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1. Introduction

The vampire who wanted to be good —
 who ran around saving people's lives so
 he wouldn't be a monster...
 (*Twilight* 179)

Vampires are all around these days, they seem to have taken over the media and even everyday life. Their appearance is not limited to literature and film anymore, you find them in supermarkets (on ice-cream and candy for example) and you come across their faces, printed on T-shirts, practically everywhere. Popular fictional characters, such as Winnie the Pooh, Hello Kitty or Spongebob Squarepants, have at some point made appearances as vampires. And also in films or series, which are not related to vampires in any way, such as the medial drama series *Private Practice* (2007) or the recently released film *Somewhere* (2010, Dir. Sofia Coppola), vampires – especially those belonging to *The Twilight Saga* (2005-2008) – are discussed by the main characters. In literature, and in adaptations in the form of film or T.V. series, vampires began to appear more and more frequently. However, these vampires are different from their predecessors, they seem to have adapted to the culture surrounding them. Modern vampires, such as Edward Cullen from *The Twilight Saga* share only few characteristics with traditional ones, such as Dracula. Therefore, the change of the vampire in literature from the late nineteenth to the early twenty-first century is analyzed in this thesis. I will illustrate not only how vampires have changed over time, but also why.

Before discussing vampires I will provide a theoretical background on monsters and their history in literature, based on the studies by Margrit Shildrick and Jeffery Jerome Cohen. Afterwards, vampires, who are currently the most popular kinds of monsters, will be emphasized on. The shift from traditional to contemporary vampires will be explained in theory and exemplified with the help of two novels – Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), Anne Rice's *Interview with the*

Vampire (1976) – and one vampire novel series: Charlaine Harris' *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*¹ (2001-). These works will be analyzed in detail with regard to their narrative features, the metaphorical function of the vampire and the uncanny. Along with vampires, also those who hunt them, the vampire slayers, have changed, which is why, in addition to vampires, vampire slayers and their alteration will be discussed thereafter. Again, after a general overview of the character in literature and visual culture, the works of Stoker, Rice and Harris will be read with regard to vampire slayers and their portrayal.

The choice to include *Dracula* seems obvious, as it is understood as the ultimate vampire novel. Discussing another vampire story of the nineteenth century, for example *Carmilla* (1872) or *The Vampyre* (1819), would have made sense as well, but due to the novel's popularity and its depiction of nineteenth century beliefs and conceptions, *Dracula* was preferable. Similarly, *Interview with the Vampire*, is not only one of the most popular vampire novels of the twentieth century, but also a landmark in vampire fiction as the vampire is allowed to tell his story himself. It is the first novel of *The Vampire Chronicles*, the title of Rice's series of vampire novels, which consist of ten novels published from 1976 to 2003. The difficulty with Rice thus was not whether to include her works, but how many of them. Even though they are connected by a general story line and the same characters occur throughout the series, most of them are able to stand alone. Therefore, only the first novel of the series is analyzed in this thesis. In contrast, I find it necessary to use Charlaine Harris' vampire novel series as a whole. The reason why I chose *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* in the first place was the simple fact that among all the vampire novels published in the still young twenty-first century, they are quite unique: vampires not only exist but publically live among humans, i.e. *with* humans. In addition the idea of the redeeming vampire in despair over his possibly 'lost soul', a crucial element in recent vampire fiction, occurs as well. Finally, I will establish the links between Stoker's, Rice's and Harris' vampires and their slayers.

¹ Also known as *The Sookie Stackhouse Novels*.

Although I used children's literature and films and young adult fiction, as well as vampire films and T.V. series, as examples and references in my overviews of monsters and vampire slayers I decided to exclude them from a detailed analysis and to focus on the change of the vampire in literature. This decision was not easy to make as the works of Stoker, Rice and Harris have been adapted for the screen. Especially with regard to Rice and Harris these adaptations would have been interesting as both their works, unlike Stoker's *Dracula*, have only been adapted once to date: *Interview with the Vampire* was made into a successful film by Neil Jordan in 1994 and *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* was made into a T.V. series, *True Blood* (2008), by Allan Ball. The first season of the series is based on the first novel (see *True Blood*), which leads to the assumption the subsequent seasons will be loosely based on the other novels of the book series. Nevertheless, to include an analysis of the portrayal of vampires in visual culture, which has undergone very interesting changes as well, would have exceeded the scope of this thesis by far. Similarly, research an analysis of children's and young adult literature would have constituted enough material for a study of its own.

2. It's Alive! The Monster in History and Culture

2.1. A Brief Historical Account of the Monster

The monster was the best friend I ever had.
(Boris Karloff)

"We live in a time of monsters," Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, editor of the essay collection *Monster Theory* (1996), states accurately (vii). In fact, we have always lived in a time of monsters. From ancient Greece and Rome to the twenty-first century, they have always been there. But, as a matter of fact, what is a monster? *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary* defines a monster as "a large, ugly, and frightening imaginary creature," "an inhumanly cruel or wicked person," or "a congenitally malformed or mutant animal or plant" (925). The term originates from the Latin words "monstrare" ("to show") and "monere" ("to warn") (925; Shildrick 12). The adjective monstrous stands for something "very ugly or frightening," or something "outrageously evil or wrong" (COED 926). The emphasis here will lie on the monster as the ugly and frightening imaginary creature and the monster as an inhumanly cruel or wicked person, as well as the monster as a figure of evil or wrong.

In the course of time monsters have appeared in various forms and cultures. Margrit Shildrick gives insight in the monster's past by outlining the representation of the monster in history. In ancient Greece Aristotle already "used the term 'monstrosity' to describe forms of corporeal excess, deficiency or displacement, not just in those bodies which were malformed by disease, accident, or birth, but more widely to depict all beings that are a deviation from the common course of nature" (Shildrick 11). For him this was an issue of immorality (see Shildrick 12). Nevertheless, the general idea on the causes of

monstrosity in Greek mythology emphasized the supernatural. The monster was understood as either a test for humanity or a punishment from the Gods (see Zhanial 9-10). Furthermore, monsters are seen as evidence of nature's capabilities, an idea which was still valid in the Middle Ages (see Zhanial 10; Shildrick 12-3). The monster at the same time horrifying and marvelous and represents nature and the power of God (see Shildrick 12). Shildrick indicates that the monstrous is a "mirror of humanity", hence being a monstrosity is "a punishment for disobedience to the laws of Gods" (17). The function of the monster then is to offer a reflection of some of the core issues of the human condition (see Shildrick 16-7).

In the Age of Enlightenment a shift regarding the origins of monsters took place and they were subject to "described, explained, and thus demystified" (Goetsch 21). Scholars began to operate within a medical discourse rather than believe in the supernatural. They wanted to gain knowledge and be able to command nature (see Shildrick 20-21). The results were collections, such as cabinets of curiosities, which were also, or rather mainly, used for entertainment (see Shildrick 21). Popular monstrous objects of research in this field were, for example, conjoined twins. Such human monstrosities, exhibited to the people in so-called 'Freak Shows' thrived from the mid-eighteenth to the early twentieth century². However, this tradition of making profit from such monstrosities has always existed, rooting back to the early twelfth century (see Shildrick 23-4). Shildrick provides a description of the Freak Show's audience, which is strongly reminiscent of the typical horror-film audience of today:

Certainly the crowds came to gasp with horror and to admire, to be frightened and amused, but the very extent of the desire to witness monstrosity first hand, to report in detail every instance, and to circulate a prodigious literature indicates, I suggest, an inner anxiety about the relation between the creatures on display and normative form and identity. (23)

² As Shildrick points out, in a reference to P.T. Barnum's autobiography (Barnum was the most successful showman of the nineteenth century), "the spectacle was often based on fraud" (24).

The presentation of the monster in Freak Shows strongly influenced the notion of the monster as the Other as it made the distinction between the self (the viewer) and the Other (the 'freak') clear. This image of the distinct self and Other then "took on cultural, racial, national or historical significances which emphasized difference as inferiority" (Shildrick 24).

While the monstrosities exhibited in the eighteenth and nineteenth century gained popularity, the literary monster evolved in fiction. In the Age of Reason, due to the demystification of the monsters, they slowly disappeared, only to return with a metaphorical function in the Romantic Period (see Goetsch 23, 26). During the Enlightenment, the popular faith in the supernatural was undermined and figures like witches or monsters were taken out of their original, supernatural, belief system (see Goetsch 26). In contrast, the Romantics were fascinated by monsters again. Monsters, for them, served three functions: "their critique of the Age of Reason, their portrayal of the night side of imagination and their treatment of the poet and his problem of creation" (31). The variety of monsters employed ranged from ancient mythological to traditional folkloric creatures, such as vampires, demons or fairies. The use of these monsters stretched beyond the traditional lore as the Romantics invented new perspectives and even new monsters (see Goetsch 30-32). In the late eighteenth century, the Gothic novel, which, until today, is of importance, surfaced (see Goetsch 41). In the nineteenth century, in the mid-Victorian period, writers again started to refrain from writing about monsters, due to, among others, the realist movement, modernization and criticism in religious beliefs. Nevertheless, some writers were influenced by the Romantics, which explains the continuous interest in the supernatural. The situation, though, was complex as both of the trends mentioned above had an influence on each other. For example, new monsters were created, as fears became influenced by science and rationalism (see Goetsch 126-7). Goetsch lists the following developments as the reason for the monsters' increasing occurrence in Victorian literature: "the Darwinian revolution, naturalism, theories about race, crime, sex, gender, and degeneration, the scientific interest in parapsychology, the supernatural, and

the unconscious" (127). In the genre of fantastic literature monsters were allowed to exist as such, whereas monstrous characters in the field of realism had to have an explainable origin or cause in this kind of fiction (see Goetsch 127). Hence, in the Victorian era, due to the influence the Romantics had on the Victorian writers, the monster finally began to occupy the function of a metaphor (see Goetsch 135).

In literature at the fin de siècle the monster reached a peak. Numerous and various kinds of monsters were invented. Among others Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) by Robert Louis Stevenson, Dorian Gray in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) by Oscar Wilde, Dracula in the novel by the same title (1897) by Bram Stoker or the "Martians" in *The War of the Worlds* (1898) by H.G Wells, are some of the famous monsters of that time (see Goetsch 284). The rise of the monster, which goes together with the revival of Gothic fiction, "can be seen as a reaction to the crisis of Victorian realism" (Goetsch 284). Also Shildrick, agreeing with Paul Goetsch, points out that many scholars observe a connection between times of unrest in society and politics and the obsession with monstrosities, which regularly go together (Shildrick 20).

In the twentieth century the horror genre, in literature and visually culture, gained extreme popularity (see Shildrick 25). "[Monsters] became part of everyday culture" (Goetsch 329). The monsters of the Victorian Age are still important in the twenty-first century, they shape their successors, or rather, they are still here themselves, just in a revised form. Apparently, the monsters of the nineteenth century keep being recycled (see Goetsch 330). Dracula or Frankenstein's monster, for example, have been the characters of numerous films, theater productions and literary works. They are no 'new' monsters, but new novels and films about them are constantly being produced, as is the case with other monsters from earlier periods. Depending on the work and medium they appear in, the monsters most often are slightly, or majorly, adapted to cater a certain audience. The contemporary image of the monster has changed even

so far, that the monster is not only shown as a nice and loving creature, but even as a creature who sees the humans as the Other and is, as a matter of fact, frightened by them. In Walt Disney & Pixar's *Monsters Inc.* the protagonists are almost exclusively monsters, who live behind cupboards and walls. Their job is to scare children, as the monsters collect screams in order to produce energy. The funny thing is though, that the monsters are horribly afraid of the children (see *Monsters Inc.* D: Peter Docter 2001).

The term “monster”, with its broad definition, thus is full of meaning and history, which again is reflected by the huge amounts of monsters, in all their variations, in literature and visual culture. Nowadays, academics study characters, like Beowulf, God-created-monsters of ancient times, human-created-monsters, misshaped persons, aliens and vampires alike. In *Monster Theory* the monster is seen from a cultural studies perspective. Monstrosity is understood as a cultural discourse and the monster is always a construct of its time and culture. Cohen, with a focus on the fin de siècle America, speaks of “a society that has created and commodified ‘ambient fear’ – a kind of total fear that saturates day-to-day living, prodding and silently antagonizing but never speaking its own name” and explains that “this anxiety manifests itself symptomatically as a cultural fascination with monsters – a fixation that is born of the twin desire to name that which is difficult to apprehend and to domesticate (and therefore disempower) that which threatens” (Cohen viii). This means that the monster is given its name out of a desire to label things that are incomprehensible and at the same time to make the threat of the unknown less imminent.

One example illustrating this process of domestication of the monster, are the various representations of the alien as the Other in the past thirty years. In 1979 Ridley Scott directed a movie called *Alien*, which became a world-wide success. The alien was designed by H.R. Giger (see “H.R. Giger”) and is a hideous, evil killer. Only three years later Steven Spielberg presented the world with a – still ugly – but cute, harmless, friendly and homesick alien called E.T (see *E.T.* 1982). Another 20 years later, Walt Disney introduced the alien Stitch in the

animated feature film *Lilo & Stitch* (2002). Stitch, considered the most evil and destructive creature in space, manages to flee and escapes to Earth. There, he lands in Hawaii, where he befriends a little girl, Lilo, and in the end turns into the heroic, cute and loved protagonist (see *Lilo & Stitch*).

2.2. A Theory of Monsters

It's a perfect night for mystery and horror. The air itself is filled with monsters.

(Mary Shelley in *Frankensteins' Rückkehr* (1935))

Cohen offers seven theses on monster culture, built on the idea that

“[w]e live in an age that has rightly given up on Unified Theory, an age when we realize that history (like “individuality,” “subjectivity,” “gender,” and “culture”) is composed of a multitude of fragments, rather than of smooth epistemological wholes. Some fragments will be collected here and bound temporarily together to form a loosely integrated net—or, better, an unassimilated hybrid, a monstrous body” (3).

His aim is to establish a theory of monsters and not “a theory of teratology” (4)³. The first of his thesis forms the basis thereof and gives a definition of how Cohen understands the monster:

The monster is born only at this metaphoric crossroads, as an embodiment of a certain cultural moment – of a time, a feeling, and a place. The monster’s body quite literally incorporates fear, desire, anxiety, and fantasy (ataractic or incendiary), giving them life and an uncanny independence. The monstrous body is pure culture. A construct and a projection, the monster exists only to be read: the monstrem is etymologically ‘that which reveals,’ ‘that which warns,’ a glyph that seeks a hierophant. Like a letter on the page, the monster signifies something other than itself: it is always a displacement, always inhabits the gap

³ Teratology is “the branch of medicine concerned with congenital abnormalities and abnormal formations” (COED 1486).

between the time of upheaval that created it and the moment into which it is received to be born again. (4)

In the second thesis, “The Monster Always Escapes” the absence of the monster is in the foreground. The monster “turns immaterial and vanishes, to reappear someplace else” (4), but the damage done remains. For example, the yeti’s footprints found in Tibetan snow or a giant’s bones stranded on a beach (see Cohen 4). The monster can be killed by a hero and disappear, but it will still come back. “Regardless of how many times Sigourney Weaver’s beleaguered Ripley utterly destroys the ambiguous Alien that stalks her, its monstrous progeny return, ready to stalk again in another bigger-than-ever sequel” (4-5). This also applies to the vampire, who has been staked throughout the past and is still one of the most prevalent monsters. As a consequence “‘Monster Theory’ must [...] concern itself with strings of cultural moments, connected by a logic that always threatens to shift [...]” (6). The question of the monster’s escape is discussed in the third thesis “The Monster Is the Harbinger of Category Crisis”. Cohen argues that “the monster always escapes because it refuses easy categorization” (6). The monster exists in a liminal space and occurs at times of crisis, standing for a “third term” problematizing binary thinking. At all events it escapes “to return to its habitations at the margins of the world” (6).

“Thesis IV: The Monster Dwells at the Gates of Difference” explains the monster’s functions as “dialectical Other”, it is “an incorporation of the Outside, the Beyond – of all those loci that are rhetorically placed as distant and distinct but originate within” (7). The monstrous body is able to imply various kinds of alterity. Mostly “monstrous difference tends to be cultural, political, racial, economic, sexual” (7). Examples for cultural differences of the monster can be found very often, for example, in a newspaper article on Yugoslavia, from the 1990’s, “[a] Bosnian Serb [...] tells a reporter in all earnestness that the Muslims are feeding Serbian children to the animals at the zoo [...]” (Greenway 1; Cohen 8). Another example is the representation of Native Americans as savages by the USA (see Cohen 8). Further, it has to be considered that the boundaries

between the personal and the national body are likely to blur. Also, the various differences cannot always be categorized and “one kind of alterity is often written as another” (Cohen 10).

In the fifth thesis “The Monster Polices the Borders of the Possible” Cohen analyzes the monster “as a warning against exploration of its uncertain demesnes” (12). “Curiosity is more often punished than rewarded,” is the gist (12). The figure of the monster is used to prevent any kind of mobility. The private person is thus advised not to cross borders, as this might result in a monster attack (see Cohen 12). “Primarily these borders are in place to control the traffic in women, or more generally to establish strictly homosocial bonds [...]”, explains Cohen. The monster then functions as a herdsman. It validates the system and controls the functional places of men (see Cohen 13-14).

The penultimate thesis, “Fear of the Monster Is Really a Kind of Desire” elaborates the link between the monster and forbidden practices and the fact that the monster, as a result of the forbidden, attracts and appeals. “We distrust and loathe the monster at the same time we envy its freedom, and perhaps its sublime despair” (17). The monster can even function as an alter ego, “as an alluring projection of (an Other) self” (17). “The monster awakes one to the pleasures of the body, to the simple and fleeting joys of being frightened, or frightening – to the experience of mortality and corporality” (17). Both horror films and horror stories are immensely popular and are enjoyed by large audiences. The audience/reader knows that once the story is over, no matter in which medium and length, they are safe again (see Cohen 17). Cohen here also mentions a central issue in global culture: “[t]imes of carnival” (17). The carnival marginalizes the monster and simultaneously provides a “safe realm of expression and play” for it (17). Halloween, as celebrated in the USA, serves as a good example for this phenomenon, as at this special night everyone can be a demon (see Cohen 17).

Eventually, Cohen incorporates Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection: "[t]he monstrous lurks somewhere in that ambiguous, primal space between fear and attraction, close to the heart of what Kristeva calls 'abjection' [...]" (Cohen 19). Kristeva's *Powers of Horror. An Essay on Abjection* (1982) illustrates the formation of subjectivity, it examines the way a person sees him- or herself as a detached entity, separated from the other "Abjection preserves what existed in the archaism of pre-objectal relationship, in the immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be [...], " says Kristeva (10). At birth, an infant does not know about borders, they need to be established first, in order for the "I" to form. Therefore, separation from the mother is necessary (see McAfee 45-6). Kristeva explains the abject in more detail with regard to the loathing of food, which she considers to be "perhaps the most elementary and most archaic form of abjection" (3):

When the eyes see or the lips touch that skin on the surface of milk [...] I experience a gagging sensation and [...] spasms in the stomach, the belly; and all the organs shrivel up the body, provoke tears and bile, increase heartbeat, cause forehead and hands to perspire. Along with sight-clouding dizziness, nausea makes me balk at that milk cream, separates me from the mother and father who proffer it. "I" want none of that element, sign of their desire; "I" do not want to listen, "I" do not assimilate it, "I" expel it. But since the food is not an "other" for "me," who am only in their desire, I expel myself, I spit myself out, I abject myself within the same motion through which "I" claim to establish myself. (3)

Abjection is not just a phase, but a life-long process, both a repelling and a seductive affect and it constitutes a danger, both consciously and unconsciously, to the self (McAfee 49, 46): "It lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated. It beseeches, worries, and fascinates desire, which, nevertheless, does not let itself be seduced. Apprehensive, desire turns aside; sickened, it rejects" (Kristeva 1). Megan Becker-Leckrone indicates that "[a]bjection's power of horror" is the result of the subject being "ex-statically drawn from its proper domain [...] at the same time that the subject is repulsed" (33). Abjection provokes a crisis of the subject, of meaning and of identification (see Becker-Leckrone 33). However, neither objects nor subjects inspire fear; it

is rather the inability to distinguish these two from another (see Becker-Leckrone 33).

The abject can also be applied to culture, “[a]bjection is coextensive with social and symbolic order, on the individual as well as on the collective level. By virtue of this, abjection [...] is a universal phenomenon; one encounters it as soon as the symbolic and/or social dimension of man is constituted, and this throughout the course of civilization [...]” (Kristeva 68). Shildrick refers to Kristeva as well, linking monsters and abjection, “[i]n collapsing the distinctions between self and other, monsters constitute an undecidable absent presence at the heart of human being” (Shildrick 54). Further, she says, “[...] the abject never really leaves the subject-body, but remains as both reminder of, and threat to, the precarious status of the closed and unified self” (Shildrick 81). Kristeva herself says about the abject: “Abject. It is something rejected from which one does not part, from which one does not protect oneself as from an object. Imaginary uncanniness and real threat, it becomes to us and ends up engulfing us” (4).

