

ISTANBUL KÜLTÜR UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

BLOOD ON PAGE, BLOOD ON STAGE:
A LOOK INTO ARTISTIC CREATIVITY AND TRANSFIGURATION THROUGH
VAMPIRES IN LIZ LOCHHEAD'S *BLOOD AND ICE* AND *DRACULA*

MASTER OF ARTS THESIS

By Aylin AKYAR

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Department: English Language and Literature

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JUNE 2025

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Dr. FATİH YÜCEL

JUNE 2025

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It all began when I attended the conference “Our Glocal Shakespeare: Intercultural Encounters with The Bard” between 19-20 April, 2024, held at Istanbul Bilgi University, the staff of which I am also part of. During one of the intervals at the conference, I had a brief but life-changing conversation with Prof. Dr. Özden Sözalan. When I told her that I was still in search for a feminist dramatist, desperate as I was for an inspiration, she told me to have a look at Liz Lochhead. I did, and was instantly captivated by her unique contributions to feminist drama. In an incredible twist of fate, I realised that Lochhead’s *Blood and Ice* was scheduled to be staged at İstanbul Kültür University. That moment I remember feeling this was no coincidence. This play was staged by the English Literature department's official student community "English Literature Society". I would like to extend my heart-felt appreciation to the play’s director, and advisor for this student club, Res. Asst. Murat Kabak. Seeing the play staged for a live audience fuelled my imagination and triggered me to dive in months of scholarly research. Murat Kabak is one of the most helpful academics I have ever known, and at the beginning of it all, he did all in his power to address my enquiries.

I have had the privilege of taking the course “Selected Topics in Literature: Women’s Writing: Madness, Mother and Myth” led by Prof. Dr. Gillian Alban and it has most certainly transformed the way I look at feminism. Among many insights I have gained from her meticulously planned course, some have prevailed. Alban is the scholar who introduced me to Angela Carter’s radical feminism, and her Gothic tales in the *Bloody Chamber* collection. I had no clue back then, that these Gothic tales would haunt me until they found their way into my thesis. I believe my class project on Carter’s *Sadeian Woman* resonates with her to this day. Quite fittingly, Carter’s Gothic has been a huge inspiration for Lochhead’s writing. I was introduced to Adrienne Rich’s monumental essays which have left their mark on my approach at Lochhead’s works under scrutiny here. I was also given the chance to study Adrienne Rich’s poetry with a look into her prose in Dr. Özlem Gülgün Güner’s course on Women’s Poetry and Güner’s positive feedback helped me better understand Rich’s feminist politics and women’s writing in general. Thank you for agreeing to be my Mary Shelley, dear Özlem hocam. Being part of your course has shaped the way I think about ‘lost’ or ‘hidden’ female authors.

The most memorable insight I have gained through Prof. Dr. Alban has been into feminism as an ideology. As an advisor, a remarkable quality of hers is that she has given me the space and scholarly freedom to design my research and come up with my own interpretations in the process. She nurtured this freedom of thought. She is the kind of advisor/scholar who pushes you to the limit for your own good. I will always remember how she supported me emotionally as well during times of crisis, both personal and political. Most of all I admire her stamina — it is not hard to guess that she also burned the midnight oil to help me realize my full potential.

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the infamous demeanour of Byron. In this encounter, Mary Shelley is me. This person is Ádám Mézes, and I call him the ‘vampire doctor’ as a tribute to his research on real-life vampire cases of the 18th century. That sounds fascinating. He is now a Max Weber fellow at the European University Institute; I wish him all the best in his oncoming book on the Undead. I have not made acquaintance with him face to face (I do hope to trim my sails for the Dalmatian Coast) but he has done so much in so little time that the scope of this thesis does not allow me to thank for it all. But let me try, he always encouraged me to question notions or anecdotal evidence that some ‘vampire’ scholars seemed to take for granted. He was there for me when I needed an Annotated version of *Dracula* in the middle of the night, to give an example for his dedication. He made me think of Dracula’s blood in a new light, or re-interpret vampiric encounters which have already fuelled much academic interest in the field. He answered my endless late-night questions with incredible readiness and the list goes on... I will go so far to say that without the far-reaching support of such a ‘vampire doctor’, I could not have completed a whole new chapter within such a short time. And most important of all, he encouraged me to find my own voice, and to claim the credit I deserve for my ideas.

As far as ‘vampire doctors’ are concerned, there is one exceptional name introduced to me by our mutual advisor Prof. Dr. Gillian Alban: Dr. Fatih Yücel. I had the privilege of attending his Vampire module, and he kindly let me discuss Foucault and Barthes with a bunch of his doctoral students including my CELTA buddy Burçin. I would like to extend my gratitude to him for supporting me all the way, *also* answering my endless questions on the vampire concept that he is an expert scholar on. I admire the way he cares about his profession, and his genuine attitude towards me. I have met Yücel exactly at the right time and I hope our mutual ‘affinity’ for vampires turns into a mutually-supportive friendship and academic connection.

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keys) I sought her support. She has been by my side when I needed her the most and even this very last night of my thesis. I admire her dedication to her profession and I share her love for women of literature, for the Gothic, and especially for Mary Shelley. Göker Talay, another colleague of mine, deserves praise for his understanding attitude whenever I called our meetings off due to my 'thesis'. Our conversation about *Dracula*'s attire has been most insightful. Göker is not only a great colleague to have, but also one of the most selfless human beings I have ever known. I will never forget how you supported me during 'Speaking'. Cecilia A'deane Kinnear Uygur, the beautiful human being I work with, was so intrigued by my *Dracula* chapter that she agreed to have a look at it. When I visited her later to see how it went, her reaction was priceless. My dear Cecilia, you are such a strong woman, bountiful just like mother nature, and your lust for life is a huge inspiration. I am truly grateful for your presence. Your genuine curiosity (I saw it in your eyes) about my writing meant so much to me.

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June 2025

Aylin AKYAR

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KISA ÖZET

SAYFADAKİ KAN, SAHNEDEKİ KAN:

LIZ LOCHHEAD'İN *BLOOD AND ICE* VE *DRACULA* ESERLERİNDEKİ SANATSAL YARATICILIK VE VAMPİRİN DÖNÜŞTÜRÜCÜLÜĞÜNE DAİR BİR İNCELEME

Blood and Ice (1985, 2009) ve *Dracula* (1988), İskoç oyun yazarı Liz Lochhead'in Feminist Gotik Tiyatro türüne yaptığı sui generis katkıları arasındadır. Bu çalışma, feminist edebiyat kuramlarından yola çıkarak, özellikle Adrienne Rich'in "feminist yeniden-okuma" ("feminist re-vision") kavramına dayanarak, Lochhead'in Romantik/Gotik edebiyat türünün tanınmış figürleri olan yazar Mary Shelley ile Bram Stoker'ın karakteri Dracula'yı feminist bir bakış açısıyla nasıl yeniden kurgusallaştırdığını analiz etmektedir. Ancak bu iki oyunun ortak noktası yalnızca Gotik türüne dayanmaları değildir. Bu tez, bir yandan *Blood and Ice* adlı oyunda mecazi bir vampir figürü olarak yer alan ve John William Polidori'nin *The Vampyre* (1819) adlı eserine ilham kaynağı olan Romantik şair Lord Byron'ın, Mary Shelley'nin sanatsal yaratıcılık arayışında, onun için bir ayna ya da alternatif benlik (double) rolünü nasıl üstlendiğini tartışmaktadır. Lord Byron, Mary Shelley'nin sanatsal yaratım sürecini körükleyen, onu yazmaya iten bir güç olma rolünü üstlenir, aynı zamanda *Frankenstein* (1818, 1831) eserinin yaratımındaki içkin çelişkilerini de açığa çıkarır. Mary Shelley'nin *Frankenstein*'i, bu içsel bölünmelerin yükünü taşıyan ve onları sanatsal bir yaratıya dönüştüren, eşsiz benzersiz bir "canavarca otobiyografi" olarak da değerlendirilebilir.

Bunun yanı sıra, Bram Stoker'ın *Dracula*'sı (1897), yüzyıl sonu Gotik edebiyatının kurgusal aristokrat vampiridir; ve bunun çok daha ötesinde, Kont Dracula aykırı ve sınırları aşan, aşkın bir arzusun ve cinselliğin saklı simgesine dönüşmüştür. Lochhead'in *Dracula* oyunundaki feminist yeniden-okuma biçimiyle birlikte bu vampir, kadınlarla uyumlanan, onları özgürleştiren ve onların gücüne güç katan bir doğa figürüne dönüşür. Kont Dracula, kendilerini halihazırda her türlü toplumsal kısıtlamadan özgürleştirmek isteyen kadınlar için bir dönüşümü ateşler. En nihayetinde Liz Lochhead her iki oyununda da, feminist yeniden okuma stratejisiyle, beklentileri ters yüz eder.

Bu tartışmanın çerçevesinde ele alınan Liz Lochhead'in oyunları, Romantik ve Gotik edebiyattaki 'Vampir' figürünü nihayetinde benlik ile ötekiliğin, cinselliğin ve toplumsal cinsiyetin sınırlarını dağıtan, dönüştürücü bir varlık olarak yeniden ele alır.

Anahtar kelimeler: feminist yeniden-okuma, feminist yorumlama, adaptasyon, feminist tiyatro, Gotik tiyatro, sanatsal yaratıcılık, yazarlık, toplumsal cinsiyet, queer vampirler, Mary Shelley, kadın vampirler, Dracula.

ABSTRACT

BLOOD ON PAGE, BLOOD ON STAGE:

A LOOK INTO ARTISTIC CREATIVITY AND TRANSFIGURATION THROUGH VAMPIRES IN LIZ LOCHHEAD'S *BLOOD AND ICE* AND *DRACULA*

Blood and Ice (1985, 2009) and *Dracula* (1988) are listed as Scottish playwright Liz Lochhead's sui generis contributions to Feminist Gothic drama. Drawing on the framework of feminist literary theory, specifically Adrienne Rich's concept of "re-vision," this study analyses how Lochhead reimagines canonical Romantic/Gothic figures, respectively Mary Shelley and Count Dracula through a feminist lens. However, their arising from Gothic genre is not the only connection between these two plays. This thesis puts forward that on the one hand, in Lochhead's *Blood and Ice* the metaphorical vampire, Lord Byron as John William Polidori's primary source for *The Vampyre* (1819), assumes the role of Mary's mirror / double in her quest for artistic creativity, compelling her literary authorship and revealing the contradictions embedded in her creation of *Frankenstein* (1818, 1831). Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* can be regarded as a monstrous autobiography par excellence, since this Gothic tale carries the burden of her self-divisions, which transfigure her artistic creation as well.

On the other hand, Bram Stoker's Count Dracula in his Gothic fin de siècle novel *Dracula* (1897) is the fictional vampire — the epitome of transgressive desire and sexuality in disguise. In Lochhead's feminist re-vision in *Dracula*, Bram Stoker's Vampire is portrayed as a liberating and empowering force of nature aligned with women, a trigger for transformation for the women who sought to free themselves from the societal constraints. In both texts, Liz Lochhead turns the tables with her revisionist stance.

Lochhead's plays within the scope of this thesis' discussion ultimately depict the Gothic/Romantic 'Vampire' as a transfiguring figure, disrupting the boundaries between Self/Other, along with sexuality and gender.

Keywords: feminist re-vision, feminist re-writing, adaptation, feminist drama, Gothic drama, artistic creativity, authorship, gender, queer vampires, Mary Shelley, female vampires, Dracula.

INTRODUCTION

In their monumental study on female creativity and authorship, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar ask the following question: “Where does [...] an implicitly or explicitly patriarchal theory of literature leave literary women? If the pen is a metaphorical penis, with what organ can females generate texts?” (7). For so long, patriarchal discourse attributed the role of ‘penetrator’ to men, and men only, thus only male authors were seen as equipped with the privilege to penetrate into the white sheet — the page. If reading and writing were seen as male activities, then these were “not only alien but also inimical to female characteristics” (8). Such a notion left women outside the door to ontological reality. Since they lacked the pen/penis, women in patriarchal societies were reduced to “characters and images imprisoned in male texts, because [they were] generated solely [...] by male expectations and designs (12).

If one takes a moment to look what Romantics had to say about this, for Blake for instance, “the eternal female was at her best an Emanation of the male creative principle. For Shelley she was an *epi-psyche*, a soul out of the poet’s soul” (12). Disparate examples from Western literature point to the fact that both patriarchy and its literature is quite anxious to contain women’s sexuality and creativity. Then what would one’s strategy be, to break free? Before women could even hold the pen which was “so rigorously kept from them” they must first escape “those male texts which deny them the autonomy to formulate alternatives to the authority” which had kept them away from that magical pen at first place (13). Obviously, the male horror of female sexuality is so pervasive that men compulsively ‘kill’ women in their texts (14). Women’s bodies seem to be an anti-thesis for philosophical beauty, they are “too fleshy and material” for noble and intellectual love (Showalter 176). On her discussion about decadence and homosexuality in fin de siècle England, Elaine Showalter refers to Lord Henry Wotton — “the aristocratic dandy” — in Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, (176). These misogynistic lines of Wotton’s reflect “an escalating contempt for women”:

[Dorian] – ‘You must admit, women give the men the very gold of their lives’.

[Henry Wotton] – ‘Possibly’ he sighed, ‘but they invariably want it back in such very small change. That is the worry. Women, as some witty Frenchman once put it, inspire us with the desire to do masterpieces, and always prevent us from carrying them out.’

[Dorian] Harry, you are dreadful! (Wilde 68-69)

According to Dorian Gray, women can have access into the ‘sphere of art’ only if they kill themselves first, and “become beautiful objects” (Showalter 176).

[Basil Hallward] ‘You went to the Opera while Sibyl Vane was lying dead in some sordid lodging? You can talk to me of other women being charming, [...] before the girl you loved has even the quiet of a grave to sleep in?’

[Dorian] Yesterday when I heard that Sibyl Vane had killed herself——’
‘Killed herself! Good heavens! is there no doubt about that?’ cried Hallward, looking up at him with an expression of horror.

[Dorian] ‘No,’ said Dorian Gray, ‘there is nothing fearful about it. It is one of the great romantic tragedies of the age. [...] she died, as Juliet might have died. She passed again into the sphere of art. (Wilde 93-94)

Through actress Sybil Vane’s suicide, death is aestheticized; hers becomes a ‘Jacobean tragedy’. In the Romantic poem “Ode on a Grecian Urn” (1819), Keats “embedded” his woman inside a Grecian marble, figuratively silencing and ‘killing’ her: “Thou still unravish’d bride of quietness, / Thou foster-child of silence and slow time”. Keats’ lines suggest that the woman he adores is as ‘still’ and ‘silent’ as a Grecian vase, who can express her beautiful tale only through her death since this vase is of a specific kind — it is a burial urn. In this paradox of “the metaphor of literary paternity”, the author both enlivens and locks away his fictional characters through silencing them, taking away their literary autonomy (Gilbert and Gubar 14).

“The successful courtship of a beautiful young woman is the most popular of fictional plots. The death of a beautiful young woman, Poe tells us, is the most powerful poetic theme” (Tracy 33). The combination of these elements are excessively common in nineteenth century Gothic, subtle as they may be. However In Stoker’s *Dracula*, the marriage between the idealised beauty (of a woman) and death is so

straight-forward and blunt — “unguarded, and [...] crude” that for instance, there is almost a momentary transition from the ‘monstrous feminine’ to the *angelic* countenance at the pivotal scene where Lucy, as a vampire, is confronted with the Crew of Light. The “voluptuous” Vampire Lucy is restored back to her angel-in-the-house status, the moment she is killed by the phallic stake by her fiancé, and one should notice that the moment of her death is aestheticized by depicting it with the same vocabulary as the quivers of an orgasm, and of ecstasy. Sex and death is crudely juxtaposed with each other, which is eerily reminiscent of Henry Fuseli’s Gothic painting, the “Nightmare” (1781), where ecstasy (both in the sense of an overwhelming emotion, a rapture and displacement) and pain become intertwined. Only then did Lucy look beautiful and peaceful again — men liked their woman better dead.

That male authors berate her for [her refusal to be fixed or ‘killed’] while they themselves generate female characters who perversely display monstrous autonomy is one of the ironies of literary art. From a female perspective, however, such “inconstancy” can only be encouraging, for — implying duplicity — it suggests that women themselves have the power to create themselves. (Gilbert and Gubar 16)

Within such a discourse, the question is how a woman can achieve artistic growth, and flourish. Gilbert and Gubar refer to Joan Didion’s assertion that “writing is an aggression” precisely because it is “an imposition . . . an invasion of someone’s most private space” (qtd. in Gilbert and Gubar 20). When it comes to the author of *Frankenstein* — Mary Shelley, her writing was indeed an act of aggression — a *monstrous* preoccupation she subconsciously felt it to be — even though she was Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin and William Godwin’s proud daughter, had literary works within her reach in abundance and was surrounded by an artistic circle (including Percy Bysshe Shelley) who expected her to *write*. She is a unique author in the sense that she became the creator of one of the most prescient myths in English literature and beyond, and I could not stress enough that she achieved this when she was only eighteen years old, having lost a baby, having left her father embittered against her. Nevertheless, the “pale student of unhallowed arts” abode in her mind and in her dreams (*Frankenstein*: 1818, 55). Hers thus became a *monstrous* autobiography par excellence, which will be explained through Barbara Johnson’s post-structuralist account of Mary Shelley’s selfhood and her monsters.

Then the question is, how did she sit down to write against the odds? Let alone keeping the pen *away* from her, there was specifically one artist among others who kept throwing the pen *at* her, who *urged* her to “*write that story*” — an intellectual exchange for which there is only scattered evidence in the non-fictional accounts of the time and which requires a huge scholarly effort to unearth. Nevertheless, in Lochhead’s play *Blood and Ice*¹ this exchange is rendered by these characters; the poet and the prodigy. This Romantic poet was no other than the “mad, bad, and dangerous to know” Lord Byron himself.² I will refer to their intellectual exchange in real life through several accounts such as journal entries and correspondence and then demonstrate how in Lochhead’s play, Lord Byron becomes her double / mirror — becoming in a way, her voice and her conscience, while she insistently tried to maintain her silence and hide those monstrous parts of her. In doing so, the ongoing in the famous villa Diodati will be put under close scrutiny because precisely this villa rented by Byron, one cold summer night, ignited the gestation of *Frankenstein*. Byron’s primary role in the gestation of such a masterpiece is his proposal of a ghost story contest one night upon reading translated versions of a French anthology of German ghost stories, *Fantasmagoriana* (1812), and feeling discontent due to those stormy, long summer nights which trapped them indoors by the blazing fire. Had it not been for such an idea of Byron’s, today we might not have gained such an enduring myth of *Frankenstein*. This literary contest must have been one of the most fruitful in the history of all contests because it did not only ignite Mary Shelley’s wonderful imagination. This entourage involved a curious member — Byron’s personal physician and secretary (at the time, staying for a while during the summer at Villa Diodati) and an aspiring writer, John William Polidori. However curious, he had developed an affinity for Mary Shelley and he was the only one except Mary to take this ghost story contest seriously. He sat down and began to write *The Vampyre* (1819), which is considered to be the very first vampire tale in English Literature. This paved the way for another prescient myth — the most popular vampire story to date — Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*. As it will be mentioned below, Lord Byron with his eccentric personality “mad, bad and dangerous to know”, inspired Polidori to write that story in the first

¹ This thesis refers to the 2009 version of *Blood and Ice* throughout.

² A depiction by Lady Caroline Lamb, a lover of Byron’s: “Forced to commit shameful public acts of love to win him back, Lamb had her revenge on the poet by defaming him in her novel *Glenarvon*, which was published in May 1816” (Aquilina 28).

place (Aquilina 28). Critic after critic attributed the vampire character Lord Ruthven to the real-life Lord, Byron, with his aristocratic background, self-loathing, egotistical personality, yet attractive aura. Based on this literary connection, I assert that we could see Lord Byron as the ‘vampire’, who, rather than posing danger and imposing horror, becomes the empowering force for the woman author who was struggling to *write her story*. While Lord Byron becomes an Other in that he becomes Mary’s mirror in *Blood and Ice*, Dracula as the Undead disrupts the boundaries and his proximity blurs the distinctions between Self / Other.

When it comes to Lochhead’s feminist politics, the first chapter ‘Liz Lochhead and Feminist Drama’ provides an overview which is critical in understanding Lochhead’s revisionist stance. It was not until the advances of feminism and feminist drama that women playwrights became preoccupied with the presence and/or absence of women on stage, even though there have been plays on and about women ever since the times of Sappho and Aphra Behn. This new trend, which marks the realisation of the under-representation of women and women’s stories as well as their absences and silences, do not only reflect the changing times but profess “a new aesthetic based on the transformation rather than the recognition of persons” (Keyssar 1).

Helene Keyssar refers to Gertrude Stein’s theatre and opera in the first half of the 20th Century, as “among the first overtly feminist dramas” (2). Stein herself referred to her plays as “landscapes” — in that these plays were not snapshots of reality, but visions filled with utterances and silences, left ambiguous on purpose so that one could find her own expression in such terrain. The plays in this context do not intend to make bold statements or exceed their scope but rather find and create new meanings, new modes of being, within the usual events of everyday life. Protagonists of these plays are predominantly women, but this does not mean that these works exclude men altogether. Rather, these plays are on and about women with a focus on women’s lives, their relations with each other and their relationship with men. This focus manifests itself in the form, closely associated with the aforementioned aspects of women’s theatre “re-presenting women who played important but forgotten roles in history or of retelling history from a female perspective” (2). In their retellings of historical figures, such plays endeavour to reflect upon conventional representations of women on stage, and the ideological implications of gender, at large.

Many British women writers have been interested in retelling old tales with a feminist lens and their new versions have made up some of their most creative, compelling work: “The construction or reclamation of a women’s tradition brings to light hidden or neglected stories. And the retelling of traditional stories or myths has become one of the significant strategies of female creativity” (Macmillan 17). While some of them engage with Greek mythology, some others address the Bible, fairy tales or British history. They revisit old fairy tales by providing the readers with a completely new vantage point, as in Angela Carter’s short stories in *The Bloody Chamber* (1979) collection, as analysed in Alban’s *The Medusa Gaze in Contemporary Women’s Fiction: Petrifying, Maternal and Redemptive* (2017). Besides, they rewrite Greek tragedies and mythological tales as in Timberlake Wertenbaker’s *The Love of the Nightingale* (1989), Caryl Churchill’s translation of *Thyestes* (2001) or Liz Lochhead’s Scots translations such as *Tartuffe* (1986). One of the most famous Biblical postmodern rewritings is Jeanette Winterson’s *Oranges are not the Only Fruit* (1985).³

Apart from the endeavours mentioned above, playwrights such as Lochhead, revisit nineteenth Century gothic tales and novels. Lochhead revisits Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* in *Blood and Ice* (1985, 2009) and her poetry collection *Dreaming Frankenstein* (1984). All of these revisits, whether they are rewritings, references, or acts of putting new twists to old tales, glance at the project of feminist revision.

Feminist retellings act as a continuation of a history of narrative flux in which a host of contesting versions hover around any particular manifestation. The new tales work precisely against the notion of interpretive truth, making submerged or silenced elements or readings part of the story, there to be questioned but not ignored. (Benson 205)

“Lochhead’s plays re-examine the roles, and images which historically have limited the signifying possibilities of ‘women’ — and hence the roles open to women” (McDonald and Harvey 124). Lochhead’s sui generis position as a dramatist stems from her feminist-revisionist approach. Lochhead’s is a writing process in which meticulous research, gender politics, sexuality, the unconscious, dramaturgy and intertextuality all contribute to the art. Consequently, Lochhead’s most significant

³ See Harries 158.

contribution is her rendering of an alternative to conventional narratives in the field of playwriting.

Stephen Benson refers to Adrienne Rich's "writing as re-vision" through which women writers contribute to the narrative, which is open to challenges and various contestations. They challenge the patriarchal norms embedded in these texts and as they "rewrite" them, deliberately reveal the silences in the stories, and hence ensure that the female characters once 'submerged', reclaim their voice. Although the folk tales, for instance, seem to be fixed and static at first glance, they are open to infinite interpretations, and this is what makes the narrative pool fluid. Lochhead explains her act of looking back at old tales in a 1990 interview as follows: "[In The Grimm Sisters] I began to tell familiar stories from another angle. I didn't want the women to be the object in the stories, but the subject" (Somerville-Arjat, Wilson 9-10).

Until recently, Mary Shelley's creative journey — Mary the artist, as the 'subject' of the story — has not been taken into thoughtful consideration. In the accounts of Romantic circles, she was depicted as Percy Bysshe Shelley's wife and the dear friend of Polidori and Lord Byron. However, Mary Shelley, primarily as the daughter of Wollstonecraft and Godwin, is the cultural icon whom Lochhead addresses and re-visits in *Blood and Ice*. In an interview, Lochhead voices her interest in Mary Shelley as the author of *Frankenstein*:

What about your interest in Frankenstein and Dracula? When I [...] decided I would write about Mary Wollstonecraft, all I really knew about her [...] was that she'd been Mary Shelley's mother and that Mary Shelley wrote Frankenstein. It kept fascinating me, how this intellectual, rational woman, with all these incredibly powerful [...] views of female education, had been so haunted by bogeymen in her own life [...]. And then it interested me that her daughter should have grown up to write Frankenstein. (Somerville-Arjat, Wilson 12)

Liz Lochhead is among the numerous Scottish writers who sought to grant a new life to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Along with *Blood and Ice*, Lochhead's play *Dracula* deals with fantastical elements and retells them in line with the feminist strategy of "revisioning history, mythology and existing literary and theatrical texts" (McDonald, "Scottish" 494). Lochhead is a prominent figure among Scottish

dramatists due to her concerns with, “the key socio-cultural tropes of [...] sexual identity [...] and a deliberate deployment of strategies of politicised deconstruction and feminist revisioning” (Scullion, “Contemporary” 95). In their adaptations and representations, Scottish writers engaged with socio-political issues in their motherland and way beyond. In their representations, they aspired to “re-vision” such classic texts in the manner of “looking back, seeing with fresh eyes, entering an old text with a new critical direction” (Rich 18). “The centrality of the unspoken histories of women [...] has led to the use of various discourses to uncover and articulate areas of women’s experience occluded by patriarchal society. Dreaming [...] and the creation of a work of art provide keys to the formation of meaning in Liz Lochhead’s *Blood and Ice*” (Bain 141).

Along with Liz Lochhead’s *Blood and Ice* (1985) are *Wasp Factory* by Iain Bank (1984), *Poor Things* by Alasdair Gray (1992), and *Monster!* (2002) — an opera by Janice Galloway. What these works have in common is that they all engage with the classic text of *Frankenstein* in order to question established cultural norms, and power relations especially in terms of gender, linked with “literary voice, authority and artistic creation” (Davison 180). At the core of their revisioning process is female authority and authorship. There was an obvious disparity between the opportunities given to male playwrights as opposed to female authors in Scottish theatre. This coupled with the rise of second wave feminism, which is one of the reasons why Liz Lochhead was drawn towards a dramatic representation of women’s issues, “fuelling her need to redress the position of a woman, and indeed a woman writer, from a radically female perspective, [...] and to explore the ways in which female creativity does or does not differ from male creativity” (Horvat, “Liz”, 182).

The question of agency, sexuality, and female creativity explored in *Blood and Ice* continues to echo in *Dracula* (1988), another play by Liz Lochhead, adapted from the fin de siècle gothic novel with the same name. In Lochhead’s *Dracula*, the playwright “makes it clear that Dracula is merely the trigger for transformation” (McDonald, “Liz” 549). She is surprisingly faithful to the original novel in terms of plot development, but her detailed reading of the novel becomes evident in the instances where she departs from the original text. Through the cues left by Stoker, she expands on the vampire mythology, by unravelling the ways in which Stoker’s women are “transformed by the exposure of a transgressive impulse” (McDonald, “Liz” 459).

For Lochhead, the most striking part of the tale, even more striking than the rampant if latent sexuality, is a unique quality of the vampire — Dracula cannot come in and enter inside unless being invited first. Of course, Lochhead makes sure that the audience notices this feature of the vampire, by incorporating lines into Dracula's soliloquies such as "Thank you. For your kind inviting" (*Dracula* 73). What is only hidden or discreet — undercoded — in Stoker's version, becomes visible and vocal in Lochhead's version. "Lochhead's women subconsciously desire his intrusion. [I]t signals liberation and empowerment" (McDonald, "Liz" 459). Through her re-vision, the subversive transpires, potential such as the sexually fuelled clues left by Stoker for readers to discover. Namely, she picks on such instances in the novel, finds the dissonances and uncertainties in the text, and exposes these moments "in Stoker's text where social and gender-related anxieties are covered and silenced" (Braun 199).

In Lochhead's version of *Dracula*, Dracula the vampire resurfaces as the liberating source for women to manifest their sexuality along with desire and appetite. They are represented as "terrifyingly beautiful" against all odds, and they regain a kind of power they had long possessed but which they were denied by the conventional Victorian society. While Stoker makes a warning out of these female characters — the hazardous, monstrous nature of unleashed sexual awakening, she makes a critique of it by using a number of narrative techniques. All such diversion serves as a rewriting of the fin de siècle Vampire as a queer figure.

When dealing with Mary Shelley, she has the same intention in mind — to break and rewrite myths constructed by males (i.e., the Romantics). For the first time ever among other theatrical representations of Mary Shelley's story, Lochhead places Shelley at the central stage and replaces her identity from solely being the daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin, to Mary the creator of her own story. In other words, she challenges the traditional myth of Mary Shelley who remained in the shadow of her mother, father, and her husband. As she allows Shelley to embrace the fragile nature of her womanhood in terms of childbirth, menstruation, and sickness, Lochhead also makes her reclaim her power; her power to write and create and give life; she is thus liberated. In a similar vein, Victorian women in *Dracula* are representations of the society's abjection of the manifestations of womanhood in terms of sexuality and desire. She makes use of language as well as dramaturgy to show the excess and ambivalence in her characters' desire, expressed through references of fluids

— especially blood. Much of *Dracula*'s ironical tone is embedded in double entendres and puns around blood and drinking. However, desire is a complex issue in Lochhead's version. Lucy is liberated by Lochhead's Dracula because she simply cannot be contained and defined, both in her nature as a vampire and her ambivalence towards her desire.

Lochhead's plays creatively reimagine the familiar narratives of *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*. Her willingness to weave the poetic with the prosaic within a single play, scene, or even a single character or monologue, adds depth and nuance to her already credible and relatable characters, enhancing the tragic or emotional resonance they evoke. Her works explore the intersections of history, myth, and memory, frequently drawing on elements from literary and popular culture. She is particularly inspired by Gothic motifs and has found new ways to use fairy tales and childhood rhymes as metaphors that address women's societal roles. Similar to Angela Carter, Lochhead reframes familiar narratives to expose dark, often violent unconscious realms, offering fresh critiques of accepted social norms. Her plays frequently engage with the theme of corporeality, playfully navigating the grotesque and the ambiguous. Although fantasy and the supernatural have historically played a vital role in Scottish literature, Lochhead's modern interpretations of these tropes allow her to tackle themes of power, creativity, and empowerment in unexpected ways.

The thesis consists of three main chapters. The first chapter is concerned with an overview of Liz Lochhead's revisionist stance, in other words, the ways in which she engages with texts full of feminist re-visionary potential in the light of Adrienne Rich's arguments in her monumental essay, "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision" (1972). An overview of 1970's and 1980's radical drama and a brief history of feminist drama contextualises the plays discussed in this thesis. One of the key tropes of this chapter is that Lochhead's plays are unique renderings of the feminist revisioning and rewriting process in the ways in which they deal with History as a patriarchal discourse, women's hidden or neglected stories, female creativity and authorship, archetypal duality of womanhood, sexuality, and agency. While remaining loyal to the core of the stories told, as in the way Lochhead retells famous conversations which took place within the coterie of Villa Diodati in *Blood and Ice* or in the way she incorporates exact lines from Stoker's novel *Dracula* for her stage

directions; she makes nuanced revisionary comments on her characters and their actions in such a way that they can escape the framing placed upon them by society.

The second chapter opens with a section concerning Mary Shelley's deep connection with her mother Mary Wollstonecraft as well as her father William Godwin. These figures in her life are significant in understanding Mary Shelley's struggle for authorship and her will and determination to create, since she always felt the pressure of living up to her parents whose legacy shaped her artistic imagination in *Frankenstein* and beyond. One stark example for this connection is presented by Liz Lochhead at the very first scene of the play *Blood and Ice*, where a young widowed Mary is presented to the audience as "stretched out asleep" in a cold and dark nursery — an image resembled to Henry Fuseli's 'Nightmare' with "perhaps an actual and physical manifestation of the smothering homunculous on her chest" (Act 1, Scene 1, 3). This Gothic tableau is purely symbolic in the way that it shows the inevitable proximity between sex and death. This image resonates in Mary's life considering her mother's troubling relationship with the artist Henry Fuseli and the fact that she died only ten days after giving birth to Mary. This "Nightmare" scene also serves as a foreshadowing for the immensely dangerous, yet alluring proximity of Lochhead's women with the 'vampire'. This chapter also analyses non-fictional accounts concerning Mary Shelley; such as letters, journals and introductory sections written for *Frankenstein* by Percy Bysshe Shelley and Mary Shelley herself and juxtaposes them with Lochhead's *Blood and Ice* within the context of female authority, artistic creativity, and struggle for authorship in the face of unbearable dilemmas Mary the artist experienced. In this context, her intellectual relationship with one particular Romantic poet in the Villa Diodati entourage — Lord Byron — is discussed at length.

In *Blood and Ice*, Lord Byron takes on the role of Mary Shelley's 'double', in the sense that he both compulsively urges her to 'write that story' following the famous ghost story contest he himself proposed one night, and that voices the contradictions within her that she kept in the dark. This section is named "In the same room with the *Vampyre*" since Lord Byron quite fittingly wrote one of the first vampire poems in English literature: *The Giaour* (1813) and in real life, he is the vampire incarnate in the eyes of John William Polidori, his personal physician. Thanks to Byron's eccentric character, charisma, and charm as well as his noble roots and the lavish lifestyle this nobility afforded, readers were introduced with the very first aristocratic/alluring

vampire in the character of Lord Ruthven, by Polidori in *Vampyre* (1819). Hence the vampire figure, for the first time in literature, was attributed the qualities of the already-popular Byronic anti-hero.

The third chapter brings forth a detailed discussion of Dracula as a transgressive vampire, following a brief look into Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872). An analysis of a selection of scenes in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* as a narrative enveloping sexuality will inform how Liz Lochhead approaches the potential of this text, particularly in terms of queer vampires, and female sexuality. Vampire narratives such as *Dracula* influenced discussions on the vampire and sexuality, and inseparably, the Self / Other in Gothic fantasy. An encounter with the vampire illustrates proximity between life and death, self and other, thus disturbing boundaries and disrupting fixed identities. Dracula's tale is a fantasy, yet, through the entanglement of fluids and corporeality of the 'vampiric kiss', it is strikingly terrestrial. Liz Lochhead, while remaining surprisingly faithful to the original text in terms of plot, and lines uttered by her characters and stage directions (she incorporates Stoker's depictions of scenes word by word), her revision is nuanced. While in Stoker's *Dracula*, sexuality is almost always undercoded, she brings it to the fore and thus reveals what is latent in the original text. In response to the post-Freudian readings of Dracula's women which tend to see Lucy and Mina as passive victims without a clue about their sexuality, Lochhead turns the tables and makes her female characters vocal, sexual, and attributes to them agency in their encounters with Dracula. This chapter will demonstrate that Dracula is a liberator and a sexual initiator; the fact that such ecstatic sexual experiences are brought by a 'vampire' does not negate these female characters' ability to assert themselves despite societal constraints, and patriarchal expectations placed upon them.

'Desire' evokes fear, and dreams produce nightmares as Fuseli's "Nightmare" (both version I and II) masterfully depicts. In her *Dracula*, Lochhead makes it irrefutably clear that Lucy and Mina invite the vampire in 'knowingly', albeit hesitantly, against all odds. These women act upon their sexual impulses no matter how 'fearful' they appear to be. And considering that Dracula is not an outsider, or the 'Other' in this reading, but the manifestation of an internal urge (to be free, to regain one's power) and a force of nature to be reckoned with, the revisionary potential of Lochhead's Gothic drama becomes yet more visible.

I. LIZ LOCHHEAD AND FEMINIST DRAMA

a. An Overview of Liz Lochhead as a Feminist Dramatist

Lochhead is a poet, playwright and a translator, whose fame surpassed her country of origin, Scotland. She was born in Motherwell, Lanarkshire on 26 December 1947, and attended Glasgow School of Art. Since Lochhead's primary desire was to tell stories through an art form, painting did not seem to fully satisfy this wish (Horvat, "Liz" 177). However, her education in art possibly helped her to visualise the stage directions in her drama pieces: "[p]erhaps one of the reasons she writes so much drama is related to her early work with the visual arts" (Smith 5). Her first poetry collection named *Memo for Spring* was published in 1972 and was awarded the Scottish Arts Council Book Award. Her second poetry publication, *Islands*, was brought out in 1978 and this "was the year in which she wrote and performed, with Marcella Evaristi, her feminist revue *Sugar and Spite* at Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh" (Varty, "Brief" vii).

While continuing to produce poetry well into the '80s, with her collections *The Grimm Sisters* (1981), *Dreaming Frankenstein and Collected Poems* (1984) and poetry for performance, *True Confessions and Cliches* (1985) her love interest with the stage was well under way. Her first full-length drama is the adaptation of *Frankenstein*, or rather the process of the creation of *Frankenstein*, which is called *Blood and Ice* (1985, 2009). In 1987, she wrote a historical adaptation about the feud between Mary, Queen of Scots and Queen Elizabeth: *Mary the Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*. Upon the request of the Artistic Director of the Royal Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh, she produced another adaptation, this time of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* with the same name, in 1988. After publishing a number of notable poetry collections in the early 1990s and 2000s, Lochhead took on the task of adapting theatrical classics such as *Medea* in 2000; *Myseryguts* – a version of Moliere's *Le Misanthrope*, with the national setting of the Scottish Parliament (2002), *Thebans* (2003) and *Educating Agnes*, adapted from Moliere's *L'École de Femmes* in 2008. She went on to write original plays as well, such as the one on the Cuban Missile Crisis named *Cuba* (1997), and her romantic comedy pieces for stage include *Perfect Days* (1998) and *Good Things* (2004), (Varty, "Brief" vii-viii). Among her important achievements and contributions to the Scottish stage and feminist drama, one of the most notable moments in her career

was her appointment as Scotland's Makar in 2011. The title of Makar, similar to a national poet laureate, is given to a poet recognized for their significant impact on Scottish literature and culture.

This is the lie of the land. / This is the house.

This is the ironwork of the old gate. / It does not open.

It does not remind you of a prison.

Don't / let history frame you / in a pretty lie.

(Lochhead, *Dreaming* 21)

Lochhead is the best known contemporary Scottish woman playwright, within and beyond Scotland. The unique qualities in her work and her outstanding voice have earned her critical acclaim and her plays have found significant recognition in repertoires. To this day, her earlier plays are both studied and staged in theatres and academic institutions. Some of the underlying reasons of her distinctive position among Scottish playwrights can be listed as her deployment of social and cultural leitmotifs in popular history and myth; women's sexuality; "popular, traditional and 'high' cultural forms, and a deliberate deployment of strategies of politicised deconstruction and feminist revisioning" (Scullion, "Contemporary" 95). As mentioned above, considering in part the wider feminist culture of the time, Lochhead made use of an outright feminist strategy — revisiting old tales or myths to rewrite women's stories and histories, and adapting popular literary texts to give women a predominantly central role, reinterpreting social and cultural leitmotifs in order to demystify and deconstruct them. She shares this position with a number of Scottish woman playwrights. These plays are listed with the intention of demonstrating their common ground in "deliberately applying classic feminist strategies" including *Business in Edinburgh* by Ena Lomont Stewart (1977), *The Straw Chair* (1988) and *Bondagers* (1991) by Sue Glover and *The Maiden Stone* by Rona Munro (1995). These specific plays appear to be "versions of the history play", and the way they salvage "lost or marginalised biographies", which "reinterpre[t] and critiqu[e] the role of women within contemporary society" (Scullion, "Contemporary" 96).

It is important to highlight that the critical reception of Lochhead's work has made a monumental impact both on Scottish studies and theatre studies. However, the Scottish theatre scene and the critical appraisal surrounding it was bound to change

when Liz Lochhead first broke onto the stage with her *Blood and Ice* (1985). Carole Woddis calls her “the acknowledged doyenne of Scottish drama” and praises her upfront attitude in dealing with politically charged issues, celebrating her “feminist guile disguised by humour and invention” (178). On the one hand, from their onset, Lochhead’s plays found affirmation within Scottish theatre circles due to a mixture of many inseparable qualities such as the continuous interplay between prosaic and poetic genres (as in *Blood and Ice*), her familiarity with pop culture and media (as in *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* and *Dracula*) accompanied by a sharp wit, an ironic voice and a unique brand of humour. As a tribute to all of these qualities in her work, these plays demonstrate Lochhead’s “counter-cultural, radical and feminist” stance (Scullion, “Woman’s” 121). In addition, her fame surpassed its locality as her drama received an overwhelmingly international critical attention.

