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# Vampire Figures in Anglo-American Literature and Their Metamorphosis from Freaks to Heroes

Charakteristika a příčiny posunu vnímání postav  
upírů v Anglo-americké literatuře, tj. literární přeměna  
negativní zrůdy v hrdinskou postavu

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Alžběta Němcová

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## Abstract

The aim of this work is to outline the development of a vampire portrayal in Anglo-American Literature. The thesis will work with the literary and mythological roots of a vampire figure. The next step will be to describe the strongly negative characteristics of vampire figure in Gothic literature of the 19th century. An analysis of a positive and relatively modern (the last century) portrayal of a vampire figure in Anglo-American literature will follow. Another important goal of the thesis is to analyse the reasons for the revolutionary shift in vampire portrayal.

keywords: Anglo-American literature, Gothic novel, vampires.

## Anotace

Cílem této diplomové práce je nástin vývoje postav upírů v Anglo-americké literatuře. Výchozím bodem této analýzy bude charakteristika původu upíří postavy z hlediska mytologie a starověké literatury. Dalším bodem bude analýza upířích postav v gotické literatuře devatenáctého století s ohledem na výrazně negativní polarizaci protagonistů tohoto typu. Posledním a závěrečným bodem této analýzy bude charakteristika těchto postav v Anglo-americké literatuře dvacátého století a pokus o vysvětlení proč došlo k tak výrazné změně vnímání těchto postav, tj. od výrazně negativního přijetí až po téměř pozitivní zhrdinštění těchto postav.

klíčová slova: Anglo-americká literatura, gotický román, upíři.

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## 1 PREFACE

Ever since my childhood I have been fascinated by horror stories, especially those about vampires. The figure of a vampire, for me, was a personification of utmost power, brutality and arrogance. I was afraid of them and they created the desired chill factor which I so often sought.

But not so many years ago, a different kind of vampire appeared in literature. The Twilight saga written by Stephenie Meyer started a frenzy I could not understand. People seemed to like her vampires instead of just being afraid of them.

This is exactly what made me write my thesis. I wanted to map the development of the vampire in Anglo-American literature. In the following pages I will compare vampires from different authors and times and will try to record the change from a monster to a hero.



## 2 INTRODUCTION

The books which will be elaborated on in my thesis come from different time periods and according to that they fall into different genres. The first pages of this thesis will be dedicated to the introduction of the genres and the authors whose works belong to those categories and whose work will be mentioned later in the thesis.

Since my goal is to map the whole development of the vampire figure in Anglo-American literature I was trying to find the most influential books or stories which contributed to shaping the vampire figure. As I found out, some of the authors researched folklore before introducing the vampire into literature, so a brief description of their occurrences in the folk tales the authors probably used will follow.

After that, the description of the literary vampires will appear. I have decided to divide their appearance in Anglo-American literature into three periods and have tried to choose the best examples for each of those periods.

The very first period comes with the very first vampire in Anglo-American prose and ends with the most influential book of that time. All three examples for the nineteenth century were chosen for their significance. Polidori's *The Vampyre* was the very first vampire to ever appear in Anglo-American prose. LeFanu's *Carmilla*, a story of a homosexual vampire, influenced a lot of movies with female vampires in them. The last of this group is Stoker's *Dracula* – a story still read today which influenced the movie industry more than *Carmilla* and which, more importantly, influenced the next generations of writers who tried to contribute to the vampire genre.

The second period in the Anglo-American vampire genre maps roughly the first three quarters of the twentieth century. It was very difficult to find strong voices of vampire literature from that period. It almost seems as if the vampires went into hiding after Dracula paid England a visit. I found, however, two very famous books written in the USA. The first book is *I am Legend* by Richard Matheson. His book was adapted into movies a number of times. The other book, *Salem's Lot*, is written by Stephen King, who is one of the most famous horror fiction writers today.

The last era begins with Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* which was published in 1976 and continues to be printed to the present day. Rice introduced a completely new outlook on vampires who, for the first time in history, had their own background and stories which they were eager to share. The reader, given so much detail, could actually feel sympathy for them. The second book for this era, written by L. K. Hamilton, I have chosen because of the introduction of a vampire executioner (Dracula had his very own Van Helsing. However, that character was a scholar and killing vampires was not his job). Anita Blake from *Guilty Pleasures* is a certified vampire executioner and her contribution to the vampire genre is very important. The last of the books I am going to analyze is *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer. Her book was commercially very successful and therefore influenced the vampire phenomenon in literature in terms of spreading it to the wider public.

After the analysis of all the books I have mentioned, a comparison will follow. In that part I will try to outline the development of the vampire figure from a very negative character to a hero of our time.

## 3 GENRES

### 3.1 GOTHIC NOVEL

The gothic novel appeared in the eighteenth century, continued to develop throughout the nineteenth century and its strong influence can even be linked to the “paperback revolution of the last half of the twentieth century.”<sup>1</sup> According to Harris, this genre still influences various media today (be it print, computer games or film).<sup>2</sup>

At first, a wave of confusion was raised by using the word “Gothic” since it was connected to the period of time ranging approximately from the fifth century to the Renaissance era or even to the Reformation in the sixteenth century. The Gothic era represented barbarism, chaos and superstitions together with strong religious influence. That is why such a word in the eighteenth century brought thoughts of everything old and obsolete.<sup>3</sup>

The Gothic is described as a type of romance which reached its peak of popularity between the 1760s and 1820s when the demand for this cheap kind of literature was very high.<sup>4</sup> Slight changes in the desired themes and patterns in Gothic literature were documented. At first, the stories were melodramatic, then they became more morbid as

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<sup>1</sup> MELTON, J. G. *The Vampire Book. The Encyclopedia of the Undead*. Detroit: Visible Ink Press, 1994, p 262.

<sup>2</sup> HARRIS, R. Elements of the Gothic Novel [online]. c2013, last revision 29<sup>th</sup> of March 2014 [cit. 2014-03-29] <http://www.virtualsalt.com/gothic.htm/>

<sup>3</sup> CLERY, E.J. *The Genesis of „Gothic“ fiction*. In *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012. p 21.

<sup>4</sup> CUDDON, J. A. *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. London: Penguin Group, 1992, p 381.

decadence (a period of time around 1890s also known as “fin de siècle“<sup>5</sup>) started to prevail at the end of the nineteenth century, and a century later the demand for rather sophisticated Gothic fiction appeared.<sup>6</sup>

The elements which can be found in most works of Gothic fiction include an atmosphere of mystery, gloom and horror, old castles, prophecies, omens and visions, the supernatural, high sentimentality, ladies in distress, and tyrannical male characters. There are also many various contradictory forces in Gothic fiction: alive/dead, natural/manufactured, middle class/ nobility, domestic/foreign, etc.

Features of romance can be parts of the Gothic novel as well. In such cases, the stories revolve around strong love, uncertainty of the love’s mutuality, obstacles put between two lovers, a woman becoming the target of an evil man’s interest, rivalry in love, unrequited love, and disapproval of the father figure of his daughter’s choice of love interest.<sup>7</sup>

One of the features of Gothic fiction which is present in all the works is an antiquated place. It does not necessarily have to be the aforementioned castle (or graveyards and all the typical places with very long history), in modern versions of the genre such an aspect can be represented by a disused factory or laboratory, decaying spaceships, obsolete computers or even new inhabitable spaces with old items in them. Such places or items then create a motif of an old secret which subsequently drives the characters crazy, haunts them to the point of physical exhaustion or affects them

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<sup>5</sup> HOGLE, J. E. *Introduction: the Gothic in western culture*. In *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012. p 1.

<sup>6</sup> CUDDON, J. A., p 383.

<sup>7</sup> HARRIS, R. *Elements of the Gothic Novel* [online]. c2013, last revision 29<sup>th</sup> of March 2014 [cit. 2014-03-29] <<http://www.virtualsalt.com/gothic.htm/>>

powerfully. This is exactly the space from which the preternatural can flourish, because the boundaries between the real world and the supernatural world may be easily crossed as the book characters near their physical or psychological limits.<sup>8</sup>

These psychological limits are connected to the unconscious. Sigmund Freud based his “*fin de siècle* sense of the unconscious”<sup>9</sup> on the features of the Gothic novel due to its vast base of old and repressed memories. But it is not only one’s own unconscious the Gothic novel revolves around. The Unconscious can also be looked at from the social perspective – that is the unconscious of a whole group of people who share a common social or historical problem which is not resolved and thus enters the conscious by its manifestations. That is why Gothic is still popular today. In its own way it deals with our fears and helps us come to terms with or hide our desires, anxieties and cultural dilemmas.<sup>10</sup>

### 3.1.1 THE GOTHIC THROUGH TIME

Cuddon recognizes Smollett’s *Ferdinand Count Fathom*<sup>11</sup> from 1753 as the starting point of Anglo-American Gothic fiction. Melton gives the primacy to Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto*,<sup>12</sup> written in 1763. This book was firstly published under the name *A Story* and it was not until the second edition that it became *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story*. Walpole put the word *Gothic* there as an experiment to mock

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<sup>8</sup> HOGLE, J. E., p 2-3.

<sup>9</sup> HOGLE, J. E., p 3.

<sup>10</sup> HOGLE, J. E., p 4.

<sup>11</sup> CUDDON, J. A., p 381.

<sup>12</sup> MELTON, J. G., p 263.

or confuse literary critics, because the Gothic era of human history was long gone and surely no contemporary author was supposed to write in such style. The literary critics did not use the word Walpole reintroduced to literature; they simply analyzed the Gothic fiction as romance.<sup>13</sup> Walpole, by introducing a different kind of romance which would be later labeled as Gothic, introduced innovative aspects into the genre: “revisionist accounts of medieval culture, the aesthetics of original genius and the sublime, and the growing cult of Shakespearean tragedy.”<sup>14</sup>

A barrage of works of this genre, which varied in quality, were published and even dramatized after *The Castle of Otranto* appeared. Radcliffe’s *Mysteries of Udolpho*, Lewis’s *Ambrosio* or Beckford’s *Vathek* were among them.<sup>15</sup> But the journey of the Gothic genre was not always easy. The critics did not like to acknowledge it as a genre and of the aforementioned canon of works, which tried to implement some innovative aspects into romance, one can speak of quantity rather than quality. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the demand for romantic literature reappeared and it has been pointed out that the boom of the Gothic may have been based solely on the economic situation of that time. The publishing houses registered growing demand for everything new and it did not take long for someone to take up Walpole’s challenge and write in the fashion he established. *The Old English Baron* (1777) by Clara Reeve was “her well-timed initiative that turned Walpole’s half-serious novelty into a viable commercial mode.”<sup>16</sup> In the first half of the 1790s, Radcliffe’s influence on Gothic fiction was the most visible (she being one of the last writers to follow the structure of romance). Later

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<sup>13</sup> CLERY, E.J., p 21.

<sup>14</sup> CLERY, E.J., p 25.

<sup>15</sup> CUDDON, J., p 382.

<sup>16</sup> CLERY, E.J., p 33.

Godwin introduced “the first ostensible Jacobin Gothic”<sup>17</sup> in his *Things as They Are, or the Adventures of Caleb Williams*. With this work of Godwin’s, the political aspect entered the Gothic genre. Miles thus divides the Gothic fiction of the last decade of the eighteenth century into two phases: before and after 1794.<sup>18</sup> The first phase presents chivalry as a significant force in culture, together with the feudal system; the second one brings a modern approach and discord (reflecting the revolution in France).

Even though Gothic fiction had started to flourish and authors who wanted to have a wide audience could ensure their success by writing something in this genre, the following years still labeled Gothic fiction as a low genre and many authors of the Romantic era dreaded being labeled as Gothic authors because once they had been given that label it was impossible to get rid of it. For example, to Coleridge the notion of appearing in the same collection of stories and poems as Lewis “produced nothing less than panic.”<sup>19</sup> However, some of the most famous Romantic writers contributed to the Gothic genre despite their anti-Gothic claims and thus raised this genre from the lowest depths of literary obscurity. Shelley and Byron, to name but a few, focused on states of consciousness in their Gothic pieces and subsequently introduced a philosophical and psychological element into the Gothic.

The gathering of Mary Shelley, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Polidori and Lord Byron in Switzerland in 1816 responded to the growing popularity of Gothic fiction by writing ghost stories for each other in order to pass the time when the weather did not

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<sup>17</sup> MILES, R. *The 1790s: the effulgence of Gothic*. . In *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012. p 48-49.

<sup>18</sup> MILES, R., p 54.

