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"The Blood in the Llife!": Victorian Manifestations of Porphyric Anxiety and Blooklust in Bram Stoker's Dracula

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Cover Page Footnote

Ashley Szanter is a graduate student in English Literature at Weber State University. Her primary research examines the impacts of supernatural folklore and disease on the late Victorian literary imagination. Her current scholarship examines how medical discovery manifests in Victorian monster literature.

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**“The Blood is the Life!”: Victorian
Manifestations of Porphyric Anxiety and Bloodlust in
Bram Stoker’s *Dracula***

Ashley Szanter

[Ashley Szanter is a graduate student in English Literature at Weber State University. Her primary research examines the impacts of supernatural folklore and disease on the late Victorian literary imagination. Her current scholarship examines how medical discovery manifests in Victorian monster literature. Ashley can be reached at ashleyszanter1@weber.edu]

Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* enraptured Victorian audiences with the tale of an enigmatic vampire. For modern readers and critics alike, the novel holds endless fascination and is revisited by scholars using a variety of lenses intended to extract every last bit of analysis from its pages. Examinations of the tale have revealed myriad meanings that touch on many of the *fin de siècle* anxieties expressed by 1890s Victorians. However, none of these proved to be as fixating as Victorian obsessions with blood. Society at large was engrossed in the theatrical phenomena of publicized murder. In 1888, Jack the Ripper’s bloody slayings ensnared the collective imagination and created audiences that were hungry for tales of blood. Consequently, blood was also at the very center of a new medical discovery: porphyria. Porphyria, originally known for the 1836 poem “Porphyria’s Lover” by Robert Browning, created a media stir in the late Victorian Era. In terms of knowledge of the disease, scientists were still examining the causes and symptoms of the blood illness. Stoker’s text capitalized on both the Victorian discovery of porphyria and the cultural appetite for tales of blood to

craft the violent, bloodthirsty, and porphyric Count Dracula.

Contextually, the social culture of the late Victorian period was influenced by the slew of violent murders that began early in the 19th century and grew in depravity until their climax, marked by Jack the Ripper, in 1888. While murder had been a mainstay of Victorian newspapers for decades, Jack the Ripper “brought with him a new kind of crime, and a new kind of fear” (Flanders 415). Murders attributed to the unknown Ripper became common fodder for the press as well as the general public. The power of the press transformed the Ripper into a monstrous caricature of a man. Newspaper titles assert that London had fallen “under the spell of a great terror... a nameless reprobate – half beast, half man...a ghoulish creature who stalks through the streets of London... simply drunk with blood” (Flanders 427). These images, given by newspapers to their readers, imbued the collective imagination with visions of horrific nightwalkers that wait in dark alleys to spill the blood of victims caught unawares. Beginning with the murder of Annie Chapman in 1888, these illustrations of a bloodthirsty specter circulated and grew with each subsequent killing.

Cultural attachment to Jack the Ripper kept growing and strengthened each time someone was knifed in the streets. These fears reflect the delicate state that characterized Victorian mindsets. How could a man commit such atrocities in public spaces yet evade sight, judgment, and justice? Biologist Edward O. Keith explains, “When the fear of the unknown and of others not like ourselves confronts real or imaginary phenomena that lack apparent explanation, irrationality prevails over rationality” (61). This phenomenon overwhelmed the late 19th century collective imagination and generated a fear that manifested itself in the

resurrection of monsters; these monsters, such as the vampire, could provide the public with answers to unknowns they believed threatened their safety. Jack the Ripper's anonymity forced the public to mythologize him so as to fathom who, or what, he was. The 1890s imagination was unable to process the violence and veracity of the Ripper's crimes. While elevating him to celebrity, they correspondingly dehumanized him into a creature that sought blood to satisfy his needs.

Secondary in its effect on the collective imagination were advances in both technology and experimentations; the late 19th century led to many important medical discoveries on the human body – particularly in regard to disease and blood. While venereal disease was arguably the frontrunner in terms of public importance, doctors also made strides in understanding blood and how it can be transfused from human to human. In analyzing blood, discoveries were made on how it functions as an integral part of the human body – the center of life. The heart, the interpretive core of humanity, is responsible for making sure blood flows through the person. How blood effects its host was central to certain experiments conducted in the 1880s. Early experiments in the history of blood transfusions date to the early 1800s, “with the discovery of distinct blood types leading to the practice of mixing some blood from the donor and the receiver before the transfusion (an early form of cross-matching)” (“History of Blood Transfusion”). These advancements in blood research generated fascination in how a person's “life force” could be transferred to sustain another human being.

The idea of transferring blood from body to body was not a new one – knowledge on blood transfusion dates back to the 15th century. But Victorians were endlessly fascinated by the notion of blood being exchangeable. In the same century, Great Britain was a

hub of transfusion research marked “in 1818, [when] Dr. James Blundell, a British obstetrician, performed the first successful blood transfusion of human blood, for the treatment of postpartum hemorrhage” (“History of Blood Transfusion”). Then, in 1840, Samuel Armstrong Lane, a doctor at St. George’s Hospital Medical School in London, “performed the first successful whole blood transfusion to treat hemophilia” (“History of Blood Transfusion”). Medical discourse and spheres were prominent in major cities across Europe; London was no exception. Major universities and hospitals of London were a growing locale for doctors and scholars to discuss modern advancements in medical practice.

In the case of porphyria, discoveries of the disease’s causes and symptoms did not happen in any significant way until the mid-1800s. The disease is hidden deep within the blood of the carrier and therefore “the first recognition of the porphyrias as diseases had to await the appropriate developments in chemistry” (Goldberg 1). Making analysis even more complex, there are two particular types of porphyria: cutaneous and acute. Though there are sub-categories within the two varying in severity, the porphyrias are similar because they “consist of a constellation of syndromes caused by mutations in one of the many enzymes in the synthesis of the heme molecule that is found in the oxygen transport protein hemoglobin and other enzymes” (Keith 64). While histories of the disease indicate that a chemist by the name of J. Scherer first dealt with these anomalies as early as 1841, most medical historians attribute discovery of the disease to Dr. Beran J. Stokvis. In December of 1889, Stokvis published an article titled “Over twee zeldzame kleurstoffen in urine van zieken” translating into “About 2 unusual dyes in the urine of patients” (PubMed). In the article, Stokvis discusses how the symptoms of porphyria – in this case, the symptom

of blood in the urine – are caused by the “appearance of a larger or smaller amount haemato-porphyrin” (Stokvis). In large part, the article deals with only one side effect of the disease, but it nonetheless created a stir in medical circles.

Knowledge on the disease was prominent in the British Isles as doctors in major medical centers began to engage in discourse on porphyria. Even before its official naming in 1888, porphyric interest spiked in Great Britain because of similarities between early knowledge of the disease’s symptoms and King George III. AIP – or Acute Intermittent Porphyria – “famously afflicted King George III of Great Britain, as expressed in the film *The Madness of King George*” (Keith 65). This particular strand of porphyria, “common in Sweden and Great Britain,” is also responsible for spurring discussion among medics and academics because it “causes no cutaneous symptoms” – that is, there are no outward physical manifestations (Keith 65). Rather, this particular disorder is characterized by “neurological attacks, such as trances, seizures, and hallucinations” (Keith 65). Regardless of the strand of porphyria, Great Britain – along with other significant nations such as the Netherlands and Sweden – became a hub of research and discovery on the new disease. This, in turn, created widespread discussion on porphyria. And while some discussions were addressing fears of the disease’s contagiousness, most were exposing the exact symptoms and how those were significant to addressing public concerns.

Porphyria hit the collective conscious hard when the symptoms of the “Vampire Disease” became more commonly known around the 1890s. When Beran Stokvis published his findings in 1889, the first symptom he elaborated on was the presence of a “decomposition product of blood pigment, whose

identity with haemato-porphyrin (iron free haematin) is in the highest degree probable” (Stokvis). That is to say, the first recognizable side effect of the disease was a blood by-product excreted in the urine of patients. The “bright red urine, resembling blood” was also accompanied by other physical symptoms such as “[an] accumulation of photosensitive pigments in the skin, leading to photosensitivity, and phosphorescent pigments in the mucus membranes around the mouth and eye, causing them to be red in daylight but to glow at night” (Keith 65). Even further demonstrating similarities between porphyric symptoms and vampire mythology, “the photophobia and neurological and psychological sequelae seen in the advanced stages of porphyria are also consistent with mythical characteristics of werewolves and vampires” (e.g. erratic behaviors, a penchant for coming out at night, physical abnormalities, etc.) (Keith 64). With these symptoms being quickly discovered and presented to educated circles— and subsequently gossiped about by the general public – the “speculated relationship between porphyria and vampirism...received a great deal of media attention” and sparked wild imaginings about real vampires that walked among the living (Keith 63). Considering these symptoms are so clearly similar to those associated with vampirism, the public could not disassociate the two from one another. Based on its rarity, folkloric scholars have since discredited the disease as a possible catalyst for worldwide vampire mythologies. However, the late Victorian society that reveled in blood, crime, and sexuality did not necessarily want to detach the two from one another. As a result, vampire mania resurged as crime and myth enmeshed.

Scholars point out that Bram Stoker, not exempt from this mania, engaged in copious amounts of folkloric and mythological research before writing

Dracula. Several key books, including *Bram Stoker's Notes for Dracula*, have intricately researched those types of sources consulted by Stoker during the formative years of the novel. While the literary and historical texts consulted for research are integral to understanding how the novel came to fruition, Stoker's direct social influences also had bearing on the types of mythology he would ultimately incorporate. In her essay, "Retracing the Shambling Steps of the Undead: The Blended Folkloric Elements of Vampirism in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," Alexis Milmine describes how Stoker "creates an undead icon of vampirism that transcends time and the ethnic boundaries of folklore, drawing on a multitude of legends about this supernatural being as well as twisting the traditional folklore of Eastern Europe" (33). This essay goes on to deconstruct how Stoker carefully intertwined supernatural mythologies from various cultural traditions. When examining the types of reconstruction employed by Stoker, it can be argued that he looked to other social forces in order to create the quintessential Victorian vampire. Stoker knew that the vampire needed to be a creature that drew on fear in order to remain present in collective thought. Milmine's essay quotes Matthew Beresford, a vampirologist, on this connection:

The one common element to almost all cases of vampirism is fear. Fear is an important factor in the survival of the vampire because, although the vampire has taken various forms in history, it is difficult to pinpoint one dominant form; fear is the main unifying feature and therefore can be said to provide the key to the vampire's existence. (34)

In tandem with Beresford, Milmine points out that "*Dracula* works on this primal fear and the power it holds over the community" (34). In order to grasp onto this network of public panic, Stoker seemed to possess

an acute awareness of the public's fears. Paralyzing fear of the public, blood fascination, and the discovery of porphyria all come into play and reveal themselves as influences behind Stoker's *Dracula*.

Within the pages of *Dracula*, the brand of vampirism displayed by Stoker's vampires is distinctly porphyric. While the assertion could be made that the vampires are merely exhibiting regular vampirism and that the relationship to porphyria is coincidental, scholars have exposed that Stoker's vampires are not "typical" vampires. Rather, Milmine asserts, "Stoker uses folklore from various regions in Europe to create a vampire that violates many of the traditional beliefs...and melds it with other legends" (41). In doing this, Stoker invented what modern audiences consider to be the "real" vampire. However, Victorian audiences would have understood that this vampire was distinct from any other vampiric creature they had been acquainted with. Rather, Stoker draws on a multitude of legends and explanations for vampirism to create a new hybrid mythology. Therefore, Stoker's vampirism embraces different symptoms that, when combined, suggest an influence of porphyric anxiety. Fear of the disease manifested itself in the pages of the novel, given voice by the author. Facsimiles of these symptoms can be seen throughout the text. In referencing the symptoms of porphyria listed below, a reader can draw conclusions on the relationship between porphyria and Stoker's vampirism:

Red Eyes/Mouth:

In the essay referenced above, Keith presents the symptom of "pigments in the mucus membranes around the mouth and eye, causing them to be red" (65). In *Dracula*, the red eye motif is heavily present and always associated with the presence or perceived vision of a

vampire or vampiric creature. Lucy Westenra, shortly after being infected with vampirism, “murmured as if to herself: - ‘His red eyes again! They are just the same’” (106). Her seeing them “again” implies that she is already familiar with the vampire’s eyes. Having already beheld the discoloration, she now associates the phenomenon with the creature. Again, identifying the alleged specter, Mina Murray, the female protagonist of *Dracula*, who has yet to encounter a vampire, has “a vague memory of something long and dark with red eyes” (110). Two individuals – Lucy and Mina – observed the same eye-related coloration independently of one another. Dr. Seward, a member of Abraham Van Helsing’s cohort, reinforces this consistency during his encounter with Renfield. Renfield, a minion who is subservient to Count Dracula, experiences a need for blood and its “life force” that causes him to experience symptomatic similarities to his Master – even though Renfield is not a biological vampire. Dr. Seward exclaimed that the corrupted human “sneered at [him], and his white face looked out of the mist with his red eyes gleaming” (298). Ascribing this side effect to his vampires, Stoker fulfills the red eyes symptom present in those who experience acute porphyria. In continuing the comparison, it is necessary to examine how Stoker utilized a sister symptom and incorporated this disproportionate redness around the mouth.

The red eye phenomenon in porphyria is the result of high levels of pigmentation within and around the mucus membranes. Exhibiting similar mucus membrane discoloration is the mouth of the infected individual. The immediate assumption would be that the redness around the mouth is attributed to the blood that they drink to sustain their strength. However, the two small puncture marks in the neck would not seem to be an overly messy means of drinking a host’s blood. The Count, after

drinking from a victim, looked “as if his youth had been half renewed...the mouth was redder than ever” (58). Then, later on in the text, Renfield exhibits the same symptom when he is seen “laughing with his red mouth” (297). Considering Stoker’s vampirism deviates from more traditional mythologies, it makes sense that Renfield would adhere to the same types of symptoms as his pseudo-sire. The indication of redness in the mouth is directly referential to those suffering from acute porphyria.