As a Scottish and feminist playwright, Lochhead seeks to revisit old tales, a strategy resonating with Angela Carter’s, and retell them in a deconstructive style. This is a necessary project for her not only because there are so many stories about women untold and/or hidden but also too many myths were created around female creativity and sexuality, which need to be demystified. The purpose of ‘re-visioning’ is “to challenge the received opinions contained in the original text, and for feminist writers, it is to initiate a reinterpretation of the role of women as constructed and marginalised by history, mythology and the literary canon” (McDonald, “Scottish” 495). In a way, through this initiation, Lochhead becomes an iconoclast, a destroyer of myths (McDonald, “Liz” 454). Lochhead is a highly prominent figure in contemporary Scottish drama partly due to her “deliberate deployment of strategies of politicised deconstruction and feminist revisioning” (Scullion, “Contemporary” 95). Her work raises questions and initiates interrogations on mythologies regarding female expression, creativity, and sexuality.

From a poststructuralist lens, if one adopts the presumption that every artistic endeavour is only a form of repetition, then nothing truly new can be created. However, one can still make a statement. One example of how Lochhead creates new meanings and opens up new possibilities from a historical account is *Blood and Ice* (1985, 2009) — a play which focuses on Mary Shelley’s perspective and hence centres the story around a woman. Both Lochhead and her biographical character Mary Shelley search for all the possibilities of stripping themselves of the given identities throughout the

play. It is an endless struggle in Lochhead's drama to strip oneself of and free oneself from societal limitations, be it the fin-de-siècle British social environment (*Dracula*) or the Romantic, bohemian way of life (*Blood and Ice*).

Braun-Hansen regards Lochhead's revisionist style as one of her most remarkable achievements. If finding one's own voice and re-creating oneself is one of the central themes in her writing, the scale of her contributions to revisionist literature, by opening up possibilities for questioning the texts despite limitations, is beyond doubt. As discussed above, one of the ways in which Lochhead's feminist position as a woman dramatist is played out is in her choice of placing women at the centre stage in her plays. "Lochhead's is certainly a repertoire that places a woman or women at the centre of the drama and at the heart of the narrative (Scullion, "Woman's" 117). Through these characters, Lochhead gives voice to women who had been socially, as well as domestically and sexually shut down, dismissed, marginalised and whose artistic creations have been disregarded or hidden from view. For the first time they get to tell their stories from their own vantage point, and they become powerful in a myriad of ways. Of course, the revelations these women experience throughout the plays could posit new challenges as a consequence of the ambiguity in the way these characters come to terms with their creative and sexual potential. Nevertheless, Lochhead takes the stereotypes surrounding these women, such as the popular view of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley as the daughter of William Goldwin and Mary Wollstonecraft and/or wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley, thus totally dismissing her as the creator of *Frankenstein*, and twists that view by making the whole play deal with her creation, her creative struggles, her pain. What is more, the whole play takes place through the psyche, so fragments of her life in this Romantic circle are told from her point of view. In doing so, Lochhead "peels back the mythology, drawing out the person's essential humanity" (Scullion, "A Woman's" 117).⁴

In both of the plays to be discussed here, Lochhead interpolates quotations from other authors (as in *Blood and Ice*), besides obviously revising the original utterances and the effects that the author tries to create (as in *Dracula*). For instance, in *Blood and Ice*, she writes lines from Coleridge's *Christabel* (1816) for Mary Shelley, or she spares a considerable number of lines in her stage directions to Bram Stoker's very

⁴ See also in Scullion "Contemporary" 97.

same depictions of setting and mood, directly quoted from the author, or again, she uses long lines and passages from the original novel *Dracula*. This metatextual quality of the mentioned plays – this deliberate strategy is a product of Lochhead’s main concern. Then, the context of these plays, as well as the specific imagery onstage and the borrowings from the original work or interpolations within the play seem to be “ideologically influenced” (McDonald and Harvey 136). Metatextuality also serves to bring the audience face to face with the “fluidity, changeability and interpretability of reality” (Horvat, “Liz” 181). To explain further, the dramatic dialogue could shift from prosaic to poetic in an instant or the direct quotations of long passages from the original novel might help the audience move away from the mimetic quality of theatre and come to terms with how the playwright intentionally creates this meta reality.

b. Politics of Feminist Drama From Early 70’s to Late 80’s

It is an important task to clarify *feminism* as a movement and establish a link between British feminism and drama. Feminism includes a consciousness of the ‘dominant male discourse’, the eagerness to understand and unravel systematic exclusion of women within this discourse, and last but not the least, the critique of the materialistic conditions (social mechanisms) that perpetuate the sexual/class/public/private divide at that time.

British feminists were inspired by a rich tradition of feminist literature, most remarkably Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* (1929) and Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949). While Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) foreshadowed radical feminist movement on the West side of the Atlantic; British authors, especially among Marxist thinkers, envisioned a new phase in gender politics. In her work *Women: The Longest Revolution* written in 1966, Juliet Mitchell contended that socialism in the twentieth century marginalised women, despite Engels’s late-nineteenth-century family analysis. Mitchell argues that women’s central role in family life, situated within a “universe of their own,” reinforces traditional perceptions of childcare and domestic work. She identifies key aspects of women’s roles as including reproduction and child socialisation, and notes that a prevailing familial ideology endures, even as family sizes decrease (Whelehan 115). Importantly, British feminism had a socialist foundation, marked by both class awareness and a focus on the welfare

state. Various campaigns opposed the commodification and portrayal of women, infusing this mainly socialist movement with a radical feminist dimension (115).

Feminist literature has two complementary tasks: “One of the most important achievements of the women’s movement has been to repoliticize art on the level of both production and reception, and to question ruling ideologies of the text as a self-contained artifact” (Felski 175). The circulation, interpretation, and critique of feminist fiction contributed to challenging dominant ideologies. The political significance of reading as a means of affirming one’s identity is rooted in the idea of feminism as a form of literacy (Whelehan 120). An emerging period of “feminist literacy” is anticipated, fostered within an interpretive community. “Feminist criticism’s Utopian project of total social transformation rested on an enormous faith in the power of texts to make change. That faith in turn rested on a belief in feminist literacy *as* social change: providing new ways of mirroring and creating women’s identity” (Hogeland 11-12).

Based on the discussions of feminist criticism presented above, this study is grounded in the idea that the core of feminist discourse lies in its review of "dominant male discourse" and is especially focused on identifying and analysing feminist perspectives within theatre. (Aston, *Feminism* 8). In another noteworthy account — *Feminist Theatre Practice*, Aston sets out to help theatre practitioners in their endeavours, nevertheless, her insights on the beginnings of the feminist agenda through performance require close analysis, since the aim of this chapter is to contextualise two predominantly feminist plays by Liz Lochhead. She explains her purpose as helping women “see their lives politically” and thus contribute to the consciousness raising objective of feminist drama in terms of raising awareness of women’s containment in the dominant discourse, as well as promoting female creativity (*Feminist* 2).

In order to contextualise the dramatic works, the development of feminist theory in the performance art should be examined. Aston regards feminism, which was on the rise in the 1970s, as a driving force for women to understand their position in society from which they had been ostracised socially, culturally and politically (*Feminist* 5). Feminism paved the way for the realisation of the oppressive systems in effect within the dominant discourse. Soon after, the reaction was in full force both in

the public arena at large, and in theatre. As it was still very challenging to find a space in the male-stream theatre circles or the newly-formed Leftwing Socialist theatre companies, female practitioners began to form their own theatre groups. These groups helped them to claim a “counter cultural” alternative space (6).

When it comes to radical feminism, as a philosophy it holds that patriarchy embodies all structures of male dominance and is seen as the foundation of many societal issues. Essentially, a male-centred culture has long been established and that culture, wherever it has prevailed, has subjugated women across all social and economic backgrounds (Case, *Feminism* 63-64). The radical feminist focus on patriarchy led to the development of another key area of analysis and practice: the concept of a women’s culture. Many radical feminists actively engage in this women’s culture, described as a grassroots movement offering feminist alternatives in areas such as literature, art and sexuality. They argue that such a culture has existed throughout history, from early matriarchal societies and mother goddess cults to witches’ covens and women’s communities, and into modern alliances. The focus on patriarchy and women’s culture makes gender a central concept in radical feminism. Radical feminists direct a substantial amount of their critical efforts towards recognising and highlighting women’s power (64).

In theatre, feminists applied their social critique to the structure of theatrical practices and the analysis of art forms. They highlighted issues such as the exclusion of women’s stories onstage. Feminist critics began to rewrite the history of women in theatre, drawing on the objectives of consciousness-raising communities: giving them a voice, recovering works suppressed by dominant historical narratives, and explaining the historical processes that led to the suppression of women and its impact (Case, *Feminism* 113). One of the agendas of such counter-cultural feminist collectives was to “re-present women as subjects in their own right” as opposed to the male-stream theatre in which women would almost exclusively be depicted as aligned to men, or to the domestic sphere. They sought to turn the spotlight on women’s issues and experiences, via writing about ordinary lives or the lives of the ‘greats’. As Aston notes, “women desired to be ‘seen’ as women and not as a representation of a masculinist imagination” (Aston, *Feminist* 6).

After the Women's Liberation Movement on both sides of the Atlantic, a substantial portion of women's theatre groups emerged and feminist scholarship looked to catch the wave, to basically theorise their practice onstage. It is important to point out that feminist scholarship tended to celebrate such theatre initiatives / collectives as 'unique' or 'new', however, this tendency only served to contribute to the position of women in history as hidden or lost. Aston warns "[t]hat feminist scholarship rushed to claim this phenomenon as a 'first' risked perpetuating the historical invisibility of women's work in theatre" ("Feminism" 55). This attitude ignored the fact that the claim for a space and recognition within a malestream theatrical tradition was far from new — if one looks at the new historicist scholarship alone, one will notice that the quest for an alternative space as opposed to an all-male space on and off stage went so many centuries back. Asserting that there has not been a feminist theatre before would do injustice to centuries of women going against the grain and would risk perpetuating this very silencing of women. Nevertheless, there is one benefit to this body of scholarship. Because feminist scholarship saw 1970's theatre groups as a new feminist phenomenon, they documented a great deal of work produced by women playwrights as well as performers, which might otherwise have gone unnoticed, let alone being documented (55).

Coming to the political aspect of these collectively organised theatre groups, it is important to mention that they professed a common rhetoric also visible in the shared characteristics in terms of their rhetorical devices. These groups' primary aim was political action in the sense that their practice was informed by feminist consciousness-raising above other concerns. Thus, the feminist rhetoric they adopted was that of creating awareness on different levels and challenging the dominant discourse. Aston refers to Janet Brown's categorisation of four tropes of the feminist rhetoric, which were made use of in order to challenge the malestream representations of women:

- 1 "sex-role reversal device";
- 2 "presentation of historical figures as role models";
- 3 "satire of traditional sex roles";
- 4 "direct portrayal of women in oppressive situations".

(Aston, *Feminism* 56)

While some of these categories challenged gender stereotypes, others aimed at empowering women or dissecting the underlying causes of woman's oppression. Similarly, in Gabrielle Griffin's account, this feminist rhetoric is explained through the ways in which theatrical performance was utilised in "seven core ways":

1. making women's stories seen
2. taking public and private space and occupying it
3. recovering lost or buried accounts of women's cultural artefacts
4. focusing on women's concerns
5. stressing how the personal was actually political
6. utilising cultural forms for political purposes
7. enabling women to assert themselves in cultural contexts from which they had long been ostracised. (Griffin 52)

Both Aston and Griffin stress the primary concern of the plays written by women in the 1970s and the early 1980's as highly political. Thus, one of the most important components of feminist theatre is the feminist intervention in the study of theatre in order to trace back the ostracization of women and set out to find (the hidden/lost) women's tradition within history. For instance in the late 1970's, a theatre collective named "Women's Theatre Group" staged a number of plays "which dramatized a feminist re-visioning of male versions of history" (Aston, *Feminism* 30). Their plays such as *Time Pieces* (1982) became influential on the feminist agenda mentioned above. The earlier agenda of revisiting women's past and retelling their stories, Wandor observes, became a conscious endeavour in this play, where "an aunt tells her young niece about the history of the women in her family by looking through an old photograph album. This gentle consciousness-raising exercise reconciles mother and daughter at the end of the play" (67). Aston asserts that "bringing the 'lost' tradition of women's theatre history into view is an important political step if feminist theatre scholarship is to change the future history of the stage" (*Feminism* 31). It appears that the practice of staging the lost or hidden history of women's presence, was reactionary in the political sense since it revealed the mechanisms within patriarchal discourse, which systematically disregarded or dismissed women's creative

power together with their agency. Through such plays, the scholarship around feminist theatre discourse can find its expression and transform the future of the stage.

In the light of this heightened feminist interest in historical revision, this section aims to look at the ways this is played out in drama. The left-wing politics that these theatre collectives engaged in, manifested itself in their feminist agenda which was predominantly women's issues. From this perspective, it is no surprise that they claimed their own alternative space both publicly and privately, seeking to revive hidden or lost histories of women's works. Most of the plays of that period of explosion achieve to adhere to the feminist rhetoric in more than one way. Griffin makes a list of the names of these collectives, pointing out the fact that this rhetoric is evident in the way these groups named themselves. Feminist political agenda is apparent in the names of the companies established at this time such as "the Sadista Sisters, The Monstrous Regiment [of Women], Beryl and the Perils, Cunning Stunts, Sphinx, Siren Theatre Company, Spare Tyre, Clean Break" (53).

The second wave of feminism was seen as creating "monsters" by its critics, and feminists embraced the concept of the "monstrous" as part of their ongoing challenge to traditional notions of "appropriate" feminine behaviour. One feminist theatre collective, for instance, adopted the name "Monstrous Regiment", effectively disrupting John Knox's infamous sixteenth-century pamphlet denouncing women's power (Whelehan 114). Other misogynistic terms, like "Virago and Shrew", were reclaimed and cherished by these theatre companies, often with intentional irony (14).

The[se] names were intended to produce what Michel Foucault described as a 'reverse discourse', designed to take on and revalue words and phrases used to derogate women. The names indicate a reclaiming of and an identification with all that is abjected in women: [...] their desires; a resistance to being told what to do and instead to own a doing that flies in the face of 'decorous femininity'; and a sense of engaging with traditions of viewing women as mysterious, disturbing, in need of containment. (Griffin 53)

Methuen's *Plays by Women*, edited by Michelene Wandor, exemplifies many of these themes. Wandor, a key feminist critic and playwright of the 1970s and early 1980s, whose work is pivotal in the examination of feminist theatre through different

collectives and their agendas. While Wandor explores the work of one of the collectives — The Monstrous Regiment — she notices that a couple of their plays were concerned with “reclaim[ing] the history play from male domination by reinterpreting important historic events from the women’s angle” (63). She begins the collection with *Vinegar Tom* by Caryl Churchill (which revisits the 17th Century witch trials with a feminist agenda) the second touring production of Monstrous Regiment. The volume concludes with *Aurora Leigh*, based on a poem by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, which addresses women’s struggle for visibility and to have a voice in a patriarchal setting. These plays engage with historical subjects, aiming to recover their significance (Griffin 53). Their challenge to traditional gender roles cohered with challenging other cultural norms as well. This endeavour arose both from an inquiry into gender and from a politically driven desire to change women’s circumstances (56).

All of these observations illustrate that from 1970’s onwards, women’s theatre in Britain was preoccupied with history one way or another. Griffin and Aston call this tendency “the performing of feminist history”, which has become one of the core endeavours of feminist playwriting (1). While some of the plays in the early British context chose to dramatize the idea of communities of women, as in Churchill’s dinner scene in *Top Girls* (1982), some others sought to reclaim the artist’s subjectivity, authorship, and creativity as in *Blood and Ice* (1985, 2009). Liz Lochhead shares in the attempt to uncover the “hidden” lives of women, along with their sexualities and struggle for self-assertion.

It is important to look at theatre history with a feminist lens in order to illuminate the ways in which women were hidden from history and then to realise how the narrative changes once their stories are reclaimed. Starting from the late 1960’s, which mark the onset of the Women’s Liberation Movement, women writers and academics started to question the historical representations of women and unravel the ways in which they had been excluded from history. This realisation of having been “hidden from history” impacted feminist criticism in the way it “initiated the recovery of their ‘lost’ female ancestors. In literary criticism this involved explicating how women had been oppressively represented by men in literature and then finding a tradition of women’s writing⁵ (Aston, *Feminism* 12).

⁵ see Moers 1976.

However, the wish to find the hidden women's tradition (in writing and arts) or discover the self was not so easily fulfilled when it came to theatre. A primary reason for this is the absence of women from the stage, either as performers or playwrights as the predominantly male structure of theatre prevented women from entering this public space for decades. "There are a number of interesting ideas in circulation as to why comparatively little of the work of female playwrights from earlier than this has survived in the canon, of which the most significant is the gulf between the public nature of the theatre stage and the private nature of the woman's space as conventionally viewed" (Wyllie 21).

The 1980's saw the rise of several female playwrights, such as Timberlake Wertenbaker, Sarah Daniels, and April De Angelis who addressed gendered issues (Griffin 56). The playwrights of the 1980s, like Wertenbaker in works such as "*The Grace of Mary Traverse* (1985), and *Our Country's Good* (1988)", often drew on historical material to uncover the forgotten histories of women (56). This allowed them to explore the continuities and disruptions in women's experiences over time and across different contexts. Unlike some feminist works from the 1970s and early 1980s which tended to depict women as victims of subjugation, playwrights in the 1980s progressively portrayed women as active agents in shaping their own lives (57).

c. Women's Histor(ies) and Feminist Re-Visioning

One of the undoubtedly monumental texts which marks the collective consciousness at the onset of The Women's Liberation Movement, for reclaiming history and seeing the past with "fresh" eyes, is Adrienne Rich's "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-vision" (1972). She refers to this movement with a poetic insight: "The sleepwalkers are coming awake, and for the first time this awakening has a collective reality; it is no longer such a lonely thing to open one's eyes" (18).

The act of re-vision in Rich's view is more than a part of feminist history, it "is an act of survival" (18). Faced with the painful and confusing task of reclaiming one's own place in the dominant system of oppression and finding one's voice, women no longer need to feel alone in their new-found "awakening". Re-vision is 'an act of looking back' — seeing their past with a new lens, studying the old texts with a new critical agenda. According to Rich, this is an act of survival in the sense that creations of women in all cultural spheres had been hidden from view or dismissed. Their

achievements had been obscured. It took a lot of courage for women to truthfully own their artistic creations because the process in which they found themselves was full of obstacles. Even when they achieved against all odds, they could not embrace this as a victory. Publishing their works with their own names was considered outrageous — even if the work received much praise, it did so because it was presented to the public with a pseudonym. That is why one needs to look at the old texts with a new lens in order to understand the conditions within which they came into force. In her work on the ‘gaze of the Medusa’, Alban insightfully professes this need for feminist re-visioning so that women assert themselves, claim agency in their lives and find their voice through their writing. This is the only way to reclaim one’s existence by opposing a “self-destructive” system of dominance that worked against her *self*:

Until we can understand the assumptions in which we drenched we cannot know ourselves. And this drive to self-knowledge, for woman, is more than a search for identity: it is part of her refusal of the self-destructiveness of male-dominated society. A radical critique of literature, feminist in its impulse, would take the work first of all as a clue to how we live, how we have been living, how we have been led to imagine ourselves, [...] and how we can begin to see [...] a-fresh. (Rich 18)

Anderson and Zinsser demonstrate the ways in which women were hidden from history (14). Due to the systematic oppression of the patriarchal society, their achievements were not even recorded. They name only a few “surviving” works of art by women, who could carve a space for themselves despite being confined: “in the process, they created magnificence: Sappho’s poetry, Hildegard of Bingen’s visions, Mary Wollstonecraft’s defence of women, Paula Modersohn-Becker’s self-portraits” (16). If they were queens, there were allowed to achieve great deeds because they were not “ordinary” women, so their actions were received within a different cultural context, through a different societal lens.

Aston and Griffin state that feminists have been especially interested in the fact that women’s stories were hidden / lost throughout history (1). The rupture from the past took place as a direct consequence of the societal transformations brought about by the Women’s Liberation Movement. The movement paved the way for questioning

and “exploring the consequences for women and men of a world defined exclusively from a male perspective” and this evolved into a way of thinking with a new consciousness — moving from a male-centred, phallogentric viewpoint towards a woman-centred one (1). What happened when feminists began to take women as their point of reference? They started to acknowledge the system of domination with “fresh eyes” and the ways in which it excluded them from cultural history: “By taking little for granted, by seeing the world from a female viewpoint, [...] feminists began to criticise systematically what they saw as all-pervasive effects of male dominance” (Anderson and Zinsser 426).

The act of writing history through a feminist lens calls for “re-telling the past in a way which takes account of women’s lives which were previously undervalued”, which resonates especially with Rich’s argument on feminist revisioning (Aston and Griffin 1). This act of revisiting or ‘writing back’ evolved throughout the 1980’s to become an interdisciplinary field of feminist research, especially in cultural studies, literature and drama. This field does not take for granted the accounts of history and thus “resists the positivist concept of historical ‘fact’” (1). History is a patriarchal discourse and like all grand narratives, it needs to be subject to deconstruction. Only then could a “women-centred” approach genuinely signal a shift in social mechanisms (which perpetuated this oppression). There has been an increasing feminist critique of history since the 1980’s, as mentioned above. Elizabeth Sakellaridou investigates this area of research. She points out that feminist historians’ common ground on this field appears to be “retriev[ing] women from oblivion and mak[ing] them the visible subjects of history” (306). In brief, given the fact that history is a patriarchal discourse, the need for subversion and “playing with history” developed into one of the core concerns of the feminist agenda. “In pointing to the ways in which women have been historically represented [...] and the reality of women’s lives, feminist performance makes the histories, lives and desires of women visible” (Griffin and Aston 2).

Focusing on women’s lives as a key trope in feminist theatre, Aston investigates the ways in which women’s biographies might serve as a “feminist devising process” (*Feminist* 159). She asks what possibilities women’s biography brings in reclaiming their space and revealing the ostracization or visibility of women within the patriarchal discourse of history. Her deliberate choice to investigate women’s lives “arises from the ways in which they touch centrally on the principal concerns of many woman-

centred projects: representation of the self/selves, the (de-)construction of social and cultural identities, and the question of ‘truth’” (159). The rendition of a woman with a feminist lens serves to demystify her, thus freeing her from the fixed identity inscribed on her by the dominant discourse and recreating her on stage.⁶



⁶ “Pam Gems’ biographical plays feature exceptional figures such as Queen Christina and Edith Piaf “but with a view to re-figuring or demythologising these famous women” (Aston *Feminist* 161). “For the de-mythologising of ‘great’ figures — Pam Gems’s *Piaf* in *Three Plays* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), or *Queen Christina*, in *Plays By Women: Five (1986)*” (Aston, *Feminist* 170).

II. *BLOOD AND ICE* AS A MONSTROUS CREATION



Fgr 2.1.⁷

⁷ Fgr. 2.1. Henry Fuseli, *The Nightmare I*, 1781. Detroit Institute of Arts.



Fgr. 2.2 ⁸

⁸ **Fgr. 2.2** Henry Fuseli, *The Nightmare II*, 1790/91. Goethe Gallery.

“In this second version of the [Nightmare] Fuseli heightens the threatening, incomprehensible scene by means of a vertical format and pallid colouration. The young woman lies twisted on the bed. A kobold crouches on her chest, a ghostly horse thrusts its head through the curtain” (*Goethe Gallery*).

II. I. IN THE SAME ROOM WITH THE ‘*VAMPYRE*’

a. An Overview

Mary Shelley has something in common with woman artists of her time and beyond. She kept indispensable parts of herself hidden. Given the society she was part of, and the endless pressure she had to endure, that is probably what she thought the safe thing to do. Quite a number of literary critics attributed these “silences” in the private accounts of her life, as well as her private correspondence, to the possibility that she was in self-doubt, given her legacy as Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin’s daughter. This might be partly true, but her stance cannot be explained away with such an approach. Claiming that she was hesitant to assert herself as a prodigy, and as an artist, who is the sole creator of one of the most enduring myths in modern imagination, “modernity’s perhaps most compelling and ominous myth” would be denying her the recognition she well deserves (Schoene-Harwood 21). Mary Shelley wrote the tale of *Frankenstein* at the age of only eighteen. The 1818 edition of the book was printed anonymously, after being rejected by several publishers. Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor, & Jones finally accepted the manuscript, but it was on the condition that the name of the author was not inscribed. The book was dedicated to “William Godwin, the author of Political Justice and Caleb Williams, & c” and a preface was inscribed by Percy Bysshe Shelley. This made her contemporary critics assume that it was Shelley who wrote the book. Sir Walter Scott was one of them. Nobody thought it was even slightly possible that the proud daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin had given birth to such a monster: “[W]hy did the eighteen-year-old Mary Shelley give birth to this particular idea on this particular night? How did it come about that she produced so prescient, powerful, enduring a myth?” (Mellor, “Making a Monster” 9).

In the preface, Percy Shelley mentions the circumstances under which this tale was born – that they all agreed to try their hand at writing down a thrilling ghost tale, following Byron’s idea. His final words below, deliberately or unaware, indicate Mary’s unsurpassed imagination. This seemingly ordinary occasion to the guests of Byron at the time, turned into Mary’s ultimate quest for artistic creativity.

I passed the summer of 1816 in the environs of Geneva. The season was cold and rainy, and in the evenings we crowded around a blazing wood

fire, and amused ourselves with some German stories of ghosts [...]. Two other friends and myself agreed to write each a story. The weather, however, suddenly became serene, and my two friends left me on a journey among the Alps, and lost [...] all memory of their ghostly visions. The following tale is the only one which has been completed. (Preface, *Frankenstein: 1818*)

At this juncture, Villa Diodati emerges as the unifying force between the two and only Gothic plays written by Liz Lochhead, which this thesis unfolds. When he called Lochhead, the manager of Royal Lyceum Theatre obviously had in mind how *Frankenstein* and *The Vampyre* were the only Gothic tales born from this peculiar contest. Lord Byron's personal physician / aspiring writer Polidori's *The Vampyre* is the earliest vampire tale in English novel genre which envisioned an aristocratic, thrilling and alluring vampire. Amongst Polidori's source materials of vampire fiction such as "Byron's *The Giaour* (1813)⁹ and Keat's *Lamia* (1819)",¹⁰ one stands out: the real-life character — Lord Byron, himself (McDonald "The Devil" 82). Almost a hundred years later, we have Stoker's masterpiece, *Dracula* (1897) — undoubtedly the most popular vampire story ever: "John Polidori wrote the draft of a story that would become *The Vampyre*, one of the inspirations for Bram Stoker's famous tale *Dracula*" (Gordon, xiv). "Stoker's *Dracula* has much in common with Lord Ruthven, a cultured scholarly man of wealth and reputation, a soldier who exerts a hypnotic charismatic power over his lovely and virtuous victims" (McDonald, "The Devil" 82).

While Lord Byron, the inspirational *vampire* of Polidori's (Lord Ruthven, in the original text) urged a timid Mary Shelley to "write her story", igniting her creative energies, as this study will put forward, Count Dracula becomes the sexual initiator and liberator from all societal constraints for the women involved with him. While in *Blood and Ice* the real-life vampire, the Lord, assumes the role as Mary's mirror/double; in *Dracula*, the fictional vampire, the Count, disrupts the boundaries including the Self/Other, Fe/male, turning the tables once again.

⁹ "Composed as a *Fragment of a Turkish Tale*, *The Giaour* is Byron's only incontestable direct contribution to vampire literature. Byron roots his vampire within the peasant folklore of the Levant (rather than that of Eastern Europe), having travelled to Athens on his Grand Tour between 1809 and 1810" (Aquilina 26).

¹⁰ J. R. Planché's play *The Vampire, or the Bride of Isles* was influenced by "the evil Lord Ruthven (alias Lord Byron)" (McDonald 82).

It could be deemed rather poetic that the origins of two of the most iconic and beloved horror creatures can be traced back to a weekend in 1816 hosted by Lord Byron — both Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and John Polidori's *The Vampyre* were the result of a writing challenge proposed by the poet himself, prompting his guests to come up with their own ghost stories. It was this undeniable power of the imagination manifesting itself as the written word that, ultimately, led to [...] what would later become the world's most popular vampire. (Suton)

Out of this contest, two of the most *beloved* and unrivalled horror characters of all time emerged — while *Frankenstein*, an original product of Romanticism in the West, became an instant success, its author Mary Godwin, had been virtually unknown and remained in the shadows for long. On the other hand, in Polidori's *Vampyre*, the vampire figure was an appropriation of an Eastern European folkloric creature. Unlike *Frankenstein*, *The Vampyre* did not receive much critical recognition in its time, but it brought about the first aristocratic vampire, who made a huge impact on the high social circle “only by a curious combination of events in which was involved the most colourful, mysterious, and maligned figure of British Romanticism itself — Lord Byron” (Aquilina 27). Even though Lord Byron did all that was in his power to dissociate himself from the *Vampyre*, he had already fallen under the spell of the vampire in his famous poem. “At midnight drain the stream of life” — this line is taken from Byron's poem *A Fragment of a Turkish Tale — The Giaour* (1813). This poem is “Byron's only incontestable direct contribution to vampire literature” (Aquilina 26). At first glance, the vampire in this poem seems to be a continuation of the Eastern European creature, however, it departs from that in terms of style and appearance. Byron's *Giaour* (originated from ‘gâvur’ in Ottoman Turkish) is a tragic figure which marks the beginning of a new breed of vampires in literature “modelled on Byron's own persona” (26). The fate of Byron's *Giaour* is as follows:

But first, on earth as Vampire sent
Thy cor[p]se shall from its Tomb be rent;
Then ghastly haunt thy native place
There from thy daughter, sister, wife,
At midnight drain the stream of life

And suck the blood of all thy race. (23)

Byron's vampire is a cursed creature by ancestry, thus, is not only a victimiser but a victim himself. Thus, *Giaour* takes the genre to a new level, adorning the vampire with the element of ancestral curse. Byron mentions the vampire's plight, that no one is there to tell of his inner torments: "And from its torment 'scape alone / To wander around lost Eblis' throne" (23). Previously in vampire fiction, "few had aimed at understanding — or justifying — the demon's own torments" (Aquilina 26). *Giaour* is "refitted in Oriental garb" while also retaining some of the traditional peril of the vampire (26).

Yes must thou end thy task, and mark
Her cheek's last tinge, her eyes last spark,
And the last glassy glance must view
Which freezes o'er its lifeless blue. (Byron 24)

On the footnote he provides for the term 'Vampire' in the line above, Byron mentions that this was still a common superstition in the Levant region¹¹ and according to his observations, it was impossible for the Greeks to mention this name without horror and dread. However, Byron's intellectual curiosity of the vampire superstition and legend did not go beyond this Oriental endeavour: "there is little proof that Byron's interest was sufficiently piqued to pursue the vampire legend further, as his letters to his publisher Murray were to show" (Aquilina 26). Then the question is how this shift took place — how the blood-sucking, baby abducting, abject revenant suddenly became the irresistible, alluring, aristocratic; *Byronic* hero. And why Byron become such an inspiration for Polidori to come up with the first *literal* vampire ever in English literature. The "archetypal Byronic vampire", the representations of which one finds at its peak in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*,¹² and far beyond, is the direct result of 'Byromania' — Lord Byron was the most scandalous man of letters not only due to his poetry but also his affairs and highly luxurious and decadent way of living. He was the equivalent of a rock star in the 1970's Britain, and even more than that. His notoriety "effused from [his] dramatic life and

¹¹ The historical name given to the Eastern Mediterranean shores, but here Byron uses it as synonymous with Anatolia.

¹² First published in 1976.

works and [...] permeated social consciousness” at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Aquilina 27).

“[R]evered and reviled” simultaneously, “both society’s darling and demon, bisexual and profligate, brooding and melancholic”, Lord Byron became the perfect candidate for the first *literal* vampire in English imagination (27). In Carol Senf’s account of the vampire in nineteenth century fiction, the connection between Byron and Lord Ruthven begin to crystallise — Polidori’s fictional Lord Ruthven in the *Vampyre*, “seduces women, gambles, duels” (uncannily evoking the real-life Lord) (Senf, *The Vampire* 25).

[E]ven before the narrator discovers that he is also a vampire, and the reader would be equally uncertain were it not for a long preface that discusses source materials. [...] Nonetheless, Lord Ruthven, the first literal vampire in English fiction is a model for the vampire in English fiction. (25)

Even though Byron himself as a poet had little to do (apart from introducing the element of ancestral curse) with the fictional vampire’s humanisation (from a savage, and sometimes shape-shifting beast infusing terror, into an aristocratic, alluring traveller/loner), it was Polidori, his personal physician and secretary but also his rival, who appropriated his aura of “melancholic broodiness and reputation of nocturnal lover” in his *Vampyre* (Aquilina 29). Polidori’s perception of the Lord as a nocturnal lover might have cemented this centuries-long tradition of the vampires in film and in fiction as always aligned with the Moon. Polidori’s became the first tale to foreground the infamous Byronic Hero/Vampire, as Lord Ruthven was irresistibly powerful in seduction “[rendering] his licentious habits more dangerous to society”¹³ (MacCarthy 36-37). What ignited this was the ongoing “feud” between Byron and Polidori, which was initiated by Polidori’s jealousy of his fame and notoriety and perpetuated by Byron’s dismissive attitude towards his aspirations for authorship. “Byron in turn fuelled Polidori’s resentment by dismissing his authorial attempts with contempt” (Aquilina 29).

¹³ “The name is, like many elements of *The Vampyre*, directly plagiarised from previous sources. In *Glenarvon*, the Byronic villain is named Clarence de Ruthven, Lord Glenarvon. This was Caroline Lamb’s deliberate slander of the man who had used and rejected her” (Aquilina 37).

A vain, highly strung young man, he became the butt of Mary, Shelley, and Byron's at times cruel sense of fun. He wrote plays which they mercilessly ridiculed. He was accident prone — paying court to Mary one day he fell over and broke his ankle. Biographers are in his debt for his sensational account of the night of 18th June 1816, when [...] Byron's [recital] of Coleridge's *Christabel* induced a violent fit in Shelley. (Brenton, *Bloody* 12)

Notice that Percy Shelley claimed in the 1818 Preface that Mary's "tale is the only one which has been completed" (*Frankenstein*). This is a sad revelation on the part of Polidori, to say the least. Even if he did start the tale — which is quite probable — he might have become the object of ridicule and abandoned the task for the time. "Poor Polidori[']' idea was presumably belittled beyond repair; Byron's tapered to inconclusiveness, and Shelley's remained unnamed and unrecorded" (Aquilina 29). Even though it was obviously born out of revenge, Polidori incorporated a "dubious mistake" into the *Vampyre*, which "entangled Byron with the vampiric" (30). "Polidori explains how 'the tale ... to which his lordship's name was wrongfully attached' was written at the 'request of a lady' and 'over the course of three mornings'" (30). Even though Lord Byron did all within his power to dissociate himself from the character, it is thanks to him that the generic depictions found in the *vampire* genre would from now on include "aristocracy, itinerancy, seduction" (31).

Polidori does not seem to have realized what he was starting. His initial intention was to caricature his employer; the two were already on terrible terms. It was this intention that made his tale so innovative: the modern vampire is essentially a *Byronic* vampire. Because this was his primary intention, however, he did not realize the full potential of some of his innovations. The *Vampyre* is not *Dracula* (1897), but it made Bram Stoker's masterpiece possible. (Macdonald and Scherf 11)

Polidori represented the vampire as a human being — a complete transition into a depiction of vampirism which was by no means compulsive. Polidori also makes the vampire a traveller, reminiscent of the Byronic hero again, and the last and most significant innovation of his is turn the vampire into a seducer:

The Edinburgh Monthly Review noticed the disturbing eroticism of Polidori's modern vampire. [...] The combination of fear and sympathy made possible by the vampire's human consciousness can evolve into a combination of fear and desire. The elegance that the vampire's high status implies makes him attractive; the power it implies makes him irresistible. (The most notorious sentence in Polidori's diary suggests his sense of his travelling companion as a seducer, if that is the right word, of irresistible power.) The mobility of the vampire enables him to seek out new victims to seduce. (Macdonald and Scherf 14)

All in all, Polidori made the vampire perversely dignified and even if this noble vampire was seemingly unable to join in the sociabilities around him, he inspired a feeling of awe. His powers of seduction were irresistible, which made him a dangerous warning sign against the societal norms. As the evidence shows, Byron and the Vampire became synonymous. "Byron and the Byronic thus pervade Polidori's 'Vampyre' to saturation point. Polidori's and Byron's mutual dislike becomes narrative, with both roles clearly distinguishable" (Aquilina 31). Having established Lord Byron as the noble, dignified, seducing and alluring vampire, I would like to point out Mary Shelley's precarious position in this Gothic setting; and later indulge in unravelling her intellectual *interviews with "the vampire"*, which in turn will compel her to *write* her own story. Liz Lochhead saw this subtle yet very powerful connection between the woman author, and the vampire. The intense conversations between the two in *Blood and Ice* bring forward the empowering and liberating, and of course inspiring force of the vampire through Byron.

No matter whose version of that contest was the most accurate, it was indeed "Mary who struck gold" in the competition (Gordon xiv). She *did* create her ghost story, becoming the proud victor of the contest. She notes that she tried for days to come up with an idea, only to fail again and again. Finally, on June 15, in her retrospective account of the events, she woke into the dream where she saw "the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put out together" (*Frankenstein* 1818, 55). At that moment Mary felt the sudden thrill of alarm, the shivering sensation that Victor felt while the hideous creature lying beside him was animated with a "spark of life ... looking on him with yellow, watery, but speculative eyes" (55).

This makes one wonder: if this timid girl of only eighteen was ever so in doubt of herself and her literary talent, and utterly overwhelmed with the anxiety of living up to her parents' legacy, would she have "completed" such a tale? She nevertheless did complete her tale, and surpassed all expectations in doing so. Let alone aligning herself with the radical/idealistic views of the Romantic Circle, her subtle criticism of the Romantic ideals professed by those around her, in her 'tale' of *Frankenstein*, carried her work to a status which is way ahead of the Gothic/Romantic tradition marking the Regency era. (Mellor, "Making a Monster" 9). Her criticism of the Enlightenment philosophy is coupled with her stark criticism of the impracticality and egotism in which the male artists in her circle seemed to embrace. "The idealistic but impractical tenets of the male Romantic philosophy of individualism and self-indulgence threaten Mary's life" (McDonald, "Liz" 460). Mary Shelley is sceptical, and sometimes quite vocal and bitter about Percy Shelley's escapism in the name of *sublime* experience and transcendental poetry; and unlike her husband, she does not throw herself willingly at Godwin's philosophy on romantic relationships.

In her influential book, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer*, [Mary Poovey] focuses on Shelley's [...] condemnation of masculine Romantic egotism, epitomised in her husband's naively idealistic — perhaps cavalier — attitude to marriage vows, family responsibility and societal conventions. (Hoeveller 48)

It is safe to say that Mary the author was not overwhelmed by such anxieties, yet even so, she did not let any of these thoughts obstruct her writing process. Even with all of the biographical evidence, critic after critic regarded her as a woman who was in doubt. This view was further perpetuated by Mary's preface to the revised edition in 1831. Why she wrote such a preface will be investigated in this chapter as it bears parallels with Lochhead's Mary Shelley in *Blood and Ice*. Mary is ambivalent towards her "hideous progeny". She is an ardent listener and observer of her surroundings. Yet in her journals, she goes to great lengths not to utter her feelings in depth and writes about the most remarkable days of her life only in retrospect. This reminds us that it is not only History with its misogynistic tendencies that hid her and refused to acknowledge her in her own right; she also seems to avoid self-assertion. Consequently, the only medium in which she truly asserts herself in her novels, most of which can be considered autobiographical. In this respect, it requires a tremendous

amount of scholarly research to “unearth” the hidden parts of her story, the story of Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley.

b. Mary’s ‘Nightmare’

So on his Nightmare, through the evening fog
Flits the squab fiend o'er fen, and lake and bog;
Seeks some love-[be]wilder'd maid with sleep oppres'd,
Alights, and grinning sits upon her breast —
Such as of late, amid the murky sky,
Was marked by Fuseli's poetic eye;
Whose daring tints, with Shakespeare's happiest grace,
Gave the airy phantom form and place —
Back over her pillow sinks her blushing head,
Her snow-white limbs hang helpless from the bed.
— Erasmus Darwin¹⁴

Like Angela Carter, Lochhead twists the familiar to find a dark and bloody unconscious with new perspectives. Lochhead's plays hint at themes of corporeality [...], and they toy with the grotesque and the ambiguous.

