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## Economic Women

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## Demand and Desire in *Dracula*



DEANNA K. KREISEL

### I. THOSE AWFUL WOMEN: THE PARADOX OF FEMALE DEMAND

In a now-classic analysis of economic themes in *Dracula*, Franco Moretti argues that the Count “lacks the aristocrat’s conspicuous consumption: he does not eat, he does not drink, he does not make love, he does not like showy clothes. . . . Dracula, in other words, is a saver.”<sup>1</sup> While Moretti’s insight has intuitive force (it certainly seems to explain part of Dracula’s puzzling behavior, at least *chez lui*), it fails to capture other contradictory elements of the economic logic of the novel. For while Dracula may not indulge in conspicuous consumption of the aristocratic human variety, and while his blood-drinking may seem measured (he “sucks just as much as is necessary and never wastes a drop”), certainly there is something curious about labeling a practice that ends in the agapic death of its objects “ascetic.”<sup>2</sup> Later critics have in fact emphasized other consumptional aspects of the Count’s activities; for example, Gail Turley Houston argues

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<sup>1</sup> *Signs Taken for Wonders: On the Sociology of Literary Forms* (1983; New York: Verso, 2005), 90–91.

<sup>2</sup> Moretti, *Signs Taken for Wonders*, 91.

that Dracula and the English vampire hunters compete "to the death for a complete monopoly on circulation and consumption."<sup>3</sup>

The stakes of the disagreement for an economic reading of the novel—and of late-Victorian culture generally—are not trivial. While classical political economy focused on the production end of commercial activity and enshrined the labor theory of value, the interest in consumption intensified with the rise of the marginal-utility school in the latter decades of the century, when the demand theory of value waxed triumphant. The question of what, how, and why Dracula consumes is intricately connected to new cultural formations regarding appropriate levels of economic demand. Yet these concerns are not new to the latter decades of the century: anxieties about stagnation and general glut—the possibility of an economic slowdown caused by insufficient consumer demand—shape much professional and amateur economic discourse in the Victorian period. John Ruskin was a particularly important contributor to a midcentury economic heterodoxy that argued that insufficient consumption, particularly in the form of hoarding or overinvestment in capital goods, posed a threat to the continued growth of the British economy. While the rise of the marginal-utility school in the 1880s and 1890s brought these issues to the forefront, concerns about consumer demand formed an emergent discourse in the middle decades of the century; we can thus trace, in the anxieties of earlier writers such as Ruskin, the same complex of issues that reach their apotheosis in *Dracula*.

These concerns were also gendered. As many historians and cultural critics have argued, in the Victorian period the long-standing impressionistic connection between women and consumption (economic, domestic, and sumptuary) intensified; images of shopping, saving, and hoarding women also became the locus of widespread anxiety about consumption in general and the functioning of economic demand in particular. Victorian ideology imagined women as caretakers of domestic wealth, administering household resources in order to maximize the moral and spiritual health of their families: "Every wife is a steward of her husband's wealth, and should consider herself in that light. Every little act of carefulness . . . becomes a sacred duty."<sup>4</sup> Yet the image of the managing woman was not always so saintly and benign. Ruskin, for example, imagines a more sinister version of the household administratrix; in "The Ethics of the Dust" he admonishes schoolgirls to "either be house-Wives, or house-Moths. . . . In the deep sense, you must

<sup>3</sup> Gail Turley Houston, *From Dickens to Dracula: Gothic, Economics, and Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 117.

<sup>4</sup> "Our Households and Homes," *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* 15 (1873): 75–76, 76.

either weave men's fortunes, and embroider them; or feed upon, and bring them to decay."<sup>5</sup> We already see here the association of errant womanhood with the consumption and death that are so insistently present in the image of the vampire.

Yet for Ruskin the problem is not consumption *qua* consumption. On the contrary, Ruskin, as iconoclastic critic of the labor theory of value, worried more about economic stagnation and insufficient demand than about luxurious expenditure:<sup>6</sup> as the rest of this essay demonstrates, these concerns were precursors to the economic anxieties attendant upon the rise of the marginal-utility school that we see in *Dracula*. As Ruskin opines in *Munera Pulveris*, the hoarder is the real figure of revulsion, a figure that is also strikingly gendered and sexualized: "the holder of wealth . . . may be regarded simply as a mechanical means of collection; or as a money-chest with a slit in it, not only receptant but suctional, set in the public thoroughfare."<sup>7</sup> In his denial of the universal benefit of saving, Ruskin rhetorically equates images of transgressive female sexuality with the horrors of unwise economic management. By withdrawing capital from the circulatory stream, the hoarder expends value by shrinking aggregate consumer demand and thus threatening the smooth operations of the young capitalist economy.<sup>8</sup> And the selfish miscreant guilty of this transgression, as with the figure of unwise spending, is figured, paradoxically, as a sexually rapacious woman.

