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"There was No Sign of Man in It": Casting Dracula as Posthuman and Valuing the Progressive Vampire

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“THERE WAS NO SIGN OF MAN IN IT”: CASTING DRACULA AS POSTHUMAN AND VALUING THE PROGRESSIVE VAMPIRE

by

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ABSTRACT

"THERE WAS NO SIGN OF MAN IN IT": CASTING DRACULA AS POSTHUMAN AND VALUING THE PROGRESSIVE VAMPIRE

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Although not an immediate commercial success, *Dracula* has since become a seminal example of Gothic horror at the *fin-de-siècle*, leading not only to film, stage, and television adaptations, but also to literary reimaginings and a plethora of scholarship. I argue that the vampires in *Dracula* do not fit into the traditional critical understandings of the vampire; rather, they belong in two different but related categories recently theorized by science fiction studies and related to human evolution: transhuman and posthuman. I suggest that a reading of the novel that prioritizes the pervasive influence of evolutionary theory on Victorian literature encourages a reading of vampires as a posthuman species. Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871) challenged and troubled the Victorians, who now had to consider humans as a species that not only evolved over time but that could also, like other species, go extinct. Humans in a state of transhuman evolution and vampires as posthuman call into question a common belief that Victorian *fin-de-siècle* literature echoes contemporary fears of regression post-Darwin. Instead, the vampires in this new reading highlight Victorian fears of the progression of another species that will naturally overtake *homo sapiens*. Having read the text as an expression of a fear of the vampire's evolution, I will then argue that rather than limiting the discussion of Stoker's novel to *fin-de-siècle* Gothic horror, we can also read Stoker's novel as a work of science fiction.

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"There was No Sign of Man in It"

Despite scores of bloodsuckers on the page and screen since his creation, the most widely recognized vampire in the world remains Bram Stoker's 1897 creation, Dracula. Although not an immediate commercial success, the novel has since become a seminal example of Gothic horror at the *fin-de-siècle*,[1] leading not only to film, stage, and television adaptations, but also to literary reimaginings and a plethora of scholarship. Much of the critical conversation on the text seeks to understand the vampires themselves, reading the vampires of Stoker's novel in one of four ways:[2] first, as degenerate humans; second, as stand-ins for humans of another race, sexuality, or religion; third, as regressive, abhuman beings; or fourth, as mutants outside of the known and recognized taxonomy. I argue that the vampires in *Dracula* do not fit into any of these four categories; rather, they belong in two different but related categories recently theorized by science fiction studies and related to human evolution: transhuman and posthuman. I suggest that a reading of the novel that prioritizes the pervasive influence of evolutionary theory on Victorian literature encourages a reading of vampires as a posthuman species. Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871) challenged and troubled the Victorians, who now had to consider humans as a species that not only evolved over time but that could also, like other species, go extinct. Humans in a state of transhuman evolution and vampires as posthuman call into

[1] *Fin-de-siècle* translates to "end-of-the-century," and refers to the period between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The term came into the common vocabulary around 1889 ("*Fin-de-siècle*").

[2] There have been numerous other readings of Dracula, of course, including Franco Moretti's interpretation of the Count as manifesting monopoly capitalism and Talia Schaffer and Christopher Craft's address of Dracula as representing homoerotic desire. However, I want to focus on common readings that are related to evolution; therefore, I will limit my analysis to these four conversations.

question a common belief that Victorian *fin-de-siècle* literature echoes contemporary fears of regression post-Darwin. Instead, the vampires in this new reading highlight Victorian fears of the progression of another species, a fear that a species stronger, smarter, faster, and more intelligent than man will naturally overtake *homo sapiens*. Having read the text as an expression of a fear of the vampire's evolution, I will then argue that rather than limiting the discussion of Stoker's novel to *fin-de-siècle* Gothic horror, we can also read Stoker's novel as a work of science fiction.

Dracula opens with Jonathan Harker, an Englishman, travelling to Transylvania to complete business with a shadowy figure named Count Dracula. The trip goes awry as Dracula is revealed to be a vampire intent on conquering England (if not the larger European continent). As Dracula sets into motion his plan for conquest, he travels to London to begin the process of creating other vampires by biting them, including Jonathan's fiancé, Mina, and her friend, Lucy. Mina; Lucy's three suitors (Dr. John Seward, Arthur Holmwood, and Quincey Morris); and Dr. Seward's professional mentor Dr. Van Helsing work together to oppose and defeat Dracula; this group is known as the "Crew of Light".[3] Lucy, once bitten, transforms into a vampire, and the Crew stakes and beheads her; Quincey Morris dies fighting Dracula; and Mina very nearly becomes a vampire. The Crew must chase Dracula across London before the vampire retreats to his continental home, where The Crew of Light corners and stakes him through the heart.

The vampire menace that the Crew of Light defeats lends itself to allegory, and, accordingly, readings of the novel offer a multitude of interpretations on how to read the

[3] This nickname, now used widely among critics, originated in Christopher Craft's essay, "'Kiss Me with Those Red Lips': Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*" (1984).

vampire. Thus, before I offer my own interpretation of the vampire, I will look to previous vampire scholarship on which my understanding builds and from which it departs. The first way to read the vampire is as a degenerate man, a reading which builds on Victorian concerns of degeneration theory and criminal physiognomy, like that which Max Nordau and Cesare Lombroso, respectively, popularized in the nineteenth century. In the nineteenth century particularly, an increase in knowledge about the human body and Darwin's theories helped create a strong fear in Victorian England of man's degeneration, that humans and society were becoming a "morbid deviation from an original type," that culture had become so corrupt that individuals were no longer able to advance (Nordau 16). As a result of this fear, creative works crafted at the end of the nineteenth century were often occupied with the ideas of "a vice-ridden London waiting to seduce naive young girls," "crowds of grotesque and ne'er-do-wells," and the "descent into profligacy and madness" (Ridenhour 25-26). Larger, societal degeneration, Nordau and the Degenerists would assert, also occurs on a smaller, individual scale which contributed to Europe-wide hysteria. Physiognomists like Lombroso hypothesized that physical traits, such as aquiline noses and pointed ears—traits shared by the Count—evidenced the degenerate and pointed to the likelihood of criminal behavior among that population. Within *Dracula* scholarship, the pervasiveness of degeneration theory and criminal anthropology looms large: Andrew Smith has called *Dracula* "the great ur-text of this Gothic degeneration" (34), writing that the Count "is [] a projection of bourgeois anxieties concerning *their* potential for decline and degeneration" (36). Even the novel itself directly references a concern for degeneration: Mina, Jonathan's fiancé, comments to Dr. Van Helsing that, "The Count is a criminal and of the criminal type. Nordau and

Lombroso would so classify him…" (Stoker 317). Importantly, and in contrast to the abhuman being discussed below, the degenerate man is still a man—the degenerate is less evolved, but is not actively becoming less "human."

