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Neither Devil nor Angel, Sinner nor Saint: Moving Beyond a Dichotomized View of the Fallen Woman in Bram Stoker's Dracula and Christina Rossetti’s “Goblin Market”

Kristin Kallaher
Agnes Scott College
Atlanta, Georgia

“You, Sweet, … Mistress, Wife, and Muse,
Were you for mortal woman meant?
Your praises give a hundred clues
To mythological intent! …
How proud she always was
To feel how proud he was of her!
“The Angel in the House” (1854)

Coventry Patmore’s early poetic celebration of woman as a pure, angelic, domestic goddess remains a strongly resonant work with concurrent Victorian literature and a strongly prescient work of the Victorian literature to follow. Regardless of how socially and historically accurate Patmore’s representation of such an inhumanly perfect Victorian woman is, the female “angel in the house” has come to define our
understanding of womanhood as it existed in the years between 1837 and 1901, when Queen Victoria reigned supreme in England. The “angel in the house” personifies the attitudes of moral righteousness, prudishness, and sexual repression that have become such popularly familiar perceptions of Victorian society’s expression of sexuality.

Early in the century, Victorian gender theory espoused the idea that men were seen as lustful, sinful creatures who took advantage of innocent, fragile women. Later in the era, however, the tables turned and women were held accountable for appeasing their sexual appetites, while men simply could not be blamed for fulfilling their own innate, sexual needs (Lee, Victorian Web). Thus, a lady’s classification as an “angel in the house” depended not only on her remaining in the domestic realm but, more importantly, on her intact chastity. Any woman who gave in to promiscuous or sexual acts outside the bond of marriage became a social pariah who had fallen from her pedestal, never to rise again—an act which establishes the relationship between angels in the house and fallen women as a dichotomous one. These classifications represent polar opposites.

If angels in the house are certainly well represented in Victorian literature, fallen women—from Tennyson’s Lady of Shalott to Hardy’s Tess—are perhaps more. By applying the concept of the fallen woman to Lucy and Mina in Bram Stoker’s Dracula (1897), one can see that each is neither devil nor angel, sinner nor saint. Understanding where Lucy and Mina lie on a pure-to-fallen woman continuum illuminates significant differences in their status which cannot be gleaned from defining the two women as exclusively virtuous or fallen.

By incorporating an examination of Christina Rossetti’s seminal poem “Goblin Market” (1862), which radically twists the tired tale of the fallen woman by rehabilitating her into society, we can provide a literary context for Dracula to help us move beyond oversimplified dichotomies.

Shortly after the publication of Patmore’s “The Angel in the House,” Christina Rossetti published Goblin Market and Other Poems, (1862). The work “was received like a
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If angels in the house are certainly well represented in Victorian literature, fallen women—from Tennyson’s Lady of Shalott to Hardy’s Tess—are perhaps more. By applying the concept of the fallen woman to Lucy and Mina in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897), one can see that each is neither devil nor angel, sinner nor saint. Understanding where Lucy and Mina lie on a pure-to-fallen woman continuum illuminates significant differences in their status which cannot be gleaned from defining the two women as exclusively virtuous or fallen. By incorporating an examination of Christina Rossetti’s seminal poem “Goblin Market” (1862), which radically twists the tired tale of the fallen woman by rehabilitating her into society, we can provide a literary context for *Dracula* to help us move beyond oversimplified dichotomies.

Shortly after the publication of Patmore’s “The Angel in the House,” Christina Rossetti published *Goblin Market and Other Poems*, (1862). The work “was received like a
breath of fresh air over a rather stale poetic landscape, and almost overnight Rossetti became famous” (Blain 112). At the time of publication, Rossetti worked alongside her sister, Maria, at the St. Mary Magdalene Penitentiary for fallen women, endeavoring to “equip fallen women with the spiritual enlightenment, moral fortitude, and domestic skills necessary for them to escape their former depravity” (Escobar 134).

