Université de Montréal

Unholy Transubstantiation: Christifying the Vampire and Demonizing the Blood

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Résumé

La représentation du vampire, à la fois en tant que revenant et de monstre fictif, est sans doute celle qui, à travers l'univers et les âges, a inspiré au plus haut degré la peur, la crainte, le respect et, enfin, le désir passionnel.

Dès les premiers rapports scientifiques d'exhumations de revenants ayant pour but d'expliquer l'étrange phénomène associé aux maladies, aux épidémies et à la mort, jusqu'aux représentations du 21^{e} siècle, le vampire, en tant qu'être omnipotent, créature sexuelle torturée, a toujours joui d'une relation ambivalente avec ceux parmi lesquels il vivait, évoluant dans l'imagination collective parmi les interstices de l'existence humaine qui dissimulent les pulsions et les instincts les plus noirs de l'inconnu chez l'humain. La découverte et l'explication de Freud de la lutte constante entre les pulsions de vie et les pulsions de mort constituent la plus éloquente représentation du vampire.

Cette représentation, issue d'une compréhension mystique, fut associée à travers les âges à diverses symboliques. Le symbole le plus souvent associé au vampire, qui l'a nourri et qui lui a conféré sa véritable raison d'être comme monstre de la peur, est le sang. Aussi, parce que cette substance, associée au sang trans-substantiel du Christ fut un des pivots de l'Église chrétienne, l'insertion de la représentation du vampire dans les paradigmes de la Chrétienté en est une extension logique. En vertu du fait qu'il soit perçu comme antagoniste à la doctrine de l'Église, le vampire aura réussi à être en avance sur elle, en dehors de ses pouvoirs de représentation.

Et pourtant le sang ne va pas sans ses difficultés de figuration. Avant sa métaphorisation à titre de symbole chrétien de l'expiation des péchés et de la rédemption de l'humanité, le sang existait en tant que substance en soi relié à son passé héroïque, visible dans toute valeureuse effusion. Cependant, avec l'apparition des maladies des temps modernes, l'association sang-mort est devenue moins manifeste sous l'aspect perte du sang qu'en tant qu'agent sournois, propagateur de la mort, à la façon des maladies sanguines fatales qui se multiplient sans cesse. Aussi, parce que ces maladies sanguines étaient pour la

plupart transmises sexuellement, leur association au vampire, dérobeur et transporteur de sang par excellence allait s'imposer d'évidence. Sous l'égide de l'esprit de l'époque romantique, la représentation du vampire, tout comme celle du sang, subirent leur plus important renversement de la perception qu'ils suscitaient.

Afin de montrer la pleine ampleur de ce renversement, je me suis appuyée sur la représentation du chiasme optique, figure qui, bien qu'elle représente clairement l'opposition, dans leur nature, du vampire et du sang, illustre en même temps leur constante proximité et correspondance; et ce, à partir du Moyen-Âge où le revenant est à la fois objet de crainte et d'abomination alors que le sang, lui, est sanctifié et adoré, jusqu'au 21e siècle où le vampire est vénéré et le sang soumis à des siècles de transmission souillée.

La déification du vampire et, simultanément, l'humanisation de Jésus-Christ devaient à la longue provoquer un croisement des traditions vampiriques et chrétiennes, créant ainsi une intersection où s'incarne de façon transcendante et immanente le symbole du sang.

Mots clés : Anne Rice, chiasme, christianisme, gothique, Lestat, transsubstantiation, religion, revenant, sexe, simili-mort

Abstract

The vampire figure, both as revenant and as fictional monster, is doubtless the one which has, across space and time, inspired the most fear, trepidation, respect and finally, lust. From the first scientific reports of "revenant" exhumations which aimed at explaining the strange phenomena associated with disease, epidemics and death, to the 21st-century representations of the vampire as omnipotent, tortured sexual creature, the vampire has always enjoyed an ambivalent relationship with those amongst whom he lived, dwelling in the collective imagination in the interstices of human existence which conceal the darkest drives and instincts of the human unknown. Freud's discovery and explanation of the death drive in constant struggle with the drive to live represents to the fullest degree the figure of the vampire. This figure of mystical understanding has, through time, been associated with divers symbolic economies. The emblem most often amalgated with the vampire, which has afforded him sustenance as well as his *raison-d'être* as fearsome ghoul, is the blood. And because this substance, both as Jesus Christ's literal and transubstantiative blood, has been a mainstay of the Christian Church, the vampire figure's insertion within the paradigms of Christianity is a logical extension. By virtue of being perceived as antagonistic to church doctrine, the vampire has always managed to stay a step ahead of it, outside its representational clutches. Yet the blood is not without its figurative difficulties. Before blood was a Christian metaphor for expiating sins and redeeming humankind, it existed as a substance on its own with a heroic past, visible in the tradition of valorous bloodshed. However, with the advent of modern-day disease, the association between blood and death

became less manifest as blood loss than as a propensity to kill from within, as escalatingly fatal blood diseases. And because these blood diseases were largely sexual in transmission, their association with the vampire, purloiner and transporter of blood *par excellence*, was obvious. Under the aegis of the spirit of the Romantic age, the vampire figure, along with the blood, underwent their greatest reversals in common perception and representation. In order to fully represent the magnitude of this reversal, I have resorted to the figure of the optic chiasma, a structure which, although it clearly represents the oppositional nature of vampire and blood, also depicts their constant proximity and correspondence, from the middle ages where the revenant is both feared and loathed and the blood is sanctified and worshipped, to our 21st-century spacetime where the vampire is revered and the blood has been subjected to centuries of sullied transmission. The simultaneous deification of the vampire and humanization of Jesus Christ would eventually meld the vampiric and Christian traditions, creating an intersection where resides the blood symbol, in both its transcendent and immanent incarnations.

Keywords: Anne Rice, chiasma, Christianity, gothic, Lestat, transubstantiation, religion, revenant, sex, undeath

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate my dissertation to my incredible family: my mother Mariette, my father Maurice, my brother Maurice Junior, and his wife Jimmie. Your love and inspiration anchor me even as they give me wings. Thank you.

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My respect and most profound thanks go to Terry Cochran, my thesis director, who gave me the space and latitude to find my own way. From the humus of unfettered thought, rampant affect and dogged determination, you managed to guide the production of a coherent text. I owe you so much.

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To Bill, for everything.

Preface
As It Was in the Beginning

No other figure of literature, film or folklore, has caused more consternation or reverence, or spilled as much ink – or blood – as that of the vampire. Science began to cast its first tentative beams on the phenomenon of vampirism so as to come to grips with the madness following the reports of what was believed to be hordes of revenants which, local gossip maintained, "bled entire villages to death." The first investigative reports of the 17th and 18th centuries, *Visum et Repertum*, allowed observers with a more scientific (or perhaps casuistic) bent to recognize patterns and phenomena explainable by the fledgling biological and physiological sciences of the times; this eyewitness information helped loosen the grip of hysteria on entire populations that, until then, the alleged vampire had had.[1] When it seemed that the very visceral fear he inspired had abated, he returned in the Victorian literary tradition as a black-clad gentleman, feeding off the blood and the attention of the upper classes whose company he actively sought out, embodying the myriad fears and malaise of a society in upheaval.

In the 20th century, the vampire became a cartoon character who appeared in children's books – *Dracula/ A Spooky Lift-the-Flap Book* and *Bunnicula,* for

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[1] *Visum et Repertum* (*Seen and Discovered*) is a series of documents which saw its inception in the first quarter of the 18th century, triggered by the accidental death and subsequent "vampirization" of a Serbian soldier named Arnod Paole. The reports themselves are most often incomplete, grammatically and linguistically incoherent, and inconsistent with regard to names of victims or "vampires." They are, however, the first manifestations of the need to understand and document the vampire's activities and are a precious source of folklore and early "medical" science. An excellent array and discussion of the Arnod Paole *Visum et Repertum* (as well as of many others) can be found in Dieter Sturm and Klaus Völker, *Von denen Vampiren oder Menschensaugern* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1968).

example – endorsed breakfast cereal – Count Chocula – and even lent a hand in teaching toddlers how to count, appearing as, of course, "The Count."[2] The vampire seemed to have lost the two lynchpins of his stronghold on the collective imagination, fear of the unknown through lack of knowledge, and fear of divine retribution for inappropriate actions. After all, science had explained away the threat posed by the folkloric vampire, and the onset of humanism had loosened the all-encompassing stronghold of religion on the individual. And yet vampires have continued to appear in film and in print, very often in shoddy takes and reinterpretations of classic vampire fare. Nonetheless collections like those of Anne Rice or of Chelsea Quinn Yarbro show that the vampire is, indeed, still alive and sucking, and doing so in a manner that still manages to disturb without horrifying, to disquiet rather than shock.

The character of the vampire is clad in a black cape and in a dark legend. Where he used to haunt graveyards and crypts, he now haunts the imagination in a way that no other literary or filmic figure has come close to doing. The cosmopolitan vampire roams the world in the pages of novels today in the same way that, in his many guises and embodiments, his legend inhabited almost every society in the world, beyond those of North America and Europe to far-off cultures such as those of China, Indonesia or the Philippines. Death brings death. This has seemed to be the common thread running not only through most cultures in general, but all cultures of

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[2] Keith Faulkner and Jonathan Lambert, *Dracula/A Spooky Lift-the-Flap Book.* (NewYork: HarperCollins, 1993); Deborah Howe, James Howe and Alan Daniel, *Bunnicula: A Rabbit Tale of Mystery*. (New York: Atheneum Books, 1979). "The Count," a character who taught children about numbers and simple mathematical processes, appeared on *Sesame Street*, a popular children's show which started in 1969 under the aegis of the Children's Television Workshop.

vampires as well. Death lingers somewhere within and without all figures representative of the horror genre, but no one embodies it as convincingly or as elegantly as does the vampire. In the vampire, the spectre of death not only produces a thrill of fear, but suggests that this ominous figure is somehow associated with those deep, dark wells of instinct and passion that pass all understanding, and that are very far removed from reason or logic. As Guy de Maupassant affirms in "The Horla," a tale of a man coming to grips with the supernatural, "One might say that man, ever since he began to think, has had a foreboding fear of a new being, stronger than himself, his successors in this world, and that, feeling his presence, and not being able to foresee the nature of that master, he has, in his terror, created the whole race of occult beings, of vague phantoms born of fear."[3] It is in these dark domains that demons dwell.

Throughout history, from its most primitive forms to its most recent incarnations, the vampire has dwelt in and been borne by these pockets of little-known drives and instincts. To get to know and understand the figure of the vampire is to attempt to approach the deepest recesses of the human psyche without fear of what one will find there.

This is perhaps the reason why the work of Sigmund Freud is so essential to get to the closest reading of the vampire that can be expected. His discovery and explanation of the death drive personified in the aggressive instincts, which is in

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[3] Guy DeMaupassant, "The Horla," *The World's Greatest Horror Stories*, eds. Stephen Jones and Dave Carson (London: Magpie Books, 1994) 176.

constant struggle with the drive to live, is to be found in its most complex and comprehensive representation in the figure of the vampire. Freud's conception of Eros and Thanatos locked into perpetual battle within the individual, here extrapolated to the vampire, gives rise to the most subtle manifestations of internal conflict and turmoil which can now be elucidated through this figure. Freud's fearlessness in exploring unknown (and forbidden) territory has been a boon to furthering the understanding of the human psyche. His work on religion and on sexuality is of particular interest to me, and I will argue that both have always been inherent in the representation of the vampire figure, in constant yet fluctuating states of overlap and expression. The vampire was born on sacred ground. His evolution has always run parallel to the dictates of the Holy Church and its precepts. The popularity of the vampire is due in great part to his problematic relationship with the Church and its teachings.

He is a figure of mystical understanding, which has, through time, fraternized with diverse symbolic associations. Because he has often been perceived as antagonistic to church doctrine, he has, by virtue of being designated a permanent outsider, escaped the clutches of religious institutions and organizations. It is precisely for this reason that much sexual ambivalence or outright fear has found expression in and through the vampiric figure.

This vampire figure, in the true Auerbachian sense of figure as *figura*, is what serves to approach the problem of the ultimate repository of how sexual and religious

ambivalence are combined in the character of the vampire, where the figure of the undead suggests a historical personage or event which prefigures a later one, with the latter shown to be expressed as subject-vampire, with, as its forerunner, that of Jesus Christ.[4] The vampire figure is not anchored down in history; rather, it moves through history by virtue of the fact that it embodies the religious/sexual tensions of particular historical moments. From the earliest frightful revenant, reported in folklore, to the soul-searching, God-fearing creature for which we willfully suspend out disbelief, the vampire has been subjected to historically dependent transformations and mutations.

In order to render this hypothesis more visual, I will resort to the model of the optic chiasma, which is effective insofar as it strongly highlights the chiasma proper, the point of intersection of the two vectors of the chiasma. This schemata represents a spacetime roughly situated at the beginning of the 19th century, an era which used the momentum of the Romantic Revival to usher the vampire into a new subjectivity. The chiasma proper is a representation of the locus of change, demonstrating how two units with their origins in late medieval thought, representative of, respectively, how the blood and the early vampire figure intersect. What follows this intersection is an abrupt spatio-temporal shift which results in not only a re-appropriation, and, ultimately, reification of the vampire figure, but also

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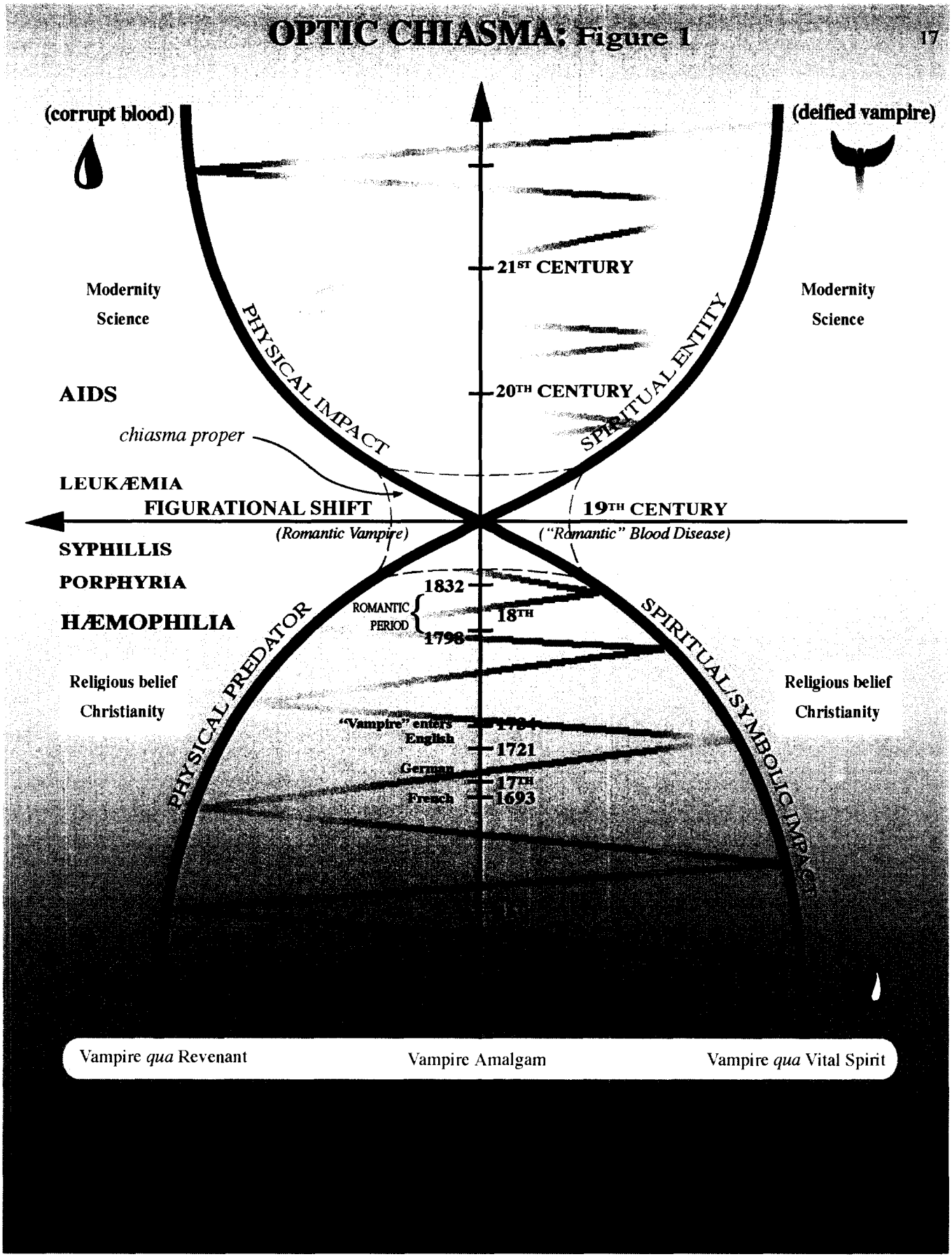
[4]Although the essay explores the term *figura* in all its diversity, I am alluding to the description Auerbach makes of *figura* at a specific time when it was "the figure which was then regarded as the most important and seemed before all others to merit the name of *figura* was the hidden allusion in its diverse forms." Erich Auerbach, "Figura," *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (New York: Meridien Books, 1959) 26-7.

the shedding of the blood's inherent (with respect to its initial endpoints) aura, ending in its symbolic aniconism and libidinal reinvestment

This humanization of the vampire figure would flesh him out with the sacro-sexual characteristics with which he became progressively identified, and which would alter the way in which he would be perceived. The speed, magnitude and significance of this shift, which endowed the figure of the vampire with, ironically, not only deified but sexualized proportions, can best be represented by the diagram which follows, which illustrates the rapid reversal in the vampire's literary and theatric manifestation, as well as the extreme ideological transmutations affecting public perception of blood. (see Figure 1)

The model of the chiasma is there to help us visualize and delineate a trajectory which, although a simple path, impresses upon us just how absolute and definite is the mutation. I make recourse to this heuristic model so as to visually highlight how the impact of modernity and its concomitant humanization of religion rendered the vampire a secular figure where he could safely be appraised, seemingly without offense to, but still within, the paradigms of the religious institution which were already set in place at the vampire figure's origin. Having escaped the confines of church and religion, the vampire figure could be held up for a vivisection of sorts, whereby religious figures could not have morally withheld the same type of scrutiny.

OPTIC CHIASMA: Figure 1



Without losing any of his sacred significance, the vampire appeared in film and literature, begging for analysis and understanding, happy to pose as a metaphor. It is through this very metaphor that many have tried to pinpoint the impact and even the function of the vampire in our culture and society.

The laziest signifier associated with the figure of the vampire is that of raw, rampant, insatiable carnal need. The perception of the medieval vampire, according to some theories, may have been helped along by the incubus/succubus myth, whereby the demon would drain the sleeping victims by having sexual relations with them. Although the Middle Age saw fit to keep the preying revenant well within the family, the vampire feared and depicted in the pages of Victorian literature had ceased to limit his sexual escapades to relatives, and therefore had to hone his powers of seduction to mingle with the aristocracy.

The sexual symbolism so carefully coded in the pages of vampire fiction and blown up on the cinema screen is not at all difficult to decipher. There is no question at all of whether it is there, only of why it *must* be there at all for the vampire figure to be believable. The stake of vampire lore and literature cannot help but resonate with phallic imagery in the way it accomplishes its twofold task of penetrating and disarming the vampire's prowess/contagion. Its full implication for religious impact shall be made manifest in the examination and analysis of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.[5] By the same token, however, the vampire's tools of the trade, his long, thrusting,

[5] Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (New York: Signet) 1897.

prominent fangs, are *de rigueur* for any self-respecting portrayal of the sexual fiend. While penetration by these fangs is symbolic for forceful coitus by the male vampire, close-ups of long-sharp incisors in a female vampire's mouth are said to evoke the latent fear of the *vagina dentata* and its accompanying male castration anxiety.

Of course, the vampire's recent status as a sultry, magnetic outsider positions him superbly as the hero of gay and lesbian fiction, both in its negative aspect (as monster preying on innocent, unsuspecting victims) and positive vision (rejecting prescriptive, normative sexualities and embracing the marginal). As early as 1872, J. Sheridan LeFanu's vampire, Carmilla, in the novella by the same name, unashamedly seduced her female victim, who withered away slowly under the vampiress's ministrations.[6] Samuel Taylor Coleridge's Romantic poetry may have done much to couch the actions of his own monster, Geraldine's, behaviour in sexually ambiguous terminology, but there is no question that his early version of the vampire, the lamia, had designs on Christabel, in the poem of the same name.[7] And, although the homoeroticism of Anne Rice's novel, *Interview with the Vampire*, was not lost on readers familiar with the vampire mystique, the film by the same name starring Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt left little to the imagination as to the

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[6] J. Sheridan LeFanu, *Carmilla, Daughters of Darkness. Lesbian Vampire Stories.* ed. Pam Keesey. (San Francisco: Cleis P, 1998) 27-87.

[7] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Christabel," *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. M.H. Abrams, vol. 2 (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968) 311-25.

orientation of the characters of Lestat and Louis.[8] Their homosexuality was not a forced or fortuitous aspect of the film, but rather a necessary component of the vampire relationship which was extant outside the conflicts of the familiar Oedipal bonds, and sheds light on the particular complexities of the vampire relationship.

The vampire as metaphor for disease is also a simplistic metaphor, both for syphilis in the Victorian era, and for AIDS in the 20th century. The fact that both of these conditions are blood-borne illnesses and are transmitted through sexual practice, and that the frail, gaunt appearance of the vampire/victim of disease insinuates that he has been contaminated by either of these viruses fuelled the usage of the vampire metaphor in puritan and homophobic circles as a symbol of a wayward, fatal sexuality. Sigmund Freud's postulate that morbid dread always signifies repressed sexual wishes found its ideal personification in the figure of the vampire. According to some critics, it became possible for the prudish Victorian audience to confess its obsession with its carnal desires, and, inasmuch as those desires were associated with shady, sultry, mysterious immigrants who brought with them the threat of disease and disruption, and new and innovative, yet taboo, sexual practices, most prominent of which were oral sex, which, for obvious reasons, was not limited to, but definitely encompassed, same-sex liaisons.

The vampire was easily recuperated by feminist fans and scholars of vampire fiction. The relationship between vampire and victim, in their eyes, became one of maternal-

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[8] Anne Rice, *Interview With the Vampire* (New York: Ballantine Books 1976); *Interview with the Vampire,* dir. Neil Jordan, Geffen Pictures, 1994.

infant symbiosis, where sucking at the neck mimicked nursing at the breast. The bond between vampire and victim could now be read as the connection forged in the pre-Oedipal moment, before the father could signify the new ruling order.

The vampire, however, is beyond a mere metaphor, in which, by definition, one thing is described in terms of another. Although a metaphor, by simply carrying meaning from one place to another, might encompass and express a great variety of possibilities, it nevertheless relegates the revenant to simple stand-in for the fear *du-jour*. A metaphor, as a rule, uses one symbol to express one (or, over space and/or time, a range of) purported meaning. For example, analysis of fiction which aims to disclose the vampire as a victim of xenophobia, or to represent him as an agent of illness, reduces him to a mere symbolic icon. And because the figure of the vampire can be perceived as being rooted in history, to diminish it to a mere symbol begs punctual elucidation of its representation in popular culture if it is to be approached metaphorically.

The danger inherent in metaphor, however, is the clichéd nature which accompanies the tenor when the metaphor is overused. Marx' famous quote: "Capital is dead labor, which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labor, and lives the more, the more labor it sucks" has caused much ink to be spilled, but yet again reduces the vampire to a political trope, which although effective, does not convey the full potential of his impact and influence.[9]

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[9] Karl Marx, *Capital* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Brittanica, 1955).

As a representative of elitism and class difference, the vampire has appeared in the guise of Romanian *voivod* (with the 15th-century ruler Vlad Ţepeş portrayed as a bloodsucker), a Transylvanian count (in Bram Stoker's 19th-century novel, *Dracula*), and as a marquis' son (as Anne Rice's famous Lestat de Lioncourt, son of a slowly dying nobility during the inception of the French Revolution, depicted in *The Vampire Lestat*).[10] The parallel between class oppression as it is manifested by the nobility toward the ordinary citizens, and personal fear of tyranny as experienced by the ordinary mortal toward the vampire is not a difficult one to draw. Marx, however, equates the vampire with capital itself, something inanimate, soulless, heartless, yet extremely powerful and potentially oppressive for those in its clutches, a product of humanity, rampant yet not human, so that the powerlessness of the individual is amplified by the lack of an object to oppose, of a dragon to slay.

The very significance of the vampire figure is manifested in the way he has shifted within literary figuration. When the vampire as revenant was thought to be a nightly visitor, a literal terrorizing dealer of death to members of his family, he was said to appear as a true monster, not as the figuration of a monster. His presence inspired horror and dread, his actions were thought to cause grievous bodily harm. Fear of the revenant was a very real, punctual fear. As a stand-in for carrier of disease or contaminator of the soul, the vampire plays a metaphorical role of agent of death spawned by his medieval prefiguration. Even though the stronghold of the

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[10] Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (New York: Signet, 1897) and Anne Rice, *The Vampire Lestat* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1985).

revenant's terror was weakened by the advent of science, the signifier itself was never quite emptied of its sense, morphing instead into the spectre which was to haunt the modern imagination. Never a static figure, the vampire evolved along with our concerns, reflecting our fears, our anxieties, our malaise. He is ahead of the metaphor, for onto him we foist our diachronic ambivalences. He is beyond the merely specular, for what he chooses to reflect, we are not always keen to acknowledge. In the event that he is seen as a trope, however, the vampire is one which elucidates rather than obfuscates. The vampire is a historical construction produced by humans out of the necessity to understand and deal with anxiety, embodying several countenances on the pathway of meaning production. Figuration within historical construction has always been one of the forces behind meaning production, and in the case of the vampire, these very forces need to be examined more closely so as to attempt to pinpoint, as precisely as possible, the vampire's dialectical standpoint at a particular spacetime in Western culture. This spacetime will, of course, influence the depiction of the figure of the vampire. One would do well to refer to the figure of the chiasma in order to help elucidate this premise; it is made manifest that at the chiasma proper, the change in direction / perception / appearance of the figure of the vampire and its corresponding shift in the representation of blood is radical and uncompromising.

Whereas the pre-chiastic revenant of folklore was steeped in the cultural fears and anxieties of the medieval imaginary, the post-chiastic vampire had to migrate to where the concerns of modern man could be found. Because, as stipulates Slavoj

Žižek, "Modernity is the social order in which religion is no longer integrated into and identified with a particular cultural life-form, but acquires autonomy so that it can survive as the same religion in different cultures," I will argue that the association that the vampire enjoyed with the Christian tradition in the Middle Age has perpetuated itself into modernity and beyond; the vampire figure finds itself not only entangled with but entrenched into the Christian tradition, where it provides a libidinal substitute for what was at one time a nexus of piety and religious devotion, a locus which was, in the past, provided by the religious figure, especially that of Jesus Christ as totem of the Christian faith.[11]

The dismantling of the strictures of the Christian Church demanded an auxiliary support system, underpinnings which the fledgling Science of modernity was only too eager to provide. In attempting to provide solutions for queries into what had been, heretofore, unapproachably sacred, Science left the door gaping wide for further questioning and analysis. Although the foundations of religious hegemony had been shaken, those abiding within its domain were still afflicted with its imperatives. As to whether religion is needed at all, Freud's devil's advocate offers that we are obliged to impose upon the developing child some sort of doctrine which he cannot refute, an "axiom that admits of no criticism" so as to continue to serve the needs of society and the civilization in which it resides.[12] Slavoj Žižek, however,

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[11] Slavoj Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf: the Perverse Core of Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT P, 2003) 3.

[12] Sigmund Freud, "The Future of an Illusion," trans. James Strachey, *Civilization, Society, and Religion: Group Psychology, Civilization and Its Discontents and Other Works*, vol 12 *The Penguin Freud Library* (London: Penguin Books, 1964) 236.

offers the explanation that "rational philosophy or science is esoteric, confined to a small circle; it cannot replace religion in its function of capturing the imagination of the masses, and thus serving the purposes of moral and political order."[13] Žižek goes on to explain, bolstered by Hegel, that in these modern times of reason, religion can no longer function as the organic binding force of social substance. By claiming that religion has lost this power for scientists, philosophers and the "ordinary people" as well, he echoes Hegel's precept that as much as we admire art, we no longer approach it on bended knee, and the same holds for religion.[14] Although irreproachably true, this idea more than illustrates and explains the hungry void left by the departure of religious control. It is only fitting that, in part, such a void should be filled by a cultural figure which, although firmly implemented by folk and popular culture, should somehow resonate with the spectre of religious doctrine.

The vampire sits comfortably on the frontier between faith and reason. On the one hand, he is entrenched within a dogmatic belief system that demands utter suspension of disbelief (what we have come to interpret as the Kierkegaardian "religious suspension of the ethical"), a belief system which has found its *raison-d'être* in each of three tenets, the first of which maintains that religious teachings deserve to be believed because our primal ancestors believed them; secondly, that the proofs upon which we rely today have descended from the same reasoning used by our forbears; and thirdly, it is forbidden to raise the question of their

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[13] Žižek, *Puppet* 5.

[14] Žižek, *Puppet* 5.

authentication at all.[15] Having once belonged to this all-encompassing school of thought in the figure of the revenant as one of its resident law-breakers, the vampire still contains within himself a hint of the sacrilegious, a trace of the irreligious. Today, the vampire *per se,* as he is represented in film and fiction, is anything but shrouded in mystery. He is analyzed and interrogated, scanned and scrutinized. He feeds to live, but no longer lives merely to feed. He walks amongst mortals in the guise of Everyman, the better to escape detection, blending into culture so seamlessly that he is held up as one of its totems. He is the perfect embodiment of Freud's irreligious man, the one who "goes no further, but humbly acquiesces in the small part which human beings play in the great world – such a man is, on the contrary, irreligious in the truest sense of the word."[16] These figures are well-represented in the fiction of the turn of the 20th century, where they are well-ensconced within its culture, the very "non-fundamentalist culture" outlined by Žižek, as he opposes it to "real" culture such as art, religion, and so on; the so-called field of "disowned/impersonal beliefs." "Culture," he says, "is the name for all those things we practice without 'taking them seriously'."[17] It is precisely at this point of "not being taken seriously" that culture is best able to leave its mark. The vampire has never laid claim to the trappings of "real" culture, i.e., religious culture. This is where the vampiric departs from the Satanic, and why Lestat displays so much more influence and attraction than Lucifer does.

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[15] Sigmund Freud, "The Future of an Illusion," trans. James Strachey, *Civilization, Society, and Religion: Group Psychology, Civilization and Its Discontents and Other Works,* vol. 12 *The Penguin Freud Library* (London: Penguin Books, 1964) 207.

[16] Freud, *Illusion* 215.

[17] Žižek, *Puppet* 7.

I fully concur with Žižek's postulate that Christianity, because of the Trinity, is the only true monotheism.[18] He explains this by stating that God fully coincides with the gap between God and man, and that God is this gap. To extrapolate this concept further, I will argue that it is thereby easier for the figure of the vampire, a seemingly non-threatening figure relegated to the realm of the popular, to insinuate himself within the ranks of the religious, filling the space left vacant when the figure of Jesus Christ lost its grip on the collective imagination in order to fulfill his libidinal duty. In the vampire, the spiritual/otherworldly connection was maintained, and the blood transaction was kept intact. It is precisely because of this communion through the exchange of bodily fluid that the vampire was able to sneak in and assume his position amongst the ranks of the eternal, if not the sanctified. For although it was agreed by the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 that the body and blood of Christ ingested during Holy Communion signified *spiritual* oneness between Him and the congregant, the signifier remained unchanged. Blood, although the medium of and for life, in its pure physiological reality, is of the realm of the abject. Yet it is through this blood that we may most easily reconcile the figures of Christ and of the vampire. According to Julia Kristeva:

> We may call it a border; abjection is above all ambiguity. Because, while releasing a hold, it does not radically cut off the subject from

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[18] Žižek, *Puppet* 24.

> that threatens it—on the contrary, abjection acknowledges it to be in perpetual danger.[19]

In other words, Kristeva shows the abject to continually disturb borders, positions and rules. It does not respect identity, systems and prescribed order. The abject, she maintains, separates the human from the non human, the fully constituted subject from the partially formed subject. In this same way, blood is the abject medium in the otherworldly economy of both the figure of Christ and of the vampire. It is through rituals, insists Kristeva, that societies renew their initial contact with the abject element, and then proceed to exclude that same element. Through ritual, the boundaries between the human and non-human, or the transcendent and the immanent, are re-established and made even stronger.[20] With blood as the confounding element, the locus of the holy could easily be found within the vampire. It is, however, the locus of the carnal within the figure of Jesus Christ which is problematic. And yet, as I shall demonstrate, this locus has never been questioned, reified, or argued because it was never absent to begin with, although it was perceived and expressed in "spiritually" acceptable ways.

While Lacan sees the Holy Spirit as Freud's concept of the death drive, Žižek posits that the Holy Spirit stands for the symbolic order, as that which cancels or suspends the entire domain under the headings of "life," which he categorizes into libidinal

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[19] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: an Essay on Abjection,* trans. Leon S. Roudiez. (New York: Columbia UP, 1982) 51.

[20] Kristeva, *Powers* 4.

instinct and the range of emotions, in other words, what Kant qualifies as the "pathological." "When we locate ourselves within the Holy Spirit," he states, "we are transubstantiated. We enter another life beyond the biological one."[21] I offer that it is precisely in that space occupied by the Kantian "pathological" that we stand transfixed, and that the figure of the vampire has picked up where the very visceral promise of union with God has left off.

In a discussion on the deification of men, Slavoj Žižek urges us to beware of, for example, the "Christification of Che."[22] What is most alarming to him, however, is how he is so easily turned into "an icon of radical-chic consumer culture, a martyr ready to die for his love for humanity," and its logical extension as the subsequent "Cheification of Christ." This is precisely what I look at in the following chapters. The Christification of the vampire has been accomplished progressively, drawing on parallels and attributes somehow agreed upon by consumers of vampire culture, placing these similarities (the blood, the ritual to gain eternal life, the welcoming into the fold) at the forefront in order to lubricate the vampire's entry into the sacrosanct. The vampirization of Christ, however, needed to occur so as to reestablish Jesus as object of desire, and to recreate the visceral bond provided by religion. This could be accomplished no other way than through the very blood of eternal life. The recommendations of the 4th Lateran Council moved union with God from the intensely physical to the purely spiritual. But it was this carnal bond which kept God's subjects in thrall that progressively withered away, leaving room for the

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[21] Žižek, *Puppet* 10.

[22] Žižek, *Puppet* 30.

opportunity for another type of intense bodily connection which could invoke, at once, the spiritual. Enter the vampire.

The model which I find indispensable in delineating the chartered courses of both elements of the vampire product, i.e., the vampire and the blood, is, as I have briefly touched upon earlier, that of the chiasma. Although it is a simple model in and of itself, the chiasma not only delineates but puts into sharp focus how rapid and all-encompassing the changes were which accompanied the rise of humanism. Both ideologically and etymologically, Dracula has been being the product of the Draconian. For this reason, I have found it necessary to give a brief background of the uses and understandings of the chiasma so as to further elucidate the dynamic, shifting nature of the elements usually plotted along its course, put into relief by the semantic possibilities afforded by the chiasma. The uses and representations of a literary (and later filmic) figure are not fortuitous; they reflect the concerns and apprehensions of those who consume this figure, and those who may be consumed by it as well. From this perspective, the early demonization of the vampire, as well as its later deification, come into sharper focus through an epistemological lens, made clearer by the intersecting pathways along the chiasma.

As I have indicated previously and as can be immediately grasped from the diagram of the chiasma proper, the figure of the vampire undergoes a radical reversal in and around the 19th century, with the inception of this role change being situated in the Romantic period; this is made abundantly clear by the vectored progression of both

the synchronic and diachronic axes of the figure of the vampire and that of the blood. Along with a general overview of the perception of the elements on the chiasma, the figure of the vampire, as well as a peremptory observation of the significance and signification of its second constituent, the blood, Chapter 1-a) will further explicate and delineate the migration of both elements.

Chapter 1-b) will continue to examine, through a stronger magnifying glass, the perception of blood as physiological substance, etymological component, and symbolic aspect. I will show how blood has not only entered the language metaphorically and metonymically, but how it has penetrated the collective imagination as signifier of valour or portent of death. It is no coincidence that blood figures prominently in every culture's literary and oral traditions, nor is it surprising that many customs and rituals are still imbued with it, be it through very tangible praxis or on a figurative level. Whether it is mixed at the contact of two self-inflicted wounds between blood-kin or sipped from the chalice during Christian Holy Communion, physical or symbolic involvement of blood between two individuals always signals a bond through the merging of life forces. The blood economy is heavily invested in many traditions; blood figures prominently and intrinsically in their languages, and their literature. Long associated with temerity and valour in life, and with death in physical strife, such as that perceived on the battlefield, the figure of blood beyond bloodletting, both voluntary and accidental, enters an entirely new sphere and engages a new paradigm with the advent of Christianity, notably in the role it plays in transubstantiation. The blood *is* the life, specifically, the life of the

Living Christ, which was tangibly and perceptibly shed at his death, and is repeatedly given up every time celebrants/congregants come together to glory in his – and our – everlasting life. Although blood was recognized as a biological life force in humans and glorified as a sanctified promise of pardon and eternal salvation, the spectre of death which diseased and contaminated blood carried was soon to render added meaning to the metaphor "bad blood." The visceral fear it inspired at its shedding in many societies was now extrapolated, under the aegis of scientific progress and analysis, to the dangers lurking in the blood, a seeming betrayal of the life force. The manifestation of sexual corruption in illnesses borne by blood were quick to be manifested in the figure of the vampire, which is why an overview of the history of blood is necessary for a full understanding and appreciation of the shift in perception of the vampire, even as the awareness of the dangers lurking in the blood was being manifested.

