The Byronic Vampire as a Threat to Nineteenth Century Male Dominance in Polidori's *The Vampyre* and Stoker's *Dracula*

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ÍNDICE

Introduction

Vampires have been part of our collective imagination for a very long time, they are part of an old tale which has its first exponents in folklore. Despite their long history, it seems that we mostly pay attention to their relationship with female victims. However, women are not the only ones on those stories. Men also see themselves lost in the intricated plans of the revenants. Moreover, while it seems that the vampires' influence on women makes them more sexually confident, at least for a while, it makes men lose power. The following work will focus on how the trope of the Byronic vampire affects masculinity, more specifically, the nineteenth century version of English manhood in John William Polidori's *The Vampyre* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. To do this, it is appropriate to carry out an intersectional analysis, focusing on gender roles, class, and race. The importance of exploring a topic such as this lies on the fact that as times change, anxieties do too. Hence, it is important to see how such an iconic image, such as the Byronic vampire, came to be, and what it meant for the readers of the time. Moreover, it gives us a starting point from where it is possible to reflect upon how such a character was represented in the past, and how it is represented nowadays. It allows us to see how fear and emotions differ in the reading of their stories as people and cultures change.

Some key terms need to be discussed before the analysis. Those are the Byronic vampire, and masculinity. Before the introduction of the vampire that we all know and enjoy today, there was the original folkloric tale. A corpse, with a ruddy, blood-stained

mouth and long hair and fingernails, who languidly rises from its grave and proceeds to suck the blood out from his family, a truly gory and grim affair. Then, how, and when did the sophisticated and seductive vampire appear? The answer lies in a disastrous trip through Europe during which the relationship of two young men fell apart. The story is well-known. Lord Byron escapes England after a series of scandalous affairs and debt that tarnished his reputation. Travelling with him is Doctor John William Polidori as his personal physician, eager to spend time with such acclaimed writer, as he himself envisioned becoming one. However, their relation soon became strained: Byron's patronizing attitude and Polidori's jealousy were not an ideal combination for a successful relation. Thus, soon after the famous ghost story competition, which took place during the summer of 1816 at Villa Diodati, Switzerland, both men parted ways.

Such disastrous and disappointing trip inspired Polidori to write *The Vampyre*, which was published in 1819 under the name of Byron himself. Ironic, since Doctor Polidori wrote the novella as a way of mocking the poet by modelling his villain after him. His decision of writing Lord Ruthven after the image of his ex-employer is embedded in the wave of general excitement that the figure of Byron arose within the crowd. People wanted to keep up with the latest news about him, waiting for his next scandal. This desire was denominated Byronmania, as, like Aquilina claims on his chapter regarding Polidori's vampire influence over the genre, Byron's 'dramatic life and works […] permeated social consciousness in the 19th century' (27). Such deep interest for the poet also inspired the

success of the Byronic hero, which will later lead up to the Byronic vampire. This expression was first used to refer to Byron's own characters which were moulded after himself. What makes this hero so peculiar is that he bears 'the dual markings of both villain and victim' (Aquilina 28). Thorslev, in *The Byronic Hero: Types and Prototypes*, claims that it presents characteristics of typical gothic villains, but at the same time, is full of 'tender sensibilities' (163). Thus, he distances himself from the old, traditional hero, such as classical ones like Achilles, or more contemporary ones like Voltaire's Candide. Instead, he is 'an outcast, living in perpetual exile on the fringes of society' (Aquilina 28). However, soon this archetype was taken from Byron's hands and was, instead, explored by ex-lovers, friends, acquaintances, and developed throughout the nineteenth century till today. In addition, the creation of the first aristocratic, itinerant, and seductive vampire — so distant from the original gory tales of Eastern Europe— was a compilation of different features that former literary vampires, like Coleridge's Geraldine, had shown (Macdonald and Scherf 11). In this sense, Polidori was able to adapt elements such as human features, an aristocratic nature, itineracy, and seductiveness, into a well-rounded character that would permeate literature for centuries.

In the nineteenth century, the struggles of the vampire were not the focus. Instead, the experiences of the victims were the ones foregrounded, usually, those of the vampire's male victims, even though they are not the majority. Even if there is no biting involved, male victims are also deeply damaged and disturbed since their masculinity seems to be threatened. They are not only seduced, like women would in these writings, but also helpless when it comes to protecting their female companions, be they lovers or family.

In this way, their masculinity is harmed once they find themselves powerless. Undoubtedly, masculinity is a difficult term to fit into a single definition or category as it changes trough time. In the nineteenth century, masculinity was in the middle of important transformations due to the turbulent changes of the time. However, one aspect that seems to be constant is that it is defined in contrast to other groups. Therefore, because its definition depends strongly on others, it is prone to being questioned. According to Tosh in *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth Century Britain*, 'masculinity is insecure in two senses: its social recognition depends on material accomplishments which may not be attainable; and its hegemonic form is exposed to resistance from both women and subordinated masculinities' (25). Masculinity depends on the power that men have over other groups, but also on other factors such as material possessions which are bound to and influence social, political, and economic power. Therefore, any element that alters this delicate balance threatens male dominance.

However, despite its influence over today's culture, proper investigations on the relevance of the Byronic vampire himself are few. However, research regarding the seductive nature of the revenant and its influence over both male and female characters is broad. Most of the time, authors focus on how sexuality plays a big part on the vampire's plan of attack. They delve into the overt sexuality that female victims explore after being bitten in different way, either as liberation or as a threat to masculinity. Moreover, many explore the homoromantic subtexts that works regarding the vampire imply. In terms of

the other features of the revenant, such as his aristocracy and itinerancy, few papers are being produced. The one that seems to be at least more commented on relates to the way vampires have been adopted by different ideologies to illustrate social conflict. In addition, the vampire has also been read as a racial description of primitive and uncivilized worlds. Therefore, the following work will explore how the male Byronic vampire is the materialization of men's fear of losing power over others in Polidori's *The Vampyre* and Stoker's *Dracula*. In addition, this threat, by being represented in a living creature, can be defeated, allowing male victims to reassert their masculinity. Hence, this discussion hopes to add to the already explored male and vampire relations by going beyond the aspects of sexuality, focusing on how male dominance is harmed after important features of it are attacked by the vampire's nature.

The following dissertation is structured in three chapters, which will explore how seduction, aristocracy, and itinerancy affect male dominance. The first one relates to the conflict between vampire and man and how their relationship affects male dominance. More specifically, how the seduction of the male character affects his own masculinity. The second chapter focuses on how the seduction of close female relations to male character affects male dominance. Finally, the last chapter will focus on how the aristocratic and itinerant nature of the vampire affects male white dominance in England. For this last section, a more intersectional analysis will be done, focusing on how class and race issues are developed in those works.

