

ABSTRACT

Title: CLOSETS AND TRANSYLVANIAN CASTLES: VAMPIRES AND QUEERNESS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE AND BEYOND

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Provide a brief description and summary of your research here; 250 words or less, single spaced.

My thesis examines how vampires have been used in literature to depict queer people and explore issues of queerness. Focusing primarily on the nineteenth century with a brief foray into the twentieth, I analyze seven key texts, both well known and relatively obscure, from John Polidori's groundbreaking "The Vampyre" (1819) to G.S. Viereck's *The House of the Vampire* (1907). This wide range is significant: previous work in the field has tended toward individual studies. I track how the depictions of vampirism and queerness evolved over time, focusing especially on the tropes of disorientation of space and narrative structure, complex patterning of relationships between characters, and conflict between humans and vampires for control of narrative. To this end ideas drawn from theorists such as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick have been deployed in my analysis. I have discovered that from the first there is a degree of sympathy for queerness which is often occluded by gothic tropes. While the vampires themselves only begin to shift from villains towards more ambiguous figures at the end of the nineteenth century, their victims are often figured as queer and portrayed sympathetically. This suggests that vampires have been used as a way to mask queerness in metaphor so that it could be explored and discussed during a time when any explicit examination was forbidden.

Table of Contents:

Introduction: Page 1

Chapter 1: Page 8

Chapter 2: Page 47

Conclusion: Page 101

Works Cited: Page 104

Introduction:

Vampires have haunted Gothic and horror fiction since the early nineteenth century, and although society has changed and evolved, these blood-sucking monsters continue to terrify and intrigue us. Monsters in general are often used as symbols and reflections of societal fears; my reading tracks the use of vampires as objects of a simultaneous fear of and fascination with queerness that has only recently begun to change to an unambiguous acceptance and support. Vampires are neither alive nor dead, and thus they violate one of the boundaries we hold most sacred; such liminal creatures prove to be important tools for breaking gender and other binaries. The designation “predatory monster that preys on innocent people and converts them” can equally well describe vampires and the predatory queer archetype present in the vivid imaginations of homophobes. I am focusing on a few particular recurring tropes: the persistence of complex “erotic triangles” (drawn from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s study of queer figures in the Gothic), an enduring pattern of spatial disorientation suggestive of a larger breakdown in ontological structures (in part drawn from Sedgwick’s later queer theory), and, finally, an ongoing problem of narrative power and centrality, as different figures compete for some kind of authority.

Two clusters of literature merit our attention. The first is the earliest material from the beginning of the nineteenth century into the Victorian period, from John Polidori’s “The Vampyre,” which first brought the titular figure to our fiction, and Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu’s *Carmilla*, the first lesbian vampire novella (though certainly not the last). This grouping of texts not only establishes key vampiric tropes, but also makes clear a queer valence from the very start of this literary subgenre. The second cluster examines vampires in the last decade of the nineteenth century and first decade of the twentieth century. *Dracula* of course is central here,

but I am also examining the “psychic vampire” figure in Florence Marryat’s *The Blood of the Vampire* and George Sylvester Viereck’s *The House of the Vampire*, arguably the first full-length gay vampire novel.

Two terms must be properly defined before proceeding further: “vampire” and “queer.” The vampire in essence transcends immortality by absorbing the life essence of others. We start with the undead blood-sucking vampires of Eastern European folklore but quickly find that the vampire morphs in nature and definition. Coleridge’s Geraldine seems simply to absorb the identity of the titular heroine in his poem “Christabel” through a mechanism tantalizingly left veiled, and by the time we reach the texts of Marryat and Viereck the vampire absorbs life force, and talent, identity without resorting to traditional sucking of blood. Indeed in Marryat’s case the vampire need not be undead; in Viereck’s novel Reginald Clarke might simply be an immortal who has never died. Thus the salient identity marker of the vampire is the ability to “live” off the blood or energy of another.

The category queer likewise requires some narrowing and definition for the purposes of this thesis. In the modern day, queer has come to be a term that encompasses a wide variety of sexual orientations and gender identities that are outside of the default labels of heterosexual and non-transgender; it is in essence a shorter way of communicating the ever-growing LGBT+ acronym, and it is especially popular in academic discussions of the issues faced by these people. However, here queer cannot be used in this sense, since many of the concepts and identities it has come to encompass had not been articulated at the time that the texts I am examining were written; thus to use queer in the modern sense would be ahistorical and potentially problematic for my analysis. Instead, queer is here used to represent the range of non-heteronormative behaviors exhibited by the characters in these nineteenth- and early twentieth-century texts: same

sex attraction amongst men and women, both including and excluding non-same sex attraction (in modern terms, gays, lesbians, and bisexuals), and non-conformity to gender roles (not to be confused with transgender people). Although a survey of queerness in vampire texts in the modern sense would be fascinating and illuminating, the present study is limited to examining behaviors and characters associated with them; since modern notions of queerness could not at this time be articulated except behind the “monster mask,” the vampire figure and tropes associated with it would prove to be remarkably useful in representing queerness.

The Romantic Era, the moment when the vampire emerges as a literary figure in England, was a time when queerness was prosecuted quite severely, and all discussions of it were effectively forbidden. It is thus no surprise that most of the works from this time period lack characters explicitly declaring their attraction and affection for somebody of the same gender – such clarity is not to be expected. However, one can find signs of queerness in the characters of many of these works. Foucault argued that the seventeenth through early twentieth centuries, rather than merely being a time of intense sexual repression, as people generally believed, in fact produced a great deal of discussion and exploration of gender and sexuality leading to the development of a discourse. One must simply know how to read the tropes in order to interpret this kind of buried discourse. David Halperin, for instance, argues in *Saint Foucault* that “Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, and dominant. There is nothing in particular to which it refers. It is an identification without an essence” (61). Vampires are similarly identified as beings at odds with the normal function of nature who defy the laws of life and death; queer people in their lack of a fixed “essence,” in Halperin’s terms, defy the notion that everyone is heterosexual.

By pulling together two significant groupings of vampire texts and reading them as articulating queer identities through the genres of Gothic and horror, my thesis does something new. Vampire narratives are often treated singly, or perhaps in pairs; much scholarly work in the field is oddly fragmented and there is to date little in the way of a broader analysis such as this work provides. Most of the criticism has been applied, unsurprisingly, to Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and to key second-tier works such as Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla*. Critics have been drawn to these works by their potential for interpretation according to gender, racial, post-colonial, and narrative theories in particular. Carol A. Senf, for example, has written on how Stoker's female characters are a response to the New Woman, a sort of early feminist figure. Alison Case's "Tasting the Original Apple: Gender and the Struggle for Narrative Authority in *Dracula*" interprets Stoker's text in the light of threats to masculinity and a struggle for gender dominance. Christopher Craft reads the novel as a series of gender inversions. Le Fanu's story is very frequently read in the light of the author's Irishness. Jamieson Ridenhour's edition of *Carmilla*, in fact, is constructed around the notion that this tale of horror is a thinly veiled reading of power struggles in colonial Ireland. Any queer readings of the vampire literature are likewise narrowly focused: Mair Rigby sees the vampire in Polidori's tale as a particularly "Romantic" queer type, Adrian Antrim Major's reads *Carmilla* as "Lesbian Gothic," and Octavia Davis likewise provides a Gothic reading, this time of notions of heredity, in Florence Marryat's *The Blood of the Vampire*. Some scholarly studies have begun to pull together groups of these texts. Sian MacFie, for example, looks generally at the vampiric female type in the late nineteenth century. Ardel Haefele-Thomas usefully pulls together Le Fanu's and Marryat's female vampires in her analysis of queer "monstrosity." And finally, it should be noted that Nina Auerbach's *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, a foundational text from 1995, does consider the large

social function of vampire narratives from Polidori through the 1980s with some attention to homosexuality, particularly in *Carmilla*. Relying on the insights of these critics, my thesis will provide a detailed analysis of the meeting of vampiric and queer tropes in key texts over a century.

While no scholar or theorist has pulled together the narrative lines of vampirism and queerness in a survey of any length, one critic nonetheless offers some approaches that might illuminate such a survey. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in her 1985 study *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* turns to Gothic literature for an example of the way in which homophobic ideology is both present and at times undercut in that early horror subgenre. Here Sedgwick sees “modern European style homophobia” as creating a kind of “space” or “mechanism” of control (87). The Gothic is marked by “paranoia”: “one or more males...not only is persecuted by, but considers himself transparent to and often under the compulsion of another male” (91). In such formulations, marked by “namelessness” and the “unspeakable,” we are pointed toward an emergent discourse of queerness (94). Although Sedgwick’s study spurns any discussion of vampire narratives, it is nonetheless highly useful and applicable to them. She reads the “erotic triangle” as a key construction for a clandestine articulation of queerness, one that seems to put women in a privileged position but that may in fact heighten the importance of the bond between men (this reading applies, of course, to a classic male/female/male triangle, but as we will see below such constructions quickly become more varied). Sedgwick insists that the erotic triangle is not ahistorical, interpreting it as “a sensitive register precisely for delineating relationships of power and meaning, and for making graphically intelligible the play of desire and identification by which individuals negotiate with their societies for empowerment” (27).

I must also acknowledge the importance of Sedgwick's later theoretical work *The Epistemology of the Closet* (1990). Here Sedgwick offers to this project a couple of important notions or tools for analysis. One is her reading of the problems of homo/heterosexual definition as arising from the fact that discussions of queerness are never only about a small minority but also always of importance and disturbing relevance to people across a range of sexualities [check for quotation]. Hence the omnipresence of fears of conversion and of homosexual panic. As Sedgwick points out the stakes can seem to be high even when the matter at hand appears to be one individual's nature; "homophobic oppression" in her view emerges from "its inextricability from the question of knowledge and the processes of knowing in modern Western culture at large" (33-4). It is this concern or obsession with *knowing* that feeds in to one of the key tropes examined below: the disorientation at crucial moments of a central figure in the text, connected to a moment of crisis in identity. Queer theorists since Sedgwick have advanced the analysis of queer tropes in ways useful to my thesis. Paulina Palmer has identified the importance of "place and space" to such theoretical discourse, seeing an "uncanny resonance" in the play of the familiar and unfamiliar in the topography of queer texts (156). Meanwhile Anna Marie Jagose looks to "incoherences in...allegedly stable relations between chromosomal sex, gender, and sexual desire" (4). These critics point us toward moments of confusion and disorientation, in characters and in the larger narrative construction, as important markers of queer representation.

Pulling these various critical and theoretical strands together allows us to examine the "monster mask" of queerness in vampire narratives across a century. In some ways the choice of the vampire as an avatar of the queer is almost too obvious. He is a bloodsucking villain, a villain with demonic associations, who attacks the body, and can covert his victim. It is very clear from even a brief look at these narratives that a good part of the enjoyment of them is the threat posed

by such a horror – attacks can be rather lovingly described. At the same time there might be more to this mask, more that is being masked. These tales, however fantastic, do make space for articulation of a forbidden otherness and it is notable that they are very quickly associated with depictions of a transgressive same-sex desire. My readings of queer vampire tropes will illuminate not only moments of queerness in these texts but also an emerging pattern across the readings of queer representation one that will shift, change, and, by the later texts considered here, open yet more possibilities in narrative structure, reader response, and larger implications for the influences of what had been at the start defined as the queer monster.

Chapter 1:

Rise from Your Grave: The Emergence of the Literary Vampire

From their earliest appearance in English literature, in John Polidori's "The Vampyre" (1819), vampires have been marked by queerness. This queerness is usually encoded in a relatively subtle way, since queerphobia was especially extreme during the early nineteenth century. These early texts, therefore, do not explicitly label their characters as gay, lesbian, or bisexual (terms that did not even exist at this point), and readers both contemporary and current may or may not pick up on the hints of such sexual otherness in these texts. Nonetheless it is there to be discovered by those who know how to look for it. This kind of obfuscation can allow for queerness to be portrayed with surprising sympathy. While the vampires tend to be embodiments of the "queer predator" trope, their victims often can also be read as queer and are portrayed in generally positive ways. Narrative point of view has some tie to this phenomena, as in these early texts the story is being told by the human heroes and not the vampires. Vampires generally get little or no chance to speak and tell their own stories; they are instead discussed and described by those that fear and hunt them. *Carmilla*, the last text in this initial group, begins to change the narrative structure, but it is not until the texts from the 1890s-1900s that the vampire figures truly begin to break out of this kind of structural confinement. The fact that there are complicated, if occluded, portrayals of queerness at all in these early texts is significant, showing that the beginning of this journey towards the queer heroic or antiheroic vampire known today was not quite as simplistically hostile as might be expected.

Vampires entered the English-speaking world through translations of Eastern European folklore, and these folkloric vampires would form the basis for all that follows. The main source

of these translations is *The Phantom World*, a work by the Catholic priest Augustin Calmet, who wrote many works on Christian theology, and also compiled a long book of stories of all sorts of supernatural events. Calmet's goal was to catalogue these phenomena and attempt either to explain them in light of Catholic belief and theology or to dismiss them as superstition and hearsay. Folkloric vampires are restless dead who rise from their graves to prey on the living people around them. They usually appear in peasant communities and thus are themselves peasants. There is no consistent explanation for their origin; often, vampires arise as the result of plagues, and may in fact be the first victim of the illness in a particular area; they tend to be like a plague themselves, as they feast upon and convert many other people. Folkloric accounts do not generally describe villages entirely overrun by vampires, as occasionally appears in the fiction, but this concept does have a basis in the original vampire myths. Other vampires seem to come about simply by chance, creating the terrifying possibility that any recently dead person can return to prey on the living. Vampires' choice of prey is important to note: like many villains of early Gothic novels, folkloric vampires tend toward an incestuous stalking and killing of their own family members. One account from the 18th century collected by Calmet describes one such creature's return to the family table: "the following night he showed himself, and asked for something to eat. They know not whether the son gave him anything or not; but the next day he was found dead in his bed" (Calmet 23). Folkloric vampires are thus threats to the community not just because they bring death, but because they cause destruction of social norms by violating the incest taboo and shattering normal family bonds. From their inception vampires are figured as threats to the heteronormative familial order.

Since the danger of vampirism comes from within the community, in the folklore the most common method of combatting an infestation is to call in the government to help. Although

the villagers are often aware that a vampire is responsible for the mysterious deaths, they make sure to call upon government authorities, often in the form of a local judicial committee, to pass judgment on and destroy the undead. As the social order has been disrupted from within, outside authority is required to restore society to its proper state. Pragmatically, there's also the fact that governmental authorities can exhume bodies in a more official and less desecratory manner than private citizens can. Such exhumation of corpses is a necessary part of the vampire-destroying process, as the monsters can only be laid to their final rest while they sleep in the earth. The actual killing of a folkloric vampire is a relatively simple matter of staking the creature through the heart and then burning the body; the accounts all end with the destruction of the vampire(s) in this manner. Thus the folkloric vampires, which are patient zero of English literature's obsession with the vampire, are not dissimilar from other folkloric monsters; they stalk the edges of society, but are dispatched fairly easily once dragged into the light of day by those with the proper knowledge.

While folklore is the source of the obsession with vampirism that has infected literature for two centuries, poetry also quickly fell victim to the vampire's allure. German Romantic poetry offers some of the earliest treatments of the motif. Two poems, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's "The Bride of Corinth" (1797) and Gottfried Burger's "Lenora" (1774) will be considered here. A third, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Christabel" (1794/1800) while roughly contemporary with those two, is more appropriately treated in parallel with *Carmilla*, below. "The Bride of Corinth" depicts a man who goes forth to marry one bride, but is instead seduced by her vampiric sister, who had been killed as a result of her conversion to Christianity. He will soon waste away and join as the undead, unless, as the woman pleads to her mother, both are burned together in a pagan funeral pyre. The themes are still somewhat folkloric, in that the

vampire is preying upon a (future) family member. However, in this case there seems to be consent on the part of the man, a notable development: "Then with word and sigh their troth they plighted,/Golden was the chain she bade him wear" (Goethe, stanza 13). Further, the fact that the Bride pleads for her own destruction indicates that she views her vampirism as a curse: "Mother! hear, oh, hear my last entreaty! / Let the funeral-pile arise once more; / Open up my wretched tomb for pity, / And in flames our souls to peace restore" (Goethe, stanza 28). In general, the Bride is portrayed rather sympathetically and is given the chance to tell her own story, something unknown in the folkloric narratives.

"Lenora" is instead a more simple "demon lover" sort of narrative. Technically, in fact, it does not have a vampire at all, but instead some sort of image of Death or a demon. The titular Lenora is a young woman whose husband-to-be is the only man in the village not to return from war. As a result, she curses God and turns her back on him:

"O mother, mother! what is blisse,
And what the fiend is celle?
With him 'tis heaven any where,
Without my William, helle.
"Go out, go out, my lamp of life;
In endless darkness die:
Without him I must loathe the earth,
Without him scorne the skye." (Burger)

As punishment, a monster in the shape of her betrothed arrives and carries her on a wild and dangerous ride, with all the host of the dead following them (it is here that the famous line "for the dead travel fast" first appears). Finally, she discovers that the creature is not her lover, but a skeletal monster, and she is deposited in her lover's grave. Here the creature encountered is a monstrous threat. It is not necessarily evil per se; it seems to be carrying out a mission of retribution on the girl for defying God. Overall, this poem is notable more for its mood and imagery than for any direct representation of a vampire: aspects such as the dark and horrific ride

through the night at a breakneck pace are far more important parts of the poem (such nighttime journeys will become a part of the template of vampire tales, most notably in Bram Stoker). One moment in the poem when the creature cannot of its own volition enter the abode merits particular attention:

And soon she herde a tinkling hande,
That twirled at the pin;
And thro' her door, that open'd not,
These words were breathed in.
"What ho! what ho! thy dore undoe;
Art watching or asleepe?
My love, dost yet remember mee,
And dost thou laugh or weep?" (Burger)

He cannot open her door to get at her, but instead must ask her to open it and let him in. This has significance for the wider canon of vampire stories, as it foreshadows the common trope of vampires not being able to enter a home until asked in. Further, Lenora must choose to ride with the creature. This poem, like "The Bride of Corinth," displays the details of an emerging template by which vampire figures are understood: they are associated with threats to (sometimes already troubled) family units, and, perhaps most significantly, they elicit some kind of cooperation or consent from their intended victims.

The first-wave vampires in prose fiction are rather more complex creatures than the folkloric vampires, and in them we see the start of the explorations of queerness that have been so central to these narratives ever since, making it clear that queerness is built into vampire narratives from their inception. This wave consists of Lord Byron's "Fragment of a Novel" and John Polidori's "The Vampyre." Both works emerged out of the famous writing contest at the Villa Diodati in 1816. Lord Byron had fled scandal in England and gone to Switzerland, where he settled in a villa by the shores of Lake Geneva. Polidori was his personal physician, and thus came with him, and they were also joined by Mary and Percy Shelley. They socialized fairly

regularly, sharing ideas and discussing their writings, eventually coming up with the idea of writing “ghost stories” (as horror fiction in general was termed at the time), due in part to that year being the Year Without a Summer and thus full of unusual weather suitable to the Gothic mood. Lord Byron would challenge the others to write ghost stories as a kind of competition. He wrote his “Fragment of a Novel,” which inspired Polidori to write “The Vampyre” – although according to Mary Shelley, the work Polidori produced during the contest itself was not very good or interesting. Mary Shelley of course wrote the first draft of what would eventually become *Frankenstein*, a key novel for both the Gothic and science fiction genres. However, it is the two vampire works produced as a result of the competition that are worth considering here.

Byron’s piece is relatively short, and, as the title implies, is only a portion of an intended longer work. Though the story never goes on long enough for the creature to be identified explicitly as a vampire in the text, the real-world context of the story’s origin and the parallels to Polidori’s text make it clear that Byron’s work is indeed a vampire tale. A young man who has been traveling with a mysterious companion through foreign lands discovers that his friend is suddenly dying. Upon coming to a graveyard, the mysterious Darvell begins fading even faster and proclaims that he is going to die here. Before he can die, however, he must extract a promise from the narrator:

“Peace! It must be so. Promise this.”

“I do.”

“Swear it, by all that—” He here dictated an oath of great solemnity.

“There is no occasion for this. I will observe your request; and to doubt me is-”

“It cannot be helped, you must swear.”

I took the oath, it appeared to relieve him. (Byron 42)

A few aspects of this scene are particularly noteworthy. For one, the mysterious Darvell must acquire an oath, a binding agreement of cooperation from his companion/victim before he can act. However, the narrator has no idea what it is that he is consenting to. That the narrator is

willing to swear “an oath of great solemnity” despite his lack of knowledge of what he is swearing to do shows that a strong homosocial bond already exists between these two men. The oath strengthens it further, as, despite the weird events that occur during this death scene, the narrator still cares for Darvell and is willing to carry out his appointed task. There is even a way in which this oath-swearing mimics heteronormative marriage, as it involves Darvell giving the narrator a ring. This fragment is key not only for inspiring Polidori, but for establishing the primacy of male bonds that will be so important throughout the various vampire texts that come after it. It is this sort of male bond that Polidori will explore further with his version of the oath (and its results); such a bond will eventually create, in vampire tales, the heroic band of men seen in works such as *Carmilla* and *Dracula*. Byron’s work is lesser known than many others, but that does not mean it is nothing more than an insignificant footnote. It has, through Polidori, an outsized influence.

