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Between Reason and Faith: Breaking the Status Quo in Bram Stoker's Dracula

Cover Page Footnote

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**Between Reason and Faith:
Breaking the Status Quo in Bram Stoker's *Dracula***

Erin Newcomb

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Perhaps because the theological elements of Stoker's tale can simultaneously be viewed as epistemological issues, the text's religious symbolism is largely ignored by critics; I contend that *Dracula's* religiosity is neither arbitrary nor simply a plot device to forward different social messages. Indeed, the religious images are critical fodder for analysis precisely because they signify characters' shifting ideologies about knowledge and the know-ability of the world. The "Englishness" re-established at the text's conclusion is not the same "Englishness" from the beginning of *Dracula*; the reversion to the ordinary is possible only because of the crusaders' acceptance of and extraordinary action against the evil spiritual forces that seek to destroy everyday life. The collective knowledge, memory, and activity of the select group that vanquishes Dracula allow the population at large to remain ignorant about the real conditions of the spiritual world. As Harker states in his final "Note," "[w]e were struck with the fact, that in all the mass of material of which the record is composed, there is hardly one authentic document." Based on this lack of textual support, Harker admits, "[w]e could hardly ask any one, even did we wish to, to accept these as proofs of so wild a story." Yet it is Van Helsing, that master of superstitious lore, who gains the final word: "[w]e want no proofs; we ask none to believe us!" (Stoker 380). Dismissing textual evidence in lieu of the embodied evidence of the Harkers' son, Van Helsing adeptly summarizes the epistemological dilemma of *Dracula*—that there are ways of knowing essential to the preservation of an orderly world, even if those epistemologies cannot be contained within a text, but are incorporated in sacramental imagery and embodied by the crusaders' offspring. Only turning to the religious elements exemplifies the extent to which Stoker's text relies on readers' acceptance (if only within the narrative world he creates) of supernatural epistemologies as valid meaning-making strategies. And only those supernatural epistemologies ultimately explain why the anxiety persists even when the status quo seems to be reestablished.

Anxiety is the one thread that seems to run through critics' analyses of Bram Stoker's 1897 *Dracula*. This trend is unsurprising given the text's late-Victorian context, and other readers have thoroughly and eloquently examined the many manifestations of that anxiety. Several critics (Craft, Prescott and Giorgio, Kuzmanovic, Petersen) grapple with Stoker's treatment of gender and sexuality, particularly with regard to the "New Woman" construct and its attendant upheaval of sex roles. Other readers, like Malchow, illustrate Dracula's expressions of xenophobia and anti-Semitism; others still, such as Stevenson, combine the two anxieties to discuss the work "in terms of interracial sexual competition" (139, original emphasis). While each of these articles offers a unique stance on Stoker's text, all of these critics, along with Armstrong (who argues that Dracula affirms the modern family in the face of its cultural challengers) reach a similar conclusion to Rowena Mohr, who writes: "whatever is at stake in Stoker's novel—Englishness, class stability, gender and sexual identifications—it is a text that anxiously defends the social, political, and sexual ideals of conservative, middle-class,

masculinist ideology” (80). Although Mohr aptly summarizes the majority of responses to *Dracula*, (that the conclusion reaffirms the social system) religious elements of the text remain largely ignored by critics, yet religion is precisely where the status quo breaks down in the text. In terms of religion, there is no return to “Englishness” in *Dracula*; there is, instead, an infusion of the sacramental and the supernatural that elevates superstition over the reasoned and ordinary religious focus most of Stoker’s characters initially hold. By validating the mysterious theological elements in his story, Stoker challenges the completeness of logical epistemologies and cautions readers that, however static the status quo may be, all knowledge is limited and all stories must, ultimately, be taken on faith. The necessity of faith pinpoints the underlying anxiety that the world in its entirety is fundamentally unsafe, uncertain, and unknowable.

