Mutations of the Vampire Motif in the Nineteenth Century

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to explore the figure of the vampire in its specific historical contexts throughout the nineteenth century. It is an in-depth look at the social and cultural events which inspired literary appearances of the vampire from its oral beginnings in the eighteenth century and through each decade of the nineteenth century. It discusses how specific historical events and personal experiences of the authors of vampire fiction might have impacted the presentation of the vampire in those decades. It also details the shifting attributes of what constitutes a vampire, and how the motif is transmitted in terms of literary format. Broadly, it seeks to demonstrate that there is no set vampire canon, and no singular vampire figure. The ultimate aim of this thesis is to challenge received notions about the vampire, to chart its transformations, and thereby to attend to the complexity of a motif being constantly reworked in new historical and cultural contexts.

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I had a recent conversation with the author David Stuart Davies, who told me I was very lucky to be able to write on this topic – when he was at university, he wanted to write a thesis on Sherlock Holmes, but was told such a subject wasn't suitable for academia. Thankfully, times have changed, and popular literature no longer means not suitable for academia. Thank you to all the vampire academics who came before, for helping make this subject a legitimate one.

Thank you to Christopher, for being my inspiration, now and always. Also, a huge thank you to J, Harley, and the rest of the Rogues for helping me stay sane during the long process. I am also eternally grateful for Tibby, tea, and *The Lord of the Rings* soundtracks for getting me through the editing phase – honestly couldn't have done it without them!

Most importantly, thank you to my family for their unconditional love and support – Dad for showing me the 1958 *Dracula* at an impressionable age, Mom for not thinking my obsession with vampires too weird, and my brothers Sean and Randall for keeping my arguing skills sharp. Also to my

dearly loved and dearly missed grandparents, Baa and Kunk, who praised my determination and made me think I could accomplish anything with it. A massive thank you to my goddaughter, Emilia, for being endlessly entertaining, and for making me smile every day. Finally, thank you to all my amazing friends, particularly those here in the UK, who have been there for me this past decade. Thank you for putting up with my numerous rants and various forms of insanity. Assuming I'm granted the doctorate, I promise not to insist on being called doctor by you all. Maybe…

Author's Declaration

I, Megan Bryan, declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Introduction – "He is Known Everywhere That Men Have Been":

Introducing the Vampire Motif

Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, for all its canonical status and huge influence in subsequent popular culture, is not the whole story. The vampire motif is rich and complex. I use the term "motif" to describe the vampire throughout this thesis – the word is used in many disciplines including music theory, visual arts, and literary narrative, as well as among folklorists to describe elements of folklore, and identify recognizable patterns in folk art and traditions, according to Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (1955-58). The vampire, while also originating in folklore, contains similar elements and patterns throughout its history, and thus motif is the appropriate word to describe it. Its distinctive attributes include, among other things, the blurring of lines between the living and the dead; the exchange of bodily fluids, primarily blood; the theme of parasitism; and the allure of a perverse eroticism. The vampire motif circulates in the form of collective fantasies, literary fiction, and popular scandal. It is transmitted through coroners' reports, medical texts, case histories, legal cases, and religious discourse, as well as via literary texts. My thesis focuses not only on specific vampire texts, but also on their historical and cultural contexts, in order to analyze the changing forms of the motif itself.

Broadly, this thesis seeks to examine the vampire motif in the specific historical and literary context of the nineteenth century when it became an object of knowledge and fascination in a wide range of fields and disciplines. Generally, the subject of a historical literary vampire is a broad one, with a wide range of writers examining its place from the nineteenth century to the

present day. Glennis Byron and David Punter in their chapter on "The Vampire" in the Blackwell guide to the Gothic, state that, "confounding all categories, the vampire is the ultimate embodiment of transgression, but while most critics agree in reading the vampire as a transgressive force, the psychological or social significance they attach to this figure varies considerably."[1] Perhaps predictably in an introductory guide to the subject, the chapter makes sweeping statements about the vampire figure which upon closer examination do not ring true. For instance, Glennis Byron and David Punter emphasize the chronological progression of the vampire as a linear trope, claiming: "one of the most significant shifts in the movement from folk-lore to literature is the vampire's transformation from peasant to aristocrat."[2] As my thesis will demonstrate, this idea of a linear evolution of the vampire figure is erroneous. The vampire does not transform, but rather appears in a multiplicity of guises which all exist simultaneously. Another sweeping statement made by Glennis Byron and David Punter characterizes vampires as "not only aristocrats, but also seducers, and from the start the vampire has been associated with sexuality."[3] My thesis also seeks to contradict this interpretation, since contemporary reviews of early vampire stories do not explicitly connect the vampire with sexuality. It is in the early twentieth century, when psychologists such as Ernest Jones draw explicit parallels between the vampire and sexuality, that such readings begin to emerge. The majority of this thesis seeks to interpret how the vampire may have been

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[1] Glennis Byron and David Punter, "The Vampire," in *The Gothic,* eds. David Punter and Glennis Byron (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 268.
[2] Byron and Punter, "The Vampire," 269.
[3] Byron and Punter, "The Vampire," 269.

viewed in its contemporary historical context, rather than looking back on the figure through twentieth and twenty-first century critical lenses.

Ernest Jones explicitly associated the vampire with sexuality as early as 1912, but the critical study of vampire texts did not take off until the 1970s. Detailed readings of the vampire as a symbol of transgressive sexuality were first proposed by C. F. Bentley and Carol L. Fry in 1972. Their essays, "The Monster in the Bedroom: Sexual Symbolism in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*" and "Fictional Conventions and Sexuality in *Dracula*," respectively analyze the vampire motif as a metaphor for a range of sexual transgressions. This work was built upon by Christopher Craft in "'Kiss Me With Those Red Lips': Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*" (1984) and Nina Auerbach in *Our Vampires, Ourselves* (1993). Both Craft and Auerbach focus on *Dracula* and on the vampire motif's sexual symbolism. Adele Olivia Gladwell and James Havoc in *Blood and Roses: The Vampire in Nineteenth-Century Literature*, also heavily associate the vampire with sexuality, declaring: "a vampire's spectre augers erotic deliria: carnal debilitation, auto-erogenous metempsychosis, fetishism and lesbianism, necrophiliac dementia, auto-symbolic incest, masturbation…The male vampire is a catamenial harbinger supping blood from the newly violated throat (neck) as menses discharge through the cervix (neck of womb) from the rawly-opened uterus."[4] Gladwell and Havoc analyze the vampiric act as an explicitly sexual one, and as such read the vampire as a metaphor for the sexual act itself. Such readings, however, prove to be limiting in terms of analysis, since assigning the vampire as a single metaphor, in this case, sexuality, frequently ignores other equally

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[4] Adele Olivia Gladwell and James Havoc, *Blood and Roses: The Vampire in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (London: Creation Press, 1992), 5.

valid and more complex interpretations. Indeed, the introduction to *Blood and Roses* encourages the interpretation of the nineteenth century vampire stories and excerpts it contains through a heavily sexualized, post-Freudian lens, when many of the works included in the collection would have been published before Freud was prominent. My thesis seeks to largely explore non-sexual readings of the vampire, since such readings would likely not have been associated with the vampire in the mind of a nineteenth century reader. My thesis hopes to illuminate specific historical associations of the vampire, rather than modern associations.

Many modern interpretations of the vampire frequently address the motif in the nineteenth century through a retrospective approach. Aspaisa Stefanou's *Reading Vampire Gothic Through Blood: Bloodlines* focuses on blood and its consumption as a metaphor, and its appearance in "a particular time and place in order to unearth its degenerated movements and shameful deviations hidden behind lofty concerns."[5] In this way, Stefanou analyzes the vampire figure in the context of the AIDS epidemic, following the thread of blood and its many symbolic meanings as a way of understanding the vampire figure. Stefanou's approach is almost exclusively modern, again in contrast to my own, which focuses on historical context. Additionally, the focus on blood is merely one aspect of the motif I wish to explore.

There are a number of works which collect together vampire stories or excerpts of stories with critical commentary on their historical context. David J. Skal's *Vampires: Encounters with the Un-Dead*, for instance, contains extracts

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[5] Aspasia Stefanou, *Reading Vampire Gothic Through Blood: Bloodlines* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 4.

of both fictional and supposedly non-fictional accounts of vampires from the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, in a nearly six hundred page compendium. Such a broad range of texts and timeframes must necessarily only touch briefly on specific time periods, preferring quantity of material over depth of historical analysis. Skal's work contains his notations in the margins, which are by necessity brief, touching on historical and biographical instances of significance in the stories. My thesis differs in this approach by seeking an in-depth approach to the specific historical context by analyzing contemporary accounts and events which might have influenced the conception of vampire stories during specific cultural moments of the nineteenth century. In this way, it is a unique contribution to scholarship, as it frequently touches upon events which have not explicitly and only tangentially been linked to the vampire figure, such as the serial murders of Jack the Ripper and the exile of Napoleon Bonaparte. It also contains in-depth analysis of the creators behind the literary vampires, rather than the passing biographical notes mentioned in Skal's work.

This thesis presents a uniquely historicist approach to the vampire, in contrast to other works which examine the figure. Peter Day's *Vampires: Myths and Metaphors of Enduring Evil,* for example, gives a broad introduction to some of the many fictional vampire incarnations, and includes chapters which range from a sexual interpretation of the figure, such as Lois Drawmer's "Sex, Death and Ecstasy: The Art of Transgression," to specific historicist approaches such as Terry Phillips "The Discourse of the Vampire in First World War Writing." The wide range of interpretations also includes vampire animals, as in Phil Bagust's "Vampire Dogs and Marsupial Hyenas:

Fear, Myth, and the Tasmanian Tiger's Extinction." The collection also contains a section entitled "Vampires for the Modern Mind," which includes analysis of contemporary vampires in our own culture. Again, the sheer breadth and variety of the work is by necessity a broad one, which focuses on specific random interpretations, rather than a chronological account focusing solely on the literary vampire and its many incarnations and transformations. My thesis is a chronological historicist examination of the motif of the literary vampire specific to the nineteenth century, offering similar threads of examination throughout, rather than shifting between topics and styles of criticism.

A similar format to Peter Day's is employed in Leonard G. Heldreth and Mary Pharr's *The Blood is the Life: Vampires in Literature*, which spends the first third of the book focused on nineteenth century interpretations of vampires. As in my thesis, the collection focuses on Polidori's *The Vampyre*, Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, and Stoker's *Dracula*, but rather than focusing on specific analysis of the works, as my thesis does, the approach in *The Blood is the Life* is to examine their place in the literary tradition. To this end, J. P. Telotte analyzes Polidori's creation in the wider Romantic tradition in "A Parasitic Perspective: Romantic Participation and Polidori's *The Vampyre.*" Telotte's information regarding *The Vampyre* and Polidori himself is drawn from, according to his notes, secondary sources, including "Mario Praz's *The Romantic Agony* (76) and from James B. Twitchell's *The Living Dead: A Study of the Vampire in Romantic Literature* (104-07)."[6] My research on Polidori explores more primary sources, including his medical thesis on

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6 J. P. Telotte, "A Parasitic Perspective: Romantic Participation and Polidori's *The Vampyre*" in *The Blood is the Life: Vampires in Literature*, eds. Leonard G. Heldreth and Mary Pharr (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1999), 18.

somnambulism, and his personal diary on his travels with Byron, in order to illuminate the text of *The Vampyre*. In this way, I hope to contribute an original interpretation of the material, along a similar contemporary approach.

The same desire to place the vampire in a literary tradition is seen in the subsequent essay in *The Blood is the Life*, Robert F. Geary's "'Carmilla' and the Gothic Legacy: Victorian Transformations of Supernatural Horror." Geary analyzes *Carmilla* as "a paradigm of the transformation of the incoherent numinous elements of the faded Gothic into the enduring form of the modern supernatural horror story."[7] Geary reads *Carmilla* as a bridge between ancient and modern traditions of storytelling, again focusing on how the story influenced the modern vampire, but without focusing on its place in its historical culture. Again, my thesis primarily examines the perception and reception of the literary vampire during its nineteenth century roots, rather than any effect it might have had on modern storytelling.

There is a specifically modern approach to the vampire in Joan Gordon and Veronica Hollinger's *Blood Read: The Vampire as Metaphor in Contemporary Culture*. As implied in the title, the essays in this collection are primarily focused on modern and post-modern interpretations of the vampire, including Veronica Hollinger's "Fantasies of Absence: The Post-Modern Vampire" and Nicola Nixon's "When Hollywood Sucks, or Hungry Girls, Lost Boys, and Vampirism in the Age of Reagan." The only nineteenth century vampire the collection focuses on is included in Nina Auerbach's "My Vampire, My Friend: The Intimacy Dracula Destroyed." Auerbach focuses primarily on cinematic adaptations of Le Fanu's *Carmilla* and its transgressive

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[7] Robert F. Geary, "'Carmilla' and the Gothic Legacy: Victorian Transformations of Supernatural Horror" in *The Blood is the Life: Vampires in Literature*, eds. Leonard G. Heldreth and Mary Pharr (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1999), 19.

homoerotic implications, which is certainly a primary aspect of the story, but certainly not the only aspect of the story which bears examination. However, reading the vampire as a metaphor for transgressive sexuality is typical of twentieth century analyses of the vampire, which *Blood Read* is primarily analyzing. My thesis focuses on the previous century, and the concerns of contemporaries of that era, rather than the current one.

In that vein, Alan Dundes's *The Vampire: A Casebook* collects and collates contemporary non-fictional writings about vampires without any in-depth commentary as to how or why these might have influenced the creation of the literary vampires who were conceived at the same time. While undoubtedly useful for the historical scholar of the figure, I am hoping my thesis can offer more insight into the variety of the kinds of texts which may have influenced the creation of vampires, including medical and scientific texts, as well as contemporary events. Dundes's book focuses on texts that specifically mention the vampire, while my thesis hopes to connect a wider range of historical texts to the creation and proliferation of the vampire figure.

Carol A. Senf's approach in *The Vampire in Nineteenth-Century English Literature* is to begin with twentieth century incarnations of the figure and to work backwards, examining their roots in nineteenth century fiction. Again, my thesis seeks to resist this kind of straightforward linear chronology towards a twentieth century endpoint, focusing exclusively on the nineteenth century, and not reading the motif as a kind of diagnostic figure who has a clear trajectory of evolution. I chose the term motif to resist these kinds of interpretations which confine the vampire to a strict canon. Senf also begins her examination of the nineteenth century vampire with *Dracula*, and this is

another way in which my thesis attempts to distinguish itself, by being less *Dracula*-centric. Senf's approach is similar to mine in that her work examines "the historical reasons that so many major nineteenth-century writers chose to treat the vampire seriously. Seeing reasons for the change from the powerful figure in the nineteenth century to its less powerful but more attractive twentieth-century offspring reveals a number of profound differences between our predecessors in the nineteenth century and ourselves."[8] Senf again sets up a linear progression of the vampire figure to compare its, in her own words, "evolution,"[9] which is a concept I contest. She also chooses to use the vampire to "explore sexual roles and human identity,"[10] which is again an approach I avoid, preferring to ground my research in contemporary readings of the vampire figure. Both Senf and I, however, utilize the term "motif"[11] in reference to the vampire, and do not confine our explorations of the figure to works which specifically cite a vampire.

For instance, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Olalla* features shades of vampirism without any character actually being a vampire. The story does contain themes of the parasitic, however, and blood-drinking, which is associated with vampirism. Sara Wasson attests that *Olalla* "contains a cluster of motifs that have led critics to identify it as a vampire tale: specifically, a character addicted to drinking human blood and an ancient family fallen into decline."[12] Wasson uses these motifs to contrast the tale to Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, claiming that while *Dracula* may be canon in the

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[8] Carol A. Senf, *The Vampire in Nineteenth-Century English Literature* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1988), 11.
[9] Senf, *The Vampire in Nineteenth-Century English Literature*, 16.
[10] Senf, *The Vampire in Nineteenth-Century English Literature*, 11.
[11] Senf, *The Vampire in Nineteenth-Century English Literature,* 15.
[12] Sara Wasson, "Olalla's Legacy: Twentieth-Century Vampire Fiction and Genetic Previvorship," *Journal of Stevenson Studies* 7 (2010): 55.

twentieth century, *Olalla* lays the framework for the type of vampire that would more heavily influence the canon in the twenty-first. By contrast, I seek to prove that there is no vampire canon. The vampire motif has always been composed of a multiplicity of forms and interpretations existing simultaneously, and the same is true in the nineteenth century.

William Hughes supports this theory in *A Companion to the Gothic* when he states: "The glib insistence - common to both academic criticism and the continuing discourse of Gothic writing – that the vampire and Count Dracula have become effectively synonymous has seriously inhibited the debate on the portrayal and signification of the un-dead in Gothic fiction…The eponymous anti-hero of Bram Stoker 1897 novel has become *the* reference point to which the characteristics of other vampires are judged to have adhered, or to have departed from."[13] Hughes notes the broadly *Dracula*-centric critical analysis of other nineteenth century vampire works, and contests "it is…a twentieth-century folklore of origins and simulacra which has attempted to fix *Dracula* as an immutable and convenient midpoint between the closing years of the romantic movement in the nineteenth century and the postmodernity of the last quarter of the twentieth."[14] Unlike Hughes, however, my thesis is not focused on the twentieth century reception to *Dracula* or the other vampire works he analyzes, such as those by Anne Rice. Nor do I necessarily criticize the twentieth century readings of *Dracula* in this way – my focus is on the nineteenth century reception of these works. Hughes is critical of "the predominance of *Dracula* as *the* central example in critical studies of vampire fiction [which] supports an academic institution committed to retaining

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[13] William Hughes, "Fictional Vampires in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in *A Companion to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 143.
[14] Hughes, "Fictional Vampires in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," 144.

a signifying association that links the vampire with the liberation of repressed sexualities."[15] My thesis broadly agrees with this point, while exploring in more depth the historical concept and reception of vampires in the nineteenth century than Hughes did.

With this thorough collection of previous and insightful scholarship, my thesis seeks not to retread well-worn ground, but instead focus on the vampire's ambiguous nature, and its shifting variety of interpretations. Most importantly, none of the works I have cited have emphasized the vampire's multiplicity of incarnations which existed simultaneously in the nineteenth century. It is this complex state which I seek to examine in my thesis, treating the vampire as a motif which does not necessarily evolve or progress, but exists in various forms at the same time. My thesis does not take a diagnostic approach as these works do, but instead focuses on the motif in a historicized, diachronic approach in a selection of nineteenth century texts.

Broadly, I focus on contemporary attitudes and discoveries which might have influenced the literary vampire, in an in-depth, almost exclusively historicized analysis. My thesis touches on different areas that have not fully been explored, such as the intersection between history, politics, science, and contemporary laws and events, in order to illuminate the motif and add to the range of interpretations of a complex figure. My work also seeks to explore often ignored aspects of the motif, such as modes of transmission and forms of texts, along with the implications of each. My thesis seeks to challenge received notions about literary vampires by grounding them firmly in their

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[15] Hughes, "Fictional Vampires in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," 153.

nineteenth century origins. It is a contemporary rather than retrospective look at the vampire at certain historical moments.

In modern scholarship, the vampire can be read as a metaphor for a variety of retrospective anxieties. Stephen D. Arata, in his essay "The Occidental Tourist: *Dracula* and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization" (1990), explores the vampire as a metaphor for racial tensions and reverse colonization in late nineteenth century literature. Franco Moretti's 1983 *Signs Taken for Wonders* reads the vampire as a capitalist predator draining the blood from the working classes, while Terry Eagleton explores the Anglo-Irish connection of the vampire motif in *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* (1995).

As mentioned previously, these diverse approaches across recent decades are all primarily focused on *Dracula*. Carol A. Senf declared in 1998 that "whereas Coleridge, Polidori, and Le Fanu transformed a folklore belief into a literary icon, Stoker emphasized the multiple natures of the vampire and also placed the vampire squarely in the modern world. Furthermore, he was the first writer to use the vampire to suggest the intersection of myth and science, past and present."[16] While endorsing Senf's account of the "transformation" of the vampire, my thesis seeks to challenge its implicit sense of linear literary progression. The motif does indeed transform through various modes of cultural transmission, including oral legend, eyewitness accounts, novellas, periodicals, short stories, and novels. However, with the disproportionate critical focus on *Dracula*, the interesting and significant process of transformation is obscured. Senf's passing mention of Stoker's

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[16] Carol A. Senf, *Dracula: Between Tradition and Modernism* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998), 7.

precursors credits them with merely giving the vampire motif a literary form, while crediting Stoker with modernizing it. I also challenge Senf's assertion that Stoker was the first writer to use the vampire to intersect myth and science – as I demonstrate throughout the thesis, even early literary vampires were informed and shaped by contemporary scientific beliefs. Senf's assertion of a linear literary progression of the vampire is echoed by Ken Gelder in his compendious collection *The Horror Reader* (2000). Gelder argues that "before the nineteenth century, the vampire was found mostly in collections of folk tales, a localized figure who pretty much kept to the same spot. Picked up by the novel later on, however, the vampire began to circulate, moving through nations and across borders, a marauding 'incorporeal' figure."[17] The novel which Gelder refers to is *Dracula* – he makes no mention of any prior nineteenth century vampire text. James Twitchell asserts that in the modern era, "'Dracula' and 'vampire' have become virtually indistinguishable."[18] Even as early as 1928, Montague Summers notes that "certainly there is no sensational romance which in modern days has achieved so universal a reputation [as *Dracula*]."[19] Summers himself, however, notes his preference for another nineteenth century vampire story, *Varney the Vampire* (1845-7)*.* This precursor to *Dracula* is largely disdained, even in modern scholarship. Margaret L. Carter in 1988 dismisses *Varney* as a "near-plotless blood feast,"[20] while Jorg Waltje in 2005 calls it "hack writing at its worst."[21] Yet

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[17] Ken Gelder, *The Horror Reader* (London: Routledge, 2000), 146.
[18] James Twitchell, "The Vampire Myth" in *Dracula: The Vampire and the Critics*, ed. Margaret L. Carter (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988), 110.
[19] Montague Summers, *The Vampire: His Kith and Kin* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd, 1928) 333.
[20] Margaret L. Carter, *Dracula: The Vampire and the Critics* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988), 2.
[21] Jorg Waltje, *Blood Obsession: Vampires, Serial Murder, and the Popular Imagination* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 41.

Varney undoubtedly inspired Stoker's creation, and arguably established the first sympathetic vampire protagonist in literature. The focus on *Dracula*, though the text is canonical, potentially blinds vampire scholarship to the significance of its precursors in their own right, as well as to the extent of the cultural contest over the vampire motif in which they participated.

The critical analysis of the vampire reaches a turning point in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which is part of the reason, I believe, why many scholars focus primarily on *Dracula*. Its publication in 1897, and its literary aftermath at the beginnings of the twentieth century, set it in a historical moment which saw important developments in the understanding of human psychology. In this context, the motif takes on a variety of interpretations rooted in its oral past and literary present.

The vampire originates in the magical thinking of early modern cultures. In *The Golden Bough* (first published in two volumes in 1890), the anthropologist J. G. Frazer wrote that a regressive mental stage was a natural consequence of believing in magic. The vampire, as a magical creature, produces a regressive effect upon the minds that believe in him. Frazer regarded magic as the first step in a three step evolution from magic to religion to science. Magic is the "refuge of the superstitious and ignorant," while religion belongs to the "pious and enlightened portion of the community," which "directly prepares the way for science. Alchemy leads up to chemistry."[22] Frazer's theory posits the relationship between magic, religion, and science as a linear one, with each evolving out of the previous

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[22] J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Comparative Religion, Vol. 1*. (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1894), 32.

state. Frazer's linear progression theory mirrors the linear progression of *Dracula*-centrism in studies of vampire literature – the desire to analyze a steady progression of the motif. Frazer's attitude is an example of the orthodox, pre-psychoanalytic moral disapproval of magical thinking. Psychoanalysis, by its engagement with the totality of magical thinking, opens the door that Frazer tries to lock. More modern theories of sociology, such as Lévi-Strauss's which will be discussed later in this chapter, theorize that concepts of magic, religion, and science not only coexist, but inform each other. This thesis hopes to prove something similar holds true for the vampire motif.

Psychoanalytic interpretations of the vampire motif were initiated by Ernest Jones in 1912. The second part of his four-part work *On the Nightmare* describes what he terms "the two essential characteristics of a *true* vampire" to be: "his origin in a dead person and his habit of sucking blood from a living one (emphasis added)."[23] Jones's attempt to define a "true" vampire likely stems from the desire to analyze its literary manifestations in a psychoanalytic context. The vampire is uncanny, both familiar and yet strangely unfamiliar – Jones explores this in his essay on vampires and argues that the figure is simultaneously feared and desired by its victims: "On the one hand it may be desired, and this may result either in the living being drawn to the dead or in the dead being drawn back to the living; on the other hand it may be feared, which may also have the same two effects."[24] The effect of both fear and desire is the same on the subject, and the mix of these emotions produces the

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[23] Ernest Jones, *On the Nightmare* (London: Hogarth Press, 1931), 99. The collected version of all four parts of this work were first published in English in 1931 – Part II, which features the discussion of the vampire, was originally published in German in 1912. See the Introduction of the 1931 edition for a discussion of the complex publication history of the full text.
[24] Jones, *On the Nightmare*, 99-100.

uncanny effect. Freud wrote on the theme of the uncanny in 1919, and gave

examples of situations and instances which would produce the uncanny

emotion, many of which can be caused by the vampire – the doppelgänger,

for instance, the double self which is the result of vampiric possession of a

body. Freud states:

> The quality of uncanniness can only come from the circumstance of
> the "double" being a creation dating back to a very early mental
> stage, long since left behind, and one, no doubt, in which it wore a
> more friendly aspect. The "double" has become a vision of terror, just
> as after the fall of their religion the gods took on daemonic shapes.[25]

The "double," according to Freud, hearkens back to a more primitive

mental stage. His rationalist critique of religion asserts that it is "nothing but

psychology projected into the external world. The obscure recognition…of

psychical factors and relations in the unconscious is mirrored…in the

construction of a supernatural reality, which is destined to be changed back

once more by science into the psychology of the unconscious."[26] Based on

this statement, Freud like Frazer believes that religion will eventually evolve

into science, once the "supernatural reality" is examined scientifically. "The

Uncanny" offers a psychoanalytical, and would-be scientific explanation for

supernatural phenomena.

Freud's own familiarity with specifically vampire fiction is unclear, but

there are striking parallels between his analysis of Wilhelm Jensen's *Gradiva*

and literary incarnations of female vampires, including *Carmilla*. Freud's

"Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*" essay from 1907 analyzes the

story of an archaeologist named Norbert Hanold who falls in love with a

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[25] Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny (1919)," in *Sigmund Freud, Collected Papers, Vol. 4.*, trans. Alix
Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 1959), 10.
[26] Sigmund Freud, *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901), trans. A.A. Brill. (London: T. Fisher
Unwin, 1914), 258-9.

woman on a bas-relief whom he names Gradiva. He meets this Gradiva in the flesh only for her to be revealed as his childhood sweetheart Zoë, who has disguised herself as Gradiva in order for Hanold to realize his love for her, which he duly does. Freud summarizes this as: "If the young lady in whose form Gradiva had come to life again accepted Hanold's delusion so fully, she was probably doing so in order to set him free from it. There was no other way of doing so; to contradict it would have put an end to any such possibility."[27] According to Freud, indulging the delusion is the only way to cure it. Otto Fenichel refers to this as "something which might be called 'cure by seduction' or 'cure by love.'"[28] The vampire is the inverse of this, a creature which seduces in order to infect, rather than cure. This specifically female version of the motif can be seen in Coleridge's *Cristabel* (1797, 1800) and Keats's *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* (1819), as well as Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872), where the vampire name is explicitly ascribed to the figure. Le Fanu further inverts the trope by not only twisting the "cure by seduction" into infection, but by making the female figure a transgressive seducer of women, rather than men. The story of Gradiva is also a story of uncanny doubles, since Zoë is the doppelgänger of the woman in the bas-relief. She is a familiar figure from Hanold's childhood, while simultaneously embodying the unfamiliar form of a woman long dead. This double aspect of the uncanny also occurs in *Carmilla,* whom the narrator Laura encounters as a child "in vision or reality,"[29] and is struck with an "ambiguous feeling"[30] upon meeting

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[27] Sigmund Freud, "Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume IX*, trans. James Strachey. (London: Hogarth Press, 1959), 21-2.

[28] Otto Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis* (London: Routledge, 1946), 548.

[29] Sheridan Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly* (1872), ed. Robert Tracy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 259.

the vampire twelve years later. Carmilla also bears a "wonderful likeness" to a portrait of an ancient family member, Mircalla, Countess Karnstein from 1698.[31] In this case, the double is not a doppelgänger, but rather the same person whose lifespan has been supernaturally extended. However, the uncanny effect of the double remains the same.

Freud identifies one aspect of the uncanny as a fear of bodily loss, recounting the story of a young man who fears his eyes being plucked out. Freud reads this as a symptom of a fear of castration. The body of a vampire victim is wounded by penetration, and later possessed by an outside entity which can only be banished by driving a phallic stake through the heart. If the loss of sight is a symptom of a fear of castration, the vampire may be an embodiment of the fear of penetration. Indeed, John Jervis argues in "Uncanny Presences" (2008) that "it is death as violence that most clearly marks the necessity to destroy the body, as essential vehicle of the self."[32] The body is inextricably linked to the self, and only by violence can the two be separated. Hence the change in a vampire's corpse after a staking – the look of peace marks a return to the true self after it was originally destroyed by the violence of the vampire.

Another way in which Freud's concept of the uncanny illuminates our understanding of the use of the vampire motif concerns the fear of live burial which is recurrent in vampire texts. While a vampire is not clinically alive, it is similarly also not clinically dead, and is therefore buried while conscious enough to realize what is happening. Freud concedes that:

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[30] Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly*, 260.
[31] Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly*, 272-3.
[32] John Jervis, "Uncanny Presences," in *Uncanny Modernity: Cultural Theories, Modern Anxieties,* ed. Jo Collins and John Jervis. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 15.

> To many people the idea of being buried alive while appearing to be dead is the most uncanny thing of all. And yet psychoanalysis has taught us that this terrifying phantasy is only a transformation of another phantasy which had originally nothing terrifying about it at all, but was filled with a certain lustful pleasure—the phantasy, I mean, of intra-uterine existence.[33]

In this way, burial is a return to pre-birth, and a fantasy of the womb. This is something desired, according to Freud, but also feared, as in live burial, hence the ambivalent feeling of the uncanny, something equally terrifying and pleasurable, which is similar to Ernest Jones's assessment of the vampire as something equally feared and desired. Stories involving live burial as a subject for horror include "The Buried Alive" by John Galt (1821) and "The Premature Burial" by Edgar Allan Poe (1844), both of which focus on detailing the sensations of fear of live burial. In 1846, anatomist Herbert Mayo wrote a series of articles for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, where Galt's story was also published. His "Letters on the Truths contained in Popular Superstitions" makes reference to vampire legends. Mayo rejects the existence of such creatures, but states: "Let us content ourselves for the present with a notion less monstrous, but still startling enough: That the bodies, which were found in the so-called Vampyr state, instead of being in a new and mystical condition, were simply alive in the common way; that, in short, they were the bodies of persons who had been buried alive."[34] Mayo theorizes that this would explain why the bodies seem to have decayed slower than other corpses – because they had been alive longer. Hence the vampire motif exemplifies many features of the uncanny, and readily lends itself to psychoanalytic interpretation.

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[33] Freud, "The Uncanny," 14-15.

[34] Herbert Mayo, "Letters on the Truths contained in Popular Superstitions: Vampirism," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 61 (1847): 432.

It is perhaps for this reason that the vampire text most studied in the modern era is *Dracula*, which more than any other lends itself to psychoanalytic interpretation. C. F. Bentley in 1972 claimed the novel contains every type of transgressive sexuality, including necrophilia, incest, genital rape, oral rape, sadism, masochism, adultery, promiscuity, menstrual taboos, and castration, as well as "a symbolic act of enforced fellatio,"[35] and an act of reverse menstruation in the scene of the forced feeding between Mina and Dracula. Because of the wealth of material available for psychoanalysis in *Dracula*, scholars have perhaps analyzed that text to the detriment of other nineteenth century vampire works. My thesis challenges this *Dracula*-centrism in order to focus on the transformation of the vampire motif in the decades prior to the publication of Stoker's work.

While possessing some consistent attributes, the vampire motif is problematic and elusive. The figure of the vampire exists as a creature of printed genre fiction, and simultaneously has roots in the magical thinking of early modern cultures. As stated previously, early anthropologists were particularly concerned with the relationship between magical thinking and the scientific process - J. G. Frazer, writing initially in 1890, condemned magic as "a spurious system of natural law as well as a fallacious guide of conduct."[36] He asserted that the role of the modern anthropologist and man of reason was to combat these creations of a more primitive mind. Frazer separated magic into many forms, the most common being sympathetic magic, which he

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[35] C. F. Bentley, "The Monster in the Bedroom: Sexual Symbolism in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," *Literature and Psychology* 22 (1972): 30.
[36] Frazer, *The Golden Bough,* 15.

attested "plays a large part in most systems of superstition."[37] Sympathetic

magic is based on the idea that "things act on each other at a distance

through a secret sympathy, the impulse being transmitted from one to the

other by means of what we may conceive as a kind of invisible ether, not

unlike that which is postulated by modern science for a precisely similar

purpose, namely, to explain how things can physically affect each other

through a space which appears to be empty."[38] Although dismissing magical

thinking itself, Frazer notes the similarity between magic and the scientific

practice, a similarity which will be remarked upon nearly seventy years later

by Claude Lévi-Strauss. Ouzi Elyada, a recent explicator of Lévi-Strauss's

work, offers this summary of his theories about the relationship between

science and superstition:

> As opposed to the anthropological approach, which perceives the
> savage mind as motivated by necessity and instinct, Lévi-Strauss
> believes that it is an intellectual thought pattern which endeavors to
> put the world in order via a procedure of observation and
> classification. Unlike scientific thought which deconstructs reality,
> however, the savage mind is holistic; it seeks ways to understand all
> types of nature, and contains fields which science deems
> nonresearchable, fields pertaining to faith, magic, imagination, and
> subjective experience. To this end, the savage mind employs the
> existent. It is a type of bricolage, improvisation based on available
> materials and tools.[39]

The vampire myth is an attempt by pre-scientific cultures to make sense of

observed connections between death, burial, and decay. It is a supernatural

belief with roots in the scientific process of observation and conclusion. The

motif first appeared in its Anglophone literary form in the early decades of the

nineteenth century, a time of emergent science, dominant religion and

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[37] Frazer, *The Golden Bough,* 31.
[38] Frazer, *The Golden Bough,* 10.
[39] Ouzi Elyada, "Claude Lévi-Strauss and the Hidden Structures of Myth," in *Raw and Cooked*, ed. R. Director. (Haifa: Haifa University Press, 2007), 23.

residual magic. This thesis explores the relationship between these three states, and how they inform each other in the transformation of the vampire.

The procedures for the destruction of a vampire, according to oral tradition, appear to demonstrate the application of a scientific mode of thought. According to Lévi-Strauss's interpretation of magical thinking:

> Magical thought…forms a well-articulated system, and is in this respect independent of that other which constitutes science, except for the purely formal analogy which brings them together and makes the former a sort of metaphorical expression of the latter. It is therefore better, instead of contrasting magic and science, to compare them as two parallel modes of acquiring knowledge. Their theoretical and practical results differ in value, for it is true that science is more successful than magic from this point of view, although magic foreshadows science in that it is sometimes also successful. Both science and magic however require the same sort of mental operations and they differ not so much in kind as in the different types of phenomena to which they are applied.[40]

Vitalism, (which the OED defines as "the theory that the origin and phenomena of life are dependent on a force or principle distinct from purely chemical or physical forces,") was a dominant current in science prior to, and leading into, the nineteenth century. It was a theory which became discredited as more modern scientific theories emerged in the latter half of the century. Descartes's statement in *Treatise on Man* (1664) that "the body is nothing else but a statue or earthen machine"[41] provoked vitalist counter-argument in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and prompted the search for the vital principle in areas of inquiry such as mesmerism and hypnotism. The vampire motif can be seen through the lens of both the mechanist and vitalist view of life – the vampire is a creature whose body is an "earthen" shell which can be possessed by demonic forces, and yet is also imbued with the

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[40] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (1962), trans. George Weidenfield and Nicholson Ltd. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 9.
[41] René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* (1664), trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothof, and Dugald Murdoch. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1.

principle of life without being truly alive. Vitalism plays a prominent part in the narrative of *Varney the Vampire*, and in John Polidori's medical education. This aspect of contemporary scientific thought is repeatedly referenced in literary incarnations of the motif, but it has been largely neglected as a subject for analysis, an oversight which my thesis endeavors to address.

According to Roger Luckhurst in *The Invention of Telepathy: 1870-1901* (2002), scientific practice and the social compositions of the participants in it changed radically in the late nineteenth century. The fin de siécle saw "the shift of scientific study from a small, if influential, pursuit of gentlemen-amateurs into an institutional *system*, highly differentiated, government funded, integrated with compulsory education, and with powerful professional spokesmen asserting the primacy of scientific authority over traditional, theological orientations of experience."[42] The rise of the scientific "system," to use Luckhurst's term, shifted the study of science from the casual hobby of the elite, wealthy few to the broader, more formal sphere of the publicly educated. This resulted in a broader cultural awareness of verifiable scientific concepts which could be tested and proven by a greater number of people.

The vampire appears to be especially prominent in the popular imagination during particular periods of the nineteenth century, and its rise parallels the rise of certain popular sciences which can be related to aspects of the motif. I take these to include the rise of hypnotism as an offshoot of the vitalist movement, new discoveries in the spread of diseases, and the study of physiology. Questions and debates among scientists and the public explain why the motif mutated at this particular moment in history.

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[42] Roger Luckhurst, *The Invention of Telepathy: 1870-1901,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 9.

The emergence of various forms of print culture and the wide variety of printed material available to the public also account for the rise of the vampire motif and its multiplicity of forms during this period. This transformation of the vampire motif occurs across a variety of mediums. In the early nineteenth century, the motif is transferred from a primarily oral culture to a primarily print one. Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick cite the years after 1819, when *The Vampyre* was first printed, as heralding "a new phase of modern British fiction in which the opportunist sensationalism of the monthly magazines assumed an unprecedented importance."[43] In the latter half of the century, not only magazines but also periodicals and reviews gained an increasing profile and importance. Among all these shifting formats, the vampire motif endures in a range of different forms. As the vampire motif thus assumed a more visible presence, questions about the cultural legitimacy of vampire texts were posed in a more and more urgent way. The idea of cultural legitimacy is a complex one, which will be unpacked in the next section. The debate over what kinds of culture can be described as legitimate is central to my thesis, via questions of high and low culture, and popular versus elite entertainment. The precise terminology is outlined in the next section, utilizing terms introduced by Peter Burke in 1978.

John Storey in *An Introduction to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture* (1997) defines "popular culture" as "the culture that is left over after we have decided what is high culture."[44] Storey argues that popular culture is "a

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[43] Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick, ed., *The Vampyre and Other Tales of the Macabre*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), xiii.
[44] John Storey, *An Introduction to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture, Second Edition*. (London: Prentice Hall, 1997), 7-8.

residual category…substandard culture,"[45] suggesting that the label "popular"

often implies a value judgment by the viewer or critic. Modern cultural theory

addresses this difference as "not necessarily a question of

superiority/inferiority; it is more about different kinds of satisfaction,"[46] a theory

proposed by Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel in their text *The Popular Arts*

(1965). In the mid-nineteenth century, this question of cultural hierarchy

preoccupied the periodical reviewers as well as social commentators. With the

emergence of a large reading public as a result of a more accessible primary

education system in the mid-nineteenth century, questions arose about what

sorts of literature the public should be reading. Bracebridge Hemyng

expounded the perceived dangers of cheap fiction to the public in his 1861

essay "Prostitution in London," which appeared in the fourth volume of Henry

Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor*. According to Hemyng:

"Another very fruitful source of early demoralization is to be looked for in the

quantities of penny and halfpenny romances that are sold in town and

country…To say that these are not incentives to lust, theft, and crime of every

description is to cherish a fallacy."[47] The focus of social commentators like

Mayhew and Hemyng on the "demoralizing" effect of "penny romances"

shows a desire to separate wholesome and unwholesome literature, with

Hemyng even suggesting that the police should be authorized to act against

the "shameful misuse of the art of printing" by an Act of Parliament.[48]

Situations such as this illustrate Peter Burke's claim that "there was two-way

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[45] Storey, *Introduction to Cultural Theory*, 8.
[46] Story, *Introductions to Cultural Theory*, 65.
[47] Bracebridge Hemyng, "Prostitution in London" in *London Labour and the London Poor, Volume Four* by Henry Mayhew (1861), ed. Victor Neuberg. (London: Penguin Books, 1985), 477.
[48] Hemyng, "Prostitution in London," 477.

traffic between ['learned culture' and 'popular culture.'],"[49] and also that
cultural arbiters of one kind or another also sought to establish a distance
between what they understood as legitimate and illegitimate. The concern of
learned culture about the influences of popular culture, and popular culture's
inverse influence on learned culture, is central to the vampire motif. This is
also apparent in the mid-eighteenth century, when reports of vampires were
transcribed by men of learned culture in order to document the contours of a
popular belief.

As Burke points out, the question of mediation between text and oral
tradition is central to the understanding of popular culture. The question of
mediation is also central to understanding the vampire motif. The prominence
of oral narratives in the vampire's early history results in the motif acquiring
multiple variations. These oral stories change depending on their narrator
even in the modern era. In 1972, Radu Florescu and Raymond T. McNally
attempted to collate a history of Dracula and his association with Vlad III of
Wallachia. In doing so, on a research trip in 1969, they spoke to locals of the
Carpathian region of modern day Romania, who narrated a series of stories
about Vlad Dracula, many of which vary greatly in detail from ones transcribed
by contemporary Russian and German scholars. According to Florescu and
McNally, "One of the central points made in this book is that the general
themes in the oral Romanian folktales concur with those in the printed
German pamphlet and the Russian manuscript sources dating from the
fifteenth and sixteenth centuries…the Romanian narratives are longer [and]

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[49] Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*. (London: Maurice Temple Smith, Ltd., 1978), 58.

often [contain] a moral."[50] The Romanian oral stories, translated by Florescu,

illustrate a depraved act of Vlad Dracula, such as his impalement of a woman

for being lazy and not repairing her husband's clothes. They finish with: "It is

just as well that Dracula does not rule our country today, for he would have

had to expend many stakes, which might have eliminated from our land the

innumerable drones who wither the very grass on which they sit."[51] In this

way, the variance between the written tales and oral tales transforms them

from propaganda against Vlad Dracula by countries which despised him into

propaganda supporting him as a national hero who justly punished the idle.

The tone and potential moral of the story are completely changed depending

on the narrator, and the form in which the story is told.

    Peter Burke also claims that "we cannot afford to assume that…printed

texts are faithful records of performances, even to the limited extent that texts

can be."[52] Furthermore, we cannot conclude that the accounts in question are

unbiased, for that is the primary problem with written mediation in the oral

tradition: "The texts are rarely produced directly by the craftsman and

peasants whose attitudes and values we are trying to reconstruct."[53] The

mediator will almost inevitably be placing his own value judgments on the acts

he is witnessing, as in the case of a narrative of vampire staking. The

mediator will also possess an agenda in setting down the record so as to

please those who entrusted him with the task. The tale of Peter Plogojowitz

(1725) demonstrates this – the account of the vampire staking, which will be

detailed in the next section, was transcribed by the Imperial Provisor of

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[50] Raymond T. McNally and Radu Florescu, *In Search of Dracula: The History of Dracula and Vampires* (London: Robson Books, 1992), 208.
[51] McNally and Florescu, *In Search of Dracula*, 214.
[52] Burke, *Popular Culture*, 67.
[53] Burke, *Popular Culture,* 67-8.

Gradisk. It concludes with: "I inform the most laudable Administration, and at the same time would like to request, obediently and humbly, that if a mistake was made in this matter, such is to be attributed not to me but to the rabble, who were beside themselves with fear."[54] The Provisor shifts blame for any errors in his account to the peasants, rather than himself, in order to make himself seem more reliable. There is a similar propaganda in Pitton de Tournefort's 1718 account of a Greek vampire on the island of Myknonos, which the residents dispose of by a series of rituals, including burning the body. The botanist ridicules the practice: "After that, it is not necessary to point out that the Greeks of today are not the great Greeks, and that there is among them only ignorance and superstition!"[55] This derision of the peasant class illustrates Burke's point about the texts not being produced by the peasants whose attitudes the cultural historian tries to reconstruct. They are, in fact, designed to dismiss the peasantry as frightened and superstitious. Although such records are unreliable, they are valuable in illustrating the divisions between the common people and the educated people setting down these reports.

