

TAMING THE VAMPIRE

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TAMING THE VAMPIRE

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To Mama, Daddy, Leslie, and Rachel. Thanks for listening.

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INTRODUCTION

According to Nina Auerbach, “every age embraces the vampire it needs” (145). The vampires of today are a far cry from that vampire to whom all others are measured, Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*. Today’s vampires generally possess great beauty and for all intents and purposes, are domesticated; they live in gated communities or small towns and survive on synthetic or animal blood. These vampires permeate both the publishing and the film industry; today, they are a cultural obsession. However, the topic of vampires began its rise in popularity during the reign of the Gothic novel through the imaginations of John Polidori, J. Sheridan de Le Fanu, and most notably, Bram Stoker. Their vampires acted egocentrically and committed evil acts against their human counterparts. The vampires represented in these works exuded horror and evil, whereas representations of vampires in subsequent years reveal an ongoing permutation. A survey of vampires in literature, film, and television presents the ever-increasing emasculation of the vampire’s monster nature and the simultaneous rise of the male vampiric hero and the female vampire’s eventual empowerment.

Incidentally, Tim Kane points out at great length in *The Changing Vampire of Film and Television*, “genres do change over time” (133). So, by studying these different mediums across various time periods, one can see that the vampire transforms from a

bloodthirsty villain into a romanticized, often self-loathing hero. In fact, when Kane catalogues the changing genres, he asserts that one of the most important changes in the “Sympathetic Cycle” (one of the vampire horror genre categories he delineates) “comes with the vampire assuming hero status” (88). In any event, the hero vampire appears to be a domesticated shadow of its former self, often assimilated into the human world. In the meantime, the traditionally low number of female vampires, so often portrayed in menial, sexualized capacity, shows a gradual shift toward a less sexualized, more empowered female vampiric figure.

The intention of this thesis will be to examine the emasculation of the vampire’s traditional monster nature alongside its accompanying evolution into heroism, domesticity, and in the case of the female vampires, metamorphoses from lasciviousness to empowerment. In doing so, emphasis will be directed to the idea that it is the monster, not the man, which is being emasculated. Additionally, the thesis will examine questions of why such shifts occur. The thesis will argue that if, as Nina Auerbach suggests, vampires are a reflection of our culture’s needs, then our culture needs a hero capable of darkness, but embodied with control. Using the cultural assessments drawn by Auerbach and Kane (as well as others) as a starting point, attention centers on the potential fears and social trends of the nineties to present day.

CHAPTER ONE: ESTABLISHING A FRIGHTENING ARCHETYPE

By examining the traditional vampire motifs, one can see the emasculating morphing undergone by vampire monster nature becomes more readily apparent. Literature's original and most noteworthy vampires spawned countless authorial recreations. Further examination in subsequent chapters will reveal today's vampire interpretations as a far cry from the sinister archetype. However, to grasp the scope of such an evolution, investigation of the prototypical vampire needs to first be examined.

Traditionally speaking, Bram Stoker's Count Dracula tends to be the vampire to whom all other vampires are compared. Though not the first vampire to appear in fiction, culture makes him the most renowned. In a recent review of vampire literature, Erik Smetana wrote that Stoker "likely had no idea he was creating the prototype for a sub-genre of fiction as undying as the characters portrayed in its pages, a genre that is still thriving over a century later—that recently, in fact, has undergone yet another renaissance" (173). However, his most noteworthy predecessors include Lord Ruthven from John Polidori's *The Vampyre* and Carmilla from J. Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla*.

On the surface, these three characters do not appear to have very much in common. In fact, in *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, Nina Auerbach claims that

Most critics who bother to study Dracula at all proceed on the lazy assumption that since all vampires are pretty much alike, his origin extends neatly back through the nineteenth century to Lord Ruthven, Varney, and, particularly Carmilla. (64)

Auerbach argues that Dracula “is less the culmination of a tradition than the destroyer of one” (64). Certainly, differences exist in the construction of each character. Physicality provides one example: Count Dracula first appears as an old man, Polidori portrays Ruthven as a young enigma, and Carmilla stands out due to not only her gender, but her almost invalid behavior. However, where Auerbach aims to highlight the differences, I would argue that these earlier vampires are more alike than different.

While their timeline and construction reveal that degrees of evolution take place, if one views the full scope of vampire attributes as they appear in literature, television, and film, the vampires of Polidori, Le Fanu, and Stoker stand together. The ability of the vampires in these works to instill fear unites these three characters. In fact, while Stoker’s creation serves as the cultural archetype for a vampire, the differences among the vampires of his predecessors in conjunction with the shared intent to frighten makes up Count Dracula.

To begin with, both Polidori and Stoker constructed their vampires to be chilling physical figures, albeit in a different manner. Polidori describes Lord Ruthven as having “the dead grey eye” and “a deadly hue to his face,” and goes on to write that its “form and outline were beautiful” (Polidori 7). Whatever beauty his face might contain, Lord Ruthven possesses the ability to “throw fear into those breasts where thoughtlessness reigned” with “a look” (7). Similarly, Stoker imbues Dracula with physical traits capable

of influencing those around him. Much like Ruthven, Dracula stands out; upon looking him over, Jonathan Harker comments that Dracula possesses “a very marked physiognomy” (Stoker 17). Dracula’s description gives a feeling of menace. His mouth “was fixed and rather cruel-looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth,” which “protruded” over surprisingly “ruddy” lips considering his age. Like Ruthven’s hue, Dracula’s overall look “was one of extraordinary pallor” (18).

But unlike those fellow gentry who seek out Ruthven’s company because of his strange look and manner, Harker’s initial encounter with Count Dracula leaves him recoiling. The description of Dracula’s hands invokes fear: “Strange to say, there were hairs in the centre of the palm. The nails were long and fine, and cut to a sharp point” (Stoker 18). When Dracula leans over Harker, his hands touch him and Harker shudders while also failing to conceal “a horrible feeling of nausea” which he attests might have been because Dracula’s “breath was rank” (18).

Besides sharing frightening physical traits, these early vampires exhibit the ability to wreak psychological terror. Strange dreams and madness permeate *The Vampyre*, *Carmilla*, and *Dracula*, thus further emphasizing the villainy that makes the vampire a monster.

After his first evening with Dracula, Jonathan Harker writes in his journal, “I am all in a sea of wonders. I doubt; I fear; I think strange things which I dare not confess to my own soul” (Stoker 18). As the story progresses and Harker finds himself imprisoned by Dracula, his sanity continues to diminish. In trying to acquire Dracula’s key to escape the castle, Harker finds Dracula lying inside a box. Stoker creates a gruesome picture of Dracula:

. . . the mouth was redder than ever, for on the lips were gouts of fresh blood, which trickled from the corner of the mouth and ran over the chin and neck. Even the deep burning eyes seemed set amongst swollen flesh, for the lids and pouches underneath were bloated. It seemed as if the whole awful creature were simply gorged with blood; he lay like a filthy leech, exhausted with his repletion. (51)

Despite the fearsome sight, Harker searches the body in vain for a key to escape the castle. According to Harker, “There was a mocking smile on the bloated face which seemed to drive me mad” (51). Harker decides to kill the Count with a shovel, but the Count’s sudden turn of the head frightens and disrupts Harker’s plan. Harker says, “The last glimpse I had was of the bloated face, bloodstained and fixed with a grin of malice which would have held its own in the nethermost hell” (52). Due in great part to what is perhaps the most graphic physical description of Dracula in the novel, with such a statement the scene becomes palpably spine chilling. After Dracula’s departure for the castle, Harker disappears from the novel until a letter comes to Mina that he is in a hospital “suffering from a violent brain fever” (99). Sister Agatha, who is caring for Harker, writes to Mina that, “in his delirium his ravings have been dreadful” (99). Upon reuniting with him, Mina writes in her journal that Harker is “only a wreck of himself,” and that Sister Agatha informed her that “he raved of dreadful things whilst he was off his head” (103). Harker even tells Mina, “You know I have had brain fever, and that is to be mad” (104). According to those caring for him, some terrible shock accounts for his state, and readers know that the shock comes from witnessing Dracula’s vampire nature.

In a similar vein, Polidori's Lord Ruthven displays the ability to psychologically intimidate. Throughout *The Vampyre*, Lord Ruthven performs various nefarious deeds (gambling, sullyng women, etc.). During the course of the journey, robbers attack Aubrey and Ruthven. The wounded and dying Lord Ruthven begs Aubrey to save his honor by not breathing a word of his horrible deeds. Ruthven demands that Aubrey "Swear by all your soul reveres, by all your nature fears, swear that for a year and a day you will not impart your knowledge of my crimes or death to any living being in any way, whatever may happen, or whatever you may see" (Polidori 17). Upon exacting that oath, Lord Ruthven "sunk laughing upon his pillow, and breathed no more" (17). The next day, Lord Ruthven's corpse disappears. Aubrey, ceasing his travels, returns home to his sister. When they attend a party, he shockingly sees Lord Ruthven and hears a whisper near him saying, "Remember your oath!" (20). Aubrey knows now that Ruthven is a vampire, but the oath prohibits him from warning others and plunges him into madness. Polidori writes that Aubrey's "dress became neglected" and that Aubrey "was no longer to be recognized" (21). Eventually, Aubrey's "incoherence" confines him to his room where he becomes "emaciated" and "the only sign of affection and recollection remaining displayed itself upon the entry of his sister" (21). Regarding Aubrey's deterioration, Polidori writes that Ruthven "readily understood himself to be the cause of it; but when he learned that he was deemed insane, his exultation and pleasure could hardly be concealed from those among whom he had gained this information" (23). Aside from the inner turmoil Aubrey undergoes, Lord Ruthven's reaction to Aubrey's condition fully emphasizes the evil with which Polidori imbues his vampire.

