

Tales of Desire and Destruction:
The Natural Vampire in Ludwig Tieck's "Der Runenberg" and Friedrich Wilhelm
Murnau's *Nosferatu: Eine Symphonie des Grauens*

by

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B.A., University of Victoria, 2008

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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Since its entry into the literary field in the late eighteenth century, the vampire has seen many permutations, ranging from the truly monstrous to the present-day seductive stranger. The creature's mutability stems from its liminal placement, hovering as it does between life and death. In exploring the figure of the vampire within the Germanic tradition, two works separated not only by medium, but also by nearly a century of time, emerged as the focus of this thesis: Ludwig Tieck's Romantic *Kunstmärchen* "Der Runenberg" and Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau's Expressionist film *Nosferatu: Eine Symphonie des Grauens*. Superficially, this link appears tenuous, but in analyzing Tieck's fairy tale and Murnau's neo-Romantic film several thematic connections emerge. Both works contain a complex and fluid depiction of gender, a narrative of infection, and a vampire that is an embodiment and corruption of nature. Using a syntagmatic approach, this thesis explores the similarities between the two works, as well as the differences, with a focus on the element of vampiric nature and the representations of gender.

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1. Introduction: The Vampire, A Foul German Spectre

When Charlotte Brontë wrote of the vampire in *Jane Eyre*, she referred to the creature as the “German spectre” (297), demonstrating an awareness of the origins of the modern vampire that remains nebulous amidst the current prominence of the bloodsucking fiend. Indeed, James B. Twitchell cautions that the vampire’s

current commercial popularity is almost invariably vulgar: vampire dolls, vampire teeth, vampire cartoons, vampire costumes, and ‘vitamin enriched’ vampire cereal (*Count Chocula*), to say nothing of a spate of vampire television shows, movies and comic books, [which] have made him more a subject of parody than of serious study. (3)

In a sense, this creature of the night has infected the literature, cinema and scholarship¹ of several eras and its fame shows no signs of waning. Since the vampire first entered into the scholarly circles in the early 1700s, it has undergone a process of appropriation, moving from villages in Eastern Europe, into German-speaking areas of Western Europe, then to Britain and finally to North America. In its current permutation, the blood-drinking, “living” corpse is a figure of glamour, sexual allure and introspection. Having been imbued with a complex psychology, the vampire often serves as both a point of identification and an object of desire for audiences, rather than a source of terror and repugnance. Through its mutability, psychological evolution, and continued popular appeal, the figure of the vampire has drawn the attention of scholars in the last few decades, with much focus on Bram Stoker’s novel *Dracula* (1897) and its subsequent

¹ Indeed, at the moment the vampire is so popular that in April 2010 *The Guardian* featured a story about the University of Hertfordshire, which was to begin offering a Masters in vampire literature in September 2010 with the goal of reclaiming the bloodsucker as the offspring of Bram Stoker in light of its appropriation by Hollywood (Tobin).

adaptations and interpretations. Arguably, the significance of Stoker's novel for the vampire genre has created an intellectual vortex,² which has led to scholarship that centers on the English traditions, while the vampire's Germanic roots become obscured in *Dracula's* wake.³ Despite this dominantly Anglo-centric lens, the literary vampire's origins are actually found within German-speaking territories. The *Oxford English Dictionary* establishes that the term "vampire"⁴ entered into English vocabulary in 1734 after a period of "scholarship" on a phenomenon observed in villages that had recently joined the German-speaking Austro-Hungarian Empire. Austrian officials wrote several reports of exhumations of supposed vampires, which led to what Paul Barber characterizes as a "vampire craze" (5). And yet, despite these facts and the rich literary history of vampire stories, which flourished outside of Anglophone culture, scholarship continues to revolve around English-language vampire tales.

The creature entered into the imagination of both Enlightenment thinkers and their rebellious successors, the Romantic poets. It bridged linguistic, national and philosophical borders in order to continue its parasitic life through the centuries that followed its initial "discovery" in the folklore of Eastern European peasants. The monster's mutability has distanced it from its origins so that the position of the German

² As Ken Gelder points out, "Few other novels have been read so industriously as Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Indeed, a veritable 'academic industry' has built itself around this novel, growing exponentially in recent years and, in effect, canonising a popular novel which might otherwise have been dismissed as merely 'sensationalist.' To enable its canonisation [...], *Dracula* has become a highly productive piece of writing: or rather, it has become productive *through its consumption*" (65).

³ The dominance of Anglo-Saxon interpretations of the vampire endures even though the first (unofficial) cinematic adaptation of Stoker's novel was a German production (see below).

⁴ The origin of the word "vampire" is a source of speculation among scholars. See, for example, Katharina M. Wilson, who summarizes that "there are four clearly discernible schools of thought on the etymology of "vampire" advocating, respectively, Turkish, Greek, Hebrew, and Hungarian roots for the term. The four groups are chronological and geographic entities: the first group is represented by a nineteenth-century Austrian linguist and his followers, the second consists of scholars who were the German contemporaries of the early eighteenth-century vampire craze, the third comprises recent linguistic authorities, and the last is almost entirely limited to recent English and American writers" (577).

vampire within scholarship is precarious, and even James B. Twitchell, in his study of Romanticism and vampirism, only discusses German authors briefly in his introduction. He mentions how the vampire epidemics of the Enlightenment period were “soon exploited by the German poets, [...]. First Ossenfelder wrote ‘The Vampire’ (1748), Bürger wrote ‘Lenore’ (1773), then Goethe wrote ‘The Bride of Corinth’ (1797), and for the next century the Western World would know no respite from this monster” (33). He then outlines the popularity of Bürger’s “Lenore” and how, through various translations, it became an inspiration for British writers. Twitchell, however, does not include E.T.A. Hoffman’s vampire tale, “Vampyrismus,” from *Die Serapions-Brüder* or “Wake Not the Dead!,” a story often attributed to Tieck, but actually written by Ernst Benjamin Salomo Raupach. These two tales are discussed briefly in Wayne Bartlett and Flavia Idriceanu’s *Legends of Blood: The Vampire in History and Myth*:

Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853) wrote a number of works which used fantastic themes and had an important effect on the German Romantic Movement. ‘Wake Not the Dead!’ which was attributed to him, appeared in about 1800. Another writer, Ernst Hoffmann (1776-1822) was an author who mixed the fantastic with elements of irony in his work. He too used themes based on the vampire, with the Baroness Aurelia appearing as a seductress luring victims to their doom in *The Serapion Brethren* (published in 1820). (28)

These brief observations mark the extent of the discussion of the German aspect of the literary vampire and the authors quickly transition to a detailed consideration of British Romanticism and Keats’s “Lamia.” Most often, German vampire tales become a footnote to English Romanticism’s appropriation of the vampire, rather than being examined in detail on their own merits or from within their own cultural and historical

context.⁵ This trend continues, despite the references to German elements in Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* and Stoker's *Dracula*, and the vampire becomes a creature firmly mired in the British imagination. As a result of this blurring of origins, one of the concerns of this thesis is to bring to light the Germanic ancestry of the vampire tale through several avenues, including brief discussions of the source of the myth and its evolution in Romantic literature,⁶ as well as the German aspects of Stoker's novel.⁷

The primary focus, however, is a reading of nature as vampire in two German works. The first is Ludwig Tieck's 1802 fairy tale, or *Kunstmärchen*,⁸ "Der Runenberg," where the ambiguously portrayed nature spirit embodies vampiric qualities. This interpretation is perhaps not immediately apparent, but through a careful consideration of the text, its narrative and symbols, nature emerges as a vampire, consuming the life

⁵ As a result of the popularity of Polidori's "The Vampyre," "the European market was flooded by stage productions featuring the undead (the most enduring example of which is August Marschner's 1828 opera *Der Vampyr*)" (Butler 95). This opera is another work which does not receive critical attention within vampire studies despite its original success. As J. Gordon Melton writes, "*Der Vampyr* opened in Leipzig in March 1829. The opera was a great success and was taken on the road. It opened in London in August and ran for some 60 performances at the Lyceum Theater" ("Marschner" 451-452). Melton also notes several other German and Austrian vampire tales: "What may have been the first vampire novel in any language was written by Ignaz Ferdinand Arnold [...] his three-volume novel published in 1801 entitled *Der Vampir* [...] was noticed in some contemporary catalogues and biographies, but no copy is known to be in existence. [...] There are other German vampire novels almost as early, for example: *Der Vampyr oder die blutige Hochzeit mit der schönen Kroatin: Eine sonderbare Geschichte vom böhmischen Wiesenpater* (1812); or Theodor Hildebrand(t), *Der Vampyr oder die Todtenbraut. Ein Roman nach neugriechischen Volkssagen* (1828)" ("Germany, Vampires" 286). Another author, Hanns Heinz Ewers also wrote novels that featured vampiric elements, most notably *Alraune* (1911) and *Vampir* (1922) (Melton "Ewers" 240-241).

⁶ See Chapter 1.

⁷ See Chapter 2.

⁸ The Romantics developed an interest in *Märchen* with "its ancient provenance, yet great potential for constant adaptation, its defiance of definition, yet recognizable identity. It attracted the Romantics in particular as a medium for expressing their lively belief in the existence of the supernatural in the midst of reality, and the result was the emergence of a new, short-lived genre, that of the *Kunstmärchen*, a tale embodying folk-motifs but written by sophisticated modern authors" (Trainer 97). Tieck, specifically, felt that "every novella, regardless of its other features, needs 'jenen sonderbaren auffallenden Wendepunkt' (that peculiar striking turning point), a central event in the story that one can perceive as being both plausible, as a possible occurrence in real life, and supernatural in its magical uniqueness. The conflation of everyday life and the supernatural is also at the heart of Tieck's insistence on using the fairy tale next to the novella as the short prose form of choice in his earlier works. It is thus not surprising that texts such as [...] *Der Runenberg* [...] have been classified as 'Märchen novellen' (fairy tale novellas), 'Kunstmärchen' (artistic fairy tales), or 'märchenhafte Erzählungen' (fairy tale-like stories)" (Scheck 102).

energy of the tale's protagonist, Christian. The key elements in this analysis are the journey into the mystical mountains with its crossing of thresholds, the vision of the woman on the summit of the Runenberg, the narrative of metaphysical infection associated with the magical tablet given to Christian, and the characterization of nature throughout as existing in a liminal life-in-death that requires it to lure victims into its clutches. Nature, in this tale, *suffers*. When he trespasses into the depths of this realm and gains access to this knowledge, Christian becomes a victim, enthralled to the enigmatic spirit. As Anthony Phelan argues, the story

offers a succinct parody of the process of (in this case *Romantic*) *Bildung*. For Tieck's hero, the inexplicable impulse to leave home relocates him in an alternative identity, and is replaced for a moment by illusory married bliss, before his fugue state brings him finally to dissociation and the loss of identity. (59)

Once he encounters the nature spirit and is penetrated by her magical tablet, he is *infected* with her metaphysical illness, Christian cannot return to human society. As this thesis will prove, the vampire claims his life to sustain her own. Thus, nature as vampire serves as a bridge between the two works and highlights not only the continuing influence of Germanic vampire traditions, but also the Romantic and neo-Romantic vision of nature as an alluring, but also deadly setting.

The second work that exemplifies nature's vampirism, is the earliest surviving⁹ vampire film, the unauthorized adaptation of *Dracula*: Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau's *Nosferatu: Eine Symphonie des Grauens* (1922).¹⁰ As will be explored in more detail

⁹ David J. Skal mentions, "a now-obscure film with the title *Drakula* [which] was produced in Hungary the previous year [1921], directed by Karoly Lajthay and photographed by Lajos Gasser" (*Monster Show* 50).

¹⁰ The film was released by the newly formed production company Prana, which is "Sanskrit for 'breath of life'" (Elsaesser "No End" 80). The company "was founded in January 1921 on a capitalization of 20,000

later, “German culture permeates the historical background of *Dracula*” (Dickens 31); thus Murnau’s choice to adapt this novel can be seen as an expression of the continued affinity between Germany and the vampire myth. While Twitchell argues that “whatever *Dracula* may or may not be, one thing is certain: the book represents the culmination of the Romantic interest in the vampire” (140), Murnau’s film surpasses Stoker’s book and presents a neo-Romantic *re-invention* of the vampire. *Nosferatu*¹¹ is more than an adaptation of *Dracula*. It represents a return to Romantic concerns about the struggle to belong and humanity’s relationship to the sublime power of nature.¹² Murnau achieves this re-imagining through a tightly focused narrative that places the emphasis on the

marks, under the codirectorship of businessmen Enrico Dieckmann and the designer/painter/architect Albin Grau. An ambitious prospectus of potential projects was unveiled, revealing a distinct predilection for the occult, the Romantic, and the bizarre. [...] Only *Nosferatu* would be realized – Prana’s first and last gasp” (Skal *Hollywood Gothic* 46).

¹¹ The origins of the word “nosferatu” are unclear. Stoker uses the term in his novel *Dracula* based on Emily Gerard’s *Transylvanian Superstitions*, in which she writes, “there are two sorts of vampires - living and dead. The living vampire is in general the illegitimate offspring of two illegitimate persons, but even flawless pedigree will not ensure anyone against the intrusion of a vampire into his family vault, since every person killed by a *nosferatu* becomes likewise a vampire after death, and will continue to suck the blood of other innocent people till the spirit has been exorcised, either by opening the grave of the person suspected and driving a stake through the corpse, or firing a pistol shot into the coffin” (334). The editors of the Norton Critical Edition of *Dracula*, Nina Auerbach and David J. Skal, add in a footnote “The word *nosferatu* appears in no Romanian or Hungarian dictionary, nor in any standard text on Eastern European folklore available to Gerard. It is possible she mistook the usage of the Romanian adjective *nesuferit* ('plaguesome') in connection with vampires and inadvertently coined the now familiar term” (334). J. Gordon Melton also connects the term with the “Old Slavonic word, *nesufur-atu*, borrowed from the Greek *nosophoros*, a 'plague carrier.’ [...] Though it has been in use in Romania for several centuries, it is not found in Romanian dictionaries. It was originally a technical term in the old Slavonic that filtered into common speech. It has erroneously been reported to mean 'undead” (496). Jaroslaw Zurowsky also argues the name means “disease carrier” and tracks possible linguistic shifts that would account for the word. For his detailed argument, see his short piece “Nosferatu” on page 4 of *The Borgo Post*, Volume 16, Issue 2 (Spring 2011).

¹² While there is no record of Murnau’s familiarity with Tieck’s work, Stefan Keppler notes that Murnau “hat von 1907 bis 1911 Romanistik, Anglistik, und Germanistik in Berlin und Heidelberg studiert, danach die Klassiker für die Reinhardt Bühne auswendig gelernt. [...] *Nosferatu* intertextuell allein auf Stokers *Dracula* zu verpflichten, würde diesem Umstand nicht gerecht“ (20) (“from 1907 until 1911 [Murnau] studied French, English and German literature in Berlin and Heidelberg, thereafter, he memorized the Classics for the Reinhardt stage. [...] Intertextually committing *Nosferatu* only to Stoker’s *Dracula* is not just to this circumstance,” my translation). In Lotte Eisner’s biography of the director, his brother, Robert Plumpe remembers that “as soon as he could read he fell on every book that came his way, whether it was a novel or a classical drama” (14) and “by the time he was twelve my brother was already familiar with Schopenhauer, Ibsen, Nietzsche, Dostoievski, and Shakespeare” (15). The argument can thus be made that a man with this education, if not familiar with the works of Tieck directly, would be familiar with the aesthetic philosophy of the Romantic era.

individual rather than Stoker's *Crew of Light*.¹³ The film presents the story of Hutter, a young real estate agent who travels into the mountains to bring contracts to the mysterious Count Orlok. While at the castle, the vampire attacks his guest and infects him. The creature's power, however, extends to the young man's wife, who intervenes through a psychic vision to rescue her husband's life and ultimately, sacrifices her life to protect the townsfolk when the vampire invades the space of civilization. The narrative thus focuses on the struggle against the wilderness Orlok embodies and the tension between civilization and nature. Representations of vampiric nature thus serve as a bridge between the two works and highlight not only the continuing influence of Germanic vampire traditions, but also the Romantic and neo-Romantic vision of nature as an alluring, but also deadly setting.