Related to the reading of vampires as degenerate humans, a second popular way to read the vampire is as a stand-in for the human Other. Like the Gothic, Invasion Literature was popular during the Victorian period. Fear of invasion cropped up in various forms, from military invasion to the arrival of extraterrestrials:

> Concerns affected included, but were not limited to, the strand of oriental invasion or 'yellow peril' tales often associated with Shiel, the fin-de-siècle gothic with its defining trope of the supernatural intruder, and early crime and detective fiction with its comparably dominant figure of the foreign criminal. (Bulfin 489-490)

Within *Dracula* scholarship particularly, Stephen Arata and Judith Halberstam read Dracula as a racial, religious, sexual, ethnic, or cultural Other moving into the space of the white, Anglophone, Protestant heroes.[4] Vampires represent the unfamiliar, and the novel provides an experimental space in which to examine Victorian fears of foreigners who invade or otherwise endanger the British Empire. Yet while the text may indicate anxiety over the degeneration of or an invasion by man, other scholars read the vampire as non-human beings that threaten the Empire.

A third common vein of vampiric criticism of the novel is that Dracula and the vampires are essentially regressed versions of man that are no longer human. Man, this reading of regression in *Dracula* would suggest, is in the process of returning to a more

[4] For more on invaders in Victorian literature and ideas which influenced Arata, see Patrick Brantlinger's *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism* and Judith Wilt's "The Imperial Mouth: Imperialism, the Gothic, and Science Fiction."

primordial state, and *homo* sapiens are regressing to a state that lacks the advancement and sophistication of man (though he may have special, new abilities as a vampire). Kelly Hurley's description of the abhuman[5] in various Gothic works, including *The Island of Dr. Moreau, The Time Machine, The Beetle, Jekyll and Hyde,* and *The Great God Pan,* illustrates the possibility of man's regression back down the evolutionary chain. Hurley describes the abhuman as "a not-quite-human subject characterized by its morphic variability, continually in danger of becoming not-itself, becoming other" (Hurley 3-4) and "bodily ambiguated or otherwise discontinuous in identity" (5). The abhuman, unstable and regressive, is a being that moves away from humanity, as the prefix "*ab*" denotes, relapsing to that which is less civilized: "the motif of human devolution occurs again and again in the *fin-de-siècle* Gothic" (63). Hurley's readings of Stoker's work center on *Dracula's* attempt to understand the "fantastic" (15) in relation to a Darwinian world-view and suggest that a confusion over man's place in the evolutionary chain pervades the text (15, 19, 20). An understanding of the abhuman in *Dracula* muddles the reader's delineation between man and beast; vampires defy our understanding of man's evolution, but still the vampire remains a possibility.

Finally, *Dracula* scholarship has understood vampires as mutants who deviate from traditional evolutionary processes. For Darwin and early evolutionists, change in a species happened slowly over time through the reproduction of "fit" individuals. Beings like Dracula, then, defied this process of development through a potential—even the propensity for, as Thomas Richards says—"sudden and catastrophic changes of form, a

[5] The term "abhuman," though expanded and popularized by Hurley, was initially coined by William Hope Hodgson in *The Night Land*, published in 1912.

kind of change outlawed and virtually unknowable under the Darwinian system" (48-49). Dracula's change from man to vampire, Richards says, is a rapid process that defies the process of evolution; thus, his transformation evidences his monstrous being. The fact that Dracula drinks blood, that vampire Lucy preys on children, the vampire's advanced intellect and strength, among other traits, highlight Dracula's difference from man. Because his evolution from man to the more advanced species of vampire happens suddenly and seemingly inexplicably, it is simple to read the *Dracula* text as Gothic horror meant to shock and thrill wherein "humans regard the monsters that they encounter as abnormal, as disturbances of the natural order" (Carroll 52). Richards' reading of the vampire as mutant in particular comes close to my understanding of the vampire as posthuman. Yet while Richardson argues that vampires are an aberration of the evolutionary process, I hold that the evolution of the vampire is a natural process in line with Darwin's ideas.

These four ways of reading Dracula, while useful, are problematic when attempting to explore the possibility of Dracula and other vampires as progressive characters rather than degenerate humans, human invaders, abhuman creatures, or inexplicable mutants. Readings in which vampires essentially "devolve" from being human downplays the extent to which vampires *evolve* to threaten the heroes of the novel. The vampire's transformation, I will argue, builds on Darwinian ideas of evolution as improvement and encourages a reading that values the evolutionary success of the vampire, despite its monstrosity. Meanwhile, reading Dracula as mutant outside an understanding of evolution ignores one explanation for the staying power of the text: vampires can naturally evolve from humans and can overtake *homo sapiens*. To add to

the current discussion of the vampire's place in the natural world, I will turn to two categorizations that have previously been ignored in *Dracula* scholarship: transhuman and posthuman.

Transhuman and Posthuman

Dracula, I posit, actually indicates that vampires are extremely advanced beings; thus, vampires can be read as transhuman and posthuman. These terms, created by science fiction writers, denote men and women who desire a more perfect form of humanity and who often achieve this perfectibility through external means.[6] Around the middle of the twentieth century, science fiction writers began to use the term "transhuman" to describe a state of being "in transition to the next evolutionary phase of humanness" (Allenby and Sarewitz 2). For these writers, the term connoted changes made to the body that allowed for enhanced performance and functionality. With trans- and posthuman characters, authors of science fiction could then pen increasingly incredible tales of adventure, travel, and ethical quandaries. Outside of fiction, theorists understand transhumanism as "a program of continuing expansion of the human desire to understand, modify, and control its surroundings, its prospects, and its self, and to couple to the technologies that surround us ever more intimately" (2). Vampires, like the transhumans of modern science fiction, are in the process of evolving from their humble, human beginnings and becoming something other than *homo sapiens*. Transhumanism is a sort of middling state, a place of being more advanced than the average human, but still recognizably human. This process of vampiric evolution establishes a more perfect

[6] These means may include body modification through pills and medicine, fake limbs, surgeries, or other changes to the body.

version of the human, in which the vampire throws off human weaknesses, sharpens existing strengths, and gains new abilities. Transhumanism, for the human, is a step in the process of becoming a vampire, even if the evolution from human to vampire has begun against his/her wishes. The transhuman state in the novel ends upon the natural death of the person bitten by another vampire, and at the time he/she fully makes the transition into a vampire themselves.

