

# **Subverting the Canon: The Vampire Archetype and the Steampunk Vamp**

**Carina Maxfield**

**Dissertação de Mestrado em Línguas, Literaturas e Culturas  
Especialização em Estudos Ingleses e Norte-Americanos**

**Novembro 2016**

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Dissertação apresentada para cumprimento dos requisitos necessários à obtenção do grau de Mestre em Línguas, Literaturas e Culturas, realizada sob a orientação científica de Professora Doutora Iolanda Ramos.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Professor Iolanda Ramos for her time and patience in helping me complete this dissertation.

I would also like to thank the school and several public libraries around Lisbon for lending me the space to complete my research.

Finally, I would like to thank all of my friends, Vítor Arnaut, and my loving family for their complete physical and moral support through this at times challenging moment in my life.

# **Subverter o Cânone: O Arquétipo do Vampiro e o ‘Steampunk Vamp’**

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## **Resumo**

Esta dissertação tem como objectivo analisar os diferentes modos em que o arquétipo do vampirismo se tem modificado das normas convencionais e como prevaleceu. Tem por objectivo analisar como os vampiros foram inicialmente descritos e como Bram Stoker incorpora este arquétipo vampiresco na sua obra *Dracula*, reconhecendo o propósito que esta descrição servia no final do século XIX.

Esta dissertação tem também como objectivo não só revelar a investigação da obra *Dracula* de Bram Stoker, mas também o modo como o neovitorianismo e o *steampunk* abordaram o vampirismo. Tem como intenção examinar como o livro *Johnny Alucard* de Kim Newman desafia o arquétipo do vampiro e o transforma num ‘steampunk vamp’.

Em suma, a finalidade é examinar como as adaptações contemporâneas não só modificaram o arquétipo do vampiro como também revelaram a ansiedade escondida e a subversão do convencional cânone literário do vampiro.

**Keywords:** Dracula, Neovitorianismo, Subversão, Steampunk, Vampiro.

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation intends to analyze the different ways in which the archetype of vampirism has altered from conventional norms, and how it has endured. It aims to evaluate how vampires were initially portrayed, and how Bram Stoker incorporates this vampire archetype into his novel *Dracula*, acknowledging the purpose that this depiction served at the end of the nineteenth century.

This dissertation also aims to introduce what the investigation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* reveals, and how neo-Victorianism and steampunk have addressed vampirism. It hopes to examine how Kim Newman's novel *Johnny Alucard* challenges the vampire archetype and morphs it into a 'steampunk vamp'.

In sum, the intention is to examine how contemporary adaptations have not only modified the vampire archetype, but also unveiled the hidden anxieties and subversions from the conventional literary canon of the vampire.

**Keywords:** Dracula, Neo-Victorianism, Subversion, Steampunk, Vampire.

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## INTRODUCTION

This dissertation intends to analyze how the vampire paradigm has evolved from early European folklore up until the contemporary vampire in the twenty-first century. It aims to carry out an analysis which illustrates how some characteristics of the conventional vampirism endured, while others have morphed into the vampire prototype that is visible today in both literary texts and cinema. A synopsis of a few historical vampire depictions will be undertaken, incorporating some of the earliest vampire mythologies, followed by a review of some of the first literary texts written about vampires, namely, *The Vampyre* (published in 1819) by John William Polidori, *Varney the Vampire or the Feast of Blood* by James Malcolm Rymer and Thomas Peckett Press (the first book published in 1847) originally in *The Penny Dreadfuls* (1845-47), the cheap pamphlet of horror stories from the Victorian era, and Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's novel *Carmilla* (first published in *The Dark Blue* in 1871 and later published within *In a Glass Darkly*, 1872).

A more in depth analysis will be done of the canonical Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, to illustrate the parallels to the contemporary adaptations of the twenty-first century providing a background for the survey of neo-Victorian and steampunk adaptations of *Dracula* and archetypal vampirism.

This dissertation also proposes to analyze some contemporary television adaptations that have been fundamental in recasting the original vampire prototype, namely *True Blood* and *Penny Dreadful*. With further investigation of these series as well as other adaptations on the vampire, it aims to show how the modern vampire has been morphed into a neo-Victorian steampunk vamp unveiling some of the subversions of the original literary texts.

Finally, it will focus on a particular novel from the *Anno Dracula* series (1976-1991): *Johnny Alucard* by Kim Newman. It strives to analyze how Kim Newman has transformed the original vampire archetype into a contemporary steampunk vampire, highlighting on steampunk concepts from the secondary bibliography to support this analysis, essentially demonstrating how this has

both complied with and challenged conventional vampire paradigms. Although the vampire subject has been covered by previous academic works, this dissertation essentially hopes to demonstrate how neo-Victorian and steampunk adaptations reconstruct the original vampire prototype, and divulge previously obscured truths.

In conclusion, this dissertation will emphasize how the neo-Victorian and steampunk modifications of the vampire have exposed previously veiled Victorian anxieties, bringing them to the forefront for a twenty-first century audience.

## Chapter I

### The Historical Vampire

Vampires have both fascinated and frightened humanity since ancient times. The allure of the vampire is a topic that has bemused scholars for a long time, and the general appeal doesn't appear to be going away any time soon. In fact, the archetype of the twenty-first century is more popular than ever with a plethora of literary works, film and television series utilizing the vampire subgenre. With the popularity of *Twilight*, several television series have followed which will be discussed in this dissertation, including *Penny Dreadful* and *True Blood*.

This current reappearance of the vampire has produced a very different replica than the infamous predecessors that are familiar from the late nineteenth century. The present-day vampires are drastically more enticing, lovelier and eminently more romantic than the scary, monstrous ones of yesteryear. This is evident in both the beautiful Edward

Cullen and clan that is seen in Catherine Hardwicke's *Twilight* saga along with countless other appropriations illustrated over both the twentieth and twenty-first century from Frank Langella in John Balham's 1979 *Dracula* to Julie Plec and Kevin Williamson's *The Vampire Diaries*.

Nina Auerbach suggests in *Our Vampire Ourselves* that, "they [vampires] promise escape from our dull lives and the pressure of our times, but they matter because when properly understood, they make us see that our lives are implicated in theirs and our times are inescapable" (1995: 9).

Stories about vampire-type entities have been spoken of in ancient civilizations, but the legends of what we know today of the vampire started to emerge from the southeastern part of Europe, primarily in the the region of modern day Romania. They were considered to be remains of evil spirits or demons that consumed the blood of the living, and they could be either male or female. Vampires did not become a literary genre until the early nineteenth century when Lord Byron's physician John William Polidori wrote *The Vampyre* in 1819, while on a trip in Geneva with Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Mary Wollstonecraft (later Mary Shelley,

author of *Frankenstein*).<sup>1</sup> The work is considered to be the precursor to the later vampire genre. The vampire in this novel, Lord Ruthven, resembles the quintessential vampire that is still known today. Lord Ruthven is a mysterious, distinguished nobleman that preys on females, biting them on the neck, comparable to the archetype vampire that is known throughout the last nineteenth and twentieth century. John Polidori's tale provoked a fashion of vampire figures in literature in a time when Gothic horror stories were becoming more and more popular throughout the Victorian period. This vampire work gave rise to many future vampire tales.

