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BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA AND THE GOTHIC TRADITION

BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA  
AND THE GOTHIC TRADITION

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## Introduction

Although in his time, Bram Stoker was a theatre critic, a civil servant, a newspaper editor, an author of novels and short stories and the business manager for the famous actor Sir Henry Irving, he is known today primarily as the creator of Dracula. The fame of this novel, one of the greatest works of horror fiction, has tended to eclipse both its author and his other writing. There is no question, however, that Dracula is Stoker's masterpiece. It is also the last great Gothic novel. Written over seventy years after the peak of the Gothic movement, Dracula is a revival of the style and form perfected by Ann Radcliffe, Matthew "Monk" Lewis and Charles Robert Maturin. Although the era of the Gothic novel had ended long before Stoker began his writing career, its influence can be seen clearly in his work and that of many of his contemporaries, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Robert Louis Stevenson.

In spite of the popularity of Dracula there has been relatively little critical work on Bram Stoker's writing and little attempt to see his work in its literary context.

What has been done has focussed on Dracula and has virtually ignored his other novels and stories. Although Harry Ludlam's A Biography of Dracula: The Life Story of Bram Stoker fills in the details of Stoker's life and various careers, it is unsatisfactory when it attempts to discuss his writing.<sup>1</sup> Ludlam passes quickly over Stoker's fiction by means of brief plot summaries and never adequately explains his method of writing or his sources. There is a strong sense in the biography that Ludlam has only a superficial knowledge of his subject. He certainly does not explain "the mysteries of Dracula"<sup>2</sup> as he claims to do in his introduction, nor does he "explore Stoker's uninhibited humour, rigid code of honour, facile mastery of the weird and curious underlying tenderness in all his works."<sup>3</sup> H. P. Lovecraft, Dorothy Scarborough, Edith Birkhead, and Les Daniels have included references to Stoker in their works on horror and terror literature and have tried to show his place, thematically within these genres. In his essay, Supernatural Horror in Literature, Lovecraft wrote that Stoker "created many starkly horrific

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<sup>1</sup>A new biography of Bram Stoker, written by Daniel Farson, has been published in England, but at the present time it is unavailable in Canada.

<sup>2</sup>Harry Ludlam, A Biography of Dracula: The Life Story of Bram Stoker (London, 1962), p.8.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

conceptions in a series of novels whose poor technique sadly mars their net effect."<sup>4</sup> In The Lair of the White Worm, Stoker, according to Lovecraft, "utterly ruins a magnificent idea by a development almost infantile."<sup>5</sup>

Although there is much justice in Lovecraft's criticism, there is a reason for Stoker's failure with The Lair of the White Worm. The novel was written during an illness from which Stoker never recovered; he died soon after the work was published. In Lovecraft's opinion, The Jewel of Seven Stars "is less crudely written"<sup>6</sup> and Dracula is "justly assigned a permanent place in English letters."<sup>7</sup>

In The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction, Dorothy Scarborough calls Dracula "the tensest, most dreadful modern story of vampirism."<sup>8</sup> Her commentary, however, betrays a mistaken impression of the novel. She writes that the "combination of ghouls, vampires, ghosts, werewolves, and other awful elements is almost unendurable."<sup>9</sup> While there

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<sup>4</sup>H.P. Lovecraft, Supernatural Horror in Literature (New York, 1973), p. 78.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>8</sup>Dorothy Scarborough, The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction (New York, 1967), p. 163.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 163.



are vampires in the work, there are no ghosts, ghouls or werewolves. Edith Birkhead in The Tale of Terror comments on the power of Dracula as a horror story. Her opinion is that no "one who has read the book will fail to remember the picture of Dracula climbing up the front of the castle in Transylvania, or the scene in the tomb when a stake is driven through the heart of the vampire who has taken possession of Lucy's form."<sup>10</sup> While she is enthusiastic about Stoker's novel, Birkhead, like Scarborough, is mistaken about what actually occurs. As Leonard Wolf points out in A Dream of Dracula, the Count is climbing down the castle wall, not up as Birkhead has it.<sup>11</sup> In Living in Fear, Les Daniels states that as an "irresistible combination of repression and mayhem, rife with sexual and religious symbolism, Dracula is probably the best out-and-out horror novel ever written."<sup>12</sup> Leonard Wolf's A Dream of Dracula is a fairly recent work which concentrates in some detail upon Stoker's chief creation. While Wolf describes some of the precursors of Stoker in the realms of Gothic romance and vampire literature,<sup>13</sup> his book is more one man's reaction to Dracula than a critical study of Stoker's fiction.

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<sup>10</sup>Edith Birkhead, The Tale of Terror (New York, 1920), p. 225.

<sup>11</sup>Leonard Wolf, A Dream of Dracula (Boston, 1972), p. 181.

<sup>12</sup>Les Daniels, Living in Fear (New York, 1975), p. 61-62.

<sup>13</sup>Leonard Wolf, A Dream of Dracula (Boston, 1972), p.143-170.

Wolf interprets Dracula in symbolic rather than Gothic terms. He writes that now "Dracula is fully visible as a visionary novel in the sense that Jung defined the term and in any case as a fiction whose allegorical power transcends the fairly narrow Christian work that Stoker made."<sup>14</sup> Leonard Wolf is also the editor of The Annotated Dracula, a work which bears witness to Wolf's obsession about vampirism and Stoker's novel.

In Dracula: A Biography of Vlad the Impaler 1431-1476 (1973) and In Search of Dracula (1972), Raymond T. McNally and Radu Florescu present their research on the life of Vlad Tepes, the Wallachian prince who was the original of Stoker's vampire. Although their main interest is with the historical Dracula, McNally and Florescu also comment upon his fictional counterpart and briefly outline the important works of Mary Shelley, John Polidori, Thomas Preskett Prest, and Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, a few of Stoker's predecessors in the realm of horror fiction. They cite as well some of the contemporary personalities and events which might have influenced Stoker's conception of Dracula; these include Sir Henry Irving, Sir Richard Burton, the Oscar Wilde Scandal, and Jack the Ripper's reign of terror in London.

There are, naturally enough, references to Stoker's

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 180.

Dracula in surveys of vampire legends and literature.

These works include Basil Copper's The Vampire: In Legend, Fact and Art (1973), Anthony Master's The Natural History of the Vampire (1972), Nancy Garden's Vampires (1973), The Dracula Myth by Gabriel Ronay (1975), and Vampires, Zombies and Monster Men (1976), by Stoker's great-nephew, Daniel Farson. Concerned only in a superficial manner with the novel, these writers concentrate on Stoker's use of vampire folklore. These works, however, usually offer generalizations rather than detailed research. Daniel Farson's comments are typical of this sort of writing; he states that "It was British author Bram Stoker, however, who finally took the many jumbled strands of the vampire legend and wove them into the classic Dracula, published in 1897. His mixture of fact and fiction has dominated our conception of a vampire ever since."<sup>15</sup>

Although the Gothic aspect of Dracula has been noted previously by Harry Ludlam in his biography of Bram Stoker, McNally and Florescu in their two works on Vlad Tepes, Leonard Wolf in A Dream of Dracula and The Annotated Dracula, and Margaret L. Carter in a preface to Varney the Vampire, it has not been examined in any detail. While

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<sup>15</sup>Daniel Farson, Vampires, Zombies and Monster Men (Garden City, 1976), p. 17.

Ludlam calls Dracula "the last of the great Gothic romances"<sup>16</sup> and summarizes some of the major Gothic novels, he really does not identify those qualities which make the novel Gothic. McNally and Florescu classify Dracula as a realistic horror story rather than a Gothic novel and demonstrate how the novel differs from the romances of Ann Radcliffe.<sup>17</sup> They point out that in traditional Gothic novels, the author takes a "rationalistic approach",<sup>18</sup> supernatural mysteries do not really exist, but are only an illusion. Margaret L. Carter, although more detailed in her discussion of the novel, limits her examination of the Gothic to the first section of the work, Jonathan Harker's visit to Transylvania and the castle of the vampire.<sup>19</sup> Leonard Wolf briefly points out some of the elements in Dracula which are recognizably Gothic.<sup>20</sup>

This thesis will examine the influence of the Gothic romance on the fiction of Bram Stoker. The thesis will focus primarily on Dracula, but will also refer to some of Stoker's other novels, The Jewel of Seven Stars, The Lady

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<sup>16</sup>Harry Ludlam, A Biography of Dracula: The Life Story of Bram Stoker (London, 1962), p. 179.

<sup>17</sup>R. Florescu and R. McNally, Dracula: A Biography of Vlad the Impaler 1431-1476 (New York 1973), p. 156-157.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 152.

<sup>19</sup>Margaret L. Carter, "A Preface from Polidori to Prest", Varney the Vampire (New York, 1970), p. xxxv.

<sup>20</sup>Leonard Wolf, A Dream of Dracula (Boston 1972), p. 180.

of the Shroud, The Lair of the White Worm, and four of his short stories, "Dracula's Guest", "The Judge's House", "The Burial of the Rats", and "The Secret of Growing Gold". The first chapter of the thesis will consider Stoker's debt to the Gothic tradition for his themes, settings and atmosphere. The second chapter will examine Stoker's use of Gothic prototypes for his major characters. In Dracula, The Lady of the Shroud, and "Dracula's Guest", Stoker combined elements of the Gothic tradition with legends and folklore about the vampire. The third chapter will explore the presentation of the vampire in the works of John Polidori, Thomas Preskett Prest, Joseph Seridan Le Fanu, and in the fiction of Bram Stoker.

## CHAPTER ONE

Although it is not possible here to relate the history of the Gothic movement in English literature, it is necessary to define what is meant by the term "Gothic" in order to examine its influence in Bram Stoker's work. The Gothic movement, it has often been stated, began with Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto in 1764.<sup>1</sup> The author claimed that the novel was inspired by his dream of "a gigantic hand in armour"<sup>2</sup> on a staircase in an old castle. An assertion that a work was dream-inspired itself became part of the Gothic tradition. Later Mary Shelley, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Bram Stoker were to state that Frankenstein, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and Dracula had their origin in dreams.<sup>3</sup> The Castle of Otranto was one of the first works to bring together the elements that were to be basic to the Gothic mode: a mysterious castle, supernatural events, and those

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<sup>1</sup>Devendra P. Varma, The Gothic Flame (London, 1957), p. 41.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted by Mario Praz, "Introductory Essay," Three Gothic Novels (Harmondsworth, 1972), p. 88-89.

<sup>3</sup>Harry Ludlam, A Biography of Dracula: The Life Story of Bram Stoker (London, 1962), p. 99.

now-familiar characters, the beautiful and threatened heroine, the virtuous and brave hero, and the villain with a dark secret in his past. Although it was widely read, it did not start a new genre of literature immediately. Walpole's work was "corrected" by Clara Reeve in The Old English Baron: A Gothic Story published in 1778. Mrs. Reeve toned down the horrific and the supernatural features of The Castle of Otranto and introduced the element of sensibility into her characterization.<sup>4</sup> While Mrs. Reeve's work has a laudable moral purpose, her good intentions cannot prevent the work from being both predictable and dull.

The author whose work provides the finest expression of Gothicism and who is the most readily identified with the genre is Ann Radcliffe.<sup>5</sup> Far more sophisticated than her predecessors in technique, she set the pattern for the Gothic romance for succeeding authors. In Radcliffe's work, the heroine and the villain were promoted to roles of equal importance and the heroine's sensibility, her reactions to her situation, the other characters, and the landscape, became the focus of interest. Radcliffe, justifiably called "the poet of apprehension",<sup>6</sup> provided the suggestion of evil,

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<sup>4</sup>Ernest A. Baker, The History of the English Novel: The Novel of Sentiment and the Gothic Romance V, (London, 1934), p. 179-180.

<sup>5</sup>Eino Railo, The Haunted Castle (New York, 1964), p. 4-5.

<sup>6</sup>J.M.S. Tompkins, The Popular Novel In England 1770-1800 (London, 1932), p. 258.

rather than an elaborate description of it. She concentrated on "the interval during which the menace takes shape and the mind of the victim is reluctantly shaken by its impudence."<sup>7</sup> The following passage from The Mysteries of Udolpho is a typical example of Radcliffean suspense.

Emily, lost in the winding corridors of the castle, hears

a low moaning at no great distance, and having paused a moment, she heard it again and distinctly. Several doors appeared on the right hand of the passage. She advanced and listened. When she came to the second, she heard a voice, apparently in complaint, within, to which she continued to listen, afraid to open the door, and unwilling to leave it. Convulsive sobs followed, and then the piercing accents of an agonizing spirit burst forth. Emily stood appalled, and looked through the gloom that surrounded her, in fearful expectation.<sup>8</sup>

Although the conclusions of her novels explained the eerie events rationally, Mrs. Radcliffe was careful to keep her readers "on the edge of their seats" through the use of false alarms and apparently unearthly happenings. The decaying corpse which Emily finds behind the black veil at Udolpho and which causes great fear turns out to be a wax figure which a proud ancestor was forced to contemplate as penance.

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 258.

<sup>8</sup>Ann Radcliffe, The Novels (New York, 1974), p. 339.



While there were many imitators of Ann Radcliffe's Gothic style, several writers expanded the genre by combining new elements with those established by Walpole, Clara Reeve, and Ann Radcliffe. These authors include Matthew Lewis, whose novel The Monk appeared in 1795, Mary Shelley, who published her Frankenstein in 1818, John Polidori, whose work "The Vampyre" appeared in 1819, and Charles Robert Maturin who published Melmoth the Wanderer in 1820. Not everyone, however, was able to take the new genre seriously. The prevailing taste for Gothic literature also inspired several parodies of which the most notable is Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey, published in 1818, but written around 1798.<sup>9</sup> The genre did not die out completely after its peak period. The tradition continued, but without the impetus and imaginative power which characterized the earlier works. Several Victorian authors revitalized the characters, style, and basic situations of the Gothic romance in later works. Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's Uncle Silas is the tale of a beautiful young heiress whose life and fortune are menaced by an evil guardian and a sinister French governess. The foreign villain, the innocent heroine, and the persecution and imprisonment themes in Wilkie Collins' The Woman in White also owe much

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<sup>9</sup>Ernest A. Baker, The History of the English Novel: The Novel of Sentiment and the Gothic Romance V (London, 1934), p. 225.

to the Gothic tradition.

The term "Gothic" is, perhaps, a misnomer for the genre of literature which it denotes. Originally, it was an epithet which a later age gave to the art and architecture of the Middle Ages.<sup>10</sup> The novels of Walpole and Reeve were set in the past and were supposed to represent the manners and customs of an earlier and, therefore, less civilized age. However, the medieval setting of the early Gothic romances was replaced by any suitably remote period in later works. "Gothic" was soon used to indicate, not the period of the novel, but its style and themes.

Thematically, the Gothic novel deals with the conflict of good and evil. In the novels of Ann Radcliffe, "Monk" Lewis, and Charles Robert Maturin, the virtuous characters are endangered by evil, but with faith, wisdom, and endurance manage to triumph over their oppressors. While this theme is not exclusive to Gothic fiction, it is treated in a special manner by Gothic romance writers. In their attempts to destroy virtue and innocence, the villains employ a variety of techniques. Some villains, like Melmoth and Ambrósio, enlist the aid of diabolic forces to ensure their success, while others, like Radcliffe's

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<sup>10</sup>Clara McIntyre, "Were the 'Gothic Novels' Gothic?", PMLA, XXXVI (1929), 645-646.