Photosensitivity:

One of the most direct symptoms of vampirism is an inability to go out in the sunlight. While the folkloric explanations ascribe this inability to vampires’ roles as demons and creatures of the night, porphyria attacks its victims with photosensitivity as a result of an “accumulation of photosensitive pigments in the skin” (Keith 65). These pigments pool in the top layers of the skin and can cause both burning sensations and boils on the skin of the infected. For this reason, those with the disease are confined to dark spaces with little or no artificial light. This confinement means that those with the disease can only comfortably leave the indoors at night so as to avoid the painful consequences of sun exposure. While examining Lucy during her early infection with vampirism, Van Helsing notes that the sun’s “searching light showed the ravages in poor Lucy’s strength. She was hardly able to turn her head” (166). During this same examination process, Van Helsing prophetically tells Dr. Seward that he “see[s] no light in life over her horizon” (161). Seeming to indicate the fate that Lucy has in store for her, Van Helsing understands the side effects of her disease and reveals that her ability to physically see light or feel the sun’s warmth is, literally, gone. This manifestation of

photosensitivity is characteristic of those infected with porphyria. In connecting these two, the inability to be in the sun also contributes to a deathly pale complexion. Porphyric skin displays a waxiness that mimics the “extraordinary pallor” of Stoker’s vampires (23). The inability to be in the sun and thereby bronze the skin is distinctive of both vampirism and porphyria.

Trance Psychosis:

In addition to the above symptoms, other side effects are the “neurological and psychological sequelae” that come with advanced stages of the disease (Keith 65). The psychological experiences would transport the diseased individual into a trance-like state where they would experience various levels of hallucinations. The diseased person would experience these trances after extended exposure to the blood disease. The use of trances is extensive within Stoker’s novel. A few characters experience the trance like hypnosis that comes with the disease; the idea of a trance is directly linked to the vampires within the novel. When examining Lucy’s undead body, Van Helsing points out, “she was bitten by the vampire when she was in a trance, sleep-walking...and in trance could he best come to take more blood. In trance she died, and in trance she is Un-Dead” (216). Regardless of Lucy’s trances when she was not yet a vampire, the trance is a necessary element of the transformation and existence of a vampire. The idea of trances is relatively foreign in vampire mythology. Often, the vampire is not in a trance but acting on their base need for sustenance – or blood. In this text, the idea of a trance is inextricable from the vampire world, be it becoming, existing as, or interacting with a vampire.

Secondarily, Van Helsing and Dr. Seward manipulate Mina—who is mid-transformation herself—into entering a necessary trance. Van Helsing states, “it

be that she can, by our hypnotic trance, tell what the Count see and hear” (343). In this intriguing way, Mina is used as a transitional vampiric conduit where a trance can be induced in order to communicate with the Count. Her ability to fall into this trance-like state is due to her early exposure to the disease of vampirism. Much like porphyria, the trances are a result of brain psychosis after exposure to the disease itself. An interesting element of this particular trance is that, while being experienced by Mina, the trance was induced by Van Helsing. Van Helsing’s ability to control the trances of a young transitional vampire is due to his special skill sets and knowledge. This knowledge is by no means coincidental and is the result of his special training and relationship to the very roots of porphyria.

The textual manifestations of these porphyric symptoms seem to expose that Stoker has a working knowledge of the infant disease; however, the lynchpin of the argument lies in the character Abraham Van Helsing. The previous arguments directly analyze the symptoms but, in every instance, Van Helsing is an integral character who both diagnoses and, via Stoker’s novel, pathologizes vampirism. Within the text, Van Helsing is a highly educated doctor and professor with both a practicing Medical Degree (M.D.) and a scientific research degree (Ph.D.). This indicates that he both practices medicine on the general public and is qualified to, and likely has, engaged in high-level scientific research. When investigating and trying to capture – and ultimately dispatch – the vampires, Van Helsing is the only one with the necessary knowledge to identify the diseased and their affliction. Dr. Seward, in a letter to Arthur Holmwood, references Van Helsing as “the great specialist” (131). Additionally, Van Helsing, in the process of performing a blood transfusion for Lucy, hastily declares, “[he] must go back to Amsterdam

tonight...there are books and things there which [he] want[s]" (137). This indicates that the symptoms and disease he believes afflicts Lucy are something outside his realm of normal practice. He came unprepared for what he would encounter and must now reference texts that he cannot call to memory. However, it also reveals that Van Helsing already possesses texts that address this particular disease – that is, vampirism. His experience with disease is made apparent when he returns with both a sense of foreboding at Lucy's symptoms and suspicions over how she came into contact with such a disease.

His ability to diagnose this disease is not only attributed to his studies in medicine. It is made very plain throughout the course of the novel that Van Helsing is a Dutch native who lives in Amsterdam. It seems too coincidental that an experienced doctor of the vampire disease hails from the same place that gave name and mainstream fame to porphyria. Beran Stokvis, who published the previously cited paper explaining symptoms of porphyria, was a practicing Dutch physician and researcher of rare and obscure diseases, like Van Helsing. The similarities between the two doctors are striking. However, Stoker's creation of Van Helsing makes perfect sense within the context of the novel. If arguing that porphyria had influence on the *Dracula* text, Van Helsing is perfectly crafted to be the guide and leader of the vampire hunting team that brings down the Count and many of his "children." Who better to lead the hunt for a vampire than a man who specializes in the disease? While the similarities between these two individuals are not evidence enough to claim that Stoker applies knowledge of the disease based on Stokvis's one essay, the brand of vampirism that Stoker constructs is too similar to the disease to deny an

association when coupled with the unusual connections between Van Helsing and Stokvis.

Stoker was uniquely qualified to reinvent the mythology of vampirism and blood fascination that was already present in the late Victorian period. The 1890s were a pressure cooker of social and scientific advancement that provided the ideal atmosphere for Stoker to bring his infamous vampire to life. Capitalizing on this atmosphere, Stoker not only crafted but reinvented the vampire in order to achieve an overwhelming public response to his text. Stoker knew his audience intimately and blended particular elements to present the most fearsome manifestation of their darkest fears. Understanding the relevance of the bloody crime and violence that plagued many European cities, he combined this with the widespread fear of disease that troubled Victorian minds. Stoker uses the fear of disease that troubled Victorian minds to pathologize vampirism via porphyric symptoms.

The pages of *Dracula* exhibit a porphyric influence that cannot be denied. Presenting porphyria as an explanation for vampire mythologies is weak and largely discredited. However, presenting porphyria as an influence in Stoker's text proves to be an easier diagnosis. Stoker's text capitalized on porphyria's discovery and cemented *Dracula's* position as a socially satisfying novel by addressing the cultural appetite for tales of blood. In writing *Dracula*, Stoker revolutionized the image of the vampire and redefined the creature for the modern age.

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Beauties and Beasts of *Carmilla*, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *Dracula*

Shirley Ibach

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"Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size."
--Virginia Woolf¹

Introduction

Woolf's statement is a perfect summary of the male author's use of women in Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and Stoker's *Dracula*. These texts utilize the psychology of the Beauty and the Beast motif² as a means of expressing forbidden love and desire through the

¹ Quote from Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, Hogarth Press: 1929.

² The Uther folklore classification system classifies Beauty and the Beast as "The Search for a Lost Husband," within which it receives its own subtype, ATU-425C. This subtype has specific characters and elements: a young daughter, her father, a beast who is transformed by the end into a handsome prince, a flower of unspeakable beauty, and a garden. While these gothic texts do not contain all these trope elements, they do contain the underlying plot of an erotic relationship between a human and a nonhuman.

monster and its victims. The Beast is a manifestation of the Freudian id, while the Beauty character serves as the superego³. These novels extend man's consciousness into the other – a metamorphosis into the beast – where he can be free enough from societal strictures to indulge his fantasies; and, in these texts, to be monstrous is to be feminine.

The monster-female relationship in each novel uses the Beauty and the Beast trope to fulfill emotional needs for the male and female characters which real life cannot duplicate. In *Carmilla*, Laura is attracted to Carmilla, not only physically but emotionally, because Carmilla fulfills the roles of attentive mother and dotting child simultaneously. Dracula, as well, serves as both lover and mother to his female victims, at least while they are still human. *Strange Case* may seem out of place, but the seductive quality of the beast that is inherent in vampire lore still exists within Jekyll and Hyde, only the real fight is within. For all of the characters “bitten” (in Jekyll's case, drugged) in the novels, the struggle between the Beauty and the Beast becomes a war of self.

For James Twitchell, the vampire myth is “loaded with sexual excitement; yet there is no mention of sexuality; [i]t is sex without genitalia, sex without confusion, sex without responsibility, sex without guilt,

³ “The id is the primitive and instinctive component of personality. The id is the impulsive (and unconscious) part of our psyche which responds directly and immediately to the instincts. The personality of the newborn child is all id and only later does it develop ego and super-ego... The superego incorporates the values and morals of society which are learned from one's parents and others. The superego's function is to control the id's impulses, especially those which society forbids, such as sex and aggression.” Source: <http://www.simplypsychology.org/psyche.html>

Beauties and Beasts

sex without love – better yet, sex without mention” (88). Monstrous sex is somehow freer, but also safer. Reproduction with a vampire does not lead to the burden of a child, but to a new – and more powerful – self. “The vampire is the most complete condensation of the problem and the resolutions of pre-adolescence” states Twitchell, citing the vampire as a vehicle for exploring incest, homosexuality, promiscuity, and the initial disgust towards sex that must be overcome while approaching adulthood (92). In these texts, the sexuality that must be overcome or accepted is actually the sexuality of the self. Seeing oneself as a sexual object creates a duality in childhood that is continuously struggled with throughout life. The duality of self naturally produces the other – the monster, the Beast – through which anxieties can be expressed from a safe distance⁴. These male authors use narrators describing female monsters in stories retold by doctors writing down eye-witness accounts; they utilize anything at their disposal to distance themselves from the homosexual fantasies coming through in the text – overt in *Carmilla*, subdued in *Dracula* and *Strange Case*. This indicates more anxiety around male sexuality at the turn of the twentieth century than female sexuality, as generally thought. Traditionally, these texts are thought to

⁴ The nineteenth century featured vampires who represented conflicts in society. Vampires express “various human relationships, relationships that the artist himself had with family, with friends, with lovers, and even with art itself” (Twitchell 4). Other critics contend that the vampire represents the economic and political atmosphere: the leeching of middle and lower classes by the ruling class and the threat of foreign cultures as Britain imported goods from its Empire.

showcase the fear around female sexuality,⁵ but, in reality, they say more about the repressed nature of masculinity at the time.

This repression of sexuality is most obvious in *Dracula*, where all homosexual undertones are sublimated through heterosexual bites and sexualized women almost always perish. Stoker was familiar with *Carmilla*⁶, and likely *Strange Case*, and in response, his monster, Dracula, instead of liberating its victims from rules simply introduced new ones. Elizabeth Signorotti contends that this is exactly what Stoker meant to do with his text: “Dracula is Stoker's response to Le Fanu's portrayal of female empowerment; [i]f Le Fanu frees his female characters from subject positions in the male kinship system, Stoker decidedly returns his to exchange status and reinstates them in that system.”

Lucy and Mina are used by Dracula as a point of contact with the men, since he is drinking the men's blood through the women's blood transfusions. This exchange of fluids between the males within the novel is akin to Signorotti's explanation of “compulsory heterosexuality” as a formative part of human relationships. Men, especially in Britain in the nineteenth century, are encouraged to do things in groups and establish bonds (sports, political parties, smoking clubs, etc.). These “homosocial” relationships between men must be distinguishable from homosexual ones, Signorotti states, “and the only way to eliminate

⁵ As discussed at length in Bram Dijkstra's *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture*.

⁶ According to Elizabeth Signorotti, Stoker's familiarity with Le Fanu's vampire tale is certain. There is even an unpublished first chapter in which Stoker describes a sepulcher with a reference to Styria, which recalls the Austrian setting of *Carmilla*. The sepulcher houses a former Countess.

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the homosexual threat between men is to include a woman in the relationship, forming a (safe) triangular configuration rather than a (threatening) linear, male-to-male union.” Therefore, women are simply tools to enable male relationships.

The tale of Beauty and the Beast has been retold again and again, but one theme never changes: Beauty is always in love with – even if at the same time terrified of – her Beast. The tale can trace its roots to Apuleius’ *The Golden Ass*⁷, in which the tale of Cupid and Psyche⁸ first appears. Although Cupid is only reputed to be a beast in the myth, and is actually beautiful, the story which surrounds the myth Apuleius relates is filled with bestiality and forbidden love.

Laurence Talairch-Vielmas discusses the attraction of women to “hideous suitors” within the Beauty and the Beast motif. After the work of Bruno Bettelheim, psychoanalyses generally posit that Beasts function as veiled symbols representing sexuality that children must initially experience as disgusting before they reach maturity and discover its beauty. Talairch-Vielmas finds that these three fairy tales about bestial lovers

⁷ *The Golden Ass* features a narrator who, seduced by the power of magic, accidentally turns himself into a donkey – during which time he is prostituted for entertainment – before being saved by a goddess and returned to human form in the end.

