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***DESMODUS DRACULAE:
THE VAMPIRE TRAVELER IN INTERVIEW WITH THE
VAMPIRE AND ONLY LOVERS LEFT ALIVE***

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THE VAMPIRE TRAVELER IN INTERVIEW WITH THE
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I dedicate this dissertation to Kalani.

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“My friend. Welcome to the Carpathians. I am anxiously expecting you.

At the Borgo Pass, my carriage will await you and bring you to me. I trust your journey from London has been a happy one and that you will enjoy your stay in my beautiful land.”

Your friend, D.

(Letter from Count Dracula to Jonathan Harker)

ABSTRACT

The realm of the vampire had significantly increased since Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), the most influential novel in the genre to this day. Nevertheless, since John William Polidori's short story *The Vampyre*, the act of traveling has been a continuous element in these narratives. Lord Ruthven and Count Dracula's successors not only transcended Transylvania boundaries reaching other continents, but they also expanded the literary domain to a multimedia level, which include films. The present research consists of an investigation of the vampire traveler in the films *Interview with the Vampire* (1994) directed by Neil Jordan and adapted from Anne Rice's homonymous novel, and *Only Lovers Left Alive* directed and written by Jim Jarmusch (2013) focusing the analysis on the characters Louis and Adam and their displacement from Old World/New World, vice-versa through a historical, cultural and political perspective. In order to conduct such analysis, the research draws on the works of Carol Senf, Stephen Arata, Edward Said, Sérgio Bellei, Nina Auerbach and the Marxist perspectives in Franco Moretti and Burton Hatlen. The specific objective of this investigation is to analyze not only the physical displacement, but also the ways that the sense of displacement appears as a consequence of traveling in these narratives. The films and the representation of its respective vampires as transhistorical agents can be understood as a critique of its own period.

Keywords: Vampires. *Interview with the Vampire*. *Only Lovers Left Alive*

RESUMO

Os domínios do vampiro vêm apresentando uma ampliação significativa desde o lançamento de *Dracula* (1897) de Bram Stoker, o romance mais influente do gênero até os dias atuais. Porém, o ato da viagem tem sido um elemento contínuo nestas narrativas desde o conto embrionário *O Vampiro* (1819) de John William Polidori. Os sucessores de Lord Ruthven e Count Dracula não somente ultrapassaram as fronteiras européias, chegando em outros continentes, mas também expandiram o domínio literário para um nível multimídia, fato este que inclui filmes. A presente pesquisa consiste em investigar o vampiro viajante nos filmes *Entrevista com o Vampiro* (1994) dirigido por Neil Jordan e baseado no romance homônimo de Anne Rice e *Amantes Eternos* (2013) dirigido e escrito por Jim Jarmusch, focando no deslocamento Velho Mundo/Novo Mundo, e vice versa, através de uma perspectiva social, política e histórica. O objetivo específico reside em verificar de que maneira o senso de deslocamento aparece como consequência da viagem nestes filmes. Para conduzir a análise, a dissertação utiliza questões do vampiro viajante e de viagem trabalhadas por Carol Senf, Stephen Arata, Edward Said, Sérgio Bellei, Nina Auerbach and e os olhares Marxistas de Franco Moretti e Burton Hatlen. *Entrevista com o Vampiro* e *Amantes Eternos* mostram a representação do vampiro como agente transhistórico podendo ser entendido como uma crítica ao seu próprio tempohis experiences and his life story. This research presents an investigation of the ways that Jon Furberg retells the wanderer tale of the Anglo-Saxon poem from the perspective of a Canadian myth of displacement and exile. To do this, the study uses a comparative approach to the ideas and themes presented in the medieval poem *The Wanderer* and in *Anhaga* in order to investigate historical, political and cultural issues involved in the representation of the myth of the Canadian Wanderer. The analysis shows how Furberg's Wanderer represents the inheritance of the country contained not only in language, but also in common themes and in the identities created through experiences of displacement and exile, thus deconstructing an old national view of English-Canada as a country that lacks any meaningful mythology of its own.

Palavras-chave: Vampiros. Viagem. *Entrevista com o Vampiro*. Amantes Eternos.

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INTRODUCTION

The title of the present study refers to the scientific name *Desmodus Draculae*, a species of giant, blood-feeding bat, now believed to be extinct. While *Desmodus* is a subdivision of the bat family meaning vampire bats, *Draculae* pays homage to Bram Stoker's Gothic novel protagonist, Count Dracula.

I have chosen to name this thesis *Desmodus Draculae* due to the perceptible disappearance of the cruel, grotesque, and inhumane vampire who was eventually replaced by a more sympathetic, human-like blood drinker. The characters Louis de Pointe du Lac in *Interview with the Vampire* (1994) and Adam in *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2013) are representatives of this new generation of vampires. Despite all the changes over the years, two elements remained untouched among vampire narratives: immortality. As a consequence of immortality, these mythical figures are capable to migrate between different locations and periods in history. The investigation of these processes of displacement – across countries, continents and even across media – constitutes the general objective of the present thesis, emphasized by the representation of the vampire character as a traveler in films. Additionally, these characters are vampires who, at some point of their eternal life, start to question the purpose and meaning of their existence and, therefore, engaging in multiple dilemmas.

There are many references to the acts of traveling in vampire narratives. For example, in the first chapter of the novel *Dracula* (1897) written by Bram Stoker, a novel that according to J. Gordon Melton, “set the image of the vampire in popular culture of the twentieth century” (201) and that has never been out of print since its first publication, the sentence “for the dead travel fast”, - a line taken from the German ballad *Lenore* (1773), by Gottfried August Bürger and translated by Stoker – is whispered on the arrival of the carriage sent to take Jonathan Harker to Dracula's castle and it can be seen as a motto for the subject matter of this thesis.

Over the course of time, Count Dracula's successors underwent a series of transformations and adaptations. The matters of extinction, sense of displacement and eternal life also operate here on broader levels. First, on the historical-cultural level in connection with the questions of form and moral attached to figure of the vampire and its meaning according to the time period in which the character is inserted

in, and second, on the cross-platform level in relation to the many transformations generated by the adaptations from page to screen, which includes, but it is not limited to, the vampire migrating from the Gothic-horror genre into other narrative genres.

In the change from one medium to the other, it is of foremost importance the transcoding process from novel to cinema, a domain in which the vampire has been commonly associated with since F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922), a film adapted from the novel *Dracula* (see Chapter 2). David J. Skal states that "*Dracula* didn't begin in Hollywood, but it traveled there with an inexorable momentum" (4). As a matter of fact, with the development of film techniques, cinema became the perfect place of residence for vampires around the world, capturing the vampire lore and disseminating its enchantment for bigger audiences. Moreover, the introduction of sound in films in 1926 contributed to intensify the character's already powerful image.

As for the historical and cultural transformations, especially towards the end of the twentieth century, vampires were gradually being undressed of their fearsome aspect into a charming, and sometimes even funny, undead creature. Nevertheless, the changes concerning physical traits were not the only relevant transformation observed in the vampire narrative. Another significant aspect is related to the vampire character as a traveler and the possible meanings attached to it, thus in the following paragraphs I will establish some of the issues underlying my investigation about the films *Interview with the Vampire* and *Only Lovers Left Alive*.

Adapted from Anne Rice's homonymous Gothic novel, first published in 1976, the film *Interview with the Vampire*, directed by Neil Jordan¹, tells the story of Louis de Pointe du Lac (Brad Pitt) and the events surrounding his transformation into a vampire by Lestat (Tom Cruise). In the second object of this study, *Only Lovers Left Alive*, directed and written by Jim Jarmusch², the narrative deals with the relationship between a vampire couple: Adam (Tom Hiddleston), a professional musician who collects antique musical instruments and Eve (Tilda Swinton), a book lover. These two films maintain intact certain conventional codes from the previous narratives, for example, the non-

¹Neil Jordan is an Irish director and screenwriter, known worldwide for films such *Interview with the Vampire* (1994) and *Byzantium* (2012).

²Jim Jarmusch is an American independent filmmaker and screenwriter having directed twelve films. Among his titles are *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2012), *Dead Man* (1995) and *Broken Flowers* (2005). The most recent entitled *Paterson* was release in 2016.

reflection in mirrors and the vulnerability to sunlight, fangs, pale complexion, feed on blood, and other characteristics, but they also bring their own innovations to the vampire character. On *Reading the Vampire*, Ken Gelder comments that

Each new vampire film engages in a process of familiarisation and defamiliarisation, both interpellating viewers who already ‘know’ about vampires from the movies (and elsewhere), and providing enough points of difference (in the narrative, in the ‘look’ of the vampire, and so on) for newness to maintain itself. (86)

This process of updating characteristics is essentially a “vampire palimpsest” in order to preserve a collective memory. In other words, the tendency for non-stasis and narrative innovation in relation to tradition also contributed to produce a major change on vampire’s traditional traveling itinerary. In these films, the boundaries of the Old World³ were crossed and the vampires are not limited anymore to the route Transylvania – London. Therefore, this study seeks to understand what possible reasons the vampire character had to leave Europe and occupy the New World.

In *Interview with the Vampire*, the narrative intercalates between three main scenarios: the city of San Francisco during the 1990s, eighteenth century colonial French Louisiana and Paris. Meanwhile, the narrative of *Only Lovers Left Alive* takes place in the cities of Detroit and Tangier.

Furthermore, my specific objective is to examine travel, not as mere physical displacement but also the sense of displacement that comes with the act of traveling. In this binary process, Louis wonders about the moral issues related to the definitive metamorphosis from human into vampire and about the dilemma of accepting his new form and the origins of the vampire species. Adam is a vampire who loves music and collects old musical instruments, his existential crisis stems from an internal struggle to accept the societal transitions of a globalized world.

³ Throughout this thesis, I will be using the terms New World and Old World focusing on a historical and geographical context to distinguish the Old World/Africa, Europe and Asia from the New World/Americas.

Regarding the significance of the present thesis, it is important to point out that the act of traveling in vampire narratives has not yet received as much critical attention as, for instance, the sexual or psychological readings on the character. Therefore, this work contributes to existing knowledge by expanding the scholarly interest about the vampire and the act of traveling. Secondly, this thesis can aggregate the relevant researches that have been carried out at Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês (PPGI) about the vampire figure. For instance, Dante Luiz de Lima's thesis *Bloody Eroticism in Interview with the Vampire from literature to the audiovisual domain* (2007) deals with the issue of homoeroticism between the male vampire characters Louis, Lestat and Armand, both in the novel *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) and in its homonymous 1994 film adaptation, the latter, one of my primary sources. There is also Livia Paschoal's thesis, entitled *Falling for lions: transformations of the vampire character in literature* (2012), in which the author investigates personality and physical aspects concerning the vampires in the novels *Dracula* (1897), *Interview with the Vampire* (1976), and *Twilight* (2005). Another PPGI thesis to be mentioned is George Ayres Mousinho's *Subversive Blood Ties: Gothic Decadence in Three Characters from Murnau's and Coppola's Renderings of Bram Stoker's Dracula* (2013), which investigates the construction of Gothic decadence in the novel *Dracula* and two of its film adaptations: Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922) and Coppola's *Dracula* (1992).

Having briefly contextualized my objectives and corpus of study in this introduction, I will proceed dealing with the theoretical basis in the following pages, thus divided in three main sections: gothic tradition and the act of traveling (1.1), an outline of the relationship between Gothic tradition and traveling during the mid-eighteenth and end of nineteenth century, followed by an overview of the vampire in literature and films (1.2 and 1.2.1). Moreover, I discuss the issues involving the representation of the mythical figure of the vampire in relation to the route Transylvania – London, present in the first narratives of the genre (1.3). I draw my critical concepts from Carol Senf's *The Vampire in Nineteenth Century English Literature* (1988) where she indicates the importance of the vampire in popular culture and draws a correlation between the vampire and the Victorian era; Stephen Arata's article *The Occidental Tourist: "Dracula" and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization* (1990) concerning a narrative of reverse colonization; I also consider Edward Said's Orientalism and the representations of the East by the West; Nina Auerbach's conception of the vampire as an embodiment of

Anglo-American history and its fears in *Our Vampires, Ourselves* (1997); also Sérgio Bellei who highlights in his book *Monstros, Índios e Canibais* (2000) the travel motif in *Dracula*; and the Marxist perspectives in Franco Moretti and Burton Hatlen articles, *The Dialectic of Fear* (1982) and *The Return of the Repressed/Opressed in Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1980) respectively.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to the analysis of the vampire in the film *Interview with the Vampire* with several examples connecting the character to the act of traveling. The chapter also deals with the many aspects of the Gothic tradition within the film narrative and Louis' melancholy and inner struggles as a result of his vampire form. Moreover, I write about the expectations and reactions of the New World vampire in relation to the Old World as well as his return home.

