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DRACULA

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A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

Bram Stoker

DRACULA



AUTHORITATIVE TEXT
CONTEXTS
REVIEWS AND REACTIONS
DRAMATIC AND FILM VARIATIONS
CRITICISM

Edited by

NINA AUERBACH

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and

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Finally, the novel has it both ways: Dracula is destroyed⁹ and Van Helsing saved; Lucy is destroyed and Mina saved. The novel ends on a rather ironic note, given our understanding here, as Harker concludes with a quote from the good father, Van Helsing:

"We want no proofs; we ask none to believe us! This boy will some day know what a brave and gallant woman his mother is. Already he knows her sweetness and loving care; later on he will understand how some men so loved her, that they did dare so much for her sake" (416). [327]

CAROL A. SENF

Dracula: The Unseen Face in the Mirror†

The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

Julius Caesar, I, ii, 134-35

Published in 1897, *Dracula* is an immensely popular novel which has never been out of print, has been translated into at least a dozen languages, and has been the subject of more films than any other novel. Only recently, however, have students of literature begun to take it seriously, partially because of the burgeoning interest in popular culture and partially because *Dracula* is a work which raises a number of troubling questions about ourselves and our society.¹ Despite this growing interest in Bram Stoker's best-known novel, the majority of literary critics read *Dracula* as a popular myth about the opposition of Good and Evil without bothering to address more specifically literary matters such as style, characterization, and method of narration. This article, on the other hand, focuses on Stoker's narrative technique in general and specifically on his choice of unreliable narrators. As a result, my reading of *Dracula* is a departure from most standard interpretations in that it revolves, not around the conquest of Evil by Good, but on the similarities between the two.

9. When discussing this paper with a class, two of my students argued that Dracula is not, in fact, destroyed at the novel's conclusion. They maintained that his last look is one of triumph and that his heart is not staked but pierced by a mere bowie knife. Their suggestion that, at least, the men do not follow the elaborate procedures to insure the destruction of Dracula that they religiously observe with regard to that of the women, is certainly of value here, whether one agrees that Dracula still stalks the land. My thanks to Lucinda Donnelly and Barbara Kotacka for these observations.

† Reprinted by permission from *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 9 (1979): 160-70.

1. Recent full-length studies of *Dracula* include the following books: Radu Florescu and Raymond T. McNally, *In Search of Dracula* (New York: New York Graphic Society, 1972); Gabriel Ronay, *The Truth About Dracula* (New York: Stein and Day, 1972); and Leonard Wolf, *A Dream of Dracula: In Search of the Living Dead* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972).

More familiar with the numerous film interpretations than with Stoker's novel, most modern readers are likely to be surprised by *Dracula* and its intensely topical themes; and both the setting and the method of narration which Stoker chose contribute to this sense of immediacy. Instead of taking place in a remote Transylvanian castle or a timeless and dreamlike "anywhere," most of the action occurs in nineteenth-century London. Furthermore, Stoker de-emphasizes the novel's mythic qualities by telling the story through a series of journal extracts, personal letters, and newspaper clippings—the very written record of everyday life. The narrative technique resembles a vast jigsaw puzzle of isolated and frequently trivial facts; and it is only when the novel is more than half over that the central characters piece these fragments together and, having concluded the Dracula is a threat to themselves and their society, band together to destroy him.

On the surface, the novel appears to be a mythic re-enactment of the opposition between Good and Evil because the narrators attribute their pursuit and ultimate defeat of Dracula to a high moral purpose. However, although his method of narration doesn't enable him to comment directly on his characters' failures in judgment or lack of self-knowledge, Stoker provides several clues to their unreliability and encourages the reader to see the frequent discrepancies between their professed beliefs and their actions. The first clue is an anonymous preface (unfortunately omitted in many modern editions) which gives the reader a distinct warning:

* How these papers have been placed in sequence will be made manifest in the reading of them. 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. There is throughout no statement of past things wherein memory may err, for all the records chosen are exactly contemporary, *given from the stand-points and within the range of knowledge of those who made them.*²

Writers of Victorian popular fiction frequently rely on the convention of the anonymous editor to introduce their tales and to provide additional comments throughout the text; and Stoker uses this convention to stress the subjective nature of the story which his narrators relate. The narrators themselves occasionally question the validity of their perceptions, but Stoker provides numerous additional clues to their unreliability. For example, at the conclusion, Jonathan Harker questions their interpretation of the events:

We were stuck 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 note-

2. Leonard Wolf, *The Annotated Dracula* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1975), my italics.

books 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.³ [326-27]

The conclusion reinforces the subjective nature of their tale and casts doubts on everything that had preceded; however, because Stoker does not use an obvious framing device like Conrad in *Heart of Darkness* or James in *The Turn of the Screw* or employ an intrusive editor as Haggard does in *She* and because all the narrators come to similar conclusions about the nature of their opponent, the reader is likely to forget that these documents are subjective records, interpretations which are "given within the range of knowledge of those who made them."

While Stoker's choice of narrative technique does not permit him to comment directly on his characters, he suggests that they are particularly ill-equipped to judge the extraordinary events with which they are faced. The three central narrators are perfectly ordinary nineteenth-century Englishmen: the young lawyer Jonathan Harker, his wife Mina, and a youthful psychiatrist Dr. John Seward. Other characters who sometimes function as narrators include Dr. Van Helsing, Seward's former teacher; Quincey Morris, an American adventurer; Arthur Holmwood, a young English nobleman; and Lucy Westenra, Holmwood's fiancée. With the exception of Dr. Van Helsing, all the central characters are youthful and inexperienced—two dimensional characters whose only distinguishing characteristics are their names and their professions; and by maintaining a constancy of style throughout and emphasizing the beliefs which they hold in common, Stoker further diminishes any individualizing traits.⁴ The narrators appear to speak with one voice; and Stoker suggests that their opinions are perfectly acceptable so long as they remain within their limited fields of expertise. The problem, however, is that these perfectly ordinary people are confronted with the extraordinary character of Dracula.

Although Stoker did model Dracula on the historical Vlad V of Wallachia and the East European superstition of the vampire,⁵ he adds a

3. Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (1896; rpt. New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1971), p. 416. All future references will be to this edition and will be included within the text. Bracketed page numbers refer to this Norton Critical Edition.
4. Stephanie Demetrapoulos addresses another facet of this similarity by showing that male and female sexual roles are frequently reversed in *Dracula*. Her article, "Feminism, Sex Role Exchanges, and Other Subliminal Fantasies in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," is included in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 2 (1977), pp. 104-113.
5. Stoker could have learned of Vlad from a number of sources. Ronay adds in a footnote that "The Millenary of Honfoglalás, the Hungarian invasion of their present-day territory, was being celebrated with great pomp and circumstance in 1896—the year when Stoker was writing *Dracula*" (p. 56). Another possible source is cited by G. Nandris, "A Philological Analysis of Dracula and Rumanian Placenames and Masculine Personal Names in -a/ea," *Slavonic and East European Review*, 37 (1959), p. 371:

The Rumanian historian I. Bogdan, who published a monograph in 1896 on the prince of Wallachia, Vlad V, nicknamed Tsepesh (The Impaler), and who edited in it two German and four Russian versions of the Dracula legend. . .

number of humanizing touches to make Dracula appear noble and vulnerable as well as demonic and threatening; and it becomes difficult to determine whether he is a hideous bloodsucker whose touch breeds death or a lonely and silent figure who is hunted and persecuted.⁶ The difficulty in interpreting Dracula's character is compounded by the narrative technique, for the reader quickly recognizes that Dracula is *never* seen objectively and never permitted to speak for himself while his actions are recorded by people who have determined to destroy him and who, moreover, repeatedly question the sanity of their quest.

The question of sanity, which is so important in *Dracula*, provides another clue to the narrators' unreliability. More than half the novel takes place in or near Dr. Seward's London mental institution; and several of the characters are shown to be emotionally unstable: Renfield, one of Dr. Seward's patients, is an incarcerated madman who believes that he can achieve immortality by drinking the blood of insects and other small creatures; Jonathan Harker suffers a nervous breakdown after he escapes from Dracula's castle; and Lucy Westenra exhibits signs of schizophrenia, being a model of sweetness and conformity while she is awake but becoming sexually aggressive and demanding during her sleepwalking periods. More introspective than most of the other narrators, Dr. Seward occasionally refers to the questionable sanity of their mission, his diary entries mentioning his fears that they will all wake up in straitjackets. Furthermore, his entries on Renfield's condition indicate that he recognizes the narrow margin which separates sanity from insanity: "It is wonderful, however, what intellectual recuperative power lunatics have, for within a few minutes he stood up quite calmly and looked about him" (p. 133) [109].

However, even if the reader chooses to ignore the question of the narrators' sanity, it is important to understand their reasons for wishing to destroy Dracula. They accuse him of murdering the crew of the *Demeter*,⁷ of killing Lucy Westenra and transforming her into a vampire, and of trying to do the same thing to Mina Harker. However, the log found on the dead body of the *Demeter's* captain, which makes only a few ambiguous allusions to a fiend or monster, is hysterical and inconclusive. Recording this "evidence," Mina's journal asserts that the verdict of the inquest was open-ended: "There is no evidence to adduce; and whether or not the man [the ship's captain] committed the

6. Royce MacGillivray explains how Stoker altered the Dracula story:

In real life Dracula was known for his horrifying cruelty, but Stoker, who wanted a monster that his readers could both shudder at and identify with, omits all mention of the dark side of his reputation and emphasizes his greatness as a warrior chieftain.

"Dracula, Bram Stoker's Spoiled Masterpiece," *Queen's Quarterly*, 79 (1972), p. 520.

7. It is significant that Dracula—who is portrayed as a sexual threat—comes to England on a ship named for the Greek goddess of fertility. Furthermore, he returns to his homeland on the *Czarina Catherine*; and Stoker probably expected his readers to know the stories of Catherine's legendary sexual appetite.

murders there is now none to say" (p. 100) [84]. Lucy's death might just as easily be attributed to the blood transfusions (still a dangerous procedure at the time Stoker wrote *Dracula*) to which Dr. Van Helsing subjects her; and Mina acknowledges her complicity in the affair with Dracula by admitting that she did not want to prevent his advances. Finally, even if Dracula is responsible for all the Evil of which he is accused, he is tried, convicted, and sentenced by men (including two lawyers) who give him no opportunity to explain his actions and who repeatedly violate the laws which they profess to be defending: they avoid an inquest of Lucy's death, break into her tomb and desecrate her body, break into Dracula's houses, frequently resort to bribery and coercion to avoid legal involvement, and openly admit that they are responsible for the deaths of five alleged vampires. While it can be argued that *Dracula* is a fantasy and therefore not subject to the laws of verisimilitude, Stoker uses the flimsiness of such "evidence" to focus on the contrast between the narrators' rigorous moral arguments and their all-too-pragmatic methods.

In fact, Stoker reveals that what condemns Dracula are the English characters' subjective responses to his character and to the way of life which he represents. The reader is introduced to Dracula by Jonathan Harker's journal. His first realization that Dracula is different from himself occurs when he looks into the mirror and discovers that Dracula casts no reflection:

This time there could be no error, for the man was close to me, and I could see him over my shoulder. But there was no reflection of him in the mirror! The whole room behind me was displayed; but there was no sign of a man in it, except myself. This was startling, and, coming on the top of so many strange things, was beginning to increase that vague sense of uneasiness which I always have when the Count is near. (p. 34) [30-31]

The fact that vampires cast no reflection is part of the iconography of the vampire in East European folklore, but Stoker translates the superstitious belief that creatures without souls have no reflection into a metaphor by which he can illustrate his characters' lack of moral vision. Harker's inability to "see" Dracula is a manifestation of moral blindness which reveals his insensitivity to others and (as will become evident later) his inability to perceive certain traits within himself.⁸

Even before Harker begins to suspect that Dracula is a being totally unlike himself, Stoker reveals that he is troubled by everything that

8. Wolf comments on this characteristic in the preface to *The Annotated Dracula*:

Here, then, is the figure that Bram Stoker created—a figure who confronts us with primordial mysteries: death, blood, and love, and how they are bound together. Finally, Stoker's achievement is this: he makes us understand in our own experience why the vampire is said to be invisible in the mirror. He is there, but we fail to recognize him since our own faces get in the way.