Montoni and Schedoni, are first class stage managers and arrange a series of apparently supernatural events which can be explained rationally. This elemental struggle between good and evil is also found in the novels and short stories of Bram Stoker. In The Lady of the Shroud, a small Balkan country is in danger of being invaded by the Turkish army. An unseen threat from a dead Egyptian queen hangs over the heroine of The Jewel of Seven Stars and a primeval "wurm" that has survived into the nineteenth century provides the menace in The Lair of the White Worm. In "The Judge's House", "The Secret of the Growing Gold"; and "The Burial of the Rats", evil has human embodiments, a malevolent judge, a vengeful woman who returns from "the dead", and a sinister group of rag-pickers. In Anatomy of Criticism, Northrop Frye analyzed the nature of the struggle between the hero and the villain of romance:

The central form of romance is dialectical: everything is focussed on a conflict between the hero and his enemy, and all the reader's values are bound up with the hero. Hence the hero of romance is analogous to the mythical Messiah or deliverer who comes from an upper world, and his enemy is analogous to the demonic powers of a lower world."<sup>11</sup>

This definition is, by and large, applicable to the fiction of Bram Stoker, but particularly to Dracula; the good

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<sup>11</sup>Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton, 1957), p.187.

characters must combat the evil which threatens them personally and their society as a whole. The struggle is made even more difficult by the human frailties of the champions of good. Dracula's corruption of Lucy demonstrates the vulnerability of unprotected innocence. When Jonathan Harker returns to England, he tries to forget his experiences in Transylvania. Ignorance, however, like innocence, is no defense against danger and Harker, in time, realizes that he must share his knowledge of the Count with others in order to defeat him. Stoker makes it clear that virtue needs the aid of wisdom and experience to cope properly with its enemy, evil. In the novel, wisdom is embodied by Van Helsing, experience by the young heroes, particularly Quincey Morris and Jonathan Harker, and virtue by Mina Harker. According to Van Helsing, Mina is

one of God's women fashioned by His own hand to show us men and other women that there is a heaven which we can enter and that its light can be here on earth. So true, so sweet, so noble, so little an egoist--and that, let me tell you, is much in this age, so sceptical and selfish.<sup>12</sup>

As Mina's role is suggestive of divine goodness and of man's chance for salvation, Dracula's attempt to pervert

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<sup>12</sup>Bram Stoker, Dracula (London, 1974), p. 170. All further quotations from Dracula are from this edition and will be noted by page number in parenthesis after the quotation.

her becomes particularly diabolic.

The virtuous characters in Dracula, like those of Gothic romance, have the power of love on their side. This is what sustains them when in distress and helps them to overcome the obstacles which the villains place in their way. In The Castle of Otranto, there is this interchange between hero and villain:

The injustice of which thou art guilty towards me, said Theodore, convinces me that I have done a good deed in delivering the princess from thy tyranny. May she be happy, whatever becomes of me--This is a lover, cried Manfred in a rage: a peasant within sight of death is not animated by such sentiments.<sup>13</sup>

In Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer, Immalee is comforted in her loneliness by the thought of Melmoth:

I lived but in the light of his presence-- why should I not die when that light is withdrawn? Anger of the clouds what have I to fear from you? You may scorch me to dust, as I have seen you scorch the branches of the eternal trees--but the trunk still remained and my heart will still be his for ever.<sup>14</sup>

In Dracula, the power of love manifests itself in self-sacrifice; Mina, after she has been attacked by Dracula, makes the men swear to destroy her if she ever becomes a

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<sup>13</sup>Horace Walpole, The Castle of Otranto in Three Gothic Novels, ed. Mario Praz (Harmondsworth, 1972), p. 88-89.

<sup>14</sup>Charles Robert Maturin, Melmoth the Wanderer (London, 1968), p. 315.

danger to them, Quincy Morris lays down his life in order to save Mina, and even Renfield attempts to defend Mina from the attacks of the Count and is killed as a consequence. The redemptive force of love is contrasted to the destructive sexuality of the vampires. On this level, Dracula suggests a conflict between sacred and profane love for the souls of men. Lucy Westenra, in her roles as innocent maiden and lustful vampire, illustrates both sides of the struggle. Although tainted by the Count's sexuality, Lucy's soul can be reclaimed by Arthur Holmwood, the man who loves her in a pure and disinterested manner.

Although the central theme of Dracula is the battle for supremacy between good and evil common to Gothic romance, the weapons with which Stoker's heroes conduct their fight represent an innovation. Unlike the heroes of standard Gothicism who had to rely upon their own wits, virtue and courage, the "good" characters of Dracula have all the resources of nineteenth-century technology at their command, telegrams, a dictaphone, Winchester rifles, a steam launch, and blood-transfusions. The heroes of Stoker's other novels also make use of "modern" equipment to combat evil. In The Lady of the Shroud, for example, the hero rescues the heroine and her father with the help of bullet-proof clothes, and armoured yacht, and an airplane.

Stoker incorporated other traditional Gothic themes in Dracula; imprisonment, persecution, and tyranny.<sup>15</sup> The opening section of the novel, Jonathan Harker's visit to Castle Dracula, is a retelling of the central episode of Ann Radcliffe's The Mysteries of Udolpho and embraces all three of these secondary themes. Harker, like Emily, finds himself imprisoned in a strange castle and menaced by an autocratic villain. In each case, there is a direct sexual threat to the prisoner; Emily is pursued by Count Morano and Montoni's brigands, while Harker is stalked by the three "brides" of Dracula. Neither Montoni nor Dracula is interested in his "guests" except as the means to an end. Montoni has designs on Emily's money, not on the girl herself, and Dracula makes use of Harker in order to get to England. Both Harker and Emily make horrible discoveries during their enforced sojourns at Castle Dracula and Udolpho. Emily comes across a trail of blood, a corpse, and the gruesome wax effigy behind the black veil and Harker finds Dracula resting in his coffin after an attack which has renewed the vampire and given him a more youthful appearance. In England, Dracula turns his attention to Lucy and Mina. This persecution is motivated by far more sinister reasons than the mercenary or sexual ones of the traditional Gothic villains. Stoker's villain

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<sup>15</sup> J.M.S. Tompkins, The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800 (London, 1932), p. 268-269.

preys on the two heroines as a matter of survival; as a vampire he needs new victims and fresh blood in order to prolong his life. Vampirism itself can be seen as a type of imprisonment because the soul of a vampire is trapped in limbo between life and death. According to Van Helsing, the virtuous characters should feel compassion even for Dracula because he is himself a prisoner of his condition. The Doctor says,

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 worse 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. (p. 275)

While some of the Gothic villains, Manfred, Ambrosio, Melmoth, and Frankenstein's monster, are seen, to some extent, in a sympathetic light as victims of circumstances, Stoker carefully avoids this in his creation of Dracula. The reader is given little chance to sympathize with the Count. There is, despite Van Helsing's statement, little consideration given to the fact that Dracula once must have been a victim himself; he is an actively evil force which must be destroyed.

Stoker's borrowing from the Gothic tradition is most obvious treatment of setting. The locales of the novel, the castle, the abbey, the neglected country house, the



crypt, and the asylum, had been the favorite settings for many previous authors. Although Stoker did research on the landscape of Hungary, his Transylvania and his Land of the Blue Mountains in The Lady of the Shroud are comparable to Ann Radcliffe's France and Italy and Matthew Lewis' Spain; they are countries imagined rather than actually described. Transylvania, like other foreign countries in Gothic romances, is a mysterious place where anything is possible and the usual conventions and logic do not apply. The foreign setting brings out the fears and anxieties of the character displaced in it. Jonathan Harker's calm gradually evaporates as he travels <sup>more</sup> ~~deeply~~ into the unknown reaches of Transylvania. The Count tells Harker, "We are in Transylvania; and Transylvania is not England. Our ways are not your ways, and there shall be to you many strange things..." (p. 26) Harker's arrival at the castle is based directly upon a Gothic prototype as the following excerpts illustrate. Jonathan Harker describes the end of his journey:

The time seemed interminable as we swept on our way, now in almost complete darkness, for the rolling clouds obscured the moon. We kept on ascending with occasional periods of quick ascent, but in the main always ascending. Suddenly I became conscious of the fact that the driver was in the act of pulling up the horses in the courtyard of a vast ruined castle, from whose tall black windows came no ray of light, and whose broken battlements showed a jagged line against the moonlit sky. (p. 20)

This is the approach to Montoni's castle in The Mysteries of Udolpho:

The sun had just sunk below the tops of the mountains she was descending, whose long shadow stretched athwart the valley, but his sloping rays, shooting through an opening of the cliffs...streamed in full splendour upon the towers and battlements of a castle that spread its extensive ramparts along the brow of a precipice above. The splendour of these illuminated objects was heightened by the contrasted shade which involved the valley below. There, said Montoni, speaking for the first time in several hours, is Udolpho.<sup>16</sup>

Castle Dracula is a "haunted castle"<sup>17</sup> in the tradition of Otranto, Udolpho, and the others. It appears to consist almost entirely of long, dark passageways, dusty rooms filled with old and decaying furniture, and locked doors. The landscape which surrounds the castle aids in the imprisonment of the persecuted victim; looking out of a window Harker sees that as "far as the eye can reach is a sea of green tree tops with occasionally a deep rift where there is a chasm" (p. 31). Escape is hazardous because of the surrounding forest and the position of the castle upon a high cliff. After Dracula, Stoker used the customary depiction of the Gothic castle for Vissarion in

<sup>16</sup>Ann Radcliffe, The Novels (New York, 1974), p. 325.

<sup>17</sup>Eino Railo, The Haunted Castle (New York, 1964), p. 7.

The Lady of the Shroud and Castra Regis in The Lair of the White Worm. These later versions do not add any innovations to the traditional description, but are, in fact, inferior reworkings of Castle Dracula.

The Carfax estate, Seward's lunatic asylum and Whitby Abbey are not described in the same detail as the castle, but they are also evocative of the Gothic romance genre which lies behind so much of the novel. The ruined abbey at Whitby is not a very important setting in Dracula, but it does serve as a reminder of the corrupt monasteries and convents which were an essential part of the novels of Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis, and Charles Robert Maturin. Mina describes the abbey as "a most noble ruin, of immense size, and full of beautiful and romantic bits; there is a legend that a white lady is seen in one of the windows". (p. 62) The lunatic asylum had been used in Gothic romances as a place of imprisonment for the persecuted hero or heroine. It has this function in Melmoth the Wanderer and The Woman in White. In Dracula, however, the asylum provides an appropriate background to Seward's speculations about sanity, madness, and vampirism. The building does suggest some of its traditional menace when Seward comments upon "the grim sternness" of the asylum "with its wealth of breathing misery" (p. 109). In Gothic novels which are set in England, the isolated country house

often becomes a substitute for the mysterious castle. This is the case in Le Fanu's Uncle Silas, Collins' The Woman in White, and Stoker's Dracula. Bartram-Haigh, the house to which the heroine, Maud Ruthyn, is brought in Le Fanu's novel, has "a forlorn character of desertion and decay, contrasting almost awfully with the grandeur of its proportions and richness of its architecture."<sup>18</sup> Marian Halcombe describes the landscape which surrounds Blackwater Park, the country house in The Woman in White:

Far and near, the view suggested the same dreary impressions of solitude and decay; and the glorious brightness of the summer sky overhead, seemed only to deepen and harden the gloom and barrenness of the wilderness on which it shone.<sup>19</sup>

The Carfax estate, Count Dracula's English home, is described by Jonathan Harker:

The house is very large and of all periods back, I should say, to medieval times, for one part is of stone immensely thick, with only a few windows high up and heavily barred with iron. It looks like part of a keep, and is close to an old chapel or church. (p. 28)

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<sup>18</sup> Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, Uncle Silas (London, 1947), p. 222.

<sup>19</sup> W. Wilkie Collins, The Woman in White (London, 1975), p. 184.

When the men break into the house to destroy Dracula's earth-boxes, Harker notices the odour of evil which infests the air. He says, "It was not alone that it was composed of all the ills of mortality and with the pungent, acrid smell of blood, but it seemed as though corruption had become itself corrupt" (p. 225) The old country house was one of Stoker's favourite settings. It reappears, with slight variations, in The Jewel of Seven Stars, The Lair of the White Worm, "The Judge's House", and "The Secret of the Growing Gold".

Another important setting, considering the nature of the Count and the infection which he spreads, is the tomb in the graveyard or the crypt. Previously, this had been an important setting in The Monk, where amid "graves, and tombs, and skeletons"<sup>20</sup> Ambrosio rapes and then murders Antonia, in Varney the Vampire, and in "Carmilla". It also adds to the eerie atmosphere of Uncle Silas; the heroine is aware that the wind which blows her way comes from the family mausoleum. She says, "I saw all the trees bend that way this evening. That way stands the great lonely wood, where my darling father and mother lie. Oh, how dreadful on nights like this, to think of them--a vault! --damp, and dark and solitary--under the storm."<sup>21</sup> In

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<sup>20</sup>Matthew Lewis, The Monk (New York, 1959), p. 366.

<sup>21</sup>Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, Uncle Silas (New York, 1947), p.182.

Dracula, crypts and graveyards are a suitable backdrop for several grim disclosures; Dracula in his coffin, the empty Westenra tomb, and the Undead Lucy preying on small children. The crypt of an old church is also an important setting in The Lady of the Shroud. It is there, in a scene comparable to that of Jonathan Harker in the chapel of Castle Dracula or Van Helsing and Seward in the Westenra tomb, that Rupert finds Teuta lying in her coffin and has his suspicions about her true nature apparently confirmed.

As well as his effective use of setting, Dracula also demonstrates Stoker's ability to create and to sustain atmosphere. This is an essential element in Gothic romance, as J. M. S. Tompkins points out in The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800. She writes that "nothing very terrible happens at Udolpho after all; there are brawls, a soldier is killed, and an old woman is worried into her grave by a harsh and selfish husband; but these things, in the shadow of that Gothic masonry, half-lit by those perpetually failing lamps, acquire a monstrous hue."<sup>22</sup> Again, Stoker drew on the Gothic tradition for his material. The eerie atmosphere of Transylvania is generated by

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<sup>22</sup>J.M.S. Tompkins, The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800 (London, 1932), p. 253-254.

traditional effects: mysterious nocturnal sounds, an apparently inexhaustible supply of romantic moonlight, and a warning chorus of fearful, superstitious peasants. The "ghostly" music which was a favourite device of Ann Radcliffe is replaced in Dracula by the music of "the children of the night", wolves (p. 24). Significantly, at Castle Dracula, day and night are reversed. To carry out his business, Jonathan Harker finds that he must share the Count's nocturnal existence and, like his host, retire to bed at dawn. In Dracula, as in Gothic romance, night plays an important role. It is traditionally at night that the forces of evil are most powerful. Accordingly, it is at night that the villains seem to be most active; the illicit maneuvers of Montoni, Schedoni, Melmoth, and Ambrosio take place under the cover of darkness. Stoker follows pattern for his evil characters in Dracula. Although the Count can appear during the day, for the most part, he and the other vampires operate at night. At the beginning of his visit to Dracula's castle, Jonathan Harker is aware only of a vague sense of fear and anxiety, but he cannot uncover the source of his feeling. He writes in his diary, "there is something so strange about this place and all in it that I cannot but feel uneasy. I wish I were safe out of it, or that I had never come. It may be that this strange night-existence is telling on me; but would that were all!" (p. 30) ¶ The nightmarish

quality of life at Castle Dracula is clearly Gothic in origin. In The Mysteries of Udolpho, Emily's stay at Montoni's castle "appeared like the dream of a distempered imagination, or like one of those frightful fictions in which the wild genius of the poets sometimes delighted. Reflection brought only regret, and anticipation terror."<sup>23</sup> The English section of the novel establishes an atmosphere of calm after the crescendo of tension and horror in the first part. The aura of normality is gradually eroded, however, by Mina's anxiety about Jonathan, Mr. Swale's talk about death, and Lucy's return to her old habit of sleepwalking. Despite the atmosphere of enlightened rationality in England, Mina's allusions to two of the legends of Whitby, the White Lady and the bells at sea, prove that there is still a residue of superstition left over from an earlier age. These reminders of the supernatural world alert the reader to the possibility of further uncanny events. In spite of Seward's "it cannot happen here" attitude toward vampirism, England is not immune to the danger. The approach of Dracula is signalled by several strange events: Lucy becomes more determined to get outside while sleepwalking, Mr. Swale's "smells" death in the air, and Mina notices a "brool" or low sound over the sea which is like "some presage of doom" (p. 71).

