

Dracula's Swedish Cousin: A Great Literary Mystery

By Rickard Berghorn

I.

A UNIQUE VERSION OF DRACULA

Only two years after the publication of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), the novel began to be serialized in the Swedish daily newspaper *Dagen* [The Day], under the title *Mörkrets makter: Roman af Bram Stoker: Svensk bearbetning för Dagen af A–e* [Powers of Darkness: Novel by Bram Stoker: Swedish Adaptation for *Dagen* by A–e]. It ran there from June 10, 1899 to February 7, 1900. Shortly thereafter, it was serialized in *Aftonbladets Halfvecko-Upplaga* [The Evening News' Half Week Edition], an inexpensive bi-weekly edition of the daily newspaper *Aftonbladet*, where it was published from August 16, 1899 to March 31, 1900, although in a radically abridged version. *Aftonbladet* and *Dagen* had the same editorial office at the time, which explains the parallel publication. The full version from *Dagen* was then reprinted in *Tip-Top* (October 4, 1916 to January 23, 1918), a cheap weekly magazine for pleasure reading. And then it fell into oblivion.

So far, no reason to bat an eye. No literary scholar in Sweden found reason to show any significant interest in this version of *Dracula*. Sam J. Lundwall listed it in his various editions of *Bibliografi över science fiction och fantasy* [Bibliography of Science Fiction and Fantasy] between 1962 and 1997, and that was all.

However, in 2017 I got a reason to take a closer look at the publication, because a sketchy, slim Icelandic version of Bram Stoker's novel had been discovered and translated into English, and attracted attention because the plot differed dramatically from the original. It was published in 1900 under the title of *Makt myrkranna*, or *Powers of Darkness* in English—which translates into “Mörkrets makter” in Swedish! But the Icelandic version (only about half the length of the 1897 *Dracula*) was published in the year *after* the initial serialization of *Mörkrets makter*. This indicates that it was not an original text, as the publishers of the English translation had assumed. The team behind the translation and presentation of *Makt myrkranna* consisted of the art historian Hans Corneel de Roos (b. 1956) and the prominent *Dracula* researchers Dacre Stoker (related to Bram; b. 1958) and John Edgar Browning (b. 1980).

I hit the jackpot. Once I received copies of the 1899 *Mörkrets makter* it turned out that this Swedish adaptation of *Dracula* was almost twice as long as Bram Stoker's already extensive original novel, with a plethora of memorable characters, scenes, and plotlines of which there is no trace in *Dracula*, and with an entirely new ending.

In one stroke it turned out that the Icelandic version was nothing but a severely abridged translation, which also lacked details and scenes from the Swedish original. The Swedish *Mörkrets makter* was “the real deal.”

Here, several of the main characters have changed names: Jonathan Harker is named Thomas, Mina is Wilma, Dracula has been renamed Mavros Draculitz. In addition, plenty of the new material is ingenious and cleverly written; it also preserves Stoker’s style and mood consistently throughout. If all this was written by the unknown signature A–e, then he or she must have been a master of Gothic horror.

But the novel is deeply fascinating in many other ways. Here it is not merely that the Transylvanian Count wishes to spread the vampire race across the earth; he also conspires with politicians and rulers all over the world to introduce a new world order based on a kind of racial and overtly fascist notion of the natural right to rule, inherited by “the Strong.” Count Draculitz conceives the vampire race as the next step in the evolution of humankind—a new “master race,” as Hitler would soon call it. *Powers of Darkness* can partly be read as a satire of—and warning against—the Social Darwinist theories that flourished around the turn of the twentieth century. In a darkly fascinating way, the novel foresees the destruction that Nazism and Fascism would bring to the world in the 1930s and 1940s. And this is not an overstatement; the novel speaks explicitly about the persecution of Jews and the seething anti-Semitism of the day, as well as the troubled political situation in Europe, and associates it with Count Draculitz’s superhuman ideas. The psychiatrist John Seward opens a tabloid paper after a conversation with a fascist follower of Draculitz and reflects:

Incidentally, the telegram section of the newspaper reports much strange news: lunatic scenes and riots, organised by anti-Semites, in Russia, Galicia, and southern France; shops looted, people killed; general insecurity of life and property; and the most monstrous old wives’ tales of “ritual murders,” abducted children, and other unspeakable crimes, all of which are ascribed in real earnest to the poor Jews, while influential newspapers are inciting to a general war of extermination against the “Israelites.” You would think this is the middle of the Dark Ages!¹ [...]

It is a strange time in which we live, that is certainly true. Sometimes it seems as if all the insane fantasies, all the mad ideas, the whole world of unhinged and disjointed notions into which I, as a madhouse doctor, have for years been obliged to enter in the care of my poor patients, are now beginning to take shape and form and gain practical application in the course and development of the great events of the world.

The novel is sometimes verbose and monotonous, and full of threads that are left hanging, but there are also elements of pure genius. What other author in 1899 wrote with

1 The “old wives’ tales” of ritual murders and abducted children ascribed to the Jews were in fact abundant in newspapers at the turn of the twentieth century. I know this because I incidentally began to collect such clippings some years ago with the intention of writing a book about “fake news” through the ages.

such awareness of the state of the world and the direction in which the trends pointed? I can name only one, G. K. Chesterton (1874–1936), but he warned against the popular eugenics movement and the rise of fascism and totalitarianism many years later, in *Eugenics and Other Evils* (1922), in the aftermath of World War I.

In two peculiar essays published in February 2022, Tyler R. Tichelaar and Sezin Koeçler argue that *Mörkrets makter* as a whole is racist and advocate “white supremacy,” which seems absurd to anyone who has actually read and studied the novel. Their reasoning is that since some sections that *do not* treat Draculitz and his fascist ideas *also* contain elements of ethnic prejudices typical for its time, the novel as a whole is more or less advocating Draculitz’s racial ideas... After I have given the following examples as a counterargument, I find no reason to discuss the opinion further: Abraham Lincoln does not become an anti-abolitionist or advocate of slavery just because he also demonstrated period prejudices against blacks. And Sir Arthur Conan Doyle remains one of the bravest anti-racists of the day, although some of his Sherlock Holmes stories contain obvious allusions to racial stereotypes.¹ It is famous that Sir Conan Doyle, for anti-racist reasons, became involved in two legal scandals, and succeeded in clearing the accused in at least one of the cases, a British-Indian man who had been falsely convicted for mutilating and killing cattle. The other case regarded a Jewish immigrant who obviously had been falsely convicted for robbery-homicide. And we must face the fact that the black American sociologist, socialist, anti-racist and civil rights activist W. E. B. Du Bois also sympathized with the eugenic movement. We are all trapped in the time we live in and we can never fully get an overview or see through what becomes obvious in hindsight for future generations. We can only do our best, and *Powers of Darkness*, Lincoln, Doyle and Du Bois did far better than others of their time.

In *Dagen* and *Afionbladets Halfvecko-Upplaga*, the novel was provided with anonymous illustrations. They usually only depict people who talk to each other and are often not very well-drawn. Only a few of them are used in the present translation, but all 135 illustrations are collected in a gallery at the end of the book. In February 2022, it was revealed that they were drawn by the artist and illustrator Emil Åberg (1864–1940).

Besides the political climate, *Mörkrets makter* also deals with the contemporary craze of spiritualism, occultism, and newly constructed religions, where both the magical society of the Golden Dawn and Madame Blavatsky’s Theosophy were topics of interest for the upper classes and intelligentsia of Great Britain. The novel contains numerous speeches in defense of occult and metaphysical beliefs, but it also criticizes or warns against its aberrations. Van Helsing’s belief in the supernatural, for example, is portrayed as healthy and insightful, while the rites and occult beliefs of Count Draculitz’s followers are depicted as pernicious. In the depths under the castle are caves where Count Draculitz, as a high priest, presides over a disgusting pagan religion with human sacrifice, practiced by bestial, degenerate sub-humans; a religion that he now plans to spread across the world.

In addition, leading Dracula researchers such as David J. Skal, John Edgar Brown-

1 The Sherlock Holmes story “The Yellow Face” (1893), on the other hand, is remarkably anti-racist with its empathetic portrayal of an Englishwoman marrying an intelligent, cultivated black lawyer from the United States, and the child they have together.

ing, Dacre Stoker, and Robert Eighteen-Bisang strongly suspect that parts of the Swedish version may have been adapted from one or more of Stoker's early drafts of the classic novel, or in any case have been inspired by the same, because so many details are consistent between *Mörkrets makter* and Stoker's work notes. To make it even more intriguing, the text is riddled with Anglicisms even in the parts not found in the 1897 *Dracula*, similar to a poorly translated text not originally written in Swedish.

The full-length version of *Mörkrets makter* is 1,625,800 characters in the original language, while the 1897 *Dracula* weighs in at 830,000 characters.¹ The abridged version in *Aftonbladets Halfvecko-Upplaga* is little more than half as long as Bram Stoker's novel, and was further shortened in the translation into Icelandic (for example, Renfield was completely removed from the plot). In this presentation and analysis, I will adhere strictly to the full-length version in *Dagen*, on which the present translation is based; this is the original text, unlike the abridged version in *Aftonbladet*, and in particular unlike the abridgement of an abridgement that is *Makt myrkranna*.

My publishing house, Aleph Bokförlag, released the complete Swedish text of *Mörkrets makter* in October 2017 with a foreword by John Edgar Browning. As he wrote: "*Mörkrets makter* (*Powers of Darkness*) is among the most important discoveries in *Dracula*'s long history."

* * *

An edition of this translation with essentially the same introduction will be published in April 2022 by Centipede Press in the United States. It is a very lavish luxury edition illustrated by five European artists, and can hardly be bought by other than a few specialized collectors and *Dracula* aficionados. Ever since the beginning of the project of translating *Mörkrets makter*, I was worried about the possibility that another publisher would catch up with us, but was constantly met with reassuring, even annoyed words that there was no reason to hurry. The translation was completed as early as 2019, but Centipede Press needed several more years to get the book printed. This year it will finally happen, six years after the start of the project.

Of course, I was right in my fears. A certain William Trimble in Chicago, USA, suddenly came out with his own edition, translated by one Anna Berglund, as an ebook in February 2022. I immediately decided to take full control of my own project, so I obtained permission from Centipede Press to publish my translation and introduction in paperback and affordable hardcover editions. And here, already in March 2022, the editions are finally on the bookshelves.

Bram Stoker and the Contemporary Dracula

During his lifetime, the Irishman Abraham "Bram" Stoker (1847–1912) was known primarily as being the assistant and constant companion of the famous actor Sir

1 In Sweden, characters are counted instead of words, and it makes more sense to do it here too, since the texts are in different languages. The present translation of *Mörkrets makter* is around 292,500 words, while the 1897 *Dracula* is around 161,000 words.

Henry Irving. He was also the acting manager of the Lyceum Theatre in London, in whose stately building Irving performed when he was not on tour. Stoker's fiction writing was a spare-time job at this time, but he was forced into the role of professional author after 1905 when Irving died and his involvement with the Lyceum Theatre ceased. Stoker's finances suffered and he needed periodic medical care because of overwork. Toward the end of his life he became afflicted with Bright's disease; it seems he also had two strokes. The cause of death has been much debated, but in *Something in the Blood* David J. Skal argues strongly for the controversial opinion that Stoker died from neurosyphilis (which thus also caused what has been interpreted as embolisms).

Dracula was well received by critics as well as readers when it was published by Archibald Constable & Co., Westminster, but it would take some decades before it reached its monumental status of a literary classic. Stoker had previously published theatrical reviews and short stories, as well as four novels between 1890 and 1895, but only a few of the short stories had horror motifs. After the vampire orgy with the Transylvanian Count, he returned to the horror genre with *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903) and the Gothic *The Man* (1905). His last horror novels echo *Dracula* with a Central European woman believed to be a vampire in *The Lady of the Shroud* (1909) and with a vampire-like monster in *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911), in which a seductive and murderous woman is actually a giant snake that lives hidden in the caverns below a castle.

As early as January 1 until March 29, 1898, a Hungarian translation of *Dracula* was published in the newspaper *Budapesti Hírlap*, following the text of the 1897 novel. The next year, *Dracula* was published as a serial in the American newspaper *Charlotte Daily Observer*, starting on July 16, 1899 and finishing on December 10 of the same year. This text also matches the original novel and can be found scanned on the Web.

