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World Vampires and World Literature

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

World Vampires and World Literature

by

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This dissertation employs the vampire genre as a lens to explore and read world literature. It integrates Wolfgang Iser's reader-response theory and Roman Ingarden's concept of "schematic views" to highlight the reader's role in constructing literary meaning. The study analyzes three pivotal vampire texts spanning nearly two centuries and bridging Western and Eastern traditions: Frombald's "Copia Eines Schreibens" ("Copy of a writing," 1725), Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth" ("The Bride from Corinth," 1797), and George Soulié's "The Corpse, the Blood Drinker" (1913).

As the first comparative exploration of these specific works, this research breaks new ground in vampire studies and world literature. It presents the inaugural scholarly comparison of Habsburg, German, and Chinese vampire narratives, expanding the geographical and cultural scope of vampire literature analysis. Furthermore, this approach also advocates for plurality in approaching literary themes and rejects monolithic readings focused solely on chronological evolution or direct transmission. I highlight that literary encounters, mediated by readers and their personal literary backgrounds, contribute to the

life of recognizable “schematic views” across cultures and time. Additionally, contemporary readers, often multilingual and products of diverse cultural traditions, bring new perspectives to these schematic views, potentially reshaping the vampire motif while preserving something of its essential core. By reading vampire literature, we read and make world literature.

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations

Introduction

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Introduction

Background and Context

The roots of this dissertation combine personal experience with academic inquiry and reflect a complex relationship between local folklore, literature, and imported cultural concepts. My first encounter with the "vampire" did not occur through Transylvanian legends or tales passed down through my family. I first met the vampire in a classroom while studying Ion Luca Caragiale's 1885 comedy "O Scrisoare Pierdută" [A Lost Letter].[1] Caragiale's text debuts with a linguistic wordplay and transforms the word "vampire" into a more comical "bampire." More specifically, one of the characters, Tipătescu, reads a newspaper that depicts him, a rather incompetent local politician, as a "vampire." This comparison, implying that he is a mere leech sucking the blood of his people, makes him lose his composure: "Me a vampire, eh? *Funny* [deliberately misspelled in original]!" Pristanda, the other character in the scene, a typical bootlicker policeman, chimes in and tries to get into Tipătescu's good grace: "Clearly *funny*! [also mispelled]... I beg your pardon, forgive me, sir Fănică, that I must ask: *bampire*... what is this, *bampire*?"[2] Both

[1] Ion Luca Caragiale (1852-1912) is considered the most renowned dramatist in Romanian literature. He published numerous plays, short stories, and satirical pieces, with his most famous works including the comedies "O Noapte Furtunoasă" (A Stormy Night, 1879) and "O Scrisoare Pierdută" (A Lost Letter, 1884). Caragiale's writing primarily focused on satirizing Romanian society and politics of the late 19th century. His work was influenced by Realism and Naturalism.

[2] My translation from the original in Romanian, Caragiale, Ion Luca. "O Scrisoare Pierdută." București: Editura Minerva, 1995, p. 5.

inside and outside the narrative, the situation exemplifies how, even in my native Eastern European context, the vampire is a foreign concept, ripe for satirical treatment.

Later, in the mid-1990s, the term became more familiar to me and others in my generation through American cartoons on illegal streams of the *Cartoon Network* channel. A quirk specific to post-communist Eastern Europe was that even after *Cartoon Network Europe* launched in 1993, only a few cable TV providers included it in their offers. Consequently, access to foreign media and popular Halloween themes, such as Frankenstein, zombies, and vampires, remained limited and primarily illegal, relying on makeshift "cablu" (Cable TV) and improvised antennas.[3] In this vein, this clandestine introduction to vampires and other Western supernatural beings overlapped with the local folklore that genuinely shaped the childhood anxieties of my generation. Our nights were haunted not by vampires but by "moroi," "strigoi,"[4] and "Cel-Necurat" [The Unclean One].[5] The latter is an instance of the devil himself, comparable to Belzebuub, vividly

[3] Ironically, the people in charge of legitimate cable TV offered these creative (and illegal) alternatives for an extra fee. For example, between 1995 and 1998, my family oversaw one such makeshift equipment, known as a "decodor"—a massive, rusty metal box placed on our balcony that allowed us and a few other neighbors to access foreign media.

[4] Popular culture usually refers to the "strigoi" as being a vampire, but this is not entirely accurate. For the depth and connotation of the "strigoi" see Tudor Pamfile's *Mitologie Românească* [Romanian Mythology]. Vol. I. *Duşmani şi Prieteni ai Omului* [Volume I. Foes and Friends of Man]. București, Leipzig & Viena: Pavel Suru, Otto Harrassowitz & Gerold & Comp. 1916, pp. 132-162.

[5] The similarity between the Romanian "Necurat" [Unclean] and "Nosferatu" doesn't seem to be a coincidence.

described by influential Orthodox figures like Father Cleopa (1912-1998)[6] and openly embodied in the frescoes of our Orthodox churches **(Fig. 1)**.

Fig. 1. (Left) Section of the inner fresco on the pronaos of the wooden church at Corund, Romania, early 18th century © Marius Barta. **(Right)** Section of the outer fresco of the wooden church at Florești, mid-18th century © Personal archive

It is essential to underline that such an overlap of imported supernatural narratives and local religious folklore did not dismiss the traditional Transylvanian beliefs. Instead, this new pandemonium expanded our world to encompass a broader spectrum of motifs, texts, and literatures. As someone named Vlad Sîrbu, which roughly translates to "Vlad the Serbian," I almost felt compelled to explore canonical texts like Heinrich Zopf's *Dissertatio de Vampyris Serviensibus* (Dissertation on Serbian Vampires, 1733) or Frombald's *Copia eines Schreibens aus dem Gradisker District* (1725) and understand how the alleged Serbian vampires, while rooted in specific cultural contexts, ended up sharing

[6] Part of his work has been recently published in 16 volumes and many of the stories are elemental to anyone who grew up in rural, post-communist Romania. See Bălan, Ioanichie (ed.). *Ne Vorbește Părintele Cleopa* [Father Cleopa Speaks to Us]. Editura Mănăstirea Sihăstria, 2016.

their *topos* with *Mina and the Count* on Cartoon Network. This exploration naturally extended to other cultural manifestations, such as Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth" (1797), Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872), or the Chinese *Jiangshi* (殭屍), often translated as the "Chinese vampire." By examining such localized yet globally resonant creatures, this dissertation aims to contribute to the discussion on World Literature through the lens of the vampire theme.

As a first step, I highlight that these vampire instances are not mere cultural projections in a binary, center-periphery system.[7] Instead, vampires are rather complex literary constructs that blend and create new motifs while preserving some essential elements. In their very essence, vampire texts are ways of engaging with the uncanny, constant kernel of a restless corpse thirsty for the blood of the living. However, what a restless corpse *is*, the reasons for its thirst or the many implications of such an anomaly vary from text to text and from culture to culture. As David Damrosch argues, world literature is a "mode of reading that can be experienced intensively with a few works,"[8] a concept that perfectly encapsulates the vampire's journey across texts and languages. Instead of highlighting the universality of the vampire, I propose we consider its plurality.

[7] The discussions around the center-periphery concept are better illustrated by turning to Franco Moretti's "Conjectures on World Literature (2000)" and "Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History (2005)," together with the debates it generated. For example, David Damrosch, in *What Is World Literature?* (2003), offers a contrasting view to Moretti's quantiative approach and emphasizes World Literature as a more flexible, mode of reading. Also, translation scholars such as Emily Apter in *Against World Literature* (2013) also challenge the applicability of such models to linguistically diverse contexts.

[8] Damrosch, David. *What is World Literature?* Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003, p. 299.

While the vampire may seem today as an easily recognizable creature, its diffusion over three centuries has accumulated a rich corpus of themes and motifs, transforming it into a fundamentally intertextual genre. By reading vampire literature both as world literature and as a contributor to its globalization, this dissertation also aligns with Theo D'haen's view of world literature as a plurality of interconnected modes of different systems. The main difference is that while D'haen defines World Literature as a reflection of "constellations of power around the world: literary, intellectually, but also, and perhaps even foremost, economically, politically, and militarily,"[9] this dissertation highlights that the *worldness*, the power, of the literary vampire springs from less political affairs.[10]

This dissertation also draws inspiration from the Bloomsbury series *Literatures as World Literature*, edited by Thomas Oliver Beebee. This collection spans from *Taiwanese Literature as World Literature* (2019) to *Existentialism as World Literature* (2020) and *Feminism as World Literature* (2022). These works demonstrate how diverse themes, whether tied to specific nationalities or not, can enrich our understanding of world literature. The vampire genre, I argue, is no exception. Its plurality and richness offer a valuable lens through which to examine world literature, potentially facilitating what Todd

[9] D'haen, Theo. *The Routledge Concise History or World Literature*. London & New York, 2012, p. 4.

[10] This should be interpreted as an open-ended debate. However, we must consider that the contemporary, diverse representations of vampires transcend geopolitical boundaries. Vampires derive their appeal from their ability to include fundamental human fears or desires, rather than merely the political influence of their country of origin. For instance, the global popularity of Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series among young readers is not *only* a result of the American superpower status, but rather because it embodies themes like love, identity, and fragility, which are popular among teenagers everywhere.

Kontje calls a "return to literature in an age of Cultural Studies."[11] By focusing on vampire texts in their plurilingual and pluricultural dimensions, we gain insights not only into representations of the undead or supernatural across different cultures but also into the inherent richness and intertextuality of world literature itself. Just as Damrosch and D'haen take crime fiction as a nexus for exploring central themes across cultures in *Crime Fiction as World Literature* (2017), the vampire genre offers similar potential.

Take, for instance, the fire motif in vampire texts. In Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth," fire can evoke both medieval witch hunts and the heroic pyres of the *Iliad*, while in the Habsburg vampire reports, it takes on a more pronounced religious dimension. However, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) subverts this trope, and the Count comfortably recounts tales of heroism to Jonathan Harker by the fireplace. In contrast, Pu Songling's "Shi bian" [Transforming Corpse], translated by George Soulié as "The Corpse, The Blood Drinker" (1913), presents a living corpse that seems to intensify the fire's brightness, particularly the candles before its coffin. This last example, when read within a Chinese context, can be explained as the *yin* (阴) of the dead female appearing to feed the pure, masculine *yang* (阳) of the fire.

Another element signaling the richness of the vampire genre is the chain. For example, while in both Goethe's "Braut" and Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs Du Mal* (1857), the motif of the chain appears as a significant vampiric symbol, in Ricky Lau's film *Mr. Vampire* (1985), this element appears as an improvised weapon, in a comical fight between

[11] Kontje, Todd. *German Orientalisms*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2007, p. 244.

a Daoist master, a policeman, and a vampiric ghost.[12] If we go deeper, in Goethe's and Baudelaire's narratives, the "chain" is the bond between the vampire and its victim. In the "Braut," the vampiric bride initially refers to a "Kette" (chain), both as a piece of jewelry and as a symbol of an unbroken love connection. Exchanging gifts and "signs of loyalty," she gives the groom a rich, "golden chain," while he reciprocates with "a silver bowl, crafted like no other."[13] Later, however, addressing the corpse of her groom, she laments that his life is forfeit due to her contamination, and the same golden "Kette" suddenly loses its shine and symbolizes only the subjugation to an undead existence: "I gave you my necklace" ("Meine Kette hab ich dir gegeben").[14]

To a certain extent, Baudelaire's poems can be interpreted as the subsequent words of the infected young man in Goethe's ballad. Aware of his new metamorphosis, the vampire in *Les Fleurs du Mal* bemoans his unwilling attachment to the seductress (the arch vampire), depicting himself as "bound" to her "like the convict to the chain" ("— Infâme à qui je suis lié Comme le forçat à la chaîne").[15] This transformation of physical phenomena

[12] Lau, Ricky, director. *Mr. Vampire* [*Jiangshi xiangsheng*, 殭屍先生). Bo Ho Film Company Ltd., Golden Harvest Company, Paragon Films Ltd., Toho-Towa, 1985. YouTube. 1:11:30-1:14:30.

[13] "Und schon wechseln sie der Treue Zeichen,/ Golden reicht sie ihm die Kette dar,/ Und er will ihr eine Schale reichen,/ Silbern, künstlich wie nicht eine war." Goethe, Johann Wolfgang. "Die Braut von Corinth." lines 85-88, in *Musen-Almanach für das Jahr 1798*. Friedrich Schiller (ed.). Tübingen: J.G. Cotta. p. 93.

[14] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth." ibid. p. 98.

[15] Baudelaire, Charles. *Les Fleurs Du Mal*. Paris: Poulet-Malassis et De Broise, 1857. p.71.

like fire and chains, among others, into semiotic indicators demonstrates the genre's capacity to explore complex themes and cultural concepts.

The depths and versatility of vampire literature have not gone unnoticed in academic circles, where it has increasingly been recognized as a powerful pedagogical tool. For example, Lisa A. Nevárez's *The Vampire Goes to College* (2013) uses vampire narratives in the context of higher education to examine themes of love, death, immortality, and otherness. Similarly, Melissa Anyiwo's *Teaching with Vampires* (2024) integrates social justice, race, and marginalization into vampire studies. This interdisciplinary approach also extends to political science, where Jason Morissette's "Marxferatu: The Vampire Metaphor as a Tool for Teaching Marx's Critique of Capitalism" (2013) uses vampiric imagery to elucidate Marxist theory in college. Indeed, Marx himself employed the vampire metaphor in *Das Kapital*, describing capital as "dead labor, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labor, and lives the more, the more labor it sucks."[16] This academic interest is also present in courses like Gil Anidjar's "Vampires," inaugurated in 2016 at Columbia University. According to Anidjar's syllabus, the course examines vampire narratives across global cinema to explore themes of politics, sustenance, race, and blood mixing. As Anidjar notes, "Every place with a film industry has produced vampire movies, including Cuba, Sweden, Russia, Greece, France, and more."[17]

[16] Cited from Marx, Karl. *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy*. Vol. I, p. 163. Available online at *Marxists.org*, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Capital-Volume-I.pdf (6/2/2024).

[17] Interviewed by Gary Shapiro in "Vampires! A Syllabus to Sink Your Teeth Into." *Columbia News*, October 24, 2016. https://news.columbia.edu/news/vampires-syllabus-sink-your-teeth .

Building on the vampire's presence across diverse cultural contexts and literatures, this dissertation adopts a chronological, text-based approach. The analysis begins with Ernst Frombald's 1725 report, "Copia eines Schreibens aus dem Gradisker District in Ungarn," [Copy of a Writing from the Gradiska District in Hungary], published in the *Wienerisches Diarium*, a popular Viennese gazette. This text emerged in the wake of the Habsburg domination of Serbia following the 1718 Treaty of Passarowitz. The study then examines Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth" ballad published in Schiller's *Musenalmanach für das Jahr 1798*. Goethe's work transplants the vampire to ancient Corinth after the Theodosian Reform (380 A.D.). Finally, the dissertation analyzes Georges Soulié de Morant's 1913 English translation, "The Corpse, The Blood Drinker," derived from Pu Songling's Qing-era text "Shi bian" (屍變, "Transforming Corpse"). This selection of texts deliberately moves beyond the scholarly discourse dominated by Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and addresses a significant gap in vampire scholarship. To my knowledge, this study represents the first comparative analysis of literary vampires bridging Habsburg, German, Chinese, and English contexts. It offers a fresh perspective on the vampire's role in World Literature.

Research Landscape and Dissertation Objectives

This dissertation addresses the vampire's role in World Literature and its potential as a lens for cross-cultural analysis. In this sense, it does not aim to answer the traditional questions often pursued in vampire scholarship, such as identifying the first literary vampire or defining the criteria for vampire-related texts or media. Scholarly works such as Erik Butler's *Metamorphoses of the Vampire in Literature and Film* (2010), Nick Groom's *The Vampire: A New History* (2018), and John Edgar Browning's Introduction to *Dracula: A Norton Critical Edition* (2021) already provide comprehensive maps of the creature's evolutions.

Nevertheless, this existing scholarship predominantly focuses on Western representations, and the presence of vampire-like entities in Chinese literature remains understudied. I address this gap by exploring Frombald's Habsburg vampire alongside Goethe's ballad and George Soulié's "The Corpse, The Blood-Sucker" as a translation of Pu Songling. This study, therefore, sets the groundwork for further research in the field of comparative literature. It also raises important questions about whether Chinese literary creatures such as ghosts (*gui* 鬼), vixens (*hulijing* 狐狸精), or supernatural monsters (*mogui* 魔鬼) can be considered within the vampire paradigm of the Habsburg *Vampyri* or the German *Blutsaugers*. Furthermore, this research also contributes to the emerging field of Asian Gothic studies, expanding the scope of scholarship such as Andrew Hock Soon Ng's *Asian Gothic: Essays on Literature, Film, and Anime* (2008), Katarzyna Ancuta's

chapter on "Asian Gothic" in *The Cambridge Companion to the Modern Gothic* (2014), and Colette Balmain's "East Asian Gothic: A Definition" (2017).

I also want to emphasize that this study does not attempt to reconcile the vampire's varied etymologies or trace its linguistic evolution through terms like the Turkic *obur*[18] or the proto-Slavic *upper* (*упырь*).[19] Such an inquiry would demand a comprehensive etymological expedition beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, the analysis begins with the vampire's proliferation in 18th-century German texts, using this as a springboard to examine the interplay between literatures produced in diverse socio-cultural contexts.

This approach reveals an intriguing conundrum: while it could be argued that before 18th–19th-century European literature, there were no vampires *per se* but only vampiric entities, contemporary lenses have reshaped perceptions of earlier creatures. The Hebrew

[18] Kırgi, Salim Fikret. *Osmanlı Vampirleri*. Ankara: İletişim Yayınları, 2018. Kırgi discusses the references to *obur* wizards in the Ottoman era and many of his citations are from Evliya Çelebi's 17th century *Seyahatname* (Book of Travels).

[19] Also see Stachowski, Kamil; Stachowski, Olaf. "Possibly Oriental Elements in Slavonic Folklore. Upiór ~ wampir". Essays in the History of Languages and Linguistics, ibid. p. 655; Sariyannis, Marinos. "Of Ottoman Ghosts, Vampires and Sorcerers: An Old Discussion Disinterred." Archivum Ottomanicum 30 (2013), pp. 195–220; Also in his article "The Dead, the Spirits, and the Living: On Ottoman Ghost Stories." Journal of Turkish Studies 44 (2015), pp. 373–90; Wilson, Katharina M. (1985). "The History of the Word *Vampire*." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 46 vol. 4, pp. 577-583.

alukah (עֲלוּקָה *'ălūqāh*),[20] Icelandic *draugur*,[21] Greek *lamiae*, and Romanian *strigoi*, originally distinct entities articulating specific socio-cultural contexts, have been retroactively associated with vampirism. Conversely, newer iterations of the vampire have attained canonical status, influencing the general interpretation of these earlier beings. As soon as it was commended to paper, therefore, the vampire as a neologism was projected onto different cultures as a symbol of social anxiety, ethnic estrangement, or material exploitation.

This plurality of processes is also described by Franco Moretti in *Signs Taken for Wonders* (1983), who notes that the vampire is both "sensibly supersensible" and "incorporeal".[22] Furthermore, Moretti argues, the vampire's paradoxical existence, bound by a curse to perpetuate its kind, is closely mirroring a capitalist compulsion to accumulate, and it was not until the 20th century that mass culture transformed the creature into a more human figure.[23] In another article, Moretti also suggests that the modern vampire distinguishes itself from preceding monsters because it embodies a "dynamic, totalizing

[20] This feminine noun might relate to *Lilith*, an important demon in Mesopotamian and later in Babylonian demonology, places from where Hebrew tribes emigrated. This link is explained more in detail in Geduld, Harry M. "The Lineage of Lilith." *The Shaw Review*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1964, pp. 58–61. Also see Dan, Joseph. "Samael, Lilith, and the Concept of Evil in Early Kabbalah." AJS Review, vol. 5, 1980, pp. 17–40.

[21] The "draugr" is most commonly glossed as "ghost" in English. However, Ármann Jakobsson argues that this creature is closely related to the vampire. This familiarity also explains why Bram Stoker's *Dracula* became so popular so early in Iceland. See Jakobsson, Ármann. "Vampires and Watchmen: Categorizing the Mediaeval Icelandic Undead." *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, vol. 110, no. 3, 2011, pp. 281–300.

[22] Moretti, Franco. *Signs Taken for Wonders.* London: Verso, 1997, p. 91.

[23] Moretti, Franco. Ibid. pp. 92, 104.

monster."[24] Yet, what kind of "totality" is this, more specifically? What is its relationship to earlier vampiric instances, and how can it help us understand World Literature? The term "Nosferatu" is an excellent example of such a process. While closely associated with vampirism through F.W. Murnau's 1922 film *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens*, its Romanian origin, "Necuratu," roughly translates as "The Unclean One" and originally referred to the devil.[25] In other words, the emergence of "Nosferatu" - a linguistic and media neologism - not only vampirized the "Necuratu" but also linguistically resurrected it into modernity, albeit with vampiric connotations.

Similarly, David Punter, in *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day*, also observes that the late 19th century saw the surge of what he terms as the "decadent Gothic of the 1890's".[26] This decade, Punter argues, introduced a wave of "symbolic energy" in Gothic literature and produced potent adaptations of older fears, including the "new, improved vampire of Dracula."[27] However, where did this "symbolic energy" come from, more specifically, what was its relationship

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[24] Moretti, Franco. "Dialectic of Fear." *New Left Review*, vol. 1, no. 136, 1982, pp. 67; 81.

[25] The term "necuratu" also has colloquial uses beyond its diabolic associations. In my own childhood in Romania, I recall my grandmother angrily referring to my grandfather as "necuratu" when he returned home after lingering too long at the village bar. On a more scholarly note, while Emily Gerard is often credited with introducing "nosferatu" to English readers in her 1885 article "Transylvanian Superstitions" (*The Nineteenth Century*, vol. 18, July-December 1885, pp. 130-150), Antony Hogg has identified an earlier written example from 1865. For more discussions on the topic see Hogg, Anthony. "Examining Roumanian Superstitions." *Digging Up the Vampires*, 11 Aug. 2010, doaav.blogspot.com/2010/08/examining-roumanian-superstitions.html.

[26] Punter, David. *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day*. Longman: London & New York, 1996, p. 1.

[27] Punter, David. Ibid. p. 1.

to literature? Could it be linked to the Goethean *Weltliteratur*, which heralded the inclusion of diverse literary worlds into the Western canon, such as Herbert Giles' 1880 translation of Pu Songling's *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*?

Methodological Aspects

In addressing these bits and pieces of the vampire scattered across diverse cultural contexts, this dissertation employs a dual methodological approach. More specifically, the following chapters offer a close reading of 3 canonical vampire texts produced in different socio-cultural contexts while drawing on Roman Ingarden's concept of "schematized views" ("schematisierten Ansichten"[28]) and Wolfgang Iser's reader-response theory. The texts, as mentioned before, are Frombald's "Copia Eines Schreibens," Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth," and George Soulié's "The Corpse, The Blood-Drinker." I tried as best as possible to focus on all the sources in their original languages, and all the translations into English are mine unless specified otherwise.

Ingarden's notion of "schematized views," as outlined in *The Literary Work of Art* (1931), provides a framework for understanding how texts hold multiple potential meanings in a state of "readiness" ("Parathaltung"). Due to their linguistic connection to the object they depict, these views exist initially as "mere potentiality" ("bloße

[28] See chapter 8, "Die Schicht der schematisierten Ansichten," in Ingarden, Roman. *Das Literarische Kunstwerk*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1972, pp. 270-294.

Möglichkeit"[29]). However, through reading ("bei der Lektüre"[30]), these views transition into a form of actuality—a unique mode of "gewisse Aktualität" that, although it never achieves the fullness of a concrete, experienced perspective ("konkrete erlebte Ansicht"), surpasses the initial, schematized, mere potential ("bloße Potenz"[31]).

In this dissertation, I slightly extend this notion beyond the reader-text interaction and propose that the schematized views also encapsulate something of the socio-historical context of the text's production. This step allows us to approach the vampire narratives in World Literature as both aesthetic objects and historical documents. Furthermore, this dual application of Ingarden's "Ansichten" acknowledges that the reader's engagement with a text is not solely an internal or aesthetic experience but is also an act of historical and cultural interpretation. Works emerging from distinct socio-historical contexts—such as the newly Habsburg-annexed territory of Wallachia compared to a densely populated urban center in Qing China—bear inherently different schematized views. How can, then, one talk about a single, recognizable, and cohesive vampire aesthetic? Where would its elements reside, and where would their associations occur? The answer to such questions inevitably points towards the plurality of vampires and to the fact that these "pre-

[29] Ingarden, Roman. ibid. p. 281.

[30] Ingarden, Roman. ibid. p. 281.

[31] Ingarden, Roman. Ibid. p. 283.

determined schematic views are always supplemented and filled in with various details (...) which do not actually belong to them."[32]

This observation, which Ingarden and later Wolfgang Iser would associate with the act of reading as a phenomenological process,[33] is equally applicable to the three authors analyzed in this dissertation. Frombald, Goethe, and Soulié bring their own interpretations and biases to the vampire accounts, each crafting different "various details"[34] upon the "schematized view," now outside the Habsburg context. As a result, the various vampire structures ("Aufbau") are part "schematized" historical interpretations, colored by the cultural and literary frameworks of their era, and part "details added and filled in" ("verschiedene Einzelheiten ergänzt und ausgefüllt"), initially by the authors themselves and later by the various instances of reading ("bei der Lektüre"[35]).

Following this argument, reading vampire stories becomes a dynamic process where the texts themselves serve as contexts for newer iterations. This concept of *context* transcends a deterministic, materialistic historical backdrop, as discussed by Raymond Williams in *Marxism and Literature* (1977) or the field of cultural materialism in general. The context is not merely a backdrop but a "schematized view" in itself, another text that

[32] "Die vorbestimmten Ansichtenschemata werden bei der Lektüre immer durch verschiedene Einzelheiten ergänzt und ausgefüllt, die eigentlich nicht zu ihnen gehören," Ingarden, Roman. ibid. p. 281.

[33] Iser, Wolfgang. "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach." *New Literary History*, 1972, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 279–99.

[34] Ingarden, Roman. ibid. p. 281.

[35] Ingarden, Roman. ibid. p. 281.

further invites subsequent "recreations" of elements in a state of "readiness," regardless of language or cultural settings. This is the reason why Iser refers to reading as a "recreation," which "is not smooth or continuous… [Instead] We look forward, we look back, we decide, we change our decisions, we form expectations, we are shocked by their non-fulfillment, we question, we muse, we accept, we reject."[36] Therefore, the vampire texts after the Habsburg reports perform a complex movement - they fill in the already "filled in" schematized views of Frombald, which becomes an underlying context in subsequent vampire aesthetic worlds. From Ingarden's and Iser's phenomenological perspectives, Frombald never *finished* his text. His vampire report merely opened the door to an ever-increasing set of additions, accessible as a repository of and for world literature.

While engaging with "schematized views" offers dynamic interpretative possibilities, they also appear to complement a somewhat consistent essence of the vampire aesthetic. This essence, whether a single element, multiple factors, or their synthesis, provides the necessary framework for readers to uniformly identify vampire literature or vampire motifs. Although precisely defining this essence is problematic, if not impossible, this dissertation explores five distinct schematized views that most commonly constitute the vampire genre. These form the backbone of vampire literature, though they are not exhaustive; future iterations may well introduce new elements. Nevertheless, these schemata serve as valuable tools in addressing the contemporary universality of the vampire and, by extension, the genre's significance for World Literature.

[36] Iser, Wolfgang. "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach." *New Literary History*, 1972, Vol. 3, No. 2, On Interpretation: I, p. 293.

First, the vampire world is characterized by **a) a dichotomy of the known and unknown**, where narrators oscillate between the facts (as presented to them) and an uncomfortable fictionality they cannot explain. Additionally, there exists **b) a temporal layering** between the intradiegetic time—the events occurring within the story—and an extradiegetic past, referencing ancient occurrences outside the immediate storyline. This juxtaposition connects the narrative with a mysterious, often darker past. Furthermore, characters, especially narrators, often experience displacement, finding themselves in new, unfamiliar environments they must explore. This **c) narratorial displacement** not only drives the plot but also engages the reader. **d) Mortuary imagery**, with its frequent invocation of burial rites, grave markers, and other symbols of death, further underscores the vampire's liminality and adds a layer of authenticity to the supernatural elements. Lastly, also central to the vampire aesthetic are **e) themes of blood and contagion,** echoing the original Habsburg concerns regarding epidemics, impurity, and unregulated circulation.

These five categories, while not exhaustive, consistently structure the vampire genre. They also both reflect the initial socio-historical context of the texts' production and invite subsequent readers to interpret and fill narrative gaps. Adopting a structuralist approach reminiscent of Vladimir Propp, this dissertation seeks to avoid the constraints of a single, monolithic definition of the genre. Whether a vampire work must include all five elements or in what combination remains open-ended. Such flexibility allows for recognizing the vampire aesthetic across diverse media and contexts, from Halloween costumes to cocktail names, from Habsburg military documents to English translations of Chinese texts.

Therefore, the engagements with and between various vampire themes are more profound than simple, linear transmissions of words and metaphors from one text to another. A prime example of this is the shift in how the vampire extracts blood from its victims, which transitioned from an initial representation of strangulation to a more dramatic and visually impactful bite on the neck.[37] This shift also resembles a kiss and is far more captivating to the public than the Habsburg initial bruise from strangling, present in Flückinger's medical reports.[38] In fact, neither Flückinger's vampire, Arnont Paule, nor Frombald's Peter Plogojowitz were initially depicted as blood suckers, but rather as stranglers who drained their victims' blood post-strangulation in an unexplained manner.[39]

In this regard, more modern instances of the vampire do not take up the texts of the 1730s with unwavering fidelity. Instead, the schematic views of newer and older iterations

[37] The first mention of linking blood sucking with the neck appears in France in 1746, in Calmet, Agustin. *Dissertations sur les apparitions des anges, des démons & des esprits et sur les revenans et vampires de Hongrie, de Boheme, de Moravie & de Silesie*.Paris: 1746, pp. 275-279: "(...) un homme mort depuis plus de trente ans, (...) qui avoit succe le sang au cou la première sois a son propre frere, la seconde a un de ses fils, & la troisieme a un valet de la maison.", p. 277.

[38] "(...) umb den Hals gewürget worden, worauf sie grosse Schmertzen (...) von Stund zu Stund sich schlechter befunden". Flückinger's report was also published by Hamberger in Hamberger, Klaus. *Mortuus non mordet: Dokumente zum Vampirismus* 1689-1791. Wien: Turia und Kant, 1992, pp. 49-54, while an original text can be found at *Documents of the Medvedia vampire case*, 1732. OESTA/FHKA/Hoffinanz Ungarn, 1138r-1141v. Also see "a bloodshot blue mark, the length of a finger" in Barber, Paul. *Vampires, Burial, and Death: Folklore and Reality*. 2nd ed. New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2010, p. 18.

[39] Ádám Mézes argues that one of the most common theoretical frameworks used was the Paracelsian sympathy-based *mumial magnetism*, in Mézes, Ádám. *Doubt and diagnosis: Medical Experts and the returning dead of the southern Habsburg borderland (1718-1766)*. Central European University, PhD Dissertation, 2020, p. 102. Also see Sugg, Richard. *Mummies, Cannibals and Vampires - The History of Corpse Medicine from the Renaissance to the Victorians*. London & New York: Routledge, 2011, pp. 28-66.

interact with one another. This dynamic is evident in Goethe's own designation of his ballad, "Die Braut von Corinth," as a "vampiric poem" ("Vampyrische[s] Gedicht"[40]), which is different from saying a "vampire poem" (*Vampirgedicht* / *Vampir-gedicht*). He describes his text using an adjective and not an attributive noun. The difference between a "vampiric poem" and a "vampire poem" lies in the subtle yet crucial difference in connotation. The first suggests a work that embodies characteristics or qualities of a vampire, taken here as schematic views. In contrast, the latter suggests a poem that is about a vampire or directly relates to vampires. In other words, when writing the "Braut," Goethe was not focused on the vampire figure as a crystallized motif in the same sense as a contemporary author would be, but on some of its structural elements.

Building on this notion, one can naturally analyze vampire's role in World Literature from the lens of transmediality. Drawing on Friedrich Kittler's notion of "discourse networks" ("Aufschreibesysteme") in his homonymous 1990 book, it can be argued that the vampire genre extends beyond its initial textual boundaries and infiltrates other forms of cultural expression. For example, even within the intradiegetic world of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), the Count finds its way through a plurality of cultural technologies and communicative modes with supernatural ease. Van Helsing's observation that "The vampire live on, and cannot die by mere passing of the time"[41] underscores the creature's adaptability to the changing tides of technology and society. Similarly, outside

[40] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Goethes Werke (Weimarer Ausgabe)*, 1887-1919. dtv, München, 1987. vol. III.2, p. 72.

[41] Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. Penguin Classics, 2011, p. 258.

of *Dracula*, the vampire's existence is not a linear narrative but a web of cultural imprints, including but not limited to the carbon-penned letters of Frombald (1725), Goethe's ballad printed in Schiller's *Musenalmanach* or the contemporary mass-produced Halloween costumes.[42]

Expanding on our methodological framework, Kittler's essay, "Dracula's Legacy" (1982), provocatively describes *Dracula* not as a vampire novel "but as a chronicle of bureaucratization," a perspective that sidesteps the novel's supernatural elements to highlight its engagement with contemporary media.[43] This viewpoint dovetails with the historical trajectory of the vampire tale, which morphs from a supposed oral account to handwritten reports, and eventually to print media. These "ever new and imaginary resurrections"[44] of the vampire also reflect my understanding of Ingarden's schematized views, where each iteration of the vampire exists in a state of readiness, waiting to be resurrected through new forms.

[42] The entertainment industry underscores the richness and potentiality of these transmedia gaps. Statistically, in the United States alone, the estimated annual Halloween expenditure in 2022 was $10.6 billion. Within these costs, vampire accessories seized a dominant position, and nearly 1.7 million adults (roughly the whole adult population of Latvia) donned vampire cloaks and fangs. More data in Tighe, Daniel. "Halloween in the U.S. - Statistics & Facts", Oct. 25, 2022. Statista. Web. https://www.statista.com/topics/1727/halloween-in-the-us/ (10.27.2022).

[43] In the English translation of "Draculas Vermächtnis" in Kittler, Friedrich. "Dracula's Legacy." *Stanford Humanities Review*, No. 1, 1989. p.166.

[44] Kittler, Friedrich. "Dracula's Legacy." p. 177.

Chapter Breakdown

The first chapter presents a pioneering literary analysis of Ernst Frombald's 1725 report, "Copy of a writing from the Gradisker District in Hungary" ("Copia eines Schreibens aus dem Gradisker District in Ungarn"). This canonical text in vampire studies marks the vampire's transition from an alleged official report to mass media, though the original document remains lost. The chapter contextualizes Frombald's account within its socio-historical setting, specifically the Habsburg conquest following the Treaty of Passarowitz, and also situates it within its contemporary literary landscape. While the chapter examines burial practices that may have informed the informers within Frombald's account, it also notes the discrepancies between the text's objectives and the historical reality of early 18th-century Serbian villages. By parsing Frombald's text through the five schematic views mentioned in the methodology, namely the dichotomy of the known and unknown, the temporal tension, the protagonist's narratorial displacement, the mortuary imagery, and the novel themes of blood and contagion, this part of the dissertation sets the groundwork for the subsequent comparative analyses.

Chapter Two examines the vampiric protagonist in Goethe's ballad, "Die Braut von Corinth" (The Bride of Corinth), a literary hybrid that melds classical mythological motifs with lyric forms characteristic of Goethe's Weimar period. By comparing the schematic views in Goethe's text with those in Frombald's report, the chapter illuminates how vampire fiction establishes a literary space where historical narratives and imaginative constructs coalesce, rather than merely reproducing existing power structures.

Furthermore, while some of the ballad's roots can be traced to the 1725-1755 vampire articles, the "Braut," crafted in Jena in 1797, reflects decades of erudition and showcases a plurality of cultural and religious nuances. Unlike Frombald's report published in a tabloid, Goethe's poem emerges from the author's immersion in canonical literary traditions and positions the literary vampire as a creature of cosmopolitan, dynamic high culture.

The third chapter examines George Soulié de Morant's 1913 translation of Pu Songling's (蒲松齡) story "Shi bian" (屍變, "Transforming/Changing Corpse") into "The Corpse, The Blood Drinker." This translation serves as a nexus of various cultural contexts and layers, each contributing to the interpretation of the Chinese vampire as a tool for exploring world literature. More specifically, rather than a mere linguistic translation or cultural adaptation, Soulié's work establishes a new type of vampire, one that later inspired the bloodthirsty *Jiangshi* (殭屍) of Hong Kong cinema. While acknowledging the evident orientalization and fetishization in Soulié's text, this chapter emphasizes the worldly, intertextual characteristics of vampire literature. Through Soulié's translation, readers can discern more profound schematic views and echoes of diverse literary traditions, from Goethe and Shakespeare to Baudelaire and the *Iliad*, and from the *Zhuangzi* to Frombald's Habsburg report. This interconnectedness exemplifies the vampire genre's capacity to function as world literature. It transcends cultural and linguistic boundaries while engaging with and transforming local traditions.

The conclusion synthesizes the findings from the three core chapters and highlights how the vampire genre serves as a promising lens for exploring world literature. The 18th-

century Habsburg vampire reports, initially framed within bureaucratic discourse, reveal what Hayden White described as "a deep structural content which is generally poetic, and specifically linguistic."[45] This element, once disseminated through Habsburg newspapers, sparked the formation of a distinct world centered around the vampire, an untranslatable, previously unknown concept. Therefore, the concept is new. There is no primordial, original ur-vampire, and vampire literature does not reflect a unitary, universal, folkloric entity omnipresent across cultures and eras. Instead, the creature stands as a particular, plural manifestation of the written text: "The word is a fan" that conceals without hiding.[46]

Soulié's work simultaneously creates a new text and also integrates a purported Orient into the *topos* of a blood-drinking monster rooted in the 1725-1732 vampire debates. Linguistically, he transforms the Chinese concept of a "transforming corpse," Shi bian (屍變), through the lens of a Germanized Slavic term, "Upiór - wampir," to craft an English short story published in the United States, in Boston. This process not only introduces Western readers to an interpretation of Chinese literature but also expands the vampire's geographical and cultural reach. This dissertation maps the various schematic views

[45] Hayden, White. *Metahistory: the historical imagination in nineteenth-century Europe*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975. p. IX.

[46] In the *West-Eastern Divan*, Goethe plays with the symbolism of what a word can do: "Und doch haben sie Recht die ich schelte:/ Denn dass ein Wort nicht einfach gelte (...)/ Das Wort ist ein Fächer! (...)/ Der Fächer ist nur ein lieblicher Flor,/ Er verdeckt mir zwar das Gesicht;/ Aber das Mädchen verbirgt er nicht." [And yet, those whom I scold are right:/ A word does not show a simple meaning (...) The word is a fan! (...)/ The fan is only a lovely veil,/ True, it hides her face from me/And yet it does not conceal the girl." in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *West-östlicher Divan*. Stuttgart, 1819. Available online at: *Deutsches Textarchiv*, https://www.deutschestextarchiv.de/goethe_divan_1819 , p. 46. (6/14/2024).

inherent to the vampire's 1725-1913 journey from Serbia, "the frightening borderlands of Enlightenment,"[47] through Goethe's Corinth, to China, the home of the "admirably complicated and obscure Oriental soul."[48] Soulié's liberal translation, like a literary Magellan-Elcano, completes a world circle, and through "The Corpse, The Blood Drinker" (1913), the Habsburg *Vampyris Serviensibus* becomes a "world vampire."

[47] Bräunlein, Peter. "The frightening borderlands of Enlightenment: The vampire problem." *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Science*s, Volume 43, Issue 3, 2012, pp. 710-719.

[48] "(...) nous pénétrons jusqu'au fond de ces âmes extrême-orientales que les uns jugent admirablement compliquées et obscures," in Soulié, George. *Essai sur la Littérature Chinoise*. Paris: Éditions Mercure de France, 1924. p.6.

Chapter 1. Frombald's "Copia Eines Schreibens"

A Brief Contextualization of the Habsburg Texts

To ascertain what elements specific to Habsburg texts can be recognized in Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth" and George Soulie's *The Corpse, The Blood-Drinker*, it is essential to present and contextualize our sources. By "Habsburg texts," this dissertation essentially refers to the 1725 report of the imperial provisor Ernst Frombald, "Copia Eines Schreibens," Glaser's 1732 "Bericht von der Dorffschafft Metwett an der Morava" (Report from the village of Metwett on the Morava)[49], and Flückinger's 1732 examination "Visum et Repertum."[50]

Researchers have different opinions on the quality and character of these sources. Paul Barber, for example, argues that Flückinger's "Visum et Repertum" is a "rather curious document," "hardly a literary masterpiece." According to him, the text is difficult

[49] The report is currently found as "Bericht des Cantagions-Medicus Glaser an die Jagodiner Kommandantur (nach dem 12.12.1731.)" in the Hofkammerarchiv [Court Chamber Archives], Wien, Hoffinanz Ungarn, Rote Nummer 654 HKA, fol. 1134–1136 and also in the Sanitatsakten, Rote Nummer 1, fols. 1-4. There are also copies gathered in a special collection called Vampir Akten - Teil 2. For online references: https://www.archivinformationssystem.at/detail.aspx?ID=1966 (5/23/2024); For coherence, the future citations of the report are taken from Hamberger, Klaus. *Mortuus non mordet: Dokumente zum Vampirismus 1689-1791*. Wien: Turia & Kant, 1992, pp. 46-49.

[50] Flückinger's report was also published by Hamberger in Hamberger, Klaus. *Mortuus non mordet: Dokumente zum Vampirismus 1689-1791*. Wien: Turia und Kant, 1992, pp. 49-54, while an original text can be found at Documents of the Medvedia vampire case, 1732. OESTA/FHKA/Hoffinanz Ungarn, 1138r-1141v.

to read, and its author is completely "indifferent to questions of grammatical parallelism."[51] Simultaneously, in an equally compelling study, Peter Mario Kreuter suggests that the same report is actually well formulated and logically balanced ("gut formuliert und logisch im Aufbau"[52]).

Such a difference in interpreting the Habsburg vampire cases can be attributed to the varying perceptions of their socio-historical contexts. The engagement and interpretation of texts vary depending on the readers' academic backgrounds, goals, and expectations. Paul Barber, an anthropologist, views the Habsburg texts through a lens critiquing the 18th century's investigative shortcomings, suggesting that such reports, mired in ignorance, are inherently confusing and limited. Conversely, with expertise in medieval Southeast European history, Peter Kreuter finds the Habsburg vampire reports valuable, coherent sources amidst otherwise fragmentary regional documents. Although the two researchers discussed the same texts, the contexts do not perfectly coincide, hence the different interpretations.

To address such discrepancies, in analyzing the context surrounding the first schematized views of the vampire, this dissertation must first take into account a) the intellectual and literary landscape, b) the pertinent political dynamics, c) the most relevant

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[51] Barber, Paul. *Vampires, Burial, and Death: Folklore and Reality*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988, p.15.

[52] Kreuter, Peter Mario. *Der Vampirglaube in Südosteuropa: Studien zur Genese, Bedeutung und Funktion. Rumänien und der Balkanraum*. Berlin: Weidler Buchverlag Berlin, 2001, p. 23. Also see the thoughts of Niels Peterson on these two close readings at *Magia Posthuma*, May 12, 2007. https://magiaposthuma.blogspot.com/2007/05/languages-and-barriers.html (8/23/2022).

religious, linguistic, ethnic, or social class frictions, and d) the relationship between the texts and concerns related to epidemiological aspects.

Given this contextual framework, I propose that the Habsburg vampire texts are entrenched in an Enlightenment mindset and contain travel and utopian literature elements. They reflect the tensions arising in newly annexed Habsburg domains, underscored by religious, linguistic, and ethnic diversities, alongside stark contrasts between the peasantry and nobility. Moreover, they embody the era's epidemiological anxieties, evidenced by stringent border controls, extensive quarantines, and a pervasive atmosphere of suspicion. Beyond these elements, which are more or less evident, there is also the crucial issue of the reader. Are these characteristics discernible or even relevant to a reader encountering these works in translation, in contemporary Shanghai, for example? More importantly, do these socio-historical factors retain their significance or visibility in other vampire narratives?

In terms of literary connection, it is safe to assume that Goethe was familiar with the texts of Frombald, Glaser, and Flückinger and with the animated discussions around the so-called "vampire craze."[53] Between 1732 and 1760, scholars discussed the topics and terminology introduced by these three sources in over 40 treaties and 150 journal articles in Latin, German, and French.[54] Therefore, Frombald's article, the first close reading of this dissertation, transcends its local, epistemic, or medical expertise.

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[53] Hock, Stefan. *Die Vampyrsagen und ihre Verwertung in der deutschen Literatur*. Berlin: A. Duncker, 1900, pp. 67-70.

[54] This is without mentioning the commented book reviews or the texts that have disappeared and are only known from their mention in other treaties. A more detailed analysis of the published corpus is in: Mézes, Ádám. "Vampire Contagion as a Forensic Fact." *Historical Studies on Central*

More than being mere sources for literary adaptation and spectacular "early media events,"[55] as Paul Barber argues, these documents are transcultural par excellence. Given their wide reach and the social implications of their publication, they are similar to the travel journal genre (*Reiseschreibung*).[56] All of them depict foreign, yet recognizable lands, where a narrator provides insights into cultures and landscapes, engaging readers in a dual process of discovery and interpretation. This engagement, however, is not merely passive; it involves an active, fictional "recreation" of the landscape, often with didactic or moral purposes.

Similarly, a point must be made regarding the early vampire texts and early utopian literature. Just like the Habsburg vampire cases, utopian texts are anchored in "a journey to an island or an inaccessible mountain range, to some imaginary country or another planet, or into faraway times."[57] These narratives also invite readers into an active role, creating new contexts from the socio-historical conditions of the text's production and the reader's participation. Douwe Fokkema argues that writers of utopian fiction often create

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Europe, no. 1 (2021): 149–176; A complete list of 14 academic treaties published in 1732 and 1733 in Bohn, Thomas. *The Vampire: Origins of a European Myt*h. Berghahn Books, 2019, pp. 94-95.

[55] Barber, Paul. *Vampires, Burial, and Death: Folklore and Reality*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988, p. 5.

[56] In one article, Arthur Schultz estimated that the total number of German travel books printed and published between 1700-1835 would reach almost 1400 titles. This study, however, omits from this number "works on geography, history, natural science, and philosophical, commercial, or religious treaties which, together with descriptions, compendia and literary adaptations (...) would swell the bibliography of travel by many hundrehundreds." in Schultz, Arthur. "Goethe and the Literature of Travel." *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, vol. 48, no. 4, 1949, note #1, pp. 445-446.

[57] Fokkema, Douwe. "Introduction." Perfect Worlds: Utopian Fiction in China and the West, Amsterdam University Press, 2011, p. 15.

ideal societies in moments of crisis when "dominant ideologies fail to meet the needs of the day" and that historical conditions play a significant role in the creation and reception of utopian fiction but "depends on the willingness of readers to accept improbable settings."[58] Therefore, the readers of Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* (1721) or the portrayal of the hidden Eldorado in Voltaire's *Candide ou l'optimisme* (1759) are engaging not only with the context of these works but also take them as schemata that they fill with their own, thus creating something else. As Iser argued, "The entanglement of the reader is, of course, vital to any kind of text, but in the literary text we have the strange situation that the reader cannot know what his participation actually entails."[59] Did Goethe know that the reading of his text, "The Bride of Corinth" would generate a new type of context?

Overall, the intellectual landscape surrounding the emergence of the 18th-century vampire is characterized by a secular, encyclopedic endeavor to systematize the known universe.[60] In his analysis of the Habsburg vampire, Peter Bräunlein notes that the first half of the 18th century was marked by intellectual dynamism and experimentation. It is a time when priests and theologians become more rational, "and natural philosophers more theological."[61] The reigns of Joseph I (r. 1705-1711), Charles VI (1711-1740), and Maria

[58] Fokkema, Douwe. "Introduction." ibid. pp. 15-16.

[59] Iser, Wolfgang. "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach." *New Literary History*, 1972, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 295.

[60] See Holenstein, André; Steinke, Hubert; Stuber Martin (eds.). *Scholars in Action The Practice of Knowledge and the Figure of the Savant in the 18th Century.* Vol. I. Leiden: Brill, 2013.

[61] Bräunlein, Peter J. "The frightening borderlands of Enlightenment: The vampire problem". *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, Volume 43, Issue 3, 2012, p.713.

Theresia (r.1740-1780) exemplify this period of transition, with medicine and legislation becoming central to moral discourse and individuals increasingly viewed through the perspective of institutional or educational frameworks. Nevertheless, the same intellectual landscape is also shaped by religious frictions between the various confessions of the growing empire and a constant, institutional crusade against rural superstitions, Islamic religion, and magical beliefs[62].

Fig.2 An overview of the Habsburg-Ottoman wars after the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699) ©https://www.themaparchive.com/. Map acquired and modified for academic use

On a political level, the world around the first vampire texts is also fast-paced. During a single generation, the Habsburgs acquired a large and considerably diverse territory in South-Eastern Europe: Slavonia and a large part of Croatia, the central Hungarian Kingdom, Transylvania, Serbia, Bosnia, the Banat of Temes, and Little

[62] See Klaniczay Gabor and Pócs Eva (eds.). *Witchcraft and Demonology in Hungary and Transylvania*. Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic, 2017; Shalev, Zur. "Islam, Eastern Christianity, and Superstition according to Some Early Modern English Observers". *Knowledge and Religion in Early Modern Europe*. Leiden: Brill, 2013, pp. 135-152; Çirakman, Asli. "From Tyranny to Despotism: The Enlightenment's Unenlightened Image of the Turks." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2001, pp. 49–68.

Wallachia (**Fig. 2**). The peace treaties of Karlowitz (1699) and Passarowitz (1718) bring the empire not only new lands, but also vast numbers of non-Catholic, non-German-speaking individuals who require a cultural transformation into becoming loyal subjects of Habsburg rule.[63] Naturally, having been under Ottoman rule carried a stigma and the status and social acceptance of the new subjects are not so easily defined.

The early vampire narratives occur within a context of massive demographic shifts, both into and out of the Military Frontier (*Militärgrenze*). While some new subjects preferred the Ottoman rule, finding it more favorable than Christian governance, others supported the Habsburg policies, which offered attractive benefits to the volunteer militia along the military frontier. Some of these privileges included receiving whole plots of untaxed land after a brief military and war service. A very early example is the "Vlach Statute" (*Statuta Valachorum*), issued by Ferdinand II in 1630, which formulates the rights of the Orthodox refugees incorporated in the Habsburg defense lines. Notably, just as in

[63] More on the internal shifts of populations and power in the Habsburg period in Winter, Eduard. *Barock, Absolutismus und Aufklärung in der Donaumonarchie*. Vienna: Europa Verlag, 1971; For the provinces of Transylvania, Banat and Serbia, parts #3 and #4 in: Barta, Gábor; Köpeczi Béla. *History of Transylvania*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1994. Regardless of its title, the introduction in Hitchins, Keith. *The Rumanian National Movement in Transylvania, 1780-1849*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1969 offers an excellent survey of the socio-economic background of the region after 1718. A revised, more general overview in Ingrao, Charles. *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1618-1815* (Revised Second Edition). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, Chapters II & III. For an overview of the Muslim populations in the area in Waardenburg, Jacques. "Chapter 14. Muslim Minorities: Politics and Religion in the Balkans." *Muslims and Others: Relations in Context*. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 2008.

the case of the terms "Turk", "Grenzer," or "Vampire", "Vlach" is also an ambiguous word that, within that context, referred to a group broader than the ethnic Wallachians.[64]

By 1728, Habsburg authorities curiously recruited border guards for the Militärgrenze exclusively from regions beyond the old Ottoman border.[65] This is extremely important, given that the symptoms of vampirism were constantly related to individuals who previously had contact with the Ottoman side. Additionally, the external recruitment led to inevitable socio-cultural clashes, as the frontiersmen from outside the Habsburg borders displayed considerable problems integrating into a disciplined military life. Travelers passing through Serbia, Transylvania, and Little Wallachia reportedly had to constantly watch the deadly dangers they posed.[66] Even the local civilians, recently colonized or not, regarded them as "a rightfully flagellum of the country" ("ein rechtes Flagellum des Landes"[67]), as the new frontiersmen reportedly harassed and looted the villages they were supposed to protect.[68] Therefore, just as in the case of being a "Vlach,"

[64] Ádám Mézes argues that "Wallachisch," as it appears in German sources, "was an expression with a complicated history, as it could refer to a variety of ethnic groups on the Habsburg-Ottoman border region." Mézes, Ádám. *Doubt and diagnosis: Medical Experts and the returning dead of the southern Habsburg borderland (1718-1766)*. Central European University, PhD Dissertation, 2020, p. 39.