This complex of issues returns in force in *Dracula*, where signs and tokens of deviant demand become literalized in the form of the vam-

<sup>5</sup> John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols. (London: George Allen, 1903–12), 18: 337.

<sup>6</sup> See John Ruskin, "Home and Its Economies," *Contemporary Review* 21 (1873): 927–37.

<sup>7</sup> *Works*, 17:169.

<sup>8</sup> For a helpful discussion of the paradox of hoarding, see Walter Benn Michaels's *The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism: American Literature at the Turn of the Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), chap. 5. For a discussion of scarcity and the marginal-utility school, see Regenia Gagnier, *The Insatiability of Human Wants: Economics and Aesthetics in Market Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 4; and Catherine Gallagher, *The Body Economic: Life, Death, and Sensation in Political Economy and the Victorian Novel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 127. As numerous other critics have argued, the concern with instilling new tastes and desires and with catering to the newly crowned consumer became paramount in the final decades of the Victorian era. See Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851–1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990); Lawrence Birken, *Consuming Desire: Sexual Science and the Emergence of a Culture of Abundance, 1871–1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988); and Erika Diane Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London's West End* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

pire. The novel is obsessed, above all else, with consumption and failures thereof. *Pace* Moretti, the Count *does* consume: generally, the blood (and life) of his victims, and in particular the blood of Lucy Westenra and Mina Harker—along with the blood from the three suitors that flows briefly through Lucy’s veins before being withdrawn nightly by the vampire. This particular act of consumption is markedly “aristocratic,” invoking through the novel’s discourse of marriage and husbandly rights the mythical privilege of *droit de seigneur*. Yet the vampirization *process* (not just its results) also turns both its female victims, strangely, into consumers: Lucy imbibes the blood of the men in love with her, while Mina is later forced to drink Dracula’s own blood directly in a depraved parody of consumer desire. By acting as conduits for the Count’s “consumer goods,” both Lucy and Mina dramatize and trouble the model of woman as caretaker of resources—albeit in very different ways. The heterodox—and largely repressed—anxiety about insufficient demand and economic stagnation we see in Ruskin is resurrected at the end of the century in the form of the vampire. For while vampiric women in particular might seem to resolve anxieties about insipid consumption, in fact their methods are unsustainable—and so the fear persists, for Stoker and his readers, that the depredations of *fin-de-siècle* consumer culture are ultimately unsustainable as well.

## II. LUCY’S EXTRAVAGANCE

The paradoxical image of the vampiric female consumer reaches its apotheosis in Lucy Westenra, the first of Dracula’s English targets. While Lucy’s vampirization marks her, quite literally, as object of consumption, she is also an extravagant consumer in her own right, both as the “Bloofer Lady” vampire and as wasting victim requiring nightly blood transfusions from her devoted male suitors. This confusion of consuming and being-consumed is one we see throughout the Victorian discourse of womanhood, where wives are expected to act simultaneously as thrifty managers of household resources and as decorative objects of male choice. This paradox, along with persistent anxiety about inappropriate (including insufficient) consumption, is a rhetorical side effect of the discourse of economic demand,<sup>9</sup> of which the vampire metaphor is a particularly condensed version.

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<sup>9</sup> I elaborate further on this idea in Deanna K. Kreisel, *Economic Woman: Demand, Gender, and Narrative Closure in Eliot and Hardy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

It is thus not surprising to see these images appear throughout the writings of demand theorists, both after the rise of the marginal-utility school and in midcentury heterodox theorists such as Ruskin. In the lengthy dialogue-essay “The Ethics of the Dust” I quoted above, Ruskin whimsically educates a group of “Little Housewives” about the proper duties of womanhood, using geological formations as extended metaphor. As I noted, Ruskin’s warning to young women that they prepare to be proper “House-wives” and avoid “feeding” on their husbands’ fortunes presents the mismanaging woman as a species of monster. Elsewhere in the essay, Ruskin invokes vampires both indirectly and directly; the former occurs during a discussion of the formation of agates in the veins of rock:

The veins themselves, when the rock leaves them open by its contraction, act with various power of suction upon its substance . . . while water, at every degree of heat and pressure . . . congeals, and drips, and throbs, and thrills, from crag to crag; and breathes from pulse to pulse of foaming or fiery arteries, whose beating is felt through chains of the great islands of the Indian seas, as your own pulses lift your bracelets. (333)

The word “veins” is not a dead metaphor for Ruskin: the arteries of evolving crystal thrill and throb and pulse with life just like those within the wrists of his young interlocutors. The processes of crystal production are intimately intertwined with violent processes of consuming raw materials, and all under the sign of the vampire: the “open” veins in the rock exerting their “power of suction” align this image rhetorically with the “receptant yet suctional” hoarder/prostitute of *Munera Pulveris*. He does not belabor the point, but the mention of the girls’ bracelets invokes an association between crystals as natural formations and crystals as gems, objects of luxurious feminine consumption: all this tumult and steam and pressure and decomposition are the unseen obverse of decorative femininity.

While obfuscating his own vampiric interest in the veins of young girls, Ruskin makes crystal clear the connection between vampirism and capitalism; in a long passage in which he likens varieties of geological formations to caricatures of people, he notes: “sometimes you will see fat crystals eating up thin ones, like great capitalists and little labourers; and politico-economic crystals teaching the stupid ones how to eat each other, and cheat each other; . . . and vampire crystals eating out the hearts of others; . . . and parasite crystals living on the means of others” (335). This is a somewhat different capitalism–vampirism linkage than the classic one we see in Marx, where “capital is dead labour which, vampire-like, lives only

by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks."<sup>10</sup> Ruskin personalizes the connection and moralizes it even more pointedly than Marx: the vampire is the capitalist himself, and thus the blame for the evils of the system can be laid squarely at his feet rather than attributed to a historical process.

For Ruskin proper consumption is not merely a matter of quantity (thus simple rapacity is not the solution); the questions of production, consumption, and supply are also deeply ethical. Ruskin required consumers to be attentive to the social effects of their tastes and desires: "wise consumption is a far more difficult art than wise production."<sup>11</sup> It is important to consume lavishly and not to "spend" selfishly through hoarding, but it is also important to consume objects that contribute to the health and well-being not only of their manufacturers but of their purchasers and the economy in general. This responsibility was one Ruskin particularly marked out for women, as his lectures to schoolgirls attest. And this means he also marked out for them particular ire, in the form of images of monstrosity and vampirism, when their consuming practices were immoderate in any way.

Ruskin's paradoxical image of the vampiric female consumer is perfectly embodied in Lucy Westenra. Lucy's own acts of blood consumption are, as innumerable readers of the novel have noticed, markedly sexual.<sup>12</sup> Yet it is also her "super-sensitivity" (86) that initially sets her apart as Dracula's ideal victim: her powerful unconscious drive to be vampirized leads to her nightly sleepwalking, just as her irresponsible flirtation leads to her confession of three marriage proposals in one day.<sup>13</sup> In other words, it is not only after she has been converted (or is in the process of being converted) to a literal bloodsucker that she betrays a predilection for rapacious desire: Dracula's predation only literalizes and makes visible a tendency that has been present all along. Thus the logic of her consumption: Lucy feeds on the blood of her victims not only as a full-fledged vampire, but also during the course of the transfusions in which her stalwart, and largely discarded, suitors (plus Van Helsing) give up the "blood of four strong men" (138) for her maintenance. This is also a process that is

<sup>10</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (New York: Modern Library, 1906), 257.

<sup>11</sup> *Works*, 17:98. See also *Fors Clavigera (Works, 27:31ff.)*.

<sup>12</sup> For example, see Phyllis A. Roth, "Suddenly Sexual Women in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," *Literature and Psychology* 27 (1977): 113–21.

<sup>13</sup> Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, ed. Nina Auerbach and David J. Skal (1897; New York: Norton Critical Ed., 1997), 86.

explicitly sexualized by the donors, who insist that to give and accept blood is to be “really married” (157) and that Lucy has been made a “polyandrist” (158) by accepting their bodily fluids. Lucy’s femininity is thus always characterized as extraordinarily expensive and her “tastes” as extravagant, to say the least.

