



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

SOME GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING A THESIS PROPOSAL FOR THE M.A. IN LITERATURE

A Master of Arts thesis is a demonstration of your ability to conduct effective research using largely secondary sources and, where appropriate, primary sources. The end product is a cohesive, well-written, and illustrated *defense of your thesis statement*.

After considering your intellectual interests using the guidelines below, you should discuss your proposed project with your thesis advisor. This will open a critical dialogue, very likely over several meetings with him or her, in the process of which you will bring your written proposal to the level of development appropriate for committee consideration. Your thesis advisor will confirm with you that he or she believes your proposal is ready to go forward for review by the Graduate Committee of the Department.

These are the crucial elements you have to clarify in an M.A. thesis proposal:

1. Title: The title of your thesis needs to be brief and descriptive. It should provide a fairly clear idea of what your thesis is about.
2. Abstract: In not more than 350 words explain what you plan to do in your thesis.
3. Definition of key terms: To avoid misconception in your future discussions, explain what area of meaning you have in mind regarding key terms.
4. Thesis statement. Provide a concise and specific statement of the question you propose to tackle and perhaps answer. Describe in outline the argument you intend to make.
5. Previous research on the topic. Give a summary of the contents of the literature relevant to the subject and your research on the topic.
6. Methodology. Describe how you will pursue your research, including the critical and theoretical basis of your investigation. This section conveys how you will develop your argument.
7. Anticipated findings. Keeping in mind that research is subjective and open to changes, discuss what you hope your work will establish to confirm the statement of your thesis. *Indicate also what findings may **disconfirm** your thesis statement.*
8. Outline: Give a sketch of what your thesis will look like.
9. Bibliography. List sources of research, both secondary and primary. The bibliography should conform to the standard format as outlined in *MLA Manual of Style*.
10. Schedule. Include the start date and key deadlines for the sub-objectives of your thesis project. (Depending on the anticipated length of your research, the schedule should be broken down into monthly objectives, or, preferably bi-monthly dates.)

In The Name of God



University of Tehran
Faculty of Foreign Languages
Department of English language and Literature

Thesis Proposal Form
For
Master of Arts in Literature

1- Thesis Title:

**A mythological approach to Bran Stoker's Dracula
in the light of Edward Burnett Taylor**

Name: Elham Fallah

Advisor: Professor Beyad

Date Submitted: Winter, 2018

Note:

This form must be completed under the supervision of the student's advisor

**2- Abstract:
(Not More Than 350 words)**

Dracula is personified in a way that does not look like a bloodthirsty, ugly and animal (it's exaggerated in Dracula's bloodthirsty movies), but the only and mysterious nobleman who lost everyone around him. Also, one of the characters in the story, Jonathan Harker, faces the courtyard of Kent Dracula, faced with his polite and respectful attitude. According to Harker notes, Kent Dracula loves reading and owns a very large library of precious and ancient books. According to Dracula, his books are his best friends and have helped him in all circumstances. Kent Dracula is a lone creature, and he himself says: Because of the loss of my beloved countless years ago, I have been farewell to joy and happiness, and now I live in sadness in the dark world that there is no joy and joy. He was even known in his time as Dracula, the dragon boy. He always wore dark clothes; the linen poured his cape from the red velvet and always drank the red wine. For this reason, people thought that he was a vampire.. He is considered to be both the prototypical and the archetypal vampire in subsequent works of fiction. He is also depicted in the novel to be the origin of werewolf legends. Some aspects of the character are believed to have been inspired by the 15th century Wallachian Prince Vlad the Impaler, who was also known as Dracula. The subject of this proposal is Dracula's Mythology, which has been tried to be used by critics such as Frazer and Tylor. Vampires have been a constant presence in literature for more than one hundred years. But what is it that has granted this fictional monster such remarkable resilience and staying power? It is the constantly changing nature of the vampire that allows it to keep up with the times and maintain its position as one of the favored monsters of gothic horror and literature in general. Writers who use vampires in their work often make use of cultural fears in order to make the vampire more compelling. The advantage of using specific cultural fears tailored to a specific audience is that it is far more likely that the audience will react to the type of vampire that the writer has designed. In this thesis we have focused most of our attention on Bram Stoker's Dracula from 1897. Comparing Victorian interpretations of the events that transpire within the novel to more modern interpretations tells us how the original vampire horror novel has managed to keep itself relevant in spite of it being published more than a century ago. The main focus points of this comparative analysis were the evolution of the ideas of sexuality, the perceptions of homoeroticism in Dracula, and finally how the threat of reverse colonization translates quite well into how Count Dracula encroaches on traditional English values. This research, all in all, provides a coherent viewpoint on the subject area which attention among a mythological approach to Bran Stoker's Dracula in the light of Edward Burnett Taylor and will contribute to the development of the discipline of literary analysis in its own terms and will offer a critical review to the issues related to the mutual relationship of literature.