Polidori’s story “The Vampyre” (1819) expands not only upon the theme of the oath, but upon Byron’s story as a whole. John Polidori was Lord Byron’s personal physician at the time of the Villa Diodati incident, and so he was well aware of Byron’s “Fragment.” In fact, it is entirely possible that Polidori knew of Byron’s full plans for his story, and decided to complete it himself when Byron’s version was not forthcoming. Interestingly, “The Vampyre” was originally credited to Lord Byron when it was published, though the error was quickly corrected. Nonetheless, this confusion might be part of why Polidori remains a relatively obscure author in the vampire canon despite the key importance of his work, the first English-language vampire story.

“The Vampyre” tells of one man’s encounters with the vampiric Lord Ruthven, a figure clearly based on Byron himself. (Lady Caroline Lamb’s Gothic novel *Glenarvon*, published in

1816, had used the same name for its figure of Byron.) While this vampire is obviously important, the protagonist of the tale, a young man named Aubrey, is himself highly significant. Whereas much subsequent vampire fiction has one or more male protagonists who are masculine hunters bound in a homosocial bond and determined to fight the vampire to the death, Aubrey is a much more effeminate figure. He is reminiscent, in fact, of a heroine from a Gothic novel. Much like Jane Austen's Catherine Morland in *Northanger Abbey*, Aubrey has derived his views of the world not from real-life experience but from the reading of books and poems. He "cultivated more his imagination than his judgement" and "thought, in fine, that the dreams of poets were the realities of life" (Polidori 48). Reading, especially of the sort of romances that Aubrey is most familiar with, was at this time an action coded as feminine--see, for example, various satirical images such as James Gillray's caricature "Tales of Wonder!" (1802) that mocked women for being overly excited by their reading. Aubrey is thus foolish and incapable of defending himself properly from the dangers of the world or even of accurately reading Ruthven—just as Gillray's women readers would be. This is the first of a series of similarities between Aubrey and the female vampire victim of subsequent works such as *Carmilla* and *Dracula*. Thus, in our very first vampire tale, the victim is marked by a blurring of gender roles.

As a further sign that Aubrey is more the female victim than the male hero, his homosocial bond is not with other human men but with the vampire himself. Although he at first tries to attach himself to the young women of high society, Aubrey gives up on them because they do not live up to his romantic ideals. Instead, he becomes fascinated by Lord Ruthven, seeing him as a hero from a tale: "he soon formed this object into the hero of a romance, and determined to observe the offspring of his fancy, rather than the person before him" (Polidori 49). Despite hints that Lord Ruthven is as infamous a character as the real-life Lord Byron,

Aubrey's fancy causes him to worship the man as a hero; a certain shade of romantic feeling is made clear by Aubrey's devotion to his "fancy" of Ruthven rather than the truth, for this is a not uncommon aspect of romantic infatuation. This queer attraction leads Aubrey to travel with Ruthven to the Continent; in Ruthven's case, the trip seems to be a routine chance for debauchery, but to Aubrey it represents his Grand Tour, a rite of passage for young British aristocrats. Aubrey's choice to travel with an experienced man echoes the way that in societies that repress and condemn queerness, young men are often introduced to an understanding of homosexuality by more senior men. Lord Ruthven acts as a dark mentor figure; even though he does not perform the now traditional vampiric conversion ritual of biting his victim, he is in a way attempting to induct Aubrey into his world. However, Aubrey manages to discover Ruthven's depraved nature, one that is hell-bent on ruining anyone he comes into contact with, and thus ends the association between them.

As a result, there comes a period in which Aubrey, at least briefly, begins to resemble the traditional hero of subsequent vampire narratives. He travels to Greece and there falls in love with a local girl named Ianthe. She is described as "a being, so beautiful and delicate" and her dancing would cause one to think "the gazelle a poor type of her beauties" (Polidori 53). She is also a fairly simple girl, for she is a peasant, and thus while she has some superstitions and strange beliefs, largely shown through her telling Aubrey tales about vampires, she would be perfectly subservient to him. She secretly goes after him when he travels into a dangerous part of the country, and in the end loses her life for his sake. Ianthe is, in essence, the perfect object of heterosexual desire. Aubrey's attraction to her provides a kind of idyllic heteronormative interlude, and suggests that he is trying to distance himself from any queer attraction towards

Lord Ruthven. He has discovered that neither the women in London nor Lord Ruthven match his Romantic ideal of what his lover should be like, and perhaps Ianthe will.

Despite his attempt to avoid Lord Ruthven and the homoeroticism he represents, Aubrey has in a way just entered into a different sort of queer relationship with the vampire. In *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick offers the “erotic triangle” as a key structure in queer narratives: two men are rivals for the affections of a woman, and yet “the bond that links the two rivals is as intense and potent as the bond that links either of the rivals to the beloved: ... the bonds of ‘rivalry’ and ‘love,’ differently as they are experienced, are equally powerful and in many senses equivalent” (21). In essence, the female corner of the triangle does little more than serve as an intermediary for the two males. Direct strong erotic bonds between two men are forbidden, and thus they must be represented indirectly through a woman. Further, although the bond between the two men is strong, it is often marked by a powerful ambivalence, for the attraction does nothing to eliminate the rivalry they still feel. Thus the male bond in an erotic triangle is quite similar to the shifting emotions Aubrey has felt towards Ruthven – first attraction and then abhorrence. In some ways the relationship that Aubrey enters into with Ianthe is not a full erotic triangle, as Ruthven is not a rival for Ianthe’s affections. In fact, Aubrey himself could be seen as occupying the female corner of the triangle, as both Ianthe and Ruthven are drawn towards him—from the first, such erotic triangles in vampire narratives are subject to shifting interpretation. However, while woman and vampire are rivals for Aubrey’s affections, neither character feels a strong attraction towards the other – there is only rivalry and hatred (though, of course, erotic triangles only require a strong feeling between the two rivals – it need not be a feeling of attraction).

Nonetheless, it seems as if Aubrey will escape his feminine role vis-à-vis Ruthven until the vampire kills Ianthe. Though she has warned Aubrey about vampires, he still travels into a dangerous part of the countryside. Ianthe pursues him when he doesn't return before nightfall, but both she and her lover end up in the same abandoned hovel with the vampiric third party. This hovel is described as one that "hardly lifted itself up from the masses of dead leaves and brushwood that surrounded it," implying that it is fairly small (Polidori 56). However, later a group of men with torches are able to move far enough through it that the light from their torches can fade out from Aubrey's perspective lying near the window and then come back into view: "the light of their torches fell upon the mud walls....At the desire of Aubrey they searched for her who had attracted him by her cries; he was again left in darkness...when the light of the torches once more burst upon him" (Polidori 57). This description suggests a much larger space.

Such contradictions make Ianthe's murder seem to take place in a shadowy, dreamlike space. This scene, in which Aubrey's heterosexual attachment is annihilated, is a crucial one in the text, and the murkiness and illogic of its description point us to a crisis in Aubrey. He is attracted to this space by "dreadful shrieks of a woman mingling with the stifled, exultant mockery of a laugh, continued in one almost unbroken sound" (Polidori 56). The horrific noise guides him through the "utter darkness" inside the hut. Again, the fact that Aubrey needs guidance through what seems as if it should be a small space seems strange and confusing. Further, he is unperceived when he attempts to call out. The stress on distorted and illogical spatial relations suggests that we are dealing with the kind of queer topography outlined by Palmer, which in turn provides the ground for the sort of breakdown in the coherence of gender norms described by Jagose.

It is only when he stumbles across one of the people inside the hut and grapples with him that Aubrey's presence is acknowledged, with a cry of "Again baffled!" This seems strange, as the hut should be small enough for Aubrey's cries to be heard. Even more mystifying is Aubrey's failure to recognize the voice, given that it is later revealed to belong to Lord Ruthven. Aubrey grapples with the figure, who seems to have superhuman strength, but he is quickly thrown to the ground; like subsequent heroes in vampire tales, Aubrey has struggled against the vampire. Unlike these heroes, Aubrey does not know that he is fighting for Ianthe's life (for he does not find out she was the vampire's victim until later), and he is completely ineffective in his struggle. Aubrey would in fact possibly perish alongside Ianthe if not for the timely intervention of a search party bearing torches that cause the vampire to flee. There is an obvious metaphorical aspect to this "rescue." As long as all was darkness and confusion, Lord Ruthven was powerful and Aubrey was weak and disoriented. As soon as light is shed upon the monster, however, he must flee posthaste or else risk discovery. Lord Ruthven's fear of the light thus reflects the fear of discovery queer people often have, especially at this time in history. The darkness of the strangely expansive hovel is Ruthven's closet, and rather than be uncloseted against his will by torchlight, he flees.

Further, it is not until light is shed upon the mysterious scene in the hovel that Aubrey discovers the terrible reality: Ianthe is the victim of the vampire. His horror upon perceiving "the airy form of his fair conductress brought in a lifeless corpse" and hearing the men cry "A Vampyre! A Vampyre!" is great: "his mind was benumbed and seemed to shun reflection, and take refuge in vacancy" (Polidori 57). With Aubrey's wish that his first glimpse of Ianthe's corpse was just a vision, it seems that his brain is attempting to deny all of the horrible events that he has witnessed. Aubrey has been faced by a series of mysterious, occluded events, but

rather than try to decipher them, he chooses to ignore them and take refuge in his ignorance.

Mair Rigby suggests that by killing Ianthe, “Ruthven shatters Aubrey’s fantasies, violently reinscribing the woman’s position as a conduit between two desiring-hating male figures” (9).

Aubrey’s mind cannot reconcile this shattering of his worldview and he lapses into illness. The traumatic scene of Ianthe’s death does not lead to a rejection of Ruthven. Quite the contrary: he ends up being cared for by Ruthven himself and appeals to the vampire’s authority, which leads to a reconciliation of their bond. Aubrey cannot have a successful, productive bond with a woman, but can only maintain the homosocial bond. By eliminating the woman that Aubrey has bonded with, Ruthven forces him to return to a more feminine role.

The relationship between Lord Ruthven and Aubrey is ultimately cemented with an oath. As in Byron’s text, Lord Ruthven comes face to face with death. Unlike Darvell, Lord Ruthven dies to protect Aubrey from a dangerous gang of thieves that waylay them in their travels. This sacrifice, in combination with Ruthven’s earlier ministrations at Aubrey’s bedside, makes the full force of Lord Ruthven’s attraction to Aubrey clear. There is little cost in this for Lord Ruthven, however, for as he himself says, he “heed[s] the death of [his] existence as little of that as the passing day” (Polidori 60). Ruthven’s actions then represent no true remorse or good feeling towards Aubrey on his part, but are purely manipulative. Aubrey has no doubts about the sincerity of Ruthven’s feelings despite all the evidence to the contrary he has witnessed. Ruthven has, in effect, finally succeeded in seducing his companion. Though the man believes that Lord Ruthven is a tragic figure who, perhaps, could have been his lover or close friend, the vampire is nothing more than a supernatural incarnation of the predatory queer trope.

To secure this domination over his young companion, Ruthven extracts an oath from Aubrey that the young man will not tell of Lord Ruthven’s death for a year and a day: “swear

that for a year and a day you will not impart your knowledge of my crimes or death to any living being in any way, whatever may happen, or whatever you may see” (Byron 60). The homosocial bond between the two men is thus cemented, and though there is no exchange of a ring or any other material object to act in a symbolic function, the oath-swearing is still in many ways a sort of queer marriage between man and vampire. As far as Aubrey knows, when he makes the oath he is simply repaying his dear friend for all Ruthven has done by securing Ruthven’s reputation. Aubrey’s attachment, in contrast to Lord Ruthven’s, is positive and loving.

The similarity the oath bears to a socially accepted heteronormative marriage is further made clear by Aubrey’s full return to his effeminate state soon after he swears it. He has a strange feeling about the oath from almost the moment he swears it: “when he remembered his oath a cold shivering came over him, as if from the presentiment of something horrible awaiting him” (Polidori 60). Aubrey further comes to regret what he has done when he discovers that Lord Ruthven was the murderer of Ianthe. Despite what he knew of Ruthven, he was overly trusting, a trait he shares with many an innocent heroine of later vampire tales and earlier Gothic novels. However, it is not until Aubrey returns to London that he truly becomes a male equivalent of the traditionally female victim of the vampire. Lord Ruthven reappears under a new name and forces Aubrey to keep silent about his true nature and identity with repeated cries of “Remember your oath!” Aubrey is prohibited, in effect, from “outing” him.

The marriage-like oath should be a pleasant joining of the two, but instead Ruthven wields it like a weapon to keep Aubrey completely under his control. Part of this agony is created by Aubrey’s feeling that his word is his bond, because he is a gentleman. However, given the high stakes and the threat posed by Ruthven to society, the justification for Aubrey’s silence is questionable. We are provoked here into pondering the true nature of his bond with Ruthven. In

some ways, Aubrey has become the male equivalent of the pure upper-class women that Lord Ruthven so enjoys ruining. Were word of what Aubrey and Ruthven did in far-off lands to get out, it is quite likely that Aubrey himself might be marked as transgressive. Thus Lord Ruthven has transformed Aubrey into a cowering and fearful figure akin to the ruined woman whose sin has not yet been revealed by her attacker.

Aubrey finally cracks under the pressure of Ruthven's use of the oath, and is reduced to an unmanned invalid. He is caught between the desire to expose Ruthven, especially once he targets Aubrey's sister, and the knowledge that revealing what happened on the Continent, which would break Aubrey's honorable vow, will implicate Aubrey as well as Ruthven. Aubrey generally seems to be queer without being predatory, but at this time, queerness was seen as disturbing and something to be punished no matter how moral the queer person was.

At first he tries to escape the horrible responsibility he inflicted on himself, but eventually Aubrey tries to rejoin society, only to show that he has become deranged, at least from the point of view of everyone who does share his knowledge of Ruthven. As a result, he is locked away, just like the madwoman in the attic of many Gothic novels such as *Jane Eyre*: "When, however, remonstrance proved unavailing, the guardians thought proper to interpose, and, fearing that his mind was becoming alienated, they thought it high time to resume again that trust that had been imposed upon them by Aubrey's parents" (Polidori 65). As Ruthven, the pseudo-husband, is not able to publicly reveal his ties to Aubrey at this time and thus take over for him as he did abroad, the guardians must step in and control Aubrey just as the husband or father of the archetypal madwoman always does. When Aubrey discovers that Ruthven is to marry his sister, his seeming madness becomes even more intense. Even this revelation, however, is insufficient to shatter the homosocial bond and lead Aubrey to break his oath.

Instead, his attempt to stop the wedding leads to a great physical shock that sends him into decline and, soon after, death.

He is finally freed from his oath just before he dies, but all this achieves is that the story of Ruthven's horrors will be passed on – Aubrey acts too late to save his sister. Thus Aubrey dies as he lives – a feeble, effeminate man bound by a fatal queer attraction to a vampire. Despite this, Aubrey's queerness in some ways makes him an especially sympathetic figure, though to contemporary audiences he might well have been seen as a man who heroically resisted Ruthven's deviance and queerness and preserved a manly and homophobic honor rather than as the victim of an overwhelming attraction to the wrong person. Like many women in Gothic novels, Aubrey is victimized not so much for being attracted to men as for having a taste in bad boys.

Although Polidori's tale is titled "The Vampyre," this is because Lord Ruthven is the monster to be feared, not because he is the protagonist. The story is focused on Aubrey's point of view, and what little information the reader gets about Ruthven is filtered through Aubrey's understanding. While much of the actual dialogue is Ruthven's, this is mainly because of his repeated cries for Aubrey to remember his oath. Ruthven's methods and desires certainly become apparent, as Aubrey goes from believing his companion is a storybook hero to realizing that he is truly a depraved monster. Ruthven's true motives and feelings are never revealed, so it is impossible to know the true self of this "monster." Instead, he is simply a horrific figure whose actions allow the queerness of the text to wear the mask of vampirism.

Polidori's story was immensely popular, and quickly spawned a stage adaptation in France. James Robinson Planché adapted this version into *The Vampire, or the Bride of the Isles* (1820). Planché's melodramatic stage adaptation of Polidori's work merits attention as a

reduction of its source to a fairly typical heteronormative melodrama, significant primarily for bringing vampirism into the world of English theater. We can, perhaps, better read the “queer” aspects of Polidori’s narrative by the manner in which they are rendered absent by Planché. He inaugurated the first of many adaptations of vampire tales to the stage, a trend that, in combination with film adaptations, still remains popular today. He also created the innovative “vampire trap,” a stage device that allowed his version of Lord Ruthven to appear to move through solid objects, as if by magic. Unlike the original story, Planché’s *The Vampire* largely follows melodramatic conventions and eschews much of the queerness that makes “The Vampyre” significant. Aubrey is replaced with Lord Ronald, who is the father rather than the brother of Lord Ruthven’s victim. There is still some hint of a queer relationship between Lord Ruthven and Ronald’s deceased son, who seems to preserve some aspects of the original Aubrey: “When called, as you know, by the sudden illness of my now lost son to Athens, I found Lord Ruthven, with whom he had contracted an intimacy, hanging over his sick couch, and bestowing on him the attentions of a brother. Such behaviour naturally endeared him to me” (Planché I.ii).

However, this potential queerness is pushed into the background and couched in terms of “an intimacy” and brotherhood. The play instead focuses on the more socially acceptable homosocial bonds that arise between the various male characters in defense of Lady Margaret, the young woman who is to be Lord Ruthven’s latest victim. That the vampire unifies a band of men around the target of his destructive impulses, in contrast to Polidori’s lone and weak defender, establishes an important pattern for many subsequent vampire stories, including Stoker’s *Dracula* itself. Planché’s version of Lord Ruthven comes closest to Polidori’s vampire that seduces regardless of gender when he exploits a bond of respect and admiration that exists between himself and Lord Ronald, a bond that forges an oath similar to that in Polidori’s tale.

However, though Lord Ronald begins to be drawn down the path to madness and effeminacy, he is rescued by the other men and ultimately helps them to destroy the vampire. This last change is especially significant. Polidori's monster is victorious because Aubrey is never able to overcome the power of the homosocial bond between himself and his tormentor. In contrast, the melodramatic version of Lord Ruthven falls to a united band of men who have thrown off the shackles of the oath and have instead formed an alternative bond to destroy the monster. The vampire is prevented from perverting the heteronormative tradition of marriage for his own evil ends. The men are victorious through a form of homosocial submerging of queerness; as long as the bonds stay homosocial rather than homosexual, the band of men has not gone beyond the role circumscribed for them by a homophobic society. As a reward for their virtuous victory, all of the men are quickly united with their various female loved ones. Thus they have refuted homosexuality and restored socially approved gender roles. This ending is far from Polidori's.

Planché's work is notable for allowing the vampire to speak directly to the audience and reveal some of his feelings about his undead state. As Lord Ruthven muses about his plans to feed on Margaret's blood, he gives the following soliloquy:

Demon as I am, that walks the earth to slaughter and devour! The little that remains of heart within this wizard frame, sustained alone by human blood, shrinks from the appalling act of planting misery in the bosom of this veteran chieftain. Still must the fearful sacrifice be made, and suddenly, for the approaching night will find my wretched frame exhausted -- and darkness -- worse than death -- annihilation is my lot! Margaret! unhappy maid! thou art my destined prey! thy blood must feed a vampire's life, and prove the food of his disgusting banquet. (I.ii)

Lord Ruthven does not get any such soliloquy, and most of his subsequent dialogue involves him scheming for blood or manipulating people. However, that does not invalidate the soliloquy's importance, as it represents Lord Ruthven giving voice to the vampire and allows the audience to have some sympathy for him. It seems that his feelings for Lord Ronald are not entirely feigned,

and he does feel some regret that he must kill Margaret so that he can continue to live. This regret prompts him to attempt to target Robert's prospective bride instead, which shows that his regret is not so much for his vampirism as a whole but rather because it must bring harm to somebody he cares about. This version of Lord Ruthven is not the angst-ridden self-hating vampire that will appear in later works and much more explicitly, albeit metaphorically, wrestle with issues of sexuality. Though he has a heart still, it is small and weak, and feels only a limited pity; and this pity is insufficient to stay his hand. In spite of his monstrous nature, his soliloquy still sets up an important precedent for the vampire stories that will follow and more and more give vampires the chance to have their say, in parallel to the growing narrative prominence given to queer characters.

