

Université de Montréal

The Figure of the Vampire as an Emblem of Tradition

Par Marie Levesque

Département de Littérature comparée
Faculté des Arts et des sciences

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Résumé

Afin de se perpétuer dans le temps, la tradition recourt à des figures qui la véhiculent. Cette étude prend pour objet la figure du vampire qui, en transmettant des aspects importants de la tradition culturelle, prend la forme d'une tradition en soi, se manifestant dans une série de récits et d'œuvres littéraires et culturelles. Ces figures possèdent le plus grand pouvoir de transmission puisqu'elles ne sont pas des traditions à la base, mais elles ne peuvent rester culturellement importantes seulement qu'en devenant des traditions. C'est-à-dire que la figure du vampire possède sa propre tradition littéraire et/ou filmique, tout en offrant une vision de la transmission, de la tradition et de l'éducation.

Afin de demeurer présentes à travers le temps, les traditions doivent posséder un noyau principal, tout en restant assez malléables afin que des caractéristiques secondaires de celles-ci puissent changer et évoluer. Le vampire est une figure toute aussi malléable que les traditions, faisant donc d'elle l'emblème parfait du concept. De plus, cinq nœuds de tradition réapparaissent, à différents niveaux, dans la littérature vampirique. Le choix de la victime, la morsure vampirique et l'échange de sang transformatif – et le lien de ceux-ci à une vision perverse de la sexualité, le processus d'éducation, le désir d'appartenir à une famille ou à une communauté et le besoin de comprendre ses origines, illustrent tous le lien indéniable entre la figure du vampire et le concept de la tradition.

Ce mémoire explore l'impact de la figure du vampire comme emblème de la tradition à travers le roman vampirique classique – le plus traditionnel – *Dracula* de Bram Stoker et à travers les

trois premiers tomes des *Vampire Chronicles* d'Anne Rice, soit *Interview with the Vampire*, *The Vampire Lestat* et *Queen of the Damned*, ainsi que leurs adaptations cinématographiques.

Mots-clés : transmission, tradition, figuration, vampire, perversion, simili-mort.

Abstract

To perpetuate itself in time, tradition makes recourse to figures that convey it. This study takes as its object the vampire figure that, in transmitting important aspects of the cultural tradition, takes the form of its own tradition, manifesting itself in a series of narrative and cultural works. As this study maintains, the vampire figure possesses its own literary and cinematographic tradition, even as it provides an understanding of transmission, tradition, and education.

In order to persist through time, traditions need to retain a static core, while also being malleable enough to allow for the transformation of the secondary features. The vampire is a malleable cultural figure, making it the perfect emblem of the concept of tradition. Moreover, five recurring traditional constellations are present, in various degrees, in vampire-centric narratives. The victim choice, the vampiric bite and the transformative blood exchange – with its undeniable relation to “perverse” sexuality, the training process, the desire to belong to a family or a community, and the search for one’s origins all illustrate the link between the vampire and the concept of tradition.

This thesis explores the impact of the vampire figure as an emblem of tradition through the most classic – the most traditional – narrative, Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, and through the first three installments of Anne Rice’s *Vampire Chronicles* – *Interview with the Vampire*, *The Vampire Lestat*, and *Queen of the Damned* – as well as through their film adaptations.

Keywords: transmission, tradition, figuration, vampire, perversion, undeath.

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Dedication

To the mad ones.

“The only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles [...]” – Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*, Part 1, Chapter 1.

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À Bohème et Toffee.

Introduction

Transmission, Tradition, and Figuration

The concept of tradition – the transmission of artifacts, ideas, symbols through time – has always been questioned in many different fields. The point of view of a given tradition can – and will – change during its transmission process. Indeed, if traditions did not get altered throughout the years, no history could be made. However, the concept of tradition, because of its abstract nature, requires the vessels which figure within to be thoroughly understood. These vessels can take multiple forms, some more tangible than others, going from family heirlooms to figures and symbols. I will argue that figures are the most fecund vehicles of tradition. Since they are intangible, and sometimes imbued with transcendence, they can convey both a more literal meaning of the concept, as well as its symbolic inclination. The figure which will be used in this thesis to illustrate both aspects is the vampire. Not only is it a figure that has been around for a long time, which gives it its own narrative tradition, but, more importantly, the figure of the vampire itself possesses, in its many forms, its own history, its own tradition. Indeed, I will demonstrate that the vampire, through a few traditional reoccurring constellations, comes with a strong explicatory vision of tradition. The traditional elements can be categorized into five broad aspects: the choosing of the victim by the master-vampire, the vampiric transformation itself (the bite and the blood exchange), the training process, being integrated in a family or a community, and finally, the impact and the place of sexual relationships in vampirism. In analyzing these various threads, this study will establish, on the one hand, that vampires possess their own tradition and, on the other, that they serve as vehicles for an understanding of tradition.

Indeed, tradition, in its basic form, can be described as the transmission of knowledge through time. I will first define the central elements of this statement through the lens of etymology in order to explain the literal side of it. Then, I will delve into the symbolic aspect in order to illustrate the transcendental¹ nature of the concept. The latter explanation is of capital importance, since figures belong in this intangible realm. Once the concept of tradition has been thoroughly clarified, we will explore what figuration is and how the vampire fits into this mold.

First and foremost, the concept of tradition cannot be brought forward without giving a thorough description of what transmission is. Without transmission, traditions would come to a grinding halt. The term transmission comes from the Latin prefix *trans-*, which means “over”, “across” according to Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short. It can also signify “through” (“Trans.”, *A Latin Dictionary*). Therefore, transmission ever and always implies something going beyond, further, something which goes across boundaries. The transcendental nature of transmission is also applicable to figuration, since figures belong in an intangible realm sustained by intellectual creation. Moreover, the act of transmission is undeniably linked with the process of tradition because the Latin verb *trado* – and its conjugated form *tradere* – is first defined by Lewis and Short as “to give up, to hand over, to deliver, to transmit, to surrender”. They also posit that this term signifies “to make over, to transmit as an inheritance”, as well as something being delivered through the act of teaching (“Trado”, *A Latin Dictionary*). Indeed, the transmission of traditions most often occurs through a teaching-learning dynamic. Sociologist Edward Shils states that “[the teachers]

¹ I use the word “transcendental” in this case, to mean “of the transcendent”, and not in its vernacular sense.

enfold [the pupil], infuse the tradition into him, and they place him in a position in which [the student] can move forward from [the teachers], while remaining within them” (119). The teaching process is not only there to ensure the perpetuation of traditions, but also to give the pupil the necessary tools to teach his/her own students later on. Félix Gaffiot follows the same idea by defining the Latin term for tradition – *traditio* – as “transmission, enseignement; relation, rapport; tradition” (“Traditio.”, *Dictionnaire latin français*). The teaching rapport implies a learning process by the pupil. The teacher – or, in this case, the master-vampire – infuses the student with his own knowledge. The bond evolves when the pupil has assimilated the vampiric tradition so strongly that he is able to shape it to his/her liking. The newborn will therefore alter elements of the tradition. These modifications are an inherent aspect of the concept of tradition. If no changes occur, traditions become static, and the transmission process falters. Thus, the core elements of a tradition must remain intact, while secondary features can – and must – be altered in order for the transmission of traditions to run its course through time. The most essential aspect linking the transmission of traditions and vampirism resides in the vampiric transformation. The biting and the blood exchange not only make a human being into a vampire, but it also allows vampiric tradition, and intrinsic features – the ability to fly, to control minds, etc. – to be transmitted. Thus, the static core of a tradition is what allows it to remain imbued with immanence, and culturally present in and through time. The impact of culture and media is also relevant to the creation of figures.

Figures, being symbolic in constitution, cannot persist through time without becoming traditions. Indeed, “symbolic constellations are not traditions, but they can be preserved only as traditions” (Shils 90), since a community needs to accept them and re-transmit them in

order to ensure the perpetuation of the figure: “[...] intellectual traditions are themselves symbolic constellations, transmitted, received, possessed, and transmitted” (Shils 90). Simply put, any tradition of an intellectual nature is formed in a transcendental fashion, to eventually be transmitted through culture. The vampire is a figure that is transmitted through narratives; it does not describe an existing being. The narrative transmission of the vampiric figure suggests two threads: one where a tradition of vampire narratives changes in and through time, but also another whereby narratives about vampires establish a vision of transmission, of tradition, and of education.

The vampire and its impact on culture has caused a lot of ink to be spilled over the centuries. The strong hold of the vampire figure on the collective imagination transformed it into an extremely malleable narrative being. Vampire literature followed the footsteps of the figure by becoming vast and varied, making it impossible for the multiple facets of the vampire to be encompassed in one single model (Benefiel 262). The variety of changes the vampire went – and still goes – through paved the way for many different interpretations of what the figure represents.

The folkloric vampire of the 17th century was often described as a ghoul, a revenant who terrorized people in their sleep at night, draining their blood. The purpose of this figuration of the bloodsucker was to explain diseases and the fear of what was “other”². The resolution of

² Paul Barber, in his introduction to his book *Vampires, Burial, and Death: Folklore and Reality*, states that “the vampire lore proves to be in large part an elaborate folk-hypothesis designed to account for seemingly inexplicable events associated with death and decomposition” (3). The folklore revenant is the tangible representation of the belief that “the dead may bring us death” (Barber 3). This assumption was principally present in European cultures and Asian countries. For more information on the subject, see Paul Barber’s

these phenomena did not make the vampire disappear, however. The beginning of the 19th century – the Victorian Era – paved the way for the gentleman vampire in Gothic fiction, the most important being Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*. The Count became so embedded in people’s imagination – even centuries later – that he became the vampire by which all other vampiric figures are eventually measured (Zanger 17; Hollinger 207). At first glance, Stoker’s vampire seems to only be the villain who must be vanquished by the agents of “good” and of the Church. While *Dracula* does serve that purpose in the plot of the novel, he also embodies many aspects which may have been regarded as taboo in the 19th century, such as the repression of sexual desire, the fear of newcomers and that of little known diseases.

There is a plethora of essays and books written on *Dracula*. One of the most prolific topics related to the “father” of vampires is the sexual nature of the novel. Eroticism and sexuality were then perceived as desires and/or drives which needed to be repressed at all costs. The vampire, being a narrative figure, was the perfect vehicle by which these desires could be expressed. As George Stade states in his introduction to the novel, “Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, in short, is an apparition of what we repress, particularly eros. To be bitten by *Dracula* is to become a slave to a kind of lust, abandoned to unlawful hungers, a projection of the beholder’s desire and dread” (vi). This lust-induced temptation must be removed, however, in order to be in line with the authority of the clergy. Margaret L. Carter, in her essay *The Vampire as Alien in Contemporary Fiction*, paraphrases Rosemary Jackson’s thoughts on the correlation between *Dracula* and sex:

aforementioned work and *The Vampire: A Casebook*, edited by Alan Dundes (see bibliography for the complete reference).

Rosemary Jackson, like many other critics, also sees ambivalence toward Dracula's sexual prowess as central to the novel. In her view, Stoker objectifies forbidden desires in the vampires – Dracula and his female disciples – in order to assert the conservative values of established society by exterminating the vampires, and, with them, the “subversive” drives that threaten to break free. (29)

Dracula and his vampire wives therefore become vicarious vehicles through which readers might comprehend their repressed impulses. Stoker, being faithful to the school of thought of the 19th century, kills all the vampires at the end of the novel. Dr. Van Helsing and his companions kill the Count in the name of God. From this perspective, Dracula also becomes a representation of the Anti-Christ.

As Veronica Hollinger suggests,

[...] the vampire [in Stoker's *Dracula*] functions as the revelation of Evil in all its resplendent horror; as such, the vampire functions also to guarantee the presence of Good in the world of Stoker's human characters. Existing as he does beyond the margins of the Good, the human, and the natural, the vampire's very existence acts as a confirmation that these categories remain in place, demarcated against and defined by that which is not Good, not human, not natural. (202)

The vampire in Stoker's work acts as both the narrative villain and the representation of the power of the Church. Count Dracula is, in basic terms, the Anti-Christ who must be sent back to Hell because of his killings, and because of the lustful feelings he brings out in women – Mina Harker and Lucy Westenra, especially. Jules Zanger takes on a similar stance: “In the Victorian world that created [Dracula], his absolute nature was an expression of the formally dichotomized structures of belief which, although crumbling, still dominated that world:

religious, moral, political dichotomies that sharply distinguished good from evil for the mass culture [...]” (25). Stoker achieves some closure with the elimination of his vampire characters, but desires constantly renew themselves. They ever and always imply a state of transgressive behavior. As a matter of fact, the link between desires and vampirism is so strong that Rosemary Jackson says that since sources of desire are inexhaustible, a new “other being” – a new vampire – is created to fill in the void. It is also one of the reasons that prevent these beings from ever leaving collective psyches (Carter 29).

In addition to the release of repressed desires through its representation of Anti-Christ, the vampire figure in *Dracula* is often portrayed as the outsider who invokes fear, precisely because it is “other”. Victorian culture did not embrace the outsider; people were scared and repulsed by it. Changes occur with the publication of Anne Rice’s *Vampire Chronicles*. The first volume, *Interview with the Vampire*, was released in 1976, and the vampires populating Rice’s universe embraced a completely different lifestyle. The author once declared that “the vampire is a metaphor for the outsider” (Carter 27). In the subsequent novel *The Vampire Lestat*, Rice made Lestat a rock star because “rock stars are symbolic outsiders who are expected to be completely wild, completely unpredictable, and completely themselves, and they are rewarded for that” (Carter 27). The outsider status borne by the vampire in Anne Rice’s *Chronicles* presents him as admirable for the same reasons which made him a creature to be feared in Bram Stoker’s time (Carter 30). This paved the way to a more individually-centered and free vampire, in all aspects of their “lives”, whether they are social, sexual, etc. This freedom also presents a rebel bloodsucking being who craves not only blood, but recognition as well, and he achieves it through rebellious acts. Rice’s vampire Lestat, and the

vampires in Joel Schumacher's film *The Lost Boys*, among others, follow that exact pattern. Through this change, "Rice created a vampire who is not simply a figure with whom a reader can identify to some degree, but a dynamic character who went through a change in his values and beliefs" (Rout 474). The most important aspect of this, however, is the fact that readers now get complete access to the vampires' psyches.

Anne Rice turned the vampire figure 180 degrees compared to Bram Stoker's gentleman vampire. The main vampires in the universe of *The Vampire Chronicles* still remain mostly from aristocratic families – Lestat's father is the Marquis de Lioncourt, for instance – but they also become much more three-dimensional. Questions about good and evil are raised, quests to understand the blood drinkers' origins and their need to belong are taken, making the vampire figure complex. Having access to the feelings of vampires also leads to a certain "domestication" of the creature. The "domestication" implies a transformation of the vampire figure: "The intention to transform the vampire from an objectification of a metaphysical evil into simply another image of ourselves seen in a distorting mirror is revealed most clearly in the novels of Anne Rice, who is probably the most successful of the producers of the new genre" (Zanger 23). Exploring human concerns through the vampire figure brought forth a certain feeling of reality and of identification to the readers. The vampire therefore became an even more powerful vehicle with which people could identify vicariously. An evolution occurred from *Dracula* to *The Vampire Chronicles*, but an inherent feature of the vampire figure is still its ability to mold itself into representations of people's needs. Furthermore, vampires in Anne Rice's novels still embody sexual taboos, but this time, they are taken into the realm of pure perversion.

In Bram Stoker's time, the vampire was the personification of the belief that sexuality was evil, and needed to be repressed. In the case of Anne Rice's works, sexualities of various natures are explored. Gender boundaries are erased, giving way to different types of relationships, whether they are heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual. One example of this is demonstrated when Lestat bites Louis:

Deirdre Byrne points out that in *Interview with the Vampire*, when Lestat exchanges blood with Louis, turning him into a vampire, the "ritual . . . is carried out with strongly erotic overtones" (178). The male sexual penetration of the victim (with the phallic-substitute fangs) is followed by the more archetypal female nurturing of the victim, feeding him or her blood from the vampire's body. (Benefiel 262)

This sexual freedom, however, leads to utter perversion. One of the most flagrant examples is how incest makes its way into vampire families. In *Interview with the Vampire*, Lestat and Louis transform an orphan child named Claudia into a vampire. They treat her as their daughter, but Louis and Claudia also develop a relationship as lovers. In this case, not only is incest presented, but pedophilia is also illustrated. This perversion comes back in *The Vampire Lestat* when Lestat bites his own mother, Gabrielle. The vampiric change also brings forth a shift in the authoritarian hierarchy because the mother becomes the child, and the child becomes the parent. Once again, Lestat and Gabrielle's relationship becomes incestuous, starting during the transformation process: "And jetting up into the current came the thirst, not obliterating, but heating every concept of her, until she was flesh and blood and mother and lover and all things beneath the cruel pressure of my fingers and my lips, everything I had ever desired" (Rice, *Lestat* 157). Gabrielle is at once Lestat's mother, daughter, and lover.

Therefore, Anne Rice still explores sexuality through vampirism, but brings it to a level of perversion which was unthinkable in Stoker's time.