Chapter One: Emasculation of Seduced Men

The Byronic vampire can be characterized as a seductive, itinerant, and aristocratic version of the reanimated corpse from folklore. These traits present a threat to the power male victims enjoy because of their gender. In the case of the first feature, both female and male character can be victims of it, which leads to male disempowerment. The following pages will focus exclusively on the seduction of men, exploring the loss of power in Aubrey's and Jonathan Harker's brief encounters with madness and the loss of autonomy that it implies. It is in this way that the vampire manages to take away the male victim's power by means of emasculation, leaving him exposed to perils similar to those of dominated women. Thus, men seduced by the vampire lose the advantages of the dominant gender. The emasculation of male victims is accomplished in different ways by Lord Ruthven, and Count Dracula and the female vampires. Nonetheless, we first find both victims in confusing moments of their lives. Aubrey and Harker are worried about entering the adult world of masculinity. In this sense, the male victim is vulnerable and prone to fall into the vampire's trap.

Madness and Masculinity

The relation between madness and masculinity lies on the fact that the former can give way into a loss of autonomy, which harms certain features that are attributed to manliness. According to Garde, in her study of masculinity and madness, 'for males […] any loss of

rationality, i.e., madness, implies a loss of manhood and feminisation', because of the loss of liberty it entails (12). This view is useful for us in our reading of vampire tales since madness transforms male victims into passive characters who no longer can continue their journey into manhood because they are unable to control their emotions. Moreover, derangements such as this also have physical consequences that make male victims lose their physical abilities and energy, rendering them unable to stand up against the vampire. The harm done by their nervous breakdown also leads to emasculation' as it affects important features of manliness. According to Tosh in 'Masculinities in an Industrializing Society', the core attributes of manliness were 'physical vigour, energy, and resolution, courage, and straightforwardness' (335). All these characteristics are lost during mental breakdowns propelled by seduction.

Emasculation in The Vampyre

In Polidori's *The Vampyre*, Aubrey, a young man under the care of negligent guardians, meets the vampire when he is on the verge of adulthood. In fact, his first encounter with Lord Ruthven is on his coming out to society: 'He had hardly courage to turn, fearful of seeing a spectre, that would blast him, when he perceived, at a little distance, the same figure which had attracted his notice on this spot upon his first entry into society' (Polidori 54). Moreover, this attractive figure is known for his seductive abilities: 'He had, however, the reputation of a winning tongue […] he was as often among those females who adorn the sex by their domestic virtues, as among those who sully it by their vices' (40). Aubrey

is aware of the rumours and the reputation that precedes Lord Ruthven of being a womanizer who can attract the attention of every type of woman. However, women are not the only ones under the effect of the vampire.

Aubrey is particularly vulnerable to the advances of the vampire because of two reasons. First, since he is an orphan, he needs someone to guide him. More specifically, he needs an older, more experience male figure to teach him about the world and being a man

> Left also to himself by guardians, who thought it their duty merely to take care of his fortune, while they relinquished the more important charge of his mind to the care of mercenary and negligent subalterns, he cultivated more his imagination than his judgement. He had, hence, that high romantic feeling of honour and candour, which daily ruins so many milliners' apprentices (40).

Not only Aubrey is an orphan, but the people that are supposed to take care of him would rather tend to other issues, such as his inheritance, leaving him guideless. Secondly, because of his guardians' lack of interest, Aubrey has been left to learn about the world through novels, making him oblivious and naive. Aubrey is a dreamy romantic due to his fascination with novels, which will influence his perceptions of masculinity, as he does not have any other role models. Thus, he was prone to fall under the spell of a man who resembled his heroes. Unfortunately, Lord Ruthven fits that category perfectly.

As soon as Aubrey meets Lord Ruthven, he is fascinated by his alluring presence, pouring on the newcomer all his expectations and fantasies: 'He soon formed this person into the hero of a romance, and determined to observe the offspring of his fancy, rather than the individual before him' (41). Lord Ruthven is not only capable of seducing all types of women, but also a young man, since he is a blank canvas which can be filled with his victims' own desires and fantasies. Lord Ruthven can shape into whatever the victim wishes. Thus, as Bainbridge claims in his article on Lord Ruthven's power, the vampire is the 'projection of Aubrey's repressed desires' (26). He appeals to Aubrey's need of guidance, but also to his desire to leave English society. Thus, the vampire is the materialization of Aubrey's inner wishes, since he sees in the newcomer a representation of manliness that follows what has been his only source of education in these affairs, romances. In fact, the young man follows Lord Ruthven in his trip through Europe to learn from him about the world and, consequently, about how a man is supposed to behave in it.

Aubrey explains his decision as he believes the trip is necessary for young men to 'take some important steps in the career of vice, put themselves upon an equality with the aged, and not allow them to appear as if fallen from the skies' (41). They wish to get away from the prying eyes of English society to thoroughly explore the vices of the world, for Aubrey to become a man and to leave behind his innocent characteristics. In addition, the trip offers Aubrey an escape from the English society he finds so oppressing due to his fascination with novels

> He was startled at finding, that, except in the tallow and wax candles flickering, not from the presence of a ghost, but from a draught of air breaking through his golden leathered doors and felted floors, there was no foundation in real life for any of that congeries of pleasing horrors and descriptions contained in the volumes, which had formed the occupation of his midnight vigils. (40)

Aubrey sees in Lord Ruthven a way to leave behind the life that he finds so meaningless when he was about to comply to what society expected of him: 'He was about to relinquish his dreams, when the extraordinary being we have above described, crossed him in his career' (40-41)

However, instead of growing into manhood, Aubrey is emasculated by his relationship with the vampire in the end. Aubrey trusts the vampire enough to be his guide into the unknown. This fact makes evident that the seduction of the young man is built upon friendship and companionship. In her book *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, Auerbach asserts that, the fatal oath 'is frightening because it involves not raw power, but honor and reciprocity' (14). Her analysis is useful since it pinpoints the central element of the story. It is not due to extortion or force that Aubrey cannot save his lover and his sister, but because of his sense of honour and loyalty. The terrifying consequences of the oath reach their peak when because the fear of no one believing him, he is unable to act against the vampire

> The more he thought, the more he was bewildered. His oath startled him; —was he then to allow this monster to roam, bearing ruin upon his breath, amidst all he held dear, and not avert its progress? His very sister might have been touched by him. But even if he were to break his oath, and disclose his suspicions, who would believe him? (55)

This dilemma ends up driving him mad, making him paranoid and obsessed to the point that his family decides to lock him in his chamber under the care of a physician

> He hardly appeared to notice it, so completely was his mind absorbed by one terrible subject. His incoherence became at last so great, that he was confined to his chamber. There he would often lie for days, incapable of being roused. He had become emaciated, his eyes had attained a glassy lustre (56)

Thus, he loses his independence and ability to act because of his treatment. He is incapacitated both physically and mentally: he is bedridden and ignored when he decides to speak out about the vampire, but also becomes unable to think of anything else, captive of his illness. After losing these abilities, he is emasculated, since nineteenth century saw masculinity in mental and physical vigour, which leaves him unable to face the vampire.

