ROGER LUCKHURST

Introduction

Cuadecuc, Vampir is probably the most provoking adaptation of *Dracula* you have never seen, for it is vanishingly rare. The film was directed in 1971 by Pere Portabella, the legendary Spanish producer of scandalous films by Luis Bunuel, a documentarist in his own right and later a leading Catalan politician. It is a strange collection of scratchy, black-and-white footage taken on the set of Jess Franco's *Count Dracula* (1970), an Italian-Spanish-German production that – like many Hammer House of Horror films – starred Christopher Lee as the aristocratic vampire. In *Cuadecuc*, however, instead of lurid Technicolor melodrama, Portabella's camera keeps drifting beyond the staged action to reveal stage-hands tinkering with smoke machines, spraying cob-webs on cardboard tombs, tensing the guide wires for very unconvincing rubber bats, or catching Lee in make-up, out of character, laughing and joking as he slips on his wig. The soundtrack is a dissonant avant-garde composition by Carles Santos, full of industrial noise, gratings and grindings, which further alienates the viewer from the action. The film ends with Lee reading out the last page of Stoker's novel, the scene of Dracula's death (his own character's death), yet even here the camera stays rolling slightly too long, and an awkward silence stretches out before the director eventually shouts 'Cut!'

Cuadecuc, Vampir was shown at the Cannes film festival to acclaim but was immediately banned in Spain. Although there is nothing explicitly stated, the Fascist authorities that tightly controlled cultural expression in Spain under the dictatorship of General Franco got the message loud and clear. Count Dracula is meant to represent the undead dictator Franco, but Portabella's strategy is to show *Count Dracula* as a flimsy Gothic concoction, his camera revealing the simple devices that create the illusion of power, fear and Mesmeric control. He is pulling away the curtain, just like the end of *The Wizard of Oz*.

Why start here? Because Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is rarely approached except through the myriad adaptations, transpositions and revisions of the

novel since it was first published in 1897. Portabella's meta-film, a film of images appropriated from another, amplifies this filtering effect. We come at *Dracula* as if it were always already 'found footage'. We somehow already know the arbitrary rules of vampirism and how to protect ourselves against it, we come decked out with crucifixes and garlic flowers, and we know the narrative arc of this story, from margin to centre and back again. Florence Stoker, Bram's widow, attempted to use the courts to stop the circulation of F. W. Murnau's masterpiece, *Nosferatu* (1922) for breach of her husband's copyright, but by 1932 she accepted a deal with Universal Studios when they hired Bela Lugosi to repeat his stage success in *Dracula*. The text, already a success in popular editions and on stage, has since been in unceasing circulation. It wandered so wide and far, that Francis Ford Coppola's hugely successful adaptation in the 1990s was called *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, as if it was a novelty to plan a return to the originating text itself.

Dracula is what Chris Baldick has called a modern myth, like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) or Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Jekyll and Hyde* (1886), a text that is open to all kinds of adaptation but that carries a basic set of narrative structures and meanings, even through the worst translation.[1] *Dracula* speaks very specifically to the heady world of fin-de-siècle London in the year of Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee, but it also offers allegorical potential to a sclerotic Spain in the last years of Franco's dictatorship. The myth-structure of the arrival of an insidious, alluring vampire carrying a deadly contagion that threatens modernity itself but is fought off – just about – by an improvised Praetorian guard, has since found vectors around the world and embedded itself in all kinds of surprising local contexts (some of which Ken Gelder explores in his chapter below).

Yet rather than merely saying that Stoker taps into the mythopoeic – primitive or archetypal stubs of storytelling that prove easy to repeat and transmute – *Cuadecuc, Vampir* reinforces the lesson that *Dracula* is always thoroughly political and context-specific. Indeed, as Nick Groom details in the opening chapter here, the word 'vampire' enters the English language in the 1730s as a satirical political metaphor long before it appears in fiction. Never mind the strange peasant stories of buried bodies that refuse to die and come back to feast on their neighbours, stories that were being reported from the very edges of civilised Europe in confused accounts hailing from the bloody Balkans. The 'Riflers of the Kingdom' in London or Paris were the merchants, bankers and politicians who were regularly termed blood-suckers or vampires in the vibrant pages of the disputatious newspaper press of the emergent bourgeois public sphere. The vampire was a mobile metaphor long before Stoker picked up and transformed William Polidori's portrait of the demonic aristocrat Lord Ruthven in his short Gothic tale, 'The Vampyre' (1819).

