

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen question number: Question 5 ☒ Question 6 ☒
Question 7 ☒ Question 8 ☒

Please write the name of your two studied texts below:

Text 1: Dracula, Bram Stoker

Text 2: Goblin Market, The Prince's Progress, and Other Poems,
Christina Rossetti

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Christina Rossetti's poetry both communicate to audiences recurring themes of crossing boundaries; not only in the physical sense of boundaries, but also the social and psychological boundaries that are exploited. Both writers demonstrate suffering and consequences as a result of crossing boundaries.

Count Dracula is a character who continuously crosses boundaries, especially social and religious boundaries. In chapter eight, Dracula attacks Lucy Westenra in the churchyard. "There was undoubtedly something, long and black, bending over the half-reclining white figure." Bram Stoker uses dramatic irony as a means to contrast character reactions, Mina Harker, with audiences'. Mina is not aware of who Dracula is and the threat he poses ~~whereas~~ and is unable to identify who this figure is.



However, readers are able to identify it is Count Dracula due to previous knowledge provided in the novel. This dramatic irony in a way is crossing a boundary of having knowledge of this danger that the characters do not. Dracula not ^{only} causes suffering to Lucy through the physical attack, but also will cause her pain through forcing her to cross social and religious boundaries. Stoker creates a juxtaposition between the clothing of Lucy and Dracula. The white that Lucy wears often represents holiness, chastity and ~~innocence~~ innocence in religion, especially ~~Christianity~~ Christianity. In a Victorian England, that's faith was mainly Christian, a woman would have been expected to marry and be subservient to her husband. They must have also been chaste until after marriage. Stoker describes the Count as "long and black." If white represents holiness, then one can assume that black represents evil and corruption. Dracula "bending over" Lucy creates imagery of the evil black enveloping the innocence of the white. Blood is often used as a metaphor for sexual exchange in Dracula. Sucking Lucy's blood without consent is a form of metaphorical rape. Dracula crosses the boundary of ^{what is} acceptable ~~social acceptance~~ and forces Lucy to suffer as a "fallen woman," a term for unchaste women outside of wedlock. Here Lucy must suffer, not only



through her transformation into a corrupted vampire, but also ^{sale} religious damnation of losing her innocence and virginity.

In one of her more well-known poems, Rossetti presents suffering after a boundary is crossed in "Goblin Market". Rossetti also presents the theme of lost innocence through the symbolism of Laura's hair. The Goblin Men wish for her to "Buy from us with a golden curl" in exchange for their evil fruit. Their fruit ~~is~~ can be seen as a representation of sexual exchange, much like Bram Stoker uses blood as a metaphor for ~~the~~ sexual activity. The Goblin Men use imperative sentences which creates a sense of foreboding as they want Laura's "golden curl" which could be a representation of chastity and holiness. After the exchange and the boundary of virginity is crossed, Laura's hair "grew thin and grey." Her sweetness and innocence has been lost and become corrupted. Damnation towards her crossing of this religious boundary has caused her suffering. Like Lucy, Laura has become a fallen woman as represented by her once luscious golden innocence being corrupted into a withered grey. She is now impure, and must suffer as a result of her ~~long~~ crossing of the temptation boundary.

Bram Stoker uses physical boundaries as a means



to cause suffering to characters. Dracula's objective in the novel is to cross physical borders from the superstitious Transylvania to the modern, industrialised England to create a vampire army. "Your girls that you all love are mine... my creatures, to do my bidding and to be my jackals." Stoker uses the pronouns "your" and "my" to emphasize Dracula's power and control over women. In the ~~victorian~~ Victorian era, many people were concerned of the threat of reverse-colonialization. The British Empire travelled abroad and colonialized many countries yet there was a fear this would happen to England. Many were scared that their wives would be stolen as well. Not only does Dracula cross physical boundaries, but social boundaries as well. He wishes to steal women, such as ~~the~~ Mina, who belong to other men. Women were seen as possessions towards men therefore Dracula's pronouns reflects this. However, he wants to make them his "creatures," this lexical choice suggesting animalistic behaviour and inhuman. Dracula aims to make men suffer as he transforms their women beyond social boundaries into animalistic vampires that now belong to Dracula. This is Stoker's representation of unknown foreign power and the dangers of colonialization.

