Modernity and anti-modernity in stoker's dracula

Present research paper seeks to provide the analysis of modernity's and anti-modernity's reflection in Stoker's masterpiece Dracula, which was created in the end of Victorian era in England. The elements of modernity and anti-modernity are traced on the thematic, discursive and semantic levels to establish interrelation and opposition between them, as well as functions they perform in the analyzed text.

Modernity and anti-modernity are studied as wide social, historic, cultural, philosophic categories, which explain certain constitution of society, including economic and ideological structure, value system, gender relations, the level of the production forces and technology development.

Considering these dimensions, modernity and anti-modernity represent essentially opposite phenomena, reflecting radical changes, which took place in the world.

However, present paper proceeds from the hypothesis that modernity is not only progressive evolution of society, such as democracy, rapid economic development and liberalization, but has its dark side, which unites it with anti-modernity. The mentioned dark side is reflected in the negative consequences of technology, consumerism, commercial ethics as well as the development of social Darwinism, racism etc.

, which were present in modern Victorian society of England.

Based on these reservations, the thesis is defended that modernity and anti-modernity, represented in Stoker's novel are essentially interwoven and linked. Modernity and Anti-modernity as Basic Social, Cultural and Philosophical Categories Before comprehensive analysis of the reflection of

modernity and anti-modernity's in Stoker's Dracula, one has to present their basic contours, seen through the prism of our own approach. In the Western social and political thought modernity was traditionally characterized by several important cultural, socio-economic and philosophical developments.

Seen from the philosophical and ideological perspectives, it may be said that modernity should be regarded as emancipation of free subject from the burden of feudal oppression, the establishment of knowledge and progress as the driving forces of development and becoming conscious about the flow of history (Habermas, 1987). From the socio-economic standpoint, modernity should be understood as the rise of capitalism and market economy, individualism and rapid development of technology and productive forces, which spiraled the trajectory of human needs and future perspectives.

Modernity is also characterized by rapid institutionalization of new classes of workers and capitalists, rapid urbanization and industrialization, which have changed the landscape of human civilization and its self-consciousness (Giddens, 12). Another important dimension of modernity is found in the development of representative democracy and citizenship and establishment of the wide ranging human, civil and political rights.

Moreover, such developments fostered emancipation of women and furnishing their new identity as the equal representatives of humanity, having rights for creativity and active way of life (Jarzombek, 2000). Anti-modernity is often regarded as the total opposite to modernity due to the retrograde social order with political, economic dominance of feudal of post-feudal elites, conservative mindset, religious fanaticism, the absence of human rights and secularism (Giddens, 1998).

However, as the thesis defended in the present research paper states, modernity is often characterized by the similar negative trends in the critical thought. For instance, Adorno and Horkheimer argue that technology in modern society became an essentially conservative element, which is used as the tool of power to control and direct human interests. Technology exemplifies the dominance of instrumental reason, which seeks to rationalize violence and control and is totalitarian in nature, which may be observed in toto in Nazi concentration camps and industrial factories (Adorno and Horkheimer, 34).

The similar point is defended by Foucault, who claims that modernity distorted the application of Ratio and made it the instrument of control and oppression, as in the case with education system, prisons and mental hospitals (Foucault, 13). Moreover, Marxist critique of modernity is well known for its debunking of capitalist exploitation, limited nature of representative democracy, partial liberation of women etc. No less important is the critique of modernist ideologies, especially in the context of the present research paper.

Such ideologies as racism and Social Darwinism are inherently modern as for example Amin argues (Amin, 34). Racism is inherently conservative ideology, which was particularly dominant in Victorian England, as the tool for legitimizing its colonial dominance over ' third-world' peoples. Its basic ideological presumptions would be immediately seen in the further analysis if Stoker's Dracula, but here it would suffice to say that racism is significantly affected by Eurocentrism, that is the ideology, which postulates the

dominance of modern Western civilization over allegedly, under-developed, barbaric peoples etc.

Modernity and Anti-Modernity in Stoker's Dracula's: analysis of reflection and distraction. Central philosophical appeal of Dracula, which lies on the thematic surface, is the unbound struggle between modernity and anti-modernity, which are, however, presented one-sidedly in the Stoker's novel (McNally, 34). The division line between modernity and anti-modernity lies in antagonism between Dracula and Westerners (Englishmen and Dutch Van Helsing), who oppose the brutal and horrendous invader into allegedly just and free society.

