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De-monstrating the Literary Vampire: Psychic, Social and Political Anxieties of the Undead in Nineteenth-Century France

Author

Scovel, Zachary

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De-monstrating the Literary Vampire: Psychic, Social and Political Anxieties of the Undead in Nineteenth-Century France

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ZACHARY SCOVEL
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Approved:

Julia Simon, Chair

Jeff Fort

Jaimey Fisher

Committee in Charge

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Acknowledgment for Use of Copyrighted Materials

I would like to thank the *Musée d'art et d'histoire de Judaïsme* [*Museum of Jewish Art and History*] for not only granting me permission to publish the following image in this dissertation, but also for providing me a high-resolution digital copy. I discuss this work, and others like it, in my third chapter.

Figure 7. Louis Bombled's *Aux abattoirs - Les sacrificateurs israélites et les buveurs de sang* [*At the Slaughterhouses – The Jewish Sacrificers and the Blood Drinkers*], drawn from life. Printed in *Le monde illustré* on March 1, 1890. Copyright, muahJ.[1]

[1] See Bombled, Louis.

Abstract

This doctoral dissertation traces the socio-historical roots of the vampire in French culture and literature from the Reign of Terror through the Second Empire. I begin with an exploration of the fear of the undead (in fiction and in real life) by examining the anxiety about the life-death boundary that was brought on by the guillotine's swift blade during the Terror—eyewitness accounts detail that the blade was so swift that some severed heads continued to exhibit signs of life. From here, in readings of *La dame pâle* [*The Pale Lady*] by Alexandre Dumas (1849), *La vampire, ou la vierge de Hongrie* [*The Vampire Woman, or the Virgin from Hungary*] by Étienne-Léon de Lamothe-Langon (1825), and Netflix's 2020 series *Les vampires* I argue that the vampire characters are rendered through an imperialist lens with traces of racial and orientalist discourse under Napoléon Bonaparte during the First French Empire. I coin the term "vamperialism" to argue that the Empire is also a vampiric entity in its colonialist and expansionist values. In my third chapter, I argue that real-life acts of blood-drinking during the Second French Empire offer a glimpse of the lasting effects of Haussmannization when the slaughterhouses were pushed to the outer rims of Paris and the ways in which violence coincided with class stratification to breed the vampirism. Lastly, I examine Théophile Gautier's *La morte amoureuse* [*The Dead Woman in Love*] (1836) which portrays a female vampire who can be read as a feminist liberator as she is hunted and demonized by the patriarchal powers of the Catholic Church. Ultimately, I argue that for a creature who shows no reflection in a mirror, the vampire becomes society's mirror and casts a wide reflection by embodying anxieties about the life-death boundary, imperialism and the racial other, the dissolution of class boundaries, and the desire to control women and their sexual liberties.

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A Note on Translations

Throughout this dissertation, I engage with French voices through direct citations of various works. Thus, I have decided to add translations of these passages and the titles of the French works. The decision to add translations is against a background of my desire to reach a wider audience with my work more broadly, and how I may be able to take a more interdisciplinary approach to my research. Indeed, this project in many ways spans various centuries of literature and scholarship and through many fields. And, at the same time, as I consider how to present myself as an interdisciplinary learner and scholar, I would like first and foremost to ensure that my work is accessible to anyone across disciplines. With my translations, I hope to have been able to engage anyone in this rich subject area, no matter their academic background nor their discipline. For titles of French works, I provide the title in English only the first time it is mentioned in each chapter—unless the title is a one-word cognate, in which case there is no gloss.

Introduction

In "Some Statements and Truisms about Neologisms, Newisms, Postisms, Parasitisms, and other small Seismisms," Jacques Derrida contends the following:

> A monstrosity never presents itself; or else, if you prefer, it only presents itself, that is, lets itself be recognized, by allowing itself to be reduced to what is recognizable; that is, to a normality, a legitimacy which it is not, hence by not letting itself be recognized as what it is—a monstrosity. A monstrosity can only be "mis-known" … that is, unrecognized and misunderstood. It can only be recognized afterwards, when it has become normal or the norm. ("Some Statements…," 79)

This doctoral dissertation undertakes precisely what Derrida suggests here. Specifically, Derrida intimates that monstrosity presents itself only as monstrosity and if we are to "recognize" the monster—that is, to understand it more intimately and in a more nuanced fashion—then we are forced to no longer accept it as a monster. If we are to understand a given monster for all the social components that have comprised its iteration or manifestation throughout the centuries, for example, then we must only recognize it for what it is composed of and to no longer accept that it is a monster, a creature that can only be "mis-known." In this same vein, Derrida also states that "Monsters cannot be announced. One cannot say: 'Here are our monsters,' without immediately turning our monsters into pets" ("Statements," 80). Therefore, I propose in this dissertation this very sort of dissection of the vampire in order to understand it in the sense of how it has been composed via psychic, social, and political anxieties. In this fashion, we may begin to understand, or, in Derrida's terms, to "mis-know" and to "domesticate," the vampire as a figure whose manifestation lies so intrinsically in our imaginary as one formed by social and political movements throughout the centuries. This dissertation is an attempt at this

"domestication" of the vampire as it appears in fiction but based on the real. I argue that so much of what renders the vampire frightful and horrific is rather a grotesque amalgamation of society's fears throughout the ages as these anxieties manifest even in the present day. The vampire which appears in the French sphere, however, is a particularly intriguing manifestation of the vampire, as it exhibits traits of war, revolutions, renovations and whose ground zero (so to speak), as I will show, emerges from post Revolution on the guillotine's scaffold, covered in blood, and decapitated.

In my first chapter, I will discuss how a striking image infiltrated the psyche of the French people, who observed the horrors of the Revolution. They were left bereft and horrifically awe-struck at a blinking severed head, which spiraled the pre-nineteenth-century imaginary into fantastic, romantic, and gruesome imaginings of the vampiric. This bloody impetus, at the dawn of the nineteenth century, bled into the century that followed. Specifically, the vampire that appears in the French nineteenth century appears, as I and others have argued, from this impetus of cultural and psychic significance.

The Terror began as the Committee of Public Safety to ensure the execution of monarchical sympathizers and royalists. "La loi des suspects" ["The Law of Suspects"] on September 17, 1793, began revolutionary tribunals for all who were suspected of treason against the Republic, and upon a guilty verdict would be sentenced to death by guillotine. It soon evolved into a fear-mongering regime, eliciting paranoia and terror in the common Parisian, questioning whom they had spoken with, mingled with, or even remotely associated with—fear of being black-listed, arrested, tried, even executed before a mass public witness in what is today La Place de la Concorde in Paris.

Maximilian Robespierre's role as the leader of the Committee of Public Safety perpetuated the same fears which ultimately dissolved the preceding monarchy—fear of a single executive power. Thus, the Committee's role in French society mutated into the Reign of Terror, something more totalitarian than any remote "republic" which it promulgated itself to be, or at least one day hoped to become. The primary boundary of successful republicanism seemed to be, in the gaze of the Committee, the remaining monarchists and royalist sympathizers post Revolution. They were feared for their contagion of political ideals infecting the public imaginary and thus the governing powers.

Symbolically, the guillotine remained as the central signifier for the executive power of the Committee, the fear which sparked the Committee's Reign of Terror, the interpersonal fear of the community, and a simultaneous excitement for those who would be next to lose their head. This impetus, as a towering expression of a multitude of fears, perpetuated such webs of anxieties even when the blade fell, and the severed heads were held up and presented to the crowd. What happened next, according to some surviving anecdotes, is the spark of anxieties which perpetuated horrific imaginings of the undead.

As severed heads were presented to the crowds, many witnessed the heads continue to express emotion, blink, or even change in color. These signifiers transformed the imaginary of those who witnessed the emotive severed heads and ruptured central signified notions of life and death as binary oppositions. Could life perhaps continue past the point of death? Indeed, what is the point at which life ends and death begins, or can they overlap? Such anxiety-provoking questions began to promote horrific images in the cultural imaginary, as the interplay of signs continuously evolved into renderings of the undead.

In my first chapter, I utilize Derrida's "La Structure, le signe et le jeu" ["Structure, Sign and Play"] to explain how the image of the vampire comes from witnessing a severed head continue to exhibit signifiers of life, thus creating a rupture in binary thinking and prompting notions of immortality and dualist corporality. I apply Derrida's theory to ascertain how the vampire first coincided with this rupture in the French imaginary to perpetuate its contemporary iterations within the literary field and the horror genre more broadly. Therefore, the nineteenth-century adaptations of vampiric monstrosity may have some sort of imaginative spark, I argue, from the fear and anxiety perpetuated by the guillotine and the Reign of Terror.

My dissertation comprises the historical sweep from the Reign of Terror and into the nineteenth century, with a peripheral glance to modernity and contemporary iterations of the vampire in a Netflix series that encapsulates the ways in which the vampire's coded discourse has become mobilized into today's literary and artistic manifestations. Within the context of the Terror and the nineteenth century, I argue that there are significant political junctions that elicit specific anxieties from which the vampire manifests. Specifically, anxieties about the life-death boundary, the fear of the foreign Other, and anxieties about race, class, gender, and sexuality embed themselves onto the figure of vampire and are present in nineteenth-century France. My first chapter begins with the Reign of Terror, and from there I move into the First Empire under Napoléon Bonaparte in chapter two. In my second chapter, I discuss how the vampire evolved in political rhetoric toward manifestations of anxieties about the foreign Other. Thus, I argue that the vampire is not without its coded political discourse and exhibits notions of empire and imperial expansion as it is depicted as a threat both from within and without certain geopolitical boundaries.

For example, in my second chapter, two of the vampires I discuss appear in nineteenth-century works—*La dame pâle* [*The Pale Lady*] (1849) by Alexandre Dumas and *La vampire, ou la vierge de Hongrie* [*The Vampire Woman, or the Virgin from Hungary*] (1825) by Étienne-Léon de Lamothe Langon. I posit that the vampires that appear in these two works are rendered through images of imperial expanse and figures of the foreign Other vis-à-vis the signifiers that they elicit. One vampire bears cultural signifiers on his clothing which harkens back to empires of old, such as the Ottoman Empire, implying the revenant of empires past and the continuation of imperialistic ideals within an undead form. Another vampire is discussed through her neighbors' gossip, as she is the foreigner and as such represents the fear of foreign invasion. She arrives in France from her native Hungary and her neighbors discuss, with indignation, her foreign accent, her religion, and her servant's monstrous appearance. The third vampire that I analyze appears in a contemporary Netflix series, *Les vampires* (2020), and exhibits traits of the issues surrounding a modern-day republic which has held tightly to its imperialist values from the nineteenth century. Themes of hybridity and occupying a liminal identity are embedded onto the main vampire figure of this work, leading to notions of national, racial, and monstrous identity.

Identification becomes a larger theme in my second chapter as I discuss the ways in which orientalism became idealized in the nineteenth century, leading to larger implications for immigrant and Jewish communities alike. The nineteenth-century iteration of the vampire, of course, is not without its implied antisemitism, either, as the period's depictions of vampires often echo antisemitic caricatures associating Jews with blood libel. Since the Middle Ages, antisemitic portrayals of Jews have coded the Jewish body as both monstrous and vampiric.

This societal and monstrous caricature of Jews led to the self-identification of Jews as both a race and a religion. By supplementing the religious identification of Jewishness with a racial one, this helped to create some thread of solidarity within the larger French community and within the imperial government. Jews began to gain some societal recognition in terms of a "French" identity beyond a religious categorization by working directly with Bonaparte. However, this proved to be a large hurdle of the Jewish community for this identification because they were asked, in many ways, to assimilate to a French national identity and to societal practices in order to reduce the perception of their "threatening foreignness" in regard to their religion and their race.

The political coding continued throughout the nineteenth century in this vein. In my third chapter, I discuss the ways in which early gentrification practices under Louis-Napoléon (Emperor Napoléon III), forced "undesirable" communities to the outskirts of Paris during renovations of Paris, known as Haussmannization during the second half of the nineteenth century. The vengeful violence enacted in the renovations of Paris had two larger effects: one was to limit the ways in which insurrections of revolutions past could spring up against the Second Empire's regime, and the second was to push the lower end of the food chain up and out of sight—although, both of these were expressed in political rhetoric under the guise of updating sanitation methods throughout the city. This renovation therefore had a larger impact on the marginalized communities, among which those of lower-class status were forced into overbearing class stratification. The ways in which the newly constructed apartments were rented out to communities of varying class status meant that the lower class was consistently, and literally, pushed upward into new buildings' top floors, and out of sight.

However, the slaughterhouses that were also cordoned off in the outskirts of the city became a site of strange, real-life, vampiric occurrences. Crowds would gather, en masse, composed of varying social classes, to drink the blood of freshly slain bovine with the belief that the consuming of blood would cure certain pulmonary ailments from which the crowd suffered. This vampirism becomes a response to the violent upending and stratification of Paris. In some strange ways, the bovine are sacrificed in a very specific ritualized form of violence which is enacted to stave off other forms of violence against the people—whether we understand this to be some illness or contagion to be cured by the bovine blood, or violence enacted upon the people by the state to stratify the classes who are brought together and mixed in the crowds waiting to partake in the warm effusion.

It becomes clear that through the evolving political discourses, whether it is about race, identity, a sense of national or cultural belonging, and even political and social violence, the vampire is part of an ever-evolving signifying system. Freud tells us, as I explain in my first chapter, as well, that uncanny figures represent the return of a repressed notion, yet it is somehow altered. If we come to understand that this alteration is a violent distortion, as Bruce A. McClelland explains, then the vampire's mere existence, as determined by ruptured central notions to our reality, is predicated on some sort of violence. This is due, in large part, to its existence in our psyches as part of a larger signifying system which is ever evolving, and therefore in constant rupture, constantly distorting our realities.

It is for this reason, as I argue in my fourth and final chapter, that the vampire poses such an extreme threat to religious discourses within vampire texts. Even today, the battle between religious figures and vampires continues to display such opposing signifying systems in contemporary popular culture. In Judeo-Christian terms, and according to Derrida, God as a

signifier helps to stabilize the interplay between systems and therefore is in opposition to the vampire whose signifiers continue to evolve, creating a rupturing upon rupturing of centralized signified notions that then evolve into larger signifiers, larger discourses, and stronger oppositions even to the reality that we live. It is no surprise, then, that in my fourth chapter, I discuss the ways in which the vampire's threat to Christian religious beliefs is because it poses as a mimesis to Christ, threatening the orthodoxia of Christian beliefs in Théophile Gautier's 1836 work *La morte amoureuse* [*The Dead Woman in Love*]. To add to this, when the vampire is a woman who entices a priest to live a life of debauchery, the threat to religious ideology becomes even more complicated.

The vampire woman in Gautier's work seeks to lead a priest away from his vow of chastity and God's service—however, she does more than threaten the religious order. The vampire topos has much to do with gender and sexuality in the vampire's display of power, and nineteenth-century views of the New Woman begin to demonize "hypersexual" behavior in women by likening them to actual monsters. The vampire woman in Gautier's text is a manifestation of the anxieties surrounding the feminine threat to old-fashioned patriarchal systems, both within a societal system and the grandest of patriarchies, the Catholic Church. Her mimesis of Christ and the refusal to submit to patriarchal dominance is what shows us that the vampire may infiltrate even the most minute social inner workings of our psyche.

To conclude this introduction, I turn to Luarent Milesi who states that "one cannot demonstrate a monster without 'de-monstering' it," and it is therefore how I have formed the title of this dissertation (276). My aim is to demonstrate the various elements that compose the vampire through psychic, social, and political anxieties about the undead, and thus to de-*monstrate* the vampire, that is to defang it in order to delve a little deeper into its manifestation

beyond horror, dread, and overarching, generalized monstrosity. The objective of this dissertation is therefore to dissect the vampire throughout the political junctures of the French nineteenth-century, and to start off globally with my first chapter to discuss larger theoretical notions tied to the vampire and to whittle down from the political to the inter-social workings and effects that the vampire has on the psyche in the ensuing chapters. Together with the political and theoretical backdrop, the dissection and thus the "domestication" (in Derrida's terms) of the vampire shows us that its embedded discourses are continuous, ever-evolving, and incessantly embedded onto psychic, social, and political anxieties, no matter the time period in which it is situated.

Chapter I

Understanding the French Vampire: Freud, Derrida, and the Interplay of Signs from the Guillotine

"To die, to be really dead, that must be glorious."
—Béla Lugosi, as Dracula[1]

On July 13, 1793, Charlotte Corday (a Girondin revolutionary) murdered Jean-Paul Marat (a Jacobin revolutionary) as he sat in his medicinal bathtub. Her reasoning was, according to police statements, "ayant vu la guerre civile sur le point de s'allumer dans toute la France, et persuadée que Marat était le principal auteur des désastres, elle avait préféré faire le sacrifice de sa vie pour sauver son pays" ["having seen the civil war on the verge of igniting in all of France, and persuaded that Marat was the principle author of the disasters, she had preferred to sacrifice her life to save her country"] (Du Bois, 90).[2] She was arrested, tried, and sentenced to death by guillotine four days after Marat's murder on July 17, 1793. When her head fell from the scaffold, the executioner picked it up and showed it to the crowd. He then gave her cheek a hearty slap, perhaps to express his political disgust for her murder of Marat. Her pallid, lifeless face suddenly changed to "[express] the most unequivocal marks of indignation," and afterward, "every spectator was struck by the change of colour" in her cheeks (Croker, 71).[3] There are many surviving anecdotes such as this one from eyewitnesses of public guillotine executions, and as

[1] See *Dracula.*
[2] The Girondins and the Jacobins were two opposing parties who desired to dominate the National Convention after the execution of Louis XVI. Their political rivalry, and Corday's actions here, led to the fall of the Girondin party and the start of the Reign of Terror led by Maximillian Robespierre, who belonged to an extremist faction of the Jacobins. For more political context, see "Fall of the Girondins" by Harrison W. Mark.
[3] These words, cited in Croker's work, come from Dr. Sue who was, according to Croker, "a physician of the first eminence and authority in Paris" (70). See, Croker, John Wilson.

far-fetched as they may seem today, they all highlight the same societal anxieties fueled by the Terror: the boundary between life and death may not be as stable as previously thought.

Kristen Lacefield argues that the guillotine sparked an "ontological anxiety," referring to the sudden, terrifying thought that death is not as final as previously thought, and that life could potentially resume beyond the grave.[4] This is in part due to the swiftness that the guillotine brought in delivering a fatal blow that previous forms of capital punishment had not. According to Lacefield, until the Terror, many forms of capital punishment were still very medieval.[5] Crushing by stones, for example, often took a long while to carry out, and perhaps the executed person suffered a slow suffocation that allowed death to only gradually overcome the body.

> [The guillotine's] swiftness elicited a particular anxiety, as it seemed, unnaturally, to compress death into a single second … Paradoxically, the guillotine also aroused fears of a protracted agony. The blade cut quickly enough so that there was relatively little impact on the brain case, and perhaps less likelihood of immediate unconsciousness than with a more violent decapitation, or long-drop hanging. (Lacefield, 39)

The sudden state of confusion as onlookers gazed at an allegedly lifelike severed head, sparking a fear that perhaps pain continued after the swift moment of decapitation—or that a severed head could consciously observe its own body bleeding out—leads to notions of a confused and destabilized life-death boundary. Perhaps the point at which death was presumed to overtake life was not indicative of the end of life, per se. Therefore, what would be the cultural and literary

[4] Lacefield's work, "Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein*, the Guillotine, and Modern Ontological Anxiety," served as an inspirational foundation for this chapter whose term "ontological anxiety" becomes useful for the following analysis. While Lacefield's work discusses this particular anxiety as it appears in the realm of scientific advancements on the boundary between life and death, I utilize this framework to situate the vampire literature of the French nineteenth century in other theoretical paradigms. See Lacefield, Kristen.

[5] And, according to Edward Jones-Imhotep, "[the guillotine] was designed to solve … the problem of how to make punishment uniform, rational and humane; and the related problem of the effect of non-uniformity, variability and inhumanity on a sentimental, spectating public" (17).

implications to suddenly suppose, or realize, that life and death could overlap? The purpose of this chapter stems from my interest in the various ways the vampire occupies a state of supplementarity[6] and how this stems from a cultural impetus of the guillotine during the Reign of Terror (1793–1794). Specifically, this chapter seeks to parse out the nuances embedded within the notions of life and death that are traditionally conceived as binary oppositions, yet this chapter will overlay these larger questions onto the transcultural figure of the vampire whose manifestations refute this logic, occupying both states of being at once. I begin with a discussion of Sigmund Freud's "The Uncanny" in order to illustrate the ways in which visions of the undead (e.g., severed heads and vampires) can elicit a bifurcated emotional response that is both familiar and frighteningly unfamiliar. And, as vampires similarly occupy dual states—life and death—I find that Freud's work allows room for such a figure to uncomfortably occupy two states at once, as is the case with uncanny images. "The Uncanny" creates space, as well, for Derrida's "La Structure, le signe et le jeu" ["Structure, Sign and Play"] regarding these bifurcated notions and the ways in which an ever-evolving system of interplay between signifiers can rupture the central notion that life and death are in opposition to one another. On the contrary, I argue that in examining both Freud's and Derrida's theoretical paradigms, such notions cannot remain as stably opposite one another, and the vampire is therefore a figure who occupies a state of supplementarity. After all, the ontological anxiety elicited by the guillotine, as Lacefield intimates above, leads to transcultural iterations of monstrous literary figures, such as severed limbs, talking heads, ghouls, and zombies. I argue, as well, that the vampire is no different as a

[6] My use of this term relates to the ways in which Derrida posits that a supplement occupies a state of bifurcated notions, perhaps conflicting, but under simultaneous evolution in order to add to one notion from outside a central notion. That is, specifically in terms of the vampire, the supplementarity is that the monster is both life and death, and exhibits traits of immortality—constantly varying, conflicting notions in evolution for, or by, one another.

figure of the undead. Although, where Lacefield's discussion evolves into the realm of science,[7] I take a different approach grounded in a critical and analytical discussion of the events that lead us from the Terror to the vampire.

The Reign of Terror[8] was undoubtedly a bloody period in French history. The guillotine erected in what is now the Place de la Concorde in Paris signified both the new age by (literally) severing influence of the *ancien régime*[9] and a cultural junction into what was hoped to be a republic. However, the ensuing Reign of Terror rendered the scaffold and the guillotine more as a towering reminder of a precarious liminal space between the old ways and the new ways yet to come. The apparatus of the guillotine towered ominously as a bloody fear mongerer amongst the people. The subsequent beheadings and Robespierre's political reign created a contagion of violence. Julia Kristeva observes the cacophony of blood and violence that took place at the guillotine: "Le bourreau n'ignore ni le sang qui coule et coagule entre les madriers, sous la guillotine, et que lapent les chiens, ni les hystériques qui jettent des pierres, de la boue et des excréments sur les charrettes chargées de ravissantes jeunes filles, ni l'insolence des prisonniers désormais indifférents à la mort banalisée…" ["The executioner is neither ignorant of the blood that runs and coagulates between the timber planks, under the guillotine, which the dogs lap up, nor the hysterics who throw stones, mud, and excrement at the prisoner carts filled with ravishing young ladies, nor the insolent prisoners from this point on indifferent to the everyday humdrum of death…"] (*Visions*, 105). This description indicates that the violence among the

[7] Lacefield eloquently goes on to describe the ensuing scientific fascination with re-animation of severed heads, much akin to *Frankenstein*, post guillotine.
[8] See "Reign of Terror" by Harrison W. Mark, who sums up this political regime quite eloquently: "The *Reign of Terror*, or simply the Terror (*la Terreur*), was a climactic period of state-sanctioned violence during the French Revolution (1789-99), which saw the public executions and mass killings of thousands of counter-revolutionary 'suspects' between September 1793 and July 1794. The Terror was organized by the twelve-man Committee of Public Safety, which exercised almost dictatorial control over France" (par. 1).
[9] The "Old Order," which was the monarchy in place before the French Revolution.

witnesses is a reciprocal violence that feeds off the pooled blood around the scaffold, and perhaps from under their feet. The witnessed violence is contagious to the crowd. The pools of blood and the noisy, rambunctious crowds, coupled with the prisoners numbed with impending death certainly paint a picture that the witnesses themselves had already been subsumed into the spectacle of the guillotine, drawn in en masse to witness the royalists beheaded, and therefore already fallen victim to the contagion of violence that the Terror perpetuated.

The bifurcated, conflicting, and simultaneous elicitation of the fear and excitement that the guillotine symbolically perpetuated to witnesses of beheadings funnels down to the minutiae of its psychic ramifications even post beheading. Although the passion for the end of the *ancien régime* is clear and as much as witnesses to the beheadings were impassioned with violence toward the prisoners awaiting the blade, according to Kristeva's description above, we cannot ignore the sort of supplementarity that the guillotine elicits. The bloody tower served as just as much an excitement for the next victim to walk the scaffold as there was a whispering fear that *you* or *I* might be next. This sort of dual quality, or this supplementarity, is what I will discuss through Freud's uncanny and Derrida's theory on the interplay of signs.

Freud's essay on the uncanny provides more insight on the psychological turmoil that presents itself at these events that Lacefield discusses. The premise of Freud's work, "The Uncanny," posits that the uncanny is a thought that had been repressed but that appears suddenly within the psyche of the observer, triggered by the sight of a given object or event. However, this thought which returns elicits a discomforting feeling within the observer as it is both familiar and unfamiliar—*heimlich* and *unheimlich* in the original German; literally, *homely* and *unhomely*. It is an odd and eerie feeling for the observer, and one that "arouses dread and horror" (Freud, "Uncanny," 219). The repressed thought, however, is returned simply because it was once old

established in the observer's psyche, yet repressed through various means, or, as Freud posits, a thought "…which ought to have remained hidden but [has] come to light" by some sort of trigger (Freud, "Uncanny," 241).

To further illustrate Freud's theory on the guillotine's landscape, the guillotine's lively severed heads elicit feelings of the uncanny via signifiers of death and life. For instance, Charlotte Corday's bloody, severed head was presented to the crowd, thus the psyche of the onlookers interpreted the signs thereof (e.g. a severed head, blood, etc.) to mean death. Yet, when her head was slapped, Charlotte's head took on signs of life (e.g. a grimace, a "look of indignation," etc.), causing an anxiety among onlookers due to the nature of a severed head seemingly continuing to live. For Freud, perhaps, feelings of the uncanny exhibited by male onlookers may be attributed to a sudden, repressed thought and fear of castration—particularly as the Terror portrayed the explicit chopping of body parts. The thought is both familiar among men, according to Freud, and an unfamiliar one, meaning that it is discomforting and thus sparks fear. Yet, we may be able to take this beyond the Freudian castration model of the uncanny and into the binary of life and death, for the Terror itself was terrifying and horrific as a governing power based on death. Citizens feared constant, surveilled inquisition under Robespierre's reign, as the large scaffold of the guillotine itself was a constant reminder of this penetrating fear of death.

The dismay evoked by the lifelike severed heads during and after the Terror points toward an air of discomfort of a returned thought that had once been repressed—onlookers were suddenly confronted with a vivid image of the possibility that death itself does not have a definitive start as one had previously thought. And, if put into Freudian terms, the lingering question about when the precise moment of death is—or, even more personal and frightening,

when the precise moment is for *our own* death—the uncanny becomes clearer in this paradigm of historical events and ontological pondering. That is, the question of when we will die is likely to be thought of early in our lives and therefore repressed as we age, as Freud might say, only to have returned for guillotine witnesses in a way that elicited fear, horror, and a grave sense of dread and mortality when the bodyless head continued to portray signs of life. As for Kristen Lacefield's point of view on this turmoil, it seems that once the fear of death—or ontological anxiety, in her terms—penetrated the French social imaginary during the Reign of Terror, the anxiety manifested as literary imaginings of the undead, ghosts, zombies, and even sentient severed limbs.

Rebecca Comay's argument portrays this very trajectory from psychic turmoil to iterations of the undead in Romantic literature within the nineteenth century following the Reign of Terror. According to Rebecca Comay:

> The obsessive fantasies of posthumous survival entertained by the popular imaginary of the guillotine … are the inversion of the living death to which life itself had seemingly been reduced—hence the proliferation of blushing heads, talking heads, suffering heads … the ghosts and ghouls and zombies that would populate memoirs, prints, broadsides, magic lantern shows, canvases, and the pages of gothic novels throughout Europe. (Comay, 73)[10]

Naturally, the figure of the vampire fits within this paradigm, as well. The vampire, which I place here within Freud's visions of the uncanny, is a corporeal form which exhibits both life and death as an undead being. Vampires in contemporary iterations, like those in the nineteenth century, are depicted in human form with undertones of unfamiliarity as they exhibit non- and

[10] Lacefield equally draws upon Comay's words here to posit that the trajectory from Guillotine to Romantic horror is a plausible cause and effect.

super-human traits.[11] This bifurcated familiarity and unfamiliarity renders the vampire a perfect contender for Freud's uncanny, and one that may have been influenced by the ontological anxiety perpetuated by the guillotine, as illustrated by the anecdotes from guillotine witnesses.

