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FEMALE SANGUINARY CAPITALISM IN VICTORIAN VAMPIRE FICTION

Abstract
The historical residue of the Victorian-era vampire is yet to release its firm grip on its contemporary revivals, allowing additional spaces for new historical and socio-political insight into the effect of Marxian capitalism as "*economic* vampirism" (Morrissette 2013: 637) on *fin-de-siècle* nineteenth-century Gothic fiction. The class-consciousness of Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* and Sheridan LeFanu's novella *Carmilla* is also yet to be comprehensively explored in terms of elucidating the inextricable link between Victorian vampire and industrial capital. Well-established Marxian tropes in *Dracula* and overlooked in *Carmilla*, such as capital, class conflict and the bourgeois work ethic, require attention and reinterpretation; while undetected ones in both fictions, estrangement, animalisation, emasculation, factory working conditions, child exploitation, deterritorialization, call for a thorough examination. Furthermore, the neglected potential of female vampires as sanguinary capitalists within the framework of nineteenth-century political economy is also established in this paper.

Keywords: capital, Marx, Victorian Gothic, vampire, *Dracula*, *Carmilla*

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1. Introduction

In his dissection of capitalist production, Marx notes that capital is "dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks" (1967: 233). His use of the vampire trope in deconstructing political economy comes as no surprise since vampire fiction was a popular literary Gothic sub-genre at the time and as Neocleous claims, Marx was rather fond of such horror stories (2003: 673). It is thus evident that the narrative of monster-as-capital(ist) dates back to the age of fictional vampires of the Victorian Gothic which, in turn, inspired Marx's (in)famous analogy.

While the prolific literary genre of the nineteenth-century Gothic, or more precisely, vampire fiction has been subjected to numerous treatments of an overwhelmingly psychoanalytic trajectory, efforts to historicise and economically classify these works have also cropped up. Once such example is Count Dracula's Romantic forefather, Lord Ruthven of John Polidori's *The Vampyre*, establishing the vampire villain as anti-bourgeois (Rogers 2000: ix). The haunting and feeding patterns of other literary vampires of the era, namely female, however, are yet to be comprehensively deciphered within a politico-economic framework. Therefore, the central focus of this paper is to apply Marx's works of economy and political philosophy, alongside other pieces of thematically related literature, to a cultural materialist (re)interpretation of the concepts surrounding capitalist production, such as capital, labour, class struggle and conflict, the bourgeois work ethic, estrangement and animalisation, subpar working conditions in factories, child exploitation, deterritorialization and consumption in Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* and Sheridan LeFanu's novella *Carmilla*. Due to the vampire's cultural perseverance in contemporary political economy, relevant neo/post-Marxist writings shall also supplement this reading.

2. Vampire and Capital

"To read the opening chapters of *Capital* is to be plunged into an extraordinary literary world" (Wolff 1988: 13). In fact, the introductory section of Francis Wheen's *Marx's Das Kapital* enumerates and elaborates *Capital*'s many literary allusions (2008: 1–9), affirming its poetic and intertextual aesthetic (431–44). The relationship between the literary and

the economic during Victorian times reveals itself as a two-way process, as the latter also impacted the former. For instance, Hites uncovers the fiscal consciousness of the Victorian novel, clearly influenced by nineteenth-century economic theory (2016: 428–33). In addition, the author highlights the fact that "Victorian novels [created] the cultural climate around finance by portraying it as an enigmatic and malicious entity" (429) while money was perceived "a threat" and "object of anxiety" (431). The words "enigmatic", "malicious" and "threat" do not only aptly depict the fictional vampire, but also prophesise its connection to political economy. The Gothic genre, therefore, intensified this capital-induced neurosis by resurrecting the vampire myth and placing it in social strata. Furthermore, Marx's critique of industrial capitalism is essentially Gothic, in its jargon and methodology, by virtue of endowing the economic system with the "ability to transform matter into commodity, commodity into value, and value into capitalism" (Halberstam1993: 346). It was Jacques Derrida who brilliantly engaged with *Capital*'s supernatural language of currency in *Specters of Marx*, concluding that the idealisation of money is "a production of ghosts, illusions, simulacra, appearances, or apparitions" (1994: 56). In the very same section, Derrida also continues to place business, commerce, haunting and grave digging in close proximity. Marx's philosophic opus, toiling to detangle the very essence of capitalist production, thus contains an overture of somewhat vague magical analogies and explanations that ultimately culminate in the palpable and corporeal vampire motif in *Capital*. Hence, the vampire's roots in the occult are bolstered and supplemented with economic attributes, though somewhat abandoning the realm of superstitious imagination, to establish the blood-sucker as a class-conscious cog in the machine of industrial capitalism.

