

Treating and Tracking Infection:
Doctors, Disease, and the Type-Writer Girl in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*

Scholars have known for decades now that Bram Stoker's 1897 novel *Dracula* defies definition. Yet the urge to quantify the vampire has struggled with and sometimes attempted to override *Dracula*'s ephemeral qualities. This has created a number of what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick refers to as "paranoid readings" of the vampire himself, and with fair reason; *Dracula*'s varied qualities invite suspicion and anticipation of the vampire that provoke not only the characters of the novel who seek to cleanse London of *Dracula*'s presence, but also scholars who tackle the text. Paranoid readings produce a position of "terrible alertness" that anticipates potential threats and danger (Sedgwick 130), a position that resonates with the bulk of scholarly attention to *Dracula*. Paranoid readings have infected critical interpretations of *Dracula*, driving scholars to anticipate and define the body and actions of the vampire as a reflection of a larger picture of degenerative outbreak at the *fin de siècle*. *Dracula* has been imagined as a metaphor for contagion (Willis), parasitism (Forman), and even diseases as specific as syphilis (Krumm, Mulvey-Roberts *Dangerous Bodies*) and addiction (Zieger). This metaphor is not limited to disease, as *Dracula* has been read as a fear of reverse colonization (Arata "The Occidental Tourist") and the rise of racial anxieties (Halberstam), but also *fin-de-siècle* fears of the sexualization of the feminine (Swartz-Levine), menstrual taboo (Mulvey-Roberts "*Dracula* and Doctors") and homosexuality (Schaffer). These myriad anxieties create a technology of monstrosity that "can represent any horrible trait" (Halberstam 21) the reader anticipates. If *Dracula*, by his very nature as a technology of monstrosity, cannot be defined, we must refocus our attention on the definable world that this technology occupies and examine the ways in which the human cast of *Dracula* work to define the undefinable.

While the question of what exactly Dracula represents in light of these paranoid readings is still up for debate, the vampire is undeniably a host body for the myriad anxieties at the *fin de siècle*, however, a paranoid reading is not the only way to approach *Dracula*. What Sedgwick calls “reparative reading” does not deny the presence of anxieties, but concentrates rather on mitigating and managing paranoia. As a reparative reading rises in reaction to a paranoid lens, the source of that paranoia must be examined to fully understand the reparative effects of the novel, just as a doctor must examine a patient’s symptoms before referring them to a specialist. Dracula, as a technology of monstrosity, moves into and throughout London in a manner that mimics what Priscilla Wald has defined as an outbreak narrative. In such narratives, a plot begins by first identifying an infection, then secondly discussing its movement, and finally chronicling “the epidemiological work that ends with its containment” (2). Conforming to Wald’s theory of narrative structure, *Dracula* begins with Jonathan Harker’s identification/realization of Dracula’s vampiric nature. As the novel continues, doctors and other professionals join this solicitor in plotting the movement of the monster throughout London, with Mina as chronicler of their epidemiological work. These professional’s “power of combination” (Stoker 277) of their specializations is integral to the removal of Dracula from Britain. While this is accomplished through the hard work and cooperation of the entire team, it is Mina Harker who meticulously records and combines the knowledge of these professionals into the coherent text that enables the group to finally kill Dracula.

While Mina’s status as the sole female professional of the group and her role as amanuensis is ripe for paranoid readings, her role in the text also reflects the affective potential of a reparative reading. It is no surprise that *Dracula* has invited such a wide array of paranoid readings; by its very nature, “paranoia tends to be contagious,” inviting “symmetrical

epistemologies” (Sedgwick 126) in much the same way the criticism of *Dracula* has produced an interwoven body of reflexive readings of the vampire. As a technology of monstrosity, *Dracula*’s nature invites anticipation, both in-text through the professionals who hunt him, and in reality, where the vampire is obfuscated by both conflicting and complimentary readings of his nature. While reparative readings readily and reactively enter into dialogue with paranoid readings, proponents of the latter often write off reparative readings as “merely” about pleasure and ameliorative motivations (Sedgwick144). However, denying the potential of a reparative reading of a paranoid text is akin to denying treatment to a patient. Reparative readings mitigate anxiety (128) in much the same way the heroes of *Dracula* alleviate the vampiric infection, or more crucially, how Mina Harker, through both her professional and emotional roles, mitigates *fin-de-siècle* anxieties.