All the ideas brought forth so far demonstrate the power of the narrative vampire figure. While they are all valuable and important, the impact of tradition and its link to vampirism has not been explained by critics. Since the vampire has been a part of collective psyches for centuries, it possesses its own tradition, but is also representative of the concept itself. The correlation between the vampire figure and tradition is intertwined in the figure's transformation process, in its outsider status, and in its sexual debauchery. Through the blood exchange, knowledge and intrinsic vampiric characteristics are transferred, and traditions cannot live on without transmission. The same idea applies when it comes to the vampire as an outsider. Outsiders bond with similar people, just as vampires long to understand where they come from, and to know they are not alone. The yearning to understand one's origins and to belong is deeply rooted in the transmission of traditions. Finally, the impact of sexuality, in the case of this study, more importantly implies an idea of transmission of vampiric knowledge through sexual acts. The underlying erotic tones suggested in the majority of vampiric transformations are presented as such in order to establish the relationship that will follow. The bite and the blood exchange imply not only the act of vampiric creation, but they also cement the master-newborn relationship, mainly through the training process, and the required feelings of lust. The relation between the vampire figure and the concept of tradition will, on the one hand, establish the tradition of vampire narratives, and on the other, bring forward the underlying current linking Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles*, despite the fact that they are a century apart. The vampire, in this case, becomes a vessel of

universal human fears and desires, which confers it its status as a figure, as well as cements the purpose of this thesis. Indeed, a correlation between vampirism and the concept of tradition will give a more thorough understanding of the founding principles of all the main representations of the vampire figure – fear of what is “other”, and the figuration of dark desires through the act of biting and through sexual relations. All of these recurring elements are at the heart of the vampiric tradition. The hidden network found within the concept of tradition is thus what links all the main vampire narratives – novels and films – together. Tradition and the act of transmission are what propelled the vampire to its status of figure, but more specifically, they have given the vampire figure all its strength and importance throughout the centuries. The explanation of all these main recurring constellations – the choosing of the victim, the inflicting of the vampiric bite and the ensuing transformation, the training process, belonging to a community, and its sexual acts – are the elements which reappear in all main vampire narratives. The purpose of this thesis is to uncover them through the lens of tradition in order to demonstrate the complete figurative power of the vampire, and to understand why it is still present in popular culture, centuries after its creation.

As aforementioned, vampire narratives have been a part of popular culture for centuries. One of the first fictional narratives which had an impact on readers is *The Vampyre* by John William Polidori, published in 1819. His work put an aristocrat vampire named Lord Ruthven in the foreground, and Polidori chronicles the Lord’s travels to Europe in search of carnal pleasures. Ruthven’s character was often thought to be a representation of Lord Byron. The correlation between a fictional being, and a real aristocrat reinforced the impact of the vampire figure on collective psyches.

Polidori's representation of the vampire is that of an aristocrat yearning for carnal desires and human blood. Both these aspects will be reproduced over and over again in subsequent narratives. Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* explores similar themes. Little Laura gets acquainted with her new neighbor Carmilla, who happens to be a vampire. They get so close that homoerotic undertones are clearly present in Le Fanu's novella. The correlation between aristocracy, sexual relations, and vampirism has been of capital importance since the early authorship of modernist vampire fiction, which also explains why Bram Stoker reproduces the same pattern in *Dracula*. In these three narratives, the impact of repressed desires and drives is undeniable. The vampire thus exemplifies, in part, these needs that want to break free, especially those of a taboo nature – both heterosexuality and homosexuality in the case of *The Vampyre*, *Carmilla*, and *Dracula*. The representation of the gentleman vampire who seduces women in order to drink their blood was demonstrated most clearly in popular culture with Bela Lugosi's portrayal of Count Dracula. Lugosi really embraced the aforementioned aspects, in addition to the vampire's outsider status, mostly through his now famous accent. One of the most memorable portrayals of the scary monster in film is Max Schreck's Count Orlok in F. W. Murnau's 1922 film *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens*. Based on Stoker's novel, Count Orlok's representation rather explores the vampire as the horror-inducing outsider than focusing on its sexual nature.³ Horror Hammer films starring Christopher Lee as Dracula also helped to keep the vampire figure alive in popular culture. The Hammer Films production company released eight feature films based on *Dracula* from 1958 to 1974. After Dracula's undeniable popularity through the cinematographic medium, a new kind of vampire entered

³ F.W. Murnau and Florence Stoker, Bram Stoker's widow, had a dispute in regards to the film since the production company, Prana-Film, "had neglected either to ask permission to use [Florence Stoker's] late husband's book or to pay her for using it [...]" (Melton 502). The case dragged on for several years, and Mrs. Stoker ordered the destruction of all copies of Murnau's film. "After Florence Stoker's death in 1997, versions of *Nosferatu* became available, though there was little demand for it" (Melton 502).

the scene with the release of the first novel of Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles* in 1976. *The Vampire Chronicles* is a gateway into the vampires' psyches and emotions. Anne Rice also expands the vampire universe by giving her characters their specific history, in addition to creating a full-fledged origin story. The entire book series was published from 1976 to 2003, and also spawned two movies: *Interview with the Vampire* and *The Queen of the Damned*, which combines *The Vampire Lestat* and the novel of the same name.

The enthusiasm surrounding the vampire figure took a completely different turn in the mid-2000's with the publication of the *Twilight Saga* by Stephenie Meyer. The "domestication" of vampires that had started in Rice's novels was utterly solidified in Meyer's works. Indeed, the vampires in this particular world go to high school – one of them, Edward, even falls for a human girl named Bella – and they drink animal blood only. The vampire figure becomes sanitized, and Edward even refrains from having sex with Bella. Up until then, the vampire was the complete embodiment of sexual debauchery and freedom. With *Twilight*, however, the roles are reversed. The bloodsucking creature, in this case, was used because of its cultural popularity. Other book series followed the same path, such as *The Vampire Diaries* and *The Sookie Stackhouse Series*. *Twilight* was made into five films, whereas the other two examples were made into their respective television series – *The Vampire Diaries* and *True Blood*. Even though the recent interpretations radically departed from their previous inclinations, the vampire figure remains culturally present, once again reinforcing the idea that it needs to be a part of people's imagination. In other words, the vampire has become a traditional narrative figure. It is so embedded in collective psyches that it cannot be removed. As any cycle of tradition flows, changes do occur, making the transmission process always relevant, but this

process is also what allows a given tradition to survive. Vampiric figuration follows that exact pattern, undeniably linking it to the concept of tradition, and thus reinforcing the purpose of this study.

Since this thesis will address the correlation between the vampire figure and its representation of the concept of tradition, two main narratives will be studied. First and foremost, one cannot talk about tradition and the vampiric figure without broaching the most traditional creature of the night on the literary scene. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* will be the starting point of my analysis, showing the most recurring – the most traditional - aspects of the aforementioned amalgam of elements, that is, the choosing of the victim, the bloody transformation, and the impact of sex. These three components are of capital importance because they always reappear, regardless of the novel or the film.

Once *Dracula* has been thoroughly examined, the first three books of Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles* will be covered. *Interview with the Vampire*, *The Vampire Lestat*, and *The Queen of the Damned* not only reinvest the three main aspects seen in *Dracula*, but there is also the addition of two more recurring traditional constellations: the relationship between the master-teacher and the newborn, and the subsequent training process. Also, Lestat's story will illustrate how a cycle of tradition comes full circle. The most interesting idea raised in Rice's works, however, is the fact that an entire origins story – an entire tradition – is present. Not only does it bring forth the last traditional aspect – being a part of a family or a community – but it cements how the vampire figure can provide an understanding of tradition itself.

This thesis will articulate itself in the following fashion: the first chapter will explore Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and how the traditional amalgam of elements found in the novel not only paved the way for future vampire narratives, but also how it shaped the vampire figure as a whole. This straightforward examination will set the stage for the second chapter where I shall enter the world of Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles*. Indeed, Rice's universe not only incorporates the traditional elements, but, more importantly, creates an extremely detailed history of the vampiric tradition; the first three books of the *Chronicles*, *Interview with the Vampire*, *The Vampire Lestat*, and *The Queen of the Damned* serve as the basis for my subsequent analysis. Indeed, Lestat's story will provide a remarkably rich environment to understand and demonstrate how strongly the vampire is emblematic of the concept of tradition.

Last, the third chapter of this thesis will concentrate on the film adaptations of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and of Anne Rice's *Interview of the Vampire* and *The Queen of the Damned* in order to examine which elements of tradition have been reproduced on the big screen, and which have been altered, or simply removed. This analysis will give the opportunity to look at the same works, but in a different light, and thus, see how the concept of tradition can be modulated through parallel media.

Chapter I

Perversion and Tradition in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*

Five recurring traditional constellations – choosing the victim, the vampiric bite and transformation, the training process, belonging to a family or community, and the impact of sexual relations – can be found in various vampire narratives. Some novels deal with only a handful, while others put them all forward in various ways. In the case of Bram Stoker's classic text *Dracula*, three of these aspects are explored. Selecting the victim, the vampiric bite, and the impact of sex are all intrinsically present in Stoker's work. These three elements are of capital importance because they constitute the core of the vampire figure. Indeed, this recurring amalgam of elements of tradition always comes back in any vampire narrative. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is the most classic vampire story precisely because it consolidated the very core of the vampire figure through these three constellations. However, these elements cannot be separated from what has been characterized as “perversion”, especially as it relates to representations of narcissism, sadism, control, and fetishism. Indeed, a perverse representation of sex and of personal relationships is at the center of both the choice of the victim, and the following act of biting and blood drinking, and obviously, in the impact of sex in vampirism. *Dracula* represents these concepts, which furnish the basis for subsequent figurations of the literary and cinematographic vampire.

By their very nature, vampires are perverse beings. I will refer to the concept of perversion as a challenge to the hegemony of social morality through what has been called “deviant” sexual practices. This definition applies to the representation of sexuality in the majority of vampire narratives, but it is especially relevant in *Dracula*. Indeed, since it was largely recommended

to subdue or even eradicate sexual behaviors in the 19th century – “to a late-Victorian such as [Bram] Stoker, in any case, sex was likely to seem bestial, polluting, depleting, deathly, satanic [...]” (Stade vii) – the vampire figure became the literary vehicle through which people could experience their darkest desires vicariously. Robert J Stroller defines the term “perversion” as an essential interaction between hostility and sexual desires (Stroller 9). Stroller’s use of the term “hostility” relates to the desire of hurting someone – it is different from an aggression, which often implies only the use of the aggressor’s strength to attain his goal. A hostile behavior requires an element of risk – inflicting physical pain, rape, etc. – in order for the perversion to bring as much excitement as possible during sexual acts. Hostile conduct also relates to the desire to take down the societal hegemony of morality, for instance, by behaving in an anarchist manner. The vampire challenges societal authority because he is the outsider who enjoys killing people. He is a disrupter of the established rules of conduct. In Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, the Count comes to London and makes Lucy and Mina act in an unruly fashion – Lucy becomes promiscuous, and Mina follows Dracula’s orders through his control.

Perverse behaviors are also often perceived as being wrong, and they are therefore disavowed (Stroller 18). The vampire figure became a representation of all these elements – destruction of moral hegemony and the desire to hurt someone through sexual practices – and the vampire therefore became a cultural representation of the concept of perversion. The sexual appeal of the vampire was strengthened through Bela Lugosi’s film portrayal of the famous Count. The outsider status borne by the vampire not only shrouded him in mystery, but it also conferred to him the possibility of imposing a deep libinal impact on his victims. The sexual desires carried

through the vampire figure, however, are not soft and loving. Instead, they are extremely painful, even to the point where the victim's identity is eventually taken away.

The master-vampire/victim relationship always begins with the choosing of said victim by the vampire. The choice is often a long reflective process. The reasons behind it vary, but they are often dictated by a desire expressed by the vampire himself. In the case of Dracula, for instance, he bit and put a curse on Mina as an act of vengeance against Jonathan Harker and the men plotting to kill him. The exertion of vengeance is seen in perverse acts since it relates to the challenge of societal morality. Robert J. Stroller states that the hostility which can be found in perversion shapes itself in a fantasy of vengeance (17). The correlation between vampirism and perversion can be easily made because, in its simplest terms, perversion is the erotic form of hate (Stroller 17). In challenging integrity, hate manifests itself. In the case of vampires, societal hate can sometimes be aimed at the vampires' victims because the blood drinkers have to hide their true identity. For instance, Lestat in Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles* cannot deal with the fact that no one will truly know and understand what he is. The killing of the victims – simply for the mere kill or for transformation purposes – therefore becomes a way to survive, but also to vindicate the misunderstanding vampires may feel, which ultimately leads to hate.

Another significant correlation between hateful feelings and the vampire figure resides in the rape imagery which can be represented in the vampiric bite. A vampiric bite and the violence it exudes can be correlated to this imagery because the two sharp vampire fangs going into the neck or another part of a human being's flesh are a representation of a forced penetration, as

occurs when someone is raped. The unwilling victim is at the mercy of his or her aggressor, and the aggressor himself obtains an ultimate satisfaction through this extremely violent act. When Dracula bites Mina in a vengeful act, she “[...] began to rub her lips as though to cleanse them from pollution” (Stoker 311). The feeling of being dirty is one of the characteristics of post-rape. More importantly, the bite was forced unto Mina. The vampire chooses the human he will bite, and maybe transform, to his own liking. In that way, vampirism is, at its very core, a mix of narcissism, sadism, control, and fetishism. The narcissist aspect of vampirism relates to the victim choice because the vampire selects the other in order to create the other – the victim – as his or her own simulacrum. Achieving such a copy is first and foremost determined through the initial victim choice. Sadism is also presented in vampire narratives in the selection of the victim, extending to the transformative blood exchange, and the subsequent training process. Sadism, as the vampire’s exertion of power over his victim, the blood drinker is both forcing his power upon his prey, and committing an act of violence. Both violence and power are interrelated in the three aforementioned elements because the choice of victim and the blood exchange are intrinsically related to physical domination. The relation of power presents itself when the newborn vampire is being taught by his maker. Choosing which elements to teach or to withdraw from the pupil is a way for the vampire to force the scope of his power upon his prey. In the same way, the concept of control also applies to what is disclosed to the newborn vampire. More importantly, the act of control dispossesses the victim of his identity. In doing so, the master-vampire can shape him/her in the way he desires, while marking him/her as his – this where the transformative bite and the blood exchange that follows gain their meaning. Finally, fetishism is an aspect of the choice of the victim as well. Indeed, the master-vampire fixates so

strongly on a specific feature of his prey, either physical and/or psychological, that he must ultimately possess the chosen other. The concepts of sadism, control, and fetishism ultimately are melded together because their main goal consists in exerting power and violence upon their newborn.

According to Siegmund Freud in his essay *On Narcissism*, the concept itself can be described as follows:

We have discovered, especially clearly in people whose libidinal development has suffered some disturbance, [...] that in their later choice of love-objects they have taken as a model not their mother but their own selves. They are plainly seeking *themselves* as a love-object, and are exhibiting a type of object-choice which must be termed 'narcissistic.' (87)

The love-object choice – the victim in the case of vampirism – can take on various forms. A narcissistic person – vampire – may love either “what he himself is (i.e. himself), what he himself was, what he himself would like to be, [or] someone who was once part of himself” (Freud, *On Narcissism* 89).

In addition to his vision of narcissism, Freud's definition of sadism is also important to the comprehension of the relationship between the vampire and his future newborn. Sadism can be defined as an exercise of violence or power by the sadist upon someone else who is viewed as the object (Freud, *Instincts* 127). Vampirism is a representation of the Freudian concept of sadism because the initial bite is undeniably forced upon an unwilling victim. Exercising such violence is also a proof of the scope of both the physical and psychological power exuded by

the vampire. The basic idea surrounding the master-vampire/pupil relationship always begins with the imposition of the vampiric bite, and the subsequent exchange of blood leading to the transformation. Since the victim rarely makes the choice of becoming a vampire – Lestat’s giving Louis the choice in Anne Rice’s *Interview with the Vampire*, for instance, is an aberration – the bite and blood drinking is undeniably forced upon the human being by the vampire. Both aspects of sadism – violence and power – are first unleashed when the vampire pierces his victim’s skin with his pointy fangs. The phallic nature of the vampire teeth going through the skin of an unwilling victim is both an exercise of violence and of power. The violence of the aggression of the fangs forcing themselves through a part of the human body resembles the penetrating corporeal violation associated with rape. The power aspect can be correlated with the choice of the victim by the vampire. The exertion of power is both physical and mental in this case. The physicality of the imposed bite is often extremely violent, and the vampire always has the upper hand; he always gets what he desires when it comes to drinking a victim’s blood. It also represents a mental aggression because the vampiric transformation is, in its most basic terms, the sequel to a sexual assault. Through this aggression, the newborn vampire will always share a bond of ambiguous love and hate with his maker. The concept of love and hate, also explored by Freud in his essay *Instincts and Vicissitudes*, appropriately describes the relationship between the newborn vampire and his sire.