While no clear definition of abjection is provided by Kristeva herself, Zhanial identifies three functions relevant to the analysis of monsters and the abject: the abject is an aid in constituting the subject, while, at the same time, it is a destructive force directed at said subject and, thereby, helps to maintain the very thing it threatens to annihilate (see Zhanial 3). The vampire can be seen in the light of these three functions, as he or she was a human being once and could still be mistaken for one, yet he or she is not human any longer but something else – not subject, not Other. Furthermore, vampires are undead – they neither live nor are they dead. Moreover, they pose a threat to a human being, i.e. the subject, while at the same time they hold the promise of immortality for, and therefore indefinite continuation of, said subject.

Returning to the penultimate thesis, Cohen identifies “[t]he monster [as] the abjected fragment that enables the formation of all kinds of identities – personal, national, cultural, economic, sexual, psychological, universal, particular (even if

that ‘particular’ identity is an embrace of the power/status/knowledge of abjection itself); as such it reveals their partiality, their contiguity “(19-20). He ends this sixth thesis which raises the inevitable question, “Do monsters really exist?” immediately with an answer: “Surely they must, for if they did not, how could we?” (20).

The final thesis, “The Monster Stands at the Threshold ... of Becoming”, identifies monsters as “our children” (20). The monsters, no matter how far they have been pushed away, will always return, with more and more knowledge, questioning the way the world is perceived, pointing out misrepresentations and asking “to reevaluate [...] cultural assumptions” (20). And in the end, “they ask us why we have created them” (20).

The monster as a mirror of his time, representing fear and desire is already depicted as such in *La Belle et la Bête* (*The Beauty and The Beast*), which was first published in 1740 by Madame Gabrielle–Suzanne de Villeneuve in two parts, *Histoire de la belle et la bête* and *Histoire de la bête* (see Erhart 19; Diaconoff 155). In brief, a malignant fairy transforms a prince into a ferocious beast. The beast then needs to find true love in order to be able to become human again. At the same time good a fairy saves an infant, Belle, from murder, so that she will be able to save the beast in the future. Years later the good fairy causes Belle’s father to be lost in the forests and to seek shelter with the beast. In the end he trades his own life for Belle, whom he sends to the beast. She must learn to live with the beast, which begins to act more and more human again. In the end Belle sees the beast’s inner beauty and they marry, breaking the beast’s curse. In this version of *La Belle et la Bête*, unlike in its successive versions⁴, the fairy world has a high significance: the power lies in the female world. Instead of the patriarchy of the time the idea of a matriarchy is established. Interestingly though, this female world is not depicted as an ideal.

⁴ Jeanne Leprince De Beaumont reduced the story from approximately 185 to 17 pages and published it in 1756. She cut out the fairy world almost completely, leaving one fairy. Further she rewrote the story so it could become child-friendly (see Diaconoff 155).

Like the humans, every fairy is different, hence some fairies are good while others are bad (see Diaconoff 156-8).

From a twenty-first century perspective numerous cultural discourses are presented in the tale, especially the issue of arranged marriage, or as Marina Warner names it, a focus “on the evils of matrimonial customs” (Warner *Beast* 317). Maria Tatar points out that “[a]ny an arranged marriage must have seemed like marriage to a beast, and the telling of stories like [this] may have furnished women with a socially acceptable channel for providing therapeutic advice, comfort, and consolation” (27). Also, patriarchal norms of the age are reflected in the tale, as well as “the subordination of female desire to male desire, and a glorification of filial duty and self-sacrifice” (Tatar 27). In addition the transformation of the prince into the Beast by the vicious fairy demonstrates “the corrupt and vicious intrigues of court life” (Warner *Brides* 290). Further the story “campaigns for marriages of true minds, for the rights of the heart, for the freedom of the true lovers and of romance” (Warner *Brides* 290).

Interestingly, the focus of the story has been on Beauty, but in recent years there has been a shift towards focusing on Beast (see Tatar 29). This development over the last two hundred years is best illustrated in the Walt Disney version of *Beauty and the Beast*, which differs from Villeneuve’s version significantly. In the Disney film the emphasis on Beast and its progress to turn from a fierce into a loveable beast is so strong that the majority of the audience in the end was disappointed with the “human prince”; “[n]o child in [Warner’s] experience preferred the sparkling candy-coloured human who emerged from the enchanted monster; the Beast had won them” (Warner *Beast* 313). Thus, in this version, Beast is not the monster. A human man, Gaston, who is also a suitor to Belle, is. An animal killer, “prey[ing] on social outcasts” and treacherous is the “real [...] unredeemed damned beast: socially deviant in his supremacist assumptions, unsound on ecology in both directions, abusing the natural (the forest) and culture (the library)” (Warner *Beast* 316).

Warner agrees with Cohen, and generally defines the monster in a similar way: “monstrousness is a condition in flux, subject to historical changes in attitudes. One volatile current, carrying ideas of ugliness, abnormality, abominable deformation, converges with another, carrying ideas about nature and man” (Warner *Beast* 299), making clear that *Beast* will always be interpreted and depicted in a different way. The story of *Beauty and the Beast* occurs around the whole world and adapts to the predominant culture. For example, in Scandinavia the beast might be a bear, in India or Africa it might be a snake, in the Philippines a monkey or, in some cultures even a monster, half human and half animal (see Griswold 115)⁵.

Regarding Cohen’s *Monster Theory* *Beast* represents numerous theses. *Beast*, as monster, stands for difference; it functions as the Other, but only at first. As a matter of fact though, it is a “condemned Other return[ing] to Selfhood, and recover[ing] his ‘I’” (Warner 291). Further, *Beast* can be understood as a warning not to wander through dark forests and even more obvious, not to enter and explore a stranger’s home in these dark forests. As Cohen points out, if the border is crossed, the monster might attack, which is true for Belle’s father (see Cohen 12). Also “Thesis VI: Fear of the Monster is Really a Kind of Desire” is obvious in *Beauty and the Beast*. Although in this case the relation between human and monster is different than in typical horror stories, the core idea of the thesis is still relevant. Belle, first reluctant to *Beast*, “distrusting and loathing” it, after some time realizes her desire to be with *Beast*. Hence she is the one deciding to spend the rest of her life with it. On closer inspection of the story, *La Belle et la Bête* is a harbinger for the monster, as defined by Cohen: the monster is created, domesticated and in the end vanishes only to reappear again in literature throughout time, out of various motifs.

Now, in the twenty-first century, and already towards the end of the twentieth century, the monster is more present than ever. Monsters can be found

⁵ In 1993 Betsy Hearne published *Beauties and Beasts*, a collection of 27 different stories based on the *Beauty and the Beast* plot. Also, Maria Tatar in *The Classic Fairy Tales (Norton Critical Edition)* presents the reader with various versions of *Beauty and the Beast*.

everywhere and in all forms, from children's toys to gruesome murderers to unethical humans. And with regard to recent developments it seems that the most popular monster of our times is the vampire.

3. It's Undead! Vampires in Literature From The Late 19th To The Early 21st Century

3.1. Sucking Blood. From Victorian Virgins to True Blood: All Flavor, No Bite!⁶

No coffins, no piled skulls in the corners; I don't even think we have cobwebs... what a disappointment this must be for you.
(Edward Cullen in *Twilight*, 287)

With the publishing of *The Twilight Saga* from 2005 to 2008 the vampire has reached a new peak of popularity and the vampire as a character in film, TV-series and literature became prevalent. Newspapers and other media report on the latest events, such as vampire film premieres or newly gained information on filming locations, and all the authors and actors involved. Additionally, vampires, and other monsters, are now also popular action figures and plush toys. The vampires concerned here are “new” vampires though; they have only little in common with traditional literary vampires such as Dracula, Lord Ruthven or Carmilla. Some of them are even ‘vegetarians’, i.e. they only drink animal blood and do not wish to harm humans.

The contemporary vampires in literature “have been depicted as space aliens, the product of scientific experiments, highly evolved humans, and any number of other things that amount to a rejection of the medieval Christian view that vampires are corpses animated by demons” (Barkman 180). Their appearance is very attractive; “vampires are hot” (Peppers-Bates, Rust 187), and they stand for unreachable beauty. In *Interview with the Vampire* for example, some

⁶ (HBO *True Blood* Promotional Poster)

humans are turned into vampires so that “[their] human beauty is preserved eternally” (Cordes 34). And as vampires, they have become even more beautiful (see Cordes 34). The older the vampires of this novel get, the closer they become to obtain a higher state of perfection: their skin shows no more pores and becomes like marble (see Cordes 33). Furthermore, as the Anne Rice expert Rebecca Cordes says, “most of [the new vampires] are quite vain” (35). They pay attention to fashion and culture, they own cars and motorcycles, they are able to use a computer and are familiar with the T.V. program. And most importantly, they do not necessarily require sleeping in coffins (see Cordes 35). In *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*, for example, some sleep in a hiding place, others in beds and others in coffins. Yet, they need coffins for daytime travelling. But in *The Twilight Saga* the vampires do not sleep at all (see Meyer, *Twilight* 162). A recent newspaper article on the popularity of vampire fiction says it in a nutshell: “vampires transformed from soulless creatures living in remote areas of the Danube Monarchy into elegant and urban lifestyle-icons” (Iwaniewicz 50, my transl.⁷).

“Every age and every culture has its own vampire” (11) states Cordes concurring with Cohen’s theory on the monster. According to him, monsters always reflect their time and culture. She argues that the vampire is the most reflective mythological creature, “[u]nlike other monsters it is unable to exist on its own. It can only exist, both literally and figuratively, in relation to humans” (11). Nina Auerbach, author of *Our Vampires, Ourselves* (1995) analyzes the vampires similarly, “all vampires seem alike, but they are wonderful in their versatility” (5). Still, she says “all [of them] are disturbingly close to the mortals they prey on” (6) and describes them as the most receptive monsters, “[they] are neither inhuman nor nonhuman nor all-too-human; they are simply more alive than they should be” (6). The reason she chose to write about them is simple and provides a good definition: “vampires [...] can be everything we are, while at the same time, they are fearful reminders of the infinite things we are not” (6).

⁷ “Vampire sind von den ursprünglichen entseelten Halbwesen entlegener Provinzen der Donaumonarchie zu elegant-urbanen Lifestyleikonen geworden.“ (Iwaniewicz 50)

To add one more definition explaining vampires and their recent popularity, Veronica Hollinger, coeditor of *Blood Read: The Vampire as Metaphor in Contemporary Culture* (1997), considers the fact that the vampire is “an inherently deconstructive figure: [...] the monster that used to be human; [...] the undead that used to be alive; [...] the monster that *looks like us* [emphasis in original]” to be helpful for understanding “why the vampire is a monster of choice these days” (Hollinger 201). This resemblance to humans is also important for their traditional function as scapegoats, since they are the ones blamed for problems created by humans (see Corn, Dunn 151). Simultaneously they have to be different as well. “The best scapegoats are peripheral members of the community who lack the sort of status or connections that would protect them from persecution,” say Kevin J. Corn and George A. Dunn (151). In real life, the vampire functioned predominantly as scapegoat in the past. That means if a crime happened and no one was able to solve it, it was easier to blame the supernatural than a living human whose guilt could not be proved (see Köppl *Vampir* 20). In recent times though, this idea became inappropriate and inapplicable. Due to science and medicine the belief in vampires turned into a folktale and legend. And in literature, too, this concept is no longer valid; many vampires now live in urban areas among humans. The monster moved from the margins to the center and thus is right amongst us. Thus, the scapegoat function of the vampire has vanished completely.

One of the most important authors with regard to the literary vampire's development is Jules Zanger, author of the essay “Metaphor into Metonymy: The Vampire Next Door” (1997). She elaborates the distinction between the ‘old’ traditional and the ‘new’ vampire in great detail. The 1970s and 80s were the time in which the ‘new’ vampire emerged and began to become more and more popular. She illustrates the alteration the vampire went through; how it turned from a “metaphysical ‘other’” towards a “social deviant” (17). The ‘new’ vampire is not a solitary creature, but a familial or communal one (see Zanger 18). Furthermore vampires are no longer considered as an “earthly embodiment of supernatural evil”, as embodied by Dracula, anymore (18). Whether or not a

vampire is evil does not depend on a possible relation to God or Satan, but on the vampire's personality. As a result, vampires are finally able to be good (see Zanger 18-9). Moreover, this demythologization brings vampires closer to the readers (see Cordes 42).

With the demise of the religious influence on the vampire, i.e. the disappearance of the idea that the vampire is the Anti-Christ, also a number of folkloric elements defining the vampire vanished. For example, the ability to transform, as well as the vampires' invisibility in mirrors vanished. Likewise, vampires do not need to be invited in order to enter private property in contemporary vampire fiction (see Zanger 19). Cordes agrees with Zanger, "[a]lthough retaining their preternatural strength, most contemporary vampires have lost their mutability. They can neither shape-shift into animals like bats or wolves nor into mists or puffs of smoke" (35). Of course there are exceptions, for example in Harris' work an invitation to enter is still a necessity for the vampire, though, it is not valid indefinitely as it can be rescinded at any time (see Harris, *World* 41), and in Lisa J. Smith's *Vampire Diaries* (1991), powerful vampires, who drink human blood, are able to transform into one or at the most two animals (see Smith 274).

Zanger's 'new' vampire is "no longer embodying metaphysical evil, no longer a damned soul", but "has become, in our concerned awareness for multiculturalism, merely ethnic, a victim of heredity, like being Sicilian or Jewish" (19). She also points out the possibility of regarding vampirism as a viral infection (see Zanger 19), which, for instance, is the official theory on vampirism in Harris' works. Most importantly though, the origin of the vampire is not necessarily an Eastern European country anymore: "[...] the new vampire, although 'ethnic' in one special sense, does not come to us like Dracula from some mysterious foreign clime, preferably Eastern, but is resolutely American, [for example] appearing as a Louisiana plantation owner in *Interview with the Vampire* [...]" (19). Although she is basically right and an indefinite number of 'new' vampires are American, many of them still have European roots. Louis in

Interview with the Vampire was born in France and moved to the USA with his family (see Rice, *Interview* 9). In the course of the novel he returns to France and even visits Eastern Europe to search for his vampire ancestors. Nevertheless he still fits Zanger's further definition of the 'American' vampire, "[t]his new, demystified vampire might well be our next door neighbor, as Dracula, by origin, appearance, caste, and speech, could never pretend to be" (19). This also applies to the many non-American vampires in Harris' novels, who all learn to adapt and to pass as human, regardless of their former nationality.

Another significant change is the shift to a focus on relationships among vampires, instead of the traditional vampire-human relation. As a result, the idea of a human the reader can identify with vanishes. Suddenly, the reader is made to sympathize with the vampire (see Zanger 21). This focus on the undead also makes the 'new' vampire a more complex social being. The vampires' range of emotions has widened, instead of being only able to kill or plan to kill, like Dracula, they are able to experience all kinds of emotions, they have "become socialized and humanized" (22). Vampires can now long for anything – a relationship, a social life, a prosperous business – just like a human being, "their [new] communal condition permits them to love, to regret, to doubt, to question themselves, to experience interior conflicts and cross-impulses – to lose [...]" (22). Most importantly, they can be self-judging and self-loathing, which is a salient issue in almost all modern vampire fiction (see Zanger 22): in *Interview with the Vampire* the moral dilemma with his having to kill humans for survival is a central issue for the protagonist. In Harris' *Southern Vampire Mysteries* the feeding from and injuring of humans, which can be avoided by drinking synthetic blood, is a major concern. In Meyer's *Twilight Saga* the plot unfolds around a vampire coven, who live like a family and drink animal blood exclusively in order not to hurt and kill humans. Considerable insight is given into the main character, Edward, who believes that vampires are damned creatures without a soul (see Meyer, *New Moon* 33). As a consequence the 'new' vampire, if at all, murders out of reasons other than pure hunger: rational

murders, sadistic murders or “hysterical bloodlust[s]”, among others, might occur (Zanger 23).

A last aspect covered by Zanger is the depiction of vampires as wealthy. Similar to *Dracula*, also the ‘new’ vampire is supposed to be wealthy, and often, aristocratic too. This wealth is related to murder though (see Zanger 22). This is also made clear in Rice’s *Vampire Chronicles*, where “the possession of wealth is more natural, or rather naturalized; whereas the initial accumulation comes from the plunder of human victims” (Grady 227). Cordes, regards the vampire as “the snob among the monsters” (61), and indicates that, in literature, more than two thirds of the vampires belong to the aristocracy and more than half of the remaining third belong to the upper-class, regardless of the fact that the society is modern and classless (see Cordes 61).

In the following subchapters this change of the vampire is illustrated by a comparison of three works, from the late nineteenth to the early twenty-first century.

3.2. Bram Stoker – *Dracula*

‘Welcome to my house! Enter freely. Go safely, and leave something of the happiness you bring!’ (Dracula in *Dracula* (1897))

With the publication of *Dracula* in 1897 Bram Stoker changed vampire literature forever. Even now, more than a hundred years later, the novel enjoys great popularity. The antagonist, Dracula, became one of the icons of twentieth century pop culture (see Köppl *Maske* 47).

The novel begins with Jonathan Harker, a solicitor in behalf of Peter Hawkins, travelling to Transylvania to see Count Dracula, who wishes to acquire property

in England. Harker's exhausting travels and his arrival and stay at the Count's castle are illustrated in detail in his journal. During his stay with Dracula strange events take place, for example three women try to seduce him or he sees Dracula climbing down the castle wall like a lizard, and has to realize that he seems to be imprisoned by the count, who leaves for England without him. While Harker is forced to remain in Transylvania, his fiancé Mina Murray, still in England, is in contact with her friend Lucy Westenra, who tells her about being courted by Dr. Seward, Quincey Morris and Arthur Holmwood. Further, the reader learns that Dr. Seward is working on the case of R.M. Renfield, a lunatic in his asylum. Later Mina visits Lucy in Whitby for some time. There, strange events start to happen. One of which is the stranding of a ship on the coast after a severe storm less than two weeks after Mina's arrival. No one is found on the ship, except for the dead captain bound to the steering-wheel. Interestingly though, a giant dog jumps off the ship and runs away.

Lucy, who is walking in her sleep, suddenly gets weaker and weaker, and shows tiny wounds on her throat which do not seem to heal. Mina at this time receives a letter after not hearing from Jonathan in a long time, and learns that he is ill and needs to recover in Budapest. She decides to go there to be with him and marry him. In England, Lucy's state of health changes for the worse. Therefore Dr. Seward asks his friend Abraham Van Helsing for help. After spending some time with Lucy, temporarily improving her health and finding out about the 'bitemarks' on her neck, he insists on going back to Amsterdam to get his books. After his return he equips Lucy's room with garlic flowers, which indeed help to improve Lucy's health. Shortly after a wolf is reported to have escaped from the zoo, a wolf breaks into the Westenra's house, scaring Lucy's mother to death. Lucy, still in an extremely weak state, is taken care of by Dr. Seward, Van Helsing, Quincey Morris and Arthur Holmwood. Only a few days later Lucy dies. The wounds on her neck have disappeared and she looks as beautiful as she did before 'falling ill'. In the meantime Mina and Jonathan return to England, where shortly after their arrival Jonathan believes to recognize

Dracula in the streets in London. Though, Dracula looks younger than before, Jonathan is convinced the man they have seen is the count himself.

When a newspaper reports children to have been bitten by a mysterious beautiful woman Van Helsing, who, after Lucy's death, has been in contact with Mina Harker and reading Jonathan's diary about his travels and encounter with Dracula, gets suspicious and finally shares his thoughts on Lucy. He thinks that she has been the victim of a vampire and teaches the others about vampires and how to defeat them. Slowly, Mina starts to show the same symptoms as Lucy, and so the hunt for Dracula begins. Jonathan, having been the one responsible for Dracula's move to England, is able to help by going through the paperwork and finding out where Dracula's belongings were delivered to. With the help of Renfield the men learn about Dracula's intention on Mina. As a result, they immediately want to see her and break into her room where they catch Dracula forcing her to drink his blood. Dracula vanishes and the men rush to save Mina. In the meantime, with everyone worried about her, Dracula destroys all of their material (not knowing that copies exist) and kills Renfield. During the day the men spread out to Dracula's properties to sanctify the boxes filled with Transylvanian earth he needs to sleep on. Thus, his only option is to flee. Mina, who has drunk Dracula's blood, establishes a mental connection with him. Van Helsing hypnotizes her, and in that state she discovers Dracula's whereabouts: a ship leaving England for Varna. The whole group plans to follow Dracula. Thanks to their elaborate plan and Mina's ability to connect to the count, they manage to arrive at the castle before him. In the end they get into a fight with the gypsies transporting Dracula and Quincey Morris is killed. Nevertheless they overpower the gypsies, stake Dracula and thereby save Mina's life.