Emasculation in *Dracula*

Jonathan Harker's relationship with the Count is not based on intimacy like the one in *The Vampyre*. On the contrary, while Aubrey is manipulated by Ruthven, Dracula and Harker engage in a contest for dominance. While Ruthven seduction of Aubrey includes a distorted version of a friendship, Dracula wishes to own Jonathan as his tool. The seduction of Jonathan Harker happens, just like Aubrey's, in a decisive moment of his life. He is about to get married and enjoying professional success. However, he does not feel comfortable in that position as it is made clear in how he cannot accept his reality, forgetting that he is indeed a professional solicitor and not a clerk

Was this a customary incident in the life of a solicitor's clerk sent out to explain the purchase of a London estate to a foreigner? Solicitor's clerk! Mina would not like that. Solicitor, for just before leaving London I got word that my examination was successful, and I am now a full-blown solicitor!' (Stoker 28).

According to Kuzmanovic in his article on vampiric seduction and masculinity in *Dracula*, 'before the sexual and professional maturation can take place, Harker must experience a more profound crisis, which will subdue his unconscious resistance to such maturation and initiate his adoption of a more stable masculine self-identification.' (415) I agree that Harker is, indeed, suffering an identity crisis. However, I believe that even if this crisis is latent in Jonathan's mind, it is in Dracula's castle that his masculinity is truly challenged. Harker has been working towards becoming a successful young man. In fact, his employer, Mr Hawkins writes to Dracula: 'He is a young man, full of energy and talent in his own way, and of a very faithful disposition. He is discrete and silent, and has grown into manhood in my service. He shall be ready to attend on you when you will during his stay, and shall take your instructions in all matter' (31). However, while Harker thrives under the guidance of parental figures such as Hawkins and Van Helsing, Dracula's influence will harm his masculinity by seducing him. While Aubrey was trying to learn and discover his identity, Harker is being put to the test and must reassert his masculinity by defeating the external and internal monsters that do not allow him to grow comfortably into a successful man.

In the case of Harker's seduction, even if the male Byronic vampire is not the direct culprit of the biting scene, as Jonathan is lured by the female vampires, he is still an

important component in it. The importance of this event is that it propels his masculinity crisis by comparing and assigning him the role of a female character. It starts with Harker finding comfort on what he believes to be a lady's room, and more specifically, her bed

> The soft moonlight soothed, and the wide expanse without gave a sense of freedom which refreshed me. I determined not to return tonight to the gloom-haunted rooms, but to sleep here, where of old ladies had sat and sung and lived sweet lives whilst their gentle breasts were sad for their menfolk away in the midst of remorseless wars. (55)

Harker feels free and comfortable while using a woman's place. This also can be read as him wishing to play a more docile and passive, and therefore, feminine role when it comes to romantic and sexual relationships, which can be seen when he is under the vampires' control: 'I could feel the soft, shivering touch of the lips on the super-sensitive skin of my throat, and the hard dents of two sharp teeth, just touching and pausing there. I closed my eyes in languorous ecstasy and waited, waited with beating heart' (57). We can see how his inner desires are brought forward. Thus, this scene unveils two important aspects of his wishes. First, it brings forwards his repressed sexuality: 'I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips. It is not good to note this down, lest some day it should meet Mina's eyes and cause her pain; but it is the truth' (56). Secondly, it shows his preference when it comes to acting on his sexual desires, avoiding assuming a more dominant role, even with women.

Nonetheless, the Count himself does not perform any type of physical contact. In fact, he prevents any biting or sexual act from happening by claiming Harker as his own

In a voice which, though low and almost in a whisper, seemed to cut through the air and then ring in the room he said: 'How dare you touch him, any of you? How dare you cast eyes on him when I had forbidden it? Back, I tell you all! This man belongs to me! Beware how you meddle with him, or you'll have to deal with me'. (58)

Moreover, it is Jonathan's reaction that completes the emasculation as it shows how he finds a certain amount of comfort on the Count: 'As I look round this room, although it has been to me so full of fear, it is now a sort of sanctuary, for nothing can be more dreadful than those awful women, who were – who *are* – waiting to suck my blood' (59). The room where Harker has been afraid of the Count no longer poses the same threat, as he would rather deal with him than with the three female vampires, since Jonathan would find yielding to a male less humiliating. Despite his wish to be dominated by either woman or male, it was accepted in English society to be under the power of more capable men than under the control of women, at least in public affairs, as they were believed, according to Kollar in 'Power and Control over Women in Victorian England', to '[occupy] certain clearly defined subordinate roles' (11). Thus, despite Harker tendency to be dominated by both genders, he still finds himself more comfortable under the power of the Count as it is less of a shock. For Kuzmanovic, 'Harker's apparent obliviousness to the fact that Dracula as well might wish to suck his blood […] goes hand in hand with his denial of his own preference to be Dracula's victim rather than the women's' (417). Although I agree with the fact that Harker seems to prefer Dracula than the female vampires, I do not think Harker is oblivious to the Count's intentions. Jonathan is aware that Dracula is a latent danger. However, he still sometimes loses his instincts of preservation, as when he is enthralled by the vampire's recount of his story, and prefers him over the sisters: 'If I be

sane, then surely it is maddening to think that of all the foul things that lurk in this hateful place the Count is the least dreadful to me; that to him alone I can look for safety, even though this be only whilst I can serve his purpose' (54).

In addition, Dracula, as a Byronic vampire, represents both a hero and a villain. Jonathan becomes a clear version of the helpless female gothic heroine, trapped in an old castle by the villain, just like Isabella is trapped in Manfred's castle in Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*,

> But I am not in heart to describe beauty, for when I had seen the view I explored further; doors, doors, doors everywhere, and all locked and bolted. In no place save from the windows in the castle walls is there an available exit. The castle is a veritable prison, and I am a prisoner! (42).

