

The use of tabu subjects like sex, violence and gore as literary devices in dracu...



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Ever since the beginning of time society has taken an interest in subjects that one is supposed to reject. When stories are created they tend to deal with many of these topics because the storyteller knows people want to hear about these outcast ideas. Children are not taught at school and grown ups are not shown at work the actual details of intercourse, they are not taught of how it looks when someone has their body mutilated, and they are not taught about the vampire. All these subjects come from ghost stories around campfires, movies, and horror books. The novel, Dracula, written by Bram Stoker in 1897 uses controversial issues he lived through such as sexual fantasies, abnormal gore and violence, and the idea of the vampire to catch his readers attention.

Sex is a topic many avoid talking about. Parents tend to bring it up to their children as the birds and the bees. Teachers use huge words and parts of the body like the fallopian tube to make the topic less awkward and also less appealing. Kids know about sex by the time they are in the fifth grade. They understand how it works and they know that is where they came from. They also know that people enjoy it and that it makes people feel good; otherwise why would there be those restricted channels called Spice and Playboy or that one restricted area of the movie store with a sign that reads Must Be 18 To Enter. This is where their interest lies. They do not care about where the sperm goes once it is inside the vagina; they care about how many different ways one can make the sperm get into the vagina, why it feels so good, and why people are embarrassed to talk about it. Where parents and teachers leave off, television, movies, and books take over(Maurley 2).

Stoker wrote about fantasies like sex and suggestive situations even though he lived in a very conservative time period, and yet people showed great interest in his morbid novel (Fisher 64). Stoker fills his book with sexual situations people only dream of. For people to talk of what type of sex they long for would be immoral and embarrassing and therefore the topic is left silent. It does not make desires disappear it just makes people feel bad about having them. Hearing about sexual desires makes people more comfortable about themselves because they don't feel bad about their own feelings (Laplanche 16) In the beginning of the novel Stoker involves three vampire ladies and a man, Jonathan Harker, in a sexually suggestive situation. Harker had been sleeping in a forbidden part of Draculas castle when he is disturbed by three lady vampires. The first one advances as the other two watch and wait the girl went on her knees, and bent over me, simply gloating. There was a deliberate voluptuousness, which was both thrilling and repulsive, and as she arched her neck she actually licked her lips like an animal, till I could see in the moonlight the moisture shining on the scarlet lips and on the red tongue as it lapped the white sharp teeth. Lower and lower went her head as the lips went below the range of my mouth and chin(Stoker 36)

The description of this situation leaves one to believe that Harker is being seduced by three vampires. In detail it describes what could be the beginnings of a man receiving oral sex and the beginnings of a very intense orgy between one man and three females. Men love when women use their mouth to give them pleasure. This is supposed to be dirty and something that is only accepted when it is done between two people who love each

other. A man with multiple female sexual experience is also a desire held by most men of all ages in all time periods(Plamino 1).

Society says that being with more than one partner is wrong and dirty.

Society also says that sexually engaging yourself with someone that you do not love or involving yourself with a stranger is morally wrong; thus leaving the situation at a very enticing and exciting level being that it involves many wrongs. These are the types of sexual descriptions and ideas that people want to read about and see.

The story of Dracula originated from a man named Vlad Tepes. He was nicknamed Dracula because of the hundreds of savage murders he committed in the 1400s covering the areas of Romania and Transylvania. Dracula in Romanian means son of the devil or son of a dragon (Vampire 268).

The origin of Dracula comes from a very gruesome history, involving violence and gore resulting in death. People did not know what to make of all the horrid murders. They needed an explanation to calm their anxiety. They needed an answer to why a man would do such terrible and cruel things. So when the book Dracula was written people wanted to hear the story because it answered all their questions. It made people feel more settled that there was a reason behind all the violence. Even though it was a fairytale story by an everyday man about unrealistic things it was a reason none the less. That answer was all that the people wanted. Stoker was a genius in his time period. He knew that people wanted to hear about violence even though no

one voiced it. That is the primary reason why his novel Dracula became famous (Worley 172)

Plays and books during the nineteenth century and before dealt mainly with comedy and romance. They had very little violence and the details were scarce. The props on stage were minimal and poor. If someone was killed it did not look realistic. Most plays and books used a lot of symbolism. When someone fell to the floor it meant they were dead (Jones 7). Dracula was more descriptive. Jonathan Harker describes a situation he found himself in, As the ghastly vixen feasted on the meaty flesh of the infants bloody carcass, I reflected upon my current situation and as to whether I would ever make it through this grueling ordeal alive (Stoker 369). In a narration by Mina Harker describing the murder of Dracula she says, But, on the instant, came the sweep and flash of Jonathans great knife. I shrieked as I saw it shear through the throat; whilst at the same moment Mr. Morriss bowie knife plunged into the heart (Stoker 352). Mina also describes the death of Mr. Morris. Mr. Morris, who had sunk to the ground, leaned on his elbow, holding his hand pressed to his side; the blood still gushed through his fingers (Stoker 353). These descriptions were very detailed compared to what people were used to. Since violence and gore were not things you saw everyday or even ever, people were interested in imaging what it would look like to!

