Rebellion, treachery, and glamour: Lady Caroline Lamb's *Glenarvon* and the Byronic vampire (Byron Society, 20 April 2022)

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I'm going to take as my starting point what Lady Caroline Lamb wrote in her commonplace book on seeing the poet Byron for the first time: 'That beautiful pale face is my fate'.[1] [2] That facial pallor and that idea of fatalistic passion will reappear throughout this talk. Lamb's novel *Glenarvon,* first published in 1816, is usually seen in terms of her revenge for Byron's ill treatment of her after their brief but fiery love affair. Lamb met Byron in March 1812; she was 27, he was 24. The affair was over by November.

It's a mistake, I think, to stress the novel's autobiographical elements, as many people have done. It stands on its own as a novel and has as much merit as many Gothic/sentimental fictions of the period, if not more – it's quite a dazzling achievement. Yet as Nicola Watson has shown, there is a strong intertextual relationship with Byron's poems, the letters between the two, and other works by Lamb. And one aspect of their lives is important – that is, the way their public personas were invented and manipulated. That was part of the celebrity status that hung around Byron. It's been argued that Byron was the first celebrity in the modern sense. Byron himself talked of his celebrity as 'the contagion of Byronism' spreading across Europe; this idea of contagion is another theme I will be tracking.[2]

Then, there is the further intertextuality of Byron's fragmentary vampire tale, upon which John Polidori drew for his 1819 novella 'The Vampyre', fusing this with his personal acquaintance with Byron and elements from *Glenarvon* – I'll return to this later. Thus there is a complex criss-crossing between lives, life-writing, and fiction.

Glenarvon was seen by critics as transgressing gender by its clashing of genres. The *Monthly Review* 'could not decide whether [it] was romance or biography', calling it 'of the *doubtful gender*, though a feminine production'; genre and gender become confused – like 'the doubtful gender' of Lamb herself with her notorious cross-dressing.[3] This clashing of genres, of autobiography, political adventure, high society satire, love story, and Gothic novel, accounts for much of

Glenarvon's interest and value. One of Caroline Lamb's distant heirs may be the paranormal romance of our times, which involve a similar hybridity and which I'll discuss later.

Glenarvon

[3] Glenarvon initiates a fictional trope that is now very familiar, with a vampiric figure that is hypnotic and sexually seductive. Lamb turned her own attraction-repulsion to Byron into a Gothic and sentimental fiction where amatory seduction and betrayal is aligned with the political upheaval of the Irish Rebellion of 1798. Here, the eponymous Lord Glenarvon, or Clarence de Ruthven (the name appropriated by Polidori), is notably Byronic, feeding off Byron's own self-fashioning and Lamb's mimicry of him. Stressing the artifice and self-fashioning of his persona, Lamb writes that Glenarvon 'had a mask for every distinct character he wished to play'.[4]

Glenarvon is characterised with the melancholy nobility and satanic allure that inaugurates a series of vampiric heroes through the Brontës, the Gothic Romance of du Daphne du Maurier and others, and the sympathetic vampires of paranormal romance. He is frequently characterised by diabolical epithets such as 'arch fiend' (111) and 'fallen angel' (121). He howls at the moon and his ancestor is said to have drunk blood from a skull (as was Byron's).

But at the novel's centre is the heroine, Calantha. She is an intelligent, passionate young woman, somewhat untamed, whose education has been indulgent. She has married Lord Avondale but has become discontented by his absences on business. In the amoral society life of London, she meets the charismatic Glenarvon and is fascinated by him. She eventually becomes his lover.

Glenarvon is involved in the anti-colonial rebellion against British rulers, inciting the people with his rhetoric and personal charm. Political subversion, in the domestic sphere and at the level of the nation is equated with madness and yet with glory. Glenarvon's political persuasiveness is linked to his sexual glamour. All this resembles the satanic revolt of the Byron figure. Glenarvon's women themselves become Byronic, denouncing God, family, and society, and swearing satanic vows of abjuration; Byronism is an infection, like vampirism.

Byron and his avatars

Byron saw Lamb as his 'evil genius'.[5] Frances Wilson says, 'Lamb struggled not to regain him but to become him'.[6] Byron's persona in some ways was also Lamb's creation; they invent and reflect each other.