Before that, starting on May 7, 1899, the newspaper *Inter Ocean* in Chicago had begun to print the novel under the title *The Strange Story of Dracula*. When Hans Corneel de Roos in 2017 discovered this American serialization, he prematurely went public and claimed it was the origin of *Mörkrets makter*, a conclusion he based on one single detail: that Lucy Westenra in some ads for the serial had gotten her name misprinted as Lucy Western. However, copies of the serial that de Roos himself has published, as well as a description in an advertisement of the contents, show that *Inter Ocean* simply published the text of the 1897 *Dracula* once again. De Roos is a force of nature when it comes to ambitious excavations in databases and archives, but sometimes his enthusiasm gets the better of him.

These are the known appearances in print of *Dracula* until the time of the original release of *Mörkrets makter* in *Dagen*. Nothing eliminates the notion that the novel is a translation or adaptation of a similar version published in another country, but there is nothing that indicates it either. Library databases in Norway, Denmark, Germany, France, and the Netherlands have been searched before the writing of this introduction. *Mörkrets makter* remains a unique version of *Dracula*.

Harker and the Blonde Seductress

One of the most interesting differences between *Mörkrets makter* and *Dracula* is the presence in the castle of Draculitz of a blonde and blue-eyed vampire woman, who

is constantly seeking to seduce Harker and lure him into corruption. In the text of 1897, there are three women, two dark-haired and one blonde, who in one scene display an erotically charged bloodlust for Harker. Nevertheless, they play a rather insignificant role in the novel, unlike Harker's blonde femme fatale in *Mörkrets makter*. This is steaming eroticism:

Just then, everything was illuminated by the bright electric light of two large flaming flashes of heat lightning, almost immediately following upon each other. In the glow of these she was suddenly before me—quite close—dazzling—like a white flame—with the same enigmatically tempting smile as when I first saw her eyes of blue fire, burning into my brain and causing my strength and will to melt like wax. I saw her thus for a few seconds only, slender and yet voluptuous, against the dim light in the room; then it was dark again [...] Once again the quiet, flaming glow blazed, ghostly and otherworldly—it showed me her lovely face close to my own, leaning over me, her eyes holding my eyes; the longing, voluptuous red lips half open, the sparkling jewel upon her white bare bosom. I saw how she sank to her knees, next to the bench on which I was lying—in the next moment it was dark again, and, dizzy and half-conscious, I felt as if I were sinking into an abyss [...] I felt her breath, warm and intoxicating, on my face—felt a pair of swelling lips pressing against my neck in a long, burning kiss that made every fibre of my being tremble with shuddering lust and anguish—and in a reckless delirium I locked the beautiful apparition in my arms—

Compare this with the corresponding scene in *Dracula*, where the blonde woman approaches Harker for the “vampire kiss.” The scene is classic for its “sexiness,” but appears tame beside the one in *Mörkrets makter*. Here, the tension is almost literally heightened by the electric discharges of the atmosphere—but tastefully in the form of “heat lightning” and not a full-blown thunderstorm, strengthening the deep, threatening, dammed-up tension between Harker and the vampire woman.

A Success That Never Happened

Dracula had already attracted attention abroad. Why didn't the editorial office of *Dagen* and *Aftonbladets Halfvecko-Upplaga* just translate the already released novel? It would be significantly cheaper than paying the signature A–e for a “Swedish adaptation” twice as long as the original novel. At least A–e was paid for this gigantic work, one can safely assume. This was not a simple pirated edition among a multitude.

The editorial staff of *Dagen* and *Aftonbladets Halfvecko-Upplaga* certainly expected to have a guaranteed literary success at hand, a future classic alternative to *Dracula*. And because Stoker's novel was so heavily edited in this Swedish version, they could also circumvent copyright problems. In *Something in the Blood*, David J. Skal explains that Stoker was vigorously involved in the struggle for copyright legislation. Although he could not legally prevent a Swedish pirated edition of his work, he could be a nuisance.

However, the hope of success was dashed. Only the Icelandic translation of the

abridged text in *Aftonbladets Halfvecko-Upplaga* was realised, and the two Swedish versions were never printed in any separate book editions.¹ The novel was published only one more time sixteen years later in the cheap weekly magazine *Tip-Top*—and then it fell into oblivion. The fact that the serial in *Aftonbladets Halfvecko-Upplaga* was shortened radically, after the initial portion had been printed, can also be interpreted as a result of the failed success; they wanted to have space for some other serial as soon as possible, which hopefully would appeal better to the audience.

II. BRAM STOKER AND SWEDEN

For a long time, genre fiction had a low status and a weak position in Sweden, with the exception of crime fiction (Sjöwall/Wahlöö and Henning Mankell among others). This can presumably explain why *Mörkrets makter* became so thoroughly forgotten, as we will see.

The cultural life in Sweden was roundly politicized even in the early 1900s with the rise of the labor movement, and it became firmly rooted with the craze of socialism and communism that followed in the '60s and '70s. Both the labor movement and the radical left gained a uniquely strong position in Sweden, and their ideologies and preferences permeated the entire university system. Consequently, the most accepted and respected literature was the politically “conscious” kind with social criticism. Among popular genres, crime could be accepted as long as it exhibited these political tendencies, as Sjöwall/Wahlöö did, while fantasy and horror were regarded as escapism and despised as “commercial” genres. The science fiction connoisseur John-Henri Holmberg (b. 1949) has declared that he was not even allowed to study and analyze fantastic fiction during his university studies in literature. However, the harsh climate for horror and fantasy in Sweden has improved significantly after the turn of the millennium.

This is the context in which Aurora Ljungstedt (1821–1908) became a forgotten master of weird fiction. She wrote Gothic horror and mystery stories very much in the vein of Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu and Wilkie Collins and was one of the most popular and esteemed writers in Sweden during the nineteenth century. But toward the end of her life, she began to be purged from the literary history as being merely an “entertainer.” She fell into total oblivion until she was rediscovered around the turn of the millennium. As early as August 1901, a tribute article in the magazine *Idun*, prompted by her eightieth birthday, stated that the kind of authors she represented “seems like playing children besides socially important authors,” and that this impacted unfavorably on Ljungstedt’s legacy. Here it can be objected that Selma Lagerlöf (1858–1940), author of ghost stories and novels inspired by folk legends, was highly respected and even awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1909, but

1 It may be noted, however, that the serial was published in a book-size format in *Dagen* and *Aftonbladets Halfvecko-Upplaga*, in a way that made it possible to cut out the sheets and hand them over to a bookbinder. This was a common way of publishing serials in Sweden in the nineteenth century.

her literary star rose before the politicization was a fact, and her stylistically masterly body of work was always primarily of a philosophical and moralistic nature.

When such a skillful and entrancing author as Aurora Ljungstedt could be so thoroughly forgotten in Sweden, we should not be surprised that the same fate met *Mörkrets makter*. It is easy to interpret the elements of political thriller and social criticism as an attempt to appeal to the politicized culture of the time, as August Strindberg and his generation had set the tone, but a sensational, sexy vampire serial must have been too much “escapism” and “entertainment.” It can also be mentioned that the decadent movement, which influenced *Dracula* to such a large extent, never really got a foothold in Sweden.

A Vampire Hunter from Helsingland?

When we read *Dracula*, we do not seem to find that it has much to do with Sweden. Stoker does not touch on specific Swedish conditions at any time in his other novels and short stories, although he gladly refers to Old Norse phenomena such as Vikings, Berserks, Goths, and the mythology. But the Stoker family had solid personal contacts with Swedes, which may be of significance to *Mörkrets makter*.

In Bram Stoker’s working notes to *Dracula*, Sweden is mentioned in connection with a Hungarian Jesuit who visited Lapland in 1775 and claimed that the linguistic idiom of the Sami people (Sweden’s indigenous population) resembles Hungarian (EM 95).¹ However, the following question is worth more discussion:

Why did Stoker choose the strange surname “Helsing” for the Dutchman Abraham Van Helsing? It is certainly not a Dutch or Flemish name. There is no hint in Stoker’s work notes where he got the name, but we do know that Helsing is actually a genuine Swedish name.

“Helsing” (with “Hellsing” as a variant) is very common in Sweden and the Swedish linguistic region, but very uncommon in England and on the Continent, where it is used by Swedish descendants. Two people of the name who are famous in Sweden are the author and composer of children’s songs Lennart Hellsing (1919–2015) and the Finnish-Swedish conductor Anna-Maria Helsing (b. 1971).

This is due to the origin of the name. A person from the Swedish province of Helsingland is called a “Helsing” in Swedish, and thus it was close at hand for Helsing to use that as a surname. Helsinki (“Helsingfors” in Swedish), the capital of Finland, received its name from a colony of Helsing that settled in the area in the thirteenth century, according to the Helsinki City History Committee; thus the city was also commonly known as Helsing or Helsing in olden times. Gösta Mittag-Leffler (friend of the Stoker family; see below) was a professor of mathematics at the University of Helsinki in 1877–1881, and his wife Signe Julia Emilia was born and raised there. It is worth noting that Helsinki was often called Helsingfors in English literature in the nineteenth century. I assume that Stoker got the name this way.

1 EM stands for Eighteen-Bisang & Miller, the two scholars who edited Stoker’s work notes; the page numbers refer to the order in which EM placed them. See *Bram Stoker’s Notes for Dracula* (2008). The notes had been studied by a handful of researchers since the 1970s but were published by Eighteen-Bisang & Miller in 2008.

The name Helsing almost never appeared in English literature until 1897, when *Dracula* was published. Then it happened sporadically, used by writers such as Anthony Hope (with a character in *Rupert of Hentzau* [1898]) and Robert W. Chambers (a character in *The Reckoning* [1905]).¹

Van Helsing, the Dutch metaphysician, vampire hunter, and expert on neurological ailments, is quite rightly considered to be modeled after a recurring character in the works of Bram Stoker's favorite author, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu (1814–1873): Doctor Martin Hesselius. Like Van Helsing, Dr. Hesselius is a physician with an interest in mental illness, occultism, and the spirit world. In addition, he also has the peculiar habit of frequently quoting the Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), whose doctrines are used to explain the haunting in “Green Tea” (1872). And as if by coincidence, Dr. Hesselius, too, has been given a Swedish surname.

Le Fanu simply took the name Hesselius from relatives of Swedenborg. Among Swedenborg's circle of friends could be found his cousin, the physician Dr. Johan Hesselius (1687–1752), who is mentioned in several places in Swedenborg's writings (however, his practice had nothing to do with mental illness or hauntings). But among Swedenborg's relatives there was an abundance of other Hesseliuses, such as the portrait painter Gustavus Hesselius (1682–1755), his son the artist John Hesselius (1728–1778), and his half-brother, the author Andreas Hesselius Americanus (1714–1762).

Van Helsing, like Martin Hesselius, was originally intended to be German (EM 21), but Stoker eventually made him Dutch, possibly to de-emphasize the similarities with Dr. Hesselius. In the novel, however, Van Helsing continues to utter German phrases.

The fact that Stoker chose a Swedish name for his occult detective, just as Le Fanu had done the same for his occult detective, really looks like a nod to the precursor and inspiration.

The Stoker and Leffler Siblings

If *Mörkrets makter* is really based on, or inspired by, early drafts of *Dracula*, Bram Stoker's connections to Sweden may be of significance. This brings us to the author and playwright Anne Charlotte (Edgren-)Leffler (1849–1892) and her brother, a mathematician and man of art and culture, Gösta (Gustaf) Mittag-Leffler (1846–1927).

Anne Charlotte Leffler, today rather forgotten, addressed mainly women's liberation in her drama. She was a highly successful, much-disputed, and controversial writer even internationally during her lifetime; she is said to have attracted more attention in England than Henrik Ibsen. Her brother Gösta Mittag-Leffler was, for his part, an internationally renowned professor of mathematics, a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences and an honorary member of the Royal Society in Eng-

1 This I was able to find out by means of Google Books, Project Gutenberg, and Archive.org. While the name “Helsing” appeared sparingly in English literature before Stoker, it was almost always in translations from Swedish and other Nordic languages, or in nonfiction books that dealt with Swedish and Nordic history. Google Ngram Viewer is of no help here because words such as Helsingfors, Helsingland, and Helsingborg, etc. have been hyphenated in the scanned books, resulting in a great number of extraneous “Helsing” hits.

land. But he also held a strong interest in culture and literature and was fervently active in the literary circles of Stockholm, where he acted as a debater in cultural and political matters. In 1914, he was prosecuted and convicted for defamation of Prime Minister Karl Staaf; however, the verdict was thrown out by the Supreme Court because of formal inaccuracies in the prosecution.