[65] Langer, Johann. "Serbien unter der kaiserlichen Regierung 1717–1739." *Mitteilungen des k.k. Kriegs-Archivs NF* 3 (1889), pp.191-193.

[66] Fata, Márta. "Karl Alexander von Württemberg : Kaiserlicher General und Statthalter von Serbien". In Wolf Josef; Zimmermann Wolfgang (eds). *Die Türkenkriege im 18. Jahrhundert. Wahrnehmen - Wissen - Erinnern*. Regensburg : Schnell & Steiner, 2017. pp. 58-60.

[67] Langer, Johann. "Serbien unter der kaiserlichen Regierung 1717–1739." *Mitteilungen des k.k. Kriegs-Archivs NF 3,* 1889, p.219.

[68] Fata, Márta, ibid. p.58.

to be labeled a "vampire" by the locals also conveyed a subtle interplay of cultural, social, and political meanings. These details might have been overlooked or deliberately excluded by the Imperial delegate drafting the official reports, whose objective was to swiftly address the issue at hand.

It is within this context that the crucial importance of the written word should be emphasized, for it encapsulates the standard institutional and cultural references, supposedly shared by the multiconfessional, multiethnic masses, circulating from and to the newly annexed provinces.[69] The written texts produced in German – the official language, are parts of an effort of defensive enclosure for what Benedict Anderson regards as "imagined communities."[70] This linguistic uniformity ensured a common political identity modeled around active resistance against outside and inside enemies.[71] Within this

[69] Oscar Jászi emphasizes this aspect when he cites, in a shortened form, the titulature of later Habsburg rulers: "Emperor of Austria; King of Hungary, of Bohemia, of Dalmatia, Croatia; Slavonia, Galicia, Lodomeria, and Illyria; King of Jerusalem, etc; Archduke of Austria [sic]; Grand Duke of Tuscany and Cracow; Duke of Loth[a]ringia, of Salzburg, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, and Bukovina; Grand Duke of Transylvania, Margrave of Moravia; Duke of Upper and Lower Silesia, of Modena, Parma, Piacenza, and Guastella, of Ausschwitz and Sator, of Teschen, Friaul, Ragusa, and Zara; Princely Count of Habsburg and Tyrol, of Kyburg, Gorz, and Gradiska; Duke of Trient and Brizen; Margrave of Upper and Lower Lausitz and in Istria; Count of Hohenembs, Feldkirch, Bregenz, Sonnenberg, etc." in Jászi, Oscar. *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarcy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929, p.34.

[70] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 2016.

[71] This discourse was later adopted by the National Socialist propaganda, which idealized the Habsburg borderlands as an exemplary lesson in the "German military spirit" ("dieser beispielgebenden Schöpfung deutschen Soldatengeistes"), in Kerchnawe, Hugo. *Die alte kk Militär grenze. Ein Schutzwall Europas*. Reihe Südost, no. 21. Adolf Luter Verlag, 1939, p.9. This rhetoric starts from the premise that the Militärgrenze had its origin in a stable, immovable cooperation between the peoples inhabiting it. In reality, however, the frontier was a fluid, transnational, transreligious structure.

framework, Ádám Mézes interprets the vampire phenomenon as an example of knowledge production originating from the periphery, from "the margins of the known world."[72] He also regards the individuals directly involved with the written vampire reports between 1725-1732 not only as intermediary actors between the Habsburg power and its new subjects but also as independent processors and creators of original cultural forms. In vampire scholarship, this type of historical approach clashes with a post-colonial interpretation of the phenomenon, where "the figure of the vampire actually emerges from colonial exchanges…[and] required brave vampire hunters—invariably patriotic, straight, white men—to issue nationalist, masculinist, and heterosexist punishments."[73]

On the one hand, the new subjects are simply viewed as Christians sharing a general anti-Islamic feeling and not as new, complex cultural subjects to learn from[74]. On the other hand, religious identity did not align seamlessly with political affiliation in the same manner as it is often perceived in contemporary times. Like the Habsburg rule, the Ottoman Empire was a heterogeneous political construct that lasted for over 600 years and

[72] Mézes, Ádám. *Doubt and diagnosis: Medical Experts and the returning dead of the southern Habsburg borderland (1718-1766)*. Central European University, PhD Dissertation, 2020, p.3.

[73] Hudson, Dale. "Vampires and Transnational Horror." in Harry M. Benshoff (ed.). *A Companion to the Horror Film*. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2014, pp. 463-464.

[74] More on the social status of these refugees in Kaindl, Raimund. "Die K. K. Militärgrenze – zur Einführung in Ihre Geschichte". *Heeresgeschichtliches Museum, Die K. K. Militärgrenze: Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte*. Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag für Unterricht, Wissenschaft und Kunst, 1973, pp. 20–21; Also see Lindén, Claudia, and Hans Ruin. "The Vampire, the Undead and the Anxieties of Historical Consciousness." *The Ethos of History: Time and Responsibility, edited by Stefan Helgesson and Jayne Svenungsson*, 1st ed., vol. 34, Berghahn Books, 2018, pp. 32–53.

incorporated a multitude of peoples, cultures, and religions.[75] There was not a single model of ruling that can hold for all places and at all times within its domains. Therefore, it is an oversimplification to assume that all Christians from Serbia, Bosnia, or the Banat of Temesvar uniformly and without reservation favored Habsburg rule over Ottoman governance. This becomes clearer when examining the local frictions between Orthodox Christians and Catholics, alongside the dismissive attitude of the Viennese court towards Eastern Christians.[76] For instance, in a later series of vampire incidents, Gerart Gerard van Swieten, the personal physician to Holy Roman Empress Maria Theresa, attributes all the vampire reports exclusively to superstitions exacerbated by what he perceived as Orthodox ignorance.[77] During the 18th century, therefore, Catholics were considered safe from the attacks of the creature. Those who obeyed the Imperial authorities even more so.

[75] See the introduction of Goffman, Daniel. *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002; Also, Inalcik, Halil. "The Meaning of Legacy: The Ottoman Case," in L.C. Brown (ed.), *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East.* New York: Columbia University Press.

[76] From a macro-perspective, the Fourth Crusade's sack of Constantinople in 1204 ended friendly communication between the churches and strengthened the divide. This event continued to have deep implications for the regions under Habsburg control. More contextualized analyses are in the introduction to Vintilă, Constanţa. *Changing Subjects, Moving Objects*. Leiden: Brill, 2022. Also see Jelavich, Charles. "Some Aspects of Serbian Religious Development in the Eighteenth Century." *Church History*, vol. 23, no. 2, 1954, pp. 144–52; Bushkovitch, Paul; Chrissidis Nikolaos; Păun, Radu. "The Lands of Orthodoxy in The Seventeenth Century." *Les Terres de l'orthodoxie au XVIIe Siècle*, 2017, vol. 58, no. 3, pp. 259-270.

[77] Swieten originally published his report in French, in 1755, as *Remarches sur le vampirisme*. Nevertheless, the text did not receive any significant attention until its translation into German in 1756, by Anton Hiltenprand: *Vampyrismus*. This version was later popularized by Andreas Mayer, who edited and published it in 1768 as *Abhandlung des Daseyns der Gespenster: nebst einem Anhange vom Vampyrismus* ("Treatise on the Existence of Ghosts; along with an appendix on vampirism").

The Ottoman rule in the Balkans affected local social classes differently, and this is crucial for the context of the vampire reports. Christian nobles who did not emigrate and collaborated with the Ottomans were granted some privileges but were heavily taxed, and some examples are the Greek "Phanariots" or the Wallachian "Hospodar."[78] Meanwhile, according to the Bosnian-American historian Wayne Vucinich, the rural population was "less abused, paid lower feudal taxes, and (...) had somewhat greater security."[79] This perspective also aligns with the 1724 observation of Jakob von Alter, a cameral inspector for the Imperial Treasury. Von Alter states that "the inhabitants [of the newly acquired provinces in Serbia and Wallachia] are extremely superstitious; they think of their city inhabitants as demigods, and so far, they prefer the Turkish yoke to Christian governance."[80]

Although concise, von Atler's report provides a considerable number of nuances to the socio-cultural dynamics of the newly acquired Habsburg territories. First, von Alter

[78] This new type of transnational oligarchy is detailed in Sadat, Deena. (1972). "Rumeli Ayanlari: The Eighteenth Century." *The Journal of Modern History*, 1972, Volume 44, Number 3 Sep https://doi.org/10.1086/240801 . For additional material see "Balkans - Ottoman Empire, Southeastern Europe, Conflict." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., (16 Feb. 2023). www.britannica.com/place/Balkans/The-Ottomans ; Papademetriou, Tom, "Ottoman Tax Farming and the Greek Orthodox Church." *Render unto the Sultan: Power, Authority, and the Greek Orthodox Church in the Early Ottoman Centuries*. (Oxford, 2015; online edn, Oxford Academic, 23 Apr. 2015), https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198717898.003.0005 ; Philliou, Christine. "Communities on the Verge: Unraveling the Phanariot Ascendancy in Ottoman Governance." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 51, no. 1, 2009, pp. 151–81.

[79] Vucinich, Wayne S. "The Nature of Balkan Society under Ottoman Rule." *Slavic Review*, vol. 21, no. 4, 1962, p. 601.

[80] Langer, Johann. "Serbien unter der kaiserlichen Regierung 1717–1739." Mitteilungen des k.k. Kriegs-Archivs NF 3 (1889), p.194. Also cited in Mézes, Ádám. *Doubt and diagnosis: Medical Experts and the returning dead of the southern Habsburg borderland (1718-1766)*. Central European University, PhD Dissertation, 2020, p. 131.

suggests that the rural populace held deeply ingrained superstitious beliefs, perhaps posing a challenge to the reforms intended for the region. Additionally, he also hints at a disconnect between the rural and urban populations. Finally, and most importantly, a considerable segment of the rural community exhibited a preference for the established Ottoman customs over the new Habsburg rule. These three elements—superstition, isolation, and a longing for Ottoman rule—underscore the social tensions shaping the context of the earliest vampire narratives.

Furthermore, it is also pertinent to note that the term "Reaya (رعايا)," as used in Ottoman historiography to denote all taxpayers, encompassing 90% of Ottoman subjects, both Muslims and non-Muslims, persisted under Habsburg rule. For the Habsburgs, however, the term specifically describes the Christian and other non-Muslim populations that, while transitioning under Habsburg rule, retained a distinct status that echoes their previous ties with the Ottoman Empire. Consequently, in contrast to the Ottoman usage of "Rayah," which translates literally to "the Sultan's flock," the Habsburg adaptation of the term carries with it a pejorative undertone. This specific denomination reflects a broader trend within the Habsburg Empire of categorizing its diverse population by ethnicity, language, and other distinct characteristics, which inadvertently fostered national identities. Even the army, although "trying to make good Austrian patriots out of conscripts, it also sorted them into linguistic ethnic boxes to ease the challenges of training."[81] Specifically in the example of the "Rayah," the persistence of this category led

[81] Rok, Stergar; Scheer, Tamara. "Ethnic boxes: the unintended consequences of Habsburg bureaucratic classification." *Nationalities Papers* vol. 46,4, pp. 575-591. 1 Jun. 2018, available

to a liminal identity for the inhabitants of newly acquired provinces, already viewed with suspicion by the rest of the Empire.[82]

In addition, health concerns, particularly the fear of epidemic diseases, also fueled the wariness towards individuals who had either originated from or had interactions with the Ottoman territories. To mitigate the risk of diseases spreading via maritime routes, European Mediterranean ports had instituted mandatory quarantine measures as far back as the 14th century. By the time the vampire narratives emerged in the 18th century, every European port city engaged in trade with the Ottoman Empire had established stringent sanitary protocols to isolate both people and goods.[83] These quarantines, which sometimes necessitate weeks or even months of isolation for travelers, undoubtedly carried significant social implications and stigmas. However, what distinguishes the *Militärgrenze* is the application of this concept to an extensive land border, creating a terrestrial *cordon sanitaire* ("Pestcordon" or "Kontumaz" in German sources) that spanned approximately 1800 km between the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires.[84] Jovan Pešalj highlights that, while

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online: Taylor & Francis Open Select, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5991032/ (3/21/2023).

[82] Norton, Claire. "Liminal Space in the Early Modern Ottoman-Habsburg Borderlands: Historiography, Ontology, and Politics." In: Stock, P. (ed) *The Uses of Space in Early Modern History*. Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2015, pp. 75-96; Also see Hajdarpasic, Edin. "Frontier Anxieties: Toward a Social History of Muslim-Christian Relations on the Ottoman-Habsburg Border." *Austrian History Yearbook*, 2020, no. 51, pp. 25–38.

[83] Inì, Marina. "Quarantine, Diseased Geographies, and Cross-Cultural Encounters in the Eighteenth-Century Mediterranean." *The Historical Journal*, 2024. Vol. 67, No. 2, pp. 256–280.

[84] More on the topic in Lesky, Erna. "Die österreichische Pestfront an der k. k. Militärgrenze," Saeculum 8 (1957): 82-106; Panzac, Daniel. *Quarantaines et lazarets: L'Europe et la peste d'Orient (XVIIe-XXe siècles).* Aix-en-Provence: Édisud, 1986; Panzac, Daniel. "Politique sanitaire et fixation des frontières: l'exemple Ottoman (XVIIIe-XIXe siècles)," Turcica 31 (1999), pp. 87-

"land sanitary cordons against the plague, which existed elsewhere, were always temporary, organized only in exceptional circumstances," the "border checks on the Habsburg-Ottoman border were permanent, lasting for a century and a half."[85]

Because of these reasons—superstition, religious identity, social exclusion, and fears of epidemics—it seems likely that the villagers who told Habsburg officials about vampires between 1725 and 1732 did not fully trust or give full information to a perceived (and new) repressive authority. This perspective is crucial as it contests a conventional understanding of the vampire as a pre-existing rural belief prior to Habsburg documentation. Instead, it brings into discussion the significant influence of Imperial bureaucrats' biases, who depended on translations and interrogations and had objectives that differed markedly from those of the new subjects who lived in rural areas.

108; Hirsch, Sandra. "Medicine on the Edge of the Habsburg Territories: Medical Practices and Medical Care at the Banat Military Border (Late 18th Century-Early 19th Century)," *Acta Medico-Historico Adriatica*, 2021, vol.19, no.1, pp. 33-60; Bulmuş, Birsen. *Plague, Quarantines, and Geopolitics in the Ottoman Empire*. Abingdon: Edinburgh University Press, 2012; Trubeta, Sevasti, et al. *Medicalising borders: Selection, Containment, and Quarantine since 1800*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021.

[85] Pesalj, Jovan. *Monitoring migrations: the Habsburg-Ottoman border in the eighteenth century*. PhD Dissertation, University of Leiden. https://hdl.handle.net/1887/70437 (12/21/2023), p. 17.

A Mysterious Bureaucrat Makes the Headlines

"The wife of the deceased Peter Plogojowitz [...] testified that her husband came back to her asking for his *Oppanki*, or his shoes…"[86]

The first textual source analyzed in this thesis is a copy of an official report,[87] published in 1725 in the Viennese gazette *Wienerisches Diarium*[88] under the title "Copy of a writing from the Gradisker District in Hungary" ("Copia eines Schreibens aus dem Gradisker District in Ungarn"). This is now known in scholarship as Frombald's report and marked here in the footnotes as "Anon." because the author of the actual copy published in the Viennese journal remains anonymous to this day. Before being copied and published in the newspaper, other identical versions of Frombald's report circulated within the Habsburg aristocracy, as standalone fliers.[89] The original document was supposedly sent

[86] "…da des verstorbenen Peter Plogojoviz Weib / nachdeme sie zuvor ausgesagt / daß ihr Mann zu ihr gekommen / und seine Oppanki oder s. v. Schuh begehret…", in Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens aus dem Gradisker District in Ungarn." *Wienerischses Diarium*. 21 July 1725 Available online at: https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=wrz&datum=17250721 (Last accessed 10.12.2023).

[87] The only extant version of this document is found in Vienna: "Copia des vom Herrn Frombald kayserlichen Cameral Provisore zu Gradiska im Königreich Servien erlassenen Briefs anno 1725. Die im Königreich Servien damals in Schwung gegangenen sogenannten vanpiri oder Blutsauger betreffend", AT-OeStA/HHStA StAbt TürkeiI/191, Konvolut 1725, fol. 25 – 26, Türkei I Turcica der Reichshofkanzlei/ des Hofkriegsrats,Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna; Its wider use is based on the reprint in Hamberger, Klaus. *Mortuus non mordet: Dokumente zum Vampirismus 1689-1791*, pp.43-45. Nevertheless, it cannot be determined with certitude if Hamberger used the 1725 *Wieneisches Diarium* version, or another copy circulating at that time.

[88] Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens aus dem Gradisker District in Ungarn." ibid.

[89] The earliest mentions to the stand-alone flyers in J,P, Kaltenbaeck's almanach: *Austria: österreichischer Universal-Kalender. 1843*; This reference is also taken and transcribed in Hock, Stefan. *Die Vampyrsagen und ihre Verwertung in der deutschen Litteratur*. Berlin : A. Duncker, 1900. A rare original flyer was exhibited in Taiwan, in 2013, as part of a joint, Chinese-Italian

directly to Vienna by the official cameral provisor of the Ram-Gradiska district (today's Ram and Veliko Gradiste, in Serbia),[90] the highest civil authority figure in the area. Despite the importance of this source, the full name of its author, Ernst Frombald, was only recently discovered, a particularity that attests to the specificity of the knowledge production process in the *Militargränze*.[91] The partial anonymity of the writer is also related to the unusual bureaucratic trajectory of the document, which skipped local supervision in Belgrade and was sent directly to the highest authorities, the *Neoacquistica Commissio* in Vienna.[92] Although the text's transmission is an ongoing mystery, Frombald's report is vital in the evaluation of the posterior, 1731 and 1732 sources.[93]

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exposition. Promotional video showing the exhibit: 德古拉傳奇 -- 吸血鬼歷史與藝術特展 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0kTvUHGGMs , time stamp 00:18.

[90] Throughout the dissertation the personal nouns will be written as they appear in the textual sources.

[91] Marín, Álvaro García. "Imperial Provisor Frombald's First Name—Discovered." J*ournal of Vampire Studies* 1.1 (2020), pp. 118–121; In his dissertation, Ádám Mézes uses the surname Johann, instead of "Ernst", in Mézes, Ádám. *Doubt and diagnosis*, ibid. pp. 135, note #305; 147.

[92] This institution was created a year after the 1718 Treaty of Passarowitz and was composed by members of both the Aulic War Council (*Hofkriegsrat*) and the Treasury (*Hofkammer*). For a brief period, it became the central institution in charge of the administration of the new Habsburg acquisitions in Serbia, combining both civil and military responsibilities.

[93] A more detailed discussion on the transmission of the document, in Schroeder, Aribert. *Vampirismus: Seine Entwicklung vom Thema zum Motiv*. Frankfurt: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1973, pp. 42–45; Schroeder argues that Frombald avoided the authorities in Belgrade out of fear of being reprimanded for allowing civilians to carry out a legal sentence and execute a corpse. Ádám Mézes, however, suggests that Frombald addressed the authorities in Vienna looking for a promotion, "as a personal strategy of securing his position". in Mézes Ádám. *Insecure Boundaries. Medical experts and the returning dead on the Southern Habsburg borderland*. M.A. Thesis. Central European University, 2013, p. 30; Both arguments are not exclusive to each other.

Fig.3 Various depictions of Rascian women of the territories of the Militargränze
© Balthasar Hacquet. *L'Illyrie et la Dalmatie.* Paris: Nevpeu, 1815. Personal collection

In approaching this "copy of a writing" ("Copia eines Schreibens") as a unified text, we draw upon Lisa Gitelman's conceptualization of what a "document" is. In *Paper Knowledge: Toward a Media History of Documents* (2014), Gitelman argues that a document's essence transcends its original tangible form—a notion particularly relevant here, where Frombald's original is lost. According to Gitelman, a document embodies an "epistemic object," an ongoing process that conveys both knowing and showing beyond the physical original. "One of the things people do with documents is to copy them, whether they get published variously in editions (like the Declaration of Independence, for instance), [or] duplicated for reference (like the photocopy of my passport that I carry in my suitcase)."[94]

The report states that, in the winter of 1724/1725, cameral provisor Frombald – an essential bureaucrat in the Habsburg local state apparatus, went to the village of Kisilova (today Kisiljevo), in Serbia. His mission was to investigate several strange deaths attributed

[94] Gitelman, Lisa. *Paper Knowledge: Toward a Media History of Documents*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2014, p.2.

to Peter Plogojowitz, a peasant thought to be returning from his grave. The villagers there said that Plogojowitz had appeared to them in their sleep, pressing down upon them ("im Schlaf gekommen / sich auf sie gelegt"[95]). These visitations led to the death of nine villagers within eight days. Before expiring, they all exhibited similar symptoms and said that Plogojowitz was the cause of their demise.

Upon further questioning, the people of Kisilova also told the authorities that Plogojowitz was displaying the behavior of something that they called vampires ("so sie Vampyri nennen"), a phenomenon describing an abnormal, posthumous activity. According to Frombald, this belief was so strong that it compelled the villagers to consider leaving their homes ("müsten sie Haus und Gut verlassen"), fearing further attacks if something was not done. Also, according to Frombald, upon exhuming Plogojowitz's body, they found it remarkably preserved, without the usual odor of decay ("und dessen Grabe nicht der mindeste sonst der Todten gemeiner Geruch verspüret") and with fresh blood in his mouth. This "spectacle," the report states, was taken as evidence of his vampiric feedings ("in seinem Mund hab nicht ohne Erstaunung einiges frisches Blut erblicket / welches der gemeinen Aussag nach er von denen / durch ihme Umgebrachte / gesogen").

The last part of the text is rather curious. First, the villagers' response was to drive a stake through Plogojowitz's heart, upon which fresh blood flowed from his ears and mouth ("bey solcher Durchstechung nicht nur allein häuffiges Blut / so gantz frisch / auch durch Ohren und Mund geflossen"), further convincing them of his abnormal state. After

[95] Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens aus dem Gradisker District in Ungarn." ibid. All the following in-text citations are from the same source.

witnessing other disturbing signs (“andere wilde Zeichen”), which the narrator chooses not to detail out of respect (“welche wegen hohen Respect umgehe”), the people proceeded to burn Plogojowitz’s body, reducing it to ashes (“zu Aschen verbrennet”). Somewhat abruptly, though, the report concludes with Frombald’s desperate appeal to the higher administration. He humbly requests that if any error was made in handling the situation, the blame should not fall on him but on the villagers (“dem vor Forcht außer sich selbst gesetzen Pöfel beyzumessen”).

This final statement reflects a complex situation: on one hand, it could indicate Frombald's effort to distance himself from the villagers’ actions, and his attempt to fall into line with the rationalist stance of the Habsburg authorities. On the other hand, it suggests a lack of control over the situation: Frombald was an incompetent and clumsy supervisor. In any case, the segment underscores the complexities of centralized governance in the face of cultural and supernatural anxieties. It also underlines how important it is to contextualize the text for a clear understanding.

a) Dichotomy of the Known and Unknown

The onset of Frombald's account showcases an interplay between empirically grounded elements, termed "Inditia," and a more fluid category of knowledge, derived from secondhand narratives and personal impressions, encapsulated under "Spectacul." This dichotomy is structured on the narrator's conviction in the veracity of the Inditia as incontrovertible truths, whereas the Spectacul is relegated to a somewhat bewildering portrayal of regional peculiarities and their unknowns. Joseph Pitton de Tournefort, a French botanist who witnessed a corpse execution similar to that of Frombald on the Greek island of Mykonos in 1718, also used the terminology.

According to Tournefort, the Greeks called their disturbing revenant a *vrykolakas*, a returning dead accused of "beating Folks in the night, breaking down Doors, and even Roofs of Houses (...)"[96] and also of infecting the villagers with an "Epidemical Disease of the Brain, as dangerous and infectious as the Madness of Dogs."[97] Tournefort refers to these elements as part of a "Spectacle" that made the imagination of the villagers "grow full of visions."[98] Stephen Gordon, in an article on early modern vampires, also mentions

[96] De Tournefort, Joseph Pitton. *A Voyage into the Levant*. London: 1718, vol. 1, letter 3, p.104.

[97] De Tournefort, Joseph Pitton. *A Voyage into the Levant*. Ibid. p. 105.

[98] De Tournefort, Joseph Pitton. *A Voyage into the Levant*. Ibid. p. 103.

the "spectacle of the exhumed corpse" as a "key to understanding how bodily performances - in Bordieusian terms, "practice" - prompted the transmission of feeling."[99]

This type of narrative, somewhat balanced between factual grounding and the exoticization of anecdotal evidence, echoes the overall tendencies of 17th and 18th-century literature. For example, in Voltaire's *Candide, ou l'Optimisme* (1759), the protagonist's journey through the fantastical land of El Dorado serves as a satirical critique, although the hearsay is combined with factual geographical details and references to the historical 1755 Lisbon earthquake. Another example would be the adventures of Simplicius through the landscape of the Thirty Years War in Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen's novel, *Simplicius Simplicissimus* (1669). Like Frombald or Candide, this protagonist also moves within a space where the lines between the political realities of war and the unknown peculiarities of individual experiences are blurry.

In Frombald's account, the Inditia elements encompass several verifiable occurrences and observations. These form part of a set of information that the narrator is relying upon in his investigations. Notably, the village of Kisilova, which serves as the backdrop for the occurrences, is a location grounded in geographical and historical reality. Also, the report unfolds with the death and subsequent burial of Peter Plogojowitz, alongside the rapid, mysterious deaths and burials of nine villagers in a brief span. Frombald mentions that, although he did not witness these deaths, he was present in the

[99] Gordon, Stephen. "Emotional Practice and Bodily Performance in Early Modern Vampire Literature." *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2017, p. 103.

cemetery when the investigation process was taking place. Intriguingly, Frombald also categorizes under factual observations the absence of decay odor, Plogojowitz's remarkably preserved skin, and the well-maintained state of his hair and beard. Among these remarks, perhaps most striking is the presence of fresh blood in Plogojowitz's mouth—a detail Frombald reports meticulously without offering explanations, suggesting an attempt at impartial documentation.

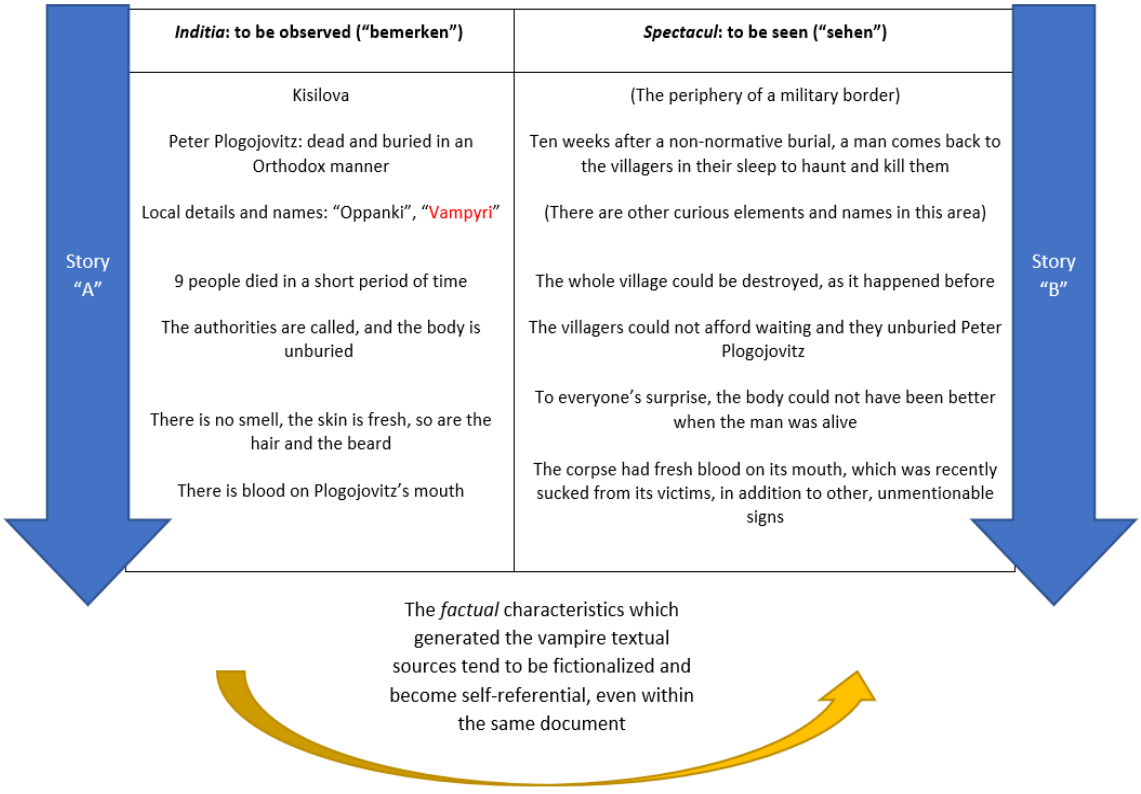

Fig. 4. Textual breakdown of Frombald's report, emphasizing the literary dimension of some of its elements

It is essential to underline that, in the report, these empirically experienced *facts*, this knowledge, seem to be universally *observed* ("bemerken"). Meanwhile, the elements of the Spectacul category, which integrates the anecdotal, almost burlesque side of the events, are *seen* ("sehen"). As a term, the *Inditia* was common in the medico-legal terminology of the time, constituting circumstantial evidence in favor or disfavor of an official sentence.[100] In other words, the Inditia constituted details that could be validated bureaucratically, and which have a bearing on the legislative apparatus of an institution. This is presented as undeniable knowledge not only for the narrators and the characters but also for the institutions they are employed for and, subsequently, for the readers of the document.

What makes Frombald's text distinct is the abrupt shift from a supposed medico-legal role into a literary narrative, transitioning from the realm of the known and verifiable to the domain of the unknown and bewildering. This shift also exemplifies Wolfgang Iser's concept of the "Leerstelle," or "blank spaces," inviting readers to engage in a participatory act of meaning-making.[101] More specifically, the blank space "enables the later reader to

[100] "Les indicia mortis" in Pernick, Martin. "Back from the Grave: Recurring Controversies over Defining and Diagnosing Death in History." In R. M. Zaner (ed.). *Death: Beyond Whole Brain Criteria.* Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988, pp. 17-74; A more detailed description of the relationship between medical death and bureaucracy in the introduction of Grmek, Mirko (ed.). *Western Medical Thought from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, tr. Antony Shugaar. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998. An analysis focused on the time period of Frombald in Crawford, Catherine. "Legalizing Medicine: Early Modern Legal Systems and the Growth of Medico-Legal Knowledge." *Legal Medicine in History*, edited by Michael Clark and Catherine Crawford, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 89–116.

[101] Gerrig. Richard. "Readers' Experiences of Narrative Gaps." *Storyworlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies*, vol. 2, 2010, pp. 19–37.

experience the historical situation" and match it with "the reaction the text intended to arouse."[102] While such a transition might appear unmarked and instantaneous in person, Frombald's report delineates a clear demarcation, underscored by two consecutive sentences.

After detailing his observations on the exhumed body of Plogojowitz, which was remarkably well-preserved despite being buried for 10 weeks, Frombald notes the following: "Overall, all the Inditia that those people [the Vampyri] were expected to have and be observed ["bemercket"], were there."[103] The text then marks a transition from these Inditia to the Spectacul, shifting from the realm of the known to the unknown: "And while both me and the priest were watching ["sehen"] this Spectacul - [the social *performance* and the reactions that these elements elicited from the nearby witnesses], the rabble became more and more angry than dismayed."[104]

Within the framework of the Spectacul, the narrative transitions from a straightforward recounting of events to a dramatic enactment, showcasing diverse viewpoints and characters. The villagers, fueled by a blend of anger and fear, hastily fashioned a stake and impaled the corpse. Frombald notes that this act triggered not only the ejection of new, fresh blood from the body but also elicited other "wild signs" that, "out

[102] Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading. A theory of Aesthetic Response.* Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1987, p. 206.

[103] "in Summa waren alle Inditia vorhanden / welche derley Leute (wie schon oben bemercket) an sich haben solten." Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens", ibid.

[104] "Nachdeme nun sowol der Popp als ich dieses Spectacul gesehen / der Pövel aber mehr und mehr ergrimter als bestürtzter wurde…", Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens", ibid.

of respect, he refrains from mentioning."[105] Such details contrast with the Inditia associated with clinically recognized signs of death (*signae mortis*[106]). Some scholars suggest that the "wilde Zeichen" likely refers to regular physiological reactions, such as a post-mortem erection.[107] However, Frombald writes of these phenomena as a collection of "wild things," indicating a plurality of unexplainable occurrences that he does not describe, but whose presence is too important to omit.

What does "wild" ("wilde") mean in the context of Frombald's report? According to Larry Wolff in *Inventing Eastern Europe* (1994), the concept of "wildness" or "barbarism" as portrayed in Eastern European narratives such as Frombald's is deeply rooted in the Enlightenment's invention of Eastern Europe as the "other" of Western Europe. Wolff argues that it was during the 18th century that Western Europe constructed Eastern Europe as its diametric counterpart, a region imbued with notions of backwardness.[108] Through this perspective, the "wild signs" and the Spectacul seen in Frombald's account may be interpreted not merely as supernatural phenomena but as reflections of the Habsburg view of the newly acquired territories in the East. Years later,

[105] "(...) andere wilde Zeichen (welche wegen hohen Respect umgehe) vorbey gangen." Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens", ibid.

[106] A canonical book on the topic, popular among the 18th century students of medicine was Paolo Zacchia's *Quaestiones medico-legales*, 9 vols. Rome, 1621, republished in Nurnberg in 1726, 2 years after the events of the Kisilova village.

[107] Mézes Ádám. *Doubt and diagnosis: Medical Experts and the returning dead of the southern Habsburg borderland (1718-1766)*, p. 148.

[108] Wolff, Larry. *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994, p.12.

this space is also epitomized in Balzac's *Comedie Humaine* in similar terms: "The inhabitants of the Ukraine, Russia, the plains of the Danube, in short, the Slav peoples, are a link between Europe and Asia, between civilization and barbarism."[109]

Another interpretation suggests that the text reflects a broader superstition, namely that witchcraft and unexplained *magia* could directly influence the male sexual organ. This danger, among other magical perils for the Early Modern male,[110] is also described in detail in Heinrich Kramer's widely popular *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486).[111] A longstanding link between sexuality and the occult established the belief that sexual energy could be utilized for magical purposes.[112] If the reference to such scandalous details in Frombald's account was genuine and not an editorial addition by the *Wienerisches Diarium*, it raises questions about the Imperial Provisor's motivations for incorporating this information at all. Why

[109] Honore de Balzac. *Cousin Bette*. trans. Marion Aytan Crawford. London: Penguin, 1965, p. 229.

[110] See the Introduction and Chapter V of Durrant, Jonathan B. *Witchcraft, Gender and Society in Early Modern Germany*. Brill, 2007; Also Broedel, Hans Peter. "Witchcraft as an Expression of Female Sexuality." *The "Malleus Maleficarum" and the Construction of Witchcraft: Theology and Popular Belief*, Manchester University Press, 2003, pp. 167–88; For an intriguing collection of visual material pertaining to the context, see Warfield, Abaigéal. "Witchcraft Illustrated: The Crime of Witchcraft in Early Modern German News Broadsheets." *Broadsheets: Single-Sheet Publishing in the First Age of Print*. Andrew Pettegree (ed.). Brill, 2017, pp. 459–87.

[111] More specifically in the chapters "De modo quo membra virilia auferre solent" (How they Deprive Man of his Virile Member) and "...qui prestigiosa arte illuduntur vt se virili membro carere aut in bestiales formas transmutatos" ([those whose] virile members have seemingly been transformed into the shapes of beasts). In the scanned manuscript hosted online by the Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, available online at: http://diglib.hab.de/inkunabeln/151-quod-2f-1/start.htm (7/2/2021); More on the emasculating powers of magical feminine forces in pre-modernity in Pitkin, Hanna Fenichel. *Fortune is a Woman.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, pp. 285–306.

[112] See Roper, Lyndal. *Oedipus and the Devil Witchcraft, Religion and Sexuality in Early Modern Europe*. London & New York: Routledge, 1994.

mention it without actually describing it? Some scholars argue that, prior to the article's publication, standalone leaflets containing Frombald's report circulated among the Viennese nobility.[113] One of them, displayed in Taiwan in 2013 as part of a joint Chinese-Italian exposition,[114] contained the exact expression published in the July 21st, 1725, article. Furthermore, the full title of this leaflet indicates an urgency similar to Frombald's tone. It reflects the same tension between the known and the unknown, between factual Inditia and frightful Spectacul: "A Dreadful/Terrible Incident Which Happened a Few Days Ago in the Village of Kisolova, Not Far From Belgrade, in Upper Hungary" ["Entsetzliche Begebenheit, welche sich in dem Dorff Kisolova, ohnweit Belgrad in der Ober-Ungarn, von einigen Tagen zugetragen"].

Furthermore, it can also be argued that Frombald's "other wild signs" addition, originally in parenthesis, subtly emphasizes the taming of the East's feral sexuality via the discipline and written letter of a civilizing institution. After such a display, the threat was neutralized, and the unruly body dully burned to ashes ("sie haben endlich oftermeldten Cörper [...] zu Aschen verbrennet"[115]). In this sense, Foucault also relates the

[113] This possibility is also debated by Niels Pedersen in Pedersen, Niels. "A terrible incident". *Magia Posthuma*. 5 January 2013. https://magiaposthuma.blogspot.com/2013/01/a-terrible-incident.html (8/6/2021); Also see Barber, Paul. *Vampires, Burial, and Death: Folklore and Reality*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988, pp. 5-9.

[114] Promotional video showing the exhibit: 德古拉傳奇 -- 吸血鬼歷史與藝術特展 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0kTvUHGGMs , time stamp 00:18.

[115] Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens", ibid.

Enlightenment's methodological epistemology with *discipline*,[116] this "dark secret of the enlightened civilization in the 18th century."[117] Similar comparable sexual triumphs over an unruly East are consummated in the pages of Casanova's memories of his 1764 stay in Russia. There, with the help of an officer, he bought a 13-year-old girl who became his ambiguous sexual slave,[118] domesticated with French clothes, regular beatings, and, most importantly, language learning.[119] Likewise, further 18th century "wild signs" of the lawless sexuality of Eastern Europe appear more crystallized a generation later, in Sade's *History of Juliette* (1797-1801), where Russians, Poles, and Hungarians are cannibalizing and raping whole harems of sexual slaves.[120] In the same spirit, Erich Raspe's fantastic adventures of Baron Munchausen also debut with the Baron subduing ferocious, wild beasts, by flogging or violently penetrating their bodies.[121]

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[116] [In the Enlightenment] "A *political anatomy*, which was also *a mechanics of power*, was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies". Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Alan Sheridan (tr.). New York: Vintage Books, 1995, p. 138.

[117] Wolff, Larry. *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of civilization on the mind of Enlightenment*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994, p. 94.

[118] In society, he paraded her to other nobles who "did not care to inquire if she was my daughter, my mistress, or my servant", in Giacomo Casanova. *History of My Life*. Willard Trask, (tr.). Vol. 10. London: Longman, 1972, p. 130.

[119] "(...) "the pleasure I took in hearing her talk to me in Venetian was inconceivable.",In Giacomo Casanova. *History of My Life*. ibid., p. 114. Additionally, Casanova was also joined by a Cossack boy, whom he taught to speak French. Needless to say, Casanova's interest in learning any Eastern European language was not in the picture.

[120] Marquis de Sade. *Juliette*. Austryn Wainhouse (tr.). New York: Grove Press, 1968, pp. 890-893.

[121] [Somewhere in a Polish forest] "(...) I found nothing but two spare flints: one I flung with all my might into the monster's open jaws, down his throat. It gave him. pain and made him turnabout, so that I could level the second at his back-door, which, indeed, I did with wonderful success". in Raspe, Rudolf Eric. *The Travels and Surprising Adventures of Baron Munchausen*. London:

From a textual perspective, the physiological phenomenon of a post-mortem erection could be categorized under Inditia, representing an observable fact. However, Frombald's commentary extends beyond mere observation, and highlights the social implications and immediate reactions this phenomenon elicited, thus transitioning into the Spectacul. This shift not only underscores the dichotomy between the known and the unknown but also emphasizes Frombald's metatextual awareness. His decision to include references to such details, despite their potential to scandalize, suggests an acknowledgment of the unknown's power to both captivate and horrify. Furthermore, Frombald's immediate need to distance himself from these observations, paradoxically drawing more attention to them through writing, also exemplifies a Derridean rupture.

This separation of the author from the text, occurring within the same document and even the same sentence, serves as a prime example of linguistic spacing ("espacement") that typifies vampire literature. The unknown terms from the *Militargränze*, such as "Vampyri," "Oppanki," or the aforementioned "Rayah," undergo a process similar to the "wild signs". Once integrated into an established, legible, schematized view, they are ripe for transformation – for the reader to complete their meaning. Frombald, while refraining from detailing the scandalous aspects of the events, nonetheless alludes to them, thereby prompting readers to envision the scene for themselves. In a similar vein, he does not explicitly affirm the existence of the phenomena

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Dedalus, 1988. p. 24; Larry Wolff also interprets this scene as alluding to sexuality: "Violated "down his throat" and then "at his backdoor," the bear suffered both oral and anal assault", in Wolff, Larry. *Inventing Eastern Europe: The map of civilization on the mind of Enlightenment*. ibid. p. 102.

"which [the villagers] call Vampyri,"[122] yet he meticulously documents all the Inditia associated with them. This deliberate choice leaves a space for readers to engage with the text, fill in the gaps, and draw their own conclusions.

Through this narrative strategy, the "Copia eines Schreibens" effectively employs the interplay between the known and the unknown, central to the vampire genre. In Benjaminic terms, through the newspaper as the exponent of "democratization of the means of textual production", the "Vampyri" became intellectual "public property"[123] and resources for a larger Spectacul. By 1797, when Goethe addressed the topic in his "Vampyrische[s] Gedicht,"[124] the schematized view of the Habsburg vampire was ripe for a complete fictionalization: the Corinth in Goethe's ballad is not the actual, historical city, as Kisilova was for Frombald, but a symbol of the East, equally *Oriental* as the Indian setting in "Der Gott und die Bajadere" (1797). All examples "negotiate a transcultural encounter with some kind of <<East>>,"[125] that the reader is expected to fill in.

[122] "(...) dergleichen Personen (so sie Vampyri nennen)" [such persons (as they call vampyri)], Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens aus dem Gradisker District in Ungarn," ibid.

[123] Levin Thomas & Jennings Michael (eds). "The Publishing Industry and Radio". Benjamin, Walter. *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008, p.345.

[124] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Goethes Werke (Weimarer Ausgabe)*, herausgegeben im Auftrage der Großherzogin Sophie von Sachsen-Weimar. Fotomechanischer Nachdruck der Ausgabe Weimar, Böhlau 1887–1919, dtv, 1987. vol. III.2, p.72.

[125] Endres, Johannes. "Vampires and the Orient in Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth"." *The German Quarterly* 93.2 (Spring 2020). pp. 204-220.

b) Temporal Layering

Frombald, an otherwise unknown figure to readers, emerges through a narrative marked by several layers of time. In "Copia eines Schreibens," these range from the concrete historical moment of publication to a more ethereal realm of unverifiable references. Such a structure becomes a staple of the vampire genre, where the narrator or other significant characters stumble upon a dark curse or are in the middle of an occult series of events, triggered sometime in the distant past. Notable examples include Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), where the narrative oscillates between the *present* events surrounding Dracula's arrival in England and the ancient origins of his vampiric existence. Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) introduces its protagonist in a similar manner. The vampire Louis, makes a lengthy confession that moves from his human life in the 18th century to his experiences as a vampire in various historical periods.

In the case of Frombald's report, the account is firstly anchored by its publishing date, July 21, 1725, an extradiegetic timeframe that situates the text within a specific historical context. Following this, the narrative alludes to events occurring ten weeks prior to Frombald's arrival in the village, an immediate past that sets the stage for the unfolding investigation. Subsequently, the text also mentions an eerie sequence of nightly visits and mysterious deaths within a span of eight days - a crucial period leading up to the execution of the corpse. This scene, or, more specifically, its very conclusion, is the *present* of Frombald's report. Most compellingly, however, the narrative also evokes a *historical* or folkloric timeframe, alluding to past devastations also attributed to malevolent forces.

According to some of the villagers, before the Austrians took possession of the land in 1718, the village had already been leveled by "an evil spirit" ("üblen Geist").[126] **(Fig. 5)**

Layer	Description
Extradiegetic Timeframe	The report's publication date, 21st of July, 1725, situates the report within a historical context.
Immediate Past	Events occurring ten weeks earlier, setting the stage for the investigation.
Nightly Visits and Deaths	An eerie sequence of nightly visits and subsequent deaths within a span of eight days.
Exhumation and Observation	The present moment of the narrative focused on the exhumation and firsthand observations (Inditia and Spectacul elements).
Historical/Folkloric Timeframe	Alludes to past devastations attributed to malevolent forces. Specifically, before the Austrians took possession in 1718, an "evil spirit" ("üblen Geist") had supposedly already leveled the village.

Fig. 5. Temporal Layers in Frombald's Vampire Report

Between these temporal layers, the narrative does not provide explicit, logical, and coherent episodes that seamlessly transition from one to the next. Instead, it is the reader who actively fills in the gaps and "assembles the meaning of the text."[127] As Wolfgang Iser

[126] "das gantze Dorf - wie schon unter Türckischen Zeiten geschehen seyn solte - durch solchen üblen Geist zu Grund gehen könte," Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens aus dem Gradisker District in Ungarn", ibid.

[127] Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading. A theory of Aesthetic Response.* Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1987, p. X.

suggests, this type of temporal openness resists singular interpretations, and "any attempt to reduce it in this way leads to nonsense."[128] However, understanding the context of the text reveals how and why readers "fill in" these gaps in similar ways, producing a cohesive, recognizable vampire aesthetic world that resonates broadly despite variances in interpretation.

For instance, Frombald notes that Plogojowitz had been buried "in Rascian fashion" in the local cemetery, subtly indicating the ritual's deviation from normative Catholic practices ("und Rätzischer Manier zur Erden bestattet worden"[129]). This detail likely left readers in Vienna, Berlin, or Paris puzzled, as the exact nature of a "Rascian manner" burial would have been unfamiliar to them. Instead, it is more likely that they are suggesting an element of the unknown or "barbaric," as discussed in the previous section. The term "Rascian," or "Rätzisch" in German, ambiguously referred to the Orthodox population of the Habsburg borderlands, glossing over the region's ethnic diversity, which included Serbians, Wallachians, and various mixed ethnic "Grenzers" - military colonists residing in the Militargrenze.

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[128] Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading. A theory of Aesthetic Response*.ibid. p. 9.

[129] The term Rascian, in German "Rätzisch" is highly common in contemporary textual sources, and refers to the Orthodox (Slavic or Wallachian) population within the borderland area. According to the *Dictionary of American Family Names*, "Rác/Rácz" is an ethnic name for a serb or a habitational name for someone from Serbia, in: Hanks, Patrick (ed.). *Dictionary of American Family Names.* Oxford University Press, 2006. Available online at: https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093 (6/19/2021). Specifically in the context of Frombald's letter, it means, most probably, that Plogojowitz was buried according to the local, Serbian custom.

In terms of temporality, the phrase "buried in the Rascian manner" conveys not only the immediate timeframe—10 weeks prior to Frombald's writing—but also evokes a deeper historical context marked by conflicts, specifically the multigenerational wars between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans, and even earlier clashes between Christians and Muslims, or between Christians among themselves. This particular layering is central to the vampire aesthetic, as also observed in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, where the Count describes his land as "the ground fought over for centuries by the Wallachian, the Saxon, and the Turk. Why, there is hardly a foot of soil in all this region that has not been enriched by the blood of men, patriots or invaders."[130]

This is the reason why the superstitious, simple Szekelys peasants offer Jonathan Harker a crucifix before his visit to Count Dracula.[131] It is not necessarily aimed at protecting him against a specifically anti-Christian threat, but, as the peasant woman says when gifting him the object, against all "the evil things in the world."[132] While the essence of this scene in Stoker's novel is recognizable and similar to Frombald's report—the rural setting, language barriers, and framework of superstition—the repeated "filling-ins" between 1725 and 1897 are different than those of a reader of the *Wienerisches Diarium*. In a narrative strictly steeped in Habsburg tradition, the peasants, "more and more angry

[130] Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. London: Penguin Classics, 2003, pp. 32-33.

[131] "Finally she went down on her knees and implored me not to go (...) It was all very ridiculous (...) She then rose and dried her eyes, and taking a crucifix from her neck offered it to me. I did not know what to do, for, as an English Churchman, I have been taught to regard such things as in some measure idolatrous." in Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. London: Penguin Classics, 2003, p. 16.

[132] Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. London: Penguin Classics, 2003, ibid.

than distressed" ("mehr und mehr ergrimter als bestürtzter"[133]), would have escorted Harker to the castle themselves, armed with spikes and shovels, ready to confront and correct the supernatural threat.

Furthermore, the "filling in" across the temporal layers in Frombald's narrative proves so effective that even the primary temporal present— the discovery of vampiric signs and the subsequent execution of the corpse—transcends concrete chronology and becomes part of an *ahistoric* time. The text becomes con-text: the historical moment - if there ever was one, is cast into a folkloric dimension that resists empirical verification. Such is the potency of this process that a mere 40 years after the events in Kisilova, Gerard van Swieten's investigation of similar occurrences in Bohemia conflates the "Rascian manner," the staking of the corpse, and its destruction, with practices of a distant, pagan past. In his 1768 report, which itself becomes another canonical text for vampire studies, van Swieten likens these aspects to "the pagans who worship idols in India [and] learn the wickedness of their accursed Master whom they serve,"[134] thus projecting them onto a backdrop of ancient ignorance.

[133] Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens aus dem Gradisker District in Ungarn", ibid.

[134] "die Heyden, welche in Indien die Götzen anbethen, alle die Bosheiten ihres verfluchten Meisters erfahren" in the 1768 German publication of Gerard van Swieten's *Remarques sur le Vampyrisme de Sylésie de l'an 1755*. Mayer, Andreas Ulrich. *Abhandlung des Daseyns von Gespenster*. Augsburg: 1768; The original note handed to Queen Maria Theresa (Holy Roman Empress 1745-1765, Queen of Bohemia, Hungary and Croatia 1740-1780) was bilingual, in French and German: *Remarques sur le Vampyrisme de Sylésie de l'an 1755/ Nota über die vermeintliche sogenannte magia posthuma*. The original is held at the National Austrian Library, Vienna: Codex Vindobonensis 7237, P.l.n. 18, fols. 1-14.