Yet perhaps the more interesting aspect of Lucy’s vampirization is the strange way in which she acts as “index” to the Count’s own desires. The word “index” is used twice in reference to Renfield, whose lunatic excitability waxes and wanes with the proximity of his “master,” the Count. Once the vampire hunters discover the connection between the two, they realize they can use the psychological state of the patient “in an indexy kind of way” (219) to track the Count’s activities.<sup>14</sup> What the focus on Renfield obscures, however, is the much more reliable and direct way in which Lucy acts as “index” to the Count’s grotesque consumption: this is an unacceptable connection that must be obscured by the text. The relationship between indexing and blood becomes apparent, however, upon close reading: Lucy’s cheeks, their pallor or ruddiness, indicate distinctly when she has been fed upon and when she has been allowed to recover. Before the arrival of Dracula in Whitby, Mina’s journal attests that Lucy “has got a beautiful colour since she has been here” (65); that her “cheeks are a lovely rose pink” (72); and that she has “lost that anæmic look which she had” (72). Later, when Dracula begins to feed on her, she becomes “paler than is her wont” (91); we are told that “the roses in her cheeks are fading” (92), and later that she is “ghastly pale” (103). The novel is, at least superficially (and as we shall see in a moment, not always logically), meticulous on this point: dates are carefully collated so as to create a “secret” index of the Count’s comings-and-goings, which is corroborated by the more histrionic index of Renfield’s zoophagous activities and rantings about his master.

There are two crucial ways in which Lucy’s index intersects with the pervasive economic concerns of the novel. First of all, her changing cheeks stage an up-to-date, *fin-de-siècle* version of the Romantic ideology of the

<sup>14</sup> The only other time the word “index” is used in the novel is when Jonathan describes the blue flames that appear on the eve of St. George’s Day to mark the location of buried treasure in Dracula’s own country. As the Count explains to Jonathan, “That treasure has been hidden . . . in the region through which you came last night, there can be but little doubt. For it was the ground fought over for centuries by the Wallachian, the Saxon, and the Turk. Why, there is hardly a foot of soil in all this region that has not been enriched by the blood of men, patriots or invaders” (27). In a very direct way, the “index” here points to the existence of blood, or blood-as-treasure: treasure as a literalization of the spoils of rapine and imperial exploitation very similar to the metaphor employed by Marx.



blush, one that is attuned to the specific concerns of the new economic theories taking hold at the end of the century: consumption and the "scientization" of economic discourse. As Mary Ann O'Farrell has argued, blushes in the nineteenth-century novel straddle the somatic and the semiotic, enacting a "demand for interpretation" that is also an "invitation to narrative."<sup>15</sup> In the case of Lucy, what the blush demands is a species of scientific interpretation: in this sense it is more of an invitation to medical case history than to imaginative narration. This precise measurement of Lucy's process of vampirization—this index—is of a piece with the overall scientization that grips the characters in the novel. As many readers have noted, *Dracula* enacts an almost obsessive need to professionalize and technologize the practices and accoutrements of monster-hunting: from phonography, shorthand, typewriting, and hypnosis to telegrams, railway timetables, and double-entry bookkeeping, the novel aggressively (and paradoxically) presents late-Victorian vampire fighting as thoroughly methodical and relentlessly empirical.<sup>16</sup> While critics have thus traced the influence of multiple professional or newly professionalized disciplines—such as accounting, psychiatry, and medicine—in *Dracula*, none has discussed marginal-utility theory, the newly scientific version of political economy contemporaneous with Stoker's novel.

The theory of marginal utility was simultaneously "discovered" in 1870 by three theorists working independently, W. Stanley Jevons in England, Léon Walras in France, and Carl Menger in Austria.<sup>17</sup> The principle states that the satisfaction or benefit (utility) to a consumer of an additional unit of any good is inversely related to the number of units of that good she already has. The value of a commodity is no longer seen to be determined by its cost of production, or the cost of the labor required to produce it, but in terms of its desirability to the consumer. The rise of the marginal-utility school thus marked a shift both in content (the demand theory of value) and in methodology (the mathematical model). "Economics," as the study was starting to be called, was becoming a professional discipline requiring highly specialized knowledge and advanced mathematical skills.

<sup>15</sup> Mary Ann O'Farrell, *Telling Complexions: The Nineteenth-Century English Novel and the Blush* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 4.

