The Uncanny and Narrative Destabilization of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*

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All we have to go upon are traditions and superstitions. These do not at first appear much, when the matter is one of life and death – nay of more than either life or death. . . . Does not the belief in vampires rest for others – though not, alas! for us – on them? A year ago which of us would have received such a possibility, in the midst of our scientific, matter-of-fact nineteenth century? – **Bram Stoker, Dracula [1897]**

We are reminded that the word 'heimlich' is not unambiguous, but belongs to two sets of ideas, which, without being contradictory, are yet very different: on the one hand it means that what is familiar and agreeable, and on the other, what is concealed and kept out of sight – **Sigmund Freud , The Uncanny [1919]**

As with most Gothic texts of the fin-de-siècle, Stoker's novel *Dracula* demonstrates "a particular interest in questions of identity and the transgression of borderlines" (Punter 26) in its attempts to assuage late Victorian anxieties of deviant sexuality and reverse colonization. All forms of fantasy, including the Gothic, are fundamentally concerned with defining reality by its very violation of reality; by disrupting the rules which govern reality it actually helps to establish what those rules are. Since it is the very "nature of reality" which is at question for late Victorians, "the fantastic proved ideal for symbolically reaffirming the traditional model of reality" (Spencer 208).

On the cusp of a new age of technology, science, and politics, fin-de-siècle English society found that the clear-cut boundaries defining England and Englishness were more permeable than previously supposed. The once stoic lines between male/female, man/beast, civilized/degenerate, and East/West suddenly began to erode, upending the rules by which Victorian society organized experience, and thereby threatening British identity. The concentrated resurgence of the Gothic aesthetic in fiction during this time, therefore, is unsurprising when taking into account the genre's regular dalliances with repressed or unconscious fears and desires. As many critics have noted, the Gothic "is frequently considered to be a genre that re-emerges with particular force during times of cultural crisis" (Punter 39).[1]

[1] Kathleen Spencer identifies several key events in the late nineteenth century England which underlay the tremendous public anxieties, including the potential for degeneration (on the both the level of individual subject and civilization), the state of the Empire, the Boer War of 1899-1902, the physical frailty of London's East-End slum population, the work of Cesare Lombroso, and the growth of criminal anthropology and Darwinian evolutionary theory.

With the Gothic, literature could attempt to reduce anxieties by stabilizing certain cultural distinctions. *Dracula*'s Gothic elements, therefore, provided a means in which the national imagination could map fears of the future and its identity by utilizing the supernatural to displace threats outside of both the individual and social subject. Through a process of Othering, the character of Count Dracula becomes a liminal body in which unconscious desires and fears can be articulated while maintaining a sense of self through cognitive dissonance. Distancing through the supernatural and uncanny, then, becomes a means of exploring the cultural psyche.

At the time of *Dracula*'s publication, the word 'uncanny' was used in a more generalized, nondescript way by readers and critics alike to describe things which were mysterious, unfamiliar or of a supernatural character (OED). However, when Sigmund Freud wrote *The Uncanny* in 1919 he elaborated and developed the concept to include more specific psychoanalytic characteristics. He suggests that the uncanny is something which is both familiar and repulsive. As readers, we are attracted to it at the same time in which it arouses sensations of "dread and creeping horror," as something well known becomes estranged or the unknown becomes embedded with a haunting familiarity. To Freud "uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression," or alternatively "something which ought to have remained hidden but has come to light." The uncanny in literature, therefore, could take the form of the familiar blending with the unfamiliar, constant recurrence of the same thing, or a doubling or dividing of the self.