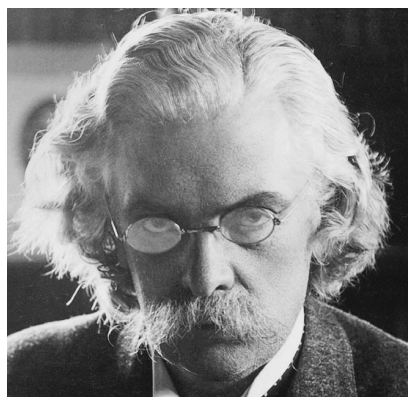
In the manuscript collection at the National Library of Sweden, there are letters and messages indicating that Anne Charlotte Leffler and Gösta Mittag-Leffler were close friends with Bram Stoker's siblings, and thus probably with Stoker himself. A letter to Anne Charlotte Leffler from Stoker's brother George Stoker (1854–1920), dated 1887, is preserved, as well as an undated business card from him to Gösta Mittag-Leffler. In the National Library there are also seven letters to Mittag-Leffler from Stoker's sister Margaret Dalrymple Stoker (1853–1928), written between c. 1874 and 1883. There are also three undated letters of 1875 to Mittag-Leffler from a Mathilde Stoker. It is unclear whether this is Bram Stoker's mother Charlotte Mathilda Blake Thornley Stoker (1818–1901) or his sister, the artist Charlotte Matilda Stoker Petitjean (1846–1920). The correspondence is commonplace and does not contain anything of particular interest for a literary scholar; however, it shows that the contact between the Leffler and Stoker siblings was extensive and familiar.

But there is more. On the whole, Anne Charlotte Leffler had extensive contacts with friends of Bram Stoker; she simply moved in the same circles. At the National Library there is a letter to her, undated but written in 1884, from Jane Francesca Elgee Wilde (1821–1896)—Oscar Wilde's colorful mother. In Dublin she ran a literary salon where the young Bram Stoker was a frequent visitor. He started socializing with the family and became a dear friend of her son's. David J. Skal describes their friendship in detail in *Something in the Blood*. Stoker's wife Florence also had a relationship with Oscar Wilde before she abandoned him for Stoker.

In one of Anne Charlotte Leffler's letters to Adam Hauch, quoted in her letter and diary collection *En självbiografi* (1922), she describes her encounter with Lady Wilde during a stay in London in 1884:

I have made acquaintances in a lot of literary circles. The other day I received an invitation to a Lady Wilde, a well-known literary lady, who is just about to publish a book about Scandinavia, in which she mentions me as one of the leading authors at home, and she absolutely wanted to meet me, when she was told that I was here. It was the most precious party I have ever attended. Her son, Oscar Wilde, famous poet and leader of the so-called Aesthetic movement here, usually wears breeches and a Spanish coat, she [Lady Wilde] never shows herself in daylight, wherefore her rooms were kept dim in the middle of the day and only illuminated by an artificial red light—dressed in a deeply low-necked, light-coloured silk dress (at a morning reception) much painted, the furniture the most motley bric-a-brac, remnants of its former glory, but broken, which was not meant to be seen in the dusk—.

Lady Wilde as a vampire? The Irish writer lived at this time in misery in London, after her husband had died in bankruptcy a few years earlier.



Anne Charlotte Leffler and her brother Gösta Mittag Leffler.

Was Oscar Wilde himself present at the gathering? It is possible to read her letter in that way. In Leffler's diary entry of 9 May of that same year, she and Oscar Wilde even visited a "hermetic society" in London: "Mystical drawing-room meeting. Hermetic, theosophical society in evening dress. Doctor Mrs. Kingsford loveable, beautiful, intelligent, very self-aware, yellowish-red hair, tall and slim, pale face. Oscar Wilde with 'nasty looks' at limping, pockmarked Miss Lord. Two hermetic celebrities speaking."

Monica Lauritzen's biography *Sanningens vägar: Anne Charlotte Lefflers liv och dikt* (2012) describes Leffler as a frequent theatregoer during the same period in London, most impressed by Sir Henry Irving's version of Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing*, which she must have seen at the Lyceum Theatre. Unfortunately, Lauritzen does not provide many concrete details of this event. Was Leffler introduced to the great actor after the performance? At least it would be bad etiquette if she did not exchange words at the Lyceum with Bram Stoker, whose brothers and sisters she had such good contact with. Generally, we have to assume that Leffler socialized with the Stoker siblings during her time in London, although it is not evident in the letters and diary entries known to date.

There is also the fact that Leffler spent her last years in Naples, to which the Stoker family too had links. Bram Stoker's parents, Abraham Stoker Sr. and Charlotte Mathilda Thornley Stoker, lived there in their old age, and when Abraham died in 1876 it was Bram Stoker's task to visit Naples and arrange the funeral. His mother Charlotte lived on the continent for another fifteen years—exactly where is unclear—but it is very possible that she stayed in Naples. She then returned to Dublin, where she died in 1901. Since their parents lived there, the Stoker siblings ought to have visited Naples on many occasions. Dacre Stoker speculates in an email to me (dated June 24, 2019) that Thornley Stoker, Bram's elder brother, who read and commented on Bram's drafts of *Dracula* during the course of the work, had the opportunity to visit Naples, since he was Baroness Burdett-Coutts's private physician, and accompanied her on at least one cruise on the Mediterranean.

Perhaps he had a manuscript with him on a cruise and gave it to his friend, the literary celebrity Anne Charlotte Leffler, for some comments. When she suddenly and

unexpectedly died of appendicitis in October 1892, the manuscript may have gone astray along with her estate.

Exactly how it happened—if it happened at all—that some draft of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* ended up at *Aftonbladet's* editorial office in Stockholm, we do not know, but it is very possible that Anne Charlotte Leffler and her brother had something to do with it.

Gösta Mittag-Leffler continued to be active in the literary circles of Stockholm until his death in 1927.

III. IS MÖRKRETS MAKTER BASED ON AN EARLY DRAFT OF DRACULA?

There are many indications that *Mörkrets makter* is based on one or more of Stoker's early drafts of *Dracula*, but all in all there is no definite evidence of it. The indications, however, have accumulated not least during the research for this introduction. In this chapter they are accounted for, and at the end there is a discussion for and against the theory.

Mörkrets Makter in Bram Stoker's Notes

In Eighteen-Bisang and Miller's *Bram Stoker's Notes for Dracula* (2008), in the section "Limitations of the Notes," the editors explain that Stoker may well have written more notes for *Dracula* than those present; in other words, we cannot take for granted that the Notes give a complete view of how Stoker imagined the novel at the different stages of development. The editors add: "Almost half the events in the novel are not mentioned in the Notes. Most of the interactions between human beings and vampires from chapters 16 to 27 [in *Dracula*] are missing." They also make clear that it is "highly unlikely that Stoker moved directly from the Notes to the typescript. He probably bridged the gap between them with one or more lost drafts of the novel," which tallies well with the aforementioned hypothesis of the background of *Mörkrets makter*.

The hypothesis was first put forward in the 2017 English translation and presentation of *Makt myrkranna*, primarily by Hans de Roos. He missed perhaps the most striking correspondence between Stoker's Notes and *Mörkrets makter*—the presence of a lone vampire woman who makes advances on Harker in the Count's castle, which will be examined in detail in the section "Dracula's Mysterious Guest" of this introduction. Some other correspondences listed in that book are obviously false; I examine these in a separate section. Here are a number of the significant correspondences and similarities, the first of which is my addition.

In Stoker's Notes, Lucy finds a "mysterious brooch" on the beach outside Whitby, probably intended to have come from the wrecked ship that brought Dracula to England. This piece of jewelry then plays a mysterious role when Lucy is sleepwalking in the graveyard of Whitby and gets attacked (EM 18, 19, 34). In *Mörkrets makter*, she falls under the influence of a similar mystical piece of jewelry when meeting the gypsies who have camped outside Whitby, and who are in collusion with Drac-

ulitz. The seductive blonde woman in Draculitz's castle wears the same kind of jewelry; and Harker receives a gift from the Count, a ring with a suggestively gleaming ruby, similar to the other pieces of jewelry. They have some kind of hypnotic impact on Harker and Lucy.

In the Notes, the Count has a deaf-mute servant (EM 1, 7), while the Count himself takes care of all the tasks of the household in *Dracula*. The Notes indicate that this woman is the Count's servant in England, but in *Mörkrets makter* she is only present in Count Draculitz's castle. Another servant of Dracula in London is mentioned in Stoker's Notes, a "silent man," who probably also was the coachman who brings Harker to the castle, "driver man muffled" (EM 11), which indicates that the servants did not exclusively belong to the London part of the novel. In *Dracula* as well as in *Mörkrets makter*, the Count himself plays the role of the coachman.

In the Notes there is a detective named Cotford (EM 1, 7). This detective has a significant role in *Mörkrets makter* under the name Edward Tellet, subsequently assisted by another colleague named Barrington Jones.

In repeated notes Stoker mentions a blood-colored room: "secret room—coloured like blood"; "Count's house searched ° blood red room"; "the blood room"; "Searching the Count's house—the blood red room"; "Secret search Count's house—blood red room" (EM 7, 8, 15, 27, 34). In *Mörkrets makter*, this blood-colored room turns out to be the vampire Countess Ida de Gonobitz-Vårkony's most intimate chamber, where she lives on Draculitz's estate Carfax. Dr. Seward describes it thus in the following novel:

I found myself in a bedroom, furnished with great luxury and illuminated by a hanging ceiling lamp with a blood-red screen. Everything in the room was of the same colour, in my opinion not very well suited for the calm, soothing mood you would like to find in a bedroom—a strong flaming red that permeated and filled the whole atmosphere. [...] Ceiling and walls were covered with ruby-red silk; two of the large wall spaces were almost entirely covered with immense mirrors, framed with red plush; the carpet had the same red colour, and windows as well as doors were completely covered with red curtains, while the bed itself was so cased, draped, and padded with silk and velvet of this deep, brilliant colour that it resembled a case intended for some expensive piece of jewellery rather than an ordinary place of repose.

Perhaps this room in deep red was originally meant to be Dracula's orgy chamber, but obviously it is better suited for a woman. In *Mörkrets makter*, Draculitz has a similar room in another building in which he seduces his victims, although arranged in a much more masculine fashion.

In Stoker's Notes, Dr. Seward—the administrator of the insane asylum in the neighborhood of Carfax—is described as "a mad doctor" (EM 1, 5). In *Dracula*, he has no problems with his own mental health, but in *Mörkrets makter* his realization that he is on the verge of insanity is a significant plot point, and at the end he also becomes insane. His mind is suffering from the grief of Lucy's death and the fabulous experiences he is forced to undergo at Carfax.

It has been pointed out that the phrase “mad doctor” does not necessarily mean that the doctor is mad, but may merely implicate “a doctor specializing in madness.” It is a fair point; but even Eighteen-Bisang and Miller interpret it as most probably meaning the former: that the doctor is mad.