Dracula represents. While journeying from London to Transylvania, Harker muses on the quaint customs which he encounters; and he notes in his journal that he must question his host about them. Stoker uses Harker's perplexity to establish his character as a very parochial Englishman whose apparent curiosity is not a desire for understanding, but a need to have his preconceptions confirmed. However, instead of finding someone like himself at the end of his journey, a person who can provide a rational explanation for these examples of non-English behavior, Harker discovers a ruined castle, itself a memento of bygone ages, and a man who, reminding him that Transylvania is not England, prides himself on being an integral part of his nation's heroic past:

. . . the Szekleys—and the Dracula as their heart's blood, their brains and their swords—can boast a record that mushroom growths like the Hapsburgs and the Romanoffs can never reach. The warlike days are over. Blood is too precious a thing in these days of dishonourable peace; and the glories of the great races are as a tale that is told.
(p. 39) [35]

To Harker, Dracula initially appears to be an anachronism—an embodiment of the feudal past—rather than an innately evil being; and his journal entries at the beginning merely reproduce Dracula's pride and rugged individualism:

Here I am noble; I am *boyar*; the common people know me, and I am master. But a stranger in a strange land, he is no one; men know him not—and to know not is to care not for. . . . I have been so long master that I would be master still—or at least that none other should be master of me.
(p. 28) [26]

It is only when Harker realizes that he is assisting to take this anachronism to England that he becomes frightened.

Harker's later response indicates that he fears a kind of reverse imperialism, the threat of the primitive trying to colonize the civilized world, while the reader sees in his response a profound resemblance between Harker and Dracula:

This was the being I was helping to transfer to London, where perhaps for centuries to come he might . . . satiate his lust for blood, and create a new and ever-widening circle of semi-demons to batten on the helpless. The very thought drove me mad. A terrible desire came upon me to rid the world of such a monster. There was no lethal weapon at hand, but I seized a shovel which the workmen had been using to fill the cases, and lifting it high, struck, with the edge downward, at the hateful face.

(pp. 62-63) [53-54]

This scene reinforces Harker's earlier inability to see Dracula in the mirror. Taken out of context, it would be difficult to distinguish the man from the monster. Behavior generally attributed to the vampire—the habit of attacking a sleeping victim, violence, and irrational behavior—is revealed to be the behavior of the civilized Englishman also. The sole difference is that Stoker's narrative technique does not permit the reader to enter Dracula's thoughts as he stands over his victims. The reversal of roles here is important because it establishes the subjective nature of the narrators' beliefs, suggests their lack of self-knowledge, and serves to focus on the similarities between the narrators and their opponent. Later in the novel, Mina Harker provides the following analysis of Dracula which ironically also describes the single-mindedness of his pursuers:

The Count is a criminal and of criminal type . . . and *qua* criminal he is of imperfectly formed mind. Thus, in a difficulty he has to seek resource in habit. . . . Then, as he is criminal he is selfish; and as his intellect is small and his action is based on selfishness, he confines himself to one purpose. (p. 378) [296-97]

Both Mina and Jonathan can justify their pursuit of Dracula by labeling him a murderer; and Mina adds intellectual frailty to his alleged sins. However, the narrators show themselves to be equally bound by habit and equally incapable of evaluating situations which are beyond their limited spheres of expertise. In fact, Stoker implies that the only difference between Dracula and his opponents is the narrators' ability to state individual desire in terms of what they believe is a common good. For example, the above scene shows that Harker can justify his violent attack on Dracula because he pictures himself as the protector of helpless millions; and the narrators insist on the duty to defend the innocents.

The necessity of protecting the innocent is called into question, however, when Dr. Van Helsing informs the other characters about the vampire's nature. While most of his discussion concerns the vampire's susceptibility to garlic, silver bullets, and religious artifacts, Van Helsing also admits that the vampire cannot enter a dwelling unless he is first invited by one of the inhabitants. In other words, a vampire cannot influence a human being without that person's consent. Dracula's behavior confirms that he is an internal, not an external, threat. Although perfectly capable of using superior strength when he must defend himself, he usually employs seduction, relying on the others' desires to emulate his freedom from external constraints: Renfield's desire for immortality, Lucy's wish to escape the repressive existence of an upper-class woman, and the desires of all the characters to overcome the restraints placed on them by their religion and their law. As the spokesman for civilization, Van Helsing appears to understand that the others

might be tempted by their desires to become like Dracula and he warns them against the temptation:

But to fail here, is not mere life or death. It is that we become as him; that we henceforward become foul things of the night like him—without heart or conscience, preying on the bodies and the souls of those we love best. (p. 265) [209]

Becoming like Dracula, they too would be laws unto themselves—primitive, violent, irrational—with nothing to justify their actions except the force of their desires. No longer would they need to rationalize their “preying on the bodies and souls of their loved ones” by concealing their lust for power under the rubric of religion, their love of violence under the names of imperialism and progress, their sexual desires within an elaborate courtship ritual.

The narrators attribute their hatred of Dracula to a variety of causes. Harker's journal introduces a being whose way of life is antithetical to theirs—a warlord, a representative of the feudal past and the leader of a primitive cult who he fears will attempt to establish a vampire colony in England. Mina Harker views him as a criminal and as the murderer of her best friend; and Van Helsing sees him as a moral threat, a kind of Anti-Christ. Yet, in spite of the narrators' moral and political language, Stoker reveals that Dracula is primarily a sexual threat, a missionary of desire whose only true kingdom will be the human body. Although he flaunts his independence of social restraints and proclaims himself a master over all he sees, Dracula adheres more closely to English law than his opponents in every area except his sexual behavior. (In fact, Dracula admits to Harker that he invited him to Transylvania so he could learn the subtle nuances of English law and business.) Neither a thief, rapist, nor an overtly political threat, Dracula is dangerous because he expresses his contempt for authority in the most individualistic of ways—through his sexuality. In fact, his thirst for blood and the manner in which he satisfies this thirst can be interpreted as sexual desire which fails to observe any of society's attempts to control it—prohibitions against polygamy, promiscuity, and homosexuality.⁹

9. A number of critics have commented on the pervasive sexuality of *Dracula*. C. F. Bentley, “The Monster in the Bedroom,” *Literature and Psychology*, 22 (1972), p. 28:

What is rejected or repressed on a conscious level appears in a covert and perverted form through the novel, the apparatus of the vampire superstition described in almost obsessional detail in *Dracula* providing the means for a symbolic presentation of human sexual relationships.

Maurice Richardson, “The Psychoanalysis of Ghost Stories,” *The Twentieth Century*, 166 (1959), p. 429 describes Dracula as “a vast polymorph perverse bisexual oral-anal-genital sadomasochistic timeless orgy.” In *A Dream of Dracula*, Wolf refers to the sexuality of Dracula:

His kiss permits all unions: men and women; men and men; women and women; fathers and daughters; mothers and sons. Moreover, his is an easy love that evades the usual failures of the flesh. It is the triumph of passivity, unembarrassing, sensuous, throbbing, violent, and cruel. (p. 305)

Furthermore, Stoker suggests that it is generally through sexuality that the vampire gains control over human beings. Van Helsing recognizes this temptation when he prevents Arthur from kissing Lucy right before her death; and even the staid and morally upright Harker momentarily succumbs to the sensuality of the three vampire-women in Dracula's castle:

I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips. It is not good to note this down, lest some day it should meet Mina's eyes and cause her pain; but it is the truth. (p. 47) [42]

For one brief moment, Harker does appear to recognize the truth about sexual desire; it is totally irrational and has nothing to do with monogamy, love, or even respect for the beloved. It is Dracula, however, who clearly articulates the characters' most intense fears of sexuality: "Your girls that you all love are mine—my creatures, to do my bidding and to be my jackals when I want to feed" (p. 340) [267]. Implicit in Dracula's warning is the similarity between vampire and opponents. Despite rare moments of comprehension, however, the narrators generally choose to ignore this similarity; and their lack of self-knowledge permits them to hunt down and kill not only Dracula and the three women in his castle, but their friend Lucy Westenra as well.

The scene in which Arthur drives the stake through Lucy's body while the other men watch thoughtfully is filled with a violent sexuality which again connects vampire and opponents:

But Arthur never faltered. He looked like a figure of Thor as his untrembling arm rose and fell, driving deeper and deeper the mercy-bearing stake, whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted up around it. His face was set, and high duty seemed to shine through it; the sight of it gave us courage so that our voices seemed to ring through the vault. . . . There in the coffin lay no longer the foul Thing that we had dreaded and grown to hate that the work of her destruction was yielded as a privilege to the one best entitled to it, but Lucy as we had seen her in life, with her face of unequalled sweetness and purity. (p. 241) [192]

Despite Seward's elevated moral language, the scene resembles nothing so much as the combined group rape and murder of an unconscious woman; and this kind of violent attack on a helpless victim is precisely the kind of behavior which condemns Dracula in the narrators' eyes.

Joseph S. Bierman, "Dracula: Prolonged Childhood Illness and the Oral Triad," *American Imago*, 29 (1972), pp. 186-98. Bierman studies Stoker's life and concludes that much of Dracula can be attributed to Stoker's repressed death wishes toward his brothers and toward his employer Henry Irving.

Moreover, Lucy is not the only woman to be subjected to this violence. At the conclusion, in a scene which is only slightly less explicit, Dr. Van Helsing destroys the three women in Dracula's castle. Again Dr. Van Helsing admits that he is fascinated by the beautiful visages of the "wanton Un-Dead" but he never acknowledges that his violent attack is simply a role reversal or that he becomes the vampire as he stands over their unconscious bodies.

By the conclusion of the novel, all the characters who have been accused of expressing individual desire have been appropriately punished: Dracula, Lucy Westenra, and the three vampire-women have been killed; and even Mina Harker is ostracized for her momentary indiscretion. All that remains after the primitive, the passionate, and the individualistic qualities that were associated with the vampire have been destroyed is a small group of wealthy men who return after a period of one year to the site of their victory over the vampire. The surviving characters remain unchanged by the events in their lives and never come to the realization that their commitment to social values merely masks their violence and their sexuality; and the only significant difference in their condition is the birth of the Harkers' son who is appropriately named for all the men who had participated in the conquest of Dracula. Individual sexual desire has apparently been so absolutely effaced that the narrators see this child as the result of their social union rather than the product of a sexual union between one man and one woman.

The narrators insist that they are agents of God and are able to ignore their similarity to the vampire because their commitment to social values such as monogamy, proper English behavior, and the will of the majority enables them to conceal their violence and their sexual desires from each other and even from themselves. Stoker, however, reveals that these characteristics are merely masked by social convention. Instead of being eliminated, violence and sexuality emerge in particularly perverted forms.

Recently uncovered evidence suggests that Bram Stoker may have had very personal reasons for his preoccupation with repression and sexuality. In his biography of his great-uncle, Daniel Farson explains that, while the cause of Stoker's death is usually given as exhaustion, Stoker actually died of tertiary syphilis, exhaustion being one of the final stages of that disease. Farson also adds that Stoker's problematic relationship with his wife may have been responsible:

When his wife's frigidity drove him to other women, probably prostitutes among them, Bram's writing showed signs of guilt and sexual frustration. . . . He probably caught syphilis around the turn of the century, possibly as early as the year of Dracula, 1896. (It usually takes ten to fifteen years before it kills.) By 1897 it seems

that he had been celibate for more than twenty years, as far as Florence [his wife] was concerned.¹

Poignantly aware from his own experience that the face of the vampire is the hidden side of the human character, Stoker creates unreliable narrators to tell a tale, not of the overcoming of Evil by Good, but of the similarities between the two. *Dracula* reveals the unseen face in the mirror; and Stoker's message is similar to the passage from *Julius Caesar* which prefaces this article and might be paraphrased in the following manner: "The fault, dear reader, is not in our external enemies, but in ourselves."