The divisions are succinctly evoked by Burke:

There were two cultural traditions in early modern Europe, but they did not correspond symmetrically to the two main social groups, the elite and the common people. The elite participated in the little tradition, but the common people did not participate in the great tradition. This asymmetry came about because the two traditions were transmitted in different ways. The great tradition was transmitted formally at grammar schools and universities. It was a closed tradition in the sense that people who had not attended these institutions, which

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[54] Michael Ranft, *De Masticatione Mortuorum In Tumulis* (Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1728), quoted in Paul Barber, *Vampires, Burial, and Death: Folklore and Reality*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 7.

[55] Pitton de Tournefort, *Relation d'un voyage de Levant, Vol. 1* (Paris, L'Impremerie Royale, 1717): 148, quoted in Paul Barber, *Vampires, Burial and Death*, 24.

were not open to all, were excluded. In a quite literal sense, they did not speak the language. The little tradition, on the other hand, was transmitted informally. It was open to all, like the church, the tavern and the market-place.[56]

The vampire was a product of the "little tradition," a creature of common knowledge and oral tradition. The motif's introduction to the world of the "great tradition" in the mid-eighteenth century made it more accessible to a wider audience than the oral tradition could. The latter is bound by location – an audience can only hear the stories if they are in the same location as the storyteller. Once the tales are written down, however, the audience widens to include the rest of Europe, and the vampire literary tradition begins.

In Germany in the late eighteenth century, according to Peter Burke, the rise of the *Volkskunde,* which translates literally as the "art of the people," focused the interest of European intellectuals on the peasants and craftsman of their countries. Thus began the study of "popular culture" as a discipline.[57] Burke attributes this interest to Johann Gottfried Herder's essay *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784-91) ("Ideas on the Philosophy of a History of Humanity") on the influence of poetry as a force that once united communities by oral performance.[58] This force, according to Herder, has since been lost because transcribing poetry divides the audience among those educated enough to read, and those who are not. Oral tradition, by contrast, belongs to the whole of the population. Herder describes the difference as *Kultur des Volkes* (literally translated as "culture of the people,"

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[56] Burke, *Popular Culture*, 28.
[57] Burke, *Popular Culture,* 3-4.
[58] Johann Gottfried Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Leipzig: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1784-91).

or "popular culture") versus *Kultur der Gelehrten* ("learned culture"), terms which Burke also utilizes.[59] The vampire belongs to both traditions, initially a product of popular culture, in which the learned culture subsequently took an interest. This interest was to satisfy intellectual curiosity as to the existence of such creatures.

Even before interest in the *Volk* was awakened in Germany, in what Burke terms "the discovery of the people,"[60] Eastern Europe's *Volk* were being studied. In 1718 during the Peace of Passarowitz, when parts of Serbia and Wallachia were turned over to Austria, Austrian officials began to notice and report on the destruction of so-called vampires by the exhumation of dead bodies. According to Paul Barber, "literate outsiders began to attend such exhumations. The vampire craze, in other words, was an early 'media event,' in which educated Europeans became aware of practices that were by no means of recent origin, but had simply been provided, for the first time, with effective public-relations representatives."[61] This is the beginning of the motif's appearance in elite culture: verified accounts of actual vampires, established by the low culture, and transmitted by learned representatives.

The story of Peter Plogojowitz (1725) was one of the early cases of vampirism recorded by the Imperial Provisor of the Gradisk District in Austria. Shortly after Plogojowitz's death, an epidemic killing ten people occurred in his village. When exhumed, his body had not decomposed, and fresh blood was in his mouth. His body was then pierced by a sharp stake, at which point fresh blood poured from its orifices, and then the body was burned.[62] A similar

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[59] Burke, *Popular Culture*, 8.
[60] Burke, *Popular Culture*, 6.
[61] Barber, *Vampires, Burial, and Death,* 5.
[62] Barber, *Vampires, Burial, and Death,* 6-7.

scene was witnessed by regimental medical officers in the case of Arnold

Paole (1727), who claimed during his lifetime to have been troubled by a

vampire. After his death, people complained of having been attacked by

Paole, and four people in his village died. The same symptoms manifested

themselves after the body was exhumed – no decay, and blood in the mouth

– and the same process was undertaken for its destruction – a sharpened

stake through the body, which bled profusely, after which the body was

burned. Unfortunately in this case, Paole had reportedly attacked cattle as

well as humans, and the people who had eaten the cattle, seventeen in all,

died and had to be disposed of in the same way after death.[63]

Arnold Paole is referenced in the footnotes of Robert Southey's

Thalaba the Destroyer (1801). Southey cites a long text from the *Mercure*

Historique et Politique (1736), which gives a similar history of Paole (spelled

Arnold Paul in the text). The footnote claims that Paul encountered a vampire

"on the Frontiers of the Turkish Servia,"[64] implying that the vampire is a

creature which originates in non-Christian territory, but lurks threateningly on

the borders of it. Indeed, the plot and setting of *Thalaba* are centered around

an Islamic culture, as Byron's *The Giaour* (1813) would be twelve years later.

Romantic Orientalism paralleled the rise of Romantic Gothicism, and the two

share many elements in common, including exotic settings and supernatural

occurrences. Byron's interest in Orientalism, and the vampire's relation to it,

will be addressed in the next chapter. Even from these early references,

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[63] Dieter Sturm and Klaus Völker, *Von denen Vampiren oder Menschensaugern*. (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1968) quoted in Barber, *Vampires, Burial, and Death*, 16-18.

[64] Robert Southey, *Thalaba the Destroyer: The Second Volume* (London: Biggs and Cottle, 1801), 104-111.

however, the vampire's association with the foreign "other" is a feature which

will endure.

In 1888, nearly 150 years after the Plogojowitz case, Emily Gerard

reported in her folkloric exploration of Transylvania how the vampire had

evolved:

> Most decidedly evil, however, is the vampire, or *nosferatu*, in whom
> every Roumenian peasant believes as firmly as he does in heaven
> or hell…The…vampire is in general the illegitimate offspring of two
> illegitimate persons…and will continue to suck the blood of other
> innocent people till the spirit has been exorcised…by opening the
> grave of the person suspected and driving a stake through the
> corpse…In very obstinate cases it is further recommended to cut off
> the head and replace it in the coffin with the mouth filled with garlic,
> or to extract the heart and burn it, strewing the ashes over the
> grave. That such remedies are resorted to, even in our enlightened
> days, is a well-attested fact, and there are probably few Roumenian
> villages where such has not taken place within the memory of the
> inhabitants.[65]

Gerard's report is roughly contemporary with Stoker laying the

foundation of his own vampire tale (his earliest notes on *Dracula* begin in

1890).[66] Stoker, more than any other author previously, preserves the

formulaic procedures for the destruction of his vampires, likely by referring to

cultural texts such as Gerard's. Using the Burke theory of two-way traffic, this

is an example of a creature of popular culture being transcribed by a learned

cultural historian, and reproduced as a creature of literary popular culture in

Dracula.

As well as their methods of destruction, the habits and features of

vampires were also carefully recorded. The signs of vampirism - pale, bloated

corpses which seemed to be preserved after death - were noted by folklorist

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[65] Emily Gerard, *The Land Beyond the Forest: Facts, Figures, and Fancies from Transylvania* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1888), 52.
[66] Robert Eighteen-Bisang and Elizabeth Miller, ed., *Bram Stoker's Notes for* Dracula: *A Facsimile Edition* (Jefferson: McFarland and Co. Publishers, 2008), 4.

Agnes Murgoci nearly forty years later in 1926. She noted that, according to Romanian legend, the vampire returns at night to speak with its family. This intercourse may be threatening or benign, but as a consequence of the visit, the vampire's family and livestock all die off rapidly.[67] The idea of the vampire destroying its family first also appears in fiction in Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, where the un-dead noblewoman destroys her family line as well as her local village before she is forced to flee by a knowledgeable vampire hunter.

Although Polidori's Lord Ruthven is credited as being the first literary vampire in 1819, the word itself first appeared in English long before his creation was conceived. The first recorded instance of the word "vampire" in English appears in the eleventh volume of *The Harleian Miscellany*, in the section detailing "The Travels of Three English Gentlemen."[68] Their travels, in the year 1734, take them to a region of Eastern Europe known as Carniola, now part of modern Slovenia, where their landlord informs them that some parts of the country are infested by "Vampyres…supposed to be the bodies of deceased persons, animated by evil spirits, which come out of the graves, in the night time, suck the blood of many of the living, and thereby destroy them."[69] The author then describes the phenomenon in more detail: "The Vampyres…being dug out of the graves, appear in all parts, as the nostrils, cheeks, breast, mouth, &c. turgid and full of blood. Their countenances are

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[67] Agnes Murgoci, "The Vampire in Roumania," *Folklore* 37.4 (1926): 322.

[68] It is also interesting for the purposes of my research to note the apparent similarities between the Three Englishmen's journey abroad and Jonathan Harker's journey to Transylvania in the novel *Dracula*. It seems Stoker must have consulted this text at some point, since the detailed descriptions of landscape and peasant customs echo the first few entries of Harker's journal. The Three Englishmen also describe staying with a Mr. Robinson, an English minister, and "a gentleman of great politeness and address" who serves them "bottles of Tokay wine," which is also the drink Dracula serves Harker. Anonymous,"The Travels of Three English Gentlemen (1734)," *The Harleian Miscellany*, *Volume XI* (London: Robert Dutton, 1810), 265.

[69] Anonymous, "Travels of Three English Gentlemen," 231-2.

fresh and ruddy; and their nails, as well as hair, very much grown. And, though they have been much longer dead than many other bodies, which are perfectly putrefied, not the least mark of corruption is visible upon them."[70] The description is completed by an account of the procedure for destroying a vampire: "Those who are destroyed by them, after their death, become Vampyres; so that, to prevent so spreading an evil, it is found requisite to drive a stake through the dead body, from whence, on this occasion, the blood flows as if the person was alive. Sometimes the body is dug out of the grave, and burnt to ashes; upon which, all disturbances cease."[71] As can be seen from the examples given, the descriptions of vampires and practices for destroying them vary. The vampire may converse with its family benignly, or just destroy them. It may need to be staked through the heart with its head cut off, or the body or heart may be burned. It may attack humans or livestock. It may be the product of an illegitimate union, or it may have been plagued by a vampire in its lifetime. From these fragments of information, various different "vampires" are recorded, and from these the authors of literary vampires would draw their inspiration. While this eclectic mix does not make the case for the existence of any "true" vampire, it is important to note some of the elements that will feature in certain later vampire stories.

First of all, there is the vampire with aversions to religious objects, such as Dracula and Carmilla. Dracula and his victims can be warded off with a crucifix or sacred wafer – the wafer burning Mina's forehead is proof she has been corrupted by the vampire in the novel. Carmilla, on the other hand, appears to dislike religion, but not be controlled by it. Other literary vampires,

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[70] Anonymous, "Travels of Three English Gentlemen," 232.
[71] Anonymous, "Travels of Three English Gentlemen," 232.

such as Ruthven and Varney, appear to have no aversion to religion – Varney even manages to confess his sins to a clergyman without any physical repercussions.

Some vampires are harbingers of plagues, wars, and famine. Barber asserts that this is a result of the commonly found blood on the lips of exhumed corpses: "The pneumonic form of the plague causes the victim to expel blood from the mouth…The observer does not realize that the blood comes from the lungs but instead sees it as evidence that the body has been sucking blood from the living."[72] Dracula summons rats, the bearers of the Bubonic plague. Stoker's Irish mother recounted to him the horror of the Potato Famine, detailing emaciated, wasted bodies: "Famine, followed by fever, struck in the year prior to [Charlotte Stoker's] birth, 1817; famine, caused by the failure of the potato and oat crops, recurred even more fiercely in 1822, when she was four…[she] left behind a vivid account of the horrors of a cholera epidemic in 1832, when she was fourteen." [73] These descriptions undoubtedly inspired Stoker when he wrote his own stories of living corpses, as did the descriptions of the victims of the Potato Famine of 1845-52, an event that decimated Ireland and would have influenced both pre-eminent Irish vampire writers of the nineteenth century, Le Fanu and Stoker. One of Stoker's sources for Dracula, Vlad Dracula, was a Wallachian warlord who fought several campaigns against the Ottoman Turks, and was known for his brutality and bloodthirstiness. Both Vlad Dracula and Lord Byron, inspirations for the vampires Count Dracula and Lord Ruthven, died fighting the Ottoman

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[72] Barber, *Vampire, Burial, and Death*, 42.

[73] Paul Murray, *From the Shadow of* Dracula: *A Life of Bram Stoker* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004), 11-12.

Empire, although nearly 350 years apart, in 1476 and 1824 respectively.

Dracula is associated with disasters, such as the Whitby shipwreck, as is

Carmilla, whose first act as a vampire is to destroy the inhabitants of her local

village, as effectively as if a plague had struck it. Her first victim in the story is

also the daughter of a general, a military man, further strengthening the

motif's association with war. Contrariwise, both Ruthven and Varney have

little to do with wars or plagues.

The overtly sexual act of vampirism might lead the modern reader to

consider the vampire as an incestuous figure. According to Croatian folklore,

a person may become a vampire if they are born of an incestuous union

between a mother and a son.[74] The vampire's existence is therefore a direct

result of sexual transgression, as well as being a metaphor for it. This aspect

of the motif holds true for Dracula and Carmilla, as well as for Ruthven.

Because of Polidori's story, the vampire came to be associated with Lord

Byron, the aristocrat banished from England on suspicion of incest with his

half-sister. The suspicion of sexual taboo and incest is associated with some

forms of vampirism, but again, not all. The idea of keeping the bloodline pure

by a noble pedigree is of particular concern to royalty and nobility, and

marriage between close family was a common enough practice in order to

achieve this. Hence the nobility condoned incest for the sake of preserving

bloodlines, a fitting attitude for a creature who believes that "the blood is the

life." Many nineteenth century vampires were of the nobility, but their roots in

the peasant tradition, where vampires were friends, relatives, and neighbors

of the common people, also make the vampire a creature with social mobility.

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[74] Murgoci, "The Vampire in Roumania," 325.

This aspect is key in the initial distrust of Varney, a nouveau riche vampire, who hordes wealth. Interest in him is piqued, however, when it is mentioned that he is likely to be a baronet. The pedigrees of both Carmilla and Dracula are discussed in detail in their respective texts, both coming from a long line of influential and noble families. The classic Marxist interpretation of the vampire is that the creature is a metaphor for an aristocracy that literally drains the blood of the working classes. According to Marx: "Capital is dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks."[75] This is just one of the many different constructions of the figure of the vampire in the nineteenth century.

As stated previously, both the transformation of the vampire motif and the modes by which stories about vampires were transmitted are central to this thesis. The oral tales of vampirism, as demonstrated, were recorded by medical officers and legislative officials. These educated mediators granted the stories an authenticity which might otherwise be lacking in peasant tales. Indeed, according to Horace Walpole, these special reports, including a public inquiry launched by the Austrian government in 1731, convinced George II of the truth of their existence. In his letters published in 1788, Walpole states: "George II, no more addicted than his father to too much religious credulity, had yet implicit faith in the German notion of vampires, and has more than once been angry with my father for speaking irreverently of those imaginary bloodsuckers."[76] Walpole believed vampires to be a German superstition. As mentioned previously, the tales of the Eastern European vampires were

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[75] Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume 1: The Process of Production of Capital* (1867), trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin Books, 1976), 343.

76 Horace Walpole, "Reminiscences of the Courts of George the First and Second: Written in 1788, for the Amusement of Miss Mary and Miss Agnes Berry" in *The Letters of Horace Walpole, Earl of Oxford, Vol. 1, 1735-1745* (London: R. Bentley, 1840), lxv.

transcribed in German by Austrians, thus Walpole's mislocating the origin of the creatures is a reasonable error. The stories of the Villa Diodati, which inspired Polidori's first vampire story, were translated originally from German into French before being read aloud by Byron and the Shelleys.[77] This resulted in the transmission of supernatural stories being frequently distorted by language as well as location. These inconsistencies of translation would also add to the discrepancies in the description of a vampire, and further enrich the motif.

From the late eighteenth century into the early nineteenth century, the vampire motif appears minimally and briefly in certain forms of Romantic literature. Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801) and Byron's *The Giaour* (1813) have been mentioned, but Coleridge's *Christabel* (1816) also features a character, Geraldine, who displays certain vampiric attributes such as nocturnal existence and restrictions on her entering people's homes. (Arthur H. Nethercot has claimed that Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872) is a homage to *Christabel*.)[78] Although Coleridge never uses the word "vampire" in the poem, it is likely he was influenced by the text that Southey cites in the footnotes of his poem describing how the vampire preys upon its victims. In 1746, French biblical scholar Augustine Calmet anthologized the written material pertaining to vampire sightings and exhumations, and published it under the title *Dissertations sur les apparitions des anges, des démons & des esprits, et sur les revenans et vampires de Hongrie, de Boheme, de Maravie & de Silesie* (Dissertations on the apparitions of angels, demons, and spirits, and the

[77] Mary Shelley, "Author's Introduction to the Standard Novels Edition (1831)," *Frankenstein* (1818) in *Three Gothic Novels,* ed. Peter Fairclough (London: Penguin Classics, 1968), 261.
[78] Arthur H. Nethercot, "Coleridge's 'Christabel' and LeFanu's 'Carmilla,'" *Modern Philology* 47.1 (Aug. 1949): 32.

ghosts and vampires of Hungary, Bohemia, Maravie and Silesie). This work was passed around among late eighteenth century scholars, but was virtually inaccessible beyond the educated class, due to its exclusive publication in French. The vampire appeared in German literature at around this time, in Heinrich August Ossenfelder's poem "Der Vampir" (1748), which narrates a young man visiting a maiden during the night and drinking her blood. Other German writers preferred to focus on the dead returning to life, such as in Gottfried August Bürger's *Lenore* (1774)[79] and *The Bride of Corinth* (1797) by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. In Britain, while Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis fed the public's appetite for tales of suspense and the supernatural in the late eighteenth century, the vampire in English remained largely absent. It was not until Polidori's *The Vampyre* in 1819, written in English and casting the vampire as the central figure of the text, that the motif was made accessible to the common English reading public.

The first chapter of the thesis focuses on the vampire's initial literary incarnation as a member of the aristocracy in John Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819). Polidori was a doctor who had written his medical thesis on somnambulism, a trait frequently associated with vampires in later literature, featuring in *Varney the Vampire, Carmilla,* and *Dracula*. Polidori's medical and scientific interests brought a unique perspective to his representation of the vampire. The creature in Polidori's case was endowed with features that reflected the interests of contemporary science – mesmerism, vitalism, and

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[79] This poem is later quoted in *Dracula*, when Dracula's coach appears for the first time – Jonathan Harker overhears a passenger whisper "Denn die Todten reiten schnell." ("For the dead travel fast"). Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (1897), ed. Glennis Byron (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1998), 41.

the possibility of the return of the dead to life, as well as a personality that closely resembled that of Polidori's employer, Lord Byron.

From *The Vampyre*'s initial publication, readers were keen to cast Lord Ruthven as a literary avatar for Lord Byron, reading the text as a barely-concealed caricature of the nobleman that contemporary readers would easily identify. Indeed, the story was published with Byron as the author, a commercial decision by Byron's publisher, who theorized correctly that attaching Byron's name to the work would make it more popular, which made such readings fairly inevitable. The introduction to the modern Oxford edition of the work states that "for Polidori, the 'vampire story' is conceived as a variant upon the moral tale, a tale designed principally as a *warning* – here, against the fascinating power of the libertinism represented by his employer Byron."[80] Christopher Frayling argues that Ruthven "represents the prototype for the Byronic vampire."[81] The term "Byronic" is problematic, however. While Erik Butler agrees that characteristics of Lord Byron are applied to Lord Ruthven, he notes "that Ruthven also bears traits that separate him from Byron and the aristocracy in general, and these features make him a representative of an indeterminate – and therefore threatening – class of new men."[82] Even while the vampire assumes the title of the aristocracy with its association with Lord Byron, it sets itself apart from the nobility in the very same narrative, defying classification and heightening the ambiguity of the character. In the story, Aubrey notes that Ruthven is "a nobleman, more remarkable for his singularities, than his rank. He gazed upon the mirth

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[80] Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick, ed., *The Vampyre and Other Tales of the Macabre*, xix.
[81] Christopher Frayling, ed., *Vampyres: Lord Byron to Count Dracula* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), 8.
[82] Erik Butler, *Metamorphoses of the Vampire in Literature and Film: Cultural Transformations in Europe, 1732-1933.* (Rochester: Camden House, 2010), 89.

around him, as if he could not participate therein."[83] Even to Aubrey, the man's rank is not the most interesting or important aspect of him – rather his vampire characteristics, that of being the "other" set apart from society, the "indeterminate," is the source of his fascination. Ruthven instills in others feelings of "fear" and "awe," and "his peculiarities caused him to be invited to every house," including the "deadly hue of his face."[84] Ruthven's emotional effect upon people, as well as his odd physical appearance, make him a source of "otherness" that is nevertheless attractive and fascinating. The attractive and fascinating "other" will be a frequent aspect of subsequent literary vampires.

The popularity of Ruthven was immediate, spreading from England back to the continent. In Europe, Polidori's story generated numerous adaptations and sequels on the stage and in print. All of the Ruthvens being performed were not one character, but many, existing simultaneously with Polidiori's Ruthven. Even the popular perception of Byron turned slightly vampiric (according to Frayling, in Paris at the time of the novel's publication "boulevard gossips were unwittingly contributing to the sales of the book…by spreading the rumor that [Byron] had murdered his mistress and 'enjoyed drinking her blood, from a cup made of her cranium.'"[85]) By the 1820s, several versions of the vampire existed in popular culture; they would be recognizable as a vampire, but lack precise definition other than as a creature associated with death and blood, the same as the vampires of oral tradition. In this way,

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[83] John Polidori, *The Vampyre* (1819) in *The Vampyre and Other Tales of the Macabre*, ed. Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 3.
[84] Polidori, *The Vampyre*, 3.
[85] Frayling, *Vampyres*, 7.

the vampire metamorphosed superficially by changing class, but retained its equivocal characteristics.

In my second chapter, moving on to the mid-nineteenth century, the focus shifts from celebrity authorship to mass production. The growing reading public demanded cheap, entertaining stories, with an emphasis on quantity over quality. These stories were frequently referred to by the sellers of such works as "penny bloods," to designate the gruesome nature of their narratives. The popularity of these stories gave rise to a genre in which stories of dismemberment and reanimated corpses coincided with grave-robbing and allusion to the Burke and Hare murders, as well as scientific debates about galvanism and reanimation. The mid-nineteenth century also saw a sharp rise in mass urbanization and consumerism. According to Paul Bairoch and Gary Goertz: "The 19th century, and particularly the period between 1820-30 and 1914, constitutes a turning point between a society still essentially rural and a developed, urbanised society prefiguring that of the end of the 20th century."[86] Parallel to this urbanization arose fictional stories of cannibalism, and true stories of corpses being dismembered and sold to medical institutions for experimentation. The elements of the human body became objects of monetary value, and the vampire in this era consumes blood, not as a source of life, but as a source of income.

The most enduring vampire from the mid-nineteenth century is Sir Francis Varney, the title character of *Varney the Vampire* (1845-7)*, a vampire who at various times seems to crave blood or gold – the two are equated in

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[86] Paul Bairoch and Gary Goertz, "Factors of Urbanisation in the Nineteenth Century Developed Countries: A Descriptive and Econometric Analysis," *Urban Studies* 23 (1986): 285.

the story as equally desirable to Varney. This text successfully captured the indeterminate nature of the vampire, thanks to its multiple authorship, but also to the indeterminate nature of the vampire motif. Varney is a conflicted character with moral dilemmas. This is seen frequently in modern adaptations of the vampire, but was unprecedented in its time. In the story, Varney often attempts to save himself from his fate and redeem himself, a task he is doomed to fail at because of his uncontrollable fits of temper. Before he was cursed with vampirism, this fit of temper drove him to murder his own son, a crime of passion he mentions in the story with bitter regret. The ability to feel remorse is a unique aspect of the vampire at this point in time. Varney is presented as a largely sympathetic victim of circumstance, not choosing to become a vampire, but cursed by the affliction after betraying a royalist to Oliver Cromwell. Thomas Carlyle published the first edition of an annotated collection of Cromwell's letters and speeches in December 1843. In that work, Carlyle is effusive in his praise of Cromwell and the Puritan society he sought to establish, calling it "the last of all our Heroisms."[87] Carlyle's sympathetic portrayal of Cromwell suggests that he intended to influence popular perception of him as a positive historical figure. This adds to the reading of Varney, as a supporter of Cromwell, as a sympathetic character. It also adds a dimension to his character as an anti-monarchist, even while a member of the nobility, a twist which complicates his identity. The 1840s, according to Alex Tyrrell and Yvonne Ward, was a decade when the Royal Family began to participate in public, crowd-pleasing spectacles which had been neglected since the turn of the century. "During a decade when many national

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[87] Thomas Carlyle, *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches With Elucidations by Thomas Carlyle* (London: Robson and Sons, 1843), 2.

institutions were experiencing trenchantly radical criticism…in the course of the 1840s…the monarchy did learn how to participate in crowd-pleasing pageantry devised by its provincial subjects."[88] It is telling that Varney, an anti-monarchist, appeared in the same decade in which the monarchy began a public relations campaign to improve their image – he, like his precursor and subsequent vampires, is firmly a product of his time.

Due to the story's disjointed narrative with shifting characterizations and plots, *Varney the Vampire* is often dismissed in the study of vampire literature. The first accessible critical edition of the story was published in 2007 as an enthusiast's pet project.[89] Erik Butler refers to *Varney* as a story filled with "narrative jumps…[and]…bad writing."[90] This awkward narrative seems to be the reason the story is often denigrated. The narrative jumps and disjointed style are in keeping with the vampire motif in literature, however, and very appropriate for a creature which eludes a single definition. The setting of the story is indeterminate – though the narrative ostensibly takes place at the beginning of the eighteenth century, there are references to the Napoleonic Wars being long over, which hints at a more recent setting. Varney also shares Ruthven's interests outside of blood-drinking – Ruthven seems as interested in killing women and attending parties as he is in drinking blood, while Varney is as interested in wealth and titles as he is in terror. Varney attacks women in a series of episodes in which he intends to marry,

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[88] Alex Tyrrell and Yvonne Ward, "'God Bless Her Little Majesty.': The Popularising of Monarchy in the 1840s," *National Identities* 2.2 (2000): 111, 114.

[89] There is a critical edition of *Varney the Vampire* printed by Dover Publications in 1973 and edited by E. F. Bleiler, which is a facsimile of the original periodical. However, this makes it virtually unreadable, as the text is incredibly small, cramped, and riddled with original misspellings. Curt Herr's edition is the first reprinted critical edition that is also edited for grammar and punctuation for the modern reader.

[90] Butler, *Metamorphoses of the Vampire*, 102.

and then either murders them or is forced to flee. The question of why Varney, like Ruthven, seeks to marry, is never explored or answered, and in this case, as in many others, the gaps left in the text add to the ambiguity. With the vampire motif, what is unsaid can be as important as what is said.

The third chapter of this thesis focuses on the later nineteenth century, and the sensation genre, first popularized by Wilkie Collins in his novel *The Woman in White* (1859). The question of genre is central here, since Collins sought to elevate his work above texts such as *Varney the Vampire*. The Burke theory of two-way traffic between learned and popular culture is exemplified in the debates about sensation fiction, a form of writing which was deemed by some authors as being of lesser merit for attempting to appeal to the masses. Charles Dickens was derided by George Eliot as being a sensation novelist who used "frequently false psychology"[91] in his characterizations. Dickens defended himself against the sensation label in an article in *All the Year Round*. He stated in 1863 that the label was an "orthodox stone to hurl at any heretic author who is bold enough to think that life has its tremendous passes of anguish and crime, as well as its little joys and little sorrows, its strange adventures and vicissitudes, as well as its daily progresses from Brixton to the Bank."[92] "Sensation" is an allegation that is used as a weapon, according to Dickens. *The Woman in White* first began in serial format on the same page and immediately after the conclusion of Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* in *All the Year Round* in 1859, and Wilkie Collins cites it in his 1860 preface to his novel as "the most perfect work of

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[91] George Eliot, "The Natural History of German Life," *The Westminster Review* (July 1856): 56.
[92] Charles Dickens, "Not a New Sensation," *All the Year Round* (25 July 1863): 517.

constructive art that has ever proceeded from [Dickens's] pen."[93] The

dramatic narrative and surprising coincidences in *A Tale of Two Cities* would

likely make it eligible for the "orthodox stone" of "sensation" to be hurled at it.

Dickens and Collins defended their work and the work of each other as

legitimate art, even as their writing was clearly dependent on popular

materials for creative inspiration.

In this period, the primary vampire is Carmilla from Sheridan Le Fanu's

novella of the same name in 1872. Her tale reflects a growing uneasiness

about the subjection of women, a theme which will be seen again in *Dracula.*

The story is written after various successful contemporary campaigns for

women's rights. The Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 granted women more

power during a divorce, allowing them to petition their husbands for divorce

for a variety of causes. The idea of a powerful woman is central to Carmilla, a

character who fascinates the narrator, Laura. Carmilla's lesbian impulses

feature in modern critical analysis of the story, though this subject was

avoided in contemporary reviews. The vampire motif as a sign of sexual

transgression will be examined in this chapter.

The genre of sensation fiction, and the eagerness of Dickens and Le

Fanu to dissociate themselves from it will also be explored in the chapter. This

defense was necessary due to the fear concerning sensation fiction's effects

on its readers. In 1863, Henry Mansel blamed the differing forms of literature

on offer, specifically periodicals, along with circulating libraries, and railway

bookstalls for what he deemed "the wide-spread corruption," of which

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[93] Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* (1860), ed. Maria K. Bachman and Don Richard Cox
(Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2006), 3.

sensation novels "are both the effect and cause."[94] These sensation novels

were "called into existence to supply the cravings of a diseased appetite, and

contributing themselves to foster the disease, and to stimulate the want which

they supply."[95] The literature is represented as unwholesome: "corruption" and

"disease" imply that the very act of reading such works will lead to moral and

physical harm. The fear of literature causing physical decay can be explained

through contemporary theories of biology. The differing biology of men and

women, as proposed by Herbert Spencer and Patrick Geddes, posited that

men and women evolved differently, and that too much nervous shock could

be fatal. These theories about evolutionary biology also influenced

contemporary and later theories of degeneration, according to Daniel Pick's

Faces of Degeneration (1989). Max Nordau's 1895 account of the subject

declares that "degenerates are not always criminals, prostitutes, anarchists,

and pronounced lunatics; they are often authors and artists…Books and

works of art exercise a powerful suggestion to the masses. It is from these

productions that an age derives its ideals of morality and beauty. If they are

absurd and anti-social, they exert a disturbing and corrupting influence on the

views of a whole generation…especially the impressionable youth."[96] Nordau

makes an explicit connection between authors and criminals. He cites authors

as being responsible for the moral decline of the age, a position often taken

against penny fiction, as will be demonstrated and discussed in this chapter.

My fourth chapter focuses on *Dracula*. It examines how the novel's

incarnation of the vampire figure differs from previous incarnations of the

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[94] Henry Mansel, "Sensation Novels," *Quarterly Review* 133 (April 1863): 482.
[95] Mansel, "Sensation Novels," 483.
[96] Max Nordau, *Degeneration.* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1895) 1.

vampire, and why it is given disproportionate attention by modern scholars. The emphasis on *Dracula* is, however, understandable. The novel and its subsequent film adaptations have shaped the popular perceptions of vampires, as well as the critical reception of the motif. Attributes not previously associated with vampires become associated with them thanks to cinematic interpretations of the motif. The notion of sunlight as a means of destruction, for instance, ensures a scene which can be cinematically compelling. This trait has since embedded itself into the received image of the vampire, since its early appearance in the film *Nosferatu* in 1922.

Ken Gelder, writing in 1994, attributes the wealth of material on *Dracula* to the multiplicity of discursive fields in the novel and its subsequent adaptations, including, but not limited to, "ethnography, imperialist ideology, medicine, criminality, discourses of degeneration (and, conversely, evolution), physiognomy…early modes of feminism, more entrenched modes of masculinism, occultism, and so on."[97] Indeed, whatever critical lens the novel is seen through, there is no single dominant interpretation. *Dracula* is, in Geoffrey Wall's words, a "persistently…anxious text. Innocently, unironically, it contemplates its materials and methods, fascinated by the evident contradiction between the archaic stuff of its narrative and the contemporary techniques which allow that narrative to emerge."[98] Not only does the novel rely on archaic knowledge and modern technology, as Wall states, but it also fluctuates between narrators in its mode of transmission. In this way, the novel provides numerous contradictions and complications, much like the vampire motif itself.

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[97] Ken Gelder, *Reading the Vampire* (London: Routledge, 1994), 65.
[98] Geoffrey Wall, "'Different from Writing': *Dracula* in 1897." *Literature and History* 10.1 (1984): 15

My thesis argues that there is no single cultural "vampire" figure. In the words of Paul O'Flinn: "There is no such thing as *Frankenstein,* there are only *Frankensteins*, as the text is ceaselessly rewritten, reproduced, refined and redesigned."[99] The same holds true for the vampire motif. Each version of a literary vampire exists simultaneously with previous versions, while also adding an extra layer of accretion to the cultural object itself. Beginning in the nineteenth century, and continuing on to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the vampire is transformed by writers and filmmakers. It eludes precise definition, because its origins are indefinable. Every new vampire reshapes the motif into something that is in its own way distinctive, and yet still recognizable as a vampire. The aim of this thesis is to challenge received notions about the vampire, to chart its transformations, and thereby to attend to the complexity of a motif being constantly reworked in new historical and cultural contexts.

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[99] Paul O'Flinn, "Production and Reproduction: The Case of *Frankenstein*," in *Popular Fiction: Essays in Literature and History*, ed. Peter Humm, Paul Stigant and Peter Widdowson (London: Methuen, 1986), 197.

Chapter One - "More Remarkable for His Singularities Than His Rank":
The Byronic Vampire

Moving away from the oral traditions discussed in the introduction, the focus of the thesis now shifts to those stories originally written down, without any oral mediation. This does not mean, however, that the stories would not be read aloud, only that their original form was in printed text that could be uniformly replicated and distributed. The mediation of information could still be oral, but the collation of folktales and fairy tales in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the rise of literacy among the population, ensured that the variations of those tales were codified to a single version. That is not to say that there was a singular definition of the vampire motif any more than there is in contemporary times, however. The vampire still retained its diverse potentiality from its literary beginnings in the early nineteenth century.

In this chapter, the focus of my original contribution is primarily on the Byron and Polidori relationship, including both authors's relationship to Napoleon, and his association with the vampire motif. I believe my identification of Napoleon's exile as a kind of living death is a unique perspective on the vampire. I have also, I believe, uniquely analyzed Polidori's medical thesis on somnambulism in the context of vampire literature and Romantic celebrity.

Byron was an early "celebrity," which Tom Mole defines as "a cultural apparatus consisting of three elements: an individual, an industry and an audience."[1] The interplay between these elements is certainly applicable to Byron – his audience was fascinated not only by his work, but by details of his

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[1] Tom Mole, *Byron's Romantic Celebrity: Industrial Culture and the Hermeneutic of Intimacy* (Basingtoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 1.

personal life, both of which were supplied by a greedy publishing market. Many of Byron's works, particularly his *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, include a confessional aspect, which Sir Walter Scott attested in an 1817 review, contains "so many allusions to the author's personal feelings and private history, that it becomes impossible to divide Lord Byron from his poetry."[2] Byron's work and the public perception of Byron became intertwined to create the celebrity phenomenon. Mole defines this as a "feedback loop" which the celebrity is trapped in, "in which…neither self nor celebrity can be conceptually quarantined from the other."[3]

The same conceptual blending of identities between work and self, occurs in *The Vampyre*, although in this case, it is the mistaken author and Polidori's work which become inextricable. Byron's association with the vampire Lord Ruthven occurs as a result of the interplay between reader and publisher, with the publisher intentionally printing the story under Byron's name, and the readers willingly believing the story as a kind of confessional. Byron's own eagerness to distance himself from the work proved fruitless, which demonstrates the limits to which the individual celebrity can actually limit or contain themselves in the public sphere. The celebrity of Byron and its relation to the vampire motif will be a focus of this chapter.

The word "vampire" is mentioned in Byron's *The Giaour* (1813), the first in a series of Oriental romances, followed by *The Bride of Abydos* (1813), *The Corsair* (1814) and *Lara* (1814). *The Giaour* is subtitled "A Fragment of a Turkish Tale." The fragmented nature of the poem is reflected in its narration, initially by an educated Westerner, and then a Muslim in a coffee house,

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[2] Walter Scott, "Review of Byron, *Childe Harold, Canto III*," *Quarterly Review* 16 (October 1816): 174.
[3] Mole, *Byron's Romantic Celebrity*, 3.

though Marilyn Butler claims Byron's sardonic wit is evident regardless of the narrator.[4] She argues that "the poem's villains are the two great monotheistic codes, Christianity and Islam, *comparable* instruments of personal control over the lives of men and women, and potentially of political control by great powers over the destiny of small nations."[5] The anti-religious tone of this and other works resulted in Byron being "attacked more as an anticlerical writer, sapping the faith and morals of individuals than as a misleader of the riotous masses."[6] Butler acknowledges the vampire comparison in this perception of Byron. It is also noteworthy that the association between vampire literature and the perceived moral decay of its readers has its roots in the early part of the century.

The vampire is explicitly referred to in *The Giaour* in the following section of the poem:

But thou, false Infidel! shalt writhe
Beneath avenging Monkir's scythe;
And from its torment 'scape alone
To wander round lost Eblis' throne;
And fire unquench'd, unquenchable,
Around, within, thy heart shall dwell;
Nor ear can hear nor tongue can tell
The tortures of that inward hell!
But first, on earth as vampire sent,
Thy corse shall from its tomb be rent:
Then ghastly haunt thy native place,
And suck the blood of all thy race;
There from thy daughter, sister, wife,
At midnight drain the stream of life;
Yet loathe the banquet which perforce
Must feed thy livid living corse:
Thy victims ere they yet expire
Shall know the demon for their sire,
As cursing thee, thou cursing them,
Thy flowers are withered on the stem.

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[4] Marilyn Butler, "The Orientalism of Byron's *Giaour*," in *Byron and the Limits of Fiction*, eds. Bernard Beatty and Vincent Newey (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988), 86.
[5] Butler, "Orientalism of Byron's *Giaour*," 91.
[6] Butler, "Orientalism of Byron's *Giaour*," 94.

But one that for thy crime must fall,
The youngest, most beloved of all,
Shall bless thee with a father's name —
That word shall wrap thy heart in flame!
Yet must thou end thy task, and mark
Her cheek's last tinge, her eye's last spark,
And the last glassy glance must view
Which freezes o'er its lifeless blue;
Then with unhallowed hand shalt tear
The tresses of her yellow hair,
Of which in life a lock when shorn
Affection's fondest pledge was worn,
But now is borne away by thee,
Memorial of thine agony![7]

According to his letters, Byron's relationship with the poem was somewhat ambivalent, as was his subsequent dealing with the vampire in literature. Writing to his publisher John Murray on August 26, 1813, Byron states, "I have, but with some difficulty, *not* added any more to this snake of a poem, which has been lengthening its rattles every month."[8] He expresses similar feelings to his friend Thomas Moore on September 1: "*The Giaour* I have added to a good deal, but still in foolish fragments;"[9] and, again on September 8, "By the coach I send you a copy of that awful pamphlet *The Giaour*."[10] Whether his repeated deprecation of his work was genuine is immaterial – it foreshadows his deprecation of writing on vampires after he is mistakenly given credit for Polidori's work, an incident which will be discussed later. Even the brief mention of the vampire in the poem seems to have this effect on him, though there can be no denying the popularity of the poem among the reading public. If we are not to dismiss his petulancy as that of an

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[7] George Gordon Byron, *The Giaour* (London: John Murray, 1813), 86-7, lines 739-800.
[8] George Gordon Byron, "Letter 130, To Mr. Murray, August 26 1813" in *The Letters and Journals of Lord Byron With Notices of His Life, Vol. 2*, ed. Thomas Moore. (London: John Murray, 1832), 227
[9] Byron, "Letter 135, To Mr. Moore, September 1, 1813" in *The Letters and Journals of Lord Byron, Vol. 2*, 238.
[10] Byron, "Letter 137, To Mr. Moore, September 8, 1813" in *The Letters and Journals of Lord Byron, Vol. 2*, 241-2.

emotionally unstable artist toward his work, there may be something in the ambiguous nature of the vampire that arouses this love and hate relationship in him, much as the vampire itself is meant to do with its victims. Byron would be identified with the vampire Lord Ruthven by the reading public for the rest of his life, and through to contemporary times. In this way, it can be said that Byron is indeed a victim, metaphorically speaking, of Lord Ruthven.

Byron describes the vampire in *The Giaour* with similar traits to those discussed previously in oral incarnations of the figure – it returns from the dead to drink blood, and starts by destroying its own family first until its bloodline has been completely destroyed. A notable difference, however, is Byron's association of the vampire with Eblis, who, according to Byron's notes, is "the Oriental Prince of Darkness."[11] This version of the vampire is not only demonic, but a demon of foreign extraction serving an "Oriental" master. The curse on the Giaour is not only to become a blood-drinking monster, but also to lose his own identity as a dominant Westerner in submitting himself to an Eastern master.

The vampire is also described as possessing fire which is "unquench'd, unquenchable" at the beginning of the passage, which can be read as a metaphor for Byron's celebrity, a concept which feeds upon itself and demands more the more it is fed. The description of the vampire's destruction of its "youngest, most beloved of all" who blessed him "with a father's name" echoes his description of Lady Charlotte Harley in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, to whom the poem is dedicated as Ianthe. (The importance of this name in relation to *The Vampyre* will be discussed later on

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[11] Byron¸ *The Giaour*, 86, note 36.

in this chapter). Byron writes in *Childe Harold*: "My years already doubly number thine; my loveless eye unmoved may gaze on thee,"[12] indicating that his age prevents him from a romantic relationship with Ianthe. His interest is more fatherly, as the vampire in *The Giaour* is given a "father's name" by the child he destroys. Byron also claims "that while all younger hearts shall bleed," for Ianthe, "mine shall escape the doom thine eyes assign,"[13] indicating a vampiric quality in Ianthe, the ability to seduce men and to pierce their hearts with her gaze. In this way, Ianthe herself can be read as a vampiric figure. The blood is obviously associated with vampires, and the seductive glance can be found in both *The Vampyre* and other Romantic poems which do not explicitly mention vampires, but contain women who seduce men to their ruin, including Coleridge's *Cristabel* in 1816, and later Keats's *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* and *Lamia* in 1820. Another female vampire figure is Lilith, mentioned in Goethe's *Faust, Part I* (1808) in the following lines: "Her beauty's one boast is her dangerous hair. / When Lilith winds it tight around young men / She doesn't soon let go of them again."[14] Goethe, according to Patricia L. Skarda, would later suggest that Byron modeled *Manfred* on *Faust*, which suggests Byron's familiarity with the work.[15] In light of this, the mention of the vampire in *The Giaour* and its association with the child's hair takes on a more sinister tone. The hair as an instrument of entrapment could suggest the child herself has vampiric qualities which she used to ensnare the Giaour, and who eventually comes full circle by taking the

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[12] Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, 60, lines 20-21.
[13] Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,* 60, lines 24-25.
[14] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust, a Tragedy: Part I* (1808), translated by Martin Greenberg (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 155, lines 4207-4211.
[15] Patricia L. Skada, "Vampirism and Plagiarism: Byron's Influence and Polidori's Practice," *Studies in Romanticism* 28.2 (Summer 1989): 260.

ensnaring hair as a "memorial of thine agony," both of being ensnared and now being the one who must do the ensnaring.

Ianthe in *The Vampyre* is described as "a being, so beautiful and delicate, that she might have formed the model for a painter wishing to pourtray on canvass the promised hope of the faithful in Mahomet's paradise, save that her eyes spoke too much mind for any one to think she could belong to those who had no souls."[16] This is in stark contrast to Polidori's description of Ruthven, whom he describes as having a "dead grey eye,"[17] which is the opposite of Ianthe's which speak her mind and reveal her soul. Ianthe's lively eyes echoes Byron's reference to Ianthe's eyes in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, which he describes as "brightly bold or beautifully shy."[18] However, while that Ianthe remains immortalized in Byron's dedication, the Ianthe in *The Vampyre* is destroyed by the Byronic and soulless figure of Lord Ruthven.