Robert Eighteen-Bisang discussed *Mörkrets makter* with me in an intense email exchange between June 1 and September 19, 2018. There he also compared *Makt myrkranna* (the version available to him) with Stoker’s notes and made this addition to the list:

Swallows are mentioned twice in Stoker’s notes as birds of religious significance: “swallow—galinelle lui dieu—fowl of the Lord—is lucky” (EM 6), and in almost identical wording “Swallow—galinele lui dieu—fowl of Lord—is lucky” (EM 53). Swallows are not mentioned in *Dracula*, but in *Mörkrets makter* they are mentioned and even given a symbolic significance in an important scene. At the beginning of Harker’s stay at the castle they are contrasted to the bats, whereby the swallows represent the day and the bats the night, as well as (we can presume) good and evil: “The swallows, still whizzing back and forth over the depths of the chasm, eventually turned to rest and were replaced by the silently circling bats, which in countless flocks seem to inhabit all the crevices and cracks of this old castle.”¹

Robert Eighteen-Bisang does not believe that *Mörkrets makter* is directly based on an early draft of *Dracula*, but that it is highly likely that it was translated and rewritten by someone who knew Stoker, and who had either read Stoker’s working notes or discussed the ideas for the novel with him. He explains this in his recent book *Drafts of Dracula* (2019). (He has also been given the opportunity to read this introduction and approve what is written about his opinions.) We can surmise that this would result in the many similarities with Stoker’s working notes, while it simultaneously explains the major differences: e.g., that the Count’s deaf-dumb maid is staying at Castle Draculitz while the Notes declare that she attends the Count in London; that the blood-red room belongs to the Count himself in the Notes, but in *Mörkrets makter* it can be found in the home of a female vampire; that there are two detectives in the Swedish text, while the working notes only speak of one; etc.

De Roos Goes Astray

Three of the similarities that Hans de Roos thought he had found between the Notes and *Makt myrkranna* appear to be completely unfounded.

In one case he writes: “The early notes indicate that the Count visits Lucy as a regular guest. Such visits are reported in the Icelandic version, while in *Dracula*, the Count enters Lucy’s house only stealthily or by force.” But there is no such mention in either the work notes or *Makt myrkranna* (and thus not in *Mörkrets makter* either). The closest you get in the Notes is this: “Jonathan & Mina are married—Lucy at wedding—gets worse—dreams again. Where is the evil where the cure—two vis-

1 The bats have already been given a sinister meaning in the novel. Harker sees the swallows and bats through an open window. He does not manage to close it in time before one of the bats enters the room and disappears. Shortly thereafter he meets the wonderful blonde vampire woman for the first time when she appears in the room—apparently she was the bat.

itors *Count Dracula & the Texan*" (EM 19; my emphasis). Perhaps this means that Dracula is visiting the wedding of Jonathan and Mina, but it can obviously not be interpreted as if Dracula is a "regular guest" in Lucy's home.

In the second case, de Roos writes: "In Stoker's original plan, the Carfax house and Seward's asylum were located in London itself—just like in *Makt myrkranna*. Only in the 1897 typescript version of *Dracula*, these buildings were removed to Purfleet, 20 miles east of Piccadilly." This is simply false. In *Makt myrkranna*, the location is not specified (unlike in *Mörkrets makter*, where the asylum and Carfax are always referred to as located in Purfleet). The early notes are actually very clear on the point that Dracula buys his property in Purfleet: "Peter Hawkins to Count <Wampyr> Dracula. Place secured on approval ° enclosing copies (2) of letters from Harker re estate at Purfleet" (EM 9). And that Dr. Seward lives in Purfleet is evident from this note: "Mina alarmed—asks Jonathan by letter to consult doctor re living at Purfleet" (EM 19). It is also mentioned on the same page that someone—apparently Dracula—has moved into a house in Purfleet and is visited (or just being observed) by Dr. Seward: "Lucy grows worse ° Mina goes about her to Dr. Seward. He goes to Whitby having seen new tenant of Purfleet house."

And the third case, according to de Roos: "The Stoker notes mention a dinner for thirteen people at Dr. Seward's house, where the Count arrives as the last guest. In *Makt myrkranna*, an evening party takes place at Carfax while Seward is the only English guest. Although the Count is the host now, he again enters last." It is enough to quote Stoker's own lines (EM 5) to see how far-fetched this is:

The dinner party at the mad doctor's
thirteen—each has a number
Each asked to tell something strange—order of numbers makes the story
complete—at the end the Count comes in

This is cryptic in itself but has nothing to do with the repeated late-night parties at Carfax at which Dr. Seward becomes an unwilling participant. On one occasion, the Count arrives late to the party, and that is all.

An Encounter with Gypsies

Here follows another hitherto unknown case: there are distinct scenes from an early short story by Bram Stoker, "A Gypsy Prophecy," to be found in Part Two, Chapter 7 of *Mörkrets makter*, in the scenes where Wilma and Lucy are visiting a gypsy camp. "A Gypsy Prophecy" was first published on December 26, 1885 in the US newspaper *Spirit of the Times* and was later reprinted in *Dracula's Guest and Other Weird Stories* (1914).

Both the short story and the sequence in *Mörkrets makter* are about people who visit a gypsy camp on a common to examine the supernatural powers supposedly possessed by the gypsies. In both narratives, there is a fateful prophecy about a seemingly horrible deed a husband/fiancé is about to commit against his beloved. In both narratives, the scene evoked by the fortune teller really happens—and it turns out to have been misinterpreted. The husband in "A Gypsy Prophecy" is not killing his

wife; it only looks like that when she has fallen and hurt herself; and Lucy's fiancé in *Mörkrets makter* is not cheating on her, only soothing his sister with hugs and kisses after she has fled from her violent husband.

Stoker's short story is considerably more mediocre and conventional in the writing, ideas, and descriptions than corresponding scenes in *Mörkrets makter*, but it was also published early in his writing career. It definitely seems as if Stoker had his own story "A Gipsy Prophecy" in mind when he wrote the similar sequence in the present novel.

There is a slight possibility that A-e may have read Stoker's obscure story (which is not known to have been translated into Swedish), and since it was written by the same author, A-e found it convenient to engraft it into this "Swedish adaptation" of *Dracula*. Or perhaps A-e really, in some way or another, was familiar with Stoker's earlier drafts of *Dracula*.

Dracula's Mysterious Guest

The significant and intimate role played by the lone blue-eyed and blonde vampire woman in the first section of *Mörkrets makter* intensifies Harker's inner struggle between sexual desire and his wish to stay faithful to his fiancée in England, and *Mörkrets makter* significantly surpasses the 1897 classic in this regard. In *Dracula*, she is the "leader" of the three vampire women in the castle (the other two are dark-haired), and she is also the first of them to try to "kiss" Harker.

Now it is evident from the Notes that Stoker, during a period around 1892, really seems to have intended there to be only one vampire woman and not three in Dracula's castle—a detail that was strangely overlooked in de Roos's presentation of *Makt myrkranne*. The note reads: "woman stoops to kiss him—terror of death—suddenly Count turns her away—"This man belongs to me" (EM 12). To this Eighteen-Bisang and Miller add a footnote explaining: "Here there is just one woman." This is preceded by another mention of the "vampire kiss," in which the number of women is not mentioned at all, and it may very well be one single seductress here, too: "Loneliness ° the Kiss—'this man belongs to me'" (EM 8). This note is dated 1890.¹

Bram Stoker's short story "Dracula's Guest" sheds an interesting light on this blonde vampire woman. The story was published in 1914 in the collection *Dracula's Guest and Other Weird Stories*, edited by Stoker's widow Florence. In the preface, she claimed that it was an unpublished part of *Dracula* that had been deleted because the novel was too long. For a long time the text puzzled researchers, because it simply does not fit into the novel.

The story takes place outside of Munich during Walpurgis Night, on 30 April, while *Dracula* begins with Jonathan Harker arriving at Bistritz from Munich a few

1 Here it should be pointed out that in his later book *Drafts of Dracula*, Eighteen-Bisang takes back this opinion, on the grounds that some unspecified "visitors" mentioned earlier on the page can be interpreted as the vampire woman's sisters. I argue that this connection is very remote, and I stand by the conclusion that Stoker's working notes indicate a single vampire woman.

days later, on May 3. “Dracula’s Guest” was therefore assumed to be a deleted first chapter. However, the events in this short story have nothing to do with the plot of the novel, and the style is completely different from Jonathan Harker’s other notes. Furthermore, the ending, with its allusion to *Dracula*, seems to be superimposed.

The Englishman in the story (Harker, but the name is not mentioned) goes out into the wilderness outside of Munich to visit a legendary deserted village. However, he is surprised by a violent snowstorm and finds shelter in a tomb. There lies a Countess Dolingen of Gratz, who committed suicide in 1801. Inside the door, in the light of a flash, Harker sees a beautiful woman apparently sleeping on a bier. The next lightning bolt eradicates the tomb at the same moment as the woman stands up. Harker is then found by some soldiers, semi-conscious, at the ruin, where he was watched and kept warm by a great wolf licking his neck. As events unfold, it becomes obvious that it was Count Dracula who was protecting his future guest against the undead Countess by creating the rage of the elements, and in the form of the wolf kept him alive in the cold of the winter night.

Today, we know that “Dracula’s Guest” in fact is a deleted part of a previous version of *Dracula*; this mainly because of an unexpected find in the early 1980s in a barn in northwestern Pennsylvania: Stoker’s typescript for the vampire novel, very close to the final version of 1897. The typescript had belonged to Thomas Corwin Donaldson (1843–1898), a Philadelphia lawyer and a close friend of Stoker.

“Dracula’s Guest” cannot be found in this typescript, either—but there are sentences and portions that directly mention the fatal adventure during Walpurgis Night. These are fragments that were deleted before the final publication and apparently remained in the typescript by mistake. For example, Harker mentions this adventure in a discussion with Count Dracula, and there is a sentence in which Harker complains that his throat still aches after a gray wolf has licked it with its sharp tongue. In fact, the typescript begins on page 102, which indicates that a large introductory section has been deleted. Instead it begins with Harker’s arrival at Bistritz, similar to the finished novel.

The episode is also suggested in Stoker’s work notes for *Dracula*: “Adventure snow storm and wolf” (EM 40). Furthermore, the Notes show that Stoker had provided *Dracula* with an elaborated prehistory before Harker arrives in Bistritz, which was then rejected. In Munich, according to the Notes, Harker stays at the Quatre Saisons, the same inn he stays at in “Dracula’s Guest,” but which is not mentioned in *Dracula*; and in the town he experiences strange events in a “dead house.” During the trip from London Harker is followed by letters from Dracula, similar to the one at the end of “Dracula’s Guest” (EM 10, 40).

Stoker’s typescript reveals something further. The Countess in the tomb is apparently identical to the blonde vampire woman in Dracula’s castle. In the scene where the women approach Harker and the blonde vampire tries to “kiss” him, the following passage can be found in the typescript, also deleted in the final version: “I was looking at the fair woman and it suddenly dawned on me that she was the woman—or her image—that I had seen in the tomb of Walpurgis Night...”

We can note the element of ambiguity here: Harker remarks that it is the same woman, but nevertheless he adds that it can be someone of the same appearance (“or

her image”). But there is no rational reason to assume that. This ambiguity, adding to the unsettling atmosphere, is characteristic of Stoker’s writing style and of the whole novel; as an example, Stoker does not state explicitly that the driver who takes Harker to the Castle is Dracula himself, nor does Harker himself realize it, but readers and researchers have always taken it for granted, and rightly so.

The description of this blonde vampire in *Dracula* reads: “The other was fair, as fair as can be, with great wavy masses of golden hair and eyes like pale sapphires.” The description is brief, but it obviously conforms with that of the blonde vampire woman who besets Harker lasciviously in *Mörkrets makter*.

Mörkrets makter also lacks an episode such as “Dracula’s Guest,” but we get a rich background for the blonde vampire. She turns out to be a Countess “from the beginning of the century” who had lived in Austria, just like the dead Countess of “Dracula’s Guest” (Styria is a part of Austria). How she died is left to the reader’s imagination—but it is very possible that she was driven to take her own life. However, the inscription on the tomb must not necessarily refer to the woman whom Harker sees inside; according to folklore, suicides can become vampires, but vampires are also attracted to places where suicides are buried, such as Dracula when he is sleeping in George Canon’s grave at the Whitby graveyard.

The language of “Dracula’s Guest” differs significantly from the concentrated and unvarnished prose that Jonathan Harker uses in *Dracula*, indicating that the text of the short story comes from an earlier draft of the novel and not from the heavily edited text that was published. On the other hand, it is in line with the language of *Mörkrets makter*.

This kind of detailed, wordy, sometimes downright clumsy prose found in “Dracula’s Guest” and *Mörkrets makter* characterizes Stoker’s short stories and novels in general, but is kept in check in *Dracula*.

A Number of Robinsons

In the colorful scenes with the old sailors at the Whitby graveyard, there is a friend of old Swales named Robinson, whom you do not see in *Dracula*. They all speak in a thick Whitby dialect, which Stoker got from Francis Kildale Robinson’s dictionary *A Glossary of Words Used in the Neighbourhood of Whitby* (1876) (EM 63).