The vampiric transformation, and more specifically the blood exchange between the vampire and his victim, is the perfect example of Freud’s view on the ambivalence between love and hate. Indeed, “one of the first aims of the love-hate relationship is the phase of incorporating or devouring” (Freud, *Instincts* 138). In most vampire narratives, the animalistic nature of

human beings is revealed when they first ingest the blood of their makers. The aggression forced upon the victim is reversed when the soon-to-be vampire reproduces the same act upon his master. For instance, Jesse's character in Anne Rice's novel *Queen of the Damned* becomes extremely animalistic towards her maker Maharet once her vampiric transformation is complete: "Slowly, she opened her eyes; she saw the white throat and the white breasts; she reached out and caught the throat in her hands, and this time it was she who broke the flesh, she tore it. And when the first spill of blood hit her tongue, she pulled Maharet down under her" (Rice, *Queen* 241). The vampire transformation is the complete blend between the incorporating and devouring phases. Drinking blood from his maker, the soon-to-be vampire literally incorporates within himself or herself vampiric intrinsic attributes – flying, the ability to read minds, etc. – and more importantly, vampiric traditions and knowledge. The devouring phase is strongly linked to the vampire's feelings when he bites his victim. Since vampires drink human blood, they literally and figuratively incorporate human lives into themselves. The vampire devours his victims literally because of the assault produced by the piercing of the flesh with pointy fangs. Skin can even be ripped off the throat or other body parts that might have been bitten, as has been previously illustrated. The figurative aspect of the devouring inclination of a love and hate relationship in vampirism is illustrated through blood drinking. Blood being the fluid of human life, the vampire always starts by tasting the physical life force of his victims, bringing them to the verge of death before the transformative blood exchange occurs. Figuratively, drinking someone's blood is to deprive the victim of his or her soul. The transformative blood exchange, however, greatly complicates the relationship between the vampire and his prey. If a human victim is bitten with the intent of making a new vampire, the maker must restrain himself in order to make sure that the soon-to-be newborn is

not completely drained of his or her blood. The near-death state is of capital importance since the victim must, in his/her turn, drink the blood of his/her sire. The restraint the master-vampire must possess signifies that he will not achieve the utter satisfaction of completely draining someone of his/her blood. Therefore, the desire to shape his new protégé to his liking is made stronger. Since the master-vampire had to suppress his most powerful impulse in the transformation process, the maker, out of vengeance, wants to alter his newborn into a simulacrum of his own self. In doing so, he not only controls his prey, but he also gives in to his narcissistic inclinations. The importance of blood drinking in vampirism goes beyond self-sustenance, extending to knowing and shaping the victim as the bloodsucker deems appropriate. Therefore, by being forced to become similar to his or her maker, the soon-to-be vampire is stripped of his/her previous human identity.

This removal of humanity also correlates with Freud's idea that after the incorporating and devouring stages of the love-hate relationship comes a "need for mastery" (Freud, *Instincts* 139). The basic vampiric mastery can be seen in the training process between the master-vampire and his newborn. The maker transmits the elements of vampiric tradition that he chooses to teach. He truly becomes a master to his slave. As Freud stated, "love and hate cannot be separated in this specific attitude towards the object" (Freud, *Instincts*, 139). It is especially true of the love-hate bond between the sire and the newborn vampire because the transformation and the subsequent education share both love and hate aspects. Hate, and its link to perversion, is an important factor in vampirism since the victim did not choose to become a bloodsucking creature. A feeling of hate is therefore directed towards the victim's

maker – Louis’ repulsion of Lestat in Anne Rice’s *Interview with the Vampire* is one example, among others. This feeling of hate, however, also has its love counterpart.

Even though the vampiric bite and transformation are, at their core, a violent aggression, feelings of deep love are also mutually felt by the maker and the victim. Although the master-vampire almost drains the chosen human of his/her blood, stripping him/her of his/her identity during the vampiric change, this ritual also confers upon the master-vampire a savior status. Since the maker of the soon-to-be vampire is going to be his/her only point of reference in his/her new “life”, the victim often idolizes his/her maker. The sire therefore becomes omnipotent in the eyes of his pupil, and the latter will devote himself/herself to the creature who made him/her undead. Furthermore, blood exchanges between vampires and victims are always imbued with a strong feeling of lust and love. Blood being the vessel through which one’s complete being resides – in vampiric terms – the exchange of this fluid is extremely erotic in function. In addition to the lustful physicality of the biting act – the representation of the sexual act of penetration with the fangs piercing the flesh – the transmission of vampiric knowledge and intrinsic features is also colored by erotic undertones. Discovering the world as a vampire is often described in narratives as being an extremely sensory experience. Everything is enhanced, and is therefore erotic and sensual.

Vampires thus juggle both love and hate in their relationship with their maker, and with the world as a whole. As Freud suggested, love and hate cannot be separated when the stages of incorporating and devouring become a need for mastery. Since vampirism requires mastery from the sire to the newborn, love and hate are also undeniably connected in vampiric

undead. The idea of the vampire mastering his victim is also strongly correlated with a need to control.

Paul Denis' report on Roger Dorey's view on control ⁴ can easily be correlated with important aspects of the master-vampire/victim relationship. First and foremost, Denis states that Freud derives his concept of sadism from the concept of control. The exercise of violence and power the sadist strives to attain is also obviously linked to a desire to control. Denis explores this idea further when he quotes Dorey's work. For Dorey,

[...] l'emprise doit être abordée en tant que relation d'emprise dont la spécificité est déterminée par trois ordres de significations données au mot « emprise »:
— appropriation par dépossession de l'autre ;
— domination ;
— empreinte, l'appropriation-domination ne pouvant s'exercer sans qu'il en résulte l'inscription d'une marque :
« Celui qui exerce son emprise grave son empreinte sur l'autre. » (Denis 1314)

The vampiric transformation and the impact of the master-vampire both contribute to the aforementioned idea that a vampire's victim is ultimately stripped of his/her identity. The need for the vampire to control his victim is the underlying force of it all. Moreover, through this dispossession and control, the master-vampire can fully dominate his pupil. This domination can be seen in the knowledge the vampire chooses to transmit to his pupil, but more specifically through the relationship of authority which will arise during the training process. Much like what he experiences in a parent-child relationship, the newborn must submit himself/herself to the teachings and recommendations of his maker. With vampirism and the

⁴ All allusions to the term "control" in this section relate to the concept of "l'emprise", as explained by Paul Denis and Roger Dorey.

love-hate bond that ensues, however, this usually respectful exchange becomes a dominant one. The stage of appropriation-domination cannot be fully acknowledged by either the master or the victim without a marking upon the one who will be transformed. Since the vampire is the one dominating the victim, he is the first to mark him/her. The vampiric transformation must occur when the vampire has almost drained the chosen human being of his/her blood. He literally marks his future pupil as being his, and only his. However, in order for the change to be complete, the newborn must bite his/her maker and drink his blood. In doing so, the victim completely surrenders himself/herself to his/her sire. The control, "l'emprise", of the master-vampire is therefore complete once the exchange of blood with his pupil has taken place. For instance, when Lestat – the main character in Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles* – is bitten by his sire Magnus, he tries to escape the aggression. Once Magnus has almost drained Lestat of his blood, however, the latter completely surrenders himself to Magnus, both physically and mentally: "And then his arms surrounded me. They drew me to him and I felt a great warmth emanating from him, and he seemed to be filled not with blood but with love for me" (Rice, *Lestat* 89). The feeling of hate present at the beginning of the transformation gets replaced by feelings of love and warmth. This alteration also demonstrates that master-vampire does have a great amount of control over his newborn during the blood exchange, a control which will persist during the entire teaching process.

The object-choice of the pupil by the master-vampire is narcissistic, as was previously illustrated, but it is also a fetish choice. Phyllis Greenacre defines basic fetishism as follows: "The fetish [...] is commonly adopted as a necessary prop or adjunct to ensure adequate sexual performance in adult life" (315). The vampiric sexual performance is represented by the act of

the transformative bite. Fetishes can take on multiple facets, but a specific physical aspect is usually preferred – hair, eyes, etc. This fixation therefore becomes an addiction for a fetishist (Greenacre 321). This is also the underlying reason as to why the vampire’s choosing of the victim is such a lengthy process. The vampire examines his prey, through both a narcissistic and a fetishist lens. Fetishism also includes a “rather simple form of envy, jealousy, and projection” (Greenacre 330). Once again, a correlation between the narcissistic love-object choice and a fetish object can be made. These feelings of envy, jealousy, and projection are at work when the vampire chooses his victim. Envy and jealousy can be related to the narcissistic idea that the narcissist wants to emulate something that he wishes he had through his love-object choice. The projection aspect of fetishism relates to the idea that the master-vampire wants to create a copy similar to his own self through the vehicle that is his prey. In the same vein, Greenacre suggests that “[w]hile the fetishist needs his fetish to complete the sexual act, it is often the narcissistic need rather than the expression of tender love which is satisfied” (333) She also says that sadomasochistic feelings and desires can be implicitly found in fetishism (Greenacre 334). Therefore, narcissism, sadism, and fetishism are all part of the same network of hateful violence and aggression, and they can all be related to vampirism.

Even though the vampiric sexual inclinations are of a violent nature, they are indispensable for the transmission of tradition. In order for a legacy to take form, an acceptance of desire and surrendering to the other must occur. This complete surrender, much like in a love relationship, is the underlying driving force through which the transmission of traditions can ultimately take place. By succumbing to the feelings of love and lust of the master-vampire, the newborn tries to open himself/herself up to all the teachings of his/her maker. The

love/lustful rapport shared between the sire and the newborn during the vampire's choice and the ensuing transformation is what cements their relationship as both teacher and pupil, and lovers. For the master-vampire, his victim choice, even though it is mostly driven by a fetish desire, is also his way of surrendering his knowledge. The vampiric transformation and the transmission of traditions is only shared with the human being whom the vampire believes is worthy of gaining access to said knowledge. This idolization of the victim is also related to the vampire's vision of his elected victim. Through the lens of fetishism, the master-vampire is attracted to and lusts for his soon-to-be newborn in an intense fashion. This intensity of desire is an important requirement for the transmission of vampiric knowledge and the subsequent training process. Through a given fetish, the master-vampire makes his choice not only to transmit vampiric tradition, but he also has an underlying motive to shape his victim to his liking.

As the classic, traditional vampire narrative, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* establishes the basic core of vampire characteristics, putting a fundamental emphasis on the sexual aspect. In subsequent texts by various authors, the vampire figure retained the three aspects which were first brought forward in *Dracula*. The choice of the victim, the vampiric bite, and the impact of sex are the first elements which have to be taken into consideration in order to demonstrate how the vampire figure is the perfect vehicle to provide an understanding of tradition.

The vampire figure is shrouded in mystery, especially in *Dracula*. He is the recluse outsider who lives in a dark castle, inviting people in to make them his prisoners. With Jonathan Harker's arrival from London, the Count takes a special interest in him. *Dracula* has chosen

Harker to be his, and only his. When his three wives almost drink Jonathan's blood, Dracula gets furious: "How dare you touch him, any of you? How dare you cast eyes on him when I had forbidden it? Back, I tell you all! This man belongs to me! Beware how you meddle with him, or you'll have to deal with me" (Stoker 41). The fact that the Count had forbidden his three female disciples to touch Harker suggests that Dracula had chosen Jonathan Harker to be his victim. The idea that he wants this human being to belong to him can also be linked to Denis' and Dorey's concept of control – "l'emprise" – as well as Freud's concepts of sadism and narcissism. The first step to attain a strong hold of control over someone – over a victim, in this case – is to dispossess the human being of his/her identity. This removal of personality allows a greater control by the master-vampire over his victim. Furthermore, on the basis of the concept of sadism elaborated by Freud, the sadist first incorporates and devours his victim before mastering him/her. In *Dracula*, the narcissistic inclination is, at its core, Dracula's desire of making Jonathan Harker a copy of his own self.

Since the love-object choice is narcissistic, the Count yearns for a copy of himself. He does not search for someone who is different from him, but for someone who is similar to him. Dracula's representation of his own self is therefore idealized, modulated into a fetish. Since no personal and physical differentiations are made, the vampiric state requires a fetish carbon copy of the maker through the victim's transformation. The sire invests his own self in his pupil in the same fashion as he himself was invested by his own maker. That is why Dracula needs Harker to be similar to him. In this sense, the dispossession of the human's personality is of an extremely narcissistic nature. It is the reason why Dracula gets angry when his three female disciples try to bite Harker in his stead: Dracula wants Jonathan for himself, and

himself only. This yearning for a copy of himself through his victim can also be correlated with the idea of control. The first step toward exercising full control over a victim is to dispossess him/her. Thus, through his narcissistic and fetish love-object choice, Dracula would have completely stripped Jonathan Harker of his personality and of his mortal body, if the transformation had been completed.

The idea of utter control can also be seen in Dracula's relationship with his three wives. The tone with which Dracula addresses them when they almost bite Harker resembles that of someone holding unquestionable power over their subordinates. The bond between the Count and his disciples is also narcissistic. Dracula shaped them to be the mirror of his own self. Since vampires in Stoker's universe cannot see themselves in mirrors, the vampires do not understand the differentiation between oneself and what is other. In this sense, the other – the transformed victim – becomes a reflection of what the maker ultimately wants. The strong desire to control his fledglings illustrates the idea that Dracula wants them to remain a copy of what he is, and nothing else. That is also one of the reasons why he did not want his three wives to bite Harker: beyond Harker being claimed by Dracula, the three disciples must remain passive reflections of their maker. The dispossession of the vampire's victims entails passivity instead of activity; after the vampiric change has occurred, they remain – in *Dracula* – utterly static, almost touching and biting Harker, but they are never utterly active. Exercising such control gives Dracula the ultimate status of being in control while being narcissistic in his choices, as was defined by Denis and Dorey, and Freud.

The choosing of the victim can also be driven by a desire for vengeance. This yearning also brings out a strong love-hate aspect to the vampire-victim relationship. Indeed, when Jonathan Harker escapes from the Count's castle, and rallies with Dr. Van Helsing and the other men to kill Dracula, the vampire goes to England to stop their plan. However, instead of killing the men themselves, Dracula plots a scheme to attack the two women they love the most: Mina Harker and Lucy Westenra. In the novel, as a human being, Lucy was shy and in search of love. After Dracula drains her of her blood little by little, she is transformed into a bloodsucking creature. The sexual nature of Lucy is brought to life after her transformation. The majority of her victims are children. Once again, a clear correlation between vampirism and perversion can be made. Pedophilia is, as sadism, narcissism, and the desire to control, an act of extreme violence. Lucy leaves bite marks on the necks of her young victims, marking them. The marking of the skin is, as aforementioned, an act of utter control onto the victim. Lucy's sexual inclinations are what cause her demise, however. After trying to seduce her husband Arthur, she goes back in her coffin, and the men go in to kill her. Van Helsing lets Arthur do the deed, which consists of plunging a wooden stake in her heart. The phallic symbolism of the vampire killing is also a hidden manner to bring out repressed desires and drives. The most significant biting act, however, occurs when Dracula goes into Mina Harker's room.

Even though Jonathan Harker escaped from his castle, Dracula still wants him to be his and only his. Thus, as an act of vengeance, the Count bites Jonathan's fiancée, Mina: "And so you, like the others would play your brains against mine. You would help these men to hunt me and frustrate me in my designs! You know now, and they know in part already, and will know in

full before long, what it is to cross my path. They should have kept their energies closer to home” (Stoker 311). Dracula’s desire of Jonathan Harker leads him on the path of vengeance, which can be correlated to Robert Stroller’s definition of a love-hate relationship. Still aiming for a vengeful act, Dracula tells Mina that she will become a vampire: “And you, their best beloved one, are now to me, flesh of my flesh; blood of my blood; kin of my kin; [...] and shall be later on my companion and my helper. You shall be avenged in turn; for not one of them but shall minister to your needs” (Stoker 311). Even though the underlying aim for this transformation is vengeance, the Count puts forward the main elements of the transmission of vampiric tradition. These basic elements are the most traditional because they are repeated in modern vampire narratives, making them the basis for the correlation between the bite and the blood exchange and the transfer of tradition.

Dracula’s statement that Mina is now his is another confirmation of the desire and need of the master-vampire to utterly control his victim. The same idea applies when he says that the men shall not minister to her needs. The Count will be her sole point of reference once the transformation is complete. Even if Jonathan Harker and his fellow companions kill Dracula before his curse on Mina can take on its full effect, the main goals Dracula wanted to achieve remain. In vampirism, the transmission of tradition occurs through the act of biting and drinking blood. Therefore, the body, its corporeality, is of extreme importance. The idea that Mina’s flesh is now Dracula’s portrays this idea. The same applies to their relationship with blood. Drinking and sharing the fluid of life is not only discovering the other in its most hidden and secret manner, but it also acts as the medium through which the transmission of knowledge and intrinsic features will occur. This transfer of blood and tradition will bind both

the master-vampire and the soon-to-be newborn as both teacher and pupil, and as lovers. This is what the “kin of my kin” part of the dialogue represents. By becoming Mina’s only point of reference once the vampiric change has occurred, Dracula will become both Mina’s father figure and mentor, as well as her lover – “[...] and shall be later on my companion and my helper”. The relationship between vampire and victim is always imbued with a strong sense of eroticism and sexuality. Through often perverse sexual acts – mostly carried through the act of biting and the subsequent exchange of blood – the vampire cements his bond with his fledgling, in some fashion preparing him/her for his/her upcoming training, as well as to ensure that he/she is indeed fit to receive the vampiric tradition.