Gelder goes even further in enforcing an interchangeable synonymy between capital and vampire by stating that "[t]he representation of both capital or of the capitalist as vampire was […] to produce a striking figure defined by excess and unrestrained appetite" (1994: 22). Following this rationale, if a closer inspection of Marx's allegories of capital(ism) is conducted, it might shed light on the defining traits of the vampire as a "sanguinary capitalist" (Skal 2001: 159). It is also paramount to point out that Marx does not make a clear distinction between capital and capitalist since the latter is "only capital personified" (1967: 233). Thus, the two will be used interchangeably throughout this paper. In 1867, in the wake of economic crises and overproduction, Marx prefaces the first

German edition of *Capital* slightly superstitiously, warning that alongside of modern evils, "a whole series of inherited evils oppress us, arising from the passive survival of antiquated modes of production [...] We suffer not only from the living, but from the dead. *Le mort saisit le vit!*" (1967: 9). This excerpt contains two crucial signifiers of vampirism. Firstly, the adjective "antiqued" conjures up images of aristocracy and feudalism, commonly associated with fictional vampires. Two such typical examples are Sir Francis Varney of the serialised Gothic horror story *Varney the Vampire* and Polidori's Lord Ruthven, the latter defined as "dead and yet not dead, as the power of the aristocracy in the early nineteenth-century was dead and not dead" (Punter 2013: 104). While this interpretation is partially justified, such choice of words might point in another direction. Perhaps this adjective is actually a reference to capitalism's ancient inception, dating as far back as the fourteenth century (Cole, 2018) and long-standing tradition of exploitation. Within the context of folklore and Gothic tradition, is the vampire not also "antiquated", preserving its immortality via the feverous exploitation of the human cardiovascular system? To apply the vocabulary of Mark Fisher in elucidating this peculiar symbiosis of life and death as quintessential to the vampire's condition, the figure of the blood-sucker is a "flatline" construct (2018: 28), weakening the border between life and death. This argument strengthens the bond between vampire and capital(ist) since both deathly constructs must prey on the living to satisfy their gluttonous desire for accumulation of blood and wealth which, consequently, revitalises them as their victims perish in the process (McNally 2011: 140; Moretti 1983: 91). Perhaps it is Haraway who made the most elegant connection between vampire and capital by noting that "the vampire is [...] the marauding figure of unnaturally breeding capital, which penetrates every whole being and sucks it dry in the lusty production and vastly unequal accumulation of wealth" (2018: 215). So far, the manifestation of vampirism and capitalism accordingly can be summarised into one disturbing image of the exploitative (un) dead addicted to accumulation. However, the references in *Capital* to the vampiric anthropomorphisation of capital do not end here. Another condition of capitalism arises – the sucking of time (Godfrey et al. 2004: 27). "The prolongation of the working-day beyond the limits of the natural day, into the night [...] quenches [...] the vampire thirst for the living blood of labour" (Marx 1967: 256). This unnatural extension of the working day into the night highlights the temporal consciousness of the vampire

as a vital component to its survival. After all, what traditional folklore and vampire fiction have taught us is that the vampire is the most violent, insatiable and cunning under the cover of night. Lastly, in other corners of *Capital*, Marx accuses capital(ism) of "thirsting after exploitation" (1967: 769). The verb employed in this instance is quite obviously applicable to vampiric feeding.

From a fictional standpoint, a multitude of scholars have also, unsurprisingly, definitively associated Bram Stoker's iconic Count Dracula with capital (Godfrey et al. 2004: 25–36; Moretti 1983: 84–94; Neocleous 2003: 677–84; Rickels 1999: 27). For instance, Moretti offers a classical Marxist reading of the novel, arguing that Dracula represents the bourgeoisie and monopoly capital. However, in order to offer a fresh take on fictional sanguinary capitalism, this paper will deviate from the well-established link between male vampire and capital, and attempt to resurrect the Marixan potential of female vampires in Victorian fiction.

3. Vampire as Capital(ist) in *Carmilla*

A host of scholars have identified in *Carmilla*, or vampire fiction in general, a whole range of socio-political motifs, including intersections of queer desire (Dyer 1988: 47–73), miscegenation, imperial anxiety and decay alongside issues of racial impurity and political turmoil of Central Europe (Haefele-Thomas 2012: 96–8; see also Brock, 2009), just to name a few. Similar, if not identical questions have been raised in *Dracula* as well, predictably overlooking the bourgeois potential of the woman-vampire. This and subsequent sections will thus seek to rectify this fact by bringing to light a number of unexplored areas of the two texts.