However, the same villain that has imprisoned him is, somehow, his saviour from the rest of the horrors that lurk in the shadows of the castle. Thus, by assigning the roles of hero and villain, both male roles, to Count Dracula during Harker's stay at the castle, Jonathan feminisation, and, therefore, his lack of agency, power, and control, are made clear. However, once he finds in the group of men a source of friendship with Lucy's suitors and mentorship with Van Helsing, he can grow comfortable into his role as a hero.

Just like in *The Vampyre*, this encounter with the monster will inevitably lead to the male figure into madness. However, despite Harker's emasculation within the walls of the

castle, he is able to fend for himself. Even though he does not face the monster directly as in the end of the book, he does bravely deal with the situation and manages to escape by coping the vampire as he crawls his way out of the castle. However, before he can enjoy this newfound confidence, his stay in the castle leads to madness. Thus, his seduction by both female vampires and Dracula leads to him having 'brain fever', which makes him lose his autonomy. He is left to be tended by women since he is unable to do anything by himself, as Sister Agatha writes to Mina from the hospital: 'I write by desire of Mr Jonathan Harker, who is himself not strong enough to write, through progressing well […] He has been under our care for nearly six weeks, suffering from a violent brain fever' (134-135). Moreover, this condition will be the last push he needs before working towards assuring his masculinity, which is a task in which he will work throughout the rest of the book. But for now, it is thanks to this nervous breakdown that Harker gives the first step and decides to marry Mina as soon as possible. In the following passage, Mina recounts to Lucy the event: '"You know I had brain fever, and that is to be mad. The secret is here, and I do not want to know it. I want to take up my life here, with our marriage." For, my dear, we had decided to be married as soon as the formalities are complete' (141). Moreover, marriage grants Harker someone over who he can execute power, as Mina gives herself completely to him: 'I was the happiest woman in all the wide world, and that I had nothing to give him except myself, my life, and my trust, and that with these went my love and duty for all the days of my life' (142).

The vampire's seduction finds both Aubrey and Harker at a point in their lives where they must make decisions to continue their journey into masculinity. This seduction can occur in different ways. For Aubrey, Lord Ruthven offers guidance into the world which the young man so desperately needs, but also fulfils his wishes of escaping English society. Meanwhile, Harker's masculinity is tested by both male and female vampires who place him in feminine roles. Moreover, madness is the common denominator between the two stories. Aubrey's loyalty forbids him to betray the vampire driving him into obsession, which will inevitably lead to him being kept in his room unable to do anything against the threat that looms over his friends and family. Unlike Aubrey's end, Harker is allowed another chance at life after his encounter with madness once he has left Dracula's castle. This new opportunity is brought by Mina, who gives herself completely to her new husband, who asserts his masculinity by owning her.

Chapter Two: Loss of Women and Power over Them

Vampires' dominance over male characters is not only accomplished through their seduction, but also through the seduction of female victims who are close to them, be they lovers, sisters, or friends. Male characters lose dominance as they are unable to fulfil their jobs as protectors of their households. In other words, men's dominance is threatened by a more powerful entity, the male vampire, not only by dominating them, but also by depriving them of a woman over who they can wield power.

Men as Protectors

During the nineteenth century, a characteristic of the male figure within the household was to be a protector. For A. James Hammerton in *Cruelty and Companionship: Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Married Life,* 'tenderness, love and care, the protection of the weak, especially women, and the education and cultivation of dependants became the new hallmarks of male virtue' (142). This occurs in the case of a man that is a husband and a father. However, if he were no longer present, his son would then be responsible of taking care of his mother and his sister. As Davidoff and Hall state in their book on gender relations during the nineteenth century, 'the son is charged with protecting his sister's name for "remember son - thou art her father now" and with supporting his mother's "falling years"' (334). Thus, one could state that adult masculinity during the nineteenth century implied that, once a man reached maturity, he did not only enjoy power within

and without marriage, but also had to fulfil certain obligations. One of them was the protection of loved ones that were considered more vulnerable, his close female relations. These beliefs are relevant to the reading of vampire tales since we can observe that, by threatening the women of their close circle, this creature threatens the dominance that men enjoy over this weaker group of people in exchange for their protection.

Unprotected Women in *The Vampyre*

In the case of Polidori's *The Vampyre,* Lord Ruthven does not attack the women straight away, as he needs Aubrey to get access to feed off them. Throughout the tale, we get glimpses of the female characters that have been victims of the vampire, but none of them has died. However, the only two fatal victims of the creature are Ianthe and Aubrey's sister. As Auerbach states in *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, 'Ruthven drinks Aubrey vicariously through his women, but he makes no move towards a sister, a mother, or daughter of his own' (17). I believe that Aubrey is, in fact, the one that Ruthven drinks, but not physically as with the young women. Instead, the young man's life is drained by the vampire as he takes away his loved ones and strips him of his power while preying on the young women. Aubrey is unable to save these women as he pales in power when compared to the vampire. Lord Ruthven superiority is exemplified by Alliata in 'The Physician and his Lordship', 'the fact that the women associated with him simply disappear, makes him unquestionably a villain, a figure to be demonised, but also a sort of all-powerful superman, and immortal supernatural being, an unattainable figure so far

superior to other humans' (7). Aubrey as a naïve young man never really stood a chance against the revenant, making him and his close female friends an easy target. In fact, Aubrey's detriment is clear towards the end of the novella as he becomes isolated and a shell of his former self, as seen in the following quote after Ianthe has been killed: 'Aubrey's mind, by the shock, was much weakened, and that elasticity of spirit which had once so distinguished him now seemed to have fled for ever' (Polidori 49). Moreover, it seems that while the vampire feeds on the body of women, he drains the mind and spirit of men.

In addition, once Aubrey is back in England after not only losing Ianthe and Lord Ruthven, but also discovering that the latter was the cause of her death, he isolates himself. However, his priority still is to protect his sister and his friends: 'He could not feel interest about the frivolities of fashionable strangers, when his minds had been torn by the events he had witnessed; but he determined to sacrifice his own comfort to the protection of his sister' (53). However, his state worsens after Lord Ruthven reappears in England and he cannot act against him because of the oath. But still, he wishes to protect his loved ones

> Struck with the idea that he left by his absence the whole of his friends, with a fiend amongst them, of whose presence they were unconscious, he determined to enter again into society, and watch him closely, anxious to forewarn, in spite of his oath, all whom Lord [Ruthven] should approach with intimacy. (55)

What is interesting regarding the vampire's strategy is that he leaves the male characters without someone to dominate not by simply killing the young women, but also by taking

them away, and making them his own. In the case of Ianthe's death, two aspects must be considered. First, Aubrey is unable to fight Lord Ruthven when he kills the girl, thus, the vampire also overpowers him physically: 'he felt himself grappled by one whose strength seemed superhuman: determined to sell his life as dearly as he could, he struggled; but it was in vain: he was lifted from his feet and hurled with enormous force against the ground' (48). Here, Aubrey is not being manipulated by the vampire as it was the common occurrence, but he was physically defeated. Secondly, he loses any ownership he could had have over Ianthe as his wife, after she is taken by the vampire as food.

