

# **Stony Brook University**



OFFICIAL COPY

**The official electronic file of this thesis or dissertation is maintained by the University Libraries on behalf of The Graduate School at Stony Brook University.**

**© All Rights Reserved by Author.**

**From “Un-Dead” to “Undeath”: Rehabilitating the Figure of Dracula**

A Thesis Presented

by

**Kaitlyn Frakl**

to

The Graduate School

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements

for the Degree of

**Master of Arts**

in

**English**

Stony Brook University

**December 2015**

**Stony Brook University**

The Graduate School

**Kaitlyn Frakl**

We, the thesis committee for the above candidate for the  
Master of Arts degree, hereby recommend  
acceptance of this thesis.

**Dr. Michael Tondre**  
**Assistant Professor of English**

**Dr. Andrew Newman**  
**Associate Professor of English**

This thesis is accepted by the Graduate School

Charles Taber  
Dean of the Graduate School

Abstract of the Thesis

**From “Un-Dead” to “Undeath”: Rehabilitating the Figure of Dracula**

by

**Kaitlyn Frakl**

**Master of Arts**

in

**English**

Stony Brook University

**2015**

The primary goal of this thesis is to offer a way of rehabilitating the figure of Dracula by using Victorian and modern death practices to inform our understanding of Stoker’s narrative. The method I propose is to extend Stoker’s antagonist beyond his construction as an “Un-Dead” being lacking complexity into what I am calling the ideology of “Undeath.” Undeath restores the identity of the Un-Dead being, and seeks to legitimize the being’s current existence. Victorians were hindered from seeing Undeath in the narrative due to the contemporary tension between religious and secular approaches to death, however, modern scholars have the ability to not only see the struggle of Undeath but to understand its implications to the extent that we may acquire a sensitivity for Dracula as a character.

## Table of Contents

### Section

1	Introduction . . . . .	1
	Defining “Undeath” . . . . .	3-4
2	The Terror of Undeath . . . . .	8
	Slippage of Christian Beliefs . . . . .	11
3	The Trouble of Undeath . . . . .	21
	Modern Reliance on Technology . . . . .	22-3
	Bibliography . . . . .	32

## Introduction

Recent criticism has reintroduced, and perhaps reinvented the most prevailing antagonist the literary world has seen for over one hundred years. *Dracula* extends into our contemporary lives to the extent that his presence has become conventional, or in other words, enough for a simple introduction to seem counterproductive. But the path to *Dracula*'s literary and cultural immortalization had unsteady beginnings, for *Dracula* was only reasonably successful in the years surrounding Stoker's publishing of the novel. Constable & Co.'s review published in the *Athenaeum* on June 26, 1897 characterizes how readers felt about the thriller; the piece begins by commenting on the popularity of novels "stamped with a more or less genuine air of belief in the visibility of supernatural agency." The reviewer further explains that such fantastical views are "a feature of the hour, a reaction – artificial, perhaps, rather than natural – against late tendencies in thought." What separated Stoker from Sheridan Le Fanu or Wilkie Collins is the "uncompromising" and "direct" nature of *Dracula*; Stoker's narrative lacks "the essential note of awful remoteness and at the same time subtle affinity that separates while it links our humanity with unknown beings and possibilities hovering on the confines of the known world" (qtd. in Senf 59). The "late tendencies in thought" which aroused such terror caused authors of vampire fiction to take for granted that vampirism was exclusively evil (Carter 27). In contrast, modern readers take for granted that vampirism is not exclusively evil. In consideration with this critical tradition, I will examine both Victorian and modern responses to what Stoker anticipated would arouse fear in readers – *Dracula*'s "Undeath." The source of terror inhibited a positive view of vampirism for previously religious-minded readers. With the terror now being obsolete, the implications of what I am calling "Undeath" work to create a more positive view of *Dracula*'s

characterization. Essentially, modern critics acquired a sensitivity for what was once only the state of being “Un-Dead,” thus resulting in the rehabilitation of *Dracula* as a whole.

To better understand the subtle adjustment of the term from Stoker’s “Un-Dead” to its more recent form “Undeath,” I will first demonstrate the Victorian response to the state of being. The *Athenaeum* review categorized the novel’s eerie quality as a response “against late tendencies in thought.” Worthy of note is the reviewer’s inclusion of “against” rather than “to,” which calls attention to the tangible tension within Stoker’s narrative. *Dracula* explores the tension between religious and secular approaches to death and the afterlife through Dracula’s “Undeath.” The Crew of Light<sup>1</sup> finds themselves entirely confounded by the figure of Dracula as an embodiment of this tension; Van Helsing relates his foe to a product of the “geologic and chemical world,” a being who comes by means of “moonlight rays as elemental dust” (*D* 279). Yet Dracula is also likened to the anti-Christ as an “evil thing rooted deep in all good, in soil barren of holy memories” (*D* 280). The Crew of Light is uncertain about whether he is something legitimate, and earthly or an abomination, and otherworldly.

The space for uncertainty in Stoker’s narrative within Dracula’s “Undeath” would have translated into a source of terror in Victorian readings due to the contemporary slippage of Christian beliefs. In order to refine Victorian anxieties about *Dracula*, I work closely with Jani Scandura’s essay “Deadly Professions: Dracula, Undertakers, and the Embalmed Corpse.” Scandura works to frame and extend anxieties about secular approaches to death beyond Stoker’s novel by discussing the ways Victorians had roamed too far from the comfortable boundaries of death practices. Victorians navigated, somewhat unsuccessfully, past modest funerals and into an

---

<sup>1</sup> The “Crew of Light” is a term Christopher Craft coined for the group of vampire hunters: Van Helsing, Dr. Seward, Arthur Holmwood, Quincey Morris, and Jonathan Harker. The Crew of Light will be limited to Van Helsing, Dr. Seward, and Arthur in this paper. See Craft, Christopher. ““Kiss Me with Those Red Lips”: Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*.” *Representations* No. 8 (1984): 107-33. *JSTOR*. Web. 08 Dec. 2015.

ostentatious spectacle of death devoid of Christian values. The public was suddenly thrown from a place of familiarity to utter unknowability. Unstable death practices quickly escalated past the control of the public wherein the government had to step in, calling for a return to the modest practices of the early nineteenth century. Imaginably, Victorians were threatened by Stoker's exploration of the tension between secular and religious approaches to death as the characters' experiences are identical to their own; the Crew of Light is threatened by something which may not be able to be understood in purely religious terms, despite their efforts to understand Dracula in this way. Dracula's ambiguity in "Undeath" soon prompts the Crew of Light to turn to religion as justification to relieve that tension by killing the Count.<sup>2</sup>

The Victorian reading was streamlined in a forward-moving path because there could be no reconsideration of Dracula's secular qualities out of concern for being irreverent. Rather than admit to the space of uncertainty, the Crew of Light reduces Dracula into a contained presence which only exists to threaten Christian values – an "Un-Dead" monster. Thus, the "Un-Dead," in the way Stoker uses the concept, are the antithesis of all things holy. The "Un-Dead" are not given identities beyond what is needed to terminate their existence. And, finally, the "Un-Dead" are stagnant beings.