Shifting perceptions are often reflected as shifting nomenclature. There is a significant connection to be made, therefore, with the name "vampire" itself. In tracing its myriad translations and variations through centuries and continents, these many mutations underpin the fact that the vampire has never been a one-dimensional, run-of-the-mill ghoul inserted into legends for its mere fear factor. Etymologists will attest to the fact that both the legend and the name of the vampire have always been shrouded in mystery and half-truths. Witches, lamiae, and even incubi have shared some of their invasive propensities with the vampire, thereby leaving etymological traces. On the other hand, some cultures, as I shall point out in

Chapter 1-c), never address their demons as "vampires," but describe their same nocturnal behaviour. Although a vampire by any other name would suck as diligently, the way the monster is perceived is often belied by the name it is given. As I shall make abundantly clear, it is important to understand by examining the origin of the word "vampire," how we come to appreciate this figure which is in constant flux, evolving in complexity and in subjectivity, while it embodies the rapidly shifting needs and fears of the societies which produce it. When Polidori, Rymer and Stoker, in turn, clothed the bloodsucker in a black cape and an aristocratic background and addressed it with titles reserved for the nobility, little did they know how this figure would rapidly, through the aegis of his newly sanctioned persona, penetrate not only the luxurious abodes of the upper classes, but the dank and murky, innermost recesses of the public psyche as well.

A brief history of the vampire as a quantifiable character in multitudinous scenarios, and that of the vampire as figure, is therefore a necessary exercise which situates him across time in our homes, graveyards, and finally, in our minds. When the *visum et repertum* observations began by the scientists and the scholarly, the echoing chorus stated unequivocally that "Vampires don't exist." If we scroll forward to our present 21st-century spacetime, *Moonlight*, the television series, features Mick St. John, a vampire private investigator who claims in the pilot episode that, indeed, "Vampires don't exist."[23] From eye-witness accounts to popular media, the consensus seems to refute the existence of the undead. It seems only reasonable that

[23] "Moonlight" television series, writ. Ron Koslow, Trevor Munson, Silver Pictures Television, 2007.

we should be concerned with the western obsession of something that does not, admittedly, exist. Retracing the form and function of the vampire through space and time, in Chapter 2, I will depict many of the mutations that accompany his moonlit journeys from churchyards to movie screens. Ranging from birth defects to noisome traits of personality in life, characteristics which marginalized ordinary citizens also predisposed them to a life of undeath. The actually *making* of a vampire, however, is as problematic as it is theatrical; while folkloric accounts skip the details of the gruesome transmogrification, there is a Foucauldian confessional delight in detailing, even limning, every sensation that accompanies the exposing of the vein, the piercing of the flesh, the slow, sensual siphoning of the blood. This Victorian desire to deliciously delineate the pleasures of the flesh, as characterized by Michel Foucault, coincides fortuitously with the sexual endowment of the bloodsucker, shedding light on the vampiric appetite.[24] Indeed, what scholars did for the folkloric, bodily vampire without, psychoanalysis continues to perfect in the way it attempts to understand the way the vampire possesses our psyches within. Chapter 2 is a springboard for these considerations.

In this vein, Chapter 3 continues in the psychoanalytical exploratory vein, revealing the father-child relationship as locus of filiation, while extrapolating this concept to denote the struggle of the vampire to burst beyond the boundaries of the carnal and the bodily. While the act of vampirism itself, as it has been recuperated and even reified in countless domains, is one which explores and transgresses bodily

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[24] Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I: la volonté de savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976).

boundaries, the newly explored need to vampirize beyond the imperatives of mere nourishment must be elucidated. Beyond the need to possess the mother in a pre-Oedipal moment of (blood)sucking, the vampire now needs to not only usher fledglings into his fold via the vampiric act, but also to insert himself into the post-Oedipal identification with the Father figure which, although it does not supersede the physically transformative act, insists on the striving for the vampirically transcendental nature of the filiation. The best representation of this desire to attain both affiliation into the world of the undead and filiation into the order of the Father is found in the pages of *The Vampire Lestat*, where Anne Rice introduces and differentiates between Lestat's three "fathers": the first, biological progenitor who is a mortal, alive yet lifeless in that he is incapacitated by blindness and the loss of his (L)estate to the world of the undead, has no claim on his son, a son who is called to far greater deeds; the second, the sire who ushers him into the world of the undead against his will, infuses him with the spirit of the vampire, but endows him with little substance with which to forge his way down the path foisted upon him; the third, the one Lestat seeks out by name for answers and for direction, finally comes to him, elevating him both literally and figuratively, and positions him firmly within the world he seeks and claims. In this primacy of vampiric over biological filiation, it is impossible to regard the vampire's reproduction as mere replication; he pointedly strives for association beyond the worldly, for the need for integration beyond possession through sharing of blood. Nevertheless, the indication of this desire to infiltrate and integrate is made manifest through ceremonials which, though they aspire to a connection which goes beyond the bodily, are, first and foremost,

expressed on and through the physical self. It is only fitting that both societies, that of the life everlasting and that of the undead, express their devotion through ritual, ritual which is necessarily expressed on and through the body.

Chapter 4 will, therefore, venture into the physicality of the vampiric/spiritual bond, approaching it from two salient angles, the first being that of the sexual, the purely carnal and corporeal need, and the other being the erotic, the lustful and desirable, while enlarging on the pre-Oedipal echoes made manifest in the newly emerging vampire/victim relationship. The parallel between sexuality and the figure of the vampire is one that is compelling to draw; sexuality *per se* and the figure of the vampire developed agency more or less contemporaneously, the vampire figure being a marked indicator of the inclination toward recognizing the impact and import of sexuality as a force beyond the one underpinning reproduction. Sexuality has never existed any other way but as intricately wound within the social, political and ideological fabric of a society. Although it has, however, abided as a factor to be controlled, explained, and finally exploited, sexuality in its broadest sense has always managed to elude the most piercing and astute observations. Any attempt to pin it down and hold it in thrall to a theory or an ideology has seen it slip out of the most tenacious grasp only to re-emerge, triumphant and cloaked in mystery, in another locus. Sexuality is not (and has never been) a static concept, inasmuch as the figure of the vampire has never been an empty referent. The two have been perceived, by different peoples and at different times, in terms of dualisms, primarily that of mind versus body.

As I will illustrate in Chapter 5, using as my primary vehicle Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, this binarism is also a defining factor inherent in the ceremonial, especially in the rites and rituals expressed in the Christian religion. Since the vampire is markedly a figure enmeshed in the Christian tradition, and, as I argue, also a figure which embraces both the carnal and the spiritual, it is only fitting to question and explicate the intersection of all these interconnected traditions. Although the confounding of religion, sexuality and the figure of the vampire are highlighted in most gothic vampire texts and conspicuous in most 20th-century vampire films and narratives, nowhere have these three elements been so thoroughly dissected and critiqued as in *Dracula*, the classic vampire tale which started it all. The exegesis of Bram Stoker's classic caused the exhumation of other classic texts which, in turn, admitted to their sexual secrets.[25] Stoker's Victorian version of the gregarious ghoul then spawned Francis Ford Coppola's provocatively named *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, which maintains the spirit of the original while adding an erotic preface serving to justify Dracula's actions and finally giving the Count a voice, which underpins a subtext which many critics feel Stoker posits.[26] It is not my intention to analytically parse *Dracula*, but I do argue, however, that while the original *Dracula* is emblematic of the Victorian confessional voice (as per Foucault), it is rife with the same sex and the sacred as is made manifest in Coppola's version, and explicitly demonstrates a revitalizing and shifting perspective on the symbiosis of sex and religion.

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[25] In particular, I am thinking of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Christabel* (1797), J. Sheridan Lefanu's *Carmilla* (1872), and Théophile Gautier's *La morte amoureuse* (1843).

[26] *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, dir. Francis Ford Coppola, perf. Brad Pitt, Tom Cruise, Kirsten Dunst, Columbia, 1982.

If we are to pinpoint the prevalence of sex and religion in the classic of the vampire tradition, it is only fitting that we extend this practice to the Christian classic of the religious tradition, i.e., the Bible, and to the manifestations of the erotic within religious practice in, for example, the lives of the saints – in particular, that of Saint Theresa of Avila. A description of the religious ecstasies to which she was subjected displays a consolidation of religious fervour and sexual expression which is indicative of the erotic frenzy which accompanies the vampirization of the victim. The symbols reified and utilized by the Christian Church reappear as the appanage made to vampire tradition, for example, as seen in the cross/stake used to crucify Jesus and to dispatch the vampire. Chapter 6, in fact, describes a variety of rites and symbols of the Christian Church which have become completely ensconced within the vampire tradition, and explains how the vampire now not only inhabits holy ground, but aspires to become one of its most exalted residents. Even as our traditions have posited God as a known quantity to be sought out yet questioned, so the vampire now wishes, inasmuch as he and God both share immortality, to gain proximity to the holy, to access the transcendent. Even as vampire covens take on the attributes of religious orders, so do we come to equate the religious exaltations of the beatific with the concupiscence that accompanies the moment of shared blood, which is now of both the domain of the Christ, in the transubstantiation of his holy blood, and that of the vampire, in the draining and exchanging of the eternal life that flows through his veins.

This rendering of the saintly within the sexual is made manifest in none other than the vampire's most popular incarnation, the Vampire Lestat in Anne Rice's novels. Although the expression of and search for the spiritual is rendered in the work of many authors of fantasy, Lestat's journey toward the divine is punctuated by encounters with the carnal which only serve to illustrate his frustration with what is worldly and earthbound, and which highlight the incongruence of the vampire figure as a simple creature of the flesh. The blood which he covets is no longer the requisite bodily nourishment of early revenants and simple-minded ghouls, but rather the blood of the Holy Communion, a Covenant which Lestat yearns for and seeks to embrace. This desire for sanctity is truly brought to a head and made most explicit in the final installments of Rice's *Chronicles*. Lestat's quest for the divine is most appropriately illustrated as a need to be delivered from sin, and this sin is, in Kierkegaardian terms, none other than that of unacknowledged truth. The master who will bring the conditions for obtaining the truth to Lestat, the student, is no other than God. Chapter 7 will explore Lestat's acceptance of the Master, hence his acceptance of God, and his yearning for not only the eternal-on-earth, but the eternal through the transcendent.

Clearly, the figure of the vampire has evolved not only into a multi-dimensional being whose subjectification at the crossroads of the chiasma is now fully realized, but into what our Christian tradition has identified as the creature-figurehead who would fill the void that the dismantling of hegemonic religious structures has left behind. Although the strictures of religion have been dismantled and analyzed into

the ground, religious *thought* has not followed suit. The vampire emblematizes the figure which is necessarily out of the clutches of institutionalization, and which is not stigmatized by centuries of ritual and dogma that necessarily adhere to traditional precepts. The religious figures which served as models for emulation, as the locus of our passion in a demon-haunted world, cannot serve in the same way today. This is why we have not only created our vampire figure to serve as our new deity, we have invested him with the same Godlike qualities we once foisted upon our saints. The vampire who has traveled along the path of modernity beyond the intersection of the chiasma depicts this domestication of religious feeling as well as a popular re-institutionalization of a religion without the reign of the Christian Trinity, with God as a secular figure.

Recognizing the erotic attachment which we now have to the vampire to be the same one we once had with Jesus, we can easily understand how the figure of the vampire has slowly but surely become the receptacle for our religious – and erotic – ambivalence. This is what my thesis aims to explore.

Chapter 1-a)
Him They Compelled to Bear His Cross (Mathew 27:32)

Recently, vampire fiction and its accompanying legitimizing theory has become a popular field of study across departments of literature, philosophy, sociology and even political science, to name but a few. The contemporary, classic, musical, even whimsical vampire is taking centre-stage both onstage and off. It has become so *de rigueur* to offer courses on this most monstrous of persons yet most personable of monsters that even doctoral students are feeling the need to examine not only the character of many avenues of entertainment, but also the figure of the vampire and what its shifting signification portrays and portends in literatures both past and present. The figure of the vampire has, through the years, always been perceived as a locus of conflict and ambivalence. The vampire evokes, in his friend, foe or student, feelings ranging from disgust to awe, and from horror to admiration, even as per Freud's definition, a "special core of feeling" which is the uncanny.[1] The ambivalent movement of the term *heimlich* toward its opposite, yet reconciled pole, the *unheimlich* (the uncanny) serves perfectly to illustrate the same kind of unravelling or unveiling of the persona of the vampire. The feelings instilled in us by the vampire are like those evoked by the wax figure described by Jentsch and categorized by Freud as "uncanny," and by uncertainty about whether an apparently animate being is actually alive, or a lifeless object is inanimate. In fact, the vampire, by definition, has gone through all the stages of viability, from life to death to undeath, passing through all the necessary stages in between. Not only has the

[1] Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," *An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works: The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* vol. 17 (London: The Hogarth P, 1955) 219.

vampire been through the necessary life/death stages, he also has gone through great image changes since his inception in book, film and, most importantly, the imagination. As will become abundantly clear, the monstrous creature of old which terrorized with primeval magnetism-yet-revulsion now entices and beckons in the guise of a fully pedigreed gentleman. These costume changes have not gone ignored by the entertainment industry, which has capitalized on the different shapes the vampire has shifted into, and which, in turn, prompt us to think of Dracula's descendants and ancestors as having evolved dialectically through time.

While there exists a long history of vampire writing in Europe and North America that explores a point of view from either the vampire's antagonist, or from the protagonist who is justifying or sanctioning the acts of the vampire, in contemporary literature and film a new ethics of presenting the vampire has emerged in which he is now not only the subject of narrative and exploration, but also protagonist as (sometimes tragic) hero or antihero and tortured soul where, ironically, his human antagonists prove to be the vilified catalysts necessary to expostulate what is necessarily beyond the vampire's subjectivity-in-process, that is to say his deification.

As important as our understanding of the figure of the vampire, however, is that of the blood tradition and economy that defines and sustains him, the tradition with which he is most closely identified. The shedding and ingestion of blood between and amongst any given combination of vampire and victim is still called upon to

instil repugnance, horror, and a chronologically-dependant array of ambivalent emotions. The figure of the vampire has changed, incarnating new representations in our present spacetime and becoming representative of values that we have come to espouse or to scorn. Although the vampire has now found his voice (he can certainly hold his own in popularity and complexity against any other literary figure), it is in his capacity as exsanguinator and vehicle for the metabolism of blood that he is most interesting, for the perceptions and interpretations of this blood, both as sanguine symbol and as literal bodily fluid, have changed and evolved. The paths taken by the vampire figure and by the blood symbol are, although in constant opposition, also in constant flux and negotiation. Studied separately, the vampire first appears as a clear sign of blasphemy, a breach in God-given nature, while the blood, although part and parcel of the horror of the vampire, did not have any negative connotation *per se*. Indeed, it still clung to its passionate and noble medieval qualities of being the most precious of substances offered up to the gods in human or animal sacrifice. When blood was shed (as manifested by the Arabic proverb "Blood has flowed, danger is past"), the powers that be had been appeased and what had been wrong was set to rights. Blood that was wilfully, intentionally spilled nourished a greater, nobler cause.

The vampire has travelled the path of social curiosity and redemption, however, and, after the cataclysmic repositioning of religion in modernism, the not inconsequential influence of the Romantics, and the social ambivalence of postmodernity, he has emerged as antihero for 21st-century America. The importance of the blood symbol,

however, in light of the influence of deeply religious currents and the onslaught of haematopoietic disease and sexually communicable illness, has faded in the magnitude of its contribution to the vampire's persona. My desire here is not to entangle my thesis in a web of theoretical discourses on the nature of blood diseases and, as a separate entity, the vampire, but, more pertinently, and most particularly, to examine through selected works of film and literature, the dynamic symbiosis of the two components of what I shall designate the "vampire amalgam," i.e., the figures of both the vampire *and* the blood.

Recently, scholarly research on the vampire in his myriad presentations and re-presentations has been increasingly re-examined and re-appropriated in the light of an ever-expanding diffusive network of theoretical discourse. Unfortunately, vampire fiction remains confined to the science-fiction (wrongly so) or fantasy stacks because of its requisite *novum*, the vampire himself.[2] Both academics and laypersons have advanced and vigorously defended such a wide array of stances or heuristic models of the vampire which position him as a monster, and, by virtue of this, as the "other." As I shall show, early texts, under both "fiction" and "scientific" headings, expostulate on the horrific nature of the vampire. Recent (from the 19th century onward) texts, however, not only subjectify, but constantly and progressively deify the vampire, thus obfuscating the impact and significance of the vampire amalgam. At this juncture, the model of the chiasma proves invaluable to

[2] I am drawing upon Darko Suvin's definition of "novum" as novelty or innovation: "SF is distinguished by the narrative dominance or hegemony of a fictional "novum" (novelty, innovation) validated by cognitive logic." For further discussion of science-fiction vs fantasy nomenclature, see Darko Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science-Fiction: on the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1979) 63.

examine the oppositional influences of the two components of the vampire amalgam.

Chiasmus is defined primarily as a structure whereby a syntagm is repeated in reversed order and the relations between the same or similar words yield a wide range of semantic possibilities.[3] Indeed, its uses have burst beyond the syntactic to the phonetic and on to the philosophical. From this perspective, it is easy to gauge the potential inherent in this structure and indeed, it has been (more or less) artfully exploited, from Mae West to Paul de Man, from John F. Kennedy to Jacques Derrida. A general overview of the uses and narrative possibilities of the chiasmus will provide some insight as to the role it plays in the portrayal of the vampire and his blood economy.

Descriptive rhetorics identifies the chiasmus as consisting of a reversal of signs which form an "X" (or *chi*) in the pattern AB:BA ("Ask not what your country can do for you, but rather what you can do for your country"). This would lead one to think of chiasmus uniquely in terms of antithesis or negation. While this is certainly useful in syntactic play, the formal or historical role of chiasmus should not be overlooked, and it is more accurate to say, as would Sanford Buddick, that "a chiasmus is a movement of two sets of opposed signs (two binarisms) in which the pattern AB:BA is only one interim possibility."[4] What is not only interesting, but crucial to my analysis, is that any one reading of any sign, because of the multiple

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[3] Sanford Buddick, "Cross-Culture, Chiasmus, and the Manifold of Mind," *The Translatability of Cultures: Figurations of the Space Between*, eds. Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996) 227.

[4] Buddick 227.

possibilities of meaning residing in it, is always arbitrary. At any given juncture, whether it be near the chiasmus proper (where the two pathways intersect) or at a particular point and its vertical mirror image, each binarism evokes a change of its opposite and corresponding sign (A into B or B into A). Any one position, therefore, permits not only an opposition, but also a reflection or refraction. Chiasmus, Buddick insists, necessarily leads to a wholly different world of meanings since its inherent duality leads beyond chiasmus (and its uses) itself. Buddick sees the possibility of "intertextual relations" informed by the chiasmus itself. These relations, he feels, are "frequent occurrences in any complex writing".[5]

The most pertinent of Buddick's chiastic representations, and the most significant for my analysis, is that of the *absences* created between the binary terms of the chiasmus. These absences cannot simply be perceived as negations or antitheses of their vertical counterpart, nor can they be specifically pinpointed on the chiasmus itself. These absences, in and of themselves as well as in combination with their correspondences, render the chiasmus much more than just a simple reversal or a play on words; rather, they erect binarisms fecund with the potential of depicting systems which not only avoid closure and generate perpetual contradiction, but which also sustain tension and affirm external and internal struggles between (for example) reason and faith, self and other, appearance and reality. While Buddick's analysis attempts to show that it is because of the mobility of the chiasmus in its various historical uses that absence of this order cannot be located spatially, my own analysis will demonstrate asymmetric social and/or literary influence as the reason

[5] Buddick 227.

for the asymmetric positioning of binarisms. We can therefore extrapolate the potential within this dissymmetry to demonstrate that each binary term is charged with the potential of its opposite. Hence, mobile binarisms used within this chiasmus do not restrict their representation to that of the antithetical or opposite. Rather, what we perceive are elements of reciprocal potentiality which represent themselves within matched oppositions (not opposites).

The specific chiastic model which best suits the purpose of explicating the various vampire-blood dyads that will emerge in the course of my analysis is that of the optic chiasma. Although firmly anchored in the empirical vision sciences, the optic chiasma can be distinguished from the general chiasmus as defined in the realm of semantics by the fact that the complexity of the optic structure is a closer, more appropriate metaphor for the vampire amalgam, in terms of representation and inference. In the optic chiasma, the visual stimulus which is perceived by the right eye and transmitted along the nerves from the right temporal visual field cross to the left half of the brain, while the image perceived by the left eye travels, conversely, to the right half of the brain. This intersection, however, is not simple and complete; at the crossing of the nerves, i.e., the chiasma proper, portions of fibres from the left eye continue along the left pathway, while a percentage from the right eye is directed to the right. This cross is essential to the integration of the signals received by each eye so as to obtain a full three-dimensional image of the visual stimulus. It is the fully fleshed out representation of the vampire-amalgam which is akin to this complete image, with, however, slight modifications and variations attendant on each of the components of the amalgam relative to the period to which we refer, and

dependent upon where the perception takes place. This relativity is a trademark of the vampire amalgam.

As I shall show, the perception of both the figures of blood and of the vampire have been anything but constant over time. With science as the omniscient, ever-present handmaid of chroniclers from the enlightenment onward, it was inevitable that blood, as emblem of life, love and honour would be examined and analysed, and, eventually, linked to a multitude of diseases – an association which would come to bear on blood's role as giver of life and, ineluctably, death. The vampire, conversely, had his *raison d'être* in the need to explain the unwarranted phenomena surrounding disease and death. Born of the fear and hysteria that were foisted upon it, the vampire was the designated bearer of disease (by name: *nosferatu*), who, if done away with, would also dispose of the ills of mankind. This ghoul stayed alive, it was said, by virtue of feasting upon poor innocents' pure blood.

It is clear, not only through fiction and film, but also through progressively lucid eye-witness reports of "vampire" sightings, exhumations and "killings," that the figures of the vampire and of the blood, and the way both were perceived have evolved significantly over time. These individual constituents, like the stimuli propelled along the visual pathways, will eventually be integrated with the other in an entirely new context, depending on the value which was originally attributed to them. These transformations, dependant upon place and time, will give rise to an altered distribution of information, singular combinations, and a changed final product. It is this fluctuating relationship which is a central element of the impact

and representation of the vampire amalgam, a relationship which is in constant flux. (see Figure 1, page 17)

The optic chiasma, in particular, allows us to grasp the impact of the way things are perceived and recorded through space and time, and replicates the process whereby two figures can be captured and wholly (or not) integrated into one final combination of various advents. Use of the optic chiasma makes these two elements most manifest not only in their individual representations but in their amalgamation as well. Most salient in my use of this model is what I refer to as the chiasma proper, the cross itself, which has its chronological correspondence situated roughly in the Romantic Period (1798-1832) but extending to the end of the 19th century, of course, so as to include Stoker's publication of *Dracula* at its Victorian endpoint (1897), where popular appreciation of both vampire and blood figures shift contrapositively, with this alteration symbolized in the chiasma as a redistribution of the subjective elements of each.[6]

The standard model of the chiasmus is incomplete in tending to the nuances of representation pertaining to blood and vampire; the optic model, therefore, permits us to discuss the variations inherent in both, from the standpoint of not only change, but also representational evolution. A more refined, yet simple, model putting into relief the oppositions between the two figures so as to better understand their subtle interplay, connection and amalgamation was necessary in order to avoid positing blood and the vampire as simple opposites; the regular model of the chiasmus, a

[6] Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (New York: Signet) 1897.

static syntactical model, does not do justice to the delicate contextual correlations between the two. The complex yet highly accurate way in which images are captured, transferred and received in the empirical mind is the best parallel, when viewed from an epistemological standpoint which privileges the relativity of space and time, to the comprehension and integration of two multifarious, symbolically laden figures, indeed, to the way in which the mind integrates a variety of aspects to constitute a final identity. As different images are produced in the brain as a result of differences in visual stimuli, so identities are constituted from the integration of two distinct referents. The optic model allows me not only to convey the key event of integration, but to pin (or stake) down the vampire amalgamation in order to focus on and analyze a phenomenon which is in constant flux. It was therefore necessary to reach beyond the scope of classic literary and film representation so as to lay claim to a more nuanced model, a model which is significantly different from Buddick's and where the individuality of both figures is maintained although the relationship between the two is dynamic and fluctuating.

My concept of figure, here, is quite in agreement with Auerbach's "figura," which suggests a historical personage or event which prefigures a later one, with the latter shown to be expressed as subject-vampire, with, as its precursive figure, that of Jesus Christ.[7] Clearly, the two figures remain distinct historical and hermeneutical entities, but I will show that the vampire will take on Christ-like characteristics as it wends its way from hero of the Romantic Revival to 21st-century *Übermensch*. The

[7] Erich Auerbach, "Figura," *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (New York: Meridien Books, 1959) 26-7.

vampire, in and of itself, is but an empty conceptual category, but its positioning in a much broader framework, as I shall show, situates it in a much more symbolically problematic (and thought-provoking) proximity to that of the figuration of blood, the ever-constant opposition along the chiastic model. The optic chiasma, by virtue of what it accomplishes physiologically, is an ideal metaphor for the binarism I wish to analyse (A = vampire, B = blood), illustrating factors of the components' direction, magnitude and final perception, integration (or lack thereof) and analysis.

Although the optic model I have chosen is straightforward in its physiological simplicity, the actual literary and representational paths taken by both the vampire and the blood are, of course, not as sterile and direct; at times they include, as I have described above, positions where the complementary position of the binarism is constituted by absences within the binary term. The dynamic binarisms found along the lines of the chiasma allow us to test new forms of inquiry, and offer new and multiple chances of being and/or perceiving within the vampire framework. The optical model of the chiasma underscores the dynamic nature of vampire representation and perception, and describes the roles of both vampire and blood as ontological metaphors of eternal life, illustrating their areas of metaphorical overlap.

The paths which demarcate the chiasma itself consist of multitudinous vectors and bifurcations, and trace an intriguing route between our chronological endpoints (in its greatest time span, roughly the end of the 16th century and the early 21st century), along which we can observe the development of the vampire amalgam (as vampire +

blood) through several centuries of development in its intimate relationship with its creators and its audience. I define the chiasma proper as the phase in the evolution of the vampire product, i.e., the social locus, where monster becomes man, and where, correspondingly and paradoxically, blood symbolism assimilates another role as carrier of contamination and disease. The central problem in this discussion, however, is the cosmological shift in the representation of the vampire, from, literally, *nosferatu*, carrier of disease, ranging from simply repository of the libidinal, to outright deification. The heuristic model of the chiasma will prove invaluable in its visual representation of the radical shift which metamorphosed the vampire amalgam.

The chiasma is also useful in avoiding problems of closure generated by a strictly oppositional description, as well as those of absolute judgement in depictions of competing value systems. It is ideal to explicate the gradual reversal of popular perceptions of both blood and the vampire (vehicle of the blood). Although chiasma occurs on many occasions as instances of microchiasma, the master trope of my thesis is that of the involuntary chiasma which has been drawn diachronically by the corresponding figures of the blood and that of the vampire. While chiasmus has been used as a voluntary literary or aesthetic device in narrative, the function which I will soon demonstrate is that accomplished by a macro structure, not as it is delineated within individual works, but across the vampire literary and filmic vampire corpus as a whole. What interests me above all is the potentiality rendered by the chiasma, not within syntax, but rather within thought, as well as the complexity and hybridity

contained in this potential.

From its recognition and development as a major figure in popular fiction in the 18th century through to its continuing attraction in the twenty-first, one of the most significant evolutions in the realm of the vampire figure has been that from solitary predator to fully civilized, socially adept member of the state. This trajectory, as we shall see, is of no small importance when we consider that it is the route travelled by the vampire in the very act of becoming subject. One of the greatest hungers of the late 20th-century vampire (for example, that created by Anne Rice in her *Vampire Chronicles*) is for a society of peers. Even more than the late 19th-century vampire (portrayed by Stoker, Polidori, Rymer, etc.) in search of a mate/victim, Rice's vampires have scoured the continents for kindred undead.[8] Where the vampire was once closely, indeed solely, identified through his propensity for ingesting blood and changing human life, the act of sucking blood and causing either death or undeath has become more than just a means of staying alive, but rather a function which is now problematic for both victim and vampire. The act of blood-sucking is now of concern to the vampire-subject, because of the necessity, first, of ensuring his own life (the suicide taboo is very strong, even amongst the undead, as we shall see) through necessary sustenance, second, of resisting temptation to give in to what can be construed as the vampiric libidinal instinct, and lastly, of resolving the conflicts within the system of religion or ethics which had previously defined the vampire in

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[8] Stoker, *Dracula;* John William Polidori, "The Vampyre," 1819 *Collected Fiction of John William Polidori,* eds. D.L. Macdonald and Kathleen Scherf (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1994); Malcolm Rymer, *Varney the Vampire; or, The Feast of Blood* (Electronic Text Center, Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Library).

his human form. The vampire's bite is also problematic to the victim-*qua*-victim, for obvious reasons if the bite leads to death (whereby the event, albeit unfortunate, results in eternal heavenly salvation), but also even when the effect of the vampire's attack does not culminate in death, but rather, in undeath and eternal damnation by having to inhabit a body which, although it resembles an authentic human physique in its best and most ornamental attributes, no longer can carry out human functions, physiological processes and natural cycles. In the victims who are chosen to be vampires, i.e., victims who themselves feed off the vampire body, the cycle of earthly damnation, ethical conundrums, and the necessity to live the existence of the vampire as outcast, both socially and physiologically, is repeated and propagated. As the blood is shared and recycled, so is the existential positioning of the vampire. This particular instance quite manifestly indicates how important vampire society (i.e., relationships and clan formations) is in recent vampire fiction.

In the latest phase of his development, the vampire is no longer an isolated monster who preys to live and lives to prey. He has grown into and within his society and that of the mortals who surround him, and his growing pains include those of the civilization within which he resides. He is not marginal with respect to the rest of society, but rather ensconced and integrated within it, ultimately in ways which reflect not only changes in the vampire, but societal mutations as well. His own trials and tribulations as a vampire/other are complications added onto those suffered as a regular member of society, amongst both mortals and vampires. He has grown beyond the depiction of educated nobleman, as was Stoker's Count Dracula, or the

erudite world traveller, represented by Polidori's Lord Ruthven. He is *l'estat*, not only veering away from the murky, humid, primitive unknown, but rushing headlong into the pinnacle of progress, into the United States, the new State itself. He is running straight toward civilization and, as he shall discover, its discontents. The vampire, true to the path predicted by many critics, is now no longer merely the representative of evil; he has come to depict and metaphorize the human soul, human society, and the soul of human society in irreversible trauma.

At this point, it will prove useful to look toward the second component of our binarism, our point B, blood, both as metaphor and product of haematopoiesis. In the figure of the contemporary vampire, there exists a fine correspondence between these last two. There is the blood which is constituent of social strata, that which situates the vampire-subject according to caste or stratum. What will become abundantly clear is that the further away from the chiasma proper into the present spacetime the vampire chronologically gets, the less obsessed he becomes in the quest for blood *qua* blood and the more invested he becomes in blood as figurative of stratum and social position. In this economy of blood as filiation, the spectre of "bad blood" is not negligible, as it comes to figure significantly as representative of the incest taboo. This is the union, according to Freud, which, since time immemorial, has been proscribed and punished by peoples of all civilizations. And just as these societies have "set before themselves with the most scrupulous care and the most painful severity the aim of avoiding incestuous relations," so does the

modern vampire.[9] For Freud, the central configuration of incest is the mother-son relationship. The boy's pre-Oedipal attachment to his mother is succeeded by his Oedipus complex, at which point his father becomes his hated rival. The castration complex interrupts, and it is at this point that the little boy realizes that he cannot sexually possess his mother. Little boys, says Freud, are able to deal with their ambivalent feelings toward their father by projecting all their hostility onto them. This centuries-old prohibition is still very powerful and even in the world of the unholy, of the unGodly, the incest taboo persists.

Transubstantiating the Binarism

In drawing back and confronting both components (A=vampire, B=blood) of our binary expression at their respective points on the chiasma, what becomes undeniable is the following: blood, once the physical emblem of honour and sacrifice, has taken on quasi-religious/sacrilegious symbolism in its exchange between members of an unholy alliance. Blood no longer merely serves as the innocent elixir in the maintenance of illicit life for the evil vampire. Blood has taken on myriad representations, as we shall see in our exploration of vampire societies. One thing is certain: gone is the monstrous vampire who preyed upon God-fearing people with nary a care or backward glance at the terror he was causing. Although he feels a definite ostracization from mortal civilization because of the terrible secret he must keep, he is as much part of society — and society is as much a part of him — as any mortal. He experiences and endures all the upheavals and cataclysms of

[9] Sigmund Freud, "Totem and Taboo," *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* vol. 13 (London: Hogarth P, 1953) 2.

the worlds he lives in, perhaps even more keenly because he lives long enough to effect comparisons and experience nostalgia for other times and other places. He bears the marks of the civilization which has most affected him, usually that in which he was made.

Contemporary vampires have been fully integrated into the state by their very interpellation and inclusion, where the term "interpellation" is most expediently explicated in the ideology of Louis Althusser.[10] All agents of production (in this case, the production of vampires and the maintenance of a viable vampire society) Althusser maintains, must be "imbued" with this ideology so as to acquit their function in a most convincing manner. There is a manifest correspondence between state apparatuses (as defined by Althusser) and the configuration of vampire society itself. Vampire ideology must be maintained within a framework of social rituals (the culture and performance of bloodsucking) which in turn confirms the view that the vampire is, indeed, a subject with a consciousness of his own. With the vampire now being "hailed as subject" (once again according to Althusser), his entry into ideology serves two purposes, which the location of both A and B on the chiasma makes clear: the first helps to define the birth of the vampire as subject, and the role of blood as symbol, whereby the symbol is no longer Christian icon but rather token in the reproduction of vampire ideology.

Having demonstrated the symbolic charge of the vampire product (as figure of

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[10] Louis Althusser, *Essays on Ideology* (London: Verso P, 1984) 73.

vampire + figure of blood), it is now essential to delve into its individual components to extricate the value inherent in each of these elements which will further elucidate the dynamic nature and mobility of the unit. Chapter 1-b) will give us a better understanding of half of the equation of the vampire product, i.e., the product of haematopoiesis itself, and, by further elucidating the mysteries with which it was surrounded, how it easily acquired its privileged role in the ritual of both the spheres of the public and the sacred.

Chapter 1-b)
For the Blood is the Life (Genesis 9:23)

Blood is the world's most singular substance.It has the power to frighten, to inspire, to repulse, to subdue, to control, to awe, and, most recently, to maim, even kill. It keeps many species alive, and it injects life into language the way few metaphors can. It has spawned a science (haematology) and a philosophy (haematosophy). To even consider a serious discussion on the vampire without bloody preamble would be sacrilegious.

Our language is replete with blood. Metaphorically, we lay claim to "hot-blooded women," "blood-curdling shrieks," and cool-headed Frenchmen who display a great deal of *sang froid.* Metonymically, we pride ourselves on our full-blood dogs, especially if they happen to be blood-hounds. Men inspired compassion when they shed their blood and died; women aroused fear when they shed theirs...and didn't. Some blood diseases, such as porphyria, give seeming credence to tales of vampires and revenants, tales which force those afflicted by it to live in fear and seclusion. Two other diseases of the blood, leukaemia and haemophilia show how, along the chiastic road to the present, blood, in its capacity to affect health and livelihood and in its role as a controllable substance, evokes more fear and less romance. The word "leukaemia" has come to have alarming connotations (as any manifestation of cancer should), because, and in spite of, the fact that we have studied it, and now know it. Leukaemia is a cancer of the white blood cells, with no primary tumour to target and excise. In 1973, in his textbook *Blood: The Paramount Humour*, Earle

Hackett explains how "the disease is to a small extent related to the steadily increasing use of X-rays and radiation in civilized communities".[1] This opinion is not a far cry from Van Helsing's exposition, in the filmscript to *Bram Stoker's Dracula*.

> The blood – and the diseases of the blood...such as syphilis. The very name "venereal" diseases – the diseases of Venus – imputes to them divine origin. They are involved in that sex problem about which the ideals and ethics of Christian civilization are concerned. In fact, civilization and syphilization have advanced together.[2]

As this largely discontented civilization has developed, it has, in a parallel manner, dragged behind it the spectre of disease, especially that of the blood. Although Hackett's book was published almost a century after Stoker's, his opinion that "In some strange way, leukaemia may be related to a high standard of living, for the better-off countries and classes appear to be more subject to it" is a reflection of what Stoker's characters had depicted a half-century before.[3] This claim and metaphorical representation of the civilization of the upper echelon as breeding ground of disease is illustrated in Stoker's well-to-do Westenra family, where Lucy Westenra is afflicted with a deadly blood disease of her own.[4] Greater understanding

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[1] Earle Hackett, *Blood: The Paramount Humour* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973) 229.

[2] *Dracula*, Coppola.

[3] Hackett, *Blood* 229.

