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## A Very Victorian Feast: Food and the Importance of Consumption in Modern Adaptations of Dracula

### Cover Page Footnote

S. Brooke Cameron currently holds a Limited-Term Appointment as Assistant Professor of English at Queen's University at Kingston in Ontario, Canada. She is at work on a book project entitled *Feminine Bonds: Economics and Feminism in English Writing, 1880- 1938*. Suyin Olguin is currently completing a Master's Degree in English at the University of Montreal. Her thesis focuses on representations of masculinity and the gentleman in Jane Austen's fiction.

**A Very Victorian Feast: Food and  
the Importance of Consumption  
in Modern Adaptations of *Dracula***

*S. Brooke Cameron*  
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From its first appearance in publication, *Dracula* (1897) has been read as a text heavily invested in the economy of fear and libidinal appetites. The *Athenaeum*, for example, interprets Stoker's novel as a nightmare vision of desire that "promises to unfold the roots of mystery and fear lying deep in human nature" (Anon 481). This is indeed how most twentieth-century critics continue to interpret the novel; in *Sexual Anarchy*, Victorianist Elaine Showalter reads the vampire as allegorizing Victorian men's fear surrounding unruly New Women, including Lucy as representative of the "New Woman's sexual daring" and Mina as a symbol of "the New Woman's intellectual ambitions" (180). Her argument is influenced by Christopher Craft's "Kiss Me With Those Red Lips," in which he claims that the Crew of Light fights to reestablish masculine supremacy, even through violent means if necessary. By staking Lucy, Craft

explains, the Crew “effectively exorcises the threat of a mobile and hungering feminine sexuality, and it counters the homoeroticism latent in the vampire threat by reinscribing (upon Lucy’s chest) the line dividing the male who penetrates and the woman who receives” (122). The men thus reclaim their authority over women’s bodies by punishing the New Woman for her voracious sexual appetite.

Food stands as an important and yet underexplored aspect of this libidinal appetite. And food is something that *Dracula* is obsessed with. Following each scene wherein the ‘nation’s blood’ is purified, the men must replenish their strength through a hearty meal.<sup>1</sup> Food’s role in policing national bodies is something that modern film adaptations by Mel Brooks (*Dracula: Dead and Loving It* [1995]) and Francis Ford Coppola (*Bram Stoker’s Dracula* [1992]) exploit, either in service of humor or titillation. Indeed, what is remarkable about each adaptation is its central awareness of the gendered aspect of consumption; so-called ‘normal’ or appropriately gendered appetites can be gauged both in terms of what and how one eats. Both film adaptations thus read Dracula’s invasion as a dual appropriation and corruption of consuming bodies: Dracula attempts to redirect both what the English eat and to what end.

This article reads Brooks’s and Coppola’s film adaptations as representative of our continued investment in nineteenth-century appetites and, specifically, disciplined consumption and food rituals. Both films explore what, for modern viewers, have

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<sup>1</sup>See also Dennis Foster’s essay “The little children can be bitten.” As Foster explains, “Eating is on everyone’s mind, but of course eating is the central activity of the book” (487). We want to extend Foster’s argument to consider the issue of neo-Victorian consumption and adaptation.

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become commonplace meals and acceptable eating practices but which were, for the Victorians, still very new. After all, eating rituals changed dramatically in the nineteenth century following the rise of industrialism and a new class-based capitalist economy. Suddenly the middle-class angel of the hearth found herself responsible for her professional husband's rather rushed breakfast and, later, hearty dinner following a hard day's work at the office. Moreover, both films raise immediate questions about the very nature of adaptation as a kind of intellectual digestion, ingesting and reproducing—be it a critical deconstruction or not. On the one hand, Brooks uses parody as a way to encourage a critical distance between the modern and Victorian text. This distance then helps us to see and, also, laugh at our very Victorian attitudes toward food. Coppola's film, on the other hand, draws heavily on the original text's gothic elements, thereby reproducing an overwhelming tale of unrestrained desire and, in terms of food, a near excessive appetite. By placing equal emphasis on genre as well as content, this article thereby argues that the modern film adaptation participates in and continues to disseminate very Victorian appetites and attitudes toward consumption.

### **1. Brooks and Parodic Consumption**

Alexia L. Bowler and Jennifer Cox define neo-Victorian adaptation as a conversation between the original and its antecedent. But “[w]hat does seem relatively new in our adaptive practices,” they add, “is the active theorising and engagement with the process, its usefulness as a means of interrogating and critiquing our own society and facilitating a new understanding of our relationship with and perception of a cultural past in such close proximity with our own” (2). Adaptation not only

revisits but also ‘interrogates’ the original text’s continued relevance to modern texts and contexts. Linda Hutcheon explains this “*process of adaptation*” as “taking possession of another’s story, and filtering it, in a sense, through one’s own sensibility, interests, and talents” (18, emphasis ours). The “process” of adaptation thereby holds in tension these two distinctive works: the original and the reproduction or interpretation.<sup>2</sup>

We are interested not only in the process of adaptation but also how such interpretations are received, or how the reader participates in this interpretive conversation. The two films we focus on, Brooks’s *Dead and Loving It* and Coppola’s *Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, rely very heavily on the viewer’s knowledge of Stoker’s original for their full meaning (indeed, Coppola even writes this associative process into his film’s title). This is what Hutcheon calls “The Audience’s ‘Palimpsestous’ Intertextuality: “For audiences, such adaptations are obviously ‘multianimated’; they are directly and openly connected to other recognizable works, and that connection is part of their formal identity, but also what we might call their hermeneutic identity” (21). The key, then, is not to demand fidelity to the original but rather to recognize and even focus on that divergence from the original, that ‘interpretive process.’<sup>3</sup> In both Brooks’s and Coppola’s adaptations, consumption emerges as *the* common link (or ‘intertextual’ conversation) between texts.