3- Definition of Key Terms: To avoid misconception in your future discussions, explain what area of meaning you have in mind regarding key terms.

Gothic: Bram Stoker's *Dracula* has all of the classic elements of a Gothic novel. The setting of the novel is a dark crumbling castle, the tone is mysterious, there is a villainous character, and there is the sense that the hero is struggling against an inescapable fate. Argue that *Dracula* is a particularly excellent example of the Gothic genre by relying heavily upon textual support.

Sexuality: One of the many taboos that is explored in *Dracula* is related to sexuality. Stoker seems to be contesting Victorian sensibilities and ideas about the solely procreative function of sex.

Religion: Another idea/institution that is important in *Dracula* is that of religion. Note that the symbols of religion—crucifixes, rosaries, and the like—become the tools that are used to ward off the evil and danger the vampire intends to perpetrate. Considering these and other latent symbols and references to religion in *Dracula*, in which develop an argument about Stoker's religious position.

Cultural fear: is a concept that encompasses the previous statements about fear and society in a single concept. Once a particular danger (or perceived danger) becomes established within a specific culture it can be referred to as a cultural fear.

Dracula: as a character manifests many of the cultural fears that existed within Victorian society. He is simultaneously the foreigner encroaching on British land, bringing strange customs and the threat of change to the very doorstep of society, as well as a sexual deviant with the power to corrupt the otherwise pure population of London and bend them to his will.

Homoeroticism: At no point during *Dracula* does a male get bitten or penetrated. This is quite interesting, because there are in fact multiple opportunities for this exact scenario to play out within the narrative.

Cultural perspective: through a relationship of power in which the other is the subjugated element.

4- Thesis Statement: Brief (1-2 pages) statement of your thesis project and key issues or questions to be developed.

All of this leads to an answer to the question of how vampires continue to be very popular in literature? Writers of vampire stories have updated the vampires to fit the times constantly since Stoker's original narrative was published. While there are many other monsters from gothic horror that are also quite well known today, the vampire is one of the few creatures which has managed to keep up with the times and constantly reinvent itself in order to stay relevant. This has led to several periods in time where vampires suddenly skyrocketed in popularity amongst the general population. These jumps in popularity are most likely indicators of when vampire writers managed to sync the idea of the vampire up with whatever happened to be going on in the world at the time. When the audience can recognize elements from their own lives then the characters in vampire novels become much more believable and realistic

¹(Macmillan Press LTD, 1999. 93-118. Print).

Dracula takes advantage of cultural fears. But how has the original text from 1897 continued to be relevant even to modern readers? The answer lies not only in the changing and changeable nature of the vampire, but also in the fact the cultural fears that are utilized in Dracula are somewhat universal fears. Sexuality is always relevant to human beings, fear of the foreigner or the unknown is another example of a cultural fear that simply continues to persist in the minds of human beings. People tend to fear what they don't fully understand, and since they don't understand something they instead become cautious of it ²(Macmillan, 1999.

Print).

5- Literature Review:

Previous research on the topic. Give a summary of the contents of the literature relevant to the subject and your research on the topic.

Bram Stoker is now widely recognized as a master of horror in literature. In his masterpiece *Dracula*, the hero Count Dracula is endowed with the characteristic of evil on the basis of traditional vampires. Since its publication in 1897, it has never been out of print. And scholarly interest in this novel and its author has been aroused since the second half of the 20th century. Especially many critics delve into the vampire symbolic of Alien power. However, most of the studies are confined to the orthodox Freudian interpretation and few of them analyze the real reason for the vampire symbolic of the other. Here the other is designated as a form of cultural projection of concepts. The projection constructs the identities of cultural subjects through a relationship of power in which the other is the subjugated element. Stoker, as an Irishman, feels the social prejudice against the other acutely. However, he doesn't express his discontent over it in his works openly but in the way of the invasion of vampire so as to avoid the strict censorship of the Victorian authorities. This article discusses how the vampire is defined as the other and how the authorities discriminate against him all the time for their own sake based on Foucault's power theory. Undoubtedly, it is a thrilling story, which attracts readers of several generations. In spite of its popularity, *Dracula* is initially treated by reviewers only as a sensational novel. And because classical literature was dominant at the time of its publication, it attracted little scholar's attention. "Contemporary reactions to the archetypal vampire tale at the time of its publication did not look deeper than its generic identity." (Carter, 1988) However, since the early 1970s, along with the revitalization of vampires in popular fiction, there has aroused considerable scholarly interest in vampire novels. Comments on *Dracula* from a variety of critical points of view