In the 1830s, an inexpensive periodical circulated called the *Penny Dreadfuls*, which later featured the next biggest vampire, *Varney the Vampire or the Feast of Blood* written by Thomas Malcolm Rymer and Thomas Peckett Press. Originally it was published anonymously in the cheap horror pamphlet, and then in 1847 it went to book form. Physically Varney resembles the trope of the vampire that is known today. He has fangs, and when he bites, he leaves two pricks on the neck. He has immense vitality, and he is able to

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<sup>1</sup> *The Vampyre* written in 1819 by John Polidori is available at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). See secondary bibliography.

hypnotize. *Varney the Vampire* has had a great impact on the vampire genre, due to the fact that these physical traits are still noted in vampire fiction today. The next big vampire story that Bram Stoker derived some of his inspiration for *Dracula* from was Joseph Thomas Sheridan Le Fanu's narrative from 1872, initially written in the literary magazine *Dark Blue*<sup>2</sup>, about a female vampire named *Carmilla*.<sup>3</sup>

Similar to Bram Stoker's vampire, she can transform herself into a monstrously large cat, comparable to the howling dog that *Dracula* becomes. The setting has a very Gothic theme, being in a dark castle in Austria, corresponding with *Dracula*'s castle in Transylvania. The twist in this vampire anecdote is that the vampire is female, and she hunts other females. She shares a close bond with the main character Laura, which hints at the slightly female homoerotic undertones, as many scholars have pointed out.

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<sup>2</sup> *Dark Blue* was a literary magazine published in 1871-1873. More information at [rossettiarchive.org](http://rossettiarchive.org). See Web Sources.

<sup>3</sup> *Carmilla* written in 1872 by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu is available at [gutenberg.org](http://gutenberg.org). See Secondary Bibliography.

She frustrates the patriarchal system even more by being an unproductive female. Engaged in erotic relationships with young women, she will not produce offspring, but will eventually destroy them. Carmilla's sexuality and gender non-normativity make her a queer character. (Stockstill, 2013: 47)

This makes her similar to Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, as the fright of many Victorian is that their offspring will not survive, and being written in a time period that encouraged modesty about sexuality, this novel like *Dracula* presents the elements which make up the Gothic horror story, namely fear of both sexuality and miscegenation.

## Chapter II

### Metamorphosis of the Canonical Vampire

#### II.1 Bram Stoker's *Dracula*

Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, published in 1897, is considered to be the canonical vampire of our time. The publication was during the Romantic Period, an era that wanted to rebel against the ideas of logic and rationalism that the preceding Enlightenment era had brought, with the argument that the human psyche cannot be explained entirely through reason. *Dracula* is considered to be a Gothic romance, which allowed Bram Stoker to play with the darker areas of the human mind without any implications. James Craig Holte writes:

The conventions of Gothic romance permitted writers to explore the dark side of humanity, specifically violence and sexuality, in a popular and culturally acceptable format. It is a morality play in which vice can be

examined and enjoyed for a time, before it is punished and virtue ultimately rewarded. (1997: 3)

It enables both the reader and the writer to delight in forbidden behavior, escaping restrictive obligations that are normally imposed on them.

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* conveys all the clichés of the classic Gothic horror, while exposing several deviations from Victorian conventions. The novel displaces all Victorian male anxieties into one embodiment—Dracula. Dracula is the monster, the foreigner, the lustful deviant, the sexual predator, the criminal, the homosexual, the violator, 'the Other', and the shadowy side of the mind where no one wants to go.

In Victorian fiction, the vampire is morphed from a legend to a metaphor, and in *Dracula*, he is the metaphor representing the fear of miscegenation, disease, taboo sexual behaviors, violence, and the reverse role of genders. These concerns were at the forefront of the Victorian mind, and although there is obvious abhorrence, there is simultaneously a strong ambivalence that Bram Stoker highlights in his *Dracula*. As Valente points out:

Britain's 'new urban gentry' feared violence by and disease of the 'casual residuum': the status of health in London's slums, the growth of mass democracy, and geopolitical class separation; infection by the poor and by immigrants who, with the 1880s suburban explosion, increasingly lived among the middle class. By century's end, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* sought to resolve fears about body replication, technological intervention, and population invasion, about transnational flows of bodies, blood, disease and death. (apud Sadoff, 2010: 103)

One of the most prominent fears that is evident in Stoker's novel is the question of race. Stoker evokes this sense of anxiety at many points in his novel. He decides that the location of the story will be in Transylvania, a place where empires have risen and fell, and there was an ongoing conflict between the races, high within the Carpathian mountains. As Stephen D. Arata notes in *The Occidental Tourist: "Dracula" and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization*, "By moving Castle Dracula there, Stoker gives distinctly

political overtones to his Gothic narrative. In Stoker's version of the myth, vampires are intimately linked to military conquest and to the rise and fall of empires" (1990: 462-463).

Dracula symbolizes the ultimate threat to the British race. Vlad the Impaler, the prince from whom Stoker got his inspiration for the novel from, was a strong, cruel, conquerer of the Ottomans. Stoker links this 'impaler' to vampirism in his novel, drawing attention to the strength of the Romanian race. Dracula himself is an aristocrat, a warrior, strong and virile. "His activities after death carry on his activities in life, in both cases he has successfully engaged in forms of conquest and domination" (Arata, 1990: 464).

Stephen D. Arata points out that by placing Dracula in the Carpathians, "Stoker blurs the lines between the Count's 'vampiristic' activities, and forges seemingly 'natural' links among his principal concerns: racial strife, the collapse of the empire and vampirism" (1990: 464-465). Dracula's move to London is a threat to Britain, where he can penetrate and proliferate, and spread his vile vampire seed creating more 'mini-monsters'.

Dracula invades the body through blood, replicating more vampires, thereby threatening the English race, and the alleged 'purity' of the English blood.

Blood is one of the most important ongoing themes in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. "The blood is the life! The blood is the life!" (S, 45).<sup>4</sup> Blood being the most prominent symbolic metaphor in *Dracula*, has several connotations, one of them being race.