Although written a few decades later, these characteristics can still be seen to apply to Stoker's 1897 novel as each of these elements are found in abundance within the text. In *Dracula*, Stoker attempts to simultaneously recognize fin-de-siècle anxieties as threats already present in British society, while also reestablishing the dominant order through their displacement and destruction, expelling them from society. Yet although his ending involves the triumphant defeat of Dracula and the salvation of Mina, his use of the uncanny throughout the novel also works counter this narrative, presenting a not altogether convincing solution to these cultural fears, leaving the conclusion steeped with ambiguity. Instead of metaphorically purging the threats, *Dracula* paradoxically demonstrates how the Other is not only inherent in the British unconscious, but because of its innate nature it is capable only of being repressed, not eliminated. What is more, if as Freud claims:

> "psycho-analytic theory is correct in maintaining that every affect belonging to an emotional impulse, whatever its kind, is transformed, if it is repressed, into anxiety, then among instances of frightening things there must be one class in which the frightening element can be shown to be something repressed which recurs"

then Stoker's use of uncanny elements actually serves to undermine any stabilizing effects of the narrative. Instead of a return to the status-quo and a solidifying of crumbling boundaries, the novel suggests that repressed anxieties will reemerge. Therefore, by examining Bram Stoker's *Dracula* through lens of Freud's *The Uncanny* we can see how these elements ironically subvert any potential reaffirmation of Victorian delineations and possibly serve to explain our continuing fascination in the story.[2]

While initially receiving generally positive reviews, *Dracula* none-the-less contained problems for several of Stoker's contemporary critics, particularly when it came to his use of traditional Gothic tropes in a modern setting. The reviewer for *The Saturday Review*, for instance, appears to commend Stoker, stating: "Mr. Bram Stoker was not content with the small honour he could have gained by leaving him in an out-of-the-way corner of Europe" in a Radcliffian fashion, but ultimately trivialized the work feeling the novel would only impress those readers who like to "sup full of horrors" (implying that perhaps it would have been better if he had). The idea of the vampire itself was unsuccessful to the reviewer of *Athenaeum*, who argued it was "too direct and uncompromising." Moreover, it lacked the "essential note of awful remoteness and at the same time subtle affinity that separates while it links our humanity with unknown beings and possibilities hovering on the confines of the known world." He too, however, felt that *Dracula* was "uncanny enough to please those for whom they are designed." A June 1987 review in *The Academy Fiction Supplement* admired Stoker's descriptions of Count Dracula's Transylvanian castle, feeling that it "[struck] home at once to the imagination, while the supernatural element of horror is so skillfully worked," but was, however, less impressed with the novel once it returned to British soil. The reviewer states: "The middle part of the book, where the scene is mainly in England, strikes me as less good. Vampires need a Transylvanian background to be convincing. The witches of 'Macbeth' would not be effective in Oxford-street." A similar

[2] This is particularly the case considering Freud's assertion that: "fiction presents more opportunities for creating uncanny feelings than are possible in real life." A writer of the uncanny, Freud claims, "pretends to move in the world of common reality" but tricks readers into believing the validity of their account, while in truth they are multiplying the "conditions operating to produce uncanny feelings" to go "beyond what could happen in real life." The writer is in effect "betraying us to the superstitiousness which we have ostensibly surmounted." Right from the beginning readers of *Dracula* are told that the papers which make up the text have been arranged so that they "may stand forth as simple fact"(5), yet within the pages we are confronted with unsettling fantastical events.

comment was also made in the *Spectator*, except instead of location the reviewer found fault with the year: "Mr. Stoker has shown considerable ability in the use that he has made in all the available traditions of vampirology, but we think his story would have been all the more effective if he had chosen an earlier period. The up-to-dateness of the book – the phonograph diaries, typewriters, and so on – hardly fits with the medieval methods which ultimately secure the victory for Count Dracula's foes."

Therefore, while each of the critics seems to enjoy the novel as a piece of frivolous, if somewhat thrilling, work of fiction none view the text as anything more significant than a romantic adventure, in the same vein — but of a lower caliber — as Robert Louis Stevenson or Rudyard Kipling – presumably the only difference being Stoker's addition of what Kathleen Spencer calls the "fantastical."[3] What is more, each critic identifies the novel's failure to be anything more than a text 'full of horrors' at least in part to these very elements. However, *Dracula* is by no means unique in its revival of Gothic elements or its appropriation of the fantastical into modern day England. David Punter and Glennis Byron note:

> "Victorian Gothic is marked primarily by the domestication of Gothic figures, spaces and themes: horrors become explicitly located within the world of the contemporary reader. The romantic Gothic villain is transformed as monks, bandits and threatening aristocratic foreigners give way to criminals, madmen and scientists" (26).