FRANCO MORETTI

[A Capital *Dracula*]†

* * *

Count Dracula is an aristocrat only in manner of speaking. Jonathan Harker—the London estate agent who stays in his castle, and whose diary opens Stoker's novel—observes with astonishment that Dracula lacks precisely what makes a man 'noble': servants. Dracula stoops to driving the carriage, cooking the meals, making the beds, cleaning the castle. The Count has read Adam Smith: he knows that servants are unproductive workers who diminish the income of the person who keeps them. Dracula also lacks the aristocrat's conspicuous consumption: he does not eat, he does not drink, he does not make love, he does not like showy clothes, he does not go to the theatre and he does not go hunting, he does not hold receptions and does not build stately homes. Not even his violence has pleasure as its goal. Dracula (unlike Vlad the Impaler, the historical Dracula, and all other vampires before him) does not *like* spilling blood: he *needs* blood. He sucks just as much as is necessary and never wastes a drop. His ultimate aim is not to destroy the lives of others according to whim, to waste them, but to *use* them.¹ Dracula, in other words, is a saver, an ascetic, an upholder of the Protestant ethic. And in fact he has no body, or rather, he has no shadow. His body admittedly exists, but it is 'incorporeal'—'sensibly su-

1. Daniel Fanson, *The Man Who Wrote Dracula: A Biography of Bram Stoker* (London: Michael Joseph, 1975), p. 234.

† From *Signs Taken for Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms*, Susan Fischer, David Forgacs, and David Miller, trans. (New York: Verso, 1988) 90–104. Reprinted by kind permission of the publisher.

1. Harker himself is forced to recognize this clear-headed bourgeois rationality in Dracula, after the latter has saved him from the purely destructive desire of his lovers: 'surely it is maddening to think that of all the foul things that lurk in this hateful place the Count is the least dreadful to me: that to him alone I can look for safety, even though this be only whilst I can *serve his purpose*.' (My italics). So un-cruel is Dracula that, once he has made use of Harker, he lets him go free without having harmed a hair on his head.

persensible' as Marx wrote of the commodity, 'impossible as a physical fact', as Mary Shelley defines the monster in the first lines of her preface. In fact it is impossible, 'physically', to estrange a man from himself, to de-humanize him. But alienated labour, as a social relation, makes it possible. So too there really exists a social product which has no body, which has exchange-value but no use-value. This product, we know, is money.² And when Harker explores the castle, he finds just one thing: 'a great heap of gold . . . —gold of all kinds, Roman, and British, and Austrian, and Hungarian, and Greek and Turkish money, covered with a film of dust, as though it had lain long in the ground.' The money that had been buried comes back to life, becomes capital and embarks on the conquest of the world: this and none other is the story of Dracula the vampire.

* ('Capital is dead labour which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks.'³ Marx's analogy unravels the vampire metaphor. As everyone knows, the vampire is dead and yet not dead: he is an Un-Dead, a 'dead' person who yet manages to live thanks to the blood he sucks from the living. Their strength becomes *his* strength.⁴ The *stronger* the vampire becomes, the *weaker* the living become: 'the capitalist gets rich, not, like the miser, in proportion to his personal labour and restricted consumption, but at the same rate as he squeezes out labour-power from others, and compels the worker to renounce all the enjoyments of life.'⁵ Like capital, Dracula is impelled towards a continuous growth, an unlimited expansion of his domain: accumulation is inherent in his nature. 'This', Harker exclaims, 'was the being I was helping to transfer to London, where, perhaps for centuries to come, he might, amongst its teeming millions, satiate his lust for blood, and create a *new and ever widening*

2. Before Dracula there had been another literary character who had lost his shadow: Peter Schlemihl. He had exchanged it for a purse full of money. But he soon realizes that money can only give him one thing: more money, still more money, all the money he wants (the purse is bottomless). But *only* money. The only desire Peter can satisfy is thus the abstract and immaterial desire for money. His mutilated and unnatural body denies him access to tangible, material, corporeal desires. So great a scandal is it that once the girl he loves (and who loves him) finds out, she refuses to marry him. Peter runs away in desperation: he can no longer love. (Just like Dracula: "You yourself have never loved; you never love!" . . . Then the Count turned . . . and said in a soft whisper:—"Yes, I too can love; you yourselves can tell it from the past. Is it not so? . . .") Chamisso's story is a fable (*The Marvellous Story of Peter Schlemihl*); published in 1813, the same period as *Frankenstein*, it too revolves around the conflict between the spread of capitalism (Peter) and feudal social structures (Mina and her village). As in *Frankenstein*, capitalism appears in it as a fortuitous episode, involving just one individual and lasting only a short time. But the underlying intuition has an extraordinary power; it stands on a par with the punishment of Midas, for whom gold prevented consumption.

3. Marx, *Capital* Volume I, Harmondsworth 1976, p. 342.

4. ' . . . the Un-Dead are strong. [Dracula] have (*sic*) always the strength in his hand of twenty men; even we four who gave our strength to Miss Lucy it also is all to him' (p. 183). One cannot help recalling the words of Mephistopheles analysed by Marx: 'Six stallions, say, I can afford./Is not their strength my property?/I tear along, a sporting lord./As if their legs belonged to me.' (quoted in 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts', p. 376).

5. Marx, *Capital* Volume I, p. 741.

circle of semi-demons to batten on the helpless' (my italics). 'And so the circle goes on *ever widening*', Van Helsing says later on; and Seward describes Dracula as 'the father or furtherer of a *new order of beings*' (my italics). All Dracula's actions really have as their final goal the creation of this 'new order of beings' which finds its most fertile soil, logically enough, in England. And finally, just as the capitalist is 'capital personified' and must subordinate his private existence to the abstract and incessant movement of accumulation, so Dracula is not impelled by the *desire* for power but by the *curse* of power, by an obligation he cannot escape. 'When they (the Un-Dead) become such', Van Helsing explains, 'there comes with the change the curse of immortality; they cannot die, but must go on age after age adding new victims and multiplying the evils of the world'. It is remarked later of the vampire that he 'can do all these things, *yet he is not free*' (my italics). His curse compels him to make ever more victims, just as the capitalist is compelled to accumulate. His nature forces him to struggle to be unlimited, to subjugate *the whole of society*. For this reason, one cannot 'coexist' with the vampire. One must either succumb to him or kill him, thereby freeing the world of his presence and him of his curse. When the knife plunges into Dracula's heart, in the moment before his dissolution, 'there was in the face a look of peace, such as I would never have imagined might have rested there'. There flashes forth here the idea, to which we shall return, of the *purification* of capital.

If the vampire is a metaphor for capital, then Stoker's vampire, who is of 1897, must be the capital of 1897. The capital which, after lying 'buried' for twenty long years of recession, rises again to set out on the irreversible road of concentration and monopoly. And Dracula is a true monopolist: solitary and despotic, he will not brook competition. Like monopoly capital, his ambition is to subjugate the last vestiges of the liberal era and destroy all forms of economic independence. He no longer restricts himself to incorporating (in a literal sense) the physical and moral strength of his victims. He intends to make them his *for ever*. Hence the horror, for the bourgeois mind. One is bound to Dracula, as to the devil, *for life*, no longer 'for a fixed period', as the classic bourgeois contract stipulated with the intention of maintaining the freedom of the contracting parties. The vampire, like monopoly, destroys the hope that one's independence can one day be brought back. He threatens the idea of individual liberty. For this reason the nineteenth-century bourgeois is able to imagine monopoly only in the guise of Count Dracula, the aristocrat, the figure of the past, the relic of distant lands and dark ages. Because the nineteenth-century bourgeois believes in free trade, and he knows that in order to become established, free competition had to destroy the tyranny of feudal monopoly. For him, then, monopoly and free competition are irreconcilable concepts. Monopoly is the *past* of competition, the middle ages. He cannot believe

it can be its *future*, that competition itself can *generate* monopoly in new forms. And yet 'modern monopoly is . . . the true synthesis . . . the negation of feudal monopoly insofar as it implies the system of competition, and the negation of competition insofar as it is monopoly.'⁶

Dracula is thus at once the final product of the bourgeois century and its negation. In Stoker's novel only this second aspect—the negative and destructive one—appears. There are very good reasons for this. In Britain at the end of the nineteenth century, monopolistic concentration was far less developed (for various economic and political reasons) than in the other advanced capitalist societies. Monopoly could thus be perceived as something extraneous to British history: as a *foreign threat*. This is why Dracula is not British, while his antagonists (with one exception, as we shall see, and with the addition of Van Helsing, born in that other classic homeland of free trade, Holland) are British through and through. Nationalism—the defence to the death of British civilization—has a central role in *Dracula*. The idea of the nation is central because it is collective: it coordinates individual energies and enables them to resist the threat. For while Dracula threatens the freedom of the individual, the latter alone lacks the power to resist or defeat him. Indeed the followers of pure economic individualism, those who pursue their own profit, are, without knowing it, the vampire's best allies.⁷ Individualism is not the weapon with which Dracula can be beaten. Other things are needed—in effect two: money and religion. These are considered as a single whole, which must not be separated: in other words, money at the service of religion and vice versa. The money of Dracula's enemies is money that *refuses to become capital*, that wants not to obey the profane economic laws of capitalism but to be used *to do good*. Towards the end of the novel, Mina Harker thinks of her friends' financial commitment: 'it made me think of the wonderful power of money! What can it not do when it is properly applied; and what might it do when basely used!' This is the point: money should be used according to justice. Money must not have its end *in itself*, in its continuous accumulation. It must have, rather, a *moral*, anti-economic end to the point where colossal expenditures and losses can be calmly accepted. This idea of money is, for the capitalist, something inadmissible. But it is also the great ideological lie of Victorian capitalism, a capitalism which is ashamed of itself and which hides

6. Marx, 'The Property of Philosophy' (1847) in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 6, London 1976, p. 195.

7. This is the case with all the minor characters in the novel. These (the stevedores and lawyers, sailors and estate agents, porters and accountants) are always more than satisfied with their dealings with Dracula, for the simple reason that Dracula pays well and in cash, or even facilitates the work. Dracula is one of them: an excellent master for wage-earners, an excellent partner for big businessmen. They understand one another so well, they are so useful to each other, that Dracula never behaves like a vampire with them: he does not need to suck their blood, he can buy it.

factories and stations beneath cumbrous Gothic superstructures; which prolongs and extols aristocratic models of life; which exalts the holiness of the family as the latter begins secretly to break up. Dracula's enemies are precisely the exponents of *this* capitalism. They are the militant version of Dickens's benefactors. They find their fulfilment in religious superstition, whereas the vampire is paralysed by it. And yet the crucifixes, holy wafers, garlic, magic flowers, and so on, are not important for their *intrinsic* religious meaning but for a subtler reason. Their true function consists in setting impassable limits to the vampire's activity. They prevent him from entering this or that house, conquering this or that person, carrying out this or that metamorphosis. But setting limits to the vampire-capital means attacking his very *raison d'être*: he must by his nature be able to expand without limit, to destroy every restraint upon his action. Religious superstition imposes the same limits on Dracula that Victorian capitalism declares itself to accept spontaneously. But Dracula—who is capital that is not ashamed of itself, true to its own nature, an end in itself—cannot survive in these conditions. And so this symbol of a cruel historical development falls victim to a handful of whited sepulchres, a bunch of fanatics who want to arrest the course of history. It is they who are the relics of the dark ages.

