

**TECHNOLOGIES OF DESIRE: TYPISTS, TELEGRAPHISTS AND THEIR
MACHINES IN BRAM STOKER'S *DRACULA* AND HENRY JAMES'S *IN
THE CAGE***

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Abstract

Focusing on Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) and Henry James's *In the Cage* (1898), this paper examines the eroticising of the female typist and telegraphist during the fin de siècle and the linkages between female sexuality and the female labourer's textual productions. I aim to trouble the easy connections made by theorists such as Friedrich Kittler between the advent of the typewriter and female emancipation. To conjoin the two unproblematically is to overlook the ways in which such female figures are erotically staged when working. Both *Dracula* and *In the Cage* highlight this relationship, as well as the intersections between the female worker and her roles as wife and mother. This paper also suggests a reading of the typist and telegraphist as new types of authors, and concludes by examining the multifarious ways in which the female worker's body is presented in both texts in relation to their writing machines.

Machines do away with polar sexual difference and its symbols. An apparatus that can replace Man or the symbol of masculine production is also accessible to women [...] A writing apparatus that does not represent an erotic union of script and voice [...] is made to order for coeducational purposes. The typewriter brought about [...] a completely new order of things.¹

Friedrich Kittler views the typewriter as a neutraliser of gender that compels a complete re-ordering of female employment from the late nineteenth century onwards. This perspective exemplifies the recently emerging critical discourse circulating around female emancipation, the typewriter and the workplace. To disregard the tensions that arise from the relationships made between women, labour and the typewriter, as Kittler does, is to misunderstand and reduce what is at play within a number of fin-de-siècle texts which concentrate on the figure of the female textual machinist.

Critics such as Morag Shiach and Rita Felski have begun to challenge the allegedly seamless link between women's entry into the workplace and female emancipation. Shiach and Felski argue that to conjoin women's employment with her emancipation is to ignore the 'clear sexual segregation in employment in the early twentieth century' and the fact that women were 'paid significantly less than men'.²

¹ Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900* [1985], trans. by Michael Metteer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 351-52.

² Morag Shiach, 'Modernity, Labour and the Typewriter', in *Modernist Sexualities*, ed. by Hugh

Indeed, as Margery Davies points out, ‘the central fact of working-class life’ was that ‘most women worked because they had to’.³ Such conditions, Shiach argues, prevent an easy connection between the emancipation of women and the secretarial labour opportunities that flooded the market in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The number of female clerical workers and typists increased dramatically: from 1851 to 1911 the number of female clerks rose from two thousand to one hundred and sixty-six thousand.⁴ Many female clerks and typists may have discovered that ‘participation in the labour force afforded psychological benefits such as increased independence and self-reliance’.⁵ For many, however, working did not necessarily offer the type of independence needed to carve a route away from the expected destination of matrimony and motherhood, especially since the marriage bar ‘which forced women to resign’ from their jobs once they were married, continued until the 1940s.⁶

Depictions of the female typist act as sites where a locus of anxieties specific to the fin de siècle are rehearsed, particularly within Bram Stoker’s 1897 novel *Dracula*, which focuses on a female typist, and Henry James’s 1898 novella *In the Cage*, which focuses on a young, female telegraphist. Both texts, I will argue, expose the ambiguities and anxieties surrounding the woman worker in relation to technology, writing, subjectivity and the female body. *Dracula* and *In the Cage* rehearse the tensions inherent in the relationship between sexuality and textuality and thereby reveal the reductive qualities of Kittler’s notion that the typewriter is ‘a writing apparatus that does not represent an erotic union between script and voice’.⁷ Whilst Kittler attempts to establish that the advent of the typewriter does ‘away with polar sexual difference’ and that this ‘desexualization allows women access to writing’, such a reading of the emancipatory possibilities of the typing machine ignores the explicit sexualisation of typists, secretaries and telegraphists in some

Stevens and Caroline Howlett (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 114-29 (p. 117).

³ Margery W. Davies, *Woman’s Place is at the Typewriter: Office Work and Office Workers 1870-1930* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), p. 70.

⁴ Meta Zimmeck, ‘Jobs for the Girls: the Expansion of Clerical Work for Women, 1850-1914’, in *Unequal Opportunities: Women’s Employment in England 1800-1918*, ed. by Angela V. John (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), pp. 153-78 (p. 154).