— Scullion, “Contemporary” 97

Liz Lochhead was inspired by Muriel Spark's *Child of Light* (1951), a Mary Shelley biography; when she took on the task of writing *Blood and Ice* (1985, 2009): “It's exactly thirty years since I first took down from a library shelf Muriel Spark's *Child of Light*, her wonderful biography of Mary Shelley, and, shortly after, began my own pursuit” (*Blood and Ice*, viii). *Blood and Ice* is a semi-biographical drama and through the mother text *Frankenstein*, it interrogates women's issues, particularly in terms of artistic creativity and empowerment. Artistically aligned with the mother text, Lochhead incorporates Gothic elements in the play. This is achieved in the way she stages her characters and uses the monster motif as an outer grotesque voice in her dreams and waking hours. Furthermore, her writing hints at the societal fear of the

¹⁴ qtd. in Jones 5.

unheimlich aspects of women's sexuality and its implications "on the experiences of women in history and literature" (Scullion, "Contemporary" 97).

To illustrate, one of her inspirations for her poem "Dreaming Frankenstein" was Fuseli's painting "The Nightmare" (1782). This painting represents an erotic scene in which a woman in a white nightgown lies unconscious with her arms stretched out, in a lifeless or dream-like pose. In the cloth beneath her, Fuseli displays shades of red, concentrating into dark red and it is staged in such a way that it is perceived as an outpouring of blood. Over her sits a sinister incubus who gazes at the onlooker with an uncanny vitality and an unwavering aura of mischief. The woman, under the pressure of the incubus sitting over her, simultaneously exhibits feelings of orgasmic arousal and suffocation. Ecstasy and pain. Life and death.

Lochhead imagined the gestation of *Frankenstein* as symbolised with this painting – the experience of a nightmare in the form of an erotic intercourse or as the position of the incubus suggests, a violation or rape, resulting in the "literary birth" (Davison 181). Fuseli's staging of the incubus implies violation, as Fuseli's art works were interpreted by his contemporaries with an erotic lens (Ward 24). In "The Nightmare", female erotic desire and its dire implications are depicted with such vivacity that it has shocked its viewers ever since.

Fuseli's woman is an image of female erotic desire, both lusting for and frightened of the incubus that rides upon her, brought to her bed-chamber by the stallion that leers at her from the foot of her bed; both the presence of this incubus and the woman's posture of open sexual acceptance leave Fuseli's intentions in no doubt. (Mellor, "Possessing" 225)

While Mellor is certain of the painting's implications, as in most works of art, the meaning is unstable, and Fuseli's intent appears to be more ambivalent, having been "interpreted as everything from forcible rape to the emergence of the women's libido while she sleeps" (Ward 24). Lochhead rearticulates the same scene on the opening act of *Blood and Ice*:

In an England of darkness and loneliness, MARY SHELLEY, a young widow in her late twenties, is stretched out asleep.

The ‘nightmare is upon her’, the image is that of the famous Fuseli painting and there is perhaps an actual and physical manifestation of the smothering homunculous on her chest that appears momentarily in a flash of lightning and disappears again in the beat of darkness that follows it. Certainly, shadows move. (Act I, 3)

The play opens with the desolate Mary Shelley. In the way she is staged, there is a deliberate attempt to signify loneliness and disappointment. Mary is depicted in misery, in the darkness of a nursery, haunted by the ghosts of her past. She is staged in a Fuseli-like pose with the “perhaps actual and physical manifestation of the smothering homunculous on her chest” and the appearance of the incubus “in a flash of lightning” and disappearance “in the beat of darkness” (*Blood and Ice* Act 1, 3). Onstage, Mary’s first confrontation with the monster is within a dream, as this Fuseli-like imagery indicates. The creature’s whisper disturbs her sleep. She does not acknowledge its presence but feels it. Hearing her monster’s voice, her creative power emerges momentarily. The beauty of this scene is how, with one line of speech and one pose, Lochhead sets forth all of the contradictions that Mary Shelley experiences: “CREATURE’S VOICE (a whisper). Frankenstein?” (*Blood and Ice* Act I, 3).

Looking beyond the immediate implications of this painting which fostered Lochhead’s imagination in both of her texts, its connections with Mary Wollstonecraft and her daughter (as well as Mary’s circle) begin to surface. Wollstonecraft, at a time when she was a part of Joseph Johnson’s intellectual circle (which included William Blake, Thomas Paine, William Godwin and Henry Fuseli) became acquainted with Fuseli. Wollstonecraft had known Fuseli before she became the lover and then wife of William Godwin. During September of 1789, she took up the habit of having nightlong conversations with the Swiss artist. While some sources claim that she had an affair with the painter, there are other biographical accounts which assert that Wollstonecraft sent Fuseli’s wife a letter, both in order to reveal her admiration for Fuseli and to propose a ménage à trois (Gordon 187). In other words, she asked his wife if it would be possible for them all to live together at the Fuseli household. She was rejected. Godwin himself revealed this piece of information in the memoirs of Mary Wollstonecraft.

The story of her life was disclosed to all when Godwin published *Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in January 1798. This was a work of unprecedented biographical frankness, which covered every phase of Wollstonecraft's unorthodox career. It documented her friendship with the married artist Henry Fuseli, her residence in revolutionary France, her liaison with the American merchant Gilbert Imlay, [...] her domestic experiment with Godwin, and finally, her painful death. (Clemit 27)

Even though Godwin's intention in publishing such a sincere and intimate account of Mary Wollstonecraft's private life was an endeavour to bring into the public space his "revolutionary doctrine of sincerity" which he professed in his writings in the early 1790s, and to make "her individual history an effective agent of historical change", it is impossible not to regard this act as a violation of Wollstonecraft's privacy in every sense of the word (Clemit 28). Her memoirs also sparked a public debate with regard to her morality and unfortunately, considering the Victorian prudishness on the rise at the time, she would not be remembered as the author of such a pioneering manifesto of feminism.

Despite the genuine feeling and sensitively distanced rhetoric of Godwin's account of his dead wife's history and writings, [...] despite his noble intention of memorialising his wife's literary reputation, despite his deep admiration for her [...] personal courage, Godwin completely misjudged his audience. Public outrage followed his published account. (Mellor, *Mary* 2)

Godwin was taken aback by the negative reaction to his admiring biography of [Mary Wollstonecraft]. Whereas he had applauded her independence and enterprise, the increasingly conservative public thought she was a whore and cried scandal over Godwin's memoirs. The initial enthusiasm over the French revolution was giving way to Victorian respectability. (Johnson, *Mary* 59)

Despite the circumstances, the memoirs are an invaluable source of information on Wollstonecraft's self-determination. The discrepancy between Wollstonecraft's public and private selves is only one of the sources of Mary Shelley's self-

contradictions. While Mary Shelley must have certainly read about her mother's liaison with the artist Fuseli in the memoirs in question, she had already known Fuseli since they remained in her father's social circle after her mother's death.¹⁵ Mary Wollstonecraft's involvement with Fuseli went way beyond intellectual exchange — it was charged with sexual tension. According to Charlotte Gordon, Fuseli was preoccupied with the topic of sex and was more than willing to familiarise Mary Wollstonecraft with sexuality:

His paintings featured imps nuzzling the bare pink breasts of fairies, naked Greek gods flexing their muscles, and lascivious witches. Fuseli was dedicated to the principle that no sex act should be a taboo. He explained pleasures that were entirely new to her [Mary Wollstonecraft]. He thought women should be allowed to discover and express their sensuality, [...] human sexuality needed to be [...] honoured as the life force it was. (151)

Gordon further informs that it was becoming increasingly difficult for Mary to contain herself given Fuseli's legendary magnetism (152). There are only a few fragments left from Mary Wollstonecraft's letters to Fuseli, such as "she encountered his 'grandeur of soul' and 'lively sympathy,' he had become essential to her happiness" (186). Her letter to Johnson in October clearly reveals her state of mind — hers was an unrequited love:¹⁶

I suffer more than I can express... I am a strange compound of weakness and resolution ... [M]y wayward heart creates its own misery — Why I am made thus I cannot tell; and, till I can form some idea of the whole of my existence, I must be content to weep and dance like a child".(Gordon 187)

The painting's symbolism as well as its associations with Mary Shelley's legacy are reflected in the close link Lochhead built between sex and death. The

¹⁵ "Godwin took the children on regular outings to public lectures, plays, and art galleries, and encouraged them to meet many distinguished writers, artists — such as Coleridge, Humphry Davy, Fuseli, Hazlitt, Charles and Mary Lamb, and Wordsworth — who visited them at home. The Godwin household thus provided Mary Shelley with an unusually wide-ranging education" (Clemit 29).

¹⁶ Godwin's biographer C. Kegan Paul dug deep into the records in 1883 and argued that the story of Fuseli's wife throwing Mary out of their household was a made-up scheme in order to "discredit her as a desperate, love starved spinster" (187).

painting is grotesquely erotic with its dark undertones and reminds Mary of her mother's life. The violation scene of the painting resonates her mother's allegedly shameful pursuit of Fuseli and how she might have felt in the face of such a rejection. The same man conspired to discredit her mother and put an end to her literary career (Ward 26). For Mary Shelley, catastrophe was the inevitable consequence of a woman's sexuality, or of sexual expression. She had been, as she made herself believe, the cause of her mother's death only after 11 days of her birth, due to puerperal fever.

In this new light, the opening scene of *Blood and Ice* comes to signify more than its surface. Lochhead imagined Frankenstein's gestation as a Fuseli-like 'nightmare', in which the violation of dark forces came unbidden and result in the artistic creation/birth. This image continues as the play opens and the audience is presented with the authors' contradictions, or in other words, the unbearable dilemmas that she endured. The split imminent in this painting become a useful device for Lochhead, who "uses the notions of split subjects and plural identities to indicate the split in the female subject as opposed to the traditional representations of a woman [...] on stage" (Horvat, "Liz" 182).

Apart from this "nightmare," the image that uncannily associates sex with death / literary creation with catastrophe / women's picturesque beauty with *unheimlich* aspects of her sexuality; Lochhead brings an omnipresent monster on stage through speech, whose corporeal body cannot be seen but is always felt. It has a grotesque voice and haunts its creator as if to force her to come to terms with her own monstrosity and literary creativity.

As for the monster itself, its presence is felt as a permanent, if shadowy, stage figure, as though always on the edge of our — and Mary's — consciousness. The monster is a being whose significance ranges from the obvious one of being the "other" to Lochhead's far more interesting and original invention: the terror of creativity itself. (Woddis 179)

b. The Coterie of Villa Diodati

MARY. I wrote that, on a stormy night in June. I was happy then, we were all of us happy, then. My most congenial companions and I...

They were my most beloved congenial companions. Most of the time.

— Lochhead, *Blood and Ice* Act II, 41.

SHELLEY. The same secret strength of things flows through us all, making us work. Just because it's invisible doesn't mean it isn't real . .

Think of us! We four.

Oh, there are wires and bonds between us that are as fine-spun as filigree and as intricately structured as a spider's web and stronger than blood —

— Lochhead, *Blood and Ice*, Act I, 30.

In the play, Shelley refers to their connection that summer as “stronger than blood”. Villa Diodati appears as metonymy, which stands for the hub of artistic creation. In June 1816, on one rainy evening in Villa Diodati by Lake Geneva, Mary's stepsister Claire Clairmont, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lord Byron, and his personal physician William Polidori were reading French translations of German ghost tales and Byron had a spark of an idea to make up their own ghost stories and turn it into a contest. This particular night in this particular location undoubtedly became a monumental reference point for numerous bio-fictions concerning not only Mary Shelley's life but all the literary figures who sat together in search of ghostly inspiration. A plethora of biographers has summoned the ghosts of this legendary ensemble.

The events of the summer of 1816, when Byron and Polidori met Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft-Godwin and Claire Clairmont on the banks of Lake Geneva ... have become something like a focal point for Romantic biofictions. [T]he reasons for this must be sought in a biographical episode which symbolises [...] the theme of the problems of artistic expression and creativity. [T]he Romantics [...] engaged in a

ghost-story competition, which generated not only the first vampire-story but also Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. (Huber 97)

Even in the revolutionary times of the late 1700s and the Romantic period, which was overflowing with coterie of similar sort, it is indeed a rare case that out of such a coterie emerges one of the most celebrated occasions in the history of literature: the birth of *Frankenstein*. Without a doubt, Mary would always remember back in England that cold summer of 1816 with heart-felt tenderness and nostalgia. The long nights filled with ghost stories, intellectual and scientific discussions, recitals of Coleridge's poetry beside the fire... all elements expected from such an entourage of artists. She was on the verge of the grand achievement of her artistic creation whilst reinventing her *self* as the author. Her journal entries indeed indicate that she looked back at these days with retrospective praise. So much so that the rented villa situated on the outskirts of Geneva became one of the most famous and most cited lodgings of English Literature.

Looking back at the beginning of that summer, the trio had escaped the social ostracism back in London and on the shores of Lake Geneva, as they tried their best to enjoy their relative privacy. During his stay at Hotel d'Angleterre,¹⁷ Byron was treated like an ill-famed rock star and fashionably became the topic of gossip with every move he made. He had made his entrance to Geneva on May 25th, 1816, with a "military blue with flashy red and gold stripes" Napoleon-inspired war carriage (he went to great lengths to have an exact replica made), he felt that he and Napoleon were so similar in their shared destinies. They were both exiles, they had both experienced the rise-and-fall, "the extinction of greatness, the enormity of his hero's ruin, tormented Byron (Gordon 164-165). He was (or rather tried so hard to look like one) indifferent to social conventions of his time. So much so that, while fighting so hard to free his readers from the iron chains of convention, he attracted even more hatred upon himself, to the point of no return. It was impossible to miss the connection between his, and his fictional heroes' ill fate ('The *Byronic* hero'). Upon the news of him abandoning London, Sir Walter Scott publicly announced that the poet had "Childe Harolded himself, and outlawed himself, into too great a resemblance with the pictures of his imagination" (Gordon 165). Byron resembled his farewell to

¹⁷ Hotel d'Angleterre Sécheron, where the party had stayed upon their arrival.

Napoleon's farewell to his country in a poem he completed before his arrival in Switzerland: *Napoleon's Farewell* (1815).

The Shelley household decided to rent the modest chalet called Maison Chapuis. Following this trend, Lord Byron rented the Villa Diodati in July. Soon after, the weather grew grey, ash clouds filled the sky, the waters of the lake heaved beneath the darkened sky, thunders broke, lighting struck. The once-scandalised guests of Hotel d'Angleterre were concealed behind a curtain of grey fog. On the other side of the shore, they were cut off from the rest of society. This deliciously romantic feeling of isolation lent itself to the feeling of worry, and then dismay. It certainly transformed into a feeling of intense boredom. Theirs was not a summer escapade. Intensified by the unexpected ash cloud in the sky (resulting from the famous volcanic eruption in the Mount Tambora, Indonesia the year before-1815), it became a dark and gloomy place and hence, fitting for a ghost story. Fiona Sampson's depiction of the ambiance of Villa Diodati is too gripping not to mention:

[Mary] and Percy are at the drawing room of the Villa Diodati [...]. The lighted salon seems to float among the dark trees of a hillside high above the darkened water. But this is no idyllic summer evening, with a scent of roses and cool drinks on the terrace. For 1816 is the Year Without a Summer. (Sampson 118-119)

Albeit caught in the midst of this tedious setting, Mary Shelley seemed to be content. At least for the time being, she no longer had to adapt herself to Percy's 'free love' mentality. However, Dr Polidori was disappointed that Mary Shelley did not respond to his advances, and Byron was feeling rather impatient (Gordon 168-169). They were all in desperate need of something "to break the dullness, the stultifying deadness of each day" (169). On the 1st of June in the letter to her sister Fanny, Mary revealed her delight mixed with a sense of entrapment:

An almost perpetual rain confines us to the house. [...] The thunderstorms that visit us are grander and more terrific than I have ever seen before. [...] One night we enjoyed a finer storm than I had ever before beheld. The lake was lit up [...] and the scene illuminated for an instant, when a pitchy blackness succeeded, and the thunder came in

frightful bursts over our heads amid the blackness. (qtd. in Sampson 124)

This minutiae depiction of Mary's brings to mind these lines: "it proved a wet, ungenial summer, and incessant rain often confined us for days to the house" (Introduction, *Frankenstein*, 1831). Her romantic outlook towards this dreary scenery is missing one important aspect of her experience. She remembers Byron in a very different light. On May 28, 1817, almost a year after that productive summer of Villa Diodati and her first reading of the third Canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, her journal entry unravels how deeply affected she was by her memories of Geneva, and particularly Lord Byron:

Dear Lake! I shall ever love thee. How a powerful mind can sanctify past scenes and recollections — His is a powerful mind. One that fills me with melancholy yet mixed with pleasure as is always the case when intellectual energy is displayed. I think of our excursions on the lake. How very vividly does each verse of his poem recall some scene of this kind to my memory — This time will soon also be a recollection — We may see him again & again — enjoy his society but the time will also arrive when that which is now an anticipation will be only in the memory — [...] in the last moment all will be a dream. (qtd. in Blumberg 57-58)

The following day, she wrote to Percy Bysshe Shelley:

It made me dreadfully melancholy — The lake — the mountains and the faces associated with these scenes passed before me — Why is not life a continuous moment where hours and days are not counted — but as it is a succession of events happen — the moment of enjoyment lives only in memory and when we die where are we? (qtd. in Blumberg 58)

What exactly happened in this picturesque villa will remain a mystery. For one thing, there is almost no mention of these cold summer nights in Byron's letters, even though he does mention to John Cam Hobhouse that he rented the villa, in his letter dated June 23rd, 1816.

My dear H[obhouse]e/

I have taken a very pretty villa in a vineyard – with the Alps behind – & Mt. Jura and the Lake before – it is called Diodati – from the name of the proprietor – who is a descendant of the critical & illustrissimi Diodati – and has an agreeable house which he lets at a reasonable rate per season and annum as suits the lessee. (qtd. in Lansdown 224-225)

In another letter addressed to Samuel Rogers from Villa Diodati dated July 29th, all he mentions about his pastime activities is the excursion route and the dreary weather:

Dear Rogers

I came here by the Netherlands — and the Rhine Route [...] I have circumnavigated the lake — and shall go to Chamouni — with the first fair weather — but really we have had lately such stupid mists — fogs — rains — and perpetual density — (qtd. in Lansdown 227-228)

Another letter from Diodati was addressed to his half-sister Augusta Leigh, on September 8th. Notice he wrote to Augusta in compulsively stark detail about his experiences that summer, from the excursions to the mountains to the things he ate, the poems he worked on, and his adventures with Polidori. As a matter of fact, the only time he ever mentioned their entourage in his letters was when he wanted to explain himself to Augusta about his affair with Claire Clairmont. In this letter, among other frivolous details of his purchases, he exposes his misery following his scandalous separation from his wife Lady Byron and his self-imposed exile to Geneva. As his letter comes to a close, he refers to the “mistresses” in his assembled company of Diodati in an attempt to redeem himself in the eyes of his *beloved* half-sister and deny public allegations against him:

My dearest Augusta

H(obhouse) has told me all the strange stories in circulation of me & mine; — not true, [...] as to all these ‘mistresses’ — Lord help me — I have had but one. — Now — don’t scold — but what could I do? — a foolish girl — in spite of all I could say or do — would come after me [...] and I have had all the plague possible to persuade her to go back

again. Now — dearest — I do most truly tell thee — that I could not help this — that I did all I could to prevent it. — I am not in love — nor have I any love left for any, — but I could not exactly play the Stoic with a woman — who had scrambled eight hundred miles to unphilosophize me. (qtd. in Lansdown 229-230)

Byron's concealment in his above letters is juxtaposed with Mary Shelley's similarly superficial treatment of their Diodati summer in her journal entries, overlooking any kind of exchange they might have had at the time. "Unfortunately, Mary's letters provide no reference to Byron before 1817, and her journal entries for the summer of 1816 are carefully and significantly non-committal concerning him" (Lovell 37). For reliable evidence, one needs to investigate other surviving sources, such as Mary's letters to her close friends or other journals written by someone else from Mary's circle. It is doubtful whether Lochhead got hold of these letters presented above, but if she had treated Muriel Spark's *Child of Light* as her primary source for *Blood and Ice*, she would have also found out that Mary's connection with Lord Byron was mostly neglected in this biography. The critical role Byron possibly played in Mary's *compulsion to write* her story was only briefly mentioned. Mary's summer of Geneva in 1816 is allocated merely more than one page.

Notwithstanding, Lochhead did realise Byron's instrumental role in the genesis of *Frankenstein*. In her play which rightfully places Mary Shelley at the core of the whole story, she sometimes gives Byron the role of a persistent mentor who compels her to write her story, and sometimes the antagonist who challenges Mary about her relationships with her dead mother, estranged father and eccentric idealist of a lover. In such confrontations, Mary answers Byron's satirical and often sinister remarks about her life with short outbursts. It will be further discussed that such confrontations serve to voice Mary's hidden dilemmas, or contradictions she refuses to acknowledge in the course of the play. Byron's role as Mary's double / mirror manifests itself in so many instances that it is crucial to understand the connection between the two artists. This will establish the basis of Mary's subject position in Lochhead's play, since more often than not she plays around with the biographical material.

d. Byron and Mary: An intellectual Encounter

While the exact mechanics of the creation of Frankenstein's monster are withheld by Mary ("occupies a few understated lines in the novel"), the events surrounding its birth — the genesis of the myth — are recollected through the introductions to the novel (Blumberg 30). In the preface and introduction¹⁸, it is publicised that the seeds of the novel were planted in Shelley's imagination in direct response to a challenge made by Lord Byron. Hence, understanding the dynamics of the relationship between Mary and Byron, particularly during the Diodati summer, is of paramount importance.

In the summer of 1816, we [...] became the neighbours of Lord Byron. At first we spent our pleasant hours on the lake, [...] and Lord Byron, who was writing the third canto of *Childe Harold*, was the one among us who put his thoughts on paper. These, as he brought them successively to us, clothed in all the light and harmony of poetry, [...] whose influences we partook with him.

'We will each write a ghost story,' said Lord Byron; and his proposition was acceded to. There were four of us. (Shelley, "Introduction" 248-249)

In her introduction¹⁹ Mary pays tribute to Lord Byron, but there is a lot more than just that, as "the influence which he exerted upon her life began before and extended far beyond the summer of 1816" (Lovell 35). Ernest Lovell is one of the first scholars who attempted to reveal the minutiae of their relationship. Lord Byron played a considerable part in Mary's career as a novelist, which Lovell sets out to explain. One of the chief documents left behind by Mary Shelley concerning Lake Geneva is enclosed in Thomas Moore's *The Life of Lord Byron* (Lovell 37). Lovell informs that Mary "wrote out for him her recollections of Byron's famous "Memoirs" and her contributions were of paramount importance to Moore. Among her contributions are some highly engaging details epitomising her views and attitude towards the poet. She

¹⁸ See Percy Shelley's preface to the 1818 edition.

¹⁹ *Frankenstein* 1831 edition.

was inspired by the third canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*,²⁰ depicting Byron as “playful, meditative, philosophising, [...] singing”. This portrait is wittingly concealing Byron’s public image of the time. He found fame not only through his poems but also his illicit love affairs. He had been raised to a “notorious superstardom” in the eyes of London society, by 1816. His tale named *The Corsair*, which was set in a Turkish harem, had sold ten thousand copies on the day it was published. He was the handsome, charming noble who produced sincere depictions of love affairs of a forbidden nature. He was “mad, bad and dangerous to know,” — Lady Caroline Lamb said — one of the most famous statements about him (Gordon 155). “His fame as the “Byronic hero” was more biographical than textual, more mythical than literal” (Johnson, *Mary* 105). Despite this reputation, Mary Shelley had been delighted by his poetry — long before she met him, she had memorised long passages from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *To Thyrza*.

Both Mary and Byron deeply admired Coleridge both as a poet and as a friend. As Charlotte Gordon informs, he loved the poem *Christabel* so much that he immediately read and memorised its manuscript, urging Coleridge to publish it. Given this background, it comes as no surprise that they were on good terms that summer of 1816. In Moore’s memoirs recollected by Lovell, Mary remembers how Byron sent Polidori down the steep path in the soaking rain to help her walk up and eventually sprained his ankle, him “unveiling his bleeding heart before them all” when Polidori reproached him for his lack of feeling (qtd. in 38). When asked about the nightlong conversations in Villa Diodati, she answered — “There was never any lack of subjects, and, grave or gay, we were always interested” (qtd. in 38). Most important of all these reminiscences is Byron remarking on their ghost stories as “You and I will publish ours together” (qtd. in Lovell 38).

Mary Shelley’s connection with Byron carries an aspect other than just melancholia and longing for the good old days. It is fixed on “intellectual energy”. Her mother who always resided in her memory possessed this quality abundantly, and her love for Percy had sprung and flourished on that ground. Her admiration for Byron was also founded on the characteristic which had first drawn her towards Percy —

²⁰ Byron made mention of his finished canto in his letters of June 1816.

“intellectual affinity, great creative power and boundless intellectual curiosity” (Blumberg 58).

Nevertheless, critics speculating over Mary Shelley and Byron’s relationship simplified it to the point that Shelley becomes physically attracted to Byron or thrilled by his aristocracy. What is more, there is a fascination with the “Shelley Circle”. They treat this coterie as if Percy Bysshe Shelley was the all-important Sun around whom other artists, including Mary Shelley, revolved. “Built into this term is the method which investigates or attempts to understand those myriad artists only in relation to the poet” (Blumberg 59). This view couldn’t be further from the truth. For one thing, Percy Shelley was not able to achieve fame, even if he fought for it, in his lifetime. Notice that *The Revolt of Islam* and *Frankenstein* were written simultaneously. Which work of art is remembered to this day? Or who reads *Prometheus Unbound* today? Mary Shelley, on the other hand, achieved literary fame in her lifetime, no matter if she did so anonymously. By the time she returned to London in 1823, her novel *Frankenstein* had become a success. As far as Lord Byron is concerned, his intellectual connection with Mary Shelley paved the way for her intellectual autonomy: “in some sense, Byron contributed to Shelley’s conflicted quest for autonomy” (Blumberg 59).

There is considerable evidence of friendship between Byron and Shelley based on mutual admiration and respect which, instead of portraying Shelley as the peripheral, blind admirer of a famous poet, shows a serious-minded intellectual who was rather at the centre of her milieu. (63)

Byron and Shelley were also close enough to squabble, for both to be hurt, and for Shelley to maintain her respect and affection for Byron in the midst of her exasperation. (69)

All in all, apart from the most crucial contribution of Byron’s, which is to accidentally provide the perfect setting for the myth of *Frankenstein* to be born – an unforgettable and monumental moment in Mary Shelley’s entire life — his introduction to her circle presented a fresh and empowering intellectual impetus for Shelley. His irreverence for social conventions encouraged her to question the radical ideology of her time. It is important to realise that even if *Frankenstein* is a construct of the radical movement and the philosophers they compulsively read, the novel is also

a critique of the characters who were caught in the wind of humanism and idealism. As Blumberg insightfully suggests, “after initiating the famous ghost-story competition he [Lord Byron] evidently continued to push her [Mary Shelley] contribution after the others had lost interest.” (30).

e. Byron as Mary’s Double in *Blood and Ice*

In parallel with the above evidence, it is important to take into consideration Mary Shelley’s account of those dark summer nights in Villa Diodati, where she repeatedly expressed that she was only a ‘silent listener’ or an eavesdropper upon Byron and Percy’s nightly conversations.

To-night, a few bars of a known air [Byron’s voice?] seemed to be as a wind to rouse from its depths every deep-seated emotion of my mind. I would have given the world to have sat, my eyes closed, and listened to them for years. [...] I do not think that any person’s voice has the same power of awakening melancholy in me as Albe’s. I have been accustomed, when hearing it, to listen and to speak little [...]. Since incapacity and timidity always prevented my mingling in the nightly conversations of Diodati, [...] and thus, as I have said, when Albe speaks and Shelley does not answer, it is as thunder without rain . . . (qtd. in Lovell, 19th October 1822, 45)

Most critics who interpreted these accounts of hers, represented her “as so impassive that one is forced to picture a kind of oracle, moved by a disembodied inspiration to record a history over which she had no control” (Blumberg 61). Her relationship with the two poets was thus diminished into some kind of one-sided emulation, awe and idealisation, a state in which she was inconsequential. However, in *Blood and Ice*, the tables are turned. Byron here undertakes a highly complicated role, and the traditional / biographical coupling of Mary and Percy Shelley and Claire and Byron is intentionally disturbed for this end.

Mary Shelley and Lord Byron appear in the play as doubles, with Byron taking on the role of her (more) vocal self: “the imagery of mirrors, pictures, sea and blood, monsters” serve to amplify the split subjects “that she [Lochhead] is set to explore” (Horvat, “Liz” 183). In a way, Byron becomes Mary’s double, or mirror, in disguise:

The roles of protagonist and antagonist in the play are held by Mary Shelley and Lord Byron. The subtext of an intense intellectual and sexual power game is established through minute details of speech and gesture. Byron, if anything, operates as a mirror, or double, to Mary Shelley, not of “sameness” [...] of radical “otherness” — reflecting back to what she chooses to forget or keep hidden. (Kabitoglou 220)

In the first act of the play, Mary’s first confrontation with the monster invokes Byron’s voice. In this scene, she goes to great pains to conceal her anxiety to prove herself worthy of her parentage, aware of Percy and Byron’s expectations of her.

MARY. Well, it wasn’t for the money anyway. Nor for the wager, or the challenge of the competition —

BYRON’S VOICE. I’ll set us a little contest. Why should we content ourselves with translated, traditional horrors, all bookish and stilted. Home-grown ones are the best. Who can make the most stirring unnatural tale?

MARY. There were three of us.

MARY. There was Shelley, Byron, and me.

ELISE’S VOICE. Mrs Shelley, madame! Milord Byron’s man says he is here to fetch both the ladies —

MARY firmly suppresses these voices from the past.

(Blood and Ice, Act I, 5-6)

Soon after this scene, Lochhead transposes the ‘now’ of the play when Mary Shelley as a young widow in her late twenties is alone in a dark nursery; back to the summer in Switzerland, 1816.

MARY *blows out the candle, casts off her heavy, dark dressing gown and is a laughing eighteen-year-old girl in white muslin back in Switzerland, 1816 – summer, daytime, in a totally bright and different light. The lake and Mont Blanc above it. (Blood and Ice, Act I, 6)*

Obviously between the two is an intense tension even before Lord Byron makes his first appearance on stage. The tension in their relationship, defined by Kabitoglou as an intense intellectual and sexual power game, is presented throughout the play by speech and gesture. Byron is a source of tension in absentia.

SHELLEY. No, we have no need of intoxicants. A failure of the imagination I call it, but when we have guests —

MARY. No, Shelley, no brandy, not tonight, I don't want him [Lord Byron] to come! (*Blood and Ice*, Act I, 9)

Later Mary Shelley, transposed back to her widow-self of her late twenties in the opening scene with her shawl and dressing gown at her desk, reminisces their summer together. Claire's presence certainly causes tension within her, but she knows deep inside that it was rather Byron who would make her face her contradictions.

MARY. We were so happy then, always, Shelley and I, even with Claire, our ever-constant companion.

CREATURE'S VOICE. Who made me? Who made This...?

Frankenstein.

MARY. Oh, [...] we were so happy then, always, that summer, Shelley and I, before *he* came!

She actually means BYRON

(*Blood and Ice*, Act 1, 12)

Byron unleashes Mary Shelley's suppressed/hidden self and acts as a driving force to make her confront her monsters — her creative urge. In a surprisingly similar fashion to what might actually have taken place in Villa Diodati, there are six precise instances in the play when Byron asks her if she had started her story or urges her to write *that* story. It is incredibly obvious that Byron is obsessively interested, and interested *only*, for that matter, in Mary's creation. He becomes her mirror, reflecting back to her the strong urge to assert herself, no matter her reservations.

BYRON. There's mad Shelley, and bad Byron, and sad Polidori next door, scribbling away like a dervish, muttering 'Vampyre, vampire.'

...

BYRON. And how about you, *Mary*, have you begun yours?

BYRON. Writing time! The contest! Creation! *I asked you Mary, how goes your story?*

SHELLEY. (bursting out enthusiastically). Well, all I say of mine — it's scarce begun, to tell the truth — but I will say it's something about a dream.

BYRON. A dream, eh? Marvellous! *How about you, Mary?*

...

BYRON. Ah, Mary! Brave new world that has such poets in it.

BYRON drinks to her, toasting her.

SHELLEY begins to write again, almost in trance, staring.

I'm asking you, Mary Godwin —

BYRON. *Have you started your story?*

MARY. I don't think we would play with such dangerous things.

...

BYRON. Fan... tas... magor.. iana...! What was that story, Mary? You read it last night. 'And when the moon..' What?

MARY. Blue and baleful light.

BYRON. 'Blue and baleful light!'

Shelley! Shelley! Does she not make your flesh to creep and your gorge to rise? Oh, I know she does mine!

(Blood and Ice, Act 1, 29-31)

BYRON. *Come, write that story*, and let me tell you, it won't be made of nebulous ideas, pretty philosophies and pointless, pointless politics!

(Act 1, 39)

Mary's confrontation with her creation and creature is always under the scrutiny of Byron, who is sinisterly aware of her unuttered anxieties. As mentioned, the root of her anxieties is her belief that she caused her mother's demise and that she is expected to live up to her legacy, to become a great writer like her. She finds solace in her mother's grave in an attempt to feel close to her, as if she is pulled towards her so much so that she cannot liberate herself: "the maternal grave is repeatedly posited as the primal scene for Mary Shelley" (Kabitoglou 220). Byron reminds her of this ever-constant longing and sense of guilt by making an allusion to Coleridge's *Christabel*. In the poem, Christabel's mother had also died giving birth to her. This is surely one way of triggering her emotions. Mary's response, "There, I could be perfectly alone" establishes an uncanny location for her search for autonomy and self-expression.

SHELLEY. Remember back there in St Pancras Graveyard we used to blow bubbles and sail paper boats, and plan how we would sail away forever.

BYRON. Graveyard? That does not sound the most romantic sport for courtship, still —

CLAIRE. That was Mary's secret place. Her mother's grave.

MARY. (*heartfelt*). There, I could be perfectly alone.

BYRON. Poor Mary-Mary! Wearing her mother round her neck and her father on her sleeve.

(*Blood and Ice*, Act 1, 20-21)

"Wollstonecraft and Godwin, as members of Mary Shelley's personal 'family romance,' as historical figures, and as 'texts' whose socio-political theories have significantly contributed to the cultural constructions of the time, constantly interface with the plot and rhetoric of *Blood and Ice*" (Kabitoglou 221). Byron becomes the one to bring forth the idealism of Godwin's and subsequently Percy Shelley's doctrines in order to demonstrate their falsehood to Mary and to make her question her adherence to them. He does not only recognise Mary's "Oedipal deadlock" but also her tensions as a result of being caught up in between "her mother's radicalism (the combination of equal rights and self-abnegating sexuality) and her father's utopianism" (Kabitoglou

221). Besides undermining Percy Shelley's flightiness and romantic idealism, he also uncannily spies on Mary's hiding places.

SHELLEY. I could not wait to see the daughter of this excellent man I wished was my father!

BYRON (laughing). Godwin, eh? Political Justice!

SHELLEY. The best and bravest and most important book ever written in the English language.

BYRON. High praise!

SHELLEY. Not exaggerated!

BYRON. Poor Mary-Mary! Wearing her mother round her neck and her father on her sleeve.

(Blood and Ice, Act 1, 21)

And while he does all of this, he plays a sinister game of seduction, which incites the intellectual, but also sexual power game between the two.

CLAIRE. Albe, don't you admire my necklace?

BYRON. Very diverting, yes. Not so bonny as the gewgaw you wear on your throat, though, Mary. And who is that?

CLAIRE. That's Mary's famous mama!

BYRON looks at it, holding MARY by it close to him.

BYRON. The writer, eh? [...] She was bonny, but not so bonny as you.

MARY. I do not resemble her.

BYRON. No, she was all russet — fire and earth. You're more ... water and air.

MARY pulls away.

(Blood and Ice, Act 1, 18)

Through speech acts and gestures, Lochhead instigates an erotically charged intellectual and sexual power game between them. Lord Byron becomes the ultimate antagonist, while Mary Shelley is the protagonist, and there is so much tension (Kabitoglou 220). With Lochhead's dramatization, Byron takes on the role of the *double* or *mirror*, who reflects back to Mary "what she chooses to forget or keep hidden" (220). This mirror image does not denote "sameness", but just like the other side of a pendant, (which Mary carries with her all the time) as radical "otherness". It would not be bold to suggest that they complete one another: "It is Byron, rather than P.B. Shelley, who persistently enforces upon her an "unnameable" desire — to be a writer in her own right (220).

BYRON. Mary, you are getting good and sick, I know it, of Ariel's²¹ head-in-the-clouds hopefulness. Come on, come down to earth where you belong! Come on, come and curl up with the club-footed Caliban!²²

Hold for a long moment. Till it almost looks as if she will. She steps a step closer to him. He flicks at her mother's pendant on her throat.

BYRON. Everything I write is a Creature who can only live by what he sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches, and grabs, Mrs Shelley. [...] At any rate, one has to laugh. Or doesn't this one? Don't you, Mary? I look at you, Mary, and I see someone who is holding it all within. A lovely lady who yet suppresses every gust, every gale, every giggle. Don't sit on your wit, just to please Shelley.

MARY. 'Like a sword without a scabbard, it wounds the wearer!'²³

(Blood and Ice, Act 1, 36)

All in all, Lord Byron becomes her *double* or *mirror* in that he voices the anxieties she had and never uttered (in the text and subtext), and he echoes her in such ways that their *radical otherness* is impossible to miss.

²¹ Mary as the Ariel, the fairy.

²² Byron as the Caliban, the club-footed monster. (At birth, his right foot was deformed, a disability that he fought to reverse with violent exercise.)

²³ An allusion to Lady Elizabeth Montagu.

II. II. MARY'S MONSTROUS CREATION

a. Frankenstein as Mary's *Monstrous* Autobiography

CREATURE'S VOICE. You should love this. The creator should not shun his creature.

— Lochhead, *Blood and Ice*, Act 1, 12

MARY. I did not want to write —

CREATURE'S VOICE. Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay to mould me?

MARY. I did not want to write. *I did not want to write.*

— Lochhead, *Blood and Ice*, Act 1, 28

There is another layer of Mary's problematic relationship with her creature / authorship. In the first act of the play, whenever the omnipresent creature's voice is heard, he pleads with Mary. His search for meaning and plea for approval echoes through Mary's ambivalence towards the act of writing. At this juncture, it is important to note that this indecision does not derive from the female 'anxiety of authorship' (the term coined by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in *Madwomen in the Attic*) or self-doubt. The act of writing provokes in her a negation, which is much more than a sign of self-doubt: "it transpires the intense combination of pride and shame, anger and love that the act of writing, as the maternal topos, provokes in her – her ambivalence about female self-assertion." (Kabitoglou 221).

Mary's line "I did not want to write" couples with the following line: "Daughter of Political Justice, daughter of a *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. And I wrote you" (Act 1, 28). In a letter she wrote to Frances Wright in 1827, Mary Shelley exposes how her literary imagination — she feels — was shaped by the ideals of her radical philosopher father and proto-feminist mother (Clemit 26). She indeed wrote with an unparalleled awareness of the post-revolutionary politics of her time, and she is indebted to her mother and father's radical visions. Hers is, rather, the deeply felt desire to live up to her mother's, Mary Wollstonecraft's legacy and to find ways, at least literary ways, to get closer to her estranged father. Mary Shelley in a way put forward the intellectual legacy of her novel – "her primary intellectual allegiance" — in the

dedication of the first edition, albeit published anonymously (Clemis 26). Since the book represented her *self* as the author, she dedicated it to “William Godwin, Author of Political Justice, Caleb Williams, & c” (*Frankenstein* 1818, 2). This dedication is extremely significant in that, instead of giving the book to her husband who had encouraged her to expand the story and helped her a quite deal with the revisions, she gave it to a father who had refused to have anything to do with her after her elopement. What was her motive? According to Mellor, she wanted to “give the book to its father, her father, for the book is her created self as well as her child” (*Mary Shelley*, 54).

Shelley’s anxiety about her authorship did not derive from what Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar have famously called a female ‘anxiety of authorship’, the fear of speaking in public in a literary culture that systematically denigrated women’s writing. Rather, her anxiety was produced by both Godwin’s and Percy Shelley’s expectation that she would become a writer [...]. Alone among the participants of the ghost-story writing contest, she felt a compulsion to perform, but at the same time, as she later recalled, ‘that blank incapability of invention, which is the greatest misery of authorship, when dull Nothing replies to our anxious invocations’.²⁴ (Mellor, “Monster” 11)

On the critical level, scholars such as Barbara Johnson explain how *Frankenstein* is the story of the experience of writing *Frankenstein*²⁵, claiming that self-contradiction is repressed in woman authors, while their male counterparts are allowed to have their authorship anxieties and doubts. According to her, since autobiography as a genre is readily masculine and women were left with no choice but to assert themselves through this masculine medium, the only way out was that female autobiography itself become *monstrous*. In other words, the only possible way for a woman author to assert the contradictions she experienced, was autobiography through a fictional genre.

