This essay stems from the obvious (?) fact that Stoker and Joyce are two Irish authors who both project a certain conception of distance and alterity into two dead, or rather “undead”, eastern figures, Dracula and Lipoti Virag. These two “characters” have a few notable points in common: they are ethnic Hungarians (Dracula is a Szekely from Transylvania, claiming descent from Attila and the Huns,¹ and Lipoti Virag is a Jew from Szombathely, in the West of the country); their ontological status is problematic, and their bodies seem to hover between the material and the ectoplasmic. Also, they are trespassers who cross borders (geographical ones between Eastern and Western Europe, temporal ones between the past and the present, natural ones between humanity and animality, etc.). They invade western metropoles and the consciousnesses of their denizens and, in colonizing the latter, reveal them as the sites of a struggle between “reversion and acculturation”.²

But one should also acknowledge what has, for so long, made it difficult for any earnest academic to whisper Joyce’s and Stoker’s names in the same breath: the institutional distance which separates their most famous works. Stoker was apparently conscious of having written, in Dracula, a “shilling shocker”³ and, though he spent years writing his novel, his highest ambition regarding its future was to have it adapted as a play and to have his employer and idol, the actor Henry Irving, play the part of the vampire on the Lyceum Theatre’s stage (a wish which Irving, to Stoker’s consternation, obstinately refused to grant). On the other hand, Ulysses is the prize exhibit of a modernist project which “issues its claim to aesthetic dignity by repudiating that

Victorian literature, above all fiction, which had sold itself to a mass reading public\textsuperscript{4} – in other words, by repudiating exactly the kind of literature which Stoker’s novel represents, or represented until recently.

For Dracula is now the object of a dramatic critical reevaluation, which has led both to a new appreciation of its narrative complexity and to a rewriting of its cultural background, in terms which, as I will first try to indicate, may chime with Joyce’s work. Conversely, as I will then argue, a Dracula-inspired reading of Joyce may help us to understand the apparently insane logic of Virag’s apparition on stage, by linking it with the ideological and biological anxieties which the vampire, as an agent of taxonomic destabilization, covertly embodies. And lastly, I would like to suggest that vampire literature could lead to new ways of considering Joyce’s linguistic practices in “Circe”, a chapter which, like the vampire’s kiss, is based on the twin principles of defamiliarization and cannibalization.

I. Inviting Dracula into the modernist mansion

In the last thirty years or so, Stoker’s novel has been salvaged from the stygian depths of Victorian popular fiction, dusted off and canonized by the academic community. This change of status has culminated in Joseph Valente’s recent bid to promote Dracula as embodying “the kind of sophisticated, post-impressionistic strategies of representation that have signaled, for generations of readers, the aesthetically serious complexity of early modernist artists such as Ford, Conrad, and the young James Joyce and have distinguished them from the practitioners of popular fiction, including Stoker himself”\textsuperscript{5}. As any reader of Dracula knows, vampires cannot enter a closed space unless they have been “carried, led, helped or in some way welcomed over the threshold”\textsuperscript{6}. Valente, a noted Joyce scholar, can here be seen to welcome Dracula across the border dividing “popular” Victorian shilling shocker serials from “serious” modernist