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<sup>23</sup>Ann Radcliffe, The Novels (New York, 1974), p. 357.



¶ The storm which brings Dracula to England recalls the storm in Melmoth the Wanderer and Varney the Vampire and other Gothic novels. These storms are used as background for unearthly events such as the wedding of Melmoth and Immalee in Melmoth the Wanderer, Varney's attack on Flora Bannerworth, in Varney the Vampire, and the appearance of the Bleeding Nun at the Castle of Lindenberg in The Monk. The storm in Dracula is a Victorian parallel to the "sublime" natural scenes which are a major characteristic of Radcliffean Gothic. Stoker describes the ominous turmoil in nature which heralds the arrival of Dracula:

Some of the scenes thus revealed were of immeasurable grandeur and of absorbing interest--the sea, running mountains high, threw skyward with each wave mighty masses of white foam, which the tempest seemed to snatch at and whirl away into space; here and there a fishing boat with a rag of sail running madly for shelter before the blast; now and again the white wings of a storm-tossed sea bird (p. 75).

There is a comparable storm scene in A Sicilian Romance:

The darkness was interrupted only at intervals, by the broad expanse of vivid lightnings which quivered upon the waters, and disclosing the horrible gaspings of the waves, served to render the succeeding darkness more awful. The thunder which burst in tremendous crashes above, the loud roar of the waves below, the noise of the sailors, and the sudden cracks and groanings of the vessel, conspired to heighten the tremendous sublimity of the scene.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Ann Radcliffe, The Novels (New York, 1974), p. 57.

¶ The storm in Dracula is presented primarily for the atmospheric effect, but it also functions as an indication of the approaching evil. Stoker was not interested, as Radcliffe was, in using the landscape as a key to the emotional states of the characters. While in Transylvania, Jonathan Harker finds comfort in looking at a moonlit landscape, but he is not inspired, as Radcliffe's heroines consistently are, to write poetry. Scenes and descriptions of nature are ~~neither~~<sup>not</sup> as elaborate in the novels of Ann Radcliffe. On occasion, Stoker uses atmosphere for a symbolic purpose. The redemption of Lucy's soul from the realm of the Undead is mirrored by a significant change in the natural world:

Outside the air was sweet, the sun shone, and the birds sang, and it seemed as if all nature were tuned to a different pitch. There was gladness and mirth and peace everywhere, for we were at rest ourselves on one account, and we were glad, though it was with a tempered joy. (p. 196)

After Dracula's "death" even Transylvania is changed. When the Harkers visit the area nearly two years after the destruction of the Count, they find that it "was almost impossible to believe that the things which we had seen with our own eyes and heard with our own ears were living truths. Every trace of all that had been was blotted out." (p. 336) After evil has been defeated, the natural world is restored to some semblance of its original

pure state. This transformation of the landscape underscores the romance-quest aspect of the novel and the heroes' roles as Messianic deliverers, mentioned previously in this chapter. As the heroes pursue the Count back to his castle, Van Helsing notes that they are "moving into a more and more wild and desert land" (p. 324). Transylvania, therefore, could be interpreted as a wasteland which is redeemed by the heroes' destruction of Dracula.<sup>25</sup>

Stoker's treatment of theme, setting, and atmosphere follow the traditional models laid down by Radcliffe, Lewis, Maturin, and the others fairly closely. Of all Stoker's novels, The Lady of the Shroud is the most faithful to the Radcliffean prototype; the supernatural events of the work are, at the conclusion, given a rational, if not particularly plausible, solution. Stoker's true innovations concern the subject of vampirism and will be discussed in a later chapter.

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<sup>25</sup>Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton, 1957), p. 189.

## CHAPTER TWO

The major characters in Stoker's fiction are patterned on the prototypes established earlier by Gothic novelists. Stoker worked variations on the traditional types of the persecuted maiden, the stalwart young hero, and the diabolic villain. This reliance on conventional character-types reveals one of Stoker's limitations as a writer.

The young heroes of Stoker's novels and short stories, like previous Gothic heroes, are sterling examples of the ideal male. It has been remarked that it is extremely difficult to make virtue exciting or even interesting. As Eino Railo states in The Haunted Castle, "Virtue is boring, insipid, unromantic; sin is fascinating, variegated and romantic."<sup>1</sup> Stoker's characters, unfortunately, are no exceptions to this rule. His young heroes, Rupert St. Leger in The Lady of the Shroud, Malcolm Ross in The Jewel of Seven Stars, Adam Salton in The Lair of the White Worm, and the four men in Dracula, have all the standard virtues, ~~novices~~, and all the depth of character of cardboard figures. In this aspect, Stoker is really

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<sup>1</sup>Eino Railo, The Haunted Castle (New York, 1964), p. 283.

no different from any other Gothic romance writer. In his discussion of the romance genre in Anatomy of Criticism, Northrop Frye states,

The characterization of romance follows its general dialectic structure which means that subtlety and complexity are not much favored. Characters tend to be either for or against the quest. If they assist it they are idealized as simply gallant or pure; if they obstruct it they are caricatured as simply villainous or cowardly.<sup>2</sup>

It is the predicament of the Gothic hero which engages the reader's attention rather than his personality. This treatment of the hero originates in The Castle of Otranto and Walpole's presentation of Theodore, who is imprisoned and condemned to death by the evil Manfred. Theodore, in spite of his situation, remains the pattern of manly virtues and, therefore, a one-dimensional character. Told that he does not have many minutes for confession before his execution, Theodore retains his equanimity:

Nor do I ask many, my lord, said the unhappy young man. My sins, thank heaven! have not been numerous; nor exceed what might be expected at my years. Dry your tears, good father, and let us dispatch: this is a bad world; nor have I had cause to leave it with regret.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton, 1957), p.195.

<sup>3</sup>Horace Walpole, The Castle of Otranto in Three Gothic Novels, ed. Peter Fairclough (Harmondsworth, 1972), p. 90.

Although Stoker's heroes lack the bravado of their earlier Gothic brothers, the majority of them are endowed by their author with a near-fatal curiosity. The young Englishman in "The Burial of the Rats", lured by his curiosity into the lesser-known suburbs of Paris, is menaced and almost murdered by tramps and rag-pickers. Malcolm Malcolmson, intrigued by its solitude, rents "The Judge's House" and comes to a frightening end there. The basic situation in these two short stories, the growing fears and gradual realization of danger of a young man alone in strange surroundings, recurs in The Lady of the Shroud, "Dracula's Guest", and the opening section of Dracula. In all of these works except "The Judge's House", the helplessness of the hero is compounded by his <sup>being</sup> isolated in a foreign country. The archetype for this feature is found in The Mysteries of Udolpho; the heroine, Emily, is taken from the security of her home in France and brought into Italy and to the castle of Udolpho, far from her relatives and friends.

While the attitude which Stoker's young men have toward women can be traced back to the devotion which the Gothic hero showed the heroine, it has a clearer link to Stoker's own personality. According to the Ludlam biography, Stoker admired America's reverence for its women: "'One of the most marked characteristics of American life is the

high regard in which woman is held,' he gladly noted. 'Everywhere there is the greatest deference, everywhere a protective spirit. Such a thing as a woman suffering molestation or affront, save at the hands of the criminal classes is almost unknown.'<sup>4</sup> This "protective spirit" is one of the major characteristics of the Stoker hero. In Dracula, the task of saving Mina is undertaken in the manner of a sacred quest:

Then without a word we all knelt down together, and all holding hands, swore to be true to each other. We men pledged ourselves to raise the veil of sorrow from the head of her whom, each in his own way, we loved; and we prayed for help, and guidance in the terrible task which lay before us (p. 265).

In the same spirit, Rupert St. Leger vows to rescue Teuta, the Lady of the Shroud:

Dead she may be, or Un-dead--a Vampire with one foot in Hell and one on earth. But I love her; and come what may, here or hereafter, she is mine. As my mate we shall fare along together, whatsoever the end may be or wheresoever our path may lead. If she is indeed to be won from the nethermost Hell, then mine be the task.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Harry Ludlam, A Biography of Dracula: The Life Story of Bram Stoker (London, 1962), p. 70.

<sup>5</sup>Bram Stoker, The Lady of the Shroud, (London, 1966), p. 115.

The unnamed hero of "The Burial of the Rats", exiled from his beloved for a year as a trial of affection, is continually afraid that some accident will prevent his return to her and will cause her anguish. It is the thought of her which spurs his endeavours to elude his pursuers.

The heroes of romance reflect the virtues admired in their author's period. Although Mrs. Radcliffe set her novels in an age at least two centuries previous to her own, her heroes display the Romantic sensibility of her time. In the same way, Stoker's heroes show the behaviour proper to a late-nineteenth century gentleman. As they are late Victorian creations, the young men of Stoker's fiction are denied the emotional outbursts of tears and wrath which marked Mrs. Radcliffe's heroes. This is Valancourt's reaction to Emily's rejection of his love in The Mysteries of Udolpho:

He was silent a moment, as if overwhelmed by the consciousness of no longer deserving this esteem, as well as the certainty of having lost it; and then with impassioned grief, lamented the criminality of his late conduct, and the misery to which it had reduced him, till, overcome by a recollection of the past, and a conviction of the future, he burst into tears and uttered only deep and broken sighs.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Ann Radcliffe, The Novels (New York, 1974), p. 455.



John Seward's <sup>reaction</sup> to Lucy's rejection of his proposal is very different. As Lucy tells Mina, Seward "looked very strong and very grave as he took both my hands in his and said he hoped I would be happy, and that if I ever wanted a friend I must count him one of my best" (p. 57). The only time that a young Stoker hero bursts into tears is when, in Dracula, Arthur Holmwood breaks down under the double loss of his father and his fiancée.

There are four men who fit into the young-hero category in Dracula: Jonathan Harker, Dr. John Seward, Arthur Holmwood, and Quincey Morris. They are, to all intents and purposes, practically indistinguishable from each other in terms of character, although Stoker does make an attempt to differentiate them. Each is given one specific trait to set him off from the others, but this does not really help the reader to keep the four men separate in his mind. Quincey Morris is an American and the most memorable of the group if only for Stoker's improbable version of American slang. The proposal to Lucy Westenra is typical of his speech:

Miss Lucy, I know I ain't good enough to regulate the fixin's of your little shoes, but I guess if you wait till you find a man that is you will go to join them seven young women with the lamps when you quit. Won't you just hitch up alongside of me and let us go down the long road together driving in double harness?(p. 58).

Arthur Holmwood's main characteristic is that he is wealthy; he finances the trip to Transylvania in pursuit of Dracula. At best, Arthur Holmwood is a fairly vague character in the novel. Dr. Seward functions as the voice of reason and common sense confronted by foreign superstition. Despite Van Helsing's explanations, Seward remains unconvinced about vampirism until he sees the Undead Lucy with his own eyes. Like another Stoker hero, Rupert in The Lady of the Shroud, Seward finds an antidote to his problems, emotional and vampiric, in work. These three men function less as individuals than as a group with a united purpose. All three propose to Lucy Westenra, are disappointed in love, and vow to avenge her death by destroying Dracula. Along with Van Helsing, the three give their blood to Lucy in an attempt to save her. Although Seward and Holmwood are heart-broken at Lucy's death, they both recover sufficiently to find consolation with another woman by the conclusion of the novel. This feature has its origin in The Castle of Otranto with the marriage of Theodore and Isabella and in The Monk with the union of Lorenzo and Virginia. In both novels, the young hero finds happiness with another woman after the death of his first love.

Jonathan Harker is, initially, the most important of the four young heroes because it is with him that, in the

opening of the novel, the reader travels into Transylvania. Harker is a hero without an heroic appearance. After reading Harker's journal, Seward comments that Jonathan is "uncommonly clever, if one can judge from his face, and full of energy...I was prepared to meet a good specimen of manhood, but hardly the quiet, business-like gentleman who came here today" (p. 202). As an innocent who becomes embroiled in the plots of the villain, Harker is a direct descendent of Vivaldi in Radcliffe's The Italian and Aubrey in Polidori's "The Vampyre". Through his diary, Harker reveals himself as an ordinary young man, curious about foreign customs, but not willing to accept anything which his own rational mind denies. In "Dracula's Guest", a chapter which Stoker excised from Dracula, there is this exchange between Harker and the coachman who warns him of the dangers of Walpurgis Night:

Finally, in an agony of desperation, he cried, "Walpurgis Nacht!" and pointed to the carriage for me to get in. All my English blood rose at this and, standing back, I said: "You are afraid, Johann--you are afraid. Go home; I shall return alone; the walk will do me good." The carriage door was open. I took from the seat my oak walking stick--which I always carry on my holiday excursions--and closed the door, pointing back to Munich, and said, "Go home, Johann--Walpurgis Nacht doesn't concern Englishmen."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Bram Stoker, "Dracula's Guest", The Bram Stoker Bedside Companion, ed. Charles Osbourne (London, 1974), p. 25.

While the reader identifies with Harker and, in the manner of Mrs. Radcliffe's readers, vicariously shares his fears, he is also, metaphorically, one step ahead of Harker. The reader is more inclined to give credence to those aspects of Transylvanian life which Harker abruptly dismisses as superstition.

Although Harker's reactions to his imprisonment in Castle Dracula are the fear and panic of the typical Gothic prisoner, his behaviour in one instance is unusual both for the Gothic novel and for Stoker. This incident is his first meeting with Dracula's three "brides". The usually circumspect Harker succumbs to an atypical erotic impulse when the women appear:

All three had brilliant white teeth,  
that shone like pearls against the  
ruby of their voluptuous lips. There  
was something about them that made me  
uneasy, some longing and at the same  
time some deadly fear. I felt in my  
heart a wicked burning desire that  
they would kiss me with those red lips  
(p. 40).

As will be seen later, Stoker's vampires are associated with sexuality and the liberation of unconscious desires. Harker's sexual nature surfaces only in this episode and seems out of character for him, but the ambiguous response to the threat of the vampire is typical of the victims in the novel. Once he returns to England, Harker cedes his primary role and becomes one more member of the vampire-

hunting group.

