

12-2005

# Vampires in Literature: A Postmodern Study of Bram Stoker and Anne Rice

Christina Marie Link

*University of the Incarnate Word*

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**VAMPIRES IN LITERATURE:  
A POSTMODERN STUDY OF BRAM STOKER AND ANNE RICE**

**A Thesis**

**by**

**CHRISTINA MARIE LINK, BA**

**Presented to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of the Incarnate Word  
In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements  
For the Degree of**

**MASTER OF ARTS**

**UNIVERSITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD**

**December 2005**

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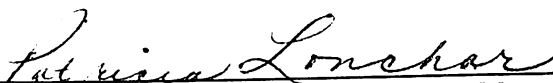
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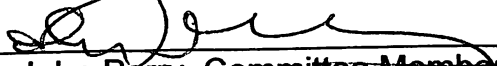
Dr. Hector Perez, Committee Chair



Dr. Emily Clark, Committee Member



Dr. Patricia Lonchar, Committee Member



Dr. John Perry, Committee Member

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## Acknowledgments

My gratitude is owed to several people, without whom this thesis would not have been completed. First and foremost, I would like to thank my family for their support and love, particularly my parents and my brother, Aaron, who first introduced me to the novels of Anne Rice many years ago. I also owe much to Michael Rodriguez for keeping me sane and making me laugh when it was most needed. I would like to thank Julie Schenzinger for her translation of the German text found in the Introduction, as well as for her friendship and encouragement over the past few years.

I would also like to thank my committee: Dr. Emily Clark, Dr. Patricia Lonchar, Dr. John Perry, and my chair, Dr. Hector Perez. They have provided insightful advice and encouragement, and have challenged me to become a better writer.

Last, but not least, I would also like to thank Mr. Morgan and the staff of the J.E. & L.E. Mabee Library for their unwavering support and resources. I especially owe my gratitude to everyone in Technical Services: Melissa Rucker, Mary Jinks, Becky Zec, Tom Rice, and Sister Mary Catherine Bruen. Not only have they have provided encouragement and support for this project, but they have helped me to grow over the past five years that I have been working in the library.

I would like to dedicate this thesis in the memory of Mickey and Frank Corwin Link.

## Abstract

M. H. Abrams explains that postmodern authors “blend literary genres, cultural and stylistic levels, the serious and the playful, [and] that they resist classification according to traditional literary rubrics” (176). Bram Stoker and Anne Rice both fall into this category of postmodernism. Bram Stoker puts his own spin on the literary vampire, changing the vampire from an aristocratic figure into a monster and adding such features as shape-shifting. He also utilizes various styles throughout the novel under the pretense of several different narrators and narration sources, since Dracula is an epistolary novel that combines the different characters’ journals, letters, and even newspaper clippings. Anne Rice’s Interview with the Vampire is also considered to be postmodern with the anti-hero, Louis, who questions traditional moral and societal boundaries. Rice’s work transcends the traditional mythology of the vampire as she rewrites myth and history.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine these two major vampire novels from a postmodern perspective, utilizing various different literary theories. In the process, these arguments will relate the vampire to society. The thesis will open with a discussion of Victorian societal fears of de-evolution and reverse imperialism in Dracula. Issues related to feminism, gender studies, and sexuality, followed by a discussion on the power-play dynamics within society and relationships will be explored in both novels. In order to balance out the discussion of the novels, a final chapter on

postmodernism and the rewriting of the vampire myth will focus on Rice's novel. The thesis will conclude with a discussion on the contemporary Goth subculture and its relationship to the vampire and the literary vampire.

This thesis includes a filmography of several adaptations of Bram Stoker's Dracula and Anne Rice's Interview with the Vampire. Due to time constraints, the filmography focuses on theatrical releases from the United States and United Kingdom, with the exception of two versions of Nosferatu. Nosferatu is included here since this production is the first major film based on Stoker's Dracula. Also included in the thesis is a list of Internet resources that readers may find helpful for their own research purposes.

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## Introduction

In 2003, a Dracula theme park was expected to be built in the town of Sighisoara, in the Romanian province of Transylvania. Although the park would have consisted of themes from Stoker's Dracula, the park was primarily aimed at the country's legendary hero, Vlad "Dracula" III, who was born in Sighisoara in 1431. Aside from the economic benefits of bringing tourists into the town, one of the main goals of the theme park was to educate the public on the historical Vlad III, and how he differed from the mythical figure created by Stoker. Although the plan was never brought to fruition in order to preserve the ecological and historical integrity of Sighisoara (although rumors abound that the park will simply be relocated, the rumors have not been confirmed at this time), the attention has spawned a revived interest in Sighisoara, Vlad III, and the vampire myth.

It is difficult to say exactly when and where the vampire myth originated, since it has appeared in various forms all over the world. Some of the earliest references to vampire-like creatures are found in Babylonian demonology, as well as in Chaldean and Assyrian beliefs. Vampire lore also existed in ancient Roman and Greek mythology. Most mythological vampires are reanimated corpses who had either committed suicide or were innocent victims of other vampires, although there are some vampires, called psychic vampires, that simply drain the energy of the living.

Equally unclear is the origin of the word "vampire." Katharine M.

Wilson points out four schools of thought regarding the etymology of the word, each one advocating either Turkish, Greek, Slavic, or Hungarian roots. In the first group, Franz Miklosich, an Austrian linguist, suggests that “vampire” derives from the Turkish word for witch, “uber” (3-4). Wilson quotes a German scholar from the second school of thought, Harenberg, who believes that the word has Greek origins. Harenberg writes that, “Es last sich vermuten dass das Wort zusammen gestzet sey aus Bluht draus Vam geworden, und piren, das ist begierig nach einer Sache trachten” (4).<sup>1</sup> The third school of thought, which advocates Slavic roots for the word “vampire” has a wider acceptance by linguists, including the Grimm brothers. They point to the Serbian word BAMIUP, as well as several other theories for Slavic root words. A more recent school of thought is advocated primarily by American and English linguists, who argue that the root word is Hungarian. Wilson points out, however, that “the first appearance of the word “vampir” in Hungarian postdates the first use of the term in most Western languages by more than a century” (5). With Wilson’s research on the etymology of the word “vampire,” it is easy to conjecture that the myth of the vampire originates around Central and Eastern Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> “It is permitted to conjecture that the word placed together as such, ‘Vam’ appears drawn out of blood, and ‘piren’ speaks of eagerly striving after a situation.” (Translation provided by Julie Schenzinger.)

One of the more famous myths of the vampire revolves around a historical figure by the name of Vlad III, nicknamed Vlad Tsepes, or Vlad the Impaler. McNally and Florescu point out that “Dracula was in fact an authentic fifteenth-century Wallachian prince who was often described in the contemporary German, Byzantine, Slavonic, and Turkish documents” (8). Dracula (Romanian for the son of Dracul), as he also came to be known, was the son of Vlad II. In 1431, Vlad II was invested in the Order of the Dragon, an organization dedicated to fighting the Turks, by Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund, earning him the nickname of Dracul, which has a double meaning of “dragon” and “devil” in Romanian. Vlad III was born in the same year as his father’s investiture, in the Romanian town of Sighisoara. Due to political turmoil, Vlad III endured many hardships, including six years of imprisonment by the Turkish sultan, Murad II, as well as the assassination of his father and older brother. Vlad’s years of rule were also tumultuous, while he continued to fight the Turks over control of Transylvania. His methods of punishment became well-known as “his ingenious mind devised all kinds of tortures, both physical and mental, and his favorite way of imposing death earned him the name ‘the Impaler’” (McNally and Florescu 8). Vlad’s methods of torture and execution, along with Stoker’s influence in the late nineteenth-century, also earned him the reputation as a vampire.

The vampire in literature began making an appearance in eighteenth-century Germany, with August Ossenfelder’s poem “Der Vampyr,” published

in 1748, and Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth," published in 1797 (Wilson 6).

The literary vampire was introduced to English literature by Lord Byron.

Byron's epic poem, "The Giaour," published in 1819, contains the first English literary mention of the vampire:

But first, on earth as Vampire sent,  
Thy corse shall from its tomb be rent:  
Then ghastly haunt thy native place,  
And suck the blood of all thy race;  
There from thy daughter, sister, wife,  
At midnight drain the stream of life. (ll. 755-760)

Byron and his personal physician, Dr. John Polidori, met up with Percy Shelley, Mary Shelley, and Claire Clairmont at Lake Geneva in Switzerland in the summer of 1816. At Byron's suggestion, each member of the group was to write a short ghost story. It was out of this game that Mary came up with the idea for her renowned novel, Frankenstein. Byron wrote a fragment of a vampire story, which he discarded. Polidori wrote a short story, "The Vampyre," with a Bryonic character named Lord Ruthven. This name was given to the vampire as a joke, after a character of the same name in a novel by Lady Caroline Lamb, which was a thinly disguised character based on Byron. Polidori's story was published anonymously in 1819, but it was attributed to Byron. Although Byron denied writing "The Vampyre," it took several years to clear up the misconception. Despite the authorship

controversy, "The Vampyre" has been established as the first appearance of the aristocratic vampire, both in popular culture and literature.

The vampire myth received more attention in 1845 in a series of penny dreadfuls called Varney the Vampire, or, The Feast of Blood. Varney the Vampire was first attributed to Thomas Preskett Prest; however, James Malcolm Rymer has been established as the true author (Ryan 25). Irishman Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu published a vampire story, "Carmilla," in a collection of stories in 1872, entitled In a Glass Darkly. "Carmilla" features, for the first time in literature, a female vampire. Le Fanu seems to take much of his vampire theme from the traditional Irish fairy lore of Leanan Sidhe, a female vampire-like fairy who drinks blood and is considered to be a muse of poets.

A fellow Irishman by the name of Abraham "Bram" Stoker combined vampire mythology and historical fact to bring the vampire novel to fame. Dracula was published in 1897, after seven years of research on vampire folklore, the historical Vlad III, and Transylvanian history. Dracula was a truly modern novel of its time, as it brought these historical elements into a contemporary setting. Marshal Berman writes that modernity is fed by science and changing perceptions of the universe and our place in it (16). Stoker utilizes many aspects of science in his novel, from the blood transfusions performed by Dr. Van Helsing, to the trains that the characters use for transportation, telegrams, the phonograph, and even weapons.

Changing perceptions of the universe are portrayed through the evolutionary theory of Darwin, which is characterized in *Renfield* and *Dracula*. Other societal changes are seen in the representations of the New Woman and the foreign Other. Berman describes nineteenth-century modernity as a time of revolutionary change and upheaval in every dimension of life, but also as a time in which the “public can remember what it is like to live, materially and spiritually, in worlds that are not modern at all” (17). *Dracula* expresses this dichotomy of existence as it combines the scientific advances of Stoker’s time, along with a spiritual and superstitious dimension that harkens back to the Transylvanian vampire mythology.