Sexual satisfaction in vampirism is usually achieved not through usual sexual acts, but by the vampiric bite and the sharing of human blood. The bond between the master-vampire and his pupil reaches its climax when the transformative blood exchange takes place. By exchanging blood, the vampire and his victim discover each other’s most personal aspects. In addition, as with fetishism, the blood becomes a symbolic representation of desires since blood encompasses the most intimate aspects of a human being, and the attained satisfaction of these desires. The correlation between the vampiric bite and its underlying sexual inclinations were put forward before the publication of Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, but the popularity of the novel cemented the link once and for all. Even though the vampire narratives published in the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries gave a subdued description of sexual scenes, it is where the vampire found his mystery.

One of the most sexually-charged scenes in the novel occurs when Jonathan Harker steps into the room of Dracula's three brides:

The girl went on her knees, and bent over me, simply gloating. There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive, and as she arched her neck she actually licked her lips like an animal, till I could see in the moonlight the moisture shining on the scarlet lips and on the red tongue as it lapped the white sharp teeth [...] I could feel the soft, shivering touch of the lips on the super-sensitive skin of my throat, and the hard dents of two sharp teeth, just touching and pausing there. I closed my eyes in a languorous ecstasy and waited – waited with beating heart. (Stoker 40-41)

Harker's reactions, and the vampire bride's movements and actions are permeated by sexuality. When Harker feels the fangs on the skin of his throat, he waits in pure ecstasy because of his arousal, but more specifically because being bitten by a vampire is a superlatively intimate gesture. Even though the whole choosing-of-the-victim process is often pure perversion, the abandonment of the victim to the vampire, and its reversal, are the most sexually-charged biting occurrences. Indeed, the transmission of intrinsic vampire features and of tradition is extremely erotic because the victim was chosen for these specific reasons. Obviously, perversion plays a role in the love-object choice, but more importantly, the soon-to-vampire has to be worthy of receiving said vampiric tradition and knowledge.

The impact of Bram Stoker's masterpiece on the world of vampire narratives cemented the core elements of the vampire figure, and paved the way for subsequent, richer narratives. Through the demonstration of the importance of perversion in vampirism, Stoker reinforced the idea that the three main elements that always reappear in vampire narratives hold their importance for a reason. The choosing of the victim, the bite and the blood exchange, and the

impact of sex all have an underlying perversion to them. In that, the transmission of vampiric tradition can occur in perverse fashion. However, once the exchange of blood is over, and the victim's transformation is completed, the master-vampire and his pupil embark on the true journey that will lead to the transmission of vampiric tradition. In addition to the elements already mentioned in *Dracula*, the training process and being brought into a family or a community reinforces the strength and importance of the transfer of tradition among vampires. The first three books of Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles* – *Interview with the Vampire*, *The Vampire Lestat*, and *The Queen of the Damned* – deal with these five traditional constellations. Through the following analysis, I will demonstrate that the vampire figure really is emblematic of the concept of tradition.

Chapter II

The Origins of Modern Vampiric Tradition in Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles*

The traditional vampiric constellations brought forward in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* are considered as such because they cemented the central elements which make vampires what they are. Choosing victims, drinking their blood, and engaging in sexual acts have always been present, in varying degrees, in vampire-centric narratives. Even though these three elements were made popular with Stoker's novel, *The Vampire Chronicles* by Anne Rice turned the perception and representation of the vampire figure 180 degrees. Not only do the traditional elements found in Stoker's novel strongly reappear, but Rice, in her *Vampire Chronicles*, made it imperative that her vampires go through a thorough training process with their sire once the transformation is completed. In addition, they long to understand their origins, and they therefore look for other blood drinkers, in hopes of forming a community. Throughout the *Chronicles*, the vampire characters go through a certain evolution. The vampire figure is not the mere villain anymore, but rather a well-rounded creature. In analyzing the five traditional constellations found in the first three novels of the *Vampire Chronicles* – *Interview with the Vampire*, *The Vampire Lestat*, and *The Queen of the Damned* – I will demonstrate that the vampire figure can ultimately provide an understanding of the concept of tradition. Indeed, the choice of the victim, the blood exchange, and the training process all bring the newborn vampire to understand what being a blood drinker implies. The blossoming relationship with his/her maker also reinforces the idea that the sharing of vampiric attributes and knowledge is not a simple task. The impact of sexuality – and its undeniable link to blood drinking – also strengthens the bond between the master-vampire and his new progeny. Finally, the yearning to discover one's origins, and to meet and converse

with other vampires is a direct example of how the narrative vampire figure is emblematic of tradition. Without this desire of comprehension of one's origins, traditions could not be transmitted.

As in *Dracula*, the soon-to-be transformed victims in *The Vampire Chronicles* are all chosen. The vampiric transformation is seen as a ceremony of great importance. Being chosen to become a blood drinker usually means that the master-vampire took the time to observe his prey. The lengthy process of choosing a particular victim can, once again, be linked to the ideas of fetishism and of narcissistic love-object choice explored in the first chapter. Victims in Anne Rice's universe are often chosen because they possess specific features. For instance, when Magnus lays eyes on Lestat, he decides that he wants him as his next fledgling because Lestat is a wolf killer. By emulating an attribute that Magnus wished he himself possessed, Lestat becomes an obsession for the vampire. Magnus wants to exert control over Lestat because he himself cannot be all he wants to be, regardless of his immortality. Before giving Lestat the "Dark Gift" – the vampiric attributes are worded as such in *The Vampire Chronicles* – Magnus observes him in both his familial and social surroundings. He even goes so far as to torment Lestat in his sleep. In doing so, Magnus slowly starts to establish his hold and control over Lestat. Once the master-vampire finally decides that Lestat is ready to receive his vampiric attributes, Magnus attacks his soon-to-be vampire child on a rooftop. Before drawing the blood out of Lestat's body, Magnus tells him what he finds so attractive about him: "He lifted his hands and stroked my hair as I cringed. 'Sunlight in the hair' he whispered, 'and the blue sky fixed forever in your eyes.' He seemed almost meditative as he looked at me" (Rice, *Lestat* 86). The fact that Magnus looks at Lestat in a meditative manner suggests that he

actually loves staring at his new protégé. Stroking his hair, looking deep into his eyes: all these actions provide a gateway into Magnus' fetish towards Lestat. Indeed, all the main vampires in the *Chronicles* who actually transform a human being into a vampire feel a strong attraction towards a physical and/or mental aspect of their chosen victims. For instance, when Lestat remembers what drew him to Louis, he words it in the following way: "Yet Louis gained a hold over me far more powerful than Nicolas had ever had. Even in his cruelest moments, Louis touched the tenderness in me, seducing me with his staggering dependence, his infatuation with my every gesture and every spoken word" (Rice, *Lestat* 498). Even though Lestat is particularly ego-centric, Louis did have a hold on Lestat. Louis' devotion to his master eventually became Lestat's fetish. In the same fashion, Louis exerted some kind of control over his maker, but Lestat undeniably had an immense power over Louis. In doing so, Lestat marks his victim as being his even before marking him with the vampiric bite. While Magnus fetishises Lestat for his physical attributes – his hair, his eyes, and his strength when killing the wolves – Lestat is obsessed with Louis' admiration of him. Marius, on the other hand, idolizes Lestat's thirst for vampiric knowledge, and his longing for some kind of personal connection:

'But why have you chosen to reveal things to me?' I asked. [...] 'There are several reasons, as I told you,' he said. 'And probably the strongest reason is the manner in which you sought me. Very few beings really seek knowledge in this world. Mortal or immortal, few really *ask*. On the contrary, they try to wring from the unknown the answers they have already shaped in their own minds – justifications, confirmations, forms of consolation without which they can't go on. To really ask is to open the door to the whirlwind. The answer may annihilate the question and the questioner. But you have been truly asking since you left Paris ten years ago.' [...] 'You have few preconceptions,' he said. 'In fact, you astound me

because you admit to such extraordinary simplicity. You want a purpose. You want love.’ (Rice, *Lestat* 380)

Marius being himself an educated vampire artist sees in Lestat a copy of his own self. As was mentioned above, a narcissist often tries to produce a copy of himself through the person he or she desires. This specific case applies to Marius’ and Lestat’s relationship, especially because Marius is not Lestat’s maker, but his teacher. The yearning for similarity can easily be molded through the teachings and the training of the master-vampire. Therefore, both the fetish aspect and the narcissistic love-object choice play a role in the victim selection in Anne Rice’s novels. The most important part of said choice, however, is the soon-to-be vampire’s worthiness to receive vampiric knowledge and intrinsic attributes.

The vampires in Rice’s universe follow a rule which stipulates that the human beings who are chosen by a vampire must be transformed by them – they cannot be merely an insignificant kill: “You never pass on our ‘secrets’ to humans unless you mean to bequeath the Dark Gift of our powers to them” (Rice, *Lestat* 16). Blood drinkers are indeed dark creatures because of the death they inflict on other beings. The perception of these features – the ability to drink blood by piercing flesh, reading minds, etc. – as being a gift depends on the newborn vampire. At the beginning of the transformative training process, the new creature will appreciate the novelty of it all, and the power and strength he/she now possesses. Once this phase comes to an end, vampires seek ways to feel more alive. However, being a vampire means that the creature is always caught between life and death. Vampires are never truly alive, nor dead. For this reason, the Dark Gift can sometimes be seen as a curse. Therefore, the choice of the victim is of great importance, since the newborn must be strong enough to deal with both aspects of life

and death. Moreover, in Rice's novels, the "secrets" which must be shared only with newborns relate to the revelation of the existence of vampires. Also, the scope of the vampiric powers is so great that these abilities must be carefully taught.

The relevance and importance of the bond between the master-vampire and his victim can be seen throughout the five traditional constellations, and the starting point of this close relationship occurs when the vampire chooses his victim. The master-vampire must be superior to his fledgling until the training process has been completed. The authority of the maker is what makes him competent to teach his newborn. As his sire did before him, the master-vampire shares his knowledge with the vampires whom he perceives as being worthy: "That the vampires of the world are a small number and live in terror of strife amongst themselves and choose their fledglings with great care, making certain that they respect the other vampires mightily" (Rice, *Interview* 252). The respect of the vampire ancestors is not only a way to confirm that the fledgling really wants to learn about vampiric tradition, but more importantly, it demonstrates the utter importance of the transmission of traditions between vampires. By keeping their community small in numbers, they are assured that the teachings will stay secret among a few individuals. The idea that the soon-to-be vampires are chosen with great care, and that they must respect their elders in the highest degree, is the first step towards understanding the concept of tradition in Anne Rice's works. Indeed, by choosing their victims carefully, the vampires ensure that their teachings and traditions will not only be well-respected and learned, but that their pupils will also care about the ongoing transmission of said teachings. In the same vein, by demanding unconditional respect towards the elders, the new blood drinkers will quickly learn the importance of the teacher-pupil

relationship, making the newborns more open to the training process. Putting a hierarchy in place also cements the idea that transmitting vampiric knowledge is undeniably necessary, and that it cannot be taken away from the narrative vampire figure itself. The strong bond between the master-vampire and his chosen victim starts when the vampire makes his choice, but the real strong rapport occurs when the vampire bites the human being, and then feeds him/her his own blood.

Even if choosing the victim is the first step towards the master-vampire and pupil bond, the core of it all resides in the transformative blood exchange. To become a vampire in Anne Rice's universe, a human being must be near death, drained of almost all his/her blood, before the maker feeds him/her his own blood. Once said sharing is over, the newborn will gain his/her intrinsic vampiric attributes. More importantly, vampires have a dual relationship with blood. On the one hand, it is what they must ingest in order to survive, but on the other, the blood is what connects them to their pupils in the strongest way possible. As Louis states at the beginning of *Interview with the Vampire*:

Killing is no ordinary act [...] One doesn't simply glut oneself on blood. [...] It is the experience of another's life for certain, and often the experience of the loss of that life through the blood, slowly. It is again and again the experience of that loss of my own life when I sucked the blood from Lestat's wrist and felt his heart pound with my heart. It is again and again a celebration of that experience; because for vampires that is the ultimate experience. (Rice, *Interview* 29)

Killing and drinking human blood is the ultimate experience for vampires because they feel the lives of their victims going into their bloodstreams, while the vampires are also inflicting death. Since vampires are forever locked in a state of "undeadness" – being neither alive nor

dead – the taking of the life fluid in this ephemeral moment brings their soon-to-be dead or transformed victims into a similar state. Therefore, even if a human being has not been chosen to become a creature of the night, any blood drinking becomes a manner in which vampires can create brief similar copies of themselves. This reaffirms the importance of the narcissistic love-object choice when victims are chosen not only for their appearance or mental attributes, but also for their blood and the feeling it provides. Drinking blood from victims is often described in Rice’s world as being extremely erotic:

You know, it was never merely the need for the blood anyway, though the blood is all things sexual that a creature could desire; it’s the intimacy of that moment – drinking, killing – the great heart-to-heart dance that takes place as the victim weakens and I feel myself expanding, swallowing the death, which, for a split second, blazes as large as the life. (Rice, *Queen* 1-2)

The “heart-to-heart dance” described by Lestat and the eroticism of it all reinforces the idea that the impact of being neither alive nor dead is undeniably sought after by the vampires when they drink human blood. The sexual aspect of the vampiric bite is obviously linked to sexual acts, but also to any search of pleasure. As the character of Baby Jenks in *The Queen of the Damned* describes:

Oh, the blood was good, yum, it was so good, even now that she was alone and had to work up her nerve, the way it had been this evening, to pull into a gas station and lure the old guy out back. Oh, yeah, snap, when she’d gotten her hands on his neck, and the blood came, it had been just fine, it was hamburgers and french fries and strawberry shakes, it was beer and chocolate sundaes. It was mainline, and coke and hash. It was better than screwing! It was all of it. (Rice, *Queen* 44)

The description Baby Jenks gives can easily be correlated with human pleasures. Eating, doing drugs, and having sex are all ways through which human beings can attain the satisfaction of their strongest and most erotic desires. The fact that Baby Jenks says that drinking blood is better than all these things combined clearly illustrates the entire sensual and sexual inclinations of blood drinking for vampires. It is the ultimate experience precisely because it transcends all earthbound pleasures. The complete physical and soulful connection that vampires feel while draining a human being of his/her blood can only be reproduced by killing other victims. Obviously, they need to drink blood to stay “alive”, but what they truly aim for is the complete and utter abandonment provided by this act. The sexual surrender for vampires is most ultimately achieved through the vampiric bite. As Louis states when he talks about the vampire Armand, “it was an icon for me of love. The love I felt. Not physical love, you must understand. I don’t speak of that at all, though Armand was beautiful and simple, and no intimacy with him would ever have been repellent. For vampires, physical love culminates and is satisfied in one thing, the kill” (Rice, *Interview* 254). Whether the blood drinking occurs to simply quench a vampire’s thirst or to impose the Dark Gift upon someone, the whole process is extremely erotic in nature. Intimacy, both physical and psychological, is what most human beings desire. Through the transcendental experience of the vampiric bite, blood drinkers reproduce this feeling of intimacy and of ecstasy provided by sexual acts. One of the most significant encounters occurs when Lestat transforms his ill mother, Gabrielle:

And jetting up into the current came the thirst, not obliterating but heating every concept of her, until she was flesh and blood and mother and lover all things beneath the cruel pressure of my fingers and my lips, everything I had ever desired. I drove my teeth into her, feeling her stiffen and gasp, and I felt my mouth grow wide to catch the hot flood when it came. (Rice, *Lestat* 157)

The complete intimacy correlated to blood drinking and its relation with sexuality can first be explained through the current which the first taste of blood brings. Sexual gestures and acts can often feel like currents coursing through the body. The transformation ritual can also be associated to the heat felt between two partners. The most relevant section, however, is when Lestat says that Gabrielle is flesh and blood, but that she also becomes his lover, while keeping her motherly authority. Through this transformative act, the basic gender and filial barriers do not apply. Vampires do not have preferred genders when it comes to attraction, and the family hierarchy is most of the time completely altered. In the case of Lestat and Gabrielle, the parent – Gabrielle – becomes the child, and Lestat becomes the parent. This alteration also illustrates the erotic relationship blossoming between Lestat and Gabrielle during the transformation process.