Likewise, *Le Fanu* incorporates psychological elements, which heighten Carmilla's formidable nature. Within the novella, the psychological elements generally take the form of dreams. In the beginning, six-year-old Laura wakes up in the middle of the night to a strange lady who crawls into bed next to her. Laura soon falls asleep, but awakens as she says, "by a sensation as if two needles ran into my breast very deep at the same moment" (*Le Fanu* 74). The mysterious woman slides to the floor and disappears from the room. The rather unnerving scene plays a key role throughout the novella. Carmilla, who due to an accident is staying with Laura's family and who readers later discover is a vampire, claims that she met Laura in a dream when she herself was a child. Carmilla's supposed dream, though reminiscent of Laura's strange childhood experience, lacks its horror. In a striking parallel, Laura, now a young woman, experiences a disturbing dream. She says, "I cannot call it a nightmare, for I was quite conscious of being asleep," but she also states that, "I was equally conscious of being in my room, and lying in bed, precisely as I actually was" (102). In the nightmare, Laura describes feeling movement at the foot of the bed. She makes out in the darkness "a sooty-black animal that resembled a monstrous cat" (102). After the animal leaps onto the bed and approaches Laura's face, she reports that she "felt a stinging pain as if two large needles darted, an inch or two apart, deep into my breast" (102). Laura wakes up screaming and sees a female figure at the foot of the bed, which then appears by the door and exits the room. Laura continues to have strange dreams. In one, she hears a voice, which tells her that her mother warns her to "beware the assassin" (106). At that point in the dream a light appears and Laura sees Carmilla standing at the end of the bed, "in her white nightdress, bathed, from her chin to her feet, in one great stain of blood" (106). The

dreams and the as yet undiscovered draining of her blood leave Laura in a state of mental deterioration. She admits feeling “changed,” “melancholy,” and that “Dim thoughts of death began to open, and an idea that I was slowly sinking took gentle, and, somehow, not unwelcome possession of me” (105). Le Fanu’s use of dreams to convey the sinister nature of Carmilla actually strengthens her frightening nature. The dreams create a sense of haunting, while Laura’s increasing listlessness sets a mood of apprehension for the reader.

All things considered, perhaps the most vehement portrayal of the monster aspect of the vampire comes from each author’s incorporation of “othering.” Polidori, Le Fanu, and Stoker all design their vampiric characters as outside of the norm. Obviously, drinking blood and reviving after death accomplishes this goal, but there are much more profound authorial monster constructions taking place in regard to societal convention and historical contexts.

To begin with, all three authors created vampiric figures, which pervert sexual conventions. Polidori’s Lord Ruthven consistently seeks out morally reputable women to sully and force into a fall from grace. Lord Ruthven appears intent on perpetuating misfortune since “all those females whom he had sought, apparently on account of their virtue, had, since his departure, thrown even the mask aside, and had not scrupled to expose the whole deformity of their vices to the public gaze” (Polidori 11). In fact, Lord Ruthven even threatens Aubrey about upholding his oath by using the fears surrounding the Victorian period’s “fallen woman.” Lord Ruthven reminds Aubrey about the oath saying, “ ‘Remember your oath, and know, if not my bride to day, your sister is dishonoured. Women are frail!’ ” (23). Considering at this point Aubrey knows Lord

Ruthven to be a vampire, it appears a threat to reputation instills more fear than the threat to life.

Where Polidori makes Lord Ruthven's exploits readily apparent, Le Fanu writes Carmilla's dismissal of sexual convention implicitly. Carmilla engages in friendship with Laura, but the friendship carries with it undercurrents of homosexuality. When Carmilla takes her hand, Laura describes it like the "ardour of a lover":

. . . my strange and beautiful companion would take my hand and hold it with a fond pressure, renewed again and again; blushing softly, gazing in my face with languid and burning eyes, and breathing so fast that her dress rose and fell with the tumultuous respiration. (Le Fanu 90)

Laura finds it embarrassing and describes Carmilla's behavior as "hateful and yet overpowering" (90). Possessiveness emerges within the sexual connotations of Carmilla's actions as well. Laura says that "with gloating eyes she drew me to her, and her hot lips travelled along my cheek in kisses; and she would whisper, almost in sobs, 'You are mine, you *shall* be mine, and you and I are one for ever'" (90). Laura continually volleys between attraction and repulsion to Carmilla's conduct. Le Fanu's vampire is all the more threatening since she is not only an undead creature syphoning away Laura's blood, but because she embodies sexual taboos and crosses the boundaries of socially accepted friendship.

Much has been said in regard to sexuality in *Dracula*. Lucy's blood transfusions from multiple men, Arthur's flagrantly sexual staking of Lucy, and the carnally evocative scene, which occurs when Mina drinks Dracula's blood, are each provocative scenarios. But, it is when sexuality and social fears meet allusion that Stoker fashions a deeper sense

of Dracula's monstrosity. By placing Dracula's new estate in Carfax, Stoker brings to mind Jack the Ripper. Jimmie Cain specifies that Carfax "is well to the east of downtown London, near the Whitechapel district, the epicenter of the London immigrant community" (128). As Cain continues to point out, "In addition to its dense Jewish population, Whitechapel was also noteworthy as the scene of the murders ascribed to Jack the Ripper, a figure often represented in newspaper stories and sketches as an Eastern Jew" (128). Cain proposes that in attempting to portray Dracula as a monster, that Stoker purposefully plays into English fears of the Jewish. Thus, the Judaic relevance connected to Jack the Ripper becomes doubly significant; Dracula becomes linked not only to a serial killer, but also to society's "belief that Jews spread disease and contamination" (127). If one considers that Dracula chooses and feeds predominantly on women, there appears to be legitimacy to seeing connection between Jack the Ripper (who also focused solely on women) and Dracula. However, Cain asserts a link between Dracula and Judaism with the claim that, "The count has singularly Jewish features" (128). He uses the previous description of "cruel-looking mouth" in conjunction with the description of his face as "a strong – a very strong aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils, with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily round the temples, but profusely elsewhere" (Stoker 17). The physical description of Dracula in the novel coupled with his "rank" breath leads Cain to conclude, "in his conception of Dracula, Stoker undoubtedly includes attributes of the dangerous, pestilential Jewish immigrant" (128). Yet, Cain devotes much of his research to his contention that "Stoker projects anxieties about a much more real and powerful threat to England and Victorian culture in the figure of the monstrous count: the Slavic menace

imposed by imperial Russia” (128). Cain supports his premise with Dracula’s own descriptions of his heritage, which he shares in his conversation with Harker, as well as with the Eastern geography of Dracula’s castle, and Stoker’s research associated with Vlad Dracula.

Obviously, Polidori, Le Fanu, and Stoker show no intent to endear a vampire to their readers. In writing about *Dracula*, Auerbach notes that, “. . . the gulf between male and female, antiquity and newness, class and class, England and non-England, vampire and mortal, homoerotic and heterosexual love, infuses its genre with a new fear: fear of the hated unknown” (66-7). While Dracula reigns as the vampire archetype, as predecessors, Polidori and Le Fanu’s vampires make up the traditional vampire motif, and thus are an important part of that genre. The ability to elicit fear acts as the common thread, which ties these works together and defines vampire convention. As the previous introduction indicates, the vampires in recent years appear more full of humanity than monstrosity. But, these original literary vampires emanate undiluted maleficence through their physical presence, psychological influence, and profane infusion of disregard for convention, provoking no sense of sympathy on the part of their readers. Instead, vampires and terror are synonymous.

CHAPTER TWO: RISE OF THE VAMPIRIC HERO

Over the past few decades, the innately evil vampire appears to have lost its monstrosity. Instead, cultural representations of vampires in literature, film, and television display more human qualities indicating an emasculation of the vampire's monster nature. In *The Changing Vampire of Film and Television*, Tim Kane calls the shift "the transformation from malignant vampire as villain to sympathetic vampire as hero" (19). In fact, cultural vampire interpretations reveal a plot pattern incorporating a vampire with a tragic past, self-loathing vampiric characterizations, occurrences of human preservation, and often times a quest for personal redemption. Each of the aforementioned components appears in literature, film, and television and marks the dilution of the vampire's monster nature and simultaneous rise to hero status.

To begin with, Barnabas Collins of the 1966 television series *Dark Shadows* represents the catalyst in vampire heroic development, or as Kane attests, "the origin of the vampire as hero" (50). Kane argues that Barnabas exhibits syntax "borrowed from Universal's Mummy series": reincarnated love (51). According to Kane, "The motivation for the vampire's continual pursuit of a certain victim centers on the search for a lost love, reincarnated in the film's heroine" (44-5).

After being in a coffin for 200 years, Barnabas returns to the Collins mansion in the hopes of restoring not only it, but also his lost love Josette through Maggie Evans, a local waitress who strikes him as remarkably reminiscent of Josette. While Barnabas feeds on humans, the end result for his victims tends to be mesmerization rather than death. More than anything, he wants to be reunited with Josette, who “fell off a cliff trying to escape him after he had turned into a vampire” (54). Barnabas finds himself wracked with self-loathing and remorse. In fact, Kane gives account of episodes where, despite his intentions to turn a victim into a Josette recreation, Barnabas refrains because his love for Josette and the victim’s innocence render him unable to complete the act. Barnabas’s struggle with his nature leads Kane to argue that “the heart of a ruthless predator does not beat within him,” and that “the vampire is rendered more human, with compassion sometimes overruling passion” (54-5).

Further highlighting the vampiric shift to heroism, Nina Auerbach calls Barnabas “a culture hero for disaffected young intellectuals in the late 1960’s” (137). Kane’s background research on *Dark Shadows* gives additional credence to Auerbach’s claim. Before the love triangle envisioned by the writer fully emerged, fans uncovered it. Kane cites the “torrent of fan mail” as “the key reason for the shift of the vampire from villain to hero” (51). The guilt ridden tragic figure of Barnabas made him accessible as a sympathetic figure. Kane writes, “Teenagers identified with the vampire’s isolation and inability to fit into the modern world” (51). Instead of seeing a monster, audiences saw an intriguing protagonist.

Incidentally, the reincarnated love syntax dubbed by Kane manifests itself in various other vampire plots. Kane shows that both *Blacula* and the original *Fright Night*

incorporate female characters that serve as reincarnations of ancient bygone paramours (57, 83). Francis Ford Coppola even goes so far as to endear Count Dracula to audiences by using the reincarnated love syntax, despite how baseless consultation of Stoker's novel deems such a plot construction (100).