In Mel Brooks’s rather liberal adaptation of the Dracula story, food is a test of one’s ‘normal’ health,

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<sup>2</sup>As Hutcheon elaborates, “adaptation is an act of appropriating or salvaging, and this is always in a double process of interpreting and then creating something new” (20).

<sup>3</sup> Hutcheon also explains how “part of both the pleasure and the frustration of experiencing an adaptation is the familiarity bred through repetition and memory” (21).

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both mental and physical. We have, for example, the scene in which Renfield is taken by Martin, one of the guards, to see Doctor Seward, an invitation which Renfield enthusiastically accepts as an opportunity to show the doctor “that I am not insane” (Brooks 1995, 26:16). But before Renfield can join the doctor, Martin must first inform the latter that McMainis is “having a conniption fit” (26:48). The doctor then tells the guard to “give him an enema” (26:51), and when Martin replies with a puzzled look, Seward continues, “Yes, it will give him a feeling of accomplishment” (26:57). More than just lowbrow bathroom humor, the enema is part of Seward’s ‘bodily medicine’ in which one treats mental health by focusing on eating and the digestive process. Renfield must perform properly during the breakfast ritual, a test which he of course fails but to comical effect. Viewers know that this scene is not in the original novel. However, viewers will recall that, in the original, Renfield’s insanity is firmly established by his irregular eating habits, or what Seward himself labels “zoophagous”: “My homicidal maniac is of a peculiar kind. I shall have to invent a new classification for him, and call him a zoophagous (life-eating) maniac” (Stoker 103). To get Brooks’s joke, then, one must know that the original, like Brooks’s parodic reinterpretation, is very invested in food.

With this implied joke about Renfield’s consumption, Mel Brooks’s film stands as an excellent example of the neo-Victorian possibilities inherent in parody, a form of adaptation that uses humor to dialogue with the original. Dustin Griffin explains this in terms of parody’s potential to satirize: “When satire takes over another literary structure, it tends not just to borrow it, as when a cuckoo finds another bird’s nest for its egg, but

to subvert it or ... to alter its 'potential'" (Griffin 3).<sup>4</sup> But parody can also diminish or devalue the serious, "deploy[ing] 'levelling strategies,' reducing high to low, spirit to body" (Griffin 33). Parody thus depends upon continuity as well as distance between the original and the adaptation. Distance is achieved through critical insight, poking fun at or 'lowering' the original text's 'high' subject matter. The subsequent humor arises from this distance: the parody recasts that original in a wholly new and absurd light. Despite this distance, parody is still fundamentally tied to the original. In Brooks's case, the readers must know the original novel's emphasis on food in order to get the joke about enemas.<sup>5</sup>

Brooks's joke about Renfield and breakfast reminds us of just how often food comes up in Stoker's original novel. A quick keyword search of Stoker's novel shows us that 'breakfast' comes up twenty-eight times.<sup>6</sup> One cannot forget, too, that Dracula himself is marked as deviant by his habits of consumption. In his May 8<sup>th</sup> journal entry, for example, Jonathan compares his and Dracula's eating habits: "When I went into the dining-room, breakfast was prepared; but I could not find the

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<sup>4</sup>See also *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, which defines "parody" as "a mocking imitation of the style of a literary work or works ridiculing the stylistic habits of an author or school by exaggerated mimicry" (Baldick 185). Parody can thus quickly turn into subversion.

<sup>5</sup> And this almost 'parasitic' aspect of parody as a form is all the more appropriate when we remember that Dracula himself feeds upon English bodies as 'hosts,' which he then subverts to new ends or meanings.

<sup>6</sup> See also Foster: "Once the action returns to England, meals are less prominent in the characters' accounts of their own activities (although nothing is ever done without breakfast, a meal that is mentioned twenty-eight times in the book)" (486-87).

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Count anywhere. So I breakfasted alone. It is strange that as yet I have not seen the Count eat or drink. He must be a very peculiar man!" (Stoker 50). Like Jonathan, we know that there is indeed something "peculiar" about Dracula – his reputation precedes him. As demonstrated following Lucy's transformation, the vampire's appetite is excessive both in that it is insatiable as well as morbid; she would rather eat the population's increase than contribute to it as a good Victorian mother should. Of course, Lucy's extreme appetite was what made her vulnerable to Dracula's transformation in the first place (as is the case with Mina's turn, later in the novel).<sup>7</sup> As Mina writes of the women's "'severe tea' at Robin Hood's Bay": "I believe we should have shocked the 'New Woman' with our appetites" (123).

