Performing Dracula: a Critical Examination of a Popular Text in Three Sites of Performance.

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PERFORMING DRACULA:
A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF A POPULAR TEXT
IN THREE SITES OF PERFORMANCE

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Speech Communication

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December 1999

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Acknowledgments

So many people have provided significant aid in the long journey to completing this document that I cannot hope to give sufficient thanks to all who have been involved. I would, therefore, like to first acknowledge all of those good friends and colleagues whom I cannot name individually. Their assistance, even if it remains anonymous, was invaluable.

Because I have been writing this dissertation while teaching professionally, it follows that I owe a great deal of gratitude to the two institutions where I have worked. First, I owe a lot of thanks to Saint Lawrence University for providing much encouragement and support. The First Year Program especially allowed me several opportunities to work out ideas presented in this dissertation in a pedagogical setting. I am also deeply grateful to my extended family and truest role-models at Saint Lawrence University, Kirk Fuoss and Randy Hill, without whose constant reassurances, sharp intellects, and loving interest I would have given up on the project a long time ago. Second, my colleagues and friends at Hofstra University provided much guidance and assistance in the final stages of this process. I would especially like to thank Laurie Wenchell for much needed emotional support and her excellent counseling skills during this last, difficult year.

In addition to the support from these institutions, I have been fortunate to have a good network of colleagues, friends, and family who never fail to blur the distinctions between those categories. Cindy Kistenberg and Patrick Johnson have consistently offered votes of confidence, demonstrating great stamina for maintaining collegial interest in my work. Larry and Julie Cumbo have repeatedly demonstrated
that Louisiana hospitality and friendship are the best in the country. My parents, Charles and Retta Gray, have been exceedingly generous in providing gentle inquiries and quiet encouragement. While it is not unusual for colleagues and friends to become like family, I feel that I am blessed to have caring and loving parents who are also very experienced professional colleagues.

Special thanks go to the careful readers on my dissertation committee, especially Andrew King for his initial advice that got this project rolling. Words are insufficient to express my respect and gratitude for my advisor, Michael Bowman, whose commonsense counsel, unflagging assistance, insightful responses, and storehouse of useful information have most shaped this document and my thinking.

Finally, this document would not have been completed without the love as well as the shrewd feedback of my partner, Craig Gingrich-Philbrook. When I most wanted to give up on the project, Craig assured me that he would love me whether I finished it or not, but that he knew I could do it. I cannot thank Craig enough for his unswerving support, his incredible insight and especially for believing in me when I failed to believe in myself.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................................................................................ iii

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................ vii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .................................................................................... 1
  Purpose .......................................................................................................................... 3
  Method ......................................................................................................................... 7
  Review of Literature .................................................................................................. 16
    Dracula ................................................................................................................... 17
    (Popular) Culture .................................................................................................. 24
    Text ........................................................................................................................ 28
    Performance .......................................................................................................... 31
    Textuality and Performativity .............................................................................. 38
  Conclusions ............................................................................................................... 40
  Endnotes .................................................................................................................... 42

CHAPTER TWO: DRACULA AS CONSPICUOUS THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE .......... 45
  Theatrical Adaptations of John Polidori’s “The Vampyre” ..................................... 48
    “The Vampyre” ..................................................................................................... 48
    Le Vampire ........................................................................................................... 55
    The Vampire: Or, The Bride of the Isles ............................................................ 63
  Conclusions .......................................................................................................... 66
  Bram Stoker’s Dracula .............................................................................................. 73
    Bram Stoker’s Relationship with the English Theater ...................................... 73
    Theatrical Characterizations in Dracula ............................................................. 76
  Conclusions .......................................................................................................... 83
  Hamilton Deane and John Balderston’s Dracula: The Vampire Play ..................... 86
    An “Official” Theater Adaptation ................................................................. 86
    Critical Response to the 1927 Production ....................................................... 88
    Theatrical Developments in Dracula Between 1927 and 1977 ......................... 93
    Critical Response to the 1977 revival of Dracula: The Vampire Play .............. 97
  Conclusions ........................................................................................................ 103
  Conclusions .............................................................................................................. 111
  Endnotes ................................................................................................................... 114

CHAPTER THREE: DRACULA AS MEDIATED FOLKLORE ...................................... 116
  Folklore and Popular Culture ............................................................................. 120
    Preserving Distinctions .................................................................................. 120
    Blurring Distinctions ....................................................................................... 126
  Folklore in Dracula .............................................................................................. 135
    The Vampire Ritual ........................................................................................ 136
    Mediated Folklore ............................................................................................ 149

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ABSTRACT

Dracula is a significant example of a popular phenomenon with a long and ongoing history of productive circulation in Anglo-American culture. While theorists of popular culture often use the term “performance” in their explanations of the popularity and meaningful operations of such phenomena in a culture, they do not always provide concrete definitions of what they mean by performance. This study provides an analysis of the roles performance plays in a specific popular culture phenomenon. Identifying Bram Stoker’s Dracula as a nexus for a broader cultural activity, this study examines articulations of Dracula in performances and texts that both precede and follow Stoker’s novel. The analysis focuses on the roles performances play in the circulation and construction of this diffuse popular artifact by examining theatrical adaptations, folkloric performance practices, and the performativity of identity construction.

This study uses theater reviews and play scripts to examine various theatrical representations of vampires, tracing performance influences on the cultural production of Dracula and focusing on the central figure’s acknowledged “theatricality.” Positing a significant similarity between the transmission processes of folklore and audiencing practices associated with mass media, the study traces structures of traditional vampire rituals that influenced Stoker as well as a popular film version of Stoker’s novel. Finally, the study provides a performative analysis of the vampire as citational behavior that allowed Victorian authors to signify the vampire in such a way as to police cultural constructions of sexual identity; in contrast, contemporary vampire fans use vampire performatives to resist such dominant constructions of gendered identity.
While concerned with the adaptation of literary texts into performances, the study focuses more on how performances influence the production of texts. Viewed across a variety of textual and performance articulations, Dracula emerges as a highly reflexive cultural phenomenon that is both influenced by and meta-communicatively about performance. This study’s focus on Dracula provides insights into the ways performance functions in the ephemeral circulation processes of other popular culture phenomena and articulates ways in which the theoretical resources of performance studies can be productively applied to the critical activities of cultural studies.
CHAPTER ONE: 
INTRODUCTION 

In 1897, Bram Stoker published his best known work of fiction, Dracula. With the possible exception of Mary Shelly's Frankenstein, no other nineteenth century gothic figure has enjoyed such a long and varied life in the popular imagination of England and America. For both authors, these novels mark their only successful literary production. However, most people usually learn about each of these fictional creations through some other popular channel than their respective novels. In both cases, discrepancies understandably exist between the popular versions and their original literary representation. Indeed, much of the scholarship about both novels usually distinguishes the literary monster from popular perception, presumably rescuing the “truth” of the monster from the “misconceptions.”

While scholars often trace these popular perceptions to cinematic depictions, in Dracula’s case, film is not the only location for popular vampire variations. In addition to a successful life in film, vampires ostensibly inspired by Stoker’s novel appear frequently on the stage and in pulp fiction and comic books. Furthermore, a popular role-playing game based on vampire fiction allows players to enact vampires and serves as a template for many computer and internet games -- arguably one of the most effective and fastest growing media of transmission for vampire lore. The vampire’s popularity has led to a youth subculture that relies heavily on a pastiche of styles associated with gothic fiction. All these performances (stage, screen, games and counterculture lifestyles) stem in one way or another from Stoker’s novel, however indirect and oppositional that lineage may sometimes prove to be.
However, it is a mistake to attribute too much originary credit for the vampire to Stoker’s novel. As with all artistic production, this novel has its own significant influences, especially where representing vampires is concerned. *Dracula* owes much of its details about vampires to Stoker’s exhaustive research into Eastern European folklore. Additionally, Stoker’s representations of his evil count rely heavily on his experience working as a theater manager and personal assistant to Henry Irving, the famed nineteenth century British stage actor. Many of the themes and images in the novel suggest that Stoker was influenced by his experiences in the theater in other significant ways, as well.

In the chapters that follow, I will demonstrate the important and varied roles performances have played in the popular success of *Dracula.* I contend that popular culture texts tend to confound traditional modes of literary and textual analysis in significant ways because critics focus on discrete texts. *Dracula*’s status as popular culture has similarly confounded many of its critics who make Stoker’s novel the exclusive focus of their analysis. A performance-centered analysis necessarily examines the various performances associated with *Dracula.* In so doing, this study questions the centrality of texts in the analysis of popular phenomena. An exploration of various sites of *Dracula* performance demonstrates the popular phenomenon’s ability to circulate usefully within communities and participate in the negotiation of cultural identity.

In this chapter, I outline the basic assumptions for a study of Stoker’s novel that focuses on the performances that influenced its production, that it represents within its pages, and that it has directly or indirectly inspired. I begin with a
discussion of the purpose of the study, explaining the ways I feel this study contributes to and extends existing scholarship. I next discuss the method I have used to study the various performances associated with Dracula. Finally, I provide a review of relevant literature about Dracula, cultural studies, text and performance.

Purpose

While many analyses have been written about Stoker's Dracula -- tracing its origins, analyzing its narrative content, and even tracking its routes into and influences on popular culture -- little serious or sustained scholarly work has been done examining the performances associated with Dracula. This absence is curious, for more than one scholar and popular critic has noted how “theatrical” the vampire is (Dace; Homan; Kissel). I agree that theatricality is central to the success and popularity of Dracula and an aspect of the story that deserves closer attention.

This study, then, provides a performance-centered analysis of Dracula, differing from the bulk of Dracula analyses in three significant ways. First, it takes as its principal focus the performances associated with Dracula. Second, while it treats Stoker's novel as the nexus of those performances, it is as concerned with the performances that come before the novel as it is with those represented within it and inspired by it. Finally, in looking at the performances associated with the novel, I am equally if not more concerned with covert cultural performances as overt theatrical performances.

While this study contributes to the body of scholarly work about Stoker's novel, it also adds more broadly to the study of popular culture, especially as that study might be conducted using the theoretical resources of performance studies. This study
seeks to demonstrate the significant contributions performance studies can make to the
study of popular culture phenomena. Several dissatisfactions in current methods for
studying popular culture inspire this analysis. First and foremost among these is that
popular culture artifacts seem to resist established means of analysis. Simply put,
studying a popular text as one might a literary text leads to problems. Harold
Schechter, for example, acknowledges how ineffective analyses of popular texts are
when critics treat them the way they would literary “masterpieces.” He proposes that
popular texts be treated more like folklore, examining them for variants of traditional
folklore motifs. Barry Brummett, on the other hand, suggests that the problem lies in
isolating discrete texts for rhetorical analysis. In a critical move not unlike
Schechter’s, he proposes that popular texts are best studied as diffuse textualities
rather than discrete texts. By “diffuse text,” Brummett identifies the tendency of
discrete popular texts to flow into one another “without clear boundaries and certainly
without a focused awareness of who or what has produced the text” (43). I agree with
these critics’ move to an intertextual analysis, but I believe that the move away from
studying popular texts in isolation needs to include studying performance practices as
well.

Nor am I alone in this contention that performance matters. Popular culture
scholars have long embraced the idea that performance is a significant concept related
to their work (Mukerji and Schudson 7). However, the use of “performance” in
popular culture studies tends either to limit the idea to overt theatrical entertainments
or to leave it undefined altogether. This study is, in large part, born out of a
dissatisfaction with the way many popular culture scholars casually use “performance”
and out of a conviction that a more rigorous use of performance as an analytical term will lead to richer and more revealing analyses of popular culture. Put another way, I feel that theorists of popular culture may have opened the door to making performance central to their study, but theorists of performance studies may be better equipped to explore how performances operate in popular culture.

By contributing to the trend of bringing performance studies to the study of popular culture, this analysis also suggests that studying popular culture brings much to the theoretical resources of performance studies. For example, circulation models of cultural production suggest that popular texts are caught up in a dialogic tension between production and consumption, text and performance. Meanwhile, much of oral interpretation's history contains an impulse to return literary texts to oral contexts, proposing that the best way to know literature is through performance (cf. Shattuck). Popular texts, according to circulation models, seem not to need any "return" to performance, for they are already historically enmeshed in a circulation process that includes performance as one of its main components.

These theories of popular culture challenge the inherent tendency in text-centered approaches to performance studies to privilege the text as originary to performance. Whether in traditional theater where the script precedes the play as a sort of blueprint or in oral interpretation where the performance tries to embody a preexisting literary text, the text in all its fixedness and transtemporality comes first. Even when theorists celebrate performance for its ephemerality and active engagements, they still often privilege the text such that the performance parasitically comes second. The dialogic relationship between texts and performances implied in
circulation models of culture suggests a different relationship between texts and performances where texts do not necessarily come first but may, themselves, be responses to performances.\(^5\)

This study, then, begins with somewhat different assumptions about text and performance relationships where popular culture (among other) artifacts are concerned. Across history, texts influence and are influenced by performances at multiple sites and magnitudes. This study, therefore, is not only interested in popular texts being performed but also performances in popular texts — how performances influence the production of popular texts, how those texts contain and represent performances, and how they ultimately generate new performances that in turn lead to further textual and performance productions.

The cultural artifact of Dracula, with its various articulations and histories, is a particularly suitable location to study these text and performance relationships in popular culture. As the subsequent chapters will demonstrate, it is a story whose variations and articulations depend on a tensive relationship between texts and performances. As a cultural myth, it is also arguably about performance, in the sense that vampire behavior comes to serve as a second order signifier for culturally designated and negotiated taboo behaviors. Stoker's novel, positioned by this study as a nexus for a variety of Dracula performances and textual productions, represents a cultural artifact that inverts traditional text/performance relationships; instead of generating performances in service of a text, it demonstrates how a text may stand in service of performances. So, while the novel serves as an anchor for the various
Dracula texts and performances which the subsequent chapters examine, its foundational status is put into question.

In so positing the text/performance relationship, this study hopes to contribute to existing scholarship in several ways. For the existing body of analyses of Stoker’s novel, it adds to the small but growing number of analyses that examine Dracula as a broader cultural phenomenon than one man’s literary production. By including a more detailed examination of performances involved in that phenomenon, it contributes to and extends the use of “performance” in the analysis of popular texts. The study addresses important issues for performance studies scholarship, as well. At the core of the challenge to the traditional text/performance relationship is a question of adaptation. While traditionally performance studies scholarship has focused on how performers and directors adapt texts for performances, this study shows that texts also adapt performances. Viewed broadly across history, Dracula texts and performances demonstrate a dialogic relationship of texts adapting prior performances and performances adapting prior texts. Consequently, a performance analysis of Dracula yields insights unavailable to a traditionally text-centered literary analysis. At the heart of this study is an exploration of a series of related popular phenomena where texts and performances, textuality and performativity are inseparably linked, neither in secondary service to the other.

Method

Because this study marks an intersection of performance studies and popular culture, the best label for its assumptions and critical methods is cultural studies. However, it is notoriously difficult to define cultural studies or to identify its critical
methods. In this section, I will briefly synthesize foundational assumptions that guide cultural studies critics in their analytical work, discuss how performance studies contributes to that kind of analysis in this study, and identify my process for collecting data.

For many cultural studies theorists, "method" is anathema to their work. They provide readings of cultural practices and processes based on modes of analysis suitable to the objects of analysis. Some even go so far as to suggest that cultural studies is "anti-method," pointing to limits inherent in assuming a specific approach to any analysis. For example, Ben Agger notes that "cultural studies resists programmatism -- a definitive methodology and a discrete list of critical topics" (2). However, at the core of the wide interdisciplinary practices brought together under the rubric of cultural studies are several shared assumptions and similarities of critical practice. This study draws on many of those assumptions in its performance-centered analysis of Dracula.

Faced with the task of synthesizing cultural studies' varied methods of analysis and theoretical frameworks, many anthology introductions and definitional essays embrace the interdisciplinary nature of cultural studies as a defining and laudable feature (Agger; Berger; Gray and McGuigan; Grossberg, "Can"; Grossberg, Nelson, and Treichler; R. Johnson; Mukerji and Schudson). While they are quick to note the (inter)discipline's theoretical sophistication, the resistance to disciplinary boundaries makes defining the specific methodologies of this proposed study rather difficult. It is easier, perhaps, to note what cultural studies is not than what it is. Following this strategy of negations, there are two very important refusals in this study that mark it as
an example of cultural studies. First, I am not engaging in a textual analysis of Stoker's novel or any other discrete text of Dracula by itself. I do not argue that Stoker's novel is an overlooked masterpiece that some currently enlightened academic trend can finally rescue from the morass of popular representations. That Dracula so successfully circulates in our culture’s representational apparati indicates that it is in no need of rescue. Rather, as a significant instance of popular culture, it is best analyzed as a diffuse phenomenon, thereby requiring a simultaneous analysis of multiple articulations, resisting any set temporal ordering, and reading both forward and backward across its history of production.

Secondly, this study is not a mass culture analysis of culture industry in keeping with Adorno, Althusser, Horkheimer or much of the rest of the Frankfurt School of Marxist social critique. Such studies tend to view popular culture texts as the building blocks of a social superstructure, contributing to the hegemonic continuation of the power bloc. While many articulations and processes associated with Dracula serve hegemonic ends, many others are distinctly counter-hegemonic. Nor do I propose to adopt Benjamin's optimistic notion that the mechanical reproduction of mass produced art is liberational within the repressions of a bourgeois society (224-225). If anything, Dracula seems to prove that despite a multitude of mechanical reproductions, Stoker’s novel maintains a ritualistic aura of literature, including its rather oppressive Victorian ideological content. Rather than dichotomizing opposition and resistance, contemporary theorists of popular culture and cultural studies tend to view popular texts as resources of both preferred and oppositional readings, the raw material whereby meaning is constructed in a complex and processual relationship between
mass production and individual consumption. From such a position, Dracula is not only or merely a hegemonic lesson of good social norms triumphing over deviance and difference or the subversive celebration of alterity, but more significantly the very narrative whereby norms and "others" are negotiated and constructed. The diffuse cultural phenomenon of Dracula functions, like all phenomena of popular culture, as a resource for the ongoing and ever-changing processes by which cultures develop, propagate, and reorganize their understandings of themselves.

At a very basic level, then, I am engaging in a hermeneutic of a diffuse cultural artifact, reading into the various gaps between individual articulations the performatively charged processes of the ever-changing cultures that tell and retell Dracula. What follows is a type of analysis that focuses on a diffuse artifact and its circulation, production, and consumption within a multitude of overlapping communities, the boundaries of which are never stable or discrete. I contend that these processes and performances can be read within texts, if only as traces, when the analysis focuses on a diffuse artifact rather than discrete work.

This assumption that the traces of varied cultural operations can be read into the texts and artifacts of cultures is supported by several cultural studies circulation models. These models usually serve to interrelate processes of consumption and production. Richard Johnson proposed an early conception of this circulation as involving production, texts, readings and lived cultures (47). Paul du Gay et al. similarly suggest that cultural texts and artifacts need to be studied for the interrelated processes that form a “circuit of culture,” including representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation (3). They stress that each process should be
considered when studying a cultural artifact, but also note that "in the real world [these processes] continually overlap and intertwine in complex and contingent ways" (4). What this interweaving implies is that all of these processes are inscribed into any text or artifact of popular culture, whether discrete or diffuse. Cultural studies method, then, is an interpretive reading of cultural processes within the artifacts they (re)produce, regulate, and disseminate. Those cultural processes are variously identified as incorporation/excorporation (Fiske), production/reading (Johnson), production/consumption/etc. (du Gay et al.), and reading/performance (Mukerji and Schudson).

Texts hold a centrality in cultural studies as resources for locating evidence of important cultural processes. However, cultural studies approaches differ from traditional textual analyses in that the text is not, strictly speaking, the object of study. Texts and various documentable practices serve as the sites for accumulating evidence of more ephemeral cultural practices; they provide the clues of ideological formations and important power relations that normally remain obscured, strategically or otherwise. Significantly, cultural studies critics are as much interested in the processes that lead to the production of texts as they are with what people do with those texts when reworking and taking them into their cultures, using them to negotiate and refresh their cultural identities. For cultural studies theorists, the production of texts is already multivalent, depending on multiple authoring influences; the meanings in the text are only further authored by the various strategies and tactics of use and consumption that follow and lead back into production.
For these reasons, this study uses Bram Stoker's 1897 novel as a kind of anchor or nexus for the cultural processes and performances of Dracula. In each chapter, I examine Stoker's novel in the context of significant texts and performances that both precede/influence it and are inspired by it. While each chapter provides, of necessity, close readings of Stoker's novel, those readings necessarily resonate within the broader cultural performances of Dracula taken as a whole.

I have tried to focus this project, somewhat, by limiting my analytical interest in those ephemeral processes to specific sites of performance. Those different sites of performance are ordered in the following chapters loosely by what Richard Schechner has identified as "magnitudes of performance." Schechner identifies magnitudes of performance as the performative degrees of any action within a culture, from internal neurological "brain events" to fully staged theatrical presentations. Although Schechner has returned to and reworked this continuum a bit, at its most basic construction it maps increments of performance magnitude from the performative through the theatrical to the narrative. Another way of representing this continuum is to think of the theatrical presentations at the "narrative" end of Schechner's spectrum as overt performances -- dramas and popular entertainments that a culture most often recognizes and labels performance. At the performative end of Schechner's continuum are covert performances -- those citational behaviors that shape and replenish identity in the social performances of everyday engagements within one's culture. Between these two extremes of theatricality and sociality lie a range of rituals, social dramas, and cultural performances.
In the chapters that follow, I provide analyses of Dracula at three magnitudes of performance representing the breadth of Schechner's continuum. The next chapter examines the overt theatrical performances of Dracula, starting with theatrical influences on Stoker's novel and moving through its production to examine the stage performances it has inspired. The third chapter examines the cultural performances of Dracula, focusing on the folkloric origins of the text and examining the ways people's engagements with mass media representations of Dracula are akin to those early folkloric processes. Finally, the fourth chapter examines the performativity of Dracula, examining particularly the significations associated with vampiric behaviors and noting how those behaviors are transmitted and used in the forming of countercultural identities by contemporary fans.

My access to these magnitudes of performance associated with the diffuse cultural artifact of Dracula has been, at times, circuitous. Because performances are by definition ephemeral, direct participation in these historical events was, of course, not possible. Rather, much of my audiencing of these performances involves performative readings of several texts and historical documents. Relying on both primary and secondary resources about various Dracula-related performances and texts, I pay particular attention to the elements associated with each magnitude of performance. Each chapter reviews these elements before identifying and examining the relevant performance traces.

My historical research borrows a bit from Joseph Roach's "performance genealogies," one of the most rigorously developed analytical processes for tracing the histories of performance practices. Inspired by Michel Foucault's critical genealogies,
performance genealogies attend to "the disparity between history as it is discursively transmitted and memory as it is publicly enacted by the bodies that bear its consequences" (Roach 26). What intrigues me about Roach's performance genealogies is the assumption of

expressive movements as mnemonic reserves, including patterned movements made and remembered by bodies, residual movements retained implicitly in images or words (or in the silences between them), and imaginary movements dreamed in minds, not prior to language but constitutive of it, a psychic rehearsal for physical actions drawn from a repertoire that culture provides. (Roach 26)

The suggestion here is that past performances are inscribed into texts and bodies as subaltern resources that direct and influence present performances and textual production. Roach relies on this assumption to unpack "living memories" contained in "gestures, habits and skills" as a form of history resistant to the strategic forgetting that seems to plague archives, museums, and other storehouses for the discourses of history (27). My own interest in looking at the performances associated with the historically situated diffuse cultural artifact of Dracula relies on a similar assumption of a dialogical relationship between living memories and their intextuation into novels, scripts, theater reviews, and similar texts. As with Roach's work, this study relies heavily on historical traces of performance as well as reading into textual artifacts the effects of performance practices. Often, my experience with contemporary performances shapes my positing of historical performance practices, recognizing that contemporary performances carry their own traces of history.

Therefore, in addition to mining texts and archives for clues to historical performances, I also draw on my own personal history with this text. I have spent most of my adult life as a Dracula fan and much of the last ten years researching both
Stoker's novel and its manifestations and circulations in my culture. I draw on that experience and the different magnitudes of performance contained within it, particularly when discussing cultural performances and the social performatives of Dracula. While not specifically an ethnographic project, this study nonetheless relies on my own emic observations of performances associated with the popular performances of Dracula.

This inclusion of myself within the critical project, rather than maintaining some critically objective distance, is supported by various scholarly practices in both cultural studies and performance studies. Including my own engagements with this diffuse cultural artifact demonstrates what William James identified as "radical empiricism," a form of fieldwork that replaces the boundary between observer and observed in traditional empirical research with a dialogic engagement between the two (Carlson 191). Kristin Langelier also suggests, based on her work with personal narrative, that in addition to studying others, "it is no less important that we examine the political and ethical dimensions of our own cultural materials and practices" (134). Both the ethnographic focus on participant observation and the personal narrative turn towards autoethnography seem to justify including my own lived engagements with popular culture as part of this study. In the final analysis, however, I think commonsense indicates that it is necessary to take advantage of all resources at my disposal when examining the ephemera of popular performances. Therefore, part of my method in doing this analysis relies on my own interests, not just as scholar but as dialogically engaged fan and participant in the popular culture of Dracula.
Finally, bringing this discussion of method back to where it began with cultural studies, I feel that including subjective accounts of my own encounters with fan behavior and the popular performances of Dracula fits with the critical practices of cultural studies. Linking cultural studies to critical pedagogy, Henry Giroux (among others) has called for cultural workers to be directly involved in their sites of study. Cultural studies theorists see direct engagement and intervention as a significant part of their work. While this present study does not specifically deal with such issues of ideological intervention or critical pedagogy, it does take steps in that direction by including my own interactions with vampire fans and my discussions with them about the cultural processes I study in relation to performances associated with Dracula.

Dispensing with the assumption of objective critical distance, at least, is at the heart of cultural studies’ analytical methods and critical practices.

Review of Literature

This study relies on a body of existing scholarship in cultural studies and performance studies as well as criticism dealing with Dracula. Much of my discussion of method and purpose have already addressed key ideas that guide this study. In the review that follows, I further situate this study in relation to key issues of concern within existing relevant scholarship. I have selected four key terms to provide a focus for the review of representative literature: Dracula, (popular) culture, text and performance. In the case of the last two terms, I provide a brief review of each separately followed by a review of recent debates about their relationship to one another.
Dracula

In the last three decades, scholars from a variety of disciplines have produced many different analyses of Dracula. In the last fifteen years, much of this analysis has been included in various popular and literary analyses of vampires in general, referencing Dracula as a significant influence on the sustained popularity of vampires during this century. Analyses of Stoker’s novel from a variety of interests and approaches dominate Dracula scholarship. Of these, the two dominant critical approaches to the novel involve psychoanalytic readings of the novel’s depiction of sexual desire and materialist politics of class and racial otherness. In addition, a variety of works investigate the historical influences on Dracula, including three significant biographies of Bram Stoker. Beyond the novel itself, a few significant works deal with the theatrical productions of Dracula, while many more focus on cinematic versions of the story. Finally, a few significant works discuss Dracula, and the vampire in general, as significant cultural artifacts across history.

The majority of analyses of Stoker’s novel fall into the category of psychoanalytic critique, addressing particularly the psychodynamics of gender identity in the tale (Bently; Byers; Case; Alison; Craft; Fry; Griffin; Howes; Pick; Roth; Stephenson; Twitchell; Williams). Of these, I think James Twitchell’s The Living Dead and Sue-Ellen Case’s “Tracking The Vampire” represent the inclusive extremes of this sort of reading. For Twitchell, the vampirism in Stoker’s Dracula is a direct representation of the anxieties of awakening to a sexual identity. He reads the symptoms of vampirism and the very act of blood drinking as charged yet repressed oral sexual acts. “The myth is loaded with sexual excitement; yet there is no mention
of sexuality. It is sex without genitalia, sex without confusion, sex without responsibility, sex without guilt, sex without love — better yet, sex without mention” (Twitchell 112). Twitchell clearly marks the psychosexual content of Dracula’s vampiric activities, focusing particularly on the conflict of speaking and not speaking about sex in Victorian literature.

Sue-Ellen Case, on the other hand, expands on this failure to openly speak sexuality in the myth and combines it with the violence done to vampires to draw attention to the tale’s focus on policing non-normative sexualities. “The dominant gaze constructs a vampire that serves only as proscription -- is perceived only as transgression: interpolated between the viewer and the vampire is the cross -- the crossing out of her image” (9). Part of Case’s project in recognizing the transgressive sexuality of the vampire is to provide a counter interpretation that empowers that difference, rereading within the dominant discourse of proscription a significant role model for queer identities. Taken together, Case and Twitchell’s readings represent the interpretive variety of psychosexual analyses of the novel, from simply recognizing to questioning the novel’s use of vampirism to represent and construct gendered and sexed subject-positions.

Often related to and sliding into these psychological readings of the novel are Marxist and materialist political readings of the text. Rather than focus on the vampire as representing transgressive sex, these analyses read Dracula as a tale of threat from either a non-bourgeois class (Hatlen; Moretti; Wasson) or a non-Western ethnic other (Arata; Hollinger). While both of these readings are interesting, I think Moretti’s Marxist interpretation is one of the most provocative. He identifies aspects of Dracula
that simultaneously mark the Count as both a representations of the aristocracy and the proletariat. The political threat that the vampire represents to its middle class heroes is both old world upper class oppression and a growing, mobilized lower class. What interests me about this reading is the way Moretti interprets the vampire as combining and representing political opposites; the horrific monster of the story somehow resolves contradictions in order to pose an extreme threat to the middle class values from both socioeconomic directions. Whether political or psychological, interpretations of Dracula typically acknowledge openly or implicitly the multiple and often contradictory representations contained within the same figure.

A significant number of works provide historical and archival background for the novel. Radu Florescu and Raymond McNalley have made careers out of tracing the historical figure of Vlad Tepes, the Transylvanian voivode that captured Stoker’s imagination when creating his vampire. In addition to the “real” historical figure, several folklorists have traced the vampire lore of Eastern Europe in relation to Dracula (Barber; Bunsen; Copper; Dundes; Hill; Hoyt; Masters). Paul Barber’s book, *Vampires, Burial and Death*, is representative of these works in that it takes as its project the rescue of traditional vampire folklore from its misrepresentations in Stoker’s novel and popular culture. Similarly, analyses of the vampire in nineteenth century gothic fiction seek to distinguish the literary vampire from the popular culture representations of it, including most notably Carol Senf’s *The Vampire in 19th Century English Literature* and James Twitchell’s *The Living Dead*. These studies, while certainly rigorous and intellectually productive, in large part serve as the catalyst for my own work. Their strategies of isolation, at once clearly defining their object of
analysis and rescuing it from the taint of popular misconceptions, moves me to wonder what happens if we include these other discourses in making sense of Dracula and other vampire narratives?

I am not alone in proposing this question, as four other very important studies demonstrate. David J. Skal’s *Hollywood Gothic* meticulously traces the “tangled web of *Dracula* from novel to stage to screen” (1), along the way discussing and displaying a variety of commodities and artifacts that the novel has inspired. Skal notes that “the *Dracula* legend rudely refuses to observe conventional parameters of discussion, and touches on areas as disparate as Romantic literature and modern marketing research, Victorian sexual mores and the politics of the Hollywood studio system” (7). Engaging as it is, Skal’s focus on a direct history of Stoker’s novel as it winds its way through various popular articulations and performances suggests but does not sufficiently explain why the text is “one of the most obsessional texts of all time” (7), or what functions it serves for the culture that so obsesses over it.

From a folkloric rather than an archival approach, Norine Dresser’s *American Vampires* provides a rich exploration of the pervasiveness of vampires in American popular imagination. Her study identifies the significant impact Dracula has on that popular imagination. However, her analysis is intriguing to me because as a folklorist she is more concerned with what contemporary Americans “know” about vampires than in distinguishing popular culture from folklore. While most of her respondents identify film and pulp fiction as their knowledge base, her analysis reveals multiple material manifestations of the lore, from breakfast cereal to alcohol advertisements, greeting cards to candy. Although she does not specifically discuss elements of
performativity, her study does provide interesting accounts of fans who go so far as to
develop transgressive sexual fetishizations of blood drinking. Dresser concludes that,
from the most innocent manifestations to the more profoundly disturbing, the vampires
are "indeed an appropriate symbol for American life and hold an important and
beloved place in this society" (206).

Two other works take this conclusion as their point of departure and provide
deeper cultural readings of the vampire, each with a sustained focus on Dracula. Nina
Auerbach’s Our Vampires, Ourselves opens with the assumption that “what vampires
are in any given generation is part of what I am and what my times have become,” and
Auerbach seeks to provide “a history of Anglo-American culture through its mutating
vampires” (1). Auerbach traces significant transformations in the vampire and posits
links to changing values and cultural ideologies. Her work focuses primarily on
vampire novels and films, paying particular attention to transformations of vampirism
and key narrative elements in Dracula films.

Similarly, Ken Gelder’s Reading the Vampire provides a historical review of
vampire fiction, focusing on the significant features that are reproduced between texts.
Gelder notes that “much like capital for Marx, the vampire circulates; and this book
attempts to understand what is at stake in this kind of designation” (x, emphasis in
original). While he focuses almost exclusively on vampire fiction, Gelder never loses
sight of these fictions’ historical relationship to one another and the politics of their
times. Drawing on Dresser’s finding that a significant proportion of fans believe that
vampires exist as real entities, Gelder asserts that “to believe or not believe in
vampires means something in the cultural marketplace -- something which is,
essentially, ideological” (xi, emphasis in original). For Gelder, the reader’s occasional tendency to believe in vampires is symptomatic of a broader response to vampires, Dracula included, that is irrational and emotive. This response is at the heart of the contradiction of vampires, for it opens readers up to the ideological content of the text but also inspires them to make their own manipulations of the text. Because readers work with vampire texts to build belief structures, Gelder concludes:

the vampire’s nature is fundamentally conservative — it never stops doing what it does; but culturally, this creature may be highly adaptable. Thus it can be made to appeal to or generate fundamental urges located somehow ‘beyond’ culture (desire, anxiety, fear), while simultaneously, it can stand for a range of meanings and positions in culture. (Gelder 141, emphasis in original)

Gelder identifies in this observation the simultaneously oppressive and resistant resources in the vampire figure generally, and more specifically in the various articulations and developments of Dracula. For me, Gelder comes closest to identifying the sources of the vampire’s appeal and popular success. The concept that evades him in reaching these conclusions is a discussion of performance. In his reading of vampires, Gelder touches on cinematic Draculas but shies away from overt theatrical performances and the more covert performances involved in everyday cultural circulation.

Finally, four biographical studies of Stoker are important to consider when making sense of Dracula. These studies range from the purely archival and historical documentations to critical cultural historicism. Biographies by Phyllis Roth and Barbara Belford fit into the former category, although the second is a bit more engagingly written in its accounts of Stoker’s life. Daniel Farson’s controversial _The Man Who Wrote Dracula_ is unique among these biographies in that Farson is a distant
relative of Stoker's and relies as much on family stories as historical records. Many of his claims about Stoker, especially that he suffered from syphilis while writing Dracula, have been challenged by more scholarly historians (Belford 23; Glover 3-4). Farson's chatty stories and gossipy assertions are nonetheless provocative in that they seem, at times, to provide a counter history to an author who otherwise hardly seems worthy of literary canonization. My interest in Farson's work has less to do with its historical accuracy and more to do with its competing claims on history, privileging the ephemera of family stories against the texts of more scholarly research.

Less concerned with Stoker's life than in addressing the entirety of his literary production, David Glover's Vampires, Mummies and Liberals reads Stoker's fictions against the cultural politics of his time. Borrowing from the tenets of New Historicism, Glover uses Stoker's novels as lenses for viewing both his life and the culture in which he lived. Glover spends quite a bit of time unpacking Dracula for this purpose, but also revels in Stoker's less well known works, noting that because of Dracula's success "the bulk of Stoker's work has been eclipsed, shunted off to the sidelines of critical discussion" (8). Glover instead offers "a corrective to the current overconcentration on Dracula and to place that book in the context of some of Stoker's other writings, showing his consistent concern with questions of nationhood, character, and sexuality, and the close links between them" (8). Even so, Glover returns to Dracula repeatedly, making it the nexus of Stoker's other works, and of his own reading of the cultural politics of late Victorian England.

This review of literature about Dracula demonstrates two things. First, there is no dearth of analyses of Dracula, either as literary text or popular culture phenomenon.
Second, outside of a few documentations of existing theatrical performances, there are very few analyses of Dracula that take into account the vampire's relation to various magnitudes of performance. Both of these observations, taken together, point to the way that a performative analysis of Dracula might add significantly to the existing body of critical scholarship.

(Popular) Culture

Not too long ago, to be a student of "culture" meant to study that which was refined and aesthetically valuable in a given society's products and practices. Recently, the study of culture has turned instead to exactly the kind of representational politics that determines such qualities as "refined" and "aesthetically valuable." While views on the nature and function of popular culture are varied, those who choose it as an object of study more or less agree on one assumption; namely, representations that are shared in a community are important and serve some purpose. The nature and function of that purpose is often the most contested aspect of popular culture (Mukerji and Schudson 3).

Many scholarly studies of popular culture are, self-admittedly, apolitical. They acknowledge that whatever object or practice of popular culture they are studying is significant and then move on to an enthusiastic cataloguing of its forms and structures. Mukerji and Shudson identify such analyses as "celebrations" of popular culture and largely dismiss them from the practices employed in cultural studies (4). However, I think it is important not to conflate enthusiasm too hastily with a tendency toward depoliticized celebration. There is a certain fundamental thrill in probing critically those objects and activities that dominate the cultural landscape. Even the apolitical
analytical approaches participate in a politics of academic practice, rejecting a culturally imposed canon in favor of the author's favorite "guilty pleasure." My belief is that it is possible, as in the nature of carnival, to celebrate Dracula enthusiastically while still providing a rigorous critique of its cultural and representational politics.

Studies of popular culture that focus on the operations of representational power tend to go in one of two directions. Traditional Marx-influenced scholars tend to view most popular texts and activities as somehow reinforcing dominant capitalist social structures, operating primarily within and for the superstructure. When the proletariat revolution that Marx predicted failed to come, Marxists turned to the processes of culture (all culture, high and low) to explain industrial capitalism's ability to defuse revolutionary impulses. Lumped together as mass culture theorists, these social critics tend to adopt injection models of ideology whereby cultural commodities and texts serves as a metaphorical hypodermic, giving the masses their soporific doses of dominant ideology (Gray and McGuigan viii-ix). Along these lines, Gramsci's notion of "hegemony" contends that it is precisely when these ideologies are unnoticed and taken for granted, as they most often are in popular culture, that they are most effective in maintaining social structures at status quo (Williams 108-109).

The Frankfurt School is one of the most influential original schools of this sort of cultural studies. Several of its members (most notably Adorno, Althusser, Marcuse, and Horkheimer) viewed popular culture with unveiled contempt. One notable exception in their ranks was Walter Benjamin. In "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Benjamin identified a liberational potential in the mass production of popular and popularized art (224). He foresaw the masses seizing the
means of cultural production, thereby freeing themselves from the indoctrination-
function of culture. While such a radical revolution has failed to occur, Benjamin's
recognition of the difficulty in policing or controlling meaning in such mass quantities
of reproduction was a significant contribution to contemporary trends in cultural
studies.

Contemporary cultural studies borrow much from these Marxist approaches
while simultaneously abandoning the belief in a purely ideological function of popular
culture. In general, cultural studies agree with Marxists that there is a limited amount
of power that is unevenly distributed in any society. Any kind of representational
activity, but particularly those that are popular, is fundamentally connected to the
negotiation and distribution of that power (Johnson 39). Pierre Bordieu, for example,
notes that in a capitalist society, money is not the only capital that is unevenly
distributed. He suggests that "cultural capital" may be a more significant site of
exchange, the social control of which is structured by education and representational
means. While the systems of mass production tend to be in the control of the socially
and culturally dominant groups (the power bloc), their power is limited in many ways
by subordinate consumers (Bourdieu and Passeron 32). All cultural processes,
especially those that are most popular, are the meeting grounds of dominants and
subordinates in a struggle over meaning.

Within this general model is a sizable continuum between those who are
optimistic about the liberational and radical potential of subordinate groups in the
processes of popular culture and those who tend to believe that, whatever its
limitations, popular culture serves primarily hegemonic ends. John Fiske, for
example, tends to concentrate on the oppositional and resistant attributes of popular culture, claiming that radical social changes must begin at the micro-political level of challenged meanings before they can happen at the macro-political level of reform (161-162). While Fiske's position is overly optimistic, his eagerness can be excused when viewed against a history of pessimistic injection models. More in the line of compromise, theorists like Michel de Certeau and Richard Johnson tend to view the negotiation of representational power as constantly in a state of flux. Johnson posits a great cultural circulation whereby consumers consume the mass produced texts, creating a lived culture that is then incorporated back into the dominantly controlled systems of production (47). De Certeaux avoids circulation models, preferring "trajectories" instead where cultures form and move between two forces: strategies and tactics. Strategies define those visible hegemonic structures and activities of social control employed by dominant powers, while tactics are the invisible guerrilla incursions into such representational resources by the disempowered and subordinate (de Certeau 29-30).

I find such models most persuasive in describing many of the trends in the diffuse cultural artifact of Dracula. For one, they acknowledge that even with Stoker's more proscriptive novel, the very coding of vampirism as unrepressed sexuality provided the representational resources for empowering suppressed issues of sexuality and gender. Subsequent articulations of Dracula that turn the evil Count from villain to misunderstood victim are, I contend, incorporated meanings that were excorporated from many of the text's proscriptive "origins." Production and consumption, strategies and tactics, incorporation and excorporation -- all of these terms variously indicate a
kind of process for culture that unites texts and their uses with multiple feedback paths. These models justify, at the very least, the kind of study in which I am engaging.

**Text**

I have already been attempting to use this term with some care. I have been concerned primarily to contrast the novel written by Bram Stoker (*Dracula*) with the cultural phenomenon (*Dracula*). This difference is sourced in a similar distinction posited by Roland Barthes between *work* and *text*, where work is "a fragment of substance...[that] can be held in the hand" while a text is "a methodological field...experienced only in the activity of production" (Image 156-7). I may then speak of the work of *Dracula* as that book by Bram Stoker that sits on my shelf, while the text of Dracula awaits my interaction with it in a writerly fashion that will set its meanings into productive motion. Works, in essence, are things while texts are interactive processes. Hence, I have tried to use "work" when referring to Stoker's novel and "text" when describing the process of that tale's circulation within meaning producing communities.