In turn, evidence of the vampire hero aesthetic surfaces in Anne Rice's 1976 novel *Interview With the Vampire*. Like Barnabas Collins, Louis has a tragic past. Louis's younger brother died after the two had an argument. Grief stricken and blaming himself, Louis "drank all the time" and "lived like a man who wanted to die but who had no courage to do it himself" (Rice 11). While Louis exists in a state of turmoil, Lestat attacks him and returns again with the offer to make him a vampire. Louis accepts, but his form of vampirism shares very little with Lestat. Unlike Lestat who toys with his prey, Louis often avoids feeding on humans in favor of animals. Louis tells the young reporter that, "Had you asked me then, I would have told you it was aesthetic, that I wished to understand death in stages . . . But it was moral" (Rice 71). Louis continues his explanation by saying, "I believed I killed animals for aesthetic reasons only, and I hedged against the great moral question of whether or not by my very nature I was damned" (71). Louis's belief in his own damnation prevents him from becoming an unequivocal killer like Lestat. In fact, Lestat calls Louis a "whining coward of a vampire" (50). Lestat recognizes that Louis lacks monstrosity:

"Louis!" he said. "You are in love with your mortal nature! You chase after the phantoms of your former self. Freniere, his sister . . . these are images for you of what you were and what you still long to be. And in

your romance with mortal life, you're dead to your vampire nature!" (80-1)

Lestat's assessment speaks not only to Louis's vampire nature, but acts as a commentary on culture's changing vampire, as well. Lestat's reference to Freniere's sister provides further evidence of Louis's heroic qualities. Lestat killed Freniere leaving behind his sisters to run an estate and fend for themselves. Acting in a ghostly manner, Louis goes to the eldest sister Babette and gives her counsel on how to survive financially. When the slaves uncover Lestat and Louis's vampirism, Louis goes to Babette for help, for whom he has "a strong feeling" (59). Though Babette hides them, she obviously fears Louis despite the many ways he helped her in the past. Recognizing her fear, Louis feels devastation. He says, "To Babette, I was a monster; and I found it horrible to myself and would have done anything to overcome her feeling" (67). Louis's self-loathing never quite ceases to plague him. Yet, Lestat tempts Louis into feeding on a young girl named Claudia, who Lestat then turns into their vampire daughter. Claudia's inclusion into the family marks a change in Louis's diet; he begins feeding on people. Lestat and Claudia would often become acquainted and even form friendships with their potential victims, but Louis states that he "could not bear it" (97). Instead, he feeds on strangers, getting "only close enough to see the pulsing beauty, the unique expression, the new and passionate voice" and then killing "before those feelings of revulsion could be aroused in me, that fear, that sorrow" (97). Louis cannot escape his respect for human life because as a vampire, he possesses more human nature than monster nature. Claudia calls it his "flaw" (116), but in reality it marks an emerging pattern in vampire construction: humanity.

By the same token, 1980's vampires illustrated a continuation of the emasculated vampire monster. Auerbach states, "For the first time, vampirism itself is mortal" (168). In making that statement, Auerbach refers to the half-vampires in *The Lost Boys*, "the most important paradigm-shift of the 1980's" (168). In this film, Michael becomes a half-vampire after unwittingly drinking from a bottle of blood given to him by David, the leader of what appears to be young hoodlums, but is in fact a gang of vampires. Michael experiences blood lust and almost attacks his younger brother Sam. Sam, along with the local vampire hunting Frog brothers, sets out to locate and kill the unknown head vampire. By successfully killing the head vampire, Michael, his love-interest Star, and her surrogate little brother Laddie can turn back into humans. Though their mutual affection and humanity keep Michael and Star from becoming full out monsters, it should be noted that even the full vampires show a slight glimmer of humanity. They exhibit rage over the slaying of Marco, their fellow vampire, indicating some level of affection, which Chapter Four's domestication and familial relationship discussion will explore more fully. At the end of *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, Auerbach says, "The reversibility of vampirism in the 1980s movies—in *The Lost Boys* and *Fright Night* as well as *Near Dark*—suggests that at the end of the twentieth century, vampirism is wearing down and vampires need a long restorative sleep" (192).

Incidentally, the next culturally notable vampires emerge a decade later in the 1997 television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. In examining the show's vampires, Kane writes that, "All the vampires, except Angel, are shown to be bloodthirsty creatures that revel in the killing of humans" (113). Kane also points out that, aside from having great strength, "The vampire can appear like a normal human, transforming to a predatory form

a split second before the kill, yet in both forms, the vampire is remorseless” (112).

Admittedly, Kane’s assessment contains merit; however, it seems that Kane only examined the first season of the seven season series because his evaluation ignores the intricacies of Angel’s character, as well as Spike’s, a prominent vampire featured in the series.

For starters, Kane correctly asserts that Angel functions differently from most of the other vampires; gypsies cursed Angel with a soul. In Episode 7, Angel explains to Buffy why he hasn’t fed on a human being since the curse. He says, “When you become a vampire, the demon takes your body, but it doesn’t get your soul. That’s gone. No conscience, no remorse—it’s an easy way to live. You have no idea what it’s like to have done the things I’ve done and to care” (Buffy). As such, Angel embodies all of the trappings of the vampiric hero: he harbors regret over a terrible past and focuses intently on preserving lives and doing good. In Season Two, Angel’s heroism encounters a setback; after experiencing a moment of true happiness that breaks the curse, Angel loses his soul and reverts back to a demonic monster.

At first glance, it might seem that Angel’s return to monstrosity adheres to Kane’s estimation of *Buffy*’s other vampires. However, Spike proves to be a contradiction. Spike first appears as a villain in Season Two along with his insane vampiric love and partner in crime, Drusilla. Over the course of the series, Spike’s character development morphs him from a sinister villain, known for having killed more than one slayer, into a savior for the world. However, even in his days of villainy, Spike displays signs of the emasculated monster. In Episode 25, Spike and Drusilla assemble The Judge, “a demon brought forth to rid the earth of the plague of humanity, to separate the righteous from the wicked and

burn the righteous down” (Buffy). Initially, The Judge makes a move to kill Spike and Drusilla, telling them that they both “stink of humanity” because they “share affection and jealousy” (Buffy). So, like the 1980’s vampires, *Buffy*’s vampires reveal aspects of humanity, an emasculation of the vampiric monster. In Season Four, an underground government group implants Spike’s brain with a chip that arguably neuters his vampire monster. If he attempts to bite a human, he experiences a shock of extreme pain in his skull. As the series progresses, Spike develops romantic feelings for Buffy. In fact, he begins fighting alongside her, and the two eventually have an illicit affair. In Episode 119, the relationship turns sour when Buffy, shamed by her relationship with Spike, rejects his love and sexual advances. The rejection and subsequent argumentation soon escalates into Spike’s attempt to rape Buffy. She manages to fight him off, and almost immediately what he did dawns on him. Spike reacts with horror at himself.

Back at his own home, Spike complains to his friend Clem that “Everything always used to be so clear, Slayer, Vampire. Vampire kills Slayer, sucks her dry, picks his teeth with her bones. It’s always been that way . . . It isn’t supposed to be this way” (Buffy). Spike’s comment functions as a comment on the changing genre as well as the literal translation of the episode’s plot line. Similarly, Spike’s comment on his chip ruminates about the changing vampire genre when he says, “It won’t let me be a monster. And I can’t be a man. I’m nothing” (Buffy). A self-loathing Spike sets off to make a change. The last three episodes of Season Six show Spike in a cave with a shaman-like character with which he voluntarily undergoes numerous painful trials, like having scarab beetles attack and crawl inside his body. The shaman cites Buffy as the reason for Spike’s current state. He attempts to insult Spike, saying, “You were a legendary dark warrior

and you let yourself be castrated . . . You are a pathetic excuse for a demon” (Buffy). At the end of Episode 122, after enduring all of the trials, a bloody and beaten up Spike tells the shaman to “Make me what I was so Buffy can get what she deserves” (Buffy). Then, the shaman restores Spike’s soul, just as Spike wanted. At this point, Spike steps fully into the role of vampire as hero. Unlike Angel, it’s not a soul that makes Spike a vampiric hero, but his *quest* for a soul. He loathed his past and chose to redeem himself out of love for a human. Spike’s heroism culminates in Episode 144, the final episode of the series, when he sacrifices himself to stop the apocalypse. Later, Spike returns as a ghost and joins Angel on the already established spin-off series by that same name. Angel, who regained his soul in *Buffy*’s Episode 34, moved to Los Angeles at the end of Season Three so that Buffy could have a mortal love life. The television series *Angel* explores his life as a detective saving those less fortunate from the demonic atrocities of Los Angeles.

In the following years, a vampire’s abhorrence for its monster nature continues to emerge in favor of the increasingly more common vampire heroism. In the 1998 film *Blade*, Wesley Snipes portrays Blade, who was turned into a half vampire in the womb when a vampire bit his mother. According to Kane, Blade “shows a unique syntax for the sympathetic vampire” (119). Kane attributes his claim not only to Blade’s half-vampire status, but goes on to point out that “He has the creature’s strength and regenerative abilities, and is not affected by silver, sunlight, or garlic. However, Blade suffers the same longing for blood as every other vampire” (119). Blade’s vampirism set in when he entered adolescence, causing him to feed on humans. However, a vampire hunter named Whistler took Blade in and created a serum, which suppresses Blade’s bloodlust. Aside from taking the serum, Blade further rejects his vampire nature by hunting and killing

other vampires. A hematologist named Karen Jenson under Blade's protection advises Blade that he should let go of his regret over those past adolescent vampiric acts. Blade responds, saying:

I have spent my whole life looking for that thing that killed my mother. It made me what I am. And every time I take one of those monsters out I get a little piece of that life back. So, don't you tell me about forgetting.

(Blade)

Blade uses both his self-loathing and his tragic past to drive his quest to eradicate vampires, continually saving humans along the way. Though the other vampires in the film exhibit evil, Blade emerges as a tough, yet sympathetic character.

Aside from garnering sympathy from their audiences, the vampires of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Blade* paved the way for future recognizable vampires through the exhibition of valor. Like Angel, in 2007's television series *Moonlight*, Mick, a vampire and the main character, investigates crimes and protects human individuals because he wants "to help people," and, as he says, doing so "might make up for what I am" (*Moonlight* ep 2). Mick sees himself as a monster. Rather than making himself seem more frightening, his self-view cultivates him as a tragic hero. Mick's wife Coraline turned him into a vampire against his will on their wedding night. Despite his faultlessness, Mick's horror turns inward. In Episode 3, he says, "I went to bed a happily married man, and I woke up a monster" (*Moonlight*). However, Mick operates under a moral code, which sets him apart from other vampires. He doesn't hunt women or children, but attests that "there's predators out there who need to be dealt with" (*Moonlight*, ep 1). In particular, Mick dedicates himself to protecting news reporter Beth

Turner, who he rescued as a child when Coraline kidnapped her. Mick believes Coraline burned up after he escaped with Beth, but Coraline reappears later in the season seemingly human. Mick's quest to physically reclaim his humanity becomes a dominant plot line for the remainder of the season. Mick's quest comes as little surprise considering his human feelings for Beth. In Episode 2, he states that "Holding her in my arms, it almost feels like it could work between us, but monsters don't get happily ever after" (*Moonlight*). Despite his perpetual remonstrance of his monstrosity, Mick's characterization readily aligns with notions of heroism rather than villainy. Though *Moonlight* was short lived (lasting only one season), the vampire permeation of literature, film, and television underwent an additional surge in the following years.