In Frombald's account, the temporal *present* against which all other events seem to unfold is also rooted in an ahistorical time. Unlike concrete details such as the name of the village, the names of some inhabitants, or the occurrence of several deaths within a short period, the elements of the background timeline cannot be factually verified. They exist solely within Frombald's text, emerging as a creation of it. The cameral provisor suggests that the locals believed the phenomenon of the returning dead, referred to as "Vampyri" in plural, to be a relatively constant occurrence. According to the text, such "evil spirits" ("üblen Geist")[135] had supposedly plagued the village even before the Austrians took control of the land in 1718, hinting at several destructions that had already befallen the village under Ottoman rule. However, the absence of cross-references or archaeological evidence to support a complete destruction of any kind, even less one attributable to the returning dead, indicates that the dramatic addition of this temporal layer might pertain exclusively to Frombald. Until Ottoman archival sources can provide further clarity, it seems prudent to view the prior devastation of the village at the hands (and teeth) of the blood-sucking "Vampyri" as a narrative embellishment. It is a cryptic reference designed to enhance the temporal depth and complexity of the situation.

On the novelty of the 18th-century vampire, David Keyworth contends that, while there were many undead-corpse types in Europe from the medieval period to the Enlightenment, these new creatures were distinct because they thirsted for human blood.[136]

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[135] "das gantze Dorf - wie schon unter Türckischen Zeiten geschehen seyn solte - durch solchen üblen Geist zu Grund gehen könte," Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens," ibid.

[136] Keyworth, David. "Was the Vampire of the Eighteenth Century a Unique Type of Undead-Corpse?" *Folklore*, vol. 117, no. 3, 2006, pp. 241–60.

Stephen Gordon and Koen Vermeir dismiss this uniqueness and argue that the "Vampyri" are part of a larger "manifestation of the revenant encounter."[137] Their arguments include references to earlier works, such as Geoffrey of Burton's *Vita Sancte Moduenne Virginis* (ca. 1140s), Walter Map's *De Nugis Curialium* (ca. 1182), or William of Newburgh's *Historia rerum Anglicarum* (ca. 1198).

For example, in Newburgh's chronicle, two brothers exhume a dead monk who was disturbing the town of Anantis (Alnwick) in Northumbria and find his corpse to be filled with blood. They interpret the anomaly as "a leech of many [people]" ("ut intelligeretur sanguisuga fuisse multorum"[138]). This prompts Gordon to emphasize that "the association of the ruddy, restless corpse with the act of bloodsucking does not, as some scholars suggest, appear to be an invention of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century."[139] Nevertheless, prior to the 18th century, there are no sources that explicitly mention the word "vampire" in relation to bloodsucking or the ruddiness of the deceased, as Frombald's report explicitly does.[140]

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[137] Gordon, Stephen. "Emotional Practice and Bodily Performance in Early Modern Vampire Literature." *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2017, p. 95. Also see Vermeir, Koen. "Vampires as Creatures of the Imagination: Theories of Body, Soul, and Imagination in Early Modern Vampire Tracts (1659–1755)," *Diseases of the Imagination and Imaginary Disease in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Yasmin Haskell, Turnhout: 2011, pp. 341-373.

[138] William of Newsburgh. *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, V, 24, p. 578. Available online: https://archive.org/stream/guilielmineubrig02will#page/578/mode/2up (3/13/2023).

[139] Gordon, Stephen. "Emotional Practice and Bodily Performance in Early Modern Vampire Literature." ibid. p. 121, note #65.

[140] Ruthner, Clement. *Outbreaks of the Balkan Village Vampire in the Eighteenth Century*. In: Bacon, Simon (ed). *The Palgrave Handbook of the Vampire*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2023. pp. 1-18. Klaus Hamberger's work on the field is also structured on the same idea. In Hamberger, Klaus.

Regardless of the ongoing debate, Frombald does reference the "Vampyri" as having supposedly wreaked havoc on the village of Kisilova during an unspecified period under Ottoman rule. This detail is articulated in the subjunctive mood in German, the grammatical Konjunktiv II: "wie schon unter Türckischen Zeiten **geschehen seyn [seien] solte**."[141] This mood is typically employed to describe hypothetical or speculative situations. In this context, it conveys a sense of something that should have happened or was supposed to happen, indicating the conditional or hypothetical situation of the "Spectacul" category. Consequently, this narrative technique mirrors the approach previously taken with the "wild signs,"[142] where the narrator does not explicitly assert belief in their reality. Instead, by introducing the possibility in writing, Frombald invites readers to engage with the narrative and leaves space to interpret and fill in the gaps themselves.

Based on the sources investigated up to this point, in the whole area, there are only two documented cases of blood-hungry revenants preceding the establishment of the Habsburg administration. Although disturbing, none of these destroyed an entire village. The first one dates from November 1717, in the village of Merul (Hungarian "Almafa", Romanian "Mărul"). This occurrence, however, is mentioned in a 1732 number of the

Über Vampirismus: Krankengeschichten und Deutungsmuster 1801–1899. Wien: Turia & Kant, 1992.

[141] Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens aus dem Gradisker District in Ungarn", ibid.

[142] Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens aus dem Gradisker District in Ungarn", ibid.

Commercium Litterarium magazine and is not backed up by other archival sources.[143] The second one, a 1725 anonymous vampire report from Kragujevac, also seems to precede Frombald's report by a few months. In this rather detailed account, the medical examination of the vampire graves ("so genannten Wampyrengräbern") supposedly took place on April 6, 1725, while Frombald's article from Kisilova was published on July 21, 1725. If this case, reportedly reprinted from the original version ("von dem Originalaufſatze abgedruckt") is authentic, it could be concluded that the first public mention of the word vampire ("Wampyren") in relation to blood-sucking originates from the report of the Kragujevac.[144] Nevertheless, there are two problems: First, we do not know whether the leaflets with Frombald's report were printed and circulated before April 1725. Secondly, the only existing mention of the Kragujevac investigation is an article published in 1791 in the Swiss journal *Der Neue Deutsche Zuschauer*, almost 70 years after the events supposedly took place.[145]

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[143] Anon. "Ex historia vampyrorum," *Commercium Litterarium ad Rei Medicae et Scientiae Naturalis Incrementum Institutum*, no.19, May 1732, p. 147; Available online at: https://books.google.com/books?id=SA1AAAAAcAAJ (6/12/2021); There are additional references pointing towards an early chronology in Calmet, Augustin. *Traité Sur les Apparitions des Esprits, et Sur les Vampires, Ou les Revenans de Hongrie, de Moravie.* Paris: 1746, pp. 275-280, yet they are not specific about the time, nor the exact location, and may be posterior interpretations and projections of other events. Also, in Mézes, Ádám. *Doubt and diagnosis*, ibid. p. 479. A more detailed overview of the "Vampyr/Vampyri/Vampires" mentions in *Commercium Litterarium* of 1732 in Magyar, László András. "Orvosi vita a magyarországi vámpírokról, 1732-1756". *Szazadok* 133, no.3, 1999, pp. 1247-1257. Available online at: *MATARKA. Searchable database of Hungarian journals*, https://matarka.hu/cikk_list.php?fusz=6249 , (7/2/2021).

[144] A more detailed calculation is given in Ristić Aleksandar, "The Vampirlija Hill in the Village of Mijajlovac (Trstenik): A Possible Location for the Birthplace of European 'Vampirology'". *Istrazivanja, Journal of Historical Researches*, 2021, no. 32, pp. 116-132.

[145] Anonymous. "Beitrag zur Geschichte des Aberglaubens," *Der Neue Deutsche Zuschauer* 7, no. 21 (June 1791), pp. 326- 329, https://books.google.es/books?id=q7JIAAAAcAAJ (7/3/2022).

Regardless of Frombald's reasons behind his temporal layering, his report decisively influenced subsequent vampire literature and created a schematic view of the genre. For instance, Stephen King's *Salem's Lot* (1975) portrays the town of Jerusalem's Lot becoming overrun by vampires, leading to apocalyptic destruction. Similarly, Guillermo del Toro's *The Strain* trilogy (2009-2011) and its TV adaptation (2014-2017) also depict the demise of an entire city (New York) as a consequence of a modern-day vampire virus outbreak.

c) Narratorial Displacement

In addition to navigating through different timeframes, another schematic element pivotal to the vampire aesthetic world is narratorial displacement. By narratorial displacement, I understand the phenomenon where characters, particularly narrators, find themselves in new, unfamiliar environments that they must explore, understand, and sometimes survive. This relocation is not just physical but can also be temporal, cultural, or existential. For example, in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), Jonathan Harker is thrust into the unknown world of Transylvania, far removed from his familiar English setting. His journey to Dracula's castle and the subsequent events push him into a realm that tests his beliefs and understanding of reality. Similarly, in Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976), Louis's transformation into a vampire displaces him not only

Álvaro García Marín suggests that the article is based on an authentic report from the Militärgrenze, whose original has been either lost after the Ottoman conquest of 1739, or just waiting to be found in the Viennese archives. A more detailed analysis of the Kragujevac case in his article: "Analysis of a 1725 Report on Vampirism in Kragujevac". *Journal of Vampire Studies*, 2021, vol.1, no.2, pp. 137-165.

geographically, from Louisiana to Europe, but from time itself, as he navigates centuries of existence, witnessing the evolution of societies while he remains an outsider.

What was Frombald's purpose in Kisilova? Despite the exotic and mysterious details of his dispatch, the stark reality was that, within a single week, nine villagers had succumbed to death under identical, enigmatic circumstances. Therefore, in all probability, the cameral provisor was there to investigate, take measures, and prevent a mass contagion behind the *Militärgrenze*.[146] This scenario bears a striking resemblance to Richard Matheson's 1954 novel *I Am Legend*, where the protagonist, Robert Neville, struggles to rationalize and scientifically combat the vampiric contagion that made *his* world unrecognizable. Similarly, Guillermo del Toro's *The Strain* trilogy (2009-2011) introduces Dr. Ephraim Goodweather, a character who, like Neville, also lives in a world of scientific parameters until the resurgence of an old vampiric virus.

From this perspective, the structure, focus, and metaphoric details of Frombald's bureaucratic report are even more intriguing. The account does not approve or disprove the existence of the *Vampyri* - but mentions them as part of an unknown *topos*, which is geographically localized but ontologically incomprehensible. Furthermore, Frombald, both as an institutional actor and as a narrator, does not attempt to explain the deaths, nor does he hint toward the catastrophic medical implications of an epidemic cluster. Instead, the

[146] Scholarship agrees that the *Militärgrenze* was set up mainly with the threat of plague epidemics in mind in Lesky, Erna. "Die Österreichische Pestfront an der k.k. Militärgrenze." *Saeculum. Jahrbuch für Universalgeschichte* 8, 1957, pp. 82-106; Panzac, D. *La peste dans l'Empire Ottoman 1700-1850*. Leuven: Peeters, 1985; Vocelka, K. *Österreichische Geschichte 1699-1815. Glanz und Untergang der höfischen Welt. Repräsentation, Reform und Reaktion im habsburgischen Vielvölkerstaat*. Wien: Ueberreuter, 2001.

impression he gives is that of someone trying to communicate from an isolated, unknown place. His report is part of an ongoing conversation, and he is waiting for a reaction—a response from the authorities and, implicitly, from the readers.[147]

The contextual elements surrounding the isolation of Frombald significantly contribute to the tension inside the narrative. As a civilian authority rather than a medical expert, Frombald found himself navigating a situation fraught with uncertainty. The arguably downplayed medical dimension could also be the consequence of the scarcity of medical personnel in the region. According to a 1723 survey, in the provincial capital of Belgrad - to which Kisilova belonged and reported, there were only two surgeons and no official apothecaries or physicians.[148] Consequently, immediate medical expertise regarding a few isolated cases in the rural area was out of the question. This limitation likely heightened Frombald's concern, especially given his lack of specialization. Undoubtedly, there had been an exchange of letters before his report and some sort of invitation or cry for help; otherwise, he would not have gone to investigate. Once in Kisilova, though, Frombald underlines the urgency of the case and that the mob ("Pöfel"[149])

[147] "in hoc casu, gewöhnlichem Gebrauch nach / zu Aschen verbrennet / welches dann einer Hochlöbl. Administration hinterbringen / und **anbey unterthänigst gehorsamst Bitten wollen** / daß wann hierinfals einen Fehler begangen haben solte / solchen nicht mir / sondern dem vor Forcht außer sich selbst gesetzen Pöfel beyzumessen." in Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens aus dem Gradisker District in Ungarn", ibid.

[148] H. K. R. Archive. 1724, February, Nr. 168. Exp., cited in Langer. Johann. "Serbien unter der kaiserlichen Regierung 1717-1739". *Mitteilungen des K.K. Kriegs-Archivs*. Neue Folge. III. (1889), pp. 211-212; Available online at: https://library.hungaricana.hu/en/view/MitKuKKriegsArch_1889_2_03/ (6/11/2021).

[149] Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens", ibid.

refused to listen and to patiently wait for an alternative solution from the authorities. According to him, the villagers were determined to open Peter Plogojowitz's 10 weeks old grave and to publicly confirm his irregular condition ("als haben sich die Unterthanen einhellig resolviret / das Grab des Peter Plogojoviz zu eröffnen / und zu sehen"[150]). This act of defiance occurred without Frombald's express approval, and by the time he arrived at the cemetery with an Orthodox priest, Plogojowitz's body had already been unearthed, leading to the subsequent, unsettling "Spectacul."

The cemetery scene underscores the narratorial displacement even more, thrusting Frombald—and, by extension, the readers—into a series of unfamiliar and distressing circumstances. The readers are drawn into a narrative that not only explores the geographically unknown but also confronts them with the visceral elements, the "Spectacul," of the superstition that pervaded the *Militärgrenze*. More importantly, it also sets up the discourse and opens up the possibility that the text might become a context for other potential cases - transforming the elements of the "Spectacul" into facts, "Inditia."

This experience of displacement (or replacement) resonates with the approach H.G. Wells describes in his introduction to *The Scientific Romances of H.G. Wells* (1933), where the fantastic is made plausible through a careful construction of the narrative. More specifically, Wells emphasizes the importance of "domesticating the impossible hypothesis,"[151] to maintain the reader's interest. The writer must "trick [the reader] into an

[150] Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens", ibid.

[151] Wells, H.G. *The Scientific Romances of H.G. Wells.* London: V. Gollancz, 1933. Accessed from "The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction." https://sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/wellss_law (2/18/2024).

unwary concession to some plausible assumption and get on with his story while the illusion holds."[152] In Frombald's account, the *plausible assumption* is the empirical evidence of the "Inditia," which anchors the narrative in a reality that the reader can accept. The "Spectacul," however, quickly overturns this initial factual basis and underlines that the narrator is now in an unknown place with unknown rules.

In other words, the report creates a mere temporary suspension of disbelief. By highlighting that the events unfold in Kisilova, "aus dem Gradisker District in Ungarn,"[153] the report situates the narrative within a specific geographical context. Furthermore, it references a series of events occurring *there* since time immemorial ("wie schon unter Türckischen Zeiten geschehen seyn solte"[154]), setting a quasi-historical backdrop for the narrative. This framing prepares the narrator - and through it, the reader - to perceive the unusual events in Kisilova not as anomalies but as part of a longstanding yet unfamiliar phenomenon, thereby establishing them as what Frombald calls "a basic truth" ("gründlicher Wahrheit"[155]).

This process is also similar to Tzvetan Todorov's theory of the fantastic, as articulated in *Introduction à la Littérature Fantastique* (1970). According to Todorov, the fantastic emerges when supernatural events occur within the realistic world. The reader,

[152] Wells, H.G. *The Scientific Romances of H.G. Wells.* ibid.

[153] Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens", ibid.

[154] Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens", ibid.

[155] Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens", ibid.

upon encountering such events, is faced with a decision: to interpret the event as an illusion - a product of dreams, drugs, or madness—or to accept it as a *real* occurrence (in the world of the text) that challenges the laws of reality. This hesitation between natural and supernatural explanations is central to the fantastic. Only if the reader cannot choose definitively between these explanations, which in Frombald's report would be either belonging to the "Inditia" or the "Spectacul" category, does the text remain purely fantastic. Therefore, by finding himself in an unfamiliar space, Frombald is unable to conclusively categorize the events he writes about, maintains a heavy sense of hesitation, and invites the reader to fill in the blanks.

Another element pertaining to the narrator's displacement into a different *topos* is the destruction of the vampire—a gruesome scene that becomes a canonical staple in vampire narratives. This act, as depicted in subsequent media, often serves as a pivotal moment, emphasizing the abnormality and the violence that are inherent parts of the space where the action takes place. For contemporary, 21st-century readers, the idea of such a brutal act occurring in or around the capital of Vienna in the 1720s, when the late-Baroque music of Johann Fux or Francesco Conti might have filled the air, seems starkly out of place.[156] However, within its historical context, the execution of Plogojowitz's body perfectly aligns with the norms of the time. In this regard, the mutilation of his corpse is more impactful to a 21st-century reader than to Frombald's contemporaries.

[156] Jones, David Wyn. "Court, Aristocrats and Connoisseurs." *Music in Vienna: 1700, 1800, 1900*. Boydell & Brewer: 2016. pp. 72–96.

Furthermore, for readers from other cultural contexts, such as Confucian traditions, the destruction of Plogojowitz's corpse would likely be even more jarring. In Confucianism, to continue with the same example, the treatment of the deceased is of significant importance, with traditional Chinese practices emphasizing the preservation of the body as a form of respect for the ancestors. The handling of the dead involves meticulous rituals to ensure the comfort of the earthly soul, known as *Po* (魄), which is believed to remain near the body. If not properly cared for, this soul could become a harmful ghost, posing a threat to the living.[157] From this perspective, the violent desecration of Plogojowitz's body at Kisilova would not be seen as a solution but rather as an extremely dangerous act that could disrupt the harmony between the living and the dead. It would be a disaster that could potentially bring further misfortune to the community.

To an individual living in the 18th-century *Militärgrenze*, however, the destruction of a human body - dead or alive, might not evoke the same kind of shock. Yet, subsequently, reading it *as literature*, this scene becomes a terrible revelation to the public, to the extent that later, in Stoker's *Dracula*, Van Helsing refers to the act as "a deed of horror," "a butcher's work" that made him "tremble."[158] Despite being an old and seasoned

[157] On the topic, see Olberding, Amy; Ivanhoe, Philip (eds.). *Mortality in Traditional Chinese Thought.* New York: State University of New York Press, 2012; Watson , James. Rawski Evelyn (eds.). *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988; Tavor, Ori. "Embodying the Dead: Ritual as Preventative Therapy in Chinese Ancestor Worship and Funerary Practices." *Journal of Ritual Studies*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2020, pp. 31–42; Ebrey, Patricia. "Cremation in Sung China." *The American Historical Review*, vol. 95, no. 2, 1990, pp. 406–28.

[158] Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. London: Penguin Classics, 2003, p. 379.

doctor, familiar with all manner of physiological and paranormal phenomena, Van Helsing admits the emotional toll of witnessing the vampire's end: "Had I not seen the (...) gladness that stole over it just ere the final dissolution came (...) I could not have endured the horrid screeching as the stake drove home; the plunging of writhing form, and lips of bloody foam."[159]

Wolfgang Iser's approach to reading is helpful in understanding why the violent elements surrounding vampire executions become particularly shocking when encountered in a literary context. Iser posits that "one text is potentially capable of several different realizations, and no reading can ever exhaust the full potential, for each individual reader will fill in the gaps in his own way" and "as he reads, he [the reader] will make his own decision as to how the gap is to be filled."[160] This suggests that the act of reading something *as literature* is inherently an active and creative process, where the reader's engagement with the text brings it to life in a unique and powerful way, perhaps more effectively - or at least differently - than an actual event.

When closely read, we also observe a crucial duality in the "Copia Eines Schreibens." At first glance, Frombald presents the facts as a functionary employed in the service of the Habsburgs. From this position, as an institutional, non-diegetic actor, he refrains from expressing horror at such "Inditia" details as: "einiges frisches Blut erblicket

[159] Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. ibid.

[160] Iser, Wolfgang. "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach." *New Literary History*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1972, p. 285.

/ welches der gemeinen Aussag nach er von denen / durch ihme Umgebrachte / gesogen" ("some fresh blood was observed, which, according to the common report, he had sucked from those he had killed"[161]). However, as the diegetic narrator, Frombald introduces elements of his own astonishment, noting "hab nicht ohne Erstaunung…erblicket" ("I observed not without astonishment"[162]). This duality in Frombald's narrative persona—simultaneously a hypothetical contemporary of the 18th century and a scandalized narrator displaced in unfamiliar contexts—further emphasizes the complexity of the text.

Frombald's displacement in the midst of the unexplainable events of Kisilova is the first written account connecting the vampire ("Vampyri") with fresh blood ("frisches Blut") oozing out from an old corpse. Even in the case of the most popular and well-cited "vampire burials,"[163] the burning of the corpse could be used simultaneously with other *traditional* solutions, such as decapitation, placing stones or blades in the mouth, or having the limbs of the deceased bound or severed altogether.[164] Nevertheless, given the lack of

[161] Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens", ibid.

[162] Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens", ibid.

[163] See the introduction of Jenkins, Mark Collins. *Vampire Forensics: Uncovering the Origins of an Enduring Legend*. Washington: National Geographic, 2010.

[164] See MacDonald, Fiona. "Scientists Reveal The Origin of Poland's Mysterious <<Vampires>>". *Science Alert*. May 5, 2018. https://www.sciencealert.com/research-reveals-the-origin-of-poland-s-mysterious-vampires (9/5/2022). Nevertheless, the scientific article cited does not prove the existence of "vampirism", but that the deviant burials in post-medieval cemetery site of Drawsko were locals. Also see Gregoricka Lesley, Betsinger Tracy, Scott Amy, Polcyn Marek. "Apotropaic Practices and the Undead: A Biogeochemical Assessment of Deviant Burials in Post-Medieval Poland". *Plos One*, 2014, vol. 9, no. 11, available online at: https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0113564 (9/5/2022).

any actual textual evidence, to interpret all these archaeological finds *only* in relation to a supposed belief in vampires might be an anachonistic projection of modern scholarship.[165]

For example, in Austria, the last official execution for witchcraft, which involved decapitation and burning, was that of the 16-year-old Maria Pauer in 1750, who was accused of instigating poltergeist phenomena in a village near Salzburg.[166] In Germany, the last public execution for supernatural interference was that of Anna Schnidenwind in 1751. She was accused of starting a fire that devastated the village of Endingen am Kaiserstuhl (at that time under Habsburg possession). As a consequence, she was strangulated and burned to ashes.[167] In the context of Transylvania and lower Hungary, the situation is more blurry. According to the written sources, the decriminalization of magic

[165] "The case studies of skeletal pathologies in Europe lack any description of the context in which the individual was buried. Furthermore, many of the studies concerning burial practices have no descriptions pertaining to the skeletal evidence beyond the positioning of the individual." in Bartholdy, Bjørn Peare. "Bloodsucking Diseases: Applying Vampire Superstition to Paleopathology". Conference paper. *Breaking Barriers: Proceedings of the 47th Annual Chacmool Archaeological Conference*, 2015, p. 191; Also see Gardeła Leszek, Duma Pawel. "Untimely death: atypical burials of children in early and late medieval Poland". *World Archaeology* vol. 45, no. 2, 2013, pp. 314–332; Gilchrist, Roberta. "Magic for the Dead? The Archaeology of Magic in Later Medieval Burials". *Medieval Archaeology*, vol.52, no.1, 2008, pp. 119-159 and also Gardeła Leszel, Kajkowski Kamil. "Vampires, criminals or slaves? Reinterpreting 'deviant burials' in early medieval Poland". *World Archaeology* vol. 45, no. 5, pp. 780–796.

[166] See Neumeyer, August Friedrich. *Der Mühldorfer Hexenprozess 1749/50*. Mühldorf, 1992; Also Byloff, Fritz. "Die letzten Zaubereiprozesse in Mühldorf und Landshut." *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte (ZBLG)*, 1938, pp. 427–444.

[167] More on the topic, see Rowlands, Alison. "'When will the burning start here?': the Catholic challenge during the Thirty Years' War." *Witchcraft Narratives in Germany: Rothenburg, 1561-1652*. Manchester, 2003. Manchester Scholarship Online, 19 July 2012; Behringer, Wolfgang, et al., editors. *Späte Hexenprozesse: der Umgang der Aufklärung mit dem Irrationalen*. Vol. 14, Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2016; Robisheaux, Thomas. "The German Witch Trials." *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*. Edited by Brian P. Levack, Oxford Academic, 2013, pp. 179-198.

and the end of persecutions against alleged supernatural agents were lengthy processes that took place between 1740 and 1848.[168] In Romania, such an execution happened as late as 2004 in the village of Marotinu de Sus, next to the Serbian border. On this occasion, 6 local men exhumed an alleged "strigoi" (a local supernatural entity haunting the living[169]) who was getting people sick. These modern vampire hunters split his ribcage open with a scythe, burned its heart, stabbed the corpse with wooden stakes, and sprinkled it with garlic.[170]

Violent events have persistently marked the factual world of readers, from public executions to the harrowing genocides and ethnic cleansings that characterized the 20th century, especially within Central and Eastern Europe. Yet, within the realm of literature, portrayals of violence often carry a heightened impact. They also render the settings in which they occur as distinctly alien territories, even when these are perfectly recognizable. Frombald's narrative, with its employment of gaps and ambiguities, actively draws readers into a space where their imagination and emotional engagement are necessary. As Iser articulates, "With all literary texts, then, we may say that the reading process is selective,

[168] Klaniczay, Gábor; Pócs, Éva. *Witchcraft and Demonology in Hungary and Transylvania*. Palgrave Macmillan: 2017; Pop-Curşeu , Ioan; Pop-Curşeu, Ştefana. *Witchcraft in Romania. Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic*. Palgrave MacMillan: 2022.

[169] Taloş, Ion. *Gândirea magico-religioasă la români. Dicţionar*. Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică, 2001, p. 165.

[170] McLaughlin, Daniel. "A village still in thrall to Dracula." *The Guardian*, June 18, 2005. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/jun/19/theobserver (3/19/2023); Taylor, Timothy. "The real vampire slayers." *BBC History Magazine*, October 28, 2007. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/the-real-vampire-slayers-397874.html (3/19/2023).

and the potential text is infinitely richer than any of its individual realizations."[171] In the context of vampire literature, the readers' emotional engagement renders the places where vampires live more shocking than their *real* counterparts: Frombald's Kisilova appears much more dangerous than the actual Serbian village today, and the only real dangers in contemporary Transylvania are money-thirsty tourist traps, not blood-thirsty vampires.

d) Mortuary Imagery

Mortuary imagery and paraphernalia play an important part in the vampire genre and remind readers of the core themes of death, decay, and the afterlife. Vampires are invariably linked with symbols of mortality, such as grave markers, coffins, or crucifixes, which not only set an aesthetic, atmospheric tone but also remit to the undead nature of these creatures. For instance, in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, the Transylvanian castle is surrounded by ancient, unknown, and unmarked tombs, ruins, and decay, and in most media, vampires emerge from soiled-filled coffins. Why do these elements recur so frequently in relation to the vampire?

The prevalence of mortuary elements in vampire narratives may not reflect the events encountered in the Habsburg reports of the 18th century. The grave of a villager from the Militärgrenze—a region marked by poverty, warfare, and recurring epidemics—would likely not contain the elaborate mortuary paraphernalia depicted in gothic literature. Instead, normative burial objects would be simple and functional, reflecting the practical

[171] Iser, Wolfgang. T*he Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*. Baltimore. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974, p. 280.

and spiritual needs of a destitute, rural Orthodox Christian community. Although no archaeological sources specifically detail the grave of Plogojowitz, clues within Frombald's text, combined with the socio-cultural context of the time, allow us to extrapolate and imagine the actual scene.

First, the Ottoman cadastral registers from 1741 indicate that Muslims and non-Muslims cohabited primarily in large urban centers such as Belgrade. In contrast, the villages around them were exclusively inhabited by Orthodox Christians or other Christian colonists settled by the Habsburgs post-1718.[172] Consequently, burial practices in these rural areas remained constant, undisturbed by significant cultural shifts or legislative changes. These wouldn't appear until later, like those that Joseph II introduced after 1782. These reforms, beginning with the "Edict of Tolerance," eventually led to transformations in religious and cultural practices regarding the depths of graves, the distance between them, or physical contact with the dead.[173] However, during the time of Frombald's account, the traditional Orthodox Christian burial rites would have been preserved, providing a stable framework for understanding the mortuary context of the period.

Contemporary pop culture often depicts vampires in association with exhumation or tomb entry. Yet, it's worth questioning whether this practice was as prevalent in

[172] More specifically, book no. 18 in the "Old Records Archive" in Istanbul (Kuyûd-ı Kadime). More on the topic in İlhan Türkmen. "Osmanlı Kaynaklarına Göre 1740'larda Belgrad'ın Sosyo-Ekonomik Yapısı" *Belleten*, vol. 80, 2016, pp. 411-438.

[173] See Linzbauer, Franciscus Xaver. *Codex sanitario-medicinalis Hungariae*, vol. 3, Buda: Typis Caesario-Regiae Scientiarium Universitatis, 1853, p. 121 and further.

Frombald's time or among the villagers of Kisilova. Why were they so compelled to exhume the body, to the extent that the Imperial Provisor discovered it already unearthed and lying beside its grave? Annemarie Sorescu-Marinkovic notes, "Even though, [in Eastern Orthodox communities] as a rule, the bodies should not be disturbed from their eternal sleep, ritual exhumation has probably nowhere in the civilized world had a longer history, and bodies have never been more troubled than in Eastern Europe."[174] Moreover, the tradition of exhuming the people who died young, 40 days post-funeral for a final farewell—a ritual known as "otkopavanje pokojnika" (uncovering the dead)—was still practiced by the Vlachs in Eastern Serbia until the late 20th century.[175] Such ritual underscores cultural continuity in the region's funerary customs, and the act of exhumation served both to alleviate familial grief and to mitigate fears of the undead.

Within this context, it remains unclear whether the villagers intended to destroy Plogojowitz's body, say a last goodbye, or add something to his grave. We only have Frombald's narratorial perspective. His report mentions that, after death, Plogojowitz came back to his wife and asked for his "Oppanki," a type of simple footwear made of animal

[174] Sorescu-Marinkovic, Annemarie. "'If the Sun Shines on Him Once More, He Will Live Two Lives': Exhuming the Dead in Eastern Serbia." *Journal of Ethnography and Folklore*, 2004, vol. 1-2, pp. 33–34.

[175] According to the field research of Repedžić, Aleksandar. "Neka ga sunce po drugi put ogreje" – otkopavanje pokojnika ["Let the Sun Warm Him Once More": Exhumation of the Dead]. Available at: https://repkeetnolog.blogspot.com/2020/12/neka-ga-sunce-po-drugi-put-ogreje.html (2/21/2024).

skin.[176] According to the traditions documented within the region, opening a grave post-funeral was considered "when the deceased showed up in somebody's dream and asked for a particular object or piece of clothing to be sent to them, to the other world - not what was initially put in the coffin."[177] Ignoring such requests from the deceased could lead to dire consequences, including loss of property, illness, or even death.[178] To a certain extent, it seems that Frombald was compelled, too, and Plogjowitz's request for shoes seems important enough to be mentioned. However, it also indicates something else: Plogojowitz was buried barefoot, or his wife kept the "Oppanki" because they were too valuable to be discarded in the grave.

While there is no explicit written record confirming the villagers of Kisilova's intentions to destroy the body of Plogojowitz, other documents from the Habsburg territories provide circumstantial evidence. Notably, the vampire scandal of 1755 in Hemersdorf, along the Moravian-Silesian border, attests to the destruction of bodies suspected of vampirism.[179] However, textual sources from the period preceding the 1725

[176] "des verstorbenen Peter Plogojoviz Weib / nachdeme sie zuvor ausgesagt / daß ihr Mann zu ihr gekommen / und seine Oppanki oder s. v. Schuh begehret" in Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens," ibid.

[177] Sorescu-Marinkovic, Annemarie. "'If the Sun Shines on Him Once More, He Will Live Two Lives': Exhuming the Dead in Eastern Serbia." ibid. p. 41.

[178] This was also common among Orthodox Slavs, not only the Vlach population. See Djurić, Dragana Mythological Notions of the Deceased among the Slavic Peoples. Religions 2024, vol. 15, no. 194, Open access: https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/15/2/194 (4/22/2023).

[179] The Olomouc Episcopal Archives contains several boxes of documents on the cases of returning dead. "Documents Relating to the Frei Hemmersdorf Magia posthuma Case", 1754, Fond Arcibiskupska konsistor Olomouc/ signatura C13/ inventarni cislo 2278, 2279, 2280. Zemsky archiv v Opave, Olomouc. The parish death register for the period, available online, also confirms the data and the names from the documents: "Catholic Parish Register 1704-1736, Velke Heraltice",

Kisilova case are scarce and often unreliable. For instance, the 1732 edition of the *Commercium Litterarium* magazine references a report from "a most worthy man now living at Ratisbona" who claims that "similar cases [of vampirism?] have been dealt with in the same manner [unburial? staking? burning?], in 1721 in the village of Possega and its surroundings."[180]

Additional reports of exhumation and destruction in the Habsburg territories prior to Kisilova exist, yet they do not explicitly mention bloodsucking or use the term "vampire." An example preceding the Passarowitz Treaty of 1718 involves Christian villagers seeking permission from Ottoman authorities to execute the bodies of two women, János Kántor and Margith Paija Czoitos, suspected of witchcraft ("boszorkányok"[181]). This correspondence occurred between May and June 1662 in Hatvan, near Budapest. The Ottoman official, Amhett Bek, granted permission swiftly, as the matter pertained only to

J IX 5. Regional Archives in Opava, accessed 5/25/2021, http:/digi.archives.cz/da/; Also: Mézes, Ádám. *Doubt and diagnosis: Medical Experts and the returning dead of the southern Habsburg borderland (1718-1766)*. Central European University, PhD Dissertation, 2020. p.36, note #82 and Bohn, Thomas. *The Vampire: Origins of a European Myth*. New York: Berghahn, 2019, pp. 105-108.

[180] Anon. "Ex historia vampyrorrum", *Commercium Litterarium ad Rei Medicae et Scientiae Naturalis Incrementum Institutum*, no.19, May 1732, pp. 146-147; Available online at: https://books.google.com/books?id=SA1AAAAAcAAJ (6/12/2021).

[181] Sugár, István. *Bűbájosok, ördöngösök, boszorkányok Heves és külső Szolnok vármegyében* [Charmers, devils, witches in the county of Heves and outer Szolnok]. Budapest: A Magyar Tudomanyos Akademia, 1987.

non-Muslim subjects, "who belong to Hell" regardless of whether they were being burned on earth or not.[182]

Other occurrences of exhuming and destroying bodies, often linked to plague epidemics, have been documented throughout Transylvania and Debrecen by György Komáromi Csipkés in 1664,[183] Sándor Felvinczi in 1679,[184] and Sámuel Köleséri in 1709.[185] Köleséri, a physician, detailed the extreme measures taken by communities to combat plague outbreaks, attributing the disease to malevolent, posthumous magic. In the modern-day villages of Bobâlna, Cristei, Broşteni, and Păuca in Transylvania, there are records of villagers exhuming and mutilating several individuals, including a priest, followed by impaling and burning their bodies.[186] The 18th century saw numerous instances of corpse destruction, as noted by László Vekerdi in his unfinished epidemiological history. He cites 18 sources documenting such events between 1700 and

[182] "Mivelhogy a halott nem lévén mohamedán, s úgy is a visszautasítás poklába tartozna, a nevezettek tervezett határozata szerint a tűzzel való elégetésre engedélyt adunk." [Since the dead persons, not being a Mohammedan, is still rejected and belongs to hell, we grant permission to burn them with fire, according to the decision of those asking." in Sugár, István. *Bűbájosok, ördöngösök, boszorkányok Heves és külső Szolnok vármegyében*, ibid. p. 23.

[183] Komáromi Csipkés, György. *Pestis Pestise* [The plague of plagues]. Debrecen, 1664.

[184] Felvinczi, Sándor. *A Jehova Nevében. A Pestisről való Rövid Beszélgetés* [In the Name of Jehovah: A Short Discussion of the Plague]. Debrecen, 1679.

[185] Köleseri, Samuelis. *Pestis Dacicae anni MDCCIX scrutinium et cura* [The Dacian Plague of 1709. Examination and cures. Heltzdörffer: Cibinii, 1709. Cited in Magyary-Kossa, Gyula. *Magyar orvosi emlékek IV* [The Archives of Hungarian Medical History IV]. Budapest: Megyei Városi Tanács, 1940. pp. 111-113.

[186] Solyomvari, Timea. "Returning dead in the late eighteenthcentury Transylvanian communities." *Pons Aelius* 17, 2021. https://www.societies.ncl.ac.uk/pgfnewcastle/files/2021/09/Timea-Solyomvari.pdf (2/22/2023).

1722, only in Debrecen and Transylvania alone.[187] However, these accounts do not explicitly mention vampirism, and "it is more likely that the letter patent used the term *bűbájos* (meaning sorcerer or incantator/incantatrix) to refer to local purveyors of folk medicine."[188]

Whatever the motivations behind the exhumation of Plogojowitz in 1725, one of the mortuary objects that Frombald likely encountered—and which he references towards the end of his report—is the sharpened stake. He notes that after seeing the signs confirming vampirism, the villagers "hastily sharpened a stake, set it to pierce the dead body through the heart."[189] This element of driving a stake through the body is a recurring motif in accounts of dealing with suspicious corpses, though Frombald's mention lacks descriptive detail. In contrast, for example, in 1789, Johann Gottfried Schenker, a Saxon priest from Transylvania who witnessed this process many times, provided a more elaborate description. In a report sent to his superiors, he explains that if a deceased person in the grave is believed to be sucking blood from the living, "the only remedy left is to clear the grave; to open the coffin, then to turn the vampire with the head towards the east, and the

[187] Vekerdi, László. *Magyarországi és erdélyi pestisjárványok a XVIII században. Járványtörténeti bibliográfiai függelékkel.* [Plague epidemics in Hungary and Transylvania in the 18th century. Epidemiological history with a bibliographic appendix]. *Magyar Tudománytörténeti Szemle Könyvtára*, 2009, no. 81 [Library of the Hungarian Review of Scientific History, 2009, no. 81].

[188] Kristóf, Ildikó. "<<His Soul Is Weeping inside That He Cannot Bury the Dead as before.>> Plague and Rebellion in Debrecen (Hungary), 1739–1742." Religions, 2020, vol. 11 no. 12. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11120687 (2/22/2023).

[189] "(...)in schneller Eil einen Pfeil gespitzet / solchen dem Todten-Cörper zu durchstechen an das Hertz gesetzet," in Anon. "Copia Eines Schreibens," ibid.

feet towards the west, to lay him on his stomach; and (...) to drive a green, sharpened oak stake through his back into the ground, and then to fill the grave again with earth."[190]

Contemporary pop culture has dramatically expanded the execution scene in vampire narratives and created a climactic moment that varies widely across stories. Such diversity stems from two centuries of *filling the gaps* through translations and adaptations. For instance, in Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872), the vampire meets her end in a more traditional manner—unearthed from her grave, staked through the heart, and beheaded, with her remains burned to ashes. Contrastingly, the 1987 film *The Lost Boys* showcases the head vampire, Max, being impaled by a truck outfitted with wooden stakes before exploding. These examples highlight the creative liberties taken in modern adaptations. However, the question remains: what kind of objects and mortuary paraphernalia did Frombald actually witness at the Kisilova cemetery in 1725?

Firstly, Plogojowitz had been interred for ten weeks when his body was exhumed, yet Frombald's report curiously notes the absence of any typical odor of decay: "From such a body, and its grave, not the slightest common smell of the dead was perceived."[191]

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[190] "so sey das einzige Rettungsmittel übrig, das Grab aufzuräumen; den Sarg zu öfnen, sodann den vampyr mit dem Kopfe gegen morgen, und mit den Füßen gegen Abend gekehrt, auf den Bauch zu legen; und (...) einen grünen eichenen zugespizten pfahl durch seinen Rücken, in die Erde zu schlagen, und hernach das grab neuerdings mit Erde zu füllen" cited in Johann Gottfried Schenker "Über Vorurtheil und Aberglauben in Siebenbürgern," in: Ambrus, Miskolczy. *Felvilágosodás és babonaság (erdélyi néphiedelem-gyűjtés 1789–90-ben)* [Enlightenment and superstition (Collection of Transylvanian folk beliefs in 1789–90)]. Budapest: PTE Néprajz–Kulturális Antropológia Tanszék, 2016. p. 274.

[191] "Erstlich von solchem Cörper / und dessen Grabe nicht der mindeste sonst der Todten gemeiner Geruch verspüret," in Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens," ibid.

Furthermore, Frombald makes no mention of a coffin or burial container, and only describes the already unearthed body. It is possible that he observed some form of funeral attire, likely made of linen or wool, which tends to deteriorate quickly. In the Eastern European Orthodox tradition, this funeral clothing is traditionally new, but its inclusion with the deceased is contingent upon social status and available resources.

If the deceased is dressed in new garments for burial, however, these are often stuffed with coins, baked bread, or candles—objects believed to aid their passage to the afterlife. A notable practice involves placing a disc made of candles on the deceased's chest. This disc is ignited both at home and in the church during the funeral service. It is made by waxing a rope the length of the deceased and is known in the Vlachian communities of Serbia as "stat."[192] Also, inside the coffin or on the deceased, Frombald could have seen pieces of broken earthenware. These are remnants of a practice that involves "the ritual breaking of an empty pot or one filled with water or ashes by a close relative of the deceased, either at the place of death or on the threshold of the house,"[193] and symbolizes the severance of ties between the living and the dead.

[192] Ilin-Grozoiu, Loredana Maria. *Concepte, credinţe şi tradiţii previn nemurirea sufletului şi cultul morţilor*. [Concepts, beliefs and traditions prevent the immortality of the soul and the cult of the dead]. București: Editura Pro Universitaria, 2014, p. 170.

[193] "Una dintre aceste practici (...) este spargerea rituală a unei oale goale sau umplută cu apă ori cenușă, de către o rudă apropiată repusatului, pe locul morţii sau pe pragul casei." in Ilin-Grozoiu, Loredana Maria. *Despre Ritualistica Funerară Românească.* [About Romanian Funeral Rituals]. *The Journal of Ethnology and Culturology,* 2016. Vol. XX, p. 29.

Furthermore, where Kisilova is located, burial customs also include a rather elaborate preparation of the deceased for their journey to the next world. It is customary to "pack everything he [the deceased] would need for the trip."[194] A stick and a cap are placed next to the corpse, together with a bag or sack filled with objects. This typically contains "a hair comb, mirror, towel, and soap"[195] - considered essentials for the afterlife. I witnessed several identical burials myself: in rural Romania, children often participate in funeral practices, attracted by the prospect of free food, money, and objects passed on "in the name of the deceased" ("datul de pomană"). If these items are forgotten, it becomes necessary for the relatives to exhume the grave to ensure everything the deceased might need is subsequently included: "they must place everything inside."[196] Within this perspective, it makes sense for the villagers to have Plogojowitz exhumed, especially after his wife reportedly told everyone that he had come back for his "Oppanki." These shoes alone might have been the cause of all evil and disease. The question that remains unanswered, in this case, is why they did not rebury him.

Among other items Frombald might have observed but did not detail could be a bucket or a vessel for holding water, an essential component in the Orthodox funerary practice of cleansing the deceased. Traditionally, before burial, the body is washed with water and soap. In rural communities such as Kisilova, to avoid any potential misuse of

[194] Sorescu-Marinkovic, Annemarie. "'If the Sun Shines on Him Once More, He Will Live Two Lives': Exhuming the Dead in Eastern Serbia." ibid. p. 41.

[195] Sorescu-Marinkovic, Annemarie. "'If the Sun Shines on Him Once More…" ibid. p. 41.

[196] Sorescu-Marinkovic, Annemarie. "'If the Sun Shines on Him Once More…" ibid. p.41.

these items for magical purposes, this bucket, along with any remaining water, is customarily either buried with the deceased or disposed of in a flowing river[197]. Additionally, in Orthodox burial traditions, it is also customary for the deceased to hold a wooden cross on their chest, yet Frombald makes no mention of such an object in his report. His account is notably sparse, detailing only that Plogojowitz's body exhibited "fresh skin [that] had grown from underneath [on] the face, the hands and [...] feet," and that "his entire body was such that it could not have been more complete during its lifetime."[198] This description suggests Plogojowitz was covered by some garment that left his hands and feet exposed, indicating, again, that he was buried barefoot. However, the nature of this covering remains unclear—was it a traditional burial shroud, or something else? And if the villagers did undress him before impaling and burning the body, could this act be related to the "wild signs" that Frombald alludes to but chooses not to detail?

Such gaps in the narrative are pivotal for understanding the ease with which the vampire is adapted to other cultures and languages. They create a "schematic aspect" that invites reader engagement while holding certain elements in readiness for the imagination to complete. As Roman Ingarden suggests in *The Literary Work of Art* (1973), "schematized aspects that are *held in readiness* pass from the state of mere possibility (...) into a mode of a certain actuality (...) which is not the actuality of a concretely experienced

[197] Ciubotaru, Ion. "Cadrul etnografic al cântecului funerar pe Valea Șomuzului Mare." *Anuarul Muzeului Etnografic al Transilvaniei*, 1978. Vol. X, pp. 373-375.

[198] "und eine frische neue darunter hervor gethan / das Gesicht / Hände und s. v. Füsse / und der gantze Leib waren beschaffen / daß sie in seinen Leb-Zeiten nicht hätten vollkommener seyn können" in Anon, "Copia Eines Schreibens," ibid.

aspect, nor is it simple potentiality."[199] This "holding-in-readiness" (Parathaltung) can be enriched, or facilitated, by literary devices such as "images, metaphors, similes, etc." or even by the phonetic qualities of some words.[200] However, such *jumps* project different objectivities from those initially represented. In the case of Frombald's report, the minimalistic details of the mortuary imagery invite the reader to bring their own elements and complete the scene in Kisilova in 1725. In other words, the vividness of what Ingarden calls "represented objectivities" - the vampiric "spectacul"—does not stem from detailed descriptions of mortuary paraphernalia within the text. On the contrary, if aspects and elements were described in detail, the focus would shift to the aspects themselves, potentially obscuring the potentiality of the work.

[199] Ingarden, Roman. *The Literary Work of Art. An Investigation on the Borderlines of Ontology, Logic, and Theory of Literature*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973, p. 266.

[200] Ingarden, Roman. *The Literary Work of Art.* ibid. p. 266.

Mortuary Element	Description in Original Text	Translation into English	Contextual Meaning
The grave of Plogojowitz, not emitting any odor	“Erstlich von solchem Cörper / und dessen Grabe nicht der mindeste sonst der Todten gemeiner Geruch verspüre.”	“First of all, not even a trace of the common odor of death was emitted from that body, nor from its grave.”	The body was not decomposing as expected, which would have been highly unusual and alarming
Fresh organs, regeneration	“(...) ausser der Nasen / welche etwas abgefallen / gantz frisch / Haar und Bart / ja auch die Nägel / wovon die alte hinweg gefallen / an ihme gewachsen / die alte Haut / welche etwas weißlicht ware / hat sich hinweg geschellet / und eine frische neue darunter hervor gethan.”	“(...) apart from the nose, which has wittered a bit, there was new hair and beard, even the nails, from which the old ones had fallen off. Also, the old skin, which was somewhat whitish, had peeled away, and a fresh new one had emerged underneath.”	The body was not decomposing as expected, which would have been highly unusual and alarming
Blood in the mouth	“(...) in seinem Mund hab nicht ohne Erstaunung einiges frisches Blut erblicket.”	“(...) in his mouth, I have seen, not without astonishment, some fresh blood.”	Suggestion of feeding on the living by absorbing their blood
Stake through the heart	“(...) einen Pfeil gespitzet / solchen dem Todten-Cörper zu durchstechen an das Hertz gesetzet.”	“[The villagers] sharpened a stake and pierced the dead body through the heart.”	Destruction of the body as a method of defending against supernatural attacks
Body burned to ashes	“sie haben endlich oftermeldten Cörper / in hoc casu, gewöhnlichem Gebrauch nach / zu Aschen verbrennet”	“Finally, they burned the aforementioned body to ashes, according to usual practice.”	Destruction of the body as a method of defending against supernatural attacks

Fig. 6. Mortuary imagery in the 1725 “Copia Eines Schreibens”

e) Blood and Contagion

As previously mentioned, vampires, far from being ancient or exotic entities, emerge from a specific socio-historical context. Nick Groom, in The *Vampire. A New History* (2018) posits that the vampire narrative is "rooted in the empirical approaches of the developing investigative sciences of the eighteenth century, in European politics and in the latest thinking."[201] Central to the vampire's novelty is the importance of blood, a motif described by Mephistopheles in Goethe's *Faust* as "a very special juice" ("Blut ist ein ganz besondrer Saft"[202]). Ádám Mézes characterizes the vampire in similar terms, as "a special kind of dead," setting it apart from "the body-less souls from Purgatory, treasure-guarding ghosts or raging spirit hordes riding in storms of the Wütendes Heer-type [an older, Germanic motif of a ghostly, wild hunt]."[203]

Additionally, Mézes suggests that the defining feature of the vampire extends beyond mere bloodsucking—a characteristic that scholars like Koen Vermeir and Stephen Gordon do not even consider central to the vampire's essence.[204] Instead, what

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[201] Groom, Nick. *The Vampire. A New History*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2018. p. 15.

[202] I am using the Open Source Public Domain version on *Project Gutenberg*: Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Faust: Der Tragödie erster Teil*. Project Gutenberg, 2021, https://gutenberg.org/ebooks/2229 (2/25/2022).

[203] Mézes, Ádám. *Doubt and diagnosis: Medical Experts and the returning dead of the southern Habsburg borderland (1718-1766)*. Central European University, PhD Dissertation, 2020, p.18.

[204] Vermeir, Koen. "Vampires as Creatures of the Imagination: Theories of Body, Soul, and Imagination in Early Modern Vampire Tracts (1659–1755)," *Diseases of the Imagination and Imaginary Disease in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Yasmin Haskell, Turnhout: 2011, pp. 341-373; Gordon, Stephen. "Emotional Practice and Bodily Performance in Early Modern Vampire Literature." *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2017.

distinguishes the vampire from other vampiric entities or the undead is the implication of bloodsucking as a catalyst for further consequences. The true horror lies in the contagion aspect, rather than merely in the cessation of the victim's life. Furthermore, this indiscriminate threat renders the vampire a threat not only to a specific demographic but to all individuals, regardless of gender, age or confession. Even innocent people can fall victim to this danger. "The thought that even innocent people's corpses can be transformed into evil revenants was highly unsettling and resulted in corpse executions on a much larger scale than before."[205]

Similarly, the interpretation of bloodsucking in the Habsburg vampire reports as a metaphor for contagion rather than mere death gains substantial support from a range of scholarly works. Mark Collins Jenkins suggests that the "vampire epidemics" tap into a deep-seated fascination with disease.[206] Without understanding the bacterial cause of common blood infections,[207] the villagers of the Militärgrenze looked for supernatural explanations that related blood sucking to epidemic death. Furthermore, Eduardo Galguera's[208] and Vincent DiMarco's explorations of rabies in relation to the vampire reports parallel these fears. DiMarco also highlights how disease transmission has

[205] Mézes, Ádám. *Doubt and diagnosis*, ibid. p. 110.

[206] Jenkins, Mark Collins. *Vampire Forensics. Uncovering the Origins of an Enduring Legend*. Washington: National Geographic Society, 2010. pp. 99-131.

[207] Marcondes, Carlos Brisola et al. "Blood Sucking, Vector-Parasite Relationship, and Transmission of Diseases." Marcondes, Carlos (ed.). *Arthropod Borne Diseases*. Springer, 2016, pp. 47-57.