After the transformation to vampire is complete, however, I argue that the vampire should be deemed posthuman. The evolution from man or woman to vampire is such that those beings no longer belong to the same species as Jonathan, Van Helsing, and other members of the Crew of Light. They are not advanced humans, they are something Other. The posthuman, Nicholas Gane explains, citing Donna Haraway, tests the "three key boundaries that have helped preserve the sanctity of 'the human' as a self-contained being: those between humans and animals, animal-humans (organisms) and machines, and the realms of the physical and nonphysical" (431). These boundaries mutate, fuse, and push against each other to create a new understanding of what it means to be human; the human is no longer confined to the physical, intellectual, emotional, psychological, or mental boundaries that have limited the human previously. In modern posthuman studies, critics explore how technology and the human interact and meld. In *Dracula*, the vampire tests the three boundaries that "preserve the sanctity of 'the human,'" and demonstrates the potential of man, should he transition past human and become that which is part man, animal, and machine, and that which transcends the boundary between physical and nonphysical (Gane 431). The vampires have left behind

humanity and its trappings, resist the boundaries that separate humans from other beasts and machines, and confuse the space between our physical and immaterial existence.

Because the definition and current understanding of posthuman arose relatively recently[7] and continue to evolve as technology rapidly advances, I find the OED's simple definition of posthuman useful for understanding vampires in *Dracula*: "Posthuman" is defined as "[a] member of a hypothetical species that might evolve from human beings" ("Posthuman"). In examining more current works of literature and art including films, paintings, music, and drama, posthuman studies frequently concerns itself with subjects which are part mechanical, such as cyborgs, or medical advancements, such as the use of drugs to alter reality and ability. For Stoker's novel, however, written in 1897, current technologies with which modern science fiction contends and much of the understanding of the human body, its abilities, and relationship to other species (the focus of posthuman writing, both fictional and critical) were as yet unknown. Still, *Dracula* pushes the boundaries of medical science and human and technological advancement and blurs the line between man and machine.[8] The vampire, can be understood as a creature who evolves from man, melding a new technology of rapid physical and intellectual development with traits that might be associated with technological advancement and who has become something outside the human species. Importantly, that species is no longer human, but possesses abilities beyond that which the *homo sapiens* is capable. Having previously sought modification or advancement as a transhuman species,

[7] Gane locates the "explosion" of posthuman studies as the early 1990s (Gane 431).
[8] There are many texts which hypothesize about the "fear" being expressed in *Dracula*. Anna Marie Jones discusses new understanding of energy that was occurring concurrently with *Dracula* in *The Beetle*. Judith Halberstam discusses the fear of technology such as the typewriter as monstrous.

vampires have reached a state of posthumanism, a terrifying prospect for the British characters in the novel, as well as for Stoker's readers. An examination of some of the vampire's traits will help explain how Stoker's vampires test the three boundaries of the human in both the transhuman and posthuman forms, and thus, I will now offer a reading of three characters, Dracula, Lucy, and Mina, who each offer a unique understanding into the transformation process of human to transhuman to posthuman.

Dracula's transformation from human to vampire (human-transhuman-posthuman) happens primarily off the page, yet insights into his life as a human, as well as his abilities as a posthuman vampire, reveal exactly how far he has progressed as a member of the vampire species. Dracula was born hundreds of years before Queen Victoria sat on the British throne, and was once a man like the members of the Crew of Light. Prior to his evolution, Dracula was "the cleverest and the most cunning, as well as the bravest of the sons," but as a vampire, these talents are multiplied many times over (Stoker 224). Van Helsing recounts for the Crew the research of his colleague, Arminius, on Dracula's origin, sharing that, "[The Dracula family] learned [the Evil One's] secrets in the Scholomance[9] amongst the mountains over Lake Hermanstadt, where the devil claims the tenth scholar as his due..." (224). Over multiple generations, the Dracula family has evolved via its study and interface with "the Evil One," and thus produced a member, the tenth scholar Dracula, whose abilities extend past the human. The transhuman transformation of Dracula from man to vampire occurs as a result of the

[9] In Emily Gerard's *Land Beyond the Forest*, the Scholomance manifests as a school where "the secrets of nature, the language of the animals, and all magic spells are taught by the devil in person." Notably, from a group of ten scholars who learn the Devil's magic, one is detained to serve as his aid after the lessons conclude (Wolf 214).

desire for self-improvement, accomplished through education and skill acquisition. Though the Count's transformation from man to vampire does not appear on page, Van Helsing's retelling of the process indicates the mental sharpening that occurs during the vampiric transformation. The evolution from human to advanced transhuman is simply a stepping stone on Dracula's path to becoming truly posthuman: that which is no longer human and possess abilities beyond those of man.

Now a vampire, having moved from man, through transhuman, to posthuman, Dracula's human abilities as warlord, statesman, and soldier have transformed. Dracula's intellectual prowess, previously impressive, increases. For example, the Count uses talents, skills, knowledge, and his many physical forms (dog, fog, storm) to infiltrate England via boat. Dracula meticulously plans his invasion by studying English magazines and newspapers and "books…of the most varied kind—history, geography, politics, political economy, botany, geology, law—all relating to England and English life and customs and manners" (Stoker 22). Though Victorian England did not exist at the time when Dracula lived as a human, as a vampire, he has since memorized countless details about the foreign land, planned an invasion, and shows his ability to adapt his plans in the process of carrying them out, as he does when he changes his land/sea route returning to Transylvania. Dracula's meticulous planning leads to further adaption of the vampire, and indicates that even "alone! from a ruin [sic] tomb in a forgotten land" Dracula changes and advances (297). Vampiric powers multiply Dracula's intellect, which, during his life, was recognized as "a learning beyond compare" (280). Now, the vampire demonstrates that he continues to advance, and even more frightening to the Crew, is

aware of his continued development (280). Yet advanced mental faculty is not the sole achievement of the vampire.