She would return to Byron and his persona as a focal point of her writing. In her last novel, *Ada Reis*, of 1823, the hero is 'the Don Juan of his day'.[7] And at a ball in 1820, Lamb appeared dressed as Don Juan.[8] Mimicry abounds as her novelistic practices invade her actual life; she forges letters from Byron and even imitates his style with great accuracy in *The New Canto* (1819). This was an apocalyptic political satire which also takes aim at Byron while emulating his poetic style to perfection and which she tried to pass as a continuation of *Don Juan*. This mimicry – which might be called vampiric – lies behind the character of Glenarvon, who is recognisably Byronic.

Glenarvon is not the only Byronic figure; the novel is like a hall of mirrors, where facets of the diabolic poet-hero can be found anywhere. The Byrons proliferate like a virus. The mysterious and sinister Viviani is one such figure: 'A deep melancholy played upon his spirits; a dark mystery enveloped his fate' (13).

Viviani, with little justice, blames Calantha's scheming aunt, Lady Margaret, for her own malignant influence over himself; he calls her 'something even more treacherous and perverted than myself'. Lady Margaret 'concealed a dark intriguing spirit' (10) and has a 'face of an Angel, distorted by the passions of a Dæmon' (14).

Calantha is herself Byronic. She swears an 'impious oath' to Glenarvon, abandoning God (221). [4] Comparing herself to one of Glenarvon's victims, Elinor, she fatalistically prophecies her own doom:

> her uncontrolled passions must have depraved her heart. [. . .] I think I understand the feelings which impelled her to evil. [. . .] Something seems to warn me [. . .] that, if I wander from virtue like her, nothing will check my course – all the barriers, that others fear to overstep, are nothing before me. (119)

She calls to her husband: 'Save me. [. . .] who knows whither the path I follow leads? My will – my ungoverned will, has hitherto, been my only law' (119). All this fatalistic amoralism is typical of Byron's own heroes.

[5] It's impossible to read the novel without being aware of the flamboyant life of its author, whom Calantha strongly resembles, and one senses Lamb judging herself in the novel. Calantha dresses as a pageboy for her first secret assignation with Glenarvon (219). Lamb notoriously cross-dressed: as a pageboy on numerous occasions, to get admittance to Byron, even to dictate her novel. And yet we must still be careful to separate life from fiction.

The fallen Elinor, also seduced by Glenarvon, has succumbed to the ultimate Byronic scepticism: 'It were presumption to believe: I doubt all things' (319). Elinor is another avatar of Lamb, or of the female equivalent of the Byronic persona; she 'unblushingly' follows Glenarvon in 'the attire of a boy' (142). When Elinor's uncle is injured, his outcast niece seeks a reconciliation, dressing as a pageboy to effect an entrance (194), taking the name 'Clarence', thus repeating Lamb's cross-dressing and impersonations of Byron.

Duplication, pallor, and infection

[6] I have mentioned the significance of Byron's pale, beautiful features. Lamb wrote to Byron: 'How very pale you are [. . .] a statue of white marble, so colourless, and the dark brown hair such a contrast. I can never see you without wishing to cry'.[9] And here's Glenarvon when Calantha first observes him in society: his 'pale cheek and brow expressed much of disappointed hope' (147). Thus, the pallor is bound up with the characteristically Byronic inner torment. We can already see prefigured here Anne Rice's marble-like Lestat in *Interview With the Vampire* and *Twilight*'s glittering Edward Cullen. And Polidori's Ruthven is attractive to women 'despite the deadly hue of his face', from which passion is absent though the features are beautiful.[10] This pallor is associated with ill health. This makes Glenarvon a Gothic figure, more living dead than truly alive and clearly laying the ground for his literary metamorphosis into vampire.

Annabella Milbanke, who would become Byron's wife, compared Lamb at the time of her infatuation to a rabid dog and 'thought that [she] had bit half the company and communicated the *Nonsense-mania*'.[11] It is Milbanke who also coined the term 'Byromania' for the infectious glamour the poet spread around him. This contagious Byronism incites rebellion.

