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Fang de Siècle: The Literary Vampire's Destruction of Western Patriarchy

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ABSTRACT

Although vampire lore has existed in various communities, countries, and times, the stereotypical creature that makes us cover our necks or, perhaps, feel a longing desire to be bitten, originates in the Victorian era. Examining texts from the eighteenth into the twenty-first centuries, I argue that vampire literature reveals and challenges the throughline of Victorian patriarchal binary in western society. Often, the authors of these stories, Bram Stoker among them, placed the vampire in a simple binary of good and evil, using the monster to prove patriarchy's morality and validity. As the typical demonic character, the vampire has maintained elements that Victorianism imbued it with--such as piercing fangs, fear of the light, association with the devil, and sexual promiscuity. And, although stories like Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* (2005) transform the vampire from evil monster to romantic lover, these characteristics remain. Ironically, however, despite the best efforts of some vampire authors to make the creature unfavorable, the vampire always disproves the efficacy of patriarchal structures. As a subversive figure, the vampire inherently attacks the offensive stereotypes thrown upon it by embracing viciousness. Through sexual promiscuity, for example, the vampire exhibits to women the power in bodily autonomy. As a creature that infiltrates the home, the vampire displays the home and nuclear family as sinister patriarchal institutions that trap women. The vampire's true potential, then, is not as evil foil but active revealer--showing patriarchy's illegitimacy and desperate need to formulate lies to maintain its existence. I also examine intentionally subversive vampire tales, such as Jewelle Gomez's *The Gilda Stories* (1991) and Octavia Butler's *Fledgling* (2005), to demonstrate the vampire's social power in its fullest extent. In these cases, the authors intend the vampire to disprove patriarchy in its various forms, allowing the creature to attack patriarchy directly. I propose that vampire media, which centers in Victorian social and literary tradition, reflects patriarchal lies and offers truth through targeted resistance.

INTRODUCTION

The vampire has been a figure of subversion since its earliest inception in Western literature. One of the literary references on record to mention vampirism, “Der Vampir”(1748) by Heinrich Ossenfelder, speaks from the vampire’s perspective and, with only two stanzas, argues against “All the teaching of a mother ever true” (Lines 3-4). Although this piece comes before the time range of this thesis, which is from the late nineteenth century into the twenty-first century, its use of a vampire to question normative pedagogy predicts many of the key subversive themes in Victorian vampire literature and beyond. As a result, Ossenfelder’s opening lines to “Der Vampir” frame my project as well.

The title of this thesis, while tongue in cheek, refers to the culture and literature that resulted at the fin de siècle (direct translation: end of the century), or the end of the Victorian era, which technically outlasted the nineteenth century by two years. While the full term refers to a plethora of events and cultural shifts from that particular time, it has significant resonance within the vampire genre. The vampire is a focal point for society’s weaknesses and liabilities. It breaks down conventional social systems. So, the title functions on two levels: it refers to the changes met at the end of the Victorian era as well as the norms and expectations that patriarchy has carried from that era into the present day. Essentially, I argue that the vampire of Western literature, spanning from the late nineteenth century into the twenty-first, destroys patriarchy, which is rooted in Victorian normativity, with the feminine viciousness patriarchy bestows upon the vampire. The vampire pits patriarchy against patriarchy.

There are certain terms central to this project. The first is patriarchy. This piece specifically deals with Victorian-based patriarchy, functioning on the assertion that Victorians contributed vastly (and almost exclusively) to patriarchy and its development in places with

British influence, like England or America. This sort of patriarchy is predicated on a few key establishments, the first being the rigid enforcement of gender policing. The Victorians utilized a gender binary that feeds into absolutist notions about the essence of womanhood and manhood. Men are strong, critically minded, logical, and great leaders. Women are the opposite--weak, overly emotional, better kept inside the house. Karen F. Stein explains the binary in “Monsters and Mad Women” (1983): “Significantly, the women who have been most acceptable to patriarchal culture are those who have been powerless: passive rather than active, self-sacrificing rather than self-assertive, meek rather than bold” (124). There is no nuance in patriarchy--only simple, clearcut definitions that box men and women into their expected roles. As people grow up with these gender roles, they learn to accept them as the norm.

And, within womanhood, the Victorian era maintained another binary that categorized women as either virtuous or vicious--further delineating social normativity. Examples of this further breakdown of femininity are evident in the Victorian attitude toward actresses, who the Victorians viewed as sexually promiscuous and amoral (Matthews 140). This meta-binary is also present in modern patriarchy. Slut shaming, silencing, gas lighting, and binary gender enforcement prevail to designate women as good or bad. These systems support patriarchy because they allow society to define human beings in simplistic terms, therefore, making them easier to control. Vampires, the figures patriarchal authors intend to use as representations of pure, demonic evil, undermine the overarching gender binary and its meta-binary because they refuse to remain within patriarchal categorization.

As these binaries dictate patriarchy’s efficacy, they affect several and some seemingly unrelated aspects of society. Evidence of the masculine/feminine and virtuous/vicious woman binaries is present in beauty, sexual autonomy, maternity, queerness, race, and religion. While

patriarchy's influence on beauty, sexual autonomy, and maternity might seem intuitive in that it uses these concepts to bar women from selfhood and keep them in molds that perpetuate male dominance, patriarchy also requires heterosexuality for the unbalanced gender dynamic present in enforced heterosexual marriage. It requires white supremacy to argue for western dominance and often feminizes races it deems "inferior." Finally, religion is the patriarchy's tool to argue for a particular kind of virtue that forces women to be silent paragons of the home and men to ascend through the social ranks by the threat of divine wrath.

The second key term in this project is femininity, the tool vampires use to defeat patriarchy. While femininity necessarily exists on a binary with masculinity, this split supports the vampire's subversion. For the vampire to challenge patriarchy, it must first exist in a patriarchal society and/or context. So, in this thesis, femininity abides by its patriarchal associations like the virtuous/vicious woman, piety, chastity, loyalty, and silence. Simultaneously, the vampire weaponizes these characteristics against patriarchy and, in doing so, proves their hypocrisy. In patriarchy, femininity is everything masculinity is not. It is wrong where patriarchy is right. In finding power in what is supposedly weak, the vampire both embraces the binary notion of femininity whilst using it to destroy binary and prove patriarchy wrong. Someone, no matter their gender, who embraces femininity challenges men's feigned superiority. Femininity is the source of subversion because patriarchy belittles it and, as the vampire proves, that which patriarchy belittles, patriarchy fears.

The critical literature included in this thesis is both unique to and separate from vampires. Nina Auerbach, for example, writes about monstrous women in *The Woman and the Demon* (1982) and later focuses on vampires and their relationship to the current moment in *Our Vampires, Ourselves* (1995). I engage with criticism that directly addresses monstrosity and

vampirism by either applying it to my arguments or challenging it in some way. In other cases, I apply arguments that seem unrelated to vampires or even patriarchy, like queerness or racism or Victorian cultural practices, to demonstrate the vampire's timeless ability to incorporate sociocultural criticism into its very being. Additionally, my wide range of sources establish patriarchy's expansive reach over almost every aspect of society. It does not only affect gender, but sexuality, race, and religion as well. Understanding how patriarchy constructs society illuminates the vampire's various attributes and makes subversion that much easier to conduct.

The vampire's body is a center for subversion. The mouth, with fangs that pierce into a person, is a representation of both male and female genitalia. When she drinks, she penetrates her victim but then receives fluids. This dual sexual implication reveals the baseline ability for the vampire to challenge gender norms because she contains both qualities patriarchy believes inherent to men and women, respectively. The vampire is also canonically beautiful, designed to tempt its victims. The vampire's attractive physical attributes, such as red lips and cheeks, which are unnatural in a regular corpse, are meant to show the vampire's vicious character. Many of the Victorian authors who instilled these stereotypes to prove viciousness did not intend the vampire to be subversive. Rather, they use the vampire as the central antagonist that proves patriarchy's strength by contrast. The vampire, then, is subversive both on the textual and sociocultural levels. She challenges what it means to be evil even when her creators intend her to do otherwise.

The female vampire offers a baseline for subversion because patriarchy directly associates her with femininity, the central point of subversion. This association with female monsters, sexuality, and immorality is not limited to the vampire genre, either. Consider witches, sirens, or succubi, which are all prototypes for the vampy woman. Notably, the term vamp (a

shortened version of vampire), which means "A woman who intentionally attracts and exploits men; an adventuress; a Jezebel; frequently as a stock character in plays and films" (Oxford English Dictionary), first came into use around 1911--a decade after the Victorian era. The use of vamp to mean a sexually promiscuous and adventurous woman evidences Victorianism's influence on future patriarchy as Victorian stories made female vampires tempting, independent villains. These moral delineations are merely random symbolism--an attempt to degrade women and prove them overly emotional and evil without evidence. The vampire's attractive human appearance and literal division from humanity through (un)death make her a strong symbol for subversion as she invites people in with her appearance and rejects humanity through her supernatural transformation.

A traditional female vampire owns her sexuality and proves men's promiscuity. On most occasions, she abandons or ironizes her motherly duties by targeting children and imitating motherhood. In summary, she violates the values of the "angel in the house," a Victorian gender trope that encouraged women to be obedient wives and doting mothers through moral and religious obligation. She is a demon who scoffs at the home, at men, and at social niceties. But demonism is questionable in a social order that relies on subjugation and subjectivity. Patriarchal authors characterize subversion as evil because the patriarchy is weak and cannot survive rebellious attitudes. In making subversion unsavory, they hope to deter possible detractors. While the female vampire might be a vehicle to exhibit the evils of subversion, she also has inherent supernatural strength that humanity cannot control. This makes the female vampire the embodiment of patriarchal fear--the nightmare realized.

The female vampire's beauty, in a Victorian and post Victorian context, rests on female weakness. In the Victorian era, a woman was beautiful when she was quiet, sickly, pale, and

corpse-like. The patriarchy desires dead women, which it receives, but not in the way it intends. The female vampire actualizes this fetishization of the ill woman and then infuses it with power. The vampire's alleged temptations also condemn patriarchal modes. Although both male and female vampires drink blood for nourishment rather than sexual gratification in traditional lore, female vampires are portrayed as temptresses.

My analysis of this literature proves the straight human male's sexual promiscuity. His desire for the vampire, in her beauty, mystery, and dangerous power, proves his irresponsible sexuality. And, in either case, men are proven weak, which opposes their patriarchal categorization. Female vampires also have sexual autonomy, which allows them to make informed decisions about their bodies, something reserved for men in patriarchy. Through their power and self ownership, female vampires prove both the existence and potency of feminine strength.

This newfound autonomy results in the female vampire's refusal of the home and motherhood. The patriarchal definition of motherhood suggests someone who raises children to be good patriarchal agents. She models womanhood through silence and literal entrapment in the home. Her role, despite its significance in society, is subordinate to the husband and father's. The family unit becomes a miniature patriarchal model. The female vampire, then, in escaping these confines, appears vicious but she actually gains liberation. She furthers her autonomy and displays patriarchy's reliance on women as workers.

While female vampires have directly subversive qualities, male vampires also challenge gender norms. And, in patriarchal construction, male vampires are not "male" because they deny the lines patriarchy establishes to separate gender. Male vampires take on stereotypically feminine qualities, especially motherhood. As a mother births and nourishes her child, the male

vampire can birth new vampires--bringing a human into new life. In several stories, the transformation is only complete once the new vampire drinks from the maternal-vampire, a mimicry of the infant at the mother's breast. The male vampire shows the weakness and even nonexistence of gender binary and, furthermore, the potential for men to engage with femininity. They, too, can counteract patriarchy.

Male vampiric beauty also follows female stereotypes. It is present in stories as early as John Polidori's "The Vampyre," (1819) but it reappears with the emergence of modern romance tales, like Charlaine Harris' *Dead until Dark* (2001) and Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* (2005). Whether horror or romance, women feel freer to express their sexual desires around the male vampire--something especially important for women as patriarchy suppresses their sexual desires. Rather than hinder or dehumanize female desire, the male vampire encourages it. He allows women to engage in their sexualities and find joy in bodily autonomy. Women, then, are not inherently demure and naive, but capable of "male" behavior. These instances of realized desire beg the question: if it is okay for straight men to be sexually active, why not us?

Neither is his sexual subversion and liberation reserved for heterosexual relationships. Queerness in vampirism began at the inception of the vampire novel with Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872) and its female characters' implied romance. Queerness threatens patriarchy because it breaks down the heterosexual power structure that the system requires to propagate patriarchal citizens. While a straight woman could benefit from the nuclear family structure sexually or romantically, a queer women would have limited to no options in the same position. If the potential benefit for sexual or romantic gratification does not exist in marriage, it is that much more difficult for patriarchy to convince women that being an "angel in the house" is ideal.

And, if men desire men, the power structure becomes impossible to maintain because even those who benefit from it do not want it.

However, in an interesting and hypocritical way, Victorian patriarchy does permit some semblance of same sex relationships. In the Victorian era, British women were permitted female marriages that were socially but not legally sanctioned. The patriarchal government policed the acceptable amount of queerness as a method of control that eliminates queer love from the legal space, therefore, making it taboo. If one's love is only expressed in metaphor or must be hidden completely, then society recognizes that love as irredeemable to its overall functionality. And, if something is nonfunctional in society, it can work against society. It is not that queer Victorians were nonexistent, it is that society wants to hide them to avoid confrontation.

Vampires are unashamed of their queerness and offer those in patriarchy the ability to recognize and express their own queer identities. Vampires can pursue their queerness because laws and social boundaries do not affect them. Their strength gives them power, especially in a society that insists queer individuals are sinful or immoral. The queer vampire complicates this designation by both feeding into patriarchy's stereotypes while defeating the patriarchy through queerness. Patriarchal immorality comes from fear rather than an objective split between good and evil.

The queer vampire also broadens the scope of sexual possibility for her victims. In several cases, the vampire's presence disrupts normal society. Their victims can reevaluate normativity and discover subversion (that is, queerness) within themselves. Once the vampire helps unbury what patriarchy has oppressed, the living human carries on that legacy, whether or not the vampire lives or dies.

Vampiric queerness also relates to the more recent HIV/AIDS epidemic. Novels such as Jewelle Gomez's *The Gilda Stories* (1991) provide community via blood relations. Queer vampires reclaim blood as a powerful life source rather than one of death and stigma. They also use that blood-based immortality to "infect" or destroy those who stigmatize them. They have strength in adversity.

Race also reveals patriarchy's social control and anxieties. The Victorian patriarchy rests in what it would define as Western superiority against the patriarchy's construction of the East through power and dominance. Orientalism, as defined by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978), echoes Victorian gender binary through its division of the world into two parts: East and West. The East, like women, serves as a weak, controllable foil to the masculine West.

Orientalism is blatantly inaccurate because it conglomerates everyone in the "East" to match the Western imaginary and the impossibility of justified colonialism. White western superiority, like male authority, is an unfounded assertion that further establishes authority through colonialism's forceful violence. Similar to the ideal patriarchal man, it commits terrible acts without negative consequences for itself--utilizing power and empty symbolism for control. The vampire follows Orientalist stereotypes through her eastern European origins and feminine qualities. She also utilizes the West's dedication to Orientalism to her advantage. As the western characters scoff at eastern tradition like garlic and crosses, the vampire creeps up on them--reclaiming its homeland. A reverse colonization occurs.

As with Orientalism, anti-Blackness stems from a false narrative and dichotomy, but is focused specifically on white superiority and Black inferiority. Traditional vampire literature is not suited for racial revolution due to the vampire's association with pale skin and racist Victorian beauty standards. Many Victorian stories, like *Carmilla*, bolstered the vampire's

historic whiteness through anti-Black racism. These stories demonize Black characters and those associated with them. As a result, the vampire genre's placement in the broader Victorian tradition often enforces racist tropes tied to the vampire.

However, despite the author's intention, when Black vampires appear in racist works, they challenge prejudice and racial stereotypes about inferiority. In every case, Black vampires (or vampire adjacent figures) prove that racism is a patriarchal effort to maintain control. If white patriarchy were actually superior, it would not need to constantly demean or destroy other groups. Racism shows patriarchy's desperate attempts at control and that desperation shows it is vulnerable.

Pro-Black vampire tales have emerged from this weakness. In these stories, authors intentionally write about Black vampires as actors that reclaim their power from white supremacist patriarchy. They adopt Frantz Fanon's theory from "On Violence" (1963) that the oppressor only speaks the language of violence and, to be comprehended by the oppressor, the colonized must respond in turn. Black vampires make racist patriarchy confront its own tools of oppression. If patriarchy criticizes Black vampires for their violence against the social order, the social order itself is problematized as it requires and only comprehends violent action. Pro-Black vampire tales challenge patriarchal supporters through this conundrum.

In the same theme of questioning accepted social orders and forms of knowledge, the ultimate chapter addresses the vampire's complex relationship to Christianity as both follower and heretic. This chapter defines Christianity through its relationship to patriarchy. Patriarchy appropriates Christian belief to support misogyny. For instance, the Catholic Church is an exclusively male hierarchical system and patriarchy uses angel terminology to keep women in the home. In many early cases, like *Carmilla* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), the vampire's

Eastern European origins are a key part of their genetic makeup. Protestant British people are often the protagonists of these stories, inking the "primitive" East with Catholicism, a "primitive" form of Christianity.

While the vampire might embody Catholic evil, it still abides by the traditions and beliefs tied to Catholicism. Importantly, Catholic vampires force their Protestant victims, often representatives of the West in an Orientalized context, to adopt the practices they belittle in others. Conversely, vampires' superstrength and predator status embodies Darwinian evolutionary theory, which challenges Christian origin stories for humanity and overall anthropocentrism--people are no longer the center of the universe. In fact, they are now prey to a powerful, subversive predator with no regard for human norms. The vampire exists liminally between belief and heresy, making her difficult to categorize as good or evil in a Catholic context, which deals with its own patriarchal problems.

The vampire also grows more Protestant past the Victorian era, with authors intentionally experimenting with the idea of salvation through faith and the vampire's status as powerful beings that challenge the Christian God. Working off of Lloyd Worley's essay "Anne Rice's Protestant Vampires" (1999), this section asserts the key differences between Protestantism and Catholicism and how those distinctions function throughout the vampire genre. Worley argues that the vampires in Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) exemplify the Protestant belief that holy objects only gain power by human faith. As the main characters in Rice's novel either question or deny God's existence, the holy objects used against them become powerless and empty. Vampires in other texts capitalize on this theory to the point of atheism. Vampires co-opt Protestant beliefs to cast doubt on Christianity and form a new vampiric religion.

The vampire "gains followers" through blood drinking, an ironized Eucharist followed by eternal life. This power gives them sublimity, the feeling someone experiences when they realize their insignificance. Typically, God or some great act of nature, like a storm or earthquake, causes sublime feelings. Beth McDonald's *The Vampire as Numinous Experience* (2004) suggests that vampires have divine potential because of their association with the demonic. Vampires' sublimity comes from their supernatural strength and human incomprehension. Nature is already sublime; a vampire's preternatural state goes beyond the natural world and, consequently, beyond humanity's understanding--just like God.

Vampires are also similar to God because both have their existences pondered and questioned by mortals. For example, Jonathan Harker brushes off Dracula's vampirism as superstition whilst engaging in Protestantism. Ironically, however, the vampire becomes a tangible threat while God is a nebulous force that, to some extent, is only upheld by the vampire's demonism. Many religious humans in vampire literature maintain their faith because of the vampire's aversion to holy objects and consecrated ground. And, even then, they must adapt their Christianity--adopting "superstitious" or Catholic practices to defeat the vampire.

Because society uses Christianity to justify male control, vampires offer an alternative framework through their divine status. This new religion challenges the current social order and offers the possibility of a novel one that directly challenges it. The vampire generates its own binary--one that can bleed patriarchy of its power.

The vampire is a symbol for understanding how patriarchy evolves but, ultimately, stays the same over time--just like the vampires it condemns. Examining why and how a vampire is evil describes the dominant structure's fears and anxieties about its lack of legitimate control. If we better understand how the vampire functions within literature over time, we can develop new

skills and tools to subvert oppressive orders. The vampire offers a path to reveal patriarchy's insidious existence as well as its inherent weakness. Western domination is a social reality, but it does not have to remain that way. With the vampire's continued popularity, reframing this literature and expanding on its subversive potential will bring people closer to slaying Victorian patriarchy in its various, continued forms.

CHAPTER ONE: The Female Vampire

Part One

I. INTRODUCTION

We can examine the Victorian patriarchy's lasting effects on social institutions through analysis and comparison of vampires from the Victorian era (1837-1901) to the 1950s due to each period's conservative emphasis on gender roles through the gender binary. Specifically, this section establishes the female vampire's tendency to co-opt patriarchal standards for beauty and sexuality. Part of this revelation includes recognizing patriarchy's reliance on female complacency to carry out and maintain feminine standards. Recall Karen F. Stein's quote from the introduction of *Monsters and Mad Women*: "The women who have been most acceptable to patriarchal culture are those who have been powerless: passive rather than active, self-sacrificing rather than self-assertive, meek rather than bold" (124). If meekness and passivity mark the ideal, (weakened) woman, then a woman with autonomy who expresses herself through beauty and sexuality is the opposite because she embodies what patriarchy suppresses so it can continue.

Victorian gender morality divides women into viciousness or virtue. The virtuous woman follows Stein's description--she is quiet and obedient. The vicious woman is outspoken, opinionated, and promiscuous. Vampire women model vicious authority through their active, predatory natures, sexual desires, and hunger for blood, as well as their ultimate power over patriarchal men. Vampire women's forbidden knowledge about the falsehood of binary regarding female roles in restrictive times reveals the contradictory nature of patriarchy through the blood of male victims.

The first part in this section, "The Female Vampire and Victorian Beauty," uncovers the role of beauty and makeup in the patriarchal world. The Victorians idealized a corpse-like

appearance for women--pale skinned, sickly, and silent. The vampire embodies the corpse ideal but uses her preternatural existence to destroy men through blood drinking. "The Mystery of the Campagna," by Anne Crawford (1891) shows the vampire's beauty juxtaposed with her undead nature. Rather than fear the vampire, the men comment on her attractiveness, illuminating the weakness and susceptibility of their patriarchal minds. The vampire can consume them while they obsess over her heaving breasts, an obsession that patriarchy encourages.

The male gaze's focus on beauty results in female pressure to maintain a certain appearance. Makeup becomes a way to preserve corpse-like beauty while simultaneously ironizing and reclaiming patriarchal beauty's constructed nature. On one hand, makeup can push women further into conformity. On the other, it puts the tools of beauty into women's hands. Lucy Westenra from Bram Stoker *Dracula* (1897) has beauty that mimics makeup's artificiality and, consequently, the phoniness of patriarchal beauty. Rather than reckon with Lucy's power via appearance, the men sexualize her--painting her as a vicious whore, so to speak, to condemn her through a patriarchal framework.

The second part, "The Female Vampire and Male Sexuality" addresses the hypocrisy of male sexual freedom within restrictive eras. The binary of male and female behavior holds men and women to opposite standards. Since society defines women as overly emotional, women have to be quiet and demure to account for their supposedly chaotic natures. As opposites, men are inherently logical and, therefore, do not need to defend or counteract their actions in the same way. The female vampire proves this binary unreliable. In *Dracula*, Jonathan Harker expresses his sexual desire for the three vampire women who live in Castle Dracula, despite his engagement to Mina Harker. If the vampires are temptresses, then Jonathan is weak. If they are

not, Jonathan's sexuality is immoral and reckless--he cares more about sex than danger or his betrothed.

The American 1950s mark a resurgence of rigidly defined gender roles, which followed women's inclusion in the work space after World War II. Richard Matheson's *I am Legend* (1954) examines male sexuality in the context of a vampire apocalypse. The protagonist Robert Neville feels tempted by zombie-like vampire women who pose for him as a hunting technique. As with Jonathan, the living male's reaction to vampires is more intriguing than the vampires themselves, whose goals are clearcut. The female vampires realize that the binary is flawed and use it to their advantage, almost convincing Neville to come outside.

The lies about inherently logical male behavior also bleed into the third part, "The Female Vampire's Authority Through Sexual Autonomy." If normative expectations are male sexuality are false, then rules about female sexual expression must be as well since they rest on a binary against one another. A problem with one set of gendered rules marks issues with the other. Vampires reveal that women can realize their power in sexual autonomy, which patriarchy suppresses for control over them. Ludwig Tieck's "Wake Not the Dead" undercuts patriarchy through female sexual ownership. The vampire, the deceased wife of a king, moves into his castle and destroys his family through her emotional control. While the king gives up everything to be with her, she uses her knowledge of his character for power. Similarly, in *I am Legend*, Ruth, a person with a latent form of vampirism, uses binary expectations about women to trap Neville and, ultimately, destroy him. Neville expects her to adhere to patriarchy and Ruth twists that expectation. Her awareness of her role gives her the upperhand in patriarchy.

These three ideas feed off of a larger theme of self-destructive conformist patriarchy—that is, they reveal that vampire women take advantage of preexistent patriarchal weaknesses that

stem from inherent normativity. The artificial social system that benefits from gender performativity allows the vampire woman to capitalize on notions of constructed rules to prove them illegitimate. Ultimately, this leads to an unexpected revelation in these two heavily binaried and restrictive times: female authority through patriarchal implosion.

II. THE FEMALE VAMPIRE AND VICTORIAN BEAUTY

Nineteenth-century patriarchy imagined women as a particular type of beautiful: pale, sickly and obedient (Silver 27)—as Stein suggests in her quote above. The ideal Victorian woman's beauty centered in her potential for male control and, therefore, inability to challenge patriarchy. The ideal woman's physical description and passive nature describe a corpse, which is pale and devoid of liveliness, the ultimate form of silent obedience. Victorian patriarchy fetishized the dead woman, encouraging living wives to maintain anemic appearances, because a dead lady cannot be a threat. Needless to say, the beautiful woman in Victorian patriarchy was counterintuitive. Corpses are decrepit and decaying, showing that the woman's allure is her imposed inferiority rather than physical attractiveness--an effort to protect patriarchy. Nina Auerbach expands on this imposition in *Woman and the Demon* (1982): "The social restrictions that crippled women's lives, the physical weaknesses wished on them, were fearful attempts to exorcise mysterious strength" (8).

The female vampire's fearsome nature stems from the corpse beauty standard in two ways. First, she literally engages in the standard by simultaneously reenacting the Victorian attraction to the female corpse, but she does this while becoming an emblem for revolutionary strength against male control. Second, she exists as a contradiction: she is both alive and dead as well as powerful through perceived weakness. The Victorian binary-based society, cannot grasp her because binary requires a world without contradiction. For example, her ability to surpass

death keeps society from controlling her body even when it seems they should. No one can define who she is posthumously nor design her corpse to look a certain way because, through her "resurrection," the vampire woman disturbs the grave her society has designated for her.

The female vampire imitates the corpse's idealized weakness/ beauty to trick her male victim in "The Mystery of the Campagna." Crawford came from a North American family of creatives, including two author siblings who also wrote horror and an aunt who published the abolitionist poem, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." Her father was a successful sculptor whose work includes the bronze figure atop the US Capitol Building (Sims 240). With such deep-rooted links to both patriotism and activism, Crawford's history reveals an important aspect of the female vampire story. It behaves as both a critique of and concern for Western society. The female vampire displays the necessity for change in a normative, contradictory atmosphere.

In Crawford's story, two male friends travel through Italy and the more impulsive one decides to purchase a home in the countryside. He grows weaker and more secluded as he stays in the house, leading two of his companions to check on him. They discover a vampire, who occupies a crypt on the property, has killed their friend. The concerned pair finds their friend's body on the floor of the decrepit grave and sees the vampire in her coffin nearby.

She appears as "The body of a woman, perfect as in life, with faintly rosy face, soft crimson lips, and a breast of living pearl, which seemed to heave as though stirred by some delicious dream" (Crawford 274). This vampire threatens the patriarchy through a variety of means. First, she weaponizes the patriarchal beauty standards of her age—rosy cheeks, softness and white, sickly skin—against men. Additionally, she possesses the qualities of a living woman. Her ruddy complexion and heaving breast violate natural order as she is a deceased person in a grave. She actualizes the Victorian corpse fetish. She is the only type of woman capable of

simultaneous life and death and, so, is the only one who can meet the impossible standard. In doing so, she is better equipped to feed on male blood. The vampire turns the expectation back onto its inventor—she weakens and kills a man, turning him into a dead corpse, and mesmerizes two other potential victims.

This literalization of the Victorian corpse juxtaposed with the vampire's supernaturalness reveals the flimsy nature of patriarchal standards. They are random and meaninglessly assigned to women since, clearly, a bloodlet man is just as impotent as any "good" woman. Patriarchy's corpse fetish attracts men to the vampire and, ultimately, brings the man's demise. The vampire's vitality also proves that recognizing male expectations of women as flimsy constructions offers power through self assertion and ownership. In "Female Vampirism," (2016) Gina Wisker notes, "Much lauded, much feted, much sought after, the body beautiful is both a celebration of woman's being in the world and contradicts the abject female body found in many Gothic horror works" (154). The living corpse should not be an object of male desire, but of male fear because a living corpse violates laws of the known world. The female vampire's preternatural beauty indicates her power over patriarchy and her unapologetic existence in a world that tells her to die. She exhibits beauty on her own terms based on the framework society provides.

The Victorian female vampire's beauty relates to something less supernatural —makeup. Makeup, like vampire women, simultaneously corresponds to and subverts patriarchal norms. While makeup generates the possibility for women to better conform to patriarchy's restrictive expectations, it also allows women to control their appearance. Victorians generally associated makeup with prostitutes and actresses, people far removed from authentic respectable women (Matthews 140). At the same time, women used powder and rouge to better fit into patriarchal

molds (Matthews 140). Makeup is the fundamental example of constructed femininity through its artificial nature and reveals the weakness of construction because it can be applied to virtuous and vicious women. Makeup is applied by women, giving them power over their appearances. It can be a tool for women to reveal patriarchy's constructed nature by mirroring it back.

In a sense, the vampire woman is a hyper-conformist. She is dead. She mimics the model of the "made-up" woman--the ultimate conformity. However, she parodies Victorian beauty ideals because she is inherently fictional. The living corpse is an impossibility so she only achieves patriarchal beauty through her fictionalized nature. The actual made-up woman, whether following patriarchy or not, engages in performance and she, too, is a fiction. Additionally, the female vampire relates to actresses and prostitutes because she is a demon and Victorian patriarchy demonizes those occupations.

Beyond her embodiment as caricature, the Victorian female vampire is beautiful and most late nineteenth-century texts replicate that beauty. She is often white, rosy-cheeked and red-lipped—adopting characteristics of viciousness and virtue. The vampire cannot be placed into either category, making her impossible to control. Makeup allows Victorian women to imitate the vampire in a key way: they take on a lively, authoritative appearance that extends beyond natural possibilities. As Wisker commented earlier, female-determined beauty allows women to announce their place in the world on their own terms. The female vampire models resistance through her otherworldly physical attributes and natural artificiality.

Stoker's *Dracula* explores the potential of female-controlled beauty. Stoker was an Irish-born author deeply embedded in the London literary and drama scenes. In his adulthood, he worked with writers such as Sheridan Le Fanu, who authored *Carmilla*, a vampire story that precedes *Dracula.* Stoker worked as a theatre critic under Le Fanu and later became business

manager of the Lyceum Theatre (Biography). Stoker's focus on theatre shows in his descriptions of female vampires in *Dracula*, which all perform expectations of femininity to manipulate their victims. Gender performativity, paired with his assumed influence from Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla*'s (1872) nonconformist themes, contribute to subversive portraits of female monsters in Stoker's novel. These female monsters originate from Dracula, a centuries-old Transylvanian vampire who invades England.

Dracula preys upon Lucy Westenra, a British girl and best friend of Mina Harker, one of the novel's protagonists. Although Dracula helps Lucy achieve Victorian beauty standards by draining her blood, he also makes her patriarchy's worst nightmare. Her male friends observe her transformation. They note: "The cheeks were red, nay redder than before; and on the cheeks was a delicate bloom" (Stoker 186). Like the vampire from Crawford's work, Lucy is unnaturally alive both because she is dead and because she appears more vibrant as a corpse. Lucy's red cheeks reflect the control makeup grants women as well as its performativity. Cheeks flush when someone experiences an intense emotion or physically strains themselves. Blush offers an artificial alternative to emotion, something sickly women probably required due to their emaciated state. Lucy mimics the Victorian propensity for rouge and the nature of gender performativity as it relates to femininity while asserting her existence as a breathing, feeling person. Her beauty gives her access to male sympathy and shows that Lucy is not just undead, but *alive*.

The men visit Lucy's grave after they discover she has been feeding on local children, but they do not condemn her for her dietary preferences. Instead Lucy's preternatural appearance is a threat: "She seemed like a nightmare of Lucy as she lay there; the pointed teeth, the bloodstained, voluptuous mouth—which it made one shudder to see—the whole carnal and

unspiritual appearance, seeming like a devilish mockery of Lucy's sweet purity" (Stoker 199). This comparison of Lucy's two selves, the human and the vampire, exemplifies the nineteenth century binary of the good/evil woman that reduces women to either moral purity or sexual corruption.

The human Lucy, invalid and vulnerable, is supposed to be ideal. In contrast, the vampire Lucy is expected to take advantage of gender norms and beauty. Because her vampiric nature is the root cause of her physical/social change, it seems odd that the men do not fixate on Lucy's horrifying fangs nor bloodstained mouth. Patriarchal conceptions of women only grant women access to beauty, not danger, because that would admit male weakness. This ultimately fails since patriarchal beauty standards are performative and empty. Additionally, the focus on beauty puts men in a perilous position against a lethal vampire. Neither patriarchal standards nor men can stand up to a legitimate challenge, like a vampire. Lucy's enhanced features threaten idealized Victorian complacency and beauty because they become assets in a fight against men. Rather than cope with Lucy's strange, potent beauty, the men determine that Lucy's allure must indicate sexual promiscuity. Accusing women of sexual deviance is another form of patriarchal condemnation that indicates vicious femininity since, as we will explore, a sexually autonomous woman is difficult to control. Lucy's beauty and supernatural features transform her into a force. Through their demeaning characterization, the men acknowledge their anxiety around Lucy's power and prove that women can co-opt and break patriarchal beauty standards.

One of *Dracula*'s protagonists, Jonathan Harker, further displays the flimsy barrier between patriarchal beauty and sexuality. Jonathan wants to have sex with the three vampire women who live in Dracula's castle while he is held captive there. As they approach him, Jonathan notices their "white teeth that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous

lips" and says, "There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips" (Stoker 35). Before the three vampires even make contact with Jonathan, he desires them. The patriarchal mind, which designates how a woman should be attractive, haphazardly assigns certain symbols of female beauty, such as the recurring motif of red lips and redness, with overt sexuality.

