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TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF VAMPIRES:
THE (D)EVOLUTION OF THE UNDEAD IN LITERATURE AND
CINEMA

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Literatura Inglesa

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por estar siempre a mi lado, ayudarme y apoyarme.
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Resumen

El presente estudio analiza la transformación del vampiro en la literatura y el cine Gótico desde el siglo diecinueve hasta el presente. Esta figura Gótica ha atravesado un proceso de evolución en el cual ha pasado de ser un monstruo guiado por su instinto animal a uno completamente humanizado. Se propone que esta transformación se debe a que tanto el género Gótico como el vampiro se adaptan al contexto social y temporal, y capturan las ansiedades de la sociedad que los produce. Por este motivo, ambos, género y figura, han mantenido su permanencia en la cultura popular. Las actitudes y la apariencia de los vampiros a través del tiempo son prueba de esta humanización. Aquí se proponen tres etapas cronológicas en las que se aprecia su evolución: el Vampiro Pristino, el Vampiro en Transición y el Vampiro Contemporáneo. La primera categoría, el Vampiro Pristino, representa las preocupaciones de la sociedad Inglesa Victoriana desde el siglo diecinueve hasta principios del siglo veinte. Durante el siglo veinte la figura del vampiro es adoptado por, y adaptado a, la sociedad estadounidense. Por lo cual, los textos y filmes con Vampiros en Transición como protagonistas empiezan a representar también las incertidumbres de los estadounidenses. De igual forma, los cambios sociales y las inquietudes de la sociedad de finales del siglo veinte y el siglo veintiuno son capturados en producciones Góticas en las que figuran Vampiros Contemporáneo. Por lo tanto, esta investigación demuestra que la figura del vampiro en literatura y cine Gótico se adapta a la sociedad y época en que es creada.

Abstract

This investigation analyzes the transformation of the vampire in Gothic literature and cinema from the nineteenth century to the present. Vampires have undergone a process of evolution that sees them transform from monsters guided by their animal instinct into humanized creatures. It is argued that this transformation is the result of the capacity of the Gothic productions and the vampire character to adapt to the societies that create them and to portray the anxieties of those societies. This adaptability allows both the vampire and the literary genre to remain up-to-date and popular. The attitudes of vampires and the way they are portrayed prove the humanization they have gone through. This research proposes three key stages in the evolution of vampires, each carrying a new version of this Gothic creature: the Primeval Vampire, the Transitional Vampire and the Contemporary Vampire. The first category, the Primeval Vampire, portrays the concerns of the British Victorian society from the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. During the twentieth century, the figure of the vampire is adopted by the society of the United States and adapted to its concerns, which is evident in the literary texts and films about Transitional Vampires. Similarly, the social changes and the worries of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries are captured in productions in which Contemporary Vampires appear. This study asserts that the figure of the vampire in Gothic texts and films adapts to the society and period that creates it.

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INTRODUCTION

Hypothesis

Vampires in literature and cinema have undergone a transformation from a figure of pure evil to an attractive one; this conversion has broken down the classic monstrous vampire through three main phases, chronologically denominated in this particular study as: the Primeval Vampire, the Transitional Vampire, and the Contemporary Vampire. This transformation conveys not only the evolution of a species, but the devolution of a monster.

General Objective

Attitudes and traits of vampire characters evidence the transformation of the vampire figure. This work will analyze the transition of vampires in literature and cinema from pure evil figures into more humanized beings, capable of generating empathy and of alluring humans.

Specific Objectives

During the course of this investigation the following specific objectives will be reached:

1. Defining and establishing a clear difference between the terms that are coined in this study: the Primeval Vampire, the Transitional Vampire, and the Contemporary Vampire.
2. Proving that the Primeval Vampire is a horror figure of evil, divorced from human emotions, and that it shows complete disregard for the well-being of humans.
3. Demonstrating that the Transitional Vampire possesses a divided nature; this vampire ponders whether to fight his evil nature or to embrace it. Therefore, this vampire marks the

beginning of the transformation.

4. Showing how the Contemporary Vampire is an appealing and humanized figure, which embodies the final stage in the transformation of vampires.
5. Arguing that vampires are not always wicked creatures but admirable ones capable of generating empathy.
6. Distinguishing the periods in literature and cinema that mark the changes that vampires have undergone.

Introduction

For centuries, vampires have lured human audiences either with their mystery and sensuality or with their power and monstrosity. Although variations of the vampire figure are found in different folklores, the prevailing portrayal of the vampire is that of an immortal being that rises from death and feeds on the living, drinking their blood and killing its victims. The vampire literally sucks the life out of its victims. The figure of the vampire began as a myth that inspired stories, novels and, recently, films. This study will analyze the transformation vampires have experienced through the years, beginning with their portrayal in myths to their most recent featuring in films.

An initial observation of the different cultural discourses in which vampires have featured puts into evidence the extreme changes these creatures have experienced in time. They have passed from being a figure of pure evil to one that is almost human. This transformation poses two questions that guide the present investigation. The first concern considers the way in which this literary figure has evolved and devolved. The literary figure of vampires has undergone social and biological transformations that go hand in hand with the historical context of texts in which they appear, but one ponders whether the changes that this figure has had over the years are really evolutionary or devolutionary. The evolution of characters refers to the adaptation of vampire species to survive in new contexts while the devolution of the vampire as a character implies the loss of key aspects of the original monster. Vampires have their origin in myths and legends from around the world, and in these tales, they were presented as killers, monsters that feed on humans. Later, the first written texts and films with vampire protagonists also characterized them in this terrifying fashion. However, today's vampire is presented rather as a human that has

been doomed to live with a deadly disease. The second main question this study attempts to answer is why vampires have undergone these changes. The analysis seeks to determine to what extent the figure of the vampire mirrors the time in which it is created and how much it transforms itself alongside the society around it. Lastly this thesis aims at understanding the reasons why these creatures are forced to adapt to their changing circumstances. The categorization here proposed will answer these questions with the analysis of the vampire through the years and its interrelation with its historical context.

The relevance of this study lies with the acceptance and universality of the figure of the vampire not only in literature but in numerous mediums of our culture. The vampire is nowadays one of the most recurrent figures in literature, movies and television. Its popularity has transcended its origins in the Gothic genre and is now part of an unthinkable number of areas such as the food industry, music, cartoons, clothes, toys, among others. As mentioned before, vampires first appeared as the ultimate Gothic monster, but in current times, this monster is depicted as a sympathetic and humanized creature. The vampire is no longer that monster that terrifies audiences; more than that, vampires are now an admired and cherished figure that has transcended the boundaries of Gothic as a genre. Therefore, it becomes necessary to analyze and understand why such an evil creature that kills and feeds on humans is now popular, admired and loved even by children. Thus, this study attempts to be the key to understand the transformation of vampires over the years.

The present investigation is based on the analysis of different cultural discourses, discussed in chapter 1, that construct the figure of the vampire. For the purpose of this study, the methodology will be based on the New Historicist approach since this method involves the analysis of multidisciplinary discourses. In *Literary Criticism an Introduction to Theory and Practice*, Charles Bressler affirms that cultural poetics or New Historicism is

a literary analysis in which the study of the interrelation of “all human activities” is necessary to gain a more complete understanding of a text (248). New Historicism, of course, not only provides a better understanding of texts but also of histories and the different discourses that interact and influence each other, shaping societies. Three main discourses will be studied jointly in order to prove that the evolution of the figure of the vampire finds its roots in the interaction among literature, cinema and history. Within these three discourses lies the proposed definition of the vampire. In addition, this study categorizes the figure of the vampire into the Primeval Vampire, the Transitional Vampire and the Contemporary Vampire. New Historicism brings valuable support to this categorization, as it follows a chronological and historiographical order. Each of these categories will be explained in a different chapter in which specific characteristics of each type are analyzed.

Innumerable cultures around the world offer references to vampiric creatures in their folklore. The most significant of these representations will be discussed in the second chapter of this study, “A Historical Glance at Gothic Literature and the Vampire.” Europe is the place where the vampire craze bloomed to its peak, spreading multiple stories and legends, especially during the eighteenth century. The vampire myth began as an attempt to find an explanation for what seemed to be inexplicable (mostly irregularities in corpses), and it was strengthened by stories of blood-sucking creatures and corpses that came back to life from their graves to torment and feed on the living. According to Miguel G. Aracil in his book *Vampiros: mito y realidad de los no muertos*, in Polynesia, it was believed that the *tii*, the souls of the dead, leave their graves at night to feed on their relatives’ blood (16). Similarly, in Guinea, it was believed that the corpses of evil people became the *Owenga*, creatures that left their graves to feed on the living (45). Such myths are found in numerous

cultures in every continent. Many folkloric vampire stories were inspired by corpses that were found perfectly preserved after months or even years of having been buried. People could not explain the fact that these bodies appeared to be alive because their bodies seemed to be still growing and did not show signs of decomposition¹. Most of these myths, however, could be explained by science. Nevertheless, with a logical explanation or not, variations of the vampire are part of tradition of many civilizations worldwide.

The figure of the vampire has an additional base in reality: real historical figures. Real people such as Vlad Dracula² and Elizabeth Báthory³ contributed to make the myth of the vampire real because their brutal and inhuman acts were considered to be vampiric. Vlad Dracula, prince of Wallachia during the fifteenth century, cold-bloodedly impaled his enemies. Furthermore, during the early seventeenth century, the Hungarian Countess, Elizabeth Báthory, killed hundreds of girls to use their blood to preserve her own youth. These historical characters, analyzed also in chapter 2, inspired new stories and gave vital support to the wide-spreading myth of the vampire.

As a result, the vampire has become an important recurrent figure not only in myths

¹ When a person dies, the body loses its water, and the skin dehydrates. According to Ronald S. Wade in "Medical Mummies: the History of the Burns Collection," putrefaction can be avoided when the water of the body is removed (99). Because of the shrinking of the skin, the nails and hair of a corpse may look like they are still growing. Similarly, the fangs of vampires may also be related to the same scientific fact. The canine teeth can be confused with fangs because they give the impression of being longer than normal after the shrinking of the gums. Additionally, the decomposition of the body may also have a role on the blood found on a "vampire's" mouth. After death, all bodily liquids find their way out through all the corpse's cavities, including the mouth, nose and ears. These liquids may look like fresh blood drool to observers.

² See *In Search of Dracula* (1994) by Raymond T. McNally and Radu Florescu for a thorough study of Vlad Dracula.

³ See *Infamous Lady: The True Story of Countess Erzsebet Báthory* (2009) by Kimberly L. Craft for a thorough study of Báthory's predatory behavior.

and folklore but also in stories, novels, and more recently in movies and TV. The first appearance of the vampire as a literary figure in a British Gothic story was in *The Vampyre* by John Polidori in 1819. From there on, loved by some and feared and hated by others, vampires have enjoyed a privileged place in popular culture.

Vampire characters have changed gradually, but drastically, over time, and their transformation is clear in literature and cinema. What began as an evil and feared monster in legends and myths has become an attractive humanized creature in today's media. In our day, they are no longer perceived as monsters but as appealing figures. This study will analyze the transformation of the vampire figure in literature and cinema and the way the character has evolved through the years to portray the characteristics of the society and period to which they belong. Since the eighteenth century, Gothic literature has been a mirror of society by reflecting its concerns and anxieties in a particular period of time. The vampire, one of the emblems of Gothic literature, also echoes the society and literary period of its author. That is, authors mold their vampire characters according to the influences of their particular environment. The fact that vampires have changed over the years matches the distinctive characteristic of Gothic literature of reflecting the anxieties of an author's society. Therefore, the radical transformation that vampires have undergone in literature and cinema from figures of pure evil to attractive ones may be explained by considering the way in which the concerns of society vary over the years.

Three main types of vampires and the process of transformation they have undergone are evident in literature and cinema. In this study, vampires will be categorized into three main sorts, each corresponding to the chronological phase shaping their characterization. These categories will be denominated: the Primeval Vampire, the Transitional Vampire, and the Contemporary Vampire. The historical context of writers

influences their construction of vampire characters, fitting them into one of the three categories proposed. The date and context of the creation of vampires is elementary for this categorization, and it must not be confused with the time setting of the story. Therefore, it makes no relevant difference whether the plot of the story is set in, for example, the sixteenth, seventeenth or twentieth century. This time setting does not affect the categorization of its vampire characters, but the period in which the author writes the work does.

The first category of the vampire, proposed in chapter 3, denominated here as the Primeval Vampire, encompasses the earliest vampire figure. This type of vampire is the classic monster described in myths from around the world. These gruesome characters began frightening audiences since ancient times with myths. It also features in stories from the nineteenth century literature and even jumped to the silver screen at the beginning of the twentieth century. This first stage of the vampire is the longest, and it is based on those characters from myths and folklore. Vampires belonging to this category inspire horror and fear in people, with their animal-like characteristics such as pointed ears and fangs and their complete divorce from all human emotions and relationships. The Primeval Vampire became known in mainstream literature during the nineteenth century, with unforgettable tales such as John Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819), Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872), and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). This kind of vampire is also present in the beginning of the cinematographic industry with the silent film *Nosferatu a Symphony of Horror* by the German director, F.W. Murnau. *Nosferatu* was the first adaptation of Stoker's *Dracula*, dating back to 1921. It was followed by a film of the same name directed by Tod Browning in 1931. Carl Dreyer's film *Vampyr* from 1932, based on Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, also includes a Primeval Vampire as a character.

During the second half of the twentieth century, the vampire figure is affected by humanity. This acquired relationship is the base to define the second category of the evolution of vampires discussed in chapter 4. The Transitional Vampire changes from a purely malevolent creature to one that is torn between its monstrosity and human side. This vampire is a hybrid. The Transitional Vampire still has a wicked nature that compels it to kill and feed on humans, but it also covets human emotions and connections. Vampires in this second phase debate about whether to embrace their evil side or the new feelings and yearnings for their lost humanity. This categorization of the vampire makes its apparition in literature with Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* in 1976. This novel marks the origin of a new "race" of vampires that lingers between the two worlds. This transitional vampire is also the protagonist of Francis Coppola's film *Dracula* (1992). Although Coppola's film was based on Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, the transformation of the vampire protagonist is abysmal, in order to fit the period of the director.

By the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries, the Contemporary Vampire has settled in literature and cinema. This last category, developed in chapter 5, reveals a humanized vampire figure that has human emotions, romantic ties and often a family. The Contemporary Vampire may even maintain relationships with humans, and experience human problems and frustrations. A very distinctive characteristic of these vampires is that they are usually presented as victims of a cruel destiny that has infected them with the vampire virus. In this period, being a vampire is often interpreted as being the carrier of a disease; therefore, vampires are constantly looking for a cure to recover their humanity. The Contemporary Vampire tends to be so humanized that it becomes difficult to distinguish it from human characters. Moreover, this vampire does not repel humans. People are frequently attracted to these creatures and seduced by their own

condition of victims. Vampires still kill and drink blood, but they do so only to survive, not because they see humans only as food. Therefore, blood substitutes are created during this period as a literary device to smoothen their portrayal. Contemporary Vampires are the protagonists of films such as *Daybreakers* (2009) and the film saga *Blade* (1998, 2002 and 2004). They also feature in Dan Simmons's novel *Children of the Night* (1992). They are humanized vampires who carry a virus that keeps them from enjoying their humanity at its full.

To sum up, the Primeval Vampire stands in direct opposition to the Contemporary Vampire, the former being a monster that is completely different from humans, the latter being a humanized character that has been tamed by humankind and their own humanity. Furthermore, between these two, one finds a third kind of vampire with a divided nature. The Transitional Vampire is neither Primeval nor Contemporary, but struggles between the two.

The vampire figure has been present in almost every culture around the world in myths, stories, novels and films. It has proved to be a popular literary and cinematographic figure for centuries. Authors from the three periods established in this study have managed to transform the character to reflect the fears and anxieties of their own society. Thanks to their malleability, vampires have become the real immortals in literature.

CHAPTER I

Theoretical Framework

New Historicism and Gothic are going to be the two main pillars in this investigation due to the fact that by being interdisciplinary in nature, these approaches will enable me to consider numerous discourses. New Historicism asserts that to gain a better understanding of history and culture, it is necessary to consider as many different areas and discourses as possible. Similarly, Gothic is a field that nurtures from the interrelatedness with other literary genres. Moreover, Gothic's adaptability to portray the anxieties and fears of each period makes of this genre a perfect means to study different periods and cultures. Both New Historicism and Gothic welcome any discourse in order to obtain a better analysis and understanding. In addition, this study will also benefit from the contribution of different discourses. Therefore, I will address other theoretical notions such as hybridity, Lacan's mirror stage, mesmerism, the notion of the gaze, liminality, ecocriticism, globalization, and atavism among others. The affinity of New Historicism and Gothic with other discourses will allow me to obtain a better understanding of each period of time and the way in which the figure of the vampire reflects the society that creates it.

Review of New Historicism

Cultural poetics or New Historicism⁴ is a poststructuralist theory that appeared in the 1970s and early 80s. As noted in Charles Bressler's *Literary Criticism an Introduction*

⁴ For a further study of New Historicism refer to *Practicing New Historicism*, in which Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt reflect upon New Historicism as a practice. Through examples, these two practitioners expose the impact their theory has had on literature.

to Theory and Practice, before New Historicism, the theory employed for literary criticism was the New Criticism or Old Historicism which asserted that the text is a reflection of its historical context (237). Old Historicism never questioned the validity and veracity of a text to narrate history: “history, as written, is an accurate view of what really occurred” (237). For New Critics, writers and historians were capable of narrating history in a completely objective way. The way history was told in books was unquestioned. Therefore, literature was considered more important than history which was only a background to the first (237). Texts were considered to contain history the way it occurred. This methodology gave texts and historians (the writers) an absolute power to “tell” history. Historians were believed capable of “discovering the mindset, the worldview, or the beliefs of any group of people” (237). This limitless power of narrating granted to historians by New Criticism was challenged by Cultural Poetics, a methodology that came to fill the gap left by that theory of literary analysis. As a new way of interpreting texts, Cultural Poetics “declares that all history is subjective, written by people whose personal biases affect their interpretation of the past” (238). For the followers of Cultural Poetics, it is impossible to completely understand history through the eyes of one single person because that individual is telling a story influenced by his or her own surroundings and life experiences. Everyone and everything is biased. Therefore, “[C]ultural [P]oetics or New Historicism claims to provide its adherents with a practice of literary analysis that highlights the interrelatedness of all human activities, admits its own prejudices, and gives a more complete understanding of a text than does the old historicism and other interpretative approaches” (238). Thus, in order to understand history and its culture, it is mandatory to study the different discourses that made up that culture or period. The more discourses are analyzed the greater the understanding of that culture and its history will be. Cultural Poetics offers a literary textual

analysis that is inclusive and provides a more complete understanding of a text as it encourages the analysis of different discourses in order to approach and understand both literature and history.

Cultural Poetics branches out into two trends, New Historicism and Cultural Materialism. Bressler explains that Stephen Greenblatt was the critic who gave Cultural Poetics the name of New Historicism in 1979 (239). Greenblatt was interested in answering the question of how literature is formed, and he believed that previous approaches did not answer this issue (239). New Historicism, the branch of Cultural Poetics that developed in the United States, “holds that one’s culture permeates both texts and critics. Just as all of society is intricately interwoven, so are critics and texts, both with each other and with the culture in which the critics live and the texts are produced” (241). From this point of view, it is necessary to study the different discourses of society to obtain a more accurate understanding of it. Every individual is influenced by different backgrounds. Therefore, everybody has a unique way of perceiving their environment, and in the same way, each critic “arrives at a unique interpretation of a text” (241). For the practitioners of this methodology, it is not possible to reach a definite consensus on a subject matter, but it is possible to have a more precise view of history through the analysis of the different components of a society. It is not feasible to fully know a culture, but it is possible to obtain a more accurate understanding of it when analyzing as many discourses as possible. On the other side, Bressler notes that the British branch of Cultural Poetics, called Cultural Materialism, is known to be influenced by Marxist theories; therefore, its objectives are mainly political and cultural (241). For these critics, literature influences people, and it can be used to change their mind and behavior (241), but in order to do so, it is necessary to “read the works of the established canon ‘against the grain’” (241). By understanding and

finding the weakness of the hegemonic group, critics “will expose the political unconscious of the text and help debunk the social and political myths created by the bourgeoisie” (241). Thus, the Cultural Materialist approach can be used to change the concentration of power from one group to another. Nevertheless, both trends share the belief that literature and history influence one another; thus, in order to study the history of a specific culture it is necessary to study its literature and vice versa:

Members of both groups [Cultural Materialism and New Historicism] continue to call for a reawakening of our historical consciousness, to declare that history and literature must be analyzed together, to place all texts in their appropriate context, and to understand that while we are learning about different societies that provide the historical context for various texts, we are simultaneously learning about ourselves, our own habits, and our own beliefs. (241)

For Cultural Materialism and New Historicism critics, literature and history must be analyzed jointly when trying to comprehend a society and its peculiarities because these critics believe that these two areas and their discourses develop hand in hand. Bressler affirms that history and literature are both narrative discourses that have an endless interaction with every aspect of their culture and thus “Neither can claim complete or objective understanding of its content or historical situation” (245). History affects the literature that is produced in a culture, and the literature produced by a culture can affect history.

As with all the different discourses that make up a culture, New Historicism views literature as a cultural production. Texts are one of the many different discourses that should be studied in order to understand a society and its background. History is then

formed by the interrelationship of discourses and literature is just one of them; Michel Foucault argues that “history is the complex interrelationship of a variety of discourses or the various ways—artistic, social, political—that people think and talk about their world” (qtd. in Bressler 242). For new historians, history cannot be completely understood only through literature. Texts are a key element to study history, but they are not the only relevant source to understand it. By “viewing a text as culture in action, these critics blur the distinction between an artistic production and any other kind of social production or event” (240). In order to study the culture of a specific period or society, it is not only valid but essential to consider other forms of expression and cultural productions that are elemental in that social group.

For New Historicism critics, literature is one relevant discourse of culture but not the most or least important. Therefore, you can neither understand a culture through one text nor understand a text in isolation. According to Bressler, texts are social productions that reflect their historical background, and it is precisely because texts are part of a culture that it is necessary to take into consideration other discourses that form the same culture to better understand the text:

Because texts are simply one of the many elements that help shape culture, cultural poetics critics believe that all texts are really social documents that not only reflect but also, and more importantly, respond to their historical situation. And because any historical situation is an intricate web of often competing discourses, cultural poetics scholars necessarily center on history and declare that any interpretation of a text is incomplete if we do not consider the text’s relationship to the various discourses that helped fashion it and to which the text is a response. (244)

A text cannot be studied in isolation or it will render an incomplete analysis; it must be studied as one of the aspects of culture. Clifford Gertz notes that all elements must be analyzed to understand the way they relate with each other and the way a culture is shaped: “each separate discourse of a culture must be uncovered and analyzed in order to show how all discourses interact with each other and with institutions, peoples, and other elements of culture. This interaction among the many various discourses shapes a culture and thus interconnects all human activities, including the writing, reading and interpretation of a text” (qtd. in Bressler 244). In this interconnection of human activities, all discourses are equally important and all of them must be studied. Gertz argues that there is no distinction or superiority between social discourses: “a text—is like any other social discourse that interacts with its culture to produce meaning. No longer is one discourse superior to another, but all are necessary to shape and are shaped by society. And no longer do clear lines of distinction exist among literature, history, literary criticism, anthropology, art, the sciences, and other disciplines” (qtd. in Bressler 245). Since all discourses are equal in the eyes of New Historicists, cinema and literature can and have to be treated as equal disciplines that create meaning and help shape culture. New Historicism will serve as the theoretical basis for this multidisciplinary study in which literature and film will be analyzed jointly as cultural productions, as two distinct discourses that both reflect and enrich the historical and cultural background that gave birth to these productions.

Review of Gothic as a Literary Field

Gothic arose as an academic field in the early twentieth century. Gothic texts have been written since the eighteenth century, but critics did not begin writing about the genre until the last century. In *Gothic Literature*, Andrew Smith affirms that “The first major

academic study of the Gothic was Dorothy Scarborough's *The Supernatural in the Modern English Fiction* (1917)" (5). *The Tale of Terror* (1921) written by Edith Birkhead and *The Haunted Castle* (1927) by Eino Railo followed Scarborough's book (5). According to Smith the first critical readings of Gothic texts tried to locate them "within certain literary cultures, or to explain them in terms of an author's oeuvre" (*Gothic* 5). This contributed to the fact that the first Gothic texts are, in the most, linked to specific geographical regions. Later, in the 1930's, critics started to study the Gothic in relation to other fields. Smith notes that Mario Praz examined the relation between the Gothic and Romanticism in *The Romantic Agony* (1933), and a year before, J.M.S. Tompkins's *The Popular Novel in England, 1770-1800* (1932) "explored in detail Gothic themes and how they contributed to a suspense tradition" (*Gothic* 5). It is not until the 1980's that critical readings start to examine texts with a more critical point of view: "the modern era of theoretically informed criticism was inaugurated by David Punter's *The Literature of Terror*, published in 1980, which provided the first rigorous analysis of the Gothic tradition and suggested ways in which Gothic texts could be read through a combination of Marxist and psychological perspectives" (A. Smith, *Gothic* 5). Punter is the pioneer of a later proliferation of critical analyses of Gothic. He not only links the genre to new fields, but also provides a new way of reading Gothic texts. Punter is followed by Rosemary Jackson who was the first to relate the genre to Freud's concept of the uncanny in *Fantasy: the Literature of Subversion* (1981) (A. Smith, *Gothic* 5). In the last decades of the twentieth century, Gothic is globalized⁵. All forms of Gothic, such as literature and films, start to be produced worldwide. This expansion occurs also in the critical field. Smith points out that since the 1980's "there have

⁵ The globalization of Gothic will be analyzed later in this study.

been many ground breaking contributions from scholars working in Britain, mainland Europe, the United States, Canada, and Australia, indeed often in those very countries where the Gothic took root” (*Gothic* 5). He notes that these studies have provided different approaches to the Gothic because critics have studied the genre from a great variety of fields, “the psychoanalytical, historicist, feminist, and colonial and postcolonial perspectives” (A. Smith, *Gothic* 5). Similar to New Historicism, Gothic is an interdisciplinary genre that welcomes other approaches to be employed in the analysis. Following the growth of Gothic literature, Gothic as an academic field started as a genre connected to a specific region, usually Europe, but since the late 1900’s it has become decentralized and has become a global phenomenon that can be read from a variety of points of view.

The 1930’s is the period in which Gothic starts to be perceived as an academic field. Although there are earlier critical readings, it is in this period in which it is finally acknowledged as a genre that is worth analyzing. In “Gothic Criticism,” Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall affirm that in the 1930’s Gothic texts start to be examined and given credit as a genre that “merited some scholarly treatment of its sources, influences, biographical contexts and generic features” (267). Baldick and Mighall affirm that Gothic criticism developed from two different fields in the 1930’s: “on the one side the reactionary medievalism of the eccentric bibliophile and vampirologist Montague Summers, and on the other the revolutionary modernism of André Breton, leader of the surrealists” (269). Thus, Gothic criticism was influenced by the past, myths and the unexpected connections of surrealism. It emerged from different fields that found Gothic as a common ground. According to Baldick and Mighall, in “Limits not Frontiers of Surrealism” (1936), Brenton affirms that Horace Walpole started Surrealism and acclaimed the writers of Gothic for

“resorting spontaneously to dream and fantasy and thereby ‘fathoming the secret depths of history’ which are inaccessible to Reason” (270). The way in which Gothic uses imagination, the supernatural and mirrors the time in which it was created is what inspired Brenton to affirm that it also made way for Surrealism. Both movements combine aspects that seem otherwise mismatched. Moreover, Brenton also points out to the fact that Gothic reflects the anxiety of the return of the past: “the ruined buildings encountered in Gothic novels ‘express the collapse of the feudal period; the inevitable ghost which haunts them indicates a peculiarly intense fear of the return of the powers of the past’” (Baldick and Mighall 270). In his article “Surrealism and the Gothic” (1938) Summers replies to Brenton. Baldick and Mighall claim that Summers’ reply is grounded in snobbery, expressed in the claim that the Gothic novel ‘is an aristocrat of literature’” (270). Both Brenton and Summers present opposing views of Gothic. On the one hand, Brenton describes Gothic as anti-aristocratic and revolutionary because he sees it as an “escape from the tyranny of a feudal past into an enlightened present” (270). On the other, Summers claims that many prefer the peace, culture and stability of the past to the chaos confusion and “artistic sterility of the present” (270). Additionally, Summers affirms that “the leading Gothicists were anti-revolutionary: Walpole, a true gentleman, would have regarded socialism with disgust; Ann Radcliffe was deeply conservative; Lewis was a capitalist slave-owner; and Maturin was a declared opponent of Godwinian radicalism” (270). Unlike Brenton, Summers affirms that “the ‘spirit’ of Gothic fiction was the quintessence of romanticism” (271). Baldick and Mighall claim that after these critical readings, Gothic criticism “aligned itself more with Brenton, while usually retaining, however, Summers’ assumption that the Gothic is a form of romanticism characterised by nostalgic resistance to bourgeois modernity and enlightenment” (271). These critics’ opposing views gave rise to today’s

Gothic criticism. Critical readings of Gothic were fueled in the 1930's by the integration of opposing views and fields that seem otherwise incompatible.

Gothic is a field that welcomes other approaches to be analyzed, but in the same way, it is a genre that is in constant dialogue with other literary genres; it is a hybrid literary genre. The hybridization of Gothic is a phenomenon that is not new—Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* shares elements of Gothic and Science Fiction—, but that has certainly become popular during the twentieth century. In *Gothic Romanced: Consumption, Gender and Technology in Contemporary Fictions*, Fred Botting affirms that during the twentieth century, “things get messier” in literature because hybridization becomes a popular phenomenon: “Histories become plural, perspectives multiply and genres hybridise” (14). Gothic writers—and film makers, because it is a practice used not only in literature—take advantage of hybridization to enrich their texts. Brian Baker, in his introduction to the “Visualizing Fantastika” Issue of the *Luminary*, notes that genres “develop: by importation, stealing, hybridization. Genres are not ‘pure’” (10). Hybridization contributes to the development of genres and to the creation of new ones, such as Steampunk, the combination of Science Fiction, Gothic, and Fantasy with the aesthetic of Victorian England. Gail Carriger's novel *Soulless* is an example of Steampunk. Then, it is common to find Gothic texts and films, or any other forms of art, that share similarities with other genres. Baker works with Science Fiction and notes, in “Visualizing Fantastika,” that he usually looks at “the generic boundaries rather than at ‘classic’ examples of the genre, because this enables us to see how sf texts work intertextually both within and without the genre: *Alien* and horror or the Weird; *The Time Traveler's Wife* and the romance; *Blade Runner* and the Gothic” (10). This intertextuality can be recognized in current Gothic too. The film *Blade* and Dan Simmons' novel *Children of the Night* are a combination of Gothic

and Science Fiction, Coppola's *Dracula* of Gothic and romance, *Underworld* of Gothic and Fantasy, *Vamps* of Gothic and Comedy, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* of Gothic and Young Adult, and the list seems endless. Gothic has expanded as an interdisciplinary genre. It is usually blended with other fields which makes the genre popular and more adaptable to the tastes of different audiences. The hybridization of Gothic undoubtedly contributes to make the genre timeless.

Concepts and Theory Related to Gothic Studies and the Figure of the Vampire

This investigation will benefit from contributions of fields such as psychology, psychoanalysis, literature, film, and biology, among others. Studies in these areas offer concepts and theories which will be used to analyze the evolution of the vampire in literature and cinema as defined in this study. The impact of these theories will also be taken into account as many of them contribute to the anxieties of various societies. As it has been established, the interdisciplinary nature of the two main pillars of this thesis (Gothic and New Historicism) not only allows but also demands the analysis of different discourses. New Historicism emphasizes that, in order to better understand the history and culture of a period, it is necessary the study as many discourses as possible. Similarly, Gothic adapts to different cultures and periods of time because it nurtures and blends with other genres and areas of knowledge. Therefore, when studying a Gothic production, it is essential to study history, culture and other areas that feed the text or film. As New Historical and Gothic research requires, concepts and theories from each correspondent period of time will be used in order to define and analyze the three categories of vampires here proposed, the Primeval, the Transitional and the Contemporary.

Regarding the Primeval Vampire

The concepts and theories that will be used in this study are detailed hereunder in the order in which they will be addressed in the analysis chapters. For the Primeval Vampire, Darwin and his theory of evolution is going to be used to emphasize the notion that these vampires are hybrids of the human and animal world. Jacques Lacan's theory of the mirror stage, and the terms of mesmerism and the gaze will serve as a theoretical background to analyze and define the first stage of the vampire here proposed, that of the Primeval Vampire.

Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution: Hybridity

During the 1860s and 70s, Charles Darwin studied plants and their possible combinations to form new species. Darwin demonstrated that there is a great number of possible combinations between plants of different species. In his article "Domestic Hybrids: Ruskin, Victorian Fiction and Darwin's Botany," Jonathan Smith explains that Darwin showed that the crossing of flowers from different plants is actually more productive than the crossing of flowers from similar plants: "Flowers of different forms proved to be extremely fertile when crossed, while the crossing of flowers of similar forms was generally less successful and produced plants analogous to hybrid offspring of separate species" (862). Actually, the offspring of the combination of similar plants are very alike to those of different plants. With his studies on cross-pollination, Darwin proved that insects play a major role in the process because they pollinate flowers, and this practice results in better plants, healthier offspring and a more abundant production of seeds (J. Smith, "Domestic" 863). This evolutionary theory of "co-development between flowers and insects," created great debate and caught the attention of the public because the

combination of species resulted in better and more beautiful varieties of plants (J. Smith, "Domestic" 863). According to Smith, Darwin notes that there are difficulties when combining two different species of plants, and this can sometimes be identified in the infertility of the offspring ("Domestic" 866). Moreover, Darwin affirmed that out of all the possible combinations between species only a few were "legitimate" (J. Smith, "Domestic" 865). In spite of their legitimacy or not, Smith notes that the language Darwin used to refer to the crossing between species reveals much of the way he perceived it: "Darwin's language for describing this array of sexual possibilities is revealing. Crosses are 'unions' and even 'marriages,' while the resulting seedlings are 'offspring' and 'children'" ("Domestic" 864). Darwin viewed these crossings as a legitimate and valid process of evolution, a natural process: "Darwin declares that 'nature has ordained a most complex marriage-arrangement' (26:99). Despite his use of 'ordained,' it is nature, not God or church or bishop, that does the ordaining, and the 'marriage-arrangement' ordained by nature" (qtd. in J. Smith, "Domestic" 865). The crossing of different species might not be legitimate or normal, but it is possible and acceptable by nature.

Darwin conducted his studies during the Victorian period in England. The Victorians are known for being one of the most strict and rigid societies. The inflexible structure of this society resulted in numerous fears that tormented people. It is not unexpected that Darwin's investigations and theory of cross species created rejection in people from the time because of their fear of corrupted bodies and minds. Smith notes, in "Domestic Hybrids: Ruskin, Victorian Fiction and Darwin's Botany," that in his article "Fiction, Fair and Foul," John Ruskin, a British writer from the nineteenth century, clearly rejects Darwin's theories of crossing of species: "While Ruskin's reference in 'Fiction, Fair and Foul' to the 'Darwinian process' of the witch's charm being cooled with baboon's blood

[referring to *Hamlet's* witches] is clearly expressive of his discomfort with the idea of human descent from apes, the botanical context of his remarks suggests that even here Ruskin had Darwin's plant studies most immediately in mind." (J. Smith, "Domestic" 867). Smith continues and affirms that Ruskin is disgusted "at science's narcissistic curiosity about physical corruption echoes the language of his condemnation in *Proserpina* of Darwinian botany's frenzied fascination with blotches, filth, and 'reproductive operations'" ("Domestic" 867). Ruskin saw Darwin's studies of reproduction and the corruption of bodies as an obsession; thus, he referred to this fear and warned his reader in his work *Proserpina*: "'warn my girl-readers against all study of floral genesis and digestion' and to avoid such questions as '[h]ow far flowers invite, or require, flies to interfere in their family affairs' and 'which of them are carnivorous' (25:413-4) have their analogue in the fiction of modern novelists, who insist on anatomizing sexuality, corruption, death, decay, and mutilation" (qtd. in J. Smith, "Domestic" 867). He refers to Darwin's investigations on the reproduction of plants, and the importance of insects in the process as something evil, but he also demeans the symbiosis between flowers and insects because some plants are carnivorous and killed the insect to survive. Ruskin condemns not only those investigating processes of reproduction such as Darwin, but also writers of his time who included in their works such subjects as death and decay or personified them with deformed and/or corrupted characters, something which was very common during the Victorian period.

Darwin's theories were applied to different areas and culture was one of them. In "Darwin and the Evolution of Victorian Studies," Jonathan Smith affirms that "Darwin's work engaged with almost every aspect of nineteenth-century society" (219). In the nineteenth century, Victorians lived under the most ruthless and severe society. They had the highest standards of morality and sentenced all those individuals and behaviors that did

not follow their rules. As will be discussed in chapter II, this rigidity caused innumerable anxieties in Victorian subjects. One of their most rooted worries was the invasion of the center of the Empire by colonial subjects. Victorians were afraid of cross-cultural hybrids. They did not want their perfect society to be tainted and corrupted by the foreign cultures that were infiltrating their idealized Empire. During that century, people from the colonies were believed to degrade and infect England. In “Hybrid Forms and Cultural Anxieties,” U.C. Knoepfelmacher notes that “as the century [the nineteenth century] progressed, the Victorian bourgeoisie was also worried by the racial influx of uneducated Irish, impoverished Jews, and ‘sickly . . . (Negro) hybrids as you see in Oxford Street,’ alien intruders who differed from their idealized incarnations as noble chieftains, mighty prophets, and ‘black as ebony’ Carthaginian princes” (751). Victorians feared that outsiders would come and contaminate their Empire with the inferiority and corruption they brought from the colonies. Knoepfelmacher explains that “the marginalized others that so fascinated the Victorians always served a dual function” (751) because Victorians “idealized” the exotic and strange people from the colonies, but rejected those who dared to come into the Empire. During the nineteenth century, cross-cultural hybrids of all sorts, plant, animal or human, represented a nightmare for Victorians.

The nineteenth century was marked by Darwin’s theories and many scholars agree that his influence is noticeable in many areas of the period. In “Darwinism and Darwinisticism,” Morse Peckham argues that “Everyone knows that the impact of *The Origin of Species* was immense and that it has had a profound influence on the literature of England and of the West” (qtd. in J. Smith, “Darwin” 216). Thus, the influence of Darwin on literature cannot be ignored. Smith refers to John Ruskin’s conjecture of literary hybrids. For Ruskin, literature—in the nineteenth century—was similar to Darwinian botany in the

sense that the modern novel was a cross between domestic realism and Gothic romance (qtd. in J. Smith, "Domestic" 862). However, Smith also states that Ruskin did not perceive this combination as positive, for he referred to the nineteenth-century writing as "the pestilence of popular literature" (qtd. in J. Smith, "Domestic" 869). This literary Darwinism, as Smith calls it, seems to respond to the necessity of finding a scientific explanation to the changes of literature and "a variety of deplorable Victorian and modern sins" ("Darwin" 217).

Characters in literature from the nineteenth century are also an example of the impact Darwin had on this subject. Literary characters from this period were believed to personify the dangerous and uncontrolled crossing between species. This crossing is represented in the physical and moral corruption of characters in nineteenth-century writings. Smith affirms that Victorian writers' demoralization is depicted in their works: "Ruskin argues [in his article "Fiction, Fair and Foul"] that depictions of deformity and physical mutilation express the modern novelist's unhealthy 'love of thorniness' and inhuman cold-bloodedness" ("Domestic" 861). Ruskin refers to *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* as an example of a character "unhealthy in mind and body" (qtd. in J. Smith, "Domestic" 869). The physical deformity of characters created during the Victorian period is a reflection of the authors' moral deformation. Ruskin goes beyond and asserts that diseased characters are the product of the writer's "prurient obsession with love and sex," (qtd. in J. Smith, "Domestic" 861) aspects that were severely condemned by Victorian society. The backgrounds in which the writings were set and the characters' backgrounds mirrored, as well as the degradation of the character itself, the vices of the writers:

[T]he conditions of languidly monstrous character developed in an atmosphere of low vitality," Ruskin wrote in "Fiction, Fair and Foul," "have

become the most valued material of modern fiction, and the most eagerly discussed texts of modern philosophy" (34:268). Crossing primroses, counting the flies captured and consumed by butterworts, cataloging the levels of fertility in the offspring of a triple union of three hermaphrodites—all this was for Ruskin of a piece with the sexual transgressions and lurid deaths depicted in Dickens and Collins. (qtd. in J. Smith, "Domestic" 867)

Modern fiction, in the eyes of Ruskin, was a literary hybrid which exemplified and enclosed the deterioration and degeneration of the Victorian society: "he [Ruskin] regards the sensationalism of modern fiction as excessively physical and hence unconcerned with morality" (J. Smith, "Domestic" 869). Nineteenth-century literature was a hybrid of different genres, and, as mentioned before, hybrids are one of the major concerns of this society. This crossing of genres was catalogued by many as a reflection of the lack of morality of the authors who depicted their own degeneration through their writings.

Victorian society was stirred because of Darwin and his theories on hybridity. The idea that plants and animals were capable of crossing with different species and the creation of mutants that transgressed normality instilled terror in a society plagued by fears and restrictions. However, this negative connotation of hybrids is far older than Darwin. U.C. Knoepfmacher notes that "it seems well worth remembering that earlier cultures were likely to be distrustful, and even fearful, of "mongrel" mixtures they saw as dangerous deformations" (745). Crossing between species was not seen as an opportunity to combine or improve genes. It was something evil, the degeneration of a species, and it was feared. According to Knoepfmacher, "the Oxford English Dictionary helpfully reminds us that, in 1623, a "Hibride" primarily signified "a Hog engendered between a wild Boar and a tame Sow" (745). This definition conveys the negativity of the word because of the use of the

word “engendered.” The combination of two different species was not perceived as an offspring; it was a deviation of nature. During the first decades of the nineteenth century, Victorians understood “hybridity” in a similar way in which Darwin developed the notion in his theories (746). Well into the nineteenth century, theories of hybridity represented a real challenge for Victorians. It was difficult to conceive the fact that combinations were feasible in nature, but the fact that these combinations could endure and survive was even more frightening:

The notion that seemingly arbitrary recombinations were not only far from erratic or capricious but could also result in the creation of enduring new structures posed a severe challenge for traditionalist believers in the fixity and authority of established forms. As wanderers—in Matthew Arnold's memorable formulation—between contrary worlds, the Victorians were called upon to wrestle more fully than their forebears with this escalating and ever accelerating challenge. (745-746)

The Victorian society feared deviations in nature because of its implications in the physical degeneration of humans (due to species crossing). This concern was recorded in literature of the time. Knoepfmacher asserts that hybridity became a regular element of the writings of Victorian authors: “Victorian writers not only addressed hybridity as a subject but also incarnated it through a great variety of blended forms and discursive mixtures. Although their inventiveness reflected the cultural anxieties of an age of accelerating changes, it was also energized by that uniquely Victorian convergence of radical and reactionary impulses” (747). Hybridity was not only a motif in literature, but it was also personified through monstrous characters such as vampires. For reasons that I will later address, vampires are

the perfect hybrid of the human and animal worlds, and during the nineteenth century, they became the ideal vehicle to capture the anxieties of Victorian society.

Franz Mesmer's Mesmerism

The animal magnetism theory, or mesmerism, disclosed by Franz Mesmer in the nineteenth century discusses the notion of a force or person capable of overpowering another being's mind. This practice gained Mesmer a number of advocates as well as detractors because many specialists attempted to induce another person into a hypnotic state. Some people saw mesmerism as a medical advance that could be used to detect diseases, but for others it was an invasion of the person's mind and an attempt to control people. Martin Willis notes in *Mesmerists, Monsters & Machines* that Mesmer himself believed that mesmerism was a medical breakthrough that had a "scientific status" (34) and that it would contribute to detect and find cures to many diseases. *The British Medical Journal*, known today as the *BMJ*, published an article in 1873 entitled "Mesmerism" which explains Mesmer's theory that all the beings and natural elements are part of an invisible fluid that connects all of them and their minds: "[Mesmer] maintained that there exists 'a natural influence between the celestial bodies, the earth, and animated bodies; that this influence has as its agent a fluid universally diffused and of incomparable susceptibility, apt to receive, to propagate, to communicate, all the impressions of motion'" (667). This natural connection opens the possibility of controlling other people's minds. Mesmer did not see his technique as an invasion; he saw it as an opportunity to advance medicine and help people: "thanks to this fluid, which he can manage as he wills, the physician will be enlightened on the use of medicines; he will perfect new actions, and will excite and direct salutary crises in such a manner as to become master of them" (667).

Although it was presented as a beneficial technique, not everyone perceived the advantages of mesmerism.

Many saw mesmerism as an opportunity to control weak-minded people and generate a profit: “Mesmerism was therefore categorized both as a breakthrough in scientific medicine and as an occult charlatanism preying on the psychology of weak-minded individuals” (Willis 35). The problem was that when a person was mesmerized, an intimate bond between the mesmerizer and the mesmerized was formed. Being hypnotized allowed the penetration of a stronger mind that would subdue the weak one: “To all these phenomena, the contemporary somnambulist added a sort of intimate communion with the magnetiser; the loss of sensation, of movement, and of consciousness; the transposition of the senses; the knowledge of diseases and their remedies; prevision; entire forgetfulness, on waking, of that which had passed in and around him during the access of somnambulism” (*BMJ* 667). When mesmerized, people seemed to lose complete control over their minds and relinquish their freewill. This relinquishment was one of the main preoccupations of detractors, since mesmerism was often seen as a maneuver of unscrupulous men to subdue weak-minded people. As was previously discussed, in the nineteenth century, Victorians worried about having their mind invaded and controlled by another entity. This fear is reflected in vampire stories written in that era. However, this power to control the mind of the victim is also conveyed in stories from the following periods, the Transitional and Contemporary Vampires.

Lacan’s Mirror Stage

In his article “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience,” Jacques Lacan explains his theory of the Mirror Stage. In this

stage in the development of children, they identify themselves as individuals for the first time. Therefore, it is a determining moment in the formation of the subject. According to the author, children can recognize their own image in the mirror at the age of six months, and this happens before they can perform other activities by themselves, such as walking (1). Lacan argues that this is the stage of identification, and it determines the formation of the child as an individual because it occurs before the acquisition of language: “This jubilant assumption of his specular image by the child at the *infans* stage, still sunk in his motor incapacity and nursling dependence, would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the I is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject” (2). Once the child learns to speak, the I is objectified because it exists as merely another being. During the Mirror Stage, the child perceives himself as the individual in the mirror. He gives agency to his own ego before being socially determined (2). Michael Billig notes in “Lacan’s Misuse of Psychology Evidence, Rhetoric and the Mirror Stage” that “for Lacan, the way that the child comes to recognize its own reflected image in the mirror was ‘the turning-point in development’” because the image the child identifies in the mirror becomes his ideal ego (5-6). This is the point in life when the object becomes a subject. If a person does not undergo this stage, identity problems will emerge. This implies that the person does not recognize him or herself as an individual subject and does not have an ideal to follow. In the literature that I will be addressing, vampires do not go through this stage because they lack a reflection, and this is a trait that characterizes Primevals. Since they lack an ideal, they are creatures merely driven by their wild instincts. The lack of reflection of Primeval Vampires stands for their loss of humanity and their capacity to identify themselves as individuals. Unlike their

predecessors, Transitional and Contemporary Vampires used to be humans before turning. It is implicit, then, that they underwent the mirror stage. These later vampires in literature and cinema become subjects that recognize themselves. Vampires start as primitive creatures and eventually turn into beings that understand their own evil side.

The Gaze in Cinema

In contemporary film studies, the gaze is often seen as a powerful mechanism to objectify women. Film scholars who have explored the role of the gaze in films studies have come to the general conclusion that in films the gaze portrays a masculine perspective. In *Psychoanalytic Criticism a Reappraisal*, Elizabeth Wright uses Christian Metz's theory to explain the power of objectification of the gaze and notes that "in classical Hollywood cinema the camera is usually controlled by a male director" (183). This fact implies that the spectator usually sees what the male director wants them to see. Women are portrayed from the perspective of the director and since they have no control over the way they are conveyed in films, they are stripped of their agency. In the interview, *Gender, Gaze and Technology in Film Culture*, conducted by Roberta Sassatelli to Laura Mulvey, the latter notes that:

The TV camera's gaze is co-extensive with the male gaze, which depends on the image of "the castrated woman' in order to make sense of the world. The spectator, both male and female, is invited to take pleasure in a particular configuration of the gaze through which 'the male hero acts' while "women are seen and showed at the same time": "their appearance is so much coded for a strong visual and erotic impact that it can be argued that they connote the true essence of being seen." (124)

Women, then, are showcased on the screen. Unlike actors who act on the screen, actresses are merely seen. Men are empowered by the film industry because the latter immediately places women in a lower position, the powerless one. Mulvey claims that the film industry damages the female image and identity: “classic Hollywood movies give us back a woman-object through a male gaze that projects his own fantasy on the female figure in two ways—voyeuristic (which sees the rebel woman as temptress and prostitute) or fetishist (the docile and redeeming woman represented as the Virgin Mary)” (124). The female figure is represented in cinema following the male ideals which are, according to Mulvey, extremes: a good or a terrible woman. Male fantasies are nurtured and satisfied in films. To make matters worse, women fall for the conception conveyed by the male gaze. They see themselves through the eyes of men and their fantasies: “the male gaze is also the female gaze—namely that women look at themselves through the male gaze” (127). The film industry has contributed to the objectification of the female figure. This phenomenon is clearly appreciated in vampire films in which the vampire’s gaze places the monster in a higher position to that of the female victim, who is usually the coveted object. The gaze of vampires takes the place of the male-controlled camera as they hungrily objectify their victims or objects of desire. This trait is characteristic of the Primeval and Transitional Vampires, but as it will be addressed later, it is not always a rule for the humanized Contemporary Vampire.