Infection through music and poetry

Calantha rebels against domesticity: on Avondale proposing marriage, she scorns the epithet of 'wife' (51). She despises feminine occupations such as needlework (62); music becomes the dangerous obverse to domestic work (63). Calantha is especially susceptible, claims Viviani, and music will be an instrument of seduction (69). Likewise, Elinor's musicality reveals her passionate nature (63). Music and poetry are like the infectious power of the hypnotic vampire.

Sir Everard, the utilitarian doctor at Calantha's father's castle, is misogynistic, despises poetry, 'heroics', 'romance and fooleries in women', and favours 'common sense' (67). He writes pamphlets against the growing plague of republicanism. Thus rebellion, which Lamb has some sympathy towards, is linked to both the poetic and disease, announcing the ambivalent pathology of Byronism.

Music heralds Calantha's first meeting with Glenarvon as she hears his flute. [7] She catches sight of Glenarvon's face, that of the suffering hero-villain:

> The eye beamed into life as it threw up its dark ardent gaze, with a look nearly of inspiration, while the proud curl of the upper lip expressed haughtiness and bitter contempt; yet, even mixed with these fierce characteristic feelings, an air of melancholy and dejection shaded and softened every harsher expression.
>
> [. . .]
>
> She could have knelt and prayed to heaven to realise the dreams, to bless the fallen angel in whose presence she at that moment stood. (120-21)

Calantha asks the radical preacher, O'Kelly about this mysterious man. He says he is infected with 'the distemper' from sleeping in the dog kennel. Now, 'he howls and barks, whenever the moon shines bright' (122). There's a hint of lycanthropy here – and at this time the werewolf was not clearly distinguished from the vampire. And note the image of the Satanic 'fallen angel'.

Revolt and betrayal

In Ireland, Calantha reads Glenarvon's 'address to the United Irishmen' that has been circulating to much effect. It is 'so eloquent, so animated', that she fears its infectious potential. This is Calantha's first awareness of Glenarvon. Then Sir Everard appears, raging about the 'licentious democrats' and 'rebellious libertines' that have infected his wife and daughters and, in particular, his niece, Elinor, who lives with them. They have been 'struck mad, like Agave in the mysteries of Bacchus', he says.[12] They are 'running wild [. . .] hair dishevelled [. . .] ornamented with green cockades' (111) – the Irish nationalist symbol. All stirred up by the 'arch fiend' (111) Glenarvon. The women follow Glenarvon 'as if he were some god'; this is the celebrity fervour that surrounded Byron. The castle retainer MacAllain says, 'The whole country are after him [. . .] it's a rage, a fashion' (111), accurately describing the Byron phenomenon. The doctor retorts that it is pathological: 'a frenzy' (111) and 'a pestilence' (112). The Duke, Calantha's father, thinks Glenarvon himself is diseased and 'acting under the influence of a mad infatuation' (112).

However, for all his avowed anti-imperialism at the level of the state, Glenarvon sees Calantha in the light of imperial conquest. In her face he reads 'his empire and her own weakness' (177). In the manner of the demonic lover of many a romance, he asserts his dominance: 'I must be obeyed: – you will find me a master – a tyrant perhaps; not a slave. If I once love, it is with fervour – with madness' (182). But, in the context, this has wider political overtones. He tells her, '"I know my empire. Take off those ornaments: replace what I have given you" [. . .], throwing a chain around her' (192). There is a hint that she is bound by him with jewellery that is imperial plunder: 'richest jewels brought by him from distant countries' (194). So Glenarvon's political radicalism is shown to be suspect. Glenarvon's politics can already be seen as superficial and tied up with his egotism, as he declares his abandonment of Ireland (243).[13]

Glenarvon ultimately betrays Calantha and this is connected to his betrayal of revolution; it's not made explicit, but both coincide with the restoration of his property and granting of a ship by the English court and with the prospects of his marriage to the eligible society woman Miss Monmouth. Calantha has died of grief. The betrayals are twinned, casting doubt on his love and patriotism both, which appear now to be motivated by self-interest and self-love.