are too numerous to list in detail. Among them, one of the most famous general collections is *Dracula the Vampire and the Critics* edited by Margaret L. Carter in 1988, who has gathered many of the best essays together on Stoker's novels, mostly *Dracula*, in about three decades. In view of literary criticism, most of the studies may be categorized as historical, political, psychosexual or structural. Here I only offer a brief overview of the studies of *Dracula* with examples of each of these approaches. Richard Wasson gives a new interpretation of *Dracula* from the political perspective. Count Dracula is symbolic

of the expansion of barbaric Europeans, opposed by a Western alliance. So, in the novel *Dracula*'s move to London marks the intersection of racial strife, political upheaval and the fall of empire. Close reading of *Dracula* in terms of psychological analysis is undertaken more rigorously than others. The research can be categorized as two views: one is to show that the novel arises directly from Stoker's life experiences. Joseph Bierman is a leading critic in this respect. The other is to discuss that Stoker's portrayal of female vampires symbolizes male fear of female revolt. Based on the fact that the Count can only go where he is first visited (desired), he expresses or fulfills a need or desire for innocent victims. So, the Count arouses such feelings as sexuality and anti-maternity, which were suppressed in the Victorian England. The view prevailed in the 1970s and 1980s. Generally speaking, most of the studies are confined to the orthodox Freudian interpretation¹(Durham and London. 1996. Print).

Here the structural analysis focuses on the narrative technique of *Dracula*. A few critics introduce the novel's multiple-narrator structure, such as diaries, memorandums, telegrams and newspaper cuttings, etc. But in recent years, some critics further explore *Dracula*'s theme from the narrative point of view. David Seed compares its narration with that of Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*. Meanwhile, he stresses that in *Dracula* only Dracula's opponents are granted

narrative voices and can record what in each case they have plausibly experienced. But in most cases, Dracula keeps silence. From the above mentioned, though some latest studies offer new perspectives to read the text of Dracula, most critics both at home and abroad discuss the vampire symbolic of alien power only from the orthodox psychoanalytic perspective and few of them further analyze the real reason for the vampire symbolic of the other. Here the other, similar to that in post-colonial and feminist context, is designated as a form of cultural projection of concepts. The projection constructs the identities of cultural subjects through a relationship of power in which the other is the subjugated element. (Edgar and Sedgwick, 1999).

From the second half of the 18th century to the whole 19th century, the expansion of the British Empire reached a peak¹(Durham and London. 1996. Print.). The influence of the British Empire was widespread in its colonies throughout Asia, Africa, North America and Australia. It is widely acknowledged, especially by some post-colonialist critics, that the views, values and Attitudes of the westerners about the colonies and the places outside the West are built on prejudice. In the eyes of the westerners, the colonial people are backward, ignorant and subordinate and therefore they need to be remolded. Among them, Ireland is the colony of the British Empire for a long time in history. Though, throughout the 18th century, Ireland regained a form of self-governing status through her own parliament, the parliament was abolished at the beginning of the 19th century. From this period on Ireland becomes an integral part of a new United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. In addition, the disparity between the British Empire and Ireland is broadened, especially in economy and population. The British Empire has become a modern nation, while

Ireland, like East, is still a poor land²(*Oxford University Press, 1990. Print*). So, Stoker, as Irishman, himself feels the social situations very acutely. In particular, he serves as a theatre manager for Sir Henry Irving for several decades in London. During the time, Stoker has an opportunity to spend a good deal of time with members of the English ruling class. His admiration for these elegant people is obviously very strong. Yet he also retains a strong sense of his Irish identity throughout his life. And Stoker has a personal and close friend, William Gladstone, “a Liberal in politics and a tacit supporter of independence for Ireland.” (Belford, 1996) To some extent, under his influence, Stoker writes a pamphlet advocating Home Rule for Ireland but he is disappointed at his failure to persuade Irving to espouse this cause. As an Irishman and a dependent of Irving, it seems probable that Stoker feels like another among Irving’s wealthy and aristocratic friends. It is likely that his external geniality conceals certain resentment against the proud English ladies and gentlemen whom he so entertains. There is no Irish character in Dracula but there is such the other as the vampire, especially the erotic, demonic and vengeful Count Dracula³(*New York and London. 2008. Print*).