In the case of his sister, Aubrey is unable to protect her as he is bound by the oath. Back home, he decides it is time to present Ms Aubrey to society for her to get married. A first clue appears at this point of the lack of agency that Aubrey has over his sister: 'She was yet only eighteen, and had not yet been presented to the world, her guardians having thought proper to delay her presentation at court until her brother's return from the continent, when he might be her protector' (53). Here, despite him being the one that is supposed to oversee her sister's marriage, he is not the one with the last word, but her guardians. Moreover, he does not want to participate in the event, but 'would rather have remained in the mansion of his fathers, to feed upon the melancholy which overpowered him' (53). Thus, it is clearly shown how affected he is after Lord Ruthven has killed Ianthe. His power has been taken away as he falls sick after his encounter with Lord

Ruthven in England. In fact, the vampire takes advantage of his state and ends up deciding for him by seducing the young girl, as can be seen in the following passage

> When [Lord Ruthven] heard of Aubrey's ill health, he readily understood himself to be the cause of it […] He hastened to the house of his former companion, and, by constant attendance, and the pretence of great affection for her brother and interest in his fate, he gradually won the ear of Miss Aubrey (57)

Thus, Aubrey is not only left with no bride to affirm his masculinity, but also without a sister to look after and marry off. Instead, he dies without having fulfilled his masculine role as a protector.

Unprotected Women in *Dracula*

Meanwhile, in *Dracula*, Lucy's and Mina's seduction and transformation are at the centre of the plot. After Lucy has been bitten, Arthur, the rest of her suitors —Dr Seward, and Mr Morris— and Professor Van Helsing form an alliance based on friendship through which they reassert each other's power, instead of harming it. They can face the vampiric attack as they join forces to save the young women, as we can see in the second half of the book while they plan and work together as a team. It is most clear at the end of the story as they all have a role to play while defeating the vampire, as Mina describes: 'Instinctively [the gypsies] reined in, and at the instant Lord Godalming and Jonathan dashed up at one side and Dr Seward and Mr Morris on the other' (Stoker 480). The importance of this type of dynamic is that here male relations are based on reassuring the masculinity of the other as they work together towards a common goal, the protection of

Lucy, Mina, and England. Thus, prompted by the love and esteem that they have for the young women and their desire to reassert their masculinity, they work together instead of fighting each other. In this way, it seems almost instinctive for them to want to protect the weaker members of the group. In the case of Lucy, this is carried out as she inspires love in the three suitors, and tenderness in the Professor, while in Mina's case it is because she became a dear friend for everyone. This can be seen in how eager all of them are to protect and avenge the ones they love, as we can see before they begin their journey to Transylvania

> Then without a word we all knelt down together, and, all holding hands, swore to be true to each other. We men pledged ourselves to raise the veil of sorrow from the head of her whom, each in his own way, we loved; and we prayed for help and guidance in the terrible task which lay before us. (381)

Moreover, the presence of Professor Van Helsing is key, as he is an older man that, unlike the Count, wishes to empower and guide the young men through this difficult time. The most important way in which he offers power is through sharing knowledge with them, most specifically, how to defeat Dracula, The following passage is taken out from one of his letters to Dr Seward: 'Take the papers that are with this, the diaries of Harker and the rest, and read them, and then find this great Un-Dead, and cut off his head and burn his heart or drive a stake through it, so that the world may rest from him' (263).

Unfortunately, despite their efforts to save Lucy's physical form they are not able to save her from the vampire's transformation. However, they do manage to save her soul.

Most importantly, it is Arthur the one that makes the final strike: 'We all looked at Arthur. He saw too, what we all did, the infinite kindness which suggested that his should be the hand which would restore Lucy to us as holy, and not an unholy memory' (278). In this way, after this group of young men and Professor Van Helsing were unable to protect her from the vampire, they still manage to save her. However, it is her fiancé the one that, without even marrying her, is able to retain a certain amount of power over her fate as he regains his role as protector. Even if they did not prevent her death, he was able to save her from perdition thanks to Van Helsing's guidance, as he is the one that explained how to perform the task: 'So that, my friend, it will be a blessed hand for her that shall strike the blow that sets her free' (277).

Meanwhile, the fear of losing Mina pushes the group, but most importantly, Jonathan, into action. Harker is shaken from the stupor that his delicate physical and mental state prompted into fulfilling the role of Mina's protector. Once the group begins to hunt Dracula, it is Jonathan the one that seems the most confident in the task, as Dr Seward describes

> We men are all in a fever of excitement, except Harker, who is calm; his hands are cold as ice, and an hour ago I found him whetting the edge of the great Ghurkha knife which he now always carries with him. It will be a bad lookout for the Count if the edge of that kukri ever touches his throat, driven by that stern, ice-cold hand! (430)

As Dr Seward details, he is no longer perturbed by the Count, unlike his previous reactions. Moreover, it is Mina's doing what allows him to regain power. As Senf states

in 'Dracula: Stoker's Response to the New Woman', 'Mina's acceptance of a traditional feminine role distinguishes her from the other women in the novel […] Unlike Lucy who remembers only the bittersweet sensation of yielding to Dracula, Mina is filled with horror at her momentary indiscretion' (46-47). Mina has been described as a brave woman who protects those she loves as in the scene where she does not hesitate in facing Dracula, unknowingly, as it looms over Lucy while they are in Whitby

> It seemed to me as though something dark stood behind the seat where the white figure shone, and bent over it. What it was, whether man or beast, I could not tell; I did not wait to catch another glance, but flew down the steep steps […] which was the only way to reach the East Cliff (123).

However, when it comes to her role as a wife, she subjects to her husband and it is her own plea and need for protection what finally leads him to pull himself together: 'Do not fret, dear. You must be brave and strong, and help me through the horrible task. If you only knew what an effort it is to me to tell of this fearful thing at all, you would understand how much I need your help' (368). His wife's need of protection is verbalized and constitutes an important factor in the recovery of male dominance as Jonathan is finally able to face the vampire to save his wife.