Travel Narratives and Reverse Colonization

Reverse Colonization refers to the movement of colonial subjects towards the center of the empire during the Victorian period. In “The Occidental Tourist: ‘Dracula’ and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization,” Stephen D. Arata categorizes Stoker’s *Dracula* as a

travel narrative. Arata explains that during the late Victorian period the travel narrative genre was as popular as Gothic, and Stoker's novel belonged to both (626). In *Dracula*, the conventions of the Victorian travel narrative are first palpable in Jonathan Harker's account of his journey to Castle Dracula (635). Through Harker's journal, Stoker shows the eastern world, the colonized world, through the eyes of a western tourist, the colonizer. British supremacy is hinted in Harker's writing. For example, he observes the reliability of the rail system in Britain and is annoyed by the lack of punctuality in the Eastern part of the world (636). Arata states that for Harker crossing the Danube during his trip symbolizes leaving Europe and entering the Orient, the wild and colonized world (636). Although the Danube and Romania are part of Europe, for Harker, the British tourist, going into the colonies feels like leaving his continent, the civilized world. Harker assumes the role of the Victorian traveler that penetrates the colonies, and his narrative clearly shows the Victorian assumption that there is an unbreakable gap that "separates the Western traveller from Eastern peoples" (636). However, Arata claims that Harker's tourist perspective changes when he arrives to the Castle and realizes that the Count is extremely well-read and seems to have a vast knowledge of history and England: "Dracula is the most 'Western' character in the novel. No one is more rational, more intelligent, more organized, or even more punctual than the Count. No one plans more carefully or researches more thoroughly. No one is more learned within his own spheres of expertise or more receptive to new knowledge" (637). Arata reveals the nineteenth-century's belief that Western people are superior to Easterners, and to all colonials. He claims that the colonizer/colonized roles are reversed when Harker and the Count are face to face. Later in the plot when Dracula moves to England, the center of the empire, he confirms this interchange. This reverse colonization, a term coined by Arata in the same article, refers to the migration of the

colonial subject to the center of the British Empire during the nineteenth century. Arata notes that Stoker brought the Gothic terror to the modern world when he moved his vampire to England (621). This invasion of the intimate space of home is a common trait of the nineteenth-century Gothic, as it was argued before. During the twentieth century, vampires have completely adopted the role of the tourist. In the texts in which Primeval Vampires are the protagonists, the subjects from the empire, westerners, visit the wild world of vampires as tourists, in the East. Entering the East is an adventure that might put their lives at risk. During this period, vampires are infiltrating what is considered the civilized world. Primeval Vampires move in an attempt to secure their sustenance in crowded cities and threatened the well-being of the native inhabitants, like colonizers do.

Regarding the Transitional Vampire

Liminality and Liminal Subjects

In “Liminality and the Practices of Identity Reconstruction,” Nic Beech mentions the term liminality, coined by the anthropologist Arnold van Gennep to refer to a rite of passage between two stages (287). In, 1908, Gennep developed a theory about rites of passage that describes the processes people undergo when passing from one state to another, such as that of a child becoming an adult (287). According to Gennep’s theory, a person must go through three different phases to complete a rite of passage: separation, liminality and aggregation (287). Beech argues that during the separation stage, individuals must detach from the state that defines their current life (287). The second stage is one of in-betweenness or ambiguity: “liminality, in which the ritual subject or ‘liminar’ is ambiguous and passes through a realm that has few or none of the attributes of the ‘before’ and ‘after’ states” (287). During this second step, the liminar has already detached from his

old self, but he is not yet the individual he attempts or is destined to be. Liminal subjects do not fit either their past or future categories (i.e. they are neither children nor adults). Genep's last phase, aggregation, is the one in which the rite of passage is consummated: "At this stage, the liminar has reached a new identity position and they are expected to adopt certain norms" (287). At the end of the ritual, subjects become new individuals and behave according to their new categorization; their ambiguity is resolved. According to Mark M. Hennelly, in "'Betwixt Sunset and Sunrise'; Liminality in *Dracula*," aggregation means the returning of the individuals to their society as adults and experts in their new cultural codes (2). In this final step, individuals have completed the rite of passage and are ready to rejoin a community, and society is ready to accept them back. Beech notes that for Genep, the liminal process is a ritualistic one, and it is triggered by an event (287). The liminal subject must undergo the three steps to complete the rite of passage. Once the individual finishes the process and is reincorporated to a social group, he or she is no longer liminal. After having successfully completed the ritual, liminal subjects become, in a sense, newborn individuals, with a newly defined identity, capable of joining their social group.

The concept of liminality was then expanded by Victor Turner in 1967. Turner focused on Genep's second stage, the liminal. According to Beech, Turner saw the liminal subject as "interstructural" because they are in an uncertain position; they are "betwixt and between" stages (287). For Turner, the liminal is invisible for society. Society has the need to categorize, and liminal subjects cannot be defined or characterized as one thing or the other because of their ambiguity: "the liminar is socially if not physically invisible. Their ambiguity means that they are outside definition, for example 'a society's secular definitions do not allow for the existence of not-boy-not-man, which is what a novice in a male puberty rite is'" (qtd. in Beech 287). In the structure of a society, there is no place for

an ambiguous individual. A liminar is not part of any area of that society. Thus, he becomes invisible, non-existent. Beech explains that in Turner's theory this stage is also linked to death: "the liminar is structurally 'dead' (and may be ritually buried/lie motionless/stained black/covered in blood), and they are regarded as unclean with contact being prohibited or curtailed during liminality lest they should 'pollute' those who have not been 'inoculated' against them" (287). Due to their in-betweenness, liminals are tainted and are not allowed to be part of any sector of their society until they once again become subjects that can be categorized. They are ostracized because they may contaminate others with their ambiguity. Moreover, liminals have no rights; therefore, they must subject to elder members of society (287). Beech believes that Turner's most important contribution to the definition of liminality is the fact that he sees this stage as one of reflection, "a phase in which the liminar reflects about their society and their cosmos in order to return to society in a new identity with new responsibilities and powers" (287). Liminal subjects are not simply lost in a liminal space. They are undergoing a process of transformation and reformation of their identity which will ultimately benefit the individual and their community (287). Gennep and Turner's concept will be used to define the Transitional Vampire as a liminal subject, a vampire that is between stages. In this second category, vampires do not embrace their monstrous nature and are more humanized. Thus, Transitionals are in between states as they do not fit with Primeval Vampires, but they are not completely humanized to the point of being accepted by humans. Transitional Vampires are ambiguous characters trapped in the uncertainty of their two worlds. These are vampires that question and reflect upon their own nature and try to define who they really are in a world between monstrosity and humanity.

The Figure of the Vampire Expands to the United States

During the twentieth century the vampire begins the path towards humanization, and concurrently to that process, this Gothic monster becomes the protagonist of Gothic tales beyond its European homeland. As a result, this figure is Americanized⁶ as it becomes the center of many films and texts from the United States. In spite of the fact that it is possible to find references to vampire monsters around the world, during the nineteenth century, the first texts about vampires, in the main, have a European origin. However, in the 1930s, the development of the cinematographic industry expanded the popularity of the figure of the vampire to the United States and gave it new roots and motifs. In *Gothic Literature*, Andrew Smith notes that the new media, film, radio and television allowed Gothic to continue to be present in the twentieth century (132). According to Smith, horror⁷ shows on the radio became popular in the United States before the invention of the television; these radio horror shows “addressed the issues of the time, from the period of economic depression to providing support for the war effort” (*Gothic* 132). Therefore, Gothic continues to portray the anxieties of its time and culture through new forms of media in the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century, most of the first texts about vampires were written in Europe by European authors; thus, these texts portray most of the concerns of their society. In the twentieth century, radio, television and film industries transport the figure to America, so this Gothic monster starts depicting anxieties that belong to this continent: “Whilst Stoker’s novel represents a *fin de siècle* crisis, 1931-2 witnessed the production of five seminal horror films which in different ways captured the

⁶ In “Undead Reflections: The Sympathetic Vampire and its Monstrous Other,” the introduction to *Gothic Studies*, Sam George and Bill Hughes refer to the Americanization of this genre.

⁷ In *Gothic Literature*, Andrew Smith affirms that during the twentieth century the word horror stands for Gothic in popular literature (140).

contemporary mood of social and economic crisis in America: *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, *The Mummy*” (A. Smith, *Gothic* 134). With the exception of *The Mummy*, these films are based on novels written during the nineteenth century by British authors. Nevertheless, they are American cinematographic productions and directed by directors from the United States. Thus, these early twentieth-century Gothic films characterize both British and American anxieties. Tod Browning’s film, *Dracula* (1931), resembles texts from the nineteenth century in which the vampire leaves his remote castle to invade a more populated city. According to Franco Moretti in *Signs Taken for Wanders*, in the film the vampire is a sanguinary capitalist that relocates to find new victims to drain (qtd. in A. Smith, *Gothic* 134-135). Smith affirms that these cinematographic adaptations mirror the economic crisis of the United States during 1931-2 (134)⁸. Universal Studios is the cinematographic company that creates the first American adaptation of Stoker’s *Dracula*. During the twentieth century, the figure of the vampire in literature and films went from reflecting exclusively the British society to being a figure that depicts concerns and traditions from different latitudes.

Post-World War Gothic

The first half of the twentieth century was a period hit by two world wars. The degeneration and squalor provoked by the World Wars are reflected in the society of the time, and consequently in its literature and films. Post-world war Gothic mirrors the decadence and loss of morals that humans provoke with their own destruction. Andrew

⁸ Later in the 1950s Hammer Films started a new wave of horror British films. Nevertheless, this cinematographic company continues mostly with the nineteenth-century Gothic Tradition. Hammer films based on Stoker’s *Dracula* depict most of the Gothic motifs from nineteenth-century Britain. They continue to feature Primeval Vampires.

Smith affirms that Gothic captures the decaying tone that followed the First World War: “the tales after the First World War are often much darker than those that preceded it” (*Gothic* 128). Similarly, the critique notes that the aftermath of the Second World War sees the influence of this catastrophe mirrored in language: “A new language of moral revulsion appeared in the media after the Second World War and influenced what was deemed acceptable in the 1950s and 1960s, before Hammer’s introduction of soft pornography in the 1970s as public appetites changed” (A. Smith, *Gothic* 135). The influence of war in language and tone is conveyed in films and texts from the period and decades following the end of the conflict. Gothic productions about Transitional Vampires convey the influence of wars in society. Later versions of *Dracula* and new vampires in literature and cinema portray more humanized vampires. As Smith notes the “post-war Gothic in literature provides an example of how, later writers engaged with, and critically reworked, an earlier tradition” (*Gothic* 140). Writers and directors work with the same Gothic monster and tradition, but they are modernizing the way they depict it. Therefore, during the twentieth century, Transitional Vampires come to exist as a consequence of the changes in society. This Gothic figure becomes more human because it is not the traditional monster from the nineteenth century invading human territory. In the post-war twentieth century, humans are the real monsters, and there is always the possibility that humans will not be able to escape their monstrous nature and destructive instincts. Smith affirms that one of the main concerns of society is the moral emptiness of humanity: “later ghosts suggest a metaphysical horror about the dangers inherent to existence, especially an existence characterised by moral emptiness. The idea that the world is fundamentally malign” (*Gothic* 125). Transitional Vampires mirrored this anxiety strengthened by wars, in which humans are the real evil hunting and exterminating themselves. Thus, after the World Wars,

Gothic tales become more negative and concerned with the loss of human values and morals provoked by humans themselves.

During the twentieth century, Gothic literature and cinema mirror society's loss of morality and values. Similar to Victorian times, in the twentieth century the decadence of society's morals is one of the most rooted anxieties of the time. Gothic continues to be a means to capture these concerns. According to Andrew Smith, Gothic serves as a field to portray and analyze the corruption of this century: "the Gothic provides a focus for a debate about the loss of value (moral and social)" (*Gothic* 130). The fact that the different cultures around the world are not bound to the same set of moral standards contributes to the propagation and consolidation of this concern. What is right for one group of people is wrong and even offensive or repulsive for others. In *The Lure of the Vampire: Gender, Fiction and Fandom from Bram Stoker to Buffy*, Milly Williamson supports the idea that society is not united by morals, but rather divided by it, resulting in an "anxiety brought about by a frightening new world in which the traditional patterns of moral order no longer provide the necessary social glue" (46). Thus, a battle between what is considered good or evil by society is reflected in Gothic tales and films. During this century, Gothic tales reflect on what is morally right, and the vampire is the perfect representation for this anxiety. Williamson argues that vampires enact moral dilemmas because they are innocent humans who are turned into these creatures against their will, and at the same time their lifestyle is presented as glamorous and appealing (37). In narratives with Transitional Vampires it is implied that the vampire is as much the victim as humans attacked by vampires. These vampires raise the question of what it means to be a human being. For Williamson, vampires in the twentieth century "personify dilemmas of the self: how to have meaning in the world which demands it, how to act in circumstances we did not choose,

how to be a good human” (50). In a century in which humans are exterminating each other using excuses that seem to be valid for some but immoral for others, morality becomes a major concern for society. Then it is not clear what it is to be a human, a good human at least, because people act guided by their beliefs. Transitional Vampires represent this fear of crossing the line between humanity and monstrosity.

Education as a Humanizing Motif

In Gothic fiction, education is used as tool to create more “civilized” individuals. Transitional Vampires are more civilized and educated than other characters, so these narrations raise the question of whether education defines what being a human is or is not. Transitional Vampires enact the search for an answer to this. Like Louis in *Interview with the Vampire*, they struggle to understand what they really are and the purpose of their existence. During this period, people realize that humans are the only cause of all the evil and destruction in the world. As mentioned previously, men and women are the real monsters in the twentieth century, and atrocities committed by humans generate more horror than those committed by ghosts or other creatures. Smith refers to this issue of what it means to be human with the motif of education in Thomas Harris’s series of Hannibal Lecter and the Monster in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. Proper of the twentieth century, the monster in Harris’s novels is a human being, Lecter, who contrasts with the monster created by a human with human parts in Shelley’s novel. Smith refers to education as a humanizing tool in Gothic: “what it means to be human and the role of education in forming that humanity is a key theme in *Frankenstein*” (*Gothic* 149). Education is a humanizing trait. The Monster is assigned more human qualities when he learns to speak and read. He becomes an individual capable of communicating; he is no longer a creature isolated from

the rest of the world due to his illiteracy and general inability to communicate. Similarly, in Harris's novels, education is a key concept: "it is around Lecter that a debate about the relationship between conceptions of 'civilisation' and what it means to be 'human' takes place" (A. Smith, *Gothic* 149). Lecter is far more educated and knowledgeable than the rest of characters in the novel, but he is a ruthless murderer. Lecter is an educated and civilized monster capable of understanding things that police cannot. Harris raises the question of whether education really means an advanced state of humanity. On the one hand, in *Frankenstein* education contributes to counteract the wild state of the Monster, but in Lecter's case, education does not stand for civilization. Being highly educated does not stop Lecter from murdering (in fact, it gives him an edge and an advantage as predator), but it does humanize Shelley's Monster. Transitional Vampires are well-educated and humanized creatures; nevertheless, all their knowledge does not exclude the fact that they are monsters. In Gothic, education is used as a tool to question what it means to be human or not.

Vampires as Rebellious Outcasts

During the twentieth century, heroes and heroines rebelling against the prejudices and wrong-doings of society are idealized. As a result of their rebellious attitude, Transitional Vampires are romanticized and perceived as glamorous figures. As outsiders, Transitionals' lives seem to be glamorous and mysterious. In *Reading the Vampire*, Ken Gelder refers to Rice's vampires and affirms that in her novels, being a vampire implies having an elegant and sophisticated life: "to be a vampire is to be 'cultured' – that is, to have 'aristocratic' tastes" (119). This idealized image of the outcast aristocrat starts to be shaped in the nineteenth century by John Polidori with *The Vampyre* and the influence of Lord Byron. In *The Lure of the Vampire*, Milly Williamson notes that Polidori "was Byron's

physician and travelling companion” and was inspired by him to create his vampire, Lord Ruthven (36). Byron was forced to live as an expatriate as a result of his tainted reputation—he was accused of “infidelity, incest, homosexuality and debt” (36). Williamson argues that Byron’s bohemian feel helped to shape the ambiguous figure of the aristocratic vampire: “It is a figure which is deeply ambivalent, pointing simultaneously in opposing directions, from political radicalism to aristocrat elitism, from fascination to contempt” (36). Byron’s influence on the figure reached a height of popularity in the twentieth century: “Byronism helped to shaped a new kind of rebel who comes to enter the twentieth century—the bohemian—a figure who was very much about cutting *the figure* of the rebel, and the vampire also comes to adopt the pose of this emerging bohemianism” (37). Williamson has noted that vampires are not only seen as fascinating and heroic characters, but also as figures to be imitated:

That the vampire figure has transformed from a figure of fascination to a figure of emulation signals not so much changes in attitudes towards authority, as it implies how those broader social changes are related to changes in attitudes towards the ‘self’ in the twentieth century. The vampire suggests an attractive outsiderdom—even bohemianism—in a culture where a dominant experience for the self is predominantly marginalization and outsiderdom. (35-36)

Williamson affirms that this change in the perception of vampires is an indication of the social changes of the twentieth century. This is a period in which going against the rules of society is admired because it implies courage, and insight. Carol A. Senf, in “Dracula: The Unseen face in the Mirror,” affirms that “vampires in the twentieth century have been perceived as more or less attractive rebel figures, ones who choose to live outside society”

(qtd. in Williamson 30). The change in attitude of Transitional Vampires toward life and society affects the way they are perceived in the twentieth century. According to Senf, the “refusal to live by the rules of their society” exists in all vampires, but it is during the twentieth century that their rebellion makes them heroes and heroines because of “a change attitude towards authority” in society (qtd. in Williamson 30). Transitional Vampires are the perfect means to represent the tortured hero rebelling against the injustices of the world. This attitude transforms the figure of the vampire into one of the most popular and admired creatures in the Gothic tradition.

Regarding the Contemporary Vampire

Ecocriticism

In the 1990's, ecocriticism emerged as a new kind of literary criticism concerned primarily with environmental issues; more specifically, ecocriticism studies the relationship between the environment and literature. In “Ecocriticism: Interdisciplinary Study of Literature and Environment,” Jelica Tošić notes that the meaning of the word ecocriticism refers to the relationship there is between organisms and their surroundings:

Eco is short of *ecology*, which is concerned with the relationships between living organisms in their natural environment as well as their relationships with that environment. By analogy, ecocriticism is concerned with the relationships between literature and environment or how man's relationships with his physical environment are reflected in literature. (44)

While ecocriticism is a discipline that focuses on the way humans relate to their environment and how this is portrayed in texts, this critical approach is not limited to the study of literature; it also reflects on other cultural creations, such as cinema. According to

Michael P. Cohen in "Blues in the Green: Ecocriticism Under Critique," ecocritics analyze what humans undergo as a result of their relation with their environment: "Ecocriticism focuses on literary (and artistic) expression of human experience primarily in a naturally and consequently in a culturally shaped world: the joys of abundance, sorrows of deprivation, hopes for harmonious existence, and fears of loss and disaster" (10). The pleasure and the suffering that result from our human interaction with nature are captured in literature and any other form of artistic expression. During the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, environmental crises shape the lifestyle of many around the world, and this phenomenon permeates different literary genres: "The domain of ecocriticism is very broad because it is not limited to any literary genre" (Tošić 44). Gothic is one of the genres that capture current environmental anxieties. Human indifference towards the destruction of our biodiversity, the continuous threat of environmental catastrophes, and the hope of a better future for both nature and humans become manifest as palpable fears in literature and films from this period.

EcoGothic

Environmental awareness seems to be a new motif incorporated into Gothic literature and cinema during the late twentieth century, but in fact it has been present for centuries. In "Defining the EcoGothic," Andrew Smith and William Hughes argue that the relation between ecocriticism and Gothic, or ecoGothic, is usually seen as a modern trend "given the current concerns about climate change"; however, they have been able to trace the origins of ecoGothic to Romanticism (1). For Romanticism, Nature was central. Romantics saw Nature as the ideal setting, contrasting with urban landscape. They questioned "progress" and industrial revolution. The Gothic and Romantic movements

began gaining adepts during the late eighteenth century as a reaction against the order and rationality of the Enlightenment. The ecological awareness of Gothic finds its origins within the Romantics, not within modern environmental issues (Smith and Hughes 1). What is considered a modern concern by many critics can actually be traced back to Gothic tales from the eighteenth century. In “Panic, Paranoia and Pathos: Ecocriticism in the Eighteenth-century Gothic Novel,” Lisa Kröger states that in novels from the late eighteenth century, the forest plays a role as integral as the ancient state or the castle (16). Kröger refers to Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* to indicate that in spite of the novel’s title, it has “three main settings: the castle, the abbey and the forest” (16). It is in the forest that the true identity of the prince becomes apparent (16). Similarly, Kröger argues that nature provides a solitude and freedom impossible to find in urban places in Ann Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho*: “The solitude nature provides is dependent on one thing: the absence of civilization” (17). The author suggests the city corrupts and the forest brings peace (17). Early Gothic tales depict social awareness of our dependence on nature. Smith and Hughes agree that: “While the origins of this ecoGothic can be traced back to Romanticism the growth in environmental awareness has become a significant development” (5). Ecological concerns have been present in Gothic since the eighteenth century, but have gained a more notorious role in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Theory on ecoGothic will support the argument that the Contemporary Vampire demonstrates modern environmental anxieties.

The gradual destruction of our planet and human indifference towards the environmental crisis permeate Gothic texts and films during the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The adaptability of Gothic to mirror the fears of a specific period makes it the perfect channel to transmit current environmental concerns. Smith and Hughes note that

modern Gothic becomes a field that captures anxieties related to “climate change and environmental damage,” and it “provides a culturally significant point of contact between literary criticism, ecocritical theory and political process” (5). Gothic stories that reflect upon the ecological crisis of the planet raise awareness in the audience. The societal concerns related to our natural surroundings, such as natural disasters, destruction of biodiversity and scarcity of resources, shape many of these narrations. The fears of society are appropriated by Gothic to produce horror. In “A Gothic Apocalypse: Encountering the Monstrous in American Cinema,” Susan J. Tyburski notes that Gothic apocalyptic films “depict the transformation of our natural environment into something monstrous” (150). What Tyburski denominates monsters are the different disasters that threaten humanity nowadays and that are captured in some Gothic films and texts as opposing forces. These monsters include shortages of resources, droughts, climate change, and others. According to Tyburski, humanity not only struggles with one “ecological monster,” but a combination of all the environmental disasters that proliferate around humans (148). Thus, Gothic adapts to current concerns and portrays contemporary ecological disasters as “monsters” to provoke terror: “The Gothic apocalyptic narrative employs monsters to generate a feeling of horror and revulsion, and may be the ultimate Gothic tale, as it portrays the disintegration not just of a specific individual or a specific place, but of life itself” (154). The intention of this kind of Gothic is not only to generate horror, but to make audiences aware of the ecological monsters and the results of their destructive action. During this period, Gothic texts and films capture humanity’s fear of destruction of our natural surroundings and its repercussions in our lives.

Deterioration of the environment is a common source of horror of contemporary Gothic. As Larry Fessenden states, “horror is not a genre. It’s a reality” (qtd. in Tyburski

157). Human reality, then, is the primary source of Gothic texts and films which provokes horror in audiences. Glenn Albrecht argues that climate change results in changes in people's habitat which generates chronic stress (qtd. in Tyburski 148). Nowadays, there are real documented cases of people affected by environmental disasters. For instance, Tyburski refers to a 17-year-old boy who was admitted to a psychiatric hospital in 2009. He refused to drink water, arguing that he was worried about droughts provoked by climate change (148). Albrecht coined a term for this condition, "solastalgia," which refers to "the pain experienced when there is recognition that the place where one resides and one loves is under immediate assault... a form of homesickness one gets when one is still at home" (qtd. in Tyburski 148). Seeing the natural environment damaged is accompanied by a feeling of helplessness which generates nostalgia and stress. Nowadays, the shortage of the natural resources, the extinction of species, the destruction of nature, environmental disasters and the threat to the existence of human kind give life to many "monsters" of Gothic. In Gothic texts and films, iconic figures like the vampire face similar changes in their surroundings and have to adapt to survive in a hostile world. Contemporary Vampires struggle with the same ecological anxieties that affect humanity during this period.

In the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, many Gothic texts and films portray societies that have been struck down by one or various ecological disasters and are forced to deal with the consequences. Hunger stands out as the most character-revealing repercussion of these ecological catastrophes. In "Locating the Self in the Post-apocalypse: The American Gothic Journeys of Jack Kerouac, Cormac McCarthy and Jim Crace," Andrew Smith argues that in Gothic post-apocalyptic settings, the real characters and personalities of people are exposed when they face hunger: "identities are tested against the demands of appetite" (140). Food shortage is a real problem affecting millions worldwide, and Gothic

becomes a perfect means to depict this fear of starvation, and how to be true to yourself and your morals when you and those around you face this situation. Smith affirms that Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* explores a post-apocalyptic environment and the struggle of humans trying not to lose their humanity in extreme and deadly scenarios, such as starvation. According to Smith, these are worlds that have been destroyed by natural or man-caused catastrophes, and people attempt to survive in a place that has lost all its meaning ("Locating" 138). The real challenge is then to preserve your values and humanity in a hostile environment. Smith notes that these narrations focus on the way people try to alleviate hunger and how this "marks you as either one of the 'good guys' or one of the villains" ("Locating" 140). Thus, one's real personality is unveiled when facing real starvation. Texts and films about Contemporary Vampires deal with the consequences of facing hunger and the moral dilemma of how far they are willing to go to obtain food. These contemporary narrations feature vampires that have to deal with blood shortage or blood substitutes that calm their appetite but that never fully satisfy. In the same way in which humans are tested in the post-apocalyptic text, modern Vampire narratives often explore their trepidations for obtaining blood in a rundown world.

Gothic texts and films have also captured society's fear of pandemics. During the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, plots often deal with incurable and deadly viruses spread worldwide, exterminating millions. In Gothic vampire tales, diseases and viruses are transmitted, degenerating and killing people. Since the early 1980's, when AIDS was first identified,⁹ the fear of contracting the virus spread worldwide, infecting contemporary Gothic and the cinema. In *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, Nina Auerbach notes that the epidemic

⁹ In "Origins of HIV and AIDS Pandemic," Paul H. Sharp and Beatrice H. Hahn go through the history of this virus and affirm that it was first identified in the 1980's.

of AIDS was made widely known in the early 1980's, a period that was already full of vampires in popular culture (175). A connection was almost instantly drawn between vampires and the virus because of its transmission by blood. Thus, the way blood is perceived in modern Gothic narrations about vampires gained a negative connotation: "once the etiology of AIDS became clear, blood could no longer be the life; vampirism mutated from hideous appetite to nausea" (175). After the identification of AIDS and a public declaration that it was transmitted through blood, the precious life-giving liquid was perceived as carrier of diseases, of vampirism in this case. In "Who Ordered the Hamburger with AIDS?," Xavier Aldana Reyes argues that vampire narrations have been associated to AIDS because both are associated to excessive sexual practices:

The figure of the vampire has been read alongside AIDS pandemic because they have both been perceived as sexually excessive and as evil products of sin. This rhetoric of disease, which saw philosophers establishing theoretical connections between essential bodily emissions and impurity or abjection, is one that has permeated the cultural spectrum of the twentieth century and, more general, vampire lore itself. (58)

The act of sucking blood from another being is seen, many times, as sexual and passionate, but also as an immoral act. The interchange of bodily fluids and the way it is performed echoes sexual activity. From this moment on, vampire texts and films take a new path in which vampirism is no longer another species; it is now seen as a virus. Contemporary Vampires carry this stigma connected to viruses, particularly those which are sexually transmitted.

Globalgothic

During the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Gothic went from being associated to specific (usually European) geographical locations to being a worldwide phenomenon. The globalization implies the genre integrates motifs and monsters from other cultures. In the introduction to *GlobalGothic*, Glenis Byron points out that Gothic is now cross-cultural due to the increasing integration of the global economy (1). According to Byron, critics in the 1990's from around the world become aware of their own countries' supernatural traditions not only the ones emerging from Anglo-European forms (1). Some of these Gothic forms find their origins in Anglo-European traditions, but some others are endemic of different regions: "globalgothic is as likely to focus upon such creatures as soucouyants, La Llorona, pontianaks and onryō as upon the ghosts, doubles and so on familiar to readers of Western gothic" (7). These are not traditional Gothic creatures, but they can be the protagonists of these narrations. Byron notes that during this period there is "also increasing evidence of the emergence of cross-cultural and transnational gothics" (2). Gothic benefits and develops from the exchange of traditions from around the world and becomes a globalized genre. As a result, Gothic can no longer be categorized as a genre that belongs to a specific location: "in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries gothic was actually progressing far beyond being fixed in terms of any geographically circumscribed mode" (1). The decentralization of the genre contributes to the emergence of new Gothic forms; for instance, Gothic influenced by different regions can be identified, such as southern Gothic or Japanese Gothic or by its blending with other genres such as Sci-Fi or Steam Punk. Moreover, globalization involves a reformulation of traditional Gothic tropes in order to mirror new anxieties that are product of the international exchange (2). Cultural concerns also travel with people and become known in other regions. Byron

argues that as Gothic tropes are “dislocated from specific regions” (3), globalization transforms these tropes, favoring the appropriation and adaptation to different places. Gothic is one of many different means to reflect globalization, but as Byron claims, it is always “a ready-made language to describe whatever anxieties might arise in an increasingly globalized world” (2). Globalization contributes to the transformation of Gothic, which at the same time becomes a means to capture the effects of the globalized world.

Globalization contributes to the popularization of folkloric myths and creatures from different parts of the world, refreshing and reinvigorating the genre. As people mobilize from one place to another, they take with them their own traditions and beliefs. The interchange between cultures from different geographical locations spreads Gothic traditions. Byron affirms that globalgothic, a term that refers to the globalization of Gothic, implies that myths and folklore are adopted, recycled and commercialized for worldwide audiences (6). This globalization and commodification of Gothic has transformed and diversified the genre. At the same time, critics have become aware that old Gothic traditions have equivalents in other locations: “one of the effects of the increasing mobility and fluidity of people and products in the globalized world has been a growing awareness that the tropes and strategies Western critics have associated with the gothic, such as the ghost, the vampire and the zombie, have their counterparts in other cultures” (3). It is possible to find vampire-like figures in cultures from different regions. The globalization of this genre is a process that works in many directions. In spite of the diversification of Gothic, Byron points out that the figure of the vampire continues to be as present and popular as in the past and continues “to demonstrate what might appear to be an unnerving global reach” (7). Among Gothic monsters, vampires seem to have a never-ending presence in popular culture

due to their adaptability. Since the late twentieth century, films and texts about Contemporary Vampires confirm this globalization and portray anxieties from around the world. The Contemporary Vampire is, like most of its human counterparts, a global citizen.

Atavism

Human devolution is one of the anxieties captured by contemporary Gothic. Atavism is a concept linked to anxieties related to evolution, and it might be defined as the reversion of ancestral traits in new generations. Although it is also one of the greatest fears of the Victorian society, atavism has become a recurrent motif in Gothic especially during the twenty-first century. In *A Geography of a Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares*, Robert Mighall explains that atavism comes from the word *atavus*, which means great-grandfather, and it refers to the resurgence of the characteristics of distant ancestors in new generations (144). The term was first used to refer to the return of physical traits, but with the advance of medical science in the nineteenth century, atavism was also associated to the reappearance of morals and personality attributes (144). Mighall notes that late-Victorian fiction is obsessed with the degeneration of the body, and that Gothic fiction reflecting this anxiety is a reaction to the concern generated by medical, biological, social and scientific discourses (130-131). The concepts of atavism and reversion as well as the evolutionary discourses contribute to make the human body a field in which anxieties bloom: “such concepts as atavism, reversion, and survival, evolutionary, ethnological, and criminological discourses helped to demarcate a new territory for Gothic representation, with the body providing a site for ancestral return” (153). The body becomes the place in which ancient terror may be reborn. The focus on the devolution of the body does not disappear from fiction with the Victorian era; it is continuously dislocated and adapted to

new periods of time (138). Thus, fears of “evolutionary reversion” adapt to specific-body anxieties. The monsters that provoke terror in Gothic narrations that reflect this social fear are no longer “other” creatures, but physically or psychologically degenerated humans. In *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the “Fin de Siècle,”* Kelly Hurley points out that atavism is the Gothic synonym of evolution: “the theories of criminal ‘atavism’ and ‘degeneration’ are ‘gothic’ versions of evolutionism—discourses that emphasized the potential in differentiation and changeability of the human species” (qtd. in Mighall 131). Thus, the resurgence of ancestral traits is considered evolution in Gothic. Devolution is paradoxically the next evolutionary step for a species. A great number of texts and films about Contemporary Vampires deal with atavism and suggest that the figure of the vampire exhibits a devolution.

Atavism, or “evolutionary reversion,” suggests that ancient traits that have been absent for generations may reappear, but it also implies that the latest traits of human evolution may disappear as a product of this devolution. Morals and intelligence are two of the human characteristics that usually deteriorate faster in these texts. According to Mighall, the term atavism, also known as “psychiatric Darwinism,” was popularized in Britain during the nineteenth century “to explain the importance of biological and hereditary factors in ‘manufacturing’ deviant or criminal individuals” (143). In other words, atavism was used to explain criminal and deviant behavior of certain individuals, since in the nineteenth century, criminal behavior was seen as a primitive trait not characteristic of a civilized person. It was claimed that criminals behave immorally due to devolution. Daniel Tuke affirms that “psychiatric Darwinism” suggests that a morally insane person behaves in an uncivilized way “because he [or she] literally regresses or reverts to an earlier ancestral stage of development” (qtd. in Mighall 142-143). This term explains the return of attributes

that, instead of moving forwards with the evolution of humans, seem to devolve to a previous state. Just as ancient traits return, modern ones revert. In *Body and Mind*, Henry Maudsley points out that morality is one of the first human traits that tends to degenerate because it is one of the latest additions to the human mental evolution; thus, it is one of the less stable. As a result, when there is mental degeneration, morals are the first to disappear, thus unleashing a more primitive and rooted behavior (qtd. in Mighall 145). However, morality is not the only evolved human attribute affected by atavism. Maudsley argues that an individual who has reverted also shows deterioration in intelligence: “in the degeneration of the highest intelligence there would appear to be a reversion to the lower form of human intelligence, or even sometimes to the type of animal mental development” (qtd. in Mighall 143). Degeneration of the mind inevitably results in a primitive human and one that is often equated to the figure of the criminal. Atavism will prove to be relevant in the analysis of the Contemporary Vampire. In this third and last evolutionary stage of this Gothic figure, the vampire often struggles not to degenerate to its more primeval form.

Review of the Origins of Film Studies

The history of film¹⁰ has been a stony one since its invention at the end of the nineteenth century because as an art, it has always been subjugated to literature. Both genres have been constantly confronted with each other, often to prove which one has more influence on the other and which one is a superior medium to tell stories. In this almost endless battle, literature has often been granted an advantageous position. In *Cine / literatura ritos de pasaje*, Sergio Wolf states that literature has been referred to as the one

¹⁰ From now on, the words film and cinema are going to be used interchangeably.

that motivated cinema; thus, literature becomes the “origin” of the other (18). According to Carmen Peña-Ardid in her book *Literatura y cine una aproximación comparativa*, there are many comparative studies that have contributed to establish hierarchy and rivalries between film and literature; in which cinema has been consigned to an inferior position than literature and sometimes even considered to be under literature’s tutelage (21). It seems that film was not considered an art in itself and that it depends on literature and its techniques to narrate. This subjugation increases when a film is adapted from a written text—technique that became popular during the first half of the twentieth century—because cinema was not believed to have the tools to tell its own story. Peña-Ardid explains that this lack of elements ratifies the inferiority of cinema: “abundan los análisis cuyo propósito no parece otro que el *confirmar* la inferioridad divulgadora y reduccionista de los films creados a partir de textos literarios; inferioridad que se atribuye bien a las carencias expresivas del lenguaje cinematográfico” (23). Critics did not believe that the cinematographic language was capable of narrating in the same way as literature. Even though film was considered inferior in many ways, written texts, especially novels, continued to be adapted to cinema during the twentieth century. Alberto Insúa affirmed that adaptations continued because films reached bigger audiences than books and thus generated more profit: “Indudablemente. Las novelas al pasar a la pantalla, pierden en lo literario, pero como el cine tiene más público que el libro, la popularidad del autor y la venta de sus novelas ganan extraordinariamente” (qtd. in Peña-Ardid 26). A story adapted to cinema was believed to lose quality. Nevertheless, cinema became popular because it is an excellent means to reach people, even though it was considered to have a poorer capacity to narrate.

The process of adapting a written text to film is what Sergio Wolf calls transposition. He affirms that transposition has been inaccurately confused with a

translation of a written text to cinema. A translation occurs within the same discipline or code, the written word, in the case of literature (30). A translation from literature to cinema is impossible because both use different methods; one works with language and the other with a dynamic codification of images and sounds: “si la discusión se concentrara sobre las palabras confrontadas con la imágenes y los sonidos, sería un dilema absurdo, por tratarse de sistemas disimiles, y no de sistemas análogos” (34). Therefore, it is unfeasible to affirm that cinema is the exact rendition of a written text because both disciplines operate under different systems. Besides, a translation implies an inescapable tie with the original (30), as well as the obvious subjugation to it because the translation will never be as exact and true as the original. Wolf notes that this mistake happens because literary and cinematographic critics are unaware of the existence of a cinematographic writing and all its elements which are completely independent from the literary writing (40): “se tiende a creer que la escritura es solo literaria, o la que está relacionada con las palabras de los textos que se dicen en un filme, y no con la escritura específica del cine, realizada a través de todos sus materiales: el encuadre, el tipo de luz o imagen, los movimientos de cámara, la manera de cortar o cambiar de escena, la entonación de los actores” (40). Cinema has its own language to refer to the elements and techniques used to create it. Framing, types of light, camera movements, cutting or changing scenes are terms that are typical of cinema and originally alien to literature. Wolf claims that this is what is known as cinematographic writing, and it was proposed by the theorists Alexander Astruc y André Bazin (40). Both theorists maintain that film directors write in cinematographic language, and that makes them equal to novelists (40-41). Film directors have their own language and indeed write with it; therefore, cinema must not be taken as the exact rendition of literature. Both genres can be compared and contrasted, but it cannot be affirmed that one is subjugated to the other. Wolf

notes that in order to understand both literature and cinema it is necessary to relinquish any positive or negative attribution and eliminate any hierarchy (29).

For those theorists who supported cinema, it became primordial to define it as an art in itself independent from literature. Peña-Ardid explains that in the 1970s the Russian formalists claimed that film is an art because it transfigures and builds an entire new and independent meaningful system (52). Theorists claimed that cinema had its own language, techniques and semiology, and it is during the 1970s that the formalists made a significant advance in the cinematographic theory: “el punto más original del trabajo formalista es su análisis del cine como ‘lenguaje’ o, mejor como ‘lengua’. Veremos proliferar entonces toda una serie de conceptos lingüísticos—la noción de cine-palabra o de cine-frase—combinados con otros procedentes del estudio de la literatura—noción de cine-metáfora, de cine-estilística etc” (Peña-Ardid 64). Additionally, Peña-Ardid explains that even though cinema borrows elements from other genres—such as literature—, film is an art because it takes those elements and approaches them differently: “el cine no es sólo un arte del montaje porque yuxtaponga signos icónicos distintos de los signos lingüísticos, o porque presente de diversas formas los acontecimientos perceptivos, sino porque articula y opone unidades semánticas cuyo sentido puede ser estudiado” (108). Cinema is a self-contained genre. It presents elements that are specific and different from other art forms, making possible the study of films. This new way of presenting elements can be studied and analyzed, and that is what makes film an independent art. Motion pictures as many other genres are capable of telling a story because they have their own techniques. Peña-Ardid notes that each system has its own signifiers. Stories do not depend on words or images to be narrated; therefore, the same story can be told in a ballet, a novel, a play, a film or a conversation because what matters is the meaning of the events and situations of the

narration (Jacques Aumont qtd. in Peña-Ardid 129). All these genres, the author explains, possess their own narrative codes—whether images or language—and share other elements such as temporality and sequentiality (129) that allow them to tell a story. Although it has elements in common with other arts, especially literature, cinema possesses a language of its own that defines it as the seventh art.

Both cinema and literature share a common ground that makes them comparable. However, these two genres not only have similarities, but also borrow and lend elements to each other. In the 1940s the film maker Sergei Eisenstein, who was interested in the comparative study between cinema and other forms of art, was the first to discover structural equivalencies between film and other genres, especially literature (Peña-Ardid 71). Different genres such as cinema, literature and theater take elements from each other. Peña-Ardid notes that because of this transposition of elements, it is necessary to establish rules to compare them: “cuando no se piensa sólo en influencias temáticas sino en una transposición de elementos formales de un sistema semiótico a otro—el cine y la novela en nuestro caso—resultan más necesarios que nunca unos principios metodológicos que permitan homogeneizar, como primera medida, los componentes del discurso narrativo filmico y literario susceptibles a ser confrontados en una relación de equivalencia ” (17). The comparison between both genres is inevitable because of the constant exchange. Therefore, it is crucial to standardize the components of these forms of art to compare them. When the text is perceived as an assortment of statements similar to other homogenized elements that belong to other semiotic systems, it gives new possibilities to the reader/spectator to find explicit references and structures that have been borrowed from other systems, even when these structures have been modified to fit the new semiotic system (Peña-Ardid 15). Cinema is particularly compared to literature because of the

similarities they both have to narrate stories: “muchas semejanzas de la novela con el cine surgen, precisamente, del modo en que este se introduce en el discurso y transmite la información al lector—y, por otro, la intertextualidad, ‘el diálogo más o menos audible pero siempre interminable que el texto establece con otros textos’” (89). Both cinema and literature have a never ending interrelationship with other texts. They constantly influence, and imitate each other. It is precisely this intertextuality that allows them to be compared.

One of the most notorious common characteristics between literature and cinema is that both try to reflect real life. In the words of Jose-Carlos Mainer, in the prologue to Peña-Ardid’s book, *Literatura y cine una aproximación comparativa*, both literature and cinema are just an interpretation of life: “Sabemos hace mucho que la literatura no es la vida. Algunos ignoran que el cine, tan usual, tan cercano, tampoco lo es sino en la forma vicaria de la imitación” (9). Both genres reflect life. The same way they influenced one another, they are influenced by their social context. According to Viktor Sklovski in his book *Cine y lenguaje*, the evolution of cinema is developed alongside to that of literature using similar methods to tell stories: “en general, el cine se desarrolla paralelamente a la literatura, es decir opera con el mismo material semántico: la descripción o, mejor dicho, la representación de las acciones de los hombres, de su destino, de la naturaleza, y la propia elección del material cinematográfico está sustancialmente determinada por la literatura” (105). Similar to literature, cinema nurtures from its historical context and works as a mirror of it. Peña-Ardid claims that much of the popularity of cinema among writers is due to its intertextuality and its capacity to transmit culture. (98). Cinema and literature emulate life and adapt to their surroundings, and it is because of this simulation that it is common to find similarities: “analogías entre la imagen real y la reflejada por el espejo, o entre el espejo y la pantalla—, que crea una apariencia de realidad, un mundo propio,

simbólico, evocador de ‘la vida virtual’” (Peña-Ardid 131). As well as literature, cinema has proved to be a great means to portray society, which is one of the main reasons it gained so many supporters and followers. In this study, films and literary texts are going to be analyzed based on this assumption that both mirror the society that creates them. Although cinema and literature are genres in themselves and each is a valid one, for this investigation films are going to be analyzed as texts, through the lens of literary, not film studies.

The studies of cinema and literature underwent a transformation during the 1960s and 1970s. Peña-Ardid notes that new methods (structuralism and semiology) to analyze narrations establish the parallelism, and differences between both genres, and the way in which they influence each other’s telling maintaining their own autonomy and individuality (87). In this period, both genres are compared and contrasted, but the new methods understand that both are independent systems that interact with each other but that do not depend on each other. Cinema is established as a form of art and respected as one. Critics and theorists no longer believe that film owed almost everything to literature. The focus of film studies is now to find the affinities between both genres and the way they influence each other, such as the way literature has lent cinema subjects, narrative techniques, transpositions of different literary genres, and the concept of the author; film studies also consider more complex phenomena, such as when literature borrows cinematographic procedures (Peña-Ardid 90). In the 60s and 70s, film is studied under a new light, one that acknowledges cinema as the seventh art and approaches it as an autonomous genre.

When comparing cinema and literature, all their similarities to tell stories seem to be obvious. In *Film and literature*, Morris Beja affirms that “both are forms of telling stories, and their modes of telling those stories are comparably open. So basic indeed are these

similarities that they over-shadow many of the differences” (qtd. in Peña-Ardid 132). However, Peña-Ardid affirms that cinema was the definite solution to the reproduction of movement that other forms of art and literature had pursued (79). When film appeared, a new way to express and depict came with it as well. As Jean Mitry claims, art—such as painting, or literature—attempts to express movement because it does not have a way to do so directly, but cinema is able to show that movement: “si el arte traduce el movimiento, lo significa más de lo que lo expresa. Y no lo significa precisamente, sino porque no lo posee. El cine por el contrario, no lo significa: lo representa” (qtd. in Peña-Ardid 79). Peña-Ardid explains that when visual arts tried to “narrate” stories, they separated the text in pieces and placed them in a sequence of frames (129). Cinema provides numerous opportunities to narrate and show movement: “las posibilidades narrativas se incrementan de forma notable con la imagen filmica—móvil, múltiple y dispuesta en secuencia” (129). Cinema brought an innovating way of narrating stories and translating movement that offered a whole new world of possibilities to film directors.

The possibilities of cinema to narrate and show are almost unlimited. However, often all its elements are underestimated and overlooked when it is compared to literature, thus weakening what could be an enriching analysis of a film. According to Peña-Ardid, when analyzing a film, most of the time only the image is taken into account, leaving aside all the elements that deepen its narration: “el cine se considera casi siempre únicamente desde el punto de vista de la imagen y no desde la heterogeneidad de sus materias de expresión—imagen, palabras, música ruidos—, cuando, de hecho, sólo atendiendo a la información que se transmite mediante todos esos canales en un film se pueden establecer comparaciones ‘generales’ con la novela” (156). The variety of elements—some which belong only to film—give cinema a capacity to express ideas differently from any other

form of art. This unique form of expression can be contrasted and compared to that of the novel or any other art. Similar to literature, the images in a film are figurative because both use characters, behavior and fictitious incidents; however, cinema has other elements to narrate, such as the variations in the rhythm, music and combinations of color (130). All the elements that belong only to cinema define it as an autonomous art. Furthermore, an element that is borrowed from literature and modified in cinema is *thought*. Peña-Ardid notes that although a thought cannot be seen in an image—such as in film—, it can be heard (175). In the same way in which other art forms borrow elements from other disciplines, when cinema takes an element, it adapts it to the possibilities and means of film. Cinema has a great variety of techniques to tell stories, many of which have been borrowed from other art forms and adapted to film. All the elements contribute to the understanding of the narration and the genre and cannot be overlooked, as they often are.

Wolf refers to specific problems that appear in transposition. As mentioned before, the author affirms that when a written text is adapted to a film, it is a process of transposition because the work is taken from one system to a different one. In other words, the text is rewritten in a new different code that has its own rules and techniques. When film directors transpose a novel into a film, they might find what are typical problems in this process: “la extensión o la economía, el diálogo teatral o literario frente al diálogo cinematográfico, la voz *off* y sus variantes—monólogos interiores, pensamientos, fluir de la conciencia—, y el punto de vista o la problemática de los narradores” (Wolf 49). In literature, writers have more freedom to extend their work to go in depth into the mind of the characters, flashbacks, backgrounds, and descriptions (49). Authors have the possibility to create and develop a world as they please. Unlike literature, in cinema there is a tendency or rather a need to economize (49) because cinema has to adjust to a time frame. The

dialogue represents a challenge because, as Wolf explains, in literature, language tends to be more poetic, not like cinematographic language that needs to be more fluid and less intellectual (56). Voice-over is a cinematographic element in which the person talking cannot be seen. It is also considered an element borrowed from literature. In that case, voice-over would be an adaptation of an interior monologue, stream of consciousness or a first person retrospective writing (61). In the transposition of a written work to literature, film directors need to employ and adapt some literary elements that are not part of cinema, and they succeed using the resources available in cinema.

Conclusion

This thesis is the result of a multidisciplinary research. New Historicism and Gothic are the structural basis of this study as they allow the joint analysis of literature and film using a variety of discourses and theories. The present theoretical framework combines academic data from various fields. Both New Historicism and Gothic contribute to a broader understanding of the evolution of the figure of the vampire and the way in which it adapts to time and place. Written texts and films contribute to the study of this Gothic figure in particular ways, giving views specific to each form of art. A first step to appreciate the contributions of these forms of art is to establish them as separate genres. The review of film elements and filmic jargon in this chapter introduces the key nomenclature and theories that are key to understand this genre. However, it is necessary to emphasize that for the purpose of this study, texts and films will be analyzed through the lens of literary studies, not film studies. Even though cinema and literature are valid and respected genres on their own, this investigation addresses both from the perspective of New Historicism which states that film is a cultural text. The aim of this study is to analyze the way in which

the figure of the vampires adapts to the time and society that creates it, and the way this is captured in literature and cinema. Analyzing differences or similarities in the adaptation of this Gothic monster from one genre to the other is not an objective in this particular investigation. Both literature and cinema about vampires will be studied using as theoretical background New Historicism and Gothic and a combination of theories and concepts from different areas.