Heavily influenced by Rossetti’s work at the House of Mercy, “Goblin Market” describes two sisters living in a country cottage. Each day at twilight all the maids in the country hear the cries of goblin merchants peddling their fresh, succulent fruit, but the women know better than to eat it, for “[they] must not look at goblin men, / [They] must not buy their fruits: Who knows upon what soil [the goblins] fed / Their hungry thirsty roots?” (Rosetti 116; lines 42–45). While her sister Lizzie “thrust a dimpled finger / In each ear, shut eyes and ran,” “curious Laura chose to linger,” and she “reared her glossy head” to look at the goblins as they tramped through the country (52, 69, 67–68).
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When Laura decides to indulge her temptations by watching and listening to the goblins’ “shrill repeated” cries of “come buy, come buy,” she mirrors Lucy Westenra’s forwardness in Chapter V of Dracula (89–90). Lucy, in a letter to her best friend Mina Harker, voices her fickle wish to accept the proposals of all three of her suitors. She asks, “Why can’t they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble?” (Stoker 60).

Each woman, either by her actions or words, reveals her desire for something she knows she either should not or cannot have. Laura has already said “we must not buy [the goblins’] fruits,” just as Lucy voices her own knowledge of the sinfulness of what she has wondered—”But [to ask such a question] is heresy, and I must not say it” (line 43; Stoker 60). Unwittingly, both women have set themselves up to take the fall.

Because she did not run and hide like her sister, Laura encounters the goblins. She innocently purchases fruit from them with “a precious golden lock” of her hair, figuratively
Victorian England’s fallen women and St. Mary Magdalene’s prodigal daughters experienced a need (whether physical want or desire) and sacrificed their maidenheads as well. The truth of the poem and Christina Rossetti’s society was that women would pay dearly for such an exchange. (Escobar xx)

When it comes to literary depictions of women who “sacrificed their maidenheads,” an important distinction is that the act in literature, as with Laura, Lucy, and Mina, is usually figurative. Rare cases were those such as Hardy’s Tess of the D’Urbervilles, who experiences a literal loss of virginity when she is raped and subsequently becomes pregnant. Intercourse determines fallen woman status in a clear cut case like Tess’s.

Yet most authors substituted softer, figurative representations of a woman’s fall, such as Tennyson’s Lady of Shalott who leads a cursed life after gazing out her window to look upon Sir Lancelot. She loses her innocence—a socially constructed, subjectively understood concept—rather than literally losing her physical virginity through engaging in the act of sexual intercourse. “Goblin Market” and Dracula follow in this pattern but with increased sexual suggestiveness and symbolism. Rossetti and Stoker both exhibit a reticence to speak frankly in sexual terms, but they do infuse these two works with incredibly strong sexual undercurrents through their usage of figurative representations. Rossetti was a deeply religious woman, which explains a large part of her restraint.

As Christopher Bentley has written regarding the influences governing Stoker and Victorian writers in general, “the obscenity laws, the tyranny of the circulating libraries, and the force of public opinion were, throughout the greater part of the nineteenth century, powerful constraints on any author who wrote for the general public…” (142). Thus, authors necessarily devised highly creative figurative substitutes for the event of a woman’s loss of virginity. In “Goblin Market,” Rossetti makes use of Garden of Eden symbolism. Laura’s eating of the tempting, juicy, fresh-from-
to look upon Sir Lancelot. She loses her innocence—a socially constructed, subjectively understood concept—rather than literally losing her physical virginity through engaging in the act of sexual intercourse. “Goblin Market” and *Dracula* follow in this pattern but with increased sexual suggestiveness and symbolism. Rossetti and Stoker both exhibit a reticence to speak frankly in sexual terms, but they do infuse these two works with incredibly strong sexual undercurrents through their usage of figurative representations. Rossetti was a deeply religious woman, which explains a large part of her restraint.

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the-vine goblin fruit stands in figuratively for the sexual act and her loss of innocence. In *Dracula*, Stoker accentuates the symbolically sexual nature of the act of fluid transfer: Lucy and Mina drink blood, a staple ritual of vampires established in the traditional mythology and folklore.

