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INTRODUCTION

This work aims at describing how the figure of the vampire has changed during the nineteenth century, a period that saw a florid proliferation of novels about vampires.

In the first chapter I focus briefly on the concept of Gothic literature whose birth is related, according to the majority of critics, to the publication of Horace Walpole’s *Castle of Otranto*, a short story about a ghost who hunts a castle. In the second part of the chapter, I deal with the figure of the vampire from a non-fictional point of view. This mythological creature, indeed, did not appear for the first time in novels, but its existence is attested already long time before the nineteenth century. The first document known about vampires dates back to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, during the Byzantine empire, but the official documents that affirm the existence of these creatures come in succession for the following centuries too. The chapter presents some examples of these evidences such as Antonio de Ferrariis’s *De situ Iapygiae*, Joseph Pitton de Tournefort’s *Relation d’un voyage au Levant*, Dom Augustin Calmet’s *Treatise on the Vampires of Hungary and Surrounding Regions*. Probably, the most significant account on vampirism presented in the chapter is the strange case of Arnold Paole, a soldier who became a vampire after being bitten by one of them. The chapter ends with the etymology of the word “vampire” whose first appearance is dated back to the eleventh century in the Book of Psalms.
The second part of this study concentrates on three literary works about vampires: John William Polidori’s *The Vampyre*, Théophile Gautier’s *La Morte Amoureuse* and Joseph Thomas Sheridan Le Fanu’s *Carmilla*. Polidori’s novella was published in 1819 and it is the first fictional work that present the figure of the vampire who, in his plot, is better known as Lord Ruthven, a young and fascinating nobleman. Polidori’s story has the merit of having influenced the majority of the later works on vampires not only in his homeland but oversea as well. In France, Théophile Gautier published another novella in 1836 entitled *La Morte Amoureuse* where he narrates the loving affairs of a Catholic priest, Romuald, and the charming Clarimonde, a female vampire who incarnates the features of the femme fatale, an extremely fascinating woman who brings men to ruin. Finally, the chapter ends with the study of the third novel, *Carmilla*, which appeared in 1872 presenting another female vampire and her Sapphic love for Laura, a young girl who lives in Styria in a solitary castle or schloss with her father, who is in the Austrian service.

The third and last chapter is entirely devoted to Bram Stoker’s masterpiece: *Dracula*. Published in 1897, the novel is the result of six years of studies, interviews and research carried out between London and Whitby. The plot presents, in addition to Count Dracula, other four female vampires who are all his ‘creatures’ and, indeed, he seems to be the only undead who is able to turn humans into vampires.
As it will be shown later, these four books present some common features such as bloodlust, passions, carnal inclinations, sexual and sinful urge and social anxieties.
1.1 Gothic Literature.

The word ‘Gothic’ has acquired different meanings throughout the centuries and, indeed, it may refer to literature, history, art or architecture. As David Punter points out, in a literary perspective the term ‘Gothic’ is generally related to those novels written between the 1760s and the 1820s by authors such as Horace Walpole, Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis, John Polidori or Mary Shelley. This group of literary works is characterized by common features such as an interest in the terrifying, the use of ancient settings, the frequent description of some supernatural event, the employment of stereotyped characters and the ability to create expectation and tension. This is the reason why these Gothic novels are usually set in ghostly castles where the hero or heroine is prey to appalling terrors and horrors caused by supernatural events or by a villain who may be a human but also a vampire, a ghost, a werewolf or even a monster.

According to Punter, originally, the word ‘Gothic’ meant ‘to do with the Goths’, that is to say with a Scandinavian tribe who played an important role in the closing stages of the Roman empire and whose language, the oldest in Germany, was Gothic. This first meaning changed during the eighteenth century when the interest shifted from geography to

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2 Punter, David. Ibid., p. 4-6.
history and the term began to be associated to the medieval period thus contrasting what was perceived as classical. The Gothic was related to chaos, excess and embellishment, it was the consequence of the uncivilized and associated to the wild, while the classical was the result of a set of norms and had a preference for order, simplicity and purity. The middle of the eighteenth century marked another shift of interest, from history to cultural values. This change was perceived in various fields since the medieval and its main features became fashionable literary, architecturally and artistically thus acquiring a positive connotation. In this period the medieval found its main expressiveness in architecture, especially in churches and abbeys but also in other kinds of buildings such as Horace Walpole’s Strawberry Hill which was modeled on an ancient castle.

Contextually, as David Punter underlines, the authors of Gothic fiction were influenced by the ancient British tradition, the ballads (such as *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Coleridge), English medieval poetry (Chaucer, for instance) and the Elizabethans. In particular, the most influential poem for Gothic fiction is certainly Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s *Christabel* which was published in 1816 and it is divided in two parts. The first section opens in the middle of the night describing the sounds of the animals awakened by the clock in a castle. The owls, the rooster and an old mastiff all answer with their cries to the strokes. It is a cold night brightened up by the moonlight that turns the clouds grey. It is April and

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3 See Appendix.
Christabel, a lovely lady, is walking alone in the wood praying that the knight she loves will come home safe from the war. She stops under an oak but, suddenly, she hears a moan coming from the other side of the tree. At first she believes it to be the sound of the wind, but it is a silent night and no leaf moves on the trees. Christabel’s heart is thudding, nevertheless, she decides to find out what is causing those sounds. The young lady turns around the oak where she sees a damsels dressed in white with shining jewels entangled in her hair and whose skin is even paler than her robe.

The white lady, with a slow and feeble voice, explains that she is Geraldine, the daughter of a noble man, and that five warriors have abducted her the previous morning. The men tied her on a white horse and then they left her under the oak promising that they would come back soon. After Geraldine’s story, Christabel decides to hide her in her castle where her father, Sir Leoline, will take care of her. Once in the castle, Christabel encourages her pale friend to pray the Holy Virgin but Geraldine maintains she cannot speak since she is too feeble. The old mastiff continues to sleep while the girls are walking and, while they are passing near the embers in the fireplace, there comes a burst of flames that lights up Geraldine’s hypnotic eyes. Once in Christabel’s room, the damsel falls to the floor due to her weakness and, consequently, her host makes her drink a cordial wine made by her mother who, as she explains afterwards, died giving her birth. Geraldine responds with a strange voice exhorting the ghost to leave the castle and her eyes seem to be able to see the
death in that moment. The lady chases away Christabel’s mother with her words claiming the lady as her property.

Christabel undresses herself and lies down on her bed leaning on her elbow to admire the beauty of her friend. Geraldine undoes her belt and her suit slips to the ground leaving uncovered half her side and her bosom, “a sight to dream of, not to tell!” Then the damsel reaches Christabel on the bed and she hugs her casting, at the same time, a spell with the touch of her bosom. The lovely lady, as a consequence of the evil spell, will not be able to tell anyone what has happened during the night but that she has found a poor damsel under an oak in the wood. When Christabel arouses from her trance, she smiles and weeps at the same time and her face is both sad and peaceful.

The second part of the poem opens with the awakening of Sir Leoline due to the sound of the bells. Soon after, Geraldine wakes Christabel whose first thought is about her sin.

Later, the ladies meet Sir Leoline in his presence-room where they tell him what have happened but, when the Baron hears the name of the damsel’s father, Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine, he turns pale since they had been friends in youth but, then, they have argued heavily. However, Sir Leoline decides that the time has come to make peace with Lord Roland and offers to help Geraldine by sending his knights to her castle if it is needed. While the baron is hugging the white lady, Christabel, mindful of the evil spell, hisses like a snake, but she is not able to warn her father of the threat. The Lord of the Castle resolves to send
his bard, Bracy, to his friend’s chateau to inform him with his sweet singing, that his daughter is safe. However, the bard tells his lord that he cannot make the journey immediately due to a dream he had during the night about a dove that was moaning under an old tree because a green snake was strangling it. The baron, believing the dove to be Geraldine, swears to protect her from the snake but, in that moment, Christabel perceives the damsel’s reptilian eyes. The young lady falls into a sort of trance in which she cannot do anything but imitate her enemy hissing and acting like a snake. When she recovers, she preys her father to send Geraldine’s away. Although Sir Leoline feels dishonored since he believes that his daughter is simply jealous of the other lady, he orders his bard to walk her to her castle. The poem ends in this way raising many questions about the future of Geraldine and Christabel.

As Punter notes, the influence of *Christabel* and of others literary works, which was most likely completed by the 1780s, can be considered as a revival of the Gothic that produced a standardized body of writing thus presenting the same style, themes and ideologies. Beyond the traditional features of Gothic, which enabled the genre to rule the novel market, these novels presented other characteristics less connected to old Gothic such as the description of mysterious events that create a sense of terror and fear both in the characters and in the reader, the attempt to evade everyday vocabulary and the use of fixed characters.\(^5\) Usually, the main character is a retiring and fearful heroine who has to face a series of

dangers which she is surprisingly able to endure. The Gothic revival managed also to restore the figures of the ghost and the phantom, typical of the ancient ballads, but which had vanished during the beginning of the eighteenth century rejected by the Augustans⁶.

The birth of Gothic fiction is strictly connected to the beginning of the novel during the eighteenth century. While the authors of the previous century wrote almost exclusively for an aristocratic élite, the rise of a trading middle class and the development of urban areas enlarged the reading public. Moreover, the appearance of the circulating libraries facilitated this growth by loaning books for a membership payment so that the novels were affordable even for the middle classes. This new and larger public showed the same taste for realistic novels and Gothic fiction. Those readers who had previously supported realism must have somehow altered their tastes thus privileging ancient settings and romances. Punter argues that the eighteenth-century opposition between official culture and actual taste can explain this change. This period, better known as the Enlightenment, put an emphasis on rationality that was strongly supported by French philosophers such as Denis Diderot and Voltaire who then influenced English thinkers as Hume. The most remarkable result of this period was the publication of the *Encyclopédie*, the first systematic compendium of every human knowledge in alphabetical order, which described men as rationally omnipotent, able to grab the truth through science and reason. The Enlightenment, therefore, elevated the role of

⁶ Punter, David. *Ibid.*, p. 27. As Punter notes, Augustanism was named after the Augustan period of the Roman Empire and it was characterized by a conservative and rational attitude meant to safeguard civilization.
men’s rationality to the detriment of religion since God was perceived mainly as the creator of the universe, who, nevertheless, was completely indifferent to every human event\textsuperscript{7}.

During the eighteenth century, Samuel Richardson had the merit of denying the official principles of the Enlightenment by emphasizing the role of emotions in the life of men. Richardson’s sentimentalism permeated the eighteenth-century fiction and influenced the early Gothic novels. This interest on human feelings was reflected in the novel market and explains the opposing tastes during the century. Obviously, there were those who criticized this new trend as the Augustinians who maintained that reason should control every emotion and passion. Despite this critical attitude, sentimentalism continued to pervade every literary field, from prose to poetry, which, in this period, began to be called ‘graveyard poetry’. This name implied an obvious relation to death and grief, but it also provided a critique of rationalism by supporting passions and, in this way, it greatly influenced Gothic fiction. Furthermore, the stress on death and grief caused an interest on fear and terror which were considered as the principal means to evade reason and which are also one of the main features of Gothic novels and poems\textsuperscript{8}.

In 1764 Horace Walpole published \textit{The Castle of Otranto}, which is widely considered the first Gothic novel. The story revises the tradition of romance and it is a clear attempt to fuse elements of the novel to that of the ancient English literature but the result is a prevalence of fancy on

\textsuperscript{7} Punter, David. \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 20-27.
\textsuperscript{8} Punter, David. \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 28-30.
realism. The novel is set during the Twelfth century and the main location is a castle, modeled on Walpole’s Strawberry Hill, which is haunted by the ghost of the former owner. The description of a series of supernatural events conveys a tinge of irony to the story rather than generating fear or terror. History, however, is perceived as a serious matter. Walpole manages to depict a feudal and aristocratic society in a realistic way thus influencing an important feature of Gothic fiction, that is to say, the emphasis on the sins of the ancestors upon their progeny. Moreover, The Castle of Otranto presents another characteristic, which is typical of Gothic fiction since the story is said to be taken from a real manuscript found by the author who reedited it. The manuscript device allows Walpole to give credit to his novel by creating a plausible story.

1.2 The Origin of Vampires.

According to Christopher Frayling, The Castle of Otranto was the product of a nightmare. In the nineteenth century, many Gothic writers took inspiration from nightmares or frightful stories, but they also used drugs such as laudanum or opium that create illusions and visions. In 1816, these remedies allowed the creation of Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein, but also of Polidori’s The Vampyre. The origin of this mythological figure is usually associated to Eastern Europe or Greece since, during the eighteenth century, many people died in these places because of

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9 Punter, David. Ibid., pp. 43-49.
10 Frayling, Christopher. VAMPYRES: Lord Byron to Count Dracula. London, Faber and Faber, 1991, p. 3.
epidemics. Actually, traces of blood-suckers can be found in other cultures as well:\textsuperscript{11} the Lamiae, messengers of the Triple Goddess Hecate, sucked blood; blood drained by Lilith, Adam’s first wife; blood is also described as impure or a taboo, it is used for sacrifices or as an elixir. The Lamiae, demons of Ancient Greece, were women who, in life, experienced the loss of their children and who, therefore, sought revenge by targeting infants, drinking their blood and eating their flesh. According to the legend, Lilith refused to submit to the orders of Adam and, for this reason, was chased away from the Garden of Eden, but she came back afterwards as a snake trying to tempt him. The figure of Lilith is then changed into a demon that allured men, kidnapped children and gave birth to baby-demons. Oddly enough, both the Lamiae and Lilith could change their human shape into that of a snake. The concept of drinking blood in order to obtain immortality is at the basis of some Christian rituals such as the Eucharist or the Holy Communion, that is to say when, during a mass, baptized people eat the host and drink the wine, which are symbols of Christ’s body and blood. Many nineteenth-century writers, however, based their vampire stories on folktales or on the account of some peasant who maintained to have witnessed some strange event, or on ancient Greek and Roman myths. The evidence collected from 1680 to 1760 revealed that the vampires had florid complexions, voices that sounded like bells, long beards, big mouths and they sucked blood from their victim’s chest. On the contrary, the vampires described in Romantic novels were

\textsuperscript{11} Frayling, Christopher. \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 4-6.
gorgeous and fascinating, they had no beard, a pale complexion, seductive voices, they glowered at everyone and they drained their victims by biting their necks. According to some critics, this shift is due to some mysterious stories about certain representatives of the British aristocracy such as George Selwyn and Thomas Warton who loved attending gory executions and tortures, or Sir John Lambert who was fascinated by extremely thin women and who even had a collection of mummified girls, or Lord Byron who was said to have drunk the blood from the skull of a woman after having killed her, this is also the reason why he was thought to be the author of *The Vampyre*.\(^\text{12}\)

Before the publication of Polidori’s story, as Frayling notes, other authors played on the figure of the vampire. In *Hop O’ My Thumb* by Charles Perrault, the Ogre had seven daughters with long and sharp teeth, Giacomo Casanova’s *Icosameron* tells of a population who survive by drinking blood, but also in the *Thousand and One Nights* there are evidences of vampirism in the story called *Sayf al-Muluk*. Authors such as Polidori, Shelley or Lord Byron managed to fuse together the different characteristics of the vampire and to create a new literary genre\(^\text{13}\).

During the nineteenth century the figure of the vampire took two directions: one moved from Polidori’s short story and the other from the so-called *femme fatales*, attractive women who managed to lure their victims with their appeal. The first example of Polidori’s influence on the genre is *Varney, the Vampire*. *The Feast of Blood* by James Malcolm

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Rymer. The novel is about a naïve young girl who is seduced by Sir Francis Varney, but he is hounded out when people comprehend that he is a vampire and arrange an expedition against him. This event happens several times throughout the novel, since, after he has been hounded out, Varney, changed in disguise, reappears to seduce another innocent lady.

As Frayling points out, during the nineteenth century, it is possible to detect four main conventional vampires in literature: “the Satanic Lord” (Polidori and his followers), “the Fatal Woman” (Tieck’s Brunhilda in *Wake Not the Dead*, Hoffmann’s Aurelia in *The Serapion Brethren*, Gautier’s Clarimonde in *La Morte Amoureuse*, Baudelaire’s “woman with the strawberry mouth” in *Les Métamorphoses du Vampire*, Swinburne’s Mary Stuart in *Chastelard*, and Le Fanu’s Countess Carmilla in *Carmilla*), “the Unseen Force” (O’Brien’s something in *What Was It?* and de Maupassant’s Horla in *The Horla*) and “the Folkloric Vampire” (Mérimée’s cursed Venetian in *La Guzla*, Gogol’s nameless woman in *Viy*, Tolstoy’s Gorcha and Sdenka in *The Family of the Vourdalak*, Linton’s Fanny Campbell in *The Fate of Madame Cabanel* and Burton’s Baital in *Vikram and the Vampire*). Polidori can be considered the founder of this literary genre since the following works took inspiration from his novella thus creating a sort of popular or mass literature. In the succeeding stories, the plot remains mostly the same while the scene can vary and this demonstrates that, throughout the century, the genre did not show any significant development.\(^\text{14}\)

\[^\text{14}\] Frayling, Christopher. *Ibid.*, pp. 41-64.
People in the eighteenth century, began to really believe in the existence of vampires even though there are evidences of vampirism between the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries in *Zetesis peri vouulkolakon*\(^\text{15}\) that is the first post-Byzantine account known.\(^\text{16}\) According to the document, in case of plague, the most recent tombs were opened and some corpses were usually found in good conditions: teeth, nails, beard and hair were longer than when the cadavers were alive, the bodies were laying down in a different way than at the time of burial and the heads were covered with what resembled sharp bristles. After the disinterment, the corpses are pierced with a sword or a wooden pole, the heart and liver are burnt and, occasionally, the plague ceases in this way.

As Charlotte Montague notes, there were a number of precautions that could be taken to ensure that a corpse would not return on Earth in the form of a revenant. In addition to the well-known stake in the heart, the head of the dead could be removed and buried under the butt as to prevent the vampire from reaching it, the heart drawn out and placed on the cadaver’s head, the limbs maimed and secured together, nails could be driven into the skull\(^\text{17}\). There were also precautions taken to prevent a body from transforming into a vampire. The most common was to place two coins on the corpse’s eyes as to make them heavier, so that the vampire could not see anything at the moment of his awakening.

\(^\text{15}\) The extended title is: Research on the vouulkolakoi, that is why the holy Church of God does not accept the belief that they cause plagues and that they may devour the living (Braccini Tommaso. *Prima di Dracula. Archeologia del vampiro*. Bologna, Il Mulino, 2011, p. 27).


Moreover, the mouth was firmly shut to prevent the revenant from biting people, or it was filled with garlic. At other times, a thorn could be put under the tongue of the dead; the body might be buried with a sickle over the neck or with a needle in the navel and also placed facedown. After the burial, there were many ceremonials that could be observed to prevent the corpse from becoming a vampire. In Albania, for instance, the tradition dictated that a virgin boy had to ride a black virgin stallion in the churchyard; the horse refusal to touch that ground meant that a vampire was resting under it. Furthermore, in the Slavic countries, people used to guard the corpses before their burial, mostly to defend it from dogs and cats, as it was commonly believed that if one of these animals touched the cadaver, it would turn into a vampire.

What it is known today about similar burials comes from studies by archaeologists who have unearthed tombs dating back to centuries before. In 2009, for example, they exhumed the corpse of a woman who had been buried in a mass grave on Lazzaretto Nuovo, a Venetian island. The woman, who died as a consequence of the bubonic plague that infected Venice in 1576, presented a heavy stone in the mouth as to make the body heavier and prevent it from leaving the tomb. Moreover, the gravediggers had to open the grave several time as it was a mass tomb and, not used to see the processes of decomposition, might have mistaken the purge fluid that flowed from the body’s mouth and nose, for new blood, as if the woman had drunk it. The archaeologists also found a hole in the woman’s burial garment around the mouth, as if it had been
chewed, but, most probably, the fluids had simply corroded it. During a plague, the belief in vampires increased since the tombs had to be repeatedly unearthed and the gravediggers could see the process of decomposition in its initial stage\textsuperscript{18}.