The action of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), for instance, takes place exclusively in the urban setting of Victorian London and uses the modern chemical experimentation to create the abhuman transformation of Jekyll into the degenerative Hyde, while H.G. Well's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896) took up similar themes of degeneration through the perverse vivisections of Dr. Moreau (a former eminent London doctor of the relatively new and rapidly expanding field of physiology). In both of these texts, however, the supernatural phenomena are produced through scientific practice rather than any form of mysticism. Rather, their protagonists are the careless or irresponsible scientists; the Faustian-like descendants of Frankenstein continuing to push limits of human understanding

[3] Nina Auercach and David J. Skal also note: "While modern readers and critics of *Dracula* are transfixed by both the story's primal narrative power and its extraordinary psychosexual, sociopolitical subtexts, the novel was initially treated by reviewers as harmless, if thrill-producing entertainment. This seems somewhat puzzling today; Stoker, after all, published his book within a year of H.G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), which created a firestorm of controversy with its anxious Darwinian images of human beings blurring into animals – also a major thematic preoccupation of *Dracula*. And not a single reviewer of the time related *Dracula*'s story of 'degenerate' sexuality and blood contamination to the syphilis epidemic which cut a wide swath through 1890s London, possibly killing Stoker himself"(363).

and ability. Instead of religion, folklore or superstition, science is the "metaphor that rules human interactions with the universe" and it is "the discourse of the empiricism" which is used to "describe and manipulate supernatural phenomena" (Spencer 200). The filter of 'scientific' language thus allowed modern readers a structure in which to read the texts, making it possible to place them under the heading of 'potentially possible, if not probable' and coordinate it back to the natural world. Science becomes the scapegoat of the unknowable by attempting to place the occult into empiricist terms in an almost updated version of an explanatory Radcliffe ending.

The science in *Dracula*, however, takes on a different format. Apart from the overwhelming presence of modern technology, scientific elements manifests through Dracula's characters: Professor Van Helsing and Dr. Seward are practitioners of psychology and well versed in the medical sciences while Dracula himself is consistently described in terms borrowed from "criminal anthropology, degeneration theory, and alienism, late-Victorian sociomedical disciplines that worked to classify and comprehend the abnormal human subject" (Hurley 192). Moreover, it is Mina's revelation that the "Count is a criminal and of a criminal type" and thereby possessing an "imperfectly formed mind" which leads to the formulation of a plan in which to defeat Dracula (296). By drawing explicitly on the works of Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (1893) and Cesare Lombroso's L'uomo *Delinquent* (1875), both of which were highly influential studies at the time of Stoker's writing, Mina is able to conclude that the Count must "seek resource in habit" (296) and fall back to his castle in Transylvania in order to regroup from his failed invasion of England. Similarly, Dr. Seward's patient Renfield, for which Seward invents a "new classification" the "zoophagous (life-eating) manic" (71), becomes the clinical foil to Dracula, presenting a psychological case study which the band of adventures can empirically observe to learn the Count's patterns of behavior.

But although Dracula utilizes aspects of late-nineteenth century sciences as other Gothic tales of the time do, Stoker's critics instead focus on the more traditional Gothic elements, seeming to at once prefer them and find them incompatible with the scientific modernity, thus suggesting that Stoker modernizes the Gothic tale in a way unique from other Victorian novels. The works of Stevenson and Wells attempted to recreate the Gothic along scientific lines, establishing a new seemingly controlled framework with which to negotiate fin-de-siècle anxieties; the texts attempt to "conceal under the language of science" what was actually "philosophic and political" (Spencer 204). However, while *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *The Island of Doctor Moreau* come down strictly behind the lines of scientific discovery and practice (to the extent that the novels could arguably be classified as early science fiction or some hybrid

thereof), with *Dracula*'s inclusion of scientific elements there remains an uneasy link between superstition and modernity.