In “Goblin Market,” the description of Laura eating the fruit for the first time is blatantly sexually suggestive: “She sucked and sucked and sucked the more / Fruits which that unknown orchard bore; / She sucked until her lips were sore ...” (134 – 136). When she returns home, “Lizzie met her at the gate / Full of wise upbraidings”:

[You] should not loiter in the glen
in the haunts of goblin men.
Do you not remember Jeanie,
How she met them in the moonlight,
Took their gifts both choice and many ...
But ever in the noonlight
She pined and pined away;
Sought them by night and day,

Jeanie’s story foreshadows Laura’s own physical and emotional withdrawal even though Laura herself does not realize she has already fallen and is on the same path as Jeanie, who represents the ultimate stereotypical fallen woman.

Laura seems to understand her sacrifice on some level, though, because when she initially clipped her “precious golden lock” with which to buy the fruit, “she dropped a tear more rare than pearl” (127). Her single tear indicates her awareness of making the exchange Escobar mentioned. Unaware of just how dearly she will pay for the exchange, however, Laura hushes her sister’s speech, telling Lizzie her “mouth waters still” and she will simply buy more fruit the next night to appease her growing hunger (166). Laura spends the next day in an “absent dream ... sick in part” and “longing
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Found them no more but dwindled and grew grey;
Then fell with the first snow,
While to this day no grass will grow
Where she lies low ... (141 – 159)

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for the night" (211 – 212, 215). The evening comes slowly, and Laura finds at twilight she can no longer hear the goblins cry, “come buy, come buy” or “discern[] even one goblin / Racing, whisking, tumbling, hobbling” (232, 236 – 237). She “turned cold as stone / To find her sister heard that cry alone” (253 – 254). Laura’s withdrawal symptoms begin almost immediately upon returning home:

[She] crept to bed, and lay
Silent till Lizzie slept;
Then sat up in a passionate yearning,
And gnashed her teeth for baulked desire, and wept
As if her heart would break ... (264 – 268)

Her “hair grew thin and gray; / She dwindled” with “sunk eyes and faded mouth” (277 – 278, 288). Laura’s withdrawal resembles that experienced by modern-day drug addicts who find themselves deprived of drugs to support their habit.

Laura’s decline in physical and mental health parallels that of Lucy, who almost as soon as we meet her needs constant blood transfusions to keep her alive. We can compare Laura’s deterioration with Lucy’s diminishing health as meticulously recorded by Mina in her journal:

Lucy seems to be growing weaker ... I do not understand Lucy’s fading away as she is doing ... all the time the roses in her cheeks are fading, and she gets weaker and more languid day by day; at night I hear her gasping as if for air. (Stoker 92).

Dr. Seward later records that “[Lucy] was ghastly, chalkily pale; the red seemed to have gone even from her lips and gums, and the bones of her face stood out prominently; even her breathing was painful to see or hear ...” (112 – 113). Just as Laura longs for the taste of goblin fruit and the nourishment it will provide her, Lucy craves the blood which has become necessary to replenish the supply Dracula drains from her each night. Lucy develops a dependence on blood, as it literally becomes necessary to sustain her life. Laura’s fall, on the other hand, can be traced back to one event—her eating the goblin fruit. Once she has eaten, she
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Lucy’s descent from lady to fallen woman begins when she rhetorically asks why she cannot marry all three of her suitors. Stoker punishes Lucy for her forwardness by having Dracula visit her each night, tainting her purity by establishing an intimate, highly sexually charged relationship in which he drinks blood from her neck. These visits take place on the sly, outside recorded observations in Mina’s, Dr. Seward’s, and Jonathan’s journals; we hear only that the two puncture wounds on Lucy’s neck refuse to heal. In an ironic twist of fate, Lucy’s wish to marry as many men as had proposed to her comes true in a symbolic sense: Dr. Seward, Quincy Morris, and her fiancé Arthur all give her their blood via transfusions.

