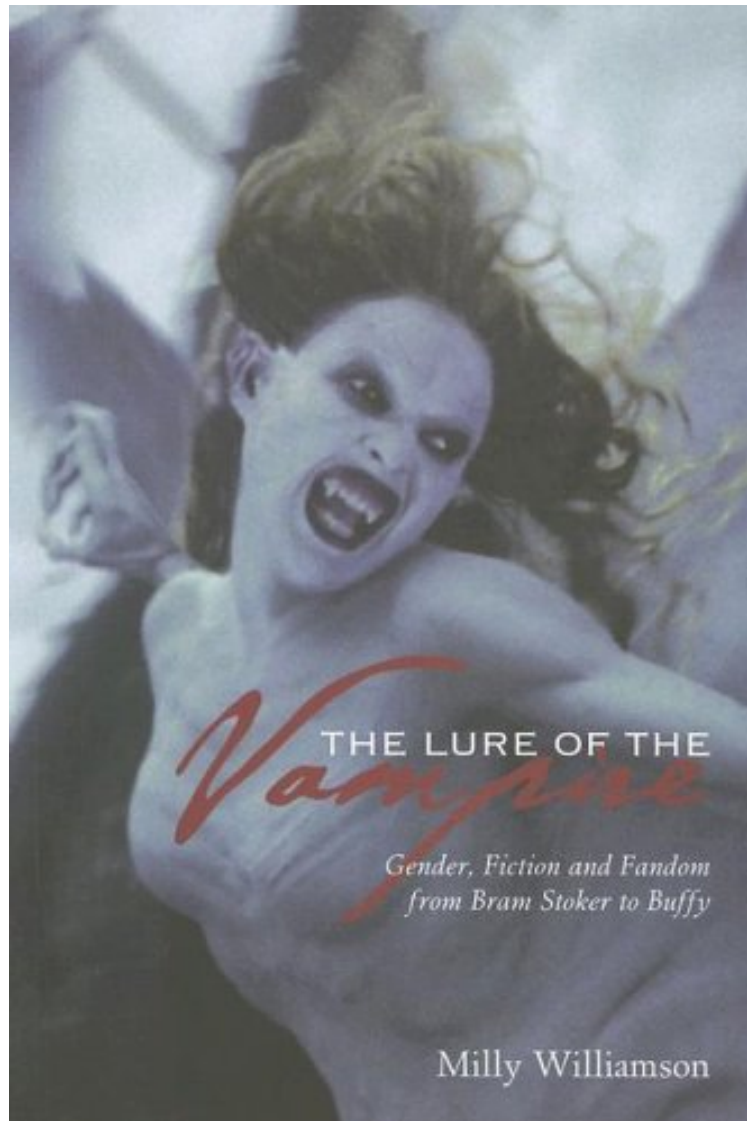


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The Lure of the Vampire: Gender, Fiction, and Fandom from Bram Stoker to Buffy the Vampire Slayer

Milly Williamson

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Milly Williamson : The Lure of the Vampire: Gender, Fiction, and Fandom from Bram Stoker to Buffy the Vampire Slayer before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Lure of the Vampire: Gender, Fiction, and Fandom from Bram Stoker to Buffy the Vampire Slayer:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Great for Critical Analysis of Vampires and GenderBy