That Swales’s friend seems to have been named after the author of the dictionary was pointed out by Martin Andersson during the translation of *Mörkrets makter*. But in addition, there are two more mentions of Robinsons in connection with Stoker’s Whitby research. Stoker copied a large number of inscriptions from tomb monuments, some of which made their way into the finished novel. These two inscriptions, however, do not appear in the novel: “John Robinson drowned Haseborough Sand 1st March 1814. aet.18” (EM 114), and “Sacred to the memory of [...] John Robinson who died Aug. 3rd 1827. aged 36 years” (EM 123).

Bram Stoker actually used that name—John Robinson—in another novel, *The Man* (1905). In it the main character, Harold An Wolf, assumes the name John Robinson for most of the novel, as he works as a sailor among other tasks, and several dramatic scenes with him take place at sea, for example, a shipwreck. As some kind of fixed points in the novel are recurring scenes with conversations in picturesque cemeter-

ies, reminiscent of similar scenes in *Dracula* and *Mörkrets makter*; they are probably inspired by the Whitby graveyard. It is obvious that the repeated use of the name on the dialect dictionary and the grave monuments, which also brings to mind a certain Crusoe, made an impression on Stoker during his research—such a strong impression that the surname comes back again and again in *Mörkrets makter*. There is also Eliza Robinson, who is the chambermaid of the Western family; an anecdote about one Fred Robinson with squinting eyes; an “old Robinson” present at a funeral, and a police officer named Robinson. None of them appears in *Dracula*. Bram Stoker had the surname in mind and therefore it must have been close at hand when drafting.

How Much by Stoker?

All the similarities between the working notes and *Mörkrets makter* listed above are found in the Notes from 1890 to 1892, according to their own dates and the order in which Eighteen-Bisang and Miller have placed them. After 1892, the dating of the pages is very unclear, but the notions approach the final version of *Dracula*. The draft or drafts that may have been the basis of *Mörkrets makter* seem to have been written at this stage or soon afterwards.

However, *Mörkrets makter* cannot possibly be a straight translation of an early draft. Jonathan Harker, Mina Murray, Lucy Westenra, and Dracula already go by their final names in these early notes of 1890–1892, but have been changed to Thomas Harker, Wilma Murray, Lucy Western, and Count Draculitz respectively in the Swedish adaptation. In the section with the human sacrifices under Draculitz’s castle, the flame-lit scene is compared with the flickering pictures of the cinematograph. The cinematograph (the first film projector) was not patented until 1895 and began to be used commercially only in 1896. Eighteen-Bisang has also pointed out¹ that R. M. Renfield did not get his name until the final version of *Dracula*, and that he is not even named in the typewritten manuscript discovered in the 1980s—in short, A–e must have done the editing with one eye on the published book. In *Mörkrets makter* there is even at least one allusion to an event that occurred after *Dracula*’s original edition in 1897: the “Orlean conspiracy,” which is a reference to rumors in 1898–1899 of a planned coup d’état in France, to be carried out by Louis Philippe Robert, Duke of Orleans, who claimed to be the King of France.

The big question is how much has been adapted or elaborated by A–e. Stoker’s early drafts must have contained a prehistory before Harker arrives at Bistritz. The fact that it was deleted here is also a proof that the editor was inspired by the 1897 *Dracula* during the work. The whole subplot about Draculitz’s political conspiracy of a fascist nature can be a Swedish addition based on the Social Darwinist hints already in *Dracula*,² which would explain the hybrid-like impression given by the vampire theme in combination with political thriller. The theme of *fin de siècle*—the pessimism and decadence at the end of the nineteenth century—in the last quarter of the

1 In email to me, June 8, 2018.

2 Mathias F. Clasen analyzes this in depth in his dissertation *Darwin and Dracula: Evolutionary Literary Study and Supernatural Horror Fiction* (Department of English, Aarhus University, 2007).

novel seems to have been added to make the novel contemporary; this closing part was published in *Dagen* from December 1899 until early February 1900.

Nor are there any allusions to high politics or political conspiracies in Stoker's work notes.¹ But Stoker was no stranger to such elements, as his novel *The Lady of the Shroud* (1909) indicates. It is set in roughly the same European region as *Dracula*—the setting is today's Croatia—and it also has a vampire theme. The ghostlike “white lady,” who is believed to be a vampire, turns out to be a woman who pretends she has died and has been hiding in a crypt to avoid being kidnapped by rebels. The novel is set against the background of the conflicts that would soon lead to the Balkan Wars (themselves a prelude to World War I) and contains political intrigues and conspiracies, diplomacy, and international war threats. Could it be that Stoker, having understood the advantage of clearing up the political intrigues in *Dracula*, felt the need to write something akin in *The Lady of the Shroud*?

The fact that the original Swedish text of *Mörkrets makter* is remarkably burdened with Anglicisms—which is analyzed in the “Notes on the Translation”—strongly indicates that *most* of the novel is a translation into Swedish; for example, the awkward use of Swedish present participle for English progressive form in abbreviated clauses can usually be assumed to indicate a (rather inept) translation. The parts of the novel with few or no Anglicisms may, therefore, be assumed to have been written originally in Swedish. This, however, does not prove that the translated parts were originally written by Stoker—it is of course possible that most of the novel was originally rewritten by some Anglophone writer and intended for publication in the UK or the US. Perhaps he or she found it risky because of Stoker's staunch attitude against copyright infringement, and instead allowed it to be published in the out-of-the-way country up in the North.

Pros and Cons

I do not attempt to conceal my fascination with the idea that *Mörkrets makter* may have been based on one or more early drafts of *Dracula*. It can also seem convincing in the light of the accumulated circumstantial evidence as presented above. But we are still lacking any clear, conclusive evidence.

Not much would be needed. If only one of the detectives had been named Cotford as in Stoker's work notes, or the vampire woman in Castle Draculitz had been named Countess Dolingen of Gratz, it would dispel any doubts, as such details cannot be coincidental. But in spite of the great extent of the material in existence, with all indirect evidence, it is completely lacking in such small but crucial details.

Is the amount of indirect evidence in itself just a bizarre tangle of randomness? Or

1 In the introduction to the Swedish edition of *Mörkrets makter* I pointed out: “However, there is a remarkable allusion to immortality and high politics in Stoker's early notes: ‘Immortalia-ble—Gladstone’ (EM 6).” William Ewart Gladstone was the Prime Minister of England and a good friend of Sir Henry Irving, but also a philosopher and theologian, and I later found that the note is rather a hint at his views on the immortality of the soul (which he denied). See for example W. A. Burch's *Gladstone and Conditional Immortality: His Reasons for Rejecting the Theory of the Natural Immortality of the Soul* (2014; orig. 1900).

just a series of overinterpretations based on the principle of *qui quaerit, invenit* (“He who seeks, finds”)? That is possible. But there is a solution that mediates between the extremes: perhaps A–e was in contact with Bram Stoker, discussed the interminable work on *Dracula* with him, and was told about the ideas that were subsequently removed from the manuscript. And perhaps A–e even had the opportunity to skim a few pages here and there in one of the drafts. Back in Sweden, A–e drifted apart from Bram Stoker on a personal level. But when *Dracula* was published, A–e recalled the discussions s/he had with Stoker, and considered himself or herself well suited to write a “Swedish adaptation” of the novel.

On the other hand, this does not explain the number of Anglicisms that permeate the novel even in parts that do not exist in *Dracula*—unless A–e was English-speaking at birth and then had settled in Sweden, or had someone translate the adaptation. Or perhaps A–e had lived for many years in England or the US and lost sense of his or her native language.

At this stage, it is simply not possible to know if the hypothesis is true; that is, if *Mörkrets makter* really reflects early ideas or drafts of *Dracula*.

What remains is the literary enigma; we can only speculate, discuss, and continue the research. For example, to plunge into the possibly most fascinating connection between a draft of *Dracula* and *Mörkrets makter*: the one regarding H. P. Lovecraft.

IV.

A HINT FROM H. P. LOVECRAFT

That Stoker wrote earlier versions of *Dracula* is quite clear from the circumstances surrounding “Dracula’s Guest” and the typescript found in the 1980s. But this is also confirmed from an unexpected source, no less than the classic American horror writer Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890–1937). And it turns out to have significant implications for *Mörkrets makter*.

In a letter to Frank Belknap Long on October 7, 1923, Lovecraft declared: “Mrs. Miniter saw ‘Dracula’ in manuscript about thirty years ago. It was incredibly slovenly. She considered the job of revision, but charged too much for Stoker” (*Selected Letters* 1.255).

Mrs. Miniter in the quotation is Lovecraft’s good friend, the author and journalist Edith Dowe Miniter (1867–1934). They were connected through their shared interest in the history of New England and their involvement in the amateur journalism movement, where members wrote and published small magazines and distributed them to other members. They were in contact from 1920 until her death.

In another letter, to Donald Wandrei on January 29, 1927, Lovecraft repeats essentially the same information about Stoker’s draft:

[I]t is curious to note that one of our circle of amateur journalists—an old lady named Mrs. Miniter—had a chance to revise the “Dracula” MS. (which was a fiendish mess!) before its publication, but turned it down because Stoker refused to pay the price which the difficulty of the work impelled her to charge. (*Mysteries of Time and Spirit* 20)

And also in a letter to R. H. Barlow on December 10, 1932: “I know an old lady who almost had the job of revising ‘Dracula’ back in the early 1890’s—she saw the original MS., & says it was a fearful mess. Finally someone else (Stoker thought her price for the work was too high) whipped it into such shape as it now possesses” (*O Fortunate Floridian* 44–45).

In another letter to Barlow in September 1933, Lovecraft adds that Mrs. Minter had no personal contact with Stoker: “She never was in *direct* touch with Stoker, a representative of his having brought the MS. & later taken it away when no terms could be reached” (*O Fortunate Floridian* 81).

Finally, in a memoir of the recently deceased Mrs. Minter, written in 1934 but published in 1938, Lovecraft provides additional information and a partial reason why Mrs. Minter did not undertake the task:

Notwithstanding her saturation with the spectral lore of the countryside, Mrs. Minter did not care for stories of a macabre or supernatural cast; regarding them as hopelessly extravagant and unrepresentative of life. Perhaps that is one reason why, in the early Boston days, she had declined a chance to revise a manuscript of this sort which later met with much fame—the vampire novel “Dracula”, whose author was then touring America as manager for Sir Henry Irving. (“Mrs. Minter—Estimates and Recollections”; *Collected Essays* 1.381)

If Lovecraft’s information is correct—it was, after all, thirty years later that he learned this from Minter—Stoker contacted Minter through a representative about the assignment, when Sir Henry Irving and his ensemble were touring in the States backed by Stoker. In his Stoker biography, David J. Skal states that the tour began in 1893 and came to Boston in January 1894, where Edith Minter worked for the *Boston Home Journal*, a weekly magazine for literature and art. Irving’s productions were reviewed in the *Boston Home Journal*—but in a glaringly scathing manner; in fact, it was among the most negative reviews the Lyceum received during this US tour. Stoker was the press contact, and Skal assumes that he contacted the editorial board for some diplomatic talk, as was his wont. Therefore, Skal suggests the possibility of a contact between Stoker and Minter without specifying how; but it is conceivable that Stoker came to terms with at least Edith Minter on the editorial staff. It is also conceivable that the contact between them was brought about completely independent of the *Boston Home Journal*—after all, they moved in the artistic and literary circles of Boston at the same time.

Mörkrets Makter and “The Rats in the Walls”

Now consider this, regarding *Mörkrets makter*:

Count Draculitz wanders by the light of wax candles in the cobwebbed family gallery with Thomas Harker by his side, and the more ancient the centuried portraits get, the more primitive and bestial the Count’s forefathers seem to be. But these early branches of the family tree have not vanished but degenerated further into apelike creatures that live in caves deep below Castle Draculitz.