It is Elinor who, after Glenarvon's betrayal, continues the authentic rebellion for Ireland, which is represented almost as a betrayed mistress (351). [8] The image of

Ireland as wronged woman is frequent in nationalist iconography; even, on occasion, as victim of vampirism, as Christopher Frayling illustrates in his seminal book on vampires. But Glenarvon is still Elinor’s muse, of lyrical poetry and rebellion despite his betrayal (352). Glenarvon ultimately betrays both his women lovers and Ireland (352), yet still somehow he is an inspirational force, though for rebellions doomed to tragedy, both for the transgressive women and for the nation in revolt. With all these conflicting forces, Lamb’s novel shifts between conservatism and radicalism.

So, I’ve shown how Lamb’s novel sets up the image of a mesmeric vampire here, attractive to women but dangerously so, and the centre of a contagious delirium.

Glenarvon’s heirs

[9] I’ll turn now to *Glenarvon*’s immediate heir. There’s a complicated story about John Polidori and his tale ‘The Vampyre’ which I’m sure many of you will know. In 1816, Mary and Percy Shelley, and Mary’s step-sister Claire Clairmont, were staying at the Villa Diodati on the shore of Lake Geneva with Lord Byron and his physician Polidori. Fuelled by intellectual discussion and the reading of Gothic tales, they held a competition to each write a ghost story. From this, Mary’s novel *Frankenstein* famously emerged but also a short fragment by Byron. Polidori took this as the basis for his novella ‘The Vampyre’, first published in 1819 as though it were by Byron himself.

In this story, a naïve young man, Aubrey, goes on a tour of Europe with the mysterious Lord Ruthven (Lamb’s alternative name for Glenarvon). The relationship sours as Aubrey sees that Ruthven is a dangerous corrupter of morals. Ianthe, a young Greek peasant girl whom Aubrey has come to love, is savagely murdered – by a vampire, he is told. Aubrey witnesses Ruthven’s death but is sworn to secrecy about it. Back in England, Aubrey finds his sister engaged to none other than Ruthven! She wastes away with sickness and dies – the victim of a vampire, as Aubrey now sees but is unable to reveal because of his oath.

Polidori had a troubled relationship with Byron and it’s not hard to see the tale as a personal attack on him. Lord Ruthven is, as we have seen, Glenarvon’s titular name in Lamb’s novel and he in turn is based on Byron. Polidori satirises the aristocratic women of Whiggish high society. The sympathies aroused in Glenarvon are erased in Polidori; he casts Lady Caroline Lamb as Lady Mercer, 'the common adulteress' who 'dressed as a mountebank'.[14]

The Byronic vampire is diseased. In the fragment by Byron that was the basis of Polidori's tale, we read that Darvell is 'a prey to some cureless disquiet'. The incurable malady here may, says the narrator, have arisen from 'ambition, love, remorse, grief [. . .] or a morbid temperament' (247). This combination of qualities is again typically Byronic.

Dracula's love(s)

[10] I want to look now at the most famous of Polidori's literary progeny: Bram Stoker's aristocratic Count Dracula in his 1897 novel. Polidori took the vampire out of peasant society in Eastern Europe and introduced him into the drawing rooms of urban society and Count Dracula follows him.

At first sight, Dracula isn't sexy at all and little of either Lamb or Polidori's Ruthven remains apart from his aristocratic status. He's depicted in the novel as repulsive. [11] His visualisation in the earliest film of *Dracula*, F. W. Murnau's 1922 *Nosferatu*, is not going to make you swoon with desire. But as well as being an aristocrat, he's hypnotic and a seducer of women, haunting the polite society of Whitby and London. And the Count we know from film is increasingly depicted as attractive and even sympathetic, laying the foundations for the contemporary romantic vampire. I'll begin with the love interest in *Dracula*. You may know the famous passage with Jonathan Harker's sizzling encounter with the three seductive female vampires in Dracula's castle. They incite in Harker 'a wicked burning desire, that they would kiss [him] with those red lips' (38), and when their fangs touch his throat, a 'languorous ecstasy' (39). This is the very character of the desire that vampires still generate in contemporary fiction. And the unearthly and inhuman character of their allure is familiar too:

> [12] such a silvery, musical laugh, but as hard as though the sound never could have come through the softness of human lips. It was like the intolerable tingling sweetness of water-glasses when played on by a cunning hand.[15]

That pure, crystalline hardness does, I think, become transposed onto Edward Cullen's cold, diamond body.

