

Bill Hughes

‘I, too, can love’: Genre, Knowledge, and Dracula’s Romantic Progeny

We’re here to celebrate all things undead but particularly, of course, the centenary of Bram Stoker, and his innovatory vampire novel of 1897. *Dracula* is the seminal text in many ways, the Count having become mythical—in the sense, that is, that Ian Watt finds Faust, Don Juan, Don Quixote, and Robinson Crusoe mythical figures of western culture.¹ *Dracula* is indeed a break with previous vampire fictions, as Nina Auerbach points out (though I think there are continuities too—and particularly with the vampires of Romanticism, despite a new, late-Victorian flavour).² Jennifer Wicke announces a generic break, too, claiming *Dracula* as the first modern novel.³ Auerbach sees *Dracula* as discontinuous with earlier vampires, but particularly in his extreme isolation, and denies that he *can* love.

I am going to trace a story—one of miscegenation of genres, confusions in knowing, and ambivalent love objects. It’s necessarily brisk, but aspires to see what happens in the transition from *Dracula* to today’s Edward Cullens, Bill Comptons, and Stefan Salvatores. The overlapping of romance that accompanies the humanising of the vampire occurs in *Dracula*’s precursors, in Polidori and in Le Fanu—as homosocial or homoerotic romance. But, in *Dracula*, that romance is not clearly visible. Yet, despite that absence, it’s still Count Dracula who is the principal archetype for fictional vampires—particularly the pale, sensual, moody undead of today’s paranormal romance. Associated with the rise of this glamourised figure are certain permutations of genre and transtextual operations. Also, along the way certain epistemological questions are raised—questions about what is known, concerns with doubt and verification. I’m attempting to show how these three strands are linked.

Along the way, there will be some shameless plugging of the *Open Graves, Open Minds* book but, in my defence, it’s because the contributors to that book responded so well to our call to make connections with each other’s chapters that a narrative plainly emerged, and one that parallels my own. (I’ll be referring to the book as ‘*OGOM*’ from now on.

Dracula’s love(s)

I’ll begin with the love interest in *Dracula*. The passage is, I’m sure, well-known to you all, so I’ll not quote much from Jonathan Harker’s sizzling encounter with the three seductive vampires, who incite in Harker ‘a wicked burning desire, that they would kiss [him] with those red lips’ (38), and when their fangs touch his throat, a ‘languorous ecstasy’ (39); but note that this is the very character of the desire that vampires still generate in contemporary fiction. And the unearthly and inhuman character of their allure is familiar too:

such a silvery, musical laugh, but as hard as though the sound never could have come through the softness of human lips. It was like the intolerable tingling sweetness of water-glasses when played on by a cunning hand.⁴

That pure, crystalline hardness does, I think, become transposed onto Edward Cullen's cold, diamond body.

But I will remind you all of the climax: Dracula, with 'blazing' (39) eyes, flings the women aside and cries:

'How dare you touch him, any of you? How dare you cast eyes on him when I had forbidden it? Back, I tell you all! This man belongs to me! Beware how you meddle with him, or you will have to deal with me.' The fair girl, with laugh of ribald coquetry, turned to answer him:—

'You yourself never loved, you never love!' On this the other women joined, and such a mirthless, hard, soulless laughter rang through the room that it almost made me faint to hear; it seemed like the pleasure of fiends. Then the Count turned, after looking at my face attentively, and said in a soft whisper:—

'Yes, I too can love; you yourselves can tell it from the past. Is it not so? Well, now I promise you that when I am done with him, you can kiss him at your will. (39-40)

'I, too, can love'—this famous phrase has drawn a multitude of speculations on just who, exactly, Dracula *can* love. 'What, exactly, are the object choices in *Dracula*? Who desires whom?', asks Roger Luckhurst in his introduction to the World's Classics edition.⁵ The homoerotic undertones have struck many readers of this scene, so charged with illicit eroticism. Doubts about what can be known and questions of verification surround this aporia itself; Dracula appeals to the past experience of the three women, but, as many have pointed out, there is no other indication of just who Dracula loves, or how he can love.

So, who are the love objects of Dracula, and other vampires in general?

Female vampires are certainly often desirable. In 'Dracula's Guest', Stoker's discarded story, there is a sexy vampire, modelled apparently on Le Fanu's Carmilla. In *Dracula*, Lucy, on turning, has the same 'voluptuous' mouth as the three vampire women in the castle. But where does Dracula's sex appeal lie, if at all? Who does he love, or who loves him? He does brag of his mastery over women, declaring to the 'Crew of Light (as his foes have become known): 'Your girls that you all love are mine already' (285).