Between 2008 and 2009, two novel series spawned two popular television series, *The Vampire Diaries* and *True Blood*. While their plots exhibit difference, the vampires of the shows share commonalities. Much like Mick and Angel before him, *True Blood*'s Bill and *The Vampire Diaries*' Stefan show disdain for their vampirism. In Episode 3 of *True Blood*, heroine and human mind reader Sookie visits Bill at his home and encounters disturbing vampire visitors which threaten her and feed on humans in front of her. After they leave, Sookie expresses her confusion to Bill and wonders why they seem so evil and he does not. Bill cites the visitors' nesting lifestyle as the source of their viciousness, and says, "Whereas vampires such as I who live alone are more likely to hang on to some semblance of our former humanity" (*True Blood*). Bill's affection and protection over Sookie further emphasizes his respect for humanity, provided that those humans show the same respect. After Sookie shares with Bill that her Uncle Bartlett molested her as a child, unbeknownst to her, Bill seeks out Uncle Bartlett and murders

him so that he can never upset her again. Yet, this murder is not the first one Bill commits to protect Sookie. In Episode 1, the Rattreys beat Sookie to the point of death because on a previous occasion she attacked them when they overpowered Bill to drain his blood (vampire blood is an illegal drug sought by human addicts). Bill saves Sookie and feeds his restorative blood to her after he kills the couple; he moves their bodies back to their trailer, creating evidence of a tornado to explain their deaths. Despite these human deaths, Bill cements his role as hero when he disregards his own existence to save Sookie from a serial killer. Because they have shared blood, Bill senses when Sookie encounters danger. While Rene (aka Drew Marshall) chases Sookie through a graveyard, Bill awakens. Despite the daylight hours, Bill fights his way into the daylight in search of her. Bill's skin smolders and by the time he reaches Sookie, his features are indiscernible; instead of skin, he has layers of burnt, flaking black ash. Aided by her boss, the shape shifter Sam, Sookie overcomes Rene and buries Bill in the ground to be restored by nightfall.

Similarly, *The Vampire Diaries'* Stefan cares for a human named Elena. Over the course of the first season, Elena discovers that Stefan saved her from her parents' fatal car accident. Stefan's first act of valor becomes one in a series of many where he saves her life from an evil threat. Aside from risking his life, Stefan also sacrifices his own feelings not just in those instances where she needs protection, but also simply to put her happiness before his own. In Season One, he breaks up with Elena because he fears his vampiric nature may bring harm or pain her way. The hiatus between the two is shortlived because their feelings overpower them, but Stefan's initial sentiment shows selflessness.

Much like Spike, even those ruthless vampires like Eric (*True Blood*) and Damon (*The Vampire Diaries*) engage in acts of heroism because their humanity outweighs their monstrosity. They find themselves ruled by emotions of love rather than hunger. In *True Blood* Episode 54, the Vampire Authority's Guardian Roman Zimojic interrogates Eric on whether or not he believes that mainstreaming (peaceful coexistence with humans) has value. Eric's response is rather typical for his character; he says, "There are certain humans I've felt protective toward in the past" (*True Blood*). In general, Eric's primary concern is generally his own well being, making him appear self-serving, manipulative, and often times monstrous. In the beginning of the second season, Eric holds Lafayette prisoner because he was dealing V (vampire blood). Nonetheless, Eric reveals aspects of humanity when it comes to those "certain humans" to whom he alludes. For example, when a suicide bomber attacks a vampire gathering, Eric throws his own body over Sookie to shield her from harm. In addition to that, Episode 51 reveals the story behind Eric's progeny, Pam through her flashbacks. Lying in bed next to Eric, Pam asks him to make her a vampire so that she may avoid the aging fate of most other madams. Eric refuses because of the enormous responsibility attached to being a "Maker." Pam, distraught, slashes her wrists leaving Eric with the choice to let her die or to turn her. Essentially, Eric has the choice to be a villain by abandoning her, but instead he takes the hero's route and becomes her "Maker." On the other hand, at the end of *The Vampire Diaries* Season One, Damon claims, "I'm not a hero, Elena. I don't do good. It's not in me" (*TVD*). Despite his protestations, over the course of the series, Damon morphs into a heroic figure. When he witnesses the death of a vampire named Anna, who he knows Jeremy (Elena's brother) cares for, he offers to erase Jeremy's memory of her so he won't

suffer. Additionally, in Season Three, an evil vampire werewolf hybrid named Klaus erases Stefan's humanity and takes him away from Mystic Falls. Even though Damon loves Elena himself, he knows how much she loves Stefan. With that knowledge in mind, Damon realizes Stefan's return would impede his own chances to win over Elena, yet he investigates Stefan's whereabouts anyway, determined to bring him back and stop her suffering.

By and large, in recent years, vampires tend to appear as protagonists rather than villains. However, Veronica Hollinger shows that that has not always been the case. She points out that throughout Stoker's *Dracula*, humans provide the narrative voice. In regards to the vampire, Hollinger states that:

The ideological outcome of this narrative method, of course, is the exclusion of the voice of the monstrous Other from the novel; that is, it keeps the outsider on the outside . . . In *Dracula*, the Other has no voice, no point of view; he merely is. While this, of course, ensures that he is all the more terrifying because almost completely unknown, it also effectively silences him. (149)

Hollinger's observations make the contrast between Count Dracula and his descendants all the more pronounced. Despite the general affiliation with monstrosity, the vampire evolution becomes clear. Since *Dracula*, vampire constructions display a pattern of tragic pasts, self-loathing, valorous acts to preserve human life, and pursuits for personal redemption. In short, vampires appear reincarnated as heroes.

CHAPTER THREE: THE FEMALE VAMPIRE'S RISE TO EMPOWERMENT

Much like women in human history, the representation of female vampires in literature, film, and television reveals a struggle toward female empowerment. Primarily, early female vampires serve as background characters. Even though Sheridan Le Fanu named his novella after his female vampire Carmilla, closer study still reveals that patriarchy stifles her role. In general, female vampires appear subservient to their male counterparts. Through the years, female vampires tend to function as sexualized and dominated objects within their various plot constructs. However, as they too experience the emasculation of the vampire's monster nature, a slow trend emerges in which female vampires balk at patriarchy and become more empowered. Selene from *The Underworld* film series symbolizes not only the most empowered female vampire, but also the epitome of the vampire evolution from monster to hero. Nonetheless, the journey to that point in female vampire representation is a long one, which often attempts to relegate the woman vampire to the role of whore or mother.

Because the archetypal vampire is born from Le Fanu and Stoker, their female vampires require foremost examination. (Polidori also serves as a vampire archetypal forefather, but his work, *The Vampyre*, does not contain accounts of female vampires.

Instead, male vampires feed on women and as far as readers can tell, leave them for dead.) At first glance, it might seem that Le Fanu's Carmilla displays power. After all, she kills General Spielsdorf's niece, feeds on Laura, and turns into a cat-like creature. But, Carmilla's transgressions coupled with her sexuality exhibit deviance from patriarchal norms. Ultimately, the discovery of her vampirism results in her extremely thorough final demise at the hands of the General, Laura's father, and two medical men:

The body, therefore, in accordance with the ancient practice, was raised, and a sharp stake driven through the heart of the vampire, who uttered a piercing shriek at the moment, in all respects such as might escape from a living person in the last agony. Then the head was struck off, and a torrent of blood flowed from the severed neck. The Body and head were next placed on a pile of wood, and reduced to ashes, which were thrown upon the river and borne away, and that territory has never since been plagued by visits of a vampire. (Le Fanu 134)

Helen Stoddart points out that "All the vicious energies unleashed onto Carmilla's body, and sanctioned by civil society (in the Imperial Commission's report), must invite some questioning of what she could possibly embody that might provoke this malignant yet fearful response, succeeded as it is by such durably vivid fears" (28). Not surprisingly, Stoddart connects the violent dispatchment of Carmilla to the values Carmilla threatens. Stoddart writes, "On examination, however, Carmilla's pumped-up proportions of power can be read as the monstrous result of injections of various different ingredients, each of which is recognizably anathematical to the socio-economic exigencies of a particular late-Victorian, British, bourgeois masculinism" (28). Suffice it to say, beyond her

vampirism, and in fact on a deeper level, Carmilla's supposed power threatens traditional patriarchy, which is why Le Fanu's male characters must vanquish her.

Likewise, the female vampires in Stoker's *Dracula* fall subject to patriarchal control. When the three vampire women in the castle attempt to drink from Jonathan, the Count furiously admonishes them. Jonathan claims that he could not "imagine such wrath and fury, even in the demons of the pit" (Stoker 38). With eyes that "were positively blazing," the Count employs "a fierce sweep of his arm" to fling the fair vampire who was about to bite Jonathan (38-9). Then, the Count yells at the women, saying, "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! or you'll have to deal with me" (39). Even though the female vampires outnumber Dracula, they follow his orders with only a retort accusing Dracula of having "never loved" (39). Here, Dracula responds by saying, "Yes, I too can love; you yourselves can tell it from the past" (39). To further placate the women, Dracula tells them they will be able to have Jonathan at a later date. However, Dracula's ultimate manner of placation carries powerful patriarchal connotations: he silences them by giving them a child (39). By drawing the women's attention toward a child to keep them from interfering with Dracula's plans, aspects of Stoker's Victorian time period appear readily recognizable. Of course, a gruesome twist emerges with the reader's realization that what physically silences the women will be the actual consumption of the child.

