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Adapting *Dracula*: The Afterlives of Stoker's Memes
in *Nosferatu* (1922) and *Dracula* (1979)

Ian Duncan McArthur

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Adapting *Dracula*: The Afterlives of Stoker's Memes
in *Nosferatu* (1922) and *Dracula* (1979)

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Master of Arts

Dracula is a narrative that has risen above its own origins, having been translated and adapted across mediums it has inundated culture with vampires. However, with each adaptation the narrative and characters adapt into something new. This study is interested in the mechanism behind this evolution and argues that memes and, and their interpretations, are largely responsible for these shifts across adaptations. Three memes, in particular, tend to be adapted in films of *Dracula*. They include Dracula's appearance, Mina's empowerment, and the nature of the bite that they share. This analysis covers how these memes functioned in Stoker's original novel and how they adapted in the films *Nosferatu* (1922) and *Dracula* (1979) to reflect the developing culture norms regarding sexuality.

Keywords: *Dracula*, *Nosferatu* (1922), *Dracula* (1979), Film, Mina, Adaptation Theory, Memes, Sexuality

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Introduction

Over one hundred years after the publication of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* in 1897, the vampire derived from this Victorian novel is still a force to be reckoned with. A fact that Nina Auerbach finds surprising since, "so many of his contemporary monsters . . . have declined into quaint mementos" ("Dracula" 23). *Dracula*'s appeal is quite remarkable considering that we are not flooded with adaptations of the *many* penny dreadful novels from the period. *Dracula* now inundates film, novels, comic books, video games, and even breakfast cereal, effectively echoing the words of Stoker's Van Helsing: "He is known everywhere that men have been . . . and the peoples fear him at this day" (Stoker 229). With each new adaptation, the likelihood that the character will continue to be adapted seems to increase almost exponentially.

It is this abundance of adaptations that has made it possible for *Dracula* to become a "culture text." In his work on the phenomenon of the culture text, Paul Davis explores how a piece of writing like *A Christmas Carol* becomes so ingrained in the cultural consciousness that it essentially becomes "literary public property" (111). Because the story is consumed so often and through so many different adaptations, it has more in common with the "remembered story" than the original text (110). Thus, for Davis, a culture text "is the sum of all its versions, all of its revisions, parodies and piracies" (110). In Davis's model, essentially, the weight of adaptation is what drives a cultural, rather than a specific, understanding of a text. When the adaptations of a text begin to outweigh the original text in terms of their proliferation and recognition, the original text could potentially vanish from the earth, yet the culture text would remain deeply rooted in the cultural consciousness.

Certainly, *Dracula* the novel functions in the way Davis describes.¹ Davis is describing culture texts that take the form of books or other print media, but *Dracula* the character, separate from the novel, may also function as a kind of culture text. *Dracula* is now extra-literate; he seems to exist outside of the novel, because he exists both as Stoker created him and as what “we collectively remember” about him from countless adaptations (Davis 4). Essentially, both *Dracula* and *Dracula* have been detached from Stoker’s original creation by the sheer number of adaptations that have followed, allowing the character, as well as the narrative as a whole, to evolve independently into texts that are both old and ever new.² This constant adaptation, however, is achieved only in concert with the themes, characters, topics, and ideas already present in the novel. *Dracula*’s character, while recognizable from Stoker’s novel, is in a state of flux. Plot elements, traits from other characters, and *Dracula*’s relationships with other characters provide the material necessary to achieve his evolution.

In fact, *Dracula*’s evolution has transpired in a way that is similar to the evolution of actual living creatures. Linda Hutcheon points out that “like biological adaptation, cultural adaptation involves migration to favorable conditions: stories travel to different cultures and different media. In short, stories adapt just as they are adapted” (31). To bolster her claims, Hutcheon cites Richard Dawkins and his work on memes. Coming from the Greek *mimesis*, memes represent an element of culture, a trope, or an idea that is passed on through imitation.

¹ In just the last decade there have been several adaptations, including *Dracula Untold* (2014), *Dracula 2012* (2013), *Dracula 3D* (2012), *Hotel Transylvania* (2012), *Hellsing Ultimate* (2006), *Dracula* (2006), *Dracula 3000* (2004), *Blade: Trinity* (2004), and *Van Helsing* (2004). These are just the films that have utilized *Dracula* as a character and do not include the numerous other films featuring vampires.

² According to Cutchins and Albrecht-Crane, “Any ‘retelling’ of a story is a new story because the text has been reinterpreted by the ‘reteller’” (18). Using the enormously popular *Frankenstein* as an example, they further explain that, “Shelly’s *Frankenstein* might be interpreted primarily as a frightening adventure story, a social commentary, a critique of science, etc., depending on the interpretation of the reader/adaptor. Someone working on yet another adaptation of *Frankenstein* may choose one of these less traveled paths to create a new and fresh reading, and thus a new and fresh adaptation of the novel” (19).

Dawkins argues that “just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via . . . imitation” (192). Each time an adaptation is made, certain textual memes are selected and rearranged while others are left behind. This creates a new text, and our recognition of it as an adaptation depends on its preservation of a few memes without which a narrative—or a character like Dracula—becomes something unfamiliar.

Those memes, as they are used and reused, can become the material for numerous adaptive innovations. For example, Stoker’s novel is heavily invested in the changing role of religion. Francis Ford Coppola’s *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* (1992) is similarly interested in this question. However, Coppola draws a different emphasis in the film, choosing to focus on a fall from grace and eventual redemption (even if that redemption is predicated on religious tenets outside of Christianity) rather than simply using religious symbols as weapons against the unholy vampire. This film recounts the origin of the Count as a holy warrior who loses his wife and, in an act of unholy communion, stabs a cross and drinks the blood that flows from it. By the end of film, however, he is redeemed by the reincarnation of his wife, Mina, and finds salvation. Religion thus remains in a place of power and control, governing the overall narrative.

Another popular *Dracula* meme involves the principles and complications of evolution. John Glendening contends that *Dracula* is, at its heart, a novel about evolution. He notes that Darwin’s theory of evolution by natural selection accepts that organisms might adapt to a simpler form in order to survive an environmental shift, and he presents the Count as a devolved member of a primitive species. However, Glendening goes on to argue that Dracula “anticipates the survival of the fittest, with himself and his offspring filling that role. The irony is that this projected evolutionary triumph also exemplifies devolution” (121), a subversive and disturbing

idea for many Victorian readers. This meme lives on in the modern *Underworld* series (2003-2016), though, again, the resulting narrative there is quite different from Stoker's. In the *Underworld* films, vampires are the result of a genetic mutation brought on by a virus, and the characters are heavily invested in the preservation or development of this species. It is the reverse of Stoker's narrative, which focused on the preservation of England and the British people, instead placing emphasis on the struggle to maintain, or evolve, the vampire bloodline.

