An Evening with *Dracula*

Leslie Klinger and Zoe Caldwell

October 30, 2008

South Court Auditorium

LIVE from the New York Public Library

www.nypl.org/live

TAPE OF FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT: Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself!

(laughter)

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: Brrrr. Good evening. Good evening. My name is Paul Holdengräber and I'm the Director of Public Programs here at the New York Public Library, now known as LIVE from the New York Public Library. Our motto is no longer making the lions roar but Expect Wasabi. We began this week with a program about obituaries. It was called "LIVE from the New York Public Library presents Dead from the New York Public Library." Quite natural and it is wonderful that we should end this week in such a marvelously consistent way with a program about Dracula, my favorite count.

It is my pleasure to thank our media sponsors, Metro, as well as 192 Books, our independent bookseller. After the evening Leslie Klinger will be signing his magnificent new *Annotated Dracula*—here it is. Let me thank, with all my heart now, Bob Weil, the senior editor at Norton. He has brought me *amazing* goods—tonight, of course, Dracula but he has also brought me António Lobo Antunes, Jan Morris, Clive James, from high to low and everything in between, so a huge round of applause for Bob Weil. **(applause)**

Please consider joining the New York Public Library. For a pittance of forty dollars a year, you can become a Friend. If you ask me, that's a pretty cheap date. Also, join our e-mail list so that you can hear of our upcoming events. In November, a tribute to Rust Hills and Carol Shields as well as Toni Morrison with Fran Lebowitz. A week after the election we will take the pulse of the nation as well as celebrate the forty-fifth anniversary of the *New York Review of Books* with Joan Didion, Andrew Delbanco, and others. Really, it's a way of paying tribute also to forty-five years of considerable

intelligence through its editor, Robert Silvers. Our season ends with a conversation between Avraham Burg and Omer Bartov, followed by Zadie Smith, and finally on December ninth, but not in this garb, I will have the pleasure of interviewing the conductor and pianist Daniel Barenboim.

Though this is her first appearance LIVE from the New York Public Library, this is a homecoming of sorts for Zoe Caldwell to the New York Public Library, as she delivered, before my time here, the Norton Lectures. In October of 2001 they had to be postponed by a few weeks because of 9/11, but the show had to go on. The five-time Tony winner was commanding and got a huge audience, which loved hearing stories from her memoir, *I Will Be Cleopatra*, which Norton had just published. It is my joy as well as an honor to welcome her back to the New York Public Library. **(applause)**

Leslie Klinger is considered to be one of the world's foremost authorities on those twin icons of the Victorian era, Sherlock Holmes and Dracula. He's the editor of the three-volume collection of the short stories and novels, a *New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, also published by Norton in 2004 and 5, winner of the Edgar Award for best critical/biographical work and nominated for every other major award in the mystery genre.

As you know, over the last hundred years after the publication of *Dracula*, the book continues to influence pop culture. Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* young adult series, which threatens to outsell Harry Potter, Anne Rice's international bestseller vampire books,

Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's extended series about Count Saint-Germaine and especially the huge success of Elizabeth Kostova's *The Historian* prove that this story continues to inspire. There are over two hundred movies made about Dracula and hundreds more about vampires. Dracula is the second-most-filmed character ever, with Sherlock Holmes in the lead and Tarzan close behind. There have been radio and television series in the United States and in England, including Orson Welles's Mercury Theatre and the unforgettable *Mr. and Mrs. Dracula* starring Dick Shawn. In recent years, the BBC did another, sexier production of Dracula, and Will Smith's *I Am Legend*, about a plague of vampires, was a huge hit. Television has aired the series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Angel*, *Moonlight*, *Blade*, and this fall *True Blood*, demonstrating the immense popularity of vampire stories. It is now my great pleasure and my great honor to invite to this stage Leslie Klinger and Zoe Caldwell. I think Leslie is coming up first.

LESLIE KLINGER: Wow, it is such a privilege to be here tonight, especially to be onstage with Miss Caldwell. I've never been introduced by a vampire before, I must say. Something that Paul said about the pulse of the nation seemed like—we're not going to be doing that tonight—we're talking about *no* pulse tonight. What I want to talk about is how the vampire image has changed. How it began, how it changed in *Dracula*, and how it evolved.

In the beginning, vampires were legend. They go back to Greek and Roman times. In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, there was a plague of vampirism, reported by governmental officials, reported by magistrates, military officers—what was going on

here? I think what was going on was something like this. There would be problems in the village—maybe the cattle were dying, the horses, the crops, whatever, and some bright villager would say, “Well, it must be the spirit of Uncle George, who died a few weeks ago. He’s probably up and about, disturbing things. Let’s go check.” So they’d go out to Uncle George’s grave, they’d open it up, and sure enough, Uncle George’s fingernails had continued to grow and his hair had continued to grow and there was red fluid on his lips, perhaps a flush to his cheeks. There was a groaning sound coming from him as they opened the coffin and his arm even moved. Now, we’re now cynically aware that what was going on here was the normal decomposition of human bodies. But they didn’t understand that. Their remedy was to take a wooden stake or an iron stake and put it right through Uncle George and kind of staple him into that coffin so he wasn’t going to disturb the village anymore. And sure enough, it worked.