Brooks's parodic humor focuses on consumption in an attempt to show us, as well as defamiliarize, our ties to Victorian food rituals and culture. As recent scholars Andrea Broomfield (*Food and Cooking in Victorian England* [2007]) and Annette Cozzi (*The Discourses of Food in the Nineteenth Century* [2010]) argue, the Victorian era saw major transformations in eating habits, including the emergence of breakfast and dinner as essential meals. Broomfield explains this shift as the result of industrialization and a subsequent urban migration. With this new urban economy came new food rituals and, in particular, a subsequent movement away from the old model of a mid-day dinner and then late supper, staples of the agricultural world where one worked close to home. By the Victorian era, capitalism and industrial production demanded a new relationship to both work and home; suddenly the vast majority of

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<sup>7</sup>Both Craft and Jennifer Wicke have made convincing arguments regarding Lucy's excessive sexual desire.

men (and working-class women) were forced to commute between the home and work, be it an office or factory. As such, large home-cooked mid-day dinners were supplanted by hearty breakfasts meant to tide one through a long day's work in the office. The breakfast ritual thus became an important symbol of a new class system.<sup>8</sup>

Broomfield's history of food also helps us to see how new middle-class attitudes towards food and consumption are accompanied by a gendered division of labor. She looks to the emergent Victorian conduct manuals, such as Alexis Soyer's *The Modern Housewife or, Ménagère* (1849), which "Championed the middle-class value system and affirmed the importance of the mistress maintaining a smooth-running, tasteful household" (Broomfield 27).<sup>9</sup> As mistress of the house, the wife must oversee the all-important "morning ritual" and ensure that her husband is fed a decent nourishing breakfast before he is sent out into the public world of work and money. As part of this job, the middle-class wife must also oversee the Maid-of-all-Work or General Servant (critical to middle-class standing) who performs the hardest work in preparing the home and morning meals. However, as Broomfield points out, the mistress herself is also expected to pitch in and work; she must "remain upstairs to tend to her children and her

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<sup>8</sup>As Broomfield elaborates, "Working-class people had little choice but to see breakfast as a purely perfunctory affair, but the middle classes began to weigh the meal and its foods with meanings that took it far from both its pragmatic and its casual roots" (25).

<sup>9</sup>See also Broomfield: "Part of Soyer's purpose in *The Modern Housewife* was to help the 'new' middle-class wife feel more confident and secure with her status by making visible to her seemingly invisible codes of conduct and protocols to which she was now expected to subscribe" (27).

husband's early morning demands (particularly for hot water)," "and then later help set up and administer the morning meal" (33). The stakes in all of this are very high: a failed breakfast is a mark against the mistress and the middle-class home itself.<sup>10</sup> There were, as a result, many Victorian women who could not handle the 'heat' of the breakfast ritual. On this point, Broomfield cites Francis Power Cobbe's discussion of the infamous "Bad Husband Headache," which prevents the mistress from performing her morning food rituals (Cobb, qtd in Broomfield, 39).<sup>11</sup>

For Victorians, then, food is viewed in terms of discipline or normative habits of consumption. This has everything to do with the class and gendered ideologies informing Victorian consumption. As Cozzi explains, one's classed and gendered identity is "defined by not only *what* one eats, but also *where*" (15, emphasis in original). By the end of the nineteenth-century, Cozzi adds, Victorian texts are haunted by the threat of various foreign "Monsters," a category which included the "New Woman, the disenfranchised Irishman, the colonized African," among many 'Others' (128). A running theme throughout all of these nightmares is excess or an undisciplined appetite. Consequently, "The terrifying and monstrous hunger of these foreign predators convinced the Victorian reader that national health

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<sup>10</sup>See, for example, Broomfield's discussion of the social importance of toast: "As a middle-class breakfast staple, hot toast tested the servant's ability to fulfill her obligations, and it tested the mistress's ability to manage her staff and household efficiently" (Broomfield 35).

<sup>11</sup>As Broomfield continues, "Cobbe's deliberate mention of breakfast as the catalyst of this 'peculiar sort of headache' would not have been lost on women readers who understood that no time of the day was more stressful than the early morning" (40).

demanded that these beasts be tamed and that the secret to British national identity depended on a balance of appetites and the moderation of consumption” (Cozzi 128). National health is synonymous with middle-class restraint, prudent in both tastes and habits. Middle-class consumers, in turn, act as the buffer between the English nation and that threat of the foreign Other, a threat which might manifest from without or within.<sup>12</sup>

Brooks’s adaptation understands that the successful Victorian breakfast ritual depends upon such middle-class moderation. At the heart of Renfield’s breakfast test is a joke that draws attention to proper eating habits—including what, where, and how one eats. When the doctor first greets Renfield he asks him how he feels, to which Renfield proudly proclaims, “Normal! Perfectly normal!” (Brooks 1995, 27:08). Yet, as the scene continues, Renfield’s eating habits confirm that he is anything but “normal.” His error is immediate: he eats a bug as opposed to a muffin. When Seward catches this, Renfield desperately tries to cover up his error: “it must have been a raisin. Yes, it fell off the muffin” (27:51). Still, Renfield cannot stop himself from eating inappropriate things, like bugs. The next object of his undisciplined appetite is a spider which dangles from its web. Again the doctor catches the act and continues to question Renfield—as much out of shock as a need for confirmation. Renfield continues to deteriorate. He spots a grasshopper on the ground and, in an effort to maintain the appearance of propriety, throws his fork down so that

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<sup>12</sup>Taking *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* as her case study, Cozzi explains how this threat of the Other—within or without—betrays itself by consuming the wrong (i.e. foreign) stuff in excess: “The fact that no one drinks proper British libations, ale or even gin, signals one of the problems with the stuffy, stifling nation revealed in the novel” (Cozzi 147).