In chapter 3, I address the film *Only Lovers Left Alive* and the complexities of being a transhistorical vampire focusing mainly on the character of Adam who lives in Detroit in contraposition to his wife Eve, who lives in Tangier. I present the importance of maintaining certain codes from the vampire lore, especially in a film where there is no occurrence of the word vampire. In addition, the study explores the nostalgic trait in Adam's personality as a consequence of immortality. Another important discussion deals with the engagement of the twentieth first century vampire regarding enviromental issues. Furthermore, in this chapter I write about Adam and Eve's return to the Old World as a symbolic restitution of the vampire origins.

Finally in the last chapter, I conclude by readdressing important issues and main findings concerning my analysis.

1.1 The Gothic Tradition and The Act of Traveling

The word Goth is used to define a nomadic Germanic tribe whose tradition remains vague due to the scarcity of records, mainly by two reasons: the first, "the Goths left no clear written or archaeological records which may be used to pinpoint their location", and second, the tribe that was subdivided in two groups, the Ostrogoth (*Ostro-* meaning eastern) and Visigoth (*Visi-* meaning western) "seem not to have remained in one region for any lengthy period of time, being driven to migration by stimuli both internal and external" (Krause and Slocum).

The Goths, as well as the Gothic language, became extinct, but the word Gothic persisted throughout the centuries, transforming itself into a concept of style and a genre, addressing and influencing the most diverse areas until the present day. Its extensive occurrence in culture

occasioned the emergence of Gothic studies, an interdisciplinary academic field, in which one can apply to various theoretical approaches and discuss a wide range of topics through the lens of gender, post-colonialism, feminist criticism, ecocriticism and others.

The beginning of Gothic fiction is attributed to the publication of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764, subtitled as a "Gothic story". The novel establishes a number of key features related to theme (escape), setting (castle), and mood (tenebrous) for all the subsequent narratives associated to the Gothic. This excerpt of *The Castle of Otranto* can exemplify the fictional construction of such codes:

The lower part of the castle was hollowed into several intricate cloisters; and it was not easy for one under so much anxiety to find the door that opened into the cavern. An awful silence reigned throughout those subterraneous regions, except now and then some blasts of wind that shook the doors she had passed, and which, grating on the rusty hinges, were re-echoed through that long labyrinth of darkness. (Walpole 18)

The detailed indoor setting in Gothic fiction since Walpole, provided and established an atmosphere of suspense and horror in these narratives. However, Gothic fiction also relied on the outdoor to support the horror/mystery mood and tone. By outdoor I mean not only the picturesque descriptions of landscapes, but also the physical movement related to the act of traveling. Enrique Ajuria Ibarra notes that "Gothic fiction's relationship with travel narrative permits a full development of the horrifying and the uncanny within the landscape of the foreign and previously unexplored land" (124). The idea of venturing into the unknown is usually surrounded by superstitions and fear of the still not mapped places. In the first Gothic fiction works, most of these travels happened inside the intra-European borders.

Many Gothic authors from the mid-eighteenth and nineteenth century were not only readers of travel literature - an extremely popular genre of the time - but they were also travel writers. Horace Walpole traveled between 1739-1741, while taking part on the Grand Tour, a common practice that was somewhat a rite of passage among young males with aristocratic background to adulthood. The excursions had as frequent destinations France, Switzerland, and Italy.

William Thomas Beckford, the author of *Vathek* (1786) registered his impressions of Europe in the book *Italy: with Sketches of Spain and Portugal* (1834), as well as influential Gothic novelist, Ann Radcliffe who kept account of her travels in *A journey made in the summer of 1794, through Holland and the western frontier of Germany: with a return down the Rhine: to which are added Observations during a tour to the lakes of Lancashire, Westmoreland, and Cumberland*, where she writes about the tour with husband William Radcliffe. In the previous year, she had published *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) in which the plot revolves around the protagonist, Emily St. Aubert, who is taken by her father to “travel leisurely along the shores of the Mediterranean, towards Provence” (Radcliffe, 32) after the death of her mother, Madame St. Aubert.

A few years later, Mary Shelley - née Godwin - and her husband, Percy Shelley published their travelogue entitled *History of a Six Weeks' Tour* (1817) depicting France, Switzerland, Germany, and Netherlands. It was during their passage through Geneva in Switzerland, that Mary Shelley had the idea for her famous Gothic novel *Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus* (1818). Fittingly, *The Vampyre; a Tale* written by John William Polidori was also conceived on that same trip. As far as the anecdote goes, Polidori happened to be Lord Byron's personal physician and both men were staying at Villa Diodati, near Lake Geneva when Percy Shelley, Mary Shelley, and her sister, Claire Clairmont who were renting a house “distant from the Villa Diodati only about 8 minutes' walk” (Polidori 117) came by for a visit. In the evening, the group, probably as a result to the bad weather ⁴ which prevented any attempt of outdoor activity, decided to entertain themselves by creating ghost stories.

John Polidori included travel in his plot by telling the story of a vampire, Lord Ruthven, in a tour with a wealthy young English gentleman named Audrey, through Italy and Greece.

Together with these important texts, there is *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) written by Charles Robert Maturin and presumed to have put an end on this first wave of Gothic fiction (Punter, 00:01:10). Although the plot has its point of departure and arrival in Ireland,

⁴ The bad weather was caused by the eruption of Mount Tambora, Indonesia in 1815, called by historicists as “the year without summer”. As pointed out by Klingaman “by the winter of 1815–16, the nearly invisible veil of ash covered the globe, reflecting sunlight, cooling temperatures, and wreaking havoc on weather patterns” (32).

Maturin managed to incorporate in the tales that compose the novel, travels through Spain, England, and an Indian island.

The late Victorian era gradually witnessed United States replacing Britain in its role as a powerful empire. The *fin-de-siècle* context and withdraw of Britain's dominant identity, reverberated in the narratives of this time. Gothic literature had produced literary classics such as *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) written by Robert Louis Stevenson, that deals with interchangeability between personality sides; Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) in which the narrative is build around the motif of duplicity, and last but not least, *Dracula* (1897) by Bram Stoker, where the process of traveling across West-East borders is described in several passages, including the one in which Jonathan Harker describes his impressions on the eastern side: "there were dark rolling clouds overhead, and in the air the heavy, oppressive sense of thunder. It seemed as though the mountain range had separated two atmospheres, and that now we had got the thunderous one" (Stoker 12). Glennis Byron notes that

the opening section ... has close connections with traditional Gothic, a genre to which *Dracula* clearly belongs. Yet even in its Gothicism, *Dracula* is, like such other late-Victorian Gothics as *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Dorian Gray*, ... very much of its time, very much a late-Victorian text, soon leaving the strange and alien world of Transylvania to land firmly in the urban centre of Victorian – London (13-14)

All three texts mentioned by Byron have been "traveling" across different time periods, countries and media such as stage plays, television series, video games, and films. The consequence of these remakes is an adjustment of these texts within a new spatiotemporal context, as if the works were in a process of continued resurrection. In the case of *Dracula*, not only it is the "most adapted story in film history" (Nuzum 5) but it also helped to set a precedent for all the vampire characters to come. The following part of this study moves on to describe the vampire character in the Western literary tradition, followed by vampires in films.

1.2 The vampire character in the literary tradition

I asked Mr. Stoker whether he had written with a purpose, but on this point he would give no definite answer. "I suppose that every book of the kind must contain some lesson," he remarked; "but I prefer that readers should find it out for themselves."

Fig. 1 – Interview with Bram Stoker for *The British Weekly* in 1897

In order to understand the omnipresence of vampire in film, it is fundamental to bring forth some of the key vampire texts in the Western literary tradition. Thus, the following section addresses, in chronological order, a brief description of the major narratives of the genre.

In an interview for Jane "Lorna" Stoddard in July 1, 1897 for *The British Weekly* (see fig.1), short after the publication of *Dracula*, Bram Stoker mentioned the vastness of the vampire historical myth, stating that in "...certain parts of Styria [southern Austria] it [the vampire legend] has survived longest and with most intensity, but the legend is common to many countries, to China, Iceland, Germany, Saxony, Turkey, France, and England, besides all the Tartar communities" (185). The vampire has been traveling across cultures and it is part of the folklore in different civilizations as a creature that feeds on the blood of the living.

The short story *The Vampyre; a Tale* (mentioned in the previous section) is considered the first narrative in English language about vampires. Another predecessor story to *Dracula* is the penny dreadful⁵ *Varney, the Vampyre; or, the Feast of Blood* (1845-47) by James Malcom Rymer and Thomas Peckett Prest. Both these stories portray vampire protagonists, Polidori's Lord Ruthven and Rymer's and Prest's Sir Francis Varney in processes of physical displacement within the European continent.

⁵Penny dreadful was a very cheap and popular literary production, published during the nineteenth century Victorian Era.

A few decades later, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, in his novella *Carmilla* (1872) writes a plot about a female vampire named Carmilla, who arrives in a “traveling carriage”, and Laura, a young woman living with her father in a castle with “its many-windowed front; its towers; and its Gothic chapel” (Le Fanu) and one of Carmilla’s victims.

The character of Carmilla, together with Lord Ruthven and Sir Francis Varney, anticipated and developed the foundation of the vampire genre, clearly influencing Bram Stoker. At the turn of the twentieth century with the publication of *Dracula*, the Count “became the dominant image of the ‘vampire’ in popular culture in the decades after the World War I” (Melton 75). As the years passed by, *Dracula* continued to hold this dominance, but the image of the vampire started to capture new contours according to the context it was inserted in, revealing certain political and social circumstances of their productions.

In 1976, the Gothic novel *Interview with the Vampire* written by Anne Rice refashioned the vampire character. Considered as “one of the most significant rewritings of the traditional myth since it was established by Bram Stoker in *Dracula*” (Punter and Byron 244), Rice’s version of the myth tells the story of Louis de Pointe du Lac, the protagonist, and the events that surrounded his transformation into a vampire by Lestat. Additionally, another important character in the novel is a five-year-old child named Claudia, also turned into a vampire by Lestat, later becoming Louis’ protégé.

While Rice maintains certain vampire conventions in Louis, like the intolerance to sunlight, the absent reflection in mirrors, and the cold pale skin, she also deconstructs other traditional characteristics commonly associated with Stoker’s Count *Dracula* such as the aversion for garlic and holy symbols. Louis and Lestat are charming human-like vampires, thus creating an empathy bond with the reader/spectator.

In the current twentieth-first century, so far the vampires maintained the charming and supernatural attributes as observed in Stephenie Meyer’s revision of the myth, *Twilight* (2005). The best selling book portrays a teen romance between Edward Cullen and Isabella Swan, although Edward is around a hundred years old with the physical appearance of a seventeen year old.

There are two significant changes in Meyer’s vampire narrative that subverts in great scale well known core features of the vampire lore. The first one is the fact that Edward, instead of being vulnerable to sunlight, actually glows when in contact to natural light. The second is connected to the vampire’s feeding behavior and the choice for a diet based on animal blood instead of human blood, making Edwards and his

family somewhat vegetarians. The *Twilight* series comprises four novels and just like Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*, was also adapted to the big screen although the similarities when comparing the two novels are limited.