Stoker's emphasis on blood accentuates the Victorian fear that 'the Other', perhaps more stronger 'blood' will infiltrate and conquer the English race, not only corporeally, but economically as well. Arata writes:

If 'blood' is a sign of racial identity, then Dracula effectively deracinates his victims. In turn, they receive a new racial identity, one that marks them literally the 'Other'. Miscegenation leads, not to the mixing of races, but to the biological and political annihilation of the weaker race by the stronger. (Arata, 1990: 465-466)

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<sup>4</sup> *Dracula* by Bram Stoker will be cited several times throughout this dissertation, and will be therefore shorted with just an "S" wherever it is referenced.

The Romanians were seen as strong and healthy, and therefore a dangerous and direct threat to the British race. Stoker uses the vampire to emphasise this British fear, because they are powerful, strong, and fertile creatures. Jonathan's initial physical description of Dracula emulates this observation of strength and virility:

His face was a strong —a very strong—aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily round 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. [...] the chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin. (S, 21-22)

This description uses adjectives to create a visual effect of someone/something with great power, physical strength and immense vigor. Stoker uses the vampire trope to elude to the idea that the the threat is not weak, but rather forceful, vigorous, and it could easily annihilate if the British don't prepare for its coming. They are the 'Undead'. Van Helsing says to Arthur:

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. (S, 219)

This is one of the greatest terrors of the British during that time. The fear that they will lose their race to a stronger breed and their political power along with it. Stoker underscores this angst when Jonathan elaborates in his diary about the Count's story of the history of his people, told during the first few days of his stay at the castle. "We

Szekelys have a right to be proud, for in our veins flows the blood of many brave races who fought as the lion fights, for lordship” (S, 32).

Stoker stresses the fact that the blood of the Count is one of tremendous strength. Jonathan's account of the the Count's narrative follows with:

Again, when, after the battle of Mohacs, we threw off the Hungarian yoke, we of the Dracula blood were amongst their leaders, for our spirit would not brook that we were not free. Ah, young sir, the Szekelys - and the Dracula as their heart's blood, their brains, and their swords – can boast a record that mushroom growths like the Hapsburgs and the Romanoffs can never reach. [...] Blood is too precious a thing in these days of dishonourable peace; and the glories of the great races are as a tale that is told. (S, 33-34)

The metaphor that Dracula represents is the strong, fertile seed that is likely to implant itself into English soil, and infiltrate Britain's culture, economy, women, and its

body, and it will accomplish all of this through the strength of its warrior blood. In *Dracula*, the British race seems to be dying off or growing old, while Dracula seems to be getting younger and younger as time passes. This distinction is evident in Jonathan's description of Dracula upon finding him sleeping in his room:

There lay the Count, but looking as if his youth had been half-renewed, for the white and moustache were changed to dark-iron grey; the cheeks were fuller, and the white skin seemed ruby-red underneath; the mouth was redder than ever, for on the lips were gouts of fresh blood, which trickled from the corners of the mouth and ran over the chin and neck. (S, 55)

This statement not only exhibits the erotic overtones that Dracula represents, but also reveals the terror that the 'Other' is getting stronger through his reproduction, whilst the British are getting weaker. Once Dracula bites his victims, they become healthier and stronger, as does Lucy after Dracula's attack. "The adventure of the night does not

seem to have harmed her; on the contrary, it has benefited her, for she looks better this morning than she has done for weeks” (S, 96).

The British fear so much the fruitfulness of Dracula or the ‘Other’ that the only solution they have is to counteract the deed that he has done onto Lucy is to give her blood transfusions of the purest, British blood, namely that of Lord Arthur Holmwood because, “he is so young and strong and of blood so pure that we need not defibrinate it” (S, 126).

They give the transfusions in order of class and race, in the following order: first up are British aristocracy, then the British in general, then the European, and finally the American. This discernment is no accident. Professor Van Helsing further asserts that the British women servants are not to be trusted for the transfusions of blood or anything else. Lucy's mother and Arthur's father have died, both British upper class, further revealing apprehensions that the British are getting weaker (S, 162).

Stephen Arata points out that this bias towards the servants is not only because they are lower class, but also because they are women (1990: 468). There is detectable

misogyny from Professor Van Helsing presented in the novel, who is seen as the patriarch of the group. He not only reveals this misogyny in his mistrust of the maids, but also in the violent way that he wants to mutilate Lucy's body (S, 169). Women that have been infected by the bite of Dracula are considered to be dangerous in his mind. They are threatening because they are now enlightened.

Lucy's bite from Dracula coincides with her sexual awakening. This is one of the main fears in Victorian society. Sexually enlightened women are dangerous to a patriarchal society. British society prides pure and chaste women like Mina that want to marry, while Lucy is sexually promiscuous, as she gloats, when she says, "I know, Mina, you will think me a horrid flirt – though I couldn't help feeling a sort of exultation that he was number two in one day" (S, 62).

Lucy is more inquisitive about her sexuality than Mina, and she is more flirtatious, resulting in her three proposals in one day (S, 60). She is considered to be the 'New Woman', and therefore she is the one that is assaulted, and vamped by Dracula.

Lucy initially writes to Mina, “why can’t they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble?” (S, 63). Both Victorian literature and Stoker use the vampire as a metaphor to represent the fallen, unwholesome woman. In fact, today in the English language usage, the term ‘vamp’ can be used to describe a woman who uses her charm to seduce men or to depict a ‘fallen woman’.<sup>5</sup> In Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, this is precisely what Lucy represents, the fallen women, which results in her vampirism. In other words, a ‘vamp’ or ‘vampire’ can be discerned as a ‘loose woman’, although for the purpose of this dissertation the term is applied to both male and female vampires.

Lucy is then violently persecuted once she has been vamped, not only in her death, but before her death through the blood transfusions. That vampirism is associated with sexuality is clear, but what is not so clear is the repressed sexual desires that are displayed through ambivalence towards the vampire. All of the men are repulsed, yet at the same time attracted to Lucy after she has been ‘infected’ with

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<sup>5</sup> This reference is from the on-line website [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vamp](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vamp).

vampire blood. “Young miss is bad, very bad. She wants blood, and blood she must have or die” (S, 125).

Stoker hints that the blood is not only blood of race, but also represents Lucy’s need to have her desires fulfilled, which is accomplished through the transferring of their blood to Lucy. It is incontestably discernible that blood is not the only thing being transferred in these transfusions. “When the professor was satisfied he called Arthur into the room, and bade him strip off his coat. Then he added: ‘You may take that little kiss while I bring over the table. Friend John, help to me! So neither of us looked whilst he bent over her” (S, 126).

The men’s weariness after these ‘transfusions’ also suggests that blood may be symbolic for a different kind of infusion. Van Helsing says, “Now take down our brave young lover, give him of the port wine, and let him lie down a while. He must then go home and rest, sleep much and eat much, that he may be recruited of what he has so given to his love” (S, 127).