<sup>16</sup> For analyses of the technologies and modernity of *Dracula*, see Jennifer Fleissner, "Dictation Anxiety: The Stenographer's Stake in *Dracula*," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 22 (2000): 417–55; and Jennifer Wicke, "Vampiric Typewriting: *Dracula* and Its Media," *English Literary History* 59 (1992): 467–93.

<sup>17</sup> For a good discussion of the strange phenomenon of this theory appearing in three separate places simultaneously, see Marc Blaug, *Economic Theory in Retrospect*, 5th ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, 277–92.

We can see most clearly the mathematization of consumer desire in the figure of Renfield: his meticulously kept records—the long columns of figures and tallies of insects, spiders, and birds he plans to consume—function as a grotesque parody of the calculation of consumer desire “at the margin.” Yet once again, Renfield here functions as the more visible textual function, obscuring the fact that Lucy is engaged in a more furtive version of the same activity. Lucy’s index, or rather Lucy-as-index, stages a quasi-scientific quantification of the occult practice of vampirism; her blush and pallor are both scientific “evidence” of Dracula’s activities and a sexualized version of the rigorously *measurable* desire to consume insisted upon by marginal-utility theory.

The second way in which Lucy’s indexing reveals the economic concerns of the novel is an extension and amplification of the first, and has to do with the way in which the index directly reflects the operations of demand itself. The Count husbands his resources in Lucy; he allows her body to restore its supply of nourishment before he feeds on her again. But the timeline of Lucy’s “indexing” of the Count seems a bit peculiar. The very night after the arrival of Dracula, Mina remarks that Lucy has “more colour in her cheeks than usual” (86). The morning after we are certain that the Count has begun feeding on Lucy—the morning after Mina rescues her from the “something dark” (88) bending over her “snowy white” (88) figure in the churchyard in Whitby—Mina notes in her diary: “The adventure of the night does not seem to have harmed her; on the contrary, it has benefited her, for she looks better this morning than she has done for weeks” (89).

Has Dracula drunk only enough to stimulate the color in Lucy’s cheeks, but not enough to enervate her? As soon as she does start to become pale from his ministrations, he leaves Whitby and travels to London, allowing his favorite victim to recover—for the “roses” in her cheeks to return and even for her to get “fat” (101)—before he begins to feed on her again in London. Only when the “stalwart men” begin restocking her artificially does Dracula get greedy and apparently feed on her nightly, to such a degree that she cannot survive even with the artificial prop of the transfusions. What is important about the logic of the transfusions is the way it displaces “demand” from Dracula (the “end user”) to Lucy—she is the one who appears insatiable. As long as Dracula and Lucy are engaged in good, measured, up-to-date economic activity—using resources only when the added utility of each additional unit warrants its consumption—the system seems sustainable. Yet vampirism, as we shall see, is exactly that activity that exposes an anxiety about the *unsustainability* of the capitalist system.

For if demand is what is required for the operations of the economy, then those operations are simultaneously threatened in two directions by the figure of the vampire: first, as Moretti argues, demand can be inadequate; and second, demand can be so robust as to evacuate productive capabilities. In both cases, the anxiety is particularly focused on transgressive female figures.

### III. MINA'S TRANSGRESSION

Mina is an even more interesting case study in anxieties over improper consumption than her more flamboyant friend. While Lucy is figured as pure-yet-transgressive, demure-yet-rapacious, Mina is depicted as unalloyedly loyal, discreet, hard-working, and sensible; her process of vampirization is thus more complicated and circuitous than that of the susceptible Lucy. However, even though Mina is a late-Victorian update of the "angel in the house" (helping her husband in his work through her knowledge of short-hand), she is not immune to the kind of anxious gender critique we saw levied at the earlier incarnation of domestic femininity. As Mina herself is at great pains to emphasize, after she and Lucy tuck into a "capital" afternoon tea, she is *not* a "New Woman": "I believe we should have shocked the 'New Woman' with our appetites" (86).<sup>18</sup>