In the section that follows, I will address the preminent films within the vampire genre and their contribution to the maintenance and expansion of the vampire myth worldwide.

1.3 Vampire in Films

With the birth of cinema in 1895⁶, the vampire gained a new territory to conquer, and it did not take long until the blood consumer creature crossed the frontier from paper to the audiovisual medium.

German director, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau⁷ was among the earliest directors to accomplish this "travel" across platforms by taking the nocturnal creature to the light of the big screen. F.W Murnau directed a film adaptation of the novel *Dracula*; the silent film *Nosferatu: a Symphony of Horror* was released in 1922 in Germany and seven years later exhibited in United States. In *Nosferatu*, the vampire Count Orlok travels from Transylvania to the city of Bremen⁸ aiming to find a new residence but with the real objective of finding a woman named Nina. Murnau had to change the name of the characters and locations because he did not have the legal rights to adapt Stoker's novel (Elsaesser 12). Since *Nosferatu*, vampires have been widely portrayed in cinema, maintaining the audience aware of their immortal presence.

The first two vampires films after the advent of the sound were Carl Theodor Dreyer's *Vampyr* (1932) Tod Brownings' *Dracula* (1931), which introduced the actor Bela Lugosi as Count Dracula, a charming and seductive vampire, unlike Murnau's Count Orlok who appears as a repulsive creature. Lugosi's Dracula also travels, but this time, from Transylvania to the city of London. In these two examples, the vampire follows a transnational trajectory in Europe, departing from Transylvania to Bremen-Germany in Murnau's film and to London-England in Browning's film. The vampire protagonists in these two

⁶ The Lumière brothers presented the first public exhibition of a projected motion picture in 1895; this is the reason why the year is celebrated as the birth of cinema. Among these early projections there were *Workers Leaving the Lumiere Factory* and *Baby's Meal*.

⁷ In this section I intend to do an overview of the vampire character in films, having in mind that might be some historical gaps concerning the first cinematic adaptations of vampire narratives. That said, I decided to begin my section using F.W.Murnau's *Nosferatu*.

⁸ Some restorations of the film *Nosferatu* use the name of a fictional city called Wisborg instead of Bremen.

films travel in order to achieve a specific objective that is to buy a property in the metropolis. Thus, by traveling to acquire a home in a location with the purpose of being part of a certain community, these vampires place themselves in a position of tyrannical conquerors, not only inhabiting the houses but also, metaphorically, inhabiting bodies by feeding and surviving off their blood. Speaking of which, the potential of blood to cause terror was enhanced by color in films. During the late 1950's, 60's and 70's, Hammer Film Productions, also known as Hammer Horror, produced nine films with the vampire as subject matter, most of these films starring Christopher Lee as Count Dracula. The Hammer aesthetic is highly connected to the saturated colors and hues of the films, many intensified by the use of Technicolor like *Dracula* (1958) adapted from Stoker's novel and directed by Terence Fisher. The vampire ambition of conquest seems to have vanished from the narratives of the genre in the following decades. Dracula's successors started to embody other concerns related to their respective periods of production. For example, in *The Hunger* (1983), *The Lost Boys* (1987) and *Near Dark* (1987) the vampires portrayed are also charming and attractive like the duo Lugosi-Lee but they disregard the convention of the location in the previous narratives: they no longer inhabit the Old World. *The Hunger* has New York City as setting, *The Lost Boys* is about two brothers who end up meeting a group of vampires in California and *Near Dark* has a western-meets-horror narrative and it is set in Oklahoma. As for the last two films, Punter and Byron observe that

Such popular vampire films as *The Lost Boys* (1987) and *Near Dark* (1987) ... in spite of offering the attractions of a more anarchic world, are ultimately completely complicit with the Reaganite values of the era in which they were produced. Demonic vampire communities function as a metaphor for the contemporary dysfunctional family... (271)

The metaphors connected to vampires and their era did not cease in the 1980's. In the following decade, known as the dawn of the Information Age and its technological advances, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1992) directed by Francis Ford Coppola "span decisive media shifts by summing up and juxtaposing past and present communication technologies as well as foreshadowing future developments" (Bruce and

Purdy 108). Besides this acknowledgement of the film in relation to technological advances, another possibility of reading deals with a critical approach regarding the epidemic of Human Immunodeficiency Virus during the 1990's. According to Fred Botting in the book *Gothic* (1996), "the film's magnified shots of blood cells seen through a microscope, the novel link to diseases of the blood is prominently displayed: the 1990s, like the 1890s, is terrorised by the lethal link between blood and sex, syphilis becoming AIDS" (115). Two years later, *Interview with the Vampire* was released in theaters and portrayed the attraction between male vampires (see Dante Luiz de Lima's thesis *Bloody Eroticism in Interview with the Vampire from literature to the audiovisual domain*).

Moreover, among the recent 2000's vampire film productions, the *Twilight* saga screen adaptation, despite critical reception, had a successful impact worldwide among fans. This narrative included characteristics to the vampire that until this point were unusual. For example, not only the vampire sparkles, but also is divided in two groups: the bad ones being those who feed on human blood (red eyes) in contrast to the good ones who feed on animal blood (golden eyes).

In 2013, Jim Jarmusch's *Only Lovers Left Alive*, starring Tilda Swinton and Tom Hiddleston as Eve and Adam, managed to show the relationship of a vampire couple and their different perspectives in relation to a globalized world.

This section has attempted to provide a brief summary of the major productions depicting vampires from Murnau's *Nosferatu* to *Only Lovers Left Alive*.

1.4 Vampire Traveler

To date, there has been much written about the vampire and the lore surrounding the character, however, only a few critics have discussed the travel motif in vampire narratives, most of them paying particular attention to Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. In this section, I will present some reading possibilities regarding travel motifs in vampire narratives using the works of Stephen Arata, Edward Said, Sérgio Bellei, Carol Senf, Nina Auerbach, Franco Moretti and Burton Hatlen, in order to define the concepts that will be used in this study.

Stephen Arata's seminal article entitled *The Occidental Tourist: Dracula and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization* (1990) demonstrates that "critics have occasionally noted the travel motifs in *Dracula*, but have not pursued the implications of Stoker's mixing of

genres” (635). The two genres mentioned by Arata are the Gothic and travel narrative, which are both concerned with the matter of crossing boundaries – whether literally or metaphorically. The mixing of genres undergirds the narrative of *Dracula*, amplifying the reading of the novel by investigating in a more elucidative manner, the reasons behind the act of traveling and vampires.

As well as highlighting the mixing of genres in *Dracula*, Stephen Arata also raises the key concept of reverse colonization, which is the fear that the colonies could threaten the hegemonic position of the British Empire. According to the author, thus

the exploiter becomes exploited, the victimizer victimized. Such fears are linked to a perceive decline – racial, moral, spiritual – which makes the nation vulnerable to attack from more vigorous, ‘primitive’ peoples (623).

In other words, by traveling from the East (Transylvania) to the West (London), the vampire, Count Dracula, embodied, as an allegory, a potential hazard to the omnipotence of the British Empire.

Although located in Europe, the region of Transylvania, and the Carpathians in general, has always been seen by Western Europe as a remote, savage region, surrounded by a plethora of legends, the vampire being one of the most famous among them.

The Western gaze in relation the East is an issue that has been constructed for centuries through several social/cultural/political processes. This gaze has been observed and conceptualized by Edward Said as Orientalism, a discursive phenomenon that deals with a variety of powers such as moral and intellectual, from the Occident in relation to the Orient in order to maintain its colonizer superiority. In his book *Orientalism* (1979) Said refers more specifically to the French/British/American discourse in relation to the cultures of the Middle East and Asia, but it would be possible to include Transylvania in this process. By proposing this illustration, based on Orientalism, England would be “the familiar (Europe, the West, ‘us’),” while Transylvania, “the strange, (the Orient, the East, ‘them’)” (Said 43). In this sense, the interpretation that Dracula travels to leave behind the “primitiveness” of Transylvania in an attempt to enter the “sophisticated and modern” England is plausible. In many regions in the West, it is believed the most East a place is, the probability to find “primitiveness” increases: “eastern Europe has been commonly associated with

‘backwardness’, the Balkans with “violence”, India with ‘idealism’ or ‘mysticism’, while the west has identify itself consistently with the ‘civilized world’ ” (Bakić-Hayden 917). Arata mentions that Stoker’s choice for Transylvania was not pointless:

by situating Dracula in the Carpathians, and by continually blurring the lines between the Count’s vampiric and warrior activities, Stoker forges seemingly ‘natural’ links among three of his principal concerns: racial strife, the collapse of empire, and vampirism (629).

This become evident in a passage from *Dracula* when Jonathan Harker asks the Count about the history of Transylvania and his enthusiasm while speaking about the tribe battles and wars amazes Harker, “as if he [Count] had been present at them all” (Stoker 30). Dracula’s war accounts only reinforce the menace towards England.

Vampires are part of the Romanian peasants folktales, but many critics believe that Bram Stoker based the creation of Count Dracula’s character on fifteenth century historical events involving Vlad Tepes, the prince of Wallachia, a former region that nowadays is part of South Romania. He is notoriously known as Vlad, the Impaler due to the execution method of impalement adopted in his enemies, mainly Turks. The first scholars to revealed the possibility of the connection between Count Dracula and Vlad Tepes were Raymond McNally and Radu Noreescu in their book *In Search of Dracula* published in 1972. In this regard, Dracula operates as a transhistorical agent that travels both space and time and one who can vividly narrate experiences that only a person who has the custody of immortality is capable to do, and in this sense he is also a traveler.

In a work that predates Arata, *The Vampire in Nineteenth Century English Literature* (1988), Carol Senf, based on Jonathan Harker’s travel accounts in *Dracula*, already introduces, though superficially, the idea of Count Dracula symbolizing a threat to England as a case of reverse imperialism (Senf 59). Stoker’s vampire displacement is infused with intrinsic political connotation in relation to the idea of “the primitive trying to colonize the civilized world” (Senf 59), which corresponds to Stephen Arata’s concept of “reverse colonization”. Both Senf and Arata place the vampire as a metaphor for the reverse imperialism/colonization, similar to an instrument of

retaliation, defying and breaking the idea of the British Empire hegemony.

Likewise, Nina Auerbach in *Our Vampire, Ourselves* (1995) notes Stoker's xenophobic anxiety towards a "racially alien foreigner ruling and transforming England" (148), which can also be attributed to the way in which the East - West route was structured in *Dracula*. For Auerbach the "vampire goes where the power is" (6) not only to contemplate the power of the others, but also to be the Other, who conquers and seeks to possess this power. In the nineteenth century that meant traveling to London, "but with the birth of film, they migrated to America, in time for the American century" (Auerbach 6). The so-called American century refers to a period in which the United States dominated the political, economical and cultural global scenario and had its beginning in the middle of the twentieth-century.

In the book *Monstros, Índios e Canibais* (2000), Sergio Bellei also observed the importance of the travel motif in *Dracula*. Bellei begins his discussion highlighting the fact that the massive criticism about the sexual implications in Stoker's *Dracula*, usually conducted by psychoanalytical concepts, can obstruct "the questions that are incite by the novel, especially in xenophobic times of diasporas and migration, which could be as, or more, significant than the theme about sexuality itself"⁹ (35). The relevant, yet not intensely investigated act of traveling and its consequences in vampire narratives, remained as the main reason for my research.

In this text, Bellei discusses the expectation of the cultural encounter between the "civilized" solicitor from London and the "primitive" Count from Transylvania. Jonathan Harker travels to Transylvania to deal with legal matters concerning the Count's desire to acquire a property in London. In his journal, Harker provides details about the first impressions on the Count's physical appearance including words such as "peculiar", "cruel-looking" and "ruddiness".

Additionally, while Harker was engaged finding information about Transylvania at the British museum's library, Count Dracula had its own library with books "of the most varied kind – history, geography, politics... – all relating to England and English life and customs and manners" (Stoker 22). In this context, the library is the place in between, a territorial entity where the Count gets familiar with the British way of living, aiming to leave behind the idea of an obsolete

⁹ Translations into English are mine, unless otherwise noted.