Barthes's taxonomy, however, supplies a different term for texts that circulate repeatedly in a culture. In *Mythologies*, he details a second order of signification identified as "mythology." In *Dracula*, the King Vampire may be a sign within the discourse of the story, but at the level of myth that sign becomes a signifier. That is, at the first order of signification the name "Dracula" is a signifier for the novel's blood sucking revenant from Transylvania. At a second level of signification, the realm of myth, both the name and the revenant become a signifier of something else, usually a
carefully coded form of deviance. The Dracula myth thereby becomes a significant phenomenon where each new vampire within the sign system of a particular work is also a signifier of something else, circulating in the signification processes of popular culture. In providing a semiotic explanation of myth, Barthes outlines a model for understanding popular culture as closely related to folklore (mythology).

A significant part of this understanding of the text as a cultural interweaving features the notion of texts as quintessentially intertextual, which Barthes describes as "woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages (what language is not?), antecedent or contemporary, which cut across it and through it in a vast stereophony" (Image 160). Of course, the intertextual aspects of Stoker's Dracula make it a work interpenetrated by many works other than those that simply deal with vampires; many scholars have taken on the task of tracking down some of the more explicit non-vampiric references in the work (Varma, "Voyage"). Still others have engaged in subjective meditations, reading into the text of Dracula countless other cultural texts dealing with sexual orientation (S. Case), AIDS (Hanson), and desire (Wolf, Dream) among others. To understand how the text operates in popular culture, it is necessary to define "text" as something beyond but also inclusive of Bram Stoker's novel or any particular cinematic, theatrical, or fictional production.

Borrowing Barthes's understanding of texts, Barry Brummett provides a distinction between "diffuse texts" and "discrete texts," arguing that analyses of popular culture have largely failed because they have been too dependent on discrete texts. To reduce a text into a discrete object of study is ultimately to set it off from the processes of consumption and production that allow for the circulation and negotiation
of cultural meanings. This circulation is dependent on an intertextual network of multiple and coexistent (conflicting and cooperative) readings. If studies of popular texts tend to apologize for their object's lack of complexity (the "junk" culture of Norman Rockwell paintings or pink plastic flamingos, for example), it is largely because a discrete text has been studied in the place of a diffuse text. Brummett asserts,

> The rhetorical dimensions of popular culture will not begin to be fully explored until scholars can break apart texts as defined by sources and consider how such diffuse texts, or discrete texts, broken up and resituated in appropriational manifestations, might be woven into the everyday flow of signification that constitutes popular culture, or into the deeper conditional meanings that shore up whole ways of life. (51)

Brummett makes this claim in an attempt to expand rhetorical models that are not, he claims, very useful for understanding popular culture. In his counter model, he proposes three types of rhetorical manifestation: interventionist, appropriational, and conditional. Interventionist rhetoric responds to some exigence, and people are aware of the presence of rhetoric or a marked rhetor. Appropriational manifestations are omnipresent in our incorporation of symbolic material around us into our everyday lives. Conditional rhetoric, by extension, refers to those a priori assumptions that shape our lives and that we rarely recognize or question. The important distinction here is that interventionist rhetoric is marked by discrete texts ("works") created by agents which are the traditional purview of rhetorical critics, while appropriational rhetoric involves diffuse texts where the focus cannot be on who or what constitutes the agent. While Brummett claims that most phenomena in popular culture are best studied at the appropriational compromise between the interventionist and conditional
stances, he notes the usefulness of the model in showing rhetorical phenomena moving along these three levels, producing texts (discrete, diffuse, or "haunted") at each.

Because Brummett deals primarily with discovering appropriate analytical tools for probing the rhetoric of popular culture, his model is a useful point of departure for this study's concern with the performance aspects of popular culture and, specifically, the diffuse cultural artifact of Dracula. Brummett's model aptly demonstrates that, by necessity, the method of the present study must deal with diffuse texts rather than discrete texts or works in isolation. The genesis of his model, however, stems from a dissatisfaction with how other rhetorical models deal with popular culture. Similarly, this study is motivated by a dissatisfaction with how performance is deployed in studies of popular culture. Therefore, coupled with negotiating the slippery notion of "text," this study will also examine "performance" as a critical and not fully theorized aspect of popular culture.

Performance

As a critical concept, "performance" has a rich life of its own beyond the academic discourses of performance studies. The performance studies discipline is often at loggerheads to define performance or even the nature of its own practice. Far from being a difficulty of the discipline, I think this disagreement about or failure to essentialize the defining aspect of the field invigorates the kind of analytical work that we do. Agreeing with this position, Strine, Long and HopKins assert that performance is perhaps best understood as an essentially contested concept, its topicality open for debate in each and every use of theories and terminology (183). That performance has become an important concept of cultural studies and the analysis...
of popular culture is quite evident; Mukerji and Schudson note that, "If 'reading' is one master concept in the new study of popular culture, 'performance' is another" (11). The difficulty arises in trying to match differing uses of performance.

For the purpose of this study, I have identified three types of performance that do not necessarily encompass all uses of the term but do span a breadth of its application as a tool of analysis. In so doing, my primary goal is to position this study between an under-specified use of performance models in popular culture analyses on the one hand, and a spare use of popular culture texts in performance analyses on the other. To do this, definitions of performance must include both marked, "theatrical" performances as well as the various "taken-for-granted" performances of everyday life. I use the distinction between theatrical performance, cultural performance, and the performativity of everyday life primarily as an analytical separation. I feel that this study demonstrates how these different magnitudes of performance overlap and often operate simultaneously.

The first of my chosen magnitudes of performance is that which takes place in a theater. Although it is unfortunate that such a definition is based primarily on the location of the performance, it is nonetheless true that the theater and its study are well established in Western culture. The theater is a recognized space for the enactment of dramas, so much a part of our culture that it almost needs no definition (Brockett 14). To concentrate on the theatrical performances of Dracula is to use the resources of dramaturgy and theater history to understand how this text has been part of a history of popular performance practices. I would also include in this type of performance the rich cinematic tradition of Dracula performances, taking place as they do in movie...
theaters and involving professional actors. Finally, acknowledging the importance of Stoker's work, I think his association with the Lyceum Theater is an important interpretive framework for examining the novel of *Dracula*.

"Cultural performance," as an umbrella term of performance studies, often includes overtly theatrical performance as one of its varieties. To claim that cultural performances occur in popular culture is to recognize that a "popular" culture is part of any culture. Cultural performances, as described by Milton Singer, include such operative characteristics as being scheduled, temporally and spatially bounded, programmed, and coordinated public occasions (Bauman, "American" 46). Such a definition would tend to subsume theater as well as various other communal and ritual activities. Victor Turner, on the other hand, identifies a specific type of cultural performance, the social drama, in terms of the specific elements inherent in rituals. Turner analyzes such performances for the ways they construct, repair and reify communities, and for their structures. He identifies four successive phases: "breach," or the visible violation of normal social functions; "crisis," or the resulting struggle as members of the community choose sides across the breach; "redressive procedures" that examine the situation and determine possible courses of action; and "reintegration/permanent schism" where the breach is either repaired or a permanent schism remains (Turner, *Anthropology* 22). I contend that the vampire tale, whether pulled from ecclesiastical documents or pulp fiction, follows this essential process of social drama.

My own use of "cultural performance" is in keeping with Turner's, noting primarily the folkloric origins of the vampire myth as it operates in *Dracula*. The
cultural performance tradition of vampires primarily involves the various ritualistic activities that a community performed in order to rid itself of moral corruption or disease. These rituals are included in Stoker's novel and are, I contend, an important factor in the text's success as both theater and popular culture. According to Turner (From Ritual), the original vampiric rituals would be prime examples of the liminality of social dramas, locating pollution in the unresolved "betwixt and between" status of the vampire's perceived undeath. Once this social drama is mediated by the various transmissional forms of popular culture, it loses that liminality and becomes, as he terms it, liminoid. Although this difference is significant (the popular text replacing the ritual with the ritual-like), I think that Turner would agree that the significant aspects of social drama, however diluted by a liminoid status, are nonetheless present in the popular depictions of Dracula.

The difficulty arises, however, in trying to define the culture constructing and consuming the vampire film or play. Folklore is defined primarily as practices or objects that are functionary and are useful in a specific community (Dundes, Interpreting; Toelken). Because Dracula is mass mediated popular culture in a capitalist society, it must appeal to a significant enough number of consumers to warrant the cost of its production. Rather than circulating usefully in one community, it must be useful to multiple communities. The Dracula text has constantly succeeded in popular markets precisely because it informs different cultures with different meanings. Rather than distinguishing folklore from mass media, I propose to follow the lead of several contemporary folklorists in examining the interactive relationship between media and audiences that leads to a mass mediated folklore process.
Certainly various Dracula performances have participated in the construction of a dominant cultural hegemony across many seemingly different subcultures; therefore, it lives up to the traditional folklorist's fears about the mass media. Dracula also, I would argue, operates as an important subversive drama both of and for those varying subcultures and "others" existing within the dominantly defined cultural discourse. Moreover, it is precisely the performance of vampirism that is at issue in these negotiations and exchanges.

As noted above, in the Barthesian conception of a Dracula myth, the vampire sign becomes a signifier. Drawing on a rich weaving of intertextual citations, at this second level of signification, vampirism signifies the coded behaviors of disaffected others: the sexual aggressiveness of gender subordinates, the substance addiction of counter cultures, the exoticness of alternative sexualities, and so forth. Such coded behaviors are indicative of another type of performance, "performativity," which refers to the ways various identities are constructed, recognized, negotiated, and reproduced in a community by certain culturally rehearsed and citational behaviors. Performativity is a concept that has a wide currency outside of performance studies. In many applications, usually linguistic in nature, it refers to the ways that utterances "do" (cf. Austin; Searle). Erving Goffman, among others, has explored the various roles adopted in regular, everyday interactions describing these as a kind of "performance of self" (Presentation). Feminists have taken this concept even further, suggesting that gendered aspects of identity are performances that we rehearse from an early age. Judith Butler, for example, claims that

if gender is instituted through acts which are internally discontinuous, then the appearance of substance, is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performance
accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief. (271 Gender, emphasis in original)

This conception of the performative is both related to and markedly different from the "utterance that does." Butler's primary concerns are those mechanisms that train us in these performances of gendered identities. Part of that cultural mechanism, she allows, is the various ways that gender is represented in marked performances, including especially those representations that are circulated through popular culture.

Throughout Dracula, vampires enact the social performances that surround and have become the defining practices of certain (usually disempowered) cultural groups. In a sense, I argue that the vampire Dracula may be read as a popular instance of Benjamin's flaneur, moving through the cultural landscape, adopting the behaviors of disaffected others or masquerading beneath a polished performance of the socially acceptable (Tester 1). For at the most basic level, vampires and these disempowered others are constantly developing ways to evade detection and blend in with dominant society by adopting and enacting performances of socially constructed norms. Conversely, Dracula also shows in many manifestations a glorification of a vampiric "style": the "hipness" of costumes, practices and attitudes other than those privileged by the mainstream. When the vampire or cultural other is not trying to blend in, it has its own defining performance -- or "performativity" -- of self that flaunts rather than masks difference.

Performativity, then, is in many ways to performance what text is to textuality (or work is to text, or discrete text to diffuse text). It identifies the gestures and behaviors in a culture that form and replenish identity. Performativity finds its most
popular usage in queer theory, where its theoretical assumptions reveal the ways sexual identities are mandated and enforced by cultural politics (cf. Parker and Sedgwick; Case, Brett, and Foster). The covert social performances included in the theoretical concept of performativity serve, principally, to “undermine the theoretical partitions between paired abstractions, such as ‘art’ and ‘life’” (Gingrich-Philbrook 123). While much of the development of performativity theory has come from disciplines outside of performance studies, performance studies has embraced the concept as a way to both broaden and further legitimate its object of study.

Taken as a whole, these various approaches to performance combine to make this study of Dracula essentially a "performance about performativity." Or, stated another way, the diffuse and ephemeral performance processes of popular culture serve as what Steven Mullaney defines as a rehearsal of culture. He states:

A rehearsal is a period of free play during which alternatives can be staged, unfamiliar roles tried out, the range of one's power to convince or persuade explored with some license; it is a period of performance, but one in which the customary demands of decorum are suspended, along with the expectations of the final or perfected form. (69)

Various articulations within the popular phenomenon of Dracula range from hegemonic morality plays to radical appeals for dominant culture subversion. The majority, however, fall somewhere between these two extremes, providing instead a rich resource for multiple interpretations. As such, the rehearsal of culture is not just in the text and its various productions, but in what Michel de Certeau has identified as a second and often overlooked level of production, "making do" (29). No longer can we assume the audience to be universal, and different groups will see different things, making texts and performance important resources in the creation and circulation,
rehearsal and reproduction of meaning that is culture. Mass produced works of popular culture with their carefully marketed ambiguities are, then, the open playing fields where different subcultures simultaneously negotiate and rehearse identity and meaning, the products of their various consumptions circulating back into the systems of mass production. Because it is a circulating process, the performances of popular culture can be read in the systems of production, the individual practices of consumption, or in the embedded and multiple codes of the texts themselves.

Textuality and Performativity

One final observation about the scholarship of texts and performances needs to be made before concluding this review of relevant literature. As poststructural practice broadens text to textuality and performance to performativity, both of these terms seem to overlap. Barthes’s concept of text is caught up in the interactional participation in the production of meaning. Derrida’s identification of performativity as necessarily citational borrows from the citational function of texts (18). In the language of performativity, bodies are inscribed and can be read. In the language of textuality, reading becomes a kind of active audiencing.

But it would be a mistake to see the overlapping of textuality and performativity as a necessarily equal or happy bonding. Dwight Conquergood calls for a performative resistance to the fetishizing of the text (“Beyond”). He notes that performance studies research suffers from an inherent bias towards objectifying complex processes into texts. Moreover, this textual bias is not merely some convenient scholarly practice, but one with deeply ideological ramifications. In our eagerness to acquire texts, we miss the resistant potential of performance. Citing the
ways in which literacy has been used for oppressive state strategies while noting performative tactics of resistance, Conquergood calls for a decentering of text in our discipline.

Importantly, this decentering does not require removing texts altogether. Pollock notes that “to discard texts would then, ironically, diminish the power of performance” (“Response” 40). Rather, the term that may need reconfiguring is “performativity.” Rather than make text-centered concepts such as “citation” and “reiterability” the central concepts of performativity, Pollock and Conquergood both endorse Bhaba's idea of the performative as essentially resistant. Performatives raid and resist textualities, opening up spaces for new ideological possibilities (Conquergood, “Beyond” 32; Pollock, “Response” 43-44). Performative readings similarly interrogate and challenge established textual assumptions, because such a reading might “fail to assume the prerogative of its own performativity and to make textuality tremble with both loss and possibility” (Pollock, “Response” 45).

Performative readings are less concerned with what is than with what might be when the reader unmasks and resists the objectified realities of texts.

I must admit that this performative critique of the text-centeredness of performance studies challenges my training and cognitive skills. Yet, in an important way, I see this debate invigorating the role of performance in scholarship, both at the level of doing performances and at the level of audiencing/reading them. Without claiming that performance is inherently liberatory, Conquergood and Pollock call for a performance-centered approach to performance studies that embraces a politics of
resistance. Not accidentally, this kind of move is in keeping with the agenda of cultural studies.

Under this construction of performance studies, performativity and textuality may overlap but they are far from the same. Rather, by focusing on the resistant and ephemeral in performance, performance studies moves more towards the assumptions and practices of cultural studies. Both the cultural studies imperative to search within texts for the traces of performance and the performance studies trend to challenge the centrality of text in favor of performance point to a destabilization of the text/performance and textuality/performativity binaries. In their place emerges a contingent and contested, deeply ideological study of the complex processes of culture.

Conclusions

Central to this study is a contention that Dracula is a cultural phenomenon significantly about and reliant on several magnitudes of performance. Its longevity as popular culture is directly tied to those sites of performance. By making performance the central concept of the study, the traditional pairing of text and performance is destabilized, revealing alternate and more dialogic relationships. Performances, in significant ways, write the novel of Dracula, and Stoker's novel performs and inspires performance. By bringing performance to the analysis of this popular artifact, not as a parasitical or derivative secondary practice but as the central activity of inquiry, this analysis focuses on the ephemeral processes of culture rather than the texts it leaves behind. The result is an analysis that emphasizes struggle rather than outcome, process rather than product.
Having reviewed the purpose, method and literature relevant to this study, I must admit that it is a project that contains some difficulties. Perhaps the greatest challenge in this study is resisting my well trained and culturally developed desire to focus on close readings of discrete texts. My established reading practices are part of the cultural baggage I bring with me to this project. Similarly, part of my struggle in completing this study has been making it fit into the expectations and established formats of a dissertation. Although I do not intend to explore such conventions as part of this study, I suspect that there are many ideology-laden aspects of the textual formats of dissertations that impede a performance-centered analysis. In some small and serendipitous ways, this study may reveal some of those structures and expectations even as it minimally resists them.

Finally, I think this study not only contributes to the scholarly analysis of a popular culture phenomenon, but participates in it. Dracula is a representative example of popular culture, but it is also distinct in several important ways. Studying Dracula reveals much about (popular) cultural processes, but it also engages in ongoing scholarly and popular dialogues about Dracula. While principally an act of scholarly analysis, this study also represents my own fannish interest and involvement in Dracula, a popular phenomenon whose popularity shows no signs of dissipation. By writing to understand Dracula and the cultural performances associated with it, I am also seeking to understand myself and my own participations and performances in my culture. If, according to cultural studies theorists, consumption and audiencing of popular commodities are not passive activities, then how can my critical scholarship be any less an active engagement with my popular culture?
Endnotes

1 Literary analysts of Stoker’s Dracula and Shelly’s Frankenstein often lament that popular culture has so misrepresented these two narratives. For example, in the preface of The Living Dead James Twitchell writes: “I couldn’t care less about the current generation of vampires: personally, I find them rude, boring, and hopelessly adolescent...This book traces the vampire out of folklore into serious art until he stabilizes early in this century into the character we all too easily recognize” (ix). Not too surprisingly, many of the commonly accepted attributes associated with Dracula that distress Twitchell and similar critics cannot be found in Stoker’s novel but are the result of successful media representations. For example, Norine Dresser notes that “the popularity of the Dracula figure in the United States can be credited in great part to the impact of Bela Lugosi and his pronounced speaking style” (115-6). However, close readers of Stoker’s Dracula point out that the Count speaks with nearly perfect English (Wolf Dream 57). Similarly, a frequent corrective applied to Shelly’s novel reminds readers that “Frankenstein” is the name of the doctor and not the monster, correcting a popular misconception (Grixti 57). These sorts of observations have led critics such as David Skal to acknowledge that both Frankenstein and Dracula have many culturally relevant significations beyond their depictions in their creators’ original novels (Monster 16).

2 Throughout this document I have been careful typographically to distinguish Stoker’s novel from the broader cultural phenomenon. When referring to the novel, Dracula is underlined. When referring to the broader cultural phenomenon, Dracula is not underlined. Whenever possible, I have also provided clear contextual clues to distinguish whether I am talking about the novel, the broader cultural phenomenon, or the actual character of Count Dracula.

3 Making text the precursor of performance is a pervasive aspect of much oral interpretation and theater scholarship. Strine, Long and HopKins summarize the basic assumptions of oral interpretations as: “literary texts are repositories for enduring insight and value, and that latent meanings and values embedded within literary texts become manifest and most fully accessible when experienced holistically through the act of performance” (182). Similarly, theater studies often refers to the script as the blueprint of performance. David Ball’s system of reading scripts for performance clearly notes that “the purpose of a script is for it to be staged” (3). While scripts are written for performance, Ball argues that successful performances of them depend upon close readings prior to the performance process: “The theater artist who perceives little on the page puts little on the stage” (4).

4 A recurrent and acknowledged aspect of the turn from oral interpretation to performance studies is a broadening of text so that it no longer refers to canonical literature. Jill Dolan states this trend succinctly when she notes “perhaps the most distinctive contribution of performance studies is to expand even further the scope of the textual object, opening its purview into folklore and festivals, rituals and rites” (430). Pelias and VanOosting’s similar articulation of text belies oral interpretation’s
ordering principle in relation to such a reconceptualization of text: “When the performance studies practitioner adopts this philosophical perspective, all human discourse becomes available for participatory probes and critical inquiry” (222). Performance, therefore, remains a “participatory probing” of such reconfigured texts, following textual production as critical practice upon them. Similarly, these shifts in conceptions of text allow a shift in the performance/text relationship that Strine, Long, and HopKins (among others) characterize as a shift from performance as metaphor to performance as metonym. In the metaphor perspective, performance displaces text, standing interpretively in its place. In the metonym perspective, “meaning emerges as relational rather than representational” (185), allowing a dialogue between the performance and the text. While this shift in tropes more clearly articulates a dialogic relationship between text and performance, it still inherently constructs that dialogue as something performance brings to the text after the fact.

These circulation processes are distinct from attempts to transcribe performances into texts. Transcription procedures associated with “conversation analysis” (cf. Gray and VanOosting) or Elizabeth Fine’s conception of “folklore texts” still fundamentally privilege textuality as they seek to develop systems that sediment performance ephemera into textual encodings. These practices seem more concerned with creating a textual object out of performances so that established procedures of textual analysis might be applied to such stabilized performances. Fine and Speer’s model proposes that the outcome of such performance transcriptions is that we “can plot more clearly the ways in which even fixed literary texts are emergent—how much and in what manner such texts are subject to individual creativity, to what extent audience and situation affect performance competency and style” (384-5). Inherent in this approach is still an assumption that such texts precede the context of their performance. Circulation models of culture posit a flow from performance to text and back again such that neither is privileged and entextuation is not so directly an act of transcription as it is performative influence.

In a manifesto that calls for an interdisciplinary and non-institutionalized approach to cultural studies, Giroux, Shumway, Smith and Sosnoski argue that “resisting intellectuals must actively engage in projects which encourage them to address their own critical role in the production and legitimization of social relations” (480). This critical engagement is a central aspect of the critical pedagogy of cultural studies as well as its scholarly projects. Giroux describes assignments that enable “students to theorize about their own experiences rather than articulate the meaning of other people’s theories” (Disturbing 135). Similarly, Peter McLaren identifies that a critical pedagogy curriculum should “have as its focus of investigation the study of everyday, informal, and popular culture and how the historical patterns of power that inform such cultures are imbricated in the formation of individual subjectivity and identity” (21). Critical pedagogy requires a self reflexivity on the role pedagogy plays in the power relations it teaches, whether that pedagogy is to-be found in classrooms or popular entertainments. The profound link between cultural studies and critical
pedagogy is based on the radical need to be aware of one's own involvement in the ideological processes of culture, whether as student or "scholarly expert."
CHAPTER TWO:
DRACULA AS CONSPICUOUS THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE

Writing in Women’s Wear Daily about the 1977 Broadway revival of Dracula: The Vampire Play, Howard Kissel observes, “In part, the attraction of Dracula is his immense theatricality” (10). A significant portion of that theatricality is surely Dracula’s success on both stage and screen. For example, J. Gordon Melton reports that forty dramas in England and America published this century carry Dracula’s name (814-816). Similarly, while a great number of films depict Dracula, Matthew Bunson reports thirty-four films in England and America alone that merely include “Dracula” in the title (91-97). Apparently an important aspect of Dracula’s theatricality is that he spends a lot of time in theaters.

However, Kissel is not only referring to the many play and film adaptations of Stoker’s novel; he identifies an inherent theatricality within the figure of Dracula. But what does it mean to say that someone is “theatrical”? Kissel implies that theatricality is attractive and that we are drawn to the Count because of his theatricality. Conversely, Jonas Barrish observes that attributing adjectives of the theater to someone is rarely a compliment. The tendency towards using theatrical metaphors as pejoratives (“he is so melodramatic” or “I am so tired of my family’s theatrics,” for example) is evidence of the antitheatrical prejudice (Barrish 1). While this antitheatrical prejudice at first may seem at odds with the attractiveness Kissel attributes to the vampire, a closer examination of Barrish’s arguments reconciles this seeming contradiction and does much to identify key sources of Dracula’s popularity on stage and screen.
Referencing Plato as one of the first proponents of the antitheatrical prejudice in Western culture, Barrish identifies several attributes of the prejudice that are relevant to Dracula. Because the central aspect of drama is conflict, theatrical presentations tend to depict and emphasize characters and situations lacking in virtue. Summarizing Socrates on this point, Barrish notes, “Far more difficult to render interestingly or convincingly would be the austerity of a truly temperate soul” (9). In addition to conflict derived from the dominance of baser passions, dramas depend on mimesis; for Plato, imitation is nothing more than pretense and deception. Moreover, while Plato concedes that the dominant themes and representations in dramas are developed in order to please the audience, he is most concerned with the way performances play on emotions in order to influence and manipulate audiences (Barrish 10). For Plato, poets and performers must be banned from the ideal republic because this dangerous and disingenuous influence ultimately challenges the authority of the state, if only by disrupting the fixed forms and accepted norms of the dominant culture (Barrish 26). Therefore, Barrish identifies four foundational aspects of the antitheatrical prejudice: that it deals with unvirtuous themes, relies on imitation and pretense, unduly influences audiences, and ultimately challenges the accepted authority of the state. These same elements, I contend, constitute the principal attributes of the theatricality of Dracula.

In this chapter, I examine how several of these theatrical attributes of Dracula develop in direct relationship to conspicuous performances. By “conspicuous performance,” I mean that magnitude of performance which European and American
audiences recognize as theater in the most traditional sense of the word. My interest lies both in certain theatrical venues that may have influenced Stoker in the writing of his novel and how they feed into key stage adaptations.

While several scholars have made the connection between John Polidori’s novella, “The Vampyre,” and Stoker’s novel, few have made connections between the stage adaptations of Polidori’s work and Dracula. Given Stoker’s relationship with the theater, it is reasonable to assume that he was, at least, aware of these scripts and performances. At the same time, it is unnecessary to make any direct claims for such evolutionary links in the dramaturgical history of Dracula; the style of Stoker’s characterizations points backward to the vampire’s theatrical and literary forebears as well as forward to its successful theatrical and cinematic adaptations.

My interest here is in the theatrical influences on and of Dracula, keeping in mind that I have identified Stoker’s novel as a nexus for a diffuse cultural phenomenon that both precedes and follows its moment of production. While the structure of this chapter moves diachronically through time, my focus is primarily on the synchronic connections that I explore across the articulations of Dracula. Central to this diffuse cultural artifact is a slippery relationship between fiction and performance. While performance studies is no stranger to the intricacies of performances developed from literature, this analysis reveals how popular culture phenomena also mark the ways performance may influence the production of fiction. In Stoker’s day, the vampire was as much a figure of popular entertainments as it was a character in gothic fiction. Stoker’s exposure to popular performance styles through
such celebrated actors as Henry Irving and Ellen Terry seems to have influenced his
depiction of Count Dracula and vampirism.

What follows, then, is an analysis of the theatricality of Dracula as defined by
the antitheatrical prejudice. I begin with an analysis of Charles Nodier's melodrama,
Le Vampire, and James Robinson Planché's English adaptation of it, The Vampire;
Or, The Bride of the Isles, as early nineteenth-century theatrical articulations of
Dracula. In examining these dramas, I am most interested in the role they play in
shaping some of the theatrical elements of Dracula. I map these influences and their
further developments into Stoker's novel and into the subsequent adaptation of the
novel for the stage by Hamilton Deane and John Balderston. I focus on this particular
stage adaptation because of Deane's early association with Stoker and because of the
play's success both with 1920s audiences and in a 1970s revival. The differences
between these two productions demonstrates the ways in which the text, even as a
playscript, continues to be influenced by performance.

Theatrical Adaptations of John Polidori's "The Vampyre."

"The Vampyre"

It is difficult to pinpoint any one factor behind the popular success of Polidori's
novel. One key indicator of its reception seems to be the number of vampire
melodramas it inspired. The bulk of these occurred in Paris from roughly 1820-1830.
Charles Nodier's Le Vampire was the first and most successful of these and was
revived no less than twice during the decade. This play spawned such a series of
similarly plotted vampire melodramas that one critic claimed in 1820 that "There is
not a theater in Paris that does not have its Vampire! At the Porte-Saint-Martin we have Le Vampire; at the Vaudeville Le Vampire again; at the Varieties Les trois Vampires ou le Clair de la Lune" (Summers 303). Other Parisian vampire plays included Encore un Vampire, Les Étrennes d’un Vampire, and Cadet Buteux, Vampire (Skal, Hollywood14). While Paris theaters were inundated with vampires, apparently only one of these plays managed to re-cross the English Channel. James Robinson Planché’s first play, The Vampire; or, The Bride of the Isles, was an adaptation of Nodier’s Le Vampire. It played to packed houses in August 1820 at the Lyceum Theater in London (Roy 36).

To a degree, the scandals associated with Lord Byron made Polidori’s novella such a success. However, the popular appeal of such a scandal alone hardly explains the story’s popularity as a stage melodrama, especially in Paris and less so in London. While historians hail Polidori’s Ruthven as the first vampire of English literature, the depiction is also noteworthy for shifting the vampiric image away from its more grotesque folkloric form. In addition to this significant shift in vampiric representation, I contend that it was a combination of popular scandal and turbulent social relations in 1820s France that made the vampire so successful on the Parisian stage.

Related to these sources of popularity is Polidori’s creation of what several scholars have come to call the “Byronic Vampire.” Lord Ruthven in “The Vampyre” is a significant departure from the vampires of folklore and Romantic poetry that preceded it. Brian J. Frost characterizes this type of vampire as possessing “a fatal seducer’s magnetic personality” and employing “the strategies of a lover rather than a
predator" (38). Conversely, his appearance is in keeping with the vampire’s traditional popular image: “tall and gaunt with a leanness bordering on emaciation; his pale, spectral face is instinct with evil, and the terrible demonic eyes speak of fathomless understanding of sin and passion” (Frost 39). Prior to this representation, the vampire was a grotesque corpse, preying on its victims by the cover of darkness. The Byronic vampire combines this ghastly appearance with the stock melodrama character of the rake. The Byronic vampire, then, is alternately a creature of great loathing and of great attraction. Or, to imply a different relationship, he is an obviously awful fiend successfully cloaked in the attractive social behaviors of a paramour.

As the name implies, this variation of the vampire corresponds to the popular view of Lord Byron at the time. Polidori’s novella, “The Vampyre,” was an immediate success in Paris, propelled by the gossip and intrigue surrounding its creation. Although many were convinced that the story’s central theme was probably Byron’s creation, the literary community quickly acknowledged the story as Polidori’s and saw in it a vicious satire of Byron’s behavior during his self-imposed exile from England (Skarda 250). The details of Polidori’s and Byron’s relationship bear review as they provided the genesis of both the novella’s and the subsequent melodramas’ popular success.

James Twitchell’s The Living Dead details many of the events that brought John Polidori and Lord Byron together. Byron was no stranger to scandal. His “Grand Tour” of Europe was the result of a sexual indiscretion in England. His own reputation as a seducer of women was well known on the continent and was certainly
well known in Paris. The British public was so curious about Byron’s escapades that
one newspaper editor, John Murray, promised Polidori £500 for a detailed account of
Byron’s activities. Polidori, one of the youngest doctors ever to graduate from
Edinburgh, had taken a position as secretary and traveling companion with Byron and
so was in a good position to observe the poet’s activities. Unfortunately, Byron and
Polidori did not make the best of companions, and Polidori never had much of a
chance to observe Byron’s continental life. (Twitchell 105-107)

During the latter days of their tense relationship, Byron and Polidori met Percy
Shelly and his soon-to-be wife, Mary Godwin, on the shores of Lake Geneva. During
this sojourn, the four writers held an informal contest to tell horror stories; the contest
is most famous as the genesis of Mary Shelly’s Frankenstein. Byron’s contribution to
this contest was a fragment of a story that may have been the kernel for “The
Vampyre” and became his publisher’s claim for ownership of the text. Polidori,
according to Mary Shelly, had some “terrible idea about a skull headed lady” that had
nothing to do with vampires (Shelly 21). Byron apparently discussed his story with
Polidori and then wrote a brief outline in a journal which Polidori may or may not
have stolen. In June of 1816, Polidori petulently challenged Shelly, a known pacifist,
to a duel, and Byron subsequently dismissed him from his services. The two parted
company and had only one other meeting when Byron rescued Polidori from a
Milanese jail in October of 1817. Polidori was not grateful and returned to England
without money, without sufficient marketable details of Byron’s European activities,
and with nothing but loathing for his former employer (Twitchell 106).
Creating in fiction an opportunity that journalism would not allow, Polidori wrote “The Vampyre” primarily as an act of revenge. The April 1819 issue of *New Monthly Magazine* attributed authorship to “Lord B.” and, by the end of that same month, the novella was being announced in Paris magazines. In the following May issue of *New Monthly Magazine*, Polidori claimed authorship for the story but admitted that it was based on one of Byron’s ideas (Twitchell 107). In Paris, translated editions of the story were, therefore, included with other translated works of Byron, even though it was general knowledge that the text was Polidori’s. Both Polidori and his publishers banked on using Byron’s own name to sell a story that mocked and satirized the Romantic poet. It was the kind of manipulation worthy of a vampire; it was the kind of scandal that generated popular interest (Skarda 255).

The scandal also made a lot of people more aware of vampires. For, while purporting to be fiction, when “The Vampyre” was published as a novella, it was accompanied by an extensive introduction that surveyed vampire lore, reported actual cases, and provided dire warnings as to vampires’ factual existence (Copper 58). Playing along with this belief in the actuality of vampires, when Byron disavowed all claim for the story, he stated, “I have . . . a personal dislike to ‘vampires,’ and the little acquaintance I have with them would by no means induce me to divulge their secrets” (qtd. in Twitchell 113). Certainly, Byron’s comment is a subtle barb aimed at Polidori, possibly for the doctor’s parasitic use of the poet’s name and reputation. Nonetheless, the comment also indicates that, even in its earliest fictional incarnations, audiences considered the vampire as something more than a fiction. Debating the
reality of vampires was one of many sources for the success of vampires in Paris theater and print.

Neither the scandal around the novel’s production nor the accompanying materials that detail the truth of vampires seems to have been used much in the adaptation of the novel to the stage. The plays borrowed components of Polidori’s petulant act of revenge and reworked them into a particular form of theater, melodrama. That there were more of these theatrical adaptations in France than in England suggests different social circumstances that made particular elements of these plays more resonant for the French. To better understand these different appeals, I first examine the novella itself and then the important Nodier and Planché stage adaptations.

In “The Vampyre,” the first character the reader meets is the villainous Lord Ruthven. The opening paragraph hints at his evil nature. He is an older aristocrat of an unspecified (foreign?) country, who is “more remarkable for his singularities than his rank” (Polidori 7). His “dead grey eye” and the “deadly” hue of his face are the primary physical descriptors provided for the monster. Yet, despite these alarming physical features, through the “reputation of a winning tongue” he is able to work his way into the most virtuous of polite society (Polidori 7). Thus, into a world already inhabited by the vampire comes the young, inexperienced, innocent hero of the novella, Aubrey. The story moves quickly, and by the third paragraph Aubrey has decided to travel with Lord Ruthven, who must leave England because of embarrassing circumstances.
If Lord Byron is Lord Ruthven, then obviously the heroic and misused Aubrey is Polidori’s depiction of himself. Just as Polidori had a falling out with Byron, so does Aubrey come to realize the evil that surrounds Ruthven. In Italy, Aubrey leaves Ruthven and warns the vampire’s current victim of the intended debauchery, thereby temporarily thwarting Ruthven’s charms. In Greece, Aubrey learns about the folklore of the vampire and comes to associate it with his former travel companion. Although forewarned about the dangers of such creatures, Aubrey still has an encounter with one who kills both his native guide and a peasant girl who had captured his romantic interests. Aubrey’s grief is so great that he is bedridden and, in a feverish voice, calls out Ruthven’s name. Ruthven, who has conveniently arrived in Athens, answers the youth’s calls and nurses him back to health. Aubrey is so grateful for his treatments that he forgets his mistrust of Ruthven and joins the vampire for renewed travel around the Greek countryside.

While traveling, the two renewed companions are beset by bandits. Ruthven is fatally wounded by musket fire and, on his deathbed, exacts an oath from Aubrey: “Swear by all your soul reveres, by all your nature fears, swear that for a year and a day you will not impart your knowledge of my crimes or death to any living being in any way, whatever may happen, or whatever you may see” (Polidori 17). Aubrey makes the oath, but, when Ruthven’s body disappears after exposure to the first rays of the full moon, he begins to have misgivings. He returns to England in time to help his sister make her debut into polite society. During the festivities Lord Ruthven appears and grabs Aubrey’s arm, reminding him of his oath. Although he tries to warn his
sister and their guardians, Aubrey is unable to break his oath, and his frantic attempts to do so eventually lead his family to restrain him as a mad man. When he learns that his sister is to marry Ruthven, he again desperately tries to warn his guardians and stop the wedding, but they do not believe him. His efforts are so tragically heroic that he bursts a blood vessel and is removed to his deathbed. The marriage is conducted on the same day that his oath to Ruthven expires, but Aubrey’s warnings come too late. The last line of the novella states “Aubrey’s sister had glutted the thirst of a VAMPYRE!” (Polidori 24, emphasis in original).

It is important to note that Nodier made significant changes in this narrative for his stage adaptation. For the sake of running time and scenography, he removes much of the initial exposition in England and the traveling in Europe. However, the most significant alterations involve the story’s ending. While the novella seems to be more about Polidori’s perception of the magnitude of his mistreatment at the hands of Lord Byron, the play follows the melodramatic formula that concludes with the villain vanquished and the hero and heroine saved. These alterations from page to stage are significant; the combination of Polidori’s scandalous satire and the formulas of melodrama did much to develop many of the recognizable structures of Dracula.

Le Vampire

The play consists of three acts and one prologue. The prologue begins with a discussion between Ithuriel, “angel of the moon,” and Oscar, “the genie of marriage,” discoursing in a cave on the nature of vampires. Ithuriel asks if vampires truly exist, and Oscar assures her that they do. In a tableaux, Oscar shows how he protects...
marriages from the vampire’s evil thirst. The use of spirits is particularly interesting, as it employs supernatural figures in a sort of debate that asserts the existence of other supernatural beings. At the same time, the use of a guardian spirit of marriage emphasizes the “higher purpose” of that human practice (Summers 291). Thus, the play adopts the novella’s presupposition of supernatural forces at work in human affairs; however, the play does more to identify the threat the vampire poses as less about human health and more about the sanctity of marriage. After thus focusing the audience’s attention on the central concern of the drama, the play picks up the basic story of Polidori’s novella with a few important changes.

Aubrey and Lord Ruthven have already been traveling when the play opens, and Aubrey is not the least suspicious of Ruthven. When Ruthven proposes to marry his sister, he is happily relieved to see Ruthven alive (the episode in Greece having happened but, apparently, having been less sinister). After Ruthven explains that his wounds were not fatal, Aubrey vows that they should be as brothers. In the next act, Lord Ruthven attends a nearby wedding and begins making romantic overtures to the bride. The bride has already been warned about Ruthven by Oscar, the strange figure from the prologue, who appeared to her as an old man with a curious limp but nonetheless commanded respect. As the bride does her best to heed Oscar’s warning and avoid the vampire, the groom becomes a bit agitated and shoots Ruthven. Aubrey rushes to his “brother’s” side in time to hear the dying Ruthven request of him, “Promise me that you will tell Malvina [Aubrey’s sister] nothing of this and that you will do nothing to avenge my death until the first hour of night has sounded. Swear to
me that this secret will die in this park."

Aubrey takes the oath and gently lays Ruthven’s body on the ground. The act ends as the characters exit, leaving Ruthven’s body washed in a glow of moonlight.

Act III opens at the foot of a huge, gothic vestibule, the entrance to a chapel. Aubrey finds his sister, who is happily preparing for her wedding to Ruthven, and is about to tell her of the shooting tragedy. Suddenly, Ruthven appears, grabs his arm, and reminds him to “Remember your oath!” Aubrey realizes that evil is afoot and rants at Ruthven that he is a phantom. He pleads with his sister not to marry such a monster and cries out that this wedding is a crime. The servants take Aubrey away as the great chapel doors open and the wedding couple approaches the altar. In a last attempt to stop the ceremony, Aubrey throws himself at the monster as he is about to stab Malvina. The clock strikes one, and Ruthven’s power is gone. He drops the dagger and searches for a place to flee, but shadows emerge from the ground and follow him. The “Angel Exterminator” appears in a cloud, and the shadows swallow up Ruthven in a dramatic rain of fire.

While Le Vampire did not make it into many twentieth-century anthologies of nineteenth-century dramas, it was nonetheless very popular in its day. It played to packed theaters and, as noted previously, had many other versions playing at most of the other theaters in Paris. Nodier himself claimed that the popularity of the play was due in large measure to the figure of Ruthven:

The vampire will again scare people with its horrible love... soon, without a doubt, this monster will again be exhumed to show his horrible, immobile mask, his sepulchral voice and his eyes of grey death... It will surely appear in
the melodramas of Melpomene on the boulevard; the success of the play, however, will not be reserved just to the trappings of the melodrama.\textsuperscript{6}

Nodier not only predicted the success of the play in Paris, but also the attractiveness of the tale in other literature as well. Nodier asserted, "The vampire fable is, without a doubt, the most universal of our superstitions."\textsuperscript{7}

Other critics were not so sure that the vampire image was either universal or worthy of any serious artistic attention. One critic writing for \textit{Les Lettres Normandes} noted that the apparent purpose of the play was to provide tableaus that would cause innocent girls to blush, while another writing for \textit{Conservateur Litteraire} implied that the production was so monstrous that he had not been invited to attend (Summers 294). Both of these critics took greater aim at Nodier for his royalist politics, noting little in the way of Polidori or the vampire's folkloric origins. Another critic posed a more direct question of the type of story, asking, "this story, is it moral? . . . The whole play represents indirectly God as an evil creature who is odious and abandons the world to the genies of Hell."\textsuperscript{8}

It is this type of criticism which served, in some measure, to make the play and its imitators so successful for so long. Alexander Dumas saw an 1823 revival of \textit{Le Vampire} at Porte-Sainte-Martin and later devoted some five chapters of his memoirs to his experience of the play and the effects it had on him. He remarks on the authenticity of the play's representation of vampires, basing this observation on his own experiences in Illyria. The play moved him so much that, at the end of his life, he tried his own hand at adapting Polidori's novella for the stage. Dumas' \textit{Le Vampire} premiered at Ambigue-Comque on December 20, 1853, which suggests in some
measure the lasting appeal of the vampire theme and Polidori’s novella for the Paris theater (Summers 295).