At the end of *Dracula* the vampire's defeat is complete. Dracula and his lovers are destroyed, Mina Harker is saved at the last moment. Only one cloud darkens the happy ending. In killing Dracula, Quincy P. Morris, the American who has been helping his British friends to save their nation, dies too, almost by accident. The occurrence seems inexplicable, extraneous to the logic of the narrative, yet it fits perfectly into Stoker's sociological design. The American, Morris, *must* die, because Morris is a vampire. From his first appearance he is shrouded in mystery (a friendly sort of mystery, it is true—but isn't Count Dracula himself likeable, at the beginning?). 'He is such a nice fellow, an American from Texas, and he looks so young and so fresh [he *looks*: like Dracula, who looks it but isn't] that it seems almost impossible that he has been to so many places and has had such adventures.' What places? What adventures? Where does all his money come from? What does Mr Morris do? Where does he live? Nobody knows any of this. But nobody suspects. Nobody suspects even when Lucy dies—and then turns into a vampire—immediately after receiving a blood transfusion from Morris. Nobody suspects when Morris, shortly afterwards, tells the story of his mare, sucked dry of blood in the Pampas (like Dracula, Morris has been round the world) by 'one of those big bats that they call vampires'. It is the first time that the name 'vampire' is mentioned in the novel: but there is no reaction. And there is no reaction a few lines further on when Morris, 'coming close to me, . . . spoke in a fierce half-whisper: "What took it [the blood] out?"' But Dr Seward shakes his head; he hasn't the slightest idea. And Morris, reassured,

promises to help. Nobody, finally, suspects when, in the course of the meeting to plan the vampire hunt, Morris leaves the room to take a shot—missing, naturally—at the big bat on the window-ledge listening to the preparations; or when, after Dracula bursts into the household, Morris hides among the trees, the only effect of which is that he loses sight of Dracula and invites the others to call off the hunt for the night. This is pretty well all Morris does in *Dracula*. He would be a totally superfluous character if, unlike the others, he were not characterized by this mysterious connivance with the world of the vampires. So long as things go well for Dracula, Morris acts like an accomplice. As soon as there is a reversal of fortunes, he turns into his staunchest enemy. Morris enters into competition with Dracula; he would like to replace him in the conquest of the Old World. He does not succeed in the novel but he will succeed, in 'real' history, a few years afterwards.

While it is interesting to understand that Morris is connected with the vampires—because America will end up by subjugating Britain in reality and Britain is, albeit unconsciously, afraid of it—the decisive thing is to understand why Stoker does *not* portray him as a vampire. The answer lies in the bourgeois conception of monopoly described earlier. For Stoker, monopoly *must* be feudal, oriental, tyrannical. It cannot be the product of that very society he wants to defend. And Morris, naturally, is by contrast a product of Western civilization, just as America is a rib of Britain and American capitalism a consequence of British capitalism. To make Morris a vampire would mean—accusing capitalism directly: or rather accusing Britain, admitting that it is Britain herself that has given birth to the monster. This cannot be. For the good of Britain, then, Morris must be sacrificed. But Britain must be kept out of a crime whose legitimacy she cannot recognize. He will be killed by the chance knife-thrust of a gypsy (whom the British will allow to escape unpunished). And at the moment when Morris dies, and the threat disappears, old England grants its blessing to this excessively pushy and unscrupulous financier, and raises him to the dignity of a Bengal Lancer: 'And, to our bitter grief, with a smile and in silence, he died, a gallant gentleman.' (the sentence significantly abounds in the clichés of heroic-imperial English literature). These, it should be noted, are the *last* words of the novel, whose true ending does not lie—as is clear by now—in the death of the Romanian count, but in the killing of the American financier.⁸

8. The finishing touch is Jonathan Harker's short 'Note', written seven years after the events have ended. Harker informs the reader that he and Mina have christened their son 'Quincey', and that 'His mother holds, I know, the secret belief that some of our brave friend's spirit has passed into him.' (p. 336) [326]. The American outsider Morris is 'recycled' within the triumphant Victorian family, not without being made to undergo a final tacit humiliation (which would delight a linguist): his name—Quincy, as appears from the signature of the only note in his own handwriting—is transformed, by the addition of an 'e', into the much more English Quincey.

One of the most striking aspects of *Dracula*—as of *Frankenstein* before it—is its system of narrative senders. To begin with, there is the fact that in this network of letters, diaries, notes, telegrams, notices, phonograph recordings and articles, the narrative function proper, namely the description and ordering of events, is reserved for the British alone. We never have access to Van Helsing's point of view, or to Morris's, and still less to Dracula's. The string of events exists only in the form and with the meaning stamped upon it by British Victorian culture. It is those cultural categories, those moral values, those forms of expression that are endangered by the vampire: it is those same categories, forms and values that reassert themselves and emerge triumphant. It is a victory of convention over exception, of the present over the possible future, of standard British English over any kind of linguistic transgression. In *Dracula* we have, transparently, the perfect and immutable English of the narrators on the one hand, and Morris's American 'dialect', Dracula's schoolbook English and Van Helsing's bloomers on the other. As Dracula is a danger because he constitutes an unforeseen variation from the British cultural code, so the maximum threat on the plane of content coincides with the maximum inefficiency and dislocation of the English language. Halfway through the novel, when Dracula seems to be in control of the situation, the frequency of Van Helsing's speeches increases enormously, and his perverse English dominates the stage. It becomes dominant because although the English language possesses the word 'vampire', it is unable to ascribe a meaning to it, in the same way that British society considers 'capitalist monopoly' a meaningless expression. Van Helsing has to explain, in his approximate and mangled English, what a vampire is. Only then, when these notions have been translated into the linguistic and cultural code of the English, and the code has been reorganized and reinforced, can the narrative return to its previous fluidity, the hunt begin and victory appear secure.⁹ It is entirely logical that the last sentence should be, as we saw, a veritable procession of literary English.

In *Dracula* there is no omniscient narrator, only individual and mutually separate points of view. The first-person account is a clear expression of the desire to keep hold of one's individuality, which the vampire threatens to subjugate. Yet so long as the conflict is one between human 'individualism' and vampirical 'totalization', things do not go at all well for the humans. Just as a system of perfect competition

9. In Stoker's novel the function of Van Helsing describes a parabola: absent at the beginning, dominant at the centre, removed to the margins of the action at the end. His aid is indeed irreplaceable, but once she has obtained it, Britain can settle matters herself: it is indicative that he is only a spectator at the killing of Dracula. In this, yet again, Fisher's *Dracula* betrays the ideological intention of the original: the great final duel between Dracula and Van Helsing belongs to a very different system of oppositions from Stoker's, where there prevails the conflict between Good and Evil, Light and Darkness, Frugality and Luxury, Reason and Superstition (see David Pirie, *A Heritage of Horror. The English Gothic Cinema 1947-1972*, London 1973, p. 51 ff.).

cannot do other than give way to monopoly, so a handful of isolated individuals cannot oppose the concentrated force of the vampire. It is a problem we have already witnessed on the plane of content: here it re-emerges on the plane of narrative forms. The individuality of the narration must be preserved and at the same time its negative aspect—the doubt, impotence, ignorance and even mutual distrust and hostility of the protagonists—must be eliminated.¹ Stoker's solution is brilliant. It is to collate, to make a systematic integration of the different points of view. In the second half of *Dracula*, that of the hunt (which begins, it should be noted, only *after* the collation), it is more accurate to speak of a 'collective' narrator than of different narrators. There are no longer, as there were at the beginning, *different* versions of a single episode, a procedure which expressed the uncertainty and error of the individual account. The narrative now expresses the *general* point of view, the official version of events. Even the style loses its initial idiosyncrasies, be they professional or individual, and is amalgamated into Standard British English. This collation is, in other words, the Victorian compromise in the field of narrative technique. It unifies the different interests and cultural paradigms of the dominant class (law, commerce, the land, science) under the banner of the common good. It restores the narrative equilibrium, giving this dark episode a form and a meaning which are finally clear, communicable and universal.

The Return of the Repressed

A sociological analysis of *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* reveals that one of the institutions most threatened by the monsters is the family. Yet this fear cannot be explained wholly in historical and economic terms. On the contrary, it is very likely that its deepest root is to be found elsewhere: in the eros, above all in sex. 'Dracula', David Pirie has written, '... can be seen as the great submerged force of Victorian libido breaking out to punish the repressive society which had imprisoned it; one of the most appalling things that Dracula does to the matronly women of his Victorian enemies (in the novel as in the film) is to make them sensual.'² It is true. For confirmation one only has to reread the episode of Lucy. Lucy is the only protagonist who falls victim to Dracula. She is punished, because she is the only one who shows some

1. The story of Lucy illuminates the interrelationship of the characters. In the opening chapters, no fewer than three of the main characters (Seward, Holmwood and Morris) enter into competition for her hand. In other words, Lucy objectively turns these men into *rivals*, she divides them, and this makes things easier for Dracula who, making them by contrast be friends again, prepares her downfall. The moral is that, when faced with the vampire, one must curb all individual appetites and interests. Poor Lucy, who acts solely on her desires and impulses (she is a woman who *chooses* her own husband, without mentioning it to her mother!) is first killed by Dracula and then, for safety's sake, run through the heart by her fiancé on what, going by the calendar, should have been their wedding night (and the whole episode, as we shall see, oozes sexual meanings).

2. Pirie, p. 84.

kind of *desire*. Stoker is inflexible on this point: all the other characters are immune to the temptations of the flesh, or capable of rigorous sublimations. Van Helsing, Morris, Seward and Holmwood are all single. Mina and Jonathan get married in hospital, when Jonathan is in a state of prostration and impotence; and they marry in order to mend, to forget the terrible experience (which was also sexual) undergone by Jonathan in Transylvania: 'Share my ignorance' is what he asks of his wife. Not so Lucy, who awaits her wedding day with impatience. It is on this restlessness—on her 'somniaambulism'—that Dracula exerts leverage to win her. And the more he takes possession of Lucy, the more he brings out her sexual side. A few moments before her death, 'She opened her eyes, which were now dull and hard at once, and said in a soft voluptuous voice, such as I had never heard from her lips: . . .'. And Lucy as a 'vampire' is even more seductive: 'The sweetness was turned to adamant, heartless cruelty, and the purity to voluptuous wantonness . . . the face became wreathed with a voluptuous smile . . . she advanced to him with outstretched arms and a wanton smile . . . and with a langorous, voluptuous grace, said:—"Come to me, Arthur. Leave these others and come to me. My arms are hungry for you. Come, and we can rest together. Come, my husband, come!"' The seduction is about to work, but Van Helsing breaks its spell. They proceed to Lucy's execution. Lucy dies in a very unusual way: in the throes of what, to the 'public' mind of the Victorians, must have seemed like an orgasm: 'The Thing in the coffin writhed; and a hideous, blood-curdling screech came from the opened red lips. The body shook and quivered and twisted in wild contortions; the sharp white teeth champed together till the lips were cut and the mouth was smeared with a crimson foam.' Surrounded by his friends who goad him on with their cries, Arthur Holmwood Lord Godalming purges the world of this fearful Thing; not without deriving, in distorted but transparent forms, enormous sexual satisfaction: 'He looked like a figure of Thor as his untrembling arm rose and fell, driving deeper and deeper the mercy-bearing stake, whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and spouted up from around it.'

Dracula, then, liberates and exalts sexual desire. And this desire attracts but—at the same time—frightens. Lucy is beautiful, but dangerous. Fear and attraction are one and the same: and not just in Stoker. Much of nineteenth-century bourgeois high culture had already treated eros and sex as *ambivalent* phenomena. Their rhetorical figure is the oxymoron, the contradiction in terms, through which Baudelaire sings the ambiguity of amorous relations. Among the condemned poems of *Les Fleurs du Mal*—a title which is itself an oxymoron—is 'Les métamorphoses du vampire', where the irresistible female seducer is described 'writhing like a snake over charcoal'. And Stendhal noted in the margin of the first page of *De l'Amour*: 'I undertake to trace with

a mathematical precision and (if I can) truth, the history of the illness called *love*. Love is an illness: it entails the renunciation of man's *individuality* and *reason*.³ For Stendhal, the devotee of enlightenment, this means denying one's very reason for existing: love becomes a *mortal* danger, and only a *greater* danger (Dracula!) can cure the person who falls victim to it: "The leap from Leucates was a fine image in antiquity. In fact, the remedy for love is almost impossible. It requires not only that danger which sharply recalls a man's attention to his own preservation; it also requires—something far more difficult—the continuity of an enticing danger."⁴ An *enticing danger*, just as that of love is a *dangerous enticement*: fear and desire incessantly overturn into one another. They are indivisible. We find this confirmed in Sade, in Keats' Lamia, in Poe's Ligeia, in Baudelaire's women, in Hoffmann's woman vampire. Why is this?