Therefore, when Stoker blends the mythological with the scientific he creates an uncanny experience for the reader as new and old are combined and seemingly incompatible elements are forced together. Dr. Seward mixes the languages of myth with science likening "chloral" to "the modern Morpheus – C2HCl3O-H2O!" (97) and his clinical case study Renfield exhibits signs of "religious mania" (96) along with his zoophagous behavior. Even elements such as the modern medical practice of blood transfusion take on highly symbolic significance which suggests an intermingling of the superstitious past with the technological advancements of modernity. Although described as a medical procedure, ("we are about to perform what we call transfusion of blood"(113)) conducted while the patient is under the influence of a narcotic and with Van Helsing's "swiftness" but "absolute method"(114), the scene also contains overtly sexual tones as strong male blood is transferred from "full veins of one to the empty veins which pine for him" (114). Moreover, following Lucy's first blood transfusion, the "brave lover" Arthur "deserves another kiss" from his lethargic fiancée.

The language of the scene conflates the purely medical operation with the traditional Victorian mythos of blood as personal identifier inextricably bound to the soul, all the while associating the act of transfusion with the act of sex. This coupling of blood and semen is later highlighted when Arthur comments at Lucy's funeral that he felt "since [the transfusion] as if they two had been really married, and that she was his wife in the sight of God" (157). Therefore, even when the scientific makes an appearance within the novel, Stoker's writing deviates from the purely technical or clinical language by overlaying it with mysticism and the supernatural, giving it the unsettling feeling of standing for two (or more) things at once.

What is more, *Dracula* fulfills enough of the traditional Gothic motifs – a gloomy and abandoned castle, connections to a medieval past, remote and eerie landscape – to prevent it from falling too neatly into a single form of Gothic and to suggest that what really disturbed Stoker's contemporary critics was not *Dracula*'s failure to use such devices aptly, but their abrupt and uncompromising intrusion into modern day London, with only the flimsiest of scientific filter to blunt the force of its invasion. As Punter and Byron note, in the late Victorian Gothic revival "the exotic and historical settings that served to distance the horrors from the world of the reader in earlier Gothic are replaced with something more disturbingly familiar: the bourgeois domestic world of the new urban landscape" (26).

It can be argued however, that by the late 1890s the realm of the remote castle and the exotic locales were a familiar landscape, recognizable in their literary format as the rightful home of vampires, witches, and ghosts. Therefore, Dracula's most unsettling feature to the critics of the time was its refusal to stay within the confines of its literary genre; it was neither a traditional Gothic tale set in a gloomy castle, nor the modern tale of scientific practices, but both. While in the works of H. G. Wells or Louis Stevenson new sciences offer new ways of fixing the lines of difference, thereby containing the threat of the deviant, Stoker's insistence on both the medieval and the modern creates the disturbing effect of blending the familiar with the unfamiliar, complicating divisions of difference rather than clarifying them. He brings the old into the new and the new into the old, breaking the well-established rules of the well-established genre. Just as the vampire lore intrudes into modern day England, modern medical and criminal sciences are forced upon the familiar literary creature, highlighting and compounding the uncanny effect of the novel.

Perhaps what was even more terrifying in this blurring to its readers of the time then, was the implication that the new scientific practices and discoveries may not contain the means of stabilizing the crumbling boundaries which it was helping to create in the first place.[4] The technologies of modernity, after all, are shown to fail the band of adventurers: the blood transfusions do not save Lucy's life in the end; modern science cannot really explain the existence of Dracula; and modern weaponry is useless in their quest to destroy him. Although Dr. Van Helsing claims that the group has the "resources of science" on their side he contradicts himself shortly thereafter when he says "all we have to go upon are traditions and superstitions" (210). This breakdown, therefore, suggested the "need to move away from materialist explanations and to engage with the more shadowy arena of the mind" (Punter 23). Notably, it is the sciences of criminology and psychology – sciences dealing with the inner workings of the human psyche – which are ultimately of the most help to the team. What is more, it implies that the "chaos and disruption previously located mainly in such external forces as vampire or monster was actually produced within the mind of the human subject" (Punter 24).

[4] Although *Dracula* presents the hope that classification systems such as those in criminal anthropology could identify and thereby contain aberrant persons and behaviors, the categories are still at times either insufficient or breakdown. No classification system for instance can explain the origins of the Count, yet Van Helsing theorizes that because "We all know — because science has vouched for the fact — that there have been toads shut up in rocks for thousands of years"(172) then "doubtless, there is something magnetic or electric in some of these combinations of occult forces which work for physical life in strange way" (278). Similarly, Dr. Seward's patient Renfield fluctuates between mania and lucidness, sane and insane, making him a difficult case for the doctor to analyze and demonstrates the thin line between the two states of mind.