Lucy's dream reveals this mastery and the erotic power of Dracula (83).⁶ His hypnotic bond with Mina also suggests an erotic connection, but it is a mere hint, becoming amplified in Tod Browning's and Coppola's cinematic revisions. And Lucy's nocturnal wanderings, stimulated by a similar magnetic process, seem to resemble accounts of meeting forbidden lovers. She sleepwalks onto the cliffs at Whitby where Mina sees, or seems to see, a figure bending over her in an apparently sexual pose. This is one of the many moments of epistemological doubt and optical confusion that permeate the novel.

And ‘sleep-waking, vague, unconscious’, on the border between living and undead, Lucy reveals her sexuality and, ‘in a soft voluptuous voice’ (150), she invites Arthur to kiss her. The truth is, Lucy is more sexy as a vampire. Lucy, as vampire, is, ‘if possible more radiantly beautiful than ever’ (186). This is when she, though already transformed, lies dormant and apparently newly deceased. Her lips are ‘red, nay redder than before’ (186), but her teeth ‘are even sharper than before’ (187); when she wakes, however, this voluptuousness becomes threatening; dangerous sexuality is central to vampire romance. (We are actually very near Hampstead Heath, where this ‘bloofer lady’ stalks her infantine prey—and where Varney performs strange lunar rituals—so I’d be careful tonight if you’re walking past the heath.)

One potential lover of Dracula is Renfield: here, Renfield breathlessly anticipates the coming of his lord to his bedchamber: ‘The bride-maidens rejoice the eyes that wait the coming of the bride; but when the bride draweth nigh, then the maidens shine not to the eyes that are filled’ (96). This blasphemously parodic Biblicalism is laden with erotic suggestions of the Song of Songs.

Despite Auerbach’s claims, later reincarnations of the Count have frequently shown him as a lover, or erotic object, though usually heterosexual and in an increasingly romanticised aspect. Here, the genre of romantic fiction copulates with the revitalised Gothic of Stoker. I want to trace a sketchy and necessarily superficial genealogy of Dracula’s romantic progeny from the brief hint in that line ‘I, too, can love’.

‘Dracula,’ says Auerbach, ‘is less the culmination of a tradition than the destroyer of one’, referring to a tradition of intimacy and sociability where literary vampires are concerned.⁷ Vampires such as Lord Ruthven, Varney, and Carmilla are shown as somewhat humanised and sympathetic, and cast as lovers, unquestionably. Auerbach claims that the vampires of our own age don’t love either (60), but this needs revision in the light of recent incarnations (she was writing in 1995).

Yet, that tradition was itself brief and had, in its turn, overthrown an older one of monstrous folkloric vampires. When considered alongside the sparkly and humanised vampire, this justifies Conrad Aquilina’s cyclical account in our book where he talks about the avatars of the Byronic vampire in contrast to the monster of folklore. The genres involved in this earlier Enlightenment vampire are ethnography and satire, incarnating a rational and scientific epistemology; they are, of course, loveless. Again, the *OGOM* book explores these precursors.

But, to return: there must be something latent in Stoker’s Dracula that allowed the sexuality, the humanity, the vampire as lover to emerge—such as, the brief hints announced by ‘I, too, can love’ and the moments where Lucy and Mina fall under his spell. So, there must have been some buried seed to work on; the operations of parody, hypertextuality, and genre transformation are very important here.

Perhaps that very absence, that unfulfilled desire, the unanswered question—who *does* Dracula love?—provokes a fictional response. Auerbach, however, claims that the demand for a love story arises because *Dracula* is so bleak.⁸ This suggests how utopian strands emerge in vampire fiction; new possibilities of love are discovered, even if this is simply Bella Swan’s fabulous sex-life, and triumphs over physical limitations or over death can be imagined.

We can (and the *OGOM* book does) trace several strands in the post-*Dracula* narrative, all interesting, all found in that seminal text: ways of knowing and doubting; a politics of otherness, with a direction towards humanising and acknowledging the alien, but with frequent reversals; a mixing and cross-fertilisation of genres—notably, an engagement with Romance—like the forbidden commingling of blood in *Dracula*. (The book is itself notoriously hybrid). So it's also a story of the transformations of genre, as fluid and interpenetrating as those of the Count himself. This latter is, I will show, not unconnected with the other two strands.

A mass of typewriting

Dracula's narrative appears as a 'mass of typewriting' (351), but this is only the final transcription of a heterogeneous mass of documents and what Bakhtin calls 'speech genres'—all of which affirm or cast doubt on ways of knowing. This formal structure constitutes, in part, the modernism that Wicke claims. But the very process of transcription seems to have annulled the authority of these genres; the redacted document is finally found unacceptable 'as proofs of so wild a story' (351).