Vampirism is an excellent example of the identity of desire and fear: let us therefore put it at the centre of the analysis. And let us take the psychoanalytic interpretation of this phenomenon, advanced for example by Marie Bonaparte in her study of Poe. Commenting on Baudelaire's remark that all Poe's women are 'strikingly delineated as though by an adorer', Marie Bonaparte adds: 'An adorer . . . who dare not approach the object of his adoration, since he feels it surrounded by some fearful, dangerous mystery.'⁵ This mystery is none other than vampirism:

'the danger of sexuality, the punishment that threatens all who yield, is shown, as in *Berenice*, by the manner in which Egaeus is obsessed by her teeth. And indeed, in psychoanalysis, many cases of male impotence reveal, though more or less buried in the unconscious—strange as it may seem to many a reader—the notion of the female vagina being furnished with teeth, and thus a source of danger in being able to bite and castrate. . . . Mouth and vagina are equated in the unconscious and, when Egaeus yields to the morbid impulse to draw Berenice's teeth, he yields both to the yearning for the mother's organ and to be revenged upon it, since the dangers that hedge it about make him sexually avoid all women as too menacing. His act is therefore a sort of retributive castration inflicted on the mother whom he loves, and yet hates, because obdurate to his sex-love for her in infancy. . . . This concept of the *vagina dentata* and its consequent menace is, however,

3. For Hegel too love originates from 'the surrender of the person to an individual of the opposite sex, the sacrifice of one's independent consciousness'. But then Hegel dialectically resolves and pacifies this self-negation from which love originates: 'this losing, in the other, one's consciousness of self . . . this self-forgetfulness in which the lover . . . finds the roots of his being in another, and yet in this other does entirely enjoy precisely himself.' (*Aesthetics*, 1820–29, Oxford 1975, pp. 562–3.)

4. Stendhal, *De L'Amour* (1822), Paris 1957, p. 118.

5. Marie Bonaparte, *The Life and Works of Edgar Allen Poe. A Psychoanalytic Interpretation*, London 1949, pp. 209–10.

also a displacement (in this case downwards) of a factor with roots deep in infantile experience. We know that babes which, while toothless, are content to suck the breast, no sooner cut their first teeth than they use them to bite the same breast. This, in each of us, is the first manifestation of the aggressive instinct, . . . later, when the sense of what 'one should not do' has been instilled by ever severer and more numerous moral injunctions . . . the memory, or rather the phantasy of biting the mother's breast must have become charged, in the unconscious, with past feelings of wickedness. And the child, having learnt by experience what is meant by the law of retaliation when he infringes the code . . . begins, in his turn, to fear that the bites he wished to give his mother will be visited on him: namely, retaliation for his "cannibalism".⁶

This passage identifies with precision the ambivalent root, interweaving hate and love, that underlies vampirism. An analogous ambivalence had already been described by Freud in relation to the taboo on the dead (and the vampire is, as we know, also a dead person who comes back to life to destroy those who remain): 'this hostility, distressingly felt in the unconscious as satisfaction over the death . . . [is displaced] on to the object of the hostility, on to the dead themselves. Once again . . . we find that the taboo has grown up on the basis of an ambivalent emotional attitude. The taboo upon the dead arises, like the others, from the contrast between conscious pain and unconscious satisfaction over the death that has occurred. Since such is the origin of the ghost's resentment, it follows naturally that the survivors who have the most to fear will be those who were formerly its nearest and dearest.'⁷

Freud's text leaves no doubt: the ambivalence exists *within the psyche of the person suffering from the fear*. In order to heal this state of tension one is forced to *repress*, unconsciously, one of the two affective states in conflict, the one that is socially more illicit. From the repression arises fear: 'every affect belonging to an emotional impulse, whatever its kind, is transformed, if it is repressed, into anxiety'.⁸ And fear breaks out when—for whatever reason—this repressed impulse returns and thrusts itself upon the mind: 'an uncanny experience occurs either when infantile complexes which have been repressed are once more revived by some impression, or when primitive beliefs which have been surmounted seem once again to be confirmed'.⁹ Fear, in other words, coincides with the 'return of the repressed'. And this brings us perhaps to the heart of the matter.

The literature of terror is studded with passages where the protago-

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 218-9.

7. 'Totem and Taboo' (1913) in Freud, Volume XIII, p. 61. See also the essay 'The "Uncanny".' (1919): 'Most likely our fear still implies the old belief that the dead man becomes the enemy of his survivor and seeks to carry him off to share his new life with him.' (*Ibid.*, XVII, p. 242).

8. 'The "Uncanny".' , p. 241.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 249.

nists brush against the awareness—described by Freud—that the perturbing element is *within them*: that it is they themselves that produce the monsters they fear. Their first fear is—inevitably—that of *going mad*. ‘Remember, I am not recording the vision of a madman.’ (*Frankenstein*). ‘God preserve my sanity . . . there is but one thing to hope for: that I may not go mad, if, indeed, I be not mad already.’ (*Dracula*, Harker’s words). ‘[Dr Seward] says that I afford him a curious psychological study’ (*Dracula*, Lucy). ‘I have come to the conclusion that it must be something mental.’ (*Dracula*, Seward, who is also the director of a mental hospital). Jekyll has to defend himself from the suspicion of being mad, just like Polidori’s Aubrey a century earlier. In these novels, reality tends to work according to the laws that govern dreams—‘I wasn’t dreaming’, ‘as in a dream’, ‘as if I had gone through a long nightmare’.¹ This is the return of the repressed. But *how* does it return? Not as madness, or only marginally so. The lesson these books wish to impart is that one need not be afraid of going mad; that is one need not fear one’s own repressions, the splitting of one’s own psyche. No, one should be afraid of the *monster*, of something *material*, something *external*: ‘“Dr Van Helsing, are you mad?” . . . “Would I were!” he said. “Madness were easy to bear compared with truth like this.”’ *Would I were*: this is the key. Madness is nothing in comparison with the vampire. Madness does not present a problem. Or rather: madness, in itself, *does not exist*: it is the vampire, the monster, the potion that creates it.² *Dracula*, written in the same year that saw Freud begin his self-analysis, is a refined attempt by the nineteenth-century mind not to recognize itself. This is symbolized by the character who—already in the grip of fear—finds himself by chance in front of a mirror. He looks at it and jumps: in the mirror is a reflection of his face. But the reader’s attention is immediately distracted: the fear does not come from his having seen his *own* image, but from the fact that the *vampire* is not reflected in the mirror. Finding himself face to face with the simple, terrible truth, the author—and with him the character and the reader—draws back in horror.

1. Mary Shelley claimed to have ‘dreamt’ the story of *Frankenstein*. And one of the passages that stands out in the text is *Frankenstein’s* dream, which takes place immediately after the creation of the monster. At the moment when, in the dream, he is about to kiss Elizabeth, she changes into his mother’s corpse. *Frankenstein* wakes to find the monster by his bed, in an unmistakable maternal pose: ‘He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes . . . were fixed on me . . . a grin wrinkled his cheeks . . . one hand was stretched out.’ Other things about the monster suggest a reworking of the mother figure: the fact that he is a dead man who comes back to life; his physical ‘bigness’; his language, improbably more ‘archaic’ than *Frankenstein’s*. The analogy, however, rests mostly on the *function* of the monster within the plot: he kills Elizabeth, punishing *Frankenstein* for having married her and thereby avenging his mother, killed by the scarlet fever she had caught from Elizabeth, with whom her son is now getting ready to ‘betray’ her. The situation recalls many of Poe’s tales.
2. Think of Renfield, Seward’s patient who is given considerable space in *Dracula*. Seward examines his case with the utmost care, draws on all the known psychiatric techniques, even forms new hypotheses, and calls Van Helsing for a second opinion: nothing—they draw a blank. Then, all of a sudden, the penny drops: Renfield is the servant of *Dracula*.

The repressed returns, then, but disguised as a monster. For a psychoanalytic study, the main fact is precisely this metamorphosis. As Francesco Orlando has remarked of his analysis of Racine's *Phèdre*, 'the relationship between the unconscious and literature was not postulated according to the presence of contents, whatever their nature, in the literary work . . . perverse desire could not have been acceptable as content in the literary work without the latter's also accepting *the formal model capable of filtering it*.'³ This formal model is the monster metaphor, the vampire metaphor. It 'filters', makes bearable to the conscious mind those desires and fears⁴ which the latter has judged to be unacceptable and has thus been forced to repress, and whose existence it consequently cannot recognize. The literary formalization, the rhetorical figure, therefore has a double function: it *expresses* the unconscious content and at the same time *hides* it. Literature always contains *both* these functions. Taking away one or the other would mean eliminating either the problem of the unconscious (by asserting that everything in literature is transparent and manifest) or the problem of literary communication (by asserting that literature serves *only* to hide certain contents). Yet while these two functions are always present in the literary metaphor, the relationship between them can nevertheless change. One can stand out more than the other and win a dominant position within the overall signification of the work. These observations have a direct bearing on our argument, because the metaphor of the vampire is a splendid example of how the equilibrium of literary functions can vary. The problem can be posed thus: what is the sex—in literature, naturally, not in reality—of vampires? Vampires, unlike angels, do have sex. But it changes. In one set of works (Poe, Hoffmann, Baudelaire: 'elite' culture) they are women. In another (Polidori, Stoker, the cinema: 'mass' culture) they are men. The metamorphosis is by no means accidental. At the root of vampirism, as we have seen, lies an ambivalent impulse of the child towards its mother. To present the vampire as a *woman* therefore means to make relatively little distortion of the unconscious content. The literary figure still retains the essential element—the sex—of that which is at the source of the perturbation. The defences that

3. Orlando, pp. 138 and 140; my italics.

4. That a desire or a fear underlie the uncanny is entirely secondary for Freud. The terror is caused by the sudden re-emergence of something repressed: having established this, 'it must be a matter of indifference whether what is uncanny was itself originally frightening or whether it carried some *other* effect.' (The "Uncanny", p. 241). This ambivalent unconscious origin confers a peculiar function on the literature of terror. The distinction suggested by Freud in his study of jokes—'Dreams serve predominantly for the avoidance of unpleasure, jokes for the attainment of pleasure'—and extended by Orlando to literature (which also functions for the attainment of pleasure, for the manifestation of a repressed desire), becomes highly uncertain. In the literature of terror the two functions—avoidance of unpleasure and attainment of pleasure—seem to balance each other perfectly. Indeed the one exists for the other: a terror novel that doesn't frighten doesn't give pleasure either. In this respect, and not just because of its contents, the literature of terror seems to be that whose workings approximate most closely to those of the dream: and like the dream it 'imposes' an obligatory context of enjoyment: alone, at night, in bed.

literature puts up to protect the conscious mind are relatively elastic: D. H. Lawrence (as Baudelaire, implicitly, before him) passes with ease from the vampire theme back to Poe's perverse erotic desires.⁵ But if the vampire becomes a man, the unconscious source of the perturbation is hidden by a further layer of signifieds. The link becomes more tenuous. The conscious mind can rest easy: all that remains of the original fear is a word, 'Dracula': that splendid and inexplicable feminine name. The metamorphosis, in other words, serves to protect the conscious mind, or more precisely to keep it in a state of greater unawareness. The vampire is transformed into a man by mass culture, which has to promote spontaneous certainties and cannot let itself plumb the unconscious too deeply. Yet at the same time and for precisely this reason, the repressed content, which has remained unconscious, produces an irresistible fear. Spurious certainties and terror support each other.

* * *

CHRISTOPHER CRAFT

"Kiss Me with Those Red Lips": Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*†

* * * Bram Stoker's particular articulation of the vampire metaphor in *Dracula*, a book whose fundamental anxiety, an equivocation about the relationship between desire and gender, repeats, with a monstrous difference, a pivotal anxiety of late Victorian culture. Jonathan Harker, whose diary opens the novel, provides *Dracula's* most precise articulation of this anxiety. About to be kissed by the "weird sisters" (64) [51], the incestuous vampiric daughters who share Castle Dracula with the Count, a supine Harker thrills to a double passion:

All three had brilliant white teeth, that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous lips. There was something about them that made me uneasy, *some longing and at the same time some deadly fear*, I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips. (51; emphasis added) [42]

Immobilized by the competing imperatives of "wicked desire" and "deadly fear," Harker awaits an erotic fulfillment that entails both the dissolution of the boundaries of the self and the thorough subversion of conventional Victorian gender codes, which constrained the mobility

5. D. H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature*, London 1924, chapter 6.

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of sexual desire and varieties of genital behavior according to the more active male the right and responsibility of vigorous appetite, while requiring the more passive female to "suffer and be still." John Ruskin, concisely formulating Victorian conventions of sexual difference, provides us with a useful synopsis: "The man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention; his energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest. . . ." Woman, predictably enough, bears a different burden: "She must be enduringly, incorruptibly, good; instinctively, infallibly wise—wise, not for self-development, but for self-renunciation . . . wise, not with the narrowness of insolent and loveless pride, but with the passionate gentleness of an infinitely variable, because infinitely applicable, modesty of service—the true changefulness of woman."¹ Stoker, whose vampiric women exercise a far more dangerous "changefulness" than Ruskin imagines, anxiously inverts this conventional pattern, as virile Jonathan Harker enjoys a "feminine" passivity and awaits a delicious penetration from a woman whose demonism is figured as the power to penetrate. A swooning desire for an overwhelming penetration and an intense aversion to the demonic potency empowered to gratify that desire compose the fundamental motivating action and emotion in *Dracula*.