Another incestuous relationship takes place during a vampiric transformation in *Queen of the Damned*. When Jesse's body is crushed to pieces by a vampire during Lestat's rock concert, her ancestor, vampire Maharet, decides she is worthy of being given the Dark Gift. Maharet can make such decisions because she and her twin sister Mekare are the first real vampires to come into existence. When Jesse's transformation occurs with the mutual exchange of blood with Maharet, all ancestral barriers vanish:

Then the blood came; it poured through every fiber of her body; she was legs and arms again if it electrified her limbs, her skin stinging with the heat; and the hunger making her body writhe as the blood sought to anchor her soul to substance forever. They lay in each other's arms, she and Maharet, and Maharet's hard skin warmed and softened so that they become one wet and tangled thing, hair enmeshed, Jesse's face buried in Maharet's neck as she gnawed at the fount, as one shock of ecstasy passed through her after another. Suddenly Maharet drew

away and turned Jesse's face against the pillow. Maharet's hand covered Jesse's eyes, and Jesse felt the tiny razor-sharp teeth pierce her skin; she felt it all being taken back, drawn out. Like the whirling wind, the sensation of being emptied, of being devoured, of being nothing! 'Drink again, my darling.' Slowly, she opened her eyes; she saw the white throat and the white breasts; she reached out and caught the throat in her hands, and this time it was she who broke the flesh, she tore it. And when the first spill of blood hit her tongue, she pulled Maharet down under her. Utterly compliant Maharet was; hers; Maharet's breasts against her breasts; Maharet's lips against her face, as she sucked the blood, sucked it harder and harder. *You are mine, you are utterly and completely mine.* All images, voices, visions, gone now. They slept, or almost slept, folded against one another. It seemed the pleasure left its shimmer; it seemed that to breathe was to feel it again; to shift against the silken sheets or against Maharet's silken skin was to begin again. (Rice, *Queen* 241)

The drinking of blood in Anne Rice's universe is the complete experience of another being, of his/her soul. The heat emanating from the tasting of the fluid is the physical representation of that ultimate experience. Moreover, the fact that Jesse and Maharet become entangled with one another while the former tastes her ancestor's blood – which gives Jesse shocks of ecstasy – is clearly a representation of love-making. When Jesse's change is almost complete, the animalistic side of vampires is revealed. Indeed, the tearing of Maharet's throat is extremely animalistic in nature. The most flagrant aspect, however, is when Jesse first tastes Maharet's blood. From that moment on, Jesse constantly repeats that Maharet is hers. The sexual inclinations of the exchange become rougher as well. Therefore, the concepts of control and sadism are once again at work on both Maharet's and Jesse's part. Even if Maharet is her maker, Jesse still wants to take possession of her, making the barriers of authority disappear once more. The final instants of the exchange, however, are softer, and Maharet regains her control over Jesse when the latter states that being against Maharet is like beginning again.

Even though the longing for control took over Jesse during her vampiric transformation, being close to Maharet is the ultimate feeling for her, a close second to drinking blood. By the same token, the bond between the master-vampire and his/her victim always begins with an exchange of blood, but said trade is violent and aggressive, which is why vampires possess a strong animalistic side.

Since the vampiric bite is most often forced upon victims, rape imagery is also relevant in *The Vampire Chronicles*. For instance, after Magnus has studied and looked at his prey – Lestat – for a long time, he finally bites him. Lestat’s reaction clearly goes against Magnus’ desire to drink Lestat’s blood: “I fought him harder than I had ever fought anyone or anything in my existence [...] I beat on him, kicked him, tore at his hair [...] ‘Damn you! Damn you! Damn you!’ [...] I was roaring and bellowing. And he drew closer and the teeth went through my flesh” (Rice, *Lestat* 88). Even though the initial bite is extremely aggressive, the near-death draining of the victim also triggers the tight bond between the pupil and his maker. By penetrating the victim’s flesh with his fangs, the vampire literally injects all of his love for the victim, as well as part of his intrinsic vampiric knowledge that the master-vampire possesses. This is why the chosen beings must necessarily be transformed into blood drinkers. The sharing of this knowledge and tradition – how to act in the human world, how to kill victims, how to train new fledglings – requires worthiness. Telling these secrets to a fledgling is no ordinary act because the human victim who gets bitten will receive a thorough training, and will delve into the intricate inner workings of vampirism.

Once the initial bite and blood draining have occurred, the soon-to-be vampire completely surrenders himself/herself to his/her maker. The surrender is both physical and mental. When Magnus offers his blood to the almost-dying Lestat, he gets to feel the body of his sire, and feel pleasure: “ ‘The wine of all wines’, he breathed. ‘This is my Body, this is my Blood.’ And then his arms surrounded me. They drew me to him and I felt a great warmth emanating from him, and he seemed to be filled not with blood but with love for me” (Rice, *Lestat* 89). Even though the choice of the victim is narcissistic at its core, the maker desires his soon-to-be progeny lovingly. On deeming the victim worthy of receiving the Dark Gift and its knowledge, the master-vampire offers a great proof of love. The transmission of vampiric tradition is intrinsically related not only to the worthiness of he/she who was chosen, but also to the maker’s love towards his pupil. Once Magnus offers Lestat his blood, Lestat surrenders himself to his sire. The blood is not only the transformative substance, but also the symbolic representation of Magnus’ love for him. Moreover, the fact that the maker’s blood is “the wine of all wines” signifies that the mutual blood exchange provides the main gateway towards the training process and the transmission of tradition. The hierarchy between teacher and pupil is also quickly established through the blood exchange. The fact that Magnus declares “This is my Body, this my Blood” before embracing Lestat suggests that Magnus has a God-like countenance. It is as if he were the Christian son of God who offers his life in return. He is therefore Lestat’s vampire father, mentor, and lover. Since Lestat perceives Magnus as a divine being, Lestat comes to idolize him for everything Magnus will teach him, as well as for what Magnus will provide him in terms of guidance and love. Once Lestat completely surrenders himself to Magnus, he realizes the scope of the power which the vampiric transformation can provide: “I was against him and I could feel his sinews, his bones, the very

contour of his hands. I *knew* his body” (Rice, *Lestat* 90). Lestat’s physical knowledge of Magnus’ body is the starting point for the training process and the learning of the vampiric tradition. Indeed, once the surrender is complete, the newborn’s mind is utterly open to the subsequent apprenticeship. The idea of complete surrender can be easily captured when the story of Armand’s transformation by Marius is told:

‘This is the moment, beautiful one. For you to come to me and become like me. Is it what you wish?’ ‘Yes,’ ‘Forever to thrive in secret upon the blood of the evildoer as I thrive, and to abide with these secrets until the end of the world.’ ‘I take the vow, I surrender, I will... to be with you, my Master, always, you are the creator of all things that I am. There has never been any greater desire.’ (Rice, *Lestat* 294-295)

By taking this vow, Armand cements the idea that newborn vampires wish to follow the footsteps of their makers. This submission is the main basis upon which the transmission of knowledge and tradition will occur. The bond between teacher and pupil is of utmost importance for the maker to provide his newborn with the best education possible.

The training process quickly gets underway once the transformation has been completed. Indeed, discovering the world through vampire eyes is very intense and can also be disorienting. Thus, the newborn’s surrender to his/her master takes all its meaning in the first seconds of the new blood drinker’s “life”. Lestat’s education takes an entirely different turn, however. After his transformation, Magnus teaches him only the basic vampiric survival elements that Lestat needs to know:

Listen carefully. [...] For I’m about to leave you [...] And there are things you must know. You’re immortal now. And your nature shall lead you soon enough to your first human victim. Be swift and show no mercy. But stop your feasting, no matter how delicious, before the

victim's heart ceases to beat. In years to come, you'll be strong enough to feel that great moment, but for the present pass the cup to time just before it's empty. Or you may pay heavily for your pride. (Rice, *Lestat* 93)

Magnus, like other vampires, sees the act of drinking blood as being the ultimate experience. As he explains to Lestat, the full pleasure provided by such an act takes time to appreciate. Strength and control must be built before a newborn vampire can truly grasp the greatness of this experience. However, after teaching these basic elements to Lestat, Magnus commits suicide by throwing himself into a burning pyre. Lestat has now to mourn the death of his sire, while adjusting to his new countenance: "Magnus, why did you leave me? Magnus, what am I supposed to do, how do I go on?" (Rice, *Lestat* 105) Disoriented and alone, Lestat has to rely on himself to slowly understand what being a vampire truly encompasses. Since the vampiric tradition and knowledge will not be taught by his maker, Lestat is forced to learn on his own, becoming an autodidact.

As has been previously explained, traditions retain a specific core, which allows for their transmission to occur. Some elements of a same tradition will change through time, enabling not only a more fluid transfer, but also a re-shaping of elements from a given tradition in order to make said tradition more relevant and current. Magnus' suicide which leads to Lestat's self-education serves precisely that purpose. Lestat's personal learning somewhat eases the necessity for a mentor in the first stages of Lestat's transformation. This particular upbringing also shaped Lestat's own teaching method towards his protégés. In *Interview with the Vampire*, Louis and Claudia are barely taught anything by Lestat, and they are therefore forced to become autodidacts themselves. Lestat recreates this way of thinking because he has had to

learn a great deal by himself, but more specifically because he believes Magnus had followed his own teaching traditions:

Magnus had great strength even after giving me his blood. And he had bound his vampire victim in chains when he stole his powers. An enormous mystery, and a maddening one. But for the moment, ignorance was truly bliss. And I was doing very well discovering without the help of Magnus. And maybe this was what Magnus had intended. Maybe this had been his way of learning centuries ago. (Rice, *Lestat* 126)

In believing that his maker reproduced his own tradition, Lestat thinks that he is part of a cycle that will never end. By the same token, he puts Louis and Claudia in the same circle of tradition. However, even though “ignorance was truly bliss” for a moment, Lestat still craves an understanding of the whole inner workings of vampirism, while desperately looking for a father figure to guide him. The role of mentor and father, in this case, is taken on by the character of Marius.

After learning the basic elements of vampirism – killing people, turning chosen victims into vampires – by himself, Lestat goes on a quest to find Marius, whom he hopes will be his mentor. Tired of roaming the world, Lestat buries himself in the earth, letting time pass. Marius eventually finds him and gives him some of his blood in order to make Lestat strong again:

‘Drink,’ he said, eyebrows raising slightly, lips shaping the word carefully, slowly, as if it were a kiss. As Magnus had done on that lethal night so many eons ago, he raised his hand now and moved the cloth back from his throat. The vein, dark purple beneath translucent preternatural skin, offered itself. And the sound commenced again, that overpowering sound, and it lifted me right off the earth and drew me into it. And my arms

gathering incalculable strength, winding round his shoulders, my face pressed to his cool white flesh, the blood shooting down into my loins and every vessel in my body ignited with it. How many centuries had purified this blood, distilled its power? It seemed beneath the roar of the flow he spoke. He said again: 'Drink, my young one, my wounded one.' I felt his heart swell, his body undulate, and we were sealed against each other. I think I heard myself say: 'Marius.' And he answered: 'Yes.' (Rice, *Lestat* 362-363)

Marius' main purpose at this very moment is to be Lestat's savior and guide. Being one of the most ancient and educated vampires on earth, Marius is the ultimate mentor. Lestat does feel the scope of his power when he feeds off him because vampire blood contains every fiber of knowledge the master-vampire possesses. The training process is necessary because the fledgling needs to understand and master both his/her new identity and his/her new origins. The undeniable bond between a newborn's mentor and the newborn himself/herself can be demonstrated through the physical act of the blood exchange. In Marius and Lestat's case, they seal against one another, while Lestat's bloodstream is flooded with Magnus' undiluted insight into the vampire world. The sharing of knowledge is also linked to the erotic aspect of the blood exchange. Being filled with the novelties of vampirism and what ensues from the mutual blood exchange can be extremely overwhelming, and it can therefore exude the same properties as those of an orgasm. Through this strong sensual bond, the mentor and the newborn will become tightly linked. This relationship is undeniably necessary for vampiric traditions to be rightly transmitted. Since Marius' fetish towards Lestat relates to his thirst for knowledge, the bond they share will attain its peak when the education process begins. Marius loves Lestat for the main aforementioned reason, but he also desires for the love to be required by his fledgling: " 'What can I do to make you love me?' he whispered. 'What can I give? The

knowledge of all I have witnessed, the secrets of our powers, the mystery of what I am?’ It seemed blasphemous to answer. And as I had on the battlements, I found myself on the edge of tears” (Rice, *Lestat* 281). The offer of knowledge brings Lestat to the edge of tears because his yearning to know more will finally be satisfied. In addition, since love and knowledge are so intertwined in the vampire world, Marius and Lestat will experience an almost perfect teacher-pupil relation.

Marius is the ultimate mentor for Lestat not only because he is well-educated, but especially because Marius also respects his pupil’s original self-taught upbringing:

‘I brought you here because I want to tell you what I know,’ he said. ‘I want to share with you whatever secrets I possess. For several reasons, you have attracted me.’ I was fascinated. And I felt the possibility of an overpowering love. ‘But I warn you,’ he said, ‘there’s a danger in this. I don’t possess the ultimate answers. I can’t tell you who made the world or why man exists. I can’t tell you why we exist. I can only tell you more about us than anyone else has told you so far. I can show you Those Who Must Be Kept and tell you what I know of them. I can tell you why I *think* I have managed to survive for so long. This knowledge may change you somewhat. That’s all knowledge ever really does, I suppose...’ ‘Yes –’ ‘But when I’ve given all I have to give, you will be exactly where you were before: an immortal being who must find his own reasons to exist.’ (Rice, *Lestat* 379-380)

The possibility of overwhelming love which Lestat feels is strongly intertwined with the ideal of understanding the vampire world, and feeling a sense of true belonging. Marius’ statement concerning how much knowledge can change a being is of extreme importance for ensuring the transmission of tradition through time. Without the teaching-learning cycle, traditions would simply cease to exist. As much as blood drinking is the ultimate physical experience for

vampires, knowledge is the ultimate key for the ongoing sharing of vampiric traditions. Without denying this, Marius is also a supportive teacher because he acknowledges and respects Lestat's self-learning ways. By saying that he must discover his own reasons to exist, Marius still gives Lestat the opportunity to bring his own flavor to the ongoing flow of knowledge and customs of the bloodsucking undead universe.

The undeniable link between knowledge and the transmission of traditions is highly relevant when the vampire figure comes into play: "And Marius knows things – and I don't mean about us, or about Those Who Must Be Kept or whatever the old mystery – he knows things about life itself, about how to move through time" (Rice, *Lestat* 318). Obviously, Lestat yearns to understand his origins, but what he wants to grasp above all else is how to move swiftly through time. The vampire figure and the concept of tradition go hand in hand because, like traditions, vampires are timeless, and traditions, by nature, need to be timeless. If it were not the case, traditions would simply be customs which would eventually be forgotten. In the same vein, vampires, by their immortal countenance, have no other choice but to be timeless creatures. Therefore, through their intrinsic features, blood drinkers act in the same manner as traditions.

The most difficult aspect of immortality is, once again, trying to deal with the undead status provided by the vampiric bite. Being neither dead nor alive can be unsettling. Vampires are immortal, but they cannot indulge in human pleasures, which is why the drinking of blood is the utmost perfect sensation for them because it is the most ethereal pleasure they can afford: "All I learned from Armand, finally, was that immortals find death seductive and ultimately

irresistible, that they fail to conquer death or humanity in their minds. Now I want to take that knowledge and wear it like armor as I move through the world” (Rice, *Lestat* 317). The “undeadness” vampires have to deal with can never be taken away from them. In addition to blood drinking, it is the most stable vampiric characteristic there is. Thus, not only is the training process important to ensure that the pupil knows how to behave properly as a new vampire, but the education process also allows the fledgling to start dealing with the overwhelming aspects of immortality. This appropriation can also be dealt with by sharing knowledge and other aspects with other vampires.

Sharing knowledge with a vampiric community does not only allow blood drinkers to live with a lesser burden, but it more importantly creates a continuity aspect: “The idea was simply that there was somebody who knew everything, somebody who had seen everything. I did not mean by this that a Supreme Being existed, but rather that there was on earth a continual intelligence, a continual awareness” (Rice, *Lestat* 398). This continual awareness illustrates, once again, the undeniable correlation between the vampire figure and the concept of tradition. Without temporal continuity, traditions would come to a grinding halt. In the same way, knowledge about vampires and their origins need to be exchanged between bloodsucking creatures if they want their history to live on. In order for this communication to occur, more vampires had to be made: “Only as time passed and more blood drinkers were created did they acquire the power to communicate silently with each other as we have done with mortals all along” (Rice, *Queen* 279). The passing of time and the creation of new vampires allows traditions to persist strongly through time. With new fledglings teaching what they have learned from their makers to their own newborns, traditions evolve while remaining strong at

their cores. Since the concept of tradition works in this specific manner, the vampire figure is well-indicated to provide an understanding of the concept. As was aforementioned, tradition is the transmission of knowledge through time. In the case of the vampire figure, this particular knowledge includes being taught how to drink human blood, how to make new vampires, and understanding how their otherworldly features work. They also have to be taught how to deal with the fact that vampires are bringers of death. In that sense, they must also learn how to cover their tracks and remain hidden in the shadows. The most hidden and important elements to uncover, however, are related to the origins of vampirism.