Finally, *Dracula* adaptations often adapt a meme from Stoker's novel that involves a hero who negotiates the complicated worlds of faith, science,³ and technology⁴ in order to defeat the monster. Rupert Giles, in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003), is an excellent example of this recurring meme. Giles acts as Buffy's own personal Van Helsing throughout the series. These films and franchises draw from the memes of Stoker's novel, but their implementation of those memes results in variation and the formation of new stories out of very old ideas. The repetition is important because it shows the life of a meme over time. Without the repetition the meme would simply be an idea that has not taken a deep enough hold to be replicated. When these memes replicate, it offers critics an opportunity to witness creative variation in the adaptations and provides a compelling picture of how memes, and culture, adapt together.

While these examples reflect popular memes for adaptors, there is one in particular that is extraordinarily prevalent in adaptations: sexual politics. Sex and relationships are common

³ Jann notes the scientific and religious elements of the novel, arguing that *Dracula* "speaks in two voices: one that urges the superior reality of the supernatural, and a second— ... ultimately the more authoritative one—that affirms the status quo of scientific reasoning" (273). Essentially, though there are positive elements to religion, it is science that should govern a healthy world view.

⁴ Senf argues that Stoker "wanted to believe that science and technology could mitigate the dark areas of life" ("*Dracula*" 218). She highlights Stoker's deep interest in science and mathematics, mentioning that he graduated from Trinity College with advanced degrees in both fields. Senf then traces how this interest plays out in reference to the mysterious—the non-scientific—in both *Dracula* and *The Lair of the White Worm*. Senf draws attention to how the dark Gothic past is vanquished by modern technology and rationalism. She concludes that Stoker "counters the Gothic and its mysterious threats with science" ("*Dracula*" 227).

subjects of examination in *Dracula* criticism, including criticism of Stoker's original novel as well as criticism of the films it has inspired. Times change, perceptions evolve, and new stories continue to be produced because memes are similarly in flux, moving with the current of cultural and social change. From the New Woman movement of Stoker's 1890s to 1970s second-wave feminism, *Dracula* has engaged with cultural values regarding gender and sexuality. This may, in fact, be one of the key reasons for *Dracula*'s status as a culture text and for its continued relevance. As George Bluestone suggests, in film "more than in any of the arts, the signature of social forces is evident in the final work" (35). As social mores have shifted, adaptors have been "obsessively merging and recombining the core players and situations, almost into infinity" alongside the shifting perceptions of gender, sex, and relationships (Skal, *Hollywood* 292). There is already a rich critical conversation engaged with how *Dracula*, and its various adaptations, engage in questions of sexual politics and relationships.⁵ I, however, am interested in the mechanisms behind these changes and how incremental shifts in memes substantially augment the treatment of sexual politics in adaptations of *Dracula*.

As Skal suggests, adapters create today's vampires through the merging of story elements, but as genes can be broken down into DNA, if you will, these recognizable elements are made up of a complicated array of memes that invite analysis. I will be focusing on one aspect of *Dracula* film adaptations that employs a particularly complicated variety of memes adopted from earlier versions of Stoker's tale: the relationship between Mina and Dracula. This

⁵ See Stephanie Demetrakopoulos' "Feminism, Sex Role Exchanges, and Other Subliminal Fantasies in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," Alison Case's "Tasting the Original Apple: Gender and the Struggle for Narrative Authority in *Dracula*," Carol Senf's "Dracula: Stoker's Response to the New Woman," Nina Auerbach's "Magi and Maidens: The Romance of the Victorian Freud," or John Stevenson's "A Vampire in the Mirror: The Sexuality of *Dracula*" for just a few examples of criticism regarding sexuality and gender in *Dracula*.

aspect of the narrative may be seen to function as a cluster of three main memes that exist in a dynamic relationship with each other: the physical appearance of Dracula, the level of Mina's empowerment, and the nature of Dracula's perpetration against Mina (which spans a wide range, from assault to seduction). By dynamic, I mean that they are interdependent. If one meme is altered, the other two must be adapted accordingly. Adaptors have adjusted these three memes in numerous ways, according to the desired focus of their adaptation, resulting in deeply varied interpretations of the narrative. There are numerous memes at work in *Dracula* and its adaptations, but these three are at the heart of all critical conversations about gendered relationships in *Dracula*. More importantly, the relationship between Mina and Dracula has been the focus, if not an extremely important element, in the bulk of adaptations. Mina and Dracula have eclipsed all other relationships in the novel, making the rest ancillary to the two of them.

There are other gendered relationships that could be examined, and other characters as well, but the Mina/Dracula relationship remains pivotal, while other relationships tend to react to an adaptor's interpretation of this key pairing. Furthermore, it is Mina—and not usually Harker, Seward, or Van Helsing—who gets bitten in *Dracula* adaptations. Mina, and sometimes Lucy, is the object of Dracula's vampirism. If a vampire relationship is defined by the bite, then Dracula's relationship with Mina cannot be other than primary. Also, if one of the three memes that define the Mina/Dracula relationship is altered in a film adaptation, other key features of the narrative or the ancillary characters must also be adjusted. The result of such adjustments can shift the relationship between the characters as well as the focus of the entire adaptation. Thus, by examining this specific triad of memes which are repeated in successive film versions but, as Hutcheon explains, “without replication” (7), we can see how *Dracula* and the *Dracula* narrative

has adapted over the course of decades so as to ensure their continual relevance to readers and viewers.

To illustrate this, I will examine how these three memes constellating around the Mina/Dracula relationship function in Stoker's novel to support a phallogentric adventure story and how they are then adapted to very different effect in two classic Dracula films, F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922) and John Badham's *Dracula* (1979). These films fit into this discussion especially well, as opposed to the dozens of other film adaptations of *Dracula*, because they represent the dramatic shifts in these memes from Stoker's novel. Furthermore, these two films not only take different approaches to the individual memes, but the overall expression of these memes produce opposing explorations of gender, sex, and relationships. *Nosferatu* (1922) gives us the female sacrifice to the foreign monster, while *Dracula* (1979) presents a female participant and a romantic hero.⁶ While the genetic material constituting the Mina/Dracula relationship, as established by Stoker, never disappears completely, it is recombined in these films in a manner revelatory of the way in which adaptations adapt so as to produce a figure as ubiquitous, as mercurial, and as immortal as Dracula.