Missing Religion in *Dracula*

In response to *Dracula*, two authors who do deal with religion come away with radically different readings. Herbert’s “Vampire Religion” sees *Dracula* as struggling to maintain the integrity of religion against primitive superstition, yet he ultimately concludes that “for all its putative devotion to the cause of true religion, the two supposedly antithetical categories of religion and superstition reveal an uncontrollable tendency to collapse into one another” (104). Herbert calls it an apologetic Christian text where “[t]he crux of the theological argument of *Dracula* lies in this persistent suggestion that vampirism is not so much an alien invasion after all as it is a dark mutation of Christian forms” (111). There are, of course, numerous parallels between Christian practices and vampirism, not least of which are blood drinking and an emphasis on the afterlife. But where Christians drink (literally or symbolically, depending on the theological frame) the blood that Christ willingly sacrifices as atonement for sin, vampires forcibly take victims’ blood to satiate their own lust. Where Christ’s blood leads to a peaceful life after death, the vampire’s blood perpetuates an “undead” state of agony, a parody lacking the fullness of life or the tranquility of true death. Herbert ultimately sees these parallels as symptomatic of *Dracula*’s “confusion of magic and religion” where Stoker uses “sacred devices like the crucifixes and communion wafers” and asks “his reader to regard these things as precious adjuncts of Christian piety” (108). I would argue instead that Stoker relies on sacramental symbols within the definition of sacramentalism—as objects set apart to make tangible the spiritual truth of grace. That the body of Christ (in both crucifix and wafer form) stands against vampirism can recall the doctrine of substitutionary atonement, where the innocent Christ willingly takes the place of the would-be victims. What Herbert sees as a conflation of religion and superstition, which he evaluates negatively, should instead be interpreted as an epistemological commentary in which Stoker asks his characters and readers alike to suspend teleology and rationality to explain a world that resists total know-ability. As the concluding “Note” reminds us, textual proof is unavailable and would seem beyond belief, even if the original documents were carefully preserved.

On the other hand, Edward O’Brien calls Stoker’s text “a Christian allegory” (75) and asserts that “liberal, secular critics will not accept the reality of such virtues as charity and faith; they equate these qualities to superstition and prudery, the quaint ‘conventions’ of Victorian religion as expressed by the trappings or habitual responses of popular Christianity” (77). O’Brien discusses “Christian morality as if it were real and binding,” though what O’Brien dismisses as attempts to “relativize” universal morality, might more accurately be called contextualizing morality. While I concur with O’Brien that *Dracula* is a novel about grace (79), reading Stoker’s text within that theological framework requires the suspension of logic that

forms the novel's foundation. To call both grace and *Dracula* irrational, to my mind, is not an insult but an epistemological observation, that grace—divine, unmerited favor—is theologically compelling precisely because it counters humans' logical impulses. Rather than reading *Dracula* as an allegory, I propose it be read as a conversion narrative where protagonist Jonathan Harker's Christian worldview is shaken to its foundations. Yet Harker's transformation, while a significant religious experience, is also fundamentally epistemological. Though he begins the narrative with courteous pity towards the "superstitious" villagers he meets in the Carpathians, Harker himself is quickly schooled in the ways of the world where evil is not an intellectual concept but an active, tangible force in the universe. Harker begins and ends claiming to be a Christian (indeed, his faith seems bolstered by his vampiric quest), yet he cannot rightly claim to be the same kind of Christian, nor can he regard the world with the same intellectual detachment possible before his encounters with the Count. *Dracula* may be a text about many things, but at its core, it asks readers to wrestle with issues of knowing, through reason and faith comingled. Neither Stoker nor his protagonist reaches an easy conclusion, and readers likewise are left with a vision of an altered spiritual world that infringes upon the status-quo so desperately maintained in other areas of the text. Social order, manifested in a clear preservation of insiders and outsiders, and "pure Englishness" elide the menacing spiritual forces that any worldly semblance of safety is purely superficial.

Not Just Superstition

Early in Harker's journal, he writes, "I read that every known superstition in the world is gathered into the horseshoe of the Carpathians, as if it were the centre of some sort of imaginative whirlpool" (Stoker 2). Harker's statement derives its authority from text—something he has read and something he subsequently recorded in his travel diary—and he differentiates the "imaginative" qualities of superstition from the assumedly factual attributes of his own religion. The tone of Harker's writing begins objectively, with some measure of observational distance, yet his separation from the Carpathian villagers breaks down as he begins to interact with them. Upon being offered a crucifix from a pleading woman, Harker reflects, "I did not know what to do, for, as an English Churchman, I have been taught to regard such things as in some measure idolatrous, and yet it seemed so ungracious to refuse an old lady meaning so well and in such a state of mind" (5). Here Harker's initial response focuses on theology, but soon the emotional situation and its unuttered expectations of hospitality press him to disregard his church's teachings on idolatry in favor of pleasing a stranger. As his journey continues, Harker continues to accept gifts from his fellow travelers; he neither understands nor fully appreciates the tokens, but comments "they pressed [the gifts] upon me with an earnestness which would take no denial; these were certainly of an odd and varied kind, but each was given in simple good faith, with a kindly word, and a blessing, and that strange mixture of fear-meaning movements, which I had seen outside the hotel at Bistritz—the sign of the cross and the guard against the evil eye" (9). Even as he takes the strangers' offerings, he subtly distinguishes himself from the "others." Their faith is simple and good, strange and founded on fear, whereas, readers seem intended to infer that Harker's faith is good but in a loftier, more complex and mindful manner based on reason and thoughtfulness, faith instead of fear. Harker does not, of course, explicitly state these differences, but his tone suggests them, and it almost seems as if the Englishman does not just receive the gifts but provides an opportunity for others to be generous—thereby almost gifting the villagers himself. Harker accepts these gifts with the air of doing the givers a kindness and of politely partaking in some foreign ritual, though the boundaries of his well-ordered, intellectual