Dracula, notably, becomes a more advanced version of man during the feeding process, a success that demonstrates the superiority of the posthuman. When Jonathan descends into Dracula's subterranean sleeping chamber in his Transylvanian castle, he discovers a Dracula much different than the vampire he had earlier encountered. Upon his initial arrival at the castle, Jonathan describes the Count's appearance as having "extraordinary pallor," with "…the mouth… fixed and rather cruel-looking," and with cheeks "firm though thin" (Stoker 20). Dracula resembles a corpse in his paleness and the sharp angles of his features, from his "aquiline nose" to his "pointed ears" (20). Later, the first time that Jonathan sees the Count asleep in his box of dirt, Dracula's "cheeks had the warmth of life through all their pallor, and the lips were red as ever" (48). This scene, following a night of feeding in which Dracula brought a child for the Sisters to drain, demonstrates the effects of blood on the vampire's body. The blood is resuscitating, fulfilling, and the effects are even more astonishing when Dracula has fed extensively. The second time Jonathan sneaks into Dracula's lair, he finds the Count, "looking as if half his youth had been restored" (51). Aging, the natural decay of humans, is a reversible process for the vampire. Dracula's hair darkens after feeding, his cheeks fill in, and his distinctive pallor brightens with the blood he has consumed (51). Not only does the process of vampirism sustain and strengthen Dracula's body, but "vampire[s] live on, and cannot die by mere passing of the time; he can flourish when that he can fatten on the blood of the living" (222). By enacting his vampirism, Dracula becomes superior to

humans; the drinking of blood to sustain himself, barring death via staking and beheading, will allow the vampire to exist *ad infinitum*.

With this long life also comes superior strength and physicality. In a scene of the novel that is frequently discussed by critics, Dracula exits his Transylvanian castle though a window in order to keep the castle doors barred against Jonathan. While Jonathan watches with "repulsion and terror," Dracula "emerge[s] from the window and begin[s] to crawl down the castle wall" (Stoker 35). Reading this passage with Dracula as posthuman allows readers to accept Dracula's extraordinary, yet natural, feat. As shocking as the climbing action is, Dracula uses an enhanced version of human capabilities to scale the wall. The Count uses the "projection and inequality" in the rock, much like a skilled rock climber, relying on the strength of his "broad" hands (20). Yet Dracula still retains his human shape in this moment and depends on advanced abilities to accomplish his task, rather than a supernatural ability (20). Jonathan later attempts to mimic the Count's window exit, asking, "[W]here his body has gone, why may not another body go?," yet Jonathan is unable to travel the same route, and instead, frightened and cautious, opts instead to walk along a narrow ledge only to reenter the castle (46). As illustrated by the window exit, the vampire is infinitely more gifted and able than most humans. The Count, having evolved from human to transhuman to posthuman, is a more advanced version of man, able to perform that which is too advanced for *homo sapiens*.

Throughout *Dracula* is scattered other evidence that suggests that vampires have advanced beyond what might be considered human, pushing the boundaries between man and animal, man and machine, and physical and nonphysical. Van Helsing tells the Crew

of many other "superhuman" qualities of the Count which demonstrate that the vampire is no longer human or even transhuman, but has become posthuman. Dracula's talents surpass the abilities of man, including obtaining excessive strength (man/machine), the ability to communicate with animals (man/animal), mutation into non-human forms like fog and a dog (physical/nonphysical and man/animal), seeing in the dark (man/machine), hypnotism or trance induction,[10] and the ability to "at times vanish and come unknown" (physical/nonphysical) (Stoker 221). Dracula is stronger and faster than the humans around him, able to exert "physical mastery" over his British victims (Arata 121). These abilities support labeling Dracula posthuman, a member of a species that has evolved beyond man as Victorians understand him.

While Dracula displays much of the prowess of the posthuman, Lucy Westenra offers insight into the vampire as a species separate from humans and further illustrates the transhuman evolution. Andrew Maunder supports this reading of the transhuman transition as a process when he notes, "Stoker's depiction of Lucy's decline follows a definite pattern, from over-sensitivity…through the development of somnambulistic trances with attendant eroticism, to the emergence of a dual existence which hovers between waking and lethargic states and finally to her eventual death" (44-45). After Lucy is bitten by Dracula and begins the process of becoming a vampire, her body rapidly undergoes a series of changes between August 11 (the day she was first bitten) and September 20 (the day of her natural death). In that span of time, Dracula repeatedly visits Lucy and feeds on her, robbing her body of blood and decimating her health.

[10] Dracula can control, lure, and otherwise use Dr. Seward's patient, Renfield, though Renfield is not a vampire.

During this period, Lucy's friends and admirers frequently liken her to a corpse, a description that may be read quite literally as vampires are, to use Van Helsing's term, "Un-Dead." As Dracula drains Lucy's blood through repeated feedings, the vivacious, flirty woman becomes more docile, "weak," and "afraid" (Stoker 142, 143). Near the end of Lucy's life, her body reflects the fear she constantly experiences and the lack of blood from which she suffers: "She was hardly able to turn her head, and the little nourishment which she could take seemed to do her no good…her open mouth showed the pale gums drawn back from the teeth…she looked her own self, although a dying one" (143). The dramatic change in her appearance demonstrates that Lucy's wasting away and the initial steps of transformation into a vampire occur simultaneously; she grows pale during the transformation in contrast to her usual, rosy beauty making her appearance harsh rather than soft (151). Despite her lack of strength and the decay of her body, Lucy also develops a habit of somnambulance. Initially, Lucy explains away her sleepwalking as a family trait, but as the feedings increase and Lucy becomes less of a human and more of a vampire, her nighttime wanderings increase. Lucy's period of transhumanism is painful for the girl and a grueling process for her friends to watch, but upon Lucy's death, she completes the evolution from human, to transhuman, to posthuman.

Despite the apparent wasting away of Lucy's body, after her human death, the collapse of the human body is reversed. As a result of her transformation into vampire, Lucy's beauty, one of her defining characteristics in life, is exponentially enhanced to the point where she is barely recognizable, even to her betrothed. As a human, Lucy's hair is "shiny ripples" (150), and the pallor of a vampire contrasts with her bright countenance. After death and as a vampire, the process of decline reverses. Lucy becomes "more

radiantly beautiful than ever" (Stoker 186). Her cheeks are rosy and her lips full, just as Dracula's become after feeding. Her old suitors, including Dr. Seward and Arthur Holmwood, express shock at her visage immediately upon her passing: "God! how beautiful she was. Every hour seemed to be enhancing her loveliness. It frightened and amazed me somewhat; and as for Arthur, he fell a-trembling, and finally was shaken with doubt as with an ague" (157). Lucy's beauty is multiplied as a vampire, demonstrating that the evolution from human to posthuman improves upon human characteristics and abilities. Dr. Seward is entranced by Lucy's voice after her transformation and reanimation as a vampire: "There was something diabolically sweet in her tones—" Seward writes, "something of the tingling of glass when struck—which rang through the brains even of us who heard the words addressed to another. As for Arthur, he seemed under a spell…" (197). Vampires, Dr. Seward's diary suggests, have powers which exceed those of a human; Lucy's voice is unnaturally sweet, and her powers of persuasion are such that she fairly casts a spell over her listeners. Lucy is also able to pass through a sealed tomb door, changing the shape or size of her body to an unnatural extent. Lucy's new powers and abilities support the idea that in becoming a posthuman vampire, the vampire gains abilities that are not accessible to the human.