This is another example of beauty as artificial and empty. Its standards have no greater significance beyond the signifier. As part of its connection to vivacity, redness is indicative of blood. Female sexuality was a Victorian sin. Therefore, the patriarchy associates life and vibrancy with moral degeneracy, which upholds the notion of the virtuous female corpse. The female vampire consumes blood (i.e. redness/life), a physical manifestation of draining gender stereotypes. In contrast, Jonathan shows that men *believe* they do not suffer for their free sexual reign in the patriarchal system. They are the opposite of women--controlled, logical, free of emotional influence. Ironically, however, he quite illogically desires to have sex with dead women who wish to suck his blood. In patriarchy, men's sexual desire grants them power over women, unless those women have a certain bloodlust and flair for the dramatic.

III. THE FEMALE VAMPIRE AND MALE SEXUALITY

Part of the sickly woman's appeal was her limited sexual expression. Her husband had complete control over her social and sexual roles. Regarding *Dracula*, Stephen D. Arata writes in "The Occidental Tourist (1990), "In the novel's (and Victorian Britain's) sexual economy, female sexuality has only one legitimate function, propagation within the bounds of marriage" (632). If a woman strayed from those roles, men condemned her as hysterical. This condemnation presented the woman with a dilemma—either endure a subservient role or end up in the asylum

and become a social pariah, or worse. Victorian vampire women never really desire sex, just blood. Patriarchal living males are the true sexual deviants because, even when they notice the potential for bodily harm, they still sexualize the vampire woman.

The patriarchal mind views the female vampire's vibrant, performative features through a particular lens of sexual desire—like it does with the color red. Patriarchal men cannot see beyond the symbol and, consequently, engage in blissful desire while maintaining ignorance about bodily harm. It is the ultimate power move— the patriarchal man's dogged belief that a woman with fangs and super strength is nowhere near as potent as his sex drive. According to patriarchy, the vampire woman must exemplify what the virtuous woman is not and, therefore, society imagines the vampire as inherently sexual.

Returning to Jonathan's encounter with the three vampire women in Dracula's castle, the attentive reader recognizes that Jonathan, who is engaged to Mina, the novel's emblematic good woman, is the one at fault. Jonathan's sexual desire reveals the irony of the good woman: even if she abides by all their rules and dichotomies, men still do not respect her. Jonathan's physical encounter with the three vampires emphasizes this point. Jonathan describes, "I lay quiet, looking out under my eyelashes in agony of delightful anticipation. The fair girl advanced and bent over me till I could feel the movement of her breath upon me. Sweet it was in one sense, honey-sweet, and sent the same tingling through the nerves as her voice" (Stoker 36). The passage reads more like a sex scene than a terrifying vampiric feast.

The equation of sex and horror emphasizes male ownership of sexuality and its instability. Wisker writes, "These three voluptuous blood sucking sirens threaten Jonathan Harker's marriage, sanity and life, their bodies expressing threats to women's chastity, purity and maternal instincts and through them, a danger to male sexual self management, heredity and

blood purity" (152-3). For Wisker, the three vampires threaten well-established concepts of femininity. However, although Wisker's assertions are reasonable, Jonathan's sexual deviance suggests something else. Jonathan is the one who breaks down virtue surrounding family, sexuality and purity through his agonizing desire—not the unmarried vampires. Jonathan's sexual projection reveals that the female vampire mobilizes patriarchy to consume itself through its evident fallacies.

Dracula's Lucy forgoes her power in favor of the norm. While alive, she openly expresses feelings for her three male suitors and receives blood from all of them as well as from her doctor/father figure. The text implies that Lucy's blood transfusions are akin to intercourse—the mingling of blood. Human Lucy, therefore, is polyamorous and symbolically incestuous. After her transformation, Lucy attempts to seduce only one man—Arthur, her legal husband. She beckons, "with a languorous, voluptuous grace, … 'Come to me, Arthur. Leave these others and come to me. My arms are hungry for you. Come, and we can rest together. Come, my husband, come!'" (Stoker 197). Lucy's sexually normative declaration has no lasting effect; her husband stakes her through the heart.

Wisker writes,"The threat of each [female vampire] is highly sexualized, invasive, non-conformist; each is demonized for her active sexuality and desire for eternal youth" (152). Although active sexuality is questionable, unless it means the vampire's knowledge of her sexual ownership, Wisker's overall point still stands. Lucy's power lies in non-conformity and she can only affect the system once she separates herself from it. Unlike the other vampires mentioned, she attempts to integrate her strategy with conceptions of virtue. Although seemingly sensical, her choice does not challenge patriarchy and, therefore, she remains easy to control.

As both she and Mina prove, the stereotypical and earnest good woman has no real authority. She is incapable of affecting the social system. Auerbach touches on this concept: “Angels were thought to be meek and sacrificial by nature: in this cautiously diluted form, they were pious emblems of a good woman’s submergence in her family” (7). Once a woman is vampirized, men immediately see her as sexually deviant and adapt to that assumption. Lucy does not stand a chance because she tries to operate within a binary that functions to weaken her.

About half a century after Dracula’s vampire women terrorized men, the 1950s offered a resurgence in restrictive Victorian gender roles. After women joined the workforce in World War II and abandoned their roles as housebound “angels,” patriarchy forced them to return. WWII-era women showed the untethered expanse of female potential. They could create weapons, support the war effort, and be good parents. In essence, they showed men’s expendability. Fear of female strength characterized the 1950s as highly conformist, archaic, and utterly binaried—forcing women and men into clearcut gender roles of housewife and provider, servant and served (PBS) Matheson’s *I am Legend* incorporates themes of sexuality similar to those of Victorian vampire literature. Like Jonathan Harker, the protagonist Robert Neville has trouble controlling his sexual desires around the undead.

Matheson grew up writing and became fascinated with horror at a young age, citing the *Dracula* film as one of his early influences (Weber). As he grew in prominence as a writer, Matheson joined the Southern California Sorcerers, a brotherhood of horror and science fiction writers who met to collaborate on their stories (Rod Serling Foundation). Matheson’s academic approach to horror is present in *I am Legend*, a post-apocalyptic tale about a vampire pandemic and the last man’s struggle to survive. Rather than enticing mystical beings, Matheson explains vampires with science (the characters discover vampires come from a germ that mutates humans)

and gives them a zombie-like, decrepit appearance. This creative take on the vampire both dilutes and empowers their authority. They are less "made-up," both in their realistic portrayal and horrifying features, but these characteristics also reveal other ways female vampires expose patriarchy. Matheson's mostly male influences are also apparent in his novella, for better or for worse. Here, *I am Legend* is analyzed for its non-normative approach to gender and its ultimate characterization of the human male as monster.

Robert Neville, the sole uninfected survivor of a vampire pandemic, vigilantly guards his house from the vampires who try to attack him at night. Despite his knowledge about their hunger, Neville has odd thoughts about the decrepit vampire women in his neighborhood. He complains, "It was the women who made it so difficult . . . The women posing like lewd puppets in the night on the possibility that he'd see them and decide to come out" (Matheson 7). While Neville compares the vampires to puppets controlled by their desire, indicating their performativity, the simile ironizes Neville's role.

The vampires perform the expectations of male desire as a means to an end, the end being Neville's blood. Really, Neville admits the performativity of patriarchal behavior. The vampires are not puppets of their desire, but clever strategists. A key difference between these vampires and the three in *Dracula* is agency. Jonathan projects his desires on the three vampires and their intentions in terms of sexuality are unclear. The walking corpses from *I am Legend*, however, consciously reappropriate their sexuality as a hunting tool. Neville never takes the bait, though he often considers it, which suggests men are more sexually deviant than women. They see women sexually even when they look like zombies (another living corpse). The vampires' sexual ownership gives her authority over patriarchy-encouraged sex-crazed men.

IV. THE FEMALE VAMPIRE'S AUTHORITY THROUGH SEXUAL AUTONOMY

Sexual knowledge within the female vampire tradition offers avenues for authority. She understands how sexuality functions in patriarchy and, furthermore, how it works to limit female autonomy. If a woman does not understand sexuality or is disempowered to access it, then she becomes easier for men to control and violate. With sexual knowledge, women can push against male requests for sex and gain a better understanding of how to break down normative sexuality. The sexually aware female vampire is the restrictive patriarchy's worst nightmare: she has bodily autonomy and uses it to attain power. Rather than behave in an uncontrolled manner, the vampire woman practices careful restraint, strategy, and ownership in sexuality that enables her to achieve consequential positions of power within a system meant to destroy her.

Years before Crawford wrote about the beautiful vampire in the Italian tomb from "The Mystery of the Campagna," Tieck's "Wake Not the Dead" warned audiences about the consequences of necromancy around the year 1800. Like Stoker, Tieck had a career steeped in theatre. Later, Tieck served as a literary advisor and remains appreciated for his adaptability to literary trends and moments (*Encyclopedia Britannica*). "Wake Not the Dead" has progressive qualities, whether or not they were intended, through its empowered, authoritative female vampire. The blend of theatre and adaptability is recurrent in this and several other vampire stories since these tales carry elements of both artificiality and the need to challenge specific cultural norms.

Although technically before the Victorian era, "Wake Not the Dead" is close enough in time to provide key insights. Walter, a king and distraught widower with a new family, uses magic to bring his first wife Brunhilda back from the dead, which ultimately destroys Walter's family and sanity. The undead Brunhilda (who now has a penchant for blood and the moon) is beautiful and, like her literary vampire sisters, elicits intense sexual reactions from men.

Brunhilda only performs her "wifely duties" on her own terms. She instructs Walter, "'Not yet—spare your caresses until the moon has again filled her horn.' Spite of his impatience, Walter was obligated to await the lapse of a period of another seven days" (Tieck 81). Brunhilda has agency in her sexual relationship. Furthermore, she does not violently dominate her partner, but demands consent. Female autonomy, therefore, differs from violent male hegemony. It creates a foundation for healthy mutual exchange.

Later, she demands that Walter move her to the castle rather than keep her in hiding. She states, "'Is it fitting that I who have been purified by death from the frailty of mortality should become thy concubine...no, it must be within the walls of thy palace, within that chamber where I once reigned as queen'" (Tieck 81). Beyond consent, Brunhilda demands respect and shapes that respect to meet a patriarchal form of power—monarchy. In her movement to the castle, Brunhilda reasserts her power and existence in a literal way while demonstrating that she has more agency than a human queen. She commands a king, a symbol of patriarchal dominance. Brunhilda also uses language that the patriarchy enacts to control/ limit women. She makes clear through her "concubine" simile that her current position violates patriarchal standards of female respectability. Unlike *Dracula's* Lucy, Brunhilda's sexual autonomy allows her to undercut patriarchal norms so that the designated roles reverse. Brunhilda's sexual agency grants her power over Walter through a mockery of patriarchal, hierarchy authority that ultimately, gives her access to the castle—a physical emblem of patriarchy.

Something similar occurs in *I am Legend*. Ruth, the main antagonist, appears uninfected because she has a latent form of the vampire disease controlled by medicine, something Neville does not know about. Her mission is to make him pay for his careless murder of people like her, infected with the vampire virus but alive, who make up her society. After he sees Ruth standing

in the sunlight, something deadly for a fully-fledged vampire, Neville chases her in hopes of finding another human. Once he has kidnapped Ruth and brought her to his house, he is suspicious of her human status. Ruth performs her gender/humanity through comments like, "'You scared the life out of me this afternoon . . . You and your bristly beard. And those wild eyes.' Wild eyes? That was ridiculous. What was she trying to do? Break down his reserve with cuteness?" (Matheson 131). Ruth also tells Neville about her past as a married woman and admits that she watched him murder her late husband (Matheson 143). Later, as Neville faces the new social order of infected, but medicated individuals, Ruth informs him that she is "ranking officer" in the new society of vampire-adjacent people (Matheson 157). Ruth's monstrosity gives her access to survival tactics, as she must deal with Neville's misguided killing sprees against both vampires *and* infected humans.

Like the untreated vampire women in the novella, Ruth performs her sexuality to lure Neville into her trap. She works off of his assumptions about women, vampires, and vampire women. Ruth then leads a society that accommodates the reality of both vampires and potential vampires. Although she ultimately feels guilty, she helps rid the new order of Neville, the last remnant of a human and patriarchal society. Neville represents the old patriarchal order, which engages in murderous violence to preserve patriarchy and an irrelevant way of life. Ruth pushes against Stein's assertion in her discussion of the links between mad women and monstrosity that "For a man to rebel, to leave a comfortable home and to search for truth are noble acts...for women, however, such assertions of questing selfhood have been deemed bizarre and crazy" (123). At the beginning of *I am Legend*, this message seems true, but, by the time the reader sees the new order, they realize that Neville's journey only rebels against the new society. Neville

maintains a normative, patriarchal mode of life. Ruth's social growth, from wife to political figure, is the true tale of honorable rebellion.

V. CONCLUSION

The vampire woman subverts patriarchal conceptions of binary to both gain power and show the weakness of the overarching oppressive system. As an immortal being, she reveals Victorian patriarchy's pervasive nature, especially heightened in restrictive eras like the 1950s. Through her, the reader learns about patriarchy's stagnancy and inability to adapt. While intimidating, it is not a formidable opponent. The vampire's reclamation of beauty erases a form of male control that simultaneously educates women about the empty nature of that control. With this knowledge, she can weaponize her appearance to break down patriarchal rules and consume the men who attempt to weaken her. With the control of her appearance and, therefore, herself in society, the vampire can evade assumptions of virtuousness and viciousness completely. She can sit between and outside the binary to further her subversion. No one can pin her down into a single category.

This rebellion against binarism relates to issues of sexuality as well. While men continue to place themselves within the binary, assuming that their gender grants them special sexual privileges, the vampire women step outside binary rules. As the more evolved of the two, vampire women can defeat patriarchal men because the men refuse to move beyond their familiar society.

Because the female vampire possesses both physical and intellectual strengths over her oppressors, she is the embodiment of female subversion. But, as a fiction, she is not the actual way one can destroy patriarchy. Still she is the framework for revolution. She represents Auerbach's inner strength. The vampire is women's hidden power, buried in arbitrary rules and

regulations about womanhood. She reveals patriarchy's emptiness and femininity's power against a weak system that fights for control.

Part Two

I. INTRODUCTION

The vampire's immortality, blood sucking, and choice of infant victims emulates the brutal reality of Victorian motherhood in its entrapment and association with death--characteristics that contrast ideal motherhood, which espouses nurturing and sustaining life. Although mortality rates have decreased in the current era, motherhood's relationship with death remains because no one outwardly acknowledges that motherhood has such a complicated relationship to life. As a result, patriarchal motherhood maintains an idealistic veil that covers motherhood's pitfalls. Patriarchal motherhood still expects women to be the children's central caretakers while their husbands work (Meeusen and Van Lar). Husbands, therefore, continue to control their wives socially and financially.

The vampire is the anti-mother, a term indicating her closeness and distance from patriarchal motherhood. She is distant because she represents everything the patriarchy hides about motherhood--death and loss of personhood--and thrives on those aspects of motherhood. She remains in close proximity, however, because her actions reveal motherhood's unsavory reality.

Patriarchal motherhood is a pretty fiction that entices women into an eternal servitude of husband and family. The law of the father binds the wife/mother, meaning she is at her husband's will in the same way a child must follow their parents. The law of the mother only applies to children and, even then, is minutely effective because the husband can undercut it with his authority (Wallace 75).

Motherhood appears idyllic and dutiful, the holy obligation of all virtuous women. However, it can also be lethal and keep women controlled within the family. The first part of this section, “The Problem with Mothers,” examines motherhood’s contradictory nature in more detail, using Nina Auerbach’s definition of the angel in the house to explore the vampire’s demonic identity juxtaposed with this concept of motherhood. This section also utilizes Ginette Carpenter’s explanation of the mother as other (m/Other) in Gothic fiction, which grapples with the mother’s role as unnatural--a bringer of both death and life. The monstrous, or the Other, side of the mother embraces what patriarchy conceals and reveals that patriarchal motherhood contains sinister elements in both maternal and infant death as well as social isolation.

The second part, “Hungry Mothers” looks at these concepts in vampire literature, examining female vampires who feed on children. In Sheridan Le Fanu’s *Carmilla* (1872), the novel’s namesake vampire mimics motherhood when she sneaks into her victim’s bedroom and lulls her to sleep. Rather than completely ironize motherhood, Carmilla shows its truth. Although mothers can soothe their children, death also contributes to the mother’s identity with high infant and maternal mortality rates in childbirth. Carmilla represents the traditional, stereotypical mother as well as the pains associated with that role. From *Carmilla,* the section examines the female vampires from Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897)--the three at Dracula’s Castle and Lucy Westenra. The three vampires consume a baby in front of Jonathan Harker who disbelieves what he observes because he cannot recognize motherhood’s lies. This keeps Jonathan in a state of infantile innocence about the threat of motherhood, mirroring the baby the vampires feast upon.

Lucy hunts children around her neighborhood, leaving most alive. When the newspaper hears about the “bloofer lady” (Stoker 165), they publish an article questioning the children’s stories, insinuating that they are not beautiful enough to be attacked. This reveals patriarchy’s

association with beauty and weakness. Lucy parodies the expectation of mothers to accept their children no matter their appearance. Only through monstrosity can Lucy engage with maternal stereotypes.

When Lucy's hunters find her feeding on a child, they harp on her indifference. They cannot fathom how a woman exists without maternal motivations. Ironically, the hunters do not recognize that Lucy also maintains maternity. As an undead creature draining a child of its blood, she engages with and mocks maternal and infant death. Rather than be silenced by death (the same way patriarchy silences motherhood's association with death), Lucy thrives on it. Patriarchal motherhood makes women objects in the home rather than members of it. Lucy literally feeds on death, changing the negative parts of maternity into something beneficial for her.

Tiecks's "Wake Not the Dead" also does this. It shows the irony of perfect motherhood in that women must follow these guidelines of virtue without rights to their children. The vampire Brunhilda uses her newfound position as stepmother to reclaim her power. She destroys the family and, in doing so, attains physical and social efficacy. Motherhood's trauma becomes her power source. And, ultimately, she challenges her most formidable adversary--her husband, Walter.

The vampire reveals the dark side of motherhood and uses its ugliness for power, puncturing the falsehood of the angel in the house to suck its potency for her own purposes. Motherhood does not threaten vampires because they know of its dangers and can avoid them. Instead, the vampire flaunts motherhood's hardships as she grows stronger and the patriarchy loses its ability to convince women that motherhood is a desirable fate.

II. THE PROBLEM WITH MOTHERS

There are two types of motherhood in patriarchal society. First, the practical term for a female parent: she chooses to have children and cares for them without social or paternal pressure. The second definition, which I examine, is the constructed mother whose identity relies solely on her existence as a reproducer and prisoner in the home. She is the "Angel in the House," a Victorian ideal for the married woman who espouses obedient silence. To borrow Auerbach's definition from *Woman and the Demon* (1982), "Not all Victorian angels lived in houses… but according to literary convention, many did, making ['Angel in the House'] a convenient shorthand for the selfless paragon all women were exhorted to be, enveloped in family life and seeking no identity beyond the roles of daughter, wife, and mother" (66–9).

While Auerbach goes on to reclaim the angelic figure as a mode of power (which is a similar project to this one), there is also value in rejecting the mother's association with the home and family. Because, while angel's have an empowering history, their symbolism relies on a patriarchal abstraction of goodness, such as demureness, purity, and obedience. Vampires' demonic identity implicitly contrasts the angel's, offering a reclamation of viciousness as powerful and intentional. Vampires represent freedom. They threaten patriarchy because they allow women to see beyond the existing power structure and, if those women become vampires, to physically leave the structure in choosing the vicious side, which they know is not actually vicious.

Motherhood is any virtuous woman's fate. Once they have achieved this goal, nothing else waits for them. They cannot improve on their now established purpose.Victorian motherhood confines women to the home and eliminates their autonomy. Ginette Carpenter in "Mothers and Others," (2016) analyzes the Gothic maternal:

> The figure of the monstrous m/Other has been identified as a site of rupture that serves a dual function: voicing the obfuscated experiences of maternity while simultaneously

> reinscribing the fictions that maintain the occlusion. Gothic texts (and their monsters) have always performed this contradiction, both policing and transgressing the borders between ideological inscription and resistance. (46)

The contented, angelic mother is a fiction devised to serve and reproduce patriarchy. In reality, mothers brought death with life. In the Victorian era, the maternal mortality rate was high--peaking in the 1870s and 1890s to more than 60 deaths per thousand births in England and Wales (Chamberlain). And a successful birth did not guarantee domestic happiness. Many Victorian families had to cope with infant and child death as a normal, expected part of life (Leeds). Carpenter's analysis of the Gothic mother relates to the resentment felt toward motherhood by both men and women. It was a necessary role in Victorian life, but it brought on tragedy and linked women to life and death, a liminal existence that marks mothers as the monstrous m/Other.

So while the angel mother reinforces patriarchy-sanctioned femininity, the figure of the subversive vampire is also appropriate for the mother. Like her, the vampire has an explicit connection to life and death, but the vampire has authority over these concepts. Death is an essential part of the vampire's life, rather than an unwanted byproduct of her existence. In this way, the vampire "polices and transgresses the borders" of motherhood. She is an enhanced, powerful version of the mother who embodies the anxieties around that role. The key difference is undeath. Fears about motherhood can be contained in the home. The husband can lock her away and ignore the trauma associated with her or, if the mother dies, the husband can replace her with someone else. Motherhood is not a dead end for the vampire because she cannot die. She embraces her status as "m/Othered," removing the paternal authority that attempts to alienate her. As m/Other or, as I put it, anti-mother, the vampire threatens the patriarchal establishment of motherhood in showing its difficulties.

The female vampire is vicious because she embraces the pain of motherhood without negative consequences. She thrives in (un)death and even seeks out children as her food source. These characteristics make her seem evil, but, really, the vampire showcases the masquerade of Victorian motherhood and the expendability that both mothers and children experience. The vampire's immortality makes it impossible for her to engage in normative female roles that deplete her, like cooking, cleaning, serving and nurturing. Her recognition of motherhood's hidden nature frees her and allows her to maintain her autonomy. She is the anti-mother, at once the embodiment of everything patriarchy wants to avoid and everything it presses upon virtuous women. Through her example, readers can see the fraught expectations of mothers and the destruction of self for the sake of family or honor.

III. HUNGRY MOTHERS

Perhaps the vampiric anti-mother's most obvious and terrifying characteristic is her appetite for children. Although there are some instances of male vampires killing or harming children, several stories highlight female consumption of children and babies. The shocking effect of such actions highlights the vampire's evil nature and association with the negative side of motherhood. Her independence is also a point of contention as the vampire does not want to join the patriarchal fantasy of a nuclear family. She is evil because she violates patriarchal rules that maintain society--namely, she reveals motherhood's unsavory status and refuses to partake in it.

The vampiric anti-mother utilizes characteristics of Victorian motherhood to prove the role's sinister nature. In consuming children, she accepts the mother's unique relationship to death and reverses her role as sustainer of life as the child sustains her. This extreme example also reveals the ludicrous nature of patriarchal binaries, the method patriarchy employs to

eliminate the understanding of motherhood as complex and not wholly positive. The vampire's evil nature thwarts the pretend concept of the virtuous mother in patriarchy, making her, instead, a monster who eats children. The anti-mother exists in patriarchal fears both because she stands for the dangers of motherhood and she brings those dangers into the light when patriarchy wishes to hide them.

Le Fanu's *Carmilla* features anti-motherhood, which establishes the novel's other subversive themes, such as queer sexuality and reverse colonialism. Le Fanu was a prominent writer who helped develop the horror genre in the Victorian era. His relationship to motherhood shows in *Carmilla.* His wife suffered from neurotic symptoms and struggled with religion as a result of many close family deaths. She died after a bout of "hysteria." Following his wife's death, Le Fanu did not write another work of fiction, including *Carmillla,* until after his mother's death in 1861 (Encyclopedia). *Carmilla*'s central female character, subversive themes about sexuality, repression, destruction, and anti-motherhood form a cohesive reflection of Le Fanu's life and dedication to literature.

Carmilla centers on Laura, the innocent daughter of a British general and a dead Styrian mother. From childhood to young adulthood, the vampire Carmilla terrorizes Laura. Carmilla takes on many roles throughout the story, among them friend and lover, but her introduction is (anti) maternal. Laura describes her first memory of Carmilla:

> I can't have been more than six years old, when one night I awoke, and looking around the room from my bed, failed to see the nursery maid...to my surprise, I saw a solemn, but very pretty face looking at me from the side of the bed. It was that of a young lady who was kneeling, her hands in the coverlet. She caressed me with her hands, and lay down beside me in the bed, and drew me towards her, smiling. I felt immediately delightfully soothed, and fell asleep again. I was wakened by the sensation as if two needles ran into my breast. (Le Fanu 13)

Carmilla's association with the nursery maid and the comfort she grants Laura indicate her motherly position in this scene. Carmilla mimics the action of a mother tucking in her child. Laura's restfulness and even Carmilla's apparent youth form a domestic fantasy of mother and daughter. Religious imagery helps Carmilla with this representation as well. Her solemnity, kneeling, and hand placement indicate a woman at prayer or, perhaps, blessing her child. Furthermore, since Laura does not recognize Carmilla, her mysterious identity could suggest that Carmilla is some sort of divine visitor. She literally poses as an "angel in the house."

Carmilla's calming appearance and mannerisms in this scene, however, make her all the more horrific. In the same way vampire women use their made-up beauty to entice male victims, Carmilla's facade of maternity allows her to deceive Laura. Similarly, the facade of motherhood tricks women into desiring motherhood. For both Laura and living mothers, the truth is ugly and often has more associations with death and entrapment. In hurting Laura, Carmilla threatens the universal symbol of motherhood--the child. This endangerment does not destroy Carmilla's maternal associations, but emphasizes their hypocrisy. In fact, Carmilla has a direct connection to Laura's maternal line. They discover Carmilla's portrait among several others from Laura's mother's familial history. This connection means Carmilla can better parody motherhood as well as Laura's dead mother since Carmilla literally embodies maternal death. Furthermore, Carmilla's maternity harms Laura, enacting motherhood's hidden relationship to death.

Carmilla's harmful actions illustrate the Victorian mother's futile role in bringing life to the world due to the high infant and child mortality rates in the Victorian era as well as her ultimate lack of authority over her children since they belonged to the father. Patriarchal motherhood is contradictory--convincing women that they are essential to the establishment of a stable, growing society when they have no control over themselves or their families.

Motherhood's contradictory nature, representative of life and death, authority and manipulation, shows women's subhuman status. Patriarchy designates all women as mothers and mothers remind patriarchy of its evils and illogical nature. As a result, mothers maintain an uncanny role in the patriarchal structure, simultaneously necessary and feared. Carpenter notes,"Male Gothic tradition as a whole: that the horrible, the abject, is identifiable with 'the female,' the alien energy that poses a dreadful danger to man, society and the Law of the Father" (Carpenter 51). Carmilla embraces her monstrosity. She is not a human woman and refuses to be held by human conceptions of morality. She also rejects the law of the father because she sneaks into a man's home and corrupts his child with her bite. The vampire is abject and alien, the realization of dreadful danger, and she proves that men should continue to fear motherhood's reality. Once women recognize patriarchy's inability to fully mask the dangers and restrictions of motherhood, they can break free of patriarchal constraints, which are constructs.

Carmilla parodies this theme further with her own mother-daughter charade. Each time Carmilla selects a long term victim, a woman posing as Carmilla's mother asks if Carmilla can stay. In Laura's case, Carmilla's "mother" asks if Carmilla can stay with the family to heal while she goes away on business. In the other case, the mother has a long conversation with the uncle/caretaker of a young woman who subsequently passes away. Carmilla's "mother," known as the Madame la Comtesse (which translates to lady of the Countess, implying the woman's role in Carmilla's orchestrated manipulation), begs the General to care for her daughter, who suffers injuries, while she goes on a mission of life and death (Le Fanu 36). Madame la Comtesse's maternal facade literalizes the mother's relationship to death. In feigning concern for her ill daughter, she enables Carmilla's feeding habit and kills someone else's daughter. Additionally, as a pawn in Carmilla's plan, she evokes the mother's subordinate role in the home. Just as the

father controls the mother, Carmilla owns this maternal figure so much so that the woman's only identification is her belonging to Carmilla.

Carmilla mainly targets young women with single male caretakers. This familial dynamic means that both are ignorant to motherhood's hardships--the guardians because they either ignore or are unaware of a mother's duties and the girl's because they know the world through their paternal figures' experience. This permits even more conspicuous trickery on Carmilla's part. Her victims will only view her and her mother as life-giving figures rather than bad omens. In a way, their interpretation is accurate since Carmilla gains life through draining her victims' blood.

Essentially, Carmilla parodies Carpenter's definition of "dual function." The vampire reveals the immorality of motherhood through anti-motherhood and uses it as a tool of resistance, rather than as a method of containment or a hidden secret. Vampiric anti-motherhood is dangerous, potent, and, unlike patriarchal motherhood, self determined.

Dracula also contains hungry anti-mothers. In the first scene of infanticide, the protagonist, Jonathan Harker, observes the grotesque feeding habits of the three vampire women who live Castle Dracula (the same ones with the "red lips"). Jonathan describes,

> 'Are we to have nothing to-night?' said one of them, with a low laugh, as she pointed to the bag which [Dracula] had thrown upon the floor, and which moved as though there were some living thing within it. For answer he nodded his head. One of the women jumped forward and opened it. If my ears did not deceive me there was a gasp and a low wail, as of a half-smothered child. The women closed round, whilst I was aghast with horror; but as I looked they disappeared, and with them the dreadful bag. (Stoker 37)

Although less explicit than *Carmilla*, the vampires' language suggests the baby's brutal fate. Another difference is characterization. Carmilla uses a maternal facade, masking her hunger with social niceties, but these vampire women behave more as animals than as mothers. Jonathan's

language mirrors the dehumanization in the scene as he describes the infant as "some living thing" and cannot be quite certain that he hears a *child*'s wail. Jonathan's confusion relates to the "uncommon" behavior the vampire women display. Despite all the knowledge Jonathan has about his monstrous hosts, he is still unable to admit that vampire women are vile enough to harm a baby. Jonathan's expectations of their gender makes their monstrosity invisible to him.

Jonathan's blindness illustrates the dangers of hiding motherhood's inherent monstrosity. If Jonathan is ignorant to female monsters consuming a baby because of his patriarchal conceptions of women, then it seems impossible he would ever recognize evil in motherhood. The three vampires make an example of Jonathan and prove patriarchal motherhood's inherent stupidity. Men are blind to motherhood's dangers even though they imperil women both because motherhood traps them within a particular role and can literally kill them and their children. Additionally, patriarchy expresses anxiety about revealing this truth, imbuing vampires with even more power through subversion.

Specifically, Jonathan's conception of maternity supersedes the vampire women's identities and monstrosity in general. He incorrectly and dangerously assumes that a blood sucking creature will make an exception for an infant version of its food source. More so than Carmilla, the vampire women are anti-mothers. And, like Carmilla, they lean into their monstrous identities. They embody motherhood's evils without the frills and, in doing so, gain sustenance. Jonathan's willful disbelief makes the scene unclear. The scene crumbles Jonathan's constructed reality that maternity is inherently good. The vampire women instead exist eternally, tearing apart the source of motherhood--functioning on Carpenter's rupture in selecting motherhood's reality over its fiction.

Besides the three vampire women in *Dracula*, Lucy Westenra also has a taste for children. Once vampirized, Lucy terrorizes her community, not killing all her child victims but leaving some alive to spread tales about her. A newspaper describes Lucy's aftermath:

> Several cases have occurred of young children straying from home or neglecting to return from their playing on the Heath. In all these cases the children were too young to give any properly intelligible account of themselves, but the consensus of their excuses is that they had been with a 'bloofer lady'. . .Our correspondent naïvely says that even Ellen Terry could not be so winningly attractive as some of these grubby-faced little children pretend—and even imagine themselves—to be. (Stoker 164)

The joke at the end contributes to the unbelievability of the anti-maternal--the writer cannot believe that a woman would target these children. The joke also cuts to something deeper. Authors, like Stoker, construct the vampire in levels of beauty and attraction. Because the vampire is fictional, her design is a result of human intervention. The newspaper is a meta representation of this occurrence, taking accounts from living children to write an article for other living people. Beside its manner of construction, the article also includes human assumptions about vampirism. Not only is the vampire meant to be beautiful, which, according to the children she is ("bloofer" is a pronunciation of beautiful), but her victims must be as well.

The children's beauty is similar to the vampire's, especially with the comparison to actress Ellen Terry. Their beauty is manufactured, constructed and deliberately selected—as an actor must prepare for a role. Through their beauty, the children become desirable and consumable as an actor must be digestible for a large audience. The author believes beauty indicates the bloofer lady's hunger for their blood.

Because the journalist does not know or believe in the bloofer lady (Lucy), who would be judged otherwise, they push the expectations of beauty onto children. Children, like women, have little autonomy and are controlled by those more powerful than them. Examining beauty

from this perspective shows its ties to weakness. The writer discredits the children because they are not beautiful and, therefore, not threatened by a looming power. It is as if beauty would victimize them.

In contrast, female vampires see beauty as a tool for destruction and empowerment. While patriarchal society places the pressures of beauty onto children, Lucy expresses maternity because she feeds from children no matter their appearance. Her monstrosity allows her to literally engage with the cliche, "The face only a mother could love." Society has a distorted conception of beauty which bleeds into the problem of motherhood. If monstrosity and motherhood are so connected, there is a necessary reflection on the nature of motherhood in general. It has subversive potential and, in that, it is not as angelic or perfect as patriarchy designs it.

When the group of Lucy's suitors and friends catch her drinking blood from a child, they are shocked. At first, Dr. Seward describes, "A dim white figure, which held something dark at its breast" (Stoker 196). When they realize it's Lucy, Seward's language shifts: "Lucy Westenra, but yet how changed. The sweetness was turned to adamantine, heartless cruelty, and the purity to voluptuous wantonness" (Stoker 196). The group gauges Lucy's viciousness through the loss of her maternal, that is, sweet, character. Seward reacts violently to Lucy's "eyes unclean and full of hellfire" which contrast her previously "pure, gentle orbs" (Stoker 197). Lucy's monstrosity challenges the stereotypical image of a good woman, caring and pure, who becomes a good mother.

Lucy's characterization reveals more about the overall symbolism of anti/actual motherhood present in this scene. Before the men recognize the dark thing at Lucy's breast as a baby, it is simply an ominous, mysterious blob that has the potential for danger or harm. This

unknown entity, as unfamiliar to the men as the vampire herself, represents the reality of motherhood, childbirth, and children. In the Victorian era, a baby did not mean joy or happiness but pain and loss of female autonomy. Lucy's vicious attitude occurs because she refuses to conform to the fictive motherhood in which she was relegated to her human life. Vampirism is itself a birth as it brings someone into new life and offers new knowledge about human society. Without the bounds of mortal humanity, Lucy can see motherhood for what it truly is and treat it as such.