Byron's note on the vampire superstition which he attached to *The Giaour* references "honest Tournefort," whose account is mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, as well as Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801).[19] Byron attests that "the freshness of the face, and the wetness of the lip with blood, are the never-failing signs of a Vampire,"[20] which he drew from both Tournefort and Southey's accounts of the superstition. Like Southey, Byron's poem focuses on a broadly "Eastern" domain - the Giaour in the poem is cursed to become a vampire by the mother of the Turkish antagonist, and hence the Giaour is the victim of a foreign curse by a foreign character.

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[16] John Polidori, *The Vampyre* (1819) in *The Vampyre and Other Tales of the Macabre*, ed. Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 8.
[17] Polidori, *The Vampyre*, 3.
[18] Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, 60, line 29.
[19] Byron¸ *The Giaour*, 86, note 37.
[20] Byron, *The Giaour,* 87, note 38.

The Eastern European nations where the vampire superstition was most prevalent, such as Romania and Bulgaria, were subjected to repeated invasion attempts by the Ottoman Turks in the fifteenth century, and the historical Dracula, Vlad III of Wallachia, spent most of his reign battling the Ottoman Empire. The region with which the vampire is widely associated in this period is therefore a liminal zone. The vampire figure is neither the product of a Christian or Islamic culture, but rather of tensions between these two faiths. The motif is rooted in instability and conflict.

It is perhaps because the vampire emerges from such a culturally ambiguous space that the figure is often designated by writers as a foreign menace, as is the case with the Eastern European Count Dracula and Austro-Hungarian Carmilla. The vampire motif is regularly cast as a foreign "other," to use Said's terminology in *Orientalism* (1978). Said asserts that "Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, West, 'us') and the strange (the Orient, the East, 'them')."[21] As tempting as it is to read the vampire in this context, the motif cannot be so easily pinned down. The vampire in Byron's poem is not originally a creation of Eastern origin, but rather a Western figure cursed in the East. It is not strictly "Oriental," but rather culturally heterogeneous. Peter J. Kitson defines the Gothic as "a mode that disdains generic purity and embraces hybridity,"[22] and compares this to Romantic Orientalism, both of which he claims "manifest a shared concern with representing the alien and the other to European cultures, yet…both may be used as a means of representing the dark, irrational, and monstrous at the

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[21] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism.* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 3.
[22] Peter J. Kitson, "Oriental Gothic" in *Romantic Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, eds. Dale Townshend and Angela Wright (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 114.

heart of British society."[23] According to Kitson, because of the supernatural natures of such narratives, both the Gothic and the Oriental "were able vicariously to employ exoticism to represent non-heteronormative desires and practices, safely distanced from the reality of an often savage eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century social and legal repression."[24] Kitson also attests that "the vampire is the most important gift bequeathed by Orientalism to the Gothic mainstream,"[25] citing works such as *Thalaba the Destroyer, Cristabel,* and naturally Byron's *The Giaour* as precursors to Polidori's *The Vampyre* and thus the entire vampire literary tradition. The vampire figure, therefore, is rooted in a tradition that "embraces hybridity" and "disdains generic purity," a motif constantly in flux and without a set canon. The vampire in both its geographical context and literary context is a mix of traditions and cultures, which cannot not be confined to a singular interpretation or form.

The ending of *The Giaour* sees its protagonist as a social outcast of uncertain cultural identity. Later vampires such as Carmilla and Dracula are similarly characterized by their uncertain cultural identities – a product of the mixing of blood and therefore bloodlines. Eric Meyer reads *The Giaour* as encompassing two figures and cultures: "The Oriental despot, with his paralyzing gaze, and the Napoleonic conqueror, with his panoptic world-historical vision, merely reflect, in inverse mirrors, a single specular structure from which the mutually mesmerized protagonists find it impossible to extricate themselves."[26] Subsequent incarnations of the motif such as Lord

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[23] Kitson, "Oriental Gothic," 114.
[24] Kitson, "Oriental Gothic," 114.
[25] Kiston, "Oriental Gothic," 120.
[26] Eric Meyer, "'I Know Thee Not, I Loathe Thy Race': Romantic Orientalism in the Eye of the Other," *ELH* 58.3 (1991): 675.

Ruthven and Count Dracula similarly combine despot and conqueror in a single figure capable of exerting mesmeric power over others.

The Giaour is also a poem in which Byron plays with his newfound celebrity, by teasing his readers with an inconclusive narrative. The poem was published over several months, with a version of 700 lines published in June of 1813. By the last edition in December of 1813, the poem had grown to 1300 lines, nearly twice as many as originally published. In this way, Byron tantalized his captivated readers with the promise of more material gradually to be released. The text itself is fragments of a narrative which are never fully concluded. According to Thomas Mole, "Whilst the narrative of The Giaour creates desires, it also establishes Byron as the only person who can satisfy those desires…The Giaour seduced its readers by suggesting that Byron might at some point in its serial elaboration enable them fully to possess the story, and his own story, by a complete revelation of the elements that it had so far concealed."[27] Mole attests that in the absence of Byron's personal revelations, his audience created a myth about him modeling the Giaour on himself that temporarily satisfied their desire for personal information, and thus further entrenched his celebrity by extrapolating Byron's notoriety from the poem.

The Giaour is not Byron's last brush with a vampire – in his letter to Murray in December of 1813, he writes about the mistakes and numerous errors in the printing of his poems, and curses the person responsible: "I wish the printer was saddled with a vampire."[28] Byron in his post-script also wishes "Devils" upon them, indicating that he conflates, or at least compares, these

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[27] Mole, *Byron's Romantic Celebrity*, 64.
[28] Byron, "To Mr. Murray, December 6, 1813" in *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron, Vol. 2*, 332.

two figures. Vampires and demons have always had a complex relationship.

The vampire becomes gradually more and more associated with Christian

iconography, even though its origins, as I have indicated, are not purely

Christian. Montague Summers, an ordained clergyman as well as occult

scholar, emphatically asserts that the vampire is distinct from a demon in

Christian belief since "the devils have a purely spiritual nature, they are beings

without any body, angels."[29] He goes on to state:

> A demon has no body, although for purposes of his own he
> may energize, assume, or seem to assume a body, but it is
> not his real and proper body. So the vampire is not strictly a
> demon, although his foul lust and horrid propensities be truly
> demoniacal and of hell. Neither may the vampire be called a
> ghost or phantom, strictly speaking, for an apparition is
> intangible…The vampire has a body, and it is his own body.
> He is neither dead nor alive; but living in death. He is an
> abnormality; the androgyne in the phantom world; a pariah
> among the fiends.[30]

Summers is attempting to categorize the vampire, but admits that it

does not fit the criteria for being a demon. He declares it an outcast even

among other "fiends," a class unto itself. He does note a type of "foul lust," but

whether he means blood lust or sexual lust is unclear. The vampire's "horrid

propensities," and indeed its type of lust, remain unclear in many literary

vampires, including Polidori's Ruthven. There is something unspeakable

about what the vampire does, and the silence allows its actions to be

interpreted in a variety of ways, including in relation to ideas of sexual

transgression. The relationship between Ruthven and Byron will add to the

reading of the motif as a sexual one. This relationship will be discussed in the

next section.

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[29] Montague Summers, *The Vampire: His Kith and Kin.* (London: Kegan Paul, Trunch, Trubner and Co. Ltd, 1928), 1.
[30] Summers, *The Vampire*, 2, 6.

Byron's role in the creation of the first English vampire is at once central and indirect. In the spring of 1816, Lord Byron wrote to his friend John Cam Hobhouse confessing that he "may have been *bereav'd of reason*" during his quarrels with his wife, the Baroness Anne Isabella, or "Annabella" Byron.[31] Lady Byron certainly had "the fear that Byron had gone or was going mad,"[32] and Byron himself confesses in a letter to his father-in-law that he possesses "a disorder I have to combat."[33] While a physical malady might not have been the cause for his absence – MacDonald attests that "the speed with which Byron recovered after leaving England does suggest that there was nothing profoundly wrong with him"[34] – the end result was his absence from England in the company of a physician, John Polidori.

Jane Stabler's account of Byron's self-imposed exile notes the ties which nevertheless shackled Byron to his native land, including his public and his publisher. Despite, or perhaps because of his notoriety, he remained popular: "Byron's texts were a marker of distinction when his person had become an object of distaste."[35] Content to leave his public, Byron nevertheless continued to profit off them. Claire Tuite attests that "Byron's exile intensifies this experience of print culture…as a form of virtual presence

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[31] John Cam Hobhouse, "MS Diary, 12 March 1816," quoted in T.A.J. Burnett, *The Rise and Fall of a Regency Dandy: The Life and Times of Scrope Berdmore Davies* (London: John Murray 1981), 116.

[32] D. L. MacDonald, *Poor Polidori: A Critical Biography of the Author of* The Vampyre (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 54. Polidori scholarship seems to have peaked in 1991, with two biographies focusing on the author, both of which are heavily referenced in this chapter. They both have a solid academic foundation, and lean toward trying to exonerate a talented writer overshadowed by the personality of Lord Byron during his lifetime. This is strikingly similar to recent Stoker biographies, which try to bring the less famous figure out of the historical shadow of Henry Irving or, more pertinently to Stoker, his creation *Dracula.*

[33] George Gordon Byron, "Letter to Sir Ralph Noel, February 2nd, 1816" in *The Letters and Journals of Lord Byron With Notices of His Life, Vol. 5*, ed. Thomas Moore. (London: John Murray, 1837), 20.

[34] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori*, 53.

[35] Jane Stabler, *The Artistry of Exile: Romantic and Victorian Writers in Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 45.

and dramatic absence."[36] In celebrity culture, absence is a form of performance, and although physically absent, Byron's celebrity continued, aided in part by the circumstances of his departure.

Byron's departure was surrounded by rumors, one of which was marital sodomy, a rumor which affected him deeply. According to his friend Hobhouse: "he became 'dreadfully agitated', saying he was ruined and threatening to blow out his brains."[37] It is only comparatively recently that Byron's biographers have even dared to address the issue of his alleged marital sodomy. It was hinted at by his wife in a letter to her sister: "Even to have such a thing *said* is utter destruction & ruin to a man from which he can never recover."[38] At the time, the laws against sodomy were more severe than those against incest,[39] which was the other major scandal which drove Byron from England and his failing marriage. By the spring of 1816, Byron's reputation was summed up as follows by Mary Godfrey: "The world are loud against him, and vote him a worthless profligate…He is completely lost in the opinion of the world; and I fear he is the sort of character never to make an effort to recover it. So I look on him as given up to every worthless excess for the rest of his life."[40] It was a month after this letter, and in such a climate of

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[36] Clara Tuite, *Lord Byron and Scandalous Celebrity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 4.

[37] John Cam Hobhouse, "Diary 12 February 1816" quoted in Fiona MacCarthy, *Byron: Life and Legend* (London: Faber and Faber, 2003), 267. MacCarthy's biography is rightly hailed as a comprehensive look at the controversial figure, and one of the few to actually address his alleged sexual transgressions, where earlier biographies just drop hints. This is especially useful in terms of vampire scholarship, which has a long history of implied sexual transgressions. If Byron is a model for Polidori's creation, this connection is especially useful in considering the Romantic, sexualized vampire which stands to this day.

[38] Augusta Leigh, "Letter to Lady Byron, 17 February 1816," quoted in Fiona MacCarthy, *Byron: Life and Legend* (London: Faber and Faber, 2003)*,* 267.

[39] Michael and Melissa Bakewell, *Augusta Leigh: Byron's Half-Sister – A Biography* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2000), 104. According to the authors, the suspicions of bigamy and sodomy did more damage to Byron's reputation than incest did, since it was not officially a crime until 1908 with the Punishments of Incest Act.

[40] Mary Godfrey, "Letter to Thomas Moore, February 1816," quoted in MacCarthy, *Byron*, 273.

public notoriety, that Byron was first introduced to the young physician John Polidori.

Polidori was not a famous figure in his day, certainly not compared to Byron. Polidori is described by his own nephew, William Michael Rosetti, who posthumously edited his diary, as:

> overweening and petulant, too fond of putting himself forward face to face with those two heroes of our poetical literature [Byron and Shelley], and too touchy when either of them declined to take him at his own estimation. I will allow that this judgment of Polidori is, so far as it goes, substantially just; and that some of the recorded anecdotes of him prove him deficient in self-knowledge, lacking prudence and reserve, and ignoring the distinction between a dignified and a quarrelsome attitude of mind.[41]

Rosetti had never met Polidori – he was born after his uncle's untimely death. It must also be understood that Polidori was quite young when he began his diary of his travels with Byron in 1816 – only twenty, compared to Byron's twenty-eight years. Polidori was freshly graduated from Edinburgh University, earning his full Degree in Medicine in 1815 at the age of nineteen, a remarkable achievement.[42] He wrote his thesis on somnambulism, a common trope in Gothic stories, particularly in later vampire stories such as *Carmilla* and *Dracula*. Somnambulism in these particular stories is the result of vampirism, a supernatural cause for a natural affliction. Polidori references this anomaly on the title page of his thesis by quoting from *Macbeth*: "A great perturbation in nature! to receive at once the benefit of sleep, and do the

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[41] John Polidori, *The Diary of Dr. John William Polidori*, ed. William Michael Rosetti. (London: Elkin Mathews, 1911), 1-2.

[42] Franklin Bishop, *Polidori! A Life of Dr. John Polidori* (Kent: The Gothic Society, 1991), 15: "This achievement was outstanding as the average age of graduation from 1814-1817 was twenty-five years of age."

effects of watching" (5.1.8-9). The citation invites parallels between the supernatural themes in that play with the scientific cases Polidori cites.

Polidori prefers the term "oneirodynia" to "somnambulism." He begins his thesis by defining the origin of the former word – "Greek, a compound from 'oneiros' and 'duno' which signifies 'walking while in a dream.'"[43] He was attacked for this during the examination of his thesis because the actual derivation of the word, according to the OED, is based on the Greek for pain – "odune." Polidori appears eager to place the malady in a physical context as opposed to the more abstract concept of the imagination. He defines oneirodynia in his thesis as "the habit of doing something in sleep that is usually done by those who are awake,"[44] a definition that has nothing to do with the imagination, but is rather a purely mechanical process. He defines somnambulism as something slightly distinct from oneirodynia, as "a hallucination where dreamers rise from their bed and expose themselves to various dangers."[45] This is an important distinction in terms of the vampire, since the victim of a vampire in a sleepwalking state naturally fits in the category of exposing themselves to various dangers. It also implies that there is something aberrant about this state – there is a desire to deliberately seek out dangers, rather than just go through everyday motions. Since somnambulism suggests the capability of the mind and body to work independently of each other, the innate desire to seek out harm seems to imply a natural tendency towards self-harm once the body is deprived of any mental regulation. In the context of vampire literature, it is also suggestive that

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[43] David E. Petrain, "An English Translation of John William Polidori's (1815) Medical Dissertation on Oneirodynia (Somnambulism)." *European Romantic Review* 21.6 (2010): 776.
[44] Petrain, "Polidori's (1815) Medical Dissertation," 776.
[45] Petrain, "Polidori's (1815) Medical Dissertation," 776.

the body may be compelled to commit acts which the conscious individual would otherwise find abhorrent. It makes the body vulnerable to manipulation by an outside consciousness, such as the will of a vampire. In vampire literature, this dynamic can be seen frequently in the relationship between the vampire and its victims, for example in *Dracula* and his attacks on Lucy.

Although Polidori chose to write his thesis on the somnambulist phenomenon, it was not as unusual a subject as it first appears for a medical dissertation. About twenty years prior, in 1784, mesmerism was being debunked by the likes of Franklin and Lavoisier.[46] However, around the same time, a different theory arose known as "artificial somnambulism," formulated by the Marquis de Puységur, who manipulated patients into a trance, and then gave them commands which they obeyed in a state of neither sleeping nor wakefulness, in an early precursor to hypnotism.[47] While Polidori's interest coincides with a popular topic, his reasons for choosing it were probably also personal. Polidori's uncle Luigi "had submitted to the Royal College of Physicians a report of a case of somnambulism he had treated in 1793: a ten-year-old boy who walked about in his sleep, talked, prayed, threw his cap at the ceiling, used his chamber pot, attacked a servant, and went to considerable lengths to frustrate the physician's examination."[48] Polidori focused on his uncle's sleepwalking case for "more than a quarter of his thesis,"[49] suggesting that it was a major influence on his own interest in the subject. Polidori concluded that "the disease [oneirodynia]…evidently arose from an affection of the brain…[although] what this affection of the brain is can

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[46] Anne Stiles, Stanley Finger and John Bulevich, "Somnambulism and Trance States in the Works of John William Polidori, Author of *The Vampyre*," *European Romantic Review* 21.6 (2010): 792.

[47] Stiles, Finger and Bulevich, "Somnambulism and Trance States," 792.

[48] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori*, 37-38.

[49] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori*, 38.

by no means be understood."[50] Polidori seems less interested in

understanding the cause of the disease and more in the effects on its

sufferers. Indeed, he cites the ineffectiveness of trying to understand the

origins of oneirodynia, resigning himself to the idea of its hopelessness:

> Indeed, all the actions of the soul, and of external bodies, on
> the organic body are so obscure, that it seems we shall never
> know the first causes of things. For when in chemistry and
> even in mechanics we are ignorant of many and great things,
> how are we to believe that we shall come near to grasping the
> principles of vegetable life, much less those of animal life and
> of the soul?[51]

To Polidori, there is a scientific cause for the seemingly inexplicable,

but he dismisses further study, since the causes are beyond comprehension.

This attitude is reflected in his later fiction. Polidori never seeks to scientifically

explain the vampire in his novel, preferring instead to present him as a

completely supernatural figure, who demands a vow of silence from others.

The vampire in his work seeks to conceal knowledge, not reveal it. There is

no explanation of the origin of his vampire, as there is in *Varney the Vampire*,

nor the rules and restrictions of his vampire, as there is in *Dracula.* Polidori's

work is concerned only with a present, omnipotent incarnation of the vampire,

and the destruction he causes at a particular place and time.

Polidori attended Edinburgh from 1810-1815, nearly fifteen years

before the infamous Burke and Hare murders in 1828, when the need for

human bodies for the study of anatomy led to murder, and the subsequent

Anatomy Act of 1832. The role of corpses in the scientific study of vitalism and

galvanism was established before Polidori arrived in Edinburgh, when

Giovanni Aldini experimented on the corpse of an executed prisoner at

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[50] Petrain, "Polidori's (1815) Medical Dissertation," 776.
[51] Petrain, "Polidori's (1815) Medical Dissertation," 776.

Newgate in 1803. He described the effect in detail: "Electrical charges caused one eye to open, the legs to jolt and the hand to raise itself as in greeting."[52] Referring back to the questions of sleepwalking, this experiment provided visual proof that the body could operate independently of the mind. It also proved that another being could indeed control the actions of a body, whether that body were living or dead. Such public spectacles resulted in a popular conflation, according to James Robert Allard, between "resurrection men and surgeon anatomists, between criminality and anatomy, [and] between brutality and dissection."[53] It is this conflation that the literature of this period taps into, particularly in *Frankenstein*, and, to a less explicit extent, in later vampire works such as *Varney the Vampire.* The forced, involuntary control of one being over another is a trope that will continue throughout vampire literature.

There is also a case to be made of somnambulism in the context of celebrity, which might explain Polidori's fascination with Byron. According to Mole's argument, "an *audience* – massive, anonymous, socially diverse, geographically distributed – consumes and interprets celebrity, often in creative ways. These responses are unauthorized by the celebrity individual, or the industry, and beyond their control."[54] In this way, the audience of a celebrity produces a vampiric effect upon the celebrity by consuming and interpreting them, in this case, Byron. The image of the celebrity is controlled by an audience without consent and beyond his control, as in a somnambulistic state. Polidori, while likely unaware of the theory behind celebrity, could nevertheless have regarded the relationship between Byron

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[52] Christa Knellwolf and Jane Goodall, ed., *Frankenstein's Science: Experimentation and Discovery in Romantic Culture, 1780-1830* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2008) 7.

[53] James Robert Allard, *Romanticism, Medicine, and the Poet's Body* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2007), 26-27.

[54] Mole, *Byron's Romantic Celebrity*, 3.

and his audience, or possibly Byron and himself, as one of control without consciousness or consent.

Less than a year after Polidori's graduation in 1815, he was introduced to Lord Byron through their mutual acquaintance, Dr. William Knighton, who had been Byron's physician for an earlier ailment.[55] Byron was eight years Polidori's senior, and had already attained literary fame and popular infamy. Since Byron was already making plans to absent himself from England, and since his health had not particularly improved,[56] it seemed natural that he would take a physician to accompany him on his travels. The choice of Polidori, however, was subject to much debate from both sides. Polidori's father warned him against the appointment, citing Byron's "'atrabilious' temperament, and perhaps…his morals,"[57] as grounds for reconsideration. Five days after agreeing to accompany Byron, Polidori wrote to him asking to be released from his obligation, to which Byron consented. Polidori apparently changed his mind again, presumably at "the prospect of travelling with the most famous poet of the age,"[58] although money and his love of travel also apparently played major parts. John Murray, Byron's publisher, allegedly offered Polidori £500, a large sum of money at the time, to write an account of the tour, although this account never came to fruition. There is some controversy over whether such a thing was ever commissioned by Murray.[59] Polidori wrote to his sister Frances stating "you will either see my journal in writing or print Murray having offered me 500 guineas for it thro Lord Byron,"[60]

[55] Bishop, *Polidori,* 22.
[56] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori*, 55.
[57] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori*, 55.
[58] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori*, 56.
[59] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori*, 56.
[60] John Polidori, "Letter to Frances Polidori, 2 May 1816," quoted in MacDonald, *Poor Polidori*, 56.

and yet Byron later wrote to Murray in 1819 denying that he had heard of such an offer.[61] This discrepancy could be due to Byron's memory, or an intentional denial to avoid his dealing with Polidori again, since their relationship had since decayed.

In agreeing to write and publish an account of the tour, Polidori himself agreed to become part of Byron's celebrity industry, feeding the public further information about Byron for profit. This is the beginning of what J. P. Telotte describes as their "parasitic" relationship, where Polidori feeds on Byron's celebrity for profit. In this way, Polidori himself can be read as a vampire figure to Byron, although the complexity of their relationship cannot be so easily pinned down.

Byron agreed to take Polidori on his travels with him in the spring of 1816, despite the dislike of his friend John Cam Hobhouse for Polidori. Hobhouse argued with Byron against taking Polidori, citing "his damned Italian polysyllabic name" as sufficient ground for mistrust.[62] Judging from Hobhouse's testimony, however, Byron found Polidori "irresistible,"[63] and the two did travel to Europe together on the 24th of April 1816. The night before, "Polidori first assumed a role in which he would serve Byron more prominently than he ever did as physician – as the butt of jokes for the company's entertainment."[64] Hobhouse wrote scathingly of Polidori's literary efforts: "His attachment to reputation and his three *tragedies* is most singular and ridiculous. Byron and I shall have the reputation of having made a sober,

[61] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori*, 56.
[62] John Cam Hobhouse, "Letter to Lord Byron, May 3, 1819," quoted in *Byron's Bulldog: The Letters of John Cam Hobhouse to Lord Byron,* ed. Peter W. Graham (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1984) 270.
[63] Bishop, *Polidori,* 22.
[64] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori,* 59.

commonplace fellow quite mad!"[65] The "three tragedies" to which Hobhouse

referred to were Polidori's three tragic plays which he had composed during

medical school. These were roundly mocked when he attempted to read them

aloud the evening before his continental travels with Byron began.[66] This

incident appears to have set the tone of Polidori's treatment for the rest of the

trip.

On the morning of the 23rd of April 1816, Byron and his friend Scrope

Davies, along with Polidori and Hobhouse, left Byron's London home early for

Dover. The early timing was due to Byron being greatly in debt - bailiffs

entered Byron's London home shortly after his departure and seized

everything left behind.[67] Hobhouse writes in his journal that "Polidori and I

went in Scrope Davies's chaise; Byron and Davies in Byron's new Napoleonic

carriage built by Baxter for £500. There was a crowd about the door."[68] It is

noteworthy that Byron chose to make his exile a public act, further feeding his

celebrity. Clara Tuite addresses the Napoleonic carriage by claiming: "With

his marriage over, Byron starts over again, under the aegis of the coach

reappropriated as a material and symbolic support for his own departure into

exile. The Napoleonic carriage - and the obsession with Napoleon it

synecdochizes – is a vehicle by which Byron works out his coming-to-writing

as a career and a mode of heroic action."[69] Byron's replica of Napoleon's

carriage is worthy of examination in its historical context and in his

relationship with Polidori, as well as in terms of the vampire motif.

[65] John Cam Hobhouse, *Recollections of a Long Life, with Additional Extracts from His Private Diaries*, ed. Charlotte Carleton, Baroness Dorchester (London: John Murray 1909-11), 250.

[66] Andrew McConnell Stott, *The Vampyre Family: Passion, Envy, and the Curse of Byron*. (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2013), 11.

[67] Bishop, *Polidori*, 26.

[68] Bishop, *Polidori*, 26.

[69] Tuite, *Lord Byron and Scandalous Celebrity,* 66.

Napoleon was a controversial figure at the time, and Polidori seems to have been opposed to his politics – he wrote to his father during his time at Edinburgh to plead with him to let him travel to Italy and fight for his country during its occupation by France.[70] He goes on to condemn the English in the same letter: "My disposition is not that of the English. They are automatons: they have no enthusiasm, nor other vivid passion…I can never say what I feel, for fear that they should treat me as crazy if I talk of liberty, war, literature."[71] This passion may have explained Polidori's attraction to Byron, who presented himself as the complete opposite of the English stereotype he laments. Polidori was, however, "impressed by what he heard from their guide at Waterloo about Napoleon's…courage – that he was 'cool and collected' throughout the battle, and turned only 'momentarily pale' when the Prussians approached."[72] Polidori's attitude toward the character of Napoleon could obviously be separated from the actions of Napoleon's army. Byron's attitude toward Napoleon was much more complex.

Byron regarded Napoleon mostly with admiration, and almost idolatry. As Fiona MacCarthy puts it: "The apparition of Napoleon, almost twenty years his senior, was the spur to Byron's own ambition, his dissidence, the glamour of his arrogance, the sense of sweeping history that permeates his writing."[73] Byron compared himself to Napoleon in a letter to John Murray in 1821: "I perceive that the 'two greatest examples of human vanity – in the present age' are firstly 'the Ex-Emperor Napoleon' – and secondly – 'his Lordship the noble poet &c.' – meaning your humble Servant – 'poor guiltless I.' Poor Napoleon!

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[70] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori,* 19.
[71] John Polidori, "MS Letter to Gaetano Polidori, December 1813," quoted in MacDonald, *Poor Polidori*, 20.
[72] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori*, 67.
[73] MacCarthy, *Byron*, vii.

He little dreamed to what 'vile comparisons' the turn of the Wheel would reduce him."[74] Byron's commission of Napoleon's carriage before his self-imposed exile from England was likely an intentional parallel with Napoleon's involuntary exile to the Isle of Elba. Appropriately, one of Byron and Polidori's first stops on their journey was Waterloo, which inspired stanzas of Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. In these stanzas, Byron illustrates his judgment "that Napoleon's failing stemmed not simply from his egotism and ambition, but, more fundamentally, from predispositions in his nature over which he could have had little control."[75] These uncontrollable character flaws leading to a tragic downfall were something to which Byron could relate. The same uncontrollable character flaws and their inevitable result can also be applied to the vampire motif – a creature that is compelled to drink blood, a compulsion which eventually brings about its own downfall.

There are a number of ways in which the figure of Napoleon may inform Polidori's representation of Ruthven. Napoleon was a figure who terrorized Europe and who, at the time of the story's composition, was living in exile. The condition of exile may be regarded as analogous to the un-dead state of the vampire, a living death with the possibility of returning to life. Napoleon had already come "back to life" once before from his previous exile on Elba. Even after Napoleon's death, the self-styled Bonapartists pledged their loyalty to other members of his family, so profound was his effect.[76]

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[74] George Gordon Byron "Letter to John Murray, 4 December 1821," quoted in MacCarthy, *Byron*, ix.
[75] Christina M. Root, "History as Character: Byron and the Myth of Napoleon," in *History and Myth: Essays on English Romantic Literature*, ed. Stephen C. Behrendt (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990), 149.
[76] Michael A. Riff, *Dictionary of Modern Political Ideologies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 33.

There is something of the vampire in this kind of endurance, in the preservation of the spirit of Napoleon after his death.

 "At this early stage, everything was convivial between Byron and Polidori,"[77]attests Bishop, and this good humor seems to have continued for quite some time. Byron affectionately refers to Polidori as "Dr. Dori," on more than one occasion.[78]

Polidori was apparently influenced by his companion's interest in women – MacDonald attests that he "suddenly appears to have developed a highly discriminating eye for women."[79] He admired "sexual domination"[80] over women in general, particularly as demonstrated by Byron, and his references to how pleasing or displeasing he finds the general character of women (largely the latter) can be found peppered throughout the early stages of his diary.[81] While the vampire of folklore attacked indiscriminate of gender, Polidori's vampire is described as "feeding upon the life of a lovely female to prolong his existence."[82] In Polidori's tale, the female is the exclusive victim of the vampire, hinting at an element of sexual domination in the figure. As opposed to later vampire literature, the victimization of women in *The Vampyre* is not at all consensual, but leaves the woman howling with "dreadful shrieks"[83] to echo Ruthven's "exultant mockery of a laugh."[84] One can see how Polidori's interest in the sexual domination of women might have

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[77] Bishop, *Polidori,* 28.
[78] Bishop, *Polidori,* 30.
[79] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori*, 64.
[80] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori,* 65.
[81] Polidori, *Diary*, 51, 64, 77, 82.
[82] Polidori, *The Vampyre,* 9.
[83] Polidori, *The Vampyre,* 11.
[84] Polidori, *The Vampyre*, 11.

inspired his vampire. Polidori also identifies manipulative behavior in Ruthven's wooing of Aubrey's sister: "Who could resist his power? His tongue had dangers and toils to recount – could speak of himself as of an individual having no sympathy with any being on the crowded earth, save with her to whom he addressed himself…in fine, he knew so well how to use the serpent's art…that he gained her affections."[85] The submission of women whether through physical or emotional manipulation is one of Ruthven's specialities, and one which will be consistent in many subsequent vampires. In Polidori's version of the motif, the vampire is a powerful male figure physically dominating a helpless female, and domination is something he seems to have admired in Byron.

Polidori and Byron's relationship grew strained during their travels through Germany. One reason for this was that "Polidori was useless to Byron as a doctor,"[86] since Byron's physical health appeared to be completely restored by his travel abroad. The one time Polidori did exert his medical skill to heal a blacksmith in Ghent, Byron wrote to Hobhouse joking "I daresay he is dead by now" – the first in a long series of jokes about Polidori's medical skills.[87] His nickname also appears to have changed from the rather affectionate "Dr. Dori" to the rather mocking "that Child and Childish Dr. Pollydolly,"[88] indicating some level of resentment or ill-feeling.

In late May, Byron and Polidori met up with Percy Shelley and his companion Mary Godwin, referred to as Mrs. Shelley by Polidori and Byron (although the Shelleys were not married at the time since Shelley was still

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[85] Polidori, *The Vampyre,* 21-2.
[86] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori,* 71.
[87] Byron, *Letters and Journal, Vol. 5*, 73.
[88] Byron, *Letters and Journal, Vol. 5*, 76.

married to Harriet Westbrook).[89] The party also included Mary's sister, Claire

Clairmont, Byron's former lover and pregnant with his child.[90] She was

resentful of Polidori and saw him as a roadblock to resuming her affair with

Byron.[91] Shelley and Byron became fast friends, according to Daisy Hay: "On

the surface, it was an unlikely pairing. Byron, at twenty-eight, was jaundiced

and embittered about being hounded out of England, in contrast to the

idealistic, enthusiastic twenty-three year old Shelley…[but] each recognised

and respected the other's talent, and each knew something of life as an

outcast."[92] Polidori was younger than both at twenty, and indeed wrote in his

diary entry for June 18th that Mary Shelley "called me her brother (younger)."

She was only eighteen at the time, but apparently appeared more worldly than

Polidori.[93] In fact, Mary Shelley was the only member of the party who seems

to have been friendly to Polidori, although "by the end of the

summer…Polidori had alienated her as well as the others; her later references

to him are as disdainful and inaccurate as theirs."[94]

This is especially obvious in Mary Shelley's introduction to the

Standard Novels Edition of *Frankenstein*, written in 1831, ten years after

Polidori's death, and fifteen years after the events at the Villa Diodati. Mary

Shelley describes the story as the result of a challenge initiated by Lord

Byron:

> "We will each write a ghost story," said Lord Byron, and his
> proposition was acceded to. There were four of us. The noble
> author began a tale, a fragment of which he printed at the end

[89] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori,* 72.

[90] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori,* 69.

[91] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori*, 69.

[92] Daisy Hay, *Young Romantics: The Shelleys, Byron, and Other Tangled Lives* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 82.

[93] Polidori, *Diary,* 127.

[94] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori,* 76.

> of his poem Mazeppa…Poor Polidori had some terrible idea about a skull-headed lady who was so punished for peeping through a key-hole…The illustrious poets also, annoyed by the platitude of prose, speedily relinquished their uncongenial task.[95]

One suspects "poor Polidori" in this case is more of a patronizing name than a sympathetic one; it's clear that Mary Shelley's opinion of him never improved.

Mary Shelley mentions only one of the many ghost stories read in the Villa Diodati by name, although she refers to "volumes of ghost stories translated from the German into French…There was the *History of the Inconstant Lover* who, when he thought to clasp the bride to whom he had pledged his vows, found himself in the arms of the pale ghost of her whom he had deserted."[96] (This must have felt especially relevant to Percy Shelley, who had abandoned his wife Harriet Westbrook in order to elope with Mary two years previously. Harriet later committed suicide by jumping into the Serpentine).[97] The second story Mary describes is "the tale of the sinful founder of his race whose miserable doom it was to bestow the kiss of death on all the younger sons of his fated house, just when they reached the age of promise."[98] There is something of the early vampire myth about a creature cursed to destroy his own bloodline by killing his own family – as discussed in the introduction, one of the characteristics of the vampire was to drink the blood of its own family before moving on to other victims.

The other notable vampiric connection to the Villa Diodati is an entry in Polidori's diary on the 18th of June, shortly after they all decided to write a ghost story – he refers to a bizarre and unsubstantiated anecdote regarding

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[95] Shelley, *Frankenstein,* 261-2.
[96] Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 261.
[97] Hay, *Young Romantics*, 105.
[98] Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 261.

Percy Shelley: "He married; and, a friend of his liking his wife, he tried all he could to induce her to love him in turn. He is surrounded by friends who feed upon him, and draw upon him as their banker."[99] The vampiric imagery of having friends "who feed upon him" hints that the model for Polidori's vampire Ruthven may not only be Byron, but also his friend Shelley. Shelley's non-monogamous view of his marriage and affair with Mary Shelley is also typical of the polyamorous Ruthven. It is likely that the libertine qualities of both Byron and Shelley were forefront in Polidori's mind when composing his vampire tale.

The story Mary Shelley describes as written by Polidori in her introduction does not exist. Polidori did indeed produce a tale from the challenge set by Byron – it was called *Ernestus Berchtold; or, The Modern Oedipus,* published in 1819,[100] but it contains none of the incidents described by Mary Shelley. Bishop theorizes that Mary Shelley may have misremembered fifteen years after the event, and that the story she describes may have been authored by either Percy Shelley or Claire Clairmont. Neither of their stories survives to prove this, however. This is yet another of the myriad of uncertainties and inconsistencies which faces scholars of Polidori's life and work – a man who proves almost as elusive as the vampire he wrote about.

In the preface of *Ernestus Berchtold*, published shortly after *The Vampyre*, Polidori attempts to explain the confusion surrounding the publication of that story:

[99] Polidori, *Diary*, 128.
[100] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori*, 88.

> The tale which lately appeared, and to which his lordship's name was wrongfully attached, was founded upon the ground-work upon which this fragment was to have been continued. Two friends were to travel from England into Greece; while there, one of them should die, but before his death, should obtain from his friend an oath of secrecy with regard to his decease. Some short time after, the remaining traveller returning to his native country, should be startled at perceiving his former companion moving about in society, and should be horrified at finding that he made love to his former friend's sister. Upon this foundation I built the Vampyre, at the request of a lady, who denied the possibility of such a ground-work forming the outline of a tale which should bear the slightest appearance of probability. In the course of three mornings, I produced that tale, and left it with her. From thence it appears to have fallen into the hands of some person, who sent it to the Editor in such a way, as to leave it so doubtful from his words, whether it was his lordship's or not, that I found some difficulty in vindicating it to myself.[101]

The "lady" Polidori references can only be Mary Shelley or Claire Clairmont, being the only two ladies present at the Villa Diodati where the tale was conceived. Mary Shelley is the more likely, as Polidori's journal notes that he actually spoke with her fairly regularly. The fact that Mary Shelley is concerned with the "probability" of the tale is noteworthy in that it is also an aspect Polidori continued to be preoccupied with himself – he further states in the preface: "A tale that rests upon improbabilities, must generally disgust a rational mind…but I had agreed to write a supernatural tale, and that does not allow of a completely every-day narrative."[102] Polidori makes excuses for the supernatural elements of his tale, attributing the fault to whoever specified the tale as being supernatural, which was Byron according to Mary Shelley. Polidori seems preoccupied of absolving himself of an association with the supernatural, in a similar way he absolved himself of blame for *The Vampyre*

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[101] John Polidori, *Ernestus Berchtold, or the Modern Oedipus* (1819), eds. D. L. Macdonald and Kathleen Scherf (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2008), 63.

[102] Polidori, *Ernestus Berchtold,* 63.

publishing confusion. The whole preface exemplifies a self-deprecating quality to Polidori – he chides himself for not possessing "the horrible imagination of [*Frankenstein*], or the elegant classical style of [*Mazeppa*]."[103] Even before the story begins, it has been denigrated by its author. Polidori's insecurity in his own writing is likely a natural consequence of his treatment by Byron, and he likely expected the poet's public to treat any work of his as contemptuously as Byron did. However, due to Byron's celebrity, the lie of Byron being the author of *The Vampyre* was more appealing than the truth of Polidori being the author, having not the same celebrity himself. The vampire itself is an avatar for this kind of popularity – feeding upon an undiscerning public which feeds upon an author.

The *Vampyre* describes its title character with few of the attributes that the word "vampire" might conjure up to a modern reader. His only notable characteristics appear to be "the deadly hue of his face, which never gained a warmer tint, either from the blush of modesty, or from the strong emotion of passion, though its form and outline were beautiful."[104] Although attractive, Ruthven retains the outsider quality of the vampire: "he gazed upon the mirth around him, as if he could not participate therein."[105] The question of Ruthven's "otherness" does not arise from his roots in a foreign country, but rather his complexion, and his aloofness. Paradoxically, it is this inability to engage with society that makes Ruthven so fascinating to the society of London. Just as Byron was, Ruthven is intriguing for his eccentricity and notoriety. It is a strange contradiction of Polidori's tale that a creature who has

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[103] Polidori, *Ernestus Berchtold,* 63.
[104] Polidori, *The Vampyre,* 3.
[105] Polidori, *The Vampyre,* 3.

to appear normal in order to keep his true nature hidden is unable to perform properly within society. His aloofness attracts attention and labels him as a social outcast, not in the sense that society rejects him, but in that he becomes an object for people to stare at and speculate about because of his peculiar oddity: "His peculiarities caused him to be invited to every house; all wished to see him."[106] Ruthven's popularity results, in this case, not from his conversation or rank, but rather from his oddness. He is less a celebrity and more of a spectacle – someone not to be interacted with but looked at.

The only people Ruthven appears to genuinely interact with before meeting Aubrey is women, but only certain types of women: "But though the common adulteress could not influence even the guidance of his eyes, it was not that the female sex was indifferent to him: yet such was the apparent caution with which he spoke to the virtuous wife and innocent daughter, that few knew he ever addressed himself to females."[107] Ruthven's taste in women seems singular – he ignores women of dubious morality and seems cautious around women of virtue. The fact that he later victimizes Ianthe, described by the narrator as possessing "innocent, youth, and beauty, unaffected by the crowded drawing rooms, and stifling balls,"[108] and indeed Miss Aubrey, seems to be at odds with Ruthven's former reluctance to address himself to "innocent daughter[s]." This contradiction of character is an aspect of the vampire which will be seen again in Varney in his monstrous acts and subsequent remorse, and particularly Carmilla, who attacks and victimizes a woman with whom she otherwise behaves in a tender and loving manner. The fact that Ruthven appears to eschew all vice in his appearance in London society, and then

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[106] Polidori, *The Vampyre*, 3.
[107] Polidori, *The Vampyre*, 3-4.
[108] Polidori, *The Vampyre*, 9.

immediately launches into vices of the worst kinds when traveling with Aubrey, presents the vampire as being deliberately deceptive, although his behavior could also be a function of geography. On the European continent, Ruthven appears as an unrestrained libertine and gambler, which he represses in London society. It is perhaps a commentary by Polidori on the English stereotype he described when referring to "automatons [who] have no enthusiasm, nor other vivid passion."[109] Ruthven must repress his passions while in England in order to blend in with his surroundings – Polidori does the same. In this way, Ruthven cannot only be read as an avatar for Byron but also in some respects for Polidori as well.

The appeal of Ruthven to the people of London society is not only his eccentricity, but also his attractiveness, and his nobility. Ruthven is Lord Ruthven – whether his nobility is genuine or merely a pretense is not explained, and indeed fairly immaterial. He is free to move in high society, and free from suspicion because of his rank, something which will be emulated by later literary vampires such as Sir Francis Varney and Count Dracula. The highly sexualized, libertine nobleman has obvious parallels with Lord Byron. The aristocratic aspect of Polidori's vampire also gives him license to treat members of the perceived underclass, such as the peasant Ianthe, as he wishes. This is the same way Byron, according to Polidori, treated the lower orders on their arrival in Ostend, where he "fell like a thunderbolt upon the chambermaid."[110] The aristocratic vampire for the first time, in part because of its rank, is given license to treat its unwilling human victims not only as a source of blood, but as a source of sexual pleasure.

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[109] Polidori, "MS Letter to Gaetano Polidori, December 1813," quoted in MacDonald, *Poor Polidori*, 20.

[110] Polidori, *Diary¸* 33.

The type of seduction Ruthven espouses is similar, according to Simon

Bainbridge, to Byron's upon his readers: "Polidori presents Ruthven's

irresistibility as a product of his mastery of the rhetoric of Byronic poetics.

Ruthven's 'power' derives from his use of language ('his tongue') and

particularly from his ability to exploit the two most distinctive features of

Byron's writing of the 'years of fame' – exciting romance narrative and

sympathy evoking self-presentation – to create a particular kind of subject

position for his listener."[111] According to Bainbridge's theory, it is the text itself

which charms its readers, and the vampire illustrates the seductive and

influential power of language, an aspect of the vampire motif which will be

explored in the next chapter. Bainbridge claims *The Vampyre* "also presents

as vampiric the system of production through which the poet sustains his

position in the literary marketplace."[112] The literary marketplace in Byron's

case continues to prosper because of the poet's celebrity, making the vampire

a metaphor for celebrity itself. The vampire as a metaphor for a capitalistic

system of production will also be explored in the next chapter.

The Byronic associations with the vampire are clearly fundamental to

the motif, and fairly inescapable. They also associate the vampire with the

idea of the Byronic hero. Without this association, Mario Praz contends that

the vampire figure would never have risen to popularity at all.[113] James B.

Twitchell asserts that "Byronic Heroes…share with the vampire a love of

darkness, hypnotic eyes, an obsession with the destructive side of love,

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[111] Simon Bainbridge, "Lord Ruthven's Power: Polidori's 'The Vampyre', Doubles and the Byronic Imagination," *Byron Journal* 34.1 (Spring 2006): 21.
[112] Bainbridge, "Lord Ruthven's Power," 24.
[113] Mario Praz, *The Romantic Agony* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 22.

sneering smiles, and quivering lips,"[114] all of which Lord Ruthven possesses. Other Byronic heroes, including the title characters in both *Manfred* (1816) and *Cain* (1821) associate themselves with supernatural entities. *Manfred* was composed shortly after Byron's stay in the Villa Diodati. The dramatic poem involves a nobleman who summons spirits in an attempt to assuage his guilt for a past deed, and ends in his eventual suicide. Manfred faces supernatural forces which drive him to death, as does Cain, who instigates not his own death, but his brother's. The dramatic work ends with his banishment as a perpetual outcast, similar to the Giaour. Ruthven faces no moral dilemmas as Byron's heroes often do, but later incarnations of the vampire would. Byron's effect on both the character of Ruthven and on the motif more broadly is indelible.