Furthermore, Dracula's statement regarding his ability to love alludes to the women becoming vampires, implying that it was through him and his "love" that they became so. Such an implication gains more credence later in the novel when Dracula focuses on Lucy and Mina. Brenda Hammack makes the point that, "By infecting female

victims, Dracula seeks to propagate a race of vampires” (891). Though she refers primarily to the threat he poses to “racial purity,” it’s significant that the majority of Dracula’s victims are women. Through women, Dracula spreads his vampiric seed; for Dracula, women are both the whore and the mother. For example, Dracula attacks Mina in her bed in a sexually fraught scene:

With his left hand he held both Mrs Harker’s hands, keeping them away with her arms at full tension; his right hand gripped her by the back of the neck, forcing her face down on his bosom. Her white nightdress was smeared with blood, and a thin stream trickled down the man’s bare breast, which was shown by his torn-open dress. The attitude of the two had a terrible resemblance to a child forcing a kitten’s nose into a saucer of milk to compel it to drink. As we burst into the room, the Count turned his face, and the hellish look that I had heard described seemed to leap into it. His eyes flamed red with devilish passion; the great nostrils of the white aquiline nose opened wide and quivered at the edges; and the white sharp teeth, behind the full lips of the blood-dripping mouth, champed together like those of a wild beast. (Stoker 282)

As a result of this scene, Mina becomes a mother-like figure when she begins to morph into a vampire, essentially giving birth to her vampire self.

In addition to the whore-mother paradigm, the scene above ties into patriarchal relevance as well. Cyndy Hendershot writes that, “In the modern and postmodern Western world the body has traditionally been used as a means for representing masculine superiority and feminine inferiority” (373). Dracula’s manner of holding on to

Mina in the scene displays masculine superiority over the female form. Hendershot also points out that:

The confusion of fluids-blood for semen, blood for milk, a man's blood for menstrual blood- of sexual acts- enforced fellatio on a man's chest, a man breastfeeding a woman, a woman performing cunnilingus on a man's chest-and of gender roles-a man nurturing a woman, a man's chest substituting for a menstruating vagina-point back to the one-sex model discussed by Laqueur in which the body itself was prone to fluctuations between "male" and "female" organs and fluids. Mina's subsequent horror over the act suggests that she has understood it as a sexual experience, but one which defies "normal" heterosexual dimensions. (380)

In mentioning Lacquer, Hendershot refers to Thomas Lacquer who wrote *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*, attesting that Lacquer “argues that from the time of the ancient Greeks to the eighteenth century, European society viewed anatomy according to a one-sex model” (373). Hendershot also specifies “Lacquer argues that the one-sex model performed the powerful ideological function of promoting and preserving male cultural superiority” (373). At the same time, Hendershot also makes a case for vampirism’s ambiguity within the one-sex body construct. She writes that, “Although there is clear social difference-Dracula controls Lucy, Mina, and the vampire women-there is no physical sign of difference between the aggressions of male and female vampires” (379). Hendershot argues that male and female vampires appear as equals outside of the social realm. She states, “Although vampires retain their social gender as

men or women, anatomically they are the same, with the genital organs being superseded by a mouth which is the same in both male and female vampires” (379).

But, that social difference cannot be ignored. Despite Hendershot’s argument of genital equality amongst Stoker’s vampires, it should be noted that only Dracula creates new vampires. He controls the continued vampire line. So, Dracula, the only male vampire, maintains power and control over his female counterparts both socially and by vampiric genital standards. He commands the female vampires in his castle to do as he says, and they do; he forces Mina to drink from him, and it is only from his death that she is released from vampirism (Stoker 377-8). So, taking into account all of Hendershot’s analysis in combination with Lacquer’s ideas of the one-sex body, still Mina’s potential vampirism highlights and cements the female vampire’s subjection to the patriarchal construct which Dracula embodies.

Additionally, Veronica Hollinger unites the threads of patriarchy by marrying the subjection of the female vampires to their relegation as objects by not only Dracula, but also all of the male characters. She states that, “the roles played by the female characters in Dracula soon reveals that they are as dependent upon their relationship with Stoker’s sinister Count as they are upon the ordinary men by whom they are befriended or to whom they are betrothed” (152). Hollinger claims that Lucy and Mina “are cast as prizes in the contest between the Vampire and his human opponents, while the three vampire brides have already been won” (152). Though Mina finds herself released from vampirism in the end, she does not escape from patriarchy. In accordance with Hollinger’s view, “If Mina Harker enjoys peace and prosperity at the end of her adventures, it is because she submits herself to the values of Stoker’s Victorian reality and

returns to the patriarchal fold cleansed of any contact with the Other who both attracts and threatens from the outside” (152). Whether a vampire or a woman, Mina acts as a commodity relegated to the realms of patriarchy.

In later years, female vampires continue to be dominated by their masculine vampiric peers. Though a woman wrote *Interview With the Vampire*, patriarchy confines its primary female figure, the vampire Claudia. When Lestat turns Claudia into a vampire, she is five years old (Rice 90-2). Claudia never physically alters from childhood, but she matures into womanhood on a mental level and engages in monstrous acts of vampirism. However, despite Claudia’s monster nature, Judith Johnson declares that she “is simultaneously the victim of her homosexual parents’ incestuous love for her, and a perpetual child bride doomed, in an exaggeration of the conventional marital infantilization of women, never to grow up enough to live an independent and sexually autonomous life” (78). Often describing her as a doll, Louis’s perception of Claudia’s vampirism supports Johnson’s assessment. Louis says that:

She was to be the demon child forever . . . But her mind. It was a vampire’s mind . . . yet more and more her doll-like face seemed to possess two totally aware adult eyes, and innocence seemed lost somewhere with neglected toys and the loss of a certain patience. There was something dreadfully sensual about her lounging on the settee in a tiny nightgown of lace and stitched pearls; she became an eerie and powerful seductress, her voice as clear and sweet as ever, though it had a resonance which was womanish, a sharpness sometimes that proved shocking. (100-1)

Claudia's stagnated nature conjures anger and contempt within her, which she directs toward Louis and Lestat. However, Claudia knowingly realizes that aside from trapping her in perpetual childhood, that Lestat has also trapped Louis. While discussing Lestat with Louis, she says, "And we've been his puppets, you and I; you remaining to take care of him, and I your saving companion" (117). Johnson cites Claudia's "resulting rage at her powerlessness" as the reason she tries to kill Lestat, which "ultimately leads to her own death" (78). Still, Claudia's effort to murder Lestat serves as a rebellion against patriarchal restraint. Janice Doane and Devon Hodges point out that instead of "the monstrous sexual appetites of Stoker's somewhat marginalized vampire women," Claudia embodies "the rage of a monstrous girl vampire against her infantilization and dependency in a world defined by the fathers" (424). Aside from her attack on Lestat, Claudia's persuasion of Louis to turn a grieving mother named Madeleine into a vampire illustrates her additional denunciation of her previous patriarchal restrictions. But, as Doane and Hodges argue, "The mother, Madeleine, is no less defined by male society than Claudia has been, though the attachment between the women reveals a shared desire to repudiate paternal control" (426). Unfortunately, Claudia and Madeleine never break free of that control. Patriarchy reigns as Lestat returns and serves as the impetus for Claudia's, as well as Madeleine's, final demise at the hands of Théâtre des Vampires.

Markedly, 1987's *The Lost Boys* ushers in the beginning of an ever so slight change for the female vampire. In this film, the female half vampire Star adheres to the changing pattern of vampirism, the evolution from demonized monster to a more heroic status. Star loathes her emerging vampirism, wishes to return to full humanity, saves other humans, and fights against the evil vampires. However, Star only volleys from the

fetters of one patriarchal construct into another; she finds salvation from the male dominated vampire gang through an entirely male vampire slaying team. During her involvement with both groups, she wears the mantle of whore and mother. Star reveals that the night she spent seducing Michael was meant to be the night she fed on him as her first kill. Star's feelings win out. Those same feelings prompt her to act as a substitute mother for Laddie, a half-vampire child. Though Star serves as evidence for a changing, monster emasculated female vampire, she still operates within the confines of patriarchy.

Like Star, the female vampires of Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* novel series draw their vampiric heroism from their mothering roles. Anna Silver points out that in the series "gender ideology is ultimately and unapologetically patriarchal" (122). Silver acknowledges that though "Edward and Bella are the center of the novel's narrative, the series is equally concerned with the contemporary American nuclear family, and a woman's role within that family" (122). Silver deals primarily with Bella's role within Meyer's patriarchy, but Bella's actions after becoming a vampire remain the focus here. Edward, a vampire, turns Bella into a vampire in *Breaking Dawn* after she gives birth to their child and lies dying on the table (Meyer, *Dawn* 375-8). By Silver's estimation, Bella becomes "the apotheosis of the self-sacrificial, selfless mother, who is willing to die for the good of her unborn vampire child, and the warrior-mother who successfully protects the integrity and survival of her family" (123). Interestingly enough, if one looks at the primary female vampires in Meyer's series, they all exhibit power through mothering (with the exception of the villainous vampire Victoria). Esme, Carlisle's wife, acts as a mother to the entire Cullen clan, which is lead by her husband. Silver writes that, "Esme defines herself primarily as a mother (127). Meyer reveals that Esme became a vampire

after attempting suicide because of the death of her baby (*Twilight* 368). The other prominent female Cullens are Alice and Rosalie. Alice often engages in mothering behavior toward Bella by buying her cute clothing and throwing parties in her honor. While Alice becomes Bella's close friend, Rosalie generally appears unapproachable and angry throughout the series. However, in *Breaking Dawn*, Rosalie's background story is revealed. She becomes heroic through her protection of Bella's unborn child. Again, Meyer's female vampires derive power from maternal nature. And though they are strong and powerful vampire creatures, their leader is still male.

Conversely, *True Blood* exhibits a convulsion of female vampires, empowerment, and patriarchy, all of which often wrestle against one another. The majority of the vampire makers are male, and in the rare instances where a female appears as a maker, she is characterized as a harpy. Bill's maker Lorena serves as a prime example. By turning Bill, she robbed him of his human life and took him away from his family. As a result, Bill appears a tortured soul, while Lorena is a villain. Through a series of flashbacks, Bill's hatred for Lorena and his desire to get away from her becomes increasingly apparent. Though other makers appear in *True Blood*, they tend to be characterized as beloved. For example, Eric exhibits great affection for his maker Godric, and weeps over his death. In the same way, Eric's own progeny Pam shows love and fealty towards him. Bill, on the other hand, tells Lorena that he never has and never will love her, and that she is "the loneliest, saddest creature" he's ever seen. Despite her position of power, Lorena appears far from heroic or empowered. Truth be told, female vampires with power appear rarely in *True Blood*. The face of the Vampire League is a female vampire named Nan, but she serves a council led by a powerful male vampire.