This ambivalence, always excited by the imminence of the vampiric kiss, finds its most sensational representation in the image of the Vampire Mouth, the central and recurring image of the novel: "There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive. . . . I could see in the moonlight the moisture shining on the red tongue as it lapped the white sharp teeth" (52) [42]. That is Harker describing one of the three vampire women at Castle Dracula. Here is Dr. Seward's description of the Count: "His eyes flamed red with devilish passion; the great nostrils of the white aquiline nose opened wide and quivered at the edges; and the white sharp teeth, behind the full lips of the blood-dripping mouth, champed together like those of a wild beast" (336) [247]. As the primary site of erotic experience in *Dracula*, this mouth equivocates, giving the lie to the easy separation of the masculine and the feminine. Luring at first with an inviting orifice, a promise of red softness, but delivering instead a piercing bone, the vampire mouth fuses and confuses what Dracula's civilized nemesis, Van Helsing and his Crew of Light,² works so hard to separate—the gender-based categories of the penetrating and the receptive, or, to use Van Helsing's language, the complementary categories of "brave men" and "good women." With its soft flesh barred by hard bone, its red

1. John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (New York, 1974), pp. 59–60.

2. This group of crusaders includes Van Helsing himself, Dr. John Seward, Arthur Holmwood, Quincey Morris, and later Jonathan Harker; the title Crew of Light is mine, but I have taken my cue from Stoker: *Lucy, lux, light*.

crossed by white, this mouth compels opposites and contrasts into a frightening unity, and it asks some disturbing questions. Are we male or are we female? Do we have penetrators or orifices? And if both, what does that mean? And what about our bodily fluids, the red and the white? What are the relations between blood and semen, milk and blood? Furthermore, this mouth, bespeaking the subversion of the stable and lucid distinctions of gender, is the mouth of all vampires, male and female.

Yet we must remember that the vampire mouth is first of all Dracula's mouth, and that all subsequent versions of it (in *Dracula* all vampires other than the Count are female)³ merely repeat as diminished simulacra the desire of the Great Original, that "father or furtherer of a new order of beings" (360) [263]. Dracula himself, calling his children "my jackals to do my bidding when I want to feed," identifies the systematic creation of female surrogates who enact his will and desire (365) [267]. This should remind us that the novel's opening anxiety, its first articulation of the vampiric threat, derives from Dracula's hovering interest in Jonathan Harker; the sexual threat this novel first evokes, manipulates, sustains, but never finally represents is that Dracula will seduce, penetrate, drain another male. The suspense and power of *Dracula's* opening section, of that phase of the narrative which we have called the invitation to monstrosity, proceeds precisely from this unfulfilled sexual ambition. Dracula's desire to fuse with a male, most explicitly evoked when Harker cuts himself shaving, subtly and dangerously suffuses this text. Always postponed and never directly enacted, this desire finds evasive fulfillment in an important series of heterosexual displacements.

Dracula's ungratified desire to vamp Harker is fulfilled instead by his three vampiric daughters, whose anatomical femininity permits, because it masks, the silently inderdicted homoerotic embrace between Harker and the Count. Here, in a displacement typical both of this text and the gender-anxious culture from which it arose, an implicitly homoerotic desire achieves representation as a monstrous heterosexuality, as a demonic inversion of normal gender relations. Dracula's daughters offer Harker a feminine form but a masculine penetration:

Lower and lower went her head as the lips went below the range of my mouth and chin and seemed to fasten on my throat. . . . I could feel the soft, shivering touch of the lips on the supersensitive skin of my throat, and the hard dents of the two sharp teeth, just touching and pausing there. I closed my eyes in a langorous ecstasy and waited—waited with a beating heart. (52) [42-43]

3. Renfield, whose "zoophagy" precedes Dracula's arrival in England and who is never vamped by Dracula, is no exception to this rule.

This moment, constituting the text's most direct and explicit representation of a male's desire to be penetrated, is governed by a double deflection: first, the agent of penetration is nominally and anatomically (from the mouth down, anyway) female; and second, this dangerous moment, fusing the maximum of desire and the maximum of anxiety, is poised precisely at the brink of penetration. Here the "two sharp teeth," just "touching" and "pausing" there, stop short of the transgression which would unsex Harker and toward which this text constantly aspires and then retreats: the actual penetration of the male.

This moment is interrupted, this penetration denied. Harker's pause at the end of the paragraph ("waited—waited with a beating heart"), which seems to anticipate an imminent piercing, in fact anticipates not the completion but the interruption of the scene of penetration. Dracula himself breaks into the room, drives the women away from Harker, and admonishes them: "How dare you touch him, any of you? How dare you cast eyes on him when I had forbidden it? Back, I tell you all! This man belongs to me" (53) [43]. Dracula's intercession here has two obvious effects: by interrupting the scene of penetration, it suspends and disperses throughout the text the desire maximized at the brink of penetration, and it repeats the threat of a more direct libidinous embrace between Dracula and Harker. Dracula's taunt, "This man belongs to me," is suggestive enough, but at no point subsequent to this moment does Dracula kiss Harker, preferring instead to pump him for his knowledge of English law, custom, and language. Dracula, soon departing for England, leaves Harker to the weird sisters, whose final penetration of him, implied but never represented, occurs in the dark interspace to which Harker's journal gives no access.

Hereafter *Dracula* will never represent so directly a male's desire to be penetrated; once in England Dracula, observing a decorous heterosexuality, vamps only women, in particular Lucy Westenra and Mina Harker. The novel, nonetheless, does not dismiss homoerotic desire and threat; rather it simply continues to diffuse and displace it. Late in the text, the Count himself announces a deflected homoeroticism when he admonishes the Crew of Light thus: "My revenge is just begun! I spread it over the centuries, and time is on my side. Your girls that you all love are mine already; and *through them you and others shall yet be mine . . .*" (365; italics added) [267]. Here Dracula specifies the process of substitution by which "the girls that you all love" mediate and displace a more direct communion among males. Van Helsing, who provides for Lucy transfusions designed to counteract the dangerous influence of the Count, confirms Dracula's declaration of surrogation; he knows that once the transfusions begin, Dracula drains from Lucy's veins not her blood, but rather blood transferred from the veins of the Crew of Light: "even we four who gave our strength to Lucy it also is

all to him [*sic*]" (244) [181]. 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.

The representation of sexuality in *Dracula*, then, registers a powerful ambivalence in its identification of desire and fear. The text releases a sexuality so mobile and polymorphic that Dracula may be best represented as bat or wolf or floating dust; yet this effort to elude the restrictions upon desire encoded in traditional conception of gender then constrains that desire through a series of heterosexual displacements. Desire's excursive mobility is always filtered in *Dracula* through the mask of a monstrous or demonic heterosexuality. Indeed, Dracula's mission in England is the creation of a race of monstrous women, feminine demons equipped with masculine devices. This monstrous heterosexuality is apotropaic for two reasons: first, because it masks and deflects the anxiety consequent to a more direct representation of same sex eroticism; and second, because in imagining a sexually aggressive woman as a demonic penetrator, as a usurper of a prerogative belonging "naturally" to the other gender, it justifies, as we shall see later, a violent expulsion of this deformed femininity.

In its particular formulation of erotic ambivalence, in its contrary need both to liberate and constrain a desire indifferent to the prescriptions of gender by figuring such desire as monstrous heterosexuality, *Dracula* may seem at first idiosyncratic, anomalous, merely neurotic. This is not the case. *Dracula* presents a characteristic, if hyperbolic, instance of Victorian anxiety over the potential fluidity of gender roles,⁴ and this text's defensiveness toward the mobile sexuality it nonetheless wants to evoke parallels remarkably other late Victorian accounts of same sex eroticism, of desire in which the "sexual instincts" were said to be, in the words of John Addington Symonds, "improperly correlated to [the] sexual organs."⁵ During the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first of the twentieth, English writers produced their first sustained discourse about the variability of sexual desire, with a special emphasis upon male homoerotic love, which had already received indirect and evasive endorsement from Tennyson in "In Memoriam" and from Whitman in the "Calamus" poems. The preferred taxonomic la-

4. The complication of gender roles in *Dracula* has of course been recognized in the criticism. See, for instance, Stephanie Demetrakopoulos, "Feminism, Sex Role Exchanges, and Other Subliminal Fantasies in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," *Frontiers*, 2 (1977), pp. 104-13. Demetrakopoulos writes: "These two figures I have traced so far—the male as passive rape victim and also as violator-brutalizer—reflect the polarized sex roles and the excessive needs this polarizing engendered in Victorian culture. Goldfarb recounts the brothels that catered to masochists, sadists, and homosexuals. The latter aspect of sexuality obviously did not interest Stoker. . . ." I agree with the first sentence here and, as this essay should make clear, emphatically disagree with the last.

5. John Addington Symonds, *A Problem in Modern Ethics* (London, 1906), p. 74.

bel under which these writers categorized and examined such sexual desire was not, as we might anticipate, "homosexuality" but rather "sexual inversion," a classificatory term involving a complex negotiation between socially encoded gender norms and a sexual mobility that would seem at first unconstrained by those norms.

* * * Van Helsing stands as the protector of the patriarchal institutions he so emphatically represents and as the guarantor of the traditional dualisms his religion and profession promote and authorize.⁶ [Van Helsing's] largest purpose is to reinscribe the dualities that Dracula would muddle and confuse. Dualities require demarcations, inexorable and ineradicable lines of separation, but Dracula, as a border being who abrogates demarcations, makes such distinctions impossible. He is *nosferatu*, neither dead nor alive but somehow both, mobile frequenter of the grave and boudoir, easeful communicant of exclusive realms, and as such he toys with the separation of the living and the dead, a distinction critical to physician, lawyer, and priest alike. His mobility and metaphoric power deride the distinction between spirit and flesh, another of Van Helsing's sanctified dualisms. Potent enough to ignore death's terminus, Dracula has a spirit's freedom and mobility, but that mobility is chained to the most mechanical of appetites: he and his children rise and fall for a drink and for nothing else, for nothing else matters. This con- or inter-fusion of spirit and appetite, of eternity and sequence, produces a madness of activity and a mania of unceasing desire. Dracula lives an eternity of sexual repetition, a lurid wedding of desire and satisfaction that parodies both.

But the traditional dualism most vigorously defended by Van Helsing and most subtly subverted by Dracula is, of course, sexual: the division of being into gender, either male or female. Indeed, as we have seen, the vampiric kiss excites a sexuality so mobile, so insistent, that it threatens to overwhelm the distinctions of gender, and the exuberant energy with which Van Helsing and the Crew of Light counter Dracula's influence represents the text's anxious defense against the very desire it also seeks to liberate. In counterposing Dracula and Van Helsing, Stoker's text simultaneously threatens and protects the line of demarcation that insures the intelligible division of being into gender. This ambivalent need to invite the vampiric kiss and then to repudiate it defines exactly the dynamic of the battle that constitutes the prolonged middle of this text. The field of this battle, of this equivocal competition for the right to define the possible relations between desire and gender, is the infinitely penetrable body of a somnolent woman. This interposition of a woman between Dracula and Van Helsing should not surprise us; in England, as in *Castle Dracula*, a violent wrestle between males is mediated through a feminine form.