Nodier’s prediction that the vampire would sell itself, no matter what the trappings of the melodrama were, may offer another reason for its success on French stages. Perhaps he was correct in claiming the vampire myth as the most universal of our stories. Straddling old world superstitions and the advances of the modern world, it provides useful metaphors for making sense of the struggles of the day. The signifiers in the myth are remarkably malleable, allowing their meanings to signify differently in different situations. I suspect that this adaptability of the myth accounts partly for the fascination with the vampire in 1820s Paris. For the Paris audiences who reveled in the thrills and humor of the “theater of vampires,” Polidori’s story and the French dramatic versions of it served as an important text that was in some way about themselves.

A brief look at the socio-political turmoil of France in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century gives an idea of the stressful world most Parisians inhabited. A not so arbitrary place to begin is the abolishment of the monarchy with the guillotining of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette in 1793. The French Revolution that followed was violent and anarchic. However, in 1799 Napoleon Boneparte became a consul of The First Republic. In 1804 he was declared Emperor, and he proceeded to make much of Europe his empire. On June 22, 1812, Napoleon began his invasion of Russia. While he succeeded in marching on Moscow, the overall campaign was his downfall. He barely managed to raise another army and defend Paris before he met
with defeat and went into exile at the isle of Elba on April 6, 1814. One year later, he
returned from exile and seized power for one hundred days before being defeated at
Waterloo on June 18, 1815.

The review of Napoleon’s impressive political career may seem a bit off the
point, but not when viewed as the world in which many Parisians of the 1820’s had
grown up. Taking into account the number of men lost in Napoleon’s campaigns
(particularly towards the end), the average age of French citizenry by 1820 was very
young (Spitzer 28). The twenty- to twenty-five-year-old in 1820 was born either during
or at the end of the First Republic, growing up largely in the Napoleonic Empire.
Because they were not old enough to fight for Napoleon in his Russian campaign of
1812-1814 or, for that matter, at Waterloo, this generation was left to endure the return
of France to monarchical rule. In 1815, the return of the Bourbon King Louis XVIII,
with his strong connection to the Catholic Church, might as well have been an alien
invasion. The youth of France, particularly the intellectuals, grew up in a different
country and balked at the reforms the Bourbon kings tried to install.

The Restoration Government’s decree of April 8, 1814, clearly articulates the
threat of these reforms in its attack on “an exclusively statist and militaristic
educational system and promised to return children to the authority of their fathers,
mothers, tutors, or families” (Spitzer 37). In an attempt to mollify the Bourbons,
academic officials at Breton College of Vannes passed out white, royalist cockades to
replace the tricolor of the Empire. The students trampled and destroyed the royalist
emblem and secretly cherished the blue-white-and-red cockade. From the ranks of
these students arose the great organizations that eventually brought about the July Revolution of 1830 and the deposing of the Bourbons in favor of a constitutional monarchy.

In the meantime, during the royalist reformation, revolution was always a dangerous threat. One talk given by a noted member of the Faculty of Letters warned students in 1820:

Beware of those who flatter you. Beware of those who praise your precious gifts, the brilliant but sometimes portion of a fortunate few, and never the common lot. Reject the ridiculous notion of constituting yourselves, in all your inexperience, as an autonomous power within the state, bizarre and tyrannical judges of all the rest. (qtd. in Spitzer 61)

While the royalists warned the young generation of the 1820s to beware the revolutionaries amongst them, the young students had their own ideas as to who the true villains were.

Writing in the Tabletes Universelles in 1823, one young critic explains:

It is not because we scorn the heritage passed on to us by our fathers that we have not completely accepted it; but enriched by experience that they did not enjoy, free of their illusory prejudices, we renounce only their errors, while taking infinite pains to preserve the intermingled truths. (qtd. in Spitzer 101)

This statement may be one of the more gentle expressions of how the younger generation felt about their rulers. What is clear, however, is that the Bourbon rule of France from 1815-1830 was unsuccessful and largely unremarkable because of a "generation gap" that made the monarchy new and unfamiliar to the largest age groups of French citizenry.

"The Vampyre," with its story of a malign and malingering revenant of a past age preying on the idealistic and virtuous youth of the present, fits easily into what
must have been a politically charged atmosphere. Aubrey is a young intellectual who has traveled with an older noble in a sort of exile. He has come to recognize Ruthven’s particular evil. He leaves him to go to that classical world of philosophy and ancient democracy, Greece. While in this ideal “school” state, he does not heed warnings that threats of Ruthven’s kind, vampires, haunt the landscape. He is betrayed by the moral excesses of the vampire figure, and yet that same figure regains his trust by nursing him to health. When Ruthven is “fatally” wounded, he exacts an oath from Aubrey that, in effect, is an oath of fealty. The result of this oath allows Ruthven unfettered access to the most prized of nineteenth-century European commodities, women (Aubrey’s sister). An oath to an older, bloodthirsty aristocrat of the past allows Aubrey’s sister to be violated and destroyed even as Aubrey himself is silenced by her servants.

What can this story have meant to its Paris readership? I think there is some suggestion of its importance in the changes from page to stage. In the play, while Aubrey is surprised to see a man he thought dead, there are no bad feelings between the two. He is happy to have Ruthven marrying into the family. The audience, although forewarned by the prologue, does not see Ruthven’s evil magic at work until he tries to seduce a peasant bride at a local wedding. When Ruthven is shot by the groom, Aubrey runs to his side. Following the last request of his “dying” friend, Aubrey swears himself to silence about the circumstances of Ruthven’s apparent demise. Again, it is the ghastly reanimation of a corpse and the power of the oath that prove to be the important signifiers in the script. Ruthven is a leaching, murderous
presence from the past who uses deceit to gain a dangerously binding oath. Aubrey attempts to defy his oath and interrupt the marriage, initially to no avail. Fortunately, Aubrey has a “genie of marriage” looking over him who protects all good marrying folk from evil vampire aristocrats. Divine providence thwarts the vampire’s schemes and consigns him, via the spectacular deus ex machina, to the fires of Hell.

Both play and story serve to textually embody the ideological generation clash that dominated the Bourbon years in the brief period between Napoleons. Based on a scandalized English (a common foe to all factions in France) aristocrat, Lord Ruthven was the perfect embodiment of a non-royalist, politically-inspired nightmare. Aubrey, orphaned and innocent in the world, is at the very least a pleasant way of depicting a citizenry raised and abandoned by Napoleon. The vampire was a more than suitable image for the almost forgotten yet somehow revived Bourbons, who drained France under their absolute rule. The symbolic struggle in the vampire story seems quite appropriate for the struggles that animated the interactions between generations in Restoration France.

The Vampire; Or, The Bride of the Isles

If the vampire was popular in Paris, it was also successful in England, although to a lesser degree. The different social conditions in England may well explain the difference in degree of popular success. England’s political circumstances were a bit more stable than those of France in the early nineteenth-century. Of far greater concern were troubles on the outskirts of the Empire and even the “backward” parts of the British Isles, including Scotland and Ireland. It is perhaps for this reason that the
scene of the play is resituated in the Scottish Isles. Planché attributes this scene change to a Samuel James Arnold, the manager of the English Opera House, who had a stock room full of Scottish costumes and scenery (Roy 3-4). Planché was well aware that Scotland had no vampire myths and, in 1829, rewrote the play, setting it in Hungary and changing Ruthven from a Scottish Earl to a Wallachian Boyard (Skal, Hollywood 15).

This sort of scenic shift aside, Planché follows the French play directly with a few key variations. An older character, Ronald, takes the place of Aubrey. Ronald is a Baron of the Scottish Isles, the English version thus featuring an aristocratic hero, although he is still of a lesser rank than Ruthven, who is the Earl of Marsden. Another significant change is that it is Ronald’s daughter (as opposed to Aubrey’s sister) on whom the vampire preys. With greater economy than the French version, Planché manages to present the story within two acts, although the plot follows fairly closely that of Le Vampire.

Where the changes become most evident is in the climax of the play. Whereas in Polidori’s story and the French melodrama Aubrey’s oath has a supernatural power, Ronald is able to break his oath in Planché’s version. In the English version, the abrupt actions of foolish and drunken servants put Ronald’s daughter in peril. Only when the servants realize their mistake are they able to thwart Ruthven. Up until this point, the fool, M’Swill, has misread his master’s agitations as the ravings of a father about to lose his daughter.
While the line, “Remember your oath,” has a similar resonance in the English play, it is overshadowed by a struggle between competing male-female relationships. This becomes clear as Ronald struggles with Ruthven:

RONALD: Barbarian! I forbid the ceremony. You have no right over her — I am her father.
LADY M: You are — you are my loving, tender father — I will not wed against his will. (throwing herself into his arms)
RUTHVEN: I'll hear no more! She is my bride betrothed: this madman would deprive me of her. (Roy 67)

In this final moment, Ruthven’s attempt to characterize Ronald as a madman fails and Lady Margaret chooses her father. This choice, now supported by the servants who have figured out Ruthven’s evil, seals Ruthven’s fate. His time runs out and he disappears in a clap of thunder, literally vanishing before the audience’s eyes.

The abrupt disappearance of the vampire at the end of the play is another site of difference in the two versions. While Le Vampire ended with a similarly extravagant spectacle, it appears that the English did this trick even better. Theater historians credit productions of Planche’s play with inventing a standard bit of theater trickery: the combination elevator/trap door that allows characters to disappear and appear suddenly before the audience’s eyes. Called a “vampire,” this stage technology became standard fair for supernatural melodramas and has whisked people on and off stages extensively ever since (Bunson 265).

The play enjoyed a successful run in 1820 and was rather less successfully revised and revived in 1829 (Roy 6). At the heart of the story is a familiar melodramatic character, the “rake.” Like a con man, the “rake” insinuates himself into a family for the sake of violating its integrity by seducing its women. Planche returns
to the more stock characters and settings of the gothic melodrama. While the setting is eerie and teeming with legends and supernatural beings, the main villain operates more through human treachery and deception.

What is missing in this text is the social relevance of the vampire. Here, the vampire signifier serves little more function than a more mundane villain. Lacking the kind of generational conflict that seems to animate the text in Paris, the English version is little more than a footnote in the melodrama tradition of English theater. This relative lack of popular success may also derive from Planché’s use of the French script rather than the English novella. In the latter, at least, was a slightly veiled cautionary fable about the debaucheries of English nobility. Planché’s version is overly reliant on its French predecessors and so is less able to adapt the vampire to the socially relevant issues of English culture. Consequently, his play is a formula melodrama more remembered for its stagecraft than its narrative.

Conclusions

Taken together these plays and the novella that inspired them represent several key developments of Dracula’s theatricality. Keeping in mind the key elements of the antitheatrical prejudice, these theatrical aspects cluster around immoral content, imitation and pretense, powerful influence, and disruptions of state power. These attributes are relevant to the audience’s reception of the plays and novella, but they are also relevant as depictions of the vampire’s power within the stories. The plays then become theater about theater, the vampire working its magic on other characters in the story in a fashion similar to the way the plays related to their audiences.
The immoral content of the story is fairly obvious. As the title proudly proclaims, this is a play about a vampire, a creature that kills people and drinks their blood. But in proper carnivalesque form, this depiction of debauchery is an exaggeration of the more everyday excesses that seem to have promoted the play and novella to popularity in France. The popular interest in Lord Byron and his scandals motivated Polidori to write the novella. His publishers pushed him to publish the story under the name “Lord B.” because they knew that the audience’s interest in new fiction by the scandalous English lord was far more marketable than a neophyte author’s work. As Plato feared, the audience’s interest in depictions of immorality prevails.

Polidori does not disappoint them. Yet for all his exaggerated representations of Byron’s debaucheries as vampirism, it is significant that in neither the plays nor the novella is blood drinking depicted. Significantly, Aubrey’s first falling-out with Ruthven is over his misconduct with young women while they are traveling across Europe. Associating the vampire with the sexual transgressions of a social deviant is an important development in these proto-Dracula articulations. It is important to keep in mind that the vampire’s debaucheries are primarily about the ways he negotiates non-normative sexual relations with women. Even though the textual descriptions of Ruthven are not flattering, the sex appeal of the scandalous Lord Byron cannot help but glide into the popular perception of the vampire. And while the homoerotic content of the story is muted in comparison to present day versions of Dracula, it is also important to keep in mind that the central relationship in this story is between two
male companions at odds with each other about the appropriate way to behave sexually.

As Aubrey's trust in Ruthven waxes and wanes, the central conflict in the story is between Aubrey's virtue and Ruthven's guile. Significant yet secondary to this drama is the internal conflict in Aubrey as he questions whether he can trust Ruthven and as he regrets the oath he ultimately makes. Such conflict is central to the idea of immoral content, as it stands in contrast to Plato's preference for representations of unified virtue (Barrish 10). As a victim of Ruthven's debaucheries, in both plays and the novella Aubrey is also complicitous with the vampire to a degree. In the novella, he pays for helping the vampire with his life. In the plays, he merely suffers until a theatrical contrivance rescues him. The novella is puritanical in its suggestion that making oaths with the devil can only lead to one's demise. Conversely, the content of theater presentations suggests that the devil will get his due, and that after some suffering the fallen hero will emerge triumphant.

This leniency in the theatrical presentations may well be connected to a tolerance of pretense. The second of the antitheatrical concerns deals with anxiety about mimesis. In "The Vampyre," pretense begins extra-textually with Polidori publishing under Lord Byron's name. Understandably, pretense and deception are central to the vampire. Aubrey's downfall is instigated by a moment when Ruthven tricks him into believing that he is dying. Of course, this pretense is predicated on the greater pretense that Ruthven is a human being. The climactic moments of all three versions of this story deal with a verbal combat between Aubrey and Ruthven as
Aubrey tries to convince his family that Ruthven is a monster. Ruthven’s lies win out against Aubrey’s truth, initially. In Polidori’s novel, the victory is complete. In Nodier’s play, it takes the genie of marriages to rescue the hero and heroine. In Planche’s version, it takes the virtuous voice of a daughter finally believing in her father to delay the vampire long enough so that he can be destroyed.

These variations point to a significant aspect of Dracula: strategies for penetrating of the vampire’s deceptions. Polidori is cynical, suggesting that a vampire’s illusions, once engaged, are too powerful to be beaten. On a metaphysical level, Nodier’s play suggests that while there is evil preying on us through deception, there are also other similarly powered forces of good that work to protect us. On a technical level, the structure of the play demonstrates that the machinery of the theater can save us from the deceptions of its actors. If deception is the operation of concern in the theater, this play suggests that deception is not the only force at work. The “God in the machine,” literally a part of the theater’s architecture, is there to save the day. The important point here is that Nodier’s version fights the theatricality of the vampire with further theatricality, foreshadowing Van Helsing’s supernatural defense for a supernatural predator in Stoker’s novel. Finally, in Planche’s play, the vampire’s intended victim breaks the vampire’s spell. In the face of her father’s ravings, Lady Margaret nonetheless supports him and stalls the marriage long enough for Ruthven’s powers to fade. The image that the weak prey of the vampire can be so virtuous as to resist his deceptions is Planche’s greatest contribution to Dracula, prefiguring the role of Mina Harker.
As supernatural beings go, Lord Ruthven is not particularly powerful in any of his representations. Nonetheless, he does have a certain power of influence over his victims. *Dracula* does significantly more to develop the idea that this influence is based on emotional response and so is more clearly a part of the antitheatrical prejudice. Nonetheless, Ruthven does have undue influence over his victims, and it is primarily enacted through the performance of an oath. Linked with his ability to deceive, this oath is an injunction against Aubrey's revealing the truth. The power of that oath is magical. In the novella, Aubrey fights against his sudden inability to speak until he bursts a vein in his head. In *Le Vampire*, every time he tries to speak, Ruthven's voice drowns him out, reminding him to "remember your oath!" Only in Planche's version is the oath less supernatural. As the Aubrey character, Ronald, speaks against the wedding, he is misunderstood by his family and servants. They think he is a father unwilling to release his beloved daughter into marriage. The play depends on his ability to speak and to convince his daughter, thus demonstrating that the vampire's power need not be supernatural and certainly is not absolute.

The oath is a particularly interesting source for the vampire's power. Although I will discuss such performatives in greater detail in Chapter Four, it nonetheless bears mentioning that an oath is a highly performative gesture. In these early versions of *Dracula*, it is significant that Ruthven's source of influence over his victims is an oath -- literally a binding performance. Ironically, Plato's greatest concern about drama is that the audience would be moved to forswear their oaths to the state in favor of what they were learning in the theater (Barrish 24-25).
The French fascination with “The Vampyre” and its subsequent theatricalization into multiple versions most typifies this challenge to state authority and firmly establishes the vampire as inherently transgressive. While Planche’s play does contribute significantly to Dracula -- the “vampire” trapdoor and the virtuous heroine most notably -- it failed to be as popular with audiences as the French versions. The success of these French versions is dependent on the fourth key element of the antitheatrical prejudice, that theater implicitly undermines the dominant authority of the state. To some degree, *Le Vampire* challenged the established order of Bourbon rule. I think it is not entirely accidental that a significant decline in the popularity of vampire-based melodramas occurs close to the end of the Bourbon reign. That the primarily youthful audiences may have identified with Aubrey and associated the aristocratic Lord Ruthven with the returning Bourbons seems quite plausible. No doubt the central oath in the play resonated for students and young scholars who were encouraged to pledge their allegiance to their new lieges. As a seemingly innocent melodrama, the imagery of *Le Vampire* is quite oppositional to the established state power of the day.

The vampire tale in general also seems to challenge religious authority as well. By publishing the novella with an introduction about the reality of vampires, the text suggests that the triumph of rationalism over superstition was flawed. The critic who dismissed the play for representing indirectly “God as an evil creature who abandons the world to the genies of Hell” highlights the tensions between superstition and early modernism. Entertaining the notion that such beings exist at all challenged the
emerging world-view of a well-ordered world open to rational and scientific explanation.

Therefore, it would seem that transgression is at the core of the Dracula phenomenon from the very beginning. These early plays present a transgressive figure, allow him to stir up considerable trouble, and then vanquish him, albeit crudely. While that vanquishing would seem to suggest that the plays support the established social order by reaffirming it in the end, proponents of the antitheatrical prejudice are not so sure. Arguments against such morality tales hold that the drama fails to teach because entertainment wins out over the moral content; people return to the theater not for the lesson but for the depiction of evil (Barrish 67). Certainly the proliferation of vampires in Paris theater of the 1820s suggests that the vampire figure was more than simply a lesson of vanquished evil. As a sort of foreshadowing of the many sequels of Dracula in twentieth century film, the supposedly vanquished Ruthven turned up in play after play during the 1820s. The return of so many vampires suggests that Paris culture reveled in transgression and scandalous behavior.

The presence of these antitheatrical prejudices in these early articulations of Dracula play an important role in Stoker's construction of the novel. While certainly not a proponent of social transgression, Stoker was nonetheless an avid fan of the theater. The residue of the trangressive aspects of the vampire cannot help but find their way into Stoker's work. As the next section reveals, he was a man deeply enamored of the theater's ability to influence audiences, as well as of a good actor's
ability to lose himself in a role. These theatrical abilities, of course, played an important part in Stoker’s construction of Dracula.

Bram Stoker’s Dracula.

Bram Stoker’s Relationship with the English Theater

A little more than fifty years after the first production of Planche’s vampire play at the English Opera House, Bram Stoker came to be manager of the same theater, renamed the Lyceum. While his working notes for Dracula show that Polidori’s story was one of the inspirations for his novel, there is no direct evidence that he was aware of its dramatic adaptations either in Paris or in London (Bierman 54). However, more than the ghosts of the Lyceum had their dramatic effects on Stoker’s vampire. Certainly the architecture of the theater contained a “vampire,” directly referencing Planche’s play; Balderston and Deane’s play calls for the use of such a device (147). A brief review of Stoker’s association with both the theater and his companion, the famed nineteenth century actor Sir Henry Irving, reveals a background of theatrical influences on Stoker’s work.

Bram Stoker’s relationship with the English Theater begins in Dublin. As a student at Trinity College, he enjoyed the productions of the Theatre Royal. His interest in theater, however, was mostly extracurricular. In addition to his honors study in science, he demonstrated a great proficiency at writing. He served as president of the Philosphical Society, where he delivered his first lecture entitled “Sensationalism in Fiction and Society.” While in college, Stoker first saw Henry Irving in a production of The Rivals. The performance made quite an impression, as
Stoker recalls in *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*: “What I saw, to my amazement and delight, was a patrician figure as real as the person of one’s dreams, and endowed with the same poetic grace” (qtd. in Roth 67).

Upon graduating in 1868, he followed his father’s footsteps and entered into civil service at Dublin Castle. The work was apparently mind numbing, but it heightened Stoker’s managerial skills. The work also left him both time and mental energy to continue his love of the theater (Farson 42). When Irving returned to Dublin in 1871 in a production of *Two Roses*, Stoker was shocked when he could find no reviews for the performance. He saw an opportunity to write publicly and began publishing, without salary or financial compensation, theater reviews for the *Dublin Mail* while continuing his civil service work (Belford 43). In the fall of 1876, Irving returned again to Dublin playing the title role in a production of *Hamlet*. Stoker, no less impressed with Irving’s skill as an actor in this role than in the others he had seen, wrote a glowing review of his performance. Irving requested and received an introduction to his admirer, which was the beginning of the two men’s lasting friendship (Roth 5).

Stoker was increasingly frustrated at his job. In the summers of 1877 and 1878, Stoker took vacations in London where he spent more time with Irving, building their friendship. Meanwhile, Irving’s success as an actor provided him with enough capital to establish his own theater company (Belford 75-80). In November of 1878, Irving signed a lease for the Lyceum Theater in London. He eagerly requested that
Stoker come serve as his theater manager. Stoker agreed and, in December of 1878, he moved with his new wife, Florence, to London (Roth 6-7).

Florence quickly established the Stoker home as a minor social center in polite London society. Meanwhile, Stoker excelled at managing the 128 member staff of actors and stage workers at the Lyceum theater. Stoker’s position allowed him to preside over the theater during performances, especially on opening nights. Patrons took to calling him the “red-haired giant,” and Irving benefited from his efficiency at running the theater. One writer of the day, Reginald Auberon, describes an opening night at the Lyceum as follows:

To see Stoker in his element was to see him standing at the top of the theatre’s stairs, surveying a “first-night” crowd trooping up them. There was no mistake about it -- a Lyceum première did draw an audience that really was representative of the best of that period in the realms of art, literature and society.

Admittance was a very jealously guarded privilege. Stoker, indeed, looked on the stalls, dress circle, and boxes as if they were annexes to the Royal Enclosure at Ascot, and one almost had to be proposed and seconded before the coveted ticket would be issued. (qtd. in Farson 47)

While his duties mostly involved supervising the theater staff, he also offered artistic input on the selection of plays for the company’s repertoire. In addition, he was largely responsible for making the company’s tours, especially to America, go smoothly (Roth 11).

As with his theater reviews in Dublin, Stoker managed to find extra time away from his duties at the Lyceum to write prolifically. Stoker often wrote hundreds of letters a week in the service of Irving’s growing correspondence. He continued to publish short stories and reviews in London periodicals. In the course of his twenty-
seven-year friendship with Irving and his managing of the Lyceum Theater, he also turned out five novels (Glover 8).

Stoker’s association with Irving put him in the heart of London’s social scene and theater world. He met and became good friends with Ellen Terry, famed actress of the time and briefly one of Irving’s romantic companions. While he never published a play for the theater, he did offer a staged reading of his second novel, Dracula.

Several scholars have suggested ways in which his association with Irving and the Lyceum affected Dracula (Auerbach, Ellen 199; Belford xi; Farson 33-4; Glover 13; Skal, Hollywood 26). Most of these are speculative, but this speculation is more than understandable given some of the theatrical elements of the novel. What is clear from both his managing of the theater and his writing notes for Dracula is that the man was methodical, organized, and seemingly untiring (Bierman 51). The theatrical elements in Dracula seem to come from Stoker not as a performer on the stage, but as a spectator — and, by Auberon’s account, not a passive spectator but an active audience member/manager committed to performing in the theater from the other side of the stage edge.

Theatrical Characterizations in Dracula

The direct effect of acquaintences and events in Stoker’s life — particularly his life in the theater — on his drafting of Dracula is not clear. Still, speculating on the biographical influences on this text is a significant part of the Dracula scholarship. Phyllis Roth posits that his relationship with his father during a childhood illness influenced him, while Danial Farson suggests that Florence Stoker’s frigidity plays
into Dracula. On the one hand, this impetus to explain his most successful novel in terms of the author's biography may simply have to do with the psycho-sexual fantasies that seem to permeate images within Dracula. Surely the creator of such a disturbing fantasy must have suffered somewhere in his life. Similar criticism offers speculation about Stoker's sexual health, his relationships with actor Henry Irving and actress Ellen Terry, and so forth. I take to heart David Glover's caution in his book Vampires, Mummies and Liberals that to pin Stoker's texts to speculations about his own psycho-sexual development is to foreclose interpretive analysis on the cultural impacts of his works (3).

Critics tend to reach for such connections more so with Dracula than with any of his other works. This tendency points to another, perhaps more reasonable, explanation for this desire to see Stoker’s life in the text of Dracula. That Stoker used Polidori's “The Vampyre” as a source for his novel is fairly clear. That Polidori’s novella is based on his experiences with Lord Byron is also fairly well established. There seems, therefore, to be a precedence for reading vampire stories as connected to the author’s world. One might also see similarities between the Byron-Polidori and Irving-Stoker relationships. Consequently, many of the attempts to bridge Stoker’s life with his art make particular note of his relationship with Irving.

Some of these connections are patently false. Their veracity is less important, I think, than the apparent desire to make the connection. For example, Daniel Farson, a distant nephew of Stoker’s, recounts a story told to him by Orson Welles:

“Stoker,” he declared expansively, “told me this extraordinary story — that he had written this play about a vampire especially for his friend Henry Irving,
who threw it aside contemptuously. But — you know? — his voice deepened and he leant forward — "Stoker had his revenge! He turned the play into a novel and if you read the description of the Count you will find it identical to Irving!" Welles gave a great roar of laughter and I was impressed at the time, but there are two flaws in the theory: firstly, Count Dracula has a big white moustache in the book, and secondly, Stoker died three years before Welles was born. (Farson 164-5)

Three aspects of this story are of interest. The first is that Welles sources the origin of Dracula as a play. The second is the assertion that Stoker modeled Count Dracula’s appearance after Irving. Finally, Welles attributes a Polidori-esque motivation of revenge to this representation. Each of these points may hold a glimmer of accuracy, but taken as a whole the story is clearly more about Welles’s own fantasies of Stoker.

The claim that Dracula may have first been a play holds some merit. Stoker did stage a reading of his novel at the Lyceum Theater on the morning of May 18, 1897. Ostensibly, this performance was for the purpose of copyright in an attempt to prevent unauthorized imitations of his work in either print or performance (Skal, Hollywood 25). However, Farson suggests this reason seems insufficient to explain the performance. For example, there is no indication that Stoker held such a reading for any of his other works, either before or after Dracula. Similarly, posters and programs announce the “one time only!” performance; while “Henry Irving” and “Lyceum Theater” loom large on these posters, Stoker’s name does not appear (Farson 163-4). If Stoker were interested in preserving his rights to the story, this omission seems strange. Finally, the fact that Stoker had two programs printed for the performance, one acknowledging a minor change in the casting of the reading, suggests that the performance and its casting were significant enough to him to
warrent a costly gesture marking that casting change (Farson 165). If the purpose of
the performance were only to create witnesses to preserve his authorship over the plot
of Dracula, surely the casting would not matter so much.

The significance of the performance, however, seems to have been for Stoker
alone. His adaptation apparently followed very closely the narrative in the novel,
taking up five acts and forty-seven scenes. The performance required 15 major
characters, each listed on the program for the show. Convoluted and overly burdened
with character monologues substituted for the novel’s detailed narration, the
performance lasted over five hours (Belford 270). While little evidence of this
performance remains, as a staged reading of a novel it may have looked something
like a chamber theater performance more than a drama. Irving, who saw only part of
the performance, was reportedly unimpressed. Farson relates that when Stoker
approached Irving to ask what he thought of the performance, the actor’s one word
evaluation was “Dreadful” (Farson 164).

This story, even if apocryphal, suggests two possible characterizations of the
Stoker/Irving relationship. On the one hand, that Stoker asked Irving for his opinion
seems to point to the deep respect he felt for his benefactor. On the other hand, the
rebuke seems to support the idea that Stoker and Irving were not always on the best of
terms. Both interpretations bear considering when examining how the descriptions of
the vampire in Dracula may or may not be based on Sir Henry Irving.
That Stoker was impressed with Irving is clear from his earliest writings and reviews of the actor's performances. Writing of a recitation of Thomas Hood's poem, "The Dream of Eugene Aram," Stoker describes Irving as follows:

That experience I shall never -- can never -- forget . . . such was Irving's commanding force, so great was the magnetism of his genius, so profound was the sense of dominance that I sat spellbound. Outwardly I was of stone ... here was incarnate power, incarnate passion . . . here was indeed Eugene Aram . . . After the climax of horror, the Actor was able by art and habit to control himself to the narrative mood whilst he spoke a few concluding lines of the poem. Then he collapsed half fainting. (Stoker, Personal 28-30)

This description recalls the supernatural powers of Count Dracula, whose hypnotic influence over Mina and Lucy is similarly strong. Stoker's experience in the presence of this performance is also not unlike Jonathan Harker's paralysis in the presence of the Count. Nina Auerbach notes that Irving was an actor who "possessed others' minds so intensely that he linked the theatrical to the supernatural" (Ellen 199).

If Stoker's Count is based in part on Irving, he may be drawing on one of the actor's most famous roles as the devilish Mephistopheles in Christopher Marlowe's Faust. Pictures and drawings of the actor in this role show a figure not unlike popular depictions of Dracula. His forehead is high with his hair coming to a widow's peak; his eyebrows are large and feature intense, penetrating eyes (Skal, Hollywood 26-7).

Looking at these pictures, it is easy to see how Orson Welles might fabricate his story about Stoker's description of Dracula being based on Irving. Except for the mustache, the description fits quite nicely:

His face was strong -- a very strong -- aequiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily over the temples, but profusely elsewhere. His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that
seemed to curl in its own profusion. The mouth, so far as I could see it under
the heavy moustache, was fixed and rather cruel looking, with peculiarly sharp
white teeth; these protruded over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness showed
astonishing vitality in a man of his years. (Stoker, Dracula 21-2)

The image suggests that Irving may very well have served as the model for Count
Dracula, both in terms of his appearance and in terms of his supernatural presence.

The question remains, however, as to whether this depiction is in some sense a
critique of Irving. Two critics suggest that Stoker was criticizing his patron. Ivan
Stoker Dixson, another distant relative of Stoker’s, posits that Dracula is inspired by
Stoker’s resentment of Irving. His association with Irving drained his energy and
diminished his abilities as a writer. Stoker’s novel literalizes the parasitism that Irving
enacted on his life (Muro). This reading of Stoker’s relationship to Irving is
interesting, especially for the ways in which it mirrors Polidori’s frustrations with Lord
Byron. However, this negative view of their relationship does not take into account
Stoker’s positive reviews of Irving’s performances, which often praised his acting for
its hypnotic qualities. There is strong evidence that Stoker prospered from his
relationship with Irving up until a year following the publication of Dracula, when an
unfortunate fall and subsequent lingering injury began Irving’s downward spiral as an
actor (Roth 14-5).

Nina Auerbach suggests that the relationship represented in Dracula is not
between Irving and Stoker but between Irving and Ellen Terry. Terry’s most
successful years of performance were during her time at the Lyceum under the
influence of Irving. Audiences recognized her own hypnotic abilities as a performer,
and she reached a level of acclaim that rivaled Irving’s. Auerbach notes, however, that
"[l]ater, when Ellen Terry acted without Irving, the legend of her charm would cloy and cripple her performances. . . . Irving’s holy circle made her less an actress than an object of belief. Like Mina in Dracula’s final scene, Ellen Terry froze into her magic circle, immobilized and adored" (Auerbach, Ellen 199-200). Auerbach’s connection of Dracula to Irving serves more as an interpretive lens for making sense of the actor’s relationship to Ellen Terry. While highly speculative in attributing satirical intent to Stoker, her point is well taken that not only did Irving demonstrate a “powerful” performance ability, but that he seemed to communicate that ability to some of the women who performed with him.

Whatever Stoker’s attitude to his actor friend, the important fact remains that Irving’s performance seemed to have a “supernatural” effect on his audience. The language of the day made sense of this power by means of hypnosis. That theater and hypnosis (or mesmerism) interpenetrated one another in the nineteenth-century seems very clear. Stoker’s primary influence for Dracula’s mesmeric powers can be most directly traced to Irving’s performances than to any experience with hypnotism that he ever wrote of. Elizabeth Miller, archivist for The Dracula Society, confirms that references in his working notes and in the text of Dracula indicate that he was certainly aware of the major scientific names associated with hypnotism. In the novel, Dr. Van Helsing connects hypnotism to mind reading, and both to theater, as he argues with Dr. Seward about the scientific reality of the vampire’s supernatural powers:

"Ah, it is the fault of our science that it wants to explain all; and if it explain not, then it says there is nothing to explain. But yet we see around us every day the growth of new beliefs, which think themselves new; and which are yet but the old, which pretend to be young -- like the fine ladies at the opera. I suppose
now you do not believe in corporal transference. No? Nor in materialization. No? Nor astral bodies. No? Nor in the reading of thought. No? Nor in hypnotism —

"Yes," I said. "Charcot has proved that pretty well." He smiled as he went on: "Then you are satisfied as to it. Yes? And of course then you understand how it act [sic.], and can follow the mind of great Charcot -- alas that he is no more! -- into the very soul of the patient he influences. No? Then, friend John, am I to take it that you simply accept fact, and are satisfied to let from premise to conclusion be a blank? No? Then tell me -- for I am a student of the brain -- how you can accept the hypnotism and reject the thought reading. Let me tell you, my friend, that there are things done to-day in electrical science which would have been deemed unholy by the very men who discovered electricity -- who would themselves not so long before have been burned as wizards. There are always mysteries in life...." (Stoker, Dracula 172, emphasis added)

Van Helsing elaborates on what becomes one of Stoker’s central themes in the novel, a connection (almost a reconciliation) between modern science and past superstitions (Glover 58).

Within this context, Van Helsing’s reference to the opera is particularly interesting. On the surface, the reference continues Van Helsing’s theme of the old masquerading as the young, a trait that extends beyond vampirism to high society and science. However, I think the mention of theater in the midst of this debate about the possibilities of telepathy and hypnosis serves another function as well. As with Stoker’s responses to Irving’s readings, perhaps these ladies at the opera are given to similar “swoons” in the face of powerful performances. The implied “old” here is the power of performance; the “new” garb for that old power is hypnotism.

Conclusions

Bram Stoker’s extensive involvement with the theater is quite clear. His work as both a theater reviewer and manager allowed him a professional outlet for his
interests in the theater. That he never performed on the stage seems to mark his pleasure in the theater as located more backstage and in the audience. He was a reviewer, a critic, a manager; in short, he was a man impressed by the performers around him. That he should have found time in his busy schedule for writing prolifically and yet not have written a script surprises me. Yet, his writing of the theater and its performers is composed with such reverence that he may well have deemed his talents unworthy for the stage, either as writer or performer. It seems odd that a man so in love with the theater would create a story that depicts a monster that so embodies antitheatrical prejudices. Nonetheless, pretense, influence and transgression play significant roles in Stoker's novel.

Part of the uncanniness of Count Dracula is his transformations within the novel. Like an actor appearing in different scenes, he changes his appearance frequently. His initial appearance, arguably modeled after Irving as Mephistopheles, is as an older aristocrat. He then appears in London as a younger man, dressed in evening clothes as if planning to attend the opera. The novel then also suggests that he can be a wolf, a bat, and even dust in moonlight. No doubt inspired by Irving's ability to play multiple parts, Stoker creates a monster that is similarly protean. This protean ability is unlike most of the literary and dramatic vampires that predate Dracula. Such an ability to play many different parts and so well is both a central anxiety of the novel and a central anxiety of the antitheatrical prejudice.

That Stoker based Count Dracula's hypnotic power on Irving's abilities as an actor seems fairly clear. The linkage of an actor to Dracula is far more interesting, I
think, than trying to map real life relationships in a Polidori-esque manner onto Stoker’s novel. Whether Irving’s relationship with Stoker or Terry was amicable or parasitic is less important, I think, than how the actor’s performance ability is captured in the vampire’s powers. In *Dracula*, the reader comes to know the vampire’s powers by the effects that his victims report; the novel is literally written from the point of view of the spectators of the vampire’s performance. Similarly, this vantage point would be Stoker’s view on Irving’s power as a performer for the stage.

But Stoker also spent a considerable amount of time with Irving away from the theater. While he and his wife enjoyed making their home a popular and well received center in London’s proper society, he no doubt was aware of, if not participating in, the various nefarious pastimes of Victorian gentlemen. The novel similarly oscillates between the forces of rigorous control and the vampire’s sexual release as a subaltern alternative. The transgressive behaviors in the novel are represented less by the figure of Dracula himself than by the women he transforms; these women change from proper Victorian ladies to little more than prostitutes. This transformation is all the more interesting as it further links the antitheatrical prejudice with Dracula’s theatrical powers. Theaters and prostitutes have shared the same street corners throughout history (Barrish 3). That Stoker casts the ultimate effect of vampirism as a transformation historically associated with the theater is significant.

It is little wonder, then, that a vampire so inspired by stage performance should find its way back to the stage. That Stoker may have conceived of the story as suitable for a play is supported most clearly by his staged reading of it. And I suspect that the
actual influences of his work at the Lyceum are greater than I have been able to
unearth here. The implications of theatrical influences on the novel play out more
clearly in the process of moving it from the page to the stage.

Hamilton Deane and John Balderston's Dracula: The Vampire Play

An “Official” Theater Adaptation

As a young member of the Lyceum troupe, Hamilton Deane must have been
struck by the dramatic potential of both the story and character of Count Dracula.
Deane pursued his own acting career following an early association with the Lyceum
theater and Bram Stoker. As his own traveling troupe of actors began to meet with
success, he repeatedly approached writers to adapt Dracula for the stage, but they
always turned him down. In 1923, while bedridden with a bad cold, Deane adapted
the novel himself. Deane gave a “sneak preview” of the play in June of 1924, and it
proved to be very successful. By 1926, Dracula was the main play of Deane’s
repertoire and also his main source of income. On February 14, 1927, the play opened
at the Little Theater in London to mixed reviews. Regardless of the English critical
response, Dracula was a huge popular success as evidenced by the length of the play’s
run in England and its subsequent success on the road. Deane continued to play
Dracula in London and provincial theaters until 1941, in that time having the
opportunity to do the play as one of the last productions at Stoker’s old theater, the
Lyceum.

Aware of the success of the English Dracula, Horace Liveright purchased the
play for the American theater in 1927. In preparation for bringing the play across the
Atlantic, Liveright enlisted journalist and playwright John L. Balderston to revise the play. The settings were further simplified and the characters of Mina and Lucy were combined into one central heroine. Balderston also contemporized the setting of the play, moving it from the 1890s to the 1920s. The title character was left just as Deane described him. It was this description that the young Hungarian actor, Bela Lugosi, followed in the American premier of the play.

Deane's description of the Count is modeled much more after his own appearance than the description of the monster in Stoker's novel. Possibly thinking of his own appearance, Deane described Count Dracula as “a man of about fifty with a conspicuous green face, deep voice, and suave continental mannerisms” (Glut 80). Deane was also responsible for emphasizing the black cloak (only passingly referred to by Stoker) and the formal evening attire that was to become the Count’s permanent costume. Deane insisted that Dracula be played in a “witty and melodramatic” style, but “never over-acted as to become ludicrous” (Glut 81). To these instructions, Lugosi added his own thick Eastern European accent and created the most famous and easily recognized vision of vampires in Western popular culture.

The Deane and Balderston adaptation of Stoker’s novel played for 261 performances at the Fulton Theater in New York before moving on to numerous successful touring companies. In 1931, a further adaptation of the Deane and Balderston play into a feature length film provided Lugosi the opportunity to reach a wider audience. Film, play, and novel all were successful, although not always greatly praised by the critics of the time.
Critical Response to 1927 Production

The popular critical reviews of the 1927 play in New York reflect certain commonly held attitudes. What is obvious in these reviews is that Dracula was considered no great dramatic work and, therefore, was worth only the most cursory of critical glances. Although the play received some attention in the press before its arrival, many of the reviews condemned or praised it for the believability of its topic. The theater critics seldom gave much attention to the individual elements or performances involved in the production. Critics valued Dracula for its ability to terrorize and thrill its audience. As Deane’s directions for playing the King Vampire imply, terror and thrills must come with a certain amount of wit and melodrama. Much of the discourse given to reviewing the play engaged in the same sort of game. Nonetheless, the reviews, such as they are, can be examined in terms of the notoriety the play achieved before it opened, the question of vampiric reality, and comments on Lugosi’s performance.

Dracula came to New York with much advance notice of its success in England. American audiences and critics alike were aware both of Stoker’s novel and the Deane version playing in London. As early as March, 1927, the New York Times reported that a nurse was required at each performance of the play in London to deal with the fainting and hysterical audience members (“Two Plays”). Not unexpectedly, this obvious publicity stunt lost its appeal, and, by 1931 when Dracula returned to Broadway, the New York Times was quick to point out that the only “hysterical outbursts” from the play were to be had “under the leadership of one or two screamers
and shouters who gave evidence of being professional” (“Dracula Returns”). These same stunts were amusing and newsworthy four years before but had become a tactic worthy of negative review. Such reactions led to a growing sense among theater critics that Dracula was an inconsequential melodrama worthy of the least attention.

Further evidence of the notoriety that accompanied Dracula’s arrival at the Fulton Theater is found in a New York Times review of it during its debut in New Haven. The two paragraph “blurb” begins, “And then there is ‘Dracula,’ which a lot of people already know a good deal about.” The rest of the review provides a description of vampires and a brief description of the central conflict of the play “on the chance that [some people] have forgotten it.” The review encapsulates the purpose of the play as trying “to establish the fact that there are such things as vampires” (“New Plays”). This review offers no criticism of the play, either in response to the acting or the writing.

