

# Dracula criticism summary-response essay

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



In Phillis Roths critical essay, " Suddenly Sexual Women in Dracula" there is an allusion to the societal view of women sexuality, which forms that main theme of the essay and by extension, the book. The setting differs in the fact that Dracula was written many years ago, but Roth analyzed the book in an era when the society seems to revolve around sex. Roth assumes that Dracula is the father figure while the mothers are represented by Mina and Lucy. The sons are Van Helsing's men as described in the essay which is in agreement with the Oedipus complex.

Roth brings about this issue throughout the entire essay and supports it with a number of examples from the book. In one example when Mina sucks blood in Dracula's nipple, she is described as unclean and adulterated. That any contact with Dracula renders one adulterated and unclean, even when they have not been involved in any sexual activities is itself at the height of opposition to the expression of female sexuality.

Female sexuality is also elaborated further by the fact that Dracula does not seem to bother men but is constantly after the women, in most cases; Dracula is always after Lucy and Mina. Roth carefully brings out this theme by noting that Mina and Lucy are voluptuous and desirable, a key issue that brings out female sexuality.

The book also makes reference to the Oedipus complex where we have women becoming sexual after being attacked by Dracula while the men try to kill Dracula as he is deemed the father. Roth's allusion to the vagina and toothed female mouth is symbolic of the abnormal female sexual behavior. The females in this book are seen to have an unhealthy appetite for sex brings out and overly zealous indulgence that would do anything to get what

it wants regardless of the moral implications. It's on these premises that I concur that the essay is centered on the theme of female sexuality as noted by Roth.

## **Response**

Roth's essay is an interesting interpretation since the essay was written at about the time when the world experienced the second feminist movement and thus this gives a different interpretation of the book. Clearly, men in the story seem to be threatened by the sexual woman and that's why they were interested in eliminating Lucy.

It should also be understood that this story dates back to the Victorian time period when expression of female sexuality was easily frowned upon by the men; this is evidenced by the fact that any expression of female sexuality here is destroyed. Lucy's actions to express her feminine sexuality are frowned upon since it's deemed highly inappropriate at the time.

Roth's interpretation of the book brings an intellectual perspective to the whole book that presents a way of thinking that pushes the boundaries. Roth indicates that according to the Oedipus complex, men were all children try to get the attention of Mina, who is initially brought forth as their mother, before Lucy. All these men want to kill Dracula but would not mention it since it could give advantage to the others. Such information is very helpful in assisting one to understand the content of the book.

According to Roth, even in their vampire nature, these women expressed a great tinge of their sexuality. She explains how Lucy transforms from a very normal woman into a very beautiful being after her death and revival in the

form of a vampire.

She also constantly brings out the sexuality of the women when she talks of them as voluptuous. Additionally, Roth brings about one issue that I found intriguing. Even as the whole text is about female sexuality, there are human characters in the book, even couples who appear to non sexual, as if with no sexual drive at any given time. Mostly, the characters that display any form of sexual urge are the undead.

As much as Roth's analysis provides a rather clear basis for Dracula's aims, it rarely envisions a defense that other characters could have against him. The issue of female sexuality is also elaborated by the idea of men having to be masculine and strong so as to have the desire of their women counterparts. Jonathan for instance, seems the least masculine and by extension the least dominating of all the males. He appears dominated by the women, is afraid of gunshots and is sometimes hysterical. Being deeply passive and of course non- dominating, he does not get any of his sexual desires fulfilled by his wife Mina. Not until she willingly performs them or Dracula. This causes him to become so engrossed in his quest to revenge so as to prove his manhood, even as this is fueled by his fear of inadequacy.

Jonathan is jealous of a number of things that may include his wives desire for Dracula's sexual gratification. Some of these forms of gratification have been described as being very superficial and reflect a form of gratification such as revenge. This form of gratification is never fulfilling and is usually an inadequate cover up to the real problem. They could be so as to compensate for the lack of self esteem or the deep desire for acceptance.

## Conclusion

My opinion regarding Roth's criticism is that of reserved agreement. I agree with Roth that the core content of the book is about the issue of female sexuality as has been illustrated above. Her essay clearly brings out the issue and points out a number of examples in the book to support the claim. Roth, in her analysis also assists one to understand the book since she is able to explain some of the scenes in the book and relate it to the present period. This is important since it would be difficult for one to understand the content of the book especially given the time difference, In fact, it would be very difficult to figure out the symbolism in some of the characters without her in depth research as is evident in the essay.

My reservation on the quality of this story is that Roth has gone into very deep analysis of every bit of the characters and their sexuality so as to support her view of the book. My other major issue with the essay by Roth is the sexual undertones that belie this analysis. While I agree that these sexual escapades do happen, I am not very convinced and do not personally think that they are too important to cover in a scholarly set up. All in all, after reading the essay, I am convinced that it took a lot of effort and research as it's an exceptionally well written piece of work.