The Mina/Dracula Relationship in Stoker's *Dracula*

Bram Stoker's version of *Dracula* acts as a precursor to the twentieth-century film versions, and it draws the characters of Mina and Dracula together in a way that provides the genetic template that will be rearranged in later adaptations. The memes coalescing around Mina and Dracula in Stoker's text serve to reinforce Victorian patriarchal hegemony. Stoker's vampire is not a handsome one, but he is powerful, aggressive, and dangerous. Mina occupies an

⁶ Bela Lugosi and Christopher Lee, who also played the character, introduced a certain sex appeal to Dracula, but they very much remained monsters.

uncertain place between the progressive and empowered New Woman popular in the 1890s and the traditional Victorian angel in the house. Because of this arrangement, there is no seduction in Dracula's relationship with Mina. Instead, Dracula assaults and victimizes her. Her trauma spurs the men in the novel to action, and they vow to purge the Empire of the foreign monster and restore order. Part of that order, however, involves relegating Mina to a tightly regulated sphere of influence.

The Mina/Dracula relationship is built upon a collection of dynamically related memes, and the representation of their relationship relies on the expression of those three memes. Perhaps the most visible of these three is the appearance and nature of Dracula, who represents a curious blend of monstrous prowess and bestial traits. Though powerful, this combination is not an attractive one. Jonathan Harker observes that Dracula's "face was a strong—very strong—aquiline" and that Dracula has a jaw that is "broad and strong" (23). In the same description, Harker notes that Dracula's mouth "was fixed and rather cruel-looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth . . . his ears were pale, and at the tops extremely pointed" (23). According to Mina, "His face was not a good face; it was hard, and cruel, and sensual, and his big white teeth, that looked all the whiter because his lips were so red, were pointed like an animal's" (155). While Harker's description suggests a proud individual, and both illustrate a unique appearance, there is no indication of handsomeness in the features. Dracula's visage is too tainted by bestial traits to be attractive. Further evidence of Dracula's overall ugliness can be found in Harker's description of the Count's hands. Harker notes that they are, "coarse—broad, with squat fingers" with "hairs in the center of the palm" and long nails "cut to a sharp point" (24). While these characteristics do not fully dominate his appearance, the overall essence of his physiognomy, according to Mina, is "nasty" (155).

Part of Dracula's appearance, however, is also his demeanor, how he acts and behaves. While the novel makes it apparent that Dracula is a monster, he has other qualities that make him particularly dangerous. One of these is that Dracula appears polite and intelligent, speaking English "thoroughly" (26). He also greets Harker with the aristocratic grace of a nobleman: "I am Dracula; and I bid you welcome, Mr. Harker, to my house. Come in; the night air is chill, and you must need to eat and rest" (22). Later, when Harker is introduced to Dracula's library, he notices numerous books that have seen obvious use. He notes, "The books were of the most varied kind—history, geography, politics, political economy, botany, geology, law—all relating to England and English life and customs and manners" (25). Dracula might be a monster, but he is a well-read and culturally competent one. This meme, though not necessarily vital to the Mina/Dracula relationship in Stoker's novel, grows in significance in later film adaptations.

What is vital, however, is the one moment of physical interaction that Mina and Dracula share (apart from a chance meeting on the street): the vampire bite. Dracula is not skilled in seduction in Stoker's text. Instead, he uses physical strength and hypnosis to maneuver Mina into a position of compliance.⁷ Dracula's attack on Mina in Stoker's text constitutes one of the crucial memes orbiting their relationship, a meme that will be transformed again and again—but never discarded—in later adaptations. When he first attacks Mina in her home in England, Dracula threatens to murder Jonathan if she resists. This threat suggests that his attack is an act of predation and not of seduction or coercion: "Silence! If you make a sound I shall take him [Jonathan] and dash his brains out before your very eyes" (251). He then adds a second troubling piece of information: "You may as well be quiet; it is not the first time, or the second, that your

⁷ The only seductive vampires in the novel are Dracula's wives and Lucy. Carol Senf describes their appeal as a "peculiar combination of lust and loathing," which has become a pivotal meme in the vampire tradition ("Brides" 64). Often, though, the sexiness of these female vampires is detached from the brides in later film adaptations and adheres to Dracula instead.

veins have appeased my thirst!” (251). Although it is news to Mina, Dracula has apparently assaulted her previously without her knowledge or recollection of the occurrence. He is thus compelling her without her consent. This becomes clearer as Dracula explains, “And you, their best beloved one, are now to me, flesh of my flesh; blood of my blood; kin of my kin; my bountiful wine-press for a while; and shall be later on my companion and my helper. . . . When my brain says ‘Come!’ to you, you shall cross land or sea to do my bidding” (252). These lines, like this moment, have found numerous afterlives in film, becoming essential to the development of the relationship between Mina and Dracula across adaptations. Here they are a threat, a proclamation of control. They place Mina and Dracula in a victim/perpetrator relationship as she becomes a pawn in Dracula’s game against Harker, Van Helsing, and their friends. Even as Mina compiles evidence against Dracula, adopts the mantle of detective, and strategically takes advantage of her psychic link with the Count, she remains a piece in a game that is, in fact, played out entirely by the male characters in the novel.⁸

Mina’s relegation to a position of subservience with regard not only to Dracula but also to the men who would save her from him becomes particularly apparent by the end of the novel. Van Helsing, who praises Mina for her “courage” and her “great brain which is trained like man’s brain, but is of sweet woman” (255), determines that key pieces of information—including the information learned during her own Dracula-induced psychic trances—should be withheld from Mina. Her information leads the men to Dracula, but when they finally corner him, Mina is required to remain helpless and unhelpful, stuck in a circle of Eucharist wafers, while the men do the work of killing Dracula.⁹ The ring of wafers is meant to keep her safe from

⁸ This idea of psychic connection between villain and heroine, or hero, has become quite popular, even jumping to other narratives such as the immensely popular *Harry Potter* series.

⁹ According to Armstrong, “In order to become the traditional reproductive woman, she [Mina] ceases to manage information and leaves the work of cultural reproduction to men.” (12)

Dracula and his vampire wives, but it has the added effect of curtailing Mina's empowerment at the novel's end. Just as the vampires cannot enter the circle, Mina cannot leave it. While she is capable and intelligent, it is her lot to be saved while the men do the saving. Even though she feels a "surging desire to do something" (324), she remains in her small—albeit "comfortable" (316)—circle, unable to pass its perimeter until Dracula is dispatched and the curse of her vampirism is lifted. Ultimately, her empowerment, along with Dracula, are dual casualties of this adventure.