*Dracula* is an epistolary novel, consisting of newspaper clippings, telegrams, and journals of the various narrators. The various sources tell the story of the experiences of a small group of individuals in London who come in contact with the vampire Dracula, and form an alliance in order to defeat him. After Jonathan Harker unwittingly aids Dracula to sail to London, he manages to escape Dracula’s castle where he had been imprisoned and returns to London and to his new bride, Mina. In London, Dracula begins preying upon women, particularly Lucy Westenra and Mina Harker. Lucy’s circle of friends and the young couple ally themselves to each other in order to rid London of Dracula. After they combine forces and individual areas of knowledge, they hunt down and destroy Dracula.

While many vampire novels have been published since the time of

Stoker, none have attained the popularity of Dracula until 1976 when Anne Rice published Interview with the Vampire. Rice's novel also presents a study of modernity, although a different modernity from Stoker's time period that is, in literary terms, closer to post-modernity. One major difference between Dracula and Interview with the Vampire is the character of the vampire. While Stoker's vampire is the monstrous Other with no voice of his own in the narration of the novel, Rice's vampire is brought forth out of the darkness to tell his own story.

The protagonist in Interview with the Vampire, Louis, meets with a young journalist in contemporary San Francisco and tells the story of his past, including how he was made into a vampire. Although the narration occasionally slips into the third person point of view in the frame of Louis interacting with the journalist, the novel is mostly in the first person, from Louis's perspective. Louis begins his story with his life just prior to becoming a vampire in 1791, when he ran his family's indigo plantation just outside of New Orleans and cared for his widowed mother, younger brother, and sister. After a tragedy involving the death of his brother, Louis becomes guilt-ridden and depressed, often wishing for his own death. The vampire Lestat takes him up on his wish, only instead of killing Louis, Lestat transforms him into a vampire. The five year old child, Claudia, is later brought into their circle after she is drained of blood by Louis and transformed into a vampire by Lestat. Claudia soon sympathizes with Louis as their unhappiness with Lestat grows.

Claudia devises a way to get rid of Lestat and succeeds, allowing her and Louis to travel abroad in search of other vampires. Although they find what they are looking for in Paris, the other vampires are not what they had expected. Claudia is destroyed by the Paris vampires, and Louis then spends the remainder of the nineteenth-century and part of the twentieth-century with Armand, an elder vampire whom he met in Paris.

Throughout the novel, Louis is searching for his identity. He is constantly questioning who and what he is, as well as his place in society. Louis also struggles with the idea of good and evil, and the existence of God and the devil. This questioning of identity and moral bounds exemplifies, not only Rice's own questioning at the time of writing this novel, but the society of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries as well.

The Gothic subculture (popularly referred to as "Goth") of the late 1970s stems from the Gothic music genre, which grew out of the punk rock music scene in England and the United States through bands such as Joy Division (later New Order), Bauhaus, Siouxsie and the Banshees, and The Cure. A second wave of the Gothic subculture grew out of a new music genre labeled as industrial, with bands such as Nine Inch Nails and Front Line Assembly. The Gothic subculture also grew through film, with the works of Tim Burton (Edward Scissorhands, Nightmare Before Christmas) and David Lynch (Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me, Lost Highway). Despite the fact that the Gothic subculture grew out of the music scene, being Gothic



“was not a Saturday evening affair, but a permanent lifestyle,” (Introvigne 142-143) as members began dressing in vintage Victorian styles, or in more rebellious dark styles with piercings and body art. An offshoot of the Goths is a smaller subcultural group of people who refer to themselves as real vampires, which will be discussed in greater detail in the conclusion of this thesis.

Perhaps due to the popularity of the Goth subculture, interest in Gothic literature has steadily grown in recent years. This can be clearly seen in the many works of Auerbach, Botting, Senf, Punter and other literary critics, as well as the scholarly journal, Gothic Studies, published by the International Gothic Association, which holds conferences sponsored by different universities every two years. This thesis will contribute to the growing field of Gothic Studies by examining two of the most influential vampire novels from two different time periods, Stoker’s Dracula and Rice’s Interview with the Vampire. For a postmodern perspective of the vampire novel, this thesis will explore several issues of society and identity by utilizing various methods of literary analysis.

## Chapter One:

### Dracula and Socio-Cultural Fears of Science and Politics

During the Industrial Revolution in nineteenth-century England, a major population shift occurred as people left their farms in the countryside and moved into larger industrial cities in the hopes of making a better living by working in factories. The effects of this change appeared on many levels of daily life, including the personal, familial, social, and environmental. On the personal level, "left behind were the rhythms of the natural world," (Sussman 245) as more people began to gauge their time by the clock rather than the natural cycles of day and night. The advent of gas lighting also allowed workers to labor far into the night. As the separation of workplace and home developed, the separate spheres of the male and female, and public and private, domains also became more pronounced. While women often worked in the factories, usually only young, unmarried women did so. Social standards decreed that they would quit working once they married so that they could focus on their home and raise their children. Environmental conditions also deteriorated, as more factories and people crowded into the cities, creating an unprecedented amount of industrial and human waste. All of these factors combine to create the new Gothic landscape—the city. Along with this new Gothic setting came new fears that would be expressed in the revived Gothic novel of the Victorian Period. Fears surrounding the fin de siècle, including the new developments of science and politics, are the

focus of the Victorian Gothic novel.

Charles Darwin published The Origin of the Species in 1859 amid a growing social movement interested in evolutionary theory. The founder of the movement, Herbert Spencer, accepted the term “Darwinism;” however, he pointed out that “the doctrine of organic evolution in its application to human character and intelligence, and, by implication, to society, is of earlier date than The Origin of the Species” (Spencer 26). In 1871, Charles Darwin published his human evolutionary theory in The Descent of Man. Darwin’s theory that man descended from an ape met with much conflict, as some received the new idea with awe and others with skepticism and outrage. While many scientific and sociological scholars greeted the movement and its theories with enthusiasm, Darwinism also instilled many with fear, as Kelly Hurley states in “British Gothic Fiction, 1885-1930”:

[Darwinism] destroyed a comfortably anthropocentric worldview: human beings were just a species like any other, developed by chance rather than providential design, and given the mutability of species, humans might well devolve or otherwise metamorphose into some other repulsive abhuman form. (195)

Many Victorian Gothic novels, including Dracula, drew upon this fear of Darwinian science and human de-evolution. One example of how the concepts of Darwinian science are expressed in Dracula is seen in the character of the lunatic, Renfield. In his insatiable desire to ingest life,

Renfield utilizes a scientific method of collecting and making notations of the insects and animals that he eats. Fred Botting states in Gothic that, "in his strange eating habits, progressing from flies to spiders, sparrows and, he hopes, kittens, Renfield selects a bizarre food chain which links animal to human life in a caricature of Darwinian theory" (148). Indeed, Mr. Renfield seems to imitate a scientific researcher, as he methodically attracts his specimens, and accounts for them all in his little notebook. As he moves on from feeding flies to spiders, to feeding the spiders to sparrows, and to desiring a kitten (presumably so that he can study the kitten while it eats the sparrows), it is apparent that Renfield is progressing up the food chain. While Renfield also eats his specimens in addition to studying them eating each other, the reader presumes that he is making scientific notations of the process, but to what end his research is progressing towards, is left up for speculation. Drawing on the fact that Renfield is Jonathan's occupational predecessor and that he had visited Dracula's castle previous to his being committed to the asylum, one can only guess that the reasoning for his actions is to rationalize the horrors that he has seen from his visit.

The fear of human de-evolution that emerged from Darwinian science is incarnated into the form of Dracula. Upon first meeting him, Jonathan Harker notices that Dracula has many animalistic features, including a strong, aquiline profile, which Auerbach notes in her annotation of Stoker's novel as being like the curve of an eagle's beak (Stoker 23). Other facial features

include massive eyebrows that meet over Dracula's nose, "bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion," a cruel-looking, mustachioed mouth "with peculiarly sharp white teeth" and pointed ears (Stoker 23). Jonathan also makes note of Dracula's hands, which are broad, hairy, and have sharply filed nails, which reminds the reader more of an animal's claws than a man's hands.

Another means of connecting Dracula to animals that Stoker utilizes is in the power which Dracula has in communicating with other animals. For example, on Jonathan's first night at the castle a silence falls between him and Dracula, which is filled with the howling of wolves from outside. Dracula then exclaims (in the line later made famous by Bela Lugosi), "listen to them—the children of the night. What music they make!" (Stoker 24). Not only does Dracula revel in their song, but he also has control over the wolves, which is seen in an earlier scene when Jonathan is traveling to the castle. At one point during the trip, Dracula (who is in disguise as the carriage driver) stops the carriage and gets down so that he can dig up the treasures that are illuminated by mysterious blue lights. While he is away, the carriage is surrounded by wolves and Jonathan begins to fear for his and Dracula's safety. Before he can enact a plan to attempt the rescue of Dracula, Jonathan sees Dracula approach the carriage and with a "voice raised in a tone of imperious command," Dracula commands the wolves to leave (Stoker 20). Dracula also commands the wolves to more devious ends. He uses

them to get rid of a woman who throws herself at his castle doors, begging for the return of her child, and again as a means to keep Jonathan from leaving the castle.

According to Auerbach, Stoker begins the tradition of the shape-shifting vampire. While some cultures have had shape-shifting vampires in the mythology for centuries, this is, perhaps, the first appearance of this particular mythological aspect of the vampire in literature. Stoker's use of shape-shifting is a striking example of Dracula's reification of de-evolutionary fears of the Victorian Period. As previously mentioned, Hurley clearly states that one part of the fear of de-evolution was that humans would metamorphose into an abnormal shape. Dracula embodies this fear when he shape-shifts into animals, including a wolf, bat or even a rat; however, he can also shape-shift into a non-animal form, such as fog and mist. This ability, along with the other animalistic traits that he possesses, clearly denotes that Dracula is not only abnormal, but he is also, as Hurley states, abhuman.

On May 1, 1851, the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations opened at the Crystal Palace. As Britain attempted to show off its supremacy in the industrial and intellectual spheres of society, insecurities that it would not match other fast-growing countries, such as Germany, began to grow. Many British also feared the foreigners who would swamp the city in order to participate in and view the exhibit. Around this time, other fears of invasion also began to circulate. Along with the rise of a global market, there

came the threat that the autonomy of nations, including Britain, would dissolve. Still another threat came along with Britain's colonialism and tourism practices, as many became fixated "upon the necessity of sequestering the British woman from the contaminating touch of the colonized man" (Buzard 448). All of these fears gave rise to a new form of Gothic called Imperial Gothic, in which reverse colonization is the focus.