Transylvanian elite and predictable lifestyle to be a part of an effervescent metropolis, symbolically linked to the idea of a Promised Land. The library may function as a territory of ongoing training zone in which the Count is absorbing a culture that is not his own and preparing himself to cross boundaries, evidencing another meaning for the traveling vampire.

Another possible reading for the travel motif in *Dracula* comes from two Marxist perspectives. In the *The Return of the Repressed/Oppressed in Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1980), the literary scholar Burton Hatlen mentions how criticism in relation to *Dracula* is originated in its majority from psychoanalytical views on the vampire (81), focusing predominately on the sexual symbolism of the narrative, in consonance to Sergio Bellei's ideas. Both authors point out to the issue of sexuality and neither of them deny the importance of such reading. Hatlen states that "...in Stoker's novel vampirism often seems to be a metaphor for sexuality – in particular, the female sexuality which so terrified the Victorians" (84), although they help to enlighten other ingrained aspects of the vampire character.

Hatlen develops a substantial critical piece of the *fin-de-siècle* vampire, drawing upon Northrop Frye and Fredric Jameson ideas, the latter affirming that when one pays enough attention to a literary text, it is possible to "read its structure as ideology, as a socially symbolic act, as a protopolitical response to a historical dilemma" (Jameson 157) This is the position Hatlen assumes on his article, writing about the historical, and notably, social and political implications regarding the character of Count Dracula. He suggests that Count Dracula evokes not only the sexuality of the Victorian period, but more importantly, he illustrates the character as a being constituted of "both the repressed masses of workers, and the decaying aristocracy" (Hatlen 93). Therefore, the Count not only transgresses the purely geographical illustration of cardinal positions of Stoker's East -West route choice, an "opposition as crucially important to the novel" (Hatlen 90) but he is also able to "travel" around social classes.

In associating Count Dracula with the working class, Hatlen develops the idea that the Count "comes up out of the lower depths; like the peasant, his life is rooted in the soil" (92). Hence, this could be the reason why the count travels carrying a few wooden boxes filled with earth of his homeland, implying the expectation of a chance to fertilize the soil and keep his roots firm in the metropolis. By the time of his arrival in the West, he represents diferents categories of otherness, including the "sexually 'other' " (Hatlen 87). Meanwhile, Hatlen's

paradoxical viewpoint in also considering Dracula a representation of the aristocracy – although a decadent one – seems more practicable, taking into consideration that the count himself affirms in a passage of the novel that “we Transylvanian nobles love not to think that our bones may be amongst the common dead” (Stoker 26). Thus, his moving to Victorian England can be understood as the social return of a title that has no longer use in Transylvania.

In 1982, Franco Moretti addresses *Dracula* from a socio-economic view of the vampire in the article *The Dialectic of Fear* (1982) in which he affirms that “like capital, Dracula is impelled towards a continuous growth, an unlimited expansion of his domain: accumulation is inherent in his nature” (149). Money is not an issue to the vampire since he accumulates wealth throughout the centuries, not requiring much to live, except blood. According to Moretti, vampires have an intrinsic capitalist ambition to acquire new markets, by not only expanding their domains beyond Transylvania, but also to make new victims. These victims are chosen with the objective of establishing a parasitic relation, shedding light to a potential metaphoric connection between the victim’s blood, acting as labor, and capital representing the vampire creature. Moretti juxtaposes Dracula and capital accumulation, analyzing the figure of the vampire as a monopolist who accumulates and travels to conquest.

Whether interpreted and depicted as capital, an aristocrat or as part of the working class, in both Marxist views the act of traveling is a fundamental component in relation to what Count Dracula may represent. The vampire will only accomplish either Marxist interpretations once he/she decides to travel.

In the previous three sections, I briefly described how the act of traveling has appeared within the Gothic literary tradition since its first publications; also the presence of the vampire in literature and films and the transformations in the character throughout the years; and I also discussed theoretical positions concerning the act of traveling in the romance *Dracula* and its potential meanings in vampire narratives.

The next chapter provides the analysis on the vampire traveler and a reading of the possible consequences related to the act of traveling as seen in the film *Interview with the Vampire*.

CHAPTER 2

Love, blood, and a tape recorder: *Interview with the Vampire*

As the opening credits roll up, an aerial shot of the Golden Gate Bridge during the night, leads to the sign of the Port of San Francisco. This initial scene sets the tone for the subsequent travel motifs in *Interview with the Vampire*, enabling to establish theoretical and key thematic aspects for this analysis.

Ports are locations of transit for both passengers in cruise ships and/or goods in cargo ships into a country, and this particular scene highlights the fact that any attempt to reach the land, presents “obstacles” such as customs and immigration services, and other form of borders to cross. However, for non-ordinary beings like vampires, these barriers are easily transposed, thus the choice for using an aerial shot of the bridge and the port helps to convey a blurriness in relation to these borders and could be seen as a the ability of the vampire to transcend time and space.

The camera then moves to the interior of a room, where the interview between the journalist Daniel Molloy (Christian Slater) and Louis du Pointe du Lac (Brad Pitt), the vampire, takes place: “So, what do you do?” asks Molloy, “I’m a vampire”, Louis replies. (Interview with the Vampire, 00:03:34). The present time of the action is set in the 1990’s and Louis is a vampire who, unlike its predecessors, resides in San Francisco, a cosmopolitan city, historically and culturally known for its hippie and counterculture movement, gay-friendly environment, and Victorian architecture. The interview however, is conducted implementing the flashback technique, taking the narrative back to 1791, with Louis describing himself as a plantation owner in New Orleans, a period that he reminisces as the year he was “born to darkness” (Interview with the Vampire, 00:05:32). According to Maureen Turim, the use of flashback in film is strongly attached to memory; the critic argues that, the use of this technique

...give us images of history, the shared and recorded past. In fact, flashbacks in film often merge the two levels of remembering the past, giving large-scale social and political history the

subjective mode of a single, fictional individual's remembered experience. (23-24)

Turim's argument is that the character's individual experience (flashback) has the potential of invoking broader socio-political elements and collective memory. In this sense, the film's end of the eighteenth century New Orleans setting brings up aspects related to multiculturalism and the formation of the American nation, especially the southern part of the country, considering the fact that the state of Louisiana was under strong European influence due to its predominantly Spanish and French colonization. Moreover, this was a moment in which the Thirteen Colonies¹⁰ had won the Revolutionary War to achieve independence from Great Britain. Therefore, the flashback technique plays a central role in the development of the narrative, not only by reinstating collective memory, but also by recognizing the vampire as a citizen of the alleged New World, part of this historical transition.

If in Europe the vampire was connected to Medieval Ages and even more ancient times, in a young country like the United States, the vampire character should be likely to appear in its colonial period (as an European heritage). Hence, if in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, the vampire's desire was to leave Transylvania and buy property in London, Anne Rice's screenplay (and homonymous novel) physically transposes the vampire from outside European borders to a blossoming land, where the character can literally, or figuratively, participate in new levels of freedom and independence. Rice's vampire is innovative in the sense that balances the aforementioned "process of familiarisation and defamiliarisation", (Gelder 86) maintaining certain echoes from Stoker's *Dracula* but breaks with the literary traditions, leaving behind some of the vampire's former characteristics and opens up the possibilities of representing the character in unprecedented ways.

The use of the image of the port, a crossing location, in the case of *Interview with the Vampire* can also be interpreted as an allegory of

¹⁰ The Thirteen Colonies were (in alphabetical order): Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina and Virginia. They were Great Britain former colonies and declared independence in 1776, renaming the colonies to The United States of America.

this transformation. It is at another port, this time at the banks of the Mississippi River (see fig.2), that Lestat (Tom Cruise) turns Louis into a vampire. In this case, the transposition, dislocation or crossing is related to overcoming the threshold of death and embarking into the journey of immortality. Louis' transformation leads to the second part of the film, in which the spectator has the character's unique perspective about the practical adversities that a new born vampire has to overcome, such as Louis' disgust about feeding on human blood, and also, the moral difficulties he faces to accept such drastic change in existence.



Fig. 2 – port by the Mississippi river in *Interview with the Vampire*

2.1 From Transylvania to Louisiana: Gothic traditions

The two vampires begin their relationship by living together at Louis' luxurious plantation house in New Orleans (fig.3) and the mansion operates as a transposition of the classic medieval castle in traditional vampire narratives. In a comparative analysis, the plantation house and the castle, emanate the same grandeur atmosphere, although the castle is usually portrayed as a decadent place, a reminiscence of what was, once, perhaps, a glorious and powerful past.



Fig. 3. Outside Louis' plantation house

The Southern Gothic aesthetics presented in the film are not only inspired by the classic Gothic narratives but it is also highly connected to the history of the South itself with its own distinguish ways and traditions in comparison to the rest of the United States. Such aesthetics include the late eighteenth century plantation system that is directly associated to slavery, a “much more than a form of labor; ... a way of subordinating black people in a society that feared and hated them” (Degler 64). The majority of plantation owners at the time were persistent on the use of violent methods towards slaves, while Louis assigns the role of a master who seems closer to the slaves, as pointed out by Yvette (Thandie Newton), the house slave. She mentions that they are all afraid from the mysterious recent deaths in the plantation and the suddenly ceased of his visits to the slave quarter.

Another two important aspects of the Southern Gothic aesthetics in the film comprehend the macabre aura of the Louisiana swamps and the chiaroscuro lighting that helps to reinforce and retain the tension and suspense of the narrative. In these terms, one can equate the sensations engendered in *Interview with the Vampire's* narrative with the use of Southern Gothic elements to those aroused by the English Gothic tradition.

2.2 The inner endeavors of a New World vampire

Subsequently, the relationship between the two vampires goes beyond the fact that Lestat fathered Louis' vampire transformation. He also becomes Louis' mentor by teaching the crafts of being a vampire and making him able to cross the boundaries of moral issues concerning killing victims for blood. Louis' issues on slaughtering humans becomes clear in the sequence where they are both sitting at the table and Louis is disturbed with the idea of having to kill to survive. Lestat says: "You'll get used to killing. Just forget about that mortal coil. You'll become accustomed to things all too quickly" (Interview with the Vampire, 00:18:17), Louis replies by questioning if a vampire is able to survive of the blood of animals without having to kill humans. This is the first time in *Interview with the Vampire* the viewer realizes a genuine concern on behalf of a vampire about, taking or not, someone's life. Vampires usually do not have a sensitive side in relation to humans or ethical impulses and moral issues in times of hunger, at least until Anne Rice's novel and film adaptation where the traces of humaneness of the vampire could surface.

These changes also mirror the social-political context that was going on when the novel *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) was first written, with lasting repercussions and impact in the next decades, when it was adapted into film (1994).

One example of this process is the depathologization of homosexuality by the World Health Organization, which happened four years prior to the release of the film *Interview with the Vampire*; consequently, many readings of the film involve the homoeroticism tones in Rice's novel and screenplay (see Dante Luiz de Lima's thesis *Bloody Eroticism in Interview with the Vampire from literature to the audiovisual domain*).

Another instance concerning the social mirroring that can be seen in both film and novel is Louis refusal to feed on blood. This fact may be read in terms of vegetarianism, an issue with moral/ethical implications that acquired great projection during the 1970's with the publication of Frances Moore Lappé's book *Diet for a Small Planet* (1971), who many believe to have launched the vegetarian movement in the United States.

This sensitive behavior and new self-reflexive trait in the vampire's personality seems to be an effect of the displacement that the character underwent when transported to the New World, as if their presence in a different continent allowed the expression of new contours

in the old vampire legend. This is exemplified in the scene in which both vampires are arguing in a room on whether or not they should kill a prostitute. Louis refuses the order to kill and Lestat says: “in the Old World, Louis, they called it the ‘dark gift’, and I gave it to you” (Interview with the Vampire, 00:36:02). Indeed, Louis agreed on receiving the dark gift – immortality – but he does not know how to manage the killer instinct that comes with it, leading to a moral and ethical crisis.