Their similar loss of power is the ultimate direction of Stoker's novel, a direction predicated on the arrangement of memes formulating their relationship. Dracula's repulsive appearance and Mina's blend of self-will and Victorian femininity do not allow for attraction or a seduction. She finds him horrific and his attack a traumatic predation, an act of violence and control. This violence spurs Van Helsing's men to action. The wronging of Mina and the hope of reclaiming her become the twin drives of the remainder of the novel. As a result, Mina loses much of her autonomy, Dracula loses his life, but England—and its status quo—is saved.

Nosferatu's Heterosexual Relationship of Loss

If memes were firm in their arrangements, this might have been the end of Mina and Dracula's relationship. It is a conclusion germane to Stoker's narrative and the period that produced it. But as times changed, so did the approach to the integral memes behind Mina and Dracula. Adaptors brought *Dracula* across cultural boundaries and broke into new mediums, giving the narrative a life beyond the page. With the advent of film, Stoker's *Dracula* would change forever. While there have been numerous film adaptations, the first surviving adaptation is F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu: Ein Symphonie des Grauens* (1922).¹⁰ Murnau's interpretation of

¹⁰ "Hungarian Director Károly Lajthay's *Drakula halála* marked the character's earliest film appearance" (Rhodes 25). Most of this film has been lost except for a few images.

the Mina/Dracula relationship is based on incremental alterations to the three memes—Dracula’s appearance, the nature of the bite, and Mina’s empowerment—which result in a narrative interested in a gendered contrast instead of a homosocial masculine adventure. Ellen (Mina’s name in *Nosferatu*) and Orlok (the Dracula figure)¹¹ become locked together as female and male emblems of innocence and evil, with the impact of their interaction resulting in Ellen’s death and guiding the conclusion’s emphasis on loss.

In large part, these shifts can be attributed to Murnau’s embrace of the German Expressionist movement, an art form born in the nineteen-teens but reaching its peak in post-WWI Germany. After Germany’s defeat in WWI, the Weimar Republic was weak and failing, and on the horizon lurked authoritarian rule. Ultra-conservative fascism and Bolshevism competed for the faith of a broken people. Furthermore, growing antisemitism and racism began to take root. Living in a time fraught with uncertainty, artists and consumers turned to Expressionism, which represented the “anarchy-chaos dialectic” of the period, for escape (Roth 311). Murnau’s film responds to this cultural need, supplying a surreal fantasy that encapsulates the broken nation’s loss of innocence. *Nosferatu* also speaks to another fear during the period, the growing shadow of anti-Semitism. Stoker’s vampire narrative, an exciting homosocial adventure, does not seem to offer much to an expressionist like Murnau, except for the misty, almost unstoppable, foreign force that the vampire represents. If there is a loss of innocence in Stoker’s novel it is because Dracula has taken it, an idea that resonates throughout *Nosferatu*.

Murnau responded to these cultural needs, drawing from other German traditions, such as Goethe’s Gretchen and the image of pure—and vulnerable—feminine sexuality, and adapting

¹¹ The names were changed because Murnau and Prana (the studio) did not have the rights to Stoker’s novel. Florence Stoker sued the studio, to protect her meager income, and won, requiring that all copies of the film be destroyed. A few survived, however, allowing modern audiences to enjoy Murnau’s moody adaptation.

Stoker's Dracula/Mina memes in such a way that the relationship itself becomes fundamentally different and more relevant for his time. In *Nosferatu*, the first major change that Murnau makes is to Dracula (Orlok's) appearance. Under Murnau's direction and Max Schreck's acting, Orlok evolves from the nasty-looking man of Stoker's novel into a wholly inhuman creature. Orlok remains very much an evolution of Stoker's vampire, Dracula being considered his "literary prototype" (Catania 230), but *Nosferatu* emphasizes different traits to create a more monstrous kind of evil. For example, Orlok—pestilential, bestial, and "darkly ethereal" (Catania 230)—is more connected to animals than men, a kind of "human vermin" situated among "universal fears and collective obsessions" (Skal, *Hollywood* 86).¹² These anxieties are so universal that Orlok has been interpreted as both "the Shylock of the Carpathians" and a "cinematic anticipation of Hitler" (Skal, *Hollywood* 87). Orlok clearly has the same pointed ears and sharp teeth of Dracula, and these traits become central to his portrayal, not ancillary, making Orlok a purer representation of the inhuman than Dracula.

In Stoker's novel, Dracula is, as Van Helsing says, a "criminal," unsavory but able to walk among men without drawing too much attention (256). Orlok could never do this, as his physical appearance is notably inhuman (see fig. 1). He is "malevolence itself. . . . [F]ollowed by rats, the nosferatu, undead, is a walking plague" (Holte 34). Rats are certainly a part of Stoker's *Dracula*, but the strong connection to disease and the vampire is original to *Nosferatu*. The arrangement—and emphasis—of these memes in *Nosferatu* are adapted to a new end. While Stoker's Dracula is monstrous, Murnau's Orlok is a monster. There are other, perhaps subtler, indicators of this monstrosity. For example, Murnau illustrates how very unnatural Orlok is by filming the carriage ride through the mountains using a film negative style, revealing the

¹² There are several juxtapositions in the film between Orlock and rats, an image adapted in the Nazi propaganda film *Der Ewige Jude* (1940) (Kaes 109).

vampire's "uncanny and dark nature" (Laner 33). Like a film negative, everything is reversed, illustrating that Orlok, his carriage, and his entire domain are essentially an inversion of normality (see fig. 2).

The warped perversity and horror of the vampire is heightened by the consistent low-key lighting of the film, which intensifies the contrast between light and shadow and places emphasis on darkness. The technique, popular in film noir and horror genres, produces sharp contrast between light and dark that results in a sense of mystery and foreboding in a film. According to James Franklin, Murnau's use of shadow assumes "a precise communicative function" (Franklin 176) and brings "narrative depth" to *Nosferatu* (179). That depth serves to underline *Nosferatu*'s brooding and pessimistic vision of an innocence lost to a menacing evil. While make-up and costuming are one method of creating a monster, Murnau's use of lighting further augment's Orlok's appearance, making him more menacing and otherworldly.