Another reason why Ruthven's association with Byron appears so inescapable is that *The Vampyre* is based on the fragment of a story written by Lord Byron. The fragment, according to MacDonald, was not likely intended to be a vampire story: "Nothing in [Byron's] fragment or Polidori's outline suggests that the dead friend, Augustus Darvell, will come back as a vampire; the ending of the fragment even suggests that he will not [since] his body begins to rot as soon as he dies."[115] Byron's association with the vampire is nevertheless recognized by Polidori, who quotes a passage from *The Giaour* as an epigraph in *Ernestus Berchtold.*[116] Byron wrote to *Galignani's Messenger* after *The Vampyre* was mistakenly published under his name to correct the error, and to voice his opinion on vampires: "I have…a

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[114] James B. Twitchell, *The Living Dead: A Study of the Vampire in Romantic Literature* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1981), 76.
[115] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori*, 89.
[116] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori*, 91.

personal dislike to 'vampires' and the little acquaintance I have with them would by no means induce me to divulge their secrets."[117] Byron's interest in brooding, doomed figures does not appear to wane after 1819, so the message was probably tongue-in-cheek. To his publisher John Murray, Byron attached the "Fragment," dated "June 17, 1816" shortly after *The Vampyre*'s appearance in print. He instructed: "If you choose to publish it in the Edinburgh Magazine, you may, stating why, and with such explanatory proem as you please."[118] Murray instead published the fragment at the end of *Mazeppa*, without a proem and without consulting Byron, who was suitably annoyed by this a year later, stating: "I shall not allow you to play the tricks you did last year with the prose you *post*-scribed to Mazeppa – which I sent to you *not* to be published if not in a periodical paper, & there you tacked it without a word of explanation and be damned to you."[119] It is interesting to note that Byron wanted his fragment to appear in a periodical, as the "Edinburgh Magazine," or *Blackwood's,* was by 1820 publishing numerous supernatural stories. Byron seemed to believe this was a fitting place for his fragment of a supernatural tale, rather than at the end of a poem. The place of periodicals in the rise of the popularity of supernatural literature will be discussed at length in the next chapter.

It is highly probable that Byron's purported disdain for *The Vampyre* has more to do with its author and less to do with its subject – by the time the story was published, Byron and Polidori were no longer on friendly terms. The

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[117] George Gordon Byron, "Letter 387, to the Editor of *Galignani's Messenger,* April 27 1819," in *Byron's Letters and Journals, Volume 6,* ed. Leslie A. Marchand (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 119.

[118] George Gordon Byron, "Letter 137, to Mr. Murray, April 6, 1819," in *Byron's Letters and Journals, Volume 6,* ed. Leslie A. Marchand (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 126.

[119] George Gordon Byron, "Letter 427 to John Murray, March 20 1820" in *Byron's Letters and Journals, Volume 7,* ed. Leslie A. Marchand (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 58.

break between them seems to have come from a series of slight quarrels which gradually became worse and worse. Indeed, Polidori's own account of the affair to his father admits that there is no glaring reason for the break:

> We have parted, finding that our tempers did not agree. He propos[ed] it & it was settled. There was no immediate cause, but a continued series of slight quarrels. I believe the fault, if any, has been on my part, I am not accustomed to have a master, & there fore my conduct was not free & easy.[120]

MacDonald speculates that Polidori grew jealous of Shelley's monopolization of Byron's time and attention.[121] What is noteworthy, however, is Moore's account of Polidori's reaction after a disagreement with Byron when Polidori's dismissal seemed inevitable: "He looked on this as 'nothing less than ruin' and went to his room to poison himself. He was just wondering whether to leave a note when Byron himself 'tapped at the door and entered, with his hand held forth in sign of reconciliation.' Polidori burst into tears."[122] Attempted suicide over a slight quarrel is evidence of a melancholic and depressive temperament, and indeed five years later, Polidori's next suicide attempt with prussic acid would be successful. One of the traditional methods in folklore for becoming a vampire is death by suicide, as will be detailed in the next chapter, and it is morbidly tragic that the first vampire author in the English language committed suicide.

In the introduction to the Oxford edition of *The Vampyre,* Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick claim that Polidori transformed "the figure of the vampire from bestial ghoul to glamorous aristocrat….his Lord Ruthven is

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[120] John Polidori, "MS Letter to Gaetano Polidori, 20 September 1816," quoted in MacDonald, *Poor Polidori*, 102.

[121] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori*, 101.

[122] Thomas Moore, ed., *Life of Lord Byron with his Letters and Journals and Illustrated Notes* (London: John Murray, 1830), 276-7.

really the conventional rakehell or libertine with a few of the vampiric attributes grafted onto him…for Polidori, the 'vampire story' is conceived as a variant upon the moral tale, a tale designed principally as a *warning* – here, against the fascinating power of the libertinism represented by his employer Byron."[123] As discussed previously, vampiric attributes are numerous and varied, and I would argue that Polidori's vampire possesses many of what might be termed "vampire attributes" – pale, attractive, hypnotic, aristocratic, dominating, and seductive. The reading of Ruthven as Byron is fairly inevitable based on the history of the text.

The manuscript was sent to Byron's publishers anonymously, and the first publication in 1819 was subtitled: "A Tale by Lord Byron." The name Ruthven had also appeared in an 1816 novel by Lady Caroline Lamb, Byron's former mistress, whose character of Clarence de Ruthven, Lord Glenarvon, was also meant to be a caricature of Lord Byron.[124] To simplify the story to the level of a mere morality tale, however, is to do it a great injustice in my opinion. The narrator of the story is neither explicit nor reliable. Aubrey, the protagonist, is said to have "related composedly what the reader has perused,"[125] but the state of his sanity by the end of the story is questionable at best: "His dress became neglected, and he wandered, as often exposed to the noon-day sun as to the midnight damps. He was no longer to be recognized."[126] Aubrey's sister and guardians, fearing for his sanity, confine him to his room with a physician to take constant care of him, all of which cast doubt on the reliability of his narration. Indeed, the fact that Aubrey does not

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[123] Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick, ed., *The Vampyre and Other Tales of the Macabre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), xix.
[124] Morrison and Baldick, "Introduction," vii.
[125] Polidori, *The Vampyre,* 23.
[126] Polidori, *The Vampyre,* 19.

directly narrate the story, but rather dictates it through the medium of another makes the issue of reliable narration even more complicated.

Another aspect of the story, and one which will continue to be associated with the vampire, is glamour. According to James Soderholm, "By a coincidence of labors – one literary, one maternal (but both Scottish) – the word 'glamour' and George Gordon Byron came into the world at about the same time."[127] Soderholm credits Sir Walter Scott with the first use of the word in his poetry, where, according to him, "glamour is associated with the power to create illusions,"[128] and is utilized by supernatural entities such as fairies, goblins, and dwarfs. The supernatural association with the word continues throughout the nineteenth century.[129] Although the word "glamour" is not explicitly used in the text of *The Vampyre*, the supernatural association, and the ability to fascinate and deceive through supernatural means, is explicit throughout the text. The deceptive and particularly hypnotic aspect of glamour will be seen again in later vampire texts – Polidori's tale is the beginning of this particular aspect of the vampire motif. Ruthven, and by association Byron himself, embody glamour in the conflation of the supernatural, the hypnotic, and the aristocratic.

Ruthven is not a straightforward charming libertine; he has "the reputation of a winning tongue"[130] but "few knew he ever addressed himself to females."[131] His "dead grey eye…fell upon the cheek with a leaden ray that

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[127] James Soderholm, *Fantasy, Forgery, and the Byron Legend* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 1.

[128] Soderholm, *Fantasy, Forgery, and the Byron Legend*, 2.

[129] Soderholm, *Fantasy, Forgery, and the Byron Legend*, 4.

[130] Polidori, *The Vampyre*, 4.

[131] Polidori, *The Vampyre,* 4.

weighed upon the skin it could not pass."[132] A heavy stare and "dead grey eye" cannot be said to be particularly irresistible attributes, and yet, as stated previously, Ruthven fascinates high society as a spectacle. Patrick O'Malley asserts that "like his glance, this early vampire is dangerous not because he penetrates hearts or societies but because the very absoluteness of his alterity becomes fantastically hypnotic."[133] This hypnotic aspect relates to the earlier discussion of somnambulism and Polidori's thesis on the subject – the idea of being oneself and not oneself while controlled by another being. The hypnosis aspect of vampirism was obviously appealing to Polidori, and it is unsurprising that a man whose own personal and medical interests included trances and sleep-walking should have incorporated that into his literary creation.

Patricia L. Skarda attests that Polidori drew Ruthven not as a simple caricature of Byron, but "ingeniously construed a story that describes by curious ritual and convoluted dream his own entrapment in the anxiety of influence."[134] She points out the numerous parallels not only between the travels of Byron and Polidori to Ruthven and Aubrey, but also the parallels between *The Vampyre* and Byron's other works, including *The Giaour*. "Robbers overtake Aubrey and Ruthven in a narrow defile between mountains, a place unmistakably exaggerating the features of Byron's setting for the Giaour's mortal combat with Hassan, the jealous murderer of Leila…In a long deathbed speech, though not quite as long as the Giaour's, Ruthven elicits from Aubrey an oath of silence as to his crimes and his death for a year

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[132] Polidori, *The Vampyre*, 3.
[133] Patrick R. O'Malley, *Catholicism, Sexual Deviancy, and Victorian Gothic Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 136.
[134] Skarda, "Vampirism and Plagiarism," 250.

and a day."[135] The readers of *The Vampyre* were likely also aware of these parallels, further strengthening the Byron connection to the work even after the correct author was attributed. Byron's celebrity and the fame of his works made the association between him and *The Vampyre* obvious to his readers.

The setting of *The Vampyre* and his travels throughout the European continent not only reflect Byron's own enforced exile, but culminate in Greece, the country in which Byron would later meet his death. Byron's interest in the Levant was aroused during his first visit in 1809, and he later wrote: "With these countries, and events connected with them, all my really poetical feelings begin and end."[136] According to Makdisi, this probably has to do with Byron "viewing the East as the site or birthplace of Europe's great cultural heritage, while at the same time viewing the East as a site into which one could escape from modernity and Europe itself."[137] This foreign setting is especially prominent in the context of vampire literature, since the journey to the East in both *The Vampyre* and later *Dracula* is almost a literal journey to the past, where myths and superstitions still hold sway over a credulous population. The Eastern setting is also the origin of these creatures of myth and superstition, and the point from which they can be brought into the West, for good or ill.

Revolution had been brewing in Greece since 1814, and Byron would later meet his death fighting for its independence in 1824. Greece at the time was contested by forces of rival faiths vying for control – Ottoman Turkish

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[135] Skarda, "Vampirism and Plagiarism," 256.

[136] George Gordon Byron, "Letter 234 to Mr. Moore, March 8, 1816," in *The Life of Lord Byron*, *with his Letters and Journals and Illustrated Notes,* ed. Thomas Moore (London: John Murray, 1830), 294.

[137] Saree Makdisi, "Versions of the East : Byron, Shelley, and the Orient" in *Romanticism, Race, and Imperial Culture, 1780-1834*, ed. Alan Richardson and Sonia Hofkosh (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), 209.

Muslims and Greek Eastern Orthodox Christians.[138] As stated previously in the discussion of *The Giaour,* this religious and cultural conflict is a common trope of both traditional vampires and their later incarnations. The fact that both Byron and Southey referenced Greek vampires in the footnotes to their poetry demonstrates that the superstition was associated with that country at that time, rather than the more modern associations of the vampire with Eastern Europe, largely due to Dracula being a native of Transylvania. This is another case where a focus on Dracula has perhaps limited research done on other countries and their role in the history of the vampire myth, such as Greece. What both Greece and Transylvania have in common, however, is the conflict of cultures and religions which makes up both their respective histories, and thus influences the vampire as well.

During their travels on the continent, Aubrey is "surprized at the apparent eagerness with which his companion sought for the centres of all fashionable vice,"[139] having had "no opportunity of studying Lord Ruthven's character"[140] previously. Aubrey catches glimpses of his character at this early stage by watching Ruthven gambling against a naïve and desperate opponent: "Then…his eyes sparkled with more fire than that of any cat whilst dallying with the half dead mouse."[141] Ruthven's only hint of emotion, according to Aubrey, is when he has the opportunity to hurt or destroy a victim. There is a sadistic aspect to this in the comparison of a cat "dallying" with a mouse – Ruthven is not a vampire who causes harm purely to survive,

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[138] Nigel Leask, "Byron and the Eastern Mediterranean: *Childe Harold II* and the 'polemic of Ottoman Greece'" in *The Cambridge Companion to Byron*, ed. Drummond Bone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 101.
[139] Polidori*, The Vampyre*, 6.
[140] Polidori, *The Vampyre,* 5.
[141] Polidori, *The Vampyre*, 6.

but takes pleasure in causing pain. The same sadistic pleasure at tormenting others will be seen in the character of Count Dracula, another aristocrat who uses his rank and glamour to deceive his victims as to his true character. This aspect of the motif which delights in its own cruelty also owes itself to Polidori's interpretation of Lord Byron, since Polidori had to endure insults and mockery at the hands of his former employer.

Because Ruthven never narrates the story, we have only Aubrey's description of Ruthven's character and actions to rely on. This is a common trope in early vampire literature – the vampires never directly speak or narrate, but instead their actions and words are mediated by others. Ruthven himself never seems to speak, and when Aubrey attempts to speak to him "frankly and openly,"[142] Ruthven never gives him the opportunity; speaking frankly and openly to him is an impossibility because he is incapable of frankness, openness, or communication of any sort: "His eye spoke less than his lip."[143] The "lip" is likely a reference to Byron's own – according to Thomas Babington Macaulay in his 1831 review of Thomas Moore's *Life of Byron*, male contemporaries of Lord Byron attempted to mimic his appearance: "Many of them practised at the glass, in the hope of catching the curl of the upper lip, and the scowl of the brow, which appear in some of his portraits."[144] Since Byron's lip was a distinctive feature of his, the reference to Ruthven's eye speaking less than his lip would likely be interpreted by contemporary readers as a reference to Byron himself.

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[142] Polidori, *The Vampyre,* 7.
[143] Polidori, *The Vampyre,* 7.
[144] Thomas Babington Macaulay, "Review of Moore's *Life of Byron*," *Edinburgh Review* 53 (June 1831): 572.

Aubrey's decision to leave Ruthven is the result of others telling him that Ruthven's "character was dreadfully vicious,"[145] which surely Aubrey must have already realized for himself by what he has seen. But he needs the confirmation of others to validate what his experience has already taught him. His strange reluctance to believe the vicious character of his friend could stem from his distrust of his own perception, which leaves the reader little trust in his perception. Perhaps Aubrey has imagined Ruthven's character entirely; perhaps Ruthven has hypnotized Aubrey by his glamour. Either way, the vampire again occupies an ambiguous space in the mind of the protagonist – it is both the harbinger of evil, and the blank, apathetic personality who cannot engage with the world around him. The same ambivalent feeling toward the vampire will be seen later in *Carmilla*, when Laura feels both drawn toward and repulsed by her vampire companion and attacker.

Ruthven's second hint of emotion occurs when Aubrey falls ill after the death of Ianthe. As stated previously, Byron dedicated his *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* to "Ianthe" when it was first published in 1812. The name was a term of endearment he used for Lady Charlotte Harley, who was eleven years old when the poem was first published.[146] Ianthe was also the name of Percy Shelley's first child with his first wife, Harriet. It is telling that Polidori chooses this name for the victim of his Byronic vampire – since unkind feeling developed toward both Byron and Shelley, it is possible that the choice of name is a jab at both. Both female children are deprived of the presence of both men through their sexual transgressions – Shelley by abandoning his wife when he eloped with Mary Shelley, and Byron through his enforced exile

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[145] Polidori, *The Vampyre*, 7.
[146] Gordon Glegg, "Byron's 'Ianthe'," *The Byron Journal* 18 (1990): 80.

for marital sodomy. In the narrative, Ianthe is destroyed by Ruthven, and this is perhaps a chastisement on the part of Polidori towards Shelley and Byron, implying that their worldly lusts have made victims of their own innocent Ianthes.

In *The Vampyre,* after Ianthe's death, "his lordship seemed quite changed; he no longer appeared that apathetic being who had so astonished Aubrey…[Ruthven's] kind words, implying almost repentance for the fault that had caused their separation, and still more by the attention, anxiety, and care which he showed, soon reconciled [Aubrey] to his presence."[147] When Aubrey is in need of care, Ruthven becomes, in his mind anyway, the ideal nurse, lending yet more uncertainty to his character. In light of the knowledge of Byron and Polidori's quarrels, this passage can be read as a kind of wish fulfilment on Polidori's part – that Byron would become apologetic over the fault that caused their separation and ask Polidori to return as his traveling companion.

After Ruthven is shot, "his conduct and appearance had not changed; he seemed as unconscious of pain as he had been of the objects about him."[148] Even with his death imminent, Ruthven will not speak or give any sign of engaging in the situation around him. His last act is to swear Aubrey to the same silence and secrecy he seems to have placed upon himself: "Swear by all your soul reveres, by all your nature fears, swear that for a year and a day you will not impart your knowledge of my crimes or death to any living being in any way, whatever may happen, or whatever you may see."[149] The oath that Ruthven makes Aubrey swear connects all his soul reveres with all his nature

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[147] Polidori, *The Vampyre,* 13.
[148] Polidori, *The Vampyre*, 15.
[149] Polidori, *The Vampyre*, 15.

fears, simultaneous feelings of both love and loathing that are one of the characteristics of the vampire figure. Ruthven is both of these things for Aubrey.

It is noteworthy that this is the moment Aubrey returns to England and his sister is introduced to the reader, for the cycle seems to repeat itself. Miss Aubrey is also unacquainted with society, and is described as possessing "a melancholy charm…which did not seem to arise from misfortune, but from some feeling within, that appeared to indicate a soul conscious of a brighter realm…It seemed as if those eyes, - that face were then playing in the light of their own native sphere."[150] Miss Aubrey too seems to be slightly detached from society; unable to engage properly with reality, as Ruthven was. She is first introduced to society in "that very place"[151] where Aubrey had first seen Ruthven, and where he sees him again, returned from the dead. The implication is that Ruthven was already dead when Aubrey met him, and this is just a repetition of that cycle, with the added consideration of Aubrey now having knowledge of Ruthven's death and personality.

It is entirely possible that Miss Aubrey has been hypnotized by Ruthven's glamour herself, since she has become engaged to him, and now shares some of his qualities. The spread of the vampire contagion in this case does not result from an actual drinking of blood, but more by being in the company of a vampire for a long period of time. To extend this, the implication is that Aubrey too begins to exhibit signs of vampirism.

Aubrey seems unable to even inquire about Ruthven, whether bound by his oath, some mysterious supernatural force, or his own fears for his

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[150] Polidori, *The Vampyre*, 17.
[151] Polidori, *The Vampyre,* 18.

sanity: "Though he attempted to ask concerning Lord Ruthven, the name hung upon his lips, and he could not succeed in gaining information."[152] This apparent supernatural enforcement of his oath once again implies the vampire's control over a natural action of speech, re-enforcing again the hypnotic and somnambulistic powers of the vampire, although not explicitly stated in the text.

Whether because Aubrey and his sister are both hypnotized by the vampire or because they are becoming vampires through prolonged contact with Ruthven, they appear to possess the vampiric attributes discussed previously. Aubrey becomes as introverted and self-contained as Ruthven was at the beginning of the story. He too becomes an object of unusual interest and speculation for society: "His haggard and suspicious looks were so striking, his inward shudderings so visible."[153] His unusual appearance attracts as much attention as Ruthven's did. Aubrey's only interest appears to be in his sister, just as Ruthven's only interest is in virtuous young women to be his victims. Aubrey "pressed [his sister] to his breast, and kissed her cheek,"[154] both actions with a hint of sexual transgression about them. He becomes furious when he sees the image of Ruthven in her locket, the image of, according to his sister, "her future husband…the Earl of Marsden."[155] He is stopped from revealing Ruthven's true identity by a voice belonging to a man not even present in the room,[156] but who still seems to hold sway over Aubrey's power of speech and action.

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[152] Polidori, *The Vampyre,* 18.
[153] Polidori, *The Vampyre,* 19.
[154] Polidori, *The Vampyre,* 21.
[155] Polidori, *The Vampyre,* 21.
[156] Polidori, *The Vampyre,* 21.

Aubrey's death is brought about by bleeding, just as Ianthe's was, although Aubrey's is as a result of "a broken blood-vessel."[157] The "effusion of blood"[158] echoes the death of the vampire's other victims, however, hinting that Aubrey himself has indirectly become the vampire's victim, if not the vampire himself. The aspect of blood is central to Polidori's representation of the vampire motif, even at this early literary stage.

The Vampyre was published on the 1st of April 1819 under the title The Vampyre: A Tale by Lord Byron.[159] It is unclear how the periodical which published it, Henry Colburn's New Monthly Magazine, had got hold of the manuscript, since "the physician had left it behind at Geneva in 1816 and had almost completely forgotten about it."[160] Polidori wrote a letter to Henry Colburn the day after its publication, claiming the work as his, but describing it as "imperfect and unfinished."[161] Nevertheless, the attachment of Byron's name made the book instantly popular, as Colburn knew it would. Hobhouse, in his continuing contempt of Polidori, wrote the following to Byron, notifying him of the publication of the story:

> A cursed and trashy tale called and entitled The Vampyre was lately advertised in your name…I recollected your telling me something about a picnic of that kind at Diodati so I thought it possible that Dolly might have purloined your tale and was now covering his nakedness with it. The moment, however, I saw this Vampyre, I who, like all coxcombs, know your style, swore the whole to be a vile imposture and Dolly's whole and sole doing…Now, however, he publishes a letter in the papers stating that though The Vampyre in 'its present form' is not yours, yet the 'groundwork' is 'certainly' yours. To this he has put his damned Italian polysyllabic name…I think it would be

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[157] Polidori, *The Vampyre,* 22.
[158] Polidori, *The Vampyre,* 23.
[159] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori*, 177.
[160] Bishop, *Polidori,* 78.
[161] John Polidori, "Letter to Henry Colburn, April 2 1819," quoted in Bishop, *Polidori,* 78.

advisable for you to send to Murray…a note to be published in the papers, totally depriving the Doctor of any copyright in ground work: or he will continue making use of your name – I fear he is a sad scamp, but you know I told you that you were wrong in taking him, you know I did.[162]

Hobhouse judged Polidori harshly and unjustly as having orchestrated the mix-up to increase the sales of his book. Byron likely believed Hobhouse's claims since he appears never to have repaired his friendship with the doctor, nor taken any pains to defend Polidori from Hobhouse's accusations. Byron disowned the book completely – he confessed to his friend Medwin: "I was forced to disown the publication lest the world should suppose that I had vanity enough, or was egotist enough, to write in that ridiculous manner about myself."[163] Byron's eagerness to distance himself from the tale shows that he identified himself, as so many did, in the character of Ruthven, but in this case was not willing to play upon his notoriety or infamy among the reading public. It is possible that he was still reeling from the sodomy and incest scandal, and was reluctant to draw further attention to his transgressive behavior, but his denial also indicates a certain reluctance to be associated with a vampire.

J. P. Telotte accuses Polidori himself of being a vampire figure toward Byron: "[Polidori] simply appropriated Byron's brief account of two traveling companions and the oath which one extracted from the other, and then drew upon its characters and situations, as well as Byron's own reputation and the details of his life, to craft his own tale of parasitism and to ensure its

[162] John Cam Hobhouse, "Letter to Lord Byron, 3 May 1819" quoted in Bishop, *Polidori,* 80.
[163] George Gordon Byron, quoted in Thomas Medwin, *Conversations of Lord Byron Noted During a Residence with His Lordship at Pisa in the Years 1821 and 1822* (London: Henry Colburn, 1824), 120.

immediate success."[164] Telotte suggests Polidori tried to use Byron's celebrity to feed his own personal success, with minimal results.

The vampire, of course, contains aspects of the celebrity – a creature the public can live vicariously through in order to act out their fantasies, without meriting any of the consequences of their actions. It is a glamorous creature who feeds off its own success and fascinates the minds of others, a publicly recognizable yet privately unknowable figure. The vampire is an avatar for this kind of behavior, and, via Lord Ruthven, Polidori fed off Byron's celebrity as much as Byron himself did.

A few years after the publication of *The Vampyre,* several plays were written in French by Charles Nodier, one a stage adaptation of the novel, and another written in 1820 as a sequel to the story featuring Lord Ruthven, the vampire. Throsby asserts that "Byron was…more than any other author of his time, the focus of countless attempts at what would now be called 'fan fiction': that is, imaginative stories written by amateur writers about Byron and his works."[165] Byron's fictional counterpart, Ruthven, fared as well as he did in terms of copycats, although they could not all be termed "amateur writers." Alexandre Dumas published a sequel to *The Vampyre* in 1865, translated as *The Return of Lord Ruthven.*[166] Lord Ruthven's presence spread all over Europe, resulting in diverse efforts to carry on the literary trope of the aristocratic vampire, and the Byronic anti-hero.

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[164] J. P. Telotte, "A Parasitic Perspective: Romantic Participation and Polidori's *The Vampyre*," in *The Blood is the Life: Vampires in Literature*, eds. Leonard G. Heldreth and Mary Pharr (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1999), 10.

[165] Corin Throsby, "Byron, Commonplacing, and Early Fan Culture" in *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture: 1750-1850*, ed. Tom Mole (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009), 228.

[166] Christopher Frayling, ed., *Vampyres: Lord Byron to Count Dracula* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), 18.

Perhaps in the end, the truth of the text's authorship was not as interesting to contemporary readers as the identification of the vampire with the famous Byron. Indeed, the vampire figure often overshadows its creators – Polidori is not a well-known writer anymore than Bram Stoker is. Both are known, if they are known at all, for creating a famous vampire, or for working for a celebrity – Polidori for Lord Byron, Stoker for Henry Irving. MacDonald attests that "even Byron's indirect contributions to the theory and practice of vampirism turned out to be extraordinarily influential…the oath of silence, for example…A surprising number of later narratives include such an oath, although it creates contortions or implausibilies of plot in almost all of them."[167] (The oath of silence first appeared in Byron's "Fragment of a Novel" where Augustus Darvell makes the narrator swear to "conceal [his] death from every human being."[168]) The fact that the vampire is not allowed to speak, and forbids others from speaking on his behalf, is central to Polidori's narrative. It is also an attribute of many popular vampire stories throughout the nineteenth century, including *Carmilla, Varney the Vampire,* and *Dracula*. Polidori's influence is felt in all these later vampire stories – the oath of silence is an important plot point in *Carmilla*, Varney meets a Count Pollidori in *Varney the Vampire*, and *Dracula* takes the aristocratic seducer to its most famous conclusion. As the nineteenth century progresses, so too does the vampire figure begin to take more definite shape, while still retaining its appealing ambiguity and malleability.

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[167] MacDonald, *Poor Polidori*, 191.
[168] George Gordon Byron. "Fragment of a Novel (June 17, 1816)" in *Mazeppa: A Poem* (London: John Murray, 1819), 69.

Chapter Two - "Penny Packets of Poison": The Vampire in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

This chapter focuses on the vampire motif's complex place in the "great tradition" and "little tradition," from associations with the nobleman Lord Byron to the pages of penny dreadful fiction. My original contributions include examinations of galvanism in relation to the vampire, and an in-depth study of *Varney the Vampire*, a text which has been largely ignored by critics due to its disjointed narrative, but one which nevertheless deserves examination in its literary and historical context. There is also the study of the modes of transmission of the motif in periodicals and magazines, and how the format impacts the story, which I believe is an original contribution in terms of the examination of vampire fiction.

The literary afterlife of Polidori's Lord Ruthven, as mentioned at the end of the last chapter, was not only prolific but also international. In France, Cyprien Bérard wrote an 1820 novel entitled *Lord Ruthwen ou les Vampires*, which included Polidori's character but added in two other vampires and some completely original plot elements in its two volumes.[1] It features a benevolent female vampire called Bettina, who leads her former fiancé to Lord Ruthven, the vampire responsible for her creation. The fiancé, Lèonti, ends up dueling Ruthven, who does not die after receiving a mortal wound, and thus is proven publicly to be a vampire. The onlookers despatch him in a rather unique fashion – his heart is pierced, but his eyes are also gouged out, apparently ensuring death. This removal of body parts is yet another method of destroying a vampire which hearkens back to the folkloric vampire, and one

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[1] Erik Butler, *Metamorphoses of the Vampire in Literature and Film: Cultural Transformations in Europe, 1732-1933* (Rochester, Camden House, 2010), 94.

which will be utilized in later novels such as *Dracula*, where Lucy's head is removed from her body and stuffed with garlic.

Also in 1820 in France, Charles Nodier wrote a play featuring Lord Ruthven entitled *Le Vampire*, which was adapted back into English for the London stage by James Robinson Planché and called *The Vampire, or The Bride of the Isles.*[2] This version follows Polidori's tale more closely, but includes a happy ending with the female victims being saved from the vampire.[3] Several years later, in 1828, two German operas were written and produced based on Polidori's tale, both titled *Der Vampyr*, although to distinguish one from the other, one version named the vampire Aubri, rather than Ruthven, a nod to the name of Ruthven's companion and protagonist of the story in Polidori's tale, Aubrey.

Even into the mid-century, Ruthven's popularity endured. Elsewhere in Europe, the Swedish author Viktor Rydberg wrote a novel called *Vampyren* in 1848 featuring a character called Lord Ruthven, not a vampire but rather a lunatic who believes himself to be a vampire, a theme which will be revisited later by Bram Stoker in *Dracula*. In France, the effect of Polidori's story on Alexandre Dumas was obviously profound – his novel *The Count of Monte Cristo* features a countess who refers to Edmond Dantès as Lord Ruthven, and attributes the creation of that character to Lord Byron, indicating how persistent that misattribution turned out to be.[4]

It can be argued that a reason for *The Vampyre*'s immediate and enduring popularity is primarily due to its association with Byron and his

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[2] Francesco Manzini, "Frenetic Romanticisim," in *The Oxford Handbook of European Romanticism,* ed. Paul Hamilton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 148.
[3] Frederick Burwick, *Romantic Drama: Acting and Reacting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 234.
[4] Richard Switzer, "Lord Ruthwen and the Vampires," *The French Review* 29.2 (1955): 107.

celebrity, rather than any innate appeal of the text itself. Its connection with

Byron also manages to convey a legitimacy to a work that perhaps otherwise

would never have amounted to much more than the status of popular

melodrama. The perception of Byron by his reading public was an

amalgamation of actual fact and exaggerated fiction. According to Soderholm:

"Glamour [is] partly the result of public investment and invention. As much

phenomenon as artifact, 'Byron' was half-perceived and half-created."[5] The

icon of "Byron" attracted a massive following, and the vampire's association

with a celebrity idol and cultural phenomenon aided it in transcending its place

as a footnote in poetry to the central subjects of the works themselves. The

vampire's emergence into the literary sphere is achieved both by its

association with a member of elite society, and melodramas designed to

appeal to the masses. The motif is a product of both high and low culture

simultaneously, as discussed in the introduction.

      Peter Burke references 1930s social anthropologist Robert Redfield to

support Burke's theories of high and low culture. Redfield uses the terms

"great tradition" and "little tradition":

> The great tradition is cultivated in schools or temples; the little tradition works itself out and keeps itself going in the lives of the unlettered in their village communities…The two traditions are interdependent. Great tradition and little tradition have long affected each other and continue to do so…Great epics have arisen out of elements of traditional tale-telling by many people, and epics have returned again to the peasantry for modification and incorporation in local cultures.[6]

As both Redfield and Burke are keen to emphasize, these distinctions

between cultures and traditions are by no means binary. Burke highlights the

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[5] James Soderholm, *Fantasy, Forgery, and the Byron Legend* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 5.

[6] Robert Redfield, *Peasant Society and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 41-2.

importance of what he terms the "two-way traffic" between the great and little traditions, both informing and shaping the other.[7] This kind of traffic continues into the middle half of the nineteenth century and beyond, particularly in the case of penny fiction. As will be demonstrated later on in the chapter, members of the learned tradition, including periodical publishers, demonstrated a concern over what types of subject matter were suitable for an increasingly literate public. This concern frequently involved supernatural stories commonly found in penny fiction, and the potential harm they could conceivably inflict on young and vulnerable minds. Later on in the mid-century, authors such as George Eliot and Henry James cast aspersions upon "sensation" fiction. The early beginnings of this type of antagonistic literary classification can be seen in the reaction to supernatural stories of penny fiction and the unprecedented rise of the periodical culture.

In 1819, the same year John Polidori's *The Vampyre* was published in Henry Colburn's *New Monthly Magazine*, the poet and essayist Leigh Hunt wrote in his essay "A Tale for a Chimney Corner": "A man who does not contribute his quota of grim stories now-a-days seems hardly to be free of the republic of letters. He is bound to wear a death's head, as part of his insignia. If he does not frighten every body, he is nobody."[8] Hunt gives his critical opinion of these "grim stories" as something he thinks "very cheaply of," perhaps a jest indicating the price of these kinds of stories, along with his sentiment toward them. Although Hunt never refers to which "grim stories"

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[7] Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London: Maurice Temple Smith Ltd., 1978), 24.

[8] Leigh Hunt, "A Tale for a Chimney Corner," *The Indicator: A Miscellany for the Fields and the Fire Side* (December 15, 1819): 26.

specifically he thinks very cheaply of, the slight can certainly be read against

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, a periodical established two years

previously in 1817, which published, among other things, supernatural tales,

and which had attacked Hunt in a series of reviews as being one of the

"Cockney School of Poetry."[9] This attack on Hunt's class background, as well

as the establishment of *Blackwood's*, will be discussed in further detail later in

this chapter. Hunt's comments in his essay about contemporary authors

needing to contribute a quota of grim stories reveals how pervasive

supernatural material was at the start of the 1820s.

Hunt was a friend of both Percy Shelley and Lord Byron, and the essay

might have been written in response to Byron's mistakenly attributed vampire

story. Hunt's essay also addresses the subject he finds most horrific in "grim

stories":

> Re-animation is perhaps the most ghastly of all ghastly things,
> uniting as it does an appearance of natural interdiction from the
> next world, with a supernatural experience of it…When the account
> appeared the other day in the newspapers of the galvanized dead
> body, whose features as well as limbs underwent such contortions,
> that it seemed as if it were about to rise up, one almost expected to
> hear, for the first time, news of the other world.[10]

While I was unable to find the specific instance of galvanism Hunt was

referring to, during the previous year, on the 4th of November 1818, a highly

publicized experiment involving galvanism occurred at the University of

Glasgow, where Dr. Andrew Ure performed galvanic tests on the freshly

hanged murderer Matthew Clydesdale, and published an account of the

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[9] John Gibson Lockhart, "Of the Cockney School of Poetry, Vol. 1," in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 2.7 (October 1817): 38.
[10] Hunt, "A Tale for a Chimney Corner," 29.

events in 1819.[11] This could be the incident Hunt was referring to, confusing a newspaper with a journal. 1818 was also the year Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* was first published. The novel included its own fictional portrayal of galvanism returning the dead to life, an event which undoubtedly seemed plausible to any reader or viewer of Ure's experiment.

Ure recounts his experiment in great detail, noting his intention to restore life and commenting: "This event, however little desirable with a murderer, and perhaps contrary to the law, would yet have been pardonable in one instance, as it would have been highly honourable and useful to science."[12] Ure notes a questionable morality in the act of restoring the dead to life, especially the dead who have lived a less than exemplary life. These sinners, from a Christian perspective, are also the types of people chosen to be restored to life through vampirism in the oral tradition – suicides, or people buried in unconsecrated ground, as shown in the tale of "The Shoemaker of Silesia." This story, from Grässe's collection of Prussian folklore, describes a figure who supposedly became a vampire after slitting his own throat.[13] Dagmar Burkhart supports this belief by listing people understood as being predisposed to vampirism including: "the godless, evildoers, suicides, in addition [to] sorcerers, witches, and werewolves; among the Bulgarians the group is expanded by robbers, highwaymen, arsonists, prostitutes, deceitful and treacherous barmaids and other dishonorable people."[14] Although the

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[11] Andrew Ure, "An Account of Some Experiments Made on the Body of a Criminal Immediately After Execution, With Physiological and Practical Observations," *The Journal of Science and the Arts* 6 (London: John Murray, 1819), 283-294.

[12] Ure, "An Account…", 288.

[13] Grässe, Johann Georg Theodor. *Sagenbuch des preussischen Staats* (Glogau: Berlag von Carl Flemming, 1868), 176-9.

[14] Dagmar Burkhart, "Vampirglaube und Vampirsage auf dem Balkan," in *Beiträge zur Südosteuropa-Forschung* (Munich: Rudolf Trofenik, 1966), 216.

resurrection of the body in those cases was supposedly the work of the devil, the work of the doctor follows a similar pattern in Ure's case by choosing a murderer for his subject. Thus in the public's mind, the scientific process becomes associated with a kind of demonic process in usurping God's work. Stories such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, as well as public performances of science such as Ure's experiment, furthered the association between science and religious heresy in the contemporary mind, and this association sometimes aroused suspicion and mistrust of science in the public consciousness. According to David Knight: "By 1815, laboratory science was becoming ever more recondite…Scientists duly achieved honor and respect; though some could still be viewed as absent-minded and dotty professors, and others as threatening."[15] This view of the threatening doctor was reignited in the public consciousness after the highly publicized Burke and Hare murders of 1828, where Dr. Robert Knox purchased freshly murdered corpses for his anatomy experiments. In that case, the progress of science in the dissection of corpses was dependent upon an act of religious heresy, murder, as well as the public violation and display of the corpse, similar to Ure's experiment.

Ure's account of electricity applied to the corpse is very colorful: "The success of it was truly wonderful. Full, nay, laborious breathing instantly commenced. The chest heaved and fell; the belly was protruded and again collapsed, with the retiring and collapsing diaphragm."[16] By varying the voltage, "most horrible grimaces were exhibited .... Rage, horror, despair, anguish and ghastly smiles united their hideous expression in the murderer's

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[15] David Knight, *Public Understanding of Science: A History of Communicating Scientific Ideas* (London: Routledge, 2006), 5.
[16] Ure, "An Account…", 290.

face, surpassing far the wildest representations of a Fuseli or a Kean. -- At this period several spectators were forced to leave the apartment from terror or sickness, and one gentleman fainted."[17] The physical effect on the spectators appears to be as powerful as on the corpse itself, if it can provoke such extreme reactions. Ure assigns emotions to the expressions the corpse makes, imbuing it with an emotional life as well as a physical one. To him, the process appears not just to be a mechanical one, but one that can restore actual feeling into something that was previously dead. The attribution of emotion to a corpse implies a belief that there is a soul still inside the body – indeed, Ure refers to the corpse as a "murderer," implying that the deeds of the person in life stay with them in death, and hypothetically in rebirth. The vital spark, Ure implies, cannot be restored without the accompanying emotions and actions that characterize a human being.

The reference to Edmund Kean, an actor known for his tragic and emotionally-charged Shakespearean roles, reinforces the highly dramatic and performative nature of the experiment. Samuel Taylor Coleridge later commented on Kean's performances that "to see him act, is like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning" in his *Table Talk* memoir of 1823.[18] This may be Coleridge suggesting that Kean only had flashes of genius, as Coleridge's other criticism seems less than positive: "His rapid descents from the hyper-tragic to the infra-colloquial, though sometimes productive of great effect, are often unreasonable."[19] Kean was a popular figure in his day, and Coleridge, who at this point in his life was trying to establish himself more as a

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[17] Ure, "An Account…", 290.
[18] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "27 April 1823," *Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, Christabel, &c.* (London: Routledge, 1884) 38.
[19] Coleridge, *Table Talk*, 38.

lecturer and literary thinker than a poet, might be using this criticism of Kean to try and set himself apart from popular tastes in drama. His parting shot of "I do not think him thorough-bred gentleman enough to play Othello" certainly indicates a certain snobbery on his part.[20] Coleridge's critical review of Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), makes his opinion of the Gothic genre very clear, and it is by no means an unpopular one:

> The horrible and the preternatural have usually seized on the popular taste, at the rise and decline of literature. Most powerful stimulants, they can never be required except by the torpor of an unawakened, or the languor of an exhausted, appetite…We trust, however, that satiety will banish what good sense should have prevented; and that, wearied with fiends, incomprehensible characters, with shrieks, murders, and subterraneous dungeons, the public will learn, by the multitude of the manufacturers, with how little expense of thought or imagination this species of composition is manufactured.[21]

Coleridge's words seem strangely prophetic – in the next fifty years, the public will demand an almost inexhaustible supply of "horrible and preternatural" stories, and the overwhelming number of them merely encouraged, rather than sated, the market. The idea of public "appetite" in Coleridge's example, is associated with two different states – it is either "unawakened" or "exhausted." The implication is that there is no possibility of moderation of such an appetite – it must be either suppressed or sated by overconsumption. This associates the reading public with an insatiable greed for such stories that can never be satisfied except in total repression, or excess, similar to contemporary fears of sexual appetite, the specifics of which will be discussed later in this chapter.

As for Ure's comparisons to Henry Fuseli, his paintings depict nightmarish scenes of supernatural entities. According to Janet Todd,

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[20] Coleridge, *Table Talk*, 38.
[21] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Review of Matthew G. Lewis 'The Monk'," *The Critical Review* 2.19 (February, 1797): 194.

although Fuseli was already married, he had been pursued romantically by Mary Shelley's mother, Mary Wollstonecraft.[22] Fuseli was also a friend of Wollstonecraft's future husband and Mary Shelley's father, William Godwin, who published his *Memoirs of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Women* shortly after his wife's death in 1798. The candid book detailed, among other things, Wollstonecraft's love affairs and suicide attempts, and led to Robert Southey accusing Godwin of "the want of all feeling in stripping his dead wife naked."[23] The book also inspired a later poem by Robert Browning called "Wollstonecraft and Fuseli," (1883) indicating that their courtship was public knowledge and ripe for reference even in the later decades of the nineteenth century. In the minds of the readers of Ure's account, therefore, Fuseli might well connect with the mother of the author of *Frankenstein*. The subject matter of Fuseli's work might also connect, in the mind of Ure's readers, the supernatural with the scientific experiment Ure is attempting. The mention of Fuseli reinforces the nightmarish nature of the act of resurrection, and also implies a form of exhibited performance, rather than a purely scientific study.

Ure noted in his account that he successfully restored the process of breathing to the corpse as long as he continued his galvanic shocks. He also notes "that for a full half an hour before this period, the body had been well nigh drained of its blood…No pulsation could be perceived meanwhile at the heart or wrist; but it may be supposed that, but for the evacuation of the blood – the essential stimulus of that organ – this phenomenon might also have

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[22] Janet Todd, *Mary Wollstonecraft: A Revolutionary Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 153.

[23] Robert Southey "Letter to William Taylor, 1 July 1804" in *A Memoir of the Life and Writings of William Taylor of Norwich*, ed. J. W. Robberds. (London: John Murray 1824), 504.

occurred."[24] In relation to the vampire, the discovery that life can still manifest itself in a body without blood provides an almost scientific basis for such a creature to exist, and lends credence to the myth. The writers of the vampire figure in these decades draw from both folklore and experimental science in modifying their creature. The scientific aspect of the vampire motif is an approach that varied widely from its previous incarnations, and has its roots in the mid-nineteenth century.