In Our Vampires, Ourselves, Nina Auerbach states that Dracula is a novel that is concerned with hierarchies, and that the relationship between Dracula and Jonathan Harker is one based on caste and ownership. This is evident in the text of Stoker's novel as Dracula exclaims that "this man belongs to me," referring to Jonathan (Stoker 43). It is natural for a *boyar*, the highest rank in Romanian aristocracy after a prince, to feel that he is socially above a mere clerk; thus, he assumes power and ownership over Jonathan. Dracula continuously takes advantage of his power of position over Jonathan and he holds him prisoner inside the castle and gleans as much information about London as possible from Jonathan. If the reader connects the fact that Dracula has knowledge of many aspects of London, from the language, law, and daily life, including many different modes of transport, to the demeanor in which Dracula proclaims his past triumphs in war (thinly disguised as his family's triumphs), the reader can make the assumption that Dracula is methodically planning an invasion of London. At one point during a conversation, Dracula even refers to England as "my dear

new country of England,” already claiming possession of the country (Stoker 30). Upon the realization that he has unwittingly become both a prisoner and an aide to Dracula’s invasion, Jonathan becomes horrified and fears what monstrosity he has helped to bring upon his homeland.

When Dracula moves into London, he becomes the foreign, invading Other. According to Stephen D. Arata, Stoker connects Dracula to the colonized East by having his monstrous Other originate in Transylvania. Arata states that “Transylvania was known primarily as part of the vexed ‘Eastern Question’ that so obsessed British foreign policy in the 1880s and ‘90s” (462). In “The Politics of Dracula,” Richard Wasson further claims that “Count Dracula ... represents those forces in Eastern Europe which seek to overthrow, through violence and subversion, the more progressive democratic civilization of the West” (19). The threat posed by Dracula’s presence in London thus becomes clear, as Jonathan Harker and his friends fear that reverse imperialism will be imposed upon them and all of English society.

Along with the fear of reverse imperialism is the interconnected fear concerning race and purity of blood. When Jonathan gains the confidence to seek out Dracula’s sleeping place in the castle and sees him laying in his coffin for the first time, Jonathan laments that “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” (Stoker 53-54). Jonathan fears that Dracula will mate with English women and, thus, propagate his race. This idea is further backed when Mina is essentially raped by Dracula, and she is, consequently, impure and tainted. As a physical reminder of her impurity, Mina is seared on her forehead by the Holy Communion which Van Helsing uses in an attempt to offer a form of protection from further attack by Dracula. Mina, herself, then exclaims, “Unclean! Unclean! Even the Almighty shuns my polluted flesh! I shall bear this mark of shame upon my forehead until the Judgment Day” (Stoker 259). While the mark serves as a constant reminder of her impurity, it only lasts until Dracula is destroyed; thus, as the monstrous Other is destroyed, she reclaims her British purity.

In keeping with the concept of blood purity as an indicator of social status, there is also a social hierarchy in blood purity amongst the men who band together to destroy Dracula. This is illustrated by Stoker when Lucy falls prey to Dracula, and Van Helsing orders blood transfusions in an attempt to save her. Van Helsing looks to Lord Arthur Godalming to donate blood to his fiancée, Lucy, stating that “you are better than me, better than my friend John,” (Stoker 113) referring to Dr. John Seward, a psychologist. Van Helsing goes on to praise Arthur’s blood, saying that “you are more good than us, old and young, who toil much in the world of thought. Our nerves are not so calm and our blood not so bright than yours” (Stoker 114). Van Helsing

even goes so far as to proclaim that Arthur's blood is so pure that there is no need to filter it before transferring it into Lucy's veins. When Dracula continues to prey upon Lucy, causing the need for more blood transfusions, Van Helsing goes down the social ladder, from Lord Godalming, to Dr. Seward, and finally, to Quincy Morris (an American), leaving only Dr. Van Helsing (who is too old) and Jonathan Harker (whom they have not yet met, but who has already been established by Dracula as beneath one of high social rank) out of the hierarchy.

These three men of rank band together with Van Helsing, and Jonathan and Mina Harker, who are given some bit of social status since they are in the loop of knowledge of Dracula and his planned invasion. Information, in addition to social status, thus becomes a major factor in their search for, and destruction of, Dracula. As the eldest man in the group and a renowned scientist, Van Helsing acts as a father figure and coordinates the men in their tasks. Lord Arthur Godalming utilizes his rank in order to accomplish certain tasks. Quincy P. Morris, an American and avid hunter, knows his weapons and provides an armory. He is also "the most pragmatic campaigner ... who is always there with practical suggestions and who on the spur of the moment can make the best decisions" (Wasson 22). Dr. Seward, whose study of his patient, Renfield, offers some insight to Dracula, also offers a home base of operations at his asylum. Jonathan Harker, with his knowledge of law, the workings of real estate solicitors, as well as his

knowledge of some of Dracula's whereabouts, helps the group locate all of Dracula's coffins, which had been strategically dispersed all over London. Mina also has much to offer the group. Through her tireless efforts of compiling all of the information collected from several diaries, including her own diary, letters, newspaper articles, and telegrams, the men are able to seek out and destroy Dracula.

From a postcolonial perspective, one can see that with the Englishmen's social privilege, there is also a rather large amount of hypocrisy. Arthur abuses his social rank on several occasions so that the group may work outside of the law. For example, in order to break into one of Dracula's residences, Arthur hires a locksmith to open the lock to the home, claiming that he owns the house and has been locked out. The locksmith does not ask for any proof of ownership, nor does a passing policeman question the event, since Arthur is an aristocrat. All of the men also use the privilege of money to bribe lower, working-class citizens for information. Another example of the hypocrisy of the men is when they perform the blood transfusions on Lucy. The life-sustaining act of transferring blood from a donor to a recipient is perfectly legal and medicinal when performed by Van Helsing; however, the blood transfer is monstrous and criminal when performed by Dracula, even though his donors seem to be willing. The hypocrisy portrayed by the band of vampire hunters shows the unfair advantage that they hold over Dracula, which is utilized (according to their

ideals) in the name of good.

It is also important to point out that throughout the novel, Dracula has no voice. It is true that there are a few instances in which he speaks; however, all dialogue spoken by Dracula is filtered through one of the Englishmen. All conversations between Dracula and Jonathan Harker are written by Jonathan's character in his diary. Only a few other conversations are heard through Mina, as she recounts her attack, and Dr. Seward. Other than a very simple letter of welcome to Jonathan when he first arrives to Transylvania in the beginning of the novel, no part of the novel is actually written in Dracula's voice. By this very simple act, Stoker has already repressed his main character, thereby turning Dracula into an oppressed and voiceless Other.

Mina, whom the Englishmen also attempt to repress and keep out of the group, responds to the threat of the Other differently than the men. Even though she works tirelessly to compile the information that will eventually be used against Dracula, and even after she has lost her best friend, Lucy, and has been, herself, attacked by him, Mina feels sympathy for him. Despite all of the men's hate towards Dracula, Mina reminds them:

that poor soul who has wrought all this misery is the saddest case of all. Just think what will be his joy when he too is destroyed in his worser part that his better part may have spiritual immortality. You must be pitiful to him too, though it may not hold your hands from his

destruction. (Stoker 269)

It is presumed that while she begins to transform into one of his kind, Mina requests pity for Dracula as she would have them pity her. It is also possible that her pity for Dracula stems from her pity for herself, as she is excluded from the men's domain, signifying her connection to, and empathy for, the foreign Other.

## Chapter Two:

### Gender and Sexuality in Dracula and Interview with the Vampire

There are several gender studies issues that are present in the works of Bram Stoker and Anne Rice. For example, Stoker portrays the New Woman through Mina. He also examines Victorian ideals of gender and sexuality through the female and male characters. Anne Rice's novel, Interview with the Vampire, is studied by gender critics for Rice's portrayal of androgynous and homoerotic vampires. Both novels, although different in many aspects, are similar in that each novel portrays its contemporary society's predominant concepts of identity through gender and sexuality.

In "Dracula: the Unseen Face in the Mirror," Carol A. Senf claims that "Dracula is primarily a sexual threat" (428). Senf points out that, according to Stoker's novel, a vampire must have permission to enter a human dwelling; therefore, Dracula's victims must be willing to allow him entrance into their lives. Senf's point denotes that Dracula's victims are, rather than being *victims*, are actually willing participants. As Senf states, Dracula "employs seduction, relying on the others' desires to emulate his freedom from external constraints" (Senf 427). Dracula simply seduces the female characters to act on their pre-existing desires. The idea of the sexual threat, therefore, is not limited merely to Dracula, the threat also applies to Lucy Westenra and Mina Harker. Lucy and Mina unconsciously challenge patriarchal society, depicting the Victorian debate of gender roles. The two women and the ever-present

symbol of blood also explores the threat of sexually transmitted diseases. Another example of the sexual threat is through the relationship between Jonathan Harker and Dracula, portraying Victorian society's fear of homosexuality. While Dracula is a threat to the other characters, his danger is that he is a catalyst that brings together all of these elements of fear surrounding gender and sexuality.

New Women of the Victorian period played a major role in their society's concepts regarding women's roles in society. While they were often criticized, New Women fought for their independence, aiming at education and meaningful employment. For example, Elizabeth Wolstenholme and Josephine Butler founded the North of England Council for Promoting the Higher Education of Women in 1867 (Hughes 38). Two colleges that were founded by women, Girton College in 1869 and Newnham College in 1871, provided higher education, as well as sites for independent living, for women (Hughes 38-39). In addition to education, New Women fought for marriage and divorce law reforms. After several minor victories of new political acts and amendments that did not completely free women to control their own property, the Married Women's Property Act of 1882 finally allowed women rights to their own property acquired both before and during marriage (Hughes 38). New Women also sought the right to publicly acquire information on important issues that affected them and their children, which had been previously restricted to educated men, such as sexually transmitted

diseases. Not only did they seek information, but they also rallied for better methods of diagnosing venereal diseases like syphilis, and as a result, better methods of preventing the spread of disease.

Victorians feared, however, that New Women blurred the boundaries of traditional gender roles. Glennis Byron states that “the breakdown of traditional gender roles, the confusion of the masculine and the feminine, was seen as a significant indication of cultural decay and corruption, an attack on the stability of the family structure” (139). In further creating familial instability, many Victorians feared that as these New Women became more masculine, they would lose their maternal nurturing side, causing a further breakdown of the patriarchal family structure. The fear of the disintegration of the traditional Victorian family structure spread outward into a fear of the disintegration of the traditional social structure. The debate of the New Woman versus the traditional woman is evident in Victorian literature, including the works of women authors such as Charlotte Bronte’s Villette, and Olive Schreiner’s The Story of an African Farm (a noted feminist novel published in 1883 under the pseudonym Ralph Iron), as well as works by Dickens. The traditional versus New Woman debate is even more evident in Victorian gothic literature, in works such as H. G. Wells’s The Island of Dr. Moreau, Arthur Machen’s The Great God Pan, and several of Stoker’s works, including Dracula.