The act of transfusing blood, of penetrating Lucy’s body with the phallic needle and enabling the men to deposit their own fluids in her, conjures up images of gang rape ... Each transfusion symbolizes a kind of ghastly marriage and prompts Van Helsing to fret that “this so sweet maid is a polyandrist.” Stoker gives Lucy what she wants and teaches her a lesson at the same time.

(Signorotti 623)

Thus, Stoker reduces Lucy’s status as a lady even more after tainting her with Dracula’s visits by making her a passive, unconsciously willing receptacle for the bodily fluids of many men, none of whom to which she is married. Unfortunately, after Stoker teaches Lucy a lesson through these suggestive transfusions, Lucy still dies, only to return as one of the Undead. She is no longer a woman but a vile “Thing” who “seemed like a nightmare of Lucy” (Stoker 192, 190). When she dies and returns as a vampire, Lucy in a sense becomes like a super, evil fallen woman. The stereotype of the broken, fallen woman is reincarnated in Lucy as proud, voluptuous, and strong, with a ravenous appetite for drinking blood, the ultimate symbol for sex in Stoker’s vampire tale.
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At this point in the novel, the dichotomized devil and angel imagery becomes especially important. When Lucy turns into an Undead, Van Helsing enlists the aid of Dr. Seward, Quincy Morris, and Arthur to kill her by “cut[ting] off her head . . . fill[ing] her mouth with garlic . . . and driv[ing] a stake through her heart” (179). In his inspirational speech to the men, Van Helsing states, “Instead of working wickedness by night and growing more debased in the assimilation of it by day, [Lucy] shall take her place with the other Angels,” implying Lucy will return to her pure state in death and be an Angel once more for her eternal life (191). Implying that Lucy is not an angel when she is an Undead, we can deduce logically that we are therefore meant to see Lucy as the polar opposite of an angel—in this case, a devil. The impression gleaned from Van Helsing’s speech supports this dichotomous way of seeing Lucy, especially after the act of killing her is complete, when Van Helsing confirms Lucy’s devil status by saying, “. . . she is not a grinning devil now—not any more a foul Thing for all eternity” (193).

Escobar states that “because the Victorians rested their sense of decency, morality, and familial cohesion on the very human shoulders of an etherealized womanhood, if a woman fell, she fell utterly” (133). In this same tradition, Lucy falls, and she falls utterly. When we are first introduced to her in the novel, Lucy displays a delightful sense of innocence and purity in her letter to Mina, in which her girlish giddiness over being in love with Arthur (“I love him; I love him; I love him!”) permeates the tone (Stoker 57). She seemingly travels down a continuum in her classification as a woman, careening from one extreme to the other. She plummets from the height of her lady’s pedestal into the depths of fallen woman status. Stoker even drives Lucy past the point of a fallen woman by turning her into a vile, evil “Thing” (193).

While Lucy’s story exemplifies Stoker’s dichotomous labeling of Lucy—she is initially like a pure angel, only to fall and turn into an Undead devil, only to be revived in eternal life as an angel—Stoker moves away from dichotomous characterization somewhat with Mina, who ultimately does not fall as precipitously as Lucy. The continuum supports an infinite
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number of classifications between the two dichotomous extremes, making the continuum an excellent way to redefine our concept of the fallen woman. As if he was simply required to provide a traditional, clearly defined case of the fallen woman with Lucy, Stoker experiments with this continuum in Mina’s character, driving her back and forth along the pure-to-fallen woman continuum. Perhaps due to the radical groundwork of “Goblin Market,” Mina is not forced to fall like Lucy. The conclusion of “Goblin Market” illuminates Stoker’s trial with Mina, who identifies greatly with Laura’s sister, Lizzie. When Laura, “dwindling / Seemed knocking at Death’s door,” Lizzie determinedly goes looking for the goblins:

... Lizzie weighed no more
Better and worse;
But put a silver penny in her purse,
Kissed Laura, crossed the heath with clumps of furze
At twilight, halted by the brook:
And for the first time in her life
Began to listen and look. (322 – 328)