*Dracula* arguably does not feature Un-Dead beings, but rather individuals experiencing "Undeath." "Undeath" is a newly formed classification to describe the state of being Un-Dead. The term is hardly traceable, though there is a rather telling early usage in *The Psychology of Men: Psychoanalytic Perspectives* (1986). The authors write "Lucy dies *into* undeath" (emphasis added, Fogel et al. 41). Lucy does not become Un-Dead but transitions sinuously *into* "Undeath." Though the term is often used in recent scholarship, usages are typically offhand as in *The*

---

<sup>2</sup> How fitting it is, then, that Dracula's weakness is a crucifix.



*Psychology of Men*, and the implications of the development have not been given much credence. I argue that the development of the term reveals the modern attempt to classify the state of being beyond the binary of life and death: to name it, to legitimize it, and to acknowledge its implications within and outside of *Dracula*. Geoffery Gorer's study on British death practices (1965) captures the extent to which modern people deny death. As a reversal to Victorians, the boundaries of medical technologies are pushed for the promises religion once made: hope of eternal life and revitalization. Understandably, modern readers are less threatened by the questionably scientific, and legitimate aspects of "Undeath" having acquired a sensitivity for the continuity between life and death. Being able to see that Dracula's condition is not unlike our own allows readers to feel empathy for his current state.

"Undeath" became an alteration to the definition of one's existence rather than a discrete experience, thereby suggesting continuity from one's former life. Thus, "Undeath," in the way I am using the concept, is a way of extending an Un-Dead's presence beyond their place as a threat to Christianity by nuancing the fundamental uncertainty in Stoker's narrative. "Undeath" rehabilitates those afflicted to a legitimate state of being between life and death. "Undeath" reinstates the individual's identity, to acknowledge their once human lives. And contrary to being Un-Dead, "Undeath" suggests mobility.

Contemporary and modern critics have traditionally subscribed to one side of the spectrum, respectively: the possibility of being overcome by the fear of this mystical being as an Un-Dead, and oppositely, recognizing the individual in their state of Undeath. Victorian readers could not imagine the latter interpretation, though as I have touched upon, the continuity from one's former life was not devised alongside the term itself but is a distinctive feature of what can be thought of as Stoker's ideology of Undeath.

In a text that has been noted for its unreliability in practically every aspect<sup>3</sup>, there is but one unequivocal fact that a reader may gather from his or her reading of *Dracula*, that is, Van Helsing's expertise on the Un-Dead. Dr. Seward writes enthusiastically to Arthur to inform him that he has invited his "old friend and master, Professor Van Helsing, of Amsterdam," to attend to Lucy's health after his attempts to do so are made in vain. Stoker momentarily exploits Dr. Seward's lack of experience in an effort to signify that hope is coming to London; a "philosopher and a metaphysician," Van Helsing is "one of the most advanced scientists of his day" (*D* 149). He is well-versed in "obscure diseases," has an "indomitable resolution," and the "kindest and truest heart that beats" (149). If readers were to have any doubts concerning the Professor's unique breadth of knowledge, either in "theory [or] practice," (149) Stoker actively puts a stop to them by providing a test of sorts with Miss Westenra as a piece in the unlucky equation. Lucy's presence in the novel, then, is best read as a case study. For example, after Lucy's death, Van Helsing states that "all that die from the preying of the Un-Dead become themselves Un-Dead (*D* 253). The reader is soon given the chance to see this transformation come to fruition. Lucy's tomb sequence establishes the change that comes over her body; a beauty free of the harshness of death. The change is not only physical, but mental as well. Lucy confirms that she retains consciousness in her Undeath as her loved ones are still recognizable to her. More significant, however, is her awareness of her relationship to those individuals. She specifically summons Arthur, "her husband," and asks that he come rest with her when the Crew of Light visits her tomb (*D* 250). The psychological continuance between life and Undeath for Dracula, though

---

<sup>3</sup> See Senf, Carol A. "'Dracula': The Unseen Face in the Mirror." *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 9.3 (1979): 160-70. *JSTOR*. Web. 14 Oct. 2015.

lacking direct witnesses, is surprisingly clearer as he has had time to mature past his early vampiric state. Arminius, Van Helsing's colleague, sheds light on what Dracula "has been"<sup>4</sup>:

He must, indeed, have been that Voivode Dracula who won his name against the Turk, over the great river on the very frontier of Turkey-land. If it be so, then was he no common man; for in that time, and for centuries after, he was spoken of as the cleverest and the most cunning, as well as the bravest of the sons of the 'land beyond the forest.' That mighty brain and that iron resolution went with him to his grave, and are even now arrayed against us. (280)

These characteristics follow Dracula through his death into his Undeath. Elaborating on the connection between Dracula's specific qualities in Undeath and his connection to the past is not a focus of this essay, though there is fertile ground for digging within that subject. What I have set out to do is capture the process of becoming Un-Dead in a way that allows readers to see the entirety of the individual in life, death, and Undeath. Emphasizing Lucy's transition, and Dracula's "mighty brain and iron resolution" solidifies that the Un-Dead begin as people. Permitting this conceptualization causes Dracula's mystical status as the original "King-Vampire" (*D* 412) to crumble as his status as a man is accentuated.

Section one begins by incorporating the slippage of Christian beliefs with death practices during the Victorian period to broaden the anxieties Scandura lays out. Addressing the anxiety about embalmed corpses points to Dracula's Undeath as a secular-driven terror with religious implications. Lucy's tomb sequence serves as an anchor to the discussion as I nuance the relationship between the curse of Undeath and the Victorian frame of mind. Dracula's Undeath, as a symbol for the anti-Christ, is a curse upon their Christian society. The tomb sequence also presents the tension between religious and secular alternatives as the Crew of Light struggles with whether they should mutilate the late Lucy. The Crew of Light quickly succumbs to their terror and mutilates Lucy after Van Helsing speaks on the antithetical nature of the Un-Dead.

---

<sup>4</sup> Note "has": Dracula continues to have these qualities.

The section concludes by briefly referring to the effect of the Victorian reading on *Dracula*. The terror of Undeath positioned Dracula as a mere body for anxieties.

Section two continues on the path set in section one by noting the free-range of *Dracula* criticism in the 1970s. Modern people are no longer inhibited by the terror which negatively impacted Dracula's characterization. Instead, secular attitudes towards death open the space for identifying with the Crew of Light as they attempt to make sense of Lucy's Undeath from a logical standpoint. The ability to truly see the struggle before it is resolved means Undeath is not the threat it once was. Modern people can identify with Dracula because he embodies the space between life and death that we struggle with through our attempts at prolonging life. Ultimately, Dracula's Undeath becomes a point of sensitivity as the measures Dracula must take to persevere reframe the curse away from society, and onto the Count himself.

Taken as a whole, the primary goal of this study is to show how changing attitudes towards death have influenced or set up current perspectives of *Dracula*. Stoker is a wonderful example of the way once indefinable ideologies can be categorized beyond their original objectives to enrich the understanding of a text or subject. Understanding the malleable philosophy behind Undeath offers a way of reconciling the massive change in interpretation. Most simply, modern readers have the ability to continue breathing life into Dracula, as a character, through the object of the Victorian's terror – his Undeath.