3.1. From Noble Mircalla to Bourgeois Carmilla

The Gothic, supernatural re-imagination of industrial capitalism, pertaining to its metamorphic tendencies of vampiric inter-class transmutations, as seen first-hand in *Dracula*, likewise plagues the narrative of *Carmilla*. Nonetheless, the disposition, transformation and haunting patterns of the novella's vampire protagonist disclose a unique brand of nineteenth-century capital(ist) and its corresponding motivations. While Count

Dracula's noble social status and consequent bourgeois transformation are only subtly implied in the novel, the shift from Carmilla's aristocratic self to vampire is distinctly more tangible. The major plot twist of the novella lies in the anagrammatic camouflage of Carmilla's true identity – prior to her vamping, she was known under her seventeenth-century alias of Countess Mircalla Karnstein. Carmilla's aristocratic past is confirmed by our trusty narrator, Laura, who states that "her family was very ancient and noble" (LeFanu 1872: 34). In addition, the family's abandoned dilapidated estate is depicted at the beginning of chapter 1 as comprising of "a quaint little church, now roofless, in the aisle of which are the mouldering tombs of the proud family of Karnstein, now extinct, who once owned the equally desolate chateau" (4). The deserted castle illustrates Carmilla's present sanguinary capitalist-self, no longer occupying, either literally or figuratively, an aristocratic socio-cultural space. However, her ties to the aristocracy combat total extinction as witnessed later on in the story, in chapter 5. As Laura's father reveals an inherited portrait of Countess Mircalla, Carmilla must quite literally face the ghosts and sins of her noble past. This exact scene, hence, epitomises the persistence of an antiquated mode of production, characterised by feudal serfdom, in the nineteenth-century industrial plant, and the irreconcilable conflict that remains between the two.

In contrast to the frugal Dracula, Carmilla's family still clings onto this outdated social hierarchy, evidenced in chapter 2 where horse-drawn carriage drivers and servants are seen in the service of her mother. Notwithstanding the Karnsteins' spendthrift ways, by relinquishing her title of Countess and scrambling the letters in her anonym beyond recognition, thus abandoning her noble ancestral name of Mircalla, vampire Carmilla can now come into her bourgeois role and fully embody sanguinary capitalism of a morally dubious historical origin. This duplicitous nature of industrial capitalism, fossilising (lumpen)proletarian exploitation from times of yore, also underscores her contempt for the underclass populace of Styria. "I don't trouble my head about peasants" (17), exclaims Carmilla while observing a funeral procession for one of her victims – a young local peasant girl native to the area. In accordance with this rationale, in a totalising fashion of the vampire, her sanguinary thirst does not discriminate based on socio-economic class as Carmilla's taste for peasant, middle and upper-class blood is equalised. For instance, in the prologue to the story, Doctor Hesselius reports that upper-class Laura ultimately

succumbs to the incurable vampire malady provoked by Carmilla's unsolicited blood-sucking, while General Spielsdorf, as a representative of the middle class, accuses the same offender of murdering his niece Bertha. Thus, despite their respective vampiric variations, Carmilla and Dracula essentially adhere to the same logic of totalising monstrosity and bourgeois sanguinary metamorphosis.

3.2. Carmilla's Bourgeois Necrophilia

A lasting exposure to customised and reconstructed vampire folklore through the prolific literary genre of vampire fiction has established a universal truth about the blood-sucker – the vampire's dual existence, fixed in limbo between life and death, necessitates a mortification of the living in order to prolong its own unnatural life. Conveniently, Marx appropriates this analogy to tackle industrial capitalism. In the existing literature, this link has been sufficiently explored and contextualised in *Dracula*. While *Carmilla* portrays an identical attraction of capital to death, personified in the trope of the female vampire, the nature of that attraction is originally distinct in LeFanu's text. Influenced by same-sex desire that permeates Carmilla's and Laura's peculiar relationship, the female sanguinary capitalist does not only extract life out of labour and labourer, she also romanticises this process. For instance, during two of their abundant homoerotic episodes, Carmilla relishes in Laura's ensuing death as she whispers sweet nothings in her ear: "to die as lovers may – to die together, so that they may live together" (47) and "darling, [...] I live in you; and you would die for me, I love you so" (53). The vampire's musings on death are non-sequiturial and strange to her soon-to-be victim because her "colourless and apathetic" (LeFanu 53) face does not match the passion of her words. Naturally, Laura does not reciprocate such sentiments, which indicates the one-sided exploitative nature of their euphemistic unconsummated lesbian relationship, present also between capitalist and labourer in the framework of political economy.