Time’s more attentive review of the Broadway opening of Dracula similarly draws on the popularity of both Stoker’s novel and the character of the Count. The review begins by reminding readers of the success of Stoker’s novel thirty years before. The critic compares the reactions to the novel that left “many a maid helpless with hysterics” with the less frightening play that saw theater goers calmly smoking cigarettes in the lobby during intermission. Nonetheless, Time describes the play as “a chamber of horrors to raise the most jaded hairs.” Finding, yet not naming, faults with the mechanics and acting of the play, the review recommends the play for its “morbidly magnificent,” even if already familiar, material (“Dracula”).
Beyond comparisons to Stoker's novel, the majority of opening night reviews for Dracula are most concerned with reassuring potential audiences that the play is successful in its ability to thrill. R. Skinner writing for Commonweal begins his review: “Those who enjoy chilly spines will find in Dracula the same kind of nervous agitation which tourists in Paris find at the Grand Guignol” (Skinner 584-5). Theater Magazine praises the play’s scariness by beginning its review with a challenge: “You who have pooh poohed last season’s and this season’s marrow jolters — I challenge you to sit passively through Dracula.” The review then goes on to compare the play to a ride on “the steepest scenic railroad” (Maxwell 84).

There is a special thrill to the play that the reviews all make note of (whenever they make note of more than just a plot description): the play’s ability to facilitate the audience’s suspension of disbelief and accept the possibility of the reality of vampires. Brooks Atkinson argues that “the first act snaps with sufficient intensity to make the tyranny of vampires seem entirely plausible.” Yet realism is not necessarily a compliment, as he says of the next two acts, “when the atmosphere becomes more realistic than occult, the effect is not so horribly fascinating” (Atkinson 29). Skinner is less fault-finding and praises the playwrights and director for their ability to make “so much pure hokum . . . convey the sense of supernatural reality” (584). The editor of Theater Magazine, picking up on a line by the Count’s adversary, Van Helsing, points out “that the superstition and theory of today is the fact of tomorrow” (Maxwell 84). In contrast, Time, which praises the ability of the subject of the play to scare its audience, sums up its review with a dismissive comment: “And of course it is all
perfectly silly” (“Dracula”). These critics’ descriptions of the play suggest a drama at once melodramatic and fantastic and yet taking itself quite seriously. As Van Helsing notes in both the novel and the play, the power and danger of Count Dracula is that most people will not believe in vampires.

At first, Brooks Atkinson’s review of Dracula seems to accept this popular and superstitious belief in vampires. Appearing to enjoy the show and suggesting the play’s impact as a thriller, he comforts readers: “let every timid soul rest assured that the Evil Monster was slain last night.” However, letting the humor of the myth get the better of him, he states his opinion that after seeing the play he would be happy if Dracula never rose from the dead again. After praising the first act, Atkinson suggests that the audience can find protection from the undead “by watching the stage machinery whirl.” Atkinson’s final summary of the play is one of disappointment: “One is not so frightened as one had generally hoped to be.” His rather vague suggestion for improving the terror of Dracula is that it should be played “more swiftly, fiercely and mysteriously” (Atkinson 29).

In general, many of the reviews resort to one-liners and sarcasm to sum up their critical response to the play. Robert Benchley reviewed the play in Life magazine in one sentence: “A horror play a bit overcharged with creeps but effective enough in spots to spoil an afternoon for you” (32). Even shorter responses were found in Alexander Woolcott’s “Ye who have fits, prepare to throw them now,” and John Anderson’s, “See it and creep” (qtd. in “Dracula”). Such responses, perhaps, reveal the attitude most drama critics felt for melodramatic thrillers in professional theaters at
the time — that they were spectacles worthy of little or no serious attention. Only
Atkinson’s review goes beyond its quips to discuss, rather vaguely, the performance.
Atkinson is willing to develop criteria for “the ideal thriller” as one in which “the
deception must be perfect. One must never be able to soothe one’s feeling by pooh-
poohing the play” (29). The majority of 1927 New York theater critics did not provide
such depth of analysis.

About the individual performances given by the actors, particularly Lugosi,
these reviews are sketchy at best. R. Skinner only praises Lugosi for his “authentic
and competent performance,” giving general praise to the whole company’s talent
“without which the play would simply become a ridiculous situation” (585). On what
basis Lugosi’s vampire can be said to be “authentic” is not stated. Theater Magazine,
echoing Atkinson’s suggestions for improving the play, states that “Bela Lugosi’s
heavy slowness as ‘Count Dracula’ rather exaggerates the portentousness of his role,
nevertheless his physique is impressive” (Maxwell 84). Atkinson identifies this
“heavy slowness” as a performance that is “too deliberate and confident.” In
Atkinson’s view, “‘Dracula’ needs a frantic, tormentous rush of performing to befog
the eyes of the audience with complete mystery.” Less directly, Atkinson praises
Lugosi’s and the play’s ability to elicit loathing from the audience in his dissatisfaction
with the monster’s end. Not satisfied with the stake pounded once through Dracula’s
heart at the end of the play, “Count Dracula deserves a steam hammer. Let them kill
this ghastly beast with enthusiasm” (Atkinson 29).
Stoker, and subsequently Deane and Balderston, found a powerful formula for a theatrical thriller. Both Deane’s directions and the New York reviews suggest that this subject is only successful with a healthy blend of the terrifyingly real and the hopelessly campy. The criticism of Lugosi’s performance points out that he too deliberately plays Dracula as a real and believable character; ironically, the praise for his performance comes in the critics’ acknowledging his “authenticity” and that he was actually scary. While it is doubtful that many critics or audience members of the 1927 Dracula actually believed in vampires, the success of the play is undoubtedly due to the thrill of suspending disbelief in such monsters.

While Dracula may have been jokingly dismissed by theater critics, audiences were willing to pay the price of admission to see the Count. This popularity kept the play a steady vehicle for many amateur and professional companies and made possible a revival of the play fifty years later on Broadway. In the fifty years between Bela Lugosi’s and Frank Langella’s performances, the character of Count Dracula transformed into a cultural phenomenon that theater critics could not so easily dismiss.

**Theatrical Developments in Dracula Between 1927 and 1977**

Throughout much of the twentieth-century, film has been the dominant medium for conveying the vampire image. The earliest film vampire haunted the silent screen some three years before Hamilton Deane first brought Dracula to the London stage. F.W. Murnau’s German expressionist film, Nosferatu, slightly modified Stoker’s novel and presented the first cinematic image of the vampire as a big-clawed, dome-headed fiend. Due to a copyright infringement suit by Stoker’s
estate, the film had a three day limited run in London. So powerful was Stoker’s
widow at quelling this film that an edited version did not reach the United States until
1929, well after Lugosi’s performance at the Fulton (Skal, Hollywood 38). By this
time, Nosferatu suffered from being a silent film at the dawn of “talkies.” Two years
later, Lugosi would overshadow this German “Dracula” in the 1931 Todd Browning
film.

Browning’s film undoubtedly did more to popularize Lugosi’s interpretation of
Count Dracula than the Broadway play. The black cape, formal evening attire, swept
back hair, and penetrating eyes under dark eyebrows returned in sequel after sequel,
from Dracula’s Daughter to Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein. While initial
sequels to the 1931 film further developed Dracula, eventually Universal Studios
began to pair their vampire with other stock monsters such as Frankenstein’s monster,
the wolfman, and the mummy. Even Lugosi’s non-Dracula portrayals tended to
depend on the features he had developed for Dracula: piercing hypnotic gaze,
predatory stalking, claw-like hand gestures, and even a black cape in films such as The
Murders in the Rue Morgue and The Black Cat. Lugosi and Lugosi look-alikes
perpetuated this Dracula image in Universal films until the early 1950s.

In 1958, Hammer films in England introduced a new actor to the role of Count
Dracula who was to have as much an impact on the character as Lugosi. Bloodier and
gorier, Christopher Lee played a Dracula whose nobility was easily abandoned for the
predator he saw Dracula to be. The Hammer films, oddly enough, ushered in the first
evampiric representations to revel in the bite and the bloodstained mouth. Through the
1960s, Lee returned in sequel after sequel to keep Dracula alive in the cinema. While
countless other actors have, to date, played Dracula on screen, Lugosi and Lee were
most successful at keeping the image in the movie theaters.

Dracula shared a similar if somewhat less visible presence in theater. Dracula
became a musical comedy at the Muse Theater in Ravenna, Ohio, in 1966. A rock
musical of Dracula met with some success in Los Angeles in 1973. A darkly satanic
and erotic Dracula: Sabbat played at the Judson Poet’s Theater in New York in 1970.
Count Dracula, a dramatization that attempted fidelity to Stoker’s novel, played at the
Alliance Theater in Atlanta in 1974. In 1977, a Freudian interpretation of the text
titled The Passion of Dracula played off-Broadway and rivaled the uptown revival of
Deane and Balderston’s play (Ansen). It seems that many directors and producers
realized, as Deane had, that there was successful theater in Stoker’s novel.

Several of the reviewers of the Broadway revival of the Deane and Balderston
script noted the extent of this “Draculamania.” Aside from the more obvious
representations in film and theater, Dracula images could be found in comic books,
selling children’s cereal, teaching children how to “count” on Sesame Street, or
playing lead guitar at a Kiss concert. Smirnoff vodka even used Dracula to sell its
“Vampire Gimlet” while the Schlag lock company foiled Dracula, an “uninvited
guest,” in magazine advertisements for home security (Dresser 85). The vampire,
particularly Dracula, was an image of popular culture that cut across all modes of
transmission.
Capitalizing on this popular trend, neogothic writer/illustrator Edward Gorey’s morbid Dracula illustrations became the impetus behind a revival of the Deane and Balderston play. In 1974, the Nantucket Open Theater approached Gorey to turn his drawings into sets and costumes for a production of the play. So successful was the revival that it eventually came to Broadway with Frank Langella playing Count Dracula and giving the character a new interpretation. For most of the other characters, director Dennis Rosa stuck to a melodramatic style that the somewhat dated language seemed to require. Langella, while still costumed in a flowing bat-winged cape and formal wear, was no pale older gentleman with a greenish tinge, impressive eyebrows, and hypnotizing gaze. He was a young, lusty, and attractive seducer of Lucy for whom Jonathan Harker was hardly a rival. Ironically juxtaposed to this image were Gorey’s curtain illustrations, which depicted the Count with a death’s head, claw-like fingers, a skeleton-thin body, and monstrous bat wings. Gorey’s sets were enlarged illustrations dominated by blacks, whites, grays, and, in each scene, just a touch of red. On the wallpaper, in the metal-work of Lucy’s bed, fastening Renfield’s pajamas, and humorously hidden throughout the production design were images of bats. Through this darkly comic yet somber design moved Langella’s fiery and passionate Dracula. The production kept the Deane and Balderston script largely intact, but Gorey’s designs and Langella’s Count were quite different both from the original production of the play and the then dominant images of Dracula.
Critical Response to the 1977 revival of Dracula: The Vampire Play

Drama critics responding to the play were faced with three distinct aspects to review. Given the “Draculamania” of the 1970s, many found it necessary to discuss and critique the subject matter of Stoker’s Dracula and the script’s ability to accurately present it. Beyond the script, critics responded to the production itself, particularly Gorey’s designs. Finally, much more detailed attention was given to Langella’s interpretation of Dracula than Lugosi ever received from the critics of his performance.

While 1927 critics were sometimes disappointed at the quality of Dracula: The Vampire Play’s thrills, 1977 critics apparently did not expect the play to retain any vestige of “real” horror. Instead of being sinister and frightening, the word most positively associated with the Dracula revival was “fun.” David Ansen, writing for Newsweek, claims that Dracula is “our most endearing monster.” He further notes, without displeasure, that except for “one delicious moment of shock at the end . . . the pervading mood is fun” (Ansen 74). Similarly, Debbi Wasserman of the New York Theater Review begins her observations with: “It should be explained at the outset that this Dracula is fun.” For these critics, all questions of the quality of the play are lost in their overall response to the pleasures of the text.

A few other critics were even more vocal in their praise of the play. Martin Gottfried of the New York Post begins, “It was inevitable that Dracula would return to Broadway.” He contends that “the story is part of our mythology” and therefore worthy of revival. He further approves of the manner in which the play is presented: “It takes itself seriously and is played only occasionally for laughs.” Gottfried stands
almost alone in his praise for the play, its historical significance, and for the relevance and prevalence of its theme in popular culture. Brenden Gill of *New Yorker* magazine takes this serious response a step further. Responding to the plot of the play, he speculates: "Maybe, we think, there really are men and women who drink human blood and who contrive, century after century, never to die." Whether referring to the believability of vampires or the possibilities of such horrors within the scope of human cruelty, Gill is the only critic in 1977 to admit to such a belief in the plausibility of the play’s subject.

The majority of the play’s critics found fault most often with the script itself. While commending some elements of the production, Douglas Watt of *Daily News* begins his review: "If we must have Dracula again . . . ." His simple conclusion is that "it’s a rotten play, really." Richard Eder of the *New York Times* agrees that all the expense of the production creates only a “surface perfection” for a text that is “beyond real revival although capable of useful adornment.” Eder claims that “a stage representation of Dracula is a challenge not so much to modern performers as to the audience.” Because the horror of the play is lost to a contemporary audience, Eder continues, the play “loses force” and “tends to be bloodless.” John Beaufort of the *Christian Science Monitor* notes that this loss of horror reveals the play’s “dramatic limpness.” In view of this limpness and the play’s dated language, Beaufort recommends that “perhaps the creaky old piece of hokum should have been left under dust covers.” Whatever praise these critics may have for Gorey or Langella, their
general contention is that the play was not worth reviving for reasons of dated language, unbelievable subject, or unsophisticated horror.

Other critics found that, however "creaky" the script, the production values and the shifts in emphasis made the production more than worthwhile. Edwin Wilson of the Wall Street Journal begins his review with a description of the trained nurses Deane needed for his audiences. Wilson recognizes that Dracula in 1927 was played as if vampires were real. The play is credible to a 1977 audience because "rather than placing emphasis on the reality of Dracula hoping to scare patrons, the creators of this new production stress its style." Similarly, Howard Kissel, writing for Women's Wear Daily, notes that audiences found the 1927 Dracula horrifying and mesmerizing while in 1977 audiences may laugh at Count Dracula but still find the character mesmerizing. While other critics may complain of the play's dramatic blandness, Kissel claims, "In part, the attraction of Dracula is his immense theatricality." For these critics, the Deane and Balderston play presents a subject rich for stylistic interpretation.

The "newness" of the 1977 production derived predominantly from Langella's portrayal of the Count and Gorey's designs. While it is not unusual for a play to be associated with a new performance choice, the 1977 Dracula distinguishes itself for the fame of its designer. As Gottfried notes, "Productions are not usually identified with their designers, but Gorey dominates this one." Much of the discourse of the reviews of Dracula is devoted to discussing Gorey's designs. In general, even when critics such as Eder and Watt find that no single element can successfully resurrect
such a bad play, there is still praise for Gorey's gothic sets and costumes. One notable exception is Wasserman who finds Gorey's sets "unnecessarily extreme for the material." Wasserman is, on the whole, alone in this opinion. Generally, the critics felt that Gorey's designs contributed to a witty, double voiced irony in the production, creating a "new" interpretation of Dracula by imitating illustrations found in nineteenth-century publications.

A final production value that the critics consider is the place of humor in a production of Dracula. Remembering Deane's directions for wit and melodrama without camp, this concern was an important facet of the play from its earliest productions. Several critics seem to resent the humor of the 1977 production. T.E. Kalem of Time laments the way "horror mutates into giggly farce" (93). Both Gottfried and Wasserman blame Rosa for this "mutation." While generally liking the production, Gottfried claims that "Rosa has made but a few slips and those for the sake of humor. We have come not to laugh at Dracula. We want to go with it." Similarly, Wasserman criticizes Rosa for taking "a 'camp' point of view which detracts from the dialogue." Not surprisingly, these two critics value the script of Dracula for the genre that it is -- a thriller.

Inevitably, other critics found that the use of humor in the production was either appropriate or insufficient. Beaufort finds the humor one of the few saving graces of the production and states: "Without condescending to the material, director Dennis Rosa has allowed for the kind of laughter the script inevitably provokes today." Eder claims that the play is "only very faintly camped up." Watt notes a predilection
in the 1977 theater season “for the silly, the freakish, the campy and the horrendous”
and still finds Dracula “a bit of a drag” even by these criteria. In contrast, Kissel
contends that the true success of the play is the ability of the “subterranean attractions”
of the myth to penetrate a “production style [that] is light — some might call it camp.”
While holding different opinions as to the outcome, these critics recognize a value in
the combination of the humorous with the terrifying.

Wherever else the critics may have disagreed, with respect to Langella’s
performance they all tend to repeat the same descriptors. Yet, while they all seem to
have seen the same qualities in his performance, not all are in agreement as to whether
these qualities made for a successful interpretation of Dracula. Of his general
appearance, all critics commented on his physical attractiveness. Watt describes him
as “tall, lean, majestic and handsomely unwholesome.” Brenden Gill calls him
“formidably handsome in a long black cape.” In similar fashion, Eder calls him “a
stunning figure as Dracula: tall, pale, Byronic,” while Ansen describes him as “a
Transylvanian Prince Charming, a Byronic hero with a fatal flaw for blood, . . . a
beautiful and sensual Dracula” (76). Both Ansen and Beaufort call his Dracula
“elegant,” while Wilson and Gill describe him as “suave.”

Langella’s voice and movement are two other qualities that struck several of
the reviewers. Wilson describes his voice as “mellifluous,” while Kissel elaborates,
“he uses his voice like a 19th century Shakespearean actor — it is resonant, robust and
musical, also properly insinuating.” Describing his movement, “grace” is the word
that dominates the reviews. Wilson paints him as “almost dance-like: macabre but
Ansen elaborates that “never has the Count had such balletic grace” and describes his seduction of Lucy as “a dance of cool passion, sweeping elegantly” (75). Kissel identifies this grace as “reptilian -- elegant, fascinating, and unsettling.” These descriptions of Langella’s performance elaborate a more general conclusion that this vampire is attractive.

Most of the critics found this interpretation refreshing and effective. Most of the reviews agree with Beaufort that Langella is a “defiantly threatening Count -- as romantic as he is sinister.” Two of the critics felt that what Langella gained in grace and elegance he lost in the ability to terrify. Ansen notes that “no one is likely to faint dead away at Langella’s elegant Count” (75). More critically, Eder claims that “he is a beautiful and sensual Dracula . . . but he notably lacks terror.” Of all of the 1977 critics, Eder’s is the harshest criticism of Langella’s interpretation.

Even with the disagreement over Langella’s ability to scare, these critical descriptions paint a clearer picture of his portrayal of the Count than the 1927 reviews did for Lugosi. This increased specificity is directed at almost all of the 1977 production’s theatrical elements. While there is still some doubt voiced as to the artistic merit of Deane and Balderston’s play or the significance of the Dracula character, the revival of Dracula clearly drew more critical attention than the original. This additional attention points to the increased significance or, at least, commodity recognition of the Dracula text in the second half of the twentieth-century.
Conclusions

Lugosi’s and Langella’s performances in Deane and Balderston’s dramatic adaptation are important in several key ways. Although developing their performance from the same script, the difference between them marks a semiotic shift in the representation of Dracula as villainous monster to a sympathetic figure. While this shift is “completed” in works that are contemporary with Langella’s performance, the fact that he begins this shift using the lines provided by the Balderston and Deane script indicates that this interpretation was always, to some degree, available. Themes abandoned by Stoker but present in the 1820s seem to resurface in the 1977 production. Significant shifts occur in relation to the perceived morality of the play’s content. Less relevant in this performance is the vampire’s protean abilities and more central is a shift in the source of his power. Finally, the transgressive ability of the vampire seems to have come full circle as the Langella production now moves away from the original and faulty morality play construction.

One of the most obvious differences between the two productions is the amount of critical response each receives. That the 1927 production received so little response would seem to indicate that it wasn’t deemed worthy of much critical effort. While the story is still ostensibly about blood drinking and predation, the moral value of such content is no longer particularly shocking. Instead, critics note the production’s theatricality and status as melodrama, returning to the pejorative connotations of those descriptors. In the eyes of the critics, the 1927 production has lost any social commentary that the story might have once had. Instead, they
acknowledge that the production will be a popular success and move on, as if
popularity represents a failure of the performance.

Critics of the 1977 production are more concerned about the purpose of the
play and its revival. The debate over the humor and thrills of the production is directly
about the show’s content. The tendency to identify the production as “campy” points
to a dissatisfaction with the content of the production. Those critics who feel the play
should be more about thrills and terror nostalgically search for its original content.
Those who embrace the campy style and design of the production articulate a new
level of immoral content. This is a show not only about the conflict of its central
characters, but also about the conflict between the original text and the campiness of
the production choices. In a sense, this piece of theater has become so “bad” that it no
longer even tries to take itself seriously. Rather than stay true to its form, the play
mimics itself to gain a humorous response. By the logic of the antitheatrical prejudice,
not remaining faithful to one’s “true form” is a direct route to immoral content.

The protean aspect of the vampire is deemphasized in both productions in
favor of a greater concentration on the vampire’s evil influences over its victims.
Lugosi is less a monster in disguise than an ominous presence whenever he is on stage.
Operating, in a sense, more faithfully to Stoker’s vampiric representations, Lugosi
presents a Count whose sexual overtones are buried within the horror of the play’s
premise of predation. He relies less on seduction and more on supernatural influence
to violate his victims. Deane and Balderston describe him as “a tall mysterious man of
about fifty. Polished and distinguished. Continental in appearance and manner” (83).
At the heart of the 1927 version is the questionable belief in vampires, and in this question is an assessment of what motivates them. If we believe that Dracula’s hunger is real, then we can suspend our disbelief in vampires. In Lugosi’s interpretation, he is a “ghastly beast” precisely because he is otherwise signified as something a young woman would not want to be with.

Two images support this argument. The first is a photograph of Lugosi’s make-up for the part (Glut 22). Although in black and white, the image clearly shows dark shading about the eyes and cheeks. The age lines leading into the eye sockets are darkened and emphasize Lugosi’s trademark stare. He is threatening, odd, and ugly. The make-up at once suggests a skull and an old man. Lugosi’s appearance is clearly not that of a paramour. The other image is from Todd Browning’s film and involves Dracula’s first visit to Mina’s bed. He waits outside her window, a pale face in the glass, looking in and summoning her to him. Again, Lugosi’s Dracula forces himself on his victim by means of hypnosis and a magical presence. The horror in such a scene is that a pretty, young woman can be summoned from the safety of her home and into the arms of such a pale-faced monster. The scene’s focus on the vampire’s supernatural powers shows that his victim is clearly not acting on her own volition; she does not in any way desire the vampire or his embrace, but she cannot resist his hypnotic commands. For Lugosi’s Dracula, the Irving-inspired hypnotic approach to seduction seemed to prevail. He portrayed the Count as a predator lurking in the shadows, waiting to summon his prey with clasped hands and penetrating stare. And,
while Lugosi did this sort of performance very well, there was nothing particularly new here.

Langella, on the other hand, seems to have discovered a “new” interpretation for the vampire’s power. In the age of advertising “spokesmodels” and the “me generation,” Langella’s vampire seemed to dispense with hypnotism and recognize the power of sex appeal to influence his prey. Langella’s Dracula is less Van Helsing’s adversary than he is Jonathan Harker’s. For this dynamic to work, however, Lucy must not simply be overcome by hypnotic suggestion but be seduced. In order for her to be seduced, she must be seducible. While critics note Langella’s grace and often use dance metaphors to describe this seduction, what they leave unstated is that in order for Dracula to dance he must have a dance partner. Lucy, in other words, to some degree must be willing to be the vampire’s victim.

The frequent use of Byron’s name in describing Langella points back to the original vampire plays in France and the Polidori novel that inspired them. If the vampire had always been a seducer in disguise, this production simply puts him back in his seducer’s garb. The attention paid to Langella’s physical appearance suggests a shift in the aesthetic values of performance. As Hollywood and television studios moved more toward sex appeal than acting ability in choosing the next generations of popular performers, good looks replaced emotive talent as the basis for an actor’s evil influence over an audience. Dracula, ever adaptive, responded to this shift in popular performance expectations by recasting the source of the vampire’s influence and
turning to sex appeal. Few are the actors who play vampires today who have not appeared in the pages of fashion magazines.

The location of transgression similarly shifts. The key signifier of this shift is the empathy Langella elicits from the audience. His Dracula moves from being a villain to being a hero, although the text of the play does not quite support making this shift completely. Still, by more clearly associating the vampire’s desire with sexual desire and allowing the act of vampirism to resonate as misunderstood transgressive desire, Langella’s performance opens up the vampire to becoming an argument for rather than against difference.

Arguably, the foundation for such a shift was always implicit in the Dracula story. However, Langella’s performance should not be overlooked as a significant act of intervention into the traditional interpretation of Dracula. Although his Dracula is vanquished at the end of the story, the audience is less comfortable with this action. Why, we begin to ask, must Dracula die? Many novels and films since the 1970s have asked this question and provided happier endings for their Dracula-inspired vampires. In some small part, I think this development comes from Langella’s performance, first on stage and then on screen.

Recasting Dracula as a lover has two important implications for the changing nature of the theatrical vampire’s ability to destabilize norms and depict transgression. First, this Dracula is what folklorist Norrine Dresser has identified as an “American vampire.” Dresser’s 1989 study attempts to make sense of the American fascination with vampires. Vampires, she concludes, represent three qualities that are attractive
to most Americans: sexuality, power, and immortality. While power and immortality are seductive as superhuman qualities in and of themselves, the attraction of sexuality has to do with freedom. Related to this sexual freedom is a sense of humor that vampires allow. She notes, “Vampires titillate by their erotic behavior; they kindle the making of verbal sexual innuendoes in jest” (200). Critics of the 1977 production of Dracula noted both the play’s sense of humor and the romantic, seductive nature of Langella’s Count.

The second implication of this shift has to do with the “unnatural” motivation of the vampire. From Polidori to Stoker and Deane, the vampire is motivated by hunger. The last line of Polidori’s novel indicates that Aubrey’s sister has “glutted the thirst of a VAMPYRE!” (24). Similarly, Ruthven laments during an aside in Planché’s play:

RUTHVEN: (Walks the stage agitated.) Daemon, as I am, that walk the earth to slaughter and devour, the little that remains of heart within this wizard frame - sustained alone by human blood, shrinks from the appalling act of planting misery in the bosom of this veteran chieftain. Still must the fearful sacrifice be made! and suddenly; for the approaching night will find my wretched frame exhausted — and darkness — worse than death — annihilation is my lot! Margaret! Unhappy maid! thou art my destined prey! thy blood must feed a Vampire’s life, and prove the food of his disgusting banquet! (Roy 37)

The play makes it clear that Ruthven is motivated by need, by thirst, and by hunger. Moreover, Ruthven is disgusted by his need, a detail Polidori did not allow in his scathing character assassination of Lord Byron.

But Dracula has a different motivation than Ruthven. Stoker makes it clear that the danger Dracula poses is that he is looking for power. His blood thirst is still a
hunger, but it is one that could just as easily be satisfied in Transylvania. The threat Dracula poses in Stoker’s novel is that he has taken advantage of modern commerce and travel to move to London and satisfy his hungers there. Deane and Balderston further add to this theme by making the airplane the means by which Dracula comes to England:

VAN HELSING: . . . For five hundred years he has been fettered to his castle because he must sleep by day in his graveyard. Five centuries pass. The airplane is invented. His chance has come, for now he can cross Europe in a single night . . . By dawn he is in London and safe in one of his cases — a great risk, but he has triumphed. He has reached London with its teeming millions, with its “opportunity,” as he said. (107)

That opportunity Van Helsing has, at least in part, noted already in his description of the vampire; he describes the vampire as “a living corpse sustained by the blood of the living” (Deane and Balderston 91, emphasis added).

Langella’s interpretation moves Dracula’s motivation out of the realm of hunger, whether that be for sustenance and existence or more complexly for power and greater territory, into the realm of desire. While not entirely new, Langella’s interpretation is marked because it foregrounds this desire. One of the ways in which desire is marked differently from hunger in Langella’s performance is that its fulfillment requires that it, to some degree, be shared. Dracula and Lucy embrace as lovers at the end of Act II, recalling Romeo and Juliet more than Lugosi’s predations.

Sharing the vampire’s desires is only a stepping stone away from empathizing with the creature. In Lugosi’s 1927 Dracula, there is little indication of the critics’ empathy for the “ghastly beast” (Atkinson) or “grisly horror” (“Dracula”). Indeed, Atkinson was not satisfied with the final staking of Dracula and claimed that “several
additional blows, given with a hearty grunt or two would seem a good deal more conclusive; Count Dracula deserves a steam hammer. Let them kill the ghastly beast with enthusiasm.” In contrast, the 1977 critics found the death of Dracula to be a “powerfully bone-shaking ending” (Eder). Ansen notes “one delicious moment of shock at the end” (75), while Gottfried claims that “the curtain has every right to plummet down at [the play’s] end because something worth plummeting down on has happened.” Gill says of the final scene, “shivers of unease run up and down our spines.” These responses differ significantly from Atkinson’s reaction in 1927. The discrepancy is an indication of the difference in the two performance interpretations: Lugosi was an evil monster who deserved a bloody end while Langella’s elegance, grace and attractiveness made his gory staking somewhat more disturbing. Members of the audience are disturbed because, to some extent, they have been asked to identify with him. It is this step towards empathy that allows the vampire to become less the monster and more the hero.

While not quite a hero, Langella’s performance demonstrates the conceptual starting ground for a shift in Dracula towards sympathetic vampires. It is a trend that writers like Anne Rice and Chelsea Quinn Yarbro as well as films like Love at First Bite and Coppola’s Bram Stoker’s Dracula pick up and develop. More importantly, these texts’ transformation of the vampire into a romantic hero and the sympathetic explorations of the motivation behind vampirism suggest that the second order significations of the Dracula myth now refer to a different transgressive phenomenon. The “deviant” desire of the vampire to drink blood readily connects to other desires
deemed deviant by dominant, heteronormative culture. In the earlier versions of Dracula, the vampire’s deviance is what makes it monstrous; the narrative centers around the destruction of such dangerous difference. The shift to a sympathetic vampire whose desires seem motivated by love and a different way of “love making” makes the monster more human, moving the debate of the text to which kinds of “love” are culturally acceptable and which are not.

That this shift is made using a 1920s script based on an 1890s novel indicates that the basic resources for such signification were already there, waiting for such an application. There are limits to how far that sympathetic interpretation can go in that script. However much Lucy may welcome Langella’s Dracula, that script still concludes with the vampire’s demise. The scripting of the vampire is flexible enough to allow the performance to modify his motivations, but the outcome is still the same. The audience response to that outcome, however, is markedly different. That the audience is so moved by the now tragic death of Dracula at the end of the play opens the door to new tellings of the story where Dracula may not have to die. The important point is that a performance (although certainly not by itself) contributed to a redrafting of Dracula texts, changing and recasting the way the vampire is depicted. But this influence of performance on textual production is not new in the theatrical history of Dracula.

Conclusions

I began this chapter with a discussion of the antitheatrical prejudice. My purpose in doing so was less about revealing the ways that Dracula is caught up in a
history of antitheatricalism and more to use that history to identify what exactly is theatrical about Dracula. Most obviously, Dracula is theatrical because the vampire spends so much of its history on the stage. That presence on the stage is important for, as the preceding analysis demonstrates, those staged performances have significantly influenced the depictions of Dracula in texts. What emerges from mapping assumptions of the antitheatrical prejudice onto the textual depictions of the vampire is a popular phenomenon as much about as created by performance.

This analysis has demonstrated different theatrical performances' influences on the development and transmission of Dracula. From the obvious connections between Stoker's own life in the theater to the various related representations of the vampire on stage that precede and follow Stoker's novel, the vampire has clearly been a stock character of the theater. Yet the analysis reveals that, for a stock character, the representations of the vampire seem to change radically from age to age and stage to stage.

From a symbol of passing aristocracy to a sex symbol, Dracula proves to be theatrical in often very different ways. The vampire finds his variable powers and attributes in what proponents of the antitheatrical prejudice identify as the theater's "problems." The dominant theatrical representation of the vampire's downfall, therefore, appears to be theater about vanquishing theater. This seeming contradiction makes sense so long as the vampire remains villain. Dracula represents the very villainy that, according to some, the theater embodies; as Dracula is staked down, so should the theater and its shifty practices be pinned down. Yet, when Dracula turns
from monster to sympathetic figure, these same evil powers turn to something else entirely.

Dracula’s theatricality in this new guise comes to represent performance’s capacity to challenge the established order, to pose alternatives, and to open up a space for resistance. The sympathetic vampire potentially embodies a liberatory aspect of performance that Conquergood identifies as “that force which crashes and breaks through sedimented meanings and normative traditions” (“Beyond” 32). In short, it potentially represents positive and progressive actions that contemporary performance scholars call for in a performance-centered conceptions of performance studies. Of course, the sympathetic Dracula only represents the potential for this sort of resistant work. There still lurks within the the continued representation of the figure the great capacity for villainy.

Dracula’s powers, however dissected by means of the antitheatrical prejudice, represent theater reflexively about theater. The significance of the theatrical influence on the textual production of Dracula suggests a similarly reflexive cultural process, whereby these performance-inspired cultural artifacts represent culture metacommunicatively thinking about and constructing itself. The openness of Dracula to shifting interpretations as well as its adaptability to changing performance styles indicate a popular phenomenon capable of adapting its signifiers to shifting cultural concerns. This capacity is directly related to the performance influences on its construction.
As the next chapter turns to cultural performances and the folkloric elements of Dracula, this reflexive quality becomes even more significant. The preceding analysis has been primarily focused on the relationship between conspicuous performances and texts. The next chapter explores the reflexive activities of folk and fans engaged in performances that shape and are shaped by Dracula. This reflexive quality of folklore permeates mass mediated versions of Dracula, challenging the bulk of modernist analyses of popular culture that “have often denied reflexive and therefore subversive potential to all but the most elite and esoteric art forms” (Ashley xix). Just as Dracula on stage proves to be theater about theater, significant aspects of Dracula among the folk and the fans proves to be folklore about folklore.

**Endnotes**

1 On the one hand, I am using a term “conspicuous” to stand in for “pure,” which Erving Goffman uses to distinguish theatrical performances from such things as sporting events and personal ceremonies. The distinction here is primarily based on the spectator’s relationship to the action. Writing of “pure” performance, Goffman identifies an “…arrangement which transforms an individual into a stage performer, the latter in turn, being an object that can be looked at in the round and at length without offense, and looked to for engaging behavior, by persons in an ‘audience’ role” (Goffman, Frame 124). While I appreciate the classification, I am uncomfortable with the term “pure,” as it seems to create a hierarchy or originary impulse in classifying magnitudes of performances. “Theatrical” is also a bit restrictive as it implies a focus on stage dramas performed live. While this chapter does primarily focus on stage dramas, the ideas discussed here might apply to other instances of “pure” performance outside of the drama, such as film and television. I therefore use “conspicuous” here in a similar fashion to the way Cindy Kistenberg uses the term to distinguish certain AIDS plays from other performances associated with AIDS activism (Kistenberg 1-2).

2 A brief overview of scholarship which makes this connection includes: Frost, 38-9; Gelder 24-5; Senf 33; Skal, Hollywood 13-4; Twitchell 132-3; and Wolf, Dracula 98-99.

3 “Promets-moi que Malvina ne saura point ce qui m’est arrivé; que tu ne feras rien pour venger ma mort avant que la première heure de la nuit n’ait sonné. Jure-moi

4 “Songe à ton serment!” (Summers 292)

5 “l'Ange exterminateur paraît dans un nuages, la foudre éclate et les Ombres s’engloutissent avec Rutwen. Pluie de feu. TABLEAU GÉNÉRAL.” (Summers 293)

6 “Le Vampire épouvantera, de son horrible amour, les songes de toutes les femmes, et bientôt sans doute, ce monstre encore exhumé prêtera son masque immobile, sa voix sépulcrale, son oeil d'un gris mort, . . . tout cet attrait de mélodrame à la Melpomène des boulevards; et quel succès alors ne lui est pas réservé!” (Summers 293)

7 “La fable du vampire est peut-être la plus universelle de nos superstitions.” (Summers 293)

8 “cette situation est-elle morale? . . . Toute la pièce représente indirectement Dieu comme un être faible ou odieux qui abandonne le monde aux génies de l'enfer.” (Summers 294)

9 Recall that James Twitchell identifies Dracula as being about sex but “better yet, sex without mention” (“Myth” 112). The twist in Langella’s performance is that the sex, while not explicit, is a bit more “mentioned.”
CHAPTER THREE
DRACULA AS MEDIATED FOLKLORE

On Friday, November 13, 1992, I met with friends to stand in line outside a rather old theater in a small upstate New York village. We did not know it yet, but the first snow of the season was on its way. We thought, I suppose, that our shivers were of anticipation, maybe even the slight thrill of fear. This was the first night and the first showing in our small rural community of a story we had all heard a lot about. Some of us had heard so much about it that we were almost experts. We experts took it upon ourselves to fill the dinner conversation that night with speculations, trivia, history, and important details about the narrative we were about to watch unfold. Those less aware of the variants of the narrative but no less full of interest about them had questions and perceptions in need of confirmation or refutation. As we filed into the dark (and not a little dank) chamber where we would watch the story unfold in images projected onto a wall, we knew that we were ready, that we had prepared ourselves well for the telling.

Afterwards, as we marveled at the world transformed by snowfall, we shared our perceptions of this version of the tale. The reactions were positive -- the version was just full enough of inventions and innovations without significantly departing from the narrative as most of us already knew it. There were interesting citations of other versions and narratives. For comparison, we found ourselves returning to earlier versions of the story and enjoying an impromptu performance of particularly descriptive passages. As the night wore on, we continued to argue over whether some of the innovations in this most recent telling were effective, good or necessary. We
cited other ways we had seen or heard or read the story and debated the values of each.
Some of us quickly grew tired of the exchange, uncertain perhaps of why this story so
interested the rest of us when surely there were better stories, more significant to the
human condition, more worthy of such telling and retelling. Slowly, these folks said
their good-byes and left the rest of us to continue our conversations late into the early
hours of the next day.

The story in question, of course, is Dracula. The experience we had just shared
was a screening of Francis Ford Coppola’s Bram Stoker’s Dracula. However, my
story thus far is not really about the film itself, but rather the viewing of the film by a
small group of friends. It is a story about a particular night in a particular place where
members of a community came together to listen and watch a narrative -- a narrative
which is a deep and lasting part of our culture. The film lasted only one hundred thirty
minutes, but it penetrated our social lives for a far greater amount of time both before
and after our viewing. This chapter is about that film, but it is more about the
moments that surround the film; in order to write such an analysis, it is unfortunate but
also necessary to single out and isolate certain moments. I only ask that we keep in
mind that all the moments are connected.

The film had one particular moment of note that resonated across the evening’s
conversation and across time to the present analysis. Upon Count Dracula’s arrival to
London, just prior to his meeting Mina on a sunny street, the narrative “requires” a
curious voice-over by Van Helsing who reminds the audience: “Contrary to some
beliefs, the vampire, like any other night creature, can move about by day, though it is
not his natural time and his powers are weak.” The moment is curious for several
reasons. It is the first moment of direct address to the audience by a narrator in an otherwise unnarrated film. It is spoken by a character who has not yet been introduced by the narrative; the film depends on the viewer’s familiarity with the text to identify who the speaker might be. Finally, the information functions primarily as a corrective, as if the filmmaker anticipates a misunderstanding on the part of the audience.

Yet what is the source of this belief that “some” hold that vampires cannot move about by day? Evidence suggests that this aspect of the vampire story comes from early film versions of Dracula where directors discovered simple “special effects” that create the illusion of the evil Count evaporated sunlight. While this image was first depicted in the 1922 silent film, Nosferatu, the theme has been repeated and developed in many vampire films since that time (Skal, Hollywood 43-62). Coppola’s version, however, purports to be an adaptation that is faithful to Stoker’s novel and so must deal with this facet of Dracula that has emerged from repeated cinematic versions, rather than the original novel.

This odd moment in the film did not escape comment from the group of friends and colleagues who had just attended the screening. Indeed, our entire experience of that evening suggested we were in the presence of a cultural narrative that circulates and exists somewhere between and around the commercial entertainment industry and the communal processes of folklore. Our varying degrees of knowledge about this myth, this legend, this popular fiction was shaped by some combination of folkloric tradition and cinematic innovation. But, while this observation is in some senses obvious, it is not one that always sits well within the academic disciplines that study either film or folklore. The history of folklore, particularly, contains several heated
debates that draw clear boundaries between the authenticity of folk traditions and the pollution or contamination of mass culture.

In this chapter, I ask (as some folklorists and cultural studies scholars are beginning to do) what is at stake if we penetrate these boundaries? What are the consequences of maintaining the conceptual frames that separate folklore from mass media and film? What happens to the study of popular narratives if we grant that there are significant similarities between folklore and mass media? In what follows, I examine the effects of preserving the distinction between folklore and mass media as well as the possible theoretical benefits of blurring this distinction. At the heart of this border crossing is, again, a reconsideration of the relationship of texts and performances. While the two methodological approaches of traditional folklore tend to focus on either texts or observations in the field as their respective objects of study, they have been slower to embrace the play of texts back into performances and vice versa. Richard Bauman’s reconceptualization of folklore as performance challenges this methodological division in the field and provides an opening rationale for examining the performative folkloric of popular culture phenomena. Following a review of these theoretical concerns in folklore, I analyze folkloric performance in three articulations of Dracula: representative vampire folklore that directly influenced Stoker, Stoker’s novel, and Francis Ford Coppola’s film adaptation of it. I provide an analysis of these articulations looking first for structures of ritual performances within each and then examining how a specific community of fans negotiates these variants in making sense of Dracula.
Folklore and Popular Culture

For much of the 1970s and early 1980s, folklorists tended to divide the discipline of folklore into two method-driven categories, although the distinction was frequently hotly debated. In *Folklore Matters*, Alan Dundes identifies these distinctions as literary and anthropological, where the former looks for folklore references in literary texts and the latter does its work in the field, collecting its artifacts and motif variants “from the source” (6). In a very real sense, this distinction marks a difference between emphasizing texts and emphasizing performances. While the degree to which folklore and popular culture overlap is similarly charged, it is interanimated and influenced by this basic tension between text and performance. The camps as I broadly paint them below seek to preserve or collapse distinctions between objects of study, be that performance/text, anthropology/literary analysis, or folklore/popular culture.