[4] Indeed, the entire Westenra family is doomed to early hereditary disease and death. In details which are seemingly of minor importance to the unanalytical eye, and which have not been reproduced in any screen or stage version of Dracula, the Westenras are particularly given to sleepwalking, a genetic condition whose hereditary nature was not discussed until some fifty years later. Although it may simply have set the stage for Lucy's encounter with the newly landed Dracula as well as

of blood diseases obviously accompanied a greater fear of them, but until the Victorian period could approach these diseases with more scientificity and less superstition, this apprehension was slow to manifest itself.

Haemophilia, as it had been perceived during the short-lived but intense Romantic period, was a "romantic" disease. Haemophilia is an illness whose victim lacks one of several clotting factors, and therefore bleeds so freely and easily as to exsanguinate to death. The blood itself does not have to be contaminated by a second party, as haemophilia is a genetic condition – one which has been made manifest in the royal lineage of several countries in the 19th century, including England (Queen Victoria and her children were all afflicted with it), Russia (Victoria's granddaughter, and her son), and Spain (Victoria's granddaughter, Queen of Spain, and her two sons). This dangerous illness, manifest only in males (women can only be carriers of the gene) had been acknowledged for quite some time; it was only in the early 19th century that physicians saw fit to bestow upon it a name as romantic as the decades that were to come. The disease was (erroneously) called haemophilia, "blood-fondness," setting the stage for he who was to become literature's most famous, in the true sense of the etymology, haemophiliac, Count Dracula. More interestingly at this point, however, was the involuntary nature of this male bleeding.

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fabricated an excuse for her wanderings alone upon the cliffs, it was also part of the extensive and meticulous medical research which Stoker did for his most popular novel. Lucy is, of course, condemned to undeath by the Count and then permanently terminated by the vampire hunters. Mr. Westenra, it will be noted, has already died when the narrative begins, and, for her part, her mother, Mrs. Westenra, dies shortly thereafter.

Leanne Groenveld astutely maintains, in her discussion of the male-involuntary / female-involuntary nature of shedding blood (to which I shall return later, in my discussion of the sexualized Christ), that male figures (in her example, that of Jesus Christ) shown spilling blood did so in a resolutely masculine way, in that their wounds are presented as "intentional, weirdly self-inflicted, if effected through independent human agents."[5] In other words, Jesus and the men who were to emulate him *chose* to bleed, whether it was in the act of saving humankind or that of saving country. Women, conversely, bleed because that is just what women do, whether they want to or not. These bleeding haemophiliac men were, therefore, probably not perceived as unproblematic; on the one hand, their involuntary bleeding did not uphold the masculine image of control of the blood, but which, to the English Renaissance imagination, was redolent of Christian sacrifice and symbol.

Blood has often been associated with the images of many gods, including that of Jesus Christ. Basil was said to sprout from Christ's blood at the foot of the cross. Roses and anemones grew from the blood of Adonis. A purple flower sprang from the blood of Hyancinthus. Even the most violently obtained blood is shown to be productive: violets bloomed where Attis bled when he castrated himself, and many chthonic gods sprang from the blood of Uranus, who was castrated by his son, Cronus. The most ill-gotten blood was fertile ground for life of all sorts. It is little

[5] Leanne Groeneveld, "Letting or Leaking Blood? Christ's Wounded Masculinity." *Tessera* 33-34 (2003): 137-8.

wonder, then, that until blood became linked to disease, it represented life and the possibility of its transmission.

It is difficult to imagine blood, metaphorically and metonymically, or tangibly, as divorced from ritual. While Hackett posits that our present notions of blood have developed over the course of two to three thousand years, beginning in Egypt and Mesopotamia, and later moving to other intellectually active countries around the Mediterranean, Karen Armstrong suggests that it is approximately around this time that religious ritual began, in some more spiritual pockets of civilization, to move *away* from "ceremonial" where the blood of one animal (or human) was actually shed.[6] Armstrong explains that animal sacrifice was a universal religious practice in the ancient world. It was a way to recycle depleted forces that "kept the world in being": it was believed that people survived only because other creatures gave up their lives for their sake, and that as a matter of fact, the world had originally come into being as a result of this kind of sacrifice. In this case, the blood was very real. It represented life inasmuch as it flowed from the animal, as its vessels were slit, and when the blood ceased to come, the animal's soul (where it had one) had left its body and it had passed on. As religious history progresses toward the birth of Christ, however, religious ceremony begins to focus on the individual and not on events external to him.

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[6] Karen Armstrong, *The Great Transformation: The Beginning of Our Religious Traditions.* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006) 85.

Around the 9th century BC, Chinese traditions put more and more emphasis on elaborate and dramatic rites that focused less on animal blood-offering, and more on liturgical minutiae. In India (also around the 9th century), the break away from animal sacrifice was made even more drastically. The *Brahmanas* suggest that violence was being removed from religious rites.[7] In these texts, the killing of an animal was frequently described as cruel. The god Prajapati had been the archetypical sacrificer, first by having the power to create living creatures out of those sacrificed to the gods, and then by being, himself, the sacrificed, from which life was sustained. Since Prajapati was the god who oversaw and encompassed all the other gods, he was the ultimate sacrificer. And since the ultimate sacrificer could only conquer death by assimilating it unto himself, so that Death was swallowed up, Prajapati could offer himself up to the gods, and experience immortality. In societies such as this one, where Death could now be now engulfed within the Self, the spiritual focus turned inwards. There was no need for outside manifestations of blood as life. And, it was around this time that scientifically curious and enlightened societies began to experience the role of blood beyond its entertainment value.

The Greek doctors presented a first significant attempt at a holistic, enlightened vision of how blood contributed to life. Pythagoras, Hippocrates, Aristotle and Galen all upheld, to a greater or lesser degree, a theory of the "humours," where blood, as

[7] Armstrong, *Transformation* 78. The *Brahmanas*, technical ritual texts written between the 9th and 7th centuries BC, are important, as they denote the instant where ritualists inaugurating India's Axial Age of worship turned toward the inner self, away from sacrificial rites, hence those including bloodshed. These ritualists belonged to the Brahmin priestly class.

in the title of Earle Hackett's book, was the paramount humour.[8] Blood, along with bile, black bile, and phlegm, circulated in the body and the various ratios of the humours to each other were responsible for one's health and disposition. The figurative language bequeathed by the theory of the humours has been traced back to the Greeks, as any bloody-minded linguist will attest to, and will probably be with us for centuries to come, as any sanguine student of language will tell you.

Although all the physicians I have mentioned contributed to the knowledge of blood, Galen (129-199 AD), ironically, stultified medical research on blood for years to come not in spite of, but because of the popularity of his theory. Galen promoted the idea that all blood contained "vital spirit." Because it was infused with holy properties, the human body, via its blood, was now one step closer to control by religious authorities, or at least more closely regimented by their dictates. It is only logical that the Christian Church would enthusiastically embrace this belief. At the time, Galenic medicine was being produced, Christian doctrine was gaining momentum and the idea of human blood infused with vital spirit lent credence to and supported the notion of the transubstantiation (although this was a matter that was hotly debated, and "solved" many centuries later) and the existence of the Holy Spirit. It was not until the 16th century that Italian anatomists started to question

[8] Hackett, *Blood.* Aristotle, who is situated between Hippocrates and Galen, preferred the theory of "plethora," which maintains that blood is carried by the arteries on the right side of the heart, but that the arteries on the left side carry a vital, airy substance. Both sets of vessels are interconnected so that the two substances are kept balanced and in check. The three physicians all practiced at the Medical School of Alexandria and since the theory of the humours had been in vogue with Hippocrates, it was easily re-established when Galen began his practice.

Galenic doctrine, and not until William Harvey's work in 1628 that Galen's ideas on blood began to be questioned in England.

Although many of the ancient ideas had been refuted and new theories and discoveries had been promulgated by the time Bram Stoker wrote *Dracula*, blood transfusions were still in the embryonic stages, and Christianity's doctrine of spirit-infused blood was still widely accepted and sanctioned. It is not difficult to imagine, therefore, how Lucy's blood transfusion, to the Victorian audience, was rife with sacrilege and sexuality (which I shall explore later), while, to Hackett, almost one century later, blood transfusion symbolized biological altruism and vitality, the "unity of species," plus "the independent organ of the cells."[9] This very modern sentiment contrasts sharply with Clay Trumbull's beliefs.[10] Writing a mere four years before the birth of *Dracula*, Trumbull introduced his discussion of primitive blood rite by maintaining that

> The universally dominating primitive convictions: that the blood is the life; that the heart, as the blood fountain, is the very soul of every personality; that blood-transfer is soul-transfer; that blood-sharing, human, or divine-human, secures an inter-union of natures; and that a union of human nature with the divine is the highest ultimate

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[9] Hackett, *Blood* 190.

[10] Clay H.Trumbull, *The Blood Covenant: A Primitive Rite and its Bearings on Scripture.* (Philadelphia: John D. Wattles, 1893) v.

> attainment reached out after by the most primitive, as well as by the most enlightened, mind of humanity.[11]

Although blood in its metaphorical and symbolic capacity did not reach its apex until the era of Christianity, the very physical act of blood covenanting is an ancient concept. Stories of blood-letting and sharing abound in documented Semitic rites, and can be found in Norse mythology, including the Elder Eddas. Lucian speaks of courting one's friends before entering into a blood pact with them, while Tacitus also writes of "blood covenanting" as an intimate gesture.

In this preamble on blood and the complexity of its involvement and role in rites and rituals, it has become increasingly clear that blood's association with the vampire is just as intricate and convoluted. The mere *taking* of blood had been performed centuries before vampire fiction and lore, even vampire *myths,* came to be. Because blood *was* associated with life in a very tangible, visible sense, revivification through the shed blood of another was a logical step. We can hark back to many folk tales (for example, that of the medieval romance legend of Percivale's sister) to see that this drinking of, or bathing in blood is very pervasive.[12] The process of shedding blood, in the Middle Ages, was a common occurrence and a categorically gendered

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[11] Trumbull, *Covenant* v.

[12] Sir Thomas Mallory, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, vol. 2 (London: Penguin Books, 1969) 348-9. In Book XVII of *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Percivale, one of the Knights of the Round Table, travels with his sister to the castle of a Lady who explains that she will die if she does not obtain a "dish full of blood of a maid and a clean virgin in will and in work, and a king's daughter, that blood should be her health, and for to anoint her withal." Percivale's sister consents. She agrees to be a donor, and consequently, she dies.

act. Masculine blood is the mark of lineage; feminine blood is that of parturition. The clichéd present dichotomy of male = culture, woman = nature is clearly represented when blood is spilled. According to Peggy McCracken

> Blood shed by the father is paternal blood – it demonstrates lineage and loyalty between men and God. It is blood that is shed deliberately and with intention; it is therefore blood that can mark a covenant, it is a blood that can be spilled for a higher good. The blood shed by the mother is maternal blood, it recalls menstruation and the blood of parturition. It is therefore a polluting blood.[13]

In the world of vampires, especially Anne Rice's vampires, blood exchange is more than mere sustenance; it is a highly symbolic and symbolized process, and it is striking to note that the large majority of vampires who "perform the dark tricks" or "change" or "turn" humans into vampires are males. Male blood culture, as blood-shedding or blood exchange, is, in antiquity, very important in and of itself. It is the manifestation of the blood itself, and not the pain which the shedding of the blood brings, that is testimony to loyalty, or love, or faith. It is blood, as I mentioned previously, which one *consents* to spill. This notion of consent is closely associated with that of valour and we observe its manifestation in specific, significant, not seemingly unrelated instances: in the Passion of the Christ, where Jesus voluntarily offers his blood to save mankind; in the Grail legend, where Percivale's sister volunteers hers to save a Lady; in vampire lore, where the victim must consent to the

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[13] Peggy McCracken, *The Curse of Eve, the Wound of the Hero: Blood, Gender, and Medieval Literature* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2003) 58.

vampire's advances, initially by inviting him across the threshold (evidence of the decreasing religiosity of the ritual) . The notion of *consent* to spill blood, therefore is of the utmost importance. Perversions of the blood-letting traditions abound, where the latest representation of which is the Québec film, *Éternelle*, a retelling of the legend of the Countess Erzbet Bathory of Hungary, who was said to have bathed in her servant girls' blood to ensure her own youth and beauty.[14]

In 1893, Trumbull wrote of the Carib tribe of South America, that at a male child's birth, the father sprinkles a few drops of his own blood on his newborn.[15] Clearly, filiation is not enough; a tangible, flowing proof of the father's valour is necessary to ensure that these qualities will be passed on to the boy child. It is the spirit, so to speak, of this type of blood transaction which is to be found in the transfusion; for the newborn child, the blood is the very real carrier of the father's courage and valour, and for the ailing, blood is liquid revivification. SaysTrumbull, "insanity has been cured by the transfusion of a sane man's blood."[16] (Trumbull 133) Blood, in its liquid aspect, is powerful, beneficent, life-giving. Again, according to Trumbull,

> Because blood, as life, belongs to, and, in a particular sense, *represents* (italics mine) the Author of life, blood has been counted a

[14] *Éternelle*, dir. Wilhelm Liebenberg and Federico Sanchez, TVA Films, 2004. It is interesting to note that in Liebenberg/Sanchez's rendition, the pre-Oedipal component of the vampiric exchange, as I shall depict in Chapter 3, is lost, as the Countess obtains blood using a sharp, phallic instrument which she uses to slash the victims' throats. These victims are always female.

[15] Trumbull, *Covenant* 133.

[16] Trumbull, *Covenant* 133.

> means of inspiration...the Agency whereby the Author of life speaks in and through the possessor of that blood.[17]

Blood is described as practically having a life of its own. It is of widespread opinion, Trumbull says, that the blood of a murdered man will flow afresh from the victim at the murderer's touch, in testimony to the crime. If this belief is, indeed, widespread in 1893, Stoker was certainly privy to it, and would have been aware, by extrapolation, of the transgression of "illegally" spilling blood. What is certain is that toward the end of the 19th century, it was common opinion that "Beyond the idea of inspiration through an interflow of God-representing blood, there has been in primitive man's mind (however it came there) the thoughts of a possible interconnection with God through an inter-union with God by blood."[18] To the pious mind, therefore, God was life. All life was bestowed by God and could be taken back by Him. Most importantly (to me), life was carried in blood. So blood, in its fluid, boundary-less nature, was even more indicative of a gift of God; it was the means of man's covenant with man, but most importantly, the most sacred of man's covenant with God, the inter-union of human nature with the divine, made possible through the proffered acceptance of a common life in a common blood-flow.

This portrayal of the common Victorian religious conviction upholds many critics' beliefs of the Victorian audience's horror at the blasphemous actions of Dracula. This gesture of vilifying the blood is made even more graphic by Francis Ford Coppola, whose pre-vampiric Dracula not only transgresses the sanctions of the

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[17] Trumbull, *Covenant* 139.

[18] Trumbull, *Covenant* 147.

Christian Church by violently stabbing the cross of Christ, which shows the life within by bleeding profusely, but also by actually drinking of this blood, therefore appropriating the powers of transcendence of God. It is highly unlikely, however, that this scene was understood in this vein by Coppola's audience. As Trumbull insists

> Blood is not death, but life. The shedding of blood, Godward, is not the taking of life but the giving of life. The outflowing of blood (to primitive man) toward God is an act of gratitude or of affection, a proof of loving confidence, a means of inter-union.[19]

To suck blood inward, therefore, is nothing short of pure transgression.

Probably the most sanctified example of this "offering up of the blood" is reflected in Jesus' words: "This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you (Luke 22:20)." The Eucharist, much as it is the first instance of this literal offering upward of blood to God, is also the one that provides a first glimpse into the perversion of the rite. Maggie Kilgour observes that Augustine's God claims to be "the food of full-grown men. Grow and you shall feed on me. But you shall not change me into your own substance as you do with the food of your body. Instead you shall be changed into me".[20] In her *Metaphors of Incorporation*, however, Kilgour focuses on the Host, and the part of the Eucharist given over to the Host. She further perceives that the focus on *drinking* accompanied one of the shifts in

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[19] Trumbull, *Covenant* 148.

[20] Maggie Kilgour, *From Communion to Cannibalism: on Anatomy of Metaphors of Incorporation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1990) 15.

communion practice that occurred during the Middle Ages. As the celebration of the Eucharist was becoming more "gentrified," its practice was further removed from the "unwashed masses." The layman was slowly eased out of the sacraments, hence out of direct communion with God. This process was, however, bound to happen as men's gods went from being plural, human-referred entities who demanded blood, to a single transcendent being whose connection to mankind had been established as the instance when *He* gave up his own blood for mankind. "Through an increasing emphasis on ceremony, the role of the communicant was reduced from receptive participant to mere spectator."[21] And as part of this exclusion, the chalice was limited to the priest alone, who performed the act of drinking and absorbing the blood of Christ while the congregants watched. To observers and congregants both, it must have been felt that the blood was reserved for the priests alone as it seemed to be more powerful than the host: it was less defined and less controllable. It was also, I feel, less innocuous than the wafer (or actual bread) which stood in for the host. This blood could actually be spilled and communicants were not subject to the same constraints with regard to it (i.e. to avoid blasphemy by being careful not to "harm" the host with the teeth). Blood could not be controlled in a similar manner. While the appearance of cannibalism could be discouraged while ingesting the host, there was no such prophylaxis while imbibing the blood.

The very act of Catholic communion, with its belief in the ingestion of the body of Christ, gave rise to tracts by protesting Protestants regarding the bloodthirsty rite embodied in the communion. It is this perception, I feel, which stands as the

[21] Kilgour, *Incorporation* 82.

foreshadowing which lends itself to the "blasphemous" misappropriation of the rite of communion and to the superstitions pertaining to the vampire, which were to sweep through the Balkans. This "literalization of a trope," says Kilgour, was problematic. The early Church, she says, had few problems accepting Christ's words and the relation of the substances involved in the sacrement. However, she quotes Adolph Hornack as stating, in connection with the use of the word "*representio,*" that this word had the significance "to make present": "what we nowadays understand by "symbol" is a thing which is in some way really what it signifies."[22] It was, therefore, easy to appropriate the rites of communion, especially where vampirism/drinking is concerned, in a much more involved manner lending itself to an existential fear much greater than that pertaining to eating/cannibalism. Though ultimately unpleasant, the end result of cannibalism is death by dinner. The victim of the vampire, however, could also die, but it is not death by exsanguination that throws fear into the most stalwart of hearts, but rather the possibility of living as undead, and the obviously intensely sexual, religious nature of the exchange, for the vampire attack, when it does not result in death, is a highly intimate one.

Communion, therefore, needed to be defined as the *spiritual* practice of oneness with God so as not to misunderstand the relation of signs to what they signify, and fall into disgusting literalism that degrades the spirit. Again according to Kilgour, "communion is protected against literalism and materialism by being introjected, internalized, and transformed into a psychological process that takes place, not in the

[22] Kilgour, *Incorporation* 80.

bread and wine, but inside the faithful."[23] This is not to say that what does occur "inside the faithful" is not a very visceral reaction.

> Metaphor is a trope of "translation," which is frequently described in such terms as "a trespass across boundary lines, a usurpation of the 'proper' by the 'alien' term, an imposter or 'guest' who displaces the 'host'. When the canny becomes completely uncanny the result is the gothic, but even in less extreme cases a metaphoric meaning is an alien meaning and, like all aliens, potentially threatens the system it infiltrates.[24]

It became, therefore, significant and expedient to completely sever the elements of the metaphor. Erasmus, in his *In Praise of Folly*, illustrates how precious objects must be kept from common view, since what is divine and immortal is what can not be seen, and the most excellent things are hidden most deeply, and "the furthest removed from profane eyes."[25] Erasmus uses the figure of the Silenus box, ugly on the outside, but holding things noble and virtuous within. To him, inside and outside are diametrically opposed, and ultimately, he pleads for the separation of sacred and secular powers based on a belief in the total antithesis of the spirit and the flesh. Opposites, maintains Erasmus, can not be reconciled in one body; the outer, lowly, material must ultimately be completely destroyed. Kilgour harks to this period as a

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[23] Kilgour, *Incorporation* 84.

[24] Kilgour, *Incorporation* 12.

[25] Margaret Mann Phillips, *Erasmus on His Times: A Shortened version of the "Adages of Erasmus"* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1967) 82.

time when the modern individual was emerging, a figure whose mind and body were now more decidedly disjunct. It was a logical step, therefore, for the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 to establish the doctrine of transubstantiation, which jockeyed with both positions, which insisted that what the communicant *really* ate and drank were Christ's body, and the spiritualist position, which maintained the pure symbolism of the practice. The transubstantiation held that "while the substances of bread and wine became the substance of Christ, the accidents remained unchanged."[26] While the priest re-presented the scene of the Last Supper, the congregants opened themselves up spiritually to God's word. But this spiritual vulnerability held potential dangers too. Knowledge is, indeed, a substance more fluid than blood, and even less controllable and of frightening intangibility. Like church wine, church words make an attempt to satiate spiritually. Although the communicant's thirst for the Blood is filled, his/her thirst for the Word may remain unfulfilled. And it is in this dichotomous yet symbiotic connection that the vampire will find his niche. The blood metaphor will be regenerated as it is literalized. Kilgour calls this process a part of the ritual degradation, the return of abstractions to the body in order to regenerate them. In this way is Christianity revivified, not in spite of, but because of, the vampire.

Before the blood was a metaphor, it was a substance on its own with a heroic past, and, as we advance into modernity, a troubled present. While metaphorically (in religion, anyway), blood was still imbued with nobility and sacrilege, as a substance of study and analysis, it was flowing into trouble. While blood diseases have existed

[26] Kilgour, *Incorporation* 81.

since the beginning of recorded time, some in particular lent themselves to romance (as I have shown) or disrepute.

The first disease of note, and one duly noted by the character of Professor Van Helsing in Stoker's *Dracula*, is syphilis. Although syphilis is not primarily a blood disease, but rather a systemic illness, its means of contamination was either through blood or through semen. And since, to the ancient Greeks, semen was believed to be the most purified, noble distillation of blood, the connection between blood and sexuality could not easily be negated, even when the disease came to be understood. The origin of the first documented case of syphilis, in 1493, was hotly debated; while some argued that it came from the New World when Christopher Columbus returned from his travels, others insisted that it was exported to the New World from Europe. The former explanation would have given momentum to Stoker's *Dracula* and bolstered some critics' opinion that the novel is a xenophobic reaction to the huge numbers of immigrants to Great Britain when Stoker was alive. The latter reasoning would actually be upheld by the statistics showing that in 1900, a whopping 16% of Paris was infected with syphilis. Between 1880 and 1887, the number of syphilis victims tripled. Suddenly blood was not so holy.

Porphyria is another disease that is said to have been around "forever," but that still carries a huge stigma, and this in spite of easy medical explanation. Although it *is* a disease of the blood (it belongs to a group of disorders caused by abnormalities in the steps leading to blood formation), its symptoms are visible and uncannily

approximate the characteristics of the early vampire. Besides enduring the painful blistering, itching and scarring due to extreme sensitivity to sunshine and light, victims of porphyria were afflicted with increased hair growth, thick skin and darkened pigmentation, which probably did nothing to assuage xenophobic fears. Although it was documented by Dr. Schultz in 1874, descriptions of porphyriacs abound in medical journals, including reprints of work written by Hippocrates. Had this disease not caused monstrous traits in its victims, it might have replaced haemophilia as England's "romantic disease" since it, too, affected royalty. King George III, who was said to have been mad, was later discovered to have been afflicted by the neurological variety of porphyria. As it were, haemophilia took this dubious honour.

Although haemophilia was also a disease known to the Ancients (2 A.D. rabbinical texts describe exempting some Jewish babies from circumcision because they belonged to families of "bleeding men"), in 1803, Dr. John Conrad Otto determined that men bled to death because they lacked a clotting factor to staunch bleeding when they were injured, even slightly. Up to that point, the blame wasn't placed on the blood; physicians were of the opinion that haemophilia was due to faulty blood vessels.

Finally, by the time leukaemia was diagnosed as a cancer of the blood in 1845 by John Hughes Benett, blood had lost its sanctified aspect. It was scrutinized and analysed, and attested to the most unholy of alliances. Although it could wash away

the sins of humankind and revivify men, it could also kill them and hold them hostage to ugly, painful diseases. As civilization spread out, syphillization moved in. Modern man was born, with a clearly differentiated body and spirit, and the baggage of not-so-original sin.

To gain a deeper understanding of how the vampire amalgam was affected by this change in one of its components, the blood, it will prove useful and interesting to examine the other constituent, i.e., the word "vampire" itself, its most probable origins and grand entrance into language itself, and finally, the scope of its social symbolic manifestation.

Chapter 1-c)
And the Word Was Made Man (John 1:14)

Although the history of the vampire-amalgam is obviously of the utmost importance in our procession toward the crossroads of the chiasma (as I have explained in my introduction), the actual *title* of "vampire" has a colourful past, which, as I shall show, is rather significant in establishing initial perceptions of the vampire. The word which stands for the figure that we have chosen to designate "vampire" is evocative of a tradition of folkloric or religious fear, an apprehension which, at its inception, was not eroticized to any degree. This fear evoked by the vampire, in its different incarnations, will become more complex and stratified as we progress into the 20th century. More specifically, it will become abundantly clear that the aim of the early vampire was not one of bonding, affiliation or sexual expression at all, but rather one of decimation and destruction, whence this terror of the revenant.

Scholars of etymology, although divided on the origin of the word "vampire," will agree on one issue: the word itself is shrouded in mystery and misinformation. The most credible sources, however, all agree that in the vampire's supposed "homeland," Transylvania, the term itself appears as a neologism, where it makes its first appearance in the *Dictionar de Neulogisme* in 1976. Although the word is a recent phenomenon in Romania, four different schools of thought suggest more distant roots from Turkish, Greek, Slavic and Hungarian origins. Interestingly, what is believed to be the chronological origins of the word coincides with the first reported "vampire sightings." This parallel is of no small importance, as we shall see

in the latter half of this chapter.

While a first group of etymologists, led by Dr. Franz Miklosich, posits that the word "vampire" and its Slavic synonyms (*upior, upper, upyr*) derive from the Turkish *uber*, meaning "witch," a second group, headed by Montague Summers, postulates that "vampire" derives from the Greek verb πι (to drink). This notion is also reflected in the third group of theorists, and evident in the work of Russian folklorist Alexander Nikolayevich Afanas'ev, who cites Slavic origins for the word: *wempti*, once again meaning "to drink."[1] The Slavic school of thought is probably the most popular and has gained almost universal acceptance, although many of its members take issue with Afanas'ev and his followers on the actual root of the word, believing instead that the root noun of the term is the Serbian word BAMIIUP. This opinion seems to be accepted by English theorists and etymologists (as per the *OED*), as well as German (*Brockhaus*), Spanish (*Encyclopedia Universal Illustrada*) and Swedish (*Swensk Etymologisk Ordbok*) scholars. The fourth group of authorities, whose members are mainly American and English, propose that although the word "vampire" itself is of recent Hungarian origin, the actual *belief* in vampires has its roots in ancient superstition. This theory, however, fails to take into account the fact that the Hungarian *vampir* postdates its first use in Western languages by more than a century.

[1] Theories 2 and 3 are highly unlikely, however, since the actual drinking of the victim's blood (or any other of its bodily fluids for that matter) either postdates the vampire's classical origins or is merely incidental to the vampire's raison d'être, i.e., to evoke fear and/or repugnance. The insistence and focus on the vampire as a drinker of blood is highly indicative of the changing perception of this figure and connotes a growing intimacy with his victim.

The sources from Western European countries are even more interesting, and no less murky. From France, we get the first appearance of *vampire* in the publication *Mercure Gallant* in connection with "actual" 1693 and 1694 cases of vampirism in Poland and Russia. After Dom Calmet's publication of the 1746 *Dissertations sur les apparitions et sur les revenants et les vampires*, the word grew in popularity.[2]

German readers became acquainted with the word in 1721 when scholar Gabriel Rzazynsky published his *Historia naturalis curiosa regne Poloniae*, in which he recounts 17th-century stories of Polish, Russian and Lithuanian vampires, which he calls *upior*, the Polish translation of "vampire." The actual word "vampire" in German (*der Vampyr*) occurs in the self-titled poem by August Ossenfelder in 1748 when it made its first appearance as a literary figure.

In England, the term was first introduced by Paul Rycaut in 1679. In his *State of the Greek and Armenian Churches*, Rycaut describes a figure, a "pretended demon, said to delight in sucking human blood, and to animate the bodies of dead persons, which when dug up, are said to be found florid and full of blood."[3] The term "vampire" itself is never used, although the onslaught of the said "demon" is fully consistent with the vampiric act in its more evolved state. When the word next appears, it is in the *Travels of 3 English Gentlemen from Venice to Hamburg Being the Grand Tour*

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[2] Dom Augustin Calmet, *Dissertations sur les apparitions des anges, des démons & des esprits et sur les revenants et vampires de Hongrie, de Boheme, de Moravie & de Silesie* (Paris : De Bure l'aîné, 1746).

[3] Paul Rycaut, *The Present State of the Greek and Armenian Chirches, Anno Christi 1678, Written at the Command of His Majesty by Paul Ricaut* (London: John Starkey, 1679) 6.

of Germany in the Year 1734.[4] It is worthy of note that the description of vampires given in the *Travels* is the first scholarly depiction of vampires in the English language. The author describes these figures as follows:

> These Vampyres are supposed to be the bodies of deceased persons, animated by evil spirits, which come out of the graves, in the night time, suck the blood of many of the living, and thereby destroy them.[5]

Quoting from another 17th-century source, the author of the *Travels* maintains that, "They attack men, women and children, sparing neither age nor sex".[6]

The crime perpetrated by the vampire is straightforward assault and battery. It is not focussed on one particular sex and it does not favour a specific age range. It shows no preference for, or indulgence toward, weaker human victims. In the same vein, much as the victim shows no specificity, so the perpetrator himself is notable not for his own attributes or characteristics, but rather for being the agent of assault, the dealer of carnage or even of death. The anonymous contributor to the *Travels* adds that

> Some of them [victims of the vampire], asked at the point of death, what is the matter with them, say they suffer in the manner just related from people lately dead...Those who are destroyed by them,

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[4] "Travels of 3 English Gentlemen from Venice to Hamburg Being the Grand Tour of Germany in the Year 1734," *Harleian Miscellany: A Collection of Scarce, Curious and Entertaining Pamphlets and Tracts as Well in Manuscripts as in Print: Selected from the Library of Edward Harley, Second Earl of Oxford* (London: Printed for J. White, 1808-1813) 7.

[5] *Harleian Miscellany* 7

[6] *Harleian Miscellany* 7

after their death, become Vampyres.[7]

On mainland Europe, it is interesting to note that the use of the word in the vernacular postdated its use in Latin. In 1749, Pope Benedict, considering that the belief in vampires was mere superstition, published *De Servorum Dei Beatificatione et de Beatorum Canonizatione*, where he condemns the mutilation of bodies believed to be those that host vampires, in a chapter entitled "*De vanitate vampyrorum*". The term *vampiro* appears in the literature forty years later.

In Russia, the word *vampir*, along with *vampire*, *upir* and *upyr*, all appear as borrowings from other languages. Oddly, the term *upire* dates as far back as 1047 as a family or place name. As mentioned previously, use of the word in the alleged birthplace of the vampire, Transylvania, is restricted to its appearance as a neologism. Says Agnes Murgoci in "The Vampire in Romania": "As regards the names used for vampires, dead and alive, "*strigoi*"...is the most common Roumanian term, and *moroi* is perhaps the next most usual...A Transilvanian term is *şişcoi.*"[8]

It is noteworthy to mention that the earliest use of the word "vampire" is in French, English and Latin, in describing phenomena in Poland, Russia and Macedonia. Following the Serbian "vampire epidemic" of 1725-32, the word itself surfaces in

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[7] *Harleian Miscellany* 7

[8] Agnes Murgoci, "The Vampire in Romania," *The Vampire: A Casebook*, ed. Alan Dundes (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1998) 14.

German, French and English documents. In sum, the phenomenon which occurs in the East finds a springboard in the West to propel it toward its role first as a legend and then as a media personality.

In examining the origins of the word "vampire," we are made aware of the diachronic evolution not only of the character's outward manifestation, but also of its social symbolic significance. The vampire amalgam has never existed in a vacuum. If we consider, for a moment, its role as a symbol, then we are reminded that "there is no such thing as ideas or beliefs, only ideas *and* beliefs."[9] As humans evolve in space and time, so do the symbols of their religions, customs and anxieties. As J.E. Cirlot maintains, "The symbolist meaning of a phenomenon helps to...link the instrumental with the spiritual, the human with the cosmic (and what interests us most), the casual with the causal."[10] According to Cirlot, symbolism does not infringe upon the historical validity of a phenomenon, but rather "opens the door to a deeper acceptance of the reality of that phenomenon."[11]

When Elizabeth Miller, vampirist, declares, "I like my vampires scary and ugly, she is indeed harking back to the centuries-old figure invented and exploited in numerous societies and extrapolated on by many others."[12] This is why, in appraising the vampire amalgam, it is important to understand how the origin of the word

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[9] J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbol*, (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983) xi.

[10] Cirlot xiii

[11] Cirlot xiv

[12] Personal communication, Transylvanian Society of Dracula convention, June 4, 2005.

"vampire" designated a figure which reflects not only a quantity evolving in complexity, but also one which embodies the rapidly morphing needs and fears of the societies which house it. As we have seen, societies held to be the birthplace of the vampire have only (relatively) recently equated the pop culture figure with the term "vampire." Romanian folklore and superstition, for example, give us three types of what are considered to be vampires, although the term itself is never used: a) the dead vampire types, or reanimated corpses, b) the live vampire types, who can send out their souls during life to wander with type b), and c) the vârcolac, who eats the sun and the moon.

It is obvious, therefore, that early vampires were not invested with the same characteristics as their postmodern counterparts. The word may have struck fear in the hearts of those who believed in vampires, but for entirely different reasons from those we evoke today. From wreaking havoc in the family home to dining on the sun and moon, the vampires of yore were invested with entirely different functions from those with which we associate them today, as we shall see forthwith.

Chapter 2
Behold Now, an Evil Spirit from God Troubleth Thee (1 Samuel 16:15)

How many uses can there possibly be for a vampire? As Paul Barber points out in his discussion of the vampire in Europe:

> Among the revenant's functions is that of scapegoat for otherwise inexplicable phenomena. Since these are seldom in short supply and vary from region to region (weather, local customs, and geology all contribute to such variations), the revenant acquires different habits from one end of Europe to the other.[1]

Indeed, we can extrapolate from Europe to every location where vampires "exist."

The truth is, no one really knows where, or how, or why vampires first made an appearance. What is clear is that their inception, much like the establishment of anything, was borne of a necessity that started to manifest itself at the outer limits of the group and then proceeded to delve deep within the individual psyche. The term "vampire" has become, as everyone knows, a popular, lazy referent, or, as Laurence Rickels indicates, a "polymorphous confusion of activities and desires that go down and out and under the name of vampirism."[2] Situated at any given time along the chronological side of the chiasma, the figure of this now cutting-edge character can easily be yoked into the role of the entertainer, of the fearful revenant, or of the over-analyzed, over-exposed projection. No matter what the exact spacetime of the

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[1] Paul Barber, *Vampires, Burial and Death: Folklore and Reality* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1988) 85.

[2] Laurence A. Rickels, *The Vampire Lectures* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1999) 1.

vampire's conception and development, he decidedly did NOT get his start in film, literature, or from the front of a cereal box. Almost five centuries had to pass before the fearsome ghoul developed into the dapper young man he is today. Examined from the vantage point of, first, a 17th-century Greek account of a revenant, and second, a recent description of Armand from the fiction of Anne Rice, we encounter the following pre- and post-chiastic representations:

> On the top of the bones of other men there was found lying a corpse perfectly whole; it was unusually tall of stature; clothes it had none, time or moisture having caused them to perish; the skin was distended, hard and livid, and so swollen everywhere that the body had no flat surfaces but was round like a full sack. The face was covered with hair dark and curly; on the head there was little hair, as also on the rest of the body, which appeared smooth all over; the arms by reason of the selling of the corpse were stretched out on each side like the arms of a cross; the hands were open, the eyelids closed, the mouth gaping, and the teeth white.[3]

> He was merely looking at me, a radiant creature in jewels and scalloped lace...The sheer pitch of incarnate beauty made me gasp...Yes, perfect mortal raiment, and yet he seemed all the more supernatural, his face too dazzling, his dark eyes fathomless and just for a split second glinting as if they were windows to the fires of hell.

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[3] John Cuthbert Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1910) 366-7.

> And when his voice came, it was low and almost teasing...Heartbreakingly innocent he seemed in the midst of the crowd.[4]

Obviously, the vampire's image did not evolve overnight. His (un)popularity progressed in fits and starts, depending on the country and the general mental and physical health of its inhabitants. And, decidedly, although the belief in and fear of vampires can be deciphered in one manner or another across most civilizations, some societies do not have an identifiable representation of the vampire. Native Americans, for example, do not have vampires, and neither do most of the indigenous peoples of Oceania. While fear of the dead may be universal, this fear does not always manifest itself in the figure of vampires.[5]

The late 17th century witnessed a vampire "epidemic" in Eastern Europe which was reported in the legal, medical and military literature. In fact, these documents support the belief that to the 17thcentury East European imagination, the vampire was very real indeed.[6] The vampire was not the only occult figure of the Middle Ages; witches, sorcerers, werewolves and heretics took their respective turns at being persecuted. However, by the time the 18th century, with its secularization and science, rolled around, the vampire had re-emerged, redefined and demanding attention. It is believed that as many as 40 treatises on vampires and revenants were

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[4] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 275.

[5] Alan Dundes, *The Vampire: A Casebook* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1998) 161.