faith are slowly slipping away. After freely entering Count Dracula's home, Harker starts to surmise that the villagers' superstitions may be based in fear, but a fear that is, if not rational, still real. Thrown into a frenzied state even on his first night, Harker exclaims, "I am all in a sea of wonders, I doubt; I fear; I think strange things, which I dare not confess to my own soul" (19). Instead of the meticulous record-keeping at the onset of his journey, Harker's writing at this juncture sounds more like the ravings of a madman; he is not able to record, nor even to whisper to himself the strange tidings that pass through his mind; both his writing and his theology are turned topsy-turvy by the actualization (or the assumption of their reality) of the creatures and forces Harker once relegated to the realm of superstition.

An encounter with the Count himself further prompts Harker to question everything he sees and believes:

What mean the giving of the crucifix, of the garlic, of the wild rose, of the mountain ash? Bless that good, good woman who hung the crucifix round my neck! For it is a comfort and a strength to me whenever I touch it. It is odd that a thing which I have been taught to regard with disfavor and as idolatrous should in a time of loneliness and trouble be of help. Is it that there is something in the essence of the thing itself, or that it is a medium, a tangible help, in conveying memories of sympathy and comfort? (29)

Acknowledging the limits of his Anglican theology (where the meaning of the communion elements is not universal), Harker contemplates the significance of the objects' power. Harker's thoughts waver close to typical interdenominational theological doctrines about the communion elements—whether they are purely symbolic, transformed into the physical blood and flesh, or some combination. The Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, established at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, says, "while the substances of bread and wine become the substance of Christ, the accidents remain unchanged" (Kilgour 81). Maggie Kilgour explains this phenomenon as "uphold[ing] the reality of the rite without offending sense perception, at the cost, however, of formally codifying a separation between the inner and outer terms of the sacrament" (81). This duality within the doctrine unifies theological interpretations (Kilgour 80), but divides the physical and spiritual worlds, as well as the body of believers from unbelievers; the inside and outside, the substance and the surface, are fundamentally at odds with one another. Harker seems to sense that same tension with regard to the crucifix, whose exterior repulses him as idolatrous even while he discerns some intangible emotional and spiritual response to the object. Yet at the end of this passage, Harker shies away from imbuing the crucifix with the same kind of sacramental potency as the Catholic Eucharist, opting for "memories of sympathy and comfort" but not supernatural strength. While not a complete theological or epistemological transition, already Harker's experience validates the "superstition" as powerful beyond simple hospitality; he resists the sacramental interpretation of the crucifix, but acknowledges that logic, even accompanied by his reasonable version of Anglicanism, is not enough to explain his circumstances, and he is afraid. The barrier between the superstitious and the religious, the physical and the spiritual, the mundane and the mysterious breaks down along with Harker's orderly worldview.

Whereas Harker hesitates to invest natural objects with any kind of supernatural power, attaching them instead to pleasing recollections of human kindness, Dr. Seward's patient Renfield acts out a perversion of sacramental imagery in an attempt to deify himself. Renfield is the primary player in a Eucharistic parody, but he does not seem to recognize the warped characteristics (or the impotency) of what Dr. Seward terms "life eating mania" (Stoker 73). When Dr. Seward cuts his wrist, Renfield falls to the floor, "lying on his belly...licking it up,