When the goblins “spied her peeping,” they descend en masse upon her, proceeding to hug, kiss, squeeze, and caress her (330 – 331, 348 – 350). Like Dracula, whose many guises include taking the form of a bat or wolf, the goblins approach Lizzie “cat-like and rat-like, / Ratel- and wombat-like, / Snail-paced in a hurry, / Parrot-voiced and whistler ...” (340 – 343). Lizzie attempts to purchase fruit from the goblins by tossing them her penny, but they insist upon her taking a seat and eating with them, which she refuses to do, remembering Jeanie. When the goblins snub her, Lizzie demands her penny back, and the goblins get angry, “grunting and snarling” and “... call[ing] her proud, / Cross-gained, uncivil...” (393 – 395). But Lizzie stands her ground, “white and golden,” thinking to herself that though “one may lead a horse to water, / Twenty cannot make him drink” (408, 422 – 425).

Tho’ the goblins cuffed and caught her,
Coaxed and fought her,
Bullied and besought her,
Scratched her, pinched her black as ink,
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Tho’ the goblins cuffed and caught her,
Coaxed and fought her,
Bullied and besought her,
Scratched her, pinched her black as ink,
Kicked and knocked her,
Mauled and mocked her,
Lizzie uttered not a word;
Would not open lip from lip
Lest they should cram a mouthful in:
But laughed in heart to feel the drip
Of juice that syrupped all her face,
And lodged in dimples of her chin,
And streaked her neck which quaked like curd.

Thus, what has ensued—the goblins pelting Lizzie with fruit
and abusing her—is essentially a gang rape, comparable with
the more subdued gang rape of Lucy to which Signorotti referred.

What follows when Lizzie returns home is blatantly sexual.
Lizzie commands Laura to “hug [her], kiss [her], suck [her] juices,“
and Laura obeys, “kiss[ing] and kiss[ing] [Lizzie] with a hungry
mouth” (468, 492). Just as fresh blood invigorates Lucy, Laura
responds to licking the fruit juices off her sister in unabashedly
orgasmic fashion: she “writh[ed] as one possessed” and “beat her
breast;” she was “like a caged thing freed” (496). She felt “swift
fire spread thro’ her veins” (499), and “she fell at last; / Pleasure
past and anguish past ... “ (496, 499, 505, 507, 521). In the
aftermath of this two-person bacchanalian-esque orgy, Laura
wonders, “Is it death or is it life?” and answers herself, “Life out
of death” (523 – 524). Thus, Laura finds life out of death in the
same way Lucy finds eternal life as an angel out of her death as a
devil. Even though Lucy is restored to her “unequaled sweetness
and purity” in death and Laura is restored to her innocence while
still alive, both women plunge from the pinnacle of ideal Victorian
woman status to full-fledged fallen woman status, only to return to
their pure states once again.

Although Lucy could not be saved, Laura owes her
salvation solely to her sister, Lizzie, to whom we can compare
Mina on multiple levels. Lizzie is commonly seen as a Christ-
like figure. When asking Laura to feast on her, Lizzie uses
language similar to Jesus’ words at the Last Supper (Rosetti
lines 468 – 473).

Sacrificing her own innocence to save her sister’s, Lizzie
provides a good context for examining Mina, who repeatedly
Mauled and mocked her,  
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Lest they should cram a mouthful in:  
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And streaked her neck which quaked like curd.  

(424 – 436)

Thus, what has ensued—the goblins pelting Lizzie with fruit and abusing her—is essentially a gang rape, comparable with the more subdued gang rape of Lucy to which Signorotti referred.