Conversely, LeFanu does not merely reproduce this straightforward equation of capital and death. Instead, the author generates a more profound image in the novella which captures the interrelatedness of mortification and class-consciousness under industrial capitalism. In chapter 4, Carmilla has an exaggerated reaction to the peasant girl's funeral, constantly interrupting Laura's attempts to join in the singing of

a funeral hymn. "You pierce my ears", complains Carmilla "almost angrily, and stopping her ears with her tiny fingers" (39). This scene contains an unexpected turn of events, considering the female capitalist's proclivity for romanticised necrophilia. Perhaps the answer lies in unearthing the meaning of funeral rites and rituals. Funerals can be perceived as a manifestation of mourning and, as Derrida puts it so eloquently, it "consists always in attempting to ontologize remains, to make them present, in the first place by *identifying* the bodily remains and by *localizing* the dead" (1994: 9). Engaging with the author's elaborate ideas, in the context of the scene in question, exposes the vampire's detestation for funerals, with Carmilla theatrically proclaiming them a torture of "discord and jargon" (40). That is, sanguinary capitalism thrives on the mortification of mind and body, but it is threatened by its victims localising and identifying that same mortification. Put in Marxian terms, the proletariat can overcome their oppression only by firstly gaining awareness about the inequitable distribution of the means of production and capital. Fundamentally, the praxis which leads to emancipation and social change implies both action and theory, and this theoretical component refers precisely to acquiring consciousness. Going back to the novella, this is one interpretation of why Carmilla abhors the people of Styria engaging meaningfully with death in a conscious effort to locate the source of capitalist mortification.

3.3. Capital: Vampire or Spectre?

The dangerous physicality and seductive corporeality of the male and female vampire have been ingrained in our shared cultural consciousness, thanks to Polidori's innovative literary treatment of the monster as a seducer (Macdonald & Scherf 2007: 14), as quintessential to the myth. Resorting to that same trope, Marx's endeavour in *Capital* to concretise the alchemy and mysticism of the voracious capitalist machine principally has been deemed a success by more optimistic scholars. Yet in typical Marxian fashion, contradictions and inconsistencies of his earlier ideas emerge, associating the magical with a revolutionary system of social organisation, i.e. communism, in *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*, predating *Capital* by 19 years. In the exordium of the notorious manifesto, Marx makes the following remark: "A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of communism" (1969: 14). However, to invert his sentiments, it is our understanding of LeFanu's text that it is in fact, the spectre of

sanguinary capitalism that haunts Styria. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida describes the spectre as "a paradoxical incorporation, the becoming-body, a certain phenomenal and carnal form of the spirit. It becomes, rather, some 'thing' that remains difficult to name: neither soul nor body, and both one and the other" (5). Pursuant to the author's elucidation of the "thing", Carmilla encompasses its ambiguous duality. Partially corresponding to Lucy Westenra's descriptions in *Dracula*, LeFanu's vampire is also vividly fleshy as portrayed by Laura's keen attention to the minutiae of Carmilla's appearance, namely her figure, complexion, features, and eyes (LeFanu 1872: 32).

Furthermore, other comments about her alluring demeanour of equal detail are omnipresent in the accounts of Carmilla's victims. Astonishingly, she is referenced to as a ghostly figure in chapter 4 (39), and towards the novella's conclusion, a spectre, twice in chapters 13 and 14 (105, 116). Hence, as the plot progresses, so do the impressions of the vampire, as she shifts from a physical presence to a spiritual one. This marks Carmilla's simultaneous phenomenal and carnal existence which displaces the body and soul. Bertha's bereaved uncle confirms this by detailing his niece's terminal vampiric illness during which she was "visited by appalling dreams; then as she fancied, by a specter, sometimes resembling Millarca, sometimes in the shape of a beast" (105). It is not until the very last chapter that this paradoxical condition of vampirism is clarified by Baron Vordenburg. "A suicide, under certain circumstances, becomes a vampire. That specter visits living people in their slumbers; they die, and almost invariably, in the grave, develop into vampires" (127). Thus, the dependence of bourgeois vampirism on death is not diluted in the story, but rather reinvented and broadened. In other words, Carmilla does not require literal infectious teeth to extract life or accumulate blood. This vampiric absence of promiscuous contagion was inaugurated in Polidori's tale (Macdonald & Scherf 2007: 15) and recreated in LeFanu's. Thus, in accordance with capital personified as a necrophilic apparition in Marx's analysis of capitalist production, the image of the sanguinary bourgeoisie becomes more threatening than ever, for they possess the ability to extend their instruments of alienating exploitation on both the physical and spectral plain.

Carmilla's spectral disposition as a source for her lack of infectious power conditions her susceptibility to domestication by her own prey. In Deleuzian and Guattarian vocabulary (1987: 232–309), she resists

identification with a demonic, becoming-animal due to the absence of a pack or natural allies in her wake. For instance, Laura describes Carmilla as a "sooty-black animal that resembled a monstrous cat", stalking the bedroom "with the lithe, sinister restlessness of a beast in a cage" (60). Considering Count Dracula's feral presence and alliances, it comes as a surprise to find LeFanu's vampire associated with a cat, a family pet, instead of an untamed evolution of that animal. Furthermore, her Oedipalised domestication is accentuated by Laura figuratively placing her in a cage, and in so doing, distancing her from the pack as an individuated animal-pet. Taking into account the influential research into literary responses of the era to the "growing awareness of women's power and influence" (Senf 1988: 154), subduing women noncompliant with the high standard of Victorian female propriety to some reincarnation of a domestic sphere is not that unheard of. However, not even male-driven projects of female domestication can hinder the growing force of the novella's vampire as a spectral monster of sanguinary capitalism.