⁸ Kirstin Bidoshi cites a list compiled by Jan Ojvind Swahn of over 1,000 versions of the Beauty and the Beast tale in his book, *The Tale of Cupid and Psyche*. Beauty and the Beast is a derivation of the myth surrounding Cupid, the Roman god of desire, and his bride. The theme of Beauty and the Beast was a popular one in literature at the end of the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century in French literature and folklore before becoming popular in England with the translation of Madame Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont’s version of the tale.

demonstrate that Victorian adaptations of folktales and classical fairy tales gradually shift the Beast's beastlike characteristics into the background in order to shift the focus onto the heroine's wit and skills. The Beasts are no longer simply hairy predators, and the heroines confront them to assert female autonomy and invert gender roles and expectations. This inversion is clearly present within the Beauty and the Beast motif used in these gothic novels which open the door for powerful – if in the end, subdued – female characters. Talairch-Vielmas interprets the seemingly submissive Beauty in fairy tales as a means of challenging the expectations of the reader⁹. While these little victories are important nuances in the proto-feminist movement, the Beauty character still serves to uphold patriarchal ideals and the traditional hierarchy in these texts.

Bram Dijkstra suggests the female vampire is a continuation of Kipling's "Mark of the Beast," which represented the theory that women have to be colonized and subdued by violence if they did not accept their secondary evolutionary status. This psychoanalysis is present in the Jungian perspective of the Beauty and the Beast tale; "Jungians noticed that in men's dreams what is forbidden, dangerous and erotic often comes in the form of a woman (an *anima*); in the case of women's

⁹ This is a stance supported by Nina Auerbach and her interpretation of the female vampires of the nineteenth century. Both Nina Auerbach and Bram Dijkstra represent a feminist view of the female vampire in late nineteenth century gothic novels and point to the depiction of them as an expression of the belief that women are evolutionarily inferior, more beast-like, more destructive and out of control. However, Auerbach sees tiny steps forward in gender and sexual liberation in these tales, while Dijkstra views the behavior always as condemned.

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dreams... [it] often comes in the form of a male (an *animus*)” (Griswold 54). The Beast, then, is “the personification of a woman’s animus, a part that is animal-like and sexual” (Griswold 54). Jungian therapy follows the supposition that characters in a tale are representations of the changing facets of a single personality and its aim is to help an individual acknowledge and integrate all the parts of the self into a coherent whole. The discordant nature of the human personality is exactly what these novels delve into deeply: the Beasts, released by Le Fanu in *Carmilla* and Stevenson in *Strange Case* succumb to societal strictures imposed by the Beauties Stoker creates in *Dracula*.

Beasts of Carmilla and Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Carmilla in Le Fanu’s *Carmilla* and Hyde in Stevenson’s *Strange Case* exemplify the characteristics of the Beast in their unbridled passion and impetuosity. The character of the Beast has been historically used as a subversive device, enabling authors to discuss unconventional issues. This is certainly true of *Carmilla* and Hyde, who are vehicles for the taboo topics of female sexuality, motherhood, homosexuality, and suicide.

At first glance, *Carmilla* and Hyde could not seem more different. *Carmilla*, with “features... so engaging, as well as lovely, that it was impossible not to feel the attraction powerfully” was “wonderfully graceful, [e]xcept that her movements were languid – very languid...” (Le Fanu 78, 31). Hyde, on the other hand, had “something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something downright detestable” and “stumped along... at a good walk” which is able to trample a child (Stevenson 9).

Hyde is obviously more Beast-like in his outward appearance, being “lean, corded, knuckly, of a dusky pallor” (Stevenson 54). However, the beautiful Carmilla also has the ability to transform into a beast: “a sooty-black animal that resembled a monstrous cat” (Le Fanu 52). Both antagonists are ruled by passions: anger, love, hatred, lust; a feature linked with the Beast in many incarnations of the tale. “[N]o man morally sane could have been guilty of that crime upon so pitiful a provocation; and that I struck in no more reasonable spirit than that in which a sick child may break a plaything,” Jekyll claims of Hyde’s murderous encounter (Stevenson 56). Carmilla herself paints the picture of her personality in the light of a plaintive child: “[y]ou will think me cruel, very selfish, but love is always selfish... [h]ow jealous I am you cannot know ... [t]here is no such word as indifference in my apathetic nature” (Le Fanu 50). These infantile and beast-like aspects are a reflection of society’s theories on evolution at the time. These traits are also part of the appeal of these characters to their Beauty-counterparts, Laura and Jekyll, who feel a parental or lover-like urge to take care of – or tame – the Beasts.

The nineteenth century experienced a revolution in all forms of thought – scientific, social, political and otherwise – after the theory of evolution came on the scene. “No idea was ever more widely used, or misused,” Stephen Gould claims, citing social Darwinism as the rationale for the inevitability of poverty (132). *Strange Case* can be examined in the terms of Cesare Lombroso’s theory of l’uomo delinquent (the criminal man). Lombroso’s criminals are “evolutionary throwbacks in our midst” who had “enormous jaws and high cheek bones... insensibility to pain, extremely acute sight... excessive idleness, love of orgies... the desire to not only extinguish life in the

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victim, but to mutilate the corpse, tear its flesh and drink its blood” (Gould 133). These individuals, according to the theory, are closer to an ape than a modern man and are therefore driven to act in animalistic ways that are labeled criminal in a civilized society.

Hyde’s driving force in *Strange Case* is passion, just as it is for Carmilla, but since his passion is unnamed and undescribed we only see the outbursts of anger over his being deterred from pursuing it. The object of Carmilla’s passion is Laura, which enables us to witness not only outbursts of anger: “[h]ow dares that mountebank insult us so... [m]y father would have had the wretch tied up to the pump, and flogged with a cart whip, and burnt to the bones with the cattle brand” but the outpouring of her affection as well: “she would press me more closely in her trembling embrace, and her lips in soft kisses gently glow upon my cheek” (Le Fanu 39, 33).

The intense emotional bond between the Beauty and the Beast is the impetus for the popularity of the television series *Beauty and the Beast* (1990), according to J.P. Williams. The Beast in the series has not only exaggerated masculine traits but feminine ones as well; namely, he has an empathic connection to the Beauty character. This represents an “internalization of the maternal role as the only constraint capable of preventing masculinity from becoming a destructive, antisocial force” (Williams 60). Not only do these monsters fulfill the need to mother something but also the need to be mothered. Humans seek to recreate the intensity of that bond, and adult relationships frequently do not fulfill that need. The Beauty and the Beast motif not only offers a character that satisfies this desire but also constantly recreates the trauma of the separation of mother and child. The same separation is continually represented in *Carmilla* through the loss of mothers in

childhood for both Laura and Carmilla, as well as the repeated separation of Carmilla from her female guardians.

In *Carmilla*, this mother-child drama creates the opportunity for female relationships to trump family ties. Auerbach states that “women in *Carmilla* merge into a union the men who watch them never see” (43). This matriarchy can be seen in the fact that Carmilla invades her victim’s home, depriving the father of his patriarchal power and dominance. Along with the lack of a male master, overlord figure, this creates a powerful female plot, in Auerbach’s opinion:

“Carmilla is not the product of a single maker’s potency, but the spirit of an elusive female community may be her makers or merely her confederates, and whose power only women perceive; from the beginning, Laura’s father is strangely blind to the women’s plot” (Auerbach 39-40). Carmilla tells Laura of the “strange love” (Le Fanu 101) in her past, which Auerbach interprets as the relationship that turned her into a vampire and notes: “the word strange, the Swinburnian euphemism for homosexual love, suggests that Carmilla’s original maker was female” (Auerbach 40). This establishes a powerful matriarchy which reveals Le Fanu’s cultural anxieties about women during the turn of the century.

From a Jungian perspective, Joseph Andriano supports Auerbach’s contention that the female vampires in *Carmilla* are dominating mother figures. It is significant that Carmilla first visits Laura when she is a young child feeling neglected and Carmilla immediately assumes the role of comforter before inverting the roles and suckling from the child’s chest. The female vampire mother is the antimother:

The cherishing, nourishing, positive role of the mother archetype is conjured, but she suddenly

turns into her opposite, the antimother... She is the mother in her terrible aspect, who withdraws the breast as punishment. So traumatic, in other words, is the loss or withdrawal of the mother, that her absence becomes a demonic presence: a devouring antimother. (Andriano 50)

Laura's longing for her dead mother can also be interpreted as longing for death itself, a death that is personified by Carmilla. He complicates reading *Carmilla* simply as a male writer's attempt to explore the psychological dynamics of sexual inversion, by stating it is more significant to have a male author identifying with a female character. This was not uncommon, however, as the gothic novel has historically been used to cross traditional gender roles: "the gender reversals in the vampire tale... reflect the confusion caused by a tension between archetypal androgyny—the instinctive tendency to fuse the opposites—and stereotypical dualism, the sociocultural tendency to polarize them," (Andriano 50). When written as powerful characters, women become fierce and aggressive—and therefore masculine—and the men become terrorized and submissive, and therefore feminine. Le Fanu may have been allowing for subversive readings of *Carmilla* since it ends on a note that is open to interpretation.

Laura's confused love for Carmilla is evident throughout the story but nowhere more clearly than the final lines: "often from a reverie I have started, fancying I heard the light step of Carmilla at the drawing room door" (LeFanu 108). Is she hoping or fearing Carmilla's return? The dynamic tension of longing and fear in Laura's statement is a perfect vocalization of the fear/love relationship inherent in the Beauty and the Beast motif. Children initially experience sexuality as disgusting before reaching maturity and discovering its

beauty. Laura, exemplifying this experience, is continuously attracted and repulsed by Carmilla:

I told you I was charmed with her in most particulars. There were some that did not please me so well [...] Her complexion was rich and brilliant; her features were small and beautifully formed; her eyes large, dark and lustrous; her hair was quite wonderful, I never saw hair so magnificently thick and long when it was down over shoulders; I have often placed my hands under it [...] I loved to let it down, tumbling with its own weight, as, in her room, she lay back in her chair talking in her sweet low voice, I used to fold and braid it, and spread it out and play with it. Heavens! If I had but known all! (Le Fanu 31)

Laura attempts to describe what it is about Carmilla that bothers her and ends up having to wake herself from a lover's memory of brushing Carmilla's hair. The power Carmilla has over Laura is not only inspired by Carmilla's looks – which would be inconsistent with a Beast character – but has more to do with how ardently Carmilla loves Laura. Auerbach points out that many modern vampire film adaptations have incorporated this passionate love. In order to do so, writers generally have removed the overtly patriarchal/power-hungry aspects and replaced his hunger with the more popular motif of “true love” – still as controlling – with the dynamic only changing to a willing servitude.

Love is used in *Carmilla* as a controlling force as well. Carmilla fawns over Laura so much that Laura cannot help but respond to her passion:

“And you asked for the picture you think like me, to hang in your room,” she murmured with a sigh, as she drew her arm closer about my

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waist, and let her pretty head sink upon my shoulder. [...] She kissed me silently.

“I am sure, Carmilla, you have been in love; that there is, at this moment, an affair of the heart going on.”

“I have been in love with no one, and never shall,” she whispered, “unless it should be with you.”

How beautiful she looked in the moonlight!
(Le Fanu 45-46)

Laura is enthralled by the romance of being loved so passionately, even while she is distressed by it. Carmilla’s embraces do not shock Laura until Carmilla says, “Darling, darling... I live in you; and you would die for me, I love you so.” Only then does Laura “star[t] from her” (Le Fanu 46).

Carmilla’s statement, “I live in you; and you would die for me, I love you so” sets up the parallel of *Carmilla* and *Strange Case* perfectly (Le Fanu 46). Carmilla and Laura are one as lovers, and Dr. Jekyll’s love interest in *Strange Case* is himself as Mr. Hyde:

There was something strange in my sensations, something indescribably new and, from its very novelty, incredibly sweet. I felt younger, lighter, happier in body... [...] And yet when I looked upon that ugly idol in the glass, I was conscious of no repugnance, rather of a leap of welcome.
(Stevenson 50, 51)

Jekyll is the only character who is attracted to Hyde’s appearance, and, in many ways, Hyde becomes Jekyll’s secret mistress, since he buys him a house and supports his lifestyle. Jekyll furnishes Hyde with a home, a bank account, clothing, and gifts. Although many film and stage adaptations of *Strange Case* furnish

the plot with the female companionship¹⁰ missing from the novel, Stevenson's decision to have no important female characters is an important one. Hyde is frequently described in feminine terms: "weeping like a woman or a lost soul" (Stevenson 16). He is "so much smaller, slighter and younger" (Stevenson 51) than Jekyll's manly stature and is said to be "knit to Jekyll closer than a wife" (Stevenson 61).

The love Laura feels for Carmilla can be interpreted as self-love, just as Jekyll feels for Hyde. Carmilla is the mirror image of Laura, darkly beautiful where Laura is light, but experiencing the same traumas in life. Both lost their mothers at young age and have had visions of the other as children. They are descendants of the same family, Karnstein. When Laura begins dreaming of being visited by a creature at night, Carmilla assumes Laura's mother's role, cautioning her to beware the assassin. When Laura awakes from the nightmare of being attacked, she is convinced it is Carmilla who was being murdered, not herself. Carmilla herself constantly states that she and Laura are one: "I live in your warm life and you shall die – die, sweetly die – into mine... you and I are one forever" (Le Fanu 33). This merging of the protagonist and antagonist into one is also, obviously, an aspect of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde who quite literally cannot survive if the other dies.

Scholarship has noted Le Fanu's "breakdown of boundaries" between Carmilla and Laura, beginning with their shared childhood dream. William Veeder explains Carmilla as the unconscious sexuality that Laura has had to repress. But Laura is not just in love

¹⁰ Thomas Russell Sullivan's stage play *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, 1887, reworked the plot to center around a domestic love interest. The famous musical of the book, *Jekyll & Hyde*, featured love interests for both the doctor and his alter-ego.