<sup>19</sup> GAMER, M. *Gothic fictions and Romantic writing in Britain*. In *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012. p 90.

allow them to go outside.<sup>20</sup> Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* would later be labeled as a "progenitor of scores of horror films and science fiction."<sup>21</sup> Polidori's contribution to the genre, which was also inspired by Lake Geneva, included "the first vampire story in the English language."<sup>22</sup>

The Romantics of the first half of the nineteenth century transformed the Gothic into a more reviewer-friendly genre, for they tried to introduce their aesthetic values into it, and therefore the Gothic suddenly became not a low genre but a respectable and legitimate part of literature.<sup>23</sup>

The freedom for the Gothic novel which was brought by the romantics was soon restricted in the 1840s during the reign of Queen Victoria. The Gothic became politicized. Victoria's ascension of the throne raised a wave of ambivalence from various social groups toward her person, marriage and reign. The Gothic changed noticeably:

In early Victorian Gothic the heroine who acts as a focus for social critique is lost in the world of her tale, and liberation from the hold of the past is replaced in such works by a repositioning of the woman to fix her in an architectural and political space.<sup>24</sup>

Thanks to Brontë, LeFanu and even Dickens, the Gothic shifted back from politics to other aspects. Outsiders, apocalypses and the supernatural began to flourish again in

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<sup>20</sup> MELTON, J. G., p 263.

<sup>21</sup> CUDDON, J. A., p 382.

<sup>22</sup> HAINING, P. *A Dictionary of Vampires*. London: Robert Hale Limited, 2000, p 209.

<sup>23</sup> GAMER, M., p 102.

<sup>24</sup> MILBANK, A. *Victorian Gothic in English novels and stories, 1830-1880*. In *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012. p 146.



these authors' works and the second era of Victorian Gothic thus brought some much needed variety.

Later on, "Post-Romantic Gothic"<sup>25</sup> turned out to be almost indistinguishable from other genres which emerged into literature (sci-fi, horror, fantasy etc.). There is little agreement on what makes the Gothic distinguishable from them. Since the plots and settings change, only a few aspects remain intact. One such intact aspect could be "a fascination with extreme behaviors and derangements of human subjectivity."<sup>26</sup> Another point of view is that this genre provides a means of dealing with anxiety when the culture is in need of one.

With the progress in science (Darwin, Wallace etc.) and new discoveries about nature, the Gothic took the descriptions of "real monsters"<sup>27</sup> and implemented them into literature (e.g. the discovery of the Venus flytrap which inspired Aubrey's *The Devil-Tree of El Dorado* in 1896). With this the Gothic was given the opportunity to let nature create as many abominations as possible to entertain the readers.

Cuddon mentions Neo-Gothic fiction, which basically includes all works of the Gothic genre written later in the twentieth century by any English-speaking author.<sup>28</sup> Some works by writers such as William Faulkner, Angela Carter, Daphne du Maurier, Isak Dinesen or John Gardner belong to this category.

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<sup>25</sup> HURLEY, K. *British Gothic fiction, 1885-1930*. In *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012. p 191.

<sup>26</sup> HURLEY, K., p 193-194.

<sup>27</sup> HURLEY, K., p 205.

<sup>28</sup> CUDDON, J. A., p 386.

The Gothic today is mainly influenced by Freud's theories. His studies of the unconscious and the Oedipus complex revolve around people not having free will because their conscious and knowledge does not affect them as much as their dreams, fantasies or fears - provided to them by their unconscious.<sup>29</sup> The Gothic thus reflects our forbidden and deep-rooted desires. What is also connected to this is the loss of some object (just like the Freudian father casts his son away from his mother, the Gothic character loses something – be it an actual object or a person) and this void left behind is what pushes the character further:

Simply put, we are what we have become in response to the threat of violence from anything like the figure of father. Furthermore, the mode in which the late modern subject most enacts this scene of prohibition – and the mode in which we as audience take it up – is the Gothic, itself a narrative of prohibitions, transgressions, and the processes of identity construction that occur within such tensions.<sup>30</sup>

The monsters which still lurk in Gothic literature today are personified anxieties of our culture. Since they behave rather violently one can see that our culture is actually afraid of the barbaric times (with their lack of sophistication and inhibitions) not being completely gone. Since science is continually being brought into question (high technology can bring doom by creating monsters), the fears only elevate. The decline in morals, rationality and the idea of good and bad in today's society is brought into question in the Gothic as well. That is why today's Gothic mixes "anxieties about the

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<sup>29</sup> BRUHM, S. *Contemporary Gothic: why we need it*. In *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p 262.

<sup>30</sup> BRUHM, S., p 263.

nature of human identity, the stability of cultural formations and processes of change.”<sup>31</sup>

When it comes to the monsters, quite a significant shift was noticed in the Gothic, for the monsters are no longer something we fear, but rather something we embrace. In these monsters we see some pieces of ourselves and that is why we feel compassion, desire or even sympathy for them. For the first time in two hundred years of Gothic fiction we can identify with them. The rebellious monsters who were once outcasts are celebrated, while the society which shuns them is seen as bad. The transgressions of these monsters are no longer viewed negatively – they belong to life. The Gothic seems to be losing its former levels of mystery and gloom and starts to become a lifestyle choice satisfied by a very diverse entertainment industry.<sup>32</sup>

It seems as if the Gothic has lost all its shock and novelty. After transforming numerous times for over two hundred years there is almost nothing left to surprise its readers and the elements which served to deal with anxieties are now empty and devoid of all meaning. Botting calls what the Gothic is giving us now “a weary and ominously doom-laden view.”<sup>33</sup>

### 3.1.2 SCOTTISH AND IRISH GOTHIC

Since the history of Ireland and Scotland is overshadowed by the history of England, and since this history is full of battles lost and being usurped by somebody

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<sup>31</sup> BOTTING, F. *Aftergothic: consumption, machines, and black holes*. . In *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p 280.

<sup>32</sup> BOTTING, F., p 286-287.

<sup>33</sup> BOTTING, F., p 298.

else, there is no doubt that such important moments have appeared in literature. Also, Scottish and Irish history is full of “what-ifs” and ponderings about the one who holds power over the other.

(...) in Scottish and Irish context this process of narrative reforming history goes through a further twist. Here the dehumanizing force in Gothic generally is brought into alignment, direct or indirect, with that power which reduces or dismembers the national narrative of a people operating under a sign of subjugation.<sup>34</sup>

Two tendencies arose from this background: “domestic Gothic” and “foreign Gothic.”<sup>35</sup> In domestic Gothic the subject is dealt with on a well-known home terrain, in foreign Gothic the location is moved somewhere else. These tendencies are both very frequent in Irish and Scottish Gothic.

One of the most famous Scottish Gothic writings is Scott’s *The Antiquary* (1816). The Scottish (mostly religious) matters were dealt with in Hogg’s *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) or in MacDonald’s *Phantastes* (1858). Stevenson contributed to both domestic Gothic (*Master of Ballantrae* in 1889) as well as foreign Gothic (*The Isle of Voices* in 1893).

The Irish problems appeared in many works of LeFanu. His political and religious views were included in all his works. Very common themes of the “unreliability of history and the perverseness of power”<sup>36</sup> became his main topics and encompass all his

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<sup>34</sup> PUNTER, D. *Scottish and Irish Gothic*. In *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p 122.

<sup>35</sup> PUNTER, D. *Scottish and Irish Gothic*, p 106.

<sup>36</sup> PUNTER, D. *Scottish and Irish Gothic*, p 107.

writings such as *Uncle Silas* (1864) or *In a Glass Darkly* (1872). Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) belong, together with LeFanu's *Carmilla* (1872), to the most famous Irish Gothic novels. Among other writers who contributed to Irish Gothic can be found Lord Dunsany, Elisabeth Bowen or our contemporary John Banville.

### 3.1.3 AMERICAN GOTHIC

When it comes to American Gothic fiction, which is a category of its own, it is very difficult to describe. Unlike the English Gothic novel, the American Gothic novel is looser, more variable and more slippery. The Americans managed to mix the traditional Gothic novel with realism, naturalism, romance and modern or postmodern fiction. One of the important traits of American Gothic is its voiced minorities (homosexuals, women, the handicapped etc.) and its basically being the genre of outsiders who provide the reader with a shadow outlook on all American matters.<sup>37</sup>

Savoy mentions the paradoxical occurrence of Gothic in American culture, since American culture is obsessed with the quest for happiness.<sup>38</sup> Apart from that, American Gothic can be distinguished not by the themes it revolves around but by the way it is written:

Nowhere is all this more evident than in the strange tropes, figures, and rhetorical techniques, so strikingly central in American Gothic narratives, that express a profound anxiety about historical crimes and perverse human

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<sup>37</sup> CROW and PROCHÁZKA. *Varieties of American Gothic*. Praha: Univerzita Karlova, 2004, p 5-10.

<sup>38</sup> SAVOY, E. *The rise of American Gothic*. In *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p 167.

desires that cast their shadow over what many would like to be the sunny American republic.<sup>39</sup>

And through this the Americans could give voice to creatures like ghosts, through which they could reflect on their past and revel in their anxiety.

Among the most influential writers of the genre in America were Isaac Mitchell, Charles Brockden Brown, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Emily Dickinson, Henry James and Edgar Allan Poe, whose short stories included horror, suspense, mystery and detection.<sup>40</sup>

#### 3.1.4 *VAMPIRES IN THE GOTHIC NOVEL*

Since “every age embraces the vampire it needs,”<sup>41</sup> the portrayal of this creature in literature varies throughout the ages. Hidden motifs and themes in vampire literature mirror the needs of society of that particular time. That is why the initial vampire novels revolved around suppressed sexuality and fear – two obsessions of the Victorian era. But since that time vampires have undergone some changes (along with the society they live in) and thus they have also started dealing with the topics of sex, power, intimacy, minorities and family. Vampires resemble people in their shape but can behave as they want, not caring about social rules or taboos. However, it seems as if society is looking

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<sup>39</sup> SAVOY, E., p 168.

<sup>40</sup> CUDDON, J. A., p 383.

<sup>41</sup> AUERBACH, N. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995, p 145.

into a mirror when embracing vampires because through its analysis of vampires society can learn a lot about itself.<sup>42</sup>

At the end of the eighteenth century and at the beginning of the nineteenth century the Gothic genre mirrored society's change in outlook on the metaphysical and supernatural. Many creatures emerged in literature: witches, ghosts, werewolves, trolls and – the most important for this thesis – vampires.<sup>43</sup>

Once introduced, the vampire became a standard theme in gothic romanticism, especially in France ... However, virtually every romantic writer of the nineteenth century from Samuel Taylor Coleridge to Edgar Allan Poe ultimately used either the vampire or a variation on the vampiric relationship in his or her work.<sup>44</sup>

As Auerbach pointed out, the vampires of the beginning of the nineteenth century were neither distinguishable by something specific, nor were there people out there who knew enough to kill them.<sup>45</sup> They were not even limited by a strictly liquid diet. Therefore, the portrayal of the vampire was very diverse. Butler also mentions the lack of personality in vampires until Polidori.<sup>46</sup>

When it comes to these figures that started to frequent Victorian novels, vampires, they depicted “a negative natural supernatural that this era sees as a threat.”<sup>47</sup> They

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<sup>42</sup> CLEMENTS, S. *The Vampire Defanged. How the Embodiment of Evil Became a Romantic Hero.* Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2011. p 5-6.

<sup>43</sup> CUDDON, J. A., p 385.

<sup>44</sup> MELTON, J. G., p 264.

<sup>45</sup> AUERBACH, N., p 13.

<sup>46</sup> BUTLER, E. *The Rise of the Vampire.* London: Reaktion Books, 2013, p 14.

<sup>47</sup> MILBANK, A., p 163.

became relics of a feudal system which tried to gain something from the economy and politics of a changing society.

Twitchell speaks of two streams in vampire literature – the male and the female vampires both represented different tendencies.<sup>48</sup> While the male vampire embodied utter dominance, the female vampire depicted seduction. Furthermore, while the male vampire only enjoyed the companionship of another male, the female vampire developed intimacy. The male vampire never ruined his “friendship” with another male by biting him, while the female vampire was not hesitant to become intimate with her lady “friends”.<sup>49</sup> Such examples in prose can be found in Polidori’s *The Vampyre* (1819) and LeFanu’s *Carmilla* (1871). But even in the male-oriented *Dracula* the female vampire reflects the tendencies of the Gothic genre. The bride of Dracula’s who try to seduce Harker represent a threat to his manhood. He both lusts for and fears them since they embody the “threat of and longing for the deeply maternal abyss of nonidentity.”<sup>50</sup>

Polidori tried to resurrect the dead and introduced a rather sophisticated form of the vampire into literature. His Lord Ruthven differs from the nosferatu tradition established by the German romantics.<sup>51</sup> Ruthven mingles in with society and obviously possesses wit and elegant looks which help him gain prey and power.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> TWITCHELL, J. B. *The Living Dead. A Study of the Vampire in Romantic Literature*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997, p 39.