like a dog... simply repeating over and over again: 'The blood is the life! The blood is the life!'" (142). Notably, Dr. Seward's injury mirrors the location of Christ's stigmata, which is indeed the lifeblood of Christian theology, as well as Christ's language; yet this scene presents a reversal of the Christian Passion. Dr. Seward's injury is not a purposeful sacrifice (as Christ's was), but an accident, and the injury offers insight into Renfield's insanity, not atonement for his transgressions. Indeed, where the blood of Christ memorializes a feast and unites consumers both with their deity and within a community, Renfield's meal illustrates the bloodlust of a lone maniac. Reflecting on Renfield's attempts to consume as many lives and as much blood as possible, Dr. Seward writes, "[h]e is a selfish old beggar anyhow. He thinks of the loaves and fishes even when he believes he is in a Real Presence" (104). Alluding to the Biblical miracle in which Christ feeds thousands of people with only a few baskets of bread and fish, Dr. Seward points to the irony of caring only about filling one's stomach when the Son of God stands in one's midst. Again, the theology of transubstantiation and incarnation enter in; the Catholic Eucharist begins as earthly elements and becomes supernatural, just as Christ embodies both divinity and humanity. Renfield, in his grotesque approximation of the sacrament of communion, cannot see past the purely physical elements and misses the transcendent elevation to the spiritual realm. Whereas Harker's worldview is limited to his mind and its logic, Renfield's is limited to his body and its appetites—and both initially miss the spiritual and transcendent significance of the story they find themselves in.

In his diary, Dr. Seward records: "[h]ow these madmen give themselves away! The real God taketh heed lest a sparrow fall but the God created from human vanity sees no difference between an eagle and a sparrow. Oh, if men only knew!" (103). Again, this statement indicates Renfield's many perversions of Christian theology. The Christian God looks to care for even the smallest creatures, but Renfield merely uses the smallest creatures to accumulate more lives so as "to absorb as many lives as he can" (73). In addition, Christ takes on flesh and blood as a regenerative act, to restore lives so that no more sacrifices (and thus no more bloodshed) are necessary. Further, the Crucifixion remains theologically incomplete without the perspective of the Resurrection; Christ offers blood that conquers death, but Renfield, in his and his diabolical master's infinite degenerateness, can only destroy, only kill, only provide a parasitic, peace-less death. As Kilgour explains, "[v]ampirism is the gothic definition of symbiosis and communion," but "the reciprocity of exchange is thus shown to be an illusion, for [Dracula] is an alien who possesses those who have let him into their bodies" (173). We see here how Renfield highlights the double meaning of the term "host." Vampiric lore requires the victim to invite the vampire in, thus the victim serves as the host that houses and permits the parasitical relationship where only the vampire gains. On the contrary, the Eucharistic host is the body of Christ, where Christ invites, serves, and sacrifices—to the benefit of the guest who is not defined as a parasite or alien but as a heir or subject. The vampiric communion is no communion at all; it fixates on gluttony of blood as opposed to a sacrificial offering and reduces life to the most basic physical component: blood. As O'Brien summarizes, *Dracula* "is a book of flesh and blood, and of the grace of God" (79). Though in different ways and for different reasons, both Harker and Renfield focus on the physical—the superficial or the carnal—to the exclusion of the grace that can transform and transcend the profane. According to Eucharistic scholar, Enrico Mazza, what sets apart slaughter from sacrifice and common meals from sacred ones is "liturgical action" (13). Mazza states that the ritualized prayers and blessings performed by Jesus in the upper room and imitated in subsequent communion rites by Christ's disciples "establish a clear connection of identity between the bread and the Body of Christ: The bread which Jesus gives his disciples to

eat is his Body” (20, 27). The formal elements of liturgy, signified in this case by supplication and thanksgiving, distinguish Christ’s body and blood from all others, just as grace sets sacrificial blood apart from bloodlust.

To understand the distinction between the physical bread and the transubstantiated Host (since the accidents themselves retain their earthly appearances), requires an epistemological act, a proverbial leap of faith that Harker ultimately accepts and Renfield never comprehends. Van Helsing guides Harker and highlights the epistemological difference between reason and faith when he asserts “[y]ou do not let your eyes see nor your ears hear, and that which is outside your daily life is not of account to you. Do you not think that there are things which you cannot understand, and yet which are; that some people see things that others cannot?” (Stoker 191). Mimicking the language of Christ in the initial part of this speech, Van Helsing goes on to define faith and the role of the supernatural. Indeed, Van Helsing questions Harker’s entire worldview—a perspective based on the mundane practices inspired by an intellectualized theology; given Harker’s experience with Count Dracula preceding this moment in the text, it is not surprising that Harker trusts Van Helsing as one who can see what others cannot. The entire expedition to restore Lucy and Mina, and to vanquish Count Dracula, relies on the supernatural knowledge of Van Helsing. Practices that could easily be dismissed as charlatanism (and are disregarded by some of the novel’s minor characters, always to the detriment of the anti-Dracula mission), are all that sustain and deliver the English characters from the evil influences that infiltrate their once-ordinary daily lives. Van Helsing even defines faith, via an American, as “that faculty which enables us to believe things which we know to be untrue” (Stoker 192). Untrue, perhaps, but nonetheless impactful within the paradigm of *Dracula*. The workings of the sacramental elements (the crucifixes, the garlic, the Host) are inexplicable and illogical, but all of the crusaders acknowledge Van Helsing’s authority and trust his methods. The Dutchman stakes not only his own life but also the lives (temporal and eternal) of Lucy and Mina on what is untrue—and the quest succeeds. It seems that both the text generally, and this scene particularly, work to undermine the illusions of stability of the characters and the readers alike. Suspending a logical worldview is a critical component of the crusade against Dracula, and the anxiety barely kept at bay by a veneer of respectability (which even the Count presents to the world) is conquered only by superior spiritual forces.