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with love, she is also in love with death. “Why you must die -- *everyone* must die; and all are happier when they do. Come home” Carmilla entreats Laura (Le Fanu 36). Andriano equates Carmilla’s love of death with Laura: “she [Carmilla] loves Laura passionately because Laura cannot admit to herself that *she* loves death; much easier to accept is the notion that *death* loves her” (53). Laura, as she feels herself beginning to die from Carmilla’s nightly visitations, says “[d]im thoughts of death began to open, and an idea that I was slowly sinking took gentle, and, somehow, not unwelcome, possession of me” (Le Fanu 56). Death is not unwelcome, but a sweet sleep. This works against the interpretation by Twitchell that Carmilla represents the sterile love of homosexuality. Le Fanu was not merely interested in exploring lesbianism but also suicide.

Jekyll’s kinship to Hyde is inherently more complicated since there can be no sexual relationship (except perhaps masturbation; however, there is no textual evidence for this), but it is also tied up in the language of death and suicide. Katherine Linehan points to the striking phrase Jekyll uses to describe his relationship with Hyde: “Hyde was ‘knit’ to him, he writes, ‘closer than a wife, closer than an eye’” (204). Since Hyde’s night-time pleasures are never named in the novel, Linehan notes it has been an invitation for readers to invent an array of possible perversions in which Hyde may have been involved. Nabokov suggested that the tale evoked homosexual practices common at the time, whether Stevenson intended it or not, and following critics have argued that a study of the repression of taboos against homosexuality is exactly what Stevenson intended (Nabokov 187).

A friend and fellow writer of Stevenson’s, John Addington Symonds, penned a memoir in 1889 which

sounds eerily similar to the struggles of Hyde and Jekyll, and indeed to Laura's love for Carmilla:

[P]ortraying a man of no mean talents, of no abnormal depravity, whose life has been perplexed from first to last by passion – natural, instinctive, healthy in his own particular case – but morbid and abominable from the point of view of the society in which he lives – persistent passion for the male sex. [...] The agony of this struggle between self-yielding to desire and love, and self-scourging by a trained discipline of analytic reflection, breaks his nerve. The only exit for a soul thus plagued is suicide. Two factors, equally unconquerable, flesh and the reason, animal joy in living and mental perception that life is a duty, war in the wretched victim of their equipoise. While he obeys the flesh, he is conscious of no wrong-doing. When he awakens from the hypnotism of the flesh, he sees his own misdoing not in the glass of truth to his nature, but in the mirror of convention. (Symonds 140)

The conclusion of suicide as the only escape is echoed by Jekyll in the final lines of *Strange Case*: “[h]ere then, as I lay down the pen and proceed to seal up my confession, I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end” (Stevenson 62).

Stevenson does not care what perversion Hyde was involved in, only the hypocrisy of Jekyll as he both abhorred and gloried in Hyde's activities. Linehan cites letters Stevenson writes about the dangers of hypocrisy in support of this theory. Therefore, while the homosexual angle of *Strange Case* may have been “a relation of a semi-conscious creation, in which Stevenson's doubtless complex feelings about sexuality interact with attitudes and anxieties embedded in his

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culture,” the real point for Stevenson was the complicated duality of self (Linehan 205).

Irving Saposnik, from a philosophic standpoint, agrees. He claims that the popularity of the novel has rendered it a simplistic dichotomy of good and evil instead of a commentary on the moral obligations of the Victorian era. The central issue, Saposnik claims, is the necessity for moral and social flexibility in a society which dictates rigidity. Henry Jekyll attempts to create a self free from the strictures of society, free from the influence of the Beauty. He does not wish to be evil, but simply to live without the push and pull of two extremes within.

It is tempting to view the characters in these novels in the dichotomy of good and evil, but the authors, purposefully or not, made them far more complex. In these gothic novels, duality was no longer fought on a metaphorical battleground of good and evil, but inside the self.

Duality underwent a revival which carried the subject, together with its predicated psychic state, into the century that followed... [A] hunger for pseudonyms, masks, new identities, new conceptions of human nature, declared itself. Men became women. Women became men. Gender and country and were put in doubt: the single life was found to harbor two sexes and two nations. (Karl Miller 125)

This dichotomy of self, the pull of both forces toward the light or toward the dark, is a feeling every human being can relate to the attraction of Beauty to her Beast.

The Beauties in *Dracula*

Dracula’s harsh widow’s peak, elongated, “aquiline” nose with its “peculiarly arched nostrils,” and teeth

which poke out over hungry lips do not immediately conjure the image of Beauty (Stoker 23). While vampires are exponentially sexier in the passing decades,¹¹ Stoker's *Dracula* was meant to be repulsive. However, Harker describes Dracula's lips "whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality," indicating the same attraction and repulsion of the Beauty and Beast relationship as discussed earlier in *Carmilla* and *Strange Case* (Stoker 23). Dracula's appearance is not what makes him a Beauty, however. It is his treatment of the women he vamps – freeing and sexualizing them for a time, only to colonize them as servants once they complete their transformations – that reveals his character to be Beauty by reinstating the societal norms of patriarchy, heterosexuality, and exogamy¹².

Dijkstra argues that because of the equation of semen, money, and blood within the culture, the vampire theme was inevitable at the end of the nineteenth century. The female vampires in *Dracula* represent overtly sexual women aimed to deplete men and distract them from a reproductive existence. Stoker is sending readers a warning: sexual indiscretion leads to death. Stoker is able to write a story fulfilling many deep, dark fantasies of the human psyche, while simultaneously condemning them. As Lynda Hinkle points out, "[t]he vampire is, as a motif, invested with the power to critique, uphold or destroy the culture in which the

¹¹ Popular television and film portrayals such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *The Vampire Diaries*, the *Twilight* series and *True Blood* focus on the sexual attractiveness of vampires.

¹² Exogamy is the social arrangement where marriage is only allowed outside of a social group. For example, Dracula only bites human women; he has no physical contact with the vampire women.

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author sets it (just as that culture is sometimes invested with the power to critique, uphold, and destroy the vampire)” (19). When theorists dissect the much discussed scene of Lucy’s death in *Dracula*, they point to the execution of a female vampire with a stake through the heart as a symbolic rape.

Auerbach concurs with Dijkstra¹³ that Stoker’s *Dracula*, instead of releasing the wild side of women, places them firmly under patriarchal rule. The very fact that Count Dracula’s name is titled (Carmilla is nobility too but never asks to be referred to by a title) indicates this shift in the monster from liberator to oppressor, from the Beast to the Beauty: “Stoker cleaned up more than he degraded. Above all, he gentrified female vampires, who, for the first time, are monogamously heterosexual. Van Helsing even seems to doubt whether Lucy can digest female blood” (Auerbach 79).

Christopher Craft’s interpretation of *Dracula* sets up both Van Helsing and the Count as the beauties in *Dracula*. Dracula and Van Helsing serve, on opposite sides, to repress and restructure the actions of the women in the novel. A mirroring occurs as the doctor matches the Count puncture for puncture and by giving the women injections of morphine which immobilize them

¹³ However, what Auerbach takes as displaced representations of women’s empowerment (through frightened male authors creating female beasts), Dijkstra reads as a confinement of women into yet another cycle of predation and victimization. Auerbach identifies a dynamic tension between patriarchal norms and their displaced reflection, but Dijkstra argues that even if that tension existed, it created a closed system whose influence has been soundly bad: “Lucy Westenra and Mina Harker, represent the success and failure of modern man’s arduous attempts to acculturate woman to the civilized world. They are the two faces of Eve (Dijkstra, “Backlash” 462).

like Dracula's hypnosis does. Craft discusses the war between the Beauty and the Beast of self as earlier discussed in *Carmilla* and *Strange Case* when he states:

It is so easy to remember the id as a rising energy and the superego as a suppressive one, that we forget Freud's subtler argument. These passages, eschewing as too facile the simple opposition of the id and superego, suggest instead that the id and the superego are variant articulations of the same primitive energy. In providing an indirect path for the "contents of the id" and in being "as cruel as only the id can be," the superego may be said to be, in the words of Leo Bersani, "the id which has become its own mirror." (Craft 127)

This is why the vampire casts no reflection. No monster need be present; the monster is always you in the mirror when looking at yourself.

Craft's interpretation of the layers of suppressed sexuality in *Dracula* works a little against the patriarchal view of *Dracula* because Dracula is expressing homosexual desires. However, these desires are expressed and then repressed. Dracula, while never biting men, constantly puts Jonathan Harker in a feminine, submissive role: "I could feel the soft, shivering touch of the lips on the supersensitive skin of my throat, and the hard dents of two sharp teeth, just touching and pausing there. I closed my eyes in a languorous ecstasy[sic] and waited – waited with a beating heart" (Stoker 43). The rest of the scene describes Dracula's anger with the three women for trying to bite Harker, telling them "[t]his man belongs to me!" (Stoker 43). Stoker chooses to sublimate all the homosexual overtures in the novel, so that the threat lingers but does not manifest. Dracula does feed on the men's blood, but only through the veins of Lucy and

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Mina, Van Helsing and the three men which propose to Lucy in the beginning of the novel all supply her and Mina with blood transfusions. Thus, when Dracula drinks Lucy's blood again, he is drinking the men's blood, another instance of males only having relations with each other through females:

Here, emphatically, is another instance of the heterosexual displacement of a desire mobile enough to elude the boundaries of gender. Everywhere in this text such desire seeks a strangely deflected heterosexual distribution; only through women may men touch. (Craft 111)

This "homosocial" bond, as Signorotti called it, is deemed an appropriate one by society. Therefore, Dracula and Van Helsing still serve as Beauty characters, requiring themselves to abide by the rules and only transgressing through women.

Using women as tools is a theme in this novel as Stoker carves out a place for women in the professional world by his representation of Mina. Dracula uses Mina as a way to track the men, just as they are using her to track him. Both the living and dead men simply use the women to their own advantage. The violence against women in *Dracula* – most directly against sexualized women in *Dracula* – has been agreed on by most scholars to showcase the hostility toward female sexuality felt by the culture. The vampiric women in the text are consistently described as "wanton" or "voluptuous." Dijkstra echoes this condemnation¹⁴ of

¹⁴ Phyllis Roth posits that much of the novel's appeal is inspired by its hostility to female sexuality and Judith Weissman insists that *Dracula* reflects an extreme version of the Victorian attitude toward stereotypical sexual roles. Gail Griffin argues *Dracula* represents "a subliminal voice in our

Dracula, calling the book a “central document in the late nineteenth-century war on woman” (341).

Stoker’s attempt to correct the behavior of former beastlike female vampires (like Carmilla) results in *Dracula* and Van Helsing being the Beauties who must rein in women. The conflicted characters must immediately be categorized and demonized. Lucy, Stoker’s cautionary character, is the best example of this. Stoker offers a slight hint that Lucy may have latent homosexual inclinations toward Mina, to whom she writes:

[W]ish I were with you, dear, sitting by the fire undressing, as we used to sit; and I would try to tell you what I feel. I do not know how I am writing this even to you. I am afraid to stop, or I should tear up the letter, and I don't want to stop, for I do so want to tell you all. (Stoker 55)

This proves Lucy’s sexual appetite is ripe before *Dracula*’s arrival, and it is only after his visits that she is easily delineated to the positions of either whore (vampire) or angel (after her death). Stoker displays the two possible endings for sexualized women in his novel: Lucy’s horrific ending (much like a prostitute dying of consumption) or Mina’s seemingly happy one (marriage and mother). Both women, however, have bodies that have become thoroughly male-dominated by the end, with Mina in no more control of her fate than Lucy was.

There is bisexuality in the vampires in *Dracula*; however, Stoker reinstates the societal norm by only allowing the bites to be heterosexual. The scene of the female vampires and Harker is rife with not only gender inversion, but dualism in the sexual acts of each gender:

[male] heroes, whispering that, at heart... their angels are, in fact, whores" (Dijkstra 463).

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“[t]he fair girl went on her knees, and bent over me... the red tongue as it lapped the white sharp teeth... [l]ower and lower went her head as the lips went below the range of my mouth” (Stoker 42). The masculine, dominant act of penetration and the feminine, submissive act of fellatio are intertwined in this scene. As John Stevenson points out, this is another case of the vampire expressing a suppressed human desire: “the bisexuality of the vampire is not only monstrously strange, it is also a very human impulse, an impulse that... the vampire has made astonishingly literal” (146). The inherent fear of the sexuality in *Dracula*, then, is not fear of female sexuality but the fear of dueling sexualities within one person.

Mina’s fear in *Dracula* is not a fear of dying or becoming a vampire, for she knows that by the time that happens, she will *want* it: “I myself might be – nay! if the time ever comes, shall be – leagued with your enemy against you” (Stoker 288). Dracula says to Mina, “and you, their best beloved one, are now to me, flesh of my flesh; blood of my blood; kin of my kin; my bountiful wine-press for a while; and shall be later on my companion and helper” (Stoker 252). His speech about their relationship also sheds light on his relationship to the vampire women in the castle, to whom he says, “I [Dracula] too can love, you yourselves can tell it from the past” (Stoker 43). The count’s description depicts him and Mina as husband and wife¹⁵ but also calls her his “kin.” The taboo against incest prevails; once she is fully vamped, Mina can no longer be seen as a lover. She can be his “wine-press” for a “while,” but will eventually be no more than a servant in his house, like

¹⁵ The phrase “flesh of my flesh” is from the Biblical book of Genesis and is used in traditional marriage ceremonies.

the three female vampires he leaves behind in his castle. This vampire patriarchy Dracula imposes proves his character falls firmly within the realm of Beauty, reinstating the societal norm of exogamy, albeit horrifically. It is in sharp contrast to the liberating matriarchy present in *Carmilla*. Carmilla is allowed to freely roam and indulge her appetites, while Dracula's women, once fully transformed, are confined to the home and brought scraps. Part of the horror of *Dracula* for women is still a modern fear: that intensely passionate desire will be satiated by the fulfillment of that desire. This theme is inherent in the Beauty and the Beast myth; once Psyche discovers she loves Cupid, he leaves her.

