

**‘Violating all the rules of civilized vampirism’: identity, sexuality, alienation, and ‘vampire wolf-dogs’ in Andrew Fox’s *Fat White Vampire Blues***

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Andrew Fox’s ‘fat white vampire’, Jules Duchon is not a typical member of the undead. Duchon is a morbidly obese, hypochondriac vampire living in the far-from-glamorous Ninth Ward of New Orleans, a city firmly associated with the undead thanks to Anne Rice’s *Vampire Chronicles*. His identity undergoes both physical and emotional transformation, aided by Doodlebug who, as a transsexual vampire, has learnt to manipulate the ability to shape-shift, and exist in an unstable state of being as a female.

Fox’s vampires follow Stoker’s *Dracula*, the fluid blueprint for modern American vampirism, in their capacity to also be able to adopt animal forms such as dogs, panthers, and rats. But, where *Dracula*’s shape-shifting is nefariously motivated, alienation within this localized vampire community is the primary impetus for Duchon’s metamorphism and, as such, fundamental to his narrative arc. Adapting to ‘wolf form’ may be part of a response to victimization, but leads to bestiality.

Once in lupine form, Duchon’s humanity is subsumed by animalization, guided by baser instincts. His judgement patterned by wolf behaviour, Duchon is determined by impulse and ‘fuck[s] a stray’: ‘I’ve gotta turn human again, Jules told himself [. . .] caught in the throes of a lust unlike any he had ever known [. . .] But before he could even begin to muster the concentration necessary for a transformation, he had already mounted her.’ While it may be argued that such animalization adulterates vampirism, Duchon’s bestiality creates a hybridized form – ‘something new, both familiar and unfamiliar [a . . .] vampire wolf-dog’ – that serves to heighten the *unheimlich*, a primary function of supernatural characters. As fantastic entities, (were)wolves could be construed as limited in their otherness, being understandable as compulsion-lead and unattractive but, combined with the elastic form of vampirism, there arises an intriguing supernatural aggregation, potentially greater than the sum of its parts.

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