To study Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, then, requires a number of long perspectives, from before and after its publication in 1897. A reader needs a sense of the mobility of the vampire as folkloric term and agile metaphor in the 150 years before publication, in literature, folklore, anthropology and the geopolitics of Europe. But we also need a grasp of the renewed narrative energy and concentrated form Stoker gave the vampire that meant it could leap so effortlessly from text to stage to many different kinds of screen (film, TV, computer game) in the 120 years since its publication. This *Companion* aims to provide that long view in its opening and closing sections, which offer various pre-histories and subsequent cultural transformations of Stoker's text. These longer perspectives are intrinsic to understanding what Stoker's melodrama consolidated in its exuberant narrative form.

But we also have to address the specific puzzle of what Stoker did in *Dracula* that secured its astounding success as a modern myth. On publication, the book was regarded a cynical pot-boiler that was seeking slightly too hard to join what some newspapers denounced as the Culture of the Horrible, written by a hack writer better known for his management of the Lyceum Theatre under famous actor Henry Irving. Stoker's *Times* obituary recognised that 'he was the master of a particularly lurid and creepy kind of fiction, represented by "Dracula" and other novels', but confidently predicted that 'his chief literary memorial will be his Reminiscences of Irving'.[2] This was the bid to secure a respectable place for Stoker in posterity, and was completely wrong.

In 1897, readers of contemporary fiction seemed to have been more willing to countenance Richard Marsh's *The Beetle*, a thematically similar tale of London menaced by a supernaturally powerful foreign agent, or Florence Marryat's tale of the psychological attenuation of her mixed-race protagonist in *The Blood of the Vampire*.

It is impossible to over-emphasise how culturally invisible popular fiction such as *Dracula* was to the formation of literary canons and the training of literary taste for much of the twentieth century. When David Punter wrote about *Dracula* in his pioneering survey *The Literature of Terror* in 1980, it was presented as an act of recovery of a novel he modestly suggests has been under-rated and largely forgotten under the welter of horror films that shared its name. There was a slight kerfuffle about literary value when it was announced *Dracula* would be included in the Oxford World's Classics series for the first time in 1983. *Dracula* was not helped along by any intrinsic literary merit, the critical consensus seemed to say, but this actually allowed the Dracula myth to escape the confines of its routine, entirely adequate text.

Yet the form of *Dracula* has something to do with its posthumous revival, an ingenious construction of different kinds of textual fragments, diaries, newspaper reports, phonographic transcriptions, log books and other data. Within the text, that modern girl Mina Harker (who sometimes calls herself a New Woman) emerges as the organising secretary who creates, shuffles and organises this 'mass of typewriting' (*D*, 351), reducing diverse details into equivalent informational bits that can be sorted by the hapless men around her. Mina is a kind of embodied search-engine herself, with sailing times and train timetables at her fingertips. She even becomes a kind of occult communication device herself, a new-fangled two-legged telephone, able to dial up the Count from afar once she is in mesmeric rapport. She sends in weather updates, travel reports, and neatly summarises scientific findings on the 'criminal mind'. It is having more efficient information systems than the Count that in the end defeats the vampire threat. In contrast, Dracula relies on blue books and civil lists in his mouldering library to learn the institutional contours of the British state he sets out to infiltrate. 'Vampirism is a chain reaction, and can therefore only be fought with the techniques of mechanical text reproduction', Friedrich Kittler observes. The novel is therefore, in his reading, 'the written account of our bureaucratisation'.[3]

This device of constructing narrative through fictitious assemblage was borrowed from Wilkie Collins's sensation fictions of the 1860s, but it is greatly amplified by Stoker, and turns *Dracula* into a breathless rendition of modernity itself, racing on with the whizz of trains and omnibuses, of letters and telegrams speeding through wires or voices caught in real time on wax cylinders. It might have felt crude and vulgar to cultivated aesthetic taste in the 1890s, but it makes *Dracula* part of the new century, not the old.