The real hero of the novel and the character who is Dracula's rival in dramatic interest is Dr. Van Helsing. He is not a traditional Gothic hero, but is more like the helpers of the hero, Father Jerome in The Castle of Otranto, the Wandering Jew in The Monk, and Father Oswald in The Old English Baron. Van Helsing, along with these other characters, is a descendant of the wise old man or magician figure.<sup>8</sup> Prospero in The Tempest, Cerimon in Pericles, and Merlin in the Arthurian legends are major examples of this character. As a "detective of the supernatural", Van Helsing's predecessors include three of Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's characters, Dr. Hesselius in "Green Tea", the vampire-hunting General Spielsdorf and Baron Vordenburg in "Carmilla". Baron Vordenburg is, in all probability, the model for Stoker's Van Helsing. A man of eccentric appearance, Vordenburg has devoted his life to "the minute and laborious investigation of the marvellously authenticated tradition of vampirism."<sup>9a</sup> Vordenburg is the first genuine vampire-hunter in English fiction. As befits the most important of the heroes in Dracula, Van Helsing is described in a more detailed manner than any of the others. He is

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<sup>8</sup> Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton, 1957), p. 195.

<sup>9a</sup> Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, "Carmilla" Uncanny Tales I, (London, 1974), p. 79.

a man of medium height, strongly built, with his shoulders set back over a broad, deep chest and a neck well balanced on the trunk as the head is on the neck. The poise of the head strikes one at once as indicative of thought and power; the head is noble, well-sized, broad, and large behind the ears... Big dark blue eyes are set widely apart, and are quick and tender or stern with the man's moods (p. 164-165).

There is an almost supernatural quality to his knowledge and his dedication to the quest of saving Lucy and Mina from Dracula. Although he is a wisdom-figure, Van Helsing is not invulnerable. He breaks down when it seems that evil is invincible and all his attempts to save Lucy have been frustrated. Even before he appears, Van Helsing is presented as Dracula's equal in knowledge. He is as potent a force for good as Dracula is for evil; Seward describes Van Helsing as

a philosopher and a metaphysician, and one of the most advanced scientists of his day; and he has, I believe, an absolutely open mind. This, with an iron nerve, a temper of the ice brook, an indomitable resolution, self-command and toleration exalted from virtues to blessings, and the kindest and truest heart that beats--these form his equipment for the noble work that he is doing for mankind--work both in theory and practice, for his views are as wide as his all-embracing sympathy (p. 105).

Stoker's attempt to give Van Helsing a distinctive dialect was no more successful than his attempt at genuine American

speech. Fortunately, however, when Van Helsing must be lucid and outline the dangerous nature of vampirism, the dialect disappears and he sounds no different from the English characters.

Wisdom figures less exotic than Van Helsing appear in Stoker's other novels. In The Lair of the White Worm, it is Sir Nathaniel de Salis, the geologist, archaeologist, and local historian, who provides the necessary information about "wyrms". Like Van Helsing in Dracula, de Salis has a semi-paternal relationship with the heroine of the novel. It is the Egyptologist Eugene Corbeck who acts as advisor to the hero in The Jewel of Seven Stars. In The Lady of the Shroud, Rupert St. Leger's Aunt Janet is a variation on the traditional wisdom-figure and helper of the hero. Although she has the gift of second sight and can see the danger around the hero, her revelations are consistently "after the fact" and, therefore, useless as advice.

In Bram Stoker's novels and short stories, the young hero is overshadowed by the villain, the heroine or the eerie events of the plot. This itself is commonplace in Gothic tradition; Radcliffe's Valancourt and Vivaldi become colourless beside Montoni and Schedoni as do Lewis' Raymond and Lorenzo when compared with Ambrosio. Northrop Frye has written that in romance and comedy the "technical hero and heroine are not often very interesting people...

Generally the hero's character has the neutrality that enables him to represent a wish fulfilment."<sup>9b</sup> The function of the Stoker hero, like that of the hero in traditional Gothic romance, is to defeat the villain and rescue the heroine from danger. However conventional Stoker's young men are, they, like the earlier heroes, always fulfill their duty.

The Stoker heroine is, like her Gothic prototype, to be menaced and threatened, but ultimately saved by the hero for whom she is a perfect match. The motif of the persecuted maiden does not originate entirely with the Gothic novel. While it is difficult to trace the type to its source, there are notable examples of this character in Elizabethan and Jacobean literature, Florimell in Spenser's The Fairie Queene, Marina in Shakespeare's Pericles, and Webster's The Duchess of Malfi. However, the heroine as the victim of romantic persecution is seen to best advantage in the novels of Samuel Richardson.<sup>10</sup> With their emphasis on feminine sensibility and male oppression, Pamela and Clarissa Harlowe are the direct ancestors of the Gothic novel. The perils and indignities which Richardson's heroines suffer recur, with variations, in many Gothic novels. Richardson's own description of

<sup>9b</sup> Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton, 1957), p.167.

<sup>10</sup> Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony (Cleveland, 1968), p.95-96.



what he attempted in the character of Clarissa could serve as a definition of the Gothic heroine:

I had to shew, for example sake, a young lady struggling with the greatest difficulties, and triumphing from the best motives, in the course of distresses, the tenth part of which would have sunk even manly hearts; yet tenderly educated, born to affluence, naturally meek, altho when an exertion of spirit was necessary, manifesting herself to be a heroine.<sup>11</sup>

The strange relationship which exists between the heroine and the villain and which wavers between fascination and repulsion is part of Richardson's contribution to the Gothic genre. Further developments of the archetypal Clarissa-Lovelace relationship can be found in the relationships between Melmoth and Immalee in Melmoth the Wanderer, Emily and Montoni in The Mysteries of Udolpho, Ellena and Schedoni in The Italian, Adeline and the Marquis de Montalt in The Romance of the Forest, and Ambrosio and Antonia in The Monk. Other writers, Bram Stoker among them, used this aspect of the Gothic tradition to depict the relationship of the vampire and its victim. In Stoker's novels, Dracula and The Lady of the Shroud, the reaction of the victim to the vampire as an ambiguous

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<sup>11</sup>Quoted by George Sherburn, "Introduction", Clarissa (Boston, 1962), p. x.

mixture of fear and attraction. This aspect is significant and will be examined in more detail in the chapter which deals with Stoker's treatment of the vampire.

Paired heroines similar to Stoker's Lucy and Mina appear quite often in Gothic fiction. The prototypes, in this case, are Isabella and Matilda in Walpole's The Castle of Otranto. Although both are victimized by Manfred, it is Isabella who provides the real model for the Gothic heroine.<sup>12</sup> She is the one who is threatened sexually by the villain, defies his machinations, and is eventually united with the hero. She also, like many heroines to follow, flees through the mysterious castle, a prey to countless anxieties. Isabella is one of the first heroines to suffer "those thousand nameless terrors which exist only in active imaginations."<sup>13</sup> In the vaults of Otranto, Isabella

trod as softly as impatience would give her leave--yet frequently stopped and listened to hear if she was followed. In one of those moments she thought she heard a sigh. She shuddered, and recoiled a few paces. In a moment she thought she heard the step of some person. Her blood curdled; and she concluded it was Manfred. Every suggestion that horror could inspire rushed into her mind.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Eino Railo, The Haunted Castle (New York, 1964), p. 41-43.

<sup>13</sup>Ann Radcliffe, The Novels (New York, 1974), p. 331.

<sup>14</sup>Horace Walpole, The Castle of Otranto in Three Gothic Novels, ed. Peter Fairclough (Harmondsworth, 1972), p. 61.

The heroines of Ann Radcliffe's novels develop from Isabella rather than the more reticent Matilda. Radcliffe's heroines show their derivation from Isabella by their ability, even in perilous circumstances, to defy the men who threaten them. When Manfred proposes to divorce his wife and marry Isabella, his intended daughter-in-law, the girl rejects his advances:

Heavens! cried Isabella, waking from her delusion, what do I hear! You, my lord! You! My father-in-law! the father of Conrad! the husband of the virtuous and tender Hippolita! --I tell you, said Manfred imperiously, Hippolita is no longer my wife; I divorce her from this hour. Too long has she cursed me by her unfaithfulness: my fate depends on having sons--and this night I trust will give a new date to my hopes. At those words he seized the cold hand of Isabella, who was half-dead with fright and horror. She shrieked, and started from him.<sup>15</sup>

In The Mysteries of Udolpho, there is a comparable exchange between the threatened maiden and the villain. Montoni tells Emily

Your credulity can punish only yourself; and I must pity the weakness of mind which leads you to so much suffering as you are compelling me to prepare for you.

You may find, perhaps, Signor, replied Emily, with mild dignity, that the strength of my mind is equal to the justice of my case; and that I can endure with fortitude

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

when it is resistance of oppression.

You speak like a heroine, said  
Montoni, contemptuously; we shall  
see whether you can suffer like one.<sup>16</sup>

Defiance, fear, love, and anguish are the dominant moods of the Gothic heroine. Although these would appear to provide only a limited emotional range, they are sufficient for the heroine's needs.

Although Ann Radcliffe used pairs of heroines in two of her novels, The Mysteries of Udolpho and The Sicilian Romance, she never gave them roles of equal importance. Blanche in The Mysteries of Udolpho and Emilia in The Sicilian Romance are used primarily as foils for Emily and Julia, the principal heroines. While Stoker presented two heroines in Dracula and The Lair of the White Worm, he was not the only Victorian writer to make use of this tradition. Wilkie Collins, for example, had previously worked the same device into The Woman in White with his treatment of Laura Fairlie and Marian Halcombe. Laura is a fairly conventional version of the beautiful, endangered maiden. Collins broke with tradition, however, in his creation of Marian. She is not just a foil to Laura, but

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<sup>16</sup>Ann Radcliffe, The Novels (New York, 1974), p. 395.

an intelligent, courageous woman who, in the absence of the hero, manages to rescue Laura from the lunatic asylum by herself. The usual "battle of wits" between heroine and villain in Gothic romances is presented in an untraditional manner in The Woman in White for it involves, not Laura, but Marian and Count Fosco. Collins' treatment of his heroines, his division of them into strong and weak types, had an influence on Stoker's creation of his heroines.

Stoker's women fall into two classes, victims and survivors. The victims, Lucy Westenra, Lilla Watford of The Lair of the White Worm, and Mrs. Brent in "The Secret of the Growing Gold," are frail, beautiful creatures whose virtue is not proof against harm. The survivors, Mina Harker, Margaret Trelawny in The Jewel of Seven Stars, Teuta, <sup>in</sup> The Lady of the Shroud, and Mimi Watford, are made of stronger stuff and endure the threatening evil with the help of the heroes. Stoker's ideal woman, as typified by the latter group, is beautiful, resourceful, intelligent without being a threat to men and, when the need arises, courageous. A typical heroine, Mimi in The Lair of the White Worm, combines in "perfection the qualities of strength of character and sweetness of disposition."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Bram Stoker, The Lair of the White Worm (London, 1911), p. 189.

This is the type of woman who can shoot a lock off a door with a revolver without compromising her femininity. Usually Stoker presents his heroines by means of one of his favourite devices, the juxtaposition of contrasting types, strong and weak, dark and fair, victim and survivor. In Dracula, the differences between Mina and Lucy are illustrated largely through their characters and actions. The contrast is made through detailed physical descriptions in The Jewel of Seven Stars and The Lair of the White Worm. The length to which Stoker would carry this device is shown in The Jewel of Seven Stars. In this novel, Nurse Kennedy, a very minor character, is given an elaborate description solely to contrast her with the heroine; she has little other purpose or role.

The two heroines of Dracula, Mina Murray Harker and Lucy Westenra, are, by Stoker's standards, only sketchily described. While Lucy is beautiful enough to attract three suitors, Stoker remains vague about her actual appearance. Clear distinctions are made between the two heroines in personality, class, and function. Lucy Westenra is the beautiful, doomed victim in the tradition of Walpole's Matilda, Lewis' Antonia, and Maturin's Immalee. Lucy is the first in England to succumb to foreign invasion of vampirism. Soon after she appears there are intimations that there is danger looming for her. In her diary, Mina

writes, "I greatly fear that she [Lucy] is of too super-sensitive a nature to go through the world without trouble" (p. 84). Before she falls prey to Dracula, she is presented as the innocent and virtuous heroine usually found in Gothic romance:

Lucy was looking so sweetly pretty in her white lawn frock; she has got a beautiful colour since she has been here. I noticed that the old men did not lose any time in coming up and sitting near her when we sat down. She is so sweet with old people; I think they all fell in love with her on the spot (p. 64).

Although they have been friends since childhood, Lucy, one of whose suitors is a lord, belongs to a higher social class than Mina who must work as an assistant school-mistress. Protected and romantic, Lucy is sentimental enough to wish to be married to all three of her suitors rather than cause any of them pain. She gets her wish, but not in the manner that she would expect; her "marriage" to her three suitors takes the form of blood-transfusions.

Lucy's plight as a victim of Dracula owes much to the Gothic tradition. She is a version of the persecuted maiden, but her persecution is far more sinister than that of the typical Gothic heroine. It is not just her life that Dracula endangers by his visits, her soul is also in jeopardy. In spite of Van Helsing's precautions and her own will to live, Lucy, in an unconscious state, is

drawn to Dracula and destruction. The ambiguous quality of their relationship will be examined in the next chapter. The influence of Richardson's Clarissa Harlowe has been mentioned previously in connection with the persecuted maiden motif and can be seen in the way in which Stoker depicts the final attack on Lucy. In the following excerpt, Clarissa explains to Miss Howe what happened to her at Mrs. Sinclair's house:

Let me cut short the rest. I grew worse and worse in my head; now stupid, now raving, now senseless. The vilest of vile women was brought to frighten me. Never was there so horrible a creature as she appeared to me at the time. I remember I pleaded for mercy, I remember that I said I would be his-- indeed I would be his--to obtain his mercy. But no mercy found I! My strength, my intellects, failed me--and then such scenes!--fits upon fits (faintly and imperfectly remembered) procuring no compassion --but death was withheld from me. That would have been too great a mercy.<sup>18</sup>

Lucy's memorandum describing the attack is found on her body afterwards:

What am I to do? What am I to do? I am back in the room with mother, I cannot leave her, and I am alone, save for the sleeping servants, whom someone has drugged. Alone with the dead! I dare not go out for I can hear the low howl of the wolf through the broken window.

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<sup>18</sup>Samuel Richardson, Clarissa (Boston, 1962), p. 354.



The air seems full of specks, floating and circling in the draught from the window, and the lights burn blue and dim. What am I to do? God shield me from harm this night! I shall hide this paper in my breast, where they shall find it when they come to lay me out. My dear mother gone! It is time that I go too. Good-bye dear Arthur, if I should not survive this night God keep you, dear, and God help me! (p. 133)

In both accounts, the event is related by the heroine herself and, therefore, the focus is upon her attitude to the impending catastrophe. In each case, the persecuted maiden faces a sexual threat from a corrupt aristocrat, helpless and isolated from all her friends. Both "rapes" are, symbolically, the destruction of innocence and virtue by evil. Although a more complex and extreme version of the Gothic heroine, Lucy is, nevertheless, the direct descendent of the victims in vampire literature. Ianthe and Miss Aubrey in "The Vampyre", Bertha in "Carmilla", and Clara Croften in Varney the Vampire are previous examples of this character.