Perhaps one of the biggest societal fears that was exposed by the



appearance of New Women was the fear of women's sexuality. Kelly Hurley discusses the Gothic literary treatment of women and sexuality utilizing the theory of Victorian sociomedical discourses on the hysterization of women's bodies, taken from Michel Foucault's The History of Sexuality. Foucault claims that the late nineteenth-century hysterization of women's bodies was "a threefold process whereby the feminine body was analyzed—qualified and disqualified—as being thoroughly saturated with sexuality; whereby it was integrated into the sphere of medical practices, by reason of a pathology intrinsic to it" (104). Female sexuality was pathologized by medical practices as being both the symptom and cause of many mental disorders suffered by women. Victorian literature, especially Gothic, often dealt with the issue of female sexuality by setting female characters on one of two extremes. Women are depicted as "saintly or demonic, spiritual or bodily, asexual or ravenously sexed, guardians of domestic happiness or unnatural monsters" (Hurley 121). Bram Stoker was no exception to the literary polarization of women. In his novel, Dracula, Lucy depicts the sexual, unnatural monster, while Mina remains the saintly mother figure.

Carol A. Senf claims in "Dracula: Stoker's Response to the New Woman" that "Stoker's villainesses ... radiate sexuality" (39). This statement is most true for the character Lucy Westenra. In the beginning of the novel, Lucy is presented with three marriage proposals. While she tries to choose among her three suitors, she laments: "Why can't they let a girl marry three

men, or as many as want her?" (Stoker 60). While Lucy outwardly adheres to society's dictates and chooses the appropriate suitor, in her case, the man with a title, she divulges to her friend, Mina, her secret desire for sexual freedom—a freedom that was claimed by many New Women. Lucy does get her wish; however, her desire is granted in a symbolic form. After Dr. Van Helsing performs the blood transfusions on Lucy, Lord Godalming (who has given blood to Lucy and does not yet know that Seward and Morris had also donated blood to Lucy) tells Van Helsing and Seward that "he felt since [the blood transfusion] as if they two had been really married, and that she was his wife in the sight of God" (157). Stoker overtly states through Godalming that with donations from all three of her suitors, Lucy becomes bound to them by blood, in effect, marrying all three men.

She also depicts the extreme of the anti-maternal New Woman after she turns into a vampire. At a time that corresponds with Lucy's death, local children begin disappearing. Upon their return in the mornings following their disappearance, the children claim to have been lured away in the night by the "bloofer [or, beautiful] lady" (159). These children are all found with tiny wounds on their necks and are weak, but otherwise unharmed. When Van Helsing, Godalming and Seward go to Lucy's tomb to destroy her, they catch her preying upon a child: "We saw a white figure advance—a dim white figure, which held something dark at its breast ... we could not see the face, for it was bent down over what we saw to be a fair-headed child" (187). Lucy

moves in closer to the men's hiding place, allowing them to see that her "lips were crimson with fresh blood" (187). Rather than portraying the traditional woman who is a loving and faithful wife and nurturing mother, Lucy (symbolically) marries three men and preys upon children.

Stoker places Mina Harker on the polar extreme. Jerrold Hogle explains the saintly woman of the polarization as "characterized by her childlike innocence, loving tenderness, and selflessness, a moral purity that was often figured as asexuality" (199). Hogle goes on to argue that Mina fits his description of the innocent and nurturing woman. Her selflessness and purity is often remarked upon by Van Helsing, as she works tirelessly to compile the necessary information that helps the men hunt down Dracula. Mina sets aside her own grief over the loss of Lucy in order to care for Jonathan. She also attempts to quell her despair from the attack she suffered by Dracula, putting on a forced smile to cheer up the men and offering pity towards her attacker. Hogle also remarks on her asexuality, claiming the innocence of her marriage to Jonathan, which occurred inside a convent while Jonathan was recovering from his ordeal at Dracula's castle. The mere fact that Mina fulfills her promise to marry Jonathan while he is in a sickly state, along with their presence inside a convent, alludes to the idea that their marriage remains unconsummated, at least until the very end of the novel when Jonathan mentions the birth of their child.

Despite the contempt for the New Woman that Mina overtly voices,

along with her maternal and asexual characteristics, Stoker's portrayal of Mina remains ambiguous. Hogle remarks that Mina "is distinguished by her resourcefulness, technological proficiency, and clear-headed rationality, all culturally coded as masculine" (202). Even though Mina verbally condemns the New Woman, she portrays many of the New Woman's characteristics. To explain Mina's ambiguity, Carol A. Senf notes that Stoker's response to the New Woman is ambivalent, due to the fact that his mother, Charlotte Stoker, was a strong woman, driven to fight for the civil rights of women, especially those in the lower-class community in Ireland ("Dracula's Response" 38). Indeed, Charlotte Stoker advocated education and practical skills beyond household servitude for women, claiming that "there is a dignity in labour, and a self-supporting woman is alike respected and respectable" (Belford 27). Due to his being raised by such a woman, Senf believes that Stoker "creates women characters who are the intellectual equals of the men in his novels; however he seems to have drawn the line at sexual equality, and he has his heroines choose the traditional roles of marriage and motherhood instead of careers" (38). Not only does Stoker seem to limit professional equality for the female characters, but he also limits sexuality (referring to both the heterosexual freedom of women as well as homosexuality). One hypothesis for Stoker's limitation of sexuality in all of his novels is that he views sexuality as a threat. There are several possible explanations for why Stoker would have viewed sexuality as a threat, one of

which is the possibility of his own sexual repression. Spurred on by Farson's biography on Stoker, some critics have argued that Stoker's relationship with his wife, Florence, was frigid. Belford argues that there is insufficient evidence to support any such claims; however, she does discuss Stoker's dedication to his work at the Lyceum, which kept Stoker away from Florence and their only son, Noel, for long periods of time. He often worked late into the night at the theater and toured overseas with the company. Another explanation for the sexual threat is the general societal fear of sexually transmitted diseases, and homosexuality.

On April 20, 1912, Bram Stoker passed away. The official causes stated on his death certificate were "Locomotor Ataxy 6 Months, Granulated Contracted Kidney. Exhaustion" (Belford 319-320). Stoker's great-nephew, Daniel Farson, consulted a family physician who examined Stoker's death certificate and told Farson that the terms stated on the certificate referred to symptoms of tertiary syphilis. Farson published this finding in 1975 in his biography on Stoker, entitled The Man Who Wrote *Dracula*. For several years after this publication, it was the common belief that Stoker had died from syphilis. Barbara Belford, however, claims that syphilis, which was always cited on death certificates in such vague terms, was "frequently overdiagnosed" (320). Belford argues that "Stoker was never the classic demented, psychotic personality associated with tertiary syphilis" (320) She also claims that since Stoker suffered from locomotor ataxia for only six

months, syphilis was not likely the cause of his death. Belford supports her argument with the statements of British medical experts, including Dr. R. B. Gibberd, a neurologist, who claims that it is more likely that Stoker's symptoms were the result of stroke. While the question of whether or not Stoker actually died from syphilis is debatable, the fact remains that venereal diseases such as syphilis were becoming common knowledge since they were growing into a large threat during the late Victorian Era. This threat of disease was often the subject of literature, including Stoker's own novel. Stoker's characterization of Lucy again provides an example of the threat of sexuality in regards to venereal disease. While undergoing treatment to cure her from Dracula's attacks, Lucy attempts to seduce Arthur to kiss her. Arthur succumbs to her; however, Van Helsing stops him from going near her and flings him away from danger. Carol A. Senf argues that, with his urgent response to Lucy's attempted seduction, Van Helsing "turns Lucy's body into a moral battlefield, and he ultimately convinces the others that her awakened sexuality and her attempt to reverse the traditional sexual roles are threats to them all" ("Stoker's Response" 44). The threat is that Lucy carries a disease which could be contagious to Arthur, should he give in to her seduction. The metaphorical vehicle of Lucy's contagion is vampirism, and the tenor is syphilis, a very real threat to the Victorian reader.

Nina Auerbach and Alan Johnson offer a different perspective to Lucy's and Mina's sexualities. Auerbach calls attention to the fact that after

Dracula begins to prey on the women, they appear more alive and vital. After one of Dracula's attacks on Lucy, Mina writes in her journal that "the adventure of the night does not seem to have harmed [Lucy]; on the contrary, it has benefited her, for she looks better this morning than she has done for weeks" (Stoker 89). In addition to appearing more vital, the women's senses are awakened to subtleties that, before their interaction with Dracula, had gone unnoticed. Johnson calls Dracula a "literary double for the unconscious or only partly conscious rebellious egoism experienced first by Lucy and then by Mina" (236). Before their contact with Dracula and in their everyday conscious states, Lucy and Mina submit to the authority of the men; after their contact with Dracula and while in unconscious states, however, they rebel against the patriarchal authority imposed upon them by society. The positive effects of their independence of spirit is reflected in their vitality while under Dracula's (or rather, their unconscious rebellious ego's) influence. Auerbach states that while "earlier vampires enfeebled their prey; Dracula energizes his" (Our Vampires 95). Dracula awakens in Lucy and Mina the potential of independence and freedom from the traditional patriarchal dictates of Victorian England.

Along the same line of the sexual threat presented by Stoker's novel is the Victorian fear of homosexuality. Prior to Dracula, vampires in literature often relied upon a vow of secrecy between the male vampire and a mortal man (except in the case of LeFanu's short story, "Carmilla," which occurs

between a female vampire and a young woman). This vow created a sort of bond between the two men. This bonding and secrecy among men is often related to homosexuality. The vow of secrecy as metaphor for homosexuality can be seen in Stoker's novel. Although Jonathan writes in his journal everything that happens while he is at Dracula's castle, including the knowledge that Dracula is a vampire, the journal is written in shorthand and as a result, is kept private. Jonathan does give this journal to Mina at the time of their marriage; however, in an effort to show her trust in her husband and to put his past behind them, she binds the journal with a ribbon and refuses to read Jonathan's private thoughts. When Jonathan and Mina return to London and happen upon Dracula, Jonathan does not immediately reveal to anyone the identity of Dracula, nor does Mina press the matter.

Homosexuality was officially criminalized and defined as "acts of gross indecency between men" in the Labouchere Amendment to the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 (Hughes 40). In Our Vampires, Ourselves, Nina Auerbach explains that with the Labouchere Amendment of 1885 and the Wilde trials ten years later, the bonding between men became suspect and tainted, both in society and in literature. The result of the Victorian criminalization of homosexuality on the vampire in literature is that "now unnatural and illegal, the oath that bound vampire to mortal was annulled" (Auerbach Our Vampires 84). The annulment of the bonding oath is seen in Dracula when Jonathan Harker finally reveals the identity of Dracula after he



happens across *Dracula* in London. When it becomes clear that *Dracula* is a threat to English society and that Jonathan's journal may provide valuable insight into their enemy, Mina reads and transcribes the journal and shares it with Van Helsing and the others, bringing the Harkers into Van Helsing's circle. A portion of the vampire's power, his secrecy, is thus lost when his identity is exposed to the public. By exposing the vampire to the public in his novel, Stoker is also emulating the process of exposing homosexuals to the public for judgment.