Superficially Tieck's *Kunstmärchen* and Murnau's Expressionist film appear unrelated, but there is a clear thematic connection between the two.¹⁴ In both pieces, nature is central, not merely as a setting, but as a *character* and in each nature is dualistic, represented in a state of cultivation, as well as a state of wilderness. The first becomes associated with three figures, Christian's father and the wives of the men who venture into the mountains to seek their fortunes. In Tieck's novella, the father, as a gardener, is

¹³ Christopher Craft uses this term to describe the male characters who oppose Dracula: "This group of crusaders includes Van Helsing [...], Dr. John Seward, Arthur Holmwood, Quincey Morris, and later Jonathan Harker" (445).

¹⁴ In their article "Romantic Inversions in Herzog's *Nosferatu*" Kent Casper and Susan Linville use Tieck's "Der Runenberg" as an example of the type of Romantic tale whose influence can be seen in Murnau's film (and therefore in Herzog's later reimagining). They write, "In the *Kunstmärchen* of romantics [sic] like Tieck [...] the quest becomes problematized in that the schema of idealist philosophy is subverted by an emphasis on the psychological ambiguities and pitfalls of imagination. The objects of nature (and desire) become Janus-faced, revealing a demonic aspect that can lead the hero into the abyss of illusion and madness, into a phantom reality that thwarts and mocks the quester's movement. In these tales, the trajectory of narrative desire tends toward an ironic circle, either trapping the hero in solipsistic self-imagining or 'saving' him through restoration of traditional bourgeois-Christian values. It is this romantic [sic] mode of representation [...] that so fascinated cinematic expressionism and that can be seen as constituting a narrative model for *Nosferatu*" (18).

the embodiment of nature's cultivation, while Elisabeth represents piety, religion and submission to the patriarchal order. In Murnau's film, Ellen embodies similar principles to the father and Elisabeth, but she also exhibits a deep longing for the wilderness inherent in the vampire. The other aspect of nature present in both works is the unfettered, powerful, but troubled, side embodied in the two vampires: the spirit on the Runenberg and Count Orlok. This vampiric nature in "Der Runenberg" is presented as alluring and seductive, as a vision which contains the promise of sexual union and spiritual enlightenment, but this promise is perpetually withheld. The portrayal of nature as vampire in *Nosferatu* is both an amplification and perversion of this earlier subtly dangerous ideal. Still holding the promise of sexual union, Orlok, as the embodiment of nature, also represents the promise of death. Where Tieck's Christian encounters a beautiful spirit on the summit of the mountain, Murnau's Hutter finds a grotesque old man. This shift in gender necessitates several other changes in the later work. For instance, the main focus of Murnau's natural vampire is Hutter's wife Ellen and, unlike the mountain spirit, Orlok can enter into the domain of civilization, invading the city to pursue his prey. Tieck's female vampire appears unable to cross the boundary between the mountains and the plain and must, therefore, rely on agents and subterfuge to bring Christian back into her power. The two works thus portray a Romantic and a neo-Romantic version of vampiric nature, continuing a tradition of German affiliation with the vampire tale.

In order to establish this connection between Tieck and Murnau and to nuance the reading of nature as a vampire in their respective works, this thesis is divided into two chapters. The first explores the history of the vampire, Romanticism and briefly

addresses the traditional reading of Tieck's mountain spirit as a demonic creature, rather than a vampiric one. A distinction needs to be made between the figure of the "demon" and the "vampire," before turning to a careful textual analysis of "Der Runenberg" in the final part of the chapter. In turning to F. W. Murnau's film in the second chapter, a consideration of the Germanic elements of the film's alleged source, Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*, shows the affinity between Germany and vampires once more. This short analysis leads to a discussion of the lawsuit filed by Stoker's widow, Florence, when she learned of *Nosferatu's* existence. The lawsuit is significant, because it led to the loss of the original negative, which has complicated scholarship surrounding the film. Before undertaking the analysis of *Nosferatu*, the neo-Romantic elements of Expressionism are also outlined in order to provide context for the exegesis of the film and its narrative. Finally, the portrayal of nature as vampire, its relationship to the feminine, and the inversion of Tieck's potentially positive union between man and nature through the intrusion of death in *Nosferatu* will emerge in the concluding section of this chapter.

2. Infection in the Ruins: The Natural Vampire in Tieck's "Der Runenberg"

2.1 Existence on the Border: The History of the Vampire – A Romantic Tale

Before exploring the connection between vampirism and nature in Tieck's "Der Runenberg," a brief overview of the vampire's history, beginning with its emergence in popular culture during the Enlightenment will be necessary. As mentioned in the Introduction, the vampire appears to be at the height of its fame and a consideration of its past offers pertinent insights into its evolution from folkloric monster to dreaded villain to the contemporary misunderstood anti-hero. As William Patrick Day argues,

We are now so conscious of the vampire story that it needs a past to be part of our present, a need that has motivated us to return to older stories to create a history for our own. Our current vampire stories provide the lens that allows us to see earlier stories as meaningful to us, and our awareness of these older tales in turn become part of the way in which we imagine the vampire legend. (11)

The desire and the need to revisit older vampire tales as a result of the creature's current popularity provide new life for classics such as Murnau's *Nosferatu: Eine Symphonie des Grauens*, allowing them to rise once more from the slow decay of time and obscurity. A new study of this early film will show not only its connection to the past through its reliance on neo-Romantic ideals, but also how the portrayal of the vampire continues to influence modern interpretations of the creature. Thus, while the physical depiction of the vampire does not inspire most current iterations,¹⁵ the themes that Murnau uses to tell

¹⁵ There are a few notable exceptions. The figure of The Master in the first season of the television series *Buffy: The Vampire Slayer* recalls Orlok's look. *Buffy* uses a similar aesthetic portrayal for the "ubervamps" in season 7. The spin-off show *Angel* includes a vampire known only as "The Father of Lies" in episode 13, season 5, who also resembles Orlok. In movies, the vampires in *30 Days of Night* have a similarly grotesque appearance, but most current iterations focus on the glamorous undead made popular in the novels of Anne Rice. David J. Hogan points out that "it may be significant that today, in a self-

a compelling vampire narrative, themes of alienation, the danger of nature and the inherent liminality of the undead, are still present throughout the vampire genre in fiction, film and television. While few productions since *Nosferatu* have embraced the grotesque appearance of Count Orlok, many have cast the vampire as a sympathetic figure that inspires the audience to pity on its behalf. The portrayal of the modern vampire recalls the way Romantic writers envisioned this ambiguous fiend: as a figure of intrigue and allure that subsists on love as much as on blood. Early examples of Romantic vampires, like John Polidori's Lord Ruthven and Sheridan Le Fanu's female Carmilla,¹⁶ are enigmatic and mysterious, arousing the reader's interest through the danger they represent, a danger that is as titillating as it is frightening.

What then is the vampire's origin? While modern readers and audiences know the gaunt, pale vampire in his long cape, the original¹⁷ vampire was not an aristocrat, nor was he pale and gaunt. Instead, Paul Barber notes the following characteristics of the folkloric vampire:

His color is never pale, as one would expect of a corpse: his face is commonly described as florid, or of a healthy color, or dark, and this may be attributed to his habit of drinking blood, [...]. [t]he absence of rigor mortis is considered strong evidence of vampirism. So too are open eyes, an open mouth and the presence of blood at the lips or nose, sometimes even at the eyes and ears. [...] The liquid blood is considered presumptive evidence of the vampire's blood-

proclaimed age of deadened cynicism, at least two vampire films have looked at Schreck for inspiration: Werner Herzog's *Nosferatu* (1980) [sic] and Tobe Hooper's 1979 television film, *Salem's Lot*¹⁷ (138). Another movie to add to this list is E. Elias Merhige's 2000 *Shadow of the Vampire*, which posits that Schreck, portrayed here by Willem Dafoe, was a real vampire.

¹⁶ Le Fanu's novel *Carmilla*, significantly, was set in Styria, a province of Austria.

¹⁷ Within the context of this thesis, the origins of the vampire under discussion refer to the creature as it emerged in the early 1700s within Enlightenment discourse, as David Keyworth notes, "although vestiges of vampirism can be found in antiquity [...], there is no mention of reanimated corpses that return from the grave specifically to feed upon the blood of the living, as with the so-called vampires of the eighteenth century" (22).

sucking. It is especially persuasive when [...] it is observed in conjunction with a tendency to be plump or swollen. (41-42)

Barber also notes that “blood is the most distinctive characteristic of the revenant, but it is by no means the only one. The hair and nails have grown since death, or there are no fingernails at all. Often [...] the skin has been sloughed off and replaced by new, healthy skin” (42). None of these attributes (other than the drinking of blood) described by villagers in the 1700s and reported by Austro-Hungarian officials become part of the depiction of the vampire in the literature these events inspired, or in later cinematic adaptations. Not even the vampire’s teeth, a staple of film and fiction, are of importance in the folkloric accounts (44). Rather than serving as a figure of mystery and allure, the vampire of myth is “an elaborate folk-hypothesis designed to account for seemingly inexplicable events associated with death and decomposition” (3). All of these signs of vampirism observed in the bodies that were exhumed are, according to Barber, normal aspects of the process of decomposition. Without modern scientific and forensic knowledge, these natural aspects of the corpse’s “afterlife” were interpreted as evidence of reanimation. Significantly, these reports originated not from British encounters, but rather from the borders of the German-speaking Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The reason for this sudden emergence of the phenomenon of vampirism is a redrawing of borders within Europe - a fact which draws attention once more to the vampire’s liminal position. As the boundaries of countries shift, the creature becomes part of a new territory, infecting its inhabitants with its mere presence. Even at this early moment in its modern history, the vampire captures the imagination of European society. Indeed, Barber points out that

In retrospect, it seems clear that one reason for all the excitement was the Peace of Passarowitz (1718), by which parts of Serbia and Walachia [sic] were turned over to Austria. Thereupon the occupying forces, which remained there until 1739, began to notice, and file reports on, a peculiar local practice: that of exhuming bodies and 'killing' them. Literate outsiders began to attend such exhumations. The vampire craze, in other words, was an early 'media event,' in which educated Europeans became aware of practices that were by no means recent of origin, but had simply been provided, for the first time, with effective public-relations representatives. (5)

Several elements of this description remain relevant for both the evolution of the vampire myth and for its current permutations. The first, as already noted, is its liminality. Also significant is the manner of the creature's representation. Barber identifies it as a "craze" and draws attention to the fact that "literate outsiders" attended the killings of supposed vampires, highlighting both the allure of the vampire and a morbid curiosity of those seeking this experience. These facets later allowed the monster to inhabit Romantic literature with apparent ease: the vampire is a perfect vehicle for the sense of displacement, alienation and marginalization of the Romantic Movement.

While Paul Barber locates the origin of the vampire myth in the villagers' attempt to understand decomposition and the spread of disease, Erik Butler suggests socio-politic reasons for the emergence of a revenant inhabiting the bodies of recently deceased members of a community and depriving the living of vitality. Citing the shift in political rule in the region, Butler argues that the

Rustics' belief that a vampire preyed on them reflected uncertainty about who they were, both as individuals and as a collective. The creature attacked victims with impartiality and threatened to make them a soulless shadow of life, like itself. Thus the vampire can be read as a symptom of doubts about cultural identity and produced by the conflict of different political and religious interests and systems - a transfigured expression of profound fears concerning the

reality of appearances, the order of the temporal world, and the arrangement of the heavens. Rustics whose destinies were controlled by political machinations invisible to them hallucinated a demonic agent responsible for their terror. (40)

Butler sidesteps the discussion of the physical revenant and instead explores its political undertones. The aspect that emerges from both accounts of the early vampire is that it is a creature that flourishes at points of friction between cultures as well as between life and death. In a sense, the vampire is a symbol of empowerment for these peasants, because in destroying the threat of the undead, they not only defy the laws of the bureaucratic apparatus (Butler 41) but also assert their power, allowing them to triumph against a tangible enemy. All subsequent vampires occupy the margins, they live in border zones, stalking liminal spaces that both create and enhance their uncanny resonance within the popular imagination.

Another significant aspect of this first vampire media spectacle is that the resulting publications were not in the realm of fiction. Instead, as Wayne Bartlett and Flavia Idriceanu assert, the works originally published about the vampire “were not typically literary works exploiting the vampire theme, but academic treatises attempting to analyze the phenomenon” (18-19). At this time, men of reason attempted to explain the strange occurrences in these border territories with scientific theories, and in this manner, the vampire demonstrates another shift in perspectives, another liminal space – that between the rational and the irrational, the logical and the superstitious – and “vampirism epitomized the spirit of the age. The scientists might consider this the Age of Reason, when superstition, even God, might be consigned to the dustbin of history, but others were not so sure” (Bartlett and Idriceanu 26). Once the scientific speculation

abated, the vampire did not return to his grave, but rather migrated into the realms of literature. However, no matter how or where the creature appeared, it always retains its essence of liminality, of representing uncertain border territory and through this ambiguous state continues to pose a threat to social order.

As this marginal figure, the vampire is uniquely able to reflect the anxieties and desires of society with its different guises. The vampire's lack of firm characteristics or traits allows for its resurrection in different time periods and with every return it comes to represent a variety of new fears, yearnings and the uncertain territory between the two. Perhaps its most important transformation occurred at the hands of the Romantics who took the pliable figure and molded it anew in their image. In their writing, they changed its meaning from the Enlightenment's expression of political subversion, where "the term 'vampire' did not present a creature with much personality [and] the name was above all a term of ridicule – a pejorative designation for someone who held power abusively" (Butler 85) to one that reflected the Romantics' interest in the human psyche. Through this new appropriation, "the vampire became an emblem of anguished consciousness, representing psychological interiority as a kind of bottomless pit of imperfectly disavowed culpability" (85) in the works of the Romantics. As noted earlier, the vampire entered into the literary world through German authors whose "literary vampires reflect their folkloric and pagan sources. [...] These seductive vampires embody not only what Freud calls the Death Wish but also the sensuality of a pagan fertility deity" (Halab 74). Mary Y. Halab here draws the connection between the vampire in literature and three key elements that continue throughout its long existence: death, sexuality and nature, but a nature suffused with a sense of danger.

The most significant of these early examples of the literary vampire is Bürger's "Lenore," which became the inspiration for generations of British authors, as Diane Milburn notes, "the German ballad enjoyed enormous popularity in Europe: between 1790 and 1892 there had been no less than thirty English translations" (45).¹⁸ Twitchell traces the influence of the poem in detail and asserts that "all the English Romantics were familiar with it" (33). In his analysis, he mentions that the ballad form of the poem "gives it an especially eerie surface effect while underneath it plumbs the depths of terror" (34). Through its form, "Lenore" becomes linked to the tradition of the English ballad, and serves as an inspiration for the British Romantics. Arguably, poems such as Keats's "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," which draw their inspiration from "the early revenant ballads" (Twitchell 54), portray the same uneasy relationship with nature already noted in association with the early German vampire works.¹⁹ In both Bürger and Keats, vampires draw their victims into natural settings where they must join the ranks of the undead. This type of representation speaks to the danger inherent in seeking out the natural world from which man has separated through the rise of civilization. The vampire once more transmuted its surface to reflect the needs and desires of a literary movement, shedding its previous skin with ease to become an uncanny symbol in Romantic poetry and prose. This new vampire, the creature with an anguished soul, is still present in popular films and literature today.