[13] But I will remind you of the climax: Dracula, with 'blazing' (39) eyes, flings the women aside and cries:

> 'How dare you touch him, any of you? How dare you cast eyes on him when I had forbidden it? Back, I tell you all! This man belongs to me! [. . .]' The fair girl, with laugh of ribald coquetry, turned to answer him:—
>
> 'You yourself never loved, you never love!' On this the other women joined, and such a mirthless, hard, soulless laughter rang through the room that it almost made me faint to hear; it seemed like the pleasure of fiends. Then the Count turned, after looking at my face attentively, and said in a soft whisper:—
>
> 'Yes, I too can love; you yourselves can tell it from the past. Is it not so? Well, now I promise you that when I am done with him, you can kiss him at your will. (39-40)

'I, too, can love' – this famous phrase has drawn a multitude of speculations on just who, exactly, Dracula *can* love. The homoerotic undertones have struck many readers of this scene, so charged with illicit eroticism. Dracula appeals to the past experience of the three women, but, as many have pointed out, there is no other indication of just who Dracula loves, or how he can love.

So, who are the love objects of Dracula, and other vampires in general?

Female vampires are certainly often desirable. In 'Dracula's Guest', Stoker's discarded story, there is a sexy vampire, modelled apparently on Le Fanu's Carmilla in his lesbian vampire novella of 1872. In *Dracula*, Lucy, on turning, has the same 'voluptuous' mouth as the three vampire women in the castle. But where does Dracula's sex appeal lie, if at all? Who does he love, or who loves him? He does brag of his mastery over women, declaring to the 'Crew of Light (as his foes have become known): 'Your girls that you all love are mine already' (285). In the descent from Polidori, in *Dracula*, the hypnotic act is seen as repulsive because observed by men unsympathetic to the monster who see 'their' women alienated from them. But in woman-centred fictions, this aspect will become alive again.

Lucy's dream reveals this mastery and the erotic power of Dracula (83).[16] His hypnotic bond with Mina also suggests an erotic connection, but it is a mere hint, becoming amplified in Tod Browning's and Coppola's cinematic revisions.

Later reincarnations of the Count have frequently shown him as a lover, or erotic object, though usually heterosexual and in an increasingly romanticised aspect. Here, the genre of romantic fiction copulates with the revitalised Gothic of Stoker.

There must be something latent in Stoker's Dracula that allowed the sexuality, the humanity, the vampire as lover to emerge – such as, the brief hints announced by 'I, too, can love' and the moments where Lucy and Mina fall under his spell. The scene where Mina is forced to drink Dracula's blood is particularly erotic. So, there must have been some buried seed to work on.

Perhaps that very absence, that unfulfilled desire, the unanswered question – who *does* Dracula love? – provokes a fictional response. Nina Auerbach, however, claims that the demand for a love story arises because *Dracula* is so bleak.[17] This suggests how utopian strands emerge in vampire fiction; new possibilities of love are discovered, even if this is simply Bella Swan's fabulous sex-life in *Twilight*, and triumphs over physical limitations or over death can be imagined.

Gothic Romance

The genealogy of the demonic lover has roots in the monstrous couplings from ancient myth, old ballads, and 'Beauty and the Beast'. [14] The line runs through Lovelace in Richardson's *Clarissa*, touched by Milton's Satan, to the vampire created in Byron's image – or self-image – by Polidori after Lamb and, separately, to the dark heroes of the Brontës, Daphne du Maurier, and Mills and Boon. It is familiar now in the recently emerged genre of Paranormal Romance, where themes from Gothic horror are modulated by romantic fiction, and vampires, and other monsters become humanised as love objects. Thus a hybrid genre features creatures whose monstrous nature is compromised and made mongrel by traces of humanity.

However, I want to point out an intermediate generic shift, another moment when Gothic returns to the imbrication with 'romance' that was already at the heart of Ann Radcliffe's Gothic novels of the 1790s.

As part of my research into how different genres encounter each other to generate the new genre of paranormal romance, I've been immersing myself into one of its forbears: Gothic Romance (sometimes known as romantic suspense), which proliferated from the 1950s to the 1970s.

