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Discussion 1

I will be discussing Georg Heym’s short story titled, ‘The Dissection’. The short story does well to touch upon themes such as ‘The Grotesque’ and ‘The Uncanny’ which are both strong themes within the Vampire genre. First, I will provide a summary of the short story. An individual who has died lays upon a white sheet in some sort of medical lab. A group of medical professionals begin to perform a bizarre autopsy on the dead man. During the operation, strange and disturbing descriptions suggest that the dead man is being torn apart, piece-by-piece. It describes brutal acts of violence in an almost calm way which touches upon grotesque and uncanny themes. Although the men who perform the autopsy are described as ‘Friendly’, their actions convey a sense of evil. The doctors provide us with a sense of unease as they perform their acts of violence without any sense of morals. It is also striking that even though the individual who is being performed on is dead, the story seems to be told through their lens. The story finally ends with a glimmer of hope as the dead individual goes off into a dream-like state before the doctors finally dispatch him. The grotesque acts of violence described throughout the short story do well to create an unpleasant experience within the reader, and the uncanniness of the portrayal of the doctors also conveys a sense of distrust to the reader. Comparing this to themes that are portrayed within Vampire literature, we can see that the doctors can resemble an entity like that of a vampire. Their procedure to conduct a violent autopsy without any morals or compassion towards their ‘patient’ is no different than a vampire sucking the blood out of its victim.