⁵ Davies, *Woman’s Place is at the Typewriter*, p. 70.

⁶ Shiach, ‘Modernity, Labour and the Typewriter’, p. 117. The marriage bar was a convention in employment introduced in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It was designed to keep married women from entering professions, such as banking and teaching, as well as working for the Civil Service, amongst other occupations. In the twentieth century, there were several pieces of legislation passed locally around England that enshrined this convention in law. See Shani D’Cruze, ‘Women and the Family’, in *Women’s History: Britain, 1850-1945: An Introduction*, ed. by June Purvis (London: UCL Press, 1995), pp. 44-71 (p. 63).

⁷ Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, p. 352.

literature.⁸ Kittler overlooks the theatre of staged eroticisation in which these specific types of female workers become actors as they enter into circulation as marketable bodies in the workplace. I will argue that in both Stoker's and James's work, sexuality and textuality become intrinsically conjoined; the female body, the circulation and exchange of text and (in certain instances) financial capital, all enter into a narrative surrounding the anxieties of Victorianism, modernity and gender.

In recent years critics of *Dracula* have begun to relocate their focus away from themes of repressed Victorian sexuality (both male and female) and imperial desire. The text is evolving into a site of modernist discussion; one which has begun to examine the character of Mina, whose body represents a nexus of increasingly explicit *modernist* anxieties compared to that of Lucy, a young woman who has become a receptacle of *Victorian* unease regarding female sexuality. Indeed, Jennifer Wicke argues that these newly emerging readings can permit *Dracula* 'to be read as the first great *modern* novel in British literature'.⁹ Whilst this is certainly valid, to an extent, ambiguities remain prevalent throughout the novel as to how far Mina may be read as a New Woman.

Mina types, performs secretarial duties and learns shorthand; she accumulates skills which could potentially become, as Carol A. Senf puts it, 'a means of economic independence'.¹⁰ Stoker continually emphasises Mina's intelligence, with Dr. Van Helsing noting how 'wise' she is and praising her as the group's 'teacher'.¹¹ Stoker, however, troubles a simple reading of Mina as a New Woman. For instance, Mina reveals to Lucy that she has been 'working very hard [...] to keep up with Jonathan's studies' so that when she is 'married [she] shall be able to be useful to Jonathan' (p. 62). Mina does not, as Senf argues, have a 'career'.¹² Rather, Mina's role as secretary and typist become an extension of her wifely duties. Indeed, upon deciding to read Jonathan's journal, she writes:

I shall get my typewriter this very hour and begin transcribing. And if it be wanted; then, perhaps, if I am ready, poor Jonathan may not be upset, for I can speak for him and never let him be troubled or worried with it at all. (p. 192)

Mina believes that to be a good wife she must assume the role of her husband's secretary. Mina's conflation of her typing duties and her expected role as family nurturer is wrapped up in her belief that through her transcription of Jonathan's

⁸ Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, pp. 351, 199.

⁹ Jennifer Wicke, 'Vampiric Typewriting: *Dracula* and its Media', *ELH*, 59:2 (Summer 1992), pp. 467-92 (p. 467, emphasis in original).

¹⁰ Carol A. Senf, '*Dracula*: Stoker's Response to the New Woman', *Victorian Studies*, 26:1 (Autumn 1982), pp. 33-49 (p. 45).

¹¹ Bram Stoker, *Dracula* [1897], intro. by Maurice Hindle (London: Penguin, 2003), pp. 348, 376. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

¹² Senf, '*Dracula*: Stoker's Response to the New Woman', p. 35.

journal she can protect him from further danger and anxiety. It is in the figure of wife and secretary, then, that the sexual and the textual begin to converge, assembling perhaps most interestingly at the interstices of the woman and vampire.