BelleMacabreI bought this book when I was writing a long critical paper on vampires and feminism for my Masters degree. Although I was able to get much more in depth, interesting critical analysis from *Our Vampires, Ourselves and The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (Popular Fictions Series), Milly Williamson's *The Lure of the Vampire* was a gem. I pulled several well-stated quotes and new ideas from this book that I ultimately used in my paper. Here are a few of the quotes I pulled out that I thought were interesting... I pulled more in-depth ones for my paper but those would seem out of context: "The vampires of the West exist to frighten us into acquiescence, to reassert patriarchy, racial superiority, family values and chaste heterosexuality" (Williamson 1). "The vampire offers a way of inhabiting difference with pride, for embracing defiantly an identity that the world at large sees as 'other'" (Williamson 1). "For many feminist interpretations of *Dracula*... it is the destruction of the vampire Lucy that is considered to be the symbolic centre of the tale, for it is in this scene that the fear and hatred of active female sexuality is most fully revealed and then destroyed" (Williamson 12). Williamson explores other avenues that I haven't seen elsewhere, such as this interpretation of Lucy's slaying in the novel *Dracula*: "This erotic fascination for unveiling and undressing female cadavers provides an alternative understanding of the medical and representational context for the staking of Lucy, for Stoker's novel is fascinated with erotically charged revelations about female corpses as the Victorian medical establishment. Thus the scene of Lucy's staking simultaneously enacts a sexualized corpse mutilation as well as suggesting a rape" (Williamson 16). Another thing that's unique to this book how much she talks about vampire fan clubs and vampire fan fiction. It's not just about *Dracula*. As the title suggests, she also covers *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, which was an amazing show. She discusses Anne Rice's vampires and *Lost Boys*. I think Williamson could've turned each chapter into a full-fledged book. There were definitely some parts that I was very interested in and wished that she could've either gone more in-depth or suggested other places for further research while, on the other hand, there were parts I wasn't as interested in and started to skim. If you're looking for vampire academia material, this is a great supplemental book that has some things other vampires books don't but you'll need more primary research books for a paper. 15 of 16 people found the following review helpful. A great analysis of vampire fandom (as long as you're a scholar) By Stefan Isaksson *The Lure of the Vampire* is, as the title suggests, a book about vampires. However, it's not about vampires per se, but rather an analysis of people who admire vampires and everything they stand for, people who have meticulously read every single book by Anne Rice about Louis and Lestat and her other characters, and who live their daily lives closely identifying and relating to the vampire worldview. In other words; hard-core vampire fans. True, some of them have more of a casual interest, while others more or less base their entire worldview, existence, and philosophy on the mythology about those pale, immortal beings who only live at night and drink blood whenever the thirst becomes too strong. But all fans - whether they are completely satisfied with watching the latest vampire-flick or if they choose to spend all their free time online with other devotees - have one thing in common: They're all suckers for vampires. And this is what Milly Williamson devotes most of the pages in her book to explore and analyze. When she doesn't discuss fans and fandom she explores the origin and evolution of the vampire novel along with extremely popular vampire shows such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. However, as I said before, most pages are devoted to fans, not vampires. (Or at least not "real" ones; quite a few of the fans wouldn't mind turn immortal if Louis or Lestat showed up on their doorstep and offered a quick bite and instant immortality). Williamson is especially interested in female fans, and argues that the ones more or less devoting their lives to the vampire has done so because they "found in the vampire a figure that expresses painful outsiderdom and love in a way that echoes their own experiences in the world" (pg. 189). Countless of people all over the world are interested in, and fascinated by, vampires, but *The Lure of the Vampire* is still not a book for everyone. It's a book written by a scholar, and it soon becomes apparent that its intended audience is other scholars or university students, not the everyday reader. Which obviously doesn't mean it's a bad book in any sense. Quite the opposite actually; as long as you have the necessary patience and training required to deal with it you'll find that Williamson has written a book that's both very informative and interesting, but if you don't and just want a book about vampires in general, then you're probably better off buying a different book. In the section preceding chapter five, "Vampire Fandom: Rebels Without a Cause? Theorising Fandom in the Field of Cultural Production", Williamson informs the reader that she's about to offer a model to "understanding fandom in contemporary culture" (pg. 96), but in fact the entire book, not just chapter five, is an attempt to do just that. Now, a thorough analysis is never a bad thing, but why does Williamson - along with many other scholars of contemporary culture - have such a hard time simply admitting that some people appreciate vampires and vampire movies without really considering why? Is it really necessary to analyse every single aspect in meticulous detail? I mean, I'm a vampire fan too, but I'm not sure I could tell you exactly why. I just like them. Another strange thing, perhaps less important though, is the absence of discussions about films like *Underworld*, *Van Helsing*, and the *Blade* trilogy. On the back of the book these movies are mentioned, giving the impression that they will be discussed in the book, but as it turns out, only *Blade* is mentioned, and only in a sentence or two. Not that this feels like false marketing, well, in a sense I guess it does but it doesn't really matter that much, but it's still weird. So now, then, is *The Lure of the Vampire* a good buy? Yes, as long as you belong to the right group of people who are able to fully appreciate her analysis. But no, not if your interest in vampires is more emotional than it's scholarly. Make sure to figure out what group you belong to before you buy it.

The Lure of the Vampire: Gender, Fiction and Fandom from Bram Stoker to Buffy the Vampire Slayer explores the curiosity and fascination surrounding the enduring myth of Dracula and vampires. Over one hundred years after Bram Stoker's influential novel was published, an interest in vampires is still prevalent in popular culture. This is suggested by the recent popularity of such television shows as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and its spin-off, *Angel*. Milly Williamson examines this phenomena and looks at the issues of gender pertaining to both vampires and their followers, the modern portrayal of vampires, the nature of identity and identification, and the fans themselves.

Successfully straddles the divide between high and low culture...This eclectic approach makes her study all the more comprehensive and fascinating. (Sarah Artt *Scope Magazine*) Insightful and interesting. (Kelly O'Connor-Salomon *The Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*)
About the Author Milly Williamson is Senior Lecturer in Mass Communications and Cultural Studies at the University of North London. She has written a number of articles on vampires and vampiricism.