Calling out Dracula as a Beauty character seems strange; however, it is another case of the dueling self as expressed through a monster. Dracula's inability to produce a reflection in mirrored surfaces presents a striking metaphor. Hinkle states, "[t]he inability to be seen in a mirror means that not only can the vampire never be self-aware... but also the vampire cannot be inverted as the mirror inverts an image. This may be because, as Gross has suggested, the vampire is already an inversion of humanity" (20). The other that Dracula represents is dependent on the fact that we refuse to acknowledge his similarities to ourselves; "[o]ne self does what the other self can't; [o]ne self is meek while the other is fierce; [o]ne self stays while the other runs away" (Miller 126). The vampires and humans in these novels can no longer be looked at as a simple dichotomy: good or evil, male or female, beauty or beast; each encompasses a duality of each inside of themselves.

Conclusion

The male authors attempt to remove themselves from the transgressive fantasies of their texts by all means necessary. Each of these novels is told through narrators whose tale has been written down, and in some cases transcribed from an original version. In *Strange Case* we are introduced to the story through at least three different lenses: Mr. Utterson, Dr. Lanyon, and Dr. Jekyll. The final confession of Dr. Jekyll is highly suspicious at best, written when he has no real mastery over himself as either Hyde or Jekyll – and so how can his narrative be trusted – as well as sent through the hands of several people before being revealed. *Carmilla* may seem to simply be a female narrator for a male author; however, the beginning introduction to the story puts several layers of separation between Le Fanu and his narrator's words. According to the prologue, the text is being reproduced by a student of a doctor who found this account of vampirism among the doctor's notes. The woman in question is already deceased, and so the narrator has no qualms transcribing her tale as a scientific marvel. *Dracula* is told through several narrators and in several forms: journals, letters, scientific notes; much of the correspondence is even written in shorthand. By setting themselves so apart from the monsters they create – in each novel the monster never gets a chance to narrate their own story – the authors feel freer to use the monster to relate forbidden or taboo desires.

Another layer that each author uses to subvert their own responsibility is making women the most transgressive monsters. By doing so, they attempt to preserve their own morality and sexuality, while still writing about risqué subjects. This does give women agency, if only to be subversive and taboo. A powerful metaphor for this in the text is Dracula's blood exchange

with Mina¹⁶. Mina is both empowered and enslaved by this link. For Wilson, “Mina simultaneously sabotages and supports the social and cultural technologies of misogyny that would reduce women to their wombs, which in turn would valorize their maternal roles even as the also would eviscerate their social effectuality” (121). Stoker uses Mina to show the roles he believes the “New Woman” can fulfill in society: typist, nurse, etc. Anything outside of the realms he deems appropriate and she again becomes the monster.

Twitchell suggests a Freudian theory behind this tendency by male authors to equate women with the monstrous:

Since we must recognize that all the relevant factors known to us – the strong childhood fixation, the incest-barrier and the frustration in the years of development after puberty – are to be found in practically all civilized human beings... [The result to the male is that] this is the source of his need for a debased sexual object, a woman who is ethically inferior, to whom he need attribute no aesthetic scruples, who does not know him in his other social relations and cannot judge him in them.¹⁷

¹⁶ Deborah Wilson reads Mina’s scene with Dracula where he forces her to drink his blood as the only scene of this kind. In previous literature blood exchange was not necessary to become a vampire and Lucy never mentions drinking Dracula’s blood. For Wilson, the blood exchange is what enables the psychic link between Dracula and Mina throughout the rest of the novel.

¹⁷Sigmund Freud, “On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love,” *St. Ed.* XI, 184, 185, 186. As quoted in Twitchell’s “The Vampire Myth,” pg. 90.

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The need to debase one's sexual partner, particularly in men, is one explanation for these authors' expressions of feminine beasts.

Each generation creates the monster it requires to work out the social and sexual politics of the time. For these authors, women make an ideal vehicle for the birth of a monster, and they achieve a new kind of penetration through the psyche of female characters who take on the power and the responsibility of deviancy. However, they cannot escape the looking-glass their words create. The vampire casts no reflection because it is always humanity's own reflection.

And even worse, the monstrous exists because of man's attempts to be good, according to Irving Massey:

In Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, we are repeatedly told that a vampire can be created only from a good person. We see in one instance after another the metamorphosis of kind and virtuous ladies into rabid and sensual cannibals, and we are given to understand that Dracula is the greatest vampire of them all because he was at one time the greatest of men. Again, the vampire can rest only in consecrated soil—in fact, the entire plot hinges on this condition. (55)

Hyde, as well, is the result of Dr. Jekyll's attempts to do something good. He believes he can distill the constantly battling duality inside himself into two different parts. These texts all leave us with an unanswerable question: does the wild nature of the Beast make the rules of Beauty necessary? Or do Beauty's regulations release the Beast?

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Dracula's Truth Claim and Its Consequences

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*"Begin at the beginning," the King said gravely,
"and go on till you come to the end: then stop."
Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland*

Although its name suggests otherwise, the preface of a book is usually written when all of its content has been completed. It is the writer's platform to explain the genesis, the goal, the scope or the special significance of his creation and tell his readers under which angle it should be read. In a very condensed form, it defines the relationship between "work" and "world". Despite this unique function, several editions of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* novel completely omit its author's foreword.¹ Stoker's preface to the abridged 1901 Icelandic

¹ For example, the American Grosset & Dunlap edition (printed by the Country Life Press, Garden City, New York). A scanned version can be accessed online at www.archive.org.

translation resurfaced only in 1986, in *A Bram Stoker Omnibus* edited by Richard Dalby. And among the hundreds of books, essays and articles attempting to analyse the world's best-known piece of fiction I could not find a single one systematically dealing with these two prefaces.² Of course, many scholars point to the preface of the English edition to emphasise Stoker's pastiche technique borrowed from Wilkie Collins, and the preface to the Icelandic edition has often been quoted to propose a link between the Count's crimes and those committed by Jack the Ripper.³ But a step-by-step analysis has not been accomplished yet. In my opinion, the preface is an important key to understanding Stoker's entire *Dracula* enterprise – a key the novelist has hidden in plain sight, like the Invisible Key to the Black Queen's Chamber of Dreams in Roger Vadim's *Barbarella* movie (1968). Maybe this is the reason why it has escaped the attention of *Dracula* experts discussing single aspects of the book, like Stoker's hints to Wallachian history, the geographical sites mentioned or the story's timeframe. In this essay, I will try to

² Maxime Leroy, 2006, makes some interesting remarks about Stoker's preface to the Icelandic edition, but does not discuss it as a whole, nor address the issues dealt with in this essay. Joel H. Emerson, *Deeper into the Rabbit Hole of Dracula*, dated 1 Febr. 2008 on www.draculawasframed.blogspot.de, comes closest to a direct questioning.

³ Most prominently by Robert Eighteen-Bisang, 2005, as mentioned further below.

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demonstrate how the one thing fits to the other, and why the novel's tricky tail matches its noble head so well.

The preface to the UK edition opens with a seemingly inconspicuous statement: "How these papers have been placed in sequence will be made manifest in the reading of them." This conveys the impression that the author hesitates to mention his own role at all and merely acted as an editor – a notion picked up in the next line: "All needless matters have been eliminated, so that a history almost at variance with the possibilities of later-day belief may stand forth as simple fact." Here it becomes manifest that the narrative to be presented here is at odds with modern views; the conflict between such an incredible story and its purported factual character is explicitly recognised. The last line confirms the veracity of the single statements adding up to a more or less coherent report:

There is throughout no statement of past things wherein memory may err, for all the records chosen are exactly contemporary, given from the standpoints and within range of knowledge of those who made them.

Apparently, no omniscient narrator is at work to inform the reader beyond the notes contributed by "those who made them" – an expression which excludes Bram Stoker, since none of the documents that follow bears his name. Thus, the novel is placed in the tradition of the *manuscrit trouvé* – a stylistic device often employed since Cervantes epitomised it in his *Don Quixote*. It is probably

needless to remind *JDS* readers of Edgar A. Poe's *MS. Found in a Bottle* (1833) or Joseph S. Le Fanu's story collection *In a Glass Darkly* (1872), including the vampire novella *Carmilla*, which greatly influenced Stoker: all were written in this manner.

Whereas most published novels equally present themselves as truthful stories, they do so without special introduction or truth claims. Only the *manuscrit trouvé*, by its very nature, requires a preface to define its originator as its mere "finder":

« Le plus souvent, l'argument du manuscrit trouvé est exposé dans un texte liminaire, que ce texte soit appelé préface, ou avertissement, ou avis de l'éditeur – ou qu'il ne porte pas de nom du tout. »⁴

Many writers have used this method to step back from their narrative and entertain their readers with extraordinary and risqué plots. Implausible, gruesome or erotically provocative scenes can be embedded without assuming authorial responsibility for them. However, while writing his preface to the Icelandic version of *Dracula*, Stoker decided to personally warrant the report's veracity.

This Icelandic adaptation, titled *Makt Myrkranna*, was published for the first time in the Reykjavik periodical *Fjallkonan* of 13 January 1900. *Fjallkonan*'s editor was Valdimar Ásmundsson, who also translated

⁴ Quoted from Christian Angelet, 1990, p. 166. In Poe's case, already the title provides this explanation.

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and edited Stoker's novel. The background of Stoker's cooperation or maybe friendship with Ásmundsson deserves further research. For an analysis of the Icelandic version, which radically deviates from Stoker's original plot, I refer to my essay *Makt Myrkranna – Mother of all Dracula Modifications?* in the February 2014 issue of *Letter from Castle Dracula*.

The English-language original of the Icelandic preface, which Stoker must have sent or given to Ásmundsson, has not been found yet. I sent research requests to four different Icelandic archives, and in the Icelandic National and University Archive, an Ásmundsson family archive could actually be located. Unfortunately, it did not contain any letters or publishing contracts between Stoker and Ásmundsson, or an English version of the preface. For the sake of this essay I will quote from the preface as published by Ásmundsson, as retranslated by myself from the Icelandic.⁵

The first lines more or less repeat the shorter preface to the English edition:

Upon reading this story, the reader can see for himself how these pages have been put together to

⁵ My translation slightly deviates from the translation published by R. Dalby in *Bram Stoker Journal* #5, 1993. With many thanks to Einar Björn Magnússon (Reykjavik City Library), Ásgeir Jónsson (Reykjavik), and my Icelandic friends Vildís Bo Sørensen, (Tønder, DK), Ragna Eyjólfsdóttir (Munich) and Hans Águstsson, Mällersdorf.

make a logical whole. I had to do no more than excise various superfluous minor events and let so the people involved relate their experiences in the same plain manner in which these papers were originally written. For obvious reasons, I have changed the names of the people and places concerned. But otherwise I leave the manuscript unaltered, in accordance with the wishes of those who have considered it their strict duty to present it to the eyes of the public.

After this introduction, Stoker puts his own weight behind the story:

I am convinced that there is no doubt whatever that the events here described *really took place*, however unbelievable and incomprehensible they might appear in the light of common experience.

Despite an appeal to science, it is spelled out that some of these phenomena will remain inexplicable forever; the reader is invited to enter the realm of the supernatural, where the rational mind is foredoomed to fail:

And I am further convinced that they must always remain to some extent incomprehensible, although it is not inconceivable that continuing research in psychology and natural sciences may, in years to come, give logical explanations for such strange happenings which neither scientists nor the secret police have been able to

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understand yet. I state again that this mysterious tragedy which is here described is *completely true in all its external aspects*,⁶ though naturally I have reached a different conclusion on certain points than the people who have put them down on paper.⁷

For the tenability of the described affairs, it comes in handy that they appear to be part of a collective memory:

But the events are incontrovertible, and so many people know of them that they cannot be denied. This series of crimes has not passed yet from the people's memory, this series of crimes, which seem incomprehensible, but appeared to stem from the same root and created in their time as much horror with the public as the infamous murders by Jack the Ripper, which occurred a bit later. Some people still remember the remarkable foreigners who for many seasons⁸ on end played a dazzling role in the life of the nobility here in London, and people remember that one of them⁹, at least, disappeared suddenly

⁶ Icelandic: “ytri viðburði”, lit. “outer events” or “external events”, pointing to the events really taking place “as such”, regardless of their interpretation.

⁷ Icelandic: “sögufólkið”, lit. “storytellers”, the people reporting the story.

⁸ Icelandic “misseri” (seasons) here means periods of six months each: semesters.

⁹ Literally, the Icelandic speaks of “the other” (of a pair): “annar þeirra”. Dalby initially mentions a “group” of

and in an inexplicable way, without leaving any trace.

These lines have given rise to speculation if Stoker had incorporated elements of the Whitechapel murders into his vampire tale; I refer to Robert Eighteen-Bisang's essay here.¹⁰ The member who "disappeared suddenly," cannot point to Lucy – she died in her bed and ended up in "the tomb of her kin". Could it point to the wealthy Texan Quincey Morris, intimate friend of the noble Arthur Holmwood, who vanished during a trip to Transylvania? But then, who are the other "foreigners who for many seasons on end played a dazzling part in the life of the nobility here in London"? The Dutchman Van Helsing entered the stage only shortly before Lucy died and certainly spent no time on aristocratic parties before leading his team to Romania. And what is "this series of crimes" which spread so much horror? The fatalities of Lucy and her mother were covered up by tampering with their death certificates, and the deaths of Mr. Swales and Renfield were not publicly connected with the Hillingham demises: outsiders can hardly have been aware of the interrelations perceived by the "Crew of Light". As already demonstrated in *Makt Myrkranna – Mother of all Dracula Modifications?*, the only logical explanation lies in the fact that the Icelandic preface

foreigners, but the Icelandic text does not specify how many foreigners were involved.