The first eastern author to describe vampires was the Italian humanist Antonio de Ferrariis who, in 1558, published \textit{De situ Iapygiae}\textsuperscript{19} where he wrote:

"Similis est Brocolarum fabula, quae totum Orientem coepit: aiunt eorum qui sceleste vitam egerunt animas, tanquam flammarum globos noctu e sepulchris evolare solitas, notis et amicis apparere, animalibus vesci, pueros fugere et necare, deinde in sepulchra everti. Superstitiosa gens sepulchra effodit, ac scisso cadavere, detractum cor exurit, atque in quattuor ventos, hoc est in quattuor mundi plagas cinerem proijcit: sic cessare pestem credit"\textsuperscript{20}

In 1645, the philosopher and theologian Leone Allacci published \textit{De templis Graecorum recentioribus, ad Ioannem Morinum; de narthece ecclesiae veteris, ad Gasparem de Simeonibus; nec non de Graecorum hodie quorundam opinationibus, ad Pallum Zacchiam} which consists of three books, the most important of which is \textit{De Graecorum hodie quorundam opinationibus}, a long letter from Allacci to the doctor Paolo Zacchia. Allacci was the first to present a documented and detailed

\textsuperscript{18} Montague, Charlotte. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{19} Braccini, Tommaso. \textit{Cit.}, pp. 19-26, 225.
\textsuperscript{20} As quoted in Braccini, Tommaso. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 24. It is similar the Brocolae’s tale that reached the East: they claim that the souls of those who have led a wicked life come usually out of their sepulchres at night as blazing globes, to appear to relatives and friends, to feed on animals, to suck and kill children, and, then, they go back to their sepulchres. The superstitious population dig the tombs, rip the corpse and burn the heart in order to disperse the ashes to the four winds: they believe that, in so doing, the plague would cease.
description of what he called *burculaca*, the corpse of a malignant man, mainly a criminal excommunicated by the local priest. The philosopher maintained that the body of this dead man did not follow the natural process of decomposition, conversely, it was swollen and dilated, the skin was so stretched that it sounded like a drum and this is why the creature was also called *tympaniaios*. This corpse is usually possessed by a demon that wanders around the village knocking and calling at the doors of the inhabitants. If they answer to the invitation they die the next day, otherwise they are safe. Allacci explains that this is the reason why the local population, when many people died without any plausible reason, exhumed the bodies that have been recently buried and burned those which did not show the marks of decomposition. In 1700, the French botanist Joseph Pitton de Tournefort, professor at the Jardin des Plantes of Paris, travelled to the Ottoman Empire up to Georgia. Tournefort and his fellows landed in the Greek island called Mykonos where they learned that a dead man had come out from his tomb thus spreading panic among the inhabitants who called him *vroucolacas*. The event is reported in Tournefort’s *Relation d’un voyage au Levant* where we read that the deceased was a bad-tempered peasant who was killed in the countryside but nobody knew how or by whom. Two days after his burying, some people swore they saw him walking at night, making many jokes to his fellow citizens. At first nobody was worried about this reappearance but, after several assemblies, the local priests decided to wait nine days after his funeral and then to perform an ancient ceremony. The tenth day, they
did a mass in the same chapel where the corpse was buried; they
exhumed the body and tore his heart. According to Tournefort’s account,
the corpse stank so much that the clerics resolved to burn incense but the
smoke, mingling with the stink of the decaying body, increased the
unpleasant smell and caused hallucinations to the bystanders. People
believed that smoke was beginning to flow out of the cadaver, that his
blood was crimson and the butcher, who had the task of extracting the
heart, maintained that it was still warm. Since at this point everyone was
persuaded that it was the devil’s work, the priests ordered to burn the
heart on the beach. Notwithstanding these remedies, there was still no
peace in Mykonos during the night so the islanders agreed to set fire to
the whole corpse but no priest wanted to participate for fear that the
bishop fined them for having exhumed and burned a corpse without his
authorization. Tournefort’s voucolacas shows many differences compared
to vampires as contemporary people know them: he does not suck blood,
he is described as a shabby and decaying corpse and he lives in the
Mediterranean, a sunny and green area. The belief that vampires inhabit
mainly in gloomy places, such as in Transylvania, Romania, Serbia,
Moravia and Bohemia, is due to the intensification of contacts between
Europe and Russia, the rise of Prussia and the Habsburg expansion at the
expense of the Ottoman Empire. The Treaty of Passarowitz, in 1718,
allowed Austria to control some parts of northern Serbia including
Belgrade so that European travellers came into contact with new beliefs regarding the undead\textsuperscript{21}.

According to Frayling, Walpole himself wrote in a letter to Lady Ossory that the Hanoverian king was sure that the accounts of some peasants were a true evidence of their presence\textsuperscript{22}. On 12 December 1731, the Emperor ordered his army to conduct an inquiry near Belgrade, which, at that time, was under Austrian influence. The document, appeared in 1732, consisted of an interview with the so-called heyduks\textsuperscript{23} who claimed that a heyduk named Arnold Paole, who died some years before, had reported being bitten by a vampire in Turkish Serbia. As a direct consequence of this incident, in order to purify his soul, he began to eat the earth of a vampire’s tomb and to wash himself with vampire’s blood according to the local ritual. Nevertheless, someone said that, few days after his death, Paole was wandering through the streets of the city where he even killed four men. The heyduks, then, decided to exhume the corpse and, unfortunately, they found it to be completely intact except for some blood that flowed from the eyes, nose and ears. According to the custom, the heyduks stuck a stake in his heart and burned the remains together with the corpses of the other four men killed by Paole. Unhappily, in addition to the four humans, the vampire also killed livestock and, therefore, the heyduks burned those who had eaten the flesh and had died as a consequence, since they might turn into vampires too. 1732 was called

\textsuperscript{21} Braccini, Tommaso. \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 9-14.
\textsuperscript{22} Frayling, Cristopher. \textit{Cit.}, pp. 20, 21.
\textsuperscript{23} In Hungary and Austrian Serbia, a heyduk was a soldier who may achieve social prestige. Originally, the word designated a robber, a bandit or a brigand.
the ‘year of vampires’ due to the publication, in every European country, of a translated version of Johann Flückinger’s *Visum et repertum*. The Austrian military doctor claimed that ten exhumed corpses out of thirteen were found in perfect conditions and absolutely well-preserved. Flückinger was unable to explain the absence of rot and therefore, being seized by terror and fear, he ordered the local gipsies to behead and burn the bodies. Similar stories also appeared in France under the reign of Louis XV who ordered the Duc de Richelieu to collect information about these mysterious creatures. Between the 1720s and the 1760s, this topic involved many philosophers such as Voltaire, Diderot or Rousseau and, furthermore, the period saw the publication of about twelve treatises and four dissertations. Jean-Jacques Rousseau treated the subject in his novel, *Émile*, arguing that it is not possible to affirm that the vampires exist on the basis of some peasants’ account, on the contrary, such a statement requires rational proofs. In a passage of the fourth book of the novel he wrote:

“For some time now, the public news has been concerned with nothing but vampires; there has never been a fact more fully proved *in law* than their existence, yet despite this, show me a single man of sense in Europe who believes in vampires or who would even deign to take the trouble to check the falseness of the facts... Who will venture to tell me exactly how many eyewitnesses are needed to make a phenomenon credible?”

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Moreover, according to the Genevan philosopher, the vampires were the result of a brainwash that priests made on feeble-minded men. Since superstitions increased the power of authorities, the fear of vampires was a way to subdue the population who entrusted the government and the Church the task of protecting them. Rousseau maintained that, actually, the fright of vampires is a metaphor for the real nature of men. Originally, humans were fruit eaters as it is demonstrated by the structure of our teeth, but the birth of civilized societies changed men into carnivores for two reasons: the decrease of cultivable ground and the introduction of private property which caused a fight of each against each\textsuperscript{27}. Other thinkers believed that, in reality, vampires were manifestations of Satan, while others tried to find some more rational explanation by carrying out some medical experiments. Eventually, among the various justifications of the Paole happening, there were those who argued that the hayduk had been buried alive; that, sometimes, some human corpses are preserved better than others; that the body seemed vigorous because of the usual growth of hair and nails after death; that Paole’s paleness was a consequence of the plague or rabies which spread in Prussia, Saxony and Hungary at that time. According to Charlotte Montague, during the eighteenth century there were few cases of people buried alive since it was no customary for a doctor to certify the death of a person whose vital functions seemed to cease. Obviously, if the supposed dead man woke up

\textsuperscript{27} Frayling, Christopher. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 35.
in his grave, he would try everything to be heard and rescued only to end up tortured as a vampire\textsuperscript{28}.

There were also more religious and less rational clarifications about the Paole happening and many people thought the story to be a heresy, the result of the corruption of priests who were paid for exorcisms and masses, or the superstition of ignorant people. Recent studies affirm that these fallacies and evidences were the attempt, by illiterate people, to explain the consequences of the plague or of other similar diseases\textsuperscript{29}. According to Montague, during the eighteenth century tuberculosis was often mistaken for vampirism. The disease, also called consumption since the body seems to be eaten from the inside, causes loss of blood when the patient coughs and his or her skin is extremely pale. Infected people also present red and puffy eyes, cold skin and intolerance to sunlight, typical features of vampires. Porphyria was another disease which was often associated to vampirism. The disease includes sensitivity to ultraviolet rays, which can lead to skin burns, developed canine teeth due to an enzymatic defect, red urine and faeces, hallucinations, excess of hair on the skin and paleness caused by anaemia. Some types of porphyria lead to coma that, sometimes, was mistaken for death and the patient was buried alive. People who suffered from porphyria were usually persecuted as vampires or werewolves. In addition to tuberculosis and porphyria, Montague maintains that, in an age when hygiene was not a priority, the bite from an animal, in particular from a dog or a bat, might

\textsuperscript{28} Montague, Charlotte. Cit., pp. 21-22.
\textsuperscript{29} Frayling, Christopher. Cit., p. 25.
cause rabies. This virus infects the brain causing changing in personality and behavior; it is not a coincidence that the word derives its origin from the Latin ‘madness’. The infection can worsen to the point that the patient begins to feel animal instincts and bites other people\textsuperscript{30}.

Bats, wolves and dogs inhabit the majority of folkloristic stories, but the formers are the most dreaded since they drink blood to survive. Montague notes that there are three kinds of bats that live by drinking blood: the common bat, the white-winged vampire bat and the hairy-legged vampire bat. These animals are used to sleep during the day, hidden in some cave or dark place, and then hunt during the night; two features typical of the literary vampire.

In 1746, a French Benedictine named Dom Augustine Calmet wrote a Treatise on the Vampires of Hungary and Surrounding Regions\textsuperscript{31}. The Benedictine wrongly maintained that the figure of the revenant who gets out from his tomb to suck the blood of his or her victims, was relatively new. Calmet affirmed that, according to local peasants, in many Silesian, Polish, Hungarian and Moravian villages, dead men and women were seen walking, talking, frightening everybody, insulting other people, sucking blood and killing human and animals. The only remedy against this infestation was to exhume the corpses, then, impale them, cut their heads and hearts and, finally, burn them. The Benedictine analyzed every possible rational and theological explanation and, in conclusion, maintained that these accounts had to be considered as mere

\textsuperscript{30} Montague, Charlotte. Cit., pp. 26-29.
\textsuperscript{31} Frayling, Christopher. Cit., pp. 28-30.
superstitions since they lacked any concrete evidence. The French man was also surprised that the Church or the magistrates did nothing to stop this heresy, but he made no further question, maybe to avoid possible disruptions. Nevertheless Calmet did not deny that the vampires really existed, but he maintained that either they were real (and therefore there should be a solid proof that may be found even in the Bible) or they were the result of ignorant minds. Some years later, Calmet’s work was criticized for the credit it gave to superstitions. It may be supposed that the Treatise is at the basis of the modern belief that vampires inhabit mostly Eastern Europe and the northern Balkans\(^{32}\).

In 1732, Empress Maria Theresa, concerned about the spread of similar stories, ordered her physician and counselor to arrange an inspection on the subject\(^{33}\). As a consequence of the study, Maria Theresa took a series of legislative procedures. The priests and the authorities could no longer deal with vampirism or every kind of magic that ended up being reserved for government. Nevertheless, many officers swore to have seen people, who had been dead for years, walking among the living and this is testified even by the newspapers of that time. In 1765, the Gazette de Gazettes of November 1 reported:

“This opinion – that the epidemics happened exactly as reported – strange as it may seem, is proved by so many facts that no one can reasonably doubt its validity, given the quality of the witnesses who have certified the authenticity of those facts”\(^{34}\).

\(^{32}\) Braccini, Tommaso. Cit., p. 15.
\(^{33}\) Frayling, Christopher. Cit., p. 29.
\(^{34}\) As quoted in Frayling, Christopher. Ibid., p. 31.
According to Montague, vampires have different behaviours depending on the region of origin\textsuperscript{35}. In Bavaria, for instance, people believed that vampires used to rest in their coffins with their thumbs crossed and one wide-open eye. In Moravia vampires attacked people wearing nothing, while, elsewhere, they were said to haunt the streets wrapped in their shrouds or with their mortuary equipment. Finally, in Albania, they wore high-heeled shoes wherein they kept the earth of their motherland. Vampires did not always try to kill their victims, sometimes, indeed, they simply tease them by breaking windows or objects, touching people while they sleep or trying to suffocate them. Some cultures believed that a vampire could get into one house only if previously invited and, afterwards, it might come and go whenever it wants. When the livestock or the flock became sick or died of epidemic, it was believed to be due to a vampire; the same thing happened when many people died in the same area. Similar beliefs are only recently disappeared and not everywhere; suffice it to consider that even in 1892, in Rhode Island, the teenager Mercy Brown was exhumed and her heart was burned because her father thought she was a vampire. The figure of the vampire is usually associated with night, a time when it emerges from its tomb and preys its victims. However, according to the folk legends, but also in the novels of the nineteenth century, there are no clear evidence that vampires fear sunlight; conversely, they were said to walk easily among living people

\textsuperscript{35} Montague, Charlotte. \textit{Cit.}, pp. 54-58.
since their powers appeared only at night. The idea that sunlight was dangerous for vampires is a recent one; it appeared in the twentieth century in books, films, TV series and comics. However, in traditional folklore it was commonly believed that fire could destroy vampires forever if they were burned completely. In other cultures vampires were afraid of water and therefore people believed they could not cross a bridge; this is the reason why many cemeteries are located in the proximity of a watercourse. Moreover, many rituals included the use of holy water, which combined the fear of water and that of religion as well. The idea that vampires were afraid of water was a consequence of hydrophobia, the repulsion for water, which was often caused by rabies. According to traditional folklore, vampires had a much more developed sense of smell than humans and the only remedy against such supernatural sense was garlic whose smell was too strong for them. Such belief may derive from the observation of the behaviour of some animals such as wolves, dogs or certain varieties of bats, who are able to detect the presence of other living beings simply by smelling them even miles away. Besides that, people thought the vampires had highly developed visual skill, which enabled them to see in the dark; a typical feature of owls, an animal often associated with these creatures. Finally, similarly to bats, vampires also had a sharp hearing. In traditional folklore, these creatures were not only associated with dogs, wolves, owls or bats, but they could also change their human shape into one of these animals or, otherwise, they were able to dominate them by controlling their minds and, therefore, they could
make them do what they wanted. According to some legends, they could even turn into foxes, mice, moths, but also inanimate substances, such as vapour or thin air, thus becoming invisible to human eyes, but they might also control the weather or other human beings simply by biting them. In addition, sometimes, they could run faster that a horse or become stronger than a dozen men, they were able to hypnotize people in order to attack them or to make them forget what had happened and, eventually, they were invulnerable to human weapons, since they were able to regenerate themselves very quickly, except for a stake through the heart or the fire\textsuperscript{36}.

Vampirism became fashionable in the 1780s as it is attested in some newspapers that reported news of bloodsuckers in South America. An article of the \textit{Courier de l’Europe}, for instance, gave an account of a Chilean creature whose physical aspect was a mixture of a man, a bat and a lion. Similar examples gave more credit to vampirism and to other legendary creatures such as harpies and mermaids. During that period some people even managed to capture a female vampire who was then exhibited in a public zoo where they tried to make her pregnant in order to give birth to a half-vampire, half-human child, but every attempt ended in failure\textsuperscript{37}.

When did the word ‘vampire’ appear for the first time? According to Charlotte Montague, this term first appeared in a manuscript of the Book of Psalms during the eleventh century. In a note in the book, the priest

\textsuperscript{36} Montague, Charlotte. \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 54-58.
\textsuperscript{37} Montague, Charlotte. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 59.
who translated the text addressed a Novgorodian prince calling him upir lichyj, literally “wicked vampire” but, unfortunately, the critics are not yet able to understand the reason.\(^{38}\)

The second time the word appeared in *The Word of Saint Grigoriy*, an evangelical Christian treatise on Russian pagan rituals. The document is difficult to date but critics believe it was written before the fourteenth century when the evangelical Church was promoting a campaign against the worship of pagan deities.

Until the publication of the travelogue entitled *The Travels of Three English Gentlemen from Venice to Hamburg, being the Grand Tour of Germany, in the Year 1734* there are no evidences of an English equivalent for the term. Montague claims that the English word ‘vampire’ may derive from the German *vaper* but there are also other Slavic possibilities such as *vapir* or *upir*. Critics are uncertain about the actual etymology of the word but it seems to have affinities with *netopyr*, the Russian word for ‘bat’, *ubyr*, the Turkish word for ‘witch’, and some Indo-European variations of the verb *to fly*\(^{39}\).


2.1 John William Polidori’s *The Vampyre*

In summer 1816, the British poet Lord Byron left England with his physician, John William Polidori. They headed for Geneva where they spent some days in the Villa Diodati together with Percy Shelley, his future wife, Mary Godwin, and her stepsister as well as Byron’s lover, Jane ‘Claire’ Clairmont. In her Introduction to the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley wrote:

“Incessant rain often confined us for days to the house. Some volumes of ghost stories, translated from the German into French, fell into our hands. 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. There was 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... I have not seen these stories since then; but their incidents are as fresh in my mind as if I read them yesterday. “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 of his poem *Mazeppa*. Shelley, more apt to embody ideas and sentiments in the radiance of brilliant imagery, and in the music of the most melodious verse that adorns our language, than to invent the machinery of a story, commenced one founded on the experiences of his early life. Poor Polidori had some terrible idea about a skull-headed lady, who was so punished for peeping through a keyhole – what to see I forget – something very wrong and shocking of course... The illustrious poet also annoyed by the platitude of prose, speedily relinquished their uncongenial task. I busied myself

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to think of a story – a story to rival those which had excited us to this task... Have you thought of a story? I was asked each morning, and each morning I was forced to reply with a mortifying negative...⁴¹

Mary Shelley wrote this introduction fifteen years after their stay at the Villa Diodati, when Lord Byron, Percy Shelley and Polidori were dead for some years and therefore her report contains a few mistakes as the affirmation that they were four people.

Coexistence was not the best: Lord Byron got ‘Claire’ Clairmont pregnant and she followed him throughout Europe in order to be with him when the baby was born, Polidori and the Baron did not get on well to the extent that the noble poet wrote in his journal on 25 April:

“I never was much more disgusted with any human production – than with the eternal nonsense – and tracasseries – and emptiness – and ill-humour – and vanity of that young person; he was exactly the kind of person to whom, if he fell overboard, one would hold out a straw to know if the adage be true that drowning men catch at straws.”⁴²

Confused by laudanum and inspired by the ghost stories they read in Fantasmagoriana, ou recueil d’histoires d’apparitions de spectres, revenants, fantômes, etc. and in Les Portraits de Famille, a tale of ghosts and vampires, Byron’s suggestion led to the publication of Mary Godwin’s Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus and Polidori’s Ernestus Berchtold; or, The Modern Oedipus.

⁴² As quoted in Frayling, Christopher. Cit., p. 12.
In addition to these frightful stories, Polidori’s *Diary* contains other references to the readings held in those days:

“Began my ghost-story after tea. Twelve o’clock, really began to talk ghostly. L. B. repeated some verses of Coleridge’s *Christabel*, of the witch’s breast; when silence ensued, and Shelley, suddenly shrieking and putting his hands to his head, ran out of the room with a candle. Threw water in his face, and after gave him ether. He was looking at Mrs S., and suddenly thought of a woman he had heard of who had eyes instead of nipples, which, taking hold of his mind terrified him.”

Lord Byron, for his part, began a story but, unsatisfied by his work, did not complete it. However, the Baron’s idea inspired his young physician who wrote a novella which was published on 1 April 1819 in *The New Monthly Magazine* as ‘The Vampyre: A Tale by Lord Byron’

This mistake was caused by Henry Colburn, the owner and editor of the newspaper, who, not knowing the real author of the manuscript he had received from an anonymous correspondent, decided to attribute the story to one of the most famous writer of the time. *The Vampyre* soon became a bestseller, it was translated first into French and, subsequently, into German, Spanish, Italian and Swedish, it was adapted for various theatrical performances such as Charles Nodier and Eugène Scribe’s ones, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe “declared the work to be Byron’s masterpiece”. Actually, most of the success of the book was due to Lord Byron’s notoriety, especially overseas, and, as a

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matter of facts, the readers thought the vampire to be the author’s self-portrait, a misconception which was also supported by the character of Clarence de Ruthven, a caricature of Byron that his former lover, Lady Caroline Lamb, included in her novel *Glenarvion*. In her introduction to the book, Lady Lamb openly maintained that there was a relationship between the Satanic Clarence de Ruthven, Lord Glenarvon and Lord Byron.*46* Moreover, to further support the idea that Europe now had of the Baron, in Lady Blessington’s *Conversations with Lord Byron*, the author reported a speech by the poet in which he said:

“Do you know that when I have looked on some face that I love, imagination has often figured the changes death must one day produce in it – the worm rioting on lips now smiling, the features of health changed to the livid and ghastly tints of putrefaction; and the image conjured up by my fancy, but which is as true as it is a fearful anticipation of what must arrive, has left an impression for hours that the actual presence of the object, in all the bloom of health has not been able to banish: this is one of my pleasures of imagination”*47*.

The poet’s reaction to Lady Caroline Lamb’s novel is quite evident in his journal where, on 23 June 1816, he wrote “What- and who- the devil is Glenarvon?” and, on 22 July:

“I have not even a guess at the contents – except for the vague accounts I have heard – and I know but one thing which a woman can say to the purpose on such occasions

and that she might as well for her own sake keep to herself – which by the way they very rarely can."