The witnesses experienced a psychic distortion where the sudden realization that life and death may not in fact be absolute, nor can the dead elicit signs of life without the exhibition of some kind of distortion to one or both of these notions. As part of a Freudian interpretation, Bruce A. McClelland draws on the Orpheus myth to illustrate the idea of distortion as it relates to the violence of returning to life from death. The myth itself tells the story of two young lovers, and although different versions of the tale exist, the basic premise portrays Eurydice, the lover and betrothed to Orpheus, dying and entering into Hades. Orpheus, championed by love, enters into Hades to bring her back. However, she is shown only to be spectral in the underworld, and Orpheus is allowed to lead her back to the human realm so long as he does not look behind him until they have both breached the portal between realms. Because Eurydice is in a spectral state, Orpheus cannot hear her footsteps behind him and grows worried, turning around only steps away from the portal. She falls back into Hades forever, and he fails in his mission to bring her back. Her changed, spectral state causes Orpheus concern. McClelland writes that "in Greco-Thracian mythology, the inability of Orpheus … to bring Eurydice back into the world of the living is more than a failure of will; it is an acknowledgment that images encountered in the underworld cannot withstand the violence of return without distortion" (McClelland, 18). Eurydice's return from the underworld would have rendered her undead, a living corpse, and

[11] In Alexandre Dumas's novella, *La dame pâle* [*The Pale Lady*] (1849), for example, the vampire manifests via a family curse on the male side and the monster displays inhuman language, and beast-like qualities (see Dumas, Alexandre). And, in Lamothe-Langon's *La vampire, ou la vierge de Hongrie* [*The Vampire Woman, or the Virgin from Hungary*] (1825), the vampires take on uncannily (in)human physical traits and speak an odd language (see Lamothe-Langon, Étienne-Léon de).

therefore violently distorting or rupturing the oppositional binary of life and death. Even Orpheus knew something was unnatural (or, uncanny) about her before leaving Hades. Thus, McClelland's discussion of distortion points out that although the undead are revenants of the physical forms of former loved ones, something about them is changed. McClelland elaborates on Freud's uncanny and states that when the repressed return, they return by, and with, violent means. That which returns from repression always does so in a distorted way for it to be classified as the uncanny. The severed heads from our discussion are no different, for they are distortions to the familiarity of the life-death boundary. McClelland continues:

> The reversal of the usually irreversible process of bodily decay, meanwhile, constitutes such a violent upending of natural laws that the idea of an animated corpse is frequently associated with monstrosity. This monstrosity may be physical repulsiveness, or it may be a kind of social monstrosity, often associated with vengeful and aggressive violence. (18)

Indeed, witnesses of the guillotined heads suffered from the uncanny, though a more violent form of it than Freud elucidates in his work. The severed heads signify a violent distortion of life in their monstrous return, their desire to keep living. Even the means by which the death was brought about were incredibly violent, gory, and monstrous. Returning to the guillotine, the apparatus could be interpreted under the lens of a social monstrosity that perpetuates such "violent upending[s] of natural laws." The guillotine as an instrument for humanitarian execution that invoked crowded, blood-filled squares with monstrous, uncanny results, is itself a monstrous, violent design. Its anticipated purpose was to bring a swift death, thought to be more humane than previous forms of execution. The idea was that the "method of punishments shall be the same for all persons on whom the law shall pronounce a sentence of death, whatever the

crime of which they are guilty. The criminal shall be decapitated. Decapitation is to be effected by a simple mechanism" (Strauss, 64). Though, its design and real-life application evoked much more dismay and horror as an instrument of government terror.

To further illustrate the vampire's uncanny features, Théophile Gautier's 1836 work *La morte amoureuse* [*The Dead Woman in Love*] provides a pivotal moment in which life and death are uncannily depicted in one corporeal form. In the tale, Romuald, a newly ordained priest, is called to deliver the last rites to Clarimonde who is, unbeknownst to Romuald, the vampire in question. However, when he arrives to Clarimonde's chateau in the middle of the night, it seems he has arrived too late, for she already exhibits signs of death—or does she? Romuald's dismay during this scene depicts that he is overwhelmed with the uncanny feeling which provokes the eerie question of whether she is dead or alive. Romuald states, "Cette perfection de formes, quoique purifiée et sanctifiée par l'ombre de la mort, me troublait plus voluptueusement qu'il n'aurait fallu et ce repos ressemblait tant à un sommeil que l'on s'y serait trompé" [This perfection of bodily forms, although purified and sanctified by the shadow of death, troubled me more voluptuously than it should have and this final rest resembled sleep so much that one would have mistaken it for such"] (Gautier, 78). The seemingly dead body evokes in him a boiling confusion, as he grapples with being overcome with fear, doubt, and attraction all at once. For Romuald, the confusion is tied to the conflicting notion of death and active seduction. The body, to which he refers as purified and sanctified by death, is also given a position of active agent. In the phrasing, Romuald uses the active voice to supply the dead body with agency, as if to say that the body is actively, and purposefully, voluptuously seducing him in a way that it should not if she were actually dead. He goes on to imply the strangeness in this body's active seduction of

him because although death has overcome her body, she seems so much to be sleeping that one would have mistaken her as such instead of assuming that she was dead.

Romuald's experience of conflated familiarity and unfamiliarity—*heimlich und unheimlich*—demonstrates that the vampire occupies an uncanny position within this topos. However, one aspect of this example which remains to be discussed is the return of a repressed notion, which is what ultimately leads to the discomfort that Romuald feels and is pivotal to Freud's discussion on the uncanny. In Gautier's tale, Romuald's dismay is one that stems from the conflated signifiers of death and sleep. Thus, perhaps the figure of the vampire evokes the fear of being confused for dead when one may actually be asleep, or in some state that is similar to sleep but not death, leading to fears and anxieties around being buried or cremated alive. In a more contemporary setting, perhaps the figure of the vampire may just as well elicit a fear of being deemed brain dead yet maintaining a sense of consciousness and awareness for who and what is around us—or perhaps even a lasting cognizance of what is being said for an unknown period of time after the various mechanical, computer readings in the hospital room announce the point of "death." This kind of fear aligns more closely with what Kristen Lacefield points to when analyzing the ontological anxiety brought on by the guillotine. Suddenly, questions about the point of death render such categorical boundaries (life, death) uncannily blurred or muddied when severed heads continue to show emotive responses to their surroundings. The figure of the vampire may be the same due to the signs elicited on the corporeal form.

This interplay between signs is also central to Freud's theory on the uncanny, and also at play in Gautier's example above. There are specific signifiers on Clarimonde's body that Romuald reads and therefore interprets to mean death or sleep, which also leads to the discomfort of not being able to confidently interpret sleep from death when examining her body.

Guillotine witnesses also struggled with confidently interpreting the signs of death and life on a severed head which ought to have only signified death, yet continued to blink, blush, and even speak. This interplay of signs and their interpretation begins to bring Jacques Derrida's theories on the subject into our discussion, adding a new layer to the uncanny. Backtracking slightly to the impetus of anxiety that perpetuated undead figures such as the vampire, the life-like severed heads at the guillotine provide a prime example for the way in which Derrida's theory is placed into our theoretical understanding of the fears perpetuated by the figure of the vampire.

If we consider the phenomenon of life-like severed heads in light of Derrida's analysis of signifiers, as inspired by Saussure,[12] we may begin to identify the ways in which severed heads led to imaginative conceptions of the undead. Derrida's concept of interplay intimates that there is a system of signifiers in which meaning appears through the differential play between and among them. The signifiers may be verbal or visual but are all part of a signifying system (see figure 1 below).

Figure 1. Derrida's System of Interplay

For instance, when the guillotine falls and the visual imagery of a severed head is held up in front of a crowded town square, the interplay is the process that takes place upon seeing the

[12] Saussure's study on signs proposed two main components of any given sign: "the signifier, which in language is a set of speech sounds or marks on a page, and the signified, which is the concept or idea behind the sign" ("Semiotics: Study of Signs," Britannica, par. 3). Derrida takes this a bit further in developing his "system of interplay" in "La Structure."

severed head (signifier) and the public interpreting this as *death* (signified). Here, death is the part of the central opposition between life and death that orders the signifying system, the interplay among signs. That is, the public witnesses the severed head held up on the scaffold, they interpret this to mean death and therefore attach this *signified* onto the *signifier*. For them, in this moment—*before* any signifiers are present which elicit life—life and death therefore sit in binary opposition to one another. Thus, the interplay of meaning and interpretation from certain signifiers sits within the central notion, or central understanding, that life and death cannot exist within the same system of interplay (see figure 2 below).

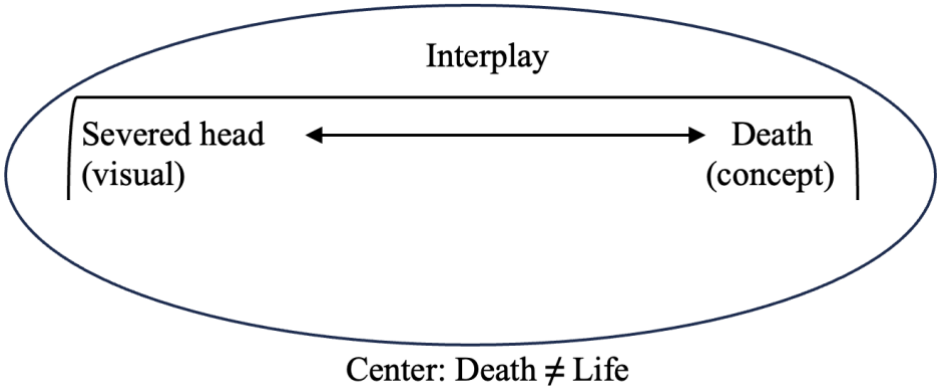


Figure 2. Derrida's Center

However, lifting the severed head before the crowd (which should at this point only signal death), and seeing it grimace, blush, and even blink, now causes a rupture in the centralized notion or concept that death is invariable or unchangeable and cannot allow for a signification of life. Suddenly, the severed head is a supplement within Derrida's system of interpreting signs, that is, both a replacement of the original signifier and also something that adds to it in some way. The lively severed head becomes a signifier with a bifurcated interpretation that perpetuates

notions of immortality, both replacing the notion that death is final, and that life somehow is augmented, or supplemented in a way that allows it to continue (see figure 3 below).

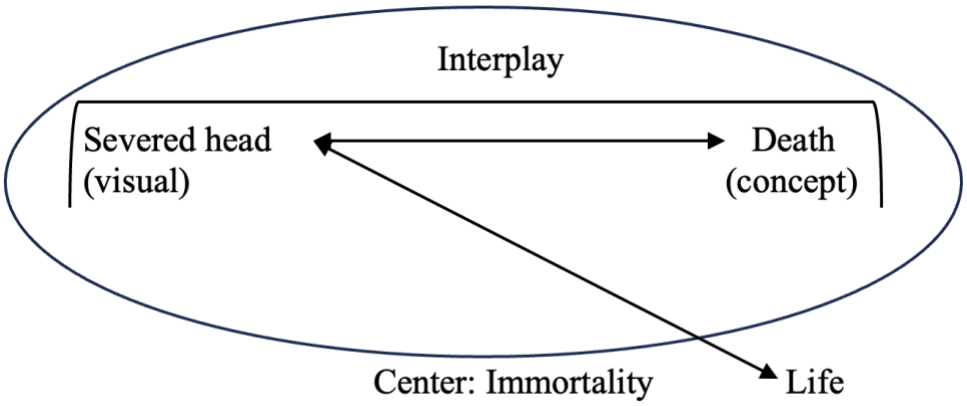


Figure 3. The Center Ruptured and Supplemented

This upheaval of the center—that the opposition between life and death is absolute—caused a great sense of dismay for early guillotine witnesses, an ontological anxiety. One that, according to Lacefield, as discussed, continued to evolve, rupture, supplement, etc. into vivid literary imaginings of the undead. Clarimonde illustrates that Derrida's system of interplay also serves as further explication of Freud's uncanny. Although Derrida does not directly cite the uncanny in his essay on the interplay of signs, Derrida mentions that this system of interplay "a toujours déjà commencé à s'annoncer et à travailler" ["already started to declare itself and to work"] with Freud's "critique … de la conscience, du sujet … de la proximité ou de la propriété à soi," ["critique … of the conscience, on the subject … of the proximity or attribute of the ego,"] which remains foundational for Freud's theory on the uncanny (Derrida, "La Structure," 412). Derrida's theory of the interplay between signs is thus an explication of the psychological mechanisms that are present within Freud's theory of the uncanny despite not having been mentioned within Derrida's writing.

Derrida's concept of interplay is illustrated in Gautier's tale *La morte amoureuse* (1836). Specifically, Clarimonde's body exhibits signifiers which elicit signs of life and death at once and therefore ruptures Romuald's central notion that life and death are in opposition, producing an uncanny affect. As Romuald continues to thoroughly examine Clarimonde with his eyes, he begins to express his doubts: "… la mort chez elle semblait une coquetterie de plus … Je restai longtemps absorbé dans une muette contemplation, et, plus je la regardais, moins je pouvais croire que la vie avait pour toujours abandonné ce beau corps" ["… death upon her seemed even more like flirtatiousness … I remained a while absorbed in a mute contemplation, and the more I looked upon her, the less I could believe that life had forever abandoned this beautiful body"] (Gautier, 79). The longer he stares at her lifeless corpse, the more he interprets that she is not yet dead, causing a bewildered, uncanny state of confusion and fear. Her vampiric form causes Romuald's uncertainty because she replaces his notion of what a dead body ought to look like: she seems to have eerily continued living after her "death," thereby exhibiting an infinite interplay among signifiers and signified.

The interplay between signs in Derrida's system is infinite, as meaning becomes interpreted and attached back onto the original signifier, so too does the interpretation change and evolve, rupturing the central notion in a supplemental way repeatedly. This is clear with Romuald's growing state of fear and confusion that Clarimonde may not actually be entirely dead. Furthermore, as Rebecca Comay portrayed earlier, guillotine witnesses' fearful notions of the binary between life and death evolved into cultural imaginings of the undead. Thus, the vampire is a supplement in Derrida's system, as it is a corporeal imagining of the replacement of the central notion that death is finite. And as illustrated in figure 3, above, when life and death

are signified from one original signifier, a rupture in the center causes a new central notion to develop in which a new system of interplay occurs.

Although Derrida does not mention immortality in his essay on the interplay of signs, he does engage with it in his collection of seminars, titled *La vie la mort* [*Life Death*]. In it, Derrida contends that life and death are not two separate concepts, but as one notion—as "la vie la mort" —which also acts as a rupture of the center that life and death are an oppositional binary. *La vie la mort,* as Derrida refers to it, is a single term, one notion, which stems from the logic that "…l'être est la vie, où la vie est deux fois marquée, une fois comme mort (procès de la mort), une fois comme immortelle, impérissable…" ["…the being is life, where life is marked twice, once as death (process of death), and once as immortal, imperishable…"] (*La vie la mort*, 24). The juxtaposition of such complex phrasing suggests that life itself is marked with two distinct significations. First, the process of death is intrinsically tied to the notion of life (something that Freud suggests, as well, which I will discuss later), suggesting that life is inherently a long process of death. Next, Derrida suggests that life is also marked by immortality and imperishability. And, if we consider that the "being" is composed of a sense of life that is marked by a process of death and immortality, then Derrida ultimately posits that the central notion of life, or death, cannot be fixed oppositionally, and that, perhaps, life and death are so complexly intertwined that notions of immortality are also exhibited. Derrida fuses the two together as it concerns the living being, or the act of being itself, and continues from this point to suggest:

> …je voulais marquer que la même logique pouvait identifier entre elles les portées sémantiques de la vie et la mort (où l'et, e, t, signifie la position, juxta- ou op-position) et

> la vie est la mort (est), où la mort définit l'essence comme procès dialectique de la vie se gardant en vie, comme vie, se produisant et re-produisant, etc. (*La vie la mort*, 24)

[… I wanted to note that the same logic could identify between them the semantic significance of life and death (where the *and* signifies position, juxta- or op-position) and life *is* death, where death defines the essence as a dialectical process of life keeps itself alive, as life, producing and re-producing, etc.]

La vie la mort, or life death, as I will refer to it, is based on the logic that Derrida applies to the being above. Life and death are both juxtaposed and yet at once opposed to each other, and life is a process by which production and reproduction may elicit notions of immortality through the avoidance of death and therefore the sustaining of life. This life death theory merges well with the way in which Derrida's system of interplay also elicits notions of immortality through the ever-evolving systems of interplay, which in turn disrupt and supplement central notions about life and death. The system itself does not waver—although it becomes augmented, changed, or ruptured in some way. The signifying system will never cease to exist so long as there are observers to interpret the objects in the world. Thus, Derrida's system is in and of itself a version of immortality that the severed heads and vampires both elicit.

Is this, perhaps, what the French guillotine witnesses suddenly became aware of? Could they have had some sort of reckoning, rupturing a cultural imaginary, to realize that life and death are not oppositional, but rather sit within a central ideology of immortality, as Derrida suggests above? This signifying system, which had always existed, was ruptured suddenly to elicit a new kind of central notion for the guillotine observers. Perhaps it was that life and death never existed in sole terms, but that they always existed together, under one central notion of *death* that governed the signifiers of both life and death together, at once. The vampire's corporeal form does this as an undead figure yet does so in a similarly shocking and violent way in the same way the severed heads did. Perhaps, instead, what the guillotine has shown us is that

there is a natural drive in our bodies to keep living, even past the point at which we may consider death to overcome the corporeal form.

As discussed at the onset of this chapter, one's own mortality comes into question more fervently, here, in that it could be time to face the executioner as well. The anxiety then turns into one, perhaps, that is rooted in the staving off of death. For many, this could elicit notions of immortality, yet it could also refer to the ways in which we, as living beings, naturally *avoid* death throughout our lives whether through direct or indirect means. That is, does the act of living already give rise to notions of immortality given, under this logic, that life is filled with conscious and subconscious actions of avoiding death?

To better understand this theoretical question, I turn to Freud's theory of the death drive to gain insight into this act to keep living. Freud's theory posits that all living beings have a death drive, which is simply an organic impetus that leads all living, animate beings to death once they are born. He elaborates that "[if] we are to take it as a truth that knows no exception that everything living dies for *internal* reasons—becomes inorganic once again—then we shall be compelled to say that '*the aim of all life is death*'…" (Freud, "Pleasure," 38). To paraphrase his theory, there is a desire that motivates us all, which leads to our own natural end, and we, as living beings, do what we can to try to allow death to come naturally from within and not circumstantially, or unnaturally from without. Death from old age, for instance, is a natural death since it comes from within the body, whereas death by guillotine is an unnatural one since it is circumstantial, or from without. However, whether it be natural or unnatural, it is death that we attempt to repress by attempting to prolong life. It is this prolongation of life which concerns the figure of the vampire so heavily.

Clarimonde, for example, illustrates this in Gautier's text. Specifically, it is in her state of liveliness that she both fits in the death drive paradigm and also disrupts it. Being a revenant, she is in a state of prolonged life. She is immortal, a trait that disrupts Freud's theory on the death drive because she perpetually represses death. She can only be killed from without and no longer from within, something that is inherent with the figure of the vampire. Gautier's vampire, Clarimonde, is life and death personified, compelled not only to repeat the act of living, but to be born again each time she transgresses the threshold between life and death. In Gautier's tale, the vampire cannot truly be vanquished. For instance, even as Romuald and Sérapion break into her tomb at night, Clarimonde still shows signs of life even after interment. She is sprayed with holy water, screams, and then turns to dust. However, she cheats death again and returns to bid a last word to Romuald before the end of the tale. "Malheureux ! malheureux ! qu'as-tu fait ?" ["Unfortunate wretch! Unfortunate wretch! What have you done?"] She exclaims, as she interrogates Romuald the next evening in his chambers (Gautier, 92). She then disappears and he never sees her again. Even though he does not see her again, she is compelled to return, yet again, from her holy water death. What she says to Romuald in his chambers upon returning from this death are also the very same words she says to him at the beginning of the work. Clarimonde as a textual being personifies Freud's theory in creating more life, even after her death.[13]

Gautier's vampire, it seems, transcends the confines of the vampire trope, and continues to exhibit varying signs of life. Although she is destroyed from without, her inherent revenant state allows her to stave off the moment of death, returning again and again in different corporeal forms. In many ways, Clarimonde exhibits the various notions of terror that the Reign of Terror

[13] For an interesting, slightly paradoxical reading of Freud's death drive theory vis-à-vis narratology, see Brooks, Peter.

had evoked upon the crowds which gathered to witness the beheadings. When Charlotte Corday's severed head, for example, continued to show signs of life but in an altered and supplemented way that had not previously been witnessed among a mass imaginary, a flurry of anxiety sparked a simultaneous fear and fascination of images of the undead, altered, revenant states of ghoulish and ghastly qualities. Clarimonde evokes the same qualities of a disrupted life-death binary and distorted forms of return from the dead as she embodies simultaneous questions and anxieties of immortality.

To conclude this discussion, however, I pose various questions about what it means to sit within Derrida's system of interplay and to consider this notion of immortality as a sense of duplication of the self, as Clarimonde illustrates in her revenant, perpetual returning-from-the-dead state. Therefore, if the vampire may be considered to be a part of ever-evolving signifiers which infinitely and incessantly rupture, supplement, and augment central notions of the observers, then at which point comes the end? Vampires themselves, as discussed, are immortal perhaps due to this infinite system of interplay, which adds to their own composition of self and identity, allowing them to reproduce other versions of themselves and to stave off death. How, then, does the ultimate end come to be if this monster allows itself to reproduce life again and again? Vicky Kirby poses similar questions:

> If we consider the question of individuation in this way, as an expression of Life's enduring reproduction of itself, then within this scene whose identity is somehow unified and plural at the same time, it may seem that Death has been entirely overcome. After all, Life endures—reinventing and differentiating itself through infinite transubstantiation. Within this system, where the finite integrity of an individual existent (of whatever sort) seems impossible, how should we conceive the absolute limit, the end—mortality and

> finality, a last word, a final judgment? Indeed, is there 'one'? It now appears that this question, which ponders the transcendence of Death, the capacity for transubstantiation, final judgment, and the process whereby the word is somehow made flesh is irreducibly theological. (Kirby, 119)

Vicky Kirby posits an important argument here, that there may not be a way of understanding this finality without a theological precedent. Throughout this discussion, I have referred to death as the absence of life, or to life as the process or signification of staving off death. Yet, as Kirby poses above, might we assume that there could exist a sense of immortality without inherently posing the question of whether or not there is life after death—that is, a theologically centered notion of an afterlife? Could our bodies exhibit the signifiers for *death* yet we keep living in some altered way, transcended to a new plane of existence, an altered reality, or a great beyond? These questions have been, and will perhaps continue to be, difficult to answer. Yet one way to reframe this within Derrida's paradigm is to posit that the system of interplay that Derrida has theorized evolves forever, without end, becomes stabilized within a theological context.

For Derrida, a theological answer is that God is a stabilizing factor among the system of interplay. As a central notion, God is one that brings stability to the evolving supplements and interplay, and without such a transcendental centralizing notion, the system would cease to exist. This system would therefore be a "…système dans lequel le signifié central, originaire ou transcendantal, n'est jamais absolument présent hors d'un système de différences. L'absence de signifié transcendantal étend à l'infini le champ et le jeu de la signification" ["…system in which the central, original, or transcendental signified is never totally present outside of a differential system. The absence of a transcendental signified extends the field and interplay of signification to infinity"] (Derrida, "La Structure," 411). Thus, God, according to this statement offers

stability to, perhaps, an ontological anxiety of the dead coming back to life, as religion itself imposes absolutism, orthodoxia, and therefore all the "answers" to questions such as Kirby's. Yet, as discussed, the vampire seeks to disrupt this stabilizing factor.

If the vampire is a result of an ever-evolving play of signifiers and signified that thus ruptures and supplements central notions without end, then the vampire figure becomes antithetical to God, who stabilizes the perpetual evolution of signifiers. I argue that this could be the result of a lack of any grounding central signified notion. For instance, as I have shown throughout this chapter, the vampire is a result of an amalgamation of anxieties and oppositional notions that run counter, parallel, and juxtaposed to each other in such a webbed manner that the idea of the vampire having one sole central signified notion that dictates the interplay of all of its signifiers is quite difficult to conceptualize. At the very least, the stabilizing figure of God would be impossible to interweave into the vampire's interplay, for the monster necessitates a chaotic and continued evolution of central signified notions that God would be impossible to exist within such a system. Thus, perhaps this is the reason for which the battle between vampires and religious ideologies lies rooted within the vampire topos, particularly within contemporary iterations.[14] The vampire manifested and continues to manifest through ever-evolving signifiers, infinite supplementarity, and a web of anxieties which converge into the monstrous figures that propagate throughout contemporary popular imaginaries. Just as this particular interplay presented itself at the site of the guillotine during the height of the Terror, the interplay continues in vampire works in the nineteenth century.

[14] Reading the vampire as an antithetical figure to God creates such stark opposition among priestly characters within vampire tales. For more information on this aspect of the vampire as it relates to nineteenth-century French literature, see my fourth chapter titled "The Coming of Clarimonde: Gautier's Mimetic Christ and Feminist Subversion."

Chapter II

The Shadow of Vamperialism: Napoleonic Empire and the Code-Switching Vampiric Other

> "No other monster has been more closely connected to the expansion of empires and the fear of imperial decline than the vampire."
> —Glennis Byron and Aspasia Stephanou, "Neo-imperialism and the Apocalyptic Vampire Narrative: Justin Cronin's *The Passage.*"

Depictions of the vampire figure throughout the centuries have continually evolved, yet one thing remains the same: when imagining the vampire, what most often comes to mind is a figure with distinctly Eastern European features and a thick accent. This is a cultural phenomenon, no doubt resulting in part from Max Schreck's eerie features in F. W. Murnau's 1922 silent film, *Nosferatu*, or from Béla Lugosi's rendition of Dracula in Universal Pictures' 1931 film, in which he gave the vampire a voice, and hence the accent, for the first time on screen.[1] However, these notions of the vampire's ambiguous easternness in popular culture stem from cultural origins that predate these classical iterations. The vampire myth had evolved from Eastern convention, in which the monstrous figures represent the West's fears and anxieties about the encroachment of an under-developed culture—anxieties about the East. The contemporary iterations of the vampire that we know today stemmed from such anxieties in the nineteenth century when the West began to cultivate a certain simultaneous fascination with—and dominance over—the East. The East and the West as cultural conventions themselves also began to shift with the growing ideology of Orientalism. With the expanding imperial borders of the French Empire at the start of the nineteenth century under Napoléon Bonaparte, depictions of

[1] See Spadoni, Richard who talks about Lugosi giving the vampire the first on-screen voice and its uncanny effect on early cinema audiences.

the literary vampire began to be coded with imperial discourses. Suddenly, the vampire is not merely a foreigner with ambiguously Eastern ethnic features and an unplaceable accent—rather, it is a manifestation of a discourse about the foreign Other under the imperial gaze. And, as I will come to argue, empire and imperial expansion, be it through rhetoric or geopolitical conquest, becomes the very thing that it fears in the figure of the Other—that is, the empire is also a vampiric entity. The vampire then becomes a symbol for resistance to assimilation via its socio-political and psychic code switching.

To start our discussion, I turn to U. Melissa Anyiwo, who states:

> Thus the vampire functions in a multiplicity of ways depending on the cultural positioning of its creation; the ways a particular generation views itself, but in all iterations it mirrors our desires and concerns, while reflecting our solutions to the problems of the day. In this context, it is not only the intent of the production that matters but the ways that production is seen/understood by the audience. (92-3)

Anyiwo's claim suggests that for the creature that in contemporary tropes casts no reflection in a mirror, the vampire merely serves as a reflection of the various problems of the era in which it manifests itself. This claim leads me to contend that not only can race be coded onto the vampire trope, so, too, can empire and imperial expansion. Above all, I argue that the web of connections between empire and vampire do not solely justify the reading that the Other is vampiric, but also that empire can be coded with traits of vampirism. If the vampire-mirror that Anyiwo suggests reflects our desires and concerns, then in the context of the nineteenth-century works I will analyze, we begin to see how the vampires are cultural manifestations of the fears and desires of the French Empire. By employing two nineteenth-century vampire works—*La dame pâle* [*The Pale Lady*] (1849) by Alexandre Dumas and *La vampire, ou la vierge de Hongrie* [*The Vampire*

Woman, or the Virgin from Hungary] (1825) by Étienne-Leon de Lamothe-Langon—I will argue that both vampires, Kostaki and Alinska, are coded with ethnic and linguistic differences, which subsequently manifest into simultaneous fears and desires regarding assimilation of the Other. Specifically, for Kostaki (in Dumas's tale) it is both a fascination for, and desired conquest of, the Orient; for Alinska, (in Lamothe-Langon's) it is her neighbors' desire for her to assimilate and the fear of her language and religion, giving rise to underlying xenophobic and antisemitic discourses. Embedded here within both vampires is a discourse that is shrouded in the fear of the Other doing to the Empire what the Empire does to it.