In the sequence, Louis leaves the room and wanders around New Orleans at night feeding on rats. He observes men dragging dead bodies piled up in a cart through the street, and one of them gives him a warning about the plague.

The connection between the motif of the plague and vampires are also seen in Murnau’s *Nosferatu* (1922) when Count Orlok spreads the plague into the German town of Bremen. According to J Gordon Melton

building upon Dracula’s command of the rats that so bedeviled Van Helsing and the men as they entered Carfax, Graf Orlok, the Dracula character in *Nosferatu* commanded plague-bearing rats. He arrived at Bremen with the rats, and the pestilence that accompanied them was a sign of the vampire’s presence (Melton 19)

In documented accounts about the European immigration in the United States, several medicine records trace the early cases of plague to ships carrying German emigrants that arrived from Bremen in New Orleans. Most often, quarantine was required in the face of the epidemic. What stands out in this evidence is the alignment between fact and fiction, linking the vampire character one more time to his/her transhistorical nature.

The relationship between rats and vampires may reside on the unusual connection with Brothers Grimm *Pied Piper of Hamelin*. The tale tells the story of a foreigner piper that helps the town of Hamelin to get free of a rat infestation. After the service, he is not well rewarded and, using his pipe and its enchantments as an act of revenge, he lures one hundred and thirty children from the German town to follow him. He abducts the children, taking them to a cave and they eventually disappear. In a retelling verse of *Pied Piper* written by Victorian poet Robert Browning, he writes

The same, to make the world acquainted / How their children were stolen away / And there it stands to this very day / And I must not omit to say / That in Transylvania there's a tribe / Of alien people who ascribe / The outlandish ways and dress / On which their neighbours lay such stress, / To their fathers and mothers having risen / Out of some subterraneous prison... (46)

There is a historical reading of the folkloric text that believes these children were captured in order to colonize Transylvania, becoming the Transylvanian Saxons (*Siebenbürger Sachsen*), connecting “the tale to the migration of young Germans to Transylvania, or even the New World” (Archer 104). There are no accounts on whether the Grimm brothers had contact with the myths and legends of Transylvania prior to their text, but Bram Stoker not only did read these tales (see page 58), but also met Robert Browning. As a manager of the famous English actor Sir Henry Irving, Stoker was present in several occasions when Browning and Irving used to meet and the two always ended up talking about William Shakespeare¹¹, as recorded in the book *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving* written by Stoker (90).

It is practicable then to picture the figure of the Pied Piper alongside with the vampire. Bram Stoker’s Count Dracula has a similar control over rats, as seen in this excerpt:

A dark mass spread over the grass, coming on like the shape of a flame of a fire; and then He moved the mist to the right and left, and I could see that there were thousands of rats with their eyes blazing red – like His, only smaller. He held up His hand, and they all stopped (260)

Additionally, in Murnau’s filmic retelling of the myth, the physical appearance of Count Orlok (fig.4) is close to the physical characteristics of a rodent, a rat-like creature destitute of the charming and seductive attributes usually found in vampires like Louis and Lestat in *Interview with the Vampire* (fig.5).

¹¹ Shakespeare references can also be found in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, for example this citation “rats and mice are such small deer (252)” taken from *King Lear* and also a few allusions to *Hamlet*.

There is a scene in which Lestat looks for Louis around New Orleans. He finds him lying down in an underground sewer and says: “All I need to find you, Louis, is to follow the corpses of rats” (Interview with the Vampire 00:39:50). The act of feeding from rats is a pertinent point that serves as a declaration to the end of the Old World vampire era and the rise of the New World vampire. Yet, denying deep-rooted, ancient habits is not an easy task and Louis struggles immensely to comprehend it.



Fig. 4 – Count Orlok



Fig. 5 – Louis

It is while wandering through New Orleans that Louis notices inside a house, a little girl crying beside her mother’s deceased body. The little girl is Claudia, who is turned into a vampire by both Louis and Lestat, becoming part of their clan, a vampire family that contrasts the version of the socially professed traditional father-mother-children format. Claudia embodies the archetype¹² of the ally, always remaining faithful to Louis while plotting to murder Lestat whom she despises.

2.3 “I wanted those waters to be blue, but they were black”: Louis arrives in the Old World

The traveling motifs appear very clearly in the film when Louis narrates in voiceover the passing of time, mentioning, in particular, the technological advances related to maritime transportation: “years flew by like minutes, the city around us grew, sailboats gave way to steamships, disgorging an endless menu of magnificent strangers. A new

¹² From Latin archetypum, meaning pattern or model. See Joseph Campbell’s *The Hero of a Thousand Faces* and/or Christopher Vogler’s *The Writer’s Journey*.

world had sprung up around us and we were all Americans now.” (Interview with the Vampire, 00:49:41). Ships are a recurrent element in Gothic narratives, especially in vampire ones, functioning not only as a mean of transportation, but also as a space associated with a sense of suspense, caused by the unpredictability of sea traveling.

In *Dracula*, it is through the Demeter ship that the vampire penetrates the British empire. As stated by Arata, “in the marauding one, invasive Other, British culture sees its own imperial practices mirrored back in a monstrous form” (623). During the eighteenth and nineteenth century the British held a naval hegemony possessing the most powerful fleet in the world (Royal Navy).

The line also makes a reference to the issue of immigration in the United States (“...an endless menu of magnificent strangers”), which reached more than twenty million European immigrants between 1821 and 1910 (Ross 310). The point here is that Louis’ monologue (which is part of his interview to Molloy) shows how vampires can indeed travel through time and witness the transformations of society. In this sense, Rice’s screenplay once more resembles *Dracula’s* text when Bram Stoker acknowledges the modernization that the Victorian society was undergoing with science, the invention of phonographs, typewriters, and the consequences of the Industrial Revolution.

Moreover, Claudia’s abomination for Lestat leads to an attempted murder, in which he apparently dies in a fire caused by Louis, who was defending Claudia from the enraged vampire. Louis and Claudia run away in time to embark on a schooner to Europe. The existential crisis here gains further development, as their journey is a quest to find the origins of the vampire in Europe and, therefore, try to make sense of their lives.

Previously to their boarding to Europe, there is a scene of Claudia at a library surrounded by books and Louis mentions during the interview how she was consumed by the idea of discovering other vampires. In Louis words: “she studies the myths and legends of the Old World, obsessed with the search of what she called ‘our kind’ “ (Interview with the Vampire, 01:04:31). While Claudia readings have the purpose of investigating the past, trying to find out about the existence of vampires in other territories, Stoker’s *Count Dracula* uses the library to learn about the metropolis’ habits and culture as a preparation to conquest a territory (Bellei 42). According to Louis, this search for other vampires cannot be prolific until they reach Paris, “mother of New Orleans” (Interview with the Vampire, 01:10:38), which they do in September 1870.

In the Old World, Armand (Antonio Banderas), a charming vampire with a heavy accent and a long black hair, invites Louis and Claudia to watch a play at the *Theatre des Vampires*, a place that in fact serves as a facade to the Parisian vampires. From the outset Louis feels disturbed by Armand and his vampire troupe, uttering sotto voce, the word monstrous while watching their “performance”. Louis’ distraught in face of the performance, can be interpreted considering that he is a vampire coming from the American Romanticism period, a movement that has unfolded from the English Romanticism, which in turn is grounded in the characteristics of the German *Sturm und Drang* movement. One example of the latter is Bürger’s *Lenore* ballad, mentioned in the beginning of this study and included by Stoker in *Dracula*. Besides, by the time of the arrival of Louis and Claudia in Paris (1870), France had been in a process of rupture with all the emotional ideals (e.g nature, the sublime) from the romantics and was already experiencing the Decadent movement with its depictions of the macabre, the perversity in society and its degenerate habits. The performance results in a moment of cultural shock for the romantic vampire.

After the play, Armand takes his guests to a subterranean space, a sort of dark underworld with crypts, which he addresses as home. During the tense moment, Armand demonstrates that even a 400-year-old vampire like him holds a great concern in relation to the temporal aspect of immortality. Armand exclaims: “two vampires from the New World, come to guide us into the new era, as all we love slowly rots and fades away” (Interview with the Vampire, 01:21:08). This is indicative that Armand is existentially as “lost” as Louis and believes there is perhaps hope for their kind in the new continent.

The encounter with Armand does not provide Louis with the answers he longed for. In fact, Lestat had warned him that such questions regarding vampires’ ancestry, identity and killing instincts were unfounded and frivolous. Soon, he realizes that Armand also does not care about his sympathetic feelings in relation to humans who die for vampires to live.

This more humanized vampire who experiences emotions such as compassion is totally absent from the Old World. The feeling of being spatially and temporally displaced becomes even more noticeable in this trip to Paris. Inquiring Armand with questions such as “what are we?”, “who made us what we are?” , “then God does not exists?” (Interview with the Vampire, 01:21:33- 01:22:46) Louis demonstrates an existential displacement in relation to his vampire condition that manifests itself in

a continuous state of melancholia. The causes of melancholia, according to the eighteenth century philosopher Denis Diderot, were “grief, pains of the spirit, passions, as well as all the love and sexual appetites that go unsatisfied” (Diderot). Louis experiences all of the causes of melancholia described by Diderot: grief for the lost of his daughter (and later, grief for Claudia), pains of the spirit (he does not accept his vampire form and the fact that he has to bite humans for blood), and love/sexual appetite unsatisfied (the love triangle between Louis, Lestat and Armand).

Meanwhile, Santiago (Stephen Rea) another Old World vampire from the troupe, warns Louis and Claudia that the only crime vampires do not forgive is the slaying of another vampire. Louis gets concerned over Claudia’s safety and decides to talk to Armand, this time by himself. Armand not only restates the “code of honor” between vampires as he also affirms he wants Louis, a New World vampire, to play the role of a transhistorical guide: “the world changes. We do not. Therein lies the irony that finally kills us. I need you to make contact with this age.” (Interview with the Vampire 01:28:05). Armand envisages Louis as a connection between the European *fin-de-siècle* decadence and the promising new century in the United States.

Louis leaves the building with the impression that now the other vampires would cease to harass him and Claudia, since Armand holds a leadership position among them, but the Parisian vampire troupe decides, through a deceitful plan, to punish the couple for Lestat’s death. In the middle of the night, the group captures Louis, Claudia, and Madeleine (Domiziana Giordano) - a woman turned into vampire by Louis as a request from Claudia. They sentence Louis to spend eternity locked inside a coffin and sentence the women to death, by incarcerating both of them in an abandoned water well where they would be vulnerable to sunlight. Armand manages to save Louis, but Claudia and Madeleine are burned to ashes. In the sequence, as a revenge for Claudia and Madeleine’s death, Louis sets the subterranean space on fire while the vampires are sleeping, killing all the vampire coven. On the way out, Armand rescues Louis for the second time, saving him from the imminent morning light. Armand is clearly not sorry for the death of his troupe, instead he states that Louis made him realize how much those vampires were “stuck in their decadent time” (Interview with the Vampire, 01:44:14) Armand is always reinforcing to Louis his aspiration and desire to be related to a new era and open to new possibilities. In the light of the film’s chronological sequence of events, Armand’s statement shows, one more time, a close relationship to the

French Decadent Movement. According to David Weir in *Decadence and the Making of Modernism* (1995)

...we must note that the “period” of decadence, the late nineteenth century, is also a *time* of decadence: late, nineteenth, ‘last in a series.’ Whether the late nineteenth century was actually a period of decadence is open to debate; but clearly it was perceived as such, as a time when all was over, or almost over: not the end, but the ending (17)

The issue of decadence in the late nineteenth century in the Old World and Armand’s behavior corroborates with Nina Auerbach’s statement – previously mentioned – that the “vampire goes where the power is” (6). It is in this sense that Armand, the self-entitled oldest vampire alive, affirms to Louis that vampires need to be “powerful, beautiful and without regret” (Interview with the Vampire, 01:44:21). Despite Armand’s persuasiveness, Louis responds saying he rather keep his regrets and his suffering than being beautiful or powerful.