So many episodes like that were recorded. In the nineteenth century with the rise of the Gothic horror, *Castle of Otranto* and the like, we began to see vampires in the literature. The first great book was cleverly titled *The Vampyre* by John Polidori. Polidori was the close friend and physician of Lord Byron and this book came out of that same famous evening at which Frankenstein was conceived by Mary Shelley. They were all part of that same circle of friends that night. The book was very successful commercially and became a very successful stage play. In the mid-century *Varney the Vampire*—and this is an illustration from the early edition of *Varney—Varney the Vampire* was written by Thomas Rymer. Rymer was also the author of *Sweeney Todd*. The innovation of both *The Vampyre* and *Varney the Vampire* was the gentleman vampire—they’re both noblemen.

Well, the end of the century, 1897, Bram Stoker wrote *Dracula*. The *Dracula* image is not Béla Lugosi. In the book he is described as an old man with hair growing on his palms, a long mustache, sharp fingernails, and, of course, bad breath—bad breath because he's dead. But this is a far cry from the image that we're going to see in a few minutes. Now we're going to take a break from listening to me now and listen to a scene. This is Jonathan Harker recording in his journal as he's staying at Dracula's castle.

ZOE CALDWELL: When I had written in my diary, and fortunately replaced the book and pen in my pocket, I felt sleepy. The Count's warning came into my mind, but I took pleasure in disobeying it. The sense of sleep was upon me and with it the obstinacy which sleep brings as outrider. The soft moonlight soothes and the wide expanse without gave a sense of freedom which refreshed me. I determined not to return tonight to the gloomy haunted rooms but to sleep here where, of old, ladies had sat in the sun and lived sweet lives while their gentle breasts were sad for their menfolk. Away in the midst of remorseless wars, their menfolk were. I drew a great couch out of its place near the corner so that as I lay I could look at the lovely view to east and south and, unthinking of and uncaring of the dust, composed myself for sleep. I suppose I must have fallen asleep, I hope so, but I fear, for all that followed was startlingly real, so real that now, sitting here in the broad full sunlight of the morning I cannot in the least believe that it was all sleep.

I was not alone. The room was the same, unchanged in any way since I came into it. I could see along the floor in the brilliant moonlight my own footsteps marked where I'd

disturbed the long accumulation of dust. In the moonlight opposite me were three young women—ladies, by their dress and manner. I thought at the time that I must be dreaming when I saw them for, though the moonlight was behind them, they threw no shadow on the floor. They came close to me and looked at me for some time and then whispered together. Two were dark and had high aquiline noses like the Count and great dark piercing eyes that seemed to be almost red when contrasted with the pale yellow moon. The other was fair, as fair as can be, with great wavy masses of golden hair and eyes like pale sapphires. I seemed somehow to know her face and to know it in connection with some dreamy fear, but I could not recollect at the moment how or where. All three had brilliant white teeth that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous lips. There was something about them that made me uneasy—some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips. It is not good to note this down lest someday it should meet Mina's eyes and cause her pain, but it is the truth. They whispered together and then they all three laughed. Such a silvery, musical laugh that as hard as that sound could never come through the softness of human lips. It was like the intolerable tingling sweetness of water glasses when played by a cunning hand. The fair girl shook her head coquettishly and the other two urged her on.

One said, "Go on! You're the first and we shall follow. Yours is the right to begin."

The other added, "He is young and strong. There are kisses for all of us."

I lay quiet, looking out under my eyelashes in an agony of delightful anticipation. The fair girl advanced and bent over me till I could feel the movement of her breath upon me. Sweet as it was in one sense, honey sweet, and sent the same tingling through the nerves as her voice, but with a bitter underlying the sweet, a bitter offensiveness, as one smells in blood.

I was afraid to raise my eyelids but I looked out and saw perfectly under the lashes. The girl went on her knees and bent over me, simply gloating. There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive and as she arched her neck she actually licked her lips like an animal till I could see in the moonlight the moisture shining on the scarlet lips and on the red tongue as it lapped the white sharp teeth. Lower and lower went her head, as the lips went below the range of my mouth and chin and seemed about to fasten on my throat. Then she paused and I could hear the churning sound of her tongue as it licked her teeth and lips and could feel the hot breath on my neck. And then the skin of my throat began to tingle as one's flesh does when the hand that is to tickle it approaches nearer—nearer—I could feel the soft shivering touch of the lips on the supersensitive skin of my throat and the hard dents of two sharp teeth just touching and pausing there. I closed my eyes in languorous ecstasy and waited, waited with beating heart.