The relationship of Dracula and Lucy is echoed in a perfunctory fashion in the relationship between Lilla and Edgar in The Lair of the White Worm. Although they are in the tradition of the threatened maiden and Gothic villain, Stoker does not explain the strange, unspoken animosity between Lilla and Edgar. Their psychic battles are obviously a symbolic conflict of good and evil, but

they are unrelated to the main plot of the novel. Whereas in Dracula, the death of Lucy is an indication of the insidious nature and the power of evil, Lilla's death in The Lair of the White Worm serves no purpose.

Mina, described by Seward as "a sweet-faced, dainty-looking girl" (p. 33), is more intelligent than Lucy. Stoker's Victorian prejudices about clever women appear when Van Helsing, meaning to compliment Mina, says that she "has man's brain--a brain that a man should have were he much gifted--and a woman's heart"(p.210-211). In order to help Jonathan in his work, Mina has learned shorthand, typing, and how to take dictation and she has also memorized train schedules. Although with her common sense and practicality, Mina seems the antithesis of the frail and emotional Gothic heroine, her situation makes her another variant on the persecuted maiden type. After Lucy's death, Mina is attacked by Dracula, but is rescued by the wisdom of Van Helsing and the united efforts of the other four men. Significantly, Dracula goes farther with Mina than he had with Lucy. In a demonic form of marriage, the vampire forces Mina to drink his blood as well as taking blood from her. In a strange blend of hate and love, he tells 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 my helper. You shall be avenged in turn; for not one of them but shall minister to your needs. But as yet you are to be punished for what you have done (p. 257).

Mina, after the attack, feels that she has been violated physically and spiritually. A major difference between the two heroines is illustrated by their reactions to Dracula's attacks. Whereas Lucy had been aware only of a mysterious force which threatened her life, Mina keenly realizes that she has fallen from grace into sin. When the Holy Wafer burns her forehead showing the corruption within her, Mina sinks "on her knees on the floor in an agony of abasement and pulls her beautiful hair over her face, as the leper of old his mantle" (p. 264). As Stoker's version of the ideal wife, her first concern is the possible danger to her husband. Mina feels the irony of the situation strongly; she whom he loves most is now potentially his worst enemy. Although the same three men, Seward, Morris, and Holmwood, gather around both Lucy and Mina, each girl has a different connection with the group. Between them, the two heroines of Dracula, embody all the conventional roles of the Victorian woman; Lucy is the sweetheart of the group and their "wife" in the blood-marriage while Mina is the sympathetic friend

and mother-figure. By destroying Dracula, who had almost succeeded in robbing them of Mina and who had corrupted Lucy, the men preserve the traditional relationships and values of their society. Mina's soul is redeemed so that, by the conclusion of the novel, she can fulfill her traditional role by becoming a mother in fact as well as in spirit. The novel ends with Van Helsing's praise of Mina as one of Stoker's idealized women,

This boy [Mina's son] will some day know what a brave and gallant woman his mother is. Already he knows her sweetness and loving care; later on he will understand how some men so loved her, that they did dare much for her sake (p. 336).

Like her Gothic sisters, the Stoker heroine does not develop or alter despite external pressures and circumstances. Her character remains static and largely symbolic; she represents innocence and virtue in distress.

For all his inability to create realistic or believable characters, Stoker's villains and villainesses have an undeniable power. Even though Edgar Caswall is virtually irrelevant to the plot of The Lair of the White Worm, he and Lady Arabella March are more vibrant and memorable than the pasteboard hero and heroines. Stoker's limitations do not matter in Dracula, however, because the Count does not need to be a fully-developed character. Despite the detailed physical descriptions of Dracula and Van Helsing's

discussion of the vampire's capabilities, he remains more of a presence than a personality.<sup>19</sup> Although the Count is present for only half the novel, he is never forgotten by the reader. After the first section of the novel, Dracula's appearances are sudden, terrifying, and brief. Stoker never lets his best villain lose his effectiveness through over-exposure. While Dracula is not always in his true shape in England, but his presence is constantly felt. While the main focus is on the efforts of the good characters to stop the threat of vampirism, the novel is dominated by the Count.

Dracula is a singular creation, but his origin is more conventional than one would first suspect. Stoker rejuvenated the stock Gothic villain in Dracula by making him a vampire. Although Polidori's Lord Ruthven and Prest's Varney had touches of the Gothic villain in their characterizations, these were not as developed or as detailed as in Dracula. Eino Railo's appraisal of Mrs. Radcliffe's achievement in the characterizgton of her villains points unconsciously to Stoker's vampire:

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<sup>19</sup> Leonard Wolf, A Dream of Dracula (Boston, 1972), p. 221.

Mrs. Radcliffe, in particular, has had a vision of something superhuman, of a superman with uncommon qualities, whose soul and actions are dominated by passions unknown to the ordinary mortal, passions verging on the demonic.<sup>20</sup>

The Radcliffean villain is a proud tyrannical man driven by his emotions and hardened by some secret and mysterious crime.<sup>21</sup> Radcliffe "fleshed out" the outline which Walpole provided with the character of Manfred in The Castle of Otranto. Manfred and his "exquisite villainy"<sup>22</sup> are among the first fruits of a tradition that was later to produce Scott's Marmion, Byron's Cain and Manfred, Maturin's Melmoth, the Brontës' Heathcliff and Rochester, and Stoker's Dracula. Mario Praz in The Romantic Agony, traces the descent of the Gothic villain from Milton's Satan.<sup>23</sup> Praz points out some of the qualities which the villains of Radcliffe and others share with Milton's creation: sinister charm, a rebellious nature, fallen beauty, and passion. Dracula shares something of Satan's spirit, a desire to work evil in the world, rather than any specific character trait. Montoni in The Mysteries of Udolpho, one of the best examples of the Gothic villain,

<sup>20</sup> Eino Railo, The Haunted Castle (New York, 1964), p. 32.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>22</sup> Horace Walpole, The Castle of Otranto in Three Gothic Novels ed. Peter Fairclough (Harmondsworth, 1972), p. 72.

<sup>23</sup> Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony (Cleveland, 1968), p.55-59.

demonstrates some of the satanic characteristics which Praz cites. He is

a man about forty, of an uncommonly handsome person, with features manly and expressive, but whose countenance exhibited, upon the whole more of the quickness of discernment, than of any other character.<sup>24</sup>

Although Montoni's guilty secret is eventually revealed, his past and his death remain shrouded in mystery. A major part of the dramatic power of this character is his enigmatic quality; the evil is never completely exposed to the sunlight. The eyes of the villain are usually his most commanding feature; they provide the means of discovering his true personality. Emily notices that

at the mention of any daring exploit, Montoni's eyes lost their sullenness and seemed instantaneously to gleam with fire; yet they still retained somewhat of a lurking cunning, and she sometimes thought that their fire partook more of the glare of malice than the brightness of valour, though the latter would well have harmonized with the high chivalric air of his figure.<sup>25</sup>

The Gothic villain is set apart from other men by his appearance and a manner which betrays his inner turmoil.

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<sup>24</sup>Ann Radcliffe, The Novels (New York, 1974), p. 233.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 301.

Schedoni is quickly identified as a villain from the following depiction in The Italian:

There was something too extraordinary in the figure of this man, and too singular in his conduct, to pass unnoticed by the visitors. He was of a tall thin figure, bending forward from the shoulders; of a sallow complexion, and harsh features, and had an eye, which as it looked up from the cloak that muffled the lower part of his countenance, was of uncommon ferocity.<sup>26</sup>

While Melmoth the Wanderer appeared nearly thirty years after The Italian, the traditional characteristics were still being used effectively in the creation of the villain. There is nothing particularly remarkable about Melmoth's features, but his eyes, the true gauges of the villain's soul, have an "infernal and dazzling lustre."<sup>27</sup> When Melmoth attempts to persuade Stanton, imprisoned unjustly in a madhouse, to exchange his soul for freedom, "the melodious smoothness of his voice made a frightful contrast to the stony rigour of his features, and the fiend-like brilliancy of his eyes."<sup>28</sup> Like the eyes of these villains, the eyes of Dracula are his most powerful and disturbing feature. Even when he does not materialize

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 531.

<sup>27</sup>Charles Robert Maturin, Melmoth the Wanderer (London, 1968), p. 54.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 54.



completely, his eyes are enough to indicate the evil that is present. Mina describes the first attack on Lucy:

There was undoubtedly something long and black, bending over the half-reclining white figure. I called in fright, "Lucy! Lucy!" and something raised a head, and from where I was I could see a white face and red gleaming eyes (p. 86).

When Jonathan Harker first meets Dracula, the vampire is "a tall old man, clean-shaven save for a long white moustache, and clad in black from head to foot, without a single speck of colour about him anywhere" (p. 21).

If Harker had been a reader of Gothic romances, he would have been on his guard from the beginning of his visit to Castle Dracula. Stoker's conception of his vampire was clearly influenced by the traditional depictions of the Gothic villain, but particularly by Le Fanu's treatment of the title character in Uncle Silas. Maud Ruthyn, the about-to-be-persecuted maiden, describes Silas:

A face like marble, with a monumental look, and, for an old man, singularly strange eyes, the singularity of which rather grew upon me as I looked; for his eyebrows were still black, though his hair descended from his temples in long locks of pure silver and fine as silk nearly to his shoulders. ...I know I can't convey in words an idea of this apparition, drawn as it seemed in black and white, venerable,

bloodless, fiery-eyed, with its singular look of power, and an expression so bewildering--was it derision, or anguish, or cruelty or patience?<sup>29</sup>

Besides his penetrating and strange eyes, Dracula has the aquiline features, massive eyebrows, and "fixed and rather cruel-looking" mouth of the Gothic villain (p. 23). Stoker's villain is unusual in that he changes, during the course of the novel, from an old man into the more conventional and younger "dark seducer" figure. When Mina and Jonathan discover Dracula in London, he has been revitalized. Mina sees

a tall thin man, with a beaky nose and black moustache and pointed beard... His face was not a good face; it was hard, and cruel, and sensual, and his big white teeth, that looked all the whiter because his lips were so red, were pointed like an animal's (p. 156).

Although much of Dracula's impact is due to an effective rediscovery of the Gothic villain, Stoker may have used a contemporary personality for his portrait of the Count. In August of 1878, Stoker met the famous explorer, Sir Richard Burton. In Stoker's words, Burton was "dark, and

<sup>29</sup> Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, Uncle Silas (London, 1947), p. 229.

forceful, and masterful, and ruthless. I have never seen so iron a countenance."<sup>30</sup> It is difficult to know for certain whether or not Burton did furnish part of the inspiration for the vampire of Stoker's novel. However, there is a connection between Burton and vampirism which might have influenced Stoker's own vampire novel. In 1870, Burton had translated and published a series of tales under the title Vikram and the Vampire or Tales of Hindu Devilry. While these tales have little bearing on Dracula itself, the subject, clearly, fascinated both men.

While entertaining Harker at his castle, Dracula displays several of the traditional traits of the Gothic villain: pride in his heritage and status, a brooding melancholy, and an hypnotic charm. Although Stoker provides enough qualities to motivate Dracula, he leaves a good deal of the character mysterious and vague. As Van Helsing reveals part of Dracula's past, the vampire takes on the aspect of a legendary figure:

he was in life a most wonderful man. Soldier, statesman, and alchemist-- which latter was the highest development of the science knowledge of his time. He had a mighty brain, a learning beyond compare, and a heart that knew no fear and no remorse. He dared even to attend the Scholomance, and there was no branch of knowledge of his time that he did not essay (p. 269).

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<sup>30</sup> Bram Stoker, Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving, I, (New York, 1906), p. 350.

In the light of this, Harker's glimpse of Dracula, the learned and remorseless aristocrat, making his bed in the castle is incongruous and slightly comic. No Gothic villain previously had stooped to doing domestic chores or cooking, which Dracula presumably must do as well since there are no servants in Castle Dracula.

In a critical work on the novels of Ann Radcliffe, E.B. Murray states that the Radcliffean villain is characterized by his consuming self-interest, while the heroine is the embodiment of disinterestedness.<sup>31</sup> Stoker also used this means of distinguishing good and evil in a literal way in Dracula. As a vampire Dracula must take the blood of others in order to survive. In contrast to this, the **f**our virtuous men give their blood unselfishly to save Lucy. This underscores a basic moral truth which is illustrated in Gothic fiction and in Dracula; evil is destructive while virtue is constructive.

Stoker's other villains, Edgar Caswell in The Lair of the White Worm, Geoffrey Brent in "The Secret of the Growing Gold", and the Judge in "The Judge's House", are also cast in the Gothic mould. The Judge, for example, is described in Stoker's best Gothic style:

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<sup>31</sup>E. B. Murray, Ann Radcliffe (New York, 1972), p. 69.

His face was strong and merciless, evil, crafty, and vindictive, with a sensual mouth, hooked nose of ruddy colour and shaped like the beak of a bird of prey.<sup>32</sup>

Caswell and Brent are fairly standard versions of the traditional villain, like the Judge. They are dark men with mysterious pasts and a strange power to fascinate their victims.

Dracula and Stoker's other villains are studies in straightforward evil; they do not indulge in the self-hate which marks the Byronic hero-villain. As in the cases of his heroes and heroines, Stoker's villains reveal clear connections with the Gothic tradition in their physical appearance and their characterization.

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<sup>32</sup>Bram Stoker, "The Judge's House", The Bram Stoker Bedside Companion, ed. Charles Osbourne (London, 1974), p. 60.

### CHAPTER THREE

While Stoker's use of traditional Gothic material has been ignored to a large extent, his contribution to the genre of vampire literature has been widely recognized. Prior to Stoker there had been relatively little of importance in this field of English literature. Significant contributions had been limited to John Polidori's "The Vampyre" in 1819, Varney the Vampire by Thomas Preskett Prest in 1847<sup>1</sup>, and Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's "Carmilla" in 1871.

Although all of these works have vampires as principal characters, there is no consensus among the authors regarding vampirism. Each writer presents his own ideas on the appearance, characteristics and powers of the vampire, how it attacks and how it can be destroyed. As will be seen in this chapter, certain elements recur in these works, but there are still many inconsistencies. In Dracula and, to a lesser degree, in The Lady of the Shroud,

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<sup>1</sup>There is some controversy about the authorship of Varney the Vampire; some critics believe it was Prest, while others argue that it was James Malcolm Rymer. As this thesis uses the version of the work edited by Sir Devendra Varma who ascribes the novel to Prest, the author will be cited as Prest throughout.

Stoker "standardized" the rules of vampirism. With the amount of detailed information about vampires in these two works, they are virtually handbooks on the subject. One major problem in attempting to examine the literary treatments of vampirism is the matter of source. Stoker must have known about the previous vampire tales, but what sources did Polidori, Prest, and Le Fanu use for their knowledge of vampirism? In his "Introduction" to "The Vampyre", for example, Polidori writes that the superstition of vampirism "is very general in the East"<sup>2</sup> and that it is a "universal belief"<sup>3</sup> that the victim of a vampiric attack will become a vampire in turn. Polidori, however, gives no source or reference for his statements.