The new form of the fiend is no longer the bloated, dead peasant returning to kill his or her fellow villagers, but instead has moved into the aristocracy, into the depths of

¹⁸ The poem also plays a role in Stoker's *Dracula*, as will be discussed in Chapter 2.

¹⁹ For another view of the pattern of influence between German and British vampire poems at this time, see Clemens Ruthner's "Bloodsuckers with Teutonic Tongues: The German-Speaking World and the Origins of *Dracula*," where he writes that "by 1800 a veritable vampiric 'cross-fertilization' was taking place between German and English poetry" (55).

society and it has become a cunning creature capable of concealing its identity. The first Romantic vampire, Polidori's Lord Ruthven is the beginning of the Byronic hero transformed into bloodsucking monster. At stake in this reconfiguration of the vampire is not only a more glamorous social status, but a transformation from the marginal into a being who seeks friendship and love alongside its need for blood:

In societies where families are inescapable and marriage is enforced, friendship may be a more indelible taboo than incest. In a dreadful way, the Byronic vampire / friend fulfills the promise of Romanticism, offering a mutuality between subject and object so intense that it overwhelms conventional hierarchies and bonds. The interfusion, as Wordsworth might have called it, between vampire and mortal makes familiar boundaries fluid, offering a wider world than home and a larger self than one sustained by sanctioned relationships. (Auerbach 19)

As with previous incarnations, the vampire remains on a boundary, this time in the space of friendship and love. Ruthven / the Byronic vampire bridges the gap between two men, allowing for their companionship in a world dominated by the family and marriage, rather than friendship. This vampire steps between husband and wife, between father and children and seduces not the wife away from the hearth, but the husband. In Polidori's tale, the vampire eliminates the women who care for Aubrey, his male companion, murdering first his beloved, then his sister. Ruthven's only relationship is with Aubrey. Thus, "in the nineteenth century, vampires were vampires *because* they loved. They offered an intimacy, a homoerotic sharing, that threatened the hierarchical distance of sanctioned relationships" (60) and they once more embodied a sphere of uncertainty, of desire and of fear. The vampire could love, but his love meant death.

Once the vampire became a figure capable of love without losing its uncanny liminal position, literature embraced it and transfigured its representation with each

passing era. Arguably the most important vampire, the iconic father of all the bloodsuckers, a creature which itself frequently returns in new iterations, is Bram Stoker's Count Dracula. This novel, with its vampire from Transylvania, the border between the Christian domain and Turkish rule in the past,

is the consummate retelling of the vampire story; all the pieces are used and all the pieces fit. [...] the vampire is there to frighten and shock, to make us jealous, not to enlighten. If the book is poetic and powerful, it is because Stoker was wise enough never to dilute the psychological content of the legend; in fact, if anything, he made it more potent. Dracula is terrifically alluring; he has everything we want: he has money and power without responsibility; he parties all night with the best people, yet he doesn't need friends; he can be violent and aggressive without guilt or punishment; he has life without death; but most attractive of all, he has sex without confusion (i.e., genitalia, pregnancy...love). It's all take, no give. (Twitchell 134)

Thus, Stoker's novel catapults the vampire into the 20th century, leading to numerous cinematic adaptations starting with F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu: Eine Symphonie des Grauens* and continuing into the present day. This new vampire is a conquering foreigner and an aristocrat, not a troublesome peasant corpse murdering family members and neighbours in their sleep. While Stoker uses some of the original vampire's characteristics – aversion to garlic and holy items – he embellishes and creates new traits as well. The original vampire did not travel beyond the boundaries of a village and especially not with a coffin full of soil. Empires were of no concern for the bloodsucking fiend, either, and he certainly did not scale walls or covet brides. And yet, Stoker's novel continues to entrance readers. Stoker uses the vampire to evoke fear and does so through the use of the most vital aspect of the vampire: he is a creature of the border, existing on

the margins and entering a center where he upsets the balance of power and threatens to bring death into the midst of English society.

Two issues emerge from this consideration of the vampire's origin. The first is its Germanic past and the fact that its entry-point into the Western imagination and new media has repeatedly been through a German vessel. The second are the characteristics that have allowed the creature to endure and even to thrive throughout the last few centuries: its liminal position, the shift from its peasant roots to the aristocratic sphere and the addition of the monster's ability to love and be loved in turn. While little remains of the mythic vampire in *Dracula* and its many incarnations, at the heart of all vampire tales are stories about the marginal outsider who steps from the shadows into the light of society and brings death in his wake. The vampire is a symbol and a scapegoat, drawing its power from the belief found in "sources, in Europe and elsewhere, [which] show a remarkable unanimity on [one] point: the dead may bring us death" (Barber 3). Ultimately, the vampire represents a sense of threat to the status quo, able to assume the qualities needed in each age to portray society's fears. As Erik Butler asserts, "all vampires share one trait: the power to move between and undo borders otherwise holding identities in place. At this monster's core lies an affinity for rupture, change and mutation" (1). The vampire, thus, threatens the stability of each generation, while its ability to adapt, to change, to mutate gives new life to the creature through the centuries.²⁰

²⁰ Or, as Nina Auerbach writes, "An alien nocturnal species, sleeping in coffins, living in shadows, drinking our lives in secrecy, vampires are easy to stereotype, but it is their variety that makes them survivors. They may look marginal, feeding on human history from some limbo of their own, but for me, they have always been central: what vampires are in any given generation is part of what I am and what my times have become" (1).

2.2 Romanticism: Alienation, Nature and the Feminine

Romanticism is a complex, often divisive and ultimately splintered literary movement. As Paul de Man writes, “from its inception, the history of romanticism [sic] has been one of battles, polemics, and misunderstandings: personal misunderstandings between the poets, the critics, and the public; between the successive generations” (4). Or, as Ernst Behler explains, “another important aspect of the theory of literature in early German Romanticism is that it is not the product of one single mind, but an open, fragmentary, ever-changing thought process to which authors of the most diverse backgrounds made their contributions” (*Romantic Literary Theory* 8). Scholars, then, struggle to clearly outline the Romantic movement and its critical and literary contributions. The ambiguity of the term Romanticism itself further complicates any clear definition of what Romanticism *is*. As with the words “nosferatu” and “vampire,” the word “romantic”²¹ has undergone several permutations,²² and these different uses of the word further obscure the already complex literary and critical organism of

²¹ An interesting note on the word is that, while “vampire” gained popularity through German-speaking reports, the word “romantisch” has English origins: “For more than a century the development of connotations of the romantic was largely an English phenomenon. The loan-word ‘romantisch’ was implanted on German-speaking soil at the end of the seventeenth century” (Immerwahr “The Word *romantisch*” 39). And Seyhan summarizes that “at the end of the eighteenth century, the concept of the ‘romantic’ came to inhabit permanently the vocabularies of European languages and referred simultaneously and variously to landscape, feeling (predominantly love), or eccentric character. It was in the work of the late eighteenth-century German literary and cultural critics that ‘romantische Poesie’ (Romantic poetry) was transformed into a critical mode of thought and came to be seen as a contemporary and autonomous literary tradition” (1-2). Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy also trace the word’s origins: “We know that the *romance* languages were the vulgar languages, thought of as derived from the vulgar *romance* tongue as opposed to the *Latin* of the clergy; that the *romance* literatures were the literatures of these languages; and that the different forms and genres were soon called *romant*, *romanze*, *romancero*. When the *romantic* first appeared in England and Germany (*romantick*, *romantisch*) and for the most part in the seventeenth century, it most often implied depreciation, or even moral condemnation of what was being discarded, along with this type of literature, into the shadows of the prehistory of Modern Times: marvelous prodigies, unrealistic chivalry, exalted sentiments” (3-4).

²² The *OED Online* lists the first occurrence of the adjective “romantic” in English as 1650 and defines it as “Of a narrative, work of fiction, etc.: having the nature or qualities of a romance as regards form or content. Of an author: that writes romances; tending to write in the manner of a romance.” Of course, in its current use “romantic” is related to feelings of love, affection and desire.

Romanticism. Attempting to clarify the debates surrounding Romanticism is a project beyond the scope of this thesis, but several historical and thematic elements of Romanticism require brief explication in order to situate the work of Ludwig Tieck, and specifically “Der Runenberg,” within the proper intellectual and historical context. This task is complicated by the fact that Tieck did not contribute to the critical project the other Romantics undertook: “Tieck was well-read, and he had a keen intelligence and a quick power of comprehension, but he was not at all theoretically oriented” (Behler *Romantic Literary Theory* 52). Despite his lack of interest in theory, the Jena and Berlin Romantics welcomed Tieck into their circles, enjoying his literary contributions and intellectual presence.

Romanticism emerged from a period of social upheavals and is both a reaction to and extension of the changes heralded by the Enlightenment. One of the aspects of the *Aufklärung*²³ was a scientific revolution that “decisively undermined, [and] deprived of intellectual respectability, the Aristotelian/medieval conception of the universe, a universe characteristically qualitative, hierarchical, spiritual, teleological, and above all providential” (Simon 18). This movement away from a worldview based on God and destiny led to “a tremendous surge of confidence in men’s ability to order their lives rationally [...]. It therefore provided an incentive for a general re-examination of ideas” (19). Arguably, one of the results of this new world centered on the individual was a

²³ German for “Enlightenment.” W. M. Simon notes that the *Aufklärung* in Germany differed from the Enlightenment in France or England, tracing these differences through social, political and economic situations in Germany (18-22). He writes that, “the mood of Germany in the eighteenth century was one of compromise, if not of complacency, rather than of criticism. Even the writers of the *Sturm und Drang* confined their rebelliousness to the field of literature. Small wonder, then, that the *Aufklärung* bore a very different aspect from the Enlightenment in France and Britain” (21). He adds as well that the matter is complicated because “there was [...] no such country as ‘Germany’ in any effective political sense” at this time and “everyday life and great matters of state alike took place within the confines of the territorial state” with Prussia at the forefront of the *Aufklärung* (22).

sense of disconnection from the spiritual foundation the teleological *Weltanschauung*²⁴ had provided, and this loss of unity, in part, fueled the Romantic desire for a return to nature in order to regain access to a spiritual realm. At the same time, Ricarda Schmidt argues that Romanticism is “a turn merely against the reductive, mechanistic tendencies of the Enlightenment, not [...] a rejection of the Enlightenment altogether” (24). This relationship to the *Aufklärung* is only one of the areas of tension for the Romantics, and it informs both their critical and literary products. While Tieck did not contribute to the theory of Romanticism, he was an active scholar and translator, working primarily with texts of the Romantic heroes: Shakespeare and Cervantes (Paulin 29). His studiousness and attention to detail within these works harkens back to the empiricism of the Enlightenment, placing him in the precarious position felt by the entire age – a position of pulling away while remaining solidly bound to the past.

The theological and intellectual crisis of the post-Enlightenment was not the only source of tension within Germany at this time, and was not the sole catalyst in the literary revolution. For the early Romantics, often referred to as the Jena Romantics,²⁵ the world was unstable and full of crisis:

[...] the Germany of this period, suffering from economic crisis and profound social problems accompanied by continual revolts, found itself [...] plunged into a triple crisis: the social and moral crisis of a bourgeoisie, with new-found access to culture [...] but who are no longer able to find positions for those sons traditionally destined for the robe or the rostrum [...]; the political crisis of the French Revolution, a model that disturbed some and fascinated others, and whose ambiguity becomes ever more apparent

²⁴ “Worldview.”

²⁵ The Jena Group or Jena Romantics were a small group. Its principal members were the two Schlegel brothers, August Wilhelm and Friedrich, their wives Caroline and Dorothea, Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg) and Tieck. For brief biographies and the contribution of each of these figures to the early Movement, see Behler’s *German Romantic Literary Theory* 33-54.

with the French occupation; and the Kantian critique, finally, which is unintelligible for some, liberating but destructive for others, and which seems urgently in need of its own critical recasting. The characters we will see assembling at Jena participated in this triple crisis in the most immediate manner. (Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy 5)

The uncertainty that emerged from these social, economic and political frictions brought a level of anxiety to the Romantic mind and this instability became the driving force

behind a literary movement rooted in the futile search for a long-lost Golden Age.

Romanticism is the product of an age “that seemed to have lost its place in the order of history” (Seyhan 9): alienated from theology through the Enlightenment and democratic

community in the aftermath of the failed French Revolution, the Romantics longed for a

return to unity, but were keenly aware of the impossibility of this reunion. The poetic

works of this new literary and critical movement, while diverse in topics and approach,

all share a common bond in their attempts to address the precarious position of humanity

in the modern world. The rise of the individual, the loss of a sense of social

interconnectivity and the ambiguity of faith influenced the works of these post-

Enlightenment, post-Revolutionary artists and instill within them a sense of deep internal

conflict and a desire for a return to a unity which would also herald a return to a clarity of

thought and feeling.

The sense of estrangement led the Romantics to write literature that focused on

characters who seek out solitude, crossing boundaries into unknown, natural regions in

order to find the isolation required for introspection. In the course of their journeys, these

characters often also cross the border between the real and the fantastic.²⁶ As Siegbert

Praver writes,

²⁶ Tieck’s fairy tales are an example of this free movement between reality and fantasy.

The most characteristic art of German Romanticism transports the reader, viewer and listener to a frontier between the visible and the invisible, the tangible and the intangible. Something transcendent shines through everyday reality, something ineffable (and often frightening) through those scenes of German country or city life which are depicted with increasing realism in the course of the period. There are some states of mind, the Romantics would seem to believe, in which man is closer than usual to the heart of such mystery. (4-5)

Empiricism gives way to fancy in the works of the Romantic poets, and Protestant belief becomes a search for spiritual union with nature and the sublime. In their desire to transcend the disappointment of the French Revolution, these poets create worlds where beauty, truth and the imagination lead to harmony and community. As such, “Romantic thought soars continually into the world of fantasy” (Walzel 31). The elements of the fantastic and the portrayal of thresholds that appealed to Romantic writers are inextricably linked to their sense of alienation. The need to express their isolation allows them to explore the liminal spaces and to engage with the borders of what is seen and unseen. According to Frederick C. Beiser, the Romantics’ sense of alienation took on three forms: “There was first the division within the self. [...] The second form of alienation – what we might also call anomie or atomism – was the division between the self and others [...]. The third form of alienation was the division between self and nature” (31). These multiple levels of disunity engendered a profound sense of longing in the Romantics, which they articulated in their poetic works. All three schisms are present in Tieck’s “Der Runenberg.” Indeed, the tale is constructed around the main character’s separation from self, from society and from nature and his attempts to find a sense of belonging.