This narrative structure of informational bits also makes the novel seem – to switch analogy – like an open grid, built from tiles of a mosaic that can be shuffled and re-shuffled into new pictures over and over again. Judith Halberstam, in resisting the temptation to produce a single key or code to unlock the novel, instead called it 'technology of monstrosity', a machine that works to 'produce the monster as a remarkably mobile, permeable and infinitely interpretable body'.[4] This is a reflection of the whole libraries of critical work that has now grown up around *Dracula*. If it sometimes feels like a generative machine for criticism, that is because the novel is so informationally dense, taking on the rich colourings of many artistic, cultural, political, social and scientific discourses that swirled anxiously through the public sphere in the 1890s.

Dracula was published in London at a period of intense contradictions in 1897. Queen Victoria headed an empire that finally had belligerent

ideological spokesmen advocating greater expansion (the 'Jingos'), but was also riven with fears of attack, over-extension and the massing of rival power in Germany, Russia and America. The economic engine of the British industrial revolution that had powered Britain to world leadership was seriously stalling. The uneasy truce between Capital and Labour seemed to be fraying, with the unemployed sleeping in numbers in London squares, unions gaining power in the coal industry and calling workers out on strike, the formation of Socialist political parties, and demonstrations bursting into riots in Trafalgar Square. Women demanded increasing political representation and legal rights, with any advances always accompanied by a conservative counter-discourse of imminent sexual anarchy and race suicide. The great liberal tradition of England as a sanctuary of tolerance from religious persecution was still upheld, yet the influx of Jews to the East End escaping from the Russian pogroms caused much anxiety and new controls over the entry of immigrants. A pseudo-scientific discourse of the hierarchy of the races hardened. Some from the more bestial races, Russian Nihilists and Irish revolutionaries demanding home rule for Ireland, haunted the city streets as bomb-throwing monsters threatening the domestic security of the heart of the Empire. Invasion narratives, just like *Dracula*, were written in their hundreds.

Scientific and technological discoveries related to the second great industrial revolution – the electrical one – seemed to reinvent the possibilities of everyday life. There were new communication technologies, wireless telegraphy and mysterious Hertzian waves, a new psychology revealing the depths of the 'subliminal mind', a new physics of 'dark matter' and invisible radiation, a new biology of nerves and synapses. The co-discoverer of evolutionary theory, Alfred Russell Wallace, declared it *The Wonderful Century* in 1898. Yet men of science also seemed overcome with pessimistic accounts of decline and collapse. At the end of his life, T. H. Huxley's lecture, 'Evolution and Ethics' (1893), seemed to indicate that the advances of civilisation were now in conflict with basic biological imperatives. An upstart young journalist, H. G. Wells, used his brand new type of education in science under Huxley to repeatedly imagine the end of the world in *The Time Machine* (1895) or *The War of the Worlds* (1898).

Cultural frontiers of freedom of expression had been pushed back by aesthetes and Decadents and by a new popular press, yet the conservative establishment viciously countered with the arrest and imprisonment of campaigning journalist W. T. Stead for publishing about child prostitution in London in 1885 and Oscar Wilde in 1895. The leading light of the Decadents was sentenced to two-years hard labour for acts of gross indecency with young men in London hotels. Stoker knew Stead in London, and had

been Wilde's neighbour in Dublin, a long-time visitor as a young man to the salons held by Sir William and Lady Wilde. The Dublin beauty Florence Balcombe turned down Wilde's proposal and married Stoker instead. Some speculate on the shadow Wilde cast over *Dracula*, a text largely composed while Wilde's health was being determinedly broken on the treadmills of Reading Gaol. Stoker was a social and political conservative, an Irishman in the colonial centre, but who lived in very liberal journalistic and bohemian circles of London's literary and theatrical culture. He was perfectly positioned to experience the full torque of these many over-lapping contradictory forces of advance and counter-reaction. Stoker is not necessarily in control of these forces, even as they surface through his headlong prose.