John Polidori's "The Vampyre" bears the same relation to Dracula that Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto does to the novels of Ann Radcliffe. The works of Polidori and Walpole sketch, in outline form, the themes, characters, and situations which will be developed and refined by their successors. The "Introduction" to Polidori's tale contains basic information about vampires and vampirism which Prest, Le Fanu and Stoker were later to use in their own works. Polidori states that it is a

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<sup>2</sup>Three Gothic Novels, ed., E.F. Bleiler. (New York, 1966), p. 261.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 261.

proof of vampirism if a corpse is "fresh and entirely free from corruption, and emitting at the mouth, nose and ears, pure and florid blood."<sup>4</sup> The life-like appearance of a dead body is used as evidence of vampirism in "Carmilla" and Dracula. The "accustomed remedy"<sup>5</sup> for vampirism is also outlined by Polidori: a stake is driven through the heart of the vampire, its head cut off and its body burned. Polidori connects the belief in vampirism to the division of the Greek and Latin churches. The superstition stems from the idea that

a Latin body could not corrupt if buried in their territory (that of the Greek Church), it gradually increased and formed the subject of many wonderful stories, still extant, of the dead rising from their graves, and feeding upon the blood of the young and beautiful.<sup>6</sup>

This cause for vampirism is cited only by Polidori, the other authors under consideration in this chapter give the cause as infection or as penance which <sup>causes</sup> are also described in his "Introduction". In some areas of Greece, Polidori states, becoming a vampire "is considered as a sort of punishment after death for some heinous crime com-

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 262.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 262.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 261.



mitted while in existence."<sup>7</sup> Although Polidori outlines these "facts" about vampirism, he does not use them in "The Vampyre". The cause of vampirism is omitted in the novella, the attacks of the vampire are not described and none of the evidence cited in the "Introduction" is used to deduce the true nature of the title character. It is only an authorial comment at the conclusion which reveals Lord Ruthven in his real form:

The Guardians hastened to protect Miss Aubrey; but when they arrived, it was too late. Lord Ruthven had disappeared, and Aubrey's sister had glutted the thirst of a VAMPYRE!<sup>8</sup>

In "The Vampyre", Polidori established the prototype of the male vampire in English fiction. A combination of Gothic villain and legendary vampire, Lord Ruthven is the first of a long line of characters which includes Sir Francis Varney and Count Dracula. His physical appearance is supposed to tally exactly with the description of the vampire given by Ianthe, the Grecian maiden, but Polidori leaves the details of her account vague. According to the "Introduction", the vampire should be

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 262.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 283.

bloated and have blood streaming from the passages of its body. Ruthven, however, does not appear this way in the tale; he is portrayed as the Byronic hero-villain or Fatal Man.<sup>9</sup> Polidori clearly intended his readers to realize that Ruthven was modelled, perhaps maliciously, upon Byron. The association between the poet and the fictional character is made explicit by the "Extract of a Letter to the Editor" which precedes the tale. This describes the circumstances of the work's origin and quotes from one of Byron's own poems, "The Giaour", which alludes to vampirism. Although Polidori leaves the portrait of the vampire fairly blank, preferring perhaps to let his readers fill it in with their memories of Byron, he does emphasize certain details. As was demonstrated in the previous chapter, the eyes of the Gothic villain were a key feature in his depiction. Ruthven fits into the Gothic tradition in this respect; he has a "dead grey eye"<sup>10</sup> and a glance "which" fell upon the cheek with a leaden ray that weighed upon the skin it could not pass."<sup>11</sup> He also displays the selfishness which is a characteristic of the Gothic villain; for his own pleasure he enjoys the destruction of innocence and is an

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<sup>9</sup>Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony (Cleveland, 1968), p.73-76.

<sup>10</sup>John Polidori, "The Vampyre", Three Gothic Novels, ed. E.F. Bleiler (New York, 1966), p. 265.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 265.

agent in the further degradation of those already entrapped in vice.

In several ways, Polidori's vampire tale parallels that of Stoker. Ruthven, like Dracula, is an evil and enigmatic aristocrat; his life prior to first appearance remains shadowy and largely unknown. The basic situation in "The Vampyre", a destructive creature intent on perverting the traditions and values of established society, is repeated in Dracula. Polidori employs two contrasting settings for his novella as Stoker does in his work, an exotic foreign country where the threat of vampirism is first felt and contemporary England where the danger recurs. A major difference between "The Vampyre" and Dracula and, for that matter, the works of Prest and Le Fanu is that in Polidori's tale evil is triumphant. In all the other vampire tales, the vampire is destroyed and the danger is removed.

Polidori's novella also establishes one of the major aspects of vampirism, an association of sexuality with vampirism. Ruthven follows the tradition of the aristocratic seducer set by Richardson's Lovelace. The vampire is an extreme version of this character, however, because he literally preys upon women. He attracts and charms women in order to destroy them. Ruthven, like the later Dracula, is a corrupting influence who brings out the

worst in his victims. It is discovered that Ruthven required that his victims

should be hauled from the pinnacle of unsullied virtue down to the lowest abyss of infamy and degradation; in fine, that all those females whom he had sought, apparently on account of their virtue, had, since his departure, thrown even the mask aside, and had not scrupled to expose the whole deformity of their vices to the public gaze.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast to the elaborate treatments of this element by later authors, the sexuality of Polidori's vampire is implicit rather than explicitly stated. The association of the vampire's attack and rape, which was developed by Prest and Stoker, is only suggested in "The Vampyre". Polidori leaves the gruesome details of the vampire's attack to the imagination of his reader. The molestation of Ianthe is conveyed through sounds alone. As he is passing through the notorious forest haunt of the vampires, Aubrey hears "the dreadful shrieks of a woman mingling with the stifled exultant mockery of a laugh..."<sup>13</sup> The murder of Miss Aubrey by Ruthven on their wedding night reinforces the implied connection between the attack of the vampire and sexual assault. This is also borne out by Ianthe's tale of "the living vampyre, who had passed years amidst his friends, and dearest ties, forced every

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 269.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 273.

year by feeding upon the life of a lovely female to prolong his existence for the ensuing months..."<sup>14</sup> The vampires are supposed to indulge in sinister, but unspecified "nocturnal orgies."<sup>15</sup> Ruthven's motives for marrying Miss Aubrey are not given by Polidori. However, the vampire probably marries because he cannot "pounce" upon his victim in England as he was able to do in Greece. The marriage is also in keeping with Ruthven's character; he knows that it will torment Aubrey who, because of his vow, will be forced to stand by and witness the destruction of his sister without attempting to prevent it. Like Varney and, at times, Carmilla, but unlike Dracula, Ruthven needs to attack his victim only once in order to kill her.

An important feature which Polidori introduces in his tale is the method which the vampire uses to return from the dead. Fatally wounded, Ruthven asks Aubrey to leave his body exposed to the moonlight on a hill. Aubrey later discovers that the corpse has disappeared. What Aubrey does not know is that the moonlight had restored life to the vampire.

"The Vampyre" was tremendously popular and influential;

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 271.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 272.

it provided the image of the vampire for the nineteenth century as Stoker's Dracula has for the twentieth century. Many plays about vampires were produced in England and France as a result of Polidori's novella and the increased interest in vampirism.<sup>16</sup> An entertaining blend of melodrama, musical comedy and elaborate scenic effects, "The Vampyre or The Bride of the Isles" is only one of these. Translated into English from its original French by J. R. Planche, it was staged in 1820 at the English Opera House in London.<sup>17</sup>

The play repeats, with some alterations, the plot of "The Vampyre", a vampire seeks to marry a young girl after swearing her guardian to secrecy about his true nature. In the play, however, the vampire is frustrated in his attempt to secure a victim. Planche made certain that his audience understood the important features of vampirism. Included in the play are a pair of comic servants, Bridget and McSwill, who, in the course of talking about Lady Blanch who was destroyed by a vampiric husband, describe the laws which govern the vampires. McSwill says,

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<sup>16</sup>Margaret L. Carter, "A Preface from Polidori and Prest," Varney the Vampire (New York, 1970), p. xxxiv.

<sup>17</sup>E. F. Bleiler, "John Polidori and 'The Vampyre'," Three Gothic Novels (New York, 1966), p. xxxviii.

I've heard my great uncle say, that these horrible spirits called vampires, kill and suck the blood of beautiful young maidens, whom they are obliged to marry before they can destroy. And they do say that such is the condition of their existence, that if, at stated periods, they should fail to obtain a virgin-bride, whose life-blood may sustain them, they would instantly perish...<sup>18</sup>

This motivation of the vampire had been implied, but not developed in "The Vampyre". An "Introductory Vision" also explains vampirism to the play-goer. In this prologue, Unda, the Spirit of the Flood, and Ariel, the Spirit of the Air, meet and discuss the impending marriage of the heroine, Lady Margaret, and the vampire. They reveal that the vampire is aided in his quest for a bride by his fatal charm. Once under his spell "the hapless victim/Blindly adores, and drops into their grasp/Like birds when gaz'd on by the basilisk."<sup>19</sup> Unda also says that Cromal "called the Bloody"<sup>20</sup> has become a vampire as punishment for crimes committed during his life. In this feature as well as in the resuscitation of the vampire by moonlight, the influence of Polidori is clear. Cromal is, on the whole, a carbon-copy of Ruthven; he is an evil seducer-figure

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<sup>18</sup>J. R. Planche, "The Vampyre or the Bride of the Isles," The Hour of One: Six Gothic Melodramas, ed. Stephen Wischhusen (London, 1975), p. 19.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

although he is frustrated in his two attempts to gain victims.

Planche added a few touches of his own to the depiction of the vampire in Polidori's novella. Cromal is able to take on another identity as Unda explains, "For his crimes, / His spirit roams, a vampire, in the form/of Marsden's Earl."<sup>21</sup> Planche's vampire differs from that of Polidori in another manner; he suffers, briefly, from remorse and disgust:

Demon as I am that walk the earth to  
slaughter and devour. The little that  
remains of heart within this wizened  
frame, sustained alone by human blood,  
shrinks from the appalling act of  
planting misery in the bosom of this  
venerable chieftain. Still must the  
fearful sacrifice be made, and suddenly,  
for the approaching night will find my  
wretched frame exhausted--and darkness--  
worse than death--annihilation is my lot!<sup>22</sup>

Cromal's costume is unlike that of any other vampire. Because Scottish settings were popular with audiences, the play, against Planche's wishes, was set in Scotland and the vampire had to appear in a kilt.<sup>23</sup>

Planche's treatment of Polidori's tale is typical of the way in which writers have used previous versions of

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 26-27.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 42.



vampire stories. By giving his vampire the alias of Lord Ruthven, Earl of Marsden, Planche deliberately reminded his audience of the work upon which the play was based and the traditional superstitions behind it. While they deliberately evoke past treatments of the vampire, Planche, Prest, Le Fanu and Stoker also add their own innovations. Although Prest almost completely revised the character of the male vampire from Polidori's original, he paid homage to his predecessor by naming one of his characters after the creator of "The Vampyre". Stoker, while developing the vampire motif farther than Le Fanu, acknowledged his debt to "Carmilla" in "Dracula's Guest". This short story, like "Carmilla", is set in Stygia and involves a beautiful female vampire.<sup>24</sup>

Varney the Vampire, published nearly thirty years after "The Vampyre", attests to the continued popularity of vampire tales. However, this work was aimed at a different reading public than was Polidori's novella. Varney the Vampire was written for an audience at a much lower cultural level; probably it was the same type of audience that two decades earlier had enjoyed Planche's

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<sup>24</sup>R. Florescu and R. McNally, Dracula: A Biography of Vlad the Impaler 1431-1476. (New York, 1973), p. 156.

theatrical vampire. In Varney the Vampire, therefore, vampirism is used for sensational and lurid effects. The tone of the novel is set by Varney's desire for "Blood!--raw blood, reeking and hot, bubbling and juicy, from the veins of some gasping victim."<sup>25</sup> Since the work was published in parts as a serial, consistency of plot and characterization cannot be expected. This method of publication also determined the length of the work, it was concluded only when the public became tired of Varney and his exploits.

Prest clearly provides a stepping-stone between Polidori and the later vampire tales of the Victorian age. Varney the Vampire is responsible for the continuity of ideas and superstitions about the vampire; several elements, which appeared in Polidori, are developed by Prest and then were elaborated upon by Le Fanu and Stoker. These recurring features include the test for vampirism, the infectious quality of vampirism, and the staking of a vampire to destroy it. The physical appearance of Varney fits the pattern of the male vampire. The features which Prest emphasizes are Varney's "lofty stature, the long, sallow face, the slightly projecting teeth, the dark lustrous, although somewhat sombre eyes."<sup>26</sup> The baleful mien of the vampire and the

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<sup>25</sup>Thomas Preskett Prest, Varney the Vampire (New York, 1970), p. 859.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

strange quality of his eyes had been set by Polidori, but Prest is the first to draw attention to the teeth of the vampire. Le Fanu, Stoker, and horror films were to make sharp, long teeth a major characteristic of the vampire. Varney, like Lord Ruthven before him, is unrestricted in his movements and he can appear during the day as well as at night. Prest cited the cause of vampirism as punishment for crime in Varney the Vampire as Polidori had done previously. Although there is a contradiction about the details of his crime, a consequence of the mode of publication, Varney became a vampire because he had committed murder. This cause for vampirism was discarded by later authors as was the device of resurrection by moonlight. This feature is used to excess in Varney the Vampire; Varney returns to life after being "killed" so many times that the device loses its dramatic effectiveness and becomes predictable.

The connection between vampirism and sexuality, which had been obliquely stated by Polidori, is handled more explicitly by Prest. Varney, like Ruthven, is the aristocratic seducer who victimizes young girls and attacks them in the manner of a rapist. In the opening chapter, Varney breaks into the bedroom of Flora Bannerworth:

Shriek followed shriek in rapid succession. The bed-clothes fell in a heap by the side of the bed-- she was dragged by her long silken hair completely on to it again. Her beautifully rounded limbs quivered with the agony of her soul. The glassy, horrible eyes of the figure ran over that angelic form with a hideous satisfaction-- horrible profanation. He drags her head to the bed's edge. He forces it back by the long hair still entwined in his grasp. With a plunge he seizes her neck in his fang-like teeth-- a gush of blood, and a hideous sucking noise follows. The girl has swooned and the vampire is at his hideous repast.<sup>27</sup>

As can be seen in this excerpt, the attack of the vampire is graphically depicted by Prest and the sexual overtones are undeniable.

Besides expanding and developing the basic material which Polidori presented in his "Introduction" and tale, Prest incorporated many new features of vampire lore into Varney the Vampire. The personality of the vampire is one of these innovations; Varney is one of the most psychologically complex of all vampires. Planche's vampire had, momentarily, been tortured by regret, but this did not prevent him from seeking a victim. By contrast, Varney is continually tormented by the thought of what he is. Varney explains to Flora Bannerworth that, against his will, he is

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

driven by his appetite:

Believe me, that if my victims, those whom my insatiable thirst for blood make wretched, suffer much, I, the vampyre, am not without my moments of unutterable agony. But it is a mysterious law of our nature, that as the period approaches when the exhausted energies of life require a new support from the warm gushing fountain of another's veins, the strong desire to live grows upon us, until in a paroxysm of wild insanity, which will recognize no obstacles, human or divine, we seek a victim.<sup>28</sup>

Varney further explains that after he has fed, "all the horror, all the agony of reflection"<sup>29</sup> comes upon him. Among his fictional colleagues, Ruthven, Carmilla, and Dracula, Varney alone exhibits a Byronic self-loathing. Despite his destructive nature, the remorseful Varney is seen largely in a sympathetic light. He genuinely pities those whom he is forced to destroy and saves at least two prospective victims from their fates. After the mob of villagers destroys Clara, it is Varney alone who grieves for the girl and gives her a decent burial. Because of his attitude of self-disgust, Varney tries suicide as a means of escape. His attempt to drown himself is frustrated when the water rejects him and throws him back on land. The

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 157.

rejection of the vampire by water is another of Prest's innovations.