Mina's anxious disavowal marks both women as potentially monstrous consumers. For Ruskin and other commentators on the Victorian discourse of proper womanhood, the idealized woman does not, vampirelike, clamor for her fair share of comestibles. She is instead a *source* of consumption for others—a fertile, maternal, *lactating* body, with a free-flowing supply of fluid sustenance: "Calm and quiet, refreshing as a fountain in the desert, as the charm of a rock in a weary land, is the true mother. . . . But with all these essentially womanly qualities she is an excellent manager, and displays business-like abilities."<sup>19</sup> This passage could serve as a description of Mina Harker, with her "so good combination" of a "man's brain" and "a woman's heart" (207). Yet during the course of her vampirization, Mina changes utterly. Not only does she cease to be the rock upon which

<sup>18</sup> The locus classicus is Carol A. Senf's article "Dracula: Stoker's Response to the New Woman," *Victorian Studies* 26 (1982): 33–49. For a more recent treatment of the topic, see also Charles E. Prescott and Grace A. Giorgio, "Vampiric Affinities: Mina Harker and the Paradox of Femininity in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 33 (2005): 487–515.

<sup>19</sup> "Our Households," 75–76.

the menfolk lean when they need to weep and be comforted in solitude; she also becomes a consumer herself, a grotesque reversal of the lactating mother who is forced to feed on the liquid sustenance of Dracula's own breast:

On the bed beside the window lay Jonathan Harker, his face flushed and breathing heavily as though in a stupor. Kneeling on the near edge of the bed facing outwards was the white-clad figure of his wife. By her side stood a tall, thin man, clad in black. . . . With his left hand he held both Mrs. Harker's hands, keeping them away with her arms at full tension. His right hand gripped her by the back of the neck, forcing her face down on his bosom. Her white nightdress was smeared with blood, and a thin stream trickled down the man's bare chest which was shown by his torn-open dress. The attitude of the two had a terrible resemblance to a child forcing a kitten's nose into a saucer of milk to compel it to drink. (246–47)

Several critics have discussed the connection between lactation and bloodsucking in *Dracula*;<sup>20</sup> I would argue further that this connection is inflected by an understanding of the particular economic meanings of breast milk (and blood) in the Victorian period. These two bodily fluids (which are symbolically conflated in the lactating-Dracula scene), when considered as items of consumption, are particularly cogent emblems of the operations of demand: they are the only “products” that are “manufactured” solely *in response* to demand.<sup>21</sup> Milk is replenished by the body in direct response to its withdrawal; the obverse of this causal relationship is that milk ceases to be produced when demand itself ceases. While the renewal of blood does not normally work in this same way, it does in *Dracula*: it is presented in the logic of the novel as another special object of consumption that is infinitely replenishable under conditions of optimum demand—not too robust and not too feeble.

Vampirism seems to be a perfect solution to the conundrum of production and allocation of resources: to consume only products that are replenished “naturally” as a direct response to the act of consumption is to return to a Physiocratic fantasy of self-sustaining, circular economic activity and thus to resolve the central anxieties of the capitalist economic organization.<sup>22</sup> As Catherine Gallagher notes, both Ruskin and Dickens, as adher-

<sup>20</sup> For a fascinating psychoanalytic study of vampirism and breastfeeding, see, for example, Joan Copjec, “Vampires, Breast-Feeding, and Anxiety,” *October* 58 (1991): 25–43, 34.

<sup>21</sup> See Kreisel, *Economic Woman*, chap. 5.

<sup>22</sup> For the eighteenth-century French school of economics known as Physiocracy, the only

ents of sanitary reform, fantasized a self-sustaining system in which bodily products and remains (including corpses, human waste, and blood products) would nourish further production in a closed and infinite cycle of renewal.<sup>23</sup> We can see, then, how a perverse kind of logic would render vampirism another such closed and self-sustaining system. In the case of Mina, the logic of her feeding on Dracula—he tells her that it functions magically to place her under his power (252)—constitutes her as a conduit between Dracula and the hunters, who later hypnotize her in order to learn of his movements, just as Lucy acted as conduit for the delivery of the suitors' blood to Dracula. Both circulatory "systems," under optimum conditions of demand, seem to be perfectly self-contained and self-perpetuating.