Stoker hints at the fact that these transfusions might be sexual in nature. Stephen Arata points out that, “In the novel

female sexuality has only one legitimate function, propagation within the bounds of marriage. Once separated from that function, as Lucy's desire is, female sexuality becomes monstrous" (1990: 468).

This idea is reminiscent of Victorian thought regarding sexuality. The men have a rather hypocritical stance about Lucy's vamping. They condemn her for it, yet reprimand her in the most violent and sexual way. This same type of ambivalence is also evident with the three women vampires and Jonathan Harker in Dracula's castle.

All three has brilliant white teeth, that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous lips. There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those lips. (S, 41)

Jonathan Harker despises these vampire brides because they are strong, sexual and empowered women. He gripes

that they are wicked, and they feed on him, yet it is explicit that he wants them to, no matter how fearful of these women he might be. He is particularly attracted to the fair one, which further enunciates the fear about racial contamination, as darker women always represent more so the 'Other' which is the more dangerous of the two.

Stoker presents the darker ones as being more similar to the Count: "Two were dark, and had aquiline noses, like the Count's, and great dark, piercing eyes, that seemed to be almost red when contrasted with the pale yellow moon. The other was fair, as fair as can be, with great, wavy masses of golden hair and eyes like pale sapphires" (S, 41). His propensity for the blond with blue eyes, clearly vocalizes the anxiety that the Victorian Britain has about 'the Other'. He has this preference because her physical attributes are more British, more familiar, and in his mind, more safe. The fairer one is the less formidable of the three because she appears to be less 'foreign': "I seemed somehow to know her face, and to know it in connection with some dreamy fear, but I could not recollect at the moment how or where" (S, 41). Nonetheless, he is circumspect of her as well because she is a

sexually aggressive woman, and although he delights in this idea, at the same time she is suspect.

The fair girl went on her knees and bent over me, fairly gloating. There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive, and as she arched her neck she actually licked her lips like an animal, till I could see in the moonlight the moisture shining on the scarlet lips and on the red tongue as it lapped the white sharp teeth. (S, 42)

Jonathan complains about how the women are sucking the life out of him, however, he never resists and is indeed delighted about the opportunity which he notes can never be disclosed to Mina. "It is not good to note this down, lest some say it should meet Mina's eyes and cause her pain; but it is the truth" (S, 41). The same ambivalence is experienced when Van Helsing and his men, want to kill Lucy. They use religion as an excuse for their misgivings, yet they do not hesitate in their blatantly violent sexual attack on Lucy,

which is ironically the same reason that they are claiming that Dracula needs to be destroyed. During the time of their vicious act on Lucy they note:

The thing in the coffin writhed; and a hideous, blood-curling screech came from the opened red lips. The body shook and quivered and twisted in wild contortions; the sharp white teeth champed together till the lips were cut and the mouth was smeared with a crimson foam. [...] He looked like a figure of Thor as his untrembling arm rose and fell, driving deeper and deeper the mercy-bearing stake, whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted up around it. [...] And then the writhing and quivering of the body became less, and the teeth ceased to champ, and the face to quiver. Finally it lay still. The terrible task was over. (S, 221)

There is no denying that this final attack on Lucy to her death needs no explanation as far as the sexual implications are concerned, yet it is no different than Dracula's attacks on

his victims. The resolution for the pack of British men to fix this uncontrollable female sexuality in women is to exorcize it out of them through the same measures of penetration that the vampires use on its victims. Stoker implies that these British men and Dracula are in essence one in the same, and his novel subverts these undisclosed desires prevalent in the men of British society. The men note how anything that comes into contact with vampires, not only Dracula and his women, but also including Lucy and Mina as well, will become 'wicked' and 'unclean', but they themselves are inherently indistinguishable.

There is a direct link between vampire sexuality and female sexuality. Yet one of the reasons that this female sexuality is so treacherous is because it subverts the British idea of gender. Dracula unravels the conventional norms of gender, and mixes the traditional behaviors of gender in such a way that it is threatening to the Victorian social codes.

This idea of gender inversion is apparent in the mouths of the vampires, including Dracula's. The mouth is a central theme in *Dracula*, yet is it male or female? "I could feel the soft, shivering touch of the lips on the supersensitive skin of

my throat, and the hard dents of two sharp teeth, just touching and pausing there. I closed my eyes in a languorous ecstasy and waited—waited with beating heart” (S, 42).

This vivid description points out Jonathan’s anticipation of the ‘thing’ that he so loathes, and the mouth that has both masculine and feminine attributes. The sharpened physicality of the teeth is phallic in nature. They penetrate, and they make hard dents. Both of these actions are traditionally masculine in nature. On the other hand, the lips are described as soft, voluptuous and red which are conventionally female attributes.

The female vampires are as threatening as is Lucy because they possess both of these masculine and feminine features in one, and this one ‘thing’ is Dracula. He blurs the male/female line. With the three women vampires, Jonathan eagerly awaits 'it', which therein slightly inferences a homoerotic aspect to the novel further blurring that line.

The novel also suggests that the throat of the victims represents orifices neither male nor female. It is the point of penetration of both males and females. Lucy’s throat is the site of several infractions.

‘What do you make of that mark on her throat?’  
‘What do you make of it?’ ‘I have not seen it yet,’ I answered, and then and there proceeded to loose the band. Just over the external jugular vein there were two punctures, not large, but not wholesome-looking. There was no sign of disease, but the edges were white and worn-looking, as if by some trituration. It at once occurred to me that this wound, or whatever it was, might be the means of that manifest loss of blood; but I abandoned the idea as soon as formed, for such a thing could not be.’ (S, 128)

The throat is often covered and uncovered with either garlic or velvet bands, implying that it is symbolic of genitalia. The garlic flowers, are a common plant, or rather, conventional, and by throwing the flowers away, the vamped Lucy is implying that she does not want to conform, and so she rebels against them. Garlic is a plant that purifies the body, which further denotes that Lucy is ‘unclean’ and needs to be purified for her transgressing acts. “When I came back

to my seat I found that Lucy had moved slightly, and had torn away the garlic flowers from her throat. I replaced them as well as I could, and sat watching her,” writes Dr. Seward (S, 163). Later when Lucy is dying, Professor Van Helsing comes to her:

Then he bent down, and, with his face almost touching Lucy’s, examined her carefully. He removed the flowers and lifted the silk handkerchief from her throat. As he did so he started back, and I could hear his ejaculation, ‘Mein Gott!’ as it was smothered in his throat. I bend over and looked too, and as I noticed some queer chill came over me. The wounds on the throat had absolutely disappeared. (S, 164)

The text’s implication is that the throat is both a male and female orifice, and the site for unspoken things. Even Mina, the woman that the men so idolize as the ‘pure’ woman, bears the ‘prick’ of the throat, and sees herself as ‘unclean’.