Stoker was no stranger to the Wilde family, including Oscar, who began going to Trinity during Stoker's final year at the university. Stoker became quite fond of the Wilde family, and he and Oscar remained friends even after courting the same woman, Florence Balcombe (later, Florence Stoker). Barbara Belford notes that, according to accounts of other theatergoers and critics, it is known that during Stoker's management of the Lyceum theater, Oscar became a regular face at the theater. Belford also notes, however, that Stoker's thoughts on the Wilde trials remains unclear since Stoker left no record of his opinion on the trials. Oscar Wilde's name was never even mentioned in a list of notable figures entertained at the Lyceum, which was compiled by Stoker. Stoker's silence can be interpreted in one of two ways. One interpretation is that Stoker continues the tradition of the secret bond by not revealing his opinion of Wilde to the public eye. One can also theorize that Stoker publicly denounces Wilde by making him non-

existent in his writings. This denouncement, in addition to the annulment of the once-present homosexual bond between men in his novel, reflects a fear of public association with Wilde, as well as with homosexuality in general.

Another vampire novel that explores similar areas of gender studies is Anne Rice's Interview with the Vampire. Anne Rice's novel parallels Stoker's in the areas of gender, sexuality, and disease in a manner that is relevant to the attitudes of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Stoker and Rice both deal with the issue of feminism, although each handles the traditional patriarchal family/social structure differently. Gender blurring, or androgyny, along with homosexuality, are portrayed in Rice's characters; however, Rice gives these traits a positive turn. The spread of sexually transmitted disease is also feared in contemporary society, which continues in the presence of the symbol of blood; however, it has taken on a new form in the twentieth-century in a relatively new disease, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), which affects millions of people worldwide.

After her first year at Texas Women's University, Anne Rice transferred to the University of San Francisco in 1960. Partly as a result of living in Haight-Ashbury for several years, she was familiar with many of the growing political movements taking place at that time, including feminism. Rice was impressed with the feminist movement, since she "had argued against double standards ever since she'd been in high school, shocking friends who'd never before heard a woman assert herself against social

expectations” (Ramsland 139). She disagreed with radical feminists, however, and stayed out of organized political activities. Rice felt that the radicals limited women to what subjects they should write about. Rice believed that, instead of writing what was dictated by any one group, women should be able to write whatever they wanted.

Anne Rice utilized her beliefs of writing beyond tradition and beyond what is dictated by societal norms when she wrote Interview with the Vampire. Rice quickly dispels of much of the myth surrounding the literary vampire that had been set up by Stoker in her own novel. For example, when the journalist asks about the superstition regarding vampires and crosses, Louis states that “I can look on anything I like. And I rather like looking on crucifixes in particular” (Rice 23). Louis even spends time inside a Catholic cathedral contemplating his existence, as well as the existence of God and Satan, a theme that recurs in many of Rice’s novels. Rice also dispels Stoker’s concept of the shape-shifting vampire. Although Rice does offer acknowledgement of the Old World superstition surrounding vampires when Louis and Claudia seek out other vampires and find the mindless corpse vampires that are more like animals than human, she also remakes the myth with her intelligent and emotional vampires.

Rice’s feminist beliefs during the late 1960s and 1970s are also seen in Claudia, the main female character in Interview with the Vampire. Claudia, who was turned into a vampire at the tender age of five, physically remains a

child, although she matures mentally into an intelligent woman. Claudia also mirrors Rice's own attitude towards herself at the time when she wrote this novel. Rice had felt uncomfortable in her body and with feminine sexuality since childhood. Rice is quoted in her biography as stating that Claudia "is the embodiment of my failure to deal with the feminine. She is a woman trapped in a child's body. She's the person robbed of power" (Ramsland 154). Despite strong religious ties and some limitations to what she was allowed to read and study (particularly during the time she spent in a Catholic boarding school), Rice had simultaneously been raised in an environment of intellectual and imaginative freedom, resulting in her outspoken and assertive nature. Claudia exposes Rice's own feelings towards herself as an outsider, an intelligent and outspoken woman who was uncomfortable with herself.

Nina Auerbach's general argument in Woman and the Demon is that in the Victorian Era, women were repressed only because they presented a danger to society. Auerbach states that "because danger and repression are interdependent participants in a continuous process, it is virtually impossible to distinguish 'official' from 'subversive' visions of Victorian womanhood: perceptions of power cannot be untangled from the impulse to repress it" (186). Claudia, with her intellect and lack of moral consciousness, exhibits this danger to society. She lures victims with the perceived innocence of a lost child; however, she feels no remorse for taking advantage of their sympathy as she feeds on them. In addition to her lack of pity for her human

victims, Claudia does not regret destroying Lestat. Louis notes that even though she was raised by him and Lestat, who both had been human at one time, she was “less human than either of us, less human than either of us might have dreamed. Not the faintest conception bound her to the sympathies of human existence” (147). This lack of human sympathy is what sets Claudia apart from Louis and Lestat and creates distrust in her loyalty and the instinct in Lestat to attempt to keep her repressed and child-like.

After 65 years of vampire existence, Claudia comes to a point of questioning and self-awareness, similar to the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s. She begins to rebel against her two vampire fathers, disrupting the relative peace that they had had until that time. Louis comes to realize that “she sees herself equal to us [Louis and Lestat] now” (Rice 105). Lestat, however, vainly attempts to remain in control as the dominating father-figure in their family, with Claudia as his little daughter. Claudia’s decision to destroy Lestat then becomes a “protest against the kind of femininity offered to women in a patriarchal culture, and a desire to assume the father’s authority for herself” (Punter and Byron 245). After she succeeds in doing away with Lestat, she gains control of her relationship with Louis, as she leads him on a journey across Europe.

Critics such as Auerbach, Byron, and Punter point out the androgyny of Rice’s vampires. Auerbach calls the character androgyny a “union of opposites ... [that is] possible only for an angel or a vampire” (Our Vampires

145). Anne Rice creates the androgynous vampire with the two characters of Louis and Lestat. Louis exhibits appropriately male traits in his mortal life, when, in the beginning of his narration, he had taken over Pointe du Lac after his father had passed away. He also takes on the role of caretaker by looking after his mother and sister for many years, until their natural deaths. After Lestat turns him into a vampire, Louis becomes more effeminate, taking on the traditionally female role of subservience to the father-figure, Lestat. Louis even goes so far as to state that the “great feminine longing of my mind [was] being awakened again to be satisfied” (Rice 234). Louis clearly revels in the feminine workings of his own mind.

Punter and Byron discuss Sandra Tomc’s idea that androgyny is achieved in Rice’s novel “through the exclusion of adult female sexuality” (Punter and Byron 245). Indeed, the one main female character in the novel, although she does exhibit female sexuality when she matures in years, remains in the physical body of a five year old child. Other adult female characters make appearances throughout the novel, such as Babette Freniere and Madeleine; however, these two characters are minor and their relationships with the male characters are inconsequential.

Due to the androgynous nature of Rice’s vampires, and with the strong undercurrent of homoeroticism, Rice’s novel lends itself well to Queer Theory. As previously mentioned in the discussion on homosexuality in Stoker’s Dracula, there was a bond between men in early vampire literature that was

lost with Stoker's novel. The vampire/homosexual bond remained missing until Anne Rice's Interview with the Vampire. As Nina Auerbach states, "the vampires of Anne Rice reclaim their literary origin ... by limiting their feverish admiration to each other" (Our Vampires 153). Anne Rice reclaims the bond between vampires with the relationship between Louis and Lestat, and between Louis and Armand later in the novel. While the bond is no longer between a vampire and a mortal, it is between vampire and vampire, the bond is no less poignant. Lestat's and Armand's knowledge of what they are and what they are capable of doing from their many years of vampiric un-life binds Louis (who is younger) to them.

Trevor Holmes argues that "vampires function as more than just metaphors or archetypes in contemporary culture; in the case of at least some subjects in the boundary-crossing moment that is both queer and goth, vampires are sources of self-invention and the very much *out* (Holmes's own stress) staging of the problematics of gender identification and sexuality" (188). This statement holds true for Rice's vampire novels, which develop elements of homoeroticism within the theme of the characters' search for identity. The most poignant example of homoeroticism in Interview with the Vampire is the scene in which Lestat turns Louis into a vampire. Louis tells his interviewer that Lestat's "movement [was] so graceful and so personal that at once it made me think of a lover" (18). After Lestat began to drink blood from Louis's neck, Louis states Lestat's lips against his neck "sent a

shock of sensation through my body that was not unlike the pleasure of passion" (19). Such moments of male on male eroticism, along with Lestat's preference for young male victims, allows for a queer studies analysis of Rice's novel.

While Interview with the Vampire was written before the AIDS epidemic, her novel is explored by queer theory critics as a form of nostalgia for a time when there was no fear of this particular blood-borne disease. According to Auerbach, authors who wrote vampire novels in the 1980s portrayed vampires as sad, disease-ridden outsiders; however, "Louis and Lestat were radiant exceptions to the vampires who shriveled in a plague-stricken, newly censorious culture" (Our Vampires 175). Whereas Stoker's novel portrays Victorian society's fear of sexually transmitted and blood-borne disease, the lack of such fear stands out in Rice's novel. The lack of fear of disease and the freedom of feeding on their victims, with little to no regard towards the victims' genders, appeals to the HIV/AIDS plagued twentieth-century audience.



### Chapter Three:

#### Power-Play Dynamics in the Vampire Novel

A major theme in many vampire novels is the power-play dynamic within society. The interplay between social classes and gender sets up a constant struggle between those with power and those without power. Often in vampire literature, the vampire has the power at the outset, and he or she uses this power to either create fear in the victims or to seduce the victims (or sometimes both). The ensuing struggle then results in the regaining of power by the victims when the vampire is destroyed. For example, in Sheridan Le Fanu's story, "Carmilla," the female vampire uses a combination of Laura's childhood fear and the intimacy of friendship to get close to Laura. Carmilla first preys upon Laura when Laura is a small child. When Laura is an adolescent, Carmilla returns in the guise of an unexpected and sickly guest. Once Laura's father and a physician discover that Carmilla is a vampire, they seek out her resting place and destroy her. Stoker's Dracula and Rice's Interview with the Vampire also share the theme of the power-play dynamic.