Frankenstein becomes the monstrous autobiography par excellence. Even though Mary Shelley stated that there were four of them in the ghost-story writing contest, there were actually at least two more secret contestants — “rival authors” at

²⁴ *Frankenstein* 1831, Intro. 54.

²⁵ On the front cover, it reads as *Blood and Ice* (2003) is “the story of the creation of *Frankenstein*”.

the time, the presence of whom she always felt (Johnson, “Mary Shelley” 56). They were no other than Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin. They were watching over her, complicating her *compulsion to perform*: “It is not singular that, as the daughter of two persons of distinguished literary celebrity, I should very early in life have thought of writing. As a child I scribbled; and my favourite pastime, [...] was to ‘write stories’ (Shelley, “Introduction” 245)”. She needs to be worthy of her parentage, she is expected to make great art, after all isn’t it because she was the loving daughter of William Godwin that Percy was drawn to her? The competition with her father surpasses just a literary or intellectual one. Percy Bysshe Shelley had already known Godwin the radical philosopher before he knew her, and wrote so highly of him: “The name of Godwin has been used to excite in me feelings of reverence and admiration. I have been accustomed to consider him a luminary too dazzling for the darkness surrounding him” (Johnson *Mary* 57). So many voices in her head... so much enthusiasm, yet so much dread. This painful gestation of hers suggests that while she was giving birth to her novel, she was also giving birth to her authorial *self*. This was, by all means, as painful as the act of composing a work of art. Unlike those woman writers who experienced an “anxiety of authorship” in Gibert and Gubar’s sense — “a difficulty in finding a precursor in which to speak within a culture that has historically suppressed the female voice and denied the means of literary production to women”, Mary Shelley most certainly had female precursors (Mellor, *Mary* 52). She is the proud daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft, and a descendant of eighteenth-century writers of sentimental fiction who can be listed as “Fanny Burney, Charlotte Ramsay Lennox, Sarah Fielding, Elizabeth Inchbald, and Amelia Alderson Opie [...] and given her commitment to a ghost story, Ann Radcliffe and other female authors of Gothic fiction (Clara Reeve, Charlotte Dacre, Sarah Wilkinson, Sophia Lee)” (Mellor, *Mary* 53). Albeit such an array of female authors and primarily her mother, Mary had her own reservations concerning the legitimacy of her literary voice and hence chose three male narrators to tell her tale. This struggle is also evident in her choice of the framed structure of her novel, and maybe in the fact that she let her husband make revisions.

Mary Shelley systematically censored her own speech in *Frankenstein*. The structure of the novel builds a series of screens around her authentic voice. [...] Mary Shelley’s decision to enclose that narrative within not one but two other narratives (Frankenstein’s account of his own story

as recorded in Walton's journal of his voyage towards the North Pole) has the effect of twice distancing her voice from public speech. (Mellor, *Mary* 57)

From another perspective, Mary Shelley's anxiety had nothing to do with fear that her desire to publish might be hindered by the patriarchal norms of the printing press at the time, even though she had to publish the first edition of her novel anonymously. On the contrary, she was expected and encouraged to publish. Especially Percy Shelley and Lord Byron, among many others in her circle, saw her as a prodigy and continuously sought her assistance in their manuscripts. As mentioned earlier, she went through a thorough education initiated by her father William Godwin. She was well accustomed to the artistic and literary intelligentsia of her time, both through her readings and attendance to public events such as plays, art galleries and intellectual discussions in her father's circle. Hence, she grew up with the expectation to write.

She felt a compulsion to write, a compulsion that was as much external as internal. When Byron proposed that they each write a ghost story for their common amusement, [...] [he] himself began a story which he abandoned after a few pages, Dr. Polidori may have written [...] the tale of "The Vampyr" that afterwards achieved a certain success when it was erroneously published under Byron's name. But fifteen years later, Mary Shelley vividly recalled her mortification at being forced to admit that she had not yet thought of a story. (Mellor, *Mary* 53)

There is a stark discrepancy between the way she recounts the events surrounding the Villa Diodati competition and what actually (more likely) happened. In her introduction to the second edition of her novel, she sounds as if she was extremely embarrassed for not *thinking of* a story. In her account of the Villa Diodati summer, Mary Shelley exposes her struggle to come up with a story for several mornings following Byron's proposal for the story competition.

I busied myself to think of a story. — a story to rival those which had excited us to do this task. [...] If I did not accomplish these things, my ghost story would be unworthy of its name. I thought and pondered — vainly. I felt that blank incapability of invention, which is the greatest misery of authorship, when dull Nothing replies to our anxious

invocations. Have you thought of a story? I was asked each morning, and each morning I was forced to reply with a mortifying negative. (*Frankenstein* “Introduction” 248)

Mellor refers to James Rieger²⁶ to show that the only other surviving account of these events — Dr. Polidori’s diary — point to a different timeline (Mellor, *Mary* 53). It was June 15, 1816. The topics of conversation were creation and human nature. Polidori read from his notes the lectures of the renowned anatomist William Lawrence. Lawrence argued that there is no such energy, or a life force, as the *soul* and that humans were made of flesh and blood and that is all. Another topic of conversation was the experiments of Erasmus Darwin, with electricity.

The following night, 16th June, the entourage gathered around the fire at close quarters. Laudanum (a tincture of opium) must have also occupied a welcome space in that soaking wet, stormy night. This was presumably the night when Lord Byron read aloud the French translation of ten anonymous German ghost tales he happened to find in the villa – the *Fantasmagoriana, ou Recueil d’Histoires d’apparitions de Spectres, Revenants, Fantômes, etc.* (1812) — to the frightened Mary, Shelley, Claire and Polidori. “BYRON. Fan... tas... magor... iana...! What was that story, Mary? You read it last night. “And when the moon...” What?” (*Blood and Ice* Act 1, 31).

Growing frustrated at the unoriginality of such tales, Byron declared that they should each write a ghost story, and that there would be a winner. What happened next will never exactly be traced, but in Charlotte Gordon’s account, the whole party slept the night since it was very dangerous to walk down the path to their more modest establishment in the vicinity (“Shelley rented a chalet called Maison Chapuis on the opposite side of the lake from the hotel [d’Angleterre]”) (168). That was a Sunday and Polidori reported on his diary: “Laid up. Shelley came, and dined and slept here, with Mrs S and Miss Claire Clairmont” (Sampson 126). That sojourn was likely to be the occasion when they told each other these ghost stories. It was also likely that following such a sleepover, they began asking each other *Have you thought of a story?* “When they returned home the next day, Mary tried to focus on writing her story [...], but whether she had immediate success is not clear, as there is so much mythology about what happened next” (Gordon 187).

²⁶ the editor of the 1831 edition.

Polidori's diary entry on June 17th is in contradiction with what Mary Shelley claimed happened morning after morning following that stormy night (that she could not think of a story). He wrote, "the ghost stories are begun by all but me" (qtd. in Sampson 126). His account might be unreliable of course, but when it came to Mary, he was usually precise, since it is clear that he had a crush on her and monitored her every move, even noted down the exact hour when they "breakfasted" or drank some tea, et cetera. He did not observe any difficulty on her part to start her story, contrary to Mary Shelley's alleged demise in the 1831 introduction. Such a challenge most probably brought about a lot of anxiety on her part, and she saw it fit to claim that she was the last one to start her story. However, it would not have escaped Polidori's attention, biographers seem to agree, if Mary was experiencing writer's block.

Even though he was often unreliable, with Mary her was usually spot-on [...]. He makes no mention of any difficulties on Mary's part, casting doubt on her version, since if she were having trouble, it seems likely he would have noticed, given his obsessive surveillance of her daily activities. Besides, it would have been a point of connection between them, one he would have been delighted to share. (Gordon 188)

Considering the biographical evidence, one question remains unanswered. Why did Mary Shelley, in her 1831 introduction, prolong the time she came up with a story (from a few hours after Byron proposed the contest vs. to a few days after) (Mellor, *Mary* 54)? Was this a revelation of the anxiety she felt lest she could not accede to Byron's request? Mellor suggests that she prolonged the time because she was unconsciously anxious about disappointing Lord Byron who expected her to write.

However, I believe that Mary Shelley was driven by an anxiety which is not so easily discernible. She felt that her art would be a reflection of her womanhood, and she dreaded this prospect. Thus, she was exceptionally ambivalent towards her art, calling it "my hideous progeny" as if she somehow wanted to distance herself from her creation. Mellor urges the reader to ask why Mary was so "apologetic", why she treated her creation like a dream-vision rather than the epitome of her creative urge: "In giving birth to her self-as-author, Mary Shelley is here able to conceive only a monster: she is the author-of-horror, perhaps even what Percy Shelley called *Frankenstein*, 'the author of unalterable evils'" (Mellor, *Mary* 55).

c. *Frankenstein* as a Transgression of Autobiography

In a patriarchal culture whose linguistic domain is predominantly male, literature (and other forms of high art) prioritizes and encourages the male voice. Asserting her artistic voice in the public sphere becomes an act of transgression, and her speech becomes unnatural. Giving birth to oneself-as-author becomes an extremely daunting and daring prospect for a woman because it might mean that she liberates herself from the confines of the patriarchal mechanism of propriety. This would mean that the author risks being ostracised, or at best, dismissed. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, being a woman artist was synonymous with being monstrous. No matter how hard Mary Wollstonecraft and her fellow radicals tried to elevate the status of women in the revolutionary times, society still expected babies from women, rather than art. Without doubt, Wollstonecraft was an ultimately independent woman, she lived by her pen, did not receive any support from a father figure. Instead, she had her intellectual supporters and mentors, for instance, Joseph Johnson who became her publisher in London. Yet when she published *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), she was even called by critics such as Horace Walpole a “hyena in petticoats” (qtd. in Johnson, *Mary* 70). As her descendant, remember Mary Shelley stating that she was “very averse to bringing myself in print” and had become “infinitely indifferent” to achieving “literary reputation” (“Introduction” 245).

As Mary Poovey has emphasized, women who wrote for publication in the eighteenth century defied the decorum of the proper lady, a decorum so long established that it was considered a law of nature. Hence the act of female authorship could be seen as an unnatural act, a perversion that arouses both anxiety and hostility in the male reader. (Mellor, *Mary* 56)

The struggle for female authorship is further complicated with a post-structuralist lens. A number of feminist critics have been influenced by the strategies presented by post-structuralist criticism. Michel Foucault’s theories on power, knowledge and discourse have provided feminists with specific strategies through which to analyse literary texts (Hoeveler 48). In Foucault’s view, power functions in society via ‘discourse systems’ which are manipulated with the ultimate aim of spreading certain ideologies. By examining how power operates through discourse,

one can understand how history has been shaped through male perspectives and how this has marginalized and silenced women's experiences. For Foucault, discourse is not simply a neutral exchange of information but rather a system of knowledge and power that shapes our understanding of the world. Discourse produces meaning and constructs reality, and it is through discourse that power operates. As Foucault argues in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), “[d]iscourse is not simply what it says: it is also—and perhaps primarily—what it does” (49). Thus, feminists with a Foucauldian lens study literary genres as ‘discourse systems’ which control and limit the way women operate in society. In order to understand how and why the patriarchal society prescribes certain modes of conduct, literary genres should be treated as discourse systems. This is why “feminists and critics [...] have been interested in *Frankenstein* as a particularly potent discourse system, a manifestation of conflicted ideologies, [...] sometimes arguing against society’s negative stereotypes about the proper roles of mothers, daughters, and friends” (Hoelever 49).

Barbara Johnson is one of the first American scholars to link the novel with deconstruction. She analyses the novel as an autobiographical text. She asserts that in *Frankenstein*, there is both the author’s resistance against and ambivalence towards the act of writing. This struggle for authorship, she argues, is what makes the work quintessentially feminist. Johnson’s point of departure is the array of discussions, which lie at the forefront of contemporary trends in literary criticism. Namely, these are “the question of mothering, the question of the woman writer, and the question of autobiography,” and her aim is to unravel the ways in which these crucial questions are intertwined. This standpoint forms the backbone of her analysis of Mary Shelley’s gothic novel (“My Monster” 15).

Until quite recently, Mary Shelley’s novel *Frankenstein*’s importance has been either neglected or regarded through the lens of her relations, including her Romantic poet husband Percy Shelley, her radical philosopher father William Godwin or her proto-feminist mother Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley. Moreover, her contemporary critics hid their patriarchal attitudes behind a veneer of discernment. In other words, Mary Shelley did not arise as an author in her own right. Hence, her struggle for authorship illuminates the ways in which her novel is analysed in Johnson’s insightful article, in the same manner as Lochhead writes on the front cover of *Blood and Ice* (2009) that it is a play about the “story of the creation of *Frankenstein*”. The novel

itself could also be seen as the “story of the creation of Frankenstein”. Johnson discusses that throughout the novel, there is “the desire for resemblance, the desire to create a being like oneself — which is the autobiographical desire par excellence” that makes her novel fundamentally transgressive (“My Monster” 17).

[Frankenstein, to Walton] You seek for knowledge and wisdom, as I once did, and I ardently hope that the gratification of your wishes may not be a serpent to sting you, as mine has been. I do not know that the relation of my misfortunes will be useful to you, yet, if you are inclined, listen to my tale. (Shelley, *Frankenstein*: 1818, 20)

[Frankenstein, to Monster] “Begone! I will not hear you. There can be no community between you and me; we are enemies.” [Monster to Frankenstein] “How can I move thee? [...] I was benevolent; my soul glowed with love and humanity: but am I not alone, miserably alone? You, my creator, abhor me; what hope can I gather from your fellow-creatures, who owe me nothing? [...] You accuse me of murder; and yet you would, with a satisfied conscience, destroy your own creature. [Frankenstein to monster] “Begone! Relieve me from the sign of your detested form”. [Monster, to Frankenstein] “thus I take from thee a sight which you abhor. Still thou canst listen to me, and grant me thy confession.” (Shelley, *Frankenstein*: 1818, 91-92)

Insofar as Frankenstein discerns an image of himself in Walton or denies (or fails to come to terms with) his resemblance to the monster he had created; the narrator in each story frame (since the novel is comprised of the accounts of three different tellers: Walton, who tells his tale to his sister through letters, Victor Frankenstein, who tells Walton about the tale of his creation and abandonment of the monster, and the nameless monster who tells Frankenstein his side of the story) actually speaks to the mirror of their own transgression. In the novel, the monster becomes Victor Frankenstein’s mirror — he creates an image of himself in the monster, becoming “the monster he linguistically constructs” (Mellor “Monster” 23):

But I did not feel the inconvenience of the weather; my imagination was busy in scenes of evil and despair. I considered the being whom I had [...] endowed with the will and power to effect purposes of horror, [...]

nearly in the light of my own vampire, my own spirit let loose from the grave, and forced to destroy all that was dear to me. (Shelley, *F* 1818, 65)

This resemblance between the creator and the creation is further reinforced with allusions to Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Repeated associations are built between Victor and his creation with Milton's Satan and fallen Adam. Victor and his creation almost become one, they are merged into one another, towards the final scene which depicts the icy wastes of the North Pole. The line which distinguishes the pursuer from the pursued is blurred: "Victor has become his creature, his creature has become his maker; they are each other's double" (Mellor, "Monster" 23).

The narrative strategy of the author, in which in each story frame the teller speaks to their listener / mirror (as in Frankenstein and his creature) highlights such resemblance in order to "eliminate such transgression" (Johnson "My Monster" 17). Frankenstein speaks to his monstrous self, and in a way, the mirror of his own transgression. However, the framing technique somehow impedes the realisation of transgression itself. No matter if the transgression is not realised, the desire to create a being like oneself is always there, and this is the autobiographical desire of Mary Shelley's. From this lens, the novel itself becomes her transgression. In this sense, Frankenstein's monster becomes a figure for autobiography. First, he creates the monster in his own image and then recounts the reasons and consequences of this tale of creation to Walton. Seen from this aspect, "*Frankenstein* can be read as the story of autobiography as the attempt to neutralize the monstrosity of autobiography. Simultaneously a revelation and a cover-up, autobiography would appear to constitute itself as in some way a repression of autobiography" (Johnson "My Monster" 18).

Mary Shelley's repressive urge to distance herself from her own autobiographical impulse is evident in her introduction. She claims that she had always been hesitant to bring *herself* forward in print, thus marking a stark departure from any association between her tale as the woman author and the tale of *Frankenstein*:

The publishers of the Standard Novels, in selecting *Frankenstein* for one of their series, expressed a wish that I should furnish them with some account of the origin of the story. [...] It is true that I am very averse to bringing myself forward in print; but as my account will only

appear as an appendage to a former production. (“Introduction.” *F*: 1831, 245)

One is compelled to ask why Mary Shelley repressed her autobiographical impulse as such, even diminishing her own account to the status of an “appendage” to her former production. Mary Shelley here seems to be speaking into a mirror, the mirror being her former production. The image in the mirror stares back at her, which is her painstaking creation of *Frankenstein*. Her struggle for authorship. Then the question remains: Why did she refuse to acknowledge her authorial self in her creation? In Johnson’s response, it might perhaps help us to ask whether this change of heart has anything to do with “the problem of specifically feminine autobiography. In a humanistic tradition in which man is the measure of all things, how does an appendage go about telling the story of her own life?” (“My Monster” 18). This brings us to the discussion of the monstrosity of feminine autobiography. When Mary Shelley was declared the author of *Frankenstein*, reviewers as well as the readers of the book found it hard to believe how a girl of eighteen could think of such a monstrous idea. The prospect of a young girl even thinking of such a monster, then, was somehow monstrous in itself. In addition, the way she ends her 1831 introduction makes it very clear that an array of parallelisms can be drawn between Victor’s creation of his monster and Mary’s creation of her novel. Frankenstein created a monster, and Mary created the monster of a story. “And now, once again, I bid my hideous progeny to go forth and prosper. I have an affection for it, for it was the offspring of happy days, when death and grief were but words” (“Introduction” 251).

With these words, “hideous progeny” — Mary seems to embrace the monstrosity of her creation, her own vampire. Calling her novel “hideous”, she builds an analogy between her as the author of the novel and Frankenstein as the creator of the monster. Mary Shelley becomes *Frankenstein’s* Frankenstein.

d. Mary Shelley's Self-divisions

In an attempt to live up to her parentage and especially her mother's legacy, and to prove herself to her circle, Mary Shelley had to usurp the parental role and give birth to her *self* as the author (Mellor "Monster"). Her struggle for authorship is not of the fear-of-success syndrome. Mary's process of bringing her *self* in print is intertwined with so many complexities of her life, her desires, her disillusionments, her pains, demands of people on her. As Johnson explains, Mary's private life was superabundant with contradictions.

Her father, who had ironically professed free love and declared that marriage was the most unnatural bond, in his earlier writings (he and Mary Wollstonecraft had only married since they wanted soon-to-be-expected Mary to be a legitimate child), rejected her after she eloped with the then-married Percy. "Percy Bysshe Shelley's elopement with Mary Shelley, despite his marriage to Harriet Westbrook, was planned in the light of Godwin's early arguments against marriage as 'the most odious of all monopolies' — though in practice it led to a two-year estrangement from Godwin" (Clemit 29-30). Critics who see through Mary's suffering as an outcast of society, in a very similar vein to her/Frankenstein's creature, have a valid point.

Mary Shelley bore four children only one of whom survived and while all of these were taking their toll on her, she kept on reading, and writing, and the way she recorded these unfortunate events in her journal was through noticeably short, few sentences. Her journals indicate that she kept turning back to her mother's writings: "The mother in this narrative is Mary Wollstonecraft, a courageous, passionate and unconventional feminist, author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, in which she pleaded for women's rights and equality in public and private realms" (Bronfen, "Rewriting" 18).

She kept hidden the heavy toll these contradictions took on her. She disguised her suffering behind her work of art. Mary carries within her all of these self-contradictions, yet these are not visible in *Frankenstein*, as the question of femininity is obscured. This is because "the fact that self-contradiction is so vigorously repressed in women" (Johnson "My Monster" 25). The painful message that *Frankenstein* delivers is not that of the female monstrosity but of female contradictions. How could

she present her contradiction in print? Only “from the point of view of its repression”: “how indeed would it have been possible for Mary to represent feminine contradiction from the point of view of its repression otherwise than precisely in the gap between domestic angels and an uncompleted monsteress?” (Johnson “My Monster” 25).

“The monstrousness of selfhood” — the unresolved tensions and contradictions of being a woman — is intricately imbedded with the matter of female autobiography since there would be no other alternative as stories have been shaped by male sensibility. Any autobiography of a man’s consists of the challenges of adhering to the norms of “how a *man* should be (“My Monster” 26). A feminine model of autobiography, therefore, does not exist. The female autobiographer, therefore, finds herself trapped within a genre that is a product of the patriarchal discourse, designed to fulfil the masculine fantasy. How is the female imagination to be played out? How could she express her difficulties in adhering to the feminine ideal? In her endeavour, her autobiography could only present itself as *monstrous*. “The fact that [this book] deploys a theory of autobiography as monstrosity within the framework of a less overtly avowed struggle with the [...] authors’ own writing [...], in the final analysis, what is most autobiographically fertile and *telling* about them” (26).

To conclude, the monstrous quality of female creation — intertwined with the unsettled tensions and contradictions of womanhood found in the gaps of Mary Shelley’s writing — and the struggle for female authorship, underlie the mainstay of Liz Lochhead’s creation in *Blood and Ice*. Doubles and split subjects are stylistic features Lochhead artfully deploys in her attempt to “redress the authority of female narrative, whether her characters or her own” in a way to revision their identities (Horvat, “Liz” 183).

II. III. LOCHHEAD'S MARY SHELLEY

a. Mary as the 'Subject' in *Blood and Ice*

In *Blood and Ice*, Liz Lochhead aims to uncover the hidden parts of Mary Shelley's story. As a result of this quest, Lochhead investigates Mary Shelley's relationships with the figures in her life. The play is a remarkable example of the use of biography by feminist playwrights as a subversive technique, through which they undermine the power relations in the patriarchal discourses of history, literature and art. In other words, this is one way of "subjecting history to theatrical feminist critique and refashioning [it]" (Sakellaridou 310). The fresh and exciting way in which Lochhead does this is by giving Mary Shelley the subject position and making other characters only relational to her. It is important to note that Lochhead's most important revision in this tale of artistic creativity is her endeavour of the 'entire play' to take place in Mary Shelley's consciousness. Not only her immediate surroundings but her mother's memory and writings, her father's philosophical circle and literary creation all serve to the purpose of *her* articulation.

Howard Brenton's *Bloody Poetry* (1984) interestingly contrasts with Lochhead's *Blood and Ice* (1985, 2009). Brenton's play comprises more or less of the same dramatis personae and concerns their entangled relationships. And it seemingly sets out to depict the same events and conversations which took place during the summer of 1816 in and around Villa Diodati. However, Mary Shelley, the one and only true winner of the ghost story competition, is used as a decorative stage figure. Although Brenton's intention was not just to write about (Percy) Shelley, but rather bring the whole quartet into the spotlight, he is predominantly interested in Percy Shelley, "the Platonist, who carries much of the idealism of this 'Utopian play'" (Wilson 99). Even though, as in *Blood and Ice*, Brenton's play overflows with intertextuality, it does not resort to intertextual references from *Frankenstein* even if the cold summer nights spent in Villa Diodati mark the genesis of this overarching myth. Instead, in *Bloody Poetry* there are a great number of (Percy) Shelley texts "from *Mont Blanc* to *Jullian and Maddalo* to the *Mask of Anarchy* — quoted and integrated into the play" (Huber 99). Thus, the biographical arrangement of all the intertextual references ensure that Percy Shelley becomes the protagonist of the play. "Brenton's

work is markedly concerned with the male league of Shelley and Byron and the male poetic creation, treating Mary as a marginal, decorative element” (Sakellaridou 311). Unlike *Blood and Ice*, the play does not take place in the consciousness of Mary or any other character. The play can also be considered as a memory play due to some scenes, in which Polidori and Shelley step outside of the fictional world of the play and start to act “as narrator-cum-stage-manager, set the scene, address the audience, recite their own texts and give their personal view of events” (Huber 100). Then, the only perspectives that matter are those of Polidori or Shelley’s. Mary, at best, becomes an object-to-be-looked-at. The genesis of Frankenstein is treated like a minor element of the story. Even though Howard Brenton explores the group dynamics and declares, “the quartet are determined to invent a new way of living, free of sexual repression”, he is not interested in Mary’s sexuality (Brenton, *Plays* xiv). On the other hand, in Lochhead’s hands, Mary stands her ground. She is the centre and the focaliser, “all characters are seen and validated through her consciousness” (Sakellaridou 311). The play situates itself in the feminist canon as it predominantly deals with female literary production and the experience of one’s own creativity despite all adversities. These adversities of course include biological ones, and it reminds the readers and the audience alike — a woman’s creativity knows no limits.

Throughout the play, one witnesses Mary Shelley’s confrontations with her “hideous progeny” in the dark and ghostly nursery of the later years of her life; her confrontations with Percy, Albé (Lord Byron’s nickname in Mary’s circle) and finally her confrontations with her own tale (as she reads a passage from her novel). Just like the mother text, the play deploys a framing technique (in the novel, the first-person narrator is first Walton, then Frankenstein, and then the Creature) of different instances of Mary’s consciousness. *Blood and Ice* is thus,

[a] phenomenological account of Mary Shelley’s consciousness (as Lochhead emphatically informs us in her postscript to the play — “Mary Shelley, in whose consciousness my entire play takes place” and use[s] a structural technique — that of the shifts in time between the play’s “now” and the summer of 1816, when Frankenstein was conceived. (Kabitoglou 218)

While Mary Shelley is alone, she is interrupted by the voices in her head — first, the voice of her creature. As the play spirals in time, she is interrupted by Byron’s remarks and interrogations. The memory of her mother is vibrant in these encounters. Through an analysis of such instances, this section seeks to answer these questions: Could Liz Lochhead grant Mary Shelley the freedom and space to utter what she had kept hidden? Is it this search for meaning that brought Lochhead closer to the story? To what extent is Mary the ‘subject’ of the play/her own story?

b. Artistic Creativity and Authorship in *Blood and Ice*

CREATURE’S VOICE. Frankenstein’s Frankenstein? Why did you make me?

MARY. *Frankenstein’s* Frankenstein? Am I? I am! My God! Oh, had I known...

I am responsible.

‘It was on a dreary night in November’.

I wrote that, on a stormy night in June.

(*Blood and Ice*, Act 2, 41)

In the second act of the play, Lochhead draws on the parallelism between the author and the creator. Mary Shelley of the play, after reading aloud the creation scene of the novel, suddenly comprehends the inseparable nature of her and her Frankenstein. Victor Frankenstein created his monster under “dreary” circumstances — during the inclement weather while he was on holiday, Victor Frankenstein happened to get hold of the writings of Cornelius Agrippa and suddenly felt in himself the fire burning — to truly apprehend the mechanics of life and death. “When I was thirteen year of age, we all went of a party of pleasure to the baths near Thonon: the inclemency of the weather obliged us to remain a day confined to the inn. In this house I chanced to find the works of Cornelius Agrippa. [...] A new light seemed to dawn upon my mind” (*Frankenstein: 1818*, 27).

So did Mary Shelley, when she was accompanied by her circle in Villa Diodati, in the year without summer, as 1816 was called. She overheard conversations concerning the principles of life, and the scientific discussions that led to her vision of a creation. What is more, that particular summer, on that particular night, got as dreary as it could. “As lighting flashed and the rain poured down, the little party huddled

around the fire at the Villa Diodati. [...] That night everyone slept at the Villa Diodati; it was too stormy for the Shelley party to venture back down the path” (Gordon 187).

After returning home, Victor Frankenstein set out to study the works of Agrippa and others, and the way he describes his visions uncannily echo the way Mary Shelley recounted that night at Villa Diodati. “The raising of ghosts or devils was a promise liberally accorded by my favourite authors, the fulfilment of which I most eagerly sought; and if my incantations were always unsuccessful, I attributed the failure rather to my own inexperience and mistake” (*Frankenstein: 1818*, 28, 29).

Furthermore, in the novel, it is hard to miss how Mary Shelley refers to Frankenstein’s activities as “art” and him as the “artist”. In the introductory note that Shelley added to the revised 1831 version, she referred to Victor Frankenstein as a “pale student of unhallowed arts”, and that “his success would terrify the artist” invoking this parallelism once more (250). There is certainly an identification process at play between the author and her protagonist:

[Walton to his sister, as he depicts his new guest Victor Frankenstein]
He is so gentle, yet so wise; his mind is so cultivated; and when he speaks, although his words are culled with the *choicest art*, yet they flow with rapidity and unparallelled eloquence.

[Victor to Walton, as he describes the moment of creation] I appeared rather like one doomed to slavery, to toil in the mines, or any other unwholesome trade, than *the artist* occupied by his favourite employment.

[Victor to Creature, upon the murder of William] Why do you call to my remembrance circumstances of which I shudder to reflect, that I have been the miserable origin and *the author*? (*F: 1818*, 91-92)

All of these pervasive parallels bring our discussion to Johnson’s inference about the novel: “Frankenstein can be read as the story of the experience of writing Frankenstein” (“My Monster” 23). There is a multiplicity of meanings embedded in this text. It depends solely on who reads them, who connects with them. The monster is Frankenstein’s creation, Mary is *Frankenstein*’s creator, Mary is *Frankenstein*’s Frankenstein, Mary becomes the *monstrous* author who attempts to write her story

through and despite a patriarchal frame. Her maternal body already makes her monstrous.

While portraying Mary as a woman haunted by ‘misery [and] grief’ after the drowning of her husband, Lochhead amplifies the widow Shelley’s retrospective desire to discover a ‘new way of making life’. This statement emerges in the face of society’s views of women’s maternal bodies as monstrous and on her reflections on the traumatic [events] she experienced as a wife and a mother. (Davison 181)

Most interesting in Johnson’s discussion in terms of autobiography is her realisation of the novel’s description of a scene of the origins of creation. In the novel, the scene is depicted in meticulous detail, but where the creature came from — how the creation itself really took shape — is not described. “Frankenstein combines a monstrous answer to two of the most fundamental questions: Where do the babies come from? and Where do stories come from? In both cases, the scene of creation is described, but the answer to these questions is still withheld” (“My Monster” 23). In the same introductory note, Mary Shelley chooses not to dwell upon where her story came from, or how her creation took place, but rather provides a “general” answer. “I am more than willing to comply because I shall thus give a general answer to the question so very frequently asked me — how I, then a young girl, came to think of and to dilate upon so very hideous an idea” (“Introduction” 245).

This brings us to the question of how one can link all of these uncanny resemblances with the struggle for female authorship. As mentioned earlier, as the daughter of such prominent authors, Mary was born with ink — all through her childhood, she grew up believing and expecting that she would become a great writer:

[A]s the daughter of two persons of distinguished literary celebrity, I should very early in life have thought of writing. My husband [...] was from the first very anxious that I should prove myself worthy of my parentage and enrol myself on the page of fame. He was for ever inciting me to obtain literary reputation, which even on my own part I cared for then. (Shelley “Introduction” 247)

As opposed to Victor Frankenstein’s sudden impulse to abandon his creature, and thus his helpless state of mind, Mary Shelley becomes the subject of her own story

in *Blood and Ice* in the sense that she does not deny her creation but confronts it, albeit reluctantly. As a result, one can argue that she embraces her own creation and as the painful, yet revelatory gestation draws to a close, she finds her “true status, [b]y taking control of the means of communication, takes the power to recreate her historically constructed image” (McDonald, “Scottish” 495). After all the losses she had been through, as Lochhead insightfully states, Mary Shelley felt the inevitable urge to create, and her creating a new life out of utter chaos is a way of asserting herself as the author of the one of the most enduring myths of all time.

[P]rescient as she must have been — many, though not all, of these griefs lay ahead of her — this particular seventeen-year-old girl should have come up with a deep-felt fantasy of a new way of *creating life*. She was already; I’m sure, subconsciously aware of pushing herself beyond her own natural boundaries. (Lochhead, *Blood and Ice* vi)

c. Intertextuality and ‘Pleasure of the Text’ in *Blood and Ice*

The feminist rewriting and revisioning of Mary Shelley’s story of creation and authorial self as a creator, is also achieved through the rich intertextuality of *Blood and Ice*. Intertextuality is a literary theory introduced by Julia Kristeva and it briefly means the use of complex literary relationships as a means of communication. It means “between texts” and investigates the myriad ways through which texts communicate with one another. A literary text, by its nature, is a weaving of different elements to construct a story, or any kind of artwork. A painting, sculpture, or a film, etc. can be seen as a text. The play’s intertextuality presents many layers, one of which is painting. The intertextuality of *Blood and Ice* encompasses allusions to Fuseli and Goya paintings, Romantic poetry of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Lord Byron, Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, and even anachronistic allusions to Beatles songs; direct and indirect references to the mother text of *Frankenstein* and Mary Shelley’s introduction to the novel, and pastiche, since the play is created in response to Muriel Spark’s biography of Mary Shelley (*The Child of Light*), as well as the novel, *Frankenstein*. As a matter of fact, *Frankenstein* is an epitome of intertextuality, as its title readily suggests: “...or, *The Modern Prometheus*”.

Lochhead’s play offers both a ‘pleasure of the text’ and a ‘jouissance of the text’, to evoke Roland Barthes’s terminology. The reader gets immense pleasure from

the text in that it encompasses familiar references to a classical and canonical text — *Frankenstein*, the author of which is the protagonist of the play. The play revolves around real-life *dramatis personae*, who were eccentric and larger-than-life artists. The entourage of Byron and Shelleys is undoubtedly one of the most popular and notorious coterie in literature and these artists invoke feelings of excitement, awe, and reverence in the readers of Romanticism and beyond. Of course, the concept of the individual within the dramatist personae in her play does not necessarily serve as a synecdoche (representative of the *zeitgeist* of the historical period) to evoke a sense of fantasy in the viewers or the readers. However, what this play shares with the more traditional historical drama, is the condition of “greatness” that the biographee does not fail to provide. This condition of greatness, be it fame or notoriety, denotes “a certain amount of guaranteed presuppositions shared by audience and author alike. It is only from this common ground (e.g. the image of Byron as mad, bad, and dangerous to know) that the voyeuristic perspective can be opened up — in the sense of showing the great artist in a ‘new’ or ‘different’ light” (Huber 95). This is the condition, which provides *the pleasure of the text*, and Lochhead’s play is no exception.

Another component of the ‘pleasurable’ aspect of Lochhead’s text is that it alludes to popular paintings, is aesthetically rich in décor and setting, thus, in general, the *mise en scène* creates a sense of nostalgia in the reader. On top of all that, seeing the embodiment of Mary Shelley onstage and following her story from her point of view is a refreshing experience. I believe Lochhead granted such a pivotal and almost equally central role to Lord Byron since, as a playwright who spent so many years obsessing over these characters, revising her text an innumerable number of times; she figured Byron would look stunning onstage, and who could be the perfect candidate but Byron incarnate for the role of spying on Mary in her hiding places, provoking her to find her own voice and unapologetically unleashing her monsters? The text is sexual, full of erotic allusions and the sexual tension between Byron and Mary — an unexpected coupling, indeed, is felt all throughout the first act of the play. Notice that in this feminist-revisionist play, *the gaze* is taken away from the male quite fashionably and the male characters in the play sometimes become (through Lochhead’s dramatization) objects-to-be-looked-at. Hence the naked Percy on the terrace of Chapuis, hence the dashing Byron with his superfluous arrogance and magnetism to the point of being fetishized by the audience.

On the other hand, *Blood and Ice* raises in the reader a ‘jouissance of the text’ because it is subversive and iconoclastic. “[W]hat pleasure wants is the site of a loss, the seam, the cut, the deflation, the *dissolve* which seizes the subject in the midst of bliss” (Barthes, *Pleasure* 7). There is the voice of an uncanny monster always interrupting Mary’s thoughts, asking “Why did you make me?” over and over again and speaking in a juvenile tone. Some critics such as Kabitoglou interpret Lochhead’s monster as semiotic excess. This is subconsciously disturbing and unsettling for the reader and the audience. Apart from the plying and rather harassing monster who seems to go nowhere and never die out (in the novel, having nowhere to go, he must consume himself in his pyre), there are so many allusions to the bloody (in the literal sense of the world) reality of being a woman. “The play fixates on “blood,” — the sign of the whole cycle of woman’s sexuality” (Kabitoglou 219). Kabitoglou draws upon the blood metaphor by evoking Luce Irigaray: “Woman is the guardian of the blood. But as she and it have had to use their substance to nourish the universal consciousness of self, it is in the form of bloodless shadows — of unconscious fantasies — that they maintain an underground subsistence” (225).

Mary Shelley reminisces her mothers’ death (who had died of puerperal fever only days after giving her birth), her own life-threatening still-birth when she remembers there were rivers of blood, she almost lost her consciousness, and Percy came up with the idea of soaking her in a bathtub full of ice — *Blood and Ice* — to save her, which he did in the end. The bloody French revolution with allusion to the bloody neck of women through Claire, and the cold death surrounding her from the very beginning to the very end. The text needs to be subversive, apart from being psychologically and physically disturbing, to invoke *jouissance*...

What is highly subversive about *Blood and Ice* is that it exhibits a phenomenological account of Mary Shelley’s consciousness, as Lochhead asserts that the entire play takes place in Mary’s consciousness and there are constant spiralling transitions between the play’s now and the genial summer of 1816, when *Frankenstein* came into being. Thus, the play does not accede to a linear narrative structure, which is already very unsettling for the audience. As the shifts in time are arranged in a way that the dark and gloomy mise en scène of the ghostly nursery hosting the widow Mary Shelley in her late twenties, is abruptly transformed into the shores of Lake Genova,

balcony of Maison Chapuis, or the fire-lit lounge of Villa Diodati, presenting the more cheerful eighteen-year-old Mary Shelley.

The play opens with Mary Shelley alone, [...] in a sensation of “coldness,” denoting a multiple cluster of ambivalent and contradictory significations that stitch together death, erotic frigidity, loneliness, dejection. The disembodied voices of P.B. Shelley, Byron and Claire drag her into her past, as she re-members bits of lived experience that surface into consciousness: (Kabitoglou 219)

This subversive strategy owes its credibility and success to the contradictions and anxieties Mary faces within and beyond the immediate text of the play. Mary’s consciousness operates as a frame narrative, encompassing various incidents which all come together to make a play out of memory fragments and “retrospective reconstruction” (Kabitoglou 218).

Blood and Ice is primarily concerned with the questions of artistic creation, female authority and authorship. While some scholars in the field claim that Mary’s story is presented as the story of a woman in her search for literary creativity as opposed to motherhood, this is actually not the case.²⁷ Of course, it can be argued that she was caught within the web of domestic responsibilities, motherhood and much more, and she navigated between them. However, what we encounter in *Blood and Ice* and *Frankenstein* is way more than a birth myth or a tale surrounding the cult of motherhood. It is the tremendous struggle for female authorship. Johnson argues that her mother Mary Wollstonecraft treated pregnancy as an “inevitable part of her life, not as an occasion for emotion” (*Mary* 81). And in her journals, it is impossible to miss how resilient Mary Shelley was in the face of catastrophes. Since childhood, she had been surrounded by great artists, living and dead, and had been influenced by the revolutionary politics of her parents as well as her Gothic predecessors/contemporaries whom she admired. “Imbricated in [a] web of interwoven living stories, Mary struggles to create “a story of her own,” in trying to give value and distinction to her own new-born existence as a female writer” (Johnson, *Mary* 58). When it comes to the act of “creating” within the context of literature, female creation was an arduous, compromised one.

²⁷ See Horvat “Liz”.