3.2.1. The Vampire in *Dracula*

Even though Dracula is the representation of the 'old' vampire now, he once stood for the 'new' vampire (see Auerbach 63). He differs significantly from his predecessors, Lord Ruthven, Carmilla or Varney. Unlike them, he – at least at the beginning – is old. While Carmilla seeks a friend, he stays isolated (see Auerbach 63-4). Varney took "his essential life from the moon; Dracula [...] from his coffin" (Auerbach 85). Dracula not only sleeps in a coffin, but when he travels to England, he does so in a box filled with Transylvanian earth. He is defined by those elements that harm him: religious symbols, garlic or daylight. At the same time he gains special importance by a number of things only he is able to do: transform, into animals or mist for example, and grow young (see Auerbach 86). His physical appearance is also a novelty. He actually looks alive rather than resembling a corpse, as Lord Ruthven did (see Auerbach 95). Also Lucy, after becoming a vampire, seems more alive than dead, "[t]he lips were red, nay redder than before; and on the cheeks was a delicate bloom" (Stoker 240; Auerbach 97).

The depiction of Dracula's physical appearance changes slightly throughout the novel, as the count at first is an old man and later seems to have grown younger. After meeting the Count in his castle Harker gives a detailed description of his physiognomy:

His face was a strong – a very strong – aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily round the temples, but profusely elsewhere. His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion. The mouth, so far as I could see it under the heavy moustache, was fixed and rather cruel-looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth. These protruded over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality in a man of his years. For the rest, his ears were pale, and at the tops extremely pointed; the chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin. The general effect was one of extraordinary pallor. (Stoker 28)

Harker also describes Dracula's hands, they are "rather coarse – broad, with squat fingers. [...] [T]here were hairs in the centre of the palm. The nails were long and fine, and cut to a sharp point" (28). Further Harker discovers, while shaving, that Dracula has no reflection in the mirror. In shock he cuts himself and bleeds a little. At that moment he says, "[the Count's] eyes blazed with a sort of demoniac fury, and he suddenly made a grab at my throat" (37-8). Immediately Harker turns away and Dracula strikes the beads holding his crucifix. As a result Dracula changes again and seems to be normal and calm (see Stoker 38). Later, while exploring the castle Harker finds the Count lying in a box filled with earth. The count looks very much alive, "the cheeks had the warmth of life through all their pallor, and the lips were as red as ever", and dead at the same time, "there was no sign of movement, no pulse, no breath, no beating of the heart" (63). On the day of Dracula's departure to England Harker decides to search for him again and is surprised by his findings: "[t]here lay the Count, but looking as if his youth had been half-renewed, for the white hair and moustache were changed to dark iron-grey; the cheeks were fuller, and the white skin seemed ruby-red underneath; [...]" (67). Two months later, Harker, when walking through London with Mina, recognizes Dracula when seeing him on the street. Mina now describes him as a "tall, thin man, with a beaky nose and black moustache and pointed beard [...]" and mentions Jonathan's belief that this man is Dracula, who has grown young (207-8).

3.2.2. Narrative Features

Dracula is told out of numerous perspectives; there is a mixture of journals, diaries, letters and newspaper articles. All of these are produced by male and female humans. The narrated time spans from May 3rd to November 6th of the same year, and a brief note on the events in the story seven years later. The novel starts off with a large number of journal entries by Jonathan Harker. Afterwards, letters and accounts of the other characters are predominant. Additionally, there is a small number of newspaper articles as well as a ship's log. All of those diaries and journals are from a subjective point of view (see Waterhouse 32). Dracula is not allowed to present his side of the story. At the

beginning of the novel, though, dialogues between him and Jonathan are reproduced in Jonathan's journal. Afterwards, Dracula rarely communicates with the other characters. Therefore his depiction is solely based on the perspectives of the other characters. The strongest influence on Dracula's image is Van Helsing, who is presented as the expert on the undead and who never hesitates to explain and define them. Thus, the count is a construct established by his adversaries (see Auerbach 82).

The events described in each journal are not only important for the reader but also show significance for the characters in the novel (see Seed 72). After Lucy's death Van Helsing is interested in reading her diary and some letters he found (see Stoker 197). At the same time, independent of Van Helsing, Mina Harker reads her husband's journal (see Stoker 215), and thus gains the same knowledge on the events which happened to him on his way to and in Transylvania, as the reader already has. Only a day later Van Helsing contacts her, informing her of the death of Lucy and her mother, and asking to see her. When they meet he is offered her diary, and gratefully reads it. After talking to Mina, she also provides him with Jonathan's journal and he is not only able to establish connections, but to validate his accounts as true (see Seed 73; Stoker 223-4). Later, Mina asks Dr. Seward for permission to typewrite his phonographic diary, and offers her and Jonathan's diaries for him to read in return (see Stoker 264-6).

The exchange of information is crucial, it enables the characters to work together. They realize how important the recording of events is becoming. Mina admits she would not have been able to believe what happened to Lucy if she had not read her husband's journal (see Seed 73; Stoker 218). As David Seed points out, "[a]t this stage the novel draws repeated attention to its own processes" (73). The characters try to gather their material and to connect it all together. Hence the reader of *Dracula* is not alone, the characters in the novel turn into readers themselves. This development results in the closing of gaps in-between the character's individual journals. The accounts begin to connect

coherently; the only notable difference is the change in perspective (see Seed 73). The knowledge on Dracula widens and it is becoming possible to define him. Dracula knows this and therefore tries to destroy the material his opponents collected (see Seed 74).

By using accounts of trustworthy humans and providing the reader with various perspectives, as well as additional information from newspapers or ship logs, Stoker wanted to convince the reader of the authenticity of the story. The characters themselves are skeptical about the mysterious incidents, until they become witnesses themselves. “The existence and nature of Dracula is confirmed by the plausibility of the text, by our predisposition toward evidence, proof, and verification”, clarifies Seed (74).

Wood, in contrast, claims the technique on the one side supported the story, but on the other side transformed Dracula, who was already more absent than present, into an even bigger outsider. Dracula, who is “accessible only through several layers of narrative filtering,” is thus getting more and more distanced from the reader (67).

3.2.3. Dracula and His Brides: Metaphorical Dimensions

The vampire as a metaphor in *Dracula* has been interpreted in an enormous variety of ways: the majority of approaches originate in the fields of gender studies, cultural studies, divinity, psychoanalysis or political science.⁸

⁸ Unfortunately only a small number of theories can be discussed here. Some other interesting theories on how to read Dracula are, among others: Judith Halberstam's reading of Dracula resembling the “stereotypical anti-Semitic nineteenth-century representations of the Jew” (Halberstam 86) and Stephen Arata's “The Occidental Tourist: Dracula and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonisation.”

3.2.3.1. The Evil Master

In vampire fiction of the Victorian Age, vampirism is doubtlessly understood as evil (see Carter 27). The character Dracula thus “functions as the revelation of Evil in all its resplendent horror” and thereby “guarantee[s] the presence of Good in the world of Stoker’s human characters” (Hollinger 202). Clive Leatherdale, author of *Dracula: The Novel and the Legend* (1985), concurs with the idea and reads *Dracula*, in this context of good vs. evil, as a Christian parody (see Leatherdale 176). The count is represented as an inversion of Christ:

Christ is Good: Dracula is Evil – an agent of the devil. Christ was a humble carpenter: Dracula a vainglorious aristocrat. Christ offers light and hope, and was resurrected at dawn: Dracula rises at sunset and thrives in darkness. Christ’s death at the ‘stake’ was the moment of his rebirth: for the vampire the stake heralds ‘death’ and oblivion. Christ offered his own life so that others might live: Dracula takes the lives of many so that *he* might live. The blood of Christ is drunk at the Eucharist by the faithful; Dracula reverses the process and drinks from *them*. Both preach resurrection and immortality, the one offering spiritual purity, the other physical excess. (Leatherdale 176)

Furthermore, he compares the assembly of the diary fragments and letters to scripture, “they constitute a ‘revelation’ of Dracula’s existence, as the Bible offers a ‘revelation’ of Christ’s” (177). At the beginning of the novel, in Harker’s account of his journey to Count Dracula St. George’s Eve is mentioned on May 4. St. George, a “mythical ‘saint,’” according to Leatherdale, was not easy to eliminate as he was brought back to life over and over again. Hence, this already establishes a link to Dracula. Like Hollinger, Leatherdale also analyzes Harker’s path to find the count’s castle: unlike in classical literature where figures need to descend to reach hell, Harker ascends (see Leatherdale 177; Hollinger 210).

Dracula represents different images to the various characters, for Lucy he is a lover, for Harker a tyrant and for Van Helsing “he is in the service of the

devil[, h]e might even be the Antichrist” (Leatherdale 177). Van Helsing is also the one with knowledge on vampires, using “Christian justification [...] to rationalize the ‘murder’ of vampires” (Leatherdale 185). Moreover, the novel not only employs good vs. evil but also the Christian perception of heaven and hell; a concept known to the readers of Victorian Britain. In the last decade of the nineteenth century the rise of Darwinism uprooted traditional patterns of faith, such as regarding the Bible indisputably as God’s immediate word, and inspired doubt in previously stout believers (see Leatherdale 187). Also elements of materialism, opposing Christianity, are obvious, since Dracula is a materialist. He is “shorn of a soul [and] physical existence [is] all that concerns him” (Leatherdale 188). Interestingly, defining Dracula as materialist means that he has no free will, which contradicts Van Helsing’s image of Dracula as “a deliberate perpetrator of evil” (Leatherdale 189). Leatherdale thus argues that Dracula would not be sentenced by a court, since he cannot be held accountable for his doings, and on these grounds Van Helsing thinks it necessary to persecute the count himself (see Leatherdale 189). Hence, in the end, Evil is defeated by Good: the vampire is staked by the humans (see Hollinger 206). The invasion of evil into the character’s ‘real world’ is one of the significant fears in *Dracula* (see Hollinger 207), the human “characters are [...] aware that Evil is part of our human nature and must be battled and expelled, [...]” (Hollinger 210).

3.2.3.2. The Wealthy Master

Another valuable contribution to the discussion of *Dracula* was introduced by Franco Moretti in 1982. In “The Dialectic of Fear” he applies a Marxist approach and equates the count with capital. He describes him as “a saver, an ascetic, an upholder of the Protestant ethic [...] [with] no body, or rather, [...] no shadow” (431). Thus, he resembles money, which is characterized by having “exchange-value but no use-value” (432). Also, he owns a lot of money and gold, which, as Harker realizes, only gets dusty in the castle. The development from that old, saved money transforming into capital, used to attempt a conquest of England,

or even the world, is the central story according to Moretti (see Moretti 432). Already Karl Marx himself used the term 'vampire', for him, "[c]apital is dead labour which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour sucks" (Marx 160; Moretti 432). The vampire takes his strength from sucking blood from the living, weakening them. Likewise, "the capitalist [...] squeezes out labour-power from others, and enforces on the labourer abstinence from all life's enjoyments" (Marx 412; Moretti 432). Moretti refers to the capital of 1897, which was "'buried' for twenty long years of recession" and finally "rises again to set out on the irreversible road of concentration and monopoly" (Moretti 433). Dracula stands for the "true monopolist", he is "solitary and despotic, [and] will not brook competition" (433). His aim is the destruction of economic independence and his intention is to bind his victims to him forever, and not just for a certain period of time (see Moretti 433). He wants to possess his victims completely (see Leatherdale 216). Thus, individual liberty, which the bourgeoisie of the nineteenth century believes in, is threatened. Moretti claims that "Dracula is thus at once the final product of the bourgeois century and its negation" (434). However, only the latter, negative, aspect is treated in the novel. The reason, according to Moretti, is that for the British, monopoly was a "*foreign threat* [emphasis in original]" (434). Similarly, Dracula is foreign, whereas the majority of his opponents are British. Van Helsing originates from the Netherlands, a land of free trade (see Moretti 434). The other foreigner is the American Quincey Morris, who is also the only human to be killed at the end. Moretti argues that the concept of nationality is significant due to its collectiveness: "it coordinates individual energies and enables them to resist the threat" (434). In *Dracula* the individual "lacks the power to resist or defeat him" (434), which is why the individual is attacked. Those who aim for profit themselves appear to be allies to the vampire (see Moretti 434). Leatherdale discusses the issue as well; Dracula's intention is to gain "economic control of the City of London" and in order to reach his goal he "acts as a perfectly rational entrepreneur" (216). His business relations go well and cause no conflicts. The situation is best illustrated by taking a look at the minor characters of the novel: the lawyers, sailors, etc. They like doing business

with Dracula, who pays them well. They see him as the perfect business-partner and think of him as one of their own (see Moretti 434 n7; Leatherdale 216-7). As Moretti puts it, “Dracula never behaves like a vampire with them: he does not need to suck their blood, he can buy it” (434, n11). Hence, the question how to defeat Dracula arises. “[M]oney and religion,” is Moretti’s immediate answer (434). Thanks to Arthur Holmwood, now Lord Godalming, the Crew of Light⁹ has sufficient money, which “*refuses to become capital* [and wants] to be used *to do good* [emphasis in original]” (434). Mina, being excited about their means, states, “[...] it made me think of the wonderful power of money! What can it not do when it is properly applied; and what might it do when basely used!” (Stoker 423; Moretti 434). Their idea of moral money conflicts with capitalism and corresponds to “the great ideological lie of Victorian capitalism¹⁰” (Moretti 434). Religious belief is what – in addition to the money – allows their hunt for the vampire. The use of religious symbols, such as the crucifix or holy wafers, renders it possible to establish limits for the vampire, for example preventing him from entering. As a result the very nature of the vampire, his freedom of limitations, is attacked. “But Dracula – who is capital that is not ashamed of itself, true to its own nature, an end in itself – cannot survive in these conditions,” and therefore is defeated (435).

Moretti also accuses Quincey Morris of being not only an accomplice to Dracula, but of being a vampire himself. He is a foreigner like Dracula and looks very young and fresh; it is not known where he lives and what he does. He was the last to give a blood transfusion to Lucy before her death and the first to mention the term ‘vampire’. He misses when trying to shoot a bat, fails to observe Dracula and is the one to call off a hunt. His mysterious appearance and especially the possibility of him being a vampire, are the factors leading to this death (see Moretti 435-6). On a larger scale, this reflects Britain’s fear of America. Why, then, was Morris not clearly marked as a vampire? Moretti

⁹ Christopher Craft created this title, inspired by Stoker, referring the group of “Van Helsing [...], Dr. John Seward, Arthur Holmwood, Quincey Morris and later Jonathan Harker” (Craft 130 n7).

¹⁰ (cont.) “a capitalism which is ashamed of itself and which hides factories and stations beneath cumbrous Gothic superstructures; which prolongs and extols aristocratic models of life; which exalts the holiness of the family as the latter beings secretly to break up” (Moretti 434-5).

clarifies that Stoker's image of monopoly had to be "feudal, oriental, tyrannical" (436). Quincey represented a Western civilization, though, a descendant from Britain even. Hence, if he was a vampire, capitalism would have been addressed directly, and this would have led to "admitting that it is Britain herself that has given birth to the monster" (436).

3.2.3.3. The Alluring Master

When turning to the most pondered theory on *Dracula* – vampirism as a metaphor for sexuality – Christopher Craft describes, in his essay "Kiss Me With Those Red Lips': Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*" (1984), *Dracula* as "a book whose fundamental anxiety, an equivocation about the relationship between desire and gender, repeats, with a monstrous difference, a pivotal anxiety of late Victorian culture" (108). Leatherdale points out that in Victorian society the only way to depict sexuality was to allegorize it, as obscenity laws regulated whether a novel could be published or not (see Leatherdale 146). From an early twentieth century perspective the Victorian era is seen as a time of sexual repression (see Nead 2). In the 1960s and 1970s, the time of sexual liberation, a shift towards this image occurred and the Victorian era is now described "as the paradigm of sexual and moral hypocrisy. [...] [A] period of public purity and private vice [...]" (Nead 2). Further, another double standard existed, the sexuality of men was condoned, while women's sexuality was condemned (see Nead 6).

Leatherdale also provides a list of sex-related themes occurring in *Dracula*: "seduction, rape, necrophilia, paedophilia, incest, adultery, oral sex, group sex, menstruation, venereal disease [and] voyeurism" (146). It is important to keep in mind though, that the vampire sex in *Dracula* does not involve genitalia; vampires seem "to be sexually inoperative from the neck down" (146). There are three core scenes in the novel which will be discussed in detail: Jonathan Harker meeting the three female vampires in the castle; Lucy receiving blood transfusions and Mina being forced to drink Dracula's blood.

Harker, feeling like a prisoner wanders through the castle and despite Dracula's warning to sleep only in his chamber (see Stoker 46), he disregards his tiredness and stays at another part of the castle. Suddenly he is joined by three ladies who do not cast a shadow. The looks of two women remind him of Dracula, the third one also seems familiar.

All three had brilliant white teeth, that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous lips. There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips. (Stoker 51; Craft 108)

The gender roles of Victorian society are thus conversed, as Harker constitutes a passive position, which is ascribed to the women. The female vampires, willing to penetrate Harker with their 'vampiric kisses', represent the sexual desire and the active male (see Craft 108-9). The scene therefore is also interesting with regard to the Victorian Age. Sexuality in women, outside of wedlock, was not accepted (see Nead 6, 19). Dracula enters the scene though, and protects Harker from the vampires. He is furious, "[h]is eyes were positively blazing[, t]he red light in them was lurid, as if the flames of hell-fire blazed behind them" (Stoker 52), and immediately claims Harker as 'his': "[how] dare you cast eyes on him when I had forbidden it? [...] This man belongs to me!" (Stoker 53; Craft 110). However, Dracula, whose "desire to fuse with a male, most explicitly evoked when Harker cuts himself shaving, subtly and dangerously suffuses this text", is never able to satisfy this desire (Craft 110).

After Dracula's leaving for England the overall situation in the novel changes and Dracula focuses solely on women (see Craft 111). Homoerotic desire therefore is reduced to "homoerotic friendship among the humans," analyzes Auerbach (81). She also establishes a connection between Van Helsing, declaring his friendly love to Arthur Holmwood, and Oscar Wilde (see Auerbach 81). "The British 1890s were haunted not only by the Undead, but by a monster of its own clinical making, the homosexual," she explains (83). In 1885 Wilde was convicted for his homosexuality, on the basis of the Labouchère

Amendment, which came into effect the same year and condemned male homosexuality. Thus, her theory is that Oscar Wilde, and not any other literary vampire, is Dracula's most significant ancestor (see Auerbach 83-4)¹¹.

Dracula's sojourn in England, Craft argues, illustrates a "battle between two evidently masculine forces, one identifiably good and the other identifiably evil, for the allegiance of a woman (two women actually [...])" (99-100). Dracula attacks these women and the Crew of Light tries, more or less successfully, to save them. Lucy Westenra is the first known victim of Dracula upon his arrival in England. In order to save her in her weakening state Van Helsing arranges a series of blood transfusions, which are intended to replace what Dracula has taken (see Leatherdale 150). These "therapeutic penetrations represent displaced marital (and martial) penetrations," which is also evident in the text (Craft 121). The first blood transfusion Lucy receives is from her fiancé Arthur Holmwood, who implies to feel married to her afterwards (see Stoker 209; Craft 121). Therefore the need for three further blood transfusions is kept secret from him (see Stoker 209). The transfusions are indeed sexual, the blood represents semen: the vampire needs blood to survive, thus it has "life giving properties", and semen is needed by humans to procreate (Leatherdale 149-50). Furthermore, Craft argues that the blood transfusions "represent the text's first anxious reassertion of the conventionally masculine prerogative of penetration" (121). When they fail and Lucy dies, transforming into a vampire, it is a "corrective penetration" which is in demand. Lucy needs to be stopped and therefore must be staked (122). Arthur is the one to finally kill his loved one and the reaction of her body to the stake resembles a climax, as Craft says, "the novel's real – and the woman's only – climax, [...] displaces roughly to the middle of the book, so that the sexual threat may be repeated but its ultimate success denied" (122).

Unlike Lucy, Mina is saved from becoming a vampire. Her case is of special interest though, as her seduction by Dracula is not only described explicitly, but

¹¹ An essay dedicated to this matter was published in 1994 by Talia Schaffer in *ELH* under the title "A Wilde Desire Took Me": The Homoerotic History of Dracula."

also from two perspectives: her own and Dr. Seward's (see Craft 124-5). She recounts the scene:

With that he pulled open his shirt, and with his long sharp nails opened a vein in his breast. When the blood began to spurt out, he took my hands in one of his, holding them tight, and with the other seized my neck and pressed my mouth to the wound, so that I must either suffocate or swallow some of the-Oh, my God, my God! What have I done? (Stoker 343; Craft 125)

This scene can be interpreted in different ways, C.E. Bentley, quoted in Craft, and Leatherdale understand it as enforced fellatio (see Leatherdale 153; Craft 125). Craft further argues, as Dracula's breast is involved, the blood becomes milk, and exemplifies this in the words of Dr. Seward, "[t]he attitude of the two [Dracula and Mina] had a terrible resemblance to a child forcing a kitten's nose into a saucer of milk" (Stoker 336; Craft 125). Hence, the sexual identity of Dracula is confused. "An interfusion of masculine and feminine functions" takes place (Craft 125). Another way of describing the situation is to see it as an analogy "of a bleeding vagina" (Craft 125). Leatherdale also interprets Mina's exclamation of the word 'unclean' as an additional reference to menstruation (see Leatherdale 154).