These connections continue as we excavate the etymology of the word ‘vamp’. To ‘vamp’ is to ‘adapt, compile, compose, [or] put together a book [or] composition’.¹³ In assuming the role of typist and creator of the ‘mass’ of manuscript, Mina performs the act of vamping, or more precisely, vampirism itself (p. 402). When coupled with the second meaning of ‘vamp’, to ‘behave seductively’, Mina’s vamping is further sexualised.¹⁴ Both meanings construct Mina as simultaneously a sexy compiler and an erotic consumer. Far from ‘doing away with polar sexual difference’ the typewriter eroticises the body of the female typist.¹⁵ This sexuality is inscribed by, and under, the male gaze and constructs female typists as ‘beauties, threats to wives, and flirts’.¹⁶ At first glance, it appears to be Lucy who is presented as the sexually wanton and promiscuous female, declaring to Mina, ‘why can’t they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her?’ (p. 67). We are informed by Jonathan, however, at the close of the novel, that his and Mina’s son’s ‘bundle of names links all [their] little band of men together’ (p. 402). There is something strangely uneasy within this statement, as though the textual discourses of the ‘band of men’ that have circulated within Mina’s body have resulted in an act of sexual reproduction (p. 402).

Critics have been keen to focus on the links between Mina as a typist and ‘the feminization of the workplace’.¹⁷ Little has been made of the way in which the (albeit traditional) sexual focal point of the house, the bedroom, has been transformed in *Dracula* into a site of typewriting frenzy. Dr Seward writes in his diary: ‘After lunch Harker and his wife went back to their own room, and as I passed a while ago I heard the click of the typewriter. They are hard at it’ (p. 240). Whether Stoker intended the final sentence as a sexual pun or not, it certainly points to the act of typing as inextricably bound up with a discourse of erotics; sexual and textual reproduction become strangely interchangeable within the marital bedroom.

The bedroom becomes a location in which the male texts and discourses of the

¹³ ‘vamp, v.1’, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, online version March 2012 <http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2277/view/Entry/221290> [accessed April 2012].

¹⁴ ‘vamp, v.3’, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, online version March 2012 <http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2277/view/Entry/221292> [accessed April 2012].

¹⁵ Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, p. 351.

¹⁶ Carol Srole, ‘“A Blessing to Mankind, and Especially to Womankind”: The Typewriter and the Feminization of Clerical Work, Boston, 1860-1920’, in *Women, Work and Technology: Transformations*, ed. by Barbara Drygulski Wright (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1987), pp. 84-100 (pp. 94-95).

¹⁷ Jennifer L. Fleissner, ‘Dictation Anxiety: The Stenographer’s Stake in *Dracula*’, in *Literary Secretaries/ Secretarial Culture*, ed. by Leah Price and Pamela Thurschwell (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 63-90 (p. 73).

group of vampire hunters permeate and circulate through Mina's mind and body. It is within the space of the bedroom, and in the role of the typist, that she simultaneously becomes both a consumer and producer of texts: both vampire victim and vampiric typist. When listening to Dr. Seward's phonograph, Mina consumes his 'grief' and reproduces his 'anguish[ed] [...] words on [her] typewriter' (p. 237). Mina and Jonathan's marital bed is hijacked by Dracula in one of the most overtly sexual and disturbing scenes of the novel. The very room in which sexual reproduction between husband and wife is legitimated, and where Mina textually reproduces, is selected as the room in which Dracula 'forc[es] [Mina's] face down on his bosom', causing a 'thin stream' of blood to trickle 'down the man's bare breast which was shown by his torn-open dress' (p. 300). This moment presents an inversion of assumed gender roles: Mina, as woman, 'drink[ing]' from the male breast of Dracula (p. 300). Mina is presented here as a corporeal entity that can be permeated by both male discourse and male blood.

Whilst it is the consumption of male discourses and Dracula's blood that render Mina a victim, she utilises both as mechanisms to save and "redeem" herself. Lucy's only definitive chance of safety and "redemption" is the circulation of male blood within her, but this method fails. For Mina to survive, however, she must consume the discourses of the men who surround her; the circulation of their texts within her serves to keep her alive. She realises that she will be "safer" with the group of men: not so much due to their physical protection, but because they will provide her with the discourses that she needs to consume, type and collate (p. 347). Essentially, she is only truly safe when she is, in a rather Lacanian sense, inscribed on and constructed by male discourses that she then circulates *within* her.¹⁸ Mina also utilises her consumption of Dracula's blood to aid her along her trajectory of survival, through becoming a medium. Mina asks Dr. Van Helsing to 'hypnotise' her, as she believes a telepathic link has been created through the exchange of fluids (p. 332).