Prest also made changes in the rules which govern vampirism. There is a new "escape-clause"; the vampire's soul may be redeemed through love. In this feature, Prest is unique among writers of vampire fiction, Varney tells Flora that if he can find "one human heart"<sup>30</sup> to love him, he will be free from his hated condition. This chance for salvation is denied to Varney, however, because each of his five attempts to marry is frustrated at the altar. In Prest's novel, vampires are required to assist at the "birth" of one of their kind. At a cemetery near Hampstead Heath in London Varney aids in the unearthing of a recently dead man who is to become a vampire. Again this is an element which is found only in Varney the Vampire. Prest does add a detail which Le Fanu and Stoker were to use in "Carmilla" and Dracula as a significant trait of the vampire; Varney neither eats nor drinks.

The reason that Varney cannot be redeemed by the love of a young girl is that no one will accept him as a lover, knowing what he is. The reaction of the victim to the vampire had only been sketched by Polidori. In Varney the Vampire, the victim's reaction is developed in more detail,

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 156.

although it remains essentially the same. Each girl whom Varney ~~me~~ances shows panic and fear when his vampiric nature is uncovered. There is none of the ambiguity of the later vampire-victim relationships, Although Flora feels pity for Varney, she is still terrified of him. Conscious of the possible danger to herself, she cannot promise to save him from his state. Her refusal makes clear her role as an innocent victim. She says to Varney that "there existed no just cause that I should suffer; one who has been tortured, not from personal fault, selfishness, lapse of integrity, or honourable feelings, but because you have found it necessary..."<sup>31</sup>

One of the first female vampires in English fiction appears in Varney the Vampire. While Polidori mentioned that vampirism is infectious in his "Introduction", neither of the heroines who died from Ruthven's attack returns as a vampire herself. Clara Crofton, therefore, is the predecessor of Carmilla, Lucy Westenra, and the "brides" of Dracula. However, Prest does not develop his female vampire; her condition is detected before she does much harm and she is staked at the crossroads, in the manner which Polidori outlined in the "Introduction" to "The Vampyre". Although Clara, like Carmilla, victimizes a young girl,

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 157.

there is no sexual implication to the attack. Unlike his treatment of Varney, ~~Prest ignores~~ the sexual element in the creation of a female vampire. This aspect was not developed until Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's "Carmilla" which was published nearly twenty-five years after Varney the Vampire.

"Carmilla" is a far more sophisticated work than either "The Vampyre" or Varney the Vampire. While it deals with the same subject as its predecessors, it differs from them in style, mood, and theme. "Carmilla" is innovative and important because it contains the first full-scale portrait of the female vampire. As Lord Ruthven in "The Vampyre" had set the standard for the male vampire as a combination of Gothic villain and vampire, so Carmilla, a union of the Fatal Woman<sup>32</sup> and the vampire, has been influential in the depiction of the female vampire. As a mysterious Fatal Woman with supernatural powers, Carmilla's literary ancestors include Keats' "Lamia" and the Lady Geraldine of Coleridge's "Christabel". In reality the long-dead Countess Mircalla Karnstein, Carmilla is described as "slender, and wonderfully graceful."<sup>33</sup> She has little of the

<sup>32</sup>Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony (Cleveland, 1968), p. 189.

<sup>33</sup>Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, "Carmilla", Uncanny Tales, I, (London, 1974), p. 27.



baleful and pallid vampire of Polidori and Prest in her looks as Laura, the narrator, relates; "Her complexion was rich and brilliant; her features were small and beautifully formed; her eyes large, dark and lustrous; her hair was quite wonderful...in colour a rich very dark brown, with something of gold."<sup>34</sup> According to Le Fanu, the pallor of the vampire "is a mere melodramatic fiction. They present in the grave, and when they show themselves in human society, the appearance of healthy life."<sup>35</sup>

While the linking of sexuality and vampirism is not original to Le Fanu, his presentation is new and unique. In "Carmilla" the unnaturalness of vampirism is reflected and emphasized by deviant sexuality in the vampire. The victims of Le Fanu's female vampire are all young girls so that the impression of lesbianism is unavoidable. In certain cases, Le Fanu states, the vampire will pursue its victim in the fashion of a lover. The vampire, when fascinated by a victim,

will exercise inexhaustible patience and stratagem, for access to a particular object may be obstructed in a hundred ways. It will never desist until it has satiated its passion, and drained the very life of its coveted victim. But it will, in these cases, husband and protract its murderous enjoy-

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 79-80.

ment with the refinement of an epicure,  
and heighten it by the gradual approaches  
of an artful courtship.<sup>36</sup>

This is exactly how Carmilla behaves toward Laura; the vampire's attentions are so ardent that Laura wonders if her guest is not a young male lover in disguise. Carmilla seeks to initiate Laura into a vampiric union, as she explains to her victim:

I live in your warm life, and you shall die--die, sweetly die--into mine. I cannot help it; as I draw near to you, you, in your turn, will draw near to others, and learn the rapture of that cruelty, which yet is love; so for a while, seek to know no more of me and mine, but trust me with all your loving spirit.<sup>37</sup>

This foreshadows Dracula's blood "marriages" with Mina and Lucy in Stoker's novel.

"Carmilla" is the first vampire tale to present an ambiguous relationship between the vampire and its prey. Unlike previous victims, Laura is not entirely repelled by the advances of the vampire. She is more complex psychologically than Ianthé, Miss Aubrey or Flora; there is a darker side to her nature which is attracted to the vampire.

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 28-29.

Under the seductive spell of Carmilla, Laura reveals that she finds the thought of dissolution appealing:

Dim thoughts of death began to open, and an idea that I was slowly sinking took gentle, and somehow, not unwelcome possession of me. If it was sad, the tone of mind which this induced was also sweet. Whatever it might be, my soul acquiesced in it.<sup>38</sup>

Laura's reaction to Carmilla's attentions is confused:

I experienced a strange tumultuous excitement that was pleasurable, ever and anon, mingled with a vague sense of fear and disgust. I had no distinct thoughts about her while such scenes last, but I was conscious of a love growing into adoration, and also of abhorrence.<sup>39</sup>

Although Laura is saved from death by the destruction of the vampire, the ambivalent conclusion of the work shows that Carmilla has had a disturbing effect upon her. Laura says that

At this hour the image of Carmilla returns to my memory with ambiguous alternations--sometimes the playful, languid, beautiful girl; sometimes the writhing fiend I saw in the ruined church; and often from a reverie I have started, fancying I heard the light step of Carmilla at the drawing-room door.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

The attack of the vampire is developed by Le Fanu in a more detailed manner than it had been by either Prest or Polidori. Le Fanu concentrates upon the victim who describes, at first-hand, the attack. While the victim's account of the vampire's attack had been given in Varney the Vampire, it had been fairly basic and blunt:

Something came; something not quite human, yet having the aspect of a man. Something that flew at me, and fastened its teeth in my neck.<sup>41</sup>

In "Carmilla", the attack comes in distinct stages and is elaborately presented. Laura first experiences a lassitude and exhaustion upon awakening from sleep. This is followed by strange dreams and sensations:

Sometimes it was as if warm lips kissed me, and longer and more lovingly as they reached my throat, but there the caress fixed itself. My heart beat faster, my breathing rose and fell rapidly and full drawn; a sobbing that rose into a sense of strangulation, supervened, and turned into a dreadful convulsion, in which my senses left me, and I became unconscious.<sup>42</sup>

During one attack Laura feels the bite of the vampire; it

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<sup>41</sup>Thomas Preskett Prest, Varney the Vampire (New York, 1970), p. 796.

<sup>42</sup>Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, "Carmilla", Uncanny Tales, I, (London, 1974), p. 46.

is "a stinging pain as if two large needles darted an inch or two apart, deep into my breast."<sup>43</sup> The "illness" which accompanies these attacks is an innovation by Le Fanu and must have been an influence on Stoker's treatment of Lucy's decline in Dracula. Although Polidori referred to the illness of the vampire's victim in his "Introduction", this element was not used in his work or that of Prest. Like Lucy under the influence of Dracula, Laura refuses to admit that there is anything wrong with her, despite her feeling of exhaustion and her pallor; she believes that it is all in her imagination or due to her nerves. It is only when the doctor sees the marks on her throat that the true nature of her "illness" is realized.

Certain features which by the time of "Carmilla" had become traditional in the presentation of vampirism are employed by Le Fanu. The method of destruction which Polidori and Prest had outlined before is used to dispatch Carmilla:

a sharp stake [was] driven through the heart of the vampire, who uttered a piercing shriek at the moment, in all respects such as might escape from a living person in the last agony. Then the head was struck off, and a torrent of blood flowed from the severed neck. The body and head were next placed on a pile of wood and reduced to ashes, which were thrown upon the river and borne away...<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 78-79.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 78-79.

The proof of vampirism in Le Fanu's work is the same that had been described in Polidori's "Introduction". Carmilla's tomb is opened and her body is examined:

Her eyes were open; no cadaverous smell exhaled from the coffin... The limbs were perfectly flexible, the flesh elastic; and the leaden coffin floated with blood in which to a depth of seven inches, the body lay immersed.<sup>45</sup>

Carmilla displays some of the vampiric traits which had characterized Varney and Lord Ruthven; she has little appetite for normal food, she is free to move during the day, and she has teeth that are "long, thin, pointed, like an awl, like a needle."<sup>46</sup> As it had been in the other works, vampirism in "Carmilla" is infectious. Carmilla, like Dracula, had become a vampire as a result of being attacked by one of the Undead.

Le Fanu, like Prest before him, made innovations in the presentation of the vampire. Carmilla is given special supernatural powers, which are denied to Lord Ruthven and Varney. She has an unnatural strength which Le Fanu cites as a factor which reveals her vampiric nature. Carmilla is also able to change her shape to facilitate her attacks.

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

On one occasion Laura sees "a sooty black animal that resembled a monstrous cat"<sup>47</sup> crawling at the foot of her bed. Another witness, General Spielsdorf, observes the attack of the vampire upon his niece; he sees

a large black object, very ill-defined, drawl, as it seemed to me, over the foot of the bed, and swiftly spread itself up to the poor girl's throat, where it swelled, in a moment, into a great palpitating mass.<sup>48</sup>

Le Fanu's vampire has the ability to move from its grave without disturbing the earth or leaving evidence of its departure. Many of these features anticipate Stoker's elaborate treatment of the vampire in Dracula.

With these new powers, however, come new restrictions for the vampire. Carmilla must return to her tomb for a certain period each day because the "amphibious existence of the vampire is sustained by daily renewed slumber in the grave."<sup>49</sup> There is another condition which is unique to Le Fanu's treatment and which concerns the vampire's name. In "Carmilla" the vampire is

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 73-74.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

limited to a name which, if not her real one, should at least reproduce, without the omission or addition of a single letter, those, as we say, anagrammatically, which compose it. Carmilla did this; so did Millarca.<sup>50</sup>

The demonic nature of the vampire is illustrated in a more tangible way by Le Fanu than by previous writers. Carmilla shows an antipathy to the rituals of the Christian church. Laura describes Carmilla's behaviour:

I often wondered whether our pretty guest ever said her prayers. I certainly had never seen her upon her knees. In the mornings she never came down until long after our family prayers were over, and at night she never left the drawing room to attend our brief evening prayers in the hall.<sup>51</sup>

Carmilla cannot bear to hear hymns either; she claims that her ears are "tortured with that discord and jargon."<sup>52</sup> This manner of demonstrating the antagonism between the Church and the vampire is an innovation on the part of Le Fanu which Stoker was to develop in Dracula.

With each succeeding work, the vampire evolves into a more sinister and demonic creature which is more difficult to destroy. Although Carmilla is as dangerous as Lord

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 41-42.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 32.



Ruthven or Sir Francis Varney, she is more effective dramatically because her evil is understated. Le Fanu never indulges in lurid or gratuitously shocking effects; therefore, when Carmilla is revealed in her true form and destroyed, the horror of the situation is increased.

In many ways, Dracula represents the apotheosis of the vampire tale. Stoker's work combined features which had become traditional in previous literary treatments of vampirism with new elements from folklore and legend. Although Stoker never actually visited Transylvania, he did research on the geography and customs of the country at the British Museum.<sup>53</sup> In Dracula: A Biography of Vlad the Impaler 1431-1476, Florescu and McNally present an outline of probable sources for Stoker's material about vampirism, Vlad Tepes, and Transylvania.<sup>54</sup> There is, however, no way of knowing which works Stoker really consulted for Dracula. One book which it is fairly certain that Stoker used for research is The Land Beyond the Forest by Emily Gerard.<sup>55</sup> This work describes, in detail, the people, traditions, geography and folklore of Transylvania. Although several critics, Leonard Wolf, Margaret L. Carter, Les Daniels, and Daniel Farson, cite Dr. Arminius Vambery,

<sup>53</sup> Leonard Wolf, "Introduction", The Annotated Dracula (New York, 1975), p. xii.

<sup>54</sup> R. Florescu and R. McNally, Dracula: A Biography of Vlad the Impaler 1431-1476. (New York, 1973), p. 148-152.

<sup>55</sup> Wolf, op. cit., p. xiii-xiv.

a professor at Budapest University, as a major source of information for Stoker, no one can state with any assurance the precise nature of Vambéry's contribution; even Stoker's biographer, Harry Ludlam, remains vague on this point. While Stoker describes Vambéry in his Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving, he does not state whether Vambéry spoke of either Transylvania or vampirism at their meeting. Whatever Vambéry gave to Dracula, Stoker acknowledged his debt to the Hungarian scholar with Van Helsing's reference to "my friend, Arminius of Budapest" (p. 269).

In Dracula, Stoker made many innovations in the customary depiction of the vampire which had evolved in the works of Polidori, Prest, and Le Fanu. To the traditional characteristics, sharp teeth and no appetite for normal food among others, he added new traits: the Undead's lack of reflection in a mirror and its lack of a shadow, its ability to see in the dark, and its rank, unpleasant breath. Although the vampire had always been attracted by blood, Stoker uses this aspect in a novel and dramatic way. Dracula is aroused by the sight of blood when Harker cuts himself while shaving:

When the Count saw my face, his eyes blazed with a sort of demonic fury, and he suddenly made a grab at my throat. I drew away and his hand touched the string of beads which held the crucifix. It made an instant change in him, for the fury passed so quickly that I could hardly believe that it was ever there.  
(p. 30)

Stoker makes the Count the most dangerous of all the vampires by giving abilities which no previous vampire had. Van Helsing outlines Dracula's powers:

he can, within limitations, appear at will when, and where, and in any of the forms that are to him; he can, within his range, direct the elements: the storm, the fog, the thunder; he can command all the meaner things: the rat, and the owl, and the bat--the moth, and the fox, and the wolf; he can grow and become small; and he can at times vanish and become unknown (p. 213).

Similarly, the Count is limited in more ways than Lord Ruthven, Varney or Carmilla. Unlike these vampires, who had been able to gain free access to their victims, Dracula must wait until the victim invites him into the house. The restrictions upon the vampire are explained by Van Helsing:

His power ceases, as does that of all evil things, at the coming of the day. Only at certain times can he have limited freedom. If he be not at the place whither he is bound, he can only change himself at noon or at exact sunrise or sunset... It is said, too, that he can only pass running water at the slack or at the flood of the tide... (p. 215).