The Gothic aspects of *Jane Eyre* (1847) and *Wuthering Heights* (1847) are well known (their allusions to vampires, their spirits, the ominous mansions and bleak, forbidding landscapes). Likewise, the presence of *Jane Eyre* in Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* and the Gothic roots of her writing have been much explored. And these devices are bequeathed to Gothic romance.

These novels rarely embrace the supernatural; it may be suggested but it is usually resolved in the manner of Ann Radcliffe's novels. But key motifs of moonlight, darkness, and shadows; subterranean passages and caverns abound. The protagonists are endangered, vulnerable (though often plucky) young women—orphans, governesses, or companions. The hero will be brooding and have dark secrets. Often an antiquated family home is central; abbeys or castles may appear. [15] The book covers for this genre notoriously feature women with great hair and flowing dresses fleeing a sinister mansion or castle. [16] At the height of this trend, *Glenarvon* itself was published in a Gothic Romance series, with all the typical hallmarks on the cover.

Polidori, seizing on elements of Byron's life in the flesh and within literature, transformed the blood-bloated vampire of the East European peasantry into a pale, cold aristocrat. But there is a parallel strand of the Byronic figure as demonic lover and betrayer, initiated by Lady Caroline Lamb and enduring through Gothic romance.

Demon lovers

As in the earlier Gothic novels, the protagonist of the Gothic Romance is, as I have said, often a vulnerable young woman. It is characteristic of this genre that the heroine is plunged into dependency at the beginning of the book, very often economic dependency following the death of their father, and emotional dependency too. The 'Cinderella' plot is common (Du Maurier's *Rebecca* exemplifies this).

[17] Demon lovers appear in this genre but not in supernatural form. They do, however, get labelled with supernatural epithets; they're 'satanic', 'demonic',

'Luciferean', and so on, just as Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* is repeatedly described as 'Devil' or 'demon'.[18] The housekeeper, Nelly Dean, says, '"Is he a ghoul or a vampire?" I mused. I had read of such hideous incarnate demons'. [18] Here's Laurence Olivier showing his tender side as the quintessentially demonic lover, Heathcliff, in the 1939 William Wyler film. [19] But note how the pose is also somewhat vampiric; this image of the monster at the bedside recurs many times in film.

Lord Mortmain, the scarred hero of Jill Tattersall's *The Wild Hunt* (1974), 'was probably handsome once, like Lucifer' says a character (32). The hero of Madeleine Brent's *Tregaron's Daughter* (1971), who has 'a faintly satanic look', is named 'Lucian', which the heroine associates with Lucifer (26). This resonates with the Satanic imagery of *Glenarvon*.

Polidori made the monster explicitly a vampire; Lamb's Glenarvon is only implicitly so. Polidori's Ruthven is somewhat reified, made thing-like rather than humanised, whereas the demon lovers that follow Lamb are sympathetic despite their treachery. The two strands reunite in the paranormal romances of the present day.

Paranormal Romance

[20] In recent years, the new genre of popular fiction Paranormal Romance has made a dramatic emergence, most notoriously with Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* (2005). Paranormal Romance takes the plot conventions of romance fiction and stylises it with a Gothic mood. Like Lamb's novel, they come from a mating of diverse genres – Gothic and romantic fiction but sometimes science fiction or *noir* detective. All the dark dangers and terrors of the Gothic give an edge to the sunniness of romance by depicting monstrous lovers. Thus humans have love affairs with all manner of supernatural creatures that once haunted tales of sheer horror, humanising the Gothic mode while problematising romance.

One aspect of the sympathetic monsters of this new genre is that they are a means of tackling issues of the contemporary politics of identity by representing outsiders, or 'Others', as the demon lover figure. So racial and ethnic others, people with alternative sexualities, and so on – once the monsters of horror – become assimilated to society through these Gothic-styled love stories. Thus they can have a political force that resurrects the rebellion of *Glenarvon*.

[21] It's the contemporary vampire, with all their sexiness and ambiguous threat that we're most familiar with as monstrous lover in paranormal romance. Note Edward Cullen's pale, sculpted face here. You all know *Twilight*, I'm sure, but the genre of paranormal romance – where mortals have love affairs with supernatural creatures – is vastly prolific. The demon lover can be vampire, werewolf or other shapeshifter; there are affairs with demons and angels, [22] zombies, ghosts, [23] even gargoyles. [24] The merman always seems to be a favourite. [25] But this may be the most terrible demonic lover I've seen.