In the same period in which Byron, Polidori, and the Shelleys are engaged in their productive ghost-story competition, Samuel Taylor Coleridge is writing his poetic fragment "Christabel," the first narrative that can be characterized as a lesbian vampire tale. Unfortunately, like some of Coleridge's other key poems, "Christabel" is incomplete, containing only the first two parts of the story. Nevertheless, the poem is still a significant work for beginning an exploration of female queerness in vampire texts. The titular Christabel is a young woman who lives with her father and servants in a castle, in a vaguely medieval setting. Similar to the Gothic, it will become customary in vampire narratives to rely on settings distant in place or time. Christabel wanders out into the woods near her home at night, and there discovers a young woman named Geraldine, who explains that she was kidnapped by a group of fearsome men and pleads with Christabel to aid in her escape. Such stories of kidnapping and other sufferings are common in contemporary Gothic narratives, and at first "Christabel" seems as if it will mimic these.

However, it readily becomes apparent that there is some strange supernatural aspect to Geraldine: she must be carried across the threshold of the Christabel's castle (hearkening back to Burger's poem, the vampire must be brought or invited in) and is incapable of saying the name of the Virgin Mary. Though she begs exhaustion as an explanation for the latter, it quickly becomes clear that this is an example of the vampire's opposition to things sacred. Geraldine further causes a dog to bark angrily at her (dogs traditionally having the ability to sense evil), and makes torches flare up as she passes them by. Christabel is perhaps not as observant or aware of these warning signs as the reader, however, for she gladly takes the mysterious Geraldine into her chamber to sleep with her (customary at the time of the poem's setting and writing, and not in itself a sign of queerness).

The queerness of this scene comes from other features. Christabel offers Geraldine wine, which forms a bond between them and harkens back to the drinking of wine in "The Bride of Corinth." She further does her best to take care of her guest, who she believes has ridden far and fast as a prisoner of strange men. Soon enough it is time for both women to sleep, and it is at this point that the queerness of the first part of the poem reaches its height. Christabel undresses and climbs onto her couch, but as she is unable to sleep, she watches as Geraldine prays. The vampire does not seem actually to pray to God, however, but to prepare to prey upon Christabel:

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
And slowly rolled her eyes around;
Then drawing in her breath aloud,
Like one that shuddered, she unbound
The cincture from beneath her breast:
Her silken robe, and inner vest,
Dropt to her feet, and full in view,
Behold! her bosom and half her side—
A sight to dream of, not to tell!
O shield her! shield sweet Christabel!

The exact nature of the horror of Geraldine's bosom is mysterious. When Byron read the poem during the Villa Diodata incident, Percy Shelley ran screaming from the room when this section was reached—he apparently imagined a breast with an eye instead of a nipple. Geraldine's breasts do seem to have some sort of mesmeric power: "In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,/Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!" (Coleridge 255-56). Christabel does not dare to look away from them, but is instead completely enthralled. The unknown, or rather not-known and not-expressible, is an important marker of a queer moment. Queerness was something that could not be described or expressed, and so queer moments must remain unknowable and unexpressed; many moments that can be read as queer are those where there is a break down of knowledge. The indescribability of Geraldine's bosom is one such moment.

Geraldine's mysteriously horrifying breasts are a key symbol of at least two aspects of the poem that will continue to be explored in further works about female vampires. First, breasts usually have rather pleasant sexual and maternal associations: being clasped to a bosom is a sign of love. Geraldine's breasts, on the other hand, are somehow monstrous and represent a weaponization of femininity. Although Geraldine appears to be the passive victim-heroine of a Gothic novel, this is just a disguise for the fact that she is, in reality, a vampire who has come to prey upon Christabel. Again, a vampire narrative relies on Gothic tropes in its disarrangement of gender norms. Geraldine's lack of passivity makes her dangerous, and the fact that her breasts are a weapon of control rather than a tool for comfort makes this clear. She is a rebel against prescribed gender roles who has taken on the more active, predatory role heretofore reserved for male vampires. Her breasts have a second major significance in evoking a particular response in Christabel. Here the pattern of attraction/repulsion built into both narratives of queerness and vampirism comes into play: the way in which Christabel is both fascinated and horrified reflects

an experience common to queer awakenings and to those under the baleful influence of a supernatural being. Which narrative one sees depends on how one reads the text. A same-gender attraction that goes against heteronormative society can be horrifying, but fascinating. Here that struggle is compacted into a strongly suggestive dramatic reaction to the exposure of Geraldine's breasts.

After Christabel falls under Geraldine's thrall a telling confusion and conflation of identity begins. Christabel is the sole child of her father, Sir Leoline, who is now something of an invalid, but when she brings Geraldine before him, he begins to favor the new arrival. Part of this is that Geraldine claims to be the daughter of an old friend of Sir Leoline. There appears to have once been a strong homosocial bond between these two men: they were "friends in youth" but their opinions of each other were poisoned by untruth and as "to be wroth with one we love/Doth work like madness in the brain," the two men separated and have never seen each other since. Nonetheless, neither has ever found a friend so good and true, and so Sir Leoline leaps at the chance to be reunited with his old friend and reforge their bond. Since Geraldine is the catalyst for this resurgence of feelings, it seems that she is responsible for a more expansive notion of queerness in the poem as a whole, and not just in relation to Christabel.

As Geraldine begins to gain Sir Leoline's favor, Christabel becomes more like Geraldine. She is unable to reveal the truth of her companion's horrific nature, as she is bound by a force as strong as Aubrey's oath. Instead, she reacts violently and loudly to Geraldine's actions, just as a monster would. Christabel's attraction towards Geraldine has been transformed almost wholly into repulsion, a more extreme version of the muddled attraction and repulsion seen in other vampire texts. When Geraldine is embraced by Sir Leoline, who has sworn by everything he holds dear to reunite her with her father, Christabel is visited by a horrible vision: "Again she

saw that bosom old,/Again she felt that bosom cold,/And drew in her breath with a hissing sound” (Coleridge). Geraldine is given a snake motif throughout the second part of the poem, but it is Christabel who here begins to act like a snake. Sir Leoline’s bard has had a vision of a snake threatening Christabel, and he implores Sir Leoline to allow him to go forth and play holy songs to defeat the vision. Sir Leoline, however, refuses and orders the bard to go on a mission to bring a message to Geraldine’s supposed father. Sir Leoline’s allegiance has rapidly and utterly switched from his daughter to the vampiric interloper.

Sir Leoline is involved in the sort of erotic triangle described by Sedgwick, albeit as the intermediary figure. Christabel and Geraldine are competing for his affections, and Geraldine is clearly winning. However, while there are some significant aspects of this competition, it is the bond of attraction and repulsion between the two women that is central to the story and gives it the lesbian content that made it so shocking and horrific to contemporary readers. Geraldine gazes upon Christabel with snake-like eyes, and once again Christabel recoils with a hiss. Geraldine responds to this by appealing to Sir Leoline. She is causing him to feel defensive of the woman he has quickly adopted rather than his true daughter. Christabel is being placed into the role of queer interloper and object of fear while Geraldine becomes the loved and accepted “normal” member of society. This inversion reflects a view of queerness as an infecting and corrupting force, and also shows Geraldine as a vampire who feeds on the psyche and identity rather than on blood.

The poem simply stops before it can reach a proper ending and resolve whether Christabel will always be a victim of Geraldine or if she will be able to escape the vampire. As it stands, Christabel and Geraldine are trapped in the process of becoming each other forever, since Coleridge did not finish. In and of itself this is not particularly noteworthy, as frustratingly

unfinished fragments are common for both Coleridge (“Kubla Khan” for instance) and the Romantics as a whole (see the previously discussed “Fragment of a Novel” by Lord Byron).

However, Nina Auerbach, in *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, sees a deeper meaning in the incompleteness of the text. She feels that “vampire and victim are so entwined that...the story has no logical end, for no character can be saved or damned” (Auerbach 50). Geraldine is beginning to become Christabel, and vice versa, but neither character has fully abandoned her previous state. Thus both are halfway between human and vampire, victim and monster, and the characters do not have the knowledge necessary to resolve this situation. This is in large part because of Geraldine’s status as a female vampire: “In nineteenth-century iconography, male vampires are allies of death who end their narratives by killing or dying, but females are so implicated in life’s sources that their stories overwhelm closure” (Auerbach 50). The only way for a female vampire to be defeated is for her to be cut out of the narrative by a group of male characters, as will happen in *Carmilla*, and later in *Dracula*. However, in *Christabel*, the only men are Sir Leoline, who is in thrall to Geraldine, and his bard, who is in thrall to him. There is no source from which a band of brave, homosocially bound men can appear and disrupt the narrative to save Geraldine. Thus Auerbach argues that it would not be possible for Coleridge to finish “Christabel” because there is no logical ending to it.¹

For a more complete narrative focusing on the lesbian vampire, we must turn to Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu’s *Carmilla*. First serialized in 1871-72 in *The Dark Blue* and then published in

¹ However, Arthur Nethercot asserts that Coleridge’s physician, Dr. James Gillman, knew how Coleridge intended to conclude the poem. Nethercot’s main use of this information is to claim that the bard, Bracy, would have found a ruin where the castle of Geraldine’s father is supposed to be. He makes no further claims about how the poem would have actually ended, however. Still, this seems to imply that Coleridge did have a plan as to how to finish “Christabel,” with the possibilities being that he had some way of not being overwhelmed by the female vampire or that he would enlist a posse of men to destroy her.

Le Fanu's collection *In A Glass Darkly* in 1872, *Carmilla* moves us from the Romantic to the Victoria era. It was published well into the period of the sensation novel, one of the most popular forms of Victorian literature.² Still, it predates *Dracula* and is best considered alongside other early vampire narratives as many of the structural elements, especially pertaining to queerness, are similar to the early narratives, and it clearly takes a degree of inspiration from "Christabel." We can consider La Fanu's story as a lynchpin text. It is the story of a young girl, Laura, who encounters the vampiric and lesbian Carmilla. *Carmilla* is told from Laura's first-person point of view, and although written by a man, the novel does a surprisingly good job of exploring queer women in an at least somewhat sympathetic light. The same ambiguity about the protagonist's feelings towards the vampire that has been present in previous narratives is evident in *Carmilla*, and the first-person viewpoint allows Le Fanu to explore these in more depth. The novel is told as a retrospective account by Laura, writing to an unnamed female correspondent. The story seems at first to conform fairly closely to what we now think of as the standard vampire narrative (although the modern idea of a archetypical or even cliché vampire narrative was as yet nascent) despite the more overtly queer content. Nina Auerbach, for instance, calls Carmilla "one of the few self-accepting homosexuals in Victorian or any literature" (41). Carmilla appears under mysterious circumstances and begins to prey upon the innocent Laura. Laura herself has no knowledge of what is happening to her and sees Carmilla as a dear friend whose actions verge on those of a lover, not as a monstrous threat. Fortunately, just when all hope seems lost, a brave band of homosocially bonded men appears to save Laura and destroy Carmilla. Thus is the threat of queerness purged from the community and heteronormativity restored. The narrative is far

² The Victorian period also saw the rise of the so-called penny dreadfuls, a genre of cheap horror and suspense stories. One of these, *Varney the Vampire*, tackled vampirism, but it is not of particular relevance to queer vampires.

more ambiguous and complex than this simple description suggests, however, and there are a number of specific moments in the text that contribute to a queer reading of *Carmilla*.

Not all critics agree with this view. Arthur H. Nethercot sees *Carmilla* as in some ways a prose adaptation of Coleridge's poem "Christabel," with modifications to make it clear that any of the possible scandalous queer readings of that poem do not apply to Le Fanu's text. Nethercot provides an interesting case; although he is one of the few critics to read these works side by side, he is writing in 1949, in a period before queer criticism informed readings of texts (and just before the post-war period in which a nascent gay rights movement would make Le Fanu's tale canonical) and his almost complete denial of queerness in the text is telling. Nethercot is correct that LeFanu is careful to reject the idea that Carmilla is a man in disguise:

Coleridge himself charged William Hazlitt with spreading the report that "Geraldine was a man in disguise" and that therefore "Christabel" had been called "the most obscene Poem in the English Language." To judge from later references, this interpretation evidently made some general impression.... LeFanu is impelled to make Laura herself disclaim this explanation. (37)

However, the critic's belief that Le Fanu is doing so to remove any possibility of a scandalous interpretation of the text arises from a misunderstanding of the author's intent and a misreading of the text. Nethercot resists seeing how queerness is encoded in literature and cannot acknowledge the "lesbian" content in the novel. Le Fanu simply wants to make it absolutely clear that Carmilla is indeed a woman. Laura's description of Carmilla's affections make it quite clear that they are feminine rather than masculine:

I could boast of no little attentions such as masculine gallantry delights to offer. Between these passionate moments there were long intervals of commonplace, of gaiety, of brooding melancholy, during which, except that I detected her eyes so full of melancholy fire, following me, at times I might have been as nothing to her. Except in these brief periods of mysterious excitement her ways were girlish; and there was always a languor about her, quite incompatible with a masculine system in a state of health. (Le Fanu 24)

By establishing Carmilla as unequivocally a woman, Le Fanu makes the main action of his novel also inevitably queer. Nethercot at the very end of his essay attempts to dismiss what he terms a “Lesbian” reading of the text by stating “A much easier case, of course, though I think not a true one either, could be made from the Carmilla-Laura affair,” but a variety of evidence in the text makes it clear that Carmilla and Laura can both be interpreted as queer figures. Nina Auerbach outlines the evidence that leads to this interpretation, and she is not alone. In her book *Queer Others in Victorian Gothic: Transgressing Monstrosity*, Ardel Haefele Thomas begins her analysis of *Carmilla* and Florence Marryat’s *The Blood of the Vampire* (discussed in the next chapter) by stating that “[t]o say that vampires Carmilla and Harriet embody queer desire is, perhaps, the least surprising interpretation” (96). Thus while early critics rejected a queer reading and focused on other aspects of the horror of *Carmilla*, recent critics are more equipped with the tools needed to see the queerness in Carmilla and Laura’s relationship and produce a reading focused on that aspect of the text.

Laura constantly goes back and forth between being attracted to Carmilla and repulsed by her. While this is in part due to Carmilla’s vampiric nature, the way this attraction-repulsion is written makes it clear that it is the exact sort of dual fascination and horror many people experience when they awaken to their queerness. Even upon her first meeting with Carmilla, this dual fascination and abhorrence is seen. Laura is disturbed by Carmilla’s appearance because she realizes the woman looks exactly like one from a nightmarish vision of childhood. The earliest thing Laura can remember, which happened when she was around the age of six, is a nightmare she had in which a woman appears at Laura’s bedside and crawls into it with her. The stranger caresses Laura and causes her to fall asleep, but then this peaceful sleep is broken by “a sensation as if two needles ran into [her] breast very deep at the same moment” (Le Fanu 4). The woman

then disappeared under Laura's bed, and Laura has never seen her since – until Laura first sets eyes on Carmilla, when she recognizes her as the strange woman in her childhood nightmare. Before Laura can act on this revulsion, however, Carmilla works to twist it around and forge a bond between them instead. She explains that she is surprised at seeing Laura because she too had a strange vision in her childhood, one in which she saw the adult Laura, and has ever since wanted to meet her. Laura reacts to this revelation with a mix of fascination and horror:

Now the truth is, I felt rather unaccountably towards the beautiful stranger. I did feel, as she said, 'drawn towards her,' but there was also something of a 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. (Le Fanu 19)

Laura has much reason to feel an aversion towards the stranger who appears to have arisen straight out of her childhood vision, and she does not wholly abandon these feelings of horror. Still, that Laura's sense of attraction wins out is significant. The way that Carmilla is "indescribably engaging" hints at a queer aspect, for such attractions were virtually unnamable at this time.

Carmilla's queerness soon becomes even more overt, with a consequent confused reaction from Laura. In one of the most sexual passages of the novel, she describes a common behavior of her companion:

Sometimes after an hour of apathy, my strange and beautiful companion would take my hand and hold it with a fond pressure, renewed again and again; blushing softly, gazing in my face with languid and burning eyes, and breathing so fast that her dress rose and fell with the tumultuous respiration....with gloating eyes she drew me to hear, and her hot lips travelled along my cheek in kisses; and she would whisper, almost in sobs, 'You are mine, you *shall* be mine, you and I are one for ever.' Then she has thrown herself back in her chair, with her small hands over her eyes, leaving me trembling. (Le Fanu 23)

This occurrence would seem to represent something far more straightforwardly and explicitly queer than Carmilla's discussion of a mutual pair of dreams. The language is quite sexual, from the "fond pressure, renewed again and again" to the hot lips that "travel...along my cheek in

kisses” to the post-orgasmic ending that sees both women exhausted. This last aspect is a key part of the passage – Laura is left “trembling” after these episodes of Carmilla’s passion, showing that on the bodily level at least, there is a pleasurable response to the vampire’s actions. Of course, just because Laura’s body responds positively to this sexual attention does not mean that she desires it or enjoys it. Instead, Laura’s confusion and “ambiguous feeling” about the vampire become even more intense and torn. She relates that she feels Carmilla’s actions are “like the ardour of a lover; it embarrassed me; it was hateful and yet overpowering” (Le Fanu 23).

It is this mixed feeling that will later cause Laura to consider and dismiss the possibility that Carmilla is a man in disguise. If Carmilla really were a man, her true identity would not cause Laura to feel the mix of repulsion and attraction she feels; instead Laura would feel only revulsion at Carmilla’s vampiric nature, which might well be insufficient to muddle her attraction. However, Carmilla is indeed a woman, as Laura observes that these passions come and go unlike the ardor of a male lover. Thus Laura’s repulsion remains, mixed with an equal feeling of attraction towards Carmilla. The values she is familiar with would lead Laura to be totally disgusted by this situation, but the queer awakening Laura is going through leads to fascination, even enjoyment. As the novel goes on, Laura’s feelings of attraction and repulsion grow equally, and so her “ambiguous feeling” does not lose its ambiguity but remains just as confusing, just as Laura continues to be perplexed (as much by herself as by Carmilla).

As in Polidori’s tale, confusion as to physical location and description is linked to uncertainty as to affections. This spatial derangement is similar to that found in “The Vampyre” and it eventually leads us into a similar violent and muddled scene. Just as Lord Ruthven hides himself in a distorted and mystifying space to occlude his vampirism and queerness, so too does

Carmilla use a similar tactic to evade Laura's attempts to learn more about her. The basics of the response is similar. Both vampires are threatened with discovery, and so they throw their victim into a distorted setting; the victim will not truly understand what is going on and fail to discover the vampire's true identity, much though the vampire may wish them to do so. Then, having succeeded in disorienting their victim, the vampire returns to the spatially reoriented victim, offering comfort so as to strengthen the bond between them. The vampire has a chance to give an explanation of the occluded events that makes it seem that they are not a vampire and satisfy the victim's attraction while destroying any lingering doubts. Thus the vampire's retreat into a muddled or occluded realm is a defense mechanism similar to the transformation into mist possessed by later vampires.

Carmilla's use of this pattern is similar to Lord Ruthven's, but where he brings Aubrey into a dark, irrational space, Carmilla retreats from containment altogether. In Chapter VII, Laura has a dream in which her mother's voice warns her against an assassin; she then sees Carmilla standing before her, bathed in blood. Upon waking, Laura believes that somebody is trying to kill Carmilla. She rushes to Carmilla's room, only to find the door locked, and Carmilla herself completely absent once the house servants aid her in effecting an entrance. Carmilla, it seems, has vanished just when Laura has begun suffering from a number of strange dreams and a certain languor that will be revealed to be the signs of the vampire's predations. By disappearing in this way, Carmilla shifts all concern, including Laura's, onto her and away from anything else. Nobody worries about whether their somewhat strange guest might be the vampire that has been plaguing the countryside; they are too concerned with trying to find where she has disappeared to. Even Carmilla's reappearance is strange and serves to further the pattern, as it allows her a chance to make her bond with Laura even stronger. Laura is too relieved that Carmilla has

returned to question the strange events that have been happening to herself too much. The “ambiguous feeling” that Laura has felt is echoed in the spatial ambiguity that Carmilla passes through, which leads to Laura feeling the attraction much more strongly. Victim and vampire thus become closer than they already were, following the pattern established in “The Vampyre.” She is overjoyed to have her friend back: “I ran to her in an ecstasy of joy; I kissed and embraced her again and again” (Le Fanu 47). It seems almost as if her fear of losing Carmilla has wiped away Laura’s repulsion and left her in a state of longing.

Laura clings to the possibility of a rational explanation—her father blandly proposes that Carmilla was sleepwalking--to justify her continued feelings of attraction towards the vampire. She also is eager to accept the rationalized explanation her father provides. Parallel to the way her relief at Carmilla’s return is causing Laura to feel an overwhelming attraction towards the vampire with very little repulsion, the vampire is helping the victim to try to deny that there was ever any spatial ambiguity in. Resolving this spatial ambiguity seems to provide a chance to resolve the “ambiguous feelings” Laura has as well. Thus Carmilla’s return from the space outside the novel is a significant part of her enactment of the spatial confusion pattern, as her actions and Laura’s reactions are a sort of case study of how the bond between vampire and victim is made so much stronger after a spatially ambiguous event.