Lucy engages with living motherhood by consuming and reversing the roles of mother and child. Her mouth is bloodstained from her drink and when she notices her entourage, Lucy, "With a careless motion, flung to the ground, callous as a devil, the child that up to now she had clutched strenuously to her breast, growling over it as a dog growls over a bone. The child gave a sharp cry, and lay there moaning. There was a cold-bloodedness in the act which wrung a groan from Arthur" (Stoker 197). Again, Seward describes Lucy's action as lacking affection, further emphasizing her rift from imagined maternity. Like the three vampire women in the castle, Lucy becomes animalistic--ironizing the image of the overprotective mother. Since mothers have no real authority in relation to their husbands and, in the Victorian era, especially, faced high maternal and infant mortality rates, it is impossible for a living mother to be truly overbearing and protective. Lucy's parody envelops the complicated nature of motherhood with the mother's powerlessness. She can only protect the child because she is a monster.

The caring, pure image the men force on Lucy is powerless to define her. Her anger manifests both in her feeding and her disposal of the child. Rather than remain concerned with the wellbeing of something that both threatens her own autonomy and could cause grief, she throws it aside. This action scandalizes Arthur, her betrothed, most of all. He is the one who

needs her to be the patriarchal mother. Her "cold-bloodedness" relates to her loss of maternal care. For Arthur, it seems, it is less that Lucy feeds from a child but that she lacks the necessary attitude to care for one--even as a vampire.

The third hungry mother is "Wake not the Dead's" Brunhilda, who threatens the patriarchal organization of the family through her consumption of children. Brunhilda's husband, Walter, brings her back from the dead as a vampire. She quickly gains access to his castle, feeding on his staff and visitors and, eventually, his children. When Brunhilda enters the castle as Walter's new partner, Swanhilda, Walter's wife, must leave. The text states: "Swanhilda then departed, in order to pronounce to her children, a bitter farewell, for they, according to national custom, belonged to the father; and, having bathed them in her tears, and consecrated them with the holy water of maternal love, she quitted her husband's residence" (Tieck 82). Swanhilda reveals motherhood's inherent contradictions. As the angel of the house, Swanhilda offers her children the "holy water of maternal love" as her role expects her to do. Her role also forces her to abandon her children to their father, who does not live with the same domestic expectations as she does. The mother's role is futile. She is only a caretaker of her husband's property, forced to bear, and raise children until he commands otherwise. This limits her maternal capabilities and ironizes Arthur's shock at Lucy's cold-bloodedness in *Dracula*. Even when both mothers and their children survive, the power system is not conducive to loving care. It generates an uneven transactional relationship between husband and wife that the man can violate when he sees fit. Maternity is itself a rift between expectations and rights that women must blindly navigate.

Brunhilda parodies this fraught expectation. From the moment she enters the castle, she feeds on "Children, youths, and maidens" (Tieck 85) who quickly die after she lulls them to sleep and sucks their blood. Her feeding habits are sinister in their comforting nature, much like

motherhood itself. The text elaborates: "Whenever she beheld some innocent child whose lovely face denoted the exuberance of infantine health and vigour, she would entice it by soothing words and fond caresses into her most secret apartment, where, lulling it to sleep in her arms, she would suck from its bosom the warm, purple tide of life" (Tieck 85). Brunhilda is distinctly maternal because her hunting strategy requires her to perform motherhood's fiction (as well as its truth) She uses maternity to reverse the roles of mother and child--sucking from the victim's bosom rather than the reverse. So, while Brunhilda engages with maternity, she parodies and follows it with death. The mother's role is inevitably futile--inviting death or losing control. Brunhilda regains autonomy and vigor by embracing the mother's associations with death and eliminating her stepchildren as she does this (Tieck 87).

Brunhilda uses motherhood as a means to an end, imbuing a powerless position with authority. She is self-serving rather than selfless, the opposite of the patriarchal mother. With this performance, she drinks blood, which enables her existence and offers physical strength, as well as social impact through access to Walter's castle. Brunhilda changes motherhood's two most negative aspects. In death, she gives herself life and, in inferiority, she gains influence.

IV. CONCLUSION

The anti-mother is not the mother's foil, but a mirror; she is a more honest depiction of motherhood or, at least, reveals the negative aspects of motherhood that patriarchy conceals from women, making them easier to control within the nuclear family. The vampire has physical attributes and capabilities that make her a strong figure for ironizing motherhood. She often looks human, which allows men to more easily project the expectations of living women onto her and, furthermore, ignore her monstrosity. She also drinks from children's bosoms, reversing the image of the mother as life/ nutrients giver and gaining sustenance for herself.

This reversal addresses a larger theme in motherhood--managing the permeable line between life and death. Because, while mothers would ideally only bring nutrients and love to their children, they also bring about death to themselves and, potentially, through the life they create. The vampire, in opposition, brings life through death---granting her power and correcting tragedy. The mother is a vampiric figure before ever drinking blood through her and the vampire's shared relationship to mortality.

This mortality is not always literal. Even when her children survive, the mother must abandon her identity for the sake of her family and, most acutely, her husband. The social system makes motherhood seem sacred, angelic, but the mother is bound to the home. She is not sanctified but used--the angel is a fiction. The vampire refuses to nurture these notions as she is aligned with the demonic. It is impossible for her to be an angel and, therefore, impossible for her to be susceptible to patriarchal trickery. The vampire thrives on motherhood's evils, using her own "vicious" nature to uphold motherhood's sins. The vampire's comfort with motherhood's detriments harms patriarchy as this action reveals the negative aspects of motherhood that patriarchy tries to conceal, showing that patriarchy uses lies to perpetuate so-called ideals.

Part Three

I. INTRODUCTION

Although there are clear links between motherhood and the home, a woman does not need to be a mother for her house to trap her. A conventional relationship with a man in the domestic sphere, whether familial or romantic, places women in an inferior position. As the head of the family, the husband/ father figure dictates the woman's position and significance in the home which removes her autonomy. The home is a male domain that runs on female labor.

The angel in the house trope, which exemplifies the ideal "house trained" woman, is not limited to mothers either, but to any woman who is or desires to be part of a household. Diana Wallace explains the home's generational relationship to women in her essay, "A Woman's Place" (2016), "Women have traditionally been required to bury their creative energies in order to marry houses. Moreover, their daughters have risked repeating such confined lives... For such women and girls, then, the home is an uncanny space haunted by lost possibilities and shadowed by patriarchal power" (75). The conception of marriage, both to the home and the husband, illustrates the female and anti-female space that the home encapsulates. Like the husband, the home generates a tyrannical partnership that requires the suppression of desire, subordination of will, and elimination of alternative possibilities to achieve. It is also something expected of women, a key part of patriarchal femininity. Ultimately, the home is a draining entity that conceals its hardships behind the front door and curtained windows. As Wallace puts it, "The home is both a possession and a prison" (78). Women run the home while their husbands work, but they do so under micro and macro patriarchal guidance--micro being the household and macro the whole of society.

The vampire, then, both mirrors and rivals the home's draining capabilities with her own appetite. The vampire is the home's enemy because she reveals its hardships and encourages women to be vicious demons, rather than poised angels. Plus, tradition dictates that vampires must be invited into the home before they can enter. As a fortress that maintains women, the home repels the vampire because, once inside, the monster can defeat the monster house. The home's defense displays fear.

The first part of this section, "Monster House," examines the home's role as prison as it constrains women to the domestic. The first story examined is Mary Wilkins Freeman's "Luella

Miller" (1903), which follows a vampiric woman who drains the energy of those who perform chores for her. "Luella Miller" shows the home's fatalities and the double standards among women and men as well as those within the female binary. Society expects women to run the home while the husband works, but this story reveals the impossible pressure associated with that expectation. Additionally, the virtuous woman must be weak and helpless whilst completing tasks that literally kill people. In both cases, the patriarchal imagination is illogical.

This section also analyzes the Marsten House from Steven King's novel *'Salem's Lot* (1975), which frames the book's focus on domesticity. The house, which sits "upon the hill," defines the community both through its legend and visibility. The whole town knows that Hubie Marsten forced his wife Birdie into hermeticism and then murdered her after he lost his fortune. Birdie Marsten represents the extreme results of patriarchal ego and the home's ability to hide violence. Later on, the Marsten house becomes a center for the vampires who infect the town.

Following the Marsten House's transition from patriarchal prison to vampire headquarters, the final part, "*'Salem's Lot* and Domestic Evils," reviews the story of citizen Bonnie Sawyer and her lover Corey Bryant in *'Salem's Lot*. After her husband Reggie catches them together, he beats Bonnie and forces Corey out of town. Rather than flee, Corey becomes a vampire and returns for revenge. At Reggie's bidding, Corey enters the home and proves Reggie's impotence. The husband's power, just like the wife's weakness, is married to the home. Once a vampire violates that home, both the power and weakness falter. The front door has opened, letting the woman escape.

II. MONSTER HOUSE

The angel in the house, an ideal for any married woman, includes independence and codependence as the wife simultaneously runs the household while being slave to it. As Wallace

explains, in patriarchy, the home becomes monster, vampire even. It depletes women of their identities as individuals and forces them to assimilate to roles surrounding household duties, which the husband dictates. Nina Auerbach explains in *Woman and the Demon* (1982), "In contrast to her sweeping ancestors, the angel in the house is a violent paradox with overtones of benediction and captivity" (Auerbach 72). Wives and mothers must be the paragons of the home, but can never have true power as they remain servants in the home and irrelevant outside it. Patriarchy manipulates religious concepts and figures to support a specific kind of virtue, a counterintuitive and heretical action. Patriarchy trivializes the role of angels so that women feel beholden to virtue and social normativity.

Since the home swallows the woman's identity, there is an indication of concealment or hiding. The home's insular, private existence masks the violence of the angel in the house, just as motherhood covers its pitfalls with promises of duty and fate. Like the home, the vampire can drain people of their life force. With this skill, she reclaims her autonomy from the home and uses her power to undercut the patriarchal standards that limit her as a living wife.

The most notable and deliberate of these women is Luella Miller from "Luella Miller" by Wilkins Freeman. Due to financial strain, Freeman's mother had to work for another family's household and Freeman published her first work around this time, helping alleviate her family's hardship. Freeman spent several years of her adult life living with a female friend, writing rather than performing the chores expected of a married woman. Once she married, her writing faltered in favor of domestic duties (Loyola Chicago). Written the year of her marriage,"Luella Miller" reflects Wilkins Freeman's complex relationship to the domestic. Like most vampiric characters, Luella is characterized as evil, but her refusal to participate in the domestic serves as her power source.

"Luella Miller" is a nontraditional vampire tale in that the main character, Luella, does not suck people's blood. Instead, she drains them of their life force when they perform domestic chores for her. Luella entrances her victims and seems unaware of her effect on them. For example, she marries a healthy young man who quickly grows ill. The narrator states, "He fell on the floor while he was gettin' breakfast and let Luella lay abed. He did all the sweepin' and the washin' and the ironin' and most of the cookin'. He couldn't bear to let Luella lift a finger, and she let him do for her. She lived like a queen for all the work she did. She didn't even do her sewin'" (Freeman 394). While the narrator rebukes Luella for her laziness, the narrator's judgment ironizes the narrator and anyone else who upholds patriarchy. The husband participates in women's work. He does all of the chores expected of a wife who, traditionally, does not have help from her partner. And, as happens figuratively to women, Luella's husband loses his life to those chores.

Luella's husband dies from his subservience because Luella *is* the looming home Wallace describes. She drains her victims of their autonomy and lives secretly, with only the narrator (another woman) recognizing her pattern of victims. Similarly, patriarchy glorifies the "do-it-all" model for wives. They are perfect angels because they have the capabilities to manage every menial aspect of the household. Wallace writes, "If the 'feminine mystique'... made the domestic activities of cooking and cleaning, washing, and bearing children into 'a religion, a pattern,' then writers of domestic Gothic expose the horrors underlying these activities, the mess and dirt which have to be repressed" (81). Although "Luella Miller" is not necessarily a domestic Gothic, it contains a similar sense of revelation. The "dirt" behind motherhood is not just dust and grime, but a sinister underlying destruction of the female/ female performing body. By both refusing to partake in and forcing others to engage with domesticity, Luella not only rejects

socially imposed labels but exists in a liminal state of masculinity and femininity that proves the home's dangers.

Luella illustrates this gender fluidity through her inability to work. The story continues as the exasperated narrator prevents people from helping Luella. She explains, "[Luella] had her hysterics in there till she got tired. When she found out that nobody was comin' to coddle her and do for her she stopped" (Freeman 398). Luella's childlike state and desire for service is meant to sound pathetic. She is a monster but she lacks any true potency beyond those she can control. Without service, her actions are futile and her crying is akin to a toddler's tantrum. With all that said, Luella is in the position of the husband, the looming house, the patriarch. Like the husband, Luella's power is not inherent but dependent on her position and the service of others. The narrator displays that this power can be removed if people no longer participate in it. Luella's exhausting attitude showcases the immaturity and incapability of patriarchs. Rather than consume them physically, Luella drains people in the same way that patriarchal husbands destroy their wives--behind the domestic veil. Luella weaponizes patriarchy against itself.

Continuing "Luella Miller's" themes, *'Salem's Lot* emphasizes the home's pressures on women. The home is a central antagonist in Stephen King's book. King, a famed horror author whose stories often center in Maine, grew up with a penchant for the supernatural—often reading comic books and horror stories. His father left his family while King was a child and his mother raised him alone while taking on other "caregiver" jobs such as helping her parents and working in a home for the mentally challenged (King).

A retelling of *Dracula*, King's novel centers on the tiny town of Jerusalem's Lot, which has suffered from both financial troubles and more serious issues. A vampire and his assistant

spread vampirism to most of the citizens. On a hill above ‘Salem’s Lot is the Marsten House, a mansion that concealed a murder–suicide and a haven for vampires.

The Marsten House is horrifying. The text states, “The house itself looked toward town. It was huge and rambling and sagging, its windows haphazardly boarded shut, giving it that sinister look of all old houses that have been empty for a long time” (King 24). In addition to the haunted exterior, the whole of ‘Salem’s Lot knows the house’s brutal past. A wealthy man, Hubert Marsten, and his wife, Birdie, lived in the home in the 1920s. After the Great Depression, the couple behaved “like hermits” (King 52). As their mail piles up, someone discovers “Birdie Marsten...sprawled in the corner...Half her head had been blown off by a close-range shot from a thirty-ought-six” (King 53). Upon further investigation, the local police find the home riddled with booby traps and Hubie “dangling from a rafter” (King 54).

The introduction to the Marsten House is the realization of domestic violence that hangs over the rest of the town and continues in other households. All of the violence in the Marsten House centers on the idea of the home as patriarchal prison. The devolution of Hubie’s mind comes from his loss of income, which establishes his patriarchal authority and control in the home as the breadwinner. In reaction, he traps himself and his wife in their home—a symbol of his money and authority. Eventually, he murders her. Someone finds her shot in the kitchen, a stereotypical symbol of the housewife. Birdie, who does not have much of a backstory beyond her husband, is left as the literalization of the decimated housewife. Birdie’s story and the haunted house foreshadow the town’s rampant domestic abuse.

III. ‘*SALEM’S LOT* AND DOMESTIC EVILS

The home is a form of concealment against the violence present in the dynamic between husband and wife. In all cases of patriarchal matrimony, there are implicit harms against women-

-such as the wife's responsibility to tend to the home/prison as well as to her husband. This norm eliminates her autonomy because she no longer exists for herself but as a convenient addition to another person's home. In some instances, however, the abuse is a direct result of the husband, rather than an inevitable consequence of marriage in patriarchy. Domestic abuse underscores the power loss present in the home. Husbands view their wives as property and, with that, feel entitled to their affections and obedience. This can result in physical violence against the wife who is already helpless in the home.

Bonnie Sawyer, another citizen of the Lot, cheats on her husband Reggie with Corey Bryant, a young telephone repairman. Reggie goes on a violent tirade when he catches them. After threatening Corey with a gun, Reggie tells him, "She'll be all right now. She's broke in now. She's gonna have to wear pants and long sleeve blouses for a couple of weeks, but I didn't mark her face" (King 359). Reggie's use of "All right" is not the same as "Alright." Rather than indicate that Bonnie is okay, Reggie suggests that he has fixed her to follow the "right" path.

Reggie's hidden abuse forces Bonnie to behave as a virtuous wife rather than a vicious one who defies her husband and follows her desires. Cheating violates the power imbalance that benefits Reggie. His anger is not a result of hurt feelings, but insecurity in his dominance. A "righted" woman knows her place as victim and prisoner in the home--never safe to make autonomous choices. The home is a place of destruction that harbors and allows for violence because its foundations place husband above wife.

Reggie's behavior mirrors the Marsten House's violence through the marital power imbalance. Just as the home conceals its evils, Reggies disguises his abuse. By avoiding Bonnie's face and forcing her to cover her body, Reggie keeps his abuse just under the surface of knowability. This sort of disguise makes the crime obvious--people will probably wonder why

Bonnie has suddenly dressed so conservatively. This attempt at disguise reveals patriarchy's tendency toward blissful ignorance that shows in the home as well. In both cases, hiding indicates shame and, therefore, acknowledgment of wrongdoing. Patriarchy cannot mask its illogical tendencies even with the most strategic disguise. "Hiding" violence means that society condones the abuse that Bonnie suffers. The social order is inherently corrupt because this kind of dominance permits the social order's existence through submission. The vampire unveils this violence and forces the society to face its shame.

Vampirism becomes Bonnie and Corey's revenge. Shortly after Reggie banishes Corey from 'Salem's Lot, the young man runs into Barlow, the novel's main vampire. Corey identifies Barlow as a foreigner and Barlow confirms his assumption. With his outsider status, Barlow makes an observation about American culture. He states, "The country is an amazing paradox...In this land...it seems the more you have the more aggressive you become. You see? Like Mr. Sawyer. With so much; yet he begrudges you a few crumbs from his table" (King 361). While Barlow's comments objectify Bonnie as property to be shared, his insight on American greed illuminates the status of the coerced housewife. She is the husband's commodity whose freedom is secondary to avarice. Reggie's violence is a result of his tendency and expectation for excess. He feels owed Bonnie's affections and loyalty.

Barlow's comments have an ulterior motive beyond Corey's issues with Reggie. The vampire wants to grow his "followers," making vampirism spread through the town like a virus. So, Barlow's misogyny is a way to manipulate Corey, who is also susceptible to patriarchy's influence and gluttony. That Barlow's crumbs metaphor convinces Corey to become a vampire proves that the young man also thinks he is owed. From there, Barlow transforms Corey. Barlow

simultaneously reveals patriarchy's greed and uses that greed against Corey to increase vampirism.

Barlow's final words to Corey have a Marxist air. He tells him, "And you shall yet have your vengeance on those who would fill themselves while others want" (King 363). Vampires like Barlow, who are distinctly "foreign," find irony in western humanity's desire for more. Ultimately, greed marks 'Salem's Lot's downfall as Barlow uses his vampires to create more vampires. As he promises citizens their darkest wants, they do not realize that they are slaves to Barlow's greed and desires. Like the housewife, their fates imprison them. So, although Barlow's vengeance is tied to greed, his vengeance also targets those who continuously desire for more.

With this attitude in mind, Corey returns to Reggie's house and wakes him up with a noise that "Penetrated his sleep like a nail being bludgeoned into heavy oak" (King 570). Penetrate implies that Corey violates the sanctity of the home. However, Reggie bids Corey inside, believing himself secure within his home fortress. His confidence is his demise. Once Corey has access to the Sawyer home, he walks "With a cold and dreadful lack of mercy" (King 573) towards Reggie. Reggie matches Corey's violent disposition with a shotgun, but Corey remains unaffected even after two bullets to the chest. Reggie's strength, established by his role in the home, cannot defeat the vampire who disrupts patriarchal order.

When Reggie instructs Bonnie to return to the bedroom, she ignores him, further proving his power deficit. She watches as Corey slaps the shotgun from Reggie, "As if from the hands of a child" (574). Rather than a powerful patriarch, Reggie becomes like a child, another common fixture in the home who lacks autonomy. His wife, who he believes is his property, observes his weakened state and realizes that his power is not inherent but reliant on manipulating others to

do his bidding. Contrastly, the vampiric intruder defeats patriarchy with objective strength and reveals Reggie's fragility. When Bonnie welcomes Corey to her, Reggie screams. His terror marks an acknowledgement of his impotence. Corey is intimidating because he reminds Reggie of his weakness and the loss of his domain. Furthermore, he convinces Bonnie, Reggie's supposedly "broke in" wife, to join him. Reggie's power has completely dissipated and Bonnie is no longer a prisoner in the home.

IV. CONCLUSION

In this project, the home is a nebulous concept that represents the stereotypes and rules associated with domesticity. To minimize the home into more digestible terms, one can think of it as a miniaturized patriarchal society. The imbalance between husband and wife mimics the social dynamic between men and women in patriarchy. And the vampire's invasion replicates the detrimental effects of rebellion and realization on patriarchal society. Furthermore, the home serves as a patriarchal figure in and of itself--joining the woman in a toxic and limiting relationship. The vampire's penetration of the home, then, destroys patriarchy on the individual and philosophical levels. The monster breaks down the mini society and removes the man's power and as well as the woman's symbolic relationship to domesticity.

The home is the real monster in Gothic literature. It is literally and figuratively opposed to the vampire because it physically prevents her entrance and follows traditional structures threatened by the vampire's subversion. Within this opposition, the home is always on the defensive--something Reggie Sawyer demonstrates when he tries to kill Corey. This state of protection proves the home's insecure power against transgressive action. The vampire, however, has supernatural strength that the patriarch cannot access. The vampire's monstrosity marks her

as dangerous to normative structures. She is inherently offensive, constantly searching for a way inside.

Ultimately, the home is evil because it forces women into submissive roles and then disguises those roles behind domestic bliss. Besides shame, this masking proves an inherent weakness in the home's controlling power. It cannot imprison women outright because, as the vampire shows, it would give them too much fuel to rebel. It must shirk away from ridicule due to its faulty logic and hypocritical nature.

CHAPTER TWO: Feminine Male Vampires

I. INTRODUCTION

Understanding the inherent femininity of male vampires requires further analysis of the function of femininity both in this project and this chapter. Overall, I use femininity as an evolving term that describes women based on Victorian gender ideology. So, as femininity shifts with various cultural changes and generational differences, conceptions of femininity rest in the binary of the virtuous woman and the vicious one. While this binary limits women in their expression and autonomy by strictly and illogically defining good and bad, it is also an easy model to resist with the correct tools. In patriarchy, femininity is the opposite of masculinity, the dominant mode of existence. As the foil to the oppressive system, femininity is also a means of resistance because it encompasses everything patriarchy wants to avoid. So, femininity is a patriarchal construct that describes gender performativity but it can also mean finding the value of vicious behavior and, with that, subversion against masculinity.

In owning femininity and problematizing what society deems weak and inconsequential, vampires attack patriarchy and empower femininity. Their social rebellion prevents masculinity from reclaiming potency and results in more progressive conceptions of sexuality, gender expression, and social expectations. All vampires use femininity to attack patriarchy by ostensibly embracing its vicious side. Male femininity breaks down the gender binary through a radical subversion of gender expectations for both sexes: male vampires embrace qualities demonized in women and use those qualities to work against their own interests as men.

Male femininity arranges itself within the same parameters as female femininity. Male vampires have maternal behaviors and physical characteristics, they share their female counterparts' beauty, and the women in their stories have sexual autonomy. This parallel

indicates femininity's ungendered potential and the closeness between male and female vampires. The monster is inherently feminine but proves that it is not an attribute exclusive to women, demonstrating that people can play with patriarchal rules regarding femininity or masculinity. Thus the first part of this chapter "The Maternal Paternal," explores male maternity in Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976). I use Lisa Shires' interpretation of republican motherhood and the British literary response to anxieties about the patriarchy's weakness in the French Revolution from *Rewriting the Victorians* (1992) to illuminate the Victorian patriarchal attitude toward women in the home. This section examines the state's objectification of the mother as a mechanism for education as well as emasculation. Just like femininity itself, republican motherhood is double-edged, at once necessary and derogatory, depending on the context. Republican motherhood, a didactic role, was reserved for women and, as such, emasculating to men. Louis and Lestat embrace motherhood through their desire for children, their teachings and vampiric transformations.

The second part, "Beautiful Men," examines manifestations of male beauty and how, like their female counterparts, male vampires' appearances are a hunting tool and catalyst for human sexual ownership. Beautiful male vampires experience objectification from the desiring eyes of human women, which furthers the gender norm reversal. This is clear in John Polidori's "The Vampyre" (1819) in which living women from positions of power throw themselves at the vampire antagonist Lord Ruthven because of his alluring beauty. He consents to their desire because they are a reliable blood source. The story makes clear that the noblewomen Ruthven associates with are not stereotypical virtuous women, but women with command over their bodies. The objectified male in vampire literature continues with Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* (2005) which emphasizes the vampire's androgynous beauty. Edward, the main love interest, is

as beautiful as his female siblings and that beauty is compared to angels and magazine covers. This use of simile shows beauty as a performative, gendered role in society as it plays into stereotypes about female sanctity and expectations. Although women have standards they must follow, Edward shows that men can be just as beautiful. This important continuity of beautiful male vampires reveals the male vampire's deep rooted association with feminine characteristics that withstand social and cultural changes in literature. The authors compare Ruthven and Edward to women to express their allure.

Finally, "Male Sexual Ownership and Living Women" investigates the development of male sexual ownership in the vampire genre. This is a fraught topic because masculinity relates to sexual violence and coercion in patriarchy. A vampire has even more physical strength and a literal predatory nature so he can promote these detrimental concepts. The first text in this section, Heinrich Ossenfelder's "Der Vampir" (1748), carries this violent theme as the vampire threatens to stalk and kill a young woman. However, this poem also contains subversion in its critique of female sexuality and motherhood. In his threats, the vampire challenges the woman's religious upbringing and the legitimacy of her mother's educational influence.

The stories that follow Ossenfelder's poem move away from sexual violence and encourage female sexual empowerment. Lord Ruthven, for example, targets upper class women, tearing down their reputations in high society. Rather than unwilling victims, however, the women pursue Ruthven and embrace their loss of honor. And, as examples for propriety, their decision carries social influence and can encourage more vicious behaviors. In *Interview with the Vampire*, Lestat seduces two women, but they express sexual desire and autonomy. Their sexual relationship with him is consensual. The female protagonist in Charlaine Harris' *Dead Until Dark* (2001) sexualizes the vampire Bill even though she knows he could kill her and she takes

on a heroic, stereotypical male role when she defends him from muggers. Again, the reversal of gender stays the same throughout the texts in this chapter, suggesting that femininity is a constant theme for the male vampire and that patriarchal gender roles cannot logically apply to vampires.

II. THE MATERNAL PATERNAL

The female vampire challenges norms related to patriarchal motherhood because her gender affords her access to that role. In contrast, some male vampires adopt performative aspects of motherhood, such as nurturing, that female vampires avoid. Shires discusses this phenomenon regarding the maenadic woman (subversive woman) in British texts. These stories deal with “bankrupt patriarchy,” an anxiety bolstered in Victorian Britain by the French Revolution’s violent upheaval of the monarchy. The king, a symbol of patriarchal power, died at the hands of the masses, which British literature degraded through feminization. Rather than a battlefield, these stories occur in the home, confronting the panic around faulty patriarchy. These Victorian texts express concerns about revolutionary action through unintentional subversion:

> If the French Revolutionary plot. . . is one of the Oedipal rivalry and cannibalism where the male aristocratic order is overturned by the bourgeoisie and lower class ‘sons,’ these Victorian texts offer a different plot with variations for the story of a bankrupt patriarchy. . [In one version], the husband appropriates the mother’s power for himself and becomes the nurturer and educator as well as the breadwinner. The father becomes feminized. . . he accrues or seizes power culturally designated as female. (Shires 157)

Shires’ interpretation of motherhood centers on a tradition of staunch Rousseauian Republicanism (Shires 148). In this model, the woman remained in the home as “nurturer and educator,” raising her children to be good members of the state. If mothers did not stay home for the future sons of the Republic, then the fathers had to and, as a result, the model of the home would be skewed. No longer seen as the independent breadwinner, the husband/father figure becomes domesticated by his new feminine power. This complicates the woman’s relationship to

the home as well, making her a nonessential (and, perhaps, liberated) member of the family. The home can no longer breed patriarchal agents in this new, feminized state.

These expectations of patriotic motherhood, which the patriarchy designs and designates, demean femininity as the foil of stable government. Shires writes about British literary tropes on subversive women: "The Unnatural Woman provides a locus for the intensified fears of revolution in an England which wants, at all costs, to preserve the stability of government" (Shires 148). The unnatural woman insult reveals women's influence on the state through their educational roles. This didactic attribute is a viable method for women to end patriarchy; the negative connotations around unnatural women emphasize the subversive power.

The characterization of the evil, "Unnatural" revolutionaries as feminine translates to the vampire, another creature that threatens social order. Shires notes that the symbol of the Unnatural Woman might stem from the reactions to the French Revolution, but it can apply to situations slightly related to the original source material--by virtue of being a symbol (147). While republican motherhood might seem unique to the French Revolution, it pervades and influences later conceptions of maternity. The previous chapter examined female motherhood, addressing its entrapment of women in the family. The revolutionary imagination of the woman as public servant applies to Victorian motherhood as well, especially because Victorian mothers are key to the home's function. Combining these conceptions of male femininity with Victorian maternal constructions, modern novels like Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* imbue their male vampires with femininity through maternal qualities.

In *Interview with the Vampire,* the two male vampires, Lestat and Louis, adopt/produce a vampire child named Claudia. Their relationship with the orphaned Claudia allows them to bring a new kind of life from death--a vampiric life. Additionally, Louis and Lestat engage with and

reinforce the performative aspects of motherhood. Overall, Lestat and Louis demonstrate the potency and influence of motherhood found in the time of the Revolution.

Rice published *Interview with the Vampire* in 1976, shortly after her daughter passed away from Leukemia; the novel reflects her complex relationship with motherhood (Biography). The story follows the vampire Louis and his adventures with his sire Lestat through New Orleans and Paris. Unlike Lestat, Louis suffers from his immortal condition, unsure if he deserves life. While wandering the streets of New Orleans, the pair discover Claudia, a five year old orphan who recently lost her mother to the plague. Against Louis' initial wishes, Lestat transforms Claudia and she joins them to form an undead family.

Claudia's dead mother brings the death associated with Victorian motherhood into the novel, making Louis and Lestat the mother's replacements. This replacement also ironizes patriarchal motherhood because the men willingly take on the maternal role--something meant to weaken them. Lestat makes this gender reversal clear when he announces, "'For no creatures under God are as we are, none so like Him as ourselves, dark angels not confined to the stinking limits of hell but wandering His earth and all its kingdoms. I want a child tonight. I am like a mother...I want a child!'" (Rice 89). Lestat's motherhood is both symbolic and literal because he references angels, a symbol linked to Victorian motherhood, and compares himself to a mother. The symbolism engages with stereotypes about maternity and angelic duty, which is problematic but it is also an example of gender revolution.

As Shires' discussion of the French Revolution and anxious British literature implies, men are not supposed to have the same affectionate inclinations toward family as women because it reduces their traditional masculinity. Mothers cultivate emotional connections with their children because their roles as educators and nurturers require it. This attitude justifies men

as the absent breadwinners and women as the ever present symbol of obedience in the home. The false notion that women exclusively want children keeps them trapped in the household and encourages men to go beyond. Lestat's selfish desire for a child could register as a mini gender revolution. He wants something patriarchy does not sanction for his gender because it threatens the hierarchy of the home. However, he also maintains stereotypes about women. Lestat exhibits the rupture in Gothic literature that Ginette Carpenter mentions in the last chapter. He both expresses the transgressive potential of motherhood in the Gothic while adhering to its falsehoods--just like anti-mothers.

Louis, despite his initial qualms about harming children, drinks from Claudia with little coaxing from Lestat, already connecting him to the anti-mothers from the previous chapter. Once the pair "rescues" Claudia from the orphanage, they take her to their lavish apartment. Louis describes, "I couldn't bear it looking at her wanting her not to die and wanting her; and the more I looked at her the more I could taste her skin, feel my arms sliding under her back and pull her up to me, feeling her soft neck soft, soft, that's what she was so soft... I wanted her!" (Rice 91). Louis' desire flips his vampire and gender identities. Normally, the vampire draws the human in with beauty or hypnotism, but Claudia's appearance entices him. His desire is also maternal. He bastardizes the desire for a child as he begins Claudia's vampiric transformation.

Vampirization is feminine, especially in this novel. The first half of the process feminizes the vampire in a sexual way as he receives a person's "fluids." In heterosexual intercourse, the woman "receives" the man's semen. Additionally, sucking has similar sexual implications, something emphasized by Louis' uncomfortable desire for Claudia not just as food but as an aesthetic, attractive object. If we function within a gender binary that denies the existence of gender queer identities, then vampires have inherently feminine and female

qualities. Sex begets children. Both characters, in being vampirized and vampirizing, adopt femininity tied to immortality and power.

Louis' meal is the first step in Claudia's vampirization. The second comes when Lestat makes her drink from his wrist, which completes the metamorphosis. Lestat takes Claudia from Louis' lap and whispers her name, encouraging her to follow his instructions. Lestat tells her,"'That's it dear; more...You must drink it to get well.'" (Rice 92). Lestat's motherhood manifests in his coddling and whispering to Claudia, which mimics a mother giving her child medicine. Claudia also drinks from Lestat, a bastardization of the baby at its mother's breast. And, patriarchy views everyone with breasts as a woman.

Furthermore, Claudia is reborn as a vampire. The comparisons to human birth are evident in this simulation of intercourse that Louis and Lestat partake in, but a single vampire can perform this act as well. In both cases, the process of vampire "birth" feminizes the sire as much as the victim, meaning vampirization has a simultaneous connection to vulnerability and empowerment. Through momentary weakness, the victim becomes a supernatural creature. The victim must be drained until near death and, then, to complete the transformation, consume the vampire's blood. The second step has two implications. First, the person (soon-to-be vampire) is sexually feminized from receiving the vampire's blood. Second, since this person was near death and would die otherwise, the vampire has given them new life. The person is now totally reliant on the vampire's blood for life and nutrients, which makes them a sort of infant and the elder vampire a sort of mother. At the same time, the vampire becomes vulnerable as they open their veins to another person and, through that vulnerability, gives the new vampire strength. Mothers do this for their children when they breastfeed but also in accepting an inferior role in the household. The transformation process differs among vampire stories, but many involve gender

complication. Even if the second half of the act is not performed, the act of sucking, whether to kill or create, feminizes all vampires.