The vampire population of Louisiana falls under the rule of a Sophie-Anne, but she refuses to marry and join her kingdom to Russell Edgington. As a result, he assassinates her. *True Blood*'s Jessica is perhaps the most intriguing female vampire. She undergoes repression and concealment not only of her sexual nature, but also of her vampire nature. When Jessica became a vampire, she was a virgin. When she and Hoyt, a male human whom she loves, engage in sex, Jessica realizes that each time will be the painful equivalent of the first time since vampires heal. Not only is she a sexual novice, but a novice vampire as well. Though she enters into a monogamous relationship with Hoyt, Jessica soon feels the need to explore her hunger for human blood. She attempts to repress her feelings and conceal her nature, but Jessica does this in order to remain worthy of Hoyt. Eventually, she tires from hiding all aspects of her nature. She balks at Hoyt's outrage and assumes authority over herself. At least, she assumes what control she can considering she must remain under the authority of her male maker, Bill. For female vampires in *True Blood*, empowerment exists—almost.

Subsequently, *The Underworld* franchise's Selene acts as the ultimate illustration of the fully empowered female vampire. Kane attests that Selene "is the first vampire to be a heroine, and yet proud of her condition" (127). Kane specifically notes that Selene doesn't possess the self-loathing prevalent in her vampire hero predecessors like Angel and Blade. Despite the patriarchy of her coven, Selene is a warrior. While most female vampires appear as canvases for sexual fantasy, Selene disregards the attempts made to sexualize her. Early in the first film, a fellow female vampire attempts to dress Selene for a party. She hands Selene a dress which Lucien, an important male vampire, wants her to wear. Selene ignores the dress and maintains her warrior wear, a full body leather tactical

suit. Though it hugs her skin, it is important to note that Selene's body is covered from the neck down.

In a blatant disregard for the law of her kind, Selene awakens Viktor, one of the ancient male vampires before it is his time to take control of the coven because she feels the coven needs his leadership. As the film progresses, Selene continues to go against her male led coven by protecting and loving Michael, a Lycan which is the vampire race's enemy. Additionally, when it becomes apparent that Viktor caused her family's death and turned her into a vampire, she kills him. In doing so, Selene frees herself from the patriarchal bonds of her coven. In the fourth film, Selene awakens in a lab, having been in a kind of induced coma for many years. As it turns out, she is a mother. As the product of Michael and Selene's affair, Eve contains genetically valuable blood. Selene must protect her from the Lycans who want to use her blood to create the ultimate powerful creature, a vampire Lycan hybrid. In previous renditions of female vampires, being cast in a mother's role relegates a woman to a secondary position to their male counterparts. But, Selene maintains her heroism. She protects Eve and in a cliffhanger ending, presumably rescues a comatose Michael from the lab.

In short, the *Underworld* films valorize female empowerment. Not only does Selene balk against corrupt male leaders, but she also saves Michael. Though he is a powerful figure in his own right, *he* needs *her*. Significantly, the most powerful creature in the film series turns out to be a *daughter*. For Kane, the first film *Underworld* shows that "vampire film has reached the point where vampires are no longer evil creatures" (127). In this case, a female vampire is not a background character either. Selene

personifies vampire heroism, and is the culmination of female vampire empowerment. As Kane emphasizes, Selene is “the star of the film, unrepentant about her condition” (127).

CHAPTER FOUR: FURTHER VAMPIRE DOMESTICATION

Not only have vampires evolved from villains into heroes, but recent cultural vampire representations showcase varying degrees of domestication. Aside from heroism and female vampire empowerment, contemporary vampires from literature, television, and film often commune in family units, adopt human friendly diets, and even in some cases reside in suburbia. If one views these vampiric adaptations through the scope of time, hearkening back to the traditional vampire archetype, the emasculation of the vampire's monster nature garners additional emphasis.

For starters, through the years, vampires appear characterized within familial bonds. Rice's 1976 *Interview With the Vampire*, 1987's *The Lost Boys*, and 1987's *Near Dark* all contain vampires operating in family systems. Kane recognizes this transition and credits Rice. He writes that, "In the novel, vampires are no longer solitary creatures. The syntax of the lone vampire, enduring the centuries, is replaced by Lestat and the family of companions he creates with Louis and the child Claudia" (68). Yet, despite the vampiric family unit, Kane asserts that, "The prevailing tone of the book and the movie is one of loneliness" (107). The loneliness Kane identifies most likely stems from the dysfunction present in this particular vampiric family. After all, Lestat tricks Louis into turning Claudia, and Claudia and Louis attempt to kill Lestat.

Released over a decade later, *The Lost Boys* further explores vampiric family dynamics. In the film, Sam and the Frog brothers battle a vampire gang as they try to discover and destroy the head vampire in order to return Sam's half-vampire brother Michael to humanity. Sam and Michael's mother just began dating her new boss, Max. When it is discovered that he is the head vampire, Max explains his motives to the family:

MAX. I knew if I could get Sam and Michael into the family there's no way you could say no.

LUCY. Where's Michael?

MAX. It was all going to be so perfect, Lucy. Just like one big happy family—your boys and my boys.

EDGAR. Great. The bloodsucking Brady Bunch. (*Lost Boys*)

After Max's diatribe, a battle ensues. Michael, Star, and Sam all attack Max, but to no avail. Luckily, Lucy's father drives into the home, the force of which sends a stake through Max's body. Though Auerbach credits Sam for the success of destroying Max and preserving the family, her examination of Max's demise has significance. She writes, "The purified family is all we need to see: the ramifications of vampirism have shrunk from the political arena into the snug domestic arena" (168). Auerbach's statement brings to mind the racially motivated fears Stoker used in crafting Count Dracula. Instead of using national fears, vampirism in *The Lost Boys* plays on domestic fears. In particular, Auerbach points out that it "indicts the careless sexuality of the mother who exposes her sons to danger" (168).

Similarly, *Near Dark*, which was also released in 1987, “is modeled off of a family with each character serving a different role” (Kane 95). Kane points out that the family positions “are not based on genetic ties, rather on the character’s leadership roles and apparent age relative to the others” (95). The group travels, lives, and feeds together. The *Near Dark* vampires appear particularly vicious. In one scene, they go into a bar and proceed to terrify the patrons by killing and feeding on each individual; the scene appears rife with blood and gore.

Admittedly, the vampires of *Interview With the Vampire*, *The Lost Boys*, and *Near Dark* all present differing degrees of monstrosity and monster emasculation. But, they mark the beginning of vampire familial bonds. Over the years, the vampire familial bond appears more frequently, and often with a marked decrease in villainy. Stephenie Meyer’s vampires from the *Twilight* series serve as a prime example. *Twilight*, as well as the follow-up books in the series, follow the story of Bella Swan, a clumsy girl hopelessly in love with Edward Cullen, a mind reading vampire who loves her in return and constantly battles his appetite for her blood. Edward and his family of vampires show affection for Bella, and by Anna Silver’s estimation, “The Cullens’ non-human, monstrous, adoptive family is, ironically, more of a family than Bella’s biological human family” (126). What differentiates this vampire family from its predecessors is their goodness. Bella first hones in on Edward’s lack of villainy. Despite his numerous speeches to convince her of his dangerous capabilities, Edward’s inability to sway her reveals itself when she speaks to her friend Jessica:

“I can’t explain it right . . . but he’s even more unbelievable *behind* the face.” The vampire who wanted to be good — who ran around saving

people's lives so he wouldn't be a monster . . . I stared toward the front of the room. (Meyer, *Twilight* 204)

Bella's analysis of Edward proves true of both him and his family. Silver's attention to the Cullen family dynamic further emphasizes the domesticity of the Cullens:

Headed by the patriarchal but compassionate godlike father Carlisle (who, like God, creates his own wife when he finds her dying), balanced by the affectionate and protective mother Esme, and humanized by squabbling siblings, the Cullens are the family that Bella craves. The "large wooden cross" (*Twilight* 330) hanging in their home, a reminder of Carlisle's seventeenth-century pastor father, along with the earnest discussions about whether or not vampires have souls (Meyer hints that they must), suggests that the family is even, in some way, Christian. (126-7)

Clearly, Meyer characterizes her vampires in such a way that their monster natures appear quite emasculated, replaced instead by humanity as seen in their good deeds and Christian ties.

Moreover, the diet prevalent among the Cullens further demonstrates an emasculation of the vampire monster nature. The Cullens hunt animals rather than feed on their human counterparts. In trying to better understand Edward, Bella asks him why he feeds only on animals. His response reveals a lack of villainy:

"I don't *want* to be a monster." His voice was very low.

"But animals aren't enough?"

He paused. "I can't be sure, of course, but I'd compare it to living on tofu and soy milk; we call ourselves vegetarians, our little inside joke. It

doesn't completely satiate the hunger — or rather thirst. But it keeps us strong enough to resist. Most of the time.” His tone turned ominous.

“Sometimes it's more difficult than others.” (Meyer, *Twilight* 187-8)

Edward does not hide the temptations of his nature, but the fact that he fights and rejects that element of himself places him among the previously examined vampire heroes. Like the developing vampire hero archetype, Edward engages in the preservation of human life rather than the consumption of it.

However, the Cullens are not the first vampires to opt for human blood substitutes. In *Interview With the Vampire*, Louis partakes of animal blood for quite some time. Though he eventually gives into his cravings for human blood, as he says, he must do so quickly “before those feelings of revulsion could be aroused in me, that fear, that sorrow,” which torture him upon taking a human life (Rice 97). Like Louis, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer's* Angel fills with remorse at feeding on a human. Because of a curse placed on him by gypsies, Angel possesses a soul, and with that, a conscience. As a result, Angel gets his sustenance from blood pints at butcher shops or blood banks. Because Angel “struggles with his condition,” as previously examined in Chapter Two, he falls into the vampire as hero category, which according to Kane illustrates a “syntax” of “marked difference” from “other vampires” (113). Unlike those others who “are merciless killers,” the “hero is afforded sympathy” (113). Similarly, like Angel and Edward, Stefan from *The Vampire Diaries* consumes only animal blood. Throughout the series, he struggles with his cravings thanks to the temptations offered up by his brother and the evil Klaus, who remain unperplexed with human blood consumption. When he “falls off the wagon,” Stefan inevitably becomes wracked with remorse and self-loathing.