6- Methodology: Describe how you will pursue your research, including the critical and theoretical basis of your investigation. This section conveys how you will develop your argument.

More specifically the study aims to investigate the following questions in the novels:
The present study is a study of the way the readings of Dracula have changed over the years is due to a variety of reasons. The study is of library type in terms of data collection as it employs library materials such as books, papers and the like. A mythological approach to Bran Stoker's Dracula in the light of Edward Burnett Taylor Check out the following chapters. How has the vampire been able to continually reemerge in texts? What caused these various changes to occur? What historical context caused the vampire to warp and change to better fit contemporary readers? How have the interpretations of Stoker's Dracula changed with the times? which individual reading that ends up catching the reader's imagination is often dependent on what aspect of the novel the reader finds frightening. But what is fear really?

7- Anticipated findings: Keeping in mind that research is subjective and open to changes, discuss what you hope your work will establish to confirm the statement of your thesis. *Indicate also what findings may **disconfirm** your thesis statement.*

Although it is not possible here to relate the history of the Gothic movement in English literature, it is necessary to define what is meant by the term "Gothic" in order to examine its influence in Bram Stoker's work. Gothic movement, it has often been stated, began with Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764. The author claimed that the novel was inspired by his dream a gigantic hand in armor on a staircase in an old castle. An assertion that a work was dream-inspired itself became part of the Gothic tradition. The author whose work provides the finest expression of Gothicism and who is the most readily identified with the genre is Ann Radcliffe. Far more sophisticated than her predecessors in technique, she set the pattern for the Gothic romance for succeeding authors. In Radcliffe's work, the heroine and the villain were promoted to roles of equal importance and the heroine's sensibility, her reactions to her situation, the other characters, and the landscape, became the focus of interest. In the 19th century, England was the most powerful country in the world. In the English eyes, Eastern Europeans, symbolized as barbarian and uncivilized, seek to overthrow their civilization on and progress. Especially Dracula's accent, "dark" sexuality and foul smell make him a representative of all dark foreigners in the Victorian society. In addition, Dracula is an epistolary novel. However, because the activities of reading and writing are crucial in this novel to establish a kind of middle-class hegemony, Dracula, as the other, is inevitably elbowed out of the narrators. It is other himself, not a particular social group that Dracula represents. For the "good" characters in the Victorian age, the modes of otherness were infinite. However, they intend to construct a harmonious society: no other power, no other culture and no other voice by all means. On the contrary, under their suppression, the other comes to London with much bitter personal hatred, which is not helpful to attain the harmony of the whole society. In fact, the activities of reading and writing are crucial in this novel to establish a kind of middle-class hegemony. It can be said that social standards seem to be a subjective production, which is revealed as the completely controlled mass-production of a group of doctors, psychiatrists and lawyers¹(Stoker, Bram. (1998) *Dracula*). Writing, or at least who writes, must be controlled since it represents the deployment of knowledge. Similarly, reading must be authorized and censored. According to Foucault's view, there is a link between knowledge and power. To be exact, knowledge is to gain power. When Mina falls under the vampire's influence and Dracula begins to read her mind, she is barred from reading the English group's plans. Besides, in *Dracula*, a great thing that is controlled wonderfully in the diary form is time. As a matter of fact, Dracula's failure is partly attributed to his lack of time concept. When Van Helsing arrives on the scene, he immediately warns Seward of the fallibility of memory. He tells Seward: "Remember, my friend that knowledge is stronger than memory, and we should not trust the weaker.... Take then good note of it. Nothing is too small. I counsel you, put down in record even your doubts and surmises." (Stoker) Why does Van Helsing hold the opinion that knowledge is stronger than memory? Knowledge is tied to time and knowledge evolves from the comparison of written sources and lived experiences. Consequently, the documentary that establishes knowledge erases memory²(Oxford University Press, 1975).

8- Thesis Outline: Give a sketch of what your thesis will be like.

Chapter One: Introduction

1. 1. General Overview

1. 1. 1. Bran Stoker

1.1.2. Edward Burnett Taylor

1. 2. Statement of the Problem

1. 2. 1. Significance of study

1. 3. Methodology and Approach

1. 4. Literature Review

1. 5. Thesis Outline

1. 6. Work cited

Chapter Two: mythological approach

2. 1. Background

2. 2. Body of Theories

2. 3. Critiques

Chapter Three: Edward Burnett Taylor point of view

Chapter Four: other critics point of view

Chapter Five: Conclusion

9- Preliminary Bibliography

- Arata, Stephen D. "The Occidental Tourist: *Dracula* and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonisation." *New Casebooks: Dracula: Contemporary Critical Essays*. Ed. Byron, Glennis. London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1999. 119-144. Print.