Thus, Jonathan and Arthur must face the creature that threatens their role as protectors not just by killing their lovers, but by gaining dominance over them through his bite and transformation, as the vampire himself states to Mina

> Whilst they played wits against me - against me who commanded nations
> [...] I was countermining them. And you, their best beloved one, are now
> to me, flesh of my flesh; blood of my blood; kin of my kin; my bountiful
> wine press for a while; and shall be later on my companion and my helper
> (369-370)

Therefore, just like in *The Vampyre*, the threat is not only losing a loved one and someone over who they can enjoy power as husbands, but it is also the fear that they might belong to a man who is much more powerful than them. Fortunately, unlike Aubrey, they are capable of saving their loved ones. Arthur may have not saved Lucy's life, but he saved her soul, thus, regaining agency over the 'weakest' members of the group as they are able to get them away from Dracula's influence.

Overall, the vampire overpowers men through his close female relationships by taking away the influence he has over them. He leaves them with no one over who to execute power. Moreover, Lord Ruthven and Dracula do not only kill the female victims, but they also make them their own. Thus, men not only see how they no longer can protect the people they have been taught to protect since they were kids but have to see how they are being replaced in the women's lives by a more powerful man.

Chapter Three: Aristocracy and Itinerancy as a Threat to Male Dominance

Beyond the vampire's distinctive seductive feature, the Byronic revenant is also an aristocrat and a traveller. These characteristics reflect middle-class men's anxieties regarding the loss of economic and political power during the nineteenth century. These fears are related to social clashes with aristocracy and the decline of the British Empire later in the century. Aristocrats were seen by this group as leeches that, in their idleness, thrived and survived thanks to other people's work. According to Taylor in *Lords of Misrule,* where he explores the reputation of aristocracy, vampirism became a representation of this class as 'the vampiric feast provided a metaphor for a predatory exercise of power over the powerless' (35). As an emerging class, bourgeois men saw their newly gained economic power threatened by a sector that, despite being unproductive, still enjoyed the benefits of their class. Secondly, his itinerant nature stands for the idea of the colonizer, either as a native from the British Isles, like Lord Ruthven, or a foreigner, as Count Dracula. His ability to travel, unlike the folklore vampires, enabled him to prey on different parts of the world. According to Arata in 'The Occidental Tourist', the vampire affects power dynamics by leaving those who enjoyed the benefits of being an English middle-class man powerless. Thus, the 'colonizer finds himself in the position of the colonized, the exploiter becomes exploited, the victimizer victimized' (623). The roles are exchanged and men that enjoyed the fruits of the empire are under attack. In this chapter, we will explore how this is developed differently in *Dracula* and *The Vampyre.*

Bloodsucking Aristocrats

Vampirism, as developed during the nineteenth century, was associated to aristocrats. Thus, it is common to see vampires with nobility titles, such as Lord Ruthven, and Count Dracula. Taylor explains how this association came into existence. He states that 'the combination of lurid sexual intrigue, the rootles, peripatetic nature of the aristocratic *rentier* class, and the elements of historical misrule led radicals to seek comparison between nobility and vampirism that reflect the prevalence of such tropes in literature' (35). Vampires and aristocrats not only shared blood as their source of power, but also, they moved around across borders constantly to take advantage of people. However, the most distinctive feature they shared is that both 'sucked out the life essence of the poor and the passive to fund a life lived in indolence' (35). In literature, however, this leech-like behaviour is not restricted to attacking only poorer classes. In fact, the heroes of our stories are all members of a privileged group. Even if Aubrey, Harker, and their friends do not own a title, except for Lord Godalming, they all enjoyed economic and social power. Moreover, although this behaviour was usually aimed at women, it still has an impact on male dominance. While women are the direct food source of the vampire, the revenant steals men's life power by manipulating them. Since the act of biting is highly sexualized, a fluid exchange through penetration, male vampires avoid touching their male victim. Thus, despite being transgressors, the revenants still comply to a certain amount of heteronormativity rules. The vampire manages to fill men with anxiety, which consequently will reduce their physical vigour. Thus, the aristocratic vampire puts a strain on the male victim's physical health by going after his possessions, in terms of

commodities and women. Pérez sums it up in his article on the vampire's construction regarding gender and racial issues: 'the vampire, being an aristocrat, parasites their own social class through the possession of the aristocratic woman, also conceived as class possessions' (2). However, not only aristocratic women are targeted, as women in general are seen like a more vulnerable being to prey upon.

According to Pérez, in *Dracula* 'blood, the paramount symbol of medieval aristocratic conceptions of honor and manhood, enabled the Count's rejuvenation' (3). As soon as Dracula starts feeding, he gains strength and agility. As Van Helsing explains, 'he have always the strength in his hand of twenty men; even we four who gave our strength to Miss Lucy it also is all to him' (Stoker 263). Even women after being bitten enjoy moments of renewed vitality before death. However, drinking the blood of young women is not his only source of power. He also steals men's vitality by threatening their positions. Jonathan Harker's mental and physical health are deeply affected after his encounters with the Count. Two instances where he is left with nothing, or is threatened to lose something, are of great significance. First, Dracula left him resourceless by taking away his documentation, while in his castle in Transylvania: 'every scrap of paper was gone, and with it all my notes, my memoranda relating to railways and travel, my letter of credit, in fact all that might be useful to me were I once outside the castle' (62). After this, the Count uses Harker's belongings to carry out his plans of making the villagers see Jonathan alive: 'It was a new shock to me to find that he had on the suit of clothes which I had worn whilst

travelling here […] he will allow others to see me, as they think, so that he may both leave evidence that I have been seen in the towns or villages' (64). Thus, by taking away his possession and resources, he not only leaves Harker powerless, as he cannot reach anyone since people has seen him around town unharmed, but also, he steals his identity. In a way, this can be read as if the vampire is now the young man, while Harker is the old creature locked in the castle. Nonetheless, Harker manages to escape, but still becomes deranged and falls physically ill after such a mental strain.

Another significant event that visibly makes Jonathan lose physical power is the biting of Mina by the Count. Here, as another man takes possession of 'his' woman by stealing her blood, his body grows old due to stress, as Seward explains: 'Last night he was a frank, happy-looking man, with a strong youthful face, full of energy, and with dark brown hair. Today he is a drawn, haggard old man, whose white hair matches well with the hollow burning eyes and grief-written lines of his face' (386). Thus, while Harker health keeps deteriorating with brief moments of recovery, Dracula becomes younger, as Jonathan sees him back in England: 'I believe it is the Count, but he has grown young. My God, if this be so! Oh, my God! My God! If only I knew! If only I knew!' (225). Dracula is now invigorated and young. Moreover, not only is Dracula more powerful in terms of strength and youth than Harker, but he also shows his physical power through fertility. He converts his victims and broadens his legacy, while Jonathan is unable to procreate until he is defeated.