[208] Galguera, Eduardo. "Un neurólogo gallego desvela el origin del vampirismo." *Tribuna Medica*, 1992, vol. 26, no. 1373, p. 13.

historically been intertwined with literature.[209] In the same vein, Winkler and Anderson, among other medical experts, have identified porphyria, a rare disorder in hemoglobin, as a possible disease in the Habsburg vampire reports.[210] Olivier Castel's examination of vampirism and bacteria in cinema modernizes these connections, reflecting ongoing concerns with infection and its spread.[211] More recently, during the COVID-19 pandemic, perhaps inspired by Richard Matheson's 1954 novel *I am Legend*, some people believed that either the virus or the vaccine (or both!) would transform them into vampiric zombies.[212] Overall, Peter Balázs and Kristie Foley's work on the Habsburg plague control measures in the 18th century provides a historical backdrop for understanding such fears, and the role of public health strategies in articulating and legitimizing them.[213]

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[209] DiMarco, Vincent. "The Bearer of Crazed and Venomous Fangs: Popular Myths and Learned Delusions Regarding the Bite of the Mad Dog." *Bloomington:* iUniverse, 2014, especially pages 215-220.

[210] Winkler, Mary; Anderson, Karl. "Vampires, Porphyria, and the Media." *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine,* 1990, vol. 33, no. 4, pp. 598–611.

[211] Castel, Olivier. "Bacteria and Vampirism in Cinema". *Médecine et maladies infectieuses*. No. 43, 2013, pp. 363–367.

[212] Rao, Sonia. "No, COVID has nothing to do with zombie vampires, but misinformation about 'I Am Legend' is swirling." *The Washington Post*, 11 Aug. 2021, www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/no-covid-has-nothing-to-do-with-zombie-vampires-but-misinformation-about-i-am-legend-is-swirling/ (2/19/2022); Herzog, Norbert, and David Niesel. "Vampires and vaccines have long connection in history." *GalvNews.com*, 22 Mar. 2022, www.galvnews.com/health/free/vampires-and-vaccines-have-long-connection-in-history/article_5ebc1599-32d3-5ee9-b798-64d7e964e9f3.html. (2/19/2022).

[213] Balázs, Peter. "Empiric physiology in epidemiologic doctrines of the 18th century, Hungarian General Norm of Health in 1770". *Acta Physiol Hung*, 2006, March, pp. 23-32; also see Balázs , Peter & Foley, Kristie. "The Austrian success of controlling plague in the 18th century: maritime quarantine methods applied to continental circumstances." *Kaleidoscope History*, 2010, no. 1, pp. 73-89.

In addition to trying to figure out what diseases might have caused the 1725 vampire cases, a literary analysis of blood and contagion can also help us understand this schematized aspect. As Gil Anidjar elucidates in a comprehensive study on blood in Christian cultures, this element transcends its mere physiological significance.[214] Anidjar posits that "blood is minimally mytheme, and it is meme, too (...) Blood functions as a mark, a citation, and a repetition. It moves, operates, and circulates to the extent that it is inscribed, co-agitated, repeated."[215] Therefore, when Frombald references blood in his report, he is not merely noting the presence of a bodily fluid but also invoking its symbolic significance. For instance, the narrator observes that the corpse of Plogojowitz had in his mouth "some fresh blood" ("einiges frisches Blut"[216]) that he "had sucked from those he had killed." ("welches...er von denen/ durch ihme Umgebrachte/ gesogen"[217]).

The mention of "fresh"/"new" blood in this case is particularly evocative. It sets up the vampire not just as a consumer of blood, but as a symbol of contagion from the old preying upon the new, the young, the very essence of life that ought to flourish. Within its context, this imagery extends metaphorically to the newly established Habsburg control, suggesting the "Vampyri" as emblems of resistance. In a larger sense, the post-Passarowitz

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[214] Also see Camporesi, Piero. *Juice of Life: The Symbolic and Magic Significance of Blood*. New York: Continuum, 1995; Roux Jean-Paul. *Le sang. Mythes, Symboles et Réalités* [Blood. Myths, Symbols and Realities]. Paris: Fayard, 1988.

[215] Anidjar, Gil. *Blood. A Critique of Christianity*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014. p. 110.

[216] Anon. "Copia Eines Schreibens," ibid.

[217] Anon. "Copia Eines Schreibens," ibid.

borders, perhaps fragile, are likened to the "fresh blood" of Kisilova—full of potential and the promise of continuity. The vampire, as a creature of the old "Turkish times" ("Türckischen Zeiten"[218]), preys upon this new life and threatens everyone with regression into past chaos and superstition.

According to Erna Lesky, within the Austrian perspective, religious extremism, particularly Islamic doctrine, was perceived as a contributing factor to the persistent occurrence of disease and pestilence in Ottoman territories. This viewpoint posits that the Ottomans viewed the plague as divine retribution, an inevitable consequence, and thus did not undertake any measures to counteract it.[219] This perspective contrasts with more recent Ottomanist scholarship, according to which "the vast area that came under Ottoman control—stretching at its height from southeast Europe to the Persian Gulf and from the Black Sea basin to Yemen—did not figure as a breeding ground for plague until the last centuries of the empire's history."[220]

Erna Lesky's insights, linking supposed religious extremism and disease in Ottoman territories, help us understand the deeper symbolic significance of blood in Frombald's report. In this context, which aligns with what Piero Camporesi calls "the

[218] Anon. "Copia Eines Schreibens," ibid.

[219] Lesky, Erna. "Die Österreichische Pestfront an der K.K. Militärgrenze." *Saeculum*. Jahrbuch für Universalgeschichte, 1957, vol. 8, pp. 82-106. Also see Varlik, Nükhet. "New Science and Old Sources: Why the Ottoman Experience of Plague Matters." *The Medieval Globe*, 2015, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 193-227.

[220] Varlik, Nükhet. "New Science and Old Sources: Why the Ottoman Experience of Plague Matters." *The Medieval Globe*, 2015, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 195. Also see Panzac, Daniel. *La Peste dans L'Empire Ottoman, 1700–1850* [The Plague in the Ottoman Empire, 1700-1850]. Leuven: Peeters, 1985.

bygone culture of blood, (...) it is along the frontier of blood—on the red line between pure and impure—that the inexhaustible drama between the sacred and the profane is played out: between the history of the divine, and the history of the human element that would struggle free of the human."[221] Therefore, it is the dichotomy of blood as both sacred and profane that sets the stage of Frombald's report. This is the first text to intertwine the vampire and the lore of the undead with larger socio-political and geographical contexts in a manner unprecedented by any other supernatural phenomenon.

It is important to notice that the adjective "frisch" ("fresh," "new") is present every time the narrator mentions "blood." This happens twice throughout the text: first, when Frombald, "not without astonishment,"[222] sees blood in Plogojowitz's mouth and second, when the villagers execute the body. Both scenes are pivotal in shaping the schematic aspect of the blood theme in vampire literature. Nevertheless, when the blood is mentioned in connection with Plogojowitz's mouth, it is not smeared across his face in the manner of a modern horror icon. Instead, Frombald writes that he spots it "inside his mouth" ("in seinem Mund,"[223]). This implies that the villagers either intentionally opened the vampire's mouth during the examination or that they manipulated the body in such a manner that the blood became exposed. This detail echoes the exhumation practice among the Vlachs in the same region, which continued well into the end of the 20th century, according to

[221] Camporesi, Piero. Juice of Life: The Symbolic and the Magic Significance of Blood. New York: Continuum, 1995, pp. 28; 121.

[222] Anon. "Copia Eines Schreibens," ibid.

[223] Anon. "Copia Eines Schreibens," ibid.

Annemarie Sorescu-Marinkovic. During an exhumation of a young man in 1979, Sorescu-Marinkovic writes, the villagers cleaned "the mud off of him"[224] in such a way that the hair came out of the back of his skull. Afterwards, "when they turned him, blood came out of his nose."[225] In this example, however, nobody believed that the deceased was a vampire, and the blood is not described as "new."

Within the same scene, when "fresh blood" is seen in Plogojowitz's mouth, Frombald employs the verb "erblicken," which implies a suddenness to the discovery. In other words, he "caught sight of" or "spotted" the blood inside his mouth, suggesting an element of surprise or the unexpected nature of the observation. The nuances of "erblicken" in English convey a moment of rapid realization, a quick shift from not seeing to seeing, which adds a special significance to the nature of the Habsburg vampire. In Goethe's *Faust*, for example, the same verb is also used to describe moments of sudden realization and is not a coincidence that is employed only in the "Hexenküche" ("Witch's Kitchen") scene. First, we see it when Faust is startled by the sight of animals busily engaged in preparing a

[224] Sorescu-Marinkovic, Annemarie. "'If the Sun Shines on Him Once More, He Will Live Two Lives': Exhuming the Dead in Eastern Serbia." ibid. p. 42.

[225] Sorescu-Marinkovic, Annemarie. "'If the Sun Shines on Him Once More…" ibid. p. 42.

magical potion,[226] and second, when the witch is caught off guard by the sudden appearance of Mephistopheles, her master.[227]

The second instance where Frombald mentions "fresh blood" is during the execution of the corpse. On this occasion, the report describes how, upon impalement, "a copious amount of entirely fresh blood flowed from his ears and mouth."[228] Similarly to the "fresh blood" inside the vampire's mouth, this also appears to be hidden, concealed within Plogojowitz's body. Such a deliberate act of hiding suggests a nuanced interaction between the vampire and its victims, between the individual and its community, and ultimately between the old and the new. Unlike the previous returning dead or ghosts, the Habsburg vampire is not merely a symbol of death or horror. It is rather a complex individual, entwined with notions of secrecy, contagion, and transgression.

Before moving on to the schematic elements present in Gothe's "Die Braut von Corinth," it is crucial to acknowledge that Frombald's report introduces the concept of blood-sucking and concealment by "Vampyri" as a novel idea. While there are accounts of postmortem entities draining the energy or life force of the living before the 1725 report,

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[226] "Es sind gar wunderbare Sachen! Der Teufel hat sie's zwar gelehrt; Allein der Teufel kann's nicht machen. (Die Tiere **erblickend**.) Sieh, welch ein zierliches Geschlecht! Das ist die Magd! das ist der Knecht!" in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Faust: Der Tragödie erster Teil*. Project Gutenberg, 2021, ibid.

[227] "DIE HEXE. Au! Au! Au! Au! Verdammtes Tier! verfluchte Sau! Versäumst den Kessel, versengst die Frau! Verfluchtes Tier! (Faust und Mephistopheles erblickend.) Was ist das hier? Wer seid ihr hier?" in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Faust: Der Tragödie erster Teil*. Project Gutenberg, 2021, ibid.

[228] "bey solcher Durchstechung nicht nur allein häuffiges Blut / so gantz frisch / auch durch Ohren und Mund geflossen / sondern andere…" Anon. "Copia Eines Schreibens," ibid.

none explicitly mentions both blood-sucking and vampires as elements of the same phenomenon. Among such previous examples, we can mention Phillip Rohr's *Dissertatio Historico-Philosophica De Masticatione Mortuorum* (1679), Count Valvasor's *The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola* (1689), or Marigner's "Sur les Stryges de Russie," published in Le *Mercure Galant* in 1694.

Another example is the first Natural History of Poland, published by Gabriel Rzączyński 1721.[229] In this text, widely cited by researchers and enthusiasts in the field, there is also a description of an undead phenomenon called *upier*. According to Rzączyński, the *upier* is a corpse that moves in the grave, swallows the sheets in which it is buried, and sometimes even cannibalizes itself.[230] Although the *upier* sometimes presents itself to the living, invading their houses and suffocating them, it does not seem to suck blood or to be an object of contagion. Furthermore, Rzączyński also differentiates the *upier* in terms of gender and writes that the female has her body "furnished with feathers, in order to move more lightly and agilely."[231]

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[229] Rzączyński, Fr Gabriel, SJ. *Historia Naturalis Curiosa Regni Poloniæ, Magni Ducatus Litvaniæ, Annexarum; Provinciarum, in Tractatus XX Divisa*… Sandomir, 1721. Public Domain, available online: http://books.google.com/books?id=C_OVohJo2m4C&hl=&source=gbs_api (2/15/2024).

[230] "linteamina, quibus fuit involutu deglutire, imo & vorare partes sui corporis" in Rzączyński, Fr Gabriel, SJ. *Historia Naturalis Curiosa Regni Poloniæ*, ibid. p. 365.

[231] "Si viri sit cadaver, vocatur Upier, si mulebre, Upierzyca, quasi diceres plumesactum, hoc est, plumis fett pennis instructum corpus, leve, agile, ad motum" in in Rzączyński, Fr Gabriel, SJ. *Historia Naturalis Curiosa Regni Poloniæ*, ibid. p. 365. Nick Broom argues that this curious description is the consequence of an etymological error on the part of the author, who "confuses the word Upierzyca with the Polish pierze, meaning *feathers*" in Groom, Nick. *The Vampire. A New History*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2018, p. 67.

Other writings mention cases of haunting revenants in the Ottoman context, especially during the time of the grand mufti Ebussuud Efendi (1545-1574). These have been transcribed by Markus Köhbach[232] and Mehmet Düzdağ[233] and posteriorly discussed by Marinos Sariyannis[234]. Nevertheless, as the Polish etymologists Kamil and Olaf Stachowski argue, "the blood-drinking mythologem is quite marginal to the Turkic *obur*."[235] This phenomenon, although bearing a linguistic resemblance with the Slavic *upier*, is primarily associated with undead sorcery and appears as a flaming sphere. Perhaps the only characteristic close to the understanding of the modern vampire is that, depending on the length of the vowels, the Turkic *obur* can etymologically remit to "gluttony."[236]

In a simplified description, the creatures inhabiting the texts preceding Frombald's account are either masticating corpses animated by the powers of Satan, Greek *vrykolakas*

[232] Köhbach, Markus. "Ein Fall von Vampirismus bei den Osmanen." *Balkan Studies 20* (1979), pp. 83-90. The texts in Turkish have been published in Özcan, Abdülkadir. *Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi (1099–1116 / 1688–1704)*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu basımevi, 2000.

[233] Düzdağ, Mehmet Ertuğrul (ed.). *Şeyhülislam Ebussuud Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16. Asır Türk Hayatı* [16th Century Turkish Life in the Light of the Fatwas of Şeyhülislam Ebussuud Efendi]. Istanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1983.

[234] Sariyannis, Marinos. "Of Ottoman Ghosts, Vampires and Sorcerers: An Old Discussion Disinterred." *Archivum Ottomanicum 30* (2013), pp. 195–220; Also in his article "The Dead, the Spirits, and the Living: On Ottoman Ghost Stories." *Journal of Turkish Studies 44* (2015), pp. 373–90.

[235] Stachowski, Kamil; Stachowski, Olaf. "Possibly Oriental Elements in Slavonic Folklore. Upiór ~ wampir". *Essays in the History of Languages and Linguistics*, ibid. p. 655.

[236] Tekin, Mehmet Talât. *Türk Dillerinde Birincil Uzun Ünlüler*. [Primary Long Vowels in Turkic Languages]. Ankara: Simurg, 1995, p. 177.

(βρυκόλακας),[237] *sanguisugas*[238] attacking from a distance using magical powers (*magia posthuma*), plague bearing revenants named *upyrs*, also working through sympathetic magic[239] or Turkic fire-breathing, flying, giant *oburs*.[240] Regardless of the possible interpretations of modern scholarship, before 1725-1732 "one cannot talk of vampirism in the sense of the Western conception of bloodsuckers."[241] Bloodsucking revenants who terrorize people outside their own families are a rather modern construction.[242] Until Ottoman archival sources shed more light on the topic, it should be assumed that the previous destruction of an entire village at the hands (or fangs) of blood-sucking *Vampyri* might be a particular, dramatic addition of Frombald.

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[237] Avdikos, Evangelos. "Vampire Stories in Greece and the Reinforcement of Socio-Cultural Norms." *Folklore,* vol. 124, no. 3, 2013, pp. 307–26.

[238] Olivares Merino E.M. . "El vampiro en la Europa medieval: el caso inglés". *Cuadernos del Cemyr*, no.14, pp. 205-232.

[239] In the Ottoman cultural context "[These] accounts combine cases of jinn possession with souls of the dead returning either to implore for prayers or to tyrannize the living. These ghost stories are also set in a balkan environment. In Anatolian and Arab populations, on the other hand, it seems that jinn interventions, and not vampires or ghosts, were more common", in Sariyannis Marinos. "On Revenants and Ghosts. Various Documents, Sixteenth Century". *The Ottoman world: a cultural history reader, 1450–1700*. Karateke, Hakan T; Anetshofer, Helga (eds.). Oakland: University of California Press, 2021. pp. 188-195.

[240] Beydili, Celal. *Türk Mitolojisi Ansiklopedik Sözlük* [Turkish Mythology Encyclopedic Dictionary]. Ankara: Yurt Kitap Yayın, 2005.

[241] Bohn, Thomas. *The Vampire: Origins of a European Myth*. New York: Berghahn, 2019, p. 57.

[242] Even among scholars who tend to project them onto a hypothetical, monolithic Eastern European Folklore. For example, Bohn, Thomas. *Der Vampir: ein europäischer Mythos*. Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2016, pp. 122–123; Kreuter, Peter Mario. "Vom 'üblen Geist' zum 'Vampier.' Die Darstellung des Vampirs in den Berichten österreichischer Militärärzte zwischen 1725 und 1756." *Poetische Wiedergänger: Deutschsprachige Vampirismus-Diskurse vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, edited by Julia Bertschik and Christa Agnes Tuczay, Tübingen: Francke, 2005, pp. 116, 126, or Braccini, Tommasso. *Prima di Dracula: Archeologia del vampiro*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2011, pp. 164-165.

Chapter 2. Goethe's Vampiric Bride

A Brief Contextualization of Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth" (1797)

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's 1797 ballad "Die Braut von Corinth" is a pivotal moment in the plurality of the literary vampire. Goethe's vampiric bride is a work of art unto itself, one that resists easy categorization into any single tradition. As Johannes Endres underlines, the bride "is neither a classical nor a Christian creature, but an intercultural hybrid."[243] This hybridity, however, entails more than a blend of cultures; it is the culmination of an aesthetic process. In an early text, "On German Architecture" (1772), Goethe writes that "Art is creative long before it is beautiful (…) such art is true and great, perhaps truer and greater than when it becomes beautiful."[244] The vampire figure also mirrors this trajectory, from the shoeless revenants concealing the "fresh blood"[245] of their victims to the seductive vampires that would later captivate audiences in 19th-century literature and beyond.

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[243] Endres, Johannes. "Vampires and the Orient in Goethe's <<Die Braut von Corinth.>>" *The German Quarterly*, Spring 2020, vol. 93, no. 2, p. 208.

[244] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "On German Architecture," in *Essays on Art and Literature*, trans. Ellen von Nardroff and Ernest H. von Nardroff. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994, p. 8. Also see Von Mücke, Dorothea. "The Strasbourg Cathedral: Edification and Theophany," *The Practices of the Enlightenment: Aesthetics, By (author)ship, and the Public*. New York: online edition, Columbia Scholarship Online, 19 Nov. 2015, https://doi.org/10.7312/columbia/9780231172462.003.0006 (11/17/2023).

[245] Anon. "Copia Eines Schreibens," ibid.

In their generative process during the early 1700s, before acquiring the aesthetic dimensions of the Gothic imagination, vampires mainly served a functional role as subjects of learned debates. The 1725 report of Frombald, although offering a schematic view of the subsequent vampire aesthetic, must also be read within its context. Ádám Mézes notes that the vampire of the 1730s constituted a theoretical battleground between competing worldviews, "between the Scylla of believing too little and the Charybdis of believing too much."[246] Similarly, for Goethe and his contemporaries, the vampire also represented a middle ground between atheism and superstition, a perspective necessitated by the intellectual climate of the time. Downplaying the supernatural claims of the Catholic Church could invite accusations of heresy. Against this backdrop, Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth" radically reimagines the vampire, fusing classical mythology with Weimar sensibilities to create a new and seductive archetype.

The ballad tells the tragic tale of two young lovers, the son of an Athenian family and the daughter of a Corinthian household, whose union was arranged by their fathers in childhood.[247] However, in the years following this arrangement, the girl's family converted to Christianity and forced her into a life of austere asceticism. This sudden, forceful change led to the maiden's untimely death. Unaware of this misfortune, the young man journeys from Athens to Corinth to claim his promised bride. He arrives well after sunset and is

[246] Mézes, Ádám. *Doubt and diagnosis: Medical Experts and the returning dead of the southern Habsburg borderland (1718-1766)*. Central European University, PhD Dissertation, 2020, p. 271.

[247] "Beyde Väter waren gastverwandt,/ Hatten frühe schon/ Töchterchen und Sohn/ Braut und Bräutigam, in Ernst, genannt." in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze." *Musen-Almanach für das Jahr 1798*. Tübingen: J. G. Cotta, p. 88, lines 4-8.

welcomed by the girl's mother, the only one still awake. She leads him to a guest room and provides him with food and drink, but exhausted from his journey, the youth dozes off without touching anything.[248]

Suddenly after this, a mysterious female figure enters his chamber, and the reader is led to understand that this visitor is none other than the deceased daughter, who briefly slipped away from her grave: "From the grave I am driven,/ To seek the lost good,/ To love the man already lost,/ And to suck his heart's blood."[249] What follows is a powerful exchange between the lovers, where the groom persuades the bride-to-be to make love to him. As desire reaches its climax, however, the girl's mother rushes into the room. Although she was imagining that her house had been desecrated by prostitutes, the truth appears more shocking—the guest was sharing the bed with her undead daughter. Deprived of her rightful union in life, the revenant maiden confesses that she was determined to possess her groom and seal their bond in death by drinking his blood. However, after she fully realizes what she has done, the bride begs her mother to build a funeral pyre and let the couple be consumed by fire.

Rather than a mere adaptation of a single, older motif, Goethe's vampiric bride should be understood as a literary creation that parallels his vision of Gothic architecture.

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[248] "Müdigkeit läßt Speis' und Trank vergessen,/ Daß er angekleidet sich aufs Bette legt,/ Und er schlummert fast." in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., p. 89, lines 24-26.

[249] My translation of "Aus dem Grabe werd ich ausgetrieben,/ Noch zu suchen das vermißte Gut,/ Noch den schon verlohrnen Mann zu lieben,/ Und zu saugen seines Herzens Blut." in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., p. 98, lines 176-179.

Just as he saw the German Gothic as "the work of the master who first created a living whole out of scattered elements,"[250] his vampire ballad also synthesizes disparate cultural influences into a cohesive artistic vision. Beginning with Goethe, the vampire enters the domain of literature. It becomes a topic for those with the leisure and erudition to craft narratives from the raw materials of idealized folklore. In this respect, Goethe argues that "in man, there is a creative force which becomes active as soon as his existence is secure. When he is free from worry and fear, this demigod, restless in tranquility, begins to cast about for matter to inspire with his spirit."[251]

The Rascian peasants of Kisilova, or from anywhere else in the *Militärgrenze*, could not have been the writers or readers of the literary vampire. These individuals were subjected to a unique form of military colonialism, where they were granted some land and freedom from serfdom in exchange for military service.[252] In all probability, except for the priest, they were all illiterate. The same situation is also applicable throughout the 19th and the first part of the 20th centuries. Although "the feudal system in Serbia was (...) abolished after the uprisings that occurred from 1815 to 1833,"[253] more than 100.000 peasant families

[250] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *The Essential Goethe.* Edited by Matthew Bell. Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016, p. 870.

[251] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *The Essential Goethe.* Ibid., p. 871.

[252] Popescu, Bogdan. "The Habsburg Military Frontier." *Imperial Borderlands: Institutions and Legacies of the Habsburg Military Frontier*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. pp. 66–99.

[253] Calic, Marie-Janine. *A History of Yugoslavia*. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2018 p. 14.

were still "working as coloni on land they didn't own" as late as 1925.[254] The concept of having an existence secure enough to afford the time and resources for aesthetic and literary pursuits was not feasible in the places where vampires were supposed to originate. Rather than homegrown creations, in these regions, vampires are foreign motifs imported from the West. For instance, in Romania, a country closely associated with vampires in literature, "it was only in 1839 that the word *vampire* itself appeared in the country's lexicon."[255]

Nevertheless, the fact that the vampire is not native to these lands does not diminish its significance. The result of Goethe's creative force is not something less *true* in an ontological sense: there are no corporeal and historically verifiable vampires, regardless of whether people write about them or not. Instead, Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth" is creating its own ontological space, where the vampire exists as an aesthetic expression that transcends the need for historical verification. This is in line with Theodor Adorno's *Ästhetische Theorie* [Aesthetic Theory], which argues that aesthetic expressions require a strong, autonomous subject capable of "critically turning against itself and breaking through its own illusionary bias."[256] Goethe's vampiric bride is, therefore, a "mimetic

[254] Calic, Marie-Janine. *A History of Yugoslavia*. Ibid.

[255] Martin, Anca Simina. "The Trope of the Vampire (and Strigoi) in Romanian Culture and Cultural Products Imported to Romania (1839–1947)." *Transilvania*, 2023, no. 7, pp. 17-25. For the source text, see Constantin Negruzzi's translation of Victor Hugo's *La Ronde du Sabbat* [The Sabbath Round-Dance].

[256] "Ästhetische Entäußerung an die Sache, das Kunstwerk, erheischt kein schwaches, sich anpassendes, vielmehr ein starkes Ich. Einzig das autonome vermag sich kritisch zu wenden gegen sich und seine illusionäre Befangenheit zu durchbrechen." in Adorno, Theodor. *Ästhetische Theorie*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970, p. 162.

moment" ("mimetische Moment"[257]) where the subject aesthetically negates itself or, in this case, negates the necessity of being a historical reality.

As Adorno further argues, "everything that artworks contain in terms of form and materials, spirit and subject matter ("Geist und Stoff"), has emigrated from reality ("Realität") into the artworks and divested itself of its reality within them (...) Even the purest aesthetic determination, appearance, is mediated to reality as its determinate negation."[258] In other words, art constitutes itself through a gradual difference from empirical reality. Goethe's vampire, as a work of art, also embodies this aesthetic "tendency against itself [as factuality]" ("Tendenz gegen sie"[259]).

Roman Ingarden expands on a similar idea, arguing that even in texts "which purport to be historical and which undertake to be as faithful as possible in representing facts and objectivities known from history,"[260] we are not dealing with genuine facts, but with representations. In the case of Goethe's "Braut," there is not even what Ingarden calls "the intention of matching objects of situations with objectively existing states of affairs or

[257] Adorno, Theodor. *Ästhetische Theorie*. Ibid.

[258] "Denn alles, was die Kunstwerke an Form und Materialien, an Geist und Stoff in sich enthalten, ist aus der Realität in die Kunstwerke emigriert und in ihnen seiner Realität entäußert: so wird es immer auch zu deren Nachbild. Noch die reinste ästhetische Bestimmung, das Erscheinen, ist zur Realität vermittelt als deren bestimmte Negation." Adorno, Theodor. *Ästhetische Theorie*. Ibid., p. 142.

[259] Adorno, Theodor. *Ästhetische Theorie*. Ibid. p. 144.

[260] Ingarden, Roman. *The Literary Work of Art*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973, p.170.

objects."[261] Instead, the ballad appears to be merely evoking, to a certain degree, a blend between the vampire world of the Habsburg texts, classical Antiquity, and concerns related to death, love, and sacrifice. To use Ingarden's words, the "Braut" conveys "a suggestive power that, as we read, allows us to plunge into the simulated world."[262] This raises the question of whether the elements of the vampire aesthetic analyzed in Frombald's 1725 report are still functioning or present in Goethe's ballad. Can we recognize the schematic views of the vampire aesthetic from 1725 in "Die Braut von Corinth," and vice versa?

To address these questions, we will closely read Goethe's ballad through the same lenses we analyzed Frombald's 1725 "Copia Eines Schreibens." We will focus on a) the dichotomy of the known and unknown, b) temporal layering, c) narratorial displacement, d) mortuary imagery and the role played by e) blood and contagion. However, before moving on to the close reading, it is necessary to situate "Die Braut von Corinth" within its broader contexts. First, we will parse the discussions surrounding the vampire debate and the texts produced in or directly related to Weimar, where Goethe and Schiller collaborated on the *Musenalmanach für das Jahr 1798*. Second, we must also mention the intellectual discussions and drives that shaped the ballad, particularly the influence of an idealized classical antiquity. The setting of Goethe's vampiric ballad is Ancient Greece rather than the *Militärgrenze* or other locations thought to be infested with vampires in the

[261] Ingarden, Roman. *The Literary Work of Art*. ibid. p. 171.

[262] Ingarden, Roman. *The Literary Work of Art*. ibid. p. 172.

18th century. This choice reflects the particular aesthetic and philosophical preoccupations of Weimar classicism and not a desire for historical veracity.

The Vampire Debates and Weimar

Although the majority of 18th-century treatises on vampires were published in Leipzig and Nuremberg, Weimar also contributed to the ongoing discussion with two important texts: *Eines weimarischen Medici mutmassliche Gedancken von denen Vampyren, oder sogennanten Blut-saugern* ["A Weimar Physician's Presumed Thoughts on Vampires, or so-called Blood-suckers"] and *Philosophischer Versuch ob nicht die merckwürdige Begebenheit der Blutsauger oder Vampyren aus den principiis naturae hergeleitet wurden könne* ["Philosophical Attempt to Explain the Remarkable Occurrence of Blood-suckers or Vampires within the Principles of Nature"].[263] Both were published in 1732 as a response to an ongoing discussion surrounding the "vampire epidemic" in the Habsburg *Militärgrenze*.

Johann Christoph Fritsch and Ernst Stahl co-authored the first one, *Eines Weimarischen Medici*, and the text is the product of their letters on the topic of vampirism and the possibility of life after biological death. Fristsch was the personal physician to the Duke of Saxe-Weimar August I (1688-1748), the grandfather of Duke Karl August (1757-1828), Goethe's friend and patron, and Stahl was a renowned physician based in Berlin

[263] There is a transcribed modern edition in Silberschmidt Abraham; Silberschmidt Irina (eds.) *Von den Blutsaugenden Toten, oder philosophische Schriften der Aufklarung zum Vampirismus*. Nurnberg: Hexenmond Verlag, 2006, pp. 115-123).

and the court physician to Frederick William I of Prussia (1688-1740). The second text, *Philosophischer Versuch*, is somewhat different and invites a more spiritual explanation for vampirism. It was written by Christian Friedrich Demelius, a cleric who ended his treaty by praying to God that He would "protect us from all such aberrations of nature in life, as well as grant our bodies in death a gentle rest in the ground."[264]

While Demelius approached the phenomenon as an evangelical theologian, suggesting spiritual solutions to a demonic epidemic affecting the imagination of the superstitious, Stahl and Fritsch addressed it from the scientific perspective of their time. Stahl, a well-known vitalist, emphasized the irreducible difference between the living and the nonliving.[265] His interest in this distinction from a rationalist lens is evident throughout *Eines Weimarischen Medici*. Given that the main characteristic of vampires is the lack or arrest of decay, Stahl and Fritsch sought to explain this phenomenon without resorting to supernatural intervention or blaming it on heresy.

Instead, they proposed a rational approach, attributing the apparent growth of hair and nails after death to an optical illusion caused by the cessation of blood circulation.[266] They also suggested that a particular diet and fasting played a vital role in explaining the

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[264] Cited in Silberschmidt Abraham; Silberschmidt Irina. *Von den Blutsaugenden Toten…* ibid. p.123, translation from Mézes, Ádám. *Doubt and diagnosis: Medical Experts and the returning dead of the southern Habsburg borderland (1718-1766)*, p. 315.

[265] Geyer-Kordesch, Joanna. "Georg Ernst Stahl's Radical Pietist Medicine and Its Influence on the German Enlightenment." *The Medical Enlightenment of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Andrew Cunningham and Roger French. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1990, pp. 67-87.

[266] Hamberger, Klaus. *Mortuus non mordet: Kommentierte Dokumente zum Vampirismus 1689-1791*. Wien: Turia und Kant, 1992, pp. 129-138.

phenomenon, a very popular argument among the explanations of vampirism. Citing from their discussion, Zedler's *Universal-Lexicon* for "Vampyren oder Blutsauger" states that "perhaps the bodies of the Greeks [Orthodox Christians] are (...) dried out by strict fasting and simple eating ("einfache Speißen"), so they do not decompose as fast as other bodies rich in blood and full of juice."[267] Furthermore, rather than relying solely on secondary interpretations, Stahl and Fritsch also maintained contact with the Belgrade military officials directly involved in the vampire outbreaks in the *Militärgrenze*.[268] This commitment to empirical investigation reflects a more general Enlightenment spirit that also shaped the intellectual discourse in Weimar during this period.

Stephan Hock argues that Goethe was familiar with the discussions on the vampire topic and that, when he wrote the ballad, he had in mind "the modern belief in vampires." ("moderner Vampyr-glauben"[269]). According to Goethe's confession, he carried the

[267] My translation from "Vampyren oder Blutsauger" in Zedler, Johann Friedrich. *Großes Vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*. Halle & Leipzig: 1732-1754, p. 480. Digitalized version available online: https://www.zedler-lexikon.de/index.html?c=blaettern&id=414651&bandnummer=46&seitenzahl=0250&supplement=0&dateiformat=1 (2/15/2023).

[268] One manuscript detailing the correspondence is found at The Archive of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Berlin: "Acta betreffend den vom König angeforderten Bericht wegen der sogennanten Vampire oder Blutaussauger, 1732." Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften 1700-1811-Wissenschaftliche Verhandlungen, Specialia I-V-24, rows 1-21. Also see Mézes, Ádám. *Doubt and diagnosis: Medical Experts and the returning dead of the southern Habsburg borderland (1718-1766)*. Ibid. p. 260.

[269] Hock, Stefan. *Die Vampyrsagen und ihre Verwertung in der deutschen Litteratur*. Berlin: Duncker, 1900, p. 68. The same point is also argued by Johannes Endres in Endres, Johannes. "Vampires and the Orient in Goethe's <<Die Braut von Corinth.>>" *The German Quarterly*, Spring 2020, vol. 93, no. 2, pp. 204-220.

subject of the vampire "deeply into his mind" ("so tief in den Sinn"[270]) for more than four decades. As a child he must have heard about the 1755 vampire scandal related to the village of Frei Hermersdorf (today Svobodné Heřmanice in the Czech Republic), where the locals had disinterred 29 corpses and executed 19 of them for *magia posthuma*. The reaction of the Habsburg authorities and the sensation of such a display of superstition in the middle of Europe sparked curiosity about vampires even more than in the 1730s.

Was the "vampire craze" of the 1730s truly forgotten by 1755, when the Frei Hemersdorf scandal reached the headlines? What kind of discussions were circulating in the decades before Goethe's birth in 1749? The scholarly consensus is that between 1734 - when Michael Ranft published the *Tractat von dem Kauen und Schmatzen der Todten in Gräbern* [Treatise on the Chewing and Smacking of the Dead in Graves] - and 1755, there was significantly less interest in blood-sucking revenants. Nevertheless, the archives are telling a slightly different story.

For example, only in the region of the Serbian Banat, between 1711 and 1766, there were more than 40 different cases of revenant execution. The numbers increased after 1738 when the *Militärgrenze* was affected by an outbreak of plague, coupled with the loss of Serbia to the Ottomans.[271] Ádám Mézes argues that "the real number of cases in fact must have been higher, as one can suspect that not all revenant-hunts were announced to the

[270] Hock, Stefan. *Die Vampyrsagen*, ibid. p. 67.

[271] For the social tensions directly related to this period, see Kristof, Ildiko. "<<His Soul Is Weeping inside That He Cannot Bury the Dead as before.>> Plague and Rebellion in Debrecen (Hungary), 1739–1742." *Religions*, 2020, vol. 11, no. 687. Open Access: https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11120687 (3/23/2024).

authorities."[272] The discussions on the topic of the blood-suckers were highly popular - or at least significant enough to make an everlasting impression on Goethe. As he later reflected in Weimar, "It seemed to me that, to be able to see and renew such valuable images again and again in my imagination ("solche werte Bilder oft in der Einbildungskraft erneut zu sehen") was a most beautiful possession ("Besitz").[273]

Nevertheless, this "possession" is renewed and Goethe's vampire is a vehicle for exploring a larger variety of relationships between the creature and the elements associated with it. For example, just like Fritsch and Stahl before him,[274] Goethe's ballad also relates vampirism to food. The bride refuses the food offered to her, serving only "dark, blood-colored wine" ("dunkel blutgefärbten Wein"[275]). This repurposing of the wine places the ballad into a highly different symbolic space than the medical inquiries of Stahl and Fritsch. In the "Braut," the lack of food and the preference for a frugal diet are not conducive to a lack of decay, nor are they related to medical reasons. Instead, these are anticipating the

[272] Mézes, Ádám. *Doubt and diagnosis: Medical Experts and the returning dead of the southern Habsburg borderland (1718-1766)*, p. 351.

[273] Cited in Hock, Stefan. *Die Vampyrsagen*, ibid. p. 67.

[274] This was one common explanation for the phenomenon in the 1730s. For example. Nick Groom also highlights that, "more prosaically, the Dutch paper *Glaneur Historique* proposed that the belief in vampires simply resulted from a poor diet: if people <<eat nothing but bread made of oats, roots, or the bark of trees>> it will raise <<gloomy and disagreeable ideas in the imagination>>." in Groom, Nick. *The Vampire. A New History*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2018, p. 84. The *Glaneur Historique* is also cited in the 1759 version of Calmet, Dom Augustin. *Dissertations upon the Apparitions of Angels, Dæmons, and Ghosts, and Concerning the Vampires of Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia*. London: 1759, pp. 213-215.

[275] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze." ibid. p. 93, Lines 95-99.

other type of food the vampire craves: human blood. This shift in meaning indicates a departure from the factual, academic discourse surrounding vampirism.

A similar process occurs in the case of the groom. When referring to the bread and wine laid out for him, the young man alludes to the pagan gods Ceres and Bacchus ("Hier ist Ceres, hier ist Bacchus Gabe"[276]). He also employs this rhetoric to explain his intention towards the bride, who is invited to complete this couple with Amor, referring both to the pagan god and to the act of making love ("Und du bringst den Amor liebes Kind... Laß uns sehn, wie froh die Götter sind"[277]). This invocation of mythological elements transforms the mundane attributes analyzed by texts such as *Eines Weimarischen Medici* into signifiers of fertility, desire, and the sensual pleasures associated with marriage.

In time, the vampire's symbolic dietary habits would become a staple of the genre. One of the most iconic examples is Count Dracula's line in the 1931 film directed by Tod Browning. When prompted by Jonathan Harker to drink, the Count, portrayed by Bela Lugosi, responds with the famous quip, "I don't drink … wine." This brief exchange encapsulates the vampire's rejection of mortal sustenance in favor of *something else*, a trope that can be traced back to Goethe and the "Braut."

[276] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze." ibid. p. 90, Line 45.

[277] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze." ibid. p. 90, Lines 46; 49.

Corinth Instead of Kisolova

In his departure from the historical cases of Kisilova and the *Militärgrenze*, Goethe deliberately chooses to localize his vampire bride in Corinth. This, however, is an idealized version of the Greek city, a *topos* that embodies the essence of ancient Greek culture that can be relieved again by a spectator or a reader, similar to Lessing's "Prägnanter Augenblick."[278] As Wolfgang Schadewaldt highlights, for Goethe, engaging with antiquity is essential for personal growth ("Bildung") and the realization of one's full potential as a human being.[279] By situating his vampire bride in Corinth, Goethe pays homage to the idealized essence of ancient Greece and underscores the transformative power of poetry and its ability to transcend historical reality. The same process is also encapsulated in the title of his autobiographical work, *Dichtung und Wahrheit* ("Poetry and Truth"), published in four volumes between 1811 and 1833.[280]

When addressing Goethe's relationship with the Greeks, we must also mention Johann Joachim Winckelmann and his 1764 text, "Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums"

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[278] "What lessing called <<prägnanter augenblick>> may well have mutated in the following discussions, such as in herder's related <<ewiger anblick,>> Goethe's <<lebenspunkt,>> or roland Barthes's <<punctum.>> These concepts provide additional material to unpack and (...) can hardly be captured via any current formula." in Niekerk, Carl, et al. "New Approaches to Eighteenth-Century Literature, Culture, and Theory." *The German Quarterly*, vol. 93, no. 2, 2020, p. 268.

[279] Shadenwaldt cites Goethe's own words: "Wenn wir uns dem Altertum gegenüber stellen und es ernstlich in der Absicht anschauen, uns daran zu bilden, so gewinnen wir die Empfindung, als ob wir erst eigentlich zu Menschen würden." ["If we confront antiquity and look at it seriously with the intention of educating ourselves, we gain the feeling as if we were actually becoming human beings"] in Schadenwaldt, Wolfgang. *Goethestudien. Natur und Altertum*. Zürich & Stuttgart: Artemis Verlag. 1963, p. 20.

[280] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Aus meinem Leben. Dichtung und Wahrheit.* Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1981.

("The History of Art in Antiquity"). In this work, which helped establish the foundations of German Hellenism, Winckelmann idealized ancient Greek culture and interpreted its statues as embodying the highest ideals of beauty and nobility.[281] Goethe not only carried this book as a trustworthy companion on his trip to Italy (1786–1788), but in his autobiography, he also remembers the excitement around its publication. According to Goethe, anyone who had an interest in or expressed the smallest affinity for art "always had Winckelmann [and not the actual Greeks] before their eyes."[282]

Nevertheless, although Winckelmann remained a constant influence, Goethe's relationship to Greek antiquity changed over time, with Hellenic influences taking on different, sometimes contradictory shades. Among others, scholars like Wolfgang Schadewaldt, Frederick Ungar, and David Wellbery have illuminated the plurality of *ancients* in Goethe's work and his complex engagement with Greek antiquity.[283] "At different times, he took great pains in order to obtain the kind of acquaintance with Greek

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[281] For more extended introductions to Winckelmann, see Fridrich, Raimund. *"Sehnsucht nach dem Verlorenen": Winckelmanns Ästhetik und ihre frühe Rezeption*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2003; Sünderhauf, Esther. *Griechensehnsucht und Kulturkritik. Die deutsche Rezeption von Winckelmanns Antikenideal 1840-1945*. De Gruyter Akademie Forschung, 2004; Kochs, Susanne. *Untersuchungen zu Winckelmanns Studien der antiken griechischen Literatur*. Tübingen: Rutzen, 2005. Also Goethe's thoughts on Winckelmann in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. Winkelmann und sein Jahrhundert: in Briefen und Aufsätzen. Tübingen: J.G. Cotta, 1805. Available online at: https://archive.org/details/gri_winkelmannun00tubi/page/n3/mode/2up (2/4/2023).

[282] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Werkausgabe*, vol. V. *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1981, p. 295. Also, see the first part of Baur, Michael. "Winckelmann and Hegel on the Imitation of the Greeks." In Michael Baur & John Russon (eds.). *Hegel and the Tradition: Essays in Honour of H.S. Harris.* University of Toronto Press. pp. 93-110.

[283] Schadewaldt, Wolfgang. *Goethestudien: Natur und Altertum*. Stuttgart: Artemis Verlag, 1963; Ungar, Frederick. *Goethe's World View: Presented in His Reflections and Maxims*. Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1963; Wellbery, David. *The Specular Moment: Goethe's Early Lyric and the Beginnings of Romanticism*. Stanford University Press, 1996.

art and literature that his purposes required."[284] Moreover, as Todd Kontje highlights, Goethe's view of antiquity is also, at times, tied to an idealized *Orient*, associated with the *Old Testament*: "When Goethe writes approvingly about Oriental culture, he means, in the first instance, certain poetic passages in the Old Testament that Herder had also praised as <<the oldest documents of the human race>> and, in the second, Arabic and Persian poetry of the Islamic period."[285]

As a chronological marker, we could say that Goethe's encounter with the Greeks gained depth after Winckelmann's assassination in 1768. Another pivotal moment was Goethe's stay in Strasbourg from 1770 to 1771, where, under the influence of Herder, his conception of the Greeks took on a more Dionysian character. During this period, Greece appeared to Goethe as "a land full of poetry and of divine inspiration, of vigor, of nature, and of national life."[286] The Greeks of this phase were embodied by the colossal figures of Aeschylus's *Prometheus* and the Socrates of Hamann's "Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten" (1759) [Socratic Memorabilia]. As Eliza Butler argues, "Werther's Greece owed little to Winckelmann's,"[287] suggesting that Goethe's vision of Hellas was different from the later Apollonian ideal championed by Winckelmann.

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[284] Trevelyan, Humphry. *Goethe And the Greeks*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981. p. 8.

[285] Kontje, Todd. German Orientalisms. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004, p. 121.

[286] Butler, Eliza. *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1958, p .93.

[287] Butler, Eliza. *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany*. Ibid. p. 95.

By the 1790s, Goethe's conception of the Greeks had acquired another shade. In 1797, when he wrote "Die Braut von Corinth," his Hellenism was colorful, to say the least. In the ballad, we can trace not only Winckelmann's interpretation of the Greeks and their "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur" ("edle Einfalt und stille Größe"[288]) but also bits from Shakespeare and the years of the Storm and Stress (*Sturm und Drang*) period. The latter refers to a movement concerned with wild emotions and an almost mystic interest in *primitive* texts like Homer or the poems of Ossian. Early works such as *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773) and *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774) are emblematic of Goethe's Storm and Stress period.[289] In "Die Braut von Corinth," the influence of the Storm and Stress is also evident, for example, in the frenzied encounter between the lovers. When they give into their emotions, "tears mingle with their lust" and the vampire bride "greedily sucks the flames of his mouth."[290] Such a vivid portrayal of "love's fury" ("Liebeswuth") stands in contrast to Winckelmann's description of Laocoön, for example, whose pain, he

[288] "Die edle Einfalt und stille Grösse der Griechischen Statuen ist zugleich das wahre Kennzeichen der Griechischen Schriften aus den besten Zeilen." in Winckelmann, Johann Joachim. *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst. Erste Ausgabe 1755 Mit Oesers Vignetten.* Stuttgart: G.J. Göschensche Verlagshandlung, 1885, p. 26.

[289] See, for example, Roy Pascal's *The German Sturm und Drang*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1953, or Nicholas Saul's chapter "Goethe the Writer and Literary History." in *The Cambridge Companion to Goethe*. Ed. Lesley Sharpe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 23–41.

[290] "Liebe schließet fester sie zusammen,/Thränen mischen sich in ihre Lust,/ Gierig saugt sie seines Mundes Flammen/ Eins ist nur im andern sich bewußt;/ Seine Liebeswuth Wärmt ihr starres Blut,/ Doch es schlägt kein Herz in ihrer Brust." in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze." ibid..p. 95, Lines 120-126.

says, “does not express itself with any violence (“mit keiner Wut”) neither in the face nor in the whole posture.”[291]

Between the autumn of 1796 and June 1797, while working on *Hermann und Dorothea* - an epic poem about love amid the French Revolution and its aftermath, Goethe was also absorbing Greek literature at an accelerated pace. In a letter to Schiller at the end of 1797, he confesses that, for the first time, he started reading Herodotus and Thucydides with a complete understanding of both content and form.[292] Therefore, the vampire, together with other “certain motifs [and] legends passed down from an early history,”[293] coincides with the peak of Goethe’s Hellenistic period. The period when he writes the “Braut” is, as Eliza Butler describes, “the climax of the ceaseless conflict between the daimon [the Dyonisian] and its adversary in Goethe’s mind,” when “the tragic and the serene literally thought for supremacy.”[294]

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[291] “(...) dieser Schmerz, sage ich, äußert sich dennoch mit keiner Wut in dem Gesichte und in der ganzen Stellung. Er erhebet kein schreckliches Geschrei, wie Vergil von seinem Laokoon singet.” Winckelmann, Johann Joachim. *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst (1755).* Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1969. Text is fully available online: https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/winckelm/nachahm/index.html (3/15/2024).

[292] “I am just now fit neither for large things nor small, and am only reading meanwhile, in order to keep with the good, Herodotus and Thucydides, in which for the first time I have a perfectly pure pleasure, because I read them only on account of their form and not their contents.” Letter to Schiller, 16 Dec. 1797, cited in Calvert, George. *Correspondence Between Schiller and Goethe From 1794 to 1805*. New York & London: Wiley and Putnam, 1845. p. 377.

[293] Cited in Hock, Stefan. *Die Vampyrsagen,* ibid. p. 67.

[294] Butler, Eliza. *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany*. Ibid. p. 131. However, as in the case of many other ideas that captured Goethe’s attention, the concept of the “Dämonische” is referred to by Goethe in different manners across the years. In retrospect, in *Poetry and Truth*, Goethe indicates that the daemonic principle of his youth years tried to encapsulate the whole variety of natural existence. “It is not merely nature, he believed, but also fate; it guides one to significant meetings

In terms of a more specific chronology, according to his correspondence, Goethe worked on "Die Braut von Corinth" between late May and early June 1797, during a short stay in Jena, which lies 20 km from Weimar.[295] On May 23rd, Schiller, who was also in Jena at the time, wrote to Goethe, thanking him for "a small poem" titled "The Treasure Seeker," and commenting on its beauty.[296] The two subsequent weeks proved to be productive, and Goethe sent Schiller "The Legend of the Horseshoe," - a text on Jesus when he was still "misunderstood and lowly" ("verkannt und sehr gering"[297]), "The Bride of Corinth," and "The God and the Bajadere." Another letter from Weimar, dated April 8th, 1797, also supports this timeline by anticipating a period dedicated to writing. After mentioning that, in his mind, "some scenes in Aristophanes appeared (...) precisely like antique bas-reliefs," Goethe ends this note by stating that, "as I get a little breathing time, I will think about the Almanac [*Musen-Almanach für das Jahr 1798*]."[298]

It is interesting to compare the wide range of cultural and religious themes Goethe explores in 1797-1798 with Frombald's 1725 report in the *Wienerisches Diarium*.

- as his own friendship with Schiller - and it produces great men" in May, Rollo. Love and Will. New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, p. 142. Also see Nicholls, Angus. *Goethe's Concept of the Daemonic: After the Ancients*. Boydell & Brewer, 2006.

[295] Tennenbaum, Rosa. "1797, The <<Year of the Ballad>> — In the Poets' Workshop." *Fidelio*, Spring 1998, Vol. VII, No,1, available online: https://archive.schillerinstitute.com/fid_97-01/981_ballad.html (2/10/2023).

[296] Tennenbaum, Rosa. "1797, The <<Year of the Ballad>> — In the Poets' Workshop." ibid.

[297] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Legende." *Musen-Almanach für das Jahr 1798*. Tübingen: J. G. Cotta, p. 144, Line 1.

[298] Letter to Schiller, April 8th, 1797, cited in Calvert, George. *Correspondence Between Schiller and Goethe From 1794 to 1805*. Ibid. p. 238.

Frombald's account is published alongside a range of sensationalistic news items designed to titillate and shock readers. The July 21st edition, where the "Copia eines Schreibens" is published, also features reports of gypsy robbers terrorizing the German town of Wetterau, murders in the night, kidnapped girls, and a woman attempting to sell a baby by hiding it in a vegetable basket.[299] The inclusion of obituaries and a list of condemned delinquents in Vienna further underscores the gazette's focus on morbid and immediate, scandalous content. Frombald's vampire report, presented as an anonymous "Copia eines Schreibens" ("Copy of a Letter"), fits seamlessly into this context of lurid journalism aimed at an audience different from that of the *Musenalmanach*.