This reparative mitigation of anxieties is not only central to Mina’s role in the novel, but also to the very structure of outbreak narratives in *fin de siècle* culture. During the end of the nineteenth century, as technological advances began to increase in frequency and production, so too did anxieties regarding technological innovation and the ways in which the world was becoming increasingly interconnected. Anonymous articles in *The British Medical Journal*, for example, disparaged London as a center of degeneration, with foul air, bad water, and people packed so densely that epidemics could not help but spread (“Degeneration” 295). London was receiving healthy folk who, due to the city’s imagined effect, would produce deviant offspring, creating fears that the English “race” would soon die out, replaced by an increasingly degenerate population (“Degeneration 295). Speaking at a lecture in 1885, James Cantlie, a Scottish physician, was sure that London, with its “close confinement” and “foul air” was raising up “a puny and ill-developed race.” During the rise of trains and telegrams, the world was feeling

increasingly small, and the theoretical effects of living in large cities was quickly becoming a source of fascination and fear. The link between degeneration and disease was impossible to ignore; the dissemination of diseases was counted “among the most potent factors in bringing about ... degeneration” (“Degeneration” 295). Literature at the *fin de siècle*, such as *Dracula*, invites a paranoid perspective that situates social concerns about disease within ideologies of race, gender, sexuality, and class, in an attempt to reveal a certain truth about reality. However, is it more useful to root out the truth or to identify the cure? And how useful is the truth when its primary effect causes or elevates distress and anxiety in the consumer? A reparative vein is essential during such times of intense collective anxiety, and such a reading of *Dracula* reveals Mina at the heart of that reparative vein.

As we turn back to *Dracula*, the lens of Wald’s outbreak narrative reveals the vampire as a simultaneous source of anxiety and infection. Wald imagines the outbreak narrative as an explanation of “how beliefs circulate in social interactions” alongside the “necessity and danger of human contact” (2). In *Dracula*, the danger of human contact is contact with the vampire himself, as interacting with the vampire puts one at risk of infection. Dracula is a “superspreader,” a carrier who brings “the virus itself to life” (Wald 4), or in this case, into Un-Death. This carrier, the “archetypal stranger” (10) is incorporated into the community (57); Dracula is a foreigner who spends much of the first portion of the book working to arrive in London. On top of hiring Jonathan Harker as a solicitor and securing estates such as Carfax, Dracula studies maps of London and texts on “English life and customs and manners” (Stoker 50), intending to blend in with the crowds of London upon his arrival. He is emphatic that he does not want to be seen as a foreigner, telling Jonathan that he would be most happy if he appears to be “like the rest” (51) of the people of London. Later in the novel, Dracula infects

Mina Harker with vampirism and uses their resulting connection to anticipate the movements of the professionals who hunt him, incorporating himself into their band by force. The infection can begin anywhere, but only properly emerges when it appears in “a metropolitan center” (Wald 34), such as London. Infection is easy to ignore, after all, when it is contained and kept at a distance. The fear rises, then, when infection threatens to invade the heart of civilization itself. Stephen Arata describes *fin de siècle* concerns about of invasion through reverse colonization as a fear of primitive forces that threaten order through a “terrifying reversal” (“The Occidental Tourist 623) of the roles of invader and invaded. Though Dracula has lived for many long years, he is not hunted until he actively threatens London and its population. London, and the rest of Western-European civilization, is perfectly comfortable allowing Dracula to do as he pleases so long as he and his influence remains outside their borders. As an outsider in the act of invading, Dracula is indicative of how fears of infection legitimize “legal and spatial responses to social biases” (Wald 115), mirroring the *fin-de-siècle* anxieties that have been read in *Dracula* so many times already. The moment he and his boxes of dirt cross the border into London, the infection becomes a threat to the city itself, where the community is elevated to a biological organism, and the nation is presented as an “immunological ecosystem” (Wald 53). Once in London, Dracula’s savagery “seems intent on penetrating into the center” (Ridenhour 78) of London itself, just as infectious diseases must penetrate a target body.