The core work of this *Companion* is to provide a series of routes through the text. *Dracula* is such an open matrix of a novel that the reader can take many different kinds of pathway through it, taking routes that sometimes reinforce each other, but at others appear never quite to intersect and indeed even contradict each other. That is the product of its feverish overdetermination, its openness to history. Hence in this *Companion*, once Nick Groom, William Hughes and Alex Warwick have set *Dracula* in relation to the capacious tradition of the Gothic romance, a sequence of essays focus narrowly on the novel's relationships to specific discourses. Christine Ferguson explores *Dracula*'s relationship with the late Victorian occult revival, which wanted to reshape the relationship of modernity to the 'supernatural', just as the novel does. Roger Luckhurst examines how the novel lies on the cusp of shifting paradigms of self and subjectivity in psychology, just as Heike Bauer relates how closely interwoven the vision of the polymorphous vampire is with a new language of sexuality and sexual perversion. Popular genres were intrinsically part of the scientific and cultural work of defining the boundaries of the normal and the pathological.

It is crucial to be aware of the investments *Dracula* has in discourses about race in the late Victorian period, and so David Glover explains the anxious discourse about the effect of mass migration to the imperial metropolis, while Matthew Gibson teases out the complex meanings Western Europe assigned to the Balkans and Transylvania in particular at this time. As the Count explains his origins in the whirlpool of races in his passionate speeches to Jonathan Harker at the start of the novel, this region existed on the very edge of Christian Europe, a blurred border zone where European civilisation met the Ottoman Empire, a rival power and a rival religion centred in Constantinople (now Istanbul). Anthony Bale details how *Dracula* is underpinned by what the symbolics of blood, the bearer of sacred meanings in the Christian tradition but also the focus for centuries of fantasies of contamination and desecration by that race of perennial

outsiders/insiders, the Jews. The monstrosity of Dracula, the contagion of vampirism, is in uncomfortable proximity to these ancient and modern discourses of race.

In this section of contexts, Carol Senf also makes us aware of how the novel embodies contradictory notions of gender and sexuality in the pairing of Lucy Westenra and Mina Harker, at once liberated New Women and the antipathy of that liberation in the course of the plot.

It was in the millennial angst of the 1980s and 1990s that there was a revival of interest in the last century's fin de siècle, a revival that buoyed up the interest in Stoker's novel. There have been many readings of *Dracula* in relation to Karl Marx's famous metaphor of capital sucking the life-blood from dead labour: Franco Moretti's remains the most often read, although there are many others.[5] But in the 1990s, identity politics dominated critical accounts of *Dracula*, the sense that the novel had to be explored through the identity categories of class, race and gender. An emergent critical language in this period was Queer Theory, which found a rich seam to explore dissident sexualities in the late Victorian era, because this was exactly the era when (as Heike Bauer details) the notion of homosexuality and heterosexuality were formulated. The Gothic was an exemplary genre for expressing ambivalence about sexualities that were just on the threshold of being enunciated. *Dracula* staunchly defends the northern Protestant Christian family and the sacred duties of motherhood, blasting the monstrous alternative represented by the Count. Yet it also indulges in precisely these fantasies of alternative vampire sexuality and non-reproductive pleasures, imagining them into existence in impressively hallucinated scenes. All the men in *Dracula*, somewhat camply, faint away at some point or other, like Gothic maidens overwhelmed by feelings that they cannot master.

This is why Queer Theory introduces the 'New Directions' section, since *Dracula* has only very belatedly come to be read in this context. Nor is this a stable, singular body of work: Xavier Aldana Reyes might be considered a second-generation Queer theorist, striving to keep the dynamic matrix of the text open to multiple possibilities, rather than trying to uncover a 'homosexual' secret buried or encoded in the text.

Dracula keeps on opening new pathways and directions. Part of the task of the new Horror Theory associated with object-oriented ontology is to displace familiar theoretical frameworks that have so often worked through 'depth reading', the phenomenology of literary interpretation that dominated the twentieth century. Mark Blacklock explores how much *Dracula* can be read as part of the revenge of the object world on the deluded subjects who thought they were in command, the vampire a figure of radical non-subjectivity, morphing as mist, or fog or rats. If this is a new approach, so is

Ken Gelder's attention to transnational and transmedial translations of the *Dracula* narrative across the 'Southern Gothic' in America, in Japan and in Sweden. Like a hybrid plant, *Dracula* flowers with strange new blooms when transplanted to different cultural ecologies.