Besides these two main approaches, other theories contribute to determine the first category of the vampire here proposed, the Primeval Vampire. Charles Darwin's theory of hybridity enables us to consider this vampire as a fusion of both the animal and human world. Vampires present characteristics of both worlds, with some of these traits disappearing with time and some others becoming more noticeable. For the Primeval Vampire, the theory of the mirror stage by Jacques Lacan will be employed to emphasize the vampire's animalistic behavior. The fact that these creatures do not project a reflection in the mirror suggests that they did not go through this stage of human growth. These Primeval Vampires never defined themselves as individuals; therefore, they act as wild creatures, merely following their instincts. Mesmerism is another concept that plays an important role in this first category. These vampires use their mental control to overpower their victims' minds and obtain blood. This power is demonstrated through the gaze of the vampire. This is one of the traits that stands out in both films and literature. The gaze of vampires shows their desire for the victim; thus, victims are then objectified and lose their human qualities because they represent only nourishment for a vampire. Some of these theories will still be valid for the next categories of vampires, the Transitional and the Contemporary Vampire, but other theories will also be used to analyze the evolution of this Gothic figure.

For the second category here proposed, the Transitional Vampire, new theories and concepts will be used. Liminality will help to define the Transitional Vampire as an ambiguous character that is in between stages. This vampire is neither an amoral monster nor a completely humanized figure. It is also necessary to study the Americanization of the figure of the vampire because it is in this period that vampires are adopted by literature of the United States. The relevance of this relocation is that now vampires start to reflect anxieties from different geographical locations. Some of the concepts used to define the Primeval Vampire are also relevant for this and the next category. Lacan's mirror stage, for example, will contribute to prove the fact that Transitional—and later Contemporary—Vampires recognize themselves as individuals. Thus, they see their own evil and try to control it. Similarly, the notion of the gaze will be used to demonstrate that Transitionals do not perceive humans as vessels of blood. They start to see humans for what they really are. Thus, people are not objectified by these vampires. The theories and concepts used in this section will be used to prove that Transitional Vampires begin the process of humanization of this Gothic figure.

Similarly, for the Contemporary Vampire, some theories will continue to be used, such as the mirror stage, mesmerism and the gaze, but also new concepts are necessary to define this third category. Ecocriticism will play a major role in the analysis of this vampire. It helps to understand the way in which Contemporary Vampires mirror modern concerns. In addition, today's vampires are global figures. Cultures from around the world have adopted and adapted vampires to capture their own concerns. The fear of degeneration has always been present in society, and similar to Gothic and the figure of the vampire, this anxiety adapts to each period of time. Atavism is the return of ancestral traits. This concept will be used to demonstrate that Contemporary Vampires portray this society's fear which is

usually triggered by hunger in texts and films about vampires. These theories and concepts will contribute to define the Contemporary Vampire as one that captures the struggles of modern society and different cultures. The figure of the vampire adapts to each culture and time, immortalizing their anxieties.

CHAPTER II

Antecedents:

A Historical Glance at Gothic Literature and the Vampire

Origins of the Word “Gothic” and its Transformation into a Literary Genre

Conventionally, British¹¹ Gothic literature has mirrored society and its anxieties. Identical to the transformations of society, Gothic literature has mutated century after century since its beginning three centuries back. Although this kind of literature appeared in the mid-eighteenth century in its written form, it finds its origins long before that in oral tradition; this chapter will focus, first, on the beginnings of Gothic as a written form, and second, on the genesis of the vampire in culture and fiction.

Gothic may be characterized best by darkness and gloominess. This association of the genre can be traced to its etymological origins in the word *Goth*. In order to define the word *Gothic*, we have to go back to Germany between the third and the fifth centuries AD when the Goths, a Germanic tribe, inhabited the land. In their joined-work, *The Gothic*, David Punter and Glennis Byron note that the Goths performed a noteworthy role in the fall of the Roman Empire and settled kingdoms in Rome, France and Italy (3). The Goths invaded and settled in other regions of Europe, and along with devastation, they brought their “barbaric” culture to other parts of the continent. Known for their cruelty and uncivilized behavior, the Goths swept every region they reached, earning their reputation for savagery from their early beginnings. Punter and Byron explain that the notorious tribe

¹¹This study will analyze works of writers from Europe, the United States and other latitudes; however, the main theoretical focus will be on British Gothic literature as it best illustrates the transformation of the vampire figure from its beginnings, but also because North American and other kinds of Gothic are born out of British Gothic, admittedly, with its own peculiarities.

“left no literature or art of their own, they came to be remembered only as the invaders and destroyers of the great Roman civilization” (3); however, in spite of the absence of literature, their contribution to the connotation of the term Gothic is unquestionable. It is because of the Goths that the term has been related to everything that is gloomy and ominous and has been used to categorize people and objects aesthetically. The Goths are inevitably connected to darkness and savagery, and this connection seems to be due to the role of this tribe in the fall of the Roman Empire and the fame they achieved during and after its fall.

During the Renaissance in Europe, almost ten centuries after the Goth invasion, the word Gothic was used to refer to the Medieval Ages and everything related to it (Punter and Byron 3). The lack of information about the Medieval Era created a mysterious and sinister atmosphere surrounding it. As Robin Sowerby notes in “The Goths in History and Pre-Gothic Gothic,” the lack of knowledge there was in the Renaissance, about the period after the fall of the Roman Empire created an immediate link of everything that is dark to that period of time: “the dark ages that succeeded the fall of Rome may be called dark principally because not much is known about them, and in the Renaissance less was known than now” (33). Therefore, this lack of knowledge contributed to the immediate connection to the primitive tribe of Goths and the destruction that followed them during and after the decline of the Roman Empire. During the Renaissance everything that seemed to be out of place or that had a halo of mysteriousness, darkness or the supernatural was classified as Gothic.

This tendency to classify everything dark and mysterious as Gothic can be seen in the field of architecture. Gothic architecture emerged as a style during the Medieval period; however, it was not called Gothic until the Renaissance. It is clear that the Gothic

architectural style was not developed by the Germanic tribe, the Goths. It was only named after them because of their dark “Medieval” nature. In the seventeenth century, constructions that differed from the classical creations of the Renaissance, which resembled the aesthetics of the Medieval Age, were inevitably called Gothic. According to Catherine Spooner in *Contemporary Gothic*, “The term ‘Gothic’ re-emerged in the seventeenth century, in Britain as a means of retrospectively describing a style of medieval ecclesiastical architecture, one that ignored the clean lines and curves of Classical styles and instead embellished its constructions with pointed arches, grotesque angles and excrescences, gargoyles, stiff elongated figures and elaborate detail” (13). This Gothic style can be appreciated mostly in cathedrals constructed during the Medieval Era. It is ironic that a term with such a dark background and connotation was used to indicate the style of such places of worship. Christian architects made this kind of construction popular during the Middle Ages since they were intended to elevate the human spirit. According to Richard Davenport-Hines in *Gothic: Four Hundred Years of Excess, Horror, Evil and Ruin*, the Gothic aesthetic achieved “some of its finest glories in cathedrals (2), and Gothic architects let “Medieval gothic’s intentions soared like the roofs, towers and spires of its churches to elevate the human spirit and celebrate the living God” (2). These elaborate and eccentric structures gave the common spectator the impression that the building stretches up, reaching towards heaven. Architects of the Renaissance praised this medieval style and tried to recreate it in their time. Today, both the medieval constructions and the posterior Renaissance recreations are classified as Gothic. As Andrew Smith notes in *Gothic Literature*, Gothic is known in architecture as the revival or cultural reconstruction that took place in Britain when architectural structures followed the medieval aesthetic (2). This interest and persistence in recreating the tendency associated with that ancient Germanic

civilization contributed to the survival and continuity of the term.

The eighteenth century was quite fructiferous for the word Gothic as it gained a new positive connotation. In the past, the term had a negative undertone because of its connection to the Goths and the mysterious Medieval Era, but during the eighteenth century, people's attitudes towards this medieval past turned radically. The Goths were no longer considered barbarians. They were now considered heroic. As Punter and Byron note, the term became aesthetically and politically contradictory (4). Before the eighteenth century, the term had been related to everything that is disorganized, out of place, strange and dark. However, during the eighteenth century, the Medieval Era and the Goths that were once negatively stereotyped became idealized. Initially, the Goths were remembered negatively because of their cruel and despicable participation in the fall of the Roman Empire. But in the 1700s, their participation was seen under a different perspective, and the tribe of the Goths was then considered "brave and virtuous" (Punter and Byron 4). This change in attitude occurred because the Goths were portrayed not only as invaders of other countries, but also as settlers who established a system that worked as a government that survived in England. Spooner states that, "although Gothic architecture fell out of style during the Renaissance, the term 'Gothick' took on new significance for the antiquarians of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For these men, 'Gothick' could be appropriated as representing a specifically British cultural tradition—a tradition of political freedom and progressivism" (13). What was once perceived as warmongering was now seen as a "strong belief in justice and liberty" (Punter and Byron 4). The Goths were appraised as the precursors of the values of liberty and righteousness that gave origin to the system of justice and government of eighteenth-century Britain. The once-believed-barbarians were now perceived as the ones who stopped Roman advance and restored

freedom for those under the control of Romans. For that reason, the Goths became heroes and role models. They were the ones who “recovered an original social order that had been replaced by foreign authoritarian rule. In this rethinking of history, rather than being seen as the despoilers of civilized values, the Goths were celebrated as the *source* of these values” (Punter and Byron 5). In spite of their path of destruction, the Goths saved the places they invaded from Roman domination. Since the Goth participation in the fall of the Roman Empire was reconsidered, the term Gothic also gained a new positive connotation during the eighteenth century.

Similar to the evolution of the word “Gothic,” the malleability of Gothic literature has allowed this genre to adapt to the conditions that surround it. Spooner supports the fact that the term Gothic had a double denotation: “On the one hand, Gothic represented a mythical medieval Britain, where chivalry held sway, social order prevailed and religious belief was unchallenged. On the other, it represented a time of barbarity and feudalism before the blessed arrival of the Enlightenment and the benefits of science and reason that it bestowed” (14). With time, the term gained a new positive significance in Europe, showing its adaptability, an attribute that has characterized it throughout time. Although Gothic was associated to both an idealized past of courage, justice and pride, and to everything that represented barbarity and social disorder, it is noteworthy that one connotation does not overrule the previous one. Even when it gained a positive connotation, the term Gothic never lost its association to the mysterious and dark.

During the eighteenth century, the Enlightenment dominated philosophical and literary mainstream. Nevertheless, before the turn of the century, this rigid movement gave way to Romanticism, and its more somber branch, Gothic literature. The Enlightenment, known also as the Age of Reason in Britain, spread through Europe, and it was in that

century in which *reason* became the most popular and influential life principle. This intellectual movement stressed the importance of human reasoning over religion, and it was also alleged that every facet of human life could be improved through reasoning. Additionally, the Enlightenment overlapped the scientific revolution; thinkers were fascinated not only with reason but also with science. It was believed that a perfect social order and happiness could be achieved only through these two pillars. According to Davenport-Hines, during the Enlightenment there was a “vision of the universe governed by law, with its emphasis on the need for rationality, order, sanity and first principles” (3). It was a movement that stressed the individual’s good judgment, behavior and manners to achieve perfection and joy.

In the late eighteenth century, a new philosophical and artistic movement reacted against the Age of Reason; this novel movement became known as Romanticism. The Romantics battled against the order, rationality, and the idealization of human principles of the Enlightenment. This new movement did not support the use of science and reason in every aspect of life. In *Gothic Literature*, Andrew Smith claims that Romanticism “began in different countries (Britain, mainland Europe, and America) in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In Britain it is characterized by anti-Enlightenment tendencies and championed the importance of the imagination over the dictates of natural science” (183). Instead of the rigid way of thinking and inclinations of the Enlightenment thinkers, Romantics granted a superior role to the imagination. Gothic literature blossomed during Romanticism, given that it stands against the values and ideas of the Enlightenment. Catherine Spooner states that, “rather than seeing Gothic or Romanticism as subsidiary to the other, it makes more sense to regard them as twin impulses, often proceeding from the same set of ideas or coexisting within the same texts” (28). These anti-Enlightenment

movements share a common background and characteristics. Smith notes that both Gothic and Romantic literature have a similar interest in the sublime and emotions; moreover, Gothic influenced many Romantic writers, among them Byron, Coleridge, Keats and Percy Shelly (183). Romanticism and Gothic originated as emotional, aesthetic and philosophical reactions to the widespread way of thinking of the period that affirmed that people could achieve happiness through perfection (Davenport-Hines 2). Both movements influenced and enriched each other and more relevantly shared common motifs as both had an urge to go against the Enlightenment. In fact, the Romantic period is the establishment of Gothic as a literary movement.

Gothic rises as a literary movement in the eighteenth century. Although the term continued being used derogatively because of its relation to the Medieval, this fascination with the past built the foundations to establish the new literary genre. The first official Gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Novel*, was written by Horace Walpole in 1764. The book became the precursor of Gothic literature mainly in Britain, parts of Europe and North America. As Robin Sowerby claims in "The Goths in History and Pre-Gothic Gothic," the new usage of the term Gothic was coined by Walpole in his novel (25). Along with his transcendent novel, Walpole created the foundations of what Gothic literature would be in coming years. This English writer not only ventured to include the word in his title but also dared to include elements associated to that repudiated past. Interestingly, many of these new elements are now recognized as the basic elements of the literary genre. According to Fred Botting in "Gothic Darkly: Heterotopia, History, Culture," Walpole initiates Gothic Literature and sets a precedent of the elements that would characterize this genre: "Horace Walpole's novel, the first 'Gothic story', introduces many of the features that came to define a new genre of fiction, like the feudal historical and architectural

setting, the deposed noble heir and the ghostly, supernatural machinations” (14). Walpole’s novel is filled with features that would be present in Gothic stories throughout time. Its plot abounds with supernatural events, curses, setting, and characters that became Gothic archetypes. It was Walpole who appropriated the term to apply it to literature and the one who established the pattern for the genre. This iconic novel became the reference for all the Gothic writing that followed.

Gothic Archetypes and Features: from Its Beginnings to Modernity

One of the most particular characteristics of Gothic literature is its adaptation to the mutations of society. This literary movement adapts to the changes of society in such a way that texts of different Gothic authors reflect their social environment. Although it has undergone a continuous transformation since it began as a written form, some of the characteristics that were present in the first Gothic texts are still part of this genre. In spite of the transformations, some themes and motifs (such as death, decay, ruin, madness, haunting of places and people, among others) have survived up to the present and are considered emblematic of the genre. In *Gothic Literature*, Andrew Smith argues that some of these features are easy to recognize: “it is possible to identify certain persistent features which constitute a distinctive aesthetic. Representations of ruins, castles, monasteries, and forms of monstrosity, and images of insanity, transgression, the supernatural, and excess, all typically characterize the form” (4). According to Neil Cornwell in “European Gothic,” these themes and features of Gothic have been part of this kind of literature since its beginnings and are now seen as classical traits of Gothic literature:

What we may now see as ‘classical Gothic,’ then, will normally involve dynastic disorders, set at some temporal and spatial distance and in a castle

or manorial locale; defense, or usurpation, of an inheritance will threaten (and not infrequently inflict) violence upon hapless (usually female) victims amid a supernatural ambience. Often (but not always) the heroine will be saved, the villain unmasked and the supernatural phenomena dispersed (explained or confirmed, as the case may be). (39)

Castles, invasions, damsels in distress, and the supernatural in all its forms have been essential elements of Gothic literature throughout centuries. This tendency of incorporating elements that reflect society started with Horace Walpole. Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* marks the beginning of Gothic as a literary movement, but it also gave way to the archetypes and motifs of that tradition. According to Smith, as an anti-Enlightenment writer, Walpole deals with themes that go against the classical tendencies of the period. His novel shows an interest in the Medieval Age and elements related to it; Walpole reinvented some of these elements and incorporated them in literature, thus establishing a foundation for the literary movement. Furthermore, these components have been present in Gothic texts from Walpole's time up to the present:

Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* negotiates a series of anti-Enlightenment themes in its construction of a debate concerning the relationship between the medieval and the modern. The medieval, associated with castles and malign aristocrats, becomes recast as symbolically representing some highly politicized issues of the 1760s. Anti-Enlightenment ruins and irrationality can ultimately be decoded to reveal some historically specific political, social, and economic anxieties. (A. Smith, *Gothic* 18)

Castles and ruins, evil aristocrats, villains, and other elements, feature in Walpole's novel because they reflect the society of the 1760's, when *The Castle of Otranto* was written. But

they also become iconic symbols of Gothic literature for years to come. Therefore, Walpole establishes a literary genre that has its own archetypes, and incidentally sparks a movement that will adapt to mirror the period in which it is immersed. *The Castle of Otranto* is the steppingstone for writers to create Gothic texts. And through this type of literature they found an outlet to represent the political, social, and economic fears and concerns of their time.

Gothic literature adapts to the changes of society, so it portrays the current concerns. These adaptations are effortlessly confirmed in the setting of the Gothic story. Terrifying, dark, and particular settings are a vivid characteristic of the literary movement. In early Gothic, during the eighteenth century, many stories are frequently set around castles, ruins, abbeys, graveyards, and monasteries. These settings help writers to create the tone and are the ideal scenario for the characters and motifs to develop. The dreary ambience of these places is partly due to their distance from the rest of the world and from the daily life of town people. Structures such as castles, ruins, and graveyards may be part of some people's landscape, but they do not visit them often. This creates a distance between people and the Gothic construction, and even though a specific site might be close, they are not familiar to common people. Locals often chose not to go into them. This disconnection creates an uncertainty of what might be hidden in these structures, which generates fear and an immediate connection to the Medieval. Gothic writers place the structures physically close to people, but at the same time, they create an abysmal gap between them, instilling terror. Furthermore, other examples of early Gothic settings are convents, abbeys and monasteries, clearly remitting to a religious, principally Catholic, context. The detachment of villagers from these constructions allows characters to seclude themselves from the outside world and escape from any social context. As stated by Smith, it is ironic the way these places,

instead of encouraging religion, are used to leave society behind: “convents and monasteries appear to be places one goes to in order to escape a kind of worldliness, rather than to cultivate spirituality” (*Gothic* 24). These settings also demonstrate the Gothic tendency to favor distance—a main characteristic of the setting of Gothic stories of that period. Early Gothic writers take advantage of the geographical and often spiritual distance between these medieval structures, both defensive and religious, to foment the Gothic experience of the text.

These secluded and remote settings of the eighteenth-century Gothic mutate during the nineteenth century. In this century, stories are placed in urban—therefore, more familiar—areas. The distance of settings in the first Gothic writings is shortened, and in this second century of Gothic literature, people are inserted into the disturbing place: “[eighteenth-century settings] are replaced with something more disturbingly familiar: the bourgeois domestic world or the new urban landscape.” (Punter and Byron 26). In the nineteenth century, the settings are no longer distant from society; the prevalent setting is the home. The place in which people feel safe and protected becomes the source of the most terrifying anxieties. There is a change from sublime constructions, such as imposing castles, to simpler homes. In “Victorian Gothic,” Alexandra Warwick claims that in the 1840’s, during the Victorian period, Gothic literature undergoes a transformation concerning the fact that the setting and stories are placed in an urban context (30). Therefore, evil is no longer in the periphery; it shares the same space with the characters in the stories. This proximity is noticeable in Gothic stories of the nineteenth century. According to Andrew Smith, the internalization of evil is the most significant characteristic of Gothic literature from the 1790s to the 1890s (87). The ghost story appears in the nineteenth century, and with its emergence, the house becomes an unsafe place for its

inhabitants because it is invaded by other entities. The risk for humans in the Gothic of the nineteenth century is that “typically in the ghost story the ‘monster’ lives with you, invading your domestic spaces, so that ‘evil’ acquires a proximity to the self which it did not necessarily have in the earlier Gothic” (A. Smith, *Gothic* 87). Unlike stories of the eighteenth century, here the danger is not distant from people; it is living within them. Therefore, this closeness to danger leads to a focus of anxieties created at home.

The fact that the safety of the home is corrupted by inner entities can be explained through a careful consideration of Sigmund Freud’s term, the uncanny. Freud suggests that the “feelings of uncanniness are generated by the intimated presence of ‘spirits and ghosts’” (qtd. in A. Smith, *Gothic* 89). According to Freud in his essay “The Uncanny,” the word derives from the German word *unheimlich*. *Unheimlich* is the opposite of *Heimlich* which means “familiar, belonging to the home, not strange, tame, intimate, comfortable, homely, etc” (2). Under this light *the uncanny* stands for everything that is familiar but becomes alien to the home (unhomely). However, in “A Homeless Concept: Shapes of the Uncanny in Twentieth-Century Theory and Culture,” Anneleen Masschelein notes that:

Un-heimlich is the negation of the adjective *heimlich*, derived from the semantic core of *Heim*, home. Except, it turns out that *heimlich* has two meanings. The first sense is the most literal: domestic, familiar, intimate. The second meaning departs from the positive, literal sense to the more negative metaphorical sense of hidden, secret, clandestine, furtive. One might say that a certain change of perspective has taken place: in the positive sense, *heimlich* takes the inside-perspective of the intimacy of the home. In the negative sense, by contrast, the walls of the house shield the interior and in the eyes of the outsider, the secludedness of the inner circle is associated

with secrecy and conspiracy. (3)

The root of the word *heimlich* refers to homely and unhomely. The fact that *Heimlich* means hidden and secret reminds us not only that the house is the place in which we should be safe and sound, but also that it is the place in which our deepest secrets are kept away from the rest of the world. Therefore, dwellers are caged with their secrets and preoccupations. This imprisonment is portrayed in ghost stories because the house is infringed by other entities making the construction unhomely and unsafe for the residents (who should actually feel welcomed and secure). Additionally, this ghostly interaction passes unnoticed for people outside the house. It appears to be a common house to the witnesses outside of it. Smith claims that this uncanny feeling is connected to Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex—the sexual desire that a boy feels for his mother—which is related to sexual secrets within the home:

In keeping with his theory of the Oedipus complex . . . , the home becomes a dangerous place because it is the site where sexual secrets are harboured and propagated. The child's feelings about their parents influence infantile sexual development, meaning that the home is not a safe, or innocent, place to be. Because the home can become the place which generates sexual anxieties it is therefore no surprise that the Gothic of the late nineteenth century also suggests, in the ghost story, that the home is a dangerous place. (Gothic 88)

Therefore, in the nineteenth century, the home is the place where anxieties arise. The home is full of secrets which in fiction are represented by the invasion of the house by spirits, making the home a dangerous place. The adaptation from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century—from the castle to the home—reflects the transformation of society.

Gothic literature, then, has the capacity to adapt to the period in which it is written.

As a representation of society, Gothic has portrayed all the fears, anxieties and important issues concerning economy, politics and power relations. According to Smith, eighteenth-century Gothic was influenced by the economic and political upheavals that Britain went through during that century (*Gothic* 23). The eighteenth century was a time in which the aristocracy started to lose power at the same time when the lower classes started to consolidate as new economic powers: “aristocratic power was progressively replaced by the new economies largely generated through international trade which were controlled by, and helped to consolidate, the new middle classes” (A. Smith, *Gothic* 23). The aristocracy was threatened by a new rising and empowered middle class. This economic and political change affected the upper classes because they were losing their power. The eighteenth-century British society was going through a transformation that worsened the preoccupations of all the social classes. In their written works, Gothic authors of the time capture this social upheaval.

Like the previous century, the Victorian period was characterized by transformations that exacerbated numerous insecurities of British subjects. Queen Victoria ruled England from 1837 to 1901, and her reign began as a promising period for England. It was a period in which the arts flourished and people became more concerned with manners and morality and the implications of improper behavior. It was a more refined society, but also one that was relentlessly strict. The Victorian period suffered many changes that played an important role in the psychological, economic, and political stability of society. All these changes contributed to the emergence of apprehensions that besieged people’s lives. In “Victorian Gothic,” Alexandra Warwick states that from the 1850 to the 1870s the Victorian period flourished due to economic prosperity and liberal reform; however, from 1880 on, England faced a period of economic decline, growing social concerns and challenges to its

imperial position. By the end of the century, also known as *fin-de-siècle*, Britain was facing social and political crises (29). The course of change and decline of England in the nineteenth century generated insecurities that were captured in Gothic literature. Although it shares characteristics with previous manifestations of the genre, Victorian Gothic not only reflects current anxieties but its setting is also located in its present:

Although it is of course demonstrable that eighteenth-century and Romantic Gothic were deeply concerned with issues of contemporary political and social life, these were rehearsed in terms of the past in the locations and conditions of medieval Europe. The revival of Gothic, the point at which it could be said to be 'Victorian,' is the moment at which it is being used explicitly to articulate the questions of the present, and setting them in that same recognisable present. The anxiety of the legacies of the past remains, intensified by the self-consciousness of modernity. (Warwick 33)

The past continues being relevant in Victorian Gothic, but many uncertainties, characteristic of this period, are what shapes the Gothic trend. A typical trait that Gothic literature incorporated during the Victorian period is its fascination with death and paranormal activity. Warwick states that this interest in ghosts, spiritualism, the occult and powerful fictional figures earned the Victorian era the title of "the Gothic period" (29). By the end of the nineteenth century, the concerns with degeneration and decadence took over literary texts.

Nineteenth-century Gothic displays the particular anxieties of Victorians, and, particularly during this period, the house becomes the origin of many of society's worries. As Byron and Punter affirm, in this century, Gothic literature reflects the concerns of the middle class and the problems generated at home: "[Gothic] focuses on the bourgeois world

and is characteristically preoccupied with domestic crime and disorder” (26). The home becomes an unsafe place, and all the anxieties are originated in it; people started feeling vulnerable inside their own home, but even more exposed to danger in the outside world. As mentioned previously, in the beginning of the Victorian period, the home was portrayed as a safe place; however, by the end of the century the home is already a place of horror and torment (Warwick 30-31). This is a century of cultural, moral, social, and psychological degenerations that started at home and extended outside it. Sexual degeneracy was one of the main concerns of the nineteenth-century society because, as explained by Smith, people were preoccupied with sexual diseases which were believed to spread both physical and moral sickness: “sexual behaviour became regarded as the site of least resistance through which the spread of all kinds of diseases (moral as well as physical) could be spread” (*Gothic* 98). Sexuality was considered a moral and physical degeneration for both men and women, and for some, even marital sex was considered inappropriate if it was for pleasure and not for procreation. Besides sexuality, wealth—or rather the lack of it—is another prevalent anxiety of people of the nineteenth century. The invasion of the home by entities, in the ghost story, produces concerns regarding the possession of the house and everything invested in it (A. Smith, *Gothic* 88). This insecurity reveals the fear of not having power over your own possessions because it was not clear if the house belonged to the people or the entities inhabiting it. This uncertainty of ownership reveals a weakened aristocracy’s fear of losing its goods. These theories of degeneration and cultural decline continued and were intensified at the end of the nineteenth century. *Fin-de-siècle Gothic* expresses the uncertainty of what the next century will bring.

Gothic of the *fin-de-siècle* is noticeably concerned with the degeneration of the humans. This preoccupation is evidenced in written texts with the emergence of

anthropomorphic figures—beings that physically resemble humans. The dread of human, moral, psychological, political and economic degenerations of the Victorian period is evident in the physiology of these creatures: “the criminal too is represented with a similarly increasing insistence on his/her physiological difference, and seen as embodying the survival of atavistic qualities of the savage human, even of the animal” (Warwick, 34). As Warwick affirms, the deformities or physiological differences of late Victorian Gothic figures, as in *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, and *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, go beyond physical anxieties (35). All the fears and concerns related to the drastic transformations and deterioration of society—such as the continuously less rich and powerful aristocracy, physical, moral and sexual diseases—find a perfect way out through Gothic literature during this period.

The twentieth century is a period in which anxieties are rooted deep inside people, and Gothic stories portray the emptiness that society experiences in an era of wars. The hardships faced since the beginning of the twentieth century affected people around the world. The first and second world wars made people feel that the world they inhabited was uncertain and meaningless, and these feelings are reflected in the literature of the time. According to Andrew Smith, “the tales after the First World War are often much darker” than in the previous centuries (*Gothic* 128). The world wars created a common feeling of emptiness in society and a sense of innate evil in human beings. People felt their world lacked security and that society lacked morality. They felt insecure in an always menacing environment. This world-spread evil is conveyed through literature: “The earlier ghosts [prior to the twentieth century] made various social and economic issues visible, whereas these later ghosts suggest a metaphysical horror about the dangers inherent to existence, especially an existence characterised by moral emptiness. The idea that the world is

fundamentally malign” (A. Smith, *Gothic* 125). The belief was that simply by existing, you are in danger. During the twentieth century, Gothic literature not only adapted to its surroundings, but it also maintained features from previous centuries. This incorporation of both old and new characteristics responds to the trait of postmodernist integration. Frederic Jameson notes, in *El posmodernismo o la lógica cultural del capitalismo avanzado*, that in postmodernist architecture, architects take features from the past and combine them randomly (47). This borrowing and imitation of the past is denominated *pastiche*, and it includes other forms of art such as literature and films. This fascination with the past makes people try to recover it (Jameson 47). Twentieth-century Gothic literature reuses stereotypes and portrays some of the anxieties from the past. This recycling of old features and incorporation of new ones leads to a variety of motifs. For example, during this century, Gothic stories convey concerns with sexual degenerations, but they also include features that are characteristic of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as sexually transmitted diseases. Science is a major motif in Gothic stories from the past, for instance Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, and it continues to be part of stories up to the present. Similarly, the motif of technology has been part of Gothic stories and still continues to be present in tales of vampires and other monsters. Technology in these stories is such a complex and flexible motif that both monsters and humans use it to fight each other. Science and technology are now used to battle current diseases, environmental problems, and the extinction of the species, all typical elements of the present century. In spite of the mutations this kind of literature has had, there are features that have been present in Gothic stories through all of its existence. This incessant transformation as well as revitalization of motifs has made of the Gothic a popular genre up to the present time.

The Origins of Vampires

The vampire figure has evolved alongside Gothic literature. In order to explain the way in which the figure of the vampire becomes one of the most recurrent and iconic figures of Gothic literature we have to go back to a time that even preceded writing. In oral tradition, vampire-like creatures have been present for centuries in cultures around the world. In *Gothic: Four Hundred Years of Excess, Horror, Evil and Ruin*, Davenport-Hines argues that the figure of the vampire has inspired horror and fear worldwide for thousands of years: “the ubiquity of the vampire myth is well attested. Called *Lamia* in ancient Greece, *Vurdulak* in Russia, and *Vampyr* or *Oupir* in Eastern Europe, these creatures can also be traced in Asian, Arabian, and African folklore. Fear of corpses is a feature of most cultures” (232). Many cultures around the world count with a folkloric creature with vampire characteristics. People have been afraid of the dead and their return since ancient times. However, they were not necessarily referred to as vampires; each culture had a different name and theory about their origins. In addition, this oral tradition was strengthened by real historical figures that made the myth come alive. Numerous historical and literary critics have asserted that the Transylvanian Prince Vlad III inspired Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*.¹² In the fifteenth century, Vlad Dracula, prince of Wallachia was also known as Vlad the Impaler because he impaled thousands of Turkish war prisoners. Dracula was called Vlad Țepeș or Vlad the Impaler because the translation of “Țepeș” from Romanian to English is “impaler” (“Țepeș” *Hallo*). Vlad Dracula reinforced the belief in vampires because he enjoyed torturing his prisoners (victims). This Wallachian Prince

¹² For a further study on some critics that affirm that Vlad Dracula inspired Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* see Raymond T. McNally and Radu Florescu in *In Search of Dracula*, Gina Wisker in “Love Bites: Contemporary Women’s Vampire,” Richard Means in “Biography of Bram Stoker,” and Ken Gelder in *Reading the Vampire*.

became the “human” inspiration for the most iconic vampire in literature. His obsession of torturing prisoners through sanguinary methods and the way he enjoyed watching people suffering while they died, similar to the pleasure vampires experience while drinking blood from their victims, allowed Stoker to relate Vlad Țepeș to these mythical figures. As McNally and Florescu affirm in *In Search of Dracula*, in Western culture Vlad’s figure was known because of his cruelties, and his name was invoked to scare children and make them behave: “a ruler whose cruelties were committed on such a massive scale that his evil reputation in the Western world reached beyond the grave to the firesides where generations of grandmothers warned little children: ‘Be good or Dracula will get you!’” (McNally and Florescu 3). Parallel to vampires, Vlad Țepeș’s evil acts were kept not only in written records but also in oral tradition, and that made him known and feared generation after generation. Similarly, Gina Wisker notes in “Love Bites: Contemporary Women’s Vampire” that in the seventeenth century, Elizabeth Báthory, a Hungarian countess known for her obsession with human blood, contributed to the myth. Báthory killed over 600 women because she believed that their blood would keep her young (183). Báthory took baths in young ladies’ blood, and it is also believed that she also drank it. According to Wisker, both Dracula and Báthory gave origin to the figure of the vampire in literature: “their roots in myth and legend, these blood thirsty historical figures are the two dimensional great-grandparents of culturally constructed, constantly metamorphosing fictional vampires” (Wisker 183). This explains why the figure of the vampire is usually portrayed as a member of the aristocracy or a high social sphere, and as someone who has good manners, is well-educated and charming. The fictional figure of the vampire, then, comes to life very early in history in oral tradition. It is then reinforced by historical figures and eventually becomes the figure that we know today.

Cultures around the world have been afraid of creatures similar to vampires for thousands of years, and each culture has a different name for these monsters. However, these creatures share a common reference to blood and death. McNally and Florescu affirm that “the notion behind vampirism traces far back in time—to man the hunter, who discovered that when blood flowed out of a wounded beast or a fellow human, life, too, drained away” (117). The hunter realized that animals and humans cannot live without this precious liquid. Therefore, since ancient times, people have known that blood is life. It makes perfect sense that in different cultures people believed that undead creatures chase the living to drink their blood. References to blood are not limited to this mythological hunter. Organized religions also include blood in some of their rites. This concept of blood being life is also part of Catholicism. Tradition dictates that Catholics drink the blood of Christ and feed upon his body. According to J. Gordon Melton, some critics have interpreted this tradition as a kind of vampirism and compare the motif of blood in vampire tales to the belief that the blood of Christ is life; they claim that “the early Christians were accused of both vampirism and cannibalism because they drank the blood and ate the body of Christ in their ceremonies” (*Vampire Secrets*). Besides, Michelle Belanger notes that Jesus rose from death (*Vampire Secrets*). These Christian beliefs and rites have encouraged some to associate the religion with vampirism. McNally and Florescu note that Stoker was well aware of this relation between blood and religion and actually borrowed it from the Bible: “to the vampire, indeed, ‘The blood is the life,’ as Dracula, quoting from Deuteronomy 12:33, tells us in Stoker’s novel” (117). For thousands of years, it has been known that blood is life, and this is the basis of the myth of the vampire.

Many ancient cultures have their own folkloric version of the vampiric creature, and they all give it its own particular name; these names are all related to blood and death. It is

not possible that many of these cultures had contact with each other; thus, it is impossible that they loaned the name or even the notion of such creatures: “vampire belief is universal; it has been documented in ancient Babylon, Egypt, Rome, Greece and China. Vampire accounts exist in completely separate civilizations, where any direct borrowing would not have been possible” (McNally and Florescu 117). Although it is unfeasible to trace back all the names vampires have been called, one can distinguish clear evidence that these names have essentially the same meaning:

The vampire is known by various names—*vrykolakes*, *brykilakas*, *barbarlakos*, *orbourdoulakos* in modern Greek; *katakhanosoor baital* in ancient Sanskrit; *upiry* in Russian; *upiory* in Polish; *blutsauger* in German, etc. Early Chinese were afraid of the *giang shi*, a demon who drinks blood. In China it was reported that vampires existed there in 600 B.C. Depictions of vampires are found on ancient Babylonian and Assyrian pottery going back thousands of years before Christ. The belief flourished in the New World as in the Old. Ancient Peruvians believed in a class of devil worshippers called *canchus* or *pumapmicuc*, who sucked blood from the sleeping young in order to partake of their life. Aztecs sacrificed the hearts of prisoners to the sun in the belief that their blood fed the sun’s continuing energy. (McNally and Florescu 117)

The word vampire in English derives from the Polish *upiory* or *upiór*, which is the name given to these creatures. The Russian word *upiry* shares the same root, the same as the Czech *upir* which means vampire bat. *Upir* became vampire because of a phonetic confusion because *ü* is pronounced as *vü* (“Vampire” *Dictionary.com*). Similarly, in German, *blut* means blood and *sauger* is sucker, thus resulting in “blutsauger,” a very literal

denotation. The Chinese *giang shi* or *jiang shi* is zombie, which implies a living corpse just like vampires. Nowadays, the word vampire and its meaning is well-known. The word vampire is defined as: “a corpse supposed, in European folklore, to leave its grave at night to drink the blood of the living by biting their necks with long pointed canine teeth, a person who preys ruthlessly on others: the protectionist vampires in the Congress” (“Vampire” *Oxford Dictionary*). It is also defined as a “reanimated body of a dead person believed to come from the grave at night and suck the blood of persons asleep, one who lives by preying on others, a woman who exploits and ruins her lover” (“Vampire” *Merriam-Webster*). The word vampire has maintained its underlying meaning that refers to a corpse that leaves its grave to feed on the living. However, it is also used to refer to someone who “preys” on other people in areas where power is used to subdue the other. In general terms, a vampire is a being that draws its existence from another being. Even more noticeable is the fact that the term vampire can also be used to refer to a woman who uses men to obtain what she wants: “[a woman who] unscrupulously exploits, ruins, or degrades the men she seduces” (“Vampire” *Dictionary.com*). From the beginning women vampires have exhorted their sensuality to catch men, but now this notion is part of the denotation of the word.

As it was previously mentioned, the myth of the vampire was born thousands of years ago; hence, cultures around the world have different versions of vampire-like creatures. Some of these examples are worth mentioning. According to D. Demetracopoulou Lee in “Greek Accounts of the Vrykolakas,” the Greek *vrykolakes* or *vrykolakas* are corpses that leave their graves, and can transform or possess animals; and even though these creatures did not drink blood, they came from their graves to kill humans (1). In ancient Greece, the *empusa* or Lamia was believed to kill handsome young men to

feed on their blood; Lamia was punished and driven insane by Hera for being Zeus's lover (McNally and Florescu 118). As part of her punishment, Lamia became a "horrible winged demon-woman," killed her children and now kills children at night as her revenge (McNally and Florescu 118). J. Gordon Melton affirms that in India, the goddess of death, Kali, was known for wondering graveyards looking for victims to drink their blood with her fangs (*Vampire Secrets*). Some believe that even religions around the world have references to vampire-like creatures or vampiric rites. McNally and Florescu state that in the Jewish tradition, Lilith, Adam's first wife, is considered the first vampire. Lilith was a rebel and defied Adam's authority and left him; when Eve appeared and had children with Adam, Lilith became jealous and killed Adam and Eve's children (118). Gordon notes that Lilith attacks mainly babies, and after killing them she drinks their blood (*Vampire Secrets*). Now, all the descendants of Adam and Eve—meaning the entire human race—must beware Lilith (118). The Chinese *giang shi* are corpses that did not receive proper burials, so they come looking for their relatives as revenge and drink their blood. According to Melton, the Chinese were concerned about following the specific steps in burials according to the *feng shui* to avoid their dead ancestors from coming to attack them (*Vampire Secrets*). The *giang shi* also shares a major characteristic with vampires since it not only drinks blood but has fangs too. All these myths created a universal fear of vampires that increased with time, and it was also due to people's limited knowledge of what happens after dying.

The lack of knowledge about death and the fear of corpses during the seventeenth century in Europe developed into a series of rituals that were later included in vampire stories. In Europe, these rites were practiced mostly on bodies of those who killed themselves. Davenport-Hines explains that people who committed suicide were denied Christian burials in a desperate attempt to avoid the dead coming from their graves to feed

on the living: “suicidals were impaled in their graves with a stake through their hearts in a rite of pagan origin, though the stake came to be seen as preventing the resurrection of suicides on Judgement day” (229). The ritual of inserting a stake through the heart was later incorporated in Gothic stories, as the way to “kill” a vampire. People who died were believed to have the opportunity of being resurrected, but those who killed themselves would have a “sleepless soul” because they were believed to be neither dead nor alive—like vampires. People’s fear of corpses led to pagan burial rituals that intensified the fear of corpses, and the rituals used to prevent corpses to rise from their graves were afterward captured and adopted by literature.

These walking corpses and historical vampire-like figures of the seventeenth and earlier centuries were not known as “vampires” until the early eighteenth century. It was in 1732 that the word “vampire” was first used in English with the report of the death of Arnold Paul, Heyduke of England (Davenport-Hines 234). After Paul’s death, people claimed to be tormented by his corpse, so they decided to open his grave and found his body “fresh and free from corruption” (Davenport-Hines 234). Therefore, they buried a stake through the corpse’s heart—according to the report, at that point, Paul moaned in a horrible way—and burnt his body (Davenport-Hines 234). It was in this report that the term vampire was first used in English, a term that became popular in folklore and literature.

Ever since their first appearance in British Gothic literature in the nineteenth century,¹³ vampires have been the perfect representation of the social and cultural anxieties. In this particular century, the aristocracy was concerned about its weakening social and economic power. In this century, vampire stories reflect the fear of aristocrats of losing their

¹³John Polidori is one of the first pioneers of the figure of the vampire in British literature with his story “The Vampyre” written in 1819.

social and economic power, thus generating tales in which vampires are usually members of the aristocracy. Andrew Smith affirms that “the aristocracy is a man’s world” that confers women a “martyr-like dignity” that stresses the authority of the male figure (*Gothic* 25). Vampires are the perfect representation of the capitalist system controlled and ruled by men. As members of the aristocratic class, vampires use their power to subjugate their victims, the bourgeois class, and literally use their power to suck the life out of them. Additionally, during the nineteenth century, sexual and power insecurities were portrayed in vampire tales. Victorians were concerned with sexuality to the extent that they found all sexual acts evil, even those within wedlock. In literature, female vampires exert excessive seduction to overpower their victims, men and women. Davenport-Hines argues that in England, the anxieties about sexual power were portrayed through females (239). The female vampire does not wield economic or social power. Although female vampires make their victims yield, they are always presented as vampires without social power. Their power is only sexual. In the Victorian story, females are second-class vampires under the dominion of the males. Lastly, British society of the nineteenth century was also concerned with physical degenerations. Both male and female vampires represent physical degeneration because they present a human look, but they also have animal features. They have fangs and are able to transform themselves into animals. Besides, vampires also demonstrate society’s preoccupation with moral corruption. They are morally corrupt because they seduce their victims with their apparent good manners, status and sensuality, only to later feed on them. During the nineteenth century, vampires conveyed most of the degenerations that people were concerned with. These degenerations continue and are intensified during the twentieth century.

The twentieth century is a turning point for vampires. With the development of

different means of communication such as radio and television, vampires begin a path—in literature, TV and film—that leads them to their maximum peak of popularity in the late-twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Therefore, it must be clarified here that in order to analyze the transformation of the vampire figure in the twentieth and twenty-first-centuries, written texts as well as films have to be taken into account because both portray the development and concerns of these periods.

Some of the same anxieties from the previous century continue to affect people during the twentieth century; however, also new contemporary apprehensions appear, and a new vampire figure emerged from the combination of these new and old tensions. During the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries some uncertainties that deal with sexual and moral degenerations, science and the environment become part of vampire stories. Sexually transmitted diseases are a concern that dates back to the nineteenth century; nevertheless, during the next century it increases and becomes one of the main preoccupations of society. This fear is portrayed in vampire stories that depict vampirism as a sexually transmitted disease. Andrew Smith claims that any sexual activity, healthy or unhealthy, is considered degenerative because it “spreads all kinds of diseases (moral as well as physical)” (*Gothic* 98). Through the bite, blood as a bodily fluid transmits the virus or disease of vampirism through the penetration of the fangs. Vampires penetrate their victims, not with their penis, but with their fangs. In these texts, vampirism is seen as a plague transmitted through an attack or by being in contact with infected blood, just like sexually transmitted diseases. Another relevant anxiety of this period is the use of science. Just like scientists try to find the cure for diseases, vampires in literature and film try to cure vampirism and to find a food substitute to feed and stop the killings of humans. Another concern of modern society is the current use of non-renewable natural resources.

This problem is evident in some of the latest stories and films. Often in these, humans and the blood supply are scarce, so a substitute is desperately needed. All these modern consternations resulted in a new kind of vampire that is less animalistic and more human. This vampire—unlike the ones from previous centuries—shows a human side that gradually becomes more evident as the twentieth century moved forward. In this century, the vampire figure undergoes the most noticeable transformation that it has experienced in literature. Although it maintains features that have distinguished vampires from other Gothic creatures—seduction, fangs, and blood thirst—the classical figure starts to transform into a modern one with more human characteristics. They begin to live in communities, and their lifestyle is almost indiscernible from that of humans. Texts and films of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries strengthen some uncertainties from the previous century; however, they also depict concerns distinctive of this period. This last generation of vampires embodies more humanized creatures that, consequently, display human conflicts.

Since their appearance in British Gothic literature, vampires have been one of the most representative figures of this kind of fiction. Similar to Gothic literature, vampires adapt to the transformations of society. These creatures have proven to be the perfect means to portray the anxieties of every historical period, beginning as early as the seventeenth century. As argued by Smith, “each age gets the vampire that it deserves” (*Gothic* 140). During the seventeenth century, vampire stories depicted society’s fear of corpses. All the rituals implemented to keep dead people in their graves are captured in vampire Gothic tales. During the eighteenth century, the concerns with social, economic, moral, sexual, and power degenerations are evident in these stories. The nineteenth century was a period of transformations in Britain. The ups and downs of British society during this century—such

as the Victorian Era's rigidity, insecurities, and the concerns with human deformities of the *fin-the-siècle Gothic*—are reflected in Gothic stories. And more recently, in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, stories reuse some motifs and stereotypes from the past and add them to current concerns such as sexually transmitted diseases, non-renewable resources, and the on-going controversies in science, thus contributing to the most noticeable transformation of vampires in literature.

CHAPTER III

The Primeval Vampire:

From its Beginnings to the Early Twentieth Century

This study suggests three categories of vampires in literature and cinema from the nineteenth century to the present. The three categories are the Primeval, Transitional, and Contemporary Vampires, all qualifying as monsters but fulfilling their abnormal condition through their own means. This chapter will focus on the Primeval Vampire. Before defining the characteristics of a Primeval Vampire, it is necessary to explain why vampires are monsters. A monster is defined as “one who shows a deviation from the normal in behavior or character . . . an animal of strange and often terrifying shape . . . a person of unnatural or excessive ugliness, deformity, wickedness, or cruelty” (“Monster” *Merriam-Webster*). Monsters can also be “something unnaturally marvelous.” Vampires, unlike other monsters, have the advantage of having a basic human form, but their actions and physical characteristics transgress those of a human being. The figure of the vampire constantly adapts to the changes of society, and thus, the study of this evolution justifies the categorization that I will apply. The vampire, in all its variations, is undoubtedly monstrous.

The denotation and connotation of the term “monster” enable the concept to adapt to evolving contexts. In *The Gothic*, Punter and Byron state that the origin of the term monster comes from the Latin *monstrare* which means “to demonstrate.” The meaning of the word is reflected in its affinity to mutate and convey what is considered anomalous by society and therefore considered monstrous:

While the term “monster” is often used to describe anything horrifyingly unnatural or excessively large, it initially had far more precise connotations,

and these are of some significance for the ways in which the monstrous comes to function within the Gothic. Etymologically speaking, the monster is something to be shown, something that serves to demonstrate (Latin, *monstrare*: to demonstrate) and to warn (Latin, *monere*: to warn). From classical times through to the Renaissance, monsters were interpreted either as signs of divine anger or as portents of impending disasters. These early monsters are frequently constructed out of ill-assorted parts, like the griffin, with the head and wings of an eagle combined with the body and paws of a lion. (Punter and Byron 263)

Therefore, the use of monsters warns people about what could happen when something or someone goes against what society considers normal or correct. For this reason, what is considered monstrous depends on the society, generation and period of time in which stories arise. Parallel to Gothic literature and the figure of the vampire, the term “monster” follows the mutations of culture; therefore, it adapts through time to portray the fears of society. Andrew Smith states that monsters “illustrate the presence of certain cultural anxieties that are indirectly expressed through apparently fantastical forms” (*Gothic* 58). These fantastical forms are shaped by society and its worries. The concept of “monster” transforms over time to depict the elements that are considered abnormal or frightening in a social group, and vampires are the perfect example of these Gothic monsters.

Vampires are part of these uncanny creatures, but unlike other fearful figures, they possess a familiar façade to cover those terrifying traits. They represent the evil monster that is near but that cannot be clearly seen. In Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, Jonathan Harker’s words illustrate this horrifying feeling raised by the uncertainty of facing the evil that is well-cloaked by a human form: “what manner of man is this, or what manner of creature, is

it in the semblance of man? I feel the dread of this horrible place overpowering me. I am in fear, in awful fear, and there is no escape for me. I am encompassed about with terrors that I dare not think of" (47-48). This uncanny feeling not only makes the vampire a far more terrifying creature than any other monster because its human exterior hides evident threat, but also hints at a latent evil killer. Battling against a monster disguised as a human intensifies terror since there is no way to be sure who is evil and who is not. The fact that any regular person could be a vampire in disguise is what makes people afraid of them in any period of time. Vampires in the three categories established in this study are monstrous creatures that possess the unique capacity to pass unnoticed by human beings.