In the final decade of the nineteenth century, disease theory was split between three paradigms: germ theory, contagionist theory, and miasmatic theory (Willis 302). *Dracula* is one of many texts from the 1890s that reveals a large-scale societal concern with diseases and their methods of transmission. Stoker’s novel plays with each theoretical method of transmission through the nature and actions of the vampire himself. The oldest of these theories, contagion

theory, emphasized that infectious diseases were passed “through close contact or touch” (305) in a similar manner to the fermentation of liquids. Quarantine, despite the disruption to the community, was the primary method of handling contagion. *Dracula* alludes to this method through the movement of the boxes of dirt and by the nature of the vampire himself. Dracula can turn into both mist and animals, which allows him to pass barriers and evade suspicion at convenient times, yet he cannot enter a household without invitation (Stoker 279) and he can only rest and recover in the boxes of contaminated dirt he brings with him to London. Without these boxes of dirt, Dracula is unable to continue his offense to penetrate the border of England, or even to remain in London. Once the protagonists destroy nearly all of Dracula’s boxes, he attempts to break quarantine by passing back over the water to his home, escaping London and living to infect another day—rather, he *would* have if he had not been caught. Dracula, in true vampiric fashion, does not limit his infectious movements to penetrating national borders; Dracula violates the border of the human body, using his teeth to penetrate the skin of his victims before forcing them to drink his own contaminated blood in order to finalize the infection. Unfortunately for Mina, her infection is far more difficult to excise than that of London’s; the heroes must chase Dracula out of London and kill the vampire to secure a cure for her.

The second theory, miasmatic theory, posits that “diseases were the product of environmental factors such as *contaminated water, foul air*, and poor hygienic conditions” (Willis 306 emphasis mine) and not by contagion. While the contaminated water and foul air is reminiscent of Cantlie’s lecture on sources of degeneration, this theory resonates within the text of *Dracula* as well. Upon finding some of Dracula’s boxes of earth, Jonathan Harker notes the earthy smell of “dry miasma,” a scent that “was composed of all the ills of morality,” “corruption

[that] had become itself corrupt” (Stoker 290). As Mina is infected by Dracula, the vampire forces her to drink his blood, a contaminated source of liquid.

Lastly, the rise of germ theory and the counter of sterilization is familiar in the ways that vampirism is treated in-text. The novel documents the sterilization of “the boxes of infected earth” (Willis 313) as the means by which the crew intends to cleanse London of its infection, though the crew must hunt down Dracula himself to cure Mina in the climax. It is telling that Dracula is not bound by any single avenue of infection, rather, an *invading* infection, one made nearly impossible to quantify, as in so many other *fin de siècle* works¹, is used as an avenue to evoke fear in the reader. Vampirism, in true *Dracula* form, evades an easy definition by its very nature through employing facets of each theory of transmission, forcing the crew of professionals who hunt the vampire to undergo a process of identification before they can properly handle the infection as a whole.