The idea that the vampire must rest in its grave each day, which first appeared in "Carmilla", is used in Stoker's treatment as well. Dracula must rest in his native earth

daily, but he is able to take shelter in an unholy place; from the suicide's grave in Whitby he attacks Mr. Swales and Lucy. To destroy the Undead Lucy, the heroes follow the usual practice of staking the vampire in its coffin, but they take the added precaution of cutting off her head and filling her mouth with garlic. This last detail is one of Stoker's innovations and does not appear in previous vampire tales. Stoker probably took it from Emily Gerard's book about Transylvania. Gerard noted that "In very obstinate cases of vampirism it is recommended to cut off the head, and replace it in the coffin with the mouth filled with garlic..."<sup>56</sup> In Dracula Stoker illustrates not only the traditional method of destroying the villain, but also, as other writers had not, the ways in which the attacks of the vampire can be prevented. The crucifix, the Holy Wafer, and garlic are introduced by Stoker as the chief aids in combating vampirism. In "Carmilla", the doctor had merely advised that Laura never be left alone in order to discourage further attacks. Again, it is not known exactly where Stoker found these ideas about prevention, but it may have been from Vambery.

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<sup>56</sup>Emily Gerard, The Land Beyond the Forest (New York, 1888), p. 185.

The sexual aspect of vampirism, which Polidori, Prest, and Le Fanu had treated in their individual ways in their works, is presented by Stoker as an integral part of the "disease". For Stoker, vampirism is an evil reverse--image of normal life. This is best seen in the transformation which Lucy undergoes when attacked by the Count. Corrupted by Dracula, Lucy is changed from an innocent girl to an erotic belle dame sans merci.<sup>57</sup> John Seward describes Lucy as she appears when a vampire:

She seemed like a nightmare of Lucy as she lay there; the pointed teeth, the blood-stained, voluptuous mouth--which it made me shudder to see--the whole carnal and unspiritual appearance seeming like a devilish mockery of Lucy's sweet purity (p. 192).

As a vampire, Lucy is an inversion of the modest and virtuous Victorian woman; she becomes sexually aggressive and anti-maternal:

With a careless motion, she flung to the ground, callous as a devil, the child that up to now she had clutched strenuously to her breast, growling over it as a dog growls over a bone. There was a cold-bloodedness in the act which wrung a groan from Arthur; when she advanced to him with outstretched arms and a wanton smile, he fell back and hid his face in his hands (p. 190).

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<sup>57</sup>Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony (Cleveland, 1968), p. 189.

The Undead Lucy's eyes blaze "with unholy light" and the sweetness of her voice, "something of the tingling of glass when struck" deliberately recalls Jonathan Harker's description of Dracula's three "brides" (p. 190). In Dracula evil sexuality is one of the dominant characteristics of the vampire. Like Richardson's Lovelace and the line of aristocratic seducers after him, Dracula's ability to love is directly related to his desire to destroy. When he answers the taunts of his "brides" that he has never loved, he answers, "Yes, I too can love; you yourselves can tell it from the past, Is it not so?" (p. 42) His love, in other words, transforms virtue and innocence into corruption and lust, and beautiful women into soulless vampires. The relationships between Dracula and Mina and Lucy clearly illustrate the unnatural, death-oriented quality to the vampire's passion. For Les Daniels, Dracula is "the embodiment of an unleashed id, sleeping all day and spending his nights creeping into bedrooms."<sup>58</sup> This interpretation does not take into account the evil inherent in the vampire. His defiance of Van Helsing and the others contains a definite sexual threat. His revenge is to come by perverting Lucy and Mina, and the love which

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<sup>58</sup>Les Daniels, Living in Fear (New York, 1975), p. 63.

they and the young men share:

You think to baffle me, you--with your pale faces all in a row, like sheep in a butcher's. You will be sorry yet, each one of you... Your girls that you all love are mine already; and through them you and others shall yet be mine my creatures, to do my bidding and to be my jackals when I want to feed (p. 273).

Although the heroine of The Lady of the Shroud only masquerades as a vampire for political reasons, she is portrayed in the same manner as Stoker's genuine vampires. To make her convincing as a vampire, Stoker even endows her with a muted sexuality which is irrelevant to the purposes of the plot. Unfortunately, Teuta is interesting as a character only as long as she is supposed to be a vampire. Her sexuality rapidly evaporates when she marries the hero and becomes Stoker's version of the ideal wife.

The ambivalent relationship between vampire and victim which Le Fanu had first explored in "Carmilla" is elaborated by Stoker. Lucy and Mina betray a curious mixture of fear and attraction in their responses to the Count. Lucy in particular, reveals an unconscious death-wish when she is victimized by Dracula. Stoker underscores the ambiguity of the relationship of Lucy and the Count by leaving many details vague. The reader must rely upon the observances of Mina and the others who, until Van Helsing arrives, do

not realize what is happening and the confused recollections of Lucy herself. Stoker is never clear about whether Lucy's original act of sleepwalking, which results in the first attack, was accidental or whether she was summoned by Dracula. Although twice Mina actually sees Lucy being attacked by the Count, she does not recognize what is taking place:

There distinctly was Lucy with her head lying up against the side of the windowsill and her eyes shut. She was fast asleep, and by her, seated on the windowsill, was something that looked like a good-sized bird (p. 90).

When, after seeing Lucy at the window, Mina comes inside, she notices that Lucy is "holding her hand to her throat, as though to protect it from the cold" (p. 90). In reality, Lucy is concealing the tell-tale wounds on her neck from Mina. Where Laura in "Carmilla" had become passive when attracted to the vampire, Lucy becomes an active agent in her own destruction. By sleepwalking and opening her window, she invites the attack of Dracula. Lucy is the first victim to aid the vampire in this fashion. The conflict in Lucy between conscious fear and unconscious desire is illustrated when she is dying. Van Helsing has given her garlic flowers to ward off the vampire's attack. Seward observes Lucy's behaviour:



It struck me as curious that the moment she became conscious she pressed the garlic flowers close to her. It was certainly odd that whenever she got into that lethargic state, with the stertorous breathing, she put the flowers from her; but when she waked she clutched them close (p. 145).

Although Lucy is presented as innocent and pure prior to Dracula's appearance in England, there are hints of a suppressed sexuality which becomes magnified and distorted once she is a vampire. In a letter to Mina, she describes her reaction to Seward's proposal, "I know, Mina, you will think me a horrid flirt--though I couldn't help feeling a sort of exultation that he was number two in one day" (p. 58). Her description of Dracula's first attack also reveals a sensuality which is surprising in Lucy:

Then I have a vague memory of something long and dark with red eyes, just as we saw in the sunset, and something very sweet and very bitter all around me at once; and then I seemed sinking into deep green water, and there was a singing in my ears, as I have heard there is to drowning men; and then everything seemed passing away from me; my soul seemed to go out of my body and float about the air. I seemed to remember that once the West Lighthouse was right under me, and then there was a sort of agonizing feeling, as if I were in an earthquake, and I came back and found you shaking my body. I saw you do it before I felt you. (p. 93).

Although Mina is not attracted to Dracula as Lucy is, her account of his attack upon her discloses the same ambiguous reaction:

I was bewildered, and, strangely enough, I did not want to hinder him. I suppose it is part of the horrible curse that this happens when his touch is on his victim...I felt my strength fading away, and I was in a half-swoon. How long this horrible thing lasted, I know not; but it seemed that a long time must have passed before he took his foul, awful sneering mouth away... (p. 256).

It is noticeable that Mina's account of the attack emphasizes the horror of the situation in contrast to that of Lucy. While she too is corrupted by Dracula, Mina does not display the sexuality which marks the Undead Lucy. Leonard Wolf, in A Dream of Dracula, argues that this is because "as a married woman, she is protected to some degree by a Christian sacrament."<sup>59</sup> Wolf also points out that Mina is stronger than Lucy in character, a fact which Stoker makes clear early in the novel.<sup>60</sup>

An ambiguous response to the vampire is not limited to the women in the novel, some of the male characters are prone as well to conflicting emotions. Jonathan Harker's equivo-

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<sup>59</sup> Leonard Wolf, A Dream of Dracula (Boston, 1972), p. 217.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 217.

cal behaviour with the "brides" in Transylvania, previously alluded to in this thesis, is only one example. Although he has been warned about the destructive quality of the vampire, when confronted by the Undead Lucy, Arthur Holmwood almost becomes her prey. He is attracted to the vampire and saved only by the timely intervention of Van Helsing:

As for Arthur, he seemed under a spell; moving his hands from his face, he opened wide his arms. She was leaping for them, when Van Helsing sprang forward and held between them his little golden crucifix (p. 191).

Even Van Helsing is momentarily distracted by the beauty of the three vampire women; it is only Mina's "soul-wail" that recalls him to his task and prevents his destruction.

Despite Van Helsing's "lectures" on the subject to Seward and the others, there is still some confusion about vampirism in Stoker's novel. The fact that Lucy was bitten by Dracula during a sleepwalking trance is supposed to make a difference in Lucy as a vampire, but the point is never clarified. Van Helsing says,

In trance she died, and in trance she is Undead, too, so it is that she differ from all other. Usually when the Undead sleep at home...their face show what they are, but this so sweet that was when she not Undead she go back to the nothings of the common dead. There is no malign there, see, and so it make hard I must kill her in her sleep (p. 181).

Van Helsing's statement is contradicted later by the descriptions of the Undead Lucy as "heartless", "foul", and "unclean". Lucy, however she was bitten, is still a vampire. The period of time during the day in which Dracula is forced to remain in his coffin is never specified. At the end of the novel, the Count is unable to move from his coffin until sunset, yet in in England he was seen by the Harkers during the day. The "loose ends" which Stoker forgot to tie up in Dracula are minor, however, when compared to those in his other novels, particularly The Lair of the White Worm and The Jewel of Seven Stars.

In Dracula, Stoker's handling of vampire material emphasizes the work's quality of Gothic romance. The introduction of vampirism into what is, thematically and stylistically, a work of romance makes the conflict between hero and villain cosmic and absolute. By giving Dracula powers which make him almost invincible, Stoker makes his vampire the representative of the Devil on earth more explicitly than any previous author. This means an increased danger for the heroes who undertake to destroy the Satanic figure; they run the risk of eternal damnation, as Van Helsing explains,

But to fail here is not mere life  
 or death. It is that we become like  
 him--without heart or conscience  
 preying on the bodies and the souls  
 of those we love best. To us for  
 ever are the gates of heaven shut; for  
 who shall open them to us again? We go  
 on for all time abhorred by all; a blot  
 on the face of God's sunshine; an arrow  
 in the side of Him who died for men  
 (p. 213).

In contrast to the Count, the heroes are the agents of order and good, and therefore are seen as the representatives of God in the battle with evil. Van Helsing says, "It may be that we are chosen instruments of His good pleasure, and that we ascend to His bidding as that other through stripes and shame; through tears and blood; through doubts and fears, and all that makes the difference between God and man" (p. 265). This sharp division of characters into good and bad is a major characteristic of romance. Northrop Frye writes that in romance

the opposite poles of cycles of nature are assimilated to the opposition of the hero and his enemy. The enemy is associated with winter, darkness, confusion, sterility, moribund life, and old age, and the hero with spring, dawn, order, fertility, vigor, and youth.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton, 1957), p. 187-188.

This opposition is clearly illustrated in Dracula in the conflict of the young heroes and the centuries-old vampire. Frye's comments are echoed by Devendra Varma in The Gothic Flame. Varma states that in Gothic romances, there are "no restful human shades of grey: the characters are mostly either endowed with sombre diabolical villainy or pure angelic virtue."<sup>62</sup> As the representative of Satan, Stoker's Dracula embodies many of the forces which threaten established society: chaos, anarchy, selfishness, and barbarism. The struggle to defeat him becomes a test of the courage, love, altruism, and faith of those involved. The fact that Dracula nearly succeeds in his plans is a measure of his potency and the efficacy of evil.

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<sup>62</sup>Devendra Varma, The Gothic Flame (London, 1957), p. 19.

## CONCLUSION

In its themes, settings, atmosphere, and treatment of characters, Dracula is a Gothic novel. The influence of the Gothic tradition is evident in each of these features of the work. Although Bram Stoker was not a great writer (some critics would say that he was not even a good writer) in his best work, Dracula, he proved himself to be a superb craftsman. Like the greatest of the Gothic novelists, Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis, and Charles Robert Maturin, Stoker knew how to tell a story, how to manipulate his audience, and how to create tension and suspense. In Dracula, Stoker carefully evoked the world of Gothic romance, a world of persecuted maidens, enigmatic villains, and unearthly events. At the same time, Stoker created an original and powerful work by blending the Gothic romance and his own unique concept of vampirism.

Like the best works of the Gothic school, Stoker's novel can be interpreted in ways which go beyond its literal or conventional meaning. There is a psychological depth and complexity in Dracula, of which Stoker himself may have been unaware. This, along with the fact that Stoker could tell a gripping story, has been responsible

for the continued interest in the novel. Critics have found meanings in Dracula which certainly would have baffled the author, who thought that he had written a straight-forward horror story. As previously mentioned, Les Daniels in Living in Fear defines Dracula as "the embodiment of an unleashed id, sleeping all day and spending his nights creeping into bedrooms."<sup>1</sup> For Leonard Wolf, the vampire is

Our eidolon, the willing representative of the temptations, and the crimes, of the Age of Energy. He is huge, and we admire size; strong, and we admire strength. He moves with the confidence of a creature that has energy, power, and will. Granted that he has energy without grace, power without responsibility, and that his will is an exercise in death. We need only to look a little to one side to see how tempting is the choice he makes: available immortality. He has collected on the devil's bargain: the infinitely stopped moment.<sup>2</sup>

Although Stoker may not have intended his reader to see the Count in this way, the novel is open to several interpretations.

Dracula has been widely influential and not just in the realms of horror and vampire literature. As the following excerpt from "The Wasteland" shows, even T.S. Eliot was influenced by Stoker's novel:

<sup>1</sup>Les Daniels, Living in Fear (New York, 1975), p. 63.

<sup>2</sup>Leonard Wolf, A Dream of Dracula (Boston, 1972), p. 302.



And bats with baby faces in the violet light  
 Whistled, and beat their wings  
 And crawled head downward down a blackened  
 wall.<sup>3</sup>

In Dracula and, to a lesser degree, his other novels and short stories, Stoker provides his readers with a link to the Gothic tradition. While only a devoted few read Ann Radcliffe, Horace Walpole or Clara Reeve today, most people have been exposed to Stoker's tale in one form or another. Thanks to horror films, the fog-shrouded castle, the beautiful girl fleeing down a long, dark corridor in a revealing nightgown, and the evil aristocrat with a black cape and sharp teeth are familiar, if not commonplace images. Walpole and Radcliffe might consider these modern equivalents of their novels to be vulgar distortions, but even the most poorly-realized vampire film pays homage, however indirectly, to the Gothic tradition as it is transmitted in Stoker's novel. As a classic tale of horror, Dracula has ensured lasting fame for Bram Stoker and for the Gothic tradition.

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<sup>3</sup>T. S. Eliot, "The Wasteland", Selected Poems (New York, (1964), p. 66. Eliot, here, is clearly recalling Jonathan Harker's description of Dracula leaving his castle in Transylvania: "But my very feelings changed to repulsion and terror when I saw the whole man slowly emerge from the window and begin to crawl down the castle wall over that dreadful abyss, face down, with his cloak spreading out around him like great wings." (p. 37)

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