<sup>49</sup> AUERBACH, N., p 38-39.

<sup>50</sup> HOGLE, J. E., p 11.

<sup>51</sup> Works such as *The Vampire* (1748) by Ossenfelder and *Lenore* (1773) by Bürger were based on the traditional vampire figure from the folklore.

<sup>52</sup> MCLEOD, J. A. *Vampires. A Bite-Sized History*. Millers Point: Pier 9, 2010, p 139.



The enigmatic Carmilla, who behaves as a sexual predator in LeFanu's work, embodies the unknown and discovery of the unknown which means that she must be destroyed because she is the exact opposite of what society wants in a woman. To Victorian society she represents an obstacle to women's embracing of the matrimonial lifestyle. In Carmilla, the vampire impedes "the adolescent's social and spiritual development."<sup>53</sup>

After the two, Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) came into the picture and changed the vampire tradition. The centuries old, evil Count, unlike Carmilla and Lord Ruthven, does not mirror in any way the generation of his victims and pursuers. Unlike them, he does not want to make friends. His depiction as a foreigner, an outcast, who comes from a proud lost race, builds a barrier between him and the society he tries to blend into.<sup>54</sup> The decadent tone can be traced in *Dracula*. The focus on melodrama, bizarreness, morbidity, despair and the dying mastery of the previous age of literature marks the pages of *Dracula*.<sup>55</sup> Compared to the beautiful vampires of the Romantic age, Dracula's looks seem, indeed, very bizarre with his "hairs in the centre of the palm" and ears with "the tops extremely pointed."<sup>56</sup> To say nothing of the long passages in which nothing new happens in the story (correspondence between Lucy and Mina). His appearance at the end of the century truly marks the end of one era of vampires.

One of the most powerful themes in the nineteenth century which helped the vampire to survive was doubt. The authors introduced the vampire figure in the

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<sup>53</sup> BUTLER, E., p 20.

<sup>54</sup> AUERBACH, N., p 63-64.

<sup>55</sup> CUDDON, J. A., p 220-221.

<sup>56</sup> STOKER, B. *Dracula*. London: Penguin Group, 1994, p 28.

enlightened age and the doubts of the people surrounding vampires created a potent background from which the vampire could strike and entertain readers for years to come.<sup>57</sup>

The vampire in literature and film then took over and numerous works appeared. The vampires which I have chosen to analyze in the next era, the era between the old and the modern vampires, offers two significant vampire books: Matheson's *I am Legend* (1954) and King's *Salem's Lot* (1975).

*I am Legend* is a classic example of a science fiction story incorporated into the Gothic novel, with its setting in the future where weapons of mass destruction have demolished ecosystems and brought a vampire plague to the country. This book "blurred the demarcation between its vampires and its singular, nasty hero."<sup>58</sup> The brutal lonely hero of this book becomes the vampire's slayer – therefore a boogeyman of the monster, which is very innovative.

*Salem's Lot* brings back the old tradition – it is a retelling of *Dracula* with a modern approach to the theme. Simply said, nothing works in this story (crosses, garlic etc.) because "its vampires, like its mortals, have no palpable design and no identifiable leaders."<sup>59</sup>

For the last part, the modern vampires, I have chosen three books for analysis: Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976), Hamilton's *Guilty Pleasures* (1993) and

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<sup>57</sup> GEARY, R. F. "Carmilla" and the Gothic Legacy: Victorian Transformations of Supernatural Horror. In *The Blood is The Life: Vampires in Literature*. Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1999, p 28.

<sup>58</sup> AUERBACH, N., p 138.

<sup>59</sup> AUERBACH, N., p 160.

Meyer's *Twilight* (2005). These all shift the vampire genre further and include innovative themes and motifs.

Even though Auerbach says Rice's vampires revoke the old – that is bringing the old Polidori's tradition back with their homoerotic relationship - they are innovative in breaking stereotypes.<sup>60</sup> They seem to be a species of their own, never participating in human history. Rice gives her vampires a voice – in *Interview with the Vampire* she lets a vampire take the lead and retell his story. Finally, it is not the victim or someone close to the victim who tells the story, it is the vampire himself.<sup>61</sup>

In *Guilty Pleasures*, a strong female fighter character was introduced. Anita Blake arises from the literary tradition of the “Van Helsing”. However, in this novel she is not just a random “wise man” but rather an educated woman (in her universe vampire matters are taught at universities) whose job it is to slay misbehaved vampires. Thus, the vampire's vampire motif is official. Anita Blake could also be solidifying the “New Woman”<sup>62</sup> tradition which was started in *Dracula* (all three *Dracula*'s brides, Lucy and even Meena show some aspects of emancipation). She is the first woman to fight vampires on her own, not needing any man to help her.

In the last book, *Twilight*, the vampires are absolutely defanged. Not only do they lack the fangs which are a symbol of vampirism, they are also natives to the land in which the story takes place (therefore the outsider theme is partially gone) and they try to be friends with humans, whom they no longer plague. Clements calls it vampires'

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<sup>60</sup> AUERBACH, N., p 153.

<sup>61</sup> BUTLER, E., p 70.

<sup>62</sup> LORRAH, J. *Dracula Meets the New Woman*. In *The Blood is The Life: Vampires in Literature*. Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1999. p. 31

free will.<sup>63</sup> In all the books before, the vampire was more (Dracula) or less (Louis from the *Interview with the Vampire*) bound by his or her vampiric nature. In *Twilight* this no longer applies. The *Twilight* vampires still embody a minority but their position in the Gothic novel is different compared to the first vampires in Anglo-American literature and that is why they are worth mentioning.

How did the vampire figure change throughout the ages? At first, the vampires embodied evil, dominance and sexual desires. They had to live by some rules (e.g. their fear of religious objects) and the trend was to get rid of them as soon as possible. Later, as science started to overtake religion in importance, vampires were made more human and they started to lose their traditional traits. In the modern age, vampires vary in the things they can or cannot do; they differ in shape and mentality. However, with *Twilight* as a closing point for this thesis, the vampire became domesticated and harmless – rather than using “the vampire to represent theological or philosophical questions, Meyer uses the vampire as a convenient alpha-hero.”<sup>64</sup>

All three periods of the books which were mentioned will be elaborated on in the analytical part of this thesis.

### 3.2 HORROR

A Horror story is intended to shock or even repulse the reader. It is closely connected to the Gothic genre and is sometimes labeled as a mode and not a genre on its own. A horror story contains a lot of elements of mystery, suspense, terror, thriller, etc.

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<sup>63</sup> CLEMENTS, S., p 108.

<sup>64</sup> CLEMENTS, S., p 112.

as well as supernatural creatures. It deals with psychological portraits of people – their limits, bringing their dark side to the surface. It holds importance in the field of developing short stories.<sup>65</sup>

Sanchez describes two tendencies in dealing with horror fiction.<sup>66</sup> On the one hand, it is underestimated due to its cheap manifestation in pulp literature. On the other hand, some of the most important works in literary history belong to the horror category (e.g. *Dracula*) and their analyses usually set them apart from pulp literature. Somehow, their influence was so tremendous that they became a part of the literary tradition.

According to Cuddon, the horror story precedes the Gothic novel – in the English context, Chaucer’s medieval-era *Pardoner’s Tale* is said to be an example of it.<sup>67</sup> Even though violence and mystery kept appearing in all ages, it was not until Romanticism that the horror story could flourish inside the Gothic genre.

When the Gothic genre crossed the ocean and arrived in America, Poe was not exactly the first of the influenced writers. However, his legacy in short intense stories full of terror and decadence is tremendous especially in the nineteenth century (for example, French symbolists such as Baudelaire translated Poe). From the British writers influenced by Poe Rossetti, Swinburne or Stevenson can be mentioned. In America, Poe influenced Bierce, Crane or Lovecraft.

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<sup>65</sup> CUDDON, J. A., p 416-417.

<sup>66</sup> SANCHEZ, M. Horror [online]. c2005, last revision 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2014 [cit. 2014-03-23] <<http://iml.jou.ufl.edu/projects/Spring05/Sanchez/horror.htm> >

<sup>67</sup> CUDDON, J. A., p 418.

Since the boom in horror stories after World War II the horror mode has undergone diversification and became more complex. The most influential writer of today's horror fiction is Stephen King, whose books sell by the millions.<sup>68</sup>

### 3.3 DETECTIVE STORY

The detective story is comprised of a mystery (often a murder), which must be solved by a detective who is often an amateur because the police forces tend to be dull and stupid. The detective has significant character qualities and often behaves in a strange way or can be distinguished by some sort of eccentricity (clothes, habits etc.). He or she must first lay out details of all the suspects and lead the reader away from the real murderer who will be revealed at the very end of the story. Some features of a detective story can also be seen in the gothic novel in the eighteenth and nineteenth century and later in the horror story.

One of the first detective stories was Smollett's *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* from 1753 which dealt with violence and crime. However, the birth of the detective story in English is generally attributed to Poe's *Murders in the Rue Morgue*. This type of story was later mastered by Doyle with his invention of Detective Holmes.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> CUDDON, J. A., p 416-430.

<sup>69</sup> CUDDON, J. A., p 229-236.

### 3.4 SCIENCE FICTION

The term science fiction was first used in 1851 by William Wilson. This genre is very difficult to define as its settings can be placed into any time – past, present or future. It can contain space travel, alien matters, utopias or dystopias, progress in technology, scientific experiments, and changes in society, ecology, geology or climate. It seeks definitions of humankind and its setting in the universe.

The key work in the evolution of science-fiction is attributed to Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Other milestones in the development of this genre can be found in the period of both world wars because people realized how easy it would be to destroy our world and this was reflected in the genre which started to thrive.

Since the 1950s the Americans have started to write more science-fiction than any other nationality. Writers such as Bradbury, Bester or Silverberg, to name but a few from the barrage of science fiction writers, have contributed to the genre.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> CUDDON, J. A., p 839-847.

## 4 HOW THE VAMPIRE MYTH TRAVELED FROM FOLKLORE TO LITERATURE

### 4.1 LEGENDS FROM ALL AROUND THE WORLD

As McLeod pointed out, blood-sucking creatures reside in folklore all over the world and they have been with us for over 5000 years.<sup>71</sup> They don't necessarily take human form - they exist in different shapes (be it animals, trees, different kinds of demons or just mist), they appear for various reasons (brutal death, death during childbirth etc.) and they go after different kinds of victims (children, criminals etc.). What the vampires have in common, however, is depriving the victim of blood or life force - the very essence of human life.

McLeod mentions one of the oldest written epics, the Epic of Gilgamesh, which includes the Sumerian demon-goddess Lilitu (also known as Lilith), who was in earlier legends referred to as the Mesopotamian demon Lamashtu – known for bloodlust. Later on, in Babylonia, she inherited a reputation as a succubus – a demon who has sex with men in order to drain them of their energy and potency. She can also be found in Hebrew stories, in which she is said to drink from newly-born babies.<sup>72</sup>

It is more than natural that the stories of Lilith, and therefore other vampires under different names, crossed the borders of their original locality and blended into other countries' folklore – including that of ancient Rome, China etc. But in some places they didn't even have to be brought, for a belief in blood-sucking creatures had

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<sup>71</sup> MCLEOD, J. A., p 6-11.

<sup>72</sup> MCLEOD, J. A., p 14-15.



already existed – as in pre-Columbian Central and Southern America with its feared creatures tlahuelpuchi, cihuateteo or canchus.<sup>73</sup>

Even though it is fascinating to read about vampire-like creatures and their behavior all over the world, staying in Europe seems more logical, for that is where the craze started.

