

MASTER'S THESIS

Empowerment and vampire literature: an examination of female vampire characters as a cultural response to oppression

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Abstract

Vampire and Vampirism have raised the interests of the public from 1700s. Vampire is being used as a lens to discuss social issues in the real world. However, it is seen that there are limited works discussing the situation of coloured communities. This project is to examine female vampire figures in select works and evaluate the extent to which those figures are able to represent an empowered image of women of colour. To achieve this aim, textual analysis will be used to examine classical vampire literature, such as Sheridan Le Fanu's "Carmilla" (1872/2003), Mary E. Wilkins Freeman's "Luella Miller" (1902/2014), Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (2007), Anne O'Brien Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976/2010) and L. A. Banks's *Minion* (2003). There will be interdisciplinary reading of the social situation and behavior of the colored alongside with textual analysis of Jewelle Gomez's *The Gilda Stories: A Novel* (1991) and Octavia E. Butler's *Fledgling: A Novel* (2005). I will conclude that vampire literature has the ability and potentiality to reflect social behavior and environment of the coloured, especially coloured women. The contribution of this thesis is to demonstrate that reflecting the situation of the coloured can be a new area for vampire literature to explore in the future development and evolution of vampire literature as a genre. This is also breakthrough to the function of vampire literature as a genre because on top of appearing as entertainment and reflection of society, vampire literature is able to serve social function to empower and enlighten readers by raising their awareness to social issues that people are used to neglect.

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