Preserving Distinctions

Traditionally, folklorists define their work by noting that the objects of their study function among the “folk.” Early “antiquarian” impulses stress the value of studying “customs, ideas, and expressions that were thought to be remnants of ancient cultural systems still surviving in the modern world” (Toelken 4). This initial impulse puts a particular focus on pre-industrial cultures as the domain of study, either as found in rural communities beginning at the outskirts of urban centers or in tribal and agrarian societies of so called third world nations. The problem here is that the distinction between the folk and their less idyllic modern descendants is one with decidedly elitist roots (Mukerji and Schudson 3). That folklore has survived as an
academic discipline in the second half of the twentieth century is largely due to a redefinition of "the folk."

Modern folkloristics does not stop outside of the city limits. Alan Dundes broadens the concept of "folk" to include "any common group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor. It does not matter what the linking factor is . . . but what is important is that a group formed for whatever reason will have some traditions which it calls its own" (Dundes, Interpreting 2). A more recent definition of the field and its purview from Robert A. Georges and Michael Owen Jones includes:

expressive forms, processes, and behaviors (1) that we customarily learn, teach and utilize or display during face-to-face interactions, and (2) that we judge to be traditional (a) because they are based on known precedents or models, and (b) because they serve as evidence of continuities and consistencies through time and space in human knowledge, thought, belief, and feeling. (1)

This definition allows the study of folklore in such diverse locations as office secretary pools, urban gangs, and shopping malls in addition to the more traditional agrarian societies. It also, at least potentially, allows for the incorporation of mass culture and its uses in peoples' everyday lives as the purview of Folkloristics.

However, Richard Bauman notes that many folklorists, while accepting this broader definition of "the folk" and what subsequently constitutes folklore, are unwilling to extend the definition to include the texts and practices of mass culture.

The mass media are disqualified on three counts: (1) they are not rooted in community life but commodified and imposed from without, (2) they are not participatory but are meant to be consumed by mass audience [sic], and (3) as with print, they are not variable but fixed by the media in which they are communicated. (Bauman, "Folklore" 180)

At the heart of both the definition and delimitation of folklore are two key qualities that "protect" that field from the corruption of mass culture.
First, anthropological folklorists claim to be interested primarily in oral forms of culture as defined by “face-to-face” interactions. This aspect features utilitarian aspects (e.g. skills or craft techniques shared in a community) of folklore as well as genres of “verbal art.” The folk object or text is meant for everyday use; narratives and skills are passed across generations by “word of mouth.” In contrast, these folklorist contend that when the folk object is removed from the folk by dominant culture or mass media, it is put on display and loses its utilitarian functions (and therefore its true status as “folklore”). These folklorists most often turn to the “oral” aspects of folklore to point out the “in the moment,” ephemeral qualities of the text in circulation, in face-to-face interaction.

Second, where narrative within literary texts is the object of study, folklorists are most interested in variants that demonstrate continuity of a tradition as well as dynamic change for different cultural conditions. Much of folkloric analysis of narrative involves identifying recurring motifs in narrative variants. Folklorists collect these variants as indications of a common story that is told and used differently by different collectives of folk and that may find its way into a culture’s literature, oral or written. Again, these folklorists contend that the tendency of elite and popular culture to produce fixed and stable texts or objects contradicts the folklorist’s interest in the variant.¹

The difference between these two practices is where some controversies occur. Because traditional folklorists tend to privilege “pure” folklore, they distrust the ways that literary invention may corrupt it. Moreover, the concern is that such texts will spread the contagion of literary invention back to the “pure” oral forms of the
narratives in the field. Ironically, where performance is the source of corruption for proponents of the antitheatrical prejudice, texts are the culprits for folklorists.

Folklorists such as Richard Dorson expressed a desire to preserve folklore from “fakelore.” According to Dorson,

Fakelore is the presentation of spurious and synthetic writings under the claim that they are genuine folklore. These productions are not collected in the field but are rewritten from earlier literary and journalistic sources in an endless chain of regurgitation, or they may even be made out of whole cloth, as in the case of several of the “folk heroes” written up in the image of Paul Bunyan, who had at least a trickle of oral tradition at the beginning of his literary exploitation. (60)

Dorson’s concerns led to considerable debate in the field of folklore, creating especially a rift between folklorists with an anthropology background and those with a literary background. On the one hand, anthropological folklorists of Dorson’s ilk advocated fieldwork and the collection of genuine lore from genuine folk in indigenous oral contexts. On the other hand, literary folklorists such as Harold Schechter claimed that important folklore variants and practices find their way into works by authors such as Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Alan Poe; such texts provide important resources for folklorists. Alan Dundes also notes:

fakelore can in theory become folklore. A composite text, however spuriously crafted, can go into oral tradition . . . . It is far better to accept the fact that fakelore may be an integral element of culture just as folklore is. Rather than reject fakelore on the a priori grounds that it is impure or bastardized folklore, let us study it as folklorists, using the tools of folklorists. (Folklore 53)

However, both literary and anthropological folklorists seem to have little time for popular culture as popular culture. In their view, popular culture is (at best or at worst) a parasite of folk culture, presenting washed down versions of folk narratives in stabilized, commercialized forms.
There are many examples of this sort of disciplinary prejudice; however, for the sake of brevity and to return to the focus of this chapter, it is worth examining one example of this tendency from scholarly literature on vampires. In Paul Barber’s book, *Vampires, Burial, and Death*, he proposes some scientific explanations for the origin of vampire folklore. He makes a clear delimiting statement about what he considers to be authentic folklore in the introduction to the book:

> Before proceeding, however, we must rid ourselves of the burden of false data from the fiction industry. If a typical vampire of folklore, not fiction, were to come to your house this Halloween, you might open the door to encounter a plump Slavic fellow with long fingernails and a stubbly beard. . . . He wears informal attire -- in fact, a linen shroud -- and he looks for all the world like a disheveled peasant. If you did not recognize him, it is because you expected -- as would most people today -- a tall, elegant gentleman in a black cloak. But that would be the vampire of fiction, a figure derived from the vampires of folklore but now bearing precious little resemblance to them. (2)

That Barber chooses as his object of study a particular variant of vampire folklore is certainly valid. But in doing so he creates a hierarchy that privileges “pure” folklore from the “false data of the fiction industry.” That he lays the blame for this contagion on “the fiction industry” indicates the residue of the preference for studying purer, simpler agrarian societies and their lore. In his study, Barber examines legal documents and monastic accounts of vampires in Medieval Europe to support a hypothesis that the folklore of vampires originates from all-too-common premature burials as a result of medical ignorance about death. This argument is compelling as far as it goes; however, his introduction to the argument relies on maintaining a clear distinction between the vampires of folklore and those of fiction. The problem here is that, in doing so, he is somewhat uncritical of the ways he privileges a certain set of variants in vampire folklore as authentic, ignoring the ways these vampires,
themselves, are derived from their folkloric forebears. His study stabilizes the vampire in exactly the same way that folklorists complain mass media texts stabilize folklore and fix variants.

Barber is not alone in making this distinction. Today, scholars frequently use a kind of short hand to make distinctions between the variations and types of vampires that folklore, literature, and popular culture have generated. Brian Frost in The Monster With A Thousand Faces distinguishes between the folkloric vampire and the Byronic vampire, the latter being the gaunt romantic figure of nineteenth-century literature and the former being more akin to Barber's description above. Similarly, a common theme of vampire lore in popular culture today, from Anne Rice to role playing games, is that there are many different kinds of vampire.

Traditional folklorists would not necessarily be interested in these variations. Rather, they would preserve a distinction between the vampires of folklore, whether they come from Medieval Europe or the modern Philippines, and those vampires that can be found in pulp fiction or video tapes. This distinction preserves a somewhat uncritical conception of "the folk," however broadly defined, as well as a nostalgia for times less contaminated by technology and modern society. Also implied by this distinction is a construction of folklore as a process that involves all people in a community, while popular culture, in contrast, is more product-oriented whereby consumers do not participate in the production or circulation of texts. Indeed, to many folklorists cinematic narratives are derivative and parasitic, often with the additional consequence of contaminating or polluting the much romanticized folk and their charming tales (e.g., Barber, Brunvand, Dorson, Oinas, and Toelken, among others).
Not all folklorists maintain such rigid distinctions. Perhaps recognizing a need to adapt or lose ground and cultural capital in the politics of academic inquiry, several folklorists resist essentializing the phenomena of folklore to the manner of its transmission. These approaches acknowledge that folklore and mass mediated texts both circulate within modern cultures, often overlapping and forming lasting discursive hybrids. Not surprisingly, performance plays a significant role in making sense of such border crossings.

Blurring Distinctions

In the first chapter of *The Vampire in 19th Century English Literature*, Carol Senf offers a review of the vampire figure in folklore, literature and popular culture, placing much of her focus on the different types of vampires to be found in nineteenth-century literature. While she is otherwise quite careful to separate these three types of transmission — folklore, literature, popular culture — and notes their distinctive vampires, she nonetheless reveals the following in a brief if telling comment: “Originating in folklore, an earlier equivalent of popular culture, the vampire generally inspired fear, horror and revulsion” (10, emphasis added). Senf does not explain or posit further the nature of this equation. In fact, she more often contrasts the twentieth-century popular culture forms of the vampire with their folkloric ancestors. However, her equating of folklore with popular culture is telling, if for no other reason than it allows her to privilege “literary” vampires as something distinct from the folkloric and popular culture forms that bracket the vampire’s repeated presence in nineteenth-century highbrow literature.
Traditional folklorists, of course, would object to such an easy equation of "folklore equals popular culture." More recently, some folklorists have used different strategies to find productive and acceptable connections between the two modes of producing discourse. These strategies take different forms, from looking to folklore as a useful resource for popular, mass mediated narratives to celebrating the ways cultures use and circulate material from popular culture in processes that closely resemble those of folklore. Some of these strategies maintain the "derivative" dynamic while trying to put a more positive spin on the idea of derivation. Others focus instead on folklore as performance and examine the relationship of performance and popular culture.

Most notable in the first camp is Harold Schechter. In *The Bosom Serpent*, Schechter addresses the thorny problem of scholarly studies of popular culture. He asserts that most scholarly analyses of popular art are unsatisfying because they either use traditional critical models to make popular art seem like high art, or they employ critical distance to analyze the primitive qualities of unrefined culture. His answer to this scholarly dilemma is that we might more productively view popular art as "part of an age-old tradition of popular or communal story-telling, a form of fiction which . . . actually bears a much closer resemblance to folklore" (Schechter 9).

*Schechter is not alone in this observation.* Other folklorists have noted the connections between folklore and modern popular art. These sorts of studies collect tabloid newspapers, comic books, horror films and the like and link them to motifs and narratives found in past and present oral traditions. The "bosom serpent" in Schechter's title refers to a folk motif of swallowing a snake and the subsequent
methods of removing it from the body; he traces this motif from the science fiction film *Alien* to a story by Nathaniel Hawthorne to the tribal narratives of several Native American peoples. This sort of tracing of folk motifs from oral culture into popular texts allows critics to maintain a distinction between different modes of discourse. The scholars doing this work, in a sense, offer no real challenge to more traditional folklorists who maintain rigid disciplinary categories. Rather, they replace the notion of derivation, whereby the popular text is a lesser form dependent upon the originary folkloric form, with a more egalitarian position of tolerated difference. This compromise position basically holds that folklore and popular culture are separate but equally valid and connected areas to study.

A somewhat different set of critical positions maintains distinctions between the two modes of discourse but locates an interesting area of hybridity between them. These critics are less interested in tracing motifs that recur from one mode of production to another, but are more interested in the overlapping processes involved in both modes of cultural production. It is worth briefly reviewing three folklorists who focus on this sort of hybridity.

The first and, perhaps, most relevant to the discipline of Performance Studies is Richard Bauman. Bauman's detailed discussion of the "performance turn" in folklore identifies a particular way that contemporary folklorists define their field of study. He identifies three dominant uses of performance: as the context of textual production, as a special and aesthetic mode of communication, and as enactment or cultural performance ("American" 177). In addition to embracing performance as central to the study of folklore, Bauman calls on folklorists to be more concerned with the larger
social implications of what they study rather than focusing on discrete folk practices by themselves (176).

In this conception of the field, it is more important to understand folklore by means of a mode of communication where “performance” takes a central position as the main process of folklore, and therefore a central and significant process in the culture as a whole. Central to this call for taking in the “bigger picture” is a recognition that it is becoming ever more unproductive to [study folklore] within a framework that excludes a serious attempt to comprehend all of the modern social condition — industrial and post-industrial capitalism, large scale bureaucratic structures, popular culture, the mass media, political ideology, class, power, and global culture — and the myriad ways these forces impinge upon and transform the lifeworld of people. (Bauman, “American” 176)

This conception of the field of folklore, while focusing on performance and context within face-to-face interpersonal interactions, nonetheless recognizes that those interactions occur within a social framework that is also occupied by other modes of interaction.

For Bauman, the performance turn in folklore has been most successful in encouraging scholars to study cultural performances. This turn attempts to reconcile the different methodological approaches to folklore by using performance to negotiate the relationship of texts and contexts. He identifies three spheres of communication within this approach to folklore: face-to-face interactions, the public sphere, and mediated communication. Although the products and processes of mass and popular culture may influence all three levels of folkloric/cultural performance, it is in the third
area that there is a significant overlapping of structures and concepts. Of the latter he
notes:

the basic focus on communicative practice, the most general sense of
performance, attunes some folklorists at least to forms of mediated
communication -- from graffiti to comics to TV sitcoms -- where there are
formal or functional continuities with the expressive forms that characterize
the interaction order. This, then, is a third sphere of communication that must
be part of a comprehensive perspective on folklore in modern society.
(Bauman, “American” 178)

As to the actual scholarly practice of this kind of folklore analysis, Bauman notes:

“This is still a small literature, and much of it -- as we might expect -- focuses on how
items of folklore taken up by the media can be taken back out into oral performance”
(“American” 180). Bauman provides an example of a performance-centered study of
mediated folklore in a doctoral dissertation on early blues records. Here, the element
of greatest interest to the folklorist is the records’ reflexivity -- the myriad ways the
recorded voices either try to establish a scene of performance (e.g., by calling for
listeners to dance) or refer to themselves as recordings. While Bauman’s focus on
reflexivity as the key aspect of mediated folklore is not very satisfying or complete, he
notes that this area of inquiry is still largely under-theorized; he ends his essay with a
call for more work in this area.

A good example of a study that has done this sort of work is Gene Bluestein’s
Poplore: Folk and Pop in American Culture. Bluestein’s key term, “poplore,”
identifies the hybridity that occurs within the interaction of folklore and popular
culture. One of folklore’s key difficulties with popular culture is that commercial
culture tends to put names to textual production while the sources of folklore texts
largely remain anonymous (e.g., “I heard this from a friend of a friend”). Bluestein’s
concept of poplore questions this easy distinction and explores a significant mode of
discursive production that allows for a sort of authored folklore.

I want to redefine the term poplore to mean the tradition developed early in
our history in which creative individuals integrated sources similar to those
appearing in older, more traditional cultures with popular or commercial
elements. (Bluestein 8)

Significantly, Bluestein suggests that the notion of communal production that is
central to the idea of “anonymous” folklore also may be found in popular culture.

That we may attribute authorship to creative individuals does not change the fact that
their works are still collectively produced.

Bluestein’s main object of study is popular music. He focuses particularly on the
hybridization of Anglo-American and African-American musical forms, noting how
popular music has been a principal vehicle for allowing different musical forms to
mix. His approach is less dependent upon identifying the contextual or self-referential
performance moments of recorded popular music and more about recognizing how the
interplay between folklore and popular music allows the development of different
discursive formations that continue to circulate in and between both spheres of
communication.

Taking this idea a step further, Linda Dégh demonstrates that this give-and-
take relationship between folklore and popular culture extends beyond popular music.

She eschews Bauman’s performance-centered model as too restrictive for
understanding all of the important aspects of and relationships between folklore and mass media. She claims that Bauman’s approach places too much emphasis on contexts and face-to-face communicative interactions when the essential power of media is that it allows such communications to happen over distance and time (22-23). For her, the two key concepts of folklore that pertain to popular culture are variants and incorporation (what Michel de Certeau would call “making do”). Mass mediated popular culture, then, becomes an important part of the process of creating and disseminating variants of narratives and themes. Dégh distinguishes herself from Schechter and other folklorists who trace folkloric motifs in popular culture by recognizing that modern folklore and popular culture are dynamically interconnected, each creating new narratives and variants while simultaneously recycling and developing older themes.

Additionally, Dégh is interested in how individuals and communities use and transform mass mediated popular texts in their everyday lives and performances. Her approach acknowledges that while popular culture may derive much of its materials from rich folklore traditions, it is also the case that the folklore process depends upon a patching together of other sources into the everyday use of community life and that one of those sources includes popular mass mediated discourse. Folklore, therefore, is also derivative of popular culture.

Dégh’s model, then, for understanding the interaction of popular culture and folklore follows the structure of many models generated by cultural studies theorists to understand the complex dynamics of cultural production. Two more obvious examples of this sort of modeling are John Fiske’s and Richard Johnson’s. Fiske
maintains that popular culture is not simply produced by commercial industries, but depends upon productive use by active and playful consumers. Popular culture, therefore, is caught between the excorporations of consumers who use popular commodities and texts in ways unforeseen by their producers, and incorporations of those uses back into the systems of production (Fiske 15-16). Johnson, similarly, identifies a cycle of cultural production whose significant parts include production which leads to texts which leads to readings which leads to lived cultures which leads back to production, and so forth (47).

Traditional models of folklore ignore the production end of these cultural models. That is, according to traditional folklorists, in folk culture there is no separation between production and consumption. Traditional folklorists identify incorporation as the parasitic relationship of popular culture to folklore (producers stealing folklore to make popular trash) and excorporation as the pollution of folklore by popular culture (popular trash replacing “real” folklore in the life world of communities). What Dégh’s approach suggests, instead, is that folklore and the folkloric process are really much the same as the processes of popular culture.

It makes sense, then, that one of the clearest articulations of this idea comes not from folklore but from theorists of popular culture who reference folkloric processes in their work. For example, in Reading Television Fiske and Hartley contend that “television functions as a social ritual, overriding individual distinctions, in which our culture engages in order to communicate with its collective self” (85). Drawing on a familiar figure of folklore scholarship, they identify this aspect of television as the “bardic function” and detail seven roles that this function serves: to
articulate consensus about reality; to implicate members of the community into value systems; to celebrate individual accomplishments; to assure the culture of the adequacies of its ideologies; to expose serious inadequacies in the same; to convince the audience that status and identity are guaranteed by the culture as a whole; and to transmit a sense of cultural membership (88). The bardic function also operates primarily by "ritual condensation," whereby abstract ideas are materialized in concrete narratives and situations (89). While Fiske and Hartley are speaking specifically of television, these concepts may be applied to other media forms of popular culture as well. The bardic function of television is also helpful because it focuses less on the structures and motifs of folklore than its ultimate purpose. Popular culture and folklore meet as clear articulations and negotiations of world views through the stories and entertainments cultures provide themselves.

These models, therefore, blur the conceptual boundaries between folklore and popular culture. Such a blurring opens up several possibilities for better understanding both fields of inquiry. First, popular culture is better understood as a process, rather than a product. The tendency to objectify texts of popular culture is what allows them to be so easily labeled "trash." This blending of disciplinary approaches recognizes that such texts are really only variants in an ongoing process of cultural production. Second, neither popular culture nor folklore is limited to means or modes of their transmission. What is central to the blurring of these two fields is recognizing that the technology of transmission is not the defining characteristic of either — folklore is more than face-to-face interaction and popular culture is more than mass media. Finally, this blurring changes the relationship of ideological critique in both fields.
Folklorists have traditionally had little interest in the politics involved in the practices and processes of folklore. The ideological dynamics of popular culture have often been oversimplified as concerning the strategies of dominant producers over subordinate consumers. When the circulation models of cultural studies and folklore meet, the ideological dynamics of cultural production become, necessarily, more complicated and sophisticated. The focus shifts from oppressors (or a lack thereof) to oppressive systems of discourse and the ways peoples avoid, exploit, and negotiate them.

**Folklore in Dracula**

The above discussion suggests two related ways of viewing folkloric performance within the diffuse text of Dracula. First, the variations on the vampire myth each provide a residue of folkloric performance. Tracing the ritual structure of a folk custom across three significant articulations of Dracula demonstrates roles that folk performance plays in influencing the structure of the Dracula narrative. In what follows, I trace such folkloric performances in three articulations of Dracula: a nineteenth-century report of vampire folklore in Transylvania, Stoker’s novel, and Francis Ford Coppola’s 1992 film, *Bram Stoker’s Dracula*. Second, by looking to the communal participation involved in the circulation of these tales, I examine ways folkloric processes (mediated and otherwise) operate in the transmission of Dracula. I examine responses to Dracula to discern how contemporary transmission practices challenge and further develop the folkloric performance structures in Dracula. Therefore, the involvement of contemporary vampire fans in the transmission and development of Dracula serves as a second site of folkloric performance.
The Vampire Ritual

While many critics of Dracula recognize that the vampire is a folkloric figure of some longevity, they tend to overlook that the folkloric vampire was almost always associated with customs for its detection and destruction. Taken together, these customs represent a communal ritual that was even endorsed and practiced by devout members of Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches. These rituals are reported in Medieval legal documents and monastic writings. Those sources of vampire lore, imbued as they are with the structures and performances of rituals, permeate subsequent articulations of Dracula.

A particularly useful model for detailing the parts of the vampire ritual is Victor Turner's “social drama.” By now, Victor Turner's “social drama” is a very familiar and often (over)used analytical rubric for studying performance rituals. While Turner uses this model as a way to describe stages in a community’s ritualized response to some problem, there is certainly precedence for applying the model to literary analysis. The essence of Turner’s model, after all, is really a return to dramatic structures proposed and discussed by critics as old as Aristotle. Turner’s interest was in identifying how those structures apply to a community in crisis and its practices in overcoming that crisis. I use his model here to identify the principal elements of rituals carried out as part of the folkloric origins of the vampire; these rituals similarly involved communities in crisis.

In Dramas, Fields and Metaphors, Turner first proposed his now famous phases of social dramas, which he defined as “units of aharmonic or disharmonic process, arising in conflict situations” (37). The four phases include: (1) breach, where a
disruption of “regular, norm-governed social relations occurs between persons or
groups within the same system of social relations;” (2) crisis, where a resulting
increase in social tension occurs, “during which, unless the breach can be sealed off
quickly within a limited area of social interaction, there is a tendency for the breach to
widen and extend until it becomes coextensive with some dominant cleavage in the
widest set of relevant social relations to which the conflicting or antagonistic parties
belong;” (3) redressive action, where “in order to limit the spread of crisis, certain
adjustive or redressive “mechanisms, . . . informal or formal, institutional or ad hoc,
are swiftly brought into operation by leading or structurally representative members of
the disturbed social system;” and finally (4) resolution or deterioration, which includes
“reintegration of the disturbed social group or of the social recognition and
legitimization of irreparable schism between the contesting parties” (38-41).

Viewed within the belief structures of those cultures which perpetuate vampire
lore, this model seems to explain the various phases of the vampire ritual. Indeed, a
brief look at some of the reported folklore Stoker drew upon in writing his novel
suggests the social drama quite clearly. Joseph Bierman speculates that Stoker may
have learned much about vampires from an article by Mme. Emily Gerard,
“Transylvanian Superstitions,” which appeared in the July 1885 Nineteenth Century
magazine (54). Similarly, Leonard Wolf conjectures that this article most probably
led Stoker to Gerard’s longer meditation on Transylvania, The Land Beyond the
Forest, published in 1888. Clearly, passages concerning vampires in Gerard’s travel
book match the folklore presented in Stoker’s novel, as the following excerpt reveals:
More decidedly evil is the nosferatu, or vampire, in which every Roumanian peasant believes as firmly as he does in heaven or hell. There are two sorts of vampires, living and dead. The living vampire is generally the illegitimate offspring of two illegitimate persons, but even a flawless pedigree will not insure anyone against the intrusion of a vampire into their family vault, since every person killed by a nosferatu becomes likewise a vampire after death, and will continue to suck the blood of other innocent persons till the spirit has been exorcised by opening the grave of the suspected person, and either driving a stake through the corpse, or else firing a pistol shot into the coffin. To walk smoking around the grave on each anniversary of the death is supposed to be effective in confining the vampire. In very obstinate cases of vampirism it is recommended to cut off the head, and replace it in the coffin with the mouth filled with garlic, or to extract the heart and burn it, strewing its ashes over the grave.

That such remedies are often resorted to even now is a well-attested fact, and there are probably few Roumanian villages where such have not taken place within the memory of its inhabitants. There is likewise no Roumanian village which does not count among its inhabitants some old woman (usually a midwife) versed in the precautions to be taken in order to counteract vampires, and who makes of this science a flourishing trade. She is frequently called in by the family who has lost a member, and requested to “settle” the corpse securely in its coffin, so as to insure it against wandering. The means by which she endeavors to counteract any vampire-like instincts which may be lurking are various. Sometimes she drives a nail through the forehead of the deceased, or else rubs the body with the fat of a pig which has been killed on the feast of St. Ignatius, five days before Christmas. It is also very usual to lay a thorny branch of wild-rose bush across the body to prevent it leaving the coffin. (qtd. in Wolf, Dracula 21-22)

In Gerard’s description of vampire belief in Transylvania, she notes that the illegitimate offspring of illegitimate parents will become a vampire. The breach here is one of marital customs and adultery taboos. This break with social norms results in a liminal figure, the vampire, literally caught betwixt and between life and death, the undead. The mounting crisis comes as this figure assaults the family and “other innocent persons.” Redressive action occurs when affected members of the community consult with a noted elder, “some old woman (usually a midwife),” and receive instructions in a number of methods to quiet the roaming corpse. The final
stage is, of necessity, reintegrative, since to fail to return the vampire to peaceful death would mean the conversion and subsequent collapse of community after community. My point, however, is that the vampire lore that Gerard reports fits Turner's model of social drama. There is a transgression (two-fold illegitimacy) followed by harm to the community that involves some sort of communal, ritual response that leads to reintegration of the liminal figure into its proper place in the community, that of an inanimate corpse well and truly dead.

Paul Barber provides one of the most thorough reviews and discussions of Medieval and Renaissance vampire folklore to date. He reviews many original documents that detail, with a certain amount of similarity and consistency, the outbreak of vampirism and the necessary steps taken to put down the cause. Barber's work, which purportedly unearths the "reality" behind this folklore of vampires, suggests an important aspect of Turner's social drama. Turner typically applied the model to social upheaval, either cyclical occurrences or emergent social rifts in the fabric of a primitive culture. The all-important third phase, redressive action, usually constituted some socially formalized activity (i.e., ritual) to resolve the conflict. Barber, however, suggests that vampire lore is the application of superstition in the place of medical science to deal with the confluence of two natural events -- plague and premature burial. Vampire lore, therefore, develops from a social drama whose breach is a natural phenomenon with social impact. The lore purportedly develops from actual social dramas where communities respond to illness by performing rituals over corpses; the subsequent folklore about these events evolves into narratives that
contain social drama structures and the ritual “recipes” for responding to similar
natural crises in a community.4

The first key natural phenomenon was a plague, or any of many wasting
sicknesses that moved through Medieval and Renaissance communities. The rapid
progression of such outbreaks often had traceable routes. That many of these illnesses
were wasting diseases, with sufferers seeming to get better only to get sick again, was
easily grist for the mill of vampire lore. The second natural phenomenon that
contributed to the growth of the vampire lore was death itself. Barber notes that before
the advent of modern medicine, correctly diagnosing death was not always easy.
General ignorance of the process of decomposition may have contributed to the belief
in corpses that walked among the living.

With these two phenomena in mind, the folkloric vampire ritual runs
something like this: A community is suddenly gripped by a horrible, wasting disease.
First, only one or two people are affected. Soon, that number grows exponentially.
The outbreak of disease is, itself, a crisis interfering in the regular operation of the
community. In the face of this natural disaster for which the community has no
scientific defense, according to Barber, it must rely on superstition. These
superstitions provide a series of practices that help identify and dispatch the vampire,
literally involving the examination and marking of corpses.

The model of social drama therefore identifies a significant breach that may
have caused a recently deceased member of the community to become a vampire.
Turner’s social drama implies a sequencing of event phases. This vampire ritual,
however, suggests that part of the ritual is identifying the breach. The social drama
structure is not merely a progression of events, but a structure that a community reads onto itself by means of the performance of rituals. The breach, therefore, is read onto the body of an odd corpse which is further marked by the community’s retrospective sense-making of the individual’s dangerous social transgressions. Once this corpse is identified as the initially afflicted member of the community, the highly ritualized performance of mutilating the body and staking it down serve as redressive action. Finally, either the disease has run its course or the wasting deaths continue. In either case, the ritual of vampire detection and dispatch has served its function, either resolving the problem and “curing” the community or failing to do so and leading to the “deterioration” of the community. Both scenarios leave behind a cautionary tale about the power of vampires.

These ritual structures are not lost on Bram Stoker when he uses this sort of folkloric material in the construction of his master vampire. However, unlike much of the rest of the vampire texts available to him in both literary and folkloric form, Stoker was less interested in the creation of Dracula than in his effects on the community he invades. The breach, therefore, has much less to do with the reasons for Dracula’s origins as a vampire. Instead, Stoker resituates the breach as a collapse of national boundaries and the penetration of British business into dark and superstitious lands, surely a more resonant danger at the height of the British colonial empire. New means of communication, long distance real-estate deals, and increased travel due to commerce seem to bring the modern world of London in contact with the mysterious world of Transylvania. The penetration of the boundaries is all that Stoker really
offers as the necessary breach that leads to the crisis, and it is the crisis upon which Stoker spends much of his time in the novel.

One of the recurring observations in criticism about the novel is how its title character remains largely absent throughout most of the novel (e.g., Skal, Hollywood 24-5; Williams 121; and Zanger 21). Stoker, it seems, is much more interested in reporting the effects of Dracula’s presence in the background of polite English society. The bulk of the novel concerns the band of soon-to-be vampire hunters coming to realize the full impact of the crisis they face. The latter third of the novel details the powers of the vampire, once identified, and tracks him back to his lair where the traditional ritual of dispatch is performed in order to redress the crisis and provide resolution. Here, Stoker draws explicitly on the folklore he has read so much about. Van Helsing’s long monologue on the vampire’s powers and weaknesses includes the following, drawn almost verbatim from Gerard:

Then there are the things which so afflict him that he has no power, as the garlic that we know of; and as for things sacred, as this symbol, my crucifix, that was amongst us even now when we resolve, to them he is nothing, but in their presence he take his place far off and with respect. There are others, too, which I shall tell you of, lest in our seeking we may need them. The branch of the wild rose on his coffin keep him that he not move from it; a sacred bullet fired into the coffin kill him so that he be true dead; and as for the stake through him, we know already of its peace; or the cut-off head that giveth rest. We have seen it with our eyes. (Stoker, Dracula 213)

Stoker’s novel provides the clearest description in nineteenth-century vampire fiction of the methods for dispatching vampires, creating quite a catalogue of their powers and ways to thwart them. Van Helsing’s role as wise member of the community and holder of arcane knowledge should not be overlooked, either. Here, the midwife or
priest of the traditional folkloric ritual is replaced by the academic, himself a kind of folklorist.

The ritual structure of the social drama stays more or less intact in Stoker’s narrative. The first sign of the vampire’s presence is a mysterious illness that suddenly plagues Lucy. Dr. Seward, the rational center of the novel, tries to cure the illness with medicine. When he is unable to find anything physically wrong with her, he next “comes to the conclusion that it must be something mental” (109). This conclusion leads him to contact Van Helsing. Although Van Helsing examines Lucy, he is more interested in various events and characters in the London community. This lack of interest in the patient frustrates Seward, who is used to looking to the patient for the signs of health problems. Van Helsing’s interest in newspaper reports, Lucy’s relationship with her fiancee, and her sleeping chamber seem, to the good doctor, to be unrelated to the patient’s health.

An early exchange between Seward and Van Helsing foreshadows much of their relationship when Van Helsing tries to convince Seward that medical knowledge alone will be unable to prevail here. He looks not only to the patient but also to the community around the patient. Inspired by the telltale wounds on her neck, he senses that there is something more than mere illness at work and looks for further signs not on her body but in the community at large. On Van Helsing’s third visit, he arrives with herbs for which Seward recognizes no acknowledged medicinal use. Seward expresses his concern as Van Helsing goes about rubbing the doors with garlic: “Well, Professor, I know you always have a reason for what you do, but this certainly puzzles me. It is well we have no skeptic here, or he would say that you were working some
spell to keep out an evil spirit.” Seward’s ironic comment conveys his professor’s turn from medical to ritual practices.

The importance of the professor’s actions as ritual should not be downplayed. Like a shaman, Van Helsing provides wise counsel and directs the ordered actions that will reveal and remove the threat of the vampire. For example, after Lucy’s “death,” Van Helsing takes Seward to her tomb to demonstrate that she is now a vampire. If Van Helsing’s only concern were dispatching her as a vampire, he and Seward might proceed at once. Instead, Seward and Van Helsing withdraw so that they might gather Arthur Holmwood, her fiancé, so that he should be the one to stake down the vampire. Afterwards, the men take an oath to hunt the vampire that transformed her. Interestingly, this oath in response to the redressive action of staking Lucy provides a kind of resolution (literally a “resolve”), forming the community that will now pursue Dracula. From this point on, Steward offers no skeptical challenges to Van Helsing’s understanding of the ritual practices associated with the vampire.

Jonathan Harker’s subsequent inclusion in this community is important because he is, to a significant degree, responsible for allowing Dracula access to England. As the member of the community directly responsible for the breach that creates the crisis of Dracula, he is included in the redressive action that brings the novel’s final resolution. Harker’s involvement at the beginning and end of the novel provides further evidence that Stoker has shifted the breach from the creation of the vampire to the penetration of national/natural boundaries. In the folklore of vampires, the vampire is a member of the community; the breach is the social transgression that creates the vampire.
Nor is this the only departure Stoker makes from vampire folklore. Borrowing from Polidori, his vampire can easily “pass” as a living human. While the folklore mentions the lycanthropic abilities of the vampire, Stoker is famous for adding the vampire bat to the list. Stoker also gives his vampire hypnotic control over his victims, a power that traditional folkloric vampires did not have. While all these innovations for Dracula provide interesting variants from the traditional folklore, the significant difference is the shift in the ritual structure. Because Stoker does not locate a specific transgression as the source of the vampire, the folkloric ritual structure is somewhat compromised.

Nonetheless, Stoker’s vampire is coded with transgressive behaviors. As Twitchell notes, vampirism for Stoker is clearly about sex (112). The transformation in Lucy from a “good girl” to a “harlot” clearly demonstrates a linking of the Victorian taboo against aggressive female sexuality with the taboo of cannibalism at the heart of vampirism. While harlotry and blood drinking are clearly transgressive behavior, Stoker’s departure from the folkloric form is that the vampirism caused the social transgression rather than the other way around. Lucy commits none of the folkloric transgressions that would lead to her vampiric transformation. Stoker suggests a hint of wantonness in the character by showing her difficulty deciding between her three suitors. He also has her suffer from sleep walking, but that habit seems to have been influenced by Dracula. None of these potential transgressions seems to fit within the structures of the traditional vampire folklore.

Ironically, Francis Ford Coppola’s *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* attempts to fix some of Stoker’s departures from the traditional folklore by depicting Dracula’s origins and
making Lucy a bit more complicitous in her transformation. I use this film as my third discrete articulation of Dracula in this chapter for two reasons. First, it makes overt claims to authenticity by clearly aligning itself with Stoker’s novel. Second, while it may claim to tell the story the way Stoker did, it is also significant for its departures from the novel. The film therefore situates itself between what Mikhail Bakhtin identified as the dialogic forces in any cultural production, centripetal alliance to tradition and centrifugal desire for innovation (272-3).

It is precisely at the level of social drama that the film provides some of its most interesting innovations. Identifying Stoker’s failure to discuss the origins of Dracula’s vampirism, the film returns to the historical figure of Vlad Tepes to narratively detail the initial breach. Whereas Stoker’s novel identifies the initial transgression as one of crossing cultural and national boundaries, Coppola recasts the story as a sort of romance. In Stoker’s novel, British business acumen and the growing Empire have attracted the Count’s attention. When Jonathan Harker crosses into the mountains of Transylvania with his real estate documents, he unleashes a monster on his homeland. Coppola’s film goes further back to Dracula’s origins as a vampire. The film opens with Vlad Tepes arriving home from battle to find that his beloved wife, thinking he has been killed, has committed suicide. When priests inform the grieving voivode that he will not see her in heaven because she committed the sin of suicide, he renounces his faith. Stabbing the altar with his sword, he is cursed to live forever with his love and an evil thirst for blood. Coppola’s film more clearly codes the breach as suicide and sacrilege, resituating the fault back onto Dracula’s own initial act of transgression.
Similarly, with Lucy the film clearly tries to establish that, in regards to her vampiric transformation, she was “asking for it.” In one scene, Coppola depicts her and Mina giggling over pornographic drawings in a novel. She makes fun of Mina for her devotion to Jonathan and contemplates what sex is like until Mina, in proper Victorian fashion, changes the topic of conversation. Later, she complains to Mina that she wants to marry all three of her suiters and wishes that she did not have to choose. This suggestion of promiscuity is underscored by her revealing scarlet nightgown; it is a significant departure from the more virginal white of Stoker’s novel. Coppola also clearly depicts her first meeting with Dracula as sexual, although she appears to be asleep while a werewolf-like Dracula ravishes her. Nonetheless, the film makes a much clearer argument than the novel that Lucy’s promiscuous attitude is, to a degree, responsible for the vampiric transformation worked on her.

While the transgressions that cause vampirism are clearly established in this version, the shift from a gothic horror story to a love story provides its own revisions of the traditional vampire social drama. With the breach much more clearly determined by Dracula’s transgressions, the social drama structure plays out across the film in a fashion that makes the vampire monstrous but somehow more sympathetic. Gary Oldman’s Dracula is a tortured lover who causes havoc by searching for the reincarnation of his lost love. The film adds to Stoker’s tale by detailing Dracula’s romantic wooing of Mina, thereby suggesting that the bond between Dracula and her is not only a matter of his unnatural and evil influence over her. The redress phase, then, has much less to do with the lore of killing vampires for the good of the community and more to do with releasing Dracula from the curse of his passion.
The result, as with Langella’s performance, is a Dracula whose death, while necessary, is still tragic. While not necessarily a violation of the social drama structure in general, this innovation seriously compromises the function of the folkloric vampire rituals. By placing our empathy with the vampire, it deflects the narrative concern away from the rescue of the community. In many ways, these choices make the social drama clearer, in terms of providing a stronger sense of transgression as the inciting incident for the rest of the drama. However, while the dramatic elements and motivations seem clearer, the “social” aspects are downplayed. In Stoker’s novel, all of polite English society is threatened by this contamination from the East. An unnatural border crossing results in social contamination that is more of a threat to the very social institutions of Great Britain. Coppola’s film focuses, instead, on the romance between two lost lovers. Dracula’s invasion of England is less about colonial expansion and more about resolving his own issues with the past. While these motivations make him both sinister and sympathetic, they overshadow the more traditional folkloric elements of a community in crisis. Less concerned with sexual or international politics, Coppola’s version focuses instead on the tortured circumstances that turn passionate love into vampiric monstrosity.

Turner’s social drama, therefore, provides a model for identifying the important structural elements of a folkloric ritual to map across these articulations of Dracula. With its emphasis on drama, Turner’s model also explains aspects of the theatrical appeal explored in the previous chapter. Clearly, this earlier cultural practice of communities has influenced the narrative structures of subsequent Draculas. These significant shifts in the ritual structures of Dracula suggest other folkloric
performances connected to the processes of transmission. Tracking these influenes means looking for the ephemeral practices of transmission that exist between and around the variants. These practices constitute performances that are even more ephemeral than ancient rituals, for they do not usually find their way into textual artifacts in archives. Such performances, I contend, are nonetheless readable in the interactions of audiences, readers, and consumers with the diffuse popular culture artifact of Dracula.

Mediated Folklore

I turn to this aspect of folklore and the media with a return to my previous observations about the contingent belief systems that surround Dracula. In giving talks about Dracula and participating in discussions about vampires on various e-mail discussion lists, I have come to understand that many people are not so quick to deny the existence of vampires. It is precisely this attitude of belief that pinpoints the mediated folkloric aspects of the Dracula.

Coppola’s Dracula is certainly not Bram Stoker’s, despite the claim to the contrary in the title. Nor should it be, if the above observations about the similarities between mass media and folklore are accurate. Coppola’s Dracula is as much a variant as any other articulation of Dracula. But it is problematic to say that Coppola is responsible for the inventions in this variant. As Bluestein’s arguments about “poplore” demonstrate, attributing Coppola’s name as author to this film obscures the countless social influences that led to this variant. The film-making process itself certainly includes input from a variety of people, and each one of those people is influenced by what they have seen and heard before. For example, the prologue in
Coppola's film draws loosely upon Radu Florescu and Raymond McNally's historical research of Vlad Tepes, the historical Transylvanian warlord who served as Stoker's inspiration for Dracula. Arguably, this drive to create a history for Dracula that makes him a more sympathetic character is also inspired by Frank Langella's sympathetic portrayal of the Count in 1977. Clearly, then, traces in the film point to collaborative authorship, suggesting that this is a culturally developed variant of Dracula.

Less easy to trace into this variant are the influences of consumers and fans. Surely many people have influenced, directly and indirectly, the variants of Dracula. These influences are truly anonymous and largely untraceable. Yet tracing the influence of individuals on the folkloric narratives is usually not the point of folkloristics. Rather, folklorists traditionally gather variants of narratives in the field and dispense with authors; the lack of a discrete author is usually a defining characteristic of a folklore narrative. When the variant in question is a film, how might one be said to do field work into the community that circulates it? Certainly, sociological approaches to media studies have developed both quantitative and qualitative research tools for examining how audiences respond to films. Similarly, ethnography provides a variety of procedures for participant observation. And, while these tools are useful, they have not guided my primary means of gathering data on participants in the Dracula text.

My "field work" has been both aided and complicated by the fact that I live in my field. I am part of the popular culture I study. I am also an avowed Dracula fan with connections to other fans who are in varying degrees familiar with Dracula. My work in the field has necessarily been diffuse, the boundaries between involvement
with Dracula and other activities and interests of daily life are frequently blurred. I
draw upon a wide variety of activities for which I have taken no notes except for my
memory. These experiences include seeing films with friends, informal chats with
colleagues, interactions with students when I lecture on material associated with
Dracula and vampires, conversations at a vampire-themed party, and so forth.