These events helped to increase Byron’s fame but also to portray him as a man fascinated both by beautiful women and gruesome images. No wonder he was considered the author of *The Vampyre*. However, Lord Byron, highly annoyed by the misunderstanding, informed the publisher that the only work he had ever made about vampires was entitled *Fragment* and was included at the end of his poem *Mazeppa*, but, understandably, the editor had no interest in changing the name of the author. When Polidori realized that his tale had been published but that he was not identified as the author, he wrote to Colburn, on 2 April 1819, asking him to correct his mistake:

"I received a copy of the magazine of the last 1rst April the present month &am sorry to find that your Genevean correspondence has led you into a mistake with regard to the tale of the Vampyre which is not Lord Byrons but was written *entirely* by me at the request of a lady who upon mentioning that his lordship had said that it was his intention of writing a ghost story... saying she thought it impossible to work up such materials desired I would write it for her which I did in two idle mornings by her side – I desire therefore that you will positively contradict your statement in the next number by the insertion of this note."  

Nevertheless, the Italian physician appeared as the writer of the novella only in Colburn’s second edition entitled *The Vampyre; a tale*.

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49 As quoted in Vanon Alliata Michela, *The Physician and his Lordship John William Polidori’s The Vampyre*. 
related by Lord Byron to Dr Polidori and, unfortunately, in all other editions Lord Byron still appeared as the author.

The story opens in London “at the various parties of the leaders of the ton”\(^{50}\) (p. 39) where a charming and mysterious nobleman appeared, “more remarkable for his singularities, than his rank” (p. 39), named Lord Ruthven. About the same time, a young gentleman called Aubrey came to London where, since he attended the same parties of Lord Ruthven, the enigmatic nobleman fascinated him too. Aubrey was alone because he had lost his parents, his only relative was his younger sister and his guardians thought only to manage his money. After becoming aware that Lord Ruthven was planning to leave for a trip, the gentleman mentioned to his guardians that:

“it was time for him to perform the tour, which for many generations has been thought necessary to enable the young to take some rapid steps in the career of vice towards putting themselves upon an equality with the aged, and not allowing them to appear as if fallen from the skies, wherever scandalous intrigues are mentioned as the subject of pleasantry or of praise, according to the degree of skill shewn in carrying them on.” \(^{(p. 41)}\)

The two young men set out together and Aubrey tried to seize every opportunity to study his friend’s personality, which turned out to be rather peculiar.

“At Brussels and other towns through which they passed, Aubrey was surprised at the apparent eagerness with which his companion sought for the centres of all fashionable vice; there he entered into all the spirit of the faro table: he betted, and always gambled with success, except when the known sharper was his antagonist, and then he lost even

\(^{50}\) All the quotation of The Vampyre are taken from Polidori, John William. The Vampyre and Ernestus Berchtold; or, The Modern Oedipus, Toronto, Broadview Press, 2007.
more than he gained... In every town, he left the formerly affluent youth, torn from the circle he adorned, cursing, in the solitude of a dungeon, the fate that had drawn him within the reach of this fiend; whilst many a father sat frantic, amidst the speaking looks of mute hungry children, without a single farthing of his late immense wealth, wherewith to buy even sufficient to satisfy their present carving.” (p. 42)

At Rome, Aubrey received a letter from his guardians who warned him about Lord Ruthven’s behavior since it was discovered that he had ruined all those virtuous women with whom he had had an affair: they were all prey to innumerable vices and no one would ever married them. After this news and after what he had already seen in person, the young gentleman resolved to part from his friend and he headed toward Greece, at Athens. There he lived in the house of a Greek where he was captivated by his young and innocent daughter, Ianthe, who often accompanied Aubrey while he visited monuments and searched after antiquities. The young girl used to keep him company by telling him all the supernatural stories about vampires her nurse had narrated her when she was a child.

One day Aubrey decided to examine an ancient location which was sited on the other hand of an old wood. Ianthe and her parents warned him to come back before night since they were afraid of what he might find in the wood:

“they describe it as the resort of vampyres in their nocturnal orgies, and denounced the most heavy evils as impending upon him who dared to cross their path.” (p. 47)
Notwithstanding his hosts’ advices, Aubrey was so absorbed in his studies that he did not notice the passing of time and, when he mounted his horse to return home, it was twilight. In the woods, he was surprised by a storm that frightened his horse and forced him to seek shelter in a hovel. As he approached, however, Aubrey heard the frightful scream of a woman but also “the exultant mockery of a laugh” (p. 47). When he entered in the hut, an unknown man whose strength seemed inhuman assailed him and he found himself on the ground while his enemy was trying to choke him. Fortunately, the flash of many torches forced the stranger to run away but when the saviours came in the hovel and enlightened it, Aubrey discovered the grievous truth: Ianthe was lying dead on the floor,

“upon her neck and breast was blood, and upon her throat were the marks of teeth having opened the vein: to this the men pointed, crying, simultaneously struck with horror, ‘A Vampyre! a Vampyre!’” (p. 48)

Soon after the sad case, Lord Ruthven arrived at Athens and the two young men decided to visit together those parts of Greece they had not yet seen so as to keep Aubrey’s mind occupied and away from painful thoughts. During one of their excursions, a group of robbers attacked them and Lord Ruthven was shot in his shoulder. After two days, Aubrey realized that his friend was going to die and, when close to the end, Lord Ruthven spoke him:
“Assist me! You may save me – you may do more than that – I mean not my life, I heed the death of my existence as little as that of the passing of day; but you may save my honour, your friend’s honour’... ‘I need but little – my life ebbs apace – I cannot explain the whole – but if you would conceal all you know of me, my honour were free from stain in the world’s mouth – and if my death were unknown for some time in England – I – I – but life.’... ‘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.’” (p. 51)

After Lord Ruthven’s death, Aubrey resolved to visit his sister in England and, since she had not yet been presented to the high society, they both went in town where a drawing-room had been proclaimed. During the party, Aubrey thought he heard the voice of Lord Ruthven who reminded him of his promise and, turned his face towards the hall, he perceived the well-known profile of his dead friend. After the incident, the young gentleman fell into a catatonic state that lasted months and, during this period, he was unable to mention to anyone what had happened.

A year after Lord Ruthven’s death, Aubrey, who was still confined in his room because of his mental problems, learned from his guardians that his sister was getting married the next day. His anger was much greater than his surprise when he perceived around his sister’s neck a pendant depicting Lord Ruthven, Miss Aubrey’s future husband. The gentleman’s rage was so potent to break a blood vessel and condemn him to death. A year and a day after his oath Aubrey died but not before having confessed to his guardians all he knew about Lord Ruthven.
“The guardians hastened to protect Miss Aubrey; but when they arrived, it was too late. Lord Ruthven had disappeared and Aubrey’s sister had glutted the thirst of a VAMPYRE!” (p. 59)

Polidori has not the merit of having invented a new literary figure since evidences on the existence of vampires circulated for centuries. The innovation lays in the alteration of the vampire himself, and, more precisely, in the change of his social status. While Tournefort or Calmet’s accounts describe the undead as a member of the poorest people, a peasant, a worker, a thief or a brigand who never leaves his village and, therefore, who usually preys upon members of his family or neighborhood; Lord Ruthven is “a nobleman” (p. 39) surrounded by the high society and who is involved in the worldly life. According to Montague\(^{51}\), depicting the villain of the novella as a member of the nobility, and the hero as a member of the aristocracy, implies a critique against a social class that, albeit in decline, sucks, through its abuses, the “morals of society, and the lifeblood of the lower orders”. Moreover, as Macdonald and Scherf\(^{52}\) underline, usually the vampire of folklore comes back to life because an outer power, generally the Devil, possesses the corpse and throws the local population into a panic. Polidori’s creature acts of his own, he is not sedentary, quite the reverse, he moves from London to Brussels, Rome and Athens where he kills Aubrey’s beloved women, Ianthe and his sister. Furthermore, Lord Ruthven is described as a fascinating and appealing man, thus he does not look like his forebears.

\(^{51}\) Montague, Charlotte. Cit., p. 60.

It can be affirmed that Polidori’s work achieved an enormous success because it dealt explicitly with the relationship between sexuality and death. Concerning this, Montague offers another example of a report on vampirism. During the twelfth century, the English historian William of Newburgh, or William Parvus, described the exhumation of a man who was supposed to be a revenant. The corpse, Parvus noted, was

“swollen to an enormous corpulence with its countenance beyond measure turgid and suffused with blood; while the napkin in which it had been wrapped appeared nearly torn into pieces”. The men pierced the body “out of which incontinently flowed such a stream of blood, that it might have been taken for a leech filled with the blood of many persons”\(^53\).

It is certain that the physician was aware of the earlier evidences on vampires as it is attested in the introduction to the 1819 edition of his novella where, expatiating upon the Latin origin of these superstitions, he wrote:

“In the West it spread, with some slight variation, all over Hungary, Poland, Austria, and Lorraine where the belief existed, that vampyres nightly imbibed a certain portion of the blood of their victims, who became emaciated, lost their strength, and speedily died of consumptions; whilst these human blood-suckers fattened --- and their veins became distended to such a state of repletion, as to cause the blood to flow from all the passages of their bodies, and even from the very pores of their skin.”\(^54\)

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\(^{53}\) As quoted in Montague, Charlotte. *Cit.*, pp. 40-41.

Up ahead, Arnold Paole’s case but also Tournefort and Calmet’s works are mentioned in the introduction:

“In the London Journal, of March, 1732, is a curious, and, of course, credible account of a particular case of vampyrism, which is stated to have occurred at Madreyga, in Hungary. It appears that, upon an examination of the commander-in-chief and magistrates of the place, they positively and unanimously affirmed, that, about five years before, a certain Heyduke, named Arnold Paul, had been heard to say that, at Cassovia, on the frontiers of the Turkish Servia, he had been tormented by a vampyre, but had found a way to rid himself of the evil, by eating some of the earth out of the vampyre’s grave, and rubbing himself with his blood... The veracious Tournefort gives a long account in his travels of several astonishing cases of vampyrism, to which he pretends to have been an eyewitness; and Calmet, in his great work upon this subject, besides a variety of anecdotes, and traditionary narratives illustrative of its effects, has put forth some learned dissertations, tending to prove it to be a classical, as well as barbarian error.”

What cannot be found in Calmet and Tournefort’s accounts is Ruthven’s ability to come back to life through the power of the moon. Aubrey cannot find the vampire’s corpse the day after his friend’s death because, as one of the robber informed him that

«it was no longer there, having been conveyed by himself and comrades, upon his retiring, to the pinnacle of a neighbouring mount, according to a promise they had given his lordship, that it should be exposed to the first cold ray of the moon that rose after his death.» (p. 51)

Ianthe’s belief in her supernatural tales on vampires seems to embody the attitudes of all those witnesses whose accounts are well

transcribed in Tournefort and Calmet’s works and, indeed, while she is speaking to Aubrey

«Ianthe cited to him the names of old men, who had at last detected one [vampire] living among themselves, after several of their near relatives and children had been found marked with the stamp of the fiend’s appetite» (p. 46)

These examples presented in the introduction to the novella are quoted because they seem

«better adapted to illustrate the subject of the present observations than any other instance which could be adduced.»

Polidori created the first aristocratic vampire and, in so doing, he established the first parallelism with Lord Byron. A similarity which is even more stressed by the choice of the vampire’s name: Lord Ruthven (a name that Polidori will change in Lord Strongmore) retrieves the Satanic character of Clarence de Ruthven, Caroline Lamb’s already mentioned novel. Another connection between Lord Ruthven and the Baron is their being travellers. Byron was a well-known tourist as it has previously been said (his voyage to Geneva is just one example) and, moreover, his most famous poem, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, is a sort of a diary of a journey. Lord Ruthven, besides being the first vampire in England, is also a wanderer, a peculiarity which allows Polidori to create an open-ended story since the villain disappears and the reader has no further news

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about him. Lord Byron and Polidori’s vampire are also both seducers, a characteristic which is primarily derived from their being aristocrats. In addition to Caroline Lamb’s vindictive novel, in his diary, Polidori writes a sentence that sums up Byron’s attitude towards women: “As soon as he reached his room, Lord Byron fell like a thunderbolt upon the chambermaid” and, after having got ‘Claire’ Clairmont pregnant and her subsequent decision to follow him throughout Europe, the noble poet “could not exactly play the Stoic with her.”

Lord Ruthven

«had, however, the reputation of a winning tongue; and whether it was that it even overcame the dread of his singular character, or that they were moved by his apparent hatred of vice, he was as often among those females who form the boast of their sex from their domestic virtues, as among those who sully it by their vices.» (p. 40)

Later in the story, Aubrey and Lord Ruthven are in Rome where the young gentleman “lost sight of his companion; he left him in daily attendance upon the morning circle of an Italian countess” (p. 43) but he discovers in a second moment that

“his Lordship was endeavouring to work upon the inexperience of the daughter of the lady whose house he chiefly frequented.” (p. 44)

In Rome Aubrey also receives a letter about Lord Ruthven from his guardians who warn him because

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58 Frayling, Christopher. Cit., p. 12.
“his character was dreadfully vicious, for that the possession of irresistible powers of seduction, rendered his licentious habits more dangerous to society. It had been discovered, that his contempt for the adulteress had not originated in hatred of her character; but that he had required, to enhance his gratification, that his victim, the partner of his guilt, should be hurled from the pinnacle of unsullied virtue, down to the lowest abyss of infamy and degradation: in fine, that those all females whom he had sought, apparently on account of their virtue, had, since his departure, thrown even the mask aside, and had not scrupled to expose the whole deformity of their vices to the public gaze.” (p. 43)

Moreover, the novella presents the first example of a correlation between vampirism and sexuality that will be played on by all the later novels on this topic. Ianthe’s parents, for instance, describe the wood that Aubrey must cross “as the resort of the vampyres in their nocturnal orgies” (p. 47).

In the introduction to the novella, a footnote asserts that

“the universal belief is, that a person sucked by a vampyre becomes a vampyre himself, and sucks in his turn”[^59]

Lord Ruthven’s bite, however, is not infectious: Ianthe and Miss Aubrey both die after his attack and do not come back as bloodsuckers. The only infectious characteristic of Polidori’s vampire is his eroticism as well as his evil. The first is well shown in the guardians’ letter to Aubrey regarding those women seduced by the noble and who

“had, since his departure, thrown even the mask aside, and had not scrupled to expose the whole deformity of their vices to the public view.” (p. 43)

The second is evident in Aubrey’s decision to keep his oath towards Lord Ruthven, a narrative feature that Polidori seems to have borrowed from Lord Byron’s *Fragment* that, for its part, follows the examples of *The Family Portraits* and *The Death-Bride*, two stories from *Fantasmagoriana*. These devices are used to increase the level of mystery in the plot so that, in this way, all the supernatural events do not find any rational explanation as it is established by the participants of the ghost-story session in *The Family Portraits*:

«it is agreed amongst us that no one shall search for any explanation, even though it bears the stamp of truth, as explanation would take away all pleasure from ghost stories.»

Aubrey decision to keep the promise is supported by rational justifications: first of all, no one would ever believe him and, secondly, his fear to fail is transformed into a delirious fever that prevents him from performing any useful action.

As it has already been mentioned, Polidori was hired as Lord Byron’s physician during the trip that took them to Geneva. Polidori graduated very young with a thesis on “sleep, dreams, and states of suspended

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animation”61 entitled *Inaugural Medical Dissertation Concerning Certain Aspects of the Disease Called Oneirodynia*62 (1815) and these topics inspired also the author’s fictional works, included *The Vampyre*. To be more precise, Lord Ruthven possesses all those typical features of sleepwalking patients as the physician himself has studied them. The vampire, indeed, is characterized by a supernatural strength when, in the hut, Aubrey

“felt himself grappled by one whose strength seemed superhuman... he struggled; but it was in vain: he was lifted from his feet and hurled with enormous force against the ground” (p. 48)

Polidori’s later decision to change Lord Ruthven’s name to Lord Strongmore may not be a coincidence since it emphasizes the vampire’s physical strength, but also “Byron’s legendary sexual stamina.”63 Moreover, Lord Ruthven’s “emotionless, machinelike behavior resemble the case studies presented in Polidori’s medical thesis”64, an aspect that caused a theological crisis in the Romantic and Victorian era since it implies that not only the human body, but also our mind, are capable of functioning without being controlled by our soul or our will. Another feature of sleepwalking patients is their lack of attention to the world

62 «The term oneirodynia derived from two Greeks words, oneiros (dream) and odyne (pain). Oneirodynia originally indicated nightmares, but the term was eventually extended to include “inflamed or disturbed imagination during sleep”, a state of mind that could lead to sleepwalking (Cullen, qtd. in OED, s.v. “oneiro-, comb. Form”»). Stiles Anne, Finger Stanley and Bulevich John, *Ibid.*, pp. 792.
around and their visual and auditory problems. Similarly, Polidori describes the vampire’s

“dead grey eye, which, fixing upon the object’s face, did not seem to penetrate, and at one glance to pierce through to the inward workings of the heart; but fell upon the cheek with a leaden ray that weighed upon the skin it could not pass” (p. 39)

and, up ahead, Lady Mercer notices that “though his eyes were apparently fixed upon hers, still it seems as if they were unperceived.” (p. 39)

2.2 Théophile Gautier’s *La Morte Amoureuse*

Somnambulism and dream states characterize also Théophile Gautier’s *La Morte Amoureuse*, a short story published in 1836 in *La Chronique de Paris* and which was also translated into English as *Clarimonde*.

Romuald, priest and main character, narrates the story retrospectively in first person to another clergyman warning him about the dangers of carnal pleasures. Romuald leads a double life:

“Je jour, j’étais un prêtre du Seigneur, chaste, occupé de la prière et des choses saintes; la nuit, dès que j’avais fermé les yeux, je devenais un jeune seigneur, fin connoisseur en femmes, en chiens et en chevaux, jouant aux dés, buvant et blasphémant, et lorsqu’au lever de l’aube je me réveillais, il me semblait au contraire que je m’endormais et que je rêvais que j’étais prêtre.”65 (pp. 47-48)

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65 All the quotation in this section are taken from Gautier, Théophile. *La Morte Amoureuse, La cafetière et autres nouvelles*. Paris, Flammarion, 2007. During the day, I
Romuald’s highest ambition has always been, since his childhood, to take his vows and, when the so long craved day arrived, he was the happiest man in the world. On his way to the altar, however, he perceived “une jeune femme d’une beauté rare et vêtue avec une magnificence royale”⁶⁶ (p. 49). The marvelous creature casted an imploring glance to the poor man trying to prevent him from becoming a priest; she longed for him; she wanted to be her only love. Notwithstanding her pleas, Romuald became priest and the woman

“devint d’une blancheur de marbre; ses beux bras tombèrent le long de son corps, comme si les muscles en avaient été dénoués, et elle s’appuya contre un pilier, car ses jambes fléchissaient et se dérobaient sous elle... une main s’empara brusquement de la mienne; une main de femme... C’était elle: ‘Malheureux! Malheureux! Qu’as-tu fait?’”⁶⁷ (pp. 53-54)

Outside the church, Romuald received a message from the mysterious and fascinating woman whose name was Clarimonde and who informed him that she lived in the Concini Palace. Unfortunately, the priest had no possible mean to leave the seminary since he did not know any person in the city. Hence, the days passed and nothing happened until the Abbé Sérapion communicated him that he had been appointed to the

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⁶⁶ A young woman unusually beautiful and who was dressed with a royal magnificence.
⁶⁷ The woman became as white as marble; her beautiful arms fell along her body as if the muscles had melted, and she leaned on a pillar, since her legs gave out and almost betrayed her... a hand suddenly caught mine; a woman’s hand... It was she: “Unhappy man! Unhappy man” What have you done?”
curacy of a small village and that he had to leave the city the next day. A year after, a stranger arrived at the parish during the night: his mistress was going to die and, therefore, she needed a priest. The two men galloped until they reached a huge castle but they were too late:

“trop tard! Seigneur prêtre; mais, si vous n’avez pu sauver l’âme, venez veiller le pauvre corps.”68 (p. 63)

Romuald’s bewilderment was great when, approaching the deathbed, he saw Clarimonde lying still, covered with a white veil and who seemed sleeping rather than deceased. The priest could no longer control himself; he imagined that Clarimonde was his bride waiting for her husband on their first wedding night and he kissed her dead lips. As if by a miracle, Clarimonde disclosed her eyes and, hugging her lover, she whispered:

“que fais-tu donc? Je t’ai attendu si longtemps, que je suis morte; mais maintenant nous sommes fiancés, je pourrai te voir et aller chez toi. Adieu, Romuald, adieu! Je t’aime; c’est tout ce que je voulais te dire, et je te rends la vie que tu as rappelée sur moi une minute avec ton baiser; a bientôt.”69 (p. 66)

After these words, Romuald passed out and, when he opened his eyes, he found himself in his room at the presbytery where he learned that he had been unconscious for three days. The Abbé Sérapion drove

68 Too late! Sir priest; but, if you have not been able to save her soul, come to watch over the poor body.
69 So, what are you doing? I have waited for you so long that I am dead; but now we are engaged, I can come to see you. Farewell, Romuald, farewell! I love you; it is all I wanted to tell you, and I give you back the life that you have recalled for an instant with your kiss; see you soon.
away any doubt arose in Romuald’s mind about his night with Clarimonde and warned him about the woman’s behaviour:

“La grande courtisane Clarimonde est morte denierèmement, à la suite d’une orgie qui à duré huit jour et huit nuits… tous ses amants ont fini d’une manière misérable ou violente. On a dit que c’était une goule, une vampire femelle; mais je crois que c’était Belzébuth en personne… La pierre de Clarimonde devrait être scellée d’un triple sceau; car ce n’est pas, à ce qu’on dit, la première fois qu’elle est morte.”