As it has been stated previously, the figure of the vampire has mutated. This chapter will analyze the first phase of this character as it is depicted in the texts and films of the nineteenth and early twentieth-century. From now on, this first stage of the vampire will be referred to as the Primeval Vampire. The Primeval Vampire first considers those creatures mentioned in folktales around the world thousands of years ago; however, for the purpose of this study, only the ones illustrated in selected literary texts and movies will be analyzed. Early vampire texts and films prove the existence of the Primeval Vampire. The vampire characters in John Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819), Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872), and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) will be analyzed in this chapter for their primeval characteristics. Similarly, the first vampire films, Friedrich Murnau's *Nosferatu a Symphony of Horror* (1921), Tod Browning's *Dracula* (1931), and Carl Dreyer's *Vampyr* (1932) will be addressed, since they also demonstrate the existence of such a vampire in literature and cinema.

Primeval Vampires as Monsters of Pure Evil

As far back as it can be traced, the figure of the vampire has been cataloged as an evil creature. Primeval Vampires are portrayed as the quintessential Gothic monster in a number of written texts and films from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Primeval Vampires have an evil nature; their grotesque need for human blood is the strongest evidence of their inherent evil instinct. These vampires must embrace their nature that forces them to kill in order to exist. Primeval Vampires follow their killer instinct. Their disregard for human life allows them to drink human blood with no trace of remorse or feeling. Their natural need for blood separates them from humans and defines their innate evil monstrosity. In Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*, Lestat explains to Louis that murdering human beings to feed on their blood is the foundation of their existence: "what truly lies before you is vampire nature, which is killing. You alone of all creatures can see death that way with impunity... You... alone... under the rising moon... can strike like the hand of God!" (Rice 82-83). By embracing his blood thirst, Lestat completely separates the human from the vampire kind. Accepting their nature means accepting that they are inborn killers. They kill for survival and without remorse. Moreover, unlike animals, vampires can rationalize. They know what they are doing when killing someone, but their disregard for humans allows them to murder at ease. Consuming human blood prolongs their existence. Vampires' disregard for human life renders them evil monsters in the first Gothic written texts and films of the nineteenth and early twentieth-century.

Physical Traits of Primeval Vampires

Primeval Vampires share physical characteristics that distinguish them from their successors. The body of this vampire resembles a human being's basic shape, but they also

have animal characteristics that set them apart from a normal person. They possess exaggerated features such as long fangs, pointed ears and extremely pale skin. These features are displayed permanently. The perfect description of this primitive vampire is provided by Jonathan Harker in *Dracula*. The realtor notices the abnormal features of the count's face: "the mouth, so far as I could see it under the heavy moustache, was fixed and rather cruel looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth. These protruded over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality in a man of his years. For the rest, his ears were pale, and at the tops extremely pointed" (28). Harker is then shocked by the appearance of the Count's hands: "I could not but notice that they were rather coarse—broad, with squat fingers. Strange to say, there were hairs in the centre of the palm. The nails were long and fine, and cut to a sharp point" (28). They give the impression of claws, something that Harker describes as "strange" for a human being. When meeting a vampire, human characters perceive their atypical traits, and even though they acknowledge their abnormality, most people disregard them as something harmless. The first time Harker sets eyes on the Count, he recognizes that there is something abnormal about his host; though he is not afraid of the Count, he describes him as disgusting. Although the Count seems to be a regular person, his skin, eyes, mouth, teeth, hands and nails are ghastly. Dracula seems almost human, but many of his features are distorted and exaggerated, resembling those of animals. Harker continues: "as the Count leaned over me and his hands touched me, I could not repress a shudder. It may have been that his breath was rank, but a horrible feeling of nausea came over me" (28-29). The Count's abnormality confuses Jonathan, but it is clear that the Count's deformities generate disgust and discomfort on the beholder. The Count is the source of an uncanny feeling for Harker because the latter sees a strange and unfamiliar creature in a human form. In spite of his peculiarities, his basic human form helps Dracula

to pose as a human. Primeval Vampires tend to generate this inexplicable feeling; their pseudo-human appearance allows them to be among men, but their animalistic features always raise suspicion among those close to them. Their detailed descriptions allow the reader to see that Primeval Vampires are hybrids of the human and animal worlds. Stoker's description of Dracula is that of a hybrid body that personifies the fears of that era. In the nineteenth century, cross-species breeding terrified Victorians since they believed these crossings could result in physical deformity. As mentioned before, Darwin's investigations and theories about hybridity brought a sense of scientific validity to this Victorian fear. In literature, Count Dracula is the ultimate example of the Primeval Vampire. Stoker created the basis and point of comparison for future vampires. The Count's pointed ears, long fangs, and pale skin are marks that can be found in most other Primevals.

The first written texts about vampires evidence that, although Primeval Vampires coexist and are accepted by humans, some of their atypical physical traits awaken the interest and suspicion of humans. In 1872, Sheridan Le Fanu created a vampire who does not possess as many irregular traits as Dracula but whose atypical features create an immediate shock in the eyes of the beholder. In the text, Carmilla is a beautiful young lady that attracts people. Her beauty allows her to be accepted and even wanted by humans; however, like Dracula's, Carmilla's long canine teeth are a sign of her hybrid nature and raise suspicion among people. The character of the hunchback warns Laura, Carmilla's friend, of the danger those fangs pose. He offers to file Carmilla's teeth as a precaution:

Your noble friend, the young lady at your right, has the sharpest tooth,—
long, thin, pointed, like an owl, like a needle; ha, ha! With my sharp and long
sight, as I look up, I have seen it distinctly; now if it happens to hurt the
young lady, and I think it must, here am I, here are my file, my punch, my

nippers; I will make it round and blunt, if her ladyship pleases; no longer the tooth of a fish, but of a beautiful young lady as she is. (28)

Although Laura, Carmilla's host, seems to ignore the latter's abnormally long and pointed fangs, for the hunchback it is clear that they are not humanlike. More than that, the hunchback not only intends to minimize danger, but he also wants to make Carmilla's strange set of teeth match her lady-like physical appearance. To the hunchback this mismatch is troublesome and thus raises questions about Carmilla. Generally, most characters tend to acknowledge that Primeval Vampires are not normal human beings. Like the hunchback, Laura knows there is something odd about Carmilla, but she fails to recognize her as a monster. In her description of Carmilla, Laura exalts every feature and admits admiration for her beauty. She cannot point out the bizarre traits that are so obvious to other characters, but she knows that there is something in her guest that is anomalous: "she was slender, and wonderfully graceful. Except that her movements were languid—very languid—indeed, there was nothing in her appearance to indicate an invalid. Her complexion was rich and brilliant; her features were small and beautifully formed" (21). In spite of her inability to see Carmilla's non-human traits, Laura acknowledges that something is wrong with her visitor. Carmilla's way of moving is out of the ordinary. Unlike Dracula, who seems to possess vitality not common for his age, Carmilla is lethargic, which is unexpected for a girl of the age she appears to be. Likewise, in Murnau's film *Nosferatu*, Count Orlok is able to integrate into society, but he possesses animalistic traits that distinguish him from humans. He has pale skin, long nails, rat-like teeth, pointed ears and extremely bushy eyebrows that are clearly not common in a normal person. Count Orlok's way of walking and moving are also lethargic and bizarre (see figures 1 and 2).



Figure 1. Screen Capture from Friedrich Murnau's film *Nosferatu* (1921).



Figure 2. Screen Capture from Friedrich Murnau's film *Nosferatu* (1921).

Like their Primeval contemporaries, Carmilla and Count Orlok do not completely veil their grotesque physical traits. Primeval Vampires have this effect on people; they try to appear human and go unnoticed in order to get close to their victims, but they are often recognized as odd because of their non-human characteristics that raise worry among other characters.

As previously discussed, in “Darwin and the Evolution of Victorian Studies,” Jonathan Smith notes that John Ruskin referred to nineteenth-century’s writings as “the pestilence of popular literature” (869), precisely because they capture Victorian society’s fears and represent them through the depicted monsters. During the nineteenth century, Primeval Vampires embodied Victorian’s obsession with physical and moral corruption.

Eyes are another physical trait that stands out in Primeval Vampires. Eyes are usually considered the window to the soul, so what happens with the eyes of vampires if they have no soul? Primeval Vampires’ eyes are a feature that catches the attention of the rest of characters. Their gaze transmits no human emotion and makes people uneasy and reveals them as non-human beings. In *Dracula*, the Count’s eyes possess a striking sparkle not common in human beings. From the very beginning of the novel, the eyes of the vampire are the first characteristic that is described. When Jonathan Harker is picked up by the driver who is to take him to the castle, the visitor is particularly stricken by the strange gloss of his eyes: “I could only see the gleam of a pair of very bright eyes, which seemed red in the lamplight, as he turned to us” (19). Later in the story, Harker discovers that the driver was Dracula himself. As described by Harker, the Count’s eyes always gleam with a diabolic red color: “his eyes were positively blazing. The red light in them was lurid, as if the flames of hell fire blazed behind them” (52). In vampire stories, eyes are always a revealing element; they project the evilness and power inside the vampire. The moral and physical corruption feared by Victorians is projected through the eyes of the vampires they created. Similar to *Dracula*, in John Polidori’s *The Vampyre*, Lord Ruthven’s eyes are the first characteristic described: “those who felt this sensation of awe, could not explain whence it arose: some attributed it to the dead grey eye, which, fixing upon the object’s face, did not seem to penetrate, and at one glance to pierce through to the inward workings

of the heart; but fell upon the cheek with a leaden ray that weighed upon the skin it could not pass” (1). Here, the eyes of the Lord are connected to death. The vampire possesses an empty stare that seems to stab whoever looks into them. Both Stoker’s *Dracula* and Lord Ruthven’s eyes are dark and terrifying. Additionally, Browning’s film *Dracula*, based on Stoker’s novel, transmits the vampire’s power and wickedness. In the film, the eyes of the Count are exalted with bright lights illuminating them to show their power (see figures 3 and 4).



Figure 3. Screen Capture from Tod Browning's film *Dracula* (1931).



Figure 4. Screen Capture from Tod Browning's film *Dracula* (1931).

Eyes are a central and significant aspect of vampire characters, and they are one of the first traits people perceive. The eyes of Primeval Vampires intensify the effect of something anomalous and not human in them. In *Carmilla*, the vampire's eyes play a major role in the story; nevertheless, similar to Dracula's and Lord Ruthven's, they are related to evil. As a classic Primeval Vampire, Carmilla's eyes are also gloomy and sinister. Laura confesses that: "she was gazing on me with eyes from which all fire, all meaning had flown, and a face colourless and apathetic" (33). The same fire and somberness described in Dracula's and Lord Ruthven's eyes is present in Carmilla's. She has the ability of portraying the most intense sensations typical of her kind. Primeval Vampires' physical and moral decadence is revealed through their unique and powerful gaze, capable of making the victims' skins stand on end.

The Primeval Vampires' gaze is powerful not only because of the dark emotions it transmits, but also because it places the vampire in a superior position to the victim, a fact that can be easily illustrated very appropriately by considering the concept of the gaze discussed in chapter I. In these narrations, the place of the male-controlled camera is portrayed through the eyes of the Primeval Vampire. Their controlling look renders the vampire as the subject and the victims as objects. Victims, which are mostly women, are the coveted object. In the eyes of a Primeval Vampire, the victim primarily represents food. As a consequence, the human victim is completely objectified. This objectification is observed particularly in films. In *Psychoanalytic Criticism a Reappraisal*, Elizabeth Wright uses Christian Metz's theory of film to clarify the power of objectification of the gaze. Wright notes that the film is "the medium most appropriate for the luring of the gaze" (110). In films, the vampire exposes his intense attraction for the victim (the object) through his gaze. In Tod Browning's film *Dracula*, the desire of the Count for his victim is palpable in

his lustful gaze (see figure 5). Here, the Count is not interested in the woman or in her beauty. His objective is clearly portrayed in his eyes, in the way his eyes are completely focused on the victim's neck. Similarly, in the next figure (see figure 6), Dracula's desire is visible. However, even though the scene takes places in a bedroom, which is a very intimate space, the vampire's only objective is to drink the victim's blood, not the woman herself. This particular scene also captures the nineteenth-century anxiety of being invaded in the familiarity of the house, in special the bedroom, which is the most intimate space. Thus, both the gaze and the invasion of the house render the victim weak and helpless.



Figure 5. Screen Capture from Tod Browning's film *Dracula* (1931).



Figure 6. Screen Capture from Tod Browning's film *Dracula* (1931).

Wright affirms that the function of the gaze in films captures the particular attention of feminists because it objectifies the person being observed (181). The author affirms that the gaze is often identified with the male figure because “in classical Hollywood cinema the camera is usually controlled by a male director” (183). In these films, even though the Primeval Vampires’ interest in the victim is not sexual, both scenes are quite erotic and place a beautiful young woman in a very intimate and frail position. Therefore, when looking through the eyes of a Primeval Vampire, the victim loses the qualities of an active individual and becomes an object which is inevitably assigned a lower position in the scale of power. In Friedrich Murnau’s film *Nosferatu*, this objectification of the victim is clearly depicted when Count Orlok is looking at a photograph of Nina, Jonathon¹⁴ Harker’s wife. The Count shows great interest in the picture, but he does not admire the beauty of Nina¹⁵ but admires, instead, her throat (see figures 7 and 8). Even though the scene does not show a close up of the vampire’s face, his desire is transmitted through his gaze. In addition, Count Orlok’s words demonstrate that the woman is just a vessel for food.

¹⁴ The name of the character Jonathon is spelled with an “o” in Friedrich Murnau’s film *Nosferatu*. Notice that in Bram Stoker’s novel *Dracula*, the name is Jonathan.

¹⁵ The name of the character Mina in Bram Stoker’s novel *Dracula*, is changed to Nina in Friedrich Murnau’s film *Nosferatu*.



Figure 7. Screen Capture from Friedrich Murnau's film *Nosferatu* (1921).

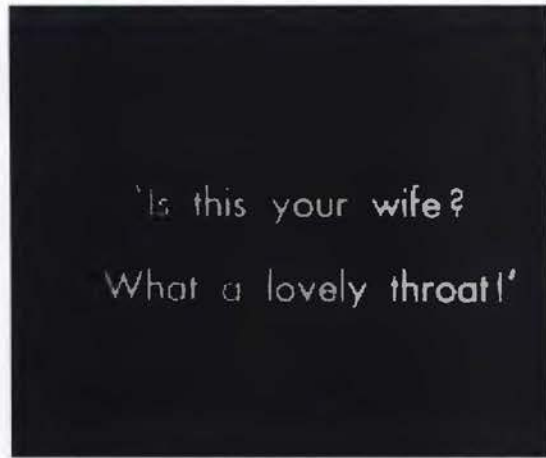


Figure 8. Screen Capture from Friedrich Murnau's film *Nosferatu* (1921)

In films featuring Primeval Vampires, women tend to be more objectified than their male counterparts, as their deaths are usually shown in a very erotic manner. In *Nosferatu*, for instance, when the vampire is on the ship and exterminates the entire crew, these deaths are not shown in the film, unlike Nina's attack in the bedroom (see figure 9).



Figure 9. Screen Capture from Friedrich Murnau's film *Nosferatu* (1921).

When these vampires look at their victims they do not see a person but something that they desire. For a Primeval Vampire this desire is not sexual or emotional. It is a profound need

of the victim's blood. Coinciding with the theory employed, the gaze of Primeval Vampires reinforces the superiority of the victimizer and the inferiority and impotence of the victim.

Supernatural Traits of Primeval Vampires

Primeval Vampires are characterized not only by their disturbing physical characteristics but also by their supernatural abilities. One of the most noticeable traits of this early vampire figure is its power to shape shift. As hybrid creatures, Primeval Vampires take the form of different animals, which allows them to reach places and to do things humans cannot do. As it has been established, Darwin's investigations on hybridity terrified the Victorian society. Victorians dreaded the crossing of species, and this fear is definitely reflected through their vampires. None of the following categories of this Gothic monster has this capability of taking terrifying animal forms because hybridity was no longer one of society's main concerns¹⁶. In literature and films of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, one can see vampires transforming into creatures similar to dogs, cats, wolves and bats—all of which are described as monstrous, frightening, or unnerving. During this period, vampires inspired fear because of their hybrid nature and the particular animals that they embodied. In Stoker's *Dracula*, for example, Van Helsing numbers the creatures Dracula can transform into: "he can transform himself to wolf, as we gather from the ship arrival in Whitby, when he tear open the dog, he can be as bat, as Madam Mina saw him on the window at Whitby, and as friend John saw him fly from this so near house, and as my friend Quincey saw him at the window of Miss Lucy" (286). The Count is able to adopt

¹⁶ It is necessary to clarify that Francis Coppola's film, *Dracula* (1992), portrays a Transitional Vampire. However, Coppola's *Dracula* still maintains some characteristics of Primeval Vampires. This is due to the fact that it is based on Stoker's *Dracula*, the quintessential Primeval Vampire. Thus, when it was adapted to the twentieth century, not all the typical traits of Primevals were eliminated.

multiple forms. Like other Primeval Vampires, Dracula takes the form of particular animals that instill the same terror vampires do. This characteristic reveals that Primeval Vampires do not take random forms¹⁷. These nocturnal animals intensify the terror in the victim since they look for their prey in the darkness of the night. When looking into the significance of these animals, their relation to darkness and evil is noticeable. In “The Vampire in Roumania,” Agnes Murgoci notes that the word used in Romania for vampire, *varcolac*, also means werewolf or “animal which eats the moon” (337). This association of the wolf to the night explains why this animal is typically featured in vampire literature. They threaten the life of humans and animals when they are most vulnerable, at night, during their sleep. They usually hunt at night, and this nocturnal habit makes of the wolf the ideal form for the vampire to take. In *Animal Symbolism in Ecclesiastical Architecture*, E. P. Evans affirms that the word “wolf” means “ravisher,” and that is “the signification of the Sanskrit name of the animal, *vrika*, seizer” (78). From ancient times, wolves have been categorized as malignant. Similarly, bats have for a long time been representative of evil and “the night.” Their very appearance is believed diabolic. In J. E. Cirlot’s *A Dictionary of Symbols*, the author states that the wings of bats are “an infernal attribute” (23). Bats are not only feared for being night hunters, but they are also believed to have a malevolent nature. Primeval Vampires take the bat form when they approach their victims, which suggests the imminent danger they face. Additionally, these flying animals are often associated to vampires because some of them drink blood and also because they spread diseases through their bite. In Tod Browning’s film, *Dracula*, the Count has the ability to

¹⁷ In “Dracula, the Monastic Chronicles and Slavic Folklore,” Bacil F. Kirtley analyses the Southern European superstitions captured in Stoker’s *Dracula*. He expands on the vampires’ shape-shifting power which has been documented in ancient legends.

transform into a bat. He takes that form in order to become more sneaky and furtive. In the following screen capture (see figure 10), the Count takes the form of a bat to get close to Mina and Harker. Here, Dracula is trying to enter the house by commanding Mina what to do. In the next scene (see figure 11), Dracula transforms into a bat again, but this time it is to enter Mina's bedroom through the window and drink her blood, a place that is difficult to access without being noticed.



Figure 10. Screen Capture from Tod Browning's film *Dracula* (1931).



Figure 11. Screen Capture from Tod Browning's film *Dracula* (1931).

A bat form makes it easier for him to get closer to his victims. Primeval Vampires' hybrid nature makes them terrifying. They embody the worst fears of a society that was afraid of crossing between species. In addition, the creatures they share traits with are carefully chosen to intensify the terror and discomfort they transmit, and the symbolic connotations of these wild animals contribute to the terrifying effect of the vampire figure.

Primeval Vampires can take the form of less savage yet equally disturbing creatures. Another animal that has a darker side and that spreads fear is the cat. In *A Dictionary of Symbols*, J.E. Cirlot also defines cats, but more specifically black cats, as animals "associated with darkness and death" (39). In *Carmilla*, Laura claims that in a nightmare she sees a cat-like creature that transforms into a young lady: "I saw something moving round the foot of the bed, which at first I could not accurately distinguish. But I soon saw that it was a sooty-black animal that resembled a monstrous cat. It appeared to me about four or five feet long for it measured fully the length of the hearthrug as it passed over it; and it continued to-ing and fro-ing with the lithe, sinister restlessness of a beast in a cage" (38). Later in the story, the reader realizes that it is Carmilla who invaded her dream in the form of a "monstrous black cat." The magnitude of the enormous animal magnifies the terror that the symbolic connotation of the simple black cat inspires. In the case of Stoker's *Dracula*, one of the most terrifying images of the Count is the one in which Harker sees him crawling down one of the castle's walls. Harker describes with "repulsion and terror" (47) the image he saw outside his window. He compares the Count to a lizard moving downward on the wall: "I saw the fingers and toes grasp the corners of the stones, worn clear of the mortar by the stress of years, and by thus using every projection and inequality move downwards with considerable speed, just as a lizard moves along a wall" (47). Though the animal is somewhat less appalling than the aforementioned cat, for instance, the

qualities of it that the Count appropriates are extremely unnerving. This connection with a lizard seems very plausible when analyzing the significance this animal is given in the Bible: “Of the animals that move along the ground, these are unclean for you: the weasel, the rat, any kind of great lizard, the gecko, the monitor lizard, the wall lizard, the skink and the chameleon. Of all those that move along the ground, these are unclean for you. Whoever touches them when they are dead will be unclean till evening” (*New International Version*, Lev. 11:29-31). Lizards are classified as tainted in a book that is devotedly followed by millions of people. Besides, these are reptiles known for being filthy and for exuding poison; thus, the connection between Dracula and this animal is reasonable. Primeval Vampires’ hybrid nature allows them to adopt animal forms not only to approach their victims, but the animals they choose also convey the dread the vampire itself inspires.

For a Primeval Vampire, shape shifting goes beyond transforming into animals. Primeval Vampires can assume the form of natural elements too. According to Murgoci, this power is well known in Romanian legends where it is recorded that vampires “are seen as little points of light floating in the air. Their dances are exquisitely beautiful. Seven or nine lights start in a line, and then form into various figures, ending up in a circle. After they break off their dance, they may do mischief to human beings” (321). The author explains that vampires use these forms to approach humans and play tricks on them. As a mirror of this ancient belief, in *Dracula*, Van Helsing affirms that the Count is capable of shifting into natural elements such as mist and dust:

He can come in mist which he create, that noble ship’s captain proved him of this, but, from what we know, the distance he can make this mist is limited, and it can only be round himself. He come on moonlight rays as elemental dust, as gain Jonathan saw those sisters in the castle of Dracula. He become

so small, we ourselves saw Miss Lucy, ere she was at peace, slip through a hairbreadth space at the tomb door. He can, when once he find his way, come out from anything or into anything, no matter how close it be bound or even fused up with fire—solder you call it. (286)

The capacity of taking the form of natural elements gives Dracula the petrifying power of omnipresence. He is capable of sneaking under doors and window frames. The victim cannot escape the Count's reach because there is no door that can keep a potential victim safe from him. Primeval Vampires' physical powers are almost unlimited, and Dracula is the ultimate example of this race of vampires. His shape-shifting ability allows him to reach, capture, and drain his victims. In its beginning, this Gothic monster is a malign all-mighty being. The hybridity of Primeval Vampires makes them terrifying for the Victorian society which was frightened by the possibility of crossing species and what might result of that crossing. Darwin's theories about hybridity molded the nineteenth-century vampire in literature. Primeval Vampires' physical hybridity separate them from humans and any other kind of earthly creature, and their supernatural characteristics seem to make them no match for humans and even vampires from the coming periods. The Primeval vampire is the most lethal.

The characteristics of Primeval Vampires go beyond their physical traits and abilities. One of the most powerful weapons of these vampires is their gifted mind. In novels and films, they are capable of controlling humans and animals wielding only their mental power as a weapon that proves to be almost unlimited. During the Victorian period, people were terrified of having their mind infiltrated by another. This fear is related to the term "mesmerism," a concept that was previously discussed in chapter I. In "Mesmerism and Magic, Science and Self in *The Beetle* and *Dracula*," Robert Jones claims that

“mesmerism shatters the boundaries of the self, allowing one person to be overpowered by another, and leads to a change in the person mesmerised” (175). Mesmerism implies that there is one person subordinated by other. This notion automatically admits the possibility that there is a powerful mind capable of controlling and commanding a lesser one. Otniel E. Dror, in his review “Mesmerized: Powers of the Mind in Victorian Britain by Alison Winter,” notes that the term is applied to different areas such as medicine, history, gender and music “to explore the attitudes, concerns and ambiguities of early—and mid—Victorian culture” (95). This term can also be applied to the nineteenth-century fiction because it encloses the Victorian anxiety of being mentally invaded. Stories of Primeval Vampires transmit this concern because vampires use their mind control to command the victim’s mind. In Stoker’s *Dracula*, the Count exerts his control over people such as Renfield, Lucy and Harker, who are blinded and deceived in a number of passages of the novel. Additionally, the most notorious of these occurrences of dominance happens to Mina in her own bedroom. The Count induces Mina into a hypnotic trance, as Van Helsing calls it, which allows him to enter her room and gain access to her blood (384). The Count, like other Primeval Vampires, overcomes the victims’ rejection by using his psychic power to take possession of their “weaker” minds and their blood. In the same way, in Browning’s film, *Dracula*, the Count also manipulates humans to act as he wishes. In this film, the Count uses his mental power to influence a nurse and commands her to open the door to allow him to enter Mina’s bedroom (see figure 12).



Figure 12. Screen Capture from Tod Browning's film *Dracula* (1931).

In another scene from the same film, Dracula invades Mina's mind and commands her to tell Harker to get rid of a crucifix that Van Helsing has with him, so that he can get into the house easily (see figures 13 and 14).



Figure 13. Screen Capture from Tod Browning's film *Dracula* (1931).



Figure 14. Screen Capture from Tod Browning's film *Dracula* (1931).

However, this time, Harker is with Mina, and he realizes that something strange is happening to his beloved because he can see it in her eyes: "Your eyes. You look at me so

strangely! Mina!” (*Dracula*). The Count easily mesmerizes the nurse, Mina and any other human in order to get what he wants, proving that the human mind is weak in comparison to that of the vampire. A common assumption is that these vampires cannot enter a house or a place unless they are invited or welcomed by someone, as it is affirmed in Stoker’s novel: “he may not enter anywhere at the first, unless there be some one of the household who bid him to come; though afterwards he can come as he please” (287); therefore, their mental power proves its value in finding and subduing people who then serve as tools to grant them access to forbidden places. Since their mental power allows Primeval Vampires to overcome one of their few limitations, it contributes to the eerie sensation of the monster’s omnipresence. Texts and films about Primeval Vampires provoked terror during the nineteenth and early twentieth century because they portray Victorian’s concern of having their mind invaded by a more powerful entity.

In addition, Primeval Vampires are able to mesmerize victims remotely. In the film *Nosferatu*, Count Orlok’s psychic influence proves horrifying as he controls Renfield, who is in Germany, from his dwelling in Transylvania. Dreyer’s film, *Vampyr*, presents a horrifying variation of vampires’ mind control. In the film, the power is described as an act of evil creatures whose purpose is not only to devour the victims’ blood but to force them to commit suicide: “once the vampire has gained complete control over its victim, it seeks to drive the victim to suicide, thus delivering that soul to the Evil One. For he who takes his own life is lost for all eternity. To him the Golden Gates of Heaven are closed. For him all hope is lost” (*Vampyr*). Similar to films from this first stage, in Stoker’s novel Count Dracula is able to take over people’s minds even from afar. Lucy affirms to be in a trance every time she sleepwalks at night. The trance she experiences is induced by Dracula, who is in a different location. Once more, this is clarified by Van Helsing: “she was bitten by the

vampire when she was in a trance, sleep-walking, oh, you start. You do not know that, friend John, but you shall know it later, and in trance could he best come to take more blood. In trance she dies, and in trance she is Un-Dead, too" (241). Since he cannot infiltrate her house because it is being guarded against him, Dracula forces Lucy into a trance to make her come out and seek him. Additionally, the Count can also use his mental power to penetrate the victim's mind and steal information from it and, as mentioned before, having their mind invaded and manipulated represents one of the worst terrors for Victorians. This infiltration implies the victim's loss of control over his own will. As he hypnotizes Mina, the vampire aims at getting acquainted with everything that happens around her. Van Helsing explains:

In the trance of three days ago the Count sent her his spirit to read her mind. Or more like he took her to see him in his earth box in the ship with water rushing, just as it go free at rise and set of sun. He learn then that we are here, for she have more to tell in her open life with eyes to see ears to hear than he, shut as he is, in his coffin box. Now he make his most effort to escape us. (403-404)

When the Count realizes that the men are trying to kill him, he uses Mina's mind as a window to spy their whereabouts and escape from them. The powerful mind of the Primeval Vampire works when they are near and even away from their victims. But more importantly, their power to mesmerize humans proves valuable to ensure their own survival, whether it is to obtain food or precious information.

Moreover, the control of Primeval Vampires does not stop with humans because their capacity to overpower minds extends to animals too. In Stoker's novel, there are several instances in which the Count's dominion over animals is depicted. The vampire has

the ability of mesmerizing and enlisting beasts as his evil minions. Jonathan Harker witnesses the Count's malevolent taming of wild wolves: "how he came there, I know not, but I heard his voice raised in a tone of imperious command, and looking towards the sound, saw him stand in the roadway. As he swept his long arms, as though brushing aside some impalpable obstacle, the wolves fell back and back further still." (23). Later in the story this power is acknowledged by Van Helsing when he affirms that Dracula "can command all the meaner things, the rat, and the owl, and the bat, the moth, and the fox, and the wolf" (286). Perhaps limited by his knowledge of the English language, Van Helsing chooses the phrase "meaner things" to group the Count's minions. However, it seems more proper to call them "things of the night" because they belong to the late hour. The Count himself calls them "the children of the night" (29). Their "meanness" should be read as the result of Dracula's influence to corrupt the animals. As explained by Van Helsing, vampires not only command animals, but also choose particular animals that may transmit the similar kind of mysterious and disturbing feelings that they themselves provoke. Therefore, vampires make use of frightening and weird animals that usually hunt and feed at night and that possess the symbolic qualities that were discussed previously. Primeval Vampires' mental capacity of controlling other beings works in their favor to manipulate, get closer and overpower their victims. The nineteenth-century interest in and fear of mesmerism clearly shaped this era's vampires and gave it a unique "edge."

Behavioral Traits of the Primeval Vampire

For centuries, myths of Primeval Vampires terrified people. This legendary creature has always instilled fear in the minds of those who believe in their existence because they are inborn predators. When vampires first appeared in literature during the nineteenth

century and later in films, the image of a blood-thirsty insatiable creature was fostered. In folktales,¹⁸ vampires are described as creatures that come to feed on the living, most of the times on their own relatives. The fact that they leave their graves to kill and devour their own family is a palpable sign of their inherent cruelty. In myths, vampires leave their graves and attack people only to drink their blood; moreover, in their first appearances in literature and films, vampires are brought close to humans. The distance between these creatures and humans is reduced when they leave behind their secluded castles and graves and settle in urban places. In *Gothic Literature*, Smith affirms that in the nineteenth-century Gothic, the monster invades “domestic spaces, so that the ‘evil’ acquires a proximity to the self which it did not necessarily have in the earlier Gothic” (87). Following this Gothic trend of the nineteenth century, in which evil gets closer to the victim, vampire tales perfectly reflect that proximity. Vampires who had been living far from people—that is the case of *Dracula* (both Stoker’s novel and Browning’s film), *Carmilla*, and *Nosferatu*—invade the security of their victims’ surroundings and home looking for blood. Their primeval instincts lead them where their provisions are—that is, cities.

This movement of colonial subjects towards the center of the empire during the Victorian period is what Stephen D. Arata calls Reverse Colonization in his article “The Occidental Tourist: ‘Dracula’ and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization.” In a way, the vampire, or the colonial subject, becomes the colonizer when trying to infiltrate England. Victorians were terrified of all the horror and degenerations these colonial subjects would bring with them. In the case of Primeval Vampires, they migrate to more populated places

¹⁸ In *In Search of Dracula*, Raymond T. MacNally and Radu Florescu analyze ancient vampire folktales such as the Chinese *giang shi*, who drank the blood of his own relatives, or the Peruvian *canchus* or *pumapmicuc*, “who sucked the blood from the sleeping young” (116).

where the rations will never be scarce. In the novel *Dracula* by Stoker and the film *Nosferatu* by Murnau, Count Dracula and Count Orlok (respectively) enact this Reverse Colonialism as they move from their isolated and remote castles to the city pretending to be regular human beings in order to satiate their thirst. In the texts *Carmilla* and *The Vampyre*, Carmilla and Lord Ruthven also achieve this type of invasion and manage to plague their victims' houses. However, unlike Count Dracula, whose abnormalities give him away and represent an obstacle in his search for blood, both in the movie and in the novel, Carmilla's and Lord Ruthven's power and seduction open doors for them, allowing them to pass unnoticed at least for a longer period of time. In the literature from the nineteenth century and films from beginnings of the twentieth, Primeval Vampires abandon their distant and ancient dwellings to get close access to their victims. They look for places in which their sustenance will never be insufficient. The enemy invades the victims' dwellings and brings with him all the strangeness and inhospitableness of their original lands. It should be expected that this, like all invasions, is unwelcomed. Most Primeval Vampires cannot enter a house or a place unless they are invited or welcomed by someone, as Van Helsing explains (287). This is also represented in Browning's film where it is clear that the Count manipulates people to open doors for him. Primeval Vampires take the role of the colonizer by invading people's homes and lives and by using their powers to make sure they obtain blood. This invasion brings Victorians closer to all the degenerations they fear from the colonies.

Another recognizable characteristic of Primeval Vampires is their lack of reflection on mirrors. This trait belongs only to Primeval Vampires, and it reflects (no pun intended) their lack of retrospection and their inability to recognize themselves as evil. This lack of reflection is first suggested in Stoker's *Dracula* when Harker is in the castle and is

surprised by the Count's presence in the room:

I had hung my shaving glass by the window, and was just beginning to shave. Suddenly I felt a hand on my shoulder, and heard the Count's voice saying to me, "Good morning." I started, for it amazed me that I had not seen him, since the reflection of the glass covered the whole room behind me . . . Having answered the Count's salutation, I turned to the glass again to see how I had been mistaken. This time there could be no error, for the man was close to me, and I could see him over my shoulder. But there was no reflection of him in the mirror! (37)

Harker describes the terror he feels when he realizes that the Count does not project a reflection. Although Stoker's vampire has a humanoid physical form, he does not cast a shadow and lacks a reflection, characteristics that go against logic and nature. Harker finishes the passage by saying: "the whole room behind me was displayed, but there was no sign of a man in it, except myself" (37). The contrast between the man and the vampire is reinforced with these words. Harker recognizes his own image because he recognizes himself as an individual, a human. But Dracula's inhumanity is represented with his lack of reflection. Van Helsing later confirms the supernatural characteristics of this vampire: "[Dracula] throws no shadow, he make in the mirror no reflect, as again Jonathan observe" (286). He is a monster, but he does not recognize his own monstrosity on the mirror. Similarly, in Browning's film, *Dracula*, the Count does not have a reflection in the mirror, as can be seen in the following images. In the first one, Dracula is talking to Dr. Seward and Mina (see figure 15). In the next image, the focus of the scene is a mirror that reflects the exact same image except this time Dracula cannot be seen (see figure 16).



Figure 15. Screen Capture from Tod Browning's film *Dracula* (1931).



Figure 16. Screen Capture from Tod Browning's film *Dracula* (1931).

In this scene it is clear that the vampire lacks a reflection, which separates Dracula from the other characters who cast an image in the mirror. The fact that Primevals do not project an image only confirms that they are completely different from human beings.

Lacan's theory of the mirror stage may explain the lack of reflection and shadow of Primeval Vampires. According to Lacan in his article "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the

Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience,” when a person identifies his or her own reflection in a mirror he or she recognizes him or herself as an individual. At that point when the object becomes a subject, that reflection in the mirror becomes the “ideal I” (503). By not having a reflection, Primeval Vampires do not recognize themselves as subjects; thus, they do not have an ideal to follow. They are creatures whose only purpose is to drain humans’ blood. They act on mere instinct as any other animal. In this primeval stage, vampires are clearly distant from having any trace of humanity. Not having a reflection establishes vampires as supernatural monsters. Their lack of reflection prevents vampires from identifying themselves as individuals and makes them monsters driven only by their innate urge for blood. Primevals are creatures following their natural instinct to find sustenance.

One of the most distinguishable behavioral traits of Primeval Vampires in literature and films from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is that they are geographically, physically and emotionally isolated from the rest of characters. They do not need or long for company. As aforementioned, in the first written texts and films about vampires, they migrate from their remote castles and ruins to more populated places, looking for provisions. According to Punter and Byron in *The Gothic*, Victorian Gothic is characterized by this movement of monsters from distant places to more populated areas where people live: “Victorian Gothic is marked primarily by the domestication of Gothic figures, spaces and themes: horrors become explicitly located within the world of the contemporary reader” (26). Vampires, as other Gothic monsters, are domesticated and brought to the cities where they become a more immediate threat to the Victorian reader. Their relocation is not driven by any need of establishing relations but by their need for blood, which is identified as a grotesque demand for Victorian society. For Victorians the family is the center of their

society¹⁹. They attempted to keep their families unspoiled and pure of the vices and degenerations corrupting their society. Rebecca Willingham notes in “George Bernard Shaw’s *You Never can Tell*” that “ideologically, the middle-class family represented the essence of morality, stability and comfort” (39). This idealization of the family gave origin to Victorians’ fear of evil invading their home and defiling that coveted perfection. Willingham continues explaining that “during the Victorian period, the family (a mother, a father and children) was increasingly idealized as people developed firm beliefs about how family life ought to be carried out. Not everyone could meet these high standards, but real changes in work and income allowed family relationships to develop more fully across all classes” (39). Vampires are an exception to this idealization by not having any sort of family relationships, and their lifestyle without this affiliation is alarming and unacceptable for Victorians. Vampires’ detachment from everyone is clearly depicted in Rice’s *Interview with the Vampire*. Rice’s novel gives an excellent opportunity to analyze the Primeval Vampire, enacted by Lestat. Lestat is completely detached from humans; in his own words: “vampires are killers . . . Predators. Whose all-seeing eyes were meant to give them detachment. The ability to see a human life in its entirety, not with any mawkish sorrow but with a thrilling satisfaction in being the end of that life” (83). Lestat embraces his killer nature. He knows that vampires’ only aim is to prey on humans. Humans represent food, and there is no sorrow in feeding from another species. Lestat’s case is an extraordinary one because he belongs to the second half of the twentieth century; however, he embodies the Primeval Vampire because of his detachment and disregard for others. Lestat, like his kindred, is an isolated being. However, unlike vampires from the nineteenth and early

¹⁹ For further study on domesticity and Victorians’ family structure see *A Portrait of Domestic Life in Victorian England: Inside the Victorian Home*. Judith Flanders. New York: Norton, 2003.

twentieth century, Lestat, as a vampire, has always lived in a city surrounded by people. He also lives with other vampires, but, as he explains to Louis, his companion, it is just a matter of convenience and safety:

You talk of finding other vampires! Vampires are killers! They don't want you or your sensibility. They'll see you coming long before you see them, and they'll see your flaw; and, distrusting you, they'll seek to kill you. They'd seek to kill you even if you were like me. Because they are lone predators and seek for companionship no more than cats in the jungle. They're jealous of their secret and of their territory; and if you find one or more of them together it will be for safety only, and one will be the slave of the other, the way you are of me. (Rice, *Interview* 82)

Primeval Vampires are solitary creatures. When they seek companionship, it is merely for their own safety. In the case of Lestat, he claims to need Louis for his money and to use him as protection from other vampires. In *Dracula*, both in Stoker's novel and Browning's film, the Count coexists with other three female vampires, but clearly they are subjected to Dracula. Dracula supplies them with blood, and they always obey him. As Lestat affirms, if vampires live with other vampires, one is the slave of the other.

One of the most powerful traits of vampires is their power of seduction. In spite of their oddities, vampires seem to possess a natural capacity of seducing their victims to obtain blood. Primeval Vampires are natural predators, and they have different means to entice humans. Some take advantage of their charm, attractive looks and good manners, while others deceive and control their victims with the only intention of satisfying their thirst for blood. Primeval Vampires earn their victims' trust, control their minds, pretend to be their friend, or make use of their beguiling sensuality to gain closeness. One way or

another, Primeval Vampires manage to invade and trap their prey. In *Seduction*, Jean Baudrillard argues that “the strategy of seduction is the one of deception. It lies in wait for all that tends to confuse itself with its reality. And it is potentially a source of fabulous strength . . . seduction, by producing only illusions, obtains all powers” (69-70). Primeval Vampires attempt to imitate humans and create the illusion of attraction, temptation and perfection. Humans never realize that they are being allured by a veiled monster. In Polidori’s *The Vampyre*, Lord Ruthven’s enticing qualities allow him to be accepted and even desired. The narrator indicates that people are actually eager to be near him and capture the vampire’s attention:

His peculiarities caused him to be invited to every house; all wished to see him, and those who had been accustomed to violent excitement, and now felt the weight of ennui, were pleased at having something in their presence capable of engaging their attention. In spite of the deadly hue of his face, which never gained a wanner tint, either from the blush of modesty, or from the strong emotion of passion, though its form and outline were beautiful, many of the female hunters after notoriety attempted to win his attentions, and gain, at least, some marks of what they might term affection. (1)

In spite of his strangeness, Lord Ruthven seduces people, men and women equally. He becomes an object of their trust, admiration and desire, and he takes advantage of that to quench his thirst for blood. As Baudrillard affirms, the seducer “turns himself into an illusion in order to sow confusion, but curiously, this illusion is part of a calculation, with finery giving way to strategy” (98). A vampire’s every step is premeditated and directed to one only purpose, that of deceiving his victims to quench their thirst. In Le Fanu’s story, *Carmilla* succeeds because she seduces and makes the victim trust her. Although Laura

acknowledges that there is something not normal about her visitor that she cannot understand, the vampire's magnificence makes it impossible for Laura to avoid feeling attracted to her guest's beauty and mysteriousness. Moreover, Carmilla uses her apparent innocence and peculiarities to deceive Laura and gain her trust. Carmilla pretends to be as innocent as she appears to be and pretends to be weak to gain Laura's trust: "if you were less pretty I think I should be very much afraid of you" (18). Laura admits being intensely attracted to her guest in spite of her oddities: "I did feel, as she said, 'drawn towards her,' but there was also something of repulsion. In this ambiguous feeling, however, the sense of attraction immensely prevailed. She interested and won me; she was so beautiful and so indescribably engaging" (19). The attraction that Laura feels towards Carmilla is more powerful than her suspicion that something is wrong. She also admits feeling repulsion, but Carmilla's mysteriousness and appeal are more intense²⁰. Although Laura does not understand the source for such contradictory feelings, her curiosity for what is forbidden dominates her actions. There are several instances in *Carmilla* in which the vampire's seduction is so intense that it might be confused with love. However, the only interest of the Primeval Vampire is to satiate their thirst. Primevals' power of seduction along with their aforementioned capacity to mesmerize their victims is strong enough to make their victims overlook their evil traits and devious intentions.

The deceptive illusion of passion and seduction created by Primeval Vampires confuses their victims into believing the monsters truly love them. However, the illusion of love weaved by vampires seeks only human sacrifice and blood. The victim is deceived by

²⁰ In "New Life for an Old Tradition: Ann Rice and Vampire Literature." *The Blood Is Life: Vampires in Literature*. eds. Leonard G. Heldreth and Mary Pharr. Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1999. Martin J. Wood analyzes the way vampires' beauty disguises the threat they represent, making the victim fall for their dazzling outside appearance.

the false impression of being loved which makes it easier for the seducer to attack. According to Baudrillard when the purpose of seduction is not sexual, it will always end up in a sacrifice:

Seduction now changes its meaning. Instead of being an immoral and libertine exercise, a cynical deception for sexual ends (and thus without great interest), it becomes mythical and acquires the dimensions of a sacrifice. This is why the “victim’s” consent is so easily obtained. In her abandon she [the victim] is, in a sense obeying the commands of a divinity who wants *every force to be overturned and sacrificed*. (99)

If the intention of seducing is not sexual, then, the final outcome is a sacrifice. That sacrifice is easier to obtain because the victim is confused and misled by the seducer and believes that the game of seduction involves love and passion; thus, the victim becomes a prey that is easily manipulated. This kind of sacrifice tends to end up with the destruction and death of one of the two involved: “seduction, being a sacrificial process, ends with a murder (the deflowering)—though the latter need not have taken place” (Baudrillard 100). A relationship with a vampire culminates in an actual murder. The “couple” never engages in sexual intercourse because the victim dies and satisfies the seducer’s goal. The “deflowering” never happens because the process of seduction ends when the victim’s blood is drained by the seducer. In *The Vampyre*, Lord Ruthven entices a woman to marry him and kills her on their wedding night. Instead of consummating the marriage, Lord Ruthven murders his victim to obtain her blood. With seduction, Primeval Vampires do not obtain any pleasure except that of satiating their instinctive desire of consuming blood. They merely aim at quenching their thirst and continuing their existences. In *Carmilla*, Laura explains that the existence of vampires is a quest to obtain blood, and they would do

anything to satiate their need: “[the vampire’s] horrible lust for living blood supplies the vigor of its waking existence. The vampire is prone to be fascinated with an engrossing vehemence, resembling the passion of love, by particular persons . . . It will never desist until it has satiated its passion, and drained the very life of its coveted victim” (83). They seduce and create the illusion of love to weaken their victims and obtain their nourishment. Once the human is completely enticed and willing to do anything for what they think is love, Primeval Vampires attack. The seducer does not need to consummate the relationship with sexual intercourse because the victim’s sacrifice occurs first. Thus, there is no consummation in the eye of the victim, but there is closure for the vampire who obtains the precious liquid. Although some of the Primeval Vampires from this period seduce and lure their victims with eloquence and flattery or mere control, a vampire’s only purpose is to drain their victim’s blood. In his article “Fictional Vampires in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” William Hughes refers to the fact that many of these vampire attacks occur in a bedroom. The author believes that although the bedchamber is a place that usually indicates intimacy and sexuality, the style and plot of these tales suggest that the vampire’s only interest is obtaining blood: “for all the location of the attack—the victim’s bedroom—the language of the account asserts that the vampire seeks primarily to feed, not to seduce” (147). Primeval Vampires do everything in their power with the only intention of satisfying their need for blood. Primeval Vampires are not looking to sexually consummate their relationship with the victims; nevertheless, they do seduce their victims to obtain access to their blood. Seduction is what allows them to invade the victim’s intimate space. Therefore, although vampire attacks are at times inaccurately related to sexual acts in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries’ stories, I argue that Primeval Vampires seduce victims with the only aim of nourishing themselves.

Lord Ruthven and Carmilla are the perfect examples of seducers whose controlling tactics seek the sacrifice of a human. Both vampires possess a drawing power impossible to resist. Their looks, attitudes, actions and way of talking are meant to allure victims into an overpowering illusion of passion. In *The Vampyre*, Lord Ruthven is known for being enticing and, as a result of that, dangerous. In Polidori's story, Aubrey is warned by his guardians who suspect of the Lord's real nature: "his guardians insisted upon his immediately leaving his friend, and urged that his character was dreadfully vicious, for that the possession of irresistible powers of seduction, rendered his licentious powers more dangerous to society" (3). Lord Ruthven's power of seduction is such that people cannot resist and that turns him into an unstoppable menace for society. His appeal allows the Lord to deceive girls, marry them and then consume their blood; this routine is played out with the victimization of Aubrey's sister, whom he marries and kills on their wedding night by drinking her blood. Similarly, Carmilla's charming looks and apparent innocence open doors for her. Laura believes Carmilla's seduction to be motivated by real love, as she pretends to be innocent and tender: "she would press me more closely in her trembling embrace, and her lips in soft kisses gently glow upon my cheek" (23). It is impossible for Laura to see her guest's true intentions and to resist. Laura continues and affirms that even though she fights that feeling, she is eventually seduced by the vampire: "from these foolish embraces, which were not of very frequent occurrence, I must allow, I used to wish to extricate myself; but my energies seemed to fail me. Her murmured words sounded like a lullaby in my ear, and soothed my resistance into a trance, from which I only seemed to recover myself when she withdrew her arms" (23). Carmilla's embrace seems to have a luring effect on Laura. The language and tone in this section are as enthralling for the reader as they are for the victim. Laura's word choice transmits the irresistible attraction

that she experiences. As she states, Carmilla's words work as a "lullaby" that numbs her and prevents her from reacting. When the vampire's mechanism is that of seducing its victim, it becomes a mortal trap from which it is impossible to escape. The victims are involved in a trance-like experience that lulls them, and it is precisely because of that trance that the victim becomes an easy target. In Carmilla's words, love demands sacrifice: "love will have sacrifices. No sacrifice without blood" (37). Primeval Vampires seduce their victims, making them believe that their relationship is based on real love. They do so to leave them unprotected and weak. As was previously mentioned, Primeval Vampires have different means to approach human beings with the only objective of drinking their blood. Seduction gives vampires the advantage of controlling their victims without being noticed. It is vampires' infallible strategies and one of their most lethal weapons.