Yet vampire Lucy, for all her beauty, charm, and improvement, is monstrous to her former suitors and good friends. Encountering Lucy in her graveyard haunt, Dr. Seward writes with horror of Lucy's adamantine, heartless cruelty and "voluptuous wantonness," and he proclaims that "[a]t that moment the remnant of my love passed into hate and loathing; had she then to be killed, I could have done it with savage delight" (Stoker 196-197). Lucy, while always more openly sexual and experimental than her

friend Mina, becomes grounded solely in her physical appetites upon her transformation into a vampire; she thirsts for blood, and, removed from the possibility of becoming a human wife and mother, "[her] female sexuality becomes monstrous" (Arata 118). As a vampire, Lucy's previously exalted traits of beauty and magnetism are dramatically warped; Lucy's feeding on children in the graveyard is not only horrific as an act of vampirism, but because "[i]n this obscene nightmare, Lucy… also threatens sexual abuse and sexual recruitment since the bite of the vampire also has the quality of contagion or conversion. By 'vamping' the children, the text seems to suggest that Lucy is a threat to the whole future of Western civilization" (Maunder 45). As a vampire with posthuman abilities, Lucy can continue to create new vampires quickly and mercilessly. Seward writes that Lucy's eyes are "unclean and full of hell-fire" (197), and Lucy's name is discarded by her peers in favor of descriptions such as "the Kensington Horror" (165), "demon," "Un-Dead," and "the Thing." In fact, Dr. Seward writes in his narrative that he uses Lucy's name only to refer to the vampire because it "bore her shape" (197). The Crew seeks to distance themselves from the posthuman vampire, appalled by the way Lucy's old, beloved traits now function in service of preying on babies and converting English children into vampires like herself, should her feeding not kill them. While the Crew of Light recognizes the power Lucy now possesses, the Crew is more appalled than awed by her abilities. Rather than admire a stronger and more alluring Lucy who can quickly reproduce, the Crew heaps digust on the evolved Lucy, for admiration could mean the loss of their own humanity.

In contrast to the "obscene nightmare" (Maunder 45) that is Lucy as a vampire, Mina Harker's transformation to the transhuman is less horrific, particularly since the

staking of Dracula prevents both her final evolution to a posthuman and the consequent loss of her humanity. Before Mina is bitten, she is held up as morally superior woman, anxious to "be useful to Jonathan" (Stoker 53). Mina is also skilled in many areas, including typing, shorthand transcription, and memorization. Van Helsing and the other members of the Crew dote on Mina as their "star and their hope" (225) and a "poor, dear, dear" lady (266), with Jonathan even using the men's affection for Mina to inspire action and begin an offense against Dracula (264). These qualities—a knack for communication and a sweet disposition—endear Mina to all who interact with her, and these traits are exactly what will further develop as Mina becomes transhuman after Dracula bites her. As with Dracula's and Lucy's transformation into vampires, Mina's transformation begins a process of enhancing and warping traits Mina already possessed. Mina's evolution to the transhuman is similar to the process of Lucy's evolution, though less extreme since the Count does not continuously feed on her. Mina and Lucy are transhuman for nearly the same length of time; Mina's transformation lasts from approximately October 1 to November 6 (the day Dracula is staked), while Lucy lives a few days longer. Mina, like Lucy, undergoes a period of physical weakening that happens gradually. While awake, Mina is frail and sickly, and during the month of October, she falls into a pattern of long periods of sleep which seem to heal her body, though it is during these times that she becomes more like a vampire. Van Helsing tells the Crew, "[h]er teeth are some sharper, and at times her eyes are more hard" (300), yet, around the same time, he also writes in a memorandum that, after her resuscitating slumbers, Mina consistently awakes "more charming than ever" (339). Mina begins to manifest physical symptoms of vampirism, an outward sign of her transhumanism. Yet Mina, unlike Lucy,

is aware of her transformation which she decries as "a poison in [her] blood, in [her] soul, which may destroy [her]" (306). Mina loathes the transformation; becoming a vampire is a curse to Mina, and she would rather die than join the Un-Dead.

Still, as with Lucy and Dracula, Mina's transhuman state shows the promise of talents or traits she would possess as a vampire: Mina receives sensations from the Count, enabling her to track his location and movement even though she is hundreds of miles away from him. Mina first guesses at her new skill the night of October 3 and instantly summons Van Helsing to hypnotize her. Thereafter, in her trance and during certain times of day, Mina can enter Dracula's mind and aid the Crew of Light in tracking the Count. Previously a skilled communicator and typist, Mina is now able to read minds, even without becoming a vampire. Mina's ability is prodigious, even for a transhuman, yet the source of her power has an explanation. Not only has Dracula fed on Mina, but Mina also ingested Dracula's blood. Dracula comes to Mina in the night, drinks from Mina, then tells her that "[N]ow you shall come to my call. When my brain says 'Come!' to you, you shall cross land or sea to do my bidding" before forcing her to drink from him (268). Dracula does not go on to call Mina to him, but the transfusion creates a close bond between Dracula and Mina. The transfer of blood from vampire to a bitten human does not happen anywhere else in the novel, and possibly accounts for Mina's extraordinary abilities that manifest before she reaches the posthuman stage. However, by November 6, Mina has nearly completed the transformation to vampire. A pattern of sleeping which lasts for nearly a day at a time leaves Mina unusually bright and cheery, with no appetite and an uncanny, verging on a sexual, interest in Van Helsing. Mina's cheerfulness, like

Lucy's beauty, warps into a predatory skill that, though incredible, is threatening in the unnatural power it belies.

The Crew of Light heaps disgust upon vampires and reinforces the belief that humans ought to reject vampires as beings drastically different than a member of their own species. Frequently, vampires are aligned with the devil, demonic forces, or other monstrous figures. Though the vampire is more advanced than man, the novel's human characters dread becoming vampires to the extent that Mina extracts promises from the rest of the Crew that they will "without a moment's delay, drive a stake through [her] and cut off [her] head" should she become a vampire (307). While the posthuman vampire clearly has advantages that the Crew can appreciate, Dracula and his kin repel humans. The Crew of Light views vampires as unlike themselves, beings without a soul, and a threat which they must eliminate. Seeing the vampire as soulless thus reduced any admiration Crew members may have for the posthuman. Like many scientific advances or phenomena then only recently explained by evolutionary theory, the vampire is not easily understood; it defies what has previously been believed possible and is threatening to humans because of its ability to transgress the lines between man, animal, and machine, and the physical and nonphysical. Vampires possess skills and abilities that allow them to thrive at the expense of the humans on whom they feed, but those abilities are the naturally-occurring product of evolution.