## Section 1: The Terror of Undeath

In this section, I will establish what made the Victorians fear Dracula's Undeath by doing a close analysis of Lucy's tomb sequence as an expression of the tension between religious and secular approaches to death. Though approaching the fear of Dracula through Lucy may seem a circuitous approach, the sequence functions as a case study that we may use to reach conclusions about his character, as I have and will continue to do in this essay. The sequence begins with the Crew of Light gathered at Lucy's funeral in chapter thirteen and ends once Arthur drives a stake through her heart in chapter sixteen. Van Helsing exhibits an animosity for Lucy in her Undeath while the other members of the Crew of Light don't immediately see Lucy as an object deserving of such hostility. The others struggle with Lucy's appearance as she becomes healthier, and more beautiful in Undeath. As a man of science, Dr. Seward expresses interest in understanding what Lucy has become, but his pursuit is abandoned in the name of faith as Van Helsing spreads fear of the secular realities of Undeath.

Before delving into the sequence, I will first explain why the characters react in this way by looking onto Scandura's criticism of *Dracula*, specifically focusing Lucy's funeral, for its secular disposition as an entry point into my own historicist approach. Scandura localizes the tension to the fear of uncanny bodies stemming from contemporary death practices. Her claim coincides with Dr. Seward and Arthur's superficial discussion of Lucy's corpse, but it does not explain Dr. Seward and Arthur's struggle between identifying the Un-Dead as people, and simultaneously wanting to destroy them in the name of God. The essay begins by noting Stoker's exclusion of the role of the undertaker in *Dracula*. This absence is peculiar in a novel which arose out of the *fin de siècle* – a time when the undertaker was a vital character within society. Scandura moves forward by laying out a history of death practices during the period with an

emphasis on the Victorian affinity for appearances. Death practices became an opportunity to showcase one's social worth, and no expense was spared. Accordingly, the embalmed corpse became a deceptive marker of social class which quickly took on a perverse impression as an uncanny body incapable of rest. To foreground her claims, she notes that the middle-class strived for a more socially elite status by imitating the burials of higher classes in the late eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century, however, a series of laws were passed to regulate the "grand theater" of funerary practices. The lower and middle classes were anxious to "distinguish their own internments," so seeing a profitable demographic, undertakers began to sell "rites of death" to do just that (3). Families had the ability to purchase specific coffin fabrics, types of wood for the coffin itself, grave sites, memorial plaques, and funerary displays (3). "Not only death," she argues, "but the appearance of mourning became commodified" (3).

Undertakers saw yet another opportunity to enhance their business by exploiting the common fear of decomposition. During a time when appearance and pomp ruled, undertakers encouraged the bereaved to invest in embalming to prevent decay. Arterial embalming then became remarkably popular for its ability to create an exquisite corpse, and was soon adopted as a legitimate scientific practice; so popular, in fact, that the results of embalming were advertised in local magazines. Scandura includes one of these unsettling advertisements from Bigsa's embalming fluid campaign (1902). In the advertisement, a three-month old corpse sits cordially in pin-stripe trousers and an overcoat, holding a newspaper while looking hauntingly refined. His refined appearance, as Scandura explains, was meant to demonstrate that an individual can keep his or her social standing beyond the grave (15). Instead, "the embalmed corpse's Un-Dead appearance hit a deeply embedded cultural nerve" (13). People became conscious of the uncanny corpse as a preternatural threat. A wildfire of fascination for live burials grew out of this source

of disturbance. Laws were created to prevent accidental live burials, articles were written documenting instances, and even the press exploited the phenomenon: Arthur Hallam, for example, published the successful *The Burial Reformer*, later called *Perils of Premature Burial*. Soon enough revitalizing corpses through embalming practices became “a threatening signifier of deception in a culture where appearance was all” (16).

Scandura redirects her discussion back to *Dracula* by arguing that Stoker included the role of the undertaker by encapsulating the “slipperiness” of the subject in Dracula himself. She references Dr. Seward’s thoughts on Lucy’s funeral: “The undertaker had certainly done his work well ... death was made as little repulsive as might be. ... [and] all Lucy's loveliness had come back to her in death” (*D* 201). Here Dr. Seward captures the “queerness” of undertaking; a business concerned with appearance alone. Scandura asserts that “Seward's assessment of the undertaker's artistry is incomplete, however, for Lucy's perverse preservation is not the make-up job of a theatrical craftsman. Her body tissue has been transformed by a death specialist more notorious than any Seward knows. Dracula, the truly consummate undertaker, does not just beautify corpses; he preserves them eternally. Indeed, he seems to embalm them” (9). Dracula, as undertaker, is able to end life, and yet breathe a new, quite different type of life into his victims. Thus, Dracula’s “greatest threat” to the characters and readers living at the *fin de siècle* is attributed to his “acumen at preservation” (16).

“Deadly Professions” leads us in the right direction to hone in on what precisely made Undeath so terrifying. By focusing on the laws which govern death practices, and the feelings associated with progressive procedures to enhance appearance in death, Scandura constructs a secular narrative that is vital to our understanding of Undeath. It points to the degree that Victorians were estranged from Christian values, not merely the source of disturbance of

uncanny corpses. For that reason, I will expand Scandura's framing of the threat by suggesting that the appearance of Undeath is a scientifically produced fear with highly religious implications. Pushing through this concept ultimately explains Arthur and Dr. Seward's struggle identifying Lucy's corpse, and accurately establishes the hierarchy between immortality and Undeath as it is largely contingent on a non-secular position.

Returning to the beginning of Scandura's essay where she alludes to the New Poor Laws and the Anatomy Act is a useful entry point to better understand why Victorians were so deeply frightened of Dracula. Her discussion of these laws in relation to the overwrought death practices points so clearly to the slippage of Christian beliefs – of a weakened Christian relationship with death – that informed readers' perception of Undeath on such a large scale. My purpose, now, is akin to "Deadly Professions." I seek to establish what made the Victorians fear Dracula by taking a historicist approach to link the terrifying appearance of Undeath with its more terrifying religious implications.

It wasn't the sheer cost of funerary practices, meaning issues of social class, which prompted the New Poor Laws or the Anatomy Act Scandura references. The government and general body saw the rapid rate at which the population was increasing in the nineteenth century, and it posed a threat to the sanitary health of the people in urban areas. Peter Jupp and Clare Gittings, in their book *Death in England* (1999), explain that the growing familiarity with health issues beginning in the late eighteenth century assisted in raising life expectancies for the subsequent century. Individuals became aware of what illnesses they could and could not treat through general texts like William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* (1769). Death slowly became more intelligible as a concrete subject rather than an uncertain but ever looming threat. The number of hapless deaths decreased substantially, while simultaneously "[robbing] death of both



its terror and Christian symbolism” (209). Yet fewer avoidable deaths did not hinder the total amount of deaths caused by the significant population increase. The small graveyards attached to churches were simply not large enough to house the thousands of corpses in need of a resting place. John Morley, author of *Death, Heaven, and the Victorians*, highlights the pressure the city felt for finding new ways of disposal by noting the common practice to dig up recently buried corpses, cut the corpse into pieces, and burn the remains to make more room (37). Not only was the practice tremendously disrespectful to the recently bereaved, burning corpses was thought to inhibit the souls of the deceased to ascend into heaven (Jupp, Gittings 225). Additionally, the gases caused from decaying bodies were thought to be “*directly* noxious” (emphasis sic., Morley 35). These bodies needed to be disposed of in a way that offered ample space for aeration, especially in graveyards with numerous cholera victims, even without the burning of bodies.