The "relationship" between vampire and humans lacks love and compassion, at least from the monster's behalf. This objectification of the human kind is portrayed in film as well as in literature in the early twentieth century. In the first half of this century, the first films with a Primeval Vampire as a protagonist are produced. These motion pictures depict vampires that hunt their victims with the only purpose of sucking their blood. Similar to any other hunter that kills its prey for its own survival, vampires in these movies kill without remorse. They do not care about their victims. No emotions are involved in this murderous act; they do not expect any emotional reward. They neither love nor hate their victims because humans represent mere nourishment; humans just happen to be in a lower rank in the food chain. In F.W. Murnau's film, *Nosferatu* (1922), it is clear that the vampire, Count Orlok, kills humans only to drain their blood. Likewise, in Tod Browning's *Dracula* (1931), the Count attempts to approach his victims seeking to satisfy his appetite. Although it might be suggested or inferred that both vampires have a predilection for young people,

women mostly, when it is time to find provisions, it is indifferent whether the victim is male, female, old, or young. In the film *Nosferatu*, when the vampire is on board the ship that is taking him to Bremen, he starts feeding on the men until he exterminates the whole crew. The deaths of the members are recorded in the captain's log (see figures 17 and 18).

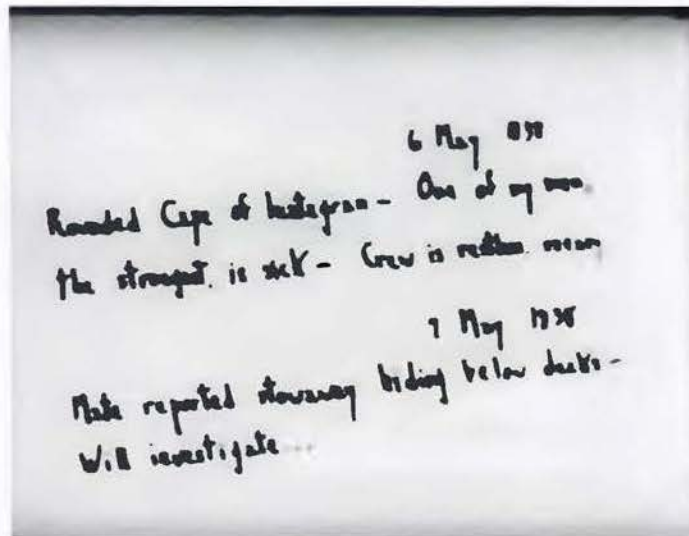


Figure 17. Screen Capture from Friedrich Murnau's film *Nosferatu* (1921).

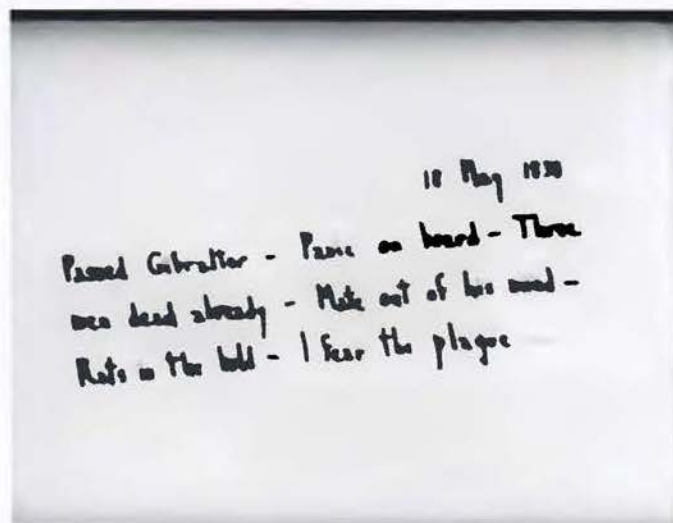


Figure 18. Screen Capture from Friedrich Murnau's film *Nosferatu* (1921).

The captain notes that his men start getting sick and dying, even the strongest. He compares

the weird disease to the plague because it seems to be lethal and kills indiscriminately.²¹ Men and women provide the same nourishment for vampires. Similarly, Dreyer's film *Vampyr* (1932), based on *Carmilla*, depicts a vampire that leaves her grave to feed on the living every night. Just like Count Orlok and Count Dracula, this vampire does not have feelings towards her victims. In Dreyer's *Vampyr* (1932), it is inconsequential who the prey is as long as it satisfies the vampire's lust for blood: "they rise from their graves to suck the blood of children and young adults and thus prolong their shadowy existence." The figure of the vampire portrayed in films during the first decades of the twentieth century is that of a murderous creature that does not feel attached to any living being. The victim is a simple resource and is not important when a vampire needs blood.

The significance of blood for Primeval Vampires is the basis of all literary texts and films to come afterwards. The bond between blood and the vampire is originally created in Primeval Vampire stories. Though subsequent stories make particular additions to the bond, the original implications of consuming blood is that it provides Primeval Vampires with all the sustenance they need to prolong their existence and empower themselves. The life-giving quality of blood has one of its most ancient sources in the Bible. In Leviticus, when God tells Moses his commands to be transmitted onto his people, He exclaims:

And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you

²¹ The plague was introduced in England by rats aboard ships from the East. The film, *Nosferatu*, depicts Victorians' anxiety about the contamination that England suffered from a disease that came from the East. In "The Black Death: The Greatest Catastrophe Ever," Ole J. Benedictow discusses the role that "ship rats" played in spreading the disease.

upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. (*King James Bible*, Lev. 17. 10-12)

In the Bible, God himself attests that it is blood that gives life to creatures on Earth. God also prohibits ingesting blood and asserts that the one who dares do it should be banned from the rest. No being can live or exist without blood, and that also applies to vampires. There is, however, a fundamental challenge to vampires. When they drink blood from humans, they prolong their existence, but at the same time they are transgressing God's mandate which ostracizes them from humans. Their existence is automatically damned. Besides life, blood also provides vampires with supernatural powers. The role of blood in literature and films about vampires from the nineteenth and first part of the twentieth century helps to define the Primeval Vampire. Blood governs every decision made by vampires and gives them special powers. In *Dracula*, Van Helsing explains that blood grants vampires a supernatural strength incomparable to that of men: "the nosferatu do not die like the bee when he sting once. He is only stronger; and being stronger, have yet more power to work evil. This vampire which is amongst us is of himself so strong in person as twenty men, he is of cunning more than mortal, for his cunning be the growth of ages" (283). Resembling any living being who obtains all the nutriment it needs from their victuals, vampires acquire their vitality from human blood. Constant feeding provides them with potentially eternal existence and supernatural strength. Blood proves to be an incomparable aliment that grants them immortality, meaning that vampires possess an everlasting existence though they are already "dead," and that also endows vampires with youth. Blood is the perfect nutriment because it makes every quality bloom: "the vampire live on, and cannot die by mere passing of the time, he can flourish when that he can fatten on the blood of the living. Even more, we have seen amongst us that he can even grow

younger, that his vital faculties grow strenuous, and seem as though they refresh themselves when his special pabulum is plenty” (286). The outstanding and unbelievable properties of blood make it vital. Vampires owe their existence to the blood they steal from humans. For Primeval Vampires, blood is their only food. The liquid equals life and governs every aspect of the life of a Primeval Vampire. Obtaining it is Primeval Vampires’ only concern in their endless existence because it grants them with eternal life and supernatural powers.

The Primeval Vampire as a Reflection of Society

Following the mutations of Gothic Literature, the figure of the vampire has adapted to the period in which it is conceived. The earliest of these adaptations occurs in the nineteenth century. Right before, during the eighteenth century, Gothic tales were commonly set in remote castles, ruins, or monasteries that created the dark and gloomy tone of these stories. Additionally, the inhabitants of these isolated places were also distant from people. This distance helped to increase the mystery and horror instilled by these Gothic constructions and those who lived inside. During the nineteenth century, the Victorian Period, these secluded settings were left behind, and creatures were moved to more crowded places; the distance between the once isolated Gothic creatures and humans is now significantly reduced or entirely eradicated. In this century, Gothic monsters and motifs invade the domestic sphere. Those elements that used to inspire terror from afar infest urban areas. This invasion is clearly portrayed in literature with the Primeval Vampire. As mentioned before, this vampire takes the place of the colonizer by invading the center of the empire in a movement that is known as Reverse Colonization. Thus, we see Primevals leaving their castle, ruins or graveyard behind to have access to more populated areas where blood is more abundant. Alexandra Warwick refers to this

transformation as the Victorian Gothic revival, in “Victorian Gothic:” “eighteenth-century form continues to survive for much longer, the significant shift to what I would describe as the Victorian Gothic revival begins in the 1840s. The shift can be summarised as the translation of Gothic to new locations: first to a bourgeois domestic setting, and second to the urban environment” (30). Warwick argues that the Gothic elements from the previous century are still present in these tales, but the location changes. Likewise, vampires continue to be the same blood-eating creatures described in myths from the past centuries, but in the nineteenth century they are immersed in cities looking for victims. This move is narrated in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*. In the novel, Harker goes to Transylvania to help Count Dracula buy properties in England. In the films from the early twentieth century, based on Stoker’s novel, *Dracula* and *Nosferatu*, this Reverse Colonization is still conveyed. Similarly, in *Carmilla*, the vampire leaves her grave in the ruins of what used to be her family’s castle to live in the village where it is easier to access her victims. In this period, Primeval Vampires change their isolated places of origin to adapt to the changes of Gothic literature.

Victorian Gothic literature portrays the fascination with supernatural creatures and paranormal activity characteristic of this period. For Victorians the house is no longer a safe place and becomes the origin of moral, social and psychological degenerations that are portrayed in Primeval Vampire stories. Nina Auerbach observes in *Our Vampires, Ourselves* that “each [vampire] feeds on his age indistinctively, because he embodies that age” (1); vampires absorb the concerns and desires of a specific society and time—the Victorian in this case—and give them life through literature and films. As a consequence of the arrival of vampires to towns and cities, the safety of the home of the victim is threatened by these creatures. The Vampire encroaches upon and invades what is supposed to be people’s safest

place, their own home. As Andrew Smith affirms in *Gothic Literature*, this trait is the internalization of evil that characterizes the Gothic literature from 1790s to 1890s (87). People are always at risk of being attacked by vampires because they cannot find protection, not even in their homes, which become the den in which degenerations and terror are originated. Gothic literature and Primeval Vampires from this period mirror society's fear of all the evil occurrences and problems that may happen at home, such as sexual, physical and moral degenerations. All the questionable moral and sexual behaviors originated at home are exemplified by the desire of Primeval Vampires for blood. During the Victorian period, sexuality, even marital sex for pleasure instead of procreation, was considered degenerative for men and women²². Vampires seduce and manipulate people to behave in a very anomalous and deviant ways. They lure their victims in the familiarity of their own home and usually in the intimacy of their bedroom.

Victorians feared the invasion of their homes, but even more terrifying was thinking about the infiltration of their mind. Franz Mesmer gave scientific validity to this anxiety with his studies on mesmerism, and texts and films about Primeval Vampires made this fear more real. Primevals are capable of overpowering another being's weaker mind. This includes animals and humans. As afore mentioned, in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, the vampire is capable of summoning creatures like wolves. Nevertheless, what really terrified Victorians is the fact that these vampires were capable of infiltrating people's minds even from afar, as it is the case of Renfield who is controlled by Dracula, even though the latter is in a different country. Primevals not only mesmerize people to make them do as they

²² For further study on Victorian sexual anxieties see Max Nordau's book *Degeneration* (1895). The author condemns all sexual practices as degenerative in the *fin de siècle* Victorian society and uses medical evidence to support his thesis.

wish, but also use that power to steal information about the person. For Victorians, the portrayal of Primeval Vampires is terrifying because they are beings capable of manipulating the fluids that connect all the other beings in the world. Thus, this power gives them the capacity of penetrating people's mind and in a certain way of forming a very intimate bond between the mesmerizer and the mesmerized. The fact of having intimate connections with strangers terrified Victorians, even more if this was forced upon them.

Primeval Vampires also embody Victorians' anxieties regarding hybridity. During the nineteenth century, Charles Darwin spread fear with his theories about hybridization. The fact that it was possible to cross two different species and that this crossing might be more productive than it is between two similar beings became one of the main worries of society. At that time, Victorians were also facing the infiltration of people from the colonies whom they did not consider their equals. This immigration brought with it the possibility of being "infected" with the inferiority of the colonial subjects and the mix between them and those from the empire and what might result from that crossing. Texts and films about Primeval Vampires depict Victorians' concern with hybrid beings. Primevals themselves are hybrids of the animal and human worlds. The animal traits these vampires possess not only distance them from humans, but also make them terrifying. Primevals have animalistic physical characteristics such as fangs, pointed ears and long nails that resemble claws, but also their behavior distinguishes from humans. In Browning's film, *Dracula*, Mina notices that something strange, not human-like, is happening to Lucy: "Lucy looks like a hungry animal, like a wolf" (*Dracula*). Mina affirms that Lucy is behaving like an animal even though she does not know that her friend has already been bitten by the Count. It is necessary to note that Mina compares Lucy to an animal that generates almost as much terror as a vampire. After being bitten, Lucy is in the process of turning into a vampire, so

her human nature is being attacked by her new animal side, and those close to her can see the change. Like other Primevals, Lucy becomes a hybrid of both worlds and that provokes uneasiness in those around her. Primevals personify the degenerations that result from crossing different species that frightened people of the time.

By the end of the nineteenth century, concerns with physical and sexual degenerations and decadence take over society. Gothic texts about Primeval Vampires portray people's concerns with human moral, physical, and sexual decay. Count Dracula, Lord Ruthven and Carmilla are the perfect representations of these degenerations. They all seem to be human, but their abnormal physical traits set them apart from people. This separation reveals society's fear and rejection of physical degenerations, a fact that is reflected in the physical deformities of Gothic creatures. However, this physical abnormality is just a mask for a much worse degeneration that is hidden inside. These creatures' unnatural needs and desires—in this case the vampire's need for blood—are a representation of the deepest desires that Victorians try to suppress. In her article "Purity and Danger: Dracula, the Urban Gothic, and the Late Victorian Degeneracy Crisis," Kathleen L. Spencer notes that:

The Count [Dracula] represents precisely those dark secret drives that the men most fear in themselves, which are most destructive to both poles of the intimate self of the family man, threatened by unrestrained sexual appetites, and the communal self of the nation, undermined by violent internal competition more than by external invasion. Representing a real aspect of his enemies, but one that they consciously wish to reject. (213-14)

Primeval Vampires represent and are the embodiment of all the desires censored by the Victorian society. The Victorian tendency to censor their inner desires is reflected in the

Gothic literature they produced, especially through their vampires. This literary concern about cultural decline continues as a motif until the end of the nineteenth century, also known as *fin the siècle Gothic*. The final result is a century of literature that records the concerns of British people in the Gothic writings of Primeval Vampires.

Victorians were terrified that their houses and minds might be infiltrated by evil. They feared the same for their great British Empire. During the Victorian period, the sense of power and nationalism created an active antagonism against colonial and non-native subjects that is reflected in Gothic stories of Primeval Vampires. In *The Gothic*, Punter and Byron note that Gothic literature from that period is permeated with Imperial elements that are “Gothicized” in literature. The racial differences that were so marked in the Victorian period are mirrored in literature of the time. At that time, non-native people were catalogued as wicked and vicious: “many nineteenth-century involvements with empire become themselves ‘Gothicized’, in the sense that the racial or national ‘other’ comes to be seen from a Gothic perspective, endowed with diabolical, monstrous or merely melodramatically powerful qualities” (45). In stories of Primeval Vampires, this evil other is represented by the vampire. In *Dracula*, the Count that comes from a distant land is clearly “the other.” At the beginning of the novel, Harker explains that he is on a trip to visit the Count in one of the most remote and unexplored parts of the continent: “Transylvania, Moldavia, and Bukovina, in the midst of the Carpathian mountains; one of the wildest and least known portions of Europe” (10). The fact that Dracula comes from a “wild” land, underscores his own wild nature and the racial differences between Harker and Dracula. Although Harker is the one entering the vampire’s territory, the Count is the “other” in the novel. It is particularly striking that in such an epistolary novel, Stoker intentionally narrates this passage through the voice of the visitor to exploit the Count’s

otherness. Harker's first impression of the Count is that of a man with a "marked physiognomy" (28). This clear physical differentiation is what Punter and Byron call racial submission (46), and it exposes the Victorians' sense of superiority regarding colonial peoples. The inferiority of the other generated in Victorians the fear being contaminated with that lower class's inferiority. They were afraid that colonial subjects would come to infest and degenerate their cities: "Victorian anxieties about evolution, or rather about the contamination that might result if less 'developed' races and species are allowed their own self-determination" (46). Victorians were afraid that non-native people would contaminate their urban space with vices and decay. In Murnau's film *Nosferatu*, a newspaper article entitled "New Plague Baffles Science" (see figure 19) describes the contagion brought by Count Orlok as a plague that infects and kills people: "a mysterious epidemic of the plague has broken out in eastern Europe and in the port cities of the Black Sea, attacking principally young and vigorous. Cause of the two bloody marks on the neck of each victim baffles the medical profession" (*Nosferatu*). Count Orlok's otherness is emphasized with the unknown disease he brought from a remote land. In Gothic stories of Primeval Vampires, the vampire is undoubtedly the "other" that comes and infests the Empire with his degenerations and inferiority.

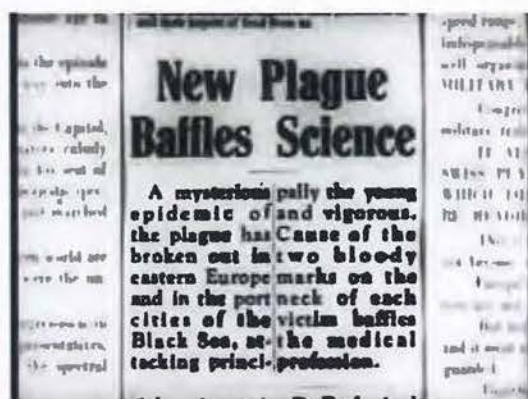


Figure 19. Screen Capture from Friedrich Murnau's film *Nosferatu* (1921).

Gothic stories of Primeval Vampires capture the Victorian perception of the colonies as wilder lands that give imperial subjects the possibility of improving by change. The outer regions of the empire were considered places for adventure that gave Victorians the possibility of changing. A long stay in the colonies represented a rite of passage for men. According to Punter and Byron, Victorians believed that an adventure in the periphery of the Empire allowed subjects to grow: “there is also the idea that operating in the empire can become a kind of test, *a rite de passage*, from which the adventurer can return wiser and stronger, having tested out his manhood on a necessary enemy” (47). This initiation of men is illustrated in Primeval Vampires’ stories. Stoker’s novel *Dracula* portrays the transformation undergone by the adventurer when Harker returns and has clearly changed because of the dangers he faced in Transylvania. His hair has drastically turned grey as a physical proof that he aged during his stay in the Count’s castle. Dr. Seward writes in his diary: “today he is a drawn, haggard old man, whose white hair matches well with the hollow burning eyes and grief-written lines of his face. His energy is still intact. In fact, he is like a living flame.” (359). Harker’s way through Transylvania tested his manhood in a terrifying manner that is emphasized with the whitening of his hair. The fact that he is still an energetic young man, in spite of his grey hair, suggests the maturity process he went through. Moreover, Van Helsing is another character that confirms this Victorian sense of adventure in the outskirts of the Empire. Mina affirms that Van Helsing “looks very tired and old and grey, but his mouth is set as firmly as a conqueror’s” (429) when they are on their way to kill the Count. Conquering, or murdering, the “other” demonstrates the everlasting superiority of the Imperial class. The Victorians’ concern of being invaded and corrupted by the colonial subjects is mirrored in Primeval Vampire stories in which the

horror of racial difference and supremacy of the Empire are captured. Additionally, facing the dangers encountered in the Empire allowed imperial subjects to grow more mature and to expand their knowledge.

Conclusion

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the figure of the vampire tormented people with its monstrosity. In the Victorian age, this Gothic monster captures the physical, sexual and moral degenerations and vices that inspired terror in that particular society. Its physical, behavioral and supernatural traits turned this vampire into the classical monster of Gothic literature. Primeval Vampires follow their inner instinct of finding blood to satiate their natural need for this vital fluid, and they do everything in their power to obtain it. Moreover, killing human beings to quench their thirst does not provoke any regret in this Gothic monster, and this detachment turns into complete disregard for the human kind. Their strong power of seduction and their incomparable mind control turn the Primeval Vampire into the dominant source of horror for the Victorian society. This vampire invaded the cities as a reflection of the Victorian's fear of being contaminated with the inferiority of the periphery.

Moreover, the figure of the vampire proves its malleability during the second half of the twentieth century in which the Primeval Vampire gives way to the Transitional Vampire. This second category suggested in this study delineates a more humanized vampire. Although it continues to be a monster, the Transitional Vampire has a divided essence between monster and human. These vampires question their own evil nature and debate whether to embrace their killer instinct or not.

CHAPTER IV

The Transitional Vampire:

The New Vampire of the Twentieth Century

The second category of this study is the Transitional Vampire. This vampire retains some characteristics of its predecessor, the Primeval Vampire, but it also marks the beginning of the evolution of vampires. In the first decades of the twentieth century, as mentioned in the previous chapter, films portray mostly Primeval Vampires. They are based on texts from the nineteenth century, such as Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. The vampire protagonists of these films depict the anxieties of the nineteenth century and of the *fin-de-siècle*. However, during the twentieth century, mainly during the second half of the century, the figure of the vampire in film and literature undergoes a process of humanization. As a result, a new kind of vampire becomes the main protagonist of vampire fiction, the Transitional Vampire. It is necessary to note that the fact that vampires are undergoing a process of humanization does not imply that Primeval Vampires ceased to exist. Transitional Vampires do not replace Primevals, both kinds coexist. Transitional Vampires are liminal subjects learning how to live trapped between the vampire and the human world. They possess characteristics that define them as monsters, but they also have a human side that clashes with their evil nature. Notably, not only does the figure change, but also the way in which their victims perceive them begins to vary. As mentioned in the previous chapter, a monster shows deviation from what is considered normal by a society, whether in appearance or behavior, but the term can also be defined as "something unnaturally marvelous" ("Monster" *Merriam-Webster*). Although Transitional Vampires are still considered frightening and abnormal, they also prove to be "something unnaturally

marvelous.” Thus, these vampires are monsters because they fulfill the definition of this creature. Nevertheless, instead of feeling repulsion or disgust towards these vampires, society is now drawn to their beauty and mysteriousness. The same as with Primeval Vampires, the period in which the texts are written or the films produced define the characteristics that make a vampire Transitional. Vampires are a reflection of their society and the anxieties that afflict it. The figure of the vampire adapts to the concerns of the twentieth century, and the result of this adaptation is the Transitional Vampire. This chapter will explain and analyze this transformation.

A representative selection of the most influential texts and films from the twentieth century will be analyzed in order to establish the characteristics of the Transitional Vampire and the mutations it has undergone. Texts such as *Interview with the Vampire* (1973) and *The Vampire Lestat* (1985) by Anne Rice and films like *Dracula* (1992) directed by Francis Coppola, *Interview with the Vampire* (1994) by Neil Jordan, and *The Lost Boys* (1987) by Joel Schumacher will be studied in this chapter to prove the necessity to establish a new category of vampires. Moreover, some of the concepts used to define the Primeval Vampire, such as the mirror stage, Freud’s theory of dreams and the notion of the gaze, will continue to be relevant to evidence the transformation of this Gothic monster. Mesmerism, and Jean Baudrillard’s theory of seduction will also prove the existence of this second stage of the vampire. In addition, new concepts such as Arnold van Gennep’s liminality and the Americanization of the vampire will contribute to the definition of the Transitional Vampire as the next stage in the evolution of the vampire through the twentieth century.

Transitional Vampires as Monsters with a Divided Nature

As has been argued, Transitional Vampires possess many characteristics of monsters. The Transitional Vampire maintains this innate monstrous side, but they also start questioning their own evil nature. Vampires in general have an inborn need for blood to survive; this grotesque need sets them completely apart from humans and asserts their evil monstrosity. Nevertheless, unlike Primevals, Transitional Vampires show a certain regard for human life. As a consequence of their empathy for humans, they lead a lonely existence as vampires. In *Interview with the Vampire*, Anne Rice²³ portrays the quintessential Transitional Vampire through Louis. This character explains that he cares about human life when he narrates the first time he witnesses his fellow vampire, Lestat,²⁴ killing a human:

I was almost sick from this. Weak and feverish already, I had little reserve; handling the dead body with such a purpose caused me nausea. Lestat was laughing, telling me callously that I would feel so different once I was a vampire that I would laugh, too. He was wrong about that. I never laugh at death, no matter how often and regularly I am the cause of it. (Rice 16)

²³ In "New Life for an Old Tradition: Anne Rice and Vampire Literature," Martin J. Wood affirms that Anne Rice revived the myth of the vampire: "Rice's alterations of the myth have given readers new reason to take it seriously, to reread their own lives in its light, she has performed a great service" (62). She used the traditional Gothic monster, but incorporated modern anxieties that make it appealing for contemporary readers. The idea that Rice revitalized the figure of the vampire is shared by other critics such as Milly Williamson.

²⁴ Louis and Lestat were both created in the 1970's, by Anne Rice. Louis is the quintessential Transitional Vampire while Lestat still has a tendency towards a Primeval Vampire. However, the way Lestat is portrayed in Rice's first vampire novel, *Interview with the Vampire*, and later in the second one, *The Vampire Lestat*, varies. In the first book, Lestat's instincts and behavior lean towards that of Primevals, but in the second book, he is depicted as a more humanized vampire, a Transitional one. Like Louis, Lestat is a liminal subject trapped between worlds.

This is only the first time Louis feeds, yet he is full of remorse and melancholy already. Since his birth as a vampire, Louis is depicted as a different kind of monster, and two hundred years later, he continues to assert that for him human life never stopped being valuable. Louis kills only because he has to, because there is no other way to survive. He is exemplary of a new breed of vampires that do not accept their evil nature. Transitional Vampires are trapped between two worlds, the human and the vampire. As it was discussed in the Theoretical Framework, according to Arnold van Gennep, someone who is trapped in between two states, monstrosity and humanity in this case, is a liminal subject. As liminal beings, Transitionals are trying to define their own nature in order to be accepted by society. Similarly, in Schumacher's film, *The Lost Boys*, Michael also proves to possess a liminal nature. Like Louis, the first time he witnesses a human being killed by a vampire, he strongly disapproves of the act (see image 20), but it also takes a great deal of self-control not to be part of it (see image 21). Unlike their predecessors, these vampires feel great respect for life and do not take pleasure in ending it. Louis makes it clear that the new vampires are no longer inborn evil killers. During this second stage, vampires possess a liminal nature.



Figure 20. Screen Capture from Joel Schumacher's film *The Lost Boys* (1987).



Figure 21. Screen Capture from Joel Schumacher's film *The Lost Boys* (1987).

Physical Traits of Transitional Vampires

The physical characteristics of Transitional Vampires differ enormously from those of Primeval Vampires. Unlike their predecessors, Transitionals do not display permanent animalistic or exaggerated physical traits. These Vampires physically resemble humans in almost every part of their bodies. They have lost all traces of the hybrid nature that characterizes Primeval Vampires. Earlier Primevals are hybrids of the human and animal worlds with their pointed ears, fixed fangs and long nails that resemble claws. Nevertheless, the next generation of vampires has no evident or fixed animal attributes. The physical appearance of Transitional Vampires is that of regular human beings; their animal traits are now easily hidden, and usually displayed only when attacking. They are capable of retracting and drawing their fangs as they please. Their vampiric features are barely visible to the naked human eye. In Anne Rice's *The Vampire Lestat*, Lestat explains that apart from his glassy nails and his pale skin, his nonhuman nature is difficult to tell. He regularly looks human except when he is too hungry: "if I'm starved for blood I look like a perfect horror—skin shrunken, veins like ropes over the contour of my bones. But I don't

let that happen now. And the only consistent indication that I am not human is my fingernails. It's the same with all vampires. Our finger nails look like glass" (Rice, *The Vampire* 3). This passage suggests that at his ugliest, Lestat has the looks of someone with an extreme case of starvation. He exhibits a human ugliness when he has not eaten for a long time. The implication is that vampires can withstand higher levels of starvation, but that they are human in appearance. Another inference of the previous quote is that Lestat is concerned with hiding his true nature. This is also evident when Lestat notes that he uses cosmetic powder to tone down his most revealing vampire attribute: "My vampire nature reveals itself in extremely white and highly reflective skin that has to be powdered down" (Rice, *The Vampire* 3). Similarly, in *Interview with the Vampire*, Louis compares their skin to the "highly reflective surface" of "polished marble" (Rice 46), so he always avoids standing in the light. These vampires try to avoid drawing attention to their supernatural traits because they do not want to raise suspicion. The exaggerated and animalistic features of the Primeval Vampire give way to the humanized physical appearance of Transitional Vampires. Their bodies are no longer hybrids of the animal and human world.

Regardless of their physical beauty, Transitional Vampires always attract people. These characters may be stereotypically good-looking or physically mundane, but they constantly capture the attention of others. They possess a charm that both humans and vampires find difficult to put into words, but this magnetic quality is impossible to ignore and difficult to resist. In *Interview with the Vampire*, Louis narrates the night Lestat came to his room to turn him:

I saw that he was no extraordinary man at all. His gray eyes burned with an incandescence, and the long white hands which hung by his sides were not those of a human being. I think I knew everything in that instance, and all

that he told me was only aftermath. What I mean is, the moment I saw him, saw his extraordinary aura and knew him to be no creature I'd never known, I was reduced to nothing. That ego which could not accept the presence of an extraordinary human being in its midst was crushed. (Rice 14)

From the first moment he sees Lestat, Louis realizes his acquaintance is not an ordinary human being. The vampire's eyes and white skin stand out. Nonetheless, there is something else about the creature that he cannot define. Louis refers to this special trait as an "aura." He uses this word to describe something that he knows is there but that he cannot identify or perceive using regular senses. Unlike Primeval Vampires, Transitionals do not provoke fear or disgust, but admiration; as a result, they infiltrate society more easily. The grandeur of these vampires makes humans feel inferior in their presence, almost insignificant. Excluding their white skin, Transitional Vampires do not exhibit physical differences from humans, but they have a different air or, in Louis's words, an aura that humans do not possess. This charm seduces their victims and allows Transitional Vampires to inhabit human spaces.

Transitional Vampires might be able to pass as regular human beings; nevertheless, they possess magnified human qualities. As soon as humans are turned into vampires, they feel an improvement of their sensorial capacities. This is the result of their liminal nature. Unlike Primeval Vampires, Transitionals were humans before, but as soon as they are turned, their human senses are sharpened like that of their predecessors. They start experiencing the world in a way that mortals cannot. In *Interview with the Vampire*, Louis describes the way his senses refined after becoming a vampire: "It was as if I had only just been able to see colors and shapes for the first time. I was so enthralled with the buttons on Lestat's black coat that I looked at nothing else for a long time. Then Lestat began to laugh,

and I heard his laughter as I had never heard anything before” (Rice 21). For Louis, it was like waking up to a completely new world full of new sensations. As a vampire, he perceives colors and shapes differently and hears sounds that pass unnoticed to humans. Additionally, Rice’s text also suggests vampires are capable of seeing perfectly in total darkness (*Interview* 28) because their eyes, as the rest of their body, have adapted to nighttime. Moreover, the Transitional Vampire not only has more enhanced senses, but they also have superior physical abilities. They are stronger and faster. Transitionals can move at a speed that the human eye cannot even record. When Louis applies this extraordinary quickness during his interview, the journalist is incapable of following his movements. The vampire notices his human companion’s confusion and says: "I moved forward much too fast for you to see. It was an illusion" (Rice, *Interview* 26). Louis explains that for humans, it seems implausible to move that fast, so it can only be explained as an illusion. The eye of the vampire, on the other hand, perceives movement better: “You have experienced a fundamental difference between the way you see and I see. My gesture appeared slow and somewhat languid to me. And the sound of my finger brushing your coat was quite audible” (Rice, *Interview* 26). The vampire is able to see and hear movements that the human fails to notice. Similar to their speed, the strength of Transitionals is greater than that of humans. In addition, in *Interview with the Vampire*, Lestat warns Louis that the slaves from their plantation will try to kill them, but he says that in “speed and strength; they cannot match” them (Rice 63). Transitionals gain a new capacity to see and feel the world, and they enjoy their enhanced skills; something that is never mentioned in stories about Primevals. Their liminal nature allows Transitionals to see the human world through the eyes of a vampire. In short, Transitional Vampires live between two worlds. They appear to be human beings, but they possess other preternatural senses and physical abilities, allowing them to do what

is impossible for a normal human being to do.

Like the Primeval Vampire, Transitionals dazzle others with their gaze, but unlike their predecessors', the eyes of these vampires show human emotions. The eyes of the Primeval Vampire draw attention because of their lack of human feeling. Their gaze transmits evil and death, but the eyes of the Transitional Vampires clearly reveal the transformation that they have undergone. The eyes of Transitionals create a strong impact on the beholder not because they transmit evil but because they are capable of carrying intense human emotions. When the journalist meets Louis in *Interview with the Vampire*, it is evident that the vampire's eyes leave a strong impression on him: "His face was as seemingly inanimate as a statue, except for two brilliant green eyes that looked down at the boy intently like flames in a skull" (Rice 4). The gaze continues to be a very powerful vampire feature emphasized in Transitional Vampires. The arrival of color films popularized the usage of contact lenses to highlight the engaging eyes of the vampire and their intense gaze (see figure 22).



Figure 22. Screen Capture from Neil Jordan's film *Interview with the Vampire* (1994).

A viewer can easily distinguish the eyes of a vampire from that of his human counterparts. Moreover, the eyes of Transitional Vampires reflect their liminal nature. At times, their eyes have the same negative impact of those of Primevals. They can be dead and evil. At other times, their gazes transmit powerful human emotions. In *Interview with the Vampire*, the eyes of the vampires are often described as “gleaming,” “blazing” or “burning” lights. Louis is well aware that his eyes can give away his non-human nature. He is afraid that Babette, a mortal woman he loves, might realize that he is not a regular human: “I turned away from her at once, wondering if when she gazed into my eyes she found them dead and soulless” (Rice 64-65). Here, Louis relates his own eyes to death. As an undead, Louis is not supposed to have a soul, so he believes that his eyes transmit his soulless condition. In moments like this, he tries to hide them from her, but at other times, his eyes transmit human emotions that would have never been connected to a vampire in the nineteenth century, such as love and fear. Noticeably, Transitional Vampires’ eyes are even capable of showing life. Louis describes the eyes of his vampire daughter, Claudia, during an argument: “Her face had not changed. The flesh was like the wax of ivory candles; only the eyes showed life” (Rice, Interview 116). He states that in her rage, Claudia’s eyes suggest life, while the rest of her body maintains its corpse-like appearance. At that precise moment Claudia looks alive and dead at the same time, making her liminality evident. The eyes of vampires “born” during the twentieth century convey their divided nature. Their monstrous and humanized characteristics coincide. The eyes of Transitional Vampires prove their evolution into a more humanized creature.

The sharpened sight of vampires allows Transitionals to have a better perception of the world, but, unlike their predecessors, their powerful gaze does place them in a superior position to that of humans. To the eyes of a Primeval, mortals are reduced to blood vessels.

In contrast, the gaze of Transitional Vampires does not render humans as mere objects or victims. Although vampires have a capacity to perceive things the human eye cannot detect, Transitionals do not consider themselves superior beings. As a result of their humanization, Transitional Vampires start to see humans for what they are and not merely as nourishment. The fact that humans are not objectified to the eyes of Transitionals does not imply that they are equal. There is still a primordial difference between the way vampires perceive the world through their eyes and the way humans do. In *Interview with the Vampire*, Louis refers to this phenomenon as “vampire eyes” (Rice 113). By vampire eyes Louis means that they are capable of seeing every detail in the world that passes unnoticed for humans, so vampires have a better understanding of it. Lestat also acknowledges there is a difference, and he tries to make Louis understand what vampire eyes mean for him: “you cannot pass back to the world of human warmth with your new eyes” (Rice, *Interview* 82). For Lestat, the great capacity of vampire eyes renders humans weak and inferior. Lestat refers to the fact that humans and vampires perceive the world differently, but he does not realize that there is also a great gap between the way Louis sees the world and the way he perceives it. In many ways, Lestat still perceives humans as a Primeval Vampire does. For Louis, the concept of vampire eyes has a more romantic connotation. He affirms that vampires see the world differently because their sharpened senses give them a new outlook and a new way of sensing their surroundings, whilst for Lestat, vampire eyes simply enable vampires to hunt more efficiently. Lestat takes advantage of his sharpened sight to kill humans; to his eyes, human beings are food, objects that satiate his hunger: “I went through mortal life like a blind man groping from solid object to solid object. It was only when I became a vampire that I respected for the first time all of life. I never saw a living, pulsing human being until I was a vampire; I never knew what life was until it ran out in a red gush over my lips, my

hands!” (Rice, *Interview* 81-82). For Primevals humans are what contain their precious food. Like Primevals, Lestat objectifies people through his gaze, but Transitional Vampires do not do the same.

The humanization of the gaze of Transitional Vampires is a reflection of the way in which post-war Gothic changed. As mentioned before, humans are the real monsters in the post-world war twentieth century. Therefore, society is less afraid of monsters like vampires, and the fact that Transitionals see humans as respectable beings reinforces the idea that they are less terrifying. Louis’s gaze, for example, shows sympathy, melancholy and even love for humanity. The contrast between the gaze of a Primeval and a Transitional Vampire can also be appreciated when Claudia and Louis talk about vampire eyes:

“But you taught me to see!” she said. “You taught me the words *vampire eyes*,” she said. “You taught me to drink the world, to hunger for more than...”

“I never meant those words that way, *vampire eyes*,” I said to her.

“It has a different ring when you say it.” (Rice, *Interview* 113)

Louis acknowledges that he does not see the world as the rest of vampires do. He tries to teach Claudia to see through his eyes, but unfortunately, Claudia, as Lestat, shows a strong tendency towards Primevals. Therefore, even though the eyes of this new breed of vampires have a greater capacity to grasp the world than regular people, their gaze does not render them superior. The eyes of Transitionals prove that humans and vampires are not equals, but they also prove that these vampires show sympathy and respect for life. During the twentieth century, the gaze of Transitional proves that they do not represent a threat for humans, as their predecessors did. This is the result of a world that has had to face wars in which humans pose the real threat to humanity, not supernatural creatures.

Supernatural Traits of Transitional Vampires

Unlike Primeval Vampires, Transitionals possess fewer supernatural abilities. As a result of not having a hybrid nature, Transitional Vampires are not capable of taking other physical forms. These vampires resemble human beings more than they resemble their predecessors. In this second stage, shape shifting is not a characteristic of this monster. Vampires are no longer capable of transforming into wolves, bats, cats or any other kind of animal. In "New Life for and Old Tradition: Anne Rice and Vampire Literature," Martin J. Wood notes that in the twentieth century vampires "share few other traits with their literary predecessors" (61). Rice's vampires, for example, cannot "transform themselves into dust, fog, bats, wolves, or anything else" (61). Unlike Dracula, in Stoker's novel, which is compared to a lizard because of the way he climbs walls and moves (47), Transitionals do not take animal forms nor look like animals in any way. Moreover, Transitional Vampires are not capable of turning into natural elements, such as mist or dust. With the loss of this capacity, the power of vampires is reduced in the sense that they can only access the same places humans do. In *Interview with the Vampire*, Louis clearly states that they cannot turn into natural elements to have access to otherwise unreachable places when the journalist asks him if he can transform into steam to go through keyholes: "'I wish I could,' laughed the vampire. 'How positively delightful. I should like to pass through all manners of different keyholes and feel the tickle of their peculiar shapes'" (Rice 23). Taking the form of natural elements is now classified as a myth by Transitional Vampires themselves, and it is actually something absurd and laughable for them. In the process of evolution and the survival of the fittest, vampires have lost many of the typical and most lethal characteristics in their effort to further resemble humans and to be able to coexist with them. The fact that

vampires are no longer shapeshifters possibly reflects the fact that by the twentieth century, Darwin's theories of evolution and hybridity did not cause so much anxiety to society.

One of the most lethal weapons of vampires has always been their mental power. The capacity to mesmerize other beings is still present in Transitional Vampires. Unlike Primevals, the scope of the mental control Transitionals exert over other creatures is not always as powerful, but it grows stronger as they get older. Humans and animals continue to be subjected to vampires. In *The Vampire Lestat*²⁵, Lestat narrates what he experiences when he is slowly waking up after going underground for several decades. He is weak and trying to feed to regain his strength, so he summons some smaller creatures that easily fall victim to his mental power: "Then I started clawing for the surface, where I could summon the rats" (Rice, *The Vampire* 6). In addition to controlling animals, Transitional vampires can also mesmerize people and command them. In *Interview with the Vampire*, Louis, who is a new vampire, narrates the moment when he realizes that he can dominate humans' minds: "She [Babette] was looking at me now, the lamp raised; and just when I meant to look away, I saw her face change. It went still, blank, as if her soul were losing its consciousness. She closed her eyes and shook her head. It occurred to me that I had somehow caused her to go into a trance without any effort on my part" (Rice 65). Louis is just learning to be a vampire, and as a recently turned Transitional Vampire his powers are beginning to develop. Louis is still not in full command of his mind control, so even though he mesmerized Babette for a moment, she broke the spell easily. The older they get, the greater the reach of their mind is. In *The Vampire Lestat*, Lestat, who is more than two hundred years old in this novel, is not only capable of controlling people, but he can also

²⁵ *The Vampire Lestat* is Anne Rice's second novel. In this one, Lestat is portrayed with a strong tendency towards Transitional Vampires instead of Primevals, like in *Interview with the Vampire*.

infiltrate their minds and read them. Lestat takes advantage of this telepathy to look for the kind of prey he wants: “One [human] came along eventually, walking right by the fence, a young male with a grizzled beard who had murdered another in some far-off place on the other side of the world. True killer, this one” (Rice 6). This occurs in Rice’s second novel, when the humanization Lestat has undergone is noticeable. He infiltrates the minds of humans looking for evil people; people that deserve to die, according to Lestat’s beliefs. He penetrates people’s minds and digs for information to make sure that they are good human beings or not. Similar to their predecessors, Transitional Vampires take advantage of their ability to infiltrate human minds in order to overcome limitations or obstacles. Thus, Transitional Vampires have powerful minds capable of mesmerizing, penetrating and reading the less complex minds of humans and animals.

Non-physical and Behavioral Traits of the Transitional Vampire

Their capacity to feel emotions and having morals makes Transitional Vampires vulnerable, so they try to detach from others to protect themselves from being hurt. The first vampires in literature and cinema are depicted as predators with no trace of human emotions. Unlike Primevals, Transitional Vampires feel love for other vampires and human beings. In *Interview with the Vampire*, the difference between these two kinds of vampires is clearly conveyed in the way Lestat and Louis express themselves about their feelings. Primeval Vampires are completely detached from human emotions and morality; their only concern is satiating their hunger with blood. Lestat, invoking his Primeval side, asserts that vampires must detach from every emotion and any living being in order to be able to kill without regret. He sees vampires as natural inborn killers and believes that is the way they should behave: “Predators. Whose all-seeing eyes were meant to give them detachment.

The ability to see a human life in its entirety, not with mawkish sorrow but with a thrilling satisfaction in being the end of that life, in having a hand in the divine plan” (Rice, *Interview* 82). Lestat affirms that humans are there for vampires to feed on. The role of human beings in the food chain is satiating vampires’ hunger, so they are meant to die. Lestat detaches emotionally from everything and everyone to be able to kill without feeling remorse. As previously discussed, Andrew Smith notes that during the twentieth century, moral emptiness is one of the main anxieties of society (*Gothic* 125). Thus, Lestat’s concept of detachment is a way to escape from any moral attachments. If you do not have feelings only disregard for others, your actions will not be determined by your morality. Transitional Vampires’ inability to detach is a reflection of the twentieth-century society’s concern with the loss of morals. On the other hand, as a Transitional Vampire, Louis learns to detach himself from others to avoid getting hurt. Once he understands that a relationship with Babette is out of the question, he tries to see things for what they are: “I had gained detachment from her by virtue of my thoughts” (Rice, *Interview* 69). She is a mortal, and he is a monster to her eyes. Louis learns to separate his emotions to avoid suffering. Louis tries to detach himself from humans, but unlike Lestat, he embraces his emotions. For Louis, love never ceases to be part of him. When he turns into a vampire, Louis gains a new respect for life and everything that is part of it. Morals never stop being part of his personality. Vampires perceive everything around them more intensely than humans do. Thus, he claims that as a vampire he is capable of feeling things even more than when he was a mortal. In his own words, what Louis feels as a vampire is “too powerful to be wasted” (Rice, *Interview* 32). He explains to the journalist that everything he feels as a vampire is comparable with the feeling of love: “‘That’s correct. It is like love.’ He [Louis] smiled. ‘And I tell my frame of mind that night so you can know there are profound

differences between vampires, and how I came to take a different approach from Lestat” (Rice, *Interview* 32). In *Interview with the Vampire*, Lestat thinks that becoming a vampire means leaving all his humanity in the past, but for Louis, it is an opportunity to perceive the world with more acute senses and appreciate it even more. Transitional Vampires are not divorced from human emotions. They feel everything and more deeply than humans do. Louis cannot understand why Lestat does not perceive the world the same way and does not take advantage of all the profound emotions they experience as vampires: “I did not snub him [Lestat] because he did not appreciate his experience. I simply could not understand how much feelings could be wasted” (Rice, *Interview* 32). According to Louis, Primeval Vampires like Lestat, misdirect their power and capacity to feel. Transitional Vampires never obliterate their emotions. Transitionals learn to detach themselves from other beings to avoid getting rejected and hurt, but they never divorce from their humanity. Rather, they use their vampiric capacities to further absorb the beauty of the world and of humankind.

As a result of their humanization, Transitional Vampires are capable of feeling love for other beings. This innate capacity to love is indeed depicted as one of their major weaknesses. Transitionals are eager to love and of being loved by other vampires and even humans. This longing brings suffering to their existence because their feelings are usually not reciprocated. In *Interview with the Vampire*, Louis is depicted as someone eager to form bonds with humans or vampires. He feels a strong urge to feel and love Babette, in spite of the fact that she is human. Louis wants a real emotional connection: “my soul wanted to know Babette without my need to kill, without robbing her of every breath of life, every drop of blood” (Rice 63). Like Louis, Transitional Vampires need other beings in their life, not just for company or safety, but to complete their lonesome existence as vampires. When Claudia—the five-year-old vampire—appears, Louis becomes deeply devoted and

dependent on her love: “I was so attuned to her; I loved her so completely; she was so much the companion for my every waking hour, the only companion I had, other than death” (Rice, *Interview* 105). Claudia, who has the basic instincts of a Primeval Vampire, knows that Louis is different. She warns Louis that as a vampire, embracing his feelings is a weakness:

“You [Louis] gave me you immortal kiss,” she said, though not to me, but to herself. “You loved me with your vampire nature”

“I love you now with my human nature, if ever I had it”

“Ah yes...” she answered, still amusing. “Yes, and that’s your flaw.” (Rice, *Interview* 117)

The immortal kiss refers to the moment when Louis drank Claudia’s blood. It is not a real kiss of love. For her, loving with “vampire nature” signals the desire vampires feel for human blood. Louis romanticizes the situation and exclaims that he loves her as a human loves. His word choice reinforces Louis’ liminal nature. He chooses to say “human” because love is not considered a proper trait of a vampire, and he is aware of that. Loving someone, whether human or vampire, leads these to their downfall. One of the two parties always ends up hurt, the vampire who embraces his or her feelings or the human who is loved by the vampire.

Transitional Vampires are living among humans and lead a similar lifestyle. As a result of their humanization, Transitionals face human problems. In the nineteenth century, vampires left their remote castles to live in the cities looking for more victims. After this mobilization, vampires start to lead a life that is more similar to humans than to other Gothic monsters. Their problems become very similar to the ones mortals face, such as difficulties related to housing, food, and coping with other beings. In *Interview with the*

Vampire, Louis mentions that many of the decisions Lestat makes are because he has human problems: “He had human problems, a blind father who did not know his son was a vampire and must not find out. Living in New Orleans had become too difficult for him, considering his needs and the necessity to care for his father, and he wanted Point du Lac” (Rice 16). As liminal beings, Transitionals struggle with burdens from both worlds. Even though his is an immortal creature, Lestat needs to find his own sustenance and, at the same time, deals with human hardships, such as having a good financial situation, taking care of family and having stability. He needs Louis to help him move forward. As mentioned before, Lestat’s traits at the beginning of *The Vampire Chronicles* show a tendency towards those of Primeval Vampires. In *Interview with the Vampire*, he comes across as a cruel killer, but the Lestat described in the next book shows a more sympathetic and human side of this character. In the first novel, Lestat is constantly ridiculing Louis because of his love for humans and mortal life, and he rarely shows empathy for any human being. However, in *The Vampire Lestat*, Lestat shows a new side, and his humanization becomes clear when he acknowledges his love for others. In this novel, Lestat states that the whole purpose of writing his autobiography and telling the truth is to bring closer those he has loved: “I wanted my band and my book to draw not only Louis but all the other demons that I had ever known and loved” (Rice 17). Lestat cares about the people and vampires that have been part of his life. He proves that he loves humans as well as vampires when he thinks about the wellbeing of the members of his band (in the second novel, Lestat is a rock star). He knows that once his band becomes famous, the members of his band are going to be in danger: “[I] thought about the danger facing them, my little mortal friends. It didn’t come from me, of course. But when the long period of secrecy was ended, they would stand innocently and ignorantly in the international limelight with their sinister and reckless star”

(Rice, *The Vampire* 15). Lestat is worried about their lives once they attract the attention of other vampires, so he vows to protect the humans from those who might want to retaliate against him by hurting his mortal friends: “Well, I would surround them with body guards and hangers-on for every conceivable purpose. I would protect them from other immortals as best as I could” (Rice, *The Vampire* 15). Like Transitional Vampires, Lestat is overwhelmed by human problems. These vampires lead a more complex life than Primeval Vampires, and thus cannot avoid feeling all the emotions that come as part of their lifestyle. Transitionals clearly need affection and care about the safety of those surrounding them.