If the vampire itself was a product of the human mind then the processes which produced it must therefore involve a fracturing of the human psyche in order to project outward those disruptive aspects which it came to symbolize. In a process he calls 'doubling,' Freud argues:

> "nothing in this more superficial material could account for the urge towards defense which has caused the ego to project that material outward as something foreign to itself. When all is said and done, the quality of uncanniness can only come from the fact of the 'double' being a creation dating back to a very early mental stage, long since surmounted — a stage, incidentally, at which it wore a more friendly aspect."

While Freud is specifically discussing repressed childhood experiences, the same can be said for cultural experiences at the fin-de-siècle as the more 'friendly' Victorian borders began to crumble, creating an environment far more chaotic and frightening. Beyond the conflating of genres, therefore, Stoker uses the uncanny to project internal social fears onto external bodies, most notably the Count's, thereby creating an atmosphere of suspenseful terror throughout the novel where the 'double' becomes "a thing of terror" (Freud).

That Dracula is actually a projection of the ego's fears is seen from the very beginning of the novel through Johnathan's interactions with the Count in Transylvania. Initially Johnathan appears eager to meet the Count (or at least conduct business with him), taking memorandums of the superstitions he "must ask the Count about" (14), and positioning himself in relation to him rather than in opposition. Upon his arrival, Dracula immediately demonstrates his familiarity with British culture, from his linguistic skill (which Johnathan applauds him on) to "history, geography, politics, political economy, botany, geology [and] law"(25). Although Harker quickly begins to develop misgivings about the Count and distance himself from him, Dracula's cultural appropriation of all things English, even before Johnathan's entrance into the castle, align the two characters as being two sides of the same coin; one dark, violent, and bestial, the other light, orderly, and civilized. The unfamiliar becomes invested with a haunting familiarity as the Count acts as a dark double for the British citizen.

If the Count is the supernatural double for the Englishman, then Renfield is the human double of the Count. Both zoophagous creatures, they both contain the urge to incorporate an object into oneself at the same time that they wish to destroy it. Representing not only the Count's need to feed with his grotesque consumption of flies, spiders, and sparrows, Renfield also articulates the Victorian dilemma of the soul. With the rise of "positivistic science and the decline of religion" (Punter 27) the concept of a human soul became increasingly problematic

during the latter part of the nineteenth century. If blood could no longer be seen as the sole source of identity, then where did the soul reside? Dracula's feeding removes his victim's blood and through it he takes possession of their souls, tainting them with his pollution. When Lucy is transformed into her vampiric counterpart, the men must rely on emblems of Catholicism to return her soul to her body and allow her to "take her place with the other Angels" (191). What Dracula does with the souls (or if he really even has them) is unclear. It is instead Renfield who takes up the question, growing anxious at the thought of lives and the soul being connected. He tells Dr. Seward "I want no souls. Life is all I want," (236) but when the doctor pressures him on the "burden of a soul" (239) he becomes agitated screaming "to hell with you and your souls!"(238).

To Freud, the soul was the first double of the body, being "originally an insurance against the destruction of the ego." This desire for preservation, however, springs from the early narcissistic state of the child, which once surmounted becomes reversed in the double: "from having been an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny harbinger of death." The blurred divisions between a subject's blood and a subject's soul thus become uncannily linked to death as well as the denial of a true death when victims enter a state of Un-Dead. Renfield's desire to possess life at the same time he destroys it makes him a madman, but it also makes him an uncanny double to Dracula's act of feeding on women, at once poisoning their souls while turning them into his "creatures" to do his "bidding" (267). This in turn reflects back on the band of adventurers and through them their Victorian audiences, which aim through their very creation of the vampire to at once acknowledge the existence of and destroy their deviant desires and so are by definition zoophagous. This constant recurrence of the same theme not only underlies the whole of the novel, heightening the uncanny feelings it produces by repeatedly exposing repressed anxieties, but also suggests that because of the innate nature of the desires Dracula stands for, his destruction does not mean the destruction of the desires. Moreover, this use of the uncanny only further blurs the lines between science and religion, self and other, life and death.