But at that instant another sensation swept through me as swift as lightning. I was conscious of the presence of the Count and of his being as if lapped in a storm of fury. As my eyes opened involuntarily I saw his strong hand grasp the slender neck of the fair

woman and with giant's power draw it back, the blue eyes transformed with fury, the white teeth champing with rage, and the fair cheeks blazing red with passion. But the Count! Never did I imagine such fury and wrath, even to the demons of the pit. His eyes were positively blazing. The red light in them was lurid as the flames of hellfire blazed behind them. His face was deathly pale and the lines of it were drawn like drawn wires. The thick eyebrows met over the nose and now seemed like a heavy bar of white-hot metal. With a fierce sweep of his arm, he hurled the woman from him and then motioned to the others as though he were beating them back. It was the same imperious gesture that I had seen used to the wolves.

In a voice which, though low and almost in a whisper, seemed to cut through the air and then ring round the room, he said, "How *dare* you touch him, any of you? How *dare* you cast eyes on him when I had forbidden it? Back, I tell you, all, this man belongs to me. Beware you meddle with him for you'll have to deal with me."

The fair girl with a laugh of ribald coquetry turned to answer him, "You yourself never loved. You never loved." On this the other women joined and such a mirthless hard, soulless laughter rang through the room that it almost made me faint to hear. It seemed like the pleasure of fiends.

Then the Count turned, after looking at my face attentively, and said in a soft whisper, "Yes, I, too, can love. You yourself can tell it from the past. Is it not so? And now I

promise you that when I am done with him you shall kiss him at your will. Now go. Go! I must awaken him, for there is work to be done."

"Are we to have nothing tonight?" said one of them with a low laugh as she pointed to the bag which he had thrown upon the floor and which moved as though it were some living thing within it. For answer he nodded his head. One of the women jumped forward and opened it. If my ears did not deceive me, there was a gasp and a low wail as if a half-smothered child. The women closed round. I was aghast with horror, but as they looked they disappeared and with them the dreadful bag. There was no door near them and they could not have passed me without my noticing. They simply seemed to fade into the rays of the moonlight and pass out through the window, for I could see outside the dim, shadowy forms for a moment before they entirely faded away.

Then the horror overcame me, and I sank down unconscious.

(applause)

LESLIE KLINGER: Wow. That scene is so much better without the twelve footnotes I put on it, so—Well, the picture begins to change now in 1922 with the first film ever to be made from the book *Dracula*. F. W. Murnau, the great German Expressionist director, didn't bother to obtain any rights. He boldly said at the beginning of the film this was based on *Dracula*, but he did change the character names and I'm just going to run the clip. **[clip excised]**Well, this extraordinary film really upset Florence Stoker, Bram

Stoker's widow, because, as I said before, there wasn't any bother with licenses. She went to court in England and got an order having the film be destroyed. Fortunately, one copy was saved—that's an extraordinary film.

That really is, however, the last of the monstrous vampires based on *Dracula* because in 1924, Hamilton Deane, a producer, arranged for a license for the—from the estate and produced a stage play in England that changed the image forever. Here we see Raymond Huntley in 1924 cast in the London cast as Dracula. And as you can see he's wearing the opera cape, the white tie and tails, good-looking man, hair slicked back. We begin to see what I call the "lounge lizard" image of the vampire. In 1927 Horace Liveright—the founder of Norton and Company, I should point out—obtained the American rights and with the help of John Balderston slightly altered the script, brought it to Broadway, where it was an enormous success. It starred the young Austro-Hungarian actor Béla Lugosi, also Edward Van Sloan in the part of Van Helsing. Frank Langella took this part in 1977 in a revival of the play, immensely successful. Jeremy Brett played the same part in 1978 and a number of other good-looking actors—Raul Julia, David Dukes.

But in 1931, Carl Leammle Jr. decided to make a motion picture out of the stage play. He did a national talent search for an actor to play the part. Reluctantly he settled on Béla Lugosi. Lugosi had been a great romantic favorite of fans, but the critics had found him somewhat wantng. One likened him to a mortician, another called him a rigid hobgoblin. You can judge for yourself. Well, I'm sure you're all familiar with the film. The next clip I'm going to show you is from a remarkable film made—it's the Spanish-language

version of *Dracula* made in 1931. It was made by Universal on the same sets, but with different actors, a different director, and a different script. I think that it's actually a better script than the Béla Lugosi version. It answers some of the mysteries of the film. The one deficit is probably the lead. That's Carlos Villar, also known as Carlos Villarías, as Dracula. I apologize in advance. The sound is not quite synched, but it does have subtitles. This is Pablo Álvarez Rubio as Renfield. **[clip excised]**

Well, unfortunately for Béla Lugosi he became typecast, and he played Dracula in a number of forgettable films. We should not forget, of course, *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein, the Wolf Man, and Dracula*, one of the better ones of the group. You can judge for yourself what the rest must have been like if that's one of the better ones. It wasn't until 1958 that another great Dracula emerged. This was Christopher Lee in the Hammer series of films, this is from the first one, the 1958 *Horror of Dracula*. **[clip excised]** Well, hard as it may be to believe, he is resurrected in three or four more films. **(laughter)** I don't know how you come back from dust, but he does it. Fortunately, the screenwriters spared Peter Cushing from saying a line like, "This is curtains for you, Dracula."