One night, Clarimonde appeared in the priest’s room and convinced him to follow her by transforming his aspect into the one of a young gentleman, handsome, well dressed and conceited. The two lovers lived in Venice where, during the night, they led a high life, but, during the day, Romuald became a priest again. Unfortunately, Clarimonde became sick and her strength seemed to have abandoned her when, one morning, her lover cut himself with a knife by mistake.

“Le sang partit aussitôt en filets pourpres, et quelques gouttes rejaillirent sur Clarimonde. Ses yeux s’éclairèrent, sa physionomie prit une expression de joie féroce et sauvage que je ne lui avais jamais vue. Elle sauta à bas du lit avec une agilité animale, une agilité de singe ou de chat, et se précipita sur ma blessure qu’elle se mit à sucer avec une air d’indicible volupté.”

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70 The great courtesan Clarimonde died recently because of an orgy that lasted eight days and eight nights... all her lovers are perished in a miserable or violent way. People say that she was a ghoul, a female vampire; but I think that she was Beelzebub himself... Clarimonde’s tomb should be closed with a triple closure; since, as people say, it is not the first time that she dies.

71 The blood gushed immediately in red trickles, and some drops spurted on Clarimonde. Her eyes enlightened, her physiognomy assumed an expression of fierce and wild joy; such as I have never seen in her. She jumped out oh the bed with animal agility, an agility of a monkey or a cat, and she rushed on my wound that she began to suck with an air of immeasurable voluptuousness.
Romuald’s blood saved Clarimonde’s life, but her behaviour troubled the priest who began to mull over Sérapion’s words. The abbot was conscious of what was passing between the priest and the vampire: the woman kept sucking Romuald’s blood when he was asleep every night. Sérapion took the only possible decision and brought the young lover where the fatal woman was buried, he exhumed the corpse and sprinkled it with holy water:

‘‘La pauvre Clarimonde n’eut pas été plutôt touchée par la sainte rosée que son beau corps tomba en poussière; ce ne fut plus qu’un mélange affreusement informe de cendres et d’os à demi calcinés.’’72 (p. 81)

Romuald saw Clarimonde for the last time in his life on the following night and she said the same words of their first meeting:

‘‘Malheureux! Malheureux! Qu’as-tu fait? Pourquoi as-tu écouté ce prêtre imbécile? N’étais-tu pas heureux? Et que t’avais-je fait, pour violer ma pauvre tombe et mettre à nu les misères de mon néant? Toute communication entre nos âmes et nos corps est rompue désormais. Adieu, tu me regretteras.’’73 (p. 81)

The story ends with a final word to the wise: never look at a woman and always walk with your eyes fixed upon the ground because, otherwise, you may find a creature that you love more than God himself.

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72 Poor Clarimonde had no sooner been touched by the holy dew, than her beautiful body was reduced into ash; it was a horrible and shapeless mixture of dusts and half-calcined bones.
73 “Unlucky man! Unlucky man! What have you done? Why have you listened to that imbecile priest? Were you not happy? And what have I done to you to desecrate my poor tomb and expose the miseries of my nothingness? Every communication between our souls and our bodies is broken by now. Adieu, you should regret me.”
As it has been mentioned earlier, Gautier’s plot weaves between real world and a dreamlike atmosphere\(^{74}\) and, from the beginning, Romuald is not sure of what has happened in his past as he himself maintains:

“J’ai été pendant plus de trois ans le jouet d’une illusion singulière et diabolique”\(^{75}\) (p. 47)

When he is walking down the nave to take his vows, his perception of reality is distorted as if he is dreaming:

“Le grand jour venu, je marchai à l’église d’un pas si léger qu’il me semblait que je fusse soutenu en l’air ou que j’eusse des ailes aux épaules. Je me croyais un ange…”\(^{76}\) (p. 49)

Romuald does not have a clear perception of his body and he seems to be “dans un état qui touchait presque à l’extase”\(^{77}\) (p. 49), as when, in a dream, you do not have full control over your movements and the limbs almost seem extraneous parts of the body. The priest’s dreamlike state of mind also affects his gaze and his discernment of what surrounds him:

“l’évêque, vieillard vénérable, me paraissait Dieu le Père penché sur son éternité, et je voyais le ciel à travers les voûtes du temple.”\(^{78}\) (p. 49)

\(^{74}\) [link](http://indexfantastique.phpnet.org/essai/ficheessai.php3?key=17)

\(^{75}\) For more than three years I have been the victim of a unique and diabolic illusion.

\(^{76}\) The great day arrived; I walked to the church with a step so light that it seemed to me that I was sustained in the air or that I had wings on my shoulders. I believed myself an angel...

\(^{77}\) Into a state which almost reached ecstasy.

\(^{78}\) The bishop, a venerable old man, seemed to me God the Father leaning over his eternity, and I saw the sky through the vaults of the temple.
According to Polidori’s dissertation on somnambulism, the patients have difficulties with their eyesight, a problem that affects Romuald several times throughout the novella. When he is leaving the city with the abbot Sérapion, the priest is able to distinguish the Concini Palace, Clarimonde’s dwelling, from the other buildings due to an optical illusion:

“Par un singulier effet d’optique, se dessinait, blond et doré sous un rayon unique de lumière, un édifice qui surpassait en hauteur les constructions voisines, complètement noyées dans le vapeur; quoique’il fût à plus d’une lieue, il paraissait tout proche.”79 (p. 59)

One night, Romuald is in the garden of his small house and he thinks to see two green eyes, Clarimonde’s eyes, amidst the leaves but he himself doubts of his eyesight after what happened in the church: “mais ce n’était qu’une illusion”80 (p. 61). The wake at Clarimonde’s bedside offers another example of Romuald’s distorted perception of reality: his beloved is firstly transformed into a statue made of alabaster; then he conceives that she is not dead, but only sleeping; afterwards he imagines to be a husband who enters into the room of his fiancée who is hiding out of shame. Romuald’s days flow in an alternation of reality and dream, where the night is associated to instinct and libido, while the day is spent in prayers, penance and flagellation. At one point, however, the dream, his life with Clarimonde, merges with reality and reality, his life as a

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79 By a unique optical effect, a building that exceeded in height all the neighbouring edifices, which were completely wet for the vapours, could be distinguished, pale and golden under a single ray of light; even though it was more than a league away, it seemed quite close.
80 But it was just an illusion.
priest, is mixed with the dream to such an extent that Romuald is unable to distinguish his double existence anymore.

One of the main themes of the novella is the importance that Théophile Gautier gives to the function of the gaze. During the Renaissance\textsuperscript{81}, the eye was considered as the mirror of the soul, a statement that means that the human soul can be influenced by what the eyes see. According to the Roman Catholic Church, the look has a negative connotation since, after Adam had eaten the apple of knowledge, he was able to see for the first time his nakedness and he felt ashamed. Moreover, the female gaze is associated to the demonic because Eve, the first woman, was the original sinner, the one who was lured by the snake, or rather the Devil.

The eyes of Clarimonde, who is also associated to Beelzebub by the abbot Sérapion, are often mentioned during the narration as “prunelles vert de mer”\textsuperscript{82} (p. 50) or “les deux prunelles vert de mer”\textsuperscript{83} (p. 61). Romuald, furthermore, is fascinated by “l’éclat phosphorique de ses yeux”\textsuperscript{84} (p. 48), a feeble radiance when the vampire is ill: “seulement l’éclat vert de ses prunelles était un peu amorti”\textsuperscript{85} (p. 69), but, when the priest agrees to follow her to Venice, “ses prunelles se ravivèrent et brillèrent comme des chrysoprases”\textsuperscript{86} (p. 71). Finally, when Clarimonde sucks Romuald’s blood for the first time “elle clignait les yeux à demi, et la

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\textsuperscript{81} http://indexfantastique.phpnet.org/essai/ficheessai.php3?key=17
\textsuperscript{82} Sea-green pupils.
\textsuperscript{83} Her two sea-green pupils.
\textsuperscript{84} The phosphoric radiance of her eyes.
\textsuperscript{85} Only the green glow of her eyes was a bit pale.
\textsuperscript{86} Her pupils were rekindled and shone as chrysoprases.
pupille de ses prunelles vertes était devenue oblongue, au lieu de ronde”\(^{87}\) (p. 77). There are other references to the snake, and therefore to the evil, in the text:

“de temps en temps elle redressait la tête avec un mouvement onduleux de couleuvre... elle était froide comme la peau d’un serpent, et l’empreinte m’en resta brûlante comme la marque d’un fer rouge.”\(^{88}\) (pp. 51, 54)

Clarimonde is therefore not only plainly associated to the devil by the abbot, but her eyes have also the typical characteristics of the demon: they are green, oblong and phosphoric. Romuald himself warns the other man of church, to whom he is telling his sorrows, against the dangers of a female gaze:

“un seul regard trop plein de complaisance jeté sur une femme pensa causer la perte de mon âme.”\(^{89}\) (p. 47)

The gaze has a double characteristic: on the one hand it recalls pleasure and desire, on the other hand it is considered as the cause of every human evil. Clarimonde’s look is opposite to Lord Ruthven’s grey eyes, which do not penetrate the object they are fixing and which seem rather dull, while Gautier’s vampire uses her gaze as a replacement for

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\(^{87}\) She blinked her eyes a half, and the pupils of her green eyes became oblong instead of round.

\(^{88}\) From time to time she straightened her head with the undulatory movement of a snake... She was as cold as the skin of a snake, and the mark remained upon me burning like the imprint of a red-hot iron.

\(^{89}\) A gaze overflowing with complacency cast upon a woman threatened to cause the loss of my soul.
her words and, therefore, her eyes are full of meaning. When Romuald is walking down the nave to take his vows, he perceives Clarimonde’s eyes and they

“étaient un poème dont chaque regard formait un chant... son regard avait presque la sonorité, et les phrases que ses yeux m’envoyaient retentissaient au fond de mon cœur comme si une bouche invisible les eût soufflées dans mon âme... Quels yeux! Avec un éclair ils décision de la destinée d’un homme; ils avaient une vie, une limpidité une ardeur, une humidité brillante que je n’ai jamais vues à un œil humain; il s’en échappait des rayons pareils à des flèches et que je voyais distinctement aboutir à mon cœur.”90 (pp. 52, 53)

Through Clarimonde’s eyes, Romuald who has never met any other woman besides his sick mother, discovers the pleasures of sexuality. In this case, sexuality may be considered a synonym of necrophilia since the necessary condition for becoming a vampire is dying. This attitude does not necessarily have a negative connotation as it is testified by Romuald’s behaviour when he discovers that Clarimonde needs his blood in order to survive:

"je lui aurais volontiers donné tout le sang dont elle avait besoin pour soutenir son existence factice."91 (p. 78)

90 They were as a poem of which each eye formed a singing... Her gaze had almost the sound, and the phrases that her eyes sent me resounded deep down in my heart as if an invisible mouth had blown them into my soul... What eyes! With a flash they decided a man’s destiny; they had a life, a clearness, a passion, a bright damp that I have never seen in a human eye; they let out rays like arrows that I distinctly saw to shoot my heart.
91 I would have gladly given all the blood she needed to support her fictitious existence.
As Annie Ubersfeld\(^{92}\) notes, in *La Morte Amoureuse*, Gautier does not describe the simple love for a woman, but the female figure is turned into an art object: the beloved becomes a statue, a canvas, the work of an artist. Clarimonde is perceived as a model of ideal beauty, as a Greek statue, a prudish Aphrodite of the nineteenth century:

“On eût dit une statue d’albâtre faite par quelque sculpteur habile pour mettre sur un tombeau de reine\(^{93}\) (p. 64)

The main feature of a marble statue is its coldness, which fascinates and strikes young Romuald who has never touched a woman in his whole life. In addition to its coldness, a statue is also white and immobile, three features that can be assigned to cadavers and, therefore, to vampires. The death merges in this way with the art and the art with love thus creating a sentimental triangle where the love for a corpse does not provoke disgust and horror. Romuald’s desire is to break the bonds of death and give new life to the woman-art object as Pygmalion who, through the agency of Aphrodite, manages to transform Galatea, a statue of his own creation, into a real woman. A new life, however, implies the corruption of ideal beauty because the human body, unlike the statue, is perishable. The only possible solution in order to preserve forever the memory and love for the art object, is a new death, a definitive one.

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\(^{93}\) She seemed an alabaster statue made by some skilful sculptor to put on a tomb of a queen.
As in Polidori’s *The Vampyre*, Romuald is not turned into a vampire after being bitten by Clarimonde but, unlike Ianthe and Miss Aubrey, he does not die due to an excessive loss of blood. The female vampire is careful to avoid removing too much life-blood from the body of the beloved:

“‘Une goutte, rien qu’une petite goutte rouge, un rubis au bout de mon aiguille!... je ne prendrai de ta vie que ce qui’il faudra pour ne pas laisser éteindre la mienne!’”94 (p. 78)

Clarimonde and Lord Ruthven share some characteristics: they both belong to high society, they are travellers (Clarimonde moves to Venise with Romuald), they both die and come back from the dead and, as Sérapion himself maintains, “tous ses amants ont fini d’une manière miserable ou violente”95 (p. 68). Nevertheless, while Lord Ruthven manages to flee and vanishes into thin air, Clarimonde, according to the folk tradition, is exhumed and both her physical body and her soul are destroyed forever by means of holy water and the sign of the cross. The vampire, the *femme fatale*, is definitely wiped from the face of the Earth thanks to the weapons of the Roman Catholic Church, the same institution that was part of his beloved as if Romuald himself put an end to her existence.

Finally, the roles seem to be reversed: Clarimonde acquires a higher degree of humanity compared to the abbot Sérapion who appears as a

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94 ‘One drop, nothing but a little red drop, a ruby at the end of my needle!... I will only take from your life what I need not to extinguish mine!’

95 All her lovers are perished in a miserable or violent way.
devil. The priest narrates to his brother his feelings while assisting the exhumation of Clarimonde’s corpse:

“le zèle de Sérapion avait quelque chose de dur et de sauvage qui le faisait ressembler à un démon plutôt qu’à un apôtre ou à un ange, et sa figure aux grands traits austères et profondément découpé par le reflet de la lanterne n’avait rien de très rassurant”96 (p. 80)

On the contrary, Clarimonde proves to be a faithful lover, a woman capable of great feelings, who does not deserve the awful end Sérapion reserved her.

Clarimonde is a femme fatale, a literary figure which appears in a defined way in the poem Les Metamorphoses du Vampire by Charles Baudelaire in 1857:

La femme cependant, de sa bouche de fraise,
En se tordant ainsi qu’un serpent sur la braise,
Et pétrissant ses seins sur le fer de son busc,
Laissait couler ces mots tout imprégnés de musc:
-«Moi, j’ai la lèvre humide, et je sais la science
De perdre au fond d’un lit l’antique conscience.
Je sèche tous les pleurs sur mes seins triomphants,
Et fais rire les vieux du rire des enfants.
Je remplace, pour qui me voit nue et sans voiles,

96 Sérapion’s zeal was something hard and wild that made him look like a demon rather than an apostle or an angel, and his figure with great austere traits and deeply cut by the reflection of the lantern was not very reassuring.
La lune, le soleil, le ciel et les étoiles!

Je suis, mon cher savant, si docte aux voluptès,

Lorsque j’étouffe un homme en mes bras redoutés,

Ou lorsque j’abandonne aux morsures mon buste,

Timide et libertine, et fragile et robuste,

Que sur ces matelas qui se pâment d’émoi,

Les anges impuissants se damneraient pour moi!»

Quand elle eut de mes os soucé toute la moelle,

Et que languissamment je me tournai vers elle

Pour lui rendre un baiser d’amour, je ne vis plus

Qu’une outre aux flancs gluants, toute pleine de pus!

Je fermais les deux yeux, dans ma froide épouvante,

Et quand je les rouvris à la clarté vivante,

À mes côtés, au lieu du mannequin puissant

Qui semblait avoir fait provision de sang,

Tremblaient confusément des débris de squelette,

Qui d’eux-mêmes rendaient le cri d’une girouette

Ou d’une enseigne, au bout d’une tringle de fer,

Que balance le vent pendant les nuits d’hiver.  

97 Baudelaire, Charles. Les Fleurs du mal. Prato, Giunti Editore, 2007, pp. 310, 312. «The Vampire’s Metamorphoses. The woman meanwhile, twisting like a snake/ On hot coals and kneading her breasts against the steel/ Of her corset, from her mouth red as strawberries/ Let flow these words impregnated with musk: / — "I, I have moist lips, and I know the art/ Of losing old Conscience in the depths of a bed./ I dry all tears on my triumphant breasts/ And make old men laugh with the laughter of children./ I replace, for him who sees me nude, without veils,/ The moon, the sun, the stars and the heavens!/ I am, my dear scholar, so learned in pleasure/ That when I smother a man in my fearful arms,/ Or when, timid and licentious, frail and robust,/ I yield my bosom to
As George Ross Ridge\textsuperscript{98} maintains, the man appears subjected to the modern woman seen as a vampire or, exactly, a \textit{femme fatale}. This submission also characterizes the love affair where the woman as an active being annihilates the man, a passive creature. At the end of the nineteenth century, the \textit{femme fatale} mirrors the development of European society where the woman becomes a predominant figure in salons, boudoirs and private societies. This new character substitutes therefore all the previous symbols of “wife, mother, hearth-woman”\textsuperscript{99} and this also implies the loss of her creative nature since her purpose is not to have children anymore, but she aims at destroying/killing the man. The female characters do not resemble the heroines of Ann Radcliffe’s novels, frightened, naïve, passive and pure, but they are transformed into active, and often violent, beings. The passive man is inevitably attracted or fascinated by this new woman as Romuald himself admits:

“Je baissais la paupière, bien résolu à ne plus la relever pour me soustraire à l’influence des objets extérieurs; car la distraction m’enivrahissait de plus en plus, et je savais à peine ce que je faisais.”\textsuperscript{100} (p. 50)


\textsuperscript{100} I looked down, determined to raise my gaze no more in order to escape the influence of external objects; because the distraction invaded me more and more, and I hardly knew what I was doing.
Often, however, the heroines of the novels during the first half of the nineteenth century mingles the features of the *femme fatale* to those typical of Romanticism since they are the forerunners of this new kind of woman. Clarimonde, indeed, experiences genuine feelings for Romuald but she is also the destroyer of her previous lovers and the ruin of the priest’s soul.

2.3 Joseph Thomas Sheridan Le Fanu’s *Carmilla*

Clarimonde is not the only female vampire in Gothic literature. In 1872, the Irish writer Joseph Thomas Sheridan Le Fanu published *In a Glass Darkly*, a collection of five Gothic stories that present, as their central thread, the investigations of Dr Martin Hesselius, a detective of the occult. The fifth and last of these short stories is entitled *Carmilla*, the name of the female vampire who troubles the life of some young girls. The novella enabled nineteenth-century readers to explore those subjects, which were considered a taboo, in a frightening, but at the same time, exciting and intriguing way. Montague notes that the character of Carmilla, the young female vampire, was probably based on a countess who had actually existed, named Countess Báthory, who had killed several women and bathed in their blood.  

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The story is narrated in first person by Laura, a youth who lives in Styria in a solitary castle or schloss with her father, who is in the Austrian service, Madame Perrodon and Mademoiselle De Lafontaine who are both her governess.

Laura begins her narration describing “the first occurrence in my existence, which produced a terrible impression upon my mind”¹⁰²(P.8). One night, when she was six years old, Laura was sleeping alone in the nursery when, suddenly, she was awakened by the squeak of the door. Realizing that she had been left alone, the child began to whimper «when, to my surprise, I saw a solemn, but very pretty face looking at me from the side of the bed” (P.8). What she saw was a young lady who, preoccupied by her weeping, lay down with Laura trying to reassure her. The child, who felt safe in the arms of the young unknown, fell asleep again but was wakened after few moments “by a sensation as if two needles ran into my breast very deep” (P.8). When the nurse came into the room, the young lady was disappeared and, though the woman face betrayed her concern, she persuaded Laura that it was just a nightmare.

Thirteen years later, Laura and her father were reading a letter from their friend General Spielsdorf who informed them that his beloved daughter was dead and that he cannot pay them visit for this reason. The causes of her death are not explained, the General only mentioned that “the fiend who betrayed our infatuated hospitality has done it all” (P.14). Laura and her father were shocked by the news and they wandered

¹⁰² All the quotations from Carmilla are taken from Le Fanu, Sheridan, *Carmilla*, London, Bibliolis Classics, 2010.
melancholy in the wood when the sound of a carriage drew their attention mostly because of its speed that was so high as to make it overturn completely by hitting the roots of a tree. When they approached the carriage, Laura and her father discovered that a young lady had been injured in the incident so the man suggested the mother of the girl to host her in his castle. The lady accepted but she also stated that she was obliged to continue her journey and that she “shall not see my darling, or even hear of her till my return, three months hence” (P.19). Eventually, the girl was brought to the schloss with the promise that no one would ever ask her anything about her private life or her family during her stay.