So, *Dracula*, our starting point, immediately strikes us with its generic hybridity. Apart from the incorporation of folklore, there is the travel journal (which as anthropological study enables the former incorporation); touches of the Gothic as reinvented by Byron's circle; diary; and the celebrated employment of new media. A series of generic mutations demonstrates a fluidity akin to *Dracula*'s own metamorphoses.

Dracula itself was a significant transformation of earlier Romantic and nineteenth-century vampires, as Christopher Frayling first observed.⁹ The initial transformation of folklore into Romantic vampire is itself interesting. But *Dracula* is seminal because the character 'Dracula' himself becomes so protean. As we move from the eighteenth century to the present day, we not only see, as Auerbach shows, how each age resurrects the vampire for its own purposes, but the vampire materialises through a transformation of genres—literary kinds fuse promiscuously with others, mutate, enlarge, and rarify, embed themselves in others, and so on. Parallel with this, we see an adaptation to different kinds of knowing, often accommodating to particular epistemological crises. (Arguably, even the foundational shift from ethnology to fiction at the end of the eighteenth century was one such crisis.)

Yet these things are often cyclical; an eighteenth-century critic complains that, in the theatre:

the horror-furnishers began to encroach a little on the territories of the sentiment-dealers, who retaliated in their turn. By degrees, intermarriages took place among the parties, and their bantlings partook of the characteristics of both parents; [. . .] warmed with sentiment on one side, and done brown with horror on the other.¹⁰

The critic acknowledges the potential for sympathy for a being who, ‘like the Vampire [. . .] fed upon the blood of human kind’ but has a ‘clayey covering’ (79). He points to an epistemological shift involved in this unseemly marriage:

If this extreme might be considered a little more rational than the other, it was nevertheless more powerful. We were not so much affected by the crimes of incorporeal misdoers, because we could not sympathise so deeply with them; but our terror was more sensibly affected, and our self-love more acutely wounded, when they were perpetrated by agents like ourselves. (79)

There is a transition from a superstitious world-view to something like a humanist psychology. The humanised vampire is generated from the confusion of genres; in our own age, similar encounters between horror-furnishers and sentiment-dealers bring romantic and sparkly vampires into being.

Questions of verification and a concern with genre stalk the pages of vampiric narratives from the beginning. This is very much so in *Dracula*, but arguably even earlier; for example, when life narrative and fiction, biography and Gothic, get fused in Polidori’s originary literary embodiment of the folk narrative. The eighteenth-century vampire phenomenon in Eastern Europe demonstrated all sorts of Enlightenment concerns with how we know things. But literary representations of vampires then were concerned to debunk superstitions, to rationalise and explain phenomena psychologically or culturally, or to satirise outmoded institutions by likening them to the irrational, monstrous creatures of premodernity. With Romanticism, doubts about the Enlightenment project begin to undermine that epistemology, and the vampire is regenerated, often through a Babel of genres, and in a fictional rather than documentary form.

Romance, in its laxer sense, gets a bad press from feminism, and the heavily romanced Gothic of *Twilight* has invoked much disapproval for what has long been seen as the deleterious effects of the genre on young women’s minds. Sara Wasson and Sarah Artt give a less mechanistic account in the *OGOM* book. *Twilight* has, too, been seen by horror stalwarts such as Stephen King as having been far too diluted by the genre of romance; as Kevin Jackson suggested, modern vampires are just not scary enough. I confess to thinking that the heavy dose of romance in *Twilight* brings a kind of certainty that renders it less interesting than other, more questioning fictions.

But horror, and the adjacent and mixed genres we’re discussing are also disparaged. At this point, the question of value comes up: why study these texts? Why have conferences and write articles on them? My quick answer is that, without becoming relativists, a concern for such popular and widely disseminated narratives, and the longevity of its central figure, is worth analysing in its own right. This puts our objects in the realm of cultural studies rather than literature, perhaps. But I also believe that, among the 170 or so I’ve sampled (and that’s still a tiny fraction), there are some—sparkly—gems. Some vampire fictions—and more often, interestingly, the young adult novels—have a stylistic competence and ingenuity and a certain daring that makes me prefer them to many ‘literary novels’. But not, sadly, *Twilight*.

In Stoker's case, the different embedded genres are symptomatic of the problems of knowing that haunt the novel, with its questioning of Enlightenment certainties. Genres can themselves be seen as perspectives and a collision of genres may thus often express a situation where fixed perspectives are questioned. A later admixture, one that Fred Botting discusses, is the Gothic Romanced.¹¹ The generic classification of 'Dark Romance' encapsulates this moment. For Botting, this begins with Rice and Coppola.