For Dracula to ensnare his victims and suck out their life force on foreign territory, he must first be invited in, as perceptively pointed out by Wicke (1992: 476). In chapter 11, this is why he is reported breaking and entering into Lucy's bedroom interchangeably in his bat and wolf avatar (Stoker 1993: 119). The shattered window of Lucy's bedroom validates Wicke's argument and affirms the Count's emblematic corporeality. In addition, even when he suddenly vanishes into thin air, he always leaves behind proof of departure, a residue or trace which is commonly described among the Crew as a mist or fog. In *Carmilla* on the other hand, the female vampire, due to her forceful spectrality does not adhere to the same logic or laws of physics. In fact, when Carmilla is on the prowl, no locked doors or walls represent an insurmountable obstacle. In searching for her, "[w]e examined the windows, but they were secured […] I was by this time convinced that she was not in the room, nor in the dressing room, the door of which was still locked on this side. She could not have passed it" (71), deduces puzzled Laura. Her unique features as an intangible apparition, granted by the fluid boundaries of her bodily form[1], enable Carmilla to invade the home uninvited, thus nullifying its presumed security. Taking this into account, an unprecedented, more haunting phantom threatens the

[1] LeFanu's idiosyncratingly fluid and hybridic vampire is a product of the author's own unique brand of Victorian horror as inhuman and decorporealised, exemplified in the ghost-monster of his 1869 masterwork *Green Tea* (Miéville 2009: 118–9).

living and the comforting social order. The female vampire-spectre chimera, as the ultimate bourgeois predator in the food chain of political economy, usurps the reigning spectrally-challenged male vampire, burdened by the limitations of natural law, that is, his own body.

4. Estrangement, Emasculation and Domestication in *Carmilla*

At the very beginning of the tale, Laura paints an extremely solitary picture of her life at the schloss.

> Looking from the hall door towards the road, the forest in which our castle stands extends fifteen miles to the right, and twelve to the left. The nearest inhabited village is about seven of your English miles to the left. The nearest inhabited schloss [...] is [...] nearly twenty miles away to the right. (LeFanu 1872: 3–4)

This physical and psychological sense of isolation is further conveyed through Laura's choice of words, such as "solitary" and "very lonely" (3), to describe her mental state and surroundings. Intensified by the recent passing of her mother, Laura's loneliness thus affects the novella's narrative style and language. In a nutshell, "[m]y life was [...] rather a solitary one, I can assure you" (5), she confesses. Despite Laura's anxious longing for visitors of any kind, Carmilla's arrival does not remedy the lonely condition of the castle and its residents. As her seductive vampiric "power over Laura grows, so too does the alienation between the narrative's men and women" (Signorotti 1996: 616). For instance, on the night of Carmilla's disappearance, the bedroom of Laura's father is so remote that the women's distress calls fall on deaf ears. The alienation between the sexes embodied in this scene is exacerbated by vampiric emasculation that befalls the macho men of Styria in their ineffectual attempts to (over) protect women (Signorotti 1996: 616). That is, in their naive gallantry, both the chivalrous Papa and General are tricked by the Karnsteins, pressing on the duty of masculine conduct (Veeder 1980: 204). Furthermore, the General's vampiric emasculation culminates in his many impotent attacks on Carmilla in chapter 14. "He struck at her with all his forces, but she dived under his blow, and unscathed, caught him in her tiny grasp by the wrist (117). The vampire's tiny, yet overpowering grasp cuts off the "male

agent [...] from his manly [hatchet]" (Veeder 1980: 205), thus invalidating his superior masculinity in the social hierarchy. However, what the authors analysing this link between alienation and emasculation have disregarded is its significance in political economy. In localising the estranging powers of industrial capitalism, Marx identifies the doublespeak underlining this politico-economic system where activity is lauded as "passivity, power as impotence, procreation as emasculation" (1993: 42). This is yet another unique feature of female sanguinary capitalism that does not only alienate individuals across social classes, but also emasculates the proletarian male subject.