In addition to Laura’s queer awakening, *Carmilla* has some significant aspects to its narrative compared to earlier vampire literature. While tropes of space connect Le Fanu’s story to Polidori’s, it should be noted that the vampire has much more of a voice here than in the earlier narratives. Much of the story revolves around her interactions with Laura, and so it is necessary for Carmilla to converse with her. However, Carmilla’s words go far beyond this necessity. The vampire does not restrict herself to vague pronouncements and terrifying hints;

instead she is less cryptic and more straightforward than previous vampires. She speaks on her affections for Laura, often in quite explicit language that male vampires have not used. While Lord Ruthven speaks of marriage to women or extracting an oath from Aubrey, Carmilla directly confesses her love to Laura: “I have been in love with no one, and never shall,’ she whispered, ‘Unless it should be with you’” (Le Fanu 34). Critics like Nethercot once tried to suppress the “lesbian” content of *Carmilla*, but the queerness of the work is now being brought to the surface rather than remaining murky subtext. This explicit queerness is a direct result of allowing the vampire herself to have a voice and be heard by the reader. The trend of allowing the vampire to speak to the audience, which began in Planché’s version of “The Vampyre,” and is greatly expanded upon here, will lead, eventually, to twentieth-century texts in which the vampire becomes a sympathetic anti-hero or even hero of his or her own story.

However, this sympathy is not yet fully apparent in *Carmilla*. While Carmilla is allowed a voice in the narrative, it is not her story. The novel is told from Laura’s point of view. Thus she is a mediator between Carmilla and the reader, greatly affecting how the reader feels about the vampire. Laura is largely sympathetic to Carmilla—as distinct from Aubrey and with more agency than Christabel—but she also feels a certain repulsion towards her. This “ambiguous feeling” causes Laura to go back and forth in her descriptions of Carmilla, and to be incapable of truly understanding the vampire. The reader does not get a stable image of the vampire precisely because Laura is not able to form one. While it is clear to the reader that Carmilla is queer and in love with Laura (albeit in a rather predatory and unhealthy way), Laura consistently tries to deny this, theorizing that Carmilla is a man in disguise or that Laura reminds her of some lover she once had. Laura acts as a mediator between Carmilla’s voice and the text, and so by standing between the reader and the vampire, prevents Carmilla from being read with full sympathy. If

Laura does not understand and cannot properly report on the vampire's queerness, it is quite possible that she has missed or misunderstood other aspects of her undead friend.

The narrative step forward that Le Fanu seems to be taking by allowing Carmilla more of a voice is in part offset by the pattern of gender imbalance in the narrative. While Laura and Carmilla spend much of the story as the focal points, this is not always the case. Rather than having female narrative predominant throughout *Carmilla*, the story instead follows a pattern of male narrative primacy being disrupted by women, only to be restored again to the men by the novel's end. Early on in the novel, Laura and her father are awaiting a visit from General Spielsdorf and his ward; the latter is to become a companion to Laura. The ward dies suddenly and Carmilla appears instead under mysterious circumstances to take her and the General's place as the focus of the narrative. Female vampire has displaced a male patriarch at the heart of the story, a disruption that causes much narrative chaos and allows Laura and Carmilla to spend much of the middle part of the novella telling their own stories.

However, this female narrative primacy cannot be allowed to last, for if the vampire is free to tell her own story, the reader may well begin to sympathize with her just as Laura does, and no final destruction of her will be possible. Male figures must regain control of the narrative in order to destroy Carmilla by displacing her: "the story has no logical end, for no character can be saved or damned. Le Fanu's experts plod in and chop Carmilla out of the narrative" (Auerbach 50) Le Fanu accomplishes this return to male narrative primacy through the introduction of a series of experts who rewrite Carmilla's story and recast her as a villain; as a result, Laura and the reader's sympathy ends and Carmilla can be safely destroyed. First, General Spielsdorf reappears and reveals that his ward was killed by Carmilla. The General tells his own story of meeting Carmilla and explains part of her monstrous and vampiric nature. Then other

male authority figures appear, including a woodsman who knows local legends and a strange Baron who seems to be an expert in vampire lore (and who foreshadows Stoker's Van Helsing). One by one, these figures force Carmilla out of the closet, as it were, and reveal her true nature as a queer predator and a vampire. The men are even the ones responsible for reporting on Carmilla's destruction, as Laura does not witness this event first-hand but only learns of it through a report by the inquisition that oversaw Carmilla's exhumation and destruction. Although Carmilla has had a chance to break free from male control and begin to tell her own story, in the end male figures corral her again and bring her and the narrative back to a focus on men that allows Carmilla to be safely disposed of. Having her story told by male authority figures rather than by a woman allows Carmilla to be recast as a definite danger and be destroyed, rather than being seen as the ambiguous and complicated figure she is depicted as when Laura has narrative prominence.

One significant part of the pattern is the General's story of his encounter with Carmilla, which begins the process of her story being told – but by men's voices, not her own. Spielsdorf spends most of chapters XI through XIV recounting his story of meeting Carmilla (then called Millarca) and her mother, agreeing to take her in, and watching as she fed upon his daughter and caused her death. Where Laura's account of similar events has been fairly sympathetic to the vampire – or at least filled with her “ambiguous feeling” about Carmilla – General Spielsdorf's account is entirely hostile. He sees Carmilla as nothing more than a horrible monster that he has sworn to destroy. The General describes Carmilla's family as evil: “It was a bad family, and here its blood-stained annals were written....It is hard that they should, after death, continue to plague the human race with their atrocious lusts” (Le Fanu 67-8). He makes his mission quite clear a short time later: he means to “decapitate the monster” (Le Fanu 68). This phrasing is significant

because it represents a change in how Carmilla is referred to in the narrative. Laura has considered Carmilla to be a dear friend and also a person just like herself, while the General dehumanizes Carmilla. There have been hints at the supernatural nature of Carmilla earlier in the novel, but it is only now that a man has come to dominate the narrative that she is reclassified as something different and less than human. From this point forward, Carmilla is varyingly referred to as a vampire, a demon, and a creature, all words that dehumanize her and place her as a definite enemy of the protagonists, rather than the ambiguous friend to Laura she has heretofore been. Thus one of the main effects of the predominance of male voices in the narrative is to change the language about Carmilla from Laura's queer "ambiguous feeling" to a heteronormative unambiguous condemnation and othering of a queer figure. The heterosexual paranoia Sedgwick locates at the heart of gothic fiction emerges strongly at this point.

We need, it seems, multiple men to banish Carmilla. Baron Vordenburg, a mysterious vampire expert, also contributes heavily to the pattern of male authority figures taking prominence in the narrative away from women and telling their stories for them. Like subsequent vampire hunters, Baron Vordenburg does much to rationalize vampirism by treating it as a phenomenon that can be examined scientifically. A fair-sized portion of the last chapter is devoted to a list of the various attributes and behaviors of vampires in general. More than just establishing a trend that will be followed in later works, this passage is key because it contains an attempt to explain away Carmilla's feelings for Laura as something other than queer love with a dark, predatory element to it. Instead, the Baron explains that Carmilla is nothing more than a base predator:

The vampire is prone to be fascinated with an engrossing vehemence, resembling the passion of love, by particular persons. In pursuit of these it will exercise inexhaustible patient and stratagem, for access to a particular object may be obstructed in a hundred ways. It will never desist until it has satiated its passion, and drained the very life of its

coveted victim. But it will, in these cases, husband and protract its murderous enjoyment with the refinement of an epicure, and heighten by it the gradual approaches of an artful courtship. In these cases it seems to yearn for something like sympathy and consent. (Le Fanu 81)

Thus rather than allow Carmilla the ability to determine and describe her sexuality and behavior for herself, a man reduces her from a full-fledged albeit dark queer character to a blood-sucking monster capable only of bloodlust, with proper love being completely unimaginable.

The Baron continues his domination and definition of Carmilla's character when he recounts the Moravian nobleman's tale of how she came to be a vampire and his battle with her (yet another male voice). He explains that this man in fact had an attachment to Carmilla: "It is enough to say that in very early youth he had been a passionate and favored lover of the beautiful Mircalla, Countess Karnstein" (Le Fanu 81-2). This revelation admits a few possible interpretations. One is that Carmilla's queerness is being further undone by showing that she actually loves men. Another is that her queerness is being pathologized by comparing it to infectious vampirism. The implication in this case would be that Carmilla was straight when she was a human, but her transformation into a vampire also turned her into a lesbian, and thus she is a perverted monster on two levels. A third, more positive possibility, is that Carmilla's queerness encompasses men and women, and despite Baron Vordenburg's statements to the contrary, the vampire's love for the male nobleman and the female Laura are equally valid. Whatever the case, it was this man's love that allowed Carmilla to escape destruction during the first plague of vampirism. He wished to save her from "the outrage of a posthumous execution" and so he hid the true location of her grave (Le Fanu 82). Thus rather than Carmilla surviving and acting on her own initiative, this story makes her dependent on a man for survival and thus once again subservient to heteronormativity. Rather than being a character that causes fear or adoration in

her own right, Baron Vordenburg's story transforms her so that she is an object for men first to save and then to destroy.

However, the novel turns out to be even more complex, and it in fact undercuts this pattern of reasserting a male voice's domination of the narrative. The end of the story makes it clear that Carmilla has not been completely destroyed. Laura still remembers her, with notable vividness:

It was long before the terror of recent events subsided; and to this hour the image of Carmilla returns to memory with ambiguous alterations – sometimes the playful, languid, beautiful girl; sometimes the writhing fiend I saw in the ruined church; and often from a reverie have I started, fancying I heard the light step of Carmilla at the drawing-room door. (Le Fanu 83)

Carmilla thus lives on through Laura, representing an ultimate victory of femininity and queerness. As Nina Auerbach says, Laura's "final sentence is not merely elegiac: as effectively as the moonlight under which dead male vampires quivered, Laura's memories restore Carmilla to physical life" (47). Though the men have destroyed Carmilla's body and attempted to take control of the story of her life and her identity, they cannot destroy Laura's memories of her (and, perhaps, her desire for her). If heteronormativity had been truly restored, Laura would feel only hate and revulsion at the thought of her queer vampire predator. Instead, she still feels that same "ambiguous feeling" that she has felt since she first met Carmilla. Auerbach goes beyond this and speculates that Carmilla and Laura have truly become one and the latter may be well on the road to vampirism, an even stronger victory for female queerness than the survival of fond memories.

Further, although the men gain a great degree of prominence in the narrative in the final portion of the novel, Laura is still the narrator. The novel is framed as a letter she is writing to a friend in town, and the fact that she portrays Carmilla sympathetically for most of the story

shows that it is she, not the men, who truly controls the whole narrative. Laura acts as a mediator of their speech just as she does with Carmilla's speech earlier in the novel. The men may be the ones who describe Carmilla's backstory and explain who she "really" is, but it is Laura who recounts these descriptions. They are thus distanced from us, and Laura remains our authority in the end. Just as she interpreted Carmilla's words of affection towards her, so too does Laura interpret the hateful words the men speak about Carmilla. The strange survival of Carmilla that occurs through Laura's memories could not happen if Laura was not in control of the narrative throughout the whole novel. Thus, though *Carmilla* seems to restore heteronormativity at the end, the final state of the novella is, in fact, just as ambiguous and complex as Laura's feelings for Carmilla.

Another narrative layer is introduced in the republication of the *Carmilla* as part of Le Fanu's collection *In A Glass Darkly*. This version of the work, in its prologue, grants control of the narrative to a (presumably) male figure, which seems to add more complication to the narrative aspects of a queer reading of Carmilla. However, the prologue actually does little to disrupt the sympathy towards queerness that Laura's narration shows. *In A Glass Darkly* is framed as being a collection of case files by Doctor Hesselius, a sort of Van Helsing figure, and the prologue to *Carmilla* turns the novella into one of his cases. This changes the audience for whom Laura is writing from a female friend to a male scientist – another one of the male experts that come to dominate the latter part of the text. The writer of the prologue, who seems to be some person who has prepared a set of the Doctor's papers for publication has not, however, chosen to give any context on Hesselius's views on vampirism and instead "shall forestall the intelligent lady, who relates it, in nothing" (*Carmilla* 84). Further, he states that "she, probably, could have added little to the Narrative which she communicates in the following pages,"

indicating that although a further level of narration has been introduced between the reader and Carmilla herself, this level has not done anything to disrupt the queer aspects of the text. The one significant alteration is a mention of Laura's death a few years after her narration, lending some credence to Auerbach's idea that Carmilla has in a way succeeded in vampirizing Laura. Thus while the prologue in the *In A Glass Darkly* version of *Carmilla* does have some impact on how the text is read, it does not undo a queer reading of the novella, but potentially, in fact, strengthens that reading.

Chapter 2:

Count Dracula Versus the World: The Vampire Goes Global

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, vampires turned from personal conquest towards a new, more ambitious goal: global conquest. Their stories were increasingly popular, and it is at this time that Bram Stoker wrote *Dracula* (1897), perhaps the most famous vampire story of all time. Florence Marryat's *The Blood of the Vampire* (1897), while nowhere near as famous, creates in Harriet Brandt a figure who also threatens to destabilize and disrupt the heart of Empire – albeit without even knowing what she is doing. Just as Stoker's villainous Count hopes to infect the British Empire's capital, so did other vampires go forth and conquer the imaginations of the whole world. A strain of German vampire narratives emerged at this time, and while it is unfortunately beyond the scope of this present study, its existence shows just how culturally significant the vampire had become. Vampires also became big in the United States, leading to innovations in such tales. Whereas Dracula wished to piggyback on the British Empire and spread his vampiric queerness across the whole world, some of the American vampires aimed higher and targeted Western culture itself. George Sylvester Viereck's *The House of the Vampire* (1907), a work that clearly draws on the writings of Oscar Wilde as well as Stoker, introduces Reginald Clarke, a man who feasts on the artistic glories of others and turns them into his own masterpieces. Clarke, as well as Harriet Brandt, displays another significant aspect of the texts of this period: as vampirism spread across the world, it mutated. A new strain of psychic vampires, creatures that steal energy and emotion rather than blood, emerged to reflect new social anxieties and scientific advances. These new vampires also radically differ from the ancient blood-suckers by marking the beginning of a turn from monstrous queer figures to tragic

and even heroic ones. Just as the turn of the twentieth century was a time of great change for the world at large, so too did it see radical shifts in the world of the queer vampire.

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is perhaps the most famous and significant vampire novel in the English language. While John Polidori's "The Vampyre" introduced vampires to English literature, and subsequent works such as *Carmilla* expanded upon the legends of these queer fanged horrors, it is *Dracula* that everyone knows, and "Dracula" is practically a synonym for "vampire." The novel is famous for creating or popularizing many archetypical vampire tropes, from their Transylvanian origin to Dracula's ability to become mist or a bat. (It must however be noted that some traits associated with vampires in general and the Count specifically emerge from films, not the original text. Stoker's *Dracula* never says "I never drink...wine," and nor is he destroyed by sunlight.) Here Stoker's masterpiece is significant for the immense number of queer moments and possibilities for queer readings it presents. However, since so much has been made of the novel in feminist theory already, this reading will focus on particular aspects of the narrative. Specifically, while the middle portion of the novel dealing with Lucy and her male protectors has a wealth of moments open to interpretation, many of these have already been mined by previous critics. Instead, the focus here will be upon Jonathan and Mina Harker; while these figures have come in for much discussion, my reading will focus on the way in which their story frames the central (and most analyzed) part of the narrative, with the opening and closing sections of the book mirroring one another in such a way that the Harkers become a kind of unified character. They thus present, in their relations to Dracula, a particularly rich example of Sedgwick's erotic triangle, and both characters bear close examination on the fronts of homoeroticism and gender inversion.

In Stoker's novel, some familiar tropes are immediately apparent. One such trope is disorientation in space and time. The first four chapters of the novel, which recount Jonathan Harker's time in the Count's castle, have episodes of disorientation that work to erode Jonathan's strong English masculine character. A form of spatial disorientation occurs during the wild ride to Dracula's castle. Jonathan has already been put into a suspicious mood by the superstitious behavior of the peasants he has encountered. He is open to the eerie and mystical in a way that he would not normally be: "I suppose the general superstition about midnight was increased by my recent experiences" (Stoker 42). As a result, Jonathan is primed to react with confusion and the beginnings of fear at the strange behavior of the coachman who takes him to Castle Dracula. The man (later revealed to be the Count himself) drives back and forth along the same path: "The carriage went at a hard pace straight along, then we made a complete turn and went along another straight road." Jonathan is able to discern that he is simply being lead around and around, and yet he does not ask the coachman why this is happening. Although he states in his diary that "any protest would have had no effect in case there had been an intention to delay," it seems reasonable to infer that the mounting fear Jonathan experiences throughout this part of his journey is the true reason he does not interrupt (Stoker 41). Both Jonathan and the reader have likely begun to suspect that this disorientation is not just meant as a delaying tactic. While it has failed to consciously alter the solicitor's feelings, the eeriness of his ride so far simply further heightens his emotional state as a prelude to the temporal distortion that follows.

Soon after midnight, the Count stops driving the coach in a circle and begins the true journey to Castle Dracula. Along the way, Jonathan sees strange blue flames on the roadside and is frightened by the howling of wolves. The first time he sees these flames, the coachman jumps down from the coach and places a number of stones on top of the flame. (Count Dracula later

explains that these flames are said to mark where treasure has been buried.) This first instance of blue fire truly happens, but Jonathan (and thus the reader) is unsure whether the series of further blue flames and stone markers are real or a dream. Just as with the earlier repeated circling of the carriage, Jonathan feels that “it seemed to repeated endlessly...it is a sort of awful nightmare” (Stoker 43). Thus Jonathan is confused as to the flow of time and the reality of his experiences, and his terror will make him an easier target for Dracula. Polidori’s Lord Ruthven exploited Aubrey’s confusion to reforge their homosocial bond, and so too will Count Dracula pretend to be a reassuring source of stability for Jonathan after his frightful midnight ride so as to gain power over the solicitor. Disorientation in space and time is here used to disturb the vampire’s victim and make him receptive to the vampire’s queer advances in just the same way as the trope was employed in the earliest texts.

Dracula’s desire for Jonathan’s friendship is clear throughout the first four chapters of the novel, but it is not until the famous scene with his brides that Dracula’s interest seems to be not just homosocial but homoerotic. Dracula at first acts kindly towards Jonathan and seems to have his best interests at heart. The Count welcomes the solicitor to his castle with the words “Welcome to my house. Come freely. Go safely; and leave something of the happiness you bring!” (Stoker 46). In spite of all the eerie experiences the Count has inflicted on Jonathan during his ride, there does seem to be some truth to this sentiment. Dracula seems truly to desire Jonathan’s safety and happiness. He acts as servant and chef, providing all of Jonathan’s meals and the various other amenities the solicitor needs during his stay. He provides a source of conversation and entertainment for Jonathan, explaining the superstitions of Transylvania and regaling him with tales of the nation’s history. Further, Dracula does his best to protect Jonathan from the weird and horrific aspects of the castle, warning him not to venture through any locked

doors, to sleep only in his own chambers, and even protecting him from the “voluptuous” women that seek to drink Jonathan’s blood. Jonathan returns Dracula’s affections to an extent. He finds the Count’s conversation quite stimulating and useful, even as he becomes more and more suspicious of the vampire; man and vampire forge a homosocial relationship with each other, much as previous pairs such as Aubrey and Ruthven have.

As in the other examples of this trope, the homosocial bond between Jonathan and Dracula is not benevolent. It is instead a tool the vampire uses to feed upon his victim. Dracula, however, does not wish to drain Jonathan of his blood but of his knowledge and identity, a process that resembles the psychic vampirism that emerges in late Victorian vampire tales (and which will be explored in a queer context in the two other works discussed in this chapter). Dracula is isolated from London, his target of conquest, and while his immense library of English books has allowed him to learn the language and gain much other knowledge about life in the capital of the British Empire, he is not yet capable of passing for a modern human and keeping his vampiric nature secret. He needs Jonathan’s knowledge of spoken English and up-to-date habits to be able to pass invisibly through London. Dracula explains his desire to talk to Jonathan so as to be able to properly speak English:

Well, I know that, did I move and speak in your London, none there are who would not know me for a stranger. That is not enough for me. ... I am content if I am like the rest, so that no man stops if he see me, or pause in his speaking if he hear my words, ‘Ha, ha! a stranger!’ ... You shall, I trust, rest here with me awhile, so that by our talking I may learn the English intonation; and I would that you tell me when I make error, even of the smallest, in my speaking. (Stoker 51)

This ability to pass through the world without being questioned is one often desired by queer people, especially those in dangerous and oppressive places. When one risks imprisonment for showing one’s true self, whether that be queer person or vampire, it is highly useful to be able to appear to be what society considers to be a “normal” person. By this time, anti-homosexuality

laws in England had changed somewhat, and death was no longer the penalty for having one's queerness discovered. "Sodomy" was still illegal, but the penalty was changed from death to life imprisonment in the 1860s. The Labouchere Amendment, passed into law in 1885, made "gross indecency" a crime. While Victorian social mores prevented the law from stating exactly what this meant, in much the same way that queerness in vampire fiction exists to allow hints at "the love that dare not speak its name," this law was used to punish queer people. The sentences that resulted were much shorter than under earlier legislation, and the death penalty was never a possibility. However, as Oscar Wilde's experiences show, the humiliation and destruction of one's way of life caused by exposure through a trial, and the sufferings and privation of prison, often lead to death anyway. As Ed Cohen's notes in *Talk on the Wilde Side*, many of Wilde's allies and friends worked quickly to disassociate themselves from him as soon as he was tried. All in all, having one's queerness exposed in late Victorian Britain was still a potentially annihilating experience, and so much effort was made to keep one's queerness secret. Many people remained as deep in the closet as possible, a hiddenness that is reflected in queer vampire texts of the time. Thus although Count Dracula will later drain blood from his victims, at this stage he must instead drain Jonathan's psyche, for without the knowledge he gains he will never be able to survive in England to accomplish his goals.