Two of the very first vampires who will be mentioned in the next chapter derived from the imagination of two Irish writers; therefore Ireland must be mentioned here, of course. An old Irish folk story mentions a dearg-dur, a beautiful woman who sucks the blood of her male victims. She became a vampire after committing suicide. Some say that she walks under the full moon, some say that she only appears on the date she died, some say she even transforms into a bat (which connects this Irish legend with Eastern Europe).<sup>74</sup>

Eastern Europe is probably the first location which springs into many a mind when asked about the source of vampire legends. Becoming a vampire was quite easy in medieval Eastern Europe or Greece (since it is very difficult to make a tale stay within the boundaries of one country, similar stories are found in Greece and Eastern Europe). One did not even have to be dead to have a vampire future. Being born with a caul on the head, with the teeth showing, with a unibrow or being born on Christmas Day meant the unlucky person had to become a vampire. Dying of consuming too much alcohol, committing suicide, or dying of natural causes but having the misfortune of someone stepping over the body, a bird flying over it or a dog or a cat sleeping atop the dead body was a ticket to join the ranks of the undead. Hence the habit of some Europeans of

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<sup>73</sup> MCLEOD, J. A., p 46.

<sup>74</sup> MCLEOD, J. A., p 60-61.

sitting on watch by the dead body for three days and three nights so that none of the above could happen. There was an unbelievably long list of things to do or not do to avoid becoming a vampire.<sup>75</sup>

Furthermore, since almost the tiniest thing could make one a vampire, it was just a question of time before practically everyone would be suspected of being one.

## 4.2 THE VAMPIRE PLAGUE

There is a period of time in human history which many authors call The Vampire Plague. As McLeod points out, it is, indeed, very humorous that something as irrational as seeing vampires on every corner actually happened during the Age of Reason.

The Vampire Plague can be partly attributed to the fears carried by a migrating people. After Austria's final defeat of the Turks in 1718, the Habsburgs annexed most of what is now Serbia and Bosnia ... The people were impoverished, and few had received a good education. As they moved into new areas, such as Bohemia ... these people brought with them a rich folklore ... Like the people of late seventeenth century Salem, who settled in America still burdened with the fear of witchcraft ... the Serbs and Bosnians migrated westwards burdened by their own intense fear – vampirism.<sup>76</sup>

Since the whole phenomenon is called The Vampire Plague, the real plague must have had something to do with it as well. Throughout the history of Europe a

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<sup>75</sup> OINAS, F. *East European Vampires*. In *The Vampire. A casebook*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998, p 47-56.

<sup>76</sup> MCLEOD, J. A., p 93.

number of plague outbreaks occurred. The last one in Continental Europe appeared in Vienna in 1679, killing a third of the population. It was still fresh in the memories of many people when the Vampire Plague broke out.

Naturally, it was vampires who were believed to spread airborne diseases during their night wanderings and through biting their victims. Many famous people of that time (Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau etc.) tried to argue that eighteenth century Europe was far too educated to be influenced by fear of a creature from the folktales.<sup>77</sup>

But despite the intelligentsia trying to calm the people down, many stories of chasing a “vampire” went down in history. To mention one, which can basically serve as a scenario for most of the stories, be it in Ireland or Russia, there was a man in the county of Buckingham who kept appearing for three nights after his burial. His surviving relatives would stay up all night making noise whenever they saw him approaching their house. The Bishop of Lincoln was told by the council that this was no novelty in England and that the only way to stop this was to burn the dead man. The bishop found it cruel and instead he wrote an absolution on a piece of paper and ordered it to be put on the body of the “vampire”, who looked as fresh as on the day of his burial. After this the dead man disturbed his relatives no more.<sup>78</sup>

As mentioned above, this is just one incident which can serve as a model situation for all the vampire sightings across Europe because they all have similar features. Since pathology was an unknown discipline at that time, every “vampire” looked odd to the ones who opened his or her grave – to the twenty-first century person

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<sup>77</sup> MCLEOD, J. A., p 98-99.

<sup>78</sup> WRIGHT, D. *Vampires and Vampirism. Legends from around the World*. Maple Shade: Lethe Press: 2001, p 48-49.

who has ever taken secondary school biology classes the fact that the nails and body hair seem to grow even after death is not unknown. But what a shock it must have been back then! A beard on a person who was shaved for the burial was unshakable evidence of living during the night. Blood gushing from the mouth was proof of a stomach full of victims' blood from the previous night. People would then drive a sharp wooden stake through the vampire's chest, decapitate the body, burn it or do whatever the church authorities told them to do.

#### 4.3 SCIENCE BEHIND THE MYTHS

Barber collected the most common features of vampire myths and tried to find a down-to-earth explanation.<sup>79</sup> With the help of forensic pathology he managed to bring a very refreshing point of view to this phenomenon.

One well-known myth says that murder victims and people who commit suicide tend to become vampires; their disturbed graves are a proof of that. Barber says that this can be explained quite easily. It was common to dig shallow graves for people who died suddenly, because the burial would occur the same day or the next day, and that is why no one had time to dig deep. Such graves could then attract the attention of dogs, which could dig around in search of food and make the grave look as if something was crawling out of it. A natural decomposing process – bloating – could also disturb the grave and further entrench the people in their theories.

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<sup>79</sup> BARBER, P. *Forensic Pathology and the European Vampire*. In *The Vampire. A casebook*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998, p 109-142.

Another proof of vampirism is blood gashing from the nose and mouth. Barber again points out that the natural decomposing process includes pressure on the lungs, making the lungs full of blood which is then released through the nose and mouth.<sup>80</sup>

Quite an interesting theory comes with the myth which mentions vampires who are afraid of running water and their need to return to their grave by sunrise. Barber found out that if the ground into which the body is buried contains a lot of water (again, it wasn't uncommon to dispose of a murder victim by submerging the body into water or into a swamp, with something heavy attached to it so that the body would stay buried) the bloating itself can lift the body up in the soil or water. As a matter of fact, the body is full of gases which make it very easy to appear on the surface, despite a very heavy object dragging the body down. But because of this the belief that a vampire cannot cross running water and must be in the grave by sunrise appeared – a dead body by the creek was for some proof of the vampire not being able to cross running water. The dead body, partly exposed to sunlight and partly buried, was proof of the vampire not making it back to the grave in time.<sup>81</sup>

Stakes and other pointy objects should kill a vampire. As has been mentioned many times, bloating is the key process a dead body undergoes. Piercing it with something sharp may let the gasses escape and shrink the body to its normal size. The “shrieking” sounds which accompany this killing can be interpreted as a vampire’s last call and ensure the audience that what they have done has worked.

Another very common myth includes garlic as a protection against vampires. Garlic smells bad and so does the decomposing body. Barber’s theory suggests that one

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<sup>80</sup> BARBER, P., p 118.

<sup>81</sup> BARBER, P., p 123.

bad smell can be used to overpower another and that is why it could be used to somehow beat the other bad smell.<sup>82</sup>

On top of it all, Jaffé and DiCataldo mention so called “clinical vampirism”.<sup>83</sup> In all the cases above, it wasn’t the deceased’s fault that he or she became a vampire – the living gave them the vampire attributes and basically turned them into vampires. But in the following case, a living person with a crooked mind becomes one of his or her free will.

The authors illustrate it by example of a man who in 1824 drank blood from a young girl and ate a part of her as well. This case is called polyvampirism. The authors define vampirism as sexual or aggressive behavior with or without suction of blood from a dead or dying person. They also point out that this basically covers cases of necrophilia, necrosadism, necrophagia, and sadonecrophilia.<sup>84</sup>

Some special cases of schizophrenia have been connected to vampirism. It has been pointed out that certain cases involve maternal deprivation during the biting oral stage in a child’s life which could result in an abnormal fixation on oral violence in the future. However, there are not many schizophrenics with this kind of problem, and therefore only speculations can be drawn from this.

Jaffé and DiCataldo also mention that the urge to control may be a key feature in psychopathic clinical cases of vampirism. Many subjects showed violent behavior

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<sup>82</sup> BARBER, P., 129.

<sup>83</sup> JAFFÉ and DICATALDO. *Clinical Vampirism: Blending Myth and Reality*. In *The Vampire. A casebook*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998, p 143-157.

<sup>84</sup> JAFFÉ and DICATALDO, p 147.

towards animals in their childhood, which persisted till their adulthood. They tend to have no empathy for living creatures and that is why criminal behavior can appear.

As such, clinical vampirism is one of the few pathologic manifestations that blends myth and reality in dramatic fashion and contains a hodgepodge of nosological elements, including schizophrenic, psychopathic, and perverse features.<sup>85</sup>

These circumstances created rich soil from which the vampire could grow and enter the realm of literature. Both Stoker and LeFanu were known for their love of folklore, therefore it is no surprise that some features of the folkloric vampire appeared in their work.

## 5 OLD VAMPIRES

To explore the vampire figure in the first era of Anglo-American literature in which vampires surfaced, three classic examples of vampires in two short stories and one novel have been selected for this work. The three pieces which will be elaborated on are Polidori's *The Vampyre*, LeFanu's *Carmilla* and Stoker's *Dracula*.

From these three I would like to create a prototype – what the figure of the old vampire looked like, which abilities or superpowers he or she possessed and what reactions the vampire got from people who encountered him or her at the time - both before knowing he or she was a creature of the night and after the revelation. I will also try to find the most typical themes or motifs in these works so that they can be later compared to the ones in the books which will be elaborated on in the following chapters.

### 5.1 THE VAMPYRE

#### 5.1.1 PLOT

Working chronologically, the first work to mention is John Polidori's *The Vampyre*, a short story published in 1818. As Twitchell says, Polidori's work was basically a starting point for vampire stories:

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<sup>85</sup> JAFFÉ and DICATALDO, p 154.



Not only was Polidori the first to use the figure of the vampire in prose, but he also seems, like Coleridge and Keats, one of the first to understand its psychological possibilities. For Polidori seems to use the myth in part as an analogy to explain how people interact.<sup>86</sup>

In this story, Lord Ruthven, who is often invited to parties in higher society even though no one knows much about him, is a vampire. He finds a traveling companion, Aubrey, with whom he roams Europe, and who subsequently finds out about Ruthven's true nature. However, after a fight with robbers Ruthven manages to make Aubrey promise not to mention his death or crimes to anyone for a year and then Ruthven seems to die. After some time Ruthven reappears which drives Aubrey nearly insane because he can't tell anyone (until it's too late) and because he himself is too weak to deprive Ruthven of life. Aubrey dies of despair and Ruthven marries Aubrey's sister and kills her. No one stops Ruthven and he escapes.

### 5.1.2 *RUTHVEN'S PHYSIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PORTRAIT*

The vampire, Lord Ruthven, is first seen at a party. It is mentioned that he is often invited to numerous parties due to his enigmatic character and good looks, which ensure him success with the ladies. He is described as possessing "the dead grey eye"<sup>87</sup> which even when focused on a person doesn't seem to really see the person in front of him. An appearance of boredom is not uncommon to Ruthven. His very pale complexion doesn't seem to lessen his beauty and even though he doesn't appear to engage in conversation

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<sup>86</sup> TWITCHELL, J. B., p 112.

<sup>87</sup> POLIDORI, J. *The Vampyre and Other Tales of the Macabre*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc, 2008, p 3.

much, he is famous for his clever tongue. Ruthven uses his poker face to scrutinize and when literally gambling he doesn't move a muscle unless he encounters a novice at the gambling table or a hopeless father – then his eyes seem to shine. He acts arrogantly and is fearless of the society he lives among. In the story, Ruthven is never given sharp pointy teeth which could be observed by someone but his victims bear the tell-tale marks on their skin.

Ruthven possesses quite a few special abilities. At the beginning he is only a skilled gambler and a lady-killer which may or may not be vampire traits. What the reader learns, however, in the progress of the story is something which happens to the ladies who have an affair with Ruthven. They all seem to fall from grace and their behavior gets worse after Ruthven's departure. It seems as if he took all their modesty and left them absolutely bare and without inhibitions.

Quite interesting is his draining of Aubrey. Ruthven never takes blood from his companion; however, Aubrey's mental health slowly fades while Ruthven's ashen face and figure improves over time:

His Lordship seemed quite changed; he no longer appeared the apathetic being who had so astonished Aubrey; but as soon as his convalescence began to be rapid, he again gradually retired into the same state of mind, and Aubrey perceived no difference from the former man (...) <sup>88</sup>

Therefore, there must be some kind of energy transfer between the two. Ruthven feeds on the life force of his unknowing friend and, as the Greek folklore in the story claims, he needs blood from a lady as well. If he is feeding on both essential parts of the

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<sup>88</sup> POLIDORI, J., p 13.

human life force, then there is no doubt he grows more cunning and arrogant toward the end of the story.

Another power he has up his sleeve is his strength. Aubrey confronts the killer of his beloved Ianthe in the dark, so he cannot know he is dealing with Ruthven at first, but what he experiences firsthand is the vampire's enormous strength as he is grasped and lifted into the air and thrown onto the ground.