Joint-stock companies made a bold move when they began building cemeteries detached from churches in the early 1830s, for while the severance was done purely out of concern for the city’s health, the choice further clouded the connection between Christianity and death in the popular imagination. On one hand, people felt they were challenging the common belief that souls cannot be resuscitated outside the bounds of the church yard. On the other hand, burial practices outside of churchyards became a transparent source of profit. Whether a family buried a loved one in a burial ground was entirely dependent upon their ability to pay for the service, so quite unsurprisingly, only the affluent were buried in them (Morley 33). Families would purchase plots of land at the exuberant cost of £17,000 - £45,375 per acre (Morley 41) to rest in garden cemeteries where the shrubs, trees, winding paths, and neoclassical tombs would lighten the harshness of death. Constructed by Stephen Geary in 1839, the High Gate cemetery in London embodies the romantic – albeit commercial – aspect of these new burial grounds.

William Justyne writes in his *Guide to High Gate Cemetery* that “no cemetery in London can boast so many natural beauties. The irregularity of the ground, rising in terraces, the winding paths leading through long avenues of cool shrubbery and marble monuments, and the groups of majestic trees casting broad shadows below, contribute many natural charms to the solemn region” (qtd. in Curl 87). High Gate’s picturesque features became an attraction for individuals to admire. Residents even had the ability to purchase a key to walk through the cemetery in the evenings, noting who was buried and the manner in which they were interred (Morley 50). The emphasis Scandura places on appearance during this period should not be understated, for the processions and memorials done before the burial had to equal its romantic idealism and affirmation of social worth. For example, the procession for a linen operative in 1834 was said to have consisted of 1,500 marchers, “all wearing rosettes and carrying union insignia”: “How elated did every spectator appear,” one journalist writes, “and with what amazement did they gaze upon the whole movement<sup>5</sup>” (qtd. in Jupps, Gittings 222).

Funerals, burials, and memorials were but a show devoid of the Christian symbolism they once held. Funerals became a mere “medium to display worth and status” (221). The new standard for memorialization trickled down from the aristocrats to the paupers. Accordingly, it was often the middle and lower classes that took part in such excessive practices to distinguish themselves as Scandura states. The stress this placed on the economy was substantial; £4 to £5 million was “annually thrown into the grave, at the expense of the living” (Morley 22). The practices were still widely accepted, though there were those who attempted to end the customs

---

<sup>5</sup> This sentiment from a newspaper journalist mirrors Pip’s satiric sentiment from *Great Expectations*: “[My sister’s coffin] followed; it was a ‘point of Undertaking ceremony that the six bearers must be stifled and blinded under a horrible black velvet housing with a white border, the whole looked like a blind monster with twelve human legs ... It was all very much appreciated: ‘the neighborhood, however, highly approved ... we were all but cheered’” (qtd. in Morley 21).

by revealing other potentially detrimental effects. Take, for example, the Ecclesiologists declaration for a return back to a Christian death: “No one has ever been summoned to attend a funeral, without bitterly feeling the Paganism, the heartlessness, the atheistical character of the procession ... We have pleasure therefore in announcing, that arrangements are in progress as to the conducting funerals on a more Christian system” (qtd. in Morley 27). The Ecclesiologists did not achieve the resolution they were hoping for. Nevertheless, their efforts speak to the ongoing discussion about the decline in Christian beliefs. Transitioning back to a understated system would not only please devout Christians, but figures like Edwin Chadwick who publicly criticized the switch to garden cemeteries as being exclusionary to particular classes. Chadwick’s argument was that if the burials were kept at such absurdly high costs, the joint-stock companies would be guaranteeing the failure of the purpose of the new cemeteries. The purpose, as many seemed to forget in this complex timeline was to provide enough space for the sanitary disposal of bodies. Chadwick stressed that “the key to the interment problem was the inability of the poorer classes to afford quick and hygienic interment, away from the heart of the city” (Jupp, Gittings 221). Families of lower classes could not always raise the funds to provide a burial they felt honored their deceased, so corpses could remain in the home for up to two weeks (Morley 26).

It is at this point we may return to the New Poor Laws and the Anatomy Act in order to show the implications of the establishment of the law. The New Poor Laws of 1834 called for many things including the simplification of funerary practices – not only satisfying the economic pressure lower-classes felt, but posing a solution to the interment problem. The Anatomy Act, in a similar fashion, gave lower-class families the opportunity to avoid the shame of having an unsatisfactory funeral by allowing unclaimed corpses to be donated to science. The existence of

these laws demonstrate the degree to which Victorians lost sight of Christian values. The government had a more serious control over death practices than the church.

One may argue that individuals lost sight of these values as they sought out ways to lessen the harshness of death. However, if the weight of death becomes too far removed, the concept becomes foreign and unrecognizable. Morley remarks that “the possibility that Faith had no foundation was looked at face to face; that agony over, the gaze was averted. Heaven became more remote; Death is still with us” (111). Victorians became lost in the effort to manage a secular approach to death, and as a result removed any and everything that was recognizable in a good Christian death. Most notably, as Morley picks up in the latter half of his sentiment, the practices challenged the promise of immortal life and the resurrection of the body.

Having seen Christian values slowly deteriorate, Scandura’s response to embalming practices hitting a “deeply embedded cultural nerve” should be more comprehensible. Undertakers revitalized corpses to the point of suspension. The bereaved looked on as their loved ones were but a frozen image of the individual they once were. The uncanny corpse did not represent a soul that could ascend to greet beloved family members in heaven (Jalland 265). Instead, the embalmed corpse stood as a mockery to the solace of immortality as a whole. It became a concrete reminder of the contemporary slippage of Christian beliefs: the burning of bodies meant souls could not ascend, but at the time, it was an acceptable practice to make room for more burials; souls were unable to ascend in a cemetery unattached to a church, but at the time, the beauty of the cemetery was seen as a tangible heaven. In short, as Victorians made the truths of death “remote” by stepping away from Christian values, and attempting to lessen the harshness of death without them, the terror came flooding back.

It is my hope that the previous detailing of Victorian attitudes towards death practices, and its connection to Christianity has started to visibly shape up in *Dracula's* treatment of Undeath. The novel features characters who rely on science to take the unknowability out of the contemporary world – a phenomenon identical to that at the cusp of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The reach of science proves to be limited as Dr. Seward and Van Helsing are faced with something that neither science nor medical practices can explain. And as they begin to feel suffocated by the terror of the unknown – the possibility that Dracula may be something legitimate and earthly – they return to their religious beliefs to fight the preternatural threat. Lucy's tomb sequence is a concentrated expression of these themes which specifies the true source of Dracula's terror as Undeath is categorized, explained, and reflected on by the most open-minded character (*D* 147) in the novel.

As Van Helsing stands beside an Un-Dead Lucy Westenra, ready to instruct his followers on ways to end her, he pauses for a moment to reflect on why this must be done.

Before we do anything, let me tell you this; it is out of the lore and experience of the ancients and of all those who have studied the powers of the Un-Dead. 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. And so the circle goes on ever widening, like as the ripples from a stone thrown in the water. (emphasis added, *D* 253)

At the core of this reflection is Van Helsing's condemning of Dracula for the "curse of immortality." Van Helsing knows that as an Un-Dead being, Dracula will continue living eternally. The curse isn't categorized by his immortality alone seeing that Van Helsing follows his statement by saying Dracula will "go on age after age adding new victims and multiplying the evils of the world." The curse is therefore discussed consistently with the Victorian frame of mind – the curse is upon their progressive, virtuous society due to the implications of Undeath.