Violence is something that is not uncommon in todays society. It is heard about everyday on the news. It is seen in the movie theaters. It is taught about in the history books. It is read about in novels and stories. It is listened to in our songs. However, it is still not accepted. Society tells us that violence <https://assignbuster.com/the-use-of-tabu-subjects-like-sex-violence-and-gore-as-literary-devices-in-dracula/>

is wrong and gore is bad. When terrible things happen, such as the murders at Columbine High School, it is blamed on the violence and gore in songs, on television, and in movies. People want to see stuff that is shunned. People want to know about things that are wrong. It is human nature (Jones 16). It is illegal to kill people. It is even illegal to hurt them. The only time when someone being brutally murdered is legally okay is in the movies, in the music, and in the books. That is why this version of entertainment captures people the most. People can relate with a side of themselves that is otherwise silenced. It is the only opportunity for them to legally enjoy violence and gore (Jones 4). Sex and violence are things that are real. They are things that people can relate to, accepted or not. However, vampires are something that people can only comprehend with knowledge about them. Vampires are immortal. They have everlasting life. This creates a lot of time for boredom and vampires fill this void with lots of sexual experiences and violence. This life style appeals to many. When stories are told of it, people listen (Kusch 163).

Horror stories can include anything from ghosts and goblins to super natural forces or monsters to walking, talking dolls. All are fairytale and all are things that humans are not. Humans are not goblins, they are not a super natural force, they are not monsters, and they are not motionless objects. So relating to any of these things one must use his imagination entirely.

Vampires take the attention of society off of ghouls and goblins. Vampires are undead humans and this is a concept people love to identify with (Kusch 143). Vampires are humans who have come back to life. They possess similar characteristics to living humans. The differences are vampires can

not go out in the sun, they have no heartbeat, and they need to drink blood to survive. Superstitions hold that people who commit suicide, die violently, are condemned by their church, or are attacked by another vampire will become vampires themselves (Vampire 268) Theory was that people could become vampires, and that they were in fact real. This puts vampires at a level where people can relate. It makes the subject more interesting. There is no proof to back up any theory of becoming a vampire and there was no solid evidence that vampires actually existed, but people still liked the thought of it. People are interested in things that can not be explained by science because science is how society bases its whole life (Jones 3).

Dracula was written during a time period when people were interested in vampires because they thought that there was a chance it could happen to them. Today, vampires are still an interesting and popular topic, but for a few different reasons. Vampires are allowed to kill who ever they want without receiving any punishment for it. They are allowed to have sex with anyone and as many people as they want to without being looked down upon. Today, humans respect vampires because vampires get everything humans desire. A person who was able to seek revenge, kill on instinct, have sex at any given time with any random partner, possess super natural powers, and has incredible amounts of strength is a person all society admires secretly. That is what interests people today about the vampire legend(Kusch 168).

Bram Stoker uses many controversial issues in his novel Dracula. These issues include sex, violence, and vampires. Those topics drew a lot of attention to the novel. Dracula, a novel by the English author Bram Stoker, is <https://assignbuster.com/the-use-of-tabu-subjects-like-sex-violence-and-gore-as-literary-devices-in-dracula/>

the most famous vampire story of all time (Dracula 317). People are afraid to discuss their sexual fantasies, violent thoughts, and vampire questions because they do not want to be seen as a pervert, killer, or weirdo. Society forces people to hide a certain side of themselves. It is only healthy that this side needs a way to be expressed, a way for the questions to be answered and the desires to be somewhat satisfied. Books and movies help people express themselves. They allow people to think about sex, violence and vampires and allow people to relate or laugh at it.

Bram Stokers Dracula is a perfect example of a novel that lets people think about their own naughty side. It was a unique book in its time. In addition to being very well written it told about interesting topics. These two factors grabbed people then. The same exact book is still extremely popular today. It is so popular that in December 2000 they are coming out with a movie about it called Bram Stokers Dracula 2000. Stoker was ahead of his time. He knew what the people wanted; he took the chance and wrote about it successfully.