By consuming Dracula's blood and seemingly rendering herself telepathic, Mina comes to embody certain depictions of woman as the unconscious consumer: she declares that she was in a 'half swoon' during her encounter with Dracula (p. 306). Mina's unconscious but dangerous consumption of Dracula's blood speaks to an emerging anxiety of the period which focuses on woman as a constant and avaricious consumer; an anxiety further illustrated by Mina's voracious devouring of all manner of male texts. Lucy behaves in a similar manner by deliriously, and almost constantly, consuming a variety of male blood that proves fatal. The sense of woman as unconscious consumer is also important, I would argue, in relation to Henry James's typist Theodora Bosanquet's notion of typewriting being 'the business of

¹⁸ See Jacques Lacan, 'The Circuit', in *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and the Technique of Psychoanalysis 1954-1955*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. by Sylvania Tomaselli (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1988), pp. 77-90.

acting as a medium between the spoken and the typewritten word'.¹⁹ The word 'medium' links the typist and telegraphist with unconscious communication, and the possibility of the machine with which they work dislocating the self, or 'I', from the physical act of writing. Such issues construct a dichotomous position for the telegraphist and typist: should such female workers be responsive authors, who engage with the substance of the words they type or translate? Or, conversely, should they convert mind and body into an extension of the machine, thus becoming a hybrid of human and machine?

Bosanquet writes that James bemoaned his 'previous amanuenses' for 'their apparent lack of comprehension of what [he] was driving at'.²⁰ James clearly desired a typist who would engage with the substance of his words, rather than one who became a passive vessel for his prose. Stoker's Mina appears to veer between two such positions. In one instance, she transcribes Jonathan's journal, which includes her husband's revelation of his 'burning desire' that the three female vampires should 'kiss [him] with [their] red lips' at Castle Dracula (p. 45). Mina makes no mention of this, only desiring that she may 'comfort him' if he ever 'gets over his nervousness' (p. 192). She seems either to have ignored the 'confession' or, more interestingly, she remains unaffected by it. Perhaps this is an instance in which Stoker misreads Mina's emotions within her simultaneous roles of wife, transcriber, reader and typist. However, if we read this moment as Mina's emotionally distanced method of transcription, this would seemingly point to the dislocation between the eyes and the mind from the hands and the typewriter. In another instance, however, Mina is presented as 'more than touched by [Dr. Seward's] grief' as she transposes his oral account of Lucy's death onto the typed page. She also adds that through the 'wonderful machine' of the phonograph she hears the doctor's 'heart beat' (p. 237). Here Mina indicates she is clearly influenced by Dr. Seward's narrative and is presented as an affected transcriber of a male text. *In the Cage* complicates such a dichotomy even further, in that 'our young lady', the telegraphist, is simultaneously knowing and un-knowing: both an active author and a passive body within the theatre of her workplace.²¹

Linkages between the sexual and the textual emerge repeatedly within James's novella. The telegraphist is literally caged 'in framed and wired confinement' and under the gaze of both her male co-workers and customers (p. 9). Her sole 'function' is to serve customers, in processing and circulating their words (p. 9). The economies of sex and text are united within the confines of the protagonist's duties as a telegraphist:

¹⁹ Theodora Bosanquet, *Henry James at Work* (London: Hogarth Press, 1924), pp. 6-7.

²⁰ Leon Edel, *Henry James: The Master 1901-1916* (London: Avon Books, 1972), p. 363.

²¹ Henry James, *In the Cage and Other Stories* [1898], intro. by S. Gorley Putt (Middlesex: Penguin, 1972), p. 96. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

And here it occurred, oddly enough, that if, shortly before, the girl's interest in [Everard's] companion had sharpened her sense for the messages then transmitted, her immediate vision of himself had the effect, while she counted his seventy words, of preventing intelligibility. (p. 17)