This does not mean, however, that the physical representation of immortality was not consequential for either the characters or Victorian readers.

Lucy's Un-Dead corpse functions as a catalyst for larger anxieties to be exposed just as the advertisement for Bigsaw embalming fluid was. The Crew of Light is understandably perplexed by what Lucy has become. Van Helsing must bring Dr. Seward and the others to Lucy's tomb on multiple occasions to demonstrate her death, and Undeath. Upon finally seeing Lucy back in her tomb, Dr. Seward is perplexed because she looks just as she did during her funeral: "radiantly beautiful," to the point where he "could not believe that she was dead. The lips were red, nay redder than before, and on the cheeks was a delicate bloom" (*D* 238). The reaction to seeing his beloved Lucy in this state is twofold: first, he feels compelled to comment on her loveliness in death once again. When Van Helsing admits he wants to "cut off her head and fill her mouth with garlic," Dr. Seward is horrified by the proposition, saying it made him "shudder to think of so mutilating the body" of a woman he had loved (*D* 239). He cannot see the point if there's "nothing to gain by it – no good to her, to [them], to science, to human knowledge .. without such it is monstrous" (*D* 202). Arthur, too, experiences a twofold reaction to Van Helsing's request to decapitate the late Lucy.

'Heavens and earth, no!' cried Arthur in a storm of passion. 'Not for the wide world will I consent to any mutilation of her dead body ... What did that poor, sweet girl do that you should want to cast such dishonour on her grave? Are you mad, that you speak of such things, or am I mad to listen to them? Don't dare think more of such a desecration; I shall not give my consent to anything you do. I have a duty to do in protecting her grave from outrage, and, by God, I shall do it!' (*D* 245)

What can first be seen in Arthur's reaction that is absent from Dr. Seward's is the religious rhetoric which governs his opposition. He is adamantly opposed to such "desecration" because it's his godly duty to protect her soul. Should he fail to do so, she will be denied eternal life.

Both Dr. Seward and Arthur's feelings towards Lucy at this moment are a product of their ability

to see her corpse as an extension of her true soul. They recognize Lucy in her Undeath. The issue, here, is that Arthur is unknowingly defending an Un-Dead being – an embodiment of the threat of secularity – in the name of God.

Convincing the Crew of Light that Lucy must be destroyed is unnervingly easy for Van Helsing, despite these tenacious protests, when basing the argument in what he sees as a true religious discourse. Van Helsing ironically responds with the same source of opposition to their protests – it is his godly duty to destroy her: “My Lord Godalming, I, too, have a duty to do, a duty to others, a duty to you, a duty to the dead; and, by God, I shall do it!” (*D* 245). His duty is also to grant tormented souls a “true” death, just as he promises Lucy will “take her place with the other Angels” after the deed is done (*D* 253). Van Helsing capitalizes on what Elisabeth Bronfen classifies as a vampires’ “false death”; this type of “antithetical” death is “based on a cyclic notion of return, [where individuals reappear] prematurely in the world of the living, with their bodies preserved whole (314). It is not until the characters view Lucy only as an Un-Dead being – as a threat to Christian values – that they become fiercely aggressive towards the threat.

Catering to Christian sentimentality drastically alters both Dr. Seward and Arthur’s perception of the deed. Both characters previously objected to mutilating her picturesque corpse, then their opinions on her loveliness shifts into revulsion after placing the idea in a Christian context. Here we are presented with the second part of the two fold reaction; the beauty was sought after, then ultimately rejected when mixing Christianity within the context of Undeath. Undeath is understood as a threat against their pious society, one they can justify terminating at any cost due to their responsibility to a divine figure. The Crew of Light comfortably advance

with their plans to mutilate the late Lucy's body<sup>6</sup> now that her corpse is seen as a "devilish mockery" of true eternal life (*D* 252). Dr. Seward rethinks his opposition to Van Helsing's request, and quickly succumbs to indifference towards the animated corpse. He begins to "shudder at the presence of this being, this Un-Dead" (*D* 239), and feels he could murder it with "savage delight" (*D* 249). And yet just pages earlier Dr. Seward was addressing "this Un-Dead" being as Lucy. Arthur's coming around is significantly more shocking as he is the one who carries out the deed. His character is considerably affected by the notion of true death, and wishes nothing more than to erase the bad Christian death Lucy had. He disregards the image of the corpse as being Lucy, and begins to see her body as the antithesis of all things Christian. Then he strikes her beat-less heart with "all his might," never once "faltering" (*D* 254). Dr. Seward compares Arthur's actions to those of Thor, therefore confirming that the act was a righteous one.

What the Crew of Light knows they will gain now is something Dr. Seward had not considered when asking questioning what good mutilating Lucy's body will do; they will be casting out an evil force, and providing genuine eternal rest for Lucy. Overall, Van Helsing's successful convincing of the two men reiterates his place as "the spiritual scientist who moves in the right circles and thereby saves humanity from spiritual death" (Wadge 40).

The twofold reaction to Undeath as a curse is unmistakably the reaction to a variety of impious death practices in the Victorian period. Scandura was right in that the appearance of the Un-Dead was unsettling to Victorians, whose scientifically produced fear of uncanny corpses resonated deeply within *Dracula*. However, the intensity of their fear is significantly more

---

<sup>6</sup> Undeath in women is particularly problematic to the Crew of Light. Stevenson, in "A Vampire in the Mirror: The Sexuality of Dracula," explores why "'wives and womenkind' [are a] treasure better destroyed than lost to the 'enemy'" (139). See Stevenson, John Allen. "A Vampire in the Mirror: The Sexuality of Dracula." *PMLA* 103.2 (1988): 139-49. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.



comprehensible when linking the anxiety to the slippage of Christian beliefs as Stoker's characters do. The terror comes from what the appearance of Undeath implies – an evil force which challenges Christian beliefs. Stoker set Victorian anxieties about death into motion as he subtly characterized the phenomenon between religious and secular alternatives in Dracula's character. Of course the antithetical threat was extinguished by Christianity in the end – a call to return to beliefs as a way of making sense of death and diminishing its terror. Nevertheless, contemporary readers turned away from *Dracula* as the fear captured the moment perhaps all too well. The terror was so intricately woven into the complexities of everyday life that the Count didn't possibly have a chance at further consideration. It was the perfect storm of fear and uncertainty, as the severity of Lucy's treatment demonstrates. The Crew of Light mutilated the body of a woman whom they had all known, and many had loved. The introduction established the rules, so to speak, of Stoker's Undeath; even with Van Helsing's knowledge that Lucy experienced a psychological continuity in which she could recognize and communicate with her former relations, there are no signs of hesitation. Mina, Dr. Seward, Arthur, Quincy, and Van Helsing watch Lucy suffer, die, change, and become revived. They recognize her in her new state of Undeath. And yet, none of these truths even slow down their self-indicted execution. How, then, would Victorians possibly feel compassion for Dracula – a character whom the others did not know in his previous life. The circumstances allotted space for terror alone.

The effects of the terror-filled treatment of *Dracula* on future academic scholarship has considerable. William Hughes stresses the theological composition of Gothic fiction as a whole in his book *Beyond Dracula*. Gothic fiction, he argues, may be interpreted in one of two ways: as “ethical allegories or morality plays,” or “political metaphors or fantasies” (15). Dracula was involuntarily forced into the first category, consequently leaving him a blank slate for whichever

anxieties we wish to be project onto him. The emergence of serious scholarship in the early 1970s fortunately took advantage of the interpretive freedom, and began efforts to humanize the figure of Dracula.