[6] For example, in Serbia, as late as the 19th century, the belief in vampires was so strong that the violent and sometimes sacrilegious means to dispatch them were often proscribed by the government and the Church.

researched and published in French and German universities from 1728 to 1743. In a 1746 dissertation (translated into English in 1759) with which every vampire scholar is familiar, Dom Augustin Calmet, one of the most famous documented vampirologists, defined vampires as

> Men who have been dead for some considerable time, it may be for a long period or it may be for a shorter period, and these issue forth from their graves and come to disturb the living, whose blood they suck and drain. These vampires visibly appear to men, they knock loudly at their doors and cause the sound to re-echo throughout the whole house, and once they have gained a foothold death generally follows. To this sort of Apparition is given the name Vampire or Oupire, which in the Slavonic tongue means a blood-sucker. The only way to obtain deliverance from their molestations is by disinterring the dead body, by cutting off the head, by driving a stake through the breast, by transfixing the heart, or by burning the corpse to ashes.[7]

Calmet was right only insofar as this applied to a certain category of vampire. Not all vampires are men, length of (un)death may vary, and, most importantly, not all vampires suck, or, as the case may be, vampires *do* suck (!), but for different reasons. Some early vampires do not suck blood, they suck milk. And some don't suck at all. Those who do, don't always go for the neck, they go for nipples...of

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[7] Dom Augustin Calmet, *Dissertations Upon the Apparitions of Angels, Daemons, and Ghosts, and Concerning the Vampires of Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia* (London: M. Cooper, 1759) 2.

men, women *and* children. Moreover, not all vampires are bad. In Romania, "retired" vampires who are no longer vampires are considered lucky. In Galicia, the vampire can sometimes eradicate various sicknesses and epidemics and change bad weather. At this point, a quick survey of ancient vampires may prove edifying.

Although records of vampire-like figures exist in several ancient cultures, the first pictorial representation of the vampire may be found on an Assyrian bowl depicting a man copulating with a beheaded female vampire. Several literate cultures espouse beliefs of the dead feeding off the living, while many others hold beliefs in demonic female figures which fuse with the living, the representation of this union taking the form of blood rituals, sexual exchanges, and expressions of violence. The actual origin of vampire lore is set by some historians in Scandinavia and the British Isles, where, it is explained, the legends "took" most firmly in medieval Central and Eastern Europe. Most prevalent in the latter location was the theory of the dead family member leaving his tomb at night to annoy, to various degrees, friends and family. Some stories impute to the vampire the power to metamorphose, usually into a bat or a wolf. According to the famous occult anthropologist Montague Summers, the vampire sometimes practices cannibalism, biting the victim's abdomen and eating the heart. By definition, it would seem that this act would place the assailant in a whole other category; however, the act of bloodsucking trumps any other aggression. This further substantiates my claim that it is not the mere fact of draining a victim of his or her blood that strikes fear into the heart of entire populations (while firing up the literary imagination), but rather the discomfort posed by the

need to suck blood, and even more so, to revel in it which fuels our need to shed some light on this darkest of creatures, who, although glorious in appearance, has started out most grotesque.

One feature commonly agreed upon, although to different degrees, is the pre-Romantic vampire's frightful, ghoulish appearance. As typified by the Greek account of the vampire's physiognomy, the vampire is quite repulsive, by any standard. His colour is never pale (which is rather de rigueur for the present-day cinematic vampire and his groupie, the role-player) but rather ranging from florid (from the "ingested blood") to dark blue (as was the case, as cited in the literature, with the most ironically yet portentously named "Glam the Vampire"!). The limbs are supple, the eyes are open, and hair and nails have continued to "grow". The mouth is agape and, in the most colourful examples, blood issues from any combination of lips, nose, eyes and ears. Indeed, the profile of the vampire is akin to that of a heavy drinker or alcoholic which, as we shall see shortly, is a character type predisposed to becoming a vampire. Liquid, as opposed to (ironically) occult blood is a sure indicator of vampirism, and readily explains why the vampire is sometimes so bloated.[8]

[8] The presence of blood in or around the mouth could have been due to pneumonic plague, from which the victim may have died. Cause and effect were inverted, and vampires were shown to be responsible for this epidemic. Another inverted cause/effect situation may have been that of the porphyria sufferer, whose unexplained symptoms, as we have seen previously, may have caused the medieval mind to associate him with vampires. The third plausible explanation may have been that of premature burial, in cases where embalming or cremation was not practiced. The comatose patient lucky enough to be disinterred, usually by grave robbers, was unfortunately unlucky enough to meet a second, more violent, "death"!

Although blood may be a salient feature of the monster, the teeth are not the prominent, dramatic appendages they are in 20th-century film and literature. The folkloric vampire's teeth are most often quite ordinary and, in some cases, not even used to draw blood. For example, the Russian vampire uses a pointed tongue to puncture skin.[9]

At this juncture, it is easy and enticing to compare the fully fleshed-out (as it were) multi-dimensional, sexually appealing, mediatic vampire with the rapacious, repulsive repository of evil, danger and, as we shall see, guilt. One attracts, one repels. It is obvious that the medieval vampire was the scapegoat for much that could be explained only with difficulty, if at all. Says Paul Barber, "Because [those for whom vampires are real] live in a world governed by personal relationships, not impersonal laws, contagion tends to be seen as meaningful and deliberate and its patterns based on values and vendettas, not on genetic predisposition or the domestic accommodations of the rat flea."[10] But this is just one approach. What *were* the means, exactly, whereby a perfectly respectable, upstanding, God-fearing citizen became a vampire? Again according to Barber, there are four broad areas of causality.

It would seem that any noisome, disruptive person was predisposed to vampire-hood. In that category, one counts people who are unpopular (for a variety of reasons), different (physically, spiritually or philosophically) or great sinners. Since

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[9] Dmitrij Zelenin, *Russische (Ostslavische) Volkskunde* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1927) 394.

[10] Barber 179.

great sinners usually had a great propensity to be well-liked, it seemed expedient to the moral mind to insist upon the association between the sinner and the unpopular, so as to discourage sinning-by-example. The two categories, therefore, were lumped together. Alcoholism, for example, seemed to be an illness that may have rendered one troublesome and (theoretically, at least) unpopular, so for having been an alcoholic in life, many a poor soul's corpse may have been unearthed in death, in as late as the 19th century. Suicides belong to this unfortunate category, and it is partially for this reason that people who had died at their own hand were refused burial in a churchyard. As a matter of fact, the godless did not rest peacefully in God's earth and, according to several vampirologists including Montague Summers and Dagmar Burkhart, these may have included evildoers, suicides, sorcerers, witches, werewolves, robbers, highwaymen, arsonists, prostitutes, deceitful and treacherous barmaids and other "dishonourable" people. The vampiric constant, it would seem, resides in the element of – and, recently, the desire to be – the "other." Now that marginalization, at least in North American society, is no longer synonymous with overt persecution and death, contemporary vampires are "other-by-choice." What we are tracing in the vampire's side of the chiasma is a history of this particular other, whereby the early vampires' otherness reflected the fears and hostilities of the society in which he had resided.

Although predisposition may have been the cause in the examples I have discussed, not every vampire could be faulted for his or her condition. Barber cites predestination as the cause in cases where children are conceived during a holy

period, born on a holy day (such as Christmas) or unlucky enough to be the illegitimate offspring of illegitimate parents. Birth "defects" such as the presence of an extra nipple, of teeth at birth or "bestial" characteristics (such as "fur" or a tail) condemned a child to a future world of undeath. Even red-haired, blue-eyed babies could not escape their destiny. Interestingly however, and fittingly, if a child were born with a hemorrhagic (red) caul (amniotic membrane covering the head), the blood contained within the caul was apotropaic for vampires if it the child consumed it. The membrane itself was indicative that the child was destined to return from the dead. The *blood* it contained, however, was still viewed as holy and still carried the emblem of Christ.

Indeed, if a baby's parents were vigilant, vampirism could be kept at bay. Hopefully, mother and father remained healthy enough to see the child on its way to outliving them. Barber describes the case of a mother who, having died in childbirth, returned from the dead, needing to make sure that her baby was being taken care of, and of another who returned as a vampire, having died unrepentant and without benefit of the extreme unction. It was an easy leap, therefore, to the belief that those who passed on without benefit of clergy, with no one to bury them (because their family members are dead or nonexistent) or to witness their final moments would encounter the world of the undead in the offing. It was expedient, therefore, not to leave things undone, lest one hoped to become a revenant.

The most common reason one becomes a vampire, at least in contemporary fiction, is that one is *made* into one, logically *by* one. But whereas our literary and filmic vampires need to donate their own blood before their victims become one of the undead, the folkloric vampire does not need this type of symbiosis. As I have mentioned previously, not all vampires suck, and even when they do, the neck is not always their preferred area of succulence. The medieval vampire may just as well have imbibed from an area near the heart, to the nipple, and even between the eyes. And *their* bite is sufficient to render their victim vampiric. The obvious choice, to a haematologically literate vampire, might be anywhere from the jugular to the carotid to any capillary in between. It is ironic that in becoming more physio-logical, the postmodern vampire has obscured the symbolism inherent in the vampiric act, a symbolism which is rewritten into this act and re-emerges in the guise of a pre-Oedipal drive.

Being crossed over before one has had a chance to cross over (into the proverbial light) may also render one a vampire, whether the crossing entity be a dog, cat, the wind, or a chicken. The agent in vampiric lore most noteworthy for crossing over, and ironically, for its rarity, is the bat. Significant as bats are to Stoker's Van Helsing, they are of little importance in the folklore. The most common apotropaic method, informs Barber, consists in "throwing out the cat, closing the doors and windows, and issuing a stern warning to anyone with a habit of leaping over

corpses," although, during a Slavic wake, the doors and windows should at some point be opened so that the soul of the departed can escape.[11]

Other events leading to the vampirization of a poor soul include dying in childbirth, being a murder victim, drowning, having a stroke, and, as we have seen, committing suicide. And woe be to those cursed by a man of the cloth; a priest's curse could effectively condemn one to vampirehood. Conversely, however, the Church is not always responsible in cases of vampire hysteria. As a matter of fact, the clergy has sometimes had to intervene in cases where laypersons would desecrate graves and dispose of the alleged vampires according to a set protocol in order to eradicate the epidemic or drought caused by the vampire. However, the belief in revenants antedates Christianity, as witnessed through, amongst other things, inscriptions and artwork (as that found on the Assyrian bowl, as I have mentioned previously). As Anne Rice's vampire Marius states, "We never served the Christian god. That you can put out of your mind right now...We are older than [the forces of good and evil behind the names of Christ and Satan.]"[12] Indeed, those who created Marius "believed in things that [Marius] did not believe...But their faith harkened back to a time long before the temples of the Roman Empire."[13] Christianity, Marius stipulates, dates back to the aesthetic order. Christianity, however, provided a wealth of lore to the saga of the vampire-revenant and supplied it with multitudinous reasons and events whereby the "unholy" (according to Christianity) could be

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[11] Barber 33.

[12] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 383.

[13] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 383.

condemned to undeath. For example, this was certainly the case, in Romania, when a Christian converted to Islam. It was also true of priests who said Mass in a state of mortal sin, or of children whose godparents faltered as they recited the Apostles' Creed at the child's baptism. Of course, children who died without benefit of baptism were most likely doomed to a condition of vampirism. Probably the most striking of Christian ritual practice appropriated by and adapted to vampiric practice is that of drinking Christ's blood. This is not only an important point, but also a pivotal moment along the chiasma, influencing the perception of blood as both a substantive of imminence and a figurative element within transcendence, and the perception of the vampire as giver of life as opposed to dealer of death. The vampire is not the Grim Reaper. The vampiric "kill" has nothing to do with death; conversely, it has everything to do with the affirmation of life and the quest to exist most wholly. This thematic will once again be picked up in my discussion of the Passion of the Christ, an event which we will explore at some length.

Amongst common apotropaics, historians have found that garlic or incense was routinely stuffed into the facial orifices of the vampire-contender, and its head could be bound with thorns. In fact, Barber suggests that "Jesus' crown of thorns may have been as much an apotropaic as a punishment: because he was executed, his body could have been seen as a rallying point of evil spirits."[14] In fact, the crown of thorns is extremely meaningful in that its significance shifts from apotropaic, propped up

[14] Barber 158.

by the bloodied son of God in His Passion, to a simple prop worn by the son of God in a bloody sadomasochistic display of passion.

In summary, there are two major classifications for the vampire. The first would be, chronologically speaking, that of vampire as revenant, stand-in for the feared and the unknown, the misjudged and misunderstood. It is from this persona that the medieval Christian church chose to create the vampire as repository of human sin and error, the end result of "he who has sinned." Although vampiric variations did exist, shifting and morphing depending on place, time and size of "vampire epidemic," the revenant has always been, and is still, member of a marginalized group, no matter where these margins are societally drawn. The selection criteria for "going vampiric," says Rickels, "tended to revolve each time around the hostilities of the in-group against whatever was already on the outside...vampirism can be followed...as a psychohistory of projection."[15] It is clear that the vampire does not want to depart just yet. His farewell, his (first) death, is not quite convincing enough for him to stay dead, as the appellation of "revenant" quite aptly signifies. Our preoccupation with the vampire, therefore, indicates our interest in and relationship with the dead, and not with death itself. Our connection with the dead, or, as the word needed to be coined, the undead, initially took place in bed, where blood (or other bodily fluids) were exchanged. Rickels points to the German *Alptraum* (literally, "goblin dream") which renders this sense of our association with the otherworldly and possibly the wicked. Likewise, the Slavic *mora*, a living being, male or female, whose soul leaves the body at night-time and approaches men in

[15] Rickels 2.

their sleep to suffocate them and/or suck their blood. This colourful character can be found in the Englishman's "nightmare" or the Frenchman's *cauchemar.* This figure's usefulness lay in keeping the disruptive phenomenon an outside agent as opposed to a psychological phenomenon. While one could not be blamed for having sex with a succubus (or incubus, or any other variety of little monster), a more analytical approach to the nightmare was taken by psychoanalyst Ernest Jones, who suggests that the vampire may enjoy a close rapport with the original goblin figures starring in nightmares, associating this nightmare realm in its entirety with issues of sexual repression and release.[16] In this figuration, in this exchange between the one sucking and the one being sucked, the medium is still blood. And blood is still equal to life. As much as it represented life to the living, it *re*affirmed "life" for the dead. Some Greek spirits, for example, could only speak in the underworld if they had been given a drink of blood. Another belief from Christian culture, again cited by Rickels, is that of the phantom who invades the living to "put them on" so as to have the proper worldly apparel with which to suck another's blood. This episode in which the vampire is "wearing another's identification," so to speak, is one of the earliest occurrences of what psychoanalysis defines as transference, and will shortly be encountered once again.[17]

Vampires, of course, were not the only occult figures to enjoy demonization. The Middle Ages introduced history to witches, sorcerers and werewolves who, for a time, caused more ink to flow than the vampire did. When the Age of Reason rolled

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[16] Ernest Jones, *On the Nightmare* (New York: Liveright, 1971).
[17] Rickels 7-9.

around, however, bringing with it secularization and scientificity, the vampire figure returned with renewed strength and significant character changes. Up to that point (and beyond) however, the vampire's existence embraces one constant, that of alterity. True to Barber's claim that the vampire is the perfect scapegoat for the indefinable and the unexplainable, everyone's favourite bloodsucker is, furthermore, marginalized in his own history of the other. When the vampire is a fearful revenant, an ugly, blood-soaked corpse who sparks fear in the heart of heart of the most stalwart, it is easy and expedient to position him as "other." A glance at any point along the chiasma pre-dating the 18th century will show that the vampire is consistently monstrous in his quest for blood – the paramount humour, exchange medium in the Christian transubstantiation. What happens at the chiasma proper, however, toward the end of the 18th century, is what makes the figure of the vampire much more problematic and, correspondingly, much more interesting, embodying, along with subjectivity and dimensionality, the inimical forces of good and evil.

The "enlightened scientist" of the 18th century needed to confront the non-viability of the vampire figure as repository for all that is ostracized and/or misunderstood. Furthermore, we cannot ignore the sexualized rapport between the "victim" and the early vampire. Unlike the witch's curse, which necessitated no contact at all, or the werewolf's attack, which culminated in a violent, brutal death, the vampire's assailment was more often than not from someone with whom a victim had been intimate, when not outright sexual. By the same token, it was no longer acceptable for the newly scientific mind to ignore the spread of disease and the role of blood

and the contagion which blood carries. What we are faced with now, at the chiasma proper, is a reappropriation and reification of both blood and vampire. Following the newly minted laws of vampiric thermodynamics that insist that life energy cannot be created or lost, only transferred, we need to understand the permutation of the libidinal investment inherent in embracing good (God and His manifestation in the blood of Christ) and battling evil (the vampire and his carnal nature and sacrilegious appropriation of Christian communion).

This would naturally segue into the second representation of the vampire figure, no longer a mere revenant. From its inception as a major figure in popular fiction in the 18th century through to its continuing attraction in the 21st century, one of the most significant evolutions in the realm of the vampire figure has been that from solitary predator to fully civilized, socially adept member of society. This trajectory, as we shall see, is of no small importance when we consider that it is the route travelled by the vampire in the very act of becoming subject. One of the greatest hungers of the late 20th-century vampire (especially as depicted in Rice's series, *the Vampire Chronicles*) is for society. Where at one time the vampire-monster was associated with dealing death through the sucking of blood, he is now re-examined in the light of his desire to belong; his function of ingesting his victims' life-blood and causing either death or undeath has become more than just a means of staying alive, but also a function which is now problematic for both victim and vampire. In the newly-constructed vampire societies, the suicide taboo is very strong; hence, the vampire must see to ensuring his own life by obtaining necessary sustenance, resist the

temptation of yielding to his *vampiric* libidinal instinct, and come to grips with the discrepancy between the ethical standpoints that guide his new vampiric life and those of his human self, which must necessarily capitulate to a new set of vampiric precepts.

The vampire's embrace is also problematic to the victim inasmuch as s/he does not remain unaffected by the monster's bite. As mentioned previously, there are two outcomes, neither of which is desirable: the victim either dies or lives an earthly existence in perpetual undeath. The chosen few, the victims who are singled out to be fledgling vampires, will repeat the agony of vampiric birth, earthly damnation, ethical conundrums, and life as outcasts. Amongst these outcasts as well as within human society, the vampire hunts for relationships and clan formation, and this is made manifest in the vampire fiction from the 19th century onward. This seeking out of society and of interpellation within a group is first disclosed in Polidori's *The Vampyre*, Gothic literature's launching of the first aristocratic vampire via Lord Ruthven.

Fiction as symbolically rich as that of Polidori's *The Vampyre* or Stoker's *Dracula* cries out with invitations to interpret certain passages in the context of their appearance in 19th-century England. We are told, for example that Lord Ruthven is a traveller. Little else is known about the "nobleman more remarkable for his singularities than for his rank." We are led to believe, however, that he is not a known quantity. Stoker goes even further in his depiction of the Count; it is made

clear from the beginning that Jonathan Harker is travelling to Transylvania, Romania, to assist this mysterious nobleman in the purchase of Carfax Abbey. Along the way, Jonathan's comments range from excerpts from a travelogue to condescending remarks about the Bulgarian and Romanian peasants he encounters. One woman seems particularly agitated: "She was in such evident distress that I tried to comfort her, but without effect. Finally, she went down on her knees and implored me not to go...It was all very ridiculous but I did not feel comfortable...She then rose and dried her eyes, and taking a crucifix from her neck offered it to me. I did not know what to do, for, as an English Churchman, I have been taught to regard such things as in some measure idolatrous, and yet it seemed so ungracious to refuse an old lady meaning so well and in such a state of mind."[18] His derision and pity of an elderly peasant lady in fictional Bistritz, however, barely masks a suspicion and fear of an ever-growing influx of foreigners into real-time 19th-century England. On that count, the ending gives hope. The fight for Lucy is won; she is "properly" staked and beheaded before she can further spread Dracula's monster (read "foreign") blood. Mina also, is snatched from the gates of Dracula's castle by four strong and stalwart Englishmen who win the fight against the spread of foreign (oral) sex practices to England, practices to which the women not only succumb, but quickly develop a taste for. Lord Ruthven, for example, is known for his habit of converting pure young maidens into harlots, of "hurl[ing] them down 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

[18] Stoker 15.

expose the whole deformity of their vices to the public view."[19] Indeed, this picture of rampant female sexuality that dares to show its face reappears in Stoker. Lucy, after having been contaminated by the Count, becomes voraciously sexual. Dracula's brides, whom Jonathan encounters at the castle, seduce and rape him in turn. Even Mina, as she is slowly turning into a vampire, bears the mark of the adulteress upon her forehead when Van Helsing presses a communion wafer to her face. Although she is the one who finally leads Van Helsing et al. back to Dracula's castle both psychically (through her connection with the Count) and technologically (as the information gatherer and processor) where they finally hunt him down, Stoker manages to have Mina abandoned and helpless at the crucial moment so that Dracula can prey upon her, and henceforth be "redeemed" by the men and the power of the Church. The wanton ways of the "new woman" are decried even by Mina, who, musing upon marriage proposals, states that she "supposes the new woman won't condescend in future to accept , she will do the proposing herself," distancing herself even more from the intimation that she may be so forward as to welcome sexual (vampiric) advances.[20]

Fans and theorists alike have pursued multitudinous avenues into the analysis of vampires' metaphoricity and practices. Because so much has been written by so many specialists in so many fields, no one analysis is necessarily probative. While writers such as Raymond McNally and Radu Florescu give historical background on the origin of the Dracula legend, providing insight about figures such as Vlad Tepes

[19] Polidori 37.
[20] Stoker 100.

of Romania and Elisabeth Bathory of Hungary, historico-cultural insight provided by critics such as Jean Marigny gives us interpretive continuation and illumination into vampire representation. Essays by Nina Auerbach chart, from a feminist standpoint, the mutations of vampires. The ideas contained within these essays demonstrate why, although there are a great deal of issues which resonate with critical preoccupations for feminist scholars, there are no female vampires. As Joanna Russ says of science-fiction characters, "There are plenty of images of women in science-fiction. There are hardly any women."[21] Likewise with female vampires and their victims. Although anatomically correct, the women of vampire fiction slide into the virgin/whore dichotomy, which relies on its well-rehearsed significance to emphasize the symbolism inherent in (male) vampire fiction. The lack of women, in itself, is fascinating. How woman's identity gets subsumed into either masculinist or non-gendered concerns, as well as why depictions of women have been taken to be incompatible with representations of the vampire merits reflection. Laurence Rickel's treatment of females within vampire fiction lies entirely within a Freudian psychoanalytical perspective, which is crucial to the understanding of the role of the unconscious in the creation and/or fear of the vampire amalgam. Insight and information on vampires and vampire literature from many spheres reveals the cumulative impact of the blood-sucking culture upon our own. But if vampires and the fear of vampires have had an impact upon art and literature, how has "human" culture and its evolving mores influenced vampires? Can we speak of a vampire "culture"? Returning to my model of the chiasma, what

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[21] Joanna Russ, "The Image of Women in Science Fiction," ed. Susan K. Cornillion, *Images of Women in Fiction: Feminist Perspectives* (Ohio: Bowling Green U Popular P, 1972) 79.

happens at the intersection of the ever-evolving figure of the vampire and the mutating metaphor of blood? How does one come to bear upon the other, if at all?

At this time, it will prove useful to define the vampire in relation to his surroundings. Early vampires, as stated above, did not indulge in the pleasure of company, but rather lived and survived on their own, seeing to their basic survival needs and nutritional requirements. Much like a single-celled organism, the vampire went about his business feeding by incorporating nutrition within himself, and from time to time giving up a part of himself that would split off and continue to act in much the same way as he did. The early vampire kept to himself and to his own. As was usually the case, the revenant was a deceased spouse, father or son whose haunting was restricted to family members only. Although his "curse" was made public and the unexplained illnesses and deaths began to manifest themselves, these happenings occurred only within villages, where the populace took the matter into their own hands and dispatched the vampire much the same way throughout history, i.e., by lopping off his head and either staking him or removing his heart. Many of these phenomena are upheld by the theories of psychoanalysis, which teach us that, for example, the resolution of our ambivalence against the dead as manifested in the death taboo is experienced as venting in the proximity of those who are closest to us, i.e., family members. It stands to reason, therefore, that the first vampires appeared as dead family members. Once more, the symbolic discontinuity is made apparent at the chiasma proper, Polidori and Stoker's 19th-century England. Although Stoker's Count is a recluse, both he and Polidori's Ruthven break with this tradition to mingle

in society. Dracula even keeps three brides at his castle; sacrilegious polygamy, perhaps, but family nonetheless. At this point, the vampire is more than a tactile organism; he is an independent free agent with a strong will which he puts to use in the seduction of women. He is interacting socially, but still in a predatory manner. Because of his proximity and dependence upon mortal blood for survival, it is through his perception by human beings that he is defined and developed, and this interaction is necessarily always confrontational. His circle of victims has widened to include not only family and friends, but also those who socialize with him in the small circles which he cultivates. He is no longer a monster; the vampire is distinguished by, if not his appearance of nobility, at least his lineage. He is increasingly well-read, educated and aesthetically conscious. Progressively, his appearance fails to disgust or repel, although it still startles with its coldness and lack of emotion. As long as the vampire remains a type, it is in the smoke rising from the clash of the author's values and mores (hidden or otherwise) that we will first perceive the outline of questions and reflections on the state of society. The very few that the vampire calls to the fold in early vampire fiction do not fulfil a long list of requirements; they are preponderantly attractive and female. The vampire's newborn acolytes (which become, in turn, vampires) are never consenting, and neither, obviously, are his victims.

The first social bond established by the vampire was that between himself and a mate (victim). The decision of whom should be given the vampire's "gift" of immortality was followed by an initial physical bond, which consisted of the

vampire biting the neck and sucking the blood of the victim until s/he was weakened, but not dead. This was followed by the victim sucking the vampire's blood. Within a matter of hours (or days, depending on the author and the victim), the victim would shuffle off his/her mortal coil and bodily fluids and would feel the quickening, indicating his/her full mutation into vampire. This ritual, from Polidori through to Rice, progressively abandons the parallel of the rape of the victim by the vampire. Mina, for example, is discovered sucking Dracula's blood, and "The attitude of the two had a terrible resemblance to a child forcing a kitten's nose into a saucer of milk to compel it to drink."[20] By the time we reach the third instalment of Rice's chronicles, Daniel (the boy who interviewed the vampire in the first instalment) is begging his lover, Armand, to give him what has become known as the "dark gift." As vampires begin to congregate and societies are constituted, "the dark gift" loses all its significance as curse. Although it is now an offering of eternal life and no longer a condemnation to a life of ostracization, it must be acknowledged by the chosen one in his consuming of the vampire's blood, a material exchange which cements the bond. The vampire makes the offering; in Stoker, as in Rice, he tears open his own flesh so that his chosen can freely drink. The blood offering by the mother in the act of birth is replicated in this act of reproduction to assure the continuity of the line. The blood metaphor is now extended to include the blood of family ties.

Within the *Chronicles* alone, we can observe progressively more complex social formations. The couple unit gives way to the family unit, which in turn gives rise to

[20] Stoker 288.

small covens. Certain members of these family systems break free to form further couple/family/coven units throughout the world. *In Queen of the Damned*, Akasha, the original Mother vampire, comes to life again to lash out against the "rogue vampires," generations upon generations of ill-conceived immortals who are so far-removed from the ideological core of vampire existence that they do not know of their beginnings or their ancestors.[21] The morality tale of vampire fiction has ebbed as the locus of interaction and conflict shifts. The various groups of vampires now manifest harmony or dissonance; they exhibit their own particular brand of rapports and clashes and existential dilemmas. If one wants to "live" within vampire society, once must adhere to its rules:

1 - There are several reproductive taboos concerning the giving of the dark gift: one cannot "make" a vampire child or an old, sickly person. The victim should be young, strong and attractive.

2 - One cannot tell mortals about the existence of vampires and their societies, or what they know of vampiric origins.

3 - One vampire cannot physically harm another.

Lestat and his first family unit (Louis and Claudia) manage to transgress all these rules, leading to the first open conflict chronicled in Rice's fiction.[22] A striking parallel develops between the reproduction and maintenance of vampire society, on the one hand, and the same process by which Louis Althusser explains the reproduction of the means of production in society, on the other. It therefore follows

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[21] Anne Rice, *Queen of the Damned* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988).

[22] Rice, *Interview with the Vampire.*

that the reproduction (which we may equate to the re-production of a new vampire from a victim) of the workforce, i.e., the maintenance of a viable vampire society, also necessitates (and this is most important for the survival of Rice's vampire society) a reproduction of submission to the existing rules of established conduct, i.e., reproduction of the individual vampire's submission to the dominant ideology. In Rice's novels, it is presented as necessary not only to maintain order, but more urgently, to maintain safety from potential enemies who may be fearful of the vampires. "Tous les agents de la production, de l'exploitation et de la repression...doivent être à un titre ou à un autre "pénétrés" de cette idéologie, pour s'acquitter "conscientieusement" de leur tâche."[23] In defining the structures of society, Althusser calls upon the model of the base-superstructure, maintaining that ultimately, it is not the levels of the superstructure which determine the strength of the whole, but rather the strength/efficiency of the base. And indeed, this base is extremely shaky in the Rice novels; it is, in fact, the volatility of the base which exists within a maelstrom of ideological quandaries which sets the tone for the latter novels of Rice's *Chronicles*. There is a manifest correspondence between the state (and the components which make it up, i.e., ideological state apparatuses, as defined by Althusser) and the configuration of vampire society itself. It is in this complexity, which includes the vampire as full participant, that Rice interpellates her characters as representatives of vampire ideology. A society must be constituted; in order to do so, an ideology must be maintained. If the vampire becomes subject, then this subject must exist within a framework of social rituals (the culture and performance of bloodsucking) which in turn confirms the view that the vampire is, indeed, a

[23] Louis Althusser, *Sur la reproduction* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1995) 73.

subject with a consciousness of his own. And since this ideology is propagated through the main ritual of bloodsucking, blood becomes the token of the reproduction which it symbolizes. This Althusserian concept of the "hailing of the subject" (in our case, the vampire) and his subsequent entry into the dominant ideology serves two purposes: the first helps to define the birth of the vampire as subject in later fiction (such as that of Anne Rice, but not limited to her), and the role of blood as symbol, whereby the symbol is no longer Christian icon but rather token in the reproduction of vampire ideology.

Chapter 3
In the Name of the Father

When we seek the definition of "father," etymology sends us in a tailspin with considerations of *pater* vs. *genitor*, nurturer vs. procreator, the one who giveth vs. the one who taketh away. When the son (in this case) which we posit is a vampire we must toss into the relationship disequilibrium the son's undeath, which ruptures the initial Oedipal analysis, and the ensuing explication takes on proportions that not only question the filial bond, but drains it of its signification and significance.

Many contemporary vampire/victim relationships are of the realm of the pre-Oedipal; most late 20th-century vampires, and in particular the members of Anne Rice's tortured covens, have often been seized upon as being fraught with images of eroticism and motherhood, inasmuch as these images evoke parallels between the blissful state from the sucking of blood, and "play at the breast." Although the bonds characterizing mother-child intimacy occur between fledgling and seasoned vampire, Rice's vampires, no mere monsters, aspire to more than the immortality passed on through blood; they desire full socialization into the world of the undead, the sense of belonging that ensures both affiliation *and* filiation. The desire and quest for filiation on the part of the son, in this case the Vampire Lestat, is thrice problematic in its various representations in three different registers, and shows this need to be as complex as the different traditions that circumscribe each of Lestat's three "fathers."

To the father, the son expresses an excession of possibility and a plurality of being. Lévinas' *Ethics and Infinity* is a springboard for understandinging Lestat's position in his initial filiation; in that work, we are told that the son's future is beyond the father's being, a "dimension constitutive of time characterizing paternity as a filiality that need not be expressed only in its 'first shape', this is, in biological terms."[1] Paternity through biology marks a transcendence constituting a father's identity determined by a future which exceeds him. Indeed, He is He when He is transcended in the absolute future of his son, "an alteration and transcendence of [my] subjectivity as passivity in the child who is [my] succession and identification."[2] The engendering of the child does not engender a linear process but rather places the son in a multiplicitous lineage which goes beyond his "pure origins." In pausing to understand Lestat's position of desire, and ensuing desire of position, we must look at the three phases of filiality.

The position of the vampire *per se* is problematic in and of itself. It has raised the ire and frustration of many who want to view him in the traditional manner which demanded that the vampire be perceived as a "[m]onstrous amalgam of adult corpse and thirsty infant vampire whose entire being is defined by its searing lust for regeneration. A thirst for life itself."[3] Rice is not the first to have posited the vampire's subjectivity (the Romantics from Polidori onward questioned the vampire's flat characterization), and she

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[1] Emmanuel Lévinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, trans. Richard A. Cohen. (Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 1985) 135.

[2] Lévinas 136.

[3] Richard Noll, "Lestat: The Vampire as Degenerate Genius," *The Anne Rice Reader*, ed.

does not present Lestat as figure of speech. His existence is no literary metaphor. The blood he drains is not a representation of inspiration or energy; it is the sap of human life itself. Rice's characters encourage not only our analysis but our sympathy and sometimes, identification.

Lestat is the Nietzschean *Übermensch*, questioning Christianity and its values, and attempting to replace or substitute these values – a being of moral courage who could come to grips with the total collapse of meaning required to replace Christianity, and then assume the awesome responsibility of creating new standards of right and wrong. From horrific manifestation of evil to complex introspective subject, the vampire stands at the cross-point of a chiasma in which the simple approach "What is the myth of the vampire? What makes him sinister? What are the reasons invoked for this evil?" is insufficient in the wake of the analysis and subjectification of the vampire. We should be asking, "What is the myth that drives us to humanize and identify with him?" One approach is to question the identity of the vampire not only as human, but as that of vampire *qua* vampire, in questioning Lestat's desire for filiation, recognizing and questioning the role of his live father, as well as that of the undead one. It is the primacy of Lestat's interaction with his three fathers which marks him as subject-in-process.

Most of us know the vampire Lestat from his auspicious beginnings in *Interview with*

Katherine Ramsland. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1997)150.

the Vampire.[4] In its sequel, *The Vampire Lestat*, Rice highlights his contention with and/or ostracization from the symbolic order bequeathed first by his three "fathers."[5] I will explicate his passage from his tenuous relationship with and subsequent split from his father the Marquis, his ravishment and abandonment by Magnus, his Maker, and most importantly, his quest for Marius and his insertion into the ultimate vampiric filiation.

Lestat-Human (The Marquis)

The Oedipal myth, or, in this case, its collapse, is useful in examining the first of this trilogy of desire, whereby the boy-child fantasises killing the father and possessing the mother, but eventually relinquishes his incestuous longings because of the fear of castration at the father's hands. The father's interference and threat becomes the paradigm for the power the child will seek and encounter later in life. Lestat's family life provides a rather flaccid mock-up of the triangle. Although he is the youngest of seven sons, he alone is provider for his titled and impoverished family, through his hunting and fishing. His bond with the land of his biological origins is one of mystic belonging to a locus of filiality, what Lacan describes as "le lien à la terre comme telle, qui n'est pas simplement un lien de fait, mais bien un lien mystique. C'est également autour de ce lien que se définit tout un ordre d'allegeance qui est l'ordre à proprement parler féodal, unissant en un seul faisceau le lien de la parenté avec un lien local autour de quoi s'ordonne tout ce qui définit seigneurs et

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[4] Rice, *Interview*.

[5] Rice, *Vampire Lestat*.

vassaux, droit de naissance, clientèle."[6] "This land," as Lestat maintains, "was my entire universe."[7]

But Lestat describes himself as the one who was "born restless, the dreamer, the angry one, the complainer."[8] Unable to "sit by the fire and talk of old wars and the days of the Sun King," Lestat twice tries to run away from home, once to the monastery to become a priest, and the second time to join an Italian theatre troupe on its way to Paris.[9] As in the traditional Oedipal circumstances, Lestat dearly loves his mother and shares a close relationship with her, while he searches for reasons to be far from his father and brothers. The threat of castration from the father who intercepts this dyad, however, is never realized; the old Marquis is blind, i.e., castrated, and since he symbolically does not possess the phallus, his son does not choose to identify with him but rather retains his close ties with his mother. Not only does the Marquis forbid Lestat to leave the folds of the family, where he is needed for sustenance, but he also sends his other sons to fetch their youngest brother home when he *does* try to escape in an attempt to insinuate himself within other filiations: first the Holy Church, which he perceives to be of a higher order, and then the commedia del'arte, which allows him, through ritual impersonation and improvisation, to step into the role of another.

In Lacanian terms, the threat of castration is not only removed, it was never there to begin

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[6] Jacques Lacan, *Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan,* ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, Séminaire XI (Paris, France: Éditions du Seuil, 1961) 323-4.

[7] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 23.

[8] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 23.

with. Lestat's father possesses no phallus to entice him with recognition and identification. Without the phallus, the threat of castration is less imperative and Lestat's bond with his mother never suffers. The Father never severs the mother-child bond and, consequently, the Law of the Father (le non du père) is never obeyed. Interestingly, the Name of the Father (le nom du père) is never known. Ultimately, it is his mother herself who gives Lestat the means to leave the nest, in this way appropriating the phallus and fulfilling her own dreams.

> She spoke in an almost eerie way of my being a secret part of her anatomy, of my being the organ for her which women do not really have. "You are the man in me," she said. "And so I've kept you here, afraid of living without you, and maybe now in sending you away I am only doing what I have done before."[10]

The ability of Lestat, his mother, and his father to shift positions within the Oedipal triangle reflects the destabilizing of traditional gender and filial categories, demonstrating, as we shall see, the primacy of vampiric over biological filiation. Lestat's complete and irreversible split from his biological father occurs when he literally meets his maker, Magnus, who turns him into a vampire.