The spiritual, emotional and intellectual ruptures between the Romantics and society, were, however, also present within the movement itself.²⁷ Thus their efforts to regain unity followed different paths, although, ultimately, “the various programs they enunciated for bringing about a revived world have certain common denominators: [...] the apprehension of a long ago, serenely unified and total world; [...] the experience of a disjointed present and a plan for its dissolution; [...and] the reestablishment of lost primal harmony” (Friedrichsmeyer 45). Most Romantics sought this harmonious world within nature. And yet, the attempted connection with nature was also a source of danger, thereby adding a sense of friction between not only the poet and society, but also the poet and the natural realm. As Jack D. Zipes describes,

Romantic writers are intent on illustrating the outcast state of their protagonist. They favor motifs and images which underline the antagonism between the hero and society and between his conscience and ego. For instance, nature appears to have order and is therefore juxtaposed to society which is in a state of chaos. The romantic hero turns to nature because he believes it possesses the secrets of creation. Yet, even nature has its dark side. It can be as luring and terrifying as Isis. It can paralyze and destroy. On the one hand, it holds forth promise and on the other is indifferent to his quest – even opposes it. Because of this he begins to doubt the intuition which led him to nature in the first place. (26)

²⁷ Roger Paulin points out that the Jena group desired harmony that it could never achieve: “If all are so much in agreement, why not a closed front of new poetical and philosophical awareness, a cohesive group offering resistance to folly and error – and dissent? This was the germ of the Jena circle, the text upon which both Schlegels preached. And yet that association, precarious at any time, almost never came about. [...] Apart from personal considerations, the sheer impossibility of such a society living together in any cooperative harmony – and every member of the circle had reservations about the other – Jena lacked the social basis of survival” (100-101). These problems did not dissuade critics from perceiving the Romantics as a cohesive unit. In discussing anti-Romantic satires, Paulin notes that the attacks on Romanticism in Germany “suggested a solidarity of Romantic endeavour, a consensus of Romantic thought, where there was, in personal terms, in effect none. [...] Nobody ever examined the Romantic edifice closely enough to see the cracks in the facade or even the desolate interior” (139-140).

The danger inherent in an attempted return to nature points to the dilemma of the Romantics: alienated from society, they also cannot find a home outside of it. This conception of dualistic nature demonstrates that these writers were aware “that spiritual harmony is an ideal that can be approached but not reached” (Walzel 22). The key, then, is in the *yearning* for unity and the knowledge of the infinite which the natural realm promises, but reveals only at great cost.

The Romantic protagonist’s attempt to find unity often leads to further alienation, removing the character from society without providing a connection to nature. The characters of Tieck’s early work, for example, are lost and in attempting to remedy their sense of restless homelessness, they only lose their way in the world even more. When Raymond Immerwahr writes of Tieck’s *William Lovell*, he also describes Christian’s struggle in “Der Runenberg”: “The initially well-meaning titular character is unable to distinguish delusion from reality, to recognize any firm moral basis for human conduct, to control his own destiny, or to understand his relations to others” (“Practice of Irony” 87). The instability of the self and of the world that confronts the characters leads the later Romantics to “expressions of sadness [...which] often merge with a predilection for sickness, decadence, decay, and a preoccupation with the so-called dark side (Nachtseite) of nature” (Behler “The Theory of Irony” 69). In order to overcome this insecurity within the self and the negative emotions related to this rootlessness, love became a stabilizing force within many of these narratives. When the Romantic protagonist struggles to attain fulfillment he often finds the means of reconstructing a united identity in a relationship with a woman. Thus, the yearning that drives these characters invites the concept of love into the Romantic discourse: “reason and love both consist in the

striving for wholeness, the drive toward universality, the longing to become one with the infinite or the universe as a whole” (Beiser 69). This love, however, was not only spiritual, but “was also associated with the love of man for woman” (Walzel 30).

Through this concept, a triadic pattern emerges in which the poet attempts to overcome the sense of alienation from society through women and nature, because they “are the locus of love” (Botting 161), and this formulation creates a system of belief which underpins Romantic literature.

Women are precariously situated within the Romantic Movement – gaining greater freedoms, but still fulfilling a role cast by the men that surround them.²⁸ For Friedrich Schlegel, one of the founding members of the Jena Group and leader of the philosophical venture of Romanticism, “woman, being the very essence of the ‘mystical,’ is the *figure* of initiation” (Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy 71). His ultimate goal for women was *Bildung*, but this education was targeted at creating an appropriate counterpart to the Romantic poet. Drawing on his *On Philosophy*, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy posit that for Schlegel “woman is [by nature] a domestic being [...]; her destination, on the other hand, or her virtue, is religion” (72). While this approach to the feminine allows women a measure of power in a masculine world, it does so through essentializing their character. Women become tools in the poet’s attempt to regain wholeness; they do not

²⁸ This precarious positioning is evident also in scholarship: “As incisive as these analyses are in their articulations of Romantic theory, the theory they articulate clearly is androcentric. In these studies, the female Romantics largely play the role of helpmeet to their male companions. For the most part, they are not treated as authors in their own right” (Helfer 229). Notably, Ernst Behler’s *German Romantic Literary Theory* is among the works Helfer critiques with this statement. She also warns that while “in its inception, Early German Romanticism calls into question the conditions of possibility, the contents, and the limits of established disciplines like philosophy, mathematics, the natural sciences, and art, thereby effecting a transgressive critique of traditional modes of discourse. In this respect one might argue that the Romantic program as a whole is fundamentally feminist in import” (232-233), the works of the male Romantics ultimately support the gender binary: “because Romanticism, even in its most transgressive literary moment – Friedrich Schlegel’s wayward novel *Lucinde* – reinscribes traditional gender categories while simultaneously calling these categories into question” (233).

have their own aspirations. They are, ultimately, *essence* that the poet lacks, without having their own substance. Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy go on to explain that in Schlegel's view, women must go through a process of education in order to embody two key elements: humanity and religion (both are areas to which women have intuitive access). As a result *Bildung* "passes through the amorous relation (since man is the formative power *par excellence*)" (72). Ultimately, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, conclude that in Schlegel's philosophy (as laid out in his *Ideas* and *On Philosophy*) any return to a lost Golden Age requires an exchange:

But this initiation is actually double, for such is the law of amorous reciprocity. That man should initiate woman to philosophy, thereby providing her with access to fulfilled religion, supposes in return that woman should be capable of satisfying man's need for poetry. Without an exchange between one and the other sex, without the simultaneous intersection of their natures and destinations, no completed 'humanity' and no effective religion is possible. (73)

This conception of the feminine and the role of women in the life of the Romantic poet or protagonist is present in Tieck's tale, although in a much less philosophical manner. As the story unfolds, Christian encounters two women: the mountain spirit²⁹ and Elisabeth, his eventual wife. Both of these female characters correspond to aspects Schlegel attributes to the feminine. The Runenberg woman literally unveils herself to Christian, initiating him into the knowledge of the mountain realm. Elisabeth, on the other hand, represents religion and piety, and serves, for a time, as an anchor to society for the troubled Christian. Ultimately, the spirit claims the young man, drawing him back to the mountain realm, demonstrating Tieck's turn toward the *Nachtseite* of Romanticism.

²⁹ Since the *Waldweib* Christian encounters toward the end of the tale is also an embodiment of the nature spirit, she is not counted here.

This configuration, however, becomes problematic when gender implications are considered. When the Romantics conflate woman with nature and thus associate her with the pursuit of wholeness, they also combine the attributes of these two loci of unification: “Romantic ideology associated women with nature, with the forces of the non-rational, organic, that is, spiritual, world” (Friedrichsmeyer 51). In this way, they formulated a binary where men, by implication, became associated with civilization, the rational and the inorganic, or secular world. The proposed union, which was “based on their understanding of the sexes as imbued with complementary powers, and spurred by a desire for their own wholeness, [...] posited restorative powers in the union between male and female as a [...] means of obtaining a merger between man and the non-rational” (52). This binary opposition prompts Anne K. Mellor to write that

Since the object of romantic or erotic love is not the recognition and appreciation of the beloved woman as an independent other but rather the assimilation of the female into the male (or the annihilation of any Other that threatens masculine selfhood), the woman must finally be enslaved or destroyed, must disappear or die. [...] This is not to deny the existence of powerful, independent female figures in the poetry of masculine Romanticism, [...] but only to suggest that the frequent equation of heterosexual love with erotic passion produced a desire for a total union between lover and beloved, a union that necessarily entails the elimination of Otherness. (26)

The Romantic triad leads to a dual objectification of the beloved, first as object of physical love and second as a personification of nature. In attempting to overcome his alienation, the Romantic poet creates a figure upon which to project his lack of connection and his longing for unity. Beloved and nature come to exist in relation to the poet, not as proper subjects, and “in the equation with nature, earth, body, Woman was construed as Other to culture, as object of intense curiosity to be explored, dissected,

conquered, domesticated and, if necessary, eliminated” (Bronfen 66). In her state of “Other,” woman could encompass both generative and destructive attributes, allowing the individual poets to formulate their relationship with the beloved and with nature according to their own philosophical and literary needs, so that, Tieck, for example, “linked women with the demonic” (Friedrichsmeyer 61). The longing for union with the infinite through love becomes dangerous when the force of nature and the feminine are not always benevolent. This danger points to the awareness within the Romantic Movement that spiritual wholeness was unattainable and that the attempt to become whole through the pursuit of love and nature is, perhaps, naïve. Furthermore, women and nature are not merely constructs, but subjects, a fact that becomes clear in an analysis of “Der Runenberg” where nature demonstrates agency throughout the tale. The desire for unity, the *yearning* embodied in the naïve protagonists is as dualistic as nature, portrayed as both positive through the act of striving and negative through the often inevitable descent into madness and exile. Tales such as Tieck’s serve as a warning against the blind pursuit of unity with nature as well as with the figure of the beloved.

2.3 A Tale of Mystical Infection: Nature as Vampire in Tieck's "Der Runenberg"

As discussed in the previous subchapter, the Romantic protagonist pays a price for venturing into the unknown realms of nature in search of harmony. This price of unveiling the mysteries of the wilderness is a core element of Tieck's fairy tale, "Der Runenberg." His protagonist, Christian, is never able to find stability in his life. Events that should bring him joy do so only fleetingly and the most consistent aspect of his character is a sense of restlessness. Ultimately, he finds a type of peace, but it requires the sacrifice of all societal bonds, familial connection, and sanity so that he may return to the stone realm and the influence of the spirit of the mountains. Through the melancholy outcome of this story and the bleak view of the struggle for a return to an unattainable ideal, Tieck separates himself from other early Romantics:

The image of the pensive youthful person alone in a turbulent landscape was so appealing to the younger generation of Romantics that it became a favorite subject for painters at the turn of the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, the opening scene of 'Der Runenberg' marks an important turning point in the development of Romanticism, for Christian is clearly neither delighted nor satisfied by the situation in which he finds himself. Indeed, he is very close to despair [...] Christian's dissatisfaction, frustration, and sense of entrapment in this scene herald the end of at least one aspect of Early Romanticism: its free-wheeling independence of mind and emotions and its ideological aversion to any binding allegiances. By 1802 the delight in such spiritual freedom had very nearly run its course, and Romantics were beginning to look around for other, more tangible goals for their idealism. (Birrell 60)

Both the time and the manner in which the story was written are relevant to Tieck's apparent pessimism. He wrote the story overnight in 1802,³⁰ the year that Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy identify as the year when the "Jena group's dissolution had been brought to a conclusion" (102). While Tieck did not contribute to the philosophical project of this group, the encouragement of the Schlegels and particularly his friendship with Novalis were crucial to his development as an artist. And as Norbert Mecklenburg argues, the provenance of the story is significant: "Die Besonderheit des ‚Runenbergs‘ liegt darin, daß dieses [...] in höchstem Grade romantische seiner Märchen dennoch eine *Krise des frühromantischen Poesie- und Weltentwurfs* anzeigt, die sich mit einer *Lebenskrise* des Menschen Tieck verband, der, selber unter dem Schatten einer tückischen Krankheit, 1801 nicht nur den Dichterfreund Friedrich von Hardenberg, sondern auch beide Eltern verlor" (63).³¹ The story, then, is a tale of emotional and philosophical crisis, marking a departure from the optimism of early Romanticism toward the attitudes of later Romantics. Venturing into nature no longer presented the option of a fulfilling spiritual union. Instead, it offered the protagonist, Christian, a more complete loss of self-identity, a complete erasure of his social being.

Associating Tieck with vampire fiction is not a novel endeavour. The early vampire tale "Wake Not the Dead!" is frequently attributed to him.³² At the beginning of

³⁰ Or, as Ulrich Scheck notes, Tieck "claimed to have written ["Der Runenberg"] in 1802 in only one night" (104), casting some doubt on the truthfulness of this origin story.

³¹ "The distinctiveness of "Der Runenberg" rests in the fact that this fairy tale, Romantic to the highest degree, nevertheless indicates a *crisis of the poetry and worldview of early Romanticism*, which connected with a life crisis of Tieck as a person, who, himself under the shadow of a malicious illness, in 1801 lost not only his poet-friend Friedrich von Hardenberg, but also both parents" (my translation).

³² The story, however, was actually written by Ernst Raupach, as J. Gordon Melton writes, "There has been some argument about another early German vampire story that may have been the first short piece of vampire fiction. An English version of a story 'Wake Not the Dead' was published in 1823, and became attributed to the famous German writer Johann Ludwig Tieck. But the story is in fact by Ernst Raupach. It was originally entitled 'Laszt [sic] die Todten ruhen' ('Let the Dead Rest') and there is a play using the

his writing career, Tieck worked for August Ferdinand Bernhardt and Friedrich Eberhard Rambach who “were on the look-out for young writers with a facile pen and a flair for style. Tieck was just what Rambach needed; his was rather the below-stairs area of the literary edifice, popular fiction in the mode of the Gothic novel” (Paulin 13-14). Tieck lent his pen to this venture and the themes which he encountered and used in this early works arguably create a dark undertow in his later, more literary, tales. Thus, when Tieck turns to prose fiction of his own, the sentiments of the Gothic that formed his younger years are present. For Tieck, and others, “the Gothic and the sublime are close partners” (Paulin 22), so his interpretation of nature in “Der Runenberg” as a seductive and seemingly malevolent presence is not surprising. In the story, Tieck “makes eros, nature organism, and underground mystery into one agency, whose sole aim is to delude, ensnare, and destroy” (Paulin 143). Paulin’s assessment of this representation of nature demonstrates a trend in scholarship of associating the natural realm and its representatives as evil or demonic within the work. By reading the manifestations of nature as vampiric, however, the motive for seducing and ultimately destroying young men becomes that of self-preservation. Nature seeks to prolong its life and in order to do so, it consumes the life energy of those who trespass into its deepest, most secret realms.

In the past, the mountain spirit has been characterized as a demonic or evil entity. W. J. Lillyman sums up the scholarship on the subject, pointing to both positive and negative interpretations and surmises that “what these critics are doing is identifying with one or other of the attitudes or beliefs held by characters in *Der Runenberg*” (232). The

same title. The tale is notable for featuring a female vampire, Brunhilda, who was brought back to life by Walter, a powerful nobleman” (286).

point of view that nature is demonic aligns them with Christian's father, wife and the village community. Victor Knight also identifies the evil aspect of nature:

Daemonic nature is symbolized by the gold and jewels and by the unnamed woman – representing, respectively, gratuitous wealth and sexual gratification without responsibility – and Christian's ambitions for these cause his misery and the misery of his dependants. His vision of beauty is wonderful, its implementation in social reality a disaster. (30)

These characterizations of the mountain spirit and its influence on Christian draw on textual evidence, but, as Lillyman and Ewton (19) argue, the story is more complex than any straightforward dichotomy between good and evil. The term that returns repeatedly in these discussions of "Der Runenberg" is "ambiguity." This inability to clearly interpret the tale, the textual ambiguity toward Christian's perceived madness, and the lack of definite malevolence or violence of the spirit allow for a reading of nature as a suffering entity, as a Romantic vampire. As Maria M. Tatar writes, "the enchantress from the Runenberg 'embodies' nature in the literal sense of the word. Blending both the terrifying and sublime aspects of nature, she appears as a creature at once satanic and divine" (290). In other words, the mysterious woman occupies a liminal space similar to that of the vampire.