The enduring force of *Dracula* is the seeming inexhaustibility of the contexts it requires and the readings it might generate. Lack of space has squeezed out a particular focus on Stoker's place in the Anglo-Irish Gothic, although there is lots of work available elsewhere on this.[6] Emergent paradigms like medical humanities inevitably re-imagines *Dracula* as a contagion narrative, perfectly fitting the paradigm of the lone 'typhoid Mary' that arrives as an advent of an epidemic.[7] The *Companion* might have stretched its already detailed accounts of adaptations of stage, film and TV to include comics or computer games. The further reading at the end of this *Companion* will help consolidate established paradigms, but also indicate emergent readings too. The tiles of this mosaic will keep being re-arranged. This is only testament to *Dracula*'s place in the pantheon of modern myths.

Notes

1 Chris Baldick, *In Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity, and Nineteenth-Century Writing* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987).
2 'Mr. Bram Stoker', *The Times* (22 April 1912), 15.
3 Friedrich Kittler, 'Dracula's Legacy', *Stanford Humanities Review* 1 (1989), 162, 164.
4 Judith Halberstam, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 21.
5 Franco Moretti, 'The Dialectic of Fear' in *Signs Taken for Wonders: Essays on the Sociology of Literary Forms* (London: Verso, 1983). For a detailed reading of the Marx's use of the vampire metaphor, see Mark Neocleous, 'The Political Economy of the Dead: Marx's Vampires', *History of Political Thought* 34, no. 4 (2003), 668–84.
6 See Raymond T. McNally, 'Bram Stoker and the Irish Gothic', in J. Holte, ed., *The Fantastic Vampire: Studies in the Children of the Night* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1997), pp. 11–21; Alison Millbank, '"Powers Old and New": Stoker's Alliances with Anglo-Irish Gothic', in A. Smith and W. Hughes, ed., *Bram Stoker: History, Psychoanalysis, and the Gothic* (London: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 12–28.
7 See Priscilla Wald, *Contagious: Cultures, Carriers, and the Outbreak Narrative*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

PART I

Dracula in the Gothic Tradition

1

NICK GROOM

Dracula's Pre-History

The Advent of the Vampire

Blood-sucking demons have haunted civilised society since biblical times. Lilith was a female demon, the first rebellious wife of Adam; her name has been translated as 'vampire'. Lamia was a bisexual female monster of ancient Greece who drank the blood of children, sometimes treated as synonymous with the Judaeo-Christian Lilith. The Romans were familiar with ghosts that sucked blood and brought nightmares, and they attributed such characteristics to the marauding Goths (also known as Scythians) who sacked Rome in the fifth century: 'they thought that Thessalian witches, accompanying the barbarian armies, were darkening her rays with their country's magic spells'.[1] The invading Huns too were steeped in blood and ruin: 'Behold the wolves, not of Arabia, but of the North, were let loose upon us last year from the far-off rocks of the Caucasus, and in a little while overran great provinces', bemoaned Saint Jerome. 'How many monasteries were captured, how many streams were reddened with human blood!'[2] Their leader Attila (who choked on his own blood) was lamented 'not by effeminate wailings and tears but by the blood of men'.[3]

In Norse myth, which drew on Hunnish and Gothic legends, the *draugrs* were corporeal undead revenants, sometimes simply guarding hoards but often raiding the living – for example in the pagan corpus the *Eyrbyggja Saga*. The twelfth-century chronicler William of Malmesbury described the Devil re-animating his servants to continue his work from beyond the grave, and William of Newburgh and the Monk of Byland likewise recorded several stories of the dead returning – either to revisit their kin, terrorise their enemies or simply through restlessness of spirit. One of Newburgh's revenants is only dispatched when, discovered in the grave engorged with blood, it is summarily exhumed, has its heart torn out and is cremated. The later Hungarian countess Elizabeth Bathory was reputed to bathe in the blood of young girls in order to retain her youthful beauty, and the fifteenth-century Wallachian warlord Vlad Ţepeş allegedly executed tens of thousands by torture and impalement: roasting children and feeding

them to their mothers, forcing husbands to devour wives, and ultimately impaling all of his victims. Stoker would have been familiar with this material through Victorian surveys such as Sabine Baring-Gould's *Book of Werewolves* (1865). Closer to home, the English and Scottish ballad tradition is haunted by demon lovers, ghosts and wraiths in verses such as 'The Unquiet Grave'.