In contrast, Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth" emerges from a markedly different textual landscape. Although some aspects of the ballad have their roots in the 1725-1755 "vampire scandals," those images are filtered through decades of erudition. The verses crafted in Jena in May and June 1797 showcase a plurality of cultural and religious nuances. For example, "The Legend of the Horseshoe" explores Christian themes, while "The God and the Bajadere" draws upon Hindu mythology. "Die Braut von Corinth" itself is steeped in the world of ancient Greek paganism, with the bride and groom's night of passion framed by invocations of deities like Ceres, Bacchus, and Amor. Unlike Frombald's report, published on the last page of a tabloid, Goethe's poems reflect his immersion in various

[299] *Wienerisches Diarium*. Anno 1725, No. 58, July 21st. Available online at the Austrian National Library: https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=wrz&datum=17250721 (3/10/2024).

literary traditions. The literary vampire, therefore, is a creature that belongs to a cosmopolitan, dynamic high-culture.[300]

In addition to being less journalistic and sensationalistic than the texts surrounding Frombald's report, the characters in Goethe's Weimar years are generally less visceral and more idealized compared to their literary predecessors. In "Iphigenie auf Tauris" (1779-1786), for example, the titular character embodies a noble quality that sets her apart from the more violent and emotionally volatile Iphigenia of Euripides' "Iphigenia at Aulis." Somewhere between Aulis and Tauris, the character of Iphigenia has been transformed. The same has happened with the vampire on its journey from Kisilova to Weimar. Goethe's tendency towards a more refined and less bloody portrayal of characters can be observed even in the twenty scenes written between 1772 and 1775, a Sturm und Drang period, that constitute what is known as *Ur-Faust*. In one of the source materials for Faust's legend, Johann Spiess's *Historia von D. Johann Fausten* (1587), Mephistopheles leads the reputed scholar down a path of increasingly depraved and violent behavior. The old story culminates in the graphic description of Faust's dismemberment by the devil.[301] Similarly, although the protagonist of Marlowe's *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of*

[300] I am using this term with a certain reservation. The distinction between "high" and "low" culture is more blurry in the post-modern context. For a more contextualized discussion on the role of a literate bourgeoisie in shaping cultural norms, see the introduction to Hohendahl, Peter Uwe. *Literarische Kultur im Zeitalter des Liberalismus 1830-1870*. Munich: C.H. Beck, 1985.

[301] Füssel, Stephan; Kreutzer, Hans Joachim (eds.) *Historia von D. Johann Fausten: Text des Druckes von 1587 ; mit den Zusatztexten der Wolfenbütteler Handschrift und der zeitgenössischen Drucke*. Frankfurt am Main: Reclam, 1988. Also see Lyndal Roper commentaries regarding physical violence and dismemberment as elements of literary entertainment in Roper, Lyndal. *Witchcraft and the Western Imagination.* Transactions of the RHS 16, 2006, pp. 117-141. Published online by Cambridge University Press: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0080440106000442 (4/2/2024).

Doctor Faustus (1592) does not share such a bloody death, his damnation is also violently sealed. On the verge of salvation, Marlowe's Faust succumbs to his most primitive appetites and chooses Helena instead of godly repentance. In doing so, his "offence can ne'er be pardoned (...) and must remain in hell for ever. Hell, ah, hell, forever!"[302]

Goethe's *Faust* presents a more introspective and philosophical character who grapples with existential questions. This depth of character is evident even in the Gretchen episode, which, while inspired by a dark period in Goethe's life and portrayed with dramatic intensity, eschews the visceral details found in previous iterations of the story. Margarete's references to death, salvation, and guilt serve as literary devices that underscore the complexity of the plot and the perilous path Faust has chosen. Her monologue, in which she laments, "The whole world/ Is bitter to me. / My poor head/ Is crazy,/ My poor mind/ Is shattered,"[303] provides the audience with clues about her mental state and the machinations of Mephistopheles, who has pushed her to the brink of madness. The moment in which Faust attempts to save her from execution is equally complex. Margarete, condemned to die for killing both her mother and her child, is already delirious when Faust appears in her cell, mistaking him for the executioner. The omnipresence of Mephistopheles terrifies her, and she ultimately chooses death and "eternal rest" ("ewige

[302] Marlowe, Christopher. "Doctor Faustus." *Christopher Marlowe: Doctor Faustus and Other Play*s. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (eds.). New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 179-180.

[303] My translation of "Die ganze Welt/ Ist mir vergällt./ Mein armer Kopf/ Ist mir verrückt,/ Mein armer Sinn/ Ist mir zerstückt." in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Faust: Eine Tragödie.* Frankfurt am Main: Reclam, 1971, lines 3380-3385.

Ruhebett"[304]) over a life of damnation, crying out, "I am yours, father! Save me!/ Your angels! Your holy flocks,/ Draw around to protect me/ Heinrich! I am terrified of you!"[305] By focusing on Margarete's inner turmoil, Goethe elevates the older Faust motif from a simple, cautionary narrative to a more profound exploration of the human condition.

Similarly, in "Die Braut von Corinth," the protagonist also asks a parental figure—this time the mother—for death. The bride believes the flames will finally bring peace to the restless, vampiric bodies of herself and the groom and that their ashes will be carried directly to the ancient gods.[306] Perhaps less delirious than Gretchen in the cell, in her plea for immolation, the vampire bride stands in stark contrast to the grotesque and predatory revenants of the *Militärgrenze*, or the German "Nachzehrer" (shroud-eating dead) in Philip Rohr's *Dissertatio De Masticatione Mortuorum* (1679). Unlike the bride, who asks her mother to "bring the lovers silence/rest ("Ruh") through flames,"[307] Plogojowitz, the vampire of Kisilova, had to be tracked down, exhumed, and investigated before being violently undressed and impaled. Equally disturbing, the shroud-eating dead are localized

[304] "Ist das Grab drauß,/ Lauert der Tod, so komm!/ Von hier ins ewige Ruhebett" in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Faust: Eine Tragödie.* Frankfurt am Main: Reclam, 1971, lines 4538-4540.

[305] "Dein bin ich, Vater! Rette mich!/ Ihr Engel! Ihr heiligen Scharen,/ Lagert euch umher, mich zu bewahren!/ Heinrich! Mir graut's vor dir." in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Faust: Eine Tragödie.* Frankfurt am Main: Reclam, 1971, lines 4607-4610. Also vailable online on *Project Gutenberg:* https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/goethe/faust1/ (4/2/2024). The English translation is mine.

[306] "Einen Scheiterhaufen schichte du, Oefne meine bange kleine Hütte, Bring in Flammen Liebende zur Ruh. Wenn der Funke sprüht, 195 Wenn die Asche glüht, Eilen wir den alten Göttern zu." in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze." ibid. p. 99, Lines 191-196.

[307] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze." ibid. p. 99, Line 193.

by their execution mobs after listening to the "grunting, gibbering, and squeaking" in their graves.[308] When exhumed, some of them may even "lap like some thirsty animal" while "groaning."[309]

In contrast, Both Goethe's "Braut" and Gretchen in the *Ur-Faust* seek death and silence ("Ruh"). This motif appears to be significant to Goethe, as it also echoes his famous poem, "Über allen Gipfeln" ["Above all the Peaks," later known as "Wanderer's Nightsong"] (1780):

"Über allen Gipfeln
Ist Ruh,
In allen Wipfeln
Spürest du
Kaum einen Hauch;
Die Vögelein schweigen im Walde.
Warte nur,
balde Ruhest du auch."

"Above all peaks
It is quiet,
In all the treetops
You sense
Barely a breeze;
The birds are silent in the forest.
Just wait, soon
You will **be quiet too.**"[310]

[308] Cited in Summer, Montague. *The Vampire in Europe*. New York: University Books, 1968, pp. 178–206. Also see Groom, Nick. *The Vampire. A New History*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2018, p. 64.

[309] Summer, Montague. *The Vampire in Europe*. Ibid. pp. 184; 196.

[310] Cited from Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Goethe's Werke. Erster Band*. Stuttgart & Tübingen: J. G. Cotta'schen Buchhandlung. 1815, p. 99. The English translation is mine.

Through stillness and silence, death appears to Goethe as an integration into the normality of things - a realization that comes with accepting mortality. Extremely different in this regard, the revenants of the "vampire scandals" of the 1730s, such as Plogojowitz in Kisilova or Jure Grando from Valvasor's *Die Ehre des Hertzogthums Krain* (1689), often display a mocking defiance in the face of death and a perverse attachment to the world of the living.[311] For example, according to Valvasor, when a clergyman confronted Grando's restless corpse, he first tried to subdue it into death by *shouting*, "Look! You Strigon! (...) Here is Jesus Christ! Who has redeemed us from hell and died for us! And you Strigon can have no peace!" ("keine Ruhe")[312] The creature's response was not less dramatic: it skipped towards the cemetery, weeping. However, once there, Grando's attitude changed. He became defiant and resisted all attempts to be dispatched. When stabbed, the weapon bounced off his chest, leaving the undead bloody but noisily laughing.[313] Only an *impromptu* decapitation with an axe finally put an end to its predations. Such an image of

[311] Valvasor, Johan Weikhard. *Die Ehre Hertzogthums Krain*, 4 vols. Rudolfswerth: 1877– 79 [1689], vol. 3, Book 11, pp. 317–19.

[312] "Schau! du Strigon! . . . Hier ist Jesus Christus! der uns von der Hellen erloeset hat und fuer uns gestorben ist! Und du Strigon kannst keine Ruhe haben" in Valvasor, Johan Weikhard. *Die Ehre Hertzogthums Krain*, ibid. p. 318.

[313] This detail is similar to one of Martin Luther's observations in *Colloquia oder Tischreden* (*Colloquia or Table Talks*). On that occasion, Luther describes the haunting of a village in Thurgau, where a priest was tormented by a *Poltergeist* who was breaking objects while laughing audibly. See Luther, Martin. *Colloquia oder Tischreden Doctor. Martini Lutheri: So Er in Vielen Jaren, Die Zeit Seines Lebens* (...). Frankfurt am Main: Johann Feyerbend, 1593, pp. 205-206. Also on the topic: Evener, Vincent. "Wittenberg's Wandering Spirits: Discipline and the Dead in the Reformation." *Church History*, vol. 84, no. 3, 2015, pp. 531–55.

a smirking, resilient revenant that can have "no peace" ("keine Ruhe"[314]) stands in sharp contrast to the vampire bride's voluntary plea for eternal rest ("Ruh"[315]).

Furthermore, Grando also reportedly visited his widow at night and subjected her to "horrifying" ("Abscheu") "sexual assaults" ("Nothzüchtig").[316] In comparison, in Goethe's ballad, it is the groom who insists on having more sensual contact. He "grasps her [the bride] violently in his strong arms," subduing and having her, "even if you yourself had been sent to me from the grave."[317] In this vein, although intrinsically an anomaly herself, the vampiric bride is a different, tragic figure. She appears as colorful as Goethe's varied sources of inspiration: caught between her desires, marriage arrangements made by anonymous, absent fathers, and a cursed existence as an undead. However, instead of letting her succumb to the chaos of these contradictions, Goethe sublimates the inherent violence of her vampiric condition into a poetic exploration, making "Die Braut von Corinth" the "first genuine vampire text in all world literature."[318]

The events unfolding in Goethe's ballad, nevertheless, are not merely illusions or unsubstantiated fantasies. The Greek background in this period "is typical without being

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[314] Valvasor, Johan Weikhard. *Die Ehre Hertzogthums Krain*, ibid. p. 318.

[315] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze." ibid. p. 99, Line 193.

[316] Valvasor, Johan Weikhard. *Die Ehre Hertzogthums Krain*, ibid. p. 318.

[317] My translation of "Heftig faßt er sie mit starken Armen (...) Wärst du selbst mir aus dem Grab gesandt!" in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze." ibid. p.94, Lines 113; 116.

[318] Endres, Johannes. "Vampires and the Orient in Goethe's <<Die Braut von Corinth.>>" ibid. p. 204.

abstract; it is individual without being peculiar; it is true without being demonstrable."[319] This stage of Goethe's artistic development, which encompasses the transformation of the Rascian shoeless, illiterate, and bloodthirsty revenant into a Greek-like, self-sacrificing heroine, is also encapsulated in the introduction to his short-lived journal *Propyläen* (1798). In this text, Goethe asserts that a true, canonical artist ("echte, gesetzgebende Künstler") strives not for "Naturwirklichkeit" (natural reality) but for "Kunstwahrheit" (artistic truth).[320]

As Johannes Grave underlines, Goethe's artistic philosophy during the Weimar period can be encapsulated within the idea that one should "not approach art thoughtlessly and regard it too closely with nature, but rather understand it in a thoughtful way, as a *second nature*."[321] In other words, the artistic creation—and, by extension, the vampiric bride—is liberated from its restrictive bonds related to mere functionality. The vampire does not need to be explained, as in the debates of the 1730s and 1750s, because art has an

[319] Howard, William Guild. "Goethe's Essay, Über Laokoon." *PMLA*, vol. 21, no. 4, 1906, p. 933.

[320] "Der echte, gesetzgebende Künstler strebt nach Kunstwahrheit, der gesetzlose, der einem blinden Trieb folgt, nach Naturwirklichkeit; durch jenen wird die Kunst zum höchsten Gipfel, durch diesen auf die niedrigste Stufe gebracht." [The real, law-giving/canon making artist strives for the truth of art, the lawless/insignificant, who follows a blind instinct, for the reality of nature; through the former, art is brought to the highest peak, through the latter it is brought to the lowest level.] cited in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Einleitung (in die Propyläen)." *Propyläen und Umkreis*. Hanser Verlag: 1990. Available online on *Project Gutenberg*: https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/goethe/propylae/propylae.html (3/16/2024).

[321] "Alle kunsttheoretischen Überlegungen Goethes (...) scheinen in der Warnung zu konvergieren, die Kunst nicht gedankenlos und allzu weitgehend der Natur anzunähern, sondern sie in durchdachter Weise als *zweyte Natur* zu verstehen." in Grave, Johannes. "Natur und Kunst, Illusion und Bildbewusstsein. Zu einigen Bildern in Goethes Beiträgen für die Propyläen." Daniel Ehrmann & Norbert Christian Wolf (eds.) *Klassizismus in Aktion. Goethes Propyläen und das Weimarer Kunstprogramm*. Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2016, p. 226.

autonomy that is "separated from everyday perception,"[322] a concept to which Goethe repeatedly returns throughout his life.

Through this lens, to a modern reader, Kisilova, dully localized by Frombald as being "aus dem Gradisker District in Ungarn,"[323] leaps from the pages of bureaucratic reports and tabloids and becomes Corinth. This is the very same place where, in Schiller's "The Cranes of Ibycus," the eponymous poet journeys to participate in the Isthmian games.

"Zum Kampf der Wagen und Gesänge
Der auf Corinthus Landesenge
Der Griechen Stämme froh vereint,
Zog Ibycus, der Götterfreund."[324]

"Unto the songs and chariot fighting
Which all the strains of Greece are joining,
On Corinth's isthmus festive gay,
Made Ibycus, gods' friend, his way."[325]

Just as Ibycus, "the friend of the gods" ("der Götterfreund"), is heading to Corinth both to celebrate the sacred games and to unknowingly fulfill his fate, so too does the "Braut" find herself connected with the city where she dies and loves again. In the pages of the *Musenalmanach für das Jahr 1798*, where both these ballads are published, Corinth

[322] "Die Autonomieästhetik (...) grenzt die Kunsterfahrung auch von der alltäglichen Wahrnehmung ab." Daniel Ehrmann & Norbert Christian Wolf (eds.) *Klassizismus in Aktion. Goethes Propyläen und das Weimarer Kunstprogramm*. ibid.

[323] Anonymous. "Copia Eines Schreibens," ibid.

[324] The original text is in Schiller, Friedrich. "Die Kraniche des Ibycus. Ballade." *Musen-Almanach für das Jahr 1798*. Tübingen: J. G. Cotta, p. 267, lines 1-4.

[325] I have used the translation published by The Schiller Institute at Washington DC, available online: https://archive.schillerinstitute.com/transl/trans_schil_3poems.html (3/10/2024).

emerges as a nexus of cultural transformation. This idea is further reinforced by August Wilhelm Schlegel's elegy in "Die Kunst der Griechen" [The Art of the Greeks] (1799), dedicated to Goethe. In this text, Schlegel envisions Corinth as a paradigm of artistic resilience in the face of a "confused world" that tries to pillage its riches:

"Kämpfend verwirrt sich die Welt, und neue Verhängnisse stürmen
Dir, kunsthegendes Land, Hellas geliebteres Kind,
Dunkel heran; **es versinkt in erneuerten Flammen Korinthus**,
Und der Proconsul häuft wieder in Schiffe den Raub,
Stolz den Ersatz androhend…"

"Fighting, the world becomes confused, and new disasters storm
Darkly towards you, art-nurturing land, Hellas' most beloved child,
Corinth sinks in renewed flames,
And the Proconsul again heaps the spoils into ships
Proudly threatening compensation…"[326]

This image of Corinth sinking "in renewed flames" ("in erneuerten Flammen") also resonates with the bride's plea for immolation, suggesting both a cyclical process of destruction and rebirth. However, to make sense, this process should be interpreted within the context of the Weimar Classicism and its predilection for Greek antiquity. Destroying a place or a body "into smoke and fire [...] goes directly against Christian beliefs of reformation, purification, or resurrection."[327] The transformation of Kisilova into Corinth

[326] cited from Schlegel, August Wilhelm von. "Die Kunst der Griechen Elegie." Sämtliche Werke, Band 2, Leipzig 1846, p.5. The text appeared in the third issue of the second volume of the *Athenaeum* journal, published in 1799: August Wilhelm Schlegel, "Die Kunst der Griechen," Athenaeum 2, no. 3 (1799), pp. 181-192. For a timeline for this period, also see Behler, Ernst. *German Romantic Literary Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. The English translation of this part of the elegy is mine.

[327] Endres, Johannes. "Vampires and the Orient in Goethe's <<Die Braut von Corinth.>>" ibid. p. 210.

represents not just a geographical change but a decisive shift in the *culture* of the vampire. For the first time, the vampire is endowed with a depth of character that goes beyond its immediate, base desires. This marks a significant departure from earlier depictions of revenants, such as the violent Jure Grando, who returns from the grave to abuse his wife, or Peter Plogojowitz, who suffocates his neighbors and demands his shoes ("Oppanki"[328]). Goethe's vampire bride exhibits a complex range of emotions and even passionate declarations, such as "Ah, the earth does not cool love."[329] Just as Corinth, the "art-nurturing land" ("kunsthegendes Land"[330]) in Schlegel, endures and regenerates itself through history's darkness, so too does Goethe's vampire seek death as a form of renewal.

In his introduction to *Goethestudien: Natur und Altertum* [Goethe Studies: Nature and Antiquity], Wolfgang Schadewaldt comments that, after his Italian journey (1786-1788), Goethe found in Antiquity not only inspiration for his artistic creation but also his "better self" ("sein besseres Selbst"[331]). This relationship, Schadewaldt continues, was reciprocal: the ancient spirit ("antike Geist") also found in Goethe something profoundly akin to it and "never let him go" ("ließ er ihn nicht los"[332]). Could this dynamic also apply

[328] Anon. "Copia Eines Schreibens," ibid.

[329] My translation of "Ach die Erde kühlt die Liebe nicht" in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze." ibid. p. 97, line 168.

[330] Schlegel, August Wilhelm von. "Die Kunst der Griechen Elegie." ibid.

[331] Schadenwaldt, Wolfgang. *Goethestudien. Natur und Altertum*. Zürich & Stuttgart: Artemis Verlag. 1963, p. 10.

[332] Schadenwaldt, Wolfgang. *Goethestudien. Natur und Altertum*. Ibid. p.10.

to the relationship between the "Braut" and the Habsburg vampires? Just as Goethe becomes *himself* through his engagement with antiquity ("Darum ist Goethe, wo er antik ist, ganz er selbst"[333]), through the "Braut," the Habsburg blood-sucking revenants also move closer to their own natures, their "better selves." Goethe's ballad, in this sense, serves as a vehicle for the vampire to transcend its alleged folkloric origins and attain new, more universal characteristics - that before remained unseen. Only through Corinth, as a metaphorical gateway to the classical world, are the revenants truly *resurrected*, and their temples are adorned with the spruce of immortality, like the corpse of Ibycus in Schiller's ballad:

"Und muß ich so dich wiederfinden,
Und hoffte mit der Fichte Kranz
Des Sängers Schläfe zu umwinden,
Bestrahlt von seines Ruhmes Glanz!"[334]

"And must I thee so rediscover?
And I had hop'd with wreath of pine
To crown the temples of the singer,
Which from his glow of fame do shine!"[335]

[333] Schadenwaldt, Wolfgang. *Goethestudien. Natur und Altertum*. Ibid. p.10.

[334] The original text is in Schiller, Friedrich. "Die Kraniche des Ibycus. Ballade." ibid. p. 270, lines 53-56.

[335] I have used the translation published by The Schiller Institute at Washington DC, available online: https://archive.schillerinstitute.com/transl/trans_schil_3poems.html (3/10/2024).

Goethe and the Vampiric *Repertoire(s)*

As previously underlined, Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth" represents a significant departure from the historical vampire cases that inspired it. Although the ballad incorporates certain elements from the accounts of the 1730s and 1750s, it filters them through specific literary, philosophical, and aesthetic interests. The result is a work that achieves a new level of artistic autonomy. Nevertheless, this phenomenon is not solely a consequence of Goethe as an individual *creator of texts* but also of Goethe *as context.* Using Roman Ingarden's terminology in *The Literary Work of Art* (1973), we can say that Weimar, as a cultural *topos*, not only enriched vampires through the "Braut" but also established a new set of "schematized views," different from those available to Frombald in 1725.

This multilayered process of enrichment and renewal, according to Ingarden's theory, also occurs every time a reader approaches the ballad. This happens because the "schematized views" of a text exist in a state of potentiality until actualized through the reader's engagement with it. These "schematized views" encapsulate not only the particular aesthetic dimensions of a work - in this case, elements such as Plogojowitz's "Oppanki" or his visits from beyond the grave—but also their potential future transformations. To employ another example, Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* embeds several core elements that Goethe, when writing his *Iphigenia in Tauris*, "supplemented and filled in with various details."[336] Both works, however, move into what Iser calls a common

[336] Ingarden, Roman. *The Literary Work of Art*. George Grabowicz (tr.). Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973, p. 264.

"repertoire," which consists of "the familiar territory"[337] between various texts. "This [repertoire] may be in the form of references to earlier works, or to social and historical norms, or to the whole culture from which the text has emerged, in brief (...) the extratextual reality which is (...) not confined to the printed page."[338]

Similarly, the relationship between the *Faust* texts of Johann Spies, Marlowe, and Goethe also demonstrates an actualization of "schematic views," comparable to that of the vampire. In the introduction to Spies' *Historia von D. Johann Fausten*, which served as Marlowe's source of inspiration, Harry Haile argues that the Faust characters in all three works seek the same thing—wisdom—and only the consequences of this search differ. Haile notes that in the 1570s, Faust's quest for knowledge was considered "the original sin of depraved mankind," much like his carnal lust for Helen.[339] However, by the 1770s, Goethe accepted (and encouraged) this longing for knowledge as "man's inborn drive."[340] Just as the "Braut" reinvents the Habsburg vampire and absorbs it into literature, Goethe's *Faust* expands upon the Faust schemata, grappling with more existential questions than those explored by Spiess or Marlowe. The legendary figure from a cautionary tale about

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[337] Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading. A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1987, p. 69.

[338] Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading. A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Ibid. p. 69.

[339] Haile, Harry Gerald. *The History of Doctor Johann Faustus*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965, p. 14.

[340] Haile, Harry Gerald. *The History of Doctor Johann Faustus*. Ibid.

the dangers of hubris is absorbed into modernity and transformed into a symbol for the quest for meaning.

Take, for example, the opening passage in Marlowe's *Faust*. The protagonist reveals that the motivation for turning to the occult arts is the desire for omnipotence and recognition. Marlowe's Faust believes that, by mastering "lines, circles, scenes, letters and characters," he will be able to command emperors and kings and even become a demigod himself.[341] In contrast, Goethe's Faust is driven by a more complex set of motivations, reflecting the yearning for a more authentic experience of life. Friedrich Kittler, in *Aufschreibesysteme 1800/1900* [*Discourse Networks 1800/1900*], also hints towards the same interpretation when arguing that "German poetry" and, by extension, modern German literature, "begins with a sigh."[342] Faust's interjection, "ach!," inserted within the irregular *Knittel-verse* enumerating canonical (and ossified) academic disciplines, points towards his dissatisfaction with the limitations of ontological categories:

"Habe nun, **ach!** Philosophie,
Juristerei und Medizin,
Und leider auch Theologie
Durchaus studiert, mit heißem Bemühn."

[341] "These Metaphysics of Magicians/ And Necromantic books are heavenly;/ (...) O what a world of profit and delight,/ Of power, of honor, of omnipotence/ Is promised to the studious artisan?/ All things that move between the quiet poles/ Shall be at my command (...)" in Marlowe, Christopher. *The Tragicall History of D. Faustus ("A" text version)*. Lines 78-86. Full text available online at the *Perseus Digital Library*: https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.03.0010 (3/24/2024).

[342] "Die Deutsche Dichtung hebt an mit einem Seufzer." in Kittler, Friedrich. *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*. Michael Metteer, Chris Cullens (tr.). Stanford: Stanford University Press, California, 1987, p. 3.

"Have, oh! studied philosophy,
Jurisprudence and medicine, too,
And, worst of all, theology
With keen endeavor, through and through."[343]

According to the *Goethe-Lexicon of Philosophical Concepts*, the lexeme "Ach" embodies "Goethe's dialectical understanding of the conjunction of materiality and spirituality (from *spiritus*, which in Latin means breath)."[344] This utterance, however, not only gives materiality to the incorporeal but also indicates a *plurality* within the subject emitting this sound. Faust's *"Ach!"* from the opening scene appears again later, outside of the confines of his studio, "Zwei Seelen wohnen, *ach*! in meiner Brust" [Two souls, *ach*, dwell in my breast][345]. Between 1756 and 1799, Goethe published no less than "twenty-two poems, whose first line or title begin with *Ach*."[346] The "Braut," although not one of them, contains no fewer than seven such utterances, all highlighting the characters' torments and nuances.

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[343] in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Faust: Eine Tragödie.* Frankfurt am Main: Reclam, 1971, lines 354-357. Available online on *Project Gutenberg:* https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/goethe/faust1/ (4/2/2024). The English translation is by Walter Kaufmann, cited in Kittler, Friedrich. *Discourse Networks 1800/1900.* Ibid. p. 3

[344] Smith, John. "Ach (Ah, Alas)". *Goethe-Lexicon of Philosophical Concepts*, vol. 1, no. 1, Jan. 2021, pp. 6-19. I have cited the online version available here: https://goethe-lexicon.pitt.edu/GL/article/view/28 (2/23/2024).

[345] "Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach! in meiner Brust,/ Die eine will sich von der andern trennen;/ Die eine hält, in derber Liebeslust,/ Sich an die Welt, mit klammernden Organen;" in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Faust: Eine Tragödie.* Frankfurt am Main: Reclam, 1971, lines 3380-3385. The English translation is mine.

[346] Smith, John. "Ach (Ah, Alas)". *Goethe-Lexicon of Philosophical Concepts*, ibid.

In one particular scene, after the bride resists the groom's initial attempts to make love to her, the latter appears to give up and "sinks onto the bed, crying."[347] Trying to explain herself to him, the vampire-bride approaches and, while hinting at her undead condition - pointing to her own dead limbs, two consecutive "Achs!" escape her:

"Und sie kommt und wirft sich zu ihm nieder:
Ach! wie ungern seh ich dich gequält!
Aber **ach**! berührst du meine Glieder,
Fühlst du schaudernd was ich dir verheelt."

"And she comes and falls down next to him:
Ach! How I hate to see you tormented!
But **ach**! Touch my limbs,
Feel with a shudder what I have told you."[348]

At first glance, such a depth of character starkly contrasts with the Habsburg vampire reports. However, this is not a case of a simple, antagonistic relationship. By applying the views of Ingarden and Iser, we can say that the bride's complexity is actually *filling up the gaps* sketched by the previous vampire accounts. We do not know what Jure Grando or Plogojowitz *said* when they visited their wives—we don't have their voices, just the retelling of an omniscient narrator. Perhaps they, too, cried out, "**Ach**! Please give me the Oppanki?" However, their silence in the reports leaves space for the reader, or in this case, Goethe, to (re)create the exact details for us, seven times over. His use of "Ach" in the ballad adds emotional depth and linguistic ambiguity. It also serves as a literary bridge towards a more universal vampire aesthetic. By giving voice to the bride's inner turmoil,

[347] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze." ibid. p. 94, line 105.

[348] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze." ibid. p. 94, lines 106-112. The English translation is mine.

Goethe transforms the flat, predatory revenant of the *Militärgrenze* into a Greek character, whose struggles resonate with a different type of reader.

In this manner, Goethe's ballad not only actualizes the potential meanings latent in earlier texts but also expands the "repertoire" of the vampire figure. However, this raises the question of whether this transformation represents a complete break from the bureaucratic and historical cases that preceded it. Is there a recognizable Habsburg "schematic view" in Goethe's ballad, and do these texts operate within the same "repertoire," as defined by Iser? In continuation, to address these questions, I will examine the elements that constitute the vampire aesthetic world in Goethe's ballad, just as I did with Frombald's "Copia Eines Schreibens."

a) Dichotomy of the Known and Unknown

In analyzing Frombald's text, I defined the dichotomy between the known and the unknown as a relationship evident to readers, where narrators oscillate between the facts presented to them and an uncomfortable fictionality they cannot explain. In Frombald's report, published in the *Wienerisches Diarium* in 1725, this dichotomy was presented around elements the narrator could present as "Inditia" and elements that appeared to him and that, although incredible, actually occurred ("Spectacul"). In Frombald, facts such as the name of the village or local linguistic elements were "observed" ("bemerken" in German), while the "Spectacul" elements were seen ("sehen" in German, which is presented to the senses and therefore considered less reliable). We concluded that what makes "Copia eines Schreibens" extremely important—and perhaps what also brought it

so much attention - is the shift from a supposed medico-legal role into a literary narrative, transitioning from the known and verifiable to the domain of the unknown and bewildering.

In Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth," the interplay between the known and the unknown is hinted at in the very first lines. The ballad opens with a young man who traveled from Athens to Corinth, where he is "still unknown" ("noch unbekannt"[349]). Although he hopes to be welcomed by its citizens ("einen Bürger hofft er sich gewogen"[350]), unlike Frombald, he does not occupy an institutional function that would precede him or make him known. He has no authority. The emphasis on the youth being "*still* unknown," which plays in tandem with his status as "*still* a heathen" ("noch ein Heide"[351]), anticipates not only a development of character and narrative but also hints at something deeper. Within the context of the ballad, not being a Christian conveys a form of social invisibility and a lack of factual recognition. There is tension between the youth's aspirations and his current status as an outsider. His lack of social and religious affiliation renders him, in a sense, invisible to the new order of Corinth, just as the "Spectacul" elements in Frombald's report were deemed less factual, invisible to the eyes of the Habsburg institution.

The theme of the stranger in an unknown land would become a recurring motif in vampire literature. In Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), for example, Jonathan Harker finds

[349] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze." ibid. p. 88, line 2.

[350] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze." ibid. p. 88, line 3.

[351] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze." ibid. p. 88, line 10.

himself in the unfamiliar landscape of Transylvania, remarking on his journey, "The impression I had was that we were leaving the West and entering the East; the most western of splendid bridges over the Danube, which is here of noble width and depth, took us among the traditions of Turkish rule."[352] It is telling, and perhaps not a coincidence, that Stoker uses this reference. Frombald's report in 1725 already sketched the vampire as a creature of the old "Turkish times" ("Türckischen Zeiten"[353]), encompassing a monolithic interpretation of the Ottoman Empire as a hermetic and dangerous unknown. Similarly, in Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872), another canonical example of vampire literature, Laura and her father are newcomers to a remote castle in Styria, where they are preyed upon by an old vampire. In the first chapter of the novel, Laura describes their isolated dwelling as "a very lonely place (...) The nearest inhabited schloss of any historic associations, is that of old General Spielsdorf, nearly twenty miles away to the right."[354]

In all these examples, and more so in "Die Braut von Corinth," the protagonist's journey is not merely geographical but also signals a transgression between the familiar and the unfamiliar. The groom in Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth" travels purposefully to a specific destination, yet harbors doubts about how the family's recent conversion to Christianity might affect his arranged marriage. This fear of a massive yet unknown phenomenon echoes a sentiment expressed by Dorothea in Goethe's contemporaneous epic

[352] Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. London: Penguin Classics, 2003, p. 13.

[353] Anon. "Copia Eines Schreibens," ibid.

[354] Le Fanu, Sheridan. "Carmilla." 1872. Uploaded and available online at *The Project Gutenberg:* https://www.gutenberg.org/files/10007/10007-h/10007-h.htm (3/24/2024).

poem, “Hermann und Dorothea” (1797). In this example, Dorothea’s thoughts on the French Revolution parallel those of the bride regarding the massive conversion of Corinth to Christianity. Both events are depicted as all-leveling, incomprehensible forces capable of upending previous, happier ways of life.

In this vein, the “Braut” encompasses the world of Greek paganism as a familiar, sensual realm characterized by simple pleasures and transactional relationships. The groom invokes the pagan gods Ceres, Bacchus, and Amor when offering his promised bride food, drink, and love: “Here is Ceres/ here is Bacchus' offering/ And you bring the Amor, dear child.”[355] In stark contrast, Christianity is depicted as a disruptive, alien force that displaces the old gods and undermines the couple’s betrothal. The bride’s mother’s adherence to Christianity is described as a “sick delusion,” a “mania” (“kranken Wahn”),[356] and the arrival of the new faith is said to have “emptied the quiet house” of the “colorful throng of the old gods” (“Und der alten Götter bunt Gewimmel/ Hat sogleich das stille Haus geleert”)[357]. Similarly, in “Hermann und Dorothea,” the Revolution is portrayed as a catastrophic event that “melts away the gold and silver from the old, sacred forms.”[358] The

[355] “Hier ist Ceres, hier ist Bacchus Gabe, / Und du bringst den Amor, liebes Kind” in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. “Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze.” ibid. p. 90, lines 45-46.

[356] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. “Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze.” ibid. p. 91, line 53.

[357] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. “Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze.” ibid. p. 91, line 58.

[358] “Gold und Silber schmilzt aus den alten heiligen Formen” cited from the German version of Project Gutenberg: Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. “Hermann und Dorothea.” *Projekt Gutenberg-DE,* 2021, https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/goethe/hermann/hermann9.html (3/24/2024).

political upheaval dissolves the familiar structures of society, just as the arrival of Christianity in "Die Braut" erases the couple's pagan frame of reference.

However, unlike the linear, binary set of references presented in Frombald's report, the interplay between the known and the unknown in the "Braut" is highly dynamic. Goethe's perspective is similar to Frombald's "Spectacul" category and gives voice to the wordless vampires, formerly described from the "Inditia" perspective. This shift reveals a crucial insight: in Goethe's narrative, being a vampire is not merely a consequence of an infection or some particular physiological affliction, as in the case of the Habsburg texts. Instead, vampirism becomes the direct effect of one's *identity* being dissolved or annihilated. The characters are vampirized not because they lose control over their bodies but because they lose their familiar contexts and because their sense of themselves is eroded.

This idea is exemplified in the introduction of the bride, who is first presented to both the reader and the protagonist as "a rare guest" ("ein seltner Gast"[359]). The use of the word "seltner" is significant, as it suggests that the bride has become a sort of strange familiarity in her own house and that her identity has been changed. The contrast is evident: the youth is presented merely as a "Gast," a familiar known, while the bride is an uncanny "*seltner* Gast." She becomes conscious of this difference, and when she enters the room where the youth is almost asleep, she raises her tone and asks with astonishment, "Am I

[359] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze." ibid. p. 89, line 27.

(...) so strange ("fremd") in this house/ That I did not hear anything about the guests?"[360] Her concern is not who the guest is, but rather who she *herself* is. She scrutinizes her degree of familiarity with and within the house and, implicitly, within the Christianized Corinth.

To put this in perspective, the liminality of Frombald's 1725 vampire was determined by the connection with "Ottoman times"[361] and seemed rather obvious to the reader. To use the ballad's vocabulary, in "Copia Eines Schreibens," everyone and everything in Kisilova appeared "fremd," as the village was at the borders, somewhere in a quasi-imaginary East. However, within Frombald's framework, vampires were complete anomalies—unfamiliar unknowns—only to the eyes of the Habsburg official and to the readers from Vienna; in the village, they were strange but rather common phenomena, or, one might say, familiar unknowns. According to Frombald, the peasants had told him that such "evil spirits" ("üblen Geist") had supposedly plagued and destroyed the village even before the Austrians took control of the land in 1718.[362]

In contrast, in "Die Braut," the she-vampire is presented as an anomaly both for the reader and for the place where she originates from. By being a vampire, the bride has become an absolute, unfamiliar unknown, a "strange, rare guest" ("fremd," "seltner

[360] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze." ibid. p. 90, lines 36-37.

[361] "Türckischen Zeiten," Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens," ibid.

[362] "das gantze Dorf - wie schon unter Türckischen Zeiten geschehen seyn solte - durch solchen üblen Geist zu Grund gehen könte," Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens," ibid.

Gast"[363]), even to her own house. This sense of bewilderment and estrangement is further amplified when the bride's mother discovers what is happening and enters the room where the lovers are. The mother "sees her own child" ("**Sieht** sie, Gott! sie **sieht** ihr eigen Kind"[364]), but this moment of recognition should be interpreted in the same way that Frombald sees the "Spectacul" and the vampire elements in Kisilova in 1725. Both the mother and Frombald are taken aback by how the events turned out. They do not factually observe ("bemerken") the actual persons with absolute certainty but are absorbed in the unknown, unfamiliar scenes presented to their eyes. Frombald sees ("gesehen"), "not without astonishment" ("nicht ohne Erstaunung"[365]), fresh blood in the mouth of a corpse, while the mother, perhaps in a more amplified state of shock, beholds her own child as a vampire. Unlike in Frombald, however, the bride's transformation is not merely a physical one but a rupture in the very fabric of familial and social bonds.

In this way, Frombald's report and Goethe's ballad offer complementary perspectives on the vampire's significance in interrogating the boundaries between the known and the unknown. Nevertheless, a significant difference emerges: before the "Braut," vampires were not completely and unilaterally alienated. For educated readers in European capitals, the bloodsuckers of the *Militärgrenze* were surely an anomaly. However, they were *presented as* an accepted reality by the Eastern Europeans living in

[363] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze." ibid. p. 90, line 36; p. 89, line 27.

[364] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze." ibid. p. 96, line 147.

[365] Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens," ibid.

this imagined geography of otherness. Following this logic, the bride's mother should not have been so shocked at the sight of her pale, cadaveric daughter.

It is with Goethe that the vampiric condition is presented as an unknown, unexpected, and shocking turn of events, even for the closest kin. The vampire's alienation is no longer merely a function of geographical or cultural otherness but a deeply personal experience of loss and estrangement. Goethe shifts the focus from the external, contagious geography of the East to the internal, psychological landscape of the individual. In so doing, the ballad invites the reader to confront the unsettling possibility that *anyone* is in danger of becoming a stranger to oneself and one's world.

b) Temporal Layering

In the close reading of Frombald's text, we defined temporal layering as a narrative technique where the intradiegetic time—the events occurring within the main narrative—references episodes that allegedly happened in an extradiegetic past, a time of ancient situations that affected the main storyline. This juxtaposition connects the main narrative with a mysterious, darker timeline—sometimes a curse or a tragic event—that enriches the plot's complexity and explains the vampire's origin. In Frombald's report, albeit short, we identified no less than five different temporal layers. These range from a folkloric/metahistorical timeframe, which is hinted at through the use of the term "Vampyri," suggesting a pre-existing tradition of vampire beliefs in the region, to the extradiegetic date of the article's publication in the historical context of Vienna in 1725.

At first glance, the "Braut von Corinth" is structured around two conflicting worldviews, one encompassing ancient pagan beliefs and the other the rise of Christianity. However, as Johannes Endres highlights, this simplified, binary structure is incomplete, and "the poetic imagery of Goethe's poem hardly supports a clear-cut juxtaposition of the classical world and its supposed opposite, which are rather blending into each other to the point where they become inseparable."[366] For example, Endres continues, the final invocation of the "old gods" in the last lines of the ballad "is saturated with non-classical implications," pointing to a non-normative use of classical Greek elements.[367] Similarly, Ellis Dye, in his book, *Love and Death in Goethe: "One and Double"* (2004), also highlights that the structure of the "Braut" is extremely pluralistic and includes, among other things, "elements of early Christian history, Enlightenment militancy toward positive religion, the topos of woman as an agent of engulfment, revenants, vampires and the meaning of the Eucharist, and religious eighteenth-century millenarianism."[368] Interpreting this ambiguity in temporal terms means that the "Braut" blends at least five distinct temporal layers **(Fig. 7)**.

In chronological order, the first layer is **a) a mythical past** alluded to through the presence of the "old gods," a construction that is employed in three instances throughout

[366] Endres, Johannes. "Vampires and the Orient in Goethe's <<Die Braut von Corinth.>>" *The German Quarterly*, Spring 2020, vol. 93, no. 2, p. 206.

[367] Endres, Johannes. "Vampires and the Orient in Goethe's <<Die Braut von Corinth.>>" ibid. p. 206.

[368] Dye, Ellis. *Love and Death in Goethe: One and Double*. Rochester: Camden House, 2004, p. 42.

the ballad. Goethe also employs a **b) pre-narrative past**, referring to the backstory of the two lovers and their arranged marriage, which is introduced early in the poem. This layer is the timeline of the two fathers, who had agreed to the union when their children were very young. Furthermore, there is also a **c) immediate past**, more specifically, the time when the girl's family converted to Christianity, a timeline that also encompasses the bride's untimely death. We do not know exactly what happened or the exact cause of this tragedy, except that the bride blames her mother. The fourth layer is **d) the narrative present,** which includes the main events of the story, including the groom's arrival to Corinth, the bride's nightly visit, and their tragic reunion. All this must have happened in the course of a few hours, a period comparable to the duration of the events in Frombald's report. The fifth and last layer is **e) the implied future**, which is not only the most compelling but also another of Goethe's marks on the development of the vampire theme. More specifically, the bride's plea for her mother to burn their bodies on a funeral pyre suggests a hypothetical future event that will take place after the main narrative concludes: "Hear, mother, now the last request: / A funeral pyre you must build."[369]

[369] "Höre Mutter nun die letzte Bitte:/ Einen Scheiterhaufen schichte du,/ Oefne meine bange kleine Hütte,/ Bring in Flammen Liebende zur Ruh." in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., p. 99, lines 190-193.

Layer	Description
The Mythical Past	The ballad alludes to the ancient Greek gods and their worship, setting the stage for the conflict between paganism and Christianity
The Pre-Narrative past:	The backstory of the two lovers and their arranged marriage. Their fathers had agreed to the union when the children were young
The Immediate Past:	The girl's family converts to Christianity, leading to the bride's untimely death in mysterious circumstances. This event precedes the main narrative but has a significant impact on the story
The Narrative Present	The main events of the story, including the arrival of the youth in Corinth, the bride's nightly visit, their deadly reunion and the bride's speech
The Implied Future	The maiden's plea to her mother suggests a future event where the lovers are consumed by fire and the vampiric cycle is stopped. However, the reader doesn't know if this request is fulfilled or not

Fig. 7. Temporal layers in Goethe's "Braut von Corinth"

The implied future is a significant temporal layer in Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth" because it introduces a sense of ambiguity and uncertainty about the fate of the vampiric couple. The ballad ends without confirming whether the mother complies with the bride's request to build a funeral pyre, leaving the possibility that the vampires might not be destroyed. At the very least, the end of the vampire and the end of the actual ballad do not coincide. This stands in stark contrast to the unequivocal execution and dismemberment of vampires and revenants in Habsburg sources before Goethe. In these earlier accounts, there was absolutely no hope left for the undead, no opportunities for

further disturbances. Ádám Mézes's *Doubt and Diagnosis* (2020) includes a 20-page appendix with executed revenants, spanning from 1717 to 1755.[370] Among these, Peter Plogojowitz and Arnold Paole, the two most famous examples, were both exhumed, staked, and burned to ashes.[371]

One could argue that the narrator of Heinrich Ossenfelder's poem, popularly known as "Der Vampir" (1748), also escapes and lives to haunt other victims. Nevertheless, that is not the case: this narrator only *imagines* himself getting away with seducing, kissing, and carrying away his unconscious victim. It is also important to note that "Ossenfelder's lyrical protagonist neither is nor becomes a vampire at any point in time."[372] Furthermore, building on the work of Johannes Endres and Clemens Ruthner,[373] de Roos highlights that

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[370] Mézes, Ádám. *Doubt and diagnosis: Medical Experts and the returning dead of the southern Habsburg borderland (1718-1766)*. Central European University, PhD Dissertation, 2020, pp. 479-496.

[371] Barber, Paul. *Vampires, Burial, and Death: Folklore and Reality*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. pp. 14-17. Among the vast scholarship on the topic of revenant execution, we can mention Keyworth, David. *Troublesome Corpses: Vampires and Revenants from Antiquity to the Present*. Southend-On-Sea: Desert Island Books, 2007; Day, Peter. *Vampires: Myths and Metaphors of Enduring Evil*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006. Bräunlein, Peter. "The Frightening Borderlands of Enlightenment: The Vampire Problem." *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 2012, vol. 43, no. 3, pp. 710-719; Vermeir, Koen. "Vampires as Creatures of the Imagination: Theories of Body, Soul, and Imagination in Early Modern Vampire Tracts (1659–1755)," *Diseases of the Imagination and Imaginary Disease in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Yasmin Haskell, Turnhout: 2011, pp. 341-373. Nowosadtko, Jutta. "Der <<Vampyrus Serviensis>> und sein Habitat: Impressionen von der österreichischen Militärgrenze." *Militär und Gesellschaft in der Frühen Neuzeit*, 2004, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 151-167.

[372] Endres, Johannes. "Vampires and the Orient in Goethe's <<Die Braut von Corinth.>>" ibid. p. 215, note #1.

[373] Ruthner, Clemens. "Vampir." *Phantastik. Ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch*, edited by hans richard Brittnacher and Markus May, J.B. Metzler, 2013, pp. 493–500.

Ossenfelder's vampire theme "functions as a Halloween mask,"[374] which allows the narrator to fantasize about "toasting a glass of Tokaj (...) to the vampire's kind" and kissing his beloved "*as* a vampire."[375] Goethe's ballad is the first text that fills in the schematized views of the vampire debates of the 1730s and 1750s with the hypothetical survival of the creature. In doing so, Goethe expands the game's rules, offering the creature a speculative future that was previously unacceptable.

Such an open approach would have been unthinkable for the Habsburgs or someone like Dom Augustin Calmet, a French Benedictine monk who wrote a canonical work on the topic, *Treatise on the Apparitions of Spirits and on Vampires or Revenants of Hungary, Moravia et al.* (1751). In this work, Calmet highlights that those who fanatically believe in vampires need to find closure in destroying them: "It is said... people can only save themselves from their dangerous visits and their hauntings by exhuming them, impaling them, cutting off their heads, tearing out the heart, or burning them."[376] By extension, the

[374] Roos, Hans Corneel de. *Translation, Inspiration, Condemnation, Illustration : "The Vampire" by H. A. Ossenfelder, 1748 -2023*. Teterow: Moonlake Editions, 2023. p. 20. Available online at: https://vampvault.jimdofree.com/the-vampire-275-years/ (4/18/2024).

[375] "Und heute in Tockayer/ Zu einem Vampir trinken," Ossenfelder, Heinrich. "Mein liebes Mägdchen glaubet" in Mylius,Christlob (ed.).Der naturforscher.achtundvierzigstes Stück,leipzig, Sonnabend, den 25. des Mays, 1748, p.380. My translation is inspired by Hans Corneel de Roos's article, which proves that "(jemandem) in Tokayer zutrinken" is an old, idiomatic German expression which means "to lift a (glass of) Tockayer wine to someone's health (or raising the glass to that person while expressing some other noble wish)" in Roos, Hans Corneel de. *Translation, Inspiration, Condemnation, Illustration*, ibid. p. 11.

[376] Calmet, Augustin. Dissertations sur les apparitions des anges, des démons & des esprits et sur les revenans et vampires de Hongrie, de Boheme, de Moravie & de Silesie [Dissertations on the Apparitions of Angels, Demons & Spirits, and on the Revenants and Vampires of Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia & Silesia]. Paris, 1746.

18th century readers of vampire reports also expected to have their narratives resolved and the vampires destroyed.

Similarly, it would have also been unthinkable for someone like Christoph Fritsch and Ernst Stahl, in their *Eines Weimarischen Medici* (1732), to leave the question of the vampire's existence open-ended, as the "Braut" does. In this regard, Goethe's newly added temporal layer represents a significant departure from the Enlightenment-era discourse on vampires, preoccupied with either demystifying or ending the creature within the narrative. By leaving its future uncertain, the ballad opens up a crucial avenue for the development of the vampire figure in literature and popular culture.

This innovative approach to the creature's fate is the direct precursor to later works of Gothic literature, such as Lord Byron's "The Giaour" (1813). In this poem, the protagonist, an "infidel" in the eyes of the Ottoman Empire, is cursed by another character to become a vampire as a punishment for his actions. More specifically, the Giaour is hexed to rise from his grave after his death and prey on the blood of his lineage:

> But first, on earth, as Vampire sent,
> Thy corse shall from its tomb be rent;
> Then ghastly haunt thy native place,
> And suck the blood of all thy race,
> There from thy daughter, sister, wife,
> At midnight, drain the stream of life;
> Yet, loathe the banquet which perforce
> Must feed thy livid living corse;
> Thy victims ere they yet expire
> Shall know the dæmon for their sire[377]

[377] Byron, George Gordon, "The Giaour," *The Works of Lord Byron*, edited by Ernest Hartley Coleridge and Rowland E. Prothero, Poetry, Volume 3, Wikisource,

Like Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth," the end of Byron's poem does not provide explicit details about the Giaour's fate beyond the curse itself. The narrative concludes with an implied future, much like the bride giving her mother specific instructions regarding her funeral pyre. The Giaour requests to be buried "with the humblest dead"[378] in an unmarked grave, leaving the reader to speculate about his ultimate fate—whether he truly dies or continues to exist as a vampire, given the nature of the curse.

However, the final stanza of Goethe's ballad adds another aspect to the discussion that is not present in Byron's poem. In her plea, the bride suggests that when she and her lover are consumed by fire, they will return to the "old gods," where their promised wedding still holds true, unlike the Giaour, who is cursed to wander the earth in a linear progression—consuming blood and persisting in time until someone buries him in an unmarked grave—the bride longs to return to a beginning, a *topos* where her marriage was valid and where the pagan gods still reign. This cyclical notion of time, where the suggestion of death leads not to an end but to a return to a previous state or existence, is in striking contrast with Byron's, or later Bram Stoker's, more linear portrayals.

The sparks of Goethe's pyre - if they come into being, supposedly hurry the lovers back to the old gods. This sort of recurrence seems to happen to *all* the temporal layers in Goethe's ballad, as they are caught within a cyclical pattern. For example, the arranged

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Works_of_Lord_Byron_(ed._Coleridge,_Prothero)/Poetry/Volume_3/The_Giaour (4/19/2024), pp. 121-122, lines 755-764.

[378] Byron, George Gordon, "The Giaour," ibid. p.144, line 1325.

union of the pre-narrative past, although disrupted by the family's conversion to Christianity, is reasserted and fulfilled in the narrative present when the youth makes love to the bride:

Liebe schließet fester sie zusammen,
Thränen mischen sich in ihre Lust,
Gierig saugt sie seines Mundes Flammen
Eins ist nur im andern sich bewußt

"Love closes them together more tightly,
Tears mingle with their pleasure;
Greedily she sucks the flames of his mouth,
One is only aware of itself in the other."[379]

Similarly, the layer of the immediate past, in which the bride dies, is echoed in the narrative present through her return as a revenant. Furthermore, with the alleged consummation by fire, the vampire's second death becomes a ritualized repetition of her first one, also hinting towards a cyclical pattern. In this way, Goethe imbues his ballad with a sense of the interconnectedness of all things, suggesting that even the most seemingly disparate elements—paganism and Christianity, life and death, past and present—are constituents of a greater, recurring whole.