In order to take a moment to reflect on the origins of Mary Shelley's quest, one should ask the question how an eighteen-year-old Shelley could create such an enduring, "prescient" myth (Mellor "Monster" 9). In Mary Shelley's life, life and death was intertwined. She created the myth of the birth of the nameless monster. In her Journal entry of March 19, 1815, she wholeheartedly recorded the agony of witnessing the death of her first-born, even before they could give her a name. Her subconscious anxieties concerning the wellbeing of her offspring is in close parallel with Victor Frankenstein's initial horror and retreat. On top of all these, as mentioned above, she was an exile of some sort since her beloved father broke his ties with her when she eloped. Mellor notes that one of the reasons why this novel resonates so much with its readers was "that it articulates in unprecedented detail the most powerfully felt anxieties about pregnancy and mothering" (10). Lochhead's play builds another layer to the apparently motherly nature of this myth. In *Blood and Ice*, the extensive reference to biographical evidence from Mary Shelley's life follows the course of an analysis, or an analytical play. It begins and ends with Shelley's reflections on the ruins of her life. She travels back and forth in time, recalling notable events as well as traumatic ones. Even though Lochhead includes direct passages from the novel and quotations from the journals of the author, reconstructing Shelly's life events or writing a bio-fiction is hardly her concern. Her primary concern is to follow Shelley's quest for her own story and revisit a marginalised author to place the issues of artistic creation, expression authorship under the spotlight. Thus, "*Blood and Ice* is an attempt to present Mary's life from a perspective that is decidedly feminist" (Huber 97). Mary's quest to find her own story is so emblematic of the quest to find the lost author. Besides, her relationship with her artistic creation, her confrontation with the act of creating itself; and the process of her coming to terms with her demons and gradually owning her authorship are all within the frame of writing as "re-vision" along the lines of Adrienne Rich. Above all other concerns, Lochhead had in mind the portrait of the female artist as a young woman.

Blood and Ice should be read as a dramatic work which concentrates on female creativity and the relationship between the female author and her creation. Taking this endeavour as a starting point, this chapter demonstrated how and why such a classic tale as *Frankenstein* was resurrected and reimagined, cementing its rightful place in feminist drama.

III. *DRACULA* AS AN EMPOWERING FIGURE



Fgr. 3.1 ²⁸

²⁸ **Fgr. 3.1** “Bram Stoker’s Dracula – Promo.” (Filmaffinity US).



Fgr. 3.2²⁹

²⁹ **Fgr. 3.2** A scene from the Michael Thonger Production of Lochhead's *Dracula* (Photo Credit: Jonathan Constant).

III. I. A Conceptual Look into 'The Vampire'

a. An Overview

Dracula [...] is a refined attempt by the nineteenth century mind, not to recognize itself.

— Moretti 102-103.

Our sexuality, unlike that of others, is subjected to a regime of repression so intense as to present a constant danger; not only is sex a formidable secret, [...] not only must we search it out for the truth it conceals, but if it carries with it so many dangers, this is because — whether out of scrupulousness, an overly acute sense of sin, or hypocrisy, no matter — we have too long reduced it to silence.

— Foucault, *History* 128-129.

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is a text which first presents, and then collapses radical dualisms. The absolute dualism is the context which frames all others in the novel. On the one hand, there is the vampiric creature appropriated from the Eastern folkloric tales — the aristocratic vampire Count Dracula — who threatens to turn human race into vampires, the outcome of which is that the human race devours itself. On the other hand, should the human race prevail over this force of nature, the "Undead" will be restored back to humanity, as in Mina Harker's case (Spear 179). Mina Harker, who is employed as a schoolmistress and has excellent typing and note-taking skills, is one of the most note-worthy characters in the novel not because she is "saved" by the Crew of Light from vampirism or because she *saves* her travel companions in their journey through Transylvanian wilderness, by reinforcing a hypnotic affinity with the Count. Alternatively, she is a remarkable character due to the affinity she builds with Dracula, or the affinity Dracula builds with her — an affinity which clearly transgresses heteronormative prescriptions of sexuality. Her final encounter with the Count, in my view, is not a clear-cut dualistic moment of active dominance (of the Vampire) and passive submission (of Mina) but an erotic embrace of desiring subjects. The fact that Mina also sucks his blood (after he sucks hers) and that Dracula, after biting and hurting her, also leaves himself vulnerable to her, marks a highly queer interaction, with the Vampire demonstrating feminine characteristics, which will be discussed in broad detail. Notice that this encounter is the only overtly described sexual moment in the whole novel. "Only one vampiric attack by Dracula himself is elaborated in the

book, the second attack on Mina as recorded by Dr. Seward who gives his own reaction and records Mina's account. The vampire hunters burst into the Harker's bedroom just as Dracula is forcing Mina to drink from a spurting vein on his breast" (Spear 184). This overcoded moment of fluid exchange is recalled three times, which will be analysed in detail.

In Stoker's account, sexuality is so enveloped that even the instance of Jonathan Harker's passive, yet eager anticipation of the vampire brides' embrace — when he is alone in the castle during the first section of the novel — is not depicted until the very end of the scene. It is rather interrupted by the sudden arrival of Dracula — whether the orgasmic fulfilment took place, one is left to imagine. That is to say, the question whether Harker is really "kissed by those red lips" is left ambiguous, as Dracula himself storms into the room to claim the man for *himself*. The 'perversity' of Mina sucking Dracula's blood from his breast, as the scene itself suggests, is a pornographic element that serves to disrupt a myriad of boundaries, especially in terms of gender. The 'masculine' and the 'feminine', like the living and the Dead, the self and the Other, threaten to displace each other, collapse, and the lines become blurred. "Within this broad frame that portends an absolute change in human being, other dualities threaten to reverse themselves or collapse into each other" (179).

Lucy Westenra is another female protagonist in Stoker's novel. She is Mina Harker's dear friend, and an idle heiress in the family home in Whitby. She is depicted as having a history of sleepwalking, and as over-enthusiastic in her interactions with men around her: "she is flattered by the attention of three suitors; duty-bound to tell two of them about the favoured one, yet reluctant to let any one of them go" (Spear 182). Like Laura, who is the female vampire's victim in Sheridan Le Fanu's lesbian novel *Carmilla*, she is a somnambulistic nineteen-year-old girl. This somnambulistic state of Lucy's implies a "double-consciousness" — a habit which makes it possible for her to move freely at night and thus act against the societal constraints which she well accepts verbally while conscious (182). She is excruciatingly pale, frail, but also rebellious against Victorian decorum as this double-consciousness suggests. One night, while she is in one of her sleep-walking states in the Whitby graveyard on top of the hill (her favourite place to pass the time, reminiscent of Mary Shelley finding solace beside her mother's grave) she uncannily finds herself in alarming proximity with Dracula, who has just arrived at the British soil by the vessel named 'Demeter'.

She is 'bitten' by the Vampire, Dracula's is a bite but also a kiss, or a love-bite, depending on one's vantage point: the one that seems to happen on the surface, or the one which is carefully undercoded by Stoker. "It is on this restlessness — on her 'somnambulism' — that Dracula exerts leverage to win her. And the more he takes possession of Lucy, the more he brings out her sexual side" (Moretti 99). What is more, the more Van Helsing tries to 'rescue' her, the more she is submerged into Dracula's irresistible charm, and gradually becomes the "voluptuous" woman, the abject 'Thing' so much so that she is no longer recognised by the male characters of this Victorian novel. The inevitable soon follows on: "Surrounded by his friends who goad him on with their cries, Lord Godalming purges the world of this fearful Thing; not without deriving, in distorted but transparent forms, enormous sexual satisfaction" (99). She is ultimately punished by staking through the heart, an act of rape-like violence perpetrated by her fiancé, Lord Godalming. "She is punished, because she is the only one who shows some kind of desire" (Moretti 98). Vlad the Impaler — one of the Count's ancestral names in direct association with Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror's ultimate rival, with whom he had grown up together in the Royal Palace of the Ottoman Empire — is chased after for almost the whole novel by the Crew of Light led by Van Helsing. Paradoxically, the Crew of Light hideously impale the somnambulist and vampiric Lucy, whom they then start to see as a threat to their masculinity, Victorian propriety, and to the angel-in-the-house rhetoric.

[T]his womanhood's ostensible purity has no power to resist the vampiric possession that inverts those characteristics, producing what Phyllis Roth calls 'sudden sexuality': an aggressive, non-genital, oral sexuality that can dissolve sexual gender distinctions, an appetite that overturns the presumed essence of womanhood by making women overtly sexual beings. (Spear 180)

In Stoker's *Dracula*, women are depicted as *unable* to resist this magnetic allure of the vampire, as Spear notes. They are shown to be powerless in the face of such a force of nature. That is why they suddenly possess a 'sexuality' with which they seem to have no clue what to do. This kind of oral sexuality (as this is the only way to elude censorship) can "dissolve" gender distinctions in that they become masculine, and invite their partners into bed, become the initiators of sex. This kind of 'sudden' sexual appetite is depicted as malevolent in Stoker's novel — an appetite which

threatens to destroy them in return, since it does not abide by the Victorian norms: the rhetoric of the *angelic*, sexually inexperienced, submissive woman.

Before moving onto how Lochhead envisioned and re-visioned the Vampire and women (Lucy and Mina) under his spell (or more accurately, in her case, awaiting his advances), I will first lay forward the possible reasons behind Stoker's apparent insistence on censorship of overt sexuality and his treatment of the vampiric women as ones trapped in their new-found power and as in need of 'rescue' by the 'male' characters rather than as the liberated, sexually enlightened, *powerful women*. The Victorian bourgeois consciousness, as Foucault points out in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, defined its sexuality (a definition which is in stark contrast with that of the earlier periods') as being "subjected to a regime of repression so intense as to represent a constant danger" (Foucault, *History* 128).

Technologies of sex represented the expansion of an omnipresent disciplinary apparatus (of 'power') with no clear point of origin or location [...]. Most important, technologies of sex did not repress, domesticate, and regulate the intrinsic sexual drives of pleasure-bound, inefficient bodies but produced them in the interests of the power whose aims they served. (Dean 278-279)

In response to this intense repression, which in turn posed even greater danger since it meant that the Victorian public was left in the dark concerning their own sexuality and knowledge for how to navigate safely within this discourse, Stoker's contemporary, Havelock Ellis published a number of testimonials, reports and analyses in order to relieve this repression. However, Ellis' work, as well as Emile Zola's novels which were overtly concerned with sexuality and sexual disease, were subject to censorship in Britain (Spear 180). This regenerative impulse for the liberation of one's sexuality-

-becomes especially clear in defenses of so-called obscene literature: Émile Zola was considered a smutty writer by conservatives and literary purists, but his defenders, Havelock Ellis among them, asserted that his

work was not the 'raw material' of pornography, but represented the 'rawness of truth and indignation'³⁰. (Dean 284)

Stoker, as his article on censorship will demonstrate, approved of this suppression. Homosexuality was another matter to be suppressed, and as an Irish man of letters and vice manager of theatre, Stoker was well aware of the events surrounding the Wilde trials. "Not only was he acquainted with Wilde, as a young man he had been a visitor to the home of Sir William and Lady Wilde, and Oscar had been his chief rival for the hand of Florence Balcombe" (Spear 180). Stoker was himself a supporter of "reticence", a quality of the authors which can be described as an internal restraint in the treatment of sensitive topics, "allow[ing] for the decorous treatment of dangerous, presumably sexual topics in earlier literature" (Spear 180). Such 'restraint' of Stoker's brings to mind the Foucauldian concept of 'discipline' inspired by Jeremy Bentham's architectural project, the 'Panopticon'. Conceptualised as 'panopticism' by Foucault is a sinister method of 'discipline', which takes its immense power from the illusion of a non-stop surveillance on unassuming Subjects. They can never know for sure when they will be watched, and thus they discipline 'themselves' without the need for any further acts or demonstrations of Power, propagating "the 'unseen but all-seeing surveillance' that orders private and particularly sexual life and its conventional representation" (Spear 180). Then the question is, how did Stoker write such a sexually fuelled novel while he simultaneously advocated censorship? "He must walk the narrow line between ferreting out vice and seeking it out. He must know and not know at the same time" (Spear 181). To proscribe a *vice*, one needs to know what it enfolds. As Franco Moretti informs in his *Signs Taken for Wonders*, "Dracula [...] is a refined attempt by the nineteenth century mind, not to recognize itself" (102).

Stoker's 'reticence' is evident in his treatment of sexuality in the novel. While his unvampirized characters, including Mina and Jonathan Harker or Van Helsing, talk of love and devotion and never mention anything slightly of a passionate nature, the realm of sexuality (often the perverse forms of sexuality) is reserved for the vampires and newly-vampirized characters: "because orally displaced, they can be allowed representation before being ruthlessly extirpated" (Spear 181). It is also important to note that Stoker was well aware of the Obscene Publications Act (1857) and would

³⁰ Marchand 265.

not, under any conditions, want his work to be categorised as ‘obscene libel’. He needed to elude such an accusation and he wrote about sexuality in such a distorted way that, as Moretti notes, masterfully pretended not to “recognize” himself. His stance is most evident in Mina and Dracula’s final encounter, in Mina’s bed, with her husband Harker left in a passive and wild stupor:

The scene has a surplus of potential meaning involving the exchange or interchange of bodily fluids: Dracula’s bloody mouth and breast, Mina’s wounded throat, her blood smeared mouth and nightdress, the blood she transfers to Jonathan’s ‘white night robe’ as well. But focusing just on the tableau as a spectacle it has the features of mastery, transgression.³¹
(Spear 184)

The spectacle presented by Stoker here does potentially feature all the things above — the acts of transgression / queer sexuality. However, these are all hidden between the lines and what is on the surface is Dracula ‘attacking’ Mina and her answering his advances because she cannot escape him, she is under his spell. Moretti sees beyond this: “Dracula [...] liberates and exalts sexual desire” (99). This is the potential of Stoker’s that Liz Lochhead masterfully builds upon. No matter how faithful to the original she appears to be (in terms of plot and speech, if not for the specific characters and their relationships with each other), as in quoting directly from the novel for stage directions; she unearths the latent desires of women, — painstakingly concealed and only hinted at for the discerning eye in Stoker’s novel — seeing Dracula the Vampire in a new light. I will demonstrate the ways in which Dracula is a queer vampire and it is through this quality of his that he “liberates and exalts” women’s sexual desires (Moretti 99). In her introduction to the play *Dracula*, Lochhead openly declares:

I seem, at that time of writing, to be in the act of becoming boldly, quite unselfconsciously and on the public stage, conscious of just how interested in the unconscious I was! If there is a strong element of pastiche, there is nothing [...] reductive in this retelling. (viii)

³¹ Stoker 300.

The theme of agency and sexuality comes to the fore in Lochhead's plays, as she is interested in unleashing women's sexual energies as well as creative impulses in women as *Blood and Ice* has shown. Her focus is precisely the former in *Dracula* where she revises Stoker's vampire tale by using his novel "as a counterpoint to the action" which she quotes directly in her stage directions (Gonzalez 77). Her re-vision is unique in the way that it offers a careful treatment of male and female sexual desire, in which she sees the vampire figure enacted by Dracula not as an outsider force of nature but within — Lochhead's women are no longer the seemingly passive victims of the vampire and "the patriarchal impositions" but they are in control of the events since they already 'invite him (Dracula) in' (577). They long for freedom from societal constraints which attribute to them the role of the angel-in-the-house. This freedom is not only *sexual* but it has broader implications, for instance, Lucy verbally announces that she does not like the crucifix necklace given to her or mocks the expectations placed on her in terms of proper attire and appearance. All of these nuances are buried within the text in Stoker's version. In Lochhead's, Dracula is "capable of disturbing Victorian values" both externally — his influence can be achieved only when he is invited in first, and internally — women, quite knowingly, and actively fulfil their sexual impulses. "The power of [the vampire] lies, then, in the conjunct action of the external symbol enacting an already existing desire" (Gonzalez 577). Dracula might seem external but he is most certainly not. In Gothic fantasy, identity is problematised in subtle ways and the line between Self and Other is blurred. This will be explained through Tzvetan Todorov's monumental work on Fantasy fiction. The aura of uncertainty in Gothic fantasy, as Dracula's protagonists demonstrate, brings about further implications about the association between 'evil' and the 'Other'.

b. Self/Other in Gothic Fantasy

Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, fagas,
 Nocturnos lemures, portentaque. [— Horace]
 Dreams, magic terrors, spells of mighty power,
 Witches, and ghosts who rove at midnight hour.

— Lewis 1

The vampire scandal was a direct challenge to medical-naturalist and ecclesiastical attempts at drawing an ever-clearer boundary between life and death, between body and soul, [...] because it obstinately occupied a middle ground in between.

— Mézes 5

In his account of “the returning dead”, Mézes refers to the real-life vampires of Serbian origin³² as well as of the lands of Slavonia, Banat; Moravian-Silesian border. His proposition that the vampire *scandal* complicated the once-stable boundaries between life and death in the borders of Hapsburg Empire, opens up a discussion of the so-called ‘boundaries’ in Gothic fiction of the same century and beyond.

Gothic fantasy operates in subtle ways to problematize identity by showing the ways in which identity formations become so fragile that political closure is impossible. That is to say, since it problematises identity, Gothic fantasy constructs alternative politics, “aware of [...] the pleasures of the confusion of boundaries”, and particularly is concerned with the “critical manipulation and enjoyment of the symbolic forms” (Donald 121; Gelder 42). The act of problematising identity destabilizes discourse. Evidently, Gothic literature achieves a *pleasure of the text*, particularly because it offers and demonstrates the “confusion of boundaries” (Gelder 42). Readers respond to the Gothic text primarily with enjoyment as a result of this destabilisation, not due to a ‘normalising’ process that takes place. Readers are not ‘obliged’ to accept the ‘normality’ of the fantasy for them to take pleasure in the horror element. On the contrary, they are well aware of the disruption of the boundaries and this very notion makes them absorb the text and be thrilled by it.

Such disruption of boundaries means that one cannot rely on fixed categories, i.e. dichotomies such as Good / Evil or Self / Other. In their analyses, some critics of Gothic literature tend to rely on the readers’ immediate recognition, and identification with, the ‘Other’ — that the readers can smoothly distinguish themselves from the ‘Other’ that the Gothic text engages in. They claim in the simplest sense that readers fear the ‘Other, including archetypes such as ‘the witch’, not because they are evil at all, but because they are ‘Other’ — strange, weird, unfamiliar, alien, otherworldly, inhuman, etc. Then, the question of the possibility to identify the ‘Other’ should be raised, with regards to Donald’s perception of the reader’s pleasure of the text. Is the ‘Self’ coherent in its distinctions? Can the ‘Self’ always identify what is different from it? The discussion turns to Tzvetan Todorov at this juncture.

³² “[T]he southern-most corner of the Habsburg Monarchy, a province of Serbia, (was home to) a specific kind of the returning dead — the vampire” (Mézes 4).

Todorov had defined 'the fantastic' in terms of the reader's (and the protagonist's) hesitation over the unfamiliar nature of certain events involving supernatural occurrences. Can they be explained, or not? Are they an illusion, or will the text eventually bring about disillusion? Because nothing is resolved in 'the fantastic', one can never properly identify the Other as Evil, so that the Self is unable to rest in the security of [...] polarisation. (Gelder 43)

In Todorov's view, the unfamiliarity and strangeness of supernatural events in the text, or the ones that involve supernatural incidents, are systematically left unexplained and the reader, as well as the protagonist, is left with the uneasy feeling that these will not be properly explained — the enchantment might never end up as disenchantment. "In the first place, the character has not entirely decided what interpretation to give to events. Sometimes he too believes in his own madness, but never to the point of certainty. At the same time, the narrator is not sure that everything the character has experienced results from illusion" (Todorov 37). This lack of resolution even at the final pages of the fantastic texts makes it impossible for the reader to identify the 'Other' as an evil, an outsider. The Self cannot be content with the categories of binary oppositions. In my view, this lack of closure of the Gothic text is one of the major reasons why a catharsis cannot take place. As the ground upon which one's identity is formed is shaken, identities become destabilised or confused.

c. *Dracula* as Fantasy Fiction

The so-called stable divide between the 'Self' and the 'Other' collapses as the earlier chapters of *Dracula* begin to unfold. "Writers of Victorian [Gothic] fiction frequently rely on the convention of the anonymous editor to introduce their tales [...]; and the narrators themselves occasionally question the validity of their perceptions" (Senf, "Dracula" 161).

For instance, throughout the first four chapters, Jonathan Harker, in a helpless state, begins to wonder whether what he observes about the alarming events in *Dracula's* castle, are 'facts' or 'nocturnal imaginings'. He is "trying unsuccessfully to unpick" those two, in a strikingly comparable way to the Gothic protagonist who can never have faith in the proper explanation of the supernatural and/or a closure. "Harker

becomes increasingly incoherent —until his diary entries, at last, come to an end” (Gelder 43).

— [A] sort of wild feeling came over me. I am, I know, either being deceived, like a baby, by my own fears, or else I am in desperate straits; and if the latter be so, I need, and shall need, all my brains to get through (Stoker 34).

12 May. — Let me begin with facts — bare, meagre facts, [...] and of which there can be no doubt. I must not confuse them with experiences which will have to rest on my own observation or my memory of them (37).

I am beginning to feel this nocturnal existence tell on me. I start at my own shadow, and I am full of all sorts of horrible imaginings. [...] I felt the dread of this horrible place overpowering me; I am in fear [...] (41).

Later: *the Morning of 16 May*. — God preserve my sanity, for to this I am reduced. Whilst I live on here there is but one thing to hope for: that I may not go mad, if, I be not mad already (43).

As far as these earlier diary entries are concerned, one can notice how he questions his own sanity, and the reliability of his senses. “The question of sanity, which is so important in *Dracula*, provides another clue to the narrators’ unreliability” (Senf, “*Dracula*” 162). He acts as if he was caught in a whirlpool of terror in such a way that he cannot differentiate between observable facts and illusions. While these chapters are filled with such reservations, notice that the narration does not follow this precarious atmosphere through, which will be explained below. It is not before the conclusion of the novel that Jonathan as the narrator admits that all these accounts might be unreliable, “question[ing] their own interpretation of the events” (Senf “*Dracula*” 161):

We were stuck with the fact, that in all the mass of material of which the record is composed, there is hardly one authentic document; nothing but a mass of typewriting, except for the later notebooks of Mina and

Seward's and myself [...]. We could hardly ask any one, even did we wish to, to accept these as proofs of so wild a story. (Stoker 402)

This extract is taken from the very last page of the novel, and these are actually Harker's final words — highly significant words — because they make the reader question everything they have witnessed up to this point, adding one final twist to the story even though Dracula is killed in the most anti-climactic way possible, a few pages earlier. This conclusion, then, “casts a doubt on everything that had preceded”, by highlighting the subjective position of each narrator (Senf, “Dracula” 161). “While Stoker's choice of narrative technique does not permit him to comment directly on his characters, he suggests that they are particularly ill-equipped to judge the extraordinary events with which they are faced” (162). Here it is important to notice that almost all the characters narrating the tale are inexperienced and two-dimensional; only their names and professions distinguish them. Stoker's consistency of style, and the consensus with which they comment on the incidents “the narrators appear to speak with one voice”, further serve to undermine any individual traits and points of view (it is only Seward who sometimes bursts out in his diary entries, genuinely speculating on their ‘sanity’ with comparison to Renfield's ‘insanity’) (162). “More introspective than most of the other narrators, Dr. Seward occasionally refers to the questionable sanity of their mission, his diary entries mentioning his fears that they will all wake up in straitjackets” (Senf, “Dracula” 163).

Sanity is not Jonathan Harker's strongest suit, either. In his journal entry of “the Morning of 16 May”, as he makes a reference to Hamlet's tablets,³³ he feels this compulsive urge to write the strange occurrences down lest he might make a better sense of everything and comfort himself (Stoker 42). The more he feels he is drawn towards madness, the more he resorts to his intensive diary-writing practice. This is a strategy he employs in order to contain and suppress the unspeakable and irreconcilable. On the one hand, Harker can never be sure whether what he is experiencing is an illusion or not, and on the other hand, the divide between Self/Other is collapsed. For one thing, there is an “exchanging of places” since Dracula is departing for England while Harker resides in the Dracula castle, or “mimicry” in that Harker mimics the way Dracula crawls down the castle (Gelder 43). “I am alone in the

³³ “My tablets! Quick, my tablets!
‘This meet that I put it down, etc’”. (qtd. in Stoker 43)

castle with these awful women. Faugh! Mina is a woman, and there is nought in common. [...] I shall not remain alone with them; I shall try to scale the castle wall farther than I have yet attempted. [...] I may find a way from this dreadful place” (Stoker 61).

More obviously, in the first four chapters comprised of Harker’s ‘journal’ entries, Dracula is noticed wearing Harker’s set of clothes which confuses their identities even further: “(Harker) The suit in which I had travelled was gone, and also my overcoat and rug; I could find no trace of them anywhere. This looked like some new scheme of villainy” (Stoker 51). Further on, Harker finds out that Dracula had been wearing the exact suit which he had worn while travelling to the castle, and even carrying the bag on his shoulder. “Harker is surprised to see Dracula emerge from his window wearing his (Harker’s) clothes; shortly afterwards, a woman from the village sees Harker at the window and identifies him as the vampire: ‘Monster, give me my child!’³⁴ (Gelder 43). Soon after this realisation, Harker becomes enraged by the thought that he is in fact a prisoner in the castle, but without any legal protection, which he believes, even a criminal deserves. The Count is himself a prisoner on his own soil since it is impossible for him to travel without carrying his own soil with him.

Another striking example for this collapse of the Self and Other is what happens soon after — Harker hears the howling of dogs and as the sounds become louder and louder, something unexpected happens to Harker — he feels an irresistible urge to answer the call of the wild. In his earlier journal entries, he mentions the sounds he hears with a hesitation, with the expression of ‘if my ears did not deceive me” even after his erotic encounter with the vampire brides (Stoker 47). However, this time, he is certain of the acuteness of his senses, and they are becoming more and more powerful as if a mortal human being is becoming a vampire.

Louder it seemed to ring in my ears, and the floating motes of dust to take new shapes to sound as they danced in the moonlight. I felt myself struggling to awake to some call of my instincts; nay, my very soul was struggling, and my half-remembered sensibilities were striving to answer the call. (Stoker 53)

³⁴ Stoker 53.

Whereas establishing this remarkable incoherence in Harker's first-person accounts in which the Self/Other divide is destabilised, the following chapters (comprising of letters and diaries, including Harker's) fail to embrace this peculiar state of incoherence. The novel moves in the opposite direction — it “establish[es] Dracula's difference as an alien or a stranger with ‘real’ supernatural power” (Gelder 43). It achieves this by distancing itself from Harker's incoherences; the hesitations and uncertainties (“if my ears do not deceive me”) found in abundance in the journal entries. Instead, the novel presents a myriad of reports, chronicles, testimonials — “a context of reportage and diagnosis”, which serve to re-stabilise this divide by imposing an ‘Other’ness on the vampire. Hence, “the vampire's identity (Other) and the identity of those who see it (Self) can be more or less stabilised” (Gelder 43).

Notwithstanding the novel's moving away from such incoherencies, hesitations and doubts, it is still quite justifiable to regard the Vampire as a “Self-image” — through which one comes to terms with their social and sexual excesses which, “although represented as foreign, actually lie much closer to home” (Gelder 43). “Whether used as [...] potential social/sexual transgressor, celebrated as troubled hybrid offering eternal love, the vampire disrupts polarized systems of thought. The vampire dramatizes endless potential for radical alternative behaviour. (Wisker “Love Bites” 225-226)

In Gothic fantasy, the Self and ‘Other’ are drawn closer to one another, and the boundaries become dissolved. In the ‘fantastic’, the ‘Other’ destabilises the self. They are not easily distinguishable any longer and what is at first glance “unheimlich”, hits too close to home (Gelder 43).

III. II. VAMPIRES' TRANSFIGURATIONS

Drawing attention to *Carmilla* and *Christabel* as Romantic/Gothic narratives which embody transgressive female sexuality, this section will discuss the 'queerness' of the fictional vampire with special focus on a selection of scenes in Stoker's *Dracula*.

Vampiric transgression embodied by *Dracula* demonstrates the text's ambivalence towards dichotomies — life and death, human and non-human, male and female — which have long been utilised in order to constrain and restrict alternative fulfilments of desire (Craft 116). "Dualities require demarcations, inexorable and ineradicable lines of separation, but *Dracula*, as a border being who abrogates demarcations, makes such distinctions impossible" (117). Even though at first glance *Dracula* seems to render a "monstrous or demonic heterosexuality", this is only to mask the Victorian anxieties around the fluidity of gender, and the transgressive aspect of such sexuality (111-112). *Dracula*, overall, has an unceasing desire and subverts the sexual dualism by his 'vampire mouth' and his bite — 'vampiric kiss', both of which express a sexuality so mobile, so fluid that it threatens to obliterate all distinctions of gender. This subversive quality of the vampire will be explained through Sue-Ellen Case's account, in which she solidifies her arguments on the queer theory with a focus on queer vampires.

Dracula is a queer vampire precisely because he disrupts gender boundaries in the way that he manifests feminine qualities through his vampire mouth, his power being closely linked with the cycles of the Moon, and as his title 'Count' suggests, he is symbolically linked with the female menstrual cycle. He is a force of nature, which also aligns him with womanhood, since blood was their magical power in ancient mythologies until the advent of Christianity. He gives them their power back. His is an 'affinity' with the women he desires and is desired by, rather than a predatory, and masculine appetite. Thus he holds a potential for queer sexuality, so masterfully disguised by Stoker, but unleashed by Lochhead through her revisionist strategy. For instance, in the most widely discussed scenes of *Dracula* such as the erotic encounter between Mina and *Dracula*, the task of the critic is to 'read' into these 'undercoded' scenes in order to reveal the 'significance,' namely, the sexual undertones masterfully concealed in them.

If these ‘queer’ scenes are undercoded, then part of the pleasure of reading lies in retrieving those codes and giving the scenes a ‘significance’ they do not appear to have in the text itself — and certainly, as we shall see, those scenes involving ‘queer’ sexual exchanges in *Dracula* have been the most heavily interpreted of all. (Gelder 58)

I would like to suggest that such scenes can be interpreted as “sites of pleasure”, because they invoke pleasure in the reader if not for anything else (Gelder 58). These are easily recognisable as scenes of ‘pleasure’ even if they are presented as sites of discomfort, and sites of anxiety, due to the authors’ reservations (such as Harker’s passive submission in his encounter with vampire brides, or Mina’s intimate moment with the Count, where she is forced to suck his blood but did not want to prevent him).

a. Historical / Literary Undertones of Stoker’s ‘Vampire’

Bram Stoker sat him down and he began to write something that similarly burst its novelistic bonds to become a lasting, pure and popular myth. *Dracula* truly is the immortal undead, stake him through the heart as we do again and again in comic books and the late-night films that broadcast terror through the airways and enter our dreams.

— Lochhead, *Dracula* v

“There is no such thing as Frankenstein, there are only Frankensteins, as the text is ceaselessly rewritten, reproduced, refined and redesigned” (O’Flinn 197). Ever since it was first published, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, has become the object of endless interpretations, as well as adaptations, productions, and reproductions, as in the example of Lochhead’s *Blood and Ice*. In a striking coincidence, another influential work of literature which Lochhead revisions for Royal Lyceum Theatre, *Dracula*, has never ceased to become the object of new interpretations and knowledge to this day, and it will surely continue to make its mark on literary studies, gender studies, high art, popular culture, and all other imaginable social spaces. There are only too many Frankensteins and Draculas. “At any rate, it seems that there is always more to be said about *Dracula*, always room for further interpretation and elaboration: this is a novel which seems to generate readings, rather than close them down” (Gelder 65).

This chapter’s critical engagement with *Dracula* is centred on the theme of sexuality, not only because of the queerness of the vampire and the potentiality it

enfolds for literary interpretation; but also because Lochhead's feminist revision lies at the heart of this sexuality, both of the Count's' and the female vampires'. Needless to say, the highly charged erotic aura of the vampire has not captured academia alone — the Vampire's appeal (as well as the vampirized women) has lured film producers, most famously among those, Francis Ford Coppola. When Lochhead received a call from the manager of Royal Lyceum Theatre with the proposition of her adapting Stoker's novel for the stage, she had never read the novel. However, she sat with it, burning the midnight oil; when she was only halfway through, she made a call back to the theatre to tell them she would do it, she would not let anybody else do it.

My 'Yes! Phone call was before I'd even got to [...] that shocking rape-like bit where, with Mina's newly-wed husband Jonathan asleep in a flushed stupor by her side, Dracula, at her throat, takes his fill of her life's blood before ripping open a vein in his own breast and [...] makes her suck and swallow his. Well, talk about 'polymorphously perverse' — you don't have to be a psychoanalyst to have a field day with Bram Stoker's sole masterpiece. / Such scenes... (*Dracula* vi, viii)

After all, "*Dracula* is a work which raises a number of troubling questions about ourselves and our society" (Senf, "Dracula" 160). Taken as one of the most 'troubling' questions about ourselves, my focus is to scrutinize the sexuality of the vampire and the sexual codes hidden in vampirism, through Stoker's *Dracula*. In order to achieve this, the historical and literary evolution of the 'vampire' needs to be considered first. In his Gothic tale, Bram Stoker made the vampire as 'human' as he could get — he was nowhere near this 'demonic' revenant which inspires fear and terror. As Fatih Yücel informs, "[G]othic fiction authors, under the influence of Romanticism movement, formed fictional vampires totally different from folkloric ones" (127). Stoker appropriated the Eastern European folklore's vampire superstitions (and obviously the historical Vlad III of Wallachia³⁵ before and after the real 'vampire cases' on the Southern border of the Habsburg Empire). It is a fun fact that the word "vampire" was introduced to European languages as late as 1732, when the first known vampire case in the Serbian province broke out and the humble folks of the village were forced to 'face the devil'. "[I]n 1732 this folkloric creature started

³⁵ *Vlad the Impaler*, known as *Kazıklı Voyvoda* or *Eflak Voyvodası* in Ottoman history: "kazık" meaning "stake". For the etymology, see Uygur Tablets. (Siddikov 161).

out on its swift conquest of European imagination, and for a brief moment, got into the spotlight of the early eighteenth-century newsagents, book publishers, learned circles and salons of the nobility” (Mézes 4).

In comparison to the horror-inspiring Vlad the Impaler or Vlad Tepes (notorious for his *stake* – *Kazıklı* Voyvoda) whom he was immensely influenced by, and sometimes strikingly parallel with the revenants — the undead — among the humble villagers of Serbia and Romania³⁶ with their rosy skin, Stoker adds another twist to the old tale. Along with borrowing from various depictions of the vampire — the ‘revenant’ as depicted in folkloric tales of Eastern European origin and of the Levant — who had already had a taste for blood — Stoker masterfully turns him into an elegant and sophisticated gentleman, incorporating “a number of touches to make Dracula appear noble and vulnerable as well as demonic and threatening”; and making it “difficult to determine whether he is a hideous bloodsucker whose touch breeds death or a lonely and silent figure who is hunted and persecuted” (Senf “Dracula” 162).

As far as his literary influences are concerned, Stoker follows on from earlier examples such as Heindrich August Ossenfelder’s poem “Der Vampir” (1748), so it is safe to say that “[t]he immediate predecessors of the English vampire were German” (Twitchell 33). Apart from the German influence, “[c]ultural terrors have been neatly embodied in his elegant/hideous, godlike/bestial form” such as through Rymer’s Varney in *Varney the Vampire* (1847) and Polidori’s Lord Ruthven in *The Vampyr* (1819) (Wisker, “Love Bites” 225). The list continues with J. R. Planché’s play *The Vampire, or the Bride of Isles* (1820) (McDonald, “The Devil” 82). Consequently, Count Dracula’s departure from the vampires in folkloric tales or Ottoman historical depictions is so evident in that he “possesses tremendous cunning, grace, [...] the ability to revert to animal form and fly through the air, an aristocratic manner, an ironic sense of humour, a commanding presence, [...] and a hypnotic power” (Stuart 181).

There is one more feature of Dracula which adds to the problematic of his ‘Other’ness. In Lacanian psychoanalysis, for the ‘The Formation of the Subject’ to be completed, an experience of ‘otherness’ of being — a confrontation with one’s own image, through a sudden realisation of one’s separateness from the perceived reality

³⁶ “[T]hey have a rosy skin, [...] even traces of bright red blood trickling from their lips” (Mézes 3).

— needs to be achieved. For the Subject to come to terms with this ‘otherness’, and thus move onto the Symbolic Order, a ‘mirror stage’ is paramount (to conceptualise, Lacan gives the example of the infant seeing her reflection in the mirror and realises her separateness from the rest). From this point onwards, the Subject can never go back to the primal wholeness (‘the Real’ stage in Lacanian), it is forever split. The first moment when the reader learns about this particular *feature* of the vampire, is the scene where Harker looks in the mirror, realises his ‘Self’ as a separate entity, his split self. However, Dracula has no such image.

Dracula cannot perceive this otherness, nor, in Bram Stoker's text, can anyone else see it for him. He is never able to see himself as a being operating within a social world of otherness [...]. [H]e never moves through the mirror stage to accept the 'reality' of the world constructed through language. (Martin 82)

Dracula does not belong to the Symbolic / The Law of the Father, even though in the novel he is enthusiastic to learn the English language and is particularly interested in the British Law: “Although he flaunts his independence of social restraints [...], Dracula adheres more closely to English Law than his opponents in every area except his sexual behaviour” (Senf “Dracula” 166). He can adapt himself to customs and traditions only to get what he truly desires. Dracula casts no reflection in the mirror. Harker confronts with this peculiar feature of the Count while he is shaving in his chamber:

I started, for it amazed me that I had not seen him, since the reflection of the glass covered the whole room behind me. [...] Having answered the Count's salutation, I turned to the glass to see how I had been mistaken. This time there could be no error, for the man was close to me, and I could see him over my shoulder. But there was no reflection of him in the mirror! The whole room behind me was displayed; but there was no sign of a man in it, except myself. (Stoker 32-33)

This particular scene speaks volumes. Harker is unable to see the vampire in the mirror because he cannot see his true self — he does not have the courage to come to terms with his own desires, “his inability to perceive certain traits within himself” no matter how ‘pervert’ they can prove to be (Senf “Dracula” 164). If the novel insists

on seeing the vampire as a threat, Dracula is ‘internal’, not as an external threat. One other feature of the vampire reinforces this concept of the slippery nature of Dracula, always in the shadows, always in the margins of the story. He cannot enter you unless you invite him in. “[W]hat really attracted me, above all, to the story, what compelled me to say ‘yes’, [...] was the Rule One for becoming a vampire victim: ‘First of all you have to invite him in.’ What unappeased hunger in Lucy would cause her to invite him in?” (Lochhead, *Dracula* viii).

Lochhead hit the nail on the head with this insight. “[I]t is Van Helsing himself who proclaims plainly to Harker (Martin 87): “He [Dracula] has been making use of the zoophagous patient to affect his entry into friend John’s home; for your Vampire, though in all afterwards he can come when and how he will, must at the first make entry only when asked thereto by an inmate” (Stoker 322). What does it mean that the vampire cannot come into your dwellings unless you invite him? — First, you have to consent to the vampire’s advances, to his influence. If we push this metaphor further, one can claim that one needs to have within the “unappeased hunger,” the desire to discharge, to surrender to the impulses; the urge to sail in uncharted waters; to sate the darkest desires. This makes the vampire “an internal, not an external” threat (Senf “Dracula” 165). That being said, Senf reads Dracula’s allure as a ‘threat’ but only from the perspective of the Victorian characters of the novel. “Although perfectly capable of using superior strength [...], he usually employs seduction, relying on other people’s desires to emulate his freedom from external constraints [...] the desires of all the characters to overcome the restraints placed on them by their religion and by their law” (Senf, “Dracula” 165-166).

b. Sexual Politics of *Dracula*

The reading of the vampire follows on from the above discussion, focusing on the ‘liberating’ aspects of the vampire and this will pave the way in understanding the nuances that Liz Lochhead employed in her re-visions of the enduring *Dracula* myth. Xavier Reyes asks: “What is *Dracula*’s investment, consciously or unconsciously, in the sexual politics of representation?” (125). Liz Lochhead provides an answer in her 2009 Introduction — “you don’t have to be a psychoanalyst to have a field day with Bram Stoker’s sole masterpiece” — *Dracula* is superabundant with psychoanalytic concepts from the beginning to the end (*Dracula* vii). The novel was published only

two years after Freud and Breuer's *Studies in Hysteria* (1895) and also owes some of its stipulations to Charcot's work.³⁷ That being said, while the novel makes room for all this psychoanalysis — even having an actual psychiatrist of some sort: Dr. Seward in charge of a lunatic asylum who is investigating madness and Dr. Van Helsing with his leaning towards spiritualism and compulsive hypnosis sessions — *never* is there ever a mention, nor curiosity, on the characters' (victims, from their perspective) or the vampires' sexuality. So, the psychoanalytic concepts are never employed to understand a character's sexuality, let alone the vampires'. "[T]he extensive commentary on events by doctors or analysts like Van Helsing, which runs through the novel, nevertheless has nothing to say — in spite of its Freudian context — about anyone's sexual motivations" (Gelder 66). How come are all the major incidents sexually driven but nobody has anything to say about them? Or, let us question for one moment the author's motives in encoding the text so much so that it talks about sex without ever talking about sex. Reyes suggests: "Why would Stoker have such an interest in writing about sex yet deliberately go through the effort of encoding the text with a number of analogies that render it 'other' than what it appears to be at the surface level?" (128). This brings the discussion to Stoker's own views on censorship in literature. On his article on censorship in fiction, surprisingly Stoker eludes the topic of sexuality, focusing on its potential danger:

[I]n a base play given in a crowded theatre, though many may be gratified or debased by the exposition of lewd suggestion — either verbal or of movement or appearance — there are others who will be disgusted. [...] A close analysis will show that the only emotions which in the long run harm are those arising from sex impulses, and when we have realised this we have put a finger on the actual point of danger. (Stoker, "Censorship" 483)

The peculiar ignorance of the paternal figures of the novel (including the novel's author) in terms of sexuality strikes critics as 'surprising' or they find it dubious at the very least. Of course, Stoker cannot just get away with 'surprising' us discerning readers. Critic after critic attributed this reticence about sex to 'Victorian repression'.