The search for other vampires and the longing to live in a community find their origins out of loneliness, but also from a quest to understand where bloodsucking creatures come from. Traditions cannot emerge and carry on through time if origins are unknown. In order to grasp the current traditions, the earlier ones need to be understood since the origins of vampires dictate the central core of their current traditions – mainly the choosing of the victims, the ultimate experience of drinking blood, and the longing for a personal connection with one’s maker and with a larger gathering. In Anne Rice’s *Chronicles*, the birth of vampirism is utterly accidental. The King and the Queen of Kemet – Enkil and Akasha – get stabbed by revolting citizens. While they both bleed to death, Amel – an evil spirit – infiltrates their bloodstreams. This aggression puts Enkil and Akasha into an undead state, not only modifying their bodily composure, but their mental states as well. The initial extreme violation of the chosen victim by the vampire is a reproduction of that first attack by Amel. The possessed King and Queen bodies also become statue-like, while remaining “alive” through the act of drinking human blood. The deep correlation between a state of “undeadness” and blood sucking and drinking

is ultimately provided by Amel. Since he enjoys the taste of blood, he always wants more, but he can never be fully satisfied. Being a spirit, Amel is an enormous mass of energy, and he cannot therefore be contained into one single body, which is why he infiltrated both the King and the Queen's bodies, yet these two receptacles are not enough for him. Enkil and Akasha are thus forced to make other blood drinking creatures – the first ones being the twins, Maharet and Mekare, and also their royal guardian, Khayman. Once the first fledglings grasped the inner workings of their new immortality, the transmission of vampiric tradition and its related constellations truly began. Understanding the origins of blood drinkers is therefore of capital importance because the transfer of the entire vampiric tradition is utterly based upon Amel's infiltration into Enkil and Akasha's bodies. The story of the King and Queen of Kemet was then shrouded in mystery in order to keep the true origins of vampires secret. Only the blood drinkers deemed worthy of receiving such knowledge can eventually learn the truth. Much like the choice of victims, the original vampiric tradition is the ultimate gateway into the realm of vampirism, and it must be hidden at all costs from humans: "I must warn you. Answer no questions. Ask and you open one bud of truth for yourself after another. But give nothing, nothing especially concerning your origin" (Rice, *Interview* 242). Therefore, in order to keep everything hidden, the original vampires enveloped the story of the two initial receptacles in a religious-inclined tale. The original story must be kept secret because Enkil and Akasha are the first and ultimate ancestors, making them the direct lineage of all the vampires born after them:

'Our blood comes from them!' he said. 'It is their blood. The line is direct, and what befalls them befalls us. If they are burnt, we are burnt.' 'We are connected to them!' I whispered in amazement. 'Exactly, my dear Marius,' he said, watching me, seeming to enjoy my fear. 'That is why they have been kept for a thousand years,

the Mother and the Father, that is why victims are brought to them in sacrifice, that is why they are worshipped. What happens to them happens to us.’ (Rice, *Lestat* 434)

Thus, the children linked to Enkil and Akasha built another vampiric tradition upon the original one. They did as such to keep the existence of their ancestors a secret, but more importantly to be able to understand and live swiftly through eternity. Without the strong connections between all five traditional vampiric constellations, vampiric tradition and its transmission would die. Since vampires live forever, they need these traditions and their related amalgam of elements in order to grasp the scope of their eternal “lives”. The choice of the victim, the intimacy of the blood exchange with one’s maker and the sexual elements intertwined with simple blood drinking, the training process, and the yearning to belong in order to meet others of the same kind and also to finally understand one’s origins, all allow Anne Rice’s vampires to move as swiftly as possible through time. Since the concept of tradition behaves in the same fashion, the vampire figure undeniably provides an understanding of the concept itself.

However, the true underlying force behind the correlation between Rice’s vampires and tradition is found in the evil spirit, Amel. Indeed, spirits – especially evil ones like Amel – envy human beings because they possess both a body and a soul. The meaning behind Amel’s love of blood drinking and the divine feeling it provides for vampires relates to the fact that Amel himself wants to live. He wants to be corporeal more than anything. Since this cannot happen, the spirit is therefore always stuck in a state between life and death, in a state of “undeadness”. Amel cannot be contained in one single entity. He thus travels through

bloodstreams of other vampire victims, through the vampire bite, in a constant search of life. The vampiric tradition brought forward in this thesis still undeniably applies, but it was built upon the premise that Amel wants to, ultimately, feel:

And the demon had what it wanted: a body to live in, a way to be in the world at last, a way to *feel*. But then came the even more dreadful discovery, that to keep their corpses animate, the blood must be fed. And all it could convert to its use was the selfsame thing of which it was made: blood. Give it more blood to enter, give it more blood to push through the limbs of the body in which it enjoyed such glorious sensations, of blood it could not get enough. And oh, the grandest of all sensations was the drinking in which it renewed itself, fed itself, enlarged itself. And in that moment of drinking it could feel the death of the victim, the moment it pulled the blood so hard out of the victim that the victim's heart stopped. The demon had them, the King and Queen. They were Drinkers of the Blood [...] (Rice, *Lestat* 441)

In this perspective, vampiric tradition is the essential search made by all beings, vampires or humans: the hedonistic search for a great life and its pleasures. Ultimately, this is what the vampires in Anne Rice's *Chronicles* illustrate. Through an understanding of the concept of tradition and its link to the vampire figure, we can state that traditions are of capital importance in order to grasp the power of life itself. Vampires, being immortal creatures, constantly search for the ultimate feeling, making them the perfect emblem of the concept of tradition. Indeed, vampires are such malleable creatures that they are not only literary figures, but they can also cross over various media, such as cinema and graphic novels. Through the lens of the film adaptations of *Dracula* and of *Interview with the Vampire* and *The Queen of the Damned*, we will now establish which elements of the vampiric tradition have been kept, modified or taken away in order to demonstrate the complete impact of the vampire figure in modern popular culture.

Chapter III

The Continuity of Vampiric Tradition in Film Adaptations

The vampire figure appeared in the collective imagination first through folkloric legends and then through written narratives. In the 18th and 19th centuries, narratives were the best media through which people could experience the scope of the vampire figure. Culture evolved, however, and so did the narrative vampire. In order to keep up with all the novelties brought forth by the popular culture of the 1930's and beyond, the vampire figure was propelled to a new level. Bela Lugosi's portrayal of Count Dracula cemented the main characteristics of the gentleman vampire both on stage and on screen. The outsider with a strong accent who drinks human blood to remain alive was immortalized in people's imagination through Lugosi's role. At the beginning of the 1960's, Hammer Films Production released eight features based on Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, the majority of them starring Christopher Lee. This series of films had the effect of keeping the vampire figure relevant in the collective popular consciousness. In the mid-1970's, Anne Rice published *Interview with the Vampire* and changed the vampire figure forever. In the 1990's and 2000's, the vampire conquered the small screen. Several television series about vampires – *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *The Vampire Diaries*, *True Blood*, *Dracula*, just to name a few – were produced. In addition, comic books, board games, and video games – for instance, *American Vampire* (comic book), *Vampire: The Masquerade* (originally a board game converted into a video game) – were created.

The relevance of this explosion of popular culture elements based on the vampire figure is correlated with the movement of traditions through time. Without a cultural appeal, narrative figures would cease to be present in people's imagination, and they would eventually

disappear. As for the transmission of traditions, the vampire figure needs the support of popular culture to remain. Even though graphic novels and video games bring the vampire to a new level, especially for youngsters, the best narrative medium apart from the written word is cinema. The power of film and its powerful visual elements make it the perfect vehicle to illustrate the entire scope of the vampire figure. I will base my subsequent analysis on three films: Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, Neil Jordan's *Interview with the Vampire* – the adaptation of the screenplay was penned by Anne Rice herself – and finally, Michael Rymer's *Queen of the Damned*. These three films will provide a basis upon which to explore the concept of tradition and its link to the vampire figure. These movies are significant because they are based on the main literary corpus used in this thesis. Only two movies dealing with Anne Rice's universe have been made so far, and they undoubtedly are a part of the filmic corpus. In the case of Bram Stoker's work, however, numerous films based on the classic novel were released. Coppola's version of *Dracula* was favored because it is the feature which is the closest to the original story. Comparing the novels used in this thesis to their movie counterparts will demonstrate how important the vampire figure actually is, but it will also enable us to look at the concept of tradition in a different light. By examining what remained, what was added, and what was taken away from the filmic adaptations, I will analyze the impact of the narrative vampire in popular culture, and also how the concept of tradition is still intertwined with the figure, despite its departure from book pages to the big screen.

Before delving into the filmic representations of the five recurring traditional constellations, it is important to look at how the general concept of tradition has been illustrated in the three

films. In the case of Coppola's version of *Dracula*, the director chose to dramatize the story of Vlad Țepeș, the historical Dracula. In doing so, Coppola brings to his work the traditional and folkloric aspects of the vampire. These details are of great relevance because Coppola cherishes the idea that traditions must be transmitted. These elements reappear a few times throughout the film. Dr. Van Helsing explains to his fellow companions what Lucy has become: "She is vampyre, nosferatu [...] and becomes immortal once infected by another nosferatu" (Coppola, 1992). The use of these specific terms once again demonstrates that the traditional and historical vampiric features are brought forth in *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. One of the cleverest uses of the concept of tradition in Coppola's film occurs when Van Helsing exposes the reasons why the vampiric creature is so dangerous: "We are dealing with forces beyond all human experience" (Coppola, 1992). The transmission of knowledge through time – the basic definition of tradition – has a timeless aspect in that it always exceeds the present. Going beyond time is the most important element needed in order for traditions to get transferred through the ages. By saying that the vampiric forces are beyond all immanent human experience, it can be clearly established that the concept of tradition and the narrative vampire figure cannot be separated. Even though tradition stems for human experience in itself, the concept of tradition requires narrative vessels to be impactful. The concept of tradition is thus at work within the vampire figure itself; tradition is what ultimately drives the vampire figure. A similar idea was explored in the cinematographic version of Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*.

The filmic version of Rice's novel *Interview with the Vampire* stars Brad Pitt and Tom Cruise as Louis and Lestat, respectively. This casting choice is striking because it elevated the

vampire figure to a new level. Hollywood celebrities play a part in the structure of the zeitgeist of a given time period. Being extremely popular actors, Pitt and Cruise slowly changed the representation of the vampire figure. The vampire went from being the scary outsider – the most potent example is F.W. Murnau's 1922 silent film *Nosferatu* – to the aristocratic, good-looking, and sex-exuding creature. This shift eventually led to the domestication of the blood drinker, making him more mainstream. The casting of Brad Pitt and Tom Cruise – Hollywood heartthrobs at the time – reinforced this categorization. Making the vampire figure more culturally bound also relates to the concept of tradition. Indeed, in order for the transmission of a tradition – in this case, of a figure – to occur through time, it must continue to produce an impact. By bringing the narrative vampire to the big screen, and by recognizing the actors who play the blood drinkers, the figure will undoubtedly live on in people's imagination. Therefore, the jump from the world of writing to the universe of cinema is not only relevant culturally, but it also anchored the concept of tradition even deeper within the vampire figure. The cinematographic representations of the vampire also illustrate different facets of the five recurring traditional constellations. By adding, subtracting or keeping elements similar, the filmic narratives give a different representation of the concept of tradition in correlation with the vampire figure.

The choice of the victim is, in the three films, similar to what was explored in the novels. In *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, one of the first elements which is illustrated is the vampire's observation of his prey. This contemplation of the victim is the first step towards the imminent transformation. In doing so, the master-vampire begins to exert his control over the human whom he has chosen. As it occurs in the novel, Count Dracula chose Jonathan Harker to be his

and only his. When Harker first enters the castle, the mystery and the controlling quality of Dracula are shown both visually and through the dialogue. Coppola directed the film in a way which emphasizes his mysterious character by playing with shadows. Dracula's shadows do not always follow his movements, thus demonstrating his non-human countenance. In addition, the vampire's eyes are sometimes super imposed in portions of the screen while another scene is played out. For instance, when Jonathan Harker travels to reach Dracula's castle, the vampire's eyes stare at Harker through the train window. The mysterious aspect of the vampire figure is relevant because it strengthens the control that the blood drinker wishes to exert over his victim. By exuding such physically – as well as visually in the film – dominating behavior, Dracula slowly increases the coercive authority he exercises over his chosen victim. This strong control over Jonathan Harker reaches its cumulating point when he is almost bitten by Dracula's three brides. As in the novel, Harker is seduced by the three female vampires – the visual and auditory elements are extremely sexual, such as the moaning sounds from both Jonathan and the vampires, and Harker's face also expresses ecstasy – until Dracula enters the room, furious. This anger is a way for Dracula to exert his control over both Jonathan Harker and his three female vampires. All four of them are his and it must remain so. In the film, Gary Oldman – playing the character of the Count – utters the same words as in the novel – that Harker is his – but he says it in Romanian. The use of the Count's mother tongue once again reinforces the importance of history in Coppola's feature. Traditions and history go hand in hand because historic temporality is what ultimately ensures the transmission of traditions and knowledge. Without historic temporality, the cemented core of a given tradition could not be transmitted through time and without the transmission process, traditions would not live on.

The observation of prey continues when Dracula first sees Mina's picture in Jonathan's locket. Upon that first sight, the vampire becomes infatuated with her because, in Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, Mina is the doppelganger of Elizabetha, Dracula's wife who committed suicide after being told that her husband had died on the battle field. Once he moves to London, Dracula sees Mina in the street. He follows her, and starts talking to her. Even though Mina is afraid at first, she lets her guard down and introduces herself to the stranger. This first introduction is a sign of his impending control. By pushing her to reveal her identity, Dracula has the upper hand in order to control her, and eventually, to strip Mina of her identity in order to achieve complete mastery over her. However, Coppola's film differs from Stoker's storyline when it comes to the relationship between Dracula and Mina. The film maker added an element of star-crossed romance in the movie in order to make his work more mainstream. In the same way as the casting choice of Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt in *Interview with the Vampire*, adding a love story to the plot makes the film more culturally appealing for modern viewers, especially since Stoker's original story was published in 1897. This addition changes the meaning of Dracula's vengeful acts, however. His yearning for revenge is first turned into an egocentric search for love. Mina almost falls for it – she asks the vampire to bite her, but he refuses out of love – but when she decides to marry Jonathan as planned, Dracula's revenge takes place. In the novel, the vampire bites Mina in order to hurt the men who are planning to kill him. In Coppola's film, the desire for vengeance is triggered by what Dracula perceives to be a betrayal on Mina's part. Therefore, the yearning for retribution is present in both the novel and the film, but the main goal of revenge differs. The bond between Dracula and Mina in Coppola's film starts with the vampire's observation of his desired prey. Dracula

reproduces this pattern of control and narcissistic love-object choice before transforming Lucy Westenra into a blood drinker.

Dracula transforms Lucy slowly, draining her of her blood one bite at a time. These multiple markings of the victim once again reinforce the vampire's need for domination and authority when it comes to his victim choice. One aspect worth noting is the state into which Lucy falls when Dracula stares at her in her bedroom at night. Lucy automatically reverts to highly sexual behavior – touching her own body, moaning while her back arches – while the vampire looks at her before biting her. Showcasing such demeanor once again reinforces the basic and utterly important bond between the vampiric bite and eroticism. In Lucy's case, this link is even more relevant because she is promiscuous in nature. By making her exude this facet of her personality, Dracula assures himself that he will be able to completely control his soon-to-be fledgling. The importance of the vampiric bite and its correlation to victim control can also be seen when Dracula finally bites Mina. As in the novel, Mina is utterly under the vampire's spell once she is bitten. Dracula can call her at will, making her do his bidding. Victim control therefore undoubtedly occurs through the piercing of human flesh and the subsequent blood drinking.