Scholars have aptly named the group of protagonists of *Dracula* as the “Crew of Light” (Willis 313, Zieger 228) because of their roles as experts whose goal is to shed light on the unknown quantity that is Dracula. The threat of Dracula draws professionals from all walks of life who realize that cooperation is key in managing the spread of vampiric infection: Jonathan Harker as the solicitor, Dr. John Seward as the psychiatrist, Abraham Van Helsing as the esoteric European vampire expert, Quincey Morris as the American muscle, Arthur Holmwood as financier, and Mina Harker as amanuensis. Their power of combination enables them to purify London and kill Dracula. Van Helsing in particular is vital to this purification; he is the one with

¹ To name a few examples, H.G. Wells’ 1898 novel *The War of the Worlds* introduced an unknown invasion by an alien force which is defeated only by an unknown pathogen, Oscar Wilde’s 1890 *The Picture of Dorian Gray* features the hedonistic corruption of the titular character by an aristocrat, and Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* explores the downfall of Dr. Jekyll as he employs science to alter his body to allow himself to commit heinous crimes. Themes of degeneration, medicine, infection and invasion were nearly inescapable in popular media at the time, though perhaps less explicit than the vampirism portrayed in *Dracula*.

the most primary information about Dracula (second only to Jonathan Harker, who has spent months with the vampire, yet was unaware of the details of Dracula's history), and the one with the knowledge of how to "treat," or properly kill, Lucy Westenra once she becomes Un-Dead. Nicholas Daly considers Van Helsing a "super-professional," the natural leader of a group "composed largely of professional men" (189). The figure of the doctor in particular represents the essence of "self-made, professional, middle-class male rationality" (Harrison 53) at the end of the nineteenth century. A series of medical acts in 1858, 1868, and 1886² increased the abilities of doctors to prescribe medications and create a monopoly of distribution that resulted in an increase of power in this fragment of the middle-class population (Harrison 54-5). The combination of these men represents "the cornerstone of professional middle-class power" (192), as these middle-class men and newly minted experts at the *fin de siècle* were suddenly forced to apply their expertise to the quantification of a new unknown: Dracula.

Dracula is transformed from a text that invites a paranoid reading to a text that is decidedly reparative in nature by its ability to manage anxiety through the actions of the Crew of Light, but most importantly, through the actions of Mina Harker as not only amanuensis, but as the sympathetic heart of the crew, binding the male professionals together into a unified front. Though a paranoid reading may view her supportive role as a conservative presentation of the expected qualities of a woman at the *fin de siècle*, a reparative reading recognizes the recuperative work that Mina performs within the Crew of Light. To track the vampire, the Crew of Light employ the powers bestowed upon them by their middle-class expertise and intimate

² The Medical Act of 1858 "established the General Medical Council and the Medical Register, distinguishing for the first time between qualified and unqualified practitioners," while the later Medical Act of 1886 integrated general practitioners into the institutional structure of the medical profession (Harrison 55). In between these two, the Poison and Pharmacy Act of 1868 regulated the supply of drugs in Britain. Each of these contributed to the rise of the male doctor as a force of power through their professionalism at the *fin de siècle*.

knowledge of London through their roles as professionals within the city. Jonathan Harker, hired by Dracula, draws upon his knowledge of copied maps (Stoker 290) to locate the chapel and the first location of Dracula's boxes of earth. Mina Harker in turn consults maps when attempting to locate Dracula (392) during his last-ditch attempt to flee England. Specific locations are referenced all throughout the text: Chatham Street (87), Liverpool Street (154), Fenchurch Street and Paddington (357), Chicksand Street and Jamaica Lane (300) and so on. Wald argues that mapping and cartography are particularly important facets of infection management, evoking "both fear and reassurance" through their inherent representation of "epidemiological work in progress" (37). While Stoker does not definitively map the vampire's movements, *Dracula* does include newspaper clippings (109, 172, 214, 215), receipts (132) and telegrams (187) alongside the letters and diary entries that make up the novel, each carefully put into chronological sequence by none other than Mina Harker. An enterprising reader would certainly be able to follow Dracula's movements alongside the Crew of Light through these collected texts, but only due to Mina's careful attention. Without a vampire to read, the Crew of Light must turn to the products of professionalism (newspapers, telegrams, receipts) to find the "marks and symptoms" (Arata *Fictions of Loss* 19) that will lead them to a cure. As these professionals become epidemiologists, they must alter their attention from individual movements to a large-scale examination of movements and transmissions, exhibited through Mina's collection of texts. Arata introduces the concept of the "professional reader," a man (and always a man) whose professional training "allows him to extract 'useful meaning from ... confusing signs'" (4). This interest in close reading links together professionals "from a variety of disciplines" (4) in much the same way the group of scattered professionals are brought together in *Dracula*. The presence

of these professionals and the explicitly professional work that they do creates a text that, in Daly's words, "produce[s] and manage[s] anxiety" (181) rather than merely expressing it.