Harker descends there after discovering a dilapidated chapel or temple in the foundations of the castle, once devoted to some unknown pagan religion. In the caves, Harker witnesses how the apelike creatures practice ancient rites including human sacrifice and drinking of blood, with Count Draculitz as a high priest. It seems obvious that the family line has been “refined” over the centuries, the individuals with the genetic garbage—pre-human, apelike, and troglodytic traits—having been relegated willingly or by force to the caves and tunnels under the castle. If this reminds you of H. P. Lovecraft, and especially his short story “The Rats in the Walls” (written in 1923 but published in 1924), then you are not alone.

The idea is practically the same in the classic short story by Lovecraft and the corresponding scenes in *Mörkrets makter*, with the only significant difference in Lovecraft’s story being that the subhuman creatures are discovered in the form of innumerable skeletons under the family castle; these remnants reveal that they, too, have been involved in cannibalistic and pagan rites (albeit as food). Even the strange detail that some of the monster-humans resemble pigs can be found in both stories.

“The Rats in the Walls” is actually the only short story by Lovecraft that shows signs of influence from Stoker. There is even a direct allusion to *Dracula*: The protagonist’s questionable forefathers had owned an estate named Carfax; in Stoker’s novel, as we know, the Count moves to Carfax Abbey in London. And it is impossible not to think of Stoker’s short story “The Judge’s House” (1891) when reading about Lovecraft’s supernatural rats that crawl around inside the castle walls.

Lovecraft wrote the classic short story in August and September 1923, that is, just before he wrote the first of the letters in which he mentioned Edith Miniter’s contact with Stoker and his draft of *Dracula*. Earlier in the year, he had met Mrs. Miniter in more private circumstances, when she took him and their friend Edward H. Cole on a sightseeing tour in Marblehead and Boston.¹ They had met a few times before, but only at meetings of the National Amateur Press Association. A “legend” that Miniter told him during this meeting—that people who habitually sit at a window can have their complexion imprinted on the glass—is recounted in the short story “The Unnamable,” which he wrote in September right after completing “The Rats in the Walls.” Perhaps even “The Festival,” which he finished in October of the same year, had something to do with this meeting; in this short story he introduced the mysterious town Kingsport, modeled on Marblehead, although Lovecraft had visited that town the year before, without Mrs. Miniter, and fallen in love with it.

The anecdote about Stoker’s draft apparently captured Lovecraft’s interest, and he must have asked questions of Mrs. Miniter; for example, if she could remember any differences between the draft and the finished novel. A scene like the one with the blood rite and the Count’s degenerate relatives in forgotten caves under the castle is so bizarre, original, and magnificent that Edith Miniter ought to have remembered at least that one among other scenes that might have been included in Stoker’s draft and later were deleted.

1 Lovecraft mentions this in his memorial text over Mrs. Miniter. S. T. Joshi dates the meeting to early 1923 in *I Am Providence: The Life and Times of H. P. Lovecraft* (Hippocampus Press, 2010).

Bram Stoker seems to have been on Lovecraft's mind during the summer and autumn of 1923, probably inspired by his discussions with Mrs. Miniter. Lovecraft may have read *Dracula's Guest and Other Weird Stories* (1914), which includes "The Judge's House." It is not listed in Lovecraft's private library but may well have been available through libraries in his hometown of Providence, or through those of his friends.

Lovecraft's opinion of Bram Stoker was ambivalent. He described Stoker as ingenious but thought *The Lair of the White Worm* was childishly written. However, he appreciated *The Jewel of Seven Stars* and in particular *Dracula*. As he writes in "Supernatural Horror in Literature" (1927, rev. 1933), *Dracula* is "a tale now justly assigned a permanent place in English letters."

The Degenerate Huns

Draculitz prides himself on being a descendant of Attila and the Huns. It turns out that an ancient myth recorded by the Roman historian Jordanes, and touched upon in both *Mörkrets makter* and *Dracula*, tells us that the Huns were originally "a stunted, foul and puny tribe, scarcely human, and having no language save one which bore but slight resemblance to human speech," not unlike the degenerate ancestors of the Count who are living in the subterranean caves and dark nooks of the castle. The myth goes on to say that this bestial race was humanized by breeding with Scythian witches, who were banished into the wilderness by the Goths. Jordanes writes in *Getica* (*The Origin and Deeds of the Goths*, c. 551 c.e.):

We learn from old traditions that their [the Huns'] origin was as follows: Filimer, king of the Goths [...] entered the land of Scythia with his tribe,—found among his people certain witches, whom he called in his native tongue Haliurunnae. Suspecting these women, he expelled them from the midst of his race and compelled them to wander in solitary exile afar from his army. There the unclean spirits, who beheld them as they wandered through the wilderness, bestowed their embraces upon them and begat this savage race, which dwelt at first in the swamps,—a stunted, foul and puny tribe, scarcely human, and having no language save one which bore but slight resemblance to human speech. Such was the descent of the Huns who came to the country of the Goths.

When Draculitz and *Dracula* refer to the myth, they omit (for understandable reasons) the part stating that the Ur-Huns were a disgusting, bestial race living in swamps, and instead change them into "devils" and emphasize the Huns' kinship with the witches. In *Mörkrets makter*, the myth is summarized as follows:

[“]We of the Draculitz family, of the tribe of the Székély— we trace, as I told you before, dear friend, our lineage from the old Huns, who once spread across Europe like a raging fire and consumed the dying peoples, as the flame consumes dry grass. Legend has it that they were descended from Scythian sorceresses who were expelled from their country and then made love with devils in the wilderness.” He laughed cynically. “The legend may be as good

as many another—but who can claim that either devil or sorcerer has been greater and more powerful than Attila, whose blood flows in these veins, and who can doubt whether we, his children, are greater in both hatred and love than other mortals.”

And in *Dracula* it is mentioned in passing that “in their [the Huns’] veins ran the blood of those old witches, who, expelled from Scythia had mated with the devils in the desert,” after which Dracula adds that Attila’s blood flows in his veins.

Attila and the Huns, and how they are related to the vampire Count, are mentioned eight times in *Mörkrets makter* but only twice in *Dracula*, which makes this connection especially significant in the Swedish version. It can be seen not least in this extract, where Harker reflects on Draculitz’s pride in his descent in terms of heredity:

I have often noticed how disposed people are to boast of external or internal qualities that in other circumstances would be regarded as defects—as soon as they can ennoble them with the term “family traits.” [...] [A]nd therefore it is hardly surprising that the Count boasts with unmixed pride of his imaginary or real descent from one of the most repulsive tribes that has ever soiled the surface of our poor Earth with its presence. “Distinguished—as much for bestial carnality as for indomitable bravery,” says my old world history unreservedly about the ancestors of the Count, the enterprising Huns, and much else that would make me, if I were in his place, as anxious to suppress this relationship as he seems to be to emphasise it—but to each his own.

V. WHO WAS A–E?

As with everything else we know—or do not know—about *Mörkrets makter*, there is no definitive answer to this question either, at least not yet. We have no candidate whom we can assume with conviction to have been A–e, but we have at least three interesting names. Of course, it would be more satisfactory for the reader to have a concrete identity, a face behind the signature, but as long as we have no factual reasons for that, such a claim would only lead the research astray and be poor scholarship.

During the nineteenth century, it was more common than not for Swedish authors, men and women alike, to use signatures or pseudonyms. The signature A–e was a one-off event in *Dagen* and *Aftonbladets Halfvecko-Upplaga*. And because Leonard Bygdén’s standard work *Svenskt anonym- och pseudonymlexikon* [Swedish Anonym and Pseudonym Dictionary], which was published with supplements from 1898 to 1905, does not mention *Mörkrets makter* whatsoever, we may safely assume that the identity behind the signature A–e was unknown even then; Bygdén’s book is a bibliography of the works whose pseudonymous authors were known (“uncovered anonyms and pseudonyms”).

The fact that a dash joins the “A” with the “e” strongly indicates that it is a masked name, for example Alice, Arne, or Anne. But that Anne Charlotte Leffler should

have been the editor of *Mörkrets makter* is of course out of the question; she died as early as 1892.

It can also be an abbreviated nickname. A writer for rural newspapers named Algot Agelborg used the signature A-e based on his nickname “Agge,” but being born in 1894 he was only five years old when the serial was published.

However, for the signature A.E., A.-E., Æ etc., there is no shortage of contenders: for example the authors Albert Andersson-Edenberg (1834–1913), Albert Engström (1869–1940), Carl Adolf Palme (1879–1960), and Daniel Bergman (1869–1932). All these individuals were associated with *Aftonbladet*. Albert Engström, a member of the Swedish Academy, even wrote a Gothic horror novel titled *Ränningebus* (1920). But it takes much to believe that this renowned humorist, cartoonist, and author was behind the signature A-e; his very distinct personality and tone are simply not there.

As the reader may have already noted, I do not care in this context to discuss Hans de Roos’ speculation that the journalist and editor Albert Andersson-Edenberg was “almost certainly” the man behind the signature A-e. I have reviewed all his arguments and references, and as far as I can see, they do not hold water. It would take too much space to treat his arguments in this introduction, and therefore I will publish a separate essay about it on Timaios Press’ website in April 2022.

Hugo Vallentin—The Weak Case

Much time and effort have been expended on tracks that seemed promising, but did not lead anywhere. For example, this:

Bram Stoker’s good friend Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens, 1835–1910) arrived incognito in Sweden in early July 1899, a few weeks after the publication of the first installment of *Mörkrets makter*. The only paper in Sweden he invited for an interview was *Aftonbladet*, obviously through personal contacts. Does this mean anything? Twain came straight from London, where he had met Bram Stoker on an almost daily basis. Staying for an extended time in Jönköping, Sweden, at Henrik Kellgren’s world-famous sanatorium, he was hoping that the doctor could cure his daughter’s epilepsy. He returned to London and his friend Stoker on 30 September. The interview, conducted by the humorist, author, and translator of stage plays Hugo Vallentin (1860–1921),¹ was published in *Aftonbladet* on 13 July. Mark Twain later described his stay in and near the picturesque town Jönköping as a wonderful time: “I’ve *never* spent such a delicious summer,” he wrote in a letter to Laurence Hutton.

Hugo Ferdinand Vallentin himself was from time to time living in London, where he moved in artistic circles (he became a personal friend of George Bernard Shaw, among others), and the interview with Twain was made on his initiative. He was an Anglophile, a translator, an author of fairy tales (*Sniggel Snuggel och andra sagor*, 1904), and had a strong interest in the theatre, which might explain all the references to the stage in *Mörkrets makter* (if we do not attribute those to Bram Stoker himself).

¹ Vallentin was assisted by another humorist, Hans Zetterström (the signature “Hasse Z,” 1877–1946).

He was a Jew¹ and engaged in promoting the labor movement in Sweden, which might explain the political elements and the criticism of anti-Semitism in *Mörkrets makter*. But unfortunately, there is nothing else that indicates a link between Vallentin and the signature A–e, which of course does not exclude the possibility. If other scholars can find more of substance in the case, it would be great for everyone.