In order to clarify the difference between nature as demonic and vampiric within the context of this thesis, the two terms require definition. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the current use of the word "demon" as: "An evil spirit; a malignant being of superhuman nature; a devil." Earlier uses point to a meaning that is not associated with evil directly, but rather designated "a supernatural being of a nature intermediate between that of gods and men; an inferior divinity, spirit, genius (including

the souls or ghosts of deceased persons, *esp.* deified heroes).” While the latter is applicable to the nature spirit in Tieck’s tale, the scholars’ persistent association of nature with negative and malignant attributes suggests that the use of the word “demon” or “demonic” should evoke the current use of the word. The vampire, on the other hand, is defined as: “A preternatural being of a malignant nature (in the original and usual form of the belief, a reanimated corpse), supposed to seek nourishment, or do harm, by sucking the blood of sleeping persons; a man or woman abnormally endowed with similar habits” (*OED Online*). The key difference between these two creatures is that the vampire is a reanimated *human* body, while the demon exists within its own body.³³ For the purpose of this discussion of nature as vampire, the following definition will serve: the vampire is a supernatural being forced to consume the lifeforce of living humans in order to sustain its existence. When applied to a reading of Tieck’s “Der Runenberg” the vampiric aspect of the nature spirit emerges from the depths of the narrative. Like Christian’s pebbles, the hints of vampirism require only a bit of polish to be seen.

On the surface, the tale is fairly straightforward: a young man named Christian is restless and seeks to escape the boredom of life on the plains with a journey into the nearby mountains, where he apprentices as a gamekeeper. During his travels, he climbs to the summit of the Runenberg where he has a vision of a beautiful woman. Emerging on the other side of the mountain range, he rejoins society, marries, and prospers. However, he cannot fully enjoy this life and when a mysterious stranger entrusts him with a sum of gold coins, he begins to act strangely. Ultimately, despite the efforts of his wife, Elisabeth, and his father, Christian returns to the mountains and apparently

³³ Some versions of the vampire tale, most notably Joss Whedon’s *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, explain that the force reanimating these corpses is, in fact, a demon, but for the purpose of this thesis the two beings are separate entities.

succumbs to madness, believing that he gains precious stones in the depths of a mine, but these gems are really only pebbles. Tieck's story serves as a warning against the blind pursuit of a reunion with nature, highlighting the dangers of venturing into the unknown regions of forest and mountain.³⁴ Christian's journey shows the juxtaposition between two superficially opposed realms:

Die fruchtbare Ebene steht für die Welt des organischen Lebens, das vom zyklischen Werden und Vergehen bestimmt ist; das öde Gebirge steht für die kristalline Welt des scheinbar unvergänglichen Gesteins. Die Ebene ist der Bezirk der menschlichen Gemeinschaft, das Gebirge die Gegend der Einsamkeit. Dort herrscht die gewöhnliche Zufriedenheit des Ehelebens, hier die visionäre Erotik eines Venusberges; dort Frömmigkeit, hier Heidentum.³⁵
(Hillenbrand 267)

In this "other" space, Christian encounters the alluring, but deadly spirit. Through this interaction with the untamed (inorganic) nature of the mountains, Christian becomes the apex of a triangle with the spectre and the pious Elisabeth, representative of tamed (organic) nature, forming the base. Close textual analysis reveals that Christian's attempt to return to the plant realm is futile: during his encounter with the spectre, he receives a magical tablet, which enters into him and this penetration gives her power over him, allowing her to ultimately lure him back to the "barren" sphere of stones. The

³⁴ The warning of "Der Runenberg" is an indication of what Gordon Birrell describes when he asserts that "Tieck, despite his close relationship with the Jena group, anticipates in many respects the mood and concerns of Late Romanticism" (5).

³⁵ "The fertile plain represents the world of organic life, which is determined by the cyclical creation and decay; the barren mountain range represents the crystal world of apparently everlasting stones. The plain is the district of human community, the mountains the region of loneliness. There reigns the common contentment of the married life; here the visionary eroticism of the mountain of Venus; there piety, here paganism" (my translation).

consequence of interaction with this unknown force is that Christian is already lost to the human realm before he attempts to rejoin society through his marriage to Elisabeth.³⁶

As an integral aspect of the tale, nature is an active participant in the story, rather than a mere set piece or symbol, and careful analysis shows that its activity is vampiric. Throughout, nature *acts*, luring Christian into its realm, employing several agents to influence the young hunter, and manifesting itself in different guises to ensure that he succumbs to its power. Christian in his encounter with the spirit becomes infected, not with a desire for blood as a traditional (and often) male vampire, but rather with a desire for minerals, with delving into the depths of the earth's body to extract its lifeblood. However, the encounter on the mountain is a *spiritual* experience for Christian in which the female manifestation of the stone realm provides a glimpse beyond the physical plane of existence for the young hunter, leaving him in an equally liminal position. Drawing on Beth E. McDonald's work, *The Vampire as Numinous Experience*, it becomes clear that Christian, as the voracious spectre's victim, "faces the possibility of surviving an encounter with the numinous in the form of the vampire in a condition of hesitation, being caught forever on the threshold of spiritual release and human existence, of the sacred and the profane" (37). Furthermore, nature does not act alone, it must employ agents to lure its prey into its lair. This analysis will show that the two strangers, and to some extent Christian's father,³⁷ can be read as previously infected men, acting as the

³⁶ Gordon Birrell asserts: "In spite of [Christian's] resolve to reunite himself with the community of the plains, he finds himself increasingly drawn back to the mountains as the mysterious figure implanted in his mind gradually reasserts itself and overpowers his superficial commitment to the plains. [...] it seems safe to interpret the tablet, and not the woman, as containing the very essence of the mountain realm" (57).

³⁷ Victor Knight, for example, points out that "Christian's father is an analogue of Christian. Beneath his moral condemnation of his son for restlessness and greed lies a fear of what may be invoked in himself. He is made uneasy by examining the tablet [...] The dualism of Christian is present also in his father, though is [sic] a less acute form" (27).

mountain realm's representatives. They maneuver Christian into situations where he is vulnerable, bringing him into contact with the spirit in the ruins and drawing him back into the mountains when he attempts to resist the urge to once more leave the plains. Finally, the old woman, or *Waldweib*,³⁸ becomes the agent of Christian's turn from civilization; her appearance coincides with the re-emergence of the magical tablet, the initial object of infection, and he can no longer deny the desire to abandon his family and his life. He leaves for the mountains to dig for the lifeblood of the earth in the deep, dark mines.

At the core of Tieck's tale lies a tension, not only between humanity and nature, but also between the organic and the inorganic, between life and lifelessness. Christian's journey crosses the boundaries that separate these realms and, as the place of contact, he becomes the center of their conflict. The spirit that haunts the Runenberg hovers between life and death, its vampiric aspect placing it into a liminal position that allows it to exert its power over the young hunter, manipulating the organic in an attempt to escape from its inorganic existence. This struggle between the untamed wilderness represented by the mountain and its spectre and tamed cultivation of the plains and its inhabitants is apparent from the beginning of the story. Christian, having left behind the comforts and community of the plain, has become a hunter and reflects on his "Schicksal, wie er so jung sei und Vater und Mutter, die wohlbekannte Heimat und alle Befreundeten seines Dorfes verlassen hatte, um eine fremde Umgebung zu suchen"³⁹ (25). His musings are

³⁸ Literally "forest woman/wife."

³⁹ "He was musing on his destiny, thinking how, still so young, he had left his father and mother, his familiar home, and all the friends he had known in his native village to seek new surroundings" (trans. Ryder and Browning 81, all translations, unless otherwise noted, are from the 1983 translation found in *German Literary Fairy Tales*, edited and translated by Frank G. Ryder and Robert M. Browning).

the first indication of the opposition between the world of the plains, his homeland, and the world of the mountains, where he resides now. As Harry Vredeveld argues,

The world as portrayed in “Der Runenberg” is clearly divided into two opposing realms: the mountains and forests on the one hand, and the plain on the other. Each of these realms is ambivalent, and possesses both a negative and a positive pole. Thus the magic realm can grant deep awareness of the inner world and lead to the discovery of the self; but it can also extinguish the light of reason completely and envelop its victim in the night of insanity. The plain is equally ambivalent. As an extreme, it represents a negative aspect; then it is the world of the Father, of the male spiritual principle, excluding and repressing the Feminine, rejecting matter (derived from *mater*), the mountains, the Mother. (213)

This analysis provides the superficial structure of the friction between mountains and plains, but does not take into account that each realm has representatives of both genders. While the dominant force in the wilderness is undoubtedly the female spirit, her agents are male.⁴⁰ On the plains, the dominant figure is the father and the order he represents,⁴¹ but Elisabeth is also pivotal in Christian’s attempt to return to society. She provides balance to the masculinity of the father, anchoring Christian within the community through *her* connection to the village. As Vredeveld argues, the two realms are only negative when taken to an extreme and this state of binary opposition is part of Tieck’s warning about humanity’s relationship to nature. With this dichotomy established, the associations of an irrational female space and rational male space are invoked at the

⁴⁰ The female *Waldweib* is not one of these agents as she is interpreted as an incarnation of the female spirit.

⁴¹ While the father is the character who attempts to assert his authority over Christian, he (and Elisabeth) can be seen as agents of the village priest. When Christian leaves the Runenberg, his first experience is in the village church, where he listens to the priest’s sermon. His reaction to the religious service mirrors the pagan experience he just underwent on the Runenberg: “Der fremde Jüngling hatte sich und sein Herz noch niemals so empfunden, so voll Liebe und so beruhigt, so den stillsten und erquickendsten Gefühlen hingegeben. Er beugte sich weinend, als der Priester endlich den Segen sprach” (Tieck 36) (“The stranger had never been so aware of himself and his heart as he was at this moment, so full of love, so given over to the calmest and most comforting feelings. He bowed his head in tears when the pastor finally pronounced the blessing” [trans. Ryder and Browning 89-90]).

outset of the narrative and those who cross the boundaries between the two spheres place themselves into danger. Untamed nature's seduction of Christian is subtle and is the source of the link between the natural realm and vampirism, for "while the male vampire story was a tale of domination, the female version was one of seduction. In the usual scenario a young man has to deal with an older supernatural temptress who somehow drains his energy, leaving him weak and desperate" (Twitchell 39).⁴² Christian does not yet know of the force on the Runenberg, the ancient spirit that has drawn him to the mountains, but she is responsible for his presence in the forest and for everything that transpires once he crosses the threshold into this realm of solitude.

The brief consideration of his past spurs Christian into movement and away from introspection. He walks downhill to a stream, and diverted from potential homesickness once more, sits for a time. Nature surrounds him with its sights and sounds and as he listens to the gurgling of the water: "Es schien, als wenn ihm die Wogen in unverständlichen Worten tausend Dinge sagten, die ihm so wichtig waren, und er mußte sich innig betrüben, daß er ihre Reden nicht verstehen konnte"⁴³ (25). Being able to hear, but not understand, nature's language in the rushing of the stream is a clever lure that both distracts and entices Christian. In allowing him to see glimpses of its presence and Otherness, the inorganic wilderness of the mountain spirit beguiles him and makes him

⁴² While it is true that male vampires also become associated with seduction as the myth evolves, they are interpreted in a different light. As Carol A. Senf argues, "Since the rise of the vampire as a literary figure, these traits [bloodsucking, rebellion, and overt eroticism] have been shared by many male vampires as well. The most important distinction is that these traits were more feared in traditional women than in men, primarily because the traditional woman was expected to be a nurturer rather than a bloodsucker, a docile creature rather than a rebel, and a being who sublimated her eroticism to child-rearing and monogamous marriage. Because of her extreme deviation from the ideal, therefore, the female vampire was both more fear-inspiring and more desire-provoking than her male counterpart" (207).

⁴³ "[...] it seemed as though it were telling him in language he could not understand a thousand things that were of great importance to him, and he became deeply downcast that he could not comprehend this speech" (trans. Ryder and Browning 81).

reckless. He wants to understand, but comprehension is always just beyond his reach. In this moment, Christian embodies unfulfilled desire. The hint he gains of nature's mysteries at first upsets him, but, as with his homesickness moments before, his mood brightens quickly. In a sense, his inability to sustain the melancholy that his exclusion from the secret language evokes, demonstrates that his desire for spiritual enlightenment is not his primary concern. At the same time, his method of distraction is to sing a hunting song and this choice is a rejection of the feminine and irrational space he cannot penetrate; he "attempts to take part of the phallographic order by choosing the 'manly' lifestyle of hunter and 'appropriating' the wild mountain terrain as his own" (Corkhill 40).⁴⁴ While he believes that he wants to gain access to nature and its mysteries, his actions and his focus on domination deny the possibility of his entrance into a spiritual union.

Escape from the feeling of exclusion, however, is short-lived. Christian's attempt to reassert control over his environment fails and the sense of melancholy and isolation returns with the setting sun. At the conclusion of his song, with the shadows deepening around him, he laments his solitude. In this moment of complete distraction, which comes as the day ends and the vampire's time of power – night – approaches, he commits an act that entraps him in nature's snare:

Gedankenlos zog er eine hervorragende Wurzel aus der
Erde, und plötzlich hörte er erschreckend ein dumpfes
Winseln im Boden, das sich unterirdisch in klagenden
Tönen fortzog und erst in der Ferne wehmütig verscholl.
Der Ton durchdrang sein innerstes Herz, er ergriff ihn, als
wenn er unvermutet die Wunde berührt habe, an der der
sterbende Leichnam der Natur in Schmerzen verscheiden

⁴⁴ Corkhill goes on to note, "Ironically, the concept of hunting as a male preserve is thrown into question by the subtle reference to its patroness in the interpolated huntsman's song" (40), thus destabilizing the gender binary, rather than affirming it.

wolle. Er sprang auf und wollte entfliehen, denn er hatte wohl ehemals von der seltsamen Alrunenwurzel gehört, die beim Ausreißen so herzdurchschneidende Klagetöne von sich gebe, daß der Mensch von ihrem Gewinsel wahnsinnig werden müsse.⁴⁵ (Tieck 27)

This uprooting is a transgression, puncturing the veil between the natural and the supernatural; the dying root's cries herald Christian's doom. The use of the mandrake root draws on its mythology: "According to legends and traditions continued in the countryside, [...] the mandrake does not only look human: it can moan, scream, sob, speak and sing as well. [...] Literature, and especially [R]omanticism [...], found in the plant a literary theme out of the ordinary, which made them question the connections between humans and nature" (Zarcone 116). The connection drawn in this case is a negative one.⁴⁶ Christian's thoughtless act leaves him completely defenceless against the beckoning of the nature spirit. The root is another tool in bringing the hapless young man to the summit of the mountain and thus fully into the power of the alluring force that resides there. As Maria M. Tatar notes, "Tieck's spelling of the word [Alrunenwurzel] deviates slightly from the orthographic norms of his age. [...] By eliding the 'a' in the word and adding the syllable 'en,' Tieck subtly alerted his readers to a possible link between the root unearthed by Christian and the mountain that appears in the title of his story" (286). Once Christian pulls the mandrake root from the ground and hears its

⁴⁵ "Unthinkingly he pulled a projecting root from the earth and started in sudden fright to hear in the ground a dull moaning, protracted subterraneously in piteous tones, which died mournfully away in the far distance. This tone penetrated his inmost heart, it seized him as though he had unwittingly touched the wound of which the moribund body of nature was painfully expiring. He sprang up and was about to flee, for he had of course heard of the mysterious mandrake root that utters piercing shrieks when it is pulled up, and drives one mad by its ceaseless moaning" (trans. Ryder and Browning 83).