Lestat-Vampire I (Magnus)

It is in Paris, as a thirty-year-old actor, that Lestat encounters the "heretic, 300-year-old vampire" who will confer upon him the status of undead. While his making is marked by

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[9] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 23.
[10] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 62.

the expression of bliss encountered in the pre-oedipal Lacanian mother-child bond, with its resulting sense of wholeness, completion and satisfaction, it is, significantly, the rites of the Christian Church which follow his "birth" as a vampire: the possession of his soul by vampiric immortality and the shedding of his human coil.

> And the blood that was flowing out of the wound touched my parched and cracking lips...My tongue licked at the blood. And a great whiplash of sensation caught me. And my mouth opened and locked itself to the wound. I drew with all my power upon the great fount that I knew would satisfy my thirst as it had never been satisfied before.[11]

The appropriation of the trappings and rituals of Christianity is not a novelty in vampire fiction. In Stoker's *Dracula*, Dr. Van Helsing calls upon sacred artefacts to engage in holy war against the undead. Rice, however, distances her vampire from the tradition that makes them vulnerable to the objects of the Church: "I reached in and took out the jewelled ciborium with its consecrated Hosts. No, there was no power here, nothing that I could feel or see or know with any of my monstrous senses, nothing that responded to me. There were wafers and gold and wax and light."[12] Rice's use of Church ritual *qua* ritual is not only subversive, but also representative of an order which blasphemes against Church doctrine, into which Lestat is being initiated, there to exist and improvise a new ethics of vampire-hood. Indeed, Magnus tempts Lestat to ask for the gift of immortality – similarly to the way

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[11] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 90.

[12] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 113.

Christ is tempted by Satan – and offering it up as the blood of Christ.

> "I shall give you the water of all waters...the wine of all wines...This is my Body, this is my Blood." And then his arms surrounded me. They drew me to him and I felt a great warmth emanating from him, and he seemed to be filled not with blood but with love for me.[13]

Although Lestat is an unwilling participant in his vampirization, his second "father", Magnus, is a father-by-choice inasmuch as the choice is Magnus' to make.

> Était père celui qui disait qu'il l'était. qui le consentait de droit...Ce modèle s'opposait au modèle médiéval pour lequel le sang prévalait dans la transmission du nom et des biens. Le sang portait dans les veines les valeurs du lignage et celle des normes vassaliques.[14]

The literal ties of consanguinity that bind Magnus to Lestat are a bequeathal of privilege, accompanied by a ritual which "names" Lestat into the fold of the vampires, a membership which goes beyond affiliation to filiation, a doubly-binding arrangement marking Lestat's entry into practice *and* process. Magnus has designated Lestat to be "My heir chosen to take the Dark Gift from me with more fibre and courage than ten mortal men, what a Child of Darkness you are to be."[15]

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[13] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 89.

[14] Alain Lefèvre, *Du père carent au père humilié: ou la tragédie du père avec Sophocle, Caudel et Lacan* (France: Éditions Soleil Carré, 1995) 33.

[15] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 92.

Although his making of Lestat is successful, it is Magnus who does not properly fulfil his end of the Dark Bargain, by fathering without fatherhood, providing the Child of Darkness a *genitor* without a *pater*. Soon after passing on his worldly goods, a fortune in priceless jewels and artefacts safely ensconced in the tower where he has resided for centuries, Magnus ends his vampiric existence by "going into the fire," a gesture of certain death for vampires. He requires but one "obeissance" of Lestat, that he scatter the ashes after the fire is out so that his body cannot recompose itself and live on. After a few hours, Magnus throws himself into the fire. Although the old vampire quickly instructs Lestat on how to feed properly to satisfy the thirst, he does not take the time to tutor him in the ways of respectable vampires. Lestat's despondency is understandable, revealed in his cry of angst, "Magnus, why did you leave me? Magnus, what am I supposed to do, how do I go on?"[16] And it is at the moment when he catches his reflection in a mirror, in a clever subversion of both the traditional vampire genre and the Lacanian mother-child mirror-phase, that Lestat suddenly realizes his destiny:

> But it suddenly occurred to me, I am looking at my own reflection! And hadn't it been said enough that ghosts and spirits and those who have lost their souls to hell have no reflection in mirrors? A lust to know all things about what I was came over me. A lust to know how I should walk among mortal men. I wanted to be in the streets of Paris, seeing with my new eyes all the miracles of life that I'd ever glimpsed.[17]

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[16] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 105.

[17] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 104.

From this moment on, Lestat is given the trappings and powers of the vampire; because of his new station as one of the undead, he need never fear castration and /or death according to the traditional human process. In a symbolically colourful twist, Lestat is "given" the phallus in the shape of Magnus' tower, and delivered of the need for the phallus/penis through his new identity, which does not maintain the need for the human sex organ in the quest for ecstasy and procreation. "I studied my reflection...and the organ, the organ we don't need, poised as if ready for what it would never again know how to do or want to do, marble, a Priapus at a gate."[18]

This renunciation of the (literal) phallus, of the erotic drive, is evocative of Freud's theory that posits that one must stifle the sex drive so as to enter into civilization, henceforward the start of one's source of discontent. Indeed, even after being delivered from the Oedipal threat, after having received the Dark Trick and the powers that accompanied it, Lestat's desire for filiation within the world of the undead has not abated. It extends past his means of survival, and the expression of the carnal pleasures of a vampire to an interrogation of himself and his *raison d'être* in this world, as well as his position amongst others of his ilk. For Lacan, identification and meaning are determined solely by the place of the subject within the signifying chain. Lacan's discussion of this theme entails the conflicts and resolutions accompanying the subject's position in this chain. Even this, to Lestat is problematic, for Magnus has not initiated Lestat or prepared anything else for him save his bodily survival. Questions of filial identification and loyalty are not approached. Armand, a

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[18] Anne Rice, *Queen of the Damned* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988) 357.

vampire encountered during Lestat's quest for answers, echoes the fledgling vampire's thoughts when he claims, "It is like not knowing how to read, isn't it?" he said aloud. "And your maker, the outcast Magnus, what did he care for your ignorance? He did not tell you the simplest things, did he? Hasn't it always been this way? Has anyone every cared to teach you anything?"[19] And indeed, Lestat's insecurity stems from this very quandary of possessing so much power, and not knowing how, or when, or in which circumstances it may be used. Magnus is essentially considered an outcast because he has stolen his immortality, his integration into the order of the undead, by trapping and imprisoning a vampire to the point of near death, and stealing the Dark Trick from him, a modern Prometheus. Furthermore, Magnus has failed to observe the First Commandment of Vampiric Filiation by making Lestat: "That each coven must have its leader and only he might order the working of the Dark Trick upon a mortal, seeing that the methods and the rituals were properly observed."[20] Striking at the base of the vampiric totem, Magnus' taboo is the creation of an outcast son-of-an-outcast.

Lestat-Vampire II (Marius)

When Armand tells Lestat of the Ancient Millenium Vampire who created him in the 15th century, Lestat refuses to believe that he is dead and feels an inexplicable longing to see this Marius, to commune with him, feeling that Marius, at last, will be the key to the answers he has been seeking, who will prove to be his completion. Lestat sets out on his own, travelling

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[19] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 249.

[20] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 301.

the world from Sicily to Greece to Turkey, south to the ancient cities of Asia Minor, and finally to Cairo. And although Lestat is fully cognizant of his telepathic powers, his approach to and claim of Marius as his third father takes the form of the letter. "And in all these places I was to write my messages to Marius on the walls. Sometimes it was no more than a few words I scratched with the tip of my knife. In other places, I spent hours chiselling my ruminations into the stone. But wherever I was, I wrote my name, the date, and my future destination, and my invitation: Marius, make yourself known to me."[21] Lestat situates himself in both space and time, concepts which are almost meaningless now to the Ancient Marius, but which delineate a most reverent Pilgrim's Progress, as it were. Even as he implores Marius to step forth to claim him, Lestat speaks of his day-to-day existence, the mundane events leading to the point in time where Marius will find the message. This is no mere fancy; Lestat's need for Marius overlaps the boundaries of pure physical desire and communion. He beckons to Marius in a most proper fashion, with his letter of announcement, his request for recognition and introduction. But in Athens, his final missive to Marius unveils his yearning and his need.

> I do not know why I go on. I do not search for truth. I do not even believe in it. I hope for no ancient secrets from you, whatever they may be. But I believe in something. Maybe simply in the beauty of the world through which I wander or in the will to live itself. This gift was given to me too early. It was given for no good reason, And already at the age of thirty mortal years, I have some understanding as to why so many of our kind have

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[21] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 323.

> wasted it, given it up. Yet I continue. And I search for you.[22]

In sadness and desperation, Lestat "goes into the ground" in self-imposed exile where he will lay for some time, shrinking to a skeletal caricature of himself, wallowing in self-remonstrance, reliving cherished moments of his past with those he drove to destruction, questioning the meaning of heaven and hell and wondering what it is all worth. And then, without warning, Marius heeds Lestat's call.

In what is probably the most emotionally-charged passage in all of the *Vampire Chronicles*, conflating and confounding any traditional human bond, Marius arrives to claim Lestat. In a burst of filial piety, deistic worship and erotic outburst, Lestat the outcast recognizes his Father. Marius reaches deep into the ground to where Lestat lies buried, "[a]nd he, the one who had been looking for me, the one from whom the sound came, was standing over me...At last, it lifted its arms to enfold me and the face I saw was beyond the realm of possibility. What one of us could have such a face?...No, it wasn't one of us. It couldn't have been. And yet it was. Preternatural flesh and blood like mine."[23] As he has with Magnus, the first moments Lestat shares with Marius are rife with the symbolism of the pre-Oedipal, of the bonding in birth and blood and shared substance.

> "Drink," he said, eyebrows rising slightly, lips shaping the word carefully, slowly, as if it were a kiss. As Magnus had done on that lethal night so many eons ago, he raised his hand now and moved the cloak back from his

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[22] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 338.

[23] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 361.

throat.[24]

The shared bonding of Lestat and Marius, however, due to their vampiric state, preclude the "pollution" of sexual intercourse; the implicit reference here is that the sharing of substance between vampires creates relatedness and ensures lineage. Filiality is invoked in this sharing of substance, in the gaze of the son and the recognition of the Father in the son, I-and-yet-not-I. "Blood, like light itself, liquid fire. Our blood."

> "Drink, my young one, my wounded one."
>
> I felt his heart swell, his body undulate, and we were sealed against each other.
>
> I think I heard myself say:
>
> "Marius."
>
> And he answered:
>
> "Yes."[25]

As I have established so far, and what has become abundantly clear as one navigates through Rice's entire *Vampire Chronicles*, Lestat, in his quest for the ultimate filiation, progressively and definitively turns his back on the earthly and the earthbound. His longing, as a youth, was to ensconce himself within the sanctity of holy orders, the trappings of tradition. Lestat's brothers finally convince the old Marquis to let Lestat go to school at the nearby monastery for, they assure him, he would soon enough come running home. "Well, I

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[24] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 362.

[25] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 363.

didn't come running home," says Lestat, "I loved the chapel and the hymns, the library with its thousands of old books, the bells that divided the day, the ever-repeated rituals. I loved the cleanliness of the place...Within a month I declared my vocation. I wanted to enter the order. I wanted to spend my life in those immaculate cloisters."[26] Lestat harks back often to the "cleanliness" of the monastery, the immaculate, unsullied territory of the sacred. He contrasts it with his life in his father's home, denouncing it as being filled with dirt and decay, of its being utter chaos.

Lestat aspires to more than his makeshift status of "noble" on his father's estate. Everything in him struggles for the pure, the antiseptic, a life beyond the position afforded him by a vulgar birth, to a filiation of the most reverent. Even after he is made into a vampire by his second "father," Magnus, Lestat transcends the fate dealt him as a vampire, to survive by taking the lives of honest people, preying only upon the wicked (whom he deems "evil-doers"), or by consuming only blood shed naturally. In Book V of the *Chronicles*, *Memnoch the Devil*, when Lestat realizes that he has vampirized Roger, the father of a devout evangelist whom he has come to love, his reaction is "I was overwhelmed. It was grief veritably blinding me, and bitterness and a deep ugly horror for what I had done to him, and to others, and that I had ever harmed any living creature. Horror."[27] Lestat's own Gethsemene comes at the hands of the devil who, in Anne Rice's Chronicles, prefers the name Memnoch. "Don't use the name Satan," he says, "Don't use any of the following:

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[26] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 31.

[27] Anne Rice, *Memnoch the Devil* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995) 65.

Lucifer, Beelzebub, Azazel, Sammael, Marduk, Mephistopheles, etc. My name is Memnoch."[28] Memnoch solicits Lestat's loyalty; he wants to make the vampire his right-hand instrument because he feels that the devil's advocate could only be a superior being with a conscience.

> "You find the self-inflicted suffering of my conscience amusing? You think I like evil?"
>
> "No, I don't think you like evil" he said, "Any more than I do."
>
> "You don't like evil?" I repeated, narrowing my eyes.
>
> "Loathe it. And if you don't help me, if you let God keep doing things His way, I tell you evil – which is nothing really – just might destroy the world."[29]

In exchange for his loyalty, Memnoch will take Lestat to Hell and to Heaven and he can "talk to God for as long as he allows, and you desire."[30] Lestat's Faustian pact, as arranged by the Devil, will take him one step closer to God. When Lestat *does* meet God, it is as Jesus, the Son-of-God, who personally invites Lestat to see his Passion, to witness his suffering. Rendered speechless and appalled by the events surrounding the Passion, Lestat finds his way to Jesus' side, to be invited once more to commune not only with him, but from him, to partake of his blood.

> "Lestat," He said, His voice so feeble and torn I could scarce hear it.

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[28] Anne Rice, *Memnoch* 161.

[29] Rice, *Memnoch* 162.

[30] Rice, *Memnoch* 163.

> "You want to taste it, don't you...The blood. Taste it. Taste the Blood of Christ...The blood of God Lestat." He whispered. "Think of all the human blood that has flowed into your lips. Is my blood not worthy? Are you afraid?"
>
> Sobbing, I cupped His neck with both hands, my knuckles against the crossbar, and I kissed his throat, and then my mouth opened without will or struggle and my teeth pierced the flesh. I heard Him moan, a long echoing moan that seemed to rise up and fill the world with its sound, and the blood flooded into my mouth.[31]

Blood from the living God. No vampire could ever have sucked from a purer or holier source. Even beyond transubstantiation, the vampire feeds at the ultimate fount, merges with the holiest of the holy, coupling with the true God.

The bargain, in the end, is a fraud. When Lestat runs away from Memnoch, refusing to assist the devil in rerouting the souls of the damned to heaven, he manages to escape minus one eye, which Memnoch mistakenly plucks out while reaching for Lestat's long blond hair. In suggesting that Memnoch would control Lestat through his power/virility, i.e., his hair, Rice takes the imagery one step further in depicting how, much to the devil's dismay, he has instead begun to castrate Lestat, whom he would have as his abettor. Later that night, the vampire finds refuge in the arms of Dora, a devout televangelist, and regains his fortitude by emptying her womb of its menstrual blood. In returning to the original vulgar fount of life,

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[31] Rice, *Memnoch* 345.

Lestat strengthens both his body and his mind, ever committed to doing no harm to mortals in a scene, once again, rife with both love and carnal desire.

> I pulled up her skirt, and I lay my face against her hot, naked thighs. The smell of the blood flooded my brain.
>
> "Forgive me, forgive me," I whispered, and my tongue broke through the thin cotton of her panties, tearing the cloth back from the soft down of pubic hair, pushing aside the blood-stained pad she wore, and I lapped at the blood just inside her young, pink vaginal lips, just coming from the mouth of her womb, not pure blood, but blood from her, blood from her strong, young body, blood all over the tight, hot cells of her vaginal flesh, blood that brought no pain, no sacrifice, only her gentle forbearance with me, with my unspeakable act, my tongue going deep into her, drawing out the blood that was yet to come, gently, gently, lapping the blood from the soft hair on her pubic lips, sucking each tiny droplet of it....blood, her sweet blood, a place where blood flows free and no wound is made or ever needs to be made, the entrance to her blood open to me in her forgiveness."[32]

Through the years (and through the installments of the *Chronicles*), Lestat becomes not only sanctimonious, but he also craves the saintly. Foreshadowing the vampire's predisposition to sainthood, the *Chronicles* first introduce Lestat, as I have shown, not only as a young man bent on leaving his father's estate, but, through this act, fracturing the mock-up of the

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[32] Rice, *Memnoch* 393-4.

Oedipal bond within which he has been living. The pivotal event which sharply demarcates Lestat as extrinsic to the normal Oedipal denouement of a young man in his position as it establishes him as beyond "normal" manhood, but also beyond the typical evolution of a vampire, occurs one cold winter morning on his own lands, where he is called to go destroy a pack of wolves which has been ravaging the countryside and decimating the herds of livestock.

Lestat begins to narrate his own story by explaining "In the winter of my twenty-first year, I went out alone on horseback to kill a pack of wolves." He explains that "My father was the Marquis and I was the seventh son and the youngest of the three who had lived to manhood."[33] In this very cursory introduction, we read that although he is the son of the Marquis, he is not in line to inherit any wealth. He is, however, the seventh son, whom we know from legends predating the Bible to be one whose legacy it is to be endowed with preternatural gifts: he possesses second sight, uncanny luck, and the ability to see into the future. He is a healer, and sometimes referred to as "the chosen one" who has a special purpose in life, determined by the deities. The forces of good and evil often battle for the soul of the seventh son, and this, as we have seen, is how Rice characterises her star vampire. But these gifts lie fallow in a young man whose occupation is to bring in "the pheasant, the venison and the trout from the mountain streams – whatever was needed and could be got – to feed the family."[34] These last tasks he sees as his duty.

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[33] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 23.

[34] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 23.

Lestat battles the entire pack and, miraculously, he wins, but he loses his two dogs and his mare to the wolves. The transformation in the young man is complete. "The smell of wolf was all over me, and the smell of blood. By the time I reached the castle gates," he states, "I think I was not Lestat. I was someone else altogether, staggering into the great hall, with that wolf over my shoulders, the heat of the carcass very much diminished now and the sudden blaze of the fire an irritant in my eyes."[35] Indeed, this course of action has changed him forever. He stumbles into the house where his mother is "patting my father, who was blind already then and wanted to know what was happening."[36] His oldest brother, legitimate heir to the Marquis, betrays a deep jealousy of what his youngest brother has done. But the culmination of Lestat's exploits and the only logical symbolic outcome happens only days later. "And then my mother came quietly and almost stealthily into the room."[37]

It would be difficult not to consider this last scene, indeed the entire wolf-killing episode, through the lens of psychoanalysis, which, as agent and critic of story production, informs us of the obvious characterology inherent in the wolf scene. First, because of Lestat and his mother, Gabrielle's, relationship, it is easy to determine that the Oedipal complex and its triangular formation will play a huge part in Lestat's "autobiography." Second, the impact of the *Totem and Taboo* myth, which narrates the banding together of the brothers against

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[35] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 28-9.

[36] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 29.

[37] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 30.

the dominant father who keeps all the women to himself, is easily reflected in Lestat's family unit: three brother versus the Marquis, with Gabrielle as the "prize." What throws a mighty wrench, however, into the cogs of the Oedipal machinery (for the *Totem and Taboo* myth is clearly one of substantial Oedipal proportions) is Lestat's clear triumph over his Oedipal role in the triangle. When Lestat returns home after overcoming the entire pack of wolves, his brother Augustin greets him, not with pride and appreciation, but with envy and disdain. "You little bastard," he said coldly. "You didn't kill eight wolves!" His face had an ugly disgusted look to it. But the remarkable thing was this: Almost as soon as he spoke these words, he realized for some reason that he had made a mistake...it was almost instantaneous, and the most curious look of embarrassment came over him."[38] In the face of Lestat's conquest of the wolves, with the token representative carcass slung over his shoulder, Augustin must now cede his position as heir of the Marquis de Lioncourt, a legacy which Lestat refuses. For, as I have mentioned previously, the true Oedipal triangle which exists in this scenario is not that of Gabrielle, Lestat and the Marquis, for Lestat's father, by the time the wolf killing occurs, has already been already castrated. True triangulation occurs between Gabrielle, her son, and the wolves, the true symbols of virility and sexual potency which Lestat *does* overcome, does vanquish, in order to gain access to the Mother. Augustin and his brother do not unite against the father for there is no need to unite against a castrated father. His refusal to accept that Lestat has triumphed over the wolf pack shows his fear and envy of the new alpha male, the one who now has access to the prize, i.e., the Mother. Gabrielle's "quiet" and "stealthy" arrival into Lestat's bedroom marks the

[38] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 29.

beginning of an epoch for him. It is at this point that Gabrielle begins to lavish attention and affection upon her son, his reward for having risen to the top of the totemic pole.

The rupture of the Oedipal triangle in the de Lioncourt family finds its ultimate emblem flaunted in the gift the villagers bestow upon Lestat. One month after the wolf-killing episode, as Lestat mopes about the house in "threadbare wool and scuffed leather boots and yellowed lace that had been seventeen times mended," the townspeople come to Lestat's home bearing gifts. They hold out to him a great red velvet cloak lined in fur, that of, the villagers tell him, the wolves which he has slaughtered himself. "And, to make the outfit complete, a pair of "finely sewn pair of fur-lined boots in black suede."[39] There is no mistaking the carnal imagery of these gifts. The vaginal furriness of the blood-red cape into which he is to bury himself, quickly followed by the "hard" phallic symbol of the black boots which, he is told, he might want to wear to the hunt, now establishes Lestat as the dual alpha male: he is the one who has overcome the wolf pack and its leader and is wearing the skin of the male who, in the Oedipal triangulation, stood in for the father-figure, as well as the totemic alpha male who has eradicated the Father and triumphed over the brothers in order to gain access to the Mother. And Lestat does not deny this at all.

His union with Gabrielle is consummated shortly thereafter, once Lestat is given the Dark Gift by Magnus, his second father, and he is fully cognizant of the irrecoverable transformation which has occurred as he holds Gabrielle's newly vampirized body in his

[39] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 42.

arms. "I think I said, "Mother," in that instant like some stupid mortal, and I closed my eyes."[40] However, once the transformation is complete in Gabrielle and she has blossomed into fully sexualized vampiric womanhood, he sees her, not through the eyes of the son he used to be, but those of the lover he has become. "Gabrielle. That was the only name I could ever call her now. "Gabrielle," I said to her, never having called her that except in some very private thoughts, and I saw her almost smile."[41] As they rob Parisian houses for clothing and jewelry to wear in their new life together, "I went to kiss her again and she didn't stop me. We were lovers kissing. And that was the picture we made together, white-faced lovers, as we rushed down the servants' stairs and out into the late evening streets."[42] Indeed, Lestat is reaping the benefits of the heroic act which has gained him access to the elusive Mother, that of decimating the wolves.

It is noteworthy that Rice's ultimate vampiric commandment is made absolutely clear in this introduction to the second installment of the *Chronicles*: "Thou shalt make thee no graven images of the vampire, or of the figure of the vampire, in a way that renders his representation static and unchanging." From even the most brief of segues from her first installment, *Interview with the Vampire*, to the second, *The Vampire Lestat*, it is compelling how the depiction of Lestat has changed, and how utterly complex and multi-dimensional he is shown to be. In fact, Lestat's Oedipal skirmish and quest for the Godlike strongly resonates within the work of Sigmund Freud as described in his case study "From the

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[40] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 159.

[41] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 160.

History of an Infantile Neurosis," referred to in popular parlance as "The Wolfman."

The first striking copular element in "Wolfman" is that which gives the subject of the analysis its name: the wolves. The boy under Freud's care had had a nervous breakdown at 18, and who had consulted for psychoanalytic treatment several years later. The first anxiety dream was reported by the patient when he was three or four years old. In this dream the boy saw a number of wolves, six or seven of them, perched in a tree. After further discussion, it was elucidated that the stimulus for this dream had been a fairy tale the boy had heard from his grandfather whereby a tailor had confronted a wolf who had entered his studio and chased him out, catching the wolf by the tail and yanking it clearly off. Later, when the tailor confronts the entire wolf-pack along with the lone wolf he had maimed, he is forced to climb a tree to get away. Freud maintains that the Wolfman has identified himself with his "castrated mother" during the dream, and resists the only option left to him: in order to be sexually satisfied by his father, he had to allow himself to be castrated like his mother; but this is not acceptable. This clear protest on the part of his masculinity is also reflected in Lestat's refusal to be sacrificed as he overcomes the wolves. But, in this instance, Lestat does not offer himself up but instead substitutes his horse to be torn apart by the wolves. Finally, as his horse lays shrieking and suffering, he euthanizes it by putting a bullet through its heart. A compelling symbol of power and sexuality, the horse is a useful stand-in for Lestat's own fledgling sexuality, which he refuses to give up at any cost. In the case of the Wolfman, however, he is not offered the means for a resolution of the anxiety symptoms,

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[42] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 169.

which show up in his dream. The logical denouement of confrontation with the wolves leads, for the Wolfman, to an unsettling perception of anxiety symptoms. Lestat, on the other hand, is able to exorcise this anxiety by acting upon the imminent objects of turmoil and conflict, returning to his father's house, however, "someone else altogether."[43]

The most intense and noteworthy resemblance between Lestat and the Wolfman, however, is their identification with Jesus Christ, both influenced to greater or lesser degrees by his Passion. Whereas Lestat is exposed to Jesus' pathway of agony and suffering during the vampire's journey to "heaven" at the hand of Memnoch the Devil where he not only witnesses the Christ in his way of the cross, but partakes literally of his blood, it is the Wolfman's nanny who impresses upon him the religious story by laying her own emphasis upon it and supporting her narrative with pictures from a book. The double parallel drawn from this phenomenon bears particular explication: whereas Jesus Christ suffers for the sins of mankind while at the mercy of a (seemingly) uncaring and impotent Father, the Wolfman identifies with Jesus through not only his suffering, but also through his relationship to a distant and negligent father whose attention he is desperately trying to capture. As for Lestat, he feels a need to emulate Jesus Christ, to reach out and eradicate evil, to feed the masses with his blood. The ironic twist in these copular relationships, however, is the occurrence of the Wolfman's birthday, December 25, which associates him intimately with Jesus Christ, but who, at the same time and according to popular vampire mythology and folklore, is given to being a vampire by virtue of his date of birth. Also significant is the fact

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[43] Sigmund Freud, "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis," *An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, vol. 17 *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: The Hogarth P, 1955) 28.

that the Wolfman was born with a caul. This is another clear indication where folklore teaches us that if a child is born with a hemorrhagic caul, the blood contained within the caul was apotropaic against vampires for the child if he consumed it. The membrane itself was indicative that the child was destined to return from the dead. The *blood* it contained, however, was still viewed as holy and still carried the emblem of Christ. (Please see Chapter 2) Both the Wolfman and the Wolfkiller carry the mark of Christ; where the Wolfman contains His blood within his birth caul, Lestat has tasted it at the Passion. But by virtue of this amniotic membrane and this date of birth, the Wolfman dwells in a definite parallel to the vampire.

Jesus, Lestat and the Wolfman have all been frustrated by their fathers: Jesus' call to his Father at Gethsemene yields nothing but the certainty that he is to embrace the suffering to come; the Wolfman, who harbours a masochistic attitude toward his father, feels his father's absence and distance and is easily able to sublimate his predominant masochistic tendencies by *becoming* Christ, a propensity made even easier by the fact that the two share a birthday. Lestat, by the same token, suffers from claustrophobia at the hands of a father whose deficiencies and ineffectiveness render the vampire's life on the estate a virtual prison. By finally transcending the bonds of his earthly existence, he is finally able to escape his fetters — and his humanity — while in the process getting closer to Jesus by becoming immortal.

The Wolfman's desire to belong to male filiation, as opposed to vulgar female birth given

him by his mother is also expressed as his desire to have been given birth to by his father, to be sexually satisfied by him, and to present him with a child, as he originally believed and as his nanny led him to assume. These wishes, Freud feels, complete the cycle of fixation upon his father, hence the manifestation of the Wolfman's homosexuality. This desire, as I have shown, also resonates with Lestat, who has turned his back on his pre-Oedipal connection with his mother by making her his lover (and child) and accessing an immortal existence whereby his desire to be given birth to by a man (his fathers, Magnus and Marius) realizes itself and he is able to gain access to a more "noble" lineage, i.e., that of vampire society.

Freud writes, when speaking of the Wolfman's love for his father

> The means by which he could bear witness to this love were laid down by religion, and they were not haunted by that sense of guilt from which his individual feelings of love could not set themselves free. In this way it was still possible for him to drain off his deepest sexual content, which had already been precipitated in the form of unconscious homosexuality; and at the same time his more superficial masochistic impulsion found a sublimation, without much renunciation, in the story The Passion of the Christ, who, at the behest of his divine Father and in his honour, had let himself be ill-treated and sacrificed.[44]

[44] Freud, *Neurosis* 115.

Extrapolating Freud's conclusions about the Wolfman to Lestat is fitting. What is offered instead of the sublimation of feelings of extreme attachment to the Father is actually portrayed as vampirization for Lestat in his quest to approach the Father. By virtue of being made immortal, the equivalent "deepest sexual content" which persists in the Wolfman is now at the service of his quest for the transcendent. To the young boy, it is the impression and subsequent fantasy of the story of the Passion which fuels and maintains his love of God. For Lestat, it is the actual moment of intercourse with God, facilitated by Memnoch the Devil, which accomplishes the same thing. For the Wolfman, religion did its work by affording him the satisfaction of belief, of sublimation, and of diversion from sensual processes to purely spiritual ones. For Lestat, religion provided with the means of accessing God directly, not merely through transubstantiation, which is a pale facsimile of the concrete act of drinking Jesus' blood. His vampirization at the hands of Magnus, his access to vampiric socialization at the hands of Marius, and finally, his befriending by the Devil Memnoch all serve, ironically, to bring him closer to God. For the Wolfman, the first ruminations which he wove around the figure of Christ were focused on whether the sublime son could also entertain a sexual relationship with his father (which the subject had retained in his unconscious). Lestat's vampiric self has necessarily renounced this sexuality and no longer needs to address this question of carnal desire and approach.

The directions taken by Lestat and the Wolfman, however, both reflect different, yet gendered, pathways. For the young boy, piety originated under the influence of a woman – his nanny – while it was a man who liberated him from it eventually – his atheist German

tutor. For Lestat, conversely, it was through the rejection of an Oedipal bond with a woman – his mother – that he was able to continue his quest for an access to piety, in order to gain the ultimate goal.

Lestat slew the wolves which the boy saw in the tree. He was able to conquer his castration complex but did not repress any homosexual drive for he has inserted himself directly into the lineage of the Father. This specular relationship enjoyed by the Wolfman and the character of Lestat further elucidates not only the complexity of the post-chiastic vampire figure, but also of his significant evolution as representative of the unease, unrest and ambivalence consumers of the vampire product have had toward the concerns of repressed sexuality and religion and have always been present in the figure of the vampire.

Chapter 4
For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace (Romans 8:6)

> I studied my reflection – my chest was like a marble torso in a museum, that white. And the organ, the organ we don't need, poised as if ready for what it would never again know how to do or want to do, marble, a Priapus at a gate.[1]

This moment, rife with virility and sexual promise, implies negation of what sex actually is, or at least, is defined as. There is no mistaking the representation and manifestation of the penis/phallus as coveted object of power and erotic attraction, but the passage makes it very clear, and Lestat clearly acknowledges the following point: his organ is "useless." "As for the missing part of the body, the part that Isis never found, well, there is one part of us which is not enhanced by the Dark Gift, isn't there? We can speak, see, taste, breathe, move as humans move, but we cannot procreate."[2] Nevertheless, the erotic nature of these passages is not lost on the reader, and even amplifies the mystery in which Lestat's sexuality is shrouded.

As I have demonstrated in Chapter 3 (and from what we understand from the quote above), it is the sharing of substance between vampires which creates an intimate bond and which may subsequently ensure lineage. It is the filiality in this event – and not the representation of a sexual, carnal nature – which is invoked in this

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[1] Rice, *Queen* 357.

[2] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 330.

sharing of substance depicted here in *The Vampire Lestat.* In this chapter, therefore, it will be expedient to contrast the two related but not identical domains of sex and erotics. Where sex is and may have been problematic as regards its expression and what resulted from it, what is cause for consternation is not the procreative act in and of itself, but rather the constellations surrounding its historicity, its politics and its manifestations, all of which are of the domain of the erotic.

The vampire has always figured in the historicity of the erotic in its largest sense, even encompassing its discomforts and apprehensions. It has always served as a repository for our un-ease and our resistance to sexuality. As society progressively imbued sexuality with an agency of its own, so too did the vampire come to manifest the conflicting influences of this "new" erotics and the complications this now posed. What better way to examine sexuality without the physical connection than to posit an *Übermensch* whose sensuality is made manifest through a vampiric behaviour which eschews the carnal for the erotic?

Before venturing into the sensuality with which Lestat's puissant impotence is imbued, I would like to focus attention on, and further define, the significant differences between the two seemingly synonymous adjectives which I have made mention of, and which are often misconstrued. "Sexual," as defined by Merriam-Webster, designates merely the having, or involving of, sexual reproduction.[3]

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[3] *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.* Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 2003.

"Erotic," however, indicates "devoted to or tending to arouse sexual love or desire."[4] It is abundantly clear that, given these definitions, sex *per se*, as coitus or sexual intercourse, is not problematic in terms of the manifestation, management or politics of the erotic. The two notions of sex and erotics are beautifully contrasted and paralleled by Alphonso Lingis as he details the individual intricacies of what he defines as corporeal needs and satisfaction (*sex*), and lust or erotic desire (*erotics*). Corporeal needs and satisfaction, he maintains, "takes what it can get, lives in a world of means and ends, obtaining satisfaction from what is at hand."[5] Indeed, this gratification is obtained through the biological functioning of the body, through its anatomy, physiology and capacity for movement which is mapped onto the exterior, objective body. Erotic desire or libido (*erotics*), however, involves a certain destabilization or confusion of body image, which nourishes an unquestionable disquiet with body image, even as it exists in conformity with it. Erotic desire does not seek to satisfy its urges in a tidy and succinct manner: rather, "erotic craving seeks to prolong and extend itself beyond physiological need, to intensity and protract itself, to revel in 'pleasurable torment'."[6] The erotic cannot function in terms of a purpose, a goal-oriented destination, but rather, "the voluptuous sense of disquiet engendered by and as lust disarrays and segments the resolve of a certain purposiveness, unhinging any determination of means and ends or goals."[7] The erotic cannot be held down to any particular agency except that of filling one's

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[4] *Collegiate Dictionary*

[5] Alphonso Lingis, *Libido. The French Existential Theories* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1985) 55.

[6] Lingis 55.

[7] Lingis 55.

senses, titillating and hinting at fulfillment, while never truly satisfying one's desire to possess, to conserve, to incorporate. Carnal desire does not move in a specific or specified direction. Logic and reasoning have no hold on it. Expediency and practicality play no part in its expression. As Lingis rightly maintains, one can never really explain (without the benefit of sound psychoanalytical theory) exactly what it is that entices and titillates. Pangs of carnal hunger feed upon themselves, creating more, not less, intense desire. Erotic hunger, as erotic torment, perpetually feeds on itself, never content with what it has experienced, always seeking more. Although the metaphor of the sex act (with "sex" designating corporeal need) is often employed in conjunction with the vampiric experience, the parallel between vampiric communion and erotic expression is striking. "This very flesh," which, according to Lingis could very well be the flesh of the vampire's victim, is now "exposed and palpable," no longer subtle and teasing, suggesting, beckoning, but rather "afflict[ing] the physical and natural continuity, afflict [ing] me and the phenomenal flesh I appropriate, as other," "other" as vampiric object or sexual object of desire. The object of desire for the lover and lover-qua-vampire is understood as the site where is privileged "the erotogenic surface, the body's 'outside', its locus a site for not only the perception of the erotic but for the intensification of targeted areas of the body."[8]

What is always true, however, about carnal desire, is its resistance to being stored, collected and compounded, and its incompliance to being yoked into production,

[8] Lingis 72.

offered up for gain, profit, or held accountable. What it *does* accomplish, in all certainty, is precisely nothing. Summing up the erotic, Lingis says

> Carnal intimacy is not a practical space; it does not open a field for action. The erotic movements are agitation that handles and fondles without keeping anything in its place, without extending its force outward and without going anywhere. Here nothing will be accomplished; one will waste time, unprofitably.[9]

The erotic is, much to the chagrin of those who would rope it into servitude, useless.

It is important here to invoke the Derridean notion of sex as the violence of difference, what Elizabeth Grosz calls the "constitutive tearing or etching of a surface, in order that one bodily part...intensify its energetic expenditure, [and] must draw intensity from surrounding organs."[10] Indeed, the vampire ***is*** fed through the act of bloodsucking, but it is as vampire-qua-lover that he gleans nourishment – through blood, of course, but even more so through the *anima erotica* carried by this blood. The victims/objects of desire give themselves up to the intensity overtaking them, seeking out this difference which collided with them in the first place, this otherness, this alive-ness. Both lover and loved, vampire and victim, are transformed, both incorporating something of the other. In the vampire, this communion is manifested in the mutual sharing of blood and of the thoughts/memories that are carried by this blood.

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[9] Lingis 67.