There were other demons too that literally stirred the blood. Incubi and sucubi were sexual predators that defiled the innocent. They are described in witchcraft manuals such as the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486) and appear in Thomas Middleton's Jacobean drama *The Witch* (written between 1609 and 1616, first published in 1778), in which the central character declares:

> 'Tis Almachildes: fresh blood stirrs in me –
> The man that I have lusted to enjoy,
> I've had him thrice in Incubus already.[4]

Elizabethan and Jacobean revenge tragedy is drenched in blood and bloody symbolism, and littered with corpses, as well as haunted by avenging ghosts and other supernatural beings, from hobgoblins to werewolves. Murdered bodies were believed to bleed in the presence of their killer, as noted by Shakespeare in *Richard III* (c. 1592–93):

> O gentlemen! See, see dead Henry's wounds
> Open their congeal'd mouths and bleed afresh. (I. ii. 55–56)

King James's *Demonologie* (1597), which also recorded incubi possessing dead cadavers in order to rape their earthly lovers, gave the phenomenon of 'cruentation' legal force:

> as in a secret murder, if the dead carcass be at any time thereafter handled by the murderer it will gush out of blood, as if the blood were crying to the heaven for revenge of the murderer, God having appointed that secret supernatural sign for trial of that secret unnatural crime.[5]

This demonic tradition – bloody, vengeful, nightmarish and supernatural – that led to Stoker's *Dracula* evidently has deep roots, reaching back into antiquity and folklore and superstition. For instance, Stoker took the name Dracula from Vlad Ţepeş, son of Vlad Dracul (the Dragon) who had the lupine lineage of the both Scythian witches and the fearsome Huns (*D*, 30). Vlad had a predilection for impalement, although not through the heart, but in ways that kept the victim alive for days. But there were other, much more recent and direct sources too. The vampire is in fact a relatively modern phenomenon, emerging predominantly from Enlightenment medicine, theology and social science.

Rumours of vampire activity as it would be recognised today emerged at the end of the seventeenth century. A vampire was reported in Ljubljana in 1689, the French gazette the *Mercure Galant* described vampires in Poland and Russia in 1693 and 1694 and there were notices in journals such as the *Glaneur Hollandois*. These creatures appeared between the hours of noon and midnight to suck the blood of humans and animals; once sated, blood would flow from their orifices and pores and their coffins were often found to be swimming in gore. They were known to feast on grave clothes, and, continuing this fascination with grisly nutrition, a prophylactic bread could be made from their blood affording protection against contracting vampirism.

There had, in fact, already been an empirical study of 'grave eating' or manducation: Phillip Rohr's *Dissertatio De Masticatione Mortuorum* (1679). This featured grisly details of graves being opened to reveal that the undead had been consuming their own shrouds and winding cloths, and had even devoured their own limbs and bowels. But what is most striking about these occurrences is perhaps the sounds that accompany infernal mastication. Like the 'churning' sound of the tongue as the female vampire in *Dracula* licks her teeth and lips (*D*, 39), the Devil makes 'curious noises' in manducation: 'he may lap like some thirsty animal, he may chaw, grunt and groan'.[6]

Rohr also includes remedies to prevent the dead from rising: clasping the hands of a corpse or placing earth on the lips, as well as decapitation or exhumation followed by staking through the heart to pin the corpse to the ground. Such activities were certainly still current in the eighteenth-century 'Age of Reason'. In *A Voyage into the Levant* (1718, reprinted 1741), Joseph Pitton de Tournefort gives an account dated 1 January 1701 of a Greek 'Vroucolacas' (*vrykolakas*) on the island of Mykonos: 'Corpses, which they [the locals] fancy come to life again after their Interment'.[7] The vroucolacas in question is aggressively physical, and attempts to destroy it by removing the heart from the original corpse and burning the organ prove unsuccessful. The vroucolacas continues to roam Mykonos until it is doused with Holy Water and the whole body is cremated. Tournefort's account is presented as a comic episode, mocking the islanders' credulity and asserting modern rationality over peasant superstition. Tournefort accordingly offers a scientific explanation: the inhabitants of Mykonos must be suffering from a disease of the brain, similar to the bite of mad dog.