Thus, Louis leaves Paris and begins a journey through many different cities in the Old World: “for years I wandered: Italy, Greece, all the ancient lands” (Interview with the Vampire, 01:46:05) but the state of melancholy and the feeling of eternal mourning remained with him. Therefore, the return to the New World becomes inevitable but Louis makes it clear that he is going back for other reasons, not the ambitions of his fellows Old World vampires. He declares to Molloy: “then, out of curiosity, boredom, who knows what, I left the Old World, and came back to my America” (Interview with the Vampire, 01:46:29).

2.4 Returning home

The reason for his return could eventually be connected to a melancholic state of mind and spirit, firstly in relation to his existential displacement as a result of his vampire form, then due to a weakness of the soul, connected to the death of Claudia. Louis’s inner struggles to find peace of mind, sways between good and evil, right and wrong. He constantly duels with a feelings of inadequacy, which is directly linked to Diderot’s definition of melancholia, as a

“... constant feeling of being inadequate, it is the opposite of cheerfulness, which arises from being satisfied with ourselves. It is mostly results from a weakness in the soul and of the organs; at the same time it is a consequence of specific ideas of perfection which we do not find in ourselves or others, neither in things and pleasures, nor in nature” (qtd. in Treichler 2)

The desire to travel is no longer related to finding answers or the search for other vampires, but it is now an escape from his losses, suffering and regrets, although he cannot escape from the memories of the past.

In the next sequence, Louis is sitting at a movie theatre watching *Sunrise, A Song of Two Humans* (1927) and *Nosferatu* (1922), both directed by F.W. Murnau. He describes how this new technology allowed him to witness sunrise again – and the sunrise here makes an allusion to Louis’ new beginning in the New World after Claudia’s death. This meta-reference to another vampire narrative is not present in Anne Rice’s novel and she included it in the screenplay. Cinema then becomes the anchor point for the flow of the narrative; the passing of time for Louis is represented by the two Murnau’s black and white films aforementioned, which are chronologically followed by *Gone with the Wind* (1939), and *Superman* (1978). In this sense, films can also be seen as a mode of traveling in time – past, present, or future.

The vampire leaves the film session and in the background, the *mise-en-scene* establishes the diegetic time using the movie sign *Tequila Sunrise*, released in the United States in December 1988. At the same time, Louis states in a voice-over - a non-diegetic technique – his return to New Orleans in the spring of 1988. In a melancholic tone, Louis affirms he is at home: “and as soon as I smelled the air, I knew I was home. It was rich, almost sweet, like the fragrance of jasmine and roses around our old courtyard” (Interview with the Vampire, 01:47:15). Soon after, while wandering through the streets of New Orleans, Louis’ heightened sense of smell detects a “scent of death” (Interview of the Vampire, 01:47:42) coming from a decaying abandoned house with a pair of lion statues guarding the front steps (see fig.6), evoking the grotesque gargoyles seen in Gothic architecture and establishing a suspense environment.



Fig. 6 lion statues in *Interview with the Vampire*

Upon his return to the New World, Louis and Lestat meet once again. Paralleling to the condition of the house, Louis finds a decaying version of the old Lestat: vulnerable and decrepit. This encounter is a symbolic reunion, an indirect message that the New World, represented by an American vampire from New Orleans vampire, overcomes the primary power and dominance of the Old World. The words uttered by Lestat make it clear that he feels powerless and abandoned: “if you stay with me Louis, I could venture out again. Become the old Lestat” (*Interview with the Vampire*, 01:52:10). Louis does not sympathize with the request and leaves the house and Lestat behind. At this point, there is a sudden cut indicating that the flashback, mentioned earlier, is over. The viewer is taken back to the room in San Francisco where the interview happens. Louis wraps up the story of his vampiric life, affirming, with the usual melancholic tone, that he no longer feels guilty in relation to his feeding habits but he still thinks and misses Claudia. Louis describes himself as “detached, unchangeable and empty” (*Interview with the Vampire*, 01:53:13); Molloy cannot understand Louis’ melancholic suffering and emptiness. What means feeling empty while possessing immortality? After all, it is perhaps the most wanted gift for the majority of mortals. At this point, Louis notices that Molloy misunderstood the real significance of the interview. The journalist suggests he too wants to receive the dark gift, an egotistical request that makes Louis mad, choking the journalist to near death before vanishing the room.

In the last scene of the film, Molloy runs away in his red convertible Mustang and while driving through the Golden Gate Bridge, the same bridge from the opening scene, Lestat reappears almost recovered from his past wounds. He bites Molloy and seems to become

the same vampire as before, with the same vibrant eloquence. Lestat's return may be seen as an illustration for the effort of the Old World (Europe, in this case) in the restoration of its power and also as a threat to the "new power" that the New World represents through the figure of Louis.

As Lestat drives the car, the background music, *Sympathy for the Devil* (originally performed by the Rolling Stones and covered by Guns N' Roses) plays the words "I've been around for a long, long year/ stole many a man's soul to waste..." The song is very fitting for the situation, and creates a tension closure in the film, generating a myriad of speculations about what these vampires could do next as the car disappears in the middle of the San Francisco night.

This chapter began by describing the symbolic use of ports as places of transition (borders) and ships as common means of transportation in Gothic narratives. It went on discussing the connections between *Interview with the Vampire* and the Gothic tradition, and how the film revisits and also reinvents some key aspects of the vampire lore (as seen in Stoker's *Dracula* and Murnau's *Nosferatu*). I also argued that Louis is a melancholic vampire, struggling to deal with moral, ethical, and existential issues of his vampire condition.

CHAPTER 3

Type O negative: Only Lovers Left Alive

Jim Jarmusch's *Only Lovers Left Alive* opens with its title written in burgundy Gothic letters laid over a dark sky that dissolves into a spinning vinyl player. It contrasts with *Interview with the Vampire* in many aspects, for example, it is not a literary adaptation, neither the structure of the film unfolds by means of a flashback technique and its point of view is not a first-person narration. Nevertheless, the similarities that connect the two films can be observed in their respective comparison and contraposition between New World and Old World and also how the travel motif is also a recurring element in the life of the vampire couple, Adam (Tom Hiddleston) and Eve (Tilda Swinton).

In a room, surrounded by books, the first character to appear on screen is Eve, a blond female vampire. The following shot comes from a cut transition and shows Adam, a male, dark-hair vampire, who is lying on a velvet couch while holding an oud, a string musical instrument originated from the Middle East. They are both asleep and, as the camera comes closer, the vampires awake. Adam's doorbell rings and the viewer can take a quick first glance at the interior of his house, which is decorated with all sorts of vintage musical instruments. It is night, and he looks through the window (see fig. 7), watching a man reaching for a guitar case in the trunk of a parked car (see fig.8). The man with the guitar case is Ian (Anton Yelchin), whose role in the film (as it will be revealed) resembles that of R.M Renfield, in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Ian not only performs the function of Adam's assistant but also worships him; unlike Molloy in *Interview with the Vampire*, he does not know about Adam's true nature.

Moreover, there is a match cut and Eve appears on the screen again. She quietly observes (see fig.9) a busy market street at daybreak (see fig.10), and in the background, it is possible to hear the sound of a distant, oriental chant. The *mise-en-scene* of this sequence is unambiguous in terms of location, as it contains elements that shed light on the area where both vampires live, ensuring to the spectator that they do not share the same space. The use of the match cut technique foreshadows the connection between Adam and Eve. It is used in the film to establish the synchronicity of the vampire couple, whose lives and minds are bounded despite their physical distance. According to

film journal *The Motley View*, “... match [cut] establishes a sense of continuity and interconnectedness between two different spatial or temporal spheres (space and time)” (“Basic Film Techniques: Match-cut”). However, Adam and Eve are very different, and in certain ways, oppose each other as analyzed in the following pages.



Fig.7 – Adam looking through the window Fig.8 – Outside Adam’s house

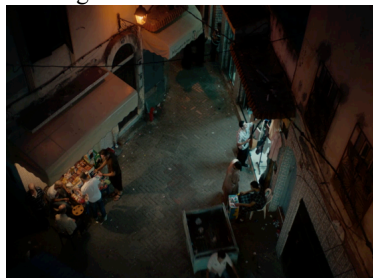


Fig.9 – Eve observing the busy street Fig.10 – Outside Eve’s place

3.1 So long, Garden! Eve’s Old World and Adam’s New World

The film narrative gradually reveals the precise location of Adam and Eve with the help of *mise-en-scène* elements. For example, the use of a business sign and a mug as props¹³ in the scenes where the viewer acknowledges the provenance of the vampire’s blood supply.

The café business sign appears when Eve meets a man named Bilal (Slimane Dazi) with whom she holds a mysterious conversation. This sign is written in both Arabic and French (see fig.11) suggesting that she is in country where these are the spoken languages. Bilal informs her that the “teacher is fragile, but he has a strong spirit” (Only

¹³ Props are objects used in films to assist the character and the narrative. In this case, the props are used to expose the vampire’s location.

Lovers Left Alive, 00:11:38) and that their secret is safe with him. Suddenly, the man they were talking about enters the scene from the back of the café, walking with crutches and holding two bags of blood supply. He seats at the table and Eve is excited about his presence. The teacher is none other than Christopher Marlowe (John Hurt), an English playwright and poet that, according to History, lived during the Elizabethan era and whose early death is surrounded by mysteries to this day.

Followers of the anti-Stratfordian theory propose that the writings attributed to William Shakespeare were actually written by a different person. One of the propositions is based on the hypothesis that Christopher Marlowe forged his own death and started to write using William Shakespeare as a pseudonym.¹⁴ In the film, Marlowe mentions that he wish he could have met Adam before writing *Hamlet* because “he would have provided the most perfect role model imaginable” (Only Lovers Left Alive, 00:36:04), disclosing Adam’s tragic hero personality trait and rejecting Shakespeare’s authorship.

The effectiveness of the props can also be seen in the sequence where Adam, disguised as a doctor, leaves the house to meet with his blood supplier, a medical laboratory technologist (Jeffrey Wright) at the local hospital. The hospital scene delivers an important detail related to Adam’s location, which is the technologist’s mug with the sayings “I Love Detroit” (see fig. 12).

The business sign and the mug are props that help to set the Old World – New World localization of both vampires. Nonetheless, the cities’ names are only revealed later on during a sequence in which, after calling Adam, Eve books an airline ticket from Tangier to Detroit to see her husband. These places look undeniably distinct and apart, stressing the polarity that constitutes their personalities.

¹⁴ The group or individual who holds the belief and view that Christopher Marlowe is the author of the plays attributed to William Shakespeare is called Marlovian.



Fig. 11 – The Mille et Une Nuits café



Fig.12 – “I Love Detroit” mug

3.1.1 Traveling personalities

Eve anticipates Adam’s negative answer to her invitation to travel to Tangier and says, “all right, I’ll come. But I can’t believe you’re doing this to me again. It’s just the traveling that’s such a drag” (*Only Lovers Left Alive*, 00:26:15) implying that she is the one that has to come, in a regular basis, to her husband’s aid.

The established convention is that a vampire can only circulate at nighttime; therefore, the dislocation from one place to another, which is a simple task for humans, turns into a difficult endeavor for vampires. Unlike *Interview with the Vampire*, where the vampires travel by ship to the Old World in a period in which the transatlantic crossings could take six weeks or more, depending on the sea conditions, Jarmusch’s film takes place in a contemporary world; consequently the mode of travel in *Only Lovers Left Alive* is no longer by the sea. Eve flights from Tangier with a connection in Paris and finally to Detroit and instead of wooden boxes filled with earth, she carries books written by authors that include names such as Franz Kafka, David Foster Wallace, and Samuel Beckett, thus embracing a variety of literary titles from different genres and generations.