Transitional Vampires also need the companionship of other vampires. They live with others not for convenience, but because they have an inborn need of belonging to a family or community. However, Transitionals find difficulty in forming bonds with other beings because their liminal nature prevents them from being part of Primevals or humans. In the past, Primeval Vampires are often depicted as lonesome creatures. Being attached to someone else is not part of their instincts. When a Primeval coexists with another being it is always because they gain from the association. In Stoker’s *Dracula*, the Count inhabits his castle with other three female vampires. However, it is clear, both in the novel and in Coppola’s film, that it is a relation of dependence. Dracula feeds the other vampires, and they obey his commands. The Count is the alpha male, which reinforces his animal nature of Primevals. Similarly, Polidori’s vampire, Lord Ruthven, gets married with the only purpose of feeding on his wife and exerting revenge on his wife’s brother, Aubrey. His commitment has nothing to do with love. Carmilla seeks shelter with humans in order to get closer to her victims and their blood. When Primeval Vampires look for company it is simply because they gain something, either safety, food or a slave. In *Interview with the Vampire*, the contrast in the way a Primeval and a Transitional Vampire perceive

relationships is depicted through Louis and Lestat. For Lestat, vampires are lonely creatures and killers. They do not like other vampires: “You talk of finding other vampires! Vampires are killers! They don't want you or your sensibility. They'll see you coming long before you see them, and they'll see your flaw; and, distrusting you, they'll seek to kill you. They'd seek to kill you even if you were like me” (Rice, *Interview* 83). According to Lestat, vampires are territorial creatures that do not hesitate to kill one of their own kind if their domain is threatened. Living with other vampires is a matter of safety or convenience, and in such cases, there will always be one that is subjected to the other: “they are lone predators and seek for companionship no more than cats in the jungle. They're jealous of their secret and of their territory; and if you find one or more of them together it will be for safety only, and one will be the slave of the other, the way you are of me” (Rice, *Interview* 83). In this quote, Lestat affirms that Louis is his slave, that their relationship is not one based on love, respect or any other laudable emotion. They are together because Lestat needs Louis to survive. Lestat does not seek for a sentimental companion whereas Louis, as a Transitional Vampire, is eager to form bonds with other beings.

Transitional Vampires need to create emotional ties and to have companionship. As a Transitional, Louis needs to share and love others. Lestat knows that Louis is different and longs for the kind of companionship and friendship that he is not willing to provide. Thus, Lestat turns Claudia into a vampire in an attempt to retain Louis: “‘Now, Louis was going to leave us,’ said Lestat, his eyes moving from my face to hers [Claudia’s]. ‘He was going to go away. But now he's not. Because he wants to stay and take care of you and make you happy.’ He looked at me. ‘You're not going, are you, Louis?’” (Rice, *Interview* 94-95). It is clear through this passage that Louis stays because he immediately feels drawn towards the little girl and stays to protect and love her. Claudia acknowledges that retaining

Louis is the only reason why Lestat turns her into a vampire: “He made me then . . . to be your companion. No chains could have held you in your loneliness, and he could give you nothing” (Rice, *Interview* 118). Lestat’s understanding of Louis’s need for love works in his favor. Lestat acts impulsively in an attempt to keep Louis by his side which shows Lestat’s transformation and liminal nature. Lestat seems to be completely detached from everybody else, similarly to a Primeval, but he is desperate to retain Louis by his side. With Claudia, Lestat and Louis become a family: “You’re our daughter, Louis’s daughter and my daughter, do you see? Now, whom should you sleep with? Louis or me?” (Rice, *Interview* 95). The three of them function as a very peculiar family in which each member gets what he or she needs (see figure 23). Claudia fills the void Louis has in his life and becomes Lestat’s accomplice in killing. At the same time, she gets protection from two adult vampires.



Figure 23. Screen Capture from Neil Jordan’s film *Interview with the Vampire* (1994).

In Francis Coppola’s film, *Dracula*, the Count, unlike Stoker’s Count, wishes to accomplish the same as Lestat and Louis. In the film, Dracula longs to experience emotional companionship. In Coppola’s adaptation of *Dracula*, Mina is the reincarnation of the

vampire's late wife, and he travels to London hoping to gain her back and to form together a family once again. Unlike the novel, which boasts a Primeval Vampire as the protagonist, the 1992 film depicts a vampire that is moved by love. Every decision Dracula makes in the film is driven by his feelings for his reincarnated wife. Similarly, in Joel Schumacher's film, *The Lost Boys*, Star, who is a Transitional Vampire, is always protecting Laddie, a child vampire, from the Primevals who turned them. When she meets Michael, who is in the process of turning into a vampire, she is attracted to him because she knows that he is like her (see figure 24).



Figure 24. Screen Capture from Joel Schumacher's film *The Lost Boys* (1987).

Star is right about Michael being a Transitional, and he is the one who protects her and Laddie and saves them from the Primeval Vampires. Transitional Vampires feel the urge of having companionship, not because it is safe or convenient, but because they long to love and be loved, very much like humans do.

Unlike Primevals, Transitional Vampires generate a reflection in the mirror. As part of their humanization, being capable of seeing their own image implies that vampires are capable of identifying themselves as individuals and not only monsters. As mentioned in the Theoretical Framework, in "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as

Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience,” Lacan explains that people recognize themselves as individuals when they identify their own reflection in a mirror (503). Being able to identify their own image allows people to define themselves as separate individuals from the rest. It demonstrates that the person is capable of reasoning. Transitionals are capable of recognizing themselves in the figure of the person they see in the mirror. They also perceive their liminal nature projected as they see a human being, but also the monster they try to tame. In *The Lost Boys*, Michael’s brother realizes he is turning into a vampire when he sees his blurry reflection in the mirror (see figure 25).



Figure 25. Screen Capture from Joel Schumacher’s film *The Lost Boys* (1987).

Michael’s transparent image is a projection of his liminality. He recognizes himself, but unlike humans, his reflection is not concrete. As a Transitional, Michael is in between his two natures, and it terrifies his little brother who does not know how to deal with the fact that his brother is now different. This clearly contrasts with the Primeval Vampires’ incapacity to see their reflection and to consequently reflect upon their nature. In *Interview with the Vampire*, Lestat makes fun of Louis’s innocence when he realizes that vampires do have a reflection: “[Lestat] laughed uproariously when I discovered that I could see myself in a mirror” (Rice 37). When turning into a vampire, Louis assumes he had become a

monster that lacks a reflection. He is startled by the fact that he can see his own image. Transitional Vampires are still capable of seeing the same image they saw when they were mortals. This implies an extreme change in the profile of this Gothic monster. It means that they recognize traits of the humanity that they thought were completely lost. Louis identifies himself as a human when he sits contemplating his own reflection in the mirror: “[I] put one foot on an ottoman and watch the fire lick the marble tile, looking for all the world to myself in the long mirrors like a thoughtful human” (Rice, *Interview* 240). Here, he sees himself as a human, not a monster or killer that goes through life guided by his wild instincts. Transitional Vampires begin to understand that although they are monsters, being a vampire does not entail being evil, a thought that they struggle to embrace. The fact that they can see their own reflection suggests that these vampires see themselves as individuals. Transitional Vampires realize they have a human side and try to reconcile it with their monstrous one. Transitionals are the reflection of the post-world war twentieth century’s society, a society that sees humans kill their own kind because of their differences. In the post-war period, people struggle to show their human side and prove that their nature is not all evil.

Similar to Louis, in *The Vampire Lestat*, the Transitional Lestat sees his humanity in his reflection, and he struggles not to let his monstrous side take over his identity. When Lestat sees his own image, he acknowledges that he is not all about evil. The mirror shows Transitionals’ liminality. They can see that there is more than their vampiric nature; their image shows them that there is a human side they struggle to accept. The ambiguous nature of Lestat is clearly shown when he sees his mirror image:

I stared at my reflection. I became frantic to discover myself in it. I rubbed my face, even rubbed the mirror and pressed my lips together to keep from

crying. Finally I closed my eyes and opened them again, and I smiled very gently at the creature. He smiled back. That was Lestat, all right. And there seemed nothing in his face that was any way malevolent. Well, not very malevolent, just the old mischief, the impulsiveness. (Rice, *The Vampire* 103-104)

In this section, Lestat sees himself in the mirror and acknowledges that even though he is a little troubled and reckless, not everything about him is evil. This realization comes as a real surprise for him. Lestat's liminality is depicted in the way he perceives himself because he understands that there is good in him too, but still he continues to call himself a "creature." In addition, Lestat recognizes human traits in his reflection, such as his gentle smile. This duality in his own self-perception continues:

He could have been an angel, in fact, this creature, except that when his tears did rise, they were red, and the entire image was tinted red because his vision was red. And he had these evil little teeth that he could press into his lower lip when he smiled that made him look absolutely terrifying. A good enough face with one thing horribly, horribly wrong with it!" (Rice, *The Vampire* 104)

Lestat looks at his human reflection and compares it to a celestial figure, which suggests that he perceives himself as having a good nature. Transitionals can pass as regular human beings and that is what he sees up to the moment when he starts to cry. This is an example of the human traits of Transitionals; they experience human emotions. Nevertheless, the bloody tears remind him of his own immortality. That immediately directs his attention to his fangs which distance him even more from people. The last sentence exemplifies the way he feels, with the word "face" working as a metaphor for individual and "one horrible

thing” referring to his vampirism. Transitionals are capable of distinguishing the traits of their “monstrosity,” which suggests that they understand themselves. Lestat points at a very controversial subject. As undead creatures, vampires are believed to possess no soul. The fact that they are soulless used to explain their lack of reflection. Thus, the fact that these Transitional Vampires can see themselves in the mirror suggests that they still have a soul: “But it suddenly occurred to me, I am looking at my own reflection! And hadn’t it been said enough that ghosts and spirits and those who have, lost their souls to hell have no reflections in mirrors? A lust to know all things about what I was came over me. A lust to know how I should walk among mortal men” (Rice, *The Vampire* 104). Being capable of seeing their mirror image ratifies the humanization Transitional Vampires have undergone, and the liminal space in which they are. The fact that now they see their own reflection means that they recognize themselves as individuals. These vampires reflect the period that creates them. As previously discussed, the post-war Gothic mirrors the decadence and loss of morals of humanity. Transitionals are the creation of society that has in a way lost its course and is trying to find it. Thus, these creatures see their own liminal nature and often try to control their evil side.²⁶ Transitionals perceive themselves as more benevolent creatures, but they are still incapable of overlooking and forgiving their vampiric nature.

During the twentieth century, society’s main concerns are not supernatural creatures, but humanity’s own evil. As a result of society’s perception of horror, vampires are less scary and more human. Texts and films that feature Transitional Vampires show their origin, and, the circumstances in which they become vampires play a major role in their lives. This fact humanizes the figure of the vampire. Transitionals are victims of other

²⁶ Later in this chapter, the relocation of evil inside human beings will be discussed.

vampires. In most cases, vampirism was forced upon them. In literary texts and films about Primeval Vampires, the origin of the vampire is unknown. In these tales it is assumed that Primevals have existed for many centuries, but who created them, as well as when or where, are not relevant issues in the story. In Stoker's *Dracula*, Harker writes in his diary that "In his speaking of things and people, and especially of battles, he [Dracula] spoke as if he had been present at them all" (40), which suggests that the Count seems to be remembering the ancient battles instead of narrating something he learned. Like *Dracula*, Primeval Vampires hardly ever reveal their origin, and it is not mentioned if they used to be human beings or who their creator was. As previously established, Carmilla is a Primeval Vampire but shares some characteristics with Transitionals. In his story, Le Fanu tells about Carmilla's past as a human aristocrat named Mircalla Countess Karnstein, who was turned by a vampire: "A person, more or less wicked, puts an end to himself. A suicide, under certain circumstances, becomes a vampire. That specter visits living people in their slumbers; *they* die, and almost invariably, in the grave, develop into vampires. This happened in the case of the beautiful Mircalla, who was haunted by one of those demons" (84). It was believed that when bad people commit suicide, they turn into vampires. One of these vampires killed Carmilla who was then destined to become a vampire in her grave. Unlike other Primevals, Carmilla has an origin and it is a violent one. She is hunted by a specter that turns her into a vampire. This defines the way in which Carmilla attacks her victims, in their sleep. Moreover, the fact that Carmilla was human before turning proves to be a relevant part of her origin. She was a mortal killed by a monster in her sleep. Thus, unlike her contemporaries, she has social skills and is capable of living not only near but among humans under the same roof. In tales about Transitional Vampires, the moment of

creation is crucial to their existence, and in many cases it helps to define the life they will have.

Similar to Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, the moment in which Louis and Lestat become vampires is described in the novels and plays a decisive role in the type of lives they will have. The fact that Transitional Vampires used to be humans distances them from their predecessors. Even after turning into bloodsucking monsters, these vampires cannot forget their past as mortals, and thus their humanity never disappears completely. They lead a liminal existence in which they never truly become the Gothic monster completely divorced from all human emotions, but, unfortunately, they cannot go back to being or living like regular human beings either. In *The Vampire Lestat*, Magnus, a very old and powerful vampire kidnaps Lestat to make him his heir of the Dark Gift—as vampirism is called in the text. Magnus wants to die, so he needs Lestat to disperse his ashes after burning to make sure he will not return to life. He leaves Lestat with a great fortune but without guidance about his new life as a vampire: “With an ugly shock, I opened my eyes. The human in me looked helplessly about this chamber. He started to weep again and the newborn fiend was too young yet to rein him in. The sobs came up like hiccups, and I put my hand over my mouth” (Rice, *The Vampire* 105). Lestat is left alone in a crucial and confusing stage. He does not know how to be a vampire, how to stop being human or how to reconcile both natures because there is no one to guide him. He is an abandoned newborn vampire²⁷: “Magnus, why did you leave me? Magnus, what I am supposed to do, how do I go on?” (Rice, *The Vampire* 105). Lestat becomes a resentful vampire that cannot shut his

²⁷ Lestat's case resembles the case of the Monster in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. In both texts, the creator—or rather the parent—abandons the newborn, not before condemning them to a monstrous, lonely and torturous existence. Lestat and the Monster are monstrous by Magnus and Frankenstein's own doing.

feelings but cannot embrace them either. Like Transitional Vampires he is destined to be a liminal subject, an ambiguous being trapped in between his vampire and his human sides. In *Interview with the Vampire*, Louis undergoes a similar experience. He is turned by Lestat, but Louis is never truly guided into how to undergo his transformation or be a vampire. Louis lingers in a liminal stage without any kind of reassurance: “I was no vampire. And in my pain, I asked irrationally, like a child, Could I not return? Could I not be human again?” (Rice 87). Unlike Magnus, Lestat is looking for money and stability, not an heir, so he never truly taught Louis what it is to be a vampire or how to “become” one. Louis always needs more than Lestat is willing to give, more guidance, love and friendship: “There were many things, as I mention, which Lestat might have said and done. He might have made the experience rich in so many ways. But he did not” (Rice, *Interview* 29). Thus, Louis spends his life looking to fill the emptiness he feels and to find the knowledge he is denied. Louis and Lestat’s lives and motivations are marked by the moment and conditions of their creation.

In the case of Coppola’s film, *Dracula*, the origin of the Count also plays a determining role in his existence as a vampire, and, similar to other Transitionals, having an origin makes him more human. As mentioned before, in Stoker’s *Dracula*, it is completely unknown how the Count becomes a vampire or if he has always been a vampire. Nevertheless, Coppola’s adaptation to film starts in 1466 and shows a brave Romanian knight who lost his wife when he was waging war against his enemies. His enemy makes Elizabeta, his wife, believe that Dracula died in the battlefield, so she commits suicide. Her suicide destroys Dracula’s life, but his pain worsens when he is told by a priest that Elizabeta’s soul cannot be saved because she took her own life: “She has taken her own life. Her soul cannot be saved. She is damned. It’s God’s law” (*Dracula*). Dracula is let

down by his own God. He and his wife will not even be able to reunite in heaven. As a result, Dracula rejects God and everything related to him: “Is this my reward for defending God’s church? I renounce to God. I shall rise from my own death to avenge hers with all the power of darkness” (*Dracula*). Dracula condemns himself to an immortal existence living from blood: “The blood is the life and it shall be mine” (*Dracula*). He interprets the Biblical reference in his own way (see figures 26 and 27).



Figure 26. Screen Capture from Francis Coppola’s film *Dracula* (1994).



Figure 27. Screen Capture from Francis Coppola’s film *Dracula* (1994).

The passage *Deuteronomy 23:12 (King James Bible)* indicates that humans cannot drink the blood of animals they hunt to eat; the blood represents the life of the creature, so it cannot be consumed. Dracula refers to the passage and does exactly the opposite. He drinks the blood and discards the body. In addition, in the film, the Count makes every decision driven by love, something unthinkable in Stoker's novel. Human feelings motivate Dracula's actions, not his wild animal instinct, so this adaptation makes the vampire undoubtedly more human. In 1992, Coppola adapted Stoker's novel to his own time, a time in which Gothic monsters are not as scary as humans themselves. During the twentieth century, human beings are the ones spreading evil and death. In the post-war world, real horror is provoked by humans more than by ghosts or other creatures. As a result, the Transitional Vampire is a more humanized figure. Having a human origin contributes to this humanization, as it grants the vampire a human side.

During the twentieth century, humans' acts make society question their own humanity because they are provoking their own destruction. This is reflected in Gothic through the attitudes of Transitional Vampires towards humans. They show empathy and respect for life; as a result, these monsters question their innate killer nature. Even though their lives depend on blood, the liminal nature of Transitionals makes them doubt whether to kill for it or not. For Transitionals, mortal life is precious. They admire the fact that it is brief and easy to end. In *Interview with the Vampire*, Louis claims that he never really cared about his own life, but for him taking the life of a mortal was an unthinkable deed: "I've told you I had no fear regarding my own death, only a squeamishness about taking my life myself. But I had a most high regard for the life of others" (Rice 16). Ending a life is never easy for Louis. He does not like to be the reason for someone to die. In contrast, due to his primeval tendencies, Lestat constantly makes fun of Louis's weakness for humans and

affirms that over time this empathy will disappear. According to Lestat, one day Louis will not hesitate when killing a person, but Louis never lost his respect for human life even though he is forced to kill humans to survive (Rice, *Interview* 16). As the quintessential Transitional Vampire, Louis never stops regretting and feeling guilty when killing someone even after two hundred years of “living” as a vampire. From Lestat’s point of view, Louis is obsessed with mortal life: “You are in love with your mortal nature! You chase after the phantoms of your former self” (Rice, *Interview* 81). Louis respects life because it represents what he has lost. When he becomes a vampire, Louis sees mortal life from a different perspective and learns to appreciate it as he never did as a human (Rice, *Interview* 81). Nevertheless, as Lestat claims, his obsession with mortals robs Louis from enjoying his real nature and having a fulfilling existence: “And in your romance with mortal life, you’re dead to your vampire nature!” (Rice, *Interview* 81). Louis will never be fully satisfied as a vampire because he cannot accept his essence and must reject his killer instincts. Similarly, in Schumacher’s film, *The Lost Boys*, Michael rejects his vampire nature from the beginning. For him, vampires are killers and he refuses to be like one. When confronting David, the Primeval who turned him, the difference between the two kinds of vampires is clear:

“I [David] tried to make you immortal!”

“You tried to make me [Michael] a killer!”

“You are a killer.” (*The Lost Boys*)

For David, being a vampire means power and grandeur, while for Michael it means being something that goes against his beliefs. Thus, Transitional Vampires respect mortal life, and this does not allow them to become the reckless monstrous killer that their predecessors

were. This does not mean that they never kill. In spite of their principles, they have to do it in order to survive.

Even though killing human beings disturbs them, Transitional Vampires are doomed to feed on mortals. Thus, Transitionals kill, but their reasons for doing so differ from that of their antecessors. Primeval Vampires hunt and murder people without showing any trace of conscience or regret. These primitive monsters are just following their wild instincts trying to obtain food; for them, humans are mere vials carrying their nourishment. As a Transitional, Louis tries to survive by feeding on animals even when he knows that it will never be as satisfying and fulfilling as blood from humans. Then, he decides to sacrifice his happiness to avoid killing humans: “But what is it that is our nature! If I can live from the blood of animals, why should I not live from the blood of animals rather than go through the world bringing misery and death to human creatures!” (Rice, *Interview* 82). Louis renounces to his own wellbeing and satisfaction to spare the life of those people who cross his way. This sacrifice means a detriment in the quality of his existence because he deprives himself from the only nutrient he needs to survive. However, going through life without feeding on humans is not always possible. Killing is part of the process of feeding, and it gives vampires a peace and satiety they cannot find with anything else:

My agony was unbearable. Never since I was a human being had I felt such mental pain. It was because all of Lestat's words had made sense to me. I knew peace only when I killed, only for that minute; and there was no question in my mind that the killing of anything less than a human being brought nothing but a vague longing, the discontent which had brought me close to humans. (Rice, *Interview* 87)

Louis knows that only killing humans satisfies his hunger and the instincts he tries to ignore; thus, he undergoes an excruciating suffering when trying not to kill people. Even when not consuming human blood implies leading a miserable existence, Louis prefers to abide by his morality, and he does it as long as it is possible. However, following a non-human diet is not attainable all the time for Transitional Vampires. There are moments in which Louis is compelled to kill, whether it is to save himself from a hazardous situation, to feed himself or for compassion:

“Stop this, Lestat!” I shouted at him. The girl was screaming again, and I could not stand the sight of it any longer. I bent down to her and took her hand. “I can't remember my sins,” she said, just as I was looking at her wrist, resolved to kill her. “You mustn't try. Tell God only that you are sorry,” I said, “and then you'll die and it will be over.” She lay back, and her eyes shut. I sank my teeth into her wrist and began to suck her dry. (Rice, *Interview 86*)

Lestat enjoys killing, so he prolongs the act as long as he can in order to feel more pleasure, but Louis cannot bear watching a person suffer, as in this scene, when he kills the girl to end her suffering. Louis' behavior shows mercy and empathy for people, which proves that he has human emotions. Their humanization comes across even when they kill. The liminal nature of Transitional Vampires is evident in their attitudes towards humans and ending their lives. Drinking blood from humans gives them pleasure and grants them life, but they cannot accept that in order to have a fulfilling existence humans have to die. Even when they kill, Transitionals cannot enjoy the experience out of guilt. Therefore, the act of killing becomes an abject experience that disgusts them and tortures them, but at the same time, it is impossible not to do it at all.

Not all Transitional Vampires manage to survive by feeding only on animals. As a Transitional Vampire and left with no other option, but to consume human blood to survive, Lestat decides to feed only on evil human beings. The case of Lestat is a special one, as mentioned before, because the way he is depicted in the first novel of *The Vampire Chronicles* differs greatly from his portrayal in the second novel. In *Interview with the Vampire*, the way he behaves shows a strong inclination to Primeval Vampires, while in *The Vampire Lestat*, he comes across as a Transitional. In the first novel, Lestat comes through as a ruthless killer. When Louis asks him why he kills innocents the way he does, Lestat simply replies that he enjoys it: “‘I like to do it,’ he said. ‘I enjoy it.’ He looked at me. ‘I don't say that you have to enjoy it. Take your aesthete's tastes to purer things. Kill them swiftly if you will, but do it! Learn that you're a killer!’” (Rice, *Interview* 84). Lestat embraces his nature as an innate killer and learns to love it. However, when he tells his own story in *The Vampire Lestat*, his liminal nature comes through very clearly when analyzing his position towards killing humans for blood. The first night when he was turned into a vampire by Magnus, Lestat felt desperate and confused: “you can't live as this! You can't feed on living beings! Even if you are a monster, you have a conscience in you, natural to you... Good and Evil, good and evil. You cannot live without believing in—you cannot abide the acts that—tomorrow you will... you will... you will what? You will drink blood, won't you?” (Rice, *The Vampire* 105). Lestat enacts the dilemma of Transitionals. He claims that even now that he is a monster who depends on blood to survive, he cannot kill human beings. Like Transitional Vampires, Lestat has a conscience that tells right from wrong. But he doubts himself and knows that he will end up killing. The next night, he kills his first victim in a very instinctive way and develops an immediate addiction for blood, hunting and killing his victims (Rice, *The Vampire* 111-112). After that first kill, Lestat becomes a

coldblooded killer, one that can decimate entire families without hesitating or feeling remorse. Nevertheless, Lestat undergoes a process of realization and, like Transitional Vampires, he starts reconsidering his life and his true nature: “he [Lestat] himself wanted to know his own reasons for killing, wanted to examine his own life. He was discovering when he spoke what he did believe” (Rice, *Interview* 96). He questions his reasons for killing and the purpose of his life. As a liminal subject, Lestat starts changing, and it is clearer in *The Vampire Lestat* in which killing becomes an abject experience for him. In this second novel Lestat continues killing, but he has decided that not one innocent human will die because of him: “And more than ever, I was resolute that I would not drink innocent blood” (Rice 11). This decision of not killing innocent blood distances Lestat from Primevals. Even though he is not like other Transitional Vampires that feed only on animals to avoid killing people, Lestat decides to feed only on evil humans, and that is a crucial step in his process of humanization. He demonstrates that Transitionals have a conscience and a sense of morality that dictates what is good and what is bad. This proves that the attitude of vampires towards humans and their mortal lives has changed. Consequently, like other Transitionals, Lestat becomes a very appropriate figure for the twentieth century. Like the society from this period, Lestat questions his own nature and tries to amend his wrongdoings. He now attempts to behave the way he considers good and more humane.

As discussed previously, Andrew Smith notes, in *Gothic Literature*, that Gothic texts and films from the twentieth century have a darker tone than the ones preceding this period (128). These productions tend to show stories of desolation, like those featuring Transitional Vampires. These vampires struggle to find meaning and happiness in a world that has taken everything away from them, their life, and love. Therefore, they yearn to form bonds with other vampires; however, they also long for relationships with human

beings. However, loving a human being brings only suffering for these vampires. This eagerness for creating social and emotional connections with mortals reveals the evolution of this Gothic monster. Transitional Vampires' existence becomes unsettling as they cannot reconcile what it entails being a vampire with the human emotions they still experience. In *The Vampire Lestat*, Lestat describes the moment he realizes he loves his mortal friend Nicolas: "I felt a profound joy, too, that I could still love, if I'd ever doubted it, and that a tragic victory had been confirmed" (Rice 134). He feels ecstatic when he discovers or rather accepts that he can still love people. Nevertheless, later he also acknowledges that for a vampire loving humans is a tragedy. This is confirmed by the queen of the vampire coven he later meets: "The vampire who leaves his coven to dwell among human beings faces a dreadful hell long before madness comes. He grows irresistibly to love mortals! He comes to understand all things in love" (Rice, *The Vampire* 230). Love and closeness bring sadness to their lives because not only loving a human makes a vampire suffer, but also understanding too much about them. A vampire who loves human beings faces an existence of misery and madness. Misery arises because they need human blood to survive and have a fulfilling existence, and if they love humans they will not be capable of killing them: "With the passage of time he comes to know mortals as they may never know each other," she [the queen] continued, undaunted, her eyebrows rising, 'and finally there comes the moment when he cannot bear to take life, or bear to make suffering, and nothing but madness or his own death will ease his pain" (Rice, *The Vampire* 230). When a vampire finds himself trapped between his devotion for human life and his innate killer nature, he is then destined to madness because of the failure of finding a way out. They cannot freely establish a relationship with a mortal because an association like that is not accepted either

by humans nor vampires. When Transitionals love a mortal, this impossible love condemns them to a tormenting and hopeless life.

Transitionals attempt to go against what seems to be their destiny. They long to be accepted by humans and this brings only more suffering and desolation to their existence. Their life is full of grief because of their affectionate attitude towards humans. In *Interview with the Vampire*, Lestat tries to warn Louis about the tortuous path that awaits him if he continues adoring people the way he does, Babette in this case:

“Does it bring you happiness?” he [Lestat] asked. “You wander through the night, feeding on rats like a pauper and then moon at Babette's window, filled with care, yet helpless as the goddess who came by night to watch Endymion sleep and could not have him. And suppose you could hold her in your arms and she would look on you without horror or disgust, what then? A few short years to watch her suffer every prick of mortality and then die before your eyes? Does this give happiness? This is insanity, Louis.” (Rice 82)

Louis is already living on rats and other animals to avoid killing humans. This behavior encouraged by their love for mortals makes vampires feel miserable even if it is their choice. If they manage to survive on animals, that does not guarantee a better life. When they initiate a relationship with a human, they are destined to suffer the aging and loss of the beloved one because of their mortality. Then they face another crossroads, either turning their beloved into a vampire to secure an eternity together or accepting their natural human deterioration, watching their beloved die, and eventually facing an eternity alone. This is the case of Dracula in Coppola's film. Here, Dracula is desperate to be with his wife—who has reincarnated in Mina. To be together forever, he has to kill her to turn her into a

vampire, but he is incapable of doing it to condemn her to this life²⁸. This predicament is depicted in the scene when Dracula enters Mina's room at night and attempts to turn her:

“No, I [Dracula] cannot let this be.”

“Please, I don't care, make me yours.”

“You will be cursed as I am to walk in the shadow of death for all eternity. I love you too much to condemn you.”

“Then take me away from all this death.” (*Dracula*)

Mina suggests that being mortal is more related to death than being a vampire. Thus, she prefers to die and to be reborn as a vampire to be with her beloved for all eternity than to face a brief existence as a human without her lover. In the film, Dracula exemplifies the excruciating decision Transitional Vampires have to make when they fall in love with human beings. There is never an easy way out in this kind of association. Some sacrifice must be made, whether to lose the loved one or curse them to eternal life. The fact that Transitionals respect and love human beings brings nothing but desolation and despair to their lives.

Seduction has been one of the most powerful traits of vampires, and it continues to be present in the Transitional Vampire. However, unlike Primeval Vampires who lure their victims with the sole purpose of drinking their blood, Transitionals have a different reason to lure mortals. These vampires do not take advantage of their charms, good looks and good manners to attract victims and feed on them. Similar to humans, Transitionals seduce when they feel attracted towards a person and want to gain their attention. Transitionals do not

²⁸ In “The Postmodern Evolution of Telepathy: from *Dracula* to the *Twilight* Saga,” Antonio Sanna expands on the relationship between Dracula and Mina in Ford Coppola's film adaptation. Sanna affirms that, in the film, Dracula seems to be incapable of turning his beloved, so it is Mina who makes the decision to be with the Count.

create an illusion in order to enthrall their victims, like their predecessors. These vampires seem to be looking, instead, for acceptance. According to Jean Baudrillard in *Seduction*, if the final purpose of seducing is not sexual, it will end with a sacrifice (99). Seduction becomes a sacrifice because the seducer tries to destroy the power the object of desire has over him or her (99). Thus, seducers try to entice their victims because they desire them as much as the victim desires them. So, seducers are in a way seduced by their victims and feel the need to destroy that power. Unlike Primevals, love and passion are involved when a Transitional Vampire tries to seduce a person. Thus, a relation with these vampires is not intended to end with the sacrifice of the human. They long for a stable relationship and everything it involves. When they seduce, Transitionals weaken themselves because they are left vulnerable in front of a society that is not ready to accept them. In Coppola's film, when Dracula arrives in England and meets Mina, he is a perfect gentleman. As a Transitional Vampire, he used to be a human before turning, so he finds it easy to blend into society. Mina falls in love with the Prince, and even after marrying Harker, she continues to be in love with Dracula. However, even though Dracula wins Mina's affection, the relation is destined to fail. Similar to Louis's crush with Babette, Dracula's relationship with Mina would never be socially acceptable even if both of them wanted it to perdure. Transitional Vampires seduce humans when they have real feelings, and their love does not put the beloved at risk, but a relationship is always impossible in their societies. However, a Transitional-Vampire-human relationship is seldom consummated. When they seduce, Transitionals weaken themselves because they are left vulnerable in front of a society that is not ready to accept them. This change in the depiction of vampires in literature and cinema reflects the changes of society. During the Victorian period sex, and public displays of love and affection were disapproved and condemned, but during the twentieth century

they were accepted as part of society. This is captured in the figure of the Transitional Vampire as they do not try to hide the fact that they want and need love.

In a period in which vampires undergo a process of humanization, even the grotesque act of blood drinking is made more humane. During the twentieth century, human blood continues to have a life-giving quality, but for Transitional Vampires blood also has a humanizing effect. Immediately after consuming this precious liquid, Transitionals experience human sensations; they feel the impression of having a living body and feeling sexual arousal and pleasure. Like Primevals, Transitional Vampires obtain all the sustenance they need to prolong their existence and enhance their powers from blood. The life-giving quality of blood will always be the reason why vampires cannot stop consuming it. Blood equals eternal existence, and it endows vampires with youth and enhances every supernatural and physical trait they possess. In *The Vampire Lestat*, the first time Lestat drinks blood from a human being, he experiences an immediate boost in all his senses: "The blood warmed me. I felt it beating in my veins. My face was hot against the palms of my hands, and my vision had grown powerfully sharp. I felt strong beyond all imagining" (Rice 112). Like their predecessors, Transitionals still depend on blood to survive and to feel more powerful. The nourishing qualities of blood magnify all the powers of vampires. Nevertheless, most important is the humanizing effect blood has on Transitional Vampires, a trait that is completely alien for Primevals. Lestat mentions that after consuming blood he experiences a warm sensation and the blood beating throughout his body. This feeling is similar to the beating of a living heart that pumps blood thorough the body, internalizing and possessing the life of the one with the heartbeat. Moreover, since the nineteenth century, texts and later films about vampires have depicted the act of drinking blood from a human as a sexual act. Vampire attacks usually take place in the victim's bedroom and the

blood sucking is often interpreted as the interchange of sexual bodily fluids. However, it is not until the second half of the twentieth century that vampires obtain not only nourishment but also pleasure when they consume blood. In other words, blood is now depicted as a humanizing liquid that provides Transitional Vampires with pleasure. In “Fictional Vampire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” William Hughes affirms that in vampire tales the search for blood is sexualized (145). Vampires need it for self-preservation, but they also fancy blood because of the gratifying sensations it provides; for Transitional Vampires consuming blood becomes a sensory and sexual experience. In *Interview with the Vampire*, Louis refers to the first time he drinks blood from Lestat as an experience that cannot be described with words²⁹: “how pathetic it is to describe these things which can't truly be described” (Rice 20). It is a moment of ecstasy in which the vampire feels part of the other being. When vampires connect with their victims, their surroundings seem to disappear, since all they can feel or hear are the vibrations coming from both hearts pumping in unison:

The sound grew louder and louder until it seemed to fill not only my hearing but all my senses, to be throbbing in my lips and fingers, in the flesh of my temples, in my veins. Above all in veins, drum and then the other drum, and then Lestat pulled his wrist free suddenly, and I opened my eyes and checked myself in a moment of reaching for his wrist, grabbing it, forcing it back to my mouth at all costs. (Rice, *Interview* 20)

²⁹ This inability of putting into words his feelings and sensations resembles the Sublime, a recurrent Gothic trope. According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* “the experience of the sublime consists in a feeling of the superiority of our own power of reason, as a supersensible faculty, over nature.”

Louis's words convey how difficult it is for a vampire to control or restrain themselves when drinking blood. The sensation is depicted as almost orgasmic, and he clearly surrenders to it. The way Louis describes his feelings when sucking blood along the lines of sexual intercourse, claiming that "for vampires that is the ultimate experience" (Rice, *Interview* 29). The emotions produced by blood and the process to obtain it contribute to the humanization of the vampire in literature and cinema. Like Primevals, blood gives them life, but for Transitionals, blood also makes them feel alive. This new connection of the blood-sucking act to sexual pleasure is due to the fact that the society that creates the Transitional Vampire enjoys more freedom and does not censor sexuality as much as Victorians did.

Blood gives Transitional Vampires human emotions, but it also gives them a feeling of fulfillment they cannot replace with anything else, so it becomes an element of torture. The intensity of emotions lasts only while they are drinking blood and leaves the vampire feeling desolate. Vampires undergo a transformation from being creatures that need blood only to prolong their existence to ones that do it also for the emotions it provokes. When drinking blood, vampires experience a sense of completion that makes this liquid addictive, like a drug. The consumption of blood gives pleasure and meaning to their existence. In *The Vampire Lestat*, Lestat affirms that when he tasted blood for the first time, he knew that it was all he needed to fill the emptiness he had felt all his life even as a mortal: "Blood and blood and blood. And it was not merely the dry hissing coil of the thirst that was quenched and dissolved, it was all my craving, all the want and misery and hunger that I had ever known" (Rice 90). Lestat claims that the satisfaction experienced when consuming blood cannot be compared to anything else in a vampire's life. The repetition of sounds and the words he uses in this passage transmit the conflict he faces. Drinking blood is like a drug

that can turn the vampire into an addict only because of the feelings and satisfaction it provides. When sucking blood, these vampires feel ecstasy and perceive everything around them with an intensity they cannot put in to words, once again depicting a sublime experience. When he drinks blood for the first time from his maker, Lestat's fear and disgust for Magnus transform immediately into passion: "Love you, I wanted to say, Magnus, my unearthly master, ghastly thing that you are, love you, love you, this was what I had always so wanted, wanted, and could never have, this, and you've given it to me! I felt I would die if it went on, and on it did go, and I did not die" (Rice, *The Vampire* 91). Lestat cannot understand all the powerful sensations running through his veins, so he interprets them as love. The elation is so overwhelming that Lestat thinks for a moment that he might die—a real death, not a transformation into a new kind of creature as is the case. Thus, at that moment, Lestat experiences a profound love for Magnus for giving him the gift of experiencing these emotions. This effect of blood is what can make a Transitional Vampire addicted to it. The down side is that vampires only experience that joy and vitality when consuming this precious liquid, so once they finish sucking, they undergo a process of anxiety: "I grew calm and changed somewhat. A desolate feeling came over me. An aloneness as though the thief had been a friend to me or kin to me and had deserted me. I couldn't understand it, except that the drinking had been so intimate" (Rice, *The Vampire* 118). When drinking blood from humans, Transitional Vampires feel connected to the victim. Like Primevals, the gender of the victim does not matter because what gives pleasure to a Transitional is the act itself. For them, it is an intimate moment in which the vampire and the human are synchronized and become one. Thus, right after drinking, they experience desolation and melancholy that only disappears when consuming blood again. Instead of bringing only fulfillment to their existence, human blood becomes an element of

torture for Transitionals. Like someone who is addicted to any substance, these vampires feel withdrawal symptoms when giving up blood. This is a never-ending predicament that produces anxiety because Transitionals only feel satisfied when consuming human blood, but it goes against their morality. So they are doomed to an existence of doubt, regret and sorrow. In *Interview with the Vampire*, Louis undergoes an excruciating suffering because he knows that due to their nature, vampires can only find peace in human blood: "I knew peace only when I killed, only for that minute; and there was no question in my mind that the killing of anything less than a human being brought nothing but a vague longing" (Rice 87). Transitional Vampires live in an eternal crossroads. Some of them try to quench their thirst with animals, like Louis, and some others, less radical, decide to feed only on evil human beings. No matter what they do, Transitional Vampires cannot conciliate their instincts with their beliefs. They either continue feeding on humans and continue feeling guilty, or they abstain from it and live unsatisfied. Despite their liminal nature, there is no middle ground in which a Transitional Vampire leads a completely happy existence.

The fulfillment and pleasure that Transitional Vampires experience when drinking blood are also depicted in Coppola's *Dracula*. Unlike Stoker's novel, Coppola's film depicts a humanized vampire whose life is ruled by love. Every decision made by Dracula, in the film, is inspired by his desire to recover his wife, who has reincarnated in Mina. This new motif added to the film affects the entire plot, and specially the act of blood drinking. Just like in the novel, many of the blood-drinking scenes take place in the bedroom, which is the ultimate intimate and private space. However, unlike Coppola's *Dracula*, in Stoker's novel the bedroom scenes are attacks, and in no way are they loving or sensual. In the novel, Dr. Seward narrates when the Count attacks Mina in her bedroom, and when the men come to her rescue, they find a horrible picture:

[The Count's] right hand gripped her by the back of the neck, forcing her face down on his bosom. Her white nightdress was smeared with blood, and a thin stream trickled down the man's bare chest which was shown by his torn-open dress. The attitude of the two had a terrible resemblance to a child forcing a kitten's nose into a saucer of milk to compel it to drink. (340)

Here, Mina is being overpowered by Dracula, and it is implied that they are not experiencing any kind of pleasure. Mina is compared to a defenseless kitten and the Count to a child who is physically abusing it. To intensify the horror of the scene, Harker is lying on the bedroom's floor in a trance, incapable of helping his beloved. In order to succeed in creating a moment of passion and intimacy for the couple, Coppola first removes Harker from this scene and transforms it into an intimate and passionate moment between Dracula and his beloved Mina (see figure 28). By removing Harker, Coppola is, in a way, removing adultery and making the moment a romantic scene in which the vampire shows too much empathy for Mina. Being a Transitional Vampires, Dracula is suffering in this scene because, as mentioned before, he wants to transform Mina to spend the rest of their existence together, but at the same time he refuses to condemn her to an eternal life (see figure 29). It is Mina who finally convinces the Count of giving her his blood.



Figure 28. Screen Capture from Francis Ford Coppola's film *Dracula* (1992).



Figure 29. Screen Capture from Francis Ford Coppola's film *Dracula* (1992).

Similarly, the scene in which Dracula in the form of a wolf-like creature mesmerizes Lucy and lures her to the churchyard to drink her blood is adapted in the film. In the novel, Mina saves her friend from a creature she cannot identify as a human or a beast because it is clouded by a dark shadow (112). Lucy's attack has classic Gothic elements to create the terrifying image of the blood-sucking act. In the film, Coppola maintains the same setting and Gothic tone, but it explicitly shows a beast biting Lucy in a hyper-sexualized scene. Lucy appears in a trance, wearing a revealing red nightgown while the vampire sucks her blood. In the film, the director emphasizes the red of her clothes with the contrast of colors. The beast and the background are dark and gloomy making the whiteness of Lucy's skin and her nightgown stand out. This contrasts with Stoker's novel in which the color of the nightdress is not mentioned; thus, the novel focuses on the horror of the scene. The film, on the other hand, uses this technique to suggest that Lucy's innocence and virginity are being tainted by the vampire. Even when Dracula has taken the form of a terrifying monster, Lucy seems to be enjoying the act and hardly suffering from it (see figure 30).



Figure 30. Screen Capture from Francis Ford Coppola's film *Dracula* (1992).

In both scenes from the film, the human and the vampire seem to be enjoying when the monster drinks blood. The difference between the scene from Stoker's novel and Coppola's film proves that the figure of the vampire adapts to the society that creates it. Stoker's novel, which is less erotic and more terrifying, reflects that fact that Victorians were not as open with their sexuality as twentieth-century society. In Coppola's version both the victim and the vampire seem to feel pleasure, something never even suggested in a text from the nineteenth century. The humanization of the blood-sucking act portrays the evolution of this Gothic creature. Transitionals need the fulfillment and pleasure that only blood provides.

The blood-drinking act becomes pleasurable for both the Transitional Vampire and the victim. Thus, another characteristic of the humanization of the vampire is that humans experience pleasure when being bitten by a vampire, which contributes to making this creature less terrifying for a society that already fears humans more than Gothic monsters. When Transitional Vampires drink blood from human beings, the victims can be mesmerized to prevent them from suffering. In *Interview with the Vampire*, the moment in

which the victims are snared by a vampire is clearly depicted when Lestat bites one of their slaves: “The slave cried out and tried to throw Lestat off. He sank his teeth now, and the slave froze as if from snakebite” (Rice 29). The slave is immediately frozen and stops moving and feeling pain. Lestat bites the slave against the victim’s will—displaying his Primeval instincts—, but even if the person fights not to be subdued, the trance induced by the vampire is too powerful to resist. In *The Vampire Lestat*, Lestat describes the moment when he is first bitten by Magnus. Here Lestat was still a human: “a great noise was echoing all around me, enveloping me, the sound of a deep gong perhaps, being struck very slowly in perfect rhythm, its sound washing through me so that I felt the most extraordinary pleasure through all my limbs. My lips moved, but nothing came out of them; yet this didn't really matter” (Rice, *The Vampire* 81). Humans experience an almost sexual gratification running throughout their body relaxing every part of it to the point that they no longer feel in control of themselves. Lestat affirms that it feels as if the other being takes complete command of his body, and it makes him feel an ecstatic delight:

Rapture. I said the word, and it seemed clear to me, that one word, though I couldn't speak or really move my lips. And I realized I was no longer breathing. Yet something was making me breathe. It was breathing for me and the breaths came with the rhythm of the gong which was nothing to do with my body, and I loved it, the rhythm, the way that it went on and on, and I no longer had to breathe or speak or know anything. (Rice, *The Vampire* 82)

Lestat is only able to produce the word “rapture.” He is completely taken by Magnus and the ecstasy of the bite. Instead of feeling invaded, Lestat claims to love the feeling of that creature possessing him. The vampire is in complete command of Lestat, and the hypnotic

rhythm of his heart is all Lestat can hear. Lestat is so trapped in the moment that he begs the vampire not to stop sucking his blood: “I realized in agony, positive agony, that the sound of the gong was fading away. I cried out, I begged. Don't stop it, please, please. I don't want to . . . I don't . . . please” (Rice, *The Vampire* 82). When he realizes that the vampire is stopping, Lestat, still as a human, feels anxious and desperate to experience the same sensation again. The blood-sucking act becomes sensual and blissful for both the vampire and the human. Even though Primeval Vampires also mesmerize their victims in order to feed, the victim clearly does not enjoy the experience. Victims of Primevals, such as Mina or Lucy in Stoker's *Dracula* or Laura in *Carmilla*, emerge from the trance with a blurry recollection of the attack and the idea of having felt some kind of pain. In Coppola's version of *Dracula*, in the same scene discussed previously, Mina is not forced to drink blood from the vampire—rather she insists on being turned in order to spend eternity together. The act of blood drinking becomes a moment of fulfillment not only for the Transitional version of Dracula, but also for the victim, as is portrayed in Coppola's film (see figure 31).



Figure 31. Screen Capture from Francis Ford Coppola's film *Dracula* (1992).

In the novel this scene occurs in the bedroom, but it is neither passionate nor intimate, mirroring Victorian's attitude towards sex, which was considered primarily for reproduction and not for pleasure. In contrast, in the twentieth-century film, Dracula and Mina are clearly in ecstasy. This is a scene between two lovers, which is accepted by the society from this period. For Transitional Vampires, the act of drinking blood is humanized. In the past, this moment is reduced to that of a monster feeding on its prey, but during this second period, it is a moment of intimacy and elation for both parties.

Transitional Vampires tell their own story. This change in the perspective contributes to the humanization of this Gothic figure in literature and cinema. Transitionals are not the monsters terrifying and exterminating humans. They have become the narrators and protagonists of their own stories, struggling to survive in a world in which Primeval Vampires and mortals do not accept their liminal nature. In the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, mostly witnesses or victims of Primeval Vampires tell the stories about these monsters. However, the narrative style of these stories underwent a change in point of view in the second-half of the twentieth century. In "Fictional Vampires in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," William Hughes notes that in vampire fiction during the nineteenth century the access to the vampire was limited, but in the late twentieth century there was a "transfer of perception and narrative voice from the human to the vampire" (148). Stories about Primeval Vampires are usually narrated by humans, thus, the vampire is usually described as the monster that threatens the life of mortals. The perspective of the vampire was not presented, so these vampires come across as monsters without a voice or conscience. Therefore, when vampires take control of the narration, they are empowered and start redeeming themselves. Hughes affirms that vampirism starts to be accepted as a lifestyle, and vampires are no longer perceived as simple monsters:

This change in emphasis had had a profound impact upon the presentation of the vampire lifestyle in fiction. The initial repulsion experienced by new initiates into vampirism, if felt at all, is rapidly replaced by a perception that the un-dead state is nothing more than a parallel lifestyle—a modified, rather than wholly new, existence, typified by a change of diet and the imposition of a few more-or-less onerous restrictions. In some cases, most notably Anne Rice's cycle *The Vampire Chronicles*, un-death is represented as a positive enhancement of sensual life—a point of access to sensations that are but imperfectly realized through the inferior organs of mortal consciousness. (148-149)

As they gain a voice, Transitional Vampires are endowed with human traits; therefore, they are more likely to be accepted by humans. Their different needs and habits are perceived as an alternate lifestyle instead of a transgression. According to Hughes, Anne Rice created vampires that make vampiric life seem desirable and superior to human life. In Rice's *The Vampire Chronicles*, Transitional Vampires tell the stories of their lives, and they do it as a way to be understood and demonstrate that they are victims, not victimizers. They want to prove that they are innocent because vampirism was forced upon them. This victimization creates empathy in the audience. In *The Lure of the Vampire*, Milly Williamson claims that Rice's vampires are victims of circumstances they did not choose (39), thus suggesting that Transitional Vampires are victims of their monstrous nature. They suffer the consequences of having an immortal life without love and dependence on human blood. Both Lestat and Louis are turned against their will. Nevertheless, since the beginning of his existence as a vampire, Louis questions his new nature and cannot embrace it. In contrast, Lestat falls in love with his new enhanced powers at first, but, as Williamson affirms, once he starts

telling his story, Lestat realizes that he is a victim too and is merely trying to hide his pain behind his monstrosity (48). These vampires inspire more empathy and less fear than their predecessors: “The result is that the vampires, rather than signifying a fear of the dangerous and taboo, are presented as sympathetic and knowable ‘outsiders’” (40). Transitionals tell their story to prove that they have a human side that longs for human contact; they are eager to be part of society again. Therefore, being channeled through a first-person narrator gives Transitional Vampires a chance to be understood and accepted.