Within a few years, however, ridicule had, for many, turned into reluctant conviction. The history of the vampire really begins at the frontiers of the Habsburg Empire in 1718 as a bizarre side-effect of Austria's annexation of the territories of Lesser Wallachia, parts of Serbia and northern parts of

Bosnia from the Ottoman Empire. These areas were effectively a buffer zone between the Austrian and Ottoman empires; they had highly mixed populations and pluralistic cultures and now became pawns in the manoeuvrings of international politics. The imposition of a military border enforced an authoritarian and foreign imperial regime that inevitably compromised local freedoms and rights; the result was that a weird epidemic took hold in these newly-seized edgelands.

Symptoms were both manifold and disturbing:

> Shivering, enduring nausea, pain in the stomach and intestines, in the kidney region and in the back and shoulderblades as well as the back of the head, further, a clouding of the eyes, deafness and speech problems. The tongue has a whitish-yellow to brownish-red coating, and dries out to the accompaniment of unquenchable thirst. The pulse is erratic and weak; on the throat and in the hypochondria, that is to say, in the area of the belly beneath the chest cartilage, livid or reddish spots are to be seen, though in part only after death. The paroxysm exhibits itself in extreme night terrors, associated with a loud cry, strong trembling, a spasmodic contraction of the muscles of the upper body, a constriction of the airway and hot flushes; with the additional symptom of constriction of the heart, that is, a sensation of anxiety in the hollow of the breast, associated with pain in the mouth of the stomach; lastly nightmares, which frequently evoke the image of the returning dead.[8]

That final, hallucinatory symptom is unnerving: 'nightmares [*incubus*], which frequently evoke the image of the returning dead'. Fearing these dreams to be reliable testimony rather than delusional fantasy, locals straightaway attributed the contagion to the undead, who apparently smothered and strangled their victims. Corpses were accordingly exhumed, staked, decapitated, and/or cremated (a practice of the Goths). The outbreak, meanwhile, showed no signs of abating, and on 21 July 1725, the Austrian newspaper *Wiener Diarium* carried a report of one Peter Plogojowitz, who was allegedly responsible for the murders of nine people over eight days in the village of Kisolova. Plogojowitz had sucked his victims dry: he was one of the *vampiri* or 'bloodsuckers' (the word 'vampire' remains obscure in its origins, possibly deriving from Old Slav).

The case simmered in the public imagination until 1732 when two more outbreaks were reported in the Serbian village of Medwegya, near Belgrade. In 1727 a former soldier, Arnod Paole (or Arnold Paul or Paule), had returned and settled to farm in Medwegya, his native village, where he was betrothed to his neighbour's daughter Nina. Paole died before they could wed when a hay cart he was driving overturned, but it transpired that the reason he had left the army and fled home was that he had contracted vampirism, possibly from a Greek *vrykolakas*. He had been tormented by

the creature and had tried to dispell it by eating earth from the vampire's grave and rubbing himself with its blood, but twenty or thirty days after his death he rose and killed four people. Although Paole appeared only at night, he could pass through locked doors and barred windows. A military commission oversaw the exhumation of his corpse, which 'had all the marks of an arch-vampire. His body was fresh and ruddy, his hair, beard, and nails were grown, and his veins were full of fluid blood'.[9] The corpse was accordingly staked and cremated, along with its victims.

A second wave of attacks followed in 1731, again attributed by locals to *vambyres*. Graves were once more exhumed and the corpses there were found to be fresh. The authorities sent a medical team to investigate: it was led by an epidemiologist, one Glaser and also present was Johann Flücklinger, a military surgeon and two apothecaries. They found that corpses feared to be vampires were being summarily decapitated and cremated. Glaser sent his report to Vienna, whereupon the case ignited European interest. Flücklinger, meanwhile, investigated the earlier incidents involving Arnod Paole and described them in detail in 1732.