In conjunction with the austere lighting, Murnau also makes use of lighting angles and shadow to create a vampire who stalks his prey with the immateriality of a nightmare. This is a particularly interesting choice for the vampire's appearance, since in Stoker's novel "he throws no shadow" (209). In trying to create an uncanny vampire, and to separate him from a more physical monster (preferring an embodiment of some unnatural force), *Nosferatu* gives the vampire back his shadow. Orlok's "appearance is anticipated by his growing shadow" (Laner 32), as when he stalks up the stairs to prey on Ellen, looming larger the closer he comes to her room (Franklin 180) (see fig. 3). By altering the angle of the backlighting, Orlok's shadow claws lengthen as they scratch toward the door handle. This mechanism makes Orlok seem "less of a flesh and blood man, and more of a wraith (Laner 32). These adaptations to Orlok's appearance affect Ellen as well; as Orlock becomes more horrible, she becomes more angelic and pure (see

fig. 4). Ellen is a loving and selfless woman, a lamb without blemish, against Orlock's despicable monstrosity. The almost mythic distinction between these two is a necessary juxtaposition for the film and its emphasis on the vulnerability of nearly sacred feminine innocence to the unstoppable, unknowable, foreign force of the vampire.

The growing disparity between Ellen and Orlok heightens until the climax of the film—the bite. Murnau makes two specific changes to Stoker's original material, both of which alter the nature of the attack and Ellen's level of complicity in it. First, in *Nosferatu*, Ellen and Orlok share a psychic connection even before the bite. Stoker made this psychic link a pivotal element of his narrative. The difference is that in *Dracula*, Dracula's bite creates the connection, whereas in *Nosferatu*, the bite is the result of an unexplained link that exists between the two before Orlok's attack. Murnau provides no explanation for why this connection exists, only visual cues to suggest it. For example, when Orlok is about to attack Hutter (Harker) in his castle early in the film, Ellen cries out in warning in her bedroom miles away, and Orlok withdraws. The editing and juxtaposition of the shot, emphasizing an eye line match between the characters, "creates a telepathic link between the vampire and Ellen" (Abbott, *Celluloid* 55). This connection forces the audience to view Ellen and Orlok as a male/female pair, positioning them as the two key figures of the narrative. It also positions Ellen as Orlok's main antagonist, another change from the novel, in which Harker, Van Helsing, and the Band of Light are the primary figures opposing Dracula. This is a crucial adaptive moment as it is the first time on film that these two characters have been locked together as the focus of the narrative. It is a stark deviation from the novel and is one of the principal contributions of *Nosferatu*.

Not surprisingly, given the changes Murnau makes to the psychic connection between Ellen and Orlok, the bite in *Nosferatu* is also fundamentally different from its counterpart in

Dracula. First, the novel places the bite somewhere in its latter half, and it drives the remainder of the narrative. *Nosferatu*, however, situates the bite as the dénouement (coming in the last ten minutes of the film), and it acts as the terminal focal point for the film. Second, this version of the bite operates on a different emotional frequency than Stoker's because instead of being an unforeseen attack, it is a trap set by Ellen. Having read *The Book of the Vampires*—which Hutter takes from Transylvania during his escape from Orlok's castle—Murnau's Ellen learns that the only way to defeat the vampire is for “a woman pure in heart” to keep him by her side until the sun rises and erases him from existence. So, in an effort to save Hutter, Ellen lures Orlok to her home and repeatedly invites him to her throat throughout the night. It remains a predatory act on Orlok's part, but Ellen's consent—even invitation—changes the nature of the attack and transforms it into a sacrifice.

The interaction between the two, as in the novel, feels uncomfortably sexual. Although Patrick Colm Hogan argues that Ellen's actions represent a “self-abandonment to a sort of sacrificial anti-sexuality, a self-abandonment to horror and disgust, not desire” (102), her complicity adds an element of resigned acceptance. Sex, as James Franklin points out, becomes linked to death in the scene (180), but it is sex nevertheless. The moment of attack, when Ellen decides to enact her plan and throws open the window, exposing herself to Orlok's view, is a moment of voyeurism, building from a scene earlier in the film when Orlok comments on the beauty of Ellen's throat. As Orlok enters the room, there is a long shot of Ellen retreating to her bed as his shadow approaches and then clutches at her breast, causing Ellen to arch her back and present her throat in pain. Ellen falls back onto the bed and keeps Orlok there, by her side, until the sun rises and Orlok fades away like a film negative exposed to light (Abbott, *Celluloid* 58). The final shot of Ellen alive shows her raising her arms in a brief moment of triumph before

dying in Hutter's embrace. That final shot, with the vampire's presence completely eradicated, shifts the focus away from the act of predation (which is the emphasis in the novel) and to her highly sexualized sacrifice.

Murnau's transformation of attack into sacrifice is vital in understanding his adaptation of the third meme characterizing the Dracula/Mina relationship—Ellen's level of empowerment—in *Nosferatu*. As intimated by Murnau's alterations to Stoker's bite scene, Mina's role evolves radically in *Nosferatu*, leaving her in a paradoxically empowered but simultaneously weak position. The fact that Orlok's destruction is a plan of her devising and execution suggests her power. None of the men in the film have any knowledge of what she is planning, and all are actually asleep during the attack. Ellen is devoid of the intelligence and agency that Mina enjoys in Stoker's novel, but she clearly has the upper hand over her male protectors. And while critics correctly argue that "Ellen's only means of action is to lure the vampire to her bedroom, emphasizing her sexuality rather than intelligence" (Abbott, "Undead" 107), Ellen is the only character in the film who understands what Orlok is and how to destroy him. She is not a stenographer or a working woman, like Stoker's Mina, and it appears that her only asset is her sexuality, yet she—and not van Helsing and Harker, as in the novel—neutralizes the threat represented by Orlok. This places Ellen in a contradictory position by film's end, both stronger than Stoker's Mina but also, in other ways, weaker.

Consequently, the Mina/Dracula relationship in *Nosferatu*, though an amalgam of the same genetic material Stoker uses, becomes a significantly different relationship. Since these memes are dynamically related, if one changes the others must follow suit, Dracula's (Orlok's) change requires an attendant change in Mina (Ellen)—as he becomes less human, the sense of horror he introduces is heightened. Mina proves strong enough to counter this horror, but by

changing the attack into a sexualized, self-sacrificial martyrdom, Murnau makes death the only option for her. In the end, their relationship is what saves the world, but it comes at a steep cost as evil and good cancel each other out, and the film ends with a sense of resounding loss despite the victory.