## **Section Two: The Trouble of Undeath**

Sexual deviant, oppressed Jew, oppressed Irish, terrorist, rapist, landlord: the early 1970s saw a substantial influx in critical interpretations of *Dracula*.<sup>7</sup> The transition to a multifaceted character from a reanimated body which mocked Christian beliefs may have been drastic, but not all together surprising. The end of section one told of the ways Dracula's character was cast off by Victorians due to the secular and religious tensions expressed through Undeath; to create an unknowable being was to offer free-range for future interpretations. Dracula fulfilled what Stoker had intended for him, that is, utter malleability. Contemporary readers set modern readers up for a tidal wave of inquiry; we "yearned to know the stranger" to renew what time had made wearied tropes (Carter 30). In short, change happened because we were interested and uninhibited.

The emerging interest in his character was then uninhibited by the clash between science and religion, and the threat of secular alternatives. The source of terror for the Victorians became obsolete to modern readers, thus opening the door to replace terror with something quite different. This section will examine the effects of coming from a more secular age on Stoker's

---

<sup>7</sup> In lieu of reviewing the emergence of scholarship, I offer two selected readings. See McNally, Raymond T., and Radu Florescu. *In Search of Dracula: The History of Dracula and Vampires*. Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1994. Print.; See Ronay, Gabriel. *The Truth about Dracula*. New York: Stein and Day, 1972. Print.

narrative. I argue that recent readers are naturally more sensitive to the state between life and death that Dracula's character embodies considering the normalcy of allowing technology to guide, limit, and alter our interactions with death. I will first convey the degree of our modern reliance on technology in relation to death practices as it opens the space for a more secularized interpretation of the Crew of Light's uncertainty. These practices permit Dracula, as a character, to attain a place as something other than a threat to Christianity. Essentially, the alleviation of the tension between religious and secular approaches to death enables scholars to continue restoring the figure of Dracula into a character worthy of our empathy.

The reliance on technology stems from the monumental shift in the way death is perceived, as it is gracefully elaborated on by Geoffery Gorer in his study on contemporary British death practices, "The Pornography of Death" (1965). Gorer notes that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, "there seems to have been an unremarked shift in prudery; whereas copulation has become more and more 'mentionable'" since the Victorian period, "particularly in the Anglo-Saxon societies, death has become more and more 'unmentionable' as a natural process" (50). The Victorians relied on the pleasantries of eternal life to soothe the harshness of death, but modern people, even devout Christians, routinely denounce the prospect of an after-life. "Natural death and physical decomposition have become too horrible to discuss" without "some such belief" (Gorer 51). Death became taboo as the subject grew more "[pornographic]" in nature the more we distanced ourselves from religion. In his book *Beyond the Good Death*, James W. Green links this "prudery" with modern people's inability to reap the "healthy effects of public mourning" (7). A celebration similar to the one given for the linen operative in 1834, for example, is strictly out of the question – needless to say out of fashion as well. Modern death entails a significantly more

private approach as the characteristic bedside scene is no longer actively sought out due to its lack of privacy. Green laments that,

[...] modern people avoid the obvious when they are with the dying. At the bedside, they talk not of the soul but about the weather or grandchildren, as though nothing special were happening. Gathered in a terminal ward, family and friends are reduced to onlookers who come to ‘pay respects’ and ‘show support’ but are not sure what to say or how long to stay. The bedchamber, once a small theater of piety, is now a private retreat where physicians replace religious functionaries and hushed discussions of vital signs substitute for affirmations of religious faith. (7)

Extreme measures are taken to render death “invisible” (Ariès qtd. in Green 7). The truth is shielded from children, denied by elders, and ignored by loved ones. Privatizing the event, for lack of better words, assists in easing the uncertainty surrounding modern death etiquette. Our ancestors had “decorum and ritual propriety” to “guide the process.” “Everyone [knew] exactly what was to be done” according to cultural and religious expectations (Green 6). Exchanging the domestic bedside scene for a hospital bed thrust moderns into uncharted territory; new technologies apparently do not equate to enlightenment. The “pornography” of death stems from our uncertainty. Celebrations were fitting in the past because individuals had faith in what they were celebrating – transcendence of the soul. Modern people lack a general consensus about the connection between “this life and the hereafter,” and certainly their condition as being “intensely social places” (Green 6). That which is unknown cannot be celebrated. We simply deny death and seek comfort in technology in the way comfort was once sought from religion.

The combination of an increased relationship with technology, and a decreased relationship with religion permits modern readers to see Undeath from a secular perspective, or perhaps more significantly, a perspective where Van Helsing’s religious rhetoric is ineffective. Thus, the modern reader can linger on the Crew of Light’s uncertainty as they struggle with identifying Lucy in her Undeath. Before moving forward, I am obliged to address the seemingly

contradictory nature of this interpretation to one of the primary goals of my study. Reader sensitivity would be directed at the Crew of Light rather than at Dracula, for the Crew of Light's response parallels the modern tendency to view Lucy as a person. Perhaps counterintuitively, the Crew of Light can be viewed empathetically without undercutting our sensitivity for Dracula. The following analysis will show that empathy for the hunters or the hunted is not mutually exclusive. In fact, identifying with the Crew of Light's response implies a certain understanding, and sensitivity for Dracula's condition.

Juxtaposing Van Helsing's change of heart with the others' reactions to Lucy in the same moment will expand and clarify the space for understanding Undeath as a technical change in one's existence. Going along with my premise for Undeath, Lucy in the tomb sequence is exactly the same Lucy, albeit with a few minor appetite changes, that Van Helsing dotes on before her death. Van Helsing immediately begins treatment on Lucy once he realizes what she is to become. Her foreseeable death is treated by a series of blood transfusions, and she's given a sedative to let her rest (*D* 158). The initial reliance on science and technology to counteract the remote, unwelcome phenomenon of death in protection of a loved one speaks to our modern tendencies. The treatments are scientific, logical, and not fixed on sensationalism. Van Helsing even comforts Lucy by brushing her hair so that it "lay on the pillow in its usual sunny ripples" (*D* 197). Lucy is at this moment still Lucy. Only a few chapters later does Lucy's change result in a vast adjustment of Van Helsing's behavior toward her. Van Helsing announces Lucy's death, and continues to sit by her body with his face "sterner than ever" (*D* 198), presumably considering the task that lay ahead. He becomes hysterical trying to extinguish what he perceives as the greatest threat to mankind and Christianity. But despite his sudden and feverous attempts

to depersonalize Lucy in her Undeath to the others, Arthur and Dr. Seward aren't as quick to judge.

In the same moment Van Helsing looks “[sternly]” at Lucy’s corpse, Dr. Seward can only recall Lucy’s peculiar appearance: “Some change had come over her body. Death had given back part of her beauty, for her brow and cheeks had recovered some of their flowing lines; even the lips had lost their deadly pallor” (*D* 198). Lucy’s revitalization stuns Dr. Seward because she has effectually transcended death by achieving an alternate form of existence – not quite dead, not quite alive. Dracula, as it is assumed to have been, used his “acumen at preservation” (Scandura 16) to remove death from Lucy to the extent that she is more recognizable in her Undeath.