By telling their own story, Transitional Vampires are able to show their human side. They demonstrate that they are not the same kind of monsters their predecessor are, but lonesome victims of a cruel destiny. Transitionals want to reach out to people and other vampires through their narrations. The act of narrating—of being listened to—becomes a liberating force and a healing process. In *Interview with the Vampire*, when Louis is given the opportunity to tell the story of his life to a journalist³⁰, he admits that it is something he is eager to do: “Believe me, I won't hurt you. I want this opportunity. It's more important to me than you can realize now” (Rice 4-5). Louis longs to tell his story to show the world that it was not his choice to be a vampire, and that he has more than just a monstrous side to him. Besides, he needs people to understand that vampires like him live a miserable and lonely existence. However, when he finishes telling his life, the journalist begs Louis to turn him into a vampire. For the young man, being a vampire seems an appealing lifestyle: “Don't you see how you made it sound? It was an adventure like I'll never know in my

³⁰ Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* is narrated by a journalist, but he writes the story Louis tells him. The book is supposed to be the transcription of the interview they conducted. Thus, Louis does not lose command of his story as he is the one who decides to tell the story of his life. Moreover, the name of the journalist is never mentioned throughout the novel. This omission indicates that the journalist is not as relevant in the story. This is also confirmed by the title of the novel which makes reference only to the vampire.

whole life! You talk about passion, you talk about longing! You talk about things that millions of us won't ever taste or come to understand" (Rice 339). Louis feels he has failed because his story does not convey the message he wants, that vampires lead a miserable existence. They are victims of a cruel destiny. Nevertheless, as William Hughes affirms, the vampiric life seems to be sensual (148), and being a vampire becomes something desirable for a regular human, at least in this stage. Compared to a vampire's life, a regular mortal life seems too boring. As mentioned before, the image of the vampire as a rebellious outcast is idealized by humans. Transitionals come across as individuals who go against the system in order to defend their beliefs and morals, which is precisely what the society from the twentieth century longs for. So, the journalist is drawn to a life that seems to be glamorous and sensual. Similarly, in *The Vampire Lestat*, Lestat wants to write his story to reach out to Louis and redeem himself: "I ached to write my story for him, not an answer to his malice in *Interview with the Vampire*, but the tale of all the things I'd seen and learned before I came to him, the story I could not tell him before." (Rice, *The Vampire* 16). Lestat needs Louis to know that he is also a victim and that if he behaved like a heartless killer it was because his merciless past forced him to do so. When vampires become the narrators of their stories, they break with the stereotype of the ruthless monster that kills humans to survive. Transitional Vampires become the subjects of their accounts and use it as a means to show their human side and their lives as victims. These narrations also show that the human victim also undergoes a transformation and becomes an accomplice. As a result, Transitionals not only create empathy, but also become the object of desire for their human "victims." By telling their story, Transitionals are portrayed as the insightful rebel that goes against the injustices of the world, which is a characteristic that the society from this period admires.

Transitional Vampires undergo a physical and psychological process of humanization. As part of their evolution, Transitionals are capable of dreaming. This suggests that these vampires are transitioning into a new kind of vampires that have a conscience. The fact that vampires dream is an indication that the way their mind set has changed, and that they are now capable of reflecting upon their own life. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Sigmund Freud notes that the way we act during our waking life influences the content of our dreams: “That all the material composing the content of the dream in some way originates in experience, that it is reproduced in the dream, or recalled,—this at least may be taken as an indisputable truth” (7). Transitional Vampires have a consciousness that is affected by their actions which means that they are no longer creatures guided only by their wild instincts. Every action and decision they make during their waking hours influences their dreams. Freud refers to this link between dreams and waking life as a “psychic bond” (“The Interpretation” 15). He continues explaining that the things that interest us and our morals also help to shape dreams: “The moral nature of man remains even in his dream life” (“The Interpretation” 54). The fact that Transitional Vampires dream suggests that they have morals and concerns, another characteristic product of their humanization. Their human side is projected when they dream. According to Freud, the true nature of the dreamer is revealed in their dreams; hence, by analyzing dreams, it is possible to comprehend and identify what is hidden in the psyche of an individual (“The Interpretation” 60). People cannot hide who they really are in their dreams, and the same principle applies to vampires. By analyzing their dreams, it is possible to better understand the true nature of a Transitional Vampire. Their capacity to dream brings Transitional Vampires closer to their human side.

In this second stage, the desires and anxieties of Transitional Vampires are projected

onto their dreams. Similar to human beings, Transitional Vampires dream about what troubles them during their waking life. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Sheridan Le Fanu's vampire, Carmilla, is a Primeval Vampire, but she is ahead of her time because she claims to have dreams. However, Carmilla's dreams are not like the dreams of Transitionals. She manipulates dreams. Carmilla deliberately uses her dreams to invade the dreams of her victims and attack them. When Laura and Carmilla meet, Carmilla tells her that she dreamt about her when she was a child: "'How wonderful!' she exclaimed. 'Twelve years ago, I saw your face in a dream, and it has haunted me ever since'" (17). Carmilla claims she has been haunted by Laura's face, but it is Carmilla the one that has been haunting Laura and other girls through dreams. When she was about six years old, Laura has a dream, or rather a nightmare, about a woman coming to her room. At first, she feels safe and soothed by the woman, but after a while Laura is bitten by the night visitor:

I saw a solemn, but very pretty face looking at me from the side of the bed. It was that of a young lady who was kneeling, with her hands under the coverlet. I looked at her with a kind of pleased wonder, and ceased whimpering. She caressed me with her hands, and lay down beside me on the bed, and drew me towards her, smiling; I felt immediately delightfully soothed, and fell asleep again. I was wakened by a sensation as if two needles ran into my breast very deep at the same moment, and I cried loudly. The lady started back, with her eyes fixed on me, and then slipped down upon the floor, and, as I thought, hid herself under the bed. (3)

Laura is traumatized by that experience to the point that she is unable to go to bed without someone watching her sleep. When Carmilla tells her version of the dream, it is clear that she was the woman visiting Laura's room (17). A couple of days later after meeting the

vampire, Laura starts having that kind of dream again. However, this time at first she sees a monstrous black cat that appears in her room: "I soon saw that it was a sooty-black animal that resembled a monstrous cat. It appeared to me about four or five feet long for it measured fully the length of the hearthrug as it passed over it; and it continued to-ing and fro-ing with the lithe, sinister restlessness of a beast in a cage" (38). Then, just like in her childhood nightmare, her breast is bitten. The strangest thing happens when she wakes up and sees the figure of a woman, whom she recognizes as Carmilla, standing at the foot of her bed. After these dreams, Laura constantly says that she is horrified and feels physically exhausted. Laura then learns that the girls who died as victims of Carmilla dreamt about a woman and a beast the nights before their death (68). Carmilla uses dreams as a trap for her victims. Her real nature continues to be that of a Primeval Vampire. Following Freud's theory of dreams, the true Carmilla can be seen in her dreams. Even when she claims that she dreams, it is clear that she manipulates dreams to torment her victims and gain access to feed on them. Her animal nature is represented by the black cat that haunts girls in their sleep. In addition, the fact that she chooses a cat reinforces her killer essence because felines are one of nature's foremost predators. Carmilla takes advantage of her victims in their most vulnerable state, when they are asleep and, like Primevals, she never regrets it. Carmilla's dreams and the way she manipulates the dreams of her victims reflect the fears of invasion of the Victorian society. In the twentieth century, mesmerism is no longer one of society's main concerns. Thus, the dreams of Transitionals now closely resemble those of mortals.

Like Carmilla, the concerns of Louis are also captured in his dreams, but as a real Transitional, Louis is affected by the cruel reality that he lives during his waking hours. Similar to human beings, Transitional Vampires can be greatly afflicted by the content of

their dreams. Almost every day, when he sleeps, Louis revives the melancholy and loneliness he faces when he is awake. Dreams of loss torment him so often that he wishes he were not able to dream:

I wish sometimes that I did not [dream]. For such dreams, such long and clear dreams I never had as a mortal; and such twisted nightmares I never had either. In my early days, these dreams so absorbed me that often it seemed I fought waking as long as I could and lay sometimes for hours thinking of these dreams until the night was half gone; and dazed by them I often wandered about seeking to understand their meaning. (Rice, *Interview* 77)

Louis affirms that now as a vampire, his dreams are more vivid and intense than the ones he used to have when he was alive. Thus, it seems that his vampirism has only magnified his human emotions and as a result his suffering. He is tormented and spends time trying to grasp their meaning. Following Freud's theory, Louis understands that dreams carry a veiled meaning, and if he were able to interpret them, he might find the answer to his questions that torment him, such as why he is unable to be happy. Louis's dreams demonstrate that he leads a life of grief and desolation:

I dreamed of my brother, for instance, that he was near me in some state between life and death, calling to me for help. And often I dreamed of Babette; and often—almost always—there was a great wasteland backdrop to my dreams, that wasteland of night I'd seen when cursed by Babette as I've told you. It was as if all figures walked and talked on the desolate home of my damned soul. (Rice, *Interview* 77)

Louis suffers because of what he has lost both before and after becoming a vampire. Unlike

the dreams of Carmilla, Louis's dreams reveal that he has morals. He sees people for what they are, not as mere "food." Dreams are a reflection of his preoccupations and interests. He suffers because they die, because he cannot be with them as a vampire, and because of the mortality he has lost. Louis's words reveal that having lost the people he loved and his own humanity makes him feel empty and not worthy. The contrast between Carmilla's and Louis's dreams shows the difference between a real Transitional Vampire and a Primeval and the societies that created them. Carmilla manipulates dreams as a way to approach her victims, while Louis's dreams mirror his daily life concerns and agonies. The society of the twentieth century is not worried about being mesmerized by a powerful being. Transitional Vampires are revealed through their dreams and come across as humanized creatures with feelings and morality. Unlike their predecessors, they do not manipulate dreams to terrify mortals. Like humans, Transitionals are often terrified by their own dreams and what they reveal about themselves. Primeval Vampires provoke dreams, while Transitionals dream.

Education plays a major role in making the life of vampires seem glamorous and refined. As mentioned before, education functions as an instrument to create more "civilized" beings in Gothic. What contributes to the vast knowledge of these vampires is the fact that they usually are eager to know the origin of vampires and the reason for their existence. In the search for these answers, vampires learn and educate themselves. In Rice's *The Vampire Chronicles*, vampires are educated and usually more knowledgeable than the rest of mortal characters. They seem to have an understanding of life that humans do not possess. They are keen and good in business, travel around the world, study extensively, and are avid readers. As a result, the lifestyle of these vampires seems ideal from the point of view of a regular human being. Unlike Primeval Vampires, Transitional Vampires are eager, almost desperate to understand what they are and why they exist. This is why Louis

and Claudia decide to travel. They are eager to know and understand their nature. According to Arata, vampires long for knowledge and understanding: "No one plans more carefully or researches more thoroughly. No one is more learned within his own spheres of expertise or more receptive to new knowledge" (637). These vampires never stop learning and looking for answers. In Rice's novel, Louis and Claudia move to Europe with the hope of finding other vampires that might know the secret of their existence. They go to Europe because through reading, they know that their kind was originated in the old world, and they are looking for answers that books cannot provide. Gelder notes that twentieth-century vampires are constantly contemplating their existence: "Louis, Lestat and the other vampires do not work, although they do have investments and, with the help of financial advisers, are able to accumulate large amounts of capital. Their 'job' is, instead, to find out who they are and where they came from" (119). Transitional Vampires are not capable of leading a regular human life. Thus, they invest a great deal of their time and energy trying to understand what they are and the purpose of their existence. Williamson analyzes the case of Louis and Lestat who fill their time with speculations about life: "Both vampires and their kith and kin spend much of their time in philosophical contemplation (of the meaning of their existence), in appreciation of the arts, and in travel and adventure" (38). During the twentieth century, Transitional Vampires show a new side. They are beings capable of understanding and reasoning. Thus, understanding their nature becomes an important part of their existence. These vampires have an origin as humans, but they also have a great need to find their origin as vampires. Literature and films about Transitional Vampires question whether education creates civilized human beings. These vampires possess a knowledge that humans can only dream of, but in spite of being well-educated and humanized, they continue to be monsters. In a way, this reflects the anxieties of the

twentieth-century society. This is a period in which education is made more accessible around the world, but the spread of knowledge does not seem to stop the injustices committed by humankind. As the saying goes, “knowledge is power,” but when humans gain power, that power is used many times against their own kind.

As mentioned before, during the 1930s, the popularity of the figure of the vampire spread to the United States thanks to the cinematographic industry. As a result, the figure of the vampire in literature and film undergoes a process of Americanization during the twentieth century. Vampires become the protagonists of texts and films that also capture the anxieties of the United States, not only Europe. Rice's *Vampire Chronicles*, portrays this change through Louis and Lestat. As Transitional Vampires, both Lestat and Louis used to be humans, and in this case, both were born in France. Louis was born in 1766 and his family migrated to the United States when he was a child. In this new country, they lived in their plantation, Pointe du Lac, in New Orleans where they became slave owners. On the other side, Lestat, who was born in 1760, migrates from France to the United States in search of adventure once he became a vampire. Rice's vampires enact the path travelled by Europeans who migrated to America hoping for a better future. In the process, vampires adapt to their new land and customs and start reflecting the anxieties of their new country. This Americanization reinforces the argument that the figure of the vampire mirrors the society that creates it. In the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, when vampire stories mainly had a European origin, vampires were depicted as aristocrats. After being adopted by writers from the United States, vampires reflect motifs from this new land. Rice's vampires, for example, take the role of masters in a southern plantation and of slave owners (see figures 32 and 33).



Figure 32. Screen Capture from Neil Jordan's film *Interview with the Vampire* (1994).



Figure 33. Screen Capture from Neil Jordan's film *Interview with the Vampire* (1994).

Louis and Lestat's roots are in Europe, but they clearly become American. In *Interview with the Vampire*, Louis affirms that he longs to go back to Europe because he knows he was shaped there, but he is an American: "the feeling of having been shaped by Europe more deeply and keenly than the rest of Americans. I was a Creole who wanted to see where it

had all begun” (Rice 148). As a migrant in the United States, Louis feels he is composed by a mixture of cultures. He feels American, but he undeniably yearns for his European past. During the twentieth century, vampires travel from England to the United States and adapt to their new land. In this period, Transitional Vampires personify motifs and anxieties unknown by their predecessors.

Similarly, in Joel Schumacher’s film, *The Lost Boys*, vampires embody attitudes and roles influenced by the American culture. The film is set in Santa Clara, a warm and very sunny beach in California (see figure 34), an unthinkable location for a vampire Gothic story in the nineteenth century.



Figure 34. Screen Capture from Joel Schumacher’s film *The Lost Boys* (1987).

In addition, the vampires are not aristocrats, but young American motorcyclists, who are clearly influenced by the 1980s rock and roll fashion (see figures 35 and 36). As mentioned before, vampires from the twentieth century look like regular mortals. Their appearance does not reveal any trace of the hybrid nature that characterized their predecessors. The Americanization of the vampire changes the portrayal of this monster, reflecting the fact that the society from twentieth century is not as frightened by supernatural monsters as by

humans themselves and the evil acts they are capable of. The evil within is now the real horror.



Figure 35. Screen Capture from Joel Schumacher's film *The Lost Boys* (1987).



Figure 36. Screen Capture from Joel Schumacher's film *The Lost Boys* (1987).

The Transitional Vampire as a Reflection of Society

During the twentieth century the vampire undergoes a process of Americanization. This Gothic figure becomes the protagonist of texts and films from the U.S. and starts to

reflect the concerns that distress this country. In *Gothic Literature*, Andrew Smith notes that anxieties related to the past and identity are captured in Gothic produced during the twentieth century in the U.S. (41). In texts and films about Transitional Vampires, the past is always relevant, and it plays a vital role in the life of these vampires. As it was previously discussed, their past as humans is determining for Transitionals. Their origin as mortals humanizes this Gothic figure in the sense that they never really lose their human side, and it makes them liminal beings. All the dilemmas Transitional Vampires face are a product of their past. They cannot embrace their vampiric side completely because it does not allow them to have the kind of life they used to; they cannot establish relationships of love or friendship neither with humans nor vampires because no one accepts their ambiguous nature. The past becomes almost an obsession for Transitionals, and their dreams capture this feeling. In the case of Louis, in *Interview with the Vampire*, his dreams remind him of his past life as human and relationships that could not be consummated because of his vampirism (Rice 77). The past hunts Transitionals and keeps them in a liminal state. In addition, not only is their past as humans relevant, Transitionals also long to find their origin as vampires. Louis decides to go to Europe when Claudia tells him that vampires are originated there: “there was in me that great desire to see Europe and to know it, which comes not only from the reading of all the literature and the philosophy, but from the feeling of having been shaped by Europe more deeply and keenly than the rest of Americans. I was a Creole who wanted to see where it had all begun” (Rice, *Interview* 148). Louis is looking for the origins of vampires, but he also longs to see the place where he was born. He was born in France, but emigrated with his family when he was a child. Louis refers to this fact when he says that he was “shaped by Europe more deeply and keenly than the rest of Americans” because he spent his first years there. As a reflection of

today's society, Louis is comparing himself to the great majority of people from the U.S. who are descendants from European immigrants. This fact reflects the reality of the U.S. During the twentieth century, vampires begin to mirror anxieties not only from Europe, but also from the U.S. Transitional Vampires are tormented by their past, and it is what ultimately keeps them from becoming primeval monsters.

During the twentieth-century, recognizing evil is not as obvious as in the past because, as it was established before, real evil now resides in humans. This is depicted in tales about Transitional Vampires in which humans are turned into monsters against their own will. It becomes almost impossible to know who is a vampire—the evil monster—and who is not. Then, the paradox of whether Transitional Vampires are real monsters or humans that are victims of a tragic destiny becomes challenging. This idea of the evil within is reinforced by the World Wars, in which humans are the ones exterminating themselves. It is not easy to recognize a good person from an evil one, and this is captured in tales about Transitionals. In *The Lure of the Vampire*, Milly Williamson notes that in the 1945 Universal Studios' film *House of Dracula*, the Count is trying to cure his vampirism, but the treatment he undergoes does not work on him so he “reverts to his vampiric ways” (32). This version of *Dracula* conveys some of the first signs of Transitional Vampires. In this film, the Count tries to revert to his mortality which suggests that he has human origins, appreciates human life and is a victim of his vampiric condition. He is a human trapped by his new monstrous nature, and he longs to recover his mortality. The new anxieties and the way these productions address motifs differ from those pre-war stories. Before the World Wars, most vampires are Primeval Vampires, reckless monsters without a recognizable origin, creatures that have always been that way. Thus, their behavior does not show any human traits or concerns. In the post-war period, vampires undergo an immense

transformation. In Tod Browning's film *Dracula* from 1931, based on Stoker's novel, the vampire depicts the same anxieties as a Primeval Vampire. However, in Erle C. Kenton's film *House of Dracula*, based on the same novel, the Count has not always been a monster because now he is trying to cure his vampirism. Vampirism is then treated as a condition, not an inborn quality. However, the Count does not succeed in curing his vampirism and not only continues to be a vampire, but all the progress he showed towards humanization reverts and goes back to his old lifestyle. Thus, the film reflects the fear that the evil within rules over the human. Universal's version of *Dracula* comes across as a Transitional Vampire, a liminal vampire trying to recover his humanity. Even though in this film Dracula does not succeed in his attempt to be human again, he shows his human side and morals. In the post-war twentieth century, humans are the real monsters, and there is always the possibility that humans will not be able to escape their monstrous nature and destructive instincts. In this period, the fact that the evil side may overrule the good side becomes one of society's main concerns, and it is portrayed in literature and films about Transitional Vampires.

Texts and films about Transitional Vampires question what really makes a civilized human being through the motif of education. In this period, Gothic tales give way to more humanized monsters. These vampires are usually more knowledgeable than the rest of characters in these narrations. The motif of education is not new to the twentieth century. During the nineteenth century, the element of education was used to counteract the monstrosity of vampires and other Gothic creatures. In "The Occidental Tourist: 'Dracula' and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization," Stephen D. Arata notes that in *Dracula* "No one is more rational, more intelligent, more organized, or even more punctual than the Count" (637). Like Dracula, Transitionals are more cultured than the rest of characters. Education

opens a gap between humans and vampires. Transitionals possess more knowledge and insight than humans, and this empowers them. These vampires live in the civilized world and seem to be more civilized and insightful than humans. Unlike their predecessors, Transitionals used to be humans, show emotions, long for connections with other beings and are usually more educated and usually have a better lifestyle than their victims. Transitionals are depicted as knowledgeable creatures with many human traits. They are eager to gain knowledge and never stop learning through their life. Tales and films about Transitional Vampires address society's fear of what really defines a human being, and education becomes a means to humanize vampires.

During the twentieth century, the Transitional Vampire is depicted as an individual rebelling against society. This rebellious attitude turns vampires into heroes or heroines admired by the society that creates them. This perception of the vampire as an outcast hero demonstrates that the attitudes toward this monster have mutated over the centuries. In the past, vampires represented all the maladies and evilness invading the mainland and the safety of homes. Primeval Vampires were feared because they stood for all that was considered wrong in the society of the time. Similarly, Transitional Vampires also convey the anxieties of their time; however, audiences also perceive them as innocent victims because vampirism was imposed on them. Transitional Vampires are the perfect representation of the tortured hero rebelling against the injustices of the world. Unlike their predecessors, Transitional Vampires used to be humans. They become outsiders as a result of an injustice that condemns them to solitude in a liminal space. They do not belong to the world of humans but are not fit to live among their predecessors either. As outsiders, Transitionals' lives seem to be glamorous and mysterious. Transitional Vampires are romanticized and idealized. In "Who do you Love? Anne Rice's Vampires and their Moral

Transition,” Kathleen Rout argues that Rice’s vampire protagonists are pictured as tortured heroes (474). Transitional Vampires lead lonely and hopeless lives. They live among humans, but are emotionally isolated from society. These vampires long for mortality and they show respect for human life, which separates them from their own kind. As liminal subjects, these vampires understand that they cannot rejoin society because they are considered monsters, but neither can they live among vampires because they cannot embrace their vampiric nature. This is the case of Louis in *Interview with the Vampire*, who observes humans from the distance and avoids their contact because he fears being rejected. Louis does not want to get hurt, and he believes that it is impossible for a human to love him. However, when he tells his story to the journalist, the man feels completely drawn to the vampire and his life and begs Louis to turn him (Rice, *Interview* 340). The melancholy and misery of the vampire is romanticized and idealized, in this case, by the journalist. Transitional Vampires are created after Lord Byron³¹, who according to Williamson, had to live as an expatriate because of his tainted reputation and the rejection of his society (36). His image inspired the figure of the bohemian vampire that was popularized in the twentieth century (37). The figure of the vampire is then romanticized and idolized. Vampires are shaped as abject subjects because their rebel exile makes them alluring creatures that attract and fascinate audiences in spite of their monstrous nature. During the twentieth century, Transitional Vampires are shunned by both humans and Primevals around them. Nevertheless, their exile and victimization, in fact, contribute to transform the vampire figure into one of the most popular and admired figures in literature and cinema. In

³¹ In *The Byronic Hero in Film, Fiction, and Television*, Atara Stein explores the influence Lord Byron has had on the different productions in the twentieth and twentieth-first centuries and the journey the Byronic hero has had during this time.

a period in which individuals rebelling against the injustices of the world are idealized and admired, Transitional Vampires become the perfect means to portray these outcasts.

In the post-war twentieth century, humans question themselves what it means to be alive and what the purpose of existing is other than destroying their own humankind. Transitional Vampires embody this dilemma. Like their predecessors, Transitional Vampires disrupt the boundaries between life and death. Primeval Vampires are mainly depicted as immortal monsters that have lurked around the world for centuries in search of human blood. In contrast, during the twentieth century, vampires start up as humans that are unwillingly transformed by other vampires into monsters. Thus, Transitional Vampires have a human origin and are liminal subjects that never fully become a monstrous vampire, and never lose their humanity completely. As a result, vampire tales from the twentieth century ponder upon what it means to be alive. These tales raise the question of whether existing is the same as being alive. Williamson notes that this is the dilemma presented in Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*:

The vampire embodies non-signification because it is neither dead nor alive. Being undead, the vampire signifies a lack of signification—it does not have meaning in the cold light of day. But the vampire presents us with a dilemma because it continues to exist despite a lack of meaning. It is this dilemma that is at the heart of Louis' quest and it structures the narrative of *Interview with the Vampire*. Louis and his companion, the girl vampire Claudia, travel to Europe to find out about the significance and origins of vampirism, and of what it means to be a vampire. (Williamson 44)

Williamson affirms that vampires do not signify because they are dead. The dilemma is that as dead beings, vampires should not exist, but they do. Their liminal nature keeps them in a

limbo. They are not living; their bodies are physically dead, but they continue to exist. They have feelings, emotions and even human sensations. This concern is captured in texts and films that present Transitional Vampires as protagonists. Education plays a major role in this concern. Transitionals strive to understand the reason for their existence and the origin of vampires. They exist, and, unlike Primevals, they want to know why they exist. As mentioned previously, critics such as Williamson and Gelder note that these vampires dedicate a large amount of time to understanding the meaning of life. These vampires are usually depicted as insightful and well-educated creatures, but not even all their knowledge and humanization take away their monstrosity. As a result, texts and films about Transitional Vampires mirror society's concern with the meaning of life and ponder upon the question of whether education results in "civilized" humans or not. They question what being alive means for vampires, and by extension, for human beings.

Conclusion

During the twentieth century, a new kind of vampire appears in literature and cinema, the Transitional Vampire. Transitional Vampires possess a divided nature. They are monsters, but they also possess a human side. These vampires have evolved into more humanized creatures that have emotions and that consequently respect human life. They physically resemble humans, and the few animalistic traits they retain are easily hidden. Thus, these vampires do not find any obstacle in living among mortals. On the contrary, their supernatural abilities give them advantages over humans. Their senses are enhanced, and they possess superior physical strength. Transitional Vampires no longer have the ability to shapeshift. They cannot take the form of natural elements or animals, but their mental power continues to be one of the most powerful abilities, which allows them to

mesmerize other beings and read minds. This new category of vampires carries a revolutionary trait. Now, they can look at themselves in the mirror and cast a reflection. Their reflection suggests that they are capable of recognizing themselves as individuals. Moreover, these vampires boast a human origin. They are former humans turned into vampires. Transitionals are emotional and long to live in community, to love and to be loved. However, this is usually impossible to accomplish because of their dual nature. They are still half monster. They often refuse to kill mortals to feed on them, but the alternative of feeding on animals fails to sustain them as well. Thus, they are forced to feed on evil human beings, humans that can be spared, according to their beliefs. Transitionals lead a lonely and painful existence. They are usually turned into vampires against their will and never find the company and love they long for. These are liminal beings that live in between two worlds, the monstrous and the human. As a result, they are rejected both by their own kind and mortals.

Similar to Primevals, Transitional Vampires mirror the period and society in which they are created. Therefore, in a century that is marked by two World Wars, vampires reflect a societal concern for the innate evil of human beings. While Primeval Vampires represent a mythological evil, the monster of the twentieth century represents the evil inside human beings, which has proved equally terrorizing. Furthermore, these new vampires no longer reflect just European concerns; they become an international means to represent world anxieties. The apparition of this new vampire does not replace its previous antecessors, since both Primevals and Transitionals coexist in literature and cinema during the twentieth century.

CHAPTER V

Contemporary Vampire:

Late Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Century Vampire

The third and last category proposed in this study is the Contemporary Vampire. The Contemporary Vampire has evolved into a humanized vampire that mirrors modern concerns. This vampire makes its first appearances in literature and cinema from the last decades of the twentieth century and is still popular today. Just as the Transitional Vampire does not replace its Primeval relative, the Contemporary Vampire does not fully substitute any of the previous categories. Contemporary Gothic witnesses the figure of the vampire adapted to live like humans. These vampires used to be humans and lost their mortality to another vampire, a trace they inherit from Transitionals. However, unlike their predecessors, Contemporary Vampires do not become a different species. They are usually referred to as infected human beings. They are said to have contracted a disease that forces them to adapt to a new lifestyle. The evolution of this monster proves that Gothic dislocates and adapts constantly. Contemporary Vampire characters are adjusted to represent the modern society and our most pressing concerns. During the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the world is afflicted by anxieties related to ecological issues, depletion of natural resources, and proliferation of diseases with no apparent cure. Films and texts which feature Contemporary Vampires depict them battling diseases and trying to survive scarcity of food. Vampirism is usually depicted as a virus that forces its sufferers to live as second-class citizens. Moreover, these narrations have also been influenced by globalization, making the vampire a worldwide phenomenon. Nowadays, vampire tales not only tell concerns from Europe or U.S.A. Different cultures from around the world have adapted

these tales to reflect anxieties specific to a certain culture or country. Like their predecessors, Contemporary Vampires mirror the society and the period in which they are created. They are also adapted to portray struggles of marginal sectors and to face the same problems that infest modern societies around the globe.

During the late twentieth and the twenty-first centuries, films and texts about vampires proliferate at a fast pace. Some of the most influential tales will be used in this chapter to identify the traits of Contemporary Vampires. Texts such as Dan Simmons's *Children of the Night* (1992), John Ajvide Lindqvist's *Let the Right One In* (2004), and Charlaine Harris's *Dead Until Dark* (2001)³² will be analyzed to establish and define this vampire. Similarly, this study also includes the analysis of films such as Michael and Peter Spierig's *Daybreakers* (2009), Jim Jarmusch's *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2014), and Tomas Alfredson's *Let the Right One In* (2008). These narrations will be used to demonstrate the evolution of the figure of the vampire into the modern and popular creature of this century. Some of the concepts used to analyze the Primeval and Transitional Vampire will continue to be relevant for this vampire. Additionally, concepts of ecoGothic, atavism, and globalGothic are used to study the evolution of the vampire and to demonstrate how Vampire narratives continue to adapt to the period in which they are created.

The Contemporary Vampire or the Vampiric Human

Contemporary Vampires are humans infected with a virus that turns them into monsters. Unlike their predecessors, Contemporary Vampires are not wild inborn monsters or liminal creatures that find themselves in between two worlds. Monstrosity has been

³² Charlaine Harris's *Dead until Dark* and its sequels became the television show *True Blood*. For this study only the first novel will be analyzed.

relocated to a virus, not the creature. Thus, Contemporary Vampires are humans who live with a monstrous virus but manage to retain their humanity. In “Monster Culture (Seven Theses), Jeffrey Jerome Cohen distinguishes a type of monster he classifies as “the monster that dwells at the gates of difference”:

The monster is difference made flesh, come to dwell among us. In its function as dialectical Other or third-term supplement, the monster is an incorporation of the Outside, the Beyond—of all those *loci* that are rhetorically placed as distant and distinct but originate Within. Any kind of alterity can be inscribed across (constructed through) the monstrous body, but for the most part monstrous difference tends to be cultural, political, racial, economic, sexual. (7)

The denominations “Monster” and “Other” have homologous connotations. Contemporary Vampires are a type of Other, different from regular humans because of a virus. All the grotesque characteristics of Primeval and Transitional Vampires have been comprised into one illness. Contemporary Vampires are humans, but the vampire virus makes them the other, a vampirized minority. Their disease is their unnatural side. Vampirism is then transformed into a monstrous medical condition transmitted through blood, so vampires are sick human beings. In “Who Ordered the Hamburger with AIDS?” Xavier Aldana Reyes argues that new texts about vampires have turned vampirism into a condition to be treated medically and, where possible eradicated (57). As a trait of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries vampire narratives reflect society’s concerns with pandemics spreading worldwide. The epidemic of Vampiric humans threatens the remaining uninfected population (often inadvertently), while they strive to adapt to their condition. Many of the Contemporary Vampires in texts and films manage to lead a regular human life. They

respect the lives of humans; they do not kill them for their blood because Contemporary Vampires do not lose their own human nature. Often in order to avoid drinking blood directly from people, they make deals with regular people or authorities to legally obtain their sustenance. In other occasions, they simply decide to consume blood only from animals; some of these vampires even avoid consuming domestic animals' blood. Though Contemporary Vampires are classified as monsters, they still retain most of their humanity. As a result, they live mostly as the rest of human beings, trying to hide their monstrous condition.

Physical Traits of Contemporary Vampires

The physical characteristics of Contemporary Vampires do not differ from those of their immediate predecessors, Transitional Vampires. Their eyes and skin remain the primary focus of physical characterization. As mentioned before, Contemporary Vampires not only used to be human beings, but they are also depicted as humans with a serious medical condition, but one which offers no physical signs. They do not have permanent animalistic physical characteristics. However, they do possess the most typical vampiric traits. Like Transitionals, Contemporary Vampires can retract and draw their fangs as they please. As the vampires from Harris's novel *Dead Until Dark* or in Lindqvist's *Let the Right One In*, these vampires draw their fangs when they are about to feed or as a defense mechanism. Moreover, their eyes continue to be one of their most emblematic traits. However, the emphasis on the eyes of a Contemporary Vampire is not meant to scare the audience, and it renders the vampire as a monster. Instead, it is a literary and cinematographic device that aims at identifying them as Others. In Jarmusch's film, *Only Lovers Left Alive*, their eyes glow brighter when they are hungry (see figure 37). This also

occurs when they feed from a victim, as in Matt Reeves's film *Let Me In*, the English adaptation of Lindqvist's book.³³ In this cinematographic adaptation, the character of Abby (the English version of Eli) uses bright contact lenses when she attacks a person. This technique of using an almost incandescent color in the movie emphasizes the transformation the vampire undergoes when facing real hunger³⁴ (see figure 38).



Figure 37. Screen capture from Jim Jarmusch's film *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2013).



Figure 38. Screen captured from Matt Reeves's film *Let Me In* (2010).

³³ The novel *Let the Right One In* (2004), written by the Swedish author John Ajvide Lindqvist, has two cinematographic adaptations. The first one is a Swedish adaptation, *Let the Right One (Låt Den Rätte Komma In, 2008)*, directed by the also Swedish director, Tomas Alfredson, and the English version, *Let Me In* (2010), directed by the American director, Matt Reeves.

³⁴ The way in which hunger affects Contemporary Vampires will be discussed later in this chapter.

With these vampires, the sudden change of color of their eyes indicates a burst of emotion and reminds the audience that they are not regular humans. However, there are other Contemporary Vampires whose eyes are permanently light. Vampire characters in the Spierig brothers' film, *Daybreakers*, have eyes that are always yellow, which works to differentiate vampire from human characters. The second most exploited physical attribute in Contemporary Vampire's tales is their pale and cold skin. This trait also serves the purpose of identifying them as separate from humans. Nevertheless, unlike their predecessors, these vampires no longer have to hide their skin tone. In certain occasions it is not necessary because their paleness passes unnoticed. They are often simply seen as people with very fair skin. In the film *Only Lovers Left Alive*, vampires spend time with regular humans without raising suspicion, and in the novel *Children of the Night*, Kate remembers the person who broke into her house as pale person, but not as not human: "each time she closed her eyes she saw the pale face and dark eyes of the intruder" (135). In other occasions, they do not need to hide because they are immersed in societies that accept them, as in the case of *Dead Until Dark*, in which vampires are "legally recognized undead" (1), or in *Daybreakers*, which is a society completely ruled by vampires. Contemporary Vampires no longer live in the dark, hiding. They usually only keep their vampire condition private.

The Contemporary Vampire's supernatural powers or the lack of them is in the service of their humanity. What differentiates them from their predecessors is the way they use their abilities. Some Contemporary Vampires have enhanced human qualities. As soon as humans contract the vampire virus, they feel their senses are magnified. In the *Blade* saga, for example, their eyes are completely adapted to the night, and their sense of smell becomes so acute that they are even capable of distinguishing a vampire from a human by

their scent. In addition, Blade can walk in the daylight, but unlike the rest of the primeval vampires in the films, he uses his powers and skills to kill the enemies of humanity. In the *Blade* saga, Contemporary Vampire Blade is known as the day walker because he has the natural ability to walk in daylight. His enemies, Primeval Vampires, find means to gain protection from UV light,³⁵ but do so in order to target humans during the day. In *Children of the Night*, baby Joshua is capable of leading a normal life during day time, which also makes him appear more human to the reader. Contemporary Vampires can be extremely fast and strong as in *Dead until Dark*, in which the vampire Bill is capable of recreating a scene of destruction caused by a tornado all by himself (42). He stages the wreck of a tornado to cover up the killing of a group of criminals who attempt to kill Sookie, the human protagonist of the story. Using his powers in the service of his human counterpart makes him as sympathetic as any human character. Contemporary Vampires lack the power of seduction and physical beauty that Transitional Vampires possess. Physical beauty and sex appeal do not come with the virus. Once they are turned into vampires, they continue to be the same person they were before contagion. While their predecessors used their physical attraction to obtain food, the Contemporary Vampire cannot depend on seduction since their transformation does not entail an improvement in their looks. This difference implies a behavioral change.³⁶ Thus, the figure of the vampire depicted in contemporary Gothic is more similar to humans. The human quality of Contemporary Vampires is also evidenced by their lack of supernatural powers in certain texts and films. For instance, Edward Dalton, the protagonist of, *Daybreakers*, has no supernatural powers. He is forced

³⁵ Namely a special sunblock.

³⁶ This will be analysed later in this chapter. Vampires are dragged into the consumerist system, and they have to come up with different methods to acquire blood.

to deal with adversity as a regular human being would. Additionally, Contemporary Vampires no longer possess the ability to shapeshift into animals or natural elements.³⁷ Regardless of their supernatural abilities or the lack of them, Contemporary Vampires make the evolution and humanization of this Gothic figure evident.

The humanization of Contemporary Vampires is demonstrated by the presence of bodily functions. Some of these vampires keep breathing and eating even after their transformation. They eat human food as a habit even though their bodies survive only with blood. In Gail Carriger's *Soulless*, a novel set in Victorian times in which vampires, werewolves and preternaturals live among regular people, the bodies of the vampires are capable of processing food, even though they do not obtain any nutrients from it: "Lord Akeldema received no nourishment from the consumption of food, but he appreciated the taste" (43). Alexia, the protagonist, explains that her vampire friend enjoys eating even if he does not need to. Contemporary Vampires have no problem engaging in sexual intercourse and experiencing pleasure, as in *Dead until Dark*, but a remarkable, novel characteristic of this new vampire is that they can procreate inborn vampires. In films like *Blade* and Len Wiseman's *Underworld*, vampires can procreate among vampires, or with humans or other species. This also occurs in Simmons's *Children of the Night*; Vlad Dracula, who now calls himself Vernor Deacon Trend, affirms to have had descendants: "It was three winters after the rebuilding of Castle Dracula that one of my mistresses announced that she was pregnant" (179). Moreover, baby Joshua is also a direct descendant of Vlad Dracula. Vampires in this novel have all the bodily functions humans have.

³⁷ In Lindqvist's novel, *Let the Right One In*, Eli turns into a monstrous creature when she attacks humans (264). However, this is more of an exception than a rule for Contemporary Vampires and it will be discussed later in this chapter.

Another new trait present in Simmons's novel, as in some other stories, is the fact that vampires age and deteriorate over time, but much more slowly than humans do. Vernor, the last son of Dracula, claims that old age is already taking its toll on him: "The habit of life, however painful, is too difficult to break after all these centuries. I can no longer walk, can hardly lift my arm, but this accursed body continues to attempt to repair itself" (174). His body refuses to die although his health and vitality have deteriorated over the centuries. Other examples of Contemporary Vampires who have essential bodily functions abound. In the film *Let the Right One In*, Eli's stomach churns every time she is starving, and she feels the same pain humans experience after a long period without any kind of nourishment. Unlike their predecessors, the bodies of Contemporary Vampires still have some or the same bodily functions they had before contracting the vampire virus. This happens because they never really stop being human beings.

Supernatural Traits of Contemporary Vampires

Today, blood still grants vampires eternal life, but they are no longer depicted as undead monsters but as immortal human beings. During the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, texts and films about vampires have begun focusing on the immortality of these beings, not on the fact that, as vampires, they are supposed to be undead. When contracting the vampire virus, the victim undergoes a process similar to dying, as in *Dead until Dark* or in *Let the Right One In* in which people who are bitten died and are "reborn" into a new life. First, their bodily functions stop, but after a while they start again completely adapted to their new condition, as it happens to Virginia after Eli bit her:

I'm... breathing.

Yes. That was the last thing she had determined before she fell asleep: that

she wasn't breathing. Now she was breathing again. (*Let the Right One In* 323)

Here, Virginia realizes that her body is alive after it had stopped functioning the day before. Nevertheless, Contemporary Vampires usually perceive themselves as humans with a special condition that grants them eternal life, not as undead monsters. In his novel, *Let the Right One In*, Lindqvist tells the story of Eli, a girl who has lived with the vampire virus for over two centuries, but she has never lost her sense of humanity. Eli explains to Oskar, her mortal friend, that she is still alive, but has special requirements as any other sick person:

“Are you a vampire?”

She wrapped her arms around her body, slowly shook her head.

“I... live on blood. But I am not... that.”

“What’s the difference?”

She looked him in the eyes and said somewhat more forcefully:

“There’s a big difference.”

Oskar saw her toes tense, relax, tense. Her naked legs were very thin, where the T-Shirt stopped he could see the edge of a pair of white panties. He gestured to her. “Are you kind of ... dead?”

“No. Can’t you tell?”

“No, but... I mean... did you die once a long time ago?”

“No, but I’ve lived for a long time.”

“Are you old?”

“No. I’m only twelve. But I’ve been that for a long time.” (271)

Eli needs blood to survive, but she never stops considering herself a person. She is still the same little girl she was when she contracted the virus. She argues that she is not a vampire,

but that her virus will not let her die. Like *Contemporary Vampires*, Eli refers to her condition as a disease: “Oskar. I’m a person, just like you. It’s just that I have... a very unusual illness” (281). These vampires are humans that have to adapt to live with an ailment that changes their lives completely, as any other person who struggles with incurable conditions. Similarly in George Mendeluk’s film, *Forever 16*, the protagonist, a girl named Raven who has been a 16-year-old vampire for 92 years, explains that once you are bitten, you get sick but do not die: “If you’re bitten and not killed, it slowly takes over, like an infection” (*Forever 16*). In the film, she is treated as a regular girl, and those who know about her vampirism refer to it as a especial health condition without making any differentiation. Similarly, in Simmons’s *Children of the Night*, Joshua seems to be a nine-month Romanian baby. His body performs all the functions of a regular human, but has a health disorder that explains his dependence on blood. Joshua is adopted by Kate Neuman, an epidemiologist from the U.S.A, who discovers with her medical team that the baby’s body needs blood to counteract his immunological deficiency: “we’ve found what Alan calls a ‘shadow organ’—a thickening of the stomach wall that might be the site where blood is absorbed and deconstructed for its constituent genetic parts” (119). Here, vampirism is not described as a virus but as a bodily condition. In this novel, vampires grow old very slowly, but they do not die because of their body’s capacity to regenerate. Joshua’s body needs blood to function regularly and live forever. Blood is not the only fuel his body requires, but a kind of medication that allows him to lead a normal life. Unlike their predecessors, *Contemporary Vampires* are not animated corpses. They are human beings that can potentially live eternally if they adapt to their different health requirements. Their blood dependence does not transform them into undead monsters but immortals.

Non-physical and Behavioral Traits of the Contemporary Vampire

The greatest longing of the Transitional Vampire becomes a reality for the Contemporary. In many modern stories, they have become part of society and have emotional companionship of other vampires and humans. Unlike Primevals, who only seek others' companionship for convenience, or Transitionals, who have problems being accepted by vampires or humans because of their liminal nature, the humanity of Contemporary Vampires allows them to form family and love ties with others. *Only Lovers Left Alive* tells the story of Eve and Adam³⁸, a vampire married couple who depends on each other to survive their vampirism and everything it implies, including loneliness and boredom. Eve and Adam seek each other's love and companionship when the monotony of being immortal becomes overwhelming. Their mutual love and support is almost as important as blood to survive. Similarly, in *Dead until Dark*, vampires establish love relationships with other immortals as well as mortals. In Harris's novel series, vampires share bonds of love and friendship, as is the case of Bill and Sookie, a vampire and a mortal that become lovers, and according to Sookie, that makes her feel safe: "No one would mess with me while I was Bill's girlfriend" (181). It is noteworthy that their society accepts and recognizes relationships with vampires. In addition, in *Let the Right One In*, Oskar, who is also a twelve-year-old boy, willingly leaves his life behind to run away with her and help her survive. They share an innocent love and friendship. In other texts and films, vampires also have family connections. In the film *Daybreakers*, the world is run by vampires. Humans are a minority about to become extinct, as a reflection of today's society in which humanity faces the extinction of species. In this film, entire families have been infected

³⁸ Adam and Eve. Their names make reference to the Adam and Eve from the Bible, as a couple that must strive to survive by themselves.

with the virus, so their family ties remain after everybody has contracted the condition. In the film, Edward Dalton thinks his younger brother, vampire Frankie, betrayed him by infecting him with vampirism, but later Frankie tells him that he turned him because he loves him and did not want to lose him as a victim of a vampire: "Do you know why I turned you, Ed? You used to say to me that you'd rather die than be like the rest of us. I didn't turn you because it was convenient or because of some selfish need for blood. I turned you because you would have died if I didn't" (*Daybreakers*). In the film, family ties and love are two of the main themes. Vampires are willing to do anything to protect their loved ones. During the last decades of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, texts and films about Contemporary Vampires show the emotional ties this Gothic figure shares with other vampires and even humans, not for convenience or survival, but because it is part of their human nature.

During the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, blood gains a new connotation in vampire plots. It continues to be a source of nourishment for the vampire, but it is also a transmitting agent of the virus of vampirism. As mentioned before, during this period, pandemics spread through blood have become one of the greatest modern concerns. Especially during the last two decades of the twentieth century, Gothic texts and films mirror society's fear of sexually transmitted diseases. In "AIDS as Monster in Science Fiction and Horror Cinema," Edward Guerrero notes that "the AIDS-monster can be traced back to a series of horror and science-fiction films of the eighties" (qtd. in Aldana Reyes 58). Vampires' fiction, such as *Blade*, contributed to the popularization of this association. This anxiety has been often connected to vampires because of the interchange of bodily fluids, which are often related to sexual activity. In addition, sexually transmitted diseases usually carry a moral stigma as well because of their connection to unhealthy sexual

practices. The vampire reflects this anxiety in Gothic. When a vampire sucks blood from a person, the penetration of the fangs is usually depicted as sensual act or as an abuse. Like Aids and other diseases, when a regular human is bitten by a vampire, the contact between healthy and infected blood results in the transmission of the virus. In contemporary cinema and literature, vampirism has been clearly turned into a disease³⁹. In *Dead until Dark*, vampirism is scientifically recognized as an illness. Sookie refers to Bill as a victim of the vampire virus: “It gave me another pang of pain, observing how glad she [her grandmother] was to see my supposed suitor in her living room, even if (according to popular literature) he was the victim of a virus that made him seem dead” (52). Sookie notes that the virus changes the appearance of its host, making infected people look dead. Similarly, in *Let the Right One In*, Eli denies she is a vampire and constantly refers to her condition as an illness or an infection, and as a Contemporary Vampire who is aware of her own infection, she struggles to avoid spreading the virus to others. She tells Oskar: “I don’t want to infect anyone. Least of all you” (272). Eli has experienced the misery and sadness brought by the illness, and she does not want others to go through the same. During this period, blood is the only food vampires need to survive; however, in tales about Contemporary Vampires, blood acquires a new connotation as the transmitter of the vampire virus.

During the late twentieth and twenty first centuries, Contemporary Vampires are usually depicted as a minority group because of their virus. Vampirism is rendered as a state, not a defining quality of the “person.” Once humans are infected with the vampire

³⁹ In Francis Coppola’s adaptation of *Dracula*, it is suggested that blood carries the vampire virus. Even though the vampire in the film is a Transitional Vampire, it was produced in 1992, a period in which the fear of AIDS and sexually-transmitted diseases was at its peak. Although, the anxiety of sexually-transmitted diseases has been present in society since the nineteenth century, it became stronger when the AIDS virus was identified in the 1980’s. This topic will be developed later in this chapter.

virus, they continue to be humans, but with a different health condition. They do not become a different species. Thus, in these fictional societies, someone with the vampire virus is similar to someone with an incurable disease. As such, vampires need to adapt their lives to the disease and the especial requirements it demands. Humans who contract the vampire virus become a minority within their society whether their condition is public or not. The vampire virus, which is transmitted through blood, is an ostracizing factor. Their depiction as minorities allows many discriminated against sectors of society to identify themselves with this figure that endures injustices of society. In “The Vampire as Alien in Contemporary Fiction,” Margaret Carter argues that the capacity to mirror different minorities or outcast sections of society contributes to its popularity: “As a rebellious outsider, as persecuted minority, as endangered species, as a member of a different ‘race’ that legend portrays as sexually omniscient, the vampire makes a fitting hero for late twentieth-century popular fiction” (qtd. in Williamson 30). Contemporary Vampires emulate the problems different segregated sectors of society face because of their social status, race, health or physical condition.⁴⁰ In *Dead until Dark*, vampires are legally recognized as citizens. Sookie, the narrator, acknowledges vampires are a minority: “Ever since vampires came out of the coffin (as they laughingly put it) four years ago, I’d hoped one would come to Bon Temps. We had all the other minorities in our little town—why not the newest, the legally recognized undead?” (1). Here, Sookie makes allusion to the gay community with the phrase “came out of the coffin.” This reinforces the idea that vampires are seen as a minority group in their society. Moreover, as the newest legally recognized

⁴⁰ In “Sullied Blood, Semen and Skin: Vampires and the Spectre of Miscegenation,” Kimberly A. Frohreich analyses the way in which the vampire is turned into the “Other” in terms of race and gender in some films and television series in U.S.A.

members of society, vampires struggle with the same obstacles any new social group faces when trying to be accepted by the rest of society. While some people accept them, others hate them. The majority of vampires in modern societies live hiding their condition because they are associated with sexually transmitted diseases or simply because mortals are not ready for someone who lives eternally on blood. This is the case in *Only Lovers Left Alive*, *Let the Right One In*, *Vamps* and most Contemporary Vampire fiction. These vampires undergo the same struggles a new minority group undergoes before being accepted by society.