⁴⁶ While not published until 1911, Hanns Heinz Ewers novel *Alraune* connects the name of the plant with vampirism. In the story, the protagonist Frank Braun and his uncle conduct an experiment which "involved the insemination of a young woman with the semen of a sex criminal. They carried out the process of going to the worst part of town, kidnapping a harlot, and artificially inseminating her. The product of the experiment was Alraune, who grew into a beautiful young woman. However, Alraune became a vampire who attacked men sexually and then took their blood and soul" (Melton 240).

anguished cry, two things become apparent: that nature is sentient and that “the episode with the mandrake root [...] reveals [...] the presence of a spirit or spirits within nature. These spirits at first gain partial control of the mind and create a longing for an association with nature. They then strive for complete control and, in Christian’s case, finally succeed” (Kimpel 177-178). What was only hinted at through the indecipherable voices in the stream, becomes concrete through the use of the mandrake: the natural realm is conscious and dying. Having exposed Christian to the knowledge of its suffering, the spirit that rules the wilderness gradually gains control over the young man and, like a vampire, begins to drain his life force in order to sustain its existence.

Immediately after pulling the mandrake root from the earth and hearing its dreadful cry, Christian encounters the first of nature’s apparently human agents.⁴⁷ A stranger appears and accompanies Christian as he crosses the mountain range in an attempt to flee from the knowledge the root has given him. In this sequence, Christian recounts his first crossing of the threshold into the mountain realm, describing his restlessness on the plains and his failed attempts at gardening, fishing and commerce. Significantly, his desire to venture into the mountains is depicted in a way that speaks to nature’s power once more: “‘Es hat mich wie mit fremder Gewalt aus dem Kreise meiner Eltern und Verwandten hinweggenommen, mein Geist war seiner selbst nicht mächtig; wie ein Vogel, der in einem Netz gefangen ist und sich vergeblich sträubt, so verstrickt

⁴⁷ Another feature of the mandrake root is that it is associated with both genders (Zarcone 117) giving rise to the argument that the stranger, as well as the mountain spirit and *Waldweib* are manifestations of the root. However, if nature has lured Christian into the wilderness, then the root is simply another tool used by the hungry spirit to bring Christian to the center of its realm – the Runenberg – and the stranger is her agent, put in place to ensure the young hunter’s ascent to the mountain’s summit.

war meine Seele in seltsamen Vorstellungen und Wünschen”⁴⁸ (Tieck 28). His father tells him about the mountains and “plötzlich erwachte in [Christian] der bestimmteste Trieb, das Gefühl, daß [er] nun die für [ihn] bestimmte Lebensweise gefunden [hatte]”⁴⁹ (28). He cannot resist this call. He crosses the first threshold between the plains and the forest in the past, but he does so willingly, eagerly even, and thereby comes into the spirit’s power. Christian is “lured by the desire to attain an object of great value; [he is] summoned or chosen, rather than initiating the search on [his] own; [...]. [He is] dissatisfied with [his] situation at home, thus [he is] ripe for the influence of a force which will draw [him] away” (Kimpel 184). Christian’s description of the longing engendered within him for the mountains, suggests that he was summoned to the wilderness. His contact with the plant world and his careless uprooting of the mandrake bring him deeper into the sphere of the mountains and into direct contact with the spirit that has apparently called him to her place of power. While the motive for this summoning is never stated, the narrative hints through the use of the mandrake root and its wounded cry, and through the portrayal of the spirit itself, that untamed nature is suffering and that the spectre requires the vitality of young men like Christian in order to maintain its existence. Thus, the woman on the mountain shares this characteristic with female vampires of the Romantic period who “became the prototype of the Romantic seductress, acquiring, as the myth developed, an appetite for young men whom she would lure into her cave with promises of love” (Twitchell 40). She does not initially use love as her lure, instead she uses the mysteries of the natural realm in order to bring Christian

⁴⁸ “It was as though some unknown power took me away from the circle of my parents and relatives; I was not master of myself; like a bird that has been caught in a net and flutters in vain, my soul was entangled in imaginings and desires” (trans. Ryder and Browning 83).

⁴⁹ “[...] and there immediately awakened in [Christian] an overpowering urge, a feeling that [he] had now found the way of life meant for [him]” (trans. Ryder and Browning 84).

to her. Furthermore, she must employ various agents to gain access to her victims, such as the two strangers who direct Christian to her locus in the ruins at key moments in the story.

Significantly, the stranger accompanies Christian to the boundary of nature's inner domain, then leaves him to cross the second threshold alone. The moon illuminates the mountain range and the two men stop with the Runenberg as a backdrop to their final conversation: "in unkenntlichen Formen und vielen gesonderten Massen, die der bleiche Schimmer wieder rätselhaft vereinigte, lag das gespaltene Gebirge vor ihnen, im Hintergrunde ein steiler Berg, auf welchem uralte verwitterte Ruinen schauerlich im weißen Licht sich zeigten"⁵⁰ (Tieck 30). This uninviting depiction does not deter Christian from his ascent and soon climbing to the summit is his only choice as the stranger bars the way to the mines which are his domain:

Unser Weg trennt sich hier [...] ich gehe in diese Tiefe
hinunter, dort bei jenem Schacht ist meine Wohnung: die
Erze sind meine Nachbarn, die Berggewässer erzählen mir
Wunderdinge in der Nacht, dahin kannst du mir nicht
folgen. Aber siehe dort den Runenberg mit seinem
schroffen Mauerwerke, wie schön und anlockend das alte
Gestein zu uns herblickt!⁵¹ (30)

This passage not only establishes that Christian must encounter the vampiric creature alone, but also that "the world of the ores is closed to Christian [...] it is the end rather than the beginning of his quest" (Ewton 24). He cannot enter the depths of the earth,

⁵⁰ "In unrecognizable shapes and many separate masses, which the pale moonlight again mysteriously united into one, the cleft range lay before them. In the distance rose a steep mountain on whose top age-old weatherbeaten ruins awesomely revealed themselves in the white light" (trans. Ryder and Browning 85). The translation of "schauerlich" as "awesomely" does not give the word's true meaning. "Schauerlich" directly translated means "eerie" or "gruesomely," "nightmarish." Thus, the appearance of the Runenberg is not inviting or pleasant.

⁵¹ "Our paths part here, [...] I go down into this gorge, there beside that old mine shaft is my dwelling; the ores are my neighbors, the waters trickling in the mine tell me wondrous things in the night. To that place you cannot follow me. But see the Runenberg there with its precipitous walls, how beautiful and tempting the ancient masonry looks!" (trans. Ryder and Browning 85)

because he is not yet infected, is not yet an agent of the vampire. Infection occurs at the summit of the mountain; thus, he must travel to the peak before he gains access to the underground regions. The stranger, arguably, is one of nature's previous victims, fulfilling the mandate of the blood disease and dwelling in the dark depths of the mine in order to unearth its secret lifeblood – minerals. He can hear and understand the voices in the stream, because the vampire's disease gives him access to its language. Christian is not yet initiated, his blood is not contaminated and entrance into the mines is prohibited. Theodore Ziolkowski supports the reading of the stranger's connection to nature (although he does not call the spirit vampiric) when he argues that "the stranger in the mountains is clearly supposed to be a miner of sorts with connections to the dark powers of nature (the mandrake root); and he directs Christian to his symbolic encounter with a spirit of the mountain, whose appearance arouses associations with knowledge, avarice, and lust" (52). Only after the encounter at the summit of the mountain is Christian ready to venture into the mines.

Undaunted, Christian begins to climb the mountain.⁵² As he does, he feels "alles winkte ihm dorthin, die Sterne schienen dorthin zu leuchten, der Mond wies mit einer hellen Straße nach den Trümmern, [...] und aus der Tiefe redeten ihm Gewässer und rauschende Wälder zu und sprachen ihm Mut ein"⁵³ (Tieck 31). Now that he is on the threshold of nature's inner realm, it seems that he understands the voices in the forest and

⁵² In the conversation with the stranger, Christian recalls that his mentor, the old forester told him stories about the mountain, but he has forgotten them. All that he remembers is "dass mir an jenem Abend grauenhaft zu Mute war" (Tieck 31) ("On the evening he told them to me I was full of dread" [trans. Ryder and Browning 85-86]).

⁵³ "Everything beckoned him thither: the stars seemed to cast their light that way, the moonlight made a bright road towards the ruins, [...] and out of the depths the streams and the rustling woods spoke to him, inspiring him with courage" (trans. Ryder and Browning 86).

water and that they give him courage to continue his climb toward the unknown, eerie ruins. The setting is significant. Ruins, Sophie Thomas writes,

suggest an absent whole, and indeed occupy an ambivalent space between the part and the past whole, whose presence they affirm and negate (affirm, paradoxically, by negation). In their present state of decay, ruins signify loss and absence; they are, moreover, a visible evocation of the invisible, the appearance of disappearance. And yet, to the extent that they are themselves preserved, they suggest perseverance: the possibility, at least, of endurance against the odds of time and history. (42)

Thus, they are the perfect home for another being who occupies a liminal space: the vampire. Clearly, Christian is crossing the boundary into a realm that is itself on the threshold of life and death, past and present and the ruins are an emblem of this state. Like the vampire, whose life occurs after death and carries it through time, the ruins continue past the overall destruction of the building, carrying its memory through time. The reanimated corpse of the vampire is itself a type of ruin, a body in the midst of decay, but still physically present. When he reaches the end of the path on the mountain, Christian sees “ein Licht, das sich hinter dem alten Gemäuer zu bewegen schien. Er sah dem Scheine nach und entdeckte, daß er in einen alten geräumigen Saal blicken konnte”⁵⁴ (Tieck 32). The room which he glimpses is not a ruin. The return of the broken stones to wholeness brings the dead building back to a semblance of its proper form; much like the disease of vampirism brings the dead body back to a semblance of vitality.

The moment of encounter at the top of the Runenberg is the pivotal scene for Christian, as the victim, and nature, as the vampire. The transmission of the disease is the reason Christian becomes fully alienated from human society, it is the beginning of his

⁵⁴ He sees “a light that seemed to be moving behind the ancient masonry. He followed the beam and discovered that he could see into a spacious ancient hall” (trans. Ryder and Browning 86).

transformation into a type of revenant that is completely under the vampire's power.

When he looks into the room, he sees

eine große weibliche Gestalt [...]. Sie schien nicht den Sterblichen anzugehören, so groß, so mächtig waren ihre Glieder, so streng ihr Gesicht, aber doch dünkte dem entzückten Jünglinge, daß er noch niemals solche Schönheit gesehen oder geahndet habe. Er zitterte und wünschte doch heimlich, daß sie zum Fenster treten und ihn wahrnehmen möchte.⁵⁵ (Tieck 32)

This description establishes that the woman in the ruins is not mortal or human, and yet, she is beautiful. Her beauty is another indication of vampirism: “the typical vampire woman, [...] is a stock type. Possessing an unearthly beauty and oozing sex appeal, she is the quintessence of glamour. The supernatural splendor of her appearance, however, is a deception, masking the wickedness of her true nature” (Frost 44). Her appearance allows her to gain power over the enchanted Christian; it disarms him and acts as a further lure, drawing him into the vampire's power. He cannot resist and continues to watch through the window, his voyeurism another transgression that ultimately leads to his infection and the severing of his ties to human society. Nature, in this tale, is a seductress, calling young men away from productive lives in order to feed her own needs. The cautionary aspect of Tieck's narrative is clear. Venturing into the wilderness is dangerous.

However, beneath this warning against reckless penetration into the untamed natural realm lies the idea that nature itself has been injured through its contact with humanity and this wound adds to the danger it poses in its attempt to survive. Thus, the spirit's

⁵⁵ “[...] a tall female figure [...]. She did not seem to belong to the mortal kind, so tall was she, so might of limb, so severe in her features, and yet it seemed to the enraptured youth that he had never seen such beauty of even dreamt of it. He trembled, but secretly wished that she would step to the window and notice him” (trans. Ryder and Browning 86-87).

“wickedness” is not inherent, as the spectre only desires to live, but rather a human interpretation of the threat it represents to young men.

This seduction does not end with the woman’s appearance in the room, or with the song she sings that once more connects her to the idea of ruins and of times long past, suggesting again the longevity of the vampire. Once she falls silent, she begins to undress, thereby adding a sexual element to the encounter, immediately before infecting Christian with her disease:

Als sie geendigt hatte, fing sie an sich zu entkleiden und ihre Gewänder in einen kostbaren Wandschrank zu legen. Erst nahm sie einen goldenen Schleier vom Haupte, und ein langes, schwarzes Haar floß in geringelter Fülle bis über die Hüften hinab; dann löste sie das Gewand des Busens, und der Jüngling vergaß sich und die Welt im Anschauen der überirdischen Schönheit. Er wagte kaum zu atmen, als sie nach und nach alle Hüllen löste; nackt schritt sie endlich im Saale auf und nieder, und ihre schweren, schwebenden Locken bildeten um sie her ein dunkel wogendes Meer, aus dem wie Marmor die glänzenden Formen des reinen Leibes abwechselnd hervorstrahlten.⁵⁶ (Tieck 33)

Christian’s temptation becomes complete with the shedding of the woman’s clothing.

The explicit sexuality of the passage is both a sign and symptom of nature’s vampiric status in the tale. The overt expression of her desire through the act of disrobing connects her to the idea that “the ambiguity of the vampire between life and death, and between body and soul is a powerful embodiment of the precarious position of the female sexualized body in a patriarchal system. In the ascetic, anti-sensual, and misogynistic

⁵⁶ “When she had ended her song, she began to undress and to lay her garments in a costly wardrobe. First, she took a golden veil from her head, and long black hair flowed in curly abundance down over her loins; then she loosened the garment covering her bosom, and the youth forgot himself and everything around him at the sight of her supernal beauty. He hardly dared breathe as she removed one garment after another; finally she strode naked up and down the room, and her thick, flowing locks formed about her a dark swelling sea out of which the gleaming limbs of her pure body shone at intervals like marble” (trans. Ryder and Browning 87).

world of Christendom independent female desire is not allowed to flourish, but is equally unable to die” (Barkhoff 132-133). This expression of sexuality is almost immediately juxtaposed to the pious and wholesome figure of Elisabeth when Christian returns to society in the aftermath of the encounter at the summit of the mountain. Overwhelmed by both the magical and sexual advances of the spirit, Christian is powerless to resist. Indeed, he does not *want* to reject the approaching vision. One further element enhances the power of the woman in this scene: the fact that through showing herself to Christian without clothing she is revealing her embodiment of the mountain realm to him. As Gordon Birrell argues, “fully clothed, she had seemed to embody the external landscape of the mountains. Now, however, her appearance suggests the internal treasures of the stone realm” (56); in other words, naked, she represents the hidden riches of the mines to which Christian does not yet have access.