After they transform Claudia and adopt her into their family, Louis and Lestat shower her in gifts. Louis reports:

> An endless train of dress makers and shoemakers and tailors came to our flat to outfit Claudia in the best of children's fashions, so that she was always a vision not just for child beauty, with her curling lashes in her glorious yellow hair, but of taste... Lestat played with her as if she were a magnificent doll; it was her pleading that forced me to give up my rusty black for dandy jackets and silk ties and soft gray coats and gloves and black capes. (Rice 99)

Louis' interest in dresses and fashion is stereotypically feminine, especially when patriarchy considers women frivolous creatures obsessed with appearance. Carol Senf makes this connection in "Daughters of Lilith: Women Vampires in Popular Literature" (1999) when she explains the relationship between vampires and mirrors. She states, "Originally, the vampire's lack of a reflection symbolized its lack of soul; however; the mirror, identified by Dracula as 'a foul bauble of man's vanity,' relates specifically to a supposedly feminine trait--vanity about one's physical appearance" (208). Patriarchy imagines that human women have an obsession with appearance. All vampires have this obsession as well--another stereotypically feminine trait. Louis' aesthetic grows more stereotypically feminine with Claudia's influence. He trades unassuming outfits for silks and fashionable silhouettes. He develops the same tendencies toward appearance that patriarchy simultaneously condemns and encourages in women--perfection without self obsession.

Louis's doll simile also relates to manifestations of femininity both within the family and in its performative qualities. Dolls behave at their owner's will. They are objects that project a superior source's narrative--similar to how mothers must ingratiate their children at the father's command. Louis and Lestat bastardize paternal manipulation through their feminine identities.

Claudia's girlish desires make Lestat want to buy her dresses and they make Louis wear different clothing. She manipulates them as much as they manipulate her. Here, members of two disenfranchised groups--mothers and children--educate each other, offering an eternal mutual exchange that excludes paternal control.

III. BEAUTIFUL MEN

Like their female counterparts, male vampires also emulate the "If looks could kill" cliché. Almost every male vampire in Western literature either is or becomes attractive with blood consumption. This hypnotic beauty, weaponized in the same way as their female counterparts, makes living people the vampires' willing victims. It also allows male vampires to mimic and ironize the beauty ideal thrust upon women. By adopting standards forbidden to men, by being feminine, male vampires have more power over their victims. For example, the legend about a vampire's missing reflection might be a commentary on their vapid and soulless natures, but that association is a result of the intertwined relationship between vanity and femininity. And femininity has negative implications in patriarchy because it threatens social order. Shires, again, explains, "The effeminization of the Jacobins is particularly important. The point is not merely that women in the Revolution were likened to the fierce furies. Rather, the men were 'reduced' to the state of female furies" (Shires 151). In the French Revolution, the Jacobins violently challenged a patriarchal institution when they attacked those of royal blood. Their conservative opponents feminized them to be demeaning, but their insults reveal the connection between femininity and revolution. Monstrosity comes with incomprehensible strength.

One of the earliests examples of the beautiful male vampire is Lord Ruthven, the antagonist of Polidori's "The Vampyre" a short narrative originally accredited to Lord Byron. Polidori, a doctor and travel companion to Byron, wrote the tale during a scary story contest held

at Byron's estate, which also resulted in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. The scandalous and evil Lord Ruthven represents Lord Byron, whom Polidori disagreed with often (Edwards).

"The Vampyre" follows Aubrey, an orphaned gentleman about to embark on his Grand Tour of Europe, a rite of passage for many wealthy young Englishman. Lord Ruthven, a mysterious and alluring character, accompanies Aubrey on his journey. Along the way, Aubrey notices Ruthven's strange tendencies and, ultimately, discovers that Ruthven is a vampire who has killed Aubrey's girlfriend and his sister.

Ruthven's mysterious beauty contributes to his lethality. Aubrey describes Ruthven's perplexing appearance: "In spite of the deadly hue of his face, which never gained a warmer tint, either from the blush of modesty, or from the strong emotion of passion, though its form and outline were beautiful, many of the female hunters after notoriety attempted to win his attentions, and gain, at least, some marks of what they might term affection" (Polidori 47). Like the beautiful female vampires mentioned previously, Ruthven's pale skin indicates his undead existence but does not counter his beauty. If anything, Ruthven's appealing form supersedes his deathly pallor. Notably, Ruthven does not share his female counterparts' rosy cheeks or heaving bosoms. His beauty is "masculine," conveying a stern exterior that contrasts with the innocent, sexualized, emotional appearance society forces on women.

This might seem to negate Ruthven's femininity, but Ruthven's appearance makes him a touchstone for several types of subversion. His beauty is a cunning deceit used to lure high society women to his bed and fangs. In patriarchy, which condemns women who shamelessly pursue beauty, weaponized beauty is a uniquely feminine act. Men cannot be temptresses because then they would have culpability in women's viciousness.

It is illogical, however, to blame someone's appearance for another person's actions. Just as Jonathan Harker placed his sexual desires onto the vampires in Dracula's Castle, the women who pursue Ruthven place their desires onto him. By referring to the women as hunters, Aubrey grants stereotypically masculine power to the women, especially in the context of rape culture. Rape culture is misogynist, casting women as both liars and victims and men as both dominant and innocent. Here, though, the women autonomously chase Ruthven, who engages in consensual sexual relationships with them. So, in insulting women by calling them "hunters," Aubrey notes distaste for predatory nature--ironizing men in patriarchy. He also gives women strength similar to that of Jacobin female furies. The women gain power through their hunter status. Finally, Aubrey's metaphor weakens Ruthven through misogyny, therefore engaging with toxic masculinity and violating normative expectations of manhood. Ruthven becomes the unaware victim, a female stereotype.

Ruthven is a prototype for the attractive male vampires found in modern romantic fiction. Beauty becomes a point of contact and empathy for an otherwise brooding, miserable bunch. Charlaine Harris' *Dead Until Dark* explores the interaction between living women (traditionally virtuous) and male vampires (traditionally vicious) and beauty's ability to express gentleness as well as passion.

Harris grew up in Mississippi, an avid reader and writer of horror fiction (Wright). Her novel contains both the positive and negative aspects of the American South, including its lasting prejudice. The main character's relationship with vampires develops in its exploration of sexuality and beauty in a conservative atmosphere, sometimes shaming the female protagonist along with other women, vampires, and non-white characters.

The book follows Sookie, a living woman with mind reading capabilities who lives in a reality that accepts vampires exist and discriminates against them. Sookie meets Bill, her vampire boyfriend, while waitressing at a diner in her small Mississippi town. From the moment she sees him, she knows he is a vampire. Sookie describes:

> I hope that my lipstick was still even and my ponytail was still neat... I could feel my smile yanking the corners of my mouth up...He was pale, of course. Hey, he was dead, if you believe the old tales... Anyway, his looks were lovely, sharply sculpted... His nose swooped down right above that [eyebrow] arch, like a prince's in a Byzantine mosaic. When he finally looked up, I saw his eyes were even darker than his hair, and the whites were incredibly white. (Harris 2)

Like Ruthven, Bill's pale, striking features have a hypnotic effect on women interested in men. Like Jonathan Harker, Sookie has a physical reaction to Bill's unassuming presence, which manifests in an impulsive desire to make herself beautiful. Notably, Bill does not deceive anyone about his nature. Sookie knows that he is dangerous but she still wants him.

Bill is not evil like his predecessors, but his beauty still benefits his bloodlust-- men accused Lucy, the Greek vampiress, and countless women of similar vanity. However, if we accept the previous chapters' criteria, that humans project their desire onto vampires, then Sookie is the one with the ridiculous appetite. Bill's appearance comes from Sookie's perception so it mirrors her sexual confidence back to the audience. Sookie objectifies Bill despite her better judgment not because she knows he is a good person, but because he is a vampire. She fetishizes Bill. Sookie takes on the classic male role of misguided sexual desire found in classic vampire fiction while Bill becomes the feminine aesthetic object forced under the gaze.

Meyer's *Twilight* continues male vampiric beauty in stating male and female vampires are equally beautiful. Meyer grew up the eldest in a large Mormon family, using her home state of Arizona as a place of origin for her protagonist Bella (Biography). Meyer's more conservative upbringing shows both in her euphemistic sexual themes as well as the novel's modest vampire

heartthrob Edward. Edward's relationship to femininity in his self loathing and awareness of propriety has strong ties to traditional gender roles.

Twilight focuses on Bella Swan who has just moved from sunny Phoenix, Arizona to gloomy Forks, Washington. At her new school, Bella meets Edward Cullen and the rest of his mysterious family. Their relationship is not immediate, Edward avoids her due to her enticing scent, but they eventually fall in love.

Twilight explicitly makes all vampires beautiful. Before knowing their true natures, Bella notices the Cullens from across the cafeteria, observing,

> I stared because their faces were so different, so similar, were all devastatingly, inhumanly beautiful. They were faces that you never expected to see, except, perhaps, on the airbrushed pages of a fashion magazine or painted by an old master as the face of an angel. It was hard to decide who was the most beautiful-- maybe the perfect blonde girl, or the bronze haired boy. (Meyer 19)

Bella's reference to Raphaelite angels and fashion magazines invokes stereotypes about female beauty, from women being angels in the house to their association with vanity. Bella's magazine comment also highlights patriarchal beauty's commercialism. Rather than allow women to embrace their sexuality, society uses beauty to sell women and sell to women. Bella's simile, then, reflects on her mindset as a woman in patriarchy.

Despite the feminine connections Bella draws with beauty, the vampires, and herself, she does not directly state that the Cullens' beauty is feminine. In this way, vampires have a tendency to not only cross gender boundaries but obliterate them. This has a practical application since neutrality, as Bella displays, makes their prey universally attainable. Beauty, for male and female vampires, is a source of strength, strategy, and adaptability.

IV. MALE SEXUAL OWNERSHIP AND LIVING WOMEN

Sexual corruption is the main component of the vampire's viciousness because they use it to expose the patriarchal pillars of virtue, honor, character, and soul as false. Consider Dracula's corrupt mark on the virtuous Mina Harker or Brunhilda's use of sexual ownership to lure a king from his family.

Corruption, especially in a Christian heteropatriarchy, has an inherent link to sexuality. Sexual corruption appears in the Christian creation myth. Adam and Eve clothe themselves after consuming the fruit of knowledge, aware of their carnality. The biblical context also marks corruption as uniquely feminine. Eve eats the fruit and convinces Adam to do the same. Vampire literature imbues its monsters with a similar sense of sexual corruption, control, and deviation. Senf acknowledges this when she explains that vampire women "Are characterized by overt eroticism. This trait, although often treated sympathetically in twentieth century literature, is more often associated with absolute evil in earlier works" (204). Senf's reading delves into the implications of feminine sexuality and allows for a deeper analysis of male monsters who also partake in promiscuity. Although, the twentieth century also contained biting criticism of sexual aberrance.

An important difference, however, and one that could problematize the concept of the universally feminine vampire is sexual coercion. Whereas female vampires have willing male victims, male vampires have a stronger history of violation toward their female victims. They illustrate the distinction between seduction and force. In many female vampire stories, men place their sexual desires onto the lady monsters and pursue them. Since the vampire desires the living man for gastronomical reasons and has formidable strength, she consents to his longing. Alternatively, she can deny it and not feel threatened. Male vampires, on the other hand, have privilege from their gender. With their additional strength and charms, their vampirism makes

them even more predatory. As a result, not every story about male vampires is redeemable, but with the development of a more complex, multi-layered male vampire, writers can lean into the male vampire's feminine attributes, especially in romance literature.

The earliest published vampire tale in European history is Ossenfelder's poem "Der Vampir." Unlike the other authors, there is not much written about Ossenfelder, but his short poem explores the relationship between sexuality and, mainly, Christianity--a point analyzed in a later chapter. The poem describes a vampire stalking a young woman to suck her blood. The poem's second stanza encaspulates the male vampire's sexual violence:

> And as softly thou art sleeping
>
> To thee shall I come creeping
>
> And thy life's blood drain away.
>
> And so shalt thou be trembling
>
> For thus shall I be kissing
>
> And death's threshold thou' it be crossing
>
> With fear, in my cold arms.
>
> And last shall I thee question
>
> Compared to such instruction
>
> What are a mother's charms? (lines 13-22).

While both male and female vampires use sexuality as a hunting method, the power dynamic between monster and human distinguishes this scene from female vampires. The social context makes the poem sinister because society allows men to push their sexual desires onto women while women must remain innocent and demure.Without sexual knowledge or access to sexuality, women are more vulnerable because they do not have the resources to defend

themselves. Ossenfelder's vampire is hypermasculine, the epitome of the macho man who believes he has a right to women.

The vampire's language is also sexually coded. Consider words like "creeping," "kissing," "trembling," and his challenge to the mother's charms. The vampire's absolute physical power in addition to this confidence mirrors the male role in patriarchy. However, while the vampire's sexuality is representative of toxic masculinity, it also complicates hierarchical order. By challenging the virtues set out by the mother (ostensibly the person who teaches the maiden about corruption and virtue), the vampire targets a key tenet of patriarchal femininity. His hypermasculine attack is also subversive because it violently threatens the mother's patriarchal standards for her daughter. Therefore, it questions the legitimacy of the patriarchal mother who educates her children to be "good" members of society. The vampire not only challenges the standards of virtue the mother espouses, but the fate of all virtuous women. Patriarchy enables the vampire to be aggressive through a culture that tells men that they are strong and women that they are weak. The vampire weaponizes this unbalanced gender dynamic and, essentially, kills patriarchy with patriarchy.

"Der Vampir's" subversion shows the potential for the development of male vampiric in the genre. Polidori's "The Vampyre" illustrates the transition from sexual coercion to sexual autonomy through its vampire playboy Lord Ruthven. Aubrey, Ruthven's orphaned travel companion, notices a recurring theme with Ruthven's many paramours. He observes:

> He had required, to enhance his gratification, that his victim, the partner of his guilt, should be hurled from the pinnacle of unsullied virtue, down to the lowest point of the abyss of infamy and degradation: in time, that all those females whom he had sought, apparently on account of their virtue, had, since his departure, thrown even the mask aside, and had not scrupled to expose the whole deformity of their vices to the public gaze. (Polidori 52)

Unlike "Der Vampir," Ruthven's relationships are consensual. The earlier quote about women hunting him suggests that they initiate the relationships. The women whom Ruthven corrupts are not innocent but "partner[s] of guilt." Women are not victims, but active participants in their destruction. Ruthven "corrupts" them because he takes their virginity, but his corruption also refers to the women's masculine sexualities. They choose to go down a path of corruption, something revolutionary in a constricting, sexist world. Their sexual desire would not affect them if they were male. Ruthven, for example, continues to enjoy society despite his promiscuity.

Ruthven's target of the upper class is also notable. Upper class women's social statuses made them paragons of female virtue. No matter Ruthven's intentions, his subversive sexuality offers upper class women an alternative to patriarchy and, consequently, allows them to set that example for the rest of society. They spread subversive behaviors as a kind of contagion throughout society, encouraging women to abandon social niceties through social influence. After Ruthven ruins their reputations, the women throw their "masks aside" and embrace their vicious transformation. "Masks" indicates patriarchal femininity's performativity. Their desire to toss the mask aside reveals the deep seated need to be free, regardless of Ruthven's influence.

Interview with the Vampire takes male sexuality even further, setting the precedent for romantic vampire fiction and the inherently feminine vampire. Besides his maternal instincts, Lestat contains a lot of female vampire-like tendencies in terms of his sexuality. He is a freely sexual being who seduces women (and men) for their blood. In one instance, two women are in his suite, one already dead. Louis describes his companion,

> He drew her close now, and she kissed him, remarking through her laughter that he was a veritable furnace of passion. 'Mark but the price is high,' he said to her, affecting sadness. 'Your pretty friend…' she shrugged her shoulders. 'I exhausted her.' He stood back as if inviting the woman to walk to the table and she did, a look of superiority on her small features.

> She bent down to see her friend, but then lost interest until she saw something ... 'Take down your hair,' said Lestat softly. And she dropped it (Rice 79).

This display of sexuality has a few issues rooted in gender politics and consent. Lestat's role as a powerful vampire man with two human women in the 1800s gives him the upperhand in a predatory situation. The passage also suggests that Lestat has a hypnotic effect on the women, making their relationship nonconsensual. However, Lestat's manipulation only occurs after the woman has gone to examine her deceased friend, when she would notice something amiss. Prior to that, she kisses him and comments on his passion autonomously. The woman even expresses superiority over her friend who could not last as long, which indicates that she has pride in her sexuality rather than shame.

If the woman is autonomous, then, as with Ruthven, women have more sexual freedom than patriarchy wishes them to and lose their inhibitions around vampires--men do too, as Jonathan Harker displays. Patriarchy tells women that if they are too sexual or own their sexuality, they are vicious sluts, so to speak. It tells men to preserve female innocence, but, simultaneously, condones sexual violence and rape culture. Vampires challenge the establishment of hypocritical society through various avenues of sexual gratification and gender identity. The vampire's inherent sexual ownership, beauty, and maternity politicize their relationship to sexuality and make their embrace of it that much more subversive. Their initiation of sexual liberation in others provides a direct challenge to patriarchy. Vampires do not live within the boundaries of mortality nor human society. By vampirizing others, either by literally transforming them or engaging in acts that could cause transformation, vampires offer subversive opportunities to the living.

Dead Until Dark takes subversion a step further because it puts a woman in a protective role, defending the vampire. When Sookie rescues Bill from greedy humans who want to steal his blood to sell for health and virility purposes, he tells her, "'You came out here to rescue me. It was so brave,'" he said in a voice so seductive it would have shivered Deeanne right out of her red nylon panties" (Harris 12). Sookie's perspective on Bill's seduction is subjective because she found him attractive before she met him. Her vampire fetish precludes his actions and so she sexualizes him despite the risks. This objectification feminizes Bill and masculinizes Sookie by traditional standards. She has the authority to differentiate between subject and object, meaningless and meaningful, danger and safety. Patriarchy generally determines these designations, which is why society associates certain characteristics with each gender. In the context of this thesis, Sookie's objectification is feminine in that it subverts patriarchy.

In addition to this reckless behavior, Sookie takes on the role of hero when she protects Bill, subverting both gender and narrative expectations. Despite her gender, Sookie embodies the stereotypical male role and reveals the performative and extrinsic nature of masculinity and femininity. As long as someone behaves bravely, they are masculine. These designations indicate the cherry-picking of gendered qualities to evoke positive or negative opinions about men and women. The reader expects Sookie to be the damsel in distress because of these learned expectations, but she breaks them down because heroism is accessible to those who choose to partake in it. Sookie works beyond the binary.

Furthermore, the vampire subverts expectations because humans threaten him rather than the other way around. Bill addresses this show of weakness when he tells Sookie, "Are you assuming that since you came to my rescue that you were safe, that I harbor an ounce of sentimental feeling after all these years? Vampires often turn on those who trust them. We don't

have human values, you know" (Harris 12). Bill's comment makes clear that his intention is not seduction; he points out Sookie's stupidity in her attraction. He still recognizes himself as a monster. And, with that, he acknowledges that humanity's social boundaries do not apply to him, even in a world run by people. Sookie shows a disregard for social rules as well since she both exhibits sexual agency and feminizes Bill through objectification. In different ways, encouraged by each other, both characters challenge patriarchy and social expectations.

V. CONCLUSION

Because femininity is extrinsic, anyone of any gender can use it to subvert patriarchy. This quality of femininity places it within and without patriarchal oppression and control since it limits people through illegitimate means but also provides an unsuspected form of resistance against dominant masculine structures. Male vampires engage with femininity and gender performativity differently than female vampires in a key way. Because they are male and have normative power, they can be degraded to benefit women. As the chapter demonstrates, several male vampires, like Ruthven and Bill, experience objectification by women through appearance and sexuality. In turn, those women experience masculine power and the men demonstrate gender's flexibility and female support.

Feminine male vampires, then, produce opportunities for masculine women--that is, women who adopt traits permissible for men. The hypocrisy required to inhabit gender roles becomes clear here. Just as Lord Ruthven traipses around society while his female paramours forgo their statuses, the reversal of masculinity and femininity shows the double standard in sexuality. Ruthven, to his credit, allows the upper class women the opportunity to shun this double standard as they exchange their propriety for freedom.

Unlike conceptions of beauty or sexuality, the vampire's maternity is inherent. While Lestat's desire for a child shows that men and women can want a family, the vampire's ability to *create* new life marks him as structurally female (in terms of patriarchal binary gender). This takes the male vampire further into gender identity politics. Because, while he identifies as male and functions in the world as male, he has female qualities that make him more powerful than living men. He reveals the potency of female education and the necessity of motherhood to society. His femininity results in more vampires and, therefore, more subversion.

CHAPTER THREE: Queer Vampires

I. INTRODUCTION

Based on the examination thus far, queer vampires are inevitable. In as much as queerness represents deviation from the norm, specifically heteronormativity, it stands for the destruction of patriarchal foundations, which rely on norms, binaries, and control. Queerness targets the nuclear family. With the man at the helm, the wife serves the husband. Without heterosexuality as the default, patriarchy must take greater efforts to justify the dynamic. Queerness makes it so both women, men, and nonbinary individuals can find sexual pleasure and romantic gratification outside of the husband-wife relationship and, furthermore, outside the boundaries of acceptability regarding same sex relationships.

Patriarchy's relationship to queerness has shifted over time but remains linked through its reliance on heteronormativity and characterization of queer individuals as *other*. In the Victorian era, women could engage in intimate relationships that involved cohabitation that many casually referred to as "female marriage," although this arrangement was not legally recognized (Marcus 292). This metaphorical use of marriage and lack of legal recognition maintained queer women's othered status as well as the legitimacy of heterosexual marriage as a socially acceptable and preferable arrangement. In the mid-twentieth century, laws banning homosexuality in England and America ceased but social taboo remained as did the need for euphemism (BBC) --probably a result of the historical trauma associated with queer identities and the lengthy process toward legal marriage.

Simultaneously, however, during the AIDS epidemic, queer activists recognized that ignorance and silence perpetuated the epidemic through apathy. The vampire stories in this chapter reflect the progression from secret identity to open celebration, with the vampires emulating and then flouting the explicit or implicit laws that dictate sexuality. Furthermore, as literal others distinct from humanity, vampires reclaim queerness' non-normative status. Queer vampires attack patriarchy physically and show the suppressed or metaphorical queer living people their own strength.

This chapter analyzes queerness in relation to the vampire and their living "victim." Notably, this focus is mainly on queer female vampires, despite the existence of queer male vampires. I agree with Carol Senf's assertion in "Daughters of Lilith: Women Vampires in Popular Literature" (1999):"Because of her extreme deviation from the ideal… the female vampire was both more fear-inspiring and more desire-provoking than her male counterpart" (Senf 207). As the previous chapter expressed, despite their deviation and subversive potential, male vampires still benefit from their gender. As a result, the most subversive kind of vampire, the one that thwarts multiple layers of patriarchy, is queer and female-coded.

The chapter's first part, "'Out' Vampires," examines three key texts in the development of the queer vampire. The first is Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872), a novel that precedes Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) and has a euphemized love story between two women, Carmilla and Laura. The vampire Carmilla's queerness is evident in her interactions with Laura, which threatens the patriarchal order of family and home. Carmilla drinks from Laura throughout the story and, simultaneously, allows the human girl to explore her queer identity. Although Carmilla and Laura function within patriarchally-sanctioned female marriage, they also use their relationship to support the feminist view of marriage that advocated for equality between

partners. Carmilla's death at the hands of multiple men only illustrates her danger to patriarchy. Men must violently reinstate their power through the phallic symbol of the stake. And, even then, they are not safe. In the end, Carmilla's queerness undercuts the marriage dynamic that allows men to control women. Her infiltration of the home and the men's desperate attempts to kill her prove her advantage over them.

The second book is Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976). Although this story has several issues with its portrayal of queer identity, it still provides the possibility of queer subversion. Here, Louis' queer identity, discovered through his vampirism, becomes both a representation of and posture against existing stereotypes about gay men. Just as society forces queer men to hide their sexualities, Louis must remain in the shadows because he is a vampire. Rather than allow this to weaken him, Louis weaponizes the night against his human victims.

The third novel in this part is Jewelle Gomez's *The Gilda Stories* (1991), which features queer Black love in the age of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Unlike Rice, Gomez fully embraces her character's queer identities and uses them to foster lasting, supportive relationships between vampire and human. Her story highlights queer humanity and the importance of community and the chosen family, which serve as alternatives to rigid patriachal notions of the family unit. The novel displays the progression from insinuated or euphemized vampire to a vampire that utilizes her queerness for a greater social good.

The second part, "Smitten/Bitten Humans," looks at the living people in vampire literature. The humans in these stories learn about their sexual identities because the vampire unashamedly expresses her own queer desires. This section returns to *Carmilla*, looking at queer manifestations in the novel's virtuous heroine Laura. Through her introduction to Carmilla and her own consideration of love for the vampire, Laura shows that vampires can raise feelings in

people that patriarchy controls legally. The second story is Samuel Taylor Coleridge's unfinished narrative poem "Christabel" (1816). "Christabel" comes before Queen Victoria's rule and expresses the baseline homophobia that frames female marriage in the Victorian era. As with *Carmilla*, "Christabel" features autonomous human same sex attraction to a beautiful vampire. The human woman feels desires similar to that of Jonathan Harker's with vampire women in Dracula's Castle, implying that she has a sexual and romantic attraction to the female vampire--challenging gender norms.

The third part, "Queer Society," reviews a vampiric social structure that contrasts patriarchy's heteronormativity. Octavia Butler's *Fledgling* (2005) focuses on a matriarchal polyamorous vampire society that offers humans extended life times and provides vampires with nourishment. Rather than an imbalanced, unfair society that cannot justify its existence, the society of *Fledgling* critiques itself. The community in the story is not necessarily the *correct* alternative to patriarchy since there are some problems with human-vampire relationships, but it asserts that better alternatives exist and, furthermore, that patriarchy is not inherent, but thrust upon people.

II. "OUT" VAMPIRES

Several vampires, spanning from *Carmilla* to *Fledgling,* are not just sexually confident in normative relationships but explicitly and comfortably gay, which makes them a greater threat to patriarchal order. A woman or female coded figure who evades male definitions of virtue is bad, but one who is not attracted to the opposite sex is even worse. Through *Carmilla*, the first novel-length vampire text written in Europe, female vampires, but also vampires in general, have queer roots that mark them as subversive. Homosexuality disputes the Victorian binary that forces

women under men socially, sexually, and hierarchically because there is no way for patriarchy to mask the imbalanced pairing with the promise of love.

Nina Auerbach writes in *Our Vampires, Ourselves* (1995), “Queer Studies is a solvent, breaking down barriers and merging categories to produce transformations inconceivable in the Foulcauldian academic mainstream. Its vampires are similarly unorthodox agents of reconstruction” (Auerbach 182). Considering how queerness unveils the unjust husband-wife dynamic by removing its potential appeal, Auerbach’s conceptions of queer studies make sense. Queerness offers the vampire sexually transgressive, as well as other binary-defying opportunities. Vampires’ fluidity is a direct attack on patriarchy’s necessary rigid regulations.

Carmilla portrays the vampire Carmilla as a creature that both drinks from and seeks companionship with women. In some ways, Carmilla is a prototype for the “evil woman” and her numerous possibilities, but her queerness complicates that association. While the binary permits female marriage as a metaphor, it does not legally accept female marriage. This is another mode of control--patriarchy permits women some semblance of queer expression but determines the extent to which it is appropriate. Sharon Marcus, in “Contracting Female Marriage in Anthony Trollope’s Can You Forgive Her?,” argues,

> Because marriage existed in order to reconcile sexual desire and propriety, to identify a couple as married simultaneously named the bond as sexual and affirmed its respectability. To describe two women as united in a female marriage, therefore, was to acknowledge the legitimate sexuality of their relationship while according it the privacy that was one of the privileges of wedlock. (293)

Although Marcus’ focus on the power of language and the existence of these female marriages is both revolutionary and illuminating in terms of how we understand Victorian conservatism, it is not the same as a legally sanctioned marriage. While I agree that metaphors are powerful since their ambiguity and double meanings evade binary’s strict definitions, I disagree with Marcus’

definition of marriage as a functional term. When Marcus refers to marriage, without the female qualifier, she describes the union between a man and woman, which patriarchy legitimated. Furthermore, “legitimate” marriage did not serve to reconcile sexual desire and propriety, but to perpetuate male power in the home and in society. If patriarchal marriage reconciles anything, it only does so in favor of the husband--the wife serves him as an angel in the house. As a result, calling something female marriage does not affirm a sexual bond or social respect.

Female marriage as metaphor undermines its legitimacy within patriarchy. The distinction between marriage and female marriage is the qualifier. Two women in some sort of romantic union were not considered *actually* married, but in a relationship similar to marriage. Female marriages did not have the same social, legal or governmental benefits of marriage. That patriarchy condoned female marriage does not indicate freedom, but patriarchy’s confidence in believing it could allow female romantic partnerships without subversive repercussions. This is not to undermine the social impact of such marriages, but to admit they are metaphorical is to affirm they are not equivalent to the patriarchal definition of marriage.

Carmilla expresses her affection for women confidently, showing power in subversion against binary and heterosexual marriage. And her victims love her back, insinuating their own subversive sexualities. Queerness is a key weapon of patriarchal destruction and a means to revolt in unexpected and unspoken ways because it annihilates Victorian marital structures that place the husband above the wife.

Carmilla first meets her paramour-victim Laura when the human girl is a child. Years later, Carmilla returns after her carriage crashes in front of Laura’s home. A woman posing as Carmilla’s mother asks Laura’s father if Carmilla can stay with them to heal from her injuries. Laura’s father obliges and welcomes Carmilla into his home. Laura’s father acts as a protector of

the ill, dilapidated woman. He does his duty as the man of the house, unconcerned because the "intruder" is an innocent girl whose sickly appearance follows Victorian beauty norms. The father is susceptible to both Carmilla and her mother because they play into his heteronormative patriarchal fantasy. Carmilla is the innocent, quiet young girl and her mother is the caring, weak figure who requires a husband/ father's help. This brief introduction of maternity in the home (something Carmilla ironically continues) seems to complete the schloss' lack of a mother figure/ traditional family structure. Rather than threaten his home, Carmilla and her mother appear to encourage it.

Laura's father relates to Reggie Sawyer from Stephen King's *'Salem's Lot* (1975) because both believe their homes are secure fortresses against threats. Laura's father's ability to preserve England within the household, despite the home's location in Styria, also provides a false sense of security. Because he believes himself invincible and discredits the power of a young Styrian stranger, he puts the entire estate in danger. A hungry vampire lays in their midst, feeding from his daughter and the local community and allowing Laura to explore her queer identity. His attitude echoes patriarchy's allowance of female marriage, a social institution that permitted women to behave as each other's spouses without legal recognition. Patriarchy's confidence in heteronormativity makes it seem that this dynamic could exist without subversive consequences. However, Laura and Carmilla prove this is not the case. Patriarchy is flimsy and lacks logical fortification.

Carmilla fascinates and delights Laura, who has been trapped in the home with her family and few friends. Laura recognizes Carmilla's face from her encounter with her as a child and both label that occurrence as a mutually fateful dream. Carmilla senses Laura's longing for companionship and as Laura sneaks into her room to say hello, Carmilla tells her, "'It does seem

as if we were destined, from our earliest childhood, to be friends. I wonder whether you feel as strangely drawn towards me as I do to you; I have never had a friend-- shall I find one now?' she sighed, and her fine dark eyes gazed passionately" (Le Fanu 56). While Carmilla discusses friendship, her suggestion of a "strange" attraction to Laura and the sexual subtext of her sigh and gaze indicate a romantic interest. The sexual and romantic euphemism in this scene relates to female marriage. The women engage in a relationship that patriarchy permits and denies. Female marriage's contradictory role in the social and legal spheres indicate its subversive potential; contradiction threatens patriarchal binary. That Laura picks up on these subtle hints suggests that she is familiar with the euphemism and feels a similar attraction for Carmilla. The women take advantage of patriarchy's contradiction and, later on, use their same sex desire to directly challenge the establishment of heterosexual marriage.

Even if Laura did not have feelings for the vampire, Carmilla's attempt at seduction matters. Patriarchy makes female subservience in marriage seem natural and desirable for women because of the potential romantic gratification they could experience. In actuality, the dynamic is not meant to benefit women, but support patriarchal structures. Women are a means to an end. George E. Haggerty, in *Queer Gothic* (2006), notes this phenomenon in his discussion of non-normative sexuality in reference to anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss' theories. He explains that "The...distribution of power depends on the control of intrafamilial relations by means of an exchange of women" (12). Women are the touchstone for power measurements in patriarchy--male dominance depends on women's weakness. In preferring queerness, women avoid traditional intrafamilial power structures since they preclude themselves from the home or family's control. The conception of the home will never be ideal for someone with same sex attraction because it severs romantic and sexual possibilities that they might want to pursue, just

as it does to Laura. Ironically, patriarchy generates queer female dissatisfaction because it permits female marriage. Once women see that there is an option besides heterosexual marriage, it becomes even harder to argue for patriarchal unions. Carmilla destroys the home from the inside and makes Laura realize that it is not women's only fate.

Carmilla's declarations of love further express this subversive power. Laura recounts these moments:

> She used to place her pretty arms about my neck, draw me to her, and laying her cheek to mine, murmur with her lips near my ear, 'Dearest, your little heart is wounded; think me not cruel because I obey the irresistible law of my strength and weakness...In the rapture of my enormous humiliation I live in your warm life, and you shall die--die, sweetly die--into mine. I cannot help it. (Le Fanu 64)

Carmilla's "law of strength and weakness" indicates both her power and her desire. Her "weakness" is her love for Laura. Simultaneously, her weakness is her bloodlust, which is also her source of physical strength. Carmilla's strength through vice makes her literally vicious and provides her with contradictory power. Because strength through weakness is oxymoronic, binaries/ dichotomies cannot contain it. Carmilla further subverts categorization and follows her queer identity, which patriarchy forces into ambiguity.

Carmilla's "rapture" also has multiple meanings. According to Oxford English Dictionary, rapture is "A state, condition, or fit of intense delight or enthusiasm." It can also mean the transfer of believers from Earth to Heaven during Christ's second coming. This is another example of Carmilla's Christian associations, previously examined in the anti-mother section. Here, these associations make her a martyr or flagellant for love. Rapture's dual definitions, then, equate Christianity with queer attraction, which challenges hierarchical structures present in the church and patriarchal society.

Additionally, Carmilla mocks and challenges Christianity. In a Christian context, to “die sweetly” indicates the joy of heaven and that version of immortality. For Carmilla, dying sweetly means Laura could become a vampire--another way to avoid death. Laura could also die sweetly because she tastes good to Carmilla. And, third, Carmilla could be comparing this conception of sweet death to sex.“Le petite mort,” or the little death, was a euphemism for orgasm that began in the nineteenth century (OED). Considering the sexual subtext of this novel as well as Carmilla’s blasphemous behavior overall, this is also likely.

Carmilla’s sexual attraction and queer identity show in her feeding habits. Carmilla drinks from Laura while the living girl sleeps, which Laura experiences as dreams characterized by an emotion of “Very strange agony” (Le Fanu 108). In one scene, Laura feels a piercing sensation at her breast and sees “A female figure standing at the foot of the bed, a little at the right side. It was in a dark loose dress, and its hair was down and covered its shoulders” (Le Fanu 109). Although this scene is terrifying, Laura’s description also hints at its sexual implications. Laura’s “very strange agony” means that her suffering has a perplexing component--perhaps it was enjoyable since pleasurable pain is oxymoronic. Contradictions fit the vampire as she uses them to avoid the binary and embrace her female queer identity. Female queerness simultaneously does and does not exist in patriarchy due to legal definitions of marriage that exclude female queer love. Laura’s confusion at her romantic feelings for Carmilla allows her to partake in the contradiction of Victorian female queerness.