Christopher Frayling attests that *The Vampyre* was "the first story successfully to fuse the disparate elements of vampirism into a coherent literary genre."[25] While it is true that there was no vampire genre previous to the story's publication, there was no shortage of demand for tales of terror and supernatural creatures at the time of its publication, and after. While the label of "vampire" was relatively uncommon in such stories, the creature had a fertile groundwork from which to emerge from the 1820s onward. Stories about murderers, ghosts, and supernatural entities populated the pages of popular fiction. Some of these stories include such ominous titles as "The Buried Alive" (1821), "Le Revenant" (1827), "The Spectre-Smitten" (1831) and a tale that took full advantage of the new, potential horrors of the operating room, "Post-Mortem Recollections of a Medical Lecturer" (1836). The authors of these stories utilized both superstition and modern scientific progress in order to shock their readers – "The Buried Alive" features a conscious protagonist believed to be dead, whose body is in danger of being dissected

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[24] Ure, "An Account…", 290.
[25] Christopher Frayling, ed., *Vampyres: Lord Byron to Count Dracula* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), 108.

by anatomy students after "some galvanic experiment"[26] is attempted. The shock of the galvanic experiment is not what restores the protagonist to full consciousness, however, but rather the blade of the dissecting knife cutting into his flesh. This could be read as a commentary by Galt on his personal belief in the effectiveness of galvanism – it has the ability to restore mechanical processes, but not full life to the subject. The story of "Le Revenant" focuses entirely on the physical and mental sensations of its protagonist, who is sentenced to be hanged for forgery, but is saved through undisclosed means. These plot details appear less important than the details of the sensation experienced – indeed, the story was conceived, according to Heather Worthington, "as a direct attack on the death penalty for non-violent, civil crimes such as forgery. It was considered by Charles Lamb to have had more influence on the eventual abolition of capital punishment than all the works of Samuel Romilly, a well-known campaigner for the reform of criminal law and the death sentence."[27] "The Spectre-Smitten" details a doctor's attempt at trying to cure a supposedly insane patient who claims to see ghosts, and ends with the patient destroying himself despite the doctor's best efforts. "Post-Mortem Recollections of a Medical Lecturer" displays a similar narrative to "The Buried Alive" in its focus on the dissection room and being mentally trapped in a body with no physical agency. These literary explorations of the limits and possibilities of science had a profound effect on the real world, as demonstrated by Thomson's "Le Revenant" and its effect on capital punishment reform. In *Varney the Vampire* (1845-7), the vampire protagonist will be the subject of galvanic experiments and capital

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[26] John Galt, "The Buried Alive." *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 10.56 (October 1821): 264.

[27] Heather Worthington, *Key Concepts in Crime Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 57

punishment, and he will also commit suicide. The roots of his narrative can be found in the stories of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine.*

Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick assert in their introduction to *The Vampyre* that the novel "heralded a new phase of modern British fiction in which the opportunist sensationalism of the monthly magazines assumed an unprecedented importance."[28] According to Morrison and Baldick, there were three categories of periodicals in 1819: daily newspapers devoted to politics; monthly magazines devoted to variety, amusement, and fiction; and reviews, published every three months, which were "sombre, substantial, and highly respectable."[29] In 1818, William Hazlitt wrote that "to be an Edinburgh Reviewer is, I suspect, the highest rank in modern literary society,"[30] while Thomas De Quincey claimed that magazines were more intimately connected with "the shifting passions of the day."[31] Whereas Hazlitt's reference to "the highest rank in modern literary society" suggests that the Edinburgh Reviewer appealed to members of a learned cultural elite, De Quincey's reference to "shifting passions" aligns popular magazines with a very different clientele. In the later decades of the nineteenth century, the number of magazines increased rapidly, with the likes of *Fraser's*, the *Metropolitan*, and the *Dublin University* springing up to challenge the established success of the *New Monthly* and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine.*[32] According to Samuel Taylor

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[28] Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick, ed., *The Vampyre and Other Tales of the Macabre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), xiii.

[29] Morrison and Baldick, "Introduction," xiii.

[30] William Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt,* ed. P. P. Howe (J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1930-4), 365.

[31] Thomas De Quincey, *New Essays by De Quincey: His Contributions to the Edinburgh Saturday Post and the Edinburgh Evening Post (1827-28),* ed. Stuart M. Tave (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 213.

[32] Morrison and Baldick, "Introduction," xiv.

Coleridge, *Blackwood's* was "an unprecedented Phenomenon in the world of letters,"[33] and indeed, there was no arguing against its popularity, whatever its merits – it seemed to strike a chord with the reading public of the early nineteenth century. It began running serials in 1820, specializing in what would popularly be known as "sensation fiction."[34] This was a problematic label for a complex genre which reached peak popularity in the 1860s, but had its roots much earlier than that.

Leigh Hunt, as stated at the beginning of the chapter, was one of the writers attacked by *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in the 1817 debut of the publication, which was then called the *Edinburgh Monthly Magazine*. J. G. Lockhart derided Hunt as being part of the "Cockney School of Poetry," essentially an attack on the class and background of Hunt. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* was a Tory publication, and Lockhart attests that: "All the great poets of our country have been men of some rank in society, and there is no vulgarity in any of their writings; but Mr. Hunt cannot utter a dedication, or even a note, without betraying the *Shibboleth* of low birth and low habits."[35] Lockhart's and *Blackwood's* focus on Hunt's background indicates an attempt to designate literature as the exclusive province of the highly born and highly educated, an attempt to confine literature to members of high culture. The "vulgarity" of which Lockhart writes includes not only tone, but subject matter as well. *Blackwood's* attempted to establish itself as a respectable magazine by setting itself firmly apart from "low habits." *Blackwood's* secured its reputation from its first issue as being controversial and polarizing, whatever

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[33] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Collected Letter of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Volume VI*, ed. E. L. Griggs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 912.
[34] Graham Law, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), 16.
[35] Lockhart, "Of the Cockney School of Poetry," 39.

else could be ascribed to it. It proudly described itself in 1822 as "a real Magazine of mirth, misanthropy, wit, wisdom, folly, fiction, fun, festivity, theology, bruising and thingumbob," highlighting its extensive range and variety of material.[36] While *Blackwood's* may have had an ambivalent relationship to popular culture materials, as evidenced by attacking Hunt as a class interloper writing beyond his knowledge, it also drew on popular and varied subject matter in order to sell copies. This is an example of Burke's "two-way traffic" between high and low culture, despite *Blackwood's* deliberate attempts to set itself apart from low culture by disparaging authors of a lower class. According to Morrison and Baldick: "The magazines offered a broader and more sophisticated consideration of political events than the newspapers, and they possessed an immediacy and variety that the reviews could not match. They were the most exuberant and original of the periodicals, while their preoccupation with violence, scandal, and hysteria made them a natural outlet for terror fiction."[37]

Morrison and Baldick also assert a notable difference between the stories of *Blackwood's* and previous works of suspense such as William Godwin's *The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794) or the works of Ann Radcliffe. The shortened format of the tales in *Blackwood's*, with a maximum length of about 10,000 words, rather than the longer volume novels of the above authors, required a more condensed account of terror and quicker pace of suspense.[38] It is a case of the magazine influencing style and output by the very nature of its format. H. P. Sucksmith declares that the vague, shadowy

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[36] William Maginn, "Noctes Ambrosianae. No. IV" in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 12 (1822): 105-6.

[37] Morrison and Baldick, "Introduction," xiv.

[38] Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick, ed., *Tales of Terror from* Blackwood's Magazine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), xv.

threats of Radcliffe Gothic are replaced by *Blackwood's* "greater precision of description in scenes of terror and horror, reaching an almost scientific degree of accuracy."[39] It is this attention to detail that will carry on in later vampire works – even longer stories such as *Varney the Vampire* are divided into smaller, self-contained plots that build and conclude within a single issue or two. Although *Dracula* is a longer novel, the scientific attention to detail and accuracy of feeling remains. It is the thorough description of feeling and sensation that sets *Blackwood's* tales apart from others. John Wilson's "Extracts from Gosschen's Diary" (1818) describes the pleasure of the narrator as he brutally murders the woman he loves, while Samuel Warren's "The Spectre-Smitten" (1831) details, among other things, a character's epileptic fit:

> He was seized with a dreadful fit soon after I had entered the room. Oh, it is a piteous and shocking spectacle to see the human frame subject to such demoniacal twitchings, and contortions, which are so sudden – so irresistible, as to give the idea of some vague, terrible exciting cause, which cannot be discovered: as though the sufferer lay passive in the grasp of some messenger of darkness '*sent to buffet him.*' [40]

Warren's narrator, although a physician himself, compares his patient's affliction to the torment of a supernatural entity with his description of "demonical twitchings" as though possessed by "some messenger of darkness." In this extract, descriptions of medical conditions are embellished with supernatural impressions. The descriptions of scientific phenomena, at least in literary contexts, are portrayed through the lens of supernatural affliction. Even Ure's genuine scientific account of galvanism is dramatized

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[39] H. P. Sucksmith, "The Secret of Immediacy: Dickens' Debt to the Tale of Terror in *Blackwood's*," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 26 (Sept. 1971): 146-7.

[40] Samuel Warren, "The Spectre-Smitten," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 29.177 (February 1831): 363.

with references to works of art and dramatic fiction. The subjective sensations or emotions of the subject, rather than objective fact, appear to be the focus of both fiction and non-fictional scientific accounts of the period.

Edgar Allan Poe wrote a satirical parody called "How to Write a Blackwood Article," shortly after a story of his was rejected from *Blackwood's* in 1838. The account details a visit from an aspiring writer called Miss Zenobia to the Blackwood offices, where the editor informs her: "Sensations are the great things after all. Should you ever be drowned or hung, be sure and make a note of your sensations--they will be worth to you ten guineas a sheet. If you wish to write forcibly, Miss Zenobia, pay minute attention to the sensations."[41] The story ends with Miss Zenobia successfully acquiring the sensations she craves – she is decapitated by the minute-hand of an Edinburgh church clock (a reference to the city in which *Blackwood's* is based) and her eyes pop out. Maria Filipa Palmo dos Res argues that this over-the-top demise is an indication that Poe is not only mocking the style of *Blackwood's* stories, but also his own output, and that many of his stories, in light of this satire, can be read as satires themselves.[42] "The Pit and the Pendulum," published in 1842, focuses less on plot and almost exclusively on the sensations of the narrator when he finds himself in horrific circumstances for an unknown offense at the hands of the Spanish Inquisition. The story was clearly inspired by the *Blackwood's* style, whether in earnest or as a parody.

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[41] Edgar Allan Poe, *The Short Fiction of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. Stuart and Susan Levine (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1976), 357.

42 Maria Filipa Palma dos Reis, "A Reading of 'How to Write a Blackwood Article' as an Exercise in Irony, Authorial Self-Consciousness and Tuition for Creative Writers, *"The Edgar Allan Poe Review,* 11.1 (Spring 2010), 142-151. Reis argues that Poe is being self-deprecating about his own genre throughout the article. The alternative reading, of course, is that Poe was perfectly serious about his own genre, but resented *Blackwood's* handling of it, sacrificing what he perceived to be intellectual content for popularity.

Poe, like Byron with his Turkish tales, may have been critically self-conscious about his own literary success. His 1846 essay "The Philosophy of Composition" describes his process in writing "The Raven" which, according to him, was a calculated exercise in purely logical poetical form and method, rather than any creative spontaneity.[43] Whether this claim is entirely true or not is a subject for debate, but it lends credence to the idea that Poe largely crafted stories as an exercise in method, and that he could be satirizing the sensation mode in many of his own works.

Poe's choice of author as Miss Zenobia is noteworthy – stories which produced sensations were believed to be particularly effective on, and therefore dangerous to, women. Hunt's essay asserts that: "A story, merely horrible or even awful, which contains no sentiment elevating to the human heart and its hopes, is a mere appeal to the least judicious, least healthy, and least masculine of our passions—fear."[44] By stating that the appeal of such stories arouses the "least masculine" passion, Hunt implies that those who enjoy those stories are women and children, or men who share the feelings of women and children. Cynthia Eagle Russett's research in *Sexual Science: The Victorian Construction of Womanhood* (1989) details theories espoused by Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thomson in the mid-nineteenth century. These theories conclude that women were generally thought of as:

> inherently different from men in their anatomy, physiology, temperament, and intellect. In the evolutionary development of the race women had lagged behind men, much as "primitive people" lagged behind Europeans. Even as adults, they remained childlike in body and mind, never developing traits, such as beards, that distinguished the men from the boys. The reason for women's

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[43] Edgar Allan Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition," *Graham's American Monthly Magazine of Literature and Art* 28.4 (April 1846): 163-7.
[44] Hunt, "A Tale for a Chimney Corner," 76.

arrested development was the need to preserve their energies for reproduction.[45]

This rationale was the basis of a pervasive anxiety throughout the nineteenth, and indeed, eighteenth century, which involved women readers succumbing to absorptive pleasure and becoming unfit for their social function of child-bearing. This belief was illustrated in the 1797 article in *The Monthly Mirror* entitled "Novel Reading a Cause of Female Depravity." The anonymous author praises the publication for "pleasantly combining MORAL EXCELLENCE with ELEGANT LITERATURE" in contrast to novel reading, which the author calls "poison instilled…into the blood."[46] The effect of reading on the mind is as dangerous as the physical effect of poison in the blood, according to the author. According to Catherine Golden, this anxiety manifested itself throughout the nineteenth century:

> Reading was damned because it was thought to damage a women's nervous system and reproductive health. Medical authorities linked excessive, unsupervised reading to a host of female reproductive ailments (for example, early menstruation, painful menses, infertility, etc.), insanity, and premature death. A woman's biological differences—her greater sensitivity and sensibility—made her more susceptible to effects of a novel. Countless experts pronounced sensation novels, mysteries, and horror tales stimuli to avoid strenuously for physical well-being.[47]

The physical and mental corruption of the ostensibly less developed, such as women and children, will be examined in more detail later on in this chapter, when penny fiction was at the height of its popularity in the 1830s and 40s.

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[45] Cynthia Eagle Russett, *Sexual Science: The Victorian Construction of Womanhood* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 11.

[46] Anonymous, "Novel Reading a Cause of Female Depravity," *The Monthly Mirror: Reflecting Men and Manners, Vol. IV.* (London: J. Wright, 1797), 278.

[47] Catherine Golden, *Images of the Woman Reader in Victorian British and American Fiction* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 31-2.

The mid-nineteenth century was also a time of rapidly increasing urbanization. According to Roy Porter, "between 1841 and 1851 alone, some 330,000 migrants flooded to the capital, representing a staggering 17 per cent of London's total population…In the 1850s, a further 286,000 migrants arrived; in the 1860s 331,000."[48] With increased population came overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, and disease epidemics. According to Lee Jackson, "by the 1840s London's overcrowded churchyards…were not only seen as posing a logistical challenge, but damned as a source of 'miasma.' Sanitarians, quite mistakenly, believed that the stench from poorly interred decaying bodies was poisoning the metropolis."[49] This miasma was interpreted as a poison floating around the city, infecting its residents. Punch personified the miasma in a poem entitled "The Vampyre (NO SUPERSTITION)":

A glimmering vapour creeps over the ground,

You may see whence it issues-yon newly-raised mound;

Mark what spectre ascends in that horrible light-

Lo, the Vampyre Infection is rising to-night! …

The Vampyre! The Vampyre! Beneath a stern doom,

On his terrible errand he breaks from the tomb;

To work vengeance and woe is his mission of dread,

Upon those mid the living who bury their dead. (5-8, 13-16) [50]

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[48] Roy Porter, *London: A Social History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 205.

[49] Lee Jackson, *Dirty Old London: The Victorian Fight Against Filth* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 106.

[50] Anonymous, "The Vampyre (NO SUPERSTITION)," *Punch* (July-December 1847): 134.

This poem illustrates a contemporary association in popular culture between a scientific belief in infection and the figure of the vampire. The motif becomes an omnipresent personification of anxieties of the mid-nineteenth century.

The 1848 edition of Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* postulates the causes of various illnesses. Fever and cholera are the result of "diseased parents," night and "bad" air, sedentary habits, abrupt changes of temperature, changes in diet, and passionate fear or rage.[51] By the mid-century, the belief in "bad" air and strong emotions as causes of disease still prevailed. It was not until 1854 that John Snow demonstrated that cholera was spread through water, and his theory was not formally recognized as fact until 1866. With the mid-century rise of urbanization and disease, fears and false scientific theories were prevalent.

In a city of industry and overpopulation, the disposal of the human body proved extremely challenging. According to Lee Jackson:

> Coffins were stacked one atop the other in 20-foot-deep shafts, the topmost mere inches from the surface. Putrefying bodies were frequently disturbed, dismembered or destroyed to make room for newcomers. Disinterred bones, dropped by neglectful gravediggers, lay scattered amidst the tombstones; smashed coffins were sold to the poor for firewood. Clergymen and sextons turned a blind eye to the worst practices because burial fees formed a large proportion of their income.[52]

The attitude of the clergymen and sextons demonstrates a belief that the human body is nothing more than a commodity to be used for potential profit.

Nowhere is this belief more obvious than during the Burke and Hare murders of 1828, when William Burke and William Hare committed sixteen

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[51] William Buchan, *Domestic Medicine, or a Treatise on the Prevention and Cure of Diseases* (London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell Publishers, 1848), 80, 115.
[52] Jackson, *Dirty Old London,* 105.

anatomy murders in order to sell the corpses to Dr. Robert Knox to dissect for his lectures. The scandal and its aftermath aroused public suspicion of the medical profession, and caused anxiety about the safety of remains. Graveyards began to employ guards to prevent body snatching until 1832, when the Anatomy Act drove body snatchers out of business.[53] The Act was prompted, according to an editorial in *The Lancet*, by the Burke and Hare murders themselves: "Burke and Hare...it is said, are the real authors of the measure, and that which would never have been sanctioned by the deliberate wisdom of Parliament, is about to be extorted from its fears."[54] From *Sweeney Todd* in 1846 all the way through the fin de siècle in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Body Snatcher*, published in 1884, the buying and selling of body parts would remain a theme throughout nineteenth century literature.

In fact, the link between the corporeal and the consumable is frequently a subject in the so-called "penny blood" stories. The terms "penny dreadful" and "penny blood" bear investigation. According to John Camden Hotten's *Slang Dictionary* of 1874, "penny dreadful" rose to dominance during the latter half of the century. Hotten defines the penny dreadful as: "an expressive term for those penny publications which depend more upon sensationalism than upon merit, artistic or literary, for success."[55] According to the definition of the penny dreadful, there is an implicit judgment value in such works as lacking either artistic or literary merit. The term itself has a negative connotation. Previously, according to Hotten, such stories were referred to by their sellers as "penny bloods." This title was obviously a marketing ploy by the publishers

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[53] David McNally, *Monsters of the Market: Zombies, Vampires, and Global Capitalism* (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2011), 57.
[54] Anonymous, "Editorial," *The Lancet* (28 March 1829): 821.
[55] John Camden Hotten, *The Slang Dictionary, or the Vulgar Words, Street Phrases, and "Fast" Expressions of High and Low Society* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1874), 281.

of the stories to advertise the thrilling nature of their narratives. All the

contemporary terms for such stories – "penny dreadfuls," "penny horribles,"

and "penny awfuls," - share the same melodramatic implications. Sally Powell

attempts to differentiate them by claiming that "penny bloods" were aimed at

working-class adults, while the later "penny dreadfuls" were aimed at children,

and that the former focused more on crime and gore while the latter focused

on adventure stories.[56] Rosalind Crone contests that the difference is in

intention, claiming the penny blood "was intended to be a sentimental and

fictional story dealing with adventure rather than a criminal biography."[57]

According to Crone, penny bloods did not intend to glamorize violence, which

is what penny dreadfuls would be accused of doing throughout the later half of

the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. As such, the distinction is an

important one. She also specifies penny bloods as possessing Gothic

elements: "Lloyd's gothic stories were always exceptionally bloody and must

bear at least part of the responsibility for the imposition of the label 'penny

blood' to his fictional publications of the period."[58] According to Crone, the

"penny blood" label is given, rather than chosen, much like the later

"sensation" label. These elements distinguish "penny bloods" from "penny

dreadfuls," although no such careful distinction was often made by their

critics.

Toward the fin de siècle, "penny dreadfuls" were still being blamed for

a rise of crime and violence among young people. Alfred Harmsworth founded

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[56] Sally Powell, "Black Markets and Cadaverous Pies: The Corpse, Urban Trade and Industrial Consumption in the Penny Blood," in *Victorian Crime, Madness, and Sensation,* ed. Andrew Maunder and Grace Moore (Burlington, VT: Ashgate 2004), 41.
[57] Rosalind Crone, *Violent Victorians:Popular Entertainment in Nineteenth-Century London* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 241.
[58] Crone, *Violent Victorians*, 243.

his magazine of adventure stories called *The Halfpenny Marvel* in 1893.

Harmsworth took care to dissociate his magazine from the "dreadful" label

which he blames for the moral corruption of the youth:

> The police court reports in the newspapers are alone sufficient
> proof of the harm done by 'penny dreadfuls'. It is an almost daily
> occurrence with magistrates to have before them boys who, having
> read a number of 'dreadfuls', followed the examples set forth in
> such publications, robbed their employers, bought revolvers with
> the proceeds and finished by running away from home and
> installing themselves in the back streets as 'highwaymen'. This and
> many other evils the 'penny dreadful' is responsible for. It makes
> thieves of the coming generation, and so helps fill our gaols.[59]

In this instance, the term "penny dreadful" is used by contemporaries

as a catch-all for any cheap work of fiction believed to produce a harmful

effect upon the young. In this way, the "penny dreadful" label is similar to the

"sensation" label of later decades – a pejorative, non-specific term for any

cheap story involving graphic descriptions of crime and violence.

Powell attests that these types of stories are "suggestive of an

expression of profound social anxiety, most simply to do with the sanctity of

the corpse in the face of the demand created by the anatomist, but also

related to the growing perception that the sanctity of selfhood is threatened by

the aggressive commercial forces generated by the industrial city."[60] The

stories are not only an expression of contemporary social anxiety, but also an

exploitation of that anxiety by scrupulous publishers hoping to make a profit.

Many of the stories involved "narratives in which bodies are 'burked',

scavenged, disinterred, traded and dissected,"[61] including *Varney the Vampire*

(1845)*, The String of Pearls, or the Sailor's Gift* (1846), *The Work Girls of*

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[59] Alfred Harmsworth, *The Halfpenny Marvel* 1 (1893), quoted in John Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 75 .
[60] Powell, "Black Markets and Cadaverous Pies," 46.
[61] Powell, "Black Markets and Cadaverous Pies," 46.

London (1865)*,* and *The Wild Boys of London* (1866)*,* which also includes a flagellation and torture scene. The writers of these stories, by the nature of their subject matter, utilize horror by dissociating the human frame from the human soul – human beings are reduced to the sum of their parts, and only worth what people will pay for them.

One of the most well-known penny bloods (although its subtitle in its original publication is "A Romance of Peculiar Interest") is *The String of Pearls, or A Sailor's Gift*, published by Edward Lloyd in his magazine *The People's Periodical and Family Library* in 1846. According to Robert L. Mack, Lloyd "had been alive to the potential market available to any publisher willing to provide the rapidly expanding audience of working-class readers with even cheaper and more 'sensational' reading material."[62] This "rapidly expanding audience" also included children, judging by Lloyd's establishment of a family magazine. *The String of Pearls* is more commonly known today as *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* – the story was plagiarized in America in 1852-3, and the title changed to *Sweeney Todd: or the Ruffian Barber.* American author Harry Hazel, who copied the text, likely intended to capitalize upon the popularity of the name of the notorious barber – according to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, as early as 1878 "it had become widely accepted that Sweeney Todd was a historical person."[63] It is also worth noting that like Francis Varney in *Varney the Vampire*, Sweeney Todd was not born a villain, but made one by growing up in industrialized London. According to Mack: "[Sweeney Todd] was himself the *victim* of a

[62] Robert L. Mack, ed., *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), ix.

[63] "Todd, Sweeney (*supp. fl.* 1784)," Matthew Kilburn in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee online ed., ed. David Cannadine, Oxford: OUP, 2004, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/53666 (accessed November 27, 2016).

society that was guilty of treating an entire class of people as little more than a disposable source of cheap labour – of treating them as objects rather than individuals."[64] Sweeney, by this implication, had no choice but to treat others as he had been treated – as objects to be used, and, in his particular case, eaten. The murderous barber and his accomplice, Mrs. Lovett, bake their victims into pies to be consumed en masse by the general public. In the story, the taste of the pies proves incredibly popular among the unsuspecting public, who are ignorant of the ingredients:

> Each moment added some new comers to the throng, and at last any strangers who had known nothing of the attractions of Mrs Lovett's pie-shop, and had walked down Bell-yard, would have been astonished at the throng of persons there assembled – a throng, that was each moment increasing in density, and becoming more and more urgent and clamorous.[65]

When the pies are revealed to be made from human corpses, there is an outcry from the waiting public: "How the throng of persons recoiled – what a roar of agony and dismay there was! How frightfully sick about forty lawyers' clerks became all at once, and how they spat out the gelatinous clinging portions of the rich pies they had been devouring."[66] Until the revelation of the pies's ingredients, the same public consumed them with relish, "devouring" the remains of their fellow human beings. The narrative, which can be read as a criticism of an ulta-capitalist, industrial society where man quite literally devours man, also invites us to think about the cultural consumption of its readers. The more an audience hankers for these stories, the more depraved the narratives must grow to meet its need to be shocked.

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[64] Mack, *Sweeney Todd*, xx.

[65] Anonymous, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (1846), ed. Robert L. Mack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 279.

[66] Anonymous, *Sweeney Todd*, 280.

Edward Lloyd's magazine *The People's Periodical and Family Library* in which *Sweeney Todd* appeared, was just one of his many magazines – his business had established itself by the 1840s as "the informal centre of the 'penny blood' publishing industry."[67] Lloyd was also an early plagiarist, publishing pirated and slightly edited versions of Charles Dickens's work starting in 1836.[68] This dubious practice did nothing to promote the "penny blood" stories's reputation, and the writers of such stories were often uncredited, and frequently lost to time. Indeed, the authorship of *Varney the Vampire, or the Feast of Blood*, which first appeared in Lloyd's magazine in 1845, the year before *Sweeney Todd*, remains somewhat controversial. Until fairly recently, it was believed that the probable author of *Sweeney Todd*, Thomas Peckett Prest, was the primary author of *Varney*. But in 1963, a number of James Malcolm Rymer's scrapbooks and letters were unearthed, and this find has established him as the primary author of *Varney the Vampire*. However, it is extremely likely that the story, judging from differences in styles and syntax, had more than one author at any given time.[69] *Sweeney Todd* is also frequently credited as being a collaboration between Prest and Rymer, and it is likely that authorship will never be conclusively proven.[70] In the absence of any biographical knowledge of the authors, the historical analysis of the work can prove more complex. There is no obvious interpretation of the vampire figure as Byron, as there was in Polidori's work, that can suggest itself without any knowledge of the authors. However, there is some biographical information about James Malcolm

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[67] Mack, *Sweeney Todd*, ix.
[68] Curt Herr, "Born from the Stinking Streets: The Rise of Penny Fiction," in *Varney the Vampire; or, the Feast of Blood,* ed. Curt Herr (Crestline: Zittaw Press, 2008), 14.
[69] Herr, "Born from the Stinking Streets," 16.
[70] Mack, *Sweeney Todd*, xvi.

Rymer available in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.* Rymer

himself was among the working classes which Lloyd hoped to appeal to as his

central readership – Rymer and his son Francis Chadwick ran a

lithographer's, and some of his engravings appear as illustrations in his

stories.[71] According to Louis James: "Rymer combined powerful melodrama

with narrative skill learned from mainstream writers," including Charles

Dickens, Ann Radcliffe, and Walter Scott.[72] James cites Rymer's versatility, as

well as his prolific output of over 120 titles. Considering his familiarity with

popular authors, it is inevitable that Rymer was familiar with Polidori's *The*

Vampyre, and this familiarity is evident in the text of *Varney the Vampire.*

The historical context of *Varney the Vampire* is a rich one for the

emergence of a literary vampire. The same year the serial finished its

publication in 1847, a figure identified as a "real" vampire was terrorizing

Paris. Although given the label of "vampire" by the popular press, his activities

have little to do with what a modern reader might identify as the behavior of a

vampire. Sergeant Francois Bertrand did not drink blood – he "entered

graveyards in and around Paris after dark, disinterred corpses and hacked

them to pieces. It also emerged that on some occasions Bertrand's activities

were 'erotically' motivated."[73] The events of this case were published in

English two years later, in the *Journal of Psychological Medicine and Mental*

Pathology in July of 1849. The French papers dubbed Bertrand "Le Vampire,"

a label which was kept during its translation. This is an association which

[71] "Rymer, James Malcolm (1814–1884)," Louis James in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, May 2008, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/53817 (accessed November 27, 2016).
[72] Ibid.
[73] Robert Mighall, *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 213.

follows on from Polidori's association of the vampire motif with overtly transgressive sexuality three decades earlier. It also associates the vampire with a sinister surgeon – digging up the dead and mutilating them as an anatomist would. This echoes the earlier commentary in this chapter about the vampire's association with the fear of the dissection room. The real life vampire becomes synonymous with a grave-robber, someone who consumes human parts rather than blood.

The story of *Varney the Vampire* lacks a linear concept of narrative, but rather contains episodic occurrences which are often inconsistent. This is due to its nature as a serial which was published over the course of two years, with 232 chapters and nearly 667,000 words. Curt Herr divides the serial into ten different sagas, all featuring Varney in different time periods, disguises, and locations. The 1853 edition includes a preface with a statement by the author that the "romance is collected from seemingly the most authentic sources, and the Author must leave the question of credibility entirely to his readers."[74] This is similar to Stoker's preface to *Dracula* nearly fifty years later, and illustrates how influential the text must have been to Stoker. The similarities in plot between the two stories are also noteworthy: Stoker's Dracula begins terrorizing the female protagonists after the purchase of his neighboring estate of Carfax Abbey; Rymer's Varney begins terrorizing Flora Bannerworth after the purchase of his neighboring estate of Ratford Abbey. Flora Bannerworth sleepwalks, as does Lucy Westenra. Varney also, on meeting the protagonist Henry Bannerworth, speaks proudly of his family

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[74] James Malcolm Rymer, *Varney the Vampire; or the Feast of Blood* (1845-7), ed. Curt Herr (Crestline: Zittaw Press, 2008), 34.

name and refuses refreshment, as Dracula does on meeting Jonathan Harker. The story begins with a scene which Stoker will also borrow for *Dracula* – like the storm in Whitby which heralds Dracula's arrival, Varney arrives on a night when "the storm raged! Hail – rain – wind. It was, in very truth, an awful night."[75] Varney appears outside the window of a young woman's room. His face is described as "perfectly white – perfectly bloodless,"[76] similar to Ruthven's "deadly hue of…face."[77] One of Varney's principal features is "the fearful looking teeth – projecting like those of some wild animal, hideously, glaringly white, and fang-like."[78] This is a departure from Polidori, who does not mention Ruthven's teeth at all. Both Polidori and Rymer do, however, focus on the eyes of their vampires, and their powers of fascination: "The glance of a serpent could not have produced a greater effect upon her than did the fixed gaze of those awful, metallic-looking eyes that were bent down on her face."[79] The "metallic" aspect of the gaze is similar to Ruthven's "dead grey eye…[that] fell upon the cheek with a leaden ray."[80] These references imply that there is something non-human, and indeed, almost mechanical in the subject to which they belong. This mechanical aspect of Varney is an interesting one, as he was conceived and written at the height of the Industrial Revolution, when machines largely replaced the need for human labor. It is possible that Rymer, as a laborer himself, is illustrating the dangers in the apparent fascination of humanity with machines, which will drain their lifeblood and eventually replace them, as a consequence of urbanization.

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[75] Rymer, *Varney the Vampire*, 35.
[76] Rymer, *Varney the Vampire*, 37.
[77] John Polidori, *The Vampyre* (1819) in *The Vampyre and Other Tales of the Macabre*, ed. Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 3.
[78] Rymer, *Varney the Vampire*, 37.
[79] Rymer, *Varney the Vampire*, 37.
[80] Polidori, *The Vampyre*, 3.

Varney the Vampire adds another new dimension to the vampire motif

– self-doubt. Varney is a monster with human feeling, weaknesses, and

regrets, which is seen frequently in modern adaptations of the figure, but was

unprecedented in its time:

> That extremely well known and popular disease called the fidgets,
> now began, indeed, to torment Sir Francis Varney. He could not
> sit—he could not walk…And thus some more time passed away,
> and he strove to cheat it of its weariness by thinking of a variety of
> subjects; but as the fates would have it, there seemed not one
> agreeable reminiscence in the mind of that most inexplicable man,
> and the more he plunged into the recesses of memory the more
> uneasy, not to say almost terrified, he looked and became. A
> shuddering nervousness came across him, and, for a few
> moments, he sat as if he were upon the point of fainting.[81]

Varney, in his own words, "[has] been among the dead…and yet [is]

mortal."[82] The vampire in this instance is a creature who has returned to life

from the dead, but who can still be killed and wounded by mortal means, as

well as feeling mortal feelings. During his second attack on Flora

Bannerworth, he confesses regret and love: "But never yet, in all my long

career—a career extending over centuries of time—never yet have I felt the

soft sensation of human pity till I looked on thee, exquisite piece of

excellence. Even at the moment when the reviving fluid from the gushing

fountain of your veins was warming at my heart, I pitied and I loved you. Oh,

Flora! even I can now feel the pang of being what I am!"[83] Varney expresses

self-loathing of his condition, and the story adds a new layer to the vampire as

a being who can be saved through love: "It is a condition with my hateful race,

that if we can find one human heart to love us, we are free."[84] Vampirism in

Varney the Vampire is similar to a temporary spell that can be broken through

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[81] Rymer, *Varney the Vampire,* 160.
[82] Rymer, *Varney the Vampire*, 164.
[83] Rymer, *Varney the Vampire*, 170.
[84] Rymer, *Varney the Vampire*, 171.

love rather than a permanent affliction. Rymer appears to borrow more from fairy tale tropes than any actual folkloric accounts of vampires. In his preface, he states that the vampire "first took its rise in Norway and Sweden,"[85] when, as stated in my introduction, the superstition was first introduced in English literature through the case studies in the Levant and Eastern Europe. Rymer's interest in vampires was obviously less focused on their cultural history, and more on his own original interpretation of the motif.

Varney has his share of ethical dilemmas. He is forced to drink blood to survive, but does not enjoy it: "Believe me, that if my victims, those whom my insatiable thirst for blood make wretched, suffer much, I, the vampyre, am not without my moments of unutterable agony."[86] He confesses his crimes to a clergyman at the end of the story, before electing to end his own life by throwing himself into Mount Vesuvius: "Before the guide could utter anything but a shriek, Varney took one tremendous leap, and disappeared into the burning mouth of the mountain."[87] The echoes of the confessional narrative in Byron's *The Giaour* are probably intentional, and yet another reference to the misattributed author of *The Vampyre.*

Varney is a perpetually wandering and exiled figure, an outcast in every society. This echoes Charles Maturin's 1820 novel *Melmoth the Wanderer,* whose protagonist is a scholar who sold his soul to the devil in exchange for 150 years of life. Varney claims to have lived for centuries, and although a deal with the devil is never explicitly stated, Flora Bannerworth tells Varney: "Love is either too much of heaven, or too much of earth to find a

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[85] Rymer, *Varney the Vampire*, 34.
[86] Rymer, *Varney the Vampire*, 171.
[87] Rymer, *Varney the Vampire*, 759.

home with thee,"[88] implying that Varney is a creature of hell. When he elects

to commit suicide, he is further exiling himself from Christian society by

damning himself. The narrative associates the vampire figure with the

Christian idea of the Wandering Jew, forever cursed to wander alone until

Judgment Day. This is also similar to the fate of the protagonists in Byron's

The Giaour and Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer.* The association of the

vampire with ethnic and religious difference will be seen again in *Dracula*, and

in adaptations of that novel in the early twentieth century, particularly

Nosferatu. This will be discussed further in the conclusion.

Varney's motivations as a vampire remain slightly unclear – his quest

for blood to survive is almost equalled by his quest to acquire wealth. Indeed,

after his initial attack on Flora, Varney does not seem particularly desirous of

blood, but of property. His declaration to Flora is: "I covet Bannerworth

Hall…And I must have it. I will have it, although my path through it be through

a sea of blood."[89] Blood is a means to an end, rather than the end itself. The

power he seeks, in his own words, is that of money:

> I should have been most wealthy. I should have possessed the
> means of commanding the adulation of those who now hold me but
> cheaply; but still the time may come. I have a hope yet, and that
> greatness which I have ever panted for, that magician-like power
> over my kind, which the possession of ample means alone can
> give, may yet be mine.[90]

Varney, although possessed of supernatural powers, covets riches as

a way of influencing people, rather than using his own hypnotic gaze. Money,

rather than supernatural influence, is the true "magician-like" power which can

give him authority over others. The fact that Varney's primary lust after death

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[88] Rymer, *Varney the Vampire*, 171.
[89] Rymer, *Varney the Vampire*, 117.
[90] Rymer, *Varney the Vampire*, 167.

is still the possession of wealth may be Rymer's critique of a capitalist society contemporaneous with that of Karl Marx. When Varney was brought back from the dead as a vampire, he paid for it with money: "I shall have paid a large sum; but that which I purchased was to me priceless. It was my life!—it was my life itself! That possession which the world's wealth cannot restore!"[91] The paradox here is that although Varney claims wealth cannot restore life, he has bought his own life back with money. It is unclear in the story which is the more horrific aspect of Varney's character – his lust for blood, or his lust for wealth.

Varney, like Ruthven, has an eye for beautiful young women, but while the story opens with an account of him menacing the attractive Flora Bannerworth in order to drink her blood, his interactions with other women in the story are much less sinister. There is even a section where a young woman and her mother try to entrap him into marriage to take advantage of his wealth and position. Varney in the story is both predator and victim of unfortunate circumstance. His character inconsistencies can be explained by the multiple authorship and the length of the serial itself. It is these inconsistencies of character and plot that scholars frequently use to dismiss the work. E. F. Bleiler defines *Varney the Vampire* as "the most famous book that almost no one has read."[92] Carol Senf describes it as "rude, crude, and inconsistent."[93] Erik Butler despairs "few readers today…will have the patience to make it to the end of *Varney the Vampire,*" and declares it full of

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[91] Rymer, *Varney the Vampire*, 165.
[92] E. F. Bleiler, ed., *Varney the Vampire; or, the Feast of Blood* (New York: Dover Publications, 1973), viii.
[93] Carol A. Senf, *The Vampire in Nineteenth-Century English Literature* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013), 48.

"narrative jumps…twists and turns…[which are] a mark of bad writing."[94]
James B. Twitchell attests "there is no excuse for not reading it. No excuse,
except for one's sanity. For the complete *Varney* (almost complete – a few
chapters and pages are missing, or at least seem that way!) is one of the
most redundant, exorbitant, digressive, thrilling, tedious, and fantastic works
ever written."[95]

However, Curt Herr criticizes those who hold Rymer's serial "to the
same standards they would apply to a novel…To hold *Varney the Vampire* to
the standards of novel structure and development or to compare Rymer's
writing style to his contemporary novelists is to do a great disservice to its
historical significance, its contribution to vampire literature, and its popularity
in the field of popular Penny fiction."[96] I would agree with this assessment. In
terms of form, it is counterproductive to compare a self-contained novel with a
serial which could run as long as the publisher wished to commission it. The
different styles of writing and the structure of the differing formats is not taken
into account in such comparisons. *Varney the Vampire* is a work which uses
the vampire motif to reveal the anxieties and interests of the historical and
cultural moment in which it was written. When a story is written for a mass
readership, and becomes wildly popular among that readership, as *Varney*
was, it is obviously worthy of examination. *Varney* clearly resonated with the
contemporary public consciousness in some way.

The anatomy room touches Varney's story in a striking parallel to Mary
Shelley's *Frankenstein.* In one of Varney's many deaths and subsequent

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[94] Butler, *Metamorphoses of the Vampire*, 100, 102.
[95] James B. Twitchell, *The Living Dead: A Study of the Vampire in Romantic Literature* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1981), 122-3.
[96] Curt Herr, "Born from the Stinking Streets," 17.

resurrections, he is hanged for highway robbery and his body is brought to an anatomist who wishes to experiment with "galvanic and other apparatus," to bring a body back from the dead.[97] This anatomist instantly abandons the man he brought back to life, the same as Victor Frankenstein did, and this allusion to Mary Shelley's work not only provides evidence of the connection between the vampire and her story that goes beyond the Villa Diodati, but also offers a different perspective of vampirism as a man-made malady that science creates.

Like Ruthven, Varney has traveled the world, nearly getting married in Italy, and later ending his own life there. Like Ruthven and indeed Darvell, Varney is restored by moonlight. He travels the European continent much like Byron did, exiled from England as Byron was, and meeting only death and angry mobs upon his return. It is reasonable to suppose that Varney is somewhat modeled on Ruthven and therefore Byron. Varney is another aristocratic vampire – his full title is Sir Francis Varney, and upon first meeting him, his English neighbors are unsure if he is a baronet or merely a knight.[98] The baronet is obviously a nod to Lord Byron's title, increasing the association between Polidori's character and Varney. An even more obvious homage is during one of Varney's many exploits, this time in Venice, where he makes the acquaintance of a Count Pollidori. Varney saves the Count from being murdered by bandits on the street. Varney then becomes engaged to the Count's daughter, but unlike Polidori's story, before Varney can drink his bride's blood, he is revealed to be a vampire and flees the country.[99] The enduring popularity of Polidori's story and character can clearly be seen here,

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[97] Rymer, *Varney the Vampire*, 309.
[98] Rymer, *Varney the Vampire*, 87.
[99] Rymer, *Varney the Vampire,* 638.

and once again proves that Lord Ruthven remained popular into the mid-century and beyond.

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, Cyprien Bérard's version of Polidori's novel in 1820 included a duel, and *Varney* also includes this, with similar results. Varney is shot, but the bullet has no effect on him. He is then attacked by an angry mob, but escapes into the forest, saving himself from Ruthven's fate in Bérard's story. He does, however, meet his death repeatedly in the story, but is always somehow brought back. Although the ending of the serial sees Varney throwing himself into Mt. Vesuvius in remorse for several lifetimes of sin, that is clearly no indication that he is permanently deceased. Indeed, if Rymer had been asked by Lloyd to add even more to the saga of Varney, it would have been possible to repeat the pattern and bring him back again, although perhaps more challenging without a body to resurrect. The narrative and character remain inconsistent and do not subscribe to any pre-established structure. The format of the work as a serial influences the story. It allows for a theoretically infinite narrative, much like the vampire's own existence.

G. K. Chesterton uses these very elements of penny fiction to defend it against the "magistrates" he claims blame such stories for rampant crime among the youth. In 1901, he wrote an essay entitled "A Defence of Penny Dreadfuls" in which he cites the complete lack of coherent plot and character as one of its best defenses against accusations of moral corruption: "It is the custom, particularly among magistrates, to attribute half the crimes of the Metropolis to cheap novelettes…[but] the facts are simply these: the whole

bewildering mass of vulgar juvenile literature is concerned with adventures, rambling, disconnected, and endless. It does not express any passion of any sort, for there is no human character of any sort."[100] Chesterton's argument is that people cannot emulate the actions of anyone who is inhuman. Indeed, the works are so badly written, according to him, that no one could possibly mistake the characters in it as being remotely realistic or worthy of imitation.

This defense as late as 1901 shows how long the debate on the morality of penny fiction, and later halfpenny fiction, lasted. Mary Elizabeth Braddon wrote in a letter to Edward Bulwer-Lytton in 1860 that "the amount of crime, murder, slow poisoning, and general infamy required by the halfpenny reader is something terrible."[101] Braddon wrote in the same letter wondering if "the sensational [can] be elevated by art, and redeemed from all its coarseness."[102] The fact that Braddon believed that sensation was the province of "coarseness," is, according to Patrick Brantlinger, one reason why the term "sensation" was so controversial: "Part of the controversy aroused by sensation novels stems from the tendency of their authors to devalue them…they see themselves as producing inferior fiction for mass consumption. At best, echoing their critics, they think of themselves as mere entertainers, striving to capture public attention through the latest sensation."[103] The definition of "sensation fiction" is problematic, and one that even contemporary reviewers were not fully able to pinpoint, categorizing

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[100] G. K. Chesterton, "A Defence of Penny Dreadfuls (1901)," in *The Defendant*, ed. Dale Ahlquist (New York: Dover Publications, 2012), 3.
[101] Mary Elizabeth Braddon, "Letter to Bulwer-Lytton (1860)," quoted in Robert Lee Wolff, *Sensational Victorian: The Life and Fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon* (New York: Garland, 1979), 126.
[102] Ibid, 155.
[103] Patrick Brantlinger, *The Reading Lesson: The Threat of Mass Literacy in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 163.

them by their effect rather than any established literary conventions.[104] The popular review periodical *The Athenaeum* established a definition based on the bodily impact on its readers. Sensation tales "curdle [the readers's] blood, cause their hair to stand on end, give them 'pins and needles' in the region of the heart, and fix their eyes with a rigid stare for at least twenty-four hours."[105] The definition of the genre is based on the assumption that fictional scenarios can produce heightened manifestations of physical feeling.