Likewise, in the film *Blade*, Blade “suffers the same longing for blood as every vampire,” but rather than give into it, Blade takes daily injections of serum “which looks like watered down blood” (Kane 119). Additionally, Kane points out that in the *Underworld* film the “vampires are never seen attacking humans for food,” and instead it’s indicated, “they subsist on livestock and synthetic blood” (127). But, the ultimate blood substitute appears in novel inspired television series, *True Blood*. In *True Blood*’s world, vampires have “come out of the closet,” and can live amongst humans without feeding on them thanks to scientist’s new bottled synthetic blood, True Blood. Many vampires still feed on humans in the show, but those that do against the human’s will tend to be characterized as villains. Bill, one of the main characters and a vampire, moves back to his pre-Civil War home, Bon Temps, Louisiana in order to “mainstream,” which is to live alongside humans. Once there, he takes up a relationship with local waitress, Sookie Stackhouse. Bill feeds on Sookie with her permission, generally during sex. J. M. Tyree best sums up Bill’s relationship with human blood in saying that Bill “enjoys the pleasures of Sookie Stackhouse’s neck as much as she enjoys his fangs, but he gets his sustenance out of a bottle” (37).

Speaking of fangs, the emasculation of the vampire’s monster nature within today’s culture gains further credence when one examines the film adaptation of Stephenie Meyer’s *Twilight*. In the film, the vampires lack traditional fangs. In fact, their teeth appear the same as any human’s teeth. In examining *Dracula*, the vampire archetype, Hendershot writes, “Although vampires retain their social gender as men or women, anatomically they are the same, with the genital organs being superseded by a mouth which is the same in both male and female vampires”(379). According to her

analysis, “active penetration of the neck” represents vampirism. Though the *Twilight* film vampires retain their ability drink human blood and live immortal lives, their lack of fangs still seems like a form of castration. Traditionally, fangs demarcate a vampire’s power and virility; therefore, despite whatever powers these vampires possess, the lack of fangs makes them appear weak. Though fear remains subjective, without the fangs, vampires arguably lose the physical animalism that contributes to their ability to frighten. In fact, Count Dracula’s animalistic features (hairy palms, sharp nails) render Harker unable to “repress a shudder” (Stoker 18). Auerbach attributes Harker’s repulsion to Dracula’s “wolfish” affinity (88). Dracula’s Darwinian inspired physicality proves a far cry from the *Twilight* vampires and their contemporaries. Unlike Dracula, the majority of recent vampires appear youthful and alluring. If Edward inspires any shudders from Bella, they are derived from attraction:

Edward in the sunlight was shocking. I couldn’t get used to it, though I’d been staring at him all afternoon. His skin, white despite the faint flush from yesterday’s hunting trip, literally sparkled, like thousands of tiny diamonds were embedded in the surface. He lay perfectly still in the grass, his shirt open over his sculpted, incandescent chest, his scintillating arms bare. His glistening, pale lavender lids were shut, though of course, he didn’t sleep. A perfect statue, carved in some unknown stone, smooth like marble, glittering like crystal. (Meyer, *Twilight* 260)

Throughout her novel, Meyer continually reminds readers of Edward’s allure. He has “flawless lips,” “perfect muscles,” and an “angel’s face” (*Twilight* 261-2). Indeed, Edward’s physicality demonstrates the full extent of vampiric difference compared with

Dracula, the quintessential vampire. Moreover, Meyer's attractive vampires aren't an anomaly; they are the latest in a line of good-looking vampires. *Buffy*'s Angel lives up to his name; while researching his identity, Giles (Buffy's watcher) finds mention of "Angelus, the one with the angelic face" (Episode 7). Similarly, Rice describes Louis as "beautiful" and "handsome" (46). The departure from animalistic, shudder-inducing physicality only adds to the vampire's stature as a hero figure, thus further emasculating a vampire's monster nature.

In addition to blood substitute diets and increased attractiveness, further evidence of vampire monster emasculation can be seen in the trend of coexistence with humans. *The Gates*, a 2010 television series, showcases some of the most domesticated vampires. Nick Monohan moves his family to The Gates after accepting a job as the gated community's chief of police. He soon discovers that the majority of its inhabitants are supernatural beings. Monohan's family ends up developing a close relationship with Dylan and Claire Radcliffe, a vampire couple living in the gates with their adopted human child. The couple keeps their vampirism secret and feeds on blood Dylan brings home from the biomedical lab he works at. Still, several instances take place where the couple gives in to their vampirism. Dylan feeds on a human to save Nick from being shot, while Claire simply struggles with her nature:

CLAIRE. You don't know how hard this is for me.

DYLAN. How is this hard? I get us all the blood we need from the lab.

CLAIRE. It's not about the blood! It's about the carpools and school committees and the dinner parties and the book clubs! No matter how

hard I try, I'm never gonna assimilate like you want me to. Not with these people.

DYLAN. I know you're struggling. Okay? But we have to try. Because there is a little girl upstairs who is counting on you and me to be there when she wakes up, to love her and protect her and be her family.

Apart from the blood consumption, Claire's protestations could be those of any human struggling with the responsibilities of adulthood. Such a theory appears even more reasonable considering Claire's reunion with an old friend named Christian who scoffs at her domestication and lures her back to her feeding days. That particular plot line mirrors the struggle many young people experience during the transition into adulthood. Still, despite the slip-ups, both Dylan and Claire exhibit qualities of the vampire as hero, most significantly through the care and protection of their daughter. As a matter of fact, they moved into The Gates specifically for their daughter Emily. The intense focus on suburbanized assimilation combined with a diet comprised primarily of blood substitutes and the familial focus qualifies the Radcliffe vampires as domesticated.

All in all, the aspects explored here in Chapter Four — familial bonds, blood substitutes, and suburbanization — combined with the vampires' heroism illustrate a transformation from the traditional vampire archetype. No longer is the vampire perpetually portrayed as a villain; instead, emasculation subdues the vampire's monster self. Currently, vampire representations in literature, film, and television show increased levels of humanistic characterization. The change prompts a significant question: why?

CHAPTER FIVE: THE REAL MONSTERS

Over the last two decades, vampiric representations in literature, television, and film demonstrate a radical transformation from the traditional vampire archetype. If, as Nina Auerbach suggests, “every age embraces the vampire it needs,” the morphing of vampires from monstrous villains into heroes communicates a significant message about our culture. In her book, *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, Auerbach explores pre-Stoker vampires up to those of the late 1980’s. She draws connection after connection between vampires and culture; she even manages to find links between presidential assassinations and Watergate’s influence to vampire representation. She writes, “Leaders fell like extras in movies,” and that “whether Americans feared cultural crisis and disintegration or relished the new beginnings they promised, authority in the 1970s was, before all things, mortal” (133). She asserts, “Vampires rushed in to fill the vacuum” (133). However, Auerbach’s book published in 1995 contains no examination of the vampires which emerge after the 1980’s. And, although in 2006’s *The Changing Vampire of Film and Television*, Tim Kane studies vampires up until 2003’s *Underworld*, his research essentially explores only the syntactical changes within the genre rather than the reasons for those changes. Keeping in mind Auerbach’s theory that certain vampires surface within a culture because of a need, the increased presence of vampires emasculated of

their monster nature in favor of heroism appears compelling. In truth, since Auerbach's exploration of late 80's vampires, the world underwent immense change; fears changed. The 90's saw several long-term serial killers apprehended, large-scale acts of terrorism, widely publicized cases of filicide, mass shootings, disease outbreaks, and a series of hate crimes. As a result, the vampires of today reflect an internal struggle with messages of tolerance and the realization that the real monsters are human. More often than not, vampires in contemporary culture's literature, film, and television reveal themselves as heroes. They exhibit self-control, but possess the capability of darkness necessary in dealing with the fears and anxieties of modern culture about the real monstrosities, namely the crimes perpetuated by humanity.

To begin with, Stoker's vampire embodies a national fear of a racial, foreign "other." In fact, it propagated vampirism as a canvas for fears of "the other." Stoker even plays with the conceptual dangers of the vampire "other" as a neighbor (Dracula takes up residence in England and feeds on the neighboring Lucy and Mina). However, instead of a fictional foreign monster, 1991 Milwaukee residents discovered a human monster in their midst, Jeffrey Dahmer. On July 23, 1991, *New York Times* journalist Isabel Wilkerson wrote that Dahmer's neighbors knew something "was terribly wrong in their building" (A14). According to her article, "Milwaukee police removed three human heads stored in a refrigerator, boxes containing body parts, photographs of several victims and a barrel of acid" (A14). Reportedly, Dahmer killed 15 men and boys ("15"). In the early nineties, terror of "the other" came less from a foreign entity, and more from local criminals. A few years prior to Dahmer's arrest, serial killer Ted Bundy was executed (Nordheimer A1). A series of other serial killers garnered attention in the late

1980's and early 1990's: Michael Bruce Ross sentenced 1987 (Yardley B3), Arthur Shawcross arrested 1990 (Hevesi B19), Andrei Chikatilo arrested 1990 (Schmemmann A3), Kenneth McDuff arrested 1992 (Cartwright). Meanwhile, from 1974 through 1991, a serial killer known as the BTK killer engaged in a killing spree, all the while taunting police with letters and phone calls (Davey 1, 24). In 2005, he was identified as Dennis Rader, a Boy Scout leader and a leader within his church (24). Decades after his murderous career began, police arrested him.

By and large, our culture fears the criminal acts of fellow humans. *True Blood* caters to those fears. In its 2008 inaugural season, a serial killer plagues the town of Bon Temps, Louisiana. The killer's female victims all have connections to vampires in some way; many are known "fang bangers" (those who engage in sex with vampires on a regular basis). Initially, all evidence suggests a vampire as the guilty party. However, Sookie soon discovers the real killer is Rene Lenier, aka Drew Marshall. Rene's first kill was his own sister because he disapproved of her relationship with a vampire. His hatred of human women involved in sexual dalliance with vampires propels his rage. In essence, the murders he commits fall under a hate crime. Truth be told, as one of the most contemporary re-imaginings of vampirism, *True Blood* acts as a metaphorical minefield for current societal fears and anxieties. Not only does the show incorporate the fright surrounding serial killers, but it also addresses the clash between hate crime and tolerance, and even terrorism. Tyree points out that the show "positions itself as a loose but obvious allegory about the mainstream acceptance of so-called 'alternative lifestyles'" (32). According to Tyree, "it's about tolerance and integration of many kinds, using the vitriolic American debate over gay marriage as a touchstone, while linking it

with the Southern reaction against civil rights” (32). Playing on the rhetoric of the gay rights movement, *True Blood* describes the vampire emergence into society as “coming out of the Coffin.” Throughout the series, humans struggle to come to terms with a world in which vampires exist. In a particularly gruesome episode, a human trio sets fire to a nest of vampires’ home, ultimately resulting in their “true deaths.”