She shuddered and was silent, holding down her head on her husband's breast. When she raised it, his white night robe was stained with blood where her lips had touched, and where the thin open wound in her neck had sent forth drops. The instant she saw it she drew back, with a low wail, and whispered, amidst choking sobs: 'Unclean, unclean! I must touch him or kiss him no more. Oh, that it should be that it is I who am now his worst enemy, and whom he may have most cause to fear.' (S, 290)

This concept of gender inversion is distinguishable with Mina again in her interaction with the Count.

With his left hand he held both Mrs. Harker's hands, keeping them away with her arms at full tension; his right hand gripped her by the back of the neck, forcing her face down on his bosom. Her white nightdress was smeared with blood, and a thin stream

trickled down the man's bare breast, which was shown by his torn-open dress. (S, 287)

The grip that Dracula imposes is masculine in essence, but the desired location which he forces Mina to 'suck', namely, the breast, is female. This further obscures the lines of Dracula's identity.

Although, these subversions and inversions were already implicit in *Dracula* during the late nineteenth century, it is the modern twentieth century neo-Victorian adaptations that bring them to light. Dianne F. Sadoff writes:

At the century's end, vampirism 1990s-style excites and soothes the fears about communication-technological explosion, sexually transmitted disease pandemics, and a sensed impending global and national financial panic. Yet late twentieth-century vampirism also converts worry into an aesthetic

pleasure for fear. Borrowing the codes and conventions of romance, gothic horror stimulates the affects not only of terror but also of sexual arousal and period pleasure. Exploiting the ambivalent fear and joy associated with anxiety about the body/machine interface, gothic-horror-romance makes terror sexy. As such, the genre manages worry by requiring spectators to deploy generic conventions, producing pleasure in knowingness, as sensation pulses and throbs. (2009: 114)

## II.2 The Transformation of *Dracula*

Countless adaptations have been made based off of this archetypal vampire, retaining some key characteristics, while altering others. The contemporary vampire has retained some of the fundamental characteristics of the canonical vampire, while modifying the more monstrous aspects of the being. This change is evident in several film adaptations of *Dracula*.

Frank Coppola's 1992 *Bram Stoker's Dracula* is an adaptation that claims to adhere as closely to the novel as possible, although it does in many ways depart from it (Film, 1992). This adaptation attempts to closely follow the original Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, while simultaneously deviating from the story in a very neo-Victorian fashion. Coppola exposes all the original subversions of the book, and then he magnifies them. He does this by putting the characters sexuality on display for the 1990s audience.

Dracula's homoerotic tendencies are revealed when he is alone in the castle with Jonathan. This is evident in the scene when he helps Jonathan with his shaving, and when he declares to the brides that Jonathan is his and not their's. The

Count also has an overall more effeminate appearance and mannerism. The Count's demeanour is changed from a cruel, horrific monster, into a nostalgic, sappy romantic.

Coppola also puts what can be considered a neo-Victorian twist on it by converting the original theme into a romantic love story, with Mina as the object of the Count's affections. Mina falls in love with Dracula, and Dracula pronounces that he has, "crossed oceans of time to find her" (Coppola, Film, 1992).

Coppola wanted to familiarize the viewers with the book, so he creates a period look through visual effects (Sadoff, 2009: 130). He dresses Mina in a virginal blue to show off her innocence, and he puts Lucy in a vixen orange to display her promiscuity. He uses high-tech visual effects to show transforming aesthetics of Dracula into vapor, a wolf and rats. Coppola also introduces soft core pornography into the film to give it a more neo-Victorian perspective. Diane Sadoff explains it well:

Jonathan's vamping is orgiastic. Materialising out of his bed, three bare-breasted brides growl, lick

Jonathan's throat, tear his shirt, open his pants, display their fangs, bite his neck: close-up of a bride's face, blood on lips; two brides kiss; in soft-core girl-girl shot, then slide onto Jonathan. Lucy, too, has never been sexier; streaking through darkened garden, in rucked and body-hugging orange dress, she lies on a raised grave, the beast between her legs and her blood on his mouth. (2009: 123)

The scene with Mina sucking Dracula's breast is also subverted. Instead of being forced on Dracula's breast, she enjoys it, and does the act with pleasure wanting more (Coppola, Film, 1992). These neo-Victorian adaptations have arisen due to a change in the cultural shift of the observer. Dianne F. Sadoff writes, "Gothic horror likewise morphs, as arousal and soft-core scenario enter 1990s heritage spectacle. Female fans adore it" (Sadoff, 2009: 124).

In Tod Browning's 1931 adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Dracula becomes more human and less of a monster. Count Dracula is played by Bela Lugosi. His features become more striking and less gruesome. Dracula

now has slicked black hair with a widow's peak. He flaunts a long black cape with a tux-like suit underneath. He retains the sharp fangs and the overall pallor of the traditional vampire, yet he is no longer a horrific creature as in past interpretations.

He continues to generate fear, but it is more subdued, almost hypnotic. The creepiness factor evolves more from the Count's physical exaggerated body movements and facial expressions alone, then from his actual appearance. He often lifts up his cape in an awkward manner and raises his eyebrows which adds to his uncanniness.

The conventional attributes of the vampire are still acknowledged in this adaptation. The biting of the neck to change a human into a vampire, and the strong need to drink blood for survival remains the epitome of the vampire. There is a scene where Renfield pricks himself with a paperclip, and the Count has a strong desire to drink his blood. The attributes of having no reflection in the mirror, the red eyes, the repelling from crucifixes and the Count's transformation into bats, rats, and spiders is retained.

Although it appears that vampires do not distinguish from what type of blood they feed on, and they continue to attack in the night with a pierce to the neck of the victim, it is noted that the Count now only choses women as his victims for these type of attacks, whereas in folklore the vampire didn't necessarily discriminate against gender.

The idea of a bisexual vampire is no longer perceivable, whereas in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* when Jonathan is alone with the Count in his castle, it is suggested that Dracula has hidden homoerotic desires. The fear of the 'Other' endures, as the Count continues to remain a foreigner from which one must protect our women. This is furthermore inferred by the physical attribute of the dark black hair and the foreign accent. The dreadful fear of other races resumes, as they continue to give transfusions of blood, horrified that the blood has been tainted.

Another adaptation is done in 1979 with Frank Lagella as Dracula (John Badham, *Dracula*, Film). In this adaptation, Dracula is transformed further into something that is considered rather more appealing than repulsive. The

depiction of Dracula as a monster is subdued and transposed into an attractive man that is alluring with his foreign appeal.

Now Dracula is handsome, and all the physical attributes that made him appalling in the past are gone. Gone are the bloody lips, pallid skin, beastly hands, and pointed nose. It is all converted into a striking man with dark hair and a tan. He is also more of a womanizer than in previous depictions, with a strictly heterosexual demeanour. The black cape pervades, and bat and fog transformation continue to be acknowledged as part of the vampire archetype, as well as the general fear of crucifixes.