In any event. In 1973, this is a—I don't have a clip from this film tonight but this is a remarkable film produced and directed by Dan Curtis, who also produced the *Dark Shadows* series for television, written by Richard Matheson. This is one of my very favorite *Dracula* films. Jack Palance has the right combination to me of rugged good looks and really scary. In the script Matheson tries to solve the problem of the

coincidence, the terrible coincidence, why Dracula comes to Whitby to find Mina and Lucy happens to be there and Mina happens to be engaged to the same lawyer that came over to Transylvania and when they go to England his house is right next door at Carfax to the doctor who was proposing to Lucy and so on. In any event, Matheson's idea was that in this version Lucy is the reincarnation of Dracula's mortal wife and that he'd seen a clipping of her in a newspaper and deliberately came to England to find her. We're going to take a little break from film here and hear another incredibly powerful scene from Dracula.

ZOE CALDWELL: The moonlight was so bright that through the thick yellow blinds the room was light enough to see. On the bed beside the window lay Jonathan Harker, his face flushed and breathing heavily as though in a stupor. Kneeling on the near edge of the bed, facing outward, was the white-clad figure of his wife. By her side stood a tall, thin man clad in black. His face was turned from us, but in an instant we saw that we all recognized the Count in every way, even to the scar on his forehead. With his left hand, he held both Mrs. Harker's hands, keeping them away from her, with her arms at full tension. His right hand gripped her by the back of the neck, forcing her face down on his bosom. Her white nightdress was smeared with blood and a thin stream trickled down the man's bare chest, which was shown by his torn-open dress. The attitude of the two had a terrible resemblance to a child forcing a kitten's nose into a saucer of milk to compel it to drink.

As we burst into the room, the Count turned his face and the hellish look that I'd heard described seemed to leap into it, his eyes flamed red with devilish passion. The great nostrils of the wide aquiline nose opened wide and quivered at the edge, and the white, sharp teeth behind the full lips of the blood-dripping mouth clamped together like those of a wild beast. With a wrench, he threw his victim back onto the bed as though hurled from a height. He turned and sprang at us. But by this time the Professor had gained his feet and was holding toward him the envelope which had contained the sacred wafer. The Count suddenly stopped, just as poor Lucy had done outside the tomb, and cowered back, further and further back he cowered as we, lifting our crucifixes, advanced. The moonlight suddenly failed as a great black cloud sailed across the sky and when the gaslights sprang up under Quincy's match, we saw nothing but a faint vapor. This, as we looked, trailed under the door which, with the recoil from bursting open had swung back to its old position.

Van Helsing and Art and I moved toward Mrs. Harker, who by this time had drawn her breath and with it had given a scream so wild, so ear-piercing, so depressing that it seems to me now it will ring in my ears till my dying day. For a few seconds she lay in her helpless attitude and disarray. Her face was ghastly, with a pallor that was accentuated by the blood which smeared her lips and cheek and chin. From her throat trickled a thin stream of blood. Her eyes were mad with terror. Then she put before her face her poor crushed hands, which bore on their whiteness the red mark of the Count's terrible grip, and from behind them came a low, desolate wail which made the terrible scream seem like only a quick expression of an endless grief. Van Helsing stepped forward and drew

the coverlet gently over her body, whilst Art, after looking at her face for an instant despairingly, ran out of the room.

Van Helsing whispered to me, “Jonathan is in a stupor such as we know the vampire will produce. We can do nothing with poor Madame Mina for a few moments until she recovers herself. I must wake him.”

He dipped the end of a towel in cold water and began to flick him in the face, his wife all the while holding her face between her hands and sobbing in a way that was heartbreaking to hear. I raised the blind and looked out of the windows. There was much moonshine and as I looked I could see Quincy Morris run across the lawn and hide himself in the shadow of the great yew tree. It puzzled me to think why he was doing this. But at the instant, I heard Harker’s quick exclamation as he woke to partial consciousness and turned to the bed. On his face as well might there be there was a look of wild amazement. He seemed dazed for a few seconds and then full consciousness seemed to burst upon him all at once and he started up.