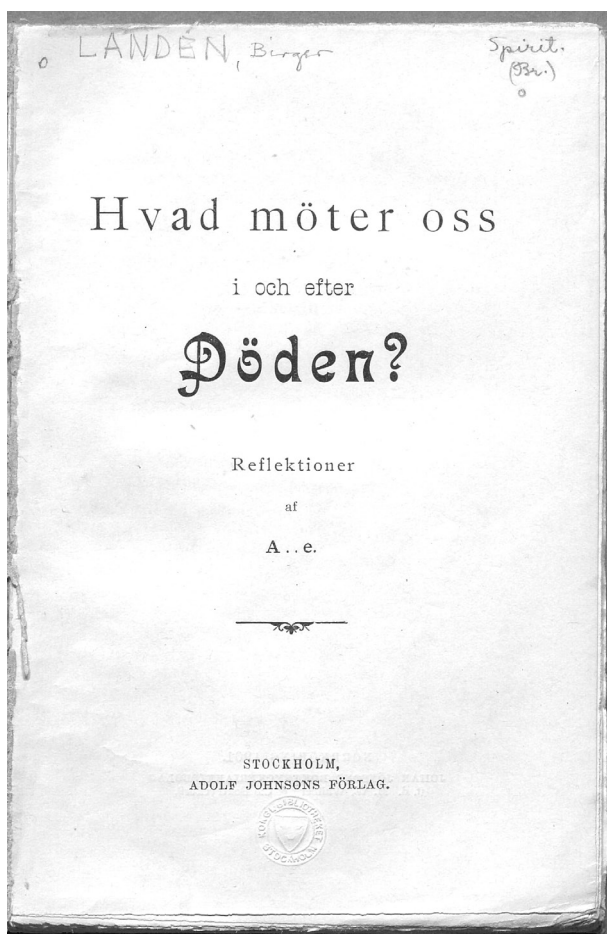
Aurora Ljungstedt—The Good Case

Aurora Lovisa Ljungstedt (1821–1908), already mentioned in Chapter 2, is the only candidate who is known to have had the capacity to write masterly horror and Gothic fiction. In addition, she wrote the novella that is considered Sweden's first detective story, *Hastfordska vapnet* (1870; *The Hastfordian Escutcheon* in English). For most of her writing career, she was known only by the mysterious pseudonym Claude Gérard, taken from Eugène Sue's novel *Martin l'Enfant Retrouvé* (1847; *Martin, the Foundling* in English), and became one of Sweden's most popular and well-esteemed writers until the 1880s. She shunned the public eye and her real identity was revealed by mistake in an encyclopedia in the mid-1870s. She continued to sequester herself and almost never gave interviews; only one is known, a brief and not very informative one, and conducted by her own brother. She was born in Karlskrona, a city in the southern province of Blekinge, and moved to Stockholm in 1846 because of her marriage, after which she began to contribute short stories and serials to newspapers and magazines. Her Gothic romance *Hin ondas hus* [The House of the Devil] was published in 1853. A great amount of her work was published in *Aftonbladet*. In addition, she herself spelled her given name *Aurore*, which may have led to the signature A–e. She spent her twilight years in Jönköping, with summer stays in Stockholm.

Not much has been revealed of her life in the shadow of her own popularity, but through extant letters it is known that she made trips to England and corresponded with at least one French publisher.² Her stories also indicate that she was interested in the supernatural; “magnetism,” psychic powers, the spirit world, and occult ideas of Rosicrucianism are often discussed in works such as *En jägares historier* [Tales of a Hunter] (1860–1861, revised in 1872), *Psykologiska gåtor* [Psychological Mysteries] (1868) and *Den tomma rymden* [The Void] (1882). The inspiration for her work came from French and above all English mystery novels; she often mentions writers such as Bulwer-Lytton and Ann Radcliffe. Some of her works even take place in England, such as the novella *Den dödas bikt* [The Dead Woman's Confession] (1868; part of *Psykologiska gåtor*), about a female serial killer who, in the form of a wandering corpse—or just very sick and old, it remains ambiguous throughout the novel—seeks out a priest to confess her sins in life. In Aurora Ljungstedt's best stories, her technique of using suggestions and hints, as well as her sense of atmosphere, are fully on par with those of Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, whom she may have read (*Uncle Silas* was translated into Swedish as early as 1866, and some short stories in the 1870s).

1 Not to be confused with the Swedish historian and pro-Israel activist Hugo Vallentin (1888–1963) with one “l”.

2 Ljungstedt was quite frequently published in Danish. One translation into French of a novella by her is known.



Title page of a spiritualist book by the signature A..e, who sometimes also used the form A–e.

A special feature of Ljungstedt's style was her fondness for animating scenes through meticulous descriptions of detail, of just the kind that characterizes *Mörkrets makter* (and Bram Stoker's works). This style was not altogether uncommon among nineteenth-century writers—Edgar Allan Poe excelled in it—but it would have made Ljungstedt highly suited to translate, rewrite, and expand Bram Stoker's novel.

Aurora Ljungstedt was furthermore fond of writing scenes and entire novels that even by today's standards are steamy with sensuality and eroticism. Her debut novel, the Gothic *Hin ondes hus* (1853), is an erotic romance of that time, with a number of seduction scenes and lovemaking, luscious bosoms heaving with desire, incest and *crime de passion*. Her most successful work, *Jernringen* [The Iron Ring] (1871), is also characterized by the same ingredients, with a vampire-like woman whose wonderful apparition and manipulative ways drive men to destruction and death. In short,

Ljungstedt had the capacity to write such scenes that take place between the vampire woman and Harker at Castle Draculitz.

And not least, Ljungstedt's style was by nature riddled with Anglicisms, which may explain the abundance of such throughout *Mörkrets makter*.

What contradicts the idea of Aurora Ljungstedt being A–e is that she was seventy-eight years old when *Mörkrets makter* was published, and she published little after the completion of her *Samlade berättelser* [Collected Stories] in 1872–1882; the gigantic project of research, translation, and writing that *Mörkrets makter* must have entailed is hardly something that an old woman or man would be keen to do.

Neither does Aurora Ljungstedt display any trace of interest in Social Darwinism, theories of heredity, high politics, or political conspiracies in her works. Despite all the possibilities, and the similarities with Ljungstedt's oeuvre, *Mörkrets makter* does not give a strong enough impression of being written by her—which in any case can be fully expected in a work that actually *is* based on another author's text.

In short, nothing of this does definitely speak against Aurora Ljungstedt's involvement, and it may well happen that she was not alone in the editing of Stoker's original text. Others may have helped her with the writing process and contributed the Social Darwinism and political conspiracies, if these were not already a part of Stoker's original.

Aurora Ljungstedt remains an interesting candidate.

Two Prominent Theosophists—The Strong Case

In the preface to Aleph Bokförlag's Swedish edition of *Mörkrets makter*, I mistakenly stated: "Birger Landén (1846–1927), a minor debater on religious issues, sometimes used the signature A..e. Apparently, he produced no fiction or translations, and nothing indicates that he had a connection to *Dagen* or *Aftonbladet*."

The information that A..e would be identical to Landén is something I got from *Svenskt anonym- och pseudonymlexikon*, in which he is stated to be the author of a small book from 1901, *Hvad möter oss i och efter döden? Reflektioner af A..e* [What Meets Us In and After Death? Reflections by A..e].

Therefore, I missed a very important clue.

With a copy of *Hvad möter oss i och efter döden?* in hand, one can quickly see that A..e and A–e in all likelihood were the same person. Both *Hvad möter oss...* and *Mörkrets makter* are characterized by the same distinctive, abundant and often unnecessary use of em-dashes (which for the most part have been cleared away in the translation). But the book also turns out to be a spiritualist and Theosophical treatise, where long passages argue against a strictly materialistic and scientific worldview with the same kind of reasoning and arguments found in *Mörkrets makter*. Not only are the arguments consistent, but also the often complaining and downright whiny *voice* when the arguments are presented.¹

1 Now, just a few days before this book will be sent to the printer, I have looked up a journal mentioned in the book, *Efteråt: Tidskrift för spiritism och dermed beslägtade ämnen* [Afterwards? Journal of Spiritism and Related Topics]. It turned out that the signature A..e often contributed to that publication—and sometimes under the alternative A–e!



Photo of Axel Frithiof Åkerberg. Source: Wikipedia.

Admittedly, Landén did not make a lot of fuss about himself personally and he is not remembered in the annals, and I do not think he was A–e. *Svenskt anonym- och pseudonymlexikon* does not provide any references explaining how the names have been uncovered, and no other source indicates that Birger Landén would have used the signature A..e. However, Birger Landén may very well have been confused with one or two people he was strongly associated with, Axel Frithiof Åkerberg (1833–1901) and Victor Pfeiff (1829–1901), who often gave away their translations for others to publish, in exchange for food and place to live. Victor Pfeiff was, together with

Birger Landén, editor from 1887 to 1893 of the magazine *Sanningssökaren: Nordisk månadsskrift för förnuftstro och praktisk kristendom* [The Truth Seeker: Nordic Monthly Magazine for Faith in Rationality and Practical Christianity]. Axel Frithiof Åkerberg was one of the founders of the magazine, a contributor, and a very good friend of Pfeiff—the nickname version of his given name Axel is Acke, in which we might trace the signatures A..e and A–e. Åkerberg was also on the staff of *Aftonbladet* and *Dagen*,¹ which fits our theory perfectly.

Sanningssökaren was a magazine for a religious group whose members called themselves “believers in rationality”² and were close to Unitarianism, a branch of Christianity that denies the divinity of Jesus and downplays biblical dogmas. The two friends Åkerberg and Pfeiff translated the Unitarian philosopher and abolitionist Theodore Parker’s collected writings in 1866–1874, and together they proceeded to Helena Blavatsky’s Theosophy. Thus they became strongly involved in the Theosophical Society founded in Sweden in 1889. Åkerberg became its secretary and Pfeiff the editor of their *Teosofisk Tidskrift* [Theosophical Journal] from 1891 until his death.

The Theosophy of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–1891) was an effort to create a religion for modern times. She emulated selected areas of nineteenth-century science—

1 *Svenskt översättarlexikon* states: “Åkerberg edited, together with O. W. Ålund, *Aftonbladet*’s foreign section in 1870/1878 [...] After 1890, Åkerberg returned to *Aftonbladet* and contributed also to other papers, most notably *Dagen*.”

2 “De förnuftstroende” in Swedish.

evolutionary ideas, physics, and cosmology—with occultism, spiritualism, reincarnation, Hinduism, and Buddhism. The universe and humanity alike are undergoing cycles of growth and decay, but the direction is generally toward ever higher stages of divine perfection. Social Darwinism was a cornerstone in this motley construction of mysticism, philosophy, and science. The Theosophical movement was very large and influential around the turn of the century, with many prominent members, but crumbled and dissolved during the following decades into what became today's New Age movement.

Both Åkerberg and Pfeiff produced translations to introduce their favorite ideas and to propagate their opinions for a Swedish audi-



Victor Pfeiff. Portrait by Maria Röhl from 1852.

ence. Both were politically active—Åkerberg was a socialist and one of the founders of the Swedish Social Democratic Party, while Pfeiff was a liberal. Both were active in women's liberation, and Åkerberg translated John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women*. They were furthermore interested in evolution and Social Darwinism, not least because it was an important element of Theosophy. Åkerberg translated Ernst Haeckel, a German Darwinist, into Swedish, and Pfeiff introduced Herbert Spencer, the founder of Social Darwinism. Pfeiff also translated novels by James Payn, William Makepeace Thackeray, and Edward Bulwer-Lytton. In 1850 he published a book of his own poems, *Dikt försök* [Attempts at Poetry], under the signature V....r.

Johan Gustaf Victor Pfeiff was born in a prosperous home—he was even a nobleman (Baron) but did not use the title. He was destined for a military career, which he could not fulfill because of sickness and a severe limp. After studies in Uppsala, he chose instead to follow his intellectual interests and introduced a long line of political, philosophical, and religious thinkers to a Swedish audience. As the idealist he was, he gained respect as an intellectual but lived in poverty and died totally destitute. Among his later translations can be found *The Rationale of Mesmerism* by A. P. Sinnett. Judging from databases, he translated nothing substantial after 1898, only a small book about vegetarianism—perhaps because he was busy with the huge novel *Mörkrets makter*? His translation of Bulwer-Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii* was published posthumously in 1912.

Axel Frithiof Åkerberg's life was in many ways a parallel to Pfeiff's—a respected intellectual, a rationalist, an idealist who died in poverty in the arms of spiritual-

ism and mysticism. They even died almost simultaneously; Åkerberg on July 13, 1901, and Pfeiff just over two weeks later, on July 29. Dressed in tattered clothes and speaking sixteen languages, he is described as an over-intellectual eccentric and oddball who, despite being extremely shy and modest, often bred bad blood in his surroundings because of his opinions; he was thrown out from the Swedish Social Democrats twice.

On April 4, 2013, the Social Democratic newspaper *Arbetsbladet* published an entertaining presentation of his life and character, written by Ulf Ivar Nilsson: "Filosofen från Hille" [The Philosopher from Hille]. In a telling anecdote, he was sent to Germany to interview some prominent Social Democrats and was arrested by German police who suspected him of being a political agitator. Imprisoned, he had the time of his life because of access to a library—and the regular meals, which he almost never had otherwise. At interrogation, he was asked if he thought it would be right to murder the German Emperor. He requested time for reflection on this tricky question—and spent a few days writing a long philosophical dissertation in German, in which he concluded that the murder of an emperor can in fact be justifiable under the right circumstances. Oddly enough, he was released after this; perhaps he confused the police officers—but he left his meals and the nice library very reluctantly.