The memes surrounding the Dracula/Mina relationship were permanently affected by *Nosferatu*. Murnau essentially altered the genome of the relationship such that his adaptations became part of the narrative's DNA. Subsequent adaptations would often include several traits inherited from *Nosferatu*. One of these is the pairing of Dracula and Mina. These two become key figures in almost all later adaptations, while the competing male characters are minimized or even made unattractive. In conjunction with Mina and Dracula's growing importance, Mina also becomes more sexual in later adaptations. While Stoker's Mina is not particularly alluring, after Greta Schröder's embodiment of the character in Murnau's film, almost every subsequent Mina will be. Finally, *Nosferatu* intensifies the intense, unexplained connection between Dracula and Mina. Future adaptations will build on this connection, sometimes portraying it as an unwanted psychic link, as in Stoker's novel, but more often depicting it as a romantic or emotional connection.¹³ *Nosferatu*'s legacy, inducted into *Dracula*'s, is perpetuated with each adaptation as new films continue to rearrange the genes comprising the narrative.

John Badham's Sensitive Vampire and Liberated Heroine

The interpretive decisions of Murnau have shaped the last century of *Dracula* adaptations, but John Badham's adaptation in 1979 took *Nosferatu*'s contribution into new territory by shaping the Dracula/Mina relationship into a full-fledged romance. The three crucial memes remain—Dracula's appearance, Mina's empowerment, and the bite—but fifty years after

¹³ Hensley suggests that *Nosferatu* first introduced the notion of the "dark lover" into the vampire tradition and argues that this film is the principle reason for *Dracula*'s modern popularity (59).

they were first expressed in film, Badham takes them in an original direction. The world changed several times over in the interim between Murnau's film and Badham's, the mores dictating sexual interaction evolving in a particularly radical way. From the fight for suffrage to free love and second-wave feminism, traditional roles of men and women underwent serious changes between the 1920s and the 1970s, and the memes of Stoker's narrative followed. Dracula is handsome and sensitive in Badham's *Dracula*, Lucy (the name of the Mina character here)¹⁴ struggles against a patriarchal system ("The Man"), and the bite may be seen as a romantic act of liberation. Numerous film adaptations of the Dracula story appeared between *Nosferatu* (1922) and *Dracula* (1979), featuring several actors who left their mark on the vampire genome and shaped the various memes through adaptation,¹⁵ but Badham's film represents a paradigm shift that has affected the last forty years of Dracula adaptations.

That shift was largely the product of Badham's choice for the leading role. Developing a romance, especially one subtitled "A Love Story," requires a romantic lead, and Frank Langella's Dracula presents the audience with a legitimately handsome and emotionally sensitive vampire. Langella's Dracula is not the criminal of Stoker's novel or the inhuman monster of *Nosferatu*. Instead, Langella is a graceful, handsome, confident, if a little eccentric, gentleman—a representation of "1970s feminist hopes for the ever-elusive 'sensitive man'" (Skal, *Hollywood* 271) (see fig. 5). Recognizing this original portrayal of the character, Skal notes that Langella embodies a "languid, almost Wildean Dracula" (*Hollywood* 271). Eschewing the hairy palms and pointed teeth of other Draculas, Langella is immaculate in appearance. Throughout the film,

¹⁴ The characters of Lucy and Mina switch names in this version. Mina is Dracula's first victim, whereas Lucy develops a relationship with him.

¹⁵ According to Skal, Badham's film hails from Stoker's *Dracula*, Tod Browning's *Dracula* (1939), and the Deane/Balderston stage play (*Hollywood* 272). The play, in particular, is an important source for the plot and for Dracula's sensitivity; films built on that script tend to "emphasize intimacy over complexity, relationships over revulsion" (Holte 80).

Langella dons elegant costumes of furs, flowing cloaks, and perfectly tailored suits. His hair, unlike in the novel, is well styled in a relaxed bouffant. Finally, unlike other versions of the character, his nails are no longer sharp and claw-like. They are trimmed and neat. All of these changes make him approachable, and his demeanor matches. The first time the audience sees Dracula is at a social event at the home of Dr. Seward.

This scene serves as the audience's introduction to Dracula and immediately places him in a more positive light than the other male characters. Before Dracula enters, one of the servants is telling the guests about a large dog that had its throat torn away by some "savage claw."

Another servant enters the room and announces the count's arrival as all heads turn—except for Lucy's—to see the newcomer. Dracula appears through a double door entrance filmed from a low angle, giving him a sense of power and poise. The camera cuts to Lucy, who finally turns to see him, and then back to Dracula. Using a dolly shot, the camera gives way before Dracula as he sweeps away his cloak and advances through the room, greeting everyone by name with an energy previously absent from the characters in the film. The character is far more energetic, engaging, and polite than any of the other male figures. Dracula continues to be filmed from a low angle, while those around him are shot at a high angle, giving them a smaller and more insignificant appearance. It does not help their case that Langella is 6'4" and already has a commanding figure.

These changes to Dracula's physical appearance and demeanor result in the shriveling of the other male characters in the film, who become mere accessories in the shadow of this "full-blown romantic hero" (Holte 80). Instead of being the intelligent young physician of the novel, for instance, Dr. Seward is the doddering, perpetually eating, father of Lucy who cannot

prescribe anything to his patients other than laudanum.¹⁶ Van Helsing, played by a wizened 72-year-old Laurence Olivier, is a sympathetic character but certainly no competition for the 41-year-old Langella.¹⁷ In this version, Van Helsing, building on the fatherly nature of the character in the novel, is Mina's father and is not romantically appealing. Harker, a possessive, ordinary little man engaged to Lucy, is the only character young enough to pose any romantic threat to Dracula, but he comes off as mean and petty, managing to flirt with two women before he has even spoken a line of dialogue.

Harker's inadequacy as a suitable romantic interest, and Dracula's primacy, is cemented by the conclusion of the dinner party. Earlier in the scene, Harker and Lucy have been dancing to the phonograph music. Their movements, though modern, are wooden and utterly dispassionate. Even a brief kiss that they share is polite, at best. Later in the scene Lucy invites Dracula to dance. As they dance the camera pans from a close-up of his right hand as he places it against the small of her back, to a shot of his left hand as he gracefully takes hers. The camera tracks around them as they waltz until it includes Harker in the shot. He appears petty, standing with his hands in his pockets and looking on jealously. The music moves from diegetic to non-diegetic as the camera begins to pan around the characters against the direction of their increasingly swift revolutions. The effect is a dizzying and exciting scene that leaves Lucy laughing, as opposed to her tame experience with Harker. At this point in the film it is already becoming clear that "Stoker's good men are villains" who want to put Lucy in a cage, while Dracula wishes to set her free (Skal, "Vampires" 398).