It seems Ruthven can walk about during the day (the night is only mentioned during his draining of poor Ianthe). But the rejuvenating power of the moon is mentioned in the story.

Once again, Polidori is introducing what will become a commonplace of vampire fiction, for this is the first time in any vampire story that moonlight's rejuvenative powers are mentioned.<sup>89</sup>

When it comes to weaknesses, Ruthven is not given many. The party of people who rescue Aubrey from his grasp ward him off, but since he is rather feared than dealt with, it is no problem for him to escape at the end of the story, leaving the reader with no knowledge of how to dispose of this vampire.

### *5.1.3 RUTHVEN'S SOCIAL PROFILE*

As was already mentioned above, Ruthven is described as a ladies' man, and therefore his path into high society is quite easy. Most women want to talk to him and

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<sup>89</sup> TWITCHELL, J. B., p 111.

be in his good graces. And even though he never reveals much about himself, the ones around him enjoy such a mysterious character.

Even after Aubrey is warned about the mess Ruthven always leaves behind (the women without inhibitions), Aubrey fights his natural instinct not to trust his mysterious companion. What is more, after the revelation Aubrey still cannot come to terms with Ruthven's nature. His inability to face the truth about the vampire costs his sister her life.

It seems as if the vampire is accepted at all costs. Only in his absence can the characters see how evil he is, but when facing him or being within his grasp they can do nothing but like him.

#### 5.1.4 THE FATHER FIGURE IN THE VAMPYRE

One of the very common features of Gothic literature is the father figure. *The Vampyre* is no exception when incorporating this motif into vampire prose.

In some way Gothic is usually about some "son" both wanting to kill and striving to be the "father" and thus feeling guilty about what he most desires.<sup>90</sup>

Aubrey, a lonely orphaned young character, uses his first opportunity to find a father figure in the society he enters. He seems lost and Ruthven's offer to travel with him gives him a good excuse to be sheltered and under the guidance of an older and

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<sup>90</sup> HOGLE, J. E., p 5.

more experienced man. Aubrey seems fascinated with Ruthven and makes it his goal to unravel as much as he can about his mysterious companion.

Ruthven's promiscuous and arrogant way of life makes Aubrey remove himself from him for a while and one would think that Aubrey would thus be more prone to realizing Ruthven's true nature. However, Aubrey fails to believe in Ruthven's being a vampire when he is given a list of vampire traits which all happen to depict Ruthven. This may be attributed to the "son's" dilemma of whether to believe in the innocence of his "father" or whether to admit that his "father" can be evil.

After a vampire attack which depletes Aubrey's love of life and wounds Aubrey, Ruthven appears and nurtures Aubrey back to health as any parent would.

When Aubrey finds direct evidence of Ruthven being a supernatural creature, he becomes almost crazy. There are two opposite forces pulling him in two directions. On the one hand, Aubrey gave a promise to his "father" to not speak of anything for a year and on the other hand, there is this monster plaguing people Aubrey loves and Aubrey feels obliged to warn everyone. By the time Aubrey rebels against his "father", it is already too late.

## 5.2 CARMILLA

### 5.2.1 PLOT

LeFanu's *Carmilla* from 1871 is a tale told in the first person narrative by Laura, a woman who experienced an encounter with a vampire ten years ago, and who finally

feels that she can tell the story of how she became acquainted with this beautiful young lady from her childhood dream. This lady, apart from making rather sexual advances toward her, was a vampire who wanted to drain her, and who wanted to force her to die for their love. This story, obviously, has a happy ending since Laura is able to write about it. Unlike the villain in *The Vampyre*, Carmilla is defeated and killed.

### 5.2.2 *CARMILLA'S PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL PORTRAIT*

Carmilla appears very suddenly and unexpectedly in the story and everyone who sees her says she is the most beautiful creature – she is slender and young and when she speaks, she has the sweetest voice. We are given a detailed description of her appearance a little later in the story when Laura really takes a look at her. She describes Carmilla as a tall woman with a slender body and languid movements. Carmilla's features are delicate, with big dark eyes and luxuriant dark hair with some lighter strands in it. She doesn't usually eat and only from time to time accepts hot chocolate when offered.

Carmilla's behavior differs throughout the whole story. At the beginning, her mother talks about her fragile health, so the characters around her somehow expect mood swings from her. Laura's father is also warned that Carmilla will not speak of her origin or family and whenever she is pressed by Laura about the matter she turns melancholic and quickly evades the subject, wanting total trust from Laura.

There are passages in which she behaves like a sexual predator – she touches Laura, wants to kiss or hug her, tells her of their love (which is not mutual) and says odd things about Laura being hers forever or about Laura sacrificing her life somehow.

In other places, Carmilla feels very weak – it is usually during the daylight hours and because of that her behavior is very subtle and she seems timid. There is also a hint of mockery in the scene in which she willingly buys a talisman against vampires.

“Will your ladyships be pleased to buy an amulet against the oupire, which is going like the wolf, I hear, through these woods,” he said ... Carmilla instantly purchased one, and so did I.<sup>91</sup>

In Carmilla’s story, there is a lot she can offer when it comes to knowledge of vampire strengths/weaknesses compared to Ruthven. There are certain eccentricities which Carmilla exhibits during the story and about the rest Laura learns after Carmilla’s death.

Besides her beauty and sweet voice, Carmilla possesses much more. When she touches Laura and tells her about her love for her, Laura knows there is something odd going on. She’d like to get out of Carmilla’s grasp but feels too weak to do so. She suddenly feels repulsed by and drawn to her touch at the same time.

Her murmured words sounded like a lullaby in my ear, and soothed my resistance into a trance, from which I only seemed to recover myself when she withdrew her arms.<sup>92</sup>

As was mentioned above, the moon plays an important role in giving life force back to the vampire. Even Carmilla, when feeling weak, becomes much better after being exposed to its rejuvenative power.

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<sup>91</sup> LEFANU, J. S. *Carmilla*. Rockville: Serenity Publishers, 2009, p 43.

<sup>92</sup> LEFANU, J. S., p 37.

Halfway through the story she actually shifts shape into a cat-like creature standing near Laura's bed. Laura thinks it just a dream for she is drowsy, so it is up to the reader to decide whether the cat / growing shadow with eyes was just a dream or reality. When alerted, Laura fully awakens and she sees Carmilla back in her human form disappearing from her room.

When Carmilla walks out of the door, Laura is shocked that she has forgotten to lock the door. Except that she has not forgotten to do so. The door is locked. That means Carmilla can lock and unlock doors at will. This will only be verified later in the story when she will not be found in her locked room.

Carmilla seems refreshed after the sip she got from Laura and since Laura seems to get worse and worse after the night encounter, Carmilla sits by her side like a real friend. Just like Ruthven did with Aubrey. Just like that other pair the vampire here looks better than ever while her friend does anything but thrive. There is the possibility of Carmilla taking more than just blood. Laura can be a good energy source as well.

Lastly, in the confrontation with the General, she grasps his hand so strongly that his axe falls to the ground. She then seems to vanish into thin air.

But LeFanu didn't give Carmilla all these powers without making her vulnerable. She is weakened during the day (if she is not sleeping) and if forced to go outside to appear normal she sits in the shade.

When a funeral parade marches nearby and Carmilla can hear religious songs being sung she reacts as if it were hurting her ears. If Laura joins in she is enraged by it.

Her weakest spot, which brings her downfall, is her grave. She is found in her coffin floating in blood with her eyes open and heart still beating, accompanied by faint



breathing. That is the place where she spends the most vulnerable parts of the day. A sharp stake is driven through her heart and she utters a terrible shriek. She is then decapitated and burned.

### 5.2.3 *CARMILLA'S SOCIAL PROFILE*

Carmilla could be described as the loveliest fragile lady who is adored by everyone. Even though Laura can detect something wrong about her companion she falls under the spell of Carmilla and starts ignoring the warning signs. All the people in Laura's house are like that. There is a scene in the story in which Carmilla is missing from her room with the door locked. She later appears and says she must have been walking in her sleep and as she slept elsewhere, she couldn't hear all the commotion when everyone was looking for her. Laura's father believes this highly improbable story and even constructs quite an elaborate scenario as to how it could have happened with the locked door.

When a picture from 1698 is found containing a spitting image of Carmilla everyone calls it a coincidence. There are so many other clues which could lead to finding out something about Carmilla but everyone is blind.

Until the moment Laura starts to get worse and a doctor examines her, the people around Carmilla pretend not to see. Then her father seems to come back to reality after he is told by the doctor what is plaguing Laura. When the General arrives telling the tale about his daughter who was murdered by a monster, the father seems to be the least surprised. But even Laura behaves in a strange way when finally given the knowledge that her best friend is a vampire. She simply lets everyone else decide what to do and doesn't even ask questions or mourn the loss of her friend. Even though the whole story is written in the first person narrative, this is exactly the place where the reader is given

nothing. No emotion, no judgment, no fear, just a list of what was done to kill the vampire.

#### 5.2.4 *THE SEXUAL PREDATOR*

Carmilla represents a sexually aggressive woman, which was “one of the fears and obsessions of Victorian culture.”<sup>93</sup> Her advances toward Laura are very straightforward and while Laura is what she seems (an adolescent), Carmilla looks young and innocent but her age gives her the upper hand in dealing with her victims.

While Ruthven’s sexuality was hinted at (we will never know if there was something erotic in his relationship with Aubrey), Carmilla’s sexuality is obvious since she first befriends and kills one lady and attempts to get closer to another one. Her getting closer involves a lot of touching, hugging, kissing and blood-sipping.

### 5.3 DRACULA

#### 5.3.1 *PLOT*

*Dracula* by Stoker is an epistolary novel (written mostly in letters and journal entries) which was published in 1897. The book tells the story of Count Dracula, a very old and sly vampire, who decides to move to England and enjoy its citizens for a

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<sup>93</sup> CLEMENTS, S., p 5.

change. He attacks two ladies (one of whom will become a vampire) but unfortunately for him the ladies have strong support from their husbands/fiancés and their friends who eventually destroy the vampire.

The inspiration for Dracula was probably Vlad III of Walachia who was known for his cruelty, which gained him the nickname “Impaler”. Butler suggests two interpretations when it comes to Vlad’s origin.<sup>94</sup> His title Dracula came from the Latin “draco” (meaning dragon or snake) and that could either mean that its bearer belonged to an order dedicated to eradicating Turkish influence or, according to the Christian tradition, the name was linked to Satan.

### *5.3.2 DRACULA’S PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL PORTRAIT*

Dracula at first appears in the guise of a servant. It is only later in the story that Jonathan Harker realizes that the tall coach driver with the long brown beard and eyes that seem to shine red, who otherwise concealed his looks by black clothing and a hat, was indeed the Count himself.

During the official introduction, however, the Count is described as a tall old man with a long white moustache. Later Harker notices his Roman nose, bushy eyebrows, cruel-looking mouth with protruding sharp teeth, and even pointed ears. Upon further inspection Harker finds other peculiarities: hair on the centers of Dracula’s palms, long sharp nails and disgusting breath.

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<sup>94</sup> BUTLER, E., p 42.

But Dracula is a master of disguise and gives the reader opportunities to see more of his looks. For example, he takes on Harker's clothes when going to post Harker's letters in case someone went investigating Harker's disappearance, which the Count had so thoroughly planned.

Harker even finds Dracula in his coffin:

He was either dead or asleep ... for the eyes were open and stony, but without the glassiness of death – and the cheeks had the warmth of life ... and the lips were as red as ever. But there was no sign of movement, no pulse, no breath, no beating of the heart.<sup>95</sup>

When encountering the Count later in London, the reader cannot help but notice that he has become younger, for Mina describes him this time as a tall pale man with a black pointy beard and a moustache. She also realizes that he has very red lips which highlight the whiteness of his sharp teeth.

Dracula manipulates others and takes what he wants when he wants. He imprisons Harker and forces him to write a letter home about his arrival, he tells his three brides what to do without them questioning him much (every wrong behavior of theirs is punished), he steals children to nourish his women, he decides to plague a different country for a change, he manipulates a lunatic in an asylum, and when he spots a woman he wants, he simply takes her from her husband's grasp. He fears nothing and it is his arrogance which leads him to his end.

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<sup>95</sup> STOKER, B., p 63.

Furthermore, when something doesn't go according to the Count's plan, he gets into a state of fury during which his eyes blaze and his paleness and clamped teeth make him look almost otherworldly as he resembles some kind of demon.