When the extremely beautiful stranger recovered from her incident, Laura visited her and, as soon as she saw her, she was petrified with astonishment since

“I saw the very face which had visited me in my childhood at night, which remained so fixed in my memory, and on which I had for so many years so often ruminated with horror, when no one suspected of what I was thinking.” (P. 27).

Before Laura could speak, the girl revealed that “twelve years ago, I saw your face in a dream, and it has haunted me ever since.” (P. 28). The girls spent few hours telling each other that past common experience and the event, which had seemed so terrifying before, began to create a strong bond between the two young to the point that, at the time to say goodbye for the night, the guest
“held me [Laura] close in her pretty arms for a moment and whispered in my ear, 'Good night, darling, it is very hard to part with you, but good night; tomorrow, but not early, I shall see you again.’” (P. 30).

The days passed and the relationship between the young girls grew stronger: the beauty and the manners of her friend fascinated Laura who was eager to know everything about the past and the origins of her new companion but the only thing she managed to discern was her name, Carmilla. Sometimes, however, Laura felt a bit worried about the girl’s attitude towards her since

“it was like the ardor of a lover; it embarrassed me; it was hateful and yet over-powering; and with gloating eyes she drew me to her, and her hot lips traveled along my cheek in kisses; and she would whisper, almost in sobs, ‘You are mine, you shall be mine, you and I are one forever.’” (P. 36).

One evening, a picture restorer arrived at the castle from Gratz carrying the family’s portraits, which had been restored for want of Laura’s father and, among them, one represented a countess named Mircalla Karnstein. The woman in the portrait was “quite beautiful; it was startling; it seemed to live. It was the effigy of Carmilla!” (P. 47). One night, Laura was sleeping in her room and had a dream, which seemed almost real: she saw a strange cat-like dark creature crawling on the floor and that, suddenly, jumped on her. Laura immediately felt pain in her breast as if two sharp needles had bitten her flesh and she began to scream making the monster disappear. The next morning, the girl was
even more horrified by the fact that even Carmilla had dreamed about the same monstrous black cat. Even though Laura slept well during the following nights, every morning she felt exhausted, she was pervaded by a languor and a melancholy that made her think of her death, an idea which she did not seem to dislike at all. One night, Laura had another realistic nightmare and she heard a sweet and gentle voice that warned her to be careful to the assassin. At the same time, she saw Carmilla standing in her room; she wore a white nightgown, which was blood-drenched from her chin to her feet. Laura woke up and told the incident to her governesses who run to Carmilla’s room but found no one. The whole servitude spent the entire morning looking for the girl, but her room was empty and the door locked from the inside. Shortly after noon, Laura went again to her friend’s chamber and found her there, frightened because her room had been violated. The girl told her friend that the past night she had gone to sleep as usual but, the next morning, when she woke up, she found herself on the sofa in the dressing room.

Laura’s health continued to deteriorate and she felt more and more feeble so that her father decided to call a doctor. She told him about her nightmares and about the punctures of needles in her breast.

“When my statement was over, he leaned with his shoulders against the wall, and with his eyes fixed on me earnestly, with an interest in which was a dash of horror” (P. 71).

Neither the doctor or her father told Laura about their anxieties, they decided never to live her alone and to visit the Karnstein’s ruined castle,
which was located near a deserted village three miles away from the
schloss. On the road they met the General Spielsdorf who was going to
visit the ruins too. The old friend, then, told them about the strange death
of his daughter: they had been invited to a masked ball in a schloss near
the Karnstein’s castle where they have been approached by two masked
ladies. The elder one, Madame la Comtesse, pretending to be an old
acquaintance of the General, started a conversation with the man and also
managed to intrigue and fascinate him while, the younger lady, named
Millarca, talked with his daughter. After a while, however, the Countess
informed the General that she was obliged to leave for almost three weeks
and she demanded him to host her daughter during her absence. The
man, mostly because of his daughter’s insistence, agreed and the lady
departed from the party. Eventually, Millarca moved to the General’s
schloss where she managed to mesmerize everybody until the man’s
daughter became mysteriously feeble, she presented the signs of bites on
her breast and, finally, died since no one could prevent it. The General
explained to his friends that he was looking for the tomb of Mircalla
Karnstein and, when Laura’s father told him about their portrait, he
maintained

“I believe that I have seen the original; and one motive
which has led me to you earlier than I first intended, was to
explore the chapel which we are now approaching” (P. 100).

The purpose of the general was to cut off the head of Mircalla since the
woman, or rather the vampire, who was supposed to have died centuries
ago, was, actually, the real cause of his daughter’s end. When Carmilla entered the chapel where the three friends were talking together, the General

«caught up the woodman’s hatchet, and started forward... he struck at her with all his force, but she dived under his blow, and unsathed, caught him in her tiny grasp by the wrist. He struggled for a moment to release his arm, but his hand opened, the axe fell to the ground, and the girl was gone.» (P. 112)

The General had recognized Carmilla as Millarca, the young who caused his daughter’s death, but also as Mircalla, the supposedly dead Countess Karnstein. The next day

“the grave of the Countess Mircalla was opened; and the General and my father recognized each his perfidious and beautiful guest... The features, though a hundred and fifty years had passed since her funeral, were tinted with the warmth of life... The limbs were perfectly flexible, the flesh elastic; and the leaden coffin floated with blood, in which to a depth of seven inches, the body lay immersed.” (P. 114)

The men, according to the tradition, impaled the corpse with a stake in the heart of Mircalla who screamed from the pain, then, they decapitated her, burned the mortal remains and spread the ashes in the river.

Unlike Clarimonde, Carmilla cannot be considered a femme fatale since her preys and her lovers are women. According to Elizabeth Signorotti, the lesbian relationship between Carmilla and Laura poses a threat to the traditional patriarchal structure of Western society. Following the works of

Claude Levi-Strauss and Gayle Rubin, Signorotti argues that women, in a male-dominated society, are perceived as the objects of sexual desire or as properties that can be exchanged in order to secure the bonds between men. The women do not participate in the creation of social order since men dominate society through a mechanism that Rubin defines “homosocial desire”, which has to be distinguished from homosexuality. The only way to make this distinction clear is to introduce, in the relationship between men, the female figure thus creating a safe man-woman-man connection. The Sapphic bond between Laura and Carmilla poses, therefore, a threat to the traditional patriarchal structure. Le Fanu had the merit of creating the first female vampire in English literature and the central role of women in the tale reflects what the author was noting in nineteenth-century society: the growing “power of female homosocial relationships.”

In the middle the nineteenth century, feminist movements had already achieved some victories in favor of women’s rights such as the passing of an Act to Amend the Law Relating to the Custody of infants who could live with their mothers after the prior consent of the Lord Chancellor. The century saw the establishment of many female societies as the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women in 1859 or the London and Manchester National Societies for Women’s Suffrage; Elizabeth Garrett Anderson became the first female doctor and, in 1871,

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women were finally eligible for election to School Boards. Nineteenth-century authors had to cope with this new society where women wanted to assert their rights and, therefore, no wonder if female characters began to “flood” the pages of books. However, this explanation alone is not sufficient to explain the appearance of the figure of the vampire woman in English literature. According to Signorotti:

“vampirism came to be associatively linked with the notion of moral contagion and especially with the ‘contamination’ of lesbianism.”

At the beginning of the story, Laura’s narration emphasizes how her father controls her life, the loneliness she feels in the schloss they inhabit, which is so isolated that the only visits are those of the old General Spielsdorf. The tedious routine of her life is broken by what Laura firstly perceives as a dream: the appearance of a beautiful lady whose behaviour seems for an instant to replace the emptiness left by the death of Laura’s mother. However, a sexual woman-woman relationship immediately replaces this initial mother-daughter connection, when the child perceives the teeth of the unknown lady deep in her breast. The mysterious woman reappears only thirteen years later in Laura’s life, but that dream has already initiated the child “to the liberating exchange of female sexuality”.

*Carmilla* develops a plot centred on female desire, which excludes any male presence; it renders women completely active and confines men in a

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corner preventing any contact between opposite sexes. The narration is full of references to the love between Laura and the fascinating vampire:

”[...] she would press me more closely in her trembling embrace, and her lips in soft kisses gently glow upon my cheek” (P. 35)

”I experienced a strange tumultuous excitement that was pleasurable... I had no distinct thoughts about her while such scenes lasted, but I was conscious of a love growing into adoration, and also of abhorrence.” (P. 35)

The allusions to their tenderness quickly turn into a downright orgasm as Laura herself testifies it:

”Sometimes after an hour of apathy, my strange and beautiful companion would take my hand and hold it with a fond pressure, renewed again and again; blushing softly, gazing in my face with languid and burning eyes, and breathing so fast that her dress rose and fell with the tumultuous respiration. It was like the ardor of a lover; it embarrassed me; it was hateful and yet overpowering; and with gloating eyes she drew me to her, and her hot lips travelled along my cheek in kisses; and she would whisper, almost in sobs, ‘You are mine, you shall be mine, you and I are one forever.’ Then she had thrown herself back in her chair, with her small hands over her eyes, leaving me trembling.” (P. 36).

As Lord Ruthven and Clarimonde, Carmilla belongs to the aristocracy. The carriage that was carrying Carmilla and her family is described by Laura as “the travelling carriage of a person of rank” (P. 17). The General Spielsdorf, when narrating the mysterious death of his daughter, states that the masked ball at which he was invited “was a very aristocratic
assembly” (P. 85) and, during the party, he meets Millarca and her mother, Madame la Comtesse, two women of high rank. Ultimately, Carmilla and Millarca are nothing but Mircalla, the former Countess Karnstein. Conversely, the General maintains that “I was myself almost the only ‘nobody’ present” (P. 85) at the masked ball and Laura, at the beginning of her narration, describes her and her father as “by no means magnificent people” who lived on “a small income” (P. 5). Consequently, the act of sucking blood that Carmilla performs towards Laura, the General’s daughter and the other girls in the village, may be seen, metaphorically, as an act of abuse of the high society against the lower classes. Carmilla refuses to reveal her origins to Laura who would like to know at least the name of her friend’s family. According to Signorotti\textsuperscript{109}, this refusal may be seen as another example of the growing power of women at the expense of the traditional patriarchal family since Carmilla is not interested in her lineage and its survival but only in her lustful relationship with Laura.

Carmilla proves not to believe in God when, discussing with Laura, she states

“Creator! Nature! [...] all things proceeds 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” (P. 43).

What Carmilla is refusing is the belief in a superior and omnipotent male being; she denies the masculine deity as she rejects the central role

that man has created for himself in society. The only supernatural power she accepts is that of Nature, a female and motherly force that allows her to justify her relationship with other women. In the novel, men seem to be unable to act: General Spielsdorf cannot save his daughter’s life and Laura’s father is incapable of preventing the relationship between the two girls and the consequent malady of his daughter. The marriage of the General and Laura could have restored the patriarchal order but the girl is no longer in a position to take husband because of her physical conditions as her father maintains by saying:

“I wish our good friend, the General, had chosen any other time; that is, I wish you had been perfectly well to receive him” (P. 77)

On the one hand, therefore, Carmilla and Laura refuse the marital union and, on the other hand, they also reject their role as mothers: in a patriarchal family, women had the sole purpose of procreating, but this cannot happen in a Sapphic love affair.

As Polidori’s *The Vampyre*, the novel is open-ended. Carmilla’s body is destroyed according to the tradition that it has already been mentioned in Dom Augustine Calmet and Tournefort’s accounts:

“The body, therefore, in accordance with the ancient practice, was raised, and a sharp stake driven through the heart of the vampire, who uttered a piercing shriek at the moment, in all respects such as might escape from a living person in the last agony. Then the head was struck off, and a torrent of blood flowed from the severe neck. The body and the head was next placed on a pile of wood, and
reduced to ashes, which were thrown upon the river and borne away...” (p. 115)

Nevertheless, Le Fanu also advises that “vampire’s victims must become vampires themselves” (p. 118), that “it is the nature of vampire to increase and multiply” (p. 118) and Laura herself maintains that “often from a reverie I have started, fancying I heard the light step of Carmilla at the drawing room door” (p. 119). Laura has changed after her experience, the reader cannot know if she has become a vampire, what is obvious is that she is not the same girl, she has developed a desire for women that her father is unable to suppress: the traditional patriarchal order is definitely destroyed.

*Carmilla* is clearly modeled on Coleridge’s poem *Christabel*. Both stories present an innocent young lady who is seduced by an extremely beautiful girl who seems in danger or needs protection. Laura and Christabel both host Carmilla and Geraldine in their castles where the fathers do not realize the menace their daughters are facing. Moreover, Carmilla and Geraldine are both associated with two wild animals but, while the former is actually transformed into a sort of huge black cat, the reader does not know for sure if the second has ever turned into a snake, it can be supposed given Christabel reaction to the bard’s dream. As Nina Auerbach notes, «intimacy arouses these vampires», they do not draw their strength from the moon as Lord Ruthven\textsuperscript{110}. In Le Fanu’s novella, the moon appears when Laura and her father see Carmilla for the first time.

They are still shaken for the news of the strange death of General Spielsdorf’s daughter and the shining satellite is often described as exquisite or gleaming,

“with a light so intense it was well known it indicated a special spiritual activity. The effect of the full moon in such a state of brilliancy was manifold. It acted on dreams, it acted on lunacy, it acted on nervous people, it had marvelous physical influences connected with life.” (p. 16)

Few lines later, Mademoiselle de La Fontaine maintains that “the moon, this night, is full of idyllic and magnetic influence” (p. 16). In *Carmilla*, therefore, the moon is a sort of prelude for the vampire’s arrival but it does not improve the girl’s ability nor it ensures her rebirth or survival. Later on, the moonlight allows Laura to appreciate her friend’s attractiveness: “How beautiful she looked in the moonlight!” (p. 49). It is under the same moon that Christabel meets Geraldine whose beauty seems to darken the cloudless sky, she radiates her own light: “the moon is behind, and at the full; / And yet she looks both small and dull […] damsel bright, / Dressed in a silken robe of white, / That shadowy in the moonlight shone”.

As Nina Auerbach underlines, there is another similarity between *Carmilla* and Geraldine since they are “eerily inseparable from the spirit of [their] victim’s mother”\(^{111}\). When Christabel enters her room with Geraldine, she wishes melancholically “‘O mother dear! That thou wert here!’” and, promptly, the other lady answers “‘I would’ [...] ‘she were!’”.

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Then, Geraldine tries to chase away the benevolent spirit of Christabel’s mother who should be protecting her daughter:

“Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine! / I have the power to bid thee flee’ [...] ‘Off, woman, off! This hour is mine- / Though thou her guardian spirit be, / Off, woman, off! ‘t is given to me.’”

Finally, Geraldine herself assumes the role of the girl’s mother but not before she has behaved like a lover:

“They then drawing in her breath aloud, / Like one that shuddered, she unbound / The cincture from beneath her breast: / Her silken robe, and inner vest, / Dropped to her feet, and full in view, / Behold! Her bosom and half her side- [...] And lo! The worker of these harms, / That holds the maiden n her arms, / Seems to slumber still and mild, / As a mother with her child.”

This mother-lover-daughter triangle becomes a cry in *Carmilla*, an admonition made by an unknown woman, which seems to be Laura’s mother as well as Carmilla:

“One night, instead of the voice I was accustomed to hear in the dark [Carmilla’s one], I heard one, sweet and tender, and at the same time terrible, which said, ‘Your mother warns you to beware of the assassin.’” (p. 64)

Soon after, Laura sees a light and perceives Carmilla at the foot of her bed covered with blood. At the end of the story, both Laura and Christabel turn into their persecutors as a result of their extreme bond. While Sir Leoline is caressing Geraldine, Christabel “[...] in a dizzy trance /
Stumbling on the unsteady ground / Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound;” She has become a woman-snake like Geraldine. At the end of Le Fanu’s novella, Laura admits that

“often from a reverie I have started, fancying I have heard the light step of Carmilla at the drawing room door.” (p. 119)

The message is clearly addressed to Laura but she misunderstands it believing that Carmilla is in danger thus merging together her mother, herself and her lover. Moreover, the lives of these two female girls are intertwined to the point that the two characters are confused from the beginning: they do not have a mother, they both consider the other as extremely beautiful, they had the same dream when they were children and, mostly, they are both Karnstein.

According to Nina Auerbach112, Carmilla and Geraldine, but it is also possible to include Clarimonde, differ from Lord Ruthven because they fall in love with their prey. It can be maintained that this is a female prerogative since Polidori’s vampire is the only one who treats his victims as mere food: Clarimonde does not seem to wish Romuald’s death, Carmilla expresses her love for Laura almost every time she speaks and Geraldine aims at seducing Christabel without hurting her physically, as far as we know. This opposition may be explainable through another dissimilarity between male and female vampires. As we have seen previously, Lord Ruthven belongs to the so-called ‘itinerant Byronic

112 Auerbach, Nina. Ibid., p. 18.
vampire’ category, while Geraldine and Carmilla choose to act in a more domestic environment where they can better penetrate the intimacy of their victims. Clarimonde may be considered an exception to this ‘rule’, but, at the same time, she is in keeping with it since, after having met Romuald, she always travels with him, she does not wander in search of new blood, and, most importantly, she acts as a vampire only in moments of intimacy, in their bedroom, as Carmilla and Geraldine do.
CHAPTER THREE

Bram Stoker’s Dracula

3.1 Dracula’s birth

As Christopher Frayling points out, Bram Stoker carried out a lot of research before writing his masterpiece. These investigations, kept at the Rosenbach Foundation of Philadelphia and known as ‘Foundation Notes’,

“consists of handwritten and typewritten notes, dated and undated, about numerous subjects of central or tangential interest to a writer who was thinking of settings, characters, and plot for a story of the supernatural; descriptions of topography, landscape and customs from the work of contemporary travellers in Danubian countries; notes on a theory of dreams; transcriptions of tombstone inscriptions; accounts of conversations with old sailors and coastguardsmen; and notes for the novel itself”\(^\text{113}\).

Stoker’s notes show that the author began to organize the novel in 1890; the story had to be set in 1893 and in the form of letters; the name ‘Count Dracula’ appeared only in 1892 while, initially, he was called ‘Count Wampyr’. At the beginning, Stoker planned to set the story in Austrian Styria (Carmilla’s setting) but, in 1892, he chose Transylvania instead; the first letters in the novel were from Dracula to some lawyers concerning his intention to buy a house in England; the plot had to revolve around the character of a solicitor called Jonathan Harker.

\(^\text{113}\) Frayling, Christopher. *Cit.*, p. 298.
The first notes, dated March 8 1890, define how the author imagined the plot of his novel that was to begin with an exchange of some letters of legal nature from Count Wampyr to a Law Society and a solicitor named Abraham Aaronson. In his letters, the Count asked Aaronson to send him a worthy solicitor who, however, must not know the German. It was only in a second time that Stoker decided to change the solicitor’s name in Peter Hawkins and to describe the process of the acquisition of Dracula’s dwelling through a flashback narrated by Jonathan Harker in his journal.

Stoker’s following notes consist of a succession of possible characters for his novel: besides Abraham Aaronson and the young solicitor, they include a German professor, a Philosophic Historian, the lawyer’s sister, another woman who should die, a mad doctor and a mad patient, a detective, a mortician and two domestics of the Count. It is easy to note that Abraham Van Helsing, the Dutch professor, is, actually, the merging of three characters: the Philosophic Historian, the German professor and the detective. In addition, the two servants disappear in the novel, replaced by Dracula himself, while Mina takes the place of the young clerk’s sister.

The note dated March 14, divides the novel in four main sections entitled *Styria to London*, *Tragedy*, *Discovery* and *Punishment*, which are split, in their turn, in seven chapters. While the first book obviously narrates the young solicitor’s arrival in Styria and its stay at the castle, the second section is set in Whitby and it describes the shipwreck of a schooner, Mina’s wedding and Lucy’s death. Book III was supposed to
begin with a dinner where all the thirteen participants would play a game trying to say something strange, thus, following Byron’s suggestion in Villa Diodati. In the same section, the Texan Brutus, who will become Quincey P. Morris in the final plot, travels to Transylvania where a werewolf kills him. *Punishment* describes another dinner party and the end of the Count. Then, the notes report another list of characters such as Dr Seward and his fiancé Lucy Westenra, Peter Hawkins and his solicitor Jonathan Harker, his future wife Wilhelmina Murray, the Texan Brutus Morris, other two lawyers named William Abbot and A. M. Young, Mina’s friend Kate Reed, Cotford the detective, Alfred Singleton who studies psychic, a Texan inventor, a German professor called Max Windshoeffel and the painter Francis Aytown. Again Van Helsing is not yet included in the list but he leaks out from the union of the detective, Alfred Singleton and the German Professor.\textsuperscript{114}

At a later stage, Stoker writes up the features that, according to him, the vampire has to present such as his influence over animals or his ability to move through London fogs. Other characteristics that will not be included in the novel (the impossibility to be portrayed or photographed, the inability to appreciate music and his pleasure in generating evil feelings in the others’ mind) as well as the painter Francis Aytown, seem to originate from another novel which was published in 1891: *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde, an acquaintance of the author\textsuperscript{115}.