Åkerberg formally left the Theosophical Society as early as 1891 but remained sympathetic to its doctrines. In 1893, he translated a book on *Hypnosens djupare stadier* [The Deeper Stages of Hypnosis], as well as two works by Karl, Freiherr von Prel, a German author who, like the Theosophists, attempted to reconcile modern natural science with occultism and spiritualism, and in 1898 Annie Besant's *Four Great Religions* and in 1900 the same author's *The Ancient Wisdom*. Posthumously in 1908, the Universal Brotherhood in Sweden published his translation of Helena Blavatsky's *The Key to Theosophy*.

In summary, Åkerberg and Pfeiff often worked together on translations. Both were politically active with humanistic worldviews. Both were interested in Theosophy, spiritualism, and occultism. Both were interested in Darwinism and Social Darwinism. In addition, both were religious freethinkers opposed to sectarianism, to which they evidently did not count Blavatsky's Theosophy. Or as *Svenskt översättarlexikon* states: "Like Pfeiff, Åkerberg was an idealist with strong religious interests; the academic milieu of Uppsala had, in the spirit of Boström,¹ trained them in a radical search for truth and in freedom from oppressive religious doctrines."

All this fits perfectly with significant elements that distinguish *Mörkrets makter* from Bram Stoker's 1897 original:² politics and political conspiracies; the interest in evolutionary ideas and Social Darwinism; the criticism of persecution of minorities, mainly Jews; a strong occultist interest paired with disapproval of sectarianism.

Today, when everyone is enlightened of the crimes of the Nazis, Social Darwinism is strongly associated with persecution of minorities, but that connection was not obvious in the late nineteenth century. Herbert Spencer has, for good reasons,

1 The Swedish professor in practical philosophy Christopher Jacob Boström (1797–1863), called "the Nordic Plato."

2 Here it is assumed that these elements were not written by Stoker in early drafts.

been named the founder of Social Darwinism, and thus he created what turned out to be a monster; but he himself was for most of his life considered a socialist, as he opposed private ownership of land and advocated labor unions as well as women's liberation. He spoke of the human race as a whole and its biological development through "survival of the fittest" without interest in racial issues and racist ideas; political demagogues then interpreted his ideas as a defense of racial biology, eugenics, ethnic cleansing, and genocide.

As mentioned, Social Darwinism was also a cornerstone of the Theosophical Society, but Madame Blavatsky was explicitly against the oppression and dominance of other races and asserted that there are no superior or inferior races. Differences between ethnical groups exist but are solely due to cultural and environmental factors, not biology: "Thus the reason given for dividing humanity into superior and inferior races falls to the ground and becomes a fallacy," as she wrote in *The Secret Doctrine*. The main goal of her Theosophy was, as she put it in the movement's first credo: "To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour." In short, the Theosophists wished to unite the world and the people of all races.

However, this anti-racism of the Theosophical Society (which for its time was quite unique) was not upheld by some of the later front figures of the movement. Charles Webster Leadbeater (1854–1934) was a fierce racist who did not hesitate to interpret the ideas of Theosophy as justifying violence against, and oppression of, other races, and his ally Annie Besant (1847–1933) expressed similar ideas.¹

A third leader of the Theosophical Society, Katherine Tingley (1847–1929), did not sympathize with such opinions and stayed loyal to Blavatsky's original doctrines, which Leadbeater and Besant had abandoned, according to her.

Through Katherine Tingley, Theosophy gained a strong foothold in Sweden, and the contact with American Theosophists became excellent. In 1899, the year *Mörkrets makter* started serialisation, the US leader Tingley chose Sweden as the second of three places to hold her Universal Brotherhood Congresses, to address the growing apprehension that a major war would break out in the politically troubled Europe—in short, the same fear that characterises *Mörkrets makter*. This congress opened in Stockholm on September 13, 1899, at which she also met the Swedish King Oscar II. The first congress was held in Point Loma, USA, in April, and the third and last was held in Brighton, England, in October. Tingley has been described as one of the most vocal anti-war activists of the early twentieth century, and she always emphasised the *brotherhood* of mankind.

Like Mark Twain, Katherine Tingley became very fond of Sweden, and toward the end of her life she even lived there. In 1913, when a major war seemed inevitable (and it did break out the following year), she organised another peace congress in Sweden, the International Theosophical Peace Congress, on the island of Visingsö in Lake Vättern, not far from Jönköping where Mark Twain had spent the summer of

1 For example, she wrote that "no negro—in the widest sense of the word—should be given the vote." Only the Indian was in her view equal to the white European; India was in Theosophy regarded as the original home of humanity.

1899. “Her aim was to sow broadcast the regenerating ideas of brotherhood, peace, friendship, and respect among all nationalities,” as Grace F. Knoche puts it in a biographical sketch. The congress took place on June 22–29 and drew 2000 participants from all over Europe. In connection with this, she also started a Raja Yoga school on Visingsö whose inauguration, however, was delayed until 1924 due to resistance from local clergy. She lived her last years on Visingsö and participated as a teacher in the school she had founded, held in Tempelgården [The temple garden], a beautiful building constructed in 1913 on her initiative.

With the Theosophical Society’s clear credo of a universal brotherhood regardless of race, creed, gender, caste, and skin colour, the socialist Åkerberg and the liberal Pfeiff may have been very critical of—probably even upset over—the increasing number of opinion-makers at the turn of the century, even inside the Theosophical movement itself, who used Social Darwinism as an excuse for oppression and violence—precisely those thoughts about the (biologically) superior individuals’ right to oppress and dominate the weaker ones, which Draculitz and his followers repeatedly express and with which they wish to dupe mankind through villainous conspiracies. Perhaps this can be interpreted as a satirical reflection of the opinions on races that contributed to the antagonism between Besant allied with Leadbeater, and Katherine Tingley.

* * *

Of the candidates in this chapter, most of the facts indicate that Axel Frithiof Åkerberg and Victor Pfeiff were the people behind the signature A–e, probably with Axel “Acke” Åkerberg as the head. The only serious objection I can find is that none of them wrote fiction, according to accessible sources, although Pfeiff translated fiction and wrote poetry. But wretchedly poor and living on the verge of starvation, they may have been inclined to invest a great amount of time and energy in editing Stoker’s novel as a “cash grab,” and were therefore willing to enter a new field of literature.

And if I am mistaken about the identities behind the signature A–e, we can at least be quite sure that the author of the book *Hvad möter oss i och efter döden?* was the same who adapted *Dracula* for a Swedish audience, and that he or she moved in the same circles as Åkerberg and Pfeiff.

VI. THE ELUSIVE “JACK THE RIPPER PREFACE”

Even when *Dracula* was fresh from the printing press, there were readers who drew parallels between *Dracula*’s sojourn in London and Jack the Ripper. As quoted by David J. Skal in *Hollywood Gothic*, a review in the magazine *The Stage* stated that Stoker “brings in, mutatis mutandis, the stabbing of women recently notorious in London.” Scholars such as Grigore Nandris and Carol Margaret Davison made the same associations during the twentieth century, although Stoker’s great-nephew Daniel Farson doubted that the author himself had intended any such linkages.

The question seemed to be settled by Richard Dalby when he claimed to have discovered a hitherto unknown preface written by Stoker himself for the Icelandic

edition of *Mörkrets makter*, i.e., *Makt myrkranna*. Dalby did not proceed to study the novel itself in its entirety, but took it for granted that it was only a straightforward albeit abridged translation of the original.

Dalby translated the preface and published it in *Dracula and The Lair of the White Worm: A Bram Stoker Omnibus* (1986), and the section about Jack the Ripper reads in his translation: “Many people remember the strange series of crimes that comes into the story a little later—crimes which, at the time, appeared to be supernatural and seemed to originate from the same source and caused as much revulsion as the infamous murders of Jack the Ripper!”¹ Here it must be mentioned that Dalby’s translation of the paragraph is problematic and contains one error in particular: the Icelandic text states that the killing spree of Jack the Ripper occurred *after* Dracula’s time in London, and not the other way around, which is also consistent with the Swedish original.

For many years, Dracula scholars considered it an established fact that the Icelandic preface had been written by Stoker himself, although Dalby’s reasons for that assumption were always weak. Because he took for granted that *Makt myrkranna* was identical to the 1897 version of *Dracula*, it seemed natural to him to assume that the preface had been written in 1898 by Stoker himself as a favor to the Icelandic publisher, especially since it was even signed by him. The signature reads, “London, — Street, August 1898. B. S.”

However, if the signature had held the significance that Dalby assigned to it, Bram Stoker would also have specified the correct address, but in 1898 he did not reside at an address named [Something] Street in London, but at 18 St. Leonard’s Terrace, Chelsea, London.² Serious doubts also arise from a remark by David J. Skal, although made in another context: Bram Stoker was always very careful that everything by his hand should be published with his authorization and provided with a copyright notice. This is lacking in *Mörkrets makter* and, hence, also in *Makt myrkranna*. Therefore, the present novel was not edited and published with Bram Stoker’s permission, and it is highly unlikely that he would have written a preface especially for its publication.

It should be noted that the Swedish original does not refer to Jack the Ripper specifically but to the “Whitechapel Murders,” which today is often used synonymously for Jack the Ripper’s atrocities. At the time, the term actually included several other murders of women in Whitechapel and its surroundings:

The series of—as it appears—totally inexplicable crimes, all bearing signs of having the same origin, which at the time enraged the public as much as the notorious Whitechapel Murders, which occurred somewhat later, is probably not yet entirely forgotten [...]

1 Hans Corneel de Roos translated the same text as follows in 2017: “This series of crimes has not yet passed from the public’s memory—this series of crimes, which seem incomprehensible but appear to stem from the same root, and have created in their time as much horror within the public as the infamous murders by Jack the Ripper, which occurred a short time later.”

2 From official census records. Dacre Stoker accounted for the correct address in an email correspondence with me on May 17, 2019.

The police investigation of the Whitechapel Murders concerned eleven murdered females between April 3, 1888 and February 13, 1891, while newspapers and the general public eagerly speculated about a link to the chopped-up bodies found dumped in the Thames (“The Thames Torso Murders,” 1887–1889); body parts had also been scattered in various sites around London, and only one of these dismembered women could be identified, a prostitute named Elizabeth Jackson. Scholars today adhere to the opinion that Jack the Ripper committed five murders (called the “canonical”) and that the others probably were carried out by other perpetrators, because of the different *modi operandi*. All these deeds taken together fuelled alarm among politicians and the general public. Later generations remember Jack the Ripper’s crimes but have largely forgotten the other murders, which in many cases were no less grotesque or, for that matter, less mysterious.

Dalby’s translation, however, got one thing right by accident. When you read *Mörkrets makter*, it is clear that it actually takes place after the deeds of Jack the Ripper et al., despite the statement in the preface. Furthermore, these murders are a direct inspiration for Count Draculitz to settle in the metropolis of crimes:

“Yes, these crimes—these dreadful murders—these butchered women found in sacks in the Thames—this blood that flows and flows, drips and drips in sealed rooms, where dead eyes in vain seek the murderer...”

I do not want to do the old man an injustice, but it *seemed* to me as if he secretly and literally licked his mouth while enumerating these atrocities, and I admit that I felt furtively for my revolver. “Even this I have read about! It is sad, very sad! And they are never discovered—*never*. [...] I also read your newspapers, dear friend, and there I see that barely three to four percent of all the crimes committed are discovered and punished!—Yes, London is a wonderful city.”

Here, Count Draculitz associates the Whitechapel Murders with the Thames Torso Murders, as they were often perceived at the time. On the one hand, he talks about sacks with female body parts in the Thames; on the other hand, he talks about blood that flows and drips in sealed rooms, “where dead eyes in vain seek the murderer”—probably a reference to Jack the Ripper’s last murder, where Mary Kelly was found in her locked chamber, completely mutilated and with her face peeled off, where only the unharmed eyes stared out of the lacerated flesh.

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The above-mentioned letters and other documents from the Stoker siblings and Jane Wilde can be found in the manuscript department of the National Library of Sweden, and they primarily belong to the Gösta Mittag-Leffler Archive. Most of them have not yet been registered in the National Library's databases but were obtained upon request in February 2017. Thanks also to Karin Sterky at the National Library for help with this.

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