- Auerbach, Nina. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. University of Chicago Press. 2012. Print.

- Craft, Christopher. "'Kiss me with those red lips': Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*." *New Casebooks: Dracula: Contemporary Critical Essays*. Ed. Byron, Glennis. London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1999. 93-118. Print.

- Dozier, Rush W. *Fear itself: The origin and nature of the powerful emotion that shapes our lives and our world*. Macmillan, 1999. Print.

- Freud, Sigmund. "The 'Uncanny.'" *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVII (1917-1919): An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works* 1919. 217-256. Print.

- Glover, David. *Vampires, Mummies and Liberals: Bram Stoker and the Politics of Popular Fiction*. Duke University Press. Durham and London. 1996. Print.

- Klinger, Leslie S. *The New Annotated Dracula*. W.W. Norton & Company. New York and London. 2008. Print.

- Roth, Phyllis A. "Suddenly Sexual Women in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*." *New Casebooks: Dracula: Contemporary Critical Essays*. Ed. Byron, Glennis. London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1999. 30-42. Print.

- Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. 1897. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. Print.

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- Smith, Andrew. (2003). Demonising the Americans: Bram Stoker's Postcolonial Gothic. *Gothic Studies*, 5(2), 20.

- Stoker, Bram. (1998) *Dracula*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.5117/9781904633143>

- Wasson, Richard. (1988). The Politics of *Dracula*. In Margaret L. Carter (ed.), *Dracula the Vampire and the Critics* (pp. 19-34). London: UMI Research Press.

- Austen, Jane. *Northanger Abbey and Persuasion*. London: Oxford University Press, 1965.

- Bleiler, E. F., ed. *Three Gothic Novels*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966.

- Collins, W. Wilkie. *The Woman in White*, London: Oxford University Press, 1975.

10- Schedule:



Department of English Language and Literature
Faculty of Foreign Languages

11- STATEMENT

Title of Proposal/Thesis:

Part I:

I certify that my above proposal or the forthcoming thesis is not, and will not be, part of a thesis or dissertation and has not been previously published in any possible form.

I also undertake full academic responsibility in the process of writing my thesis and I am aware that, if proved otherwise, the Disciplinary Committee of the University of Tehran has every right to take action against me and I acknowledge that this may **include invalidating my degree even after my graduation.**

I also take full responsibility for any penal decision, national or international, reached on the occasion of my breaching the above conditions.

Part II: I undertake to

A- Report my work progress on a routine basis to my advisor.

B- Submit the drafts for chapters to my advisor in the order they appear in my outline and to insert my feedback in my revisions.

C- Present my research materials to my advisor/reader for their close inspection if required.

If I fail to fulfill the above requirements, my advisor has every right to report me to the Graduate Committee of the Department, report me to the Graduate School and/or withdraw his/her supervision.

If my *advisor* fails to check any of the above mentioned tasks, it is my responsibility to immediately report to Head of the Department.

Student's Name:

Date and signature:

12- Advisor's Statement:

I hereby certify that the above student has discussed the above topic with me and that s/he has fully understood the course his/her thesis will take.

Advisor's Name:

Date and Signature

13- Decision reached by the Graduate Committee of the Department

	Name	Position	Yes	No	Signature
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

Thesis proposal:

Submitted by Mr. /Ms. _____ M.A. student in literature was considered in the Department's Graduate Committee held on _____ and was unanimously or with a total vote of _____ out of _____ accepted/rejected (if rejected, please see part 14).

Head of Department:

Date and Signature

14-General Issues Regarding Thesis Proposals:

Thesis proposals may be returned to students for revision. When proposals are returned, the student meets with the thesis director to get feedback from the committee on revising the proposal. Students have a short deadline (generally two to three weeks) to revise in conjunction with their director and resubmit the proposal. If the proposal is still not passed by the committee, it may be revised only one more time. Second revisions will be turned in the following semester, on the deadline for that semester's proposals. **If the second revision is not accepted by the committee, the student may not propose the same project again. He or she must choose a new topic.**

Reasons for returning the proposal for revision:

1. Project is too large and thus not appropriate for an MA thesis
2. Proposal is too narrow and thus the student will not be able to write the minimum of 80 pages
3. Point of the project is not clearly articulated and supported

4. Project is vague
5. Project is not clearly situated within literary or theoretical traditions
6. Proposal is disorganized
7. Proposal displays grammatical and/or stylistic errors
8. Project is not clearly situated within the field of English studies