The Count manifests a lot of powers and special abilities when holding Harker prisoner. What the reader cannot find out from Harker's journal or Lucy's letters can be heard from Van Helsing who, as a man of science, managed to learn as much on the topic of vampires as possible so that he could help in getting rid of one.

Harker is also scared by Dracula's absence in the mirror. The scene in which Harker is startled by Dracula actually reveals one of the Counts weaknesses – the fear of holy objects. Harker cuts himself while shaving and the Count makes a grab for his throat. But he touches Harker's crucifix and is forced to retreat from his intention.

As was mentioned above, Polidori established a potent theme in vampire literature when giving the Moon healing powers for vampires. Dracula's brides ride on the moonlight – fading and appearing into moonlit areas. The same goes for the Count, who attacks Lucy under the full moon and basically can appear and disappear in the form of a mist.

The last of the vicious tricks which is manifested in the book is Dracula's ability to give someone else his blood to make him or her do his bidding. Until the moment of him giving Mina his blood the reader is left thinking that his control of Renfield and Lucy is due to his strong mind. But maybe his proclamation of power over Mina now that she has his blood inside of her sheds a slightly different light on the matter of manipulating people. Or maybe not. Maybe Mina's will is stronger and therefore needs this trick to be fully manipulated.

One of the quite odd things about Dracula's weaknesses is the scar on his forehead, given to him by Harker in his attempt to kill Dracula. All of Dracula's victims don't seem to help him to get rid of that.

### 5.3.3 DRACULA'S SOCIAL PROFILE

Harker meets people full of superstition immediately upon his arrival to Transylvania and soon absorbs their fears. Just like the others in *Carmilla* and *The Vampyre*, even Harker senses something odd going on but cannot say what it is. He finds the Count quite eccentric at first but says nothing of his unusual way of life. After the revelation of Dracula's true nature, Harker can do nothing but oblige in what the Count has prepared for him.

Dracula also interacts with his slave Renfield, who is fully devoted to his master. In accordance to his master he needs to consume as many lives as possible and the lives are getting bigger and bigger (flies, spiders, birds and once he even gets the opportunity to lick human blood).

Lucy and Mina are usually attacked in some sort of trance leaving them almost no memory of the incident. Both women, however, recall at least something – their reluctance to be embraced by the evil engulfing them and the inability to fight and avoid succumbing to the feeling.

Van Helsing, however, marches into the story with his wits about him and does not even need to see the vampire himself to know him as purely evil. He is the one character who never doubts and sees others as they really are.

More interesting is, without a doubt, dealing with Lucy as a vampire, because Lucy starts as a positive character who is loved by everyone and therefore the reactions of the others to her turning into a vampire vary. Van Helsing has no problem believing her a vampire and is willing to proceed in killing her. Her fiancé and a very good friend are different cases. When Van Helsing presents obvious evidence to Dr Seward, a man who once loved her, he accepts it at first but later tries to blame the whole thing on Van Helsing, constructing scenarios as to how Van Helsing orchestrated the whole situation. The same goes for her beloved – he, too, cannot accept the truth and it takes seeing her in her full vampiric rage to finally accept what Van Helsing was saying all along.

#### 5.3.4 *THE OUTSIDER*

One of the most important themes in vampire fiction is that of the outsider. The vampire has been since the very beginning a separate species which only fakes human form in order to gain something from it.

Dracula has “ties to ethnic groups that Stoker barely mentions”<sup>96</sup> (here Butlers finds an analogy with Stoker’s life – an Irishman in England). That is why Dracula is both alluring and repulsive - which makes him dangerous. He comes from an old lineage and is perhaps the last surviving member. He embodies everything which is not domestic (not English). But he is also a foreigner in basically every country, for his ancestry shows so much mixed blood that it would be nearly impossible to bind him to one location.

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<sup>96</sup> BUTLER, E., p 21.

We Szekelys have a right to be proud, for in our veins flows the blood of many brave races who fought as the lion fights, for lordship. Here, in the whirlpool of European races, the Ugric tribe bore down from Iceland the fighting spirit which Thor and Wodin gave them, which their Berserkers displayed to such fell intent on the seaboard of Europe, aye, and of Asia and Africa too, till the peoples thought that the werewolves themselves had come. Here, too, when they came, they found the Huns, whose warlike fury had swept the earth like a living flame, till the dying peoples held that in their veins ran the blood of those old witches, who, expelled from Scythia had mated with the devils in the desert. Fools, fools! What devil or what witch was ever so great as Attila, whose blood is in these veins?<sup>97</sup>

Dracula represents the outsider, someone who has no ties to those around him, and it is not only his origin which he emphasizes. He also distances himself from the people around him by being a proud and wealthy man. He refuses not to be recognized. It is quite remarkable how he at the same time tries to distance himself from other humans and also does everything to blend in so that, as a predator, he can strike when it is least expected.

Well, I know that, did I move and speak in your London, none there are who would not know me for a stranger. That is not enough for me. Here I am noble; I am boyar; the common people know me, and I am master. But a stranger in a strange land, he is no one; men know him not – and to know not is to care not for.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> STOKER, B., p 41.

<sup>98</sup> STOKER, B., p 31.



The outsider's tendency is thus to blend in, to not to be recognized. Butler says that "vampires thrive on imitation and adaptation."<sup>99</sup> Vampires would not survive if they were not ready to change and adapt to the times they live in.

As Dracula in the excerpt above willingly admits, he likes to blend in (in a way that ensures he does not look like a stranger in a strange land) but he also wants to stand out. His arrogance in the nineteenth century thus brought his fall. In the next chapters, I will attempt to compare him to the vampires who followed and find out whether they have learned a lesson from him or not.

#### 5.4 SUMMARY

Even though it seems that nineteenth century vampires were diverse, some common traits can be gathered. For a start, they were purely evil – Ruthven, Carmilla and Dracula all embodied people's nightmares and by depriving them of blood in their most vulnerable state (be it trance or sleep) they could not be mistaken for friends. Evil and religion were closely connected in the stories (the vampires being afraid of religious objects, for example.).

The three vampires also modified themselves in order to gain prey. Ruthven and Carmilla used their looks to get closer to their food source. Dracula used his ability to render his victims helpless by making them obey his will.

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<sup>99</sup> BUTLER, E., p 27.

As time progressed, vampires gained more and more powers as well as weaknesses. While Ruthven needed daggers to protect himself, Dracula and Carmilla relied on their own strengths and abilities.

Since *The Vampyre* was the introduction of the vampire figure into Anglo-American literature, it is quite difficult to compare Ruthven to the others because it is a short story which does not contain much detail. However, the themes which can be found in this story and in *Carmilla* are the themes of “intimacy and friendship ... the lures of Romantic vampirism.”<sup>100</sup> Unlike in *Dracula*, these two contain a vampire’s crooked attempt to have a friendship with a human (which can never be fulfilled, of course due to the different natures of the participants).

All three pieces are full of sexual tension and in *Carmilla* as well as in *Dracula* (in the person of his brides) a female vampire is depicted as a sexual aggressor. The male vampire is also a tyrant. However, the hints at his sexuality are not as strong as in the female vampire.

The vampires of the nineteenth century were obsessed with someone’s beloved (perhaps because they could not have strong emotional bonds with anyone) and the people around the object of the vampire’s obsession naturally fought for their beloveds.

Lastly, they all represented a minority. As a species living on their own, interacting with wider society only when necessary, they were all outsiders. The revelation of their natures meant immediate ostracism.

In the following chapters younger vampires will be compared to the ones who appeared in this chapter. However, as Twitchell pointed out, Dracula and the vampire

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<sup>100</sup> AUERBACH, N., p 14.

became synonyms and perhaps Dracula is the vampire who served as the prototype for the next generations of authors.

Ironically, Dracula, the greatest vampire novel, is the work of fiction that takes the vampire out of literature and returns him to folklore. As a literary work Dracula has suffered from this achievement ... This is certainly because the vampire and Dracula have become synonymous.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> TWITCHELL, J. B., p 132.

## 6 THE VAMPIRES FROM THE ERA BETWEEN THE OLD AND THE MODERN

From today's point of view the first three quarters of the twentieth century did not produce much (in terms of bringing something as striking or as original as *Dracula*, *Carmilla* or *The Vampyre*). Only a few works from this era are mentioned in the secondary sources.

It was not until the second half of the twentieth century that vampires suddenly appeared in the USA and took over vampire fiction. As Auerbach points out, “before *Dracula*, vampires embodied forbidden ideas of intimacy; after *Dracula* they moved to America and turned into rulers.”<sup>102</sup>

Two of the most influential vampire books of the first three quarters of the twentieth century are Matheson's *I am Legend* and King's *Salem's Lot*. Both shift the motifs and themes of vampire fiction a little bit further and differ from their predecessors.

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<sup>102</sup> AUERBACH, N., p 101.

## 6.1 I AM LEGEND

### 6.1.1 PLOT

The story takes place in continental USA somewhere after a successful war, which the USA won due to the use of bombs. Those weapons of mass destruction brought a change in climate, bringing mutated insects (especially mosquitoes) and sand storms into the country. After a while more and more people fall victims of the unknown virus brought by these changes. However, they do not die. They are turned into vampires.

The population narrows down to one single human being, Robert Neville, whose struggles with everyday reality the book follows. He tries to kill as many vampires as possible as well as find what the cause of it all was and why he is the only one uninfected.

At the end of the story he encounters another human being, Ruth, who turns out to be a new kind of vampire – intelligent and able to withstand the daylight when taking medicine – who informs him about the establishment of a new vampire society which will kill the wrong vampires and which, more importantly, needs Neville dead because he is the last of his kind and embodies the biggest threat to them, since he walks around in the daylight executing them while they sleep.

### 6.1.2 THE PORTRAYAL OF MATHESON'S VAMPIRES

In *I am Legend* there are two types of vampires – the really dead ones (who got the disease, died and then returned as the undead) and the live ones (who got the disease and live their infected life). Incidentally, there are also vampire animals in the book.

The first group attacks Neville's house every night. They are white-faced but their features have not changed from when they were alive:

Ben hadn't changed much. His hair was still black, his body inclined to corpulence, his face still white. But there was a beard on his face now; mostly under the nose, thinner around his chin and cheeks and under his throat. That was the only real difference, though.<sup>103</sup>

This group behaves in a pattern. They come out at dusk and attack Neville's house with stones, some of them calling for him. When they do not get their fill of blood from Neville, they attack one of their own – usually the weakest. They do not seem to possess enough intelligence to find a way to get to Neville. From today's point of view they resemble zombies.

The other group, represented by Ruth, is intelligent and very much alive. Just like the first group they are pale and that is the only difference in their appearance. Ruth puts on fake tan so that Robert does not realize he is with the enemy. She comes to him in the daylight to find out as much about him as possible. She can communicate and one would say she is not a vampire if it were not for the blood test Robert makes her undergo. When the truth about her is revealed, she tells him about her society which is cruel but whose cruelty is necessary in order for them to build a strong future. She even warns him of his planned execution.

Matheson deprived his vampires of most of their powers. In the whole book the vampires seem very human and as proof of their inability to do anything he keeps Neville safely locked in his house during the night. The only thing the vampires are

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<sup>103</sup> MATHESON, R. *I am Legend*. London: Gollancz, 2009, p 53.

good at is not dying. Neville can fire bullets at them as much as he wants but they will not die.

He finds out that garlic, indeed, repels the undead. But as soon as the smell fades it must be replaced. He gives up his hopes of using a mirror because even though the undead are disturbed by it, they throw stones at it from a distance and destroy it easily. Another observation Neville makes is about the sunlight. He takes one sleeping man from a dark place and puts him out in the sun. The man dies. The cross works as a good repellent as well. However, Neville has his theory that this is just a psychological problem of the vampire and that a Jewish vampire would not be afraid of a cross but rather something connected to his or her religion. Ruth has a cross around her neck and it obviously does not do anything to her so either she is of a different religion or these objects interfere only with the minds of the other group of vampires.

Another option is a stake through the heart. Neville goes door to door to deliver this deadly blow to vampires and one day finds out that it does not have to be the heart he must aim for. Due to his experimenting he finds out that the germ living in vampires hates air and the stake breaks the integrity of the body, lets the air in and causes the germ to die. Bullets, however, do not work this way because the germ produces a glue which seals minor tears.