In March 1890, Bram Stoker wrote on a piece of paper:

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\textsuperscript{114} Frayling, Christopher. *Ibid.*, pp. 298-299.
\end{flushleft}
“young man goes out – sees girls one tries – to kiss him not on the lips but throat. Old Count interferes – rage and fury diabolical. This man belongs to me I want him”.

Less than a week later, he added: “Loneliness, the Kiss ‘this man belongs to me’”. In February 1892 he wrote: “Bistritz – Borgo Pass – Castle – Sortes Virgil – Belongs to me”. Stoker kept writing such notes during the following years:

“& the visitors – is it a dream – women stoop to kiss him. terror of death. Suddenly Counts turns her away – ‘this man belongs to me’, May 15 Monday Women kissing. Book I Ch 8 Belongs to me”116.

As Sir Frayling notes, therefore, before publishing his masterpiece in June 1897, Bram Stoker planned it for six years, mentally travelling in a place he had never visited: Transylvania. Stoker’s notes reveal that the author had often the same dream during those years about three fascinating women who were trying to pierce a man with their kisses while the victim experienced both desire for those red lips and terror. The nightmare usually ended brusquely when a sort of demon identified as a Count entered the room susurrating “this man belongs to me”.

In the author’s notes, the elements that constitute Dracula were unconnected, but they began to come into focus in August 1890, when he went on holiday to Whitby, a small seaside town in the county of North Yorkshire. Although he arrived there with his wife Florence and their only child, Noel, Stoker spent much of his holiday on his own, talking to sailors

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116 All the quotations of Bram Stoker’s journal are taken from Frayling, Christopher. Ibid., p. 301.
and coastguards about the sea and a Russian schooner called *The Dimitri*, which, five years before, had docked into the harbor trying to escape from a storm and avoiding the rocks by pure chance. Stoker was fascinated and he did not just report the story in his notes so that he might recycle it, but he even carried out some research in the local museum, where he found the old copies of the local newspaper, *The Whitby Gazette*. On Saturday, October 31 1885, the night of Halloween, they reported that dramatic shipwreck of The Dimitri that run into the port due to a severe gale. In the philosophical section of the museum, Stoker also found a book entitled *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia* by William Wilkinson, which proved to be Count Dracula’s birth certificate since it could be read that

“Dracula in the Wallachian language means Devil. The Wallachians were, at that time, as they are at present, used to give this as a surname to any person who rendered himself conspicuous either by courage, cruel actions, or cunning”

The author also took inspiration from *Transylvanian Superstitions* by Mme E. de Laszowska Gerard, a book that probably convinced him to move the scene from Styria to Transylvania. The book also describes the importance of the eve of St. George’s day which

“is still frequently kept by occult meetings taking place at night in lonely caverns or within ruined walls, and where all the ceremonies usual to the celebration of a witches”

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117 Sir Christopher Frayling’s speech during *Bram Stoker Centenary Conference* in Whitby. April 13, 2012.
Sabbath are put into practice. [...] This same night is the best for finding treasures, and many people spend it in wandering about the hills trying to probe the earth for the gold it contains. [...] In the night of St. George’s Day (so say the legend) all these treasures begin to burn, or, to speak in mystic language, to ‘bloom’ in the bosom of the earth, and the light they give forth, described as a bluish flame resembling the colour of lighted spirits of wine, serves to guide favoured mortals to their place of concealment”¹¹⁸

As Elizabeth Miller notes, Gerard’s book also influenced Stoker concerning the so-called *scholomance*:

“As I am on the subject of thunderstorms, I may as well mention the *Scholomance*, or school supposed to exist somewhere in the heart of the mountains, and where all the secrets of nature, the language of animals, and all imaginable magic spells and charms are taught by the devil in person. Only ten scholars are admitted at a time, and when the course of learning has expired and nine of them are released to return to their homes, the tenth scholar is detained by the devil as payment, and mounted upon an *Ismeju* (dragon) he becomes henceforward the devil’s aide-de-camp, and assists him in ‘making the weather’, that is to say, preparing the thunderbolts”¹¹⁹

In addition, in her book, Gerard also dealt with the concept of vampire that, in Romania, was better known as *nosferatu*. According to this population, vampires can be living or dead people: the former is the spurious descendant of two bastard parents; the latter, instead, is a person who becomes a vampire after being killed by a *nosferatu*. Rumanians believed that the evil spirit could be defeated in two ways: either by opening the coffin and piercing the corpse with a stake, either by

¹¹⁸ As quoted in Frayling, Christopher. *Cit.*, pp. 321-322.
shooting it with a pistol. However, if the vampire should be still alive, the head had to be cut off, the mouth filled with garlic, the heart and the corpse burned.

Bram Stoker spent many hours walking through Saint Mary’s churchyard on the cliffs above the town of Whitby where he carefully noted down eighty-seven names and the inscriptions from these graves, complete with footnotes. It is obvious, therefore, that it was in Whitby that the author began to plan the central section of his novel about a vampire from the East who arrives in Whitby in an empty schooner called *The Demeter*, not *The Dimitri*, to colonize the West. Additionally, it is precisely in Saint Mary that the vampire attacks his first victim on English soil, Lucy Westenra, who will, as a consequence, become one of the undead.

Whitby was not, obviously, the only place of inspiration for Bram Stoker who, in those moments when he was not working at the Lyceum Theatre, visited Yorkshire and its graveyards, Regent’s Park Zoo imagining the possible effects of a vampire on animals and the Library at the British Museum.

According to Elizabeth Miller, it is possible to affirm that Bram Stoker took inspiration also from Le Fanu’s novella *Carmilla*. The description of the count, indeed, seems quite similar to Carmilla’s one. They are both characterized by their piercing white teeth, they are both able to creep into small crevices becoming mist, they bear the sunlight and they can

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change their shapes into animals. In addition, not only Carmilla and Dracula have something in common, but her death is identical to Lucy’s execution: their hearts are both pierced with wooden stakes and their heads cut off.

3.2 The real Dracula

Between July and September 1890, Bram Stoker changed Count Wampyr into Count Dracula, a name he found in *Late British Consul Resident at Bukoreş* in Whitby’s library.

As Raymond T. McNally and Radu Florescu write, the real Dracula was born in 1431 in Schassburg, Transylvania, which is about sixty-five miles apart from Bistrita and which, at that time, maintained business relations with Germany. A plaque mounted on a wall of Dracula’s castle, testifies his presence in those places and that of his brother, Radu, and his father, Dracul, who lived there from 1431 to 1435. In 1431, Vlad Dracul was introduced in the respected Order of the Dragon and also became Prince of Wallachia, a title that implied a political and military commitment to protect Transylvania against a possible Turkish attack. The Order of the Dragon was founded in 1387 by the German Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg and his wife, Barbara von Cilli, and it aimed at protecting the Catholic Church through a secret military and religious congregation against the Hussites, considered heretics. The Order was also intended to

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organize a crusade against the Turkish threat that was coming from the Balkans. Vlad Dracul obtained his second investiture from the Emperor, but the title implied the beginning of a rivalry within the same family since Prince Alexandru Aldea, the former Prince of Wallachia, was Dracul’s half-brother. Once on the throne, Prince Dracul, fearing the increasing power of the Turks, signed an alliance with their sultan, Murad II, against the Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund. Due to this agreement, the Draculas were obliged to follow Murad II during his incursions in Transylvania where he killed people and burned villages. Dracul and his family thus became enemies of their own homeland, although they managed to save some town from destruction. This sort of benevolence, however, was considered a treachery by the Turkish sultan who imprisoned Dracul and his sons, Radu and Dracula. To save himself from death, Dracul forged a new alliance with the Turkish Empire, leaving his sons as prisoners as a symbol for his devotion. While Dracula remained a hostage until 1448, his brother Radu decided to go to the enemy side becoming the sultan’s minion and thus competing for the throne of Wallachia that will be his after his brother’s death. Due to these events, Dracula lost his confidence in human race and his respect for ethics becoming insubordinate and brutally violent.\textsuperscript{122}

In 1447 Vlad Dracul was killed by a member of the Order of the Dragon and Mircea, Dracula’s elder brother, had his eyes burned with pieces of burning iron and was buried alive due to their commitment in

\textsuperscript{122} McNally, Raymond T. and Florescu, Radu. \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 16-17.
the crusades against the Turks where they accused another Dragon of being responsible for a military defeat. The new Wallachian Prince, Vladislav II Danesti, was immediately considered a threat by the Turks who associated his dynasty to the Hungurian court, and who aimed at making Dracula ascending the throne. Due to Dracula’s fear of his father’s assassins and its averseness to stay with the Turks, the young man sought refuge in Moldavia that, in those days, was ruled by his the father of his cousin Stephen with whom he forged a long and lasting friendship. In 1451, however, Stephen’s father was murdered, an accident that compelled Dracula to return to Transylvania, in Sibiu, where he tried to forge an alliance with the Danesti family who, by that time, was collaborating with the Turkish Empire at the expense of Hungary. In Transylvania Dracula joined his father’s assassin in his campaigns against the Turkish army and he also laid claim to his right to reign as Prince of Wallachia.\footnote{McNally, Raymond T. and Florescu, Radu. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 20.}

Meanwhile the Turks had took control over Constantinople, killed Emperor Constantine XI Paleologus and were planning to move war against Transylvania to conquer it definitely. Strangely enough, Dracula decided to stay in Sibiu protecting it from the Turkish assaults but, in 1460, he attacked himself those lands where he murdered, mutilated, impaled and tortured ten thousand people in a more merciless way than any other foreign raid. In addition to Sibiu, Dracula attacked another Transylvanian town named Brasov which was the setting of the famous
episode regarding the ferocious Prince’s dinner among the cadavers in the battlefield where he even impaled one of his soldiers who was not able to endure the smell of the corpses. Finally, he was captured in 1462 after being accused to be an enemy for the whole humanity.\footnote{McNally, Raymond T. and Florescu, Radu. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 22.}

According to Elizabeth Miller\footnote{Miller, Elizabeth. \textit{Cit.}, pp. 11-12.}, however, there is no evidence that Stoker actually knew something about the real Count Dracula. Surely enough, he had read the name in William Wilkinson’s treaty (\textit{An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia}) but the only notions he could learn from it did not concern the Prince’s gory campaigns. The author knew that Dracula was a voivode, that he moved war against the Turks, that he was defeated and had to run to Wallachia and then to Hungary and that his brother took his place. What is more certain, is that Wilkinson’s footnote about the meaning of the word “Dracula”, really fascinated Stoker and, indeed, in his notes the words “Dracula” and “devil” are both emphasized.

3.3 The plot

The novel is mostly narrated in the form of letters written by the main characters and it opens when the young solicitor Jonathan Harker leaves England to travel to Transylvania, on May 3rd 1890, where he has to meet a local nobleman, Count Dracula, who intends to buy a house in London. Jonathan comes from the beginning in contact with the local population,
their food but, most of all, their superstitions. Although, every inhabitant of the local villages tries to persuade him not to go to the Count’s castle, Harker is determined to carry out his job and decides to continue his journey. Finally, the solicitor manages to reach the castle, not without some supernatural and scary event.

Initially, the Count seems to be just a kind old man determined to move to England but, as the days pass, he turns out to be a vampire who feeds on other human beings. Jonathan himself risks his life twice while in the castle: the first time when he cuts himself while shaving at the presence of the Count, the second time when he decides to scour Dracula’s bedroom where he is seduced and attacked by three fascinating female vampires.

Even the other characters of the novel are presented through their letters as those between Mina Murray, Jonathan’s bride-to-be, and Lucy Westenra, her best friend, that introduce Lucy’s three pretenders: John Seward, the supervisor of an insane asylum, the Texan Quincey P. Morris and Lord Arthur Holmwood, who will actually become her fiancé. Mina, who is waiting Jonathan’s homecoming, goes on vacation in Whitby with her friend Lucy and her family. Here the young girl begins to notice her friend’s strange behaviour but she also witnesses the shipwreck of an apparently ghost ship, The Demeter, whose captain is found lifeless and tied to the rudder. Mina records all these events in her journal where she also attaches an article of the local newspaper, which reports a part of the logbook and which talks about an enraged dog that came out of the ship.
From this moment on, Renfield, a patient of Dr. Seward, begins to rant about a mysterious Lord, while Lucy clearly becomes the victim of a vampire since she presents the mark of a bite on her neck. Count Dracula has landed in England.

In the meantime, Jonathan manages to escape from the castle by lowering himself from a window and he is hospitalized in a nunnery in Budapest, due to his physical, but mostly psychical, wounds. In England, Lucy’s health worsens compelling Dr. Seward to call his former professor from Amsterdam, Abraham Van Helsing. At the beginning, the men try to stop the lady’s decay through some transfusions made by the two of them, Quincey and Arthur. Unfortunately, their efforts are useless and Dracula transforms the girl into a vampire by killing her. The young monster looks immediately for something to feed upon and she captures some children who are playing near her cemetery. Seward and Van Helsing become aware of what was happened by reading the newspaper and they resolve to examine the wounds of one child that appear to have been inflicted by a vampire. As a consequence of this discovery, the four men trap Lucy’s in her tomb and, the following day, Arthur pierces her heart with a stake.

Thanks to Lucy’s correspondence, Van Helsing manages to come in contact with Mina and he also reads Harker’s journal thus discovering the details about his journey in Transylvania. Mina and her husband join the professor, Seward, Quincey and Arthur in their “campaign” against Dracula. Moreover Mina manages to decipher the strange behaviour of
Ranfield who, in a moment of clarity, tries to warn them about the danger they have to face soon. They break into the Count’s house in Carfax and, following Van Helsin suggestions, they bless the boxes full of earth that the vampire had carried from his homeland to rest. Unfortunately, the same night, Dracula arrives at the asylum where he kills Ranfield, bites Mina and forces her to suck his blood from his breast. Van Helsing, Harker, Seward and Arthur, therefore, decide to purify the other London hidings of the Count using some Hosts compelling him to flee away. However, the group does not want to vacate such a threat and they all begin to pursue the fugitive. They go to Varna where they wait Dracula’s ship, but the vampire manages to avoid them upping the river near his castle. The heroes resolve to separate themselves in three groups: Jonathan and Arthur, Seward and Quincey, Mina and Van Helsing.

On November 6th 1897, Mina’s journal reports the killing of Count Dracula. After that Van Helsing has blessed the place and killed the three female vampires who had attacked Jonathan at the beginning, the professor and Mina rejoin the others and they besiege a group of gipsy who were carrying Dracula’s coffin. Jonathan and Quincey, who is wounded, manage to destroy the vampire who turns into dust after that a smile of relief appears on his face. The episode ends with the death of Quincey.

Seven years later, Harker narrates what has happened to his friends: Arthur and Seward are both married while Mina has given birth to a child
named after the four members of the story, but they simply call him Quincey since he is born on the same day of the Texan’s death.

3.4 Blood and Class Struggle.

*Dracula* is centered on blood that flows in two directions: blood that spills out and feeds vampires, but also blood that enters through transfusions which were suggested by Van Helsing. Blood is at the basis of the survival of the vampire who, as Van Helsing underlines,

“cannot die by mere passing of the time; he can flourish when that he can fatten on the blood of the living. Even more, we have seen amongst us that he can even grow younger; that his vital faculties grow strenuous, and seem as though they refresh themselves when his special pabulum is plenty. But he cannot flourish without this diet; he eat not as others”

(p. 322)

Dracula is, first of all, the name of an ancient and powerful dynasty and the Count himself, indeed, tells Harker the deeds of his lineage:

“when, after the battle of Mohács, we threw off the Hungarian yoke, we of the Dracula blood were amongst their leaders, for our spirit would not brook that we were not free. Ah young sir, the Szekelys – and the Dracula as their heart’s blood, their brains, and their swords – can boast a record that mushroom growths like the Hapsburgs and the Romanoffs can never reach. The warlike days are over. Blood is too precious a thing in these days of dishonourable peace; and the glories of the great races are as a tale that is told”

(p. 55)

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Dracula is the last aristocrat. By now, his lineage is fallen into ruin; it does not possess the ancient domain that it had the previous centuries due to its noble blood. The power Dracula enjoys at the moment, therefore, is no longer related to politics, but to his need for blood. While, in the past, he fed metaphorically on the lives of the peasantry, now he drinks literally the blood of these people. Blood was and still is at the basis of the Count’s power. At the beginning, it was the blood shed by the soldiers who fought to maintain Dracula’s prestige and domains, but, at the time of narration, it is the blood spilled by the local population to keep the Count alive. As David Punter\textsuperscript{127} underlines, the teeth have replaced the sword.

Extrapolating the myth of the vampire from the novel, the character of the Count clearly demonstrates how aristocracy seemed immortal to the eyes of peasantry. Actually, according to the dominated, indeed, it does not matter who the dominator is, but they are aware of his existence and persistence during the centuries. Although the magnificence of Dracula’s lineage is waned for a long time, to the eyes of the population, the castle and its inhabitant are still the symbols of domination whose chains are not yet broken and whose presence continue to make them tremble with fear.

\textit{Dracula} follows the tendency of those novels about vampires whose founder was, as said before, Lord Ruthven. The issue of the struggle of aristocracy/nobility against bourgeoisie reappears. On the one hand a

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social class that is setting and that is defended with nail, but mostly with tooth, by its last representative; on the other hand another social class that is flourishing and proliferating enough to be symbolized by two future spouses, Jonathan Harker and Mina Murray. The physical strength of the vampire is thus endangered by that of love as Mina underlines in a letter to her friend Lucy:

“Well my dear, what could I say? I could only tell him that I was the happiest woman in the wide world, and that I had nothing to give him except myself, my life and my trust, and that with these went my love, and duty for all the days of my life. And, my dear, when he kissed me, and drew me to him with his poor weak hands, it was like a very solemn pledge between us.” (p. 158)

While the Count tries to protect his lineage, the bourgeoisie devote itself to the family. The vampires, according to the legends, are unfertile and, indeed, it is a matter of fact that the Count has three appealing wives but he cannot have children with them. The four of them can feed on babies but they cannot give birth to them. As a consequence of this sterility, Dracula, as Punter affirms, is associated with sex urge, passion, physical attraction, irrational instincts and eroticism; while, on the contrary, the group embodies maternal and Christian love, rationality and all those feelings that were accepted during the Victorian era.

As Franco Moretti underlines, Dracula may be a noble due to his lineage and his manners, but Jonathan Harker observes that, in his castle,

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128 Punter, David. Ibid., p. 25.
the Count is alone, he has no servants at all, and the domestics are one of the main features of nobility. Dracula, indeed, drives the carriage that brings Harker to the castle, he cooks Jonathan’s meals, he set and unset the table, he cleans the castle; in a word, he performs all those activities that should be carried out by his servants. Besides lacking this mark of nobility, the vampire does not experience those pleasures typical of the aristocracy: he does not eat or drink, hunt or participate to worldly events.

3.5 Dracula and Sexuality.

Critics, as Phyllis A. Roth\textsuperscript{130} notes, have associated vampirism and sexuality for long and Bram Stoker’s novel is not an exception. This relationship is clearly described in Jonathan Harker’s meeting with the three brides of Dracula. The novel is the first to present, in this study, female and male vampires in the same plot. The three fascinating brides, however, do not look like our previous female vampires: they do not seem to experience love as Clarimonde or Carmilla who prove affection, although in their own way, for Romuald and Laura. These three femmes fatales are more like their creator: they represent impulsive passions, sadism and eroticism and they do not even seem to feel anything for Dracula himself. When Harker breaks into Dracula’s bedroom, he meets

the three women and is struck by their attractiveness as he wrote in his journal:

“All three had brilliant white teeth that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous lips. There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips” (p. 65)

While the women discuss who should be the one to “kiss” him and decide to divide their prey, Jonathan is “in an agony of delightful anticipation” (p. 66). The young solicitor is not the only one who falls prey to these vampires and, at the end of the novel, Van Helsing has to face the same danger and delight.

This is not the only episode that displays sexuality in the novel: Lucy’s final death proves to be another good example of eroticism emphasized by what we can define as a violent defloration of a virgin. The description leaves no room for imagination:

“Arthur placed the point over the heart, and as I looked I could see its dint in the white flesh. Then he struck with all his might. 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” (p. 294)
Roth\textsuperscript{131} offers another example of an explicit scene in the novel when Dracula breaks into Mina’s room and forces her to suck the blood from a wound on his bare chest:

“with his left hand he held both Mrs Harker’s hands, keeping them away with her arms at full tension; his right hand gripped her by the back of her neck, forcing her face down on his bosom. Her white nightdress was smeared with blood, and a stream trickled down the man’s bare chest which was shown by his torn-open dress. The attitude of the two had a terrible resemblance to a child forcing a kitten’s nose into a saucer of milk to compel it to drink” (pp. 375, 376)

The scene clearly appears as a sexual harassment, a forced fellation where blood becomes semen. This is the first episode where Dracula sexually attacks a female character, while, in the rest of the novel Lucy and the three brides are the only sexually active. Men seem to be active only during these two episodes of phallic violence and when they kill.