His wife was aroused by the quick movement and turned to him with her arms stretched out as though to embrace him instantly. However, she drew them back in again and putting her elbows together, held her hands before her face and shuddered until the bed beneath her shook. In God’s name, what does this mean? Harker here cried. Dr. Seward, Dr. Van Helsing? What is it? what has happened? What’s wrong? Mina, dear, what is it, what is it, what does that blood mean? My God. My God! Has it come to this?” And

raising himself to his knees he beat his hands wildly together, “Good God, help us! Help her! Oh, help her!”

With a quick movement he jumped from the bed and began to pull on his clothes, all the man in him awake at the need for instant exertion. “What has happened? Tell me all about it,” he cried without pausing. “Dr. Van Helsing, you love me, now I know—oh, do something to save her. It cannot have gone too far yet. Guard her while I go look for him.”

His wife through her terror and horror and distress saw some sure danger to him. Instantly forgetting her own grief, she seized hold of him and cried out, “No, no Jonathan, you must not leave me. I’ve suffered enough tonight, God knows, without the dread of his harming you. You must stay with me, stay with these friends who will watch over you.” Her expression became frantic as she spoke. And he yielding to her, she pulled him now, sitting on the bedside, and clung to him fiercely.

Dr. Helsing and I tried to calm them both. The professor held up his little gold crucifix and said with wonderful calmness, “Do not fear, my dear. We are here, and while this is close to you no foul thing can approach. You are safe for tonight and we must be calm and take counsel together.”

She shuddered and was silent, holding down her head on her husband’s breast. When she raised it, his white night robe was stained with blood where her lips had touched and

where the thin open wound in her neck had sent forth drops. The instant she saw it she drew back with a low wail and whispered amidst choking sobs, “Unclean! Unclean! I must touch him or kiss him no more. Oh, that it should be that it is, that I am were now his worst enemy and whom he may have cause to fear!”

(applause)

LESLIE KLINGER: In 1977, the BBC production of Dracula starring Louis Jourdan as Dracula, Frank Finlay as Van Helsing, Judi Bowker as Mina Murray. I’m not going to say anymore about this scene you can judge for yourself. That scene gives me chills every time I see it, I’m sorry. The film is actually very close to the original book, notwithstanding the differences in that particular scene, a very powerful four-hour production. In 1979, Frank Langella appeared as Dracula. This is not the stage play—it is another hokey, very romantic, not close to the book version. Donald Pleasance plays Dr. Seward, Sir Lawrence Olivier is Professor Van Helsing.

It’s—I should have said by the way earlier about *Nosferatu*. *Nosferatu* really introduced the concept that vampires are injured by the sun. That’s not in the book, that’s only in *Nosferatu*, but you see it’s been picked up since in other films, and in the Langella film, it’s there as well. In 1992, the totally misnamed *Bram Stoker’s Dracula*—of course it should be called Francis Ford Coppola’s version of this book. There are some powerful moments. Gary Oldman is a wonderful Dracula. This is later in the film when he’s been

rejuvenated by some blood. Winona Ryder playing Mina Harker. This is him earlier in the film in his castle. It's a very powerful set of images at the beginning but after a great beginning it goes off into problems.

Well, fortunately, there is a lighter side. You're about the see the only suntanned vampire, **(laughter)** George Hamilton with Arte Johnson as Renfield, *Love at First Bite*, from 1979. **[clip excised]** Well, he goes to New York, where else? Where he meets Susan Saint James, who becomes the love of this part of his life. Well, because it's my show, I have one more clip to show you, and this is from the wonderful—in my low-taste view, anyway—*Dracula: Dead and Loving It*, 1995, Mel Brooks, this is not a scene with Leslie Nielsen as Dracula although he is wonderful. **[clip excised]** Well, it does—this is one of those films, if you don't like this joke, wait thirty seconds, there will be another one, so.

Well, the image of the vampire kept changing. Here we have from the Anne Rice books, Tom Cruise as the Vampire Lestat, David Boreanaz from the *Buffy* and *Angel* series, as the vampire with a soul, Angel. Count Saint-Germain from Quinn Yarbro's wonderful series of books. These three figures all have the same thing in common. They're good guys. They're not just romantic, seductive vampires—they're now heroes. This trend seems to keep going. We have *True Blood* with a noble vampire, a Civil War veteran who is wooing our heroine Sookie. We have the *Twilight* series with romantic, attractive teenage vampires. So the image of the vampire has come a long way from its earliest days as a corpse. Where it will go next? I'm not sure. I think the vampire has evolved into sort of that cowboy-like romantic hero—I picture the vampire riding off into the sunset

with his canteen of blood, but where will it go next? We'll just have to wait and see. Thank you.

(applause)

LESLIE KLINGER: Did you want to say something, Paul, or should I just say, "Now we're going to do some questions?" "Now we're going to do some questions." Thank you so much. I guess I should mention my book. The book is the original text of Dracula with 1,600 footnotes because I can't control myself, almost three hundred illustrations, because Bob Weil can't control me, and Norton was just incredibly generous in letting me put every image I wanted in the book. My aim, somebody characterized it the other day, as "bonus tracks with a DVD" and that was what I was trying to do with the book, was to make it a richer, deeper experience.