We are never quite certain as to whether her sexual interest in Captain Everard (and possibly his lover, Lady Bradeen) originates from her curiosity over his textual transmissions, or whether her increasingly obsessive inquisitiveness about his telegrams is a result of her attraction to him. Nonetheless, the way in which she transcribes Everard's messages is laden with distinctly sexual overtones: 'She indeed felt her progressive pencil, dabbing as if with a quick caress the marks of his own, put life into every stroke' (p. 18). The act of writing and the inscribed marks themselves become sexualised here, with the use of words such as 'caress' and 'stroke'. Her customers purchase both words and the ability to transmit them. She, in effecting this transaction, becomes intrinsically bound up within what Wicke has termed 'the erotics of knowledge.'²² The telegraphist becomes part of the circulation of capital and words, and thus a hint towards prostitution is forged. Indeed, when the heroine meets with Everard on the park bench, the narrator notes that she sits with a 'heap of gold in her lap' (p. 55). Their conversation is described as 'bargaining' (p. 61), whilst elsewhere, we see that their 'relationship' consist of 'transactions' (p. 77). Another meaning of the word 'medium' becomes relevant here, in its use within financial trading systems and the circulation of money.²³ If the telegraphist's role involves mediating text between customers, she also becomes caught up within networks of financial exchange.

Knowledge becomes a marketable product, circulated and withheld, as well as contained within the body of the telegraphist. Her knowledge of Everard becomes information capital, which in turn becomes eroticised via the hints of prostitution implicit in such transactions. Pamela Thurschwell argues that a potential economic or sexual relationship between the heroine and Everard is 'replac[ed]' by 'a sense of intimacy which springs from her knowledge of [him]': producing a desire in her, 'not for sexual contact but to do something for him [...] by means of sending or receiving information.'²⁴ Thurschwell's use of the word 'replace' here seems to discount the notion that knowledge, information and sex are inextricably enmeshed. To put it slightly differently, knowledge and sex can alternatively, and perhaps more convincingly, be constructed as at interplay with each other, rather than one replacing

²² Jennifer Wicke, 'Henry James's "Second Wave"', *The Henry James Review*, 10:2 (Spring 1989), pp. 146-51 (p. 147).

²³ 'medium, n. and adj.', *The Oxford English Dictionary*, online version March 2012 <http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2277/view/Entry/115772> [accessed April 2012].

²⁴ Pamela Thurschwell, *Literature, Technology and Magical Thinking* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 98.

the other, as Thurschwell reads it.

The telegraphist herself acknowledges that ‘the harmless pleasure of knowing’ is what she ‘get[s] out of’ her aiding Everard (p. 62). Her conflation of pleasure and knowledge is telling here, as is the way in which she speaks those words in her conversation with Everard on the park bench. The exchange becomes a flirtatious encounter, with her declaring “‘I know, I know, I know!’” whilst ‘breath[ing] it ever so gently’ (p. 62). Furthermore, her revelation that knowing that Everard realises she is helping him has endowed her with a knowledge, “‘that has been for [her] as if there were something [...] between us’” (p. 57). This is followed by ‘a movement that has the result’ of Everard ‘placing his hand on her own’, whilst at the same moment she is thinking about ‘a satin sofa in a boudoir’ (p. 58). The fact that she has ‘never seen a boudoir, but there had been lots of boudoirs in the telegrams’ further illustrates the complicated intertwining of sexual knowledge and her roles as a telegraphist and medium (p. 58). We see that she acquires a great deal of her sexual knowledge whilst being confined in the telegraph cage. This speaks to the relationship between the passive and active female worker and “author”.

Seemingly, the novella’s heroine is far from passive, as she constantly attempts to construct a coherent narrative from the various telegrams she fields between Everard and his lover. She continually remembers minute details to aid the lovers as they despatch their telegrams, believing she ‘[holds] the whole thing in her hand’ (p. 83). Just as Mina’s collating and typing of documents leads to the destruction of the vampire, so too does James’s heroine save the day, as she ‘obligingly complete[s]’ the number code for Everard, thus prompting his realisation that he and his lover are safe from exposure (p. 86). With both *Dracula* and *In the Cage*, we can read the typist and telegraphist as unexpected authors. Indeed, Michel Foucault describes ‘writing [as] unfold[ing] like a game’.²⁵ The narrator of *In the Cage* constantly presents the heroine’s relationships with the telegrams and Everard as such, with even Mr Buckton enquiring ‘what game’ she is playing (p. 87). Foucault also sees writing as becoming ‘linked to sacrifice, even to the sacrifice of life’.²⁶ The heroine regards her relationship with Everard in the context of such sacrifice, declaring she would ‘do anything’ for the man (p. 58), telling her fiancé, Mr Mudge, that she ‘must just keep on as long as [Everard] may want [her]’ (p. 68). She refuses to move to Chalk Farm or to get married to Mr Mudge until the narrative is complete. In such a sacrifice of her own life’s journey, she believes the narrative she is constructing through the telegrams of Everard and his lover ‘beat[s] every novel in the shop’ (p. 43).