³⁷ "Van Helsing practises hypnosis and admires 'the great Charcot', whose death he laments" (Gelder 66).

Let me not draw the same old conclusions but investigate further, to see whether or not Stoker intentionally censored himself.³⁸

A subject long understood to be a favourite preoccupation of vampire narratives — which, in Stoker’s period, depended on accessible but thinly veiled metaphors to pass censorship — sex is represented in intimate acts of oral violence and in the bodies of women in sleep. (Stratford 211)

Around the time Stoker sent his novel to the publishers, there was an Act specifically designed to ban obscenity in art and literature (the definition of ‘obscenity’ depended on *who* decided what was to be considered *obscene* or not, and whereas selling and distributing these books, pamphlets, postcards, etc. was made an offense, “possession” was not — the expensive private libraries of the elite were overflowing with collections of pornographic material), but there were always ways around it, such as publishing your work with a pseudonym and changing the name of the locations in the novel, lest you might get caught (Frederickson). Nevertheless, Stoker wrote in the shadow of the first Obscene Publications Act in 1857, sponsored by the Lord Chancellor. The enthusiasm for banning certain books by labelling them ‘obscene’ on grounds of ‘moral corruption / subversion’ is not exclusive to the Victorian era:

While the word pornography may not have appeared in England until 1857, the general prosecution and repression of books for obscenity began there almost two centuries earlier through a series of legal cases that culminated in the 1727 conviction of the publisher Edmund Curll for obscene libel. (Gamer 1045-1046)

It might sound even more surprising to the modern reader that once upon a time in the eighteenth century, Gothic and Pornography (as categorised later on) sometimes became synonymous with each other. Between 1790s and the first decades of 1800s — the aftermath of the French Revolution — when the news of the war with France broke out, certain works that one might call ‘Gothic’ today “came under attack of the press for their supposed libel statutes” (Gamer 1046). This tailored attack by the ‘press’

³⁸ As suggested in Robert Tracy’s 1990 essay, the vampire tale “supplies a metaphoric vocabulary to represent certain obsessions and anxieties not otherwise admissible into literature”, allowing Gothic authors such as Stoker to navigate their ways around sexuality (35).

demonstrates how the authorities used the ‘libel statute’ as an excuse to condemn, pressure, and silence those who expressed any ‘radical’ views on overthrowing the king, etc. (Gamer 1046).³⁹ British public was afraid of radical French politics as for them the ‘revolution’ meant that an overwhelming number of people were beheaded.

As Gamer indicates, around the time of the French Revolution and especially in its aftermath, there is a visible tendency to attack gothic texts, and within the calls for prosecution, mechanisms of literary and cultural hierarchies were at play. It is safe to say that calling a work of literature ‘obscene’ became a political tool. For instance, two early label reviewers announced gothic works as such to be ‘terrorist novel’ and ‘German school’ — these labels alone help us understand the consistency with which, by 1798, gothic fiction was associated with radical French politics, and “the ‘dangerous’ sensibilities of *Sturm und Drang*, Goethe's *Werther* (even though *Werther* is the most naïve among them), and Schiller’s early tragedies” (Gamer 1047).

English Romanticism takes its roots in German Literature, mostly from a specific movement deemed as anti-Rationalism [...]. This pre-romantic movement known as *Sturm und Drang*, similar to English Romanticism, urges society to go back to their nature and their human core by way of embracing their emotions. (Çelebi and Tezcan 1)

It was around this political atmosphere that Matthew Gregory Lewis’ *The Monk: A Romance* came to the fore and took its fair share in the ‘obscenity’ polemic. Thus, a number of scholars have associated the hostile reception of *The Monk* with the political climate of the time and more broadly, with the post-revolutionary censorship. However, these are not the only grounds on which *the Monk* was dismissed as obscene⁴⁰: “First published in 1796, Lewis’s romance created an uproar because of the minuteness of its sexual descriptions [...]. [R]eviewers, satirists, clergy members, and

³⁹ An uncanny parallelism with second decade of 21st century politics from the West to the East, with a specifically designed, biased Press spreading false news and libel, and the State apparatuses’ pressure with the aim to silence any uncomfortable truth and reward any kind of evil deed if it served them well.

⁴⁰ “*The Monk* was described as ‘lewd’ and ‘libidinous and impious’, and was called ‘erotic pornography’. Samuel Taylor Coleridge warned readers that it was a book ‘which, if a parent saw in the hands of a son or daughter, he might reasonably turn pale’ [...] Lord Byron, however, loved it. And so did Marquis de Sade” (King vii). Stephen King could be added to this list.

politicians began calling for the book's suppression for obscenity and blasphemy” (Gamer 1047).

Whatever vocabulary was used, Lewis was publicly disgraced for his Gothic creation. It was more associated with the ‘Jacobin’ novels of William Godwin or “the ‘dangerous’ sensibilities of German Schauerromane (‘shudder novels’)” than the respectable novels of Ann Radcliffe (Gamer 1047). Notice that the category of ‘obscene libel’ was attached to Lewis’s *The Monk* with the concern of its readerly effects. To make matters even worse, this polemic around one gothic work singlehandedly expanded to contain most nineteenth century gothic fiction, thus degrading the authors of the genre, and making ‘Gothic’ synonymous with ‘pornography’ in public imagination:

[T]he legal category of obscene libel was brought to bear on gothic texts to the extent that they could be associated with *The Monk*'s perceived textual practices and readerly effects. This prevailing association [...] not only shaped the later output of Lewis and writers associated with him; it also affected the gothic's cultural status and trajectory for most of the nineteenth century by stigmatizing the genre legally and morally. (Gamer 1051)

This brings the discussion to the 1857 Obscene Publications Act. As Robertson warns, it became a habit to refer to pornography as ‘poison’. Not only does this prudish insistence apply to the ‘Victorian’ era, but also to the 20th Century publications. The 1928 ban on Radclyffe Hall’s lesbian novel *The Well of Loneliness* was decided on the very same grounds — ‘obscene libel’. Bringing the focus back to the 19th Century Britain, and specifically fin de siècle, I suggest that all this stigma around Gothic fiction and the Act must have had an impact on Stoker. Even though most scholars seem to take it for granted (since for that matter, they did not make mention of) that he was directly under pressure because of the notorious Act combined with his Victorian sensibilities, here I am endeavouring to show that neat and clear-cut explanations such as Victorian “repression” of sexuality and sex are appealing, but are generally anachronistic and rather one-dimensional. A much closer look into his political views at the time, more specifically, his bias towards The Wilde Trials is necessary (obviously observing the treatment his friend and a contemporary artist had to endure left its mark

on him), but such an investigation is way beyond the scope of this thesis. At least this is quite clear: Stoker did not want to be associated with ‘pornography’, and not to have anything to do with ‘obscene libel’, since most highly sexualised scenes in the novel are presented to the reader implicitly⁴¹ (There is no explicit scene of Dracula biting Lucy’s neck, but we read ‘about’ it; the most erotic scene in the novel where Mina sucks blood from his breast is immediately likened to a child forcing the kitten to drink milk from a saucer, or the eroticised scene of the vampire brides almost kissing Harker is interrupted by Dracula, claiming ownership of the man). Then, it is the scholarly task to decode all these scenes to comment on their sexualit(ies).

Dracula overcodes sexuality at the level of performance, but undercodes it at the level of utterance. Critical analysis intervenes at this point, enabling these deafening silences to ‘speak’. This is one reason why the novel has been so productive as far as readings are concerned: there is so much to say about sexual motivation in Dracula precisely because the novel’s own analysts have nothing to say about it whatsoever. (Gelder 67)

Gelder put his finger on the paradoxical quality of Stoker’s writing and Stoker criticism — there is indeed “so much to say about sexual motivation in Dracula”, given that the novel never ceases to unfold clues which are unmistakable reminiscences of a sexual nature (67). Soon after the Crew of Light make sure the Count has boarded *Czarina Catherine*, Van Helsing starts a soliloquy where he resembles the Count’s geography to “deep caverns” and “fissures”, immediately evoking the depths of the womb (Stoker 340). The sexual imagery does not end there. “Volcanoes” bring to mind the fluids of an orgasmic moment, the “killing” stands for orgasm in Elizabethan culture – “the little death” (Stuart 21).

Speaking of embedded fantasies thereof, in his essay where he invests some time on understanding the aspect of sexuality in *Dracula*, Richardson revisits Freud, stating that Freud’s views on infantile sexuality sheds light on the vampire’s interpretation. The vampire, according to him, takes the readers into “the unconscious

⁴¹ The *Czarina Catherine*, the name of the the ship which carried Dracula back home, marks an interesting example for such an implicit ‘clue’ for sexuality (Stoker 337-377). “Stoker’s choice of a name for a ship that is to bear Dracula homeward is interesting [...] Catherine the second of Russia was so notoriously active sexually” (Wolf 278).

world of infantile sexuality with what Freud called its polymorph perverse tendencies” (418). Stoker’s novel deploys such tendencies, as it lays out “a kind of incestuous, necrophilous, oral-anal-sadistic, all-in wrestling match”, where a series of perversions come to the fore and become entangled with each other (Richardson 418). This, in turn, is the novel’s success in bringing up a myriad of interpretations. Such an interpretation might be too extreme, but what is considerable here is that it acknowledges the general view of Gothic fiction (as explained above) as sensationalist and beyond limits. One can always doubt if Stoker himself had the slightest idea about the latent erotic content of folkloric vampire tales, which calls for a much further investigation. However, such an interpretation opens up a critical debate on the vampire’s “polymorphous” sexuality (Gelder 69). Be it the ‘real’ vampires among the peasants of the eighteenth-century Habsburg borderland⁴² or be it the fictional ones ever since Polidori’s Diodati & Byron-inspired tale of the aristocratic *Vampyre*, the ‘vampire’ is always ready to disturb and destroy the empirical boundaries between life and death, natural and unnatural, as well as all psychoanalytical polarizations between the Heimlich and the Unheimlich. Why then, shall we not see the vampire as an embodiment of the ‘queer’? If the novel deals with the Taboo through its over-exposure of the lust for *transgression* through a wild rehearsal of infantile fantasies, then “the vampire’s function is to cross back and forth over boundaries that should otherwise be secure – the boundaries between humans and animals, [...] and, as an expression of its ‘polymorphous’ sexuality, man and woman” (Gelder 70).

‘Queer’ as a political category, and label, signifies differences in sexuality and sexual desire, without assigning any clear-cut roles to the agents involved in these sexual expressions. It destabilises the distinctions between homonormative and heteronormative, becoming “a more open and non-specific non-heteronormative form of desire and identity” (Reyes 125).

A word so fraught as “queer” is — fraught with so many social and personal histories of [...] defiance, excitement — never can only denote; nor even can it only connote [...]. “Queer” seems to hinge much more radically and explicitly on a person’s undertaking particular,

⁴² See Ádám Mézes: “Doubt and Diagnosis: Medical Experts and the Returning Dead of the Southern Habsburg Borderland (1718-1766).”

performative acts of experimental self-perception and filiation.
(Sedgwick 8)

Such an approach, then, will pave the way for a renewed understanding of the vampire — way different than just seeing the vampire figure as a warning sign of repressed/hidden sexual desire — questioning if the vampire can ever be regarded as a “stable metaphor” (Reyes 125). The radical-queer potential of the vampire lies in the very fact that it destabilises sexual identities, and problematises gender roles. Thus, for the critic, there is an imminent danger in positioning oneself beside the “repressed meaning” approach, namely that Stoker was such a repressed Victorian that he was unaware of the novel’s highly sexual potential; or “the deliberate approach” — that Stoker knew what he was doing perfectly well and that is why he hid these meanings inside the text (Reyes 128-129).

Whichever side of the argument one chooses, there is the risk of falling into the trap of seeing the vampire as an allegorical creature, which always intimates something else. However, there are limitations to this point of view — if the interpretation just focuses on the ‘repressed sexual desires’ in the text, it will eventually conceal or enclose the potentially more fluid modes of sexuality. To make matters worse, reading the text decisively to uncover repressed sexualit(ies) runs the risk of perpetuating that very ‘repression’ because it carries within a long-standing heteronormative lens, and “mark[s] non-heteronormative desire in *Dracula* as transgressive and ‘unnatural’” (129). I will contribute to Reyes’ discussion here — the Self/Other divide is dissolved in Gothic fantasy and the ‘vampire’, being the undead yearning for more life, and bringing death, already disturbs boundaries. ‘Eroticising’ the vampire only to elevate oneself from the Victorian sensibilities is a far cry from ‘woke’, no matter how much one would like to make oneself believe. (According to the linguist and lexicographer Tony Thorne, the term ‘woke’ originally means being “socially aware, empathetic” (qtd. in Remnick), having its roots in the Black community in the United States, in the 1960s. It is a slang word found in a Southern American dialect. The ‘woke culture’ of the 21st Century, however, refers to the appropriation of this slang word, which has come to stand for ‘political correctness’, sheer empathy of different lifestyles and a hypersensitivity towards personal freedoms. The term has adopted a negative connotation as well — for instance in academia, some groups claim that it stands to harm academic freedom and in a broader sense, freedom of expression, since the

practice of such culture entails the risk of such sensitivities being abused). As in this case of the eroticization of the ‘vampire’ only to alienate the Victorian so-called ‘fear’ of sexuality does not leave any room for the ‘transgressive nature of the vampiric acts.

Oddly, modern readers who eroticise the vampire in order to separate themselves from the Victorian mind-set further contribute to the Victorian myth of repression. These readings short-circuit any empathy readers may establish with sexual alterity and associate difference with transgression, [...] even when other narrative explanations might be available. (Reyes 129)

Ultimately, the readers of the ‘vampire’ should beware of the limitations of reading the vampire as purely ‘erotic.’ There is a stark difference between labelling the vampire as ‘erotic’ and seeing vampirism “as a metaphoric negotiation of sexuality” – that is, as a way to resist ontological prescriptions (129). Eroticising the vampire diminishes its potential and reduces it to an incomplete sign, to an afterthought. In other words, one should not fall into the trap of perceiving the *attraction* of the vampire by their proscription. For instance, Sue-Ellen Case warns that, in lesbian vampire tales of the twentieth century, only the “repression” is revealed, which in turn serves to confirm it (15). This is the political strategy of ‘containment’ (of subversive desires and sexualities), even though to the reader, it might look like *subversion* at first glance. However, taking the path less travelled will open up alternative meanings for the vampire and hence, their ‘difference’ will become something to cherish, to enjoy. Only then does the vampire become a liberating force. As Case suggests, if the vampire cannot cast an image in the mirror, then they have not entered the Symbolic, they will always remain “outside that door into the Symbolic” (15).

[I]n tracking the vampire, we can re-imagine her various strengths: celebrating the fact that she cannot see herself in the mirror and remains outside that door to the Symbolic; her proximate vanishing appears as a political strategy; her bite pierces subject/object positions; and the fanged kiss brings her the chosen one, trembling with ontological, orgasmic shifts, into the state of the undead. (15)

Thus, when compared with the interpretation of the vampire’s kiss as a captivating and impregnating kiss of the *heterosexual* in the dominant discourse, hers

marks a disruption of the fixed binaries, carrying such representations into the realm of political activism — of *subversion*. If the vampire escapes (as the Un-dead, the Vampire has never entered the Mirror Stage) representation in the Symbolic Order, then they will escape all societal rules and norms, as well as the discourse which seeks to define and contain them this way or another. The vampire becomes the unspeakable Thing, the ultimate uncharted territory of human desire. In other words, “the vampire is a category, regardless of any specific ascription to gendered form of desire, which is queer beyond any fixity of sexual identity” (Reyes 129). Thus, vampire fictions enable readers and audience to imagine an alternative way of living.

Following on from this acknowledgement, Reyes “deliberately goes against the grain” and sets out to embrace the liberating and empowering qualities that the Count manifests (131). Remember in the vampire lore, “proximity is the central organising principle — not only in the look, but also in the *mis en scène*” (Case 13). This *mis en scène* allows two interconnected *touches*. The first one is the atmospheric touching, as through the mist and fog. The second one, which makes the proximity of the vampire even more acute and uncanny, is the corporeal one — the touching and biting. Barbara Creed draws attention to the connection between female vampirism and blood, referring to Shuttle and Redgrove’s discussion in their study *The Wise Wound* that the vampire almost always bites from the neck, which “represents the neck of the uterus” (Creed 87). They attribute a crucial role to “the altered state of the vampire’s victims — after being bitten, that is, after menstruation begins, the women are filled with new energy (87).

Before they were bitten, they were chlorotic weak creatures with vapours, dressed in stiff constricting corseted garments, who spoke in faint and genteel voices expressing deep frustration. After their blood had been shed for the vampire, though (and it was always from the neck, as we say neck or cervix of the womb), and they had suffered their first death into their new lives as vampires — why, what creatures they became! [...] Their eyes shone, their gait was swift and vigorous, they spoke energy with every glance. At least there seemed some point in becoming a vampire! (Shuttle and Redgrove 253)

After all, it is important to remember what *queer* reading means: to read by keeping in mind that “the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, laps and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements [...] of anyone’s sexuality aren’t made (or can’t be made) to signify monolithically” (Sedgwick 7). Then one question remains: “What would it mean to *queer* Dracula?” (131).

At the level of fantasy projection, Dracula is enthralling. No matter how many unpleasant or abject associations his undead existence invokes, and no matter his inevitable destruction, this dreariness about him is complicated by other features. “Dracula is shown in films as almost a hero, defeated time and again by the masculine Christian and scientific values, turned ugly and menacing, but still an aristocrat coming from a long line of potent ancestors: the Devil, the secret initiator into blood” (Shuttle and Redgrove 252). He is powerful, has very acute senses and can control others with ease and he does that even without exerting his superior strength — “he usually employs seduction, relying on the others’ desires to emulate his freedom from external constraints” (Senf, “Dracula” 165). He is polymorphic, can transform himself into dust or into a wolf, a bat, etc. at whim, but more interestingly, he can appear as a fine gentleman with a suit or a boyar with a cloak. Harker cannot help but be impressed by him, as he inscribes an earlier conversation:

‘Not so’, he answered. [...] Here I am noble; I am *boyar*; the common people know me, and I am master. But a stranger in a strange land, he is no one; men know him not – and to know not is to care not for [...] I have been so long a master that I would be master still – or at least that none other should be the master of me”. (Stoker 27)

Dracula, even if he says so few words (quite fittingly, as he never transitioned into the Symbolic), he almost always headlines the conversations, and all characters in the novel are obsessively following him, looking for him, inviting him, calling after him, pleading with him, calling him ‘master’. He is always in the shadows, but casts no shadows – one can never know when he will appear and disappear again. One can only feel his presence. He can be imagined all the more so because of this quality of his. His sexuality is as fluid as it can get: “His harem of women, the admission that he too can love, and his admonition that Harker is ‘mine’ can be taken as indicators of his

fluid, unrestrained and mobile sexuality. In a way, the Count can reproduce, or at least turn others into his children” (Reyers 131).

Although vampires (and vampirism, in general) are systematically posited as embodying corruption and the *abject* in the novel, this negative and alien image is primarily reinforced by the readers’ identification with the Crew of Light. These forces in opposition to Dracula, represent the heteronormative and conservative politics. Religion is one of them. Dracula stands for everything shunned by Christianity, and he turns the tables by giving women back the magical power of their blood: Dracula — “He snuffle out the garlic for me, [...] and turn upside down the crucifix enemy Van Helsing tack on your door. I turn everything on its head, sweet lady” (Lochhead, *Dracula*, Act 2, Scene 14). This must be alarming for those men such as Van Helsing, who epitomised the “restrained and sexless virtues of the drawing-room and the laboratory” (Shuttle and Redgrove 253).

Lucy and Mina are in a way, modern representatives of the pagan menstruating, or ‘moon-blood’ goddesses⁴³, so the Christian symbols are used against them by Van Helsing (the Cross and the sacred wafer), as if to ward off any pagan revival of goddesses. Careful readers would immediately notice the reason why Stoker chose to name the Count’s arrival ship to London ‘Demeter’. Demeter is a mother earth figure and symbolises fertility — “controls the progress of the crops and represents, thereby, the fertility of woman. Demeter is a coherent choice for the name of the ship [...] because of the goddess Demeter’s connection” (Wolf 83).

⁴³ Ancient Greece: **Hekate**, the goddess who controls the moon cycles; **Hera**, the goddess of women and childbirth, with the power to bring moon-blood;

Ancient Egypt: **Isis**: “In addition to amulets that depict Isis in human form, [...], another amuletic form associated with this goddess is known as the tyet amulet, or the Isis knot. This object resembles the shape of the well-known ankh symbol for “life,” but rather than having “arms” that project at a perpendicular angle, the arms of the tyet droop downwards. This object [...] may have connections with menstruation (Wegner).

Inca: **Mama Killa** (Mother Moon), the goddess who oversaw menstruation cycles and protected women;

Hinduism: **Sati**, the Hindi goddess also known as the menstruating goddess;

Norse: **Freyja**, the goddess of love, fertility and beauty: “Freyja was not only associated with fertility but also the practice of Seidr magic. It is said that Freyja taught the art of Seidr to all the Volva – Viking witches” (Suess).

Maeve, the Irish goddess: Depicted as a woman rather than a goddess who is unapologetically sexual.

It is no wonder why in Lochhead's version Lucy loathes the Christian symbol and gives away her crucifix necklace to her maid. Quite fittingly, Florrie is not eager to take it, either.

LUCY. Ugh, I don't like crucifixes, they are so . . . morbid.

-- Florrie, I want to give you a present. [...] Florrie, it's a crucifix, Florrie.

-- Heavy. It's too heavy, Florrie, ugly ornate old thing, take it off me, please.⁴⁴

FLORRIE. [...] (Takes it off her.) I don't want it, mind!

(Act 2, Scene 4, 54-55)

Barbara Creed asserts in her discussion of "Woman as Vampire" that this 'sacred' bloodletting of a woman's body has been made abject through the dogmas of monotheistic religions and patriarchal discourses — "given the abject status of women's blood within religious and cultural discourses, bloodletting alone constitutes a prime case of abjection" (85). With the advent of Christianity, the blood of Jesus undermined the magical powers of menstruating women to such a great extent, "especially since Christianity is concerned principally with the values of ovulation, and women, not as representatives of the deity but as breeding-stock to bring more sons of God into the world" (Shuttle and Redgrove 253). As opposed to Christianity, Chavarria's study on the magical qualities of the menstrual blood found in the Ancient Roman texts is worth mentioning:

[S]cattered references to magical formulas can be found in Pliny's Natural History: enchantments usually attributed to a Persian magus, as well as written spells employing menstrual blood for its contraceptive virtues. It is thus not surprising to read Columella associating woman's flux with magical powers as well. (6)

As a vampire, then, Dracula stands in the opposite corner of the menstrual energies, always aligned with the moon. His title 'Count' is a perfect metaphor for the

⁴⁴ This scene invokes a scene in Jan Potocki's *The Manuscript Found in Saragossa*. "The object which keep the two sisters from giving themselves to Alfonso is the locket he wears: "It is a trinket my mother gave me and which I promised to wear always; it contains a splinter of the True Cross." On the day they receive him in their bed, Zibedde first cuts the cord of the locket. The Cross is incompatible with sexual desire" (qtd. in Todorov 129, 130).

menstrual cycle. He is not preoccupied with bringing new life after birth, but bestowing people with a new life after death. Women have always been gifted with sexual energies since ancient times and unproductive sexual energy is not Christianity's strongest suit (Shuttle and Redgrove 253). Dracula fights in multiple battlefields, fashionably rejecting constructed ideologies of patriarchy. Shuttle and Redgrove liken Dracula's image to the fallen Lucifer. Although there are parallelisms, this viewpoint would perpetuate yet another religious implication. I would like to assert that Count Dracula *is* the real opposition here, since the man's (patriarchal) order does every possible thing in its power to destroy what it cannot contain: "[I]n his masterpiece, Stoker uses his monstrous protagonist in a skilful manner to challenge the norms [...] of Victorian society" (Yücel 141).

This brings the argument to the feminine characteristics of Count Dracula, evident in both of the texts, as well as his ambiguous and polymorphous sexuality. *Dracula*, no matter how many men it involves and how much patriarchal dominance it depicts (in a group of men's ill treatment of female sexuality and their abjection of the bleeding woman), is actually driven by female energy, all along. "It is possible to argue that behind the testosterone-fuelled exchanges between Dracula's male protagonists, there lies a second narrative that is driven by a presence that is most definitely female" (Nystrom 63).

c. Queer Undertones of Romantic/Gothic Vampires

Coleridge's *Christabel* Geraldine's terrifying bosom and side haunt the reader as they haunted Shelley, who apparently fled screaming at the thought of a woman with 'eyes instead of nipples'.

— Wisker, "Love Bites" 226-227

A great body of work in Gothic fiction has revealed a sympathy for and preoccupation with the "compulsive aspects of sex", Gothic narratives' unwavering hold on the subversive strategies against the tenets of social norms and writers of Gothic stress its "animalistic, sometimes demon-seeking" resistance against societal constraints (Jones 3). In Coleridge's Gothic tale, desire and horror, pleasure and pain are mingled with a vampiric female sexuality. There is anecdotal evidence in Mary Shelley biographies that one of Lord Byron's favourite pastime activities during chilly and stormy nights was reciting Coleridge's manuscript *Christabel*, which he already knew by heart. And one of those nights, under the influence of laudanum, Percy

Shelley did have such an uncanny vision, storming out of the drawing room in the grip of horror and Polidori took a long time soothing him. This is how the image of a female vampire shook a Romantic, highly sensitive poet. John W. Polidori did not miss the chance of alluding to this sentimental incident in his *Vampyre*. His vampire tales begins with an extract from a mysterious narrator's "LETTER FROM GENEVA" (6). The letter which starts as a travel memoir quickly turns into a gossip column — under its lens lies the Villa Diodati and its infamous resident Lord Byron. And the gossip unfolds:

Mr. Percy Bysshe Shelley, a gentleman known for extravagance, [...] having taken a house below, in which he resided with Miss M. W. Godwin and Miss Clermont, were frequently visitors at Diodati. It appears that one evening Lord B., Mr. P. B. Shelley, the two ladies and [Polidori himself] after having perused a German work entitled *Fantasmagiana*, began relating ghost stories; when his lordship having recited the beginning of *Christabel*, then unpublished, the whole took so strong a hold of Mr. Shelley's mind, that he suddenly started up and ran out of the room. [...] [T]hey found that his wild imagination having pictured to him the bosom of one of the ladies [Mary Shelley, Mary Godwin at the time] with eyes, was obliged to leave the room in order to destroy the impression. (Polidori 10)

Lochhead revisits this moment in *Blood and Ice*, by shifting the roles — the reciter becomes Mary Shelley, as this dramatic intervention places her side by side with the female vampire Geraldine, whose gaze puts Shelley in a mad tantrum. I would like to refer to another representation of female vampire fiction which was influenced by Geraldine: "The closeness of the women terrifies the [...] reader [in *Christabel*], as it does in Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, the first recognizable woman's vampire tale, which it resembles" (Wisker, "Love Bites" 227).

Sheridan le Fanu published his monumental vampire novella, *Carmilla* (1872), which influenced Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. It was included in a series of horror stories *In a Glass Darkly*. In *Carmilla*, the narrator is Laura who lives with her father in a castle located next to the forest in Styria, an earlier province of Slovenia. As Laura narrates her story, she recalls a traumatic incident when she was only 6 years old and

in the nursery. In the absence of the maid, to her surprise, she sees a ‘pretty lady’ hidden under her bed, soothing her so that she could fall sleep. Soon after, she wakes up with the uneasy feeling of two needles pressing her breast and she cries out for help: “The lady started back, with her eyes fixed on me, and then slipped down upon the floor, and, as I thought, hid herself under the bed” (Le Fanu 5). Time goes by and in her adolescent stage, she stumbles across a car accident in the aftermath of which the old lady begs her father to take care of her ‘lifeless’ daughter — Carmilla Karnstein, and her father concurs without giving it much consideration. Laura immediately recognises her — “I saw the very face which had visited me in my childhood at night, which remained so fixed in my memory” (14). Even though Laura is not familiar with her, she (Carmilla) is familiar ‘to’ her. “Carmilla recognises Laura, too, from a dream she had ‘twelve years ago’, so that, ultimately, it is difficult to tell who has been haunting who” (Gelder 45).

Nina Auerbach asserts that it is only because of the patriarchal depictions made by Laura’s father and the General, that the reader sees Carmilla as threatening, perilous and a force to be destroyed (*Our Vampires*). From a feminist lens, their proximity does not cause alarm, on the contrary, opens up a myriad of possibilities for a queer reading. Both *Christabel* and *Carmilla* represent the male fears of a woman’s power. And the biggest fear of all is the “snake-like, overwhelming sexual engulfment of woman by woman”, which renders a potential lesbian relationship (Wisker, “Love Bites” 227). Both of the tales end without closure. Carmilla’s “languor and fluidity” is an embodiment of female sexuality and it can be linked to contemporary depictions of the more primitive modes of sexuality and “independent femininity”: she is carnal, alarmingly sensual — her sexuality is threatening, which resonates with Angela Carter’s *Bloody Chamber* stories full of rebellious female protagonists who are unapologetically sexual. Carmilla is frightening, but also alluring. She triggers unsettling emotions in Laura that are close to love but not of an innocent nature. Such an amorous attraction is yet overshadowed “by an incomprehensible fear and anxiety when Carmilla’s romantic passions are articulated in terms of blood, [...] and fatal possession” (Botting 94).

The queerness of *Carmilla* lies in the fact that it is a lesbian story of love. This proposition lies at the heart of *Carmilla*, and its lesbian undertone is thus “what is most obvious — and yet is nonetheless undercoded, ‘unspeakable’ at the level of narration”

(Gelder 58). The queer undertones that permeate Le Fanu's novella offer a starting point for a broader discussion on queer vampires. In Le Fanu's account, Carmilla demonstrated some conflicting qualities — she is on the one hand 'languid' in the sense that she is laid-back, oversleeps and on the other hand, sexually demanding, seductive. Her sexuality makes Laura question her gender but then decides that she is a female precisely because of such qualities. This makes Carmilla a queer vampire par excellence.

Carmilla is 'languid'⁴⁵, 'apathetic'⁴⁶, sleeping well into the afternoon — yet highly sexed, obsessive. Her behaviour is 'queer' enough to make Laura wonder at one point if she is a boy in disguise — Laura decides, however, that her 'languor'⁴⁷ is precisely what distinguishes her as female, not male. (Gelder 60)

Sue-Ellen Case writes about 'lesbian' vampires in her article "Tracking the Vampire". She establishes her arguments around queer theory by specifically referring to the queerness of the vampire, distinguishing it from the 'lesbian' category. Her purpose is to point out how more fluid this category of 'queer' is. In same-sex relations, from this perspective, the boundaries are dissolved. In a queer encounter, the one desiring and the one being desired are constantly replacing one another — sexual action itself becomes an act of negotiation between the sexes and the roles are never clearly established. Another challenge that same-sex desire poses is the notion of "being-in-the-world" — problematising reproduction practices (Gelder 61). This brings to mind the discussion on the fragility of boundaries and how Gothic fantasy complicates the divide between Self / Other, Life / Death — is the "living" always superior to the "dead", or is there a "little bit too much life in death"? (Cixous, "Fiction" 545). The fluidity made possible here is that the term 'queer' not only refuses the "gender-based construction of the lesbian in representation", but it also challenges the idea of 'being' on earth. It disrupts "the borders of life and death" — it refuses "the organicism which defines the living as the good" (Case 3).

⁴⁵ Le Fanu 17, 18.

⁴⁶ Le Fanu 25, 28.

⁴⁷ Le Fanu 19, 36.

“The queer” becomes “the taboo-breaker”, an unstable in-between state — the uncanny (3). So, the ‘queer’ is not equivalent with the ‘Other’. The queer disrupts the conventional opposition between Life and Death, instead of situating itself on the subordinate side of the polarity (Gelder 62). This in-between state is what Sue-Ellen Case has in mind in her analysis of *Carmilla*.

Considering all the fictionalised monsters of the Gothic genre, it is only the Vampire who can inspire such an erotic encomium. With the bite, they single-handedly collapse the boundaries. The piercing ‘kiss’ is inscribed with an unspeakable passion and longing; it is indeed a celebration of life’s energies manifested by the undead. Her “chosen one” is aroused to the point of orgasm, becoming ‘one’ with the undead, becoming the undead. The closeness of the ‘kiss’ almost always invokes sexual tension and charge. Even when the text does not appear to highlight such sexual tension, the piercing kiss, the biting itself is sensual and erotic that it is almost impossible to escape this imagery (Gelder 62, also Dyer 55). The readers of *Carmilla*, considering the fact that few of them are unaware of the topic of the story, have the comfort of knowing what Laura or the fathers do not yet know (Hughes 202).

d. Entangled Desires: The Vampire Mouth

Aye, they must wed some fair and virtuous maiden,
Whom they do after kill, and from her veins
Drain eagerly the purple stream of life
— Planché, 5

The fluid exchanges present a perverse sexuality, [...] in the way it exceeds fixed gender distinctions. Dracula’s fluid, shifting and amorphous shape, [...] has no singular or stable nature or identity. Meanings, identities and boundaries are utterly transgressed in the movements of vampiric desire.

— Botting 98

If blood is the recurring theme, *the vampire mouth* is the recurring image in the novel — nowhere else is the ambivalence of sexual desire more dramatically represented. Notice how Dr. Seward depicts the Count: “His eyes flamed red with devilish passion [...] and the white sharp teeth, behind the full lips of the blood-dripping mouth, champed together like those of a wild beast” (Stoker, *Dracula* 300-301). The *mouth* is the foremost site of erotic experience in *Dracula*. Obviously, the vampire kiss or bite first brings to mind a symbolism of oral sex. Roxana Stuart

reminds us that the Elizabethans used a metaphor for ‘orgasm’ — “‘the little death’, and the kiss of the vampire brings both ecstasy and death” (21).

Apart from bringing “the little death” with its touch and kiss, since the *mouth* (with its plurality of meanings) eludes signification, “giv[es] the lie to the easy separation of the masculine and the feminine (Craft 109).

Luring at first with an inviting orifice, a promise of red softness, but delivering instead a piercing bone, the vampire mouth fuses and confuses what Dracula’s civilised nemesis [...] works so hard to separate — the gender-based categories of the penetrating and the receptive. With its soft flesh barred by hard bone, its red crossed by white, [...] asks some disturbing questions. (109)

Do we have both penetrators and orifices? Which bodily fluids define us, the reds or the whites, if there is a distinction? Milk, blood, semen — how are these interconnected? This mouth subverts all “stable and lurid” gender binaries, and it is the mouth of the male, and of the female — notice the male is covered in *blood*, and desires *blood* (109).

From this perspective of *queer* reading, then, Count Dracula becomes a liberating force. I would like to focus on this “polymorphous” sexuality of the vampire to see how it plays out in his encounters with Mina and Lucy, first in the mother text and then in Lochhead’s *Dracula*. One of the most interpreted scenes of polymorphic nature is Dracula’s intimate blood exchange with Mina, where he enters her moonlit chamber by Renfield’s nonconsensual help: “Visited by Dracula the same night after Dr Seward left him in his cell, Renfield realizes that the Count has begun feeding upon the blood of Mina, whom he has developed some sort of affinity” (Yücel 137). Yücel refers to Renfield’s connection with Mina here but there could be no better word than “affinity” to describe Dracula’s feelings for Mina as well, since (as this section will demonstrate) the more Dracula gets closer to Mina, the more the distinctions between them — the penetrator and the orifice — dissolve. An understanding of each other’s natures — affiliated with the Moon — the female Goddesses — occurs, and it is precisely this *affinity* that unites them. Leaving her husband in a trance-like ‘stupor’, and having sucked her blood from her neck, Dracula opens a vein in his breast and makes Mina kneel and suck his blood from this open, bleeding wound.

Dr. SEWARD'S DIARY. 3 October — The moonlight was so bright [...]. On the bed beside the window lay Jonathan Harker, [...] breathing heavily as though in a stupor. Kneeling on the near edge of the bed [...] was the white-clad figure of his wife. [W]e all recognised the Count [...] with his left hand he held both Mrs. Harker's hands, keeping them away with her arms at full tension; his right hand gripped her by the back of her neck, forcing her face down on his bosom. Her white nightdress was smeared with blood, and a thin stream trickled down the man's bare breast which was shown by his torn-open dress. The Count turned his face. [...] His eyes flamed red with devilish passion.

(Stoker 300-301)

This highly eroticised scene yields a myriad of interpretations. A considerable number of critics seem to analyse this scene's overt symbolism though Stoker's self-censorship as a direct response to the 1857 Obscene Publications Act. They contend that, since he was restricted in — given that he signed the book with his real name — writing explicitly about sexuality (especially 'perverse' sexuality), and since he would have wanted his novel to become popular and not to be considered as *obscene* in any way (as explained in the previous discussion on 'Gothic' and pornography), he took all the great pains to encode such fantasies. Christopher Bentley among them claims that Stoker concealed the vampire's polymorphous perversions through the use of 'symbolism' (Gelder 70). Other critics turn to Ernest Jones' famous study *On the Nightmare*, which investigates the connections between Fuseli's 'The Nightmare' and medieval superstitions, and psychoanalysis. Notice that the fourth chapter of the Part II of Jones' book is named 'The Vampire'⁴⁸ (98-130). Following Jones' account will lead to this insight: Stoker 'stages' the blood exchange between Mina and Dracula in such a way that blood and semen become interchangeable, in a process which Jones describes as followed by a "nightly visit from a beautiful and frightful being", associating it with "nocturnal emissions": "In the unconscious mind blood is commonly an equivalent for semen" (Jones 119).

⁴⁸ "Our fullest knowledge of the belief in Europe, [...] we owe to the Balkan peninsula, where it has evidently been greatly influenced by Turkish superstitions" (Jones 121).

This equivalence offers another cue: the staging of red against white in this scene: “her white nightdress was smeared with blood” build up the image of mixing of blood with semen (Stoker 300). As Dracula penetrates Mina, he extracts the “vital fluid” but then in return Mina “withdraws” from him the same vital fluid. Interchangeable as they might seem, depending on the one in the penetrating and receiving end, the interpretations will alter. Let us read the scene from Mina’s end. It has been interpreted as “a symbolic act of enforced fellatio” (Bentley 29). However, it is more complicated than that because the “thin open wound” on Dracula’s breast and Mina’s blood-smeared dress necessitates another symbolism. While Mina’s later cry of shame “Unclean, unclean!” might mean that this encounter triggered her menstruation (with the matching imagery of the moonlight penetrating the room), the ‘thin open wound’ might suggest “a cut or slit similar to the vaginal orifice” (Stoker 303, Bentley 29). Such a visit by the ‘Count’ served to inspire sexual knowledge, liberating sexual energies: “a means, perhaps, of bringing Mina into contact with her own sexual cycle” (Gelder 70). This outlook will then weaken the “forced fellatio” argument and rather concentrate more on Mina as a menstruating goddess, who is regaining her energies through the exchange.