### *6.1.3 SCIENCE IN I AM LEGEND*

The protagonist, Robert Neville, uses science to decipher what is going on in his world. Even though there is no evidence of him being a scientist, it does not stop him from seeking knowledge about the events and vampires:

He put down the book. He's been reading again about the lymphatic system. He vaguely remembered reading about it months before, during the time he now called his 'frenzied period.' But what he'd read had made no impression on him then because he'd had nothing to apply it to. There seemed to be something there now.<sup>104</sup>

The protagonist's systematic acquiring of knowledge from books on the human body, diseases, parasites and all related matters make him realize that the vampires are created by germs. He even creates experiments on vampires to make sure his findings are true:

After binding her to a chair, he secluded himself in the garage (...) At last, mercifully, night came. (...) Then he made a drink and sat down on the couch across from the woman. From the ceiling, right before her face, hung the cross. At six-thirty her eyes opened. (...) "Why are you afraid of it?" he asked, startled at the sound of his own voice after so long.<sup>105</sup>

It is obvious that science plays a vital role in this book. Without it, the vampire phenomenon would not be explained. There is no magic, no religion, just pure science describing the problem.

#### 6.1.4 *VAMPIRE'S VAMPIRE*

Despite Dracula and Carmilla having their executioners, *I am Legend* brings a new kind of protection against vampires. In the books mentioned in the preceding chapter,

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<sup>104</sup> MATHESON, R., p 70.

<sup>105</sup> MATHESON, R., p 50.



the downfall of the vampire was usually a random person who happened to possess some kind of knowledge about the matter. Here, however, the protagonist is the only one who can do something about the situation and even though he seems to be inferior to the new vampire species, the vampires do not see it that way. In the last scene of the book Neville's execution arouses a wave of satisfaction within the vampire community. Some even come to witness it, to really see that the monster which has been killing them in their sleep will be executed.

Robert Neville looked out over the new people of the earth. He knew he did not belong to them; he knew that, like the vampires, he was anathema and black terror to be destroyed. And, abruptly, the concept came, amusing to him even in his pain. (...) Full circle. A new terror born in death, a new superstition entering the unassailable fortress of forever. I am legend.<sup>106</sup>

In *I am Legend* the protagonist realizes at the very end that from a different perspective he poses a threat, as an antagonist.

## 6.2 SALEM'S LOT

### 6.2.1 PLOT

Salem's Lot is a small rural town with its secrets. Even though gossip travels through its streets at the speed of light, there are still things the inhabitants do not know. They may know only partial truths spiced up by their own imagination. On the hill,

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<sup>106</sup> MATHESON, R., p 160.

above the town, stands uninhabited Marsten House. It embodies the fear and everything evil which appears in the town. Only children will go near the house on a dare.

Ben Mears, a man who needs to clear his head after the death of his wife, comes back to the town, in which he spent a couple of his childhood years, hoping to write a novel. He soon befriends local teacher Matt and starts a relationship with young Susan. At the same time a foreign man named Barlow buys the infamous house and sends his partner Straker to deal with everything and to open an antique furniture shop in the town.

One day, a child is lost while walking with his brother in the forest. The brother dies soon afterwards, from anemia and shock perhaps. As strange occurrences start to appear and more and more people disappear, everyone feels something evil beginning to reign in the town.

Matt and Ben soon discover that people are becoming vampires and that the first to become a vampire was the little boy. They try to find the original evil - which happens to be Mr. Barlow. Unfortunately for them there are fatalities – Susan is turned and has to be killed, Matt dies of a heart attack. Barlow is defeated in the end and Ben leaves the town with a boy whose parents became vampires and who helped him, but very soon he realizes that the town still has its vampires, and that therefore he must return and kill them all.

### 6.2.2 *DOMESTIC VAMPIRES*

Even though *Salem's Lot* is a retelling of the original *Dracula*, a significant change occurs in it. *Dracula* never managed to “infect” many people and turn them into

vampires. In his story he was the only creator of new vampires. In *Salem's Lot*, the foreigner comes into a new country to become a master again. However, after forcing his first prey to become a vampire, an exponential multiplication of vampires occurs. Each new vampire is driven by his or her nature to create a new one and so on till almost the whole town fall victim to this vampire plague. The vampires, even though not masters, are now natives.

### 6.2.3 A NEW TYPE OF CRAVING

The focus on blood craving in vampire literature is usually shadowed by other themes (beauty or sexuality). But bloodlust as a metaphor for any type of greed seems to come into the picture too.

Barlow, the foreigner vampire, chooses the small town of Salem's lot because "the folk here are still rich and full-blooded."<sup>107</sup> He also muses about America being a land full of paradoxes:

In other lands, when a man eats to his fullest day after day, that man becomes fat...sleepy...piggish. But in this land...it seems the more you have the more aggressive you become.<sup>108</sup>

This "massive appetite for self-destructive acquisition"<sup>109</sup> becomes appealing to the foreigner vampire and brings doom to a small American town. These American

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<sup>107</sup> KING, S. *Salem's Lot*. New York: Pocket Books, 1999, p 353.

<sup>108</sup> KING, S., p 352.

<sup>109</sup> PHARR, M. *Vampiric Appetite in I am Legend, Salem's Lot, and The Hunger*. In *The Blood is The Life: Vampires in Literature*. Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1999. p 96.

vampires are in search of a means of quenching their thirst rather than in search of conquering someone or being the perfect boyars, as in older works. Their aforementioned human greed followed them into their undead state.

### 6.3 SUMMARY

A few new tendencies appeared in *Salem's Lot* and *I am Legend*. The first significant change from the previous era is the incorporation of science. The clearly visible approach of Matheson is supplemented a little more subtly by King's, with its disease-like spreading of the vampire plague. Vampirism is no longer something given by religion but by science.

Both authors chose their native soil for their vampires. Even though the initial vampire in *Salem's Lot* is a foreigner, it is the natives who are infected. The same goes for *I am Legend*. The natives fall victim to a mutation of a virus which came as a consequence of a war and then the virus spreads across the country.

With their knowledge of the past, it is much easier for the protagonists of these books to defeat the vampires, who possess fewer powers and more weaknesses than the vampires from the previous chapter.

The vampires, now that they belong to the land they stand on, fight for it. This is a shift compared to the ever-escaping vampires from the past. While Dracula, Carmilla and Ruthven kept fleeing from trouble, these new vampires are arrogant enough to stay and fight back.

When it comes to appearances, these vampires have lost all the allure of the previous era and are no longer depicted as beautiful creatures. They retain their looks

from the time when they were still human. It seems that beauty is no longer an issue for the age of science.

Lastly, the hunger which scorches the vampires of this era is given much more emphasis than in the previous era. It serves as a metaphor for the greed which is manifested in the New World.

## 7 MODERN VAMPIRES

With the publishing of Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) a great shift in the vampire novel was begun. Her detailed description of Louis's struggles as a new vampire shed a totally new light on the genre – since the story was told from his perspective.

Another great step toward the change in the vampire genre was taken by Hamilton in *Guilty Pleasures* (1993). Her introduction of a parallel universe in which witches, vampires, trolls, were-animals etc. inhabit the same space as humans and in which it is absolutely legal to be such a special citizen contributed to reshaping the vampire novel. On top of it all, she created a female vampire executioner and a detective of sorts which ensured the powerful creatures were kept at bay.

The last novel to be discussed in this thesis is Meyer's *Twilight* (2005). This book was chosen for its commercial success because it was immediately turned into very prosperous movies and that is why a wider audience embraced the new portrayal of the vampire – the hero.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> All-Time Box Office Top 100 [online]. c2014, last revision 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2014 [cit. 2014-03-23] <  
<http://www.filmsite.org/boxoffice.html>>

## 7.1 INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE

### 7.1.1 PLOT

This book starts in a nondescript hotel room containing two people – the vampire Louis and a young reporter. The vampire tells the reporter his story of becoming a vampire and living the life of one. He recalls how he was picked by a vampire named Lestat for his plantation in 1795. Lestat made him a vampire without any choice and soon moved in with Lestat's still living blind father.

Soon the black slaves discovered the true nature of the two, who were seen only at night and the vampires were forced to leave the plantation. Lestat was a reckless creature whom Louis hated and he wanted to get away from him when he realized Lestat could teach him nothing.

Lestat then forced him to stay by making a vampire child. Their child Claudia. As time passed the little girl trapped in the body of a child grew up, at least in her mind. She felt cursed by her condition and hated Lestat. She killed him to free Louis and herself of his power.

The duo then embarked on a journey to Europe to discover others of their kind. In Eastern Europe they encountered a different kind of vampire – absolutely unintelligent and rather animalistic. But in Paris they finally discovered more sophisticated vampires who led a theater. Their leader was a very old vampire, Armand, who was drawn toward Louis. Claudia felt threatened by this new friendship and persuaded Louis to turn a doll maker into one of them to keep her company.

Lestat, however, reappeared and made the others kill Claudia and her “mother” (the doll maker). Enraged, Louis went to the theater to burn it down and kill as many of the others as possible. He then left with Armand and they traveled the world. He finally returned to New Orleans in the twentieth century and saw Lestat absolutely broken, which gave him satisfaction.

Weary of immortality, he ends his tale and is shocked when the reporter asks him for his gift. The reporter has learned nothing from the story. After Louis’s departure the reporter decides to visit Lestat to gain immortality.

### 7.1.2 RETURN OF THE AESTHETICS

In *Interview with the Vampire* Rice resurrected the aesthetic values of the nineteenth century vampires. Her descriptions of Louis and Lestat are those of otherworldly beings: “Of course, you must realize that all this time the vampire Lestat was extraordinary. He was no more human to me than a biblical angel.”<sup>111</sup>

But unlike the old vampires who were given their looks to obtain prey, Rice’s vampires do not need it. They live separately from humans and they can feed from them easily since they are stronger and faster and the humans abound. They simply enjoy being in the company of other good-looking creatures and choose to turn only “physically beautiful and spiritually profound young humans”<sup>112</sup> and that is why there cannot be an ugly vampire in Rice’s book. The vampires, it seems, have formed an

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<sup>111</sup> RICE, A. *Interview with the Vampire*. London: Time Warner Paperback, 2004, p 20.

<sup>112</sup> WOOD, M. J. *New Life for an Old Tradition: Anne Rice and Vampire Literature*. In *The Blood is The Life: Vampires in Literature*. Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1999, p 61.



exclusive undead club. Since they are going to live very long and encounter each other for millennia, no ugliness is tolerated. These “amoral aesthetes”<sup>113</sup> have lost human consciousness and created their own.

### 7.1.3 THE UNUSUAL NARRATOR

Despite the first person narrative being quite common in Gothic fiction (e. g. *Dracula*, *Carmilla*), vampire fiction usually focuses not on the vampires but on “what happens to their victims.”<sup>114</sup> The novelty in Rice’s work lies in the person of the narrator: “I was a twenty-five-year-old man when I became a vampire, and the year was seventeen ninety-one.”<sup>115</sup>

Rice made the reader look into the life of one vampire and since he did not lose his touch with humanity and despised everything he became, it did not take long for the reader to feel sympathy for what once was considered a monster.

### 7.1.4 GUILT

The most dominant theme of *Interview with the Vampire* is undoubtedly guilt. The vampire narrator, Louis, is “humanized by his tendency to feel guilty.”<sup>116</sup> Louis’s inner

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<sup>113</sup> AUERBACH, N., p 154.

<sup>114</sup> BUTLER, E., p 70.

<sup>115</sup> RICE, A., p 7.

<sup>116</sup> CLEMENTS, S., p 36.

fight between his morals and his new nature which defies these morals makes him feel ashamed, torn and lost.

His nature drives him to the point of despair – he must kill people in order to survive, which repulses him. His mind is flooded by questions: “Am I damned? Am I from the devil? Is my very nature that of a devil?”<sup>117</sup> He later finds out that he can live off animal blood but the killing process never disappears and Louis remains guilt-stricken throughout the whole novel.

## 7.2 GUILTY PLEASURES

### 7.2.1 PLOT

In this book the reader is introduced to a parallel universe in which the world is not only inhabited by humans but vampires and other creatures from folklore as well. The creatures have to follow certain rules - otherwise they are punished just as any other legal citizen.

Anita Blake, the main character of the story, works as an animator – she raises the dead for a living. However, she also works as a police consultant in paranormal crimes (if the crime is committed by someone non-human she is called to give her opinion on the creature which did it).

In this particular book she is forced to play the role of an investigator of vampire murders. The master vampire of the city blackmails her to solve the crime because

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<sup>117</sup> RICE, A., p 81.

vampires do not trust the police and prefer Anita. Anita solves the crime, and by killing the current master of the city crowns a new master – Jean-Claude – a vampire she both hates and desires.