Knowledge of language is not the only thing the vampire needs to be truly passable, however; he requires a variety of other details to be correct. Dracula questions Jonathan on his knowledge of the law, curious about such issues as whether one man can have multiple solicitors. In this way, Dracula is absorbing not just Jonathan's Englishness, which could have been acquired from any number of other people in the text, but his legal knowledge, which is more specific to him. The Count is doing his best to truly *become* Jonathan, a process that is

cemented when he steals the man's traveling clothes. Jonathan notices that the clothes are gone right after he attempts to have the Count's servants post letters for him. Soon after, he sees the Count wearing the clothes: "It was a new shock to me to find that he had on the suit of clothes which I had worn whilst travelling here" (Stoker 76). Jonathan concludes that the Count's purpose is two-fold: to make people believe that Jonathan himself posted the letters claiming he has left the castle, and to make the local peasantry blame him for any of the Count's wrongdoings as a guard against the possibility that the solicitor escapes. The Count has not just been satisfied to absorb the parts of Jonathan's identity that will allow him to pass for human in England; instead, he has gone so far as to steal Jonathan's voice and appearance, more or less becoming him. This is a degree of psychic vampirism further than most psychic vampires characters take it. Most psychic vampires, as typified by Harriet Brandt in *The Blood of the Vampire* (a novel published in the same year as *Dracula* that will be considered later in this chapter), simply drain the energy of their victims through psychic means rather than by drinking blood. They differ from the traditional blood drinkers only in the means of absorbing life from their victims; these victims still feel enervated afterwards, but just as a blood vampire does not cause the victims to lose pieces of their minds, so too does the psychic vampire take only life force. Count Dracula, however, never drinks Jonathan's blood, but instead steals his identity, making him an even more monstrous and powerful vampire than most blood or psychic vampires. In a way, the homosocial bond between man and vampire resembles heteronormative marriage's ideal of two people becoming one; however, here it is by means of one stealing the other's identity rather than a more benevolent merging of psyches. Other details considered below intensify this image of a kind of marital bond; indeed, critic Barry McCrea has read this section of the novel as detailing the experiences of "Jonathan, Bride of Dracula" (257).

This merging of selves establishes the ground for a homoerotic component to the bond between Jonathan and Dracula, although that bond is subtle and ambiguous. For the most part, Dracula's kindness towards Jonathan Harker seems to arise out of a need to steal his identity, as previously discussed. This kindness includes Dracula's protectiveness in the scene with his brides (as the three vampire women have come to be known) that closes Chapter III. The alluring and dangerous women attempt to drink Jonathan's blood, and he seems as if he is about to gladly succumb to their seduction until Dracula interferes. After hurling one of the brides away from Jonathan, the Count lays claim to the solicitor quite clearly: "This man belongs to me!" (Stoker 70). All of this is consistent with the interactions between man and vampire being entirely homosocial.

However, homoeroticism is suggested when the brides claim that Dracula "never loved; [he] never love[s]." The Count responds only after gazing at Jonathan: "Then the Count turned, after looking at my face attentively, and said in a soft whisper – 'Yes, I too can love'" (Stoker 70-1). Of course, this line admits a variety of possible interpretations. Given that Dracula goes on to say "you yourselves can tell it from the past," it is certainly possible that Dracula once loved the vampire brides. After all, given his behavior towards Lucy and Mina, love – at least in some twisted vampire form – seems to be a likely motivation for Dracula's decisions to turn people into vampires rather than just feeding on them. They have observed other instances of his "love" Another possibility that is made use of in many adaptations of the novel is that Dracula is referring to some previous mortal love who did not become a vampire.³ Nonetheless, the fact

³ This is commonly made a previous incarnation of Mina, as in Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. Such an interpretation grounds the story in heterosexuality. Any possibility of the brides being intermediary female figures necessary for mediating a relationship between two males is removed. Instead, they become echoes of Dracula's true lady love, or attempts at replacing or replicating her. Such an interpolation is unsurprising, given that this moment is such

that Dracula's retort to the brides is immediately preceded by an "attentive" gaze at Jonathan suggests the possibility that the vampire feels some sort of attraction and affection towards the solicitor that is more than the largely platonic feelings of a homosocial bond. Further evidence of this comes at the start of Chapter IV, where Jonathan awakens the next morning to discover that he's been undressed and put in bed, an intimacy redolent of a sexual encounter.

Jonathan's encounter with the brides reveals another queer aspect to this early portion of the text, namely gender inversion. Their roles in the encounter are reversed from the normative ones in which men are the active and penetrative actor in sex and women are passive and receptive. Instead, Jonathan is receptive and feminine while the brides are active and masculine. Jonathan is quite pleased by their attentions at first, even though he feels the same sort of ambiguous feeling that other heroes have felt when faced with vampires. Jonathan feels uneasy and they create in him "some longing and at the same time some deadly fear" (Stoker 69). He describes the brides in mixed terms as well. The breath of the one who almost kisses him is "honey-sweet" and yet has "a bitter underlying the sweet...as one smells in blood." They have a "deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive" (Stoker 69). Thus the same problem of vampirism (and queerness) being both alluring and frightening reappears. Jonathan is strongly attracted to the brides and their promise of dominance over him, and yet there is something eerie about the whole situation that puts him off.

a strange one; it is clearly significant but not explained. Further, if a creator wishes to make Dracula less horrific and more acceptable to a heteronormative audience, quashing any overt expression of his queerness is important. There is also of course the possibility that such an interpretation serves to appeal to fans of vampire/human romance, an increasingly popular (and often heteronormative) subgenre of vampire fiction (see Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* for the example furthest from horrific vampires).

Nonetheless, their attraction wins out at this moment, though Jonathan will ever after describe them as horrible monsters and his greatest fear. The fact that he worries that his description of the brides will cause Mina pain suggests that they are more sexual and perhaps more physically attractive than Jonathan's fiancée. As a result, Jonathan feels a strong desire for them and wishes them to kiss him with their red, voluptuous lips. He makes no move to kiss them, but reclines passively and waits for them to act: "I lay quiet, looking out from under my eyelashes in an agony of delightful anticipation" (Stoker 69). He continues to be passive even as the fair bride bends over him and brings her mouth closer and closer to his throat. The descriptions here are very sexual. Jonathan skin "tingles" in response to her approaching teeth, and right before he would be bitten, he "closes [his] eyes in languorous ecstasy" (Stoker 70). The way he can feel "the hard dents of two sharp teeth, just touching and pausing there" is reminiscent of a woman's feelings in the moments just before her male lover penetrates her. Jonathan is feminized in his interaction with the brides, and even Dracula's rescue helps to make Jonathan a weak, effeminate figure. This ties to a queerphobic fear of being womanlike, as a leading theory of homosexuality in the 1890s was that gay people were so-called "inverts" who possess the qualities and emotions of the opposite gender (this concept is vaguely similar to transgender people). Thus Jonathan's feminization in this scene represents a great deal of anxiety about gender roles and queerness which is present in all of the more conservative vampire narratives.

The gender inversion of Jonathan Harker also appears in the way he occupies the role of a traditional Gothic heroine during the first four chapters of *Dracula*. Gothic heroines tend to be marked as extremely feminine, fainting at signs of danger and needing a man to defend them. They are also often locked up in a castle or keep by an evil aristocrat, or at least threatened with

such a fate. (For example, Adeline, the heroine of Ann Radcliffe's *Romance of the Forest*, begins the novel locked up in a convent, and later is briefly trapped in a Marquis' mansion.) Jonathan shows signs of all these traits of the archetypical Gothic heroine. He is, of course, a prisoner in Castle Dracula thanks to an evil aristocrat, the Count. His reaction to discovering this is dramatic and shows a somewhat disoriented mental state (one that Victorians would read as feminine due to a belief that women are mentally weak). Jonathan rushes around like a trapped animal, trying to find any method of escape that the Count may have overlooked. He himself acknowledges a certain irrationality to his actions: "When I found I was a prisoner a sort of wild feeling came over me.I think I must have been mad for the time, for I behaved much as a rat does in a trap" (Stoker 58). Jonathan's reaction is like that of a scared woman rather than the brave British male he is supposed to be. This is in large part because Count Dracula takes the role of strong male character and displaces Jonathan into the weaker feminine role. Such motifs of entrapment in horror fiction are linked, as Palmer notes, to "signifiers of the queer uncanny," by which fears of the closet, and even fears of possible outing, are represented through traditional, even hoary gothic tropes of imprisonment and live burial (107).

This reassignment of gender roles can be seen most clearly in the scene with the brides. Jonathan would have succumbed to them and likely died from their kisses if not for Dracula's interference. While Dracula is the aristocrat that has locked Jonathan up, he is also Jonathan's male champion. After all, the Count needs Jonathan for his plans to succeed. (This doubleness and ambiguity of Dracula's role is reminiscent of Lord Ruthven, who simultaneously preys on Aubrey's loved ones and protects Aubrey himself, nursing him back to health after Ianthe's death.) Thus Dracula comes to the solicitor's rescue just as the heroes of Gothic novels repeatedly rush to the rescues of their ladyloves, the fragile Gothic heroines. Further, the scene

ends with Jonathan fainting, precisely as a Gothic heroine would: “Then the horror overcame me, and I sank down unconscious” (Stoker 71). Jonathan’s inaction and frailty in his encounter with the brides cements his place as a male Gothic heroine, showing how he is consistently feminized throughout the first four chapters. Even when he given the chance to attack the Count directly, he completely fails to do more than hurt him slightly. The Count progresses from merging with Jonathan to stealing away his masculinity, reinforcing the queerness of their relationship.

The readers themselves might be disoriented by the transition from Chapter IV to Chapter V. This point in the text marks the end of the narrative of Jonathan in the Count’s castle, and the beginning of Mina and Lucy’s time in Whitby. There are four significant sudden shifts that occur here that act to disorient the reader, two in setting and two in narrative. First, there is a large jump in time. Jonathan’s diary ends on the 29th of June, but the first document in Chapter V is dated May 9th. The narrative has leapt backwards to go over events that occur roughly simultaneously with Jonathan’s struggle with the Count, and yet are very different. This jump is especially disorienting because the note at the beginning of the text states that “How these papers have been placed in sequence will be made manifest in the reading of them” (Stoker 29). Further, within the text, it is explained that it is Mina herself who organizes the documents that make up the narrative. The reader therefore must trust that there is some reason for the sudden leap backwards through time, and yet when combined with the other changes, it can seem confusing. The second of these is a change in place, as the narrative quickly switches from Transylvania to England; from a dark and scary foreign place to the land that was home for most of Stoker’s original readers.

This change reflects the most jarring of the jumps, to which the other two contribute: the shifts in narrative. The first of these is a generic shift from horror into romance. Just as

Jonathan's part of the plot comes to a climax and the question of whether he will escape Dracula's castle alive is raised, the text takes a swerve into an Austen-esque exchange of letters about which suitor Lucy will marry. This serves in part to heighten the tension and suspense in the novel, causing the reader to eagerly look for any signs of Jonathan or Dracula in the events that follow. McCrea, it should be noted, argues that we have in fact been prepared for such a shift: as Dracula maneuvers him into the role of endangered heroine, Jonathan "explicitly imagines himself to be a lady in a marriage plot ... his plot keeps flickering between one genre and the other" (265). When he writes in his diary just before the episode of the brides, for instance, he imagines that "some fair lady" had in the past sat at the same table, composing "with much thought and many blushes, her ill-spelt love-letter" (Stoker 67). Once the narrative arrives in England the search for Dracula is one that continues for much of the novel, as after leaving his castle, he is hidden behind the scenes. Rather than acting directly, he begins to work through female intermediaries, including Lucy and Mina.

The female voice dominates in this section. Chapter IV ends with Jonathan hoping that if he dies he will "sleep – as a man," while Chapter V begins with Mina wondering about the truth of rumors "of a tall, handsome, curly-haired man" she has heard about Lucy (Stoker 85, 87). This switch in the gender of the narrator befits the sudden shift in genre from traditionally masculine horror and action to traditionally feminine romance. More than just disorienting the reader, however, this shift serves to highlight the two extremes of gender that the novel already has and will continue to subvert. Jonathan is attempting to return to full masculinity after his feminization, while Mina seems very feminine and yet will soon take up the traditionally masculine role of hero when she arrives in Whitby. Thus the sudden disorientation caused by the radical changes between the fourth and fifth chapters serves to hide Dracula's queerness from the

reader and set up the increased prominence of female sexuality and gender inversion in the portion of the text set in England.

The transition between these two chapters also hides a strange gap in the text that is never resolved. How Jonathan manages to escape from Dracula's castle and get to the train station where he is found is completely unclear. The end of Chapter IV does have him state that he will crawl down the castle wall, as both he and Dracula have done in the past: "I shall try to scale the castle wall further than I have yet attempted" (Stoker 85). However, his diary ends right before he makes this attempt, and he does not begin to write in it again until much later in the novel. When Mina sees him again in a hospital, Jonathan is in a greatly weakened state, and is only beginning to recover from some form of insanity. Certainly Jonathan's grasp on his sanity by the end of Chapter IV was weak, but the way he seems to have repressed all of his memories of Dracula's castle seems to imply that something even worse than what the reader knows happened to him.

This implication is further strengthened by the fact that no part of the narrative explains what happened to Jonathan during this gap in time. Marjorie Howes finds the fact that Stoker does not use some other document to explain what happened to Jonathan strange: "The novel does not contain a journalistic or other account of Harker's escape, though Stoker could have provided such information without any more strain on his narrative form than the text displays elsewhere" (107). This implies that Stoker has made a conscious choice to keep this part of Jonathan's experiences hidden from the reader. In fact, neither Jonathan nor any of the other characters seem even to realize this gap exists – or if they do, they express no desire to fill it. Many critics and adaptors of *Dracula* have done their best to explain this strange moment, however. Francis Ford Coppola's 1992 film shows Jonathan as the brides' plaything after

Dracula leaves, having his great fear of falling victim to these monstrous women come to pass. Howes argues that Jonathan experiences an “encounter with the secret sin that vampirism denotes and that the text cannot utter directly” (107). This sin is, of course, queerness, specifically male homosexuality. Whereas Coppola’s version shows Jonathan struggling against the brides, Howes implies that Jonathan finally and freely gives in to his homoerotic desire to be penetrated. Just as Dracula becomes much less prominent after Chapter IV to hide his explicit queerness, so too must Jonathan’s narrative be marked by a tantalizing elision, hiding a queer moment. Stoker is willing to explore male queerness to a greater extent than earlier writers, drawing our attention firmly to the obscurity in the text that evokes the unnamable something that must be ambiguous and occluded, hiding in the dark parts of the text.

Mina Harker’s gender is likewise inverted, but she benefits from the text’s view of her as a masculine woman and is strengthened. Although Jonathan mentions her during the first four chapters, Mina does not become one of the narrators until Chapter V. From the start she is positioned as more masculine and sensible than her companion, Lucy Westenra. Whereas Lucy wishes she could marry all three of her suitors, Mina is content with Jonathan, discussing how much of her activity and behavior is done with the goal of being useful to her future husband. Mina takes up intelligence-based (and thus somewhat masculine) activities such as writing in short hand, learning to use a typewriter, and acting the part of an investigative journalist during her time in Whitby: “I shall try to do what I see lady journalists do: interviewing and writing descriptions and trying to remember conversations. I am told that, with a little practice, one can remember all that goes on or that one hears said during a day” (Stoker 86). (This last piece provides a nice explanation for how Mina can make such accurate records of her adventures in Whitby and elsewhere.) All of these are in service to her fiancé, however, for he is a solicitor,

and Mina wishes to be the best secretary and general assistant to him she can possibly be: “I have been working very hard lately, because I want to keep up with Jonathan’s studies....When we are married I shall be able to be useful to Jonathan” (Stoker 86). From early on in the novel, it is clear that Mina mixes gender roles, as she has a man’s cleverness and way with new technology and techniques but she also has a woman’s subservience to male authority. Whereas Jonathan is entirely feminized by the end of the first four chapters, Mina is being established as having a healthy mix of femininity and masculinity, for her feminine side keeps her “man-brain” (as Van Helsing will later call it) in check.

Still, Mina does have a relatively masculine position in the narrative during her stay in Whitby. Lucy is quite clearly in the role of weak female heroine. Her sleepwalking is a dangerous feminine weakness of her brain; it gets her into dangerous and mysterious situations she needs to be saved from, such as when Mina must rush to rescue Lucy from wandering Whitby in her nightclothes. Normally, this would be the responsibility of a male hero, in this case Lucy’s fiancé Arthur Holmwood. However, Arthur is absent from Whitby due to the poor health of his father (and does not truly become a major actor in the story until Lucy’s vampirism becomes advanced and dangerous). As a result, Mina steps in to fill this absent role, much as Dracula became the masculine protector of the feminized Jonathan. Her work to protect Lucy from an as-yet-unidentified malevolent force is the most clearly male heroic action she takes.

Perhaps the best example of this is when Lucy goes wandering off in the night to meet with Dracula and only Mina can save her. Much of the threat to Lucy here is of a sexual nature. There is obviously Dracula’s sexual feeding upon her, which eventually turns Lucy into the oversexed vampire that Van Helsing’s band of men must destroy. There is also an element to the danger that may not be clearly apparent to the modern reader. Lucy has gone out in only her

nightdress, and this would be quite scandalous to the Victorians. It is somewhat akin to a modern woman wandering at night completely naked, and there is also the possibility that Lucy would be mistaken for a prostitute, or slandered as such by any who saw her. Thus Mina is not just protecting her friend from a physical threat (and in fact Mina is not at first aware of Dracula at all) but also from a threat to her honor. Furthermore, although Mina's actions are much like those of a masculine hero, her actions threaten her just as much as Lucy is threatened. The exact same fear of exposure and scandal hangs over Mina, and yet she goes forth and rescues her friend anyway. In fact, Mina makes the further sacrifice of giving Lucy much of her clothes, including her shoes:

I put my shoes on her....As we passed along, the gravel hurt my feet, and Lucy noticed me wince. She stopped and wanted to insist upon my taking my shoes, but I would not. However, when we got to the pathway outside the churchyard, where there was a puddle of water remaining from the storm, I daubed my feet in mud...so that as we went no one...should notice my bare feet. (Stoker 126)

Mina has refused to succumb to feminine fears, and instead fully followed the masculine urge to heroics. Rather than fainting or despairing as the cliché heroine would, Mina acts like the male hero and rises to the occasion even if it requires sacrifices on her own part. Thus Mina is clearly acting in the masculine role of Lucy's protector during this and other early encounters between Dracula and his latest victim.

There are other things that mark Mina as occupying the male hero role during the Whitby portion of the narrative. Significantly, Mina is the narrator for much of this part of the novel. Although Chapter V is made up largely of letters from Lucy to Mina, once the Whitby portion of the story begins, it is Mina's diary (interspersed with excerpts from Dr. Seward's diary and a few other supplements) that tells the story of Dracula's first appearance in England. Lucy gets a voice only through Mina, thus granting Mina a masculine position of power in which she gets to

interpret a woman's story. Such positions have generally been reserved for male characters in previous stories, thus marking Mina as an unusual hybrid of hero and heroine.

Mina's role as a masculine rather than feminine heroine is also apparent through her relationship with Jonathan in the first half of the novel. Just as Mina rushes to Lucy's rescue when she is attacked by Dracula, so too is Mina swift to act when she receives word that Jonathan has been found at a hospital in Europe. It is important to note that Mina goes off entirely by herself--such a self-reliant course of action seems rather masculine by the standards of the time. By positioning Jonathan as the invalid and Mina as the one who must come to his side to provide moral support as he returns to health, Stoker maintains Jonathan's feminization and Mina's healthier mix of masculine and feminine traits.