These three scenes all describe heterosexuality and incest and they demonstrate that sexuality can be considered as one of the main characteristics of vampires. Mina and Harker do not go beyond kissing and the three men’s courtship towards Lucy does not reveal any trace of sexual ambivalence. However, when Miss Westenra turns into a vampire, she also becomes a voluptuous woman who seems to have lost her shyness and composure.

According to Christopher Craft\textsuperscript{132}, vampirism can be synthetized in two words: desire and fear. More in particular, sexual satisfaction implies

\textsuperscript{131} Roth, Phyllis A. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 32.
the violation of any moral doctrine imposed by society and this creates a
sense of terror justified by the fear of being discovered and judged or
punished. At the core of Stoker’s novel lies this kind of ambivalence
between physical pleasures and ethical anxiety that is developed through
a triple subdivision of the plot, which is typical of gothic novels such as Dr
Jekyll and Mr Hyde or Frankenstein. The first part coincides with the
beginning of the story and the presentation of a monster, the second and
longer section develops the ambiguity mentioned above, while, the third
segment, or the conclusion, implies the destruction of the fiend and its
death. Harker’s close encounter with the three female vampires in Count
Dracula’s room is a clear example of this desire-fear contradiction. This
episode marks a revolution of the norms instructed during the Victorian
era regarding male supremacy over women. Jonathan, paralyzed by terror
and delight, turns out to be the passive element of this atypical ménage,
while, the women participate actively to the sexual experience.
Nevertheless, what really conveys an apprehensive atmosphere to the
novel is Count Dracula’s inexplicable interest in Jonathan Harker that
seems to suggest a possible homoerotic relationship between these
characters. This homoerotic desire, however, will not be directly satisfied
but it is shown through the behaviour of the three brides who crave to
penetrate the solicitor’s body with their teeth, an obvious sexual
metaphor. Moreover, from Harker’s point of view, this is the only episode
in the text where a man experiences the desire to be penetrated.

Craft, Christopher. "Kiss Me with Those Red Lips": Gender and Inversion in Bram
Stoker’s Dracula in “Dracula” edited by Glennis Byron, London, New Casebooks Series,
1999., p. 93.
Dracula’s arrival interrupts this erotic and ambivalent scene and Jonathan’s final penetration by the three brides is left to the reader’s imagination but never transcribed in his journal.

Once in England, Dracula seems to lose his interest on males since he focuses his attention on Lucy and Mina. However, this heterosexual turn actually reveals other examples of homoerotic desire. For instance, as Van Helsing himself emphasizes, when the Count bites Lucy and drinks from her he is actually swallowing Quincey, Arthur and Seward’s blood.

Comparing Dracula’s female vampires with the other novel presented so far, it is possible to notice a sort of increase in the sexual component of the narratives. Clarimonde mingles the features of the femme fatale to those typical of Romanticism since she fascinates Romuald but she also loves him. La Morte Amoureuse does not present scenes that can be considered explicitly perverted; the reader is aware that, living together, the lovers may experience carnal pleasures but he/she cannot discern it for certain. Moreover, the only scene where the woman sucks the blood of her beloved is somewhat censored since she does not bite his body with her teeth but she cuts it. Carmilla’s sexuality is more unequivocal but it is always aimed at women and never heterosexual. The narration is full of references to the love between Laura and the fascinating vampire and the vampire’s tenderness quickly turns into a downright orgasm as Laura herself describe it. Nevertheless, the reader has always to interpret the words of the narrator since the scenes are constantly covered with a sort of prudish veil. On the contrary, there is no censorship in Harker’s carnal
desire for the three brides; he longs their kisses and the sexual anticipation of what might happen paralyzes him with delight. The novel is thus impregnated with forbidden fantasies that can be realized only through the contact with vampires.

The novel presents another theme which, according to Roth\textsuperscript{133}, is strictly connected to these fantasies: the Oedipus complex. Since Dracula manages to transform Lucy into a vampire and attempts to change Jonathan and Mina too, he seems to aspire to become their father, their creator. His sons, however, try to kill him throughout the novel in order to save the mother. The Oedipus complex is not only directed against the vampire and, indeed, competition among male characters is unmistakable from the beginning, culminating in the description of the blood transfusions. Van Helsing specifies that this practice has sexual connotations and, for this reason, Quincey and Seward have to hide it from Arthur, Lucy’s fiancé, who also believes that his transfusion creates a sort of marital relationship with the woman. \textit{Dracula} seems to be made of two similar narrations where the figures of the father and the mother constitute the essence of the plot. In the first part the mother is Lucy but she is also a voluptuous, seductive and sexually attractive woman and, for these reasons, she has to be killed. This ambivalence is emphasized by Lucy’s description at the beginning of the novel and when she becomes a vampire. At first she has blond curls while, in her tomb, her hair is black; she has to be destroyed since, becoming a vampire, she encounters a

\textsuperscript{133} Roth, Phyllis A. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 33.
process of denaturalization losing her capacity to have children and, indeed, she can only feed on them. In the second part Mina is the mother and, as Alannah Ari Hernandez\textsuperscript{134} underlines, she stands for purity, strength and truth since she reports the events in her journal. In this sense the Harker family, according to Carol Engelhardt Herringer\textsuperscript{135}, can be compared to the Holy Family: father, sinless mother, baby. Since Mina does not present any sexual charge, she is destined to be saved. Her lack of sexuality is manifested in the absence of any physical description, unlike Lucy, she remains faithful to one man while the others become her sons at the point that she decides to name her real one after them. The attempt to destroy the mother appears in this part of the novel too: Dracula’s attempt to transform her into a vampire could be avoided if the men/sons had not decided to leave her alone in her room. Dracula’s attack was predictable, yet they all insisted to leave her alone for her safety.

\textsuperscript{134} Alannah Ari Hernandez’s speech during \textit{Bram Stoker Centenary Conference} in Hull, April 12, 2012.
\textsuperscript{135} Carol Engelhardt Herringer’s speech during \textit{Bram Stoker Centenary Conference} in Hull, April 14, 2012.
CONCLUSIONS

Since the first evidence on the existence of vampires until Dracula’s publication, the characteristics of the un-dead have changed quite totally. While Tournefort or Calmet’s accounts describe the undead as a member of the poorest people, a peasant, a worker, a thief or a brigand who never leaves his village and, therefore, who usually preys upon members of his family or neighborhood, John William Polidori introduces the new figure of the noble vampire describing his Lord Ruthven as a fascinating and appealing man, not at all like his predecessors who appear as rotten corpses.

Polidori’s vampire influences most of the succeeding gothic novels as La Morte Amoureuse and Carmilla. These novels, centered on two female figures (Clarimonde and Carmilla), mirror a society that is changing to the detriment of men, where women begin to struggle for their right and, therefore, are perceived as a threat. Clarimonde, indeed, is depicted as a femme fatale, an attractive woman who manages to lure her victim with her appeal, while, Carmilla poses a threat to the traditional patriarchal structure of Western society since she is not interested in her lineage and its survival but only in her lustful relationship with Laura. Finally, Bram Stoker’s Dracula recalls this anxiety about gender roles through a series of sexual metaphors that describe female vampires as active participants who assail men perceived as passive objects.

Sexuality seems to be at the core of these novels evoking unutterable desires about homosexuality, Sapphic liaisons and sinful pleasures. In The
Vampyre, for example, Ianthe’s parents advise Aubrey about the dangers he may find in the woods where vampires usually perform their orgies and, in addition, the relationship between the young aristocrat and the fascinating vampire appears to conceal a homoerotic tendency. Gautier’s novella describes the carnal and immoral lust of a priest for a fascinating and intriguing woman. Through Clarimonde’s eyes, Romuald who has never met any other woman besides his sick mother, discovers the pleasures of physical pleasures. In this case, sexuality may be considered a synonym of necrophilia since the necessary condition for becoming a vampire is dying. Carmilla is freckled with erotic scenes between Laura and the young female vampire and the novel develops a plot centred on female desire, which excludes any male presence; it renders women completely active and confines the men in a corner preventing any contact between opposite sexes. Finally, Dracula mingles both Polidori’s homoeroticism and Gautier’s heterosexual liaisons by presenting four female vampires who sexually assail their male preys but also a noble and ancient male undead who displays an ambiguous interest for the male characters in the story.

In conclusion these four masterpieces demonstrate how the figure of the vampire has increasingly developed over nearly a century preserving, on the one hand, some peculiar characteristic (noble lineage, breakdown of social norms and blood thirst for instance) and, on the other hand, progressively introducing some innovations (the first noble vampire, a
femme fatale, a Sapphic relationship, a descendant of an ancient and powerful family who is able to turn people into vampires by biting them).
APPENDIX

Christabel\textsuperscript{136} is an unfinished poem written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge between 1797 and 1800 and published later in 1816.

The poem is the result of Coleridge’s numerous studies and readings, first of all, the scientific journal called the Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester published by a group of intellectuals in Manchester and which included their dissertations upon various subjects\textsuperscript{137}. More in particular, in the third volume of the journal, the physician John Ferriar published a detailed paper concerning vampires, where he recalled the Greek myth of the so-called vroucolacas as well as Dom Calmet and Joseph Pitton de Tournefort’s accounts on vampirism\textsuperscript{138}.

Another source of inspiration for Coleridge was Friedrich Schiller’s periodical, Die Horen, which first appeared in 1794 with the aim of bringing together the works of several thinkers such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. In 1798, indeed, the German writer published the famous Gothic poem entitled Die Braut von Corinth or The Bride of Corinth\textsuperscript{139}. The poet tells of a young man from Athens who arrives in Corinth where he knows nobody. He has to meet his future bride since their fathers have arranged their marriage years before. The girl is Christian while he has not yet converted and, therefore, is still a pagan.

\textsuperscript{139} Nethercot, Arthur H. Ibid, pp. 73-74.
The youth is received by the girl’s mother who prepares him an abundant dinner and wishes him good night. Probably due to his fatigue, the man falls asleep immediately but a young veiled girl in a white dress soon awakens him. Her skin is white, she wears a black and gold ribbon around her head and she moves forward with a prudish and silent bearing. The girl complains because she was unaware of his arrival and starts to leave but the youth stops her and invites the bride to attend the banquet prepared by her mother. The woman, with a mixture of disappointment and irritation, explains that she cannot enjoy such delights since her mother has vowed her to Christ against her wish. The beautiful woman, then, tells him that she is not going to be his future wife but that he is destined to her younger sister.

Notwithstanding this news, the beauty of the girl already captivates the man who convinces her to exchange gifts and symbols of affection. She offers him a golden necklace while he wants to give her a silver cup but she declines preferring a lock of his hair. It is now midnight and the girl, feeling a sense of calm, sips a blood-red wine refusing any offer of food. At this point, the man, pervaded by this sudden passion for the girl, demands her to become more intimate but she warns him that her touch is cold as ice. The Athenian, however, insists and manages to convince her. While his heart is inflamed with desire, from her chest does not come any beat.

In the meanwhile, the mother passes by the door and discovers the lovers. Unexpectedly, the young girl reveals her real nature: she is dead,
killed by her mother’s religion, and compelled to leave her grave to meet her promised love to suck the lifeblood from his heart. The girl, then, explains that, once the young man is dead, she is obliged to seek other victims. In order to put an end to this curse, the girl asks her mother to burn her and her lover so that they may both run towards their old deities.

In the poem, Goethe does not specify if the bride of Corinth is a ghost, a vampire or any other kind of supernatural being but, in 1797, he wrote in his diary that he was writing a Vampyrische Gedicht (a poem about a vampire).\(^{140}\) It is certain that Coleridge had read and studied Goethe and Ferriar works and it may be presumed that they influenced the poet while he was writing Christabel.

I report here Coleridge’s poem with the addition of some critical notes to the text.

**PART I**

‘Tis the middle of night by the castle clock\(^ {141}\)
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock;
Tu-whit!- Tu-whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.
Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff, which
From her kennel beneath the rock
Maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour;
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud;
Some say, she sees my lady’s shroud.

\(^{140}\) Nethercot, Arthur H. Ibid, p. 76.
\(^{141}\) Coleridge introduces many supernatural elements in his poem and these are the first examples: midnight is traditionally the hour of witches and the castle is the main setting of Gothic fiction (Nethercot, Arthur H. Ibid, p. 153).
Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark.\textsuperscript{142}
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is gray:
’T is a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.
The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late,
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothed knight;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that’s far away.

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And naught was green upon the oak,
But moss and rarest mistletoe:
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel!
It moaned as near, as near can be,
But what it is she cannot tell.-
On the other side it seems to be,
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.
The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady’s cheek-
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

\textsuperscript{142} According to Jerrold E. Hogle, the first verse and the following answer seem to suggest a parody of Gothic fiction. From \textit{The Castle of Otranto} onwards, indeed, gloomy and cold nights are considered typical features of horror stories (Hogle, Jerrold E., “Christabel” as Gothic, the Abjection of Instability in Gothic Studies, vol. 7 n. 1, May 2005, pp. 18-30, p. 20).
Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Dressed in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone:
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck, and arms were bare;
Her blue-veined feet unsandaled were;
And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess, 't was frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she-
Beautiful exceedingly!

'Mary mother, save me now!'
Said Christabel, 'and who art thou?'

The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet:-
'Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness:
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear!'\textsuperscript{143}
Said Christabel, 'How camest thou here?'
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet:-
'My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine:
Five warriors seized me yestermorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn:
They choked my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.
The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
And they rode furiously behind.
They spurred amain, their steeds were white:
And once we crossed the shade of night.
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be;
Nor do I know how long it is

\textsuperscript{143} Geraldine’s first impression is that of an innocent and undefended lady that mirrors Coleridge thoughts about women’s role in society and his firm belief that there should be more gender equality. In the second part, Geraldine is mistaken for an undefended lady by Sir Leoline and she becomes “an object of exchange” between Christabel’s father and Sir Roland. Nevertheless, patriarchal order is here mined by Geraldine herself since she attempts to become Christabel’s mother and lover (Hogle, Jerrold E., \textit{cit}, pp. 23-24)
(For I have lain entranced, I wis)
Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive.
Some muttered words his comrades spoke:
He placed me underneath this oak;
He swore they would return with haste;
Whither they went I cannot tell-
I thought I heard, some minutes past,
Sounds as of a castle bell.
Stretch forth thy hand,' thus ended she,
'And help a wretched maid to flee.'

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand,
And comforted fair Geraldine:
'O well, bright dame, may you command
The service of Sir Leoline;
And gladly our stout chivalry
Will he send forth, and friends withal,
To guide and guard you safe and free
Home to your noble father's hall.'

She rose: and forth with steps they passed
That strove to be, and were not, fast.
Her gracious stars the lady blest,
And thus spake on sweet Christabel:
'All our household are at rest,
The hall is silent as the cell;
Sir Leoline is weak in health,
And may not well awakened be,
But we will move as if in stealth;
And I beseech your courtesy,
This night, to share your couch with me.'

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little door she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate;
The gate that was ironed within and without,
Where an army in battle array had marched out.
The lady sank, belike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate:
Then the lady rose again,
And moved, as she were not in pain.144

144 According to many folk-tales, the Devil cannot cross a threshold unless it is formally invited into the house (Nethercot, Arthur H. *Ibid*, p. 153). This scene describes a woman
So, free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were. 
And Christabel devoutly cried 
To the Lady by her side; 
'Praise we the Virgin all divine, 
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!' 
'Alas, alas!' said Geraldine, 
'I cannot speak for weariness.' 
So, free from danger, free from fear, 
They crossed the court: right glad they were. 

Outside her kennel the mastiff old 
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold. 
The mastiff old did not awake, 
Yet she an angry moan did make. 
And what can ail the mastiff bitch? 
Never till now she uttered yell 
Beneath the eye of Christabel. 
Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch: 
For what can aid the mastiff bitch? 

They passed the hall, that echoes still, 
Pass as lightly as you will. 
The brands were flat, the brands were dying, 
Amid their own white ashes lying; 
But when the lady passed, there came 
A tongue of light, a fit of flame; 
And Christabel saw the lady's eye, 
And nothing else saw she thereby, 
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall, 
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall. 

who carries another woman beyond the threshold, as a groom with his bride and it seems to suggest a possible marriage between good and evil as well as a lesbian relationship between Christabel and Geraldine. The succeeding scene describing the women's night may also be interpreted as Coleridge's conception of lesbianism: a mark of evil; but it also alludes at the possibility that evil is incidental to innocence (Tekinay, Ash. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel": Doubts about the Universal Order in Dogus University Journal, n. 1, 2000, pp.184-192, pp. 189-190). 

Geraldine's refusal to pray the Virgin is certainly not due to her fatigue but to her demonic essence (Nethercot, Arthur H. cit, p. 55). The girl's discomfort in front of holy images is an obvious hint of her malignant and supernatural spirit. 

It is a common belief in folk-tales that some animals are able to perceive the presence of evil forces as in these lines where the old mastiff gives out an angry growl while Geraldine is passing near her kennel (Nethercot, Arthur H. Ibid, p. 55). 

The rekindling of the flames while Geraldine is passing by the fireplace is another example of a supernatural event (Nethercot, Arthur H. Ibid, p. 55). Flames can be easily associated with hell and the Devil and the reaction of the fire to the girl's presence is clearly due to the demonic essence of Geraldine.
'O softly tread,' said Christabel,  
'My father seldom sleepeth well.'  
Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,  
And, jealous of the listening air,  
They steal their way from stair to stair,  
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,  
And now they pass the Baron's room,  
As still as death, with stifled breath!  
And now have reached her chamber door;  
And now doth Geraldine press down  
The rushes of the chamber floor.  

The moon shines dim in the open air,  
And not a moonbeam enters here.  
But they without its light can see  
The chamber carved so curiously,  
Carved with figures strange and sweet,  
All made out of the carver's brain,  
For a lady's chamber meet:  
The lamp with twofold silver chain  
Is fastened to an angel's feet\(^{148}\).  
The silver lamp burns dead and dim;  
But Christabel the lamp will trim.  
She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,  
And left it swinging to and fro,  
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,  
Sank down upon the floor below.\(^{149}\)  
'O weary lady, Geraldine,  
I pray you, drink this cordial wine!  
It is a wine of virtuous powers;  
My mother made it of wild flowers.'  

'And will your mother pity me,  
Who am a maiden most forlorn?'\(^{150}\)  

\(^{148}\) Between 1797 and 1798, Coleridge went to Germany with some friends, thus leaving *Christabel* aside. His journey in this country is well documented through a series of letters that the poet sent to his wife where he showed a particular astonishment concerning German religious rituals. The baptismal font, for instance, appeared as a huge angel with a large bowl in his hand that weaved to and fro, being held up by a chain. Here, the lamp fastened to the angel's feet is an obvious reminiscence of Coleridge's travel (Nethercot, Arthur H. *Ibid*, p.156).  

\(^{149}\) The sight of the angel and the swinging of the lamp weaken Geraldine who falls powerless to the floor. According to religious tradition and the demonologists, any symbol associated to the power of God, is able to defeat, or at least weaken, the demonic power (Nethercot, Arthur H. *Ibid*, p.156).  

\(^{150}\) Throughout the first part of the poem, Geraldine seems guided by an unknown power that compels her to act in a determinate manner. The girl even tries to fight this mysterious force as when she first meets Christabel and she "moans in sore distress". When she hears about Christabel's dead mother, she demands forgiveness since she is a miserable maiden and then she wish the mother were still alive. Suddenly, however,
Christabel answered- ‘Woe is me!
She died the hour that I was born.
I have heard the gray-haired friar tell,
How on her death-bed she did say,
That she should hear the castle-bell
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.
O mother dear! that thou wert here!' 'I would,' said Geraldine, 'she were!' But soon, with altered voice, said she- 'Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!
I have power to bid thee flee.'
Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
Why stares she with unsettled eye?
Can she the bodiless dead espy?
And why with hollow voice cries she,
'Off, woman, off! this hour is mine-
Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman. off! 't is given to me.'
Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue-
'Alas!' said she, 'this ghastly ride-
Dear lady! it hath wildered you!' The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
And faintly said, "T is over now!"
Again the wild-flower wine she drank:
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
And from the floor, whereon she sank,
The lofty lady stood upright:
She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countree.

And thus the lofty lady spake-
'All they, who live in the upper sky,
Do love you, holy Christabel!
And you love them, and for their sake,
And for the good which me befell,
Even I in my degree will try,
Fair maiden, to requite you well.
But now unrobe yourself; for I
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie.'

Geraldine’s behaviour and voice change and the girl orders the ghost to leave them alone since Christabel is hers. Geraldine’s remorse seems to reappear when she is casting her spell on the poor girl since she performs this malevolent act “with low voice and doleful look” and describing her mysterious breast as a “[...] mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow” (Nethercot, Arthur H. Ibid, pp. 81-82)
Quoth Christabel, 'So let it be!'
And as the lady bade, did she.
Her gentle limbs did she undress
And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain, of weal and woe,
So many thoughts moved to and fro,
That vain it were her lids to close;
So half-way from the bed she rose,
And on her elbow did recline.
To look at the lady Geraldine.
Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
And slowly rolled her eyes around;
Then drawing in her breath aloud,
Like one that shuddered, she unbound
The cincture from beneath her breast:
Her silken robe, and inner vest,
Dropped to her feet, and full in view,
Behold! her bosom and half her side-
A sight to dream of, not to tell!\textsuperscript{151}
O shield her! shield sweet Christabel!