As if reflecting the protean nature of their subject, contemporary vampire narratives seem to feed on a similar fluidity of genre to that of *Dracula*. Oscillations in vampire fiction between Science Fiction and horror, detective fiction and fantasy, seem again to dramatise an epistemological uncertainty. And such themes as the vacillation between scientific rationalisation and supernatural credulity play the same part—for various ends, however. Often in contemporary fiction, this seems to demonstrate a postmodernism suspicion of Enlightenment, with all the political ambivalences that stem from that as well as its antirational current, which, on the other hand, may often contain a critique of scientism.

Open-minded doubt

As many commentators on *Dracula* have suggested, this text has an uncomfortable relationship to modernity and to Enlightenment ideals. I want to focus on how the shifting and conflicting epistemologies of the book reflect (if that's an appropriate word) this unstable counter-Enlightenment position, written at a time when Enlightenment was itself no longer rapturously and unlimitedly celebrated. Contemporary tendencies for the discontent with materialism, seeking to re-enchant science with spiritualism, vitalism, and so on, are part of this and very much part of *Dracula*, too.

Stoker exposes a Victorian collapse in some of the tenets of Enlightenment thought—particularly over Otherness. *Carmilla* had already made Otherness a theme, with a certain ambivalent sympathy; lesbianism and Irishness being detected (as in Juliann Ulin's chapter). Numerous critics have pointed to how *Dracula* seems to embody the supposed evils of deviant sexuality, degeneration, and racial alterity.

There is an ambiguous greying of the opposition between light and dark. Stoker's anti-Enlightenment foreshadows other themes that later vampires embody—as racial or sexual Other, Enlightenment universalism comes under question in gestures of identity politics when the vampire comes to represent those allegedly excluded by that project. But, in *Dracula*, this exclusion is a rejection of universalism; it's been read as anti-Semitic, homophobic, and so on. The 'New Woman' and the sexualised woman that the most progressive wings of the Enlightenment celebrated, defended or anticipated is also simply mocked or feared in *Dracula* (though Mina's fortitude and competence receives qualified support). Yet the fruit of Enlightenment, technology—as again many have observed—is both central and perhaps celebrated.

Despite Romantic epistemology, however, *Dracula* is different because of the confrontation of that anti-Enlightenment thought with all its technological and (pseudo)scientific apparatus. Harker reflects, as he employs shorthand in the feudal

setting of Dracula's castle, that 'It is nineteenth century up-to-date with a vengeance.' Yet, he goes on to say, 'the old centuries had, and have powers of their own which mere "modernity" cannot kill' (37).

On his first encounter with the Count, Harker observes 'a strange optical effect' (16). During his residence at the castle, vision, the primary model for empiricist epistemology, is constantly placed under suspicion. Passages such as this are frequent: 'At first I could not believe my eyes. I thought it was some trick of the moonlight, some weird effect of shadow; but I kept looking, and it could be no delusion' (35). Seeing is subjected to constant epistemological doubt—the laws of optics are frequently broken; there are mis-sightings, metamorphoses, tricks of the light (culminating in Stoker's famous addition to the vampire myth—the trope of non-reflection, pursued earlier by Sam). I'm looking forward to Christopher's Frayling's talk later on the visual representation of the Gothic which, I'm sure, will shed some light on this topic.

Stoker's emphasis on misperception is a feature of earlier Gothic but, whereas Anne Radcliffe, say, resolves doubt into rational certainties, Stoker undermines that very ratiocination. And it is significant, too, that optical phenomena are so central; for example, the uncertainties over reflection.

There are attempts to rationalise uncanny phenomena through such discourses as phrenology, which we would not now recognise as genuine science. Van Helsing assays a physiological and chemical analysis:

all the forces of nature that are occult and strange must have worked together in some wondrous way. The very place where he have been alive, Un-Dead for all these centuries, is full of the strangeness of the geologic and chemical world. [. . .] Doubtless, there is something magnetic or electric in some of these combinations of occult forces which work for physical life in some strange way. (296-7)

It's a curious mixture of scientific rationalisation and a retreat from Enlightenment into a nature that is 'occult and strange'; an alien, Transylvanian nature that does not follow the rules of Western Europe. The eighteenth-century explorer, Tournefort had had written on vampire superstitions in Greece but, whereas, he sought to bring all of the cosmos under universal and transparent reason, here that project has fragmented into post-Romantic relativism. Contemporary vampire texts explain the vampire in similarly hesitant ways; vampirism is often both genetic or viral, *and* supernatural.