In particular, it is the fate of the feminine soul which is in danger for most of the story, emphasized as themes and crimes repeat themselves. *Dracula* is in many respects the same tale told twice. Its two female victims play out alternative endings to the same story: the seduction of a woman and the consequences of untamed female sexuality. This kind of doubling is for Freud yet another manifestation of the uncanny as it contains "all the unfulfilled but possible futures." The rise of the 'New Woman' provoked anxieties about the instability of identity and the breakdown of gender roles as this new class jeopardized patriarchal order by

demanding more political, social, and even sexual equality. Yet another threat, this new figure required policing lest its suggestive liminality endanger British manhood. Since vampires throughout the nineteenth century frequently functioned to distinguish 'deviant' sexuality from 'normal,' the two women's experiences are hyperbolic accounts of the sexual temptations the 'New Woman' disguised in an aberrant and regressive form.

Lucy, who laments that she cannot "marry three men"(60), must be punished for her sexual desires as they lead to the destruction of motherhood; instead of nourishing children she feeds on them. Moreover, she becomes an Eve-like figure whose monstrous fall from Eden can bring about the downfall of man. Consistently described as "voluptuous" after her transformation into the Un-Dead, her wantonness casts a spell over Arthur who is tempted by her "diabolically sweet" (188) entreaty to "Come to me" (188). But if she received three marriage proposals on the same day, this 'voluptuousness' must have been present even before her transformation; a fact Stoker is careful to relay through Lucy's 'heretical' desire to marry all three. She, therefore, also acts as a projection of men's desires for women; they are both horrified and tempted by her feminine sexuality because it acts as an indicator of their own. Moreover, we know from Van Helsing that Dracula cannot cross thresholds unless invited to do so. So in order to gain access to Lucy's bedchamber she must have given him permission. Her transgression then, is giving in to her sexual desires, moving away from her prescribed role as "guardian of the private sphere" (Hurley 199). Arthur's final act of "driving deeper and deeper the mercy-bearing stake" (192) through her heart returns Lucy to an acceptable state of submission (with overtly sexual imagery).

Dracula's next victim, Mina, consistently demonstrates herself to be the ideal Victorian woman – selfless, pure, loving, innocent – as even her most modern skills and accomplishments she does "so as to be helpful" to her husband (293). Carefully contained within marriage early on in the text, even her marriage vows do not save her from the temptations Dracula represents. Therefore, Lucy's tale begins to unfold for a second time with Mina. When Mina awakens to find Dracula standing over her he tells her "it is not the first time, or the second, that your veins have appeased my thirst!" and she admits in the retelling that "strangely enough, I did not want to hinder him" (251). Therefore, while she does not display the aggressive interest in sex Lucy did, Mina still gives in to temptation when the opportunity arises. For this she becomes "unclean" so that "even the Almighty shuns [her] polluted flesh!" (259). Her later resistance to temptation – begging her husband to kill her if she becomes one of the

Un-Dead – and subsequent revival of her role as wifely helpmate allows her to be saved and enter into a state of motherhood at the end of the novel.[5]

However, here again the uncanny works to undermine the solidifying narrative structure. The repetitiveness of the two women's stories leaves the reader with the lingering feeling that the repressed sexuality, Othered and made monstrous through Dracula, will reemerge. Moreover, Mina and Johnathan's son is named after all the men in the group, linking them together in a bizarre communal manhood which Van Helsing had earlier proclaimed as one of their main strengths against Dracula. It also suggests that the birth of a single child requires five men, just as the suppression of Lucy's sexuality did — in what amounted to a group rape. So while Stoker's novel purports to reestablish gender roles and boundaries, the uncanny repetition of events mixed with the Othering of the Count again causes ambiguities as the team deviates from the 'natural' heteronormative range of acceptability.