Since the dimensions of Christian’s experience are both sexual and spiritual, what occurs on the summit of the mountain is, arguably, an encounter with the numinous in the form of the vampire. Nature as vampire, then, becomes the location of Christian’s awakening to his own physicality, as well as his spirituality, thus laying claim on the entirety of his life. Beth E. McDonald claims that,

The numinous value, or sacred functioning, of the vampire myth lies in the influence that an encounter with the numinous has on the individual. In vampire literature, an encounter with the vampire works on both structural and thematic levels to produce, first, an effect or condition of perception which allows the reader, and perhaps the character, to experience a sense of powerlessness in the face of someone or some thing supernaturally powerful; and second, through the feelings of fear and the accompanying themes of power and powerlessness, to reach an epiphany, a kind of catharsis of soul that brings the character to a new understanding of being-in-the-world. (37)

In the meeting between the spirit of untamed nature and Christian, his sense of powerlessness stems from the apparition's overt sexual and spiritual advances which he is unable to resist. Significantly, Christian does not participate in the unveiling of the woman's body; he merely observes her actions, becoming more and more enthralled by her beauty. As such, the encounter follows the pattern of female vampire attacks, in which "the female may change in the various retellings, [but] it is noteworthy that the male protagonist [...] stays remarkably consistent. The victim of the lamia⁵⁷ attack is docile, a willing co-conspirator. The female seductress has all the power" (Twitchell 58). Indeed, Christian is barely able to breathe while the nature spirit weaves her spell around him, drawing him further and further into her magic so that he is unwilling, as well as, unable to resist. He *wants* her to look at him, to acknowledge his presence and so he *wants* her embrace, but he does not act on his desire so that "to the extent that lifting the veil is symbolic of the loss of virginity as part of a heterosexual process, it is noteworthy that Christian is not the one to initiate any act of defloration" (Corkhill 41). In this relationship, Christian is a passive participant. Twitchell also notes that this typical female vampire attack requires that "the male not be the aggressor. For he is being initiated into sexuality with all of its frenetic energy and bizarre confusions" (Twitchell 58); therefore, it is important that the woman holds the power throughout this encounter. She lures her prey to the top of the mountain through a type of siren's song and the use of previously infected agents, in order to victimize another young man, claiming his vitality in an attempt to heal the wound the mandrake root expresses and to revive the wilderness.

⁵⁷ The word "lamia" is used as synonym for the female vampire, as Twitchell explains, "The myth had gained sufficient currency by the eighteenth century for the word 'lamia' to have become a generic term for all female vampires" (40).

The vampire has enchanted him and made him her own creature through the use of the rune-covered tablet and the unsettling experience of a complete loss of power in the face of her desire.

Unlike in a typical vampire tale, the woman does not bite Christian and drink his blood. The moment of (reverse) penetration is mystical rather than physical. After disrobing, she takes a stone-encrusted tablet from a cabinet and the sight of this bejeweled treasure fills Christian with emotion. The glittering gems dazzle him and “[er] erschreck, als die Schöne das Fenster öffnete, ihm die magische steinerne Tafel reichte und die wenigen Worten sprach: ‚Nimm dieses zu meinem Angedenken!‘ Er faßte die Tafel und fühlte die Figur, *die unsichtbar sogleich in sein Inneres übergang*”⁵⁸ (Tieck 34, my italics). Like the vampire’s fangs, the woman’s magical tablet pierces Christian and infects him with her supernatural disease. The mystical exchange is an act of penetration, one that extends nature’s power over him.⁵⁹ From this moment of communion, he will not be able to forget the woman. Her magic infiltrates his inner being and infuses him with her essence. As Milly Williamson argues “the vampire, like the female (particularly maternal) body, is not clean and pure and closed. Instead, it transgresses boundaries and disrupts ideas about where the body starts and ends” (12). When the mystical force enters into Christian, it crosses the threshold of his self, thus blurring the division

⁵⁸ “was startled when the beauteous female figure opened the window, handed him the magical stone tablet and said, ‘Take this in memory of me!’ He grasped the tablet and ran his fingers over the pattern, *which at once passed over invisibly into him*” (trans. Ryder and Browning 88, my italics).

⁵⁹ The encounter and the tablet have been interpreted in several ways: Ralph Ewton argues that “this brilliantly shining array of jewels represents [Christian’s] own true self” (26); W. J. Lillyman posits that the scene is a spiritual communion, “the woman’s utterance, recalling the words of Christ at the Last Supper as he gives his disciples the bread, as well as the other details of the scene suggesting the communicant’s acceptance of the wafer *imply* that this communion is as valid as the other communion Christian experiences in the village church” (236); finally, Harry Vredevelde, also interprets the scene as a spiritual union, but not in a Christian context, so that Christian’s vision is “an epiphany, a moment of supreme awareness and illumination, of mystic union with the Eternal” (204).

between him and the mountain spirit. The “attack” is a transgression of boundaries that mirrors Christian’s crossing of the threshold into nature’s realm – he enters nature and now nature enters him. Neither the woman, nor Christian, present a closed space and Christian’s vulnerability, which increased with every moment that he spent in the mountains listening to voices in the stream and pulling up mandrake roots, leads to *his* defloration and infection. In the course of this interaction, he is feminized, as he is *acted upon* without acting.

In the aftermath of this mystical union, Christian falls into delirium and fever, symptoms of an infection, but also a sign that the encounter was vampiric. When the tablet enters him, the vision disappears and he stumbles away from the peak, “die Tafel fest in seinen Händen gepreßt, als der Morgen graute und er erschöpft, schwindelnd und half schlafend die steile Höhe hinunterstürzte”⁶⁰ (Tieck 34). His descent is not part of the narrative aside from this brief description, where he becomes disoriented and loses consciousness. Finally, he awakens on the other side of the mountains in broad daylight with no clear recollection of arriving at this destination. At this point, he begins to question the events he so recently experienced on the Runenberg:

Er suchte nach jener Tafel und fand sie nirgends. Erstaunt und verwirrt wollte er sich sammeln und seine Erinnerungen anknüpfen, aber sein Gedächtnis war wie mit einem wüsten Nebel angefüllt, in welchem sich formlose Gestalten wild und unkenntlich durcheinanderbewegten. Sein ganzes voriges Leben lag wie in einer tiefen Ferne hinter ihm; das Seltsamste und das Gewöhnliche war so ineinander vermischt, daß er es unmöglich sondern konnte. Nach langem Streite mit sich selbst glaubte er endlich, ein Traum oder ein plötzlicher Wahnsinn habe ihn in dieser Nacht befallen, nur begriff er immer nicht, wie er sich so

⁶⁰ “He was still holding the tablet pressed tightly in his hands when the gray dawn came, and he rushed down the steep height, exhausted, dizzy and only half awake” (trans. Ryder and Browning 88).

weit in eine fremde, entlegene Gegend habe verirren
können.⁶¹ (34)

The confusion and the dream-like quality of Christian's memories are indicative of a vampire attack. In analyzing the vampire encounter in John Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," an English poem published in 1819, James B. Twitchell writes, "the knight then falls asleep and has a dream. [...] In his dream these once-noble men announce to the knight that he is soon to join their ranks. He has become one of them, enthralled to La Belle Dame" (57). Tieck's tale predates the pale, loitering knight, but as in the poem, "art and reality, dream and waking, meet and merge" (Twitchell 57) and Christian is unable to differentiate between reality and vision once he leaves the mountain and its alluring spirit. Supernatural experiences, like the one with the spectral woman in the ruins, unsettle the mind, and as Hung-Jung Lee argues in relation to Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, "a crucial problem for those 'inflicted' with this supernatural vision is that the distinction between what is 'real' and what is fantastical or mystical breaks down, so that an inability to distinguish between the two paralyzes and eventually destroys the 'patient'" (Lee 26). Christian cannot clearly recall the moment of mystical infection, because his mind is unable to determine the reality or unreality of his experience. This split in his ability to perceive the difference between reality and fiction grows over the course of the remaining narrative, and eventually leads to his rejection of society in favour of the mountain realm. Once he is infected, he cannot be cured.

⁶¹ "He looked for his tablet but could find it nowhere. Astounded and confused, he tried to collect his thoughts and recall what had happened, but his memory was as though filled with a murky fog in which unrecognizable amorphous shapes stirred in wild confusion. His whole former life seemed a great distance behind him; the strange and the ordinary were so inextricably mingled that he could not distinguish them. After a long inward struggle he was finally ready to believe that a dream or a sudden madness had come over him during the night, but still he could not understand how he could have wandered so far astray into a remote, unknown region" (trans. Ryder and Browning 88).

The life on the plains cannot remove the enduring effect of the tablet on Christian's blood, his body, and his mind. His immediate reaction to the encounter is one of denial: "Seine Empfindungen und Wünsche der Nacht erschienen ihm ruchlos und frevelhaft, er wollte sich wieder kindlich, bedürftig und demütig an die Menschen wie an seine Brüder schließen und sich von den gottlosen Gefühlen und Vorsätzen entfernen"⁶² (Tieck 35). Christian's attempt to erase the sensations he felt on the mountain, which seem now like a dream from which he has awakened, "does not, however, represent a victory of the conscious over the unconscious. The struggle between intellect and the irrational that takes place upon awakening is a struggle for clarity, an attempt to find balance between the two realms" (Vredeveld 207). However, this interpretation is problematic. Balance between the supernatural realm and the profane would not entail a complete denial of one for the other. Christian seeks to suppress his memories on the mountain through his immersion in human society. He wishes to cure the mystical disease through piety, work and marriage, but ultimately, the disease still claims him. Once infection has taken place, balance is no longer a possibility for Christian, and not even the power of the church is able to free him completely. When he enters the village chapel and listens to the service in progress he feels "bei den heiligen Worten wie von einer unsichtbaren Gewalt durchdrungen und das Schattenbild der Nacht [ist] in die tiefste Entfernung wie ein Gespenst hinabgerückt"⁶³ (Tieck 36). The influence of the prayers allows him to believe "daß er ihn ohne sein Verdienst wieder aus den Netzen des

⁶² "The sensations and desires of the night past now seemed to him wicked and sacrilegious. Recognizing his own needs, he wanted once more to join his fellows in a humble, childlike, and needful way, to call other men his brothers and cast out his godless feelings and ambitions" (trans. Ryder and Browning 89).

⁶³ "he felt himself pervaded by an invisible power and the shadowy vision of the night retreated into the deepest distance, like a ghost" (trans. Ryder and Browning 90).

bösen Geistes befreit habe”⁶⁴ (36). However, the mountain spirit is not banished, but only temporarily forced back. Her power is not broken through Christian’s return to society; rather, her hold on him through the mystical infection is momentarily weakened.

Throughout the period of happiness in the village, there are indications that the tablet and thus the vampiric spirit, still influence his thoughts and behaviour. The key element of Christian’s attempted return to society is his relationship with Elisabeth. Physically, she is the opposite of the woman on the mountain: “schlank und blond, ihr blaues Auge glänzte von der durchdringendsten Sanftheit, ihr Antlitz war wie durchsichtig und in zartesten Farben blühend”⁶⁵ (Tieck 36). Symbolically, this portrayal associates her with flowers, and by extension with the tamed nature of the garden. The juxtaposition between the two women is clear. Pamela Tesch describes Elisabeth as a “*femme fragile*:”

Two key elements draw attention to Elisabeth as a *femme fragile*: her fragility and peaceful aura. She is a young, thin blond with translucent skin, gentle blue eyes, and vegetative lightness typical of the *femme fragile*. Peace enters Christian’s body not as a hieroglyph, but as the priest’s spoken blessing, as this is the sanctified woman, the woman of Christian society. (684)

Elisabeth does not actively seduce Christian like the woman on the mountain, his attraction stems from her spiritual appearance, not from her physicality, despite his initial observations.⁶⁶ His interest lies in the fragility and tranquil aura Tesch describes. The

⁶⁴ “for freeing him by His grace from the toils of the evil spirit” (trans. Ryder and Browning 90).

⁶⁵ “She was slender and blond, her blue eyes shone with the most pervasive gentleness, her face was as though transparent and blossoming in the tenderest colors” (trans. Ryder and Browning 89).

⁶⁶ The conflict between the spiritual, pagan realm and the physical, Christian realm is made manifest in the juxtaposition of these two female characters. While Elisabeth appears spiritual, she is ultimately only physical to Christian. The woman on the mountain, grounded in physicality through her nakedness, on the other hand, offers spiritual awakening. This friction between the two women is emblematic of a vampiric

woman on the mountain brought Christian ecstasy; Elisabeth gives him peace, although it is short-lived: “by marrying the archetypal blond and blue-eyed Elisabeth, the epitome of rural piety [...], and asserting himself as a breadwinner and family head, Christian is able *temporarily* to repress and distance himself from any ‘gottlosen Gefühlen’ [...] and to reappropriate the surrendered patriarchal order” (Corkhill 41, my emphasis). However, she cannot supplant the vision of the mountain spirit and Christian is haunted from the outset of their marriage. Even on his wedding night he exclaims, “‘Nein, nicht jenes Bild bist du, welches mich einst im Traum entzückte und das ich niemals ganz vergessen kann, aber doch bin ich glücklich in deiner Nähe und selig in deinen Armen’”⁶⁷ (Tieck 37), indicating that his attempts to repress the memory of the mountain spirit are already failing.

From the beginning, Christian’s vampiric infection undermines the legitimacy and happiness of his marriage. As time passes, his discontent grows and Maria M. Tatar argues that

the marriage to Elisabeth is celebrated ‘mit aller Fröhlichkeit’ [with all joyfulness]; the bride and groom seem ‘trunken von ihrem Glück’ [drunk with their luck]; in the arms of his wife, Christian feels ‘glücklich’ [lucky] and ‘selig’ [blessed]. By the time of his daughter’s birth, however, he is no more than ‘vergnügt,’ [content] and finally he is described as merely ‘einheimisch und befriedigt’ [domestic and satisfied]. The sequence of phrases tracing the development of Christian’s attitude toward domestic life betrays a steady erosion of happiness and a distinct attenuation of feeling, with the result that the final expression in that sequence ‘ganz einheimisch und

discourse, where the rational, pious realm attempts to save the vampire’s victim, but only the destruction of the creature can cure the afflicted and nature cannot be so easily vanquished.

⁶⁷ “No, you are not that vision that once enraptured me in a dream and that I can never wholly forget; but still I am happy when I am near you and blessed in your arms” (trans. Ryder and Browning 91).

befriedigt,' takes on a nearly pejorative meaning. (296, my translations)

Nowhere in the narrative about Christian's time in the village is he depicted as spiritually ecstatic. The events on the Runenberg have altered his inner life and he cannot truly enjoy his new life in the plains. The restlessness that characterized him at the outset of the tale returns and remembering the parents he left behind in his youth, he resolves to seek them out. This journey brings him back into the mountain realm. However, when he enters the forest that serves as the boundary between civilization and wilderness at this time, the setting fills him with dread rather than desire. At this point in the story, he is so deeply rooted in the rational, pious village mentality that the wilderness does not entice him: "seine Angst nahm zu, indem er sich dem Gebirge näherte, die fernen Ruinen wurden schon sichtbar und traten nach und nach kenntlicher hervor"⁶⁸ (Tieck 38). For the moment, he is able to deny nature's call: "'Ich kenne dich, Wahnsinn, wohl,' rief er aus, 'und dein gefährliches Locken, aber ich will dir männlich widerstehn! Elisabeth ist kein schöner Traum'"⁶⁹ (38-39). His feelings for Elisabeth and the sense that he is at home in the plains⁷⁰ act as a shield against the dream-woman on the Runenberg. This defence, however, cracks almost immediately and the line between reality and delusion blurs: "'Sehe ich nicht schon Wälder wie schwarze Haare vor mir? Schauen nicht aus dem Bache die blitzenden Augen nach mir her? Schreiten die großen Glieder nicht aus

⁶⁸ "His anxiety increased as he neared the mountains; the distant ruins were already becoming visible and gradually appeared more and more recognizable" (trans. Ryder and Browning 91).

⁶⁹ "'Madness, I know you well,' he cried out, 'you and your perilous temptations, but I will resist you manfully. Elisabeth is no empty dream'" (trans. Ryder and Browning 92).