The Lifeblood of *Dracula*

That Victorian gothic anxiety surfaces in the realization of a vibrant, potent, and malicious supernatural world lurking in the margins of everyday existence. To combat that evil influence requires an equally dynamic and powerful, though benevolent, force—thus leading to the characters’ and the texts’ overall affirmation of the Christian God. That affirmation is not without anxiety; perhaps Renfield represents a grotesque, perverted Eucharist to normalize a rite that might seem strange to Stoker’s readers. Scholars document the persistent accusations against Christians, and Catholics in particular, as cannibals—a claim fueled by misperceptions about Eucharistic theology. Priscilla Walton contends “*Dracula* is one of the last cannibalistic texts of its type, illustratively drawing to a close the nineteenth century’s fascination with and fear of anthropophagy in its many forms” (27). While the nineteenth century may have paid unique attention to charges of cannibalism, Kilgour, Mark Morton, Shirley Lindenbaum, Merrall Llewelyn Price, and Andrew McGowan all discuss the relationship between cannibals and Christians through the centuries. McGowan asserts that these accusations of cannibalism are less about literally eating people and more about “concern for purity and maintenance of order and

boundaries” (427). Fundamentally, labeling a group as cannibal is an act of social exclusion, of boundary formation, that may have little if anything to do with eating practices. In Stoker’s text, both Harker’s crusaders and Renfield operate outside of mainstream society (which remains blissfully unaware of the spiritual and physical evils lurking on its perimeters). Renfield’s immoderate appetite, his carnality, and his monomania invoke the reader’s disgust, while Harker’s hesitation to trust the sacraments invites the reader to judge Renfield the cannibal and Harker—the uncertain initiate asked, just as the readers are, to trust Van Helsing’s strange, supernatural advice. Given the alternatives of cannibal and Christian, where Renfield’s ignorance of grace highlights Harker’s submission to spiritual virtues, Stoker asks readers to consent to the real presence of evil as well as the Real Presence.

In no sense is that presence more clear and critical than in the characters’ employment of the Eucharist, which establishes a boundary between the crusaders operating for society’s protection just as Dracula’s vampiric cannibalism sets him against the social body. More serious even than accepting an “idolatrous” crucifix is Harker’s acceptance of the Host provided by Van Helsing. Though the Dutchman assures his audience “I have an indulgence” for using the Host, Harker reflects “[i]t was an answer that appalled the most skeptical of us, and we felt individually that in the presence of such earnest purpose as the Professor’s, a purpose which could thus use the to him most sacred of things, it was impossible to distrust” (Stoker 210). While Harker carefully differentiates that the “most sacred of things” refers to Van Helsing’s point of view, he also indicates that his faith in Van Helsing triumphs over any skepticism. To trust Van Helsing in this instance may mean to acknowledge that the Real Presence abides in the Eucharist, not as a symbol as in some forms of Anglicanism (where practices and theology are not wholly unified on this tenet), but as a tangible divinity to counter the evil that is not theoretically but physically present in the world. That presence literally marks Mina, setting before the crusaders another physical representation of the spiritual danger drawing ever nearer. Van Helsing places the Host on Mina’s forehead, where “it had seared it—had burned into the flesh as though it had been a piece of white-hot metal,” prompting Mina to exclaim, “Unclean! Unclean! Even the Almighty shuns my polluted flesh! I must bear this mark of shame upon my forehead until the Judgment Day” (297). The same bread that bears the body of Christ and repels the Count and his agents alienates Mina from her friends, strangers who shun her, and God Himself. Yet critical even to Mina’s understanding of her scarring is that while God rejects her “polluted flesh,” her soul remains in ambiguity, its final fate deferred until the Judgment Day. Mina’s flesh wound manifests the tension between the physical and the spiritual that permeates the text and culminates in the group’s employment of the Host. The wafer itself is first bread and then divine body; its physical presence serves as the cohort’s most potent spiritual weapon; it marks Mina’s body, but perhaps not her soul. Like the wordplay with “host,” Stoker’s sacramental imagery illustrates the instability of boundaries between physical and spiritual, outward appearance and inner reality, saved and condemned, reason and faith. The anxiety that permeates interpretations of *Dracula* hangs on this anxiety—that in Victorian England, categories of difference are inherently unstable, and all is not as it seems. Reason alone remains insufficient to render comprehensible the fluidity of boundaries in *Dracula*; the individual, social, and spiritual bodies are not autonomous or safe but are subject to hosts, divine and parasitical. Meaning-making within this narrative paradigm requires the suspension of boundaries between the physical and spiritual worlds in order to more firmly establish the borders between good and evil. Thus in the text, the Eucharistic Host expels the vampire by summoning Christ as medium.