The Evolution of the Vampire

To continue my argument that Dracula and other vampires should be viewed as transhuman and posthuman,[11] I will read Darwin's evolutionary theory alongside the novel. Though there is no evidence that Stoker read Darwin,[12] the scientist's theory was inescapable in nineteenth-century England; Darwin's ideas became a part of the national imagination and dialogue after the publication of his texts. Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* sold out its initial printing in a day and received moderate press attention, and interest in Darwin's theories expanded after his publication of *The Descent of Man* in 1871 (Ellegard 19, 25). With a background in medicine, geology, and taxidermy, Darwin's exploration and extensive note-taking[13] paved the way for more widespread acceptance of the theory of evolution, the "survival of the fittest," and the relationship between different species or the idea of a common ancestor. In much of his writing, particularly *On the Origin of Species*, Darwin focuses on the evolution of creatures much smaller or (arguably) less complex than man. Darwin later expanded his studies to the evolution of man in another major work, *The Descent of Man*. *Dracula*, published in 1897, found an audience primed for a science-centric novel. The influence of evolutionary thought on the novel, I suggest, offers a reading of *Dracula* which has previously been ignored. This new reading does not does not prioritize a regressive figure

[11] The terms transhuman and posthuman, as I will go on to explain, are recently created, yet may be applied to Stoker's vampires.

[12] While there is no definitive proof that Stoker read Darwin, scholars have long recognized Stoker's many other, varied influences such as Henry Irving, Max Nordau, Sigmund Freud, Sabine Baring Gould (author of *Book of Werewolves*), Ellen Terry, and Eastern European lore (Maunder 46-47).

[13] As Thomas Richards recognizes, note-taking and the organization of information was a project of great importance for Victorians. In fact, he argues, "Unquestionably the British Empire was more productive of knowledge than any previous empire in history" (3-4). This predilection for the gathering of facts was manifested in literature, Richards writes, to the point that writing was "obsessed with the control of knowledge" (5).

or an inexplicable mutant but a vampire who evolves naturally from the *homo sapiens* species—a more advanced version of man—and a species which man can and should fear, but one which he may also admire.

Dracula's vampire origin story aligns with Darwin's idea of evolution. Despite the difficulty of assigning the vampire a place in the taxonomy of species, Dracula's origin story in fact corroborates Darwin's idea of evolution. "Much greater variability," Darwin writes, "as well as greater frequencies of monstrosities…leads me to believe that deviations in structure are…due to the nature of the conditions of life, to which parents and their remote ancestors have been exposed during several generations" (*The Essential Darwin* 117). Simply put, Darwin theorized that adaptation comes about over several generations as ancestors are exposed to an environment that causes changes. Though Dracula's evolution does not exactly follow Darwin's theory, the trajectory of Darwin's and the vampire's evolution is similar. Dracula describes his family as Szekelys in whose "veins flows the blood of many brave races," a family who prided themselves as warriors (Stoker 30-31). Van Helsing confirms this information, telling the Crew of Light "[Dracula], must, indeed have been that Voivode Dracula who won his name against the Turk" (224). Van Helsing reveals further, "The Draculas were, says Arminius, a great and noble race, though now and again were scions who were held by their coevals to have had dealings with the Evil One" (224). As mentioned earlier in the discussion on the transhuman, Dracula has evolved from his family's study and his own work and physical prowess: "[The Dracula family] learned [the Evil One's] secrets in the Scholomance, amongst the mountains over Lake Hermanstadt, where the devil claims the tenth scholar as his due..." (224). Dracula's evolution might be read as a supernatural event; however, I

contend that the choice of the word "scholar" functions as a way for Stoker to express Victorian discomfort with contemporary rapid, scientific advancement. In a world of Darwinian theory, man has not come into being perfectly formed and shaped by the Creator as a recognizable man, but has evolved. Dracula's origin story depicts a method of evolution that mirrors nearly exactly the process outlined by Darwin: a need or desire to evolve, a period of change, and the production of an advanced being. The one difference between Darwin's theory and the Count's transformation is that the vampire's evolution is more rapid. In addition to the Count's direct evolution through the Dracula family, Van Helsing informs the Crew that vampires are "known everywhere that men have been. In old Greece, in old Rome; he flourishes in Germany all over, in France, in India, even in the Chersonese; and in China…" (222). Not only does Stoker provide readers with Dracula's genealogy and origin story, he also informs readers that vampires as a species existed prior to Count Dracula. The evolution from human to vampire, then, is not unique to Dracula, demonstrating that this rapid form of evolution is not a fluke, but rather a process that can be replicated. By offering an explanation for Dracula's evolution that does not involve being bitten as well as the creation of more vampires through two feedings, Stoker stresses the possibility of evolution, if not by one means then by another.

Dracula's evolution from man, to transhuman, to posthuman as detailed in his origin story is not the sole correspondence between Stoker's work and Darwin's scientific observations. Reading Stoker and Darwin together reveals the possibility that man could be overthrown by another species. In *On the Origin of Species,* Darwin writes, "Ultimately each new species is produced and maintained and has some advantage…

Same with domestic productions: when a new and slightly improved variety has been raised, it first supplants the less improved varieties in the same neighborhood; when much improved, it is transported far and near" (*The Essential Darwin* 184). As Van Helsing describes, the vampiric threat is not limited to one particular time period or location. Dracula already dominates Transylvania, as the villagers' reactions to Jonathan's castle-bound trip make clear. The villagers warn Jonathan against continuing his journey, and one woman even begs him not to go: "'Must you go? Oh! young Herr, must you go?...Do you not know that to-night when the clock strikes midnight, all the evil things in the world will have full sway?'" Indeed, the old woman is not the only villager afraid of the Count; the locals use their terms for "Satan," "hell," "witch," "were-wolf," and "vampire" to discuss Dracula (Stoker 9), and they try to protect Jonathan with a ward against the evil eye (9-10). The villagers' fear is well founded, Jonathan comes to learn, as locals are apt to either become dinner or be converted into vampires, like the Sisters have been. Over the centuries, the Count has avoided the destruction of his mighty, though small-in-number, species while maintaining a fearsome reputation for wickedness. Now, looking for a new challenge and different area to conquer (297), Dracula sets his sights on the West via the process Arata has dubbed "reverse colonization."[14] Darwin's idea of a species achieving local dominance before extending this dominance outward maps easily onto the *Dracula* storyline.