Stoker's Dracula follows the aforementioned pattern of the vampire having the power at the outset of the work, until the protagonists manage to gain power over the vampire, Dracula, and destroy him. The range of Dracula's power is wide, since he is both nobility in his native country and a cruel villain. When Jonathan stops over at Bistritz on his way to Castle Dracula, it becomes apparent that the townspeople fear Dracula. Several

people implore Jonathan to delay his business at Castle Dracula. Jonathan insists on continuing, however, due to his sense of duty to both his employer and to Dracula. After the landlady of the Golden Krone Hotel, where Jonathan stays for a night, realizes that she cannot persuade him not to go to Castle Dracula, she places a rosary around his neck. She sees Jonathan's hesitant expression and states that the rosary is "for your mother's sake" (Stoker 13). The landlady takes on a maternal role and gives the crucifix to Jonathan in an effort to protect him despite his protests. When it becomes time for Jonathan to leave the inn, a crowd of townspeople gathers around as they make the "sign of the cross and point two fingers towards [him]" (14). A fellow passenger on the carriage explains to Jonathan that the sign of the two fingers is a guard against the evil eye. The townspeople fear Dracula and allow superstitious belief to overrule rationalism. Jonathan, however, remains rational and discounts their actions as quaint superstition, although he is touched by their concern. The fact that Dracula exerts power over the townspeople of Transylvania is unmistakable, whether his power comes out of a respect for his nobility or fear of his cruelty and power to destroy those who displease him.

Dracula also maintains a patriarchal control over the women with whom he interacts, including his three brides in Transylvania, as well as Lucy and Mina in London. Dracula controls his brides with force at his castle and prevents them from having their way with Jonathan. While it is not clear how

Dracula gains control over Lucy, one may theorize that Dracula uses the power of seduction to lure her out of her home, considering Senf's idea mentioned earlier that vampires must be invited. Dracula uses more devious ways to obtain access to Mina when she stays at Seward's home and sanitarium. He first convinces the lunatic Renfield to allow him entrance to the building, then subdues Mina with threats and by the force of his will-power. Upon first entering the room in which Mina and Jonathan sleep, Dracula threatens to kill Jonathan: "Silence! If you make a sound I shall take him and dash his brains out before your very eyes" (251). Mina is appalled at this threat, but goes on to say that "strangely enough, I did not want to hinder him" (Stoker 251). Mina is unclear about whether her wish to not hinder him refers to Dracula's threat of killing Jonathan or if it refers to Dracula preying upon her. She attributes her lack of desire of hindering Dracula to his will-power, which he uses to render his victims helpless. Another possible explanation for her lack of wanting to prevent Dracula from killing Jonathan is that she desires the opportunity that is offered by Dracula to be free of her marriage to Jonathan. Whether the first or second theory for her lack of hindering Dracula is more appropriate, Mina does submit to Dracula's will. Dracula also acts as a providing husband to his three brides when he brings a child to them so that they do not need to hunt for their own sustenance. The power relationship between Dracula and the women is clearly patriarchal, as he maintains authority, seduces, and provides for his women.

Auerbach writes that “according to Stoker’s working notes, the heart of Dracula was not blood, but an assertion of ownership” (Our Vampires 71). This claim is made on the basis of Stoker’s working notes for his novel in which he repeatedly writes that Jonathan belongs to Dracula. Dracula lures Jonathan to his castle in Transylvania on the pretext of conducting business, and then secludes him and imposes his social rank of nobility to maintain control over Jonathan. At their first meeting, Dracula delivers a long speech about his noble ancestry, thereby speaking down to Jonathan, who is but a lowly solicitor’s clerk. The seclusion imposed by Dracula at his castle renders Jonathan helpless, and the only humans whom Jonathan can attempt to contact are gypsies who speak no English and who are loyal to Dracula. When Jonathan wanders through the castle and falls prey to Dracula’s three brides, Dracula enters and violently tears them away from Jonathan, angrily proclaiming that “this man belongs to me!” (Stoker 43). Dracula clearly takes ownership of Jonathan and uses him to serve his own needs in setting up his plans of going to England.

Once in England, Dracula exerts his power and control over the lunatic, Renfield, as well as over Lucy and Mina; however, he loses his power in London when Mina finally reads Jonathan’s journal, thus, exposing Dracula’s identity. At this point, Mina contacts Van Helsing, thereby allying herself and her husband with Van Helsing’s privileged circle. Jonathan writes in his journal that, while he previously “felt impotent, and in the dark, and

distrustful,” but now that he “knows,” he is no longer afraid (168). With the reassurance of the others’ acknowledgement of Dracula’s existence, Jonathan gains confidence that his experiences with Dracula were real and not imagined. Once Mina, Jonathan, Dr. Van Helsing, Dr. Seward, Lord Godalming, and Morris band together, they methodically strip Dracula of his power. Their group’s knowledge of Dracula, including his powers and weaknesses, allows them to exploit Dracula’s weaknesses. With Jonathan’s professional knowledge of where Dracula has located his safe bases with coffins of native earth in which Dracula must rest, and with Van Helsing’s knowledge of how to make holy what is deemed by them to be unholy, the men are able to destroy Dracula’s safe havens, thereby forcing Dracula to return to his homeland.

The power-play dynamics also occur between the mortal men and women characters of Stoker’s novel. One example is Lucy, who falls prey to Dracula and begins to change into a more independent and sexually aggressive woman. The men attempt to subdue her with medicine through their blood transfusions, garlic, as well as with religion by placing a crucifix around her neck. When their attempts fail, however, their last resort is to simply destroy Lucy. With her fiancée’s fatal strike with a stake through her heart, Lucy became “no longer the foul Thing that we had so dreaded and grown to hate ... but Lucy as we had seen her in her life, with her face of unequalled sweetness and purity” (192). The men return Lucy to her

previous state of innocence prior to her awakening from Dracula's influence; however, they can only do so by killing her.

Mina is another example of the power-play dynamics. Once Mina has served her purpose in transcribing everyone's various journals and letters, the men decide that Mina should no longer remain in their presence when they consult together over their plans for finding and destroying Dracula. Despite their claim that their decision is for her own safety, one can read that the men have chosen to exclude her simply on the basis that she is a woman. Mina's only method of coping is to turn to her journal, writing that "though it was a bitter pill for me to swallow, I could say nothing, save to accept their chivalrous care of me" (214). Writing becomes a means of empowerment for Mina. Mina resents being shut out from their group, although she feels helpless to protest the men's decision. She turns to her writing, which allows her to tap into her own subconscious mind, opening her up to the potential of freedom offered to her by Dracula. Dracula then acts as a catalyst that pulls Mina back into the group's privilege when he begins to prey upon her the very night that the men shut her out from their group and she takes up her writing. Once it is discovered that Mina has fallen victim to Dracula, the men have no choice but to keep her involved in their plans. By drinking Mina's blood and then forcing Mina to drink his own blood, Dracula creates a bond between himself and Mina. Mina then becomes a link between Dracula and the men, which allows the men to know Dracula's

whereabouts so that they can pursue him. Mina thus gains power over the men in that she is crucial and indispensable to their plans.

An alternative theory is that Mina is instrumental to Dracula's plans. When Dracula exchanges blood with Mina, he tells her: "you, their best beloved one, are now to me, flesh of my flesh; blood of my blood; kin of my kin" (252). If Mina's marriage to Jonathan remains unconsummated at this point, surely her marriage to Dracula is consummated, especially considering the argument from the previous chapter discussing the transfer of blood as symbolic of marriage. Furthermore, Dracula tells Mina that "you shall be avenged in turn; for not one of them [referring to the men in her circle] shall minister to your needs" (252). Dracula knows that she has been excluded by the men and that even Jonathan cannot provide the inclusion that she needs. Dracula goes on to explain that in the meantime, she must be punished for helping the men to thwart his plans. Her punishment is that she must go to Dracula when he calls to her: "When my brain says 'Come!' to you, you shall cross land or sea to do my bidding; and to that end this!" (252). It appears from his command that Dracula has a plan in the works. With the connection to Dracula that Mina now has, Dracula can send his thoughts and plans to her if he so wishes. So then, when Mina approaches the men in her circle and suggests that they hypnotize her in order to know where Dracula is located, is this her way of helping the men, or is she carrying out Dracula's plan, which is unknown to the reader? When the group travels to

Transylvania in pursuit of Dracula, they split up, leaving Mina with Van Helsing. At one point, Mina tells Van Helsing “let us go to meet my husband” (321). This, in connection to her blood-bond with Dracula, causes one to wonder whether she is referring to Jonathan or Dracula. At the climax of the novel, when everyone finally catches up to Dracula, the narrator is careful to note that the sun is setting. One of Dracula’s powers is that he can change form at sunrise and sunset. When the men manage to slice at Dracula’s throat (although they do not sever his head as needed to destroy a vampire) and plunge a knife into his heart, Dracula disintegrates into dust. Considering the facts that the men do not complete their ritual and that Dracula can change form, even into inanimate forms such as mist, one can theorize that the men have not destroyed Dracula; but rather, Dracula has merely changed form, allowing the men to believe that he has been destroyed. When Dracula tells Mina earlier in the novel that she shall be avenged and that the men cannot minister to her needs, one can conclude that it was Dracula’s plan all along to give Mina independence from the men, but that she must first help him to regain his own freedom from them by making them believe that they have destroyed him, and, thus, “end[ing] this!” (252). By ending the chase, Dracula would then be free to pursue his own needs, and Mina hers.

Anne Rice’s novel also exhibits the power-play dynamics; however, the theme plays out differently from the vampire-then-victim transfer found in most vampire novels, mainly because all of the main characters are



vampires. The power transfer in Rice's novel is similar to the traditional form in that the original vampire character (Lestat) has the power at the outset, but from there, the struggle for power among the characters is a constant back-and-forth fight. Another difference with Rice's novel is that the power struggle not only occurs among the characters and their relationships with each other, but also with the characters' relationships with society at large.

There are two examples in Rice's novel of the power relationship between the characters and society. The first example occurs during the first half of the novel when Lestat and Louis reside at Louis's family plantation, Pointe du Lac, just outside the city of New Orleans. Louis continues to run Pointe du Lac after he is turned into a vampire and keeps the slaves who work on it while trying to trick them into believing that he is still human. Although Louis knows that his slaves are intelligent, he realizes later on that "in my own inexperience I still thought of them as childlike savages barely domesticated by slavery. I made a bad mistake" (27-28). This mistake was in under-estimating their intelligence and superstitious belief. It does not take long for the slaves to notice that Louis and Lestat are not human and that the two men are a danger to them, and an uprising soon develops. Fearing that Louis and Lestat are devils, the slaves, rather than running away, decide to destroy them. Louis and Lestat quickly become persecuted by those who worked for them and on whom they once fed upon, fleeing for their lives into the city of New Orleans as the plantation gets burned to the ground.

The second example of the power-play dynamics occurs when Louis and Claudia travel to Paris and come in contact with a group of vampires who call themselves the Theatre des Vampires. The Theatre des Vampires, Louis soon discovers, is a model of social conformity. The Paris vampires, all dressed completely in black with hair dyed black, look down upon Louis's and Claudia's brightly-colored and lavish clothing, as well as Claudia's golden locks. The group pressures Louis and Claudia, insisting that they dress in black to blend in with them. Louis notes that "this unnatural group...had made of immortality a conformist's club" (244). While the Paris vampires attempt to mold Louis and Claudia to conform to their ways, Louis and Claudia prefer to be outcast from their society.