Vampire lovers

Dracula himself has been a lover many times. In the films, he becomes increasingly humanised and sexier. [26] There's Bela Lugosi; [27] then Hammer Horror's Christopher Lee; [28] moody Frank Langella, and so on. [29] Dracula's sexual appeal was invented by Lugosi, Auerbach maintains,[19] and 'The story of the strangest passion the world has ever known' was how Tod Browning's *Dracula* (1931) was billed – where the romance between Mina and Dracula is first suggested.
[30] Then, there is the 1992 Francis Ford Coppola film, *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (which is really not Stoker's at all); here's Mina and the Count in a full-blown clinch.
[31] Coppola's billing of 'Love never dies' asserts the theme of Mina as the Count's resurrected love. This is one of the ur-texts for the vampire as tragic lover and beloved. Anne Rice's 1976 *Interview With the Vampire,* filmed by Neil Jordan in 1994, is another. [32] Here's Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt as Lestat and Louis – humanised vampires with a hint of homoeroticism. [33] Joss Whedon's broody, tormented Angel from the cult TV series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) is in the same vein and then you had that explosion of vampire lovers of whom *Twilight*'s Edward Cullen is the most famous. [34] That formidable slayer of vampires, Buffy, even comes under Dracula's spell in one episode.

[35] All these moody, hypnotic, vampiric lovers owe a lot to Lady Caroline Lamb's transformation of her own desires and of the Byronic image in *Glenarvon*. They're 'mad, bad, and dangerous' as Lamb famously said of Byron. Why is there a

need for a vampire who is not just humanised and sympathetic, but sexually attractive? It might boil down to the cynical and market-driven exploitation of a niche – that of a largely female readership. Francis Coppola very consciously targeted a female audience. (*Dracula* itself, of course, is very much a masculine tale of derring-do and male bonding in the late Victorian manner of H. Rider Haggard.)

Often, the male vampire lover appeals precisely because he is both attractive yet dangerous. Precisely why this is appealing would need a deeper kind of psychological analysis than I could give but it may be as much a way of negotiating the perceived difference of masculinity as any urge to submissiveness (particularly in young adult fiction). Recent vampires, however, may stand accused of having watered down their threatening aspects. The dangers from Edward Cullen are so minimised that he is hardly vampiric anymore – more a superhuman who might accidentally break Bella with his superior strength if their passion gets out of hand, and this diminishes the disturbing fascination of the true romanced Gothic, with its dangerous lovers (from Rochester to Angel). L. J. Smith in *The Vampire Diaries* solves some of the problems of loving the monster by splitting her vampire lovers into brothers, Stefan and Damon, one good, the other evil (though this is qualified). The demon lover still has that appeal: 'Perhaps she'll find that real darkness is more to her taste than feeble twilight', says Damon, taunting his brother.[20] (It would be amusing to think this is a dig at the innocuousness of Edward Cullen but it was written 14 years earlier!).

And vampire lovers offer to unleash a utopian potential in the beloved; here, Damon tempts Elena: 'You've tried everything else, and nothing has satisfied you . . . It's the ultimate secret, Elena . . . you'll be happy as never before'.[21] For *Twilight*'s Bella Swan, it is eternal life and ageless looks and an intensified sex life. The dark gift on offer is the possibility of a reflection that doesn't disturb; for these female-centred narratives, eternal beauty is proffered – a changelessness that is, however, inhuman because of that very fixity. Edward, impervious and marble-like, says as much to Bella. The vampiric state, in its very perfection, despite the power it grants, denies autonomy, for change and creative spontaneity are the sources of human freedom.