As a result it becomes evident that gender is threatened by vampirism; masculine and feminine roles blend in *Dracula*. Moreover, the appearance of Dracula in the scene with Mina is his final moment of power. With his defeat at the end of the novel the confused gender roles resolve again (see Craft 125-6).

3.3. Anne Rice – *Interview with the Vampire*

Claudia to Lestat while killing him:
 Goodnight sweet prince, may flights of
 devils wing you to your rest.
 (*Interview with the Vampire* (1994)
 01:00:13¹²)

Almost eighty years, shaped by two World Wars and numerous social movements, after *Dracula*'s release, Anne Rice created a new kind of vampire fiction with *Interview with the Vampire*, which was first published in 1976. She is most likely the first to give the vampire a voice¹³ and to depict the vampire in a human state before his or her transformation (see Overstreet 20). The story is told by the protagonist, a vampire called Louis, in an interview with 'a boy'¹⁴ in contemporary San Francisco. In 1971, Louis, a plantation owner in southern Louisiana, suffers from a deep depression after the death of his brother. He seems to have given up on his life and at this very point he is turned into a vampire by Lestat. At first they live on Louis' estate, but later move to New Orleans. Louis though, is not able to cope with his new 'life', he is a tortured soul in despair. He decides to feed off rats or other animals, as he does not wish to harm humans. At one point he feeds from a little girl though. Lestat catches him, and turns the girl into a vampire for him, in order to give Louis a new companion to share his feelings with.

This life as a family of three works out for decades, until Claudia, the little girl, decides to kill Lestat. Claudia, like Louis, cannot cope with her vampire self. The reason is different from his, though; her mind is that of a fully grown woman, full

¹² Time codes provided may vary depending on software or electronic device.

¹³ "The first-person narration of the vampire is a novelty in vampire fiction" (Cordes 31). "[S]he was possibly the first writer to narrate her stories in the first person from the vampire's point of view" (Gelder 109).

¹⁴ The interviewer is only referred to as 'the boy'. No indications on his age or name are given until the third novel of *The Vampire Chronicles*, *The Queen of the Damned* (1988), in which the interviewer is revealed to be Daniel Molloy. Further it turns out he is also the narrator, but decided "to refer to himself as 'the boy,' not as 'I'" (Wood 68).

of knowledge and desire, but she is stuck in the body of a five year old. Thus she hates her maker. After being convinced of Lestat's final death, she and Louis travel to Europe to search for others of their kind. They start out in Eastern Europe only to be disappointed there. All they find are stray vampires who live in the countryside and are nothing more than brainless, animal-like killers. Therefore Louis and Claudia break up their quest in those regions and go to Paris, where they finally find what they were looking for: other vampires who are intellectual and very attractive, just like them. Armand, the leader of the coven, becomes a significant figure, a confidant for Louis. After some time Louis and Claudia learn that vampires who kill one of their own will be punished by death and the French vampires find out about Lestat, who actually survived Claudia's attack and gives witness to his attempted murder. In the end, the members of the coven execute Claudia and her newly acquired female companion Madeleine, which enrages Louis. In a fit of rage he takes revenge and kills them all, with the one exception of Armand. Afterwards he lives together with Armand for a long time, travelling the world and finally returning to the USA, where he learns that Lestat is still alive. The novel ends with the boy's wish to become a vampire; a wish that Louis is not prepared to fulfill under any circumstance. Louis, having failed in painting the immortality undesirable, attacks 'the boy', with the intention to scare him off and leaves him unconscious, hoping to convince him to keep his human life.

3.3.1. The Vampire in *Interview with the Vampire*

Not only did vampires gain their own voice in Rice's work, but they were also reinvented in their physical appearance and their mental condition. As Martin J. Wood says, "[...] Anne Rice has resurrected the vampire from its moldering texts, infusing an obsolete myth with new blood" (60). Much like Stoker, who redefined the vampire of the nineteenth century, Rice made significant changes in the supernatural world (see Wood 60).

Rice's [...] vampires are romantic, aristocratic, elegant, and erudite aesthetes, predators who are always erotic and occasionally ethical (Lestat and some of his companions occasionally boast of feeding only on murderers), and in many ways deeply fascinated with humanity, despite being forever excluded from it. (Grady 226)

Auerbach takes it even one step further by claiming that "[Rice's] vampirism is a select club, a fraternity of beauty and death, whose members are expected to be handsome and refined enough not to irritate each other throughout eternity" (154). Being aristocratic is one of the few traditions Rice kept unchanged in *Interview with the Vampire*. Her vampires, unlike Dracula are not able transform and the range of their victims has broadened. The vampires, or at least some of them, do not hesitate to harm anyone, no matter what age and sex. The vampires in *The Vampire Chronicles* are stunningly beautiful, which, in combination with the fact that they do not need to be invited into a home in order to enter it, helps them to prey upon their victims. Further, garlic, crucifixes (or any other religious symbols), mirrors, moving water or any kind of plant show no effect on them (see Wood 61). When asked by 'the boy' about that matter Louis responds:

"I can look on anything I like. And I rather like looking on crucifixes in particular." "And what about the rumor about keyholes? That you can ... become steam and go through them." "I wish I could," laughed the vampire. [...] He shook his head. "That is, how would you say today ... bullshit?" (Rice, *Interview* 25)

In addition, Rice's vampires also differ with regard to experiencing their final death. They cannot be killed by simply being staked, their remains need to be destroyed. The only way to die is through "[f]ire, dismemberment ... the heat of the sun. Nothing else," explains Armand to Louis (Rice, *Interview* 261-2). They can be poisoned, and thus weakened, though (see Rice, *Interview* 124). Also, the vampires need to drink the blood of their victims as long as their hearts are still beating (see Rice, *Interview* 31)

The vampires also gained new features that had not been needed before. For example, since they have feelings they are able to cry and their tears consist of

blood (see Rice, *Interview* 28; Cordes 50). Furthermore, if a situation requires it, they can sleep anywhere, as long as they avoid the sun. Generally speaking though, Rice's vampires do sleep in coffins, which according to Cordes, is not a need, but a stylistic matter (see Cordes 35). The vampires' style and attitude are strongly influenced by the lifetime of their human existence, which is exemplified best with Louis: already as a human he is stricken with great grief and feels responsible for his brother's death. As a vampire his emotions are even stronger and he still finds himself in the middle of an identity crisis, refusing to kill humans in order to ease his conscience. Hence, each vampire has his or her own character traits and appearance (see Cordes 44). These vampires then are not solitary creatures, like Dracula, but live in a community or a family (see Zanger 18). Both forms exist in *Interview with the Vampire*, the family of three (Lestat, Louis, Claudia) and the vampire community around the Théâtre des Vampires in Paris. The preference of living alone, with a family or in a vampire coven corresponds to the vampires' experience in their human lives (see Cordes 51). Louis, for example, was already troubled as a human. Since his father's death he had been the head of the family and had cared for his mother, sister and brother. The latter chose to live a different lifestyle than Louis and was distrusted by him. When Louis' brother fell in the house and broke his neck, Louis was blamed, by the others as well as himself (Interview 10-13). Therefore, as a vampire, his family life is troubled as well (see Cordes 51-52).

Even in Louis' last action in the novel – scaring 'the boy' – a self-loathing is evident as he considers his intentions to have failed: 'The boy' wishes to become a vampire instead of leading his human life. With regard to Cohen's thesis on monster culture, which defines the monster as a 'border police', preventing the humans from crossing the line (see Cohen 12), Louis does seem like a failure. Following Cohen, Louis, the monstrous character, should have kept 'the boy' from wanting to transgress the border of life and un-death, a desire, which risks attack and would cost his life. Eventually, Louis scare is

without effect and his interviewer immediately seeks out vampires, ending up one of them in *The Queen of the Damned* (1988) (see Wood 69).

The vampires in Rice's work moved from the outside to the very heart of the stories, which do not rely on a confrontation of men and vampires. Their focus is the vampire's pain and fear. Eternal life is a complex issue, especially if it is a necessity to harm others for one's own survival. The vampire's greatest enemy is not the human, but the undead themselves (see Wood 62-3).

Another significant change is the setting of the novel. Before, vampire stories typically were set in remote castles or cemeteries, locations that according to Wood "emphasize isolation, gloom, decay and death" (65). Such locations also established a certain distance between the humans and the vampire, convincing the reader the danger was far away (see Wood 65). On the contrary, Rice chose an urban setting and instead of living in a gloomy castle Louis and Lestat first live on Louis' estate at his plantation and later inhabit an apartment in New Orleans, right amidst all the human action. With this relocation from the margins to the center Rice repeals the distance between the reader and the vampire (see Wood 66). Further, her aim is to persuade the readers that there is no difference between them and the vampires anymore and that an identification with the vampire's world as their world is possible (see Wood 66).

3.3.2. Narrative Features

Unlike expected by a reader unfamiliar with *Interview with the Vampire*, the novel is not an interview, but about one (see Wood 68). This interview is conducted on a single evening in San Francisco and sets up a frame for the actual story, which is told by the interviewee, a vampire. In the novel, the few elements focusing on the interview itself, as well as the interviewer's reactions to the story he is being told, are narrated by a 3rd person. The narrative situation here is neutral, it is purely descriptive; there is neither judgment nor superior

knowledge. The narrator does not use any names; instead he calls Louis 'the vampire' and the interviewer 'the boy'. The reader is neither able to find out who the interviewer is, nor who narrates the story, which according to Wood seems to be irrelevant (see Wood 68).

The majority of the novel is presented in a 1st person autodiegetic narration: Louis, the interviewee, tells about his becoming a vampire and the events in his life within the last two hundred years. He is the main protagonist in his autobiography but he also tells the story of the two other major characters, Lestat and Claudia. At numerous points direct speech is used to provide the reader with these characters' perspectives on their lives, and of course, on Louis. Rebecca Cordes explains the choice of Rice's two points of view,

[t]he third-person frame narration mediates the vampire's allure to the reader from the view of a 'normal', non-vampiric angle. This description of a human, trustworthy speaker aims to make the story more credible. The frame story enables the reader to feel the seductive influence the vampire's story has on its listener. Moreover, the interviewer's initial caution as to the believability of the vampire seems reasonable. (31)

It is indeed questionable whether a vampire makes a reliable narrator; nevertheless Rice manages to present Louis as trustworthy (see Cordes 31). Even in the sequels of *Interview with the Vampire*, many of which are narrated by Lestat, there are no indications of Louis being unreliable, although Lestat does contradict some of his accounts. "It is a matter of different opinions among vampires rather than about the reliability of the vampire-narrator as such", explains Cordes (31 n62). Furthermore, she discusses the emphasis on vampires instead of humans to be the result of a vampire narrator. The victims of the vampires no longer play the central role, the vampires themselves do (see Cordes 31). Zanger describes this development in an interesting way: "[...] in Rice's Vampire Chronicles [...] the victims are as indistinguishable from each other as McDonald's hamburgers – and serve much the same function" (21). The many different vampires and their relations to each other are now in the foreground. Thus, vampires cannot pass as "un-individualized monster[s]" any

longer (Cordes 32). The vampire which was solely defined by drinking the blood of humans barely exists anymore; Rice's vampires are constituted by the fact that the necessity of drinking blood troubles their consciousness (see Cordes 32).

Like Cordes, Wood deals with the impact of Rice's vampire narrator. According to him, the narrative is told through the protagonist Louis, who serves as "the single consciousness" (67) and therefore the reader is able to identify with the vampires in the novel. Evil, which was formerly ascribed to the vampires is thus transferred to the humans themselves which allows the reader not only to be fascinated by the undead but to trust them (see Wood 69).

Within Rice's works, *Interview with the Vampire* exists as a novel as well. A novel "that turns out to be Louis's story masquerading as fiction" (Wood 68). Like the characters in *Dracula*, who read each other's journals and notes, also the characters of *The Vampire Chronicles* are able to read the story of Louis' life. The novel is of special importance in *The Vampire Lestat* and *The Queen of the Damned*. In the former, Lestat comments on Louis' account of their lives, whereas in the latter also the interviewer and the change of his life after the interview with Louis are revealed (see Rice, *Lestat*; Wood 68). Here also the issue of secrecy comes up; mortals are not supposed to know about the vampires, but Lestat dismisses this thought immediately, as the novel is presented as fiction and the readers would not believe it to be real anyway (Rice, *Lestat* 17).

3.3.3. The Evil Prince of Darkness: Metaphorical Dimensions

Interview with the Vampire incorporates a variety of themes; among others the struggle with immortality as well as the quest for identity (see Keller 6). However, the metaphorical functions of the vampire altered considerably over time and the amount of approaches for analyzing the novels decreased.

3.3.3.1. The Good Immortal

In *Dracula* the vampire represents evil and the humans good, hence good winning over evil is the aim (see Hollinger 206). In contrast, due to the loss of the metaphysical dimensions, the vampires in Rice's world can be either good or bad (see Cordes 56), and they question themselves, trying to solve the question whether good and evil exists and in what category they themselves are supposed to be placed in (see Keller 203). The consequence is that vampires suddenly show human traits. As Wood says, "[i]nstead of a ruthless monster driven by appetite, readers find a lonely, anguished creature yearning for understanding" (64). Rice's vampires are complex; the thoughtful Louis enables the readers to gain insight into his world, into what Wood calls a "survival against purely ethical behavior" (64). Louis, who is the central character of *Interview with the Vampire*, has an identity crisis throughout the whole novel. He cannot stand the idea of killing innocent humans, he is very fond of them, and the thought of having lost his humanity turns him into the tortured being he is (see Wood 65). The function of the vampire as evidence for evil, and thereby as evidence for the existence of good, is only truncated in *Interview with the Vampire* and turns into the central matter of the story in *Memnoch the Devil* (1995), the fifth novel of *The Vampire Chronicles* (see Wood 61).

3.3.3.2. The Rich Immortal

Dracula is understood as a metaphor for capital by Moretti, as elaborated in the previous chapter. Frank Grady therefore applies this approach to Rice's *The Vampire Chronicles* in his essay on "Vampire Culture" (1996). He claims that "Rice's vampires are the immortal custodians of Western culture, that realm of aesthetic endeavor that capitalism has always imagined as the repository of its conscience [...]. Her vampires are, ultimately, humanists" (226). Nevertheless they are extremely wealthy and will always gain even more wealth. "They are awash in it," Grady says (226). The vampires acquire their money from their

victims, put it into their bank accounts and invest it. They do not hesitate to spend money, in fact they even seem to waste huge amounts of their money on buying luxurious cars, airplanes, pieces of art, etc (see Grady 226). Grady emphasizes Mina Harker's statement on wonderful power of money, which Moretti interprets to fit the "great ideological lie" which is obscured in *Dracula* (see Grady 227). Hence, the distinction of *Dracula* and Rice's vampires is made by their choices of what to spend their money on (see Grady 227). In *The Vampire Chronicles* the vampires seem quite materialistic, however, with regard to their human loved ones they are also very generous (see Grady 227-8). Lestat, on that matter, teaches Louis, "Don't get any mortal notions about telling [your mother and sister] you are a vampire. Just provide for them [...]" (Rice *Interview* 34). Yet, the vampires always have enough money to maintain their lifestyle of choice. The vampires can be understood as "curator[s] of culture" (Grady 228). They collect art from the beginnings on and some of their domiciles resemble museums. This "aesthetic eclecticism" supposedly represents "a purification of capital" (228). Unlike in *Dracula*, the purification does not rely on wrongly used capital, "but on an identification between the previously discrete realms of commerce and culture" (228). Thus, because of the capital's association with the cultural domain represented by Rice's vampires and its admittance into the social domain it is purified. The key elements are vampirism and its consequential immortality (see Grady 228-9). For Grady the vampires in *The Vampire Chronicles* "exist at the boundary" and stand for "[the] formerly secret marriage of capital and culture" (Grady 231). Grady then discusses *The Queen of the Damned*, the third installment of *The Vampire Chronicles*, in which Lestat is a rock star threatening to unveil all vampire secrets. His actions awaken the eldest of all vampires, Akasha, after centuries of sleep. Akasha is stricken by the modern world she has to face, and wants to help making the world a better place by killing millions of men. Lestat, with the help of Marius, realizes she needs, not only to be stopped, but, to be destroyed. Thus, Grady concludes that "[t]he late capitalism of Rice's immortals is defined by the commodification not only of art, but also of benevolence" (236). By defeating Akasha the situation is balanced again, and the vampire can be read as a

“parasitic capitalist” and as a “preserver, arbiter, and [...] creator of aesthetic culture” again (236-7). At the end of *The Queen of the Damned*, the vampires move to Miami to reside in a newly built mansion, financed by stealing from their victims. In addition to their mansion they also have a shopping mall built, which results in a clash of two domains: aestheticism on the one side and commerce on the other (see Grady 237).

3.3.3.3. The Erotic Immortal

As in *Dracula*, vampirism as the portrayal of sexuality is still one of the most important issues regarding the vampire’s function in *Interview with the Vampire*. Though, the vampires “lose their metaphorical quality as metaphor for sexual relations and start actually having sex themselves” (Cordes 39). Sex for the vampires is not like human sexual intercourse as the vampires are ‘dead’ and therefore their genitalia are dysfunctional (see Cordes 39). Hence, like in *Dracula*, sexuality takes place on a non-genital level. In *Interview with the Vampire* the siring of a new vampire and the killing of humans, i.e. the drinking of human blood, are the eroticized actions which pass as ‘vampire sex’ (see Cordes 39). Louis establishes a link between the transformation into a vampire and sex (see Cordes 40):

‘You want to know how it happened, how I became a vampire.’ ‘Yes,’ said the boy. ‘How did you change, exactly?’ ‘I can’t tell you exactly,’ said the vampire. ‘I can tell you about it, enclose it with words that will make the value of it to me evident to you. But I can’t tell you exactly, any more than I could tell you exactly what is the experience of sex if you have never had it.’ (Rice, *Interview* 18)

Also, the detailed description of Louis’ siring by Lestat, is clearly erotic:

“Now listen to me, Louis,” he said, and he lay down beside me now on the steps, his movement so graceful and so personal that at once it made me think of a lover. I recoiled. But he put his right arm around me and pulled me close to his chest. Never had I been this close to him before, and in the dim light I could see the magnificent radiance of his

eye and the unnatural mask of his skin. As I tried to move, he pressed his right fingers against my lips [...]. "Listen, keep your eyes wide," Lestat whispered to me, his lips moving against my neck. I remember that the movement of his lips raised the hair all over my body, sent a shock of sensation through my body that was not unlike the pleasure of passion. (Rice, *Interview* 21)

Hence, the killing of humans becomes sexual as "[w]ith each kill a vampire relives the sensations he felt when he was transformed" (Cordes 40). Further, as Benefiel points out, at one point Claudia asks Louis what making love as a human was like, he answers, "It was something hurried [...] seldom savored [...]. I think it was the pale shadow of killing" (Rice *Interview* 191; Benefiel 264), reinforcing the idea of killing humans for sexual pleasure. Furthermore, by drinking the victim's blood the vampire unites with the victim (see Cordes 40).

Unlike in *Dracula* the pleasure derived from feeding on humans does not represent a forbidden desire. The passion between vampires and their victims, as well as among their own kind and gender, illustrated by Rice is real and not metaphoric (see Cordes 41). Most of her vampires are bisexual, homosexual, or, as Gelder puts it "sexually 'polymorphous'" (109). Actually, the vampire's gender and orientation seems to be irrelevant: males and females fall victim to them, what counts is their blood and not their gender (see Benefiel 268). James R. Keller regards the vampires' adaptability to contemporary issues as the basis for the obvious homoeroticism in Rice's work. The community of gays and lesbians identifies with the vampires in *Interview with the Vampire* quickly, and understands them as representations of "sexual outsiders" (Keller 12). An element supporting this understanding is also the fact that the novel opens in San Francisco's gay district¹⁵ (see Haggerty 5). The place is as telling as the time of the novel's creation. In the American late 1960s the Gay Liberation Movement was formed. In 1969, on June 27, a New York gay bar, the Stonewall Inn on Christopher Street, was raided by the police. To their surprise though,

¹⁵ The setting in San Francisco is significant as well, as "San Francisco has enjoyed an undisputed reputation as a 'gay mecca' since at least 1964" (Stryker 1). Also, Anne Rice herself lived in San Francisco's Castro district (the gay district) for many years (see Keller 14).

the patrons of the bar put up resistance - until today this event and the unrest following it are known as the Stonewall-riots and are understood to have been the origin of the movement, which had already existed before, but gained greater popularity after the riots (see Jagose 30-31). The movement was more radical than the prior homophile movement and a “new sense of identity”: showing pride in one’s sexual orientation, emerged (Jagose 32). Gay liberation, not just in America but around the globe, has also been highly influenced by the 1960s counter-culture movement in America (see Jagose 33). The various efforts of the time are all connected, as Allan Young, coeditor of *Out of the Closets* (1992), makes clear, “Gay liberation [...] also has a perspective for revolution based on the unity of all oppressed people—that is, there can be no freedom for gays in a society which enslaves others through male supremacy, racism and economic exploitation (capitalism)” (Young 25-26). Sexual liberation for all, and not just homosexuals, was aspired by the movement (see Young 25). Further, Gay Liberation’s aim was “to [eradicate] fixed notions of femininity and masculinity” (Jagose 41), as these concepts of sex and gender are defining the collective norm, and thereby devalue homosexuality (see Jagose 41). Hence, homosexuality was a part in the public discourse of the 1970s and *Interview with the Vampire* corresponded to the time.