[10] Elizabeth Grosz, "Animal Sex," *Sexy Bodies: The Strange Carnalities of Feminism*, eds: Elizabeth Grosz and Elspeth Probyn (London: Routledge, 1995) 288.

> But then her lips caught me by surprise. It was she who kissed me ardently, and then I felt her tiny sharp teeth pierce my throat.
>
> I stood rigid, eyes closed, letting her drink, feeling the inevitable pull on my heart, my head suddenly full of visions of the dark forest through which she and her companion so often rode and I couldn't know whether these were her visions or mine.
>
> On and on she drank, as though she was starving, and deliberately I created for her the lushest gardens of my most cherished dreams, and in it I envisioned the two of us together. My body was nothing but desire for her. Through every sinew I felt the pull of her drinking and I gave no resistance. I was her victim. I held to no caution...
>
> "What did you see in the blood?" I whispered.
>
> "Your pure love," she answered.[11]

The reciprocity inherent in the act shared by the vampire and her victim, as in the above passage, can as easily be applied to the lover and his beloved; one cannot excite without the other being excitable or open to co-implication. Says Grosz: "The other cannot induce erotic impulses and caresses from the outside alone."[12] It is thus that this reciprocity constitutes the power of carnal desire. Perception and understanding of the erotic, however, was not always as spiritual as undifferentiated from sex, as (re)productive, as teleological, as it was perceived to be. Perception and understanding of the erotic, however, did not evolve along a continuum. Where

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[11] Anne Rice, *Blood and Gold* (New York and Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001) 442-3.

[12] Grosz, "Animal Sex" 294

more recent theory may have imbued it with the spiritual, bound to the body in a symbolic alliance, the erotic was often lost within the appreciation of sexuality.

To understand this, it is also important to understand sexuality, in its broadest sense, as far more than the kinetic or static experience shared by all living beings. Throughout history, no discourse, be it political, sociological or religious, has omitted to take into account the impact of sexuality. In fact, throughout its myriad presentations and representations, its manifestations and clandestine expressions, sexuality, again in its broadest sense, has never existed in a vacuum. It is to be expected that, depending on the epoch, and/or the cultural climate, from the Greeks onward, sex would often be perceived in terms of binaries: body vs. soul, flesh vs. spirit, instinct vs. reason, drive vs. conscience. But, as Michel Foucault effectively points out

> Beaucoup plus que d'un mécanisme négatif d'exclusion ou de rejet, il s'agit de l'allumage d'un réseau subtil de discours, de savoirs, de plaisirs, de pouvoirs; il s'agit, non d'un mouvement qui s'obstinerait à repousser le sexe sauvage dans quelque région obscure et inaccessible; mais au contraire, de processus qui le disséminent à la surface des choses et des corps, qui l'excitent, le manifestent et le font parler, l'implantent dans le réel et lui enjoignent de dire la vérité : tout un scintillement visible du sexuel qui renvoient la multiplicité des

> discours, l'obstination des pouvoirs et les jeux du savoir avec le plaisir.[13]

Hence, seen from this optic, it is only fitting that sex, in its complexity and intractability, would inevitably appear to be most resistant to explication and analysis. Any elucidation of its myriad facets can but only be welcomed and considered. This is where the figure of the vampire can be seen to play a vital role. As Jeffrey Weeks maintains, "Sexuality is not a given. It is a product of negotiation, struggle and human agency."[14] And, because the vampire was created and elaborated in fits and starts dependent upon his spacetime, it is expedient to position him accordingly.

As I have pointed out previously, the figure of the vampire is, more often than not, ensconced within a tradition redolent with Christian imagery and belief. This tradition, consistent with contemporary theories of sexuality, has tended to see in sexuality an enduring dualism. Within this Christian tradition resides an obstinate fascination/obsession with the body alongside an often fanatical need to demean, demonize, and sometimes even obliterate it. Bolstering this dualistic paradigm is Freud's illuminating observation on religious ceremonial as a form of compulsive neurosis which is invariably a repression of a drive-impulse (which, he points out, is a component of the sex drive) which is contained in one's constitution, allowed expression during childhood and then suppressed. The influence of the repressed

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[13] Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I: la volonté de savoir (*Paris: Gallimard, 1976) 96-7.

[14] Jeffrey Weeks, "Sexuality and History Revisited," *Sexualities in History*, eds. Kim M. Phillips and Barry Reay (New York & London: Routledge, 2002) 31.

drive is experienced as temptation. Ceremonial, explains Freud, arises partly as a defense against temptation. When protective actions are no longer sufficient against temptation, prohibitions are installed. Therefore, the mind/body, sex/spirit dualism can emerge during ceremonial, which represents

> the sum total of the conditions under which other things, not yet the subject of absolute bans, are allowed – very like the way in which the ceremonial of a church wedding signifies to the pious that sexual enjoyment, normally sinful, is now permitted.[15]

Historians of sexuality, like Michel Foucault and Jeffrey Weeks, do not hesitate to position sex in its historico-social context, where the body-mind bond is important to varying degrees. Ancient history held that the pleasures of the flesh were only one aspect of a fully realized life – and not necessarily the most significant one. According to Weeks, "We, on the other hand, seek the truth of our natures in our sexual desires. In the course of that shift, with pre-Christian as well as Christian origins, sexuality has emerged as a domain of danger as well as pleasure, emotional anxiety as well as moral certainty."[16] This last observation is striking in its depiction of the representation of the vampire figure, both as a historical actant and as the round character of popular fiction.

In explicating sexual relationships, Weeks describes the special relations which organize and shape sex in its static and dynamic configurations, and proposes five

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[15] Sigmund Freud, "Compulsive Actions and Religious Exercises," *Mass Psychology and Other Writings*, ed. Philip Adams (London: Penguin Books, 2004) 9.

[16] Weeks 33.

broad categories into which these relations fall: Kinship and family systems, which place individuals in relationship to one another, each with his/her needs, desires and priorities; Economic and social organizations responsible for shaping social relations and ultimately setting the conditions for the organization of sexual life; Changing patterns of social regulation and organization; Changing forms of political interest and power and finally, Cultures of resistance which give rise to oppositional subcultures, alternative forms of knowledge, social movements and sexual mores and expressions. Weeks' theory is, in my view, strikingly astute. I have incorporated them here because they further bolster my position that the figure of the vampire is, indeed, integrated into the fabric of our sexual constellations, and easily defined in terms of sexual communion. Kinship and family systems are the bedrock of vampire communities; by definition, vampires are "made" purposefully to integrate into and fortify a vampire community. The laws which regulate the creation of other vampires are strong and strictly imposed. Economic and social organizations provide networks for vampire society with the living world as well as for independent vampire communities, pathways which are precious inasmuch as they guarantee contact with the non-vampire world and connections with other undead. Organization and social regulation is maintained in the world of the undead through strict supervision and control of who should and will multiply. The organization of political interest revolves about an axis of power in vampire society. It is to be expected that the most powerful vampires will have the most prestige amongst, and influence upon, their peers, and subsequently, the greatest "reproduction rights." Finally, cultures of resistance within the world of the undead are also a recurring

topos in vampire literature and serve to further cast into relief the unease and trepidation of vampires who do not "fit into the fold" and create rogue bands of undead, to the great consternation of those in power.

What is manifestly of the greatest importance to me, is not only that the vampire figure is located in each of the postulates enumerated by Weeks, but also that the shifting significance and signification of the vampire closely follows the same as that of the observances made of the perception of and uses for sex, as these perceptions and uses are constituted within the framework in each of the five situations above. In other words, no matter which spacetime the vampire is born in, the corresponding fears and anxieties concerning sexuality (again in its broadest sense) are made manifest. For example, the vampire may be located in medieval Europe of the 16th century, when the Council of Trent sanctioned the Church's supremacy in regulating marriage and the family, and when, correspondingly, the vampire is a vessel of carnal trespass, the repository of sexuality as sin. The association of sex and the body with sin was cemented in the early Christian era and became the paradigm within which sex was understood. Correspondingly, the medieval vampire bears the brunt of this association. In 1746 (translated into English in 1759), the French ecclesiastic, Dom Calmet, wrote

> Thanks be to God, we are by no means
> credulous. We avow that all the light which
> science can throw on this fact discovers
> none of the causes if it.

Nevertheless, we

Cannot refuse to believe that to be true

Which is juridically attested, and by persons

of probity.[17]

Characteristically, one of the signs reported by these upstanding "persons of probity" was the sexual nature of the vampire. As reported by A. Wiedemann, the dead are particularly sensual beings, and some manifest this through "*wilde Zeichen*", at that time usually euphemistic for an erection. Paul Barber describes how "The vampire of folklore is a sexual creature, and his sexuality is obsessive – indeed, in Yugoslavia, when he is not sucking blood, he is apt to wear out his widow with his attentions, so that she too, pines away, much like his other victims."[18]

If we pass the chiastic crossroads, however, where the vampire encarnalises the body and soul progressively manifested in sexuality, we find, for example, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's vampire St. Germain and his lover about to engage in a vampiric mind-body connection which could not possibly have been imagined in any vampire connection up to and including Stoker's *Dracula*. The 20th century and its insistence on the multi-faceted nature of the erotic experience could easily create characters such as St. Germain and his victim/lover.

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[17] Dom Augustin Calmet, *Dissertations Upon the Apparitions of Angels, Daemons, and Ghosts, and Concerning the Vampires of Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia* (London: M. Cooper, 1759) 31-2.

[18] Barber 9.

> "Do you want to begin every hour of the night with a new expression of your love? It will be as you wish. I may never join my body with yours as others have, but my...soul...will share ecstasy with yours."
>
> "And the blood?" Olivia asked, keeping the last little distance between them. "There is always blood."
>
> "Yes," His dark eyes held hers with their intensity. "And there always will be. It is my life. What in you, what part of you is more truly yourself, if not your blood?" He held her closer, lying close above her, the arch of her hip pressing his. "My only gratification comes through your own. My pleasure is entirely drawn from yours. If you take no delight in what we do, then I cannot know any."[19]

Jeffrey Weeks insists that what he calls the new sexual history "has fundamentally transformed the way we interpret our sexual past and present. This may be so, but nowhere is this made clearer than in the portrayal of the vampire. As I have demonstrated, the representation of the vampire is contained in the vampire figure, a re-presentation of the innermost manifestation of human sexual tension and apprehension. The dualisms holding court in the 20th-century vampire are not only mirrored in the progressively manifested nature of sex, but also divulged in the history of the priesthood: there is a rich medico-moral tradition positing the dual agency as moral/healthy, immoral/diseased sexuality, where "moral" sexuality is strictly regulated by the Church. Parallel to this, there is the internal dichotomy within the Christian priestly tradition that posits two different kinds of theologians:

[19] Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, *Blood Games* (New York: Aspect, 1979) 399-400.

those of the Resurrection School, who advocate confession and forgiveness, and those of the Crucifixion School, who recommend physical penance to atone for one's sins. The doctrine of the Resurrection School advocates the purging of one's sins through the cleansing of the soul, while Crucifixion School ideology calls for bodily prostration (and possibly bloodshed) in striving to connect with God. This is reminiscent of Olivette Genest's position on the role of Christ's blood in the forgiveness of sins (see Chapter 5) where, on the one hand, the purpose of the blood shed by Jesus Christ upon his death on the cross is to purify humankind of the sins it has committed. This expiation through the blood of Christ results in the forgiveness by God Almighty of the sins of man. It is in his exaltation and resurrection that Jesus saves souls. On the other hand, Genest also points to Leviticus 5:9, which she interprets as exalting Jesus as saviour of mankind NOT in his resurrection and identification with God, but rather in his rending of the flesh and spilling of his blood. Blood, here, figures in both the spiritual realm and the bodily domain. If the figure of the blood sits on the ideological fence, so does that of the vampire.

The seemingly ambivalent yet strangely symbiotic relationship between sexuality and religious belief has never been better represented than through the figure of the vampire. This necessary tension is indicative of the covalent bond between the two: even as the stranglehold of religious control loosened its grip on the collective popular imagination, the figure of the vampire, through perhaps slicker packaging, made its influence felt in the sphere of popular culture through the vampire figure, and its representation as messianic figure. Although Western civilization, by and

large, has experienced the end of religious hegemony, it has by no means managed to (nor does it seem to want to) obliterate religious thought. The traditional discourse once manifested through the sacred word of the living God has found its way to the lips of the undead. The Word has migrated from the convent to the coven. "And Lestat was Christ on the Cathedral cross. How describe his overwhelming and irrational authority?"[20]

The popularity of the complex modern vampire figure did not increase in spite of, but rather because of, its proximity to the rites and rituals of the sacred. Eternal life and undeath are sometimes confounded in the vampire – for example, in the works of Anne Rice, or that of Chelsea Quinn Yarbro whose 15th-century vampire Germain Ragoczy da San Germano poses as a God-fearing, church-going citizen of Rome, fighting the mounting superstition-fuelled reign of terror.

> At last there was a reaction from Fra Stanislau, the merest touch of anger in his voice and the abrupt way in which he put down the parchment.
>
> "Honor is part of Christian life. And I hear that you are a Christian. A Catholic, in fact."
>
> Ragoczy nodded slightly. "I am. I attend Mass regularly, as I am certain you know.[21]

Rice's and Yarbro's vampires embody the complementary oppositions of life and death, as depicted in Freud's observation of this duality which exists as

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[20] Rice, *Queen* 230.

[21] Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, *The Palace* (New York: Warner Books, 2002) 460.

Eros/Thanatos. Life is (to Freud, but also manifestly in the vampire) the delay of the death drive, swayed by the detour provided by the pleasure principle.

On the Freudian stage, Eros and Thanatos do not cancel each other out, but rather reinforce each other. And the figure of the vampire is the locus where this paradoxically complementary dualism plays itself out, tackling issues of morality and ambivalence, the quest for transcendence, and the deification of immanence. Where the pleasure principle provides gratification so that the death drive can express itself even as it tends toward its own ends, the death drive provides tension and its release so that the pleasure principle can also seek out and find fulfillment. The vampire, quite simply, short-circuits the course taken by the death drive.

It is necessary, however, to have these two forces collide and collaborate where one exists not only in spite of, but because of the other. Elizabeth Grosz, in an essay on animal sex, explains how single-celled organisms, through simple cell division, are considered immortal, since they are never wholly obliterated. "Sexuality," she maintains, "introduces death into the world."[22] As the Bible says, "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. (King James Bible, Romans 7:5)" In this way, it is easier, alongside the condemnation of the erotic by religious doctrine, to understand how fear has surrounded, and still surrounds, the issue of human sexuality and gender relations. In my opinion, however, what is even more startling and exciting is not only the way in which Lingis readily associates the

[22] Grosz, "Animal Sex" 292.

anticipation/apprehension of the horrific with the manifestation of the erotic, but the way in which lust and carnality are so melded to the sentiment of disgust.

> Lingis has recognized the link between horror and lust: the transformative transubstantiating effect of erotic attachments, desire, are echoed in the seeping out beyond boundaries and the dissolution of lines of bodily organization prompted by orgasmic dissolution. There is something about the compulsive incitements of sexuality that may bring one to the brink of disgust and to the abject, not only to accept but seek out activities, objects and bodily regions that one might in other contexts disdain.[23]

This sexual ambivalence is a familiar recurring topos in vampire fiction, building tension and creating a visible portrayal of the battle between Eros and Thanatos. In Yarbro's *Blood Games*, this ambivalence is made manifest in the "victim's" realization that her lover is about to make her a vampire.

> "How will I feel when I change? What will I be like?" After the first moment of doubt and revulsion, she found that the prospect of being like her lover had little horror for her. She had known St. Germain too long to find his nature disgusting.[24]

It is, however, made even more explicit when the sentiment of disgust not only gives way to desire, but actually constitutes this desire. In *The Vampire Genevieve*, Vukotich, the vampire's victim and lover – and occasional vampire-hunter – tries to

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[23] Grosz, "Animal Sex" 292

[24] Yarbro, *Blood Games* 401.

reconcile the warring impulses within him, struggling between the poles of his desiring self and his social persona.

> Last night, taking her into his bed, he had felt a certain shame mixed in with his desire. Although he could not deny his attraction to the girlshape, he had still felt almost a disgust at himself for wanting the monster…Vukotich wanted her again. Here, where the dark waters lapped the stony shore, he wanted to make a bed and force himself upon her. He was dizzy with lust. But more than he wanted her, more than he needed a release for his desires, he wanted her to open the wounds on his neck, and bleed him.[25]

Carnal desire is now a function of what was initially experienced as revulsion, and now not only tolerates this revulsion, but welcomes it, seeks it out, claims it. This is the body-victim of the vampire, the transformed erotic subject, seeking out the vampire's embrace. By definition, the eroticized body necessarily experiences the dissolving of body boundaries, the union of body parts and the slow separation of subject from physical body. These sensations entice to the highest possible degree even as they imperil in an alarming and horrifying way.

When the vampire Lestat is first "made" by Magnus, whom I have described as his "second father" (see Chapter 3), his first reaction is one of horror and disgust. Indeed, when he comes to the realization that Magnus is, in fact, a vampire, his mind and body clutch at the tools of the religious trade for salvation. He cries out to God and to heaven to help him, but to no avail – his supplications are met with derision

[25] Jack Yeovil, *The Vampire Genevieve* (Nottingham, Eng.: BL Publishing, 2005) 583.

by Magnus. It is, finally and paradoxically, in Magnus' arms that he finds solace and ecstasy, provided by the vampiric change itself.

> "Oh God, help me, help me..." I said as I backed away . . . the lips were closed yet still smiling, and then it bent down and I felt the prick of its teeth on my neck . . . "Vampire!" . . . Stillness . . . And a great was echoing all around me, enveloping me, the sound of a deep gong perhaps, being struck very slowly in perfect rhythm, its sound washing through me so that I felt the most extraordinary pleasure through all my limbs . . . Rapture. I said the word, and it seemed clear to me, that one word, though I couldn't speak or really move my lips. And I realized I was no longer breathing. Yet something was making me breathe . . . and I loved it, the rhythm, the way that it went on and on, and I no longer had to breathe or speak or know anything . . . I cried out, I begged. Don't stop it, please, please. I don't want to...I don't...please . . . I was against him and I could feel his sinews, his bones, the very contour of his hands. I *knew* his body. And yet there was this numbness creeping through me and a rapturous tingling sensation penetrated the numbness, and was amplified in the penetration so that it became fuller, keener, and I could almost see what I felt . . . Blood and blood and blood.[26]

Julia Kristeva's concept of bodily fluids (in our case, specifically, blood) as abject is here revisited not only as blood-as abject, producing sentiments of revulsion, but

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[26] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 81-90.

blood as integral fluid of vampiric/erotic exchange, inspiring disgust, even as it prompts "orgasmic dissolution."

Like much of what has prompted the disgust associated with sexual impulse, blood, significantly, was originally an indicator or procreative sexuality. Although many taboos exist today in relation to the menstrual cycle, Freud explains how this taboo is actually a reversal of its original effect on sexual excitation. Whereas the menstrual cycle (its presence or absence) produced an effect on the male psyche, either inducing or discouraging coupling and procreation, its role was taken over by visual excitation, which, in contrast with the intermittent stimulus of oestrus, is permanent. This stimulation was quickly given in to, in the interest of procreation. The taboo on menstruation is derived from this 'organic repression' as a defense against a phase of development which has been surmounted.[27] The reversal from sexual enticement to taboo is what Freud defines as one of the first taboo observances responsible for the foundations of civilization as we know it today.

In order for civilization to be fully realized, Freud explains, the individual has to give up certain freedoms, and significant amongst these is the renunciation of some libidinal instincts. Other instincts are induced to displace the conditions for the satisfaction of these instincts, through a process known as sublimation. Freud explains that this process is a necessary component of cultural development. Sublimation, he maintains, "is an especially conspicuous feature of cultural

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[27] Sigmund Freud, "The Future of an Illusion," trans. James Strachey, *Civilization, Society, and Religion: Group Psychology, Civilization and Its Discontents and Other Works*, vol. 12 *The Penguin Freud Library* (London: Penguin Books, 1964) 288.

development; it is what makes it possible for higher psychical activities . . . civilization is built upon a renunciation of instinct, how much it pre-supposes precisely the non-satisfaction . . . of powerful instinct."[28] Conditions in which libidinal satisfaction can be attained are strongly antithetical to an "orderly, moral" society. It thus became a cultural imperative to sublimate instinctual drive so as to reach a "high" level of society. And there is no higher, better-arranged, hegemonic, totally sublimating structure than that of the religious institution. "In our civilization," says Freud, "all the gods of antiquity have been condensed."[29] The advent of patriarchal monotheism allowed one to recover the intimacy and intensity of the primal bond with the Father. And thus the libidinal instincts could, under the aegis of a prescriptive moral ideology, be acquiesced to. Freud maintains that the regulations of civilization (in this case, religious civilization) can only be maintained through a lesser or greater extent of coercion, and, extrapolating from this postulate, men are not spontaneously drawn to work. Indeed, arguments can not fully serve to disarm their passions. This is why religious institutions are particularly adept at establishing and maintaining a high degree of coercion, and, I believe, it is because of, not in spite of, the fact that these restraints are specifically focused on disparaging and incapacitating libidinal instincts that those who are called to exercise religious functions are even closer to these sexual impulses than others who would reside in an atheistic or agnostic framework. This will be dealt with at length in Chapter 7.

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[28] Sigmund Freud, "Civilization and Its Discontents," trans. James Strachey, *Civilization, Society, and Religion: Group Psychology, Civilization and Its Discontents and Other Works*, vol. 12 *The Penguin Freud Library* (London: Penguin Books, 1964) 286.

[29] Freud, "The Future of an Illusion" 199.

This "religious energy" which Freud discusses in *The Future of an Illusion* is that which is seized upon by religious movements and redirected into particular channels, and is, I believe, nothing more than the displacement of a large portion of libidinal components, especially those which are aggressive and/or erotic. By means of sublimation, instinctual impulses are directed toward more "acceptable" objects of satisfaction. Life, psychoanalytically speaking, is story production of common experience. It is a useful background for understanding how the figure of the vampire slips quite easily into the popular imagination.

The vampire locus has always been a repository for the forbidden: as a revenant inhabiting the Middle Ages, his lot was to embody one's projection of evil, whatever that malevolence might be. Onto the revenant were foisted epidemics, including the plague, contagious diseases, and, from time to time, sexual wantonness. After the chiasma which occurred during and around 19th-century Victorian England, the subjectified figure of the vampire could no longer be a simple receptacle for the dark ideas which set up house in the popular consciousness. As a literary and filmic creature, the vampire needed to be much more circumspect in his dealings with the non-undead. He thus became a repository of the representation of the manifestation of the libidinal instincts which lay deep within the human soul, where they had (and still could) lay effectively repressed, especially, I feel, by the imperatives of religion, which is why the vampire is so particularly suited to an ecclesiastical life. The world of the sacred is a sanctuary for the objects of sublimation. It is the site where great passions and expression of the sex drive are redirected so as to assuage anxieties and

to satisfy the desires of the super-ego. However, as religious imperatives loosen their stranglehold on the collective imagination, the vampire figure no longer needs to walk as a ghoul but rather continues to embody the ardour which was once reserved for a God that was feared, and whose wrath was visited upon the poor revenant, until he was dispatched to eternal salvation by the righteous. But this religious passion remains, and it is expressed not only as simple carnal desire, but as the lush, sensuous exchange which is erotica, and which now imbues the figure of the vampire. This becomes clear when we examine more closely this close relationship shared by the Church of the Living God and the Coven of the Undead. The Passion of Jesus Christ takes us beyond the 12-station route with which we are familiar and leads us to the uncharted and controversial territory of the Passion which is part and parcel of the religious experience. It is this Passion, encompassing both the carnal and the spiritual, which is a living part of the undead, and which I will further delve into.

Chapter 5
Carnalities of the Blood

> C'est la loi qui est constitutive du désir et du manque qui l'instaure. Le rapport de pouvoir serait déjà là où est le désire.[1]

In his study of the history of sexuality and power, Michel Foucault insists that the two have never existed any other way but symbiotically. Seen in terms of action and reaction to each other, the power inherent in sexual relationships or in manifestations of sexuality, exists in constant, obligatory resistance:

> Là où il y a pouvoir, il y a resistance et ... pourtant, ou plutôt par là même, celle-ci n'est jamais en position d'extériorité par rapport au pouvoir...Mais on a affaire le plus souvent à des points de résistance mobiles et transitoires, introduisant dans une société des clivages qui se déplacent, brisant des unités et suscitant des regroupements, sillonant les individus eux-mêmes, les découpant et les remodelant, traçant en eux, dans leur corps et dans leur âme, des régions irréductibles.[2]

This is an extremely valid starting point for a discussion of the role of the (seemingly) antagonistic precepts of sex (perceived here as body, especially the vampiric body and its blood economy) and religion (represented here by the rites

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[1] Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I: la volonté de savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976) 108.

[2] Foucault 126-7.

and rituals of the Christian Church and its use of the symbolism of the sacrificial blood shed by Jesus Christ). Foucault makes it very clear that "power" is not a one-dimensional phenomenon that exists in specific, clear-cut instances:

> Le pouvoir, ce n'est pas une institution, et ce n'est pas une structure, ce n'est pas une certaine puissance dont certains seraient dotés : c'est le nom qu'on prête à une situation stratégique complexe dans une société donnée.[3]

In my analysis, I will restrict this "society" to that of the Catholic Church and its representatives in two major works framing the spectrum of vampire tradition, situated a century apart: Bram Stoker's *Dracula,* written in 1897, and the interestingly titled *Bram Stoker's Dracula,* produced in 1993. Obviously, the context in which Bram Stoker created Count Dracula (England, 1897) was geographically, chronologically and ideologically different from that in which Francis Ford Coppola presented his rendering of Stoker's vampire. But, using as my foundation Foucault's premise of constantly shifting power foci ("le socle mouvant des rapports de force"[4]), I will show how Coppola's film is not, as some critics maintain, a retelling, rewriting or reshaping of history, but rather a revitalizing and shifting perspective on the symbiosis of sex and religion. And since, in my analysis, blood is a vital component of sex, and religion equals blood, we find the two concepts negotiating on the same plane in chronologically dependent measures.

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[3] Foucault 123.

[4] Foucault 122.

In naming his movie *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, Vera Dika astutely maintains, Coppola harks back to late 19th-century England, birthplace of the original tale. Coppola's creation unfolds, she argues, from the point of view of the late 20th century, a period of time called the Postmodern, where, she writes, "the original is often hopelessly muted."[5] The inclusion of historical accuracy is, in the end, "only a reshaping of that material into a new story, a new myth," what Dika refers to as "postmodern neomythification."[6] Coppola's narrated introduction of the history of Romania's Vlad Tepes does give the viewer a history of the religious context of the protagonist's damnation, but this in no way affects the ensuing analysis. Rather, this explanation serves to depict not only the parallel between sex and religion, but their ineluctable coupling.

Although Stoker never explains the circumstances of the Count's expatriation to England or the reasons for his strange habits, Jonathan Harker's journal reveals that Count Dracula lays claim to a noble past which is chronologically problematic:

> We Szekelys have a right to be proud, for in our veins flows the blood of many brave races who fought as the lion fought, for lordship...Who more gladly than we throughout the Four Nations received the "bloody sword", or at its warlike call flocked quicker to the standard of the King? ...Ah, young sir, the Szekelys—and the Dracula as their heart's blood, their brains, and their swords—can

[5] Vera Dika, "From Dracula - With Love," *The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film*, ed. Barry Keith Grant (Houston: U of Texas P, 1996) 388.

[6] Dika 389.

> boast a record that mushroom growths like the Hapsburgs and the Romanoffs can never reach. The warlike days are over. Blood is too precious a thing in these days of dishonourable peace.[7]

"In his speaking of things and people, and especially of battles," says Jonathan in his diary "he spoke as if he had been present at them all."[8] The Count's longevity is accounted for in the film version, whose introduction describes a historical Vlad Tepes setting out "[to] guard... the frontier of the Turkey-land" to defend Christianity against the pagans and non-believers, against the wishes of his wife, Elizabeta. Although Vlad is victorious against the Turks (and the film supports Stoker's depiction of the "bloody sword" by its demonstration of the derivation of Vlad Tepes' eponym of "Vlad the Impaler"), a letter is sent to his wife informing her that Vlad has been killed in battle. Out of desperation, she flings herself into the river, is condemned by the Church for the sin of suicide, and is refused a Catholic burial. Vlad directs his pain at the loss of his beloved and his indignation at the callousness of the Church he has served so faithfully, by physically attacking what is perhaps the most prominent symbol of Christianity (in this case, Catholicism), the cross upon which Jesus Christ died and shed his blood. In a blasphemous rebellion against God, Vlad refuses to continue to serve his Church in pain and confusion, in a martyrdom similar to that of Jesus Christ's, and, avenging the shedding of Elizabeta's blood, stabs the cross and drinks the blood which is not rightfully his to drink. The role of this blood is twofold, both instrumental (Vlad's previous power to

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[7] Stoker 39.

[8] Stoker 37.

shed blood and now to cause it to come forth from the cross) and symbolic (risking his "blood" and spilling another's, in this case, God's). Reality speaks through blood; blood is a palpable reality that embraces a symbolic function.[9]

At no point does Vlad lose his faith in the Catholic Church, nor does he lose his belief in God. Rather it is a consuming rage and need for vengeance against those appointed to speak in the name of the Lord (and their power hegemony) which motivates him. Vlad is not interested in usurping the powers of the Church at any level. Perhaps the original reason for his punishment stems from the fact that his love for Elizabeta is greater than his love for God. God's soldier feels a greater allegiance to an earthly alliance, and for this he is chastised. Critics who have drawn a parallel between Satan and Dracula are misguided in this respect; while Satan is an angel who has fallen out of pride and narcissism and wants a piece of the heavenly action for himself, Dracula wants no part of this.[10] His personal turmoil and conflict is being carried out on a stage which is very much of this world. While Lucifer's battle is carried out in heaven and the outcome is his fall to Hell ("And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightening fall from heaven." Luke 10.18), Vlad's punishment is carried out on earth.[11] His eternal "life" is foisted upon him. Far from being a blessing which will carry him through unlimited ages, his is the eternity of damnation and an existence spent searching for his true love, making his way

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[9] Foucault 194.

[10] Anne Rice makes this very clear in her fifth installment of *The Vampire Chronicles*, *Memnoch the Devil*, where she aligns her Vampire Lestat with Memnoch who is, effectively, a figure understood to represent Satan in the Christian biblical tradition. Lestat is attributed Faustian proportions as he struggles not to accept the God-like powers proffered by Memnoch. He is repulsed and frightened by the Godlike authority that Memnoch craves.

[11] *The Holy Bible*

through his own personal hell, *la dracu* (Romanian for "to hell"). Preferring the love of his wife has put him in this position, a love which Stoker's vampire also echoes to Jonathan in the presence of his female vampire acolytes:

> The fair girl, with a laugh of ribald coquetry, turned to answer him:—"You yourself never loved; you never love!"...Then the Count turned, after looking at my face attentively, and said in a soft whisper:—"Yes, I too can love; you yourselves can tell it from the past. Is it not so?"[12]

Perhaps even Mina's character, written as the voice of reason, common sense and intelligence ("She has a man's brain—a brain that a man should have were he much gifted—and a woman's heart"[13]) senses this love, although her soul is at stake, and proclaims "I almost feel pity for something so hunted as this Count."[14] It is this love which has led him to his original act of defiance, the stabbing of the crucifix, and it is here that the cycle of damnation begins for him. In his act of defilement against the Church, Vlad is "sentenced" to non-death, and is robbed of the humanity within and with which he loved Elizabeta. Ironically, it is this opportunity to continue to exist that permits him to seek her out and to find her, four hundred years later, reincarnated in the body of Jonathan Harker's wife, Mina. Although it is made very clear that Vlad has incurred the wrath of the Church's representatives here on earth, it is never articulated that he has been spurned by God Himself. If we pause to

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[12] Stoker 47.

[13] Stoker 284.

[14] Stoker 241.

analyse the presence of the figure of sacrificial blood in the Bible, we find that 1 John 1.7 tells us:

> But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.[15]

This is the blood, according to the Christian Bible, which Jesus has shed in his death for all mankind. In her analysis of the death of Jesus and the figure of his sacrificial blood, theologian Olivette Genest tells us that:

> "De la mort est retenue la figure du sang, de l'action de cette mort sur le péché celle de la purification...Les péchés purifiés et expiés par le sang de Jésus (1,7; 2,2) sont ici pardonnés par Dieu, enlevés et détruits par son Fils."[16]

The blood shed from the crucifix as a result of Vlad's attack is the sacrificial blood of the lamb; it is, paradoxically, the blood with which God forgives mankind for their sins (and for which, finally, Dracula will be forgiven). It is the blood shed as a result of the death of Christ, which, as Genest tells us, can be perceived in different ways: "Donner sa vie peut avoir deux sens : la consacrer entièrement à quelqu'un ou mourir pour quelqu'un."[17] The conflated deaths of Jesus and of Vlad depict sacrifice on both holy and earthly planes. Jesus' death is due to his love of God and all

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[15] *The Holy Bible*

[16] Olivette Genest, *Le discours du Nouveau Testament sur la mort de Jésus: Épitres et apocalypse* (Ste-Foy: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1995) 204.

[17] Genest 204.

mankind, and he is raised to heaven toward eternal life. Vlad, because of his love for a woman, is left on earth to serve his "life" sentence.

Ultimately, Vlad's damnation begins once he has imbibed the blood shed by the cross, a premise made very clear cinematographically and consistent with the tenets of the Christian church as enacted by its members who take communion. In the film, Dracula's action of drinking the blood of the cross is a mockery of the drinking of the sacramental wine poured at mass, which, through transubstantiation, becomes the blood of Christ, in order that it may become part of the believers who choose to imbibe it. As a grotesque parallel of the eternal life granted those who drink the transformed blood, upon Dracula is bestowed not eternal life, not death, but rather eternal undeath. This notion of communion as both practice and metaphor is at the intersection of the (seemingly) opposite poles of sexual and religious practice. Holy communion is defiled and its role irreverently appropriated by Vlad, a holy act performed to spiritually unite the Son of God with his disciples. It is sacrilegious to compare this form of communion with the base physical (sexual) communion practised between husband and wife. It is made very clear, however, that as a vampire, Dracula can no longer have human sexual relations. When he finds his (reincarnated) wife, their love is not consummated in standard sexual practice, but rather by a most unholy communion. Although vampire/human sex is ungodly, it is never base, at least by human standards. It maintains, insists Jean Marigny, a certain level of metaphysicality:

> "les organes qui assurent normalement les fonctions de respiration, de digestion et, en ce qui concerne notre sujet, de reproduction sont désormais inutiles. Ne pouvant plus passer par les organes génitaux, le plaisir érotique se concentre essentiellement sur l'oralité...En absorbant le sang de sa victime, le vampire pénètre littéralement en elle de la façon la plus intime puisqu'il ressent immédiatement toutes ses sensations organiques et toutes ses émotions...mais après une brève période d'extase commune s'ensuit, comme nous venons de le voir, une rapide décélération du rythme cardiaque. La métaphore freudienne de "la petite mort" qui suit l'orgasme doit, ici encore, être prise au pied de la lettre, car la victime ne tarde pas à mourir au sens propre du terme."[18]

Should the victim survive the vampire's attack, she will remain undead. Should she die, she will go to heaven and thus be given eternal life.

Although Dracula's original act of sacrilege is his assault on the crucifix, it is his subsequent drinking of its blood, an image which has come to be associated with the figure of Count Dracula and which has spawned multitudinous variations on this theme, that he is ultimately punished. In its role as an abject bodily fluid (as we have seen previously) in keeping with the ideology of Julia Kristeva in *Powers of Horror*, blood is of the unclean elements which must be done away with in order for order to continue. Dracula is associated with this breach of order, and continues to perpetuate

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[18] Jean Marigny, "Les différents visages d'éros dans la trilogie d'Anne Rice, The Vampire Chronicles," *Les cahiers du CERLI* (Actes du XIième colloque du CERLI, Éros et fantastiques, 1991) 73-4.

his sin by drinking blood, revolting in its own performance, but also blaspheming against the rituals of the Holy Church. Count Dracula uses the "tools" of the Catholic Church as the currency of his personal, unholy quest. Their use is subverted from the spiritual to the physical. Drinking of blood, to Dracula, is not only an act of necessary nourishment, but a gesture of recruitment also. A simple attack by the vampire brings death by exsanguination. Should the victim choose to suck back, she yields to spiritual contamination, the end of life as a mortal and the beginning of damnation.

In both novel and film, Mina sucks back. This act of sucking, says Vera Dika, "is at once a perversion of sexual intercourse and of lactation as well. [Milk and blood], as corporeal excrement, are the abject."[19] Blood is the medium of exchange. Harking back to the medieval imagery of Jesus Christ nourishing His Church — which conflicts with the suggestion of oral sex between Dracula and Mina — tension / horror is felt at this clash between the holy and the fallen, the religious and the sexual. It is simple and tempting to ascribe evil to sex and good to God/religion which is one of the reasons why *Dracula* has always been categorized as the site of the traditional battle between good and evil. Vera Dika maintains that Stoker's novel is "one steeped in the mystification of defilement for the sin of sexual desire and the fear of sexual difference."[20] Robin Wood insists that "*Dracula* is the product of Victorian sexual repressiveness" and that Stoker espouses a "...superficial,

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[19] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia UP, 1982) 392.