6. On this point see Demetrakopoulos, p. 104.

The Crew of Light's conscious conception of women is, predictably enough, idealized—the stuff of dreams. Van Helsing's concise description of Mina may serve as a representative example: "She is one of God's women fashioned by His own hand to show us men and other women that there is a heaven we can enter, and that its light can be here on earth" (226) [168–69]. The impossible idealism of this conception of women deflects attention from the complex and complicitous interaction within this sentence of gender, authority, and representation. Here Van Helsing's exegesis of God's natural text reifies Mina into a stable sign or symbol ("one of God's women") performing a fixed and comfortable function within a masculine sign system. Having received from Van Helsing's exegesis her divine impress, Mina signifies both a masculine artistic intention ("fashioned by His own hand") and a definite didactic purpose ("to show us men and other women" how to enter heaven), each of which constitutes an enormous constraint upon the significative possibilities of the sign or symbol that Mina here becomes. Van Helsing's reading of Mina, like a dozen other instances in which his interpretation of the sacred determines and delimits the range of activity permitted to women, encodes woman with a "natural" meaning composed according to the textual imperatives of anxious males. Precisely this complicity between masculine anxiety, divine textual authority, and a fixed conception of femininity—which may seem benign enough in the passage above—will soon be used to justify the destruction of Lucy Westenra, who, having been successfully vamped by Dracula, requires a corrective penetration. To Arthur's anxious importunity "Tell me what I am to do," Van Helsing answers: "Take this stake in your left hand, ready to place the point over the heart, and the hammer in your right. Then when we begin our prayer for the dead—I shall read him; I have here the book, and the others shall follow—strike in God's name . . ." (259) [191]. Here four males (Van Helsing, Seward, Holmwood, and Quincey Morris) communally read a masculine text (Van Helsing's mangled English even permits Stoker the unidiomatic pronominalization of the genderless text: "I shall read him"),⁷ in order to justify the fatal correction of Lucy's dangerous wandering, her insolent disregard for the sexual and semiotic constraint encoded in Van Helsing's exegesis of "God's women."

The process by which women are construed as signs determined by the interpretive imperatives of authorizing males had been brilliantly identified some fifty years before the publication of *Dracula* by John Stuart Mill in *The Subjection of Women*. "What is now called the nature of women," Mill writes, "is an extremely artificial thing—the result of forced repression in some directions, unnatural stimulation in oth-

7. In this instance at least Van Helsing has an excuse for his ungrammatical usage; in Dutch, Van Helsing's native tongue, the noun *bijbel* (Bible) is masculine.

ers."⁸ Mill's sentence, deftly identifying "the nature of women" as an "artificial" construct formed (and deformed) by "repression" and "unnatural stimulation," quietly unties the lacings that bind something called "woman" to something else called "nature." Mill further suggests that a correct reading of gender becomes almost impossible, since the natural difference between male and female is subject to cultural interpretation: ". . . I deny that anyone knows, or can know, the nature of the two sexes, as long as they have only been seen in their present relation to one another." Mill's agnosticism regarding "the nature of the sexes" suggests the societal and institutional quality of all definitions of the natural, definitions which ultimately conspire to produce "the imaginary and conventional character of women."⁹ This last phrase, like the whole of Mill's essay, understands and criticizes the authoritarian nexus that arises when a deflected or transformed desire ("imaginary"), empowered by a gender-biased societal agreement ("conventional"), imposes itself upon a person in order to create a "character." "Character" of course functions in at least three senses: who and what one "is," the role one plays in society's supervening script, and the sign or letter that is intelligible only within the constraints of a larger sign system. Van Helsing's exegesis of "God's women" creates just such an imaginary and conventional character. Mina's body/character may indeed be feminine, but the signification it bears is written and interpreted solely by males. As Susan Hardy Aiken has written, such a symbolic system takes "for granted the role of women as passive objects or signs to be manipulated in the grammar of privileged male interchanges."¹⁰

Yet exactly the passivity of this object and the ease of this manipulation are at question in *Dracula*. Dracula, after all, kisses these women out of their passivity and so endangers the stability of Van Helsing's symbolic system. Both the prescriptive intention of Van Helsing's exegesis and the emphatic methodology (hypodermic needle, stake, surgeon's blade) he employs to insure the durability of his interpretation of gender suggest the potential unreliability of Mina as sign, an instability that provokes an anxiety we may call fear of the mediatrix. If, as Van Helsing admits, God's women provide the essential mediation ("the light can be here on earth") between the divine but distant patriarch and his earthly sons, then God's intention may be distorted by its potentially changeable vehicle. If woman-as-signifier wanders, then Van Helsing's whole cosmology, with its founding dualisms and supporting texts, collapses. In short, Van Helsing's interpretation of Mina,

8. John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women in Essays on Sex Equality*, ed. Alice Rossi (Chicago, 1970), p. 148.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

10. Susan Hardy Aiken, "Scripture and Poetic Discourse in *The Subjection of Women*," *PMLA*, 98 (1983), p. 354.

because endangered by the proleptic fear that his mediatrix might destabilize and wander, necessarily imposes an *a priori* constraint upon the significant possibilities of the sign "Mina." Such an authorial gesture, intended to forestall the semiotic wandering that Dracula inspires, indirectly acknowledges woman's dangerous potential. Late in the text, while Dracula is vamping Mina, Van Helsing will admit, very uneasily, that "Madam Mina, our poor, dear Madam Mina is changing" (384) [280]. The potential for such a change demonstrates what Nina Auerbach has called this woman's "mysterious amalgam of imprisonment and power."²

Dracula's authorizing kiss, like that of a demonic Prince Charming, triggers the release of this latent power and excites in these women a sexuality so mobile, so aggressive, that it thoroughly disrupts Van Helsing's compartmental conception of gender. Kissed into a sudden sexuality,³ Lucy grows "voluptuous" (a word used to describe her only during the vampiric process), her lips redden, and she kisses with a new interest. This sexualization of Lucy, metamorphosing woman's "sweetness" to "adamantine, heartless cruelty, and [her] purity to voluptuous wantonness" (252) [187], terrifies her suitors because it entails a reversal or inversion of sexual identity; Lucy, now toothed like the Count, usurps the function of penetration that Van Helsing's moralized taxonomy of gender reserves for males. *Dracula*, in thus figuring the sexualization of woman as deformation, parallels exactly some of the more extreme medical uses of the idea of inversion. Late Victorian accounts of lesbianism, for instance, superscribed conventional gender norms upon sexual relationships to which those norms were anatomically irrelevant. Again the heterosexual norm proved paradigmatic. The female "husband" in such a relationship was understood to be dominant, appetitive, masculine, and "congenitally inverted"; the female "wife" was understood to be quiescent, passive, only "latently" homosexual, and, as Havelock Ellis argued, unmotivated by genital desire.⁴ Extreme

2. Nina Auerbach, *Woman and the Demon* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 11.

3. Roth, "Suddenly Sexual Women in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," *Literature and Psychology* 27 (1977), p. 116.

4. An adequate analysis of the ideological and political implications of the terminological shift from "inversion" to "homosexuality" is simply beyond the scope of this essay, and the problem is further complicated by a certain imprecision or fluidity in the employment by these writers of an already unstable terminology. Ellis used the word "homosexuality": under protest and Carpenter, citing the evident bastardy of any term compounded of one Greek and one Latin root, preferred the word "homogenic." However, a provisional if oversimplified discrimination between "inversion" and "homosexuality" may be useful: "true" sexual inversion, Ellis argued, consists in "sexual instinct turned by *inborn constitutional abnormality* toward persons of the same sex" (*Sexual Inversion*, p. 1; italics added), whereas homosexuality may refer to same sex eroticism generated by spurious, circumstantial (*faute de mieux*), or intentionally perverse causality. The pivotal issue here is will or choice: the "true" invert, whose "abnormality" is biologically determined and therefore "natural," does not choose his/her desire but is instead chosen by it; the latent or spurious homosexual, on the other hand, does indeed choose a sexual object of the same gender. Such a taxonomic distinction (or, perhaps better, confusion) represents a polemical and political compromise that allows, potentially at least, for the medicalization of congenital inversion and the criminalization of willful homosexuality. I repeat

deployment of the heterosexual paradigm approached the ridiculous, as George Chauncey explains:

The early medical case histories of lesbians thus predictably paid enormous attention to their menstrual flow and the size of their sexual organs. Several doctors emphasized that their lesbian patients stopped menstruating at an early age, if they began at all, or had unusually difficult and irregular periods. They also inspected the woman's sexual organs, often claiming that inverts had unusually large clitorises, which they said the inverts used in sexual intercourse as a man would his penis.⁵

This rather pathetic hunt for the penis-in-absentia denotes a double anxiety: first, that the penis shall not be erased, and if it is erased, that it shall be reinscribed in a perverse simulacrum; and second, that all desire repeat, under the duress of deformity, the heterosexual norm that the metaphor of inversion always assumes. Medical professionals had in fact no need to pursue this fantasized amazon of the clitoris, this "unnatural" penetrator, so vigorously, since Stoker, whose imagination was at least deft enough to displace that dangerous simulacrum to an isomorphic orifice, had by the 1890s already invented her. His sexualized women are men too.

Stoker emphasizes the monstrosity implicit in such abrogation of gender codes by inverting a favorite Victorian maternal function. His *New Lady Vampires* feed at first only on small children, working their way up, one assumes, a demonic pleasure thermometer until they may feed at last on full-blooded males. Lucy's dietary indiscretions evoke the deepest disgust from the Crew of Light:

With a careless motion, she flung to the ground, callous as a devil, the child that up to now she had clutched strenuously to her breast, growling over it as a dog growls over a bone. The child gave a sharp cry, and lay there moaning. There was a cold-bloodedness in the act which wrung a groan from Arthur; when she advanced to him with outstretched arms and a wanton smile, he fell back and hid his face in his hands.

She still advanced, however, and with a langorous, voluptuous grace, said:

"Come to me Arthur. Leave those others and come to me. My arms are hungry for you. Come, and we can rest together. Come, my husband, come!" (253-54) [188]

the caution that my description here entails a necessary oversimplification of a terminological muddle. For a more complete and particular analysis see Chauncey, pp. 114-46; for the applicability of such a taxonomy to lesbian relationships see Ellis, *Sexual Inversion*, pp. 131-41.

5. Chauncey, p. 132.

Stoker here gives us a *tableau mordant* of gender inversion: the child Lucy clutches "strenuously to her breast" is not being fed but is being fed upon. Furthermore, by requiring that the child be discarded that the husband may be embraced, Stoker provides a little emblem of this novel's anxious protestation that appetite in a woman "(My arms are hungry for you") is a diabolic ("callous as a devil") inversion of natural order, and of the novel's fantastic but futile hope that maternity and sexuality be divorced.

The aggressive mobility with which Lucy flaunts the encasements of gender norms generates in the Crew of Light a terrific defensive activity, as these men race to reinscribe, with a series of pointed instruments, the line of demarcation which enables the definition of gender. To save Lucy from the mobilization of desire, Van Helsing and the Crew of Light counteract Dracula's subversive series of penetrations with a more conventional series of their own, that sequence of transfusions intended to provide Lucy with the "brave man's blood" which "is the best thing on earth when a woman is in trouble" (180) [136]. There are in fact four transfusions, which begin with Arthur, who as Lucy's accepted suitor has the right of first infusion, and include Lucy's other two suitors (Dr. Seward, Quincey Morris) and Van Helsing himself. One of the established observations of *Dracula* criticism is that these therapeutic penetrations represent displaced marital (and martial) penetrations; indeed, the text is emphatic about this substitution of medical for sexual penetration. After the first transfusion, Arthur feels as if he and Lucy "had been really married and that she was his wife in the sight of God" (209) [157]; and Van Helsing, after his donation, calls himself a "bigamist" and Lucy "this so sweet maid . . . a polyandrist" (211-12) [158]. These transfusions, in short, are sexual (blood substitutes for semen here)⁶ and constitute, in Nina Auerbach's superb phrase, "the most convincing epithalamiums in the novel."⁷

These transfusions represent the text's first anxious reassertion of the conventionally masculine prerogative of penetration; as Van Helsing tells Arthur before the first transfusion, "You are a man and it is a man we want" (148) [113]. Countering the dangerous mobility excited by Dracula's kiss, Van Helsing's penetrations restore to Lucy both the stillness appropriate to his sense of her gender and "the regular breathing of healthy sleep," a necessary correction of the loud "stertorous" breathing, the animal snorting, that the Count inspires. This repetitive contest (penetration, withdrawal; penetration, infusion), itself an image of *Dracula's* ambivalent need to evoke and then to repudiate the fluid pleasures of vampiric appetite, continues to be waged upon Lucy's in-

6. The symbolic interchangeability of blood and semen in vampirism was identified as early as 1931 by Ernest Jones in *On The Nightmare* (London, 1931), p. 119: "in the unconscious mind blood is commonly an equivalent for semen. . . ."