Carmilla’s power supposedly comes to an end when a group of men hunt and kill her. The group, consisting of a doctor, priest, baron, and general, two of whom are father figures to Laura and another one of Carmilla’s young victims, represents aspects of patriarchal authority that the vampire challenges.The doctor stands for Western science, something Eastern European

folklore, the vampire's historical origins opposes. The priest for organized Christian religion, which Carmilla dismantles throughout the text through her demonism and heresy. The father-general and the baron represent violent social power and hierarchy, which Carmilla inherently thwarts. Once they discover that she is a centuries-dead countess, the men decide that they must destroy her with stakes, beheading, and fire.

Laura describes the scene,

> The body, therefore, in accordance with the ancient practice, was raised, and a sharp stake driven through the heart of the vampire, who uttered a piercing shriek at the moment, in all respects such as might escape from a living person in the last agony. Then the head was struck off, and a torrent of blood flowed from the 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, and that territory has never since been plagued by the visits of a vampire. (Le Fanu 222)

The stake is phallic in nature and stabs Carmilla through the heart, mimicking a sexually violent act in its penetration of her body. Thus, in this first step of vampire death, the men restore patriarchal order both through their violence and their destruction of the subversive figure. They indicate their dominance over her socially and sexually, the literalization of men's violating control over women. Their actions exhibit how patriarchy reacts to those who complicate binary. Carmilla goes from powerful vampire to impotent corpse, mimicking the beauty and behavioral standards expected of Victorian women. Laura emphasizes the finality of this act when she mentions Carmilla's ashes, but these also have immortal potential.

Besides destruction, ashes have an explicit association with the phoenix, the bird that rises from its ashes. The vampire shares in the phoenix's life through death because she is undead and thrives on the deaths of others. Carmilla's ashes suggest that Carmilla's subversive role has not yet ended, but allows the men to maintain their false sense of security. The phoenix is Laura. As Ardel Haefele-Thomas in *Queer Other in the Victorian Gothic* (2012) notes, "Laura

is not necessarily relieved by Carmilla's slaughter... Le Fanu leaves the reader to wonder whether Laura will join her queer, Eastern European ancestral forces or embrace her British paternal legacy" (106). Because vampirism's mechanics are unknown, no one can guarantee that Laura has not been vampirized. And, whether or not she is immortal, Laura now understands her queerness despite the men believing she is "innocent." Like Carmilla, Laura's subversion attacks from the inside out, staying hidden from patriarchy until it's too late.

Carmilla bequeaths its queer legacy to *Interview with the Vampire*. Louis tells his interviewer that "'Lestat drained me to the point of death to make me a vampire. And gave back all that blood mingled with his own. That is how it was done!'" (Rice 198). As the anti-mother section explains, Louis is reborn in his "near death" experience. Notably, queer sex begets his existence. Just as Lucy Westenra consumates with those who donate their blood to her, "blood mingled" is a euphemism for sex. And, similar to heteronormative intercourse, Lestat and Louis' mingled bloods result in offspring--the vampire Louis who now contains characteristics of the human Louis and the vampire Lestat. The vampire offers an alternative to the "natural" heterosexual relationship key to patriarchal society. Vampires also co-opt reproduction and use it to threaten heteronormativity since vampires do not need to be with the opposite gender to reproduce.

Although this scene allows for more open sexual expression, its reliance on euphemism perpetuates the shame tied to sex and non-normative sexuality, especially since Rice never explicitly labels her characters as queer. Haggerty views this as a reflection on the homophobic and fetishic nature of the novel's surrounding culture. While Rice challenges patriarchal stereotypes about queerness, "She reinscribes them because of her own uneasiness about the desires she depicts" (Haggerty 192). Haggerty's assertions reveal the disappointment in wasted

subversive potential as well as the vampire's ability to overcome euphemism by functioning within it. Queer men faced legal punishment, making their concealment necessary in Victorian England. Vampires inherently hide. Unlike a zombie, another cannibalistic monster, the vampire resembles its living counterparts. According to traditional lore, sunlight kills them so they must remain in shadows or the night. Although this rule limits them in some ways, nightfall also presents vampires with an ample cover for their hunting that maintains their disguise. Rice's vampires follow this rule as they hunt unassuming people without suspicion. Essentially, humans force male vampires to conceal themselves but, in doing so, put themselves at a higher risk.

Louis and Lestat, whether or not Rice labels them, reveal the potential for queer individuals to express themselves. The patriarchy pushes away what it cannot handle--like female autonomy, feminine expression, and queerness. All of these elements threaten patriarchal foundations and topple long held beliefs about male superiority and its inherency. As Haggerty notes, Rice feels uncomfortable with the desire she expresses because her society deems it taboo. And, of course, queer desire complicates the nuclear family and the idealized female subservience that patriarchy requires. Rice's need for euphemism is unfortunate, but it does not negate vampiric queer potential. If anything, it actively reveals how Louis and Lestat (and characters like them) threaten patriarchal order through queer desire and expresses how queer people must exist in patriarchy. Like the vampire, historically, queer people have been forced into hiding due to social backlash. In noting this connection, there is revolutionary potential in queer sexuality that the patriarchy recognizes and fears just as people fear vampires.

Another male vampire offers Louis solace as he grapples with his existence as a vampire. After Claudia and Louis murder Lestat, thinking him dangerous, they escape to Paris and meet a vampire community. The community discovers that the two have killed a fellow vampire and

punish Louis and Claudia. Claudia dies, but Louis escapes and, with the support of the community's former leader, Armand, he destroys the other vampires. The conversation between Louis and Armand following this event resonates with the queer experience in patriarchy. Louis says, "We can go see even so far as to love each other, you and I. And who else would show us a particle of love, a particle of compassion and mercy? Who else, knowing us as we know each other, could do anything but destroy us? Yet we can love each other" (Rice 317). Sharing the secret of the destroyed community, Louis and Armand are outsiders among vampires and the living. They must hide what they have done to maintain their lives. This passage parallels the queer experience in a world that says it is wrong or unnatural to be anything but straight. Queer people suffer or risk suffering from this subjugation through their expressions of love. The power and subversion begins at Louis' *yet*. Despite the rules and binaries and systems of power, their love perseveres.

Twenty years after *Interview with the Vampire*, *The Gilda Stories* embraces queer identity and escapes the dark. Gomez is a queer woman of Native American and Black ancestry. Writing and working throughout the AIDS epidemic, which linked male homosexualitty to blood, Gomez is vocal about her queer identity and feminism (Sanchez). Her debut novel *The Gilda Stories* emphasizes queer humanity and the power found in female relationships. She counters the demonization of AIDS with vampires who care more about people than other humans. The story follows an escaped slave called Girl rescued by the madam of a brothel named Gilda. Gilda nurses Girl back to health and cares for her deeply. Gilda is also a centuries old lesbian vampire who wants to die, but recognizes Girl's need for her. After Girl is ready, Gilda transforms her into a vampire and gives her her name. Then the first Gilda commits suicide.

The first Gilda, a white woman, finds Girl hiding in the basement of her brothel after Girl escaped a white man who tried to rape her. Girl stabbed him, the blood serving a double function for life and death as its release killed the would-be rapist and saved Girl's life, foreshadowing her vampire fate. Once the first Gilda begins to care for her, Girl observes some of the older woman's unique characteristics--such as her comfort with masculinity. Girl decides Gilda must be a man dressed in women's clothing (something Laura considers as Carmilla's true identity as well.) Hearing Girl's thoughts, Gilda thinks back: "I am a woman, you know that. And you know I am a woman as no other you have ever known, nor has your mother known, in life or death. I am a woman as you are, and more" (Gomez 16). Gilda's emphasis on Girl's ignorance relates to Gilda's vampire identity because that defies accepted reality. Additionally, Gilda also means that Girl is not familiar with the casual thwarting of gender roles that Gilda does. The "and more" suggests the various power structures that Gilda accesses as a vampire, including gender and sexual identity.

Despite these differences and unfamiliar concepts, Gilda makes clear that she shares something with Girl. Though she is beyond human/ scientific comprehension, Gilda is still a woman as she is. Gilda identifies as a person and reveals that her subversion, what makes her *other*, does not negate her humanity but makes her "more." The women also share their sexualities as Girl discovers that she is queer, which humanizes and empowers queer people at a time haunted by the AIDS epidemic as she is a compassionate, caring person who offers life to others rather than stigma.

Ten years prior to *The Gilda Stories*, America faced the growing HIV and AIDS epidemic, which mostly affected gay and bisexual men. It often resulted in a cancer known as Kaposi's Sarcoma, which people referred to as "gay cancer" (HIV.gov). The LGBT community

faced (and continues to face) prejudice around the disease, with people believing they could contract HIV through touch and religious fanatics arguing the epidemic was divine punishment. By 1991, HIV treatment options became more readily available and famous people publicly discussed their diagnoses (HIV.gov).

Many people contracted HIV through blood transfusions, contaminated needles, or the exchange of fluids via sexual intercourse. The vampire directly interacts with these elements as well, either taking or exchanging blood and, in certain cases, having that exchange represent sex. Gomez's novel presents another side to queerness and, through her benevolent vampires, displays mutually beneficial examples of blood taking and giving. In the novel, vampires give people sweet dreams and visions as they drink their blood and Gilda only changes people who would benefit from vampirism. Gomez co-opts the monstrous characterizations associated with the AIDS epidemic to create gay vampires who care for each other and help others facing adversity. The first Gilda, a gay woman, is a person capable of relatability, empathy, and understanding. Her focus on queer women, however, limits the subversion in terms of AIDS because society generally associated the disease with gay men.

Another part of the novel's ironic humanization comes from the non-fetishistic portrayal of the first Gilda's relationship to her partner Bird. As evidenced in Rice's "sensual" novel, queerness often serves as a plot device for some taboo or forbidden love. Queer female love, doubly othered through non-normative sexuality and the female gender, is a sexual plot device that can hypersexualize women if written through the patriarchal gaze. Bird, a Native American vampire, has lived with Gilda for years in a mutual partnership. They have a tender, but sometimes tense relationship as Bird grapples with Gilda's desire to die, but they still care for one another and share inside jokes where Bird laughs "Just as she was expected to do. A few

joking references to time and age were their private game. Even knowing there was more to the kisses and games right now, she longed to feel Gilda's skin pressed tightly to her own" (Gomez 40). The complex but ultimately nontoxic and safe dynamic between these two women contrasts the male violence found throughout this project. Unlike male-female patriarchal relationships or even vampire-human ones, the women are equally powerful in their relationship due to their shared vampire identities and gender.

Their races do present the possibility of an imbalanced dynamic due to white supremacy's foundation in patriarchy, but their vampirism moves them away from human social structures. Their interracial relationship is subversive because it is mutual--Bird and Gilda do not abide to patriarchal rules about race, but accept each other because they transcend hateful human notions about race, gender, and sexuality. The juxtaposition of their relationship with Girl and her would-be rapist emphasizes this point. Whereas he believes his race and gender give him a right to Girl's body, Bird and Gilda respect each other's autonomy (and could kill the man easily). Bird and Gilda form a strong argument for the abandonment of patriarchal relationship dynamics. Patriarchy enables violence. A healthy queer relationship stands against that and, even in arguments, displays the tender respect necessary to partnership.

Girl, who takes on Gilda's name and vampiric nature, carries on her vampire foremother's legacy. Throughout her travels, which cover 1850 to 2050, the second Gilda finds different women that teach her truths about herself or humanity. Her first sexual experience is with Eleanor, a fellow vampire with a shady past. Despite Eleanor's selfishness and manipulation, Gilda's attraction to her is an autonomous experience. Their relationship mirrors Carmilla and Laura's. While one person does have ulterior motives, those do not affect the other's sexuality. Arguably, the more subversive the "out" person is, the easier it is for the

"closeted" person to explore their sexuality because their partner has no concern for social propriety.

As soon as Gilda meets Eleanor, she briefly experiences queer shame characteristic of homophobic society. The scene describes, "Gilda lifted the woman's hand to her lips before she thought about it. She stopped midway, realizing how odd she must look to all the others in the room, and continued planting a lingering kiss on Eleanor's hand in a move more casual than she felt" (Gomez 65). While patriarchal society affects Gilda, her vampiric nature allows her to transgress her internalized homophobia and fear of gender subversion because, like the first Gilda, she knows she is "more." Additionally, Eleanor shares in this identity, meaning that she, too, exists beyond social constraints of the living. Their existences extend beyond human understanding and so human rules no longer hinder them. Eleanor, another vampire, catalyzes Gilda's realization of her sexual identity. Through her, Gilda builds relationships with other women.

In 1981, Gilda meets Effie, who appears young but is actually a vampire older than herself. Like Bird and the first Gilda, they begin a mutual relationship. Once Gilda realizes Effie's true nature, she sees "A woman both young and old, who'd lived longer than any other Gilda had ever met. There was no reason for Gilda to run from her. That this woman was as she was...was miraculous and familiar" (Gomez 213). Familiarity is important for people functioning on the margins of polite society. It proves they are not alone nor abnormal, but also provides a greater chance of revolutionary victory via strength in numbers. The more vampires present, the harder it is for the "old" society to pervade. Familiarity is also "miraculous" because society tells queer women that their sexual identities are wrong and unnatural and, historically, nonexistent. A queer individual indoctrinated with this belief system might find it difficult to accept themselves

as legitimate. Knowing and loving someone else means accepting queerness and using it to find joy through means other than the ones patriarchy offers.

In addition to these productive relationships, both Gildas support the subversive female community. The first Gilda's brothel is a place of female empowerment, where women *choose* to have sex and utilize that to earn money and autonomy. It is also the place where the second Gilda begins to see her radical potential as a Black queer woman who can have a lasting effect on the people around her. The brothel introduces her to other women from various experiences who use their sexualities to achieve their dreams without concerns about other people's opinions. This knowledge blossoms the second Gilda's romantic and platonic female connections as she builds her own community support system. She often helps Black women via protection, companionship or transformation.

When Gilda befriends Aurelia, a African American widow living in 1920s Missouri, she considers making her a member of her vampire family. The women grow close, spending most days together as Aurelia discovers widowhood's subsequent independence. After Gilda decides she must leave Missouri, she wonders about Aurelia's potential vampirization. The text reads, "Aurelia would be acquiescent, eager, letting Gilda draw the blood and return it in the ritual of sharing that would bind them together forever... Here could begin a new family, she thought. Hunger and desire almost killed Gilda" (Gomez 120). Aurelia offers the potential for miraculous familiarity that Gilda later finds with someone else. At this point, Gilda is on her own.

Gilda ultimately chooses to leave Aurelia human, noting her attachments to her life and her potential future. In the context of the AIDS epidemic, many queer activists found support in their community, which protested for research and policy changes (HIV.gov). Gilda's need for companionship fosters a radical system of caring that enables both herself and her friends to be

happy in a world that systematically destroys their contentment. They exhibit the love that sprouts even without blood ties. Gilda's decision regarding Aurelia also upholds the importance of respect and consent, a departure from stereotypical patriarchal relationships. Gilda appreciates the mutuality in their relationship and does not push her need for family onto others, acknowledging what is best for them. This contrasts the nuclear family unit, in which society forces women to be mothers that follow their husbands' will.

III. BITTEN/SMITTEN HUMANS

Vampires not only kill and vampirize the living, they demonstrate a powerful mode of alternative existence that patriarchy cannot comfortably placate. The humans in these stories contemplate their sexual identities because of vampires. Laura, for instance, lives in isolation and only knows society through her father and caretakers. Carmilla, an outsider in her vampirism, gender, queerness, and ethnicity, represents an alternative to the life Laura thinks she must lead. Carmilla's romantic affection toward Laura makes the living girl realize her own queer identity, something her patriarchal household would never accept as an alternative to straight marriage. Plus, the vampire offers her a shield in terms of sexual exploration. Once Laura's father discovers Carmilla's secret and destroys her, he can blame Carmilla for any influence she had on Laura and believe that he has removed any of Laura's rebellious tendencies through the vampire's death. Laura, however, was always queer and lives on while her father believes her to be the archetypical virtuous woman.

Laura initiates her relationship with Carmilla. She approaches Carmilla's room as the vampire "heals" from her carriage crash. Laura explains to her audience that she was "delighted" and says, "You, who live in towns, can have no idea how great an event the introduction of a new friend is, in such a solitude as surrounded us" (Le Fanu 48).The isolation of Laura's home

represents the limited modes of existence available in patriarchal society. Just as Laura's father directs her life, patriarchy instructs people to follow and accept a set of rules without reflection.

When Carmilla expresses a desire to be Laura's friend, Laura responds, "Now the truth is, I felt rather unaccountably towards the beautiful stranger. I did feel, as she said, 'drawn towards her,' but there was also something of repulsion. In this ambiguous feeling, however, the sense of attraction immensely prevailed" (Le Fanu 56). This moment of repulsion is natural in a world that\ only accepts heterosexual love. Laura's inner turmoil reflects how queerness manifests in a repressive society, especially when that society is all the person is accustomed to. Patriarchy survives because it makes alternative ways of life seem wrong so people will not pursue them. Or, in the case of female queerness, does not acknowledge them as right compared to straight marriage. Something ambiguous, however, cannot be good or bad so it evades patriarchy's binary. Laura has power in ambiguity and unfamiliarity in a normative, binary world that wants to label and define everything according to its power structure.

And, Laura's attraction wins out. She begins her relationship with Carmilla under the guise of friendship. Laura asserts, "Young people like, and even love, on impulse. I was flattered by the evident, though as yet undeserved, fondness she showed me" and that Carmilla thought they should be "very near friends" (Le Fanu 58). Like Rice, Le Fanu avoids directly labeling his characters as queer. However, Carmilla's suggestion of friendship follows Victorian feminist conceptions of marriage. Marcus writes, "Victorian feminists argued that marriage should be a contract between autonomous equals who could dissolve their agreement by mutual consent, and they obtained a great deal of publicity for their vision of marriages based on similarity between spouses" (295). Carmilla's allusion to friendship marks her ultimate subversion. Not only does she engage in a same sex relationship, which was partially condoned but not ratified in Victorian

England, she suggests a social dynamic that obliterates the imbalance of heterosexual marriage. The “similarity between spouses” that Marcus describes is obvious in a same-sex relationship, but feminists advocated for this similarity on a social level as well--meaning wives were not inferior to their husbands. Queer marriage is not legal in patriarchy because queer marriage literalizes Victorian feminist philosophy regarding marital roles.

Laura and Carmilla’s language throughout the story mimics Victorian female marriage as it grows more obvious. Laura’s hesitance to use the word “love” in describing her feelings for Carmilla is a result of her practice in burying her emotions, which stems from her sheltered upbringing. Once Laura discusses these emotions, she admits them to herself and her reader, which establishes her sexuality personally and publically. Carmilla’s vampirism separates her from human society and makes her more powerful than any living people. As a result, Carmilla is unconcerned with social repercussions and encourages Laura to adopt a similar attitude And, so, Laura is more comfortable expressing her queer identity.

And, although the text suggests that Carmilla hypnotizes Laura at times, Laura also clearly makes autonomous decisions regarding Carmilla. After Carmilla whispers sweet, menacing nothings into Laura’s ear, Laura explains,

> In these mysterious moods I did not like her. I experienced a strange tumultuous excitement that was pleasurable, ever and anon, mingled with a vague sense of fear and disgust. I had no distinct thoughts about her while such scenes lasted, but I was conscious of a love growing into adoration, and also of abhorrence. This I know is paradox, but I can make no other attempt to explain the feeling. (Le Fanu 66)

Laura’s fixation on paradox fits into queer sexuality’s position in patriarchy, especially regarding women. In the Victorian era, queer women both did and did not exist because they could engage in female marriage but the law excluded those marriages. Women had to identify themselves and their sexualities within that confused system, blurring the lines between friendship and romantic

partnership. Laura's contradictory emotions are the results of her grappling with her paradoxical existence. Her inability to "explain the feeling," then, is a consequence of the way her society avoids lesbianism. Laura has no candid way to explain her sexuality so she relies on euphemism and confusion.

Laura's inner turmoil is society's fault and does not mean that queerness is "disgusting," but that patriarchy orchestrates that reaction in women so they do not threaten the stereotypical family ideal. Laura's"strange, tumultuous excitement" proves that she has positive emotions for Carmilla that challenge her standard world view. Carmilla contrasts Laura's turmoil because she does not conceal her emotions. Rather than force women to suffer and navigate through their romantic feelings that society simultaneously condones and punishes, Carmilla leans into her queerness and threatens patriarchy with her feminist ideas of marriage.

Carmilla's comfort with her sexual identity results in her death as the patriarchy cannot handle her sexual independence, but they do not account for her unassuming victim. The novella's conclusion focuses not on Carmilla's death, but on Laura's lingering thoughts of the vampire. On a tour through Italy with her father, Laura thinks, "To this hour the image of Carmilla returns to memory with ambiguous alternations--sometimes the playful, languid, beautiful girl; sometimes the writhing fiend I saw in the ruined church; and often from a reverie I have started, fancying I heard the light step of Carmilla at the drawing room door" (Le Fanu 232). Laura's confused emotions remain as she recalls Carmilla both in her beauty and her monstrosity, which mimics the patriarchal need to bury lesbianism behind metaphor. Ultimately, Laura suggests that she has happy, longing memories of Carmilla. The vampire moves from ambiguous monster to former lover--a fixture Laura misses in her life. The seemingly virtuous woman is not so virtuous. As stated before, patriarchy loves binary and requires it to function

properly. Ambiguity, whether or not intentional, is its downfall. Consider how Laura and Carmilla's relationship blossomed under the mask of friendship and how friendship suggests the egalitarian relationships that feminists desired. Patriarchy plays with metaphor at its own risk, not understanding that ambiguity and multi-layered meanings degrade straightforward binary.

The men kill Carmilla because she is clearly vicious through her vampirism. Laura, on the other hand, maintains her outward appearance of virtue while fostering her newly discovered identity. Binary leads the men to kill the vampire, but ambiguity continues to drain their power and allows Laura, like Carmilla, to beat them from within. If anything, the mob helped preserve Laura's queerness because they saved her from death at Carmilla's hands (or, fangs). The patriarchy unwittingly makes itself vulnerable to attack through masculine heroism.

Coleridge's unfinished narrative poem "Christabel" also focuses on the "scandalized" human and the vampiric initiator. Coleridge grew up in eighteenth century England and considered himself an outsider. As an adult, he embraced the education of women, influenced by writers like Mary Wollstonecraft (Reesman). In "Christabel," the protagonist/ poem's namesake finds Geraldine, purported daughter of a king, stranded in the forest. Geraldine takes Christabel aback at first glance:

> I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
> A lady so richly clad as she—
> Beautiful exceedingly!
> Mary mother, save me now!
> (Said Christabel) And who art thou? (lines 66-70)

Geraldine's most shocking characteristic is her "beautiful exceedingly" appearance, not that she is alone in a forest. Geraldine's physique is scary because it threatens Christabel's virtue as a

patriarchally-imagined heterosexual woman without a sex drive. In reacting to Geraldine, Christabel confirms her attraction as well as her objectification of the vampire. She follows the theme of beauty superseding suspicious or dangerous situations. And, as with Jonathan Harker, this development implies Christabel's significant and lethal attraction to Geraldine. Christabel's expletive emphasizes this as well. Just as Laura has to grapple with concealing her same sex attraction, Christabel calls on Mary, the mother of God and quinntessential virtuous woman, to prevent her attraction. Christabel's shame is rooted in her social expectations as a high society lady who must be a leader of virtue in her community and a symbol for women.

Geraldine has an odd effect on Christabel, mesmerizing her, in part, with her body. Once Christabel brings Geraldine to her father's lavish home, Geraldine remains in Christabel's company. When the pair travel to Christabel's bedroom, Geraldine undresses in front of Christabel. Once her breasts are visible, the speaker interjects, "A sight to dream of, not to tell/ Oh, shield her, shield sweet Christabel!" (lines 253-54). The language of "dream" generates this scene's notorious ambiguity. Writer Percy Shelley famously screamed at this line-- picturing eyes where Geraldine's nipples should be (MacDonald 149-50). However, "dream" insinuates something more positive than eye-breasts. Dreaming has happy, aspirational connotations. The speaker could have called the sight a "nightmare," but instead chose a word reminiscent of peaceful sleep.

The call for Christabel's protection, especially paired with "Sweet Christabel" suggests the speaker's counterproductive desire to protect Christabel from Geraldine's "corruption." The speaker represents the poem's patriarchal voice of reason. A narrator has God-like control over the story, determining what is present in a text and how it is presented.

However, this narrator loses control of his story--desperately appealing for Christabel's protection from Geraldine. The speaker only has words ("shield sweet Christabel) that the vampire defeats with subversion. The speaker's failure as a virtuous protector relates to symbolism's fundamental falsehood. A narrator's power begins and ends with words, whose meaning society collectively agrees upon, but words themselves are not actually linked to their referents. (e.g. the word "table" is not inherent to the physical object it represents). Just like words and language in general, the speaker's power is empty. Furthermore, he does not have an active role in the story as Christabel and, especially, Geraldine do. The narrator might dictate, but the characters determine action within a narrative. The narrator's impotence through empty symbolism links to patriarchy because patriarchy's authority relies on symbolism as well (recall the female vampire's red lips in *Dracula*). While Christabel, who exists in a narrated patriarchal reality with only a father figure to guide her, might be susceptible to symbolism's feigned inherency, Geraldine is not because her existence necessitates a separation from human norms. The vampire defies the speaker and forces them to describe that defiance and its effect on Christabel--mocking the narrator's supposed protector-role.

With their distinct reactions to the speaker's symbolic power, it seems the two women represent opposite sides of the virtuous/ vicious binary. However, Christabel's emotions complicate that conclusion. The speaker's spell of symbolism breaks down in the following lines when Geraldine, "Suddenly, as one defied/ Collects herself in scorn and pride,/And lay down by the Maiden's side!" (lines 260-63). Apparently mesmerized by Geraldine's breasts, Christabel begins her subversive path and accepts Geraldine's affections within the comfort of her room, an intimate space in both its sexual implications and role as a sanctuary of the individual. Geraldine faces Christabel with her potential same sex desire physically and mentally.

IV. Queer Society

While the vampires so far inhabit worlds that punish, limit, or ignore queerness, *Fledgling* presents a polyamorous matriarchal society that rivals patriarchy. The vampires, known as Ina, feed on humans and, in turn, the humans gain an extended lifespan. These two species live in harmony as familial units since, as the Ina feeds on their humans, they develop close sexual and emotional bonds. The Ina could violently overthrow humanity, but they choose a more peaceful mode of existence with numerous benefits. The patriarchal world fails in comparison.

Fledgling tells the story of a vampire-human community based on a symbiotic and sexual need. Butler, an avowed science fiction novelist with expertise in the power of fantasy to reflect reality, published her final book, *Fledgling*, in 2005. Butler's works, including *Fledgling,* often blend supernatural elements with the African American experience (Editors, Biography.com). Her tendency toward subversive or nonnormative themes shows not just in *Fledgling*'s discussion of race (examined in the next chapter) but in its inclusion of queer sexualities as an entirely different, more powerful social and cultural alternative to patriarchy. *Fledgling* follows Shori, a human-vampire hybrid who wakes up with no memory of who or what she is. As she discovers she is part Ina, a vampire-alien race that landed on earth thousands of years ago, she also learns that she forms life long, symbiotic bonds with the humans she feeds upon. Called symbionts, these humans create the foundations for a Ina-human polyamorous family.

As with *The Gilda Stories,* one of *Fledgling's* main themes is the chosen family. Unlike *The Gilda Stories*, Shori's family develops from both a physical need to consume blood and sexual satisfaction for both parties. Ina venom has a pleasurable effect on humans that makes them codependent and, after a while, inherently linked to the Ina that drinks from them. Ina

experience an emotional connection to humans as well, but there is a clear power imbalance between the two. Despite the moral/ethical problems with a human-vampire relationship, Shori and the other Ina display the potential for a functional society based on polyamory.

Ina also seek relationships with other Ina and the symbionts build families with other symbionts. Shori expresses her longing for this blended family when she says, “I wanted that: a home in which my symbionts enjoyed being with me and enjoyed one another and raised their children as I raised mine. That felt right, that felt good” (Butler 133). Shori’s society redefines these qualities as both necessary, due to the Ina’s need for blood, and ideal, offering egalitarianism within the family unit. The patriarchal home makes heteronormative dynamics appear ideal, but cannot provide adequate reasoning for this ideal. Heteronormativity does not sustain life nor provide equal benefits to the husband and wife. Ina society begs the question: If patriarchal standards are the “right” or “moral” ways of life, then why does a society of uber powerful vampires ignore them and thrive? Patriarchy is not an inherent or natural way to live or be, but rather an imposed social order formed and supported by those who benefit from it and are weak without it.

Furthermore, gender does not bind Ina-symbiont relationships. Shori has connections to two men and three women. When she finds her second symbiont Theodora, a middle aged librarian, Theadora expresses pleasure at Shori’s bite. Shori explains, “She kissed me. After a moment of surprise, I kissed her back. I held her, and she seemed very comfortable in my arms” (Butler 44). The romantic element to this relationship moves it from a practical necessity to an emotional one. In patriarchy, family functions to bolster male power, whether or not romantic feelings exist between husband and wife. In Ina society, romance isn’t just a byproduct of Ina

venom, but the baseline emotion of Ina and symbiont survival. Shori later learns from another symbiont that touch is important to both of their well beings. Brook, the symbiont, explains:

> 'You need to touch your symbionts more...You need to touch us and know that we're here for you, ready to help you if you need us.' She brought her hand up to my hair and stroked gently. 'We need to be touched. It pleases us just as it pleases you. We protect and feed you, and you protect and feed us. That's the way an Ina-and-symbiont household works, or that's the way it *should* work. (Butler 183)

Queerness does not only function on the gender level, but for any sort of subversive relationship dynamic. The romance present in the Ina-symbiont relationship challenges the economic basis for patriarchal marriage. A queer sexual identity exists outside the patriarchal norm and, therefore, threatens anything deemed "natural" or "correct." Patriarchy characterizes alternative ways of life as immoral or unsustainable because they challenge male power. However, the Ina have venom and superstrength that can influence and overthrow humankind (their venom can brainwash people as well). As polyamorous pansexuals with superior powers, the Ina embody the patriarchal fear of queerness and use it to threaten the system. The Ina prove their society is better and has the power to destroy humanity.

This is especially poignant considering the Ina live in a matriarchal society. Female Ina venom is more potent than male Ina's and can addict male Ina. Ina society is not just a hypothetical threat to aspects of patriarchal order, but challenges patriarchy as an established form of society.The Ina are Nina Auerbach's mysterious power realized and applied to an organized, opposing society. They are the aftermath of Richard Matheson's *I am Legend* (1954); they exhibit the relativity of social expectations and, therefore, have the power to overthrow and replace those rules-- something they have already done with their symbionts. Obviously the question of consent or ethics plays into this slanted power dynamic, but that is not unique since patriarchy also relies on power imbalances. Ina society fails in its underlying use of control or

coercion, not its queerness. The point is not that this alternate powered social order is a solution to patriarchy, but that it challenges patriarchy, which tries to establish itself as the correct form of society. This realization demonstrates the overall problem of essentially random (read: symbolic) social and cultural expectations found in patriarchy--they are neither all powerful nor objectively good. Individuals can fantasize about and, potentially, foster a new reality.

V. CONCLUSION

This section begins with a confident assertion--that queer vampires are inevitable. This has several intended meanings: that authors will start to write about queer vampires, that vampires are queer and that this chapter had to occur based on the previous ones. All of these statements are true because the vampire relies on subversion whether or not the authors intend them to challenge the status quo. Queerness makes the status quo inadequate because society does not include every sexual preference. Whereas the stereotypical family unit could offer some romantic or sexual satisfaction to a straight person, it does not acknowledge those who experience same sex attraction.

Unlike their human counterparts, who patriarchy controls, queer vampires do not follow social rules. With their supernatural powers and threat to humanity, the vampire can pursue love interests without fear of shame or ridicule. They also offer alternative modes of life that challenge and question the social order, which marks the true source of their oppression. Patriarchy destroys what it cannot control or defend itself against. Through the vampires' example, humans observe the freedom and power associated with self expression. Queer individuals challenge patriarchal norms and, through self exploration and expression, prove that the husband-wife relationship is not the default or natural goal for humanity, but one of many romantic options that can be improved with equality. The existence of other forms of marriage

and romantic partnerships disproves the assertion that heterosexuality is right or natural. Whether a story makes a vampire moral or immoral, angel or devil, vampires present an alternative way of life that proves patriarchy's inferiority in its limits on sexual and romantic preferences. Although patriarchy allows for metaphorical forms of queerness, as *Carmilla* demonstrates, these tease non-normative sexualities and demonstrate patriarchy's control over personal lives. The vampire takes advantage of this arrogance, making queer sexuality and feminist marriage literal rather than figurative.

CHAPTER FOUR: Orientalism and the Vampire

II. INTRODUCTION

British authors use Orientalism to demean vampires by emphasizing their feminine characteristics, which are often associated with weakness. This section analyzes Orientalism as defined by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978). Said explains, it is "A Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (Said 3). The "East" is a fantasy generated in the Western imagination that bolsters Western power and colonialism.

Through Orientalism, the East becomes weak, primitive, and alien--attributes it shares with patriarchal femininity.

The first part of this section, “Orientalism and Colonialism,” examines Orientalist stereotypes and beliefs in two foundational vampire texts--Sheridan Le Fanu’s *Carmilla* (1872) and Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897)-- through the philosophies of Said and Frantz Fanon. Fanon, a French West Indian psychiatrist and scholar, explored the role of violence in cultural reclamation. In his preface to *The Wretched Earth* (1963) he writes, “We were the subjects of history, and now we are the objects. The power struggle has been reversed, decolonization is in progress” (lx). To Fanon, this decolonization, which I refer to here as “reverse colonization” to highlight the vampire’s offensive attacks on British colonizers, is a power struggle steeped in violence. Just as the colonizing power brutally subjugates the colonized, the colonized responds with their own violence.

Carmilla embodies both Orientalism and reverse colonization through her Styrian identity and invasion of a British household on Styrian soil. She attacks Laura, who is half Styrian and half British, threatening the girl’s allegiance to her western fatherland. Carmilla represents the East, but she is not the weak Orientalized version that the West describes. Stephen D. Arata writes in “The Occidental Tourist” (1990), “In each case, a terrifying reversal has occurred: the colonizer finds himself in the position of the colonized, the exploiter becomes exploited, the victimizer victimized. Such fears are linked to a perceived decline - racial, moral, spiritual - which makes the nation vulnerable to attack from more vigorous, ‘primitive’ peoples” (623). Carmilla deceives the British family because they assume she is powerless. She then gains access to the home and disrupts its British centric organization. The colonizing British home suffers a

reverse colonization through Carmilla's reclamation of her land and Laura, who has Styrian blood.