I also decided, for my own pleasure, to play with this book the Sherlockian game. Sherlockians have for a century believed, in their hearts, that Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson really lived and those stories are true. I decided to apply that approach to *Dracula* as well. Bram Stoker, in his introduction to the first foreign-language edition, tells us that. He says, "I was given these papers by my friends and I've simply assembled them." This explains in my mind how a—excuse the phrase—hack writer like Stoker, who produced eighteen other eminently forgettable books, produced this classic. Now we know! It was a true story. So in any event I played that game in the notes besides examining a multitude of textual sources I actually did fact-checking on things like, "Can you take the

train from Galotz to Varna or from Varna to Galotz **[QUERY: Please confirm Galotz.]** on the time allotted and do the tides rise in Whitby on the allotted times and so on. So if you like that sort of thing, there's a lot of that in there, too. And if you don't, then you don't have to play my little game.

So in any event, that's sort of a—just to tell you what's there. If you haven't read the book, please read the story without the notes first, then circle back and look at the notes and the introductory material and the appendices, because it's such a delicious book as you heard from this wonderful reading tonight, this is an incredibly powerful book, so I'm sorry.

Q: (Inaudible)

LESLIE KLINGER: Well, Vincent Starrett famously said, "only those things the heart believes are true." When I teach my class on Sherlock Holmes, I'm always asked a question after the first hour, "Mr. Klinger, I'm confused, is Sherlock Holmes real or fictional?" My answer is always, "Yes." **(laughter)** Questions? Way in the back.

Q: I was wondering about Vlad the Impaler and what role he plays in your book and what your take on all of that is.

LESLIE KLINGER: I'd be delighted. This is one of the myths that I hope I've dispelled with this book. The myth is that Bram Stoker "based" Dracula on Vlad the Impaler.

When we look at the notes. Stoker kept copious notes during the construction of the book over the period 1890 to 1897 and these notes are actually on display at the Rosenbach Museum and Library in Philadelphia and I spent time going over them. Actually, they've just been published in facsimile by the Rosenbach, they're wonderful and you can get a copy on Amazon, at your local bookstores, and so on. The notes make very clear the answer to that question. In the beginning, when Stoker conceived the book, or, in my view, when he started to conceal the truth, the character name that he applied to the master vampire was Count Wampir, not the most commercially best name, but that's what he chose.

When he was doing research in the library in Whitby, he came across a history of Wallachia, the next-door neighbor to Transylvania and in it there was a footnote that said that there had been a historical figure named Vlad Dracul, he had been a great leader, and Dracul meant "dragon" or "demon," Vlad Dracul had been awarded the Order of the Dragon. His son, Vlad Dracula, meaning son of the dragon, was Vlad the Impaler. Stoker took the name and substituted it for Count Wampir in his notes. That's all he knew about Vlad the Impaler, we believe. There is no evidence that he knew anything more about Vlad the Impaler or made any other use of it. Stoker kept fairly complete records of the books that he researched in and he typed out or wrote out the source material. There's no other mention of Vlad.

Q: In the film with John Malkovich and Willem Dafoe, they're on a movie set—

LESLIE KLINGER: Wonderful film—*Shadow of the Vampire*

Q: And there's this one scene where Willem Dafoe looks at Malkovich and says, "Ah, food, I haven't ordered food in two hundred years, I don't know how. I couldn't even buy it. But yet we have the legend of Dracula as this elegant man that seamlessly flows through society."

LESLIE KLINGER: That's a wonderful film. The film is a study let's call it of the making of the film *Nosferatu.* Malkovich plays F. W. Murnau and Willem Dafoe plays Max Schreck, the actor, and the conceit is that Schreck is a real vampire found by Murnau to star in the film. Dracula is an interesting figure because when we meet him in his castle, it's apparent that he doesn't even have servants. He does all the housekeeping himself, he makes the beds and this sort of thing. Now I believe that one of the reasons that he left—or that he wanted to leave Transylvania, that he planned to come to England—was basically that he had run out of food supply. The peasants around the castle are all clearly aware of Dracula's vampirism and they know how to protect themselves so he needs to go to fresh turf to get some more food.

I'm having trouble seeing the audience. The audience doesn't reflect in a mirror.

Q: Right here. Thank you. Splendid presentation. I was wondering if maybe you could speak to a reason for why there's this endurance of Dracula and not, say, Polidori's Lord Ruthven—

LESLIE KLINGER: Sure.

Q: What is it about this story that keeps taking on all of these incarnations? Is there a kind of cultural relationship for a reason for why these filmic adaptations change over time?