Blood drinking in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* – both in its original format and in Coppola's film – is the action through which the expression or the revelation of repressed sexual desires can be felt and experienced. This repression goes hand in hand with the societal thinking of the Victorian 19th century. By making the vampire figure exude such sensuality, the readers could live their own needs vicariously through the bloodsucking creature. The existing link between

blood drinking and sexuality is presented in a hidden manner in Stoker's novel in order for his work to still conform to the repressive codes of his epoch. Coppola, proposing a faithful, but also more modern adaptation of the work, explicitly shows this strong bond. One of the most significant scenes – in the book and in the cinematographic feature – is the encounter between Jonathan Harker and Count Dracula's three female vampires. Even if Harker's reaction is highly erotic in the novel, the filmic version may be perceived as being stronger because it depicts the whole scene visually. The three vampires try to convince Jonathan to lie down on the bed. After a few tries, he finally gives in, and the three women finally reveal themselves. All three of them touch Jonathan and lick his throat, while he moans in ecstasy. Obviously, the blood drinking is stopped by Dracula, but one of the vampires grazes her pointy fangs on Harker's throat, bringing him to the edge of orgasm. The correlation between the taking of blood and sexuality is therefore the same in both media. The same applies to the relationship between Lucy and Dracula. The first time the vampire tastes the woman's blood, he does so in animal form, resembling that of a wild wolf. Lucy, being controlled by Dracula, follows him in the rain outside, and abandons herself to him. This utter surrender is illustrated through the literal physical intercourse between Lucy and the wolf. Mina, looking for Lucy, witnesses the scene. This particular moment of the film is interesting because it deals with two perverse elements. The fact that Mina looks at them while they are engaging in a sexual act is reminiscent of voyeurism. The impact of sex, blood drinking, and animalistic behaviors is of great importance in Stoker's work, and Coppola reproduced it adequately in his film. Indeed, since blood drinking is extremely intimate at its core – drinking someone's blood is to literally taste their entire being, both physically and mentally – the taking of this life fluid has no other choice but to be sexual. The animalistic inclination of blood sucking is the physical

demonstration of the aggressive nature of the act. As was mentioned earlier, since the piercing of the flesh with vampire fangs is deeply correlated with an imagery of rape, the animalistic side of the bite is the illustration of the rapist taking control of his/her victim against his/her will. In the scene depicting the first intercourse between Lucy and Dracula, the vampire's animalistic side is represented through the figure of the wolf Dracula morphed into. The rape imagery can be linked to the extreme control Dracula exerts over Lucy. Through this manipulation, the vampire is able to achieve what he wants, but, deep down, Lucy still remains non-consensual. Once he has taken some blood from her, however, Lucy becomes more willing because the connection between the blood drinker and his prey always truly begins once the piercing of the flesh has occurred. Therefore, the dichotomy between the aggression of the bite, and the ensuing link between the master-vampire and the soon-to-be newborn is greatly represented in Coppola's work.

In sum, *Bram Stoker's Dracula* is a just adaptation of the original novel. Coppola played with the three traditional constellations at work within Stoker's book – the choice of victim, blood drinking, and the impact of sexuality. The only differing element relates to the relationship between Dracula and Mina. Even though Dracula's desire for vengeance eventually comes into play, the bond between the two characters is a star-crossed romance. Coppola included this aspect to make his film more mainstream and more appealing, but it also makes Dracula less cruel. This lack of pure cruelty situates the vampire figure slightly more into the realm of the more human vampire, as has been popularized by Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles*. Even if Dracula is, to some extent, more human in the film, he still retains his terrorizing and evil outsider features. The three main traditional elements brought forward in Stoker's novel –

which eventually became the basis upon which all vampire figures are created – are well represented in Coppola’s work. The fact that the film remained faithful to the novel ensured the transmission of the narrative vampiric tradition in popular culture. In doing so, the vampire figure retained his status as an emblem of the concept of tradition.

Another film which achieved similar goals is Neil Jordan’s *Interview with the Vampire*. In addition to being faithful to the original work it is based on, the movie cleverly depicts all of the traditional vampiric amalgam of elements, strengthening the link between the vampire figure and the concept of tradition in popular culture. The victim choice in the cinematographic adaptation of *Interview with the Vampire* follows in the footsteps of its literary counterpart. Lestat observes and stalks Louis mostly in social settings for a long time before making himself known. Lestat first bites Louis not for transformative purposes, but to let Louis know what is coming if he chooses to become a vampire. Indeed, Lestat gives Louis the choice to become a blood drinker: “Do you still want death or have you tasted it enough?” (Jordan, 1994) Even though giving Louis the choice seems like an act of kindness on Lestat’s part, it is rather an egotistical way for Lestat to convince Louis to give in. While he observed Louis, the vampire understood the inner workings of his prey’s personality, and figured out that Louis invited death. In doing so, Lestat knows that persuading his soon-to-be victim will be an easy task, and the observation period therefore becomes a way for Lestat to slowly start controlling Louis without his knowing. Furthermore, the narcissistic love-object choice also comes into play in this situation. As in the novel, Lestat chooses Louis because the latter is infatuated with the vampire: “You remember the vampire that I was? No one could refuse me, not even you. [...] The more you tried, the more I wanted you [...]” (Jordan, 1994). Lestat

being a very egotistical being, he desires nothing more than to create a simulacrum of his own self out of his beloved Louis. In the same vein, the fact that Louis is highly intrigued by his maker enhances Lestat's narcissistic love-object choice.

When Louis and Lestat encounter the orphan child Claudia, the little girl has lost her mother due to a plague epidemic. When Louis finds her, Claudia goes to him and asks him to help her. Even though Louis did not have the chance to observe his prey before biting her, a bond between them quickly forms through Claudia's demand. Claudia is eventually transformed into a vampire by both Lestat and Louis. Once again, this victim choice illustrates the impact of what has been characterized as perverse behaviors in vampirism. As in the novel, Claudia is a young child who is given eternal life, and since the initial vampire bite is deeply correlated to rape, Claudia's transformation is a representation of pedophilia. The same idea applies to Armand in the film. He settled with his coven under the *Théâtre des Vampires*, always keeping a boy at his side to feed on as he pleases. In Armand's case, the link between vampirism and pedophilia is a reproduction of a specific circle of tradition, as was demonstrated in *The Vampire Lestat*. Marius, Armand's maker, transformed him when the victim was a young boy. Following the footsteps of his idolized sire, Armand also gives in to biting children in order to carry on Marius' ways – even though making children into vampires is deemed a serious crime which vampires should never commit. The victim choice in the film adaptation of *Interview with the Vampire* is therefore really faithful to the narrative events which occur in Anne Rice's work. The most interesting elements to analyze visually, however, relate to the correlation between blood drinking and sexuality.

After Lestat observes Louis in social settings for a given period of time, he bites him for the first time, asking his soon-to-be protégé if he really wants to die. After the vampire penetrates Louis' neck with his fangs, they both fly into the air while Lestat feeds. The vampires' ability to fly is first revealed in the literary version of *Queen of the Damned* – the Queen Akasha teaches Lestat how to do it. The addition of it in the filmic adaptation of an earlier novel of the *Chronicles* makes it more visually surprising, but it more importantly illustrates the whole power and impact of blood drinking for vampires. As was mentioned before, drinking blood is the ultimate experience for vampires. Since they are stuck in an undead state for eternity, feeding on human beings is what brings them closest to being involved in human pleasures and desires. Drinking blood is the greatest experience for vampires because it transcends all earthbound pleasures. Showing Lestat and Louis flying up into the sky when the former bites the latter for the first time is a way of representing the transcendence provided by blood. In addition, it can also be an illustration of the intimate event of making love and finally being satisfied after orgasm has been attained. In an idiomatic way, orgasms are often described as sending someone to seventh heaven. The satisfaction of sexual drives is one of the most human sought-after feelings, and it is the reason why it is compared to going to heaven. Since blood drinking holds the same effect as human orgasms for vampires, making Lestat and Louis fly while the vampire drinks is an interesting literal and figurative representation of sexual desire satisfaction. The issue with desire satisfaction is that it can never be completely fulfilled. The quest for it is constant in the same way blood drinking is for vampires. This is finely illustrated in Neil Jordan's film when Claudia's vampiric transformation has been completed. After being drained of her blood by Louis, Lestat feeds her his blood to make her a creature of the night. Claudia says to her two fathers "I want more!" (Jordan, 1994) after

having her first taste of the human life fluid. The fact that she wants to drink it directly after tasting hints at the neverending, never fulfilled satisfaction of desires, sexual or otherwise.

The sexual connotations of blood drinking and their link to the concept of tradition are explored when Lestat transforms Louis into a vampire. However, before drinking his protégé's blood and proceeding to the blood exchange, Lestat makes sure that Louis will follow him:

“ ‘I’ve drained you to the point of death. If I leave you here, you’ll die. Or you can be young always, my friend, as we are now. But you must tell me, will you come or no?’ ‘Yes, yes’ ” (Jordan, 1994). By ensuring the fact that Louis will follow him, Lestat not only reinforces his power and control over his soon-to-be newborn, but he also ensures that Louis is willing and worthy to receive the vampiric knowledge and tradition. Once Louis gives an affirmative answer, Lestat slashes his own wrist and lets his prey feed on him. When Louis tastes the blood, he and his maker both moan while the drinking occurs. The fact that they moan illustrates the strong sexual inclination of the vampiric transformative process. Furthermore, this scene in the film emphasizes the bond which will further develop between Louis and Lestat. The sound of their heartbeats in unison can be heard until Lestat backs away from his prey to let the transformation run its course. The simultaneous heartbeat sounds are a way to demonstrate the entire scope of the master-newborn relationship. Louis and Lestat become one physically, sexually, and mentally during the mutual blood exchange. A strong relationship between the master-vampire and his new protégé is of capital importance because it is what will ensure that the teaching process and the transmission of vampiric tradition actually occur.

The first step towards the transmission of vampiric tradition and the intrinsic features of a creature of the night happens when the vampire and the soon-to-be newborn share blood. Therefore, the training process usually begins seconds after the transformation has been completed. In Neil Jordan's film, one of the first things Lestat tells Louis after the latter has become a vampire is to "look with his vampire eyes" (Jordan, 1994). The innate characteristics of blood drinkers completely change a human being. They get trapped in a state of "undeadness" – being neither dead nor alive – while also having to adjust to being a creature of the night who will eternally crave blood. All these modifications require a period of adjustment, and it can be so overwhelming that the newborn vampire needs to be taught how to deal with his/her new "life". In Louis' and Lestat's case, however, Lestat only teaches his fledgling the basics of vampirism. Lestat is egotistical, but more importantly, he reproduces the pattern of tradition he was taught by his own maker. As was told in the novel form of *The Vampire Lestat*, Lestat lost Magnus minutes after the former became a vampire. Through his self-taught upbringing, Lestat comes to believe that Magnus only reproduced his own cycle of tradition. Wanting to stay in the same circle of tradition, Lestat acts in the same way with his protégés – Louis and Claudia if only the film is taken into consideration – and forces them to become autodidacts. When Louis asks Lestat to teach him more about the origins of vampires and about his own sire, Lestat gets angry: " 'Tell me about him. You must've learned something from him.' 'I learned absolutely nothing. I wasn't given a choice, remember?' 'But you must know something about the meaning of it all.' 'Why? Why should I know these things? Do you know them?' " (Jordan, 1994) Lestat is angry not because Louis asks him to be a better teacher, but because, by asking such a thing, Louis wants to start a new tradition cycle.

Since Lestat refuses to teach Claudia and Louis, the two lovers leave for Europe in order to find other vampires.

The longing to belong to a family or a community is a way for vampires to deal with the loneliness of living forever. Also, through the transformative vampiric bite and the subsequent training process, the strong bond between the maker and his newborn is formed. In order to ensure that this relationship carries on through time, the two blood drinkers eventually develop a parent-child relationship. However, since vampires are perverse beings, the link eventually becomes incestuous – Dracula and his three brides, Louis and Lestat, Louis and Claudia, Lestat and his own mother, Gabrielle, to name only a few. Therefore, the bonds become ambiguous and redefine the purpose of a familial or communal unit.

In the case of the film adaptation of *Interview with the Vampire*, the screenplay clearly illustrates the desire for vampires to be around others of their kind because they become lonely after roaming the world alone for centuries. One example of this is Armand's creation of a vampire coven which settled underground of the leader's vampire theater. Covens are a way for blood drinkers to exchange with other vampires, and also to be guided by the coven chief. Moreover, Louis, in both the novel and the film, acknowledges the fact that Lestat transformed Claudia to satisfy his desire of having a "child", but also in order to feel less lonely: "Perhaps, in the end, he did it because he was lonely too" (Jordan, 1994). Lestat being extremely egotistical, however, he turned Claudia into a vampire to – as in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* – make her into a simulacrum of his own self. Louis tells the reporter: "To me, she was a child,

but to Lestat, a pupil, an infant prodigy with a lust for killing that matched his own” (Jordan, 1994). By educating Claudia as he sees fit, Lestat is able to mold her into a truthful copy of his own self. Lestat is thus the parent and Claudia the daughter. The idea that Lestat trains Claudia as a parent would educate his/her child is subtly shown in the film. Not so long after Claudia’s vampiric transformation, Lestat roams the streets with her, looking for their next victims. Once Lestat has taught Claudia the basics of killing human beings in order to drink their blood, she kills her first victim by herself. While the action unfolds, Lestat lurks in the shadows, closely observing his daughter. Once Claudia has satiated her thirst, Lestat smiles like a parent proud of his/her child. The relationship between Claudia and Lestat remains strictly parental, whereas the bond between Louis and Claudia evolves into a perverse one.

Claudia perceives Louis as both her father and her lover. This dual view of their relationship includes both incest – sexual relations between vampire parent and child occur – as well as pedophilia – Claudia is a woman forever trapped in a young girl’s body. Both of these ideas are hinted at in Neil Jordan’s film. Once Louis transforms a woman into a vampire to fulfill Claudia’s wishes, Claudia joins Louis on the balcony, and he remarks: “ ‘It’s only mortal death. Bear me no ill will, my love. We are now even.’ ’What do you mean?’ ’What died in that room was not that woman. What has died is the last breath in me that was human.’ ‘Yes, Father. At last we are even’ ” (Jordan, 1994). Louis and Claudia share a strong parental bond, even though Claudia forced Louis to do something of which he did not approve. The dual feelings Louis has towards Claudia is also reminiscent of the feelings of love and hate brought forward by the strong hold of control. The most important visual moment of this scene occurs

after that last line of dialogue, when Claudia kisses Louis on the lips. This single scene illustrates the perverse duality present in the relationship between the master-vampire and his fledgling. Louis and Claudia feel trapped in their parental bond – the former being the parent and the latter being the child – while also wanting to give in to their emotional and sexual urges, as Claudia’s kiss on Louis’ lips suggests. Therefore, the bonds between makers and newborns in Anne Rice’s *Chronicles* challenge normality by being perverse, while also erasing conventional authority and gender boundaries. The desire to belong to a family or a community, however, is important because it helps vampires feel less alone, but especially because it is what pushes them to want to know more about their vampiric origins.

After Claudia’s plan to kill Lestat has succeeded – or so she believes – she and Louis travel to Paris in order to find other vampires. Louis, talking about Claudia, says that “she studied the myths and legends of the Old World obsessed with the search of what she called ‘our kind’” (Jordan, 1994). The association between the concept of tradition and the search for vampiric origins is relevant here because without the transmission of these myths and legends, Claudia could not acquire basic knowledge of their origins prior to their trip to Europe. The most important relationship between yearning to know more about one’s origins and vampirism is the counterparts’ undeniable link to lust and sexuality. Much like blood drinking, the desire to attain a new degree of knowledge is extremely erotic in Anne Rice’s universe. As was mentioned before, Marius’ fetish surrounding Lestat was based on the latter’s thirst for knowledge. Since fetishism and lustful feelings are closely intertwined, the link between the desire for knowledge and sexuality is also relevant. In the film – and in the novel – Armand is

fascinated by Louis and his strong stamina. In their last scene together in the film, they exchange the following words:

‘Then, I [Louis] leave too.’ ‘So soon? Without any of those answers you so longed for?’ ‘You said there are none.’ ‘But you asked the wrong questions. Do you know how few vampires have the stamina for immortality? How quickly they perish of their own will. The world changes. We do not. Therein lies the irony that finally kills us. I need you to make contact with this age.’ ‘Me? Don’t you see? I’m not the spirit of any age. I’m at odds with everything. I always have been.’ ‘That is the very spirit of your age. The heart of it. Your fall from grace has been the fall of a century. They [the vampires in the theater] can’t reflect anything, but you do. You reflect its broken heart. [...] An immortal with a mortal’s passion. You are beautiful, my friend. Lestat must have wept when he made you.’ (Jordan, 1994)

Armand is attracted to Louis because he dares to ask questions and tries to understand who he is. Therefore, the thirst for knowledge, beauty, and sexual desire are all intertwined. Once again, this shows that the vampire figure is undeniably emblematic of the concept of tradition. Furthermore, the importance of being a vampire of his age – of the current zeitgeist – also demonstrates that tradition and vampirism go hand in hand. Indeed, since the vampire figure is so malleable, it is able to represent many different time periods, while adapting itself to them. Therefore, the figure of the blood drinker is the perfect emblem of the concept, and it is the main reason why it is still anchored into the collective consciousness, even today. The dialogue between Louis and Armand represents all these aspects, and the fact that it is shown in a film also gives the vampire figure access to popular culture via this specific medium.

Neil Jordan's cinematographic adaptation of Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* cements the statement brought forward in this thesis. All five traditional constellations of elements are well represented throughout the film. In representing these elements, it propelled the vampire figure even more strongly in modern popular culture. This idea is also strengthened by the casting choice of Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt. The figure of the blood drinker therefore can be separated neither from the concept of tradition nor from that of collective psyches. The same cannot be said about Michael Rymer's filmic adaptation of *Queen of the Damned*, however. Indeed, the film named after the third novel in Rice's *Chronicles* was not only loosely based on the book, but the author herself did not approve of it. Anne Rice refused to be involved in any part of the creation of the film because the studio did not respect her work. (Rice, *Opinion of the Movie*) The film based on *Queen of the Damned* simply took the names of the characters and some minor and unimportant parts of the plot in order to write the screenplay. Only a few basic elements of the five traditional constellations are illustrated throughout the film.