Christina Rossetti presents conflict and suffering



through conflicting boundaries in her poem *The Convent Threshold*. The name of the poem itself already suggests this conflict due to the 'convent' suggesting a nunnery and religion but the 'Threshold' is the boundary to this. Rossetti presents a conflict between outside out-of-wedlock love and religion.

"My lily feet are soiled with mud." lilies are often used as ~~symbol~~ symbolism for purity. The speaker's purity has become tarnished possibly due to forbidden love that sins in the eyes of God. The speaker wishes to "repent" for becoming a fallen woman and unchaste. She experiences suffering due to her struggle between two boundaries: crossing the boundary to be with her forbidden lover or cross the "Threshold," this religious boundary to be with God. Rossetti herself was very religious her own to the point where she rejected three marriage proposals. She may be reflecting struggles that others may have faced between choosing unconventional love or love of God.

In *Cousin Kate*, Rossetti makes the speaker suffer as a result of crossing the social and religious boarder of sexual exchange outside of marriage. The speaker has a passive voice to show her resentment towards her male lover. "He changed me like a glove." Her use of the simile demonstrates the "Great Lord"



discarded the speaker for her Cousin, Kate, regardless of her emotions. The passive voice emphasises the Lord made her corrupt. It was common for Victorian men to have multiple lovers, many of which were prostitutes. Wives were expected to be subservient and were forbidden from having multiple lovers but this was acceptable for men. Rossetti presents the 'Madonna - Whore Complex' where men were allowed to treat women as if they were corrupt and impure however women were socially unacceptable for being so. Despite society making the speaker an "outcast thing," not even allowing her human qualities but just ^{seeing her} as a disgusting object, she doesn't have all regrets. Rossetti uses the oxymoron: "My fair-haired son, my shame, my pride," to give the speaker power despite being a female. It ~~is~~ ^{was} shameful to have a child outside wedlock in the Victorian era. However, having a child enables the speaker to provide herself purpose in life. She is proud that she can complete the goal of having a child which was expected of Victorian women. Although crossing the boundary of chastity of sex outside of marriage ~~was~~ caused her initial suffering, the oxymoron indicates there can be pride in suffering and this allows Rossetti to give this female speaker power over societal expectations.



and boundaries.

Bram Stoker also makes the protagonists cross boundaries. For example, Van Helsing intrudes Mina's private letters to Lucy. "I implore your pardon, madam," Van Helsing crosses the boundary of privacy and pervasion similar to Dracula who often perverts women's private life. The difference between the protagonists and the antagonists is that Van Helsing and the other members of the Circle of the Light show doubt and regret towards crossing a boundary that may cause consequences. Van Helsing shows Mina respect by referring to her ^{*title} as a "Madam," whereas Dracula calls them "creatures." Van Helsing does not wish to cause suffering by crossing boundaries, but in fact wishes to end further suffering caused by Count Dracula.

In conclusion, both Bram Stoker and Christina Rossetti provide situations in which boundaries are crossed. In many instances, these have consequences and cause suffering such as lost chastity before marriage causing lost innocence and ~~trans~~ transformation into a 'fallen woman.' However, crossing boundaries can lead to benefits as well. Sometimes, ~~conf~~ conflicting with ~~some~~ Victorian societal expectations



can begin to reduce prejudices and conventions,
much like Rossetti demonstrates in her written
poetry. Bram Stoker shows that crossing boundaries
with positive intentions ^{to save others} can reduce suffering as
opposed to causing ~~the~~ harm, pain and anguish.
His characters either embody good or evil, God or
Satan. These factors are what influence if suffering
is caused as a result of crossing boundaries.