The telegraphist as author is, however, further problematised as she is, like Mina, placed in a position of information quarantine. Yet Mina’s position is more consensual, given that she initially believes her lack of knowledge is her safety. The

²⁵ Michel Foucault, ‘What is an Author?’ [1984], in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. by Paul Rainbow (London: Penguin, 1991), pp. 101-8 (p. 102).

²⁶ Foucault, ‘What is an Author?’, p. 102.

heroine of *In The Cage* meanwhile '[feels] how much she [has] missed in the gaps and blanks and absent answers - how much she had had to dispense with' (p. 82). Not only is she missing a great many pieces of the textual narrative she attempts to collate but, at times, her body is gazed upon as, and described as little more than, an automaton attached to the machinery of telegraphy. Early in the novella the narrator tells us that, in the course of her working day, the telegraphist is:

Equally unconscious and unerring in each of [the] particulars, and not, as the run on the little office thickened with the afternoon hours, looking up at a single ugly face in the long sequence, nor really hearing the stupid questions that she patiently and perfectly answered. (p. 18)

This episode seems to point towards the telegraphist as an unconscious mediator between the customer and language. She interacts 'unconscious[ly]' and does not need to listen to her customers in order to perform her duties (p. 18). In this sense then, she becomes a medium; an unknowing and passive vessel for the discourses that circulate around her mind and body.

Such an episode also points to wider anxieties concerning the relationship between the female worker and the machine. For instance, the very word 'typewriter' speaks of both the machine and its operator. At the beginning of the twentieth century, female typists were encouraged to read various typewriting manuals, one of which was published by Remington for the Stenographic Efficiency Bureau. This manual includes the chapter entitled 'Making Your Body an Efficient Machine'.²⁷ Similarly, the methods that many companies marketing the typewriter employed implied that the machine was not complete without a (specifically) female typist. The novella's narrator highlights this link between body and machine by remarking that the 'memorable lady [...] pushed in three bescribbled forms which the girl's hand was quick to appropriate' (p. 13). Under the gaze of Lady Bradeen, the protagonist is reduced to a single body part: her hand. In the sphere of typewriting and telegraphy the hand becomes an important visual signifier that links the machine and the female body. Such a positioning also situates the hand in an increasingly liminal space, as it allows it to exist within both the realm of the female body and the machine or, alternatively, neither.

The marked and complex relationship between the female body and her machine was not solely reserved for the didactic literature aimed at typists who wished to enhance their abilities; as the role of female typists rose to prominence, so too did the market of 'typewriter erotica'.²⁸ This niche area of erotica features photos

²⁷ Cited in Fleissner, 'Dictation Anxiety: The Stenographer's Stake in *Dracula*', p. 68.

²⁸ Paul Robert's website contains a number of these pictures, see Paul Robert, *The Virtual Typewriter Museum*, 2001 <http://www.typewritermuseum.org/index.html> [accessed September 2011]. Paul Robert's book *Sexy Legs and Typewriters* (Netherlands: The Virtual Typewriter

which range from a typist's bare ankle, seductively strewn across her writing machine to naked models with their typewriters. Many pictures depict the typist as having some form of a sexual encounter with her (male) employer, in which their proximity to the typewriter seemingly adds a further dimension of allure. These images serve to remind the viewer of the fundamental role of the female typist; most obviously, that she is part of an erotic performance within the workplace. Indeed, Kittler remarks that 'typewriter keyboards' are 'derived from pianos': speaking to the idea that, in earlier periods, women were invited to display their femininity and charm through performing a piano recital for an audience of family and guests.²⁹ Both piano and typewriter offer the female participant the chance to perform her femininity and sexuality. They also render the woman's body and sexuality inextricably bound up with her instrument or machine; the machine cannot function without its female worker, but how can the typist work without her machine? Each seemingly gives the other its sexuality, its allure and its essence of desire.