As demonstrated by Stoker's novel and Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, alienation or estrangement is intertwined with animalisation or domestication as part and parcel of the capitalist mode of production. Accordingly, LeFanu's novella offers comparable, yet distinct images of lumpenproletarian domestication. Firstly, the Karnsteins' servants are viewed from an elitist upper-class perspective as "an ill-looking pack of men" and "ugly, hang-dog looking fellows" (LeFanu 1872: 23). Hence, apart from completely rendering their individual identities, they are equated with docile canine creatures. Furthermore, the eccentric hunchback as a representative of the underclass, is seen with a "rough spare dog" (42) as his companion. Contrarily, the feral appearance of the Styrian Quasimodo is accentuated by his ownership of preserved wild beasts. In observing the numerous peculiar items strung across the hunchback's body, Laura notices "two boxes [...] in one of which was a salamander, and in other a mandrake. These monsters [...] were compounded of parts of monkeys, parrots, squirrels, fish, and hedgehogs, dried and stitched together with […] startling effect" (41). Regardless of his underprivileged socio-economic status, this Frankenstein-esque taxidermy or animals represents an exclusively male-driven cause of taming nature and woman alike[2]. Therefore, the female sanguinary capitalist seldom if ever participates in such projects, for Carmilla herself confronts animalising ventures of men, as discussed in the previous section. Rather, the woman-vampire is primarily concerned with the business of alienation and emasculation.

[2] From an ecofeminist standpoint, the parallels between the oppression of women and the natural world stem from the same socio-economic mechanisms of patriarchy (see Vrcelj & Mušanović, 2011). For more on the subjugation of woman-as-nature and vice versa in the affirmation of "male reason" and culture under modern capitalism and techno-science, see Merchant, 2006 and Plumwood, 2003.

5. The Secular Bourgeois Ethic and Universal Capitalism in *Carmilla*

A The universally accepted reading of Carmilla "brings to mind a distinct Victorian psychiatric specification, one which ties up hysteria not just with femininity but with female body itself" (Stoddart 1991: 29; see also Veeder, 1980). Conversely, rather than merging vampirism and female hysteria, the novella alludes to the rationality and abstinence of a model industrious capitalist as inherent to Carmilla's personality. Even in trivial matters, faithful to bourgeois ascetic sympathies, Carmilla exhibits a restrained appetite in declining indulgent food items such as chocolate or coffee (LeFanu 1872: 55), offered and enjoyed thoroughly by her gracious affluent hosts. Furthermore, her methods of haunting and preying on women resemble those virtuous traits of self-command, level-headedness and self-purpose underlining the capitalist work ethic. Her calculated stalking is presented as such in the Conclusion of the tale:

> The vampire is prone to be fascinated with an engrossing vehemence, resembling the passion of love, by particular persons. In pursuit of these it will exercise inexhaustible patience and stratagem, for access to a particular object may be obstructed in a hundred ways. It will never desist until it has satiated its passion, and drained the very life of its coveted victim. (125–6)

In retrospect, LeFanu's conception of a rational, goal-oriented woman-vampire is unprecedented. What is more, this description showcases the fundamental essence of the spirit of capitalism as celebrated by classical economists. Only a single fit of senseless rage on Carmilla's part is witnessed in chapter 4 that potentially endangers her established dexterity and cold-bloodedness in deception. However, this manic episode subsides momentarily, despite the religious nature of its cause. That is, the only instances in which Carmilla's wits and reason abandon her are when she is in dangerous proximity to manifestations of Christian divination. This hysteric outburst is in fact triggered by a funeral hymn, a familiar source of frustration for the vampire heroine. The horses swerving and overturning the carriage with the Karnsteins in it, at the sight of an erected stone cross in chapter 2, thus ceases to be a mystery either. In addition, Laura also questions Carmilla's religious affiliation upon noticing her constant avoidance of evening and morning prayers. Our narrator often wonders "whether our pretty guest

ever said her prayers. I certainly had never seen her upon her knees" (59). Therefore, by Dracula's aversion to objects of Christian worship, Carmilla too embodies a bourgeois work ethic removed from religious doctrine. In fact, surpassing even Dracula's acumen, Carmilla's sharp intellect and reasoning skills are backed by her knowledge of "hard" sciences, which form the basis for the advancement of capitalist machinery and correspondent production. For instance, she debunks the alleged supernatural benefits of a vampire repellent by dissecting it in the following way:

> you don't suppose that evil spirits are frightened by bits of ribbon, or the perfumes of a druggist's shop? No, these complaints, wandering in the air, begin by trying the nerves, and so infect the brain, but before they can seize upon you, the antidote repels them. That I am sure is what the charm has done for us. It is nothing magical, it is simply natural. (65)

Conversely, Laura and the hunchbacked vendor participate in the superstitious fetishization of the amulet, entrusting "cabalistic ciphers and diagrams" (43) engraved on it to ward off evil spirits.

In summation, LeFanu's novella, approximating the bourgeois logic of *Dracula*, constructs a work ethic of sanguinary capitalism that renounces Protestant authority over the spirit of capitalism in exchange for assuming a more Smithian (see Barbalet, 2008), secular bourgeois work ethic characterised by virtues of abnegation, deferred gratification, rationality and self-control. The manner in which both Dracula and Carmilla embody this brand of secular bourgeois ethic implies the cross-national, global reach of capital that transcends the geographical and religious borders of Anglo-Irish Protestantism.