The vampire reflects the Empire's own fears of being colonized: invasion of a foreign army, overthrow of government, forced assimilation to language and culture of the Other, and the extraction of resources. Therefore, the Empire with its imperialistic views of assimilation elicits the vampiric as well. I have therefore coined the term *vamperialism* to evoke a contrary reading that certain actions dictated within an imperialist ideology and enacted within or without a national body can be seen as vampiric. After all, the forced assimilation of an underrepresented minority parallels a vampire's modus operandi to transform the difference of others into a vampiric replication. The imperial goal seems no different when considering the ways in which the Jews or the Orient, for example, are depicted under the shadow of imperialism during the nineteenth century. Antisemitic discourse about the Jewish body also portrays the Jew to be a vampirizing and monstrous code-switcher. The nineteenth century posed many challenges for Jews to seem "non-threatening." Yet, as Jewish communities struggled with renouncing certain aspects of their religious practices and linguistic difference in order to gain French citizenship, they, too, needed to code-switch and comply with "traditional" marriage practices under Napoléon's reign. And, while U. Melissa Anyiwo's scholarship points toward the racialization of

vampires coded through their struggles to code-switch in contemporary society, the same could be said for the nineteenth century in Dumas and Lamothe-Langon's works, as I will discuss. What becomes important to consider are the various ways in which the vampire may be read, particularly as it concerns its relation to empire, consistent with Anyiwo's reading of the monster as a cultural mirror. The vampires, which I will discuss in detail, all portray in some form or fashion these revolving discourses that boil beneath an imperial gaze.

This imperial gaze, however, is part of the evolving discourse about the Orient as a space for our psychic and political vampirism to manifest. French fascination with the Orient began with Napoléon Bonaparte's interest in and study of Egypt in 1798. At this time, Napoléon spearheaded a series of state-sponsored expeditions to study the country's ancient history, as well as the contemporary culture, which is what became depicted as the Orient in art and literature (Saada, 356). This launched France (and Europe, in general) into a frenzied quest for knowledge about Egypt, and therefore greater knowledge about the Orient. For, as Edward Said posits, "Knowledge of the Orient, because generated out of strength, in a sense creates the Orient, the Oriental, and his world" (40). Knowledge about, and strength over, the Orient, in other words, is what created and maintained the concept of the Orient throughout France and the rest of Europe. So, Napoléon's drive to learn more about Egypt and the rest of the Orient was designed to produce cultural, artistic, and historical knowledge of these regions in order to have the imperial upper hand when it came to colonization and expansion of the empire. The Orient, however, is defined not only in terms of imperial knowledge and advantage, but it is also a defined geographical space, which lends more to its conceptual definition. Said posits that the Orient is both a broad eastern geography, as well as a concept that renders the Orient a European-made construct.

> [S]uch … geographical sectors as "Orient" and "Occident" are man-made. Therefore as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West. The two geographical entities thus support and to an extent reflect each other. (Said, 5)

The Orient is then rendered conceptually and geographically in terms that serve as a region of reflection of Europe, as Said states. The conceptualization of the Orient would not exist without European categorization as such, and, in this sense, the Orient is a place of deep European history, as well. As we begin to imagine the Orient as a geographical point of imperial interest that physically lies adjacent to Europe (in Northern Africa, the Middle East, and Asia), and as a space that has been bred out of knowledge of (and therefore an asserted strength over) it, it becomes clearer to see how imperial expansion in the Orient creates a systemic othering. With orientalism comes notions of imperialism, for it is how foreign empires invented, defined, and positioned the Orient contrary to themselves. It is within this framework of a temporal and geographic past from which the West is compelled to differentiate itself that I explore the portraits of three vampires from three separate works that span about 170 years.

In many ways, Netflix's 2020 French series, *Les vampires*, encapsulates the points of vamperialism about which I will elaborate in this chapter. The series depicts the struggles of an Algerian immigrant under the French Republic in modern-day France. In the series, ideas of French nationality are incredibly prominent for a family that struggles with their Algerian roots. Growing up in Belleville, a neighborhood in Paris, Doïna Radescu (played by Oulaya Amamra) navigates her high school academic and social circles as an Algerian with no French identity papers. Her Algerian father is missing, and her mother is forced to stay at home, as Doïna is forced to face the Republic and its social norms that force her to nationalize herself. She

struggles to communicate her situation with her superiors who need her to present French identification in order to take the *bac*.[2] Here, she struggles against the French Republic, a dominant force that pins her against her own national identity. She ends up obtaining a French identification card illegally, which grants her more opportunities in French society. The issues that the *bac* present to her, however, are only the beginning, as the Radescu family is composed of vampires.

Redouane, the father, is allegedly human,[3] and his wife, Martha, is a vampire. The two eldest children, Irina and Rad, are vampires. Of the two youngest, Andrea is human, and his sister, Doïna, starts becoming a vampire about halfway through the first episode. The two had been given a certain medication that their geneticist father left for them to ensure that, if there were to be any hint of a vampire mutation within them, it would not manifest itself. Andrea, he admits, stopped taking the medication long ago and is relieved to know that he is fully human. Doïna stops taking it as well, and the vampire mutation begins to slowly manifest over the course of the first few episodes. However, Doïna is different from all the others—she can go out in the sunlight and her blood has healing properties. She is the only known hybrid in the entire vampire society. While she wrestles with being hybrid in the human world, she must also navigate the othering that she experiences as a vampire trying to assimilate into French society as human-passing. (Dupas, et al.)

Doïna in *Les vampires* is already established in French society and the education system, yet she is still stuck at the imperial boundaries that are imposed on her regarding this assimilation. Doïna must choose between the life she lives as an Algerian immigrant and her

[2] The French *baccalaureate*, or *bac*, is a multisubject exam equivalent to a high school exit exam in the US yet is internationally recognized. For more information, see "The French Baccalaureate" by the French Embassy Cultural Services.
[3] We find out in the last episode that Redouane, who is missing throughout the series, is actually a vampire.

newly attained French identity. She must choose between living a human-passing life and as a vampire hybrid. Once she receives help to receive fake French *papiers,* or identification, she becomes a threat to these boundaries from *within* the society, rather than *without*—as is the case with the vampires in Dumas's and Lamothe-Langon's works, as I will discuss. Her plight is coded with the ways in which the French Empire colonized and assimilated the indigenous people of Algeria during the nineteenth century. Her navigation across and through these boundaries throughout the series presents an analogous situation with what U. Melissa Anyiwo calls "code-switching" in marginalized communities within contemporary society, here with vampires among humans.

> The contemporary vampire, just like his forebears, trades on the ability to seduce us into believing he is like us. Like real marginalized groups, their ability to achieve some modicum of acceptance trades on two vital abilities: to appear non-threatening and to code-switch. These abilities define the course of movements for social change, particularly when it includes groups with visible markers of difference, like skin colour, existing in majority populations where there exist well-developed stereotypes about them. In this context, code switching includes the ability to seduce those on the inside by learning to play at coded normality so that they do not unsettle those that fear their difference. (Anyiwo, 95)

Doïna's survival in a modern world still grappling with imperialist ideologies depends on her ability to code-switch to maintain appearances and pass as both human and as a French national. The many circles of her non-threatening existence begin to threaten her in return. That is, her friend circle at school isolates her, she is continually questioned by her *proviseur* [*advisor*] about taking the *bac*, and within her vampire circle, the encroaching presence of the

governing *La communauté* [*The Community*] begins to threaten her existence as her identity and loyalty are incessantly put into question. These challenges complicate her code-switching ability and thus create great difficulty for her throughout the series. The Netflix series is coded with the struggles of immigrant families and their plight to assimilate to French culture, which is deeply embedded with conflicting cultural values. Where there are vampires within society, issues of assimilation, stereotypes, and discrimination are surely coded within the topos, as Anyiwo suggests. This aspect of code-switching, however, is not unique to Doïna's situation—indeed, there have been many Doïna's before her who, like her, struggled to maintain a grasp of their own place within an imperialist discourse. However, Doïna is not the only one of our vampires who struggles to maintain their identity under a vamperialist shadow.

Alexandre Dumas's 1849 novella, *La dame pâle*, similarly deals with imperialist and expansionist themes, but depicts a young woman named Hedwige narrating her experience traveling from her native Poland to what is modern day Romania, fleeing her homeland due to the Decembrist Revolt in 1825.[4] What she recounts is a journey that seems to take her backward in time, a landscape brimming with superstition, and a sudden encounter with bandits that kill her companions and take her captive at their family's castle. The family at the castle is Moldavan and, after discovering that Hedwige is not Russian, she becomes less of a captive and treated more as an honored guest—yet, she is still not allowed to leave the castle. Of the family, the mother, Smérande is somewhat like ancient royalty and her two sons, Kostaki and Grégoriska (half-brothers and leaders of the bandit group), also exhibit traits of ancient empires from the

[4] The Decembrist Revolt, or Decembrist Uprising, was a result of the death of Russia's Tsar Alexander I. The uprising took place when the new Tsar, Alexander's younger brother, ascended the throne of Russia. At this time, the throne of Russia also cast its imperial shadow over Poland, as the Tsar of Russia was also considered the King of Congress Poland. The uprising was defiance against Russian imperial rule and called to arms many separatists to fight for Poland's independence.

way in which they are dressed. Among the family, only one can speak a mutual language with Hedwige: Grégoriska speaks French with her and becomes the intermediary for his family's communication with her. Grégoriska, however, makes Hedwige aware of a family secret—one that takes the form of an ancient curse that is passed down through the generations to some male members of the family. Kostaki, Grégoriska tells Hedwige, is a vampire, and desires to take Hedwige as a victim. The ways in which Dumas renders the vampire character, Kostaki, exhibit traits of imperial discourse from past empires. Specifically, Dumas depicts the imperialist ideologies of French as a lingua franca, and therefore as Hedwige's savior, as well as clothing as a marker for imperial expansionist ideologies which portray an undercurrent of racial and ethnic discourses of the nineteenth century.

Although there was little linguistic assimilation throughout the various imperial departments, Dumas's work resurrects ideologies of imperial superiority of the First Empire. At the height of the Napoleonic Empire during the early nineteenth century, the imperial borders comprised 130 departments across Europe, which created an empire that was linguistically diverse, as Michael Rowe contends, "The vast majority of 'new Frenchmen' living in these departments did not speak French as their native language, nor enjoy the sense that they naturally belonged to France" (134). However, according to Stewart McCain, "linguistic unification remained an explicit aim of policy under [Napoléon]. The majority of such efforts were directed toward the speakers of the other standardised languages spoken within the Empire—German, Italian and Dutch—and were transparently aimed at securing French as the language of literature, elite communication" (3). So, if we consider these two claims—that there was a linguistically diverse majority, and that French was forced onto the elites of the Empire—Hedwige's French-speaking abilities become even more nuanced.

Although the novella takes place in 1825, long after the fall of the First Empire, Hedwige is depicted as a specter of imperial elitism in speaking French the way she does, since it was during Bonaparte's reign that Poland became the Duchy of Warsaw under the control of the First Empire.[5] She states, "[Le] français, vous le savez, [est] pour nous autres Polonais une langue presque maternelle" ["French, as you know, [is] for us other Polish people almost a maternal language"] (Dumas, 15). Not only does this language use position her above those who do not speak French, but she also presents herself to be of the elite culture that was assimilated into the French language within the borders of the Empire. Grégoriska, the non-vampire brother, is also able to speak French due to his assimilation into "Western" culture (more on this later) and is then able to communicate the family vampire curse to Hedwige and guide her to safety from Kostaki's vampirism. So, Hedwige's use of French exhibits a continuation of the Empire's effect on language and creates a savior ideology surrounding the French language and for the French Empire, as well. "C'est dans cette langue que vous m'avez défendue contre les desseins de votre frère, c'est dans cette langue que je vous offre l'expression de ma bien sincère reconnaissance" ["It is in this language that you have defended me from the designs of your brother, it is in this language that I offer you the expression of my sincerest appreciation"] (Dumas, 16). Suddenly, French becomes a vehicle for protection and grace, as language becomes a signifier for unification here, but also for difference and superiority.

On the other hand, Kostaki's inability to speak French monstracizes him and therefore others him further. In recounting the events, Hedwige situates herself based on her ability to speak French above those who speak other languages in the novella. For instance, during the combat that leaves most of her group killed before being taken to the Brancovan castle, she

[5] The granting of Warsaw to France was a result of the Treaty of Tilsit, a peace agreement between the First French Empire and Prussia after the War of the Fourth Coalition (1806-1807).

states, “Pendant le combat, [Kostaki] poussait des cris rauques et inarticulés qui semblaient ne point appartenir à la langue humaine…” [“During the battle, [Kostaki] let out hoarse and inarticulate cries that did not seem to belong to any human language…”] (Dumas, 9). In recounting the event, Hedwige positions herself above Kostaki in labeling his language as something inhuman. She does not recognize what is being said, and therefore renders it monstrous. Later, in the castle, Kostaki attempts to speak with Hedwige. “Alors, Kostaki prononça en français quelques paroles presque aussi inintelligibles pour moi que celles qu’il avait prononcées en moldave…” [Thus, Kostaki spoke in French a few words almost as unintelligible for me as those that he had said in Moldovan…”] (Dumas, 22). Though he attempts to use the French language, she does not understand him. The incomprehension further solidifies the barrier between them, as she sees herself as the linguistic superior and him the foreign Other.

However, Hedwige’s recognition of defeat and danger comes at a moment when her superiority fades due to the ever-encroaching and threatening borders of an ambiguous geographical Orient. In the Brancovan residence, upon realizing that Hedwige is Polish, and therefore no longer a threat, she is asked to dine with the family upon her arrival. She is seated in a very monarchical fashion. “Alors chacun prit sa place, place fixée par l’étiquette : Grégoriska près de moi. J’étais l’étrangère, et par conséquent je créais une place d’honneur à Kostaki près de sa mère Smérande” [“Then everyone took their seats dictated by etiquette: Grégoriska next to me. I was the stranger, and consequently I created a place of honor for Kostaki next to his mother Smérande”] (Dumas, 22-3). She is an honored guest, yet recognizes that she is the foreigner, so her customs hold no place at the table. Her foreignness renders her vulnerable, and consequently puts her in danger in the vampire household. She finds herself in a centuries-old castle

surrounded by people who speak a different language than her. While she is the endangered foreigner, the household represents an encroaching Orient, one whose borders now devour the borders of others. The vampire in Dumas's text, however, remains in the East, and therefore remains enmeshed in the superstition of the Orient.

Dumas's vampire, specifically, displays mobilized discourses related to the Ottoman Empire, which according to scholars is typical of the vampire topos. Florent Montaclair's scholarship on the nineteenth-century vampire posits: "Pourquoi associer … le vampire et les Turcs ? … parce que non seulement des récits vampiriques désignent le Turc comme vampire, mais aussi parce que les zones d'apparitions de ce dernier coïncident parfaitement avec les zones d'invasion turcomanes" ["Why associate … the vampire and the Turks? … Because not only do vampire stories designate the Turk as a vampire, but also because the locations of vampire apparitions perfectly coincide with the areas of Turkish invasion"] (Montaclair, *…au motif romantique,* 26). The vampire, then, according to Montaclair and exemplified by Dumas, is inherently imperial by way of the Ottomans. According to Stephen Arata, even in Bram Stoker's novel, *Dracula* (1897), Castle Dracula's location was almost set in Styria, which is located in Austria. However, Stoker changed the setting to Transylvania, in what is Romania today—although at the time of Stoker's writing it was located in the Kingdom of Hungary within the larger Austro-Hungarian Empire. Arata states that Stoker made this switch because Transylvania was part of the "vexed 'Eastern Question' that so obsessed British foreign policy…" (627). Yet, more importantly to our discussion, this change occurred because "Victorian readers knew the Carpathians largely for its endemic cultural upheaval and its fostering of a dizzying succession of empires" (627). Thus, the region has been assumed in the Western world to be associated with

"political turbulence and racial strife" (627).[6] Dumas's vampire is coded with such imperial-Oriental discourse.

The way in which Dumas depicts the vampire Kostaki in the novella is justified by both Montaclair's and Arata's observations. In the novella, Kostaki's ambiguously Turkish garb matches this association with the Turkish Empire that Montaclair suggests, and the geographic location of the novella—modern day Romania—was once a part of the Ottoman Empire. What Montaclair and Arata seem to suggest here is more than an associative observation of the vampire and empire, but even that there is a more grounded link between the two. In depicting the vampire as an Oriental figure, Dumas exemplifies the inherent expansionist and migratory discourses of empire that are coded onto the vampire. Montaclair and Arata imply that the vampire mobilizes notions of conquest, expansion, and notions of imperial assimilation. Dumas may be implying that they were once assimilated into (or somehow associated with) the Ottoman Empire, which stretched far into Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and along the Mediterranean coast of North Africa (Shaw, et al., par. 1). Considering the borders of the Ottoman Empire at its height grounds the vampire more clearly within an Oriental origin, even while in Eastern Europe.[7] The vampire in Dumas's novella, then, is a clear derivative of empire. And, while it is

[6] Arata's work echoes many points in this chapter, though does so through a lens of British imperialism, thus drawing on *Dracula* (1897) primarily. For more information, see Arata, Stephen.

[7] Many vampire tales within contemporary culture, and even during the nineteenth century, situate the vampire's origin within some ambiguously Eastern European geography that, according to Jan L. Perkowski's research, is deeply rooted in notions of the Orient. The classic image of the Eastern European vampire may not actually have such a clearly defined history within a European context, but instead one that derives from a Middle Eastern influence. To paraphrase Perkowski's work, the vampire myth in contemporary culture has an ancient Slavic origin but was posited there by migrating Iranian influence. According to Perkowski's thorough research, the Slavic vampire myth is deeply rooted in dualistic, pre-Christian, religious cults in Eastern Europe. For instance, there are certain names of gods that are directly borrowed from the ancient Persian language, specifically due to Scythian and Sarmatian influence in Eastern Europe. Christianity eventually spread during the ninth and tenth centuries, and "for a rather long time, especially among the East and Balkan Slavs there existed a state of "dual faith" in which Christianity existed side by side with the older Slavic religion, whose gods were now perceived as devils" (Perkowski, 23). This form of religious othering and (literal) demonization, coupled with further heavy influence over the centuries from various Iranian religions, developed into Bogomilism, where the vampire myth, according to Perkowski, began to take form. This shift to Bogomilism led to groups of people who began to believe in vampires,

now clear that the vampire in Dumas's work derives from a clearly defined Oriental empire (the Ottoman Empire), where this becomes clearer still is the way in which Hedwige others the Brancovan family through her own use of the French language.

Hedwige's account of the way she used French to guide her to her own safety illustrates the perceived difference between eastern and western cultures that was part of this cultural imagining of the Orient. This aligns with Said's claim that the Orient is "the source of [Europe's] civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other" (Said, 1). This is part of the imperial ideology that conceived the Orient, as well: that there is imperial strength over the Oriental Other, as perpetuated through knowledge and strength over (and colonization of) the Orient. Said clarifies, "Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, 'us') and the strange (the Orient, the East, 'them'). This vision in a sense created and then served the two worlds thus conceived. Orientals lived in their world, 'we' lived in ours" (Said, 43). If we consider these statements from Said and Hedwige's linguistic perspective in Dumas's text, the larger picture of the political, imperial scope of language in the vampire text becomes clear: French is used as a means to thwart the vampire danger, as if to say that French (or, Western) culture allows for the separation of good and evil and salvation from the Other, specifically one whose roots lie in the Orient, such as Kostaki and his family. However, one outlier in this discussion is Grégoriska, Hedwige's savior, who is able to linguistically code-switch between Moldovan and French. We could say that potentially, if he were to be the vampire, he would be more dangerous for having the ability to blend in with French society, as a

perpetuated by fears of non-Christian beliefs (Perkowski, 23-7). Eastern Europe, then, became a launching point of the vampire myth into the West, as it also became a space for an ambiguous blend of European and Oriental culture. The ambiguity of Eastern Europe as part of the Orient is made very clear in Dumas's vampire novella.

dangerous threat from within. Although in Dumas's text, the vampire threat is located in the East to situate a geo-linguistic boundary between good and evil, Étienne-Léon de Lamothe-Langon's vampire novella brings the vampire threat to France directly.

Lamothe-Langon's 1825 work *La vampire, ou la vierge de Hongrie* depicts a different kind of foreign threat—one who has already crossed the national border into France, seeking to terrorize a soldier's family for breaking a blood pact. While Dumas's Kostaki represents French fascination with the Orient, Lamothe-Langon's Alinska presents a threat to French society and the infiltration of the monstrous, foreign Other. In Lamothe-Langon's work, Alinska (the vampire) and her servant, Ladislas, have recently moved to the outskirts of Toulouse from Hungary. It is revealed that she is there to seek revenge on her former lover, Édouard Delmont, who now has a new family. Alinska and Delmont met while he was serving under Napoléon's army during the War of the Third Coalition (1803-1806).[8] Delmont became injured, taken to a farm by his confidant, Raoul, and while under the care of the farmer, fell in love with his daughter, Alinska. Eventually, they made a blood-pact to become married, however, Delmont was called back into service when he healed and never saw Alinska again, ignoring her letters and heated warnings about breaking this ritually sealed promise. Little did he know of the traditions and superstitions of the East and, by leaving Alinska, he damned her to become a vampire to walk the Earth in search of the one who broke the blood-sealed promise. At the fall of the Empire and start of the Bourbon Restoration in 1815,[9] Delmont moved his new wife, Hélène,

[8] The First of the Napoleonic Wars under Bonaparte's rule. France and its satellites entered into war opposing an alliance among the United Kingdom, the Austrian Empire, the Russian Empire, Sweden, Naples, and Sicily. Napoléon had already been at war with the United Kingdom, and his actions in Italy and Germany brought the other nations into an alliance against the First French Empire.

[9] After Bonaparte's defeat at Waterloo in 1815, the Empire was dismantled, and a new monarchy was put in place as government. The Bourbon Restoration lasted from 1815 to 1830, with King Louis XVIII as the head of government until his death in 1824. King Charles X succeeded and ruled until his forced abdication in 1830 due to three days of riots in July 1830 (known as Les Trois Glorieuses).

and their two children to a village outside of Toulouse to escape Paris and Bonapartist persecution. Raoul, his confidant, also moved with them. Eventually, Delmont is called away to Nantes to help his sister in need, leaving his family under Raoul's care and falling into Alinska's plot for revenge, as she moves to the town shortly after. Upon Alinska's arrival, whispers begin to smolder among the neighbors about the arrival of foreigners.

Alinska and her servant are instantly perceived as foreigners based on their language use, and othered by the community. Alinska's neighbors gossip before meeting her or her servant: "tout ce qu'on a pu conjecturer, c'est que ces gens-là ne sont point nés en France ; ils ont un accent bizarre, et entre eux ils se servent d'une langue étrangère" ["all that we managed to guess is that those people there were not born in France; they have a weird accent, and between them they use a foreign language"] (Lamothe-Langon, ch. 3). Alinska and her servant are at first depicted through the perspective of their neighbors, and in a way that renders them reclusive, outcast, and even immoral. Lamothe-Langon creates an exchange between Hélène Delmont and her cook, Germaine, about the foreignness of the newly arrived neighbors and the alleged threats they pose to their society:

> [Germaine :] … Ce sont peut-être des Anglais hérétiques qui quittent leur pays maudit de Dieu, où jamais, dit-on, le soleil n'a brillé tout un jour, où la vigne ne mûrit point, et où le figuier n'a jamais pu prendre naissance.
>
> [Hélène :] Eh bien ! Si cette dame est Anglaise, elle n'ira pas à l'église, et vous ne la verrez pas dimanche à votre aise.
>
> [Germaine :] Cela serait-il possible ? Ah ! Les vilaines gens, qui n'entendent pas la sainte messe ; on devrait les brûler tout vifs. Ils sont huguenots, peut-être ? Là ! Voyez ! De

vilains ; *parpaillots* ! Mais, non, ce n'est peut-être : la dame est bonne chrétienne, et elle ne fuira pas l'église comme une excommuniée. (Lamothe-Langon, ch. 3)

[[Germaine:] … Maybe they're English heretics who leave their God-damned country, where they say the sun never shined for a whole day, where the vineyard doesn't ripen, and where the fig tree never managed to grow.
[Hélène:] So? If that lady is English, she won't go to church, and you will never have to see her on Sundays.
[Germaine:] Would that be possible? Ah! Those dreadful people who never hear the holy mass; we should burn them all alive. Maybe they're Huguenots? There! See! Dreadful *Protestants*! But, maybe it's not so: the lady is definitely Christian, and she will never leave the Church as an excommunicate.]

This exchange displays quite a few important details about the attitude toward foreigners in a monstracizing way. The monstrosity already begins to take shape here, even before Alinska is revealed as a vampire. Alinska's incorrectly assumed nationality brings with it larger held beliefs about the assumed country of origin. By rendering the country a barren wasteland, Germaine and Hélène depict a foreign national as one that poses a potential threat to the offerings of the new society in which Alinska finds herself—one who might take advantage of the bountiful luxuries that the contemporary Toulouse society offers. This exchange illustrates a prime example of what Stephen Arata states is a "reverse colonization" narrative. In this case, Arata would state that the fear that Hélène and Germaine exhibit is that their "…'civilized' world is on the point of being colonized by 'primitive' forces" (Arata, 623). That is, Alinska's arrival threatens a society that regards itself as more developed. They further speculate that because of her assumed origin, Alinska will have certain religious practices that are threatening to their own, going so far as to say that they should be burned alive for not attending mass. Alinska is therefore rendered monstrous based on her origin and traditions, spreading a national rhetoric of an unassimilated foreign Other, much like the way the Jewish community was viewed during the nineteenth

century, a point to which I will return. In the meantime, however, we can also read this exchange between Hélène and Germaine the other way around.

Hélène and Germaine's portrait of Alinska and Ladislas not only shows their perceptions of the foreigners, but it also reflects their own monstrosity. Their quick, impulsive resolution to the perceived religious difference between them and their new neighbors is to burn them at the stake. This is reflective of a grander, more dramatic socio-political fear of the foreign Other that results in violent actions enacted by the state or a national body politic against the Other, thereby rendering the state—here, the Empire—vampiric. The vamperialism that is reflected in Lamothe-Langon's work is subtle and is only present in small exchanges like the one above. However, this notion that the government displays its own form of vampirism under imperialistic ideologies of assimilation is also present in the other two vampire works I have discussed. Doïna's case, for example, in the Netflix series, shows us that even under the guise of a modern Republic, notions of vamperialism manifest as hurdles through which Doïna must navigate. In episode 1, her *proviseur* states, "Syriens, Chinois, Afghans, Maliens … de dizaines de familles sans papiers… et dans mon lycée, on ne dénonce pas. Tu as le bac français dans quelques semaines. Tu peux pas te présenter sans un papier officiel. Tu le sais ?" ["Syrians, Chinese, Afghans, Malians … dozens of families without documentation … and at my high school, we don't report them. You have the exit exam in a few weeks. You can't show up without documentation. You know that?"] (Dupas, et al.). Not only is the government requiring her to assimilate to a "French" identity, but she must also do so in order to succeed academically. Though the proposed punishments in the two works are different—Germaine proposes to burn the foreign neighbors at the stake and Doïna will not be able to take the *bac*—the two scenes reveal the ways in which vampires are presented as those who do not belong, those who are *without* a national or communal identity, yet who attempt to

break through and refute the boundaries of vamperialism. Alinska and Ladislas in Lamothe-Langon's work, for example, choose to reside without assimilation into the community.

One of Hélène's neighbors, M. Berneval comes to her home to gossip about the newly arrived Alinska and Ladislas. He states that he spontaneously wanted to introduce himself to the new neighbors. To his surprise, he is met with Ladislas—a foreign, monstrous figure—who both bars his entry and refuses to assimilate into society. M. Berneval continues his account of their conversation about wanting to meet Alinska. Ladislas states: "Je ne puis … vous introduire ; ma maîtresse, constamment occupée, n'a aucun moment à donner à la société. Elle n'est pas venue ici pour chercher le monde, et ce serait sans résultat que vous vous présenteriez chez elle une seconde fois" ["I may not … introduce you; my mistress, very busy, has not a moment to give to the community. She did not come here to make friends, and it would be without result should you present yourself here a second time"] (Ch. 5). Alinska's refusal to assimilate sparks doubt and rumors among her neighbors. M. Berneval's strange experience seems to be centered more on the fact that he was not allowed inside. He is confronted with a foreigner who has set a threshold that he is not allowed to cross, reminiscent of an encroaching foreign threat on national borders, which subsequently layers notions of xenophobia.

Alinska and Ladislas are both viewed as threatening foreigners, and the anxiety that is exhibited by their new neighbors is analogous to the xenophobic, even antisemitic, attitudes toward foreigners during the nineteenth century. Although Lamothe-Langon's work does not explicitly detail an antisemitic reaction among Alinska and Ladislas' neighbors, the reactions above parallel antisemitic discourse. According to Jack Halberstam's scholarship, the vampire and the Jew, as depicted by antisemitic discourse, are two strongly connected figures.