The complexities of the relationship between the female body and the writing machine connote wider and prevalent anxieties about women in the workplace during the fin de siècle. That is to say, if women are working and textually reproducing, then they are likely not to be fulfilling their "natural" reproductive function. *Dracula* and *In the Cage* both mediate the notion, albeit to varying extents, that sexual reproduction must replace textual reproduction. Indeed, many commentators saw clerical work as preparing women for the sphere of domesticity and motherhood. The majority of female clerical workers followed the common trajectory of only working until they were married (the law, as discussed above, prevented women from secretarial and clerical labour once they were married). An 1891 magazine article about female clerical workers highlights this intended narrative for a woman's life, when it declares that 'the [clerical] girls make good wives'.³⁰

Both Mina and the protagonist of *In the Cage* save the day. Mina's typing leads to the destruction of Dracula, whilst the telegraphist aids Everard in his search for the intercepted telegram. It would seem though, much more is at stake. As Fleissner points out, 'the fruit of [Mina's] womb constitutes an appropriate substitute' for the 'mass of typewriting' (p. 402).³¹ Indeed, Dracula must be killed, not only for the physical safety of those hunting him down, but because he allows Mina to access a form of female sexuality that is outside of the strict sexual code of the society she inhabits. This occurs both explicitly, through Mina's and Dracula's bodily and telepathic encounters, and in other ways, such as through her secretarial work. All point towards the way in which Dracula has instigated Mina's vampiric sexuality,

Museum, 2003) brings together a further assortment of images related to this topic.

²⁹ Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 195.

³⁰ Qtd. in Fleissner, 'The Stenographer's Stake in *Dracula*', p. 70.

³¹ Fleissner, 'The Stenographer's Stake in *Dracula*', p. 84.

which is brought to the fore when she connects with her erotic unconscious and we see her in a 'half swoon' on the marital bed with Dracula (p. 306). Significantly, Dr. Van Helsing's attempt to keep Mina safe from Dracula by 'touching a piece of Sacred Wafer [...] on her forehead' results in it being 'burned into [her] flesh', due to her previous encounter with the vampire (pp. 315-16). The shame she is conjured into feeling, indicated by her screams of 'Unclean! Unclean!' may represent the figurative disgrace and guilt she should be experiencing because of her excessive and explicit displays of sexuality; a sexuality, in fact, that has nothing to do with female reproduction (p. 316).

The patriarchal metanarratives of authority, such as medicine and the law, embodied by both Dr. Van Helsing and her husband, constantly warn Mina of the dangers of transgressing the established boundaries of female sexuality and labour. When Dr. Van Helsing declares that Mina should 'say goodbye to this work' he tellingly adds: 'Besides, [Mina] is a young woman and not so long married; there may be other things to think of some time, if not now' (p. 250). Whilst Mina's stitching together of the narrative patchwork saves everyone involved, not least herself, if she wishes to remain within the rigid boundaries of accepted female sexuality it is made abundantly clear that her continued textual labour must stop. Her erstwhile vampiric sexuality is presented as an excess productive of nothing but text. Once Dracula is staked these excesses will vanish along with him, for there will be nothing more to write about and Mina will be expected to follow the customary trajectory of sexual reproduction.

Similarly, following James's heroine's success in aiding Everard, she decides that she must begin her "natural" function of wife, and perhaps in time, mother, revealing that she wishes to begin her domestic career 'not [...] next month, but [...] next week' (p. 101). Whilst both women rescue men, they are eventually shown to have also retained inherently masculine inscriptions on their bodies; inscriptions that propagate and normalise the idea that women's "natural" function is to inhabit the domestic sphere and to give birth, not to type or write. Such a reading of *Dracula* and *In the Cage* debunks Kittler's myth that 'the typewriter brought about [...] a completely new order of things', and that the emergence of the machine prompted a solely emancipatory possibility for the female worker.³² Instead, both texts reveal the typewriter and the telegraph as aids to the distinctly masculine modern world, which circulates and inscribes itself both within and upon the female body.

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³² Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, pp. 351-52.

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