The most remarkable aspect of this scene is the way it reverses the usual terms of vampirism: the consumer becomes the consumed, and vice versa. We see this reversal as well in the case of Lucy. After her death Lucy is transformed into a vampire who terrorizes the area around Hampstead Heath near where she is buried: she specializes in feeding on the bodies of young children whom she lures to her with an ersatz maternal manner, and who have nicknamed her the "Bloofer Lady." The horrifying image of a young woman clutching an infant to her breast not to feed it but to feed *on* it is described in terms markedly similar to those used to detail her growing sexual rapaciousness during her slow process of vampirization:

The sweetness was turned to adamantine, heartless cruelty, and the purity to voluptuous wantonness. . . . With a careless motion, she flung to the ground, callous as a devil, the child that up to now she had clutched strenuously to her breast. . . . When she advanced to [Arthur] with outstretched arms and a wanton smile he fell back and hid his face in his hands. She still advanced, however, and with a languorous, voluptuous grace, said, "Come to me, Arthur. Leave these others and come to me. My arms are hungry for you. Come, and we can rest together. Come, my husband, come!" (187–88)

The "voluptuousness" (Stoker's favorite word for female vampires) of her sexual advance to Arthur is juxtaposed with the voluptuous wantonness of her consumption of the child's blood. Lucy's vampiric integration of perverse sexuality and perverse acts of consumption (she is "hungry" for her lover) is an extension of the dynamic we see at work in the three "weird

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source of economic surplus was agriculture—produce extracted from the land that is greater than the amount needed for subsistence. For summaries of the work of the Physiocrats, see M[ax] Beer, *An Inquiry into Physiocracy* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966).

<sup>23</sup> See Gallagher, *The Body Economic*, 100–107.

sisters” who terrorize Jonathan Harker in Dracula’s castle: they, too, subsist on a diet of infantine flesh, and their acts of blood consumption are also described in sexualized terms. After the Count rescues his guest from the “languorous ecstasy” of the “soft, shivering touch of the lips” (43) of one of the sisters, he placates them:

“Well, now I promise you that when I am done with him you shall kiss him at your will. Now go! Go!” . . . “Are we to have nothing tonight?” said one of them, with a low laugh, as she pointed to the bag which he had thrown upon the floor, and which moved as though there were some living thing within it. For answer he nodded his head. One of the women jumped forward and opened it. If my ears did not deceive me there was a gasp and a low wail, as of a half smothered child. (43–44)

In the case of both Vampire Lucy and Dracula’s three minions, there is a smooth and seamless substitution of food for sexual “prey,” and vice versa. Yet even more importantly, that food is itself not just a substitution but also a reversal: just as with the breastfeeding tableau between Mina and Dracula, the relationship between nurturer and nurtured is exposed as structurally reversible. When we consider the special status of breast milk and blood in the novel—as “products” whose bodily manufacture literalizes the metaphorical operations of economic demand—we can begin to see how these perverse scenes of feeding both destabilize and resolve the contradictions of consumption first isolated by Franco Moretti. In other words, if we take seriously the metaphoric connection between blood and capital that Marx himself first insisted upon, then the feeder/fed reversal makes perfect sense. The fantasy of a capitalist body grown munificent, a bloodsucker who freely gives rather than taking, is a reaction not only to anxieties about sustainable production but also to anxieties about economic stagnation due to flaccid consumer desire.<sup>24</sup>

Mina and Lucy are perfect complements for each other: while Lucy’s insatiability (which was of course really Dracula’s) seemed to outstrip the productive capabilities of the system, Mina’s desires are not robust enough to sustain it. Vampirism thus functions as the dark obverse of the expanding capitalist economy: just as the economic system of Count Dracula is ultimately unsustainable (once everyone is a vampire, who will remain to be consumed?), so the fear persists, for Stoker and his readers, that *fin-de-*

<sup>24</sup> This same vision of consumptional reversal is one that we find throughout economic writers concerned about the operations of demand. See, for example, Thomas DeQuincey, *The Logic of Political Economy* (1845; Boston: James Osgood, 1872), 170.

*siècle* consumer culture is ultimately unsustainable as well. It is in the figures of Lucy and Mina that this tension is examined and uneasily resolved: while both the Count and Lucy—as superconsumers whose appetites are irresponsibly rapacious—must be eliminated, Mina is successfully disciplined into a mode of consumption that seems sustainable. The ultimate irony of *Dracula* is that the model of vampirism, in which consumption actually brings new products into being, is the perfect resolution to the anxiety attendant upon a demand theory of value. It is a resolution that is inadmissible to middle-class Victorian values, as surely as middle-class, Victorian female vampires are inadmissible. As this essay shows, such vampire/women are horrifying in their consumption, not for the reasons that have traditionally been mooted, but because they suggest the untenable implications of capitalism (and the demand theory of value) itself.