The most startling example of doubling, however, comes early on during the episode when the Count comes up behind Harker while he is shaving one morning, frightening him with his greeting as "there was no reflection of him in the mirror!"(31). Harker reflects in astonishment that "the whole room behind me was displayed; but there was no sign of a man in it, except myself"(31). In a moment of extreme uncanniness the presence of two individuals is folded into one body denoting a "doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self" (Freud) and suggests that it is the man in the mirror — the Englishman — who is the one true subject, while the other is merely a shadow: the darkness the subject does not wish to see. It is this sense of the repressed self coming to light which then causes the abject "repulsion and terror" in Jonathan when he sees Dracula emerge from his window "and begin crawl down the castle wall over that dreadful abyss, face down" (39) as the Count comes to embody all that is abhuman or culturally deviant and is yet still recognizable as a part of the British subject.

Carol Senf notes something similar when she argues that Stoker's use of vampire iconography to translate the Eastern European superstition that soulless creatures have no reflection into a "manifestation of [Harker's] moral blindness" (425). However, while Stoker's writing certainly reflects a sense of the Other being used as a means of identifying the self,

[5] For more detailed examinations of sexuality in *Dracula* see, Marjorie Howes "The Mediation of the Feminine: Bisexuality, Homoerotic Desire, and Self Expression in Bram Stoker's Dracula" Texas Studies in Literatures and Language 30.1 (Spring 1988) 104-119; Pyhllis A Roth, "Suddenly Sexual Women in Bram Stoker's Dracula" Literature and Psychology 27 (1977) 113-121; Alan Johnson " 'Dual Life' : The Status of Women in Stoker's Dracula," Tennessee Studies in Literature 27 (1984), 20-39 and Christopher Craft, "'Kiss Me with Those Red Lips': Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's Dracula" Representations 8 (Fall 1984) 107-133

Senf's readings suggest a level of authorial intent which the novel's ending does not support. Instead of a scathing social critique on the moral failings of proper British behavior, the rapid conclusion of the text — and the complete return to the status-quo — upon Dracula's demise suggests Stoker was attempting to both identify and insulate the threat quickly, quelling fears through its expulsion. What this reading implies though, is that the uncanny elements of the text destabilize the overall narrative, opening it up to various readings rather than firmly reconstructing categories of East vs. West, barbaric vs. civilized, male vs. female.

For instance as Harker's abhorrence of the Count grows, he explicitly expresses late Victorian fears of reverse colonization: "This 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 circle of semi-demons to batten on the helpless"(53-54). As Stephen Arata notes in his article "The Occidental Tourist: *Dracula* and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization," the Count's thirst for blood works on two levels: subsistence and the warrior's desire for conquest. Therefore, his "aggressions against the body are also aggressions against the body politic" (630). His attacks produce horror not because he destroys bodies, but because he appropriates and transforms them. The threat of miscegenation is embodied in the Count's ability to literally transform subjects into the Other leading to not a "mixing of races, but to the biological and political annihilation of the weaker race by the stronger" (Arata 630). Thus, the fears of degeneration of the British subject manifest itself through supernatural Othering. Yet the ending's attempt to solidify the power of the Empire is undermined by the very act of projecting these repressed fears onto Dracula.

Arata argues that "instead of being uncannily Other, the vampire is here revealed as disquietingly familiar"(633). But in the Freudian sense of the word, this familiarity is exactly what makes the Other so uncanny. Van Helsing's act of "butcher work" (320) as he stands over the graves of the three vampire women serves as a reversal of earlier moments in the text. Just as Jonathan experienced a "wicked, burning desire that [the vampire women] would kiss me with those red lips" (42), the doctor finds himself "moved to a yearning of delay" and imagines the "voluptuous mouth present to a kiss" (319). The roles of aggressor and victim are reversed while the same desire remains. Similarly, there is an uncanny parallel between Dracula "bending over the half-reclined white figure" (88) of Lucy and the four men poised over her coffin before they hammer a stake into her "white skin" (192), particularly as each instance involves penetration of the female form followed by the spilling of blood. Hence, "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" (Senf 427).