Van Helsing declares his own reaction against the Enlightenment, though he justifies it by an apparent appeal to empirical verification, complaining of 'this enlightened age, when men believe not even when they see' (298).

Let's examine Van Helsing's stance towards evidence and how he evaluates it: 'There are such beings as vampires; some of us have evidence that they exist. Even had we not the proof of our own unhappy experience, the teachings and the records of the past give proof enough for sane peoples (220)'. Note what a long way this is from David Hume's position on the miraculous, where personal testimony and 'the records of the

past' simply do not have enough weight; the eighteenth-century accounts of vampires share this scepticism towards testimony. For Van Helsing, by contrast, 'these things—tradition and superstition—are everything', despite 'our scientific, matter-of-fact, sceptical nineteenth century' (222). And after running through the vampire lore on the nature of the creature, we see again the authority that, for him, validates phenomena: 'These things we are told, and in this record of ours we have proof by inference' (223). The epistemological position is thus set out plainly.

Van Helsing *knows* things, such as Dracula's flight to his Castle, 'as if a great hand of fire wrote it on the wall' (292). This recalls the ubiquitous motifs of journalising, recording, and chronicling as instruments of verification; but this is not the modern apparatus of phonograph or shorthand, but biblical prophecy after Daniel—though these indices have to be deciphered like shorthand. Thus modernity and an archaic pre-empiricism become conflated.

Dracula himself parodies positivist science (280-1): 'He is experimenting', says Van Helsing, 'and doing it well' (280); his rapid evolution from 'child-brain' through experimentation is the Enlightenment metanarrative. In turn, Renfield parodies empiricist 'accounting', with his tallying of flies and spiders (67) yet this is also a manifestation of the accumulation of 'zoophagous' capital (68-69), which might value a man only as abstract exchange value—a token to be swapped for an equivalent in flies—in the economy of endless consumption of life and bodily substance that is vampiric exchange.

Van Helsing is more nineteenth-century than he thinks, and his retreat from Enlightenment scepticism is in tune with much *fin-de-siècle* thinking. His combination of positivist and naturalist explanations of human behaviour, coupled with a turn to mystical pseudoscience, is almost mainstream. However, there were more genuinely subversive countercurrents, and I'd like to briefly mention one, though Sam has already discussed this in much more depth. Oscar Wilde, as Sam has shown, engages with vampiric motifs. But Wilde's scepticism—although his worldview is notoriously difficult to pin down—is of a different order and not, I would argue, in the more dominant spirit of counter-Enlightenment. If anything, he is counter-Romantic, with his privileging of art and human critical rationality over Nature. Yet Wilde's vampiric aesthetic came to be appropriated by self-styled philo-Semitic, yet Nazi sympathiser, George Sylvester Viereck in his fascinating *House of the Vampyr* (1907). If National Socialism is indeed the nadir of counter-Enlightenment, then this vampiric transmutation is extremely problematic. Viereck is discussed in the *OGOM* book by Lisa Lampert-Weissig, along with another Nazi vampire writer who also claimed sympathy with Jews—Hanns Heinz Ewers (who appears in Kim Newman's immensely witty vampire novel, *The Bloody Red Baron!*).

And in another *OGOM* chapter, Stacey Abbott shows how two different modes of early twentieth-century vampire film oscillate embody different ways of knowing—one, in Todorov's terms, partakes of the marvellous, succumbing to the supernatural worldview; the other is in the mode of the uncanny, where mysteries are ultimately resolved by meeting scientific and empiricist criteria. So epistemology and genre are again intimately connected with our narrative of the evolving vampire.

Vampire lovers

Dracula himself has been a lover many times: inspiring desire, even the formidable slayer of vampires, Buffy, comes under his spell at one point (5.1). In turn, he can love, as in Stan Dragoti's 1999 film, *Love at First Bite*, where he obsessively loves a New York fashion model, embarks on a voyage to the US, and magnetises the crowd in a *Saturday Night Fever*-style disco with his swirling cape and aristocratic charisma, wooing his love with old world courtesy and romance.

Then, notoriously, there is, of course, the 1992 Francis Ford Coppola film, *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (which is really not Stoker's at all). But, as Lindsey Scott shows in the book, this is one of the ur-texts for the vampire as tragic lover and beloved. Then, there are the tormented romances between Buffy and Angel, and later, Spike (as with many people here, I suspect, this is where my own thirst for vampire stories became stirred).