Eve is a vampire that deals with the passage of time as a pragmatic observer, and does not romanticize the past like Adam; on the contrary, she has an adaptive behavior and finds pleasure living the present. She seems to incorporate her surroundings, dealing well with the transition of years and the global-technological changes that invariably come along with it. For example, she uses a smartphone to communicate, while Adam answers her call from a vintage cordless telephone. He is an idealistic vampire that refuses to walk hand in hand with modernity – despite the obvious fondness for science – and his mood sort of mutates itself into Detroit’s urban decay.

After a major economic decline, especially caused by the closed down of many automobile businesses and the decreasing population, Detroit resembles a ghost town and Jim Jarmusch emphasized this aspect of the city while shooting the narrative, starting with Adam's Victorian house that looks abandoned. The low-key lighting intensifies the decaying aspect of the house. Additionally, the color scheme of the décor and furniture stresses and helps to formalize the dark, mournful mood of the character. Adam demonstrates his emotionless detachment in relation to the place where he lives during the dialogue in which Ian shows concern because he has mud on his shoes and Adam replies by saying "I really wouldn't bother" (Only Lovers Left Alive, 00:03:28). The vampire only displays some enthusiasm, and yet in a very self-contained manner, for the rare guitars brought by Ian.

In addition to the contrasting personalities of the vampire couple – an evident element in the narrative since the beginning of the film – there is a scene in which Adam takes Eve for a ride around Detroit at night. After his invitation to visit the outside of the Motown Museum, Eve affirms that she is a "more of a Stax girl" (Only Lovers Left Alive 00:46:47).

The rivalry between the two labels is notorious among the music industry. An interview with Stax co-owner, Al Bell, published in the book *California Soul Music: Music of African Americas in the West* (1998), traces the Motown-Stax distinctions. As pointed out by Bell:

Motown was more urban. Motown was a reflection of the kind of music that you experience in big cities, the metropolitan lifestyles...Motown grew out of the urbaneness of Detroit, a major metropolitan industrial kind of city. And its music was a reflection of that kind of lifestyle. The Stax music was more rural America...[it] was basically free-form (DjeDje and Meadows 187)

Eve does not come from rural America, but she is indeed a free-form vampire living in the Old World Morocco. Conversely, Adam does not allow himself to "distil the eternal from the transitory" (Baudelaire 12), meaning that he is constantly unappreciative of the present space and time. He seems hopeless and unable to synthesize the changes that

comes along with time, just like the city of Detroit¹⁵. For instance, during their conversation over the phone, Eve says: “Oh, my liege lord, we’ve been here before, remember? You missed all the real fun, like the Middle Ages, the Tatars, the Inquisitions, the flood, the plagues” (*Only Lovers Left Alive* 01:36:31). Besides the optimistic outlook on these particular events and calamities, in contrast to Adam’s apathy, a state, according to Eve, that appears to be a cyclical existential crisis; this line also corroborates the idea of the vampire as a transhistorical agent, witnessing important historical, as previously discussed, and, according to Jarmusch also being protagonists of artistic creations.

Eve seems to be the only permanent element in the ephemeral universe that Adam has to struggle with.

3.2 The old in the new

Literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin explains the repurpose of earlier forms as genre memory, because “a genre possess its own organic logic which can to a certain extent be understood and creatively assimilated on the basis of a few generic models, even fragments” (157). The inclusion of these embedded models and fragments from the vampire genre are essential to *Only Lovers Left Alive* since the word vampire is not mentioned in any moment of the story, therefore, the spectators’ awareness in relation to the characters’ vampire form comes via a narrative memory of previous contact with folklore tales, literary works, and other films.

The four following sequences chosen to convey to this idea of “genre memory” and depict some of the core structures that are present in the vampire genre repository in order to create a level of closeness with the viewer.

First, during a visit, Adam makes an odd request to Ian: he wants a bullet, but not an average bullet. It has to be a bullet made of wood, and again not any wood but ironwood, snakewood, and blackwood, the latter well known for being used in the making of musical instruments. The vampire is deeply unhappy to the point of considering suicide, however, instead of the time-honored “stake through the heart”, he is seeking a more modern (and faster) solution to his matters.

¹⁵ The area of Detroit has been emerging from bankruptcy since 2014 and it is currently in a process of revitalization.

The wooden bullet request endorses, as stated earlier, the importance of maintaining in contemporary vampire narratives certain elements inherited from the traditional lore. According to Emily Gerard¹⁶ in *The Land Beyond the Forest: Facts, Figures, and Fancies from Transylvania* (1888), Romanian peasants believed that the “stake through the corpse” (185) was an effective method to kill a vampire. A method first observed in Le Fanu’s *Carmilla* and later in Stoker’s *Dracula*, in a passage from Mina Harker’s diary that mentions a few objects that could cause repulse or kill Count Dracula, which became iconic features for readers and spectators of subsequent narratives of the vampire genre. Mina writes:

He [the Count] may not enter anywhere at the first, unless there be some one of the household who bid him to come; though afterwards he can come as he please. His power ceases, as does that of all evil things, at the coming of day...Then, there are things which so afflict him that he has no power, as the garlic that we know of; and as for things sacred, as this symbol, my crucifix... a sacred bullet fired into the coffin kill him so that he be true dead; and as for the stake through him, we know already of its peace...” (Stoker 223)

This excerpt from *Dracula*, describe several methods - based on Stoker’s studies on Eastern Europe vampirism folklore (Skal) - that are still repeated nowadays to maintain the aforementioned “process of familiarisation and defamiliarisation” (Gelder 86) in these narratives. In *Only Lovers Left Alive*, both processes take place, for example: the wooden bullet is Jarmusch’s version to the wooden stake.

Second, correspondent to the vampires in *Interview with the Vampire*, Adam and Eve also hold supernatural powers. Some of the most recent films have put aside the vampire faculty in shape shifting into bats and wolves by replacing this ability with other attributes. Eve has the psychometric power, which “literally signifies soul-measuring” (Buchanan 3), meaning that she is able to touch an object and sense the history behind it (something that she does quite often in the film with the musical instruments). As for Adam, in the scene that Eve confronts

¹⁶ Gerard’s articles and book about the social and cultural aspects of Transylvania have influenced Stoker’s *Dracula*. Both authors have contributed to *The Nineteenth Century*, a British literary magazine.

him about the loaded gun with the wooden bullet and threats to kill herself, he demonstrates a heightened reflex and enhanced speed, rapidly getting the gun out of her hand.

Third, Eve points out that Marlowe has been wearing a weskit – a sleeveless vest – for four centuries, and he replies: “I was given this in 1586, and it’s one of my favorite garments” (Only Lovers Left Alive, 00:15:09) meaning that both have known each other for at least four hundred years, attesting their non-human nature. This temporal statement is another evidence that these characters are vampires without the necessity of endorsement by the use of the word vampire.

Lastly, Ava (Mia Wasikowska), Eve’s sister, arrives from Los Angeles – another traveling vampire – for an unexpected visit.

In the dialogue between Eve and Ava, two well-know vampire elements are mentioned: the invitation to enter a place and garlic. Eve asks: “You do know that it’s very bad luck to cross a threshold without being invited? (Only Lovers Left Alive 01:06:25) and Ava replies using an ironic tone: “Are you still afraid of garlic?” (Only Lovers Left Alive 01:06:30). Just like Louis in *Interview with the Vampire*, Eve and Ava consider the garlic as pure myth.

At the same time that these films deconstruct some of the vampire symbolism, they also reaffirm others, creating a pattern that emanates its own characteristics but, in a Bakhtinian sense, inevitably revolves around the initial narratives.

3.3 Nostalgia and Zombies

“How can you’ve lived for so long and still not get it? This self-obsession is a waste of living. It could be spend on surviving things, appreciating nature, nurturing kindness and friendship, and dancing!”

Eve (Only Lovers Left Alive 00:59:13)

Rare musical instruments are not the only antiquity that Adam collects. As the camera moves around the musician’s living room, it shows a place full of old gadgets and out-of-date technology: reel tape recorders and vintage speakers are part of the interior decoration, as if somehow by being surrounded by these obsolete devices he could keep himself away from the present and consequently, the future.

The act of collecting old artifacts can be considered a form of time travel, making the past more tangible, thus indicating the first sign towards the nostalgic tone of his personality. Collecting can be

interpreted as the need to fill a present void by reaching to the memory contained in objects that represent a period of time that has been experienced or wished to be experienced.

This sustenance of the past and apprehension of memory by keeping memorabilia is a source of nostalgia for Adam. According to Svetlana Boym in *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001), nostalgia

“... is not merely an individual sickness but a symptom of our age, a historical emotion. It is not necessarily opposed to modernity and individual responsibility. Rather it is coeval with modernity itself. Nostalgia and progress are like Jekyll and Hyde: alter egos (69).

In Adam’s case, he is not collecting as an investment (to perhaps resold in the future) neither he is collecting to accumulate, a condition clinically known as compulsive hoarding. That said, his pursue for vintage collectible musical instruments may be seen as a renouncing status in face of the latest technological goods available nowadays, thus indulging himself in a persistent condition of nostalgia in relation to a time that no longer exists but which he wants to maintain at all costs, refusing to embrace the twentieth-first century.

Adam blames his current nostalgic mood on the “zombies”, a word used by him to address humans and their lack of proper care with the world. As Kyle W. Bishop points out

Almost every vampire movie owes something of its mythology to Bram Stoker, and the reanimated dead have clear ties to Mary Shelley ... The zombie, however, has no germinal Gothic novel from which it stems, no primal narrative that established and codified its qualities or behaviors. Even though vague and inconsistent zombie references could be found in some nineteenth-century travel narratives and non-fiction anthropological texts, it took the publication of William B. Seabrook’s sensational travelogue *The Magic Island* in 1929 to bring the zombie out of the misunderstood superstitions of Haiti and into the light of mainstream America (13)

I do not follow this idea of “misunderstood superstition of Haiti”, that, by means, suggests a scenario in which the Caribbean

legend would have to be encoded by “mainstream America” in order to validate its cultural existence. Anyhow, the Haitian zombie superstitions involve reanimated corpses through voodoo. After the consummation of the black magic, these corpses remain in a sort of submissiveness trance.

As observed by Steven Schlozman, professor at Harvard Medical School and author of the book *The Zombie Autopsies* (2011), a book that intersects fiction and medicine, zombies “frontal lobes are gone. They can’t think in any kind of complicated way (“Robert Kirkman and the Walking Dead”). For Adam, the current frenetic pace of humans daily routine, obscured not only human thoughts, but also led to the image of a symbolic army of creatures in a hiatus from seeing the uniqueness of life and to the absence of appreciation for the past.

3.4 “This is not their season”: the green side of the vampire traveler

In the book *EcoGothic*, Andrew Smith and William Hughes emphasize the relevance of the Gothic genre in relation to environmental issues. They point out that “the Gothic seems to be the form which is well placed to capture these [environmental] anxieties and provides a culturally significant point of contact between literary criticism, ecocritical theory and political process” (5). Following this perspective, there is a clear ecocritical dimension in the film that is linked to vampires. In fact, this concern is already seen in *Interview with the Vampire*, although in a lower degree, when Louis and Claudia are traveling throughout the Old World, searching “village after village, ruin after ruin, country after country” (Interview with the Vampire, 01:09:40) for other vampires. The search for “the same species” only ends once they arrive in Paris.

The difficulties of finding others could imply in a warning of imminent vampire extinction, a status that is echoed in *Only Lovers Left Alive* wooden bullet confrontation scene mentioned in the “Old in the New” subsection above (3.3). Eve asks, “What’s this about? Just tell me that your having trouble with one of the others. Please tell me that”, as Adam replies: “I don’t see any others. Ever.” (Only Lovers Left Alive 00:57:41 - 00:57:53). The matter of extinction is directly related to their feeding habits and contaminated blood, because humans, or “zombies”, have “succeeded in contaminating their own fucking blood, never mind their water” (Only Lovers Left Alive, 00:43:18). The act of traveling new periods of time also brings these new concerns to the vampire agenda. The contemporary environmental issue of water pollution and

blood contamination within the genre demonstrates a direct impact in the life of the vampire couple. In order to maintain immortality, the vampire cannot be deprived of blood and Adam and Eve's main source of feeding still comes from humans. Considering that there is a high rate for transmission of deadly diseases through blood, they need a safe blood supply instead of randomly going around biting people.