Like the original Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, this version reverses gender roles. Attempting to adhere to some of the initial points of the book, Dracula cuts himself, and instructs Lucy to suck his blood, the female again assuming a more masculine role. Overall, the film follows the idea of the canonical vampire, with the exclusion of the vampire becoming less frightful and more attractive to the opposite sex.

Neo-Victorian adaptations have assisted in transforming Gothic literature from the dark, eery, terror of

the nineteenth century to the modern, sexy Gothic horror of today. Although these repressed ideas were already in the *Dracula* of the Victorian period, it is neo-Victorianism that exposes them.

## Chapter III

### Contemporary Appropriations of the Vampire

#### III.1 *Penny Dreadful*

The allure of the ‘undead’ has continued up into the twenty-first century, and several series have been emerging with vampire motif, one of them being the 2014 TV series created by John Logan *Penny Dreadful*. The popular series intermingles classic Gothic novels from the late nineteenth-century including Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, Oscar Wilde’s *Dorian Gray* and Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. The name of the series is adopted from the *Penny Dreadfuls*, the popular, cheap horror stories in periodicals which were circulating in Victorian England during the late nineteenth century. They featured both Varney the Vampire from *Feast of Blood* and the infamous barber Sweeney Todd from *String of Pearls*. However, the focus of the series is more on the previously mentioned literary works than on the periodicals themselves,

which is another way of further recycling the Victorian period in London and the popular Gothic literature that was prevalent at that time.

*Penny Dreadful* brings characters from the Victorian period back to life in a neo-Victorian fashion by subverting several anxieties from the original texts. The series itself is representational of a subversion, in the numerous ways that it reconstructs the characters from the archetype and weaves several of the classic dark literature together.

Miss Vanessa Ives, a clairvoyant woman who occasionally fights off vampires, is the heroine whose character doesn't appear to be borrowed from any of the original classic Gothic texts. This distinguishment marks her as one of the most unique and important figures of the show, which could possibly be a subversion in itself. She is a fortune teller and a tarot card reader who is often seen trying to combat being possessed by the devil, and throughout the series she is struggling to choose between the forces of good and evil. She is the surrogate child of Malcolm, who is an altered reference to Sir Malcolm Murray, Mina's father in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. They are both are on a mission to

find Mina's killer, presumably vampires, which moderately follows the original work of Stoker, modifying and unraveling precedent repressions along the way.

Despite the fact that Ms. Ives is presumed to be an 'exclusive' character in the story, she appears to have respective number of attributes in common with Lucy from Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. She is discernibly good, but lured into the dark underworld. In the first season, they have a seance and she is possessed by something evil revealing several hidden secrets about Sir Malcolm, whom she is trying to help solve the mystery of the disappearance of his daughter Mina. This link to Mina is yet another twisted version of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. She then she concludes the seance by having quite graphic intercourse in an alley with a stranger, further alluding to subversions from the original stories of the Victorian period (*Penny Dreadful*, S1 Ep. 2).

Under possession, Ms. Ives reveals both the darker side of herself through her sexual abandonment, but also the darker side of others through her shrilling out vulgar remarks,

spitting out unmentionables and bringing to life their shameful hidden truths (*Penny Dreadful*, S1 Ep. 7).

Lucy, likewise, is fundamentally with good intentions, but is drawn into the darker side of things, and in the end Lucy says that Mr. Quincey Morris referred to her as “an honest-hearted girl” and he believed her to be “clean grit, right through to the very depths of her soul” (S, 63).

Lucy succumbs to Dracula, and so does Ms. Vanessa Ives in the final season. Essentially, Ms. Ives is fighting with her own demons throughout all three seasons, and she even needs an exorcism in season one because the demon fully possesses her, but in the end the demons win (*Penny Dreadful*, S1 Ep. 7). Dracula says to Ms. Ives, “I don’t want you to be anything, but who you truly are” (*Penny Dreadful*, S3 Ep.7). Dracula then bites Ms. Ives as he bites Lucy in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (S, 94).

Although the spotlight tends to be focused on Ms. Ives, all of the characters contribute to the series having a comprehensively subversive effect. For example, the alleged hero of the series is Ethan Chandler, an American with similar attributes to Mr. Quincey P. Morris in Bram Stoker’s

*Dracula*. Akin to Mr. Quincey Morris, he is an adventurous southern gunslinger who falls in love with Ms. Ives, as does Mr. Morris with Lucy in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (S, 61). The subversive effect is that he has a well kept secret—he is also a werewolf (*Penny Dreadful*, S1 Ep. 8). This is ironic because archetype werewolves were part of Dracula's clan in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. "Listen to them—the children of the night. What music they make!" (S, 22). Dracula was the master of the night creatures, and some classic movie adaptations even transform him into a werewolf (*Bram Stoker's Dracula*, Film, 1992).

However, in light of the latest neo-Victorian vampire adaptations, namely *Twilight* among others, the original werewolf has morphed into a counterpoise from Dracula, whereas in archetypal stories, the wolves appear to follow Dracula wherever he goes (*Twilight*, Film, 2008). In Jonathan Harker's recollection of visiting the Count, he points out that wolves are ever present the closer he gets to the castle. "I did not know what to do, the less as the howling of the wolves grew closer [...]" (S, 16).

With a neo-Victorian turn of events, now vampires and werewolves appear to be on opposing sides, fighting against each other in love and war as was evident previously between Edward Cullen and Jacob Black in the *Twilight* saga (*Twilight*, Film, 2008), as well as currently with Ethan Chandler and Dracula in *Penny Dreadful* (*Penny Dreadful*, S3 Ep. 8). Ethan Chandler's personality coincides with that of Mr. Quincey Morris from *Dracula*, yet the storyline is inverted with his werewolf transformation, as well as through his sexual endeavor with Dorian Gray, which drives the deconstruction of the archetype even deeper. This overturns several tropes of these classical pieces of work. The werewolf flip reveals the bestial side that exists within even the most angelic of humanity, and the rendezvous with Dorian Gray reveals previously obscured homoerotic tendencies, pointing out that this was indeed an undisclosed anxiety of the time.

Dorian Gray is yet another character from *Penny Dreadful* whose oppressions are brought to the surface. The book *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde is intermingled with *Dracula* by Bram Stoker to create a new subversive appropriation.

Although it is not a vampire story, *Penny Dreadful* brings Dorian Gray into the plot and overturns several previously obscured secrets. With Dorian Gray thrown into the mix, the storyline becomes exceedingly carnal, eradicating the subdued paradigms of both narratives.

