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Cover Page Footnote

Shirley Ibach received her master's degree from Fredonia State University of New York in English Literature this year and her bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College in 2007. Her research areas include film and television studies and theater studies, as well as literature, and focus on issues pertaining to women's and gender studies.

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

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

--Virginia Woolf¹

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Beauties in *Dracula*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusion

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Dracula's Truth Claim and Its Consequences

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

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

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