Contemporary Vampires are in search of a cure for their disease that will allow them to live like regular human beings. Blood has become a new symbol of a virus in modern stories. It is a curse for most of these vampires, as it brings misery to their lives. This renovated trope is the result of the process of humanization of this Gothic figure. However, this does not overwrite the previous symbolism of blood. In a general sense, it continues to be the vampire's only sustenance. They still experience many different passions—remorse or pleasure—when sucking blood from a human. Nevertheless, blood has gained a negative connotation as it carries an incurable and lethal virus. Aldana Reyes affirms that modern texts about vampires point “to the aetiological understanding of vampirism as connected to blood and its potential defilement or disease condition” (57). As a result of this connection, Contemporary Vampires suffer and struggle while trying to find a cure. In *Daybreakers*, vampires find the cure in sunlight. In a “controlled daylight burn,” as they call it, the vampire is exposed to sunlight for several seconds, until they are covered by flames and their heart starts to beat again. Once a vampire is cured, his or her blood becomes the cure for the rest of vampires. Curing vampirism is the ultimate achievement of the protagonist. In some other Gothic narrations, such as the film *Vamps*, vampires can cure

their vampirism by killing their makers or the head vampire. However, in most other plots a cure is far from being developed, so Contemporary Vampires are forced to live with the virus. In *Children of the Night*, Vernor Deacon Trent, son of the legendary Vlad Dracula, affirms that he has had to live with a disease for more than five hundred years: “This disease that I had embraced so very, very long ago would not release me lightly. Even now, riddled and made rotten by old age, the disease ruled my life and resisted the sweet imperative of death” (33). His words demonstrate the endless suffering that he has had to endure his whole existence. For Vernor, living with vampirism has been a slow, lonely and painful agony. He has decided not to drink blood and to starve himself to death as a last resort to end his disease. Contemporary Vampires live with a virus that is not directly lethal to them but condemns and ruins their lives, so they long to find a cure.

Contemporary Vampires do not want to kill humans for blood. Therefore, they strive to find other methods to feed themselves that allow them a more humane life. As it has been established, these vampires are still humans, so they avoid sucking blood directly from a person. Many texts and films portray these vampires trying to develop a synthetic blood substitute. In some cases, they create a substitute that satisfies their nutritional needs, but for most it is only a dream, so obtaining blood becomes a challenge. As Andrew Smith argues in “Locating the Self in the Post-apocalypse: The American Gothic Journeys of Jack Kerouac, Cormac McCarty and Jim Crace,” when facing hunger the real identity of people is exposed, and depending on what you are willing to do or not to satiate your appetite marks you as a good or a bad individual (140). Contemporary Vampires face this dilemma every day. In *Dead until Dark*, vampires are lucky enough to have a synthetic alternative to human blood; nevertheless, this new drink meets their nutritional needs but does not satisfy them: “the synthetic blood the Japanese had developed kept the vampires up to par as far as

nutrition, but didn't really satisfy their hunger, which was why there were 'Unfortunate Incidents' from time to time" (5). These vampires drink substitutes to survive, but they never satiate their hunger, so for them, life is an ongoing battle against their instincts to consume real blood. Not all vampires come up victors. In the case of Bill, he manages to live on a synthetic blood diet (74), but his morals are continuously tested because he has to turn off his need for real blood. In the film *Blade*, the protagonist depends on injections of a serum that suppresses his need for human blood. Nonetheless, his body gradually becomes resistant to the serum, and he has to increase his dose, similarly to a drug addict. Blade's friend and companion, Whistler, notes that every time, it becomes more dangerous to inject the serum on him: "I had to increase the dose. It's over 50 milligrams now. That's getting dangerous" (*Blade*). It also gets more painful to resist his thirst, but he has the moral will to keep struggling. Similarly in *Daybreakers*, Edward Dalton refuses to drink human blood because he rejects seeing regular humans as simple blood containers in blood farms (see figure 39). As a hematologist, he tries desperately to find a substitute because humans are on the verge of extinction and worldwide blood supplies will sustain the population only for one more month.



Figure 39. A blood farm. Screen capture from the Spierig Brother's film *Daybreakers* (2009).

Some of these vampires, who refuse to drink human blood, opt for animal blood. In “The Postmodern Evolution of Telepathy: from *Dracula* to the *Twilight Saga*,” Antonio Sanna notes that vampires “who feed only animals and serenely coexist with human beings” are considered vegetarians (71). Vegetarian vampires⁴¹ demonstrate that they are civilized individuals living according to the norms of society: “Vegetarian vampirism is therefore a vehicle for the respect of the norms of human civilization as well as for love relationships rather than bonds of submission” (71). Contemporary Vampires try to have a relationship of respect and equality with regular humans. In the film *Vamps*, Goody and Stacey, the two main characters, only consume rats’ blood. Stacey is a young vampire, who has had Goody to guide her and teach her to feed on animals. Stacey has never had human or even domestic animals’ blood. Contemporary Vampires live in constant battle against their need for blood. They turn to different techniques to avoid any contact with it and keep themselves true to their morals.

Contemporary Vampires live in a consumeristic society in which blood is also a commodity. The fact that these vampires refuse to drink blood directly from humans has promoted a business around this precious liquid, turning vampires into consumers. During this period, texts and films depict vampires buying blood to consume, like any other human pays for food. In *Dead until Dark*, since the synthetic blood substitute vampires acquire is not as fulfilling as real human blood, a devious business is created around real human blood. Bill notes: “It’s so different now. I can go to the all-night clinic in any city and get some synthetic blood, though it’s disgusting. Or I can pay a whore and get enough blood to

⁴¹ In, “Dying to Eat: The Vegetarian Ethics of *Twilight*,” Jean Kazez analyzes the vegetarian vampire in Stephanie Meyer’s *Twilight* saga. In the article, Kazez discusses the ethical reasons for a vampire to become a vegetarian.

keep going for a couple of days” (56). Here, vampires would have to buy real blood in a sort of clandestine manner, while they can obtain the synthetic version even for free in a special clinic. In other narrations there are no substitutes; consequently, Contemporary Vampires make deals in order to obtain blood and to avoid attacking humans. They buy it from a willing donor or someone who has access to blood and can get it for them, like blood banks’ personnel. In *Let the Right One In*, Eli, who is only a child, offers Tommy, a teenage neighbor, money for some of his blood: “I have an illness. I need blood. You can have more money if you want to” (370). She finds herself negotiating for her own survival. Similarly, in *Forever 16*, Raven, the sixteen year-old vampire, finds people who procure blood for her from hospitals or similar places. In the film *Only Lovers Left Alive*, Adam pays a hematologist at a hospital for disease-free blood.⁴² In his world, it is too risky for vampires to consume untested blood, for most humans have contaminated blood and it can kill them. The evolution of this figure in Gothic literature and films becomes obvious when vampires work as functional members of the consumer society. Their need to buy blood confirms how they have become human to the point of participating in this consumerist system.

Additionally, blood becomes a commodity for both, vampires and humans, making a round business of this liquid. During this period, vampire blood has qualities that benefit or give humans pleasure. Thus, the blood of Contemporary Vampires is depicted as a valuable substance that mortals long to obtain. Aldana Reyes notes that the need for blood is a cycle: “‘V’ is the epitome of the circular nature of capitalistic systems, of finance itself. The human becomes a vampire who will then crave human blood, whilst the human will

⁴² The adjective “clean” gains a double significance. Clean blood is not only that literarily clean of diseases; it is also the one vampires obtain without killing or attacking a human, blood that is not tainted by murder.

crave the vampire blood that was once human” (60).⁴³ Vampires long for human blood, and now humans crave for vampire blood. In *Death until Dark*, for example, blood imbues the drinker with supernatural rapid-healing, but it is mostly sought-after as a recreational drug. Sookie affirms that vampire blood is a big market that and the suppliers “drain” vampires to obtain the precious liquid which is sold really expensive: “vampire blood was supposed to temporarily relieve symptoms of illness and increase sexual potency, kind of like prednisone and Viagra rolled into one, there was a huge black market for genuine, undiluted vampire blood” (6-7). Later Sookie herself tests the effects of this blood when she is saved from dying by drinking vampire blood. Bill rescues Sookie from an attack and explains that she is going to die of internal bleeding unless she drinks his blood: “You’ll heal. Quickly. I have a cure. But you have to be willing” (35). Vampire blood is an effective cure-all. Similarly, in *Children of the Night*, Kate Neuman discovers that the vampire virus has regenerative powers that allow vampires to live as long as they want to, so it can be used for immunoreconstruction (288). Vampire blood becomes the potential cure for serious diseases that attack the immune system such as HIV and cancer. Paradoxically, during the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, blood is the carrier of the vampire virus, but at the same time, it has beneficial qualities for mortals. It seems to be a contradiction the fact that humans want to consume vampire blood in spite of the monstrous virus it carries. This contradiction resembles today’s society and the addiction that many people have for drugs that can potentially kill them. Thus, during this period, it is common to see mortals craving vampire blood, as much as vampires needing human blood to survive.

⁴³ “V” is the way people refer to vampire blood in *True Blood*, the TV show based on Charlaine Harris’s novel, *Dead until Dark*.

Contemporary Vampires do not lose their human quality after turning. Their attitude towards people diverts from their predecessors' in the sense that they refuse to murder their own kind. They see humans as equals instead of just vessels of blood. It pains them to kill an innocent human being just for their blood. When they cannot make deals to obtain blood or substitutes, many of these vampires prefer to die than to attack someone. In the film *Daybreakers*, there are no blood substitutes available, so Edward Dalton prefers to starve himself to death than to consume human blood. In his society, the few surviving humans are captured and placed in farms to bleed them gradually.⁴⁴ Edward is against this system in which humans are tortured and refuses to be a part of it. In the same film, Charles Bromley, the owner of a pharmaceutical called Bromley Marks, which farms humans to supply blood, turns his daughter Alison against her will because he wants to be together as a family again. Alison rejects the virus and refuses to feed on humans' blood, so she feeds on her own blood, knowing that it will destroy her (see figure 40). When Charles sees her, he warns her that drinking her own blood will poison her, but she is set on not living with that condition.



Figure 40. Screen capture from the Spierig Brother's film *Daybreakers* (2009).

⁴⁴ The "blood farm" motif is also relevant in the 1979 film *Thirst*, directed by Rod Hardy. In this film, people are also captured in order to "milk" their blood, and they are referred to as "blood cows."

In *Let the Right One In*, Eli learned from a woman with the same infection that their kind usually commits suicide because they cannot accept their disease: “‘most of us kill ourselves, that’s why. You must understand that. Such a heavy burden, oh my.’ Her hands fluttered; she said in a shrill voice: ‘Ooooh, I cannot bear to have dead people on my conscience’” (386). Infected people perceive the virus as a torture that condemns their life. Eli considers killing herself too, but she does not get around to do it. At times her survival instinct is stronger than her, and she is forced to kill. Murder makes her miserable. When Oskar asks Eli about it, she confesses: “Yes. I kill people. Unfortunately” (350). However, Eli claims she and Oskar are not very different because, even as a mortal, he sometimes wishes he could kill people who bully him, and he would do it if he could get away with it. The difference, she argues, is that she kills in order to survive, not because she wants to:

“Sure you [Oskar] would. And that would be simply for your own enjoyment. Your revenge. I do it because I have to. There is no other way.”

“But it’s only because... they hurt me, because they tease me, because I...”

“Because you want to live. Just like me.” (351)

Like many other Contemporary Vampires who do not have access to buying blood or a substitute, Eli kills people when she has not eaten in days. She does it for her own survival not without regret or pain. In the film, *Let the Right One In*, Eli’s suffering when killing is evident in her face and attitude right after attacking a person (see figures 41 and 42). These vampires do not like to kill humans because they are human themselves (or a least sufficiently human). Thus, for them it is murder. Starvation and suicide are the alternatives to a life full of remorse.



Figure 41. Screen capture from Tomas Alfredson's film *Let the Right One In* (2008).



Figure 42. Screen capture from Tomas Alfredson's film *Let the Right One In* (2008).

In Gothic literature and films, Contemporary Vampires deal with the tedious reality of living forever. Immortality inevitably becomes monotonous and tiresome. In the past, vampirism was usually depicted as a glamorous life. However, the life of the Contemporary Vampires is less attractive, as they usually struggle with the boredom of their immortality. In the film *Vamps*, Goody, who was turned in 1841, finds vampirism boring because she constantly has to escape from relationships with people once they begin to age and she does not. Life for her becomes bearable when she meets Stacey, a vampire turned in the 1990's,

but in spite of having a good friend, Goody is tired of living and decides to commit suicide. She dies happily, watching her last sunrise. In *Children of the Night*, Vernor Deacon Trent is completely exhausted after living 558 years. In this novel, vampires are not truly immortal but age at an extremely slow pace. His old age drains the joy out of his existence. He decides to stop eating; however, with sorrow he affirms that even dying for him is going to be an eternity: “But even fasting, my body’s relentless ability to heal itself, to prolong itself, will struggle with my urge to die. This deathbed may hold me for a year or two or even longer before my spirit and the insidious, cell-deep compulsion to *continue* must surrender to the inevitable need to *cease*” (33-34). His words reflect his fatigue and discouragement. He is aware that starving to death is going to be painful and slow. Similarly in *Only Lovers Left Alive*, Adam deals with the negative effects of immortality. He and Eve, who have been married for centuries, try to make their lives and marriage endure time. They fill their houses with objects they love and treasure to make life more bearable; Adam is a musician (see figure 43) and Eve an avid reader (see figure 44).



Figure 43. Screen capture from Jim Jarmusch’s film *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2013).



Figure 44. Screen capture from Jim Jarmusch's film *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2013).

However, in the case of Adam, not even music is capable of making his life tolerable. He buys a silver bullet with the intension of shooting himself, but eventually Eve drags him away and convinces him to continue living. Their love is the only thing that makes him hold on to life. They try to avoid their relationship from becoming monotonous, which poses a real challenge if you are eternal. Contemporary Vampires strive to keep alive. Even though they are immortal, they have to be resilient and strong to endure eternity.

Attitudes of Humans towards the Contemporary Vampire

Since the late twentieth century the Renfield phenomenon⁴⁵ becomes popular in texts about Contemporary Vampires. In this study, I will refer to those people who worship vampires and long to become one ("Vampire-Wannabes" as Blade calls them, in *Blade*) as Renfields. They follow vampires, imitating and serving them with the hope of eventually being turned as a reward. Renfields are named after Bram Stoker's character in *Dracula*. R.

⁴⁵ In *Vampire, Werewolves & Demons: Twentieth Century Reports in the Psychiatric Literature*, Richard Noll coined the term Renfields' Syndrome to refer to clinical vampirism, the act of drinking blood.

M. Renfield is a lunatic under the influence of the Count. In the asylum, he feeds on insects in an attempt to mimic the vampire consumption of blood. Renfield believes that consuming lives, those of insects and animals, will empower and extend his own. He is looking forward to Dracula's arrival in England as he thinks the vampire will grant him immortality. Renfield is the predecessor of mortals who admire and long to become vampires. The contemporary Renfield-like characters have left the mental institution. They are everywhere, and anyone can be one of them. Renfields are seduced by vampirism as they see it as an eccentric and mysterious lifestyle. They are drawn to the vampire power, sex appeal, and wealth, among other factors. However, the original R. M. Renfield was controlled by Dracula from afar, so his admiration for the vampire was not entirely his choice; the admiration of modern Renfields is. Anne Rice continues with the Renfield motif. The journalist interviewing Louis in *Interview with the Vampire* is immediately seduced by vampirism and exclaims that being a vampire promises experiences and emotions a mortal will never be able to feel: "Don't you see how you made it sound? It was an adventure like I'll never know in my whole life! You talk about passion, you talk about longing! You talk about things that millions of us won't ever taste or come to understand" (Rice 339). The man is captivated by Louis and his story, and he begs the vampire to turn him:

"If you were to give me that power! The power to see and feel and live forever!"

The vampire's eyes slowly began to widen, his lips parting. "What!" he demanded softly. "*What!*"

"Give it to me!" said the boy, his right hand tightening in a fist, the fist pounding his chest. "Make me a vampire now!" (Rice, *Interview* 339)

Louis, who is a Transitional Vampire tortured by his liminal nature, cannot conceive the fact that someone wishes to be like him. In *Only Lovers Left Alive*, Ian, the man who gets everything done for Adam, does not know that he is a vampire, but his character fulfills the role of a Renfield. He feels attraction towards Adam and his family because of their mysteriousness and coolness. When he is at a bar with the vampires, Ian imitates their attitudes. It is particularly striking that he wears sunglasses inside the establishment in an attempt to fit in and without knowing that the vampires are only trying to hide the bright color of their eyes (see figures 45 and 46).



Figure 45. Screen capture from Jim Jarmusch's film *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2013).



Figure 46. Screen capture from Jim Jarmusch's film *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2013).

The Renfield phenomenon is often acknowledged in texts and films about Contemporary Vampires. In the film *Blade*, Renfields are known as familiars. Similarly, in the novel *Soulless*, these human minions are referred to as drones: “Drones were vampire companions, servants, and caretakers who were paid with the possibility of eventually becoming immortal themselves” (42). These drones follow vampires and obey them. Renfields see vampires as superior beings that are capable of granting them a new and better life. Even though Contemporary Vampires are humans with a virus, some mortals see vampirism not as a curse but as an improvement. These humans admire the vampires’ magnified human qualities and the kind of life they seem to have. Renfields become puppets, and even though they have been present in Gothic since the nineteenth century, it is during this last period that they become a minority group almost as numerous as vampires themselves.

The Contemporary Vampire as a Reflection of Society

Contemporary Vampires face the same problems that have affected society since the late twentieth century. In Gothic texts and films, it is common to see these vampires struggling against gradual depletion of natural resources. Society’s fears related to environmental issues are exploited to evoke horror in many of these Gothic narrations. As Susan J. Tyburski notes in “A Gothic Apocalypse: Encountering the Monstrous in American Cinema,” in Gothic the changes of our natural environment are depicted in a monstrous way (150). Environmental destruction becomes a common source of horror in modern Gothic. Contemporary Vampires strive to survive in a hostile environment, like in *Daybreakers*, where vampires dominate a world in which humans—their main source of food—are about to disappear. This world is at the edge of global famine, and vampires

strive to find humans. The situation in the film alludes to modern society's indifference towards the destruction of biodiversity. With a blood supply that will only last until the end of the month, Vampires need the human race to repopulate, but they do not give them the chance. Instead, they continue killing humans and exploiting them in blood farms. Their government tries to counteract the hunger crisis by imposing blood rationing schemes, but the measures only trigger blood related crimes and riots around the world. The film *Only Lovers Left Alive* also deals with environmental anxieties. The film emphasizes the small individual efforts that can contribute to save the world from destruction, such as recycling or saving water and energy. Adam proves to be environmentally conscious. He creates a natural power supply for his house using. He builds a system that receives "electrical information from the atmosphere" that is, then, converted into energy, an advanced technology developed by himself. In addition, Adam and Eve often refer to humans as "zombies" who do not care for the planet. There is a reversal in which vampires are the beings with morals and regular humans seem to have lost theirs to a certain extent. As a vampire, he has an ecological conscience that humans lack. In film and literature, these Contemporary Vampires either react as humans would to modern environmental anxieties to point at our own flawed behavior, or like Adam, serve as a model of good conduct towards the environment.

In the same way millions of humans around the world have to struggle with food shortage, Contemporary Vampires are tested by famine in a dilapidated world. *Only Lovers Left Alive* makes reference to the destruction of aquifers and hunger crisis that affect different parts of the planet today. Humans contaminated the world, which in turn contaminated them and the vampire food supply. Like their human counterparts, the vampire characters in the film struggle against food shortage. They can no longer obtain

blood from any stranger on the street, not only because it goes against their morals but also because human blood is infested by diseases and drugs. If vampires drink it, they can die. This film denounces people's indifference towards the destruction of the environment that affects humanity and many other species of plants and animals. Eve suggests that drinkable water is scarce. Here, humans are destroying the only vital liquid they need to survive, but at the same time they are destroying vampire's only source of nutrition, as Adam notes: "they have succeeded in contaminating their own blood, never mind their water" (*Only Lovers Left Alive*). In the film, most human blood becomes poison for vampires. As a result, Adam and Eve can only consume blood bought from hospital employees and proven clean. When they run out of clean blood to consume, they are forced to take the risk of consuming polluted blood in an attempt to survive. Andrew Smith claims that in Gothic post-apocalyptic settings characters' identities are unveiled when facing real hunger ("Locating" 140). Adam and Eve's morals are tested by starvation, and they succumb to the old ways and get blood directly by attacking a stranger on the street. In contrast to Adam and Eve, in *Daybreakers*, vampires face extinction provoked by themselves. As the dominant sector in their society, vampires show their indifference and ineptitude to save their own species. They hunt humans to the edge of extinction and deplete their farms. This destructive and narrow-minded attitude is social criticism against our own disregard towards the planet's natural resources. Gothic narrations about Contemporary Vampires expose the indiscriminate destruction of global food supplies and the modern hunger crisis.

Fear of pandemics is also captured in texts and films about Contemporary Vampires. Vampirism and sexually transmitted diseases are usually erroneously connected to degenerated sexual practices. It begins with the act of sucking blood, which is usually compared to sexual intercourse because of the penetration of the fangs, the exchange of

bodily fluids and the pleasure some vampires seem to experience. Thus, a connection between vampires to sexually transmitted diseases was instantly drawn during the late twentieth century. Nina Auerbach points out, in *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, that when the origin of AIDS was identified, in the 1980's, the perception of vampires was immediately transformed to repulsion (175). Vampires are depicted as carriers and transmitters of a deadly virus: vampirism. In *Blade*, purebloods—the ones who are born vampire—have vampirism in their DNA. Nevertheless, their condition is then passed on to human beings as a virus. In the film, Karen, a doctor who joins Blade, tells Deacon Frost, who used to be a mortal, what she thinks of vampires like him: “Vampires like you aren't a species. You are just infected, a virus, a sexually transmitted disease” (*Blade*). She also believes that vampirism can be cured from humans and decides to look for a cure: “There is [a cure] if you were bitten, if you were once human” (*Blade*). Similarly, in *Dead until Dark*, vampirism is acknowledged as a virus: “The politically correct theory, the one the vamps themselves publicly backed, had it that this guy was the victim of a virus that left him apparently dead for a couple of days and thereafter allergic to sunlight, silver, and garlic” (2). Even though the origin of the virus is not clear, it is known that the virus is transmitted through the blood. Vampires in this society are recognized as infected citizens who have legal rights as any other human. In *Let the Right One In*, Eli refers to her condition as an illness. She knows she is a carrier and tries to avoid infecting others. When Eli is starving and has to feed on someone, she prefers to kill the person than to let him or her live with the disease. In both the film and the novel, Eli fails only once and infects Virginia. After days agonizing, Virginia realizes that “she had not contracted some rare and unpleasant disease that was treatable at the hospital or in a psychiatric ward” (325). Virginia knows she is a vampire because she recognizes the signs, “she could see in the dark, was sensitive

to light, and needed blood” (325), but she refers to it as a disease. She is and feels the same person, but she can also tell she has contracted a virus. During the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Gothic texts and films express modern social concerns related to the spread of diseases. Contemporary Vampires are depicted as human victims of a virus and not as a different species.

Texts and films about Contemporary Vampires replicate the consumerism of society. These societies integrate vampires as part of the system. Thus, Contemporary Vampires find themselves forced to consume in order to be members of society. In “Theorising Globalgothic,” Fred Botting and Justin D. Edwards argue that consumerism imposes economic and cultural practices on individuals: “Of all the forces evident in the transformation of the world, consumerism (or Western consumerism) is perhaps most vividly identifiable as having powerfully imposed economic and cultural practices as a global norm and dominant expectation or aspiration. To consume is to be able to play one’s part in the contemporary world” (19). It is expected that a functioning member of society consumes. It has become a synonym for power, so the more someone is able to consume, the more power they have within society. Contemporary Vampires reflect these social practices and behavior. As mentioned before, in *Dead until Dark*, vampires are legally recognized by society which means that as any other person they have rights and obligations: “I [Bill] plan on living there, as long as I can. I’m tired of drifting from city to city. I grew up in the country. Now that I have a legal right to exist, and I can go to Monroe or Shreve-port or New Orleans for synthetic blood or prostitutes who specialize in our kind, I want to stay here” (61). As any other legal citizen, vampires can own properties and buy goods. Society not only allows vampires to buy, but forces them to do it. Here, vampires cannot just go and attack someone to feed on their blood. They have to pay for their food as

anyone else who buys food. They are completely integrated to the economic system and even have to pay taxes. Similarly, in *Daybreakers*, vampires have all the commodities they can imagine. In a society dominated by vampires, everything has been adapted for their needs. In this film, Contemporary Vampires also own houses, cars, buy blood for their own consumption and work. They buy technology and take advantage of it. They enjoy privileges their predecessors could not afford, such as buying cars that allow them to drive during the day. In *Only Lovers Left Alive*, Adam and Eve use technology to maintain their long-distance relationship. They have modern cellular phones to make video calls on a regular basis from different parts of the world (see Eve kissing Adam's image in her iPhone in figure 47).



Figure 47. Screen capture from Jim Jarmusch's film *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2013).

This particular aspect of the movie shows the old vampires adapting to use the latest technological commodities. They also travel by plane, using night flights, so distance is no longer an obstacle for their relationship. Contemporary Vampires reflect a society that turns people into consumers.

During the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Gothic has become a collage of different traditions from around the world. As a result of globalization, Gothic texts and films about Contemporary Vampires capture the integration of cultures. As Byron notes, Gothic is now a cross-cultural and transnational genre (2). Current texts are written by authors from around the world who use old conventions and incorporate their own Gothic culture to it. Botting and Edwards argue that “Globalization, then, has led to a new way of thinking about Gothic production: globalgothic” (12). Gothic cannot longer be associated to one specific geographical location as it has traditionally been done because it is now a global phenomenon. In *Let the Right One In* (2008), the Swedish author, Lindqvist immerses the vampire in a Swedish environment. The text reflects Sweden and its society, a trait that is also captured in the homonymous cinematographic adaptation in Swedish, *Låt Den Rätte Komma In*. This film is a completely Swedish production; director, Tomas Alfredson, its producers, cast and cinematographic company, *Sandrew Metronome*, are all Swedish. This contributes to the accurate representation of Stockholm and its atmosphere in the big screen. Both text and film are proof that new vampire stories are born outside the traditional English and American settings. In 2010, the British cinematographic company, *Hammer Films*, produced the English version, *Let Me In*. This film demonstrates the globalization of Gothic as the story is appropriated and adapted to another geographical location. Instead of Sweden, this film is set in New Mexico, U.S.A. Moreover, the film, *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* (2014), is probably a more precise example to study the Globalization of Gothic. The director and writer, Ana Lily Amirpour, dislocates the vampire figure and places it in an Iranian environment. Even though the production of the film is from different nationalities, its major influence is the cross-cultural origin of Amirpour, who was born in England and raised in U.S.A by her Iranian parents. In the mini

documentary included in the DVD, *Behind-the-scenes Documentary*, Amirpour claims that the film mirrors her mixture of nationalities, and affirms that it is not a pure Iranian film because it is influenced by her American upbringing. She affirms that she is Iranian but also asks the question “Am I pure?” The director claims that, just like the world today, the film is an assortment of cultures: “What we are.” Gothic is a means to capture and transmit the transformation of the world into a cross-cultural place, and the Contemporary Vampire is also a transcultural figure. Botting and Edwards argue that Gothic is the place in which the exchanges between cultures take place and make sense: “globalgothic operates as a locus, frequently an obscure locus, of world exchanges, and also points to the context in which messages, meanings, responses and reactions take shape” (13). Gothic narrations about Transitional Vampires reflect the decentralization, appropriation and blending of cultures. The Contemporary Vampire is then a citizen of the world that cannot be exclusively associated to one specific geographical location.

Texts and films show Contemporary Vampires struggling not to degenerate into their most Primeval form. This is a Gothic motif that has adapted and endured time, atavism or the return of ancestral traits. The degeneration of the vampire is usually triggered by starvation. In the film *Daybreakers*, the world is caught up in a blood shortage crisis, and as a result of not consuming blood, civilized vampires regress into a primeval state. Characters in the film refer to the resulting creatures as “subsiders” (see figure 48).



Figure 48. Screen capture from the Spierig Brother's film *Daybreakers* (2009).

In the film, civilized vampires regard these reverted creatures as wild animals. They claim subsiders are no longer their same species. This primitive subspecies becomes a serious social threat when they start committing blood crimes and home invasions. Subsiders, as Henry Maudsley suggests, have reverted to their most primitive form, and are incapable of behaving like a functional member of society, thus becoming a criminal (qtd. in Mighall 143). The desperate times force vampires to study the effects of blood deprivation on their own race. They conclude that not consuming blood completely degenerates the vampire in less than a month (see figure 49): “A complete lack of human blood over this period of time resulted in a massive deterioration of the frontal lobe. The first signs of physical deformities began with elongated ears, mental function such as logic, emotion, most parts of speech” (*Daybreakers*).



Figure 49. Screen capture from the Spierig Brother's film *Daybreakers* (2009).

Their society faces a subsiders' epidemic. Affected subjects become humanoids with animal features. Hunger threatens to revert the evolution vampires had achieved. As Maudsley notes, morals are the first modern trait to disappear (qtd. in Mighall 145). The mind is degenerated, so the individual turns into a less civilized one. Maudsley affirms that intelligence also reverts to its lowest form or even to an animal level (qtd. in Mighall 143). In this film, subsiders behave like animals, and hunt humans indiscriminately. Their morality, intelligence and capacity to reason are completely lost. Similarly, but not as extreme as in *Daybreakers*, in the novel *Let the Right One In*, not consuming blood in a long time has evident physical consequences for Eli, and when she is really starving, she transforms into an animalistic creature: "It hardly hurt anymore, just felt like a tingling, an electric current through her fingers and toes as they thinned out, took on a new shape. The bone crackles in her hands as she stretched out, shot out through the melting skin of the fingertips and made long, curved claws" (217). The same transformation happens in her toes, and her teeth become sharper. However, this degeneration is her body's last resource to prevent death. It happens only when she faces life-threatening starvation. Her body abandons her humanity and morals in order to survive, but this transformation does not occur if she eats on a regular basis. In *Only Lovers Left Alive*, Adam and Eve avoid

drinking blood directly from a person. Nevertheless, when they are famished and about to die, their primeval instincts return and drive them into attacking humans, as it happens at the end of the film. Unlike Eli and the subsiders from *Daybreakers*, Adam and Eve do not revert physically, but they need to put their sense of morality aside in order to attack a mortal. In narrations about Contemporary Vampires, atavism is provoked by blood deprivation. Vampires lose their physical and mental traits of evolution and revert into their most primeval form. As Lionel Cormac, the first human to be cured from vampirism in *Daybreakers*, claims “That last breath of humanity will vanish as soon as the blood does.” These Gothic texts and films ponder on the idea the humans can lose their humanity and turned into wild and degenerated individuals when they cannot satisfy their basic needs.

This physical and moral degeneration that vampires undergo when facing starvation can be analyzed using Cesare Lombroso’s theory of criminal atavism. In the Introduction to *Criminal Man*, Mary Gibson and Nicole Hahn Rafter affirm that Lombroso “focused on the atavistic criminals, describing those physical and psychological features that quickly became associated with criminal anthropology” (9). In *Criminal Man*, Lombroso established that criminals possess physical features that distinguish them from healthy individuals. Lombroso affirmed that crime was natural for certain individuals and not something that they choose (9). Thus, criminals are born, not made. Similarly, when the evolution vampires undergo is reverted and ancestral features reappear, vampires behave like their primeval ancestor because they are not in control of their own actions. As part of his investigations, Lombroso studied the skulls of criminals in order to identify the physical characteristics that distinguish these individuals (see figure 50).



Figure 50. Image taken from Cesare Lombroso's book *Criminal Man* (2006).

Moreover, Lombroso distinguished some of the physical characteristics of “born” criminals: “[criminals] have smaller and more deformed skulls, greater height and weight, and lighter beards, large ears, protruding jaws, and dark skin, eyes, and hair. They also tend to be physically weak and insensitive to pain. This last trait, according to Lombroso, constitutes the exterior sign of inward moral obtuseness that explains why criminal rarely exhibit remorse for their crimes” (9). Lombroso believed that criminals can be distinguished from noncriminals. In the same way, we can say that the humanization of the figure of the vampire is revealed through their physical appearance. Therefore, the physical changes Contemporary Vampires experience when exposed to extreme hunger reverts their humanization and morality and make them behave in an atavistic criminal way.

Conclusion

In the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the Contemporary Vampire emerges as a dominant figure in Gothic texts and films. At this point, the figure of the vampire has evolved and is esteemed as human. Thus, Contemporary Vampires are not a different species, but human beings infected with the vampire virus. Vampirism is then depicted as a medical condition that might be cured. As humans, these vampires have the physicality of a person; they possess retractable fangs, and some of them have superior strength, are fast and have mental powers and enhanced senses, but some others have no supernatural capacities, like regular human beings. Their pale skin and light-colored eyes are not as shocking in their societies as they were in the past. Contemporary Vampires do not attack mortals to feed on their blood because they are the same species, so it is murder for them. They strive to find a cure for their disease or a blood substitute that would allow them to live a more normal life. Contemporary Vampires are vampiric humans, so they live like any person that needs to adapt their life to the requirements of an illness.

Contemporary Vampires do not reflect only European or American concerns. They have become an international means to represent world anxieties. These vampires face the same environmental concerns that afflict our world. Global problems like the depletion of natural resources are depicted in vampire texts and films through the scarcity of blood, humans and substitutes. Thus, hunger is one of the major concerns of Contemporary Vampires. Moreover, during this period, vampirism is conveyed as a virus that can be transmitted through blood. This is the reflection of today's world battle against pandemics. This link between vampirism and viruses is the result of the anxiety generated by sexually transmitted diseases during the 1980's after the identification of HIV. Moreover, these vampires are dragged into the modern consumerist system. As functional members of

society, Contemporary Vampires are expected and forced to consume goods. They own properties, technology, and have to pay for their food. Gothic productions are influenced by the consumerist system that expands along with globalization. The Contemporary Vampire is a globalized figure. In this period, Gothic has become cross-cultural, and it is appropriated by cultures from around the world to reflect different societies. Thus, Vampires have been adopted by many cultures, and their stories continue to be adapted to the contemporary and regional societies that create them. Today, Contemporary Vampires are citizens of the world.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusions

The research I have conducted on the evolution of the vampires has resulted on evidence of the changes the figure has undergone in literature and cinema since the early nineteenth century until today. Vampires have undergone a transformation from that of a monster of pure evil to a humanized, attractive one. Their current attitudes and characteristics are proof of their humanization. Modern vampire characters generate empathy and lure audiences worldwide. In addition, during the course of this research three terms have been coined to pin-point the stages of the transformation of this figure: the Primeval Vampire, the Transitional Vampire, and the Contemporary Vampire. The Primeval Vampire is a monster detached from all human emotion, guided exclusively by its animal instincts. The Transitional is a liminal vampire with a divided nature. Vampires within this second category are trapped in between their human and monstrous sides. They lead a lonely and gloomy existence because they are rejected by their predecessors and by humans. The third kind is the Contemporary Vampire. These creatures are depicted as human beings who have contracted the vampire virus that infects them with monstrous characteristics. Contemporary vampirism is, then, described as a medical condition. This Gothic figure has undergone a process of humanization because, just like the Gothic genre itself, vampires adapt to the period in which they are created.

Over time, vampires in literature and cinema have modified their primeval, animalistic appearance for more humanized physical traits. This study has concluded that this physical transformation visually evidences the loss of their pure-evil nature. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the body of Primeval Vampires identified them as

monstrous enemies of humanity. Their pointy-ears, fangs and claws set them apart from their human counterparts and draw the attention and suspicion of their potential victims. Later in their process of evolution, they no longer present these instantly unnerving features. Instead, they are depicted with human features that allow them to blend in among humans. Their evolution reaches the point that now they commonly look like pale human beings. The relevance of this physical transformation is that, looking like human beings, they can also lead human lives. Their physical change is symptomatic of a variation of the archetypical monstrous vampire who preys on humans. The Contemporary Vampires' retractable fangs and humanized physical traits allow them to live as humans and among humans, to share and even have intimacy with the mortal kind. The loss of their external monstrosity visually denotes the loss of their inner monstrosity.

Though the supernatural powers and abilities of vampires have survived through the years without much change, this research reveals that they no longer employ their abilities only in the service of evil. In fact, their supernatural powers are modernly put at the service of humanity. The uses vampires give to their powers further prove they have become humanized. Primeval, Transitional and Contemporary Vampires possess sharper senses and physical abilities that regular humans do not have. The difference is that, unlike their predecessors, neither Transitional nor Contemporary Vampires use their powers to merely harm humans. The present study has revealed vampires have gradually lost their desire to harm humans by employing their extraordinary powers. In the peak of their evolution, vampires not only renounce attacking humans but are willing to employ their supernatural abilities in favor of humanity, fighting against Primeval Vampires who want to keep on killing people indiscriminately.

Blood, as it was discussed, has also undergone a major transformation in Gothic

tales about vampires, as it has become a humanizing motif. In the nineteenth century, blood is vampires' nourishment, and this liquid is what drives Primeval Vampires. Every decision they make revolves around blood and ways to obtain it. They are wild creatures whose only interest is drinking blood. This trait increases the horror provoked by this monster. They feed on the blood of humans and do not feel any kind of regret by killing the person to obtain the precious liquid. Nevertheless, during the twentieth century, blood gains a new connotation and contributes to the humanization of this monster. It continues to be vampires' only nourishment, but it now provides them with human emotions. When consuming blood, they experience a warm feeling and pleasure that is no longer limited to nourishment. Consequently, the vampires' need for blood intensifies in the sense that it not only quenches their thirst, but also gives them a sense of fulfillment they do not obtain from anything else. Moreover, blood becomes an object of torture, as Transitional Vampires hate to love it. They try to abstain from consuming human blood, even if it means that they must feel incomplete. Blood also humanizes vampires in the sense that it makes them question if it is worth killing a person in order to satisfy their needs. Since the late twentieth century, blood is depicted as a virus that infects humans. Moreover, blood grants vampires more human qualities because now it transmits the vampire virus. It works as a proof of the transformation of this Gothic figure, since they are now humans that contract a disease. The way in which the portrayal of blood has changed in vampire literature and cinema emphasizes the transformation of vampires into civilized creatures.

The motif of blood also works as a reflection of today's society, as it is now depicted as a commodity that has to be acquired. Since the late twentieth century, texts and films about vampires replicated the consumerism of society. Contemporary Vampires are dragged into this system in which they have to consume to be part of society. Today's

vampires acquire properties, technology and pay taxes as regular humans do. In the same way, they need to pay for their food. In the past, Primevals and Transitionals used to get their sustenance freely from humans and animals, but Contemporary Vampires find themselves forced to pay for this good. As previously discussed, they obtain blood in different ways; usually they make deals with people who are willing to sell their own blood or who can get it from somewhere, as a hospital or laboratory. There are others who are immersed in societies that recognize them as humans and have found blood substitutes which vampires have to pay for. In addition, Contemporary Vampires are pictured as people. After becoming infected, these vampires do not lose their human quality, so they are expected to behave as functional members of society who are part of the consumer society. This research has proven that the motif of blood is also used to reflect society. In a world in which everything is for sale or can be bought, blood becomes an article of trade and vampires are turned into active consumers.

This study defends the vampire as the most iconic figure of Gothic as it carries one of the genre's most representative characteristics, its adaptability. The figure of the vampire adjusts to the society that creates it to reflect its fears. Societal changes see vampires evolve from being depicted as monsters that generate horror to humans infected with the vampire virus. During the nineteenth century, vampires leave the castles and remote ruins they initially inhabit for urban settings closer to humans. This movement is the result of Gothic adapting to mirror the fears of Victorian society. During this period, people were worried that evil might invade their houses and minds. The house became the place where the strict and relentless Victorian society saw its deepest fears and insecurities materialized. Gothic of the time mirrors this anxiety through its monsters. In the nineteenth century, vampires move to places that are more crowded looking for food. They invade the privacy of the

house and attack their victims usually in their own bedrooms. Thus, the Victorian house, the place in which people should feel most secure, becomes a place of horror in tales about Primevals. Vampires lure their victims, as Carmilla does, or use their mind control and shape-shifting powers to get to their victims' rooms and feed on them, as Dracula does. Society's fear of the invasion of the home is, then, captured in vampire stories from the nineteenth century. During the twentieth century and after two world wars the fears of society changed. In a time in which humans are killing themselves, people are now the monsters that provoke horror. Evil is not only represented by monstrous creatures, but it is also relocated inside them. At this point, we humans fear each other (and ourselves) at least as much as we fear the Other. The outcome of this transformation is the Transitional Vampire. These are vampires concerned with their own monstrosity in the same way the society of the twentieth century fears the evil inside humans. The fact that it is difficult to distinguish a vampire from a human makes these creatures scarier. In the same way in which it is difficult to recognize a good person from an evil one, Gothic makes it challenging to discriminate between vampire and human. Transitionals possess a liminal nature; they have a human side and a monstrous one they strive to turn off. Moreover, during the last two decades of the twentieth century, the world faces the spread of mortal and incurable viruses, like AIDS. Contemporary Vampires reflect the new terrors that have struck the world in more recent years. Thus, vampire tales take a new turn in which vampirism is now pictured as a virus. As infected humans, these vampires adapt their lifestyle to the requirements of their disease and are usually immersed in societies that are not well-prepared to fulfill their needs and accept their condition. Contemporary Vampires reflect the struggles of the different minorities that do not share the same benefits of privileged sectors of society. Each type of vampire proposed in this study emerges as the

result of the transformation of the world and of what generates horror at a given period. They evolve with Gothic and adapt to the times just like the genre itself.

Vampires mirror the fear of degeneration that has always been part of society. Like vampires, this anxiety adapts to its time. In the Victorian era, especially during the *fin-de-siècle*, people were afraid of sexual, physical and moral degenerations, a horror they tried to control with their severe and unyielding rules. There were, however, places where rules did not reach. The intimacy of the house becomes a place of degenerations because no one can fully see what happens behind closed doors. As mentioned above, in vampire tales from the period, people are attacked by vampires in the privacy of their homes. When a Primeval Vampire sucks blood from a person, the act resembles a sexual encounter. Since open sexuality was a taboo for Victorians, Primeval Vampires represent what the society of the time considered decadent. Similarly, during the twentieth century, Transitionals capture the fears of their time. These vampires are human beings who are turned into vampires. The human is degenerated into a blood-sucking monster, mirroring how in real life they have also turned into killing monsters. As it was established, atavism, the fear of degeneration or the return of ancestral traits, is captured in Gothic literature and cinema as well. Criminality is explained as the return of an ancient trait not proper of a civilized human being. Following this logic, wars and crimes that hit the world during the twentieth century are, then, the return of humans to a primitive evolutionary state. Transitionals struggle with their liminal nature because their primitive impulsive instincts make them act against their morals. During the twentieth century, vampires reflect the degeneration of the world in which human beings seem to have lost their morality and humanity. Since the late twentieth century, society is not only distressed by its own deterioration, but also by outside forces, such as pandemics and environmental issues. This fear is captured in texts and films about

Contemporary Vampires. Plots involving these vampires depict both internal and external decay. First, like Transitionals, they are human beings degenerated by the virus of vampirism. They are infected with a disease that gives them monstrous traits. On a second level, the Contemporary Vampire is also threatened by external factors such as world famine and environmental crises. These circumstances trigger atavism, which brings out physical traits and behavior reminiscent of Primeval Vampires from the nineteenth century. When Contemporary Vampires face hunger they struggle not to revert to their most primeval form, as it happens in *Daybreakers*, *Let the Right One In*, and *Only Lovers Left Alive*. The devolution of vampires mirrors the devolution of humanity which instead of moving towards a better future for all, seems indifferent towards the destruction of the world and humankind. Over time, this Gothic figure has become the perfect means to depict society's fears of degeneration. The adaptability of this monster and Gothic allows writers from different periods and locations to transmit the different anxieties that torment them and their societies.

Gothic texts and films about vampires ponder upon what it means to be alive and the purpose of existing. In the nineteenth century, vampires are depicted as undead monsters that lead an existence guided by their animal instincts looking for blood. Later, in the twentieth century, Transitional Vampires prove to be a more complex kind of vampire that has human problems. Unlike their predecessors who only exist guided by instincts, these vampires live a human life. They live in between the vampire and the human worlds. As vampires they are supposed to be undead monsters, but their human side still struggles to survive. As a result, Transitionals question why they are still alive, even when they are not supposed to. They spend great amounts of time studying and meditating, trying to find the origin of their kind and the purpose of their existence. By the end of the twentieth

century, there is a twist in the way vampires are usually pictured because there is more emphasis on the fact that Contemporary Vampires are immortal human beings and not on the fact that they are undead. This change in the way vampires are portrayed and perceived proves that they are considered to be living beings. Since Transitionals, vampires have shown great insight and reasoning skills. They long to form bonds with humans and other vampires, and want to be loved and accepted. Contemporary Vampires have a great inclination for modern concerns, such as the preservation of natural resources. Since the twentieth century, vampires care for others and their surroundings; they have emotions and being vampires makes them suffer. Their condition tortures them because it makes them need human blood to survive, and killing people now, for the most part, goes against their morals. This research has concluded that literature and cinema about vampires question the meaning of being alive because, in spite of being Gothic monsters, vampires have a life and seem to be more aware of their surroundings and of those around them than human beings themselves. These texts and films attempt to create awareness on the difference between living and merely existing.

This thorough study on the vampire has allowed me to reach certain conclusions about this mythical figure's (d)evolution. Ever since it became the protagonist of literary texts and films, the figure of the vampire has undergone a nonstop process of evolution. Although this evolution proves the creature's adaptability to time, place and circumstances, it also implies a devolution or degradation of the literary figure. The vampire in literature and film is no longer that mythical monster capable of terrifying with his/her wild animal nature. This Gothic monster has undergone a process of humanization to the point that today it is depicted as humans with a medical condition that grants them monstrous characteristics. Thus, today's vampires are not a species of their own. They are depicted as

humans with a medical disorder. The real monster is the vampire virus, not the human who is infected with it. This process of humanization has had such a profound effect on the literary and cinematographic vampire that the figure can now be found featuring in comedies, young adult romances and even children's cartoons. These and other genres borrow motifs from Gothic, but at the same time dismiss everything that is frightening, obscure and gloomy about this tendency. Nevertheless, the positive side of this humanization is that it has kept the vampire popular to new audiences worldwide.

Since the late twentieth century, vampire tales have captured the globalization of the world. The adaptability of vampires and Gothic makes of this figure a popular character worldwide. Cultures from around the world, not only from the U.S.A and Europe relocate and appropriate vampires to their own cultures. Therefore, nowadays vampires cannot be associated to one geographical location. Contemporary Vampires become citizens of the world who mirror cross-cultural preoccupations and realities. Texts and films about Contemporary Vampires capture the integration of cultures due to the fact that popular productions are being created outside the traditional settings. This study has proven that novels like *Let the Right One In*, which reflects the life in the suburbs of Stockholm during the 1980's, or films like *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*, which places the vampire in Iran, contribute to the decentralization of the genre and the exchanges between cultures. When these productions take the vampire, a traditional European and American character, and place it in an unconventional environment, the figure mirrors concerns from its new location. Today's Gothic and today's vampires cannot be catalogued as pure because they grow and benefit from the exchanges between cultures. Like the globalized world in which cultures influence one another, Gothic literature and cinema about vampires continue to adapt to the culture that creates them. Their adaptability to time and place contributes to the

fact that Gothic and the figure of the vampire have become immortal themselves.

For Further Research

At the end of my research, I realized that as part of the evolving Gothic genre, the figure of the vampire is more complex than I could ever imagine. Their adaptability and amazing variety of resources make of them the perfect means to portray the deepest fears of any period and culture. This characteristic allows the genre and character to survive over time. Additionally, there are several related topics that can be studied that follow or precede this research. I believe that some of these deserve to be studied in the future because I could not dedicate enough pages or none at all as they were not central for my research. Perhaps, this present study could lead to a future one on the next stage of the figure of the vampire and the way it reflects the transformations of its period and culture. Similarly, although there are many studies on female vampires, I would suggest a similar study to this one focused solely on the way in which this character has evolved through time, the reasons for that transformation and its present state. Another topic that I particularly hold dear and wish I had dedicated more words to, is the horror of being a vampire child forever, the way they seize the world in order to survive, and what this says about society. Furthermore, I believe that the figure of the vampire or its equivalent in Latin America and especially Costa Rica are worthy of being studied. Even if vampires do not abound in these latitudes, there certainly are vampire-like figures that can be studied in a socio-historical or comparative research. Although I feel passionate about these topics, I could not develop them in the present study, as they would take an entire thesis to be analyzed. I strongly believe that the scope of Gothic and the figure of the vampire have unimaginable proportions that will continue luring writers and audiences for centuries to come.

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