Conclusion

Polidori's revision of Ruthven stripped away Lamb's ambivalence, but by clearly marking the aristocratic demon lover as both Byronic and a vampire, inaugurates a literary archetype. Polidori also undermines the glamour of romantic villainy – his naïve protagonist has cast Ruthven 'into the hero of a romance' but Ruthven is quickly exposed as repulsive (5). Yet many of the descendants resurrect the alluring mix of rebellion and faithlessness that Lamb depicted. But what happened to the political critique? Heathcliff has buried energies of class revolt. Anne Rice's Lestat and others are perhaps sexual revolutionaries. Often, like Angel, they can act as conservative guardians of order. [36] In one recent and very sophisticated paranormal romance, Holly Black's *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*, the vampire Gavriel does appear pitted against oppressive systems, both the feudalism of the old order of vampires and the neo-liberalism of the dystopian present. But perhaps the novel of the radical vampire lover as an agent of emancipation – a sort of Bolshevik *Twilight* – has yet to be written. We await the resurrection of a contemporary Glenarvon, a pale-faced demon lover and vampiric social justice warrior. [final slide]

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[1] Lamb, in her commonplace book, 24 March 1812, in Paul Douglass, *Lady Caroline Lamb: A Biography* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 104.

[2] Clara Tuite, *Lord Byron and Scandalous Celebrity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. xx. Also, p. 1.

[3] Douglas, *Lady Caroline Lamb*, p. 198.

[4] Lady Caroline Lamb, *Glenarvon*, intr. by Frances Wilson (1818; London: Everyman, 1995), p. 288. All further references are from this edition and are given as page numbers in parentheses.

[5] Douglas, p. 205.

[6] Frances Wilson, Introduction, *Glenarvon*, p. xxxii.

[7] Lamb, Lady Caroline, *Ada Reis: A Tale*, 3 vols (London: John Murray, 1823), I, p. xi.

[8] Duncan Wu, 'Appropriating Byron: Lady Caroline Lamb's "A New Canto"', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 26 (1995), 140–46 (p. 46).

[9] Lamb to Byron, in Henry Blyth, *Caro the Fatal Passion: The Life of Lady Caroline Lamb* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1973), p. 120.

[10] John Polidori, *The Vampyre*, in *The Vampyre and Other Tales of the Macabre*, ed. by Chris Baldick (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 3. Mario Praz describes the 'sombre portrait of the idealised [Byronic] self' thus: 'The pale face furrowed by an ancient grief, the rare satanic smile, the traces of obscured nobility [. . .] worthy of a better fate'. This, he says, is derived from Ann

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Radcliffe (Mario Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, trans. by A. Davidson, Rvsd. edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 64, 68; p. 87, n. 30. Paz on 'The Corsair' and 'The Giaour', p. 66.

[11] McConnell Stott, *Summer in the Shadow of Byron* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2015), p. 153.

[12] Agave is the princess and Maenad who tears apart her own son Pentheus in Euripides' *The Bacchae*.

[13] For the egotism and self-interested individualism of Glenarvon's politics, see Malcolm Kelsall, 'The Byronic Hero and Revolution in Ireland: The Politics of Glenarvon', *The Byron Journal*, 9 (1981), 4–19 <https://doi.org/10.3828/bj.1981.11>. Here, he is like the reformulation of Lovelace in anti-Jacobin novels – see Vallaton in Elizabeth Hamilton's *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* (1800). Kelsall sees Glenarvon as a scapegoat figure, used to absolve the ruling class liberals of their guilt over Ireland.

[14] Polidori, p. 3; 'a fictionalized Lady Caroline Lamb' (Patricia L. Skarda, 'Vampirism and Plagiarism: Byron's Influence and Polidori's Practice', *Studies in Romanticism*, 28 (1989), 249–69 <https://doi.org/10.2307/25600775> (p. 250).

[15] Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, ed. and intr. by Roger Luckhurst (Oxford: OUP, World's Classics, 2011), p. 38. All further quotes are from this edition, with page numbers in parentheses.

[16] See David Punter's remarks on this: '*Dracula* and Taboo', in Byron, *Dracula*, pp. 22-29 (pp. 26-27)).

[17] On adaptations of *Dracula* as love story, see Auerbach, pp. 71-72.

[18] See Crawford, p. 34

[19] Auerbach, p. 115.

[20] L.J. Smith, *The Awakening*, Vampire Diaries, 1 & 2 (1991; London: Hodder Children's Books, 2009), p. 180.

[21] *Ibid*, p. 206.