In *The Vampyre*, the story is somewhat different. Lord Ruthven also corrupts the young to become more powerful by ruining them

> In every town, he left the formerly affluent youth, torn from the circle he adorned, cursing, in the solitude of a dungeon, the fate that had drawn him within the reach of this fiend; whilst many a father sat frantic, amidst the speaking looks of mute hungry children, without a single florin of his late immense wealth, wherewith to buy even sufficient to satisfy their present craving (42)

However, Aubrey does not see in Lord Ruthven an enemy at first. For the young man, the Lord is not someone to fight, but to follow for a good part of the story. In his article on the private and public realm in Polidori's tale, Süner puts forth that 'Lord Ruthven is a homegrown English aristocrat, a close friend of Aubrey and his intimate object of fantasy' (190). Aubrey, instead of fighting the old order, wishes to belong to it. For him, Ruthven is a fantasy of political and economic power reflected through his ability to own women, which he lacks. Aubrey wants to be the one that engages in sexual intercourse and marries them, but ultimately Lord Ruthven does so as he kills his lover and his sister. Despite sharing similar wishes, Aubrey does not have a title. He does not have a 'blood' relationship with anyone that can assure his status. Thus, he is not made for such a life, and he falls sick when he recognizes the Lord as the vampire who has stolen Ianthe. A clear example of how different they are physically can be seen when Ruthven tends to Aubrey while ill

> Aubrey being put to bed was seized with a most violent fever, and was often delirious; in these intervals he would call upon Lord [Ruthven] and upon Ianthe —by some unaccountable combination he seemed to beg of his former companion

> to spare the being he loved [...] Lord [Ruthven] chanced at this time to arrive at Athens, and, from whatever motive, upon hearing of the state of Aubrey, immediately placed himself in the same house, and became his constant attendant (49).

It is Aubrey, instead of the old aristocratic order representative, the one who dies after Ruthven has taken advantage of his state to kill his sister. Thus, Lord Ruthven not only lives by leeching off people and sucking their blood, as with his female victims, but he also uses those close to him who do not belong to his class until they lose everything.

Aristocracy lives thanks to the stealing of others and literary vampiric aristocrats are not different. Dracula and Lord Ruthven thrive whenever they steal women's blood, or men's spirit. However, they do not restrict themselves to only lower classes. Aubrey, Harker and his companions, either male or female, in their majority belong to a middle class that had the means necessary to work hard and succeed economically and socially. Thus, the vampire is a threat to this newfound power they enjoyed, more specifically, to male dominance. The vampire, by stealing men's possessions, either goods or women, make male characters loss of their vigour, and while Harker and Dracula engage in constant confrontations, Aubrey saw in Lord Ruthven a model to follow.

Itinerant Vampire

Closely related to the vampire's aristocratic nature is its itinerancy. As seen in the previous section, the vampire, as an aristocrat, preys upon the vulnerable and less

powerful. Once the vampire has dried up his own human and material sources, he leaves home in search for food. Here, the undead can either turn East or West depending on his original location, consequently representing a different type of threat to the English male victim. When the vampire is foreign, it threatens male dominance by swapping roles. Thus, male victims that had been enjoying the benefits of imperialism, see themselves 'colonized' by the vampire. Arata explains that, 'in the case of *Dracula*, the context includes the decline of Britain as a world power at the close of the nineteenth century; or rather, the way the perception of that decline was articulated by contemporary writers' (622). Meanwhile, in early nineteenth century, Lord Ruthven was indifferent to any possible decline and enjoyed his influence not only on the East, but also the benefits of England, as he takes advantage of Aubrey's admiration for him.

According to Arata, in *Dracula* we can see the fear of reverse colonisation and of the primitive world, which is represented in 'the archaic forces unleashed by the Count, forces which threaten to overturn the progressive, scientific world of contemporary Britain' (626). The vampire represents the old order as a member of the aristocracy. However, since the West constructed the idea of the East as primitive, his Eastern roots also render him part of the ancient world. In addition, his origin in superstition also marks him as a part of a pre-scientific context. Thus, the Count represents colonizer's fear of subversion of colonized groups, which are represented as 'primitive', against their conquerors. This fear of domination can be seen in how Dracula is not depicted as idle, like Ruthven, but

as a soldier. Arata states that in Stoker's work 'vampires are intimately linked to military conquest and to the rise and fall of empires' (627). We can see evidence of Dracula's military power in the story he tells Jonathan while they are in his castle, 'Was it not this Dracula, indeed, who […] when he was beaten back, came again, and again, though he had to come alone from the bloody field where his troops were being slaughtered since he knew that he alone could ultimately triumph? (46). Moreover, Dracula clearly states his wish for power once he is in England when confessing to Jonathan: 'Here I am noble. I am a '*boyar'*; the common people know me, and I am master. […] I have been so long master that I would be master still, or at least that none other should be master of me' (35).

Nevertheless, he also represents strategy, which is seen as a feature of the West. Dracula deconstructs the ideas of West and East by showing features of both. For example, the West is understood as civilized and scientific, hence, it allows for men to strategize, which is something that we can see traces of in Dracula's behaviour. He is described as an organized man that learns the language of the land and all he needs to know to be successful. The stack of books and papers Jonathan sees the Count studying attests to this: 'The books were of the most varied kind —history, geography, politics, political economy, botany, geology, law— all relating to England and English life and customs and manners' (34). Thus, Dracula possesses not only the ruthless bravery that a military career requests, but also the strategic planning needed to invade and conquest an empire. In the end, he is

scarily powerful because the English see in him an improved version of themselves, which unites assets that were understood as innate of Eastern and Western cultures.

In addition, Dracula goes beyond the fear of losing their position as a global hegemon. He also represents the fear of losing one's heritage. He expects to secure his own legacy while wiping out that of English men, by taking over their spouses. Arata asks the question 'how secure is any racial line when five fathers are needed to produce one son? (632). The author points at the fact that Jonathan needs to help of four other men to produce an heir, implying that the future of Britain is uncertain since it requires extreme efforts to be brought into live. This can be seen in Jonathan's note at the end of the book: 'It is an added joy to Mina and to me that our boy's birthday is the same day as that on which Quincey Morris died […] His bundle of names links all our little band of men together; but we call him Quincey' (483). The fact that the boy's birthday is the same day of Morris' death can be read as if his origin is a group effort that could only by achieved with the death of the vampire. Thus, he is born out of the effort of a group of six people, five males and one woman, instead of being the result of a relationship between only two. Moreover, another sign of decay is that he, despite being of Western origin, is not purely English. He is named after an American, one of the greatest threats to the English empire, but also shares blood with the vampire, as the Count's blood runs through his veins after Mina drank it. Therefore, even if the vampire has been defeated, he still lurks in the very essence of the English future.