The character of Dorian Gray accomplishes this through several approaches. For one, Dorian has intercourse with both males and females, including both Ms. Vanessa Ives and Ethan Chandler, disclosing the homoerotic trope.

As is known, Oscar Wilde, the author of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, was found to be bisexual. He was incarcerated for his acts around the same time that Bram Stoker was writing *Dracula* in 1895, and some scholars have thus speculated a link between the first chapter of *Dracula* and Oscar Wilde. Nina Auerbach suggests that, “*Dracula* is Stoker’s striving for expressing a culturally repressed homosexual identity” (apud Antonnen 4: 2008).

In *Penny Dreadful*, the shenanigans of Dorian Gray certainly allude to that idea. He is exceedingly promiscuous as noted with both genders, and his sexual interludes can be somewhat dark to include intercourse with a prostitute with

tuberculosis, which is illustrated in some exceptionally explicit scenes (*Penny Dreadful*, S1 Ep. 2). He also acquires the implied transgender Angelique as a lover, with whom he has remarkably graphic scenes to include sodomy, and he decides to uncover his secret to the world by introducing Angelique as his love interest when he throws a grand ball for his friends (*Penny Dreadful*, S2 Ep.6). The interlacing of Dorian Gray with other key characters from these classic Gothic novels incontestably overthrows the Victorian paradigm of an austere society.

*Penny Dreadful* reappropriates with a neo-Victorian scope on these selected classics by focusing on bringing the Victorian past into a modern visual culture. It overturns the archetypes by distorting original plots and baring previously veiled secrets of the original texts.

### **III.2 *True Blood***

Another contemporary adaptation that draws attention to the vampire with a neo-Victorian outlook is Alan Ball's 2008 TV series, *True Blood*. *True Blood* takes a different approach on the vampire spectre, having the vampires now coexist together with humans in society. This is a modern adaptation that is more concerned with the question of race, but also recasts the Victorian by exposing sexuality and 'befriending' the vampire.

Similar to Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, there is the fear of race, but the neo-Victorian reconstructs this fear by placing it in a modern setting. *True Blood* is prudently set in a small town in Bon Temps, Louisiana, a state that has a reputation for vampire legends. Vampires are discriminated against as though they represent an entire race. In fact, in the first season, reports of ongoing lynchings of vampires occur, and when a vampire named Bill Compton enters a bar, the humans therein announce that they don't want vampires there, comparable to the manner in which humans would say similar notions to another race (*True Blood*, S1, Ep.1).

Derogatory terms like ‘fangers’ are used to describe vampires, and there is discrimination against mortals that have relations with vampires referring to them as ‘fangbangers’.

The fear of miscegenation is especially evident in the first season, when initially the protagonist Sookie Stackhouse is attracted to the vampire Bill Compton who enters the bar where she works. Animosity is seen from that alliance from both her bartender friend Sam Merlotte, and from her police officer brother Jason Stackhouse. The archetypal ideology of a pure race is still perceivable, yet the dynamics of that ideology are altered into a modern day society where both vampires and humans coexist with each other.

The protagonist Sookie Steakhouse is a telepathic woman that meets and falls in love with Bill Compton. The animosity is felt from everyone, including her brother with this vampire-human liaison, comparable to the vampire hunting team’s disapproval of Dracula in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*. Her relationship with the vampire is very neo-Victorian because he is on her side to help her fight other more evil vampires, contrary to trying to hurt her.

In archetypal vampire literature, typically humans are in opposition with vampires. In *True Blood* however, although there are indeed vampire enemies, some of them appear to want to help their mortal friends, as is portrayed with Bill Compton towards Sookie. Sookie also sucks his blood to make herself stronger, yet she doesn't turn into a vampire. In fact, Bill bites his wrist, and has Sookie suck from it to save her life (*True Blood*, S1 Ep. 2). They continually have an on-again off again relationship, and then he momentarily falls into the darker sides of vampirism.

In sum, Bill Compton, the main vampire of *True Blood*, exhibits several characteristics of a neo-Victorian vampire. To begin with, he falls in love with Sookie, a human (*True Blood*, S2, Ep.1). He is also a vampire born in the early nineteenth century in Bon Temps, Louisiana, who fought in the war and currently resides in a Victorian home. Incidentally, he is also attractive like most of the vampires that are depicted today. He doesn't feast on human blood, which the series notes that he did in his past, but he now currently refrains. Instead, he opts to drink the technologically advanced bottled blood that is heated to 98.6

degrees and referred to as ‘Tru Blood’, hence the name of the series. He has strong desires to help his fellow human friends, as opposed to harming them, and he protects them from other vampires whose intentions are not so altruistic. This is very different from the vampires like Dracula of the late nineteenth century. “The Draculas were, says Arminius, a great and noble race, though now and again where scions who were held by their coevals to have had dealings with the Evil One” (S, 246). Antecedent vampires such as Dracula were regarded as a frightful opponent. They were to be feared, and not befriended.

Additionally, *True Blood* is very uninhibited about sexuality. Numerous graphic scenes occur throughout the series, demonstrating very casual attitudes about sexuality, to include engaging with vampire sexuality. Sookie has relations with Bill and Eric, both vampires (*True Blood*, S1 Ep.6 and S4 Ep.6). Sookie’s promiscuous brother Jason, has rather explicit relations with several characters, due to his philandering behaviour (*True Blood*, S1 Ep.5).

Both interracial and homoerotic relations are the norm likewise, as illustrated with the homosexual cook and drug

dealer Lafayette Reynolds in his scene with James Kent who is a vampire (*True Blood*, S7 Ep.5). Interracial scenes are depicted again with Tara Thornton, Sookie's best friend who has relations with the bartender Sam Merlotte (*True Blood*, S1, Ep.8).

Many types of sexuality are put on display and brought to light with a neo-Victorian perspective in *True Blood*. In this drama-horror series, it is evident that the vampire has matured from its monstrous archetype into a reappropriated vampire for the twenty-first century.

### III.3. Newman's Steampunk Vampire

The author Kim Newman has introduced a new type of vampire in literature with his *Anno Dracula* series. His work has morphed the vampire prototype into a 'steampunk' neo-Victorian vampire. Steampunk has been all the rage as of late, and it doesn't appear to be going away any time soon. There are steampunk movies, fashion, jewelry, gadgets, art, music, among other cultural representations. The popularity of steampunk has grown tremendously.

Steampunk is loosely described as a nostalgia of the past, namely the Victorian or Edwardian past, and incorporating it into the future, usually involving some type of 'steam' technology, although the genre has branched out into many different subgenres.<sup>6</sup> Writers of this genre can play with the past, and recreate a sort of new past. "The past is a kind of future that already happened" (Sterling, 2011: 13).