7. Auerbach, p. 22.

finitely penetrable body until Van Helsing exhausts his store of "brave men," whose generous gifts of blood, however efficacious, fail finally to save Lucy from the mobilization of desire.

But even the loss of this much blood does not finally enervate a masculine energy as indefatigable as the Crew of Light's, especially when it stands in the service of a tradition of "good women whose lives and whose truths may make good lesson [*sic*] for the children that are to be" (222) [166]. In the name of those good women and future children (very much the same children whose throats Lucy is now penetrating), Van Helsing will repeat, with an added emphasis, his assertion that penetration is a masculine prerogative. His logic of corrective penetration demands an escalation, as the failure of the hypodermic needle necessitates the stake. A woman is better still than mobile, better dead than sexual:

Arthur took the stake and the hammer, and when once his mind was set on action his hands never trembled nor even quivered. Van Helsing opened his missal and began to read, and Quincey and I followed as well as we could. Arthur placed the point over the heart, and as I looked I could see its dint in the white flesh. Then he struck with all his might.

The Thing in the coffin writhed; and a hideous, blood-curdling screech came from the opened red lips. The body shook and quivered and twisted in wild contortions; the sharp white teeth champed together till the lips were cut and the mouth was smeared with a crimson foam. But Arthur never faltered. He looked like the figure of Thor as his untrembling arm rose and fell, driving deeper and deeper the mercy-bearing stake, whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted up around it. His face was set, and high duty seemed to shine through it; the sight of it gave us courage, so that our voices seemed to ring through the little vault.

And then the writhing and quivering of the body became less, and the teeth ceased to champ, and the face to quiver. Finally it lay still. The terrible task was over. (258-59) [191-92]

Here is the novel's real—and the woman's only—climax, its most violent and misogynistic moment, displaced roughly to the middle of the book, so that the sexual threat may be repeated but its ultimate success denied: Dracula will not win Mina, second in his series of English seductions. The murderous phallicism of this passage clearly punishes Lucy for her transgression of Van Helsing's gender code, as she finally receives a penetration adequate to insure her future quiescence. Violence against the sexual woman here is intense, sensually imagined, ferocious in its detail. Note, for instance, the terrible dimple, the "dint in the white flesh," that recalls Jonathan Harker's swoon at Castle Dra-

cula ("I could feel . . . the hard dents of the two sharp teeth, just touching and pausing there") and anticipates the technicolor consummation of the next paragraph. That paragraph, masking murder as "high duty," completes Van Helsing's penetrative therapy by "driving deeper and deeper the mercy-bearing stake." One might question a mercy this destructive, this fatal, but Van Helsing's actions, always sanctified by the patriarchal textual tradition signified by "his missal," manage to "restore Lucy to us as a holy and not an unholy memory" (258) [191]. This enthusiastic correction of Lucy's monstrosity provides the Crew of Light with a double reassurance: it effectively exorcises the threat of a mobile and hungering feminine sexuality, and it counters the homocroticism latent in the vampiric threat by reinscribing (upon Lucy's chest) the line dividing the male who penetrates and the woman who receives. By disciplining Lucy and restoring each gender to its "proper" function, Van Helsing's pacification program compensates for the threat of gender indefiniteness implicit in the vampiric kiss.

The vigor and enormity of this penetration (Arthur driving the "round wooden stake," which is "some two and a half or three inches thick and about three feet long," resembles "the figure of Thor") do not bespeak merely Stoker's personal idiosyncratic anxiety but suggest as well a whole culture's uncertainty about the fluidity of gender roles. * * * Once fatally staked, Lucy is restored to "the so sweet that was." Dr. Seward describes the change:

There in the coffin lay no longer the foul Thing that we had so dreaded and grown to hate that the work of her destruction was yielded to the one best entitled to it, but Lucy as we had seen her in her life with her face of unequalled sweetness and purity. . . . One and all we felt that the holy calm that lay like sunshine over the wasted face and form was only an earthly token and symbol of the calm that was to reign for ever. (259) [192]

This post-penetrative peace⁸ denotes not merely the final immobilization of Lucy's body, but also the corresponding stabilization of the dangerous signifier whose wandering had so threatened Van Helsing's gender code. Here a masculine interpretive community ("One and all we felt") reasserts the semiotic fixity that allows Lucy to function as the "earthly token and symbol" of eternal beatitude, of the heaven we can enter. We may say that this last penetration is doubly efficacious; in a single stroke both the sexual and the textual needs of the Crew of Light find a sufficient satisfaction.

Despite its placement in the middle of the text, this scene, which successfully pacifies Lucy and demonstrates so emphatically the efficacy of the technology Van Helsing employs to correct vampirism, corre-

8. Roth correctly reads Lucy's countenance at this moment as "a thank you note" for the corrective penetration: "Suddenly Sexual Women," p. 116.

sponds formally to the scene of expulsion, which usually signals the end of the gothic narrative. Here, of course, this scene signals not the end of the story but the continuation of it, since Dracula will now repeat his assault on another woman. Such displacement of the scene of expulsion requires explanation. Obviously this displacement subverts the text's anxiety about the direct representation of eroticism between males; Stoker simply could not represent so explicitly a violent phallic interchange between the Crew of Light and Dracula. In a by now familiar heterosexual mediation, Lucy receives the phallic correction that Dracula deserves. Indeed, the actual expulsion of the Count at novel's end is a disappointing anticlimax. Two rather perfunctory knife strokes suffice to dispatch him, as *Dracula* simply forgets the elaborate ritual of correction that vampirism previously required. And the displacement of this scene performs at least two other functions; first, by establishing early the ultimate efficacy of Van Helsing's corrective technology, it reassures everyone—Stoker, his characters, the reader—that vampirism may indeed be vanquished, that its sexual threat, however powerful and intriguing, may be expelled; and second, in doing so, in establishing this reassurance, it permits the text to prolong and repeat its flirtation with vampirism, its ambivalent petition of that sexual threat. In short, the displacement of the scene of expulsion provides a heterosexual locale for Van Helsing's demonstration of compensatory phallicism, while it also extends the duration of the text's ambivalent play.

This extension of the text's flirtation with monstrosity, during which Mina is threatened by but not fully seduced into vampirism, includes the novel's only explicit scene of vampiric seduction. Important enough to be twice presented, first by Seward as spectator and then by Mina as participant, the scene occurs in the Harker bedroom, where Dracula seduces Mina while "on the bed lay Jonathan Harker, his face flushed and breathing heavily as if in a stupor." The Crew of Light bursts into the room; the voice is Dr. Seward's:

With his left hand he held both Mrs. Harker's hands, keeping them away with her arms at full tension; his right hand gripped her by the back of the neck, forcing her face down on his bosom. Her white nightdress was smeared with blood, and a thin stream trickled down the man's bare breast, which was shown by his torn-open dress. The attitude of the two had a terrible resemblance to a child forcing a kitten's nose into a saucer of milk to compel it to drink. (336) [247]

In this initiation scene Dracula compels Mina into the pleasure of vampiric appetite and introduces her to a world where gender distinctions collapse, where male and female bodily fluids intermingle terribly. For Mina's drinking is double here, both a "symbolic act of enforced

fellation"⁹ and a lurid nursing. That this is a scene of enforced fellation is made even clearer by Mina's own description of the scene a few pages later; she adds the graphic detail of the "spurt":

With that he pulled open his shirt, and with his long sharp nails opened a vein in his breast. When the blood began to spurt out, he took my hands in one of his, holding them tight, and with the other seized my neck and pressed my mouth to the wound, so that I must either suffocate or swallow some of the—Oh, my God, my God! What have I done? (343) [252]

That "Oh, my God, My God!" is deftly placed; Mina's verbal ejaculation supplants the Count's liquid one, leaving the fluid unnamed and encouraging us to voice the substitution that the text implies—this blood is semen too. But this scene of fellation is thoroughly displaced. We are at the Count's breast, encouraged once again to substitute white for red, as blood becomes milk: "the attitude of the two had a terrible resemblance to a child forcing a kitten's nose into a saucer of milk." Such fluidity of substitution and displacement entails a confusion of Dracula's sexual identity, or an interfusion of masculine and feminine functions, as Dracula here becomes a lurid mother offering not a breast but an open and bleeding wound. But if the Count's sexuality is double, then the open wound may be yet another displacement (the reader of *Dracula* must be as mobile as the Count himself). We are back in the genital region, this time a woman's, and we have the suggestion of a bleeding vagina. The image of red and voluptuous lips, with their slow trickle of blood, has, of course, always harbored this potential.

We may read this scene, in which anatomical displacements and the confluence of blood, milk, and semen forcefully erase the demarcation separating the masculine and the feminine, as *Dracula's* most explicit representation of the anxieties excited by the vampiric kiss. Here *Dracula* defines most clearly vampirism's threat of gender indefiniteness. Significantly, this scene is postponed until late in the text. Indeed, this is Dracula's last great moment, his final demonstration of dangerous potency; after this, he will vamp no one. The novel, having presented most explicitly its deepest anxiety, its fear of gender dissolution, now moves mechanically to repudiate that fear. After a hundred rather tedious pages of pursuits and flight, *Dracula* perfunctorily expels the Count. The world of "natural" gender relations is happily restored, or at least seems to be.

* * *

As offspring of Jonathan and Mina Harker, Little Quincey, whose introduction so late in the narrative insures his emblematic function, seemingly represents the restoration of "natural" order and especially

9. C. F. Bentley, "The Monster in the Bedroom: Sexual Symbolism in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," *Literature and Psychology*, 22 (1972), p. 30.

the rectification of conventional gender roles. His official genesis, is obviously enough, heterosexual, but Stoker's prose quietly suggests an alternative paternity: "His bundle of names links all our little band of men together." This is the fantasy child of those sexualized transfusions, son of an illicit and nearly invisible homosexual union. This suggestion, reinforced by the preceding pun of "spirit," constitutes this text's last and subtlest articulation of its "secret belief" that "a brave man's blood" may metamorphose into "our brave friend's spirit." But the real curiosity here is the novel's last-minute displacement, its substitution of Mina, who ultimately refused sexualization by Dracula, for Lucy, who was sexualized, vigorously penetrated, and consequently destroyed. We may say that Little Quincey was luridly conceived in the veins of Lucy Westenra and then deftly relocated to the purer body of Mina Harker. Here, in the last of its many displacements, *Dracula* insists, first, that successful filiation implies the expulsion of all "monstrous" desire in women and, second, that all desire, however mobile and omnivorous it may secretly be, must subject itself to the heterosexual configuration that alone defined the Victorian sense of the normal. In this regard, Stoker's fable, however hyperbolic its anxieties, represents his age. As we have seen, even polemicists of same sex eroticism like Symonds and Ellis could not imagine such desire without repeating within their metaphor of sexual inversion the basic structure of the heterosexual paradigm. Victorian culture's anxiety about desire's potential indifference to the prescriptions of gender produces everywhere a predictable repetition and a predictable displacement; the heterosexual norm repeats itself in a mediating image of femininity—the Count's vampiric daughters, Ulrich's and Symonds's *anima muliebris*, Lucy Westenra's penetrable body—that displaces a more direct communion among males. Desire, despite its propensity to wander, stays home and retains an essentially heterosexual and familial definition. The result in *Dracula* is a child whose conception is curiously immaculate, yet disturbingly lurid: child of his father's violations. Little Quincey, fulfilling Van Helsing's prophecy of "the children that are to be," may be the text's emblem of a restored natural order, but his paternity has its unofficial aspect too. He is the unacknowledged son of the Crew of Light's displaced homoerotic union, and his name, linking the "little band of men together," quietly remembers that secret genesis.