Even with all their prudence, Christopher Marlowe dies in Tangier due to a blood poisoning: "I got some bad stuff. Contaminated. Avoid the hospital here" (Only Lovers Left Alive 01:41:36).

Jim Jarmusch also included a scene that can establish a critical awareness to another environmental issue: climate change. Climate change has been widely discussed and studied in the last decades, and according to recent researches it is a process resulted mostly from human activities. Eve notices a few fly agaric¹⁷ mushrooms (*Amanita muscaria*) outside of Adam's place growing out of their season (see fig. 13). Adam confirms that he also noticed the odd behavior of the mushrooms before and says that "they kind appear and then disappear and then reappear, those caps. I guess they're receiving information from the atmosphere like my antennae" (Only Lovers Left Alive 00:53:25). In this sense, not only the mushrooms are underlying messages for the human illusory sense of control over nature, but also can function as a symptom of how the alteration in the vegetation and the landscape configuration becomes more noticeable as a corollary of climate change.



Fig.13 – *Amanita muscaria* outside Adam's house

¹⁷ Fly agaric are the famous red and white mushrooms depicted in Lewis Carroll's book *Alice in the Wonderland* (1865). This species has psychoactive substances and can be fatal.

Interestingly, the city of Detroit constitutes a similar imagery that the forest has in many Gothic literary works. As Daniel Serravalle de Sá observed, “in gothic literature, the forest is a quintessential topos, particularly suited to representing a place in which things may appear one way while being the other” (35). A vampire can impersonate a common citizen in any metropolitan area without being disturbed.

During the night sightseeing tour around the city, Eve exclaims: “So this is your wilderness. Detroit.” (00:45:40). The wilderness found in Count Dracula’s Old World Transylvania, resurfaces in the urban Gothic setting featuring the decaying theatres (see fig.14), the old factories, the abandoned houses and the deserted streets of Adam’s New World Detroit. He tells Eve details about these buildings glorious past, signaling that he actually experienced the city’s golden days during the automobile manufactures expansion in the early twentieth century.



Fig.14 – Adam and Eve in a scene at the Michigan Theatre

This scenario of urban wilderness containing the remains of a prosperous period and sumptuous architecture, provide a similar effect to those triggered by the forest’s dense trees and mysterious sounds. Although being dislocated from a countryside landscape to an urban landscape, the feelings of solitude and unpredictability do remain present in the narrative. In fact, I argue that the urban Gothic environment (the setting) holds a role just as important as the

protagonist, guaranteeing a sense of fear and terror that are gradually vanishing from the vampire character.

3.5 “You drank Ian”: the return to the Old World

Ava cannot control her impetus to kill and bites Ian at Adam’s living room while the others are asleep. The young assistant dies and Adam throws Ava out of his house telling her to go back to Los Angeles, the “zombie central”, which is the way that Adam refers to the Californian city.

Afterwards, Adam and Eve drive to an old factory and dispose the dead body in an abandoned tank that contains a corrosive substance. The presence of a pack of wild coyotes howling in this sequence, once again operates in favor of genre memory, reverberating all the way to Bram Stoker’s narrative. In the novel, Jonathan Harker, after finishing his supper, hears the howling of the wolves. Count Dracula notices his fear and says: “listen to them, the children of the night. What music they make!”¹⁸ (Stoker 21).

The wild coyotes, they hold, altogether with raven and rabbits depending on the region, the symbolic image of the trickster archetype in Native American mythology. It appears that in some aspects, such as the predatory nature, the wandering habits and the subverting/crossing status quo boundaries – the trickster figure of the coyote, consistently reflects vampire behavior.

Adam and Eve decide to flee Detroit and return to Tangier in fear of having their vampire identities uncover after Ian’s death. Whereas in *Interview with the Vampire*, the decision to go back to the New World comes from Louis’ fatigue of wandering through the world, in *Only Lovers Left Alive* the act of traveling back to the Old World happens not only as an imposed exile followed by Ava’s uncontrolled attitude, after all “this is the bloody twentieth century” (*Only Lovers Left Alive* 01:24:32) and vampires need to be cautious about the source of their diet, but also occurs as a figurative restoration of the vampire genesis.

¹⁸ In Romania, the wolves still roam free and even have a patron: Saint Andrew, the protector of the wolves. Romanians celebrate Saint Andrew’s Day on November 30th and according to their belief, the undead, including vampires, are also allowed to roam freely among the living during the Night of the Wolf.

The vampires arrive in Tangier at night and as they walk through the streets towards Eve's place, both look exhausted from the transcontinental traveling as well as weak from the suddenly deprivation of blood intake. Ironically, Adam and Eve give the impression of suffering from a severe form of anemia, which has among its symptoms paleness, over-tiredness, and dizziness. The symptoms of the contemplative couple gets worsen as time goes by. They decide to go get blood from Christopher Marlowe's reliable supply, but it is too late. As observed on page 66, Marlowe dies as a result of contaminated blood, but before dying he handles Eve a little less than half full silver bottle which contained "the very last of the good stuff" (Interview with the Vampire 01:41:05). It is not enough blood for two vampires to satiate their hunger and the anguish continues.

The vampires, who so many times were witnesses of the death of the others, now have to confront the idea of their own imminent death. Similar to Stoker's *Dracula*, a rooster crows can be heard from afar, anticipating the sunrise. Adam, hopelessly, says: "we're finished aren't we?" (Interview with the Vampire 01:52:55) when suddenly Eve spots a couple kissing near them. As a form of distraction from the obnoxious, however irrefutable, idea of biting again to survive, she asks Adam to tell her about the "spooky action at distance"¹⁹, concept by Albert Einstein which states that two particles, previously linked, can be send to opposite sides, far away from each other and still remain connected. The concept is equivalent to Adam and Eve's relationship throughout the centuries: they will always remain linked independently of their spatiotemporal travel.

The reluctance of biting slowly vanishes in face of survival. Eve says: "So fucking fifteenth century. They are deliciously beautiful, aren't they?" and Adam gives the ultimatum affirming that there is no other choice if they want to keep living. The full restoration of the vampire genesis in *Only Lovers Left Alive* is complete.

This chapter has described key aspects of the film *Only Lovers Left Alive* related to the figure of the vampire as a traveler. In the first section, I discussed the opposite personalities of Adam and Eve

¹⁹ Quantum entanglement: phenomenon in which two quantum particles become so deeply linked that they share the same existence. When this happens, a measurement on one particle immediately influences the other, regardless of the distance between them ("The Experiment That Will Allow Humans to 'See' Quantum Entanglement")

followed by the importance of genre memory in relation to vampire narratives. In “Nostalgia and Zombies”, I argued about Adam’s act of collecting as a form of time travel resulted from his nostalgic personality and also the repugnance towards humans, whom he refers as zombies. Moreover, I demonstrated the intrinsic ecocritical discourse in the film narrative and finally, in the last section entitled “You drank Ian: the return to the Old World”, I indicated that the film returns to the old vampire genesis.

In the next chapter, I will present the final remarks concerning the current investigation.

FINAL REMARKS

The present study sought to determine the importance that the act of traveling has in relation to vampire narratives. I must admit that both subjects have been of a great interest to me: the passion for vampires I mainly blame on Rede Globo’s soap opera *Vamp* (see fig. 15) for making me believe that I could actually be one (I guess deep inside, after more than twenty years, I still nurture the idea) and as for the fascination in relation to travel literature I give credit to the Master’s program at PPGI, a place that maintained the fascination but inserted a critical thinking towards the act of traveling that I had not been in contact before.



Fig.15 – *Vamp*’s soap opera - logo

This thesis also focused on the effects of the vampire's displacement once they decided to cross the limits of the Old World in more recent productions of the genre. To do so, I chose to narrow down my investigation to the cinema sphere, which became throughout the years the "home sweet home" for the vampire, intensifying the fearsome aspects of the character. But films were also part of the transformation from the frightening vampire that you do not want to cross paths with in any circumstance, for example, Murnau's *Count Orlok*, to the sympathetic and charming vampire whom you wish to have the possibility to invite out for "a drink", a role shift explained by Carol Senf when she writes that

If changing notion of warfare and the possibility of mass annihilation in the twentieth century have been responsible for writers and readers [and viewers] taking a more sympathetic view of the vampire, changing attitudes toward authority and toward rebellion against that authority have also led to a more sympathetic treatment of the vampire, especially when the vampire is shown rejecting a corrupt or vicious society or choosing to live in seclusion (150).

The films *Interview with the Vampire* and *Only Lovers Left Alive* are a significant illustration of this role shift, although the determinant factor for choosing these respective productions had to deal with the proposed objectives (presented in the Introduction) that involved the processes of displacement from New World – Old World/vice-versa and its consequences in both narratives.

The purpose of this study was not to go over the ethical debate on New World – Old World representations, which I personally consider extremely relevant, but rather it aimed its focal point on the essential role of traveling within vampire's narratives.

As discussed in Chapter 1, it is possible to trace not only the occurrence of travel but also the variations on the travel motif within Gothic genre. Moreover, I offered an overview of the main literary works in the Western vampire genre tradition from Polidori's short story *The Vampyre* to Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* saga, followed by the displacement of the literary vampire to cinema and the films that helped

to shape the mythical figure throughout the years such as F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* and Tod Browning's *Dracula*.

In the sequence, the theoretical basis was composed of important readings to the development of the analysis concerning vampires and frontiers, consequently providing a number of political and historical considerations for the act of traveling in vampire narratives, predominantly paying particular attention to Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*. Indeed, literary works and motion pictures have aesthetics distinctions but for this thesis the core of the chosen review of literature and their focus on displacement brought to light broader issues to the discussion within the genre.

Despite time frame differences, the acts of traveling in *Interview with the Vampire* and *Only Lovers Left Alive* do not have a tourist connotation behind it. On the one hand, Louis travels for two reasons: the first displacement happens in a pursuit for answers about the vampire's origins (Old World) influenced by his emotional side and the second displacement because he feels the need to go back "home" (New World). On the other hand, the travel motifs in *Only Lovers Left Alive* revolve around a call for help (Eve travels from the Old World because Adam is going through an existential crisis in the New World) and, moreover, travel is depicted as an escape. After Ian's death, the Old World seems to be a place more secure to the vampire couple, similar to the concept of home for Louis.

The relationship between travel and vampires is clearly supported by the current findings, transcending geographical aspects and showing itself as an expression of historical contexts and its anxieties. In *Interview with the Vampire*, Armand asks Louis to guide the Old World vampires "into a new era" in a sort of prediction about future events, asserting the idea that "the vampire goes where the power is" (Auerbach 6). It essentially means that this new era is connected to the emergence of the New World – United States, in this case – as the most powerful country in the world in terms of military and economic aspirations, a role that belonged to the British Empire.

In Chapter 3, the issue of power is no longer present; instead *Only Lovers Left Alive* managed to portray the anxieties of globalization, drawing the vampire character as a critique commissioner, identifying current social weaknesses such as environmental issues, and its consequences suffered by Adam.

Also part of the current findings, the analysis dealt with the inner struggles of both Louis and Adam. Vampires, until recently, were immortal creatures with no empathy for humanly reports. However, the

passage of time and the “process of familiarisation and defamiliarisation” (Gelder 86) incorporated emotions to the vampire character. Louis is a deeply melancholic vampire and Adam extremely nostalgic, both longing for an absent moment, person or period. The feeling of melancholy and nostalgia are anchored in the idea that the vampire cannot be an unpunished transhistorical travel agent, therefore the ongoing presence of emotions seemed to be a consequence acquired after being immortal for so long.

In conclusion, I believe this study makes an important contribution to the motif of traveling bringing new insights concerning the representation of vampire traveler in films, which could be usefully explored in further researches. Travel narratives are a fruitful area and we no longer have to fear vampires, neither the ones from the Old World, nor the ones from the New World. The real horror now lies in human forms, everywhere.

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