Dracula's sexual appeal was invented by Lugosi, Auerbach maintains,¹² and 'The strangest love story of all' was how Tod Browning's *Dracula* (1931) was billed—where the romance between Mina and Dracula is first suggested—echoed by Coppola's billing of 'Love never dies'.

In the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, we have a plethora of vampiric lovers. You might call them 'funny Valentines'; their 'looks are laughable/ Unphotographable'. There is the exotic bisexuality of *Interview with the Vampire* (1976)—along with Coppola, one of the moments when the humanised and eroticised vampire comes into its own; the polyamorous vampires of Octavia Butler's *Fledgling* (2005) and their mesmerised humans; the punk and gay love of Poppy Z. Brite's *Lost Souls* (1992); the teen heroine torn between light and dark in *Vampire Diaries*; Sookie Stackhouse's Southern gentleman lover and all the other spicy goings in the Southern Vampire books adapted as *True Blood*; the passionate tragedy of Robert Masello's excellent *Blood and Ice* (2009); the moving and disturbing love affair of John Ajvide Lindqvist's *Let the Right One In* (2004). Not to mention the uncomfortable near-rapes between vampire and werewolf in Kresley Cole's *A Hunger Like No Other* (2006). There are Laurell K. Hamilton's polymorphously perverse romps; the upmarket chick lit of Deborah Harkness, *A Discovery of Witches* (2011), with its idealised romantic hero (blending genres with Dan Brown or Umberto Eco, too, recalling an earlier Gothic preoccupation with conspiracies and lost manuscripts that, of course, informs the composition of *Dracula* itself). And I feel bound to mention Kim Newman's novella, *Vampire Romance*, which plays with the conventions of romantic fiction (as well as country house murder mystery and girls' school adventure) and demystifies vampiric allure; his disillusioned heroine asks, 'Was vampire romance dead?'.¹³

Dracula's voluptuous brides have their own descendants, too, though the female vampire in twenty-first-century dark fantasy, with its largely female readership, is less likely to resemble them. The female vampire protagonist is usually a feisty rebel who readily acknowledges her sexual (and other) appetites, rather than smouldering temptress (though the Hollywood vamp and Hammer's more fleshly buxom wenches must not be forgotten).

Why is there a need for a vampire who is not just humanised and sympathetic, but sexually attractive? It might boil down to the cynical and market-driven exploitation of a niche—that of a largely female readership. Francis Coppola very consciously targeted a female audience (as Lyndsey Scott shows in our book). (*Dracula* itself, of course, is very much a masculine tale of derring-do and male bonding in the late Victorian manner of H. Rider Haggard.)

Often, the male vampire lover appeals precisely because he is both attractive yet dangerous. Precisely why this is appealing would need a deeper kind of psychological analysis than I could give but it may be as much a way of negotiating the perceived difference of masculinity as any urge to submissiveness (particularly in young adult fiction). Recent vampires, however, may stand accused of having watered down their threatening aspects. The dangers from Edward Cullen are so minimised that he is hardly vampiric anymore—more a superhuman who might accidentally break Bella with his superior strength if their passion gets out of hand, and this diminishes the disturbing fascination of the true romanced Gothic, with its dangerous lovers (from Rochester to Angel). L.J. Smith solves some of the problems of loving the monster by splitting her vampire lovers into brothers, Stefan and Damon, one good, the other evil (though this is qualified). The demon lover still has that appeal: ‘Perhaps she’ll find that real darkness is more to her taste than feeble twilight’, says Damon, taunting his brother.¹⁴ (It would be amusing to think this is a dig at the innocuousness of Edward Cullen but it was written 14 years earlier!). This splitting and doubling (a variant on the reflection motif) itself involves an epistemological confusion over identity; Kimberley McMahon-Coleman explores this theme in her *OGOM* chapter.

And vampire lovers offer to unleash a utopian potential in the beloved; here, Damon tempts Elena: ‘You’ve tried everything else, and nothing has satisfied you . . . It’s the ultimate secret, Elena . . . you’ll be happy as never before’.¹⁵ For Bella Swan, it is eternal life and ageless looks and an intensified sex life. The dark gift on offer is the possibility of a reflection that doesn’t disturb; for these female-centred narratives, eternal beauty is proffered—a changelessness that is, however, inhuman because of that very fixity. Edward, impervious and marble-like, says as much to Bella [quote]. Much like Dorian Gray, in fact. The vampiric state, in its very perfection, despite the power it grants, denies autonomy, for change and creative spontaneity are the sources of human freedom. Here, Jennifer Williams’s *OGOM* chapter on *Dracula* and *Twilight* is illuminating on the tensions between essence and autonomy in the theological context of salvation.