Nearly three chapters later, Arthur and Dr. Seward have yet to be convinced that Lucy is the abomination Van Helsing says she is. When the Crew of Light visits Lucy’s tomb, Arthur and Dr. Seward question whether the body laying in front of them is “really Lucy’s body, or only a demon in her shape” (*D* 252). Van Helsing, in an ongoing effort to depersonalize Lucy, responds cryptically: “It is her body, and yet not it” (*D* 252). Rosemary Jann, in “Saved by Science? The Mixed Messages of Stoker's Dracula,” notes that Van Helsing is “[playing] upon Seward’s inability to explain ... certain processes in such a way as to blur the difference between the scientific and the spiritual by making them both seem essentially ‘mysterious’” (275). Ideally, Van Helsing would have Lucy’s body lose its association with the soul which once inhabited it and gain a religious association void of identity – he would have her be Un-Dead. But as this is the modern interpretation from a considerably more secular perspective, Van Helsing’s tactic to “bury” the truth in religious rhetoric is lost upon modern readers (Jann 276). Van Helsing’s argument in this interpretation is simply not absolute. “Truly,” Dr. Seward writes later in his diary, “there is no such thing as finality” (*D* 227). Thus, in this brief moment – in the

absence of religious thought – the Crew of Light’s instinctive response is that Lucy has been preserved in a way unknown to them.

As I stated previously, identifying with the Crew of Light as they struggle to make sense of Lucy’s current state does not counter our sensitivity for Dracula.<sup>8</sup> It merely reiterates that the preservation supporting the concept of Undeath is no longer a threat but a source of sensitivity. With Gorer’s discussion in mind, the denial of death, and the emphasis on technology has introduced an obsession with preservation. Technology offers ways of staying death so we, too, may reach an alternate state of existence. On one hand, the modern desperation for continuance lends itself to the fluidity between what is dead and alive, thus assisting modern people to see Dracula’s Undeath as an embodiment of the space between life and death. On the other hand, the ability to understand Undeath reveals that the conditions required to sustain that type of existence are not worth the sacrifices – a reality not unlike our own experiences.

To return to the prevalence of denial in modern death experiences, denying what we are uncertain about seems to wane anxiety. Paradoxically, the more “advancements [made in] science,” the more we seem to fear and deny the reality of death” all together (Kübler-Ross 21). Why, then, do modern people seek the “authority of medicine and secular professionals ... for guidance on coping with the end of life” (Green 8) if they fear the knowledge they will gain? The answer lays in the latter portion of the paradox. Seeking assistance from medical professionals offers the opportunity to deny the actuality of death – meaning denial does not simply come in the somewhat inactive form of verbal or celebratory rejection. Borne out of this inactive denial of death is a far more active emphasis on life itself.

---

<sup>8</sup> The Crew of Light may even lose allies as they make the final decision to mutilate Lucy’s body, which of course allows for a remarkably smooth transition into allying ourselves with Dracula.

Modern people do not let current limitations of technology thwart any possible opportunities to further delay death. Frantic attempts at staying death plague modern society; take, for example, the practice of Cryogenics. Cryogenics offers the possibility of eternal life by deep-freezing a recently deceased individual in the hope that technology will progress enough to revive the deceased. There is, however, the catch that full body Cryopreservation costs a hefty \$200,000, with Neurocryopreservation a close \$80,000.00 (“Become a Member”). Willing participation in the practice, despite the exuberant cost, implies that individuals volunteering to be preserved merely accept a temporary death, and vehemently deny a permanent one. Participants exist in an alternate state in which they experienced a medically-confirmed death, and are waiting for that death to be reversed. Recalling the formation of the term “Undeath” reminds us of the movement to make sense of this precise existence. Even if there is not a legitimate state between life and death, modern people are reasonably sensitive to the notion as evolving technologies continuously push the boundaries of what is known about death. However, Cryogenics, though an exaggerated example of this trend, demonstrates that the boundaries can in fact be pushed too far. There is no certainty the technology for Cryogenics will catch up or if the results are remotely ideal. For those opting for Neurocryopreservation, regaining consciousness in a body foreign to the one you had previously known is a drastic effort to extend life by modifying our definition of existence. The poignant sacrifices for continuance beg the question of whether such measures are worth the type of existence they procure.

As an embodiment of the modern struggle between life and death, Dracula’s Undeath elicits similar concerns. Modern scholars can empathize with Dracula for the measures he takes to sustain his current state through which he denies a permanent death. Being Un-Dead does not mean one can survive forever unconditionally, for Undeath is a “curse” one way or another. John



Allen Stevenson in “A Vampire in the Mirror: The Sexuality of Dracula” claims that vampires have the same instinct for self-preservation that we do; Dracula makes the active choice to continue existing by his constantly evading his hunters<sup>9</sup> (142). It just so happens that vampires’ preservation is most dependent on their consumption of blood. Critics of *Dracula* discuss vampires’ thirst for blood in various discourses. Stevenson, for example, sexualizes both the taking and receiving of fluids between Dracula and his victims. Clive Leatherdale, a major contributor to *Dracula* scholarship, posits the blood as a Christian parody.<sup>10</sup> But in the midst of these interpretations, there is a conspicuous lack of discussion about why consuming blood is inherently bad, presumably because it’s a culturally understood fact. There is a wealth of what Louis H. Palmer labels “socially based scholarship<sup>11</sup>” which seeks to answer this overlooked question (4). Admittedly, “socially based scholarship” can be rather frivolous, contemplating issues like whether being a vampire would be a positive or negative experience. With that said, social scholarship shouldn’t be disregarded. It has the luxury of reflecting *Dracula* in a way that truly academic scholarship cannot always achieve. Being able to place ourselves in Dracula’s position without reserve is immensely helpful in understanding what Undeath truly entails.

Ted M. Preston muses that he would be hard-pressed to find someone who would not want to be spared from cancer, arthritis, Parkinson’s disease, or whatever awaits them in old age despite the unappealing diet. Preston continues to argue the aversion to sunlight and garlic seem

---

<sup>9</sup> Dracula’s evasion of his hunters problematizes the modern sensitivity for his character. While Dracula’s characterization may differ, scholars must still contend with his conscious decision to kill innocent people. Empathizing with Stoker’s antagonist cannot undo his original purpose in a thriller novel, nor can modern readers pardon his crimes.

<sup>10</sup> See Leatherdale, Clive. “11. Dracula as Christian Parody.” *Dracula: The Novel & the Legend: A Study of Bram Stoker’s Gothic Masterpiece*. Wellingborough, Northamptonshire: Aquarian, 1985. 176-91. Print.

<sup>11</sup> Palmer is referring to scholarship that covers film and various other mediums, all with varying degrees of formality. See Greene, Richard, and K. Silem. Mohammad, eds. *The Undead and Philosophy: Chicken Soup for the Soulless*. Chicago: Open Court, 2006. Print.

like “small prices to pay for an eternal life of strength, vitality, and precious time” (160). The allure of eternal life is unsurprising, but Preston understates what Dracula must do with his “precious time.” Dracula’s need for blood extends beyond the taboo or “unappealing” taste. The core of the issue when it comes to Dracula’s blood-drinking is the means of acquiring it. There is a reason characters will kill themselves, or offer too in Mina’s case, as an alternative to being turned (*D* 335). Undeath almost always implies an inherent badness. Richard Greene remarks that “most people would rather [die than] become some monster that might potentially kill a loved one or burn down their own village” (12). Greene’s statement is more fit to the type of unintelligent Un-Dead that I have not discussed in this essay. If the ideology of Undeath is accepted, then Dracula is unique because he’s conscious of both his current state, and former life. Even more appalling than the uncertainty that one may unknowingly cause destruction in their Undeath is the certainty that they will be conscious of that destruction, and relish in it. Our sensitivity is heightened by the ability to see the ways in which Undeath may not be “objectively bad” for the Un-Dead being in their current state, but “comparatively bad” to their former lives (Greene 12-13).