The power struggle theme is more pronounced in the relationships between the four main characters of Louis's narrative: Lestat, Claudia, Armand, and himself. As previously mentioned, Lestat wields the power at the outset of the novel. He turns Louis into a vampire, and thus, is stronger and more knowledgeable about vampirism than Louis. Lestat's strength and knowledge put Louis at Lestat's mercy, until Louis realizes that Lestat does not withhold information out of spite, but that Lestat simply has no more knowledge to teach. When Lestat realizes that Louis is attempting to gain his independence, he creates the child vampire, Claudia. Lestat uses Claudia against Louis in order to keep Louis with him. The three become a dysfunctional family of sorts, with Lestat acting as the powerful patriarch.

Louis and Claudia both tire of the situation, and she devises a way to destroy Lestat. After a struggle and yet another fire in which they believe Lestat is killed, Louis and Claudia leave New Orleans. They sail to the Old World so that they can seek out other vampires that Claudia has read about in mythologies. Rather than taking control of their relationship since he is the elder of the two, Louis defers power to Claudia and follows her wherever she wishes to go, from Eastern Europe to France. Louis caters to Claudia, his child-lover, spoiling her with luxury, including clothing, paintings, dolls, and whatever else she desires.

Once in France, Louis meets the leader of the Theatre de Vampires, Armand, who shows Louis that there is much more for him to learn about being a vampire. When Louis awakens to his vampire potential, he becomes dissatisfied with his relationship with Claudia, and looks more to Armand as a mentor. After his second meeting with Armand, Louis has a brief moment of awakening:

I am alone. It seemed just, perfectly, and so to have a pleasing, inevitable form. And I pictured myself then forever alone, as if on gaining that vampire strength the night of my death I had left Lestat and never looked back for him, as if I had moved on away from him, beyond the need of him and anyone else. (264)

Louis begins to realize his need for independence from Lestat, Claudia, and, in fact, everyone.

Armand, however, has different plans, as he quietly allows the Theatre des Vampires to destroy Claudia even though he has the power to stop them. Louis then destroys the Theatre des Vampires in retaliation, unhindered by Armand, who has grown tired of his followers. Unaware that Armand also had a hand in the destruction of Claudia, Louis leaves Paris with Armand and they travel together all over the world. Depressed and dissatisfied with his existence, Louis remains dependent on another vampire despite his awakening. In an effort to cheer him up, Armand informs Louis that Lestat is still alive in New Orleans and encourages Louis to go to him. Louis does so, only to discover the squalor and paranoia in which Lestat is living. He quickly realizes that Lestat is powerless. It is then that Louis also learns the role which Armand played in Claudia's death and the lengths to which Armand went in order to bind Louis to him. At this point, Louis and Armand simultaneously come to an unspoken conclusion that it is time for them both to go their separate ways. Although devoid of the passion he once felt, Louis finally gains his independence.

In Stoker's Dracula, the main character who comes into her own awareness at the end of the novel is Mina. Though she is domestic and bears a son, Jonathan claims that "this boy will some day know what a brave and gallant woman his mother is" (Stoker 327). The novel is named after the villain or catalyst for Mina's awakening; however, it could be aptly renamed after Mina. Similarly, Rice's novel focuses on a character who remains

subdued and repressed throughout the novel, until the end. Louis finally comes into his own awakening as he attempts to sort out his place in the world.

## Chapter Four:

The Postmodern Vampire in Interview with the Vampire

Jean-Francois Lyotard explains that the:

postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by preestablished rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgment, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work. (81)

Lyotard places the postmodern author in the role of philosopher and creator, as the author has to create his or her own rules and define his or her own work outside of pre-existing modes and categories. David Punter and Glennis Byron describe the postmodern in gothic literature as “the site of a certain ‘haunting,’ and in this sense can never free itself from the ghosts of the past, even if it takes as its task the constant (and constantly dubious) reconstruction of the past” (53). Anne Rice’s novel, Interview with the Vampire, falls into Punter’s and Byron’s definition of postmodernism on two levels. Rice’s novel is not free “from the ghosts of the past,” yet it also reconstructs the past. In her biography of Anne Rice, Katherine Ramsland notes that before writing her novel, Rice attempted to read Stoker’s Dracula; however, “stunned to see vampires portrayed in such an animalian fashion, [she] did not finish it” (149). Despite her dislike of Dracula, Rice’s novel is not completely free from the traditional vampire that is evoked in Stoker’s novel.

For example, as soon as Louis and Claudia are rid of Lestat, they travel to the Old World in search of vampires, which Claudia is confident that they will find. Once they arrive in an unnamed village, somewhere in the vicinity of Varna, Louis and Claudia come across local peoples who are in fear of a vampire that has been preying on them. The townspeople carry on the traditional customs of identifying and destroying vampires. By day, the townspeople lead a white stallion through a cemetery. When the horse stops and refuses to walk over any particular graves, those graves are dug up. The bodies are staked and the heads severed in order to destroy the vampire. The vampire that Louis and Claudia meet in the Old World fits the description of the traditional superstition of a vampire. After the vampire attacks Louis, Louis states that he “was battling a mindless, animated corpse” (188). In folklore, the vampire is merely a reanimated corpse that often returns to its family from life and preys upon them.

Anne Rice also sets in motion her re-creation of the vampire mythology for the Vampire Chronicles in Interview with the Vampire.<sup>2</sup> When

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<sup>2</sup> Anne Rice interweaves mythological elements of various cultures and time periods throughout the Vampire Chronicles. For example, in Queen of the Damned, Rice writes of the creation of the first two vampires, a queen in Ancient Egypt and her pharaoh husband. The events surrounding the couple’s metamorphosis from humans into vampires are reminiscent of the Egyptian mythology of Isis and Osiris. For this reason, the term “myth” is used in reference to Rice’s work.

Louis and Claudia come across the mindless corpse vampires, Louis states that “we had met the European vampire, the creature of the Old World. He was dead” (188). Through the narrator, Louis, Rice recognizes and lays to rest the traditional vampire as one of Louis’s steps towards self-awareness. That self-awareness is exactly what sets Rice’s vampires apart from the traditional vampire of superstition. Rather than the mindless corpse-type vampires, Rice’s vampires are intelligent, rational, and emotional beings.

Anne Rice does more than simply rewrite myth, she rewrites history, not only in Interview with the Vampire, but in all four of her Vampire Chronicles. Rice “uses well-known fragments of history as she traces her stories throughout various epochs; often interweaving and rewriting narratives” (Haas and Haas 56). According to Lynda and Robert Haas, Rice weaves the myth of the vampire with history in order to create her own version of the history of the creation of vampires. Rice’s rewriting in Interview with the Vampire anticipates a later and more severe rewriting in The Vampire Lestat and The Queen of the Damned when she traces her vampires back to the original vampire in ancient Egypt. In Interview with the Vampire, the narrator, Louis, moves through the late 1700s to the mid-1900s and comments on historical events, such as slavery in the Louisiana Purchase. For example, Louis regrets underestimating the intelligence of the slaves on his plantation; and as a result, he regrets not allowing one of his slaves to take over the management of Pointe du Lac after he was turned



into a vampire. Through Louis's regret, Rice rewrites the common perspective of the late eighteenth-century that slaves were savages incapable of managing a business. Rice also comments, through Louis's narration, on the free people of color in New Orleans as "marvellous people of our mixed blood and that of the islands, who produced a magnificent and unique caste of craftsmen, artists, poets, and renowned feminine beauty" (39). Rice takes on a post-colonial perspective in order to rewrite the eighteenth-century views of free people of color, thus, not ignoring eighteenth-century views, but re-examining them with a twentieth-century sensibility.

Lynda and Robert Haas describe Anne Rice's novels as "an intriguing combination of Gothic literary convention with a postmodern sensibility about identity formation, sensual/sexual embodiment, and historical perspective" (56). Closely tied to the historical perspective previously discussed in this chapter, the identity formation of the narrator, Louis, is indeed a postmodern formation. Louis spends the entire novel searching for himself as he struggles with his relationships with Lestat, Claudia, and Armand, and with his own religious upbringing and philosophical ideas. At a time of conflict with a group of mortals, Lestat warns Louis to "act like what you are" (63). Louis responds with the question, "what am I?" (63). This question drives Louis throughout the remainder of the novel to seek out other vampires in an effort to learn more about himself.

One of the themes in Louis's quest for self-awareness and identity

formation is religion. After being turned into a vampire, Louis struggles with the idea that he may be damned by God. Furthermore, he questions if there even is such a thing as God. Before they leave for the Old World, Louis spends some time inside a cathedral, meditating on the existence of God and the devil, and whether or not he is damned. While there, Louis concludes that “God did not live in this church” (142). Later in the novel, when Louis meets Armand in Paris, they discuss the existence of God and whether or not they are devils. The only answer that Louis concludes from this conversation is that “God does not exist, this life...every second of it...is all we have” (235). Anne Rice tears down religious boundaries of good and evil via Louis’s cathedral meditation and his conversation with Armand, and places her vampires in a neutral existence, since they are neither good nor evil.

Louis’s questioning of religion and the existence of God and evil mirror Anne Rice’s personal religious doubt. After a devoutly Catholic upbringing, Anne Rice began to question her beliefs when she entered college and began studying philosophy, particularly existentialism. Rice states in an interview that:

I remember walking into a campus bookstore filled with trade paperbacks with wonderful covers, and there was Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, and I wanted to read them all—I wanted to find out what this existentialism everyone was talking about was—and it was all condemned and forbidden. A Catholic girl doesn’t read that stuff!

(Ramsland 65)

Rice's initial curiosity grew more serious as she took courses in philosophy. Her favorite philosophers were Camus and Sartre, which influenced her later work. Two other influences on Rice's questioning of her religion were the loss of her mother to alcoholism when Rice was an adolescent, and the loss of her only daughter. At the time of writing her novel, Rice had only recently lost Michele, who was six years old at the time of her death, to leukemia. Rice utilizes her writing to cope with her losses. Ramsland states that with writing her novel, Rice "touched an old grief, her mother's death," which is echoed in Louis's description of New Orleans, Rice's hometown. This grief is also reflected when Claudia finds a woman whom she wants Louis to turn into a vampire. Claudia's motive for her demand to turn Madeleine into a vampire is that she fears Louis will leave her and she wants a companion who will stay with her. Claudia's desire for a physically older female companion who cannot die reflects Rice's wish for the return of her own mother. Madeleine, whose grief at the loss of her child resembles Rice's grief over Michele, desires to be with Claudia for eternity as a vampire in order to have "a child who can't die" (265). Rice deals with both losses at the end of the novel when the Theatre de Vampires destroys both Claudia and Madeleine together, an act which provides closure to the grieving Rice.