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he might reach for the bug under the guise of retrieving his utensil. But any pretensions to ‘normalcy’ are shattered with the doctor’s proclamation, “My god man! You’re eating insects right from the ground!” (28:45). We have all the elements of deviancy: an uncontrollable appetite for the wrong things consumed in the wrong way and location. Renfield’s appetite is excessive: He himself admits he is “famished” (27:26), he cannot help himself from eating bugs, and by the scene’s end he has resorted to eating them straight from the ground—like an animal—as opposed to the more civilized table (28:45).

Renfield’s performance reaches its climax when he loses all control and begins chasing flies while shrieking (in a now clearly insane voice), “All I want is your life!” (29:23). Having given into his abnormal appetite, Renfield-turned-lunatic then falls across the doctor’s lap as if ready for a spanking, a slapstick representation of emasculated vulnerability. But in falling, Renfield also knocks over much of the table, as if to suggest that his breakdown threatens civil order as symbolized by the Victorian breakfast. Immediately recognizing the threat, Seward yells for Martin, telling the guard to take Renfield back to his cell and “Put him in a straight jacket and give him an enema. Wait! Give him an enema first, and THEN put him in a straight jacket!” (29:32). Renfield’s deviant body must be isolated and cleansed of those inappropriate foreign substances—like those bugs, which the doctor had the good sense to swat away.

In substituting enemas for the infamous blood transfusions, Brooks’s adaptation also reminds us of how, in the original, the former are so often accompanied by references to food, specifically breakfast. Take for example Doctor Seward’s diary in which he recounts Van Helsing’s advice telling him to eat a large breakfast so he might recover his strength after giving blood to Lucy: “You are not much the

worse. Go into the room, and lie on your sofa, and rest awhile; then have much breakfast and come here to me” (Stoker 164). A similar ritual is performed later when the men, after pouring “plenty of blood” into Lucy’s veins, must then consume a large meal to compensate for lost energy: as Seward writes, “I left Quincey lying down after having a glass of wine, and told the cook to get ready a good breakfast” (186). Food and, specifically, a “good breakfast” are thus aligned with the defense of both gendered and English borders—protecting women from the foreign threat. Class is also part of the equation, for we need only remember the importance of the wife’s role during breakfast; and Lucy, in falling victim to Dracula’s infiltration, is unable to oversee the preparation of the breakfast meal. Her fall places both her class and the larger nation in a vulnerable position, in need of rescue by the Crew of Light.<sup>13</sup>

This kind of intertextual conversation is, therefore, at the heart of Brooks’s modern parody. The viewer requires prior knowledge of Dracula’s rather unconventional eating habits in order to get the joke. And Renfield’s breakdown, screeching to the spider that he only “wants its life,” reminds us of the original novel’s repeated claim (uttered by Renfield himself) that “the blood is the life” (Stoker 178).<sup>14</sup> Scholars of neo-Victorian studies—including Hutcheon, Peter Widdowson, Louisa Yates, and Simon Joyce—refer to this aspect of adaptation as ‘re-vision.’ Hutcheon is quick to emphasize that this kind of intertextual conversation between the original and the re-revised texts

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<sup>13</sup>In Brooks’s film the high morality of ingestion is thus transformed into a low-brow bathroom joke about defecation, a move which fits with parody’s emphasis on critical insight through diminishment.

<sup>14</sup>Through parody, Brooks’s film thus enters into a critical dialogue with the original text.

is only possible when the receiver is familiar with the former.<sup>15</sup> With reference to Widdowson's work, Yates adds that the revised text can only work if one knows the original well enough to appreciate those moments of divergence, elaboration, and, therefore, the "revisions."<sup>16</sup> As a re-visionary text, Brooks's film must straddle both texts and contexts. But it must also generate a new work, with new insights or flourishes that are easily recognized because of the audience's knowledge of the original. The end product is a parodic adaptation which encourages us to see disciplined consumption in a new and unfamiliar light; we get just enough distance from those Victorian habits of consumption that are so ingrained in us that we cannot even spot this inheritance.

## 2. Coppola and the Gothic Appetite

The Victorian preoccupation with moderate consumption is also prevalent throughout Francis Ford Coppola's adaptation. In the scene where Jonathan has his first and only meal at the castle, there is a brief but detailed close shot of the table displaying a sumptuous feast. Dracula himself then offers a brief excuse for his own eating practices: "You will, I trust, excuse me, but I will not join you; but I have already dined, and I never drink [pause] wine" (Coppola 1992, 13:32). The

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<sup>15</sup>As Hutcheon has noted, "adaptation *as adaptation* is unavoidably a kind of intertextuality *if the receiver is acquainted with the adapted text*" (Hutcheon 21, emphasis in original).