The Descent of Man further underscores the influence of Darwinian theory on Stoker and his development of the vampire. In *The Descent of Man*, Darwin dedicates

[14] "Reverse colonization," as Arata explains, is the "civilized world" on the point of being colonized by "primitive" forces, the fear of which is created by cultural guilt (623).

two chapters to the theory that man has evolved from a lower version of man, a third chapter comparing the prowess of lower forms of man to modern man, a fourth chapter on the genealogy of man, and a fifth chapter on races of man. The text shows quite clearly Darwin's preoccupation with how humans evolved—and more importantly, how certain humans evolved and thrived while others went extinct. I argue that the Crew of Light fears that vampires may cause humans to go extinct. "No doubt man, in comparison with most of his allies," Darwin writes, "has undergone an extraordinary amount of modification, chiefly in consequence of the great development of his brain and his erect position; nevertheless, we should bear in mind that he 'is but one of several exceptional forms of Primates'" (*The Descent of Man* 197). Darwin's text illustrates his theory of man's evolution and the rise and extinction of humans as a species distinct from other species; for the Crew of Light, these Darwinian theories translate into the real threat that Dracula will become "the father or furtherer of a new order of beings" that can overthrow *homo sapiens* to become the top predator (Stoker 280). Darwin continues, "[a]t some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilised races of man will almost certainly exterminate and replace throughout the world the savage races" (201). Vampires, through Dracula's invasion, loom over England as a menace to an established population, threatening "almost certain[] exterminate[ion]."

Interestingly, archeological/scientific discoveries of the twenty-first century continue to support Darwin's claims, which, in turn, give validity to the fear expressed in *Dracula*. In 1859, Charles Darwin noticed that for trilobites and ammonites, which are extinct marine animals, invasion could mean the devastation of a species: "Moreover, when by sudden immigration or by unusually rapid development, many species of a new

group have taken possession of a new area, they will have exterminated in a correspondingly rapid manner many of the old inhabitants" (*The Essential Darwin* 185). Stoker echoes this fear of invasion in *Dracula*: the new, vampiric species in the British Isles threaten the original occupants of the area with extinction.[15] Van Helsing admonishes the Crew of Light that they must work to destroy Dracula so that "other poor souls perish not" (220); their success is crucial, for, "if we fail in our fight he must surely win" (221). When Dracula is allowed to bite and feed without opposition, England and its inhabitants are under threat from the foreign, invasive species. Scientists since Darwin have examined Darwin's observation about the consequences of invasive species. The introduction of exotic species, Ludsin and Wolfe note, "has included [the] restructuring of populations and communities, alteration of large-scale ecosystem processes, and loss of biodiversity" (780). For Stoker's British heroes, a vampire takeover would certainly result in these consequences as vampires became the top predator, alter the food chain, and engender a loss of biodiversity as the number of humans in England declines. As with any ecosystem where one predator becomes highly adapted and successful, the question arises which is interesting to consider here: what happens if all humans in England are either converted into vampires or are killed for food? The answer, according to evolutionary theory, is that individual vampires would continue to evolve in order to remain the top predator, secure a food source, and "reproduce."

The vampire's rapid method of reproduction is of particular Darwinian concern to the Crew of Light. Both Lucy and Dracula demonstrate the power of the vampire's bite to

[15] Fear of invasion here is reminiscent of Arata, Halberstam, and Mascia's fear of the foreign or Other man, yet I hold that in its current context, this fear, particularly in light of its relationship to Darwin's writing, should be read as the invasion of a species other than man.

reproduce: after being bitten, a human will begin the transformation from human to transhuman and will, unless reprieved, evolve into a vampire. Dracula has bitten at least five humans: the three so-called Sisters, Lucy, and his intended "companion and helper," Mina (Stoker 268). Four of the five complete their transformation and become vampires, and whether Dracula has created additional vampires is unknown. Lucy, a new vampire in London known as the "bloofer lady,"[16] feeds on children she lures from their Hampstead homes. News reports of the incident (dated Sept. 25) describe the children who survive Lucy's feedings as "terribly weak" and "quite emaciated," though alive (166). The children, once bitten by Lucy, mirror her own transformation into vampire in which she grew weak, pale, and thin as Dracula fed on her. Lucy's evolution to vampire becomes complete at her human death on September 20, and five short days later, Lucy has bitten so many children that kids make sport of her ability to lure them away, and adults in the area write repeatedly and worriedly in the newspaper about the events. Rapid reproduction of the vampire speeds up an already rapid process of evolution from human to vampire; more vampires biting (which is the way for the vampires to reproduce and create, in a sense, their children) results in the transformation of humans into vampires on a large scale. Furthermore, the creation of new vampires through biting is monstrous not only for its speed but also for its violation of natural constraints of human reproduction. The evolution from human to vampire begins upon the victim being bitten, and the change can occur in as little as a month's time, compared to the nine-month

[16] Roger Luckhurst notes that "bloofer lady" is read as "a further corruption of 'boofer (beautiful) lady" (Stoker 381).

gestation required for human reproduction. Further, Dracula and Lucy are both able to bite and create new vampires by themselves, needing no help from a partner to reproduce.

By the time Stoker pens his vampire novel, the ideas of evolution and "survival of the fittest" have been circulating for years. Gillian Beer highlights how influential Darwin's ideas were: they "profoundly unsettled the received relationships between fiction, metaphor, and the material world" (27). Evolutionary theory, circulating for some time before Darwin, now had concrete evidence to support the transformative nature of species. Thus, just like literature before and after *Dracula*, the novel felt the influence of a major cultural player—here, ground-breaking naturalist texts like Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. Though the evolution of monsters remained inexplicable in many *fin-de-siècle* horror texts, spectral stories were no longer, perhaps, the most frightening works of fiction. Instead, Victorian literature, like *Dracula*, saw an explosion of monsters which were the product of science and technology, rather than spirits or demons, haunting the earth. In fact, according to Beer, "[e]veryone found themselves living in a Darwinian world in which old assumptions had ceased to *be* assumptions (3). Man built the Creature of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, constructing the monster utilizing recently acquired knowledge of the body and its systems as well as surgical procedures. Jekyll created his second self, Mr. Hyde, through scientific experimentation in Robert Louis Stevenson's novella. Darwinian ideas made Stoker's vampires even more terrifying because the novel suggests that vampires are evolved versions of humans. The vampires of the novel consequently offer a space for Victorians to explore their evolutionary anxiety.