A similar ending is presented in Polidori's story, as the vampire roams free at the end of the story. Lord Ruthven represents both the fear of reverse colonization, but he also embodies the power that the aristocratic and itinerant Western men enjoy over Eastern regions. Regarding the idea of reverse colonization, Ruthven ca be read as, not an Eastern foreigner, but as a colonized Scotsman. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the Gaelic Highlands were taken over by noblemen from the Lowlands and England. To create space for farming, a union of these two regions stole and evicted a great number of people that lived there. They were able to carry this out since after the Jacobine Rebellions they broke the clans' system by giving several lands to loyal subject to prevent future uprisings. Hence, as the clans were already debilitated, it was easier for this union of Lowland Scots and English to take over again. What is interesting is that one of the places where British armies were placed to control the Jaconine rising was called Ruthven. Hence, this is useful for us in the reading of Polidori's vampire as a colonized man that has come back again to take advantage of the English by stealing and manipulating. In fact, he is introduced by Polidori as a newcomer who seems strange in the eyes of English society: 'It happened in the midst of the dissipations attendant upon a London winter, that there appeared at the various parties of the leaders of the *ton* a nobleman, more remarkable for his singularities, than for his rank' (39). However, he does not wish to overpower the empire as Dracula did; he thrives in it. In England, he can manipulate his victims by appearing and reappearing. In fact, by coming back after dying abroad, he manages to drive Aubrey into obsession: 'Aubrey became almost distracted. If

before his mind had been absorbed by one subject, how much more completely was it engrossed now, that the certainty of the monster's living again pressed upon his thoughts' (55). This paranoia would later have physical consequences. According to Süner, 'Polidori depicts Lord Ruthven as explosive figure at the fraught intersection between a private life that demands secrecy for its enjoyment and a public realm that demands exposure for regulation and control' (190). We can see this as Lord Ruthven needs the prejudiced English society since it provides food, but also is so concerned about appearances that is able to turn a blind eye to his action when needed. Thus, the vampire manipulates Aubrey thanks to his itinerancy, which allows him to steal what belongs to Aubrey while he is bedridden and paralyzed by his own fears of society and honour.

Nonetheless, when it comes to the reading of the vampire as a predator of the East, Aubrey does not see a problem until it is too late. He wishes he were like Lord Ruthven, who can take advantage of women in those regions, since he is only capable of appreciating the beauty of the woman he is interested in from afar: 'often would the unconscious girl, engaged in the pursuit of a Kashmere butterfly, show the whole beauty of her form, floating as it were upon the wind, to the eager gaze of him, who forgot, in the contemplation of her sylph-like figure, the letters he had just decyphered' (45). However, once he realizes the true extent of the horrors, he cannot do anything about them since he is bound by the oath to his close friend. Thus, homosocial relationships between natives of similar conditions are much more important to him than any other.

Both the aristocratic and itinerant nature of the vampire threatens male dominance as he preys upon their possessions, either material or female. Because of his title, the revenant shares many similarities with real aristocrats who leeched upon the powerless to live. In *Dracula* and *The Vampyre,* this is represented by the male characters' being pushed into sickness while the revenant gains strength. Hence, male characters lose physical vigour after their encountering the real nature of the vampire. This is a result of how deeply the undead affects them in terms of mental balance, as he does not need to bite them to steal their life power. Meanwhile, his ability to travel the world helps him broaden the region in which he can carry out this practice, challenging, in this way, power structures dependant on class and empire strength. While Dracula haunts the West and English men's ability to maintain their Empire, Ruthven enjoys taking advantage of young men and women in both the East and the West, as society allows him to.

Conclusion

The Byronic vampire as a seductive, itinerant aristocratic is a materialization of male anxieties about losing dominance. Moreover, by making these fears take the shape of a living creature, male characters can face it and defeat it, asserting the power and masculinity that had been so wounded after the revenant threatened to steal their health, physical and mental, their possessions, and their women. The seductive vampire manipulates male characters by restricting them into female roles, or by taking away their autonomy, but also by threatening their influence over women. Additionally, the vampire as an aristocrat endangers the power of an emerging middle class from his place within an idle past. Finally, his mobility allows him to disempower English manhood by colonizing the colonizer. These features of the vampire evoke fear on male protagonists, since they target their nineteenth century masculinity, which is autonomous, physically invigorated, and emotionally stable. However, while in *The Vampyre*, Aubrey and Lord Ruthven forge a distorted friendship that is based on manipulation and loyalty, Harker and Dracula are constantly engaging in confrontation. Moreover, Ruthven roams free after having overpowered Aubrey, while Dracula is defeated by Harker who joins a group of men who share the same objective as him: save their women and their country.

The arguments of the present work have both strengths and weaknesses. Some of the former are that all of them are well linked since they describe the loss of male dominance as a consequence of the vampire taking away their health, material possessions, or 'their women. Secondly, all arguments include an analysis of how women affect the conflict

between vampire and man since manhood and its perceptions are social constructs that are influenced by different factors; they are not an isolated phenomenon. Some weaknesses in the arguments are that certain sections are more underdeveloped than others since sometimes one novel allowed for more discussion. In addition, at times it is difficult to make a clear distinction between the proposed ideas by secondary sources and the ones presented in the dissertation. Moreover, problems during research were related to the lack of material, mostly regarding Polidori's' *The Vampyre*. It was also difficult to make a clear link between nineteenth century beliefs with the ones of our own time; and to have an appropriate balance between literary analysis and secondary sources' discussion. Finally, the extension of the dissertation did not allow for an in-depth exploration of other relevant issues such as female sexuality and its influence on male anxieties.

While writing the present dissertation, the importance of society's role was made apparent. One of the aspects that makes the story so terrifying is that it is society the one that allows the vampire to thrive within us, showing how corrupted and monstrous it is. Moreover, there can be different readings of this. While for middle-class nineteenth century white men the monstrosity lied on an aristocrat that wanted their power, other groups may had had a different reading. Most likely, this anxiety was different to the ones of feminist movements of the era and working-class people, who must have seen the middle-class man as the real vampire. In this sense, it makes us think about what fear we, nowadays, see represented on the vampire, and what could be the ones represented in future generations of the myth.

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