¹⁰ Robert Eighteen-Bisang, 2005.

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points to plot elements newly added to the Icelandic narrative: Harker's Journal hinting at the "Thames Torso Murders" of 1887-1889, commencing more than a year before the Ripper Murders, and to an elitist conspiracy headed by Count Dracula, involving a group of foreign aristocratic diplomats. During the years 1887-1888, the "Thames Mysteries" indeed triggered as much public unrest as the Ripper Murders did later on, and because one of the torso parts was found in Whitechapel, there was much speculation if maybe the murderer was identical in both series.

The public awareness which indeed can be assumed in the Icelandic story helps boost the credibility of the principal witnesses, introduced as Stoker's personal friends – people of high moral standing:

All the people who have willingly or unwillingly played a part in this remarkable story are known generally and well respected. Both Jonathan Harker and his wife (who is an extraordinary woman¹¹) and Dr. Seward are my friends and have been so for many years, and I have never doubted that they were telling the truth; and the highly regarded scientist, who appears here under a pseudonym, is also too famous all over the educated world for his real name, which I have preferred not to mention, to be

¹¹ Icelandic: "valkvendi", from "val" (choice) and "kvendi" (wife): "the best woman a man could wish for".

hidden, least of all from those¹² who from experience have learnt to value and respect his genius and qualities, though they do not more adhere to his view on life than I do.

As a conclusion, Stoker quotes Hamlet's words to Horatio:

But in our days it ought to be clear to all serious-thinking men that "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

The preface closes with "London, ____ Street, August 1898" and Stoker's initials B. S., indicating that he assumes authorial responsibility at least for these introductory lines.

The only back door left open is that Stoker maintains to have "reached a different conclusion on certain points than the people who have put them down on paper" and does not agree with Van Helsing's "views on life" – although Van Helsing's critique of Seward's narrow opinions (Chapter 14, Seward's Diary of 26 September) seems to be completely in tune with Stoker's own words, that some events – despite the progress of science – must to some extent remain incomprehensible forever:

Then tell me, for I am a student of the brain, how you accept hypnotism and reject the thought reading. Let me tell you, my friend, that there are things done today in electrical science which

¹² Meaning that the scientist is so famous that his real name cannot be hidden, especially not from those who...

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would have been deemed unholy by the very man who discovered electricity, who would themselves not so long before been burned as wizards. There are always mysteries in life. Why was it that Methuselah lived nine hundred years, and “Old Parr” one hundred and sixty-nine, and yet that poor Lucy, with four men’s blood in her poor veins, could not live even one day?

But Stoker merely claims the incidents to be true in their “external respects” – does this leave any room for an alternative interpretation of their inner nature? Would it be possible that Stoker’s heroes were victims of their own imagination and saw vampires where there were none? Jonathan Harker’s Journal in Chapters 1-3 indeed may have been the product of brain fever, as he later tends to believe himself.¹³ But not later than in Chapter 16, when Van Helsing and three seasoned men see Lucy, properly buried before, walk around the graveyard, “the lips (...) crimson with fresh blood”, “growling over (the child) as a dog growls over a bone” and “pass through the interstice where scarce a knife blade could have gone”, the “external respects” of these events merge with their supernatural character as their only possible explanation.¹⁴

¹³ See Crişan, 2013, pp. 254ff, for a discussion of Harker’s inner conflicts and fears.

¹⁴ Already in Chapter 15, Seward reported how Lucy must have escaped from a sealed and intact leaden case, but later

Not *three* but *four* times Stoker swears to the truthfulness of the announced story in this Icelandic preface. The italics shown in the quotes (“*really took place*” and “*is completely true in all its external aspects*”) stress the same point even more – they appeared in the original publication in *Fjallkonan* (see text fragment on p. 3 of this essay), but were not reproduced in the 1901 book. Having manoeuvred himself in a position where the logically impossible must be explicated as a matter of fact, the author sees himself forced to add abundant detail to make the scenes look authentic. Again, this procedure is not unusual in fiction – we just have to look at the novels by Dan Brown and movies such as *Abraham Lincoln, Vampire Hunter* (2012), to name just a few examples, to see modern authors incorporate large amounts of historical information in their fantasy scenarios. But whereas Hollywood movies usually end with the disclaimer that any resemblance to persons and events is “purely coincidental and unintended”, Stoker’s Icelandic preface merely states: “For obvious reasons, I have changed the names of the people and places concerned.”

Whatever these “obvious reasons” may be, the novelist clings to his claim of an authentic report, but renders it immune to the charge of inaccuracy by openly “admitting” his manipulations. This way, the entire novel

voluntarily returned to it: A behaviour ruling out the possibility of a “normal” premature burial.

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becomes a hermetically closed construction, precluding the possibility of verification by its readers. Checking the Exeter telephone book or an Ordnance Survey map of Purfleet must remain fruitless. Only the names of the London inns and hotels have not been altered: Visiting The Spaniards or Jack Straw's Castle would not be helpful anyway in our search for an elderly Dutch physician with bulging forehead and his younger British colleague, who enjoyed a single meal there.

Stoker's caveat has not stopped his fans from trying to reconstruct the historical, geographical and biographical matrix behind *Dracula*, with many impressive results, like Art Ronnie's article in the *Los Angeles Times* (1973) about the location of Count de Ville's Piccadilly town house (later supplemented by Bernard Davies) or Philip Temple's article in the *Times Literary Supplement* (1983) about St. Mary's Churchyard in Hendon figuring as "Kingstead". The more astonishing is the laxity with which Professors McNally and Florescu flatly equated Stoker's anti-hero with the historical Vlad III Dracula. They simply assumed that the writer, through Vambéry or other sources, had intimate knowledge about the Impaler's reputation as an exceptionally bloodthirsty tyrant. Since 1997, their negligence has been exposed by Elizabeth Miller's untiring pen, arguing that Stoker, as far as we can see from the sources he consulted, was largely uninformed about this particular Voïvode. What started as a "lone voice crying in the wilderness", after fifteen

years has become accepted wisdom among serious *Dracula* scholars.¹⁵ By way of counterweight to the McNally & Florescu thesis, it has become fashionable to point out inconsistencies and lacunae in the novel's text, at the same time excusing them because Stoker was writing fiction after all, not a history textbook. This justified impulse to contradict the frivolous "Drac=Vlad" formula gradually has led to a new axiom which in turn blocks the sight to some of the finer subtleties of Stoker's penmanship: some (but not all) of the gaps and obscurities in *Dracula* may better be explained from the author's premeditated strategy than from his lack of preparation. As shown in *The Ultimate Dracula*, this seems to apply in at least three central questions: the lifetime identity of the Count, the location of his Castle and the novel's timeframe.

For readers not yet familiar with these findings, it may suffice to say here that the decisive clue about Count Dracula's personal past can be found in Chapter 25 of the novel. Here Van Helsing and Mina recognise the fiend as "that other" of the Dracula "race", living "in a later age" than the first-mentioned Dracula ruler whom we, Wilkinson's book in hand, can easily identify as Vlad III – although Wilkinson does not use this name. After

¹⁵ "Interview with the Vampire Queen: Elizabeth Miller", in *Frontline World*, October 2002, at www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/romania/miller.html (Retrieved 12 March 2012).

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Vlad III, only a few rulers from the Drăculești line actually battled with the Turks, and of these, only Michael the Brave (1558-1601) led a successful military campaign south of the Danube, reaching Adrianople in 1595. Stoker's research notes confirm that he had acknowledged Wilkinson's information about Michael. The third Voivode the writer took notes on, Constantine Brancovano, was not from the Drăculești family and never attacked the Ottomans.¹⁶ This leaves us with Michael the Brave as the only plausible candidate Stoker may have had in mind for "that other", although he ostensibly chose not to introduce him to his readers by name.

Similarly, the route to Castle Dracula can almost completely be reconstructed from the descriptions in the novel, although the writer went to great lengths to obfuscate the footsteps of his characters by snow storms and "sleep travelling" periods. From the first chapters we know that Harker left the Borgo Pass in the Count's calèche around midnight in a south-east direction and arrived well before dawn (5:30 a.m.), with enough time for a "hasty toilet", a meal of roasted chicken and some small talk with his host: Before arriving, there must have been four hours of racing through the dark, with a few breaks for the driver to inspect the gold at the blue flames. This trip must have brought him well into the

¹⁶ Eighteen Bisang/Miller, 2008, pp. 244ff, Rosenbach # 71 & 72 (EL3.S874d MS in Rosenbach Museum & Library).

Călimani Mountains, near the border between Transylvania and Moldavia. Mina Harker's Journal of 6 November teaches us that from a vantage point near the Castle, she was able to see the Bistritza River winding its way through the Moldavian plains: She and the Professor must have been standing on the eastern ridge of the Kelemen caldera, the remains of Europe's largest extinct volcano, marked by the peaks of the Reșițio, the Izvorul and the Cserbük. From Chapter 26, Harker's Journal of 30 October, we know that he and Arthur, following the Slovaks with the Count's box by steam launch, hoped to overhaul them before Straja because they "took it, that somewhere about the 47th degree, north latitude, would be the place chosen for crossing the country between the river and the Carpathians." If we add that Mina and the Professor, after mainly travelling in a south-east direction, finally reached the Castle via a loop leading them west again, the Izvorul peak stands out as the most suitable choice for the Castle's location. However, only Stoker's research notes provide final certainty. With regard to the chase along the Bistritza River through Moldavia, Stoker noted: "Between Strasha [Strascha or Straja – HdR] and Isvorul is 47 E Long, 25 $\frac{3}{4}$ N Lat."¹⁷

¹⁷ Bram Stoker, *Dracula, Notes and Outline*, ca. 1890 - ca. 1896, p. 33b (detail), EL3.S874d MS Rosenbach Museum & Library, Philadelphia, PA.

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After correcting Stoker's commutation of longitude and latitude, we find the Tulghe Pass (Hung. Tölgyes) as the point at the "47th degree, north latitude" where the Count's men, leaving the Bistritza River at Straja, would cross the Carpathians, obviously heading for the Kelemen Izvorul.¹⁸

Obviously, the novelist knew both the name and the precise coordinates of the empty mountain top which he had picked as the location of the Vampire's fictitious residence. But just as evidently, he preferred not to divulge it to his readers; his research notes, of course, were never meant to be published. These circumstances led me to the conclusion that his descriptive vagueness in some instances is mere camouflage. In other cases, quite ironically, the author's very accuracy has been dismissed as imprecision by his annotators: Leonard Wolf, Clive Leatherdale and Leslie Klinger all fail to recognise that Harker's remark about the Szgany crossing over from the Bistritza River to the Count's homeland around the 47° Parallel was a conscientious reflection of the geographical framework Stoker had devised.¹⁹

Similarly, none of the essayists trying to specify the Vampire's "Otherness" apparently realised that in

¹⁸ In publications from Stoker's times, the spellings "Isvorul" and "Izvorul" were used interchangeably.

¹⁹ Clive Leatherdale, 1998, p. 484, footnote 127; Leonard Wolf, 1993, p. 417, footnote 29; p. 420, footnote 35; p. 421, footnote 38, p. 423, footnote 41; Leslie Klinger, 2008, 471 and 475, route mark-ups on 1896 Baedeker map.

Stoker's text the bloodsucker literally *is* "that other": a second member of the Dracula dynasty, to be distinguished from the first one mentioned by the Count in his talk with Harker. Though Van Helsing inflates his conversation with Mina about the habits of the Count's criminal mind by metaphorical remarks about his "duck thought" becoming "a big swan thought that sail nobly on big wings", it still is amazing that another "queer Dutchman" was needed to notice, 115 years after the fact, that Stoker disclosed – and at the same time concealed – the Count's lifetime identity in these very paragraphs. Technically speaking, there was no need at all to introduce a second Dracula family member to the story – within the Millerian paradigm, the fiction writer Stoker could simply have attributed the character qualities of the second warrior to the first one.²⁰ Thus we must assume that this duplexity, already laid out in Chapter 3, was wilfully designed to create the mere *illusion* of a historical reference, eluding us the very moment we try to pin it down. Stoker must have disliked the idea that his readers would look up the life of his "Vampire Voïvode" in a book on Romanian history, just like the vision of one of his critics climbing all the way up to the top of the

²⁰ "A fictional character can have any history his creator wishes to endow." Elizabeth Miller about the Count, 2006, p. 172.

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Izvorul, panting and sweating, only to castigate the absence of a castle there, must have displeased him.²¹

While the conceptual topics conferred here require an additional, abstract reflection of Stoker's literary goals and methods, some old disputes can be resolved quite painlessly by looking at his actual sources, instead of any further facts he *might* have known and hinted at. Partly in reaction to McNally & Florescu, for example, several authors have hypothesised that the Count, when talking about the first ruler “who as Voïviode crossed the Danube and beat the Turk on his own ground” but was betrayed by “his own unworthy brother, (who) when he had fallen, sold his people to the Turk”, was pointing to János Hunyadi instead of Vlad III.²² Comparing Stoker's research notes and the novel's text to William Wilkinson's book (1820) quickly shows that such advances are completely pointless.²³ In this case, Stoker

²¹ English books on Romanian history *did* exist in Stoker's days; James Samuelson's *Roumania – Past and Present*, London: Longmans, Green, & Co, 1882, would have been a logical choice. If we had any evidence that Stoker had read it, this would mean that he would have been better informed on Vlad III Dracula and especially Michael the Brave than hitherto assumed.

²² Leslie Klinger, 2008, p. 69f, notes 26 and 27, presents us this theory again, originally advocated by Grigore Nandris (1966), Gabriel Ronay (1974), Leonard Wolf (1975) and Séan Manchester (1985).