Yet, all this talk to the male professional reader seemingly neglects a very important member of the Crew of Light. Continuing a reparative reading, the Crew of Light mitigate the anxiety of *Dracula* through the dissemination of information, and none of the Crew are as intimately involved with the translation and recording of information as Mina Harker. Mina's role as caretaker of both information and men within the novel establishes her early on as a critical member of the team, and by the end of the novel, the central character through which the anxiety of infection, of *Dracula*, is thoroughly ameliorated. Initial impressions of Mina Harker are thoroughly domestic; Jonathan makes a memo on the first page of the novel to get a recipe for paprika hendl for her (31) and later a recipe for "impletata" (33). Yet, the Mina the reader is later introduced to is far more than a simple housewife in training. She wants to be useful to her husband, practicing her shorthand in letters to him and working to learn stenography so she can "take down what he wants to say" (86). She wants to do as lady journalists do, "interviewing and writing descriptions and trying to remember conversations" (86) and therefore the diary she keeps is not filled with gossip or daydreams, but reflections of the world around her and recorded stories. However, at the same time, Mina disparages the rising image of the New Woman, mocking their appetites and sexual proclivity (123) despite her own work ethic and journalistic aspirations. Sos Eltis maps out the rise of "anxiety and uncertainty about social roles, sexual nature, and natural spheres of activity" (565) between the sexes at the time Stoker wrote and published *Dracula*. Eltis notes that Mina "subverts traditional gender categories" (574) by her intent to separate herself from the image of the New Woman while simultaneously possessing "a number of her commonly recognized attributes" (575). This hypocritical position allows Mina to

exist as both domestic woman and female professional within *Dracula*, and her divided position enables her to remain comfortably, traditionally feminine while still acting in opposition to the threat of infection.

As amanuensis, Mina records, compiles, and chronologically sorts all the information the men have gathered about Dracula and the spread of his infection. The novel's metafictional conceit is that the entire narrative consists of information gathered explicitly by Mina. After Lucy's mysterious death, the men are left directionless. The investigation continues only because Van Helsing writes to Mina about Lucy's death and requests help after finding letters of correspondence between the two women. Mina proves to be more useful than even Van Helsing could have expected; upon their meeting, she teases him at first by revealing her shorthand diary before her replicated, typewritten account, upon which he declares her a "clever woman" (Stoker 220). Mina's ability to elucidate information continues through the text; she brings her husband into the hunt by presenting a "doctor's letter" (225) that reveals Jonathan's experiences to be true. Upon meeting Dr. Seward, Mina offers to copy out his phonograph recordings on her typewriter (259) so they may be standardized alongside Mina's other collected texts and eventually examined for clues; once all the records are "complete and in order" the Crew of Light is finally able to become "acquainted with the facts" (275) of the case. After she is infected by Dracula, she offers herself to Van Helsing to be hypnotized in a desperate attempt to track the vampire over water (351). Though she is infected by Dracula, she utilizes her infection to help track him when all the information at their disposal fails to do the same, despite the Crew's intentions and efforts throughout the text to keep her safe.