> [The] vampire … bears some relation to the anti-Semite's Jew. If this is so, it tells us nothing about Jews but everything about anti-Semitic discourse, which seems able to transform all threat into the threat embodied by the Jew. The monster Jew produced by nineteenth-century anti-Semitism represents fears about race, class, gender, sexuality, and empire — this figure is indeed gothicized or transformed into an all-purpose monster. (Halberstam, 92)

Halberstam's argument here is significant, as it is not that the Jewish body had become the monster in nineteenth-century vampire fiction, but that it was the attitudes and discourse about the Jewish body that rendered it monstrous. This connection between Jew and vampire, as argued by Halberstam, becomes clear when the Jew is marked with a monstrosity that is largely attributed to the trope of the vampire.

Blood libel describes events throughout history since the Middle Ages wherein the Jewish community has been falsely persecuted due to accusations of sacrificial killing and drinking blood. Blood libel is part of a xenophobic rhetoric serving a particular political and societal agenda to monstracize the Jewish Body, which creates a locus for blame and fear, and a threatening foreign Other. Sarah Libby Robinson's scholarship speculates about why the myth of blood libel was so widely propagated, stating: "Over the centuries, Jews have emerged as Christianity's religious vampires, their supposed misdeeds tied to the misuse and consumption of Christian blood" (15). Her work details that from missing, dead children, to Host wafer tampering and accusations of spreading disease through drinking children's blood, blood libel has been the historical rhetoric for the vampirized Jew as a scapegoat for societal and political unrest (ch. 2). Robinson speculates:

> Over the centuries, it became a wide-spread article of belief that, since Jews did not worship Christ and attempted constantly to undermine his authority, they were monsters who performed black magic and worshiped the devil. Connecting Jews with Satan built on the idea that the devil also shared responsibility for the crucifixion. The supposed connection between the devil and the Jews also contributed to the widespread belief that Jews were demons with horns, tails, and horrible bodily odors, all attributes of Satan. (17)

Robinson's statement here parallels the way in which Germaine and Hélène describe the alleged non-Christian new neighbors and implies that there is a monstrous physicality associated with the religious Other. For example, Halberstam notes that "The anatomy of the vampire, for example, compares remarkably to anti-Semitic studies of Jewish physiognomy — peculiar nose, pointed ears, sharp teeth, claw-like hands …" (14). This parallel also aligns with the way in which M. Berneval describes the Ladislas' monstrosity, as well. He states that when he initially went to Alinska's home and knocked on the door, the door suddenly opened with no one present to answer. He states that he hesitated and was about to let himself in when Ladislas appeared. M. Berneval states: "J'allais entrer, lorsqu'un vrai fantôme se présente et me barre le passage. Figurez-vous le plus haut des humains, et assurément le plus maigre ; un visage de trappiste, des yeux de hibou, un air plutôt d'un habitant de l'autre monde que d'un citoyen de celui-ci ; la parole dure, le geste roide, l'haleine empoisonnée" ["I was going to enter when a veritable wraith presents himself and bars my passage. Imagine the tallest of people, and certainly the slimmest; a face of a Trappist, owl eyes, rather an air of someone from the Other World than a citizen of this one here; hard words, stiff movement, poisonous breath"] (Lamothe-Langon, ch. 5). From what seems to have started as a conversation between Germaine and Hélène about the religious differences of their neighbors, and considering M. Berneval's account of physical monstrosity, I

argue that what begins to manifest is a hybrid discourse about religious groups being categorized as monsters, therefore as racialized figures. Specifically, while M. Berneval does not make explicit remarks about Ladislas' race, his physical description is coded with antisemitic and xenophobic attitudes. Thus, if we consider the link between vampires and Jews that Robinson suggests, the parallels between the racialization of vampires and Jews become clear; a hybrid discourse evolves from one about the Jewish religion into one about the Jewish race, just as this discourse evolved politically and socially in the nineteenth century.

Under Napoléon Bonaparte's empire, issues of assimilation regarding Jews at first concerned their religious family practices. Napoléon established the Assembly of Jewish Notables in 1806 in order to address with them issues the government had regarding certain religious practices that had inhibited their integration into French society. Joshua Schreier's scholarship on the history of Jewish assimilation in France posits that the Assembly's purpose was to "determine whether Jewish law was compatible with the *code civil*" (78). That is, the Assembly had been created and gathered to address the nation's questions on Jewish integration in society. Napoléon posed twelve questions to the Assembly to ensure that Jewish religious practices were following French law, first and foremost: "That the list of twelve questions began with three directly tied to marriage law and family customs suggests that [Napoléon] saw private morality and the relative positions of men and women in the family as fundamental components of citizenship" (82). Specifically, the questions were about "polygamy, divorce, and intermarriage" (78). This grand inquiry is not unlike the reaction that Hélène, Germaine, and M. Berneval have upon meeting their new neighbors and discussing among themselves their integration into French society based primarily on their language use, religious practice, and physical features.

Lamothe-Langon's text and the Assembly of Jewish Notables both inquire about religious practice as the basis for difference and othering. The question of Jewish assimilation manifests into a figure depicted as a reclusive monster refusing to assimilate to societal custom and, in the case of the Jewish Notables, to French law. Eventually, according to Schreier, the Assembly was later renamed the Grand Sanhedrin and was tasked with upholding French law before religious law within certain communities throughout France. The Grand Sanhedrin later dissolved within an evolving *mouvement régénérateur* [*regenerating movement*], under which *consistoires israélites* [*Jewish consistories*] had been formed. Schreier states that, "These were Jewish-staffed community organizations that Napoléon founded in the wake of the Grand Sanhedrin to 'enlighten' the Jews, whom many observers still considered unassimilated, immoral, even 'oriental'" (79). Schreier does not elaborate on the use of scare quotes, particularly those used around *oriental* in the work. However, one may rightly speculate that this is used to refer to those in the early nineteenth century who might have assumed the Jewish communities to have an ethnic origin that is part of the larger scope of the Orient, as I discussed earlier. This not only creates a socio-political boundary between the Jewish people and the West, but also further supports the connection of the vampire and the Jews; the vampire is also deeply rooted in notions of the Orient. More to Schreier's point, however, Napoléon's "enlightenment" of Jewish communities through a code of law that prohibited certain religious functions was a way of forcing the imperial and colonial ideologies onto a community of religious difference. That is, his determination to gather Jewish notables and charge them with upholding French marriage laws was a means to further colonize the Orient and to enforce French vamperial rule. This underlying notion of colonizing the Orient by encouraging the assimilation of Jews began to transform the antisemitic discourse of the nineteenth century from one that is situated on

religious difference to one that is based on the racial difference of Jews. This specific transition has been traced out by Lisa Moses Leff's scholarship on Jewish history.

Leff's scholarship suggests that Jews began to use the French language to self-identify as a race to form solidarity within the community to combat antisemitic discourse in the nineteenth century. The discourse transformed from a religious difference into a racial one, as Leff states, "By the mid-nineteenth century, Jewish publicists were confronting new challenges that necessitated new modes of self-defense. Racial self-identification allowed Jews to describe themselves in terms … [that] served two functions at once, providing a language of self-defense against traditional attacks on Judaism and also a way to explain continued distinctiveness" (8). This distinctiveness, Leff continues, "unlike differences in religious doctrine or morality, would not set Jews outside the French national body" (9-10). Considering Schreier's scholarship above, it becomes clear why this newly formed racial self-identification allowed for more visibility and acceptance in France. The religious difference set Jews outside of the national body due to certain marriage and family practices that were seen contrary to French law. However, with Napoléon's various state-sanctioned *consistoires* under the *mouvement régénérateur*, national assimilation began to slowly gain momentum among reformist Jewish communities who encouraged integration to society and even, much later, became advocates for naturalization (Schreier). Leff states:

> The Jews, like the Gauls or Franks, could be understood as a once wandering tribe, settled in France, with distinctive and admirable moral and physical characteristics, living alongside the other races in France in peace under a single set of institutions and laws. It was not, then, the political law of conquest that Jewish publicists seem to have liked in race-theory, but rather, the statement of the natural right to difference and the concept of

> the modern French state as a mediator between racial groups of unequal strength … [For example,] Both Salvador's *Institutions de Moïse* [*Institutions of Moses*] and the equally influential two-volume *Résumé de l'histoire des Juifs* [*Summary of the history of Jews*], published in 1825-1828 by Léon Halévy, can be read as a defense of the Jewish religion and as a statement of the Jewish people's natural right to racial distinctiveness. (14)

So, with this newly formed self-identification of *racial distinctiveness*, the Jews were still able to gain a sense of individuality and solidarity within an empire that, in a way, forced religious assimilation in accordance with French marriage law, as Leff states. However, this distinctiveness that Leff posits did not render this an easy transition because of the evolving discourses about race theory in the nineteenth century making this categorization difficult.

There were varying and conflated approaches to race theory and racial categorization during the nineteenth century, as Leff states, which led to a hybrid antisemitic discourse about the Jewish religion and the Jewish race. The difficulty in determining race was prominent for the Jewish community when they began racial self-determination: "The meaning of the Jewish use of racial terminology remains obscure and troubling, especially considering the subsequent history of racial discourse" (Leff, 9). The indeterminability of racial categorization made race theory in and of itself ambiguous during the nineteenth century. This echoes, in a way, the conversation between Germaine and Hélène about their vampire neighbors ambiguous racial and ethnic categories.

According to Emmanuelle Saada, one prominent race theory discourse was based on the notion of polygenism—by way of geography and ethnology, which is "the belief that different human races stemmed from distinct origin groups" (Saada, 355). This theory, although widespread in various cultures, became very prominent in France, according to Saada, in the

eighteenth century under the ideology of birthright and noble lineage as markers for race. It is a "shift [which] results in part from the narrative of the old aristocracy in conflict with an ever more powerful monarch, which affirmed its political right by calling itself the descendants of the conquering Franks against the Gauls" (Saada, 354). Therefore, if we consider the divisive field of race theory, then we may see how this shift in identification from religious group to racial group became difficult for Jews, as Leff suggests above, since the theories were not consistent, and many were fairly new. Therefore, discourses about the Jewish body emerge as one that is both part of religion and race and begins to reveal deeper notions about hybridity in general. This idea of hybrid identities is exemplified in our vampire works, as well.

The ways in which Doïna is portrayed aligns with this evolving discourse of hybridity. In the Netflix series, Doïna must seek the help of the clandestine society *La communauté* in order to obtain a fake French identification to take the *bac*. Her alignment with this underground society is taboo in her family, and she resisted it for so long, because her family believes that Csilla Nemeth (played by Kate Moran),[10] the leader of the society, is responsible for Doïna's father's disappearance. Csilla's son, Ladislas, surveils Doïna, and seduces her to assimilate to *La communauté*. Csilla states, "[Ladislas] me dit qu'elle est spéciale. Très spéciale. Du genre … hybride" ["[Ladislas] tells me you are special. Very special. A kind of … hybrid"] (Dupas, et al.). Doïna succumbs to the pressure; in order for her to become truly hybrid and pass as both vampire and human, she needs to assimilate to the vampire society's wishes. Her hybridity is multifaceted, and thus aids her in survival, both as a vampire and as a human. Doïna's sister,

[10] As it turns out, the origin of the name Csilla is Hungarian, and Nemeth, also Hungarian, means "German." This could be an interesting indication of why Csilla speaks French with an anglophone accent, as discussed a bit later on in this chapter. It is also a coincidence that her son in the series is named Ladislas, a name of Slavic descent, but also the name of Alinska's servant in Lamothe-Langon's 1825 work *La vampire, ou la vierge de Hongrie.* Could Csilla and her family also come from Hungary? These small details are not discussed explicitly in the series but are interesting connections that bear mentioning in any case, and that help to ground further that the vampire is typically associated with Eastern Europe.

Irina (played by Juliette Cardinski), also initiates contact with *La communauté* in secret because she needs a new fake identification: "J'avais besoin de faux papiers de nouveaux … parce que c'est compliqué quand t'as l'air d'avoir 30 balais et que ta carte d'identité qui marquait : « Chantal, née 1960 en Algérie française »" ["I needed a new fake ID … because it's complicated when you look like you're 30 and your ID card said 'Chantal, born 1960 in French Algeria'"] (Dupas, et al.). *La communauté*, then, becomes a governing body on which the Other not only depends, but also by which the Other is taken advantage.

It bears mentioning at this point that in the Netflix series, *La communauté* is clearly presented as a superior governing body for all other vampires. And juxtaposed to the Radescu family who depends deeply on *La communauté* for their survival in the human world, this dependent relationship begins to parallel the ways in which Jews both depended on the State for protection and for assimilation. Csilla Nemeth, for example, owns all the slaughterhouses at which Rad and Irina work, but also from which they take home the drained blood to feed the rest of the vampires in the family. Csilla then controls their nourishment, survival, and employment––and in episode 3, during a point of contention between the Radescu family and *La communauté*, Csilla has the vampires fired from the slaughterhouses, thus throwing the vampire family into blood insecurity. They have to make amends and placate to their governing party in order to be fed and, ultimately, survive. The series also leans into racial difference, as well. Csilla Nemeth, specifically, speaks French with an anglophone accent. And, her son Ladislas, and her husband Gabor, are played by white (or, at least, white-passing) actors (Kate Moran, Aliocha Schneider, Theo Hakola), and at different times throughout the series, they all speak English briefly with one another. *La Doyenne* [*The Elder*], who is *La communauté*'s reigning elder, is also played by a white actress and whose celebration among *La communauté* members is met with a Medieval-

esque dance routine. Martha, Doïna's mother (played by Suzanne Clément) gives a toast of blood at this celebration to reconcile with *La communauté*: "Un sang. Une loi. Une mère"[11] ["One blood. One law. One mother."] (Dupas, et al.). Belen, *La doyenne*, (played by Marilú Marini) then responds:

> [Belen:] Qui est des nôtres est à jamais des nôtres. Buvez.
>
> [Everyone:] Une mère.
>
> *And they all drink.* (Dupas, et al.)

[[Belen:] Who is ours is always ours. Drink.
[Everyone:] One mother.]

The cult ceremony enmeshed with notions of class and racial superiority, poverty, and the Other's dependence on this superior governing body certainly underscores the overarching theme in all three of these vampire works that portrays notions of racial othering similar to experiences of the Jews in the nineteenth century under Napoléon's codes. This kind of racial othering appears in Dumas's tale, as well.

Dumas's racial othering offers a clear depiction of how race was viewed in the nineteenth century, which becomes an important factor for the broader notions of xenophobia within the work. Grégoriska recounts how during his childhood his father "résolut de faire de moi un Européen," ["resolved in making a European out of me"] and so they left "pour la France, l'Italie, l'Espagne et l'Allemagne" ["for France, Italy, Spain and Germany"] (Dumas, 18). He continues to recount that while he and his father were away, his mother had an affair with a man

[11] An eerie echo of King Louis XIV's revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, consequently eliminating Protestant protections and civil liberties in France (thus causing a mass exodus), during which he stated: "Un roi, une loi, une foi" ["One king, one law, one faith"] (see "Edict of Nantes," par. 3). With this historical context in mind, *La communauté*'s declaration here is an ominous one, and perpetuates notions of racial, ethnic, and religious cleansing.

who was “moitié Grec, moitié Moldave” [“half Greek, half Moldovan”], from which Kostaki was born (18). He refers to Kostaki as:

> la créature indomptable … dont les passions sont la seule loi, qui n’a rien de sacré en ce monde que sa mère, qui m’obéit comme le tigre obéit au bras qui l’a dompté, mais avec un éternel rugissement entretenu par le vague espoir de me dévorer un jour … [Une] fois en pleine campagne, il redevient le sauvage enfant des bois et des monts, qui veut tout faire ployer sous sa volonté de fer. (19-20)

[the untamable creature … whose passions are the only law, who has nothing sacred in this world apart from his mother, who obeys me like the tiger obeys the arm that tames it, but with an eternal roar tamed by the slightest hope of devouring me one day … Once he’s in the middle of the countryside, he becomes a savage child of the woods and mountains who only wants all to yield under his iron will.]

Kostaki’s monstrosity is not only marked by his extrahuman categorization, but now by his multi-ethnic heritage through his brother’s xenophobic lens. The explicit discussion about ethnic origin and disdain for the mixed ethnic categories depicts a vampire who represents society’s racial Other. He is othered as a result of being ethnically hybrid and because of his refusal to assimilate, which allows us a glance into nineteenth-century racial categories and attitudes, emphasized also through Hedwige’s description of Grégoriska.

The contrasting descriptions of the two brothers highlight two prominent modes of cataloging race during the nineteenth century. Not only was Grégoriska assimilated into Western culture, but Hedwige also describes him as “de haute taille, avec de grands yeux” [“tall height, with big eyes”] and that “[ses] longs cheveux blonds, indice de la race slave, tombaient sur ses épaules comme ceux de l’archange Michel” [“[his] long blond hair, a hint of his Slavic race, fell on his shoulders like that of the archangel Michael”] (12). This statement further exemplifies the conflated theories of race and the differences in how to talk about, or refer to, one’s race or

ethnic origin in the nineteenth century. Hedwige implies that the notion of race is tied more to one's belonging within a certain ethnic category, even tying race to biology, by indicating that Grégoriska's blond hair is a signifier for his Slavic race. Dumas emphasizes the ethnic background of both the brothers, signaling the nineteenth-century understanding of race as a cultural or national heritage. Grégoriska is posed in the work as Hedwige's savior and is described here as more Western (in education and in ethnicity) than his half-brother Kostaki. So, Dumas's text, full of xenophobic disdain for Kostaki's mixed ethnic categories, creates a vampire figure who represents two forms of racial ideologies of the nineteenth century, much in the same way the nineteenth century perpetuated varying discourses about the Jewish body above. This leads, quite literally, to a "race war" in which there is conflict over ethnic origin, birthright, and the racialized conflict of human versus vampire (Saada, 354).

Additionally, Hedwige's description of clothing creates notions of further difference between the East and West. Kostaki wears "le splendide et majestueux costume magyar, sous lequel il me sembla plus étrange encore. C'étaient une robe de velours vert, à larges manches, tombant au-dessous du genou ; des pantalons de cachemire rouge, des babouches de maroquin brodées d'or" ["the splendid and majestic Magyar suit, under which it seemed more strange to me still. There was a green velvet dress, with long sleeves, falling just below the knee; red cashmere pants, Moroccan leather slippers embroidered with gold"] (Dumas, 22). His signifiers portray a slightly different ethnic origin, which lies both in modern day Hungary in his "costume magyar" ["Magyar suit"], but also in Northern Africa with his "babouches de maroquin" ["Moroccan leather slippers"]. Grégoriska "portait la tunique magyare comme son frère ; seulement cette tunique était de velours grenat et ses pantalons de cachemire bleu. Une magnifique décoration pendait à son cou : c'était le Nichan du sultan Mahmoud" ["wore the

Magyar tunic like his brother; only this tunic was dark-red velvet and his blue cashmere pants. A magnificent ornament hung from his neck: it was the [signet of] the [Order of Glory] of Sultan Mahmud"] (Dumas, 23). Both brothers wear the traditional ethnic Hungarian tunic yet have additional signifiers that place them in slightly different geolocations of the Orient. Kostaki's is Moroccan, Grégoriska's is ambiguously Ottoman. The clothing for Hedwige is an additional marker for ethnic (or, racial) origin and therefore a marker of space. With these descriptions of both race and clothing, Dumas presents an underlying Oriental discourse. Kostaki's blended racial categories juxtaposed with his Oriental clothing signifiers suggest that race categorization and assimilation is inherently tied to imperial notions of expanse, conquest, and colonization.

Within the context of the nineteenth-century discourses on race theory, the imperial conquest of Algeria becomes a prime locus for understanding the question of race and assimilation, exemplified by the French Empire's desire for the Jews' assimilation. Within the shifting modes of government, the assimilation of the Jews in Algeria had been of varying, changing priorities. However, according to Schreier, the question of Algerian Jewish naturalization had shifted in the 1830s when "letters and appeals flew between the minister of war, the governor general, and the Central Consistory in Paris, asking that the government allow the consistory to "organize" the Algerian Jews and help spread France's *mission civilisatrice*" ["*Civilizing Mission*"] (87). Decades later and surviving the various government reforms of the nineteenth century, Napoléon III,[12] during France's Second Empire, took this *mission civilisatrice* a step further than the "organization" of indigenous Jews in Algeria.

[12] Also known as Louis-Napoléon. He was Napoléon Bonaparte's nephew who, like is uncle, was elected President of the Second French Republic in 1848 and then later declared himself Emperor of the Second French Empire in 1852.

> [Napoléon III] declared Algeria an "Arab Empire" and himself emperor of it … [and] in 1865 he decreed that all indigenous Muslims and Jews would have the choice of formally renouncing their own, religiously defined personal status, adopting the French one, and applying for full citizenship. In other words, citizenship would henceforth be available to all indigenous people who chose to live by French family law. (Schreier, 99)

This "conquest," however, was very different from the way in which Napoléon Bonaparte, during the First French Empire, sought control over the Orient by gaining knowledge about Egypt through studying its rich history and culture during the late eighteenth century. In this way, Napoléon III sought to impose control over the Orient by affixing all of Algeria into an "Arab Empire" and then annexing that empire into the already existing French Empire. The "choice" of assimilation, then, becomes slightly different within imperial borders than it does within an imperial colony. Suddenly, the choice of assimilation became the same choice that Bonaparte gave to Jews during the Assembly of Jewish Notables in 1806 through his interrogation of religious practice. Now, the question of assimilation of indigenous Jews becomes a legacy of both French Empires. So, not only do the evolving race theories of the nineteenth century present conflated and confused ideologies for cataloging and tracing race, but it is also further conflated by the notion of statehood and citizenship that the Empire "offered" to indigenous Jews in Algeria. To require the renouncing of certain religious practices also meant renouncing a cultural identity because it granted full "French" citizenship under the newly formed and annexed empire. The legacy of assimilation, however, did not die with the Empire, but continues to live on as a revenant of imperial ideologies within the modern French Republic, as demonstrated by Doïna's experience.

Doïna's attempt at assimilation and the boundaries imposed on her present the ongoing threat of imperialist ideologies within modern French society. Glennis Byron and Aspasia Stephanou's scholarship sheds light on the ways in which imperial legacies are embedded into the workings of modern republics. Byron and Stephanou suggest that while older versions of vampire tales portray a foreign Other, as seen in both Dumas and Lamothe-Langon's novellas, the modern vampire tale can be read as a "move away from this representation of the vampire as the foreign other, instead demonstrating that the threat it embodies is something produced from within," stating that this is the working of neo-imperialist infrastructure (192). We understand, then, that although Doïna's vampirism is shown slightly differently due to an evolved form of imperialism, the cause and effect of her vampirism and her othering—and that of her forebears, Alinska, Ladislas and Kostaki—are directly related to the ways in which unassimilated communities were forced into assimilation by a vamperialist entity, but also because their own survival depended on it.

Therefore, I conclude that U. Melissa Anyiwo's vampire-mirror—discussed at the outset of this chapter—not only reflects the desires and fears of the observer, but that the vampire is also a reflection of the vampirism that is inflicted upon various unassimilated groups. To the colonies, the French Empire is a vampiric force enacting on foreign soil that which it sought to impede in the foreign Others who refused assimilation. To that end, I argue that the imperial force of assimilation is inherently vampiric, for it is the vampire that forcibly turns its victims into other vampires in an attempt to create a nest or society of replicated vampires, so the same could be read into the government ideologies in the nineteenth century concerning the expansion of empire. The Napoleonic Wars of the early nineteenth century, for example, allowed those who resided in the Empire's extra-territorial departments to bask in the glory of citizenship.

Therefore, at the height of imperial expansion, as Michael Rowe points out, there were growing numbers of "new Frenchmen" who served in Napoléon's military (135). Thus, by conscription, Napoléon's vampirism created more vampires, turning their difference in nationality into servicemen of the vampiric imperial shadow.

However, this discourse on assimilation continues to mobilize through the centuries with contemporary iterations of the vampire, as well. Doïna's "choice" to assimilate to French society by obtaining an although fake French identification card renders her a victim to the vampiric imperialism that French society continues to inflict upon marginalized groups. Whether it is a Napoleonic Empire or a modern French Republic, the vampire will present itself, as Anyiwo suggests, as a mirror to the culture of the era for it to see its own fears, desires, and, as I argue, its own vampirism that it commits against the Other. I wonder, however, how much we might be able to consider geopolitical boundaries—or, in this case, the Orient—as a space that vehiculizes vampirism. In other words, does space dictate how the Other is formed, thereby monstracizing and vampirizing the Other? Alexandre Dumas's intro to *La dame pâle* (1849) might suggest that this is the case.

As I have discussed, Dumas's *La dame pâle* depicts Hedwige, a French-speaking young Polish woman on route to Sahastru in modern-day Romania, as she flees the Russian invasion of her homeland. Hedwige's journey over the Carpathians indicates an entry into a distant, foreign, and temporally ambiguous land. As she enters the region of her future captivity, she states, "Nos monts Carpathes ne ressemblent point aux montagnes de votre Occident. Tout ce que la nature a d'étrange et de grandiose s'y présente aux regards dans sa plus complète majesté" ["Our Carpathian Mountains do not resemble the mountains of your Occident. All that nature holds strange and grandiose appears there to the eye in its most complete majesty"] (Dumas, 3).

Hedwige, at the outset of her adventure, positions the geography of Eastern Europe in opposition to that of the Occidental world. That is, she renders this region Oriental from the start by granting it a mysteriousness that sets it apart from the West. Furthermore, by positioning a clear differentiation between the Orient and the Occident, Hedwige's voyage also depicts a journey backward into an implied uncivilized region, back to a primitive, savage state. Her group's guide leads them on their journey, singing a song to situate their newly found presence in a region of a different time:

> Dans le marais de Stavila,
>
> Où tant de sang guerrier coula,
>
> Voyez-vous ce cadavre-là ?
>
> Ce n'est point un fils d'Illyrie ;
>
> …….
>
> Une balle au cœur du brigand
>
> A passé comme l'ouragan.
>
> Dans sa gorge est un yatagan. (7)

[In the swamp of Stavila, / Where much war-ridden blood ran, / Do you see that cadaver there? / It is not a son of Illyria; / … / A bullet in the heart of the bandit / passed through like the storm. / In his throat is a yataghan.]

Much in the same way that Hedwige positions the Carpathians as a region that is much different than other mountain ranges in the West, the song also displays further differentiation between the East and West. The soldier does not belong to an Illyrian empire,[13] but rather he is an unknown who was killed by someone from an implied eastern empire. Specifically, the song ties the region temporally to an ancient Turkish empire with the "yatagan" (an old Turkish sword) in the

[13] Illyria is an ancient region on the western side of the Balkan peninsula and was home to the Illyrians, an ancient Indo-European people. See "Illyria."

soldier's throat. Turkey is a region that itself lies on a confused intercontinental boundary, being both a part of Europe and the Middle East, and was the heart of the Ottoman Empire which, as discussed, spanned both Europe and Asia. The song portrays this region that has been infiltrated by the East as a dangerous place, as well.

> … malheur à celui
>
> Qui passe au marais près de lui,
>
> C'est un vampire ! Le loup fauve
>
> Loin du cadavre impur se sauve,
>
> Et sur la montagne au front chauve,
>
> Le funèbre vautour a fui. (8)

[… Misfortune to he / who traverses the swamp next to him, / He is a vampire! The wild wolf / Far from the impure cadaver escapes, / And on the bald mountain side, / The funereal vulture fled.]

The song continues to recount the body of the unknown soldier who has transformed into a vampire. This further emphasizes Hedwige's journey into a land brimming with superstition and mysterious, haunting qualities. Bram Dijkstra justifies Hedwige's experience that Eastern Europe is more Orient-like in its appearance while it echoes past eastern empires and is rooted in superstition. Dijkstra states, "the East was symbolic of the past, the morning of the world, the pre-evolutionary era, while the West could only be the *Abendland*, the land of fruition, ripened by the light of the sun, harbored in the bosom of evolutionary transcendence" (335). According to this song and Hedwige's account of the difference between the East and West, the Orient is a place where superstitions pose a threat. The soldier's transformation into a vampire after being killed by an ancient Turkish sword implies that the East was viewed with an air of primitivism and danger. The song comes as a moment of foreshadowing for Dumas's plot yet is also a

warning to those who dare venture into this unknown and confusing land. The juxtaposition of a temporal geography with the dead man's transformation into a vampire begins to pose new questions on whether or not space in vampire works is simply dictated by the genre, or if there might be some evidence for this occurring at the level of the social sphere. My next chapter deals with exactly this question in which I will discuss the mystery of a real-life occurrence of vampirism within nineteenth-century Paris, dictated in part by space and violence.