Another point to consider in that scene is that right before Dracula makes Mina suck from his “thin open wound”, he is afforded a brief but excessively interpreted soliloquy:

And you, their best beloved one, are now to me, flesh of my flesh; blood of my blood; kin of my kin; my bountiful wine-press⁴⁹ for a while and shall be later on my companion and my helper. You shall be avenged in turn; for not one of them but shall minister to your needs. (Stoker 306-307)

Leonard Wolf interprets these lines as Stoker’s “anxious” effort for us readers to understand the blood/fluid exchange between the two as a parody of a Christian wedding ceremony (255). “In the Roman Catholic marriage ceremony, we read: ‘So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies . . . for we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones . . . For this cause shall a man leave his father and

⁴⁹ See Leonard Wolf, on the account (with reference to Paget, a contemporary traveler) he provides for wine-making practices in nineteenth century Transylvania (pp. 8, 9).

mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall be two in one flesh” (255). In his radio production of *Dracula*, Orson Welles also saw the parodic potential and made Dracula repeat this soliloquy while on board Czarina Catherine en route to his homeland Transylvania. The question why Stoker took all the pain to make the scene evoke marriage vows (albeit ‘parodic’) begs explanation. It might as well be that he was anxious to “undercode” the pornography evident in the scene “at the level of utterance”, all the more so because he “overcoded” it “at the level of performance” (Gelder 67). While this empowering influence of Dracula is way too concealed and coded in the mother text, Lochhead looks at it with a very different and new light, as will be discussed below. It is important to add that Dracula’s potency in this scene is in stark contrast with Harker’s impotency in the very same scene. He is in a trance-like state while all this sexual encounter happens... Van Helsing also comments on Jonathan’s immobile state: “John is in a stupor such as we know the Vampire can produce. We can do nothing with poor Madam Mina [...]; I must wake him!” (Stoker 301). The scene is first described in Seward’s diary, but later Mina herself recounts the experience:

He placed one hand upon my shoulder and, holding me tight, bared my throat with the other, saying [...] “First a little refreshment to reward my exertions.” I was bewildered, and strangely enough, I did not want to hinder him. I was in half a swoon. [...] He pulled open his shirt and with his long sharp nails opened a vein in his breast. When the blood began to spurt out, he took my hands in one of his, holding them tight, and with the other seized my neck and pressed my mouth to the wound so that I might [...] swallow some of the — Oh my God! My God! What have I done?. (Stoker 306-307)

Mina “did not want to hinder” this magnetic vampire and cannot enunciate the word ‘blood’ right in the middle of the climax of her story, or “rather, she allows the fluid at this moment to be appropriately unrepresented, making the space for its reading as semen” (Gelder 71). Consequently, this version makes it more plausible to interpret the blood as semen, further complicating the novel’s treatment of the scene as a perilous ‘attack’ on the helpless victim on the surface. Of course, in Stoker’s version, Mina immediately laments all that happened and resorts to religion: “Look down on a poor soul in worse than mortal peril; and in mercy pity those to whom she is dear!”

(Stoker 307). Nevertheless, this scene of recollection, in my view, might be left for us critics to uncover what Stoker could not overtly express. This does not necessarily mean that he designed this scene as a fellatio fantasy or a sadistic forced fellatio as some critics have read it. However, let us entertain the thought that he wanted the reader to read between the lines and as Mina's retrospective revelation that she "did not want to hinder him" makes crystal clear, see *Dracula* with a quite different light (Stoker 306).

There is one more dimension of the same scene, which makes any clear-cut interpretation even harder. When Dr. Seward is asked to recount the incident once again by Dr. Van Helsing, Seward magically alters his eyewitness testimony. Notice on his first account, Seward perceived this encounter as a sadistic domination on the Count's side and, at the very best, a passive submission on Mina's side, even resembling the instance of making her suck his blood from the thin open wound on his breast to a kid "forcing a kitten's nose into a saucer of milk to compel it to drink" (Stoker 301). However, on this occasion, Seward reports:

I told how the ruthless hands of the count had held his wife in that terrible and horrid position, with her mouth to the open wound in his breast. It interested me, even at that moment, to see, that, whilst the face of white set passion worked convulsively [...], the hands tenderly and lovingly stroked the ruffled hair. (Stoker 303)

"The hands tenderly and lovingly stroked the ruffled hair" — the sadistic vampire-turned-into-a-loving-affectionate partner. Why is that so? If one takes Seward's conflicting accounts and Mina's revelation that she "did not want to hinder him" at face value and perceive them from an equal distance, this will provide a basis for the queer reading of the vampire, and the vampiric acts in the novel. From a non-heteronormative position, this scene is quite complicated; role-reversals take place, since the vampire can transform into anything, anything you want them to be. The desires could be unspeakable, yet they exist, and this is the enigma of it.

Critic after critic (including post-Freudian feminists) have scrutinised Mina, she is under the perpetual gaze of the Crew of Light, she is taken advantage of when it is paramount, but then dismissed when the homosocial bond between "men" gets disturbed or challenged. The main issue here is that one can never truly understand

what this scene entails for Mina, Dracula, or even for Harker. Could all of it speak to an infantile fantasy of Seward's? It is also possible, but the most significant issue is that Dracula throws all gender assumptions out of the window. In an effort to feel closer to Mina, he intentionally inflicts on himself the pain that Mina must be feeling. He momentarily becomes the woman in his blood and in his pain. The scene is purely erotic, or purely affectionate, depending on which story one follows. The narrators see all of these contradictions and reversals, but cannot apprehend them. Quite ironically, they do not have the vocabulary to describe or analyse something so transgressive, even though they are obsessed with all these 'perversions.' "[T]hey offer no analysis of the sexual behaviour they nonetheless bear witness to. [...] [T]his does not amount to the usual cliché of Victorian repression. The narrators in *Dracula* do not obstruct investigation simply by remaining silent about such contradictions" (Gelder 72).

III. III. VAMPIRES ON STAGE

a. Stoker's *Dracula* on Stage

This enduring tale of the transgressive vampire has lured so many producers and playwrights into filming and staging it since Bram Stoker first read it on stage at Royal Lyceum Theatre. That *Dracula* has been on the silver screen and stage so many times with so many interpretations is of no coincidence. Some of the scenes, such as Harker's seduction by the vampire brides, do speak and they are vivid to the point of being *stage directions* — Liz Lochhead also uses them extensively — not just depictions. *Dracula* owes its dramatic effects to Stoker's decades-long attachment to the theatre and stage. Notice that before *Dracula*, few Gothic tales took pains to depict and visualise its sensational scenes. Much was left to the readers' imaginations, be it a killing scene, or a brutal attack. According to some critics, Stoker presented a melodrama in his novel, showing modernity under the attack of supernatural forces of evil. In a similar fashion to the "Fated Man" of melodrama of the 19th Century, its vampire villain was "capable of transformation into other life forms and into dust" (Wynne 165). This made the novel both stagey and as some playwrights discovered, "stageable" (166).

Stoker's imagination, which was already endowed with a Gothic predisposition, was fuelled by "Lyceum's elaborate effects" (166). In effect, the Count

becomes “a product of Stoker’s Gothic imagination, the Lyceum’s cult of the supernatural and the nineteenth century’s immersion in melodramatic excess” (166). *Dracula* is overflowing with theatrical effects. For instance, when Harker, trying to find a way out, looks out of the window of the castle, to his surprise he sees the Count appearing out of his window “crawl[ing] down the castle wall over the dreadful abyss, face down, with his cloak spreading out around him like great wings” (Stoker 41). While he cannot “believe his eyes”, he perceives the scene in a way that evokes the magical devices of the theatre, as “some trick of moonlight, some weird effects of shadow” and as Dracula crawls down the wall “just as a lizard moves along a wall” (41). The theatricality of this depiction is striking in its vividness. Christopher Frayling’s observation of Stoker’s early notes for *Dracula* is worth mentioning here. He attests that the book’s narrative structure “looks suspiciously like the “synopsis of scenery” in a Lyceum programme — four acts, each with seven scenes, many supplied with ready-made curtain lines” (300). Another example of the melodramatic content of the novel is Stoker’s depiction of the scene between Harker and the vampire brides. Stoker does not shy away from presenting this encounter overtly:

Harker — It was like the intolerable, tingling sweetness of waterglasses when played on by a cunning hand. [...] One [vampire bride] said:

– ‘Go on! You are the first, and we shall follow; yours is the right to begin.’ The other added:

– ‘He is young and strong; there are kisses for us all.’

Count suddenly appears before them and lifting the woman who is just fastening her lips on Harker’s throat, by the neck hurls her away.

In a voice which, though low and almost in a whisper, seemed to cut through the air [...] as he said:

– ‘How dare you touch him, any of you? How dare you cast eyes on him when I had forbidden it? Back, I tell you all! This man belongs to me. Beware how you meddle with him, or you’ll have to deal with me.’ The fair girl [...] turned to answer him:

– ‘You yourself never loved; you never love!’ (Stoker 45-46)

The rest of the scene closes with Dracula saying that he “too, can love” and when the women ask if there is anything left for them, he throws a sack in front of them in which there is a wailing child (Stoker 46). Wynne points to the fact that despite the erotic and homoerotic undertones of this scene, the censor let it pass untouched (168). This is probably because the officials applied different censorship standards for novels and different ones for plays written for stage, the former being a private reading experience, the latter being under public gaze. Even though the novel, thanks to Stoker’s dramatic mastery, is overflowing with vivid descriptions of scene and scenery, there are certain challenges in adapting this masterpiece for stage (or the silver screen). The framed narrative structure of the novel affords multiple points of view, even sometimes multiple testimonials from the same characters. This means that the playwright and director are left with the choice of either picking one of the angles or combining them. The plot requires a total change of scenery, from Whitby to Transylvania, back to Whitby to London and so on. This is a huge burden in terms of stage production and budget. The sheer number of characters present yet another difficulty — the playwright needs to come up with creative solutions while maintaining the novel’s core. However, beyond all these limitations, one challenge stands out: “the challenge of finding form for that which defies representation, because it is otherworldly” (Babbage 13). The intimacy of the audience and actors on stage makes theatre a distinctive medium, this is the strength and beauty of theatrical experience. However, in the case of a tale as powerful as *Dracula*, this immediacy “may conversely make this medium less able than film to give effective shape to a figure as shadowy as the vampire” (13).

Dracula was first successfully staged by the actor-manager Hamilton Deane, “premiered at the Grand Theatre in Derby, England, in 1924. Staged twelve years after Stoker’s death, this version *Dracula* became a box office hit” (Wynne 165). Deane had to alter many of his scenes due to censorship. The narrative was shrunk into three acts which featured Jonathan Harker’s Study and Mina’s boudoir, Harker’s journey to Transylvania, and the pursuit of Dracula back to his native land and beyond was omitted, having been deemed ‘unstageable’. Still, this was the first triumph of *Dracula*, some twenty years after its first release, in the late 1920s. “These decisions, although radical, were not detrimental to the production’s success: it ran for a record-breaking 391 performances at three London theatres, followed by a still more profitable

Broadway transfer” (Babbage 13). In 1984, Christopher Bond produced *Dracula* for theatre with Daniel Day Lewis as the Count, and in 1993 Hull Truck Theatre reproduced it under the creative supervision of John Godber and Jane Thornton. Among many adaptations within England and the States, as well as those written for the white screen, in my view one adaptation in particular, stands out. It is Liz Lochhead’s unique rewriting of the tale in 1985, followed by a special request from Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh — back to Stoker’s roots.

b. Lochhead’s *Dracula* on Stage

This section will focus on a particular stage adaptation — Liz Lochhead’s *Dracula* — first staged at the Royal Lyceum Theatre⁵⁰ on 13 March 1985, and directed by Hugh Hodgart. Mary Shelley and her confrontations with her artistic creativity in a dreary, dark nursery immortalized through the allusion to Fuseli’s “Nightmare” — the Gothic atmosphere of *Blood and Ice* — was in my view a harbinger of the adaptation of *Dracula*. Through her ironic stance and narrative interventions, Lochhead wishes to present a different version of the vampire. Lochhead approaches her vampire as a polymorphous being (‘polymorphous perverse’ in Freudian terms in the sense that seems to express and fulfil sexual desire through parts of his body other than his genitals, as if to reinforce infantile fantasies — as the ‘piercing kiss’ suggests) with the potential of a liberating and empowering force. The vampire has a certain appeal for Gothic fantasy and also queer narratives, as a subversive force in a society from which it is ostracised, thus becoming a spokesperson for resistance (Stratford 203).

‘The vampire’ readily implies the ‘pleasure of the text’ in Roland Barthes’ line of thought. If one applies this to the live stage, *Dracula*’s charm is hard to resist, but this Byronic anti-hero does not lure the theatre or cinema audience merely because of his cloak, handsome appearance, magnetic voice, or, as Francis Ford Coppola masterfully achieved in his film version, due to his historical roots as Vlad III of Tepes, or Vlad Dracula, the Western dread of the East. Once we peel this mythology off *Dracula*, we will notice that *Dracula* is indeed the battleground of quite a number of ideologies. Alternatively, there is an increasing tendency to view *Dracula* as a queer embodiment, precisely because of his ambiguous sexuality and ambivalence towards

⁵⁰ “Stoker’s chosen theatre for *Dracula* [for a staged reading of the novel] was the Lyceum” (Stratford 204). / “The Lyceum [...] was the vampire theatre par excellence” (Stuart 252).

male and female protagonists in the novel. If we take a moment to remember Sedgwick's interpretation of the 'queer', it is precisely this quality — that one cannot connote it with clear-cut signs — that makes it 'queer'. Another ideology that the Vampire tale manifests is the predominant male discourse which always implies a female passivity and celebrates male activity, and which also 'fears' female sexuality and deems assertion of such desire as *monstrous*. Sadly, this has changed so little since the times of fin de siècle sensibilities. Thus the Vampire deviates from the norm in its monstrous, or fragile, grotesque was depending on representation. The Vampire penetrates, but is also penetrated; it disrupts the boundaries of the living and the dead, and certainly signifies an excess that any given society struggles so hard to contain: "Vampires are a product of their time and place, a half living, bleeding, metaphor for whatever we fear as uncomfortable, threatening and deviant. Ironically perhaps, they are also a celebration of those deviances in times when deviance is exposed" (Wisker, *Contemporary* 162).

While for some viewers, the vampire carries erotic undertones with both their polymorphous sexuality and acting upon transgressive impulses, infantile fantasies, etc., for some others this rather grotesque being (depending on the dramatic rendering) will evoke horror, terror and menace. To take a step back and remember the vampire's historical transformation from a savage beast into a highly sophisticated, eloquent personality, Roxana Stuart's study of the vampire plays of nineteenth century is worth mentioning. The origins of the vampire are traced back to Eastern European tales in which the vampire was no other than a kind of savage and chubby beast. It was gradually transformed: in German literature, particularly by 'Sturm and Drang' authors such as Goethe into an outcast, loner and wanderer; then by Romantic poets such as Lord Byron into the victim of an ancestral curse; or by John William Polidori into the Byronic anti-hero — a social outcast with aristocratic lineage; and finally by English Gothic novelists into a "sophisticated, sexual deviate, seducer" (Stuart 2).

The director manipulates the audience through dramaturgical effects and techniques this way or another, so no matter how scholars interpret the text (Lochhead's version), the Vampire will take on a new meaning each time they are portrayed onstage. Namely, having long been a subject of inquiry for theatre, dramatic representations of the vampire of Stoker's have changed substantially. A close analysis of multiple stagings of Lochhead's *Dracula* will certainly provide a multi-dimensional

approach through which one can better comprehend the subversive and revisionist aspect of Lochhead's text. However, such an inquiry surpasses the scope of this thesis. While some directors do see Dracula as this alluring, magnetic aristocrat in their stage adaptations, some others focus on his grotesque features depending on the audience response they seek to elicit. When it comes to the reader-response which this study primarily focuses on, let me profess that a *pleasure* of the text is certainly achieved. In Barthes' inquiry, texts need to hold a subversive potential — "a shadow" in order to evoke pleasure (*Pleasure* 32). What Barthes means by 'shadow' is the way a text, a painting, or cultural artefact, etc. reinforces or subverts the dominant ideologies. That is to say, the informed reader will experience 'pleasure' only if the text manifests certain subversive undertones:

There are those who want a text (an art, a painting) without a shadow, without the "dominant ideology", but this is to want a text without fecundity, without productivity, a sterile text... The text needs its shadows; this shadow is a bit of ideology, a bit of representation, a bit of subject. (32)

Then the question is, what is this 'bit of ideology', 'bit of representation' in Lochhead's version? How does it distinguish itself from other adaptations of this cult fin de siècle novel? Lochhead's representation marks a pivotal moment within such re-interpretations. Lochhead's adaptation of *Dracula* (1985, 2009) makes overt use of the vampire lore both as a concept (as a force of nature aligned with womanhood) and the 'vampire' as a tangible character. Her nuanced work perfectly aligns with the project of feminist drama — re-visiting an old text to offer a new direction, re-writing familiar stories with a feminist lens — an endeavour that is in itself an act of cultural resistance (Rich 18; Lauretis 7). Foucault's views on *The History of Sexuality, Vol I* (1978) also offers valuable insight into the connection between such 'polymorphous perverse' sexualities of vampiric proximity and its counter-cultural potential. Foucault draws attention to the fact that renderings of passion, desire and sexuality have long been carefully contained in the patriarchal discourse and precisely "the figure of the vampire" acts as a deviance from the norm since they refuse to be contained, "liberat[e] the explosive power that [desire, passion and sexual activities] generate, break[e] down boundaries, behaviours, taboos, [...] den[y] the constraints of our lives" (Wisker, "Love Bites" 232). Ideologically, at last on the surface level, Stoker's novel is very

much about various fin-de-siècle male anxieties about sex; sexuality, and the fear of highly sexualised, liberated and mobile, outspoken women (or as some critics say the ‘fear’ of the ‘New Woman’). The juvenile, frail and sexually inexperienced Lucy is gradually transformed into “a grotesque vamp” and her punishment is being staked through the heart so that the social order is restored. (Varty, “The Mirror” 653). Stoker’s text, in that sense, appears on the surface as a fantasy to provoke male desire, which is most obviously visible in the rape-like scene of Lucy’s staking through the heart by her fiancé (653). The narrative provokes such desire but Christian patriarchy prevails — the vampire woman and Dracula are eliminated, so is the threat of ‘vampiric’ / perverse / polymorphous sexuality. Additionally, the novel’s dealings with Christianity reinforces its patriarchal concerns for potency if one takes a moment to remember how the dominant male discourse celebrates male ‘activity’ and encourages female passivity.

Lochhead’s narrative illustrates these ideologies, and parodies Victorian gender norms. For instance in her text, upon the arrival of the ‘Count’, the ‘innocent’ Lucy, the anorexic, sleep-walking, frail, “[C]razy Lucy, mad sleepwalking skinny Lucy with her migraines and her over-vivid imagination” suddenly becomes highly sexual, and to make matters worse (in terms of the fear her sexuality evokes), she starts menstruating (*Dracula*, 1, 5, 16). In the nineteenth century, menstruating women were expected to be immobile, “encouraged to behave like invalids while they suffered from the ‘curse’, the ‘flowers’ or as Queen Victoria called it, the ‘poorly time’” (McDonald “The Devil” 91). When Dr. Seward first learns about Lucy’s restless moods, the first question he asks is “Did she have a loss of normal female functions?” (1, 3, 11). Victorian women were expected to only rest in isolation during such times, a practice which was further reinforced by the *abjection* of women’s blood, and triggered by the view that menstruation was “unclean and repugnant”. Thus, Lucy’s hyper ‘activity’ was attributed to a pause of such a natural function (McDonald, “The Devil” 91). Lochhead reverses this Victorian approach (the predominantly male abjection of menstrual blood) by coinciding / linking Dracula’s arrival at Whitby with the beginning Lucy’s menstruation. The morning after Dracula arrives ashore, Lucy mentions a “black dog” (“I saw it! As the boat struck the shore it leapt. From down under the hold to dry land”) appears to be pale, but she dismisses Florrie’s concerns (1, 11, 38):

FLORRIE. Miss Lucy, you all right? You does look pale.

LUCY. Oh, nothing! I've got a visitor... Must have come in the night...
My friend, my bloody friend.

MINA. The curse. (1, 11, 38)

There has been a general tendency among feminists to dismiss the vampire tale because they saw the Vampire as it is represented on the surface — a sexual predator, and women as his helpless victims — *the repressed Victorians*. In other words, they are generally regarded as these Victorian women who had no clue about their sexuality and hence, fell into Dracula's trap easily. However, 'the vampire' as embodied by Count Dracula is inherently transgressive, a quality which is key in understanding his affinity with the women in Lochhead's version. He defies conventions, but this is not a monstrous defiance in any sense. He parodies Victorian propriety, rigidity of clothing and the marriage bed. His defiance is ideological in the Foucauldian sense. In a society which does all in its power to contain desire and passion, he throws all this effort out of the window by refusing to be contained. Hence the horror and repulsion he evokes. This is incredibly reminiscent of the repulsion that the sexual woman evokes in society. Angela Carter envisions the tale of a woman who uses her sexuality to cause terror in her *Sadeian Woman* (1978). In a similar vein, Dracula uses his polymorphous sexuality to subvert the Victorian rhetoric, and becoming an accomplice of women who have a similar desire and they seem connected — this is at least Lochhead's interpretation. He becomes *only* an initiator for Lochhead's women, who are somehow aware and in search of a way to fulfil their desires. Dracula cannot enter unless he is invited first, so, these women "desire his intrusion or come to him voluntarily" precisely because he challenges all the norms they are expected to adhere to, becoming "the liberator of their unacknowledged bondage" (McDonald, "The Devil" 91). They are nowhere near the helpless victims who embody Victorian dichotomies of womanhood, such as the 'angel-in-the-house' or the 'wicked woman'. While creating her female characters, what Lochhead has in mind is that in order to escape being *killed* by means of being fixated into art, the woman must *kill* the 'aesthetic ideal' as well as the angel's double — the monster in the house, by dissecting the patriarchal definitions imposed on them: "A woman [...] must examine, assimilate and transcend the extreme images of 'angel' and 'monster' which male authors have generated for her" (Gilbert and Gubar 17).

Alternatively, they also seemingly parody and reject the stereotypical sexual roles imposed upon them, in other words, the characteristics which *define* their sexuality. These characteristics are explained as the ‘female archetypes’ by Luce Irigaray, namely, the ‘virgin’, the ‘mother’ and the ‘whore’ (*This Sex* 184-191).

Besides, Lochhead’s version of Count Dracula as a force of nature aligned with women though his bloody mouth and his close connection with the Moon, is knowingly *invited* in these women’s lives — he is sought out *intentionally*. Hence, what Lochhead’s adaptation does is revising Stoker’s vampire tale into a more secular, and certainly more liberating one. It is still a fin de siècle story, but nuanced in the way that it deals with female agency, sexuality, and desire as well the fear and fulfilment of that desire. The ‘voluptuous’ vampire brides in Stoker’s version are “quite recognisably horrid versions, perversions of 1. MRS. MANNERS, 2. FLORRIE, 3. LUCY, led by her” (*Dracula* 1, 9, 32). In this scene, Lochhead makes extensive use of Stoker’s original *stage directions*:

VAMPIRE BRIDE 3 (LUCY) advances and bends over him — now, this is more straight out of Bram Stoker — ‘*until he can feel the movement of her breath upon him... sweet, honey sweet, sending the same tingling through the nerves as her voice, but with a bitter underlying the sweet, a bitter offensiveness as one smells in blood*’. (1, 9, 33)

This is a pivotal reversal in the play because long before Dracula invades London and finds Lucy in the graveyard in Whitby during one of her sleepwalking sessions, we see LUCY as a vampire bride onstage, and what is more, she is quite a perverse one. Through such reversal, Lochhead makes the audience notice that Lucy is already a sexual being, already vampiric, and hence dangerous. At this juncture, Lochhead’s fascination with Angela Carter’s Gothic tales should be noted. Angela Carter is a feminist revisionist par excellence — even though her stories are original ones, her dark imagination, her revisionist stance lies at the core of these tales. Along with her novels exploring gender identity and performativity such as *Magic Toyshop* (1967), and in her Gothic short stories in *Bloody Chamber* collection (1979) she was highly interested in the latent content of traditional fairy tales and she saw this content as “violently sexual” (Simpson ix). In her introduction, Lochhead herself refers to this

collection, admitting that she compulsively read Angela Carter, whom she describes as “the great and original”, and her tales as “equally delicious but deliberately more ornate and baroque romantic” (*Dracula* vii-viii). Carter finds those tales, shakes out the misogyny — the fear and dislike of female sexuality — embedded in them, and revisions them in a way that the female characters become vocal, zestful, and unapologetically sexual. She sees these seemingly innocent folk tales, such as “Beauty and the Beast” as cautionary tales, and creates unapologetically sexual women who cannot be kept down. “Tiger’s Bride” and “The Courtship of Mr. Lyon” are two different renderings of the same fairy tale — “Beauty and the Beast”. While in one tale, the Beast transforms Beauty, in the other one, Beauty transforms the Beast. Having drawn on these tales, I have revisited “Tiger’s Bride” in particular because the very first line of the tale has always haunted me: “My father lost me to the Beast at cards” (Carter, *The Bloody* 56). The woman who seems to be the victim of male exchange turns it all around in the end, finding her heart’s desire. Before revisiting this tale towards the end of this discussion, let us point out how similar the Beast in Carter’s and the Vampire in Lochhead’s imagination appear to be. Notice that in both tales the ‘monster’ is a loner, lives in an uninhabited place; is an aristocrat with a noble lineage (‘Lord’ Tiger and ‘Count’ Dracula). In both tales ‘desire’ is voiced, and the authors draw a beautiful metaphor of an erotic encounter which involves desiring subjects, not the dichotomy of the predator and the victim. Lochhead’s *Dracula* indicates women’s empowerment: “[b]oth Lucy and Mina desire the intrusion of Dracula for it signals [...] their liberation from the dominant culture which reduced them at best to two-dimensional icons” (McDonald, “Scottish” 497). The Beast transforms Beauty in the end, who gives herself to him willingly. She is transformed into a beautiful tiger, in this highly symbolical scene “his tongue ripped off skin after successive skin, all the skins of a life in the world” — he liberates her from all constraints, “all the skins” of life (Carter, *The Bloody* 75). Lochhead’s Count Dracula carries traces of such animalistic love, and transgressive desire. Dracula is a benign force of nature sought for by these women, and they are sexual and zestful and vocal in with a parodic twist. Hence the greatness of these authors — they turn the tables in most unexpected ways.

In the light of the above discussion, instead of focusing on what *becomes of* her (drawing on the brutal rape-like scene where she is staked through the heart while peacefully sleeping), I would rather offer more of a reading of what *becomes her*. In

Lochhead's version, in my view, the narrative and dramatization are way more interested in what *became* the women in the story, and ultimately Dracula, their companion. Upon looking at the ways in which it is achieved, Lochhead's revision of the vampire legend of Stoker turns out to bring out the transgressive nature of their encounters and queer potential of the vampire, in the sense that Sedgwick asserts in her definition of 'queer'.

In her 2009 introduction, Lochhead admits that her version of the classic vampire tale is a "very free" one in retrospect: "a very free one it seems to me now, though a very faithful one it felt to me at the time" (*Dracula* v). In her version, the relationship between Mina and Lucy is transformed into sisterhood: "There were Lucy and Mina, instantly refigured as sisters, in their garden by the sea" (vii). And she places the house of Whitby side by side with the house in Carfax on stage (adjacent to the madhouse), which would enable her to demonstrate how mad Renfield and his nurses compare and contrast with Lucy and Mina: "there, next door to that weird house, Carfax, which Jonathan Harker was surveying to sell to his overseas buyer, was the madhouse in London, where poor zoophagous Renfield lived..." (vii). In Stoker's novel female sexuality is only hinted at, and while there is almost no overt expression of sexual fulfilment or delight on women's side, the interpretation of its undertones depends on which characters' testimony (as the conflicting accounts of the highly eroticised blood exchange scene depicts) one refers to. However Lochhead sees *Dracula* as a "narrative of suppressed sexuality and sexual guilt" and reverses this through the characters' depictions, dialogue, as well as dramaturgy (viii).

Lochhead's play is overflowing with intertextual references and stage directions cut out from the original source material. "Through interpolating quotations by other authors [...], Lochhead strives to reinterpret and/or change the meanings of those texts. [I]n *Dracula* Lochhead interjects her dramatic dialogue with long passages from Bram Stoker's novel" (Horvat, "Liz" 181). Lochhead, in a way, uses Stoker's novel in order to manipulate the Gothic text through her ironic and playful tone. In other words, Lochhead is well aware of the contemporary Gothic taste and her commentary on the original material teases her readers by overwhelming them with Stoker's depictions. She juxtaposes Stoker's stage directions with her own, interpolating the very same lines or presenting hers right next to Stoker's in an attempt to present an equal prejudice but in the opposite direction (Varty, "The Mirror" 653).

One of those instances is the scene where Harker, depicted in passive anticipation, is seduced by the vampire brides: “There is a deliberate voluptuousness which is both thrilling and repulsive, and as she arches her neck she actually licks her lips. Lower and lower goes the head as the lips go below [...] *Quote, unquote.*” (Act 1, Scene 9, 33). In another outrageous moment in the novel when the Crew of Light (the symbolic attribute to Van Helsing’s crew including Seward, Lord Godalming, Harker and Quincey, who chase the vampire) finally got hold of Lucy beside her grave, and when she pleads with Seward to come to her, Lochhead’s citation demonstrates her revisionist stance. In this confrontation, she describes Lucy as “lovely and terrifying and ethereal, mist at her toes”, and then juxtaposes this depiction with a contradicting imagery in Stoker’s: “VAMPIRE LUCY [...] her eyes blaze with unholy light and her face becomes wreathed with a *voluptuous* smile” (Act 2, Scene 13, 71).

c. Re-visioning Lucy

Chasing the red-deer with her father, Ronald,
A storm arose; and, parted from her train,
She sought a shelter here — calmly she sleeps,
Nor dreams to-morrow’s hymeneal rites
Will give her beauties to a vampire’s arms.

— Planché 4

In her dramatic re-vision of this fin de siècle novel, Lochhead objects to, and “seeks to destabilise the concept of single-femaleness” in the male imagination in Stoker’s *Dracula* (McDonald, “Scottish” 497). That is to say, in Stoker’s novel even though Lucy Westenra and Mina Harker differ from each other in their unique ways, male characters do not seem to realise or take account of this fact. Even when they take account of it, they cannot make sense of it but in superficial ways. This male concept of superficiality is parodied in Liz Lochhead’s version, in which they dismiss Lucy’s particularly pale appearance and somnambulism as ‘hysterical’:

JONATHAN. You see, [Mina] has this little sister. Lucy. Sweet kid, really. Mina, though... Mina worries terribly about her. Well, last year after her father died, Lucy went into a sort of decline... got terribly terribly thin and somewhat... feverish in her behaviour.

SEWARD. Did she have a loss of normal female functions?

JONATHAN. How on earth would I know?

SEWARD. Forgive me. I'm a doctor. [...] Probably simple girlish hysteria. Attention-seeking behaviour. [...] Nine times out of ten, rest, companionship, some exercise mental and physical — wait for little miss to grow out of it.

(Act 1, Scene 3, 11)

In another noteworthy example, Harker has captured the “likeness” of his fiancé and Lucy in a photograph which he carries in a locket. Lochhead objects to this ‘single-femaleness’ as she makes Harker and Dracula contrast them as “chalk and cheese” / “night and day”:

DRACULA. Who is this ‘Mina’? Is she your wife?

JONATHAN. Practically. We will marry on her twenty-fifth birthday, in September.

DRACULA. You have a likeness of her?

JONATHAN. Some pictures I took in the gardens of the summerhouse at Whitby they have.

DRACULA. Remarkable girls. (Pause.) / They are not alike, these sisters?

JOHATHAN. Mina and Lucy? Good Lord, no. Chalk and cheese.

DRACULA. Night and day. (Act 1, Scene 7, 22-23)

Apart from this “single-femaleness”, Stoker presents a rather gradual but striking change — thus creating a duality — in the women, shortly following their encounters with the vampire. These two well-brought up Victorian girls who have a high sense of decorum — “prettily dressed for polite male consumption” — on the surface, both seem sexually inexperienced and vulnerable in his version (even though Lucy already has a habit of somnambulism, reminiscent of Carmilla) (McDonald 497). However, once ‘bitten’ by the ‘vampire’, they are depicted as the “explicit objects of his [Dracula’s] carnal lust” (497). This duality of women in the novel — either angel-in-the-house or witches, whores, or monsters — compelled Post-Freudian critics to interpret Dracula’s (in the novel) women as ‘victims’, as repressed and trapped women (trapped in the sense that Lucy, for instance, loses all her property rights after her

mother dies) who “unable to acknowledge the existence of their sexuality, conjure up a fiendish ‘other’ who forces them into physical relationship” which they both desire and fear, “loathe” and take pleasure from (497). In other words, such critics tend to see Mina and Lucy as lacking agency, trapped in the Victorian rhetoric of womanhood and in such a vulnerable state that they inevitably fall under the spell of such a charming, alluring vampire. The way these critics make sense of their sexual encounter with the vampire is by explaining it as such: that they (Lucy and Mina) fear their own desires but they are intrigued. Their passive submission to “this alien force”, as in Fuseli’s painting “The Nightmare”, brings an overwhelming ecstasy, and inevitable pain (497).

However, as she did in *Blood and Ice*, Lochhead turns the tables. What she masterfully achieves is that she negates this archetypal duality of womanhood (and also single-femaleness), and aforementioned Post-Freudian interpretations it triggers. Alternatively, in her version, Dracula “liberates” these women from patriarchal constraints, from the “psychological repressions induced by a patriarchal culture and its dominant religion, Christianity” (McDonald 497). Most importantly, no matter how different — “chalk and cheese” — Mina and Lucy appear to be in Lochhead’s play, they both seek and find empowerment in their own ambiguous ways (1, 7, 22-23). That their transfiguration is through Count Dracula, does not undermine the intensity of their desire. On the contrary, it opens up a plethora of possibilities for queer narratives. In my analysis of Lochhead’s *Dracula*, I have thus read the vampire as queer embodiment and analysed a selection of scenes from Stoker’s novel to reveal hidden possibilities in his text. This paved the way for a deeper understanding of how blood on Stoker’s page is transposed from a fin de siècle context to Lochhead’s feminist stage, and finds itself over a bridal gown through the parody of a marriage night.

Apart from the above strategic revisions in terms of stage directions, Lochhead’s most radical revision is “the valorisation of male and female sexual desire” (Varty, “The Mirror” 653). She follows Nina Auerbach’s line of thought, which asserts that Dracula is not a threatening force, at least not for the women involved with him (notice that he is an omnipotent force of nature to be reckoned with, and a threat because he poses a direct challenge to the patriarchal anxieties of the ‘men’, and only ‘men’ for that matter, in the novel). On the contrary, he becomes an unchaining force, enabling women in the story to embrace their sexuality: “Dracula’s disruption of the patriarchal control is represented as a liberating force for the expression of female

sexuality” (653). To illustrate, the women in Lochhead’s version are not only bestowed sexual maturity but also released from the heavy toll of patriarchal emblems of ‘propriety’ — “signs of oppression” — such as heavy corsets and constricting garments, which actually distorted them way more severely than just a bite mark and blood exchange (653). Varty (in similar fashion to Lochhead) saw this kind of clothing as a sign of patriarchal oppression but it is better to take this view with a grain of salt. This is not to say that all Victorian middle-class women were feeling that uncomfortable in the ballroom. This one-dimensional approach might reinforce the *oh, those poor, repressed Victorians* rhetoric. In her chapter “The Myth of Womanhood: Victims” Auerbach shares an illustration by George du Maurier.⁵¹

In the configurations of “The Tables Turned,” [...] the force of [the women’s] numbers and their costumes, the dynamic and multitudinous lines with which they are drawn, make them the generators of the picture’s activity. Du Maurier’s women observe the proprieties with demure compliance, less swelling fierceness [...]. [D]u Maurier’s women are creatures of active, curving lines. Their characteristic motion is a ceaseless, elegant swoop, while the men in their freer attire seem mysteriously hampered and inhibited. (*Woman* 21-22)



Fgr. 3.3⁵²

⁵¹ *The Tables Turned* (1889).

“[D]rawing for a cartoon published in *Harper’s Magazine* depicting a scene in a ballroom. Three similarly dressed, fashionable young women in evening gowns are shown [...] equally fashionably dressed, who is on the arm of a tall young man [...] in a white-tie evening dress” (Cottam).

⁵² Fgr. 3.3 Du Maurier, *The Tables Turned*, 1889.

Actually the corsets *did* transform a woman's body to a rigid form, emphasizing their certain bodily features while concealing others. However, du Maurier turns the tables for a reason. Du Maurier intentionally plays with the physical realities surrounding the ballroom (Auerbach, *Woman* 22). In the drawing the men do seem "hampered" and unable to escape, while the women carelessly took control of this public space. No matter what *propriety* demands, women are seen moving and talking with ease "mobile and flexible", while men, very few of which is illustrated in the drawing, seem "by nature becorseted and strangulated" (22).

However far this 'parody of the ballroom' complicates the realities of being a middle-class woman in the fin-de-siecle England, one needs to make a statement. After all, it is impossible to ignore — Gilbert and Gubar note — that the sexual ideology of the Victorian period was "in many ways particularly oppressive, confining women, as Virginia Woolf noted, not just to corsets but to the 'Private House', with all its deprivations and discontents" (xxxix). This brings to mind Lucy's entrapment. Being subjected to the male gaze is another fine example to such predicament. At the very beginning of her play, Lochhead makes the audience recognise how the female characters of the novel have been trained to entertain the male gaze (Varty, "The Mirror" 653). The audience's first encounter with Lucy is while she is on a swing, wearing her petticoats, on a midsummer morning. She is depicted as young, wild, and free, looking in the mirror wondering who her future husband shall be:

The garden is all dappled leafy light and there is a swing on which
LUCY WESTERMAN, out in her underwear, is swinging — with her
armful of frou-frou petticoats, mirror in hand, singing her song and
dreaming her young girl dreams.

LUCY (*singing*).

Who shall I marry?

Tom, Dick or Harry? (Act 1, Scene 1, 3)

It is very telling that her first line is "Who shall I marry?" (1, 1, 3). This is a foreshadowing of Lochhead's parody of the wedding night, in the scene where Lucy wears Mina's wedding gown and Dracula's embrace covers it in blood. And then the first thing she does is to kiss the mirror: "She kisses her own lovely reflection in the mirror" (3). She seems to be in love with an image, not for her own consumption or

happiness, but one that she believes will make her attractive towards her suitors (Varty, “The Mirror” 654). However, as it appears, this beautiful view of the blossoming garden is distorted instantly, in an uncanny resemblance to the opening imagery of T. S. Eliot’s *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*⁵³ (in the poem the picturesque sunset view is shattered to pieces only two lines later, by resembling the evening sky to an unconscious patient). Lucy does not appear to be unconsciously still to evoke Eliot’s famous lines just yet, but she openly declares how she wishes to be constrained — be fitted in a tight corset:

LUCY. I want it tighter. The day they put me in stays and made me wear my hair up I swore blind if I was to be pinched and skewered then I was to have the thinnest, thinnest waist and the highest, highest hair. I wasn’t going to suffer for nothing and not be noticed. (3)

If she is to be fitted for public consumption anyway, she will make the best of it. As she urges Mina to squeeze her waist tighter, Mina goes on with shaping her curls into the acceptable hairstyle. In this scene, the aforementioned bit from *The Wise Wound*, seems to have influenced Lochhead: “[W]hy, what creatures they become! The corsets were replaced by practical white unhampering shrouds, very free and easy . . . Their eyes shone, they spoke with energy with every glance, and their smiles [...] with handsome canines, were flashing and free” (Shuttle and Redgrove 253).

The moment Mina says, “Do hurry up my angel, he’ll be here soon...,” imagery of the vibrant Garden becomes almost barren (Lochhead *Dracula* 3). Just the apprehension of an announced visitor — “the invisible but omnipresent sense of the male spectator” is enough to spoil her moods (Varty, “The Mirror” 654). While in Stoker’s version they are close friends, Lochhead turns them into sisters, their relationship carries the traces of Mary and Claire’s in *Blood and Ice*. In these earlier scenes, Lucy’s carefree attitude is juxtaposed with Mina’s pretentious propriety.

LUCY. What are you going to give him before he goes away?

MINA. Lucy! I don’t know what you mean.

...

⁵³ “Let us go then, you and I
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherised upon a table” (Eliot).

LUCY. It's only tease, only talk...

MINA. Well, watch your mouth, miss! (Act 1, Scene 1, 4)

Lochhead provides such scenes in order to create the perfect setting for Dracula's much awaited intrusion into their lives "for it signals their empowerment, and their liberation from the dominant male culture that reduced them at best to two-dimensional icons" (McDonald, "Scottish" 497). Lochhead's Lucy is sexually informed ("I know more than people think") and speaks about it unapologetically. One striking example for this feature of Lucy's comes up when she has a discussion with her maid Florrie about her (Florrie's lover):

LUCY. Florrie, [...] do you miss your sweetheart?

FLORRIE. How do you know I've got a sweetheart?

LUCY. I know things, Florrie. I know more than people think. I'm not just a little girl, Florrie.

FLORRIE. No, miss.

LUCY. Is he a gentleman?

LUCY. Your gentleman. Your... lover...

LUCY. Florrie? Florrie, do you ... let Jem love you?

FLORRIE. How do you mean, miss Lucy?

LUCY. Oh, Florrie, you know what I mean. I'm not a child. Is it... nice, Florrie?

— Is it absolutely the most sweetest delicious swoony magical marvellous thing you ever -?

(Act 1, Scene 13, 43)

This erotically overt conversation between Lucy and her maid takes place while "sunset [is] going into twilight" and Lucy is not "looking very well at all", presumably shortly after Dracula becomes intimate with her (1, 13, 41). She has the habit of sleepwalking, which is highly suggestive of her taking sexual matters into her own hands — she describes the graveyard at Whitby as "the only spot in all the world I felt I ought to be" (1, 13, 42). While Lucy is in one of her somnambulistic phases, she finds herself in a close encounter with Dracula, "who plunging his teeth into her neck (the euphemistic symbolism is obvious) awakens her sexuality", which is a perverse enactment of a mutual erotic experience, or of a loving embrace (McDonald 84).