While drawing from the reactions to Civil Rights might seem a reach in contemporary America (the current president is African American), it hasn’t been so long ago since the murder of James Byrd, Jr., attracted media attention. In June 1998, James Byrd, Jr., was “torn to pieces when he was dragged behind a pickup truck” (Lyman WK6). Journalist Rick Lyman asserts that while “the crime was horrific enough . . . it was the way the victim was chosen — singled out because he was part of a despised minority — that aroused the nation” (WK6). In October of the same year, a bicyclist discovered what he first thought was a scarecrow, but in reality was “the burned, battered and nearly lifeless body” of a gay man named Matthew Shepard (Brooke A9). The culprits behind the deaths of Byrd and Shepard murdered because of their own hate. And while such hate crimes appear less frequently in the media, a surge in teen suicide stories permeates the media, most prompted by relentless bullying for being different in some way.

Though *True Blood* incorporates humor, it’s noteworthy that the objects of hatred (the vampires) tend not to be the ones committing the hate charged acts. Tyree even admits that the show’s “tones often clash, using the vocabulary of gay rights to serve a central heterosexual love affair, although probably the show desires a more universal view of civil rights” (34). Tyree reminds viewers, “There’s violence and anger among the

marginalized population,” but still emphasizes that the “prime source of evil in season 1 is a human serial murderer” (34). Tyree acknowledges, “*True Blood* manages to broach an unusual kind of horror, that inflicted *on* and not by vampires” (34). Tyree supports his claim by citing not only the previously mentioned fire attack on the vampires’ home and the vampire hating serial killer, but also the kidnapping of Eddie Gauthier, a gay vampire. Sookie’s brother Jason and his “sociopathic” girlfriend Amy take Eddie from his home so they can tap his veins for his blood, because vampire blood, called V, acts as “as sort of magic mushroom Viagra” for humans (34). Tyree asks, “Is the viewer supposed to bliss out with the couple and recognize the vampire’s subhuman or ex-human status?” (34). Several times, Amy admonishes a doubting Jason, telling him he should feel no sympathy for Eddie because he is just a dead thing. Yet, Tyree believes “Eddie is one of the most sympathetic characters in the whole season” (34).

In *True Blood*’s second season, The Church of the Sun, a fanatical church intent on the destruction of vampires, employs hate mongering and religious rhetoric to glean new members and justify its intent to assassinate the vampire Godric through “meeting the sun.” When Sookie and several vampires foil Reverend Newlin’s plan, they leave the Reverend and his congregation unharmed. Yet, Newlin sends one of his disciples strapped in explosives to Godric’s home. As a result, both human and vampire injuries and casualties occur. Yet, again, vampires emerge as heroes. At great risk to his own life, the vampire Eric dives on top of Sookie to protect her from the shrapnel spewing blast. Again, through the display of human violence, *True Blood* functions as a comment on human nature and prompts questions as to who the real monsters are.

Admittedly, not all of the vampires in *True Blood* embody the emasculated monster nature and heroism increasingly common in the representations of vampires in literature, film, and television. But, those that act monstrously encounter defeat. For example, an influx of anti-vampire sentiment erupts in Season Three when Russell Edgington, while declaring vampire superiority over humans, kills a news anchor on air. Nan Flanagan, on behalf of the American Vampire League, goes on the offensive, warning the public that Edgington's behavior "was the heinous act of a madman," and that he is both "an extremist and a terrorist." She declares, "He is one individual, just as Jeffrey Dahmer was an individual," while also pointing out that she recalls "no protests or calls to punish all humans" in that instance. Nan's statements delineate a definitive boundary within the show's fictitious realm; *True Blood* avoids allowing monstrous, non-heroic vampires to flourish. By the end of the season, Eric and Bill capture and bury Russell in silver chains and encase him in concrete. Following Russell's on screen debacle, vampire backlash ensues: crosses are burned in vampire yards and anti-vampire protests turn violent. The anti-vampire sentiment harkens back to the opening sequence of *True Blood* where a posted sign reads, "God Hates Fangs." Clearly, the show derives inspiration from our violent culture, but rather than project our fears of each other onto the canvas of the vampire, *True Blood* confines them to the humanity from which they originate.

Correspondingly, the fears and anxieties of today's cultures figure into other vampiric creations. Since the 1980's, aside from a rise in terrorism, serial killings, and hate crimes, fears of mass shootings have become more common. In fact, the Colorado movie theater tragedy in the summer of 2012 marks another catastrophic shooting in a

long timeline of similar occurrences. In fact, in September of 1999, the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* aired an episode dealing with the threat of a school shooting. The episode ended up airing months after the rest of its season because the Columbine massacre took place the same year, yet the episode itself was filmed prior to the tragedy. The show conveys the relevance and fear surrounding the event of a mass shooting through the discourse of its characters:

XANDER. I'm still having trouble with the fact that one of us is just gonna gun everybody down for no reason.

CORDELIA. Yeah, because that never happens in American high schools.

OZ. It's bordering on trendy at this point.

Though Columbine had not yet occurred when the episode was filmed, the school shootings at Jonesboro and Springfield had. In the episode, a demon infects Buffy with an "aspect of the demon." It turns out that the infection allows her to read minds, and therefore she overhears someone's thought that, "This time tomorrow, I'll kill you all." The ability to hear people's thoughts begins to wear on Buffy; she'll die without a cure. As it happens, drinking the demon's heart will cure her. So, while Buffy's friends search for the mystery killer, Buffy's boyfriend, the heroic vampire Angel, seeks out the demon. Covered in a dark cloak, yet still physically smoldering, Angel arrives at Buffy's home in broad daylight with the cure. After feeding it to her, he stays by her bedside, holding her hand until she recuperates. In this episode, the heroic vampire figure invites sympathy, while a human serves as the villain. Thanks to the cure brought by Angel, Buffy tracks down a student named Jonathan brandishing a shotgun in the school's bell tower. The

exchange between Buffy and Jonathan captures the feelings of anxiety and vulnerability common from the school shootings of the late 1990's:

JONATHAN. Stop saying my name like we're friends. We're not friends.

You all think I'm an idiot— a short idiot.

BUFFY. I don't. I don't think about you much at all. Nobody here really does. It bugs you, doesn't it? You have all this pain, all these feelings, and nobody's really paying attention.

JONATHAN. You think I just want attention?

BUFFY. No. I think you're up in the clock tower with a high-powered rifle because you want to blend in. Believe it or not, Jonathan, I understand about the pain.

JONATHAN. Oh, right . . . 'cause the burden of being beautiful and athletic, that's a crippler.

BUFFY. You know what? I was wrong. You are an idiot. My life happens to on occasion, suck beyond the telling of it, sometimes more than I can handle. And it's not just mine. Every single person down there is ignoring your pain because they're too busy with their own. The beautiful ones . . . the popular ones . . . the guys that pick on you. Everyone.

Buffy's speech to Jonathan encourages him to turn his weapon over to her. After doing so, he reveals that he intended only to end his own life. In a twist, the thoughts Buffy overheard came from the cafeteria lady who planned to poison the students at lunch that day. However, the episode acts as a conduit for the fear and anguish being experienced in

reality at that time. Rather than abate, those fears gain a stronger foothold in the wake of post-Columbine shootings because of those at Virginia Tech, Fort Hood, and the recent Colorado theater shooting. As the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* episode portrays, fear of one another is realistic. And, as in *True Blood*, a vampire acts heroically, leaving the villainy to a human.

Needless to say, people's fear and distrust of one another makes security a major concern. Zonnefeld observes the increase in gated communities as an attempt to remedy societal fears. He reveals, "The gated community is a phenomenon that has had a great attraction to residents of the big American cities in the last twenty years" (32). He asserts that people's movement into gated communities is "a reflection of the increasing insecure social relations in the big American cities today" (33). The 2010 television series *The Gates* taps into those fears. Nick Monohan moves his family from Chicago to be the chief of police for The Gates. Before long, he realizes that some of his residents possess supernatural abilities. When a woman named Teresa tries to shoot Nick, Dylan Radcliffe, a vampire, attacks and kills her. Dylan's actions separate him from the traditional vampire archetype and identify him as a vampire hero. However, in protecting Nick, Dylan breaks his fellow vampires' no kill rules for living in The Gates. Dylan shares those rules with Nick in Episode Six when the pair tries to uncover the culprit behind a fellow resident's murder. Nick thinks a vampire might be involved and demands that Dylan reveal the identities of the other vampires in the community. Dylan tells Nick:

There's a small community living inside The Gates, but Nick, listen, it's very unlikely one of them would have killed this woman. We moved here for the same reason you did— to raise our families and try to live a normal

life. We follow strict rules, the most important one being “Do not hunt inside The Gates.”

Dylan’s explanation of the vampire rules for living in *The Gates* strongly mirror Zonnefeld’s analysis of how gated communities function. Zonnefeld describes gated communities as “quiet residential areas, in which neighbourliness rules and which seem to be secured from the great ills of life” (36). He supplements that observation by conveying that the neighborhood’s rules allow for that tranquility. He writes, “What is essential is that the residents feel that the rules are the foundation of a safe and beautiful world, and they realize that. Therefore they are willing to give up some of their individual freedom for a good living in an idyllic space” (44). Somewhat ironically, the community in *The Gates* appears to fulfill Zonnefeld’s measure of a safe gated establishment. When Sarah, Nick’s wife, finds out the true identities of her neighbors, Claire (Dylan’s vampire wife) reminds her to keep in mind that now that she knows “what” they are, she should not forget “who” they are. Claire’s statement to Sarah functions as a reminder to embrace tolerance and peaceful coexistence, a source of discourse prevalent in today’s society as humans continue to subdue their fears of one another.

In conclusion, Nina Auerbach’s supposition that every generation “embraces the vampire it needs,” indicates that ours rejects a need for more monsters. No longer do people crave the terror the traditional vampire archetype enveloped. Instead, through the years vampires in literature, film, and television display an increased level of monster impotence. Instead, vampire representations illustrate increased levels of self-loathing characterization, consumption of blood substitutes in favor of sustaining human life, and acts of vampiric valor. Today’s society reveals countless instances of serial killing, mass

shootings, hate crimes, and terrorism. Since Auerbach's research drew connections between cultural events and vampiric representations, it stands to reason that the inhumane acts, which pervade our society, correlate with the transformation undergone by vampires. The permeation of vampires in the publishing, film, and television industries lends further credence to an interconnection of our culture and their morphology. Today's vampires win hearts and protect humans from what they fear the most: each other.

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