Chapter III

"Ambiguïté du sang versé": Vampiric Movement and Violence in Haussmann's and Louis-Napoléon's Paris

> "Les buveurs de sang obéissaient à la vieille croyance aux vertus régénératrices du sang encore chaud, plein de la vie du corps qu'il abandonne, et donc capable de vivifier celui qui le boit."
>
> [The blood drinkers respected the old belief in the regenerative properties of the yet-warm blood, full of the life of the body which it abandons, and therefore capable of reinvigorating he who drinks it.]
>
> —Noëlie Vialles, *Le sang et la chair : Les abattoirs du pays de l'Adour* [*Blood and Flesh: The slaughterhouses of the Adour countryside*]

One day, Mary, a little girl, and Tulotte, her aunt, set out on a journey to the slaughterhouse on the periphery of their village. However, Mary starts out thinking her aunt is taking her to get some milk from the dairy farm. They travel by foot on what seems like a long distance for the young Mary. As their village's panorama disappears behind them, the long journey eventually leads to the final destination. To Mary's surprise, she does not see any cows of the pleasant disposition that she is used to seeing when they pass through her village, their bells clanking with each step. At the destination, just before passing through the door of the establishment, Mary asks, "Amène-moi voir la vache, dis?" ["Hey, take me to see the cow?"] "Tu es une sotte" ["You are an idiot"], Tulotte retorts, "il n'y a pas de lait ici et tu n'en boiras pas" ["There is no milk here and you won't drink any"] (Rachilde, 6). Instead of dairy farmers, Mary is met by a team of young butchers, one of whom, seemingly younger than the rest, brings out a bovine. She soon begins to realize the scene of horror about to unfold in front of her: "Le garçon approcha le seau de cuivre et plongea son couteau rond dans le cou épais de l'animal. Un

jet de sang fusa sur ses bras, sur son tablier, sur sa poitrine, et ce jet tomba, à mesure que le couteau s'enfonçait, dans le seau avec un bruit de fontaine ruisselante" ["The boy approached the brass bucket and plunged his curved knife into the thick neck of the animal. A jet of blood spurted onto his arms, onto his apron, onto his chest, and this jet fell, as the knife sunk, into the bucket with a sound of a streaming fountain"] (Rachilde, 10). Today, Tulotte has taken Mary to a slaughterhouse to fetch what Mary thinks is milk, but in reality Tulotte is here to collect freshly drained bovine blood as a remedy for Mary's sick mother.

> Vous voyez ! disait le boucher s'essuyant les doigts pour verser un peu de sang bouillant dans la boîte au lait qu'il eut le soin de bien recouvrir, ce n'est pas plus malin que cela et il ne souffre qu'une minute. Il faut bien manger, n'est-ce pas ? Moi, je crois que c'est un fameux remède pour la poitrine. D'ailleurs, j'en boirais par plaisir … oui, un verre plein, mais il faudrait parier une bouteille … car on a besoin de s'ôter le goût ! … (Rachilde, 11)

["You see!" Said the butcher, wiping his fingers to pour a little boiling blood into the milk carton which he had care to wrap up. "It's no worse than that and it only suffers a minute. We do have to eat, don't we? *I* believe that it's a famous remedy for the chest. By the way, I drink it for fun … yes, a full glass, but you should wager on a full bottle … because we have to remove the taste! …]

Mary faints. She eventually comes to and is taken home where the blood is given to her mother, Caroline, to help treat a pulmonary illness. After Mary and Tulotte arrive at home with the blood they fetched from the butcher—and while the two girls are also told that "c'est un fameux remède pour la poitrine" ["it's a famous remedy for the chest"] by the butcher—it is eventually revealed that Mary's mother was also instructed by her doctor brother-in-law to drink cow's blood for her illness (Rachilde, 11).

This scene in Rachilde's 1887 *La Marquise de Sade* is shockingly much more grounded in reality than one might first consider. Specifically, there are a few key aspects illustrated in this bloody scene which will be elaborated in this chapter. First, the travel that Mary and Tulotte must undertake, though they are not located in Paris in the novel, is similar to what one needed to have undertaken in nineteenth-century Paris to reach the slaughterhouses because, during Baron Haussmann's renovation of Paris, the slaughterhouses were pushed to the outskirts of the city. Travel, however, is an interesting aspect of the vampire topos; in Bram Stoker's 1897 *Dracula*, for instance, Dracula travels from Transylvania to London. In Théophile Gautier's *La morte amoureuse* [*The Dead Woman in Love*] (1836), Clarimonde is caught in a state of to-and-fro between dream-like imaginings and a more rigid, harsh reality, and in Étienne-Léon de Lamothe-Langon's *La vampire, ou la vierge de Hongrie* [*The Vampire Woman, or the Virgin from Hungary*] (1825), Alinska travels from her native Hungary to stalk a former lover in the south of France on the outskirts of Toulouse. Second, Mary and Tulotte bear witness to a gruesome type of ritual at the slaughterhouse, which we will consider in this chapter, using René Girard's terminology, to be sacrificial in nature. Third, the journey was undertaken to fetch some freshly drained cattle blood to bring back to Mary's mother for her to drink. This practice was not uncommon in nineteenth-century Paris—on the contrary, as I will discuss, crowds of people gathered to partake in this odd delicacy. Rachilde puts these aspects into one gruesome scene, yet they seem to complement each other as pieces of a larger puzzle about different forms of violence.

In this chapter, I will elaborate that during Haussmann's renovation of Paris, different types of violence occurred according to the social hierarchy. The violence present in Paris during the Second Empire is largely the result of Haussmann's renovation of the city, and arises as real,

physical forms of violence and also symbolic manifestations. Louis-Napoléon's and Haussmann's renovation of Paris was a bifurcated type of state-sanctioned violence that perpetuated a sense of social control. On one hand, the violence that occurred on the city of Paris was designed to prevent uprisings and insurrections, and thus the streets were made wider and longer in order to prevent barricades and to allow the state's military to travel from one end of the city to the other very quickly. Therefore, we read this type of violence as a response to violence itself, that is, as René Girard posits, *legal* violence opposing *illegal* violence. On the other hand, however, the development of urban areas, renovations of slums into more affluent neighborhoods, perpetuated a violence of social stratification. Specifically, the poorer, marginalized communities, were pushed upward and outward. The new apartments' floors were designated to class and income level, with the higher-up units dedicated to the poor and lower classes. And although the people were stratified within the city-center, they travelled outward and mingled at the slaughterhouses in order to partake in the blood-drinking together, as we see in Rachilde's text. This class mingling occurs to interact with the symbiote of the butcher system whose ritualistic slaughter serves as a sacrifice to cleanse the stratified people, providing such a space for the mixing of classes and a remedy for their physical ailments. Throughout this chapter, I will engage with René Girard's *La violence et le sacré* [*Violence and the Sacred*] to aid in parsing these different forms of violence to portray their relationship with each other and to argue that vampirism is a result of violence, and that the blood-drinking at the slaughterhouses located at La Villette is a real-life manifestation of this argument. Before doing so, however, it is important to understand how these converging points of violence stem from the actual blood-drinking that occurred at La Villette.

Blood-drinking as a Medical Remedy

Mary's and Tulotte's adventure in Rachilde's text above is strikingly similar to what occurred at the slaughterhouses located in Paris' La Villette neighborhood during the nineteenth century. The medical theories vary, although one thing is clear: the consumption of blood from freshly slain cattle drew in crowds of people for the purpose of curing some sort of malady and is rooted in a deep history of cultural tradition. According to Maeva Rafron in "Buveurs de sang" ["Blood Drinkers"] from the *Dictionnaire politique d'histoire de la santé* [*Political Dictionary of the History of Health*] :

> Chaque matin, une foule principalement féminine accompagnée d'enfants, mais issue de couches sociales particulièrement variées, se rend auprès des sacrificateurs israélites afin de boire le sang frais des animaux sacrifiés, l'abattage rituel permettant seul de recueillir assez de sang nécessaire à cette méthode de soin … L'ingestion de sang se fait principalement afin de combattre l'anémie, mais également les faiblesses du corps, parfois provoquées par les atteintes de la phtisie. Le sang écarlate et encore chaud de vie est perçu par les malades, comme capable de leur apporter la vigueur nécessaire à leur rétablissement, car l'imaginaire populaire associe fortement à ce fluide vital rouge, les vertus de la force et de la vie. L'idée d'un sang nourricier et réparateur est ainsi répandue dans les esprits. (Par. 3)

[Every morning, a primarily feminine crowd accompanied by children, but from particularly varied social classes, gathers near the Jewish sacrificers in order to drink the fresh blood from sacrificed animals, the ritual slaughter permitting to collect only enough blood necessary for this method of treatment … The ingestion of blood occurs principally to combat anemia, but likewise the weaknesses of the body, often provoked by the ravages of tuberculosis. The scarlet blood still warm with life is perceived by the sick as capable to bring them the vigor necessary to their recovery, because the popular imaginary firmly associates to this red vital fluid the virtues of strength and of life. The idea that a nourishing and restorative blood is thus widespread in the psyches.]

Rafron's statement on the matter reveals that this practice was not only a homeopathic remedy for pulmonary and sanguinary ailments, but also that it is very closely related to notions of sacrificial violence, and a form of sacrifice that is linked to a Jewish tradition of butchery. Indeed, many journalists of the period noted the similarity between the kind of butchery that occurred at La Villette and what they saw as a violent, sacrificial ritual related to Jewish butcher tradition—a point to which I will return soon and in much detail. First, however, we must understand the social impetus of congregating en masse at the slaughterhouses. The act of blood-drinking itself, as Rafron states, seemed to have been common enough for nineteenth-century newspapers to write about the subject. Eugène Muller in *Le monde illustré*[1] [*The Illustrated World*] writes: "Ces libations sont-elles efficaces ? C'est une question à laquelle personne n'a su me répondre ; cependant on m'a dit que les consommateurs ne reviennent pas longtemps. La plupart ne cessent d'aller boire à l'abattoir que parce qu'ils ont été portés au cimetière" ["Are these libations effective? This is a question to which no one knew how to respond for me; however, they did tell me that the consumers don't return for long. The majority only stop going to drink at the slaughterhouse because they were taken to the cemetery"] (91). And Paul Laurencin from *L'illustration : journal universel*[2] [*Illustration: Worldwide News*] states:

> Dans quelques cas d'épuisement et d'anémie, les médecins préconisent, depuis une vingtaine d'années, le sang absorbé au moment où il sort vermeil et chaud des artères d'un animal. Cette horrible médication à laquelle on se résigne, quand la science a avoué son impuissance, s'administre aux abattoirs de la Villette … Les unes, ceux qui sont au déclin de la vie, regardent, boivent quelquefois indifférents, quelquefois avec répugnance,

[1] Muller's entry is titled "Les buveurs de sang," (p. 90-1) and was published in the newspaper *Le monde illustré* on August 8, 1874. See Muller, Eugène.
[2] Laurencin's entry is titled "Les buveurs de sang aux abattoirs de la Villette," (p. 86) from *L'illustration : journal universel* which was, coincidently, also published on August 8, 1874. See Laurencin, Paul.

> mais toujours résolument, avec l'espérance de retrouver dans ce sang quelque regain de jeunesse et de force. (86)

[In some cases of exhaustion or anemia, doctors have advised, for about twenty years, blood swallowed the moment it leaves, ruby in color and warm, from the arteries of an animal. This horrible medication to which one relinquishes oneself, when science admitted its powerlessness, is administered at the slaughterhouses at La Villette … Those who are in decline in life watch, drink, sometimes indifferent, sometimes with repugnance, but always resolutely, with the hope of finding something in this blood some revival of youth and strength.]

These accounts detail that this was not merely a fad or a symbol of social status, but rather these occurrences of blood-drinking all manifested out of what seems to be a desire to regain a strength lost on the physical, corporeal form. For sudden illness, whether sanguinary (anemia) or pulmonary (tuberculosis), blood was, allegedly, the cure. And what might have been a disgusting avenue to regain said strength, these accounts detail a slowly acquired taste for the warm, red life-force, perhaps due to the psychological (perhaps placebic) notion that the blood will actually give them strength. And, as Noëlie Vialles posits, "Quelle que soit la méthode, l'idée directrice reste que le sang est roboratif, parce qu'il est la vie même. C'est pourquoi il faut se rendre dans les abattoirs, pour y trouver le sang dans sa chaude effusion. Ambiguïté du sang versé" ["Whatever the method, the main idea remains that blood is restorative because it is life itself. This is why it is necessary to go to the slaughterhouses, to find there the blood in its warm effusion. Ambiguity of spilled blood"] (ch. 4, par. 34). While the blood that is spilled comes from the killing of other animals, the vampire myth has long held on to the regenerative and restorative nature of consuming blood.

Accompanying the commentary from the journalists above were graphic images of the act. Closer inspection of the act in illustration will reveal a few of the aspects revealed by Rafron above, as well, which are important to our discussion. Although Rafron's claims portray crowds of varying class distinctions gathering to drink blood, each image individually portrays a single

social class. Gueldry's work in figure 4 portrays the highest of classes, most likely upper class, based on how everyone is dressed in bustles and top hats, and particularly because of the way the child (center) is dressed in what appears to be a ruffled jabot. The woman (center), crouched down and reaching toward the butcher offering her a freshly poured glass of ox blood, provides a significant statement for our discussion. She represents the higher class coming to the outskirts, interacting with the symbiote, and reaching out to blend with others and challenge the stratification by partaking in a vampiric act of violence. M. Claverie's work in figure 5 presents an interior crowded with high-class individuals wearing fancy, floral-lined hats with wide brims and ribbons for the women and top hats with perfect neckties for the men. There is an eerie sense of calm throughout the scene, given how crowded it is, with each person seemingly content with the act of slaughter and vampirism. What is significant about figure 5, however, is that the only ones who are actively partaking in the blood-drinking are men, with one woman (right) perhaps refusing what is about to be offered to her. Figure 6 provides a slightly more chaotic and crowded scene than the preceding images. The people who crowd the slaughterhouse yard are seemingly middle class, with loose-fitting dresses, smocks, and bonnets for the women and simpler shirts and hats for the men. Finally, Bombled's work, drawn from life, (figure 7) also portrays a higher class, though one woman (right) who stands at the entrance, awaiting her turn to drink, is questionably lower in class status. However, the woman (center) who stands in the foreground, complete with bustle and corset, amidst the chaotic and deathly background seems rather content as her body perks forward and she sips the blood.

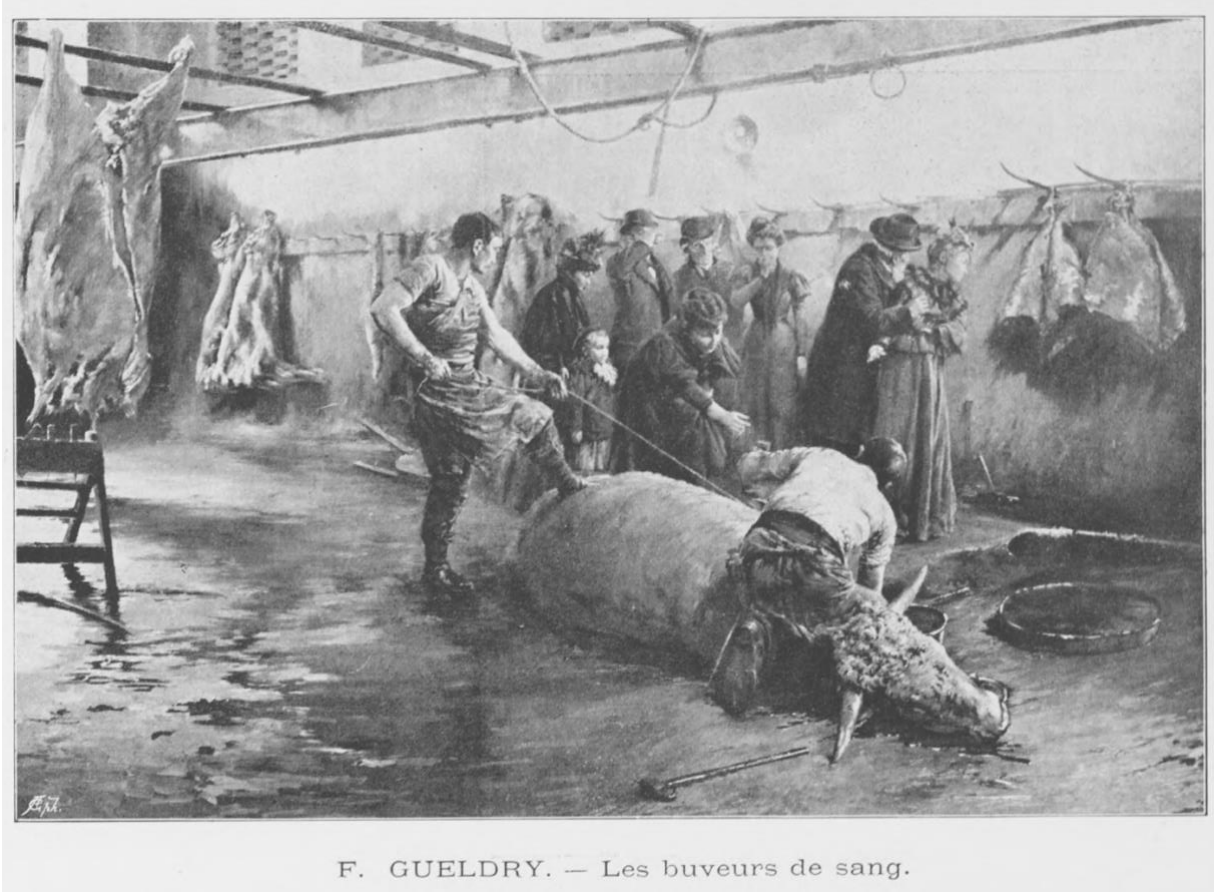
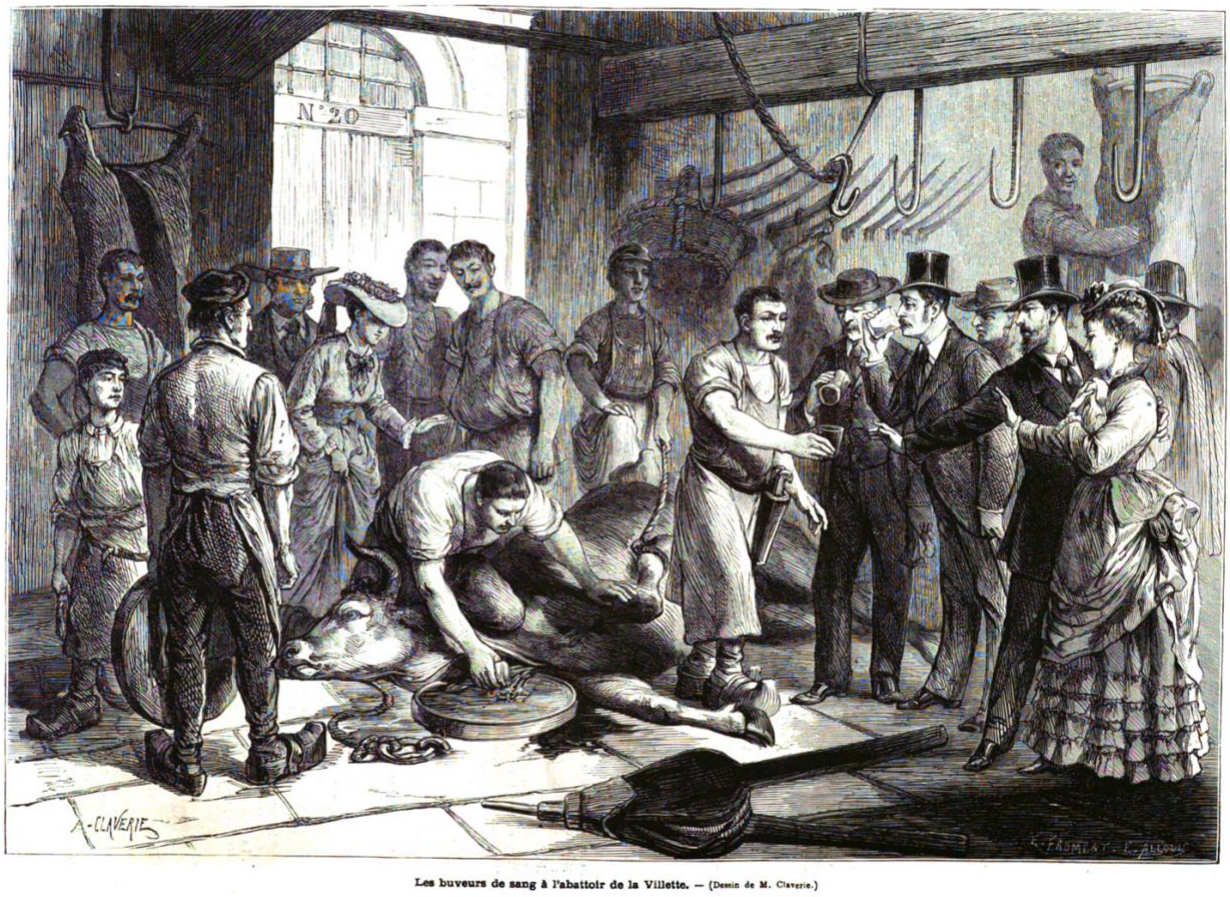


Figure 4. Les buveurs de sang [*The Blood Drinkers*][3]

[3] See Gueldry, Joseph Ferdinand. This image first appeared in print in *L'illustration : journal universel* which was press coverage for the Salon de Paris art exhibit in 1898. I first encountered this image of Gueldry's work in Bram Dijkstra's *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-siècle Culture* (p. 338). This image is what inspired this chapter. See Dijkstra, Bram.



Les buveurs de sang à l'abattoir de la Villette. — (Dessin de M. Claverie.)

Figure 5. Les buveurs de sang à l'abattoir de la Villette [*The Blood Drinkers at the Slaughterhouses in La Villette*][4]

[4] See Claverie, M. This image accompanied Eugène Muller's article in *Le monde illustré* on August 8, 1874.

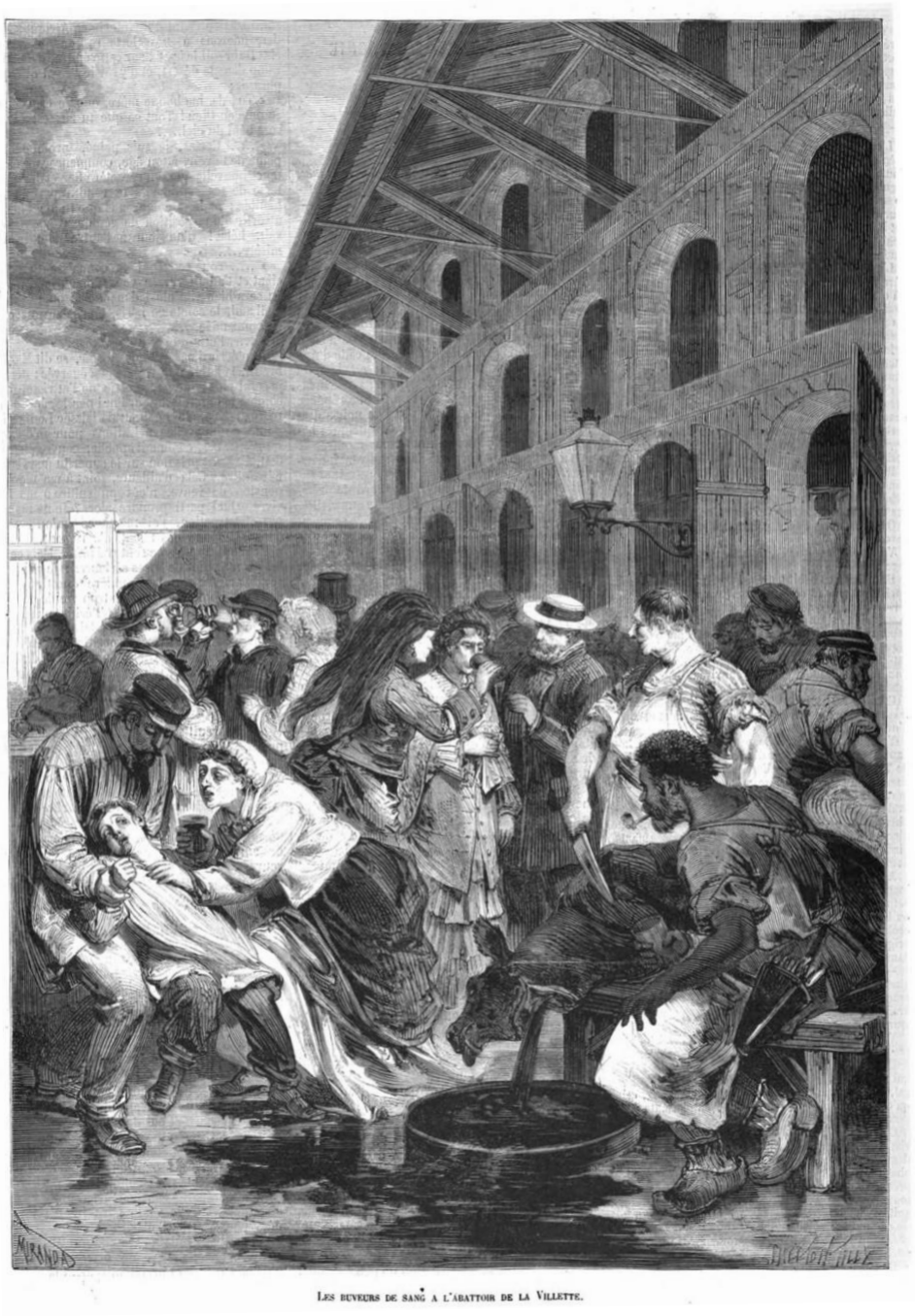


Figure 6. Les buveurs de sang à l'abattoir de la Villette [*The Blood Drinkers at the Slaughterhouses in La Villette*][5]

[5] From *L'illustration : journal universel*, p. 64, 1874. This image accompanies Laurencin's words on the subject, and it has no credited artist in the *L'illustration* publication. However, further research on the names printed at the bottom has led me to believe that the artists (listed on the bottom right) are Burn Smeeton and Auguste Tilly, who were frequent artists for *L'illustration*. The name (bottom left) "Miranda," is also uncredited and no information can be found on this name. See Miranda, et al.

Figure 7. Aux abattoirs - Les sacrificateurs israélites et les buveurs de sang [*At the Slaughterhouses – The Jewish Sacrificers and the Blood Drinkers*][6]

The Butcher System and Sacrificial Violence

The images above illustrate the reality of the broad scope of blood-drinking at the Parisian slaughterhouses at La Villette and the violence that comes with it. The organization of the butcher trade is significantly portrayed in the images, as well—each image depicts more than one butcher wrangling the cattle, cutting the neck, dispensing blood into a cup, and serving; each butcher has their own task, adding to a certain symbiotic unison of the butchering team. What

[6] Printed in *Le monde illustré* on march 1, 1890. Drawn from life. Copyright, *muahJ.* Special thanks and credit, once again, to the Musée d'art et d'histoire de Judaïsme [Museum of Jewish Art and History] for supplying a high-resolution digital copy of the image and for granting me permission for publication in this dissertation. See Bombled, Louis.

lies beneath the facade of the slaughterhouses is a very clear, rigorously delineated hierarchy. According to Kyri Claflin's research, we read that:

> Each Parisian *patron boucher* worked with his team (called an *équipe* or brigade): a *maître garçon*; second and third *garçons bouchers*; a fourth man, called a *baladeur* (literally "walkabout"), who brought the animals from their holding pens; a fifth man, the *dégraisseur* ("degreaser"), who removed the organs and fat from the abdominal cavity; and a young apprentice called the *agneau* ("lamb") … In the *cour d'abattage*, the *patron boucher* and four or five *garçons bouchers* rendered the animal unconscious with a blow from a merlin—a spiked sledgehammer—and cut its throat for thorough bleeding, after which they hauled the carcass into the *échaudoir* to "prepare" it. These skilled men manually performed every aspect of the slaughter and preparation of the carcass during the course of the morning, taking about half an hour for each steer carcass: removing the skin and all the internal organs, detaching the back half, removing the head, and cutting the animal in half again lengthwise. (34-6)

Claflin's description of the process of butchery at La Villette indicates that to interact with a butcher, just as Mary and Tulotte do at their slaughterhouse in Rachilde's text, means to interact with a social organism that is symbiotic and unified in its processes. The way in which it functions illustrates a hierarchical—almost caste-like—system of butchery that occurred in La Villette. Claflin continues:

> The men of La Villette conceived of their individual identities as members of a unique and prestigious group and as actors in a social and cultural endeavor as well as an important economic one. The *chevillards* and the *garçons bouchers* were intimately bound to a set of traditional values in French culture: an atmosphere of sociability and

> fraternity of "measure" in one's material life, prowess in their prestigious métier, and perpetuation of rituals that they believed linked them to previous generations of skilled artisans. (38)

It is clear that those who practiced the trade of butchery saw themselves as socially and economically prestigious and valuable, evoking a grander sense of deeply rooted traditional rituals performed for a society. These elements of perpetuated rituals for the benefit of social and cultural endeavors present a form of the violence illustrated in Rafron's earlier comment—one that is sacrificial. However, Rafron's comment substantiates the ritualistic nature of the butchery system of La Villette, stating that the ritual is of Jewish origin. Hugues Le Roux[7] adds more details to this Jewish ritual at the abattoirs, stating that there is a specific category "tueurs" ["killers"] called "les sacrificateurs israélites" ["Jewish sacrificers"]:

> Il y a aux Abattoirs de la Ville de Paris trois tueurs « consistoriaux », Lévy-Meyer, Blum et Marcus Bernard. Un quatrième prêtre tue pour les Juifs portugais qui suivent le rite dissident, dit « Séphardi ». Ces sacrificateurs n'assomment point : ils égorgent. Le bœuf qu'on leur amène arrive la face découverte. Ils lui garrottent les pattes et, renversé sur le dos, l'élèvent de terre au moyen d'un treuil de telle façon que l'animal présente sa gorge. Alors le sacrificateur s'avance. Il est armé d'un couteau carré du bout et qui d'ordinaire a une origine sacrée. Celui de Marcus Bernard vient de Varsovie ; un autre porte le nom de Wurtzbourg.
>
> Avant d'être admis à tuer pour leurs coreligionnaires, les sacrificateurs ont subi des examens … [qui ont] pour but l'étude du poumon et des viscères … [le sacrificateur]

[7] Le Roux's article "Aux abattoirs" accompanies Louis Bombled's drawing from life "Aux abattoirs - Les sacrificateurs israélites et les buveurs de sang" (figure 4), above, published in *Le monde illustré* on March 1, 1890. See, Le Roux, Hugues.