In her role as a traditional, domestic woman, Mina enables the men around her to act while maintaining their equally traditional masculine roles. At the *fin de siècle*, anxieties about

the changing definition of woman's nature and role brought about "concomitant questions and anxieties about masculinity" (Eltis 568) in response. Therefore, the men are expectedly defensive over Mina in *Dracula*, reflexively prioritizing her protection over their own safety. Though Mina is instrumental in gathering and sorting all of the information at the Crew's disposal, the men repeatedly attempt to keep her safe even to the detriment of the overall investigation. As her protectors, they idealize her. Mina is "a woman who was all perfection" (Stoker 350) to her husband, a beacon of "goodness and purity" (349) in Seward's eyes, "most wise" (367) to Van Helsing. While she is idealized and complimented throughout the novel, these conventionally gendered expressions of praise appear after her infection, proving that Mina remains a bastion of goodness in the eyes of the men despite her vampiric corruption. If anything, Mina's infection emphasizes the good qualities of her character through her willingness to continue to mitigate the fears of the men who surround her.

Mina's femininity and professionalism work in tandem to create the ultimate support network for the male professionals who populate the rest of the novel. She becomes the "ideal center around which" (Daly 189) the group of professional men revolve. Mina's "emotional restraint, courage, and nervous strength" (Eltis 575) often surpasses that of the men in her group, who tend to exhibit extreme emotions in times of stress. After Lucy's death, Arthur weeps in her arms "like a wearied child" (Stoker 268), and Quincey comments after that none but a woman "can help a man when he is in trouble of the heart" (269). As the emotional nucleus of the Crew of Light, Mina's natural femininity belies her active role in assuaging the anxieties of the men who surround her. While a paranoid reading of *Dracula* may link Mina (or any member of the cast) with Dracula's degeneracy in any number of ways, a reparative reading of the novel places Mina at the center of heroic response to threats to public health. Her professionalism, previously

exhibited in her production and reproduction of texts, extends when she becomes a victim of Dracula later in the novel. Immediately after the attack, Mina delivers an account of the incident despite her status as victim. As she speaks, her husband can do nothing but groan, “as if he were the injured one” (327) while Mina holds his hand in comfort. While she is emotionally affected by the infection, she delivers her report clearly and concisely, especially given the circumstances, before she retires. Her emotional strength emerges as praiseworthy, elevating her in the eyes of the men of the Crew of Light, who are in awe of her seemingly exceptional abilities.

Perhaps these powers seem less important when held up to Dr. Van Helsing’s experience, or Quincey Morris’s determination and physical ability, but just as the men of the Crew of Light value Mina’s emotional strength, so too must the reader. To acknowledge the importance of Mina’s abilities exposes the potential for a reparative reading despite the glut of paranoid readings. Sedgwick notes herself that reparative motivations are “inadmissible in paranoid theory” because they are “merely” ameliorative and focused on pleasure (144), and yet dismissing Mina as the embodiment of this reparative method is as much of a mistake as it is to dismiss *any* part of the novel entirely. If *Dracula* could only be read as a paranoid text, there would be no need for Mina, her heart, or her typewriter; the men could happily stake the vampire on their own and be done with it. Mina is no delicate woman despite her femininity, consigned to the sidelines; she is the emotional rock of the Crew of Light even as she works to track the movements of the vampire, both more than the typical female *and* more than the typical professional.

Though Mina mocks the idea of the New Woman, her role “clearly subverts traditional gender categories” (Eltis 574). Her dual nature is discussed within *Dracula* itself, most notably by Van Helsing who declares that Mina has “man’s brain ... and woman’s heart” (274). This is

explicitly a *good* thing—she is “fashioned” by God for a purpose through her “good combination” (274) of masculine rationality and feminine emotion. Just as the Crew of Light is made stronger through its powers of combination, so too is Mina made stronger through her combined traits. This balance between productivity and femininity was not unheard of at the *fin de siècle*, but it was rarely idealized to the extent that *Dracula* treats Mina. At the end of the nineteenth century and in light of the industrial revolution, many middle-class women sought work in the public sphere, work that “seemed to undermine the association with domesticity” that predicated “conventional notions of class and feminine respectability” (Keep 402). Society considered working among “men, machines, and money” as a factor in diminishing feminine “sensitivity and moral superiority” (402). However, this did not prove to dissuade a rising force of women determined or required to make their own wage in order to survive.