Is this cyclical temporal framework unique to the "Braut," or can it be found in other of Goethe's ideas? A closer examination suggests that he was deeply engaged with cyclicality as a fundamental process in nature, culture, and the human experience. A notable example is his *Theory of Colors* (*Zur Farbenlehre*, 1810), a text that explores the

[379] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., p. 95, lines 120-123.

nature of color in relation to its emotional perception. This work strongly emphasizes polarity and the cyclical interplay of opposites, seeing colors as arising from the dynamic interaction of light and darkness. More specifically, different colors emerge as light darkens into shadow or darkness lightens into brightness, a process that generates a continual, cyclical transformation.[380]

Unsurprisingly, Goethe arranged the core principles of his color theory in a circle, with complementary colors positioned opposite each other. This circular representation of interconnected binaries reflects his belief that "to divide the united, to unite the divided, is the life of nature; this is the eternal systole and diastole, the eternal collapsion and expansion, the inspiration and expiration of the world in which we live and move."[381] The notion of a harmonious, cyclical interplay between opposites is further emphasized in his statement that "every treatise on the harmonious combination of colors contains the diagram of the chromatic circle, more or less elaborately constructed."[382]

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[380] For a more substantial and focused analysis, see Portmann, Adolf. "Goethe and the Concept of Metamorphosis." *Goethe and the Sciences: A Reappraisal* . Ed. Frederick Amrine, Francis J. Zucker, and Harvey Wheeler. Boston: Reidel Publishing Co., 1987, pp. 133–45; Sepper, Dennis. *Goethe contra Newton: Polemics and the Project for a New Science of Color*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988; Amrine, Frederick. "The Metamorphosis of the Scientist." *Goethe Yearbook*, 1990, no. 5, pp. 187–212; Ribe, Neil; Friedrich Steinle. "Exploratory Experimentation: Goethe, Land, and Color Theory." *Physics Today*, 2002, July, pp. 43–47; Robbins, Brent. "New Organs of Perception Goethean Science as a Cultural Therapeutics." Janus Head, 2005, vol. 8, no.1, pp. 113-126.

[381] I have used Charles Lock Eastlake's translation: Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Goethe's Theory of Colours*. London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1840, available online at *The Project Gutenberg*: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/50572/50572-0.txt (4/21/2024).

[382] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Goethe's Theory of Colours*. Ibid.

This cyclical perspective, so vividly expressed in the *Theory of Colors*, resonates strongly with the temporal framework of the "Braut." The layers of the ballad circle back on each other, just as the colors in Goethe's theory emerge from the dynamic interplay of opposites within a continuous circle. Building on this resonance, I want to highlight that Goethe not only introduced the possibility of a vampiric future within the Habsburg schematic view but also hinted that this *future* itself is just a reiteration of the past.

The theme of the cyclical time of the vampire is further developed, for example, in Sheridan Le Fanu's novella *Carmilla* (1872). The titular vampire, Mircalla, Countess Karnstein, is repeatedly encountered across centuries, taking on different names that serve as anagrams of her true identity. Furthermore, the recurring portrait of Mircalla, which bears a striking resemblance to Carmilla, also serves as a visual representation of the vampire's repetitive existence, first hinted at in the "Braut." In this vein, the bride's nightly visit to her lover could also be seen as a temporal anagram, where the normative order of events (love, marriage, then death) is rearranged into a new, vampiric sequence (love, death, then marriage).

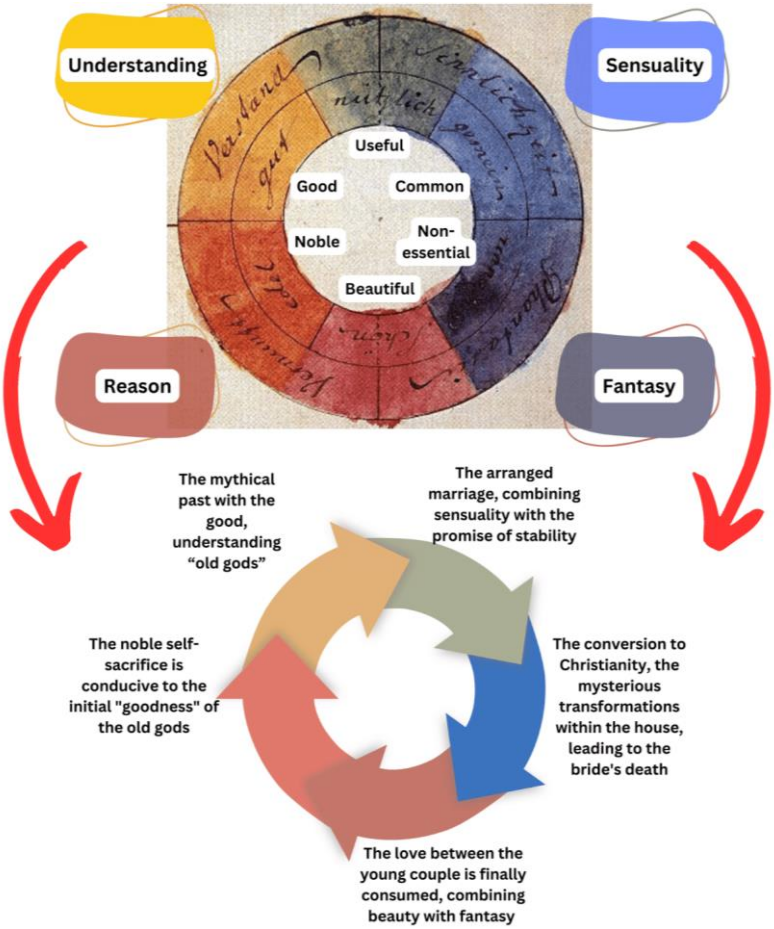

Fig. 8. Applying Goethe's "Circle of Colors Symbolizing the Human Spirit" (1809) to the "Bride of Corinth" (1797). © The circle has been adapted from the original watercolor presently at *Freies Deutsches Hochstift – Frankfurter Goethe-Museum*.

If we compare the cyclical timeline in "Die Braut von Corinth" with the famous circle of colors in Goethe's *Theory of Colors*, we can draw some intriguing correspondences (**Fig. 8**). The mythical past, with its focus on the Greek gods and their simplicity, could be associated with the color yellow, which in Goethe's circle is correlated with "good" ("Gut") and "understanding" ("Verstand.") This connection suggests that the pagan past, while lacking in complexity, is characterized by fundamental harmony and intelligibility. Moving forward in the ballad's timeline, the arranged marriage between the

two youths, agreed upon by their fathers, can be seen as a transition from the yellow of understanding to the green and light blue of "usefulness" ("Nützlich") "sensuality" ("Sinnlichkeit") and "commonality" ("Gemein"). In Goethe's system, these colors are associated with the social aspects of life, attributes that aptly describe the concept of marriage as a union based on mutual benefit and shared experience.

Continuing with this parallelism, the mother's conversion to Christianity, which led to the bride's first death, would correspond to violet. This color is correlated with the domain of "fantasy" ("Phantasie") and symbolizes the "non-essential"/"superfluous" ("Unnöthig" in the original) - which fits with how the bride angrily describes her mother's dedication to her new religion:

Eurer Priester summende Gesänge,
Und ihr Segen haben kein Gewicht;
Salz und Wasser kühlt
Nicht wo Jugend fühlt,
Ach die Erde kühlt die Liebe nicht.

"Your priests' humming songs,
And their blessings have no weight;
Salt and water cannot cool
What the youth feels,
Ah, the earth does not cool love down."[383]

Moving forward, the narrative present, where the love between the young couple is finally consummated, aligns with red. Goethe associates this color with "beautiful" ("schön") and places it in a liminal space that combines elements of both "fantasy" ("Phantasie") and "reason" ("Vernunft"). This correspondence underscores the

[383] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., p. 97, lines 164-168.

transformative nature of the vampiric union, which bridges the realms of the imaginative and the rational. Finally, the implied future and the notion of self-sacrifice through the funeral pyre would correspond with "light red." This shade is associated with "nobility" ("Edel") and the "goodness" ("Gut") of the initial yellow. Consequently, the bride's ultimate fate, aligned with these attributes, suggests a sense of transcendence and purification.

By mapping the key moments of the ballad onto Goethe's color wheel, we can discern a cyclical progression that mirrors the poem's themes of transition and renewal. The vampiric act itself, encompassed in the consummation of the lovers' passion, is linked to the vibrant red and suggests an intense transformation. In contrast to earlier Habsburg texts, which portrayed vampirism as a terrifying affliction to be eradicated through violent means, Goethe's treatment of the theme is more nuanced. While acknowledging the disruptive and transgressive nature of vampirism, the ballad also presents it as a source of renewal, a challenge to oppressive strictures imposed by a life-denying faith. The vampire bride is not merely an *end* but a promise of a future beyond the grave, a cyclical return to a more primal, authentic mode of being. Within this framework, Christianity not only cuts short the bride's life and promise of happiness but also disrupts the colorful cycle of life itself, represented by the pagan gods and the sensual vitality they embody. The true threat, then, is not the vampire bride; she is endowed with a sense of agency and remorse that her

mother seems to lack[384]. The real threat is the stifling, monochromatic dogmatism that seeks to suppress the cyclical nature of existence and the regenerative power of nature.

c) Narratorial Displacement

Another crucial element in the vampire aesthetic world is what I refer to as "narratorial displacement." In analyzing Frombald's "Copia eines Schreibens," I argued that this displacement encompasses situations where the narrators of vampire texts find themselves in unfamiliar environments. The new setting, while often geographical, is also imbued with uncanny cultural characteristics that threaten the physical existence of the characters. Among others, this displacement can manifest as a loss of agency (Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, 1897), a questioning of one's sanity (Guy de Maupassant's *The Horla*, 1887), or a blurring of the lines between reality and nightmare (as in the TV series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, 1997-2003).

It is important to signal that the concepts of narratorial displacement and liminality are closely related but not identical. Liminality encompasses the in-between *topoi* where characters or entities are "neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial."[385] While both concepts deal with states of transition, narratorial displacement focuses more on the character's *subjective experience* of disorientation or alienation in an unfamiliar setting. Liminality

[384] Endres, Johannes. "Vampires and the Orient in Goethe's <<Die Braut von Corinth.>>" ibid. p. 211.

[385] Turner, Victor. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. New Brunswick & London: Aldine Transaction, 1969, p. 95.

can encompass narratorial displacement but in a more general way, and refers to the *objective state of being* between already crystalized identities. To illustrate this with an example, in Murnau's film *Nosferatu – Eine Symphonie des Grauens* (1922), Hutter's journey to Orlok's castle in Transylvania represents a crossing into an unfamiliar realm where he is displaced, both geographically and culturally. Count Orlok, on the other hand, although a vampire who occupies a liminal state - no longer human but not fully undead, finds himself within his own ancestral home. Within that specific moment in the narrative, Nosferatu is liminal but not displaced, while Hutter is displaced but not liminal. It is also significant that, in the moment when Count Orlok himself becomes displaced and exposed to the sunlight in his new home in Wisborg, he is instantly destroyed.

Fig. 9. (Left) Count Orlok in Transylvania under a Gothic arch, still undisplaced**.** (Right) Count Orlok, now displaced in Wisborg, symbolically exposed under a modern window. © https://www.framerated.co.uk/nosferatu-1922/

While the narrator in Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth" is not directly displaced in the same manner as the characters in works by Murnau, Stoker, or Frombald, the same theme still plays a significant role in the ballad, albeit in a more metaphorical and thematic sense. Unlike these other works, where the narrators are characters within the story, Goethe employs an omniscient third-person narrator who is not involved in the narrative's events. This voice provides a bird's-eye view of the story, moving between different characters' perspectives and offering insights into their thoughts and motivations. As Wolfgang Iser argues in *The Act of Reading* (1987), the meaning of a literary text emerges from the convergence of different perspectives, including those of the narrator, characters, plot, and fictitious readers[386]. In this vein, Goethe "fills in the narrative gaps" by presenting the displacement experienced by the characters themselves, a departure from the unilateral and voiceless depiction of displacement in the Habsburg texts.

For instance, the young man from Athens is displaced when he arrives in Corinth, a city that has undergone a religious and cultural shift since his betrothal to the bride. He is confronted with new beliefs and practices that clash with his pagan background, creating a sense of disorientation and alienation reminiscent of Frombald's arrival in Kisilova or Hutter's experience in *Nosferatu*. Similarly, the bride herself is a figure of displacement, physically caught between the world of the living and the dead, between her pagan past

[386] Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading. A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1987, p. 35.

and her family's Christian present: "Am I, she cried, such a stranger in the house/ that I did not hear of the guest?"[387]

It is not a coincidence that "The Bride of Corinth," Frombald's "Copia Eines Schreibens," and *Dracula* begin in a similar manner, with references to movement and change. This seems to be a staple characteristic in vampire literature. The first word of Frombald's report is "nachdeme," which, although functioning as a temporal conjunction meaning "after," also implies a sense of transition and movement. This opening phrase, "*After* [Nachdeme] just 10 weeks after his passing, a subject residing in the village of Kisolova, Rahmer District, named Peter Plogojoviz…"[388] not only situates the readers in a specific time and place but also invites them into a context over which neither they nor the characters have control.

To a certain degree, this implied limitation of the new context resembles Mikhail Bakhtin's description of Rabelais' characters within the chronotope of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (1532-1564). For these representatives of their own, enclosed worlds, "monks, religious fanatics, feudal lords and royal courtiers, kings (...), judges, pedants and others," there is "no freedom to be found in them, no further potential."[389] However, unlike this

[387] "Bin ich, rief sie aus, so fremd im Hause Daß ich von dem Gaste nicht vernahm?," in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., p. 90, lines 36-37.

[388] "Nachdeme bereits vor 10. Wochen ein in dem Dorf Kisolova, Rahmer-District, gesessener Unterthan / Namens Peter Plogojoviz, mit Tod abgegangen" in Anon, "Copia eines Schreibens," Ibid.

[389] Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. (ed. Michael Holquist). Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981, p. 241.

unilateral, exhausted dimensionality, which Bakhtin attributes to the limitations of language, the displacement in vampire literature is conducive to a moment of crisis and leads to unpredictable developments.

More specifically, although the protagonists become involved in events whose origins have already transpired, such as the death of the villagers in Kisilova or the conversion of the bride's family in Corinth, they do not remain unchanged by their experiences, as Rabelais' monks would. Frombald, for instance, ventures to the cemetery alongside an Orthodox priest, where he discovers that the rumors regarding vampires are, in his own words, *true*.[390] This encounter with the unfamiliar forced him to confront and reassess his preconceived notions and his language surrounding the nature of life and death. Similarly, the groom's doubts and worries at the beginning of "Die Braut von Corinth" were not only confirmed, but the events took a completely unexpected turn: "But will he be also welcomed/ (...) He and his people are still heathens/ And they [the bride's family] are already Christians and baptized…"[391]

In both cases, the protagonists' displacement and confrontation with the vampire serve as catalysts for something else, including the reader's imaginative development. If

[390] "(...)habe mich mit Zuziehung des Gradisker Poppen in benanntes Dorf Kisolova begeben / den bereits ausgegrabenen Cörper des Peter Plogojoviz besichtiget / und gründlicher Wahrheit gemäß folgendes befunden:..." in Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens," ibid.

[391] "Aber wird er auch willkommen scheinen (...) Er ist noch ein Heide mit den Seinen, Und sie sind schon Christen und getauft." in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., p. 88, lines 8; 10-11.

Rabelais' monks "eat not to live, but live to eat,"[392] the vampire's need for blood in Frombald and Goethe is not simple appetite, nor gluttony, but related to complex issues of identity, repressed desires, and religious upheaval. Even in Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976), although Lestat initially seems a shameless predator that surrenders his reason and humanity to base instincts, Louis, who is actually his victim, explains that there is something more complex at work: "Being a vampire for him [Lestat] meant revenge (...) against life itself."[393] Lestat did not "love the thing for itself,"[394] but was driven by resentment and anger towards the mortal condition. Just like Goethe's bride and, to a certain degree, Frombald's Plojowitz, Lestat's appetite for blood is a psychological hunger rooted in his inability to come to terms with his own vampiric existence.

If the first word of Frombald's report is "nachdeme" ("after"), the first word of Goethe's "Braut" is "nach," ("Towards"), which refers not only to the geographical movement of the groom but also symbolizes the passage from the known to the unknown, from the pagan Athens to Corinth, a city besieged by the new, Christian faith. One of the main differences is that, while Frombald's report focuses on the temporal aspect of the transition ("After just 10 weeks…"), Goethe's ballad emphasizes its geographical dimension. The groom is acutely aware of the strangeness resulting from this displacement, too. In addition to his initial worries that the girl's family would not accept him, when

[392] Bakhtin citing Francois Rabelais in Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. (ed. Michael Holquist). Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981, p. 184.

[393] Rice, Anne. *The Vampire Chronicles*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988, p. 45.

[394] Rice, Anne. *The Vampire Chronicles*. Ibid.

negotiating with his beloved, he insists on bringing her back with him in Athens: "You are not lost to joy and to me,/ Come with me to my father's house."[395] These lines highlight not only the general tradition of the bride living with the groom's family but also the spatial negotiation between the characters. Immediately after his invitation, the bride seems to consciously set a trap: "Darling, stay here,/ Celebrate with me/ Our unexpected wedding feast."[396]

This insistence on staying in Corinth and celebrating in her own house may be a form of self-preservation, akin to Count Orlok's attachment to his castle in Murnau's *Nosferatu*. Although she exists in a liminal state, haunting the rooms of her home, in Corinth she remains undisplaced, physically close to her final resting place, which she associates with a cloister cell: "Ah! This is how I am kept in my cell!" ("Ach! so hält man mich in meiner Klause!"[397]). This connection to the grave will become a recurring motif in vampire literature, as seen, for example, in Dracula's attachment to coffins filled with his native soil.

Observing this pattern, Bram Stoker's novel also begins with a direct reference to the mobility and displacement of the narrator. More specifically, the first word of Jonathan Harker's journal is "left," the past tense conjugation of the verb "to leave:"

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[395] "Bist der Freude nicht und mir verlohren,/ Kommst mit mir in meines Vaters Haus." in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., p. 92, lines 80-81.

[396] "Liebchen bleibe hier,/ Feyre gleich mit mir/ Unerwartet unsern Hochzeitschmaus." in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., p. 92, lines 82-84.

[397] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., p. 90, line 38.

Left Munich at 8:35 p.m. on 1st May, arriving at Vienna early next morning; should have arrived at 6:46, but train was an hour late (...) The impression I had was that we were leaving the West and entering the East; the most Western of splendid bridges over the Danube, which is here of noble width and depth, took us among the traditions of Turkish rule.[398]

On the one hand, beginning with a verb gives the reader the impression that the narrator is in a hurry. We are told this is a diary kept in shorthand, which lends the text a sense of spontaneity, naturalness, and authenticity. On the other hand, it also references the previous vampire schematic views. Goethe's first lines, "Nach Corinthus von Athen gezogen/ Kam ein Jüngling, dort noch unbekannt" ("To Corinth from Athens came a youth/ As yet unknown in that city"[399]), could be very well applied to the beginning of Stoker's novel: "Nach Bistriz von London gezogen/ Kam ein Jüngling, dort noch unbekannt" ("To Bistritz from London came a youth/ As yet unknown in that city").

d) Goethe's "Braut:" More than Mortuary Paraphernalia

Mortuary imagery and paraphernalia are another constitutive element in the vampire genre. However, as previously mentioned, the prevalence of sometimes luxurious mortuary elements, such as Anne Rice's opulent coffins or the lavish mausoleums in the *Underworld* film series, are rather late embellishments. They are designed to shock and entice the readers and have little in common with the historical reality surrounding the blood-sucking revenant cases in 18th-century Habsburg villages. In fact, the vampires of the Habsburg texts were destitute, illiterate, and rather carnal, a far cry from the aristocratic

[398] Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. London: Penguin Classics, 2003, p. 13.

[399] In Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., p. 88, lines 1-2.

undead that populates much of modern vampire fiction. This discrepancy raises some questions: where do these extravagant mortuary elements come from? What else has been added and is now regarded as a staple element of the genre?

As analyzed in the previous chapter, the constitutive aspect of Frombald's report is examining an exhumed body. The text underlines that the grave was not emitting any odor, that the organs were fresh and some even regenerated, that there was fresh blood in the mouth of the unearthed body, and that the villagers had to execute the vampire by using an improvised wooden stake. Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth" echoes several of these elements, albeit in a more metaphorical and poetic manner.

For example, while the ballad does not feature a literal exhumation scene, the bride's return from the grave and her nightly visitation to the groom's chamber evoke the same sense of a returning revenant without proper decomposition. The bride's description of herself as being kept in a "cloister cell" ("Klause") and her pale, cold appearance suggests that her body has been preserved in death, much like the fresh organs of Plogojowitz in Frombald's report.[400] However, unlike the grotesque corpse in the Habsburg account, the bride's appearance is still alluring enough to entice her lover and make him beg for her to stay. Even more, the bride's body seems to have gained sex appeal in death. The narrator implies that he had observed her unnatural hue, but he interpreted it as the effect of fear or surprise:

[400] In Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., pp. 90, 92, lines 38; 73.

Bist für Schrecken blaß,
Liebe komm und laß
Laß uns sehn, wie froh die Götter sind.

"You are pale with fright,
Love, come and let
Let us see how happy the gods are."[401]

The groom's misinterpretation of the bride's pallor as a sign of emotional distress rather than a marker of her undead state underscores how blurred the lines between the living and the dead, the natural and the supernatural, are in the ballad. This confusion would not happen very easily in the case of the Habsburg "Vampyri." While Frombald's report and the subsequent *Eines Weimarischen Medici* present the vampire's body as a clear object of analysis, horror, or revulsion, Goethe imbues his revenant with a sense of tragic beauty and forbidden desire. She still displays the mortuary elements of the genre, but they are aesthetically transformed to the point of becoming desirable.

Another mortuary element that Goethe's ballad enhanced is the depth and symbolism of the vampire's garments, which were completely left for speculation in Frombald's text. The bride is introduced as wearing "a white veil and garments," and her head is wrapped with "a black and golden band."[402] While the specific practice of wrapping a head in a black and gold band is not a documented common funerary practice in Goethe's time, it may draw from classical traditions where the deceased were adorned with diadems

[401] My translation from Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid. p. 90, lines 47-49.

[402] In Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid. 89, lines 30, 32.

of gold, laurel, or myrtle to signify their status and accomplishments.[403] The ancient funerary remains in the Aegean, Greece, and Southeast Europe, from the Early Bronze Age (14th-9th centuries BC) until the late Roman period, indicate that funerary headbands were primarily worn by "young women, or ese children, who have not attained a critical rite de passage: marriage. In their funerary attire [where the diadems occupied a central role], they go to the grave as brides, married to death."[404]

Additionally, we must consider Goethe's familiarity with Classical Antiquity. In addition to his Italian journey and his admiration for Winckelmann, he was an enthusiastic devotee of travel accounts, such as Nicholas Revett's *The Antiquities of Athens* (1762), and also a devourer of classical literature, including Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which in many scenes describe heroic funerary rites. For example, Book 24 of the *Iliad* features an extended description of Hector's funeral preparations, which might have influenced the bride's attire in "Die Braut von Corinth." More specifically, the combination of black and gold in the bride's headband is particularly reminiscent of a passage where the Trojans take Hector's bones and

> "Place them in a golden larnax (a golden funerary box),
> And cover them with heavy, purple cloth."

[403] Jeffreys, Rosemary A. "Gilded Wreaths from the Late Classical and Hellenistic Periods in the Greek World." *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, 2022, no. 117, pp. 229–261.

[404] Papadopoulos, John. "The bronze headbands of Prehistoric Lofkënd and their Aegean and Balkan connections. Opuscula." Annual of teh Swedish Institutes at Athens and Rome, 2010, no.3, p. 33. Also see on the topic Furtwängler, Adolf. *Olympia IV. Die bronze und die übrigen kleineren Funde*. Berlin: Asher, 1890; Gimbutas, Marija. *Bronze Age Cultures in Central and Eastern Europe*. Den Haag: Mouton, 1965; Danforth, Loring. *The Death Rituals of Rural Greece*. Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1982; Garland, Robert. *The Greek Way of Death*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.

καὶ τά γε χρυσείην ἐς λάρνακα θῆκαν ἑλόντες
πορφυρέοις πέπλοισι καλύψαντες μαλακοῖσιν.[405]

According to Walter Leaf's *Commentary on the Iliad* (1900), this dark covering was placed over the golden box, not wrapped around the bones inside it[406]. This created a visible contrast between the gleaming gold and the somber purple, similar to the juxtaposition of black and gold in the bride's headband in the "Braut" **(Fig.10)**.

Fig. 10. Ancient Greek gold funerary headband which originally must have been attached to a textile, adjusting piece, circa 323-31 B.C.
© https://www.antiquities.co.uk/shop/ancient-jewellery/ancient-greek-gold-funerary-headband/

Another heroic, diadem-wearing figure from Ancient Greece is Olympias, the mother of Alexander the Great, whose marble statue by Wilhelm Beyer has adorned the Schönbrunn Palace since 1779. This sculpture depicts a pivotal moment before one of Alexander's battles against the Persians when Olympias confesses that his true father is

[405] My translation from the text available on *The Perseus Digital Library*, Homer. *Iliad*. Book 24, lines 795-796: http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0012.tlg001.perseus-grc1:24 (4/28/2024).

[406] Leaf, Walter (ed.) *Homer. The Iliad. With Apparatus Criticus, Prolegomena, Notes, and Appendices*. London: Macmillan & Co., 1902, vol. 2, p. 593. Also see pages 594-599 which Leaf dedicates to "On Women Dress in Homer."

none other than Zeus. In the statue, Olympias wears a two-piece attire reminiscent of the bride's "white veil and garment" ("mit weißem Schleier und Gewand"[407]), while Alexander dons a battle helmet typical of Athenian youth, much like the groom in the ballad would have worn at war **(Fig.11)**.

Fig. 11. Left: Alexander and Olympias, marble statuary group at Schönbrunn Palace, Wilhelm Beyer, 1779. Right: "The Bride of Corinth," steel engraving after W. Kaulbach, 1888.
© https://www.schoenbrunn.at/
© https://www.oblivion-art.de/

The thematic background of Beyer's statuary group also bears similarities to Goethe's ballad. Both works highlight the idea of mythological parentage shaping the destinies of younger characters: the youth were promised to each other by their fathers, who "had declared them bride and groom from very early on" ("Hatten frühe schon/

[407] In Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid. 89, line 30.

Töchterchen und Sohn/ Braut und Bräutigam, in Ernst, genannt."[408]) Furthermore, the statue and the ballad also share the motif of an absent father figure replaced by a prominent, heroic female guiding a youthful male protagonist, albeit for different reasons. As peculiar as it may seem, connections between seemingly unrelated historical figures and the vampire aesthetic thrive in contemporary communities of self-identified vampires, as John Edgar Browning's ethnographic research has shown.[409] Moreover, in 2020, Michaels Nicolson, an independent author, also published a book titled *Alexander the Great, Vampire* (2020), where the protagonist is none other than Alexander himself, who has been vampirized by Achiles and is condemned to walk the earth until 1967, "the era of free love, hippies and modern vampire clans."[410]

Closer to Goethe's ballad, the motif of a headband for the dead is also present in Schiller's "The Cranes of Ibycus" ("Die Kraniche des Ibycus. Ballade"), published in the same edition of the *Musenalmanach* as the "Braut." In this text, when the Corinthian hosts find Ibycus's naked, abandoned body, they weep and think of adorning his temples with a victorious fir wreath, as he deserved. Such a careful and honorable treatment would be unthinkable within the context of the destitute dead of the Habsburg *Militärgrenze*:

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[408] In Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid. p. 88, lines 5-7.

[409] See the Foreword to *The Palgrave Handbook of the Vampire* (ed. Simon Bacon). Palgrave Macmillan: 2024; Browning, John. "The real vampires of New Orleans and Buffalo: a research note towards comparative ethnography." *Palgrave Communications* https://doi.org/10.1057/palcomms.2015.6 ; Browning, John. "The Real Vampire Community: A Concise History," in Summers, Montague. The Vampire in Europe. A Critical Edition., ed. John Edgar Browning, Berkeley: Apocryphile Press, 2014, pp. 386-390.

[410] Nicolson, Michael. *Alexander the Great, Vampire*. Michael Nicolson: 2020, p. 5.

Und muß ich so dich wiederfinden,
Und hoffte mit der Fichte Kranz
Des Sängers Schläfe zu umwinden,
Bestrahlt von seines Ruhmes Glanz!

"And must I find you again like this?
I hoped with the fir wreath
The singer's temples to adorn,
Illuminated with the splendor of his glory!"[411]

The black and gold colors in the bride's headband are also reminiscent of the symbolic use of these hues in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. In the play, Hamlet's black attire is often contrasted with elements of gold or steel to signify both the nobility and the gravity of death. In Act I, Scene II, Hamlet describes his clothing as "inky cloak," "customary suits of solemn black," and other "forms, moods, shapes of grief."[412] In the same scene, this somber attire is juxtaposed with the celebratory garments of King Claudius and Queen Gertrude, underscoring the disparity between Hamlet's grief and the court's superficial merriment.

In this vein, the bride's black headband adorned with a precious, metallic ornament can also be connected to the ghost of Hamlet's father when it appears before the prince. Hamlet describes the specter as a "dead corse, again in complete steel" that "revisit'st thus

[411] My translation of the original: Schiller, Friedrich. "Die Kraniche des Ibycus. Ballade." *Musen-Almanach für das Jahr 1798*. Tübingen: J. G. Cotta, p.270, lines 53-56.

[412] I have used the 3rd Arden Shakespeare Edition, edited by Nei Taylor and Ann Thompson. Available online at MIT Shakespeare: https://shakespeare.mit.edu/hamlet/index.html (2/23/2024).

the glimpses of the moon,"[413] emphasizing the ghost's armor shining in the golden light of the moonlight. This luminous appearance symbolizes not only the former king's nobility but also his martial honor and the unfinished business that haunts him even in death.

The moonlight's association with undead bodies, dressed or not, also appears in Goethe's 1813 ballad, "The Dance of Death" ("Der Totentanz"). In this text, a cemetery watchman witnesses graves opening in the middle of the night as corpses emerge to dance with one another. The moon "brings everything into the light" ("Der Mond, der hat alles ins Helle gebracht"[414]) and acts as a source of power for the dancing undead who shamelessly remove their clothes, which "lie scattered over the mounds" ("da liegen zerstreut/ Die Hemdelein über den Hügeln"[415]). This eerie scene of darkness bathed in moonlight underscores a liminal temporality when the light seems to momentarily free the deceased from the constraints of their graves.

In "The Bride of Corinth," the vampire maiden also appears to be released from her captivity by light and, although not as merry as the dead in the "Totentaz," she also ends up naked. The very first time the groom - and through him, the reader - sees her is "by the glimmer of his lamp" ("bey seiner Lampe Schimmer"[416]), almost as if the maiden's destiny

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[413] Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ibid.

[414] In Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Der Totentanz." *Poetische Werke. Berliner Ausgabe*. [Band 1–16], Band 1, Berlin 1960, p. 145.

[415] In Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Der Totentanz." ibid. p. 145.

[416] In Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid. 89, line 29.

is intertwined with that of the flame. This pairing is not aleatory, as this initial scene foreshadows the funeral pyre at the ballad's end, apotheosis which is announced in the bride's cry to her mother: "Salt and water cannot cool what the youth feels!"[417] In this way, Goethe transforms the flickering lamp into a staple element of vampire aesthetics that was not prominent before. For example, in *Dracula*, Jonathan Harker - and through him, the reader - also encounters the Count by the light of a candle:

> [Within the door stood] a tall old man [...] clad in black from head to foot [like Hamlet], without a single speck of color about him anywhere. He held in his hand an antique silver lamp, in which the flame burned without chimney or globe of any kind, throwing long quivering shadows as it flickered in the draught of the open door.[418]

Moreover, the lamp's association with the vampire's ultimate fate in Goethe's ballad - the purifying funeral pyre - adds another layer of meaning. The flame that first reveals the vampire's presence also foreshadows its destruction, hinting at the inextricable link between light and darkness within nightly creatures. This idea, which is first connected to vampires through Goethe, is also echoed in his poem "Selige Sehnsucht" ("Blessed Longing," 1814), where the narrator explains existential longing as a necessary consequence for one who understands the cyclical process of life. In this text, Goethe writes that "once the silent candle lights" ("Wenn die stille Kerze leuchtet"[419]), one is immediately

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[417] In Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid. 97, lines 166-167.

[418] Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. London: Penguin Classics, 2003, p. 27.

[419] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Selige Sehnsucht." In: *Goethes Werke, Gedichte und Epen II*, Hamburger Ausgabe, C.H. Beck, München 1998, p. 18.

drawn out of the darkness of non-being and imbued with "a new tearing desire of a higher union" ("Und dich reißet neu Verlangen/ Auf zu höherer Begattung"[420]).

e) Blood and Contagion

While Frombald's "Copia Eines Schreibens" introduces blood-sucking as a means of contagion and a metaphor for societal fears, Goethe's "Braut" presents a more nuanced landscape. Notably, the ballad lacks explicit depictions of vampiric blood-sucking and instead employs metaphorical imagery. The central scene portrays a love encounter where the bride hungrily absorbs the warmth of her lover's lips ("Gierig saugt sie seines Mundes Flammen"[421]), while his passion warms her stale blood and lifeless chest ("Seine Liebeswuth / Wärmt ihr starres Blut, / Doch es schlägt kein Herz in ihrer Brust"[422]). This shift transforms blood from a physiological category laden with ethnic and political connotations into something more nuanced, with more readings. While not erasing the socio-political aspects of the Habsburg schematic views, Goethe's treatment opens the vampire narrative to themes of forbidden love, nostalgia, and intergenerational tension. Moreover, if Frombald uses blood to consistently evoke a sort of contagion and "blood" is always accompanied by the adjective "fresh," Goethe employs the blood imagery in three different instances, each with its own different meaning.

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[420] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Selige Sehnsucht." ibid.

[421] In Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid. 95, line 122.

[422] In Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid. 95, lines 124 - 126.

The first instance depicts the bride greedily drinking dark, blood-colored wine ("Gierig schlürfte sie … dunkel blutgefärbten Wein"[423]) while refusing bread ("Doch vom Waizenbrot ... Nahm sie nicht den kleinsten Bissen ein"[424]). This dietary restriction intersects with the culinary aspects of the Habsburg vampire theme and also carries potent Christian symbolism. The bride's rejection of bread, carefully prepared by her own mother, evokes both aversion to regular sustenance and the Christian communion. Paul Barber's "Forensic Pathology and the European Vampire" (1987) argues that, in some cases, those infected by vampirism would only consume bread if mixed with the blood of another vampire, preferably the one who infected them in the first place.[425]

In a similar vein, Georg Tallar, a German surgeon investigating vampire cases in the Serbian Banat in 1753, attributed vampirism exclusively to Wallachian natives, linking it to their strict Orthodox fasting practices and vegetable-heavy diet.[426] The lack of fiber

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[423] In Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid. 93, lines 94-95.

[424] In Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid. 93, lines 96-98.

[425] Barber, Paul. "Forensic Pathology and the European Vampire." *Journal of Folklore Research*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1987, p. 24. He cites Agnes Murgoci as a source. Although I did not find this specific reference in Murgoci, she has other interesting references to vampires and baked goods. For examples, in one of the stories she cites, there is a vampire in Siret who baked ten loaves of bread while preparing for a journey. Before leaving, some men entered his cottage and ate nine of them. As a token of gratitude for not leaving him completely starving, the vampire refrained from "bewitching" and killing them. See more in Murgoci, Agnes. "The Vampire in Roumania." *Folklore*, vol. 37, no. 4, 1926, p. 345.

[426] Georg Tallar's "Visum et Repertum," written in 1753 was published in 1784 in Viena and Leipzig by Johann Georg Mößle, who also added a rather harsh critique in his introduction. The original manuscript can be found as *Visum repertum anatomico chyrurgicum, oder Unterhänigst gehorsamster Summarischer Bericht. Von und über Die so genannte Vampir oder Blutsauger; Wallachischer Sprache Moroi genant.* It is currently at the Kriegsarchiv section at the Austrian State Archives (Österreichisches Staatsarchiv) in Viena. Also see Ádám Mézes's article, "Georg Tallar and the 1753 Vampire Hunt: Administration, Medicine and the Returning Dead in the

and the preference for liquids made them especially prone to becoming vampires. Interestingly, Tallar posited that the settlers in the area avoided vampirism by eating paprika, which supposedly neutralized cold, liquid foods. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* also references paprika in a dish called "paprika hendl," suggesting a continuity of these dietary associations within the vampire genre.[427] In this context, the scene of Goethe's bride greedily consuming blood-red wine not only foreshadows her thirst for blood but also aligns with the Habsburg conception of vampires as beings who prefer liquid sustenance.

The second instance of blood imagery in Goethe's ballad occurs when the lovers give into their passion: "His fiery passion/ Warms her stiff blood/ Although in her chest there is no heart beating."[428] Here, Goethe highlights the unnatural state of the bride through the adjective "starr" (stiff or rigid), which emphasizes to the reader that her blood is not ordinary. Something is going on and this description stands in contrast to a Hegelian interpretation of "universal blood" as a metaphor for the what unites mankind under a "universal notion" (der absolute Begriff).[429] Also, when read within the context of vampire

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Habsburg Banat." In: Éva Pócs (ed.): *The Magical and Sacred Medical World*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2019, pp. 93-136.

[427] "I had for dinner, or rather supper, a chicken done up some way with red pepper, which was very good but thirsty. (Mem., get recipe for Mina.) I asked the waiter, and he said it was called 'paprika hendl,'and that, as it was a national dish, I should be able to get it anywhere along the Carpathians." in Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. London: Penguin Classics, 2003, p. 13.

[428] "Seine Liebeswuth / Wärmt ihr starres Blut, / Doch es schlägt kein Herz in ihrer Brust." in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid. 95, lines 124-126.

[429] I have used A.V. Miller's translation, which reads the following: "This simple infinity, or the absolute Notion, may be called the simple essence of life, the soul of the world, the universal blood, whose omnipresence is neither disturbed nor interrupted by any difference, but rather is itself every difference, as also their supersession" in G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.

literature and Frombald's "Copia," this stiff blood presents an intriguing juxtaposition with the "fresh blood" that vampire hunters seek as evidence. More specifically, while Frombald's "Vampyri" were identified by fresh blood, Goethe's vampiric bride is characterized by her stiff blood.

However, this *contrast* should not be viewed as an antagonism but rather as an expansion in the blood schemata of the vampire. Goethe's portrayal opens up a universal concept of blood that encompasses differences, as Gil Anidjar notes: "Blood makes and marks difference, an allegedly universal difference inscribed between bloods. Considered in this manner, blood quietly traces the contours, the external and internal limits in fact, of a unique circulatory system, a system of different bloods."[430] This expanded concept of the vampire as a space of exchange not only encapsulates both life and death but also bridges the gap between Athenian and Corinthian and, by extension, between the European birthplace of the vampire and elsewhere. Furthermore, Goethe's inclusive blood symbolism has decisively influenced subsequent vampire narratives across various media. For example, in Anne Rice's *Interview with a Vampire* (1976), the vampire blood is something almost magical, able to transform other substances. The TV series *True Blood* (2008-2014) uses synthetic blood as a metaphor for social and racial integration, while Park Chan-wook's film *Thirst* (2009) blends gore themes with Catholic sacrality.

V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 100. I know that Walter Kaufmann's *Hegel: A Reinterpretation* (1988) repeatedly translates "der absolute Begriff" as "the absolute Concept."

[430] Anidjar, Gil. "Blood." *Political Concepts: A Critical Lexicon*, edited by J. M. Bernstein et al., Fordham University Press, 2018, p. 27.

The third instance of blood imagery in Goethe's ballad introduces a nuanced inversion of vampiric interaction: "From the grave, I am driven, / Still to seek the missing good, / Still to love **the already lost man**, / And to suck his heart's blood."[431] Here, the vampire bride subverts traditional roles and portrays herself as the seeker of the "lost" young man, almost forced by circumstances to suck the blood from his heart. This imagery aligns with earlier vampire schematic views that associated vampires with the chest area, as noted by Paul Barber in *Vampires, Burial, and Death: Folklore and Reality* (1988). Barber distinguishes between "folkloric vampires" who target the chest and "fictional vampires" who prefer the neck.[432] However, this dichotomy oversimplifies the complex evolution of the vampiric attacks. Early accounts, such as the 1730 Kuklina case and Flückinger's "Visum et Repertum" (1732), mention both chest attacks and neck markings, as evidenced by descriptions such as: "It was also evident that she [the victim] had a blue spot covered with bruises on the right side below her ear, the size of a finger."[433]

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[431] "Aus dem Grabe werd ich ausgetrieben, / Noch zu suchen das vermißte Gut, / Noch den schon verlohrnen Mann zu lieben, / Und zu saugen seines Herzens Blut." In Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid. 98, lines 176 - 179.

[432] Barber, Paul. *Vampires, Burial, and Death. Folklore and Reality.* New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1988, p.4.

[433] "(...) sich auch augenscheinlich gezeiget, daß sie rechter Seithen unter dem Ohr einen blauen mit Blueth unterloffenen Fleck eines Fingers lang gehabt." I am citing from Hamberger's transcription of the text in Hamberger, Klaus. *Mortuus non mordet: Dokumente zum Vampirismus 1689-1791*. Vienna: Turia und Kant, 1992, p. 54. Ádám Mézes interprets this passage as a suggesting a strangulation and not that the vampire sucked the blood through the neck, in Mézes, Ádám. *Doubt and diagnosis: Medical Experts and the returning dead of the southern Habsburg borderland (1718-1766)*. Central European University, PhD Dissertation, 2020. p.155.

Furthermore, it can be argued that Goethe's focus on the heart, rather than the neck, reflects these earlier traditions while also incorporating the Paracelsian concept of *magia posthuma*, which suggests a more metaphysical form of vampirism. In Goethe's literary context, blood transcends its physiological definition found in news articles like Frombald's *Wienerisches Diarium*, instead symbolizing the essence or life force of an individual. This also aligns with Goethe's own characterization of blood in Faust, where Mephistopheles describes it as "a very special juice" ("Blut ist ein ganz besondrer Saft"[434]). Goethe's treatment of blood and the heart in his earlier, Sturm und Drang period further illuminates this metaphysical dimension. For example, in "Neue Liebe, neues Leben," he questions his own heart as the place of a new emotional turmoil:

"Herz, mein Herz, was soll das geben?/
Was bedränget dich so sehr?
Welch ein fremdes, neues Leben!
Ich erkenne dich nicht mehr!"

"Heart, my heart, what's this about?
What oppresses you so much?
What a strange, new life!
I don't recognize you anymore!"[435]

Similarly, in "Willkommen und Abschied" (Welcome and Farewell, 1789), he explicitly links the veins with the passionate emotions in one's heart and exclaims: "What

[434] I am using the Open Source Public Domain version on *Project Gutenberg*: Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Faust: Der Tragödie erster Teil*. Project Gutenberg, 2021, https://gutenberg.org/ebooks/2229 (2/25/2022).

[435] Goethe von, Johann Wolfgang. "Neue Liebe, Neues Leben." *Goethes Liebesgedichte*. Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1912, p. 59.

fire in my veins! What passion in my heart!" ("In meinen Adern welches Feuer! In meinem Herzen welche Gluth!"[436]). Therefore, within the "Braut," the blood of the young man's heart, which the vampire seeks to suck, is not merely the physiological substance of the Habsburg schematic view but a potent symbol of passion and emotional vitality. In this regard, Goethe transforms the vampire from a purely physical threat into a metaphor for the destructive nature of passionate love and emotional connection.

[436] Goethe von, Johann Wolfgang. "Willkommen und Abschied." *Goethe's Werke. Ausgabe letzter Hand*. Stuttgart und Tübingen: J.G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1827. p. 68. Available online on public domain at: https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Willkommen_und_Abschied_(1827)

Chapter 3. Georges Soulié's "The Corpse, The Blood-Drinker"

The Vampire and its Chinese Contexts

天下事固不必實有其人，人靈之，則既靈焉矣。何以故？人心所聚，而物或托眼耳。

A thing under heaven [things in the world] does not necessarily exist in material form. If humans consider it numinous, then it is numinous. How is it so? When the human mind concentrates, a thing may materialize through the senses of the eyes and ears.[437]

Are there vampires in Chinese literature or media today? Yes, their existence is unequivocal, but their contemporary ubiquity only hints at a richer, more complex history. While the vampire has become a universal figure, it is crucial to interrogate the nuances generated through its Chinese incarnations. What cultural currents are at play when audiences engage with *Jiangshi* (殭屍) films, popularly known as the Chinese vampire films? Picture a scene from a classic *Jiangshi* movie such as Ricky Lau's *Mr. Vampire* (*Jiangshi xiansheng*, 殭屍先生): a Daoist monk locked in combat with a jumping, fanged corpse dressed in the impeccable robes of a Qing dynasty official. After a long, eventful fight, the monk slaps a sticky piece of paper on the vampire's forehead, and the monster suddenly cannot move. For Hong Kong audiences, where this film was produced in 1985,

[437] Luo Hui's translation of Pú Sōnglíng, in Zhang Youhe's 聊齋志異[會校會注會評本] (Liaozhai Zhiyi [Huì Xiào Huì Zhù Huì Píng Běn) 4 vols. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986, p. 1459, in Hui, Luo. *The Ghost of Liaozhai: Pu Songling's Ghostlore and its History of Reception.* PhD Thesis, University of Toronto, 2009, p.65. https://hdl.handle.net/1807/17472 (4/17/2024).

this might be a familiar and thrilling sight, with a clear reading. However, the same scene might seem strange for Western viewers, even exotic or kitsch **(Fig 12)**. How does this interaction between viewer and medium reflect different layers of meaning? What does it say about the cross-cultural interactions of world literature?

Fig. 12. (Left) Master Gao using a chain to hit and deflect the attacks of a vampiric ghost. **(Right)** Victims trying to remain undetected by the Jiangshi by holding their breath. From *Mr. Vampire* [*Jiangshi xiansheng*, 殭屍先生], directed by Ricky Lau, Bo Ho Film Company Ltd., et al., 1985

As Ingarden suggests, the "represented object,"[438] which Iser later reformulates as the "aesthetic object,"[439] emerges through an active process of meaning-making in the gap between the text and the reader. As readers move through a text, they are putting both the

[438] See the subchapter "Represented space and imaginational space" in Ingarden, Roman. *The Literary Work of Art*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973, pp. 222-230.

[439] "The aesthetic object signalizes its presence through the deformations of the schemata, and the reader, in recognizing these deformations, is stimulated into giving the aesthetic object its shape. It is the very insubstantiality of the aesthetic object that spurs on the reader's imagination." in Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading. A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1987, p. 92.

work and themselves into motion by "correcting" the text's "schemata."[440] When someone familiar mostly with the Western vampire genre encounters the *Jiangshi* or a Chinese ghost (*Gui*, 鬼) on page or screen, they become co-creators and fill the gaps with their own imaginations and literary experiences. In the case of the Chinese vampires, these may include earlier readings of Western vampire texts like Frombald's "Copia Eines Schreibens" (1725) or Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth" (1797). Suppose the reader is mostly familiar with the Chinese literary context. In that case, the gap *filling process will most likely include elements from Pu Songling's (蒲松齡) *Liaozhai Zhiyi* (聊齋誌異, *Records of the Strange from the Studio*, 1766), Yuan Mei's (袁枚) *Zi bu yu* (子不語, *What Confucius Would not Discuss About*, 1788), or Ju Yun's (紀昀) Yueweicaotang biji (閱微草堂筆記, *Jottings from the Thatched Abode of Close Observations*, 1800).

This chapter focuses on the gap-filling and co-creation process evident in Georges Soulié de Morant's 1913 translation of Pu Songling's (蒲松齡) story "Shi bian" (屍變, "Transforming/Changing Corpse"). When reading Soulié's 1913 translation, titled "The Corpse, The Blood-Drinker," we are simultaneously immersed in various contexts and cultural layers, each contributing to the creation of the Chinese vampire. Rather than a mere translation from one language to another or an adaptation of a cultural element to another context, Soulié's short story sets the stage for a new type of vampire, a creature that did

[440] "Herein lies the particular function of the literary schemata—in themselves they are elements of the text, and yet they are neither aspect nor part of the aesthetic object." in Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading. A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, ibid. pp. 92-92.

not exist before, which later inspired the bloodthirsty *Jiangshi* (殭屍) of the Hong Kong cinema.

This new monster, as authentically Chinese as Goethe's vampiric bride is Greek, is a potent tool for exploring the concept of worldliness in World Literature. In this regard, it is useful to draw a parallel between the vampire as a tool of World Literature and Goethe's vision of Poetry as a *Gemeingut der Menschheit* ("a common property/a common good of mankind"[441]). The main difference would be that the vampire has a more crystallized structure than something as undefined as "Poesie" ("Poetry"), and the origins of its schemata can be traced back to the Habsburg texts. Otherwise, its plurality and ubiquity evade what Mani Venkat regards as the "concrete political, historical, and social realities"[442] that usually shape the interpretation of World Literature. Furthermore, approaching World Literature through the vampire also highlights the reader's individual role in constructing meaning across cultural boundaries, regardless of the actual circulation of books ("bibliomigrancy"[443]).

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[441] In Eckermann, Johann Peter: *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens*. Bd. 1. Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1836, p. 325.

[442] Venkat, Mani. *Recoding World Literature. Libraries, print culture and Germany's pact with books*. New York: Fordham university press, 2017, p. 33. Also see his argument: "World literature is historically conditioned, culturally determined, and politically charged," Venkat, ibid. p. 44. Erich Auerbach brings into discussion similarly pragmatic objections against Fritz Strich's idealistic, Goethe-an *Gemeingut*. Auerbach, Erich. "Philologie der Weltliteratur." In *Weltliteratur: Festgabe für Fritz Strich zum 70. Geburtstag*, edited by Walter Muschg and Emil Staiger, pp. 39–51. Bern: Francke Verlag, 1952.

[443] Venkat argues that libraries are "way stations in the collection and dissemination of world literary texts as books or manuscripts in the original and in translation; along with publishers and booksellers, libraries have contributed to the conceptualization of world literature as a literary catalog of the world" (Venkat, Mani. *Recoding World Literature.* Ibid. p.12). Is this the case for

Just as the reading of Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth" may build upon inherent literary references, such as the symbolic interplay of black and gold reminiscent of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* or Homer's *Iliad*, those encountering Soulié's translation of "Shi bian" inevitably absorb the rich tradition of the Chinese *Zhiguai* (志怪) genre. In both cases, the act of reading becomes a means of engaging with unspecified or previously unfamiliar literary contexts. Although it can include translation or adaptation from one cultural context to another, this process transcends them. If a text is linguistically understood, the reader's imaginative gap-filling and schema-building processes allow fluid interactions between personal knowledge and the work's potentially unknown motifs. Therefore, the emergence of the bloodthirsty Chinese vampire in Soulié's translation is not merely a deliberate mistranslation (a fact that Soulié admits in the introduction of his *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*, 1913) but a literary opportunity that brings together elements from Chinese canonical supernatural creatures, Western vampire fiction, and the reader's own experiential background.

What lies within the reading of Georges Soulié's "The Corpse, The Blood Drinker?" First, we must consider that Soulié was an accomplished Chinese scholar who served as a French vice-consul and later consul and had access to the most relevant texts

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the Chinese literature? In the case of Pú Sōnglíng, the library was not *attainable* because of the cultural nature of Qing literati: manuscripts would circulate in their original form between various people, who would make annotations, and translate them into other East-Asian contexts, such as Japan and Korean. Does that mean that his *Liaozhai* became world literature only when it was translated, parsed into a European language?

of Chinese literature during his tenure.[444] "Shi bian," which he translated as "The Corpse, The Blood-Drinker," is not a random, insignificant piece of gossip but part of the vast corpus of the *Zhìguài* (志怪) genre, roughly defined as "accounts of the strange" or "records of anomalies."[445] This genre, with roots in various pre-Han texts (before 202 BCE), flourished throughout Chinese history, continuing well after the end of the Qing dynasty (1644-1912) until its temporary suppression during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).[446] The book that "Shi bian" is part of, the *Liaozhai zhiyi* (聊齋誌異, *Records of the Strange from the Studio*), is an extremely renowned early Qing dynasty text.