> reconnaît, au toucher, si l'animal n'est atteint ni de phtisie ni de gravelle. Il le saigne alors lentement, presque goutte à goutte. L'effroyable souffrance de la bête dont l'agonie dure parfois plus d'un quart d'heure n'a pu déterminer les dévots israélites à l'abandon d'une coutume qui répugne à notre délicatesse. Il faut que le bœuf ait été saigné vivant pour qu'il soit « viande Kascher », c'est-à-dire pour qu'on lui imprime sur la cuisse un cachet qui porte le nom du rabbin et la date de l'exécution.[8] (131, 134)

[There are at the slaughterhouses in the city of Paris three "ruling" killers, Lévy-Meyer, Blum and Marcus Bernard. A fourth priest kills for the Portuguese Jews who follow the radical rites, called "Sephardic." These sacrificers don't knock out [the animals], they slit the throats. The ox that one brings them arrives face covered. They tie the hooves and, turned over on its back, elevate from the ground via a hoist in such a way that the animal presents its neck. Then the sacrificer moves forward. He is armed with a square-ended knife which ordinarily has a sacred origin. That of Marcus Bernard comes from Warsaw; another carries one from Würzburg.

Before being allowed to kill for their coreligionists, the sacrificers underwent exams … [which maintain] the goal of the study of the lungs and viscera … [the sacrificer] recognizes, upon touching, if the animal is not ravaged by tuberculosis nor by urinary stones. He bleeds it out very slowly, almost drop by drop. The dreadful suffering of the beast whose agony lasts often for more than a quarter of an hour did not manage to identify the Jews devout to the abandon of a custom that repels our delicacy. It is necessary that the ox be bled alive so that it is "Kosher meat," in other words so that one may stamp on its butt a mark that states the name of the rabbi and the date of the execution.]

Le Roux depicts this act as one that is quite ritualistic, with dedicated, almost ceremonial, knives, and denoting the steps the butchers undertook to be sure the sacrificial victim was clean and healthy—an interesting remark, here, illustrating that the cattle could not suffer from the same illnesses that the blood-drinking crowds suffered from, and who sought the cattle's blood to cure said ailments. However, we must not ignore the fact that although the butchers seem to act in a ritualistic fashion, they still inflict violence. The description of the slow agonizing pain and death

[8] The North American Meat Institute substantiates that Kosher slaughter is the ritualistic process of butchery wherein the blood must be drained from the meat before consumption without knocking the animal unconscious before cutting the throat. For more information, see Grandin, Temple (pp. 35–40).

of the cattle is essential to our point that ritualized violence may also serve as a response to cleanse another form of violence within a community.

There are, at this point in our discussion, two major actors: the blood-drinkers from all social classes who congregate en masse at the slaughterhouses and the ritualistic system of butchery with which the crowds must interact. This juncture between the two actors leads us to a more complex discussion about ritual sacrifice and how it is used for cleansing a social body. It is at this point that I turn to René Girard's *La violence et le sacré* in order to parse out how exactly this ritualistic system of butchery can be read as a form of sacrificial violence. Although Girard's framework on violence in general is incredibly nuanced and complex, for the purposes of this chapter, I have chosen various aspects of his framework which I find useful in dissecting this social and spatial vampirism of the Parisian nineteenth century. According to Girard, in order to consider this ritual to be sacrificial, the practice must somehow serve a higher purpose of cleansing.

> [La victime] est à la fois substituée et offerte à tous les membres de la société par tous les membres de la société. C'est la communauté entière que le sacrifice protège de sa propre violence, c'est la communauté entière qu'il détourne vers des victimes qui lui sont extérieures. Le sacrifice polarise sur la victime des germes de dissension partout répandus et il les dissipe en leur proposant un assouvissement partiel. (Girard, 22)

[[The victim] is at once substituted and offered to all the members of society by all the members of society. It is the entire community that sacrifice protects from its own violence, it is the entire community that it redirects toward the victims which are exterior to it. Sacrifice polarizes the germs of dissent spread everywhere and it dissipates them by proposing a partial satisfaction.]

It is here, in conjunction with Girard's comment, that Vialles's assertion that the events at La Villette are an "ambiguïté de sang versé" ["ambiguity of spilled blood"] becomes clear. That is, the concept of spilled blood is rendered ambiguous through the ritualized system of sacrifice

because the sacrificed being must be killed in order to cleanse the community or society in question. We are dealing with, now, the notion of an accepted form of violence to cure a people of a form of unaccepted violence. Girard confirms this here, as if to say that there is a benefit for the society in inflicting violence, to the point of death, upon another being, all in an attempt to cure the society of a different form of violence. Moreover, this notion of violence is used for protective means and the sacrificer is usually cordoned off from the rest of society. La Villette, although most certainly under enormous, imposed regulations as part of a meat industry, functioned a bit outside the scope of Parisian society. After all, the slaughterhouses were pushed outward due to the sight and smell (of blood and violence, presumably), and relocated just outside the old *barrière* [*wall*] that still surrounded the city at the time. The slaughterhouses also functioned, as we see above, in a very symbiotic fashion which is much different than the ways in which Louis-Napoléon and Haussmann sought to keep social classes separate within the city limits. We may read the sacrifice here as a cleanse for two differing forms of violence. Perhaps the sacrifice was to cure the people of the violence of contagion, that is of disease and illness overall. Additionally, the sacrifice cleanses the people of the violence done to them by the State––that is, the sacrifice brings them together, mixed in a heterogenous group of social classes which upends what Louis-Napoléon and Haussmann had attempted to do in the city-center by stratifying the classes and keeping them separate. The vampirism, then, neutralizes the state-sanctioned violence of control.

Haussmann's Renovation of Paris: Violence against Violence

Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann became Prefect of the Seine under Napoléon III's empire, and he was put in charge of Paris' renovation with many goals in mind. After becoming

prefect in 1853, Haussmann's renovation projects lasted until the early twentieth century, even though Baron Haussmann was removed from his position in 1870. During his tenure as prefect, however, Haussmann had successfully incorporated the nineteenth arrondissement (the northeastern region including La Villette) into Paris proper a few years before locating the slaughterhouses in question there. According to Kyri Claflin, it was one of the poorest neighborhoods in Paris, filled with high crime, a large immigrant population, and home to many factories and industries. The slaughterhouses were, as was much of Paris, reconstructed to present a very modern and sophisticated façade. Locating the slaughterhouses in La Villette in this far, northeastern section of the city and blanketing its exterior with modern taste, according to Claflin, "reflected the nineteenth-century urban bourgeois sensibility of putting the ugly side of the food chain out of sight and smell" (32). To that end, Haussmann's and Louis-Napoléon's design included early forms of gentrification by pushing poorer communities to the outskirts of the city and pushing lower-class individuals higher up in newly formed apartment complexes.

There were two principal motives for this grand urbanization project in the city of Paris. First, as David H. Pinkney states, there was a great need for urban renewal at this period in Parisian history:

> The needs of the city were apparent, and the daily congestion of traffic, the death rate (the highest in France), the two great cholera epidemics proclaimed them for all to see. Successive administrations had made efforts to meet them—a new street there, a passageway here, new sidewalks, more sewers, a few thousand gallons added to the city's water supply, but their efforts had been fragmentary. They had lacked the courage, the imagination, and the temerity to attack the staggering problem of virtually rebuilding the

> city, and if Paris were to support a growing population without peril to public order and public health, nothing less would suffice. (24)

As Pinkney's comment illustrates, there were many needed renovations to modernize the city and to propel it into a trajectory of development, rather than allow it to wither away in stagnation, as many parts of the city were still medieval. Haussmann, once appointed prefect, began to work with Louis-Napoléon on the renovations. However, the second reason for urban renewal, and what is the most important reason for our discussion in this chapter, was grounded more in political and social motives than it was about modernization, though not directly claimed by the governing cabinet. For instance, it is argued by some historians that *La Grande Croisée* [*The Big Intersection*] was constructed as an x- and y-axis of wider streets throughout the city, which made it easier for police and military to reach one end of the city much more quickly from the opposite end.[9] Although Haussmann himself hesitates to mention in his *Mémoires* that thwarting insurrection was not an explicit goal for renovating Paris, it was, nonetheless, a welcome coincidence. Haussmann speaks on behalf of Louis-Napoléon, stating:

> Assurément l'Empereur, en traçant le Boulevard de Strasbourg et son prolongement jusqu'à la Seine et au-delà, n'avait pas plus en vue l'utilité stratégique de ce prolongement, que de tant d'autres grandes voies, comme la rue de Rivoli … dont l'alignement droit ne se prêtait pas à la tactique habituelle des insurrections locales. Mais, s'il n'a pas cherché, par-dessus tout … on ne peut nier que ce fût la très heureuse conséquence de tous les grands percements conçus par Sa Majesté pour améliorer et pour assainir l'ancienne ville. (Haussmann, 825)

[9] Roger Price states, "[Contingency] plans for dealing with insurrection were updated regularly. In the case of Paris the first objective would be to divide the city into two along the line of Boulevard de Sébastopol. The capital would then be subdued as troops were deployed from barracks and central posts in each of the twenty-seven *quartiers militaires* into which the city was divided" (142).

[Certainly The Emperor, in mapping the Boulevard de Strasbourg and its lengthening to the Seine and beyond, no longer had the strategic usefulness of this lengthening in sight, than of so many other streets, like the Rue de Rivoli … whose straight alignment was not ideal for the usual tactic of local insurrections. But, if he didn't seek [it], above all … one can bet that this was the very happy consequence of all the grand installations conceived by His Majesty to ameliorate and to purify the old city.]

Additionally, Haussmann also gives his own opinions of the matter: "C'était l'éventrement du Vieux Paris, du quartier des émeutes, des barricades, par une large voie centrale, perçant, de part en part, ce dédale presque impraticable, accostée de communications transversales, dont la continuation devait compléter l'œuvre ainsi commencée" ["It was the gutting of Old Paris, of rioting neighborhoods, of barricades, by a large central street, piercing, from end to end, this impractical maze, accosted by communication crossways, whose continuation had to complete the work thus begun"] (825). However, he then immediately backtracks: "Quant à moi, qui suis le promoteur des additions faites au projet initial, je déclare n'avoir pas songé le moins du monde, en les combinant, à leur plus ou moins d'importance stratégique" ["For my part, as the promoter of the additions made to the initial project, I declare to not have thought in the least, in putting them together, about their more or less strategic importance"] (825). It seems that the issue, socially and politically, was sensitive enough to warrant Haussmann's hesitation to declare outright these ulterior intentions in the city's renovations. Whether coincidence or fully intended, the statements confirm that Louis-Napoléon and his prefect Haussmann had conjured up a way to police Parisian society to not only protect the regime from uprising, but also to establish a form of police state within the city limits.[10] These acts, disguised with the discourse of modernization

[10] Keeping in mind that Haussmann states that there were other political and social reasons for Louis-Napoléon to move forward with the large-scale renovations: "He meant also to attach the populace of Paris so securely to his regime that they would not *want* to revolt or even *resort* to violent protest" (Pinkney, 37, emphasis mine). Therefore, he worked with Haussmann to develop architectural plans for renovation. "[Haussmann] not only elaborated Napoleon's plans; he made numerous and important additions to them. He added new streets, parks, and public buildings, and he made two original contributions of primary importance: the supplying of Paris with abundant spring water and the constructions of a system of collector sewers that ended the contamination of the Seine within

and sanitation, illustrate forms of social control that took place during the period. In order to help understand the level of stratification that the Parisians experienced, and to understand the varying forms of violence that forced the slaughterhouses outward (and, thus, the vampiric migration), I return to René Girard's work. The state is now the third actor of our discussion.

René Girard presents a theoretical framework that dissects the various societal relationships with regard to state violence. Girard posits that there are different forms of violence, one of which he deems judicial violence. This type of violence presents itself as varying forms of control and the use of *legal* violence to contain a different kind of violence (*criminal* or *illegal* violence). In the nineteenth century, Haussmann and Louis-Napoléon, as outlined by Pinkney above, created a sort of social control. In demolishing unsightly slums, displacing "undesirable" immigrant and poorer communities, and by creating an apartment building that contains within the homogenous facades a form of social stratification, the purpose of their actions becomes clear. The displacement of lower-class people and the *Grande Croisée* that dissected the city with purposeful placement of barracks illustrates the relationship that existed between the heads of state and the society which they sought to control. All signs of control point to violence. Girard states that the "système judiciaire" (to which I refer as state violence, state-sanctioned violence, or control throughout this discussion) is created through a system of violence as vengeance, such that to enact a form of violence on a criminal means to enact a form of vengeance for their crime or their *inappropriate* use of violence. Girard states, "[Le] système judiciaire *rationalise* la vengeance, il réussit à la découper et à la limiter comme il l'entend ; il la manipule sans péril ; il en fait une *technique* extrêmement efficace de guérison et, secondairement, de prévention de la violence" ["[The] judicial system *rationalizes* vengeance, it

the city. For the conception of these less conspicuous and, Haussmann complained, less appreciated aspects of the transformation of Paris the Prefect claimed and deserved primary credit" (Pinkney, 44).

succeeds in cutting it out and limiting it as it understands it; it manipulates it without peril; it creates from it an extremely useful *technique* of recovery and, secondly, a prevention of violence"] (40, emphasis original). It is clear that Haussmann and Louis-Napoléon, according to their motives above, enacted this form of judicial violence in Girard's framework. They rationalized and manipulated violence in the form of state-sanctioned control for their own benefit—an action largely undertaken to prevent uprisings from the social sphere. Girard continues:

> [L'autorité] judiciaire ne relève de personne en particulier, elle est donc au service de tous et tous s'inclinent devant ses décisions. Seul le système judiciaire n'hésite jamais à frapper la violence en plein cœur parce qu'il possède sur la vengeance un monopole absolu. Grâce à ce monopole, il réussit, normalement, à étouffer la vengeance, au lieu de l'exaspérer, au lieu de l'étendre et de la multiplier… (41)

[The judicial [authority] does not single out particular people, it is therefore at the service of everyone and everyone yields before its decisions. The judicial system alone does not hesitate to strike the heart of violence because it possesses an absolute monopoly on vengeance. Thanks to this monopoly, it succeeds, normally, in stifling vengeance, instead of provoking it, instead of spreading it and multiplying it…]

We read Girard's system of vengeance as a main proponent within notions of violence much in the same way in which we may read Haussmann's and Louis-Napoléon's regime that enacted a system of vengeance stemming from uprisings and revolutions past. In the nineteenth century, there were various uprisings and revolutions that occurred, and it is believed that Haussmann's renovation of Paris along with Louis-Napoléon's governance was a vengeful response to this type of *illegal* violence against the state and to prevent any further insurrections during the Second Empire. The above-mentioned renovations and motives begin to paint a clear picture that the government's use of violence as a form of vengeance had seeped into their urban planning to

create a landscape that allowed them to enact this form of control on city-dwellers and potential usurpers. Specifically, many streets were widened and elongated to prevent barricades and allow for quicker military access from one end of the city to the other, and poorer working-class individuals were pushed to the outer brim of the city which created homelessness and demolished neighborhoods.[11] The new Paris was an effort to privilege those who had money and little desire to rebel against the new government.

Taking Girard's statement above into consideration and applying it to our historical context, we begin to see just how the duo renovators manipulated the city to fit their own ideologies of control to police violence and, thus, specifically created a social monopoly (a monopoly of social control through violence) by way of urban renewal. However, it is important to consider that what Girard proposes is that there is a clear separation between violence enacted *by* the state (police, social control, etc.) and that which is enacted *against* the state (crime, revolt, etc.). This begins to draw clear boundaries between the government and society. Yet, one important aspect of this is that, in creating these clear categorical understandings of violence and boundaries between state and society, the boundaries must be situated in a way that renders them permeable. For, if the boundaries imposed on society by the controlling state were not permeable, the state would not be able to transgress the boundary, enter into it to thwart an uprising, or to enact any form of control. Of course, this is a one-way permeation—society cannot enter into the boundary of the controlling state, only vice versa, because this form of violence is a *monopole absolu*, according to Girard, sanctioned by the state.

[11] Commenting and further solidifying Haussmann's and Louis-Napoléon's motives, Richard Terdiman states, "Napoléon III was devising and putting into practice a pattern still familiar today: urban renewal means working-class removal" (117) and that "the process of alignment and regularization [Haussmann] directed always operated in a class-discriminatory way" (121).

Regulation and Control through Violence

The way in which the Parisian people were stratified within the city limits is a form of Girardian violence imposed by Haussmann's design of control. Haussmann's apartment complexes were renovated for a homogeneous exterior aesthetic, and although the interior followed a standard layout with a base, main body, and a crown, the way in which it was used was far from homogeneous compared to the uniform exterior. According to architect Katy Chey, the base of a Haussmann apartment building usually contained a shop, a shopkeeper's residence, and back- and main-entrances—all on the ground floor—for the residents of the rest of the apartment. Of the main body, which usually consisted of three floors above the ground floor, the lowest was considered the "étage noble," which according to Chey was "the most desired and expensive floor to rent" and had the highest ceilings of the apartment building (64). This was usually reserved for the landlord or the highest paying tenant. The ceiling dropped lower and lower for each floor above the *étage noble,* and the crown consisted of the top floors and the attic, which had the lowest ceilings and were reserved for storage, low-paying tenants and any servants' quarters. For a Haussmann-era apartment, the higher the floor meant the lower the class of the inhabitants. The lower floors were also symbols themselves of status, with the higher, more ornate ceilings and access to the ground floor with fewer staircases (Chey, 64). Haussmann's apartment complex positioned itself as a form of stratification that necessitated a system of control and a form of permeation through these boundaries that was only granted to certain societal roles and professions—that is, it necessitated a form of *legal* violence.

Only individuals of certain economic communities were allowed to occupy specific areas of the home, however, the landlords and the servants served as agents of permeation. Girard's

framework of violence necessitates a form of police, that is, an agent that is allowed to permeate through the various social boundaries that are practiced. This agent operates on what Girard calls *legal* violence, and therefore perpetuates a form of regulation. The landlords of Haussmann's apartments needed to be able to interact and transact with each tenant, regardless of class. But those of lower classes and wealth could not transgress the landlord's control to occupy areas of the apartment complex that were not built for them. Thus, the permeation was only one-sided and so strict were the boundaries between tenant and landlord that this relationship became contentious by the mid nineteenth century. Sharon Marcus states:

> So universally current did the conflict between landlord and tenant become that by 1865, the newly revised edition of François Sergent's *Manuel complet du propriétaire et du locataire* [*The Complete Manuel of the Landlord and the Tenant*] (first issued in 1826) stated in its introduction, "Everyone is either a landlord or a tenant. These two interests are opposed and their contact is constant." That new antagonism stemmed from the dramatic economic shifts in apartment living triggered by Haussmannization: increases in land values and rents (between 1851 and 1857, rents doubled in the city's central *arrondissements* [*neighborhoods*]) promoted an expensive, competitive housing market that pushed poor people to the outskirts of the city; encouraged real estate speculation; and promoted the construction of larger, more expensive apartment buildings. (Marcus, 725)

To both Marcus' and Sergent's point in the above passage, there was a constant, forced opposition between the landlord and the tenant, illustrating a form of Girard's framework of violence in that there is a boundary that can be permeated from one party to the other and only in that singular direction. This class tension presents those under such regulations the very

possibility of violence. Perhaps the relationship between tenant and landlord was not easy, creating interpersonal conflict between and among the stratified classes. Haussmann and Louis-Napoléon had created this possibility for inter-class violence even as new apartment buildings were being constructed. For instance, Richard Terdiman states that in the construction process, "almost-completed buildings were left to prostitutes for a short time until the plaster had dried enough to permit final finishing work. The middle class moved in when the hookers left" which created a space for proprietors and landlords to anticipate revenue even before long-term tenants moved in—not to mention before the building was even finished (123). However, as agents of control, landlords must be able to permeate the boundaries of tenants, though tenants must not permeate the boundaries of landlords—the exception being the servants, typically of lower socioeconomic backgrounds, who had to serve the richer tenants on the lower levels, usually entering through their own dedicated doorways on the lower levels, and then at the end of the day climb the stairs to their quarters at the top. Even in this case, however, the richer tenants typically had no business at the top of the building in the servants' quarters, therefore illustrating once again a one-sided permeation. And, as Marcus states, this kind of urban renewal and fixation on real estate during Haussmannization pushed poorer communities to the outskirts. This notion of gentrification coupled with the slaughterhouses' relocation to La Villette, due to its stench and overall undesirable quality, recalls (and further illustrates) Claflin's earlier comment that this push outward and upward was a means to figuratively "[put] the ugly side of the food chain out of sight and smell."

Pushing the slaughterhouses outward was a way for the renovating duo to regulate and control violence and their actions serve as a reminder of other communities who were also left out of the plan for new Paris. The slaughterhouses are constant reminders of violence, simply

due to the very nature on which they operate. The same can be said for the working class and for the poorer, marginalized communities whose "sight and smell" were allegedly thought to be an issue in the new Parisian landscape. Richard Terdiman states that through this separation, regulation and outward push, "Haussmann had produced a sense of exile among the disadvantaged" (124). Likewise, Michel Carmona states that, in observing today's Paris, "the so-called peripheral arrondissements have not ceased to form a distinct spatial and sociological entity within the capital" (315). Bearing both comments in mind together, Haussmann's push outward seemed compelled by the desire to separate undesirable attributes out of what will be a new Paris, and it had lasting sociological impacts at the time. La Villette, cordoned off outside the *barrière*, and other such peripheral zones were seen as "foreign," according to Carmona (316). The exile that was experienced by the working class in La Villette and those pushed outward from the city-center are grand testaments to the form of state-sanctioned violence of control that was inflicted upon the social body of Paris. Although, exile is not the only result of this violence, as we have seen.

The Vampire Born from Violence

If we come to understand the state's control over the stratified classes as the third actor in our paradigm of the violence and vampires in Paris during the nineteenth century, it is clear to see the ways in which the sacrificial violence that occurs at La Villette neutralizes or mitigates the violence enacted against the stratified social classes within the city's center. The two forms of violence stand in opposition to each other, as the slaughterhouse remained cordoned off from Haussmann's concept of social stratification with its own form of social hierarchy enacting butchery in a symbiotic, ritualistic fashion. The vampirism that occurs manifests within a

framework of sacrifice in order to cleanse or thwart a violence of control. Therefore, we may interpret the vampire as appearing outside a form of control. Bruce A. McClelland confirms this interpretation by thinking through the method by which vampires must be destroyed:

> The [vampire] is, from the very point of his reincarnation, outside any social order in which he could survive without violence, and therefore he must be put to death by (ritual) violence. He is outside of reason, and rational methods of dispatching him are ineffective. Furthermore, the inevitable violent destruction of the monster compensates for the violence done to the social order through the creation or instantiation of the monster. (McClelland, 21)

By creating a crowd of undifferentiated people in a society where the stratification of social classes is thoroughly controlled, the vampires then exist as an attempt to thwart the social control enacted by the state. They exist as a violent entity to counter or, as McClelland asserts above, "to compensate" for the ways in which the society had been controlled during the nineteenth century. The vampire, then, is a figure that challenges the effects of spatial violence in their incarnation through sacrifice and drinking cattle blood. If we consider that Haussmannization and Louis-Napoléon's controlling of the Parisian social hierarchy enforced social stratification, then the peripheral gathering of all social classes at the slaughterhouse designates the act of vampirism as a way to challenge the state's authority. The vampirism is therefore a mediator and a neutralizer of spatial and social stratification as it undermines the dynamic of power and social order enacted by the state. In the case of La Villette, the vampirism that arose was due to the sacrificial nature of the system of butchery within the walls of the slaughterhouse. The crowds awaiting entry into the slaughterhouses, who all belonged to varying stratified social classes, partook in the ritualistic act of draining and drinking cattle blood. This

created vampires out of the Parisian people, incarnated through the sacrificial cattle, cleansing them of the stratification due to the need to drink the freshly drained blood at the slaughterhouse.

Although the butchers faced government regulations to their trade, the way in which the butcher team functioned seemed to be cordoned off separately from the stratification, instead working in unison as a symbiotic system. These sacrificers were able to aid the Parisians who had traveled to La Villette by undermining the state's ability to stratify them. The sacrifice, therefore, cures and protects the Parisians from the imposed social order by bringing in crowds together and (allegedly) curing them of their illnesses—the violent contagion enacted by their own bodies. That is, the illnesses that the crowds endure and seek to cure from the blood-drinking are also another form of violence to consider. Considering the illnesses as such allows room for the understanding that the spilled blood signifies many aspects at play in this dynamic.

Returning to the idea that the sacrifice that occurred at La Villette is a Jewish ritual, blood plays a more significant role as the purifying mediator in this dynamic of violence between the state and the stratified classes. According to Montaclair, blood in the Jewish tradition can represent many oppositional boundaries:[12]

> La *Bible* nous offre un ensemble de scènes, particulièrement dans l'histoire de Moïse, où le sang signifie malheur/bonheur, la mort et la protection…
>
> Le sang joue donc ce double rôle positif-négatif, qui s'explique parfaitement par la nécessité vitale de sa présence et le danger mortel que fait courir sa perte. En jouant sur le sang, le vampire ne fait que toucher à une des constituantes de la vie, à une des figures majeures de l'imaginaire humain. (…*textes et documents,* 38)

[The Bible offers us a group of scenes, particularly in the story of Moses, where blood signifies misfortune/fortune, death and protection…

[12] For an in-depth discussion on how blood also represents antisemitic ideologies, tying Jews to vampires, see my previous chapter as well as some remarks in the conclusion of this dissertation.

Blood thus plays this double positive-negative role, which is explained perfectly by the vital necessity of its presence and the mortal danger that its loss leads to. In playing on blood, the vampire only touches on one of the components of life, as one of the major figures of the human imaginary.]

Misfortune and pleasure, danger and protection, life and death. These oppositions serve as a direct reflection of the role of the sacrificial butchers at La Villette, who were themselves cordoned off from the rest of the city and acted as purifiers employing their own form of violence. Their use of one form violence in order to cleanse society of another form is an oppositional paradigm. In this way, the butchery that was enacted in a manner of Jewish tradition (and the subsequent spilled blood that is then drunk by the Parisian's) represents the Parisian society's attempt at undermining state violence with another form of violence. The blood coupled with violence perpetuates a state of fear. Many nineteenth-century journalists describe that those who partook of the blood-drinking the first time found themselves in a state of fearful hesitation before reluctantly drinking (perhaps even the first several times). Eugène Muller describes that "A distance de l'étal où le veau râle, toutes ces raisons sont excellentes ; aucun buveur de sang n'aurait de scrupules, et sa conscience serait aussi tranquille que s'il mangeait une côtelette. Mais quand on est à l'abattoir, ces raisons n'empêchent pas les cheveux de se dresser sur la tête" ["At a distance from the stall where the calf moans, all these senses are excellent; no blood drinker would have any qualms, and his conscience would be as clean as if he were eating a cutlet. But when one is at the slaughterhouse, these senses don't impede the hair from standing on end"] (91). However, the blood-drinkers began to acquire the taste. Muller continues:

> L'odeur du sang n'a rien de particulièrement révoltant ; son gout n'en est point véritablement désagréable. Le sang de veau est presque sucré ; le sang de bœuf, quoique plus âcre, n'est point sans posséder un certain arome auquel on s'habituerait s'il ne fallait

le voir tirer devant soi des veines de la bête que l'on vient d'abattre ou dont la gorge a été tranchée. (91)

[The odor from the blood has nothing particularly revolting; its taste is actually not unpleasant. Calf's blood is almost sweet; ox blood, although a little acrid, is not without possessing a certain aroma to which one can accustom oneself if he were not to see pulled out before him the veins from the beast that one just slaughtered or whose throat was sliced.]