What follows when Lizzie returns home is blatantly sexual. Lizzie commands Laura to “hug [her], kiss [her], suck [her] juices,” and Laura obeys, “kiss[ing] and kiss[ing] [Lizzie] with a hungry mouth” (468, 492). Just as fresh blood invigorates Lucy, Laura responds to licking the fruit juices off her sister in unabashedly orgasmic fashion: she “writh[ed] as one possessed” and “beat her breast;” she was “like a caged thing freed” (496). She felt “swift fire spread thro’ her veins” (499), and “she fell at last; / Pleasure past and anguish past ... “ (496, 499, 505, 507, 521). In the aftermath of this two-person bacchanalian-esque orgy, Laura wonders, “Is it death or is it life?” and answers herself, “Life out of death” (523 – 524). Thus, Laura finds life out of death in the same way Lucy finds eternal life as an angel out of her death as a devil. Even though Lucy is restored to her “unequalled sweetness and purity” in death and Laura is restored to her innocence while still alive, both women plunge from the pinnacle of ideal Victorian woman status to full-fledged fallen woman status, only to return to their pure states once again.

Although Lucy could not be saved, Laura owes her salvation solely to her sister, Lizzie, to whom we can compare Mina on multiple levels. Lizzie is commonly seen as a Christ-like figure. When asking Laura to feast on her, Lizzie uses language similar to Jesus’ words at the Last Supper (Rosetti lines 468 – 473).

Sacrificing her own innocence to save her sister’s, Lizzie provides a good context for examining Mina, who repeatedly
makes a variety of personal sacrifices in attempts to save and redeem the lives of those around her—from her husband to Dracula himself.

Mina uses her womanly power of pity to intercede with men even for the worst of criminals, insisting that even [Dracula] can be redeemed. Her idea of dying to one’s worse self so that the better self may live is the traditional Christian idea of dying to the flesh that the spirit may live: vampirism is only an extreme version of the evil of the body against which Christians have been told to fight for almost two thousand years. And Mina is the ideal Christian woman, recalling men to an ideal of charity and love through her holy influence. (Weissman 74)

A veritable savior, Mina’s numerous sacrifices vary greatly in their degree of personal submission.

In her very first appearance in the novel, when Mina writes a letter to Lucy, one of the first things she tells Lucy is that she “has been working very hard lately, because [she] want[s] to keep up with Jonathan’s studies, and [she] has been practicing shorthand very assiduously” (Stoker 55). Always careful to put her talents in the service of her husband, Mina is clearly not a New Woman, whom she obligatorily disparages:

Some of the ‘New Women’ writers will some day start an idea that men and women should be allowed to see each other asleep before proposing or accepting. But I suppose the New Woman won’t condescend in the future to accept; she will do the proposing herself. And a nice job she will make of it, too! There’s some consolation in that. (87)

After Lucy’s death, Mina places her talents wholeheartedly in the service of men—Van Helsing, Dr. Seward, Arthur, Quincy Morris, and Jonathan—to aid in Dracula’s capture. She painstakingly copies everyone’s journals so that each person has a copy of everyone else’s for their records, and she acts as a human beacon of sorts, transmitting telepathic information while hypnotized.
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Even though she proves her strength and shows her ability to work hard alongside the men, Mina is nevertheless delegated to female roles, such as being the secretary at the group's first formal meeting about destroying Dracula. Stoker goes to great lengths to establish Mina firmly on top of the proverbial pedestal. The other men sing her praises. Van Helsing says, "She has man's brain—a brain that a man should have were he much gifted—and a woman's heart" while Jonathan writes, "I never saw Mina so absolutely strong and well" (206, 218). But just so that we do not get the wrong idea about her unique womanly capabilities, the men qualify statements such as these, constantly putting her in her place. After Van Helsing praises her as a woman whom "the good God fashioned... for a purpose... After tonight she must not have to do with this so terrible affair. It is not good that she run a risk so great" (206). Immediately after he says he has never seen Mina look so strong, Harker writes, "I am so glad she consented to hold back and let us men do the work" (218). Dr. Seward echoes these sentiments, stating, "Mrs. Harker is better out of it. Things are quite bad enough to us, all men of the world, and who have been in many tight places in our time; but it is no place for a woman..." (225).