Another work related to and similar to the *Liaozhai*, which contains more than 30 stories of animated corpses that run and hop, trying to catch their prey and who bite

[444] Georges Soulié was also nominated for the Nobel Prize for his research in clinic acupuncture after returning to France. See Candelise, Lucia. "George Soulié de Morant: le Premier Expert Français en Acupuncture" ["George Soulié de Morant : the first French expert in acupuncture"]. *Revue de synthese*, 2010, vol. 131, no. 3, pp. 373-99.

[445] I am following the canonical terminology used by Robert Ford Campany in Campany, Robert Ford. *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China*. New York: SUNY Press, 1996; This terminology is somewhat fluid, for example, Anthony C. Yu refers to it as "records of the strange," in Yu, Anthony. "<<Rest, Rest, Perturbed Spirit!>> Ghosts in Traditional Chinese Prose Fiction." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 1987, Vol. 47, No. 2, pp. 397-434, available online: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2719188 (2/5/2024). Mu-Chou Poo translates it as "anomaly accounts" in Poo Mu-Chou, "The Completion of an Ideal World: The Human Ghost in Early-Medieval China." *Asia Major*, 1997, vol. 10, no. 1/2, 1997, pp. 69–94.

[446] Elaborated surveys of the genre in Chinese scholarship include Liu Yeqiu 劉葉秋. *Weijin nanbeichao xiaoshuo* (魏晉南北朝小説, "Fiction of the Wei Jin Northern and Southerndynasties"). Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju (北京中华书局, "Beijing Zhonghua Press"), 1961; Li Jianguo 李剑国. Tangqian zhiguai xiaoshuoshi (唐前志怪小说史, "A history of Zhiguai Fiction before the Tang Dynasty"). Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe (南開大學出版社, "Tianjin: Nankai University Press"), 1984. For China's ban of ghosts see Esler, Joshua. "Chinese Ghosts and Tibetan Buddhism: Negotiating between Mythological and 'Rational' Narratives." *Modern China*, vol. 42, no. 5, 2016, pp. 505–34; A telling example is that the 2016 U.S. remake of *Ghostbusters* was banned in China because it fell under the scrutiny of the CCP.

everything around them, is Yuan Mei's *What Confucius Would not Discuss About*[447]. The title of this collection is building on a witty antagonism with one famous line in Confucius's *Analects* (論語, *Lunyu*): "The Master [referring to Confucius] does not discuss anomalies, feats of strength, chaos/disorder or spirits/ghosts" ("子不語怪，力，亂，神"[448]). "In the context of the Confucian fundamentalist society that was eighteenth-century China, such a title was clearly designed to shock."[449] For someone immersed in Chinese literary studies like Soulié, a book as problematic and well-spread as Yuán Méi's *Zi bù yǔ*, which had been officially censored three times in the course of a few decades,[450] was surely an object of curiosity and delight.

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[447] For example, see the story "僵屍抱韋馱" ("The Rigid Corpse Embraces Weituo") This narrative describes a corpse with glowing green eyes attacking a traveler and biting a statue: "僵屍伸兩臂抱韋馱神而口咬之，嗒嗒有聲" ("The rigid corpse extended its arms to embrace the Weituo deity and bit it with its mouth, making a tapping sound"). Full text available online at Wikisource: https://zh.wikisource.org/wiki/子不語/卷22 For English translations of selected stories from Yuan Me''s work, see Kam Louie and Louise Edwards, *Censored by Confucius* (London & New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015).

[448] The translation is mine, from the Chinese texts of the *Analects* available on *The Chinese Text Project:* https://ctext.org/Analects (3/15/2024). There are various other translations for this famous passage, for example James Legge: "The subjects on which the master did not talk were extraordinary things, feats of strength, disorder and spiritual beings," available on *The Project Gutenberg* at https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/4094 (3/15/2024).

[449] Francis, Sing-chen Lydia. "'What Confucius Wouldn't Talk About': The Grotesque Body and Literati Identities in Yuan Mei's 'Zi Buyu.'" *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)*, vol. 24, 2002, p. 130.

[450] The work has been censored in 1838, 1844, and 1868. "In the late Qing, the story collection was mainly proscribed as a <<licentious book>> (淫書, *Yin Shu*)." in Francis, Sing-chen Lydia. "'What Confucius Wouldn't Talk About': The Grotesque Body and Literati Identities in Yuan Mei's 'Zi Buyu,'" ibid. p. 129. The *Yin Shu* title, however, was not an exception. It was also given to other famous texts, such as Cao Xueqin's (曹雪芹) *Hónglóumèng* (紅樓夢, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, 1791) or basically to most of the dramatic works of Lǐ Yú **李漁** (1611–1680, sobriquet Liweng **笠翁**). See Hanan, Patrick. *The Invention of Li Yu*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988. Also

Furthermore, in addition to canonical works like the *Liaozhai*, the *Yueweicaotang biji or the Zi bu yu*, Soulié likely had contact with more popular, modern publications, such as the *Dianshizhai Pictorial* (點石齋畫報, *Dianshizhai huabao*, 1884–1898). This magazine also featured adaptations of Pu Songling's stories and other tales of the strange and scandalous, accompanied by rich illustrations.[451] To a certain degree, the *Dianshizhai Pictorial* resembles the *Wienerisches Diarium*, the Viennese newspaper that published the first vampire report, "Copia Eines Schreibens," in 1725. Both publications catered to a broad readership eager for gossip and sensational or extraordinary stories. Consequently, when engaging with Soulié's translation, the reader is not merely encountering a single text but tapping into a rich tradition of Chinese supernatural literature that spans centuries and encompasses a wide range of genres and media.

Additionally, Soulié's position as a translator was further enriched by his access to previous English translations of *Liáozhāi* stories, most notably Herbert Giles' 1880 rendering of "Shi bian" as "The Resuscitated Corpse." This vantage point allowed Soulié to assess the impact of Giles' work and gauge its reception among Western audiences.[452] Armed with this knowledge, he was well-positioned to make decisions about his own translation. He could choose to emulate or deviate from Giles or earlier models, adapting

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Wu, I-Hsien. *Eroticism and Other Literary Conventions in Chinese Literature: Intertextuality in The Story of the Stone*. Amherst: Cambria Press, 2022.

[451] The scanned version of the *Dianshizhai Pictorial* is available online at the *Virtual Shanghai Project*: http://www.virtualshanghai.net/Asset/Source/bnBook_ID-346_No-1.pdf (5/19/2024).

[452] On this topic see Wang, Shengyu. "Chinese Folklore for the English Public: Herbert A. Giles's 1880 Translation of Pu Songling's Classical Tales." *Comparative Literature*. December 2021; vol. 73, no. 4: pp. 442–462. https://doi.org/10.1215/00104124-9313118 (4/21/2024).

his strategies to better suit the tastes and expectations of his target readership: the urban, English-speaking individuals who were still under the spell of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897).[453] In this sense, Soulié's role was not merely a passive conduit but an active shaper of the text's meaning and reception, as he admits in the introduction to his translation: "The Far Eastern civilisation has had a development of its own, and its legends and superstitions have nothing in common with the Western folklore (...), and in my translation, I have sometimes supplied what the author only thought necessary to imply."[454]

Another important contextual difference exists between Soulié's enterprise and Giles's earlier *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* (1880). By the time Soulié undertook his translation of Pu Songling's *Liaozhai* in 1913, the vampire genre in Western literature had fully crystallized and achieved considerable popularity. As Carol Senf notes in *The Vampire in Nineteenth-Century English Literature* (1988), 1880 to 1914 saw an explosion of vampire fiction, with over 200 stories published in English alone.[455] In the introduction

[453] Although widely praised, the contemporary reviews of *Dracula* coincide in the impression that the novel was perhaps too graphic. For example, *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* wrote that "By no means can this be called a cheerful book." According to *The Hampshire Telegraph*, "The story told in <<Dracula>> is about as weird and gruesome as any we have ever copme across (...) It is full of horrors, which make one's blood curdle to read them." Similarly, *The Manchester Guardian* concluded its review with "it is (...) an artistic mistake to fill a whole volume with horrors." For more on the topic see Browning, John Edgar; Melton, Gordon. *Bram Stoker's Dracula: The Critical Feast, An Annotated Reference of Early Reviews & Reactions, 1897-1913*. Berkeley: The Apocryphile Press, 2011.

[454] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913. Available on *The Project Gutenberg*, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/37766/37766-h/37766-h.htm (3/21/2024).

[455] Senf, Carol. *The Vampire in Nineteenth Century English Literature*. Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1988. There is also a newer, homonymous book, edited by Brooke Cameron and Lara Karpenko, titled *The Vampire in Nineteenth-Century Literature: A Feast of Blood*. New York: Routledge, 2022. However, the latter addresses more contemporary concerns,

to *Dracula's Brethren* (2017), Richard Dalby also notes that the 1880s can be regarded as the beginning of a golden era for supernatural fiction, with a considerable "broadening of the vampire story's scope."[456]

Several notable works of vampire literature likely shaped Soulié's lexical choices and thematic emphases when translating "Shi bian" into English. For example, Karl Heinrich Ulrichs' *Manor* (1884), with its revived drowned sailor who preys on the living, and Guy de Maupassant's *The Horla* (1886), which explores for the first time the topic of psychic vampirism, both expanded the conceptual boundaries of vampiric entities. Furthermore, Tolstoy's *The Family of the Vourdalak* (1884) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) further cemented the vampire's place in the popular imagination and readers' expectations of *strange stories*. Even M.R. James' *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* (1904) features a narrative about a blood-sucking witch hiding at the root of an old tree, "The Ash Tree," contributing to vampire variety and bloodiness.

The success of these works stands at the root of Soulié's decision to introduce blood-drinking into both his narrative and title, despite its absence in Pu Songling's original text. This choice reflects a broader trend in translating and adapting non-Western supernatural tales for Western audiences. Another example is Richard Burton's 1870 highly liberal translation of the 11th-century collection, *Vetāla Panchavimshati* (वेतालपञ्चविंशति, *Twenty-five (tales) of Betal*). Not only did Burton use the term "vampire"

such as black female vampires, queerness in vampire fiction or the presence of invalid characters as vampires in literature.

[456] Dalby, Richard; Frost, Brian (eds.). *Dracula's Brethen*. London: Harper, 2017, p. 16.

to translate the Sanskrit word "vetāla," originally a trickster spirit similar to a vicious genie, but the illustrations that accompanied his text transformed the Hindu creature into a giant, bat-like creature with pointed ears and leathery wings. In Bernhard Unterholzner's *Die Erfindung des Vampirs* (*The Invention of the Vampire*, 2019), the relationship between the bat, the flying fox, and the vampire is interpreted as a textual contagion originating in the 18th-century works on natural science. Unterholzer argues that some scientists were deliberately looking for "the true vampire" ("wahren Vampir"[457]) in the animal world. The illustration of their articles "created the visual forerunners for the romantic vampire literature (...) with their imaginations of the bat habitat as a landscape of ruins between Arcadia and Gothic."[458] Richard Burton does not reference this phenomenon and adopts a more philologic stance. In the introduction to his *Vikram and the Vampire* (1870), he argues that, in translating some of "the old stories," he "ventured to remedy the conciseness of their language, and to clothe the skeleton with flesh and blood."[459]

Both Soulié and Burton, in their introductions, emphasize that their translations are part of a necessary process of literary invention. Burton criticizes the shortness and conciseness of the Sanskrit original, while Soulié argues that it is "impossible for a Western

[457] Unterholzner, Bernhard. *Die Erfindung Des Vampirs: Mythenbildung Zwischen Populären Erzählungen Vom Bösen Und Wissenschaftlicher Forschung*. Harrassowitz Verlag, 2019, p. 95.

[458] "mit ihren Imaginationen des Fledermaushabitats als Ruinenlandschaft zwischen Arkadien und gothic die visuellen Vorläufer für die romantische Vampirliteratur und spätere Filminszenierungen." in Unterholzner, Bernhard. *Die Erfindung Des Vampirs*, ibid. p.99.

[459] Burton, Richard Francis, Sir. *Vikram and the vampire; or, Tales of Hindu Devilry*. London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1870, p. XiX.

writer to retain all the long and useless talking, all the repetitions that Chinese writing and Chinese taste are equally fond of."[460] Although one author appears to enrich the original while the other simplifies it, the result is similar. Vikram *and the Vampire* and "The Corpse The Blood Drinker" are ultimately identifiable as vampire narratives.

Soulié's translation opens up with a vivid depiction of a caravan traveling through a mountainous region at nightfall. The scene describes a large convoy and tired muleteers abusing the animals and screaming at them. This is almost a cinematic opening, describing the narrow valley, the winding path, the cold, and the approaching darkness: "On the winding path cut in the side of the hill, about twenty mules were following each other, bending under their heavy load."[461] This build-up is reminiscent of Gothic literature and sets a foreboding tone absent from the original. More specifically, the Chinese story begins rather abruptly by introducing the social situation of the innkeeper: an old man from Yángxìn (陽信) who moved to Càidiàn (蔡店) and opened up a blooming business together with his son. There are no winding paths, mountain winds, or "darkness, rendered thicker by a slight fog."[462] Instead, we have just "several cartmen who come and go selling things and often live in their inn,"[463] which is fully occupied.

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[460] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[461] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[462] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[463] My translation of "有車伕數人，往來負販，輒寓其家。" (You che fushu ren, wanglai fufan, zhe yu qijia) Pú Sōnglíng. *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. ibid.

The vampirization of Pu Songling's "Transforming Corpse"

Story	Set up/Introduction	Antagonist	Resolution
Pu Songling's Shi bian (屍變, "The Transforming Corpse"	The focus is on the master of the inn where the attack takes place. We find out about his social situation and that one day, at sunset, he received four cart drivers.	A female corpse with a golden, pale face ("面淡金色," *Miandan jinse*) and her forehead wrapped in raw silk. She blows over ("遍吹," *Bianchui*[464]) her victims and chases the surviving traveler.	A monk (道人, *daoren*) discovers the scene and asks the villagers to help. They see that the female corpse got her fingers stuck in a tree while trying to catch the traveler. Her fingers penetrated the tree trunk.
Soulié's "The Corpse, The Blood Drinker"	The focus is on four caravan masters and their long convoy through a mountain range. When they reach the inn, they have a copious dinner "in the midst of noise, laughing, and movement."[465]	The specter is described as having a pale figure with burning red eyes and sharp teeth protruding. She is sucking the blood from the throat of her victims "in long draughts" and chases the surviving traveler.	Two peasants discover the scene with the dead traveler and the corpse of the woman, "her nails buried in the bark; from her mouth, a stream of blood" The corpse was the daughter of the village elder, whose coffin was kept in a barn
Goethe's "The Bride of Corinth"	The focus is on a young man traveling from Athens to Corinth to meet with his betrothed. He arrives late in the evening; he is served dinner but dozes off.	The vampiric bride wears a white veil and robe, and her forehead is wrapped in a black and golden band. She is also described as white and cold as ice[466]. She sucks the blood of the heart.	The vampiric bride seems to feel remorse. she denounces her mother and her religious dogmatism, she urges her to build a pyre and send the ashes "to the old gods."[467]

Fig. 13. Textual comparison between the core elements in Pu Songling, Georges Soulié, and Goethe

[464] All the citations from the Chinese source in this table are taken from a 2010 annotated version of Pu Songling's *Liaozhai Zhiyi*: Pú Sōnglíng 蒲松齡. Quan ben xin zhu Liaozhai Zhiyi (quan san ce) 全本新注聊齋志異 (全三册). Edited by Zhu Qikai (朱其鎧). Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 2010, pp. 6-8.

[465] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid. All the citations in this table are from the same source.

[466] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze." Musen-Almanach für das Jahr 1798. Tübingen: J. G. Cotta, p. 94, Lines 110-111.

[467] "Bring in Flammen Liebende zur Ruh./ Wenn der Funke sprüht,/ Wenn die Asche glüht,/ Eilen wir den alten Göttern zu." in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze." ibid. p. 99, Lines 193-196.

Equally schematic is also Pu Songling's engagement with the future victims of the restless dead, who are abruptly presented just as "four people" (四人)[468]. In Chinese, the number "four" (四, *Sì*) has a phonetic resemblance with the word for "death" (死 *Sǐ*) and, within the Sinic cultural context, this number is a not-so-subtle reference to a bad omen. Soulié, although aware of this particularity, changes the number of travelers to 3 and describes their appearance with greater detail. We are told that these men, who were the masters of the caravan, were "comfortably seated on mules with large pack-saddles," dressed in "thick dresses (...) fur boots (...) and red woolen hoods."[469] They also show various emotions absent in the original "Shi bian," and when they reach the inn, they are "happy to be able to rest"[470]. This shift in perspective creates more suspense, humanizes the characters and allows readers to better identify with the travelers.

Other elements added to the story are the detailed enumeration of foods. In Pu Songling's original, the four travelers went to sleep without eating anything and "fell asleep as soon as they put their heads on the pillow, with only one of them being awake but drowsy."[471] Soulié, on the other hand, delays the central conflict between the travelers and the walking dead with an extended description of the dinner. We are told that the three caravan masters were led into a busy sitting room where, "in the midst of noise, laughing,

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[468] Pu Songling. *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. ibid.

[469] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[470] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[471] "四客奔波颇困，甫就枕，鼻息渐粗。惟一客尚蒙眬" (Si ke benpo po kun, fujiu zhen, bixi jian cu. Weiyi ke shangmeng long). Pu Songling. *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. Ibid.

and movement," they were served "smoking rice, vegetables preserved in vinegar, and lukewarm wine served in small cups."[472]

This emphasis on food and drink echoes both Goethe's ballad, with its multiple references to wine and bread, and the emphasis on the Rascian peasants' diets in the Habsburg texts of the 1730s. Throughout the 18th-century medical literature on vampires, the most common explanation for their existence was related to the culinary habits of the locals.[473] Moreover, Soulié's introduction also aligns with the opening of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, where Jonathan Harker's very first diary entry includes a detailed description of his dinner in Transylvania: "a chicken done up some way with red pepper, which was very good but thirsty (...) it was called paprika hendl, and that, as it was a national dish, I should be able to get it anywhere along the Carpathians."[474] In both Stoker's and Soulié's texts, these culinary descriptions serve to orientalize the setting, emphasizing its foreignness to Western readers. Soulié's "smoking rice, vegetables preserved in vinegar, and lukewarm

[472] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[473] "Both Tallar [a surgeon in the Habsburg army] and Glaser [a physician sent to investigate the vampire cases of 1731] gave this as a crucial element in the disease [the vampire contagion], though interestingly enough, Tallar maintains that as opposed to Vlachs, Rascians do not get frequently attacked by vampires because of the excessive hot-natured food their cuisine contains." in Mézes Ádám. *Insecure boundaries. Medical Experts and the Returning Dead on the Southern Habsburg Borderland*. MA Thesis, Central European University, 2013, p. 52. https://www.etd.ceu.edu/2013/mezes_adam.pdf (5/24/2024). Also see Tallar's 1756 report in Tallar, Georg. *Grundlicher Bericht Von Den Sogenannten Blutsaugern, Vampiren, Oder in Der Walachischen Sprache Moroi,* available on demand on Everand: https://www.everand.com/book/380382183/Die-Vampire-in-der-Walachei-und-Siebenburgen-Ein-Augenzeugenbericht-aus-dem-18-Jahrhundert-Visum-repertum-anatomico-chirurgicum (5/24/2024).

[474] Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. London: Penguin Classics, 2003, p. 13

wine served in small cups"[475] would have seemed as exotic to his American audience as Stoker's "paprika hendl"[476] did to his English readers. This focus on unfamiliar foods adds local color and reinforces the sense of the protagonists entering an alien and dangerous world.[477]

In Soulié's text, we are told that after dinner, everyone retires to bed. However, "towards the hour of the Rat" (子时, *Zi shi*, corresponding to 11 PM to 1 AM in the Western clock), one of the travelers, Wang-Fou, finds himself unable to sleep or read and witnesses how a pale hand raises the curtains at the end of the room and enters the space where the men are. The detail of attempted reading is absent from Pu Songling's original, being one of the many devices of the translator to connect with the lifestyle of his Western audience. Another striking contrast lies in the role of darkness in setting up the scene. Soulié's narrative plunges the reader into complete obscurity, with Wang-Fou's eyes futilely searching "the darkness that the feeble light did not contrive to break through."[478] Conversely, in the *Liaozhai* version, the supernatural presence seems to illuminate the room by making the candles before the coffin burn extremely bright. This allows the

[475] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[476] Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. London: Penguin Classics, 2003, p. 13.

[477] Also see Dodworth, Cameron. "Exotic Homogeneity: Culinary Othering in Dracula." *Vampires: Consuming Monsters and Monstrous Consumption.* Available online: https://www.revenantjournal.com/contents/exotic-homogeneity-culinary-othering-in-dracula/ (5/18/2024).

[478] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

wakeful traveler in Pú's story to perceive his surroundings with crystal clarity (清清楚楚, *Qingqing chuchu*[479]).

Perhaps the most crucial difference between the two texts lies in the contextual information provided to the reader. Soulié withholds key details, allowing the reader to discover the unfolding horror alongside the protagonist. The *Liaozhai,* on the other hand, acts more as a bureaucratic record in the style of "Copia eines Schreibens." The text promptly informs the readers that the travelers chose to spend their night in the same room with a corpse: the innkeeper's daughter-in-law died, and her body was waiting for her official coffin and final rites. The climactic moments of the two stories further highlight their divergent approaches. In Soulié's translation, Wang Fou gradually discerns "the silhouette of a female" bending over his fellow travelers in what appears to be a "long kiss."[480] Only after the figure moves to the second sleeper does Wang Fou realize he is witnessing a vampire attack: "He distinctly saw the pale figure, the eyes, from which a red flame was shining, and sharp teeth, half-exposed in a ferocious smile, which opened and shut by turns on the throat of the sleeper."[481] Terrified of becoming the next victim whose blood is drunk "in long draughts,"[482] the caravan master flees the room, screaming for help,

[479] "見靈前燈火明亮，看的東西清清楚楚" (Jianling qian denghuo mingliang, kan de dongxi qingqing chuchu) in Pú Sōnglíng. *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. Ibid.

[480] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[481] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[482] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

eventually collapsing behind "the knotted trunk of a huge chestnut-tree"[483] on the village outskirts.

In Pu Songling, the female corpse (屍 *shi*), described with a golden face and silk tie around her forehead, approaches each traveler and repeatedly blows air on them ("連續吹數數," Lianxu chui shushu[484]). This act of expelling impure breath (口氣, *kouqi*) from the dead's mouth proves lethal, a motif that recurs in another *Liaozhai* tale, "Spraying Water" (噴水, *Penshui*), where a risen corpse kills by squirting a foul liquid at its victims. Both these stories align with Chinese cosmology, wherein the bodily soul, *Po* (魄), should disperse into the earth after death. The *Liji* (禮記, "Record of Rites") states that after dying, with the help of performing the right rituals, "the rational soul ascends to heaven [while] the bodily soul returns to earth."[485] In the case of the "Shi bian," the deceased girl's incomplete funerary rites leave her *po* lingering and contaminating the living. The concept of a harmful, residual life force differs from the Western vampire's blood-drinking and underscores the distinct cultural frameworks underlying each of the stories.

The endings of both texts also emphasize the necessity of interpreting them considering the socio-cultural contexts of their production. In the original "Shi bian," the

[483] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[484] Pu Songling. *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. Ibid.

[485] "魂氣歸於天, 形魄歸於地." (Hunqi guiyu tian, xingpo guiyu de). The original Chinese source text is available on *The Chinese Text Project*: https://ctext.org/liji (3/14/2024).

narrative emphasizes the intense pursuit of the protagonist by the reanimated corpse.[486] The dead girl seems to mimic the traveler's every move, matching his pace as he flees through the village.[487] Pu Songling pointedly notes that there was nobody else in the village to help the victim, a detail that may reflect the author's critique of social cohesion. When the protagonist seeks refuge at a nearby temple, the Buddhist monks (道人) refuse to open the gate, perhaps indicating the Pu Songling's skepticism towards religious institutions in times of crisis. The chase culminates at a poplar tree (白杨), where the corpse, in its attempt to seize the traveler, becomes trapped in the trunk and freezes.[488] Although rich and extremely dynamic, an overarching characteristic of the original "Shi bian" is the focus on specific bureaucratic processes and social concerns. The first thing the surviving traveler talks about, for example, is the fear of returning home without evidence: "Four people left,

[486] On this theme within the larger contex of the Zhiguai genre see Wang, Shengyu. "Pu Songling's "Shibian" 尸變 and Vampiric Chases in the Chinese Tradition of Strange Narratives." *T'oung Pao: International Journal of Chinese Studies*, 2022, vol. 108, no. 5, pp. 738-777.

[487] The behavior of a stiff corpse imitating the gestures or the movements of the living is also encountered in one of Yuán Méi's stories in *Zi bu yu*, titled "An Artisan Paints a Stiff Corpse" (畫工畫殭屍, Huagong hua jiangshi). Liu Yixian, (劉以賢), a skilled artist, is tasked with painting the portrait of a recently deceased father. When he starts moving his brush, the corpse (屍), which is also waiting for the son to buy a coffin, just like in "Shi bian," also moves its hand in the same manner: "**每臂動指運，屍亦如之**" (Mei bidong zhi yun, shi yiru zhi), in Yuan Mei (袁枚). *Zi bu yu* (子不語). Source text available online: https://read.99csw.com/book/601/18773.html (5/26/2024). This story is also translated into English in Francis, Sing-chen Lydia. "'What Confucius Wouldn't Talk About': The Grotesque Body and Literati Identities in Yuan Mei's 'Zi Buyu.'" *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)*, 2002, vol. 24, pp. 129–60.

[488] "尸捉之不得，抱树而僵" (Shi zhio zhi bu de, baoshu er jiang), in Pú Sōnglíng. *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. Ibid.

but only one returns. How can I tell my hometown about this situation?"[489] To address his concerns, the local official provides an official written attestation (牒). This gesture underscores the social and administrative complexities of the early Qing, prevalent in vernacular fiction.

By contrast, Soulié's translation transforms this culturally specific, almost bureaucratic text into a hybrid that bridges Chinese and Western literary traditions. His introduction of blood-drinking and vampiric elements aligns the tale with Western horror conventions while retaining some altered aspects from the *Liaozhai*. For example, in Soulié's version, the protagonist is discovered by two farmers instead of monks. These two promptly return to the village to alert the "Chief of the Elders."[490] This curious choice of words, reminiscent of a more tribalist society, is also an orientalist adaptation of the original *Yi zai* (邑宰), which conveys a more bureaucratic meaning in the original.[491] The farmers also find the corpse of the young woman next to Wang Fou, with "her nails buried in the bark; from her mouth, a stream of blood had flowed and stained her white silk jacket."[492] This vivid imagery juxtaposes the Western vampire trope of blood-drinking with

[489] "身四人出，今一人归，此情何以信乡里?" (Shen si ren chu, jin yuren gui, ci qing heyi xin xiangli?) in Pu Songling. *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. Ibid.

[490] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[491] Personal communication with Dr. Peng Tao. Also, the term **宰相** Zăi xiàng, which uses the same **宰** character is often encountered in Chinese Song and Yuan literature as a term for "prime minister."

[492] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

tropes of the Orient - silk and exoticism[493] - and creates a hybrid cultural narrative that would resonate with Western readers better than a word-for-word translation.

Furthermore, Soulié's explanation of Chinese cosmology in the last sentences of his text is particularly noteworthy. He explains to his readers that "the young woman evidently had not lost its inferior soul" and that "like all beings deprived of conscience and reason, her ferocity was eager for blood."[494] This interpretation, which combines the Chinese concept of *Hun* (魂) and *Po* (魄) souls with vampiric bloodlust, bridges the two cultural contexts and sets the stage for a new, *Chinese* vampire.

[493] See, for example, the introduction of Frankopan, Peter. *The Silk Roads A New History of the World.* New York: Vintage Books, 2015.

[494] Curiously, there is an early 20th century fan fiction story (翻新小說, *Fanxin Xiaoshuo*) in the style of the *Liaozhai*, titled "Losing the Inferior/Terrenal/Pò Soul" (失魄, *Shi po*), written by Po Mi (破迷). This is a 1st person text where the narrator is on his sick bed and is faced with gruesome vision because of the loss of his *po*, which acted as a sort of barrier between the natural and the supernatural. Was Soulié familiar with this story and did he adopted the exact same words to conclude his translation of Shī Biàn? Also see Wang, Shengyu. "Anatomy of the Superstitious Mind: Subjectivity and Interiority in Two Early Twentieth-Century Rebuttals to Liaozhai's Records of the Strange." S*ungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies*, 2024, vol. 24 no. 1, pp. 57-80.

The Diverse Roots of the Modern Chinese Vampire

Having closely examined Soulié's translation and Pu Songling's original text, I now turn to a broader contextualization of "Shi bian" within Chinese literary traditions. This analysis underlines both the story's place in the Chinese literary canon and its potential for "worlding"[495] literature through the vampire motif.

Shengyu Wang's historiography of "Shi bian" reveals that the theme of a living person pursued by a reanimated corpse was "widely circulated in 17th and 18th century China, particularly in the northern provinces."[496] This theme existed in at least three other variants: a) as "Shi jue" (屍蹶, "Stumbling Dead") in Wang Zhaoyun's (王兆雲) Shushi xiantian (漱石閑談) and Tan Qian's (談遷) *Zaolin zazu* (棗林雜俎), b) as "Shi xing" (屍行, "Walking Dead") in Niu Xiu's (鈕琇) *Gu sheng* (觚賸), and c) as "Jiangshi" (僵屍, "Stiff/Rigid Dead") in Tong Shishi's (佟世思) *Er shu* (耳書).[497] However, none of these variants match the bloody intensity of Soulié's translation, with its vivid descriptions of a

[495] I use this term in the sense that Theo D'haen has explained it - as an inherent characteristic of a text that sets itself as and within a world. Therefore, "worlding" is not about being involved with or creating a fixed canon of world literature, but rather about understanding literature as a process of an interconnected global system. He is combining the definitions coming from Heidegger, Said and Spivak: "[All] discussions on world literature have always already been exercises in <<worlding>>." in D'haen, Theo. "Worlding World Literature." *World Literature in an Age of Geopolitics*. Leiden: Brill, 2021, p. 8 https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004468078_003 (5/26/2024).

[496] Wang, Shengyu. "Five Late-Ming and Early-Qing Analogues of the Liaozhai Zhiyi Tale <<Shibian.>>" *Renditions—A Gateway to Chinese Literature and Culture*, 2022, vol. 98, no. 2, p. 20.

[497] Wang, Shengyu. "Five Late-Ming and Early-Qing Analogues of the Liaozhai Zhiyi Tale <<Shibian.>>" ibid. Also, all the source texts are available on *The Chinese Text Project*, https://ctext.org/ .

specter with "sharp teeth, half-exposed in a ferocious smile," drinking blood in "long draughts."[498] This discrepancy raises crucial questions about the source and significance of the blood-drinking element in Soulié's version. How does this addition transform the Chinese revenant into a more recognizable Western vampire? What cultural and literary dynamics are at play in this process of "vampirization"?

The reading of "The Corpse, The Blood-Drinker" conveys a literary entanglement that few texts and translations have. The very title of Pu Songling's original story itself invites a plurality of interpretations. While the character "Shi" (屍) straightforwardly refers to a corpse or biological remains, the character "Bian" (變) is more complex, alluding to transformation, disorder, and even rebellion.[499] Etymologically, "Bian" can be decomposed to mean "to use the reins of a horse to control or transform it," suggesting a process of taming or domestication - the opposite of rebellion.[500] Further complicating matters, in Classical Chinese, nouns are sometimes used as verbs, opening up the possibility of reading "Shi bian" as "The Corpse Transforms" or "The Corpse Rebels."[501]

[498] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*, ibid. (3/19/2024).

[499] Baxter, William. *A Handbook of Old Chinese Phonology*. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992, pp. 364-365.

[500] Online Chinese Etymology Dictionary, https://hanziyuan.net/#變 (3/5/2024).

[501] This translation would seem inviting for a direct comparison with the Habsburg unruly dead of the 1720s. See Danneberg, Stéphanie. "<<Vampire sind äußerst unordentliche Untertanen.>> Überlegungen zur Funktion und Instrumentalisierung des Vampirphänomens." *Zeitschrift für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde*, 2010, vol. 33, no. 2, pp. 177-192.

Other translations, posterior to that of Soulié's, have grappled with these difficulties in various ways. John Minford's rendition, titled "The Living Dead," evokes George Romero's cult film *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), while Sidney Sondergard's "The Restless Corpse" emphasizes the corpse's unquiet nature, reminiscent of Bürger's *Lenore* (1774).[502] More recently, Judith Zeitlin and Rania Huntington's 2024 translation workshop, focusing exclusively on Pu Songling's *Liáozhāi*, promises to shed new light on these complex interpretation issues.[503] The fact of the matter is that Soulié's change from "The Transformed Corpse" into "The Corpse, The Blood-Drinker" is the first in a long list of attempts to engage with Pu Songling's universe. It also has the merit of being the first text to open up to the West the possibility of a Chinese vampire and also one of the main models for the Hong Kong *Jiangshi* films of the 1980s.

When Soulié published his translation, several English adaptations of Pu Songling's stories were already circulating. Simultaneous to these early attempts, China also saw a massive surge of *Liáozhāi* imitations, published by those who "sought to take advantage of an increasingly lucrative publishing industry that employed *Liáozhāi* as a brand name."[504] While these Chinese texts were numerous and enjoyed the attention of the

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[502] "Graut Liebchen auch?—/Der Mond scheint hell!/ Hurrah! die Todten reiten schnell!/ Graut Liebchen auch vor Todten?"— /"O weh! Lass ruhn die Todten!"———." Source text taken from Emerson, Oliver Farrar. *The Earliest English Translations of Bürger's Lenore: A Study in English and German Romanticism*. Cleveland: The Western Reserve University Press, 1915, p. 117.

[503] UChicago Center for East Asian Studies - NEH Summer Translation Workshop on Chinese Classical Tale (July 15 - 19), https://ealc.uchicago.edu/resources/workshops-and-study-related-resources (5/20/2024).

[504] Hui, Lui. *The Ghost of Liaozhai: Pu Songling's Ghostlore and its History of Reception*. PhD Thesis, University of Toronto, 2009, p. 154.

majority of readers, as it can be deduced from the popularity of magazines such as *Dianshizhai huabao* (點石齋畫報, *The Dianshizhai Pictorial*, 1884-1898)[505], these materials were inaccessible to the English audience and likely unhelpful for Soulié's purposes.

During Soulié's tenure in China as consul, the most influential English translation was Herbert Giles' *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* (1880), which included 164 of the original 455 stories.[506] Additionally, Soulié also had access to four other renditions of the *Liaozhai*, such as Karl Gützlaff's *Liau Chai I Chi, or Extraordinary Legends from Liau Chai* (1842), Samuel Williams' *Liau Chai, or Pastimes of the Study* (1848), William Mayer's *Liao Chai Chih Yi* (1867) and Clement Francis Allen's *Tales from Liao Chai Chih Yi* (1875).[507] Despite their availability, these translations covered only a fraction of *Liaozhai's* 455 stories: Gützlaff translated 9, Williams 2, Mayer half of one, and Allen 18.

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[505] Want Tao (王韜) also reworked some of the *Liaozhai* stories and in the Dianshizhai huabao (點石齋畫報, *The Dianshizhai Pictorial*) and, in one of them, the protagonist "encounters a seductive bloodthirsty vampiress who is only put to death after the protagonist drives a blade into her heart and sets the body on fire." in Wang, Shengyu. *Chinese Enchantment: Reinventing Pu Songling's Classical Tales in the Realm of World Literature, 1880-1920*. PhD Thesis, University of Chicago, Illinois, 2017. p. 130. Available online: https://doi.org/10.6082/M1959FR0 . Also, for the source text of Wang Tao, see the scanned version of the *Dianshizhai Pictorial* at the *Virtual Shanghai Project*: http://www.virtualshanghai.net/Asset/Source/bnBook_ID-346_No-1.pdf (5/19/2024).

[506] "For many decades, *Liaozhai* was circulated in manuscript form. It was not published until 1766, fifty-one years after Pu's death. In the 1766 edition, there are 455 stories. Later, more stories were gradually found and added to the first edition. Now Liaozhai edited by Qikai Zhu (朱其铠) and published in 1992 contains 497 short stories." Pei, Yongming. *Re-presenting China through Retranslation: A Corpus-based Study of Liaozhai Zhiyi in English*. Phd Thesis, Kent State University, 2018, p. 3. Available online: http://rave.ohiolink.edu/etdc/view?acc_num=kent1532818215591724 (5/19/2024).

[507] Pei, Yongming. *Re-presenting China through Retranslation*, ibid.

Notably, none of these translations featured blood-sucking, a key element in Soulié's version. This raises the question of Soulié's inspiration for introducing Western vampiric traits into Chinese fiction.

A possibility is one of Wang Tao's (王韜) reinterpretation of a Pu Songling story, which revolves around a blood-drinking fox spirit.[508] Wang Tao co-translated *The Chinese Classics* (1865) with James Legge, traveled extensively in Europe and was the first Chinese to present at Oxford.[509] Given his innate curiosity and vast readings, he might have come across works of vampire literature, or the Western literary archetypes might have influenced him.[510] In the prologue to his Songyin manlu (淞隱漫錄, *Random Records of a Recluse in Wusong*), Wang writes: "If I cannot find [the things I cherish] in China, I look for them in faraway places, in remote regions, and among foreign people."[511] This cosmopolitan approach could have led to a cross-pollination of Eastern and Western supernatural elements, specifically blood-drinking female revenants, which served as a model for "The Corpse, The Blood Drinker." Other potential sources of inspiration for Soulié' could be found in Yuan Mei's *Zi bu yu*. Here, readers encounter a blood-eating,

[508] Wang, Shengyu. *Chinese Enchantment: Reinventing Pu Songling's Classical Tales in the Realm of World Literature, 1880-1920*. Ibid.

[509] More on his engagement with European cities in Tsui, Wai. *A Study of Wang Tao's (1828-1897) Manyou suilu and Fusang youji with Reference to Late Qing Chinese Foreign Travels*. PhD Thesis, The University of Edinburgh, 2010.

[510] Moratto, Riccardo; Xu, Qianqian (徐谦谦). "Paratexts as a site of cultural reflection James Legge and Wang Tao's collaborative translation of The Chinese Classics." *Babel*, Volume 69, Issue 3, Aug 2023, pp. 375 - 397.

[511] Xiaoling, Shi. "Disillusionment with Chinese Culture in the 1880s: Wang Tao's Three Classical Tales." *Journal of Modern Literature in Chinese,* 2016, vol. 13, Issue 1-2, p.217.

monster “twice as big as a water buffalo” that “licks the bellies of other animals with its tongue and sucks their blood,”[512] returning dead whose blood had been stolen to dip with steamed dumplings (**蘸饅**[513]), or mischievous ghosts demanding alcohol and local delicacies, including blood sausage, highlighting a complex relationship with blood that differs from Western vampire narratives.[514]

Therefore, the Chinese vampire emerges as a modern, unique amalgam rather than a recognizable variety of a single, ancestral, and universal phenomenon. While Qing-era Chinese literature features vampiric creatures such as ghosts (*gui* 鬼), vixens (*hulijing* 狐狸精), and supernatural monsters (*mogui* 魔鬼) that often serve as satirical representations of dogmatic religiosity or foreigners, these characters are remarkably diverse and

[512] “大倍水牛 (...) 其物擇肥者踐之，用舌舐其腹，吸其血” (Da bei shuiniu (...) Qi wu ze fei zhe jianzhi, yong she shi qi fu, xi qi xue), in Yuan Mei (袁枚). *Zi bu yu* (子不語). Vol. 18 (第十八卷), available online at *The Chinese Text Project*: https://ctext.org/datawiki.pl?if=gb&res=611392 (5/24/2024). Also available online at *The Project Gutenberg*: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/25245/25245-0.txt (5/24/2024).

[513] “(...) 又記人血**蘸饅頭可醫瘵疾，遂如法取血，歸奉其戚某**.” (He also remembered that dipping steamed buns in human blood could cure consumption (tuberculosis), so he collected the blood according to this method and brought it back to offer to a certain relative, You ji ren xue zhan mantou keyi zhai ji, suiru fa qu xue, guifeng qi qi mou), in Yuan Mei (袁枚). *Zi bu yu* (子不語). Vol. 18 (第十八卷). Ibid.

[514] “(…) 於是，一鬼喝畢，一鬼又要喝，兼討前門外楊家血貫腸做下酒物，呶呶之聲，又復達旦 ” (Then, after one ghost finished drinking, another ghost wanted to drink, and also asked for Yang family's blood sausage from outside the front door as a snack to go with the alcohol. Their noisy voices continued until dawn, Yushi, yi gui he bi, yi gui you yao he, jian tao qian menwai yangjia xue guan chang zuo xia jiu wu, naonao zhi sheng, you fu dadan.) in Yuan Mei (袁枚). *Zi bu yu* (子不語). Vol. 18 (第十八卷). Ibid. While blood is mentioned, it's in the context of a food item rather than direct blood-drinking.

autonomous from Western literary ghosts[515]. Furthermore, unlike the Western 19th and 20th-century vampire, which tends to adhere to a more structured schema, Chinese supernatural entities are more difficult to contain.

In this context, Soulié's "The Corpse, The Blood-Drinker" and later Western vampire media, such as Tod Browning's film *Dracula* (1931), should be viewed as equally important pieces in the puzzle of the Chinese vampire. These Western elements function as building blocks, no more or less significant than the local *gui*, *hulijing*, or *mógui*. Just as Greek elements contribute to the construction of Goethe's vampire, or Transylvanian vocabulary shapes Bram Stoker's Count, Western vampire lore becomes one of many ingredients in the modern *Zhiguai* (志怪) and *Chuanqi* (傳奇) genres. These elements do not erase the Chinese cultural substratum when used. To interpret Soulié's translation solely as a colonialist, unidirectional appropriation would be reductive, failing to capture its significance or the uniqueness of the Chinese vampire. While "The Corpse, The Blood Drinker" undoubtedly engages in orientalization and exoticization, it simultaneously allows readers to grasp elements of Chinese literary tradition and to fill in gaps with new schemata.

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[515] 魔鬼 is a relatively modern term and combines 魔 (derived from the Buddhist demon tempter of Buddha, mara मार in Sanskrit) with 鬼 (the general term for ghost). The first association of these characters appears in the *Shuowen Jiezi* (說文解字), compiled by Xu Shen in the first century CE: "魔：鬼也。从鬼麻聲。" ("Mo: It is a ghost. The character follows [the radical] ghost and has the sound of ma."), see Ctext, https://ctext.org/dictionary.pl?if=gb&id=32315 With the spread of Buddhism, the term became more common and appears also in canonical Ming novels like Journey to the West (*Xiyou Ji*, 西遊記). In this dissertation, I use 魔鬼 as a broad category that encompasses various malevolent supernatural beings in Chinese folklore, reflecting its popularity among contemporary Chinese speakers and students.

Traditional Chinese Elements in "The Blood-Drinker"

To fully appreciate the plurality of motifs in Soulié's translation, we will also mention the persistence of some traditional Chinese literary elements both in his "Blood Drinker" and in other texts and media. A prime example of a similar hybridization is the *Jiangshi* horror genre, epitomized by the 1974 British-Hong Kong co-production, *The Legend of the 7 Golden Vampires.* Partially inspired by Soulié's Chinese vampire, the film blends canonical Western vampire tropes with Chinese cultural and literary traditions, more specifically, the *Zhiguai* (志怪) and *Chuanqi* (傳奇) genres.

While the vampires exhibit familiar characteristics - fangs, blood-drinking, coffin-dwelling, and gothic ruins - they also incorporate Daoist and Buddhist motifs and spectacular martial arts sequences choreographed by renowned kung-fu masters.[516] Beneath its occasionally kitschy surface (the vampires, for example, ostentatiously wear golden bat medallions), the film's structure draws heavily from traditional Chinese supernatural literature. However, this blending - like Soulié's text - is neither a complete Westernization of Chinese motifs nor an absolute Orientalization of Western vampire tropes. It is a new work, a cinematic hybrid that can be analyzed autonomously as yet another facet within the plurality of the vampire. As Daniel O'Brien notes in *Spooky Encounters* (2003), "While it may not be accurate to describe the film as a good one, it's

[516] For example, Sammo Hung, nicknamed "Big, Big brother" and Jackie Chan. See more on the topic in Yip, Man-Fung. *Martial Arts Cinema and Hong Kong Modernity: Aesthetics, Representation, Circulation*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2017.

certainly a memorable one."[517] In this sense, it can serve as a cinematic parallel to Soulié's novel and also memorable literary hybrid.

Although tradition and canon are key elements in Chinese descriptions of ghosts, fox spirits, and later *Jiangshi* vampires, the concept of the "supernatural" as a distinct realm separate from the natural world is relatively modern. As *The Columbia History of Chinese Philosophy* (2001) emphasizes, "supernatural" is a modern term "derived from English."[518] The Chinese term *chāozìrán* (超自然), which is now used to translate "supernatural," did not exist in premodern times. Instead, in traditional Chinese thought, anomalous phenomena were considered integral to the natural order, not violations. "In premodern China," Rania Huntington explains, "the odd and exceptional is an inherent part of the natural system."[519] This worldview accommodated the existence of strange, startling, and unexpected events within a coherent framework based on the principles of balance, retribution, and reward.[520] Rather than being delegated to a separate sphere, ghosts, spirits,

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[517] O'Brien, Daniel. *Spooky Encounters: A Gwailo's Guide to Hong Kong Horror*. Manchester: Headpress, 2023, p.11.

[518] Huntington, Rania. "The Supernatural." *The Columbia History of Chinese Literature*. Victor Mair (ed.), New York: Columbia University Press, 2001, p.110.

[519] Huntington, Rania. "The Supernatural." *The Columbia History of Chinese Literature*. Ibid.

[520] Michael Puett, among many other scholars, highlights that the Fāng Xiāng Shì (方相氏, "one who sees in all four directions," meaning an expert in the occult and ritualistic exorcism) was responsible to identify these imbalances and restore cosmic order, in Puett, Michael. *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004. Also see DeWoskin, Kenneth. *Doctors, diviners, and magicians of ancient China: Biographies of fang-shih.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1983; Von Falkenhausen, Lothar. "Reflections on the Political Role of Spirit Mediums in Early China: The Wu Officials in the Zhou Li." *Early China*, 1995, no. 20, pp. 279–300.

and other uncanny entities were thus part of the human universe. Referring to the *Zhìguài* (志怪) genre, Robert Campany also underlines that the "anomaly accounts," even in their earliest forms, "take the form of lists,"[521] where the juxtaposition between "the ordinary and the extraordinary" does not act as an ontological barrier, but as a poetic device ("cosmographic poetics"[522]).

Consequently, the worlds of Chinese media dealing with the strange are highly mutable and sometimes illusory versions of the same human universe. This is also the reason why David Pollard's translation of Ji Xiaolan (紀曉嵐), another canonical author of strange stories, is titled ***Real Life*** *in China at the Height of Empire* (2014). The interplay between reality and appearance is a trope that, in written texts, goes back as far as Zhuangzi's metaphor of the butterfly dream. As the Zhuangzi states:

昔者莊周夢為胡蝶，指教然胡蝶也，自喻適志與。不知周也。俄然覺，則蘧蘧然周也。不知周之夢為胡蝶與，胡蝶之夢為周與。周與胡蝶，則必有分矣。此之謂物化[523]

Once, Zhuang Zhou dreamed he was a butterfly, a butterfly flitting and fluttering about, happy with himself and doing as he pleased. He didn't know that he was Zhuang Zhou. Suddenly, he woke up, and there he was, solid and unmistakable Zhuang Zhou. But he didn't know if he was Zhuang Zhou who had dreamt he was a butterfly, or a butterfly

[521] Campany, Robert Fort. *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China*. Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 26.

[522] Campany, Robert Fort. *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China*. ibid., p. 205.

[523] I have used the source text available at *The Chinese Text Project*, https://ctext.org/zhuangzi (3/20/2024).

dreaming that he was Zhuang Zhou. Between Zhuang Zhou and the butterfly, there must be some distinction! This is called the Transformation of Things.[524]

Therefore, rather than transgressing a cosmic order, the instability and illusory natures of reality in Chinese fiction are integral to it. As Robert Campany further observes, in most of the texts, "Things are not always as they seem (...) one's bed partner could turn out to be a fox or a stone or a corpse, and last night's cozy inn a cold tomb."[525] Such confusions, however, are to be expected within a pluralistic worldview that accommodates the strange and anomalous.

This acceptance is deeply rooted in Chinese philosophical and literary traditions and evidenced by the very term used to describe such stories: *Zhiguai* (志怪). Comprising of two characters, *Zhi* (志), meaning either "to record" or the noun "record/records," and *Guai* (怪), denoting the aberrant or anomalous, *Zhiguai* points to a long-standing fascination with the unusual[526]. Throughout the history of Chinese literature, from the Six

[524] I have used Burton Watson's translation, Watson, Burton. *Zhuangzi: Basic Writings*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003, p. 44.

[525] Campany, Robert Fort. *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China*. ibid., p. 360.

[526] For more elaborate discussions on the genre see, among others, DeWoskin, Kenneth. "The Six Dynasties Chih-kuai and the birth of fiction." *Chinese narrative: critical and theoretical essays,* A.H. Plaks (ed.) Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1977. pp.21- 52; Kao, Karl (ed.) *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic: Selections from the Third to the Tenth Century*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985; Campany Robert Ford. "Ghosts matter: The culture of ghosts in six dynasties Zhiguai", *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews*. vol. 13, 1991, pp. 15-34; Zeitlin, Judith. *Historian of the Strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese Classical Tale*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993; Gan, Bao. *In Search of the Supernatural: The Written Record*. Translated by Kenneth DeWoskin and James Irving Crump, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996.

Dynasties Period (六朝, *Liuchao*, 220 AD - 559 AD) to today, the genre has remained consistent in its purpose: to record and acknowledge anomalous phenomena without debating their existence. The oldest and one of the most important dictionaries of ancient China, the *Shuowen Jiezi* (說文解字, *Explaining simple and analyzing characters*), compiled in the Eastern Han Dynasty (121 A.D.), further elucidates the concept of *Guai*, linking it to *Yi* (異), which signifies "difference" or "particularity."[527] As other scholars have noted, "these terms [*Guai* and *Yi*] are best understood in relation to their polar opposites: Guai (怪 aberrant) / Chang (常 normative) and Yi (different 異) / Tong (same 同)."[528] Therefore, the *Zhiguai* genre, as a medium for recording the strange and the different, still stands at the core of contemporary Chinese depictions of anomalous elements, including the modern *Jiangshi* - the Chinese vampire.

Nevertheless, the crucial takeaway is that the presence of the strange and anomalous in Chinese literary thought does not imply a dismissal of their ontological or physical reality, nor a binary antagonism between the known and the unknown. Even Confucius, who famously refrained from discussing "anomalies, feats of strength, disorders, or the supernatural/spirits)" ("子不語怪，力，亂，神," Zi bu yu guai, li, luan, shen[529]) in the

[527] "怪，**异**也" On the online Chinese etymological dictionary, https://www.zdic.net/hans/怪 (3/15/2024).

[528] Liu, Mingming. *Theory of the Strange: Towards the Establishment of Zhiguai as a Genre*. UCR Phd Dissertation, 2015. https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3579w43t (3/15/2024).