The interactions between the two also parallels the treatment of Aubrey in Polidori's "The Vampyre." Just as Aubrey has knowledge that could defeat Lord Ruthven's vampiric schemes, so too does Jonathan still have his journal that records evidence of Count Dracula's danger and true nature. However, both men are constrained by an oath and by effeminate weakness from sharing this knowledge, leading to the loss of a significant woman. The key difference is that whereas Aubrey swears an oath to his vampiric stalker, Jonathan's constraining oath is one his wife makes to him. When Jonathan gives her his journal, Mina swears that she will not read it and that the two of them will leave the tragedy of the past behind. This adds a touch of feminine subservience to the affair, which is later continued and yet partly negated when Mina does finally read the diary. After Jonathan has a feminine fainting spell upon seeing Count Dracula in London, Mina makes the decision to unseal his diary and finally read it so that she can understand what is wrong with him, her choice perfectly demonstrating how her character mixes what Stoker sees as the best of masculinity and femininity. She is often both

hero and heroine, placing herself in some form of danger for the sake of men and yet remaining subservient to them. Whereas Jonathan's total feminization is scary and disturbing, Mina's mix of masculine and feminine traits is seen as a good thing, because she is man enough to be helpful but woman enough to not be a threat to the men. Such a helpful balance is commented on directly in the text by Van Helsing and his talk of Mina's "man's brain." Although all of the men praise Mina at various points throughout the novel, Professor Van Helsing's praise is the most significant because he acts as the leader and mentor figure for the band of men he assembles. He represents a combination of two of the strongest forces in the nineteenth century: religion and science. Van Helsing is a devout Catholic with an indulgence from the Church that allows him to use the Host to fight vampires, and he is also on the cutting edge of science; an expert in matters of mind and body and an early adopter of blood transfusions.⁴

Interestingly, Van Helsing's comments on Mina's masculine and feminine virtues are not directed to her. Instead, they come when the Professor is talking to Dr. Seward, and are recorded in a portion of the novel narrated by him. Dr. Seward explains that his diary has been made use of by Mina and added to the pile of documents that eventually become the novel itself. Professor Van Helsing responds by praising Mina for being the perfect woman, but not a perfectly and purely feminine one. Instead, he says: "She has a man's brain – a brain that a man should have were he must gifted – and a woman's heart" (Stoker 274). This man's brain manifests itself not just in her skills, but in her cleverness in doing such things as assembling the different diaries into one account of Dracula's actions, and her later ability to logically determine what the Count

⁴ Though as some have pointed out, this is not necessarily a good thing. Blood types would not be discovered until some time later, and thus performing four blood transfusions from four different sources would undoubtedly lead to one or more mismatches and hastened Lucy's death. See Fred Saberhagen's *The Dracula Tape* for one discussion of this.

is up to. The men find her to be quite useful because of all of this, and they also draw upon her femininity, for she does much to comfort them, especially Arthur.

However, Van Helsing's speech here reveals that there is a downside to Mina's feminine side and the fact that she is a woman. It is not a downside as far as the men are concerned, but rather one from Mina's perspective, as it will lead to much of her anguish in the remaining portion of the novel. The professor feels that she cannot be allowed to continue to fight by their side, because while her brain is that of a man, her heart is a woman's heart and thus weak and emotional. Van Helsing states that while Mina has been of great help thus far, he fears that "[e]ven if she be not harmed, her heart may fail her in so much and so many horrors" (Stoker 274). While her man's brain has been able to prevent her from the same forbidden sexual urges that Lucy had even before her vampirism, apparently the men believe it is not enough for her to withstand what she may face while fighting Dracula. Mina is seen as a mixture of masculine and feminine in just the same proportion as she has always been, but the emphasis has shifted. The focus now is on how her femininity will hold her back, rather than how her masculinity aids her. That Mina's gender is mixed and ambiguous is not in and of itself a good thing. The good thing is that she has masculine traits in a great proportion. Femininity, whether it appears in a man or a woman, is condemned by the text. Jonathan's feminization in Dracula's castle is a source of shame for him. Mina is discounted because of fears about her weak woman's heart. Even the other men are afraid of their feminine traits, as some feminist criticisms of *Dracula* discuss. While *Dracula* plays with mixtures of feminine and masculine traits and nonconformity to heteronormative gender roles, the novel makes it clear that such deviation from the "normal" is only acceptable when it makes people more masculine and rational, for men who are feminine are too close to "inverted" (i.e. queer) men. However, as discussed below, even this can be

questioned when Mina's masculine side brings up the specter of female inversion in her interaction with Dracula's brides.

Mina is especially significant in the final portion of the novel, as her journey into Transylvania in pursuit of Dracula recapitulates Jonathan's original encounter with the vampire, albeit with many twists. One of the biggest twists is that Dracula is now the feminine Gothic heroine. Rather than being the master of all he sees and a completely unstoppable threat, Dracula is weak, scared, and on the run. His attempt to invade the heart of the British Empire has completely failed, and he has barely managed to escape with his "life." He is akin to the gothic heroine in full flight from her pursuers after she escapes from whatever horrible castle or nunnery she has been trapped in. Jonathan, in contrast, has become stronger and more masculine, a process that culminates in the final battle. Now he, not Dracula, is like the corrupt noble who locks an innocent girl in his castle. If not for the presence of Mina, it would seem that the position of man and vampire have simply been flipped. Mina is a complicating factor, however, and she makes the pursuit of Dracula rather different from the first approach to his Transylvanian castle.

Mina in many ways is both a friend and a foe to Dracula. She has just as much reason as the men to want him dead, if not more, considering that he has preyed upon her. She is clearly eager to find him, and does much to aid the men in hunting him down, including allowing Van Helsing to hypnotize her and coming up with a logical argument about how Dracula must plan to return to his castle. Until the men decide to bar Mina from direct involvement in the chase for the last time, she is an essential asset in the fight against vampirism. The reason the men decide to stop her from being an active member of their schemes reveals the other side to her relationship with the Count. Van Helsing begins to fear that the communication link he is operating between

himself and Dracula by way of Mina's hypnotized body runs two ways; Mina may be subconsciously providing the Count with just as much intelligence about the men as she is providing them about the Count.

To say that Mina is only a passive victim of the Count's evil is inaccurate, however. Much as Dracula psychically absorbed her husband's identity at the start of the novel, Mina at the end is psychically vampirizing the Count and becoming more and more like him. Just as Jonathan is becoming the pursuing masculine figure out of Gothic novels, so too does Mina begin to take on a role much like the Count; a role of fear and terror for her humanity and ambiguity about her state in regards both to the life/death binary and to queerness. Her episodes of hypnotism take place just before dawn and dusk, significant times for the vampire. When Van Helsing attempts to bless her with a communion wafer, it burns Mina's skin and gives her a mark that she feels makes her unclean and horrible. This shows that early on in her transformation, Mina resists it and does not want to be a vampire. She fears being unholy and unnatural, converted by Dracula into a being like him; as with Jonathan in the opening section of the novel, her transformation is a struggle with identity, marked by the queerness of the vampire.

Mina's transformation into a vampire proceeds as she comes closer and closer to Dracula. Van Helsing, who travels with her during the final section of the novel, notes that over time she begins to lose her appetite and then refuse to eat altogether: "but she smile, and tell me that she have eat already--that she was so hungry that she would not wait" (Stoker 405). This is eerily reminiscent of the Count's claims that he did not eat with Jonathan because he had already supped. Although it seems unlikely that Mina has already taken to drinking blood, especially because there is no easy source for it aside from Van Helsing, the suggestion that bloodlust has arisen in her already is unsettling. She is also unerringly able to find the way to Dracula's castle.

She claims this is because she has read about the paths in Jonathan's journal, but there is something about the way Van Helsing records this that makes it clear he doubts her.

A key parallel between Mina's journey into Transylvania and Jonathan's experiences in Dracula's castle is Mina's encounter with the brides. It is important to note that the passage is narrated by Van Helsing, and thus all of Mina's reactions are his interpretations rather than her actual feelings. The professor has made a holy circle to protect Mina from the brides, for he fears they may appear now that he and Mina have come close to Castle Dracula. His fears are realized late at night as he sees the snow behave oddly: "it seemed as though the snow flurries and the wreaths of mist took shape as of women with trailing garments" (Stoker 407). This effect is quite similar to that when Jonathan saw the brides materialize out of motes of dust swirling in the moonlight, and Van Helsing himself notes this parallel: "It was as though all my memories of all Jonathan's horrid experience were befooling me...I could get as though a shadowy glimpse of those women that would have kissed him" (Stoker 407-8). Van Helsing fears the brides, for Mina's sake rather than his own. They make no attempt to seduce the old man, and he never seems ready to prostrate himself before them and be penetrated.

Instead, the brides' queerness is now that of women interested in another woman rather than women inverting gender roles by penetrating men. They call out to Mina to join them and be as they are: "Come, sister. Come to us. Come! Come!" (Stoker 408). Van Helsing observes that Mina is horrified and disgusted by the brides: "In fear I turned to my poor Madam Mina, and my heart with gladness leapt like flame; for oh! the terror in her sweet eyes, the repulsion, the horror, told a story to my heart that was all of hope" (Stoker 408). It must be again emphasized that this is only what Van Helsing is seeing, however. Mina never comments on her encounter with the brides in her own narration, and so her emotional state is left entirely up to the

interpretation of Van Helsing. When Van Helsing expresses concern over Mina's safety around the brides, she says, "Fear for *me*! Why fear for me? None safer in all the world from them than I am" (Stoker 408).

There are a number of ways of interpreting Mina's statement. One is simply that since Mina is already becoming a vampire, she does not fear being bitten by the brides. Another possibility is that she does not actually find the brides something to be feared, but instead feels herself attracted to them, either out of an acknowledgement of kinship or because like her husband before her she finds them beautiful and feels a sexual attraction towards them. She may well wish to go and join her sisters and is only prevented from doing so by Van Helsing's holy circle, which keeps her in just as well as it keeps them out. A third possibility is that Mina feels herself to be superior to Dracula's brides and closer to Dracula himself than they are. Rather than terror at their appearance, her eyes may instead be showing contempt for them, and she may refuse to join them because she feels she is not their sister but their better. Of course, it is impossible to determine whether any of these are the correct interpretation of Mina's feelings, but Van Helsing, that inveterate reader of women's natures, has growing doubts about her as she gets closer to Dracula. Whereas Jonathan's encounter with the brides was relatively straightforward, Mina's encounter is more complex and ambiguous. This scene is open to a number of potential queer readings, but they require digging below the surface more than Jonathan's scene did. Thus Mina's interaction with the brides seems to show female same sex attraction in the text, but it is more occluded than the male queerness displayed at the beginning of the novel.

There is a key moment of ambiguity that occurs just prior to the climax which shows just how close Mina comes to being a part of Dracula rather than a member of the band of heroes.

During the last section narrated by Van Helsing, just before he and Mina go to meet the others and see Dracula destroyed, Mina says: "Let us go to meet my husband who is, I know, coming toward us" (Stoker 413). The obvious interpretation of this statement is simply that Mina wishes to be reunited with Jonathan; her statement that she knows her husband is coming towards her seems odd, however, as there has been a great deal of danger involved in Jonathan's quest, and no one has been certain whether all of the heroes will survive. The possibility is thus raised that Mina instead means that she can feel Dracula is growing nearer. Her interactions with his brides suggest that she is somehow higher than them and yet married to Dracula in just the same way they are, and thus the Count is her husband by an infernal bond of blood just as Jonathan is her husband by holy means of marriage. The question is never answered, as when Mina says it, Van Helsing is the narrator. When the narration returns to Mina soon afterward, she does not comment on it or otherwise act in any way to make it clear whether she meant man or vampire to be her husband. Her loyalties do seem to have returned entirely to Jonathan, but it must be remembered that Mina's account is written after Dracula is destroyed. If she did feel that her true husband is Dracula, whatever influence he had over her is ended, and she may further be acting to hide this hurtful fact from Jonathan, just as he wished to hide his attraction to the brides from her. Thus Mina's behavior during the pursuit of Dracula creates ambiguous moments and gaps in the text that mirror the ambiguities and gaps in Jonathan's first visit to the Count's lair.

The specter of male queerness also returns during the novel's climax, albeit in a more mediated and indirect way than in the novel's opening. Professor Van Helsing's repeated hypnotism of Mina causes her to act as an obvious intermediary between all the men and Dracula. She is providing them unprecedented access to his brain which proves invaluable to defeating him. The men fear that Mina is also allowing Dracula some access to their knowledge

and secret movements, which would make her intermediary status run both ways, but this is never confirmed by the text. Mina acts as a significant intermediary between her husband and the vampire as well. Her marked forehead is not just a constant reminder to her of her uncleanness in the eyes of God; it also serves as a constant reminder to Jonathan that the Count invaded his marriage bed. Jonathan, Dracula, and Mina form a rather extreme version of Sedgwick's erotic triangle. Rather than Mina simply acting as a heterosexual center around which two queer men revolve their emotions, Mina is effectively an ersatz Dracula. As discussed above, Mina is vampirizing Dracula and absorbing many of his qualities. As a result, she is no mere female intermediary between vampire and man; instead, she is herself a vampire who sits at the key corner of the triangle, feasting upon both men. Sedgwick's triangle, always, as she notes, "historically volatile" and marked by asymmetry, becomes deeply unstable (27). This has a terrifying impact on Jonathan, for it means his fears in the Count's castle have come true – he is married to Dracula.

Jonathan does his best to deal with this awful fate, and it spurs him to previously unseen heights of masculinity. He attempts to shy away from the full implications of his wife's fate at first. Even if he wants to focus on the parts of Mina that are still present in his wife – the good mixture of masculine and feminine traits that have served him and his allies so well throughout the novel so far – he cannot help but be aware of the dangerous queer masculinity arising in Mina from Dracula's influence. Rather than spurring him to hate or fear his wife, Jonathan instead comes to love her even more strongly and finally take on the role of protective husband. He agrees to kill Mina before she can become a vampire, and he accepts the necessity of keeping her in the dark about the men's movements and actions. Jonathan even goes so far as to agree to

separate himself from Mina during the final pursuit of Dracula, even though he knows that if they fail he will never see her again.

Jonathan's newfound masculinity is shown to the greatest extent in the climax of the novel. Back at the beginning, when he visited Castle Dracula to finish a real estate deal, Jonathan attempted to kill the Count but failed completely. He had already been greatly feminized by the influence of the Count, and the vampire's gaze rendered Jonathan unable to do more than scar the monster's forehead. Now, however, Jonathan is practically superhuman as he comes face to face with his foe once more. He wades with ease through the ranks of Szgany protecting the Count: "Jonathan's impetuosity, and the manifest singleness of his purpose seemed to overawe those in front of him; instinctively they cowered aside and let him pass" (Stoker 417). Jonathan manages to out-man Quincey Morris, previously the epitome of masculinity. Whereas the skilled Texan is badly wounded in his charge through the enemy's ranks (albeit without feeling any pain from his wounds until his task is done), Jonathan emerges from the murderous "gypsies" unscathed. He displays superhuman strength, enough to raise "the great box, and [fling] it over the wheel to the ground" (Stoker 417). Although the Count's "red eyes [glare] with the horrible vindictive look which [Mina knew] too well," they have no power at all over Jonathan. The vampire's gaze was once enough to completely unman him, but no longer. Instead, with the "sweep and flash of Jonathan's great knife" that shears "through the throat," joined with Quincey plunging his knife into the fiend's heart, Dracula is no more. Jonathan has won out over the Count just as completely as the vampire once won out over him. In these last moments, neither Dracula nor Mina have the supernatural powers and fearsome masculinity of the vampire; instead, Jonathan has absorbed all of the Count's superhuman strength and mastery of the Szgany and used these powers to overwhelm and destroy his foe.

Although, or perhaps because, Jonathan and Quincey's destruction of Dracula represents the final expulsion of vampirism and queerness from the text, it differs greatly from the destruction of every other vampire. Lucy writhed around and gnashed her teeth as her highly sexualized staking occurred, and Van Helsing's destruction of Dracula's brides also has an erotic tone. Even the possibility of destroying Mina to save her from the horrors of vampirism emphasizes the importance of her husband's willingness to kill her for her own good. Dracula, on the other hand, has an entirely unsexualized death. Instead of the phallic stake used to put Lucy down for good, he is destroyed by a pair of metal knives. Mina describes the Count's death as almost peaceful: "before our very eyes, and almost in the drawing of a breath, the whole body crumbled into dust and passed from our sight. I shall be glad as long as I live that even in the moment of final dissolution, there was in the face a look of peace, such as I never could have imagined might have rested there" (Stoker 418). One critic, Christopher Craft, attributes this unusual death to a need to avoid ever having a male penetrate another male in the story:

Stoker simply could not represent so explicitly a violent phallic interchange between the Crew of Light and Dracula. Indeed, the actual expulsion of the Count at novel's end is a disappointing anticlimax. Two rather perfunctory knife strokes suffice to dispatch him, as *Dracula* simply forgets the elaborate ritual of correction that vampirism previously required. (124)

In essence, the process of expelling queerness cannot suggest even the possibility of queerness. The destruction of Dracula does involve the homosocial bond between all the men, but such a bond is acceptable. The penetration of a man by another man, even in the form of violence with sexual tones rather than pure sex, is completely unacceptable to the Victorians; so queerness must be expelled from the text by pure violence undertaken by hypermasculine men.

Finally, the narrative structure of the climax is important to consider. Although the triumph of reclaimed masculinity belongs to Jonathan, he is not the narrator. Instead, Dracula's

destruction is narrated by his wife Mina. This renders her an observer to her husband's reclamation of his manhood, and to the more general restoration of normative gender roles. Mina's position as an observer rather than an actor is part of the restoration of normative gender. She feels the urge to join the battle: "I should have felt terrible fear at seeing Jonathan in such danger, but that the ardour of battle must have been upon me as well as the rest of them; I felt no fear, but only a wild, surging desire to do something" (Stoker 416). Instead she can only observe from afar as her husband wades through all his opposition with superhuman power and manliness. Despite the great help Mina has been throughout the novel, combat and destruction are men's work, so she cannot be allowed to be a direct participant. Her position as the narrator is still vitally important, however, because the story of Dracula's destruction must be recorded, and Mina is in the perfect position to see all. Further, her husband's restoration to proper masculinity is largely for her own benefit. Without Mina (and to a lesser extent, the reader) as an audience, it has little point. Mina has read her husband's account of his feminizing time in Dracula's castle and now she bears eye witness to his restoration. Finally, it is important for a Harker to close out the story, because a Harker was the first victim of Dracula and the first narrator.

In reality, however, this honor of closing out the narrative belongs to Jonathan rather than Mina. In a note that bears some parallels to the male-voiced note that precedes *Carmilla*, *Dracula* concludes with a brief coda from Jonathan Harker stating that all is well. Although the last entry of Mina's diary shows the restoration of heteronormativity, Jonathan's note cements this restoration. He notes that both Arthur Holmwood and Dr. Seward are happily married, and he further discusses the son that he and Mina have had. By noting that the child was born a year after Dracula's destruction, Jonathan makes it clear that the boy has none of Dracula's queer

taint. Or, at least, that is what he seems to accomplish. His child bears the name of all the men who acted to save Mina, but is referred to as Quincey. Still, this uniting of all the male names serves as a symbol of the still extant bond among all of the men. Such a bond seems merely homosocial, as it reflects how “[t]his boy will someday know what a brave and gallant woman his mother is...he will understand how some men so loved her that they did dare much for her sake” (Stoker 419).

On the other hand, some critics point to this as the final queer moment in a novel that, despite all efforts to the contrary, cannot manage properly and fully to restore heteronormativity to a dominant place in its pages. Christopher Craft, for example, sees young Quincey as a final attempt at subsuming queerness into the proper Victorian sexual system. He states “that Little Quincey was luridly conceived in the veins of Lucy Westenra and then deftly relocated to the purer body of Mina Harker” (Craft 129). Craft previously discusses the strange way in which the various penetrations (via transfusions as well as stakes) of Lucy Westenra are a displacement that allow Van Helsing, Quincey, Arthur, Dr. Seward, and Dracula all to engage in sexual intercourse without having one man penetrate another. Such a queer moment cannot be totally excised from the text, but instead it can be placed within the confines of Victorian sexuality by using a female intermediary. What was originally a union between five males and one woman morphs into the child of Jonathan and Mina, something the Victorians would feel to be much more natural and proper. Still, such a strange transplantation of the child of queerness into a heterosexual arrangement cannot eliminate queerness from the text entirely, especially as taking Craft’s view adds the implication that Dracula, and thus queerness, lives on in Quincey. It can be seen that even the most conservative and restrictive vampire narrative of the three late Victorian narratives

to be considered here does not fully put down the specter of queerness, and it is therefore no surprise that the other two novels are even more open to queerness.

Florence Marryat's *The Blood of the Vampire* (1897) and George Sylvester Viereck's *The House of the Vampire* (1907) move such narratives and their tropes into new territory. These two works deal with psychic vampirism rather than blood vampirism. As discussed in more detail below, psychic vampirism has some key differences from the blood-sucking vampirism that all previous works have used. The most significant of these is that psychic vampires are non-generative – they cannot create more of themselves, and they are in general doomed to destroy. How this non-generativeness is dealt with in regards to queerness is an important aspect of both these novels. They also share a concern about how precisely the vampire threatens people. Whereas most previous vampires have threatened individual families, these two vampires are threats to Western culture and to the world. Marryat's vampire, Harriet Brandt, is similar to Dracula in that she represents fears about racial impurity and otherness; but Harriet comes from the New World rather than the Old. Viereck's Reginald Clarke is a more universal threat who preys upon human culture, and yet in some ways seems to be an inextricable part of that same culture, which he transforms and improves as a kind of agent of civilization. Here mimicry, the stealing of identity, is taken to the next level, and the vampire comes to embody in some sense the culture itself. Finally, this pair of novels is significant because they begin to move away from the villainous queer vampire trope and towards a more heroic type. Neither Harriet nor Clarke are unambiguous heroes, but they are more morally complex than Dracula and other blood sucking vamps and they set the stage for the explosion of anti-hero and fully heroic vampires that will come in the latter half of the twentieth century. In one, the vampire is a tragic figure, while in the other, the vampire is a victorious paragon of culture. Although both *The Blood of the*

Vampire and *The House of the Vampire* are relatively obscure, they represent significant development of the queer vampire figure.