[20] Dika 399.

profoundly hypocritical commitment to the "good" and the "noble."[21] However, Wood also looks beneath its facile interpretations to its more complex Victorian underpinnings and maintains that

> It should be added that the novel (which is probably more "perverse" than any film version has dared to be, despite — or perhaps because of — its insistent dedication to the cause of the good and noble) symbolically enacts in its "good characters", under cover of the most admirable intentions, something of the "forbidden" that Dracula represents.[22]

While it is true that Stoker's main characters (other than the Count himself) are not simply the "good" foil to his "evil" Dracula, they are, in fact, agents of the Victorian urge to discuss that which is forbidden, to speak about sex. Dracula may indeed be, as Wood insists, a product of Victorian sexual repressiveness, but his existence may in fact be because of, not in spite of, this very "repressiveness." Says Michel Foucault:

> Si le sexe est réprimé, c'est-à-dire voué à la prohibition, à l'inexistence et au mutisme, le seul fait d'en parler, et de parler de sa répréssion, a comme une allure de transgression délibéré...Quelque chose de la révolte, de la liberté promise, de l'âge prochain d'une autre loi passe aisément dans ce discours sur l'oppression du sexe.[23]

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[21] Robin Wood, "Burying the Undead: The Use and Obsolescence of Count Dracula," *The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film*, ed. Barry Keith Grant (Houston: U of Texas P, 1996) 365.

[22] Wood 371.

[23] Foucault 13-14.

Far from Roxana Stuart's condescending insistence that "With charming innocence Victorian critics failed to pick up on the erotic content of *Dracula*, and several critics branded it "ghoulish" and 'disgusting'," the Victorian audience may have wholeheartedly taken for granted the novel's sexual content.[24] It was another way, in keeping with Foucault's premise of speaking the unspeakable, that Victorian readers could gain control over the intricacies and "perversions" of human sexuality.

> "Comme ci, pour le maîtriser dans le réel, il avait fallu d'abord le réduire au niveau du langage, côntroler sa libre circulation dans le discours, le chasser des choses dites et éteindre les mots qui le rendent trop sensiblement présent."[25]

To the Victorian audience, *Dracula* was not just a ghoulish, disgusting novel, but also a space where it could subvert the impositions of religious power and social requirements, and where its audience could experience "forbidden" sexuality and desire. Sex need never be mentioned when religious metaphor can take its place. An even greater distance from the true subject matter was assured by the novel's format: *Dracula* is written in journal form. In this way, Robin Wood maintains:

> The author, who conceived Dracula, must absolve himself of all responsibility and guilt for that conception...he must never be seen to describe Dracula himself...Dracula must never be allowed a voice, a

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[24] Roxana Stuart, "The Eroticism of Evil: the Vampire in Nineteenth-Century Melodrama," *Themes in Drama* 14 (1992) 238.

[25] Foucault 25.

> discourse, a point of view: he must remain the unknowable, whom the narrative is about, but of whom it simultaneously disowns all intimate knowledge...It is up to the reader to supply the discourse of Dracula.[26]

Dracula is not reduced to a flat character in a moralistic play, but rather gives expression and a voice to a culture's sexual self-analysis, a voice which carries even further in Coppola's 20th-century vision, where the Count has, through Coppola's historical rendition of the vampire's predicament, acquired the right to subjectivity. "Cette expression désigne ici le droit à la parole, à la souffrance, au remords, à l'amour et à l'espoir."[27] This postmodern subjectivity, however, is a recent phenomenon and is made manifest by the liberties taken by Coppola, liberties not necessary to the Victorian audience.

One of the most oft-quoted passages in *Dracula* to depict its seemingly underlying sexuality is that of Lucy's "gang-rape" at the hands of her fiancé, Arthur, and the three men accompanying him on a quest to rid the world of the vampire menace. Lucy has been bitten by (mated with) Dracula and is now a vampire herself. Her maternal instinct is now turned on its head; instead of suckling infants and offering them protection, she now feeds off their blood, "suckling" off *them*. When Van Helsing, the head vampire hunter, finally persuades the others to accompany him to Lucy's tomb, they arrive and find it empty. Shortly, she returns, Lucy yet not-Lucy:

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[26] Wood 368.

[27] Eve Paquette, "La fiction vampirique, de la xénophobie de Bram Stoker au 'mysticisme' d'Anne Rice," *Religiologiques* 19 (1999) 103.

> ...Lucy's eyes in form and colour; but Lucy's eyes unclean and full of hell-fire, instead of the pure, gentle orbs we knew. At 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...She still advanced, however, and with a languorous, voluptuous grace, said:
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> "Come to me Arthur. Leave these others and come to me. My arms are hungry for you. Come, and we can rest together. Come, my husband, come!"...Van Helsing sprang forward and held between them his little golden crucifix. She recoiled from it, and, with a sudden distorted face, full of rage, dashed past him as if to enter the tomb...And so for full half a minute, which seemed an eternity, she remained between the lifted crucifix and the sacred closing of her means of entry."

Lucy is not "terminated" that night. Instead, the four return the following night, and while Arthur, the first of the four to impale Lucy because he was her fiancé ("but is there none amongst us who has a better right?") drives a stake through her body, "Van Helsing opened his missal and began to read."[28]

The rites of the church and the rituals of sex are so intertwined as to be indistinguishable from each other, one giving rise to the necessity of the other for completion. In this intermingling of holiness and seduction, the sacrifice of Lucy, in her role as the unfulfilled bride, can be perceived as parallel to the death of the bridegroom, Jesus Christ, for his Church. Religion's symbols and tokens, its

[28] Stoker 221-2.

crucifixes, garlic wreathes and holy wafers are pitted against rampant, pervasive sexuality in every shape and form. Sex is everywhere; at every level, in every layer, it exists as a lure. It exists in Dracula's castle in the shape of the three vampire women who seduce Jonathan. It is present in Lucy, symbolically as Arthur's betrothed, then as Arthur's would-be seductress. And where it was read between the lines in Stoker's novel, it is now made explicit in Coppola's movie; in Lucy's seduction and cunnilingus with the Dracula-beast, or in Mina's reciprocal sucking with the Count, the (re)union of husband and wife.

Against each of these manifestations of the sexual, the religious is invoked. Sexual pleasure and religious power do not cancel each other out or face off one against the other. They may play at being temporary or sporadic foils to each other, but they never obliterate one another. They may, says Foucault be associated according to complex mechanisms which are rife with excitement and incitement. Foucault brilliantly summarizes this process in the following way:

> Il y a eu...dans la recherche de l'union spirituelle et de l'amour de Dieu, toute une série de procédés qui s'apparentent à une art érotique : guidage par le maître le long d'un chemin d'initiation, intensification des expériences et jusque dans leurs composantes physiques, majoration des effets par le discours qui les accompagnent; les phénomènes de possession et d'extase, qui ont eu une telle fréquence dans le catholicisme de la Contre-Réforme, ont

> sans doute été les effets incontrôlés qui ont débordé la technique érotique imanente à cette science subtile de la chair.[29]

It is in this way that both Stoker's and Coppola's star-crossed lovers evolve in both novel and film. "Love never dies" reads the caption from the movie poster. Indeed, although Vlad is punished and sorely tested for his outburst against the Church, he is never killed, but rather encounters "undeath," a state which will permit him to seek Mina through the centuries. The earthly (sexual) bond which links Vlad and Mina (and, in the film, ultimately reunites them) is never condemned, but instead leads to their respective redemption. Mina begs the Count, after they have drunk each other's blood, to take her to the realm of his existence. Full of remorse, he proclaims, "I love you too much to condemn you" to which she replies, "Take me away from all this...death."[30] Eros, in all its manifestations, can never be equated to thanatos. Mina does not find death in Dracula, but rather love, and life. When the time comes for Dracula to be terminated, it is at Mina's hand that he will finally find peace, and, in his Christian death, he will find eternal life and the chance to be with his beloved once more, in God's good graces.

Although Stoker's novel, set within the limitations of his culture, could not permit Mina to brandish a Winchester or a Bowie knife and so to ultimately deliver Dracula from his unholy thrall, Coppola gives this "honour" back to the heroine. In doing so, Mina not only gives her beloved the possibility of being reunited with her, but also

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[29] Foucault 94.

[30] Francis Ford Coppola and James V. Hart. *Bram Stoker's Dracula: The Film and the Legend* (New York: Newmarket Press, 1992) 135.

with God. For here, Dracula's death functions symbolically the same way as Jesus' death, as the sacrificial lamb whose blood was given up for salvation. The death of the lamb of God is explained further by Genest:

> Selon [Lévitique] 5,9 et le contexte plus large de l'exaltation de l'agneau, sa mort est la raison de son exaltation eschatologique. C'est en tant qu'égorgé qu'il est exalté, non en tant que réssuscité...Comme la figure de l'agneau...la figure de la mort violente, le trait figuratif d'égorgé est employé de façon absolue. C'est en tant qu'agneau égorgé qu'il est vainqueur; c'est dans sa mort qu'il a conquis la dignité.[31]

Although it is true that any assessment of the vampire space must investigate the tension between unconscious inscription and conscious desires and resistance, it is necessary to correctly identify the locus of desire and the locus of resistance, tasks which are in fact a lot more complex than one may at first think. In the final analysis, it is probably more useful to agree that these loci are, in fact inseparable, and to try to isolate them is not only counterproductive, but illusory as far as understanding the thrust of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* as well as that of *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. While, for Stoker, the underpinnings of religion are clearly sexual, Coppola uses sexual love as in all its magnificence and grandeur to express the full impact of the religious. To reduce the Count to anything less than this complexity would be blasphemous.

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[31] Genest 217.

Chapter 6
Who Shall Deliver Me from the Body of This Death? (Romans 7:24)

> What comes in and what goes out. The blood that we touch like a miracle, a mystery. The blood that is siphoned, pumped, drained, sucked out of us. Blood like food and drink...Through communion we become a single body. Through belief, we form a community. I want to touch your body, press my fingers inside your wounds, paint my skin with your blood. This is when you exist for me. I make you inside me or bring myself to exist inside you. I eat you, devour you, swallow your words and your body, dig my teeth right into you in the soft curve of your neck. I bite you and your body bends, sways with passion. I let my teeth sink into you and ecstasy comes over you, takes you far away, makes you travel to the kingdom of the undead where live the eternally resurrected...The body of blood is that which I become through identification with you. You become me and therefore I become you. I keep you in, refuse to let you die, believe in your eternity...Another face of transubstantiation is vampirism.[1]

In Chapter 5, I examined the intersection between blood as holy medium and its manifestation in vampire literature and film, especially as it occurs in the American mainstream adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram*

[1] Martine Delvaux and Catheine Mavrikakis, "Blood/Le Sang: A Conjugation/Une Conjugaison," *Tessera* 33-34 (2003): 13.

Stoker's Dracula. As I maintain at the beginning of Chapter 5, the categories of sex and of religion may seem to be, at first glance, antagonistic precepts. However, as I have shown, the two *do* exist in a symbiotic relationship where "sex" is taken to designate the physical, carnal activities of the body, (focusing on the vampiric body and its blood economy), and "religion" focuses on the sacrificial blood shed by Jesus Christ. However, if we continue to examine "sex" and "religion" in the light of the extended definitions we have ascribed to these terms, it is clear that "sex" now espouses, in its broadest sense, the concepts of both carnality and of erotics, while religion no longer exists as a simple instigator of taboo, a process by which the faithful pray to a cold, distant deity. Religion is no longer an amalgamation of rite and ritual keeping sexuality and sensuality at bay so that more noble concerns may be aspired to. It is now expedient to enquire as to whether the Christian Church, far from being an oppressive hegemonic structure geared to keeping its flock far from the temptations of the flesh and the beckoning of carnal desire, did not instead provide new discourses and avenues that, far from denying the erotic, actually shaped and influenced new categories of erotic experience and practice.

This period which I find most fascinating is situated temporally along the chiasma at what I refer to as the chiasma proper, the locus where the vampire takes on full subjectivity. It is a spacetime encompassing rich Medieval and Renaissance medical and scientific literature, a period of time which attempted to make sense of a more complex sexual persona. Romantic literature on courtship and love stoked passions and evoked desires that begged to be understood and defined. It is, as we have seen

previously, in and around this period of time that the vampire came into his own and evolved into the complex literary and filmic creature we know today. And, it has become increasingly obvious, much of the dynamics of the vampire involve proximity to, or involvement in, the Christian Church. Whether we are watching Lucy Westenra rise from her glass coffin in a church mausoleum in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* in 1992, or Bela Lugosi descending ominously into a crypt in the 1931 version of *Dracula*, the undead are never far from the house of the living God. Even the Vampire King of the Goth Chicks (in the short story by the same name) has his minions bring fresh victims to an abandoned church; says Sonja Blue, the vampire hero of the series, who has been watching goth clubbers play at being vampires, "They don't have to hang out in ruined monasteries and family mausoleums any more – not that there are any to be found in the U.S. anyhow."[2]

If we delve into the folklore of the revenant, we see why some of the associations between the religious and the souls of those believed to be vampires came to be. Blue lights (which came to be known as "feu follet"), for example, were said to dance about the graves in cemeteries housing revenants. And since abnormal occurrences surrounding one's death usually indicated a vampiric presence, these lights were thought to represent the soul of the revenant, escaped from the grave. Proper apotropaics were then devised to keep the evil spirits at bay.[3] Vampires were

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[2] Nancy A. Collins, "Vampire King of the Goth Chicks," *The Mammoth Book of Vampire Stories by Women,* ed. Stephen Jones (New York: Carrol and Graf, 2001) 115.

[3] Of course, the theory that what was being observed was simply methane gas escaping from a body in decomposition is much more plausible.

not only associated with evil but were even seen as the very embodiment of sin and iniquity as well, so in order to counter their effect, the superstitious needed to fight malevolence with the ultimate benevolence, and this could, of course, only be found in or around a church, the dwelling place of God. And because revenants were not confined to a particular berth (they would, after all, return to their own homes to attack family members in their sleep or to copulate with their own wives), it became expedient to define a safe place for those who did not want to be contaminated by the vampire.

In order to confront a vampire one could always count on holy implements to wage a holy war. Says Anne Rice's character Santino to the vampire Armand, "We do not enter churches, for God should strike us dead if we do. We do not look upon the crucifix, and its mere presence on a chain about the neck of the victim is sufficient to save that mortal's life. We turn our eyes and fingers from the medals of the virgin. We cower before the images of the saints."[4] In the novel *Dracula,* Bram Stoker illustrates the tools of the holy trade in (amongst others) the scene where Van Helsing uses a cross to keep the now-undead Lucy Westenra from re-entering her burial chamber: "And so for full half a minute, which seemed like an eternity, she remained between the lifted crucifix and the sacred closing of her means of entry."[5] Toward the end of the tale, when Mina Harker is slowly turning into a vampire, Van Helsing presses a host to her head which brands her with godly repudiation (at least

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[4] Anne Rice, *The Vampire Armand* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1998) 299.

[5] Stoker 212.

until the head vampire, Dracula, is killed and his soul is accepted into heaven). Holy water, when thrown at the vampire, will, of course, sizzle on contact. Silver bullets, reputed to be the only kind to effectively terminate vampires (and other nasty creatures) may get their lethal properties from the fact that they are composed of the same material as that of the Holy Chalice.[6] The wooden stake which would kill the vampire when driven into his heart is also part of a rich tradition that holds that Jesus Christ did not, in fact, die on a cross but rather on a wooden stake. Although none of the histories which posit this finding deny the fact that a crossbeam *did* hold up Jesus' arms as he agonized on the cross, the main implement of torture was indeed a stake driven into the ground. And it is only fitting that this stake, now imbued with not only the spirit but also the blood of Jesus, be able to make short shrift of the creature who is also claiming eternal life.

These protective measures and apotropaics, however, start to lose their potency in the 19th century. Although in Coppola's version of *Dracula* Van Helsing arms his posse with religious artefacts to ward off Dracula and the power he holds over the group, Dracula laughs when he sees Jonathan brandishing a small crucifix given to him by a Hungarian peasant. "Do not put faith," he insists, "in such trinkets of deceit."[7] Yarbro's Count St. Germain is a staunch, respectable Catholic who attends mass regularly, and the vampire Lestat, who bore a special affection for the church even before his making, walks fearlessly and shamelessly within the walls which

[6] The effectiveness of silver in stopping the undead in its tracks most probably arose from the observation of the cauterizing properties of silver nitrate.

[7] Coppola and Hart 53.

enclose the sacred. When his mother, a fledgling vampire, proffers shock at the thought of sleeping under the altar of a village church, her son replies, "I have taken victims under the very roof of Notre-Dame."[8] Armand, the leader of a 20th-century coven residing under Les Innocents cemetery, realizes that Lestat has been desecrating the Church by walking about within its walls and on its holy grounds, and finally confronts him about his blasphemous behaviour. Lestat at once realizes that Armand is neither angel nor demon, but "a sensibility forged in a dark time when the small orbs of the sun travelled the dome of the heavens, and the stars were no more than tiny lanterns describing gods and goddesses upon a closed night."[9] His fear of God and of being struck stems from superstition, not experience. "In ancient days," replies Lestat, "there were martyrs who quenched the flames that sought to burn them, mystics who rose into the air as they heard the voice of God. But as the world changed, so changed the saints. What are they now but obedient nuns and priests? ....And so it is with evil, obviously. It changes its form. How many men in this age believe in the crosses that frighten your followers?"[10] Lestat's mother Gabrielle, with some trepidation, minces into the church. "What if they're right," she said, "and we don't belong in the House of God." Lestat replies, "Gibberish and nonsense. God isn't in the House of God."[11]

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[8] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 188.

[9] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 227.

[10] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 227.

[11] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 190.

It is only recent vampire fiction and film that admits the vampire into church; as the undead claims complexity and multidimensionality, so the Christian religion opens itself up to inspection and analysis. Although Anne Rice's Lestat is the best example of this transgression of religious boundaries, the *Hellsing* manga presents us with the character of Father Alexander, a vampire who accesses his victims by posing as a priest.[12] Now that the vampire has gained access to the House of God, it is not only his proximity to the almighty that needs to be questioned, but also his relationship to God and the characteristics they have in common.

Indeed, the enclosed world of religious orders does bear a resemblance to the literary and filmic vampire coven: members of both groups have agreed to submit to the basic rules of their institutions; both groups see themselves as part of a "chosen" collective; individual preferences and indulgences are given up so as to conform to group standards; sharing "inside" information is greatly frowned upon and members are enjoined to lead a life of secrecy and discretion; practices inherent to their order/coven may be intense and particularly bodily, and are sanctioned within the framework of their particular constellation. When Santino initiates Armand, he explains the most important tenets of vampire society. He explains that vampires live in covens around the world, with each coven having its leader, like the Superior of a convent, who sees to it that other vampires are "formed" in the proper way. He insists that the Dark Gift with which they are "blessed" must only be shared with the

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[12] Hirano Kohta, *Hellsing* (Milwalkie, OR: Dark Horse Comics, 1998). *Manga* is, by definition, the art of the Japanese graphic novel. It is not to be confused with the film version, *animé*, which is a form of Japanese film animation.

beautiful, for this is most pleasing to a Just God. He maintains that no one amongst them should destroy another of their kind except for the coven leader, who is free to chastise and punish as he sees fit. He is adamant about the fact that none who belong to the order should share their knowledge or secrets with anyone on the outside. Of course, Santino's coven is one of many in vampire fiction, but by and large, vampire societies have adopted the same structure and functioning as those found in religious orders. Both groups share the same dynamics, and the leaders of both these groups display similar qualities: they are both held in fascination by a strong faith in an idea in order to awaken the group's faith, they both possess imposing will, and they both possess prestige and charisma, which are forms of domination exercised over others.[13] There is obviously a need in these groups, be they convent or coven, for domination by a leader, and the politics of the group reflect this.

If we examine the infrastructure of the vampiric coven and its members, it is easy to observe and understand its sexual underpinnings, and its representation in post-chiasmic horror fiction and film. The sexual tension within its religious counterpart, however, is more difficult to pinpoint and explain. The vampire, I believe, did not penetrate the sacred grounds by force. The carnal energy which lay within the church already was a welcome breeding ground for the members of the undead, who not only subscribe to its stringent rules and regulations, but in fact espouse a philosophy of asceticism while languishing in the sensuality that abounded within the walls of religious orders. Although the early Church fathers insisted it was by

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[13] Sigmund Freud, "LeBon's Description of the Group Mind," *Civilization, Society and Religion* (New York, Penguin Books, 1991) 108.

way of the flesh that the devil corrupted the soul, they did not provide measures by which good Christians of religious orders could be spared from temptation. Although nuns and priests were separated from lay members of society, they were still in close and prolonged contact with others of their religious order, contact which provided the opportunity for sexual liaisons. Relationships between inmates had to be closely monitored in order to discourage closeness of a more physically intimate nature. Of course, life within the cloister or the monastery did prove, for the more devout, to offer instances of great intensity and intimacy, within a religious framework, and this intimacy, in the name of the sacred, often masqueraded as religious trance or ecstasy.

The Gregorian reforms of the 11th-century outlawed married clergy and abolished mixed-sex monasteries. At the same time, religious institutions were being closely monitored for signs of heresy and the presence and practice of the occult. Priests and nuns who abided by the rules set down by the Church had to be extremely vigilant to maintain the proper behaviour and demeanor required of them. It is no wonder, then, that their drives would express themselves within a rich tradition of theological literature on sex, the body and sin. Ethical texts were increasingly invoking nature as manifestation of what was a "correct" practice, especially where sexual practice was concerned. Sins "against nature" were serious transgressions to the Christian Church. It is easy to see how the vampire's "un-natural" attributes rendered him a great scapegoat for the Church, and a perfect nemesis as well. Because the vampire is so closely associated with both heresy *and* the occult, it is easy to see how he

could claim the place which he was created to fill, in his capacity of first revenant and then seducer, while gaining proximity to an institution for which he is so well suited.

In an essay on renunciation in early Christianity, Peter Brown explains how the combined authorities of Church and State imposed principles of sexual restraint and abstinence whose origins lay in the discomfort with the bodily (hence sexual), which was to be found in opposition to the spiritual/cerebral, which, he feels, "had lurked like a virus in the classical world since the days of Plato." Brown quotes Tertullian in asking, "What new thing did the Lord bring, by coming down to earth?" The answer was clear. "One mighty deed alone was sufficient for our God – to bring freedom to the human person."[14] The human body, from now on, was a locus of choice. To renounce sexual intercourse, says Brown, "was to throw a switch located in the depths of the human body itself; and to throw that precise switch was to cut the current that sustained the sinister *perpetuum mobile* of the present age."[15] Although humankind was expected to resist sexual temptation and forego giving in to its urges, it was not desirable to completely abstain from perpetuating the human race, for obvious reasons. The vampire, however is able to fulfill these expectations, ironically, by virtue of his singularly un-natural existence. He continues to live without (re)creating the conditions for life (i.e. intercourse). In his eternal life free of the need for copulation, he emulates Jesus Christ while setting up an escape valve for sexual tension.

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[14] Peter Brown, "Sexuality and Renunciation in Early Christianity," *Sexualities in History,* eds. Kim M. Phillips and Barry Reay (New York, London: Routledge, 2002) 130.

[15] Brown 132.

God had placed sexual desire, says Brown, "in the very depths of the human body, so as to render mercifully concrete the deeper processes of the impalpable soul."[16] Sexuality and its manifestations thus became an "alarm system" for the temptations submitted by the mind. The bodily and the spiritual now kept tabs on each other, as they coexisted in one unit. "Why was it," Brown quotes Philoxenos of Mabbug "that night emissions seem to increase when the novices grow in the love of God, so that their love appears to take forms akin to the passion of fornication?"[17] The sacred expressing itself in terms of the erotic is nothing new. The Old Testament (if we wish to remain in the register of the Christian Church) provides erotic conviction in the Song of Solomon. Says the lover, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine (Song of Solomon 1:2)."[18] "A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts (1:13)." "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me (2:6)." Although the Song of Solomon is held to be a metaphor for spiritual communion between Christ and his subject for Christian theologians, the very physicality and sensuousness of the passage is not lost on the reader.

Relationships with Christ were, of course, intense and meditative, but the historiography shedding light on religious female figures and their rapport with Jesus portrays a connection which went beyond the purely spiritual to encompass

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[16] Brown 138.

[17] Brown 139.

[18] The Holy Bible

extreme examples of religious ecstasy. Within the framework of religious orders, women could explore spiritual and bodily pleasure as transverberation, or spiritual ecstasy. This of course, begs the question of exactly where the sexual ends and the spiritual begins. In a religious context, spiritual ecstasy, is, of course, a means of communing with Christ, of seeking Him out and connecting with Him. Female spirituality, even if read in a purely religious context, was singularly physical. Religious women would experience multitudinous forms of ecstatic manifestations and physical sensations such as seizures, trances, levitations and visions. Some spoke of communing with Christ and tasting and kissing him. Forms of torture and self-mutilation were not uncommon. Women would jump into icy ponds or submit themselves to extreme heat, and some would cut themselves in order to bleed. In this way, they would defile themselves even as Christ had been defiled, and they would come into contact with him in this way. There are, of course, clearly erotic overtones to many of these acts. Although female religious figures used the body as a pathway to the divine, the nature of the sensations they experienced were nothing short of sexual. In this optic, therefore, it is indisputable that religious ecstasy can (and, for my purpose, should) be seen not only as a way of expanding our understanding of sensual bodily pleasures, but also be considered in a specifically religious framework. The space opened in the asking of this question is quickly filled by the figure of the vampire. The vampiric experience from the point of view of the victim subtends an out-of-body experience, a complete giving-over to a power higher than oneself, and, from a purely physical perspective, a transgression of body boundaries in the opening up of the skin, the tearing of the flesh. A description of the 16th-

century saint and mystic, Theresa of Avila, illustrates how Theresa's experience of religious ecstasy ultimately blurred the physical and the spiritual.

> L'innefable la pénétrait, ne faisait plus qu'un avec elle; elle sentait une perfection toute puissante l'enserrer à jamais sans pouvoir s'y soustraire; l'impulsion de la volonté divine chassait sa propre volonté; elle ne pouvait que lui offrir sa soumission et sa passivité radieuse; il lui arrivait de connaître un tel délice, et une telle crainte que ce délice cessât, qu'elle versait malgré elle des larmes et que la gorge étranglait, elle ne savait plus si elle souffrait ou si elle défaillait de joie. Alors l'amour qui l'embrassait semblait prêt a rompre les liens de son corps; elle sentait une douleur si vive qu'elle en gémissait et en même temps si délicieuse qu'elle eut voulu ne jamais la voir finir; qui peut savoir jusqu'ou va cette blessure, d'où elle est venue et comment peut s'adoucir un si cruel et délicieux tourment? Consumée de désir, elle ne savait que demander; car toute puissance, la félicité l'enveloppait, s'abattait sur elle, et cette plénitude, à laquelle elle avait en vain essayé d'échapper, la déchirait comme si elle ne pouvait la contenir, lui donnait la sensation d'une flèche traversant son coeur; elle croyait voir entre les mains d'un ange un long dard qui était d'or et dont la pointe portait un peu de feu et l'ange lui passait ce dard au travers du coeur.[19]

[19] Jean-Paul Barrière, "Sainte Thérèse d'Avila," 14 July 2007 <http://perso.orange.fr/jean-paul.barriere/divers2/therese.htm>.

It is in this state of religious ecstasy, of altered consciousness and of euphoria that Theresa enters into communion with God. It is also in these terms that the vampiric experience is described, as we saw, for example, in Lestat's deliverance from the bowels of the earth by Marius, or in his initial transformation by Magnus. Although the sensuality and orgasmic physicality of that moment is conspicuous, the spiritual connection is also not negligeable. When one resides in a world entirely given over to the spiritual, it is no little wonder that any manifestation of the carnal should lend its self to spiritual interpretation. This is not, however, as farfetched as it would seem at first. Although the transverberations of Theresa of Avila are, in my opinion, those which lend themselves the most to being understod in terms of spiritual manifestation couched in the vocabulary and experience of the carnal, confessions and testimonials abound from the world of religious orders. Theresa's experiences are, however, easily understandable in a Freudian landscape.

If we hark back to *Civilization and Its Discontents*, we remember that the advcancement of civilization is, as a rule, dependent upon the renunciation of drives and instincts normally sought out by primitive man.[20] The "work of civilization," as per Freud, commands human beings to renounce these drives, including of course, the sexual drive, more and more, necessitating ever-increasing instinctual sublimation. Taboos, laws and customs aid in the impostition of restrictions, but these differ depending on the society in which they are developed. For Freud, one of

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[20] Sigmund Freud, "Civilization and Its Discontents," trans. James Strachey, *Civilization, Society, and Religion: Group Psychology, Civilization and Its Discontents and Other Works,* vol 12 *The Penguin Freud Library* (London: Penguin Books, 1964) 445.

man's greatest experiences of satisfaction is in the realm of genital love. This realm, however, is highly chaotic and emotionally taxing. Certain individuals, he explains, are capable of extricating themselves from the tribulations of genital love "by making themselves independent of their object's acquiescence by displacing what they mainly value form being loved on to loving". These persons protect themselves against feelings of despondency at the loss of a love object by re-directing their love to ALL humankind, as opposed to showering it upon one object of affection. In this way, they avoid the disappointemnet and heartbreak of love by turning away from its sexual aims and and transforming their instinct into what Freud calls "an impulse with an inhibited aim." This inhibited aim, of course, is true for all spiritually motivated groups and cults with redirected sexual aims. Freud goes on to express how this technique for fulfilling the pleasure principle has often surfaced in religion. "This readiness for a universal love of mankind and the world," he stipulates, "represents the highest standpoint which man can reach." However, it is clear to any Freudian that this love, of the inhibited-aim variety, originally existed as genital love. It obviously still exists in this form in the human unconscious. Humans, as a rule, are capable of entertaining different "kinds" of love in order to conform to the norms of society. It is entirely possible to "love" one's siblings or children one way, while seeking out a different kind of "love" from one's sexual partner. In manifestations where this love is directed toward the "wrong" object (as in cases of pedophilia, for example), society has erected means of chastising the guilty party. In institutions such as holy orders, for example, the emergence of the sexual instinct

pent up in the unconscious expresses itself in terms understood as, for example, transverberation or religious ecstasy.

I have previously suggested how communion with the vampire fulfills all the criteria for an ecstatic experience, even when read in religious terms. Although it was couched in religiously circumspect terminology, matings with the vampire, from Polidori onward (indeed, from the chiasma proper onward) have, ironically, expressed the sensuous and sexual sensitivity of religious euphoria. This is, obviously, not coincidental. St. Theresa's ecstatic experiences can easily be understood in tems of the erotic. Other manifestations of the erotic within the sacred – for example, those seen in ceremonies involving transubstantiation – are not so obvious, and yet critics do not cease to equate and parallel erotic experiences with those of the sacred transubstantiation. Alphonso Lingis very clearly points out the resemblance between the two:

> The supreme pleasure we can know, as Freud said, and the model for all pleasure, orgasmic pleasure, comes when an excess tension builds up, confined, compacted is abruptly released; the pleasure consists in a passage into the contentment and quiescence of death. Is not orgasm instead the passage into the uncontainment and unrest of liquidity and vapour – pleasure in exhudations, secretions, exhalations?...Lust surges through a body in transubstantiation."[21]

If by this description we can imply that the vampire takes on attributes of Jesus Christ, it is only fair to examine the opposite relationship: that of Jesus Christ

[21] Lingis 15.

assuming properties rightfully identified with the vampire. From here it is only a very short leap of logic to ask whether Jesus' Passion involved a passionate Jesus.

If we look at the etymology of the word "passion" we find, from the early 12th century, "sufferings of Christ on the Cross," from Old French *passion,* from the Latin *passionem,* (from the nominative *passio)* meaning "suffering" or "enduring," from the stem of the Latin *pati,* meaning "to suffer" or "to endure." The sense of this word extended to the sufferings of martyrs, and to suffering in general, by the mid 13th century. The word "passion" meaning "strong emotion, desire" is attested from the end of the 14th century from the Latin use of *passio* to render the Greek *pathos.* The sense of "sexual love", in which I am interested, is first found at the end of the 16th century; that of "strong liking, enthusiasm, predilection" is from 1638. Although the automatic association of the word with "suffering" or "endurance" slowly gave way to its more contemporary incarnation as extreme desire for communion of a sexual (amongst other things) nature, congregations of Passionists, dedicated to contemplation of the Passion of the Christ. both male and female, lived in religious orders in the 19th century.This brief etymological journey suggests that the most recent incarnation of passion as the manifestation of the sex drive indeed stems from its beginnings mired in pain and suffering. This convergence of pain and suffering is, of course, nothing new in the context of the erotic. What *is* true of the word, however, is that it always calls on a sense of intensity and of exaggeration. It is always associated with violence, a sense of urgency, tumult and fury. Indeed, one who is in a state of passion is also necessarily in a state of suffering. Vuillemin says,

"si l'amour naît de la communion des personnes, la **passion** ne jaillit au contraire que du contact des choses: tout devient nature, force, animalité."[22]

Although the etymology of the word may have known a smooth evolution to what it has become today, its effect and influence have vacillated greatly over the centuries. To Sartre, who believed that one can escape one's passions simply by willing it so, using passion as an excuse demonstrated bad faith. Although Kant's position on this point is not in opposition with that of Sartre, he believes that passion is akin to an illness of the soul, since both passion and illness call for the temporary suspension of reason. However, he also believes that human beings are creatures of free will and can choose not to be dominated by their passions by willing logic and reason to take over. What he may have overlooked, however, is, according to Freud, that the drives and instincts tapped into by acts of passion are not attainable by the conscious mind i.e. by logic and reasoning. The expression of such acts of passion is not, therefore, a Sartrian "excuse" or a Kantian "weakness."

Passion evokes feelings such as love and desire, but also those of pain. Without attempting to excoriate the drives behind sadism and masochism, it is obvious that any expression of passion also involves feelings of pain. Consider the film *The Passion of the Christ*, a movie at times lauded, at times fiercely criticized for its gore and bloodthirstiness. One cannot help but wonder why a film on the final twelve hours in the life of Jesus Christ should focus so intensely and singularly on the

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[22] JulesVuillemin, *Essai sur la signification de la mort* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France) 1949.

endurance of his physical body. *The Passion* has been viewed as a gaudily tormented, pornographically blood-drenched, anything-but-literal interpretation of the last 12 hours of Jesus' life. It is in his tortured, bodily identity as a man that Jesus is depicted on film. It is his capacity to endure and represent agonizing pain that he is identified with. The flesh which filmgoers thronged to view at the movie theatres, the flesh that is whipped and torn, this is the very flesh which Jesus invited his followers to partake of. The blood pouring freely into his eyes and running over his back and torso is the blood which he invited communicants to drink. The discomfort engendered by this film, I believe, stems largely from the literalization and bodification of the figure of Jesus Christ. The blood of Jesus Christ is no longer being offered up metaphorically to wash away the sins of man. It is now visible, palpable, drinkable. We are called to his table to share his blood, in essence, to become vampires. No transubstantiation was ever this bloody. More than the blood, however, is the passion. This shared feeling of pain, which translates to lust. Says Elizabeth Grosz

> Pain is as capable, perhaps even more so, of inscribing bodies as pleasure. Sadism and masochism intensify particular bodily regions – the buttocks being whipped, the hand that whips, the bound regions of the body in domination practices – not using pain as a displacement of or disguise for the pleasure principle, but where pain serves as a mode of corporeal intensification.[23]

Indeed, if the figure of the vampire has served as a repository for our anxieties all along, has acted as scapegoat, has stood in for sacred figures, then it is only right and

[23] Grosz 289.

good that he should be admitted into church where he has indeed literalized the transubstantiation.

Vampiric practice in folklore, literature and film has always embraced the supernatural. Although vampires in fusion-genre films and in role play have sometimes crossed the line into occult territory, the figure of the vampire, neither as revenant nor as undead, has ever laid claim to the demonic, as I have insisted in Chapter 5. No victim of a vampire has ever been "possessed" by one or had his/her soul in thrall to the devil. However, by virtue of being undead, the vampire can lay claim to being close to the mystery which is death. Because he does not fear ceasing to live, he can fully embrace his experience of life, and because he lives through the equivalent of several life cycles, his is a thorough and intense education which leaves him a lot of time for scrutiny and reflection. The contemporary vampire's task is that of the philosopher. Without being bogged down by the mundane and the petty, the vampire can bypass the ordinary trappings of life and zero in on the intangibles of existence. Bestowing eternal life to a chosen few forces him to ponder the worthiness of those who would be permitted to live forever, while dealing death out of habit forces him to choose judiciously those who would be put down. With his gesture of choosing those who will live and those who must die, the vampire does, indeed, play God.

The vampire's position is more complex than we would at first believe. If we hark back to the early Christian era, we observe that there is a strong connection between

sex and sin. Indeed, the pleasures of the flesh were to be renounced in favour of spiritual salvation. In cases where the pleasures of the flesh could *not* be renounced (as in marriage), the distinction between the natural and the unnatural came to be extremely salient. The idea of sins against nature was important for enforcing Church doctrine. While pagan and pre-Christian religions had looked to "unnatural" sexual acts as proof that humankind was above nature and harboured a closer bond with the sacred, Christianity firmly grounded its acceptable sexual practices in what was observable in nature (although this topic, in and of itself, is extremely controversial and highly debatable).

If we throw the vampire into this mix, we appreciate at once how it is impossible to anchor him to one clear school of thought. Because the vampire does not participate in sexual practice, he is elevated above the fray of those who would submit their flesh to sex and consummate their carnal desires. The vampire does need to kill from time to time in order to survive, yet, in most contemporary vampire fiction where the vampire is the protagonist, victims are usually allowed to live. And when he does need to break the sixth commandment, this is done to rid the world of evil.