Lestat and Louis, for example, pass as a gay couple, not only do they live together but they also raise a vampire child, which makes them parents as well. Louis, struggling with his identity as a murderer, then is the sensitive, feminine part of the couple, whereas Lestat constitutes the masculine part (see Gelder 112). Together with Claudia, who was turned into a vampire by Lestat when she was five years old, they form a family. Unfortunately, this is not as unproblematic as it might seem. The two vampires, rivaling for their daughter’s love, often refer to themselves as Claudia’s lovers, which adds a notion of incest and pedophilia to the situation (see Gelder 113). Although Gelder argues that this unconventional relationship is “‘normalized’ through Louis’s search for [...] the [missing] mother” (113), the representation of the gay couple as

incestuous and pedophilic aroused criticism (see Keller 19 ff)¹⁶. However, disregarding the family-issue with Claudia, Candace R. Benefiel claims that already the siring of a vampire, in this case Louis by Lestat, can be incestuous, “[a]s the vampire turns its lover into its child, the relationship is oddly incestuous, a configuration that carries over into the portrayal of the vampire family” (263). This idea applies to vampires in general and not just to homosexual ones. Moreover Keller finds the illustration of the homosexual union wrong, “[t]his portrayal of a same-sex relationship perpetuates one of the most destructive heterosexist myths: the assumption that gay and lesbian domestic units mirror heterosexual unions” (Keller 16). The family of Lestat, Louis and Claudia thus is the perfect representation of a dysfunctional family (see Keller 15).

As in *Dracula*, the gender roles are confused: “Claudia [...] resembles the oedipal male child. She develops a longing for the mother and a resentment for the father whom she fears and eventually tries to kill. In this context, her inability to mature might signify her castration by a father who is unwilling to relinquish control over the mother” (Keller 18). Keller then argues that Rice might have intentionally “mixed the male and female oedipal experiences to demonstrate that there are no strict gender categories in immortality” (19). Further, Claudia is one of very few female vampires in *The Vampire Chronicles*. The difference between male and female does not seem to matter much though, as “virtually[,] all the vampires [in *Interview with the Vampire* and *The Vampire Lestat*] are men, regardless of their physical bodies” (Keller 19). This is, again, an element reminiscent of gay liberation: the movement sought to eliminate gender roles (see Jagose 41), which in *Interview with the Vampire* are, in fact, presented as insignificant.

¹⁶ As a matter of fact James R. Keller not only criticizes Rice’s writing but also Anne Rice herself. She writes about sexuality, sexual repression, sexual identities, etc. but “recoils from any public conviction of the subject” (Keller 4). “[S]he does not really accept the very ideas that she wants the public to believe that she is very comfortable with” (Keller 4). Keller thereby intends to “suggest that [Rice] has internalized heterosexist paradigms and has unconsciously represented them in her novel,” without accusing her of “conscious homophobia” (Keller 14). Haggerty, in this regard, thinks “Rice plays with homophobic responses [...] and uses them to challenge contemporary values. At the same time [...] she reinscribes them precisely because of her own uneasiness about the desire she depicts” (11).

Keller also makes clear that despite all the biting and killing “[e]ven Rice’s vampires desire a partner with whom they might endure eternity, and although these relations exist within a virtual orgy of erotic experiences, the vampires are nevertheless portrayed as partners who share many of the characteristics of conventional marriage” (2), which is obvious with Louis and Armand. The latter even manages to compete with “the [child] [Claudia] for the mother’s affection” (Keller 21). He is presented as the opposite of Lestat, he offers knowledge and companionship and spends a long part of his immortal life with Louis. Nevertheless, the relationship cannot function in the end, as it is tainted with the murder of Claudia, which Armand did not prevent (see Keller 21). Although male homosexual companionships are prevalent in Rice, most likely due to the lack of female vampires, this desire for a partner in eternity is not bound to any gender roles, anyone has the possibility to fall in love, no matter what gender (see Keller 3).

Louis and Lestat (and later Claudia) live in secrecy. They hide from their surroundings and fear their true nature to be revealed. A situation strongly reminding of the life many homosexuals, even up until today, have to live (see Keller 34). “The coffin is the closet,” Keller concludes (34). Another crucial element, in both the real world and Rice, is the crisis of identity. As mentioned before, Louis struggles with his identity as a vampire, but the crisis is even more evident in the character of Claudia: physically a five year old girl and psychologically an intellectual and mature ‘adult’. By turning her into a vampire, Lestat, as is revealed in *The Vampire Lestat*, violates the rules, children shall not be turned into vampires (see Keller 25). Keller compares Claudia’s transformation to child abuse, which affects children for the rest of their lives. “Claudia becomes a child monster who has no control over her sexual hunger,” he argues (25). She does not hesitate to kill, like Lestat, and always stills her thirst for blood. Clever as she is, she tricks her victims with her innocent, childlike appearance before brutally killing them (see Keller 25).

Although Claudia is emotionally mature she is not able live on her own and therefore depends on 'her fathers' (see Cordes 46). For many years the situation stays like this, but at one point Claudia's identity crisis reaches a peak and all their lives change: Claudia wants a coffin of her own, her killing patterns begin to change, she is obsessed with women and children and finally begins to ask Louis and Lestat questions (see Rice, *Interview* 95-7). Further she kills two of their servants, mother and daughter, which arouses suspicion. Louis then finds out that she even keeps the bodies in an unused kitchen and Lestat confronts her about them (see Rice, *Interview* 98-100). She reacts by asking the inevitable question, "Which of you did it? *Which of you made me what I am?* [emphasis in original]" (100). Lestat, in a rage, refuses to tell the truth, but in the end blurts out, "Be glad I made you what you are [...] [o]r I'll break you in a thousand pieces!" (101). Hence, it is not surprising that Claudia wants to kill him for turning her into a child vampire. Cohen ends his theory on monsters by comparing monsters to one's children and concludes that in the end they will ask questions about their creation. Claudia perfectly fits his theory: she gains knowledge and beings to question the world she lives in. She asks 'who' made her, but it can be assumed that she also wonders about the 'why'. By telling her the story of how she was sired a vampire by Lestat, Louis implicitly also reveals why (see Rice, *Interview* 106). In the end, Claudia's wish to find out the truth results in an attempted murder, for which has to die.

Accordingly, the function of the vampires, reflecting the society they live in, shifted significantly. As Margret Carter elaborates, the perception of vampires, especially of vampires as the others, even though they are still outsiders, changed. "Contemporary American society," she argues, "differs from the cultural milieu that engendered the literary vampire" (27). In *Dracula* vampirism is a metaphor for a number of things, especially for sexual activities, which "[t]o the Victorian reader [...] reinforces the horror of vampirism" (Carter 29). But the reader of the late twentieth century, and surely also of the early twenty-first century, favors this erotic vampire (see Carter 29). While the vampire in *Dracula* represented a foreigner and thus was a threat to Victorian Britain, the vampire

in *Interview with the Vampire* stands for an outsider not in terms of nationality, but “as [a] member of a persecuted minority” and therefore “appeals to the contemporary society as something positive and desirable” (Cordes 62).

3.4. Charlaine Harris – *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*

Real Blood is For Suckers. Tru:Blood.
Synthetic Blood Nourishment
Beverage.
(HBO *True Blood* Promotional Poster)

The Southern Vampire Mystery series, written by Charlaine Harris, began with the publishing of *Dead Until Dark* in 2001 and is still in progress. As of August 2010 the series consists of ten novels and eleven short stories¹⁷. Even though each novel has its own plot all of them are connected with an interrelated storyline: the lives and relations of the main characters Sookie Stackhouse, Bill Compton and Eric Northman. Therefore it is recommended to read the books in the correct order as the story is building up from the first to the last book. For this reason, the first novel, which forms the basis, will be the only one discussed in greater detail.

The novels are set in twenty-first century North America but work in an alternate history frame. Two years prior to the action happening in the first novel, vampires “came out of the coffin” and declared their existence in public (Harris, *Dark* 1), because the Japanese found a way to develop synthetic blood, “TrueBlood”¹⁸ (see Harris, *Dark* 5). As a result vampires do not necessarily have to feed on human beings anymore; they are able to still their thirst without harming anyone. Of course, not all vampires are in favor of the synthetic blood and of living in public, which leads to numerous grave problems.

¹⁷ The short stories will not be discussed here as they are mostly stand-alone stories which are not of immediate relevance to the novels.

¹⁸ The synthetic blood is first called “TrueBlood” in *Living Dead in Dallas* (2002) (199).

In *Dead Until Dark*, as in all the novels, the story is told by the protagonist, Sookie Stackhouse, a waitress living in the small – and fictional – town of Bon Temps in northern Louisiana. Sookie is able to read minds, a gift that she thinks of as a “disability” (Harris, *Dark* 2). She is fascinated by the undead and finally gets to meet one, Bill Compton, at the beginning of the novel, in the bar Merlotte’s, where she works. Thanks to her mind reading abilities she overhears a plan of two other customers to drain the vampire in the parking lot and saves his life. From that moment on Sookie is drawn into the world of the vampires deeper and deeper throughout the novel and her life. The main plot follows a series of killings. All victims were women who were in some way related to vampires and almost all of them showed bite marks on their bodies. Sookie wants to protect Bill as well as her brother Jason, who is accused of being the murderer, and therefore wants to find the culprit. In the end she finds out the truth when being attacked herself by Rene Lenier. She manages to stab him and flees. The police arrest him in the end and he confesses multiple murders.

3.4.1. The Vampire in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*

In *Dead Until Dark* vampires are “politically correct[ly]” defined as a “victim[s] of a virus that left [them] apparently dead for a couple of days and thereafter allergic to sunlight, silver and garlic” (2). Sookie, as well as a great number of other people, respect the vampires and treat them as if they were normal human beings, whereas others consider them as cruel bloodsucking monsters, who lost their humanity.

Physically, the vampires look like humans, with one exception: their fangs, which do not show at all times, but only when the vampire is aroused, excited or ‘ready to drink’. Otherwise, they pass as humans. Sookie, when Bill first comes into Merlotte’s describes the situation as follows, “I knew immediately what he was. It amazed me when no one else turned around to stare. They couldn’t tell!

But to me, *his skin had a little glow*, and I just knew [emphasis added]" (2). She later continues the description of the vampire Bill,

He had thick brown hair, combed straight back and brushing his collar, and his long sideburns seemed curiously old-fashioned. He was pale, of course; hey, he was dead, if you believed the old tales. [...] [H]is lips were lovely, sharply sculpted, and he had arched dark brows. His nose swooped down right out of that arch, like a prince's in a Byzantine mosaic. [...] [H]is eyes were even darker than his hair, and the whites were incredibly white. (2)

Hence, it seems reasonable that such vampires are able to go unnoticed among humans. Other vampires are described in a similar manner, Eric, for example is "handsome, in fact, radiant; blond and blue-eyed, tall and broad shouldered" (105), while Pam is seen as "pure American," with a "round face and sweet features" (106). In *Bon Temps* the number of vampires is quite small, which might also be a reason why vampires are not easily recognized. In fact, it is difficult to analyze this further. Once the inhabitants of *Bon Temps* get to know that Bill is a vampire, it becomes easier for them to recognize his kind, after they are seen in public with him. Moreover, it needs to be mentioned that it is unclear whether Sookie herself recognizes the vampires because of their appearance. As said, she is able to read minds, human minds that is. To her, listening to them is like listening to a radio station. A vampire mind, however, means silence for her (12). Hence, she is able to identify a vampire by an 'absence' of noise, where she usually is flooded with the contents of the minds of the people surrounding her. Sookie, thanks to her ability, is generally able to recognize supernatural beings, not just vampires. In *Dead to the World* (2004) she is asked to use her power to aid the vampires in the witch war (see Harris, *World* 217).

The vampires in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* are also similar to Rice's vampires. They too have human like traits, they have a conscience and emotions. Some of them behave good, while others are bad. Rice's vampires are represented as an elite, which cannot be said of Harris' vampires any more. Like humans, some surely belong to the elite, but others do not. There are

vampires in the government, owning business, etc, while at the same time others live a simple life – they do not care about financial security or political issues. Also, there are vampires who seem big-hearted and interested in maintaining a human lifestyle, but who do not have the means to become a member of the elite. Bubba, for example, who is also a reoccurring character in the series, works as a bodyguard for Sookie in *Dead Until Dark*, and raises some attention with those who see him:

“[N]ow you know at least some of the sighting stories [of Elvis] are true. But *don't* call him by his name [emphasis in original]. Call him Bubba! Something went wrong when he came over—from human to vampire—maybe it was all the chemicals in his blood.” “But he was really dead, wasn't he?” “Not... quite. One of us was a morgue attendant and a big fan, and he could detect the tiny spark still left, so he brought him over, in a hurried manner.” [...] “But that was a mistake. He's never been the same from what my friends tell me. He's as smart as a tree trunk, so to make a living he does odd jobs for the rest of us. We can't have him out in public, you can see that.” (238)

Thus, it is evident that the vampires also exploit their own kind. Bubba is doing the jobs no other vampire wants to do, and he does not seem to mind. Furthermore, the vampires, no matter whether they are intellectual or simpleminded, are able to be ‘good’ or ‘bad’, like the humans themselves. This is not just referring to the killing of and feeding from humans, but just like the living, some of them are criminals and commit felonies.

There are also crucial new elements in Harris' vampire world. For example, vampires always have to obey their makers, whether they want to or not. Eric illuminates, “[i]t's a compulsion. It's impossible to resist, even when you want to ... even when you're desperate to get away” (Harris, *Gone* 84). This issue is also one of the central matters of *Club Dead*, when Bill, who Sookie believes to be kidnapped, is summoned by his maker and former lover Lorena (see Harris, *Club*). Another novelty is that the vampires are able to contract a disease, the Sino-virus, also known as Sino-Aids: “Sino-AIDS didn't kill vampires [...], but it left the undead very weak for nearly a month, during which time it was comparatively easy to catch and stake them. And every now and then, if a

vampire fed from an infected human more than once, the vampire actually died—redied?—without being staked” (Harris, *Dark* 68). Other diseases, such as AIDS, sexually transmitted – or any other kind of diseases, are not able to harm the vampire, unlike drinking blood from “[a]lcoholic or heavily drugged victims [, which] affect[s] vampires temporarily” (Harris, *Dark* 68).

As in Rice’s *Interview with the Vampire*, the vampires are a central element of the story. Events are described out of their perspective, though, not from a first hand, but by the protagonist and narrator Sookie. The vampires’ struggle with killing humans is irrelevant here, since vampires are finally able to survive on synthetic blood, even if it “didn’t really satisfy their hunger” (Harris, *Dark* 5). Nevertheless, some of the vampires still have an identity crisis. Godfrey for example, is troubled by his thousand year old life and his killing of innocents and therefore commits suicide (Harris, *Dallas* 153-5, 196)¹⁹.

3.4.2. Narrative Features

Unlike Rice, Harris decided to let a human, or rather an allegedly human, woman²⁰ narrate the novels of *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*. However, a small number of vampires are given a voice by means of including numerous dialogues. The narrator is also the protagonist, Sookie, who, as stated above, is able to read minds. Therefore it is difficult to categorize the narrative situation. There clearly is a classic first person autodiegetic narration, but the narrator is able to give insight into the other character’s thoughts as well. Further, Sookie, due to her relationship with Bill and being friends with other vampires as well, knows more about vampires than the other humans in the novels. A lot of the information she gains ought to be secret, for example the structure of the vampire government. Even though Sookie’s level of knowledge is superior, she

¹⁹ The effects of Godfrey’s identity crisis on the public will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4.4.

²⁰ In *Definitely Dead* it is mentioned the Sookie seems to have “a little streak of fairy” in her blood (244). In *From Dead to Worse* it is finally revealed that her grandmother had an affair with a half-fairy (60).

is not omniscient, as she can only read the minds of the persons in her immediate surroundings. Hence, all the stories are presented through Sookie's eyes.

With regard to the time frame, there are generally no indications at what time exactly the novels take place. No dates and years are given, just seasons. According to Sookie's information on her age, in each of the novels, the time span from the first to the tenth novel is approximately just under two years²¹. Harris, even though avoiding year dates of the overall storyline does not hesitate from including date from the past, for example the revelation of Bill Compton's genealogy (see Harris, *Dallas* 286-8). As the reader knows about Bill fighting in the civil war it becomes clear that the dates given in Harris' fiction correspond to those of reality. Thus, it is possible to place the novels somewhere in the early years of the twenty-first century. The fact that Harris incorporates Hurricane Katrina, which destroyed the city of New Orleans, killed over a thousand people and left hundreds of thousands homeless (see "Hurricane Katrina"), in *All Together Dead* (2007) supports this argument. Including the natural disaster seems to have been self-evident for Harris, though, the question was when and how to put it in the plot line. As *Definitely Dead* was already completed the novel remained unchanged (see Harris, *Definitely* author's note, n. pag.). In its successor, *All Together Dead*, Katrina's aftermath, which is in the novel concerning humans and vampires alike, is discussed. In retrospect, this determines the novels to happen from late spring or early summer 2004 on.

Harris, who wanted to write about vampires and try out something new, decided to set her novel "in the prosaic trailer-park and strip-mall landscape of northern Louisiana" (Rich 1). Her intention was to make a clear distinction of Anne Rice's gothic New Orleans (see Rich 1). On the one side she succeeds, as her works

²¹Sookie states her age, twenty-five, on the first page of *Dead Until Dark* and describes the summer at various points (see Harris, *Dark*). In *Dead in the Family* she gives her age as twenty-seven (see Harris, *Family* 66) and the time is – for the first time explicitly mentioned – March and April. Also, Sookie's birthday is in summer (see Harris, *Dark* 235) which means that *Dead in the Family* takes place a little less than two years after *Dead Until Dark*.

differ from Rice in most ways, on the other side, her story is still set in Louisiana, which automatically establishes a connection to New Orleans and Rice. Further, this situation, including Anne Rice herself, is mentioned in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*: “[...] rural Louisiana wasn’t too tempting to vampires, apparently; on the other hand, New Orleans was a real center for them—the whole Anne Rice thing, right?” (Harris, *Dark* 1); “New Orleans had been the place to go for vampires and those who wanted to be around them ever since Anne Rice had been proven right about their existence. The city was like Disneyland for vamps” (Harris, *Together* 9). After Katrina though, the vampires need to vacate the city, “all that had gone to hell, of course, along with so much else. Even Bon Temps was feeling the storm’s effect, [...]. Our little town was still crowded with people who had fled from the south” (Harris, *Together* 9).

The Southern Vampire Mysteries clearly belong to the category of urban fantasy²². In the stories the cities, they are set in, are emphasized and the reader knows most of the time in what geographic place the characters are. Further, the real world and the fictional world intersect. Although the most important city, Bon Temps, is fictional, all its surroundings are real. Shreveport, Monroe, Jackson and New Orleans exist and are a geographical match to the descriptions in the novels.

²² Urban fantasy is defined as follows in *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*: “[a] city may be seen from afar, and is generally seen clear; the UF is told from within, and, from the perspective of the characters acting out their roles, it may be difficult to determine the extent and nature of the surrounding REALITY. UFs are normally texts where fantasy and the mundane world intersect and interweave throughout a tale which is significantly *about* a real city [emphasis in original]” (975).

3.4.3. The Modern Bloodsucker: Metaphorical Dimensions or the Lack Thereof

In *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* the form and function of the vampire differs significantly from almost all other vampire fiction. In fact, it is questionable whether they still have a symbolic function, other than to reflect the culture and society that constructed them. The vampire is not supposed to represent “the Other” anymore. In fact, he is just one of the many “supernatural beings”, in the Sookie-verse²³: vampires, shape-shifters, werewolves, werepanthers, witches and wiccans, demons, fairies as well as mythological creatures rooting from ancient times, occur in Harris’ works and mingle with humans. As a result vampires can be understood as a representation of a minority. Here of course the fundamental question, who the bad ones are, and who the good ones, arises. The answer is complex: everyone and no one. The ‘evil’ beings are not necessarily the vampires or other supernatural beings, evil is ascribed to the humans as much as to anyone else. This is exemplified in the main story line in *Dead Until Dark*, as well as the re-occurring events related to the Fellowship of the Sun in *Living Dead in Dallas* and *All Together Dead*. These events will be discussed in great detail in chapter 4.4.