However, some of these encounters have led to preserved notes and textual
evidence. As part of the present analysis of mediated folklore, I draw upon two
discrete forms of collected responses. First, as part of the lecture I give on the vampire
in American culture I ask the audience to fill out questionnaires about what they know
about vampires (see Appendix). I do this at the beginning of the lecture and then
discuss the audience’s responses as I gather them. The questionnaires serve to open
the discussion by demonstrating how much information even the most disinterested
respondents have about vampires. Over the last seven years, I have gathered and
retained 124 of these questionnaires, which is hardly enough of a representative
sampling to allow accurate generalizations about the population at large. However, the
trends and comments in these questionnaires combined with the results of 574 similar
questionnaires collected by folklorist Norine Dresser provide compelling evidence of
what contemporary audiences actually believe about vampires and Dracula.

A second discrete form of evidence I have gathered comes from the internet.
From 1992 to 1996, I participated on an internet discussion list devoted to vampires.
“Vampires-L” is an e-mail list that allows subscribers to post messages to all other
subscribers on the list about their interests in vampires. The list’s daily e-mail
postings included discussions of vampire topics, announcements of various vampire-
related events, and poetry and fiction created by the subscribers. At one point during my period of subscription, the list-owner reported 467 registered users with an estimated 150 of them posting regularly. During my participation on the list, it generated between fifteen and fifty posts a day, with peaks coming during “flame wars” and “virtual parties.” I participated in and started several “threads” of discussion and, in two cases, collected all of the postings in a discussion. Those two topics addressed the questions “what are the vampire’s real powers and vulnerabilities?” and “where did you learn about vampires?” Excerpts from these two discussion threads provided provocative evidence for the interplay of folklore and popular culture transmission processes.

In all of these direct encounters with people’s understandings of Dracula and vampires, two general phenomena emerged. First, while most people recognize that Dracula is a fiction, they nonetheless seem concerned about determining the truth of Dracula specifically and vampires in general. On questionnaires, respondents pose something they know about vampires and then question whether it is accurate or not. In e-mail discussions, participants could engage in quite heated exchanges about the truth of certain vampire abilities and attributes. In casual conversations, colleagues often pause to ask me, “Is it true that vampires can ____?” This kind of response on the questionnaires and in conversations demonstrates that, despite a wide range of popular representations, most people feel the need to sort through the fiction for the facts. In the e-mail discussions where the participants are more knowledgeable of the popular variants, the contributions often turn to assessing the appeal of different
vampire representations, weighing one text against another in this search for the
vampire that makes the most sense.

The second phenomenon relates to the first. As a participant in these
conversations, people often turned to me as an “expert” to resolve disputes or confirm
beliefs. Even people who admit that they are not particularly interested in vampires
have expressed interest in knowing more about what an expert thinks about vampires.

The most common question that is asked of me in questionnaires, lectures, casual
conversations, and e-mail discussions is “are vampires real?” It is a question I am very
careful about answering. Norine Dresser reports that 27% of her respondents report
that they believe vampires exist as real beings (72). My own questionnaires revealed
closer to 20% (25 out of 124) respondents reporting belief in vampires. Additional
responses indicate a shifting capacity to believe in vampires without directly
answering “yes” to the question. The vampire myth holds that aspect of legend that
Linda Dégh and Andrew Vázsonyi identify as “the quantity and quality of belief
[being] mutable and very much dependent on social and personal contingency” (285).

Out of respect for people’s contingent beliefs, I generally shy away from playing the
expert and respond to questions by identifying sources that both support and challenge
the aspect of vampirism in question. This desire to probe my expertise on the subject
only further demonstrates that people are eager to “pin down” the vampire, not unlike
the desire to separate authentic folklore from the contaminations of the fiction
industry.

The questionnaires and e-mails addressed many specific attributes of the
vampire. For my purposes, I have edited and synthesized them down to three
representative and provocative topics dealing directly with folkloric transformations in Dracula. The topics deal with the vampire’s vulnerability to sunlight, the tradition of vampires wearing capes, and the sympathetic portrayal of vampires versus their traditional depiction as monsters. This latter topic touches directly on the structure of social dramas and reveals, at the level of fan production, remarkable divergences from the traditional structures of Dracula.

The vampire’s vulnerability to sunlight is particularly interesting because, as I have already noted, it is an aspect of Dracula that comes entirely from cinema. The effectiveness of cinema in shaping our beliefs is clear; on the question of vampire vulnerability, “sunlight” is the most cited answer in the surveys I distributed, followed closely by holy water and garlic. As part of the e-mail discussion, one participant, going by the list-name “Tigerlily,” asked: “I saw in Francis Ford Coppola’s Dracula (Gary Oldman is GREAT!) and it says that Dracula can move around during the day. Is this true? I thought a vamp would get crispy in the sun.” Several subscribers to the list informed Tigerlily that Dracula does, in fact, appear during the day in Stoker’s novel. However, far from putting the matter to rest, these responses prompted another participant by the name “Jester” to claim: “No way, Jose! Stoker got it wrong. Vampires turn to smoke at dawn unless they return to their graves. I’m pretty sure Bram Stoker is the first writer to give his vampires a day pass.” Of course, several people followed with examples from folklore and nineteenth-century literature that proved Jester wrong. Curiously, Jester found support in another kind of response, typified by this posting from “Lady in Red”: “I don’t think it really matters what a bunch of dead guys thought. I don’t think vampires should be able to move around
during the day. They have enough advantage at night already. I think Jester is right, they turn to smoke in sunlight. Anything else is just stupid!” This contribution elicited a debate about how the vampire has been represented versus the ways people might represent vampires in their own fiction.

These three contributions to the discussion demonstrate a significant aspect of most of the conversations on the list. Many contributors to the list were actively engaged in what Henry Jenkins describes as “textual poaching,” a kind of “writing in the margins” of popular narratives whereby fans create their own narratives out of the worlds and stories provided by popular culture (154-155). Because typical postings were either discussions of vampires or contributions of fan fiction, the conversations tended to slide between sources of vampire lore and concerns in writing vampire stories. Yet, while most of Jenkins' examples have to do with specific television and film narratives, sometimes combining different worlds in “crossover fictions,” the examples of fan fiction on Vampires-L were a bit different. On the list, subscribers would write not so much in the margins of a particular text but within the variants of a more diffuse popular culture phenomenon. Often, heated debates arose on the list about which author's or film's vampires made the most sense. As a sort of corrective to these outbursts, the “Frequently Asked Questions” file available to subscribers asked that whenever possible contributing authors label their fiction by the kind of vampire they used. For example, labels like “Lumlooney” and “Ricean” identified vampire stories following the worlds and characters described by the authors Brian Lumley and Anne Rice, respectively.
This e-mail discussion of the vampire's vulnerability to sunlight slipped contentiously between how the vampire had been represented in past texts and how the vampire might best be depicted in present texts. It was not always easy to discern which of these questions was being addressed in a given posting. What is significant about the discussion is the number of people who believed that a standard (if not universal) aspect of the vampire is its vulnerability to sunlight. Moreover, the certainty with which several subscribers insisted that vampires were vulnerable to the sun was astounding. Richard Dorson might well shake his head at the way this case demonstrates that cinema had "contaminated" vampire folklore. On the other hand, I could not help but notice that this list seemed to represent a "virtual community" at work in the business of telling itself stories and sharing knowledge about past variations of stories. Frequently the key phrase so defining of folklore, "I heard from a friend of a friend that___" was simply replaced by "I heard of a film that___."

Nor is vulnerability to sunlight the only commonly accepted aspect of Dracula that is not to be found in Stoker's novel. The topic of vulnerability to sunlight slid easily into another assumed attribute of the vampire, as demonstrated by this excerpt from a post by "Pandora":

I think the reason we tend to think Dracula is burned by sunlight is that we want to associate him with the night. He is a 'dark' superstition, a nightmare. It's probably the same reason we think of him in a cape and tuxedo. Dracula lives the nightlife, so to speak.

Norine Dresser reports that 48% of her respondents associate a "cape" or "black cape" with the garb of a vampire. Sixty-three percent (78) of my own surveys identify the cape as signature vampire garb. Again, this facet of Dracula cannot be substantiated.
by Stoker’s novel. In an early chapter of the novel, Harker reports that he sees Dracula “begin to crawl down the castle wall over that dreadful abyss, face down, with his cloak spreading around him like great wings” (37). This one mention is the only reference in the novel to Dracula wearing a cape. The cape initially became a staple of the vampire in the Balderston and Deane stage production, although it is at no point described in the script. Raymond Huntley seems to have been the first performer of Dracula to define the vampire by a cape, a costuming choice that has come to be a stable signifier of Dracula (Glut 38). As with vulnerability to sunlight, this particular detail of Dracula lore is the product of the ways the story circulates in our culture, less an invention of a single person than a culturally developed iconic representation of multiple articulations.

A single, definitive explanation for why the cape has become such a staple of Dracula no doubt is impossible. However, the e-mail discussion turned to the issue of the cape with two insightful theories as to its meaning. Several contributors felt that the cape works for Dracula as a sign of his outdatedness. “The Lady in Red” explained, “Vampires usually wear what was in style when they were alive. Dracula’s cape shows he is behind the times.” She and others explained that this was a strategy of representation in vampire fiction that many of them used. They also referenced examples of this practice in novels by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro and Anne Rice.

However, several other responses pointed out that opera capes would not have been in fashion when Dracula was alive and so did not fully explain why he wears it. Another interpretation of the cape emerged in response to dissatisfaction with The Lady in Red’s explanation. “Baron Redoak” notes,
I think Dracula wears the cape because he has style. Capes are so cool. But except for Dracula, most vampires today don’t wear capes. They do tend to be stylish. Like Anne Rice’s Lestat, who is WAY into fashion! For the time it was written, Dracula’s cape was probably really hot.

What is interesting about this observation and the others like it is that it also makes a connection between Dracula and other more contemporary vampires. Dresser concludes that two of the dominant attributes of the American vampire are “his elegant presence and sophisticated ways” (206). The e-mail discussion seems to support this conclusion, noting a kind of style conscious savvy in the vampire, whether depicted as the traditional Dracula or the rock star Lestat. Perhaps an overlooked aspect of the theatricality of Dracula is his close attention to stylish costume.

The discussion of Dracula’s cape began to develop themes on the list concerning the preferred representation of the vampire as a sympathetic character. Responding directly to Francis Ford Coppola’s depiction of Dracula, members of Vampire-L generally appreciated Gary Oldman’s performance for this reason. Tigerlily laments, “The only bad part about [Bram Stoker’s Dracula] is that [Dracula] dies at the end. Winona [Ryder, playing Mina Harker] should have converted and ditched Keanu [Reeves, playing Jonathan Harker].” This comment further demonstrates the impulse on the list to rewrite popular narratives. It also demonstrates the general perception on the list that vampires are not really evil monsters. As far as I was able to discern, none of the fiction contributed to the list portrayed the vampire as a villain. Some of the fiction depicted struggles between good and bad vampires, but the list in general seemed to agree that vampires were not inherently evil. In Baron Redoak’s view,
Vampirism doesn't determine morality. The person the vampire is determines morality. I really like what Coppola and Oldman do with Dracula because now we know what made him such a monster. I think if a few things had worked out differently, Dracula might have been happy being a vampire. Mina too, probably.

Obviously, as a self-selected group of people carrying on a discussion on an e-mail list devoted to vampires, it is not surprising that the responses indicate a distinct preference for a sympathetic view of vampires.

Such a preference for sympathetic portrayals of vampires is not necessarily the norm, however. Only about 8% (10) of the questionnaires I collected indicate a desire to be or meet a vampire. However, I have yet to give this lecture when there hasn't been one or two such fans eager to speak with me further about vampires. The majority of people responding to both my and Dresser’s questionnaires seem disinclined to either be or meet a vampire. At first, I was a bit perplexed by this finding as it suggests that the audience for the vampire-sympathetic tale is decidedly small. Yet, by my informal count, vampire-sympathetic narratives represent about half of the vampire films produced in the last ten years and well over half of the more recent vampire fiction.

The majority of the respondents to my questionnaire indicated in one way or another that they did not spend a lot of time thinking about vampires. On the other hand, 80% (99) reported knowing someone whom they considered particularly knowledgeable and interested in vampires. The fans I have spoken to are usually either members of an internet gaming or discussion list devoted to vampires, or occasionally they are part of a fan club or organization devoted to some aspect of the vampire. That small but significant group of vampire aficionados, therefore, tends to
be well organized and productive. J. Gordon Melton's *The Vampire Book* lists forty-seven active vampire related clubs and organizations in North America; often sponsored by these clubs are regular newsletters as well as some fifty-six independent vampire-related periodicals (803-11). These publications as well as uncounted web sites, chat rooms, and e-mail discussion lists provide fans outlets for their fiction and observations. During my participation on Vampire-L, one of the subscribers, Earl Lee, successfully published a vampire novel that is a retelling of *Dracula* from Dracula's point of view. Lee was a frequent participant in the discussions on Vampire-L and shared bits of the novel there before it was published.

The impact, then, of a small group of fans on a mass mediated depiction of Dracula might be greater than if a more substantial portion of the population held adamant views about the vampire. The fewer numbers of vampire fans encourage them to search each other out in clubs or on the internet. Thus organized, these groups create the sorts of small communities that circulate and share stories, debating over what they know and how they know it. The result, in the case of Earl Lee, is the publication of a novel which is read by a larger portion of the population than is represented by the fans alone. Should that novel find its way into the office of a Hollywood (or independent) studio, then it might well receive even wider circulation. The resultant film (or television show, play, etc.) would then carry with it the conversations and debates that led to its production. And once produced, it would become a resource (as Lee's novel already has for Vampires-L) for the continued discussions and debates of fans.
The evidence of my field work in the terrain of popular culture suggests that fans are anything but passive receivers of popular narratives. While the active writing in the margins of popular narratives is certainly not a phenomenon solely related to vampires, it does demonstrate something slightly different from the fan fiction inspired by popular narratives like Star Trek or Star Wars. First, the fan participation associated with vampires is less about a discrete fictive world and more about the worlds and beings of a more diffuse and varied cultural phenomenon. More importantly, these contributions to vampire lore and Dracula add to a long history of folklore and popular representations. By blurring the boundaries between mass media and folklore, vampire fans demonstrate that they are anything but passive receivers of a popular culture narrative. Recalling Bauman’s reasons why mass media is excluded from the study of folklore, Dracula does not seem to fit as a narrative “imposed from without.”

Conclusions

Two observations strike me as particularly relevant in comparing the folklore that finds its way into Stoker’s novel and the interrelation of media and folklore in its circulations through present-day popular culture. The first has to do with the declining role social drama plays in the narratives of vampires as Dracula turns from monster to more sympathetic character. The second is the role media technologies have played in the transmission of this tale. Contrary to the beliefs of traditional folklorists, the dialogic relationship between performance and text seems to be facilitated by modern technologies.
The role of the social drama inscribed into the text of Dracula served primarily to structure that text's support of the established order. According to the logic of the novel, the proper Victorian men and women in the novel become stronger and more virtuous by having their morals challenged by the evil of Count Dracula. Stoker's anxiety that modern means of conveyance will create a breach that will lead to a crisis of vampiric invasion is redressed by the triumphant staking down of Dracula. Stoker's anxiety plays out in a novel that is principally about the clash of modern rationalism against primitive superstition where the superstition is real enough to pose a threat. Yet the anxiety is quelled by the ultimate triumph of rationalism over the old world monster. Even so, that the heroes must rely on knowledge that accepts vampires as real still challenges the easy dominance of rationalism.

When Coppola puts forth a version of Dracula that purports to be faithful to Bram Stoker, it is little wonder that it is not. Perhaps modern audiences are a little less willing to entertain a social drama where the principal transgression is colonial advance into developing countries. Because the social drama structure is so much a part of Stoker's novel, it cannot be abandoned altogether. Therefore, Coppola provides a different breach. The tragic lost love of Vlad Tepes resitutes the breach away from the responsibility of Western advances and technological developments. Coppola's Bram Stoker's Dracula, as the promotional posters suggest, is a love story.

But this change in the text prefigures another that signals the end of the social drama as the dominant structure in Dracula narratives. As the vampire becomes a figure more loved than loathed, there remains little need for the ritual of staking him down. While certainly conflict and drama remain in these vampire-sympathetic tales,
the basic structure of the old folkloric form no longer applies. Fan inspired stories now resist depictions of communities pinning their ills onto a vampire and setting out to hunt him down with stake in hand. Instead, new communities performing new versions of the story provide new variants. The vampire breaks out of the traditional Dracula narrative structure and emerges as a sympathetic figure who escapes the stake.

The list subscribers' responses to Coppola's film suggest alternate plot developments while acknowledging aspects of the film that they truly liked. This activity significantly mirrors many of the theater critics' responses to Frank Langella's 1977 portrayal of Dracula. Both fans and theater critics seemed more disturbed than happy at the demise of Dracula. Similarly, both fans and theater critics creatively wrote into the margins of the performances, positing alternatives. This shedding of disatisfactions in favor of the elements that "worked" provides the clearest indication of a text uncomfortably strapped to a restrictive structure and about to break free. In both cases, responses to these Draculas indicate that Dracula is about to move from a structure about the ritual function of community repair to a structure that empowers the individual in the face of dominant ideology and superstitious persecution.

The technologies of transmission that allow this structural transformation are important. I am not in any way suggesting that the internet alone is responsible for such changes in the vampire tale. I am, however, suggesting that the internet is one of many means of mass communication that have become more available to greater numbers of people. This new technology facilitates audience influence into the production of popular culture they consume. Not surprisingly, this potential for communication technology is present in a crude form in the novel.
Consider that Stoker chose the epistolary form for his novel. But rather than tell his tale only through the exchange of letters and journal entries, he includes newspaper clippings, gramophone transcriptions, broadsides, telegrams, and invoices. Two-thirds of the way through the novel, the characters realize that they need to pool all their information about Dracula in order to track the vampire. They set Mina to the task of collecting and transcribing these materials, using an invention quite new in Stoker's day, the typewriter. Only by gathering everyone's observations and little bits of published "trivia" are the heroes able to track Dracula, incidentally leaving behind a scrapbook that is Stoker's novel. The novel itself purports to be a collaborative writing exercise and an intertextual construct.

What allows that exercise, according to the logic of the novel, is the new technologies of typewriters, shorthand, and voice recording devices. The characters collaborate to pull out of their shared experiences evidence of the ephemeral and otherwise untraceable presence of Dracula. I find this image resonant for this discussion of folklore in Dracula for two reasons. First, this practice seems to mirror the work that literary folklorists do when they sift through materials looking for the ephemeral evidence of past performance practices, piecing together out of the fragments a larger cultural practice. Second, the final form of the novel seems to imitate the collections of e-mail posting that I used to receive daily from the Vampires-L list -- disparate fragments of narrative and observations that, taken together, tell a bigger story. Both practices look to and beyond texts to locate the evidence of influential yet ephemeral performances.
In the end, these communication technologies principally serve to augment communal abilities to tell stories. Stoker’s novel is not, strictly speaking, the same as the vampire folklore that preceded it, but it does draw heavily on the images and structures of those folkloric narratives. Nor is Coppola’s film really Bram Stoker’s Dracula, but it does rely heavily on the images and structures of the novel even as it transforms them into a new variant of the tale. Evidence of fan involvement and contributions to the telling of Dracula implies similar connections (such as the linking of capes to the prevalence of vampire stylishness) alongside the acceptance of new variants at odds with Stoker’s novel (such as the adamant belief that vampires burn in the sun). What these versions of Dracula demonstrate, alongside the organization of fans and changing technologies of transmission, is a tale alive and in the ongoing process of retelling. Vampire folklore is not contaminated by the fiction industry or other modes of popular culture; it thrives in it. The surest sign that Dracula is “alive and well” is the continued productions of variants.

Conclusions

This study is premised on the idea that existing studies of Dracula have largely failed to take into account the performances that have influenced it. Ironically, a dominant trend in folklore resists the influence of literary texts and popular culture on the oral transmission and performance of folklore. A folkloric analysis of Dracula would naturally seem to fill this void in the existing scholarly work on Dracula. However, the bulk of Dracula studies that claim folklore as part of the analysis simply identify motifs and not the performances associated with transmission. Other more
anthropologically oriented folklore analyses of vampires tend to eschew Dracula as a popular contamination of the pure folklore.

In contrast, the preceding analysis demonstrates that the separation of folklore from popular culture is simply not productive. While films and TV are certainly not the same as stories told around the campfire, they are also not entirely different. Both work to circulate important information about the world and to shape shared worldviews. As well, both generate texts and performances that influence one another, making it difficult to posit either of those terms as "first order" or central to a field of study.

The question remains, however, as to who is doing this performance work in popular culture. While certainly not everyone is a vampire fan, the questionnaires I distribute as part of my lectures demonstrate that most of us know a significant amount about vampires and Dracula. And while only few of us pursue that interest (and fewer still pursue it academically), the contributions of those for whom the vampire is of great interest affect, directly and indirectly, its representation in popular media. While I am not claiming that fans have absolute control over the vampire’s depiction in popular culture, they do have influence. In any case, the authorship behind most popular articulations is difficult to pin on any one person, suggesting that most popular depictions are already collaborative projects.

As with theatrical productions, both oral culture folklore performances and fan poaching practices have shaped the articulations of Dracula. Cultural performances influence these depictions of vampires in several key ways. From the social drama structure of folkloric vampire ritual behaviors to the discussions and heated debates in
clubs and on e-mail interest groups, folklore performances penetrate the representational aparati in which Dracula thrives.

I began this analysis of the blurred boundaries of folklore and popular culture by detailing an experience I had around watching a popular variant of Dracula. I end with another observation that these speculations on blurred boundaries have allowed me. No doubt there are productive distinctions to be maintained between a showing of a film and a live performance. These differences, I contend, have been and largely still are theorized as defining elements of disciplinary boundaries. However, I feel that there is still work to be done in the largely under-theorized areas that explore their similarities.

On this note, I would like to conclude with a longish quotation from another film that, I think, addresses this point of connection and comparison between media and folklore quite clearly. In the film Matinee, John Goodman plays an entrepreneurial horror film maker who has come to Key West during the Cuban Missile Crisis to premier his new monster film. In one scene, he explains to the film’s young protagonist the origin of horror films. As they walk through the lobby of the theater, he reminds his protégé of the important performance elements that link campfire story-telling and the modern cinema:

WOOLSEY: Okay, like a zillion years ago, a guy’s livin’ in a cave. He goes out one day. Bam! He gets chased by a Mammoth. Now, he’s scared to death, but he gets away. And when it’s all over with, he feels great.
LOOMIS: Well yeah, cause he’s still livin’.
WOOLSEY: Yeah, but he knows he is and he feels it. So he goes home, back to the cave. The first thing he does, he does a drawing of the mammoth. And he thinks, “People are coming to see this. Let’s make it good. Let’s make the teeth real long and the eyes real mean.” {Pause} Boom! The first monster movie. That’s probably why I still do it. You make the teeth as big as you
want, then you kill it off. Everything's okay. The lights come up. {sighs}
You see, the people come into your cave, with the two hundred year old carpet.
The guy tears your ticket in half. It's too late to turn back now. Water
fountain's all booby trapped and ready. The stuff laid out on the candy counter.
Then you come over here to where it's dark — could be anything in there — and
you say, "Here I am. What have you got for me?"

In the next chapter, I explore how one of the things such mass mediated
folklore texts provide is not simply an opportunity for discussion about a myth that
currently circulates in ways reminiscent of folklore. Rather, these sorts of texts
provide citational templates for performing social identity. The performative power of
Dracula may, in fact, be in what it demonstrates about the doing of gender and the
performance of difference in everyday life. I turn from Dracula as an example of mass
mediated folklore that circulates and develops in our culture to the resources that this
diffuse cultural artifact provides for the performative construction of gendered identity
and alterity.

Endnotes

1 Elizabeth Fine proposes an alternative to such fixed literary texts in The
Folklore Text. In a lengthy discussion of poststructuralists' understandings of texts,
she identifies all texts as essentially emergent in that their meaning comes from active
engagement with readers, performers and audiences. However, for all her recognition
of the power of performance in such emergent texts, her critical agenda turns toward a
detailed transcription process and a call for greater use of recording devices so that the
ephemera of performance might be sedimented in place for analysis and transmission.
While this practice does place an emphasis on context and performance, it also seems
to fit all too well into Conquergood's conception of the "fetishization of texts"
("Beyond" 25-6).

2 Referencing Milton Singer's original development of the concept, Bauman
defines cultural performances as "symbolically resonant public events [such] as
festival, spectacle, drama, or fair, in which the central meanings and values of a group
are embodied, acted out, and laid open to examination and interpretation in symbolic
form" ("American" 177).
Turner himself acknowledged that the social drama structure is an archetype drawn from the theater and present in many literary plots (Ritual 71). His identification of both the structures and functions of social drama have contributed to a cultural criticism approach to literary analysis. These analyses tend to acknowledge Turner’s principal observation that people, including literary authors and readers, are “collective makers of meaning through symbolic actions and cultural performances” (Ashley x). For relevant examples of applications of Turner’s models, including social drama, to literary and cultural criticism, see Ashley.

As the folkloric vampire moves from an actual social drama to stories about social dramas, it moves from the liminal to the liminoid. Aware that social drama structures occurred elsewhere than communities in crisis, Turner identified liminoid structures as “technical innovations” and “the product of ideas” (Ritual 32) Certainly, by the time Stoker is working with the residues of folkloric social drama in his novel, the ritual has moved from liminal to liminoid. His novel shares the characteristics of liminoid in that it is created within “an independent domain of creative activity” (Ritual 33). This, in part, explains why the liminoid structures of social drama in Dracula have less impact on the world than the liminal structures of actual vampire rituals. However, I disagree with Turner when he reduces liminoid to the status of commodity (Ritual 55). This dismissal of the liminoid as commodity downplays the productive engagement consumers pursue in what de Certeau identifies as “making do” with such commodities (22).

For an excellent and provocative reading of Stoker’s use of gadgets and communication technologies in Dracula see Wicke.
CHAPTER FOUR
DRACULA PERFORMATIVITY

Alongside the idea that hearers of tales and viewers of films interact with the Dracula text to continue its formations and continuously develop textual variants is another set of significant actions related to consumption and cultural (re)production. From popular role-playing games and on-line internet discussion groups to “goth” subculture fashions and blood fetishists, more and more fans of the vampire are finding ways to take on vampiric behaviors in their everyday lives. These behaviors, ranging from the occasional hobby to the full-blown alternative lifestyle, represent another significant site of performance for the Dracula text.

One of the implications of the circulation model of popular culture and folklore explored in the last chapter is the ways that popular culture permeates the everyday lives of consumers. Much of the history of performance studies has been more interested in bracketing off conspicuous performances, marked off from the norm of everyday exchange by the conventions of theaters or special events, campfire storytelling or parades. Contemporary performance studies theorists have turned to alternative paradigms that examine everyday social exchanges as performances, whether those performances be personal narratives or the construction of identity. In such performances, the framing conventions become harder to identify and the performances move from conspicuous to often inconspicuous articulations. In other words, these theorists ask what performance studies teaches us about the performance of self in everyday life. It is at this level that the traditional relationship of text to performance becomes further problematized, because it is more difficult to discern the
text of an everyday performance. The text becomes sublimated into the performance and no longer takes the privileged position of origination. Rather, if anything, the text becomes a residue left over after performance, an attempt to pin down and document the inherent ephemerality of performance.

Current research that investigates this idea of everyday performance relies heavily on the concept of “performativity.” This concept was first introduced by J. L. Austin in his lectures published under the title How To Do Things With Words. He defined performative as a “speech act” that, rather than reporting or describing, takes as its main function doing something (Austin 5). Performatives, therefore, can construct the world, operating on social reality through such utterances as vows and pledges. Subsequent theorists have taken this concept of the performative and explored further its implications for the social construction of reality. Theorists have applied performatives to the (re)production of knowledge (Lyotard) and even the (re)construction of gender and sexuality (Butler).

In relation to these theories of performativity, what strikes me as interesting about the Dracula text is that it allows us a window into the ways popular culture interacts with everyday life to allow several interesting performatives. A traditional paring of text and performance might be happy simply to examine Stoker’s novel as a sort of script that leads to various articulations of vampire performatives. However, a closer examination of Dracula performatives suggests a more complicated relationship between text and performance. First, the Dracula text seems to be a textual representation of performativity, the vampire myth being particularly relevant to issues of performance in everyday life and the ways those performances occur. Second, this
resonance of performativity within the text itself may suggest why the text has become so productive for fans to “poach” as a resource of everyday performances.

Before moving to an analysis of several representative Dracula performatives, this chapter will first briefly review some significant conceptions associated with contemporary theories of performativity. Looking particularly to Jean-Francois Lyotard and Judith Butler, this review will concentrate on the performative’s function in reproducing knowledge and gendered identity. I then examine these ideas about performatives in two nineteenth-century literary texts and a contemporary social event. While this analysis relies upon many existing scholarly interpretations of Dracula, applying theories of performativity to these observations links textual depictions of vampires to fan performances. In keeping with the idea that Stoker’s novel should remain the nexus for diffuse performative sites of the Dracula text, this chapter will first examine a precursor of Dracula. J. Sheridan LeFanu’s 1872 novella “Carmilla” contains some of the clearest suggestions of a link between vampirism and transgressive sexuality. In Stoker’s novel, I will examine the significant middle chapters of the book where the title character is rarely present but only detected by the effects he has on others and, particularly, the significant changes in behavior of the novel’s two heroines. Finally, I will examine a social gathering of vampire fans and their festive activities to see how interactions with these texts lead to both a reproduction of behaviors/beliefs and a construction of transgressively gendered identities.
The Performative

J. L. Austin begins his lectures in *How To Do Things With Words* by distinguishing "constatives" from "performatives," cautioning that this distinction is one he intends eventually to abandon (2-5). Austin's "performative" identifies the ways utterances, as interactions, "do things" in the world. He defines such utterances where "the uttering of the sentence is, or is part of, the doing of an action, which again would not normally be described as, or as 'just', saying something" (Austin 5). He concentrates on vows and pledges as the principal examples performatives, identifying "felicity conditions" for creating effective performatives. While the main judgment of a constative is its validity (true or false), one judges a performative by its effectiveness. A significant portion of the effectiveness of a performative is its repetition -- that it is not only enacted by the original utterance, but that it is subsequently available for re-enactment (Austin 51-52).

The important critical turn at the end of Austin's lectures is the collapse of this distinction between constatives and performatives. He wonders if any descriptive statement can be made without in some way being an action on/in the world, or if any performative can be committed without relying on description and validity. Both, he contends, are speech acts, with the constative focusing on the locutionary aspects of the act and the performative stressing the illocutionary force of the utterance. But speech acts, he concludes, have both locutionary and illocutionary (as well as perlocutionary) aspects. He then moves on to develop a typology of available speech acts, including verdictives, excercitives, behabitives, and so forth. (Austin 151-164).
Much of the work of Speech Act Theory that grows out of Austin’s initial lectures expands and develops further these typologies.

Austin’s original description of performatives has inspired a wide array of theoretical interest in performativity. However, as Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick note in the introduction to *Performativity and Performance*, the use of the term “performativity” in philosophy and theater is often at cross purposes (2). Much of the current work with performativity tries to bridge these cross purposes, negotiating difficult combinations of the act-orientation of Austin’s philosophy with the presentational and citational practices of the theatrical performative. The residue of theatrical performance in current theoretical applications of the performative gives some scholars cause for concern. By overlooking Austin’s deconstruction of any stable distinction between constative and performative, contemporary theoretical applications of the performative often deploy it as a metaphor of the stage extended to everyday life. Craig Gingrich-Philbrook cautions that “this emphasis torques ‘performativity’ theory toward conspicuous performance (such as occurs on stage) as an explanatory metaphor for everyday performativity (such as occurs in conversation), rather than deconstructing the opposition, leaving no privileged term” (124). An application of the performative concept, therefore, should in significant ways resist bracketing off a “site” of performance in everyday life, emphasizing instead the ongoing and co-constitutive aspects of situated interactions in constructing shared realities.

Two theorists who have been particularly successful at deploying the performative without privileging the theatrical metaphor are Jean-François Lyotard and
Judith Butler. Lyotard’s use and description of performatives are fleeting and suggestive in his description of the postmodern condition. However, Judith Butler’s use and explanations of performatives are explicit and detailed in her descriptions of fabricated aspects of gender identity and sexuality. Both offer important and representative examples of contemporary applications of performative theory to everyday life.

Jean-Francois Lyotard focuses on the performative as the principal way society develops knowledge in the postmodern world. Borrowing loosely from Austin, he defines a performative as an utterance whose “effect on the referent coincides with its enunciation” (Lyotard 9). In his systems theory approach to cultural relations, he replaces the felicity conditions of Austin’s “effectiveness” judgment of performatives with an evaluation of “efficiency.” “The true goal of the system, the reason it programs itself like a computer, is the optimization of the global relationship between input and output — in other words, performativity” (Lyotard 11). Austin’s formulation of performativity is curious, indeed, but his focus is primarily on knowledge and its production and dissemination. He turns to performativity as a way to destabilize knowledge, cautioning that “it is impossible to know what the state of knowledge is -- in other words, the problems its development and distribution are facing today -- without knowing something of the society within which it is situated” (Lyotard 13). Lyotard’s liberal use of performative in this context, while clearly drawn from Austin, focuses more on performance as a significant aspect of the operating procedures of culture.
Borrowing from Derrida, Lyotard shifts the emphasis of speech “acts” in performatives to language “games.” His interest is in how the discourse and practices of scientific and technological research become performatives for constructing knowledge. Scientific “research” is legitimized not through hard facts, as we might traditionally believe, but through the performatives of science and technology (Lyotard 46-7). What is at the heart of these games is a controlling of “reality” — not a discovery or description of it through observation, but a performative construction of it through a series of language games we have come to recognize as science.

This destabilization of science is disturbing enough, but only possible through another set of important cultural performatives, collectively identified as education. Rather than view education as the transmission of a pre-existing body of knowledge, Lyotard sees education as a significant site of the performative construction of knowledge. According to Lyotard, “the desired goal becomes the optimal contribution of higher education to the best performativity of the social system” (48). The details of this goal come down to reproducing “players capable of acceptably fulfilling their roles at the pragmatic posts required by [a nation’s] institutions” (Lyotard 48). And, of course, part of the role one may then take on is engaging in the performative construction of knowledge or social reality.

Central to Lyotard’s “optimal input and output” conception of performativity is the idea of reiteration. The performative is a language game that depends on being restated or re-performed. The success of a performative in Lyotard’s system is that it will be a behavior or action that leads to the production of social knowledge and that that production depends on the performance’s repetition. In other words, the success
of the performative is found in the student reproducing the behaviors that constitute
knowledge development and distribution that she learned from her teacher -- behaviors
that are always already enmeshed in the smooth operations of the dominant culture.
Although Lyotard leaves open the possibility of imagination and change within the
system, his ultimate conception of performance concerns the smooth operation of the
system by reproducing knowledge, which is to say reproducing the roles and
institutions in a society that reproduce knowledge. We are trained, at various levels of
our culture, to repeat the necessary gestures and language games that constitute our
reality. As cultural theorists, we might then recognize a successful performative by the
ways in which it is taken up by others. "Recognize," however, is a difficult
accomplishment in this sense because it is in the direct interests of the social system to
keep such performatives unrecognizable as performatives. Yet, according to Lyotard,
it is the reliance on and growing recognition of the performative construction of
knowledge, even as the grand narratives that once supported such activity dissolve,
that make up the postmodern condition.

If Lyotard emphasizes the significance of the repetition of performatives in the
construction of social knowledge, then Judith Butler points to the far reaching
implications of what might be included in such knowledge. If knowledge is what we
take for granted as true or proven, then what could be more basic to knowledge than
identity claims, particularly those having to do with gender and sexuality? Judith
Butler is a key figure in both gender and queer theory for positing that gender and
sexuality are best understood as performatives.
Butler's work begins by challenging the fixedness of gender. Pointing to a variety of gendered identities, Butler wonders what allows for such variety. She concludes that gender should not be thought of as a statement of fact, but rather as a "doing" of identity. Butler's central claim is that "gender proves to be a performative - that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed" (*Gender* 25). This last phrase is key to Butler's theory, for it suggests two things not immediately obvious from Austin's original description of performatives but certainly central to Lyotard's elaboration. First, that performative gestures are not necessarily conscious choices, as theatrical metaphors tend to presuppose. Second, the strength of a performative gesture lies in its reiteration of established performatives, a system that preexists in some fluid form any single articulation of it. In other words, we know our gendered identity based on our unconscious performance of it -- a performance that relies on the transmitted cultural knowledge of past performances of gender. In her oft-cited definition of gender, Butler states, "Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (**Gender** 33).

Butler then discusses the issue of how and why that regulatory frame operates and whose interests it serves. Borrowing heavily from the work of Michel Foucault, she argues that the regulatory frame represents a disciplining of the body. She sees the performatives of gender as representing a "disciplinary production of the figures of fantasy through the play of presence and absence on the body's surface, the construction of a gendered body through a series of exclusions and denials, signifying
absences” (Gender 135). Further, she posits that this disciplinary function typically operates “in the interests of the heterosexual construction and regulation of sexuality within the reproductive domain” (Gender 135). So, while the reiterative performance of gender is inherently not a conscious choice, it does serve the interest of dominant heteronormativity. Moreover, traditional conceptions of gender as an identity at the core of our psyche only support this dominant social structure, hiding the political aspects of gender within a naturalized schema. Butler’s conception of gender as performative is an attempt to destabilize this politics: “If the inner truth of gender is a fabrication and if a true gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surfaces of bodies, then it seems that genders can be neither true nor false, but are only produced as the truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity” (Gender 136).

Butler then turns to alternative performances of gender as activities that do much to “denaturalize” gendered identity. Her primary examples of counter-hegemonic gender performatives are drawn from queer performatives, with an initial concentration on drag performance. She states that drag “gives us a clue to the way in which the relationship between primary identification — that is, the original meanings accorded to gender — and subsequent gender experience might be reframed” (Gender 137). The effect of drag is that “in the place of the law of heterosexual coherence, we see sex and gender denaturalized by means of a performance which avows their distinctness and dramatizes the cultural mechanism of their fabricated unity” (Gender 138). Drag performances, then, destabilize the taken-for-granted performatives of gender and sex.
But is drag alone in its capacity to provide such destabilization? Butler suggests not, but does little to explore other such examples. Instead, she notes that the paradox that "the subject that would resist such norms is itself enabled, if not produced, by such norms" (Bodies 15). The agency available for the critique of gender norms relies on "reiterative or rearticulatory practice, immanent to power, and not a relation of external opposition to power" (Bodies 15). So, while she posits other "excluded and abjected realms," she notes that the principal tools of critique available to these positions of alterity are the very performatives that constitute the dominant norm (Bodies 16). Reading into this claim, even the most alien of alternate sexualities relies on the performative norms it challenges. This idea will be important when I turn back to the vampire and the Dracula text.

In applying these theories of performativity to sites of Dracula performance, two specific ideas and one general observation become particularly relevant. Borrowing from Lyotard, the reiteration and transmission of performatives become resonant and important aspects of the Dracula story. Central to the vampire myth, and the Dracula text specifically, is the idea that vampires transmit their way of being into their victims. The traditional way of reading this aspect of the myth is through metaphors of disease and contagion. However, by viewing vampiric identity as a performance, this passing on of behaviors sets up a significant resonance between vampires and theories about performativity as a reiterative (re)construction of knowledge claims. In other words, if Lyotard sees knowledge as performatively constructed by exposure and imitation, then one could argue that vampirism is a similar sort of knowledge that replicates itself through exposure and imitation.
Similarly, borrowing from Butler, vampiric identity might be profitably viewed as an “excluded and abject” performance of gender and sexuality. Much has been written about the vampire, and particularly Dracula, as a psychological fable of repressed sexuality. However, by viewing that sexuality as a performative fabrication instead of a naturalized psychological aspect of identity development, the Dracula text provides important insights to the ways popular texts simultaneously reinforce the dominant performatives of sexuality while opening up alternative possibilities that critique the naturalization of (hetero)sexual norms. Both Lyotard’s and Butler’s theories of the performative resonate significantly in vampire literature, as I will show in the following analysis of J. Sheridan LeFanu’s “Carmilla” and Bram Stoker’s Dracula.

The more interesting conceptions about performativity, however, exist between such texts and their readers. In order to make sense of how fans incorporate such vampiric performatives into their everyday lives, it is important to turn to a more general observation about performatives. The proliferation of the concept of performativity has, according to Della Pollock, resituated performance as something done rather than something seen (“Making” 20). For Pollock, the focus on performativity is about the activeness of the audience. “By positioning audience members as agents in the production of cultural meanings, [performative texts] also thus position audience members as social agents, who work out their relations with each other in and through the process of meaning engendered by the artwork/event” (“Making” 27). In these terms, the Dracula text is not only read (seen), but also “done.” Both Butler’s and Lyotard’s conceptions of performativity and its role in cultural transmission permeate the activities of Dracula fans who operate on and

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within these texts in the production of cultural meanings. For this kind of approach to performativity, it is necessary to turn from the actual written works of vampire fictions to the ways fans engage them. In order to do so, I turn to an experience I had at a party of vampire fans who met each other principally through an internet discussion group. "Carmilla"

LeFanu’s novella about a sickly vampiric girl and the havoc she wreaks on the country gentry is a direct ancestor of Stoker’s novel. That Stoker was aware of the story is supported in his working notes for the novel.3 However, there are significant differences in the two works. First, the title character spends much more time “on stage” in LeFanu’s novella than in Stoker’s novel. Secondly, the sexual overtones of the vampiric relationship are much more apparent in LeFanu’s story. The result is a text that provides some of the clearest evidence that the vampire myth may be about sexual transgression.

As with Stoker’s novel, LeFanu introduces the transgressive vampiric character only to vanquish her at the end of the story. Along the way, however, he opens the door to extensive representations of alternatives to dominant Victorian ideals of appropriate feminine sexuality. Carmilla’s vampiric performatives deconstruct established binaries between sickness/health and strength/weakness. The association of her body with fluids and flow stands in direct contrast to the hard masculine bodies that stand in her way. Lacking Dracula’s superhuman strength, it is her weakness and illness that protects her in the house of healthy men and allows her to gain access to the feminine prize of the house, Laura. LeFanu’s inscription of her body as fluidic and weak simultaneously disempowers her and serves as the source of her dark threat.
While she is ultimately the polluted figure who must be purged from the domestic world of Laura's country home, Carmilla's liminal status between sickness and health, weakness and strength provides performative deconstructions of the naturalized gendered identities that the novella tries to re-establish with her destruction. The result is a work of fiction historians consider to be the first lesbian vampire story, a sub-genre that has found its own success in twentieth-century film (Desmarais 56; Weiss 87).