<sup>16</sup>Widdowson also distinguishes between adaptation and re-vision by associating the latter with critique; the adaptation resists "*challenging* the original pre-texts in a way, as we shall see, re-visionary fiction crucially does" (Widdowson 500, emphasis in original).

insinuating look on Dracula's face when he tells Jonathan that he never drinks wine is quickly forgotten as Dracula goes on to defend his ancestry's pride. The scene continues, showing Jonathan eating the chicken and the salad, and drinking the wine, but this scene is not interested in such normal eating; rather, all eyes are on Dracula, the abnormal creature obsessed with former glory. Through such scenes, Coppola's adaptation thus picks up an important historical distinction between Dracula and Jonathan; the former aligns himself with the older pre-modern culture and practices, while Jonathan stands in as representative of the new middle-class appetite for three square (and uninteresting) meals a day.

At the same time, Coppola's adaptation reminds readers of Victorian fears around where and what one eats, an issue of particular importance given that Jonathan is not safe and sound at home in England and eating English food. Both novel and film thus pay particular attention to this relationship between eating and traveling. The novel's young Victorian traveler vigilantly works to maintain composure and never indulges in the excesses that he encounters along the way.<sup>17</sup> To make this point, Stoker's novel offers lengthy descriptions of Jonathan's meals and eating practices. Consider the following entry:

I dined on what they call "robber steak"—bits of bacon, onion, and beef, seasoned with red pepper, and strung on sticks and roasted over the fire, in the simple style of London cat's-meat! The wine was Golden Mediasch, which

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<sup>17</sup>In one instance, for example, he writes that "I had for dinner, or rather supper, a chicken done up some way with red pepper, which was very good but thirsty.[...] it was a national dish" (Stoker 31), and in another entry he describes a breakfast of "paprika," "porridge of maze flour" also known as "mamaliga," "egg-plant stuffed with forcemeat" (33).

produces a queer sting on the tongue, which is, however, not disagreeable. I had only a couple of glasses of this and nothing else. (Stoker 36)

This is a disciplined tourism whereby our young traveler records every single meal as if attempting to control his consumption through lists and the journalistic catalogue. The above excerpt not only brings attention to the meal, but also suggests the link between eating and nationhood; it simplifies the exoticism of the “robber steak” by comparing it to the “simple style of London cat’s-meat” (Stoker 36). The threat of foreign food is thus contained by reducing it—through an ethnocentric comparison—to a lower class type of meat such as “cat’s-meat,” which according to the text’s footnote was “horse flesh prepared by street dealers” (Stoker 36 n.1).<sup>18</sup>

In his adaptation, Coppola reproduces this very Victorian preference for middle-class moderation as safeguarding national identity. Recall Dracula’s instance that he doesn’t drink wine in light of the concluding line from Jonathan’s journal (per the above quotation): “I had only a couple of glasses [...] and nothing else” (Stoker 36). In Coppola’s film, therefore, Jonathan and Dracula briefly switch places vis-à-vis abstinence. Such revisions play upon the viewer’s continued expectations (inherited

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<sup>18</sup>One of the most peculiar things about Jonathan’s journal is that he provides a full description of his meals before he provides a summary of the events he has encountered. Right before his arrival to the Carpathians, for example, Jonathan is met with superstitions warnings regarding Dracula, which would make any young traveler feel anxious about his soon-to-be host. Yet Jonathan begins this entry with “There are many odd things to put down, and, lest who reads them may fancy that I dined too well before I left Bistritz, let me put down my dinner exactly” (Stoker 36). With such a comment, Jonathan assumes that the reader is more interested in his meal as opposed to the odd events that have occurred.

from the Victorians) of moderation and the fears inherent in excessive consumption.<sup>19</sup> And in Coppola's film, with the quick conversational leap from eating to national pride (and Transylvania's history), the costs of immoderation are framed very much in terms of empire or nationhood.<sup>20</sup>

Coppola's film also dramatizes the very Victorian rage for "eating out" and its effects upon national and gendered identities. Too busy to go home at midday, Victorian middle-class men began taking their lunch at coffee shops, gentleman's clubs, pubs, and "chop houses."<sup>21</sup> Women, however, were not allowed access to most lunch establishments, and only a couple of places provided certain spaces for women to dine when accompanied by men (Broomfield 53).<sup>22</sup> These two

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<sup>19</sup>Jonathan's attention to drinking also reflects his social status. As Broomfield explains, drunkenness was considered a distinctive feature of "unruliness" attributed to the working-class (64). "Temperance societies" and Evangelicals recommended limiting the amount of alcohol consumption at home and in "public houses" (Broomfield 64).

<sup>20</sup>In the original novel, upon arriving at Dracula's castle, Jonathan's first order of business is food: "I rejoiced to see within a well-lit room in which a table was spread for supper" (Stoker 47). Implicit in this comment is the fear that his Englishness is threatened within this foreign setting, and so it is of extreme importance that he finds stability in nourishment.