In the later half of the nineteenth century, attempts were made by reviewers and journalists to establish a dichotomy between "legitimate" literature, and what the journalist James Greenwood referred to in 1874 as "penny packets of poison." Penny dreadfuls such as *Varney the Vampire* were never reviewed, adding to the impression of penny fiction as something unworthy of critical attention. Greenwood goes one step further in actually describing penny fiction as a type of vampirism that preys upon the young and innocent:

> He [The penny fiction] is gifted with a devilish power of beguiling boys and girls to take to him and nourish him in secret. *Beware of him, O careful parents of little lads! He is cunning as the fabled vampire.* Already he may have bitten your little rosy-cheeked Jack. He may be lurking at this very moment in that young gentleman's private chamber…polluting his mind and smoothing the way that leads to swift destruction.[106]

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[104] Ann Cvetkovich, *Mixed Feelings: Feminism, Mass Culture and Victorian Sensationalism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 14.

[105] John Cordy Jeaffreson, "Review of *Wondrous Strange*, 178," quoted in Ellen Miller Casey, "'Highly Flavoured Dishes' and 'Highly Seasoned Garbage': Sensation in *The Athenaeum*," in *Victorian Sensations: Essays on a Scandalous Genre*, ed. Kimberly Harrison and Richard Fantina (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006), 4.

[106] James Greenwood, "Penny Packets of Poison, or a Short Way to Newgate," *The Wilds of London* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1874), 357.

This type of exaggerated emotional appeal endorses the idea that sensation fiction has both a physical and mental effect upon its readers, preying upon their minds like a vampire. Contemporary theories among physicians claimed that "overstimulated nerve would progressively fail to respond to the same level of stimulus, thus requiring a stronger stimulus to achieve the same effect, until eventually the organism would collapse under the strain."[107] In the context of penny fiction, according to Greenwood, the monsters in the stories reflect the effect of the stories themselves. The reader requires more and more of them to be sated, until madness and death result. In his example, the types of people who are most susceptible to the dangers of penny fiction are children, including male ones. Hunt's declaration of fear as being the "least masculine" passion at the beginning of this chapter is reinforced in Greenwood's statement – those who indulge in penny fiction are not masculine figures, but more vulnerable women and children. The danger in Greenwood's mind is that if a young male indulges in the "least masculine" virtue, he will grow up to be dominated by it, and lose all concept of masculinity. This, in turn, will lead to the "swift destruction" Greenwood fears. This is similar to contemporary attitudes toward masturbation, which will be detailed in the next chapter.

In the later half of the nineteenth century, some penny fiction began to be marketed explicitly as "stories for boys," such as *The Boy's Own Paper,* first published in 1879. This publication was established by the Religious Tract Society as a way to instill Christian morals in children's formative years, in

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[107] Pamela K. Gilbert, "Sensation Fiction and the Medical Context," in *The Cambridge Companion to Sensation Fiction*, ed. Andrew Mangham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 185.

contrast to the contemporary perception of penny fiction.[108] The harmful

perception of penny fiction extended so far as to raise a question in

Parliament concerning "the lamentable amount of juvenile criminality, largely

attributed to the spread of cheap publications and theatrical representations of

an exciting and immoral character, which corrupt the children of the lower

classes, and stimulate them into courses of dishonesty and vice."[109] J. E. D.

Esquirol published three cases of childhood insanity in his *Mental Maladies* in

1868, in which he blamed "masturbation…careless talk" and lack of moral

guidance from adults as the causes of the children's maladies.[110] These are

behaviors children have learned (or not learned) by the example of adults,

and Esquirol suggests that children themselves are not essentially sinful or to

be blamed, but that "immorality and crime have proximate but external

targets," and are learned behaviors.[111] In the absence of any adult guidance,

Esquirol theorizes that children learn their behaviors from outside sources,

including the stories they read. Therefore, those stories must be carefully

controlled so vulnerable minds do not have access to them, and their effects

counteracted by the spread of wholesome literature for children.

Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* was a series of

articles appearing from 1849 to 1850 in the *Morning Chronicle* newspaper.

This was the same paper which also employed Dickens for his *Sketches by*

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[108] Kelly Boyd, *Manliness and the Boys' Story Paper in Britain: A Cultural History, 1855-1940* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 46.

[109] Dugdale, W., "Mischievous Literature," *The Bookseller* (1 July 1868).

[110] J.E.D. Esquirol, *Mental Maladies: A Treatise on Insanity,* trans. E. K. Hunt (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1845), 371.

[111] Sally Shuttleworth, "The Psychology of Childhood in Victorian Literature and Medicine," in *Literature, Science, Psychoanalysis, 1830-1970: Essays in Honor of Gillian Beer*, ed. Helen Small and Trudi Tate (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 91.

Boz, a similar examination of common London life. The articles were collected and published in three volumes in 1851, and a fourth volume was added in 1861, detailing the lives of "Those That Will Not Work," including thieves and beggars. This volume was co-written by, among others, Mayhew, Bracebridge Hemyng, and the Rev. William Tuckniss. Tuckniss expounds the virtues of the *Pure Literature Society*, established in 1854, "as a supplemental agency for the collection and dissemination of a wholesome literature."[112] In Tuckniss's own words:

> Public opinion being often fluctuating, and its general estimates of morality being, to a considerable extent, formed by the current literature of the age, it is essential that this mighty and controlling power should be exerted on the side of religion and virtue. Works of a high moral tone, inculcating correct principles and instilling lessons of practical piety, conduce, therefore, in the highest degree, to a wholesome state of society, and to the preservation of public morals.[113]

Tuckniss's belief in literature as an instructor of morality reflects a popular contemporary concern of the dangers of "unwholesome" literature. Hemyng goes further to call for a complete ban on the sale of such literature, due to its corrupting nature on the young:

> Another very fruitful scourge of early demoralization is to be looked for in the quantities of penny and halfpenny romances that are sold in town and country. One of the worst of the most recent ones is denominated, 'Charley Wag, or the new Jack Shepherd, a history of the most successful thief in London.' To say that these are not incentives to lust, theft, and crime of every description is to cherish a fallacy. Why should not the police, by act of Parliament, be empowered to take cognizance of this shameful misuse of the art of printing?[114]

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[112] Rev. William Tuckniss, "The Agencies at Present in Operation within the Metropolis for the Suppression of Vice and Crime" in *London Labour and the London Poor, Volume Four* by Henry Mayhew (1861), ed. Victor Neuberg. (London: Penguin Books, 1985), 471.
[113] Ibid, 470.
[114] Bracebridge Hemyng, "Prostitution in London" in *London Labour and the London Poor*, *Volume Four* by Henry Mayhew (1861), ed. Victor Neuberg. (London: Penguin Books, 1985), 477.

The 1857 Obscene Publications Act, which outlawed the sale of obscene material, did not include "unwholesome" literature, much to Hemyng's dismay. In the same volume, he calls for "some clauses" to be added to rectify this, to spare the children of the poor from such literary vice, which in his view, can only lead to a life of vice.[115]

According to Mayhew, however, the uneducated laborers of London had, by the 1850s, "got tired of Lloyd's blood-stained stories…The tales of robbery and bloodshed, of heroic, eloquent, and gentlemanly highwaymen, or of gipsies turning out to be nobles, now interest the costermongers but little, although they found great delight in such stories a few years back."[116] This is more wishful thinking on Mayhew's part than an unbiased statement of fact, as penny dreadfuls were printed well into the 1860s and 70s. The rise of the "sensation" genre from the 1860s onwards eclipsed penny fiction in terms of popularity and became the dominant medium for supernatural tales. The debate over the respectability of literature featuring sensational themes continued with Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* in 1872. Le Fanu had to defend himself from the label of sensation because of his inclusion of the vampire motif in his stories. The next chapter will focus on the motif in the late nineteenth century, especially on works by Collins and Le Fanu.

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[115] Ibid, 477.

[116] Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, 25-27.

Chapter Three - "No Sacrifice Without Blood": The Vampire in the Late

Nineteenth Century

The 1860s saw the rise of the "sensation" genre, which Michael Gamer rightly states is a complex concept in itself. Generic classification, as Gamer points out, "depends upon the readers, publishers, and critics which ultimately determine a text's identity and value."[1] It is the interplay between these three branches, which do not necessarily agree on a text's identity and value, that results in the complex label of genre, particularly, in terms of this thesis, the "sensation" genre. As Gamer states: "Where writers and readers disagree – or where readers disagree among themselves – we enter into a different situation, one in which writers find themselves placed in generic spaces that they never intended, and where texts do not get to choose their own genres."[2] Such a situation is especially relevant in the context of the sensation genre, where writers such as Charles Dickens and Sheridan Le Fanu debated their place in the genre between critics and readers alike. This debate over the sensation genre's place in the literary canon is central to this section of the thesis. My original contributions in this chapter include an examination of the relationship between the vampire motif and Jack the Ripper, the complex debate between legitimate and sensation fiction, the harm which the latter could produce physically, and the vampire's place within the genre, and the examination of the first literary vampire with an aversion to religion.

In an 1862 review of *The Woman in White* for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Margaret Oliphant outlined her belief in the differences between a novel of sensation fiction and its predecessors:

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[1] Michael Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1.
[2] Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic*, 2.

> Its power arises from no overstraining of nature: - the artist shows no love of mystery for mystery's sake; he wastes neither wickedness nor passion. His plot is astute and deeply-laid, but never weird or ghastly; he shows no desire to tinge the daylight with any morbid shadows…the more we perceive the perfectly legitimate nature of the means used to produce the sensation, the more striking does the sensation become.[3]

Oliphant indicates here that what makes Collins's work appear "legitimate" is the fact that it seems to be broadly realistic. The statement reveals a bias of reviewers and authors against narratives which "tinge the daylight with any morbid shadows." As discussed in the previous chapter, the subjects of penny fiction narratives would likely be considered "weird or ghastly" by Oliphant. It is the ability to write subjects suitable for penny fiction but in a "legitimate" way that informs the debate around sensation fiction in the 1850s and 60s.

In the 1850s, George Eliot outlined her beliefs in fiction which would later be categorized as "realism." Eliot herself does not use that term, but describes her philosophy as follows: "That all truth and beauty are to be attained by a humble and faithful study of nature, and not by substituting vague forms, bred by imagination on the mists of feeling, in place of definite, substantial reality."[4] This "humble and faithful study of nature" was judged, according to Eliot, by a contemporary setting, and by drawing the events and characters in a realistic way. Eliot dismisses Dickens for using "frequently false psychology"[5] in his characterizations. Henry James, who also largely wrote fiction based on "definite, substantial reality," described Dickens in 1865 as "the greatest of superficial novelists…he has created nothing but figure. He

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[3] Margaret Oliphant, "Review of *The Woman in White*," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 90 (May 1862): 568.

[4] George Eliot, "Art and Belles Lettres: *Review* of Modern Painters III," *Westminster Review* (April 1856): 625.

[5] George Eliot, "The Natural History of German Life," *The Westminster Review* (July 1856): 52-53.

has added nothing to our understanding of human character."[6] Dickens

himself fought back against the label, and firmly defended his own faithful

representation of his characters. In the 1841 preface to the third edition of

Oliver Twist, he described the novel as presenting "the stern and plain truth."[7]

He later wrote in *All the Year Round* on the topic of "sensation fiction," in

which he stated that the label was an "orthodox stone to hurl at any heretic

author who is bold enough to think that life has its tremendous passes of

anguish and crime, as well as its little joys and little sorrows, its strange

adventures and vicissitudes, as well as its daily progresses from Brixton to

the Bank."[8] He further defends the sensation genre a year later, in an essay

called "The Sensational Williams": "If any one writes a novel, a play, or a

poem, which relates anything out of the ordinary experiences of the most

ordinary people – some tragedy of love or revenge, some strange (though not

impossible) combination of events, or some romance of guilt or misery – he is

straightaway met with a loud exclamation of 'Sensational'!...Life itself is

similarly sensational in many of its aspects, and nature is similarly sensational

in many of her forms, and art is always sensational when it is tragic."[9]

This is an early example of the complex interplay between author,

reviewer, and audience in terms of genre. Dickens's perception of his place in

the sensation genre was debated by both his critics and audience, down to

the present day. Oliphant's assessment of Collins's "sensation" novel as an

effective work is due largely to his ability to blend realism with elements of

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[6] Henry James, "Review of *Our Mutual Friend* (1865)" in *Views and Reviews of by Henry James*, ed. Le Roy Phillips (Boston: The Ball Publishing Company, 1908), 153.

[7] Charles Dickens, "Preface to the Third Edition (1841)" in *Oliver Twist* (1837-9), ed. Kathleen Tillotson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), lv.

[8] Charles Dickens, "Not a New Sensation," *All the Year Round* (22 July 1863): 517.

[9] Charles Dickens, "The Sensational Williams," *All the Year Round* (13 February 1864): 14-15.

fantasy, which will broadly categorize the genre of sensation fiction in the 1860s. Novels such as Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) and Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868) use both supernatural and sensational elements such as hypnotism, bigamy, mysterious fires, and secret identities in an otherwise realistic setting. According to Winifred Hughes, "what distinguishes the true sensation genre as it appeared in its prime during the 1860s is the violent yoking of romance and realism, traditionally the two contradictory modes of literary perception."[10]

Oliphant declares this ability the heart of Collins's genius in her review: "A writer who boldly takes in hand the common mechanism of life, and by means of persons who might all be living in society…thrills us into wonder, terror, and breathless interest, with positive personal shocks of surprise and excitement, has accomplished a far greater success than he who effects the same result through supernatural agencies, or by means of the fantastic creations of lawless genius or violent horrors of crime."[11] It is the realism of Collins's novel that Oliphant finds so impressive in a work of sensation – the occurrences take place in the common sphere of everyday life, and yet still manage to shock.

Henry Mansel in 1863 goes on to cite the same talent, although with less approbation than Oliphant when condemning the rise of sensation fiction: "The sensation novel, be it mere trash or something worse, is usually a tale of our own times. Proximity is, indeed, one great element of sensation. It is necessary to be near a mine to be blown up by its explosion; and a tale which aims at electrifying the nerves of the reader is never thoroughly effective

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[10] Winifred Hughes, *The Maniac in the Cellar: Sensation Novels of the 1860s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 16.
[11] Oliphant, "Review of *The Woman in White*," 568.

unless the scene be laid in our own days and among the people we are in the

habit of meeting."[12] This assessment of sensation fiction as necessarily

contemporary is a departure from the tales of *Blackwood's Edinburgh*

Magazine and Gothic novels of the eighteenth century. Ann Radcliffe,

Matthew Lewis, and Horace Walpole primarily set their Gothic tales in various

countries in Europe, during distant time periods, frequently medieval. Their

characters were not the lower-class citizens of London characterized by

Dickens, nor the middle-class professionals featuring frequently in the stories

by Collins, but rather the rural population of peasants and aristocrats. Indeed,

the one criticism Oliphant makes of Collins's novel relates to the character of

Count Fosco, a villain who shares similarities with the villains of Radcliffe's

novels, from his dangerous charm to his Italian origin:

> Such is the great and radical drawback of the most notable of
> sensation novels. Fosco is, unquestionably, destined to be
> repeated to infinitude, as no successful work can apparently exist in
> this imitative age without creating a shoal of copyists; and with
> every fresh imitation the picture will take more and more
> objectionable shades. The violent stimulant of series publication –
> of *weekly* publication, with its necessity for frequent and rapid
> recurrence of piquant situation and startling incident – is the thing of
> all others most likely to develop the germ, and bring it to full and
> darker bearing.[13]

Oliphant's concern that the frequency of publication can only produce

inferior and even dangerous imitation echoes the concern of the critics of

penny fiction, as discussed in the previous chapter. Oliphant blames market

forces for this eventuality: the need for the weekly supply of stories, the

capitalist engine which drives the market for more and more consumable

goods, results in readers craving darker and darker material to shock and

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[12] Henry Mansel, "Sensation Novels," *Quarterly Review* 113 (April 1863): 482-3.
[13] Oliphant, "Review of *The Woman in White*," 570.

sensationalize. Like the penny dreadful and serial, the form in which the story is published shapes its tone and content, as well as effect on the general public.

P. D. Edwards notes that the term "Sensation Novel" was originally applied disparagingly to a broad range of crime, mystery, and horror novels written in the early 1860s. Edwards claims the label is American in origin and first appeared in November of 1861.[14] Indeed, Oliphant blames America largely for the rise of sensation fiction – she claims that contemporary events of a violent and graphic nature gave rise to the public's desire for shock and horror: "That distant roar has come to form a thrilling accompaniment to the safe life we lead at home. On the other side of the Atlantic, a race *blasé* and lost in universal *ennui* has bethought itself of the grandest expedient for procuring a new sensation; and albeit we follow at a humble distance, we too begin to feel the need of a supply of new shocks and wonders."[15] The press on both sides of the Atlantic reported on the American Civil War (1861-65), a conflict that symbolized the internal collapse of a nation, and the opposition of family against family. British military assistance was requested by both the Union and the Confederacy. While the British government declared its neutral position, they "placed so lax an interpretation upon its neutrality laws that a half dozen cruisers flying the Confederate flag were built in British shipyards,

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[14] P.D. Edwards, "Sensation Novels" in *Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Sally Mitchell (London and New York: Garland, 1988), 703-4.
[15] Oliphant, "Review of *The Woman in White*," 565.

manned by British crews using equipment bought in England, and permitted to use British ports as bases of supply."[16]

The rise of battlefield photography, developed during the American Civil War, also allowed gruesome images of the carnage of war to be available for public exhibition. Matthew Brady held an exhibition of his battlefield photography in October 1862. A review in *The New York Times* states:

> Mr. BRADY has done something to bring home to us the terrible reality and earnestness of war. If he has not brought bodies and laid them in our dooryards and along the streets, he has done something very like it…Crowds of people are constantly going up the stairs; follow them, and you find them bending over photographic views of that fearful battle-field, taken immediately after the action. Of all objects of horror one would think the battle-field should stand preeminent, that it should bear away the palm of repulsiveness. But, on the contrary, there is a terrible fascination about it that draws one near these pictures, and makes him loth to leave them.[17]

The reviewer's contradictory response to the photographs echoes the ambiguous response of the victim of vampirism in *Varney the Vampire, Carmilla,* and *Dracula.* The vampire, although an object of horror, fascinates and repels its victims. The same effect grips the readers of sensation novels, according to both Oliphant and Mansel, and the more the readers are exposed to images and descriptions of horrors, the more horrific the tale must be to satisfy them.

In 1862, Oliphant, like her predecessors such as Greenwood who criticized penny fiction, compares the sensation genre to a drug:

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[16] Howard J. Fuller, *Clad in Iron – The American Civil War and the Challenge of British Naval Power* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press: 2008), 61.
[17] "Brady's Photographs: Pictures of the Dead at Antietam," *The New York Times* (October 20, 1862).

In the little reflected worlds of the novel and the drama the stimulant has acted strongly, and the result in both has been a significant and remarkable quickening of public interest. Shakespeare, even in the excitement of a new interpretation, has not crowded the waning playhouses, as has the sensation drama with its mock catastrophes; and Sir Walter himself never deprived his readers of their lawful rest to a greater extent with one novel than Mr. Wilkie Collins has succeeded in doing with his 'Woman in White.'…Domestic histories, however virtuous and charming, do not often attain that result.[18]

Sensation novels, like a drug, deprive the reader of sleep; no such drastic effect on physical well-being is apparent from "domestic histories." Sensation is a literary genre that, according to Oliphant, produces a negative physical effect on its readers. Sensation produces an even more damaging moral effect, according to Henry Mansel in an essay on sensation novels published the following year in the *Quarterly Review*. Mansel blames the periodicals, circulating libraries, and railway bookstalls for what he deems "the wide-spread corruption," of which sensation novels "are both the effect and cause; called into existence to supply the cravings of a diseased appetite, and contributing themselves to foster the disease, and to stimulate the want which they supply."[19] This kind of literature is allegedly unwholesome: "corruption" and "disease" imply that reading such works will lead to not only a moral decay, but a physical decay as well. The effect on the reader is "to conjure up a corporeal rather than a cerebral response."[20] This is a type of writing that stimulates the body rather than the mind, and appeals to physical gratification over mental expansion, similar to pornography.

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[18] Oliphant, "Review of *The Woman in White*," 566.
[19] Mansel, "Sensation Novels," 482.
[20] Mansel, "Sensation Novels," 482.

William Acton wrote extensively on the alleged dangers of pornography in his 1857 work *The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs, in Childhood, Youth, Adult Age, and Advanced Life, Considered in Their Physiological, Social, and Moral Relations*. Acton believed in the closed-body system, a theory detailing that human beings possess a finite amount of energy, both generally and sexually. Masturbation, according to Acton, was a waste of that energy which could never be renewed: "The boy's health fails, he is troubled with indigestion, his intellectual powers are dimmed, he becomes pale, emaciated, and depressed in spirits…At a later period the youth cannot so easily minister to his solitary pleasures, and he excites his organs the more, as they flag under his accustomed stimulus."[21] Eventually, Acton claimed that not only would the stimulus fail to produce any effect, but the quality of the semen itself would be tainted, leading to sterility. The same relationship between an overstimulation of physical sensation leading to infertility was mentioned in the previous chapter in relation to female readers. While masturbation was believed to be a solely male danger, the danger in sensation fiction was believed to apply to both genders.

Periodicals, according to Oliphant, contribute to Mansel's "craving of a diseased appetite" because of their rigid structure: "A given number of sheets of print, containing so many lines per sheet, must be produced weekly or monthly, and the diviner element must accommodate itself to these conditions."[22] Like with penny fiction, the necessary mass production of such a form results in its material being of lesser quality. According to Mansel, the

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[21] William Acton, *The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs, in Childhood, Youth, Adult Age, and Advanced Life, Considered in Their Physiological, Social, and Moral Relations* (London: J. & A. Churchill, 1857), 9.
[22] Mansel, "Sensation Novels," 482.

libraries are to blame for allowing people access to a wide-range of material they would not otherwise spend money on, some of which would be deemed "morbid" by Mansel. The railway bookstalls are also to blame, because "the exigencies of railway travelling do not allow much time for examining the merits of a book before purchasing," and people are satisfied with the "promise of temporary excitement to relieve the dullness of a journey."[23] Mansel objects to the temporary gratification sensation novels grant to the reader – an instant pleasure with no intellectual benefits, merely physical stimulation. Alison Winter in *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain* (1998), explores the fear that "the route from page to nerve was direct," that there was literally no boundary between reading fiction and its effect on the physiology.[24]

The fear of instant gratification and unnecessary stimulant was a consequence of contemporary theories of the differing biology of men and women. Herbert Spencer and Patrick Geddes theorized in 1852 that men and women evolved differently. Historian Jill Conway points out that sex chromosomes were not discovered until 1901, and so before that time, theories about gender differences were inaccurate and "a subject of intense, though inconclusive debate."[25] Geddes in 1852 developed a dyadic model separating the male and female body according to their states of energy: "Men were considered the active agents, who expended energy while women were sedentary, storing and conserving energy. A dichotomy of temperaments defined feminine and masculine: an anabolic nature which

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[23] Mansel, "Sensation Novels," 483.

[24] Alison Winter, *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 224.

[25] Conway, "Stereotypes of Femininity in a Theory of Sexual Evolution," *Victorian Studies* 14.1 (September 1970): 47.

nurtured versus a katabolic nature which released energy respectively."[26]

Herbert Spencer, in his later work *The Study of Sociology* (1873) declares

that it was necessary to prioritize "the reservation of vital power to meet the

cost of reproduction."[27] Spencer, like Acton, believed in the closed-body

system of finite energy. If energy was wasted through masturbation, or

nervous shock, it was believed to result in eventual infertility, insanity, or even

death.

Although a finite energy supply was believed to be an aspect of both

genders, women were believed to be more susceptible to these nervous

shocks, according to Spencer. Based on Darwin's theories of evolution,

Spencer claimed that women were the less evolved of the two sexes. Women

risked "a perceptible falling-short in these two faculties, intellectual and

emotional, which are the latest products of human evolution."[28] Nordau's

theories of degeneration in 1896 would later link perceived degeneracy to a

type of regression, which was particularly noteworthy in the insane, the

criminal, and the artist. Such fears were parodied in an 1863 issue of *Punch*,

in which an invented journal called *The Sensation Times* was described as

"devoted to Harrowing the Mind, making the Flesh Creep…Giving Shocks to

the Nervous System, Destroying Conventional Moralities, and generally

Unfitting the Public for the Prosaic Avocations of Life."[29]

The contemporary fears relating to sensation fiction can be situated in

the context of these beliefs, especially in terms of the concern over women

reading such exciting materials. Women's limited energy supply was at risk of

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[26] Conway, "Stereotypes of Femininity in a Theory of Sexual Evolution," 48.

[27] Herbert Spencer, *The Study of Sociology* (London: Henry S. King and Co., 1873), 340.

[28] Spencer, *The Study of Sociology*, 341.

[29] Anonymous, "The Sensation Times, and Chronicle of Excitement," *Punch* 44 (1863): 193.

being wasted on temporary sensations, leaving them constantly yearning for more. This could only end, according to contemporary biology, in exhaustion, madness, and even death. The evolving contemporary attitudes toward women will become central to the vampire motif during this time.

In 1855, Caroline Norton wrote her *Letter to the Queen,* which outlined the inferior legal state of women in England:

> A married woman in England has *no legal existence*: her being is absorbed in that of her husband…She has no possessions, unless by special settlement; her property is *his* property…If the wife sue for separation for cruelty, it must be 'cruelty that endangers life or limb'…No law court can divorce in England. A special Act of Parliament annulling the marriage is passed for each case. The House of Lords grants this almost as a matter of course to the husband, but not to the wife.[30]

Two years later, the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 was passed, which transferred the act of divorce from the ecclesiastical courts to the civil courts. This made it easier for private citizens to divorce, and helped shape the attitude toward marriage more as a contract than as a sacrament. These changes to the law still favored men, by and large – a husband could petition for divorce on the sole grounds that his wife had committed adultery. A wife could only do so based on adultery combined with other offenses such as incest, cruelty, bigamy, or desertion. The Act also required the wife to name the party with whom her husband had committed the adultery, while no such requirement was necessary for a husband when divorcing his wife for adultery.[31]

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[30] Caroline Norton, *A Letter to the Queen on Lord Chancellor Cranworth's Marriage and Divorce Bill* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855), 8.

[31] Horace Nelson, *Selected Cases, Statues and Orders Illustrative of the Principles of Private International Law as Administered in England* (London: Stevens and Sons Limited, 1889), 114.

The legal bias against women informed the plot of various sensation novels. The title character in *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) murders her husbands in order to seek a better life for herself. *The Woman in White* (1859) focuses on the wrongful imprisonment of one of its female protagonists in an asylum in order for her husband to steal her fortune. This latter instance had a basis in fact. In 1858, a number of high profile cases involving the false incarceration of women in lunatic asylums were brought to the attention of the public. Rosina Bulwer Lytton, the wife of novelist Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, was confined by her husband to an asylum in 1858. The reason for this depended on the perspective of the party in question – Edward claimed that it was for his wife's own protection, and Rosina claimed that it was an act of revenge by her husband for trying to sabotage his political career. Rosina was released after three weeks in confinement after a public outcry.[32] This event is detailed in her autobiography *A Blighted Life*, written in 1880, seven years after her husband's death. At this later date she attested that "thousands of persons, perfectly sane, are now imprisoned in private asylums throughout the Kingdom; while strangers are in possession of their property; and the miserable prisoner is finally brought to a state of actual lunacy or imbecility – however rational he may have been when first immured."[33] Whether or not Rosina's claim was true, it showed how the idea of false committal retained its power into the fin de sièlce.

Another common trope in sensation fiction which centered around women was the concept of mesmerism. As early as 1844, *Punch* began to satirize mesmerism being used as an excuse for avoiding blame for criminal

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[32] Rosina Bulwer Lytton, *A Blighted Life* (London: The London Publishing Office, 1880).
[33] Bulwer Lytton, *A Blighted Life*, 3.

transgressions. According to the magazine, mesmerism, like penny fiction, could exert an influence upon the mind and persuade the individual to commit criminal acts for which the story or mesmerizer was responsible, rather than the individual. *Punch* illustrated a case of robbery in which a professor of mesmerism argued that the accused was not in control of their actions "alleging that he committed the felony when in a state of 'mesmeric coma'…It appeared that his last attack had been produced by a visit to the Surrey Theatre. We know not what is at present acted at the favoured resort; but if it be *Jack Sheppard*, or any of its class of drama, we need not call in mesmerism to account for the stolen property."[34] The satirical magazine linked penny fiction and the act of mesmerism, comparing them both to an affliction of the mind that the individual cannot resist being influenced by.

The subject of mesmerism was usually female. Jill Galvan asserts that this was because "the mediating woman is distinguished by certain features: automatism; sensitivity or sympathy, the effect of nerves, and also sometimes of electrical force fields."[35] The belief that females were more sensitive to the electrical influence of mesmerism can also be seen in contemporary accounts. An article in the *Westminster Review* states that, "Ladies of sensitive and 'susceptible' organization, gratify a drawing-room with the exhibition of 'involuntary emotions' instead of a fantasia on the pianoforte."[36] Collins himself attended a mesmeric session, the details of which he

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[34] Anonymous, "Mesmerism; Its Dangers and Curiosities," *Punch* 6 (24 February 1844): 100.
[35] Jill Galvan, *The Sympathetic Medium: Feminine Channeling, the Occult, and Communication Technologies, 1859-1919* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 17.
[36] Anonymous, "Electro-biology," *Westminster Review* 55 (1851): 161.

published in *The Leader* in 1852, and which no doubt influenced his literary output.[37]

The practice of "involuntary emotions" upon a female subject is an aspect of the vampire motif utilized in both *Dracula* and Sheridan Le Fanu's 1872 vampire novella, *Carmilla.* This story has been hailed by Sue Ellen Case as "the first lesbian vampire narrative"[38] and it was also the first story in English to feature a female vampire as the central character. Between its publication in 1872, and the publication of *Dracula* in 1897, "about two-thirds of the fifteen, or thereabouts, vampire stories which were published in this quarter of a century…figured the female vampire."[39] Le Fanu's creation was clearly an influential one, and possibly because of the female subjects of the sensation novels, a female vampire appealed to the audiences of the later half of the nineteenth century.

Le Fanu was christened, according to Nicholas Rance, as "the Irish Wilkie Collins," by reviewers, although, like Dickens, he rejected the label of sensation author.[40] In Le Fanu's introduction to *Uncle Silas* in 1864, he condemns "the promiscuous application of the term 'sensation'" and expresses his wish that the press would "insist upon the limitation of that degrading term to the peculiar type of fiction which it was originally intended to indicate."[41] Le Fanu's opinion towards the label of sensation "degrading" a

[37] Wilkie Collins, "Magnetic Evenings at Home" (Letter I), *The Leader* 95 (17 January 1852): 63-64.
[38] Sue Ellen Case, "Tracking the Vampire," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 3.2 (1991): 11.
[39] Laura Grenfell, "'Carmilla': the 'Red Flag' of Late Nineteenth Century Vampire Narratives?," *Tessera 33/34* (Montreal, University of Montreal, 2003), 155.
[40] Nicholas Rance, *Wilkie Collins and Other Sensation Novelists: Walking the Moral Hospital* (Rutherford : Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1991), 157.
[41] Sheridan Le Fanu, *Uncle Silas* (1864), ed. Victor Sage (London: Penguin Classics, 2000), xxvii.

work shows a certain snobbery in terms of his own literary output as compared to others – he seems to dismiss the authors who embrace the label as inferior, but whether this is because he thinks certain sensation works are generally inferior, or whether he rejects the genre labeling of the reviewers, is unknown.

Le Fanu was related through his paternal grandmother to the dramatist Richard Brinsley Sheridan, a connection which endowed him with a literary background and familial reputation. He was the subject of some biographical scholarship in the 1980s, particularly relating to Anglo-Irish literature in the nineteenth century, and *Carmilla* and *Uncle Silas* are still widely studied.[42] His Irish background informed his work - he was raised in Limerick, where, in 1831, the Tithe War began. This was a reaction against the tithes that the Church of Ireland, a Protestant organization, charged to subsistence farmers, mostly Catholic. Le Fanu's brother and cousin were both attacked and stoned by the angry Irish citizens.[43] Le Fanu's father was a Protestant rector, and comparatively well off. While a native of Ireland, Le Fanu's circumstances and upbringing, as well as religion, set him apart from its regular citizens, and his sense of Irish identity must have been complicated. Despite this, his work reflects a love of Irish culture and folklore, similar to Bram Stoker, who was also exposed to the fantastical and supernatural aspects of Irish legends as a boy.

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[42] Renee Fox suggests that Le Fanu scholarship in the present day is at the same point Stoker scholarship was a decade ago: "This is not to suggest that no good work has been or is being done on Le Fanu, but to demonstrate that, like Stoker criticism ten years ago, Le Fanu criticism is still struggling to find productive ways to bring together the political, narrative, and sensational elements of Le Fanu's work." Renee Fox, "*Carmilla* and the Politics of Indistinguishably," in *Carmilla by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu: A Critical Edition*, ed. Kathleen Costello-Sullivan (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2013), 111.

[43] Ellis, S. M., *Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu, and Others* (London: Constable and Co. Ltd., 1951), 145.

Unlike Stoker, whose sense of Irish identity was fuelled by a mother who narrated tales of her homeland to him while he was bedridden, Le Fanu was mostly self-taught by reading books. According to his brother's biography, their father had hired a tutor who "spent the whole time, or nearly the whole time, tying flies for trout or salmon and in arranging his fishing gear, which he kept in a drawer before him."[44] According to William Le Fanu: "Fortunately, my father's library was a large and good one; there my brother spent much of his time poring over many a quaint and curious volume."[45] This phrasing is perhaps a reference to Edgar Allan Poe's poem "The Raven," in which the narrator "pondered, weak and weary,/ Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore (1-2)."[46] It could indicate a desire on William's part to draw a parallel between one sensation author and another. It could also be an attempt on William's part to associate his brother with the otherworldly and nocturnal habits that Joseph's son, Brinsley Le Fanu, would later write about his father. By 1871, Le Fanu had sold the *Dublin University Magazine*, in which he had previously published much of his short and serialized fiction, and was living reclusively in Dublin. He, according to his son, "became almost entirely preoccupied with the supernatural…[and] his now peculiar habits of life contributed to this obsession."[47]

> He wrote mostly in bed at night, using copy-books for his
> manuscript. He always had two candles by his side on a small
> table; one of these dimly glimming tapers would be left burning
> while he took a brief sleep. Then, when he awoke about 2 a.m.
> amid the darkling shadows of the heavy furnishings and hangings
> of his old-fashioned room, he would brew himself some strong tea –

[44] William Le Fanu, *Seventy Years of Irish Life: Being Anecdotes and Reminiscences of W. R. Le Fanu* (London: Edward Arnold, 1893), 7.

[45] William Le Fanu, *Seventy Years of Irish Life*, 8.

[46] Edgar Allan Poe, "The Raven (1845)," in *The Portable Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. J. Gerald Kennedy (London: Penguin Books, 2006) 422.

[47] Ellis, *Le Fanu, and Others*, 174.

which he drank copiously and frequently throughout the day - and write for a couple of hours in that eerie period of the night when human vitality is at its lowest ebb and the Powers of Darkness rampant and terrifying.[48]

True or not, the anecdote shows a desire to associate the author with the dark and macabre stories for which he was best known (the mention of "strong tea" in particular could be a reference to Le Fanu's ghost story *Green Tea*.) Whether Le Fanu would have approved of this association, considering his rejection of the "sensation" label, is debatable.

Le Fanu's Irishness is a subject of much debate, particularly since he was involved in the political life of the nation. The introduction by Robert Tracy to the Oxford edition of *In a Glassy Darkly* reads the stories in the collection as a metaphor for Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century. Though a plausible interpretation, the nuances of Le Fanu's Irishness, like Stoker's after him, do not lend themselves to any straightforward interpretation of his work. R. F. Foster compares Le Fanu to another Irish Protestant figure of the nineteenth century, Charles Maturin, the author of *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820). Foster casts Melmoth as a kind of proto-vampire, a tradition which Le Fanu and Stoker, both Irish Protestants, will continue in their own works of "Protestant Magic."[49] According to Foster, "the line of Irish Protestant supernatural fiction…leads from Maturin and Le Fanu to Bram Stoker and Elizabeth Bowen and Yeats – marginalized Irish Protestants all, often living in England but regretting Ireland, stemming from families with strong clerical and professional colourations, whose occult preoccupations surely mirror a sense of displacement, a loss of social and psychological integration, and an

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[48] Ellis, *Le Fanu, and Others*, 175.
[49] R. F. Foster, *Paddy and Mr. Punch: Connections in Irish and English History* (London: Penguin Press, 1993), 219.

escapism motivated by the threat of a takeover by the Catholic middle classes."[50] Le Fanu certainly felt displaced, if the testimony of his son is to be believed. This may have led to his preoccupation with the occult, his extensive knowledge of which makes *Carmilla* such an effective work.

Le Fanu's apparent interest in the occult and supernatural accounts for the many references in *Carmilla* to the oral history of the vampire discussed in the introduction. Carmilla's village has been destroyed by her curse, echoing the belief that the vampire destroyed its own family and village first. She admits that she is the last of her family, although Laura seems to be descended from her somehow, and Carmilla is irresistibly compelled to destroy her. There is little about Le Fanu's Carmilla that resembles Polidori's Ruthven, however. Carmilla, though retaining the title of nobility, is not an aloof aristocratic seducer, but rather a passionate woman who has difficulty controlling her feelings. The narrator describes her as "engaging," as opposed to Ruthven's aloofness, and she shows affection for Laura, giving her "trembling embraces" and "soft kisses" as opposed to Ruthven's harsh treatment of his victims.[51] Le Fanu's decision to return to folkloric roots suggests a desire to legitimize the motif by returning it to its historical context. This challenges George Eliot's definition of art as demanding truth. According to Eliot, truth is particularly important in terms of the truth of peasant rural life: "The thing for mankind to know is, not what are the motives and influences which the moralist thinks *ought* to act on the labourer or the artisan, but what are the motives and influences which *do* act on him."[52] These influences are

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[50] Foster, *Paddy and Mr. Punch,* 220.
[51] Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly* (1872), ed. Robert Tracy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 254, 264.
[52] Eliot. "The Natural History of German Life," 56.

not necessarily based in reality – the laborer or artisan is responsible for folklore, and their beliefs, fantastical though they may be, if truly believed, surely embody the truth Eliot cherished. In this way, by returning to the oral history of the vampire motif, Le Fanu encapsulates the truth of their beliefs, albeit in a supernatural figure.

The modern critical response to *Carmilla* largely focuses on the transgressive, lesbian overtones of the story. W. J. McCormack's account of the story focuses on its narrative structure. The vampire aspects are mentioned in passing as "marks on the throat, listlessness, and so forth."[53] He describes these as "the traditional signs of vampirism," a statement which my research calls into question, since the signs, theories, and roles of the vampire in fiction are in flux. McCormack attests that in the story, "pattern and metaphor overwhelm narrative and characterization. For it is clear that vampirism…is exploited here for its symbolic implications."[54] Le Fanu's interest in the occult, and the works of the Scandinavian mystic Emanuel Swedenborg, imply a mind that is fascinated by the spiritual for its own sake, rather than as a device for storytelling. Le Fanu's vampire is not merely a plot device, but rather a version of the motif that has its roots in cultural history while also transforming it into something new.

Carmilla adds a specifically homosexual theme to the vampire's previously established transgressive sexuality. The subject of lesbianism in the mid-nineteenth century was complex. While male homosexuality was outlawed and met with strong punishments, female homosexuality was, even

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[53] W. J. McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 190.
[54] McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu*, 191.

as late as 1886, believed to be non-existent. Max Nordau claimed in his book

Paradoxes, originally published in that year, that "the sight or the idea of a

person of her own sex has no power to excite [a woman's] sex centre to any

form of activity, and hence man must be her ideal of beauty."[55] According to

Bram Dijkstra, "sexologists were rediscovering female sexuality in terms of

woman's supposed autoerotic fixation during the 1860s and 1870s, [and]

writers were discovering the existence of lesbianism as a sort of extension of

this supposed autoerotic fixation."[56] According to Dijkstra, it was not until 1900

that lesbianism became a prominent theme among intellectuals. Even as late

as 1891, the female sexual instinct, according to leading London pathologist

Harry Campbell was "tending to atrophy."[57] Women were considered less

sexual than men by nature, and therefore close relationships between

females were less likely to be perceived as transgressive. Contemporary

readers of *Carmilla* could plausibly not notice the lesbian relationship between

the two characters, or rather read it as a kind of transgression that only exists

in a sensational, supernatural story.

The contemporary review of *In a Glass Darkly*, which appeared in *The

Saturday Review*, condemns the subject matter rather than the relationships

between the characters. The reviewer dismisses the collection: "Mr. Le Fanu,

having written some four or five foolish and vulgar ghost stories, presents

them to the world as belonging to 'metaphysical speculation' or 'religious

metaphysics' or 'metaphysical medicine'…If Mr. Le Fanu can find readers so

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[55] Max Nordau, *Paradoxes: From the German of Max Nordau* (Chicago: L. Schick Publisher, 1886), 279.

[56] Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 152.

[57] Harry Campbell, *Differences in the Nervous Organization of Man and Woman* (London: H. K. Lewis Publishing, 1891), 39.

silly to delight in all the horrors, as senseless as they are coarse, which he here serves up to them, he is welcome."[58] The brief review of the *Carmilla* story is scathing:

> Our readers will have had enough by this time of Mr. Le Fanu's stories, and may be thankful to be spared an account of the most foolish and most offensive of all his tales - that, namely, of the Vampire. When the author has the grave opened of a person who had been buried one hundred and fifty years, and describes how 'the leaden coffin floated with blood, in which, to a depth of seven inches, the body lay immersed', we are, we think, more than justified in declining to analyse his silly and miserable story. We should hope that this time he will find that he has miscalculated the taste of the subscribers to the seaside lending libraries, for whom he probably writes.[59]

The vehemence with which the reviewer dismisses Le Fanu's work is notable. It is also relevant that he refuses to even analyze it based on its fantastic subject matter alone. He mentions nothing of the plot aside from the Vampire, and the coffin full of blood. He does not mention the fact that Carmilla is a female vampire, nor how rare a female vampire has been until this point. The reviewer objects to the lack of realism in a story about an un-dead creature, which seems an odd aspect to focus on. The reviewer also derides the readers of "seaside lending libraries" for being the ideal audience for such a story. The libraries were also to blame in the minds of Oliphant and Mansel for increasing the appetite for the sensation genre in the masses. There is an implied class snobbery in this judgment. Libraries are a place where people who cannot afford books, in other words, those of a lower class, can borrow them for free. The reviewer's assertion that Le Fanu probably writes for that audience implies that his story is one which would appeal to the "low culture," the same audience that penny fiction appealed to. Even into the

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[58] Anonymous, "Review of *In a Glass Darkly*" in *The Saturday Review: Politics, Literature, Science and Art* 34 (January 11, 1873): 222.
[59] Anonymous, "Review of *In a Glass Darkly*," 222-23.

1870s, there is attempt by reviewers to confine certain subjects to certain classes. The reviewer tries to draw a line between legitimate literature of truth and fact, and Le Fanu's "silly and miserable story." This reaction could be to discourage the public from reading about the sexual transgressions of the vampire by dismissing the story as a waste of time. This is noteworthy since the reviewer spends several paragraphs discussing the plots of the other stories in the collection, but only a few lines on *Carmilla.* His reluctance could be on account of its taboo subject matter, rather than its alleged silliness.

Unlike the serial format of *Varney the Vampire* or the novel form of *Dracula, Carmilla* appeared as one story in an anthology of five, the final story in the collection entitled *In a Glass Darkly.* The title of the anthology is a deliberate misquotation, taken from the King James Bible version of 1 Corinthians 13:12, which extols the virtues of charity, and describes the hidden workings of God that mortals can only see "through a glass darkly." The "in a glass darkly" implies that the stories will place the reader in the center of these hidden workings. The title lends a religious implication and legitimacy to the text, and supports Carmilla's view that her condition of vampirism is as natural as anything God created on the earth.