Postmodern vampire love

In the age of postmodernism and identity politics, the crises over Otherness suggested by Stoker resurface. In our book, Catherine Spooner gives an account of the dialectic between Goth subculture and vampiric imagery, noting a contemporary concern of subcultures with assimilation. Michelle Smith’s understanding of *True Blood* as a postmodern vampire narrative shows a similar process at work in an allegedly ‘post-racial’ USA (again, in the *OGOM* book).

The commingling of genres is not unconscious; many contemporary dark romances display a very self-aware intertextuality. Often, the same reference points recur—

particularly Jane Austen and the Brontë's. I want to glance briefly at one example—Alyxandra Harvey's clever and sophisticated Young Adult novel, *My Love Lies Bleeding* (2009). One of her heroines, Solange, will be transformed into a vampire on her birthday in three days time. Here, she describes the process to a human vampire hunter who will (of course) become her lover:

'We have the same symptoms as tuberculosis, especially in the eyes of the Romantic poets. Pale, tired, coughing up blood.'

'That's romantic?'

I had to smile. 'Romantic with a capital "R." You know, like Byron and Coleridge [. . .] One of my aunts took Byron as a lover.'¹⁶

The different senses of 'romantic' are knowingly conjoined here, with perhaps a nod to Susan Sontag. Strangely, the consumptive Keats is not mentioned here. But in Solange, too, struggles over different epistemologies of desire are contested. To vampires, she is irresistible; males compulsively lust after her, wanting to breed with her since she is a rare female. Their lust is triggered by her unique smell, consisting of powerful pheromones. Vampirism itself is explained with a familiar hesitancy between supernatural and biological causality: 'It's not strictly scientific, nor is it strictly supernatural', says a vampire scientist, though equipped with a high-tech lab (64). Solange's desirability is determined by Darwinian concerns:

'And her special pheromone thing is a survival mechanism too, right? How everyone's obsessed with her?'

'Yes. It's a mating thing. Everyone is wondering if she'll be able to carry a vampire child to term.'

'Gross.'

'Study your Darwin, my girl.'¹⁷

Darwin and the supernatural meet in *Dracula*, of course. where theories of race and degeneration appear alongside folkloric evidence, yet here the collision appears in a distinctly twenty-first-century context.

This is a struggle between a positivist appropriation of genetics to ossify women's roles as passive love object and child bearer and a humanist representation of a woman as autonomous subject, desired for her human individuality, and freely desiring in turn. And this is achieved, in part, by the deliberate conjunction and play of genres. There is, in Genette's terminology, a hypertextual transformation and intertextual allusions abound. It begins to dawn on the reader that Solange, sheltered in isolation in the forest with her seven brothers, is re-enacting a fairy tale, and so another genre is knowingly signalled. By the time we get to the hunter's gift of a deer's heart, supposedly that of Solange, to the wicked vampire Queen, in her hall of mirrors, and then Solange helpless in a glass coffin, pecked at by ravens, it's clear that *Snow White* is one of the hypotexts of *My Love Lies Bleeding*.¹⁸ Mirrors, as we have seen, are central to themes of knowing, verification, and doubt. Her, though, rather than casting doubt on the humanity of the vampire (or ourselves), they are used to affirm the supreme and unrivalled beauty of the vampire Queen. The ambivalence of the postmodern: the archaic world of folklore and myth is conjured up yet the very

knowingness involved necessitates a modern sensibility and modern techniques of knowing.

Conclusion

The vampire, with its own fluid crossing of boundaries, has enabled this commingling of genres—leading us, incidentally, to think in broader terms than the Gothic paradigm. Romantic vampires have initiated a whole legion of other paranormal lovers—werewolves, werecats, succubae, faeries (always with an ‘e’), angels. Even zombies can now be seen lurching up as lovers. In our book, Angela Tenga and Elizabeth Sherwood argue that there is a rise in zombie fiction that fulfils the necessity of a monstrous antithesis to the new, *too* loveable vampire. Yet Daniel Water’s marvellous *Generation Dead* (2008) features teenagers rising from the dead, zombie-like, loving and being loved. I argue in the book that Waters reasserts an Enlightenment humanism with his sympathetic Others—the choice of zombies making him even more radical, startling, and humane. (We stole the phrase, ‘Open Graves, Open Minds’ from Dan’s book and he’s very generously allowed us to tag our project with it.)