3.4.3.1. The Social Fang²⁴

Another important matter in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* is the interesting, but in the novel unresolved, discussion whether “humans and vampires [are able to] belong to the same political community and participate in society as

²³ “Sookie-verse” refers to the world Sookie Stackhouse lives in, according to Harris novels. The term is used by the author and fans of *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* (see Harris, “FAQs”). It is not possible to indicate who coined the term, but it can be assumed that the term was inspired by the term “Buffyverse”, which refers to the fictional world of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003).

²⁴ Fang is the slang term for vampire (see Harris, *Dark* 262)

equals" (Dunn, Housel 3)²⁵. Vampires, although they are publically declared as equal and not superior to humans, are as a matter of fact the superior ones, even if no one dares to admit it. Not only do they have "superhuman strength and speed, [but they] also have a troubling knack for glamouring" humans out of their free will" (Dunn, Housel 3). Hence there is a great imbalance in the power structure. At one point Eric tries to make it more clearly to Sookie,

"Sookie, you have to understand that for hundreds, thousands of years we [the vampires] have considered ourselves better than humans, separate from humans." He thought for a second. "Very much in the same relationship to humans as humans have to, say, cows. Edible like cows, but cute, too."

I was knocked speechless. I had sensed this, of course, but to have it spelled out was just ... nauseating. Food that walked and talked, that was us. McPeople. (Harris, *Doornail* 214; Culver 19)

The intention herein is neither to define vampires, nor their habits and needs. Instead the focus lies on "the vampire *community* and the politics of its interaction with the human community [emphasis in original]" (McClelland, *Blood* 79). Harris chose to include an elaborate political vampire system, governing the vampire community. Kings and Queens reign the states of the USA; their territories are divided into different areas, each of them, having a sheriff (see Harris, *Club* 3). Additionally, the USA are also divided into four areas: the eastern coastal states form the Moshup Clan, the eastern mid-country states, the Amun Clan, the western mid-country states, called Zeus Clan and the west-coast states, named Narayana Clan²⁶ (see Harris, *Family* 154). The compatibility with the human political system is disputable, which leads to yet another problem as the vampires aspire to be integrated in it. This wish again reflects the difficulty of seeing vampires as "good, law-abiding members of society" (Curtis 69). In *Dead Until Dark*, after being attacked by the serial killer Rene Lenier, Sookie calls the police and refrains from taking justice

²⁵ Goerge A. Dunn and Rebecca Housel are the editors of *True Blood and Philosophy: We Wanna Think Bad Things with You*. Although the essays in this book focus on the T.V. series it can be applied to the novels, as the series' content and ideas are based on them.

²⁶ The four clan names derive from mythology: Moshup is a Native American mythological figure, Amun an Egyptian God, Zeus a Greek God, and Narayana from Hinduism (see Harris, *Family* 154).

in her own hands by killing him (see Harris, *Dark* 279). She also begs Bill, who earlier in the novel killed Sookie's uncle for molesting her when she was a child (see Harris, *Dark* 165-6), to respect her decision and to stay out of the situation (see Harris, *Dark* 291). It is thus suggested that vampires have their own way of dealing with the law, whereas the 'good' humans in the novel are law-abiding citizens. At the same time this situation illustrates that vampires are able to adapt and to observe the human law. Joseph Foy interprets this scene as "the best example of justification for political rights [of vampires] based on rational deliberation" (63). Further, the issue is expanded, pointing out that humans can act immorally as well:

Eric looked at me intently. I couldn't read his expression. "Had you ever killed anyone before?" he asked.

"Of course not!" I said indignantly. "Well, I did hurt a guy who was trying to kill me, but he didn't die. No, I'm a human. I don't have to kill anyone to live."

"But humans kill other humans all the time. And they don't even need to eat them or drink their blood." (Harris, *World* 53)

Eric's point justifies the killing of humans by vampires in the past and makes it even seem 'innocent', compared to the murder of humans by their own kind. The vampires in the novels still have not been granted 'equal rights,' but they are, despite their lethal character, slowly gaining more and more rights. In some states "legal marriage and inheritance of property" are allowed, they can be police officers and firefighters, and partially also doctors ("vampire doctors [are] not accepted in any field that include[s] treating patients with open wounds") (Harris, *Gone* 69). Interestingly, also an issue reflecting on the real world, taxation, becomes a matter here, "[e]ven the U.S. government had to admit it couldn't tax the dead. But if you gave them rights, Congress had figured, and gave them the vote, then you could obligate them into paying taxes" (Harris, *Dallas* 25).

In this 'new' world it is a necessity for the vampires to follow certain rules in order to be accepted. "Vampires must act as *if* they are human [emphasis in original]", a rule which is supposedly easy to follow, regarding the fact that at

some point all vampires have once been humans (Culver 24-25). Although this is true, the idea seems to not be realized by most of the vampire characters in the novels discussed. Just because a vampire was once human does not mean he or she was a good human, so the simple statement of 'acting human' gives no indication to morality. Additionally, for many vampires being human lies back quite a while, so the question is, in what quality the memory of the former human life is still available. Yet another issue is the fact that for thousands of years vampires did not have to play according to the rules. "Bill emphatically insists to Sookie, vampires are not human but are instead supernatural undead who have a long history of killing humans for food and even sport" (Curtis 68-9). Taking this in consideration, it is obvious that a large number of the vampires spoke out against the Great Revelation and do not want to take part in mainstream life. 'Old habits die hard', a popular word of wisdom, is appropriate here. Suddenly changing your life and all your habits from one day to the next after decades, centuries or even millennia is not easy. One thing vampires always have been used to though, is adjusting to the time they live in. Culture changes constantly and vampires have to adapt in order not to stand out. Being able to pass as human has always been a characteristic significant for vampires, but now, that humankind knows about them it is even more important that they not only pass as human but appear to be human in order to gain trust (see Culver 24-25). This trust is hard to get, not only are many humans scared of the vampires, or think of them as evil godforsaken creatures, but even more importantly, humans have no first-hand knowledge about being a vampire at all. As mentioned above, vampires were once human and might remember their mortal lives, but for humans it is only possible to imagine being a vampire, being strong and fast and living in the dark (see Curtis 75). Moreover, another discussion, whether vampires are damned, is raised, as "[t]he unlife' of a vampire is often understood as something a person is *condemned* to [emphasis in original]" (Robichaud 7). In recent vampire narratives, this question, though often examined, remains unresolved. A particularly thorough examination of the issue can be traced throughout the highly popular *Twilight Saga* (2005-2008) written by Stephenie Meyer.

3.4.3.2. The Precious Fang

A feature unique to Harris' work is reversing the function of the vampire exploiting humans. In the Sookie-verse vampires are in constant danger, not because of a fearless vampire slayer or humans seeking revenge, but due to their blood. Humans, or rather, those humans who are of low moral standards and weary of life drain vampires to obtain their precious blood. "It had been the drug of choice for at least two years now. Some buyers went crazy after drinking pure vampire blood, but that didn't slow the market any" (Harris, *Dark* 6). The legal issue with the dealing of vampire blood is unclear though, but, "[l]egally, *killing* the vampires is murder [emphasis added]" (Harris, *Dark* 174), which means that most drainers face the risk of being not only charged for drug possession and dealing, but also with murder, since it is common practice to stake the drained vampires or, dump them so the sun would get them in the morning. Of course the drainers find it necessary to kill the vampires, as otherwise they will be killed by them after they regain their strength (see Harris, *Dark* 6). The dealing of vampire blood thus makes another contribution in the disruption of harmony between humans and vampires. As George A. Dunn and Ariadne Blayde state, "[v]ampires may face intolerance and contempt from human beings, but the bad blood runs both ways" (39). Bruce A. McClelland concludes that "[t]he communal substance that reveals the true nature of both human beings and vampires is the one that exposes their baser desires, namely blood, which comes in three flavors: human [...], vampire [...], and synthetic (Tru[e]Blood)" (McClelland *Blood* 84).

3.4.3.3. The Omnisexual Fang

In the novels many topics are directly addressed and metaphoric function of the vampire vanishes almost completely. Rebecca Cordes says with regard to the contemporary vampire that

[b]oth the notion of immortality and the special characteristics of a vampire existence are connoted positively. The human desire for eternal life, youth, and beauty is an important criterion in the 20th century. Whereas in *Dracula* the negative consequences of eternal life were in the foreground, the immortality is now [in Rice] evaluated positively. The fascination with the possibilities of a vampire nature changes its evaluation. (62)

This also applies to Harris' vampires. Immortality is not only seen positively in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*, but is even strongly desired. Moreover, death by a vampire bite seems to be less feared. Some humans regard the vampires as sex symbols and offer themselves to them. These humans are referred to as 'fang-bangers' throughout the series. Sookie tries to explain the term, fang-bangers are "[m]en and women that hang around with vampires and enjoy being bitten. Vampire groupies. They don't last too long, I think, because they want to be bitten too much, and sooner or later they get that one bite too many" (Harris, *Dark* 22). Not only do they enjoy being bitten, but they also enjoy having sex with the vampires. Unlike in *Dracula* and *Interview with the Vampire* the vampires' genitals are functional and the sexual activities they engage in are explicitly described. For example, a scene of Sookie and Bill at the cemetery, is expressed as follows:

The next moment his teeth grazed my shoulder, and his body, hard and rigid and ready, shoved me so forcefully I was suddenly on my back in the mud. He slid directly into me as if he were trying to reach through me to the soil. I shrieked, and he growled in response, as though we were truly mud people, primitives from caves. My hands, gripping the flesh of his back, felt the rain pelting down and the blood under my nails, and his relentless movement. I thought I would be plowed into this mud, into my grave. His fangs sank into my neck. (Harris, *Dark* 181)

This example also leads to the next issue, the vampire bite during sexual intercourse, which marks the humans affiliated with the vampires. Sookie asks Bill if they can also have sex without the biting, Bill replies, "Yes. [But] [i]t's just like a grand finale when I taste your blood" (Harris, *Dark* 183). Thus, the 'vampire kiss' does not represent sexual desire any longer, but instead, intensifies the vampire's sexual pleasure.

The vampires, like the humans, in the novels are hetero-, bi- and homosexual. The king of Mississippi, Russell Edgington, is described to be “like the gay vampire Hugh Hefner, and [his mansion is] the Playboy Mansion, with an emphasis on the ‘boy’” (Harris, *Club* 177). In a later novel he is also getting married to a male vampire, the king of Indiana (see Harris, *Together* 131). And, for example, Eric has relationships with men and women. As a human he was married to a woman, and also, later in the novels, he fosters a serious relationship with Sookie. It was a man though, who turned him into a vampire, Appius Livius Ocella (see Harris, *Gone* 83). As Eric says, “[Appius] liked men, of course, and that took some getting used to. I had never done that. But when you’re a new vampire, anything sexual seems exciting, so even that I enjoyed ... eventually” (Harris, *Gone* 84). The maker thus represents a parent to the new vampire, he teaches him and guides him through life. Often though, makers establish an intimate relationship with their newly sired vampire or turn their mortal lovers into vampires. Hence, as in Rice’s novels the relationship between vampires and their makers, can be understood as incestuous (see Benefiel 263). Some makers, for example Appius Livius Ocella, even refer to their turned lovers as their sons, and these sons also name each other brothers (see Harris, *Family* 164).

Furthermore, the vampire’s situation can be compared to the situation of the gay and lesbian community, as well as other minorities (see Dunn, Housel 3)²⁷. Ever since the ancient times vampires have existed and lived in our world in secret. Recently they decided to officially declare their existence, they “formed a public movement to ask the larger society to accept their kind and recognize their equal rights” (Curtis 68). The result was prejudice and opposition, which “is reminiscent of many other forms of intolerance and discrimination” (Blayde, Dunn 34), similar to the reactions to gay rights movement. Another analogy is, that vampires are not able to transform into a human again, they are vampires, just like homosexuals cannot “be reprogrammed to be straight” (Brace, Arp 97).

27 Harris admitted having written “the Sookie novels in part as ‘a metaphor for gays in America.’ But, she added: ‘I am not a crusader. If you need a good adventure or a vacation from your problems, then I am your woman’” (Rich 2 para 6).

Patricia Brace and Robert Arp say that “[a] vampire’s ‘orientation’ [...] is vampire” (98), which is a risky statement, since in Harris humans and vampires live together, not only in general on the earth, but as couples, friends and lovers. In *From Dead to Worse* the controversy of legal marriage between vampires and humans is mentioned briefly, “the state legislature had voted to recognize vampire-human marriages [...]. No one had thought that bill would ever pass” (see Harris, *Worse* 88), which also reminds on the current debate of legalizing same-sex marriage (see “Same-Sex Marriage”). Jennifer Culver presents another analogy of the vampires’ ‘coming out of the coffin’ with the homosexuals’ ‘coming out of the closet’:

“[t]he public ‘coming out’ of vampires provides both them and human beings with the opportunity to play new kinds of games. Vampires can mainstream in the human world, acting mostly human in human settings. And by watching vampires, human beings gain an understanding and partial access to a world previously unknown to them. (Culver 30)

The leading thought is reminiscent of the ideas that the coming out of homosexuals is essential to gain more tolerance (see Jagose). Homosexuals have been supported by consciousness-raising groups, which assumed “that gay men and women would have many experiences of oppression in common, and that uncensored discussions of these experiences would lead both to personal empowerment and a collective understanding of homophobic culture” (Jagose 38-9) Although, these ideas seem positive, the spread of information on homosexuality and the increasing public ‘outings’, also lead to an increase in homophobia and gay bashing. Sookie, in *Dead in the Family*, confirms a similar situation in the novels herself: “[c]oming out of the coffin hadn’t solved all the vamps’ problems, and it had created quite a few new ones” (127).

Nevertheless, the complexity of the comparison between vampire and the gay and lesbian community becomes problematic: people knew about gays and lesbians, their existence was known to the public and not just any legend. Vampires though were mostly believed to be mythological creatures. Of course

there is always someone who believes in them and tries to find evidence of their existence and history, but in general, the vampire only existed in the imaginary. With the Great Revelation²⁸ the public was made aware that the myth they believed in for centuries was true (see Curtis 68).

3.4.3.4. The Ambitious Fang

As a last point, a possible link between *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* and the theories of Moretti and Grady, on *Dracula* and *Interview with the Vampire*, shall be established. Dracula, with all his money and treasures wants to conquer the world and Rice's vampires intend to savor it, by collecting art from the beginning of time. To describe Harris' vampires in such a way is difficult though. They have conquered the world, more or less successfully²⁹ and surely, some of them might be art collectors or aesthetes, but in general, they are, as a matter of fact, just like the humans of our society. Some are rich while others are poor. It can be assumed though, that many of the older vampires are rather wealthy, as they were able, like the vampires in Rice, to take the money from their victims, and either keep it safe, or invest it wisely. Sookie, in *Living Dead in Dallas*, wonders about Bill's wealth after he tells her about his new business venture,

“[h]e never seemed rich: he never seemed poor. But he never worked, either; unless it was on the nights we weren't together. I was uneasily aware that any vampire [...] could become wealthy; after all, when you can control the minds of humans to some extent, it's not that difficult to

²⁸ “The Great Revelation was the vampire term for the night that they'd gone on television all over the world to let us know that they actually existed and, furthermore, that they wanted to come out of the shadows and into the economic and social flow of human society” (Harris, *Together* 17).

²⁹ “Reactions [to the Great Revelation] varied sharply, depending on the nation. The vampires in the predominantly Islamic nations had fared the worst. You don't even want to know what happened to the undead spokesman in Syria, though perhaps the female vamp in Afghanistan died an even more horrible—and final—death. [...] Some nations—France, Italy, and Germany were the most notable—refused to accept vampires as equal citizens. Many—like Bosnia, Argentina, and most of the African nations—denied any status to the vampires, and declared them fair game for any bounty hunter. But America, England, Mexico, Canada, Japan, Switzerland, and the Scandinavian countries adopted a more tolerant attitude” (Harris, *Club* 5).

persuade them to part with money or stock tips or investment opportunities. (Harris, *Dallas* 25)

Nevertheless, the vampires, especially the business owners, seem to be in total control of their possessions. Eric, for example, after realizing money has been stolen from him by an employee in his bar, Fangtasia, asks Sookie to help him find the thief with her ability (see Harris, *Dark* 201). Fangtasia, according to Sookie's beliefs is also the primary source for Eric's income (see Harris, *World* 22), which suggests that at least some vampires in the Sookie-verse actually work for their money. In general though, the real relation of vampires and their financial situation is not evident in the novels. Grady's idea of the distinguishing the vampires in Rice from *Dracula* according to their spending of money (see Grady 227), seems irrelevant for Harris' vampires. Although it is known that her vampires buy cars and real estates, it is not indicated how luxurious or modest those expenses are³⁰. Clearly, the kings and queens engage in a more expensive lifestyle, since they are on top of vampire society.

³⁰ In *Dead in the Family* it is mentioned that Eric drives a Corvette and lives in fancy house (see Harris, *Family* 73ff), though, Eric does not represent all of his kind.

3.5. Unheimlich. The Uncanny in *Dracula*, *Interview with the Vampire* and *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*

Someone get me to the doctor. And
 someone call the nurse. And
 someone buy me roses. And
 someone burned the church. We're
 hanging out with corpses. And
 driving in this hearse.
 (My Chemical Romance – Vampires
 Will Never Hurt you)

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines the uncanny as “strange or mysterious” (1567) and indicates that the formation of the word derives from adding of the prefix ‘un’ to the word canny, which means, “shrewd, especially in financial or business matter” as well as “pleasant, nice” (205). Sigmund Freud in *The Uncanny* (1919) says, the uncanny “belongs to the realm of frightening, of what evokes fear and dread”(123). He offers two ways of analyzing the uncanny, a semantic investigation or an accumulation of persons, things or situations which evoke the feeling of uncanniness, in order to find out what these have in common (see Freud 124). The results will be the same, Freud says: “[...] the uncanny is that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and long been familiar” (124).

Regarding the uncanny, from a linguistic, or rather a German linguistic, perspective, clarifies this finding. In German, uncanny is *unheimlich*, which forms the opposite of the German word *heimlich*, which in English in this context means something familiar, comfortable, or homely. At the same time though the German *heimlich* has another meaning as well: secret (see Freud 124-9). Hence, *heimlich* “belongs to two sets of ideas[:] [...] the one relation to what is familiar and comfortable, the other to what is concealed and kept hidden” (132)., which makes *unheimlich* an antonym only in the first meaning (see Freud 132). *Unheimlich*, as defined in Schelling, refers to “everything that was meant to

remain secret and hidden and has come into the open" (Schelling 2.2, 649 qtd. in Freud 132). Thus, the two German terms merge at some point (see Freud 134).

Freud, when discussing the second way of analyzing the uncanny, assembling "persons and things, the impressions, processes and situations that can arouse an especially strong and distinct sense of the uncanny [...]" (135) refers to Ernst Jentsch's work on the uncanny, published in 1906 in "On the Psychology of the Uncanny." One example Freud uses is the "doubt whether an apparently animate object really is alive and, conversely, whether a lifeless object might not perhaps be animate" (Jentsch qtd. in Freud 135). Although neither Freud nor Jentsch refer to vampires in this regard, dolls and wax-figures are mentioned as examples, and this strongly reminds the reader of vampires. They are 'undead', their bodies, in most vampire fiction, have to have died, and thus formed 'a lifeless object'. Nevertheless, they are still alive in a kind of way, they are able to think and act, which makes them 'animate'. Dracula looks very alive, while he has neither a heartbeat nor respiration (see Stoker 63).

Freud states that the uncanny "is actually nothing new or strange, but something that was long familiar to the psyche and was estranged from it only through being repressed" (148). The uncanny, for a number of people, is represented by ideas related to "death, dead bodies, revenants, spirits and ghosts" (148), but also living persons can be sensed as uncanny when they are thought of as being related to evil (see Freud 149). Also conditions like epilepsy or madness can cause an uncanny feeling, an idea rooting from the Middle Ages, when demons were believed to be the cause of these sicknesses. Further, also elements like "[s]evered limbs, a severed head, a hand detached from the arm [...], [etc.]" enforce uncanniness (150). The uncanniness of the detached hand for example, can be related to the castration complex (see Freud 150,152). Similarly, the idea of being buried alive seems frightening. This situation derives from another – not frightening – idea: "the living in the womb" (150). Freud then concludes that the "uncanny effect often arises when the

boundary between fantasy and reality is blurred, when we are faced with the reality of something that we have until now considered imaginary [...]” (150-1). Again, a definition which closely links the uncanny to vampires, who only exist in the reader’s imagination, but come to life in fiction.