Marryat's novel centers on Harriet Brandt, a young woman who leaves her home in Jamaica to come to Europe, and her various experiences. These mainly consist of romances and other intrigues befitting a romance novel rather than a horror novel, but Harriet's true nature provides more than enough horror. Although this novel is more obscure than Stoker's classic, it has recently received more critical attention, largely due to its direct focus on race: the novel is concerned with miscegenation and the extent to which heredity dictates one's destiny. Brenda Hammack, both in her article on hybridity in the novel and in her useful introduction to the recent Valencourt edition of the text reads the work as a race-based horror tale, while H.L. Malchow, in *Gothic Image of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, reads the tie between "criminal madness and black blood" as part of a specifically gothic pattern of hybridity and corruption (171). He, like the critic Octavia Davis, see a link between Harriet and Bronte's Bertha Rochester (Davis 43). Harriet's grandmother was black, and thus she is seen as impure and horrific because she can pass for white but carries a terrible taint in her blood. Although this aspect of the narrative is obviously significant and worthy of close analysis, here the focus will be upon those moments and aspects of the text that shift our attention to the notion of Harriet as queer, and this queerness, tied to her vampirism, as a source of horror.

Unlike Count Dracula, and in spite what the novel's title may imply, Harriet is not a blood-sucking vampire, but one who absorbs, steals, life force. Victims of such psychic vampires feel just as enervated as the victims of blood vampires, but they lack the telltale twin puncture wounds in their throat; the loss of energy from psychic vampirism is often attributed to illness and thus these vampires prove difficult to detect. The interest in this variant of vampire likely

emerged toward the end of the nineteenth century alongside the rising preoccupation with psychic powers, mediums, and other supernatural phenomena; this Spiritualist movement was concerned with unknown abilities of the mind rather than hidden inhuman monsters. (Marryat herself was a Spiritualist, and in addition to her fiction wrote books about her own real life experiences with mediums.) Sian Macfie links such vampires to another contemporary area of debate: the rise as a demographic group of single, non-generative women, called “psychic sponge[s],” that were “perceived to be a drain on the energy, and emotional and intellectual resources of her companions” (60). Such women were, like queer figures, a threat to a stable heteronormative order. As discussed below, a large part of Harriet’s tragedy is that she is just such a drain on those around her, even though she does not fully realize it.

Harriet’s queerness is most evident in the earliest chapters of the novel. She has just left Jamaica for the first time in her life, and has come to Europe, where she meets with a number of English people vacationing on the Continent. Among these is Mrs. Margaret Pullen, the young wife of a military officer, who has come with her baby and best friend. Margaret is quick to befriend Harriet, for she is intrigued by her. As Harriet has long been in a nunnery, she now wishes to make the most of her freedom and understand the world that has opened up to her. (Women being stuck in nunneries is a common aspect of Gothic fiction, and often they were either released into the world when they reached a certain age, or were threatened with being trapped there forever – the latter reflecting the anti-Catholicism present in many Gothic narratives.) When Margaret first talks to Harriet, the young woman expresses the desire to “tear up and down this road as hard as ever I could, throwing my arms over my head and screaming aloud!” (Marryat 11). While Margaret finds this behavior endearing in its own way, her friend

Elinor Leyton, who is reserved and cold, consistently expresses her distaste for this far too unrestrained behavior.

As part of Harriet's attempt to understand the world that has opened up before her, she flirts and attaches herself to a number of characters. Over the course of the novel, Harriet flirts with three different men, one of whom eventually becomes her husband, and it seems safe to say that were the novel longer, she would become involved in even more love intrigues. It is her first flirtation, however, that clearly marks Harriet as a queer character and that provides a queer foundation to her narrative. When she appears at the hotel, Harriet quickly becomes drawn to Margaret Pullen and attempts to spend as much time with her as she can. In addition to taking care of her baby, as discussed below, Harriet goes on walks with Margaret and even on a sort of date with her to a café. During this outing, Harriet draws closer and closer to Margaret, eventually holding her close: "[Harriet] had crept closer and closer to Mrs. Pullen as she spoke, and now encircled her waist with her arm, and leaned her head upon her shoulder" (Marryat 19). Margaret does not particularly appreciate this closeness, but she explains it away as Harriet not being familiar with the rules of high society, and does not read Harriet's interest as queer. She believes that Harriet has a "normal" heterosexual and platonic attraction toward her, and that it is only being displayed in such a relatively extreme way because Harriet does not know how to obey the rules of personal space in polite society.

Harriet's queerness becomes apparent when Margaret suddenly feels ill while the two women are at the café. Marryat describes this illness thus:

She had become fainter and fainter, as the girl leaned against her with her head on her breast. Some sensation which she could not define, nor account for – some feeling which she had never experienced before – had come over her and made her head reel. She felt as

if something or some one, were drawing all her life away. She tried to disengage herself from the girl's clasp, but Harriet Brandt seemed to come after her, like a coiling snake, till she could stand it no longer. (21)

The sensation that she “had never experienced before” is, of course, Harriet drawing away her life force, but it can also open up a space for interpretation, as such “attacks” do, in these narratives. Going back to Polidori, moments of vampiric violence or threat cause ruptures or breaks in knowledge and understanding. The comparison of Harriet to a snake is significant not only because it is reminiscent of the snake imagery in “Christabel,” but because Harriet is associated throughout the novel with a wide variety of animal imagery (something which ties to the racial concerns of the novel). Hammack comments that “Indeed, Marryat likens her protagonist to so many different creatures throughout the course of the narrative that the young woman seems to constitute a one-person menagerie” (892). Elinor Leyton's distaste for Harriet becomes even stronger after this incident, and even Margaret becomes somewhat wary of her new friend.

Soon after this, Margaret sees Harriet looking at her strangely and finally realizes what is going on. She is able to recognize Harriet's feelings, and describes them in a notable way:

Margaret Pullen, glancing up once was struck by the look with which Harriet Brandt was regarding her – it was so full of yearning affection – almost of longing to approach her nearer, to hear her speak, to touch her hand! It amused her to observe it! She had heard of cases, in which young unsophisticated girls had taken unaccountable affections for members of their own sex, and trusted she was not going to form the subject for some such experience on Miss Brandt's part. (Marryat 27)

It is significant that Margaret acknowledges that Harriet feels romantic affection toward her. This is an important moment. Such an explicit acknowledgement of queerness has not previously appeared in vampire texts; we are moving in these narratives from the adoption of the mask of horror to something more overt, something more literal and less figurative. However, even at this

time and in this rather more open and sympathetic narrative, it can neither be named nor legitimized. Margaret cannot call Harriet a “lesbian” or “female invert” (though, of course, later events make it clear that a more proper label for Harriet would be bisexual). Furthermore, queerness cannot be seen as a legitimate orientation. A woman loving another woman is not in this context a real and proper love, but is instead reduced to the sort of thing foolish young girls do, and such behavior is deemed “unaccountable.” Harriet subsequently turns to focus exclusively on men; Hammack points out, “[o]nce Harriet discovers the effects she can have on males, she clearly opts for heterosexual predation” (892); in this pattern she inverts Dracula’s threat, “Your girls that you all love are mine,” going after Elinor’s lover and the Baroness’s son. Nonetheless, this queer foundation to Harriet’s narrative will have resonance.

Harriet’s turn to heteronormativity in the narrative is in fact marked by a profoundly destructive effect on the romantic and familial relationships around her. Two things happen at once. Harriet begins a flirtation with Elinor’s fiancé, Ralph Pullen, even while she begins to exert a fatal influence on Margaret’s infant daughter. Ralph is quickly drawn to Harriet’s lust for life and excitement about everything, traits that serve as a great contrast to Elinor’s reserve. Elinor has desired to keep her engagement a secret, and so she will make no public, and few private, displays of affection towards her future husband. Further, she is obsessed with what is and is not proper behavior, leading her to be cold and dull in comparison to Harriet’s outbursts and disregard for proper high society behavior. Whereas Harriet is passionate and sexual (perhaps too sexual by Victorian standards), Elinor is practically asexual in her behavior.

Intriguingly, Harriet, Elinor, and Ralph can be seen as forming an erotic triangle. Of course, it is one that inverts the genders of the typical triangle that Sedgwick describes. An inversion of Sedgwick’s triangle is significant because it completely changes the power dynamic.

As Sedgwick sees it, the male/male/female version of the triangle is basically a form of the “traffic in women” between two men (25). Marryat has active women fight over a passive man, rather than a passive woman being fought over by active men. However, this does not imply that Harriet and Elinor are trafficking in men. Situations in which bonds between two women are cemented through one woman marrying a man are possible, but the power dynamic is different than the male traffic in women, and so this triangle has different implications. This inversion of the heteronormative triangle has been seen before in “Christabel,” where Christabel fights Geraldine for her father’s affections, and yet there seems to be a deal of attraction between the two women. However, in Marryat’s triangle, Ralph is the intermediary figure, while Harriet and Elinor are the ones competing for his attention. In this triangle it is especially clear that the feelings between the two women are the strongest, since Elinor’s feelings for Ralph are tepid and she resists displaying them. As Harriet emerges as her rival, Elinor becomes more and more obsessed with her. One reading of this particular triangle is that the threat to Ralph in fact humanizes Elinor, who from the beginning has been a rather ambiguous, at times unlikeable, figure.

Just as Harriet is drawing Ralph into her orbit, Margaret’s baby daughter begins to fail. Harriet had doted on the child, exclaiming in delight, “I love little white babies! I adore them! They are so sweet and fresh and clean,” revealing her great degree of interest and also exposing the strong racial element of the text. Elinor is worried by this and warns Margaret not to let Harriet so close to the baby, worries born out of a belief that the young woman is strange and improper--she has no suspicions of Harriet’s true nature. Margaret’s child becomes more and more ill, sleeping for an alarming amount of time each day. At first, it’s not clear what the cause of this phenomenon is, but, nonetheless, Harriet isn’t allowed to visit with the child much

anymore because of the concern for its health. Once Doctor Phillips arrives and examines Margaret's child, it becomes clear to him (but not to Harriet, because nobody explains this to her at the time) that Harriet has been psychically sucking away the child's strength and is responsible for its state of ill health. Despite all the doctor's efforts, Margaret's child dies of Harriet's predations. Consuming the life force of a child makes Harriet a clear sister to the vampiric dark mothers in *Dracula*, Lucy and Dracula's brides, who also feed on children rather than feeding them. Furthermore, "eating" a child is perhaps the ultimate example of being a non-generative "psychic sponge" woman. Rather than simply not creating children of her own, Harriet has become a dark devouring mother figure who inverts the sacred duty of motherhood. At this point in the narrative, Harriet is busily, if unknowingly, destroying an engaged couple and a young family.

The episode of Margaret's baby reveals a significant aspect of the novel: Harriet's story is not her own to tell; in fact, she knows little of her own origins and background. She has some vague memories of her time as a child on a plantation, including the way the overseer befriended her. Instead, her past is revealed by a doctor, a patriarchal authority figure. As Robert T. Eldridge points out, Doctor Phillips is related to Van Helsing and Dr. Spielsdorf (from *Carmilla*) (11). His role is to explain the existence of vampirism and detail how it can be dealt with. There is a key difference between his situation and those of the previous experts, however. Whereas Dracula and Carmilla both know they are vampires, Harriet Brandt has no idea what she is, and she remains in ignorance until the doctor finally tells her.

The reader, however, finds out long before Harriet does. When Margaret's baby falls ill, she calls upon Doctor Phillips, and he explains to her and other characters about Harriet's condition. He tells them that there were legends on the plantation Harriet grew up on that her

grandmother, a black slave, was bitten by a vampire bat, and thus Harriet's mother was a mean woman with voracious appetites for blood and cruelty. (Interestingly, the idea of a pregnant woman being bitten by a vampiric creature and giving birth to a vampire or semi-vampire is reminiscent of legends of dhampyrs, hybrid human/vampires who were often said to be especially good at hunting the undead.) While this explanation may seem fantastic or ridiculous to modern readers, Hammack is quick to point out that it was completely in line with the medical ideas of the 1890s (888), and Macfie notes in her analysis of the novel that Harriet's mother is herself a sort of fiend: "In the case of Mrs Brandt, Doctor Phillips diagnoses a case of blood-sucking vampirism" (62). Harriet's father, the plantation owner, was a mad scientist obsessed with vivisectioning human beings and other depraved experiments. Harriet is believed to have inherited the worst parts of both her parents, but especially the titular blood of the vampire which she receives from her mother and which makes Harriet too thirsty for the life essence of those around her. Thus, a vampire bat's bite has produced two generations of monsters, at least as far as the Doctor is concerned.

Doctor Phillips does eventually explain all of this to Harriet, but not until very late in the novel. He first informs Anthony Pennell, one of the men who falls for Harriet. Anthony, however, is a writer and a "Socialist in the best and truest sense of the world" (Marryat 175). As Macfie observes, he is an advocate for social justice and "speaks out against the demonization of women who are black, working-class, lesbian, non-feminine" (64). The young author is also a rather feminine character, described as having "a heart large enough and tender enough to belong to a woman" (Marryat 176). He is a visitor to the "worst and most degraded parts of London," another thing that marks him as womanly, for many of such charitable figures were female—the ubiquitous "lady visitors" of the East End (Marryat 176). Anthony refuses to believe the doctor's

warnings and finds them to be completely ridiculous. His feminine qualities suggest that he does not just reject Doctor Phillips' information because he finds it laughable, but because a sameness of heart causes him to feel a great deal of sympathy towards Harriet. However, when Harriet finally talks to the doctor and hears about her past from him, she completely believes him and becomes terrified of what she might do to her future husband. Once again, the vampire's story is not her own to tell, but instead is controlled by a male patriarchal figure.

When Harriet meets Anthony after learning the truth of her nature, she cries out, "Don't touch me, Tony! – don't come near me. You had better not! I might harm you!" (Marryat 198). Here her words sounds remarkably like Mina Harker's protests that she is unclean and monstrous after Dracula attacks her. Harriet wants nothing to do with Anthony anymore, because she believes that the only solution to her problem is to never love anyone or even get close to anyone ever again. Anthony argues against her trust in the doctor, pointing out how ridiculous the whole thing sounds: "Pooh! Nonsense! I don't believe a word of it....it is a parcel of old women's tales. Phillips should be ashamed of himself to place any credence in it, far more to repeat it to you!" (Marryat 198). He is eventually able to convince Harriet to ignore the doctor's warning and marry him. Although Harriet is the one who makes this choice, it comes as the result of strong pressure from Anthony. She has gone from listening to one man's definition of her to obeying another man's definition. Harriet has exerted little agency over her identity this entire time, and instead has consistently allowed herself to be defined and controlled by other people. In spite of all of Doctor Phillip's warnings, Harriet marries Anthony and begins to travel Europe with him.

At first, they are a happy couple going on a wonderful honeymoon, but over time Anthony grows ill and begins to fade just as Harriet's other victims have. (It is interesting to note that all the victims that succumb to her power have been women or feminized men: Margaret's

baby, the Baroness's hopelessly dominated son Bobby, and Anthony. Although she preys on other people, they do not die from her attention. It is as if those who conform to the standards of British masculinity are effectively immune to Harriet's vampirism.) Finally, Harriet wakes up one morning to discover that her husband is dead:

The dawn is early in Florence, but it had broken for some time before she roused herself again....Harriet started up in bed. Her husband's arm was still beneath her body.She raised Tony's arm and commenced to chafe it. How strangely cold and heavy it felt. Why! he was cold all over! She drew up the bedclothes and tucked them around his chin. Then, for the first time, she looked at his face. His eyes were open.How stiff [his face] felt! My God! what was the matter? Could he have fainted? She leapt from the bed, and running to her husband's side, pulled down the bedclothes again and placed her hand upon his heart. The body was cold – cold and still all over! His eyes were glazed and dull. His mouth was slightly open. In one awful moment she knew the truth. Tony was – *dead!* (Marryat 223-4)

This scene is much more awful than any previous discovery of her victims' deaths, and as a reviewer in *The New York Review of Science Fiction* notes, "the penultimate scene, of [Harriet] waking up in bed alongside the corpse of her husband, is a nice touch and drives home the physicality of her alleged vampirism" (Eldridge 11). Harriet decides to kill herself, and carries this intention out after willing all of her money and property to Margaret Pullen. Harriet's death is described not as a great victory over a monster, but sympathetically: "But there was no awakening on this earth for Harriet Pennell. She had taken a dose of chloral and joined her husband" (Marryat 226), in an image that offers a kind of neat reversal of the carefully constructed marital union of *Dracula*. And such a treatment is consistent with the way that Harriet has been treated with relative sympathy throughout the novel. Haefele-Thomas gets at the author's striking choices here:

Marryat could have created a detestable genderqueer and racially miscegenated monster—a monster would could unify a British reading public through a nationalist insistence on heterosexuality, gender binaries, and racial and national 'purity' Indeed, what we get in Marryat's text is a story that can be read as utterly xenophobic and homophobic. On closer, inspection, however, Marryat delivers a gothic novel that

eventually portrays the British as hypocritical and unsympathetic to marginalized people; the novel's horrific conclusion leaves the reader with a sense of tragedy rather than a sense of triumph. (97)

The ending of *The Blood of the Vampire* merits analysis because it is unprecedented among the works thus far examined. Whereas all previous stories have either ended with the vampire triumphant and escaping punishment or seen the vampire hunted down and destroyed by a heroic band of men, this novel has neither ending. Instead, the vampire destroys herself to end her menace to the world, in what Octavia Davis sees as a kind of noble, even maternal, sacrifice (51). A novel that began with a menacing queer embrace in a café ends with the image of the destruction of a heterosexual couple in the marriage bed. This would seem to be an extremely regressive sort of ending, perhaps even more so than Stoker's, but some ambiguity remains.

The key issue raised by Harriet's suicide is whether heteronormativity is restored by her death. *Carmilla* and *Dracula* both end with the destruction of the titular vampire by a band of men, and this destruction seems to restore normality and proper social mores to the world of the text. (However, as has been previously discussed, both of these texts are in fact rather ambiguous in their endings.) Harriet is the locus of all forms of non-heteronormativity and non-whiteness in the text, and unlike the blood vampires in *Carmilla* and *Dracula*, Harriet's psychic vampirism does not include a mechanism for creating more people like herself. (This is another aspect of the complete nongenerativeness of psychic vampirism.) She has failed to either make more psychic vampires or to find other queer people. Her vampiric parents both died long before the novel begins, and with Harriet's death, the "blood of the vampire" has disappeared from the world completely. In her suicide note she pleads, "Let me go to a world where the curse of heredity which they laid upon me may be mercifully wiped out" (Marryat 227).

Although it is in many ways odd, the self-destruction of the vampire has led to a clearer and more complete victory than those gained by bands of men destroying vampires with stakes. Harriet leaves no ambiguous possibility of survival behind her when she dies. There is no Laura, who having absorbed her essence and memory, is in danger of becoming her. Harriet leaves Margaret all of her possessions in her will, and urges her to remember her fondly, but Harriet and Margaret's relationship had none of the queer repulsion and attraction to it that Carmilla and Laura's did. There is no overt reaffirming of heteronormativity as there is in *Dracula* with Mina's baby, but there is thus also no possibility that the vampire has tainted the proof of heteronormativity's victory.

All that there is at the end is, as previously discussed, some sympathy toward Harriet. It is seen as tragic that she died, but it is also inevitable and necessary; she is a "tragic mulatto" figure. Her heredity and queerness seem to have doomed her from the beginning, and it is thus no surprise that she ends her own life. Marryat seems to feel that no other fate is possible – in her view, what right-minded person would wish to continue living when they harm all those around them and have no way of escaping the evil of their nature? However, Marryat does display some sympathy toward Harriet, as it is the woman's heredity more so than anything else that has made her who she was. Her lack of agency suggests that, for Marryat, a queer psychic vampire such as Harriet can only be sympathetic as long as she does not exert control over herself or knowingly act as a danger to others. It is important to note that as Harriet has no idea what she is for much of the novel, it is largely impossible for her to direct her powers or intentionally use them. Whereas blood vampires such as Dracula who know exactly what they are and what they can do can choose who to take as a victim and whether to kill or simply feed a little, Harriet has no choice but to destroy everyone she comes into contact with, for she does not know any better. It

is quite possible that it is this tragic lack of knowledge that allows Marryat to portray her as sympathetic, and that the fact that Harriet does learn who she is necessitates the end of the novel playing out the way it does.