Dracula, in contrast, colonizes the West through vampirism. The novel begins with Jonathan Harker's belittlement of the East--describing the people he meets and the sites he observes in anthropological, othering terms. He tells his reader, "In the midst of the Carpathian mountains; one of the wildest and least known portions of Europe. I was not able to light on any map or work giving the exact locality of the Castle Dracula, as there are no maps of this country as yet to compare with our own Ordnance Survey maps" (Stoker). Jonathan's impression of the East is primitive and unrefined, following Said's characterization of the Orient as inherently tied to the past. Jonathan also dismisses warnings about Dracula as superstition, ironic considering Dracula traps Jonathan in his castle to terrorize England. Jonathan's ignorance represents the deeper weakness of the colonizing power. Orientalism is fiction and, therefore, Britain's "justified" presence in the "East" is as well. The Orient's fictionalized nature shows in Jonathan's physical description and physiognomy of Dracula. Despite his belief in Western supremacy, Jonathan admits Dracula's whiteness whilst insulting his eastern origins--proving that the West's definitions of the East are permeable and subjective depending on the West's insecurities. Great Britain is more delabitated than it first appears.

II. ORIENTALISM AND COLONIALISM

Vampire literature contains a looming Orientalist fascination, fear, and desire through its depictions of vampires, common characters in eastern European folklore. Depictions of vampires such as Dracula and Carmilla illustrate Orientalism's tendency to encompass multiple regions with distinct cultures as a conglomerate of "the East." Like patriarchy, Orientalism stems from a

belief and enforcement of inherent superiority that shapes the other into a convenient caricature that dignifies the West.

As the West's foil, the East contains characteristics that western culture belittles and negates for its own identity. Said explains, "On the one hand there are Westerners, and on the other there are Arab-Orientals; the former are (in no particular order) rational, peaceful, liberal, logical, capable of holding real values, without natural suspicion; the latter are none of these things" (49). Orientalism is a result of oppositional power that rests in gender binary. The West's self defined values are good and make western people seem like strong, effective leaders--the perfect masculine fantasy for a colonialist nation(s). The East, then, is feminine through its incapability and impotence--it requires the West to conquer and lead it. These designations reveal Britain's anxiety about its cultural identity as the dominant power, something also apparent in the patriarchal relationship of men and women. Through similar paternalist logic, men convince society that women belong under male control because women are incapable. Although Said associates these characteristics with "Arab-Orientals," this section will reveal that the West puts places like Styria and Transylvania in a similar position.

As should be obvious, Orientalism's binaried generalizations of cultures are inaccurate. The negative depictions of the East stem from a knowledge system organized by the West. Said elaborates:

> The object of such knowledge is inherently vulnerable to scrutiny; this object is a 'fact' which, if it develops, changes, or otherwise transforms itself in the way that civilizations frequently do, nevertheless is fundamentally, even ontologically stable. To have such knowledge of such a thing is to dominate it, to have authority over it. And authority here means for 'us' to deny autonomy to 'it'-the Oriental country-since we know it and it exists, in a sense, as we know it. (32)

The Orientalist fantasy is distinct from the actual East--there are numerous examples of eastern countries that refute Orientalism. However, in a binary power system, knowledge and facts are malleable because the authority can categorize various people, places, and things however to fit its organizational model. Facts have inherent power because they are defined as irrefutable truth. So, to name something and describe it in particular terms is to control it. People can twist definitions to manipulate given reality and eliminate elements that problematize their authority. Take, for example, sexually empowered women in patriarchy. While autonomy and personal discovery are good things, the power system makes these women seem evil or immoral to dominate them socially and sexually. The fact the Orient is not real does not limit the influence of Orientalist thought. The West, as the colonizer, defines the East and makes members of its society believe false statements about the East. These definitions shape policies, attitudes, and literature about the so-called Orient. The need to generate misleading definitions stems from the Western empire's insecurity in its own power.

Carmilla compares Orientalism's paternalistic relationship to femininity, which asserts that people from the East "are a subject race, dominated by a race that knows them and what is good for them better than they could possibly know themselves" (Said 35). The protagonist Laura's British father, a retired general who occupies Styrian land, maintains this attitude about Styria and influences his daughter's attitude as well. The death of his wife aids in his efforts--Laura's Styrian mother died when the girl was young. Therefore, the dominating male figure takes over the home and changes it based on his belief systems without fears of a Styrian mother's educational influences.

Carmilla begins with an introduction to Laura's home in Styria. The eastern European country lies in stark contrast with Laura's English fatherland. She says, "My father is English,

and I bear an English name, although I never saw England. But here, in this lonely and primitive place, where everything is so marvelously cheap, I really don't see how ever so much more money would at all materially add to our comforts, or even luxuries" (Le Fanu 6). Laura's Western, British side hyper-focuses on capitalist success, hence her note on the "cheapness" of the East. Capitalism has ties to patriarchy and the western empire because it centers on one type of success (that is, economic) which is almost exclusively restricted to people with privilege. This circular distribution of wealth to the wealthy is a symptom of patriarchy, which oppresses others to constantly reassure itself of its own power. In 1872, the year of *Carmilla*'s publication, men had more social and political influence than women. Plus, as Said's definition of the West exemplifies, people trusted men to be leaders. Consequently, men have an easier time navigating and operating within capitalist structures.

Laura's comment on Styria's primitivity also relates to Said's definition of Orientalism, which asserts that "[The East's] great moments were in the past; they are useful in the modern world only because the powerful and up-to-date empires have effectively brought them out of the wretchedness of their decline" (Said 35). Laura, who has a long line of Styrian ancestors that died with her mother (or so she thinks--Carmilla is part of this family line and the vampire encourages Laura's Styrian identity through reverse colonization), believes that her British schloss represents a present and future that Styria cannot access. Her perception of Styria as separate from a capitalist country fortifies this concept of time since capitalism is a sort of development away from previous governmental organizations, like monarchy. Carmilla represents monarchy through her status as a countess and, therefore, challenges Laura's conception of superiority and history.

Furthermore, Laura and her military father's presence in the schloss is a colonization in miniature, supported especially by Laura's isolation and her father's insistence on preserving their language (Le Fanu 11). Laura and her father believe they have dominion over Styrian land because of the false but accepted dichotomy of East and West. To maintain this superiority, Laura's father must uphold British culture. If he allowed Styria to influence him, it would challenge Orientalism in showing that the East retains the power the West characterizes as past or primitive. The father's confidence in the false dichotomy of East and West marks his weakness. He welcomes Carmilla, a representative of the feminized East, into his home because she appears harmless through the definitions imposed by the Western imagination. The vampire then returns Laura to her Styrian roots, causing the father to flounder and require lots of help before he can destroy Carmilla.

Said writes of the people in the Orient, "Their land occupied, their internal affairs rigidly controlled, their blood and treasure put at the disposal of one or another Western power" (Said 36). Although Styria is not the stereotypical Orient (Said mostly references Asia and the Middle East), Laura's family still embodies Said's sentiment: her father married her Styrian mother (who died in childbirth) and maintains a British home in the country. He takes the land for himself and erases Styria from it. Even while occupying a Styrian space, the British citizens in this novel feel distinct from Styria--despite producing a Styrian-English child.

In *Queer Others in Victorian Gothic* (2012), Ardel Haefele-Thomas discusses the British schloss as well, noting, "[Laura's father] fears that English will become a lost language; underneath the linguistic fear is the fear of the loss of nation and Empire. Later, the vampire Carmilla embodies queer sexuality and internal evil invades both the schloss and Laura, foreshadowing the fear of reverse colonization yet to come in later vampire texts" (101).

Haefele-Thomas does not directly address the gendering of East and West as feminine and masculine, respectively, but her argument supports this concept.

Laura's father and Carmilla embody two powerful, dueling identities within Laura. And both have intimate access to Laura's blood (Carmilla through her vampirism and connection to Laura's maternal line and the father through his genetics). Carmilla represents femininity through her maternal link and Orientalist characterization, while Laura's father represents masculinity through his paternity and British heritage. As the previous chapters identified, Carmilla performs maternity to drink Laura's blood, acting as an ironic surrogate for Laura's deceased Styrian mother. Arata describes vampirism as a sort of racial mixing as well: "They receive a new racial identity, one that marks them as literally 'Other.' Miscegenation leads, not to the mixing of races, but to the biological and political annihilation of the weaker race by the stronger" (Arata 630). While Laura's father attempts to suppress her Styrian ancestry with British patriotism, Carmilla has the power to literally transform Laura into a vampire--a creature distinct from humanity. This, plus Carmilla's maternal Styrian roots, give her power to transform Laura physically and to align her ideologically with her Styrian side. Laura could join Carmilla in Styrian vampirism, allowing the two to overtake the schloss from the British colonists. Thus begins Laura's "reverse colonization."

Although Carmilla and the father are oppositional authorities, their power is not binaried, but contains nuance. As a male Briton, Laura's father has the upperhand on the colonial power scale. No matter how aristocratic Carmilla is, she is still an Eastern European woman functioning within the Western imaginary. She is part of the colonized. While this might seem like weakness, it also empowers Carmilla's revolt--even justifies it. Borrowing from Fanon's "On Violence," "We have seen how the government's agent uses a language of pure violence" (4). To engage

with and overthrow the colonizer, the colonized must also communicate through violence to be understood.

The vampire is perfect for Fanon's fight. In a chapter entitled "On Violence," Fanon references the "myths" and stories of the colonized that the colonizer belittles to increase their authority. Fanon characterizes this issue, "Zombies, believe me, are more terrifying than colonists. And the problem now is not whether to fall in line with the armor-plated world of colonialism, but to think twice before urinating, spitting, or going out in the dark" (19). When the colonizer replaces folkloric tradition and religious figures as objects of fear, he delegitimizes the terrifying nature of such stories. As Fanon notes, undead creatures are scarier than men with weapons but the colonizing forces offer a new version of reality. Just as Said describes the Orientalist manipulation of truth, colonizers create a new reality/ knowledge order that denies the existence of zombies and vampires. Fearing monsters, then, is difficult because it violates given reality as dictated by the overarching social structure. This new reality violates traditional belief systems. For the colonized to partake in their cultural storytelling, to commune with these monsters, is to participate in reality as the colonized define it, distinct from the so-called fact that the West/dominating structure purports. Fanon notes that accepting this mythos could mean "Being granted a civil status, an identification" (18). People who step outside of the colonizer's social order have the opportunity to be regarded as human beings. Fearing monsters over colonizers is subversive because it places the colonizer within the colonized system and, furthermore, limits colonizer power in favor of cultural beliefs.

The vampire's eastern European origins make it a direct representation of this reclamation of power, especially considering the British Enlightenment's focus on scientific inquiry. This movement, although beneficial in some ways, often served as an excuse to conduct

pseudo-race science (Karschay 47), and "scientifically" disprove the humanity, cultural stories, and religions of colonized peoples. Science's role in racism and colonialism is a result of the dominant power defining fact and truth. The dominant power utilizes this framework of reality to make sweeping claims about the other without the need to justify their actions--since "fact" is inherently justified. This act of superiority and domination is an attempt to kill Fanon's zombie or, in this case, vampire. In fearing and engaging with the vampire, the colonized can find power in their othered-ness, making Carmilla the tradition that bites back, a metaphorical "I told you so." And, although Carmilla ultimately dies, she lingers in the most powerful and untouchable place of all--the imagination.

What's more, Carmilla has nothing to lose because she is already dead. Fanon makes a similar connection about the poor in colonized society when he says, "It is obvious that in colonial countries only the peasantry is revolutionary. It has nothing to lose and everything to gain" (Fanon 23). Like the vampire, the peasantry gains power through their submission. Impoverished classes can use their status to incite a revolution against the unsuspecting upper classes. Similarly, (un)death grants Carmilla supernatural strength, specifically against the male dominant, Western centric society. Although Arata discusses *Dracula*, his insights apply here as well. He states, " The vampire serves, then, to highlight the alarming decline among the British, since the undead are, paradoxically, both 'healthier' and more 'fertile' than the living. Perversely, a vampiric attack can serve to invigorate its victim" (631). As a symbol for the oppressed East, the vampire embraces the evil femininity and associations with the past that Said describes. These attributes give her a clear advantage over her human oppressors through supernatural strength. Carmilla transforms what it means to be "the other."

Most media designates Dracula (or, versions of Dracula) as the vampire prototype. The stereotypical vampire lives in Romania or Transylvania (the locations are often confused) and has a cartoonish “foreign” (read: “eastern European” accent). Said describes the Orient as a “Place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences” (1). Dracula’s otherness, both in his monstrosity and nationality, follow Said’s description of the Orient. Arata’s analysis contributes to this well: “Transylvania was known primarily as part of the vexed ‘Eastern Question’ that so obsessed British foreign policy in the 1880s and '90s. The region was first and foremost the site, not of superstition and Gothic romance, but of political turbulence and racial strife” (627). Transylvania’s legacy as a supernatural place centers in racial and colonialist tensions from the British empire.

The vampires in Stoker’s story also reflect this racialized reality. The Count is garish, wealthy and, literally, drains people of their life sources--generating the exotic, haunted setting that Said describes. He also occupies a place that Jonathan, a British lawyer, visits rather than desires to remain in--defining the region as somewhere “less than” England. But, as with femininity, motherhood, or queerness, the vampire generates an avenue for resistance. If they are destined to be the stereotypical other, then they use that designation to threaten the Western empire. Their ancient existence (something the West labels “primitive”) reveals their lasting power. The vampire’s threat is much more sinister, looming, and immediate than any misconception about “The East.”

Dracula further reverses colonization through the vampire’s invasion of England, the emblem of the Victorian West. Dracula shares key qualities with his foremother Carmilla. Among these are his title, again, an indicator of monarchy, wealth, and opulence, as well as his Eastern European identity. Like *Carmilla, Dracula* begins with a framing of the Count’s home

country, which establishes the juxtaposition of Britain and Transylvania, West and East, good and evil, ancient and modern. Jonathan Harker journals about his travels into Eastern Europe on a business trip. His anthropological breakdown of the East reads like a colonialist nightmare similar to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902), albeit the latter story comes two years later than the vampire novel. Conrad's novel relates a man's journey to a colonialist outpost in Africa as a devolution of the mind--the further he travels, the more insanity ensues. Harker writes:

> 3 May. Bistritz.—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. Buda-Pesth seems a wonderful place, from the glimpse which I got of it from the train and the little I could walk through the streets...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. (Stoker 1)

These stark differences of East and West conglomerate the various Eastern European countries into an othered mass, which makes them easier to define, distinguish from the West, and, consequently, disrespect. Jonathan designates himself as both ideologically and physically separate from "the East." Even though Jonathan admits his lack of experience in this part of the world, he still analyzes aesthetic differences through binary ("We were leaving the West and entering the East"). This indicates Jonathan's preconceived notions about the East and comfort with his authority. Just like the men Said quotes in *Orientalism*, Jonathan categorizes the East because he can.

The phrase "traditions of Turkish rule" contrasts the West's supposed newness and vitality and is a subtle example of Fanon's monster analysis. To Jonathan, Turkey is a relic of the past, which follows Said's argument that the West imagines the East as a sort of land before time. While Jonathan's comment about tradition does not include biting commentary (yet), the mention of the past from a representative of the West should be met with suspicion based on

Said's observations. The past means death in the Western power structure because the West always aims to push forward, masking imperialism with modernity and innovation. The vampire, too, is a part of the past, but rather than remain buried--it comes back for blood.

As Jonathan ventures closer to Castle Dracula, the proto-*Heart of Darkness*, he experiences local superstitions, often brushing them aside or pretending to believe them. When he first describes the people of Austria, or Germany, or Slovakia or Transylvania, Jonathan speaks as some sort of cultural anthropologist. He describes them:"Their big cow-boy hats, great baggy dirty-white trousers, white linen shirts, and enormous heavy leather belts, nearly a foot wide, all studded over with brass nails…[They] had long black hair and heavy black moustaches." (Stoker 3). Like the countries they occupy, citizens of the East become a large mass in the Western man's eyes. The generalizing nature of Jonathan's notes make his language mirror that of someone observing animals who tries to predict their behavioral patterns. He also reflects this attitude when he says these "picturesque" people are "Very harmless and rather wanting in natural self-assertion" (Stoker 3). Not only does Jonathan see the people as appearing the same, he also imagines their mindsets and attitudes are identical and, importantly lacking authority--another Orientalist characterization. Ironically, the western empire lacks "self-assertion" as it desperately imposes lies to perpetuate its power. Jonathan projects the struggles of his national pride onto eastern European people. He makes the people he observes indistinguishable and weak while the story's Western characters often have detailed descriptions. Conglomeration allows for and perpetuates binary since nuance complicates categorization.

Jonathan's attitude contributes to his suspicious tendencies toward Transylvanian tradition. When people warn him about Castle Dracula, he seems more afraid of them than their

cautionary tales. For instance, before Jonathan leaves his hotel to continue his journey, the landlord's wife begs him to reconsider:

> 'It is the eve of St. George's Day. Do you not know that to-night, when the clock strikes midnight, all the evil things in the world will have full sway? Do you know where you are going?'. . . Finally she went down on her knees and implored me not to go. . . It was all very ridiculous but I did not feel comfortable. However, there was business to be done, and I could allow nothing to interfere with it. . . . She then rose and dried her eyes, and taking a crucifix from her neck and 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, and yet it seemed so ungracious to refuse an old lady meaning so well and in such a state of mind. . . I am writing up this part of the diary whilst I am waiting for the coach, which is, of course, late; and the crucifix is still round my neck. Whether it is the old lady's fear, or the many ghostly traditions of this place, or the crucifix itself, I do not know, but I am not feeling nearly as easy in my mind as usual. (Stoker 4-5)

Fanon's "On Violence" elucidates key patterns in this scene, including the colonizer's superiority complex. It begins with equating a Catholic belief and the demons of St. George's Day, with superstition. The reader knows these concerns are valid, considering that the Count is a demon-like creature repelled by crosses, but Jonathan, an ever arrogant Briton, disregards them. His colonizing bias tells him he has authority to trivialize local cultural traditions and belief systems in favor of the dominant power. His business-minded attitude echoes *Carmilla*'s capitalist themes. The British, "civilized" man focuses exclusively on the objectivity of money and profit--ironic considering money is a relative conception depending on a society's definition of value. Plus, this misguided logic risks his life. Arata writes, "The primitive and the occultist alike operated beyond or beneath the threshold of the 'civilized' rational mind, tapping into primal energies and unconscious resources as well as into deep-rooted anxieties and fears" (624). Just as Fanon highlights the power of invoking monsters in a colonizing social system, Arata explains that superstitious belief offers a different perspective of life and society. Jonathan and his group of British friends will never understand the power in fearing and acknowledging

Dracula's vampirism because they never look beyond their own social system. Jonathan's feigned superiority places him in a double bind. If he believed the warnings about Dracula, he never would have entered Dracula's castle nor threatened England with the vampire. However, believing the warnings means abandoning the western mindset for one that challenges the status quo. Essentially, it admits that the western imagination is not objective reality because it does not encompass supernatural threats. In this story, supernatural creatures are objective truth, believing otherwise is a lethal fantasy.

Jonathan continues his pseudo-anthropologist language when he meets Dracula. Before he analyzes the Count's appearance, Jonathan comments that Dracula's perfect English has "a strange intonation" (Stoker 15). Already Jonathan's Western-blinded conceptions of the world take effect. Could the intonation just be a Transylvanian accent? Jonathan is unable to accept that people from non-English speaking countries speak differently than him. Or, better yet, he sees an accent as something foreign and out of the norm even in a country where English is not commonly spoken. He also describes the Count's looks in great detail, using physiognomy, the Victorian practice of determining personality based on countenance. Jonathan's descriptions make Dracula the racial and ideological other. Jonathan writes,

> His face was a strong— very strong—aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with a lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily round the temples but profusely elsewhere. His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion. The mouth, so far as I could see it under the heavy moustache, was fixed and rather cruel-looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth; these protruded over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality in a man of his years. For the rest, his ears were pale, and at the tops extremely pointed; the chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin. The general effect was one of extraordinary pallor. (Stoker 17)

Adjectives like "peculiar," "rather," "astonishing," extraordinary" convey an overall sense of non-normativity. Simultaneously, Jonathan notes Dracula's "extraordinary pallor," implicating

his whiteness in this otherness as well. Dracula problematizes Orientalism and whiteness especially as they relate to eastern Europe. As noted previously, the Orient most often applies to countries in Asia and the Middle East. Eastern Europe rests in a strange place between whiteness and exoticism in the western mind. As a location that must be conquered, eastern Europe must be Orientalized. As a place with white people, it must be Occidentalized to uphold white supremacy. Jonathan's blend of Oriental and Occidental stereotypes reflects the West's confusion and the loose definitions of the Orient in general. As a made up place, the Orient can encompass whatever the Occident desires it to. At the same time, the fiction of the Orient makes it easier to disprove. Jonathan's description, then, is a projection of this uncomfortable knowledge; it represents the ultimate danger of relying on falsehoods.

Othering is a key aspect of Orientalist thought. The East's sinful allure comes from its complete separation from the West. Without this, the East would not be foreign and, therefore, not objectified/criticized as exotic. While the modern reader knows that Dracula's appearance is a result of his vampirism (and, therefore, power), Jonathan describes it as part of his complicated and complicating ethnicity. Earlier, Jonathan commented on the harsh look of the locals, along with their prominent mustaches. He repeats these sentiments in his Dracula descriptions as well. Part of Dracula's scary allure comes from his unknowability. His supernatural existence is part of that, but his Eastern European identity also evades western binary. To Jonathan and his British compatriots, Dracula is not quite part of the Orient or Occident (nor quite human or monster) and, therefore, impossible to define.

III. CONCLUSION

Orientalism illustrates the problem with oppressive forces in general because it reveals the fantasy of truth that patriarchy generates for its own purposes. The Orient is not a real place

nor are the caricatures of its people. Instead, it is an amalgam of stereotypes that utilize patriarchy's lies about femininity and inferiority to generate a submissive delusion that the West can justifiably conquer. Since the West depends on these foils to generate its identity, the West is also a lie. It claims inherent power and responsibility over a swath of land and people because it designates that population as immature or "less than." Without that comparative inferiority, the West's foundations for colonization turn to dust; it cannot be strong without negating another entity.

This reliance on foils and binary shows throughout patriarchy. Patriarchal femininity, for example, relies on subjective conceptions of virtue and viciousness. Subversion, in many cases, is beneficial to women--allowing them social and sexual freedom and overall autonomy. In contrast, the patriarchal alternative means entrapment in the home and forcing a sickly countenance. Patriarchy's objectivity is unreliable because of this theme. It forgoes actual, reliable truth for power. Patriarchy's reliance also makes it vulnerable. Carmilla and Dracula prove that the Orientalist characterization of the other is easily weaponized. The vampire's monstrosity marks her as inherently other but this makes her superior to humanity through sheer strength alone. In an effort to create something that further degrades the East and attempts to separate Eastern Europe from Western Europe, patriarchy births a creature that is anything but submissive. In every case, patriarchy works against its own interests.

CHAPTER FIVE: The Vampire and Anti-Black Racism

I. INTRODUCTION

Like Orientalism, anti-Blackness is a tool of Western patriarchy that warps reality for power. It is a method of control, not truth, as it utilizes made up rules about Black people to degrade them. The vampire reveals the lies that support white supremacy through subversive strength. And, with the tradition of anti-Blackness in mind, some authors in the genre have developed pro-Black vampire tales that use the vampire's subversion for racial critiques and empowerment.

The first part of this section, "Anti-Blackness," examines the implications of anti-Black vampire stories and how Black characters within these novels expose racism's illogical nature. This analysis relies on Saidiya Hartman's definition of the archive as a place of historical manipulation generated by an anti-Black society. The stories the archive tells are not real, but attempts at maintaining a racist reality. Vampires reveal the archive's subjectivity.

Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872) contains a clear scene of anti-Blackness when the members of the schloss describe a Black woman sitting in Carmilla's carriage. Laura's governess describes her as a monster, making her dark skin seem like a bad omen. All the while, Laura's father allows Carmilla to enter the home. Their anxiety about a Black woman reveals the fragile nature of the historical/cultural archive. The members of the schloss must act as if she is dangerous to uphold the false stereotypes that benefit white supremacy. The vampires' inclusion

of this woman and the fact Laura's family does not acknowledge her shows that they do not recognize the same social framework.

Years later, Charlaine Harris' *Dead until Dark* (2001), set in the American South, grapples with the lasting effects of slavery and systemic racism in America. The region's historical racial divisions provide fertile ground for the racialized vampire to emerge. Harris compares the discrimination of vampires in a Louisiana small town to that faced by Black people and suggests that the vampires face worse prejudice. However, vampires pose actual danger while patriarchy characterizes Black people as threatening to control them and justify marginalization, slavery and other forms of oppression. With this as the foundation, *Dead Until Dark* forgives some white characters for their racism and belittles Black characters who have autonomy in a world that denies them that right. For example, the main character's "sympathetic" grandmother is part of a group that celebrates the history of the confederacy while the main character hypersexualizes a Black vampire woman. The novel's use of racist sympathetic white characters reveals its unfortunate role in respectability politics--offering a kind view of a racist woman and belittling a Black vampire that has, quite literally, experienced decades of oppression. Ironically, no matter how much of the story ignores American slavery's consequences, the novel's racist themes highlight chattel slavery's impact on the twenty-first century. Vampires reveal the racism that underlies patriarchy, proving it to be immoral and, again, subjective.

The second part of this chapter analyzes "Pro-Black Vampire Tales." These stories embody the vampire's transgressive power as the authors recognize the vampire's subversive legacy. The vampire may embody death but rather than stay buried or disconnected from others, they return, seeking revenge as well as community. Jewelle Gomez's *The Gilda Stories* (1991)

reclaims power for Black women. The main character, an escaped slave later named Gilda experiences social death as defined by Orlando Patterson in *Slavery and Social Death* (1982). As a vampire, rebuilds her kinship ties through death, reclaiming oppressive tactics through empowered community. Octavia Butler's *Fledgling* (2005) examines racism within a vampire community, making the novel a meta-critique of anti-Blackness in the genre. Shori, the protagonist, is a half human half-vampire whose dark skin gives her clear advantage over her white vampire family. While racist vampires attempt to destroy Shori, she fights back, holding them accountable for their crimes. Shori subverts the archive because it does not allow for her mixed existence; she is stronger than its falsehoods.

II. ANTI-BLACKNESS

Vampires' pale constitutions generate diversity issues within the genre. Whiteness and idealism go together in Victorian patriarchy-- consider the pale Victorian beauty ideal set upon women. The hallmarks of Victorian beauty have persisted in vampire literature, including whiteness. As a result, authors within this genre have written many anti-black characters and stories because of the vampire's association with and subversion of Victorian beauty ideals.

While the genre is rife with anti-Black sentiment, the vampire still maintains a strong framework for subversion against normativity. The unifying characteristic in vampiric subversion is the creature's ability to highlight concepts that the patriarchy attempts to hide or undercut, like queer sexuality or femininity. So, even when authors use vampires to promote an anti-Black agenda, this tactic fails because vampires subvert white supremacist patriarchy and reveal its feeble nature.

Carmilla, with its focus on Western superiority, contains overt anti-Black racism. Laura's governess recalls a woman present in Carmilla's carriage. The governess explains, "A hideous

ardel black woman, with a sort of colored turban on her head, and who was gazing all the time from the carriage window, nodding and grinning derisively towards the ladies, with gleaming eyes and large white eyeballs, and her teeth set as if in fury (Le Fanu 36). The description marks the Black woman as distinct from others in the carriage; the governess does not point out anyone else from the group. Additionally, the governess describes the woman as the monstrous other--ironic considering the white woman they invite into their home is the true monster. Ardel Haefele-Thomas notes in *Queer Others in the Victorian Gothic* (2012), “The woman is signified as evil and racially other. The turban on her head brings to mind African or Middle Eastern/ Oriental people as well as gypsies, often bad omens” (102). This combination of Orientalism and anti-Blackness designates the woman as someone to fear not out of danger, but out of hatred and subjugation. She differs from the norm, threatening patriarchy, which relies on established customs to exist.

Her facial description relates to the physiognomy in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897), which bolsters the idea that someone’s character is evident through their physicalities. This logic is dangerous in a racist society because the dominant culture can justify prejudice or violence through pseudo-science, asserting that someone is inherently inferior based on their appearance. The reader never learns more about this woman. She remains only an ornament of terror and, as Haefele-Thomas observes, the *other*. *Carmilla*’s white characters display their prejudice and willingness to label afflicted groups as monstrous, unaware of the actual dangers amongst them--a running theme in vampire literature.

The vampires’ view of this woman differs from the living people’s. Whereas Laura’s family sees her as some sinister omen, Carmilla’s entourage includes her in their group. Racial tolerance scandalizes Laura’s family. They see the woman as a bad omen because she is a Black

person among a white group. They believe that she does not belong in that situation which, according to the governess' logic, means she is problematic. This proves racist patriarchy's discomfort with the unfamiliar as well as its reliance on anti-Blackness. Haefele-Thomas argues that *Carmilla* is an allegory for the dangers of racial mixing because Laura, who has Styrian and English blood, is susceptible to Carmilla's bite.

Haefele-Thomas' observations extend beyond Orientalism into any sort of racial acceptance. Based on the "good" living people's derogatory reactions to a Black person, someone who does not appear in the narrative after this, they see racial dominance as key to the establishment of their British schloss. The schloss' existence in Styria already makes it vulnerable because it is a tiny British empire in a non-British place. Those in the schloss fear the woman because she is unfamiliar and, therefore, another potential threat to their unjustified residence. They must attack her to preserve white western superiority. The vampires and the woman are scary because they coexist. The vampires do not foster the same desperate need to assert racial superiority but are powerful in their embrace of "otherness." For Laura and her very white, very British family, the vampire's comfort with Blackness is unnatural and wrong. This is the basis of the subversion against anti-Blackness. Although the scene is undoubtedly racist, the vampires embrace the other and, as everyone soon learns, have more power than anyone at the schloss. The patriarchy reveals that it fears and condemns what it does not understand and cannot control-- one of its many weak points.

Anti-Blackness occurs in modern interpretations of the vampire as well. Most obvious in this racist trend is *Dead Until Dark* due to its placement in the American South and the fact that Bill, the protagonist's vampire boyfriend, was a Confederate soldier in the Civil War. Bill is the novel's "good" vampire. He wants to convene with the human world and abide by its rules.

Although he contains a few subversive elements, other vampires in the text (read: the vicious ones) are more rebellious toward ordered society. Many of these vicious vampires are non-white, the most prominent among them Diane, the Black female vampire who scoffs at the story's racist small town. Ironically, however, the story emphasizes the universal prejudice that all vampires face in the close-minded town while ignoring the racism that Diana faces.

Suggesting that vampires face discrimination similar to or worse than that of African Americans belittles the Black experience in America. Black people face a multitude of threats because society portrays them as dangerous for the sake of preserving white supremacist patriarchy. Acknowledging these struggles would require admitting fault and responsibility for inhumane actions. For example, Shannon Winnubst critiques the collective American nightmare/stereotype of the Black male rapist and white female victim in "Vampires, Anxieties, and Dreams: Race and Sex in the Contemporary United States." (2009): "Despite its ontological status as a fantasy, [it] traps and kills black and brown men in the contemporary United States. With no foothold in actual statistics on interracial violence or rape, it nonetheless functions as a myth that structures race, gender, sexuality, and class in the United States. Both real and unreal, it is a collective nightmare that structures power in U.S. culture" (2). The unfounded nature of white fear reverses the actual dynamic between white and Black Americans--white slave owners raped Black slaves. If anything, *Dead Until Dark* exemplifies this Western patriarchal fantasy about Black people. Vampires have superstrength and power. They can (arguably, *need* to) kill humans. Black people are living human beings. Comparing vampires and Black people makes Black people seem monstrous and perpetuates harmful stereotypes. Racial hatred has no basis in reality, but in the symbolic order that makes racism necessary to uphold white power.

Bill's description of the Civil War garners admiration and pity from the white protagonist Sookie. After she tells him to wear his uniform to one of her grandmother's history club meetings, Bill tells her, "'I hadn't much uniform by the end of the War...We were in rags and starving.'" (Harris 56). Neither Sookie nor Bill mentions the obvious racial implications of his participation in the war effort. In fact, Sookie expresses regret at bringing up the painful memory. This characterization of Bill's experience recalls Saidiya Hartman's description of the archive in "Venus in Two Acts (2008):" "The archive of slavery rests upon a founding violence. This violence determines, regulates and organizes the kinds of statements that can be made about slavery and it creates subjects and objects of power" (Hartman 10). The historical archive that our society maintains is not one of truth, but of subjectivity. In treating Bill's role in the confederate army as a sob story, Sookie ignores the evil institution that he defended. And, in doing so, she downplays the role of slavery in the Civil War, making the soldiers seem faultless and perpetuating racism. The Civil War becomes apolitical and those who study it forget America's systemic racism.

The archive picks and chooses what to include and morphs the narrative to serve its greater purpose. This supposedly sympathetic moment and erasure of slavery from the Civil War is a singular example of a broader issue around historitization. This erasure allows white people to separate themselves from that aspect of America's history and, therefore, eliminates responsibility. Bill is not part of a mass of racist people, but an individual with a sympathetic sob story. African Americans do not have the same privilege as history either belittles/erases their struggles or blames them for hardships, including those clearly caused by racism. Bill's narrative of forgotten slavery is historicization in practice--if society collectively forgets this crime then its effects continue without criticism.

The only Black vampire in this story, Diane, faces stereotyping by white characters. Diane fearlessly owns her sexuality. Sookie has problems with this, even though she acknowledges her community's racism. When Diane walks into the diner Sookie works in, Sookie notes, "Diane was wearing a one-piece lime green bodysuit spun out of Lycra or some other very thin, stretchy cloth. I was sure I could count her pubic hairs if I so desired. Blacks didn't come into Merlotte's much, but if any Black was safe, it was Diane" (Harris 151). Sookie filters Diane's sexual ownership through her biased perspective. Sookie characterizes Diane as the stereotype of the hypersexualized Black woman whose sexuality is not owned but thrust upon her (Matthews 5). Sookie is uncomfortable because patriarchy tells her that Black women should not own their sexualities (since, again, this threatens patriarchal order). Her discomfort comes from a deep-set fear that white supremacy will falter if non-normative people have autonomy.

Diane empowers Black characters in vampire literature because she comfortably rejects a racist space. Her vampirism gives her access to this subversion because racist people know of her physical advantage over them--an echo of Fanon's theory that the oppressors only understand violence. Diane responds to their violent belief system (which has violent results as the human characters burn her to death in a house fire) with her supernatural capabilities and, ultimately, the threat of her literal bloodlust. Sookie acknowledges that if Diane were a living human, even entering this diner could be dangerous. Sookie's comment proves that Black people are not inherently evil or physically threatening, but portrayed that way to justify racist action, which exclusively preserves the nonargument of white supremacy. When faced with an oppressed person who can hurt them, white supremacists stay quiet.