Two of the anthology's other stories are also worthy of a brief analysis in their use of tropes which I have previously discussed in relation to *Blackwood's*. The anthology opens with a prologue claiming that the following stories are part of a collection left in the medical papers of Dr. Martin Hesselius, a German physician. The first story in the collection, *Green Tea*, opens with Dr. Hesselius explaining his belief that "the entire natural world is but the ultimate expression of that spiritual world from which, and in which

alone, it has its life. I believe that the essential man is a spirit, that the spirit is an organized substance, but as different in point of material from what we ordinarily understand by matter, as light or electricity is."[60] This theory, which Hesselius describes as "Metaphysical Medicine," [61] echoes the vitalism theories of the human spirit as being distinct from purely chemical or physical forces. Carmilla shares the belief that her supernatural self is a product of the natural world, albeit in a way not yet understood by modern science. Contemporary theories about science and medicine is a thread that follows the vampire motif through its many incarnations as a means of relating the supernatural to the natural world.

The story which appears before *Carmilla* is titled *The Room in the Dragon Volant.* It shares a similarity with John Galt's "The Buried Alive" (1821) in that a drug is used to incapacitate the protagonist, who nevertheless is aware of his surroundings, including his own living burial. In a departure from the *Blackwood's* stories, however, Le Fanu takes care not to focus on the sensation of his narrator: "I must not try to recall what is indeed indescribable – the multiform horror of my own thoughts. I will relate, simply, what befell, every detail of which remains sharp in my memory as if cut in steel."[62] Le Fanu focuses on events rather than feelings. The "sensation" of the narrator cannot be described, and so Le Fanu chooses not to attempt to do so, and instead continue the narrative. This plot-driven style of writing is a marked shift from the sensation stories of the previous decades, and likely a result of the saturation of the market by such stories.

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[60] Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly*, 8.
[61] Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly*, 9.
[62] Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly*, 233-4.

Carmilla is by far the most substantial figure in the anthology, and it is perhaps intentional that her appearance is the final story in the anthology, as it, more so than any other story in the collection, leaves unresolved questions for the reader. Jack Sullivan discusses these unresolved aspects of the story, which include the identity of Carmilla's mother and the rest of her party. He also notes that, unusually in a Le Fanu story, "we *see* Carmilla; she is the only supernatural force which Le Fanu allows us to observe directly, in scene after scene."[63] Le Fanu's stories frequently feature otherworldly creatures prominently, and yet still retain their air of mystery by keeping the creatures in the shadows. In later works like *Dracula*, the title character appears and speaks for less than a third of the novel, but Carmilla is featured throughout, and speaks directly to the narrator, although she never narrates herself. Sullivan credits "Le Fanu's dark, ambiguous eroticism" as "a means toward making his vampire seem eerie and mysterious,"[64] but declares that the homosexual aspect is not what makes the story seem unsettling. According to him, it is the only Le Fanu story "in which sensuality does not take on a one-dimensional association with evil."[65] Carmilla, like Varney, is both the victimizer and victim. She seems to love Laura: "I live in your warm life, and you shall die - die sweetly die – into mine…to die as lovers may – to die together, so that they may live together."[66] Carmilla feels a morbid, possessive, jealous love, similar to Varney in her genuine and passionate emotion.

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[63] Jack Sullivan, *Elegant Nightmares: The English Ghost Story from Le Fanu to Blackwood* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1980), 63.
[64] Sullivan, *Elegant Nightmares*, 65.
[65] Sullivan, *Elegant Nightmares*, 64.
[66] Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly*, 263, 270.

Unlike both Ruthven and Varney, Carmilla in her vampiric assaults does not retain her human appearance. Laura describes the creature that attacked her as "a sooty-black animal that resembled a monstrous cat…It appeared to me about four or five feet long for it measured fully the length of the hearthrug as it passed over it…The two broad eyes approached my face, and suddenly I felt a stinging pain as if two large needles darted, an inch or two apart, deep into my breast."[67] By making the vampire take on an animal form in order to pierce Laura's breast, Le Fanu avoids the overt act of transgression that a woman biting another woman's breast would be. Le Fanu is the first author to associate the direct act of vampirism with an animal. Stoker will also use this association in Dracula's ability to transform into wolves and bats. This adds an element of bestiality to the motif.

Another unique aspect of Le Fanu's *Carmilla* is the power of the church and Christianity against the vampire. This aspect was not seen in earlier vampire literary works, once again demonstrating the motif's flexibility. Le Fanu lends the motif a legitimacy by evoking the power of religion. Religion is another of the "motives and influences" which act upon "the labourer or artisan," to use Eliot's terms.[68] Religion, according to Frazer, also belongs to the "pious and enlightened portion of the community," and "directly prepares the way for science."[69] Religion, therefore, lends legitimacy to a story where other supernatural elements might not. Stoker uses the religious element in *Dracula* as well, by having his hunters utilize the sacred wafer and crucifix

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[67] Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly,* 278.
[68] Eliot. "The Natural History of German Life," 56.
[69] J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Comparative Religion, Vol. 1* (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1894), 32.

against the title character. When a funeral procession for one of Carmilla's

victims passes Carmilla and Laura, the former reacts strongly:

> 'You pierce my ears,' said Carmilla, almost angrily, and stopping her
> ears with her tiny fingers. 'Besides, how can you tell that your religion
> and mine are the same; your forms wound me, and I hate funerals.
> What a fuss! Why you must die--*everyone* must die; and all are
> happier when they do…Well, *her* funeral is over, I hope, and *her*
> hymn sung; and our ears shan't be tortured with that discord and
> jargon. It has made me nervous.'…Her face underwent a change that
> alarmed and even terrified me for a moment. It darkened, and
> became horribly livid; her teeth and hands were clenched, and she
> frowned and compressed her lips, while she stared down upon the
> ground at her feet, and trembled all over with a continued shudder as
> irrepressible as ague. All her energies seemed strained to suppress a
> fit, with which she was then breathlessly tugging; and at length a low
> convulsive cry of suffering broke from her, and gradually the hysteria
> subsided. 'There! That comes of strangling people with hymns!' she
> said at last. 'Hold me, hold me still. It is passing away.'[70]

The sound of the hymns gives Carmilla her fits, and she speaks of

feeling "strangled" by the noise. It repels her, just as the crucifix and the

sacred wafer repel Dracula and the vampire Lucy Westenra. Carmilla appears

terrifying to Laura when she is faced with Christianity. Carmilla states that

"everyone must die; and all are happier when they do," implying that she is

happier now having died than she was while living. Perhaps the hymn affects

her because it is a reminder of her ultimate death which she cannot escape. It

is also a possibility that her anger is more a product of her guilt, since the girl

has died because of her.

Carmilla's attitude toward religion is also strangely more complex than

any vampire before or since. Rather than it completely repelling her, she

debates it with her host, Laura's father, who claims: "'We are in God's hands:

nothing can happen without his permission, and all will end well for those who

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[70] Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly*, 266-7.

love him. He is our faithful creator; He has made us all, and will take care of us.' 'Creator! Nature!' said the young lady (Carmilla) in answer to my gentle father. 'And this disease that invades the country is natural. Nature. All things proceed from Nature--don't they? All things in the heaven, in the earth, and under the earth, act and live as Nature ordains? I think so.'"[71] Like the folkloric vampire, Carmilla brings plague and disease with her. She is also, however, firm in her belief that her existence and all that it entails is natural. Her plagues and her presence are not, in her mind, supernatural – they come from nature, as all things do, and as Dr. Hesselius states in the prologue.

Carmilla's belief in her natural affliction, and her questioning of the existence of God, echoes the nineteenth century crisis of faith. The publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859 changed scientific and religious discussion "by challenging the time of the biblical creation and the boundary between human and animal."[72] Carmilla's transformation into a cat-like creature also blurs the boundaries between the human and the animal, making this aspect of the motif particularly relevant at this point in time. Darwin's theory of evolution also brought into question the Christian doctrine of a creator God. Darwin's *Descent of Man* was published in 1871, the year before *Carmilla*, and it applied the theory of evolution to human evolution, in contradiction of Biblical teaching.

The decline in Christianity and its effect on society was debated throughout the century – in 1881, James Anthony Froude wrote that "an established religion…is the sanction of moral obligation; it gives authority to the commandments, creates a fear of doing wrong, and a sense of

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[71] Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly*, 270.
[72] Roger Luckhurst, ed., *Late Victorian Gothic Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), xx.

responsibility for doing it…To raise a doubt about a creed established by general acceptance is a direct injury to the general welfare."[73] Froude describes the 1840s as a time when "all round us, the intellectual lightships had broken from their moorings, and it was then a new and trying experience. The present generation" of the 1880s had "grown up in an open spiritual ocean, which has got used to it and has learned to swim for itself," and who "will never know what it was to find the lights all drifting, the compasses all awry, and nothing left to steer by except the stars."[74] From the mid-century, the perceived decline of strict Evangelical Christianity opened up new and terrifying possibilities for the next generation.

The decline became especially noticeable in the 1870s. As Jose Harris has suggested, "religion became more secularized in the decades after 1870, retreating into an increasingly nebulous, undogmatic 'social' Christianity."[75] John Gross argues that "it is undoubtedly possible to detect by the 1880s a widespread faltering of Victorian self-confidence, a new edginess and uncertainty about the future…The commonest reaction was withdrawal, a retreat into nostalgia, exoticism, fine writing, *belles-lettres*."[76] *Carmilla* was published in 1872, at a time when secularization was on the rise. Her character reflects an increased questioning of the power of religion during that time. She is a creature of an older age who embraces the secularization of the later decades of the nineteenth century.

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[73] James Anthony Froude, "The Oxford Counter-Reformation," *Good Words* (1881): 237.
[74] Froude, "The Oxford Counter-Reformation," 234.
[75] Jose Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirits: A Social History of Britain 1870-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 358.
[76] John Gross, *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters: Aspects of English Literary Life since 1800* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1969), 132.

Carmilla blurs the boundaries of time and the boundaries of gender. She is a female creature with the ability to penetrate another female, and she appears to be solely attracted to the feminine. She possesses features and attitudes of both genders, according to Laura: "Except in these brief periods of mysterious excitement her ways were girlish; and there was always a languor about her, quite incompatible with a masculine system in a state of health."[77] Stoker will also borrow this description for his non-vampire character, Mina, whom he describes as possessing a "man's brain…and [a] woman's heart."[78] It seems incongruous that Laura would describe Carmilla as "incompatible with a masculine system in a state of health," since Carmilla is obviously not a masculine figure. Laura's ability to see her as such legitimizes in her mind her transgressive feelings of attraction toward another woman. The tone throughout the story is uneasy, as if both the narrator and therefore the reader are unsure of the nature of Laura and Carmilla's relationship, and unsure of their feelings toward it. Laura admits at the end of the story that she fancies that she "heard the light step of Carmilla at the drawing room door," in an wishful fashion.[79]

As well as her responsibility for her own actions toward Carmilla, Laura's free will is called into question. Carmilla appears to have a hypnotic power over Laura: "Now the truth is, I felt rather unaccountably towards the beautiful stranger. I did feel, as she said, 'drawn towards her,' but there was also something of repulsion. In this ambiguous feeling, however, the sense of attraction immensely prevailed. She interested and won me; she was so

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[77] Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly,* 265.
[78] Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (1897), ed. Glennis Byron (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1998), 274.
[79] Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly*, 319.

beautiful and so indescribably engaging."[80] The feeling of both attraction and

repulsion, as mentioned previously, is a recurrent feature of the motif, which

Le Fanu and Stoker harness. Carmilla's power is hypnotic: "From these

foolish embraces, which were not of very frequent occurrence, I must allow, I

used to wish to extricate myself; but my energies seemed to fail me. Her

murmured words sounded like a lullaby in my ear, and soothed my resistance

into a trance, from which I only seemed to recover myself when she withdrew

her arms."[81] Carmilla must touch her victim in order to put her into a trance,

unlike Dracula, who demonstrates hypnotic powers through his gaze. In this

regard, Carmilla is like the mesmerist, who must make passes of his hands in

order to put his subject into a trance. According to the *Westminster Review*:

"Passes are made by the mesmerizer, which convey to the mind of a patient

observing them an idea of some mysterious influence being exerted over him;

and an influence is therefore really obtained; but one dependent wholly upon

the force of the impression."[82] While Carmilla must use the touch of her

embrace to entrance her victim, Dracula has merely to use his eyes, a power

more hypnotic than mesmeric. Mesmerism, while still popular in the 1870s,

had largely disappeared by the 1890s when Dracula appeared, indicating that

both vampires are a product of their times.

Carmilla's demise evokes a sense of pity in the reader. Unlike the later

victims of vampires in *Dracula*, and indeed Dracula himself, who is described

as looking peaceful after death, Carmilla's fate is not nearly so pleasant:

"[Carmilla's lover] has left a curious paper to prove that the vampire, on its

expulsion from its amphibious existence, is projected into a far more horrible

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[80] Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly*, 260-1.
[81] Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly,* 264.
[82] Anonymous, "Electro-biology," 166.

life."[83] Whether this fate is the punishment for Carmilla's vampire existence, for her transgression in questioning the existence of God, or for her unconventional sexuality, is left ambiguous. The text, like many of Le Fanu's stories, leaves the reader with unresolved questions and a feeling of something unsaid.

Carmilla's death is described in detail: "The body, therefore, in accordance with ancient practice, was raised, and a sharp stake driven through the heart of the vampire, who uttered a piercing shriek….Then the head was struck off, and a torrent of blood flowed from the severed neck."[84] Le Fanu demonstrates his knowledge of the vampire in folklore by using the methods detailed in the introduction, cutting off the head and driving a stake through the heart. The same methods will be described by Stoker in *Dracula*. Stoker's source material might not be folklore, but Le Fanu's tale. Stoker also repeats the theme of the female vampire, although she is not the central figure of his text. Jarlath Killeen notes, however, that "Le Fanu consistently treats Carmilla far more sympathetically than Stoker does his female vampires."[85] The feeling that Laura has toward Carmilla, Jonathan Harker has toward the vampire women in Dracula's castle: "There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear."[86] Harker does not, notably, feel the same attraction toward Dracula as toward the women – he finds him repulsive. Le Fanu, however, embraces the transgressive homosexual attraction between his characters, in a version of

[83] Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly,* 318.

[84] Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly,* 315-6.

[85] Jarlath Killeen, "In the Name of the Mother: Perverse Maternity in 'Carmilla,'" in *Reflections in a Glass Darkly: Essays on J. Sheridan Le Fanu*, ed. Gary William Crawford, Jim Rockhill and Brian Showers (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2011), 351.

[86] Stoker, *Dracula*, 69.

the motif which will only be affirmed in the works of Anne Rice in the 1970s, almost a hundred years later.

The sympathy for the vampire in *Carmilla* and *Varney* cannot be found in the later novel *Dracula.* Despite several cinematic interpretations to the contrary, the title character in *Dracula* feels no guilt for his actions, nor love for any creature except himself. Stoker returns the vampire to being an unfeeling monster, having more in common with the villains of sensation novels. This changing attitude toward the vampire figure suggests a changing attitude toward the foreign, and the unknown, as the century neared its end.

Dracula was published in 1897, but it is far from being the only vampire tale between 1872 and the end of the century. A great many of these stories featured female vampires, including Anne Crawford's *The Mystery of the Campagna* (1886), Julian Hawthorne's *Ken's Mystery* (1888) and Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Good Lady Ducayne* (1896). Robert Louis Stevenson also published his story *Olalla* in 1885, in which the protagonist is sent to Spain to live with a once noble family to recuperate from an injury. It features an instance where the protagonist cuts his hand, and the title character's mother becomes animated at the flow of blood and bites him:

> I held out my two hands from which the blood was oozing and dripping. Her great eyes opened wide, the pupils shrank into points; a veil seemed to fall from her face, and leave it sharply expressive and yet inscrutable…the next moment my hand was at her mouth, and she had bitten me to the bone. The pang of the bite, the sudden spurting of blood, and the monstrous horror of the act, flashed through me all in one, and I beat her back; and she sprang at me again and again, with bestial cries…her strength was like that of madness; mine was rapidly ebbing with the loss of blood.[87]

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[87] Robert Louis Stevenson, *Olalla* (1885) in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Other Tales,* ed. Roger Luckhurst (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 128.

Although Stevenson never calls the character a vampire, the animal comparison and lust for blood are strong associations of the vampire motif. The fact that the family was once noble echoes Carmilla's history, as does the fact that they are foreign. Sara Wasson argues that *Olalla* foreshadows vampire stories of the twentieth century by focusing on "vampirism as genetic inheritance,"[88] and contrasts this approach with Stoker's *Dracula*, where vampirism is a curse brought by a foreign body. In *Olalla*, the vampiric degeneration and devolution the family suffers is brought about by their own heredity and in-breeding, rather than by an outsider. Neverthless, the fear of the outsider, and the foreign other, is implicit in the text as the bearers of this hereditary plague are themselves foreign, who can conceivably transmit it to the English protagonist when he seeks an ultimately unfulfilled romantic relationship with the title character.

Even stories from earlier periods, such as Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), feature foreign characters with uncontrollable tempers and a taste for blood, such as Rochester's Jamaican wife Bertha: "'She sucked the blood: she said she'd drain my heart," said Mason."[89] The foreign has always been an association of the vampire since the motif appeared in English literature, but towards the end of the century, the fear of the foreign was renewed in the still unsolved Jack the Ripper murders in the autumn of 1888. The murders took place in Whitechapel, a district of East London that was home to a large immigrant population, and the first suspects in the hunt for the Ripper's

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[88] Sara Wasson, "Olalla's Legacy: Twentieth-Century Vampire Fiction and Genetic Previvorship," *Journal of Stevenson Studies* 7 (2010): 55.
[89] Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre* (1847), ed. Margaret Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 213.

identity were foreign, largely Russian immigrants and Polish Jews.[90] The first name the press linked to the Ripper after the murder of Mary Ann Nichols on 31 August 1888, was John Pizer, a Polish Jewish bootmaker, known to the locals as "Leather Apron." A leather apron was a garment commonly worn by Jewish immigrants in the area, who had been fleeing persecution from Eastern Europe and Russia in the 1880s, and the name "Leather Apron" became a common term of abuse for Jews, according to Judith Walkowitz.[91] The *Pall Mall Gazette* described Leather Apron as either "a Jew or of Jewish parentage, his face being of a marked Hebrew type."[92] The *East London Observer* also noted "His…thin lips too had a cruel sardonic kind of look, which was increased if anything by the drooping dark moustache and side whiskers…He appeared splay footed and spoke with a thick guttural foreign accent."[93] The description of Leather Apron's face is strikingly similar to Harker's description of *Dracula* in the novel published nearly a decade later: "The mouth, so far as I could see it under the heavy moustache, was fixed and cruel-looking."[94] Stoker may likely have been thinking of Jack the Ripper suspects when he described his own predatory attacker of women. Both newspaper articles emphasize the foreign aspect of the suspect, and this led to an increased suspicion of the foreign, and the Jews in particular, especially after the double homicide of Elizabeth Stride and Catherine Eddowes.

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[90] According to Philip Sugden, more than half of the original six suspects named by Inspector Frederick Abberline and Assistant Commissioner Robert Anderson were immigrants: John Pizer, a Polish Jew, Aaron Kosminski, a Polish Jew, Michael Ostrog, a Russian immigrant, and Seweryn Antonowicz Kłosowski, alias George Chapman, a Polish immigrant. Philip Sugden, *The Complete History of Jack the Ripper* (London: Robinson Publishing, Ltd., 1994), 3.

[91] Judith Walkowitz, "Jack the Ripper" in *Urban Culture: Crictical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies, Volume 4*, ed. Chris Jenks (London: Routledge, 2004), 177.

[92] "The Horrors of the East End," *Pall Mall Gazette* (8 September 1888).

[93] "Leather Apron," *East London Observer* (15 September 1888).

[94] Stoker, *Dracula*, 48.

On the night of 30 September 1888, a piece of Catherine Eddowes's apron was found in Goulston Street in Whitechapel alongside some graffiti written in white chalk which read: "The Juwes (sic) are the men who will not be blamed for nothing."[95] The writing was quickly removed on the order of Police Superintendent Thomas Arnold. His reasoning was as follows: "In consequence of suspicion having fallen upon a Jew named 'John Pizer' alias 'Leather Apron' having committed a murder in Hanbury Street a short time previously, a strong feeling existed against the Jews generally, and as the Building upon which the writing was found was situated in the midst of a locality inhabited principally by that Sect, I was apprehensive that if the writing were left it would be the means of causing a riot and therefore considered it desirable that it should be removed having in view the fact that it was in such a position that it would have been rubbed by persons passing in & out of the Building."[96] Despite Arnold's efforts to avoid anti-Semitic demonstrations, the association of the Ripper with the Jews remained, as did the association of the Ripper with the vampire.

As the murders continued throughout September and October of 1888, several newspapers began comparing the Ripper to a vampire. The *East London Advertiser* wrote: "It is so impossible to account, on any ordinary hypothesis, for these revolting acts of blood that the mind turns as it were instinctively to some theory of occult force, and the myths of the Dark Ages rise before the imagination. Ghouls, vampires, blood-suckers, and all the ghastly array of fables which have been accumulated throughout the course

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[95] PC Long, "PC Long's report, 6th November 1888," quoted in *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, ed. Stewart P. Evans and Keith Skinner (London: Constable and Robinson Ltd., 2000), 185.

[96] Thomas Arnold, "Report, 6 November 1888," quoted in *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook,* 188.

of centuries take form, and seize hold of the excited fancy."[97] The writer treats ghouls, vampires, and blood-suckers as three separate creatures, indicating that by 1888, the vampire had developed into a distinct figure in the public consciousness. The nature of the Ripper's murders, including the mutilation and removal of sexual organs, is perhaps suggestive of some association between sexual violence and the vampire motif.

The *Daily Telegraph* also gave its opinion of the Ripper murders as being the product of men who are similar to monsters, and who should be dispatched just as readily: "There are natures 'mad' only in being immeasurably bad – beings who look like men, but are rather demons, vampires, of whom society has the right to be quickly rid, without too much attention to the theories of mental experts."[98] The vampire in this case is a creature worthy only of a swift death and no sympathy, unlike Varney or Carmilla. The newspaper equates people who are insane with vampires, and believes that it is in the best interest of society to destroy them, without interference from "mental experts." The association between insanity and vampires is made explicit in Stoker's *Dracula,* when Dracula's insane servant, Renfield, aids him in terrorizing Mina. The implication is that the insane, if not monsters themselves, as *The Telegraph* suggests, are nevertheless allied with them. One of the Ripper suspects, Aaron Kosminski, was considered insane, and was confined in Colney Hatch Lunatic Asylum in 1890 after threatening his sister with a knife.[99] He was then transferred to Leavesden Asylum four years later. Case notes claim he had been mentally ill since at least 1885, during which time he suffered from auditory hallucinations and a

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[97] "A Thirst For Blood," *East London Advertiser*, 6 October 1888.
[98] "News from Whitechapel," *The Daily Telegraph*, 10 September 1888, 3.
[99] Paul Begg, *Jack the Ripper: The Definitive History* (London: Routledge, 2003), 334.

paranoid fear of being fed by other people.[100] It was theorized that he had

been driven insane by "self-abuse" and "solitary vices," contemporary

euphemisms for masturbation.[101] Although it is unlikely that the identity of the

Ripper will ever be known, Kosminski exemplifies many of the fears his

contemporaries would likely have looked for in a suspect – foreign immigrant

prone to fits of rage, "solitary vices," and sexual transgressions. These

attributes can also be ascribed to the vampire motif throughout the nineteenth

century, particularly in *Dracula.*

The Ripper murders increased contemporary fears of the insane and

the immigrant in the early 1890s, during the time Stoker was creating his

vampire (One of Dracula's addresses in which he had his boxes of earth

deposited was 197, Chicksand Street, Mile End New Town in Whitechapel,

the district associated with the Ripper murders).[102] The next chapter focuses

on *Dracula*, and how these and other themes come together to create what

for many is the definitive vampire.

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[100] Begg, *Jack the Ripper*, 335.
[101] Begg, *Jack the Ripper*, 337.
[102] Stoker, *Dracula,* 300.

Chapter Four - "Up-to-date With a Vengeance": The Rise of Dracula

Dracula, according to Ken Gelder, is a novel which "a veritable 'academic industry' has built itself around."[1] Since its centenary in 1997, *Dracula* has become ever more popular, with criticism that includes both the novel and numerous film versions. In the years since the centenary, *Dracula* and vampire scholarship has flourished, though many of these critics focus exclusively on *Dracula*, at the expense of the many other vampire texts which have contributed to the motif. My original contributions to this section include Dracula as a deviant in view of Stoker's own theories of sexuality, the New Woman and their fight against the Contagious Diseases Act, the remarkable similarities between Dracula, Van Helsing, and Quincey Morris, the three foreigners in the novel, and Renfield as a degenerate artist.

Upon its initial publication in 1897, reviews of the novel broadly commented on its eagerness to take horror to its extreme conclusion. The review in *The Athenaeum* states: "The strengthening of a bygone faith in the fantastic and magical view of things in lieu of the purely material is a feature of the hour, a reaction – artificial, perhaps, rather than natural – against late tendencies in thought. Mr. Stoker is the purveyor of so many strange wares that 'Dracula' reads like a determined effort to go, as it were 'one better' than others in the same field."[2] A review in *The Spectator* a month later agrees with this assessment, addressing the same aspect of the text: "Mr. Bram Stoker gives us the impression – we may be doing him an injustice – of having deliberately laid himself out in *Dracula* to eclipse all previous efforts in the domain of the horrible, - to 'go one better' than Wilkie Collins (whose method

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[1] Ken Gelder, *Reading the Vampire* (Routledge, London, 1994), 65.
[2] Anonymous, "Review of *Dracula*," *The Athenaeum* (June 26, 1897): 835.

of narration he has closely followed), Sheridan Le Fanu, and all the other professors of the flesh-creeping school."[3] The story is read as an effort to outdo previous stories in terms of the horror of its subject matter, with little consideration of how or why the text succeeds in horrifying its audience. The reviews both focus on the author's supposed intention to horrify, with critiques regarding the characters and epistolary format, and even the setting. The "flesh-creeping" label seems to represent a form of critical dismissal similar to that implied by the "sensation" tag. Indeed, the reviewer's association of Stoker with Le Fanu and Collins confines him to the sensation genre, since, as discussed in the previous chapter, both of those authors were defined in such a way.

Even in 1897, any story featuring fantastical elements seems to have been read by reviewers as a tale to satisfy the apparently insatiable appetites of the masses for the horrific. Any interpretation of the work relating to contemporary events is largely ignored. In an interview with Bram Stoker, Jane Stoddard claims: "Though Mr. Stoker did not say so, I am inclined to think that the literary agent is to him a nineteenth century vampire."[4] Though intended as a joke, it is interesting to see the interviewer associate a middle-class professional with a vampire, possibly a satirical jab at the workings of capitalism. Ironically in *Dracula*, it is the middle-class professionals who bring about the death of the vampire. As Dracula is a member of the aristocracy in the novel, the vampire in this case can still be read as a metaphor for capitalism. The novel, according to Geoffrey Wall, centers on "the crisis of the

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[3] Anonymous, "Review of *Dracula*," *The Spectator* (July 31, 1897): 150.
[4] Jane Stoddard, "Mr. Bram Stoker: A Chat with the Author of *Dracula*," *British Weekly* (July 1, 1897): 185.

bourgeois family,"[5] with the middle-class professional protagonists taking on the role of the proletariat who rise up against the oppressive aristocratic blood drinker.

Modern scholars interpret the events of the novel in their historical context. Leslie Ann Minot reads Lucy's attack on children as symbolic of the sexual molestation of toddlers.[6] She cites historical evidence for this reading as well as textual evidence, claiming that *Dracula* was conceived as early as 1890, a year after the passage of the 1889 Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. This enabled the state to intervene, for the first time, in relations between parents and children.[7] Such an act would naturally be created in order to prevent child abuse, whether physical or sexual, by a parental figure. Stoker was a friend of W. T. Stead, a newspaper editor who controversially highlighted cases of child sexual abuse and prostitution in the *Pall Mall Gazette*; therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Stoker was aware of the contemporary concern regarding child abuse. [8] Minot equates this with his female vampires's attacks on children. Not only does Lucy lure away children as the "bloofer lady," but Dracula's three women in the castle also devour a child Dracula has kidnapped from the village. By casting the maternal woman as a child kidnapper and molester, Stoker, in Minot's view, seeks to highlight the plight of the abused child.

The novel may also be informed by the repeal in 1886 of the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, and the subsequent rise of the New Woman. The

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[5] Geoffrey Wall, "'Different from Writing': *Dracula* in 1897," *Literature and History* 10.1 (1984): 15.
[6] Leslie Ann Minot, "Vamping the Children: The 'Bloofer Lady,' the 'London Minotaur' and Child-Victimization in Late Nineteenth-Century England," in *Victorian Crime, Madness and Sensation*, ed. Andrew Maunder and Grace Moore (Farnham: Ashgate, 2004), 207.
[7] Minot, "Vamping the Children," 209.
[8] Minot, "Vamping the Children," 208.

understanding of the term "New Woman" has changed since it was coined by Sarah Grand in her 1894 newspaper article "The New Aspect of the Woman Question." Grand describes the "New Woman" as one who is equal to a man, though retaining the traditional duties of wife and home.[9] The term was one of some contention – in 1896, the year before *Dracula* was published, American writer Emma Wolf dismissed the term in her book *The Joy of Life*:

> I hate that phrase "New Woman." Of all the tawdry, run-to-heel phrases that strikes me the most disagreeably. When you mean, by the term, the women who believe in and ask for the right to advance in education, the arts, and professions with their fellow-men, you are speaking of a phase in civilisation which has come gradually and naturally, and is here to stay. There is nothing new or abnormal in such a woman. But when you confound her with the extremists who wantonly disown the obligations and offices with which nature has honored them, you do the earnest, progressive women great wrong.[10]

Wolf is careful to differentiate between "earnest, progressive women" and radicals, those who would "wantonly disown the obligations and offices with which nature has honored them," in other words, disregard the duties of wife and mother. According to Wolf, the "New Woman" was a natural state of societal progression. Its proponents still wished to retain the duties of motherhood which were customary for women during that time period. There is a disconnect, in Wolf's mind, between people using the term to describe radical women demanding complete freedom and independence from all duties, and the reality of the "New Woman" movement. By this point, however, the term had become synonymous for

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[9] Sarah Grand, "The New Aspect of the Woman Question," *The North American Review* 158.448 (March 1894): 270.

[10] Emma Wolf, *The Joy of Life* (New York: A. C. McClurg and Company, 1896), quoted in Martha H. Patterson, *Beyond the Gibson Girl: Reimagining the American New Woman, 1895-1915* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 1.

any independent, radical-thinking woman, as evidenced by Stoker's use of it in his text.

Although Mina attempts to distance herself from the New Woman by saying she and Lucy "should have shocked the 'New Woman,' with our appetites,"[11] she possesses an independent spirit and an ability to act without the assistance of men. When her husband is ill, she takes charge of the hunt for Dracula. She is also a loving wife and future mother, in deference to the "obligations and offices with which nature has honored [her]." She possesses, according to Van Helsing, both a "man's brain…and [a] woman's heart,"[12] embodying aspects of both genders. She ridicules the New Woman who might suggest the "idea that men and women should be allowed to see each other asleep before proposing or accepting. But I suppose the New Woman won't condescend in future to accept; she will do the proposing herself."[13] The idea that men and women should see each other sleeping before marriage was transgressive. It suggested sexual relations before marriage, and the idea is taboo in Mina's mind. She distances herself from that idea, and from the independent female sexuality it connotes. This reflects a contemporary concern about the New Woman - if female sexuality is unchecked, it could result in children of untraceable bloodlines.[14] *Dracula* is a novel concerned with blood and bloodlines, and the New Woman threatened the purity of this by her desire to have mastery over her own body and reproductive organs. This was made apparent by the New Woman's protests against the Contagious Diseases Acts, and their eventual repeal in 1886, which was one

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[11] Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (1897), ed. Glennis Byron (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1998), 123.
[12] Stoker, *Dracula*, 274.
[13] Stoker, *Dracula*, 123-4.
[14] Tabitha Sparks, *The Doctor in the Victorian Novel: Family Practices* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 118.

of the first campaigns spearheaded by the New Woman's movement. It also contributed to the popular perception of the New Woman as a campaigner for sexual emancipation, and a threat to traditional masculine dominance.

The Contagious Diseases Acts were originally passed in 1864, in the aftermath of the Crimean War. They were designed to protect the armed forces from venereal diseases from prostitutes. Since marriage was discouraged in the armed forces, and homosexuality was outlawed, prostitution was seen as a necessary evil for soldiers. According to contemporary beliefs, male sexuality necessitated "an irregular indulgence of a natural impulse."[15] The responsibility for venereal diseases, according to the Report of the Royal Commission, lay with the prostitutes. According to the report, these women dispensed sexual favors merely "as a matter of gain," thus ignoring economic hardship as a reason for prostitution and preferring to blame sexual perversity.[16] The Acts allowed appointed surgeons and police to detain and examine prostitutes for signs of infection. If signs were found, the women were given the choice of appearance in front of a magistrate's court or confinement in Lock Hospital for three months. In 1866, the Acts gave policemen the authority to seize and examine a suspect, and extended the confinement period to six months, removing the option of appearing before a magistrate.[17] Ironically, the Royal Commission report ruled that men suspected of having venereal diseases should not be subject to the same inspection as the prostitutes, as this would "destroy their self-respect and

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[15] "REPORT OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS," *The Sydney Morning Herald* (13 October 1871): 3
[16] Sparks, *The Doctor in the Victorian Novel*, 115.
[17] Sparks, *The Doctor in the Victorian Novel*, 115.

counteract the good efforts of the reforms against prostitutes."[18] Judging by these laws, the prostitutes were solely to blame for the spread of sexual diseases, due to their perverse sexual appetites.

The gender bias and double standard was supported by contemporary medical opinion, which cited the physiological and psychological differences between men and women. According to Thomas Laycock in 1860, there was a difference between the sexes in both blood and blood-vessels, as well as in the nervous system. Men, according to Laycock, are more likely to hemorrhage from very slight wounds, a kind of hemophilia, which "although transmitted by the female side, appears almost exclusively in males."[19] The female, however, has a smaller, less developed brain and "is of the nervous temperament. Her nervous system is therefore more easily acted upon by all impressions, and more liable to all diseases of excitement."[20] This is similar to the alleged susceptibility of women to sensation novels, as discussed in the previous chapters. The hyper-sensitive, hysterical woman is also more prone to lunacy. According to Cesare Lombroso and William Ferrero in 1895, "female lunatics in general surpass their male prototypes in all sexual aberrations and tendencies…two-thirds of female lunatics suffer from maladies of the reproductive organs, which…bring on convulsions and produce abnormal sensations, which are transformed into illusions, hallucinations, delirium, or obscene impulses."[21] In *Dracula*, the only vampires aside from the title character are female. Dracula is not described with the

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[18] Frank Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England since 1830* (New York: Routledge, 1987) 10.

[19] Thomas Laycock, *Mind and Brain or, the Correlations of Consciousness and Organisation; with Their Applications to Philosophy, Zoology, Physiology, Mental Pathology, and the Practice of Medicine, Volume 2* (Edinburgh: Sutherland and Knox, 1860), 314.

[20] Laycock, *Mind and Brain*, 316-17.

[21] Cesare Lombroso and William Ferrero, *The Female Offender* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1895), 295.

same "voluptuous wantonness"[22] as are the female vampires, hinting that unrestrained, wanton sexuality is typical in the female. This echoes the belief proposed by Lombroso and Ferrero, that women are intrinsically more sexual creatures when not restrained by the conventions of society and sanity. Certainly the discrimination against prostitutes seems to support this contemporary view, that sexuality is something women should be locked up for, whilst men are allowed to indulge their natural urges.

It was the New Woman who defeated the medical establishment's discrimination against the prostitutes, which might explain why Mina is so eager to distance herself from them. Josephine Butler led a campaign against the Acts as early as 1869, joined by John Stuart Mill and Florence Nightingale. This was one of the first public campaigns to consolidate the women's movement in Victorian England, and brought with it publicity both for the Contagious Diseases Acts, and for the New Woman.[23] Through this campaign, prostitutes and other women who were traditionally denied a voice began to influence the political and medical establishment. The medical establishment voiced its opposition, and attempted to undermine early feminism with its claims that intellectual energy in the woman enervated her reproductive organs, as has been demonstrated in previous chapters.[24] *Dracula* features two medical doctors, Van Helsing and Seward, and their efforts generally hinder rather than help the two female protagonists. Lucy is left unattended more than once by the men, allowing Dracula to attack her, and Van Helsing's unwillingness to share his information about vampirism

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[22] Stoker, *Dracula*, 249.

[23] F. B. Smith, "Ethics and Disease in the Late Nineteenth Century: The Contagious Diseases Acts," *Historical Studies* 15 (1971): 128.

[24] Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (New York: Viking, 1990), 40.

leads indirectly to her death. Seward is less culpable, but his negligence in monitoring the lunatic Renfield, the servant of Dracula, results in Renfield inviting Dracula to enter and attack Mina. Although they may not be intentionally trying to sabotage the female characters, there is a conflict between the women and the medical figures in the novel – it is, after all, Van Helsing who organizes and demands the ritual staking of Lucy, a reassertion of male dominance over female sexuality.

As stated in the introduction, Ernest Jones's essay *On the Nightmare* was first published in 1912, and explicitly detailed the sexual interpretation of the vampire figure. Originally in German, however, Jones's interpretation was not available in English until after the First World War. The essay was not printed in its entirety in English until 1931, nine years after the release of *Nosferatu* in 1922, the first cinematic adaptation of Stoker's novel. The film attempted unsuccessfully to avoid copyright issues by distancing itself from Stoker's text, renaming the vampire Count Orlok, and making his death nothing like the race against time in the novel.[25] Rather, the destruction of Orlok is brought about by the heroine, after reading a passage in *The Book of Vampires* that states: "Only a woman can break [the vampire's] frightful spell – a woman pure in heart – who will offer her blood freely to Nosferatu and will keep the vampire by her side until after the cock has crowed."[26] The sexual implications of the passage are obvious – it is not enough that the vampire's

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[25] Murnau was later successfully sued by Florence Stoker, Bram's widow, and all copies of *Nosferatu* were ordered destroyed, although this was obviously unsuccessful. Referenced in Raymond T. McNally and Radu Florescu, *In Search of Dracula: The History of Dracula and Vampires* (London: Robson Books, 1994), 169.

[26] *Nosferatu: eine Symphonie des Grauens*, directed by F. W. Murnau (Film Arts Guild, 1922), film.

bloodlust be sated, but also his carnal lust. His victim must sacrifice her

virginity by distracting the vampire all night.

Nosferatu is one of O'Flinn's "versions" of Dracula. Its effect on future

vampire cinema and the public perception of vampires cannot be overstated –

the film's ending is the first instance of a vampire being destroyed by sunlight,

which will become a common feature in later vampire fiction. The film also

focuses on the sexual aspect of the vampire. As I have demonstrated, the

motif has consistently had transgressive sexuality associated with it. Dracula,

like Ruthven, Varney, and Carmilla before him, preys on virginal women.

Dracula's bite awakens their sexuality. In the novel, the unbridled sexuality of

the woman can only be destroyed by a phallic penetration of a stake through

the heart, restoring virtue in death. This is an obvious interpretation in what

Carolyn Dever refers to as the "gang-rape" scene of Lucy's staking:

> The Thing in the coffin writhed; and a hideous, blood-curdling
> screech came from the opened red lips. The body shook and
> quivered and twisted in wild contortions; the sharp white teeth
> champed together till the lips were cut, and the mouth was smeared
> with a crimson foam. But Arthur never faltered. He looked like a
> figure of Thor as his untrembling arm rose and fell, driving deeper
> and deeper the mercy-bearing stake, whilst the blood from the
> pierced heart welled and spurted up around it.[27]

The sexual violence in this passage is obvious – the woman has been

stripped of all consent and identity, referred to as a "thing" which must submit

to the phallic object "driving deeper and deeper" into her body, which bleeds

at its invasion. It is a self-justified violation – the "mercy-bearing stake"

reasserting the dominance of male over female, the naturally phallic male

over the unnatural "she-male" demon, a woman with penetrative abilities.

According to Dever, "Lucy's friends then close the crypt on her, literally and

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[27] Stoker. *Dracula*, 254.

figuratively consigning her to an eternity of passivity enforced by the phallus."[28] While this reading is plausible, the vampire motif is often more nuanced than Dever allows.

The question of gender, for instance, is a complex one in *Dracula*. Mina worries about being associated with the New Woman, while Van Helsing claims she has a "man's brain…and [a] woman's heart."[29] Mina is a hybrid male-female figure, having male organs and female organs, just as Lucy in her vampiric form has the body of a woman but the penetrative abilities of a male. Mina is punished for her transgression by being forced to suck from Dracula's breast, another instance of the blurring of male and female roles. The male figures of the novel are both hunter and hunted, aggressor and victim. Harker waits in "languorous ecstasy"[30] to be penetrated by the female vampires, and is rendered unconscious during his wife's forced feeding by Dracula. He is frequently passive, as well as being the primary active agent at the beginning of the novel. Though the men are initially unable to save their women from Dracula, they do become the aggressors by the end.

Lillian Nayder describes the blood transfusion scenes as a kind of "'polyandry' strengthening patriarchal ties,"[31] various men claiming the same woman. Lucy, however, is not averse to the idea of marrying more than one man. On the day she receives three marriage proposals, she asks Mina, "Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save

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[28] Carolyn Dever, "Everywhere and Nowhere: Sexuality in Victorian Fiction," in *A Concise Companion to the Victorian Novel,* ed. Francis O'Gorman (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 169.
[29] Stoker, *Dracula*, 274.
[30] Stoker, *Dracula*, 70.
[31] Lillian Nayder, "Science and Sensation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Sensation Fiction,* ed. Andrew Mangham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 162.

all this trouble?"[32] It is perhaps this potential promiscuity which leads Lucy to be Dracula's first victim in England, though even Mina is not spared from his advances. This may, however, be because of her relationship to her husband – homosocial and homosexual interpretations of the novel abound which read Mina as a means for Dracula to claim Jonathan Harker. These interpretations are inspired by Dracula claiming "This man belongs to me!" and his look at Harker when he tells the women in his castle, "Yes, I too can love."[33] Christopher Craft notes Harker's feminine passivity in the scene as he "awaits a delicious penetration from a woman whose demonisation is figured as the power to penetrate,"[34] and notes an "erotic triangle" in the novel, where women are merely the means to bind men together.

Indeed, by the late twentieth century, the vampire motif parades a comprehensive transgressive sexuality: necrophilia, incest, genital rape, oral rape, sadism, masochism, adultery, promiscuity, menstrual taboos, and castration, as well as "a symbolic act of enforced fellatio,"[35] and an act of reverse menstruation. Gelder sees the vampiric act itself as a kind of perverse infantilism in "oral sadism – where sucking (love) turns to biting (hate)."[36] The childlike act relates to the Oedipal idea of the vampire as both mother and father, with the child both wanting to love and hurt the parental figure, according to Ernest Jones.[37] Although such themes were not

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[32] Stoker, *Dracula*, 91.
[33] Stoker, *Dracula*, 70-1.
[34] Christopher Craft, "'Kiss Me with Those Red Lips': Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," *Representations* 8 (1984): 109.
[35] C. F. Bentley, "The Monster in the Bedroom: Sexual Symbolism in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," *Literature and Psychology* 22 (1972): 30.
[36] Gelder, *Reading the Vampire*, 67.
[37] Ernest Jones, *On the Nightmare* (London: Hogarth Press, 1931), 110.

necessarily recognized by contemporary audiences, here we see added to the vampire motif yet another layer.

Jonathan Harker describes his use of shorthand as "nineteenth century up-to-date with a vengeance. And yet, unless my senses deceive me, the old centuries had, and have, powers of their own which mere 'modernity' cannot kill."[38] The statement is a succinct summary of the novel itself – the Count is a product of the "old centuries," and only primitive rituals can kill him, while modern medical advances, such as blood transfusions, provide him with more sustenance. Geoffrey Wall describes *Dracula* as being "fascinated by the evident contradiction between the archaic stuff of its narrative and the contemporary techniques which allow that narrative to emerge."[39] The novel, as well as the characters in it, are caught between the ancient and the modern. Dracula is a creature of early superstition walking contemporary London streets. David Glover notes that the novel contains the "latest in late-Victorian consumer goods, many of which function as a means of recording…appearances and hence permit a precise memorializing of the past: cameras, photographs, and portable typewriters…At the same time, in *Dracula* the past extends across space into those zones of arrested development which modernity has not fully reached, where the trains do not yet run on schedule or where the railway lines have come to an abrupt halt."[40] It is this modernity mixed with ancient superstitions that the contemporary reviewer in the *Spectator* objected to: "We think [Stoker's] story would have

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[38] Stoker, *Dracula*, 67.
[39] Wall, "'Different from Writing'," 15
[40] David Glover. *Vampires, Mummies, and Liberals: Bram Stoker and the Politics of Popular Fiction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 58-9.

been all the more effective if he had chosen an earlier period. The up-to-dateness of the book – the phonographic diaries, typewriters, and so on – hardly fits in with the medieval methods which ultimately secure the victory for Count Dracula's foes."[41] As Oliphant and Mansel stated in the previous chapter, however, sensation is only effective in a realistic and modern setting. In *Dracula,* the setting brings the reality of a primitive superstition into the heart of the British Empire. In this way, it exposes its latent fears, unrecognized or unspoken by its contemporary critics. The text marries the past and the present in an uneasy union. Technology separates not only time but nations, where the past is literally another country.