LESLIE KLINGER: I think in the beginning Dracula was a—I think an unconscious metaphor for some things that were troubling the English public. Most prominently probably the invasion of the Eastern European immigrants into England. And of course that's where Dracula's from. It's also a book that has a lot of sort of troubled issues with women. Lucy is a kind of airhead debutante whose biggest worry in life is which of the three men—the successful doctor, the rich American inventor, or the nobleman—she's going to marry. She picks the nobleman. And Mina, who denies being "the New Woman"—the New Woman was a movement in England that was seen by men as women who wanted to be men. But Mina says she's not that and yet she's really the brains of the outfit. She's the central figure who organizes the hunt for Dracula and who types up all this material. She does stenography. She types up the transcripts of Harker's records and so on. So this turmoil is going on in Stoker's mind, too, and the book reflects all of these things, but the vampire image, as I showed in maybe an entertaining, not very serious way, today, has changed.

I think the vampire symbolizes the other, the outsider, and as our society has created more and more of that anxiety, I think the vampire image has become more and more appealing. We now sympathize with them, those poor lonely, romantic, misunderstood vampires, and of course they're also immortal. So I mean I think it's a complex attraction. It's also all about death and blood, a very powerful substance, mystical, creates life, you take it away, life goes away, etcetera. So I'm not a psychologist, but all of that mixed together is part of the seduction of the vampire. Now there was a question over here before the microphone got taken away. Okay, yes, sir.

Q: What do you make of the biographical studies that have related Dracula to Henry Irving and Stoker's supposed homosexual attraction toward him?

LESLIE KLINGER: I think it's nonsense, but let me explain at least the factual basis. Bram Stoker's day job was to be the acting manager of the Lyceum Theatre. He had met Henry Irving, the great stage actor, when Stoker was a drama critic in Dublin and eventually Irving invited him to come to England to run his repertory company. The relationship continued for twenty-five years and Stoker was very close to Irving and on the other hand, he was also, you can make of this what you will, happily married to Florence, had a child. He was the middle—Stoker was a very congenial fellow, he was the middle of a circle of the great writers and celebrities of the day, which of course included Sir Henry Irving, Arthur Conan Doyle, Robert Barge, Jerome, **[QUERY: Please confirm or insert correct names for Robert Barge and Jerome, neither of which could be confirmed.]** etcetera. I don't—you can read the reminiscences. Stoker had a

great success actually in his two-volume reminiscences of Irving and I don't see any hints of that kind of—he was adoring in a fanboy sort of way of Irving. He thought he was the best actor the world had ever seen but I don't see the homosexual aspects to it, myself.

Q: (Inaudible)

LESLIE KLINGER: Absolutely. I was there a year ago and it's beautiful country but it's very evident that they actually made a very conscious decision to make Dracula *the* tourist industry there, to the point of almost embarrassment. At least they've cancelled the idea of the Dracula theme park **(laughter)**—seriously—but for example, Castle Bran, a beautiful castle built at the end of the nineteenth century has been essentially renamed "Castle Dracula" and when you go there, the tour guides are quick to say, "This is where Stoker got the idea for this, and this is where Vlad the Impaler . . ." and of course it's all nonsense. Bram Stoker never went to Transylvania. And Vlad the Impaler was a Wallachian prince. He was briefly at Castle Bran, as a prisoner for two days. But the great industry now—as you go to any of these major tourist sites, you will see nothing but vampire souvenirs. I pictured two of the most outrageous in my book and you can take a look at them.

Q: If Bram Stoker didn't go to Transylvania, why did you, Les?

LESLIE KLINGER: I went to Transylvania in part because I could. There was a symposium there and it was my first chance to hang around with other vampire scholars.

But I really went to—it was an interesting experience. One of them showed slides, for an hour, of decomposing bodies. Very interesting. My real purpose there was to look at the geography, because one of the remarkable things that I had seen in the first act of the book, which is Harker's trip to Transylvania, is that the descriptions in the book don't match the reality of the geography—there aren't mountains where he puts them or chasms where he puts them. In addition—and this is the mysterious part if this is a true narrative—which is a lot of the descriptions have been plagiarized right out of other Victorian travel books. So what's going on here, why would Jonathan Harker be writing false material here? Well, what I concluded—bear with me, here.

First we have to jump to the ending of the book. Now Van Helsing has told his crew two important things. One, Dracula has the power to turn into a mist when the sun sets. He doesn't have that power during the daytime. He can shape-shift after dark. In addition, the only way to kill him is with a wooden stake through the heart, you cut off his head, you stuff his mouth with garlic, and that will take care of him. So what happens at the end of the book? They stab him with two steel knives and he vanishes. We don't have a cloud of dust on the ground, he's just gone. I think he survived. So if he survived, this explains now the geography, because Dracula would have had a powerful incentive to stop the publication of the book, but it was too late. So instead he wanted to create a cover story, a false narrative that misled readers about where his home was, what his powers were, and so on. So, take it or leave it. That's my theory. Yes, sir.