Though we now consider these statements chauvinistic, they serve to enforce Mina's status as a good, pure woman who knows her place and even revels in occupying that place. Her only objections to their treatment of her remain insignificant because they are so childishly petulant as when she states after a meeting with the men, "Manlike, they have told me to go to bed and sleep; as if a woman can sleep when those she loves are in danger! I shall lie down and pretend to sleep, lest Jonathan have added anxiety about me when he returns" (214). Even in her complaints Mina acquiesces to gender-based inferiority.

Unlike Lucy, who voiced her desire to marry three men, Mina never does anything to incur punishment or her loss of figurative innocence. Indeed, her decision to drink Dracula's blood is noble because she drinks specifically to keep Dracula from harming her husband but is tainted by her own unconscious desires. She remembers Dracula's threat, "Silence! If you make a sound I
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shall take [the sleeping Jonathan] and dash his brains out before your very eyes” (251). Mina “[was] appalled and was too bewildered to do or say anything” (251). When he “placed his reeking lips upon [her] throat,” Mina “strangely enough did not want to hinder him” (251). Because her sexual desire is unconscious, she absolves herself of any blame for her response by “suppos[ing] it is a part of the horrible curse... when his touch is on his victim” (251). When Mina drinks Dracula’s blood, she retains much of her innocence because we know she drinks under duress:

When the blood began to spurt out [of the vein in his breast], he took my hands in one of his, holding them tight, and with the other seized my neck and pressed my mouth to the wound, so that I must either suffocate or swallow some of the—Oh my God! my God! what have I done? (252)

The truth is that Mina has done nothing to deserve such a fate, which is why Stoker ultimately redeems her.

Mina is worthy, while fickle Lucy was a threat to the Victorian expectations. As Lucy grows weaker and approaches death, she is entirely useless to everyone around her. Although unconscious, she literally drains life out of Dr. Seward, Quincy Morris, and Arthur when she takes their blood. On the other hand, as Mina grows increasingly weak, she still makes significant contributions to the efforts of those around her in order to stop Dracula. She willingly undergoes hypnosis in order to track Dracula telepathically. She travels with the men to Dracula’s country in order to help defeat him. She forces the men to promise to kill her—her ultimate sacrifice—should she turn into a vampire. Thus, while Lucy was worthy of redemption only in death, Mina’s sacrifices outweigh the corruption of Dracula’s bite and blood, earning her redemption in life.

Carrol Fry makes a compelling argument about Dracula, noting that Stoker’s use of “disguised conventional characters” (35) essentially defines the novel and its latent sexuality.

The most apparent of these characters is the “pure woman,” the staple heroine of popular fiction from
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Richardson to Hardy. In dozens of novels of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this pure woman is pursued by a “rake,” a seducer who has designs on her virtue. The melodrama is based on the reader’s suspense regarding whether or not he will succeed. Those women who lose their virtue become “fallen women,” outcasts doomed to death or secluded repentance. In Dracula, there are two “pure women,” Lucy Westenra and Mina Harker, the former of whom actually does “fall.” The role of the “rake” is played by Count Dracula, and vampirism becomes surrogate sexual intercourse. The women who receive the vampire’s bite become “fallen women.” (35)

Note that Fry classifies only Lucy as a fallen woman but defines fallen women as those bitten by Dracula. Because Dracula bites Mina as well as Lucy, by Fry’s definition, Mina should also be a fallen woman. Fry fails to distinguish between the status of Lucy and Mina, equivalently classifying both of them as fallen women when they occupy different parts of the pure-to-fallen woman continuum. Lucy falls utterly; Mina falls only partially and is redeemed. We have to assume that, had Mina died and transformed into an Undead, she too would have fallen completely and suffered Lucy’s fate. Christopher Bentley notes:

Though the vampire’s attack symbolizes sexual intercourse, or more precisely, in the view of the presumed chastity of the two female victims, loss of virginity, there is one important difference.

Unlike actual deflowering, the process is reversible, for the victim can be redeemed by the death of her seducer, the vampire; the burn mark on Mina’s forehead, caused by the touch of the Host when she was “unclean,” disappears as soon as Dracula is destroyed. The physical and spiritual degradation incurred by the victim of a vampire need not be permanent . . . (31)

As Fry asserts, in Dracula, death, not the bite itself, is a better indicator of which women fall. Dracula bites both Lucy and
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Mina: the death of Lucy when she is a vampire restores her to posthumous purity; the death of Dracula restores Mina to purity in life.