<sup>21</sup>See also Broomfield's history: "The seventeenth-century coffee house sold coffee, tea, drinking chocolate, and alcoholic beverages, along with sandwiches and other small, convenience foods. A distinctly male institution, the coffee house laid the foundation for the Victorian era's most popular dining-out options for gentlemen, the club and the chophouse or tavern" (44-5).

<sup>22</sup>By the end of the century, clubs began to offer memberships and services specifically designed for female customers (Broomfield 86).

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changes are recorded in both Stoker's original and Coppola's adaptation.<sup>23</sup> In the original, Jonathan's busy work schedule forces him to eat lunch away from home, and gives Mina the space to go about her day without worrying about her domestic duties.<sup>24</sup> Another record of "midday luncheon" in Stoker's novel occurs when Van Helsing requests a meeting with Jonathan and Mina in order to address his experiences in Transylvania. Originally, the meeting is set for lunch time: "Jonathan will be here at half-past eleven, and you must come to lunch with us and see him then" (Stoker 223).<sup>25</sup> However, Jonathan's commitments induce Mina to change the meeting to breakfast time: "Will you, therefore, instead of lunching with us, please come to breakfast at eight o'clock, if this be not too early for you?" (Stoker 224). Coppola's film takes this Victorian interest in "eating out" one step further and has Mina and Jonathan meet with Van Helsing at a public place rather than their home. The scene opens with a plentiful plate of roast beef being placed on the table. As Van Helsing carves the meat and serves both Mina and Jonathan a portion he states: "Eat! Feast! You need your strength for the dark days ahead" (Coppola 1992, 1:27:52).<sup>26</sup> Coppola's adaption thereby offers us a

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<sup>23</sup>The former tells us that Jonathan often eats out for lunch; the latter presents Van Helsing and the Harkers eating out.

<sup>24</sup>This was a very common practice, according to Broomfield, because of "her husband's lengthy daytime absence from home, a wife modified her own schedule and eating times to accommodate his schedule" (45).

<sup>25</sup>Broomfield argues that, by the 1850s, family dinners were replaced by "midday luncheon" and "late evening" dinners and that "women were among the first to describe an actual meal called "luncheon" in both their novels and letters" (45).

<sup>26</sup>The previous line is a modification from Stoker's novel where Jonathan writes, "It is now six o'clock, and we are to meet in the study in half an hour and take something to eat; for

reading of eating out as a rather vexed solution to the threat of infiltration, for though it offers men with much-needed mid-day sustenance, their wives are all the more vulnerable in being left all alone or forced to venture into men's public spaces.

Completed two years prior to Brooks's adaptation, Coppola's film is closer to the original *Dracula* in more ways than simple chronology; its flirtation with dangerous consumption reproduces, rather than distances itself from, the original text's fascination with the gothic elements of excess and fear. In his "Introduction" to the Bedford/ St. Martin's edition of the novel, John Paul Riquelme explains the gothic as a genre which does not, in fact, preclude parody or exaggeration to humorous effects.<sup>27</sup> And in scenes like the one where Van Helsing feasts on his roast dinner we can see how Coppola remains open to the original novel's fascination with exaggeration in service of humorous parody—suggesting a certain affinity with Brooks's reading. But Coppola's film, with its effort to blend eating and sexual appetites, represents a continuation of the original text's heavy investment in the Gothic tradition. As Elizabeth Miller explains, Stoker's novel "readily falls into the 'Gothic' category" by virtue of its investment in "blood, death, and supernatural"; we have stock types, such as the "innocent victims (usually women)," and like other gothic novels, the novel arouses the "emotions of terror (the threat of physical pain), horror (the direct confrontation with a repulsive entity) and the mysterious

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Dr Van Helsing and Dr Seward are agreed that if we do not eat we cannot work our best" (Stoker 329).

<sup>27</sup>See also Riquelme: "*Dracula*, which, like many other Gothic narratives, regularly veers from realism, becomes at times self-parodic or nearly so, and includes pairings in which various characters and groups of characters are virtually doubles for each other" (16).

(some force, usually supernatural, that defies reason)” (Miller 35). Coppola’s film thus practices adaptation as a continuum, rather than parodic re-vision, of the original text. And it is this blend of food and sex, culminating in mixed emotions of fear as well as titillation, which then places the adaptation in a close—may we even say ‘intimate’?—relationship with its predecessor.

At this point it is worth quickly mentioning the 1979 adaptation of *Dracula*, directed by John Badham, to which Coppola clearly looked for inspiration.<sup>28</sup> This earlier film was the first to cast Dracula as a romantic hero (played by Frank Langella) who seduces English women and converts them into loyal brides.<sup>29</sup> In addition, the 1979 film incorporates several references to food and excessive consumption through the character of Doctor Seward; nearly every time he appears on screen the doctor is eating something, both during and outside of scheduled meals. In his first scene, for example, he is shown racing up the stairs to the asylum and, at the same time, wiping his mouth and quickly stuffing a snack (in a paper bag) back into his breast pocket (Badham 1979, 4:07).<sup>30</sup> Such scenes cast Seward’s appetite as excessive, given that he eats constantly and everywhere (as

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<sup>28</sup>Even Coppola’s musical score bears an overwhelming resemblance to the score used in the 1979 Badham film.