[529] The translation is mine, from the Chinese texts of the *Analects* available on *The Chinese Text Project*: https://ctext.org/Analects (3/15/2024). There are various other translations for this famous passage, for example James Legge: "The subjects on which the master did not talk were

Analects (論語, *Lunyu*), did not explicitly deny their existence. Rather, as a commentator of the text explains, Confucius avoided these topics, which are the main elements of the *Zhiguai* genre, because "some of them are not good for education, while some are unbearable to talk about."[530] This reluctance suggests recognizing the power and significance of unusual occurrences, even if they were deemed unsuitable for everyday discourse or civic development. Zhu Xi (朱熹), a renowned Southern Song dynasty philosopher and historian, also comments on the topic, arguing that those who automatically reject ghosts and spirits (鬼神, *Guishen*) are individuals who actually lack the capacity to revere them and to perform the necessary rituals: "People who put excessive trust in ghosts and spirits are confused/deceived. However, those who do not believe in them are incapable of reverence. Being able to revere and maintain a distance can be called wisdom."[531]

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extraordinary things, feats of strength, disorder and spiritual beings," available on *The Project Gutenberg* at https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/4094 (3/15/2024).

[530] "或無益於教化，或所不忍言," According to a Song-Ming period commentary of the *Analects*, 論語注疏 (*Lunyu Zhushu*, *Commentary on the Analects of Confucius*) available online at *The Chinese Text Project*: https://ctext.org/lunyu-zhushu/shu-er#n92583 (3/16/2024).

[531] My translation of "人多信鬼神，惑也。而不信者又不能敬。能敬能遠，可謂知矣" (*Ren duo xin guishen, huo ye. Er buxin zhe you buneng jing. Neng jing neng yuan, kewei zhiyi*), in *Lunyu Jizhu* (論語集注, "Commentaries on the Analects") Compiled by Zhu Xi 朱熹. Sishu Zhangjiu Jizhu (四書章句集注, "Annotations on Chapters and Passages of the Four Books"). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983, p. 90. Also see Gardner, Daniel K. "Ghosts and Spirits in the Sung Neo-Confucian World: Chu Hsi on kueishen." *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 1995, vol 115, no. 4, pp. 598-611.

In this sense, the paranormal elements in *Zhiguai* and Chinese fantastic literature bear a striking resemblance to contemporary urban legends and creepypasta. Like the *Zhiguai*, these modern forms of recording the strange also blur the line between reality and fiction, presenting the uncanny as an integral, although not always convenient, part of the world.[532] Perhaps this is also why Soulié felt the need to intervene, adapt, and make his translation more palatable to his target audience.

Another important element when discussing supernatural elements in Chinese literature is their interdependence with human activities. All anomalies and disasters are triggered by the behavior (or later the karma and retribution) of the living[533]. This differs from the independent, parallel society of the vampires in the works of Anne Rice or Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* saga. In the context of Chinese tradition, this connection goes back to before the spread of Buddhism, as far as *The Record of the Rites* (禮記, *Liji*): "These rules [of propriety and rituals] are rooted in heaven, have their correspondences in

[532] On this parallelism also see Wedell-Wedellsborg, Anne. "Haunted Fiction: Modern Chinese Literature and the Supernatural". *International Fiction Review*, vol. 32, no. 1, Jan. 2005, https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/IFR/article/view/7797 (4/12/2024); Hockx, Michel. *Internet Literature in China*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015; Macdonald, Sean. "Notes on the Fantastic in Chinese Literature and Film." *Frontiers of Literary Studies in China*, 2019, vo.13, no.1, pp. 1-24; Fu, Mengxing. "New Wine in Old Bottles: Contemporary Chinese Online Allegorical Ghost Stories as Political Commentary." *Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies and Theory*, 2019, vol. 5, no. 1, https://doi.org/10.24193/mjcst.2019.7.02 (4/12/2024).

[533] In his monograph about the *Lǐjì* (禮記), Michael Ing underlines that even the normative rites and rituals for the dead can sometimes fail, bringing about misfortune and triggering anomalous elements. In Ing, Michael David Kaulana. *The Dysfunction of Ritual in Early Confucianism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

earth, and are [also] applicable to spiritual beings. They extend to funeral rites, sacrifices, archery, chariot-driving, capping, marriage, audiences, and friendly missions."[534]

In yet another passage of the *Analects*, Confucius admonishes his disciple Jilu (季路) for inquiring about spirits or ghosts before fully grasping the affairs of the living: "You are unable now to serve the living; how can you serve ghosts? (...) You are unable now to understand the living, how can you understand ghosts?" ("未能事人,焉能事鬼. . . 未能知生,焉能知死?"[535]). This rebuke does not deny the existence of supernatural entities, integral to Confucian cosmology, but establishes a hierarchy of understanding. Confucius suggests that comprehending the subtle, cosmic relationships between the elements of *Hun* (魂), the ethereal soul, and *Po* (魄), the corporeal soul, first requires a mastery of the earthly realm.[536] In other words, one can hope to comprehend the more esoteric aspects of reality by first grasping the principles that govern the interactions between the living.

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[534] "是故夫禮，必本於天，殽於地，列於鬼神，達於喪祭、射御、冠昏、朝聘," I have adapted James Legge's translation and the original Chinese source text is available on *The Chinese Text Project*: https://ctext.org/liji (3/14/2024).

[535] The translation is mine, from the Chinese texts of the *Analects* available on *The Chinese Text Project*: https://ctext.org/Analects (3/15/2024).

[536] On this topic, the "Meaning of Sacrifices" (祭義 *Jì Yì*) chapter of the *Lǐjì* (禮記) states that the distinction between a cleaner, intelligent spirit (神) and a heavier, chthonic ghost (鬼) was established by the sages and this helped them to better control the state and temper the multitudes: "合鬼與神，教之至也 (...) 天下之禮，致反始也，致鬼神也，致和用也，致義也，致讓也。致反始，以厚其本也；致鬼神，以尊上也；致物用，以立民紀也。致義，則上下不悖逆矣。致讓，以去爭也。合此五者，以治天下之禮也，雖有奇邪，而不治者則微矣 (...) 因物之精，制為之極，明命鬼神，以為黔首則。百眾以畏，萬民以服" the original Chinese source text is available on *The Chinese Text Project*: https://ctext.org/liji (3/14/2024).

Both in the *Zhiguai* tradition and Soulié's text, the supernatural threat is dangerous primarily to the order of an entire community. The vampire-like, blood-drinking corpse disrupts the social order, attacking indiscriminately and causing a breakdown in community response: "The prolonged howling of the unhappy man filled the narrow street and awoke all the sleepers in their beds, but none of them moved; they hid themselves farther and farther under their coverlets."[537] Therefore, the story could be read as a commentary on the consequences of properly failing to observe Confucian relationships and rituals. The improper burial of the young results in her transformation into a threat to the proper functioning of the social cosmos.

Therefore, by exploring the anomalous and its consequences, the Chinese *Zhìguài* tradition (and also Soulié's translation) gives voice to a supernatural realm that, while often unsettling or difficult to comprehend, is nonetheless an undeniable part of life. Even after the Song Dynasty (960-1279) removed the *Zhiguai* and the *Chuanqi* (傳奇) from official histories and grouped them with fictional writing, the genre maintained an ambiguous yet potent relationship with historiography.[538] Writers of supernatural tales continued to refer to their works as "records," "accounts," or "biographies," underscoring their belief in the reality of the strange events they described. Pu Songling, one of the most celebrated writers

[537] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[538] Ying, Hu. "Records of Anomalies." *The Columbia History of Chinese Literature* (Victor Mair, ed.). New York: Columbia University Press, 2001, pp. 542-543.

of the genre, has even adopted the title of "Historian of the strange" (异史氏, *Yishi shi*).[539] The role of the *Zhiguai* writer, then, is not merely to entertain or frighten but to record, to make sense of the strange, and to emphasize the importance of adhering to proper rites and rituals.

"The Blood Drinker" and the Vampiric "Schematic Views"

In the previous chapter, we highlighted that Goethe's ballad expanded the "repertoire" of the vampire figure while still building on the Habsburg "schematic views." However, that analysis focused on two relatively contemporary texts produced in the same language, German. A more complex question arises when we consider texts that are linguistically and culturally distant from their source, such as Soulié's translation of Pu Songling. Are there noticeable connections between the Habsburg schematic views and Soulié's adaptation? This question is crucial for understanding the vampire as a tool in reading world literature and as a recognizable element within literary plurality.

Wolfgang Iser's concept of the "implied reader" offers a useful framework here. Iser argues that texts contain "gaps" that readers must fill through active participation.[540] In the case of Soulié's translation, these gaps are both textual and cultural, requiring readers

[539] Zeitlin, Judith T. *Historian of the Strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese Classical Tale*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.

[540] Even then, "for the reader who is not fully conversant with all teh elements of the repertoire (...) the significance [of a text] cannot be called stabilized" in Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading. A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1987, p. 145.

to bridge vast differences in literary traditions. Shengyu Wang's work on reinventing Pu Songling's tales in world literature further partially illuminates this process.[541] Building on Max Weber's notion of "disenchantment of the world,"[542] he argues that early translations and adaptations of the *Liaozhai*, including Soulié's, served as "mediums of both <<enchantment>> and <<disenchantment of the world,>>"[543] simultaneously introducing Chinese literary elements to Western readers and reinterpreting them through a Western lens. This dual process of familiarization and defamiliarization aligns with the vampire's function as a recognizable and perpetually mutable figure across cultural boundaries. In continuation, as we did with both Frombald's and Goethe's texts, we explore how and *if* this cross-cultural process affects the vampire aesthetic world in the same manner as before.

a) Dichotomy of the Known and Unknown

As previously argued, the dichotomy between the known and unknown is a fundamental aspect of the vampire aesthetic world and manifests as a tension between verifiable facts and inexplicable phenomena. In Frombald's report, this dichotomy emerges through the juxtaposition of historical and geographical details with incredible events

[541] Wang, Shengyu. *Chinese Enchantment: Reinventing Pu Songling's Classical Tales in the Realm of World Literature, 1880-1920*. PhD Thesis, University of Chigago, Illinois, 2017. p. 130. Available online: https://doi.org/10.6082/M1959FR0 .

[542] Weber, max. "Science as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Hans Heinrich Gerth & Wright Mills (eds.). New York: Routledge, 1991, pp. 129-56.

[543] Wang, Shengyu. *Chinese Enchantment*, ibid. p.4.

surrounding the discovery of the vampire. Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth" also builds on this element, contrasting the protagonist's familiar pagan world of love-making and devotion to old gods with the unfamiliar Christian concepts of sexual abstinence, monotheism, and, ultimately, revenantism.

As expected from a volume translated as *Strange Stories*, Soulié's text subtly integrates the dichotomy between the known and unknown into the narrative from the outset. Unlike Frombald's report, which initially locates its events with precision in "the Gradisker District in Ungarn," or Goethe's ballad, set on the familiar route from Athens to Corinth, Soulié's translation begins in an unspecified "narrow valley."[544] This geographical ambiguity places the reader in unfamiliar territory. While traveling and seeking lodging are recognizable activities, Soulié infuses these familiar elements with an air of otherness. The meal's description, with its "smoking rice, vegetables preserved in vinegar, and lukewarm wine served in small cups,"[545] would likely seem exotic to a Western reader of the early 20th-century.[546] Similarly, the casual mention that "the bed-clothes rolled on the pack-saddles were spread out, as usual, on planks and trestles"[547] hints at a tradition unfamiliar

[544] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[545] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[546] In Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* (1998), the narrative also uses culinary ambiguity to underscore cultural differences and create a sense of the unknown within the familiar act of eating: "That's the way Chinese mothers show they love their children, not through hugs and kisses but with stern offerings of steamed dumplings, duck's gizzards, and crab." Tan, Amy. *The Joy Luck Club*. New York: Vintage Books, 1998, p. 114.

[547] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

to urban readers of Soulié's time. This blend of the recognizable and the foreign creates a liminal space and sets the stage for the supernatural events to come.

While Goethe's "Braut" uses the youth's journey from Athens to Corinth as a metaphor for venturing into the unknown, Soulié inverts this dynamic. His three caravan masters and their muleteers, who "abuse animals with their coarse voices,"[548] move from the unfamiliar, inhospitable mountain range into a village that should represent safety and familiarity. However, this expectation is subverted when the supernatural intrudes at "the hour of the Rat." Soulié's decision not to explain this temporal reference further adds to the sense of otherness, leaving Western readers to grapple with its ominous implications.[549] In the same scene, this ambiguity between the familiar and the strange is further emphasized by the name of the protagonist, Wang Fou, Happiness-of-the-kings. Although readers are positioned to empathize with his plight, his unfamiliar name serves to orientalize him for Western audiences.[550] Furthermore, the irony of his name becomes apparent as "a growing

[548] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[549] In Western literature, rats have often symbolized disease and impending doom. For example, Bram Stoker's "The Judge's House" (1891) features a giant rat as a vessel for a malevolent ghost, while his *Dracula* (1897) uses rats to foreshadow vampiric presence. H.G. Wells' *The Food of the Gods* (1904) depicts mutated rats as harbingers of societal collapse. Also, in psychology, Freud's famous "Rat Man" case study (1909) explores obsessional neurosis through a patient's rat-related, harm inflicting fantasies. Later, the Polish writer Witold Gombrowicz dramatically describes the torture device used by a judge: "The torments grew ever more intense, and by means of the rat Skorabkowski tightened ever further, without respite - and the tension rose, and rose, and rose. And all the time - the rat. Without a break - the rat. Only - the rat. The rat, and the rat, and the rat." cited from Gombrowicz, Witold, and Bill Johnston. "The Rat." *New England Review*, 2004, vol. 25, no. 1/2, p. 83.

[550] In the original text of the *Liaozhai* this traveler does not have a name.

terror froze him,"[551] highlighting the disconnect between the character's designation as *royal happiness* and his lived experience.

The ambiguity between the known and unknown intensifies as "The Corpse" reaches its climax. Wang Fou first glimpses only "a pale hand holding the curtain folds,"[552] a familiar body part that hints at an unfamiliar whole. This focus on disembodied hands as uncanny elements echoes earlier Gothic works, such as Théophile Gautier's "The Mummy's Foot" (1840)[553] or Guy de Maupassant's "The Hand" (1883), where severed limbs take on a life of their own.[554] The tension escalates even further when the corpse approaches one of Wang Fou's fellow travelers and "appears to give him a long kiss."[555] For a brief moment, this ambiguous description leaves both the protagonist and the reader uncertain of the true nature of the act, in a confusion which mirrors the debate surrounding Edvard Munch's painting series "Love and Pain" (1893-1895).[556] Like these paintings, Soulié's

[551] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[552] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[553] Available on *The Project Gutenberg*: Gautier, Théophile "The Mummy's Foot," https://www.gutenberg.org/files/22662/22662-h/22662-h.htm (2/6/2024) in the translation of Lafcadio Hearn (Japanese name: Yakumo Koizumi , 小泉 八雲), a contemporary of George Soulié who translated, among others, a considerable number of Japanese strange stories. See, for example, his *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* (1894), *Japanese Fairy Tales* (1898, and sequels), *In Ghostly Japan* (1899), and *Kwaidan: Stories and Studies of Strange Things* (1904).

[554] This story appears to be the direct inspiration for *The Adams Family* character, Thing T. Thing, which is a living disembodied hand, a helpful "handservant."

[555] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[556] Although Munch himself explained that his intention was to paint a double embrace and a kiss, the painting continues to appear as "The Vampire" in many art history analyses. See, for example, *The Munch Museum* article on this topic: "An Interpretation of Edvard Munch's Vampire."

text similarly invites multiple readings and allows readers to fill in the gaps between the familiar (a kiss) and the unknown (a supernatural assault). Only later does Wang Fou recognize the "pale figure, the eyes, from which a red flame was shining, and sharp teeth"[557] as a vampire, confirming the dangerous nature of the situation.

In Soulié's translation, the dichotomy between the known and unknown persists until the very end, leaving readers in unresolved tension. Unlike Pu Songling's original text, which reintegrates the supernatural event into the familiar bureaucratic world through an official dispatch (牒 *Die*), Soulié's version eschews any such resolution.[558] This absence of official documentation or bureaucratic response amplifies the sense of disruption to the known order and the unknown lingers beyond the story's conclusion. This contrast is particularly striking compared to other vampire canonical texts, such as Johann Flückinger's "Visum et Repertum" (1732). Flückinger's report, like Pu Songling' original, concludes with an institutional validation of the supernatural events, complete with official signatures and seals.[559] Much like the dispatch mentioned in Pu Songling's "Shi bian," this

MVNCH. https://www.munchmuseet.no/en/our-collection/en-tolkning-av-edvard-munchs-vampyr/ (3/6/2024).

[557] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[558] "客泣告宰曰："身四人出，今一人歸，此情何以信鄉里？"宰與之牒，齎送以歸" (Keqi gao zai yue: "Shen si ren chu, jin yiren gui, ci qing heyi xin xiangli?" Zai yu zhi die, ji song yi gui) in Pu Songling. *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. Ibid.

[559] The final passage of "Visum et Repertum" reads: "We, the undersigned, attest herewith that all that the regimental medical officer of the honorable Fürtenbusch regiment, together with the two medical officers signed below, has here above deposed in the matter of vampires, having been present ourselves and having observed everything, is in accordance with the truth, and has been undertaken, investigated, and examined in our presence. In token whereof our own signatures are appended hereto with our own hands. Belgrade, 26 January 1732" [my translation from German].

official attestation also serves to contain the unknown within the framework of known bureaucratic processes. Soulié, however, deliberately omits such validation, leaving the boundary between the known and unknown permeable and unsettling.

b) Temporal layering

Layer	Time Period	Description
Mythical Past	Indeterminate past	At an indeterminate point in time, the "astrologers" determined the rules for burial and the auspicious/inauspicious times for funeral rituals.
Cyclical Time	Recurring daily	The "Hour of the Rat" - cosmic pattern of supernatural activity
The Pre-Narrative Past	Six months before the main events	Death of the Chief of Elders' daughter
The Immediate Past	Between the daughter's death and the story's present	The corpse is in a liminal state, and the coffin is placed in a barn
The Narrative Present	~12 hours	The core events of the story: the travelers' arrival, the vampire encounter, and the discovery of bodies
The Implied Future	After the main events	Unresolved ending, potential for future incidents

Fig. 14. The temporal layers in Soulié's "The Corpse, The Blood-Drinker" in chronological order

Flückinger's report was also published in Hamberger, Klaus. *Mortuus non mordet: Dokumente zum Vampirismus 1689-1791*. Wien: Turia und Kant, 1992, pp. 49-54, while an original text can be found at *Documents of the Medvedia vampire case*, 1732. OESTA/FHKA/Hoffinanz Ungarn, 1138r-1141v. There is also an online version in German, taken from Hamberger: https://www.paranormal.de/vampir/quellec.html (2/6/2024).

The temporal layering in vampire narratives is another crucial element in constructing their aesthetic world. In Frombald's report, we have underlined that the revenant's exhumation and execution are framed as consequences of an extradiegetic past that echoes a darker, more complicated timeline structured on centuries of historical tensions. Frombald's text exhibits five distinct temporal layers, a number mirrored in Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth." Goethe's ballad, however, introduces a cyclical aspect to this layering and alludes to an implied future—a narrative device that would become fundamental in subsequent vampire literature. In examining Soulié's "The Corpse, The Blood-Drinker," we must consider how and if such temporal elements manifest and evolve. Does Soulié maintain the dichotomy between an ancient curse or a past transgression and the present narrative?

Although a relatively short text, Soulié's "Corpse" exhibits a complex temporal structure with at least six distinct layers. The deepest stratum is **a) the mythical past**, which, while not as explicitly stated as in Goethe's ballad, permeates the narrative through allusions to Chinese cultural traditions and beliefs. This includes concepts such as the ancestral "inferior soul" and the role of astrologers in determining auspicious burial dates, providing a cultural backdrop that informs the vampiric anomaly. Overlaying this is **b) the cyclical time concept**, introduced through the "hour of the Rat" and rooted in Soulié's interpretation of the Chinese zodiac. This layer suggests a recurring, cosmic pattern of supernatural activity that transcends linear progression. The **c) pre-narrative past**, specifically the death of the Chief of Elders' daughter six months before the main events, serves as the immediate origin of the vampire. This leads into **d) the immediate past,** a

liminal period between the daughter's death and her proper burial, during which her corpse remains in an ambiguous state, "placed in a barn"[560] awaiting interment. The story's core unfolds in **e) the narrative present**, which spans roughly 12 hours and focuses on the travelers' encounter with the supernatural. Finally, the unresolved ending hints at **f) an implied future**, echoing Goethe's technique but with less emphasis. This leaves the reader uncertain about the vampire's ultimate fate, whether it will be properly buried or destroyed in the Habsburg fashion.

Despite their cultural differences, Soulié's translation and Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth" share striking similarities in their temporal structures. Both narratives draw upon a mythical past to contextualize their supernatural events while focusing on a dramatic present that disrupts the natural order. Like the ballad, Soulié's "Corpse" also has a pre-narrative and an immediate past, layers which intertwine and determine the elements in the present, when most of the events occur. However, their treatment of the future diverges significantly. Goethe's vampire bride embodies a promise of renewal beyond death and a return to a more authentic mode of being. In contrast, Soulié's tale offers no such optimistic resolution. The witnesses in "The Corpse, The Blood-Drinker" are left with only the grim aftermath of the vampire's attack, finding "the hollow and greenish aspect of the corpses whose blood had been emptied"[561] in the harsh light of day.

[560] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[561] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

This open-ended conclusion in "The Corpse, The Blood Drinker" exemplifies a hallmark of Gothic literature: the cultivation of ambiguity and unresolved tensions. As Fred Botting notes in *Gothic* (1996), this narrative strategy suggests impactful "flights of imagination (...) supernatural possibility, mystery, magic, wonder, and monstrosity."[562] In this sense, Soulié's work aligns with other canonical vampire narratives of the 19th century. In Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872), for instance, the vampire's physical destruction is juxtaposed with the protagonist's enduring psychological haunting. After finding the truth about her true nature, Carmilla's/Mircalla's body "was raised, and a sharp stake driven through the heart of the vampire (...) Then the head was struck off, and a torrent of blood flowed from the severed neck. The body and head was next placed on a pile of wood, and reduced to ashes, which were thrown upon the river and borne away."[563] However, despite this bloody deconstruction of the vampire body, the novel ends with the protagonist's confessions: "to this hour the image of Carmilla returns to memory (...) and often from a reverie I have started, fancying I heard the light step of Carmilla at the drawing-room door."[564]

Similarly, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* concludes with Van Helsing's cryptic words about Harker's son, hinting at the Count's potential legacy. Although Dracula is simultaneously decapitated and stabbed in the heart, and his "whole body crumbled into

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[562] Botting, Fred. Gothic. London & New York: Routledge, 2014, p. 2.

[563] Le Fanu, Joseph Sheridan. *Carmilla*. The Project Gutenberg eBook, available online: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/10007/ (2/6/2024).

[564] Le Fanu, Joseph Sheridan. *Carmilla*. Ibid.

dust and passed from our sight,"[565] Van Helsing concludes that the boy "will some day know what a brave and gallant woman his mother is"[566] and that "later on he will understand how some men so loved her, that they did dare much for her sake."[567] As David Punter argues in *The Literature of Terror* (1980), such unresolved endings extend the reading experience beyond the confines of the text and give the horror genre the possibility of almost unlimited reiterations.[568]

Soulié's translation further aligns with canonical vampire literature by emphasizing recurring, cyclical temporal patterns within the narrative. The attack in "The Corpse" occurs "towards the hour of the Rat" (11 pm -1 am), when "a sensation of cold and uneasiness awoke one of the three travelers."[569] This specific timeframe echoes similar patterns in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, where midnight consistently marks moments of supernatural danger. From the very beginning of the novel, Jonathan Harker, for instance, is warned by a Transylvanian peasant that "when the clock strikes midnight, all the evil things in the world will have full sway."[570] The same witching hour also governs the strange

[565] Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. London: Penguin Classics, 2003, p. 384.

[566] Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. Ibid. p. 386.

[567] Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. Ibid. p. 386.

[568] See the chapter "Mutations of terror: theory and the Gothic," in Punter, David. T*he Literature of Terror. The Modern Gothic*. London & New York: Longman, 1996, pp. 181 - 217.

[569] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[570] Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. Ibid. p. 16.

occurrences on the ship Demeter[571] and Renfield's increasing agitation, according to Dr. Seward: "Midnight. – Another change in him (...) once more I heard him yelling (...) I could hear it better than in the morning."[572]

In Pu Songling's original "Shi bian" there is no reference to a specific time when the attack takes place, and the "hour of the Rat" (*Zi*, 子) seems to be Soulié's addition to give the text a specific, Oriental aesthetic. However, Pu Songling does mention this time interval in several of his stories and also in the introduction to the *Liaozhai*. More specifically, as Judith Zeitlin underlines, "the final tableau [of the author's introduction] theatrically stages the circumstances of the collection's composition, depicting the author writing alone at midnight in his freezing studio."[573] These midnight interactions between the paranormal and normal worlds in Soulié, Stoker, or Pu Songling appear almost as imperative, cyclical events. This contrasts with Goethe's "Braut," where the protagonist's haunting seems more spontaneous. The unexpected presence of guests draws the bride, and

[571] "2 August, midnight. – Woke up from few minutes' sleep by hearing a cry, seemingly outside my port. Could see nothing in fog. Rushed on deck, and ran against mate. Tells me heard cry and ran, but no sign of man on watch. One more gone. Lord, help us!" in Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. Ibid. p. 94.

[572] Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. Ibid. p. 124.

[573] Zeitlin, Judith. *Historian of the Strange. Pu Songling and the Chinese Classical Tale*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993, p. 55. The original passage in the *Liaozhai* reads as following: "獨是子夜**熒熒**，**燈昏欲蕊**；**蕭齋瑟瑟**，**案冷疑冰**." (Du shi ziye yingying, deng hun yu rui; xiao zhai sese, an leng yi bing), Available on the public domain on Wikisource, at: zh.wikisource.org/wiki/聊齋志異/作者自志 (3/6/2024). Zeitlin translated this passage as: "It's just that here it is the glimmering hour of midnight as I am about to trim my failing lamp. Outside my bleak studio the wind is sighing; inside my desk is cold as ice." in Zeitlin, Judith. *Historian of the Strange. Pu Songling and the Chinese Classical Tale*. ibid. p. 49.

her demeanor lacks the scheduled precision found in canonical Gothic texts. As she exclaims, startled:

Bin ich, rief sie aus, so fremd im Hause
Daß ich von dem Gaste nicht vernahm?
Ach! so hält man mich in meiner Klause!

"Am I so strange in this house
That I did not hear of the guest?
Ah! I am kept so confined in my cell/cloister"[574]

Although extremely similar, the temporal layers in Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth" and Soulié's "The Corpse, The Blood-Drinker" reveal crucial, contrasting nuances in the motivation and causes of vampirism. In Goethe's ballad, the vampiric bride's nocturnal appearance represents an individual rebellion against societal changes that wronged her. Her presence, an anomaly in the sleeping household,[575] stems from personal desire rather than cosmic imbalance.

Conversely, Soulié's translation, set in a Chinese context, presents a different paradigm. The restless corpse, dead for six months and not yet interred ("her coffin was placed in a barn, waiting for the burial"[576]), reflects a broader cosmological disturbance. Within the Confucian worldview, such negligence in burial rites disrupts the balance between the earthly and spiritual realms. Therefore, the "hour of the Rat" is not merely a

[574] My translation from Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., p. 90, lines 36-42.

[575] "Und schon lag das ganze Haus im stillen,/ Vater, Töchter, nur die Mutter wacht" ("And the whole house was silent,/ Father, daughters, only the mother was awake") in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., p. 89, lines 15-16.

[576] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

chronological marker but a cosmic imperative that signals the consequences of neglected rituals. Soulié's corpse manifests a collective failure in upholding social and spiritual obligations. The Chinese vampire, therefore, emerges not from personal hunger or rebellion but from a systemic imbalance that demands resolution.

c) Narratorial Displacement

Year	Work	Opening Line
1725	"Copia eines Schreibens aus dem Gradisker District in Ungarn"	"Nachdeme bereits vor 10. Wochen…" (After 10 Weeks have passed...)[577]
1766	"Shi bian"	"陽信某翁者，邑之蔡店人" (An old man from the Yangxin county came to live in the county of Caidian)[578]
1797	"Die Braut von Corinth"	"Nach Corinthus von Athen gezogen…" (Just moved from Corinth to Athens …)[579]
1819	*The Vampyre*	"The superstition upon which this tale is founded is very general in the East. Among the Arabians it appears to be common."[580]
1872	*Carmilla*	"In Styria, we, though by no means magnificent people, inhabit a castle, or schloss."[581]
1897	*Dracula*	"3 May. Bistritz. – Left Munich at 8.35 p.m. on 1st May, arriving at Vienna early next morning"[582]
1913	"The Corpse, The Blood-Drinker"	"Night was slowly falling in the narrow valley."[583]

Fig. 15. The opening lines in canonical vampire narratives

[577] Anon. "Copia Eines Schreibens." ibid.

[578] Pú Sōnglíng. *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. ibid.

[579] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., p. 88, line 1.

[580] Polidori, John William. *The Vampyre.* ibid.

[581] Le Fanu, Joseph Sheridan. *Carmilla*. Ibid.

[582] Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. Ibid. p. 13.

[583] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

The next schematic view I will examine is narratorial displacement. This construct refers to narrators or main characters finding themselves in unfamiliar environments where their previous worldviews and parameters no longer fully apply. In Frombald's "Copia," this displacement is explicitly stated in the title ("Copia eines Schreibens aus dem Gradisker District in Ungarn"), with uncanny elements in the Habsburg Empire's periphery threatening both civilian and authoritative stability. Similarly, in Goethe's "The Bride of Corinth," the young man's journey from Athens places him in a setting where he confronts not only a new form of dogmatism but also the vampiric existence of his betrothed. Another example of canonic vampire literature that follows this format is Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla.* The first chapter of this novel debuts with the following direct geographical reference: "In Styria, we, though by no means magnificent people, inhabit a castle, or schloss. A small income, in that part of the world, goes a great way."[584] This displacement destabilizes the characters' - and, by extension, the readers' - sense of normalcy and creates an ideal backdrop for the intrusion of strange elements.

We also highlighted that the texts of both "Copia eines Schreibens" and "Die Braut von Corinth" begin with similar temporal markers: "nachdeme" (after which) and "nach" (towards/to) respectively. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* echoes this pattern, and the first words of the novel are "left for…" signaling Jonathan Harker's departure from the familiar geography of Western Europe. It is also worth noting that John Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819) takes a similar approach, beginning with "The superstition upon which this tale is

[584] Le Fanu, Joseph Sheridan. *Carmilla*. Ibid.

founded is very general in the East. Among the Arabians it appears to be common."[585] This framing device situates the vampire legend within an Orientalist perspective, in line with the 19th-century British fascination with the "exotic" East that would culminate in figures like T.E. Lawrence.[586]

While *Dracula* emphasizes the narrator's journey through Jonathan Harker's intimate first-person journal, Soulié presents a similar voyage from a broader perspective. The reader observes a caravan traversing a winding mountain path, with tired mules burdened by their loads. As night approaches and fog thickens, the travelers eagerly seek the familiar comfort of a village. This reversal of the typical vampire narrative, where characters often venture into unknown territories, places the protagonists' displacement at the story's outset. The caravan masters transition from the alien wilderness to the welcoming village, complete with its inn, innkeeper, and familiar foods: "The three travelers, happy to be able to rest, got down from their saddles (...) The meal was served in the general sitting room, in the midst of noise, laughing, and movement."[587] This approach echoes Polidori's introduction of Count Ruthven in *The Vampyre*, where the supernatural

[585] Polidori, John William. *The Vampyre.* London: Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, 1819. Available online at The Project Gutenberg: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/6087/6087-h/6087-h.htm (2/6/2024).

[586] Jill Galvan argues that Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is also an example of the same spirit, more specifically, an "Oriental Villain" who "owes a good part of its power to disturb from associations with the 1857-1858 Indian Rebellion." in Galvan, Jill. "Occult Networks and the Legacy of the Indian Rebellion in Bram Stoker's Dracula." *History of Religions*, vol. 54, no. 4, 2015, p. 436. More on the topic of the Arabic lore and its Western renditions in Al-Rawi, Ahmed K. "The Arabic Ghoul and Its Western Transformation." *Folklore*, vol. 120, no. 3, 2009, pp. 291–306.

[587] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

entity is first encountered within the familiar confines of English high society. As Polidori notes, “His [Count Ruthven’s] peculiarities caused him to be invited to every house; all wished to see him.”[588] Both Soulié and Polidori, therefore, subvert expectations by situating their vampiric threats within ostensibly safe, known environments.

Nevertheless, Soulié’s approach slightly diverges from Polidori and other vampire texts by prioritizing descriptions of the natural environment. This focus aligns closely with traditional Chinese landscape painting, particularly works from the Chan (禪) tradition. While the original text of the “Shi bian” emphasizes socio-economic details about the innkeeper and his establishment, Soulié crafts a scene reminiscent of classical Chinese art. His introduction parallels paintings like Fan Kuan’s (范寬, 960-1030) “Travelers among Mountains and Streams” (谿山行旅, Xi shanxing lu) **(Fig. 16)**.

By adopting this descriptive style, Soulié creates a hybrid narrative that blends Chinese artistic sensibilities with Western Gothic elements. This approach not only orientalizes the story but also situates it within a recognizably Chinese aesthetic framework, as stated in the introduction: “Each nation has an heirloom of traditions, customs, or religion to which its literature constantly refers (...) and in my translation, I have sometimes supplied what the author only thought necessary to imply. In many places, the translation is literal; in other places, it is literary.”[589] For Western readers, therefore, Soulié's detailed descriptions of the Chinese landscape create an exotic, unfamiliar setting.

[588] Polidori, John William. *The Vampyre.* ibid.

[589] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

However, for Chinese readers, these same descriptions might evoke a sense of familiarity and cultural recognition.

Fig. 16. Fàn Kuān's (范寬) "Travelers among Mountains and Streams" (谿山行旅), © National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan

d) Mortuary Imagery

Mortuary imagery and artifacts play a crucial role in shaping the vampire aesthetic world. Objects such as coffins, tombstones, and wooden stakes also add material authenticity to supernatural elements. While Frombald's report offered a selective account of exhumed remains, leaving readers to fill in the gaps, Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth" integrates subtle mortuary references without an explicit exhumation scene. For example, the bride's tomb-like "cloister cell" ("Klause"[590]), her deathly pale appearance, and the presence of a cross symbolizing human sacrifice[591] all evoke a funereal atmosphere. Goethe further enriches this mortuary tableau with elements reminiscent of classical and Shakespearean traditions, such as the black and gold diadem echoing both Hector's funeral in the *Iliad* and the contrast between mourning and festivity in *Hamlet*. Such details ground the supernatural narrative in tangible, recognizable symbols of death and connect his vampiric character to broader literary and cultural intersections.

While Soulié's translation omits the color imagery present in Pu Songling's original "Shi bian," the Chinese text describes the corpse with a golden hue on its face ("面淡金色, " *Miandan jinse*[592]) and silk wrapped around its forehead ("生绢抹额," *Sheng juan mo e*

[590] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., p. 90, line 38.

[591] "Und ein Heiland wird am Kreutz verehrt,/ Opfer fallen hier,/ Weder Lamm noch Stier,/ Aber Menschenopfer unerhört." in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., p. 91, lines 60-63.

[592] Pú Sōnglíng. *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. ibid.

é[593]). This vivid contrast of gold against the night's darkness is similar to Goethe's vampire bride with her "gold and black diadem around her head" ("Um die Stirn ein schwarz und goldnes Band"[594]). In addition to the *Iliad* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, such juxtaposition of light and dark colors is a recurring motif in Gothic and horror literature. For example, in Poe's "The Masque of the Red Death" (1842), the progression of colored rooms culminates in a black chamber with scarlet windows, where the embodiment of death appears as a tall, masked figure "shrouded from head to foot in the habiliments of the grave."[595] Similarly, Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) also employs chromatic contrasts to emphasize the creature's unnatural state: "His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes (...), his shriveled complexion and straight black lips."[596]

Soulié's translation also supplements the traditional mortuary imagery by describing the vampiric apparition in a "short quilted dress and (...) long narrow jacket."[597] This representation seems to evoke rather modern attire, instead of a traditional one. Such

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[593] Pú Sōnglíng. *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. ibid.

[594] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., p. 89, line 32.

[595] Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Masque of the Red Death" available online on *The Project Gutenberg*: http://www.gutenberg.org/1/0/6/1064/ (6/21/2024).

[596] Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus. Available online on *The Project Gutenberg*: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/84/84-h/84-h.htm (6/21/2024).

[597] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

an orientalized and sexualized portrayal of the specter aligns with the protagonist's first impression of a female silhouette "bending over the bed of one of the sleeping travelers," appearing to "give him a long kiss."[598] This depiction not only contributes to the modernization of the vampire but also imbues it with a specific erotic quality, blending traditional Chinese elements with Western perceptions of the dangerous, "feminized East."[599]

In Pu Songling's original "Shi bian," the treatment of the corpse reflects traditional Chinese funerary practices. The dead girl's body awaits coffining in a small, dimly lit room, and covered with a paper quilt. More or less, the essence of these details is preserved in several subsequent translations. For example, Herbert Giles's 1880 "The Resuscitated Corpse" describes the body as "lying in the women's quarters, waiting for the coffin, which his son had gone away to buy."[600] The emphasis on "the women's quarters" is a personal addition of the translator, who adhered to Victorian gender conventions.[601] Giles, however, kept everything else and depicts the corpse as "decked out with paper robes in the usual way."[602] Similarly, John Minford's 2006 "Living Dead" portrays the scene as "her body

[598] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[599] Kontje, Todd. *German Orientalisms*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004, p. 94.

[600] Giles, Herbert. *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*. Vol. II. London: Thos de la Rue & Co, 1880, p. 193.

[601] Wang, Shengyu. "Chinese Folklore for the English Public: Herbert A. Giles's 1880 Translation of Pu Songling's Classical Tales." ibid.

[602] Giles, Herbert. *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*. ibid. p. 194.

was lying in one of the rooms of the inn (...) stretched out on a trestle-bed and covered with a paper shroud."[603] This attention to funerary detail adds authenticity to the supernatural elements and provides insight into Qing-era customs surrounding death and burial.

In this respect, Soulié's translation slightly diverges from the original text. Unlike Pu Songling's version, where the corpse awaits the right materials for the coffining ("子出购材木未归", *Zi chu gou caimu wei gui*[604]), Soulié delays revealing the presence of a dead body until the narrative's climax. Additionally, the "women's quarters" of Giles' translation becomes "only a barn, badly shut,"[605] heightening the sense of liminality and neglect. Soulié also shifts responsibility for the delayed burial, stating the corpse was waiting for "a favourable day to be fixed by the astrologers."[606] This contrasts with Pu Songling's practical explanation of awaiting wood and perhaps other materials for the funeral.

Furthermore, the repeated mention of "coffin" in Soulié's brief conclusion also underscores the villagers' preoccupation with this mortuary object. Instead of immediately checking the welfare of the other guests at the inn, "they returned in haste to find out in what condition the coffin was."[607] Furthermore, Soulié also alters familial relations and

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[603] Songling, Pu. *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*. John Mindord (tr). London: Penguin Books, 2006. p. 46.

[604] Pú Sōnglíng. *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. ibid.

[605] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[606] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[607] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

portrays the deceased as the Chief of Elders' daughter rather than the innkeeper's daughter-in-law. This change subtly redirects blame, implying the Chief of Elders had wronged his own daughter and hidden her coffin in an abandoned barn. The new situation not only amplifies the dramatic tension and moral ambiguity surrounding the corpse's treatment but also reflects Western preconceptions about Chinese funerary rites.

e) Themes of Blood and Contagion

In both Pu Songling's original story and Soulié's translation, the vampire threat triggers a community response. This behavior mirrors collective reactions to disease outbreaks. A similar communal aspect is also evident in Frombald's Habsburg text, where villagers threaten to abandon their homes if the corpse is not adequately dealt with.[608] This perspective reinforces the metaphor of vampiric "bloodsucking" as contagion, extending beyond mere death to a state of collective "un-death." In the case of Goethe's vampire bride, she seeks to mitigate the more significant consequences by redirecting her un-death toward the old gods.[609] Similar attempts to stop an indiscriminate contagion, or at least control it, are also encountered in later vampire literature, such as Anne Rice's *The Vampire Lestat* (1985), who embraces his vampiric nature to become a rock star. Other examples are Stephenie Meyer's Cullens, who choose to be "vegetarian" vampires in her

[608] "(...) allein wofern ich ihnen nicht gestatten werde / auf vorherige Beschau und Rechtliche Erkanntnuß mit dem Cörper nach ihrem Gebrauch zu verfahren / müsten sie Haus und Gut verlassen." in Anon. "Copia eines Schreibens," ibid.

[609] "Bring in Flammen Liebende zur Ruh./ Wenn der Funke sprüht,/ Wenn die Asche glüht,/ Eilen wir den alten Göttern zu," in Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., p. 99, lines 193-196.

Twilight Saga (2005-2020). These instances illustrate how the vampire figure shifts from a metaphor for uncontrolled contagion to a symbol of agency in the face of an altered existence.

Soulié's text shows no indications of widespread disease in the village. Unlike the outbreaks often associated with Habsburg vampire reports, the threat remains localized. The text notes that "the Chief of Elders recognised his daughter dead for the last six months whose coffin was placed in a barn, waiting for the burial, a favourable day to be fixed by the astrologers."[610] This deliberate delay in burial, which Soulié hints is rooted in superstition, starkly contrasts with Western approaches to death during epidemics.[611] The unburied corpse, abandoned in a run-down barn, would represent a dangerous mishandling of death, distinct from the revenant execution of the Habsburg context.

In Frombald's "Copia eines Schreibens," blood-sucking serves as a metaphor for contagion and political instability on the Habsburg military frontier, where plague and

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[610] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[611] For the vampire's frequent association with epidemiology, see Jenkins, Mark Collins. *Vampire Forensics. Uncovering the Origins of an Enduring Legend*. Washington: National Geographic Society, 2010; In the same vein is Michael Pickering's chapter "Vampires, Ottomans, and the Spectre of Contagion: The Intersectionality of Fear on the Periphery of the Habsburg Monarchy" in Kehoe, Thomas; Pickering Michael (eds.). *Fear in the German-Speaking World, 1600-2000*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. Another similar connection in DiMarco, Vincent. "The Bearer of Crazed and Venomous Fangs: Popular Myths and Learned Delusions Regarding the Bite of the Mad Dog." Bloomington: iUniverse, 2014, especially pages 215-220; Also see Castel, Olivier. "Bacteria and Vampirism in Cinema". Médecine et maladies infectieuses. No. 43, 2013, pp. 363–367; For more context see Balázs Peter's articles "Empiric physiology in epidemiologic doctrines of the 18th century, Hungarian General Norm of Health in 1770". *Acta Physiol Hung*, 2006 March, pp. 23-32; and Balázs , Peter & Foley, Kristie. "The Austrian success of controlling plague in the 18th century: maritime quarantine methods applied to continental circumstances". *Kaleidoscope History*, 2010, no. 1, pp. 73-89.

Ottoman incursions posed constant threats. Within that specific context, Plogojowitz's vampirism represents a tangible danger to both community health and imperial stability. Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth" reverses this perspective by giving voice to the revenant. Blood-sucking becomes a nuanced symbol of rebellion against Christian asceticism and a return to pagan sensuality. The bride's desire to "suck the blood from her lover's heart" ("Und zu saugen seines Herzens Blut"[612]) is an act of preservation of her sexuality in the face of a new, dogmatic religion. She warns her Athenian lover that he cannot thrive in Corinth, now emptied of its colorful old gods ("Und der alten Götter bunt Gewimmel/ Hat sogleich das stille Haus geleert"[613]), where he would "waste away" ("Du versiechest nun an diesem Ort"[614]) and become a mere specter of his former self. Through this, Goethe transforms blood-sucking from a symbol of contagion to one of resistance against cultural erasure.

[612] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., p. 98, line 179.

[613] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., p. 91, lines 57-58.

[614] Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Die Braut von Corinth. Romanze," ibid., p. 98, line 184.


Fig. 17. (Left) Illustration for the Chinese original in the *Xiangzhu Liaozhai zhiyi tuyong*, first printed in Shanghai in 1886, taken from John Minford's translation of the story. **(Right)** Edvard Munch's 1895 "vampire" painting, "Love and Pain," resembles the posture in the *Liáozhāi*, © https://www.munchmuseet.no

In this regard, Soulié's "The Corpse The Blood Drinker" offers yet another layer of interpretation. While Pu Songling's text depicts the corpse as a vengeful, uncontrollable agent of death that blows foul air onto its victims, Soulié reimagines this act as one of blood-drinking. This change aligns the story more closely with the Western vampire genre and imbues the Chinese creature with a previously absent physiological need. The antagonist in the "Corpse" even presents physical adaptations to this form of existence. Her eyes are shining red, presumably to see better in the dark, and her mouth has developed "sharp teeth, half-exposed in a ferocious smile."[615] The process behind this transformation,

[615] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

however, remains a mystery. Unlike the Habsburg texts, which attempt to offer many explanations behind vampirism, Soulié's creature exists without a logical elucidation. Also, in both the original Chinese and the English versions, there is no indication that the victims would become undead themselves.

Furthermore, the hunt in Soulié's version is ultimately halted by "the knotted trunk of a huge chestnut-tree,"[616] a departure from the fiery resolutions in Frombald and Goethe's examples. This living, wooden barrier echoes the introduction in the Chinese text, where the girl's husband was tasked with buying wood for the coffin ("子出购材木未归" - "The son went out to buy wood and had not returned"[617]). Soulié's corpse completes this task on her own and partially coffins herself in the same element that her family failed to supply for her.

[616] Soulié, George. *Strange Stories from the Lodge of Leisures*. Ibid.

[617] Pú Sōnglíng. *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. ibid.

Conclusions

Throughout this project's extended journey, I often encountered warnings about the risk of speculation. These cautions initially stung, echoing the words of Mircea Eliade, my formative idol, who, in his posthumously published *Diary of a Short-Sighted Adolescent* (1989), warned against the dangers of overreaching in scholarly pursuits. This concern drove me to the other extreme, to exhaustive historical contextualization, meticulous footnoting, and voluminous drafts that tested the patience of my committee. I religiously adhered to original texts, emphasizing their historical context and navigating bureaucratic German interspersed with Serbian and Latin, classical and vernacular Chinese, and English.

Yet, as I reflected more on my approach, I realized that what others perceived as speculation was my attempt to map connections. This tendency is rooted in my childhood, where I lacked access to a coherent educational system or abundant resources. I had to construct meaning from a disparate array of sources: Communist historical magazines in Russian, the dogmatic teachings of a rural Orthodox Christian community in Romanian, illicitly streamed Western media in English or Polish, and the nostalgic echoes of canonical Western literature taught in school in English, German, and French. I wasn't speculating; I was actively participating in the creation of meaning, forging connections from my peripheral vantage point.

While scholars like Rebecca Walkowitz, in *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature* (2016), posit that some contemporary literature is born

ready for global consumption, my experience was one of being "born translating." From one of the margins of global literary discourse, I had to see *all* literature as a world endeavor, constantly connecting diverse cultural and linguistic threads to create a coherent understanding. This perspective, born of necessity, has shaped my approach to world literature and underpins the analysis presented in this dissertation.

In this spirit, this dissertation has approached the vampire as both a tool for literary analysis and a phenomenon in itself, reflecting a dual-natured inquiry. As a tool, the vampire has allowed me to examine the socio-cultural contexts of its various iterations and their immediate textual meanings across different cultures and periods. As a phenomenon, vampire literature embodies what Ingarden termed "schematic views" - potentialities waiting to be actualized by readers, a process Wolfgang Iser described in his reader-response theory. By employing these schematic views, I tried to navigate the terrain of vampire literature without becoming entangled in debates about canon formation, colonialism, or conflicting theories of literary diffusion. The field of Comparative Literature is already conflicted and politicized enough as is. Furthermore, this approach also mirrors the seemingly random yet deeply formative encounters with world literature I experienced in post-communist Romania. The vampire, in its journey from Frombald's report through Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth" to Soulié's translation of Pu Songling, demonstrates how a textual element can function as world literature - a plurality of interconnected modes within different systems.

Crucially, this analysis demands engagement with texts in their original languages and historical contexts. For instance, clearly understanding Soulié's translation requires familiarity with the Chinese concept of *Jiangshi* and a close reading of Pu Songling's "Shi bian" in its original form. This linguistic and contextual grounding allowed me to see how new literary vampires do not simply revise or rebuild but enter a dialogue with their predecessors. They operate on both intra- and extradiegetic levels and can linguistically influence both older and newer works. As seen in the previous chapters, the example of Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922) illustrates this dynamic, by introducing new nuances that reverberate through both the older construct of "Necuratu" and newer iterations of vampires. Therefore, Nina Auerbach's assertion that "every age is haunted by its own vampire" could be expanded to "every age, every language, and every cultural context is haunted by its own vampire, each a reflection and refraction of its preceding schematic views." When taken seriously, a cross-linguistic approach to vampire literature reveals the genre's capacity to serve as a prism for world literature.

Chapter One parsed the context around the Habsburg vampire as reflected in Frombald's "Copia eines Schreibens." Analyzing this text presented unique challenges: it is, as the title suggests, a copy of an original yet to be found, and a newspaper article about a military report concerning an alleged blood-sucking creature known only to a remote rural area at the empire's border. Nevertheless, I highlighted that the vampiric elements of this curious text can be compared to subsequent iterations of the vampire, especially through Ingarden's articulation of schematic views.

Chapter Two was dedicated to Goethe's "Die Braut von Corinth," which marks the first appearance of the literary, aesthetic vampire, distanced from the actual geography and political context of the Habsburg creature. Goethe's Corinth, unlike the Habsburg villages, is a fictional Orient. In this sense, his ballad presents its own analytical complexities. Due to his vast scholarship and immersion in literature, Goethe encapsulated in his vampire a complex array of nuances and cultural and literary elements. Through the bride, the reader can connect a multitude of texts and motifs, from the pagan setting to the chromatic appearance of the characters, the tension between old and new religions, and the metaphysical implications of death, blood, and passion.

Chapter Three focused on George Soulié de Morant's translation of Pu Songling's "Shi bian" as "The Corpse, The Blood Drinker," a text that has become canonical in vampire anthologies and literature syllabi. Building on the previous framework of this dissertation, this part explores how and if Soulié's work serves as a bridge between Chinese supernatural literature and Western gothic traditions. Notably, while Pu Songling's original text did not feature blood-sucking creatures, Soulié's translation "vampirized" the content, bringing it into the framework of already crystallized Western vampire literature. This transformation not only influenced subsequent interpretations of Chinese supernatural elements in Western contexts but also laid the groundwork for later cultural products like the Hong Kong Jiangshi films featuring hopping vampires. Through a close reading of both Soulié's translation and Pu Songling's original text, this chapter sets the stage for further comparative studies, questioning whether Chinese supernatural elements such as ghosts (gui 鬼), vixens (hulijing 狐狸精), and supernatural monsters (mogui 魔鬼) can be

considered within the vampire paradigm established by the Habsburg "Vampyri" or the German "Blutsaugers." Ultimately, this analysis of Soulié's work demonstrates how the vampire can serve as a lens for understanding the cultural exchange and adaptation processes in world literature.

This dissertation opens several avenues for future comparative literature and vampire studies research. It lays the groundwork for further cross-cultural analyses as the first study to compare Habsburg, German, and Chinese vampires through close readings of texts from diverse socio-historical contexts. Future scholars might expand this approach to include other cultural traditions or media, especially of the Global South. Additionally, as contemporary readers increasingly come from multilingual backgrounds and engage with diverse media, there is potential for new, unexplored interpretations and connections within the genre. More broadly, vampire studies and comparative literature should remain vibrant academic fields and relevant in an ever-changing global context. Even *speculative* approaches, grounded in historical contextualization and individual interpretation, could yield valuable insights.

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