Our book ends with Marcus Sedgwick’s account of his unearthing of the folklore roots of vampire fiction, which led to his fabulous melding of fantasy, historical novel, and folklore in *My Swordhand is Singing* (2006), and subsequent Young Adult novels. His vampires, it has to be said, are completely unlovable and unlikely to love, though their predations and monstrous violence inspire and are set off by a touching romance plot. But it’s a fascinating revelation of just how many genres and permutations of genres have been involved in this narrative, which runs through Bram Stoker’s dramatic re-invention to the profuse and diverse vampire fictions of today.

So, Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* is the seminal text for today’s paranormal romances because of the yearning he sets up of desire between vampire and human, the striking interbreeding of discordant genres, and the instability of questions of knowledge and verification; themes that all feature so heavily and are, as I hope to have shown, imbricated with each other.

Some of Stoker’s originality and his versatility, too, will have been made clear by Professor Miller’s accounts and Dacre Stoker’s reflections, as also by Professor Hughes and Catherine Wynne’s research. The ease with which his creation can slip between media is shown by many of our contributors to the first conference, the book, journal special issue, and here today—for example, Stacey Abbott on TV here (and film in the book), Peter Hutchings on film, TV, and comics (particularly the sexuality of 70s horror), and Ivan Phillips in as many media technologies as Stoker himself embodied in his novel.

His inspirational legacy—comic or horrific—for contemporary fiction writers has been shown by the contributions of Kim Newman, Kevin Jackson (whose vampire rock opera, *Bite*, we eagerly await), and Marcus Sedgwick, Catherine Spooner and Paul Magrs (whose *666 Charing Cross Road* (2011) shows vampire romance turning very sour). We’re very grateful to have illustrious writers of vampire fiction here who can show us just how those playful transformations are carried out in practice, and we

mustn't forget the parodic and comedic transformations and cross-breeding of genres that Paul and Kim have given us.

We're lucky, too, to be in dialogue with a Crew of Enlightened vampire-loving thinkers who've contributed to conference, symposium, book, and journal in an open-minded enterprise to open the graves of these creatures and subject them to a critical post-mortem. The epistemological curiosity involved in opening graves opens our minds too. As with Van Helsing, encounters with vampires have given us each, in Dr Seward's words, 'an absolutely open mind' (106). I hope this symposium and the forthcoming book will continue to stir up that desire for knowledge—not carnal, of course—of the undead.

¹ Ian Watt, *Myths of Modern Individualism: Faust, Don Quixote, Don Juan, Robinson Crusoe*, Canto Original (Cambridge: CUP, 1997). For the durability of the vampire myth, see David Glover, 'Travels in Romania – Myths of Origin, Myths of Blood', in *Dracula: Contemporary Critical Essays*, ed. by Glennis Byron, New Casebooks (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), pp. 197-217 (p. 199).

² As Auerbach shows: *Our Vampires, Ourselves* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

³ Jennifer Wicke, 'Vampiric Typewriting: Dracula and its Media', *ELH*, 59.2 (Summer 1992), 467-93 (p. 467).

⁴ Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, ed. and intr. by Roger Luckhurst (Oxford: OUP, World's Classics, 2011), p. 38. All further quotes are from this edition, with page numbers in parentheses.

⁵ Roger Luckhurst, Introduction, in Stoker, *Dracula*, p. xxiii.

⁶ See David Punter's remarks on this: 'Dracula and Taboo', in Byron, *Dracula*, pp. 22-29 (pp. 26-27)).

⁷ Auerbach, p. 64.

⁸ On adaptations of *Dracula* as love story, see Auerbach, pp. 71-72.

⁹ In the indispensable *Vampyres: Lord Byron to Count Dracula*, new edn (1978; London: Faber and Faber, 1991).

¹⁰ 'Drama', *The European Magazine, and London Review; containing the literature, history, politics, arts, manners and amusements of the age. By the Philological Society of London*, vol. 86 (London: printed for John Fielding No. 23, Pater Noster Row; John Debrett, opposite Burlington House, Piccadilly; and John Sewell, No. 32, Cornhill, [1782]-1826), p. 78.

¹¹ Fred Botting, *Gothic Romanced: Consumption, Gender and Technology in Contemporary Fictions* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008).

¹² Auerbach, p. 115.

¹³ Kim Newman, 'Anno Dracula 1923: Vampire Romance', in *The Bloody Red Baron*, new edn, Anno Dracula, 2 (1995; London: Titan Books, 2012), pp. 395-549. And there is a replay of Coppola's film in the spoof Valentino film: p. 408.

¹⁴ L.J. Smith, *The Awakening, Vampire Diaries, 1 & 2* (1991; London: Hodder Children's Books, 2009), p. 180.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

¹⁶ Alyxandra Harvey, *Love Lies Bleeding, The Drake Chronicles, 1* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), p. 161.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 232-33.