"Carmilla" is narrated by the heroine and potential victim of the story, Laura. Through her eyes, a story unfolds of the arrival of an unexpected guest — a sickly woman named Carmilla who has been the victim of a coach accident. Displaying the excellent hospitality of the country gentry, the narrator's father welcomes Carmilla to stay with his family until she regains her health. All have expressed concern about an odd wasting disease loose in the area and use these concerns to justify Carmilla's seeking shelter in the narrator's castle. Laura's father requires her to serve as companion to the sick girl. As she spends time with Carmilla, she is struck by many strange aspects of the girl. She appears to be in good health, but is torpid during the day. She is quick to express opinions that seem at odds with her host, often insulting his views of religion. She seems to have difficulty with anything religious. More ominously, as Laura, the narrator, spends more time with her, she begins to become languid and confrontational herself. As the narrator seems to be heading down the path of becoming like Carmilla, another character appears at the castle with startlingly similar stories of a girl, named Millarca, who has destroyed members of his family...
with her unnatural desire. Recognizing at last that Carmilla and Millarca are one and
the same, Laura’s family tracks the vampire to her lair where they destroy her.

The clues and language games in the novel make it more than obvious to the
reader early on that this is a vampire story. The anagrams of the vampire (Carmilla,
Millarca, Mircalla) all point to a morbid playfulness on LeFanu’s part. Three aspects
of the story are particularly interesting in relation to questions of performativity. First,
Carmilla has an expressed desire for other women. Second, descriptions of her body
and its movements constitute a considerable amount of the narrative. Finally, her
physical and emotional demeanor begins to be passed on to the narrator, for as the
novella reminds its readers in the final chapter: “It is the nature of vampires to increase
and multiply, but according to an ascertained and ghostly law” (LeFanu 136).

In her seduction of Laura, Carmilla begins by seeking “sympathy and consent”
(LeFanu 136). The narrator comments at the end of the story that “the vampire is
prone to be fascinated with an engrossing vehemence, resembling the passion of love,
by particular persons” (LeFanu 136). The novella explicitly links passion and romance
with vampirism, both all the more unnatural for making the focus of that desire
someone of the same sex. Carmilla uses both vampirism and sexual desire to seduce
Laura. By night, she visits Laura’s bedroom in the form of a wraith; by day, she
beseeches Laura to be her confidante and tell her about what has happened in the
night. Carmilla reassures Laura by telling her that she, too, has had such disturbing
dreams. Part of Carmilla’s seduction, therefore, is not just the vampiric exchange of
blood but the discursive exchange of narratives about the dream-like sensation. At the
core of this exchange is the vampire, Carmilla, pretending to share with Laura the
same status as victim to these nightly visions.

These daily exchanges do not remain solely discursive, however. Carmilla’s
love for Laura is not always so veiled, although it confuses Laura. Laura does not
rebuke Carmilla’s physical overtures of seduction, but she does not encourage them
either.

Sometimes after an hour of apathy, my strange and beautiful companion would
take my hand and hold it with a fond pressure, renewed again and again; blushing softly, gazing into my face with languid and burning eyes, and breathing so fast that her dress rose and fell with the tumultuous respiration. It was like the ardour of a lover; it embarrassed me; it was hateful and yet overpowering; and with gloating eyes she drew me nearer to her, and her hot lips traveled along my cheek in kisses; and she would whisper, almost in sobs.
“You are mine, you shall be mine, and you and I are one for ever.” Then she
has thrown herself back in her chair, with small hands over her eyes, leaving
me trembling.

“Are we related,” I used to ask; “What can you mean by all this? I remind you perhaps of some one whom you love; but you must not, I hate it; I don’t know you — I don’t know myself when you look so and talk so.”

(LeFanu 90)

The homoerotic tone in this exchange is, to say the least, over-determined. While
Laura may be so innocent as to not recognize the seduction, readers of the story most
likely were more perceptive. Laura does not directly address Carmilla’s feelings, but
instead responds to the inappropriateness of her looks and speech. Laura tries to
identify relationships (if they were related or if Carmilla confuses her for a past love)
that would make Carmilla’s actions appropriate. Carmilla’s kisses foreshadow the
kind of vampiric blood exchange that is to come in the night. Ironically, that exchange
of blood will make them, within the logic of vampirism, blood relatives, thus meeting
Laura’s condition that such behaviors are only appropriate if they are related.
Laura’s concern about Carmilla’s behaviors is not that they are wrong, categorically. Rather, she is more concerned that they are inappropriate for their social relationship. Her understanding of the source of this inappropriateness is directly tied to her religious upbringing, as taught to her by her pious father. In contrast, Carmilla has very little patience with religion and the rules of the Creator. In a dinner-time debate, she confronts Laura’s father directly:

“We are in God’s hands; nothing can happen without his permission, and all will end well for those who love Him. He is our faithful creator; He has made us all, and will take care of us.”

“Creator! Nature!” said the young lady in answer to my gentle father. “And this disease that invades the country is natural. Nature. All things proceed from nature — don’t they? All things in heaven, in the earth, and under the earth, act and live as Nature ordains? I think so.” (LeFanu 95)

Carmilla challenges the dominance of religion with the dominance of Nature. Although apparently only referencing the wasting disease in the countryside, she is of course also referencing herself. She directly confronts the exclusivity of the patriarch’s position with impeccable logic that challenges the notion of “God’s Plan” as a discursive construct. She asserts, although obliquely, her own right to exist by virtue of the fact that she does — that she is not unnatural. She is answered with silence and a change of topic. Following so closely on the description of her overt gestures of affection toward Laura, this response is less about debating theology with the father and more about a direct response to Laura’s rebuke at her advances. Laura, who believes in God and the power of love, has responded to Carmilla that she “hates” the way she looks and acts. Carmilla simultaneously contrasts that hate with the notion of God’s love and rejects both in favor of an argument about what is “Natural.”
Carmilla demonstrates in both these scenes that she behaves inappropriately given the social structure and dominant expectations. She behaves inappropriately in her relationship with Laura, and she forgets her place as a woman and debates vehemently with the devout patriarch. LeFanu positions these moments of social inappropriateness as foreshadowings of the greater evil that is her supernatural state; indeed, among the first signs that someone is a vampire is usually the disruption of a social convention. These two scenes are interesting performative moments because they contrast with the dominant social norms and challenge the logic of the expectations. Her abjectness and inappropriateness unmask the accepted (il)logic of these scenes -- it is acceptable for family members to be passionately intimate; it is acceptable to contrast God and Nature. Were Carmilla not a vampire, these scenes alone would signify her alterity -- she does not behave as a proper girl ought. Her refusal to stay with the traditional gender performatives threatens to reveal the inconsistencies of the dominant fabrication.

LeFanu works within the vampire tradition present in, among others, Polidori’s story. The vampire, although supernatural, gives itself away by its inappropriate social performance. If only the characters doomed to become its victims picked up on these violations, they might be spared the punishment that comes from allowing such abhorrent beings loose in their polite society. The threat of the vampire is that it is able to camouflage itself through an almost perfect imitation of the performative rules of polite society. Its failures in following those rules initially read as eccentricities and rudeness. More than the fantastic dangers of supernatural threats, these stories tend to warn audiences about the dangers of social impropriety. In the case of Carmilla,
violations of gender roles mark a first and most significant level of monstrosity for which subsequent discoveries of vampirism only reinforce as monstrous.

As the story develops, textual clues point to the fact that Carmilla is other than human. She is uncanny and supernatural -- interesting concepts in that they suggest she is unnatural for being more than natural. The narrator spends much time describing her body and its movements. This curious specularity of the narrator indicates more than an eye for detail. Laura expresses through her narrative -- which presumably occurs some time after Carmilla’s demise -- an unacknowledged desire that reveals itself through a certain amount of pleasure in observing Carmilla’s body and describing it in great detail. It is a sickly body, but one that appears healthy. It is only outwardly recognizable as sickly because of the way Carmilla handles herself. The narrator is infatuated with the representation of illness not in the apparent health of the body but in the way it behaves. Part of Carmilla’s supernatural power is to use this sickly body to seduce her companion and care-giver.

An important part of Carmilla’s seduction of Laura is her body’s sickly state. She is infirm and requires not only the attention of a doctor but also the diligent ministrations of a peer companion. Carmilla’s morbidity demands a caring relationship from her companion. Laura’s isolation in the country makes her the perfect friend; starved for social contact, she cannot help but want to spend time with such a mysterious, sick girl. Added to the mystery is Laura’s memory of Carmilla from a childhood nightmare. This early visit by Carmilla suggests that the vampire has more than a passing interest in Laura. At the end of the story, LeFanu describes this interest as “an engrossing vehemence, resembling the passion of love” (136).
discerning quality of the vampire in LeFanu's articulation of the lore is that she will sometimes "yearn for something like sympathy and consent" (136) from her victim. In other words, Carmilla is love-sick as well as physically ill; LeFanu connects these two "illnesses" creating a vampiric danger in an exaggeration of feminine infatuation, a terribly wrong "girlish crush."

Carmilla's sickly body is an exaggerated representation of the sexuality of the morbid. She hardly appears as an active agent in the story. She is an unwanted but accepted object of mystery in the narrator's house. She is incapable of anything but the least strenuous actions; the narrator repeatedly marks her body with descriptions of lassitude and languor. Her periods of activity are restricted to the night hours when her sickly body is supposedly locked away. At these moments, her activities are never seen but only felt. The wasting away of neighboring children and the appearance of her face in Laura's nightmares are the only indications of her active nightly presence. Her weakness, of course, is her strength. No one suspects that she is the cause of local wasting deaths because she does not seem capable of harming anyone and, indeed, seems to be wasting from the very same disease.

In so constructing his vampire, LeFanu empowers the very weakness of the "weaker sex." The weak female body hides danger; there is, after all, no indication that Carmilla is pretending to be weak during her "waking" hours. LeFanu also carefully signifies her hours of strength as moments of feminine strength (that is, the hours of night, the sub-conscious). Her vampire body is not about the power of muscle and stride but the whisper of fluid and glide. Carmilla is a monster most vile because her softness and sweetness do not hide a contrasting inhuman strength but are,
themselves, the attributes that allow her power over men and the fruits of their labors (their young girls).

In a similar fashion, writing of Baudelaire's female vampires, Camille Paglia says, "the mineral flesh of Baudelaire's vampires restricts and confines nature's cthonian liquidity. Woman is the dandy's opposite because she lacks the spiritual contour and inhabits the procreative realm of fluids where objects dissolve. All art, as a culture of the autonomous object, is a flight from liquidity" (430). These descriptions reveal a gendered performance of femininity as liquid, lazy, supple and weak. LeFanu's vampire represents an exaggeration of these qualities. In her daytime appearances, Laura is fascinated by Carmilla's grace and her languidness, praising them as attractive embodiments of femininity (LeFanu 88). In her nightmare, she is simultaneously horrified and fascinated by the liquid flow of the spirit that haunts the foot of her bed (LeFanu 98). It is little wonder that when finally discovered in her coffin lair, Carmilla floats in a pool of blood, her limbs flexible and her flesh elastic (LeFanu 134). Her representation throughout the novella is one of liquid and ooze. Her very body is unstable, resistant by its very fluidity to being "pinned down" or isolated. She flows between sickness and health, weakness and strength. Encapsulated within this representation is an oscillation between the gracefulness of the performance of femininity and the horror of those same performances exaggerated.

The way Laura begins to adopt these behaviors becomes a central aspect of the story. As Carmilla begins her seduction of Laura, Laura slowly begins to become more like Carmilla. The initial stages involve taking on Carmilla's languor and lassitude. She sleeps more than usual and is plagued by a sad, sweet melancholia. Her
sleep is riddled with "certain vague and strange sensations" that are at first "rather agreeable" (LeFanu 104) The first of these sensations are, like Carmilla's body, very fluid in nature, involving a "peculiar cold thrill which we feel in bathing, when we move against the current of a river" (LeFanu 105). Always behind these sensations are the incomprehensible whisperings of a female voice. The final dream images are nothing short of thinly-veiled sexual orgasm:

Sometimes it was as if warm lips kissed me, and longer and more lovingly as they reached my throat, but there the caress fixed itself. My heart beat faster, my breathing rose and fell rapidly and full drawn; a sobbing, that rose into a sense of strangulation, supervened, and turned into a dreadful convulsion, in which my senses left me, and I became unconscious. (105-106).

It is significant that the dream confers on Laura a certain liquid sensibility -- the change represents Laura taking on the same elemental qualities as Carmilla. Carmilla, then, awakens in Laura a sexual fantasy that is implicitly associated with female kisses and an orgasm devoid of genital penetration. The results of these night visions (and, no doubt, Carmilla's feeding) are pale complexion, weariness, languor, and petulance. The vampire performative begins to reach its final realization as Laura moves toward becoming more like Carmilla; her willingness to confide her dreams is a sign that she is opening herself up to the intimate advances she earlier rebuked.

The narrative logic of the story requires that this transformation be stopped. Significantly, the arrival of a family friend who tells a story of a similar set of events that befell and destroyed his family sets in motion the actions that will destroy Carmilla and prevent Laura's transformation. More than the actual staking down of Carmilla's corpse, this discursive intervention halts her seduction of Laura. The swift intervention of men puts a halt to the negative influence Carmilla has over Laura. That
LeFanu makes Laura the narrator of the story is important. The telling of the tale serves as a testimonial; it is an indication that our narrator has, after a lengthy period of recovery, returned to normal and re-embraced her proper role and way of behaving. Yet, lurking under the surface of her narrative is always the alternative possibilities for performing her gender that Carmilla provided. She carries that alternative with her, inscribed into her recounting as it was into her body. That alternative serves as the foil by which she reinstates her “correct” gender performance.

LeFanu’s “Carmilla” clearly connects the unnatural practice of vampirism with homoerotic desire. The narrative logic leads to a privileging of what should be appropriate behavior by constructing the alternative as ghastly and then destroying it. His representation of the vampire does much to demonstrate the linking of vampiric performative with gender performatives. However, the transmission of that knowledge through Laura’s adopting those performatives as her own is incomplete. Laura begins to show signs of being more like Carmilla, but she is rescued before the transformation is complete. For a more detailed depiction of the repeatability of the vampire performative, we need to turn to Stoker’s Dracula and the vampire’s affects on Lucy Westenra.

**Dracula**

Central to the vampire lore that contributes to the text of Dracula is the belief that vampires transmit their condition to others. In Stoker’s novel, this transmission plays out in several characters, but none more completely than Lucy Westenra. Mina Harker, the novel’s central heroine, holds much in common with Laura in “Carmilla,” in that she is threatened with transformation but does not succumb. Lucy, on the other
hand, demonstrates the complete process of vampiric transformation and, therefore, the performative transmission of vampiric knowledge. In Lucy, Stoker demonstrates the full cycle of vampirism, a process that resonates with Lyotard's notion of performativity as central in the reproduction of knowledge.

Another significant contrast between Dracula and Carmilla is that Carmilla receives, proportionally, much more "screen time" than Stoker's vampire. Carmilla is a central actor in the events of LeFanu's story, with her action and dialogue taking up much of the action. After the first three chapters of Stoker's novel, Dracula literally disappears into the background of the novel. His effects on the other characters and the occasional reporting of odd occurrences in the news clippings they collect are the only indications that he is still present. As the main characters become aware that there is something amiss in their midst, they rely on subtle changes in their social reality to realize that a vampire plagues them. Most of the middle chapters of Dracula focus on the difficulty of convincing the more rational characters that such a supernatural presence is at work. The clues that put them on the track to making this discovery are the strange changes in behavior that affect several central characters -- the mad man Renfield and Lucy most notable among them.

Dracula's absence is significant because it demonstrates that the vampire performative need not be sought out in the vampire itself (the predominant representation in Carmilla) but in the effects, absent the vampire, in its victims. As with Carmilla, the vampire performatives in Dracula are coded as more than simply illness and the desire for drinking blood. One recognizes a vampire by the ways it transgresses the dominant social codes. Lucy's transformation, then, provides a map.
for the successful taking on of a transgressive and alternate set of performatives. The transformation takes several important steps, including: Lucy's predisposition to transgressive behaviors before encountering Dracula's influence; her physical transformations once initially under his influence; the struggle to save her from his influence; and her eventual conversion into a fully functional vampire at work passing on her way of being to others.

Lucy and Mina are first introduced in the novel by an exchange of letters between them. They have been childhood friends, although they come from very different backgrounds. Mina is a teacher who is ready to give up her position to serve as secretary and wife to her fiancee, Jonathan Harker. Lucy, on the other hand, is well moneyed and busily engaged in the process of choosing from suitors eager to marry her. These initial exchanges of letters provide much insight into Lucy's character, suggesting that even before Dracula's influence she does not perform comfortably in her society's expectations of gender roles. She dreams of alternate gender relationships, confides daring secrets to Mina, and in the ultimate return of the repressed suffers intermittently from sleepwalking.

Lucy confides to Mina that she is having trouble choosing from the suitors who vie for her hand in marriage. At first, she expresses her love for Dr. Seward. Then, in the same letter, she finds herself attracted to Author Holmwood. Finally, she is amused by the Yankee gruffness of Quincy Morris. The difference in these three suitors is a bit contrived, one representing intellect, another brute strength, and the third power and influence. Stoker writes large these different performances of masculinity and lets Lucy choose among them. Lucy at first resists making a choice,
lamenting: "Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her? But this is heresy and I must not say it" (Stoker, Dracula 62). Her lament is interesting for, while she acknowledges that even speaking such a desire is wrong, she does so in a letter. Ironically, one of the effects of Dracula's preying on her is that this desire will be realized, as Van Helsing later points out.

Peppered throughout her correspondence with Mina are various requests that Mina join her in pledging vows of secrecy. Lucy is a woman full of secrets, and Mina is her close confidante. She recognizes that there are limits to Mina's ability to share secrets: "you must keep it a secret, dear, from everyone, except, of course, Jonathan. You will tell him, because I would if I were in your place . . . A woman ought to tell her husband everything — don't you think so, dear?" (Stoker, Dracula 60). While her views here privilege the relationship between husband and wife, she seems to suggest a similar confidence between herself and Mina. Later in the same letter, she rehearses with Mina what she feels the proper role of a woman is even as she speculates that she would know what it is to be a man. She confides: "I know what I would do if I were a man and wanted to make a girl love me" (Stoker, Dracula 61). This confidence is quickly followed with, "No, I don't" (Stoker, Dracula 61). Lucy's habit of begging for secrecy and then acknowledging that it cannot be kept from a husband, followed by her assertion and then denial that she knows how a man could make a girl love him, points to a central confusion in Lucy's understanding of her role. That she is so fickle, flighty and confused is clearly to be part of Stoker's construction of her performance of sweet and innocent femininity. Another aspect of her confusion is a dissatisfaction
with her expected performance of gender which manifests itself in an ability to contemplate, if only momentarily, alternatives to her present way of being.

Stoker gives one final clue to Lucy’s confusion in that she has a history of sleep walking. Even before Dracula arrives in England, she has demonstrated a return to her childhood malady. There is a difference between the awake Lucy content to stay in the domestic safety of her home and the sleeping Lucy who puts herself in peril by nightly trying to escape its confines. Sleep walking is what makes her initially vulnerable to Dracula, but it is a condition that precedes his influence. Stoker establishes in Lucy a kind of duality that makes her particularly susceptible to vampiric transformations. Her letters indicate an ability to conceive of alternate social conventions even as she recognizes these alternate possibilities as inappropriate and covers them with vows of secrecy and denial. Her expressed anxiety over choosing a suitor manifests itself in a difference between the waking and sleeping Lucy, a difference that the vampiric influence will only deepen.

Once Dracula arrives in England and makes his first contact with Lucy, she begins to display the effects of his visits with symptoms similar to those we saw in LeFanu’s Laura. A further echo of “Carmilla” plays out in Lucy’s description of her first encounter with the as yet unidentified vampire. Her description of the encounter relies heavily on water imagery: “and then I seemed sinking into deep green water, and there was a singing in my ears, as I have heard there is to drowning men; and then everything seemed passing away from me; my soul seemed to go out from my body and float about the air” (Stoker, Dracula 98). After this initial contact, her everyday behavior begins subtly to change.
In contrast to her usually energetic behavior, she gives in to periods of great “lassitude” and “melancholia” (Stoker, Dracula 108). Lucy tries at first to hide this transformation, ostensibly to avoid upsetting her sickly mother. Dr. Seward reports to her fiancee, “I made up my mind that she was trying all she knew to mislead her mother and prevent her from being anxious” (Stoker, Dracula 108). Alone, away from her mother, Seward is able to get Lucy to confide to him that she is not well. However, Dr. Seward is confounded by an inability to diagnose any illness or even any symptoms of an illness. He reports, “I am not by any means satisfied with her appearance; she is woefully different from what she was when I saw her last” (Stoker, Dracula 108). Analysis of her blood proves nothing and he concludes: “In other physical matters I was quite satisfied that there is no need for anxiety; but as there must be a cause somewhere, I have come to the conclusion that it must be something mental” (Stoker, Dracula 109). The importance of this diagnosis lies both in Lucy’s ability to pretend to be “normal” and in the inability to identify clearly either a cause or an exact description of how she is different. She is simply “not herself” (Stoker, Dracula 108). Other characters recognize that she is “not herself” because she is acting differently than she usually behaves.

These initial signs that she is becoming something other than she was only intensify as her assumed contact with the vampire continues. The novel provides clues that she is becoming more like the figure of Dracula we first encountered in the opening chapters of the book. Seward describes Lucy’s sleepless lassitude in the latter stages of her transformation: “Lucy turned her head and looked at us, but said nothing. She was not asleep, but she was simply too weak to make the effort. Her eyes spoke to
us; that was all" (Stoker, Dracula 117). Earlier in the novel, Harker has a similar encounter with a supine Dracula: “He was either dead or asleep, I could not say which -- for the eyes were open and stony, but without the glassiness of death . . . I thought he might have the keys on him, but when I went to search I saw the dead eyes, and in them, dead though they were, such a look of hate” (Stoker, Dracula 50). Lucy and Dracula share this deathly stillness and the ability to communicate only with the eyes.

Recognizing that her condition is serious, Van Helsing recommends a treatment that is one of the more memorable contributions of Stoker’s to the vampire lore. In an attempt to prevent Lucy’s transformation, Van Helsing oversees a series of blood transfusions. These transfusions are more than a little ironic, for they make Lucy a vampire before she has truly become one. Van Helsing tells the others, “She wants blood, and blood she must have or die” (Stoker, Dracula 117). Van Helsing uses his own methods of vampirism to cure her of becoming a vampire. The implication is that it is not the act of blood exchange itself that matters, but the various significations that surround it. This is good blood from good men given in a “scientific” manner, as opposed to the dark bloodletting practices of vampires. This blood exchange will return Lucy to her good way of behaving rather than facilitating her transformation into the transgressive vampire.

Stoker’s fascination with blood transfusions predates its actual development some three decades later, for of course Van Helsing has no concern of blood types. But the scientific veracity of such a procedure is hardly the point. These blood transfusions are, themselves, a sort of performance. As Van Helsing notes: “My friend John and I have consulted; and we are about to perform what we call a
transfusion of blood — to transfer from full veins of one to the empty veins which pine
for him” (Stoker, Dracula 117). Admittedly, the context of the claim suggests that
Van Helsing only means “do” when he says “perform,” but he is also well aware of the
performative aspects of these transfusions. They accomplish more and mean more
than simply the act of transferring blood. He acknowledges significance when he
warns Dr. Seward not to tell Holmwood, Lucy’s fiancee, that he too has undergone the
transfusion process with her. Such an admission “would at once frighten and
enjealous him, too” (Stoker, Dracula 122).

Van Helsing ultimately acknowledges the deeper meaning of the transfusions
after Lucy has apparently died. Although his humor seems morbid given the context
of her funeral, the observation to Dr. Seward in response to Holmwood’s misery is
important:

“Said he not that the transfusion of his blood to her veins had made her truly
his bride?”
“Yes, and it was a sweet and comforting idea for him.”
“Quite so. But there was a difficulty, friend John. If so that, then what
about the others? Ho, ho! Then this so sweet maid is a polyandrist, and me,—
with my poor wife dead to me, but alive by Church’s law, though no wits, all
gone — even I, who am a faithful husband to this now-no wife, am bigamist.”
(Stoker, Dracula 159)

Van Helsing clearly links the performance of these blood transfusions with the
performative of the marriage vow. The result of this observation is a social
arrangement that clearly flies in the face of the dominant social norms of the time.
Ironically, it is exactly the alternative construction of marriage that Lucy considered
when she did not wish to choose between suitors. Of course, Lucy’s polyandry is also
a mirror of Dracula’s three wives back at Castle Dracula. The blood transfusions
meant to save her have, by their symbolic content, made her more like Dracula even before she has died and "officially" become a vampire.

Again, this transformation is important because it demonstrates that the transformative power does not lie with Dracula alone, but in the meaningful gestures that construct meaningful relationships. Dracula wins this contest of performative gestures, but the stage is set for Mina’s more successful resistance. Because this is a vampire story, Lucy’s ability to perform does not end with her death. Even before her restless corpse starts haunting the Hampstead Heath as the "Bloofer Lady," her body continues to carry significant symbolic content. An ominous detail of her death is that she appears to be more beautiful as a corpse than she was when alive. Reporting her funeral, Seward notes:

Even the woman who performed the last offices for the dead remarked to me, in a confidential, brother-professional way, when she had come out from the death-chamber:--

"She makes a very beautiful corpse, sir. It’s quite a privilege to attend on her. It’s not too much to say that she will do credit to our establishment!"  
(Stoker, Dracula 149)

Certainly, Lucy was beautiful before she died, an aspect that made her attractive to so many suitors. Her beauty becomes all the more remarkable and remarked on after her death. Van Helsing uses this aspect of her non-decomposition to convince Seward of her new vampire self. On visiting her tomb after her burial, Seward reports:

There lay Lucy, seemingly just as we had seen her the night before her funeral. She was, if possible, more radiantly beautiful than ever; and I could not believe that she was dead. The lips were red, nay redder than before; and on the cheeks was a delicate bloom. (Stoker, Dracula 181)

It seems that Death has given Lucy her best "make-over." More than simply not decaying as a body "naturally" should, Lucy becomes more radiant than ever. The
highly gendered act of making up the face comes to Lucy as a result of her transformation, vampirism seemingly taking on the performative tools of rouge and lipstick.

Observing this change is enough to convince the rational Dr. Seward that Van Helsing’s plan to impale her corpse and remove its head is justified. Not only that, but that these actions should be committed by her fiancee, whose very masculinity has been crushed by her loss: “He looked desperately sad and broken; even his stalwart manhood seemed to have shrunk somewhat under the strain of his much-tried emotions” (Stoker, Dracula 153). Van Helsing seems more concerned about recovering Holmwood’s masculinity by having him perform the penetration than he is about stopping Lucy’s unnatural advances on children, for he waits some several days until he can first convince Seward to help him enlist the aid of Holmwood. Surely there was plenty of opportunity to stake down the supernatural vampire on his and Seward’s first visit, but Van Helsing’s patience allows Stoker to further bring home the significations of Lucy’s performative transformation. Nor is Van Helsing unaware of the play of signifiers, for when Holmwood asks of Van Helsing’s strategies at Lucy’s tomb, “Great Scott! Is this a game?” Van Helsing replies, “It is.”

Lucy’s animate appearance completes the representation of her transformation. The three avengers at her tomb see and describe a creature who is and is not Lucy, and the language Seward uses to describe her is a direct echo of Harker’s description of the three vampire brides that attack him in the castle:

My own heart grew cold as ice, and I could hear the gasp of Arthur, as we recognized the features of Lucy Westenra. Lucy Westenra, but yet how
changed. The sweetness was turned to adamantine, heartless cruelty, and the purity to a voluptuous wantonness. (Stoker, Dracula 188)

Although they find her feeding on a child, recalling what Dracula’s brides dined on in Castle Dracula, the description here is more sexual in nature. Lucy’s transformation has made her a harlot. She has moved from sweet and proper to cruel and voluptuous. She has become, in many senses, a painted lady of the night, a street walker, and a harlot.

As if this transformation were not enough, Stoker provides a further description of her behavior that links these performatives to those of a wild animal. In a Carmilla-esque stroke, Stoker links vampirism to Nature, adding to Lucy’s hyper-sexualized performance animal qualities:

When Lucy . . . saw us she drew back with an angry snarl, such as a cat gives when taken unawares; then her eyes ranged over us. Lucy’s eyes in form and color; 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. (Stoker, Dracula 189)

Seward’s description makes it clear that physically this body is Lucy. It is the way she uses the body that signifies it is no longer the same Lucy, the Lucy he loved. Her animal like behavior and the way she looks at him brings about his change of heart.

Arthur Holmwood, however, requires an utterance in order to be convinced. Lucy must speak in her new voice and changed body, directly advancing on him for him to realize that she is now not the Lucy he knew.

She still advanced, however, and with a languorous, voluptuous grace, said:--

“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!” (Stoker, Dracula 190)
This advance is proof enough for Holmwood, and he joins the others in order to do the gruesome deed of impaling Lucy and allowing her corpse to rest. Stoker signifies this final proof of her transformation in an important way. Lucy’s behaviors are those of a prostitute advancing on her john, an experience with which Holmwood like Stoker was no doubt well acquainted. Yet her last line identifies him as her husband. The juxtapositions of these performatives, prostitute’s proposition and wifely vow, is the transgressive behavior that marks Lucy as monstrous. Drawing on ways of performing femininity that were prevalent and accepted in his culture, Stoker creates his monstrous Lucy by having her bridge the naturalized boundaries that supposedly separated these ways of being.

By showing in great detail Lucy’s transformation, Stoker demonstrates his own signification strategies with the vampire. Significant to the process, however, is the absence of the vampire working the transformation. Rather, the main characters in the novel (except for Harker) come to know him by the effects he has on Lucy. The performative transmission of knowledge is complete when we can read Dracula replicated in Lucy’s behaviors. And she, once so transformed, begins her own work performatively transforming the children of Hampstead Heath. Stoker narratively depicts this process before having Van Helsing explain it at length:

> When they become such, there comes with the change the curse of immortality; they cannot die, but must go on age after age adding new victims and multiplying the evils of the world; for all that die from the preying of the Un-Dead become themselves Un-Dead, and prey on their kind. (Stoker, *Dracula* 193)

This traceable spreading of the disease is a staple of the vampire myth, leading some scholars to speculate that plagues may well be the source of the vampire myth (Barber...
Reading forward instead of backward, this kind of reproduction of being and knowledge resonates with Lyotard's description of the role of the performative in the postmodern condition.

Just as performativity collapses the boundaries between theaters and sociality, art and everyday life (Gingrich Philbrook 123), the vampire performative seems to challenge the boundaries of oppressor and victim. The vampire's advances makes its victims vampires. The only cure for such a transformation is blood letting in the form of transfusions and murder in the form of impalement and decapitation. In the latter part of the novel, Van Helsing and his little band become vampire hunters, hunting the hunter. Although Stoker's novel is very clear about which set of hunters is morally justified, subsequent articulations of the Dracula text have often seized on the potential of this performatively collapsed binary to suggest that vampires become oppressed victims at the hands of overzealous and superstitiously misguided zealots.6

Stoker's novel elaborates on the inappropriate sexualized behaviors that LeFanu attributes to the vampire performative. However, the central concern of Stoker's novel is the dangerous spread of such behaviors/knowledge. As several scholars have noted, this spread is made possible by the modern conveniences that allow for ease and quickness of long-distance travel and communication.7 A central anxiety in Stoker's novel is that arcane knowledge may take advantage of modern technology to spread in ways that were not possible in primitive cultures.

The contemporary prevalence of vampires in our popular culture would seem to prove that Stoker was right. Modern technologies do, in fact, encourage a spreading of vampire lore and knowledge. Turning to the growth of vampire fan culture

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demonstrates that the vampire performatives, including its focus on alternative and transgressive sexualities, do transmit themselves through parties, role-playing games, internet groups, nightclubs, and the like.

**A Vampire Party**

As evidence of fan circulation of the vampire performative, I turn to a social event I attended while employed as a visiting instructor at St. Lawrence University. While a participant on the Vampires-L e-mail discussion list, I decided to participate in a “real-life” party hosted by one of the members of the list for other subscribers. Parties served as one of the principal activities engaged in by members of the list. While the daily participation on the e-mail list provided ample evidence of the continued relevance of the Dracula performative, meeting many of these vampire fans in person threw into greater relief what taking on the attributes of the vampire meant to them. It also provided me an opportunity to meet in person and discuss directly with self admitted fans their attraction to the vampire. The party itself serves as an example of what Milton Singer identifies as a “cultural performance.” The following analysis identifies the significant structural elements of the party, examines the function of the vampire personae that participants adopted, and connects these performances to the traditions of vampire performatives already traced back to Stoker and LeFanu.

Before analyzing the nature of the parties the list sponsored and the one I attended, it is important to understand something of how the list operated. As an unmoderated e-mail discussion list, members were instructed as part of their initial subscription as to the rules of the list. Members were limited to three postings per day to the list which could take the form of either contributions to a discussion or
submission of fiction or poetry. Members were also encouraged to adopt a fictional persona and provide a brief profile of that persona. These personae were important to most people on the list as they were frequently the only way subscribers identified themselves. While personae did not need to be vampires, the “Frequently Asked Questions” file for the list strongly suggested that they be vampire-related. To this end, the FAQ offered several “types” of persona a subscriber might choose to employ. Several of these types were drawn directly from Stoker’s novel. For example, a “harker” (named after Jonathan Harker) indicated a hunter of vampires; “renfield” identified a vampire servant; a “lucy” indicated a seductive female vampire; and, finally, a “van helsing” indicated a mortal human who is very knowledgeable of vampire lore. While other possible types drew from other vampire fiction and films, the presence of these direct ties to Stoker’s novel indicates the relevance of Dracula to the list and its construction of vampire performatives.

Subscribers “played” these personae for both discussions and the contribution of fiction. Much of the fiction contributed to the list detailed the adventures of the subscriber’s persona. In discussions about various topics, subscribers usually submitted under the name of their persona, although frequently in the discussion real-life details about the subscriber were revealed. The greatest use and development of the personae came during the biannual “v-parties.” During each of these, a week was given over to the list’s collaborative story-telling of a party that was attended by the subscribers’ personae. Prior to the v-party, one person was selected to host the party and provide details as to its theme, the layout of the virtual space, background information, and so forth. During the party, members would write up to three
narratives a day, recounting what their personae were doing and how they were interacting with other characters. Subscribers collaborated off-list to develop storylines and negotiate interacting with one another. Frequent mistakes occurred in the collective stories as different subscribers tried to detail conflicting responses to events, but these were usually glossed over or ignored. During a v-party, the list could generate between fifty and over a hundred postings a day, many of them quite long.

As a result of the success of these virtual parties, subscribers often expressed a desire to meet in person for a real life version of such parties. In North America, several members coordinated an annual "Bloodstock" event, providing a weekend of activities for any and all subscribers willing to pay a contribution and travel to the centrally located space. Activities at Bloodstock were usually reported to the list while the parties were going on, including information as to where to go on the World Wide Web to download pictures of the party. Bloodstock was a big event each year, drawing international contributors to the list as well as the North American subscribers. However, not all were able to attend or willing to let one big party be the only opportunity for meeting list personae face-to-face. As a result, regional "bloodfests" were often announced on the list.

On May 27, 1995, I attended such a bloodfest hosted by Lady Silverwolf in Albany, New York. Silverwolf offered her home as a location for a potluck party where attendees were expected to dress as their personae. While spouses, partners, and close friends were welcome, the invitation made it clear that the party was primarily for subscribers to the Vampires-L discussion list. The evening would include a best costume award to be determined by the host. While Silverwolf provided
sleeping space for some of the attendees, many of us stayed at a local motel.

Surrounding the party itself were several other events that allowed opportunities for socializing and public performance of one’s list persona. One of these included an opportunity to join an ongoing gaming campaign of the popular role-playing game, *Vampires: the Masquerade* the night before the party. Another event included “Breakfast as your Persona” at a local restaurant the morning after the party. While both of these additional events are interesting, the party itself was the focus of the bloodfest and was attended by the most people.

Party-goers dressed as their personae to varying degrees. Silverwolf provided name tags so that we might better identify each other by our list personae. Although several of us were interested in learning each other’s real names, all of us principally used our persona names. The experience was uncanny, to say the least, blending oddly the binary of strange/familiar. For the most part, the party was attended by a group of strangers who had never met and in most cases did not know each other’s real names. The costumes and name tags provided hooks to the familiar; the personae were familiar as narrative constructs on the discussion list. I found it particularly odd to negotiate the unknowns of a person (name, occupation, hometown, etc.) with what I knew of his or her list persona (name, occupation, hometown, etc.).

For both participation on the list and at this party, I had taken the persona of “The Gray Adept,” a scholar of extraterrestrial origins studying the vampire phenomenon on planet Earth. Many members complimented me on the clever inventions brought to the “van helsing” type character. They also seemed impressed with the similarities between The Adept and my actual name and profession. Largely
due to the fact that the van helsing persona was a staple of popular vampire lore, they were for the most part quite at ease with my participation and endless questions.

The taking on of personae demonstrates an important aspect of role-playing, both in list discussions and particularly at the party. In order to understand some of the functions this kind of role-playing serves in a social setting, I turn briefly to Erving Goffman. Goffman applies theater metaphors to the presentation of self in everyday life, noting that performance is “all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers” (Presentation 22). While the party was less structured between audience and performer than this definition would seem to support, it nonetheless allowed the sorts of play frames that Goffman discusses as part of his theatrical metaphor for everyday interactions. The “frame” of the party set it off from normal life, marking it as a place of play by our taking on of personae, visiting another person’s house for a predetermined set amount of time, and so forth. This framing of the party creates a “strip of experience” or a “raw batch of occurrences (of whatever status in reality) that one wants to draw attention to as a starting point in analysis” (Frame 10). What Goffman’s model then acknowledges is the way the party and the personae adopted at it create is a framed experience of playful role-playing. And, while Goffman acknowledges that we slip in and out of such frames, his model seems to rely on stabilized audience/performer roles and a firm commitment of the group to one frame or another. The party was never this neatly organized.

Building on Goffman’s theories, Victor and Edie Turner identify “frame slippage” as a significant phenomenon in their own work with performing ethnography
(Anthropology 142). Their use of Goffman is particularly relevant here because they discuss frame slippage in response to a party that encouraged role-playing. They identify several overlapping and “nested” frames within their performance of ethnography that allowed participants multiple overlapping selves. The degree to which people take on a role, maintain the role, and slip back and forth between their real selves and the role taken on for the performance indicates the presence of frame slippage. While the party was not a performance of ethnography, per se, it did represent a cultural performance with several nested frames. At one level, participants were ordinary people at a party. At a deeper level, they enacted vampire-related personae of their own devising. Between these two levels was a level where the everyday persona overlapped with the list persona creating a fluid hybrid.

My choices for my own persona demonstrate this sort of hybridity quite well. I am, after all, a scholar who is studying the vampire phenomenon. My choice of persona embodied this subject position but also marked my difference from the other members of the list as an outsider, literally not of this world. My persona allowed me to operate within a community I was originally introduced to by my students at Saint Lawrence University. Some of those students were members of the list and attended this party. While I was not the oldest participant on the list or at the party, the Saint Lawrence students admitted that they were at first uncomfortable with one of their professors participating in the event. The character of The Gray Adept as well as the existing van helsing persona type helped them negotiate my presence.

Frame slippage typically manifested itself within conversations when maintaining the persona became too difficult. This sort of slippage occurred
frequently during the list's e-mail discussions. Subscribers would sometimes literally remove the mask in a conversation with phrases like “speaking as Linda rather than Pandora, I feel...” (Pandora), or more complexly with “as my mortal muse would say...” (Redoak). While revealing the mask typically disrupts illusion, I think these slippages of frames served more to maintain the characters. Subscribers adopt these personae because of the vampire’s appeal -- what Norine Dresser has identified as its sex, power, and immortality (202). When conversations bring one face to face with one’s human limitations, most subscribers opted not to compromise the integrity of their created personae with their own failings. At such times, members of the list were willing to momentarily drop the mask.

The result of this easy slippage between the frame of one’s ordinary existence and the construction of the list persona was a community quite comfortable with the removal and replacement of persona masks. Not unlike the tolerance of collaborative errors in v-party narratives, both the list and the party demonstrated subscribers’ tolerance for multiple and overlapping identities. While no one seriously believed they were their adopted persona, participants at the party were nonetheless more interested in the “fictional personae” than the “real lives.” Moreover, since these personae already had a history of interactions from v-parties and other on-line discussions, subscribers actually found it easier to interact interpersonally as their personae at the party.

The party, in particular, demonstrated one of the connective aspects of this created reality -- the overt and transgressive sexual nature of the vampire. While not all of the list personae stress the sexual aspects of the vampire, the party quickly turned
to this topic. Several people at the party wore as part of their personae’ costumes
various leather and vinyl accessories usually found in adult entertainment stores.

“Travis the Red” followed a Celtic theme and wore on his belt a cat-o-nine-tails
leather whip. “The Lady in Black” wore a studded leather collar and carried a riding
crop. “Jester” carried, as part of a vampire clown costume, a large leather paddle.
Various other participants sported leather cuffs, pants, and hats.

As the party-goers complimented each other on their costumes and each others
personae, they also commented on the presence of leather and sexual fetish “toys.”

Later in the evening, these costume elements returned as a part of the conversation
when participants began to ask each other the degree to which they used their whips
and paddles. While no one was particularly revealing about his or her private
fantasies, several admitted to having more than passing experience with these items.
The conversation quickly turned to how the items were used, who could best wield a
whip, and who could tolerate the most pain. While this conversation and
demonstration surprised me and several others, it did not seem to offend anyone.
Rather, such displays seemed to be in keeping with the accepted transgressive
behaviors of the vampire.