An acquired taste with regenerative, healing properties, yet the blood still seemed to spark fear, however subtly, as if calling to mind very bluntly that violence is required in order for the blood-drinker to survive—or a sudden return of the repressed thought that death is violence to the notion of life.[13] The vampire literature of the nineteenth century seemed to have drawn on this fear, as well. For instance, in Gautier's vampire novella, Clarimonde drinks Romuald's blood in order to regenerate energy and restore her body to its peak physical form. At one point in the text, Clarimonde grows very ill and even more pale and cold to the touch. She becomes very weak and Romuald sends for doctors, and they have no idea what to make of her condition and prescribe useless remedies. As she lies in bed on the precipice of death (once again), Romuald sits next to her and at a small table begins to cut some fruit. He cuts his finger open and some blood spurts onto Clarimonde. "Ses yeux s'éclairèrent, sa physionomie prit une expression de joie féroce et sauvage que je ne lui avais jamais vue. Elle sauta à bas du lit avec une agilité animale, une agilité de singe ou de chat, et se précipita sur ma blessure qu'elle se mit à sucer avec un air d'indicible volupté" ["Her eyes lit up, the features of her face took an expression of ferocious and savage joy that I had never seen on her. She jumped to the foot of the bed with an animal-like agility, a monkey- or a cat-like agility, and she hurried onto my injury and began to

[13] For a more in-depth discussion on the philosophical notions of vampirism which fall on the life-death binary, see my first chapter of this dissertation, titled "Understanding the French Vampire: Freud, Derrida, and the Interplay of Signs from the Guillotine."

suck with an air of unspeakable delight"] (Gautier, 88). Her physical strength returns, as she falls into a state of ecstasy while drinking his blood. Her agile, strong, animal-like reaction renders her more monstrous and is a testament to what kind of regenerative, animalistic force the blood gives her: "[Elle] clignait les yeux à demi, et la pupille de ses prunelles vertes était devenue oblongue au lieu de ronde … Quand elle vit que le sang ne venait plus, elle se releva l'œil humide et brillant, plus rose qu'une aurore de mai, la figure pleine, la main tiède et moite, enfin plus belle que jamais et dans un état parfait de santé" ["[She] half-closed her eyes and the pupil among her green irises had become oblong instead of round … When she saw that the blood ran no more, she raised a watery bright eye, more rose-colored than May's dawn, her full face, her warm and clammy hand, at last more beautiful than ever and in a perfect state of health"] (Gautier, 88). Not only her strength, but her beauty and youthful appearance is regenerated upon drinking Romuald's blood, restoring her position of power in their dynamic, as well. Her cat-like eyes lend her a beauty that is rendered monstrous and animalistic, suggesting that in her restored health she becomes dangerous, powerful, and also more seductive. She becomes not only a dangerous vampire, but also a dangerous woman. Bram Dijkstra also notes the connection between women and vampires, stating that due to the act of blood-drinking at the slaughterhouse, "It began to seem by no means farfetched to suspect the existence of vampires, and especially vampire women" (Dijkstra, 338). Dijkstra's observation coupled with the female vampire in Gautier's text underscores the sexual medical dynamic within French society during the nineteenth century.

Returning to Rachilde's text one last time, Mary and Tulotte return home with the blood from the slaughterhouse to give to Mary's mother, Caroline, who is prescribed this remedy by her doctor brother-in-law.

> [C'était son beau-frère] qui révisait les traitements des médecins passagers de Caroline, madame Barbe, la pauvre colonelle agonisante, et il avait eu l'heureuse idée des tasses de sang tout chaud à prendre chaque jour. Caroline buvait ce qu'on voulait ; elle aurait épuisé l'officine d'un pharmacien pour se guérir. Persuadée, ainsi que le sont toutes les poitrinaires, irrévocablement perdues, qu'un remède existe pour rendre un sang riche à des veines appauvries, elle avalait l'horrible breuvage avec la plus entière conviction. Et, de fait, elle reprenait un peu de force. Elle avait même exigé que son mari revînt partager sa couche malgré la défense formelle de son beau-frère. (Rachilde, 15)

[[It was her brother-in-law] who reviewed the treatments by the temporary doctors for Caroline, Madame Barbe, the poor, agonizing Colonel's wife, and he had the great idea of glasses of very warm blood to drink each day. Caroline drank what he wanted; she had exhausted the stock of a pharmacist to get better. Persuaded, as are all who are afflicted with Tuberculosis, irrevocably lost, that a remedy exists for giving a richer blood back to depleted veins, she swallowed the horrible beverage with the utmost conviction. And, in fact, she regained a bit of strength. She had even demanded that her husband return back to his post despite the professional opposition of her brother-in-law.]

It is evident from this scene that Caroline's doctor brother-in-law and husband are her primary caretakers and advise her in her remedies of drinking blood for her pulmonary illness. Therefore, we can conclude that her vampirism, her act of drinking blood, is caused by men. However, the blood grants her enough strength that she sends her husband back to work—at her brother-in-law's protest. Her weakness and frailty are her caretakers' duty to cure as they occupy not only the position of authority over her care, but they also occupy a position of patriarchal defense over her decisions over her own body. Although there is much to be discussed within the interpersonal sexual dynamic and the violence that stems from this, it is apparent that violence is at the core of the vampire topos, particularly as it manifested in a real-life from in the Parisian landscape of the nineteenth century.

In sum, the many forms of violence that stem from Paris' renovation under both Louis-Napoléon's and Baron Haussmann's directives portray the varied, yet interconnected, ways in which the vampire manifests from the differing forms of violence that René Girard describes. The state-sanctioned violence, or *legal* violence was multi-faceted, as it was compelled by a form of vengeance and manifested as regulation in order to prevent uprisings, or *illegal* violence. This regulation and control came crashing down on the Parisian landscape in the form of renovation and urban renewal as poorer communities were pushed upward in apartment complexes and outward, away from the vision of new Paris. Such displacement creates other sub-forms of violence by way of class conflict, money chasing landlords and proprietors, and homelessness. And, along with the "undesirable communities," the "sight and smell" of the constant reminder of violence and death at the slaughterhouses were pushed outward, as well. Yet, relocating the slaughterhouses outward allowed for an intriguing form of what Girard would deem sacrificial violence. The slaughterhouses provided a space to help the social classes with one common goal: drinking blood to ward off illness. However, in so doing, the slaughterhouses became a site for the mitigation of the violent stratification of social classes. That is, the people's gathering en masse eliminates and diffuses the violence done to them and allows for the blood to be an agent of cleansing which is, as Girard would posit, "offered" to the Parisian society from the sacrificed cattle. The vampirism, or blood-drinking, that occurred at La Villette is thus born from varying notions of violence. And, as we have seen from the passage above in Gautier's work, a common trope in vampire tales is often violence. And, as we have seen exemplified by the historical events perpetuated by Louis-Napoléon and Haussmann, with violence comes power.

The kind of power that manifests in vampire tales is also political, as I have discussed in my previous chapter. And it is also sexual, as Rachilde's text merely hints at above yet still

portrays an interesting conjunction with the inherent violence in this act of blood-drinking during the nineteenth century and the hierarchy of sexual power, as discussed above. The sexual politics continue even within contemporary iterations of the vampire.

For example, Jean Rollin illustrates very clearly this notion of powerful female vampires in his 1979 film, *Fascination*, in which one particular scene evokes this sexual dynamic—interestingly enough, it takes place in a slaughterhouse where women have come to drink blood. In the scene, the opening, establishing shot depicts a woman dressed in white, early twentieth-century clothing, standing in a room with blood on the walls and the floor. She is standing in a slaughterhouse. The sound of dripping and swaying chains in the background. The frame cuts to a man and two women walking in, wearing black and led by a butcher. One woman who is dressed in black goes to the woman in white. She kisses two of her own fingers and presses them to the lips of the woman in white. The butcher walks out of frame and returns with a small grappa glass filled with a red liquid. He hands the drink to the other older woman who stands next to the man near the entrance. "Il faut vraiment en boire beaucoup? Tout un verre ?" ["Must we really drink a lot of it? A whole glass?"] She asks the man she is with. "Mais oui" ["But, of course"], he assures her. "Aujourd'hui en avril 1905, c'est ce qu'on a trouvé de mieux pour guérir l'anémie. Buvez mon pied, ça vous donnera des couleurs" ["Today in April of 1905, it is what we have found to cure anemia. Drink, my darling, it will give you back some color"]. She drinks. The camera cuts to the bloody slaughterhouse floor and pans upward to the two women standing in the center of the room. One in black and one in white, each holding a glass of red liquid, they look on as the old woman drinks. "Ce n'est que du sang bœuf, après tout" ["It's only beef blood, after all"], the woman in white declares. A close-up reveals the woman in white dipping her finger into the glass of blood and sensually massaging her lips with it, mouth open,

as the camera then pans upward to her deathly glare. The butcher looks on and laughs, while the man at the entrance retorts, “ce n’est pas un jeu, Mademoiselle. C’est un thérapeutique” [“it is not a game, Miss. It is a treatment”]. The camera cuts back to the two women in the center of the room who drink their glasses of blood in unison.

What may seem like another scene out of a vampire horror film actually has roots in the reality of nineteenth-century France, where women were the central focus for vampirism within a sexual hierarchy. That is, women gathering en masse at the slaughterhouse because they were prescribed blood-drinking by men creates a larger question about the sexual power dynamics as it concerns vampirism in the nineteenth century. The female vampire that propagated nineteenth-century literature arose out of fears and the unknowns about the female body, as well as conservative patriarchal values that dictated a woman’s place and her accepted sexual behavior in society. Additionally, this conservatism, coupled with the notions of blood as a regenerative remedy that is, as demonstrated, rooted in Jewish traditions of butchery and symbolic values regarding blood, tells us that the appearance of the female vampire is a coded and mobilized discourse of the intersections of sexual politics and religious beliefs. My next chapter deals specifically with these lingering questions about the relationship between vampirism and religion, regarding the female vampire in Théophile Gautier’s 1836 work, *La morte amoureuse*.

Chapter IV

The Coming of Clarimonde: Gautier's Mimetic Christ and Feminist Subversion

> "[The] female vampire is monstrous – and also attractive – precisely because she does threaten to undermine the formal and highly symbolic relations of men and women essential to the continuation of the patriarchal society."
> —Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, feminism, psychoanalysis*.

In Catholic doctrine, Christ is able to grant everlasting life through disciples consuming his flesh and drinking his blood. And in the Book of John, he demonstrated his divine power of resurrecting Lazarus, granting him life in the mortal plain after death. While these teachings are essential to the religious culture of the Catholic Church, the demonstrable connection between Christ and vampires is striking. After all, the vampire exhibits the power to live forever from drinking blood, maintains immortality as a figure of the undead, and has the ability to grant these powers by turning victims into fellow vampires. However, what does it mean when vampires exhibit powers that are akin to Christ or God? This opposes the notion that there is only one God, or one Jesus, in a religion that upholds the notion of dualism—that there is a good force and an evil force that are clearly opposed to each other. In Théophile Gautier's *La Morte amoureuse* [*The Dead Woman in Love*] (1836), however, the anti-dualistic portrayal of the vampire as a mimetic expression of Christ challenges religious authority. Complicating this dynamic even further is that the vampire is a woman, further opposing the inherent patriarchy embedded within the Church's authority and doctrine, as she also grants the agency to her human priest lover to subvert his religion as well. Gautier's vampire tale portrays the somnambulistic adventures of Romuald, a Catholic priest, and Clarimonde, a female vampire. However, Sérapion, a foreboding

Catholic force of patriarchal values, offers stark warnings to Romuald about both Clarimonde's vampirism and her female sexuality. Romuald's and Clarimonde's relationship challenges notions of patriarchal dominance within a religious context, offering anti-dualistic opposition to the Church's doctrine. In this chapter, I argue that Clarimonde and Romuald have the power to subvert the patriarchal teachings of the Catholic Church, represented by Sérapion, through their own mimetic expressions of Christ, therefore challenging the dualistic and monotheistic worldview of the Catholic authority. Specifically, Clarimonde and Romuald deify each other in an eerie mimesis of Catholic doctrine through monstrous means: resurrection and blood drinking. Finally, I conclude with a reading of Judith Plaskow's reinterpretation of the Lilithian midrash to pose the question of whether or not we may read Clarimonde as a liberator, instead of a demonic figure, similarly to the way in which Plaskow allows room for Lilith to be a feminist-leaning figure.

Demonization of Women

Sérapion's demonization of Clarimonde in the narrative stems from the long, cultural tradition of the fear that is attached to the female body. This monstrosity, however, operates on a fundamental misunderstanding that amplifies into something different—a fear of the unknown, particularly the unknown about the way in which the female body functions so differently than a male's body. As Rachel Francis Sharpe and Sophie Sexon put it, "[t]he female body has a cultural and critical history of being conceived of as monstrous … The conceptual notion of the female body as that which is monstrous is conceived via its fluid outpourings" (Sharpe & Sexon, 2). The fluid outpourings can be blood, spit, vomit, etc., though the ones that are markedly female, and much more to Sharpe's and Sexon's point, are those composed of menstrual fluids

and breast milk. These secretions elicit reactions of fear, abjection,[1] and misunderstanding within this cultural tradition—a tradition that also shuns women during menstrual cycles.[2]

There are many cultural traditions that specifically tie menstrual cycles to vampirism. For example, according to Marie Mulvey-Roberts, some cultures perceive that menstrual blood "infects [dogs'] bites with an incurable poison" not unlike the vampire's bite, which—depending on the lore referenced—is like a poison that spreads to its victims and turns them into vampires, as well (81). As Mulvey-Roberts asserts below, the notion that menstrual blood is a contagion is so strongly perpetuated that it further demonizes women and draws many transcultural parallels between menstruating bodies and vampires:

> Both are condemned as unclean, agents of pollution and instigators of corruption. Sharing an avoidance of mirrors and crucifixes, they have been considered by some religions as too profane to enter a church or take communion. A man could die from having contact, particularly intercourse, with a menstruating woman, while to make love with a vampire was potentially lethal. In some pre-industrial cultures, after menarche, a young girl would be kept out of the sun. Like her fellow-vampire who was another inhabitant of the dark, it was feared that exposure to solar rays would 'shrivel her up into a withered skeleton' … [For] their own protection these adolescent girls were kept in tenebrous seclusion, where they were suspended between life and death, heaven and earth, until marriage. Likewise, the vampire exists in a bodily state which is between life and death and in a spiritual limbo betwixt heaven and earth. The coffins to which vampires retreat in the day serve, like menstrual huts, as places of seclusion and safety. For vampires, their victims and

[1] See *Les pouvoirs de l'horreur* [*The Powers of Horror*] by Julia Kristeva.
[2] Phyllis A. Roth asserts, as well, that the vagina itself is a site of fear for men due to the imagined fear of castration from the *vagina dentata.*

> menstruating women, it is normal for blood to flow outside the body. Mythologized as transgressing the natural order, where blood is contained within the living body, menstruating women in some cultures have a kinship with vampires as the undead. (Mulvey-Roberts 79)

Coupled with the longstanding tradition of monstracizing the female body due to its fluid outpourings, the intersection between gender and vampires evolves into larger questions about contagion and the spread of impurity, as Mulvey-Roberts suggests. The vampire is a creature that relies on the biting, sucking, draining, and transfusion of blood in a way that is similar to many parasitic and viral contagions which spread, multiply, and wreak havoc on their hosts and victims. What is significant about Mulvey-Roberts' careful examination of menstruation and vampires is that there are two oppositional forces at play. As Mulvey-Roberts asserts, there are certain spaces in which both menstruating women and vampires are not allowed, due to reasons of impurity or contagion. The boundaries of these spaces are enforced by agents of control of these contagions and therefore act to limit the vampiric contagion. Thus, because there is a tradition of dictating that women's bodies are monstrous—and thus vampiric—there are agents whose mission it is to cure, treat, control, or destroy these monsters. This tradition is longstanding, as well, and operates on an overarching and fundamental misunderstanding of the causes, symptoms, and functions of menstruation.

Nineteenth-century medical discourse suggests that there was a crucial link between menstruating women and "hypersexual" behaviors, thus causing a desire to treat and control menstrual symptoms. In the nineteenth century, there were real-life instances of freshly slain ox blood prescribed for many pulmonary ailments.[3] And it is largely believed that the ignorance of

[3] For a more detailed discussion on this real-life occurrence, see my previous chapter.

some doctors led them to prescribe the same treatment for symptoms of menstruation for women to regain their strength due to the blood lost. Perhaps, to entertain this ignorance for a moment, we could speculate that many authors became influenced by this treatment to create heightened and exaggerated versions of female vampires who exhibit characteristics closely associated with menstrual symptoms of the nineteenth century. Indeed, vampire works often include some patriarchal force, e.g., Sérapion in Gautier's work, who seeks to control, dominate, vanquish the vampiric entity, something akin to nineteenth-century doctors attempting to find "cures" for the symptoms of menstruation.

Medical discourse of the period posits that doctors felt compelled to treat the early or late arrival of periods because it was thought that it would render women hypersexual. Early or late periods were perceived as dangerous, though the danger was also a sexual one. Christine de Bellaigue states:

> Thus, in the 1850's, Dr. Reinvillier noted that 'the young woman who was affected by this indisposition, almost always succumbed to reading erotica, or fixed her desires on a real or imaginary being.' As with many of the problems associated with early or late puberty, the danger of irregularity was sexual as much as physiological—in this case an excess of sexual imagination and a spirit of insurrection. In this, the scientific literature reflected—perhaps despite the anti-clerical leanings of many medical men—the influence of a Catholic ideal of temporal regularity. (804)

This sexual danger, according to Bellaigue, situates the hypersexuality as an immoral act during the nineteenth century. Thus, any woman who expresses any kind of sexual desire was rendered immoral, stemming from fundamental misunderstanding of the menstrual functions.[4] The

[4] According to Rachel Mesch, hypersexuality could be cured by an active sex life within a marriage only, with the caveat that the woman did not receive too much pleasure from her husband.

implications of this cultural phenomenon of monstracizing the female body are significant to foreground in a discussion on the female vampire, specifically the one in Gautier's text, Clarimonde. Therefore, due to this longstanding cultural tradition of demonizing female bodily functions that led to readings and interpretations of the vampiric and hypersexual, readers of Gautier's text enter into the "reality" of the tale with women already at the forefront of monstrosity due to the perception of certain physical attributes. And, as Bellaigue intimates above, hypersexuality opposed a Catholic ideology of female social decorum and therefore positioned female sexuality in opposition to the Church, as represented in Gautier's tale through the character of Sérapion.

Sérapion's Demonic Reading of Clarimonde

Romuald's adventure with Clarimonde comes to its climax when she drinks his blood. Sérapion is at Romuald's home the next day to give his final warning about Clarimonde's behavior, and in so doing, he focuses on her sexual expression, above all else:

> La grande courtisane Clarimonde est morte dernièrement à la suite d'une orgie qui a duré huit jours et huit nuits. Ç'a été quelque chose d'infernalement splendide. On a renouvelé là les abominations des festins de Balthazar et de Cléopâtre. Dans quel siècle vivons-nous, Bon Dieu ! … Il a couru de tout temps sur cette Clarimonde de bien étranges histoires, et tous ses amants ont fini d'une manière misérable ou violente. On a dit que c'était une goule, un vampire femelle ; mais je crois que c'était Belzebuth en personne. (Gautier 81)

[The great courtesan Clarimonde recently died following an orgy that lasted eight days and eight nights. It was something diabolically splendid. There they renewed abominations of the feasts of Balthazar and Cleopatra. In what century do we live, Good God! … There have always been some very strange stories about this Clarimonde, and all her lovers ended in a miserable or

violent way. They said that she was a ghoul, a female vampire; but I believe that she was Beelzebub in the flesh.]

Cursing Clarimonde's sexual liberty, Sérapion compares her to, among other seemingly bacchanal figures, the demon Beelzebub, who is often directly related to, or depicted as, the Devil himself. Additionally, Sérapion refers to Clarimonde as the Devil herself, which is consistent with Per Faxneld's research on demonic women. Faxneld links age-old ideologies to posit that the figure antithetical to God in Catholic doctrine is an "intersex Satan" (53). According to Faxneld, in many premodern renderings, the snake (Satan) in the Garden of Eden is depicted with a woman's head, and the figure Baphomet (often symbolizing Satan as well) is depicted with female breasts, giving all the more reason for Sérapion to assert that Clarimonde is the Devil incarnate. Therefore, in Sérapion's dualistic worldview, Clarimonde occupies a bifurcated notion of immorality and evil: Clarimonde is evil because she is the actual devil of his religion and she is rendered unclean and immoral due to her sexual expression in orgies and multiple lovers, which does not align with his church's teachings. In Faxneld's terms, this is considered "demonic feminism," or the act of demonizing women for transgressing patriarchal norms and boundaries (2). Thus, Sérapion easily conjures the link between female sexuality and the Devil, which of course transpires through his lens of chastity and modesty that the Church—the patriarchal force in the narrative—dictates through him.[5] In Sérapion's view, and to use Faxneld's terms, Clarimonde is demonic. And, while the Church dictates that Clarimonde is a demonic force of evil feminine contagion, Romuald views her in a different light.

[5] For a contrasting perspective on this connection between hypersexuality and vampirism, see Mighall, Robert.

Clarimonde's Mimesis of Christ

Romuald's obsession with Clarimonde is due to her likeness to Christ, in direct contrast to Sérapion's view, as she presents herself to subvert the Church's foundational dualistic teachings. Gautier's vampiric tale begins with Romuald at his ordination ceremony to become a Catholic priest. However, in the crowd, he catches a glimpse of Clarimonde, our female vampire, and is immediately struck by her: "Elle parut sensible au martyre que j'éprouvais, et, comme pour m'encourager, elle me lança une œillade pleine de divines promesses. Ses yeux étaient un poème dont chaque regard formait un chant" ["She seemed sensitive to the martyrdom I was experiencing, and, as if to encourage me, she gazed at me full of divine promises. Her eyes were a poem whose every glance formed a song"] (69). Then, she communicates to him, somehow telepathically:

> — Si tu veux être à moi, je te ferai plus heureux que Dieu lui-même dans son paradis ; les anges te jalouseront. Déchire ce funèbre linceul où tu vas t'envelopper ; je suis la beauté, je suis la jeunesse, je suis la vie ; viens à moi, nous serons l'amour. Que pourrait t'offrir Jéhovah pour compensation ? Notre existence coulera comme un rêve et ne sera qu'un baiser éternel.
>
> » Répands le vin de ce calice, et tu es libre. Je t'emmènerai vers les îles inconnues ; tu dormiras sur mon sein, dans un lit d'or massif et sous un pavillon d'argent ; car je t'aime et je veux te prendre à ton Dieu, devant qui tant de nobles cœurs répandent de flots d'amour qui n'arrivent pas jusqu'à lui. (69)

[If you want to be mine, I will make you happier than God himself in his heaven; the angels will be jealous of you. Tear apart this funereal shroud where you will envelop yourself; I am beauty, I am youth, I am life; come to me, we will be love. What could Jehovah offer you as compensation? Our existence will run like a dream and will only be an eternal kiss.

Pour the wine from this chalice, and you are free. I will take you to unknown islands; you will sleep on my bosom, in a massive golden bed and under a silver roof; because I love you and

I want to take you to your God, before whom many noble hearts pour waves of love that do not reach him.]

Clarimonde positions herself to so closely resemble the image of Christ that she now propositions the soon-to-be ordained priest, Romuald, to make a choice between Christ or her. How is it that she is able to offer *divines promesses* [*divine promises*] if she were not endowed with the same powers as Christ, or even God? Her juxtaposition to Christ's "I am" statements from the Book of John are also significant in her mimesis of Christ, and therefore of God himself. Christ states in John 6:35: "I Am The Bread Of Life;" 8:12: "I Am The Light Of The World;" 10:7: "I Am The Gate For The Sheep;" 10:11: "I Am The Good Shepherd;" 11:25: "I Am The Resurrection And The Life;" 14:6: "I Am The Way The Truth And The Life;" and 15:1: "I Am The True Vine" (*New Revised Standard Version*). Clarimonde's statements, however, offer a different image: one that is grounded in beauty, everlasting youth, and lust.[6] She implies a future sexual relationship in depicting the way he will sleep on her breast and that their relationship will be like a dream with an eternal kiss. At the outset, Gautier depicts her to be sexually liberal; a temptress for Romuald to follow a different path. And she does so by positioning herself in direct opposition to God, himself, by uttering his sacred name, Jehovah, as if to say that she is more powerful than him and that she can offer much more lavish luxury and sexual freedom to Romuald than God can. Therefore, while Gautier renders the vampire character an opponent to religious doctrine and religious moral teachings, the fact that the vampire is also a woman allows this opposition to sink a little deeper into the social realm. However, it is not solely Clarimonde who situates herself among the divine, for Romuald strays from the Church's teachings by allowing her to occupy this position.

[6] Indeed, Clarimonde's beauty is a subject of focus for many scholars. See Linton, Anne E. and DiLiberti, Julia.

Sexualization of the Undead

Romuald's relationship with Clarimonde begins with his sexualization of her dead body and granting her divine rites. Sometime after the ordination where he first encountered Clarimonde, Romuald is called by a servant to deliver the last rites of a dying soul. He is led to a castle where he discovers that it is to Clarimonde that he must offer this ritual, yet she has already died. While at her bedside, he cannot seem to shake the feeling that he is under some sort of voluptuous spell, as he sensuously inspects every inch of her body, drawn to her beauty.[7] Suddenly, he is overcome with a necrophilic impulse to kiss her. He states, "La nuit s'avançait, et, sentant approcher le moment de la séparation éternelle, je ne pus me refuser cette triste et suprême douceur de déposer un baiser sur les lèvres mortes de celle qui avait eu tout mon amour" ["Night approached, and, sensing the moment of eternal separation, I could not refuse myself that sad and ultimate sweetness of laying a kiss on the dead lips of the one who had all my love"] (Gautier, 79). Romuald's sudden necrophilic intentions stem from a profound sense of love for her that, by all accounts, developed only from examining her physical beauty and being telepathically transfixed at his ordination. Yet, this urge to kiss her not only sexualizes her, but also complicates the way he situates her among the divine. *Séparation éternelle* [*eternal separation*] and *suprême douceur* [*ultimate sweetness*] connote religious notions of eternality and supremacy that grant Clarimonde permission to be likened to God.[8] His divine sexualization of her thus blurs the boundaries of love and lust regarding religious idolatry.

The kiss itself ambiguates the agent of resurrection on Clarimonde's deathbed. Romuald recounts the very moment of Clarimonde's resurrection due to his life-giving kiss:

[7] See Wang, Ying for more on Clarimonde's hybridity and liminality as a tool for seducing Romuald.
[8] For more on beauty and death, see Peel, Stéphanie.

> O prodige ! un léger souffle se mêla à mon souffle, et la bouche de Clarimonde répondit à la passion de la mienne : ses yeux s'ouvrirent et reprirent un peu d'éclat, elle fit un soupir, et décroisant ses bras, elle les passa derrière mon cou avec un air de ravissement ineffable." (79)

[Oh, what miracle! A light breath mixed with my breath, and Clarimonde's mouth responded to the passion of mine own: her eyes opened and resumed a bit of brightness, she took a breath, and uncrossing her arms, she placed them behind my neck with an air of ineffable rapture.]

Is Clarimonde playing a trick on him as one of her vampire seductions or is it truly Romuald who resurrected her?[9] Of course, Clarimonde's undead state already leads readers to believe in her ability to cheat death and subvert God's power based on the very nature of her supernatural powers. However, Romuald, as a follower and teacher of Catholic doctrine, depicts this event in religious terms. He perceives the resurrection to be miraculous (*prodige*), and yet again he associates her with the divine with *ravissement ineffable* [*ineffable rapture*]. Thus, while it is Clarimonde's supernatural state that allows her to cheat death, Romuald, by his own religiously oriented logic, associates this ability with the divine, believing that it is with his kiss that she is brought to life.

Romuald's Subversion of Catholic Doctrine

However, if we are to understand these events through Romuald's terms, is it not clear that he brought her back to life as though by a miracle wrought by his status as a priest? Considering this question means acknowledging that the subversion of the patriarchal force—the Church—is multifaceted. Because Romuald's power was instilled in him through his ordainment, his resurrection of Clarimonde takes this power from God and likens him to Christ

[9] Małgorzata Sokołowicz equally poses such questions.

and his resurrection of Lazarus. No longer is Romuald solely an intermediary between people and God, for through his actions he presents himself to be equal to God and Christ, thus blurring the dualistic boundaries of his religion. However, the original question of Clarimonde's undead state must not be ignored in parsing out the ambiguity of the subversion in this scene.

As we consider the implications of this scene, I turn to Florent Montaclair, who asserts that it is only through divine right (according to Catholic tradition) that a mortal is able to resurrect, and that vampires—as figures of the undead—act counter to this right, or law. Therefore, for mere mortals, this immortal state is granted only through entering the afterlife.