Bearing in mind the transition from Stoker’s Un-Dead to Undeath reframes Van Helsing’s reflection during Lucy’s tomb sequence. As a brief review, Van Helsing’s reflection primarily functions as a justification for the mutilation of Lucy’s corpse. Revealing the truths of Undeath works in Van Helsing’s favor by exploiting an underlying fear that the characters share. With the religious rhetoric now being obsolete, as well as the formation of Undeath as a legitimate form of existence worthy of our sensitivity, modern scholars may reread Van Helsing’s reflection on the curse of Undeath empathetically.

Before we do anything, let me tell you this; it is out of the lore and experience of the ancients and of all those who have studied the powers of the Un-Dead. 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*. And so the circle goes on ever widening, like as the ripples from a stone thrown in the water. (emphasis added, *D* 253)

The core of the reflection remains the “curse of immortality.” The curse is simply reconfigured as the center point of the reflection shifts from the horrors of false death to the conditions of Undeath. Specifically, Van Helsing’s sentiment that Un-Dead beings “must go on age after age adding new victims and multiplying the evils of the world” comes second to their inability to die. Undeath continues to be unequivocally bad because of what the latter condition entails. The badness is transposed onto the Un-Dead being who must commit atrocities after being a victim themselves. The curse aligns with modern sensibilities as Undeath is perceived as a legitimate state of being where a person has achieved eternity, but the drastic change in existence is hardly worth denying death. The “curse of immortality,” then, is a curse on the Un-Dead being rather than on society.

Stoker’s ideology stresses that Undeath is unequivocally bad regardless of where the “curse” is thought to be directed. Therefore, an empathetic reading of Undeath also reframes the final scene from being an act of justice to rid an abomination from the earthly world, to an act of mercy to free the Un-Dead from the plight of eternal life: Quincy stabs Dracula and on his face is “a look of peace, such as [the Crew of Light] never could have imagined might have rested there” (*D* 418).

In an effort to reign in the discussion, I wish to part with another of Van Helsing’s insights that is shared with Dr. Seward: “I heard once of an American who so defined faith, ‘that faculty which enables us to believe things which we know to be untrue.’ For one, I follow that man. He meant that we shall have an open mind, and not let a little bit of truth check the rush of

the big truth, like a small rock does a railway truck. We get the small truth first. Good! We keep him, and we value him, but all the same we must not let him think himself all the truth in the universe” (*D* 230). The “little bit of truth” is the Crew of Light’s essential uncertainty. It is what Arthur and Dr. Seward observe with their own eyes as Lucy experiences a transition culminating in her revitalization. It is the piece of truth which could not be uttered if the Crew of Light’s philosophies are to remain intact. And finally, it is the reality that the Un-Dead being the Crew of Light seeks – the figure of Dracula – is more absolute, more worthy of our consideration, than those who consciously limit their foundation of knowledge to their own avail.

## Works Cited

- Bronfen, Elisabeth. *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity, and the Aesthetic*. 3rd ed. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1996. *Google Books*. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.
- Carter, Margaret L. "The Vampire as Alien in Contemporary Fiction." *Blood Read: The Vampire as Metaphor in Contemporary Culture*. By Joan Gordon and Veronica Hollinger. Philadelphia, PA: U of Pennsylvania, 1997. 27-44. *Google Books*. Web. 20 Nov. 2015.
- Curl, James Stevens. "The Garden-Cemetery Flourishes." *The Victorian Celebration of Death*. Stroud: Sutton, 2000. 69-108. Print.
- Fogel, Gerald I., Frederick M. Lane, and Robert S. Liebert. "Dracula's Women, and Why Men Love to Hate Them." *The Psychology of Men: Psychoanalytic Perspectives*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale UP, 1996. 25-48. Print.
- Gittings, Clare, and Peter C. Jupp, eds. *Death in England: An Illustrated History*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2000. Print.
- Gorer, Geoffrey. "The Pornography of Death." *Encounter* Oct. 1955: 49-52. *UNZ*. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.
- Green, James W. *Beyond the Good Death: The Anthropology of Modern Dying*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania, 2008. Print.
- Greene, Richard. "The Badness of Undeath" *The Undead and Philosophy: Chicken Soup for the Soulless*. Ed. Richard Greene and K. Silem Mohammad. Chicago: Open Court, 2006. 1-14. Print.
- Hughes, William. *Beyond Dracula*. New York: St. Martin's, 2000. Print.
- Jalland, Patricia. *Death in the Victorian Family*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996. Print.
- Kübler-Ross, Elisabeth. *On Death and Dying*. New York: Scribner Classics, 1997. Print.
- "Become a Member." *Cryonics: Alcor Life Extension Foundation*. N.p., 2014. Web. 06 Dec. 2015.
- Leatherdale, Clive. "11. Dracula as Christian Parody." *Dracula: The Novel & the Legend: A Study of Bram Stoker's Gothic Masterpiece*. Wellingborough, Northamptonshire: Aquarian, 1985. 176-91. Print.
- McNally, Raymond T., and Radu Florescu. *In Search of Dracula: The History of Dracula and Vampires*. Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1994. Print.

- Morley, John. *Death, Heaven, and the Victorians*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh, 1971. Print.
- Palmer, Louis H. "Vampire Scholarship." *Vampires in the New World*. Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2013. 1-9. *Google Books*. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.
- Preston, Ted M. "Deserving to be a Vampire: The Ethical and Existential Elements of Vampirism" *The Undead and Philosophy: Chicken Soup for the Soulless*. Ed. Richard Greene and K. Silem. Mohammad. Chicago: Open Court, 2006. 155-65. Print.
- Ronay, Gabriel. *The Truth about Dracula*. New York: Stein and Day, 1972. Print.
- Jann, Rosemary. "Saved by Science? The Mixed Messages of Stoker's Dracula." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 31.2, Nineteenth-Century Fiction (1989): 273-87. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.
- Senf, Carol A. "'Dracula': The Unseen Face in the Mirror." *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 9.3 (1979): 160-70. *JSTOR*. Web. 14 Oct. 2015.
- . *The Critical Response to Bram Stoker*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1993. Print.
- Scandura, Jani. "Deadly Professions: "Dracula," Undertakers, and the Embalmed Corpse." *Victorian Studies* 40.1 (1996): 1-30. *JSTOR*. Web. 14 Oct. 2015.
- Stevenson, John Allen. "A Vampire in the Mirror: The Sexuality of Dracula." *PMLA* 103.2 (1988): 139-49. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.
- Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. Ed. Glennis Byron. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview, 1998. Print.
- Wadge, Elisabeth. "The Scientific Spirit and the Spiritual Scientist: Moving in the Right Circles." *Victorian Review* 26.1 (2000): 24-42. *JSTOR*. Web. 5 Dec. 2015.