<sup>29</sup>It is also worth noting that the film reverses the role of Mina and Lucy, and it also casts the latter as Dracula’s final and fiercely loyal lover. Moreover, Lucy is portrayed as a New Woman type who insists that “we [women] ought to have some influence, a say in things; after all, we are not chattel” (Badham 1979, 5:28). Dracula, in turn, finds her independent spirit extremely attractive.

<sup>30</sup>And later he is shown with a similar snack (again in the paper bag) while riding as a passenger in Jonathan’s motor car (Badham 1979, 13:32).

opposed to regular meal-times and locations).<sup>31</sup> The 1979 film leaves one to wonder if Seward's excessive appetite undermines his masculinity and, therefore, his ability to partake in the Crew of Light's mission to save Lucy. Coppola's interest in the corporeal body certainly owes a significant debt to this earlier film. However, the 1979 film does not explore at length—in the same way that Coppola does—other characters' approach to food per their gendered and classed subjectivities; by contrast, Coppola's adaptation focuses on the full cast of characters' (including Mina's) approach to food and their libidinal appetites.

Coppola's film stands as a firm reminder of the modern preoccupation with food as a stand-in for libidinal appetites. It is implied that a weakened body and, thus, state of mind brings dreadful sexual consequences—Jonathan's infidelity with the “demonic women,” for example. When reminded of this infidelity, a deep flush of shame washes across Jonathan's cheeks (Coppola 1992, 1:28:28); however, the moment he cuts his meat his attitude switches to that of dominance, and he angrily states: “I know where the bastard sleeps! I brought him there...” (1:29:25). Why the switch? Is it relevant that his attitude changes just before he bites into his roasted beef? The answer is yes, and it has everything to do with the link between masculinity and the consumption of meat. According to Jeremy Rifkin's *Beyond Beef*, roasted meat is a “cooking method which

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<sup>31</sup>There is also a scene at Benedict Hall, with Dracula as his guest, where Seward and the group (including Mina, Lucy, and Jonathan) are gathered and talking as they wait for supper. Again, the doctor is snacking in advance of the scheduled meal. Indeed, when supper is finally announced, Seward enthusiastic says, “come along Count. Food!” and as he exits the room we see that he is carrying an entire tray of cookies (Badham 1979, 18:00).

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maintains the bloody rawness of slaughter” and is therefore associated with “power,” “virility,” making it “suitable for masculine consumption” (26).<sup>32</sup> Van Helsing, like Jonathan, also consumes meat in an effort to reclaim his manhood. He, too, has been outsmarted by the female vampire—recall his disappointment after losing Lucy. However, the moment Van Helsing slices into his meat, his attitude changes and he transforms Lucy’s death into a victory: “We cut off her head and drove a stake through her heart” (Coppola 1992, 1:28:14). One cannot help but note the buoyancy of his spirit as his knife almost reenacts this phallic assertion of authority. The point, Coppola shows us, is that men can and must reassert authority by nourishing their bodies with the most masculine food available; this nourishment will then support their efforts to defeat the threat controlling their women.

It is essential to note that Coppola’s adaptation does not simply exacerbate our appetites for gothic excess. Rather, he also reminds viewers of the Victorian principle of moderation and “balance of the appetites,” a principle which must also be applied to libidinal appetites. To make this point, he alters or exaggerates Mina and Lucy’s characters such that both stand in as representatives of the appetitive sensations that the Victorians feared and reprimanded. In both novel and film adaptation, Lucy is condemned for indulging in desire and consuming the blood of the Other. In Coppola’s film, her sexuality is over emphasized from the very beginning: her red hair worn loose or unrestrained, her flirting, her inappropriate night-time attire, and her near constant state of undress (particularly toward the end of her life). All of these elements are indicative of excess, which still registers with modern

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<sup>32</sup>Rifkin is also referenced in J.E.D Stavick’s “Love at First Beet: Vegetarian Critical Theory Meets Dracula.”

viewers. Mina's vampiric turn is likewise framed as a problem of consumption: she ingests Dracula's blood and thereby merges with the degenerate Other. But in Coppola's hands, this is recast as a love story. His adaptation emphasizes Mina's dissident eating habits, particularly her consumption of forbidden fluids, to help us to trace her transgression.

Coppola's film represents Mina's affair with Dracula as a descent into deviant or even morbid consumption. This is the point of that added scene (not in the original) wherein Mina drinks absinthe with her "prince" (Coppola 1992, 1:04:30). As she sucks on the drug-soaked sugar cube, Dracula tells her that "Absinthe is the aphrodisiac of the self," and "The Green Fairy who lives inside the absinthe wants your soul" (1:03:48). Of course, viewers well know that it is Dracula, more so than any fairy, who wants Mina's soul. Absinthe is the perfect tool for his seduction given that its intoxicating effects are immediate and extreme. Kirsten MacLeod writes of Victorians' subsequent fears surrounding this potent drug: "Absinthe has a much higher alcohol content than wine or other aperitifs (fifty to seventy-five and sometimes as high as ninety per cent) and was therefore regarded by many doctors as more dangerous than other kinds of alcohol" (46). Or as one author for the *New York Times* warns, "[Absinthe] is ten times more pernicious than ordinary intemperance, and that it seldom happens that the habit, once fixed, can be unloosed" (Anon 403). To consume the drug thus risks a complete loss of mental and even physiological faculties, the very tools necessary to self-control or self-possession. And Victorian fears would seem to come true when, as she sips from her cup of green elixir, Mina lets down her guard and surrenders herself (and soul) to Dracula's influence.