In spite of his association with the demonic, Dracula's ethnic background is still palpably discernible in the novel via numerous allusions to the vampire's national identity. In fact, even when encroaching on foreign territory and attempting to assimilate, his ties to the motherland cannot and must not ever be severed, for only the native soil of Romania can prevent extinction overseas. Conversely, exposing the inside of Carmilla's coffin depicts a much different scene. Upon desecrating her grave, instead of encountering cosy piles of dirt, the men find "the leaden coffin floated with blood, in which to a depth of seven inches, the body lay immersed" (123). Several authors have undertaken this scene, claiming that it connotes Carmilla's own menstrual blood as a reminder of rampant female

sexuality (Haefele-Thomas 2012: 106) or simply, the exhaustion of "the life blood of pre-conjugal adolescent girls" (Stoddart 1991: 32). In opposition to the former and partially pursuant to the latter, the vampire's resting pool of accumulated blood, life or labour signifies Carmilla's obscure ethnic background and correspondent national ambivalence. "She would not tell me the name of her family, not her armorial bearings, nor the name of their estate, nor even that of the country they lived in" (34), notes Laura. Furthermore, the myth of Carmilla's vampiric metamorphosis, as told by Baron Vordenburg in the novella's coda, reveals "a pretended removal of her remains, and a real obliteration of her monument" (128) by Carmilla's Moravian noble lover. Her unmarked resting place further intensifies the vampire's nomadic relation to territory. In fact, it is precisely because of her dislocated remains that Carmilla avoids eradication over the centuries which, subsequently, enable her to terrorise the region, unchecked by the locals' hatchets and stakes. Thus, the female vampire resists geographical or ethnic localisation, that is, placement within national borders. Without subscribing to any particular religious teachings or corresponding to a definitively explicit national identity, the trope of the female vampire becomes universally synonymous with capital. In other words, despite its origin in a given society or culture, the nature of capital is such that, in order to quench its voracious thirst, it must expand continuously to new countries, industries, ecosystems or markets. Capital's robust adaptive and transformative power propels this expansion. It is through this process of assimilation and adaptation that cultural boundaries are blurred, creating an ambiguous, yet universal, all-encompassing entity. LeFanu's vampire, for instance, having abandoned a localised aristocratic heritage, engages in bourgeois domination so threatening that it has no historical source or cultural signifiers. Hence, both female vampire and capital(ism) are equal in their globally totalising presence.

6. Female Sanguinary Capitalism in *Dracula* and *Carmilla*

Lucy's niche taste for children's blood has also been the object of multiple scholarly investigations. For example, Demetrakopoulos suggests that Stoker's female vampires, by sacrificing children to their appetites and directing their perverse and sexual aggression towards men, renounce conventional feminine roles (1977: 104–13). According to conservative

Victorian ideals, a proper woman would never be seen preying on and attacking an innocent child since such behaviour is in direct contrast to the expected motherly instincts and feelings in a woman. In chapter 16, Lucy's soon-to-be murderer and his accomplices witness her aggressive conduct with one of her child victims.

> With a careless motion, she flung to the ground, callous as a devil, the child that up to now she had clutched strenuously to her breast, growling over it as a dog growls over a bone. The child gave a sharp cry, and lay there moaning. There was a cold-bloodedness in the act". (Stoker 1993: 175)

Even the weird sisters of Castle Dracula are witnessed abusing a "half-smothered child" (34). Surprisingly, scholars have neglected to treat this scene of anti-motherhood, motherhood perverted, as a reflection of capitalist exploitation of children. As Cody notes, in the first half of the nineteenth century, children as young as three and older could be seen working shifts of up to 16 hours a day in a slew of factories and industries, including amongst others, the textile industry, gas works, shipyards, construction, match factories, nail factories, and the business of chimney sweeping (2019). Moreover, in 1860, a county magistrate by the name of Broughton Charlton reports on the working conditions in one establishment involved in the lace trade:

> Children of nine or ten years are dragged from their squalid beds at two, three, or four o'clock in the morning and compelled to work for a bare subsistence until ten, eleven or twelve at night, their limbs wearing away, their frames dwindling, their faces whitening, and their humanity absolutely sinking into a stone-like torpor. (qtd. in Marx 1967: 243–4)

The image of the children's faces whitening is reminiscent of Lucy literally sucking the life blood out of her multiple child victims. Marx also condemns silk manufacturers for "spinning silk 10 hours a day out of the blood of little children" (1967: 293). This begs the question of why would a sanguinary capitalist like Lucy exploit or accumulate child labour. In the context of industrial capitalism, in the safekeeping of the English bourgeois economist, this is done for two main reasons, says Marx; for "the sake of their delicate fingers" (1967: 293) and low cost of labour. Hence,

by prioritising maximum profit and frugality over ethics, Lucy's appetite for child labour is only logical in a political economy.