In essence, while *The Blood of the Vampire* is not as progressive as the key novels of the late twentieth century, it does move away from seeing the queer vampire as an out-and-out villain and towards viewing her as a tragic figure. While this is only somewhat better than *Dracula* and the earlier texts, it is still a significant step forward.

If Marryat's vampire spares the world, George Sylvester Viereck's both endangers and creates it. Published a decade after *Dracula* and *The Blood of the Vampire*, in 1907, Viereck's *The House of the Vampire* is even more obscure than Marryat's novel. Viereck's critical neglect is not surprising; a Germanophile (born in Germany but largely raised in the U.S.) his cultural bond to the land of his birth led him to support that country, very vocally, through both World Wars. He believed, with remarkable naiveté, that support for Nazism did not mean a support for anti-Semitism. Alongside Viereck's distasteful politics, the novel has aesthetics and art as key concerns, and in this way it is reminiscent of the works of Oscar Wilde (not to mention the fact that the protagonist is named Ernest and his best friend is Jack); however, this novel, while featuring high aestheticist prose, is entirely straight-faced. In some ways, Viereck and the vampire he creates are reminiscent of the concept of homosexuality that Sedgwick discusses in *Epistemology of the Closet*: gay men who see themselves as the epitome of masculinity and the founders of patriarchy and the Western World (88-9). The critic Lisa Lampert-Weissig, one of the few who have analyzed Viereck's text, sees the novel as being specifically inspired by *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and in some ways it is like a version of that novel in which Dorian is a vampire rather than an immortal aesthete (82). In fact, one can read Viereck's Reginald Clarke as

a composite of the three central figures from Wilde's novel: Dorian, the painter Basil, and the decadent Lord Henry (with vampirism thrown into the mix). The story revolves around the young artist Ernest, who goes to live with the famous artist and patron Reginald Clarke. Clarke, however, emerges as psychic vampire, though one who steals artistic ideas rather than life force – in essence, he is a psychic plagiarist. While at first the suspicious Ernest believes he is going mad, his relationship with Clarke's ex-wife helps him to understand that vampires are real, and in the end he goes to confront Clarke. In a conclusion reminiscent of the earliest vampire fiction, Clarke is completely victorious and destroys Ernest's identity and mind.

A vital part of the text is the complex web of relationships centering on Ernest, a web which when taken as a whole is far more intricate than those that have previously been examined. He is thus associated with the vampire Clarke, the vampire's ex-wife Ethel, and with his best friend Jack, and all these relationships have a queer component to them. The novel opens with Ernest meeting Reginald Clarke and agreeing to come see him. Soon Ernest is living with Reginald in his studio, and so the association between the two men begins. Ernest's feelings about being so close to Clarke are partly those of a young artist admiring a powerful established figure, but there is also a sexual element to the attraction. As Lampert-Weissig observes, "Clarke draws talented male and female artists into erotically charged relationships" (80).

When Ernest works in Clarke's house, there is something sensual and erotic about it: "The inter-play of his mental forces gave him the sensuous satisfaction of a woman's embrace" (Viereck 29). The predatory way that Reginald absorbs the work of other artists has in fact an erotic element to it, for in a way he seduces other artists and then violates their minds to create great works of art. Ernest decides to write a play about a princess with a yellow veil, and he spends days working on it in the sort of erotically-charged creative state noted above. Before

Ernest can reveal his play, Clarke hosts a reception in which he reads his newest work. Ernest is horrified to discover that he is “intimately familiar with every word that [falls] from Reginald’s lips,” and he realizes that it “was more than mere coincidence. It was plagiarism” (Viereck 35). Such plagiarism would seem to be impossible, since Ernest has carefully guarded his work and there is no way that Clarke could have acquired it. Towards the end of the novel, Clarke’s methods are revealed. He does possess a hidden door between his own room and Ernest’s, but this is not the greatest form of his plagiarism. A secret door allows Clarke only to steal what is already written down, but he can also steal what is only in the mind, as described in one of the most disturbing passages in the novel:

For the last few weeks evil dreams had tortured his sleep and cast their shadow upon his waking hours. They had ever increased in reality, in intensity and in hideousness. Even now he could see the long, tapering fingers that every night were groping in the windings of his brain. It was a well-formed, manicured hand that seemed to reach under his skull, carefully feeling its way through the myriad convolutions where thought resides. (Viereck 72)

Rather than completely obscuring sexual contact between two men, Viereck has made it completely explicit, and yet shielded it from censors and critics by making Clarke’s “groping” of Ernest a completely cerebral affair. There is no physical aspect to the contact between these two men, and yet it is an incredibly sexual and disturbing situation. In essence, this is the culmination of the predatory male vampires seen early in with Lord Ruthven. Rather than the implied queer predatory contact between Ruthven and Aubrey, Viereck’s novel explicitly depicts the molestation of Ernest. Such a change shows how *The House of the Vampire* harkens back to past vampire works while moving the vampire forward into the future.

Ernest’s relationship with his best friend Jack likewise displays an erotic component. Intriguingly, this seems to tie in to the then-accepted theory that homosexual people were “inverts,” as Ernest describes Jack as being more womanish: “He was subtler, more sympathetic,

more feminine, perhaps, than the rest of my college-mates” (Viereck 21). Ernest also notes that the bond between Jack and himself is very close, as if they could easily pick up exactly where they left off after years apart. While this is certainly a description that can be applied to friendships, the way Ernest and Clarke discuss the idea of two hearts beating as one implies that there is something more to the relationship. There is, of course, a Wildean joke at play: since the names of these two friends are in fact the name of a single character in *The Importance of Being Ernest*. This play on names is in keeping with a pattern in the novel whereby the bonds between characters are fraught and up for definition: they all show the potential or threat for some kind of merging of selves. When Ernest and Jack spend time at Coney Island, Ernest becomes jealous when his friend is distracted from him by a pair of women. These clues suggest that there is, at least, some attraction towards Jack on Ernest’s side; whether this attraction is requited is less clear. Clarke’s powerful presence complicates this relationship, as Jack seeks to become Clarke’s new apprentice and thus a kind of rival to Ernest.

After meeting Clarke’s ex-wife Ethel, Ernest also commences a relationship with her. Ethel, a painter, was also a victim of Clarke’s psychic vampirism, and she seems to be the one person he actually went so far as to marry--why is not entirely clear, but her relationship to Clarke was a close one, perhaps even closer than Ernest’s. It is she, rather than any male figure of authority, who instructs Ernest on Clarke’s true evil nature (men seem to be more vulnerable to Clarke), and convinces Ernest that his mentor is in fact a vampire. Interestingly, she brings up the legends of blood-sucking vampires before explaining that Clarke feeds on thoughts, not blood: “thought is more real than blood” (Viereck 81). Ernest does not just see Ethel as a mentor figure or a guide to escaping his strange and terrifying situation; he falls in love with her, and his

feelings are required, although hers seem clearly more maternal. The two plan to run away together and escape Clarke, but Ernest wants to confront the vampire first.

It is this confrontation that leads to Ernest's downfall, but Clarke has been tainting his relationship with Ethel all along. Ernest, Clarke, and Ethel form an apparently traditional erotic triangle; after all, even though Clarke has discarded Ethel, Ernest is still in some ways competing against him for her love. However, the homoerotic bond between the two men appears to be stronger than that either has with Ethel. The triangle formed by the three characters follows the basic outline Sedgwick gives for an erotic triangle. As she explains, "in any erotic rivalry, the bond that links the two rivals is as intense and potent as the bond that links either of the rivals to the beloved" (*Between Men* 21). This apparently simple structure is open to other readings, however. Ernest can be read as himself the object of competition between Ethel and Clarke, thereby tilting the usual erotic triangle. Although previous structures have inverted the male/male/female pattern with a female/female/male one, this is the first triangle to have a man act as an intermediary between a man and a woman, which is an even greater departure from the triangle Sedgwick describes. As Sedgwick herself says, erotic triangles in a pattern other than the male/male/female one are not exactly equivalent to that pattern, but instead show key differences based on differences in gender and other matters. Ethel and Clarke provide an example of a triangle in which the two competing people feel a strong connection not of love but of hatred; their bond is still more "intense and potent" than either person's bond with Ernest, and thus they still are erotic rivals. They are competing for Ernest's love, but also in a way for his soul. The maternal quality of Ethel's affections suggest a familial as well as a romantic component to the triangle: "Love, all conquering love, welled up in her. She would fight for Ernest as a tiger cat fights for its young" (Viereck 70); one can read the struggle between Ethel and Clarke as being

that of divorced parents squabbling over a child. Clarke wishes to regain Ernest and consume his thoughts and artistic ambitions, while Ethel wants to save Ernest from Clarke's predations and have them both escape his influence forever. The competition can be seen as one over Ernest's sexuality; if he goes back to Clarke, he will reaffirm his queerness, while escaping with Ethel will seem to restore him to heteronormativity. Thus even a relationship that seems to be a fully comprehensible erotic triangle is much more complex (and Oedipal) than it first appears.

This overburdened triangle in fact finally collapses into something else altogether. This complicating of the Clarke/Ernest/Ethel erotic triangle points at the way the whole novel is driven by the complex relationships between four people – we should not forget the role of Jack. These relationships can be mapped, but they cannot simply be reduced to Sedgwick's erotic triangle, suggesting that while that construction is a useful analytical tool, it must be expanded and modified. The two triangles that can be made from Clarke, Ernest, and Ethel are not the only ones that can be formed. Given the various relationships Ernest has, it is also possible to construct a triangle in which Ernest competes with Clarke for Jack's attention, and a similar but not equivalent one in which Jack and Ernest compete for Clarke's attention. It is even possible to conceive of a triangle in which Jack and Ethel compete over Ernest. In essence, a single erotic triangle is insufficient to map these relationships, and multiple distinct triangles also fail, since all triangles ultimately involve Ernest. Instead, the relationships in the novel are best conceptualized as a system of overlapping triangles, or perhaps a pyramid. The latter idea would take the two dimensional triangle and extend it into a third dimension such that Jack, Clarke, and Ethel are all competing with one another for Ernest. Despite having only four major characters, *The House of the Vampire* has presented a complex and compelling network of relationships, all with a queer aspect to them.

This multiplicity of relationship structures helps determine how we read the novel's conclusion. While *Dracula* saw its heroes destroy the vampire, *The House of the Vampire* returns to the early nineteenth-century narratives and sees the vampire victorious. As previously discussed, there is once again no band of heroic men gathered together in a homosocial bond bent on destroying the vampire for the good of all mankind. Instead, Ernest wants to prove to himself that Clarke really is a vampire and really did steal his work. This decision can be read differently depending on which aspect we choose to view the triangle. Ernest can be seen as attempting to defeat Clarke and win Ethel; alternately, he is ignoring Ethel's pleas to leave with her and he returns to Clarke. Ernest goes to the house of the vampire, despite all the danger this entails, and eventually confronts Clarke. Ernest is armed only with, as Clarke dismissively puts it, Ethel's "absurd fancies" (Viereck 99); the young man rages at the vampire, but he has no physical weapon with which to attack him, and the text has never made clear if Clarke has any of the vampire's traditional weaknesses. All that is certain is that a great strength of mind is needed to confront him.

Tragically, such mental strength is something Ernest lacks. Ernest and Clarke argue back and forth, Ernest accusing Clarke of being nothing more than a common thief and Clarke claiming that his cultural vampirism is an indispensable part of life (a claim that will be analyzed more below). Clarke begins to manifest more and more of his unnatural power: "A tremendous force trembled in his very finger tips. He was like a gigantic dynamo" (Viereck 100). Ernest, however, has a righteous fury in him that allows him to attempt to strike. He picks up a chair and prepares to hurl it at the vampire, having realized that "he must strike now or never" (Viereck 101). Up until now, Clarke has been fighting with words, but he suddenly manifests his true self. The sexual aspect of the blood vampires has always been rooted in the body, for they attack their

victims with penetrative fangs; in Clarke's case the sexual aspect is certainly present, but entirely divorced from the material, from the body. As Ernest realizes with horror, Clark is "all brain ...only brain...a tremendous brain machine...infinitely complex...infinitely strong" (Viereck 101, the ellipses are Viereck's).

This use of ellipses in the text becomes more and more pronounced as the scene proceeds and Clarke begins to rip away all of Ernest's memories, personality, soul, and talent layer by layer. The trope of disorientation of the character and reader has appeared once again, but this time the disorientation is neither in time nor in space, but on the level of thought and narrative. As the text has been in a third-person perspective focused on Ernest, the very narrative begins to break down just as Ernest himself does. He is losing all grasp on who he is and what the world is, and so the narrative that has previously stuck to him is beginning to also lose its grasp on the world. By disrupting the narrative in this way, Viereck allows the reader to experience the jarring destruction of Ernest in much the same way that he himself is experiencing it. In the end, Ernest is reduced to nothing but a shell, devoid of all memories, emotions, and personality. He is a sort of harmless, defanged member of the undead – he is living and yet everything that was Ernest has been absorbed by Reginald Clarke. The vampire has been completely victorious, and now the only question that remains is whether his victory, which fails to restore heteronormativity in the manner of earlier vampire narratives, might not be as bad as such a previous vampiric victory as Lord Ruthven's.

Intriguingly, the novel seems to indicate that Reginald Clarke's vampirism (inextricably linked to his queerness) is a necessary part of culture and history, and thus Clarke is paradoxically the hero of the story. When examined through the lens of the tropes that all previous vampire stories have been establishing, and that are still in use today, Clarke seems to

be the villain. While Marryat alters the usual narrative by making her vampire sympathetic, Viereck makes absolutely no such attempt with Clarke: he preys upon other people and ends any chance at a happy heteronormative ending to the text; he appears to be creature that needs to be destroyed, and the fact that he is not is a great tragedy. However, as Lisa Lampert-Weissig argues in her essay “The Vampire as Dark and Glorious Necessity,” Viereck identified with Reginald Clarke more strongly than any other character, and he saw the vampire as the hero of the text. She argues that Viereck creates a vampire who obeys a higher principle and thus any “collateral damage” he causes is justified (Lampert-Weissig 80). Clarke’s calling is not to obey human morality, but to serve the greater cause of Art and Culture (one begins to see where Viereck himself went wrong).

While he threatens individual artists and ends up destroying them to possess their talent, Clarke claims that he is serving the world’s best interests by fusing all these great artists together into one being and one body of work:

Self-love has never entered into my actions. I am careless of personal fame. Look at me, boy! As I stand before you I am Homer, I am Shakespeare...I am every cosmic manifestation in art. Men have doubted in each incarnation my individual existence. Historians have more to tell of the meanest Athenian scribbler or Elizabethan poetaster than of me. The radiance of my work obscured my very self. I care not. I have a mission. I am a servant of the Lord. I am the vessel that bears the Host! (Viereck 100)

Ernest, seated in Clark’s study, begins to look more closely at the busts on the shelves: “At that moment a curious family resemblance between Shakespeare, Balzac, Napoleon – and Reginald, forcibly impressed itself upon his mind,” suggesting strongly that they were all versions of Clark (Viereck himself wished to join the ranks of these great artists) (Viereck 88). It seems that Viereck wishes he could have Clarke’s powers of psychic vampirism, much as Oscar Wilde almost seems to wish to be Dorian Gray. In essence, Viereck does not see Reginald Clarke as a hero in spite of his vampirism, but because of it. Lampert-Weissig notes that “Viereck created

the types of vampires [he] seemed to need, figures that justified the superiority of some humans over others” (Lampert-Weissig 91). Viereck’s view of Clarke as a sympathetic and heroic vampire is significant in that it paves the way for the more obviously heroic vampires that begin to appear in the 1970s and 80s, vampires that are heroes to the reader as well as the author.

The turn of the twentieth century saw vampire narratives look to the past for inspiration while setting the stage for the future of queer vampires. Stoker, Marryat, and Viereck’s vampires are just as queer as those of their predecessors, but the newer vampires star in more complex, more global stories. The structure of vampire tales varied considerably by this point, as the novels grow longer and involve more characters. This increased complexity and depth reflect the way vampires become predators of whole societies and cultures rather than just single people or families. Dracula wishes to pervert the heart of the British Empire knowingly, while Harriet Brandt seems poised to unknowingly accomplish the same goal; Reginald Clarke will transform Western culture for good (despite committing evil to do so) no matter what anyone else might do. The relationships between vampires and victims have become especially complicated, and the seemingly straightforward erotic triangle has broken down. Vampires and victims no longer stand in the same places relative to each other, but can be much more fluid in their relationships. The Harkers in *Dracula* show this, as over the course of the novel Dracula changes from preying upon the husband to preying on the wife, and yet both man and woman also fight back against the vampire, despite the fact that each is bound rather intimately, at different points in the narrative, to him. *The House of the Vampire* sees the complete collapses of the erotic triangle as the vampire entangles other characters in a complex web of relationships. Through their departure from the established trope of the simply predatory and monstrous queer vampire, Reginald Clarke and Harriet Brandt presage the emergence of unambiguously heroic and

sympathetic queer vampires that would occur in the 1970s and 1980s. These changes in the complexity and scope of vampire narratives help to modernize vampires and prepare them for further mutations that occur in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Conclusion:

The changes in vampire narratives wrought by such authors as Marryat, Stoker, and Viereck set the stage for a broader emergence of the vampire in literature and popular culture while maintaining the association of that figure with queerness. Vampires have infected a variety of forms, from movies and television to videogames and “new media” such as the internet. The number of adaptations of *Dracula* alone is staggering. And just as vampires remain a major part of popular culture despite all attempts to stake them, vampires continue to be open to a variety of queer readings. Works both significant and obscure from the twentieth century and beyond are just as deserving of close analysis as the nineteenth century canonical texts, though unfortunately this present work has had only enough space to focus on the early vampires. There are fruitful works right up to the present, from the Universal Horror film *Dracula's Daughter* (1936), with its barely concealed lesbian romance, to the recent Canadian *Carmilla* webseries adaptation (2014).

It is in the post-war period that the trajectory of the vampire narratives here examined is further advanced. Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) presents a range of vampire types (later vampire novels are in general more densely populated by such figures), some sympathetic and some more monstrous. Louis, the vampire being interviewed, is a relatively more sympathetic protagonist, for though he is vampiric, he does not feel his undead state gives him license to forget all morals. Instead, he struggles to understand his condition and his origins, and he desires how to inhabit the world without becoming a monster. The vampire is now being given much more of a voice, and a good deal of attention is paid to his origin story. The obscurity and mystery associated with such a character are clearly fading. In another

development, the ambiguity of and contradictions within the vampire figures from the nineteenth century are being externalized in pairs or multiples of vampires. In Rice's novel, the character Lestat takes on much of the menace associated with the traditional undead.

A work such as Whitley Strieber's *The Hunger* (1980), perhaps best known through its film adaptation, shows both continuities and advances. In some ways reminiscent of a modern-day *Carmilla* the vampire Miriam preys on her victims, both men and women, but also turns them into lovers. There is more to the novel, however, than just being a modern version of Le Fanu's tale. For one thing, Miriam gets to speak to the reader more directly than *Carmilla* ever did. Part of her vampirism requires her to fall into a coma-like state after she feeds, and during these periods the novel delves into her backstory. The reader learns of Miriam's life, including persecution and struggles to make her vampire lovers truly immortal, and while she is still monstrous, these episodes do work to evoke some sympathy for her. The other significant aspect of *The Hunger* is the ending, which is closer to *The House of the Vampire* than *Carmilla*, leaving Miriam free to continue her predations. Here there is no heroic band of men gathering to defeat the vampiric threat.

A third example, *I, Vampire* (1984) by cult writer Jody Scott, points us toward the emergence of the vampire in narratives that are explicitly science fiction. The novel tells the story of the centuries old vampire Sterling O'Blivion as she deals first with the modern world (or, rather, the 1980s) and then with the alien Rysemians. The book is a mix of satire, space opera, and philosophy, with a plot that cannot easily be summarized (at one point, for instance, Sterling encounters an alien disguised as Virginia Woolf and falls in love with her). As the title suggests, we finally have a narrative told entirely from the vampire's point of view, a choice that not only gives voice to the creature but also allows for some notable moments of intertextuality

such as Sterling's love of reading and commenting on vampire narratives. Unlike any of the other texts examined here, *I, Vampire* actually uses explicit terms for sexuality, as Sterling is variously termed or makes use of the terms "lesbian" and "dyke."

This brief survey of more recent works reveals that the tropes that dominated in nineteenth-century texts have fallen by the wayside. The Gothic-inflected reliance on disorientation, darkness, and the hidden no longer seems to be necessary. Nor is Sedgwick's erotic triangle, which is very hard to locate in more contemporary narratives. The impulse towards narrative dominance has resulted in a victory for the vampires by the time we reach Rice and Scott. Yet it is undeniable that vampire narratives remain a site of negotiation of sexual and gender identities. The older ways of talking about queerness in vampire narratives are gone but the queer vampire remains. A further study of this figure is clearly required. I might speculate that new tropes are emerging from the contemporary discourse of gender and sexuality, tropes that explore new problems, boundaries, and liminalities.