²³ See also Miller's critique of Manchester in her first edition of *Dracula – Sense & Nonsense*, 2000, p. 111. For a

copied Wilkinson's information almost word for word, while the latter without doubt referred to Vlad III, not to Hunyadi, whom he had discussed earlier. It makes no sense to replace McNally's & Florescu's speculations by even more far-fetched postulations when Stoker's *modus operandi* is that clear and simple; the real cover-up took place somewhere else.

Likewise, in the case of the Scholomance, it is easier to trace Stoker's description back to Emily Gerard's writings than to conjecture that he may have heard of the Solomonari and their alleged ceremonial gatherings at Solomon's Rocks, which, in order to fit the (erroneous) argument, must be removed more than 100 km from Braşov to Bâlea Lac!²⁴ Instead of diving into the depths of Romanian folklore, it would have sufficed to read *The Land beyond the Forest* (1888), in which Gerard describes her excursion to "the Devil's cauldron" in agreeable detail – enough to re-enact her planned walk to the origins of the Cibin River and hear the myths she connected to the "Jäser See" from the mouth of a member of the regional Mountain Police who – speaking neither English nor German – surely never had heard of her book. Rather than double-checking Gerard's findings, Stoker tacitly relied

complete text comparison and historical background, see my essay *Stoker's Vampire Trap*, LiUEP, 19 March 2012.

²⁴ Leslie Klinger, 2008, pp. 342f, note 45, referring to his communication with Nicolae Paduraru, co-founder of *The Transylvanian Society of Dracula*.

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on her article "Transylvanian Superstitions" in *The Nineteenth Century* (1885) and baptised the unnamed lake depicted there "Lake Hermanstadt".²⁵ Lucky for Stoker and for us, Gerard had done her homework well and even the warnings of the local people, portrayed as credulous, were – and still are – not far removed from to the truth: When I arrived at Iezerul Mare, the distant roll of thunder was heard and our guide urged us not to spend too much time on the Cindrel peak: three months earlier, a German tourist had been killed by lightning nearby.

A third example is the origin of the Carfax estate described by Jonathan Harker in his dealings with his uncanny patron, its buyer. Several authors have attempted to find a similar edifice in Purfleet.²⁶ In my opinion, though, Stoker imported the whole complex, mediaeval tower "with only a few windows high up", massive walls, church and a mismatched succession of architecture included, directly from Oxford. Since the late 1880s, his own son Noel was educated at an Oxford boarding school, so that we may safely assume that the writer was familiar

²⁵ Stoker even copied the spelling error "Hermanstadt" from Gerard's article: "A small lake, immeasurably deep, lying high up among the mountains to the south of Hermanstadt, is supposed to be the cauldron where is brewed the thunder, and in fair weather the dragon sleeps beneath the waters." For more details see the upcoming *Travel Guide*.

²⁶ See Elizabeth Miller, 2006, pp. 144ff.

with the town's landmark - the Carfax building at the city centre's main crossroad.²⁷

Simple and complex strategies of reference and dissimulation thus peacefully co-exist in *Dracula* and only profound research and concentrated reading can help us to tell one from the other.²⁸ All of these strategies, however, seem to fit in the larger pattern of Stoker's paradox ambitions as outlined in the discussed prefaces. Here the novelist, in his own words, addresses the fundamental conflict between fact and fiction, his persistent claim of truthfulness leading to an inevitable dilemma. Providing an elaborate backdrop,

²⁷ Information about Noel's boarding school derived from an unpublished manuscript by Dacre Stoker. Klinger, 2008, p. 55f, note 56, notes the correct etymological connection with "quadrafu[r]cus", but fails to recognise the similarity of Stoker's fictitious Carfax to the Oxford model. See *The Ultimate Dracula*, 2012, p. 42, footnote 79.

²⁸ As I discovered, Arthur's surname "Holmwood" probably is derived from the village of Holmwood, near Godalming; the surname "Singleton" (occurring only in the Notes) from Mary Singleton (Mary Montgomerie Currie née Lamb, 1843–1905, pen name "Violet Fane"). But even the most meticulous research will sometimes fail to lead to definitive results, because we cannot read Stoker's mind. The true identity of Van Helsing, for example, to whom Stoker dedicates an extra line in his preface to the Icelandic edition, is extremely hard to establish. I refer to my article in the magazine *De Parelduiker* of Oct. 2012 about the possible role of the Dutch psychiatrists Drs. Albert W. Van Renterghem and Frederik van Eeden, who founded a celebrated clinic for hypnotic treatment in Amsterdam in 1887.

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proper train time tables included, adds to the believability of an unlikely plot and thus enhances the dramatic appeal and commercial success of the book. Vital names and places, however, had to be encoded, blurred or simply left out, to avoid closer examination and verification. With his “factual supernatural story” Stoker attempted to create an oxymoron. Only in the light of this essentially impossible goal may we recognise some seemingly mindless “errors” as part of an intelligent scheme. The time frame of the novel, for instance, has controversially been debated, without satisfactory result. Elizabeth Miller maintains that Stoker intended the novel to take place in 1893, the year in which Charcot deceased, the *Westminster Gazette* was founded and the term “New Woman” was coined. Moreover, Stoker used a calendar book to plot his story; for 1893, the weekdays seamlessly correspond to the dates.²⁹

In Harker's addendum, however, we find the remark: “Seven years ago, we all went through the flames”. For a book published in 1897, the action thus must be set in 1890 or earlier. The typeset manuscript inspected by Leslie Klinger even states “Eleven years ago”.³⁰ Accordingly, Klinger pleads for an early year of action – but has difficulties to explain the occurrence of

²⁹ Elizabeth Miller, 2006, pp. 86ff.

³⁰ Leslie Klinger, 2008, p. 500, note 56 and Appendix 2, *The Dating of Dracula*, pp. 57 ff.

technical gear appearing only after 1890, like the portable typewriter. It makes no sense to choose between either Miller's or Klinger's position, because neither is completely compatible with the text. Instead, we may deduce that Stoker, skilled in mental arithmetic, was aware of these internal contradictions and intended to leave his readers in the dark. The very fact that "eleven" could easily be replaced by "seven" shortly before finalising the manuscript, without completely rewriting it, implies that Stoker did not want to synchronise his plot with external events in an obvious way.

In the "Three Owls" *Dracula* edition we find the subhead *A Mystery Story*.³¹ Although I could not establish yet whether this addition had been created by the publisher or by the author himself, it fittingly illustrates the nature of Stoker's endeavor.³² In *The Forgotten Writings of Bram Stoker*, edited by John Edgar Browning, we find another,

³¹ W. R. Caldwell & Co, New York ca. 1909-1910, International Adventure Library. With many thanks to Paul S. McAlduff, Managing Editor of www.bramstoker.org, for identifying this edition and providing pictures of it.

³² Paul S. McAlduff points to the fact that R. W. Caldwell published several other suspense novels with the very same tag line (email communication with Paul S. McAlduff of 27-28 December 2013). David J. Skal confirmed to me that the US copyright to *Dracula* was only questioned during negotiations between Florence Stoker and Universal Pictures for the sequel movie *Dracula's Daughter* in the 1930s, so that there is no reason to assume that Bram Stoker's communication with Caldwell was disrupted (email communication with David J. Skal of 29 December 2013).

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much shorter “mystery story”, published in the *Boston Sunday Herald* in 1893: *Old Hoggen: A Mystery*. In the tradition of Edgar A. Poe, an anonymous narrator reports about a wild adventure involving a pair of crabs and a corpse falling apart. Even after newspaper reports have confirmed that he has not been dreaming, in his epilogue the protagonist hesitates to accept his memories as real. In a likewise manner, the *Dracula* narrative oscillates between feverish imagination and written testimony, the objectivity of which collapses only at the very end—in *cauda venenum*—in Harker's post-script note already mentioned:

We were struck with the fact, that in all the mass of material of which the record is composed, there is hardly one authentic document. Nothing but a mass of typewriting, except the later notebooks of Mina and Seward and myself, and Van Helsing's memorandum. We could hardly ask any one, even did we wish to, to accept these as proofs of so wild a story. Van Helsing summed it all up as he said, with our boy on his knee, “We want no proofs. We ask none to believe us!”

With this final disclaimer, Stoker skilfully closes his circle. What in the preface has been announced as solid and irrefutable fact and in the whole novel has been propped up by elaborate depictions of local traditions, costumes, sayings and even cooking recipes, in the

epilogue suddenly volatilises.³³ The reader is left with an unseizable phantom. Even if science proves that it cannot exist, it may come back to haunt us in our dreams.

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³³ Already the *Washington Times* of 21 January 1900 commented: "One wonders if the characters themselves did not feel in after years as if the whole thing had been a miasmatic vision of delirium and the last chapter hints that they did." Quoted from www.bramstokerestate.com/Dracula-Serial-Bram-Stoker-Estate-Washington-Times.html. See also Andrew Elfenbein, *Dracula, A Longman Cultural Edition*, London: Pearson-Longman, 2010, p. 405.

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From *Dracula* to *Twilight*: The Threat of the Romantic Vampire

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One of the most interesting developments in literature and pop culture in the past three decades has been the rise and near-improbable revolutionizing of the vampire. Although there have been books featuring this “modern” vampire that preceded it, Stephenie Meyer’s *Twilight* is credited as the catalyst of the oft-cited vampire “craze” among young women. Gone, it would seem, are the days of Bram Stoker’s terrifyingly evil title character Dracula; in the Count’s place, readers find themselves taken with the likes of Meyer’s timelessly romantic and physically perfect Edward Cullen. Edward and his vampire “family” resemble GQ model look-alikes who enjoy nothing but the finest things that immortality has to offer, save for the one thing that they are supposed to desire most of all: human blood. The Cullen clan adopt a “vegetarian” (181) lifestyle in which they abstain from drinking human blood because they think of it as morally reprehensible, choosing instead to prey on animals. Not only does Edward look like an Adonis in the flesh (299, 317), he operates under a thoughtfully constructed set of *morals*. Meyer appears to have created the perfect “man” in Edward, the “bad boy” that you actually *can* take home to your family. One

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would go so far as to say that, if Edward were human, he would be the ideal romantic partner. Edward is, however, a vampire, a fact that presents both conflicts in the fictional world of the novel and concern in reality for the target demographic.

Despite the fact that Meyer's *Twilight* targets a much younger reading demographic and seemingly removes the most horrific of vampire characteristics, the novel is potentially more sinister than *Dracula*. When girls "scream" in *Twilight*, it is *for* Edward, not *because* of him; when they can't take their eyes off of Edward, it is in *fascination*, not *horror* (20-22); when Edward renders girls speechless, it is not because he has said something *threatening*, but because he is "*dazzling*" (43, 167-68, 184, 209, 282) them. Meyer manages to retain the threat of danger that loomed in *Dracula* and merge it with a character akin to a Disney prince. The combination of a traditionally animalistic monster housed within a charming, handsome, immortal seventeen-year-old male presents the most terrifying character in vampire literature yet. Meyer's Edward Cullen exists as a more dangerous vampire than Stoker's *Dracula* due to the sympathetic narrative Meyer uses to build Edward's character upon; the sympathetic narrative simultaneously allows the reader to forget the monstrous actions that Edward is capable of and forgive him when he demonstrates those capabilities.

Entering the Conversation

While this analysis contends that the most prominent issue in *Twilight* is Meyer's disturbing characterization of Edward's vampiric nature, the issue comes even further into relief when considering that the author tells the story from the perspective of Edward's love interest, Bella Swan. Lydia Kokkola, author of "Virtuous Vampires and Voluptuous Vamps: Romance

Conventions Reconsidered in Stephenie Meyer's 'Twilight' Series," states that "the use of the first-person narrator, especially one who speaks so intimately, encourages the readers to forgive...and condone...behavior" (5). With that observation, Kokkola highlights a concern that plagues the novel as a whole: as the author tells the story entirely from Bella's first-person perspective, it is an almost automatic assumption that she is the character driving the action of the novel. In reality, however, Bella fails to control even the minutest of elements in the story, including her reaction to Edward. Through Bella's point of view, Edward's monstrous nature is desirable and attractive rather than something that incites feelings of terror and revulsion. In fact, the threat that Edward could snap and kill Bella at any moment cultivates the novel's theme of forbidden love even further, making the relationship between the two main characters more thrilling, considering that one misstep could result in tragedy.

Since it skyrocketed to popularity after its 2005 publication, *Twilight* has been subject to a wealth of scholarly conversation given its controversial plot. There have been numerous articles and anthologies devoted to analyzing the novel through various critical lenses. One such example is *Bitten by Twilight: Youth Culture, Media, & the Vampire Franchise*, a collection of essays devoted to understanding "the reasons that so many have connected with the powerful messages the books and films deliver" (Click et al x), published just five years following the novel's initial publication. The collective works are divided into three separate categories, which consist of "Biting into the Twilight Narrative," "Biting into the Twilight Fandom," and "Biting into the Twilight Franchise." The articles analyze *Twilight* through a range of lenses, from religion to gender and sexuality to commodification.

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Another anthology of critical essays on the novel, *Bringing Light to Twilight: Perspectives on a Pop Culture Phenomenon* (2011), is similarly organized around the thematic issues of “Literary Contexts: Past and Present,” “Gender and Sexuality,” and “Class, Race, and Green Space.” Out of the 31 articles between the two anthologies, however, none considers how the vampire has evolved from its original characteristics and what the implications of that evolution are. Although one included selection, Melissa Ames’ “Analyzing ‘Biting’ Critiques of Vampire Narratives for Their Portrayals of Gender and Sexuality,” puts *Twilight* in dialogue with popular vampire tales such as *Dracula* and Anne Rice’s *The Vampire Chronicles*, its goal is to analyze how the narratives characterize and treat females in their universes, only discussing vampires in relation to their female counterparts.