In this conversation and subsequent demonstration, The Lady in Black emerged
as a sort of “dominatrix” figure. Her on-line persona was well know for humorous
sexual innuendoes. I was fortunate to speak with her at length after the party about the
conversational turn to leather and whips. She reported that she worked as a secretary
at Cornell University and usually had to dress quite conservatively at work. She never
admitted directly to any details of her private life to her co-workers, but enjoyed
suggesting that it was substantially less conservative than her work clothes would demonstrate. She stated that she most enjoyed suggesting to her colleagues as well as to the list subscribers that she had “a more interesting sexual life” than she really did. Part of her practice to this end frequently involved wearing jewelry or underclothes not in keeping with her office’s conservative image. She also enjoyed posting to the list from work whenever she thought she would not be caught.

I asked her to what degree she identified with being “The Lady in Black.” She answered that she knew she was not a vampire and so she knew that she was not technically her list persona. However, she was very aware of the persona as her own invention and so representing an important aspect of herself. She noted that the greatest pleasure she received from being The Lady in Black was that it was a secret identity. At work, none of her colleagues knew about this other persona. Similarly, on the list and initially at bloodfests no one knew that she was a secretary; her persona as Cornell University secretary became her secret identity. She admitted that she never imagined giving a demonstration on spanking, but that at the party it just seemed like something The Lady in Black would do.

Finally, I asked her who her inspirations were for her persona. She identified two. First, she most admired Miriam Blaycock from Whitley Streiber’s The Hunger. She imagined that The Lady in Black would look like Catherine Deneuve, who played Miriam in the film adaptation of the novel. She also thinks of The Lady in Black as Lucy from Dracula, if Lucy had escaped from Van Helsing. Although usually called the “Bloofer Lady,” Stoker fictitious newspaper clippings also report Lucy’s vampiric presence as “The Woman in Black” (161). While her own persona’s history is

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different from Lucy, she nonetheless admits to owing much to Stoker's character for both her name and her emphasis on vampire sexuality.

Few of the other participants at the party had such direct connections to Stoker for their personae beyond using the characters as persona types. Several admitted to thinking of their personae as secret identities. Few of their friends knew about their involvement on the discussion list or the existence of their alternate personae. One exception was a student at St. Lawrence University who went by the persona name "Damien." During his freshman year, Damien frequently wore his persona's costume around campus, which included a cape and custom-made vampire teeth. He became an active major in the Speech and Theater department, eventually contacting me when he learned of my interest in vampires. I asked him why he wore the cape and teeth so frequently. He told me that he had felt different all his life, principally because he felt he was a bisexual. He did not think he could hide these differences, and he did not think he should have to do so. He was used to taking abuse and ridicule for his appearance and behavior. If people were going to make fun of him anyway, he reasoned that it might as well be for dressing like a vampire.

I also asked him why he chose the figure of the vampire tinstead of some other figure. He had a difficult time responding to this question. Damien claimed that he had felt a general attraction to vampires for most of his life. He knew that he liked them, that he wanted to be one, and that was all that mattered. Ultimately, he suggested that the vampire was hated for those things that made it strong. He wanted those powers, and he was willing to put up with the abuse that seemed to come along with them. Damien wore the cape and teeth periodically throughout his freshman year.
By his sophomore year, he had stopped wearing them although he still participated on the discussion list and attended parties. At the party in Albany (which followed Damien’s sophomore year) I learned that The Lady in Black had been influential in getting him to be more selective about when to wear the costume. They had met at a party the summer before and she had impressed on him the idea that the vampire’s greatest power was camouflage.

This observation seemed central to the Vampires-L subscribers’ identification with vampires. In a conversation on the list about the vampire’s powers, “Pandora” commented

Beyond flight and strength and hypnotism, I think the vampire’s greatest power is its ability to blend. That’s not just the power of the vampire but of vampire stories too. Vampire stories always remind me that there is more to the world than what I see. “Heaven and Earth,” and all that. What other monster depends so much on the ability to blend?

I appreciate Pandora’s ability to walk the line between wanting to be a vampire and between being a reader of vampire stories. Part of the conversation at the party made it clear that the majority of the subscribers were well read on the subject.

The party, therefore, demonstrated three things about the vampire performative. First, these performances were clearly citational, drawing on a rich history of vampire scripts and texts. The use of persona labels based on novels such as Dracula indicates the interplay between texts and performatives. Second, these citational performances of vampire personae usually had to do with sexuality. The use of fetish items in costumes as well as the easy turn in conversations to sexual innuendoes and suggestive behavior clearly point to the vampire’s retained potency as a signifier of sexuality. Third, these performers perceived playing vampire personae as
a transgressive act (sexually or otherwise), especially when that act is kept secret. The vampire’s clearest performative is not just its abnormality but its ability to mimic normality. Put another way, the vampire performative is aware of sexuality as a performative and, within its own logic, uses performatives to mask its alterity. This mimicking ability becomes both a mode of survival and a mode of empowerment, for the transgression is more transgressive if it is a selectively shared secret.

Conclusions

In all three of these articulation of Dracula -- Carmilla, Stoker’s novel, and a vampire-themed party -- both Lyotard and Butler’s sense of the performative are at work. Each represent the transmission of a way of being by means of a performative engagement between vampires and those they convert. They also each signify the vampire behavior as a citational practice involved in the negotiation of sexual identity, identifying both norms and transgressive difference.

In the earlier texts, the performative transmission of knowledge is seen in the transformation of the vampires’ victims. Laura’s transformations as much as Carmilla’s behaviors give her father cause for concern. Laura’s vivacious and self-sufficient demeanor changes to one of lassitude and petulance. This change signifies a shift in major roles available to women in Victorian culture. Both of these roles are subservient, but one of them is draining and unrewarding while the other demonstrates proper and energetic support of the patriarchal figure. Laura’s transformation is brought about by the evil influence of Carmilla, an influence enacted as much by their daily chats as by supernatural nighttime visits. Carmilla introduces Laura to another way of being and Laura’s transformation reflects the performative transmission of that
information. However, Laura’s father rescues her before the transformation becomes irreversible.

In Dracula, Lucy is not so lucky. However, Lucy does not directly mirror the Count in her transformation for two reasons. First, Stoker never actually depicts Lucy and the vampire together except for one distantly witnessed encounter in the garden. Second, Lucy’s new behaviors do not mirror the Count’s, at least as he is first portrayed in the opening three chapters of the novel. Another important variation is that, unlike Carmilla, Dracula is not the same gender as his victims. Unlike Carmilla, the vampiric transformation in Dracula is not a behavior-by-behavior transformation into “the other.” Rather, Lucy transforms from a proper Victorian lady to a sexually aggressive harlot. While still alive, her symptoms follow much the same course as Laura’s in Carmilla. Languor and petulance dominate her shift in behavior. Once transformed, she is less weak and more aggressive. Like Dracula, she becomes more concerned about taking what she wants. In the masculine figure of Count Dracula, vampirism is encoded as the invasion of a country and the raping of its women. In the feminine figure of Lucy, vampirism is an aggressive sexuality and the perversion of motherhood. So the transferred knowledge of the vampire performative is about exploitation and aggression, but Stoker maps it differently across male and female bodies.

The party represents several ways in which vampire lore is performatively transmitted via textual encounters. Subscribers base their personae on vampire types named for literary personae. But the party also demonstrated another significant aspect of transmitting the performative knowledge of vampires. The Lady in Black’s
advice to Damien that the true power of the vampire is its camouflage clearly affected his performance of vampire. Based on her success as a vampire persona at these parties and on-line, Damien was influenced by his encounter with her to “change his vampire ways.” He retained his interest in vampires and his regular participation on the list, but his performative understanding of the vampire changed because of his encounter with The Lady in Black.

That this vampire performative seems to have something to do with sexuality seems obvious. Similarly obvious is the transgressive nature of that sexuality. In “Carmilla,” the lesbian overtures of Carmilla’s uncontrollable love for Laura vie with the actual act of vampirism for the central horror of the novel. That Laura not only seems to become like Carmilla but also seems to be coming to like Carmilla is the novella’s principal anxiety. By connecting lesbianism to vampirism, “Carmilla” destabilizes the notion that sexual orientation is an essential aspect of sexuality and makes it a disease that one can catch. The disease elements of vampirism simultaneously reify the heterosexual norm while showing it to be vulnerable to influence from transgressive sexual alternatives. Laura’s defenses against lesbianism are strong, but they are no match for the supernatural powers of the vampire.

Conversely, one might suppose that if Laura were not so heteronormatively protected from lesbian advances she might have more quickly fallen to Carmilla’s vampiric transformation. In either case, the novel clearly links homosexuality to disease and suggestively details its performative symptoms so that they might be policed.

While Dracula is less directly homoerotic in its depiction of vampirism, it nonetheless links vampirism with sexuality. In this case, the binary of concern is less
gay/straight than aggressive/passive. The tale is also, arguably, more concerned than
Carmilla about the proper male response to such feminine aggressiveness. By
becoming a sexually strong woman capable of satisfying her own needs, Lucy is dead
to her fiancée and warrants having him pound a three-foot stake through her. The
result is a bloodied Lucy finally at peace. Although some might object to such
interpretations, the connection between vampire staking and violent rape has not been
lost on Dracula critics. Because Lucy is not behaving as she should, Holmwood is
justified in penetrating her with a super-phallus until she reverts to her peaceful,
proper, and ultimately passive behavior of female sexuality. His friends encourage
him and hold her down while he engages in this violent penetration “for her own
good.” The subtext here is clear -- rape is a suitable method of policing the
performance of sexuality. While Dracula cannot escape depicting the performatives
culturally associated with a non-normative sexuality, it is nonetheless a story that
serves primarily to police such transgressions.

In the case of Dracula, this policing is really a reflection of the vampire’s own
actions. Dracula’s transgression is invasion and rape, literally stealing good women
from proper English homes. But the cure for this behavior is to invade Lucy’s crypt,
hold her down, and symbolically rape her. Before she died, in order to save Lucy from
being a vampire, Van Helsing and his band make her a vampire by making her
consume their blood. Dracula and Van Helsing mirror one another. Dracula takes
women and introduces them to a living death. Van Helsing takes them back, restoring
them to good and true death. Yet, in this equation it seems clear that, if all these
elements match up, then the conclusion is that normative, non-transgressive culture
equals death. One can hardly blame Lucy if she is complicitous in her own transgressive transfirmation if it is against such deadly norms.

That transgressive sexuality clings to the vampire seems clear. No one, after all, chose the persona of vampire hunter at the party. The majority of the participants at Lady Silverwolf's party took on the persona of vampire. The connections between costume choices and sexual fetishes became an acknowledged part of the party conversation. The vampire personae seemed to allow a safe space for exploring such sexually transgressive behaviors. The vampire's ability to pass as normal also seemed to both create safety for and further empower the transgressive natures of the performatives of sexuality being explored.

The principal difference between the depiction of vampires at the party and their representation in Victorian fiction lies in the fixedness of identity. The fictional accounts seem most concerned about pinning the vampire down and fixing/preserving the natural femininity of the threatened heroines. Both “Carmilla” and Dracula seek to correct a problem, removing the taint of vampire influence and reestablishing the patriarchal, heterosexist norm. The play with personae at the party and on the discussion list suggests less anxiety about “true identity” and more tolerance of frame slippage and dialogic play between the personae and the real lives “behind” them. While the list subscribers know that they are not really vampires, they also acknowledge meaningful ways in which their personae express aspects of themselves that their real lives do not allow. By acknowledging such, as when The Lady in Black identifies the inversion of “secret” identities between her work and the party, these fans of the vampire indicate an awareness of the performances they engage in on a
regular basis in everyday life. Pandora’s comment about the possibility of there being more to the world than its appearances points to a similar awareness of the surface appearance of the world as a performed consensus.

Even as they seek to restore “normality,” Dracula and “Carmilla” also open the door to such a contingent view of reality and the social performances it involves. While Dracula offers clear semiotic resources for associating vampirism with various forms of transgressive behavior, its real power lies less in what vampirism signifies as transgressive than in the fact that it identifies transgression as a struggle between what is accepted and what is not, questioning the status of both. The vampire’s ability to mimic social norms reveals them to be just as much a set of performatives as the variously encoded transgressions of vampirism itself. The vampire, then, is not just about transgressive performances but about being aware of both normative and transgressive performatives and being able to manipulate each.

Endnotes

1 A good review of the variety of vampire behaviors, from blood fetishists to gothic sub-culture can be found in Guinn. See also Hebdige for a discussion of the use of costume and style in the formation of subcultures.

2 Elaborating on Austin, Searle defines locutionary acts as utterances that describe or use languages referencing ability. He defines illocutionary acts as utterances that perform, seeking to actively change social relations and affect the world. Finally, he identifies perlocutionary acts which, connected to the notion of illocutionary acts, identify effects and responses (Searle 22-5).

3 For further evidence of the direct influence of “Carmilla” on Stoker’s novel, see Howes 106-8; J. Johnson 236-7; Keats 27; Pick 220; and Senf 50-60.

4 Barbara Creed discusses the paradox involved in the frequent depiction of women in nineteenth-century literature as sickly. Such women provided the ultimate excuse for selfless male chivalry. At the same time, they served as parasites, draining vital resources and preventing forward motion (Creed 89).
5 Farson posits that Stoker and Irving would have both been quite frequent users of prostitutes (184). Glover and Belford both point out that there is little evidence to support such a claim nor reason to make it.

6 Many authors have worked with this inversion of the vampire such that it becomes the victim of bigotry and superstition. See especially McMahan; Scott; and Yarbro.

7 Wicke explores the roles that communication technologies as well as mass transportation play in Stoker's novel. Conversely, in a metaphorical read of Dracula against the AIDS epidemic, Hanson identifies relevant parallels between “Patient Zero,” a flight attendant allegedly responsible for spreading HIV over vast distances, and Stoker’s vampire.

8 In keeping with Singer's identification of the elementary constituents of cultural performances, I have identified the limited time span, the organized programs of activity, the set of performers, the audience and the place and occasion of the performance (Singer 71). Although some non-list members attended the party, the nature of the party necessarily disrupted the distinction between performers and audience with party-goers slipping back and forth between both functions.

9 As with the previous chapter, I refer to the participants on Vampire-L by their list persona names. In a very few cases, I learned the real names of these respondents. However, in keeping with the practices on the list, it is more appropriate to identify them by the names we used in our exchanges.
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION

In December of 1977 my family took one of its frequent vacations to New York City. Since I was only thirteen years old, my memories of the trip are sketchy at best. Burned into my sepia-edged recollections of cold skyscrapers and church-like art exhibits is the image of Frank Langella adorned in a cape and moving through an impossible landscape of Edward Gorey illustrations. I do not remember if my interest in Dracula was sparked by seeing this performance or if my family took me to see this performance because they knew of my interests. For me, engaged in the retrospective sense-making of my life-long interest in Dracula, that performance seems central. As a result, I found myself collecting vampire fiction, attending any film with a vampire theme, and frequently choosing to wear vampire costumes for Halloween and less appropriate occasions. As I recall and admit to my own awkward displays in fangs and a cape, I realize that my interest in Dracula has been, at times, quite obsessive.

For better or worse, it is that interest that has motivated this study. Building on the analysis in the preceding chapters, I now turn to drawing some conclusions about what the performances associated with Dracula mean. I reach the end of this study with a deeper sense of what it means to say that Dracula is about performance. Certainly, performance is an ephemeral practice that is tied to a wide array of cultural circulation processes, from the most textually sedimented to the least traceable. But Dracula’s relationship to performance is about more than the typical performance processes of popular culture. Dracula is a meta-performance -- a performance about performance. From theater to folklore to performativity, the diffuse cultural artifact of
Dracula demonstrates multiple ways in which performance serves as both its thematic content and a significant part of its process of circulation.

The conclusions that can be drawn from this observation, once asserted and supported, are multiple. I begin with a review of what this analysis has demonstrated and then detail some of the implications of these observations. I follow with an articulation of what have been some of the limitations of this study and discuss areas for additional research that this study suggests. While this study has revealed much about Dracula and performance and popular culture, it has in no way exhausted any of these topics or their intersecting domains.

Review

Viewed together, the preceding chapters demonstrate the degree to which various magnitudes of performance have been involved in the circulation and development of the diffuse cultural artifact of Dracula. Performance not only plays a role in circulating the images and narratives of Dracula, but it is also a central thematic aspect of Dracula; Dracula is a popular culture phenomenon that is reflexively about performance. A brief review of each of the chapters suggests broader implications for these connections between various performance practices and the circulation apparatus of popular culture.

Chapter One outlines the purpose and method for this study. It links the disciplinary assumptions of this study to both cultural studies and performance studies. It articulates a rationale for examining texts in context as resources for evidence of more ephemeral cultural processes. As a performance studies project, I concentrate on various magnitudes of performance as the kinds of ephemeral cultural process to be
traced. As a result, I focus on the ways performances influence the production of
texts, viewing the various texts that I read as adaptations of performances alongside
more traditional readings of performances as adaptations of texts. By studying these
influences in both directions, so to speak, I overlay the text/performance relationship
onto cultural studies' models for circulation processes of culture.

Chapter Two focuses on the overt performances of Dracula on the stage and
explores the implications of claiming that Dracula is “theatrical.” As a way into this
claim, I use the antitheatrical prejudice to identify several key aspects of the theater
that are mirrored in the figure of Dracula: a focus on pretense and mimicry; immoral
content based on conflict between and within characters; the performer’s undue
influence over audiences; and performance’s inherent challenge to the stable and
dominant social order. The chapter identifies these theatrical elements in stage
presentations of vampires that preceded and influenced Stoker’s novel. Stoker’s own
involvement with the theater proves to be another route for tracing similar theatrical
elements into Dracula. Finally, an analysis of two different performances of a stage
adaptation of Stoker’s novel demonstrates how divergent performance interpretations
of Dracula are possible within the narrative structure of Stoker’s story. While
Langella’s performance is quite different from Lugosi’s, elements of it can nonetheless
be traced back to the influence of Lord Byron on the vampire’s earliest stage
depictions.

Chapter Three broadens the concept of performance to include cultural
processes associated with folklore. In this analysis, I examine both performance
structures and practices in the formation and transmission of folklore. At the heart of
the analysis is a challenge to the tendency to separate folklore from mass media
depictions in tracing variants of vampire lore. The analysis traces a ritual structure
central to vampire folklore into the narrative structure of Stoker’s novel and a recent
film adaptation of that novel. The ritual structure remains in evidence across both of
these popular articulations of Dracula, although significant elements in that structure
are altered in each depiction. As the analysis of contemporary responses to Dracula
indicates, especially among fans of the vampire, this shift in the structure of Dracula
creates a more sympathetic and less villainous figure. The analysis reveals that key
aspects of the vampire (from its vulnerability to sunlight to its costumed appearance)
have been influenced by popular representations to the point that they are accepted as
part of the lore. Far from being corruptions of “pure” folklore, these mass media
inspired versions demonstrate communities negotiating vampire variants and selecting
the most useful and appealing. Traditional folkloric rituals and storytelling combine
with various modes of audience interactions with popular culture to demonstrate that
such depictions are not so much imposed from outside a community as they become
part of its negotiations of meaning through shared storytelling and active audiencing.

Chapter Four identifies two key aspects of performativity in relation to
Dracula: the concept of performativity as a way of transmitting knowledge and the
particular concern of performativity in the construction and negotiation of gender
identity. The analysis tracks both of these aspects of performativity in the
representation of vampiric transformations in “Carmilla” and Dracula. Central to this
analysis is establishing what the transformations of central characters signify, noting
particularly the citation of behaviors other than blood drinking. In both cases, blood
drinking is the taboo behavior in the background, rarely even represented in the fictional descriptions. Rather, evidence that a character is turning into a vampire tends to rely on references to other socially inappropriate behaviors. In “Carmilla,” vampirism clearly cites homosexuality while for Stoker vampirism references aggressive performances of female sexuality. Both of these texts provide clear messages as to which gendered performatives are preferred and depict the mechanisms for policing and quelling deviance. Modern day fan behavior as traced on an e-mail discussion list and a subsequent social gathering of fans demonstrates that the vampire’s citations of deviance from heteronormativity are still quite relevant. The constructions of vampire personae are clearly linked to Dracula by means of the labels given to persona-types. Moreover, the fans’ tolerance of slippage between real life and fictionalized personae demonstrates an awareness of their real life social identities as made up of performative practices. Their emphasis on camouflage and secret identities both reveals the everyday normative behaviors as performatives and empowers the transgressive performatives of their vampire personae.

These chapters contribute to existing scholarship about Dracula by examining its sites of performance, a concept all but overlooked in most analyses of the popular figure. By analyzing Dracula performances, this study examines what the figure does and what certain communities do with it. Importantly, Dracula resonates at various magnitudes of performance because it is about performance. The popularity of the figure points to the performative functions it serves in constructing and refreshing cultural identity. Dracula’s enduring popularity, at least in part, is due to the significant roles performance plays in its construction and circulation.
This analysis, taken as a whole, suggests wider implications of studying performance influences on popular culture, first at the level of Dracula and, second, at the level of popular culture in general. This analysis, although principally concerned with various articulations of Dracula, often slides into discussing depictions of the vampire in general. While I make an initial case for viewing Dracula as a nexus in vampire depictions and performances, it is important to realize that that critical choice is in many ways arbitrary. While the above analysis does demonstrate solid connections between contemporary vampire depictions and the specific characters, themes, and representations associated with Dracula, the fit between Dracula and modern vampire variations is not always smooth. The vampire continues to develop variations and grow in popularity, leaving Dracula behind as a related but distant ancestor. However, many of the conclusions reached about the roles various magnitudes of performance play in the circulation of Dracula apply to the circulation of vampires in general.

What is less clear are the ways in which implications of this study apply to other, non-vampire related popular culture phenomena. While fan behavior has been and will continue to be studied with other popular texts, there are significant differences between Dracula/vampires and those other sites of popular performance. First, Dracula is not a discrete film or TV series. Unlike the popularity of Star Trek or Beauty and the Beast, significant variations exist in the depictions of Dracula and vampires in general. As frequent debates demonstrated on the Vampires-L discussion list, there is little agreement as to which are the correct or even best "rules" for vampires. Subscribers on the list frequently identified friends by their shared
approaches to vampires. Based on the prevalence of role-playing games, internet gaming, e-mail discussion sites, and computer software, the vampire may be one of the most popular fan icons not associated with a particular popular depiction.

Another significant difference between Dracula/vampires and other popular texts frequently poached by fans is the central role of performance within the depiction. The preceding analysis demonstrates that performance not only circulates the popular depictions of vampires but is imbedded in their representations. The "theatricality" of Dracula is based on his powers mirroring the effects and functions of performance. One of the central aspects of the vampire is its ability to perform as ordinary, mortal human. While other popular texts attract performative fan engagement in a shared fantasy, none seem to be so centrally concerned with the powers and dangers of performance. Fan performances of Star Trek or Star Wars serve more as an entrance into a shared fantasy world and are not so reflexively about performance as Dracula.

Having noted these differences, it is important to recognize that performances do play a significant role in such poaching behaviors. Fans of such popular narratives as Beauty and the Beast, Star Trek, Dr. Who and Star Wars do hold conferences and discuss topics on the internet that allow a variety of opportunities for performance. From dressing up as personae in those worlds to creating new and alien languages, fan performances at the very least assure the industries of production that a market exists for further popular commodities within these fictive worlds.

These sites of fan performance are, to a degree, easily traceable. They produce events, organizations, magazines, and so forth that provide evidence and traces of
performance. All of these fan poaching practices share one thing in common: they create entire fantasy worlds that are distinctly different from the mundane world of everyday life. Dracula, on the other hand, seems to exist between a fantasy world and a more mundane depiction of reality. Perhaps akin to the world of Beauty and the Beast, vampire narratives reveal a subaltern reality behind and beneath the shared consensus of mundane reality. Just as part of the appeal of vampire personae is their ability to appear “normal,” so too the popularity of the vampire narrative is that it reveals a “normal” world’s capacity at any moment to collapse into the fantastic.

A further implication of this analysis suggests that performance may play a less easily traceable role in the circulation of more “realistic” popular genres. Television shows such as E.R. or N.Y.P.D. Blue or films such as Stepmom or Seven do not inspire quite the same fan behaviors, although they are all clearly popular narratives with strong audience appeal. The implication here is that performance at some level of magnitude must play a significant role in the circulation of these narratives. However, these performances, if they exist, seem to remain ephemeral and largely untraceable. The presence of such performances may be inferred but, perhaps, not proven. Their genres alone (medical drama, police drama, family drama, and murder mystery, respectively) suggest a rich tradition of variants that may be open to exploration through performance analysis. I suspect that, while performance operates differently within the circulation processes of such popular texts and dramas, it is nonetheless present.

Such speculation on the role performance plays in the circulation of other popular texts also reveals some of the limitations of performance-centered analyses of
popular culture. While I think this study has been provocative in its analysis of the diffuse cultural artifact of Dracula, I don’t think it has been completely effective in providing complete models for similarly performance-centered studies of popular culture. It is therefore necessary to review some of the limitations of this study and the opportunities they suggest for future research.

Limitations

There are several ways in which this study has proven to be frustrating. Each of these frustrations indicates a difficulty or limitation with my method and object of analysis. Some of these limitations were, I think, foreseeable given the nature of the analysis and the voids it tries to fill. Other limitations were a bit of a surprise and revealed the complexity behind often taken-for-granted aspects of popular culture. As a whole, I think the analysis is generally successful at revealing interesting and significant aspects of performative functions specifically in Dracula and more generally in popular culture. Nonetheless, the following limitations indicate areas for future research and ways in which other approaches to this same material might yield more productive results.

My first general frustration with this project is my own involvement with the subject. Not only am I a participant in my own culture and its popular entertainments, but I am also a life-long fan of Dracula and the vampire. At some levels I think this degree of participation with my object of study was helpful, leading to significant understanding and insight. However, as every ethnographer would admit, my participation in this fan culture frequently interfered with my ability to step back and examine with some critical distance the cultural processes I was witnessing and
partaking in. No doubt, a more rigorous application of an ethnographic method might have helped negotiate these overlapping participant/observer roles. Certainly, recent turns toward autoethnography and ethnographies of the culturally familiar point to similar frustrations with the analysis of one’s own participation in one’s own culture. While I think that one common answer in this sort of work is to study a phenomenon that is not so personally familiar. I think that that approach should not be an alternative but an additional strategy. This study might have benefited from concomitant analysis of another popular phenomenon alongside the analysis of Dracula, demonstrating similar performance trends in both familiar and unfamiliar territories.

However, such a move might also have served to add to another limitation of the study. Although I find Brummet’s arguments about replacing discrete popular texts with diffuse popular texts persuasive, I think it is difficult to manage in practice. The object lesson of a dissertation is the sustained and focused analysis of a significant and relevant subject to one’s field of developing expertise. I feel the present topic certainly represents my areas of interest and growing expertise. However, I struggled throughout the writing process with maintaining the focus of my topic. Because “diffuse textuality” and broad popular culture phenomena were such central aspects of my objects of my analysis, it was difficult not to let the analysis itself become overly broad and diffuse. But this study was born out of a frustration both with current critical scholarship of Dracula and performative and rhetorical analyses of popular culture in general. I hoped to address the problem of key aspects of popular culture phenomena (and certainly Dracula) seeming to dance out of reach of critical analysis. For various reasons, elements of these texts seem to resist scholarly scrutiny.
My attempt to trace the ephemeral performance influences on such processes is an effort to pin down some of these slippery aspects of popular culture, much the same way that hunters seek to stake down the elusive vampire. I found the application of theories associated with performance useful but also difficult. For all my claims to a performance-centered analysis, I spend the greater portion of this analysis reading texts. The centrality of texts, even as I use them to interpolate and read performances, is unavoidable. Much of my reading of historical performances involves speculative readings into texts. While the analysis demonstrates the influence of performance on textual adaptations, it does so primarily by reading backwards from texts.

The result is that texts rather than performances remain at the center of this analysis. I still believe that the potential exists in similar analyses to make the relationship between texts and performances even more dialogic. Building upon the work done in this study, future analyses could probe even further the functions of specific performances. The present analysis demonstrates the presence of performance influences and performance structures that map into various articulations of Dracula. It identifies the power of performance to challenge textual sedimentation and the ideologies of dominant culture. Certainly, this analysis reveals the presence of such performative resistance. Future studies might continue this work by investigating further the ideological content of such resistant performative behaviors. By productively identifying instances of transgression within and around various articulations of Dracula, this study invites further analysis of the content of those transgressions.
Certainly, one area of concern this study reveals is that Dracula seems to emphasize transgression for its own sake. The popular phenomenon opens up various sites and locations for the representation of vampirism to work as a norm-challenging representation of transgression. Again, I think part of the nature of treating Dracula as a diffuse artifact de-emphasizes the particularities of such transgressions in favor of a generalized myth of transgression. As a result, the potential for a performance-centered analysis suffers, for in addition to being ephemeral, performances are necessarily particular. Were my object of analysis somewhat narrower, I think a deeper probing of the specific ideological struggle inscribed into the transgressions of a particular performance of Dracula would be possible.

The strength of the present, broader analysis is that it suggests many other areas for more specific research. This study demonstrates that performance, at various levels of magnitude, has been influential in the popular circulations and thematic developments of Dracula. I have, however, in no way exhausted all of the Dracula performances available for closer analysis. A multitude of stage adaptations of Stoker’s novel are available for situated analysis within the contexts of their various productions. Similarly, I think this analysis suggests further combinations of folklore and mass media analysis in the study of variants of Dracula and the vampire in film and TV.

Related to acknowledging the influence of mass media on vampire lore, my association with the members of Vampires-L only scratches the surface of productive exploration of internet communities and their performances. The list’s production of collaborative fiction, particularly in the form of virtual-parties, suggests an interesting
collapse between the distinctions of text and performance. The subscribers' willingness to read through and disregard the sorts of narrative errors that occur in collaborative writing suggests that, in this context, "fixedness" is not a principal attribute of their textual production. The practice of scripting list-personae at virtual-parties suggests another site of significant on-line performance. Moreover, the ways list members negotiate these personae when they meet in real life provides yet another area for extended research.

The internet appears to have two significant effects for both the study of popular culture and performance studies. First, the rising concept of "virtual communities" seems to challenge traditional notions of community. This new form of interest based community opens up questions for the roles that performance plays in such communities. How is performance different in a virtual community than in a more traditionally defined community? How do the intersections of virtual communities with face-to-face encounters and more traditional communities create spaces for performances from both modes of interaction to negotiate the differences?

These internet organizations of fan interests also call for a re-examination of the effect of fan interest and influence on the production of popular culture. To what degree do fan interactions on the internet influence the entertainment industry and the commodities it produces? Earl Lee's Drakulya is a suggestive example of such an impact, given his active involvement on Vampires-L. However, another example not related to vampires demonstrates the even greater potential the internet has for creating its own popular culture phenomenon. Comedy Central's wildly successful South Park series began as a nine-minute-computer-generated cartoon that circulated on the
internet. The cartoon could be sent to friends and downloaded onto computer hard drives. Once downloaded, the cartoon could be viewed or mailed on to other friends. The cartoon circulated widely on the internet, ultimately catching the eye of a cable TV program director. The success of this circulated internet artifact led to the Comedy Central series which has now spawned a popular film and computer game of the same name. South Park demonstrates the potential feedback power that the internet has, linking fans to the apparati of cultural reproduction. While fan influence via the internet is still significantly limited, the internet’s role in the production of popular culture nonetheless suggests a significant site for future research.

Finally, this study suggests several locations of performance in fan behavior, both with vampires and other popular narratives. I mention only in passing in this study the influence of the role playing game Vampire: The Masquerade. The success of this popular game spawned a short lived Fox TV series, Kindred. While the TV show did not last, the role-playing game is still quite popular. It serves as the template for several computer as well as internet role-playing games. The game also inspired a popular trading-card game called Jihad. When played at social gatherings, the role playing games variously encourage costuming, acting out scenes, and collaborative storytelling. The rule book specifically identifies performance attributes of storytelling:

We no longer tell stories -- we listen to them. We sit passively and wait to be picked up and carried to the world they describe, to the unique perception of reality they embrace. We have become slaves to our TVs, permitting an oligarchy of artists to describe to us our lives, our culture and our reality. Through the stories constantly being broadcast, our imaginations are being manipulated for better and, all too often, for worse.
However, there is another way. Storytelling on a personal level is becoming part of our culture once again. That is what this game is all about: not stories told to you, but stories you will tell yourself. *Vampire: The Masquerade* is about bringing stories home and making ancient myths and legends a more substantial part of your life. (Rein-Hagen 22)

The rule book goes on to suggest ways of acting out the scenarios developed through this collaborative story-telling system. The descriptions of the game are thick with calls to take back the creative power of storytelling from mass media. At the same time, the game's history as template for computer games and inspiration for a TV show suggest that it is quite entangled in the mass media.

This game was a shared but not universal interest of members on the Vampire-L list. In my choices of what to include and what to exclude in my analysis of the performances associated with Dracula, this game and its related performances seemed significant. It also seemed like a performance phenomenon worthy of its own sustained critical attention. Regretably, I dropped any in-depth consideration of it as part of the present study. It nonetheless represents a provocative series of performances practices worthy of further study.

Another significant area of performance exploration into vampire fan cultures lies in a closer examination of the "goth" subculture and its use of the vampire as a central figure. Entire night clubs in New York City's East Village are devoted to the vampire. Youths in pale make-up, capes, and other antiquated, predominantly black clothing can be seen walking down the main streets of the East Village on any night of the week. The adoption of a "vampire drag" into a subculture style is another area of current research that would benefit from the theoretical insights of performance studies.
In addition to these vampire fan performances, this study inspires additional research in the fan performances of other popular texts. Certainly, other popular genres have their own role-playing games meriting further analysis. Similarly, the kinds of performances that shape and contribute to fan gatherings for the celebration of various popular culture texts warrant attention. At such popular conventions, readings of fan fiction, costume contests, parades, cantina performances, filk songs, and game shows are a small representation of the kinds of performances that occur at fan conventions. The majority of analysis on fan poaching of popular texts focuses on artwork and fan fiction rather than these more ephemeral practices. Such activities should be of interest to communication scholars as they indicate significant community-defining and celebratory practices.

Finally, even with its limitations, I think the present analysis offers an adaptable template for the continued analysis of performance influences on popular culture at multiple and overlapping sites of performance. Such studies offer several conceptual benefits. First, such studies broaden the concept of text, retaining its traditional literary implications but broadening it to include other culturally significant artifacts. Moreover, continued development of performance-centered analyses of popular culture can destabilize the centrality of texts and artifacts. Potentially, by emphasizing the roles performance plays in the production and circulation of popular culture, these studies may facilitate the capacity of performance to resist and challenge dominant ideology. Popular culture, thus understood, might operate to serve more liberatory than hegemonic cultural functions.
The important qualifiers in this identification of the liberatory aspect of performance and popular culture are “potential,” “capacity” and “might.” In Conquergood’s resistance to the fetishization of texts, he is careful not to cast performance as an always already liberatory activity. Citing Anna Tsing’s fieldwork in Indonesia, he notes that performance is just as capable of hegemonic and oppressive applications (“Beyond” 33). This capacity for performance to enforce dominant ideology is part of Dracula as well. Throughout this study, I have tended to discuss positively the structures of transgression in Dracula, particularly in articulations that allow more sympathetic depictions of the vampire.

However, the shadow of this “humanizing” of the vampire is frequently a “dehumanizing” of its victims. Jules Zanger notes:

As a result of this shift, the role of human beings as victims becomes increasingly trivialized and marginal. To see this, one need only compare the relative proportion of space and attention given by Stoker to Dracula and to Mina, Lucy, Van Helsing, and the other human characters in his Dracula with the character development devoted to the vampires and human victims in Rice’s Vampire Chronicles, in which almost all essential relationships are between vampire and vampire, and where victims are as indistinguishable from each other as McDonald’s hamburgers — and serve much the same function. (21)

While sympathetic vampires rarely succumb to impalement at the hands of rigid and oppressive moral codes, they frequently do not replace those hegemonic codes with anything more than a love of anarchy and chaos for its own sake.

The importance of this observation should not be overlooked. As increase in youth violence becomes a greater focus of world concern, the vampire’s morality and love of blood comes into serious question. In 1996, lost in much of the media blitz about school violence, were reports detailing the murder of Rick and Ruth Wendorf.
Their murderer was the sixteen-year-old boyfriend of their daughter, a self styled vampire who convinced himself and his friends by means of their *Vampires: The Masquerade* game that he was truly a vampire. Rod Ferrell conceived of the murder as part of a live action ritual to take place during his role-playing campaign. Currently in jail for the murders, he still claims that he is immortal (A. Jones xiii).

While a certain amount of the “blame the game” response around this case is unjustified, the role that vampire transgressiveness played in the tragedy cannot be denied. Playing *Vampires: The Masquerade* is no more likely to produce killers than the fearful prediction that *Dungeons and Dragons* promotes devil worship. Nonetheless, the case serves to remind us that performance can be just as much a force for oppression and abuse as a “force which crashes and breaks through sedimented meanings and normative traditions and plunges us back into the vortices of political struggle” (Conquergood, “Beyond” 32).

In the end, performance is a resource and a tool just as popular culture is. Future research will benefit from examining these resources both for their capacity to challenge the status quo and their potential to abuse the disempowered. Detailed and rigorous understanding of both capacities is vital.

**Conclusions**

I would like to think that my obsession with Dracula has been about what this phenomenon has been able to teach me about performance and popular culture. Dracula demonstrates the complexity of popular culture. It is a narrative that circulates, albeit uneasily, between imposed constructions of high and low culture. Dracula is a figure that looms large in our shared popular imagination, placed there by
continued popular success and a long history of telling and retelling. And it is a figure that comments profoundly on the power and potential of performance. It is hard for me to determine whether my interests in performance and popular culture come from my interest in Dracula or led me to Dracula as a significant location of their intersection. In the end, as with any ordering of text and performance, the temporal sequencing of one interest to the other is less important than the ways they dialogically feed into one another. I still am awed by Dracula and its continued ability to circulate in the apparatus of popular representations.

Endnotes

1 Much of the following comparison to other fan performances is based on personal experience with science fiction conventions. In addition, I rely on Henry Jenkins' concept of “textual poaching” which refers to the fan’s practice of writing their own fiction based on the imagined world of popular TV shows. Although Jenkins includes a discussion of filk songs (see n. 5 below), he does not directly address or analyze the kinds of fan performances these fans engage in at conventions or on the internet.

2 Sharon Bebout offers a particularly insightful explanation of the difficulties of writing about one's own culture. Through a performance project, she negotiates returning to the coal mining community where she grew up and becoming aware of the aspects she had taken for granted. Many of her observations about the importance of doing such self-reflexive work and the difficulties it entails are relevant to turning one's attention to the taken for granted qualities of one's engagement with popular culture.

3 Two relevant works provide significant explorations of the internet as the site of forming virtual communities. Unfortunately, both would benefit by considering relevant performance attributes in the formation and maintenance of communities. (Reingold; S. Jones)

4 Role-playing games on the internet tend to follow two standard formats. MUDs refer to “multi-user dimensions.” MUSHs refer to “multi-user shared hallucination.” Both of these are software systems that require a set of role-playing game rules to be mapped on top of them. The internet software takes the place of the dice in a role-playing game. A “game master” of such games still has to use a set of rules to govern how the dice are used and what the rolls mean. When creating a vampire MUD or MUSH, creators simple match the software’s operations to the
operations outlined in the existing rules of the role-playing game. See Reid for additional information on MUDs and MUSHs.

5 “Filk songs” is an abberation of “folk song” and refers to the fan practice of changing the lyrics in popular music so that the song is about whatever text they may be poaching. An example would be having Obi Wan Kenobi from Star Wars sing “When the Force Controls Your Mind” to the tune of “Windmills of Your Mind” (Jenkins 250-1).
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APPENDIX

VAMPIRE QUESTIONNAIRE

(The following questionnaire is loosely based on one of the survey instruments used by Norine Dresser in American Vampires: Fans, Victims, and Practitioners. For over five years I collected 124 responses from people ranging in age from seventeen to fifty-five. I distributed and collected the questionnaire as an opening exercise in a lecture I give on the vampire in popular culture.)

Age: Sex:
Name: School:

Where were you born:

Where did you grow up:

Directions: Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Do not worry about getting the "right" answer, just answer each based on what you know and believe. Use the back of the page if you need it.

Do you believe it is possible that vampires exist as real beings? Yes_______ No_______

If yes, why? If no, why not?

Describe the physical characteristics of a vampire.

How are they dressed?

How does one become a vampire?

Where do they come from?

When and where might a vampire show up?

What does a vampire do?

257
How can you protect yourself from a vampire?

How do you kill a vampire?

What powers and abilities does a vampire have that you would like to have?

Do you know anyone personally that you consider an expert on vampires? Briefly describe him/her/them.

Where have you seen or read about the vampire? (List any movies, books, comic books, plays, etc. that you can remember.)
VITA

Jonathan Matthew Gray received his bachelor of arts degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1987, with a combined major in Dramatic Arts and Speech Communication. In the summer of 1987, he attended the British American Drama Academy sponsored by Yale University and held in Oxford, England. He received his master of arts degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1990, majoring in Speech Communication with a specialization in performance studies. In 1989, he was accepted into Louisiana State University in the Department of Speech Communication and was awarded an Alumni Association Fellowship. He pursued a generalist program of course work with a minor in English.

In 1992, Mr. Gray accepted a visiting instructor position at Saint Lawrence University, working jointly in the Speech and Theater Department and the First Year Program. In 1996, he accepted an adjunct professor position at Hofstra University in the Department of Speech Communication and Rhetorical Studies. In 1997, Hofstra University hired him as a full-time assistant professor in the same department. In the Fall of 1999, Mr. Gray will begin serving as the Basic Course Director at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.

Play for Saint Lawrence University in the fall of 1994. At Hofstra University in the Spring of 1997, he adapted and directed *Shifting Realities*, a chamber theater performance of stories and essays by and about Phillip K. Dick. Mr. Gray's research interests focus on the productive intersections of folklore and popular culture and the performance practices associated with them.

Jonathan Gray has taught a variety of courses in speech communication, including introduction to performance studies, performance and popular culture, public speaking, argumentation and debate, environmental rhetoric, and the history of rhetoric. He has also served as a coordinator and workshop leader for teachers of basic courses in communication and composition, both at Saint Lawrence University and Hofstra University.

Mr. Gray grew up in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He now lives in Carbondale, Illinois, with his partner of five years, Craig Gingrich-Philbrook.
DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Jonathan Matthew Gray

Major Field: Speech Communication

Title of Dissertation: Performing Dracula: A Critical Examination of a Popular Text in Three Sites of Performance

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Bernard Carson
Roger King
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Date of Examination:

July 20, 1999