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs:
Ah! what a stricken look was hers!
Deep from within she seems half-way
To lift some weight with sick assay,
And eyes the maid and seeks delay;
Then suddenly, as one defied,
Collects herself in scorn and pride,
And lay down by the maiden's side!-
And in her arms the maid she took,
Ah, well-a-day!
And with low voice and doleful look
These words did say:

'In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell\textsuperscript{152},
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!
Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow,
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow.\textsuperscript{153}'}

\textsuperscript{151} In three previous manuscripts, Coleridge described Geraldine's bosom in order to let the reader share in Christabel's horror. The lady's bosom and her side "Are lean and old and foul of hue" and, in addition, the poet suggested their spending the night together (Nethercot, Arthur H. \textit{Ibid}, p.51). Geraldine's old breast suggests her impossibility to become a mother and, therefore, the destruction of the patriarchal family (Twitchell, James B., \textit{The Living Dead, a Study of the Vampire in Romantic Literature}, USA, Duke University Press, 1981, p. 42).

\textsuperscript{152} Some critics have described Geraldine as a witch since she has the power to control Christabel who, in the second part of the poem, is not able to talk about her night with the white lady (Nethercot, Arthur H. \textit{cit}, p. 118).
But vainly thou warrest,
For this is alone in
Thy power to declare,
That in the dim forest
Thou heard'st a low moaning,
And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair:
And didst bring her home with thee, in love and in charity,
To shield her and shelter her from the damp air.'

It was a lovely sight to see
The lady Christabel, when she
Was praying at the old oak tree.
Amid the jagged shadows
Of mossy leafless boughs,
Kneeling in the moonlight,
To make her gentle vows;
Her slender palms together prest,
Heaving sometimes on her breast;
Her face resigned to bliss or bale-
Her face, oh, call it fair not pale,
And both blue eyes more bright than clear.
Each about to have a tear.
With open eyes (ah, woe is me!)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
Fearfully dreaming, yet, I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is-
O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,
The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree?

153 Many critics have emphasized a strict correspondence between Geraldine and a mythological Greek figure known as Lamia. Lamia was the name of a beautiful queen of Libya, daughter of Belos and Libya. She was so fascinating that Zeus, the father of Gods, fell in love with her thus incurring the rage of Hera, his wife. In order to protect his lover, Zeus sent Lamia to Italy but, notwithstanding this stratagem, Hera managed to find her and killed every son she had with her husband. Hera’s vindictive rage and Zeus’s continuous attentions drove Lamia to madness and compelled her to live in a solitary cavern near the coast. Due to her madness and the sorrow for the loss of her sons, she began to kidnap the children who lived in the surroundings and to drink their blood. According to another version of the story, Hera punished the girl preventing her from sleeping for the rest of her life. Zeus, in order to protect his lover, gave her the ability to take off her eyes so that she could sleep. When Lamia removed her eyes, therefore, she was not harmful but when she replaced them, the memory of her dead progeny, drove her to madness again. Moreover, Zeus also gave her the power to change shape. In other legends, Lamia, still an extremely beautiful woman, used to fascinate young men by showing them her breast and then she sucked the lifeblood from them. Geraldine shows the same characteristics of a lamia: she sucks lifeblood from her prey; she fascinates her victims hypnotizing her with her breast. The main difference is that Geraldine’s victim in the poem is neither a young man, neither a child. Lamia is, finally, easily associateable to vampires but also with Lamus, the cannibal king of the Laestrygones. According to another version of the myth, Lamia was originally a snake that had the power of transforming into a beautiful woman (Nethercot, Arthur H. Ibid, pp. 83-85, 94).
And lo! the worker of these harms,  
That holds the maiden in her arms,  
Seems to slumber still and mild,  
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,  
O Geraldine! since arms of thine  
Have been the lovely lady's prison.  
O Geraldine! one hour was thine—  
Thou'st had thy will! By tarn and rill,  
The night-birds all that hour were still.  
But now they are jubilant anew,  
From cliff and tower, tu-whoo! tu-whoo!  
Tu-whoo! tu-whoo! from wood and fell!

And see! the lady Christabel  
Gathers herself from out her trance;  
Her limbs relax, her countenance  
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids  
Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds—  
Large tears that leave the lashes bright!  
And oft the while she seems to smile  
As infants at a sudden light!  
Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,  
Like a youthful hermitess,  
Beauteous in a wilderness,  
Who, praying always, prays in sleep.  
And, if she move unquietly,  
Perchance, 't is but the blood so free  
Coming back and tingles in her feet.154  
No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.  
What if her guardian spirit 't were,  
What if she knew her mother near?  
But this she knows, in joys and woes,  
That saints will aid if men will call:  
For the blue sky bends over all.

PART II

Each matin bell, the Baron saith,  
Knells us back to a world of death.  
These words Sir Leoline first said,  
When he rose and found his lady dead:  
These words Sir Leoline will say  
Many a morn to his dying day!

---

154 At this point, Coleridge stopped writing until 1800 when he moved to the Cumberland hills and after his travel to Germany. (Nethercot, Arthur H. *Ibid*, p. 52).
And hence the custom and law began
That still at dawn the sacristan,
Who duly pulls the heavy bell,
Five and forty beads must tell
Between each stroke- a warning knell,
Which not a soul can choose but hear
From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.
Saith Bracy the bard, 'So let it knell!
And let the drowsy sacristan
Still count as slowly as he can!'
There is no lack of such, I ween,
As well fill up the space between.
In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair,
And Dungeon-ghyll so foull y rent,
With ropes of rock and bells of air
Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,
Who all give back, one after t' other,
The death-note to their living brother;
And oft too, by the knell offended,
Just as their one! two! three! is ended,
The devil mocks the doleful tale
With a merry peal from Borrowdale.

The air is still! through mist and cloud
That merry peal comes ringing loud;
And Geraldine shakes off her dread,
And rises lightly from the bed;
Puts on her silken vestments white,
And tricks her hair in lovely plight,
And nothing doubting of her spell
Awakens the lady Christabel.
'Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel?
I trust that you have rested well.'

And Christabel awoke and spied
The same who lay down by her side-
O rather say, the same whom she
Raised up beneath the old oak tree!
Nay, fairer yet! and yet more fair!
For she belike hath drunken deep
Of all the blessedness of sleep!155

155 When Christabel first meets Geraldine under the tree, the white lady’s need to create an immediate physical connection is evident in her words “Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear!” When Christabel touches her, the lady manages to reach the castle although she is still very weak. When the ladies arrive at the gate, Christabel supports Geraldine and helps her to cross the threshold and, after that, Geraldine is able to walk alone once more. Finally, when the girls sleep together they experience two opposite feelings: Christabel’s night is characterized by nightmares while Geraldine rests peacefully “like a mother with her child”. At the beginning of the second part, Coleridge
And while she spake, her looks, her air,
Such gentle thankfulness declare,
That (so it seemed) her girded vests
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts.
'Sure I have sinned!' said Christabel,
'Now heaven be praised if all be well!'  
And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,
Did she the lofty lady greet
With such perplexity of mind
As dreams too lively leave behind.

So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed
Her maiden limbs, and having prayed
That He, who on the cross did groan,
Might wash away her sins unknown,
She forthwith led fair Geraldine
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.
The lovely maid and the lady tall
Are pacing both into the hall,
And pacing on through page and groom,
Enter the Baron's presence-room.

The Baron rose, and while he prest
His gentle daughter to his breast,
With cheerful wonder in his eyes
The lady Geraldine espies,
And gave such welcome to the same,
As might beseem so bright a dame!

But when he heard the lady's tale,
And when she told her father's name,
Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale,
Murmuring o'er the name again,
Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?
Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;

---

describes Christabel’s astonishment when she perceives some changes in the other lady, she is not the same woman of the previous night “Nay, fairer yet! and yet more fair! For she belike hath drunken deep Of all the blessedness of sleep!”. Geraldine seems reborn after her sleep and even her breast, which was “lean and old and foul of hue” the previous night, is now prominent and rejuvenated (Nethercot, Arthur H. *Ibid*, p. 56). The description of Christabel’s troubled night was probably inspired by Coleridge’s studies about the Arnold Paul’s case (see chapter one). One of his victims, indeed, was Stanoska, the daughter of the Heyducu Jotiiützo, who, bitten by a vampire, spent her nights “moaning, trembling, and shrieking in her sleep”. Christabel, as Stanoska, is showing the first marks of her transformation into a being similar Geraldine. Moreover, as Dom Calmet maintains in his treaties, vampires are used to attack entire families and, indeed, in the following verses, Geraldine immediately turns her attention to Sir Leoline, Christabel’s father (Nethercot, Arthur H. *Ibid*, pp.68-70).
And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanced, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted- ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining-
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between.
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.
Sir Leoline, a moment's space,
Stood gazing on the damsel's face:
And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine
Came back upon his heart again.

O then the Baron forgot his age,
His noble heart swelled high with rage;
He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side
He would proclaim it far and wide,
With trump and solemn heraldry,
That they, who thus had wronged the dame
Were base as spotted infamy!
'And if they dare deny the same,
My herald shall appoint a week,
And let the recreant traitors seek
My tourney court- that there and then
I may dislodge their reptile souls
From the bodies and forms of men!'  
He spake: his eye in lightning rolls!
For the lady was ruthlessly seized; and he kenned
In the beautiful lady the child of his friend!

And now the tears were on his face,
And fondly in his arms he took
Fair Geraldine who met the embrace,
Prolonging it with joyous look.
Which when she viewed, a vision fell
Upon the soul of Christabel,
The vision of fear, the touch and pain\(^{156}\)

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\(^{156}\) In other manuscripts, Coleridge offered another version of these lines: “The vision foul of fear and Pain” and “The vision of fear, the touch of pain”. These three verses, although
She shrunk and shuddered, and saw again—
(Ah, woe is me! Was it for thee,
Thou gentle maid! such sights to see?)
Again she saw that bosom old,
Again she felt that bosom cold\(^{157}\),
And drew in her breath with a hissing sound\(^{158}\):
Whereat the Knight turned wildly round,
And nothing saw, but his own sweet maid
With eyes upraised, as one that prayed.

The touch, the sight, had passed away,
And in its stead that vision blest,
Which comforted her after-rest,
While in the lady's arms she lay,
Had put a rapture in her breast,
And on her lips and o'er her eyes
Spread smiles like light!
With new surprise,
'What ails then my beloved child?'
The Baron said- His daughter mild
Made answer, 'All will yet be well!'
I ween, she had no power to tell
Aught else: so mighty was the spell.

Yet he who saw this Geraldine,

different in their aspect, present three common elements: the vision fear, the touch and the pain (Nethercot, Arthur H. \textit{Ibid}, p. 53). Certainly, the poet aimed at emphasizing this strong connection between the reminiscence of the sight of Geraldine's bosom, the spell that hits the girl after having touched it and the subsequent moral and physical pain caused by the loss of her innocence.

\(^{157}\) These two lines recall Coleridge's previous version of the poem where, in the first part, he intended to describe Geraldine's bosom but opting instead for a more mysterious "A sight to dream of, not to tell!" (Nethercot, Arthur H. \textit{Ibid}, p. 121).

\(^{158}\) There are, in the poem, many references to snakes. According to Sir Leoline, for instance, the truth is poisoned and Geraldine’s assailers have reptile souls. The snake appears symbolically in many folk-tales, legends, myths and religious superstitions. Some cultures worshipped this animal as a god but, for the most part of these stories, the snake was associated with an evil force and the main example can be found in the Bible where the Satan appeared in the form of a snake to Eve. Geraldine often shows reptilian characteristics such as her eyes that seem a “snake’s small eye” and, indeed, according to some naturalists these animals have the power to hypnotize with their sight. In addition, when she is embracing Sir Leoline, “couches her head upon her breast” like “a snake drawing back its head to strike”. Since Coleridge planned to become an American farmer, he read many books concerning the methods of plantation. At the Bristol Library, for instance, he loaned \textit{The Annual Register} for 1782 which contained an article entitled \textit{From the Letters of J. Hector St. John, an American Farmer} which included the excerpt \textit{Some Account of the Snake of North America, and of the Humming Bird} that maintains that people bitten by a snake began to show reptilian characteristics. Another example can be found in Dante’s \textit{Inferno} where, in canto 25, people who have robbed in their lives were compelled to live with so many snakes that the poet was not able to distinguish the animal from the human (Nethercot, Arthur H. \textit{Ibid}, pp. 92-93, 100, 108-110, 114).
Had deemed her sure a thing divine.
Such sorrow with such grace she blended,
As if she feared she had offended
Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid!
And with such lowly tones she prayed
She might be sent without delay
Home to her father's mansion.

'Nay!
Nay, by my soul!' said Leoline.

'Ho! Bracy the bard, the charge be thine!
Go thou, with music sweet and loud,
And take two steeds with trappings proud,
And take the youth whom thou lov'st best
To bear thy harp, and learn thy song,
And clothe you both in solemn vest,
And over the mountains haste along,
Lest wandering folk, that are abroad,
Detain you on the valley road.

'And when he has crossed the Irthing flood,
My merry bard! he hastes, he hastes
Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth Wood,
And reaches soon that castle good
Which stands and threatens Scotland's wastes.

'Bard Bracy! bard Bracy! your horses are fleet,
Ye must ride up the hall, your music so sweet,
More loud than your horses' echoing feet!
And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,
Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall!
Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free-
Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me.
He bids thee come without delay
With all thy numerous array;
And take thy lovely daughter home:
And he will meet thee on the way
With all his numerous array
White with their panting palfreys' foam:
And, by mine honor! I will say,
That I repent me of the day
When I spake words of fierce disdain
To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine! -
- For since that evil hour hath flown,
Many a summer's sun hath shone;
Yet ne'er found I a friend again
Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine.'

The lady fell, and clasped his knees,
Her face upraised, her eyes o'erflowing;
And Bracy replied, with faltering voice,
His gracious hail on all bestowing;
'Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,
Are sweeter than my harp can tell;
Yet might I gain a boon of thee,
This day my journey should not be,
So strange a dream hath come to me;
That I had vowed with music loud
To clear yon wood from thing unblest,
Warned by a vision in my rest!
For in my sleep I saw that dove,
That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,
And call'st by thy own daughter's name—
Sir Leoline! I saw the same,
Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan,
Among the green herbs in the forest alone.
Which when I saw and when I heard,
I wondered what might ail the bird;
For nothing near it could I see,
Save the grass and herbs underneath the old tree.
And in my dream methought I went
To search out what might there be found;
And what the sweet bird's trouble meant,
That thus lay fluttering on the ground.
I went and peered, and could descry
No cause for her distressful cry;
But yet for her dear lady's sake
I stooped, methought, the dove to take,
When lo! I saw a bright green snake
Coiled around its wings and neck.
Green as the herbs on which it couched,
Close by the dove's its head it crouched;
And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
Swelling its neck as she swelled hers!
I woke; it was the midnight hour,
The clock was echoing in the tower;
But though my slumber was gone by,
This dream it would not pass away—
It seems to live upon my eye!
And thence I vowed this self-same day
With music strong and saintly song
To wander through the forest bare,
Lest aught unholy loiter there.\(^{159}\)

\(^{159}\) The snake, central animal in the story, reappears in Bard Bracy's dream, an allegorical vision of Christabel's death. The dream does not simply forecast Christabel's death, but it also alludes to her transformation into Geraldine, that is to say, into a snake. The pulse of the dove, indeed, turns slowly into the pulse of the snake itself. Christabel hisses more
Thus Bracy said: the Baron, the while,
Half-listening heard him with a smile;
Then turned to Lady Geraldine,
His eyes made up of wonder and love;
And said in courtly accents fine,
'Sweet maid, Lord Roland's beauteous dove,
With arms more strong than harp or song,
Thy sire and I will crush the snake!'
He kissed her forehead as he spake,
And Geraldine in maiden wise
Casting down her large bright eyes,
With blushing cheek and courtesy fine
She turned her from Sir Leoline;
Softly gathering up her train,
That o'er her right arm fell again;
And folded her arms across her chest,
And couched her head upon her breast,
And looked askance at Christabel-
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,
And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread,
At Christabel she looked askance!-
One moment- and the sight was fled!
But Christabel in dizzy trance
Stumbling on the unsteady ground
Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound;
And Geraldine again turned round,
And like a thing that sought relief,
Full of wonder and full of grief,
She rolled her large bright eyes divine
Wildly on Sir Leoline.¹⁶⁰

than one time during the second part of the poem. Christabel and Geraldine belong to
that group of supernatural beings which have the faculty of changing their shapes into
that of a snake, partially or completely. In addition to the Lamia, folk-tales describe other
similar monsters such as the Gorgons, the Graie and the Empusae who are women
provided with "snaky ringlets of hair, or with scales instead of skin" or a tale instead of
their legs (Nethercot, Arthur H. *Ibid*, pp. 92-93). All "Coleridge's 'mystery' poems are all
based on dreams" and are, therefore known as nightmare poems (Tekinay, Ash. *cit*, p. 185). All the first part of the poem seems a dream due to its gloomy and silent
atmosphere, while, in the second part, the dream becomes 'real' through Bard Bracy's
account (Twitchell, James B. *Cit*, p. 44). Bard Bracy is, in this case, Coleridge himself and
he represents the voice of poetry and, therefore, the truth even though he is not able to
convey his message to Sir Leoline (Tekinay, Ash. *Cit*, p. 191).

¹⁶⁰ Christabel continues relentlessly her transformation into Geraldine, who, on her part,
appears more and more strength and beautiful. Geraldine has definitely shown her evil
essence but, at the same time, the reader feels sympathy for her unlucky existence. In
The maid, alas! her thoughts are gone,
She nothing sees- no sight but one!
The maid, devoid of guile and sin,
I know not how, in fearful wise,
So deeply had she drunken in
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,
That all her features were resigned
To this sole image in her mind:
And passively did imitate
That look of dull and treacherous hate!
And thus she stood, in dizzy trance,
Still picturing that look askance
With forced unconscious sympathy
Full before her father's view-
As far as such a look could be
In eyes so innocent and blue!

And when the trance was o'er, the maid
Paused awhile, and inly prayed:
Then falling at the Baron's feet,
'By my mother's soul do I entreat
That thou this woman send away!'
She said: and more she could not say;
For what she knew she could not tell,
O'er-mastered by the mighty spell.
Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,
Sir Leoline? Thy only child
Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride.
So fair, so innocent, so mild;
The same, for whom thy lady died!
O by the pangs of her dear mother
Think thou no evil of thy child!
For her, and thee, and for no other,
She prayed the moment ere she died:
Prayed that the babe for whom she died,
Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride!
That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,

his Biographia Literaria, Coleridge reported his conversations with Wordsworth which underlined two essential features of poetry: the ability to arouse the reader's sympathy by describing faithfully the natural reality of things and, secondly, the ability of exploiting the author's imagination to create an original work. Consequently, the two poets discovered that every supernatural or romantic element meets these requirements since it is able to increase the reader's interest remaining also faithful to reality through a process of verisimilitude (Nethercot, Arthur H. Ibid, p. 81-83). Coleridge was deeply influenced by the concept of sublime as theorized by the German and romantic philosophers Kant and Schiller for whom the sublime “claims the supremacy of the mind over nature” even though Coleridge chose to remain faithful to nature (Tekinay, Ash. Cit, p. 185).
Sir Leoline!
And wouldst thou wrong thy only child,
Her child and thine?

Within the Baron's heart and brain
If thoughts, like these, had any share,
They only swelled his rage and pain,
And did but work confusion there.
His heart was cleft with pain and rage,
His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were wild,
Dishonored thus in his old age;
Dishonored by his only child,161
And all his hospitality
To the insulted daughter of his friend
By more than woman's jealousy
Brought thus to a disgraceful end-
He rolled his eye with stern regard
Upon the gentle ministrel bard,
And said in tones abrupt, austere-
'Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?
I bade thee hence!' The bard obeyed;
And turning from his own sweet maid,
The aged knight, Sir Leoline,
Led forth the lady Geraldine!

THE CONCLUSION TO PART II

A little child, a limber elf,
Singing, dancing to itself,
A fairy thing with red round cheeks,
That always finds, and never seeks,
Makes such a vision to the sight
As fills a father's eyes with light;
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
Upon his heart, that he at last
Must needs express his love's excess
With words of unmeant bitterness.
Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together
Thoughts so all unlike each other;
To mutter and mock a broken charm,
To dally with wrong that does no harm.
Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty
At each wild word to feel within
A sweet recoil of love and pity.

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161 While Christabel is characterized by her innocence, Sir Leoline seems to be simply ignorant. Coleridge might suggest that an innocent may attempt to fight evil forces, while ignorant people are passive and, therefore, unable to react and defeat malignant beings (Twitchell, James B., cit, p. 46).
And what, if in a world of sin
(O sorrow and shame should this be true!)
Such giddiness of heart and brain
Comes seldom save from rage and pain,
So talks as it's most used to do.
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**WEBSITES**

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