Most of the conversation, in fact, surrounding *Twilight* revolves around establishing its problematic anti-feminist message and troubling characterization of healthy relationships for young adults; if the vampire aspect of *Twilight* is subject to conversation at all, it is generally to assert that it has made a mockery of the vampire archetype by turning it into a romantic hero. In “*Twilight* is Not Good for the Maidens: Gender, Sexuality, and the Family,” Anna Silver states that, “Edward is exaggeratedly more active and confident than the generally passive, insecure Bella” in *Twilight* (125); Bella’s repeated concessions to Edward open her up to the charge of being an anti-feminist role model for young readers. Abigail Nathan, an editor at *Bothersome Words*, takes Silver’s observations about Edward and Bella’s dynamic to a new level by asserting that “adults are frequently disturbed by the nature of Edward and Bella’s relationship, describing Edward as a stalker and Bella as a victim” (quoted in Lay). Danielle Borgia

agrees with Nathan's observations, contending that Edward "lures her with money, cars, clothing—all of which she claims she does not want—to isolate her from connection with others" (157) in her article "*Twilight*: The Glamorization of Abuse, Codependency, and White Privilege." While these are challenging issues deserving of critical discourse, there seems to be an inherent disregard for taking into account the fact that Edward is an entirely different *species* than Bella, instead choosing to analyze the relationship between the two characters simply as a problematic teenage romance.

It is this disregard for discussing the challenging power dynamic in Edward and Bella's relationship in terms of vampire/human rather than male/female that allows the reader to perceive Edward as a good, if somewhat controlling and misguided, "guy" in the context of the *Twilight* universe. The popular opinion of Edward as a vampire is that he represents a watered-down, laughable version of the once prevalent vampire archetype established by Dracula, given that he sparkles in the sunlight and drinks animal blood in lieu of harming humans. Even Anne Rice, author of the massively popular *The Vampire Chronicles*, weighs in on the nature of Edward's characterization on her Facebook, saying that the vampires in her novels "feel sorry for vampires that sparkle in the sun." Instead of trivializing his sinister nature and making how Edward sparkles in the sun a defining trait of his vampirism, more focus should be afforded to interrogating the acts that he has the *potential* to commit; just because Edward *chooses* not to do something, does not mean that he is not *capable* of it.

Considering the Vampires

Although teenagers by nature have raging hormones, vampires are famous for their overt tendency

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towards the sexual. The inherently sexual nature of vampires is what makes *Twilight* such a unique case in vampire literature, however, especially in comparison to Stoker's *Dracula*; in Meyer's effort to reinvent the mythical vampires, she strives, almost painfully so, to avoid the sexual aspect so frequently associated with vampirism. Regardless of her best efforts, however, she simply cannot avoid the connection between sexuality and vampires altogether, as demonstrated by this admission from Edward: "When we hunt, we give ourselves over to our senses... govern less with our minds... If you were anywhere near me when I lost control that way..." (225). By implying that Bella should not be "near" Edward when he "loses control that way," Meyer is alluding to the fact that Bella would be a *victim* of Edward's sexual desires despite the fact that the rest of the novel positions her as a more than willing participant. These slip-ups aside, Meyer does an adequate job painting the portrait of a vampire that is almost completely devoid of any carnality, unknowingly lending merit to Edward's potential for sinister acts. That Edward is presented as a vampire that has no apparent sexual tendencies is meant to remove one of the major threats typically associated with the creatures, making Edward appear to be "safe" or "tame" in comparison to the traditional Dracula, when he is equally capable of being as threatening as the Count.

Unlike his popular vampire successor, Dracula operates under neither a specific moral nor an ethical code, nor does he seem to retain any traces of humanity. Save for when Stoker introduces readers to the Count at the beginning of the novel, he never attempts to appear as anything less than a horrific monster. Despite claiming that he "can love" (Stoker 36), Dracula repeatedly demonstrates that his only motivation is to prey upon and destroy the innocent, with a particular

focus on virginal women. The act of predation and the conquering of women appear to be the character's only true purposes in the novel, purposes that he fulfills quite well. He has a trio of hyper-sexualized female vampires that answer to his every whim and command. He makes a sport out of turning Lucy Westenra, a previously pure if promiscuous young woman, into a wanton vampire (198) that preys upon young children (165-66) and literally tries to seduce her fiancé to death (198-99). Dracula's cruelty to Mina Harker is perhaps even greater, feeding on her multiple times and forcing her to drink his blood in turn (265-66). Dracula's menacing acts of manipulation and subjugation define the vampire archetype for readers, establishing that the creatures are capable of committing heinous acts with no remorse. As Dracula is the embodiment of the traditional gothic vampire, it is difficult to imagine how the vampire is so thoroughly re-imagined into a "reluctant hero" that not only obtains sympathy from readers but also stirs feelings of romance and desire.

Glennis Byron, author of "As one Dead": *Romeo and Juliet* in the 'Twilight' zone," discusses seminal works of literature in relation to the modern vampire's appeal and how it replaces the traditional heroic male, relying heavily on Meyer's *Twilight* to further the direction of the analysis:

The human is emptied out to create a space into which is poured a consumer fantasy, a celebrity, a teen icon, a hero of popular romance. Edward in *Twilight* is not just a simulation of the human; he is a simulation of what is already a simulation, a reproduction of something found only on "the air-brushed faces of a fashion magazine;" the vampires even feel like reproductions; they are hard like stone, and just as cold. The characteristics of the hero of

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popular romance are here literalized in the vampire's form. (178)

Byron asserts that the vampires featured in novels today are *enhanced* versions of humans; the lead vampire male, while somewhat resembling the typical male hero, is actually much more. That Meyer has successfully taken physical characteristics of the traditional vampire – “without a single speck of color” and “cold as ice” (Stoker 14) – and added both physical and personality traits consistent with a generic “consumer fantasy” speaks to the sinister brilliance of Edward's characterization. In an instance where Meyer almost transcends the world of the novel to comment on the vampire-to-fantasy phenomenon, Edward acknowledges that he is a “superhero” (92) in Bella's eyes, but quickly counters with the most provocative question of the novel that he answers with emphatic agreement: “What if I'm the bad guy?” (92). This is something that he was “born” to be as a vampire.

Although Bella is adamant that Edward is one of the “good guys,” Meyer unknowingly uses Bella to alert readers to some of Edward's rather substantial flaws. For example, the book focuses on Edward's careful control of his instincts to kill Bella, but his behavior in the novel is erratic at best. No less than seven times does Bella describe Edward's eyes, face, and voice as being “cold” (64, 82, 86, 174, 184, 186, 381) towards her following civilized or encouraging gestures on Edward's part; she even goes so far as to note that his mood changes are “unpredictable” (211). This kind of inconsistency reminds readers that Edward is truly a dangerous character, especially in comparison to Dracula. Edward is the antithesis to Dracula, the ultimate “wolf in sheep's clothing.” Dracula neither seeks nor desires to deny his vampiric impulses, making the threat of his existence known from the onset of every scene, whereas Edward

constantly struggles to conceal his nature. When Bella notes that he is unable to control the most basic of emotions, readers are reminded that Edward could also lose control and act on his monstrous impulses at any moment, ending the war with himself and fulfilling his nature by killing her—his prey.

...and their victims

While we will find out that *Twilight* fails to view women as autonomous beings, *Dracula* certainly is not the greatest friend to the characterization of females either. One of the most troubling observations of Stoker's *Dracula* is the way in which it negotiates Lucy's sexual liberation as a vampire and Mina's idealness as the proper English woman—essentially speaking, the way in which women are “othered” in the novel. Critic Charles Bressler defines “the other” as “an object whose existence is defined and interpreted by the dominant male” (173). In a clear exercise of the patriarchy's power, Lucy is the only female that attempts to subvert male dominance with her sexual prowess as a vampire. The men who once sought to help Lucy prior to her transformation subsequently murder her. The men in the novel all seek to restore order to society by not only destroying Dracula, but also by reaffirming the woman's role as that of “the other,” one who is subservient to a man. Perhaps that is one of the more brilliant parts of Dracula's villainy; what the men of the novel seek to contain and destroy, Dracula seeks to nurture and unleash. In other words, Dracula derives a kind of satisfaction in releasing women from the bonds of English propriety, all the while knowing that it will end in their demise. While Dracula ultimately contributes to their “othered” state by victimizing them, he also gives them some semblance of liberation that

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men in the Victorian era were unwilling to offer. More unwilling still is Edward Cullen in comparison.

One would assume that, due to both the modern era in which it is set and the stark avoidance of the issue of sex altogether in *Twilight*, the days of “othering” women have passed; of course, this assumption is faulty. In Meyer’s calculated efforts to remove the threat of sexuality from the vampire to transform it into an appealing hero, she forces the “sexless” vampire to restrain his female love interest’s own sexuality as well. Edward does resist killing Bella despite how much his vampiric nature demands that he do so, but he substitutes her literal death for a series of metaphorical ones. Edward is both denying Bella the opportunity to grow and forcing her to put his needs ahead of her desires, all while Bella is convinced that she could never be good enough for *him* in all of his “perfection.”¹ Despite Meyer’s attempts to convince the reader that Bella is in control of the relationship’s destiny, Edward is clearly the one deciding what will and will not happen in their “relationship.”

As Byron shrewdly observes, there is the “continual excess, the thrilling suggestion that boundaries will be overstepped, followed by the emphatic reassertion that they will not be. . . . But as the prolonged eroticism of such encounters between Edward and Bella shows, he disturbs, as well as defines, moral boundaries” in *Twilight* (182). In order to arrive at the discussion of boundaries, however, one must analyze the root of Bella’s attraction to Edward as a partner. It is clearly demonstrated in the novel that Bella is most attracted to Edward at the times when he is at his most monstrous,

¹ See pages 19, 20, 50, 54, 74, 79, 81, 168, 210, 219, 227, 256-57, 260-61, 277, 282, 322, 345, 453, 481 510, 513, 521, and 525.

indicating that she is seduced by the danger he presents without saying it outright. Edward overwhelms Bella with his mysteriousness, making it impossible for her to want anything or anyone but him. In a sense, Edward liberates Bella in the way that Dracula liberates Lucy; through Edward, Bella discovers her sexual awakening. Even though he is the one to “liberate” her, Edward victimizes Bella by controlling her and forcing her to repress her desires.

At no point in the novel is Bella able to control her reactions to the way Edward makes her feel. Bella's embarrassment over these reactions suggests that she lacks the inherent ability to resist him, or rather, that she lacks the control to resist something that she wants. Meyer writes that Bella was “stunned by the unexpected electricity that flowed through me...a crazy impulse to reach over and touch him... nearly overwhelmed me...” (218) and that a “shock ran through my [Bella's] body at his casual touch” (273 brackets added). In great part, the “electricity” Bella describes plays two crucial roles in her relationship with Edward. In one sense, she continually gives herself over to the effect it has on her and she allows this to rule her. Bella cannot maintain the effect Edward has on her, for a multitude of reasons, the least of which being that Edward can hear her heart and blood race or smell a change in her chemistry. Edward's “electricity” makes Bella more than foolish in his presence, as demonstrated in her fainting following one of their chaste kisses: “And then I collapsed” (319). She also states that she “would rather die than stay away from you [Edward]” (274 brackets added), a declaration that defines what party is in control of the relationship as sharply as Edward and Bella's actions do.

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Edward also sets the moral boundaries of their relationship, as Byron previously asserted. Although many critical articles characterize Bella² as a passive character, she is quite pro-active where one issue is concerned: sex. In what is perhaps the only instance of female progression from *Dracula* to *Twilight*, conservative-minded Bella is the pursuer of a physical relationship without the catalyst of a transformation as literal as Lucy's, while Edward is both the *object* of the pursuit and the *arbitrator* over the pursuit itself. Meyers casts no allusions or double meanings where Bella is concerned; she makes it quite clear that she yearns to have a sexual relationship with Edward. Kokkola concurs, observing that Bella is the character in the novel that is "constantly filled with carnal desire" (4). In *Twilight*, Edward can either be found rebuffing Bella's physical advances or unfairly admonishing her for having those desires for him at all, even though he is the one that observes that "everything about me invites you in – my voice, my face, even my *smell*" (Meyer 263-64). In many ways, Edward seeks to contain Bella's sexual desires in much the same way that the human males in *Dracula* all seek to contain the hypersexual Lucy through her death. While Bella does protest at the beginning of every rejection, she also concedes every time, allowing Edward to control not only the situation, but her as well.

Recalling Kokkola's observation about the implications of having a first-person narrator, readers forgive Edward's controlling behavior and classify it as romantic because that is how *Bella* chooses to see it. Unlike Meyer's first-person narrative, Stoker's epistolary novel¹ allows for no observation of Dracula

² See Ames, Clarke, Lay, and Siering.

outside of the horrific. Edward is a new, more dangerous breed of vampire that “dazzles” his victims, convincing them he is doing them an *honor* by associating with them. As Bella internally admits to herself that “...there was no way around it; I could refuse him nothing” (Meyer 284), there is little to do but agree with her. Meyer clearly defines Bella as “the other” in *Twilight*, since her existence is quite plainly “defined and interpreted by the dominant male” (Bressler 173), just as Lucy and Mina are in *Dracula*. Edward defines her very character to the very core; without Edward, there is no Bella. Although Edward describes himself as being “alien” (Meyer 275) because he is a vampire, he has turned Bella into the true “alien” character in her very own narrative. The appeal of Edward in Meyer’s story outweighs the danger that he should pose, making him far more deadly and opportunistic than Stoker’s *Dracula* could ever hope to be.

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