Endings, Afterlives, and In Betweens

Van Helsing's extensive use of the wafer but never the wine pits the body of Christ against the blood of Count Dracula. References to "baptism of blood" (Stoker 323, 345, 367), the inclusion of the character Renfield as Dracula's disciple, and the "un-dead" fate of Dracula's victims all indicate vampirism as an unholy perversion of Christian theology. Where Christ, innocent human and incarnate deity, offers his body and blood as atonement for sinners, Dracula fuels his diabolical aims with the bodies and lifeblood of his victims. Where Christian baptism purifies and cleanses, Dracula's baptism stains and pollutes. Where Christ's followers enjoy an afterlife of peace, Dracula's victims endure a ceaseless cannibal feast while trapped in a state that mocks true death. Dracula and his fellow vampires can kill and torment, but unlike the God whom they scorn, they cannot create, cannot redeem, and can only live a half-life in the darkness. The horror of the vampire's position becomes clear to Mina while she serves as the intermediary and representation of all that hangs in the balance between good and evil, God and vampire, as she reflects: "[j]ust think what will be his joy when he, too, is destroyed in his worser part that his better part may have spiritual immortality" (310). Even for Dracula, Mina holds onto the hope of salvation, that with the relinquishment of the flesh, his spirit might rest in peace. In light of their religious beliefs, even Mina's polluted flesh comes to be interpreted as a trial that will lead them closer to God and to the destruction of evil. Van Helsing, that persistent spiritual advisor of the group, comforts Mina that "so surely as we live, that scar shall pass away when God sees right to lift the burden that is hard upon us. Till then we bear our Cross, as His Son did in obedience to His Will" (298). Further, Van Helsing exhorts his troops—"as the old knights of the Cross" as crusaders, "ministers of God's own wish: that the world, and men for whom His Son die, will not be given over to monsters, whose very existence would defame Him" (321). These trials, then, are an opportunity to glorify God, without whom vanquishing Dracula would be impossible.

In spite of her affinity with Dracula, manifested by the scar as well as the gruesome "nursing" scene where Dracula force-feeds Mina at his breast (283), Mina separates her own and Dracula's physical fate from their spiritual destiny. Though their bodies suffer, their souls maintain hope. Thus Stoker demonstrates the tension between profane and sacred worlds and epistemologies. The incarnate Christ, sacramentalized in the transubstantiated Eucharistic Host, defies the boundaries between human and divine in order to sever the ties of blood between Mina and Dracula; the Host as medium intercedes to reestablish the limits of the physical world against the unfettered spiritual world. Stoker's story, so focused on the divide between sacred and profane, spiritual and physical, ultimately returns to issues of epistemology. Setting up superstition and faith as separate, and yet both reliable, epistemologies (particularly with the absence of textual evidence in the conclusion) provides final support for the claim that *Dracula*, intent on restoring order in so many arenas of English life, simultaneously ushers in spiritual disquiet. No quantity of records could persuade an audience of this far-fetched tale's veracity, even if meticulous texts were provided; the texts' absence underscores the mystery that lingers on the edges of even the most "civilized" societies. Between the anxieties that surface with *Dracula* and other critics' claims that order is restored (in order to reduce or eliminate anxiety), my argument stands in between by showing how religion in the text mediates between the rampant evils of vampirism and the orderly, unspiritual world that wants to deny the existence of the supernatural.

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