> Rappelons que la seule forme d'immortalité possible chrétiennement est l'entrée au Paradis, c'est-à-dire l'arrivée dans une éternité calme, sans corps et sans passion. Le retour d'un mort avec toute sa « corporalité », sa chair et son sang (ou celui des autres) est donc choquant, destructeur, mais évidemment significatif d'une volonté de contrer l'anéantissement. (Montaclair, *…textes et documents*, 48)

[Let us remember that the only possible form of immortality in a Christian sense is the entrance into Heaven, in other words the arrival into an eternal rest, without body and without passion. The return of a dead person with all their "corporality," their flesh and their blood (or that of others) is thus shocking, destructive, but obviously significant of a drive to counter annihilation.]

Clarimonde's undead state evokes a fearful and doubtful response from Romuald, as she has risen from the dead in both body and in spirit, and her immortality is a challenge to his religion's teachings on Ascension. She transgresses the thresholds of divine immortality and earthly mortality, occupying an immortal state that has transcended the boundaries of life and death as dictated by the Church. And it is this "volonté" ["drive"] that Montaclair posits that reveals so precisely Clarimonde's desire to rebel against the oppressive patriarchy, rendering her a dangerous feminist figure against the Church's teachings. For figures like Sérapion, who condemn and fear her undead state, the vampire "…incarne la fausse immortalité … un revenant

non-agrée par Dieu" ["…embodies false immortality … a revenant unauthorized by God"] (Montaclair, *…textes et documents*, 48). Though, considering Romuald's actions and his proximity to the divine, we may apply Montaclair's assertion a little differently. That is to say, we may begin to read Clarimonde as "un revenant *agréé* par Dieu" ["a revenant *authorized* by God"], instead. He allows her vampirism to subvert his own beliefs that God be the only divine figure in his life. Therefore, together, Romuald and Clarimonde create an oppositional Christ- or God-like figure, opposing the dualistic view of the Church. Not only does this opposition manifest from Clarimonde's resurrection, but it is also presented through Clarimonde's act of drinking blood.

Deification of Romuald

Clarimonde's own upending of Christ's value is mediated through drinking Romuald's blood and the way in which she articulates that the blood gives her life—analogous to the way Christ encourages his disciples to eat his flesh and drink his blood. As discussed in my previous chapter, at one point during their somnambulistic adventures, Clarimonde begins to grow very weak and ill. At her bedside, Romuald is cutting fruit for their breakfast and cuts himself accidentally. Upon seeing the blood, she latches onto him and drinks. She then exclaims, having almost instantly grown stronger and livelier:

> Je ne mourrai pas ! je ne mourrai pas ! dit-elle à moitié folle de joie et en se pendant à mon cou ; je pourrai t'aimer encore longtemps. Ma vie est dans la tienne, et tout ce qui est moi vient de toi. Quelques gouttes de ton riche et noble sang, plus précieux et plus efficace que tous les élixirs du monde, m'ont rendu l'existence. (Gautier, 88)

["I shall not die! I shall not die!" She says half-crazy from joy and clinging to my neck; "I will be able to love you much longer still. My life is in yours, and all that is me comes from you. A

few drops of your rich and noble blood, more precious and more efficient than all the elixirs of the world, have given me existence."]

Yet again, it is Romuald who is able to grant her prolonged life. Of course, due to her vampiric nature, she relies on blood to live, but his analogousness to Christ in this exclamation grants him an even higher divinatory power. Transubstantiation comes to mind, of course, given that she has literally drunk of his blood and thus claimed immortality.

> Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me." (*New Revised Standard Version,* John 6:53–7)

Transubstantiation in the Catholic doctrine centers on the act of becoming or transforming. Therefore, the consumption of bread and wine is not only metaphorical, but to some believers there is also a literal transformation that takes place in which the bread and wine truly become, or transform into, the flesh and blood of Christ.[10] This practice depicts a transfusion and absorption of bodily fluids in order to internalize and exhibit one's duty and loyalty to a worshipped figure. And, as Gautier depicts through Clarimonde's words above, immortality, resurrection, the promise of Paradise, and the transmission of blood and flesh from one body to the other through consumption is quintessentially vampiric, and even cannibalistic in its allusions. The striking similarities between Christ's statement to his followers and Clarimonde's to Romuald conveys that Clarimonde is creating a prophet out of Romuald, likening him and his life-giving blood to

[10] See Smith, Gregory A.

the figure of Christ. She further upends his beliefs and solidifies his power in being able to sustain her life, both during this scene and the scene of her resurrection, as well. He allows her to transform him into a version of Christ for her, so that she, as a Lazarus-like figure, can profit from his life-giving powers. Thus, their relationship transforms from transfixed and loved from afar to an eerie display of symbiotic worship and idolatry to the point of reciprocal apotheosis. By the end of the tale, however, this relationship dynamic proves too much for Romuald's conscience, as he is struck by his own blasphemous behavior:

> Pourtant mes scrupules de prêtre me tourmentaient plus que jamais, et je ne savais quelle macération nouvelle inventer pour mater et mortifier ma chair. Quoique toutes ces visions fussent involontaires et que je n'y participasse en rien, je n'osais pas toucher le Christ avec des mains aussi impures et un esprit souillé par de pareilles débauches réelles ou rêvées. (Gautier, 89–90)

[Yet my priestly qualms were tormenting me more than ever, and I did not know which new maceration to invent to subdue and mortify my flesh. Although all these visions were involuntary and that I did not participate in any of it, I did not dare touch Christ with my hands so impure and a spirit soiled by similar debauchery real or dreamt.]

The second time that Clarimonde drinks his blood, Romuald grows fonder of her and sexualizes her further. She attempts to drug his drink so that she can feed on him while he sleeps, yet he notices and throws out the drink when she turns away. He pretends to sleep, and he hears her debate to herself whether or not she should drink from him. She eventually does so, and Romuald's mind begins to race—he finally realizes that Sérapion was right all along: Clarimonde is a vampire. Yet, he is so in love that he would gladly give himself to her willingly: "Je me serais ouvert le bras moi-même et je lui aurais dit : « Bois ! et que mon amour s'infiltre dans ton corps avec mon sang ! »" ["I would have opened my arm myself and would have told her: 'Drink! And that my love is infiltrated in your body with my blood!'"] (89). His love for her

is so profound that not only is he allowing himself to stray from his priestly duties, but it also wipes all fear regarding her vampirism from his mind completely. However, this Lazarus-Christ relationship is complicated by Clarimonde's sexualization of Romuald, as well, implying that in worshipping Christ's figure and drinking his metaphorical/literal blood, transubstantiation and vampirism are increasingly intertwined through the lens of sexuality.[11] Clarimonde's sexualization of her mimetic Christ dissolves the otherwise clear boundary between good and evil, and angelic and demonic, as she herself represents a mirrored reflection of church practices, traditions and erotic idolatry of Christ. And, it is through this same lustful lens that he attempts to justify his relationship with such a monstrous and blasphemous creature, wherein he views the vampirism as separate from the woman he loves.

Romuald, believing to have blasphemed, while also expressing such a deep, loving connection with Clarimonde, seems to rationalize this relationship by separating the woman from the vampire. Professing his love and willingness to be drained of his blood, he states: "D'ailleurs, je n'avais pas grand-peur ; la femme me répondait du vampire, et ce que j'avais entendu et vu me rassurait complètement ; j'avais alors des veines planteuses qui ne se seraient pas de sitôt épuisées, et je ne marchandais pas ma vie goutte à goutte" ["By the way, I didn't have much fear; the woman responded to me through the vampire, and what I had heard and seen completely reassured me; so I had strong veins that would not be exhausted straight away, and I was not bargaining my life drop by drop"] (89). *La femme me répondait du vampire* [*the woman responded to me through the vampire*] suddenly takes his fear of committing the ultimate blasphemy to one that rationalizes no fault due to the woman inside Clarimonde, for the vampiric behavior is seemingly out of her control. He is in love with *her*, Clarimonde the woman, *not*

[11] See Roth, Phyllis A., who asserts that transfusion in vampire tales is inherently sexual.

Clarimonde the vampire. Therefore, he does not view Clarimonde as a vampire woman, but that the vampire and Clarimonde are mutually exclusive, separate and incomparable. It is evident in his exclamations above that his love for Clarimonde overshadows her vampiric attributes, as he is able to distinctly define the two separately. In doing so, Romuald admits that not only has he been infected by the contagion of the vampiric, but he is also infected by the feminine-demonic––about which Sérapion had offered stern warnings. Although, he views this relationship much differently than his stern Catholic superior.

Feminist Readings of Clarimonde

It is at this juncture that we may read Romuald, as doubtful as he is about the activities in which he participates with Clarimonde, as a sympathetic figure toward her, therefore a "Satanic feminist." As discussed much earlier, Sérapion views Clarimonde, given her immoral, anti-conformist attitudes toward acceptable social-sexual acts and religious figures, as a demonic woman. Yet, viewing these acts with an alternative, more sympathetic view allows Romuald to occupy "Satanic feminism," according to Per Faxneld. That is to say that the woman through the Satanic feminist lens is considered to be very intimately related to the Catholic devil, Satan, but as a liberating figure rather than one that is hellbent on evil and destruction. Does this mean, then, that we could read Clarimonde as a liberating force, perhaps as one that liberates Romuald from his vow of chastity about which he has many doubts? Is she a force for good, then, even in dismantling Catholic doctrine through anti-dualistic mimeses? And is the Church the enemy or is it the vampire? These are questions that come to mind when considering the many ways in which Clarimonde, as both a vampire and as a woman, subverts any sense of normative boundaries within the tale, whether regarding religion, patriarchy, or even societal notions of feminine

monstrosity. The answers to these questions may not be so clear and may even lead to more ambiguities within Gautier's text. However, one moment at the end of the tale points to Romuald's admission that Clarimonde led to his wariness about women for the rest of his life.

At the end of Gautier's tale, Romuald professes that he loved Clarimonde more than God, yet offers a warning that inadvertently renders Clarimonde a predecessor to the *femme fatale* figure. He states: "Ne regardez jamais une femme, et marchez toujours les yeux fixés en terre, car, si chaste et si calme que vous soyez, il suffit d'une minute pour vous faire perdre l'éternité" ["Never look upon a woman, and always walk with your eyes fixed upon the ground, for, as chaste and as calm as you may be, it takes but one minute to make you lose eternity"] (92). The last lines of Gautier's text serve as a warning to readers about such strong women as Clarimonde, and that Romuald is left, perhaps, fearful of women. It is for this reason that Clarimonde is generally accepted as a precursor to the *femme fatale* figure, for she is considered a temptress, cunning and cruel, leading to the downfall of male characters.[12] These Fatal Women, however, became a trope of (post-Romantic) Decadent literature, yet have existed even in mythological tales since antiquity, according to Mario Praz below. One such *femme fatale* who is often compared to Clarimonde throughout contemporary scholarship is Lilith. In Jewish midrashic tradition, Lilith is the first wife of Adam, made from the same mud as him, but who fled from the Garden of Eden due to a lack of gender equity among her, Adam, and God. Therefore, to conclude this discussion about Clarimonde and her subversion of religious patriarchal tradition, I argue that we must read Clarimonde in the same vein as Lilith. Yet, Mario Praz disagrees:

[12] Anne E. Linton agrees that Clarimonde is also a *femme fatale*, though a strange one. See also, Sokołowicz, Małgorzata and the way in which Clarimonde is posed within the framework of *femme fatale*, and also, DiLiberti, Julia, who asserts that the work has more to do with love than vampirism.

> There have always existed Fatal Women both in mythology and in literature, since mythology and literature are imaginative reflections of the various aspects of real life, and real life has always provided more or less complete examples of arrogant and cruel characters. There is no need, therefore, to go back to the myth of Lilith … Nevertheless, as a reminder that the type was produced so frequently, even in classical antiquity, that it became almost an obsession… (199)

But why must we not go back to the myth of Lilith? And must Lilith thus be viewed as an "arrogant and cruel" character to only serve as a reminder of Fatal Women of the distant past? Perhaps it is because Praz's comment here is that Lilith should be considered negatively, or demonically, to use Per Faxneld's terms, meaning that she can only be read as evil and destructive. The reason that I believe it is important to return to this myth in our discussion of Clarimonde is to analogize Gautier's tale with the rabbinic tradition of Lilith, but with a new perspective on the Lilith midrash that could in turn grant us a new perspective on Clarimonde and to allow us a more Satanic (again, in Faxneld's terms) reading of her journey in Gautier's text. And, although Faxneld's own work likens Clarimonde to Lilith in this vein, I contend that we must do so in a new way—one that is analogous to Judith Plaskow's rendition of the Lilith midrash, specifically. Plaskow's reinterpretation of the original Lilith midrash is significant because it allows for a more discursive and versatile way to read the religious text in question: *The Book of Genesis*. If we are to consider the reasons for which Clarimonde is able to subvert the patriarchy as a liberating force, and not one that is simply monstrous and evil, we must consider the why's in the same vein that Plaskow does for her retelling of Lilith. Plaskow states:

> [The] original Lilith midrash emerged from the contradiction between the creation narratives in Genesis 1 and Genesis 2. Because in Genesis 1 the man and woman are

> created simultaneously and apparently equally, while in Genesis 2 Eve is created from Adam's rib, the rabbis wondered whether the stories might not describe two different events in the history of creation. Their response was that, indeed, Adam did have a first wife named Lilith, who fled the garden when Adam tried to subordinate her. God sent three angels after her to bring her back, at which point in the midrash, Lilith turns into a demon, killing new babies in retaliation for the deaths of her own children. (Plaskow 85)

Plaskow references a Judaic practice known as midrash, which is the interpretative reading of Hebrew Scripture that rabbis conduct in order to guide followers through holes, gaps, or contradictions in the narratives of these texts. It is a process of orthopraxis, which allows for a more discursive interpretation and reading of religious texts, rather than a process of orthodoxia, which dictates that there is only one way to interpret religious texts, much like the Catholic Church's process. Plaskow found it necessary to reinterpret the original midrash of Lilith's origins in Genesis in order for Lilith to fit within a contemporary society as a symbol of deeply rooted sisterhood and feminism. This new perspective grants readers of biblical texts an authority to interpret Lilith's origin and therefore an authority to conjure Lilith's image as one that refutes a traditionally masculine ideology of interpreting Genesis.

Plaskow's reinterpretation transforms the original midrash into one that is sprinkled with contemporary changes: Having grown tired of serving Adam, Lilith utters God's name, and flies away. However, God is less threatening in Plaskow's version and is instead more sympathetic to Lilith wanting to leave Eden. He created Eve from Adam's rib and, unlike Lilith, was satisfied with serving her husband, Adam. However, Plaskow states:

> The only thing that really disturbed her was the excluding closeness of the relationship between Adam and God. Adam and God just seemed to have more in common, both

being men, and Adam came to identify with God more and more. After a while, that made God a bit uncomfortable too… (31)

Meanwhile, Lilith attempted to re-enter the Garden, though failed because Adam had fortified its walls. He told Eve about Lilith, demonizing her and told Eve horror stories about her threatening women in childbirth and stealing their children. Eventually, Lilith broke through the gates of Eden, entered into battle with Adam, and lost. Plaskow then positions Eve to discover she has been misled, for upon Lilith's return to exile after losing the battle with Adam, "Eve got a glimpse of her and saw she was a woman like herself … Was Lilith indeed another woman? Adam said she was a demon. Another woman!" (32). Eve began to have doubts, pondering her own limits in Eden. Her curiosity about Lilith led her to breech the outer walls of the Garden, climbing up an apple tree whose branches crossed the threshold and swinging herself over the wall. "At first sight of her, Eve remembered the tales of Adam and was frightened, but Lilith understood and greeted her kindly. 'Who are you?' they asked each other, 'What is your story?'" (32). At this point in Plaskow's midrash on midrash, she intimates that a bond of sisterhood formed between Eve and Lilith: "They sat and spoke together, of the past and then of the future. They talked for many hours, not once, but many times. They taught each other many things, and told each other stories, and laughed together and cried, over and over…" (32). The subversion in Plaskow's rendition becomes clear when Adam grows "disturbed" by Eve's behavior and her constant absence from the Garden, and talks with God, though he, "having his own problems with Adam … was able to help out a little—but he was confused, too. Something had failed to go according to plan" (32). In the end of this retelling, the break away from patriarchal dominance illustrates the effect of feminist liberation: "God and Adam were expectant and afraid the day

Eve and Lilith returned to the garden, bursting with possibilities, ready to rebuild it together" (32).

Clarimonde and Lilith Together in Sisterhood

Readers of both Gautier's and Plaskow's texts will be able to spot the subtle and nuanced narratological analogies between the two. However, what is most significant are their intersections regarding religious doctrine and authority, the ways in which women are perceived through traditional masculine religiosity, and a new perspective on supposed demonic figures that grants them both a feminist, Satanic liberation. After all, in the end, the male figures in both tales (Adam, God, and Romuald) are left fearful of the unknown; fearful of what women will do. Plaskow's feminist interpretation in a retelling of Lilith's banishment from the Garden of Eden can offer us a new perspective to read Clarimonde's actions in the same light. As Romuald reveres her, Sérapion demonizes her by way of her hypersexual, feminine characteristics that do not align with the Church's teachings on morality. Meanwhile, Clarimonde attempts to liberate, not seduce, Romuald away from the religious path about which he is full of doubts. At his ordination at the start of the tale, for example, he states:

> Je fis un effort suffisant pour arracher une montagne, pour m'écrier que je ne voulais pas être prêtre ; mais je ne pus en venir à bout ; ma langue resta clouée à mon palais, et il me fut impossible de traduire ma volonté par le plus léger mouvement négatif. J'étais, tout éveillé, dans un état pareil à celui de cauchemar, où l'on veut crier un mot dont votre vie dépend, sans en pouvoir venir à bout. (69)

[I made a sufficient effort to tear away from a mountain, to shout out that I did not want to be a priest; but I could not overcome it; my tongue stayed nailed to my palate, and it was impossible for me to translate my desire through the slightest negative action. I was, entirely awake, in a

state similar to that of a nightmare, where one wants to yell out a word on which your life depends, without being able to overcome it.]

Therefore, perhaps Clarimonde attempts to liberate him from this nightmare, and to show him what his life could be like only in his dreams. Perhaps her subversion of the patriarchy is more significant in this perspective. Either way, however, the argument remains—Clarimonde reprograms Romuald's perspective on all things moral and divine by portraying to him that he, too, could be a god. Thus, Clarimonde, dismantles the dualistic foundation of the Church *and* frees Romuald in the process by showing him the alternative to the demonic woman and the vampiric contagion—all before she is eventually destroyed. However we interpret Gautier's vampire, one aspect remains: like Lilith, Clarimonde is a strong woman. And neither Sérapion nor Romuald know what to do, or how to think about their future with her in it. Plaskow states that, much like Clarimonde in Gautier's text, "…I came to see Lilith as a classic example of male projection. Lilith is not a demon; rather she is a woman named a demon by a tradition that does not know what to do with strong women" (82).

Conclusion

The nineteenth-century French vampire had simultaneously embedded and elicited various anxieties of the period. Throughout the Reign of Terror, fear of the seemingly porous boundaries between life and death infested the French imaginary to create visions of horrific undead monsters in the nineteenth century. Vampires became images of the undead with life, death, and immortality exhibited in one corporeal form. Subsequently, anxieties about national boundaries, fear of the invasion of the foreign Other, and the simultaneous allure of the Orient transformed the monster into a political specter of an imperial imaginary during the First Empire under Napoléon Bonaparte. Suddenly, ideologies of language, national belonging, identity, race and religion enmesh onto the monstrous figure. From here, into the Second Empire under Louis-Napoléon (Napoléon III) and his prefect Haussmann, the anxieties transformed the map of Paris, pushing the ugly side of the food chain "out of sight and smell" (Claflin, 32). Thus, a real-life form of vampirism was created in order to stave off the contagion of violence—both the violence of illness and the state-sanctioned violence of class stratification as vengeance for insurrections past. Anxieties about the New Woman began to creep into the vampire's iterations, as well, as the patriarchal fear of hypersexuality, immodesty, and seduction infiltrated French society. However, being that the vampire is an imaginary conception based on a system of ever-evolving signifiers, as discussed in my first chapter, its iterations today may appear differently than they did almost two hundred years ago.

In the Francophone world today, we see varying versions of the vampire manifest within literature, art, and society. The 2020 Netflix series, *Les vampires*, which I have discussed at length in my second chapter, is but one way the vampire has presented itself as a monster composed of the fear of identity, hybridity, and the anxieties of the Other. However, other

versions which supplement the overall topos have begun to establish themselves within the larger Francophone imaginary and beyond. Such vampire images may still exhibit fears; however, some go a bit beyond this to exhibit hatred.

The use of vampire imagery to exhibit opposition and hatred continues to infest the cultural imaginary, even in the larger Francophone world. Recently, in conjunction with the rising tensions between Palestinians and Israel, the Canadian French-language newspaper, *La Presse*, published a political cartoon depicting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as the vampire Count Orlock from the 1922 silent film *Nosferatu*, with an inscription stating "Nosfenyahu, en route vers Rafah" ["Nosfenyahu en route to Rafah"], "Nosfenyahu" being a portmanteau of Nosferatu and Netanyahu (see figure 8 below). Orlock's depiction in F. W. Murnau's original film is often critiqued as an antisemitic depiction of a vampire,[1] and therefore the contemporary public perception of Netanyahu's depiction as such deemed that it was an antisemitic portrayal of the Prime Minister. And even still, in 2016 opposers of new renovations of the Museum of Art and History in Geneva depicted the Jewish architect as a vampire (also as Count Orlock; see figure 9 below). Although the voices cited in these news sources[2] stated that these images echo anti-Jewish propaganda of Nazi Germany, in many ways this imagery goes back to the Middle Ages when many antisemitic depictions of Jews as monsters and vampire-like creatures were perpetuated during the rise of blood libel. It seems, then, that the antisemitic connection between vampire and Jew is one that is still present within contemporary imaginaries.

[1] See Berlatsky, Noah
[2] See Lapierre, Matthew; Fegelman, Mike; and Francey, Olivier

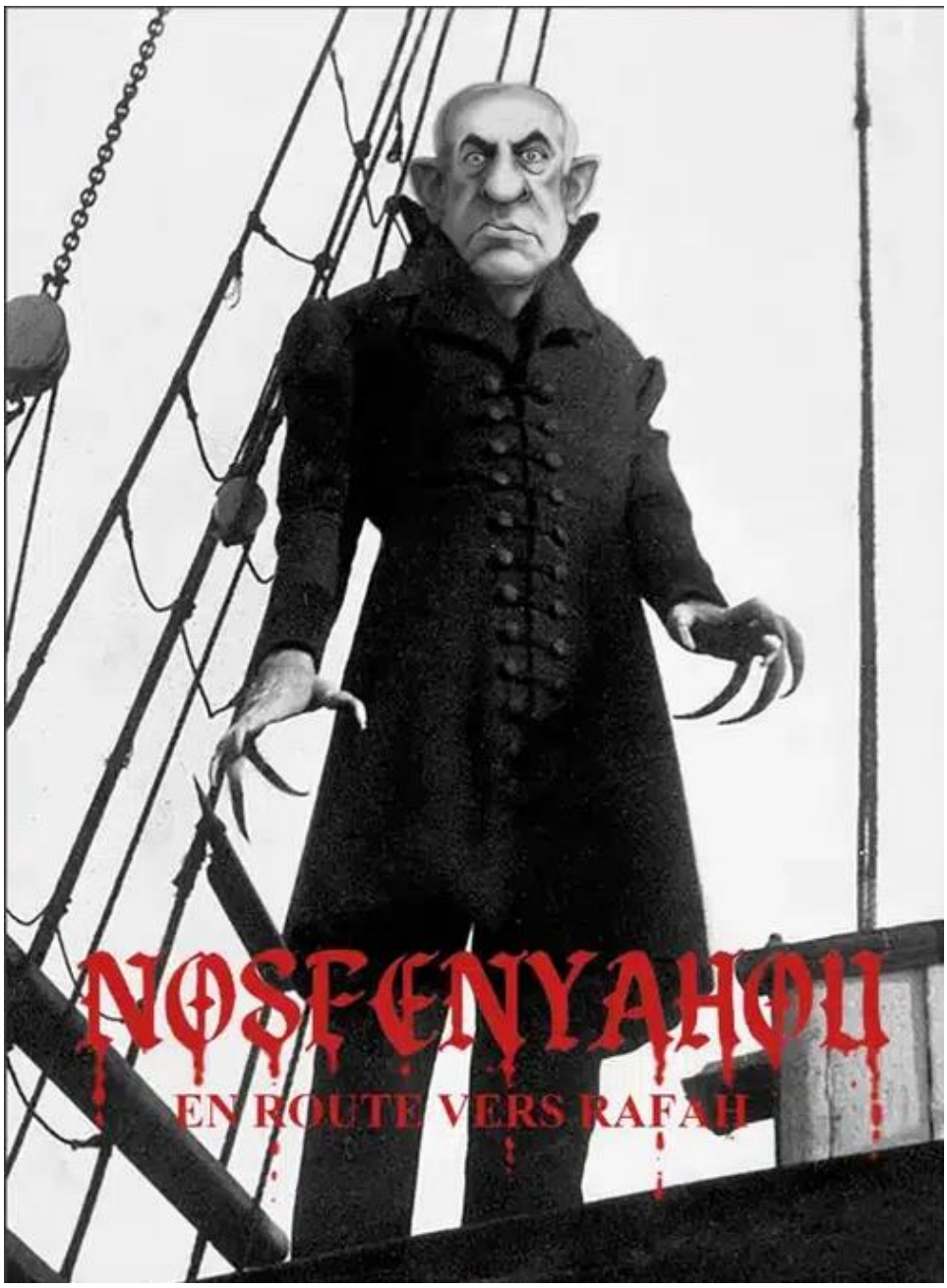


Figure 8. Nosfenyahu en route vers Rafah [*Nosfenyahu en route to Rafah*][3]

[3] First published in *La Presse* on March 20, 2024. The image was subsequently taken down from *La Presse*'s website after public critique. This image was taken from Mike Fegelman's article in *Honest Reporting Canada*. See Fegelman, Mike.

Figure 9. Architect Jean Nouvel as Count Orlock[4]

These images begin to open a new angle for reading the vampire within a contemporary society, as well, as it is apparent that these antisemitic images are born out of a desire to make a statement of opposition, rather than one rooted in fear. It is almost as if the vampire imagery is used as a slur, as a pejorative image, or one for activist propaganda. Might this mean that in conjuring the image of vampire figures today, we may read them as political s*tatements* and not solely *anxieties*? Indeed, it seems as though this is the case. Or, at least, as in the case of contemporary American television, the vampire society depicted in HBO's *True Blood* stands as a metaphor for LGBTQ rights and the legalization of gay marriage since it had first aired in 2008

[4] Architect Jean Nouvel depicted as Count Orlock in same the manner as Netanyahu above—exaggerated, stereotypical Jewish traits made to look vampiric. Published in *Le temps*, a Swiss French-language periodical, along with an article by Olivier Francey on January 13, 2016. See Francey, Olivier.

during the Proposition 8 movement.[5] Therefore, the vampire may as well stand as the "all-purpose monster" that Halberstam suggests, perhaps one that is situated in the horrific and also one that occupies other aspects of our psyche (92).

How might we come to understand the vampire as a manifestation of anxieties, as I have discussed throughout this dissertation, yet recognize that many comedic vampires may still exist? How does the comedic interpretation of the monster interplay with the elicitation of fear? Such comedic interpretations should not be ignored, for comedy is a simulation of reality often coupled with critique. Therefore, we might say that the comedic versions of the vampire may as well offer us a new way to work through the anxieties without eliciting or exhibiting fear. The comedic elements at play strip away that which makes the vampire fearful and yet still portrays its social, cultural, and political makeup. For instance, contemporary iterations, such as Taika Waititi's and Jemaine Clement's 2014 film *What We Do in the Shadows*, and the subsequent television series of the same name (2019), plays on many vampire tropes from many different centuries and cultures. Even during the nineteenth century, Alexandre Dumas published a comedic play, *Le vampire* (1851), whose character, Lord Ruthven, slightly parodies a previous British work of vampire literature, John William Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819). The vampires in these cases offer not only a simulation or critique of our reality, but also a new version of comedic monstrous figures that I have not yet discussed in this dissertation, which calls for further contemplation and discussion on its own.

Much like Anyiwo's metaphor that the vampire is our cultural mirror, what it reflects are our "desires," our "concerns," and it seems our critique on society, and even our fears. If the

[5] See "Proposition 8 Cases," which states that in November 2008 voters approved Proposition 8 which "added a new section to the state Constitution which provides that 'Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California'" (par. 1).

nineteenth-century vampire demonstrates that its composition is psychic, political, and social, then it will, in a multitude of ways, be versatile enough for its continued manifestation in our imaginary. As Anyiwo also suggests, the vampire must "code switch," and no matter the time period, the vampire will find a way to transfuse itself into our psyche and manifest itself with whatever concerns or pleasures we have at the time.

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