Q: Question number one, how does a dead guy survive?

LESLIE KLINGER: Good point.

Q: I'm sorry, my real question, though. A new film has just been released out of I believe Sweden, called *All the Right Places*, which is another take on the vampire story, this one about a twelve-year-old girl who is a vampire, who is looking for a friend, who turns out to be a twelve-year-old boy, and it goes to the othering issue that you were discussing earlier. My question for you is the vampire as metaphor seems to be from the *Twilight* series to *True Blood* now to twelve-year-olds getting younger and younger and younger and the theme seems to be isolation.

LESLIE KLINGER: Yes, yes.

Q: Could you just expand on that point a little?

LESLIE KLINGER: Well, it's the point I was making about the other, the romantic outsider. I thought this whole idea was really best explored in one of my favorite episodes of Buffy. I'm a major Buffy fan, I make no apologies for it. It's the episode, I think it's called "Lie to Me" and a group of teenagers have a club and they're all sort of trying to look like vampires and dress like vampires. And they've arranged for vampires to come there so that they can be turned into vampires, they want to be like the Lonely Ones, as they call them. Well, the vampires arrive and promptly slaughter them all and it's really a very touching episode. **(laughter)** I think this is a very powerful metaphor. Now, I must

say, lest you criticize my presentation, I only focused in this set of clips here on Dracula films and even there of course I had to leave out many other Dracula films—there are bunches. One of the best is film called Del Conte De Dracula, starring Christopher Lee. Lee himself said it was the best Dracula film he ever made, the script is very close to the original story. This is not going away soon. Yes, sir.

Q: (Inaudible)

LESLIE KLINGER: Folklore. Garlic and some of the ash tree have just been associated in folklore for thousands, for a thousand years. I don't really—I have a footnote about this. I don't remember what I said, but there are some vague religious connotations to garlic, but it's all confused. And everybody's got different folklore, as I said earlier. An iron stake in some countries, a wooden stake in many countries, silver in some but not in all. There's—the cross of course is a powerful repellant, but one of my favorite cartoons is the man holding up a cross to the vampire and the vampire says, "Oy, have you got the wrong idea!"

Q: (Inaudible)

LESLIE KLINGER: No. All I can talk about is the crackpot idea that porphyria was a vampire's disease. This is a disease that causes extreme pallor, and there's something to do with the blood also. This is all unsubstantiated stuff, so no, I don't have anything to say, but do let me know about it. Yes, you.

Q: (Inaudible)

LESLIE KLINGER: Well, I was asked in an interview last week what was the scariest thing that I found in my research and I said it was probably the English magazine called *Bite Me*. **(laughter)** Because in the magazine, I mean, it's all ads for how to have your teeth fixed and where to get the red contact lenses and it's also about sort of consensual blood-sharing personal ads. There are a number of people who are living a vampiric lifestyle. Are some of them real vampires? I don't know. Yes, sir.

Q: I was kind of curious. My dad's a big Sherlock Holmes fan, but not really a Dracula fan and I was wondering is there a cross-pollination?

LESLIE KLINGER: Thank you for asking. I got there because Dracula is the other great icon, as Paul said in his introduction. I like to picture Holmes and Dracula walking the streets of London at the same time. They were exactly contemporaries. Yes, there have been a number of speculations about Holmes and Dracula, on sort of both sides of the street, if you. *The Holmes-Dracula File* by Fred Saberhagen, *The Adventure of the Sanguinary Count* by Loren Estleman, have Holmes fighting Dracula. A wonderful series of comic books called *Scarlet by Gaslight* by Martin Powell has Holmes and Dracula teaming up on the same side to fight the ultimate evil, Professor Moriarty.

Q: Two questions if I might, one connected to a previous question with regards to pulmonary tuberculosis. I ran across a theory recently that Stoker got his inspiration from a Sylvanian princess who had that problem when they did the autopsy, they did it in a rather bizarre fashion, piercing the heart and so on and so forth.

LESLIE KLINGER: I read the article, it was interesting. It's also said Stoker got his inspiration from Elizabeth Bathory, a princess who loved to bathe in blood to keep herself young. This is all just speculation. I will tell you that the notes reveal none of these influences.

Q: The other question is connected to this gentleman's comment on Sherlock Holmes. When you teach the course on that, is there any mention to anything that might be owed to the detective of Edgar Allan Poe?

LESLIE KLINGER: Of course, of course. Conan Doyle himself acknowledged that Poe was the master, that Dupin was a superb effort, notwithstanding that Holmes himself scoffs at Dupin. Doyle was quick to say the puppet is not the master, Poe was an incredible writer. Well, we're out of time. Thank you so much.

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: Thank you so much.

(applause)