Hence the uncanny might be something familiar, which reappears after having been repressed (see Freud 152). But, “not everything that reminds us of repressed desires [...] is for that reason uncanny” (152). In addition, everyone perceives things and motifs differently, which means that the uncanny is no universal concept but context and perception related. Therefore, the uncanny is also influenced by other conditions (see Freud 152-3). Freud then makes a distinction between “the uncanny one knows from experience and the uncanny one only fancies or reads about” (154). In the first case the uncanny is most clearly linked to the repression of something formerly familiar (see Freud 154-5). The latter case though is different. For example, in fiction by offering an “invented world that [...] differs from the real world in that it involves supernatural entities such as demons or spirits of the dead” (156) the quality of the uncanny might be forfeited. Freud explains, “[w]e adapt our judgement to the conditions of the writer’s fictional reality and treat souls, spirits and ghosts as if they were fully entitled to exist, just as we are in our material reality” (156). Though, “if the writer has to all appearances taken up his stance on the ground of common reality,” (156) the conditions of the real world apply and the uncanny still exists (see Freud 156-7). Applied on *Dracula*, *Interview with the Vampire* and *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* the concept of the context related uncanny is most obvious in regard to the vampires’ appearances. *Dracula*, lifeless but animate, evokes a feeling of uncanniness, as the fictional reality of *Dracula* closely resembles real Victorian Britain. The characters themselves are in doubt and need to be persuaded that such a thing as an undead can exist. The vampires in *Interview the Vampire*, who, most likely, physically look less alive than *Dracula* but still pass as humans and as a matter of fact have a heartbeat (see Rice, *Interview* 176, 194), are different. Rice’s world, based on reality, is filled with vampires, who are at the center of her fiction. Humans,

unless they are victims, occur sparsely. Concerning their looks, the vampires of *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* appear human as well. The situation as a whole is different though. They, together with other supernatural life forms and humans are an equal part of Harris' fictional reality and, to say it in Freud's words, they "are fully entitled to exist". There is nothing uncanny about them anymore.

Referring back to the linguistic definition of the uncanny, the findings are similar. In *Dracula* numerous elements seem uncanny. Dracula's castle, in a remote rural area of Transylvania becomes the home of the British Jonathan Harker for two months. Though, this 'home' is neither homely nor familiar nor comforting, i.e. it is not *heimlich*. The thought of staying there or being imprisoned there thus clearly evokes an uncanny feeling, not only in Harker but also in the reader. Another significant element is the language. Dracula has had to learn English and wants Harker to help him improve (see Stoker 31). Also, in regard to his upcoming travel to England, he refers to himself as becoming "a stranger in a strange land" there (Stoker 31), which would imply that as uncanny as Transylvania and the castle are to Harker, England will be uncanny to him. For the reader though, the effect is converse, the foreign, unfamiliar Dracula invades into their 'home'. In the works of Rice and Harris the vampires are not necessarily depicted as foreigners anymore. Many have foreign roots or were born in Europe, Western Europe that is, but they all have adapted and their origin seems irrelevant. As a result, they seem familiar and human like, which makes them rather *heimlich* than *unheimlich*.

In *Interview with the Vampire* there is one exception: the Eastern European vampire, who only plays a minor role in the novel. Claudia and Louis, in their search for others of their own kind, travel the Eastern European countries, where they are shocked to find vampires which can only be described as "animated corpses" (Rice, *Interview* 173). These vampires then are in fact uncanny. They, in the widest sense, represent "something familiar, which reappears after having been repressed: "Claudia says, after suggesting to go to

central Europe, “[t]hat is where they live in such numbers that the stories, both fiction and fact, fill volumes“ (Rice, Interview 112). What both of them seem to have disregarded, what possibly even is repressed, though, is the fact that in stories vampires are a lot different from them. Thus, it is surprising to them that the vampires they find there are “[creatures] of the Old World. [...] [Dead]” (Rice, Interview, 173).

The vampires in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*, as mentioned before, live in public, their existence is not secret anymore in the fictional reality of the novels. They can be understood as a minority, fighting for their rights. They live in houses and apartments, like the humans and many of them have jobs. But, apart from being distinct to humans by their need for blood, they also have superhuman strength and the ability to control the minds of the humans. This mind control is one of the few things in the novels, that evokes an uncanny feeling. Further, also Sookie’s mind reading ability might seem uncanny to the reader. In the novels, she lets the reader know that often people think of her as crazy or weird. Her ability, or disability according to her, makes life complicated for her as the thoughts of other people constantly distract her. As a result, the idea that she is able to read minds is as uncanny as the idea to be forced to unintentionally hear other people’s minds. Both concepts are familiar and frightening, and relate to the desire of being able to read a mind and the fear of having one’s own mind read.

4. Vampire Slayers

Sam Merlotte: "You know what I wish would come to Marthaville? Buffy or Blade or one of those badass vampire killers to come get Bill Compton."
(*True Blood*, Season 1 Episode 03 00:39:56)

The vampire itself is not the only one who has changed over time, also the vampire slayer, destined to hunt the vampire and thus a central figure in vampire literature, has adapted. Yet, the vampire slayer, or as Bruce A. McClelland calls him "the vampire's personal nemesis", gained the attention he or she deserves only recently (*Slayers* 3). McClelland claims Van Helsing to be the first vampire slayer with "a leading role" (3), before him, the slayers were mostly incidental and often nameless. In vampire fiction the destruction of the vampire (almost) always plays a part, which makes it all the more surprising that it took the vampire slayer such a long time to arrive at the center of attention. Like the vampires, their slayers have undergone significant changes; therefore the categorization of 'slayer equals good' and 'vampire equals evil' becomes ambiguous as well (see McClelland, *Slayers* 3). Peter Iwaniewicz claims the vampire slayer to be "of a violent nature, using self-defense as a pretense for brutally killing his antagonist" (50, my translation³¹). The vicious slaying is thus justified by presenting it as civil courage. Further he labels the vampire slayer as racist and necrophilic as well as a supporter of bloodshed (see Iwaniewicz 50).

Before giving an overview of the vampire slayer in literature, that is mostly literature of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, a brief description of the historic vampire will be provided.

³¹ "[...] [D]er Vampirjäger ist selbst Gewalttäter, der Notwehr vorschützt, um den Widersacher mit großer Brutalität zur Strecke zu bringen [...]."

When the vampire myth transferred from Eastern Europe to the West, “the balance [...] between the vampire and his heroic adversary [...] was disturbed” (McClelland, *Slayers* 6). The concept behind the vampire slayer in Eastern folklore, a character who is able to recognize the undead and to carry out the rituals to destruct them, was excluded from vampire fiction (see McClelland, *Slayers* 6). The original ‘slayer’ can be understood as “an ancient shamanic figure possessing the healing power to peer into the world of the dead” (McClelland, *Slayers* 6). Hence, the more appropriate term to use is ‘vampire seer’. This function can also be carried out by a group of people assumed the vampire’s existence and identity is obvious (see McClelland, *Slayers* 6). The vampire seer, or slayer, is necessary for the vampire’s existence. The vampire needs to be able to be identified (see McClelland, *Slayers* 6). An important element is that the vampire slayer needs to “be marked[, either] externally, by some sign of birth or accident [or] internally, by his symbolic connection to the world of the dead” (McClelland, *Slayers* 7). McClelland thus defines the vampire slayer in the following way:

The slayer is the heroic and opposing reflection that is curiously, but necessarily, generated by the presence of evil, and he is as closely bound to evil as a reflection is to its original. If the vampire is a dangerous and antihuman replica of the human, the seer or slayer is the rejector or suppressor of the replica, who restores order [...]. (*Slayers* 7)

This definition still applies to a number of vampire slayers in the modern sense. However, the ‘new’ vampire slayer emerges in a greater variety. Instead of a human or a human collective also other life-forms are able to fill the position. Further, the question what counts as a ‘marking’, which is why I decided to use this term in the widest sense.

4.1. The Vampire Slayer in Visual Culture over the Last 125 Years

Gentlemen, we are dealing with the undead.
(Van Helsing in *Dracula* 1931, Dir. Tod Browning)

The first famous vampire slayer, Abraham Van Helsing, an expert on the undead, was introduced in *Dracula* (see McClelland, *Slayers* 154). The notion of the vampire slayer is just as reoccurring in literature as the figure of the vampire has been ever since. Various works of fiction even emphasize rather on the vampire slayer than on the vampire. Richard Matheson's *I am Legend* (1954), for example, is about one man living in a world full of 'alive' and 'dead' vampires, trying to save his life and thereby the human race by killing as many of them as possible. The protagonist believes to be immune from turning into a vampire like the others because a vampire bat had bitten him. His unproven theory is "that the bat had previously encountered a true vampire and acquired the vampiris [sic] germ[, which] caused the bat to seek human rather than animal blood. But, by the time the germ had passed into [his] system, it had been weakened [...] and as a result, [his] body built up an immunity to it" (Matheson 134). According to this theory, the sole surviving human killing the vampire enemies has clearly been marked as a slayer. In his case it is impossible to speak of a seer, since it is not necessary at all to be able to recognize the enemy who is omnipresent.

In 1973 the character of Blade appeared for the first time in the comic book *The Tomb of Dracula* #10. Blade is partially human and vampire, thus he has enough strength to defeat vampires, which is his life's mission. Again, McClelland's prerequisite of the vampire slayer being marked is met: Blade's mother was bitten by a vampire while giving birth to him (see Wolfman #13). As result he is immune to becoming a vampire (see Wolfman #19). The wish to

avenge his mother's death thus destines him to become a slayer. *The Tomb of Dracula* is interesting in other respects as well, as the characters of Quincy Harker and Rachel Van Helsing are some of the main figures fighting Dracula. Rachel is Abraham Van Helsing's great-granddaughter (see Goodwin 3) and Quincy, who is already mentioned in Stoker's *Dracula*, the son of Jonathan and Mina Harker (see Wolfman #7). In 1998, a feature film based on the comics was released (*Blade*) and found international success, making Blade one of the best known vampire slayers of all times. The film does not feature Rachel and Quincy, though (see *Blade*).

Only a year before the publication of *Interview with the Vampire 'Salem's Lot* (1975), by Stephen King, a traditional vampire novel, that is, a novel focusing on a group of humans hunting down one specific vampire, but also killing other newly sired vampires, was released. In the small town of Jerusalem's Lot almost the whole population turns into vampires, one after the other, and a young boy is the only one to realize the truth behind the happenings. Together with Ben Mears and a priest who lost his faith, Father Callahan, he goes on a vampire hunt, to kill their leader, and in the end, burn down the whole town. During that process the vampire leader, Kurt Barlow gets hold of Callahan and marks him by forcing him to drink his blood (King *Salem* 404). In *The Dark Tower V: Wolves of the Calla* (2003), King includes the character of Father Callahan years after he left Jerusalem's Lot. The priest in the meantime gained new knowledge on vampires and is now presented as a vampire hunter.

In the 1990s the vampire slayer gained enormous popularity when *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1992) was created by Joss Whedon. After the film in 1992 a TV series of the same name was broadcast from 1997 to 2003 (see "Buffy"). The series, as well as the film, focuses on Buffy Summers, a high-school student who is destined to become a vampire slayer. Although she does not want be a slayer, she has no choice other than to fulfill her destiny (see *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*). The vampire Angel is a significant character in the show as well. He is cursed and therefore is a vampire with a soul, which puts him into

a unique position (see *Buffy the Vampire Slayer Season 1 Episode 07*³²). He has a special connection to the world of the (un)dead as he is a member himself. At the same time he wants to prevent humans from his kind and helps Buffy killing them. Due to his popularity Angel got his own TV series *Angel*, which was aired from 1999 to 2004 (see “Angel”). In the series he fights all kinds of supernatural beings and is a key figure in the fight to preserve peace (see *Angel S5*³³). Thus, although being a vampire, his aim is to guard humans against the supernatural.

Already, the development from experts on the undead, that is vampire slayers who try to save individual human beings, to destined vampire slayers or vampire slayers driven by revenge on a bloody path to find their inner piece, is obvious. In the twenty-first century, though, the ‘vampire slaying’ takes on new forms. In book series such as *The Twilight Saga* (2005-2008) or *Vampire Academy* (2007-2010³⁴), both young adult fiction, humans are generally excluded from being vampire hunters, which is a result of the humans not being aware of the vampires’ existence. Humans who know about vampires in *The Twilight Saga* are doomed to die, unless they are turned into vampires themselves (see Meyer *New Moon* 421). Nevertheless, there are generally two dangers to the vampires: their own kind (fighting for revenge or justice, for example) and werewolves, who solve the purpose to guard the humans from ‘the cold ones’ (see Meyer *Twilight* 107-9). In the third novel of the saga, though, the werewolves and vampires decide to form an alliance to protect the human Bella from an attacking vampire army (Meyer *Eclipse* 254-256). The werewolves are thus marked as vampire seers, they surface only when vampires are around (see Meyer *Eclipse* 229). In *Vampire Academy* the situation is different yet again; there are three kinds of vampires: Moroi (mortal vampires), Strigoi (immortal vampires) and Dhampirs (half human, half vampire). The latter function as the guardians for the Moroi, who need

³² In the following season is abbreviated as S, episode as E.

³³ The issues of morality, Good vs. Evil and Angel’s predestination to save the world are central elements throughout the whole season, especially in the final episode which is also the series’ finale.

³⁴ The last book of the series is to be released in December 2010 (see “Official Book Website”).

protection from the Strigoi (see Mead 33-34). The slayer function as such therefore does not occur.

Also in recent T.V. series the vampire slayer, even if not as dominant as Buffy and Angel, still exists. *Supernatural* (2005) is about two demon-hunting brothers, pursuing the family business, and sometimes they also come across vampires (see *Supernatural* S1 E20, S2 E03, S3 E07). One of the most recent episodes, "Live Free or Twihard", which was aired on October 23rd 2010, is significant with regard to the hunt for vampires. The episode is supposed to mock *The Twilight Saga* and its film adaptations, but as a matter of fact seems like a reflection of Stoker's *Dracula*. One of the brothers, Dean, is forced to drink blood from a vampire, whom he was just about to slay (see Tinchev 1). As a result the hunter turns into a vampire while his grandfather searches for an antidote. In order to cure Dean, he and his brother are told to get more blood from the vampire and therefore decide to finally battle the vampires and in the end kill them all (see Tinchev 2). Also in *The Vampire Diaries* (2009), based on the books by Lisa J. Smith³⁵, the idea of vampire hunters is evident: the ancestors of the founding fathers of the town Mystic Falls, where the series is set, are aware of the town's connection to vampires and serve as the town's guards. Interestingly, they are not aware of the fact that some of their own are not human and that they are, thus, manipulated by the intruding vampires (see *Vampire Diaries* E08, E11). Further, the character Alaric Saltzman comes to Mystic Falls to find and kill the vampire who supposedly killed his wife (see *Vampire Diaries* E11). In both cases the slayers are marked, Saltzman's inner wish is to revenge his late wife and the town's founding fathers passed their duty on to their descendents.

In contrast, in the works of Charlaine Harris humans and supernatural beings live together in harmony, or rather in what is supposed to be harmony. As a result the wish to kill vampires is almost as prevalent among the humans as the vampire's wish to feed on humans. Here, a whole church made vampire slaying

³⁵ Due to the many significant differences between the books and the T.V. series only the latter one is included here.

their mission. Due to the complexity of the issue the vampire slayer in Harris will be discussed in more detail in 4.4.

4.2. Defeating the Vampire

The strength of the vampire is that people will not believe in him.
(Van Helsing in *Dracula* 1931, Tod Browning)

Stoker not only presented the world with what was to become the best known vampire in literature but he also introduced the first vampire slayer in English literature: Abraham Van Helsing. Even though he was long overshadowed by *Dracula*, he too rose to fame (see McClelland, *Slayers* 154).

In the novel, his friend Dr. John Seward asks him for help when treating the ill Lucy Westenra. Van Helsing, who is a Dutchman living in Amsterdam, therefore comes to England and finds out the truth behind Lucy's illness. He ends up leading Lucy's friends, Dr. John Seward, Quincey Morris, Arthur Homwood, as well as Jonathan and Mina Harker, on a quest to find and destroy Dracula, whom he identifies as the source of all evil. With his knowledge and insight he is able to construct the vampire for the others and furthermore to interpret Dracula's actions (see McClelland, *Slayers* 154). The striking features that make Van Helsing the perfect leader against Dracula are the facts that he is very open minded and, like Dracula, a foreigner (see McClelland, *Slayers* 158-9). The reader keeps getting reminded of Van Helsing's Dutch roots, his nationality is mentioned at various times and when he speaks he does so in imperfect English³⁶. As Mina informs in her journal, that the professor described his thoughts: "[t]here are such beings as vampires, some of us have evidence that they exist. Even had we not the proof of our own unhappy experience, the

³⁶ Therefore, when quoting him, errors are not marked as such, as they were intended by Stoker.

teachings and the records of the past give proof enough for sane peoples. I admit that at the first I was sceptic. Were it not that through long years I have trained myself to keep an open mind, I could not have believed until such time [...]“ (283).

Moreover, he is familiar with the characteristics of the vampires and the rituals for successfully killing them (see McClelland, *Slayers* 162). When asked by Seward how to make sure the undead Lucy would die a real death, he simply states, “I shall cut off her head and fill her mouth with garlic, and I shall drive a stake through her body“ (Stoker 241). Yet, McClelland objects to him being a complete vampire slayer: Van Helsing was never marked as vampire slayer, his knowledge is acquired from books and not gained by experience. He is neither a vampire seer nor marked as one, and as a consequence not able to track Dracula without any help. In the end, after Dracula’s escape, he would fail in finding him if it was not for Mina Harker (see McClelland, *Slayers* 161-2).

In this regard McClelland makes an interesting observation by illustrating Mina’s crucial role as a vampire seer. Through her bond with Dracula, after drinking his blood, Mina is able to track Dracula when hypnotized by Van Helsing. But, as McClelland points out, this element of the story is forgotten constantly, “[t]he novel’s main battle is usually constructed primarily as a phallic one, a struggle of wills and intellect between a supernatural and lecherous vampire, on the one hand, and an erudite lecherous scientist and his posse of blood brothers on the other” (*Slayers* 162).

By making Mina drink his blood Dracula provides her with the ability to establish a direct connection to him, believing it to be his advantage and hoping to find out more about the plans of his opponents. He clearly underestimates Mina, who is stronger than anyone thinks. She knows that she is in danger and slowly transforming into a vampire. She turns the awareness of the situation into her advantage and thereby enables the defeat of the enemy, Dracula (see McClelland, *Slayers* 162-3). “Go, call the Professor. I want to see him at once. [...] I have an idea. I suppose it must have come in the night, and matured

without my knowing it. He must hypnotize me before the dawn, and then I shall be able to speak” she says to Jonathan (Stoker 370).

Mina’s power and strength also lead to her being included in the group of men she is surrounded by (see McClelland, *Slayers* 163). She becomes the key figure in the hunt for Dracula. Although leading the way to him, she also feels compassion for him. For McClelland the “complete vampire slayer” thus is a union of Mina and Van Helsing, “a union of rational intellect and [...] spiritual power” (*Slayers* 164). He concludes that the execution of Dracula was only possible through the betrayal by Mina.

Mina allows herself to be taken wholly into the fantastic world of demons in modern times that is constructed by Abraham Van Helsing; she does so in part because of her desire for revenge, in part out of rage, which can be focused entirely on Dracula as its cause. (McClelland, *Slayers* 167)

The importance of Mina in the quest for Dracula has also been paid tribute to in the comic series *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (2000). In 1898, Wilhelmina Murray, after getting a divorce from Jonathan Harker, is requested to lead an extraordinary team to guard England (see Moore #1). After finalizing the recruitment of the team, consisting of her, Captain Nemo, Allan Quatermain, Dr. Jekyll and Hawley Griffin, she concludes their mission, “[w]ell, gentlemen, at least we know now why we’re here. British Intelligence, through Campion Bond and his mysterious superior Mr. ‘M,’ have assembled us to thwart a plot against the empire” (Moore #2). The choice of ‘Wilhelmina Murray’ thus seems to reflect her excellent qualities of leadership as presented in *Dracula*. She was the one to collect all diaries, journals (handwritten, shorthand and phonographic) and to produce a coherent text (typewritten) out of them and she was the one to lead the group of men hunting Dracula to his whereabouts. Further, Wilhelmina writes letters to Bond during the recruitment process, which strongly reminds of her character writing letters to Lucy in *Dracula* (see Moore #1, #2).

However, until today ‘Van Helsing’ is the name associated with vampires and their destruction. Thus it is not surprising that in 2004 he got his own Hollywood blockbuster, simply entitled, *Van Helsing*. He fights as a knight of the Holy Order and his mission is to go to Transylvania to hunt Dracula and his brides. To widen the story, Dr. Frankenstein, as well as his monster, and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are included in the film. Likewise, werewolves play a role (see *Van Helsing*)³⁷.