Harker on his journey to Transylvania notes the delays in the railway as a symptom of traveling back to a more primitive past: "It seems to me that the further East you go the more unpunctual are the trains. What ought they to be in China?"[42] Harker at the beginning of his diary states that he is "leaving the West and entering the East,"[43] which reveals a desire to keep those two regions separate. He is eager to draw boundaries between the West and the East, establishing a dichotomy of "us" versus "them." Harker views the population as "a wonderful spectacle,"[44] something to be admired and yet remain disconnected from.

Harker also notes the different ethnic groups that inhabit the area, a mix of three separate states: "The district [Count Dracula] named is in the extreme east of the country, just on the borders of three states, Transylvania, Moldavia, and Bukovina…In the population of Transylvania there are four

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[41] Anonymous, "Review of *Dracula,*" *The Spectator*, 151.
[42] Stoker, *Dracula*, 33.
[43] Stoker, *Dracula,* 31.
[44] Gelder, *Reading the Vampire¸* 11.

distinct nationalities: Saxons in the south, and mixed with them the Wallachs, who are the descendants of the Dacians; Magyars in the west, and Szekelys in the east and north"[45]. Harker, according to Gelder, appears "ill at ease with hybrid identities,"[46] noting his landlady's strange, hysterical mix of German and "some other language which I did not know at all" which he dismisses as "very ridiculous, but I did not feel comfortable."[47] Harker prefers his divisions and categorizations in all things: people, nationalities, and languages. Where there is a mixture, as in Transylvania, he is uncomfortable. The blend of cultures and languages makes him uneasy, reflecting emergent anxieties over ethnicity.

Harker arrives in Transylvania in the 1890s, a time when, according to Gelder, "Transylvania became increasingly significant…not least because Britain had interests in this part of Europe which it wanted to consolidate."[48] Harker's journey, read in this context, looks like a scouting trip before a potential invasion. Although his declared purpose is the sale of a house to the Count in England, he might also be, as Friedrich Kittler reads him, "an English spy…[under] the shadow of espionage" at a time when tourism is merely "imperial tourism" in the service of Western interests.[49] Harker is interested in gaining knowledge of the country - he asks the Count about Transylvanian history, and he makes a note to get the recipe of a local dish for Mina, in addition to all the data he gathered about Transylvania in the British Library before leaving London. Like Dracula, who keeps English texts and handbooks in his castle, Harker is studying Transylvanian culture. Harker's purpose may

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[45] Stoker, *Dracula,* 32.
[46] Gelder, *Reading the Vampire*, 9.
[47] Stoker, *Dracula,* 34-35.
[48] Gelder, *Reading the Vampire*, 2.
[49] Friedrich Kittler, "Dracula's Legacy," *Stanford Humanities Review* 1 (1989): 152.

not be overtly as sinister, but he is the visitor who prompts Dracula's reverse colonialism.

From the moment of Harker's entrance into Dracula's domain, he is hunted: "The baying of wolves sounded nearer and nearer, as though they were closing round on us from every side. I grew dreadfully afraid."[50] It is the first time Harker mentions feeling fear, rather than nervousness or unease. He begins to lose his confidence in his own senses, forcing himself to write a diary to preserve his sanity: "Feeling as though my own brain were unhinged or as if the shock had come which must end in its undoing, I turn to my diary for repose."[51] To write is to preserve one's cultural identity, to cling to routine, like dressing for dinner to ward off "going native." Erskine Childers, in his 1906 novel *Riddle of the Sands,* states: "I have read of men who, when forced by their calling to live for long periods in solitude - save for a few black faces - have made it a rule to dress regularly for dinner in order to…prevent a relapse in barbarism."[52] Harker's diary is to keep up appearances: "Let me be prosaic so far as facts can be; it will help me to bear up, and imagination must not run riot with me. If it does I am lost."[53] Harker's fear of losing himself to his imagination is a fear of losing his sensible English identity to become one of the superstitious, fearful Transylvanians. Patrick Brantlinger endorses this theory, by noting that "much imperialist writing after about 1880 treats the Empire as a barricade against a new barbarian invasion; just as often it treats the Empire as a 'dressing for dinner,' a temporary means of preventing Britain

[50] Stoker, *Dracula*, 43.
[51] Stoker, *Dracula,* 68.
[52] Erskine Childers, *Riddle of the Sands: A Record of Secret Service* (1903), ed. David Trotter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 15.
[53] Stoker, *Dracula*, 56.

itself from relapsing into barbarism."[54] Harker succeeds in preserving his English identity, as shown in the letter Mina receives from Sister Agatha, who reports that she "[saw] from his violent demeanour that he was English."[55] Harker is still recognizable as an Englishman; his identity is safe for the moment, though the Count is now in London.

The Count describes himself as a member of "a conquering race," one who "as Voivode crossed the Danube and beat the Turk on his own ground…who, when he was beaten back, came again, and again, and again, though he had to come alone from the bloody field where his troops were being slaughtered, since he knew he alone could ultimately triumph."[56] Dracula is a persistent invader who does not take defeat lightly. Brantlinger states that "the whirlpool of the Count's own ideas, confounding racism with the mixing of races, pride in pure blood with blood-sucking cannibalism, and aristocratic descent with witchcraft and barbarism, reads like a grim parody of the 'conquering race' rhetoric in much imperialist writing, a premonition of fascism. In common with several other Gothic invaders in late Victorian fiction, moreover, Dracula threatens to create a demonic empire of the dead from the living British Empire."[57] Dracula's methods for accomplishing this are more subtle and sinister than back in the distant past – he intends to infiltrate the population by becoming just like them. He has a collection of English books and insists on Harker correcting his English if he makes a mistake. He also reveals to Harker his plans for infiltration: "I am content if I am like the rest, so that no man stops if he see me, or pause in his speaking if he hear my words,

[54] Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism: 1830-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 230.
[55] Stoker, *Dracula,* 134.
[56] Stoker, *Dracula*, 59-60.
[57] Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, 233-4.

to say, 'Ha, ha! A stranger!' I have been so long master that I would be master still – or at least that none other should be master of me."[58] Dracula wants what Harker tried to avoid in Transylvania - Dracula wants to become just like the native inhabitants, while Harker struggles to preserve his English identity. One seeks to preserve his identity while the other seeks to hide it, or destroy it altogether. Their different strategies reveal their different approaches to colonization and their differing concerns for identity. Harker sees himself as an Englishman, and it is this identity which he struggles to preserve by his routine. Dracula, however, is willing to sacrifice his identity for power. According to Stephen Arata, Dracula's "physical mastery of his British victims begins with an intellectual appropriation of their culture, which allows him to delve the workings of the 'native mind.'"[59] Harker, perhaps consciously, did not delve enough into the workings of the native Transylvanian mind, preferring to keep them at a distance and seeing them as being "picturesque."[60] Dracula, whose purpose is colonization at any cost, will risk the danger of diversity; that is "the *loss* of one's nationality."[61] He does this so successfully that not only is he able to manipulate Harker, but he is able to become him.

Harker is shocked to find Dracula climbing out of the window dressed in a "suit of clothes which [Harker] had worn while traveling…There could be no doubt as to his quest…any wickedness which he may do shall by the local people be attributed to [Harker]."[62] The local people cannot tell the difference

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[58] Stoker, *Dracula*, 51.
[59] Stephen D. Arata, "The Occidental Tourist: *Dracula* and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization," *Victorian Studies* 33.4 (Summer 1990): 634.
[60] Stoker, *Dracula*, 33.
[61] Gelder, *Reading the Vampire*, 11.
[62] Stoker, *Dracula*, 75.

between Dracula and Harker; the woman who comes to the castle accuses Harker of stealing her child - she shouted out "when she saw [Harker's] face at the window."[63] Even Harker can only see his own reflection in the mirror, although Dracula is right behind him - the implication is that the Count is so adept at impersonating Harker that even Harker cannot tell the difference between them. Arata points out that "the truly disturbing notion is not that Dracula impersonates Harker, but that he does it so well."[64] Dracula's success at impersonating his intended victims is one of the biggest threats of the novel.

Dracula, however, is not the only foreigner in the novel. In fact, he resembles closely one of the heroes of the novel, Dr. Abraham Van Helsing. The description of them at one point is nearly identical: "[Dracula's] thick eyebrows that met over the nose now seemed like a heaving bar of white-hot metal;" "Van Helsing's face grew set as marble, and his eyebrows converged till they almost touched over the nose."[65] They even have the same, awkward way of speaking English: Dracula says "[Harker] will be in Exeter, miles away, probably working at papers of the law with my other friend, Peter Hawkins. So!"[66] Van Helsing uses the same way of speaking: "[Knowledge of the blood donations] would at once frighten and enjealous [Holmwood], too. There must be none. So!"[67] They are, of course, both foreign, and both exercise dominance over the English population they associate with. Van Helsing even shares Dracula's power of hypnotism over Mina later in the novel.

[63] Stoker, *Dracula*, 77.
[64] Arata, "The Occidental Tourist," 638.
[65] Stoker, *Dracula*, 70, 156.
[66] Stoker, *Dracula,* 53.
[67] Stoker, *Dracula,* 164.

Van Helsing also has his sinister moments, for instance after the death of Lucy when he "laughed till he cried."[68] He seems to find a morbid idea of humor in the death of Lucy and the victimization of Mina: "'Do you forget,' [Van Helsing] said, with actually a smile, 'that last night [Dracula] banqueted heavily and will sleep late?'"[69] There is a vicious streak in Van Helsing, despite his knowledge and his heroics. Even the characters in the novel seem eager to regard all foreigners as being the same. Mina receives a telegram from Van Helsing telling of Lucy's death and asking for Mina's help, and she jumps to the conclusion that he will "throw some light upon Jonathan's sad experience."[70] Van Helsing makes no mention of Jonathan's experience in his letter, however – he contacts Mina because of her association with Lucy. Mina has no reason to conclude that he will be able to shed some light upon Jonathan's experience other than the fact that Van Helsing is foreign and Jonathan's experience occurred in a foreign land. Harker too, who has never met Van Helsing, blindly puts his faith and trust in him: "Van Helsing is the man to unmask [Dracula] and hunt him out, if he is anything like what Mina says."[71] Harker, like Mina, seems to believe that because both Dracula and Van Helsing are foreign, they are the perfect opponents for each other. Van Helsing was unable to save Lucy from Dracula, and so the Harkers' faith in his abilities seems incongruous, if not entirely misplaced.

However, Van Helsing seems to have intimate knowledge of the Count's movements, more than he could learn about vampires by research. After Mina's first hypnotism, when the band has determined that the Count is

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[68] Stoker, *Dracula*, 211.
[69] Stoker, *Dracula*, 335.
[70] Stoker, *Dracula*, 217-18.
[71] Stoker, *Dracula*, 225.

on a ship, only Van Helsing seems to know that he is headed back to

Transylvania. Van Helsing's only explanation for this knowledge of Dracula's

destination is: "I know it so well, as if a great hand of fire wrote it on the

wall."[72] This is hardly in keeping with the hero's normal accumulation of facts

and reasonable deduction, and seems to be a lucky guess. And yet the group

still follow Van Helsing's instincts, possibly out of desperation, but more likely

in the same belief the Harkers' had – that because both Van Helsing and

Dracula are foreign, they are able to understand each other better than others

can, as if they share the telepathic connection that Dracula has with Mina.

The reviewer in *The Athenaeum* also confused Van Helsing's

nationality: "The German man of science is particularly poor, and indulges,

like a German, in much weak sentiment."[73] The reviewer, by mistaking the

character's nationality, seems to consider the actual nationality of Van Helsing

as of little importance as long as he is foreign. He also stereotypes Van

Helsing as being "like a German," as do many of the others in the novel,

excusing Van Helsing's eccentricities and extremes of emotions as typical of a

foreign temperament until he reveals the truth of Lucy's condition to them.

Although the novel is fiction, its reviews suggest something of contemporary

British attitudes towards the rest of Europe, attitudes that made the power of

Dracula as an invading foreign menace that much more effective.

Van Helsing, of course, is not the only foreigner in the group. The

American Quincey Morris also helps the English heroes defeat Dracula,

although he too, according to Stephen Arata, has his moments of suspicion:

"Morris leaves, without explanation, the crucial meeting in which Van Helsing

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[72] Stoker, *Dracula,* 355.
[73] Anonymous, "Review of *Dracula,*" *The Athenaeum,* 835.

first names the Count as their enemy; a moment later he fires his pistol *into* the room where they are seated."[74] Arata suggests that Morris's explanation of firing at "a big bat" is a lie to conceal his true purpose of firing on "the assembled Westerners."[75] It is also worthwhile to note that Morris disappears shortly after Dracula's assault on Mina to "run across the lawn and hide himself in the shadow of a great yew tree. It puzzled me to think why he was doing this."[76] No explanation for his doing this is ever given, and Morris hiding in the shadow implies that he is, indeed, in the shadow of the great darkness, Dracula, and suggests to Arata that Morris and Dracula are allied in some way. They are both foreign, and Seward's puzzlement at Morris's actions implies that he is suspicious of Morris. However, complete trust and faith is put in him, as in Van Helsing, likely because of his non-Englishness. Morris also shares Dracula's power to influence people; Seward asserts that "Quincey Morris had always been the one to arrange the plan of action, and Arthur and I had been accustomed to obey him implicitly."[77] Clearly, Morris holds great psychological power over the two men, who submit themselves to control by a foreigner, an idea that appalls the men in relation to Dracula's control over the women. It is another incongruous point in the text, a fear of reverse colonization that is also desired.

Stoker was a man from elsewhere, from Dublin, a man who lived most of his life in London working for Sir Henry Irving. In 1872, at the age of 25, he advocated the mixing of the Irish race with other, select races: The Irish were "to serve to counterbalance effeteness in the American, and want of principle

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[74] Arata, "The Occidental Tourist," 642.
[75] Arata, "The Occidental Tourist," 642.
[76] Stoker, *Dracula*, 323.
[77] Stoker, *Dracula,* 346.

in the Mongolian…This leavening race of future America…maybe become in

time the leading element of Western civilization."[78] This quotation is

noteworthy for multiple reasons – Stoker echoes Renfield's prophecy that

America would one day be a world power: "The Pole and the Tropics may

hold allegiance to the Stars and Stripes."[79] Stoker also equates effeteness

and femininity with weakness. Stoker repeats this belief in his later novel *Lady

Athlyne*, published in 1908:

> All men and all women…have in themselves the cells of both
> sexes; and the accredited masculinity or femininity of the individual
> is determined by the multiplication and development of these cells.
> Thus the ideal man is entirely or almost entirely masculine, and the
> ideal woman is entirely or almost entirely feminine. Each individual
> must have a preponderance, be it ever so little, of the cells of its
> own sex; and the attraction of each individual to the other sex
> depends upon its place in the scale between the highest and lowest
> grade of sex. The most masculine man draws the most feminine
> woman, and *vice versa*; and so down the scale till close to the
> border line is the great mass of persons who, having only
> development of a few of the qualities of sex, are easily satisfied to
> mate with anyone. This is the true principle of selection which is
> one of the most important of Nature's laws; on which holds in the
> lower as well as in the higher orders of life, zoological and botanical
> as well as human. It accounts for the way in which such a vast
> number of persons are content to make marriages and even
> liaisons, which others, higher strung, are actually unable to
> understand.[80]

Stoker appears to condemn bisexuals and homosexuals as people so

far down the scale as to mate with anyone, although interestingly enough, he

believes that the potential for attraction to the same sex lies in anyone, since

both males and females contain the cells of both sexes. His views offer an

explanation for the fluidity of gender in *Dracula* – once Lucy consents to mate

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[78] Bram Stoker, "Address Delivered…November 13, 1872, by the Auditor," (Dublin: John Charles and Son, 1872), quoted in Paul Murray, *From the Shadow of* Dracula: *A Life of Bram Stoker* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004) 37.
[79] Stoker, *Dracula*, 283.
[80] Bram Stoker, *Lady Athlyne*. (London: Heinemann, 1908), 82.

with Dracula, she slides further down the scale until she is so promiscuous in vampire form as to mate with anyone, gender or age being irrelevant. The same is true for Dracula himself, and this could account for his tender look at Harker. Gender becomes immaterial for a man so far down the scale as Dracula. According to Stoker's beliefs, Dracula's masculine and feminine cells have so mingled together that he penetrates men and nurses women.

Stoker's 1872 address cites Ireland to represent the West, and Mongolia to represent the corrupting, Eastern influence. Mongolia is an Asian country, rather than a European one like Transylvania where Dracula originates, or the Netherlands from where Van Helsing hails. The East, to Stoker's Irish-centric mind, is very far East, rather than the more localized European countries. He plays with typical constructs about West and East throughout the novel: Lucy *West*enra is the first person to succumb to Dracula. The West is where the sun sets and consequently the place that is safest for Dracula to thrive. The East is where the sun rises, where hope comes from in the metaphorical sense of the dawn and also in the actual sense of Van Helsing. The lines between West and East, like so many aspects of the text, are once again blurred.

As with the threat of the New Woman, the threat of reverse colonization also comes from within the Empire itself, via the moral and mental degeneration of its native citizens. Max Nordau's influential text *Degeneration*, published in 1895, two years before *Dracula*, focused on the concept of degeneration in art and literature, declaring: "Degenerates are not always criminals, prostitutes, anarchists, and pronounced lunatics; they are often

authors and artists."[81] Nordau echoes the sentiments of the critics of

sensationalism quoted in the previous chapters: "Books and works of art

exercise a powerful suggestion to the masses…If they are absurd and anti-

social, they exert a disturbing and corrupting influence on the views of a whole

generation."[82] This poses an interesting context for thinking about one of the

characters in *Dracula*, the lunatic R.M. Renfield.

Renfield is introduced by Dr. Seward as his "zoophagus" patient, who

consumes spiders, flies, and even a bird at one point in order to ingest their

life to prolong his own. Dracula does this too, but Renfield's focus is not blood,

but rather souls. The cause of his madness is never established – he is not a

vampire, nor are there any indications that Dracula has bitten him, yet he

appears to share the same telepathic connection to Dracula as his victims do.

Valerie Pedlar notes Stoker's reticence as to the causes of Renfield's

madness: "A Freudian approach is classically retrospective, aimed at

uncovering causes; here, on the other hand, there is no mention of a history

to the disorder, no attempt to detect causes; the trajectory is forward, and the

object of understanding not so much the patient but a situation and the means

of bringing the situation under control."[83] Seward's initial description of him is

that he is "so unlike a normal lunatic."[84] The reader can only guess at what

Seward means by a "normal lunatic," but Renfield's peculiar system of belief

intrigues Seward, who indulges his delusions and describes him as "mentally-

accomplished."[85] Indeed, Renfield shows an aptitude for mathematical

[81] Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1895), 2.
[82] Nordau, *Degeneration,* 2.
[83] Valerie Pedlar, *The Most Dreadful Visitation: Male Madness in Victorian Fiction* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), 141.
[84] Stoker, *Dracula*, 93.
[85] Stoker, *Dracula*, 93.

calculation in his desire to consume life. He "keeps a little notebook in which he is always jotting down something. Whole pages of it are filled with masses of figures, generally single numbers added up in batches, and then the totals added in batches again, as though he were 'focussing' some account, as the auditors put it."[86] There is a method to Renfield's madness, and that method is a scientific one. He does not blindly serve Dracula - when Dracula arrives at Carfax, Renfield swears to him: "I am here to do Your bidding, Master. I am Your slave, and You will reward me, for I shall be faithful."[87] Renfield offers his services for the promise of a reward, not merely for slavish devotion – he only lets Dracula in after Dracula proves to him that he can summon an army of rats for Renfield to consume. Although mad, his character is not idiotic. He is on the border between being almost supernatural (seeming to be able to divine Dracula's coming) and all too mortal (suffering paralysis when Dracula throws him to the ground). His nature too borders between being an antagonist to the heroes and an ally, alternately condemning Mina to death by letting Dracula in, and then trying to save her and sacrificing himself. Renfield is the redemptive character whose timely confession of his collaboration with Dracula ultimately saves Mina. He also appears well-read and aware of contemporary events, congratulating Quincey Morris on his state's admission into the Union. Renfield demonstrates knowledge of the Monroe doctrine, as well as being familiar with Van Helsing's work on the evolution of the brain.[88] He shows familiarity with the Bible, paraphrasing "The blood is the life" doctrine from Leviticus 17:14 repeatedly. Since no causes of Renfield's madness are ever discussed, it is possible that he may be one of Nordau's

[86] Stoker, *Dracula,* 102.
[87] Stoker, *Dracula,* 137.
[88] Stoker, *Dracula*, 283.

examples of a man driven to degeneracy by reading about "anti-social" topics, and developing a perverse religious mania. Renfield possibly falls under Henry Maudsley's heading of men who prefer "idleness, luxury, and self-indulgence more than to work, thrift, and self-denial" – in other words, the author, the artist, and the aristocrat.[89] Dracula typifies this sort of man – the former warrior in his vampiric state has transformed into a parasite feeding off the lower classes. Renfield's madness, according to Valerie Pedlar, "seems to be an endemic degeneracy through which foreign influences of a far more dangerous degeneracy can attack civilised society."[90] Pedlar also notes that most of the characters in the novel doubt their sanity at some point, asserting that *Dracula* blurs the line between madness and sanity in the same way it blurs the lines between science and superstition, foreign and native, men and women, and good and evil.

Contemporary beliefs in the causes of lunacy were linked to degeneracy - an affliction where the mind was returned to a more primitive, animalistic state. Lunatics also displayed physical, animalistic attributes and deformities, according to Nordau. These could include "imperfection in the development of the external ear…[and] irregularities in the form and position of the teeth." [91] These two points are particularly relevant in the character of Dracula, undoubtedly a moral degenerate. When he first meets Dracula, Harker notes of him: "The mouth…was fixed and rather cruel-looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth; these protruded over the lips…for the rest, his ears were pale and at the top extremely pointed."[92] The description coincides

[89] Henry Maudsley, *The Pathology of Mind* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1880), 32.
[90] Pedlar, *The Most Dreadful Visitation,* 155.
[91] Nordau, *Degeneration*, 12.
[92] Stoker, *Dracula*, 48.

with Nordau's assessment of a degenerate, and Van Helsing himself describes the Count as: "a criminal and of criminal type. Nordau and Lombroso would so classify him, and *qua* criminal he is of imperfectly formed mind."[93] Van Helsing subscribes to Nordau's theories that a deformed body equates to a deformed mind. There is, however, not a similar physical description of Renfield, degenerate or otherwise, who is the man incarcerated for having a deformed mind. This furthers Pedlar's theory that the text is more interested in Renfield as a means to an end rather than as a fully developed character. The exemplar of degeneration in the novel is Dracula, the supernatural criminal with the ability to control minds as well as enslave men.

Mesmerism, hypnotism, and telepathy feature strongly in *Dracula*, as well as in other vampire texts, as discussed in previous chapters. The practitioners of the mystic arts are the vampires and Van Helsing, implying that in the novel at least, this mystic power is granted only to the foreign. The subjects being entranced are both male and female – Harker describes being in a trance-like state when the vampire women attempt to attack him in Dracula's castle, and Mina uses her telepathic connection with Dracula to aid his pursuers in tracking him. The idea of mesmerism as a kind of "animal magnetism," can be read in the context of degeneration in *Dracula*. The vampire has the ability, according to Van Helsing, to "transform himself to wolf…he can be as bat…he can command all the meaner things: the rat, and the owl, and the bat – the moth, and the fox, and the wolf."[94] The vampire possesses the ability to physically transform into animals. His kinship with the

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[93] Stoker, *Dracula*, 383.
[94] Stoker, *Dracula*, 276, 278.

"meaner" things is so close that he can communicate with them. The vampire's "animal magnetism," is an aspect of his animal being.

Stoker appears to present mesmerism and hypnotism as synonymous, but there is an important distinction. Mesmerism involves mesmeric fluid manipulated by touch, and interest in the idea began to wane around the 1850s. Hypnotism, however, had a surge in popularity in the latter half of the century, thanks to the writings of James Braid in England and Charcot in France. Hypnotism has nothing to do with mesmeric fluid. Its power derives from the subject's psychological state and the suggestibility that that engendered.[95] Hypnotism could erase a personality, according to contemporary writer James Sully: "In the hypnotic trance it is possible to blot out from the subject's mind all that has occurred in his experience since a particular date, and in this way to restore the childish self. In the case of certain hysterical subjects, the hypnotic trance may disinter more than one abnormal personality which are buried and forgotten during the normal state."[96] This raises an interesting possibility in a reading of the novel – that the threat of vampirism and degeneration comes not from without but from within. Lucy's transformation may have less to do with the Count's outside influence and more to do with her buried, abnormal, nymphomaniacal personality. The possibility for transgression exists even in the novel's heroes, since both Harker and Van Helsing engage in forms of hypnotism. It is a further ambiguity in the novel – the process which allows the heroes to hunt down Dracula also may awaken their inner demons.

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[95] Alison Winter, *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 4.
[96] James Sully, "The Dream as a Revelation," *Fortnightly Review* 59 (March 1893): 361.

Hypnotism was, according to James Sully, more effective on the weak-minded or psychologically disturbed, hence Renfield is presented as susceptible to Dracula's influence. What is perhaps more surprising is that Mina, with her "man's brain", and Harker are more susceptible to hypnotism, although, as mentioned above, the text explores the continuity between madness and sanity. After all, the heroes gather in Dr. Seward's lunatic asylum, and they begin their hunt for Dracula from what might be thought of as the heart of madness.

Dracula's narrative structure adds to the complexity of the text by virtue of its multiple forms and narrators. The epistolary novel was no novelty – Wilkie Collins's novel, *The Woman in White*, had taken the same form nearly forty years previously. Both texts have striking similarities, as pointed out by the contemporary reviewers – a villainous Count with hypnotic abilities, mental asylum settings, and of course the unreliableness of their respective and varied narrators. The note at the beginning of *Dracula* suggests that whoever collated the papers was not one of the people who took part in the story. The papers are said to be "given from the standpoints and within the range of knowledge of those who made them."[97] It is "those" who made them, rather than "we" who made them. The collator of the story who "eliminated" all "needless matters" is an unknown.[98] "Needless matters" is a vague statement, which might include certain personal or scandalous matters that were edited out by the nameless editor. To this already uncertain framework are added the voices of multiple narrators – Harker's journal, Mina's journal and letters,

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[97] Stoker, *Dracula*, 29.
[98] Stoker, *Dracula*, 29.

Van Helsing's letters, and various newspaper clippings. Seward's diary is kept in phonograph, an oral rather than inscribed narrative, and a process whereby the voices of those he narrates are literally replaced by his own. This alternate form of transmission adds another layer of complexity to the "mass of material…There is hardly one authentic document; nothing but a mass of typewriting."[99] The veracity of such accounts may naturally be doubted by the reader. Van Helsing concludes the text with the statement: "We want no proofs; we ask none to believe us!"[100] However, Stoker offers convincing details in order to make the text more believable – the times of the trains are recorded from the beginning of the novel, for instance, and the rituals that Dracula must obey are outlined. These rituals serve to make the text more realistic, for the vampire is not omnipotent, unlike earlier vampires. Gary Day asserts that "the novel's form becomes its own content"[101] in that every character becomes obsessed with writing, and carries out the task as a kind of religious ritual. Dracula is interested in mastering the English language as a means of mastering the English nation. It is through their language and their familiar practices that the protagonists of the novel cling on to sanity. Stoker created a literary world in which science and superstition, technology and magic, rationalism and irrationalism, could co-exist. The written word is both the gateway into this world, and the means of salvation for its middle-class English protagonists.

The question of censorship preoccupied Bram Stoker. In 1908 he wrote an essay defending censorship in fiction for the greater good: "There is in

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[99] Stoker, *Dracula*, 419.
[100] Stoker, *Dracula*, 419.
[101] Gary Day, "The State of *Dracula*: Bureaucracy and the Vampire," in *Rereading Victorian Fiction,* ed. Alice Jenkins and Juliet John (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 90.

reality, whose existence and progress must be based on cosmic laws, no such thing as absolute freedom. The needs and necessarily recognised rights of individuals and groups must at times become so conflicting that some sort of give-and-take rules or laws are necessary to the general good."[102] Stoker considers writing to be a privilege, not a right. He also recognizes in writing the potential for the knowledge of evil, similar to the critics of sensation stories. True to the spirit of the protagonists of his novel, he advocates battling the evil: "It is natural for man to sin as to live and to take a part in the necessary strife of living. But if progress be a good and is to be aimed at in the organisation of national forces, the powers of evil, natural as well as arbitrary, must be combated all along the line. It is not sufficient to make a stand, however great, here and there; the whole frontier must be protected."[103] Stoker echoes Van Helsing after Mina asks him why they must chase after Dracula when he has left England: "It is necessary – necessary – necessary! For your sake in the first, and then for the sake of humanity."[104] The defeat of Dracula must not end in his retreat, but in his final dissolution, otherwise the plague of vampirism continues to spread. Similarly, in Stoker's view, books must be censored so that the "evil" ideas contained in them do not go on to infect others. He echoes the censors of the penny dreadfuls mentioned in the previous chapters. He compares the corruption of literature to religious blasphemy: "They in their selfish greed tried to deprave what others had striven to elevate. In the language of the pulpit, they have 'crucified

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[102] Bram Stoker, "The Censorship of Fiction," *The Nineteenth Century and After* 64 (July-December 1908): 480.
[103] Stoker, "The Censorship of Fiction," 486-7.
[104] Stoker, *Dracula*, 378.

Christ afresh.'"[105] Stoker equates writing with religion, and the debasement of the written word with the crucifixion of Christ. In his mind, the two sins are just as grievous. Although Stoker's support of censorship may seem curious considering the violent and erotic themes in *Dracula*, it is important to note that at the end of the novel the corruption is purified – the scar disappears from Mina's forehead, a physical indication of the presence of the pollution passing from her.[106] Here, in Stoker's ideal world, is the victory of good over the wantonness of evil, in both life and literature. He writes of dark matters only to more strongly illuminate the light of the human spirit, and its ultimate triumph over the forces of darkness.

The choice of narrators in the novel is telling in this regard. The title character never speaks except through the words of others. Most of the other characters are given their own voice, but Dracula remains silent. Maggie Kilgour offers a plausible theory that the absence of Dracula as narrator is Stoker's defense of moral art. By making his narrators upstanding and decent people, he is endorsing the idea that "art itself is the means of re-establishing the line between good and evil."[107] Stoker gives narrative voice and therefore control of the story to his heroes, and their writing is "the means by which the different characters preserve themselves against Dracula's vampiristic power of dissolution."[108] The act of writing is as effective a charm against vampirism as the crucifix. It is an assertion of identity, and the result is the salvation of that identity. According to Kilgour: "Writing is thus the hero of the work; the

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[105] Stoker, "The Censorship of Fiction," 485.
[106] Stoker, *Dracula*, 418.
[107] Maggie Kilgour, "Vampiric Arts: Bram Stoker's Defence of Poetry," in *Bram Stoker: History, Psychoanalysis and the Gothic*, ed. William Hughes and Andrew Smith (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1998), 55.
[108] Kilgour, "Vampiric Arts," 53.

compilation of the text is central to the battle against Dracula, as the community defeats him by piecing it and their individual bits of knowledge together."[109] It is the power and knowledge contained in the written word that bring about Dracula's downfall as effectively as the knife in his heart.

Stoker is curiously absent from his own text. Unlike Ruthven's immediate and enduring association with Lord Byron, Bram Stoker remained for many years in the shadow of his most famous character and of his employer, Henry Irving. Paul Murray, in a recent biography of Stoker, argues that rather than "a bundle of neuroses, an abject slave, a Renfield to Irving's imperious Dracula" as Stoker was viewed after his death, he was rather "the man who…to a large extent, *was* Dracula."[110] Murray argues that Stoker's creation has far more in common with Stoker himself than Irving. The Count attends to menial tasks within his castle, and he demonstrates a vast knowledge of bureaucracies and of the minutiae of everyday life. His knowledge of the law, railway timetables, and transportation are all matters Stoker would have been familiar with. Only in the last thirty years has Stoker himself been closely studied, and he is a man of many contradictions. He was an Irishman, though his work is "flavoured not with a distinctive Irishness, but expresses, rather, a blandness of taste that….[cannot] easily be assimilated into the Irish Studies canon,"[111] according to William Hughes. Other recent works, including *Dracula's Crypt: Bram Stoker, Irishness, and the Question of Blood* support this assessment. Joseph Valente claims that: "Stoker qualifies

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[109] Kilgour, "Vampiric Arts," 53.

[110] Paul Murray, *From the Shadow of* Dracula: *A Life of Bram Stoker* (Jonathan Cape: London, 2004), 1-3.

[111] William Hughes, *Bram Stoker's Dracula: A Reader's Guide to Essential Criticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 105.

neither as a proper Anglo-Irish-man nor as a slightly compromised metropolitan elite…*Dracula* is Stoker's greatest work in part because it registers this undecidability in a structural ambivalence, even skepticism, toward the racial distinctions, social hierarchies, and political assumptions that inform the Anglo-Irish literary heritage to which it is so often annexed."[112] The English influence on much of Stoker's adult life in London is obvious in the text, although his belief in the Irish and American rejuvenation of the West has been discussed previously. Stoker advocated the censorship of dark works, and yet he wrote a tale of a blood-sucking monster. He was a sickly boy who was confined to his bed as a child, and yet he was an active sportsman at Trinity College.[113] Even his eventual death from "exhaustion" is ambiguous: syphilis, a psychiatric condition, or a stroke.[114] These, the uneasy contradictions of Stoker's life, impart their tension and their energy into *Dracula,* the dominant and enduring version of the vampire motif. As I have been arguing, there is no singular cohesive vampire corpus, but rather various, constantly shifting representations. This is true before *Dracula*, and beyond.

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[112] Joseph Valente, *Dracula's Crypt: Bram Stoker, Irishness, and the Question of Blood* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 9.
[113] Murray, *From the Shadow of* Dracula, 24.
[114] Murray, *From the Shadow of* Dracula, 265.

Conclusion – "Love Never Dies": The Vampire in the Present Day

As I have suggested, the vampire motif is in flux, crossing cultures and historical epochs, and this fluctuation has continued to the present day. The motif has migrated from the textual to the cinematic medium. Cinema in particular has provided what might be termed a vampire stereotype in popular culture, in Bela Lugosi's 1931 portrayal of Dracula. Lugosi's distinctive accent appears in parodies of the figure, such as The Count in *Sesame Street.* Dracula is therefore a familiar character from childhood, even though a child might not be familiar with the source material. The wordplay of the title of 'count' with someone obsessed with counting is only an effective joke if the audience understands who the particular count is meant to reference. Similarly, in the recent *Hotel Transylvania* films, Dracula insists that he does not use the catchphrase "bleh bleh bleh," which is repeatedly quoted in the film when his name is mentioned. This joke is particularly interesting because it relies on the understanding that the audience is familiar not only with Bela Lugosi's Dracula, but also parodies of it, which is where the "bleh" catchphrase originated, according to David J. Skal. In his book, *The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror* (1994), he attests that the "bleh" comes from an impression of Lugosi by comedian Lenny Bruce in the 1960s.[1] Parody relies on the audience's familiarity with what is being mocked, and the fact that all ages recognize Dracula proves how pervasively the vampire has infused popular culture.

A recognizable form is not a singular form, however. Lugosi's Dracula is one of many cinematic incarnations, including Max Schreck's Count Orlok

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[1] David J. Skal, *The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror* (London: Plexus Publishing, 1994), 65.

in *Nosferatu* (1922). As mentioned previously, the sexual aspect of the motif was first explicitly recognized in a visual medium in this film. Lucie Armitt describes the scene as follows: "As Orlok enters Nina's chamber, the camera angle creates long shadows running from his hands, allowing those to caress torso, belly and breasts without making actual physical contact…the shadow play of *Nosferatu* enables otherwise taboo material to be presented on screen."[2] Subsequent film versions of *Dracula* will use similar cinematic devices to suggest sexual violence while avoiding the explicitness which would attract censorship. Lugosi's 1931 Dracula enters a sleeping woman's chamber and stands menacingly over her bed; the camera focuses on his steadily blurring eyes as he bends down to bite. Ironically, the off camera act of vampirism makes it even more suggestive. It allows the audience to imagine if the vampire bite is just a bite, or something more. The Lugosi version retains Mina's description of her attack in the novel, but changes the circumstances of it. The forced feeding from a vein in Dracula's chest is no longer there, nor is the drinking from the neck. Instead, Mina claims that he bit a vein in her wrist, a much less intimate area. Nevertheless, the visual erotic dimension of the vampire motif remains prominent in cinema.

In post-war cinema in Britain, the depiction of vampirism was still censored, to be replaced with an even more sexually suggestive scene. In 1958, Christopher Lee's Dracula is given limited screen time compared to earlier versions. However, he projects, as film historian Jonathan Rigby describes, a mixture of "erotic magnetism and animalistic ferocity which, though vividly present in Bram Stoker's novel, had never before been

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[2] Lucie Armitt, "Twentieth-Century Gothic," in *Terror and Wonder: The Gothic Imagination*, ed. Dale Townshend. (London: The British Library Press, 2014), 160.

captured on screen."[3] The "erotic magnetism" is apparent in a scene in which

Dracula enters his conscious victim's bedroom, nuzzles her face and neck,

and then presses her down on the bed as the scene cuts. In another instance,

the conscious victim is lying on the bed waiting for him as he bends over and

lifts his cape up, lowering his head, before the scene ends. The two women

are aware of Dracula's violation, though choose not to resist it. Their

consensus suggests that the vampiric assault is desirable, and this theme of

the willing victim appears in the majority of later cinematic interpretations.

Erik Butler argues that the early versions of Dracula share an

identification of the vampire with foreign otherness. Looking at *Nosferatu* in its

historical context of 1920s Germany, the vampire takes on an uncomfortable

association with Judaism. Orlok's appearance is a recognizable caricature of

the Jew: large, hooked nose, claw-like fingers, and bushy eyebrows. He is a

plague bearer who preys upon virtuous Aryan women. Adolf Hitler described

the Jews as "*Blutsauger*" (blood-suckers) in *Mein Kampf* in 1925, three years

after *Nosferatu* was released. The association between Jews and blood stems

from Biblical times, and a popular superstition in medieval Europe was that of

Jews participating in "blood libel." This has its roots in a historical event in late

twelfth century England, where a child known as William of Norwich was

allegedly sacrificed by Jews in 1144. According to Thomas of Monmouth, in

his book *The Life and Miracles of Saint William of Norwich*, William was

ritually sacrificed by the Jews of Norwich in a traditional crucifixion ceremony

which supposedly took place around Easter each year. In later years, the

popular explanation for these sacrifices was that Jews drained the blood of

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[3] Jonathan Rigby, *English Gothic: A Century of Horror Cinema* (Richmond: Reynolds and Hearn Ltd., 2000), 66.

Christian children, which they allegedly used in their recipes for bread and wine, "so that the Jews would literally devour the Christian life force throughout the passover festival."[4] The belief in the Jewish consumption of blood would make them readily identifiable as vampire-like figures. The myth persisted from medieval Europe through to twentieth century Europe, and into the present day.

Erik Butler argues that this ethnic anxiety made Lugosi's Dracula so powerful: "The foreign accent of Bela Lugosi…unsettles moviegoers in the same way that his direct stare into the camera…unnerves them…The 'Easternness' that Lugosi conveys in his performance is disturbing because it makes the familiar strange without rendering it wholly unfamiliar."[5] The nature of Lugosi's performance reflects the ambiguous nature of the vampire motif itself. Lugosi exemplified the foreign other, and the mistrust of the foreign other was taken to its extreme conclusion in the twentieth century during the Holocaust.

Stoker's Dracula does not speak with an accent, but rather "a strange intonation,"[6] according to Harker. Dracula is eager to blend in with his English surroundings, and he asks that Harker correct him when he makes a mistake. This, as discussed previously, typifies a fin de siècle fear of the ability of the other to blend in so effectively as to infiltrate without being recognized. It was not until 1958, however, that Christopher Lee's Dracula speaks with an English accent which acknowledges that aspect of the text. Dracula's bride in the film also speaks with an English accent, and succeeds in seducing

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[4] Paul R. Bartrop and Samuel Totten, "Blood Libel," in *Dictionary of Genocide, Volume 1: A-L* (London: Greenwood Press, 2007), 45.

[5] Erik Butler, *Metamorphoses of the Vampire in Literature and Film: Cultural Transformations in Europe, 1732-1933* (Rochester, Camden House, 2010), 45.

[6] Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (1897), ed. Glennis Byron (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1998), 46.

Harker, in a notable departure from the book. In the novel, the women's ambiguous nature as something foreign yet familiar appeals to Harker. In the 1958 film, the woman's nature as something wholly familiar results in his downfall.

In more recent years, the vampire has retained its erotic appeal, but taken on the aspect of romantic lover rather than aggressive seducer. Gary Oldman's Dracula in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) is cursed with vampirism after his wife dies, and his attraction to Mina arises from her resemblance to his dead wife. The film, directed by Francis Ford Coppola, deviates from the novel by turning Dracula into a tragic romantic figure, doomed to live a meaningless life through the centuries until he can be reunited with his true love. The tagline on the film poster, "Love Never Dies," seems to contradict the film's title as a faithful adaptation of Stoker's novel. Glennis Byron claims this interpretation is the vampire figure reflecting on the demands of modern culture:

> Our culture has turned a cold, alienating, impersonal monster obsessed with power and possession into the Byronic hero of eternal romance. One needs only to watch Francis Ford Coppola's 'Bram Stoker's Dracula'...Stoker's chilling 'This man belongs to me' has fizzled away into the sentimental banality of 'Love never dies.' All too often we have similarly humanized our own creations, our own late twentieth century vampires, given them infusions of 'good blood' to save them or turned their passionless bites into gentle 'exchanges,' forced them to anguish over moral questions, transformed them into glamorous aesthetes, sensitive lonely immortals, redemptive holy babies. Perhaps we have lost the true threat, the true violence, of Stoker's King Vampire.[7]

Glennis Byron's statement, while arguably true for Dracula, does not apply to vampires in general. As I have demonstrated, in both Varney and Carmilla, there is a precursor to the vampire who can love. While

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[7] Glennis Byron, ed., *Dracula* (1897) by Bram Stoker (Plymouth: Broadview Press, 1998) 25.

Glennis Byron compares modern vampires to the "Byronic hero of romance," the vampire actually based on Lord Byron is anything but a creature of eternal romance. Indeed, Ruthven is more similar in type to the cold, impersonal depiction of the vampire in Dracula. This supports my theory that the motif is constantly in flux, and that different ages add on to and are attracted to different aspects of it.

There does seem to be a renewed attempt to rehumanize vampires in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, notably in Anne Rice's *The Vampire Chronicles* (1976-2016) and Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series (2005-2008). Rice's first vampire novel, *Interview With The Vampire* (1976) involves an interview with a sympathetic vampire. By the end of the story, the interviewer Daniel begs to be made into a vampire by the vampire narrator Louis, who is surprised by his request since he told his story in an attempt to illustrate the agony he suffers as a vampire, rather than to make the vampire life appealing to a mortal. Rice's narrative acknowledges the ambiguity of the vampire motif – both a horrible state of existence and yet somehow seductive. Louis refuses to grant Daniel's request, and this vampire with a conscience trope will be seen throughout Rice's series. Rice's vampires with moral dilemmas and genuine emotions would be the prototype for Stephenie Meyer's vegetarian vampires, who refuse to drink human blood and feel undying and monogamous love for others.

These vampires may be a marked departure from the early incarnations of the nineteenth century, but as I hope to have shown, the motif is adaptable to various forms. The appeal of the vampire is in the

flexibility of the motif. Blood, the source of life, and the blurring of the living and the dead, is a source of fascination and unease. The vampire has always personified human anxieties in forms that are as diverse and varied as our fears.

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