With Interview with the Vampire, Anne Rice "addresses highly philosophical concepts while simultaneously blurring, questioning, and testing

the boundaries between fact and fiction” (Haas and Haas 62). She uses the philosophical concepts of existentialism to address good and evil, as well as to test the boundaries of society and self-identity. In an effort to help Louis in his self-awakening, Armand tells him that he is the spirit of the nineteenth-century. Louis argues with him, stating that “I’m not the spirit of any age. I’m at odds with everything and always have been! I have never belonged anywhere with anyone at any time!” (284). At this point, Armand smiles and replies that “this is the very spirit of your age” (284). Louis’s spirit of being at odds with everything and not belonging exemplifies Lyotard’s definition of the postmodern. Louis reflects the spirit of exploration and questioning of the preestablished rules and knowledge, while constantly re-defining the self.

### Conclusion

Arjun Appadurai writes that:

we are now accustomed to thinking about all societies as having produced their versions of art, myth, and legend, expressions that implied the potential evanescence of ordinary social life. In these expressions, all societies showed that they could both transcend and reframe ordinary social life by recourse to mythologies of various kinds. (5)

Although Appadurai speaks of modernity in the twentieth-century, this statement could easily relate to postmodernity, which blends a myriad of elements from the past, present, and future on a global scale across cultures in order to reconstruct the present. Contemporary readers can apply this definition of postmodernity to both Stoker's and Rice's works. Bram Stoker relies on folklore and legend to reframe the social life of Victorian England, while Anne Rice recreates mythology of the vampire in order to explore and reframe life in the twentieth-century. Both authors inform the postmodern society of the twenty-first century and provide a means of identification for those who may relate to the authors and their work.

Fred Botting writes that vampires in literature "offer mirrors of contemporary identity and sympathetic identification" (287). His statement, in relation to Appadurai's, implies that vampire novels in particular offer a postmodern reflection of society and provide readers a method of reframing

their own identities within the vampire mythological frame that was set up by Stoker and Rice. In Stoker's Dracula, for example, one may relate either to Mina or Dracula more easily than the other characters. The reader may identify with Mina, who is on a journey of awakening from the traditional patriarchal society, spurred on by her subconscious as a result of Dracula's influence. The reader may also identify with the titular character, Dracula, as the hunted Other. In Rice's novel, the reader may identify with the outcast vampire narrator who is on his own journey of self-discovery. The themes of post-colonialism and reverse imperialism, feminism, sexuality, and the power-play dynamics within society that are explored in Stoker's and Rice's works can also inform contemporary society and individuals of the universality of these themes across time and culture.

Stoker's and Rice's novels can be related to society and postmodern identity formation in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries through a combined examination of contemporary Gothic Studies and the Goth subculture. Sara Martin argues that Gothic Studies should be studied along with the current trend of the Goth subculture, stating that "both Goth youth subcultures and Gothic Studies are complex manifestations of the same post-modern resistance against the excessive rationalism of the first half of the twentieth-century" (41). In an effort to defy severe realism and rationalism, those participating in the Goth subculture in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries prefer sensation and emotion, including males who find an outlet for

their more feminine natures within the Goth subculture.

The androgyny of Rice's vampires informs, and is informed by, the androgyny that is displayed in the Goth youth subculture. In his study on the Goth youth subculture, Paul Hodkinson finds that "the display by males of certain behavioural characteristics and attitudes associated with femininity was also more common in the goth scene than most elements of society outside it" (54). One of the common traits of those within the Goth subculture is androgyny, with females sporting heavy, masculine boots and chain wallets, and males wearing dark make-up, jewelry, and even corsets. After interviewing one man within the Goth subculture in particular, who is by the interviewee's own description, "a skinny, weedy bloke who, like, is a bit emotional sometimes" (54), Hodkinson also finds that "a key appeal of the goth scene was that, in this distinctive cultural climate, his somewhat effeminate body became a positive, rather than a negative characteristic" (53). Male exhibition of stereotypically feminine traits, such as thin physiques and overtly emotional behaviors is a positive quality in the Goth subculture, as well as in contemporary Gothic literature.

Stoker and Rice explore and reframe the vampire myth as it applies to each of their societies. In the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries, society has taken the vampire myths of Stoker and Rice and incorporated them into the Goth identity. Sara Martin notes that "vampirism is also the central myth of the Gothic youth subcultures" (32). Indeed, a smaller group of Goths have

taken quite literally to the vampire myth. Hodkinson takes minor notice of these vampires, stating that:

among a somewhat smaller minority, particularly taken by the vampire theme, status-bestowing personal decorations also came to include fake fangs, coloured contact lenses and elaborate 'horror'-style make-up. Indeed, there was something of a loosely bounded subgroup, in which a direct emphasis on vampire fiction – via appearance, conversation, collections of literature and even role-playing games – was particularly noticeable. (46)

Unfortunately, Hodkinson does not elaborate further on the vampire subgroup of Goths. Forensic psychologist Katherine Ramsland, however, investigates vampires in her book, Piercing the Darkness: Undercover with Vampires in America Today. Ramsland traces the stories of several people who refer to themselves as real vampires and provides case studies of how these vampires interact within their own groups and within society at large.

The “real” vampires of the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries separate themselves into two separate groups: sanguine (or sang) vampires and psychic (or psy) vampires. Occasionally, a vampire will fall into both categories of sanguine and psychic. Sanguine vampires are the blood-drinkers, who often feed only within their close-knit groups for safety purposes. Safety is an obvious priority with the prevalence of serious blood-borne diseases, such as AIDS, and drug abuse. Psychic vampires feed off



the energy of other people, which can be taken from anyone at anytime.

Psychic vampires often prefer to take advantage of high-energy events, such as concerts or at nightclubs, or they may get their energy-fix from a willing donor in a more ritualistic manner.

Gothic Studies critics can argue that readers who identify with the Goth subculture may find within the texts of Stoker's and Rice's work characters with whom they can relate. They can find kindred spirits in the characters of Lucy, Mina, Claudia, and Louis, or even in Dracula, or Lestat. They may relate to Mina's, Lucy's, and Claudia's struggles against traditional female roles; or they may relate to Louis's androgyny and struggle against traditional male roles. They may even relate to Dracula, the hunted Other, or Lestat, who glorifies existence as a vampire. Readers, whether they identify with the Goth subculture or not, may also relate to the themes explored by Stoker and Rice, such as good and evil and whether such a bipolar differentiation even exists. It is also possible that readers may identify with a combination of all of these characters, applying the traits of each character that appeals to them. In their own search for identity in this globalized world, readers and literary critics may find in the works of Anne Rice and Bram Stoker a method of sorting out their own versions of myth and reality and how they place themselves and their ideals within that context. Based on the themes and characters explored by Stoker and Rice, future critics may further explore and develop the sociological and philosophical themes presented by the vampire

in literature.

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Appendix A:

Filmography

*Dracula*

Bram Stoker's Dracula. Dir. Francis Ford Coppola. Screenplay by James V.

Hart. Perf. Gary Oldman, Winona Ryder, Anthony Hopkins, and Keanu Reeves. USA. American Zoetrope and Columbia Pictures, 1992.

Dracula. Dir. John Badham. Screenplay by W. D. Richter. Perf. Frank Langella and Laurence Olivier. USA. Mirisch Corporation and Universal Pictures, 1979.

Dracula. Dir. Tod Browning. Written by John L. Balderston ... [et al.]. Perf. Bela Lugosi, Helen Chandler, and David Manners. USA. Universal Pictures, 1931. The soundtrack of this original release includes the works of Schubert, Tchaikovsky, and Wagner, which are uncredited. The film was re-released in 1999 with an original score written by Philip Glass and performed by the Kronos Quartet.

Dracula. Dir. Terence Fisher. Screenplay by Jimmy Sangster. Perf. Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee. UK. Hammer Film Productions, 1958. Also known in the United States as Horror of Dracula.

Dracula A.D. 1972. Dir. Alan Gibson. Written by Don Houghton. Perf. Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing. UK. Hammer Film Productions, 1972.

Dracula's Daughter. Dir. Lambert Hillyer. Perf. Gloria Holden. USA.

Universal Pictures, 1936.

Dracula Has Risen from the Grave. Dir. Freddie Francis. Screenplay by John Elder. Perf. Christopher Lee. UK. Hammer Film Productions, 1968.

Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens. Dir. F. W. Murnau. Screenplay by Henrik Galeen. Perf. Max Schreck. Germany. Jofa-Atelier Berlin-Johannisthal, 1922. Also known as Nosferatu, Symphony of Horror.

Nosferatu: Phantom der Nacht. Dir. and screenplay by Werner Herzog. Perf. Klaus Kinski, Isabelle Adjani, and Bruno Ganz. Germany. Werner Herzog Filmproduktion, 1979. Also known in the United States as Nosferatu the Vampire.

Shadow of the Vampire. Dir. E. Elias Merhige. Written by Steven Katz. Perf. Willem Dafoe and John Malkovich. UK. BBC Films, 2000.

Taste the Blood of Dracula. Dir. Peter Sasdy. Screenplay by John Elder. Perf. Christopher Lee. UK. Hammer Film Productions, 1969.

Wes Craven Presents Dracula 2000. Dir. Patrick Lussier. Screenplay by Joel Soisson. Perf. Jonny Lee Miller, Justine Waddell, Gerard Butler, and Christopher Plummer. USA. Carfax Productions, 2000.

*Interview with the Vampire*

Interview with the Vampire: the Vampire Chronicles. Dir. Neil Jordan. Novel and screenplay by Anne Rice. Perf. Tom Cruise, Brad Pitt, and Kirsten

Dunst. USA. Geffen Pictures, 1994.

Queen of the Damned. Dir. Michael Rymer. Screenplay by Scott Abbott and  
Michael Petroni. Perf. Aaliyah and Stuart Townsend. Warner  
Brothers, 2002.

Appendix B:

Resources

Googoth. A search engine that specializes in Gothic topics.

<http://www.googoth.com/>

International Gothic Association. An international academic organization founded in 1991, which sponsors the Gothic Studies journal.

<http://gothic.english.dal.ca/>

The Internet Movie Database. A database specializing in film production information. <http://www.imdb.com/>

The Literary Gothic. A Gothic literature resource, authored by Jack G. Voller of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville.

[http://www.litgothic.com/index\\_fl.html](http://www.litgothic.com/index_fl.html)

The Sickly Taper. An online bibliography dedicated to Gothic literature.

<http://www.pagedepot.com/thesicklytaper/>

Transylvanian Society of Dracula. <http://www.benecke.com/tsd.html>

Vita

Christina Marie Link was born in Clovis, New Mexico, on December 9, 1975, the daughter of Janet Marie and Joel Corwin Link. After completing her work at Judson High School in 1994, she studied English at the University of the Incarnate Word, earning her Bachelor of Arts degree in May, 1999. She has been working as the Assistant to the Cataloger at J.E. & L.E. Mabee Library at the University of the Incarnate Word since 2000. In April, 2001, Christina entered the graduate program in English at the University of the Incarnate Word.

Permanent address:      6662 Snow Meadow  
   Converse, Texas 78109

This thesis was typed by Christina M. Link.