Since, in *Dracula*, the posthuman vampire is a product of the rapid evolution of man, I suggest that *Dracula* can and should be read as a work of science fiction, rather than solely as a text of Gothic horror. Critics working on the *fin-de-siècle* have noted the similarities between Gothic horror and science fiction's invaders and have suggested that late-nineteenth-century tales of the supernatural resemble early science fiction texts, like those of H. G. Wells. The monsters of both gothic horror and science fiction often attempt to conquer an established species (Hurley 16-20). Jay Clayton summarizes how "[t]he typical plot form" in the two major waves of science fiction "involves the persecution of the emerging minority species by a terrified majority, the soon-to-be extinct *Homo sapiens*" (321). Clayton's description perfectly fits *Dracula*'s plotline, suggesting the novel's alignment with science fiction. The vampire, a non-human character with significant powers, is reminiscent of foreign aggressors found in works of science fiction like Wells' Martians, and the vampire's invasion is just as frightening. In literature, as Colin Manlove notes, "as soon as the 'supernatural' has become possible we are no longer dealing with fantasy but with science fiction" (qtd. in Hollinger 145). In fantastic works where the impossible is normalized, readers retains their knowledge that the most thrilling moments in the text are the product of a writer's skill. The natural world does not allow for monsters and ghosts; these creations and phantoms exist only on the page. Works routinely dubbed as "science fiction," however, resist this recognition of the impossible by the reader (Hurley 16). Science fiction's very name suggests its existence relies on the natural and physically possible, and the novel's parallels to Darwin's texts and reliance on evolutionary theory suggests that humans have the capacity to advance and simultaneously refutes the notion that vampires are supernatural.

While *Dracula* can and should be read as a work of Gothic horror,[17] treating *Dracula* as science fiction offers new ways of interpreting the novel.

Dracula, when viewed as a work of science fiction, resists the comforting notion that the novel's pages confine the vampire. Instead, vampires can exist in any country, at any time, in the very real world of the reader. Unlike the Ghost of Christmases Past, Present, and Future or the haunting of Bly, the vampire may easily exist off the page; he is natural, explainable, and evolving. Despite the seeming contradiction, grounding *Dracula* in science fiction rather than the *fin-de-siècle* Gothic advances the idea that *Dracula* is a product of a society fearful of the evolution of species. Dracula is more progressive than contemporary regressive fiends such as Mr. Hyde, indicating that the *Dracula* text itself does not display the Victorians' fear of regressing to ancestral monkeys or their fears of degenerate man; instead, *Dracula* shows that the Victorian humans *are* the ancestral monkeys that are being surpassed by a superior species. Richter explains that, "[t]he nineteenth-century fear about degeneration was accompanied by the seemingly antithetical but in fact complementary vision of human perfectibility" (173). Amid *fin-de-siècle* anxieties, work by scientists like Darwin advanced the notion that humans could achieve perfection through selective mating, gene work, and controlled variables. Yet these amazing modern notions were frightening when looked at in the context of the natural world. Predators thrive by preying on the weak; an entire species can be wiped out if a stronger, faster, larger, or otherwise cleverer species overtakes it. Rather than examining Dracula as a regressive, degenerate character, or an unruly, primal

[17] Barry McCrea notes that *Dracula* has come to be viewed as "the epitome of the horror novel" (254). Noel Carroll's essay "The Nature of Horror" offers useful explanations and guidelines for understanding texts, like *Dracula*, that are read as horror.

colonist subdued by the English heroes of *Dracula*, the book supports a reading of vampires as the superior species who try to convert an entire island, thereby wiping out humans.

Reading *Dracula* as a work of science fiction disturbs the triple rhythm of the Gothic and shows the lasting fear of the natural, rather than the supernatural. Christopher Craft postulated a plot pattern in Gothic texts which he dubs the "triple rhythm" of the Gothic— "admission-entertainment-expulsion" (107-108) based on plot arcs of *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. "Admission" describes the story's opening and entrance of a monster into the plot; "entertainment" is the "pleasurable, even a thrilling anxiety" while the monster is on the page; "expulsion" is the moment when, "in its closing pages it expels or repudiates the monster and all the disruption that he/she/it brings" (107). Reading the vampire as an evolved form of man, Craft's arc of admission and entertainment still exist, but the act of expulsion is disturbed and becomes, perhaps, impossible. In a new genre, the rules change, and the threat of the vampire does not end with the novel. Dracula and Lucy are staked, but the reader must confront the possibility that vampires (or some other posthuman species), *could* exist outside Transylvania and that the reader his or herself is potentially vulnerable prey. Just like the Neanderthal of Dusseldorf, discovered in Germany in the mid-nineteenth century, the Victorian man could see himself as the buried, early version of man, removed from the evolutionary tree and extinct (Straus and Cave 348).

At the moment when *Dracula* is limited to the realm of fantasy or horror Gothic, tinted with Nordau's ideas on degeneration and the *fin-de-siècle*, the critical conversation surrounding the work forfeits an opportunity for new discussion. Critics such as Arata,

Halberstam, and Mascia have viewed Dracula as a racial, foreign Other; others, like Thomas Richards, have suggested that Dracula is a mutant outside the evolutionary tree, vastly separate from the humans in the text. Yet if *Dracula* is read as a text of science fiction, the evolution of man into vampire is natural in Stoker's universe. Indeed, close comparison of passages from *Dracula* and writings by Darwin reveals the influence of widespread and popular Darwinian thought on Stoker's vampires. Through a sort of sped-up evolutionary process that includes education and physical adaptation, Stoker's vampires leave behind their identity as *homo sapiens* in pursuit of that which is higher. Dracula desires to be transhuman, mutates, and effectively reaches the point of being posthuman where he is no longer "human" as the Victorian man would recognize him. The vampire's process of evolution is only too natural, as is its threat to the English heroes of the novel. This shift in critical thought leads to new lines of inquiry about the text that are easy to overlook, particularly in terms of evolutionary anxieties. I suggest that critics should now explore *Dracula* as a work that fears the annihilation of humans by a superior species, one which is familiar yet horrifically different than itself—a man no longer a man, but one able to survive while preying on humans and threatening established communities. Though the Crew of Light stakes the vampire at the end of *Dracula*, Quincey Morris and Lucy must die before the vampire is defeated, and the staking of the menace is hard won. Perhaps most frightening is the novel's suggestion that Dracula's evolution, like the evolution of vampires before him, is not unique and can happen again as humans strive for posthuman abilities and actively test the boundaries of what it means to be human. Whether human readers should covet the abilities and prowess of the vampire is left to the reader to decide.

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