In chapter 1 of the eponymous tale, Carmilla's first appearance is described by six-year-old Laura, crawling into the child's bed:

> one night I awoke, and looking around the room from my bed [...] I saw a solemn, but very pretty face looking at me from the side of the bed. It was that of a young lady who was kneeling, with her hands under the coverlet. I looked at her with a kind of pleased wonder, and ceased whimpering. She caressed me with her hands, and lay down beside me on the bed, and drew me towards her, smiling; I felt immediately soothed, and fell asleep again. I was weakened by a sensation as if two needles ran into my breast very deep at the same moment, and I cried loudly. The lady started back, with her eyes fixed on me, and then slipped down upon the floor, and, as I thought, hid herself under the bed. (LeFanu 1872: 6)

This scene depicts a calculated attack on a wide-eyed naive girl, epitomising the vampire's voraciousness for child labour. Carmilla's preference for adult female blood is revealed later in the story, yet LeFanu's decision to acquaint his readers with the female vampire primarily through the lens of a monstrous child predator must be symptomatic of lax child labour laws of the era which sustained the exploitation of minors in the factories. Conversely, in attempting to comprehend the homoerotic charge of the scene in question, the majority of authors have produced obsessive Freudian readings of Carmilla's vampiric maternal role and sexuality in some shape or form (Haefele-Thomas 2012: 100–5; Michelis 2003: 15–21; Rickels 1999: 165–6; Signorotti 1996: 611–2; Veeder 1980: 206). Their findings can be summarised and simplified in one statement: Carmilla "embodies queer sexuality and maternal evil" (Haefele-Thomas 2012: 101). Applicable also to *Dracula*, Wicke has poignantly emphasised that the vampiric consumption of blood is inherently a sexual act in which both victim and perpetrator are enthralled in sexual ecstasy (1992: 479). Carmilla's feeding habits do betray an inclination towards women, solidifying the vampire in the story as lesbian. The unorthodox motherhood she exercises with Laura in her adult years also encapsulates these homosexual attributes of the female vampire trope, thus justifying these diversified psychoanalytic evaluations of Carmilla's personality. However, as illustrated prior, the

choice to showcase her "queer paedophilia" (Haefele-Thomas 2012: 103) in preying on child Laura as an introduction to female vampirism facilitates alternative readings. Therefore, following the rationale of Lucy's pattern of vampiric behaviour, that is feeding, Carmilla also embodies the gruesome potential of sanguinary capitalism in all its exploitative and ravenous glory.

7. Conclusion

The vibrant scholarly tradition in Gothic literature has engendered multiple diversified interpretations of the vampire's socio-economic identity. While Marx's vampiric anthropomorphisation of capital in his critique of political economy is limited to a fairly superficial analogy, his seminal work *Capital* is nevertheless a still pertinent foundation for Victorian literary treatments of female vampires as sanguinary capitalists. What Marx has astutely recognised as parallels between capital and vampire are a shared voraciousness for blood, life or labour, an addiction to accumulation and an uncomfortable proximity to death as a reflection of exploitative mortification. However, it is the fancy of Victorian vampire fiction that has produced a truly luscious and intricate account of the nineteenth-century capitalist mode of production alongside all its sins and evils.

LeFanu's vampire embodies a distinct flavour of industrial capitalism. Her spectral existence exacerbates bourgeois horror, as it enables her to permeate and invade almost any territory. Carmilla's ambiguous national identity is as a spectral as her physical body, thus extending the global reach of capital via national, ethnic or cultural assimilation. In contrast to Dracula, Carmilla is a symbol for universal capital(ism), unfettered by the limitations of corporeality and national borders. Furthermore, as a formidable representative of female sanguinary capitalism, indistinguishable from Lucy Westenra, she is prone to preying on innocent children, reflecting lax child labour laws of the century and correspondent exploitation of minors in manufacturing plants. Hence, Victorian woman-vampires incorporate unique aspects of industrial capitalism divergent from their male variants.

Despite the significant differences between the two main vampire villains of *Dracula* and *Carmilla*, Victorian literary vampirism implies universal qualities of capital applicable to all genders. Firstly, the occulted figure of the vampire sports a work ethic that exists in the realm of the brain and the natural rather than the superstitious or religious. Secondly,

Carmilla and Dracula both actively participate in the typically capitalist sport of estrangement, targeting each social stratum, that accompanies either animalisation and domestication or emasculation. Thirdly, both fictions demonstrate the inherited, fossilised past of slavery and exploitation that persists in factories and capitalist production in general through the vampiric metamorphosis from upper class to bourgeoisie. Therefore, the proposed claims solidify the Victorian sanguinary bourgeois vampire, female especially, as the most haunting, ultimate capitalist villain.

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