4.3. Interviewing the Vampire

God kills, and so shall we; indiscriminately He takes the richest and the poorest, and so shall we; for no creatures under God are as we are, one so like Him as ourselves, dark angels not confined to the sinking limits of hell but wandering His earth and all its kingdoms. (Lestat in *Interview with the Vampire*, 82-3)

Interview with the Vampire, the novel that redefined the vampire, is also interesting with regard to the vampire slayer, who appears to be absent. The novel is about the troublesome life of a vampire, Louis, constantly on a quest to find his origins and meaning. Louis is also the narrator which means the story is presented from his perspective. Hence, it is not surprising that the traditional vampire slayer as a significant figure is missing. As Wood says, “no gallant band of humans unites in struggle for the preservation of virgins and the social status quo” (Wood 61). The biggest enemies of the vampires in Rice are in fact their own kind (see Wood 63). On these grounds, the notion of a vampire hunter occurs at two points in the novel.

³⁷ Although many characters appear as described in their original novels Abraham Van Helsing is renamed as “Gabriel Van Helsing” and he is bitten by a werewolf and becomes one, which enables him to kill Dracula. In the end, he is given a remedy which allows him to transform back into his former self (see *Van Helsing*). Therefore the film is not further discussed.

During Louis and Claudia's journey into Eastern Europe they come across a village whose inhabitants are obviously familiar with vampires. They know to beware of them and how to kill them effectively. Louis observes, "[b]ut here we had to go to great lengths to make the kill unnoticed. Because these simple country people, who might have found the crowded streets of New Orleans terrifying, believed completely that the dead did walk and did drink the blood of the living" (Rice, *Interview* 155). He makes the danger clear to the reader, "[t]hey knew our names: vampire, devil" (155). On the door to their inn garlic and a crucifix are attached. Also inside the house garlic is found everywhere (see Rice, *Interview* 156-7). There they meet Morgan, who mourns his wife and tells Louis what he witnessed at the village's cemetery, giving evidence of the villager's knowledge

[...] and then the others had come with shovels and had begun to dig right into the grave. [...] And then I could hear this fellow in the grave. He was cracking the coffin lid with his shovel! Then out came the broken boards. [...] And suddenly he let out an awful cry! The other fellows drew up close, and all at once there was a rush to the grave; and then they all fell back like a wave, all of them crying out, and some of them turning and trying to push away. [...], right there in that coffin, with that fellow standing on the broken boards over her feet, was the dead woman, and I tell you ... I tell you she was as fresh, as pink [...] as pink as if she were alive! Buried six months! [...] They took a stake, a wooden stake, mind you; and this one in the grave, he took the stake with a hammer and he put it right to her breast. I didn't believe it! And then with one great blow he drove it right into her. [...] And then that fellow, that beastly fellow, he reached up for his shovel and with both his arms he drove it sharp, right into the dead woman's throat. The head was off like that. (162-3)

The villagers admit to hunting their vampires by day, in the ruins outside the village. On the search for this "European vampire" Louis has to realize that unlike him and Lestat, the "European vampire" is "a mindless, animated corpse. But no more" (173). In a fight Claudia kills him and as a result they return to the village and Louis, pretending to be a vampire hunter, officially declares the death of the vampire the village was scared of. The situation is similar for the rest of their journey through Eastern Europe, they find numerous "mindless corpses" (177) but no one like themselves.

The other occurrence of a hunt for vampires is towards the end of the novel, when Louis is on a quest to find and kill the vampire who is responsible for Claudia's execution. The question arises whether this is a case of a vampire slaying or rather "just" a vengeful murder. The fact that Louis in his vendetta kills a complete vampire nest, with the only exception of their former leader Armand, combined with Louis' tortured existence and despair about being a vampire and establishing hatred towards them, makes it possible to name him a slayer (see Rice, *Interview* 279-281). In this context, a human or a usual vampire seer would not have sufficed to kill the vampires. They are illustrated as highly superior beings and only one of their own, having lived among them and being familiar to their convention is in a position to be strong enough to betray them.

McClelland is of a different opinion regarding the novel. He claims that the situation of vampire and vampire hunter is inverted: "it is the vampire protagonist who must tell the vampire hunter (in this case, the reporter-narrator-interlocutor) of his actions and therefore his evil identity" (McClelland, *Slayers* 28). This statement arouses a number of controversies. First of all, Louis talks to 'a boy' not a 'vampire hunter'. Secondly, although the question of Louis being evil is discussed throughout the novel, he is not identified as evil as Dracula was. Further, by revealing his story to the interviewer Louis does not intend to transform his listener into a slayer hunting him down. At last, even if Louis intended to get the interviewer to kill him for being 'an evil vampire' the opposite comes into effect – the interviewer begs Louis for immortality.

4.4. Discriminating Against the Vampire

The sign on the well-tended lawn read THE
FELLOWSHIP OF THE SUN CENTER – ONLY JESUS ROSE
FROM THE DEAD. (*Living Dead in Dallas*, 126)

Speaking of “vampire slaying” in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* is quite difficult and controversial. The vampire slayer as defined above does not exist here; neither does the frame for which the definition was established, as vampires are public figures. There are human individuals as well as organizations which are not in favor of the vampire and many of them want to see them dead. Still, there is no quest to kill a specific vampire as in the other works mentioned. The issue is of a more general nature. Hence, the more appropriate term here would be ‘discrimination against vampires’ rather than naming their opponents ‘vampire slayers’.

The Fellowship of the Sun, an anti-vampire organization, claiming to be a church, is first mentioned in the second novel of *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* *Living Dead in Dallas*. Sookie describes, “I'd heard of the Fellowship, though I'd never met anyone who claimed to actually belong to it. What the Klan was to African Americans, the Fellowship of the Sun was to vampires. It was the fastest-growing cult in America” (Harris, *Dallas* 104-5).

The Fellowship of the Sun is based in Dallas, Texas. Therefore, when a vampire called Farrell is missing from his nest in Dallas, Sookie is summoned there to help finding him. Consequently she has to intrude the Fellowship with a human companion, Hugo Ayre, as the vampires of Dallas suspect Farrell to have been abducted by them. During her mission Sookie learns that the thousand-year-old vampire Godfrey has surrendered to the Fellowship, “Tomorrow I atone for my sin publicly [...]. Tomorrow I greet the dawn. For the first time in a thousand years, I will see the sun. Then I will see the face of God”,

is how he explains his actions (Harris, *Dallas* 153). After talking to Godfrey, Sookie convinces him to help her flee and with even more help from a shapeshifter called Luna she manages to escape. The Fellowship's intention, before Sookie axes their plan, was to kill Farrell at the same point of Godfrey's suicide, by having both of them meeting the sun before their congregation (see Harris, *Dallas* 155). Steve and Sarah Newlins, the leaders of the Fellowship of the Sun, feel humiliated by Sookie's infiltration and the resulting raiding of their center by the vampires. Bill recounts the situation:

"Their leader, Newlin, tried to deny us entrance to the Fellowship hall—surely that was a church at one time?—and he told us we would burst into flames if we entered, because we were the damned." Bill snorted. "Stan picked him up and set him aside. And into the church we went, Newlin and his woman trailing right behind us. Not a one of us burst into flames, which seemed to shake up the people a great deal." (Harris, *Dallas* 190)

The Newlins therefore avenge themselves by a shotgun attack on the Dallas-vampire's nest while they are celebrating Farrell's rescue (see Harris, *Dallas* 210-12). The attack is reported in the media as "The Dallas Midnight Massacre [...] [,] the perfect example of a hate crime" (Harris, *Dallas* 218). The victims are the human guests though; since they were not able to react fast enough after realizing the danger (see Harris, *Dallas* 210).

The Fellowship of the Sun differs from most vampire slayers in one significant matter – they do not hesitate to kill and torture humans who are affiliated with vampires, as mentioned above. Another example for their hatred towards certain humans is the revelation that when Sookie was captured by the Fellowship on her mission to free Farrell, "Steve [Newlin] had [...] plans. His idea was to lash [Sookie] to Farrell, so that when he burned, so would [she]" (Harris, *Dallas* 156). He tries to justify this idea by explaining "that [the vampires] is the lot they [Sookie and Hugo] chose in their lives, and it should be their lot in death" (Harris, *Dallas* 163). The idea of vampires greeting the sun is a central element of the beliefs of the Fellowship of the Sun and if it was up to them all vampires would be forced to take part in the ritual (see Harris, *Dallas*

154³⁸). As Joseph J. Foy says in his essay on vampire rights, this “aims at a vampire holocaust” (58). Moreover, it seems the Newlin did not think his plan through, the idea was to show vampires and humans burning to death in front of a congregation, which would not only harm the victims but would also be traumatic for the audience, which supposedly consists of children and adults alike. As Sookie says, concerning a little girl who would prefer to watch T.V. at home rather than stay at the Fellowship of the Sun center to witness God’s power (see Harris, *Dallas* 165),

I wondered if this father really understood that his leader planned for the congregation to watch two vampires burn to death, at least one of them clutching a human who would also burn. I wondered how the little girl’s mental health would fare after that “amazing evidence of the power of God”. (165)

Hence, the issue is not a simple vampire slaying anymore but a vicious act of destruction with no regard to losses and emotions on any side.

Of course this is not the only time the Fellowship of the Sun actively persecutes vampires in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*. In the seventh novel, *All Together Dead*, they return with even bigger ambitions: a bomb attack on a vampire summit in Rhodes, Illinois, which is reminiscent of the Oklahoma-City bombing (see Brace and Arp 96-7). The vampire hotel where the summit is held seems to be a safe place, since entering humans need to go through a metal detector and Sookie speaks of bodyguards running around in the lobby (see Harris, *Together* 111). Nevertheless, someone managed to bring bombs, disguised as soda cans, into the building (see Harris, *Together* 188, 195); later this is referred to as the “Dr. Pepper incident” (197). The day after, a ball takes place at the summit. There Sookie learns that the Fellowship of the Sun has been quite active in the area and the idea of a “civil war [...] between the Fellowship and the supes” is addressed (Harris, *Together* 236). At the same

³⁸ Actually these are the words of Godfrey. Though a vampire, he is an ally of the Fellowship of the Sun due to his hostile attitude towards vampires. Also, he planned a voluntary suicide at the Fellowship of the Sun Center, as a demonstration of ‘good vampire behavior’ in front of their congregation. In the end he ‘meets the sun’ without an audience other than Sookie (see Harris, *Dallas* 196).

evening Sookie hears parts of a thought, “ [...] *they should all die,*” but decides to neglect it due to the lack of context (Harris, *Together* 237). Later, when talking to the bodyguard Clovache, it is revealed that a month before the events a spy from the Fellowship of the Sun was discovered in the King of Kentucky’s entourage and that according to the spy “a splinter group in the Fellowship got wind of this summit and decided it would be a golden opportunity to come out in the open with their fight against vampires” (Harris, *Together* 244-5). Further, Clovache shares her beliefs, that the Dr. Pepper bomb was not planted to kill anyone but to function as a scare and to distract (see Harris, *Together* 246-7).

With the help of the bellboy Barry, who was introduced in *Living Dead in Dallas* and is a telepath like Sookie, she is able to unveil the planned attack. They realize that suitcases have been mixed up and that a number of unclaimed luggage and coffins in fact are bombs which are going to explode soon. Of course, this is happening during the day, which means the vampires are defenseless and there is no way the few humans realizing the truth are able to rescue them (see Harris, *Together* 284). For example, one has the idea to “slid[e] the coffins down [...] [so] the vamps would survive the explosion” (the hotel is shaped like a pyramid), as a result the coffins would break on impact though, which would cause the vampires “to be burned up by the sun” (Harris, *Together* 284-5). Desperately they still try to save their friends and loved ones when earlier than anyone would expect, the bombs start to explode (see Harris, *Together* 287). Numerous humans and vampires are killed, many of the victims being members of the vampire government.

Harris’ ‘vampire slaying organization’ thus is reminiscent of Iwaniewicz’s statement that the vampire slayer is a brutal racist. The slayer, in this case slayers, are obsessed with the idea of spectacularly killing the vampires in front of a wide audience. Be it the Fellowship’s congregation or the whole world via media, they in fact use their idea of justice as a public pretense to kill. Furthermore, the occurrence of the attacks on vampires reflects the fear of

terror, which is constantly increasing and a prevalent fear in the twenty-first century world.

Other hate crimes, without relation to the Fellowship of the Sun occur as well. For example in *Dead Until Dark* a small group of men who are against vampires torch a vampire's nest just outside of Bon Temps (Harris, *Dark* 170). Four vampires and a human were killed in the attack. Whether they will be persecuted is left open. Killing a vampire is against the law, but there was no proof whether the vampire nest burned down naturally or whether it was arson (see Harris, *Dark* 174). In addition it is mentioned in *All Together Dead* that there is also an anti-vampire movement called "Take the Night from the Dead" (235)

5. Conclusion

This was the problem with hanging out with vampires – you got used to them. They started messing up the way you saw the world. They started feeling like friends.
(Jacob Black in *Breaking Dawn*, 261)

Ever since the beginning of time, cultures and societies have evolved and changed, and so have the vampires. Like every monster, the vampire functions as an embodiment of culture. Vampires thus reflect the society that constructed them. In the literature of the late nineteenth century they are represented as solitary creatures, living in eerie castles in foreign countries. In contrast, they are portrayed almost like a human being in the early twenty-first century. Instead of an old and mysterious vampire like Dracula, we now have the most beautiful and charismatic vampires, affluent, living in all the splendor the world can bestow on them. Among these modern vampires we have come from the likes of Louis and Lestat, who still live in secrecy, to the 'newest' kind of vampire: attractive, witty and living in public, like Eric, Pam or Bill.

In addition to the looks also the metaphorical functions of vampires have changed. In *Dracula* vampirism stood for evil, for capital and deviant sexuality, which is of special interest in regard to the novel's reflection of Victorian society and which, thereby, makes the vampire and his bloodlust a metaphor for repressed sexuality. In *Interview with the Vampire*, written roughly 80 years later, amidst movements fighting for sexual liberation and rights for homosexuals, sexuality, is treated differently. Although sexual acts as such are not described in the novel, acts typically related to vampires – the drinking of blood from a human, the killing of a human and the siring of a new vampire – resemble sexual activities. This metaphorical function of the vampire vanished in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*: the taboo of sexuality is absent from the novels, sexual activities are described without further ado.

The concept of Good vs. Evil changed as well. Today's society and culture have evolved, which lead to an alteration of the belief system. Hence, the concept of depicting vampires, like *Dracula*, as evil is questioned in more recent works of fiction. The debate whether humans are generally understood as good, while vampires are seen as evil, is prevalent in literature of the twenty-first century. This plays an important role in Harris works, in which humans know about the existence of vampires. This situation mirrors the society we live in, as the vampires in the novels fight for their rights and want to be equals to humans. It is a situation reminiscent of the various struggles for civil rights, such as the African-American Civil Rights Movement, the Chicana Movement or Gay Liberation, in the real world. The cultural change also contributes to the forfeit of the uncanny in vampire fiction. While *Dracula* still presents the uncanny, the more recent works of Harris, and Rice, do not evoke an uncanny feeling. Vampires, thus, became human and are now portrayed as moral, law-abiding citizens of good character.

In contrast, their nemeses, the vampire slayers have turned into immoral, ruthless and brutally violent beings. The vampire slayer is a significant figure in literature and in visual culture as well: the vampire slayer is needed to keep evil from defeating good. His or her function is to keep the world safe from the vampires who want to conquer it. Stoker's Van Helsing, primarily a physician, is an expert who happened to become the leader of a group of men hunting a vampire. Still, his name is one of the first to be associated with the term 'vampire slayer'. In *Dracula* the aim was to save Mina Harker and to defeat the vampire in order to keep him from siring more of his kind. But during the last 50 years the slaying of vampires has turned into a professional career. Very often the objective is not to kill a certain vampire, but to kill vampires, as well as all other kinds of monsters and demons, in general. Most recently, especially in Harris' novels, the killing of vampires, although not a profession, is practiced excessively. Since vampires live among humans, they have a number of enemies. Organizations conspire to kill as many of them as possible. Hence,

the function of the vampire slayer changed radically. The slayers themselves still feel the urge to fight the vampires and to protect humans, but due to the change of society, and the inclusion of vampires into society, the vampire slayer, more than before is prepared to have human casualties. In fact, they do not hesitate to execute the vampires in public and even stage the killings of vampires and humans affiliated with them dramatically. Hence, this alteration of the vampire slayer is significant with regard to vampires themselves. The modern Vampires face a different kind of enemy, a slayer, more brutal and ruthless than ever before.

Thus, the vampire slayer, the traditional adversary of the vampire, has turned into the evil monster, while the vampire has become the good human-like being. Rebecca Cordes observes, “[i]n a culture where figures like Batman (with his affinity to bats and his long, black cloak quite similar to vampires), Spiderman, and The Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles become characters to identify with, the vampire is the fitting hero for the late 20th century society” (62). Thus, the ‘new’ vampire, conquering the worlds of our imagination, has transformed from a former villain into a hero.

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German Abstract

Die vorliegende Arbeit befasst sich mit dem Wandel der Figur des Vampirs in der Literatur vom 19. bis zum 21. Jahrhundert, anhand der Werke *Dracula* von Bram Stoker (1897), *Interview with the Vampire* von Anne Rice (1976), sowie der derzeit aus 10 Büchern bestehenden Buch-Serie *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*, auch bekannt als *The Sookie Stackhouse Novels*, von Charlaine Harris (2001-).

Vampire sind heutzutage wahrscheinlich die beliebtesten Monster. Sie erobern nicht nur die Literatur, sondern auch die visuelle Kultur. Durch den Erfolg von Vampire Büchern, Filmen und Serien sind Vampire-Charaktere derzeit sehr stark verbreitet; sie treten auch in Bereiche des täglichen Lebens über. Die Gesichter berühmter Vampire aus Film und Fernsehen, also die jener ihrer Darsteller, zieren nicht nur die Schaufenster diverser Geschäfte, sondern fungieren auch als Werbeträger, zum Beispiel, auf Lebensmittelverpackungen in Supermärkten. Es ist schwer, in der heutigen Welt, den 'Vampiren' aus dem Weg zu gehen. In Literatur und Film besteht daher der Trend immer mehr Vampire-Geschichten zu veröffentlichen und neue Arten von Vampiren zu kreieren. Jedoch unterscheiden sich diese neuen Vampire deutlich von ihren Vorgängern. Aus einem einzelgängerischen, zurückgezogen lebenden, unheimlichen Vampire wurden (besonders) attraktive, intelligente und unter den Menschen lebende Vampire. Dieser Wandel ist der Untersuchungsgegenstand dieser Arbeit. Zu Beginn wird nicht auf den Vampire, sondern auf das Monster bzw. das Monströse selbst eingegangen. Denn das Monster, laut Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, ist immer das Konstrukt seiner Zeit und reflektiert die Gesellschaft, die es geschaffen hat (vgl. Cohen 4). In Folge dessen, spiegelt auch der Vampire seine Umgebung wider. In *Dracula* steht der Vampire für die in der Viktorianischen Zeit unterdrückte Sexualität; in *Interview with the Vampire* wird der Geist der Schwulen- und Lesbenbewegung der 1970er Jahre widergespiegelt. Auch in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* steht der Vampire für seine Gesellschaft, hier

jedoch, ist die Situation komplexer. Vampire leben öffentlich unter und zusammen mit Menschen. Das heißt, sie müssen um ihre Rechte kämpfen und können als Repräsentation von Minderheiten verstanden werden.

Eine andere Gestalt, die oft vergessen wird, aber in direktem Zusammenhang mit dem Vampir steht, ist dessen Jäger. Deshalb beschäftigt sich der letzte Teil der Arbeit mit dem Vampirjäger und wie dieser sich vom 19. bis zum 21. Jahrhundert verändert hat. Während die Vampire sich zum Guten gewandelt haben, haben seine Gegner auf die dunkle Seite gewechselt. In *Dracula* führte der hauptberufliche Arzt Van Helsing eine kleine Gruppe von Männern und einer Frau auf der Jagd nach einem Vampir an. In neuerer Literatur bzw. Filmen und Serien der letzten 20 Jahre, hat sich diese Situation stark verändert. So manche Figur macht die Vampirjagd zu seinem bzw. ihrem Beruf, während andere, getrieben durch Rache und dem Wunsch nach Vergeltung auf die Jagd gehen. Wieder andere, wie zum Beispiel in Harris Büchern, diskriminieren Vampire und jagen und töten diese, weil ihnen zufolge Vampire kein Recht auf ein ‚Leben‘ haben.

Demnach ist die Schlussfolgerung, dass die Figur des Vampirjägers einen Wandel vom Guten zum Bösen vollzogen hat, während die Figur des Vampirs, welche in der Literatur eine zentrale Rolle einnimmt, sich von einem ehemaligen Bösewicht in ein gutmütiges, fast menschliches Wesen verwandelt hat.

Curriculum Vitae

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- 2008 Auslandssemester in den USA mit
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- 1998 – 2007 tätig als Verkäuferin bei der
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Fremdsprachen :

- Englisch, fließend in Wort und Schrift
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