¹⁶ This portrayal of the character was lampooned in Mel Brooks' *Dracula: Dead and Loving It* (1995). In that film, Dr. Seward prescribes nothing but enemas to his psychiatric patients.

¹⁷ Olivier's portrayal is in sharp contrast to the version of the character that Peter Cushing brought to life in the popular Hammer films. Cushing is a far more virile vampire slayer who defeats Christopher Lee's Dracula in, essentially, a robust fist fight before using sunlight to wither him to dust.

Though heavily circumscribed by the men around her, Lucy is not simply resigned to her fate. In fact, Kate Nelligan's Lucy is anything but passive. Similar to Stoker's Mina, she is a capable and spirited woman, both "intelligent and assertive" (Skal, *Hollywood* 272). Early in Badham's film, as Dracula nears the English coast, the inmates of Dr. Seward's sanatorium riot in a frenzy. Seward asks where Lucy—his daughter—is, only to discover that she is sitting with her friend Mina (Badham's version of Stoker's Lucy character), to which he responds, "A fine time to abandon us." With this single line, Badham introduces a Lucy who is a symbol of female empowerment and capability, a woman who will not simply exist to aid the men around her. She is a strong female protagonist, drawn in sharp juxtaposition to her frail and gentle friend Mina. This is emphasized when, immediately after Dr. Seward's lament about Lucy's absence, the film cuts to Lucy as she reads a letter aloud to Mina. The letter is from a law firm informing Lucy that once she finishes her degree, she will be a welcome addition. Lucy's pursuit of a law degree, and her certain acceptance into an established firm, would have been radical achievements in the nineteenth-century. As Mina observes, Lucy is brave to be "taking on all those men like that." Stenography was an impressive feat for Stoker's Mina, but Badham's film is the *fin de siècle* seen through the eyes of the 1970s. To create a powerful heroine for a more modern audience and narrative, Badham provides a progressive version of Lucy's character, one who believes that women should have some "influence, some say on things."

In this spirit, Lucy often does have something to say. For example, Lucy watches as Dracula woefully hypnotizes Mina, telling her that she will no longer have any pain. Lucy quickly replies, "And no will of her own, either." Later, when Dracula tells Harker he wants to sign the deed to his new home, Lucy interrupts their business and says "Tonight? I won't hear of it," and then *she* invites Dracula to dance with her. He protests saying, "But I hardly know . . ."

but she cuts him off explaining, “It doesn’t matter, I’ll teach you.” Dracula acquiesces and then the dance begins, but not before he points out the apparent forwardness of the invitation: “I meant, I hardly know you.” Badham’s adaptation makes no attempt to disguise the change of Stoker’s angelic Mina into a feminist heroine, instead choosing to celebrate the transformation and “turning the old story into a vehicle for twentieth-century social critiques, especially feminist critiques” (Auerbach, “Vampires” 399). Thus, despite their shared intelligence, Badham’s Lucy is the reverse of Stoker’s Mina. Instead of preparing herself to be a dutiful wife, Lucy clearly resents the cultural boundaries imposed upon her and presses against them by. For example, Dracula invites Lucy to dine with him at Carfax Abbey where he kisses her. Instead of repulsing these advances, she reciprocates them, kissing Dracula back. In Stoker’s novel, Mina undertakes a journey that ultimately serves to strengthen the patriarchal control upon her life, whereas Lucy’s arc takes her to a state of greater liberation.

That moment of liberation is achieved through the bite. However, there are several scenes that contribute to the transformation of this moment from male conquest to female liberation. While the novel, and *Nosferatu*, do not provide extended scenes between Mina and Dracula (beyond the bite), Badham’s film does. In fact, there is a prelude to the anticipated bite scene that portrays Lucy and Dracula in a radically new relational situation. After receiving her invitation to dine at Carfax Abbey, Lucy arrives and enjoys an intimate conversation with Dracula by candlelight. Then the pair step outside to enjoy the night air. The camera pans around to keep the two of them in shot, lengthening their intimate encounter. The shot is quite long and does not cut until Dracula asks Lucy to look at him, and then he kisses her and she immediately kisses him back. “You must forgive me,” he tells her. “What for?” she asks, as if it were unnecessary that he should ask forgiveness for kissing her without warning. He answers, “For intruding in your life.”

Lucy then responds with one of the most important lines in this adaptation: “I came of my own accord.” She pulls him into to a much more passionate kiss than before. Dracula tells her she should go and promises, “I will see you again,” and Lucy replies, “Oh, please!”

This scene, made possible in the film by Langella’s changes to Dracula’s appearance and demeanor, is vital to Badham’s adaptation because as a prelude, it completely shifts the framework of the bite that follows. It is not predatory or even sacrificial. It is mutual. Lucy wants Dracula to come to her and desires a relationship that is no longer built on a victim/victimizer binary but on common interests and sexual attraction. Dracula responds and comes to her room to initiate the infamous vampire baptism, though in a way never before represented on film. When Dracula appears at her window, Lucy is not afraid, as in the other versions, and the hypnotic control that connects the two in earlier adaptations has been discarded in favor of a purely romantic connection. Though typically dressed in fashionable attire, Dracula on this occasion wears only his cape and a half-buttoned undershirt. He is the “Byronic savior,” scaling the walls to meet his lover, even if he is climbing down them rather than up, in the fashion of Stoker’s vampire (Auerbach, “Vampires” 398). Entering Lucy’s room through the mist, Langella’s Dracula quotes directly from the novel, with one notable addition. Stoker’s line reads, “You will be flesh of my flesh. Blood of my blood,” which Langella faithfully recites. He prefaces this line, however, with the statement, “Now it is you, my best beloved one,” and the camera cuts to Lucy as she listens with a smile. The addition of the new line reframes the encounter, changing it from the violent attack of the novel to a moment of union, a marriage, almost. As if it were a wedding night, Dracula lifts Lucy and carries her to the bed. He then does something else unique to this adaptation; he tells Lucy, “I need your blood.” The line is both a request and an explanation of what he is about to do. It does not intimidate or frighten her, like it

would have in the novel; it makes her a part of the experience. Skal points out that Langella felt this line, in particular, made him appear more sensitive (*Hollywood* 272).