In their conclusions, "Goblin Market" and Dracula are extremely similar. Mina, Laura, and Lizzie all have children and have been able to move on with their lives because of their redemptions. The past efforts made to redeem these women are construed as valiant and well worth the sacrifices made to obtain their renewed status as pure women. Not only are they rehabilitated but they also survive their respective trials to return to their normal lives with a heightened sense of moral awareness. Carol Senf points out, "Stoker’s heroines emphasize that it is important to know the existence of evil so that they can consciously choose virtue" (48). Mina, like Laura and Lizzie, has experienced evil and emerged not only unscathed but much improved. Laura proceeds to tell her own and Lizzie’s children "how her sister stood / In deadly peril to do her good, / And win the fiery antidote.”

Van Helsing also looks to future generations when he swears that Mina and Jonathan’s son “will some day know what a brave and gallant woman his mother is” (Rossetti 130-131, lines 557-559; Stoker 327).

All three women traveled along the pure-to-fallen woman continuum; some, like Lucy, made numerous stops along the way and others, like Lucy, fell instantly. What is important for us to take from their stories is how different they are from one another. In the same way that critics argue whether Dracula is evil or not, we cannot simply define Lucy as a devil, Mina as an angel, Laura as a sinner, Lizzie as a saint. Such opposing definitions restrict our analysis of these characters, resulting in a diminished understanding of how the concept of the fallen woman fits into Victorian literature.

"Goblin Market,” published thirty-five years before Dracula, departed thoroughly from the established Victorian literature:

The permission that “Goblin Market” grants fallen women to return from depravity to chastity, if not outright purity, was indeed radical. Christina Rossetti rejects her society’s definition of female
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By contrast, Stoker redeems Mina, who is incredibly idealized, claiming many connections to angelic womanhood. Gail Griffin writes, “Mina presents herself as an excellent example of ‘advanced’ Victorian womanhood: accomplished, but only so that she can be a ‘useful wife;’ disparaging of the New Woman and her tampering with sex roles; obsessed with her ‘duty’ as a wife” (145). Stoker also denigrates his women, especially by having those such as Mina embrace the chauvinistic attitudes which men display toward her.

Despite these differences, *Dracula* follows in the footsteps of “Goblin Market.” We must be cautious, however, about implying that any similarities in *Dracula* occurred directly because of “Goblin Market.” Parallels between the two tales are striking, *Dracula* obviously was influenced heavily by earlier vampire folklore and literature, such as Sheridan Le Fanu’s *Carmilla*. Very likely “Goblin Market” was also influenced by such earlier fiction. Rossetti’s grandfather was John Polidori, author of “The Vampyre” and fourth member of the writing group (along with the Shelleys and Byron) that produced *Frankenstein*. Stoker may or may not have been aware of Rossetti’s familial connection to Polidori, but Rossetti’s poem was extremely popular so we assume Stoker would have read “Goblin Market” at some point. To what degree he was influenced by the poem remains unknown. Yet perhaps because of the important groundwork laid by Rossetti in her decision to rehabilitate a fallen woman in one of her poems, authors such as Stoker dared to redeem some of their women as
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The Underground Man and Meursault: Alienating Consequences of Self-Authentication

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Although Fyodor Dostoevsky wrote a century earlier than the modern existentialist movement and Albert Camus rejected the label of existentialist (Davison 43), many scholars have strongly associated both authors with this philosophy. Even so, the complexity of existentialism makes it difficult to articulate a concrete definition or to categorically place authors within or outside of the movement. Patrick Lyall Bourgeois believes that “it is preferable to follow Paul Ricoeur’s insistence in speaking, not of existentialism, but of existentials in the plural, indicating a lack of unity of doctrine among various figures usually considered to be existentialists” (29-30). Despite the extensive differences