The choice of the victim is demonstrated quickly in the film. Magnus' transformation of Lestat and his subsequent suicide are not shown. Instead, Marius is Lestat's only maker and teacher. The quest to find Marius is therefore completely abandoned. Also, the film does not illustrate the observation of the prey by the vampire. Lestat just finds himself in Marius' castle, on the verge of death. Marius forces the vampiric bite upon Lestat, making it look like a rape scene. The maker also states that he has chosen Lestat. The selection of the victim is therefore present. Once the initial bite has occurred, Lestat surrenders himself to Marius and embraces his vampire countenance. The impact of control from the master-vampire towards his pupil is

also briefly explored in the movie. Once Lestat has drunk the blood of the Queen, Marius is furious and says: “ ‘You’ve drunk the purest blood in the oldest of things.’ ’Her blood is like liquid fire.’ ‘She’s my mother. She’s your mother. Akasha.’ [...] ‘She chose me!’ ‘I chose you!’ ” (Rymer, 2002) Marius is angry because – as in *Dracula* – he wants to be the only one to have such an impact on his pupil. He wants to create a simulacrum of his own self through Lestat, and that signifies that no other vampire is allowed to claim his victim.

The only noteworthy elements relating to blood drinking is the correlation between tasting the blood and sexuality. In a scene which does not occur in the novel, Lestat and Akasha bathe together, while biting each other. The visual and auditory effects demonstrate highly sexual behaviors. They both moan and the visual effects are reminiscent of ecstasy-inducing behaviors. Therefore, sex and blood drinking are intertwined in the cinematographic adaptation, but only on the surface. The importance of blood drinking and the subsequent relationship between the master-vampire and his newborn are also shown when Marius bites Lestat in order to transform him: “You’ve been brave enough for one night, my son. Drink... and learn” (Rymer, 2002). The ultimate link between the transformative blood exchange and the transmission of vampiric intrinsic features and tradition is demonstrated in the film through the correlation between the verbs “drink” and “learn”. They form one single entity and therefore cannot be separated.

Moreover, part of the training process is brought forward in Rymer’s adaptation. Marius teaches Lestat the basics of vampirism and of blood drinking. He states to his pupil that in

human blood lies the victims' lives, knowledge, and complexity (Rymer, 2002). The need to drink human blood is therefore linked to the vampires' yearning to feel more and more alive, regardless of their undead countenance – which is, ultimately, the evil spirit Amel's most precious wish. Also, Marius' fetish regarding Lestat and his grand thirst for vampiric knowledge is also briefly demonstrated in the film: "I impressed my maker with my thirst for things. He set out to educate me in the unknown, taught me all about the world, its hidden history, and about myself" (Rymer, 2002). The importance of the training process and its link to tradition is thus illustrated through Marius' fetish. By teaching Lestat about the world and its hidden history, the master-vampire secures his control over his pupil, and transmits the elements of the vampiric tradition which he deems important to teach. In doing so, Marius changes the malleable elements of the tradition, thus making sure that it will not cease to exist. Unfortunately, no other aspects of the training process are shown in the film. Once again, the adaptation only alludes to some elements in a superficial manner.

The desire to belong to a family or community is also briefly touched upon. Lestat, after sleeping in the earth for a century, wakes up because he is lonely. Akasha follows this idea when she says to Lestat that the reason she kept him alive was to fulfill his wish of having a companion with whom to share eternity (Rymer, 2002). The need to share and mingle with other blood drinkers is brought forward in the movie, but the parental aspects are utterly forgotten. Indeed, Maharet's life and family story are barely talked about. The film does mention Maharet's Great Family, but its entire power is not explained. It only serves as a plot device in order to defeat the Queen. The twins' story and the importance of the entire tradition

of the vampires are completely erased. In doing so, the cinematographic adaptation strips away the vampiric origins, as well as the underlying force of Amel in the making of blood drinkers.

The filmic adaptation of *Queen of the Damned* does not faithfully represent the great complexity of the novel. Like recent vampire narratives – *Twilight*, *The Vampire Diaries*, etc. – the vampire figure in Rymer’s movie was used only because of its cultural popularity. However, despite this superficial adaptation, bringing blood drinkers to the big screen ensured that the vampire figure remains current and relevant in the collective consciousness. In order for traditions to be transmitted through time, they must stay present despite the changes they might go through. Filmic vampire narratives serve that precise purpose. The impact of film on popular culture is enormous, and without it, the vampire might well have been forgotten over time. Therefore, both literature and cinema are undeniably important in order to ensure the transmission of the vampire figure – and its correlation to the concept of tradition – through time.

Conclusion

Vampiric Immortality and the Everlasting Transmission of Traditions

As was argued throughout this thesis, the vampire figure is the most potent narrative emblem of tradition. Figuration, transmission, and tradition are all intertwined within the vampire. Tradition – the transmission of knowledge through time – needs vehicles through which said transmission can occur. The vampire is the perfect representative figure of the concept of tradition because the blood drinker is extremely malleable, going from the horror-inducing villain from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* to *Twilight*'s charming, sparkling “vampire” – while also remaining static at its core – that seduces human victims in order to drink their blood. The vampire figure articulates itself in the same way as the concept of tradition. A given tradition needs a static core in order to be able to persist through time, but it also requires a certain flexibility to ensure that the tradition will stay culturally relevant. The narrative vampire, being an immortal being – only in a narrative fashion; it does not describe an existing being – has to be able to move swiftly through time, while remaining strong at its core in order to remain present in the collective consciousness. Figures are the perfect vessels through which the concept of tradition can be explicated because figures are not traditions, but they can only be preserved as traditions (Shills 90). The vampire figure is the perfect emblem of tradition because it possesses its own narrative tradition – from Stoker to modern narratives as well as its own history through this array of vampire narratives.

Yet the figure itself, which, through the choice of a disciple in the exchange of blood, entails a transmission of knowledge, practices, and education; in this sense, it embodies at its core the modalities of tradition. The vampiric transformation not only changes a human being into a

vampire, but it more importantly transmits intrinsic features, and the whole of the vampiric tradition into – literally and figuratively – the soon-to-be newborn blood drinker. This blood exchange is the literal reception of new traditions by both the master-vampire and his fledgling. Blood drinking is the ultimate core of the vampire figure, and it is the most valuable aspect linking the bloodsucker to the concept of tradition because traditions could not exist if no transmission occurred. The five recurring traditional constellations also play an important role in strengthening the vampire as the most potent narrative figure to represent the concept of tradition. Indeed, the victim choice, the vampiric bite and subsequent blood exchange – and its undeniable link with sexuality – the training process, the desire to belong in a family or a community, and the quest to know more about one’s origins all put the vampire at the forefront as the most dynamic narrative vehicle of the concept of tradition. These recurring amalgams of elements appear in varying degrees in various narratives. However, in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, two of them cemented the core of the vampire figure. The selection of the victim and the link between sexuality and blood drinking became the most classic – the most traditional – constellations precisely because Stoker’s novel pushed the vampire forward and more strongly in the collective imagination. This static core also shaped the narrative vampire into a perverse being.

Perversion – going against societal hegemony performing and exemplifying “deviant” sexual behaviors – and vampirism go hand in hand because the vampire figure is a combination of narcissism, sadism, feelings of love and hate, control, and fetishism. The narcissistic love-object choice is relevant to the selection of the victim by the master-vampire. The vampire strives to make a simulacrum of his own self through his chosen prey. Since vampires –

especially in *Dracula* – do not differentiate their own selves from other beings, they only want to reproduce what they know and who they are. In order for this simulacrum transformation to be completed, the master-vampire must utterly dominate his selected victim and this goal can be attained through sadistic and controlling behaviors.

As Freud postulated, sadism is the mix between violence and power. These two elements can be most strongly seen in the vampire bite and the following blood exchange. The bite is a narrative representation of rape. The pointy fangs penetrating the unwilling victim's flesh is clearly reminiscent of sexual assault. Both sadistic violence and power are present during this act, since the master-vampire must be both violent and powerful in order to attain his ultimate satisfaction of drinking human blood. This satisfaction, however, cannot be reached when the blood is drunk for transformative purposes. Indeed, the vampire must restrain himself from completely draining his chosen victim if the vampire wishes to make him/her her become a bloodsucking creature. This restraint blossoms into deep feelings of love and hate. Since the vampire chose his soon-to-be newborn to be his and only his, the vampire loves his new fledgling. These feelings of love can also be seen in that selected victims are deemed worthy of receiving the vampiric traditions, and their intrinsic features. The vampire maker therefore strongly loves his protégé, while also hating him/her because the master-vampire could not attain the climax of completely draining his victim. These feelings of love and hate are also shared by the newly transformed victim. The violence of the initial vampiric bite undoubtedly provokes the victim to strongly hate the vampire who is trying to attack him/her. Once the first drops of blood have been ingested by the vampire, however, the prey surrenders himself/herself to the bloodsucking creature. Since choosing a human being for a vampiric

transformation is a great act of love bestowed by the vampire upon the victim, all of these feelings are also injected into this brutal initial bite. The victim therefore surrenders himself/herself to the master-vampire, who will become his/her sole point of reference in this new “life”. However, feelings of love and hate are not the only agents of this complete abandonment. Indeed, the vampire starts controlling his victim as soon as he lays eyes on him/her.

Both control and fetishism are at work when the vampire selects his prey. Control, as was described by Paul Denis and Roger Dorey, articulates itself in three steps. The appropriation of the other through the act of dispossession is crucial in order to ensure that the chosen victim will be a faithful simulacrum of the master-vampire. By stripping the prey of his/her identity, the blood drinker makes sure he has a completely blank canvas to shape to his liking. The same idea applies to the domination phase. In order to make the victim into a copy of his own self, the vampire must utterly dominate him/her. Finally, the appropriation and domination steps cannot be fully acknowledged by both the master-vampire and his soon-to-be fledgling until a mark has been put upon the prey. Since the bloodsucker is the dominant party, he marks his victim first, injecting him/her with vampiric intrinsic characteristics, the vampiric tradition, and with feelings of love. The dying victim must then bite the vampire to drink his blood in order to complete the transformation, but more importantly to surrender himself/herself to the subsequent teachings of his/her maker.

Fetishism also plays a role in the victim selection and the following transformation ritual. The prey is often chosen for specific features – physical and/or mental – and these characteristics

will become an obsession for the vampire. By being so infatuated with his chosen human being, the blood drinker wishes to gain or reproduce one or several aspects of his own self through the selected other. Fetishism and the narcissistic love-object choice are therefore intertwined where vampirism is concerned. All these elements come into play in Bram Stoker's classic novel, *Dracula*. The Count has chosen Jonathan Harker to be his and only his. Dracula thus attempts to strip Harker of his identity by keeping him prisoner in his castle. When his three vampire brides try to bite Jonathan, Dracula gets furious and states that no one but himself is allowed to touch Harker and to feed off him. By saying this, the vampire controls, exudes sadistic and fetishist behaviors, and displays narcissism in his love-object choice. The same idea applies to his three wives who must remain passive. Any victim selection in *Dracula* is therefore made so that Dracula can create simulacra of his own self through these chosen human beings.

The relation between the vampiric bite and sexuality is important in Stoker's work because the 19th-century Victorian Era perceived sexual acts as being taboo. The narrative vampire figure thus became the vehicle through which readers could live their repressed desires. In addition, drinking the chosen victim's blood gives Dracula the ultimate insight into both his prey's mind and body. In doing so, the vampire can utterly control his prey and make him/her into a copy of himself, as was illustrated through the character of Lucy. Rape imagery is also present, as was shown in the biting scene between the Count and Mina where the bitten woman feels dirty, as often occurs post-rape. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is the most traditional vampire narrative because it cemented the two recurring constellations which return in any subsequent vampire narratives. The victim selection and the link between sexuality and the vampiric bite

and blood exchange are the elements which make vampires what they are. These two aspects are also of high importance in Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles* because they dictate the relationship between the master-vampire and his pupil, which leads to the training process, and the desire to belong in a family or a community, while searching for one's origins.

Anne Rice turned the vampire figure 180 degrees when the first installment of her *Vampire Chronicles – Interview with the Vampire* – was published. For the first time, readers get access to the vampires' psyches. They are not mere villains anymore, but they instead become the main characters through which the stories are told. Rice also follows a more modern path than Stoker by making gender barriers disappear. Heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, incest, pedophilia, and the reversal of parental authority are all explored in the *Chronicles*. The vampire figure therefore slowly becomes an agent of its time, once again strengthening the fact that it is the most potent narrative emblem of tradition.

The victim choice in Anne Rice's works follows the same pattern as the one explained in *Dracula*. All the vampires – Lestat, Louis, Magnus, Marius, Armand, just to name a few – who transform a human being into a vampire use, to different degrees, the aforementioned concepts of narcissistic love-object choice, sadism, control, feelings of love and hate, and fetishism. Rice added the component of the vampire characters wanting to share their entire beings with humans. For instance, Lestat is furious that people will never be able to know who he truly is. This feeling of hate pushes the victim selection and the subsequent blood drinking to become, in this case, a selfish act. The act of ingesting blood brings the victims in an ephemeral state of “undeadness”. The vampires can therefore share – for a split second – who

they truly are before ending their prey's lives. The victim selection in Anne Rice's universe is very selfish and personal. The same idea applies to the vampiric bite and the transformative blood exchange.

The vampiric bite in the *Chronicles* is, first and foremost, representative of rape imagery. After the initial assault, however, the soon-to-be vampire surrenders himself to his maker. The bond which will ensue is of capital importance, especially concerning the training process. The transformative blood exchange not only turns a selected victim into a vampire, but it more importantly cements the relationship between the master-vampire and his pupil because they have lived the ultimate experience of drinking blood together. Blood – in Anne Rice's novels – is the most intimate fluid there is. It encompasses someone's complete being, and, in the case of vampires, it is the vehicle through which both vampiric intrinsic features and traditions are transmitted. Drinking blood is therefore the most precious experience for vampires. The mutual sharing between the vampire and his newborn is the starting point of their entire relationship, and the climax of this strong bond will occur during the training process.

The educative process in the *Vampire Chronicles* is present to ensure that the transmission of vampiric traditions is stable. In Lestat's case, he has to become a self-learner after Magnus' suicide. This event is important because it changes the whole line of tradition for all vampires. Indeed, by being forced to become an autodidact, Lestat changes secondary features of the tradition. Traditions, in order to persist through time, must remain static at their cores, but secondary elements must change to make sure that the traditions remain culturally and socially relevant. Lestat's self-teaching ways serve that precise purpose, once again strengthening the

relevance of the vampire figure as an emblem of tradition. In order for traditions to be transmitted, however, people must share and talk about these traditions. This is why the desire to belong to a family or community is so important to Rice's vampires.

Belonging to a family or a community ensures the effective transmission of vampiric traditions through the centuries, but it also sheds light on the uncommon familial or communal units in the *Chronicles*. Incest and pedophilia are both explored, blurring gender barriers, while also touching upon more modern problems. In doing so, Rice asks questions about the human race, pushing the vampire figure forward as being culturally and socially important. The ultimate goal of the transmission of traditions is to retain their main traditional cores, while also being able to move swiftly through the ages. However, the static core of a given tradition must be thoroughly understood in order for its transmission to occur. Knowing about one's origins thus becomes the most important aspect of all, and Anne Rice cleverly built an entire vampire tradition in her narrative universe. Not only does this completely reinforce the impact of the vampire figure as being representative of the concept of tradition, but it also makes the concept itself culturally significant, even years after the first publication of the *Vampire Chronicles*. In the same way, the arrival of the vampire figure in films pushed the blood drinking creature to an utterly different level. The cinematographic vampire made itself even more present in collective psyches. Figures, in order to remain, must become a part of culture through time. It is only by following the zeitgeist of a given period of time that the narrative vampire retains his place as a cultural narrative figure.

Beyond this fact, the narrative vampire can also provide an understanding of human existence as a whole. As was hinted at in Anne Rice's *Queen of the Damned*, the creation of vampirism is utterly accidental in this specific universe. Amel, an evil spirit who wants to feel alive, infiltrates the bodies of the Queen and King of Kemet who were stabbed by revolting servants. Amel, who also revels in tasting human blood, revels in the fact that he is able to enter two human bodies. However, spirits are neither dead nor alive, and Amel can only reproduce this state of "undeadness" through the vampiric bite. Vampirism therefore becomes Amel's quest to understand humanity for what it really is. Anne Rice thus raises questions pertaining to the relevance of the human body, of what being corporeal encompasses. Also, the story of the Queen and the King is the original tradition upon which the five recurring traditional constellations were placed. Thus, various levels and degrees of tradition are explored in the series. Finally, Rice's *Chronicles* questions the real meaning of the human existence. After all, the narrative vampire figure has been around for centuries, and it has been as such because it shapes itself to the human beings who keep it alive in their imaginations. Traditions are timeless, and so is the vampire, and it is the main reason why the vampire will always leave the marks of his two sharp fangs upon people's imagination.

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