III. PRO-BLACK VAMPIRE TALES

While Diane is subversive despite her story, there are more intentional instances of pro-Black vampires. These vampire stories are powerful not just within the context of the real world, but within the tradition of vampirism in the Western literary canon. A Black vampire challenges notions of vampirism, such as the pale complexion or Western imagined beauty standards. Vampirism has the potential to restore autonomy in an anti-Black world.

Consider social death, which describes the loss of kinship ties associated with slavery. Patterson explains, “Not only was the slave denied all claims on, and obligations to, his parents and living blood relations but, by extension, all such claims and obligations on his more remote ancestors and on his descendants. He was truly a genealogical isolate” (5). When removed from their homes, families and friends, African slaves suffered from a virtual death. They lost all connection to their place of origin. Even when the trade ended, social death remained. The buying and selling of slaves meant separated families and the continued severance of kinship ties by white supremacists. Black people, then, in any country that had chattel slavery, existed in a liminal state of being--alive whilst dead. The vampire is the opposite--dead whilst alive. The vampire persists because of death. She weaponizes her undeath against those who caused it. And, unlike an apparition, a vampire has corporeality and can engage with racist patriarchal structures and literally break them down.

The Gilda Stories captures the nuances and power that comes with being a Black vampire at several times and places in the U.S. The story begins when the protagonist, a runaway slave later named Gilda, is awakened by a memory of her mother who once told her white people are "not fully human."(Gomez 10). The mother’s statement reverses and challenges social norms because white supremacy defines Black people as not quite human. From the perspective of a Black person, however, the reader sees that this is not a universal truth but a construct that

benefits those in power. As Gilda wakes up, she sees a white man who attempts to rape her--"She looked up at the beast from another land...His smile returned as he became thick with anticipation of her *submission* to him" (Gomez 11) (emphasis added). Gilda sees the man as *other*--similar to the dehumanizing description of the woman from Carmilla's carriage. Except, in this instance, the white man, not the Black woman, is the other. Gilda notes that he could be from another land, reminiscent of the language colonists used to conquer or enslave various groups of people. Her othering of him puts her into the colonizing position of power, which allows Gilda to alienate and subjugate the man as white supremacy does to her. Gilda's reversal of the colonizer and colonized positions proves that inferiority and superiority are relative, not inherent, and provides her access to the power structure as she undercuts its legitimacy.

The act of rape has significance in the context of slavery as well. The man does not just exert physical power or dominance, he removes Gilda's bodily autonomy. Slavery condones rape. With this kind of power, the attacker does not gain strength through some superhuman ability but by treating the attacked as subhuman. Moreover, the man's power is only relevant through the given knowledge system which, because it is not inherent, can be challenged.

The second Gilda proves the instability of the man's power when she jams her concealed knife into his gut. Gilda's power is in her weapon. The scene continues, "He started to enter her, but before his hand finished pulling her open, while it still tinged with the softness of her insides, she entered him with her heart which was now a wood-handed knife" (Gomez 11). The attempted rape is a dissection--the utter desecration of a body already presumed dead. The man's arrogance is his downfall. Gilda literalizes the dissection when she stabs him with her knife--mimicking the violence of his desire. She makes "Warmth spread from his center of power to his chest as the blood left his body" (Gomez 11). Gilda's bloodbath represents a baptism into

vampirism before she ever meets a vampire. She notes that "The blood [was] signaling the death of a beast and her continued life" (Gomez 12). Like a vampire, the second Gilda gains life through blood and exists even when the world designates her as (socially) dead. Her self defense continues dehumanizing the man, hijacking the knowledge system and reclaiming it through her new dominance. Her action undermines the system's racist and sexist intentions because it shows that the system is susceptible to those it attempts to control.

As a vampire, Gilda maintains and builds her power. While she is walking alone at night in 1921 Missouri, a group of white men call her racial slurs. When she hears these words she "Tasted the acid of hatred inside her mouth and wanted to be full of it, to teach the lesson these two needed to learn" (Gomez 113). Gilda's reaction to these words mirrors her emotions toward her would-be rapist. Besides pure hatred there is a strong indication that these men are stupid. The power they believe they have is a lie-- a mistake that must be corrected. This association with education returns to the archive. The archive is a knowledge source that informs society about proper behavior and about its supposed history. By challenging given knowledge, Gilda attacks patriarchy. And, her violence mimics patriarchy, another manifestation of Fanon's violent communication.

In the fight, "[Gilda] cracked the whip once over his head, then lay a stroke across his back. That she hit him with his own whip seemed to startle him more than the pain" (Gomez 113). Gilda fully embodies Fanon's theory by not only reacting with violence but by utilizing the weapon used against Black slaves, which ensures her attackers realize the weight of her response. They understand that whips indicate subjugation and control. In reclaiming the weapon, Gilda tells them that she has control over herself and them and refuses to abide by the rules the whip used to enforce. She is the new power they must adhere to.

Gilda's experience isn't all violence. As discussed in the Queer Vampires section, Gilda builds strong bonds with other women. In most eras of her life, Gilda's family are the Black women she meets along the way--whom she protects and confides in. Jerry Rafiki Jenkins writes in "Race, Freedom, and the Black Vampire in Jewelle Gomez's *The Gilda Stories*" (2013), "Gomez contends that the concept of family is useful for moving toward 'full vision' of black freedom. One of the most important lessons Gilda learns… is family, like friends, are matters of choice" (316-7). Here, Jenkins explores the implications of something beyond blood ties. He also quotes another section of the novel, in which Gilda drinks champagne with her white vampire friends, one of whom comments of his own African ancestry.

When Gilda pushes this point, he replies, "In what great civilized nation are we not?" (Gomez 79). This assertion mends the historicization of anti-Blackness in two ways. First, it insinuates that "great, civilized nations," in this case America, exist through the blood of Black labor. The term is civilization is racialized, often referring to subjective definitions of primitivism and progress that bolster those in power and demean imperialized nations. America and England, for example, consider themselves "great, civilized nations" and, in both cases, those countries enslaved and colonized Black people to further their empires or landholds, which is inhumane and barbaric. Second, Gilda's friend suggests that white superiority is illogical. White supremacists are racist toward Black people but, if everyone has African ancestors, no matter how far back the lineage, this distinction of superiority and inferiority is random. Whiteness is a construct for power, not an actual reality.

This separation of race and blood lines also fortifies Gilda's relationship with her chosen family and overall community. In Rosebud, her companion is Aurelia, a recent widow who grows more confident with Gilda's friendship. In South End in 1955, Gilda protects a young

Black girl from a menacing vampire. New York in 1981 offers Gilda a creative coalition of Black women that includes Effie, a fellow vampire and Gilda's life partner. By the book's conclusion in 2050, as the world devolves into chaos, Gilda saves a Black woman's life by vampirizing her. Gilda's culture brings her enduring, lasting community. It is a space of protective strength. And, it is a point of pride.

As she showers in 1981, Gilda notices her own beauty. Gomez writes,

> Her brown skin shone like a polished stone; the rounded stomach and full legs were unchanged from those of her ancestors. Her teeth gleamed against soft lips, and through the fog of her dark eyes looked back at her as alive and sparkling as they had been when Gilda first saw herself in a looking glass 150 years before. (Gomez 197)

Gilda's confidence challenges racist notions of beauty and the dehumanization of the Black body. Gilda's power rests in reclamation. She attacks the patriarchy with force, but she defies it through a revolutionary celebration of her Blackness, which counteracts conceptions of the evil or untrustworthy Black person in white supremacy. In loving herself and finding her appearance aesthetically pleasing, Gilda looks beyond binary and the ordered knowledge system. Again, she proves this system subjective and arbitrary, therefore threatening it.

Fledgling also celebrates the power of being a Black woman in an anti-Black world. The story follows Shori, a vampire-human hybrid who some vampires want to kill because they believe her an abomination. She exists as an improvement on white vampires, called Ina, who cannot survive sunlight, following vampire tradition. Shori's mother, however, was a Black human and, as a result, Shori can survive in sunlight--a subversive move against the stereotypical vampire that benefits Shori.

The Ina who "disagree" with Shori's existence murder her female side of her family in a fire, but no one remembers the crime because the perpetrators brain washed or killed all the

witnesses. Shori describes the scene: "The houses had not been abandoned. I was not wrong about the scents of burned flesh that I had found here and there in them... And there had definitely been other people around the time of the fire. Why would the articles deny this?" (Butler 40). The forgotten nature of this violent act mirrors the lynchings committed throughout the American South, especially post Civil War. White people lynched Black people to show their power over them. And, despite the heinous, racist origins of the crime, lynchers rarely faced prosecution (NPR). White supremacist society condones racial violence and destruction through silence. Even with amnesia, it is obvious to Shori that a crime has occurred--the perpetrators gaslight her so they can avoid responsibility and continue lying about the system's supposed virtue. Here, vampirism represents buried memory. While society hides lynchings as a part of America's racial history, the vampire refuses death. A corpse's memory is not erased in vampire literature. In a sense, then, Shori's vampiric state foreshadows her recollection, as vampires literalize the revival of buried things.

When Shori encounters these vampires (not yet realizing they killed her family), she experiences their prejudice firsthand. Ina and humans cannot naturally procreate: Shori is the result of genetic engineering, which some Ina loathe. The Ina responsible for the fires, Russell Silk, rants about the separation of human and Ina society. He notes his family's dedication to Ina well being and that "Ina are vastly outnumbered by the human beings of this world" (297). He finishes his speech by saying, "Their lives are brief and, without us, riddled with disease and violence. And yet, we need them. We take them into our families" (298). Russell's speech shares language with paternalist arguments for slavery because he believes the humans require Ina (Despite the Ina not helping that many humans) and the Ina require humans for the latter's blood donations. Russell's fears about the human population follow racist arguments about the

preservation of the "white race" against growing diversity. This thinking pattern is an indication of fear of reverse colonization that proves white supremacist power is not based on solid evidence but only in force and numbers. Additionally, Russell is a white male Ina living in a matriarchal society. As noted in previous sections, female Ina can kill male Ina with their venom. Unlike Russell's foundationless power, female Ina have provable strength. And, Ina's white skin keeps them from the light. Traditional power found in random symbols and white skin are weak in a vampire context. Russell embodies patriarchy's empty strength based on nothing but social norms while Shori is the true answer to Ina survival.

Once convicted of his crimes against Shori in an Ina court, Russell acts on his hatred. He jumps at Shori, yelling, "'Murdering black mongrel bitch…' and 'What will she give us all? Fur? Tails?'" (Butler 306). Russell no longer mimics racist language, he uses it. His association of Blackness and animals shares deep roots with the history of colonialism. By designating Black people as subhuman, white invaders justified harming, raping, and overtaking them. This logic also allowed for enslavement and lynchings. If racial prejudice stems from a false belief in superiority, then Russell's trial is the ultimate justice. It shows his beliefs cannot protect him and holds him accountable for his actions in a world that usually looks the other way. No amount of mind control or racist vitriol can save him. He is angry because he has nothing. Everyone knows that Russell's superiority is fiction.

With the exposure of this fiction comes the reality of Shori's strength. Shori is the key to Ina survival and an evolutionary improvement on their species. Her human genetics allow her to stay awake during the day and remain relatively safe in sunlight. Some of the other Ina come to admire her because she violates Ina expectations as well as expectations from the vampire genre as a whole. One of her symbionts tells her, "'According to what I've read, you're supposed to be

a tall, handsome, fully grown white man" (Butler 97). Shori proves her power is a result of her subversion. She thwarts vampire tropes and, as a result, is more powerful than traditional vampires. She proves racist, patriarchal notions false because of her power and, simultaneously, is legitimately threatening--fulfilling and disregarding the archive of information as it relates to Black people. Her strength exists both within her community and narrative but also in the larger context of vampire literature. She and Gilda embody the vampire's fullest potential. They show what occurs when writers capitalize on the subversive strength that the vampire inherently represents.

IV. CONCLUSION

Anti-Blackness, like most patriarchal characteristics, is the result of false reality that patriarchy requires for its continued existence. However, binary systems must avoid contradiction to maintain the fantasy of clearcut opposites that lack nuance. In its dependence on lies, patriarchy undercuts its own structure. Despite this logical fallacy, patriarchy's lies have real impacts on people--including slavery, police violence, and more. Understanding the dangers behind patriarchal lies emphasizes the importance of both understanding those lies and revealing them. Passive acceptance of truth condones violence.

When racist authors attempt to use the vampire to push an anti-Black agenda, the vampire thwarts the stereotypes thrust upon her. The unnamed woman in *Carmilla* reveals racism's clouded stupidity. Her appearance distracts the schloss' inhabitants from the true monster--a white teenage girl. The unnamed woman's association with monstrosity also provides her protection. The racist Western colonizers are weak, not the Black woman or the vampires she sits with. She has power over the family and their racism reflects their implicit knowledge and fear of that fact. *Dead until Dark*'s simultaneous acknowledgment of Southern racism and erasure of

slavery displays racism’s hypocrisy in general. The characters attempt to create a world that allows for kind Confederate veterans as well as systemic racism, but that world is impossible.

Vampire literature’s inclusion of such tropes also results in intentional reclamation and subversion. *The Gilda Stories* and *Fledgling* exemplify those kinds of stories. The vampires’ celebration of their Blackness is already a subversive action in an anti-Black world. They also reclaim society’s demonization of Black people, becoming “monsters” that threaten patriarchy and support others in their communities. Their subversion of patriarchy through patriarchy’s lies is characteristic of their vampire identities. The vampires ironize patriarchy’s desires and topple baseless assertions of inferiority and viciousness.

CHAPTER SIX: Religion and the Vampire

I. INTRODUCTION

Whether demon, heretic, or atheist, the vampire’s core is Christian. Patriarchy, too, has inherent ties to Christianity--using human interpretations of the Bible to justify male rule and dominion. So, when the terms of Christianity, Catholicism or Protestantism appear in this chapter, they refer to the human institutions, not the actual belief systems. The way patriarchy interprets Christianity affects the Church’s organization. Catholics follow a patriarchal structure that keeps women from the priesthood and popedom. Patriarchy uses British Protestantism to instill social morality and duty to justify colonial actions against non-Protestant countries.

While vampires mock Catholic rites, they also buy into Catholicism to challenge Protestant notions of superiority. This doubled form of Catholicism makes the vampire difficult to pinpoint as saint or sinner and challenges falsehoods about Western advancement. Additionally, the vampire weaponizes Protestant epistemology against Christianity--emphasizing the value of individual faith over religious rites and, subsequently, God’s omniscient power. When taken further, this Protestant approach to religion reveals patriarchy’s empty symbolism in general, which targets Catholicism's foundation in symbolic practices like transubstantiation. It

even supports atheism because, if human faith cannot bring about God to save them from the vampire, then nothing will.

The first section, "The Vampire as Catholic Heretic" explores the vampire's complex relationship to Catholicism. Using Heinrich Ossenfelser's "Der Vampir" (1748) as a framework for understanding the Victorian vampire's aversion to Christianity, this section examines how the vampire transitioned into accepting Catholicism as a way to subvert British Protestantism, especially when that Protestantism associates Catholicism with Orientalism. The vampire's contradictory relationship to Catholicism characterizes the monster's liminality between heretic and believer. Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872), for example, is about a vampire who challenges established Christianity and supports Darwinian evolutionary theory through her enhanced features. Simultaneously, however, the British characters rely on Catholic and Eastern European tradition to destroy the vampire, forcing them to partake in Catholic traditions demeaned through Orientalism. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) follows a similar theme. The novel begins with Jonathan Harker's doubts about Transylvanian beliefs. It ends with the Protestant British characters using crosses, crucifixes and garlic to repel the Count. He forces them out of their British Protestantism into "superstitious" Catholicism.

The second section, "Protestant-Atheist Vampires Attack," explores the potential of Protestantism to undercut itself in favor of atheism. This section functions on the Protestant belief, described by Lloyd Worley in "Anne Rice's Protestant Vampires," (1999) that holy objects and sources derive their power through faith. As a result, rather than rely on *Dracula*'s inherently repellant crucifix, the vampires or living people must believe in holy objects for them to have effect. Richard Matheson's *I am Legend* (1954) upholds Worley's definition of the Protestant belief system through scientific inquiry. The protagonist Robert Neville studies the

origin of vampires in his society and disregards the stories and legends as distractions from the pandemic's true cause. In this case of science, Neville targets the vampire's "superstitious" Catholic origins rather than Christianity in general. Worley's logic then turns to religion in general in *I am Legend*. Neville discovers that many vampires flinch at objects from their own religions while remaining unaffected by Catholic objects. The power of religious objects really is by individual faith, rather than an inherently divine source.

Stephen King's *'Salem's Lot* (1975) uses vampires to disprove fundamentalist Catholicism. The priest in the novel longs to join a legitimate battle between GOOD and EVIL, but he grows dejected at his boring world. However, when given the choice to pit Catholic good against vampiric evil, the priest falters and, as a result, his crucifix cannot repel the vampire. The vampire Barlow then forces the priest to partake in his "Eucharist," tainting him with vampire blood. Barlow insults the Catholic religion, but in doing so, also proves its potency comes from faith alone rather than sacraments--a major Protestant tenet. Without faith in God, the priest loses his protection against the vampire. God loses authority as the vampire gains it. If Barlow convinces people that their crosses are useless against him, effectively making them faithless, he becomes unstoppable.

Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) also carries Protestant theology to the extreme. When the story's vampire protagonist Louis enters a Cathedral, nothing happens. He attacks a priest who calls on God for protection, but God does nothing. The only true supernatural being is the vampire. Louis consumes the priest's blood on the altar steps--proving the ineffective nature of Catholicism and the God's nonexistence.

The third section, "The Vampire as God," uses Beth McDonald's definition from *The Vampire as Numinous Experience* (2004) of the negative numinous to reveal the vampire's

divinity. As the vampire disproves Christian power structures' validity, she offers an alternative religion that contrasts Christianity. The vampire's supernatural strength, especially in comparison to the living, makes them sublime figures. Like God, they are reverential because people cannot comprehend them nor ever reach their level of strength. In *Dracula,* two doctors write about Dracula's unfamiliar powers. The supernatural creature sways men of science. Dracula's infrequent appearances in the novel also contribute to his religious undertones. Like God, he remains mostly invisible to the living characters. They journal about Dracula, however. He is at once unattainable and an object of obsession. He dictates their lives.

And, finally, Jewelle Gomez's *The Gilda Stories* (1991) is an allegorical tale of a vampiric Christ-figure who generates her own version of Christianity. Unlike Christ, Gilda does not practice a system of unconditional love. She respects life, but she does not leave racists or sexists unpunished. Rather than put the burden of forgiveness on herself, a Black queer woman, she forces the dominating society to issue the apology. This questions the place of sin in Christianity. If white men can get away with racist actions, how is the Christian and/or patriarchal conception of sin legitimate?

Vampires might be demonic, but their mockery of Christianity also reveals their similarity to God. The devil is not an atheist. The vampire evokes Christian symbolism, such as blood drinking and sublime power, and uses it to provide people with concrete eternal life and divinity. The vampire's religious progression also shows the authors' realization that vampires are potentially divine. In these stories, which range from the late eighteenth into the late twentieth centuries, the monster moves from unintentional subversive actor and intentional vicious character to one written to challenge Christianity.

The vampire's evolution from Catholic heretic to god follows a historical progression that reflects the vampire's subversive tendencies. This transition begins with the vampire's problematizing of the dominant religious order. Just as the vampire in Ossenfelder's poem questions the traditional teachings of morality for young women, Gilda from *The Gilda Stories* also frames that question through her subversive acts against racism and homophobia. In every case where a vampire confronts the dominant religious order, she forces people to question their faith and, potentially, convert because she both emulates Christianity's core tenants while being abhorred by Christianity.

The vampire's transition from heretic to god is also a lengthy example of the epiphany experienced by religious humans in vampire tales. Once people see the vampire's supernatural strengths, which society does not address beyond labeling vampires as vicious, they begin to acknowledge that their religious structures do not encompass the vampire. Religion falls short as it cannot account for immortal creatures that target God's supposedly favored creations--humans.

II. THE VAMPIRE AS CATHOLIC HERETIC

The traditional vampire in Victorian literature is a demonic creature that challenges Christian good. Crosses, holy water, and crucifixes harm or repel vampires because vampires have unclean souls that cannot endure the inherent power of religious symbols. Vampires engage with and embrace their heretical natures, which stem from their rejection of and association with Christian symbolism, like their parody of eternal life in material form. This embrace makes them doubly evil. In "Der Vampir," for example, the vampire admonishes and threatens a young woman who follows Christian doctrine. In addition to direct attacks such as this, vampires are more comfortable with sexuality and queerness, which many Christian religions condemn.

Several vampire stories about religious virtue conclude with the vampire's violent death at Christian hands.

A more overlooked aspect of the vampire's scriptural rebellion is the monster's connection to Darwinian evolutionary theory, a major point of interest and controversy in the nineteenth century because it contradicted Christian theories about the origins of life on Earth. Compared to living humans, the vampire is stronger, faster, wiser-- a born predator. She uses her appearance, allure, or, in some literature, mind reading abilities to hunt her prey and escape death. Vampires, which are transformed humans, literalize survival of the fittest. Evolutionary theory such as the kind the vampire embodies, challenges the creation myth about Adam and Eve, two fully-formed humans that God placed on Earth. Vampires are an improvement on God's original creation--literally changed, evolved humans with more capabilities than their living counterparts. Darwinian theory also violates human exceptionalism because, if God does exist and did create vampires, He formed creatures that consume humans, his supposedly chosen species. Either way, the vampire makes it so Christianity either does not exist or does not serve humanity.

Returning to "Der Vampir," Ossenfelder's vampire speaker delivers an unambiguous critique of Christianity. While the second stanza addresses Christine's demurity and the vampire's desire to have sex with her, the first stanza infuses religious subversion into that desire. The vampire narrates

> My dear young maiden clingeth
>
> Unbending. fast and firm
>
> To all the long-held teaching
>
> Of a mother ever true;

As in vampires unmortal

Folk on the Theyse's portal

Heyduck-like do believe.

But my Christine thou dost dally,

And wilt my loving parry

Till I myself avenging

To a vampire's health a-drinking

Him toast in pale tockay (lines 1-12)

Like a Christian does with their faith in God, the girl steadfastly maintains her mother's teachings without further analysis. When the vampire questions the girl's blind acceptance of her mother's beliefs, he criticizes religion's tendency to assert what it cannot prove--a criticism that applies to patriarchy as well since that social structure uses false conceptions of truth for power. The girl's name, Christine, also indicates her imposed dedication to her faith. Her mother labeled her daughter as Christian, defining her through religion and encouraging her daughter to fulfill her namesake. A name, like certain kinds of feminine beauty or male power, is an empty symbol in which people assign significance. The name Christine carries Christian associations and, so, the girl carries out those expectations because her parents wish this for her. Christine does not realize that a name is not fate and, consequently, that she can rebel against those assumptions.

Furthermore, the vampire's comparison to "vampires unmortal" and "heyduck-like"(militaristic) believers connects Christianity's promise of eternal life with the vampire's immortality. This connection also makes both appear equally (un)believable as many people did not believe in vampires and Christians demeaned vampires as demons or folklore. This argument's meta-framework allows the vampire to weaponize its own (non)existence against

Christianity while switching the expectation--the vampire exists and makes his argument but God remains intangible. The heyduck-like believers seem silly in their dogged dedication to something that is not apparent, which makes them easier to exploit and to use in exploiting others. This almost scientific approach to religion (valuing evidence over faith) challenges Christian doctrine along with social authority.

Patriarchy warps religion for its own means and utilizes God as a threat to maintain social order. Questioning God threatens absolute authority because it challenges patriarchy's religious foundations and empowers the individual to critique and improve God/society. If an authority does not have a right to rule, then it is vulnerable to people disbelieving it. Logical fallacies riddle patriarchy, simultaneously building it up and generating rotting holes in its foundations.

Importantly, Ossenfelder's poem predates the Victorian era but it is also one of the first pieces of European vampire literature. Rather than a direct connection to this project, Ossenfelder serves as a blueprint for the Victorian vampires that follow. These Victorian vampire stories build upon the vampire's hatred of rules and authority, targeting specific Christian beliefs rather than the whole of Christianity.

Carmilla, written by Le Fanu exemplifies the Victorian transition from anti-Christian vampire to an anti-Protestant one. The protagonist Laura questions the vampire Carmilla's religious beliefs throughout the text, which relates to Carmilla's Oriental characterization. Based on Laura's proud English heritage, she probably follows Anglicanism. Carmilla's exotic nature suggests she is Catholic or, perhaps, not Christian at all. Her exoticism relates to the novel's Orientalist themes, as Catholicism and superstition were often linked to the "primitive" East--something Jonathan expresses in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. During a peasant girl's funeral procession, a result of *Carmilla*'s appetite, Carmilla references her non-Protestant beliefs when

she yells at Laura, "'Besides, how can you tell that your religion and mine are the same; your forms wound me, and I hate funerals. What a fuss! Why you must die--everyone must die; and all are happier when they do. Come home'" (Le Fanu 58). Carmilla's outburst might appear heretical but it proves her unique relationship to Catholicism. While both Protestantism and Catholicism believe in an afterlife, Carmilla makes it clear that she disagrees with Laura's religion. Her "forms" wound Carmilla because they change or disrespect Catholic tradition and threaten vampires, traditionally Catholic creatures. But, like a good Christian, Carmilla finds beauty in death--a homecoming to God that results in eternal bliss.

However, the reader knows Carmilla's true nature as an immortal demon. They know that she, not God, caused the girl's death, giving the Catholic reading a new interpretation. Carmilla sees death as happy because death gives her literal immortality. Plus, Carmilla *is* dead and knows that it does not always mark the end of a person's life but, in some cases, a new beginning. The vampire and Christianity share in their promises of eternal life. Carmilla illustrates her control over life and death, marking her as a God-figure, and reveals the parallels between holy tradition and demonic practice. She is a natural heretic.

Besides the funeral procession mishap, Laura also notes that had Carmilla not mentioned her baptism, she would have assumed she was not Christian (Le Fanu 85). Ironically, Carmilla's baptism is inconsequential--a relic of her human past that her vampirism makes obsolete. Laura also directly associates Carmilla's un-Christian tendencies with race and location. She states, "Religion was a subject on which I had never heard her speak a word. If I had known the world better, this particular neglect or antipathy would not have so much surprised me" (Le Fanu 85). In contrast with her staunch English roots, Laura admits her ignorance of the world and the possibility of alternative modes of life. The story begins with Laura's descriptions of a miniature

British empire on her family's schloss. As she gets to know Carmilla, however, her mindset adapts, and questions, Christianity's authority. Carmilla's presence makes Laura realize that people live differently from her and, potentially, that Christianity is not an objective truth or the "right" way to exist.

Laura's shift in perspective stems from Carmilla's supernatural capabilities. Women at this time, especially in a patriarchal religion, had to be silent and obedient. The religious structures they followed related to their overall experience in society. The connections between the Victorian social dichotomies and Christianity are obvious. Good housewives were angels who tended to the home for their working husbands. Men could rise from priesthood to popedom, but women remained nuns--sometimes cloistered in an abbey without outside contact. If Laura spoke against religious or gender injustice, her father would ostracize or punish her. Carmilla's vampirism changes her objectified position as a woman. She can immaterialize to sneak under door frames and turn into animals to kill people without getting caught. Carmilla's powers allow her to speak up and avoid retribution. Her heresy is heard and lasting.

Carmilla, then, is an improvement of the female condition because she takes actions against a harmful entity with little fear of punishment or death. Because she looks beyond the scope of human religion and literally traverses its limits through her immortality with no concern for the afterlife, Carmilla represents evolution. Compared to the weak, subjugated living woman, Carmilla is invincible. One must take specific, deliberate steps to kill her while she can use her natural tools, such as fangs and shape shifting, to drain their blood. This Darwinian examination of the vampire translates their subversive abilities to the social level.

Stephen Karschay writes about evolution in *Degeneration, Normativity, and the Gothic at the Fin de Siecle* (2015), "Changing environmental conditions...force the members of a species

to develop specialized characteristics, which are in turn transmitted to the species' offspring for survival...Thus they were gradual deviations from the original, more primitive norm, which they had left behind in the never ending struggle for life" (Karschay 33). In a world that tells women to quiet down, constantly adhere to random rules, and suffer virtual death in the home's isolation, the vampire's strengths are a mode of survival. They allow women to navigate their societies with protection from leering eyes and dangerous regulations. On a more general level, vampires have adapted the concept of survival from that of humanity. Their immortality makes their "struggle for life" virtually nonexistent, especially considering their prey's comparative weakness. This argument also allows vampires to thwart the dominant society's scientific manipulation. Whereas "scientists" often weaponized Darwin against oppressed people to "prove" inferiority, the vampire's supernatural strength proves weakness across humanity--no human is a match for the vampire.

The theory of evolution challenges fundamentalist biblical beliefs. Karschay also notes that, "Darwin's theory did away with the creatonist's belief in a teleology of divinely-guided progress. In its stead, the evolution of species by means of natural selection seemed to operate randomly-- with dispassionate chance as its unsteering driving force" (32). Christianity posits that humans are the center of the universe because God made them in his image and sacrificed his only son for eternal life in heaven. The Bible also establishes that everything exists as it was in the beginning because God's creation is perfect and, therefore, does not require improvements. Carmilla and the other vampires exemplify Darwin's theory of evolution and challenge Christian anthropocentrism.

Carmilla offers an accelerated version of Darwin's theory. Carmilla expedites human evolution when she commits suicide, which results in her vampire identity. Through this act, she

becomes stronger than her living counterparts and challenges Christian assumptions about the origins of humanity and sin. She takes control of her own evolution by defying God. As an evolved figure, she proves God's human prototypes flawed. As a demon and suicide victim, Carmilla demonstrates the power in sin. Rather than eternal damnation, suicide provides Carmilla with immortal life through forbidden means. God is strong but his eternal life is not literal like the one Carmilla participates in. God can only offer a final, incorporeal afterlife while the devil (or sin, more broadly) provides continued physical life with supernatural abilities. Carmilla's sinful resurrection mocks Christ and allows her a better means of subversion. She no longer relies on the Christian faith for salvation and, as a result, the patriarchy cannot control her with "Christianity." She is a dangerous liability that foreshadows the ineffectual priests and other religious symbols in mid twentieth century vampire literature.

Like Ossenfelder's vampire, Carmilla's lack of faith seems apparent. However, her existence also affirms Christianity because she dies when faced with Catholic and superstitious symbols. As her male hunters assert, Carmilla becomes a vampire because she committed suicide. A priest helps kill the Carmilla using methods from "ancient practice." Carmilla's existence is rooted in tradition and superstition, which follows the Protestant view of Catholicism and the Orient. In one sense, Protestantism is an evolution of Catholicism, a result of religious revolutionaries unhappy with Catholicism's reliance on religious rites, relics, and other symbolic practices. Laura's British Protestant upbringing associates Catholicism with primitive sensuality. Carmilla represents the vampire legends found throughout "Upper and Lower Styria, in Moravia, Silesia, in Turkish Serbia, in Poland, even in Russia" (Le Fanu 174). The "superstition" (Le Fanu 174) of the vampire is only mended once Laura and her family give into these Catholic folklore beliefs as a way to kill the vampire and save Laura's life. The vampire forces the colonizer to

partake in the religious practices of the colonized. British Protestant lives depend on "superstitious" beliefs, proving Catholicism's potency and British exceptionalism's vulnerability.

Dracula continues the theme of failed British Protestantism. The previous chapter of this thesis explores the link between religion and race in *Dracula.* In summary: Jonathan scoffs at warnings about visiting Dracula before he arrives at the vampire's castle. When a woman offers her rosary for protection, Jonathan comments, "As an English Churchman, I have been taught to regard such things as in some measure idolatrous" (Stoker 5). Catholicism is primitive in Jonathan's British Protestant eyes. But Jonathan soon realizes that this staunch attitude toward Eastern religions could mark his demise.

Dracula invades England and forces the Protestants and (Protestant) scientists to engage with Catholic superstition. Dr. Van Helsing, the one who convinces the group that vampires exist, is the best example of this transformation. Despite his medical training, Van Helsing quickly converts to save England from a vampire pandemic. He notices Lucy's vampirism before anyone else and, as a safety measure before she enters the grave, "He came back with a handful of wild garlic... and placed the flowers amongst the others on and around the bed. Then he took from his neck, inside his collar, a little gold crucifix, and placed it over the mouth" (Stoker 153). Even while attempting to thwart the vampire, Van Helsing's actions prove the vampire's influence over him. While science seems characteristic of the new and modern Western world that the Orientalist binary evokes, the doctor's engagement with superstition proves science's susceptibility and weakness against superstition. Western powers enter a double bind: if they do not believe in the power of tools like garlic against the vampire, then they stubbornly deny people protection and exhibit the falsehood of scientific practice.If they do believe in them, they also prove science's illegitimacy. Van Helsing's superstitious beliefs subvert England's

Protestant/ patriarchal religious baseline because they challenge the legitimacy of more secular humani religion and science in favor or Eastern tradition and religious practices. Of course, when the vampire's attackers do take up superstitious beliefs, the vampire dies. The vampire's existence rests in a contradiction regarding Catholicism. While garlic and crucifixes repel the vampire, this repulsion also proves those symbols' inherent efficacy against a formidable foe.

III. PROTESTANT-ATHEIST VAMPIRES ATTACK

So far, this chapter has examined the inherently Catholic/ superstitious nature of the vampire myth, but what happens when vampires no longer follow religion? Or, when their beliefs no longer adhere to Catholicism and/or folklore tradition? While these vampires might be atheists, they also adopt a pseudo-Protestant belief system that both supports and complicates their subversion. Worley explains, "The reformers believed that Christ was objectively and effectually present in the bread and wine only when those elements were received by faith" (82). This assertion applies to Protestant belief in general--rather than have inherent power, religious objects are only as potent as the faith of those who believe in them but, in extreme cases, this can mean that religious relics and figures are devoid of all power.

If vampires follow Protestant theology then the superstitious/Catholic objects associated with their demise become obsolete since they either rely on the enemy's faith or, in some cases, are just empty symbols. And, unlike the fear of crucifixes or garlic, this Protestant belief system does not require a religious affiliation so anyone, atheist or not, can maintain this mode of thought. Perhaps no belief system works on vampires if they choose not to believe in one. Atheism gives vampires the upper hand against humanity: no clear method exists to destroy them.

The implication of Protestant-atheist vampires is multifaceted. Protestantism challenges many of the "sensual," "superstitious" notions associated with Catholic symbolism. Protestantism was a logical version of Christianity. And while Catholicism has many links to patriarchy (the priesthood, the pope, etc.) and misogyny, its affiliation with Eastern folklore defies clinical Western belief systems. So, for a vampire to challenge Catholic beliefs, the vampire must endorse the "Western" point of view--at least based on the genre's equivalency of Catholicism and Orientalism.