The bite, then, becomes a moment of erotic climax rather than fearful predation. Dracula gently kisses Lucy's body, eliciting quiet moans from her as she enjoys his attention. He eventually kisses her lips before pausing as she exposes her throat, and he bites her. She releases a gasp of pleasure, and their silhouettes appear against a lurid red background, set to a romantic score by John Williams (fig. 6). Lucy raises her hands above her head, swaying them rhythmically in a pose of romantic triumph, before she runs them through his hair. As Diane Sadoff writes, "These spectacular scenes of flaming red and deep black mimic a hot romance aesthetic" (123). The bite scene concludes with the two of them holding hands together before he offers her his own blood. Regarding this quintessential vampire scene, Auerbach observes that, "Stoker's nightmare of violation becomes a dream of female self-possession" ("Vampires" 394). Though Auerbach sees this as a moment of self-delight for Lucy and not delight in Dracula's actions, the bite remains a catalyst of Lucy's sexual fulfillment and ultimate empowerment.

After the bite, Lucy breaks free from the restraints imposed upon her by the film's other male characters and thereafter remains a figure of opposition. Van Helsing, Seward, and Harker begin their plans to destroy Dracula, but Lucy warns Dracula of their intentions. When the men catch up to her, they find a defiant Lucy who strikes them with the horse whip, calls them "fools," and declares, "I despise you, all of you!" Though the men overpower her and take her back to the sanatorium, this stands as the first moment in the film when Lucy actively moves against the male-dominated structure of her life. Even at the end, after Dracula has been defeated and is drifting away on the wind, Lucy remains unbroken. The camera cuts from Dracula gliding away to Lucy and slowly zooms in to an extreme close-up of her face. As she watches Dracula, a

contented smile slips across her lips. She will not return to the life she led before; far too much has changed. The shot implies confidence that, despite being incarcerated by the men who wish to protect her, her romance with Dracula is far from over.

This reimagining of a formerly dark and violent relationship as a romance is the most remarkable aspect of Badham's adaption. Gothic violence has become female empowerment. Nevertheless, Badham's adaptive decisions are, by necessity, built from the memes introduced by Stoker and enhanced by Murnau. Radical shifts to the meme structure behind the characters' relationship have produced a version of the narrative that is nearly unrecognizable when compared with its original source text, but entirely recognizable when considered in terms of the genetic components themselves instead of the manner in which these components get reinterpreted. By adapting the memes originally created by Stoker and then adapted again by other directors like Murnau, Badham is able to create a film in which "Stoker's vampire is a hero" and "the women, victims no more, embrace vampirism with rapture as the sole available escape from patriarchy"—essentially a thematic reversal from the original novel (Auerbach, "Vampires" 398).

Conclusion

Since Badham's *Dracula* (1979), the narrative introduced by Stoker has not remained static. *Dracula* continues to evolve and be reimagined through new takes on Stoker's original memes. As cultural movements, cinematic expectations, and television programming develop, the vampire follows. Stacey Abbott sees the vampire as a creature symbiotically linked with the ebb and flow of modernity, asserting, "The vampire is in a constant state of disintegration and renewal, and it is through this process that it is intrinsically linked to the modern world, which is also perpetually in the throes of massive change" ("Celluloid" 5). The essence of that change, the

crucial building blocks of Dracula's immortality, remains the adaptors' decisions regarding the memes that originally framed the *Dracula* narrative, chief among them Dracula's appearance, Mina's empowerment, and the bite that brings them together. These three memes exist in a complicated matrix of relationships. If one is altered, the other two must be changed accordingly. The result is any number of potential adaptations. Similar to *A Christmas Carol*, *Dracula* can no longer be contained in Stoker's 1897 novel. It has truly become "literary public property" (Davis 11). The memes Stoker created in *Dracula* have taken a life of their own and are capable of existing outside of the narrative structure that initially gave them existence. Even when there is no Carfax Abbey, Renfield, Seward, or Jonathan Harker, the memes revolving around Mina and Dracula remain in force, continuing to shape vampire narratives and their engagement with sexual politics.

This is evident in any survey of recent vampire narratives. For example, in Joss Whedon's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003), the vampire is a brooding, sensitive man (like Langella) looking for redemption, the heroine is a super-powered—but naïve—teenager, and he bites her against his will. He is dying and only her blood can save him. It is a sacrifice she, like Badham's Lucy, implores *him* to make. Similarly, Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* (2008) hinges on the same memes structuring the relationship between the heroine and the vampire. Edward is a conflicted and handsome vampire stuck in a seventeen-year-old body. Bella is a moody, angst-ridden teenager. The bite in *Twilight* is initiated, again against the vampire's will, but with an entirely different purpose: Edward is forced to drink Bella's blood in order to *prevent* her transformation into a vampire. The bite becomes a saving act, with the opposite intention of the bite in Stoker's novel or Murnau's film. Now the Dracula figure has come to rescue the Mina figure and to preserve her humanity.

Even more recently, in Gary Shore's *Dracula Untold* (2014), the title character is a dashing and noble Vlad who is a father struggling to defend his people and his family against the invading Turks. To do this, an ancient vampire grants Vlad his powers for three days. If he can withstand the temptation to drink human blood, he will become human again. His wife Mirena is not empowered, like more recent *Dracula* heroines, but returns to the role of sacrificial victim. After Vlad fails to save her from a fatal fall, she asks him to drink her blood to make his vampirism permanent so that he can save their son. Essentially the bite is a sacrifice for both of them, predicated on their roles as parents and spouses. Once again, these same three memes, remain involved in the formation of an original narrative.

Dracula has proven itself to be highly adaptable and able to evolve for over a century. As perceptions of gender, sexuality, and relationships have changed, so have the memes behind the Dracula/Mina relationship. These brief examples, as well as *Nosferatu* (1922) and *Dracula* (1979), illustrate how incredibly dynamic the meme relationships of the novel can be and how deeply interrelated they are. The plasticity of these meme relationships allows for an old narrative to maintain relevance in an increasingly modern age, completely reshaping a familiar story into something new.

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Fig. 1. Max Schreck in *Nosferatu* (1922), directed by F. W. Murnau. Image courtesy of Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation.



Fig. 2. *Nosferatu* (1922), directed by F. W. Murnau. Image courtesy of FilmGrab.



Fig. 3. Max Schreck stalking Ellen in *Nosferatu* (1922), directed by F. W. Murnau. Image courtesy of Getty Images.



Fig. 4. Greta Schröder in *Nosferatu* (1922), directed by F. W. Murnau. Image courtesy of Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation.



Fig. 5. Frank Langella in *Dracula* (1979), directed by John Badham. Image courtesy of Universal Studios.



Fig. 6. Frank Langella and Kate Nelligan in *Dracula* (1979), directed by John Badham. Image courtesy of Universal Studios.