Kim Newman is a well-known author of horror writing who is particularly fond the vampire subgenre, and he has

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<sup>6</sup> See [steampunkmagazine.com](http://steampunkmagazine.com) for more information regarding steampunk.

received several awards for his work to include the Horror Writer's of America Bram Stoker's award both in 1989 and 2005, as well as the International Horror Guild award for best novel *Anno Dracula* in 1994.<sup>7</sup> In his first book of the series, *Anno Dracula*, Dracula plants himself in Victorian England, and marries Queen Victoria so that he can spread his monstrous empire in this renovated history. London during that period in the late nineteenth century was viewed as the dominant economic power of the world, hence Newman has Dracula come to London attempting to overthrow this leading world power. Dracula wants to spread his empire in England, alternating Bram Stoker's *Dracula* by twisting the original plot and rewriting it into a revised past.

Newman reshapes the original *Dracula* again in one of his most recent novels, *Johnny Alucard*, part of the *Anno Dracula* series, into a fantasy alternate history, but this time Dracula wants to conquer the world economic leaders of the present, namely, America. Not only America, but specifically, both New York City and Hollywood, the metropolis world economic leaders of today. He interjects Dracula over

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<sup>7</sup> For more information on Kim Newman's awards see [www.johnnyalucard.com](http://www.johnnyalucard.com).

centuries to include the fifties, sixties, seventies, eighties and nineties, recreating a new history with Dracula. Specifically, in *Johnny Alucard*, Dracula is a character who has past away, but there is a mystery about whether he still exists or not. Newman has Frank Copolla directing a new version of the *Dracula* film in an alternate history of the seventies, and during the production period of the film, a young boy is bitten by Dracula himself, and thereafter, Dracula continues to exist through him akin to a quasi neo-Victorian ghost of Dracula (N, 17).<sup>8</sup> The trope of Dracula as a ghost is furthermore suggested when Johnny refers to Dracula as ‘The Father’ throughout the narrative. “The Father was always with him, first among the ghosts. He watched over Johnny and kept him from real harm” (N, 108).

In alternate history fashion, Johnny Pop as he calls himself (later Johnny Alucard), a newborn vampire boy goes to America, specifically New York City, seeking to proliferate his wickedness, comparable in approach to which the representational vampire Dracula goes to London seeking to spread his vile seed.

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<sup>8</sup> *Johnny Alucard* will be shortened with an “N” whenever it is referenced.

Kim Newman has Johnny Alcuard befriend Andy Warhol, the well-known pop artist, amongst others, infiltrating America with his corruption along the way (N, 116). To elaborate on this premise, he introduces America to vampire blood addiction, an analogy to heroin addiction or the like, as well as revering in money and greed, as the profits from this business ensue. He physically resembles the canonical Dracula, but in a steampunk, retro, disco sort of way:

Satisfied, he got off the bed and pulled on crusader white pants, immodestly tight around the crotch and rump, loose as a sailor's below the knee. The dark purple shirt settled on his back and chest, sticking to him where his saliva was still wet. He rattled a cluster of gold chains and medallions—Transylvanian charms, badges of honour and conquest—that hung in the gap between his hand-sized collar points. [...] With a white jacket lined in blood-red silk, Johnny was a blinding apparition. (N, 110)

He is ruthless, and cruel congruous to the archetypal vampire, Dracula. <sup>9</sup>Kim Newman notes in an interview to Fangoria, “So I wanted to get away from all of that and go back to him being just evil” (Fangoria, Online Source). Newman is referring to how the late neo-Victorian vampires, to include Dracula have become very romantic and sweet in nature, and he wanted to move away from that persona. Although he incorporates good-hearted vampires into the plot, like Kate Reed and Geneviève Dieudonné, two vampires who try to help their fellow humans fight against Dracula by helping police officers investigate criminal cases, Newman wanted to make Dracula scary again.

Newman rewrites past decades up through the nineties, incorporating historical figures like Marlon Brando, Martin Sheen, Dennis Hopper, John Lennon, among many others into his script, creating a fantasy-reality type of past. He infuses puns on slogans of the eighties like ‘the War on Drac’ and ‘Just say Yuck’ to give his alternate world a more realistic feel (N, 360).

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<sup>9</sup> For more on the interview, see [fangoria.com](http://fangoria.com). See web source in Second Bibliography.

In this modified universe, Johnny Alucard comes to power through various vampire film productions to include vampire pornographic films and through the distribution of the street drug 'drac', which is manifested by draining vampires of their blood and letting it dry into a fine powder (N, 133). Addictions arise from the use, and users are referred to as 'dhampires' or 'dhamps' (N, 134). Johnny Pop becomes the head of this dirty business, which leads to his successful attempt at corrupting America.

Newman's version of vampire correlates to the original archetype of the vampire Dracula by predominantly making him more evil. Other concordances of the vampire archetype that the storyline retains is the ability to shape shift, as one of Johnny's evil vampires Holly often does (N, 413). They remain susceptible to sunlight, although not as much, as they are often seen out and about in daylight sporting sunglasses. Newman still keeps the characteristic of being able to be killed with silver bullets or stakes through the heart, comparable to precedent vampire literature. Newman retains considerable traits of the vampire prototype, but reinvents the vampire into an alternative new world of steampunk.

## Conclusion

This dissertation intends to provide a new perspective of how the trope of the archetypal vampire has persevered over time, and how it has evolved, highlighting on how both the neo-Victorian and steampunk subgenres have facilitated this transition. The main objective is to illustrate how contemporary appropriations of the vampire divulge not only new views, but also subversions of the original Victorian novel *Dracula*, bringing a new context to the initial work. It aims to show how the reconstructions of vampire literature connote obscurities of the original text.

The methodologies utilized in accomplishing these objectives were obtained through depictions of some of the earliest vampire attributes and early vampire literature, along with a comprehensive analysis of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.

This was followed with an examination of more contemporary appropriations of the original vampire prototype, which includes many film adaptations of the vampire *Dracula*, portraying how the archetype has prevailed and how it has transposed.

This observation was further analyzed through the review of some of the current vampire series adaptations, respectively *Penny Dreadful* and *True Blood* with the intention of underscoring the neo-Victorian perspective on the modification of the vampire. An examination of the appropriations were undertaken to reveal how past subtleties of the Victorian era have been unveiled, namely class, race, gender and sexuality. Finally, a review of Kim Newman's *Johnny Alucard* from the *Anno Dracula* series was implemented with the purpose of contextualizing how past vampire paradigms have been both maintained and altered through the manifestation of a neo-Victorian 'Steampunk Vamp'.

Through these examinations, it was possible to confirm how the vampire has been both sustained and renewed through the centuries by means of a reinterpretation of the canon.

In conclusion, this dissertation proposes to contribute to the development of a new outlook on the vampire stereotype from both a neo-Victorian and steampunk perspective.

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