However, Florrie believes that Lucy was only dreaming things. Nevertheless, unlike herself in the original text, Lucy insists that it felt real — it *was* real. This is because she knows what it means and is not reluctant to talk about it.

LUCY. It was so strange, Florrie!

FLORRIE. Dreaming! Sleepwalking. Could've caught your death out so far at night in nobbut your nightdress.

LUCY. No. No, I didn't quite dream. It felt real. It was real. Faster faster faster up the hundred steep steps to the graveyard, [...] I... something long and dark and with red eyes, like the sunset and something very sweet and very bitter all around me at once and... sinking. Sinking into deep green water, singing in my ears, drowning. [A] a sort of agonising feeling as if I were in an earthquake...

FLORRIE. Bad dreams.

LUCY. Every night, Florrie...

(Act 1, Scene 13, 41-42)

Lucy invites Dracula as her “love”: “Come in. Come to me my love, come in” (47). In this scene of Lucy and Dracula’s first overt, but final embrace, Lochhead’s stage direction makes all the difference. “*Exit SEWARD and it darkens. LUCY has sunk back as if asleep – or feigning sleep. She pulls off her gown and her shoulders are once more bare*” (47). This depiction of Lucy’s is intentionally ambiguous — is she waiting for Seward to come in, while pretending to be asleep? Seward had promised her that he would come back once she’s asleep and “sneak back in and kiss” her (47). Or is she inviting Dracula, who she describes as “long and dark and with red eyes, like the sunset and [...] very sweet and very bitter all around” her, a force that first drowned her and shook her underneath? For one thing, Dracula cannot come in unless invited. And Dracula has already carried her away, releasing her sexual energies. And it wasn’t a dream and she is not that little girl anymore.

Another revision of Lochhead's which merits consideration, is her subtle yet powerful reference to Stoker's parody of the wedding night⁵⁴ in the scene which follows Lucy's eager invitation of Dracula. This embrace "parodies" the private affairs of obscene nature (with blood imagery) on the first wedding night, as Dracula tears the bridal veil and stains the white lace with blood (Wynne 174).

Naked, LUCY gets out of bed [...] sleepwalking, goes to MINA's wedding dress where it hangs [...]. DRACULA is there, moves from behind it, rips the bridal veil off and embraces Lucy with his arms, picks her up, wraps her in it and sucks at the wound on her neck. The classic swoon. Blood pumps out of her in a flood, staining that bridal lace, soaking them in scarlet. Red petals fall (47).

'Marriage' bond entails domestic and social constraints, and is a far cry from being a union between loving agents in a society with far-reaching class anxieties as well as phallogentric expectations from and constraints on women with regards to their sexuality. What is more, the fear of a woman's regenerative and magical powers is closely linked with the subordination of her menstrual blood, as opposed to her reproductive capacity, the non-blood phase. Her blood is the ultimate *abject*, it is a fluid to be disguised and her corporeal pain is a burden to be born alone.

According to Kristeva, woman's blood has been represented within patriarchal discourses as more abject than man's [...]. First, woman's menstrual blood threatens [the fixed sexual identities of each]. Second, woman's blood points to the fertile nature of the female body and bears witness to woman's alliance with the natural world. (Creed 85)

Marriage in this fin de siècle society is not about intimacy — for instance there is no mention of any kind of intimacy between Mina and her husband, theirs is represented by Stoker as a sexless, platonic relationship. Or, in this very scene, Lucy wants her fiancé to be beside her, but 'propriety' does not allow him to stay by her side, thus leaving her by promising to be back only once she is asleep. Lochhead recreated this scene in a stark contrast that this parodic marriage between Dracula and

⁵⁴ In the original, Stoker's implications about the wedding night are only found in the famous erotic scene which features the fluid exchange between Dracula and Mina (Stoker 306). Lochhead follows on from Stoker's imagination to turn Lucy's above scene with Dracula into a parody of the wedding night.

Lucy *becomes* about love, desire and *blood* takes the central stage. This is one of the most striking critiques by Liz Lochhead in her dramatic text, since she exposes the arbitrariness of the heterosexual marriage institution which sanctions female desire only within its enclosure, rejecting any other forms or expressions of sexuality. If Stoker appropriates the ‘vampire’ as a metaphor that stands for the threat of unrestrained female sexuality and desire, and “unsanctioned sexuality” overall, then Lochhead transforms this perception into “a warning into a critique of the Victorian — and still current — attitudes that sanction female desire only inside of appropriate marriage” (Stratford 215). When this fuelled imagery is rendered onstage in the presence of a live audience, for whom “the nakedness of actual bodies has a power it does not have in fiction” creates a ‘pleasure of the text’ in the way it “literally tear[s] the veil away from Stoker’s more evasive rendering of female sexuality” through an undeniable appreciation of the sexual undercurrents which were carefully embedded in Stoker’s text, exposing them in a way which hasn’t been achieved before (215).

In reading the vampire, queer theory has been one of the most influential approaches since the vampire occupies a liminal space and disrupts the boundaries between life and death, organic and unnatural, and so on. It is through this disruption that vampire is regarded as a force which troubles sexuality and gender binaries (Senf, “Dracula and Women” 118). As early as 1984, Christopher Craft authored a seminal article on the gender inversions inherent in *Dracula*. Within this line of thought, for instance, the reason why Lucy is put back in the coffin by brutal force is because “she has ‘inverted’ the normative feminine passive position to assert an active, masculine personality” (118). According to Carol Senf, Lucy’s “descent into vampirism” could be read in the light of Victorian medical discourses. For instance her somnambulism, “delirium and over-sexualised reactions suggest a case of hysterical degeneracy” are symptoms which had been outlined by Jean-Martin Charcot in Paris in the 1880s (a name which was uttered by Van Helsing in Stoker’s *Dracula*)⁵⁵ (Senf, “Dracula and Women” 119). Even before her first encounter with Dracula takes place, Lucy has already manifested a volatile demeanour: “her penchant for somnambulism, trance and strange physical and mental alterations would find her a place [...] in Freud and Breuer’s garland of female hysterics” (Auerbach *Woman* 22).

⁵⁵ See Stoker 204.

Sigmund Freud's famous case studies in *Studies in Hysteria* (1893), 'study' women who were thought to be 'disturbed'. These women required a 'male' intervention — the analyst who would listen to her desires which supposedly resulted in hysterical symptoms, if left unfulfilled. Seen in this view, "the lives of constrained women", Senf contends, were distracted as a result of their marital frustrations as they found themselves in this social containment (119). It is no surprise that she considers the ceremonial scene of Lucy's staking by her fiancé, with the Crew of Light gathered around her to watch the procedure, as a "rape and cathartic expulsion" (119). Craft also asserted that the staking of Lucy by Arthur Holmwood is the novel's "real — and the woman's only — climax, its most violent and misogynistic moment" (122). Since for Van Helsing and his Crew of Light, a woman is "better still than mobile, better dead than sexual" (122). For Elaine Showalter, this scene implies an "embarrassingly clear" meaning — it is nothing less than a "gang rape" in which the Crew of Light use an "impressive phallic instrument" (181). Such critics saw this climactic moment in the novel as a depiction of male characters' acting upon their misogynistic fantasies on sexually independent, outspoken women in a fin-de-siècle culture.

However, this view diminishes the latent power of Dracula, reducing him to that of an alien and a monster, who seduced these 'angels in the house', making the only passage to their salvation, to 'punish' them by staking. This could not be further from the truth because Lucy already had the sexual desire as the commonly quoted line suggests: "Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble? But this is heresy, and I must not say it" (Stoker 67). In a way, Lucy "reveals through her letters to Mina that she already has a sexual 'appetite' — as if her transformation into a vampire later on simply makes manifest what was privately admitted between friends" (Gelder 77). She is also sleep-walking, which is highly suggestive of her openness to sexual experience. In my view, this action is transgressive in nature since the 'angel in the house' leaves the house in the middle of the night to meet her 'love', whom she invites in, albeit subconsciously: "Lochhead's women subconsciously desire his intrusion" (McDonald, "Liz" 459).

Lochhead does not see Lucy as a victim of evil forces as the marriage night parody scene suggests. Notice in that scene she longs for her 'love' (who her 'love' is, is intentionally left ambiguous), standing in front of the dresser naked, unapologetic of her body and her sexuality. What is more, both Lucy's white bridal veil (Mina's but

worn by Lucy) and Dracula are stained in blood — the menstruating woman is made sacred, magical, powerful again in the hands of the playwright. This is why in Lochhead, the vampire Lucy makes an appearance in the graveyard as “lovely and terrifying and ethereal” as opposed to Stoker’s depiction below:

When Lucy [...] saw us she drew back with an angry snarl, then her eyes ranged over us. Lucy’s eyes in form and colour; but Lucy’s eyes unclean and full of hell-fire, instead of the pure, gentle orbs we knew. As she looked, her eyes blazed with unholy light, and the face became wreathed with a voluptuous smile. (Stoker 225-226)

Through Lochhead’s lines, being a vampire *becomes* her. She is magical, evokes terror in all the men around her with a re-discovered power. “Lochhead’s vampire makes Lucy powerful, even terrifying in her sexual fulfilment” (McDonald, “The Devil” 88). This is the actual influence of Dracula: “[s]he is transformed, [but] not into Stoker’s creature of pure evil” (McDonald, “Liz” 459).

All in all, by analysing Lochhead’s version, this section has drawn attention to the transformative power of the ‘vampire’ over the fictional characters and its ideological undercurrents; and transfiguration achieved through the vampiric act (McDonald, “Liz” 459). In Stoker’s version, Dracula is represented as an outsider force who seduces young and sexually inexperienced women, releasing in them desires “that were best left dormant” (459). However, Lochhead turns the tables — she rewrites the ‘vampire’ in the sense that they could be an empowering agent to the women of the story, who invite them into their lives and inside their bodies — that they freely decide to do so — “liberating them from sexual repressions induced by the tyranny of the patriarchal culture” (459). Even though it would be a superficial view to take it for granted that sexual repression was so pervasive at the time, it could still be argued that Lochhead’s women become highly aware and celebrate their corporeal existence: their sexuality.

d. The Fe/male Narrative of *Dracula*

“[B]ehind the testosterone-fuelled exchanges between Dracula’s male protagonists, there lies a second narrative that is driven by a presence that is most definitely female” (Nystrom 63). Even though critic after critic read Stoker’s *Dracula* as an incarnation of male fantasies, another vantage point predominates the text. Representations of the Vampire (via the character of Count Dracula) referred to in this thesis — in the Victorian, the 1980’s and 1990’s versions — respectively in its fiction, drama, and film form, signal a highly transgressive quality from the very beginning. As Creed informs, not only does Dracula transgress the “boundary between the living and dead, the human and animal”, but he also breaks gender norms in the sense that he appears as “strangely feminised” in this process (85). Polidori had envisioned a highly sophisticated and mysterious vampire, and among others who followed suit, Stoker’s is the most popular: “The male Dracula is feminized: he is a sensual, elegant, aristocratic figure who wears a black satin cloak, speaks with a seductive accent, [...] immensely attractive to women” (Creed 86).

From the moment Harker steps into Dracula’s castle, Count Dracula eagerly caters to all his needs, from making his bed to preparing him delicious dinners, serving him local wine — so long as he does not leave. This seems quite a departure from the norm in a Victorian culture where such manners were attributed to the *female sex* and hosting practices as such were entrusted to female servants. “By taking on these menial tasks rather than foisting them off onto the nearest servant girl, it becomes clear that Dracula is no ordinary Count” (Nystrom 64). One might suppose that this subtext of the novel was quite disturbing for Victorian readers. Count Dracula maintains his ambiguous position throughout the novel and this serves to “increase the feeling of apprehension Dracula inspires in those around him” (Nystrom 64). In parallel with Stoker, Lochhead also draws attention to Dracula as an attentive host /servant /maid:

DRACULA. Come. You shall make your toilet and I shall make your bed for you. No keeping of servants in this place so deep in the wood. So I, my friend, tonight I will be happy to... play the valet, or the chambermaid, whatever you will. (Act 1, Scene 7, 27)

Lochhead obviously maintains Stoker’s position but alternatively, it is through *her* Dracula that this enchanting villain solidifies onstage. After all, such a sovereign

and fearsome vampire is “strangely feminized” through one highly erotic, and peculiarly ‘perverse’ scene (Botting 98). The striking scene when Dracula visits Mina to make her suck the blood from his wound is, in my view, is when Dracula reaches the peak of his transgressive nature. As mentioned earlier, this scene demonstrates a fearsome yet affectionate figure. If we consider Dr. Seward’s second testimony in the novel, his touch is described as such: “[W]hilst the face of white set passion worked convulsively over the bowed head, the hands tenderly and lovingly stroked the ruffled hair” (Stoker 303). This is all Seward had to say about the tenderness of Dracula and Mina’s encounter, but it makes all the difference. The relationship between the vampire and the women he lures into this erotic act is already intimate in its nature, and it is crucial at this point to bear in mind that Mina is a “willing participant”, even though she finds it hard to openly profess so. In my view, this scene of fluid exchange is Dracula’s unique way of embracing Mina’s sexuality, and transgressing all set norms about *his* sexuality, aligning himself with her, bleeding for her and with her (in a cultural discourse where the menstruating female is made *object*). In his 1992 film, Francis Ford Coppola was aware of the erotic nature of this sudden rupture, and he also read this scene as one in which it transpires that Mina is not in a passive-submissive position. The desires of the two are closely intertwined, their transgressions are symbolised by this exchange of one another’s blood.

[W]ith eros and thanatos usually being two sides of the same coin in the world of horror, it should come as no surprise that Coppola’s movie ended up being a profoundly erotic work of art [...] — [A] cornucopia of intertwined limbs, mouths and chests; Dracula, in wolf form, drinking the blood of [...] Lucy; Dracula and Mina performing the ritual of mutual blood-drinking while professing their love for one another. (Suton)

Hugh Hodgart, the first director of Lochhead’s *Dracula*, described him as “trapped in the prison of eternity” and that he “waits for, even wills, the end of his sterile, dislocated state” (qtd. in McDonald, “The Devil” 94). He evidently saw Dracula occupying a space outside of linear time and thus, as his title Count suggests, more lined up with the menstrual cycles of women (Morrisy 169). This places Dracula in stark opposition with the rigid patriarchal norms and sexual anxieties — unfulfilled desires. Notice that in vampire narratives, there are several commonalities in terms of

the symbols they contain: “womb-like coffins, the full moon, snake-like fangs, two bite marks, dripping blood, transformation” (Creed 86).

In their monumental study of menstruation *The Wise Wound*, Shuttle and Redgrove are spot on about this transfiguring/regenerative power of the vampire, insightfully reminding that the Moon always keeps Dracula company in filmic versions (as in fiction), and he always keeps women company in their “dark place”, becoming their secret “initiator” into blood (252). The coffins unmistakably evoke the womb: “The vampire’s resting place is usually a coffin secreted in a dark, cobweb-filled cellar or crypt, which is reached by a long flight of stairs” (Creed 86). Blood dripping from the mouth signifies the bleeding womb.

The image [of the menstruating/highly sexualised woman] satisfies at the same time man’s fear of the unknown side of woman, her dark monthly place (Dracula films always show beautiful pictures of the moon); and also woman’s own natural fascination with the side of herself forbidden to her. [...] Dracula is [...] defeated time and again by the masculine Christian virtues, [...] but still an aristocrat coming from a long line of potent ancestors: the Devil, the secret initiator into blood. How amusing, though, the insistent title ‘Count’, when we think of the etymology of ‘menstruation’ in the measure of the month.

(Shuttle and Redgrove 252)

“The vampire is the sexual initiator *par excellence*” (Creed 89). Read from this perspective, Dracula in Lochhead’s pivotal scene where he and Mina share this intimate moment, assumes the role of just this sexual initiator. While in the novel this feature of the vampire (only entering upon invitation) is only mentioned once by Van Helsing, Lochhead makes it very clear that it Mina had already dreamed of him:

DRACULA. Thank you. For your kind inviting. So. You know I can change my form, but did you not know that I can change my voice, too?

(Act 2, Scene 14, 73)

I would like to close this discussion with an appreciation of Lochhead’s sui generis revisionist strategy. Once studied closely, Lochhead’s adaptation turns out to be surprisingly committed to Stoker’s text (Braun 199). However, her meticulous

scrutiny of the novel becomes evident through her deviations from the original. She looks for the moments where Stoker's subversive potential — the subtle clues that he left for us readers — can be distilled. She digs deep and brings out “textual signals Stoker scatters among the pages of his text that support a more sceptical reading” — the instances of ambiguity and dissonance. Such instances exemplified above could be regarded as the “risky moments of narrative” since they are almost always undercoded and disguised, a strategy which might have been fuelled by Stoker's views on censorship and Victorian anxieties around sexuality, particularly female sexuality (Bronfen, “Hysteria” 206; Barthes 95). However, they run the risk of being decoded: “Lochhead particularly exposes these moments in Stoker's text where social or gender-related anxieties are covered and silenced” (Braun 199). She undoubtedly adopts a point of view where “transgression becomes vital”, rather than causing discomfort “for any subjective [...] structure (199). Lochhead's unique method is tearing open these texts, finding and then embracing their hidden / ‘latent’ potential in the same manner as Carter does. This paves the way for her to re-negotiate power structures embedded in sexuality and gender through her post-structuralist stance. Consequently, she simultaneously achieves the *pleasure of the text* and the *jouissance of the text* which resonate with Roland Barthes' discussions mentioned above.

As Lochhead's revival tale of Mary Shelley and her nuanced reversal of Stoker's *Dracula* demonstrates, the contradictions and self-divisions are indispensable in our understanding of the artist as the author of such a monstrous tale as *Frankenstein*; as well as the ‘vampire’ as a transfiguring and empowering force of nature aligned with women. There is always space for alternative readings and rewritings of grand narratives as such, which in turn work to unravel and challenge the well-established patriarchal discourses. As Teresa de Lauretis reminds us, “strategies of writing *and* of reading are acts of cultural resistance” (7). Not only do they “turn dominant discourses inside out (and show it can be done)” but they also challenge their power which is “based on social validation” (7).

Liz Lochhead does precisely what *Dracula* tells Mina that *he* does, in the most climactic moment of the play. Once he bursts through the door, he says — “I turn everything on its head, sweet lady. Like your Christ-in-the-Temple I am here to turn tables” (*Dracula* 2, 14, 73). Lochhead has been here to turn tables, indeed.

CONCLUSION

Writing from another angle, or ‘revisioning’ has long become one of the dominant tropes of feminist writing. The purpose of ‘revisioning’ is to challenge the notions and presumptions in the original text, and as Lochhead’s plays *Blood and Ice* and *Dracula* have shown, it is to “initiate a reinterpretation of the role of women as constructed and marginalised by mythology and the literary canon” (McDonald, *History* 494-495). Following Adrienne Rich’s line of thought, she professed that writing as re-vision is an act of resistance and also an “act of survival” in the patriarchal discourse within which women’s creations were hidden, lost and submerged (18). Teresa de Lauretis, whose monumental works on feminist theory include *Alice Doesn’t* (1984) and *Figures of Resistance* (2007), similarly saw the practice of writing as a form of cultural confrontation: “strategies of writing *and* of reading are acts of cultural resistance” (7). The task for the feminist writer, then, is to find those texts, discover the hidden potential they carry, and revise them in the manner of an ideological action.

The first chapter of this thesis takes Rich’s prescription as its starting point. A brief overview of the history of feminist drama, and feminist politics of the 1970’s and 1980’s Britain helped contextualise Liz Lochhead’s dramatic works first written in the 1980’s. Women’s history(ies) and art have been put under close scrutiny by feminist dramatists since the advent of Second Wave Feminism, and radical theatre circles which reached their peak in the 1970’s and 80’s in Britain such as the ‘Monstous Regiment’, or ‘Women’s Theatre Group’ contributed to this endeavour substantially. They featured exceptional historical figures such as a Cleopatra or Queen Christina, or celebrities and artists, poets and authors such as Edith Piaf and Sylvia Plath, “but with a view to re-figuring or demythologising these famous women” (Aston *Feminist* 161).

One of Lochhead’s contributions to this feminist revisioning practice discussed in this study is the original script for theatre, *Blood and Ice*, which carries Mary Shelley to the centre stage, making her the ‘subject’ of the story for the first time ever. Consequently, what comes to the foreground in Lochhead’s play, which draws upon the creative process of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* is that women in familiar stories, tales and historical representations no longer occupy ‘object’ positions but become the core element of the story, in the hands of feminist dramatists. In the literary criticism Mary Shelley received before feminist scholars such as Sandra Gilbert and

Susan Gubar brought special attention to her subjectivity, she had been hidden in the shadows of her philosopher father William Goldwin and activist-feminist mother Mary Wollstonecraft. In a reversal onstage, she becomes the 'subject' of the story. Lochhead makes her a central part of the plot, making everyone else merely relational to her. Lochhead's purpose in dramatizing Mary Shelley's story from the author's perspective is a manifestation of her emphasis of "plac[ing] women at the centre of the narratives" (McDonald, "Liz" 458).

Lochhead takes a close interest in "women as creative artists" since she aims to spark a conversation around female creativity and women's creative burden through her drama and poetry (McDonald, *A Companion* 457). This attitude of the playwright is best exemplified in *Blood and Ice* in which Mary Shelley, as the protagonist of the play, takes great pains to combine domesticity and literary creativity. Throughout the play, the audience and the readers encounter Lochhead's allusive treatment of the centuries-old familiar subject: "the difficult, often compromised, gestation and pursuit of female creativity" (Woddis 180). Thus, the second chapter is concerned with Mary Shelley as the artist as a young woman, her *monstrous* creation, *Frankenstein* as her *monstrous* autobiography. It also deals with her intellectual/artistic exchanges with Lord Byron, found both in non-fictional accounts (journals and letters) and the heated conversations between the two in *Blood and Ice*, to see how this encounter triggered Shelley to vent the hidden struggles within her through her art, albeit hesitantly.

The 'vampire' theme is the key concept, the recurrent theme, which builds a nuanced connection between Lochhead's plays discussed in this thesis. Mary Shelley, like many of her contemporaries, kept parts of herself and her life hidden from the public view. She might have done so because this was the safe thing to do, given that she cared about propriety no matter how eccentric a circle she was immersed in. In Lochhead's play, her 'silences', that is to say, the parts of herself she concealed — her self-contradictions — are revealed/voiced by Lord Byron who inspired *The Vampyre* written by John William Polidori in response to the ghost story contest sparked by Byron himself in Villa Diodati one cold summer night in June, 1816. There is both an intellectual and sexual tension between Byron and Mary. All her life she sought to live up to her mother, the radical feminist Mary Wollstonecraft and her father, the philosopher William Godwin, who became embittered against her. Her anxiety was not the sort of anxiety coined by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in *The Madwoman*

in the Attic (1984) — “the anxiety of authorship”, which can be explained as the woman author’s inevitable struggle to find her own voice in a society which prioritised male authorship. In Gilbert and Gubar’s monumental study, it is discussed that the pen was considered to be male, associated with the male organ. Women were expected to be merely muses, angelic inspirations for male artists and they were not regarded to belong in the realm of artistic creativity. They could only survive inside the art of male authors, as in Romantic authors’ literary works such as Keats’ *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. They became terrifyingly beautiful in their tragic death; a misogynist concept alluded to by Oscar Wilde in *The Portrait of Dorian Gray* (1891) in reference to Dorian’s lover Sybil Vane, whose death was regarded as “one of the great romantic tragedies” (94).

On the contrary, Mary Shelley was surrounded by male authors of Romanticism, primarily her husband Percy Bysshe Shelley and Lord Byron, who kept throwing the pen *at* her rather compulsively, since they expected and encouraged her to write. This is precisely Liz Lochhead’s inspiration to recreate the Lord Byron character in the play, giving him the role of Mary’s ‘double’ in the sense that he both voices her concerns which she refuses to utter and becomes a trigger for her transformation into becoming an exceptional artist — the creator of one of the most prescient myths in English Literature: *Frankenstein*. Considering her struggle for authorship which was instigated by her deep desire to live up to her parents’ legacy, the section named “Mary’s Nightmare” looks at the very first scene of *Blood and Ice*, where the young widowed Mary is seen posing asleep in a cold dark nursery, with “the manifestation of a smothering homunculous on her chest that appears momentarily in a flash of lighting and disappears again” (Act 1, Scene 1, 3). This scene is a direct allusion to two similar versions of Henry Fuseli’s paintings presented at the beginning of the chapter for reference. The “Nightmare” depicts the dangerous proximity between sex and death, ecstasy and pain, desire and fear. Mary’s mother Mary Wollstonecraft was well acquainted with the artist Fuseli, and their relationship was a troubled one, ending in sorrow and heartbreak on her mother’s part. This particular painting was of utmost importance for Lochhead because it rendered the perfect setting for the emerging story of the creation of *Frankenstein*, involving death, pain, and sex all intertwined, and symbolising her deeply felt desire to create art against all odds.

Angela Carter once said that she used the latent content of fairy tales, a content which she saw to be “violently sexual” (Simpson ix). In *Bloody Chamber* (1979) for

instance, she unravels the fear and dislike of women's sexuality in a selection of folk tales and masterfully reverses these narratives to create new stories out of them. Carter's women are sexual, zestful, powerful, outspoken — they manifest gumption. In a way, she finds such tales, shakes out the misogyny embedded in them, and masterfully creates a new set of values through them. In this sense, she is the feminist re-writer par excellence. Her sexual and vocal women, no matter what dire circumstances they find themselves in, cannot be kept down, and refuse to be silenced. They always find a way to escape the tyrannical constraints induced upon them. Sometimes it is the mother who saves them at the last minute from the misogynistic and sadistic male characters, as in "Bloody Chamber", and sometimes the animalistic protagonists — the 'monsters' so as to say — which Carter's women have found themselves at the mercy of, liberate them in a highly unexpected turn of events.

The unexpected nature of these tales are that, not only do these women in Carter's tales refuse to be contained and to remain helpless victims, but the also the malign 'monsters' these women encounter in the original folk tales, turn out to be benign in Carter's climactic endings of her tales. To give an example, one of the tales in Carter's *Bloody Chamber* collection is named "The Tiger's Bride". This tale is one of the two "Beauty and the Beast" transformations, in this version of which Carter makes the 'beast' transform the 'beauty'. In "Tiger's Bride", the story begins as the reader is informed that the woman's father had lost her to The Beast at cards — her father gave her to the beast as a 'donation' after losing the card game (56, 59). The Beast in Carter's story possesses humane features, and while he wears a mask, he is "not much different than any other man", has a "beautiful face" but "a chaste silk stock stuck with a pearl hides his throat" (58-59). Notice that there is an uncanny resemblance between Count Dracula and Lord Beast. Just like Dracula, the Beast hides in the shadows, living in an abandoned, uninhabited palace. The pictures have been hung facing down the walls, the furniture is full of dust, one chamber opens out of another chamber like Russian dolls (63). There is an aura of decadence as well in the way the whole place is used, reminiscent of the sojourn of the coterie of Villa Diodati, which became an artistic hub igniting the creation of *Frankenstein* and the *Vampyre*, the first vampire novel in English Literature. In Carter's story, the 'master's' wish, as it turns out, is to see her naked only once. In response, she laughs — she knows a proper lady should not laugh like that, but she does anyway (64, 65). She escapes, and

is followed by the Beast. The Beast decides to show his naked body to her first, which is only fair. The mare, like the uncanny mare watching over the unconscious woman in Fuseli's "Nightmare", "looked at [her] keenly, as if urging [her]" (71). The moment the Beast undresses, everything changes. The transformation masterfully depicted by Carter is almost complete. The Beast, as it turns out, is not what he appears to be. The woman protagonist is so appalled that she describes him as such: "How subtle the muscles, how profound the thread. The annihilating vehemence of his eyes, like twin suns" (71). Moments later, she says that this sight made her feel as if she suffered "a marvellous wound" (71). This description evokes the vampire's bite, or 'kiss' in Stoker's *Dracula*, a symbol of corporeal proximity which leaves its mark on the women's bodies, symbolically awakening in them sexual impulses. In Carter's tale, even the sight of such a magnetic creature is enough to make her protagonist feel wounded, but in the sense of sudden awe and fascination, and wonder. Notice how desire and fear are intertwined. Upon showing her white skin to the Beast, but doing so willingly, unashamedly and proudly, she declares: "I felt I was at liberty for the first time in my life" (72). In the sense that the woman lost by the paternal figure to the Beast is not a helpless victim at all, and that the Beast is not the predatory evil being, the transgressive nature of this tale collapses the boundaries between human and non-human.

In the climactic end of the story, she approaches the Beast, now completely naked, shaking, full of fear, hoping that his appetite does not become her extinction. And slowly, as if in a wild dance of ecstasy, he "dragged himself closer to [her], until [she] felt" his head, and tongue, and finally, his skin (75). The more he touches her, the more she is transformed... finally, into a tiger. This purely symbolic tale crafted by Carter is, in my view, one of the most striking renderings of Gothic revision. She gives her women their voice, agency, and the power to escape the shackles of patriarchy. In this story, the female protagonist is liberated by the most unexpected Beast. Carter is deeply interested in women who are in charge of their own sexual behaviour, as other rebellious protagonists of *The Bloody Chamber* demonstrate. While in one tale the Beast has a transformative power over the Beauty, in another tale, the Beauty transforms the Beast ("The Courtship of Mr. Lyon"). This rewriting of 'Beauty and the Beast', a tale of transformation through transgressive sexuality, is strikingly similar with *Dracula's* sexual encounters with Lucy and Mina — the liberatory and

empowering potential of which is rendered by Lochhead in her version. However, it doesn't end here. Another story in this collection, "The Lady of the House of Love" is a Transylvanian vampire tale rather than a fairy tale. Carter was inspired by Anne Rice's vampire novels such as *Interview with the Vampire* (1977) in this story of vampiric love, in which the vampire Countess chooses to become humanised through bleeding, as she is reluctant to suck all the blood of the handsome cyclist. It immediately brings to mind the scene in which Dracula cuts open a thin veil on his breast and feels the pain just as Mina does, a scene which is highly transgressive.

Lochhead is an iconoclast, a destroyer of myths in her poetry and drama, just like Angela Carter is both in her short stories and novels. In her introduction to *Dracula*, in which Lochhead revisits the vampire tale, she builds upon this revisionary potential of Carter's tales, the works of whom — as she makes obvious in her reference — she reads ardently: "She [Carter] knew from the start that she was drawn to Gothic tales, cruel tales, tales of wonder, tales of terror, fabulous narratives that deal directly with the imagery of the unconscious" (Simpson vii).

In the light of such a vantage point of revision of old tales and imagery of the unconscious, the third chapter named "Dracula as an Empowering Figure" laid out that the 'vampire' embodied by Dracula should be read as a queer character with an ambiguous and polymorphous sexuality. This discussion led to an understanding of the vampire as a liberating, empowering force; his kiss enlivening the Victorian female characters who had been inevitably constrained by society. Dracula is a force of nature, aligned with the cycles of the Moon, as his title "The Count" suggests (Shuttle and Redgrove 252). He is feminine as his close alignment with the Moon suggests, and his Vampire Mouth carries within a plurality of meanings: it is covered with blood — an imagery which brings to mind the cervix of the womb — and the mouth covered in blood evokes the menstruating female. This queer sexuality of Dracula, as a close inspection of the pivotal scenes in Stoker's *Dracula* suggests, defies and subverts 'Other'ness – alienating qualities attributed to Dracula in the novel by the Crew of Light (the group of 'vampire hunters' — the embodiment of patriarchal discourse, male anxiety of sexuality, and rigid Victorian norms in the novel).

In Lochhead's *Dracula*, Stoker's depiction of the vampire as a malign force of nature, as an evil predator who chose young and inexperienced women as his prey, and

awakening sexual desires in them — without their agency to act on them — “that were best left dormant”, is reversed (McDonald “Liz” 459). In her version, the vampire embodied by Dracula rather appears as an “empowering agent” to Lucy and Mina who invite him into their lives and bodies ‘knowingly’. In other words, Lochhead’s women possess agency to decide if they want such a ‘force’ in their lives, against all odds. They are no longer the helpless victims who have no idea about what to do with their newly-discovered sexuality. They are aware of their desire and they have appetite. Thus, Dracula becomes only an initiator, a figure who is sought out by these women to liberate them from the societal constraints, from the subconscious fear of sexuality and self-assertion “induced by the tyranny of patriarchal culture” in this Victorian tale (459).

On the surface level, women in Stoker’s *Dracula* represent each Victorian notion of womanhood — Lucy is pale, frail, somnambulist; and also over-enthusiastic, idle, emotionally immature, and hysterical; while Mina is caring, nurturing, selfless; sensible, mature, and skilled in typing and note-taking. These two women are juxtaposed with each other in such a way that they represent the archetypes of womanhood. At this juncture, it is important to remember that Carter, as an inspiration for Lochhead, incorporates the prototypes of ‘the virgin’ and ‘the whore’ into her female characters because they were born out of patriarchal rule and the archetypal womanhood models which they cannot escape, yet can rebel against.

In Luce Irigaray’s feminist archetypal theory, it is discussed that the ‘mother’, ‘virgin’ and ‘prostitute’ are the one-dimensional social roles imposed upon women by the patriarchal society (*This Sex* 184-191). “The characteristics of (so-called) feminine sexuality [which] derive from them [are] the valorisation of reproduction and nursing; faithfulness; and modesty; ignorance of or even lack of interest in sexual pleasure; a passive acceptance of men’s activity, [along with] seductiveness” (*This Sex* 186). Such archetypes are socio-cultural constructs that prescribe and reinforce stereotypical gender roles and behaviour rather than ‘innate’ categories which describe some ontological reality. Wary of such archetypes, in Lochhead’s version, “the advent of Dracula puts paid to such clichés” (McDonald “Liz” 459). Lucy, for instance, once she becomes a vampire, is transformed into a woman who is “lovely and terrifying and ethereal” (Lochhead, Act 2, Scene 13, 71). Thus Lucy is transformed, rather not into Stoker’s vampiric women of pure evil, but into a “mature woman, initiating sexual

union with her chosen partners” (McDonald, “Liz” 459). Consequently, in Lochhead’s version, it is made clear that Dracula *only triggers* that transformation, which Lucy had already sought for, as a close analysis of the scenes suggests. Post-Freudian feminists tend to dismiss the vampire mythology since they read it as a narrative which either depicts female vampires as helpless victims, or ruthless predators. They saw Lucy and Mina as repressed Victorian women who had no clue about their own sexuality and in a way, feared the manifestation of their desires through the symbolic figure of the ‘vampire’. However, Lochhead negates such views in that she expands the myth to bring forth the idea that women were “being transformed by the exposure of a transgressive impulse”, adding a completely new dimension to the vampire tale (459). Acknowledging that Dracula cannot come in unless invited first (a quality attributed to Dracula by Bram Stoker), Lochhead’s women ‘knowingly’ call for this kind of ‘intrusion’ since they *want* to be transformed, an idea which resonates with Angela Carter’s women in her revisions of traditional folk tales in the *Bloody Chamber*. “Terrifying as it may be, it signals liberation and empowerment” (459).

Blood and Ice and *Dracula* could be considered as Lochhead’s unique commentary on female agency, empowerment, and artistic creativity as well as a feminist reading of Stoker’s (sexually) undercoded version. In *Blood and Ice* we encounter Lord Byron, who became the inspiration for the very first aristocratic and alluring, magnetic vampire in English Literature. Even though he wrote one of the first vampire poems in English literature, *The Giaour: A Fragment of a Turkish Tale* (1813), adding a twist to the vampire poems and tales preceding him, by dressing his vampiric embodiment Giaour in Oriental garment and turning him into a victim of his fate (due to an ancestral curse) instead of being merely a victimiser, he did not continue with his fascination with vampires. It was Polidori, his personal physician, who was so infuriated with him that he created his vampire Lord Ruthven in the *Vampyre* (1819) with Lord Byron in mind, an endeavour which was instigated by Byron’s treatment of him, Byron’s lavish lifestyle and unapologetic demeanour. No matter if Lord Byron, who was “mad, bad and dangerous to know” (as announced by Lady Caroline Lamb, an alienated lover of Byron’s) inspired such a tale; in Lochhead’s version his character is endowed with a surprising twist (Aquilina 28). The Lord Byron of Lochhead’s play is the ‘vampire’ in the manner of a Byronic anti-hero: the aristocratic, magnetic and fear-invoking loner, wanderer who inspired many other fictional vampires, from

Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) to Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1977), Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) and beyond. But this time, this anti-hero is the one and only character who urges Mary Shelley to *write that story*, triggering her emotions, seeking her in her hiding places. So one could say that the two Gothic plays are intricately connected. As Percy Shelley says, "there are wires and bonds between [them] that are as fine-spun as filigree" (Lochhead, *Blood and Ice*, Act 1, 30).

All in all, in retrospect, this thesis came about as a result of an intellectual curiosity. Most significantly, I have been preoccupied with Mary Shelley precisely because she is still, to this day, unheard of, once one looks a little bit further away from English literature scholarship. It puzzled me to find out how such a celebrated woman author, who created such a prescient myth at the age of only eighteen, was simply not known, while her monstrous gift has become a leitmotif in cinema, visual arts, science fiction narratives, and so on... Evidently, to this day, Victor Frankenstein — the "pale student of unhallowed arts" and his monster have endured (*Frankenstein*: 1831, 250). But the proud daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, is still hidden. As another striking personal observation lays forward, whenever I mention to literature enthusiasts that the novel *Frankenstein* was written by an eighteen-year-old woman, they are appalled, and some revisit the tale upon such newfound awareness.

Consequently, in my view, more scholarly research is needed in order to bring forward the lost or hidden stories, histories, and art of women, and they should be represented not only in theatre but also on the silver screen. When it comes to the challenges I have experienced in the process of this research, the most arduous one is the locational constraint — the physical archives of Britain have been out of reach, through which further evidence from Mary Shelley's journals and letters could otherwise be unearthed. This would serve better in understanding Mary Shelley's affinity and intellectual connection with Lord Byron. This is another considerable reason for further research — even though Mary Shelley clearly hid parts of herself in her non-fictional accounts, it is the scholar's task to lift the veil. It requires a tremendous amount of scholarly research to apprehend the true connection between these two Romantic outcasts. One of these outcasts is Lord Byron, for reasons including rumours of his incestual relationship with his half-sister Augusta Leigh, his treatment of his wife and his notoriously lavish way of life coupled with his eccentric demeanour. Another Romantic sharing such a predicament is Mary Shelley, for eloping

with Percy Bysshe Shelley who was then married, making her father embittered, also notice in passing that she had to publish the first version of *Frankenstein* anonymously.

What exactly happened on that dark summer night of 16th June in Villa Diodati will remain a mystery. Did Percy Shelley really storm out of the room in the wild grip of horror, after Lord Byron recited the famous lines from the manuscript of Coleridge's vampire tale, *Christabel*? "Beneath the lamp the lady bowed / And slowly rolled her eyes around; / Then drawing in her breath aloud, / Like one that shuddered, she unbound / The cincture from beneath her breast" (1816). Did he really see eyes instead of nipples when he looked at Mary? Or did John William Polidori, (he also mentions the incidents surrounding the ghost story contest, in the *Vampyre* (1819)) tired of being ridiculed by Byron at every chance (Byron called him Polly-Dolly), and being rejected by Mary Shelley, with his attempts at writing completely discarded by the coterie; make the whole story up? Did Byron really urge Mary Shelley to write her story, while Mary's lover Percy, albeit being at close quarters, was too laudanum-induced and self-indulgent to care? Did Mary's 'struggle' for authorship derive not only from her deeply felt desire to get her father's artistic approval and live up to her mother, but also from her deep fascination with Byron the artist? All in all, one might say that one of the aspects of research which limits the scope of this thesis is archival accounts documenting the private correspondence in and surrounding this exceptional coterie.

In Lochhead's *Blood and Ice*, Lord Byron becomes a mirror for Mary in the arduous voyage of the manifestation of her art and her transformation into an artist in her own right, in a similar vein to Dracula's socially liberating and empowering role in Mina's and Lucy's lives. Extensive research with access to the archives can help uncover the artistic and intellectual encounters under scrutiny in this study. Arguably, Lochhead did not attribute the role of 'double' or 'mirror' to Lord Byron who urged Mary to write, only in a metaphorical sense — it *did* actually take place.

The 'vampire' has been a leitmotif in the analysis of Liz Lochhead's Gothic plays. One embodiment of 'the vampire', Byron, urged her to *create* her story against all odds — in *Blood and Ice*: Mary Shelley. Another fictional vampire, Dracula, helped her escape the societal constraints — in *Dracula*: Lucy and Mina. This critical outlook resonates with Lochhead's famous lines: "Don't/let history frame you/in a pretty lie" (*Dreaming* 21).

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