The similarities between the band of adventurers and their opponent highlights both the "fear and guilt" (626) associated with reverse colonization. Moreover, because bodies and territories are closely linked within the text of *Dracula,* the same kind of blurring which complicates the genres, gender identities, and science/religion dichotomy occurs between the British-self and the Gothicized-Other. Arata states: "just as Dracula's vampirism mirrors the domestic practices of Victorian patriarchs, so his invasion of London [...] mirrors British imperial activities aboard" (633). However, while "Victorian readers could recognize their culture's imperial ideology mirrored back as a kind of monstrosity," Stoker's ending attempts to justify the imperial impulses of British culture, thus shoring up its sense of national identity with glorified ideas of the Empire. Dracula's destruction is, after all, administered with the weapons of the Empire; Harker's "great kukri knife"(324) symbolizes the British Imperial power in India while Morris's bowie knife is representative of American westward expansion (Arata 641). The narrative conclusion endeavors to reestablish the accustomed dominance of the West over the East, while also conveniently killing Quincy Morris, who although allied with the Europeans, never-the-less must be shown his right place in the ranks of world powers.

Moreover, it is the group, rather than the individual, which is successful. Repression becomes an act for the 'greater good' by placing the needs of society — the need for cultural stability — over the desires of the individual. As a spokesperson for civilization, Dr. Van Helsing constantly reminds the others of the risks, explaining "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" (209). Therefore to fail in defeating Dracula, to fail in repressing those desires he represents, means not just a personal failure but the destruction of society as the pollution spreads across England. Significantly, Dracula is not killed on English territory, but retreats back to the East for the final encounter, further suggesting that barbaric violence and perverse sexuality must be expunged from humanity both within and abroad. However, although Victorian readers would have been accustomed to seeing those aspects of themselves they most wish to deny in a foreign figure through the long tradition of Orientalism in literature, Stoker's addition of uncanny supernaturalism makes the connection between the self and Other more difficult to deny. As a result, the ending cannot quite contain the contractions which arise throughout the course of the

novel, nor can it account for the Count's Occidentalism which "both mimics and reverses the more familiar Orientalism" (Senf, 470).

At the end of the novel, Bram Stoker's characters are victorious, Dracula's defeat ensures the threats of deviant sexuality or reverse colonization have been eliminated, Mina has been saved, and an heir has been produced. The narrative suggests that the adventure has come to its conclusion and the dominant social order has been restored. Ambiguities are also present, however. Dracula's castle is still standing and since the Catholic rights which Van Helsing claimed were required to ensure the 'true' death of the vampire were not performed for Dracula, whether he is even really truly gone is questionable. While Stoker aims to use the Gothic uncanny to first remove and then destroy the other – thereby reestablishing the status quo – what he actually does is to demonstrate the inability to destroy what is inherent in British society. He exposes rather than fixes fin-de-siècle anxieties. Instead of reaffirming Victorian dichotomies, Stoker's juxtaposition of the familiar with the unfamiliar, repetition, and doubling of the self actually blur the barriers between science/religion, man/woman, East/West and most significantly self and Other. Paradoxically, then, the very means in which Stoker articulates his narratives becomes the means in which they are undermined.

For Freud, though, the uncanny, because of its doubling, also allows for "self-observation" and therefore for "self-criticism" and it is this aspect which perhaps helps to explain our continued fascination with Stoker's text. For Victorian readers, *Dracula* was relished as a good adventure story, filled with the supernatural and hair-raising suspense, while its narrative, in the end, reassured them that all would be well. Yet in the hundred years since its publication, Stoker's work has proven to have a continuing impact on cultural imagination, inspiring countless adaptations and variations. As Nina Auerbach and David Skal note: "A novel that seemed commonplace in its time unfurled into a legend haunting and defining the next century"(ix). Containing a myriad of contradictions, Dracula harbors the "hidden reality that oppositions of all kinds cannot maintain their separations, that each 'lesser term' is contained in its counterpart and that difference really arises by standing against and relating to interdependency." (Hogle 11). Thus, the uncanny elements of Dracula bring what is hidden and repressed into the light and provide the means in which to articulate these contradictions and fears. So although it was intended as a means of quelling social anxieties by solidifying boundaries, Stoker's tale holds a continuing power over us exactly because it cannot; it is an uncanny space in which to acknowledge our desires and fears and thus critically negotiate our way through them.

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