Thus arrives the icon of the Type-Writer Girl, a figure Christopher Keep describes as a “carefully conceived product” of the times, an “acceptable face of the ‘New Woman’” who represented the desire for independence without endangering “traditional feminine sensibilities that held matrimony and maternity as a woman’s highest purpose” (404). Though the Type-Writer Girl was originally popularized in America through ads starting in 1874 depicting “a fashionably-dressed and attractive young woman posing alongside a new machine” (405), by 1885 the *Westminster Gazette* in London reported a “typing office established by the Society for the Employment of Women in London” (407). By the end of the century, female typists accounted for “twenty percent of all white-collar workers in Great Britain” (407). The Type-Writer girl empowered women by providing some form of independence through an earned wage, even though the wage was often so low that the woman was not able to achieve full independence (422). Low wages were paired with a carefully cultivated image of an ideal Type-

Writer Girl, a woman who enjoys “fine clothes” and arrays herself as “an erotic object” for her masculine audience. While many women were reluctant to accept the low wages, the “media image of the Type-Writer Girl secured” (423) an elevation in class, shallow as it may have been. To the male outsider, the typist “seems more male than female” (414), a potential site for *fin-de-siècle* anxieties about gender roles; to combat this, some novels at the time produced the Type-Writer girl as “a site of erotic attraction” for men who may have otherwise been threatened by their “sudden invasion of the spheres of masculine privilege” (413). If the Type-Writer Girl is still recognizably female, then, she inherently supports social notions and expectations of gender even when her actions directly contradict these social perceptions. As long as the Type-Writer Girl can still be a wife and a mother, society is safe from the threat of degeneration.

The Type-Writer Girl, while supporting social expectations of gender, was still an undeniably important societal tool at the *fin de siècle*. As the role of the middle-class professional continued to rise and expand through the end of the nineteenth century, the ensuing businesses and corporations “required an ever larger body of clerks to transcribe, collate, and file the masses of paperwork” (Keep 403) these very companies and professionals depended upon. Women became the “ideal solution” as an “inexpensive source of educated labor” that helped to maintain the respectability of the office (403). Despite the low pay and social pressures, these women were a crucial part of the rise of professionalism. *Dracula* reflects this contradictory necessity through Mina’s character; though she volunteers her time and effort first to her husband, then the Crew of Light, with no expectation of compensation or even acknowledgement of her work, she is indispensable to the entire effort to rid London of infection. Despite her professional role her feminine nature is underscored and emphasized repeatedly in the text. As Arthur breaks down and cries before her, she notes how comfortable she is in the role of

caretaker. In Mina's words, "there is something of the mother" (Stoker 268) in woman, some spirit that empowers her to comfort the adult man as if he were her "own child" (269). Quincey's following statement that none but a woman can help a man in such a state rings clearer, then: Mina is fulfilling her natural role, just as society desires. At the end of the novel, after Dracula has been killed and London saved, Jonathan Harker writes a small note where he introduces his and Mina's son, Quincey, named for the only man to fall to infection. While Jonathan notes that Quincey will someday learn how "brave and gallant" his mother is, Jonathan states also that Quincey "will understand how some men so loved her, that they did dare much for her sake" (419). Mina is so loved *because* she is a "safe" iteration of the Type-Writer Girl, through her combination of feminine and masculine traits. She is an active member of the team, yet not abrasively so. She does not question the men or act against their wishes, even when she wants to, because she is a "good" woman. Just as the Type-Writer Girl is expected to also be a wife and a mother, Mina is expected to do the same despite her talents. As Dracula is defeated, Mina effectively retires to motherhood; the birth of little Quincey cements her new role. Mina does not simply assuage anxieties through her role as amanuensis, she also manages anxieties via her adamant refusal to abandon her socially expected feminine traits through her vocal distaste of the image of the New Woman. Though Mina is, in many ways, a comfortably conservative woman, her traditional femininity invites a reparative lens, as the men of *Dracula* do not have to worry about an upstart New Woman upsetting their comfortable gender roles.