### 7.2.2 *THE NEW WOMAN AS A VAMPIRE'S VAMPIRE*

The vampire executioner who appears in the guise of a woman with a license to kill serves two purposes. The first one is to create a safe ground for those who still fear vampires – now that there are laws prohibiting certain behavior it makes them less scary and more human-like.

The other side of this is to take the New Woman theme and fully introduce it to Gothic literature. Even though the New Woman has been in vampire literature for some amount of time, Anita Blake is the first fully emancipated one. She does not need anyone to help her or care for her; she embodies the ultimate tool in dealing with misbehaving vampires; and she is a woman. Through her the female audience can feel a certain way toward vampires. In *Guilty Pleasures* this is ambivalent:

“I had been attracted to Jean-Claude. Maybe I still was. So what? He thought it changed things. It didn't. (...) I know who and what I am. I am The Executioner, and I don't date vampires. I kill them.”<sup>118</sup>

With Anita Blake the tendency to like vampires only follows what was started with Rice's novels. There may be ambivalent views of the vampires, but they are starting to be viewed as more and more positive characters.

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<sup>118</sup> HAMILTON, L. K. *Guilty Pleasures*. New York: Penguin Group, 2002, p 266.

## 7.3 TWILIGHT

### 7.3.1 PLOT

The story of Twilight follows teenager Bella, who moves in with her father in Forks from Phoenix. She acts in an awkward and clumsy way; however, the students at her new school seem to like her. She encounters a mysterious boy who at first avoids her but later gives up and begins to follow her. He starts talking about how he should avoid her, how she should not like him and it all seems very pathetic.

Bella very soon finds out that her crush is actually a vampire. But this does not scare her at all. She learns about his family of vampires who live on animal blood (calling themselves vegetarians).

Once she crosses paths with a real vampire who targets her and almost kills her. She is saved by her vampire boyfriend Edward and regrets that he saved her – if he hadn't sucked the vampire poison from her, she would have been a vampire herself now.

### 7.3.2 RESTRAINED SEXUALITY AND LOVE

While all the previous works revolved around sexuality to some extent, Twilight seems to take a different course. The main couple barely touches and for Bella

“companionship with the vampire seems to offer an escape from the turmoil of adolescence”.<sup>119</sup>

In *Twilight* Edward cleverly makes Bella think she is the one deciding the course of their relationship while it is him who decides:

“Bring on the shackles – I’m your prisoner.” But his long hands formed manacles around *my* wrists as he spoke.<sup>120</sup>

Since Edward’s and Bella’s relationship is not based on physical closeness, one question arises. Can a vampire love enough to give up his craving for blood and torture himself with a vision he can never satisfy as Edward does? In this scenario, of love but no physical contact, a kind of ideal teenage romance is created for Bella by “being desired but not threatened by a genuine sexual relationship with a real man.”<sup>121</sup>

With these things in mind the vampire brings safety, love and family values. The isolated character finds love and new family though a vampire. Since such things are unheard-of, the vampire suddenly becomes “tame, repressed, pretty, glittery, and vegetarian.”<sup>122</sup> His fangs are losing their significance – and with Edward they disappear completely.

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<sup>119</sup> BUTLER, E., p 71.

<sup>120</sup> MEYER, S. *Twilight*. London: Atom, 2008, p 264.

<sup>121</sup> CLEMENTS, S., p 116.

<sup>122</sup> CLEMENTS, S., p 123.

### 7.3.3 *ROMANTIC HERO*

It all starts out as any romantically-oriented fiction. Two people meet and instantly fall in love. Here, however, the boy is actually a very old vampire. He is beautiful, protective (in a stalker kind-of-way) and rich. Since he is more mature than the girl, she feels safe with him because he makes the decisions. At first, he acts oddly and “like every good romantic hero, Edward is unknowable, with depths that both draw and scare Bella.”<sup>123</sup> Of course, he saves her life when a car nearly crushes her. She soon learns that he is dangerous, which only makes him more desirable. He keeps himself at bay even though the desire to drink her blood is very strong. He sparkles in the sunlight, runs fast, can stop a car and his arrogance can compare to that of Dracula’s. However, Edward knows how to conceal it and make it a good personality trait.

But otherwise, he is harmless. The feeling of safety he creates is what defines his era. The era of embracing vampires. The era of loving the ones who can kill us.

## 7.4 SUMMARY

The last era in vampire fiction brought about a significant change in the understanding of the vampire figure. Vampires were given a voice and that made them more human and acceptable.

Even though they still pose a threat to people (they are stronger, faster – the traits vary but each author gives the vampires something to make them superior to humans) there are means of stopping them; or the humans accept their untamed nature and risk their lives for the sake of being with them.

The last era is thus the era of acceptance, celebration of differences and embracing something which is no longer a threat because what we see in Edward could hardly be found in Dracula.

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<sup>123</sup> CLEMENTS, S., p 114.

## 8 CONCLUSION

It seems that vampires have undergone quite a long journey in their two hundred years of residence in literature. They have changed in terms of shape, powers, mentality and their inclination toward the living. But it is not only them who have changed. The society around them keeps changing and this constant change shapes vampires, for vampires serve as metaphors for society's desires and fears.

The first vampires in the nineteenth century, as portrayed in *The Vampyre*, *Carmilla* and *Dracula*, followed the trend of that time. As beautiful creatures they depicted sin and everything forbidden. They were viewed as purely evil. The vampire women who initiated sexual fantasies were the exact opposite of what was expected of the typical Victorian woman. Vampire men, on the other hand, with their arrogance and foreign origins were put in the roles of aggressors and outsiders. However, faith played a big role in that time as well. Since religious symbols could ward off evil, vampires were quite easy to kill. Since the reclusive vampires were unknown enigmas, it was their victims who shared the stories.

Later in the twentieth century, as the vampire could no longer shock by its novelty, since the wider audience already knew of this phenomenon, the authors decided to bring an interesting twist to the genre. *I am Legend* and *Salem's Lot* actually domesticated vampires by turning every citizen into one. This brought an end to the infamous vampire glamour. With so much of the population turned into vampires not everyone could gain good looks. The religious note subsided and science was emphasized. The vampire phenomenon could be described as due to technological advance. Despite the progress in technology and therefore better equipment for vampire hunters, the vampires stopped fearing their pursuers and for the first time stopped



running away and fought back to stay where they felt at home. In *I am Legend* the vampires even showed that not all of them were soulless beasts without compassion.

With *Interview with the Vampire* yet another turning point emerged in vampire literature. Even though it seems as if vampires had come to a full circle when it comes to their appearance and powers (the beautiful, powerful immortals from the nineteenth century may have a lot in common with Rice's vampires), quite a considerable change marked the last third of the twentieth century. Vampires started to speak and the audience could see the world from their point of view. In spite of some of them still being viewed as negative characters, sympathy for them started to prevail. In the nineties, with the publication of *Guilty Pleasures*, the audience could start to feel even more at ease around vampires since from that time on even women could fight them. *Twilight* introduced an unprecedented vampire. In contrast to the old ones, he did not use his superpowers to harm humans but rather to help them. Even though his exceptional looks could be utilized in order to gain prey just as in the case of the old vampires, he refused to use this to his advantage and became a vegetarian. His dominant personality traits ensured that the teenage girl he dated felt safe because she did not have to take responsibility for anything. He defied all reason and scientific findings from the era between the old and modern. Somehow, despite everything that would have made him dangerous and evil in the old days, all those traits drew people closer to him, not further away from him. Thus a new kind of vampire emerged. Neither the cunning evil creature from the old days, nor the scientifically explained phenomenon or the bystander, but a hero who uses the strength he has in order to help naïve teenagers and defy everything which makes him a vampire in order to be happy and a part of another human's life.

I hope this is not the end of vampires in the Gothic, since making them harmless poses the threat of excluding them from the gloomy part of literature. I still believe that *Twilight* was a one-time-only experiment which failed and that vampires will rise again with their fangs prepared to sink into the skins of their horror-seeking readers.

## 9 RESUMÉ

Zdá se, že upíři ušli celkem dlouhou cestu za jejich dvě stě let putování v literatuře. Měnily se jejich tvary, moc, mentalita a inklinace k živým. Ale nebyli to jen oni, kdo se změnil. Společnost okolo nich se mění neustále a tato neutichající změna upíry tvaruje, neboť upíři slouží jako metafora pro touhy a strachy společnosti.

První upíři devatenáctého století, kteří byli popsáni v Polidoriho *Upírovi*, LeFanuho *Carmille* a Stokerově *Drákulovi* kopírovali trend tehdejší společnosti. Coby krásné bytosti ztělesňovali hřích a vše zakázané. Bylo na ně nahlíženo jako na naprosto zlé. Upíři ženy, které podněcovaly sexuální fantazie, byly přesným opakem toho, co se chtělo po ženách viktoriánské doby. Na druhou stranu upíři plní arogance a cizího původu byli stavěni do rolí agresorů a cizinců. V této době hrálo náboženství významnou roli. Náboženské symboly zaháněly zlo, a tudíž jimi mohli být upíři odehnáni či zničeni. Ale jelikož byli upíři nepolapitelnými neznámými, byly to jejich oběti nebo jim blízcí, kteří mohli příběh předat dál.

Později ve dvacátém století nemohli upíři využít momentu překvapení, jelikož s nimi čtenáři již byli seznámeni. Proto se autoři rozhodli přidat do upířské tematiky jisté inovační prvky. Knihy jako *Já, Legenda* a *Prokletí Salemu* započaly domestikaci upírů tím, že začaly měnit všechny dostupné občany dané země. Toto také zbavilo upíry pověstné krásy, protože přeměnění lidé neměli žádný důvod k získávání výhod alternativně zevnějšku. To také souvisí s ústupkem náboženství a prosazováním vědy. Upír jako fenomén byl popsán díky pokroku ve vědě. Navzdory tomuto pokroku, který přinesl využití technologií pro lovce upírů, se upíři nezalekli a poprvé se přestali chovat jako štvanci. Namísto toho se obrátili proti svým pronásledovatelům a započali bojovat o

místo, které bylo jejich domovem. V knize Já, Legenda jsou navíc upíři ukázáni v lepším světle. Už se nechovají jako bezcitní, ale nabízejí i laskavější stránku.

Další milník přišel s Interview s Upírem. Ačkoliv se zdá, že tady přicházejí upíři zase na začátek – nejsou nepodobní těm dechberoucím mocným nesmrtelným z první éry, markantní změna poznamenala konec dvacátého století. Upíři začali hovořit ke čtenářům, a ti pro změnu poprvé uviděli svět jejich očima. I když někteří upíři byli stále viděni v negativním světle, sympatie vůči nim začala převažovat. Kniha Provinilé slasti zapříčinila, že se čtenáři nemuseli mít tolik na pozoru, protože s hlavní protagonistkou, která se zabíjením upírů dokázala živit, přišla i jistota, že se upíři nevyhnou kontrole. Poslední zmíněná kniha, Stmívání, pak představila velmi neobvyklého upíra, protože v porovnání s těmi starými se zas tolik nelišil (co se schopností a vizáže týká), ale svým chováním naprosto vybočil z řady. Své schopnosti k lovu lidí využil k pomoci. Jeho krása, která měla sloužit k získávání obživy, zůstala nevyužita, protože se stal vegetariánem. Jeho dominantní povaha zajistila jeho náctileté přítelkyni komfort, protože alespoň nemusela brát zodpovědnost za rozhodnutí do svých rukou. Popřel všechno rozum a poznatky vědy z předchozího období. Nějakým způsobem docílil toho, že vše, co by ho v dobách předešlých učinilo zlým, otočil a přinutil lidi právě tyto vlastnosti na něm milovat. Nestal se tou zákeřnou zrůdou starých časů, ani vědou popsaným fenoménem či dokonce nečinným pozorovatelem, nýbrž hrdinou, který využívá své síly, aby pomáhal naivním náctiletým a popřel vše, co ho dělá upírem, aby byl šťastný, a aby se stal součástí lidského života.

Doufám, že toto není konec upírů v gotickém románu. Podle posledního pohledu se zdá, že upír už nemá co nabídnout – není děsivý, tudíž se pomalu začíná vylučovat z tohoto typu literatury. Stále ale věřím, že Stmívání bylo jakýmsi výkřikem do tmy, a že se upíři zase probudí se svými špičáky připravenými strašit čtenáře.

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