While this could reduce their subversive potential in both the racial and religious categories, the vampire's Protestantism also doubles back on patriarchal concepts of Western domination. Because, if the author intends the vampire to be evil, then they condemn Protestantism/ the West as well. And, with the vampire's reformed religious views regarding faith, they might be impossible to kill because they no longer fear garlic and crosses. Since vampires who endorse Protestant theory are not necessarily religious, the authors threaten Victorian patriarchy's religious basis. The vampire's Protestant practices, as defined by Worley, use Western religious order to threaten Western society, proving patriarchal constructs empty as any cross.

The twentieth century novella *I Am Legend* centers on social demise, which its Protestant, scientific themes only bolster. Robert Neville, the protagonist and earth's only surviving human, uses scientific inquiry to break down the vampires' mysticism. The story begins with direct references to *Dracula*, which condemn Stoker's novel for making the vampire seem mythical rather than a realistic possibility. Neville laments, "Begone Van Helsing and Mina and Jonathan and the blood-eyed Count and all! All figments, all driveling extrapolations on a somber theme" (Matheson 18). Neville generates a rift between himself and the

superstitious vampires of the past. The religious emblems that destroy Dracula and his ilk have no bearing on the real world as the laws of physics and biology do not confine fiction like they do reality. So, when vampires strike the "real" world (Neville's world), no one is prepared. As Neville puts it, "The legend had swallowed up science and everything" (Matheson 17).

Unlike Dracula and Carmilla, *I am Legend* 's vampires are scientific--the result of a germ rather than demonism. Neville spends most of his time proving this theory, often referring to himself or his project with words like "logic," "foolish," "dumb," "brainless," "fruitless," etc. Neville's research and experiments result in compelling evidence against religion and superstition. In the beginning, Neville asserts that myths about the vampire's disappearance in mirrors and their ability to shapeshift are false, "A superstition that logic plus observation had disposed of" (Matheson 16). The novel takes a folklore tradition and enmeshes it with science. It appropriates myth.

The vampire's other characteristics, such as garlic repulsion, blood drinking, and aversion to sunlight, remain because they have the potential for scientific support. Neville ventures to the library, collecting information about biology. He also gathers blood samples and discovers the vampire pandemic's cause under a microscope. Neville follows his revelation with this thought, "All the centuries of fearful superstition had been felled in the moment he had seen the germ" (Matheson 75). Neville disproves the vampire's superstitious origins. Rather than religion, the vampire proves science's validity and threatens the patriarchy's religious justifications. If Neville delves further into this discovery, he will find that the patriarchal symbols the vampire challenges are also vacuous.

This discovery results in a Protestant mindset about faith, as Worley defines it, and leads Neville to question the cross' role in vampire lore. He kidnaps a vampire and shoves a cross in

her face, desperate to know why she fears it. She does not answer. He wonders to himself, "What would a Mohammedan vampire do if faced with the cross?" (Matheson 52). Neville's question follows Worley's conclusion about Protestantism. The vampire will only fear what she believes. Neville pursues this logic and decides that the vampire's fear of the cross comes from a psychological breakdown-- a result of their religious fervor in life in response to the vampire pandemic. They fear crosses because they *think* they should. The vampire's faith gives those objects power, but they are not inherently powerful. Neville realizes that other inexplicable phenomena are psychological as well, like the vampire's aversion to running water and mirrors.

Neville's theory about religious objects comes to fruition when he tries to repel a Jewish vampire with a cross. He says, "'When I showed him the cross...He laughed in my face... But when I held the Torah before his eyes, I got the reaction I wanted'" (Matheson 129). Like the various religious objects Neville uses against vampires, society's structures also rely on how much credence we give them. This is why patriarchy contains many rules and fear mongering tactics--it wants to trick people into giving it power because its strength is not inherent, but relies on outside support.

Neville's mission to explode vampiric superstition with science is reminiscent of arguments for Western superiority. In using science to defeat beliefs he deems illegitimate, Neville follows Worley's assertion that "For the best part of two centuries, the literary vampires of Polidori, Le Fanu, Stoker, and others have been Roman Catholics in exotic Roman Catholic countries where religion and superstition supposedly easily mix" (80). Neville engages in the Orientalist and otherwise racist/sexist notion that science makes one superior to other belief systems and social constructions. He also violently appropriates traditional beliefs in the vampire from Orientalized countries. Protestant theology about faith, with its impact on Neville's

scientific discoveries, justifies superiority because it demeans more superstitious forms of Christianity that have room for the supernatural.

Neville's experiments mimic violent conquests and sexual violations characteristic of colonization. While testing the effects on garlic on vampires, Neville sneaks into a home where a vampire woman sleeps on her bed. Already violating her autonomy and security, he "Pull[s] up her skirt and inject[s] the allyl sulphide into her soft, fleshy buttock" (Matheson 49). This language butchers the vampire woman until she becomes a "soft, fleshy buttock" rather than a whole being. Her division and dehumanization aid Neville's experimentation. He can harm her without guilt. While the vampire woman remains helpless in her sunlight coma, Neville invades her home and inserts poison into her body. The living man, rather than the vampire, is the monstrous menace.

The scene's placement in a bedroom has insidious sexual implications as well. Neville thinks to himself, "Why do I always experiment on women?" and "For God's sake...I'm not going to rape the woman!" (Matheson 49-50). Neville's sexist tendency to test on female vampires returns to Victorian gender dichotomy. Science is masculine because it stands for emotionless logic. The vampire's superstitious and religious associations make them emblems of patriarchal femininity--weak, reactionary, and powerless. This also applies to Orientalism as the "masculine" Occident mutilates the "feminine" Orient. However, despite his best efforts, Neville's patriarchal approach to science fails.

As Neville states in the beginning, the legend consumes science. Just as Neville cruelly destroys the vampires in his neighborhood, the new society of vampires, led by former housewife Ruth, come to his house with machine guns. They bring him into their world to publicly execute him in retribution. Additionally, their science experiments are more fruitful than Neville's; they

generate medicine that keeps the vampire germ at bay inside the body. When Neville takes poison pills and thinks, "I am legend," he is correct. He is the one who can no longer exist in the world. A new order arises. Patriarchy falls.

King's *'Salem's Lot* retells *Dracula* with its own twists on vampire religion. As a sort of Van Helsing figure (the character is split up between a teacher and a priest in King's version), Father Callahan wants to return to Catholicism's mystic roots and lead a fight against true evil. His militant desire challenges New Testament notions of peace and harmony, claiming that "Heaven was a dim attraction compared to that of fighting--and perhaps perishing--in the service of the Lord" (King 240). He dislikes the passive actions of handing out leaflets or vocally advocating for a cause. Like the vampire, Callahan finds social niceties pointless performative actions that appease rather than solve anything.

His "boring" world makes him long for a tangible manifestation of evil. The text elaborates, "In fact, he was being forced to the conclusion that there was no EVIL in the world at all but only evil--or perhaps (evil)" (King 240). Father Callahan's religious fervor separates him from Catholic virtues. He desires God's opposite because he thinks that one does not matter without the other. This proves patriarchal binaries illogical. The priest's belief that God needs EVIL to be powerful means that God's existence is dependent on vileness and, therefore, that EVIL also has immense potency. In trying to prove God's power, they uphold the Devil's as well. And, when the vampire Barlow answers Callahan's prayers, he gains the power that the priest assigns to him/ EVIL.

Barlow proves that Callahan's religious defenses are only as strong as his faith. Before Barlow confronts his hunters, Susan, one of the protagonists, notes of another character, "She saw that he was wearing a heavy gold crucifix. There was something so strange and ludicrous

about that ornate five-and-dime corpus lying against his checked flannel shirt that she almost laughed" (King 305). The crucifix's decorative nature indicates its Catholic origins. According to Protestantism, ornateness does not make the cross powerful. However, the fancy cross could indicate reverence or faith in the divine from the person who created it which, within the Protestant framework, provides it the power it needs. Susan's negative commentary about the ludicrous cross that illustrates her Protestant mindset foreshadows the group's difficulty killing Barlow, who takes advantage of their faithlessness.

While many of the vampires in this novel follow tradition--they cannot enter a home uninvited, for example-- religion is an unreliable defense in the Protestant town. At one point, Mark Petrie, a young boy who joins the vampire hunters, repels a vampire at his window with a homemade cross. In another scene, however, when Barlow attacks Callahan and Mark, the cross is ineffective. At first, Callahan's cross glows with holy power and repels the vampire. But then Barlow asks Callahan to throw the cross aside and "Your faith against my own" (King 538). Callahan falters, knowing that inaction proves a lack of faith. Barlow knows this, too, and both watch as the cross' "Preternatural, dazzling brilliance" (King 539) becomes "A piece of plaster his mother had bought at a souvenir shop" (King 540). Barlow mocks the Catholic faith, proving that the cross' power relies not on an omniscient being but on the individual.

Barlow's Protestantism disempowers the holy object until it is an empty symbol. His logic mirrors Worley's when the vampire states, "The cross... the bread and wine… the confessional... only symbols. Without faith, the cross is only wood, the bread baked wheat, the wine sour grapes. If you had cast the cross away, you should have beaten me another night... The boy makes 10 of you, false priest" (King 541). The vampire is still at the mercy of the people who pursue him, but Callahan and Susan have shown that they share in the vampire's

Protestantism and, therefore, are weak to his powers. The vampire makes their true faith, or lack thereof, evident.

Barlow parodies Catholicism's impotency further when he forces Callahan to drink his blood--a vampiric Eucharist (King 542). Unlike the useless tchotchke cross, Barlow's Eucharist transforms Callahan. With this consumption, Callahan can no longer enter churches or other consecrated ground. Barlow takes advantage of Callahan's Catholic tendencies, knowing that the priest *believes* the vampire's blood will corrupt him. Protestant Barlow uses the Catholic faith against a Catholic. Simultaneously, this action is a result of Callahan's lack of faith and "conversion." Barlow corrupts Callahan because Callahan did not have faith in the cross.

As a Catholic priest, Callahan views the Eucharist as transformative and, therefore, places value in Barlow's parody of it. Simultaneously, Callahan recognizes that the vampire is more powerful than Catholicism. Callahan has begun to understand Barlow's Protestant mindset. Worley puts it this way: "Pious Catholicism, in which readers may not have believed but upon which they relied for their safety, had given way to a practical, Protestant work ethic" (Worley 80). Catholicism does not protect Callahan from Barlow, so he recognizes the vampire's power. Callahan believes Barlow's blood has corrupted him in a contradictory manner: Callahan upholds his Catholic mindset (he believes he is ruined and, therefore, cannot walk into a Catholic church) while admitting Protestantism's legitimacy (He believes Barlow corrupts him because Barlow destroyed his faith in a Catholic God). Callahan's contradictory beliefs subvert binary and, therefore, ironize his longing for GOOD and EVIL. With his Christian faith problematized and confused, the only objective aspect of Callahan's life is the vampire.

Interview with the Vampire follows *'Salem's Lot* with extreme Protestantism that negates God's existence. The protagonist Louis' faith suffers when he becomes a vampire. He questions

his role in the universe, wonders if God exists, and why he permits vampires to as well. Louis longs for proof of the divine, stating, “It struck me suddenly what consolation it would be to know Satan, to look upon his face, no matter how terrible that countenance was, to know that I belong to him totally, and thus put to rest forever the torment of this ignorance” (Rice 163). Although the desire for Satan seems like heresy, it displays a faithful longing for God’s justified wrath and protection. As Callahan models, the patriarchal binary interpretation of Christianity requires the existence of good and evil. At the same time, Louis’ need for proof *is* heretical. Although Protestants believe in power through faith, they do not question God’s (or Satan’s) existence. Louis’ vampirism causes him this realization. Rather than see his monstrosity as a test of faith, he endorses it as evidence against the divine. Like Neville from *I am Legend*, Louis demands hard evidence over dedicated faith--a characteristic he can use against patriarchy as well since it exists despite its illogical foundations. Louis’ ability to enter holy spaces, handle crosses, and touch holy water prove his doubt in the divine. In addition, as with *I am Legend*, only sunlight and fire kill vampires.

Louis exemplifies the Church’s futility by entering one and attending confession. As he walks through the doors, he thinks, “I had no fear. If anything, perhaps, I longed for something to happen, for the stones to tremble” (Rice 142). Louis’ desire challenges Worley’s theory of Protestant vampires, to an extent. The church has no power source, individual or not, against the vampire--even when the vampire wishes that it did. Louis realizes this as well, noting, “God did not live in this church; these statues gave an image of nothingness” (144). Like the ornate cross in *‘Salem’s Lot*, the statues are decorative symbols of human faith. Unlike the cross, that faith does not make them holy emblems nor infuse them with God’s power. Whether or not someone believes in them, the symbols of faith are nothing but empty reminders of humanity’s futility.

Whereas Protestantism supports individual human power, Louis' discovery proves that no amount of faith can bring about God. It is radical individualism to the extreme, a result of the Protestant focus on individual faith, that obliterates Christianity.

Louis substantiates religion's weakness when he drinks from a priest. He tells the priest of his vampirism in confession, seeking some sort of spiritual relief or, perhaps, testing his theory of God's nonexistence. Afterward, Louis pursues the priest and the holy man yells, "'Let me go! Devil!'...He was cursing me, calling on God at the altar" (Rice 147). Rather than hesitate or experience some divine repulsion, Louis "Grabbed him on the very steps of the Communion rail and pulled him down to face [him] there and sank [his] teeth into his neck" (Rice 147). Louis makes the priest face the emptiness of his faith--no calls to God or prayers can save him from the tangible vampire. Louis, like Barlow, also mocks the sanctity of the Eucharist, taking his communion of actual blood on the steps of the altar. Louis, not the priest, gains true eternal life.

As Worley puts it, "The Blood of Christ gives no immortal life because it is lifeless, but the blood of Christ's priest grants an immortality that depends neither on faith nor repentance, but only upon the immediate blood lusting nature of the vampire itself" (Worley 84). The empty promises of the Catholic faith, which result in the priest's death, make way for the potential of a new God. Louis, in effect, performs the role of the follower taking the Eucharist, but his religious motivations differ from the priest and other Catholics. Louis generates the potential for a new religion, thus challenging Christian-based patriarchy.

IV. THE VAMPIRE AS GOD

There is a key characterization in the vampire's mockery and endorsement of Christianity. In both contexts, the vampire represents evil. At the same time, this project argues that viciousness in patriarchy is not a legitimate designation, but an attempt at silencing dissent.

The vampire is evil because she threatens the established order by complicating binary definitions. The vampire's vicious identity proves her God-like potential. McDonald explains, "While expressing the physical, non-transcendent, and isolated state of the individual human being, as a numinous figure, the vampire also represents the transcendent agent through which individuals and societies may confront questions about their innate goodness or evilness and the condition of their belief in the divine and in the possibility of the afterlife" (McDonald 2). The vampire's holiness, especially in a Protestant context, not only stems from her supernatural capabilities, but her exposure of weak social ideals. Just as patriarchy uses God to justify its actions, the vampire rationalizes a new society.

Like God, vampires make humans recognize their weakness through mortality. Humans, like Callahan, offer vampires divine strength. In other cases, many protagonists, like Jonathan Harker or Laura, do not believe in vampires until it's too late. The vampire's existence forces the characters to confront their new realities and adjust their values accordingly. This means endorsing an alternative belief system that accepts the vampire's existence. Protestant Jonathan uses Catholic symbols to repel Dracula and Father Callahan literally partakes in Barlow's Protestant "religion" through blood consumption. As both distinct from and at odds with Christianity, which society makes patriarchal, the vampire becomes both a formidable opponent to patriarchal conceptions of God and a god herself.

The vampire's deification shows in *Dracula*, an emblem of classic vampire literature. Dracula possesses several otherworldly qualities besides blood drinking and immortality. The Count can change forms, turning into a bat or materializing into dust particles. He scales walls like a lizard, communicates with wolves, and corrupts people with his blood. His strength follows McDonald's assertion; the characters question their reality through him, becoming

Catholics in as much as it helps defeat him. He is, to borrow from McDonald, the "Negative numinous." He is the opposite of the holy God since both beings originate from a state of profanity based on human fear. The vampire is God's demonic counterpart. McDonald elaborates, "The profane is the quality an earthly being feels when confronted with the power of the sacred, whether that power is objectified as a heavenly being or as a negatively numinous lower form of the divine such as a ghost or a demon" (McDonald 24). McDonald then asserts that the vampire, because of her spiritual qualities, also contains divinity. The fear one feels for a vampire is similar to a fear of God--both stem from a place of weakness and mediocrity.

People interpret one as evil and the other as good. This distinction, as is true for binary in general, is not well founded. God, like the vampire, has committed great destruction on humanity--floods, fires, an angel of death, to name a few examples. And rather than do this for survival, God does this to "cleanse" humanity based solely on his interpretation of morality. These actions assert humanity's disposability. The patriarchy considers autonomous beauty, sexual expression, queerness, femininity, and non-white people evil because they threaten its authority. Patriarchal morality is about preservation, not goodness. The patriarchy treats the Biblical God as it does most men--it excuses and upholds violence to promote authority. Vampires, on the other hand, drink from people indiscriminately. Their killing isn't an indicator of higher authority or superiority. The vampire is the feminine figure. Her actions are inexcusable because they poke holes in Christian patriarchal structure.

Dracula's protagonists have sublime fear of the vampire. Although Dracula only appears a few times throughout the novel, the characters' journal entries, physical manifestations of their minds, mention him constantly. They obsess over his power and how to defeat him. In his journal, Dr. Van Helsing refers to Lucy's transformation as "The Vampire's baptism of blood,"

something Dr. Seward, a psychiatrist turned vampire hunter, believes indicates that "There is a terrible difficulty—an unknown danger—in the work before us" (Stoker 301). The original text capitalizes "Vampire," an indicator of reverence used for God. Van Helsing's comment suggests his understanding of the vampire as a god. Baptism signifies freedom from sin and rebirth. In the context of negative numinous, then, vampire baptism represents a rebirth into sin (as patriarchy defines it). Lucy belongs to a new congregation. And, because sin is subjective, this is not necessarily a condemnation of Lucy. Dr. Seward echoes the vampire's sublime divinity/ profanity in his foreboding comment about unknowability. As with God, humanity cannot fathom the vampire. Dracula's power comes from *super*natural capabilities. He is, by definition, indiscernible, even to two doctors. Dracula's sublimity also comes from his subversive qualities. Van Helsing and Seward do not understand him because his form challenges socially ingrained norms that Van Helsing and Seward abide by because they are western men of science. The doctors can only defeat him once they engage with his world--a place of garlic, crucifixes and immortality.

Even though Dracula is not objectively evil, he still sucks people's blood without remorse. The second Gilda of *The Gilda Stories* better exemplifies the Christian God from the New Testament and questions the definition of the negative numinous and viciousness. Gilda is a Christ-figure. Both Gilda and Christ struggle at the hands of a dominant oppressor. Her transformation comes after a life of suffering in slavery. Jesus comes to the cross after enduring torture at the hands of the Roman empire.

Second, a parental figure brings Gilda into her new life just as God made his only son humanity's savior. The first Gilda is a shepherd for female prostitutes who provides them with home and protection. Before she leaves, she tells the second Gilda about her own power to

positively change the world. The latter Gilda carries out the first's revolutionary goodness on earth. Before the first Gilda vampirizes the second, she tells her, “I sensed in you a spirit and understanding of the world; that you were the voice lacking among us” (Gomez 43). According to her parental, nurturing figure, Gilda has a prophetic duty to the world--similar to Jesus’ role in bringing salvation.

When the first Gilda tells the latter about her knowledge of the world, she authoritatively generalizes humanity. She asks the cynical second Gilda about people, “Put aside the faces of those who’ve... hurt you. What of the people you’ve loved? Those you could love tomorrow?” (Gomez 44). While the first Gilda stays consistent as a God figure, the second Gilda moves away from Christian doctrine. Rather than blind universal love, she exercises selective love. This allows her to scrutinize her unjust reality. She refuses to forgive sins, like slavery and attempted rape, that dehumanize her. Gilda is a justified version of the Old Testament God, showing her wrath in the face of injustice. Vampirism enables the second Gilda’s theology because it offers her autonomy through strength--no racist misogynist can subdue her.

Gilda’s alternative approach to Christian love emphasizes her negative numinous identity because it challenges core Christian belief systems and upholds her sublimity. The second Gilda’s selective love is justified. The obligation for compassion should not fall on the harmed, but on those who harm as they are the ones who must mend their ways. As Fanon explains, white supremacist patriarchy only understands violence. Forgiveness from the oppressed will only matter once violence is not the central means of communication. The desire for universal love is not realistic. It will not protect people who need it. It is a result of privilege and the desire to maintain that privilege.

Once the second Gilda is a vampire, she carries out her Christ-like existence. She often connects with the downtrodden or socially marginalized. Aurelia, her companion from Rosebud, is a widow who finds freedom in her new status. In South End, Gilda rescues a young girl named Toya from an evil pimp/ fellow vampire. In New York, she builds a friendship with her trans neighbor. At the novel's conclusion, she rescues a dying woman. Gilda reminds the patriarchal reader that Jesus, too, surrounded himself with outcasts. Condemning Gilda for embracing subversion doubles as heresy. And, like Jesus, Gilda is marginalized, but through her gender, race and sexuality. In the Roman empire, Judaism and Catholicism were subversive. Gilda, like Dracula and Carmilla, returns to the root of Christian tradition--subversion. Religious absolutism about good and evil falters.

Gilda offers her "apostles" consensual, eternal life. Gilda's form of apostleship differs from the Catholic Church's, which keeps women from the priesthood and does not regard Mary Magdalene one of the 12 disciples, despite her following Jesus before and after his resurrection (John 20:11-18). Gilda makes informed decisions about who she does and does not transform and, notably, only changes one man. In Aurelia's case, for example, Gilda keeps her human because she knows Aurelia will be happier that way. Julius, a man Gilda befriends in New York, becomes a perfect candidate to join Gilda in immortality. The two love each other deeply (Julius romantically and Gilda platonically) and nothing holds Julius to his home or time. Before she changes him, she says, "I need an ally, a brother. If you want it, life can be yours, and we will be sister and brother throughout time. Our love will outlast the years...these old buildings. What you must sacrifice may be too much" (Gomez 191). Gilda's message to Julius echoes Christ's promise of eternal love in heaven through resurrection. Gilda offers a similar promise, with physical proof of eternal life. And, her message is more direct. Jesus is God incarnate so people

cannot be just like him. It would be sacrilegious for humanity to also be divine in monotheism. Julius, in contrast, becomes exactly what Gilda is--a vampire. Therefore, he accesses sublimity. This, too, could be interpreted as mocking the Christian God as well as challenging him through polytheism. Rather than hoard her power, Gilda spreads it to others through compassion and love.

Plus, her polytheistic religion challenges colonialism. Many Western powers invaded countries with polytheistic beliefs--including South and North America, India, and Haiti. And, returning to the gendered divisions of the West and East, these polytheistic religions also lean toward a feminine or even non binary designation. In the Western imagination, God is a dominating force that justifies violent destruction as evident in manifest destiny or slavery. The patriarchal people who follow God use him for their own means, not the other way around. Polytheism, if we function with the patriarchal binary, is the opposite and, therefore, the true source of compassion and love. The divine feminine beats patriarchy within its system. Through binary, it collapses binary.

V. CONCLUSION

The vampire's relationship to Christiantity is convoluted, especially due to Christianity's various distinctions and factions. However, no matter the context, vampires subvert dominant power structures even when their authors intend the vampires to succumb. While patriarchy characterizes the Christian God as an all powerful being that people must follow, it also objectifies that being for its own purposes. The appropriation of Christian faith for an unjust agenda already violates the Lord's omniscience because it reveals human control over religion. The key action one can take to break away from patriarchal structures is to realize this contradiction. Patriarchal religious institutions that privilege "fathers" and "brothers" do not

support the real God, but a false conception of him that encourages obedience. To break away from these institutions, then, is to seek freedom.

The vampire does just that, depending on the version of Christianity within her novel. In the cases of *Carmilla* or *Dracula*, the vampire challenges Protestantism because it Orientalizes Catholicism. The humans' beliefs are racist and Western centric. The vampires' Catholicism is not a religious decision but a part of their being. As vampires force western oppressors to engage with folklore and myth (just as the oppressors force others to conform to their belief systems), they convert oppressors and reveal the dangers of false superiority. This also manifests in Protestant/ atheist vampires who destroy the dominant belief system with itself--proving that the dominant system supports atheism and is, therefore, illogical.

The vampire's strength, the various elements that make her vicious, make her a god. Her subversion not only negates patriarchy, it provides an alternative. And, unlike Christianity, authors cannot manipulate the vampire for their own purposes, no matter how hard they try. The more evil she becomes, the stronger her subversive capabilities grow. Simultaneously, as Gilda demonstrates, vampires provide alternative moral codes that question the submissive kindness oppressors place on the oppressed. The vampire's religion is not one of horror but inquiry. It reveals patriarchy's empty symbolism and dangerous fallacies, inviting its followers to partake in a more communal, equivalent belief system.

CONCLUSION

The first section of this thesis includes Nina Auerbach's telling quote from *Woman and the Demon* (1982): "The social restrictions that crippled women's lives, the physical weaknesses wished on them, were fearful attempts to exorcise mysterious strength" (8). The vampire's various subversive characteristics, themes of gender, race, religion, and sexuality, all feed

Auerbach's claim as well as my own: the vampire, no matter the author's intention, subverts oppressive Victorian power structures through her "vicious" attributes. Patriarchy's designation of the vampire as vicious stems from the need to pre-empt people from understanding the vampire's subversion as beneficial. From the early nineteenth through the twenty-first centuries, the vampire uses patriarchy's illogical structure to reveal the social system's illegitimacy.

The vicious woman, or an iteration of her, is evident in every text in this project. The evil woman is half of the Victorian binary that defines women as strictly good or evil, condemning their autonomy and, thereby limiting their identities. Western patriarchy constructs women as definable objects to make them easier to control within a knowledge system that denies them the subversive power they irrefutably contain within that system. The patriarchal definitions of virtue, which necessitate viciousness through their binary existence, have evolved since the Victorian era, a result of cultural changes linked to the passage of time. However, these adapted designations maintain their Victorian binary origins.

Society polices how women should be beautiful. Victorianism made quiet, sickly women the ideal because they could not challenge patriarchy physically or vocally. The Victorian patriarchy also controlled women's sexual drives and preferences, keeping them within the house and relegated to their husbands and families, the cores of patriarchal society. Society still controls beauty, deeming certain body types, skin colors, and hairstyles as preferable to others. It still demonizes women for speaking up and uses sex as a form of coercion. People are still anti-Black, using the police force as their personal security. And, homophobia remains in social and Christian institutions. Importantly, these adapted Victorian standards relate to the binary that supports Victorian patriarchy--men versus women, masculine versus feminine, and virtuous versus vicious women.

The vampire emphasizes this simultaneous progression and stagnation (another contradiction) because, as her stories reflect the gender norms of their specific eras, she remains the same. Her undeath, sexual allure, reclamation of femininity and relationship to the demonic reflect the Victorian stereotypes that shaped early vampire literature-- namely, the Victorian corpse fetish, condemnation of female sexual autonomy, demeaning of femininity and the angel in the house trope. The vampire's unchanging, immortal presence in time's flux both stands for and undercuts Victorian patriarchy. Because, as she embodies Victorian standards, the vampire dispels the myth of patriarchal social control, which relies on deceit. Yes, she is vicious, but this identity grants her autonomy. It saves her from the consuming powers of the home, destroys the imbalance between man and wife, and shows that motherhood is not an obligatory service women must pursue for some patriotic ideal. While patriarchy villainizes women who rebel, the vampire uplifts people who engage in subversive action. The vampire is vicious to patriarchy because she is a tangible threat.

The vampire's menace is not only a result of her supernatural strength, however. It does not take much to topple patriarchy since it relies on an oversimplified binary that cannot survive actual reality's nuance. Instead, the vampire's strength grants her leverage against patriarchy because she poses a more immediate threat. The patriarchy's failure as an institution and/or structure unites the various arguments in this thesis. In each chapter, patriarchy's inability to fully prove its power is clear in the vampire's ironic actions or direct attacks. Consider the Greek vampire who ironizes male promiscuity through her beautiful appearance in Anne Crawford's "The Mystery of the Campagna" (1891). As the men hesitate on her heaving breasts and russet cheeks, they forget about their missing friend, proving themselves weakened by their own aberrant sexualities. In Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976), the protagonist Louis

disproves the power of religious symbols and rites as he drinks from a priest on the altar--a deadly Eucharist.

Victorian authors exemplify patriarchal hypocrisy in writing the vampire which, no matter their intentions, undercuts patriarchy. The vampire's historical identity as a character that challenges patriarchy to make patriarchy appear better in comparison poses her for subversive destruction. First, consider the vampire's general makeup. Her ruby red lips, corpse-like appearance, piercing fangs, and mesmerizing eyes play into patriarchal stereotypes about aberrant beauty and sexuality. Her enticing appearance makes men weak and grants her masculinizing and maternal power through piercing and blood drinking. For male vampires, these features grant them a feminine appeal that violates the toxic masculinity that asserts men are better than women.

And, whether or not people project their desire onto the vampire's appearance, the creature's fangs still provide a defense against the humans who wish to destroy her. Pointed teeth are the vampire's weapons while people rely on outside ammunition to destroy the creature. One is clearly predator and the other prey.

Consider, once again, Jonathan Harker's encounter with the three vampire women who occupy Dracula's castle in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). While he knows they are dangerous, Jonathan visualizes the vampires through his male gaze, a privilege (and detriment) society affords him. He decides that their red lips indicate sexual desire. And, because he is a privileged man, figures that their sexuality serves him ("I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips" (Stoker 35)). The vampire women represent viciousness, but they are filtered through a British man's eyes, already complicating their portrayal because Jonathan is an unreliable narrator with stakes in western patriarchy. If we understand Jonathan's

relationship to patriarchy, the vampire women's sexuality is also a result of Jonathan's desire projected onto them. The vampires literally see Jonathan as a piece of meat, ironizing the objectifying stereotype he employs against them.

Based on *Dracula*'s British protagonists and reliance on binary, the vampire women are antagonists. To uphold their evil characterization, the vampire women must pose a formidable threat to Jonathan. Femininity does not weaken the vampires. Additionally, Jonathan's sexual desire violates his relationship to fiancee Mina Harker, threatening the patriarchal institution of marriage and family. While patriarchy defines masculinity as logical and unemotional, Jonathan's desire proves that he is sexually aberrant, not the vampire women. Because men have autonomy and dominance in patriarchy, their promiscuity is expected--more evidence of patriarchy's contradictory rules. Essentially, if Jonathan places his sexual desire onto the vampires, then he violates patriarchal conceptions of masculine logic. If the vampires influence him in some way, then he is weak in comparison. His weakness reveals that women are not inherently inept or emotional. Patriarchy portrays women as weak because society fears female "mysterious strength." And, in both cases, patriarchy violates itself, allowing men to be sexually promiscuous while asserting that men are not driven by emotion.

Patriarchy's hypocrisy is evident in other examples of "vicious" individuals. Patriarchy's demonization of Black people and infantilization of eastern cultures shows that hypocrisy in a different context. In those cases, patriarchy belittles another group to feed white supremacy, which falls under Western patriarchy because racism establishes white men's power through the vicious/virtuous binary. However, that power is conditional because patriarchal figures must consistently emphasize the weakness of others to uphold it. An inherently powerful entity does not need to qualify its influence, especially for those it controls. White supremacy is a fiction.

While Carmilla from Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872) and Dracula are orientalized and Black characters in books like *Carmilla* and Charlaine Harris' *Dead until Dark* (2001) are demonized and demeaned, they destroy the western white "powers" that threaten them.

Fully subversive vampires require deliberate construction that pushes against the limits of Victorian patriarchy. Black queer female protagonists in Jewelle Gomez's *The Gilda Stories* (1991) and Octavia Butler's *Fledgling*'s (2005) reveal vampires' potential when they are intentionally written by female authors. When those from marginalized groups write vampires against patriarchal expectations, they emulate Frantz Fanon's focus on the myths of the colonized from "On Violence" (1963) in that they use myth-making to reconstruct a reality that contrasts patriarchy. Gilda and Shori are not wholly revolutionary in the vampire genre--instead, they fulfill the vampire's destiny as a subversive figure. In *Fledgling*, Shori challenges racist white men who orchestrated the death of her family. In the end, they are convicted of their crimes and Shori's literal superiority over them, a result of her darker complexion that allows her to survive in sunlight, reveals their insecurity and weakness. Because racist patriarchy benefits these white vampires, they choose to attack Shori rather than confront their own vulnerability.

Similarly, queer vampires push against the patriarchal status quo that denies, controls and belittles their existences. The tradition of ignorance and hatred toward queer individuals shows in later texts like Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976). Rice never labels Louis, Lestat or Armand as gay or queer, but implies it through their interactions with others. This implicit queerness emphasizes the author's discomfort with non-normative sexuality that reads more as a fetish than an empowering choice. While Louis uses the stereotypes about homosexuality to his advantage, unintentional subversion is not as powerful as intentional subversion. Here, as well, more recent interpretations of the vampire, like *The Gilda Stories* and *Fledgling*, take advantage

of the vampire as rebel to redefine the monster as intentionally queer. The vampires in these stories own their sexualities and find joy in their identities, creating families and developing more impressive social orders than patriarchy. Gilda and Shori refuse the shadows all together, subverting and fulfilling expectations of the vampire.

Tracing the vampire's transformation over time accomplishes three things. First, it establishes that, no matter their era, vampires challenge patriarchy and, ultimately, how society functions. Second, it offers a blueprint for moving forward with these interpretations. Essentially, if we understand that vampires have subversion flowing through their veins, we can interpret different iterations of vampires in and outside of their historical moments to see how they interact with different texts and vampires. And, third, it reveals patriarchy's stasis or rigor mortis, so to speak. Patriarchy constantly maintains the same Victorian binary of viciousness and virtue to uphold white male superiority. In recognizing this pattern, readers also acknowledge that the past is never past. It haunts us--lingering in the shadows of progressivism or buried like a corpse in a coffin. But, as this project indicates, corpses never stay dead. They return in different and more powerful ways.

As if to prove this fact, the vampire remains an enduring figure in popular culture. Besides books, we see her in movies and television shows--often adapted from the tropes that *Carmilla* and *Dracula* establish. Nina Auerbach's 1995 book title puts it best--*Our Vampires, Ourselves*. The vampire in its varied settings and situations--from Transylvania to Forks--evokes the ways patriarchy adapts to the current moment while maintaining the baseline elements of binary that stem from Victorianism. Analyzing vampire media provides a solid basis for sociological and literary analysis and, ultimately, asks us to confront the given realities that threaten oppressed groups for power. Vampires embody the problems with patriarchal

delineations of right and wrong. Reading vampires critically faces the audience with patriarchy's unfounded control. Questioning patriarchy is a revolutionary act because it shows that society's"facts" and definitions are not universal truths, but desperate attempts at domination. Vampires remain in our homes, in our books, in our theatres, waiting for the best time to strike. The monsters allow us to do the same against the social institutions that imprison us.

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