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Coppola is also careful in his use of color to ensure viewers make the connection between consumption and sexual seduction. As the Count fills Mina's glass, the camera zooms in so viewers can see, through the green liquid, a close-up of the word "sin" from the absinthe label (1:03:48). And as Mina drinks, the screen fills with red liquid and bubbles, which resemble blood cells, and then the whole filter shifts to green (1:04:38-42). The two continue to talk and Mina's intoxication becomes apparent when she describes the Count's voice as if from a "dream" which "comforts me" (1:05:39-45). Dracula's "comfort" is transformed into sexual desire when he later infiltrates Mina's room in the form of green mist (1:35:33-01), an obvious allusion to the intoxicating absinthe. At this point Dracula is no mere "green fairy"; rather, and as he confesses to his impassioned lover, "I am nothing... lifeless... soulless. [ . . . ] I am dead to all the world" (1:37:29-40). Mina's "fall" is then made complete when she consumes his blood and joins her life to his (1:40:25). In this moment, as with the earlier absinthe scene, Mina's consumption is marked as decadent and thus dangerous; though stimulating, the blood and the drugs she ingests do not nourish or sustain her body. Indeed, the drugs contribute to her disarmament and the vampire blood to her death—or her transformation from human to undead.

In Coppola's film, however, Mina's transgressions are redeemed when she drives a sword through Dracula's heart and cuts off his head at his own request in order to "give [him] peace" and free his soul (1:59:20). This is a big change from the original novel, in which she instead observes the "look of peace" on the Count's face after Jonathan slashes through his neck and Quincey drives a bowie knife through his heart (Stoker 418). By the end of Stoker's original we also know that Mina has been redeemed, returned to a healthy and

normative appetite, by virtue of her reproductive body which has since given birth to young baby Quincey (419). But in Coppola's adaptation, Mina is redeemed (and, thus, does not meet the same end as Lucy) because her desire is portrayed as sentimental and devotional rather than sexual. Her role as devoted lover—that Victorian ideal of the domestic angel—is recast through her relationship with Dracula, who has crossed “oceans of time” to find and reclaim her (Coppola 1992, 52:58). Despite the liberal changes in Coppola's adaptation, the critical theme is still there: men's battle for supremacy over women's libidinal appetites. And even in Coppola's movie Mina never becomes the “devil's concubine” (of which Van Helsing so strenuously warned [1:17:16]), even though she does fight for her forbidden lover (an indulgence that contemporary twentieth-century viewers support but which Victorians would have abhorred).

### **3. Conclusion**

Coppola's adaptation is tied to its predecessor through its role as a bridge text which yokes together the original and modern re-visions, including Brooks's film. Indeed, Brooks tips his hat to Coppola early on when Dracula (played by the late comic genius Leslie Nielsen) first meets Renfield. In this scene, Dracula is wearing an outrageous wig reminiscent of Coppola's Dracula, whose costume one assumes is period-specific to ancient Romania. Exhausted from lugging Renfield's bag up the stairs, Neilson's Dracula rests a moment and then suddenly takes off his wig, an act which draws attention to the costume and, thus, directly alludes to Coppola's film as a source text. The humor is therefore in the idea of reproduction itself. Brooks's film draws attention to this intertextual conversation—or rather, parody—that

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extends from the original to include Coppola's adaptation.<sup>33</sup>

Despite their differences in genre—from parody to Gothic romance, both Brooks's and Coppola's adaptations stand as powerful reminders of our continued investment in, and desire to 'consume,' Victorian texts and themes. This last point is critical to both films, for both appear nearly a century after their original pre-text, and yet both (despite their different generic commitments) continue to disseminate the very Victorian preoccupation with disciplined consumption in both form and content. In the spirit of adaptation, Coppola's film leaves us with a neo-Victorian bridge back to the past reminding us of what the Victorians

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<sup>33</sup>Coppola's film is exceptionally self-reflexive about its use of film technologies as part and parcel of this larger investigation of reproduction. As Simon Joyce explains, Mina's first encounter with the much-younger Count culminates in the two visiting a London film theatre, a move that "remind[s] us that the novel itself was a contemporary of the earliest screenings by Méliès and the Lumière brothers" (105). More important is what Joyce reads as Coppola's astute ability to align the vampire with the technology of film: "the effect . . . is to reverse conventional readings of the vampire as an archaic holdover of the premodern and to see him instead as fascinated by possibilities of the cinematic apparatus, one through which he has now managed to live on for more than a century" (105).

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continue to do for us. At the same time, his film acts as a foundation for future and subsequent adaptations, from Brooks's parody to even more recent experiments in vampiric lore and the romance of deviant appetites (consider the *Twilight* series or *True Blood*, for example). There can be, then, little doubt that our ravenous appetite for Dracula and Victorian myths around food and consumption will continue well into the new millennium.

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