Therefore, it may be reckoned that from the point of view of narration, anti-modernity is reflected predominantly in the protagonist of Dracula (Hughes, 2000). It should be noted that such evident polarization between Western modernity and outsiders' traditionalism and barbarism is very characteristic of English ' invasion literature', which depicts ' third world' peoples as the immediate threat to English society and represents these people as lacking of modern values of freedom, liberation, English virtues of dignity, self-respect etc.

The latter elements of Dracula's racialization will be further traced in the analysis of the dark side of modernity in Stoker's novel. Positive and widely acknowledged features of modernity are present in Stoker's novel. Gender dimension of modernity in Stoker's novel The first crucial element of modernity, which is evident in Dracula, is changing gender patterns of modern Western society. The changing status of woman is evident in the Mina Harker's protagonist, who is depicted as emancipated woman, having

the equal voice in the relations with men and using such modern technologies as typewriter.

There is no denying the importance of the fact that many characteristics of the ' new woman' may also be seen in Mina Harker, such as deference to man superiority and evident economic independence. It is obvious that the latter elements of modernity are reflected in Dracula predominantly in non-critical manner. The woman's emancipation in such interpretation of modernity is seen as woman's right to engage in business activity, independently realize her own desires and needs. At the same time the repressive nature of market discipline and exploitation, commoditization of woman's body and needs are ignored.

(Giddens, 1998). Hence, modernization of gender status is partially reflected in Stoker's Dracula, paying primary emphasis on the positive consequences of modernity for gender independence. However, it should be noted that Mina's protagonist is not completely modern, as she is considerably affected by the religious and moral Conservativism, existing in Victorian England. Her maternal nature and social function as school mistress still exemplify these conservative status of women within Victorian society.

Another crucial theme that epitomizes the dominance of anti-modern gender relations and morality in Victorian society may be traced in depicting Dracula as sexual seducer of morally pure and religious English women. For example, Leonard Wolf pointed to the sexual implications of blood exchange between Dracula and his victims. Moreover, it is evident that in this respect Dracula is depicted using traditional eugenic and racial prejudices against Black men, who were represented as sexually obsessed in Victorian racist discourse.

The sexual relations between them and English women were strictly prohibited not only from the genetic point of view (the clearness of white race), but also from moral, because outsiders ruin British women's moral dignity and serenity. As Wolf notes in this respect, ' Dracula has embedded in it a very disturbing psychosexual allegory whose meaning I am not sure Stoker entirely understood: that there is a demonic force at work in the world whose intent is to eroticize women.

In Dracula we see how that force transforms Lucy Westenra, a beautiful nineteen-year-old virgin, into a shameless slut' (Wolf, 15). The latter idea may be utilized as sufficient evidence to the fact that representation of women in Dracula partly should be understood as a means for indulging Victorian male's sexual imagination (Stoker, 54-56). Three female vampires, met by Harker in the Dracula's castle should be interpreted as simultaneously Victorian men's dream and nightmare.

Their sexuality and brutality serve as the object of desire and curse. Here, traditional Christian theme of forbidden object arises. The strict fixation of women's status in the Victorian England was one of the main reasons for intensification of Imaginary component of male subjectivity: a woman had two options – to be either a virgin or a wife. Notwithstanding the new role of sexual fantasy, moral imperatives still worked and it is evident in the episode of killing Lucy, when she transformed into the vampire vixen.

The latter metaphor may be interpreted as moral warning against breaking moral order existing in Victorian society. To sum it up, the representation of gender in Stoker's novel is characterized by the interconnection of modernist and anti-modernist trends. On the one side, one of the main characters is

presented as modern independent woman and on the other, the flavor of Victorian moral and sexual control over women is still seen, particularly in the collision between it and unbound sexuality of Dracula.

Moreover, it should be noted that modernity's dark side of woman's existence in modern society is distorted and hence, the negative trends of modernity in terms of women's status are not adequately covered in the analyzed novel. The collision between modernity and anti-modernity at the socio-economic level. Stoker's novel represents deep inner conflict between anti-modernist world of religion, slavery, prejudices etc. and modern rise of positivist science, Enlightenment, secularism and technology.