However, this is *Dracula*, and there is nothing clear-cut about this text. Mina's masculine brain is equally as lauded and appreciated by the Crew of Light throughout the novel as her feminine abilities. In each moment that the Crew of Light attempts to remove Mina from danger by forbidding her from aiding the investigation, they are forced to re-include her. Despite the

expertise of the gathered men of the Crew of Light, and despite her own professed traditional femininity, Mina is drawn back to the fight. Though the men may be stronger and have more scientific knowledge and experience, Mina becomes the Dracula expert through her textual expertise and, once infected, her intimate connection with the vampire. After Mina compiles and types up the majority of their evidence, the Crew convinces her to step back and let the men handle the work, only for Dracula to invade and infect Mina while they are distracted. Much later in the novel, the Crew understands Mina to be compromised by her infection, and that Dracula is somehow able to spy on them through her, and so they once again attempt to relieve her of responsibility. Mina, not one of the men, presents the solution of using that same infectious connection to their advantage, utilizing hypnosis to track the vampire as he attempts to escape, and this connection leads them to the vampire in the end. Despite the best efforts of the Crew of Light, Mina is unstoppable.

The knowledge that Mina disseminates and imparts upon the Crew of Light places her in direct opposition to a paranoid reading's "hermeneutics of suspicion" (Sedgwick 124). Unwilling to be cowed by the rise of the vampire, Mina rises to do battle with Dracula not with knives or stakes, but through knowledge and love: Knowledge of the vampire, and love for the men. While the men of the Crew of Light complete the physical work of cleansing the boxes and staking the vampires, Mina oversees the intellectual and emotional work borne of the hunt. Without Mina and her typewriter, one can imagine the novel to be a series of battles with the vampire, fear-laden narratives much like Jonathan Harker's experiences as recorded within the novel—that is, if *Dracula* would exist at all. Mina forces Jonathan Harker to learn the truth of his stay at Dracula's home, and she accepts Van Helsing's letter and schedules their first meeting, directly resulting in the formation of the Crew of Light. Mina gathers the pieces together to *make* the

book. Mina, half man, half woman, but all heart, as the glue that binds the Crew of Light together, dismantles the hermeneutics of suspicion and throws away the paranoid reading.

Dracula, under this lens and with Mina's aid, is certainly ripe for a reparative reading.

As I write this essay in 2020, over a century after the publication of *Dracula*, I find many of these old anxieties echo our current social and medical climate. While the spread of COVID-19 across the globe has not resulted in riots or violence, the tension across the world is undeniable. Managing the tension and anxieties around the outbreak is just as if not possibly *more* important than managing just the disease itself. As hoarders hit supermarkets and clear out shelves of toilet paper (Lee), other citizens begin to feel the pressure to do the same, which does nothing but inflate the issue. Keeping calm is vital, yet increasingly difficult. The world of 2020 seems ready for a Mina Harker of our own, a figure of stability, intelligence, of rationality and poise, yet such matters are clearly more easily solved in fiction than in fact. That being said, *Dracula* is a text that manages anxieties through a careful balance of combination: the combination of professionals, yes, but more importantly the combination of masculine and feminine traits in Mina Harker. As a professional woman, Mina is allowed, even encouraged to explore, to learn, to educate those around her and be educated in turn. As a representative of the traditional woman, Mina represents safety, comfort, the continuance of civilization despite the rise of societal degeneration, because even as the world appears to be falling apart, Mina and her ilk are here to piece reality back together in a coherent, logical manner—but never in an entirely unwomanly manner. *Dracula*, then, is not a text that merely rewards paranoid readings, but one with decidedly reparative traits, a novel that works to dispel the very anxieties it creates. After all, *Dracula* didn't have to end with Mina as mother, but the ending Stoker decided on quells our

fears, if for a moment. The vampire is dead, the infection is cured, and both London and Mina are allowed to return to their typical, traditional, lives.

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