At the same time Glaser's father, also a physician, wrote to the recently established weekly medical journal *Commercium Litterarium ad Rei Medicae et Scientiae* with the news that in Serbia

> a magical plague has been rampant there for some time. Perfectly normal buried dead are arising from their undisturbed graves to kill the living. These too, dead and buried in their turn, arise in the same way to kill yet more people. This occurs by the following means: the dead attack people by night, while they are asleep, and suck blood out of them, so that on the third day they all die. No cure has yet been found for this evil.[10]

Vampirism made the reputation of the *Commercium Litterarium*, which published seventeen articles on the subject in 1732 alone. Moreover, twenty-two learned treatises on vampirism were published across Europe over the next three years in cultural and intellectual centres such as Amsterdam, Halle, Jena, Leipzig, London and Vienna. Attention increasingly focused on the pathology of vampirism. John Heinrich Zopfius, Director of the Gymnasium of Essen, observed for example in his *Dissertatio de Uampiris Seruiensibus* (1733) that

> Vampires issue forth from their graves in the night, attack people sleeping quietly in their beds, suck out all their blood from their bodies and destroy them. They beset men, women and children alike, sparing neither age nor sex. Those who are under the fatal malignity of their influence complain of suffocation and a total deficiency of spirits, after which they soon expire. Some who, when at the point of death, have been asked if they can tell what is causing their

> decease, reply that such and such persons, lately dead, have risen from the tomb to torment and torture them.[11]

In Britain, the news was reported in the *London Journal* for 11 March 1732 as a prodigy from Heyducken, Hungary: 'namely, of *dead Bodies* sucking, as it were, the Blood of the *Living*; for the *latter* visibly dry up, while the *former* are fill'd with Blood'.[12] Zopfius' account was reported in a travelogue, thus: '*Vampyres* are supposed to be the Bodies of deceased Persons, animated by evil Spirits, which come out of the Graves, in the Night-time, suck the Blood of many of the Living, and thereby destroy them'.[13] In 1739, the Marquis d'Argens returned to the Plogojowitz case with the details that that vampire had reappeared three days after his death, upon which villagers recounted that they had dreamt that he was sucking their blood from their throats; they subsequently fell ill and died. D'Argens described how, when staked, Plogojowitz's coffin had filled with blood, and that other corpses had then been protected with garlic and whitethorn – details that would be enthusiastically taken up by later writers. Plogojowitz may also have been ithyphallic, indicating a predatory sexual threat as well as the paranormal menace of the vampire. Such details fuelled printed reports, making vampires a runaway press sensation. Neither was this a backwoods phenomenon: in Vienna, it was rumoured that the Princess Eleonore von Schwarzenberg (1682–1741) had risen as a vampire following her death.

Further incidents followed in Banat, Moravia and Wallachia in the years 1754–56. Established physicians passed judgement, including Gerard van Swieten (personal physician to the emperor and head surgeon of the military), whose treatise was published in 1755, and Georg Tallar (a regimental surgeon), whose report appeared in 1756. Van Swieten made a concerted attempt to medicalise vampirism as a mass delusion rather than a physical condition. He proposed a colonialist social model of the enlightened centre taming and civilising the irrational and barbaric periphery. Tallar, meanwhile, described symptoms and then analysed the possible causes. He noted that, critically, the condition of vampirism did not affect German settlers or the military, but was confined to Greek Orthodox Wallachians, so it was evidently not an epidemic disease. He then examined the customary diet of the Wallachians – their winter fast, their subsistence on a broth of cabbage and pumpkin, and their proclivity to drink brandy – and concluded that their meagre diet and habits of fasting made them prone to anaemia. Interestingly, the Dutch paper *The Gleaner* had in 1733 already put vampire delusions down to diet: if people 'eat nothing but bread made of oats, roots, or the bark of trees' it will raise 'gloomy and disagreeable ideas in the imagination', and John Bond in his *Essay on the Incubus* (1753) similarly