The vampire takes life and creates life judiciously. Creating another undead being closely follows the "commandments" which vampire society has imposed on itself. Every vampiric act, whether or not it leads to reproduction, is beyond the merely carnal. It is not of the domain of the merely sexual, but rather espouses the erotic. Sex, to the modern vampire, more closely resembles the ecstasies of the religious

than the rude gropings of ordinary lay persons. As Lingis accurately describes, vampiric mating is "the dissolute ecstasy by which the body's ligneous, ferric, coral state casts itself into a gelatinous, curdling, dissolving, liquefying, vaporizing, radioactive, solar and nocturnal state. *Exstase matérielle*, transubstantiation."[24]

Recent vampire fiction demonstrates that, far from repudiating the teachings and values of the Church, the undead wholeheartedly espouse its teachings and ideology. As I showed in Chapter 4, Yarbro's Vampire St. Germain is an avid churchgoer, who enjoys a close relationship with Pope Alessandro. Because Chelsea Quinn Yarbro situates her vampire characters in actual historical spacetimes, she is using St. Germain to decry the heretical late 15th-century Dominican priest, Girolamo Savonarola, while positing St. Germain as a friend and advocate of the Catholic Church and of Pope Alexander VI. In Yarbro's *The Palace*, Savonarola is shown to be, not only a heretic, but also a Catholic hypocrite whose bodily desires are as forceful as his religious devotion. His encounter with Suor Estasia, a recent convert, shows the predatory side of his nature, cloaked in religious habit.

> "What do you see?"...He resisted an urge to seize Suor Estasio by the shoulders and shake her.
>
> Suor Estasia blinked, then cried out as she threw herself at Savonarola's feet, tears suddenly flooding her eyes. "Oh, my adored prior, my light of salvation, my Heavenly brother." She grasped his foot and drew it toward her lips. Eagerly, she prostrated herself before

[24] Lingis 15

> Savonarola, her face pressed tightly against the leather straps of his sandals.
>
> Urgent as his need was, Savonarola savored that moment, permitting himself a faint smile in appreciation of Suor Estasia's abasement."[25]

Anne Rice's Vampire Marius also professes his love for God in a discussion with the young boy who is soon to be his fledgling. Once again using the real historical figure of Savonarola in juxtaposition with true Christian devotion, Marius explains to Amadeo (Armand) the reconciliation of his blood sharing with his devout Christian ideology.

> "Master, do we serve Him?" I pressed. "I know you condemn the monks who brought me up, you condemn the ravings of Savonarola, but do you mean to guide me by the very same route to the Very Same God?"
>
> "That's just it, Amadeo, I do," said Marius, "and I don't mean as the pagan I am to admit it so easily, lest its complexity be misunderstood. But I do. I find God in the blood. I find God in the flesh. I find it no accident that the mysterious Christ should reside forever for His followers in the Flesh and Blood within the Bread of the Transubstantiation."[26]

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[25] Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, *The Palace* (New York: Warner Books, 2002) 399.

[26] Anne Rice, *Armand* 204.

Although the association between the Vampire and the Christ may be truly sacrilegious to the devout Christian, the following account of the dispatching of a "vampire" in late 19th-century Romania strikes one as particularly salient and significant. After coming to the conclusion that a recently deceased member of the town was probably a *strigoi*, the townspeople "would drive five old knives or five hawthorn spikes into the grave: the knife into the breast and two spikes into the feet, two into the hands of the deceased, so that he would impale himself on the knives and thorns if, having become a vampire, he should attempt to climb out of the grave."[27] Although this testimonial occurred during the period of the chiasmus, the vampire (at least the one in Romania) had not achieved a godlike status as it was progressively doing in North America and Western Europe.

However, if we pause to truly ponder how and why the figure of the vampire has developed the way it did, we cannot fail to take into account its proximity to religious figures, and, beyond any other figure, that of Jesus Christ. As the vampire is Christlike in his behaviour, so Christ is vampirelike in his affiliations: he calls his followers to partake of his body and blood, he shares his holy deeds with a select few who will tell his story far and wide, and last but notably not least, he promises his disciples eternal life. If the nuns revelling in transverberation and holy connections with Jesus claim spiritual marriage with the Lord, so do the brides of Dracula enjoy these same privileges under a different nomenclature. Their bodies were the means by which these women could represent their connection to Christ, in

[27] Barber 53.

the same way that the vampire's brides cleave to him. Both brides look to their Lord to bleed, feed and give life.

It is now clear that the figure of the vampire, in our 20th-century spacetime, is no longer a rude and crude revenant who lays in wait to suck dry those unfortunate enough to belong to his family, a simple repository for the anxieties and guilt of those remaining behind after the death of a loved one. The ghoul has not only become multidimensional and physically attractive, he now aspires to the spiritual, to the otherworldly. However, this "otherworldliness" does not manifest itself as supernatural, but rather as supra-natural. Beyond the earthbound, the vampire now sets his sights on transcendance, a move which will bring him closer to Heaven, at one with God. In Chapter 7, I will explore the consequences of this new-found ambition and its significance for the figure of the vampire at large.

Chapter 7
The Demon's Daemon, or Fear and Trembling in New Orleans

Lestat wants to be a saint. "I want to save souls by the millions," he says, "I want to do good far and wide. I want to fight evil!"[1] This is how *Blood Canticle*, Anne Rice's last novel of the *Vampire Chronicles* begins, with her star monster longing for Christianity. At the inception of the Chronicles, Lestat is normal enough, as far as vampires go. As he maintains, "Death, disease, time, gravity, they mean nothing to me...I'm a condemned inhabitant of eternal night and an eternally tormented blood seeker."[2] Lestat fits the archetype of the vampire, albeit the "new and improved" model, which we shall visit shortly. Lestat's unorthodox (as it were) new calling will demand of him not only the performance of the three requisite miracles and a life given over to heroic sanctity, but also on behalf of sinners, a paradoxical proximity to God.

In his *Philosophical Fragments*, Kierkegaard uses the word "conversion" to designate the moment where the learner, having realized that he was untruth, continually in the process of departing from the truth, has charted his spiritual course in the opposite direction. In the specific instance in which I am interested, we can indeed define this moment as one of conversion for Lestat.[3] As Kierkegaard emphasizes, this conversion cannot take place without its being assimilated into the

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[1] Anne Rice, *Blood Canticle* (New York and Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003) 3.

[2] Rice, *Canticle* 3

[3] D. Anthony Storm, *D. Anthony Storm's Commentary on Kierkegaard.* 28 March 2008 <http://www.sørenkierkegaard.org/>.

subject's consciousness, leaving him with a sorrowful feeling which Kierkegaard refers to as repentance, a transition from "not to be" to "to be." And, most significantly, it is, to Kierkegaard (and to me) the "teacher" who introduces the occasion to obtain the truth, and to bring it to the learner, along with the condition for understanding it. The teacher reminds the subject (the vampire) that he is untruth and this through his own fault. The state of unacknowledged untruth, says Kierkegaard, is that of sin. And this teacher, for Lestat who wants to be a saint, is no other than God. This master, then, this teacher-who-is-actually-not-a-teacher-but-a-judge, is the one who will usher his student into the next moment, the moment filled with the eternal, in the fullness of time. To accept the condition, therefore, Lestat must accept the master, he for whom he strives to be a saint. This master is none other than Lestat's daemon, the one who calls and inspires, who dictates negatively, without saying a word, the one whom Lestat would gladly serve, and the one whom he aches to define. The promise that will be fulfilled by Lestat will be a rendering of his own essence, the sacrifice of the timelessness of his self, in his vampiric manifestation. It is for this master, his *raison d'être*, that he will wander the world.

In fact, Lestat's quest begins in Rice's second installment of the *Vampire Chronicles*, where her protagonist begins his search for identity and someone (or something) to venerate. His search leads him to Marius, a millennium vampire who finally reveals himself to Lestat in a scene redolent of the divine and the erotic. Lestat's first revelation comes to him as he lies underground in the Middle East, in

self-imposed exile, "under the olive trees. It was in the garden," says Lestat. His own Gethsemane.[4]

> And I was rising, just as if I were being lifted, up out of the earth, though this figure stood with its hands at its side. At last, it lifted its arms to enfold me and the face I saw was beyond the realm of possibility. What one of us could have such a face? What did we know of patience, of seeming goodness, of compassion? No, it wasn't one of us, it couldn't have been...I believe that I said some mad thing, voiced some frantic thought, that I knew now the secret of eternity.[5]

At that moment, Lestat is indeed delivered, quite literally, from the earth. What he hears before his deliverance from his personal hell is "a giant bass drum...a cannon boom."[6] And Marius has the demeanor of a god. "His hair was thick, white and gold strands mingled in waves fallen loosely around his face, and over his broad forehead. And the blue eyes might have been brooding under their heavy golden brows had they not been so large, so softened with the feeling expressed in the voice."[7] Hollywood could not have delivered up such a perfect figure of God.

Lestat's fulfillment is but short-lived, however. Marius is indeed old, older than any other of the vampire's kith and kin, but age does not bestow divinity. Marius is still,

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[4] Anne Rice, *The Vampire Lestat* (New York : Ballantine Books 1985) 361.

[5] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 362.

[6] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 359, 61.

[7] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 362.

Lestat feels, "The purest visage of *human* love."[8] The historical moment when Marius delivers/exalts Lestat is grounded in the historical, and although it is glorious, it is not of the eternal. Lestat's quest is far from over. The vampire's quest is not for the mortal, it is for the divine. Much as he loves Marius, it is a love born of acceptance into a filiation which is all too human, too mortal. The master whom he seeks, the sainthood which he claims, is beyond this. In needing to claim the eternal, Lestat must become a beacon for Christ, for God. "Le grand paradox chrétien," says Jon Sobrino, "que l'on peut facilement répéter, mais reste difficile à assimiler véritablement : être seigneur, c'est servir."[9] And so Lestat sets his sights on the servitude of saintliness.

In Book IV of *The Vampire Chronicles*, Rice's little-known *The Tale of the Body Thief*, Lestat is finally able to move upward in his quest for God.[10] In the body of a human with whom he has traded his own undead countenance for a brief while, he barters the carnal for the eternal, the supine for the divine, with a nun who is nursing him back from pneumonia. Lestat recognizes Gretchen as a nun immediately, through her strong nurturing hands, the little silver wedding band, "...and something about [her] face, a radiance – the radiance of those who believe...there was something in her which suggested a profound resignation."[11] Gretchen's spirituality is enticing to Lestat. Her belief in God holds a mystery, an appeal, that he feels the

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[8] Rice, *Vampire Lestat* 362. (italics mine)

[9] Jon Sobrino, *Jésus en Amérique latine : sa signification pour la foi et la christologie.* (Paris : Éditions du Cerf, 1986) 256 .

[10] Anne Rice, *The Tale of the Body Thief* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992) .

[11] Rice, *Body Thief* 229.

need to access. The purity, the simplicity of her brand of Christianity beckons; it is this moment which is his occasion.

"Do you believe in God?"

"My life has been one of self-sacrifice ever since I can remember. That is what I believe in. I believe I must do everything I can to lessen misery. That is all I can do and that is something enormous. It is a great power...yes, I do believe in God and in Christ. So do you."

"No, I don't." I said.

"When you were feverish you did. You spoke of God and the Devil the way I've never heard anyone else speak of them...You have a great simplicity to you. The simplicity of a saint. "[12]

Gretchen has opened the door to sanctity. Lestat asks her what she is doing in New Orleans, away from her mission in South America.

"Do you know the real reason why I took a leave of absence?...I wanted to know a man...I think there's a reason you took *your* leave of absence...there is a secret reason you came down to earth, that you came into the body of a man. Same reason that Christ did it."

"And that is?"

"Redemption."[13]

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[12] Rice, *Body Thief* 233, 35.

[13] Rice, *Body Thief* 235, 36.

The pact is sealed.

Lestat is not the vampire we have we have come to know through Hollywood and pulp fiction. In an essay entitled "Has Dracula Lost His Fangs?" Dracula scholar Elizabeth Miller says, "Sympathetic vampires are more appealing to some contemporary readers, but this attraction has a price – the loss of some of the power, grandeur and intensity that comes from a confrontation with something utterly evil."[14] The archetype of the vampire has evolved (or devolved, as far as archetypes go) from that of a hideous bloodsucker whose touch breeds death, to that of solicitous subject who is reluctant to handle religious artefacts for fear of desecrating them, and who is concerned that his "victims" be sexually fulfilled. Centuries before Rice created Lestat, Stoker writes,

> That poor soul who has wrought all this misery is the saddest case of all. Just think what will be his joy when he, too, is destroyed in his worser part that his better part may have spiritual immortality. You must be pitiful to him too, though it may not hold your hands from his destruction.[15]

Gone is the ugly zombie of yore, the ghastly ghoul who struck terror in one's heart. This new and improved Romantic subject no longer repels in a straightforward manner. The spell he casts now is far more insidious.

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[14] Elizabeth Miller, "Has Dracula Lost His Fangs," *Reflections on Dracula: Ten Essays* (White Rock, BC, Transylvania Press, 1997) 45.

[15] Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (New York: Signet, 1897) 317.

Fear of the vampire occurs on three levels:

• A visceral, guttural fear of what is different, ugly, repulsive to our sensibilities – the expected response to the pasty-faced, gaunt, be-fanged claw-handed Nosferatu-type vampire.

• The fear of being physically maimed by said ugly creature, of feeling the physical pain of having one's throat ripped open, of having our body boundaries transgressed.

• The far more complex (and more significant) fear of having our cerebral/emotional/spiritual selves in thrall to the evil/unclean/ungodly after the physical assault.

This last fear is, by far, the worst, because it makes no allowance for free will, offers no succour or chance of redemption, removes forever the Kierkegaardian promise of "occasion" which can lead to the transcendent. The occasion now lies beyond our reach. This third fear plays itself out for Gretchen in the form of extreme anxiety. Lestat announces himself, in Kierkegaardian terms, as the "posited sin" which, by definition, is a consequence foreign to freedom. As Kierkegaard maintains,

> This consequence announces itself, and anxiety relates itself to the future appearance of this consequence, which is the possibility of a new state. No matter how deep an individual has sunk, he can sink still deeper, and this "can" is the object of anxiety.[16]

This is an anxiety, for Gretchen, which cannot be disarmed.

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[16] Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments, or a Fragment of Philosophy/Johannes Climacus, or De omnibus dubitandum est* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1985) 113.

> The only thing that is truly able to disarm the sophistry of sin is faith, courage to believe that the state itself is a new sin, courage to renounce anxiety without anxiety, which only faith can do; faith does not thereby annihilate anxiety, but, itself eternally young, it extricates itself from anxiety's moment of death. Only faith is able to do this, for only in faith is the synthesis eternal and at every moment possible.[17]

The damage has been done, the blasphemy that has been committed is two-fold; not only has Gretchen committed a sin of the flesh by offering up her body to the devil, but she has also tempted him to seek God, to strive to be like God, indeed to simulate the Christ. She, herself, has pointed out the parallel to Lestat.

The fear which intervenes here is indicated as the ambivalent root interweaving the fear and love that underlies vampirism. Freud depicts an analogous ambivalence in his *Totem and Taboo* regarding the taboo on the dead. Lestat is, for all intents and purposes, *supposed* to be dead. The taboo arises, as per Freud's elucidation, from the contrast between conscious pain and unconscious satisfaction over the death that has occurred. Unfortunately, it follows that those with the most to fear are the living who are closest to the vampire. Gretchen has not only been close to Lestat, she has willingly offered herself up to him. Hence, one can surmise that the ambivalence exists within the psyche of the person suffering from the fear. The awareness, as described by Freud, that the perturbing element is *within*, that one is carrying inside

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[17] Kierkegaard, *Fragments* 117.

oneself the monsters that we fear, produces the sense that one is going mad. And as we discover when Lestat visits Gretchen at her mission, this is exactly what happens.

> "Gretchen, don't be afraid of me. In the name of truth, look at me. You made me promise I would come. Gretchen, I don't lie to you. You saved me, and there is no God."
>
> "Get away from me, unclean spirit! Get out of this house of God!"
>
> "I won't hurt you!"
>
> "In the name of God, get away from me...go!" Her right hand groped again for the cross and she held it towards me, her face flushed and her lips wet and loose and trembling in her hysteria, her eyes devoid of reason as she spoke again. I saw it was a crucifix with the tiny, twisted body of the dead Christ.
>
> "In the name of truth, Gretchen, I answered, my voice as low as hers, and as full of feeling. "I lay with you! I am here."
>
> "Liar!" she hissed, "Liar!"
>
> In another instant, surely, she would lose her reason altogether, helpless screams would break from her, and the whole night would hear her.[18]

Helpless, Lestat can only witness the dismantlement of Gretchen's faith as she runs to the mission church, falling to her knees and imploring the Lord to forgive her as

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[18] Rice, *Body Thief* 355.

she feels the distance growing. "Deliver me from Evil, oh Lord, take me to you, Sacred Heart of Jesus, gather me into your arms."[19]

As Abraham was tried by the Lord, he "fought with that cunning power which invents everything...he had fought with Time and preserved his faith."[20] And at the moment when Abraham was asked to render up his only son to God as a gauge of this faith, all the terror of the strife was concentrated in one instant. Abraham rises above, while Gretchen falls.

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[19] Rice, *Body Thief* 357.

[20] Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994) 14.

Chapter 8
Conclusion: Let Us Prey

As I have argued previously, although the function of the vampire through the ages has been to entertain at diverse stages, his ideological role, by and large, has been to inspire fear and apprehension in one way or another. Reiterating my observations in Chapter 7, this fear can be summed up on three levels: fear of the "other," fear of unpleasant physical aggression, and, most importantly, fear of being "mentally possessed." In this third and least controllable manifestation, I hasten to recall Freud's assessment that this anxiety is brought about by the sentiment that the "monster" is actually inside us, controlling from within. This, indeed, is what drives us to insanity. This is also what made the vampire figure a constant from his very inception across centuries, continents, and multifarious mythologies. The figure of the vampire, imagined and invented, modified and reified, with its greatest costume change occurring during the 19th century, is now most often, in 21st-century literature, completely humanized. It would appear that the completion of the evolution of the revenant is made manifest in the 21st-century Hollywood mainstream screen hero.

I have resorted to the diagram of the optic chiasma in order to better explicate the drastic turnabout that occurred during the Romantic Revival in Britain and Western Europe, the sea change that started the trend toward the de-fanging of the vampire. In becoming a kinder, gentler monster, the vampire has permitted himself to venture into other territories heretofore unimaginable for a creature of such an ungodly

nature. In doing so, the figure of the vampire has been an inestimable tool for understanding phenomena ranging from forbidden fornication to the sexualization of the sanctified. By assuming such an eclectic array of roles, however, the vampire has had to forego his prescribed figuration of bringer of disease and portent of death, that of fear-monger.

Although invested with progressively humanoid characteristics over time, the vampire figure has always been, and will always be, a model. In the same way that metaphor denotes carrying from one place to another, so too has the figure of the vampire been offered up as a carrier of disease and pestilence, and, at the opposite end of the chiasma, transformed into an icon of uncontrollable sexual craving. The nature of metaphor itself, always malleable and fluid, never absolute or conclusive, has readily lent itself to being appropriated by the vampire figure. It is as allegory, however, that the vampire has most strikingly expressed his influence. The vampire has long abided in the realm of religious taboo, from his partaking in the blood of innocent humans in a blasphemous rendition of the sharing of Christ's blood to the graphically sexual nature of his illicit encounters with his victims. As typological allegory, with his roots firmly entrenched in religious conviction, the vampire figure has fulfilled his mandate of physical entity here on earth, to be engaged, and subsequently vanquished, by the power of God. As scriptural allegory, however, the vampire has become more problematic inasmuch as he can no longer unambiguously betoken the forces of evil; his subjectification and outright desire for the transcendent has thus weakened his allegorical position.

Sometimes a metaphor, occasionally allegory rife with narrative impulse, this figure was used as a receptacle of evil until the very concept of evil was challenged in the 19th century. Violence-as-threat embodied in the vampire slowly ebbed to make room to accommodate and embrace violence-as-intensity, the very violence associated with the sex drive. It is therefore easy to understand why the thematic vampire would figure so prominently in the literature of psychoanalytical theory. Indeed, Freud may have had to conjure up a creature so uniquely suited to metaphorize not only infant sexuality and the prolongation of adult orality to help develop his fledgling science. The parallel is worthy of mention: upon leaving the womb, the newborn puts out predatory antennae in the quest for nourishment and survival. The infant sucking at the breast or on the bottle imbibes not only milk, but, with a visual acuity making vision perfect at a distance equal to that of the caretaker's face, gazes upon her, drinking in her psyche. This drive finds its echo in the vampiric act, not only in its physical component, but in its psychical aspect as well, in the transgressing of body boundaries which transpires in the procuring of nourishment, of shared bodily fluids, even in the fantasy of piercing of the skin and of bringing selves into closer contact. And yet there is no annihilation through absolute consummation. Just as the baby does not destroy its mother's flesh, neither does the vampire nor the lover seek to obliterate his partner's body. What they drain the (m)other of is nourishment, life-sustaining and ever-renewable, allowing for the possibility of repetition of this act of sucking.

Human sexuality is nothing if not an extension of the oral drive once attributed only to babies, and, correspondingly, of the vampire's oral sexuality. To experience the vampire is never a wholly cerebral activity, nor is it entirely physical; it subtends surfaces in constant contact and negotiation that lubricate the way for quasi-total possession of the individual (who is also the indivisible), who is entirely given up to his or her drives or desires. Indeed, one of the most fearsome aspects of the vampire may very well be the characteristics which render him most human.

The figure of the vampire has not always been at the mercy of (pop) cultural abuse. As a revenant, he enjoyed the rare privilege of being the scapegoat for the death and disease which ravaged entire populations. Fearful and ignorant of the science behind contamination and disease transmission, towns and villages would attribute plagues and epidemics to the vampire. But the vampire was also known as the oversexed revenant, returning to suck at the necks and breasts of his wife and children. Everything embarrassing, humiliating, and simply unacceptable to human social correctness was foisted onto the vampire. This most fortuitous of monsters proved to be the ideal whipping-ghoul to displace and reject not only profound social ills, but, more specifically, a myriad of social guilts.

The vampire's willingness to be such a receptacle, however, comes at a price; his own very existence depends on his symbiotic relationship with humans. Both as revenant and as vampire, the bloodsucker is capable of obtaining his nourishment/fulfillment from none other than human beings. In both Francis Ford

Coppola's film, *Bram Stoker's Dracula* and P.N. Elrod's novel, *Lady Crymsyn*, it is made abundantly clear that, although it is conceivable, obtaining blood from sources other than human is highly irregular, even perverse.[1] It is a desperate Count Dracula who is seen licking his own blood as a result of a shaving mishap, and a renegade P.I. Jack Fleming who is forced to break into the Chicago stockyards to drink the blood of cattle so as to avoid confronting and terrorizing humans. Feeding from oneself or from animals is a gesture taken to be demeaning to any self-respecting vampire. The vampire needs the blood, and the psychic energy that flows from it, from those who are like him, but not quite. Not the blood of other humans, but rather the blood of human others. This is the other half of the equation of the vampire amalgam with which he must be invested. He is devoid of nourishment, empty of sense and of sensation, until he gets his fill not only of the blood, but of what the blood has been invested with, in the act of possessing the other.

Communion with the vampire, as it is with Jesus Christ, is consummated in the act of draining; bleeding (literally) of the victim, in the former case, and bleeding (figuratively) of the deity, in the latter. The vampire's "victim" fledgling, although experiencing Lacan's *petite mort,* is just short of what would have otherwise become "*la grande mort*": a short step – almost but not quite – past the frontier leading to true death. As the victim is not entirely consumed by death, neither is s/he entirely consumed by the vampire. In the same way that one speaks of "consuming pornography," where this medium is never entirely incorporated and destroyed by the one consuming it, control is exercised bilaterally; the vampire takes from his

[1] Coppola, *Dracula* and P.N. Elrod, *Lady Crymsyn* (New York: Ace Books, 2000) 53.

victim, who controls him in the act of constituting the desired, in the same way that the pornographic object offers itself up to the consumer and where the exchange may end in consummation, but never in consumption. In the reciprocal victimization of vampire and victim as well, desire satisfied is desire destroyed.

The figure of the vampire permits us to reappropriate the sexual within the oral act. It allows us to reclaim an orality which may or may not have been left behind in the displacement toward genital expression, a genital expression and culmination which is refused in the vampire. In the same way, the sensuous, physical nature of the Christian rite of Holy Communion is re-directed and expressed in a wholly acceptable fashion, re-enacted within the tradition of vampire lore. After all, we do not pray to the one in the way that we are preyed upon by the other. The human has never abandoned sexual orality, and s/he finds its expression in both the vampiric and the Christian act of communion. The act is never one of destruction, but rather one of re-sourcing, of re-fulfillment, of re-filling, an act that further cements the bond between the victim/congregant and the source of this replenishment. In this way is the vampire truly immortal; in giving life afresh, he is satiated, thus ensuring his eternal survival.

It is to be expected that a figure which permits us to displace and evacuate sexual tension or anxiety would be appropriated and emulated. Countless individuals living in covens or gathering in groups re-enact what they perceive to be a vampire lifestyle, complete with dressing the part and feeding off one another. Vampire

afficionados keep to their own, attire themselves in Gothic fashion and generally present a hostile front to what they consider to be a mainstream, traditional, capitalistic lifestyle. As representatives of an alternative lifestyle, however, these self-styled "vampires" are basically recreating the same conditions of ostracization that made the conception of the revenant necessary in the first place. This shroud of resistance worn by "vampire" outsiders serves to emphasize the "otherness" vis-à-vis "regular" humans, and makes the point that "vampires" are not human, that the characteristics which make them "vampires" serve to set them apart from normal mortals. The vampire figure, however, has never been anything but a very human construct, serving to replace, represent and symbolize drives or urges that *humans* wished to project, transfer or to foist upon it. As much as he has been fashioned to bear the brunt of nihilistic sentiment or guilt, the vampire is very much a fabrication of the human psyche and a player in the human arena. Even the counter-culture must start with a culture to counter, and the role of Gothic rebel only weakens the chilling sway which the vampire has over our imagination. The daunting fangs which would serve to impale the skin, to penetrate the body and the psyche of the victim, to drain blood vessels of human life-force as the victim lay prostrate in abject horror, can now be fashioned out of plastic and bought in any dollar store the week before Hallowe'en.

Although it has been so over-used as to become cliché, Marx's appropriation of the vampire as metaphor for capital ("Capital is dead labor, which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labor, and lives the more, the more labor it sucks") still

contains the element of rampant, unstoppable, uncontrollable possession and inevitable destruction of the human soul.[2] The unchecked excesses of the revenant, as conceived by the human imagination, can conceivably parallel those of the unbridled ravages of capital. The root of the fear evoked by both is the uncontrollable nature of both actants. Reason cannot oppose or dismantle the forces of either capital or of the vampire, and fear indeed arises. Although quite a simple comparison, the metaphor is still invested with the same menacing distinctiveness by which the vampire was recognized. Marx depended upon this core of fear residing inside each of us to evoke the apprehension of the monster not within us, but, literally, without us: unstoppable, soulless, lifeless. In other words, as Joan Copjec explains,

> To constitute ourselves, we must, in other words, throw out, reject ourselves...this rejection can only be accomplished through the inclusion within ourselves of this negation of what we are not – within our being , this lack-of-being...In brief [these objects] are *extimate*, which means they are in us that which is not us. It is precisely because the subject is defined in this way – or, as we will argue later, *when* the subject is defined this way – that it stumbles into the dimension of the uncanny. The special feeling of uncanniness is a feeling of anxiety that befalls us whenever we too closely approach the extimate object in ourselves.[3]

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[2] Marx, *Capital*

[3] Joan Copjec, "Vampires, Breast-feeding and Anxiety," *The Horror Reader,* ed. Ken Gelder (London and New York: Routledge, 2000) 59.

Clearly, claiming this object is not desirable. To slip what is perceived as the extimate into a black cape and fangs is counterproductive and defeats the very purpose of the creation and figuration of the vampire. Humans, it has clearly been established, have been socialized to live within a symbolic order, under the aegis of "civilization." The emancipation of one's imaginary very often clashes with the positions and precepts of this civilization. As postulated by Freud over a century ago, the sacrifices imposed on human sexuality and aggressiveness were counterbalanced by the portion of security and safety that civilization afforded. The imperatives and taboos of a society are thus manifested in society's "monsters," which come in many forms. To try to humanize these monsters, to shape them into our kith and kin, is not only counterintuitive, it is counterproductive.

Recent turn-of-the-century films have tried to approximate the topos of vampire as revenant. The basic good-vs-evil plotline is at the forefront, and the vampires featured within are creatures of evil who must be engaged so that justice will prevail. Stoker's literary contribution is never far, however, and Eastern Europe is still the geographical locus of predilection for the antagonist. Elizabeth Kostova's 2005 novel, *The Historian*, traces the journey of a young woman across England, France, Turkey, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania to locate her father, a historian, who started on his own quest years before to search for his professor and thesis director, who had himself covered most of Eastern Europe in search of Dracula – Vlad Ţepeş – himself.[4] Although the element of the now-requisite love story within the quest for

[4] Elizabeth Kostova, *The Historian* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2005).

the vampire figures prominently in the tale (the professor's daughter, who is half Romanian and who may or may not be a descendant of Dracula himself, falls in love with his graduate student), it does not include the vampire himself, but rather makes him the catalyst for the affection that develops between the protagonists. When the professor is finally discovered in an underground crypt under a monastery in Budapest, he is indeed vampirized, but in a way evocative of the revenants described by Dom Calmet or Montague Summers:

> When [the gravestone] was off we looked down at the body inside, the heavily closed eyes, the sallow skin, the unnaturally red lips, the shallow, soundless breathing. It was Professor Rossi...There is almost nothing worse than a much-loved face transformed by death, or physical decay, or horrifying illness. Those faces are monsters of the most frightening kind...An ooze of blood filled the lines of one side of his neck and made a scarlet estuary on his soiled collar. His mouth was slack and swollen around that faint breath, and apart from the rise and fall of his shirt, he was still.[5]

The Vampire Lestat, in contrast, would never have walked around with blood on his collar, but rather in a red velvet cape lined in fur. The newly turned vampire under the crypt in Budapest does not bear any of the sexual markers flaunted by Lestat. And yet, Kostova still finds a way to incorporate the church in her vampiric equation. A Turkish scholar explains to the vampirized professor's daughter and his student, "...But here in Istanbul, to begin with, there is a story that the most

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[5] Kostova, *Historian* 361.

bloodthirsty of the emperors of Byzantium were vampires, that some of them understood the Christian communion as an invitation to quaff the blood of mortals."[6] The chalice is somehow always waiting nearby to catch the blood of Catholic/vampiric communion, even before the sexual component is made explicit.

Dan Simmons' *Children of the Night* resonates with a similar kind of fear. Kate Neuman, the protagonist, is a haematologist volunteering in orphanages in post-Ceauşescu Romania to lend her expertise in the treatment of rare blood diseases afflicting the children.[7] These children, from whom she will adopt a baby boy, are later shown to be vampires, although to refer to them Simmons uses the pre-chiastic term *strigoi*, a word used to designate vampires before the term "vampire" itself became popularized in Romania in the 1970s. Her child is kidnapped from her by the *strigoi* clan to serve as next-in-line to the ailing original Vampire himself, Vlad Ţepeş, Count Dracula, once again invoking the false assumption that Stoker's Dracula is somehow based on the historical *voivod* of 15th-century Romania. Although Stoker's vampire may have been a template for future generations of romantic vampires, Simmons' monsters are truly chilling in their ugliness and sheer evil. Kate's first encounter with a vampire-in-the-making occurs at the university medical school. What she finds floating in a blood-filled tank is a far cry from Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's dapper Count St. Germain.

> It was...or had been...a man, naked now, eyes and mouth wide open as the face floated just beneath the surface. Different parts

[6] Kostova, *Historian* 197.

[7] Dan Simmons, *Children of the Night* (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1992)

> of his body gleamed in the oily lights as unseen currents in the blood moved him to the surface and then let him submerge again...she noticed for the first time what the electronic monitors behind him were monitoring.
>
> "It's alive," she whispered...
>
> The thing in the tank was in some state more removed from reality than sleep, but more alert than a coma victim. And it was definitely alive...
>
> "How can this be?" asked Kate, but she knew...had known since she herself had pulled the trigger of Tom's shotgun and then seen the same man again the night of the fire.[8]

The fear of the vampire contained within the tale is perhaps summed up best by one of its characters, Lucian, a member of The Order who is fighting to control the *strigoi*. Lucian laughs at Kate's use of the term "vampire" to designate those who wield the most power and run roughshod over the needs of honest citizens:

> "Behind the Ceauşescus, behind the previous Communist regime, behind Ion Antonescu, behind them all...have been the *strigoi*. The evil ones who walk like people but who are not. The Dark Advisors. The ones with power who drain our nation's future away as surely as they have drained the lifeblood of its people."
>
> "Vampires," said Kate.

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[8] Simmons, *Children* 220-1.

> "That is the Western name. Most of the myth is yours...the sharp teeth, the opera cape...Your *nosferatu* and vampires are stories to frighten children. Our *strigoi* are all too real."[9]

In this metaphor is Marx's monster evoked, recalling the same fear of the rampant, uncontrollable entity which destroys everything along its path. The soulless, indestructible ghoul which cannot be handled with earthly, human means. This vampire is a far cry from our saintly, beloved Lestat. Marx's metaphor would never have walked around in the cloak of Hollywood drama.

In the final analysis, humans are cultural animals socialized to live within a symbolic order, an arena in which our libidinal instincts must be repressed so that the demands of civilization can be met. The emancipation of the imaginary is a warranted, necessary consequence of the human condition. When the needs of society do not allow for the ugly, the unsavoury, the abject, to emerge, society provides for the imaginary to be expressed in symbolic form. Charles D. Levin explains that as a society, we have crossed the threshold of intelligence combined with unruly desire, and this combination along with our understanding of it creates a capacity for us to subvert any reality. The "facts" of the manifestations of our desiring selves, which can most often be described as "scandalous," can now easily be intertwined with morality when relegated to the realm of the symbolic. As Freud postulated several decades ago, by giving up what was "evil" in ourselves and consequently offering it up to the gods (and later, to God), humankind was able to displace the drives which it had originally suppressed in the name of "civilization" in order to ascertain that

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[9] Simmons, *Children* 211.

civilization would endure and advance. In this way wanton mankind could renounce this wickedness by ceding it to the deity (or deities). By knowingly accepting the devil within ourselves, Levin maintains, we can better accept it in the other.[10]

I would therefore argue that the vampire is, today, a stand-in for the religious deity of yore. As I showed earlier, the vampire makes an appearance in most countries around the world; he has figured in many societies under various guises. Startlingly, his impact has been greatest in areas where Christianity has had its strongest influence. The vampire has evolved alongside Christian religions, and has established his connection to it through what is probably the most representative symbol of Christianity, that of the blood of Jesus Christ shed at Holy Communion. This figure is, of course, not without its limitations. Religious practices which are not Christian and which do not include Christian Holy Communion or downplay the role of the Holy Trinity will not lend the same symbolic reflection to the sharing of the vampiric blood. We do know, however, that every society cherishes its own myths and legends. Outlining the monumental changes wrought upon one of Western civilization's most mysterious, sexualized creatures, can perhaps provide a means of understanding how the emergence and transfiguration of a character such as that of the vampire can be applied to the evolution of other figures of mythology.

Likewise, the role and development of the figure of Jesus Christ is, in and of itself, paramount in understanding the impact of that of the vampire figure. Contrary to the

[10] Gleaned from an unpublished taped interview in or around 2002 with Professor Charles D. Levin of McGill University, this point of view is, in my opinion, particularly cogent.

vampire's blossoming transcendence into a mystical figure, the reaching out of God toward humankind is accomplished by bridging the distance through the incursion of His son, Jesus Christ, toward the earthly. In this respect is the vampire's ascent inversely mirrored by Jesus' descent, in much the same way that an image, after traveling the distance along the optic chiasma, finds itself in its entirety, yet inverted, in its final perception on the human retina. This bridging of the transcendental distance does not imply that the figure of Jesus Christ is not as important to the Western Christian imagination as it once was, but only reflects the fact that the modern era has heralded a social order whereby religion is no longer an admitted integral and essential part of cultural practice, but has become a mere component of social inheritance. Hence, applications and extrapolations are not permissible.

This development has indeed permitted me to draw parallels with, make observations in relation to, and reflect on, the vampire. Religion is, however, still one of the greatest components that makes civilization possible and controls its outbursts of wantonness. Referred to by Freud as the expression of neurosis, religiosity necessitates the suppression of sexual drives, which are necessarily detrimental to the advancement of a society. The vampire finds himself betwixt and between the cogs of the religious machinery which lubricates and conducts the proper behaviour of civilized individuals. It is little wonder that the deification of the vampire and the humanization of Jesus Christ would eventually point to the junction between vampiric and Christian traditions, the intersection where one finds that most powerful of symbols, in both domains of transcendence and of imminence: blood.

Using the figure of blood as the red thread that weaves its way through history, we recall a time when our relationship with God was one of trepidation. We did, indeed, learn to fear Jesus. By the same token, there was a time when vampires inspired the same angst and anxiety in the population at large. In humanizing both the figure of Jesus and that of the vampire, we have made both more accessible, hence more prone to humankind's libidinal cathexis. As Jesus Christ was sent by God to absolve humans of their sins, so was the vampire forged into a being capable of sustaining the weight of our repressed drives. After all, He too had his chiasma to bear.

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