⁷⁰ "Da kam ihm der Gedanke, daß seine Jugend vorbei sei, daß er eine Heimat gefunden, der er angehöre, in die sein Herz Wurzel geschlagen habe" (Tieck 38). ("Then the thought came to him that his youth was over, that he had found a place where he belonged, where his heart had taken root" trans. Ryder and Browning 91).

den Bergen auf mich zu?“⁷¹ (39). Christian claims he will resist the mad call of nature, but his own statements contradict him within an instant. While he appears to recognize the danger the mountains pose, his mystical infection quickly overpowers his rationality and he again confronts the force that repeatedly lures him within its area of influence. His vision here recalls the foreign voices he hears in the stream at the beginning of the story. Nature taunts him once more. He does not succumb to its power in this instance and is instead filled with fear, but the mountain spirit clearly still sways his perceptions and emotions, in the same way that a vampire continues to exert control over its victims after an exchange of fluids.

The arrival of Christian's father interrupts this fearful encounter with the wilderness and allows him to return to the village.⁷² A further period of happiness follows: “der alte Vater zog zu ihnen und gab sein kleines Vermögen in ihre Wirtschaft; sie bildeten den zufriedensten und einträchtigsten Kreis von Menschen”⁷³ (Tieck 40). The fields and family prosper. The spirit, however, does not allow this contentment to last. Thwarted once in reclaiming her victim, the vampire sends another agent to draw Christian away from cultivated nature and back to the untamed expanse of the forest and mountains. After five years of peace, a traveler arrives in the village and stays with Christian and his family. Significantly, although he stays with them not for days, but months, he is described as a “freundlicher, gesprächiger Mann, der vieles von seinen

⁷¹ “Do I not already see the forest like a head of black hair before me? Do not shining eyes gaze up at me out of the stream? Do not great limbs stride toward me out of the mountain?” (trans. Ryder and Browning 92).

⁷² Returning to the argument made by Victor Knight cited in footnote 37, it is interesting to note that the father ventured into the mountains in search of a rare flower only after the death of the mother (Tieck 39). Arguably, without her stabilizing influence, he also hears the summons of the mountain spirit.

⁷³ “Christian's old father moved in with them and contributed his modest wealth to their household; they formed a contented, harmonious circle” (trans. Ryder and Browning 93).

Reisen erzählte”⁷⁴ (Tieck 40). He never reveals his own name and is known only as “der Fremde.” This lack of a name aligns him with the “anonymous inhabitant of the mine shaft” (Tatar 288), nature’s first agent in luring Christian to her realm.⁷⁵ After three months, the visitor departs, because ““ein wunderbares Schicksal und seltsame Erwartungen treiben [ihn] in das nächste Gebirge hinein, ein zaubervolles Bild, dem [er] nicht widerstehen kann, lockt [ihn]””⁷⁶ (Tieck 41). He is unsure of his return and leaves a sum of gold in Christian’s keeping. Like Christian in his youth, the stranger feels that an unknown power calls him to the mountain, insinuating that he is also in nature’s power and acts on her behalf when he leaves his treasure with the family. The suggestion that he is indeed the same stranger that Christian encounters in the mountains is demonstrated by Christian’s feeling that “es kam ihm vor, als kenne er den Reisenden schon von ehemals, und doch konnte er sich keiner Gelegenheit erinnern bei welcher er ihn gesehen haben möchte”⁷⁷ (40-41). Thus, the possibility exists that what Christian feels he recognizes is not the stranger, but rather the influence of nature within him. The sense of familiarity the man instills in Christian also serves to build trust between the two, so that the gift of the gold, which becomes the lure that brings Christian back into the spirit’s sphere, does not arouse surprise or suspicion.

⁷⁴ “He was a friendly, talkative man who liked to tell about his travels” (trans. Ryder and Browning 93).

⁷⁵ Maria M. Tatar suggests that the two strangers are in fact the same stranger and that he is an embodiment of the violated mandrake root: “That the stranger seems less than strange to Christian hardly comes as a surprise. What is quite striking is that Christian is unable to recall the occasion on which he had previously met the man. [...] The planting of the money in Christian’s home seems to confirm the possibility that the *Alrunenwurzel* has assumed human shape in the guise of the stranger: true to its character, the anthropoid root brings wealth tainted with a curse” (289).

⁷⁶ ““a wondrous fate and strange expectations drive me into the nearby mountains; an enchanting vision, which I cannot resist, is luring me”” (trans. Ryder and Browning 93).

⁷⁷ “it seemed to him he had known the traveler somewhere before, and yet he could not recall any occasion when he might have seen him” (trans. Ryder and Browning 93).

The appearance of the stranger marks the turning point in Christian's attempt to overcome the mystical infection and the gold slowly asserts the mountain realm's power over him again. Two spheres are in conflict in this story and Christian becomes the focal point for the friction between the organic, tamed world and the inorganic, untamed wilderness. With the introduction of the gold, the struggle begins to turn in the latter's favour. Gerburg Garmann constructs the two antagonistic realms as those of dream and waking life and argues that

[sie] buhlen erneut um die Gunst des Protagonisten, der noch unentschieden zwischen beiden schwankt. Jedoch mit dem Erscheinen eines Fremden, der Christian sein Gold zur Aufbewahrung anempfiehlt, gewinnt die zweite Realität an übermächtiger Wirkkraft. Beim nächtlichen Zählen des Geldes erlebt Christian im Rot-Goldspiel des Metalls dessen magische Erotik.⁷⁸ (138)

Christian again perches on the threshold as he did in his youth, and again the ultimate outcome of this temptation is a journey into the mountains. For a time, Elisabeth connects Christian to the village community through her piety, but the vampiric nature spirit begins to assert her control over her erstwhile victim. Through the enchanted money, Christian begins to suffer a relapse of the mystical disease that entered him through the rune-inscribed tablet. Soon after the stranger's departure, Christian's father finds him counting the gold late at night and exclaims "Ist dieses verfluchte Metall nur zu unserm Unglück unter dieses Dach gebracht? Besinne dich, mein Lieber; so muß dir der böse Feind Blut und Leben verzehren"⁷⁹ (Tieck 41). The language Tieck uses to

⁷⁸ The two realms "renew their courtship of the protagonist's favour, who still wavers between them, undecided. However, with the appearance of the stranger, who entrusts Christian with the safe-keeping of his gold, the second reality [the dream reality] becomes the dominating force. Through the nightly counting of the gold, Christian experiences the metal's magic eroticism in its red-gold light" (my translation).

⁷⁹ "Has this accursed metal been brought under our roof only for our misfortune? Bethink yourself, my boy, for in this way Satan is bound to consume you leg and limb" (trans. Ryder and Browning 94). The

describe the father's concern about the treasure is indicative of a blood-borne illness, one that originates from the creature his son encountered in the mountains and that haunts him still. Nature, like a vampire, will consume Christian's blood and his life if he cannot resist the feelings the gold awakens within him.

In response to his father's warning, Christian reveals the extent of the gold's enchantment, the restlessness inspired by its presence, and his struggle to maintain his life on the plains. The village no longer offers protection from the realm of the Runenberg and its vampiric denizens. He explains,

‘Ich verstehe mich selber nicht mehr, weder bei Tag noch in der Nacht läßt es mir Ruhe; seht, wie es mich jetzt wieder anblickt, daß mir der *rote* Glanz tief in mein Herz *hineingeht!* Horcht, wie es klingt, dies güldene *Blut!* Das ruft mich, wenn ich schlafe, ich höre es, wenn Musik tönt, wenn der Wind bläst, wenn Leute auf der Gasse sprechen; scheint die Sonne, so sehe ich nur diese gelben *Augen*, wie es mir zublinzelt und mir heimlich *Liebeswort* ins Ohr sagen will: so muß ich mich wohl *nächtlicherweise* aufmachen, um nur seinem Liebesdrang genugzutun, und dann fühle ich es innerlich jauchzen und frohlocken, wenn ich es mit meinen Fingern berühre, es wird vor Freuden immer röter und herrlicher; schaut nur selbst die Glut der Entzückung an!’⁸⁰ (Tieck 42, my emphasis)

This passage is pivotal in understanding the vampiric aspect of nature. The gold here is not only eroticized, but through the allusions to its redness, to blood, penetration and nighttime activity it becomes an extension of the vampire. Christian's feelings toward

translation here loses meaning again in using idiomatic English. The German literally states, “the evil fiend will consume your blood and your life” (my translation).

⁸⁰ ““I don’t understand myself any more. I have no rest by day or night. See how it is looking at me again, till the red sheen enters deep into my heart! Hear how it rings, this golden blood! It calls me when I’m asleep, I hear it when music plays, when the wind blows, when people are talking in the street. If the sun shines, I see only its yellow eyes, how it winks at me and tries to whisper words of love in my ear. That is why I have to get up in the night and satisfy its urgent desire; then I feel myself inwardly shouting and exulting. When I touch it with my fingers, it grows redder and more splendid for joy. See for yourself its glow of rapture!”” (trans. Ryder and Browning 94).

the metallic treasure go beyond material obsession: “Christians Liebe zum Gold, [...] hat einen materiellen Kern mit einer sozialen und einer erotischen Seite. [...] [Er] vertauscht [...] die Liebe zu seiner Frau mit einer sexuell gefärbten Geldliebe”⁸¹ (Mecklenburg 69-70). The female spirit is calling Christian to her through the gold, she is speaking to him through music, wind and overheard conversations – speech that is continuously distanced from Christian as were the voices in the mountains whose language he did not understand. Now, he believes that the gold is whispering endearments to him. When he describes the sun and the coins as eyes, he implies that nature watches him. The red glow of the coins enters him much like the glowing jewels of the tablet entered him on the mountain and the vampiric infection he suffered on the Runenberg is renewed. From this time onwards, Christian is no longer able to repress the disease coursing through his blood; the enchanted treasure has possessed him.⁸² Appropriately, the father counsels him to seek the Church for relief from his obsession.

The pace of Christian’s seduction back to nature quickens. While the father believes his son is once more securely entrenched in society after the money is invested in the family’s holdings, the opposite is true. Using the gold to improve the farm seems only to heighten Christian’s awareness of nature’s plight, infusing the earth with the essence that haunts him as a result of his encounter on the mountain. The infection that so far has only affected Christian is passed into the soil and by the end of the tale, the

⁸¹ “Christians love for the gold, [...] has a material core with a social and erotic aspect. He exchanges the love of his wife for a sexually-coloured love of money” (my translation).

⁸² Alice Kuzniar likens Christian’s behaviour with the gold to vampirism: “In onanistically fingering the gold, Christian makes it even redder: the body imparts its warmth to the inorganic, and, in response, the heart pulsates not with its own blood but with the glow of the mineral substance. In a kind of reverse personification, the veins of the stone have become Christian’s own, and their medusa-like look has turned him into granite. As if wanting to come back to life, Christian then wakes like a vampire at night, drinking with his eyes the blood in the gold” (224). This argument highlights nature’s vampiric status, as the mountain spirit is the source of Christian’s infection.

estate is destitute. Further evidence of his decline comes from Elisabeth, who turns to the father for aid, because she can no longer help her husband. In the face of the vampire's call, her piety and frail beauty are rendered powerless. She turns to the father, whose inability to protect Christian has already been demonstrated through his first journey into the mountains. She tells him "wie sie ihren Mann nicht mehr verstehe, er spreche so irre, vorzüglich des Nachts, er träume schwer, gehe oft im Schlafe lange in der Stube herum, ohne es zu wissen, und erzähle wunderbare Dinge, vor denen sie oft schauern müsse"⁸³ (Tieck 42-43). She also describes how he refuses to go into the garden to work because "er sagt, er höre ein unterirdisches fürchterliches Ächzen, sowie er nur eine Wurzel ausziehe; er fährt zusammen und scheint sich vor allen Pflanzen und Kräutern wie vor Gespenstern zu entsetzen"⁸⁴ (43). His inability to work in the fields and gardens heralds Christian's rejection of human society, as he "begins his return to the mountains by rejecting those spaces constituting the daily struggle for survival" (Wells 38); the vision on the mountain and the tablet which entered into his being are loosening his family's grip while the vampire gains strength. In a sense, the pain the plants express when he pulls them from the ground, recall the experience with the mandrake root and point to its involvement with nature's seduction of the youthful Christian.

Elisabeth's revelations about Christian's state of mind prompt another conversation between the father and son. Christian's words again point to nature's vampirism and his infection with a mystical disease:

⁸³ "how she no longer understood her husband, that he talked wildly, especially at night, that he had bad dreams, often walked up and down in the bedchamber in his sleep, and spoke of uncanny things that often made her shudder" (trans. Ryder and Browning 95).

⁸⁴ "for he says he hears a fearful groaning in the ground whenever he pulls out a root; he starts back and seems horrified in the presence of plants and herbs, as though they were ghosts" (trans. Ryder and Browning 95).

‘ich kann auf lange Zeit, auf Jahre, die wahre Gestalt meines Innern vergessen und gleichsam ein fremdes Leben mit Leichtigkeit führen: dann geht aber plötzlich wie ein neuer Mond das regierende Gestirn, welches ich selber bin, in meinem Herzen auf und besiegt die fremde Macht. Ich könnte ganz froh sein, aber einmal, in einer seltsamen Nacht, ist mir durch die Hand ein geheimnisvolle Zeichen tief in mein Gemüt hineingeprägt; oft schläft und ruht die magische Figur, ich meine, sie ist vergangen, aber dann quillt sie wie ein Gift plötzlich wieder hervor und wegt sich in allen Linien. Dann kann ich sie nur denken und fühlen, und alles umher ist verwandelt oder vielmehr von dieser Gestaltung verschlungen worden.’⁸⁵ (Tieck 43-44)

In response to this passage, W. J. Lillyman writes, “the foreign power which is now apparently dominating Christian to the extinction of his true self is that of the *Runenberg*. This is made abundantly clear by his comparison of the effect of the tablet to that of a poison” (238). The words Christian uses to describe his feelings about the tablet are predominantly negative: he refers to it as a poison and feels that the oppressive spirit that invades him through his union with the mystical stones consumes everything around him. That nature here is portrayed as vampiric is supported through the subtle allusion to snakes. Christian feels poisoned and the word “verschlungen” evokes imagery of a snake devouring its prey. According to James. B. Twitchell, the lamia, and through it female vampires in general, “retained certain serpentine qualities” (40). While Christian is deeply afflicted and suffers as a result of the vampiric infection, he is not yet prepared to abandon his life in the plains and his family to seek relief in the mountains.

⁸⁵ “I am able for long periods of time, for years, to forget the true form of my inward being and easily live a life that is, as it were, foreign to me. But suddenly the ruling constellation, that is myself, rises like a new moon in my heart and conquers the foreign power. I could be quite happy, were it not that once, in a strange night, a mysterious sign passed through my hand and imprinted itself in my mind and heart; this magical figure often lies in calm sleep, and I think it has passed away, but then it suddenly revives again, like a poison, and all its lines begin to move. Then I can think and feel nothing but it, and everything about me is transformed, or rather, swallowed up by this constellation” (trans. Ryder and Browning 95).

Finally, nature sends one more agent to entice Christian back into her realm. His alienation from the village causes him to forsake the little church which at first drew him into the town on the day of the harvest festival and instead he walks to a nearby forest where he “vertiefte sich in seine dichtesten Schatten”⁸⁶ (Tieck 45). Christian is retreating from the community and fleeing into nature. As he enters the forest “eine schauerliche Stille umgab ihn, keine Luft rührte sich in den Blättern”⁸⁷ (45-46). In this stillness, Christian perceives an approaching man, who he believes is the stranger, but “als die Gestalt etwas näher kam, sah er, wie sehr er sich geirrt hatte, denn die Umrisse, welche er wahrzunehmen gewöhnt, zerbrachen wie in sich selber; ein altes Weib von der äußersten Häßlichkeit kam auf ihn zu”⁸⁸ (46). She introduces herself as the “Waldweib” and leaves almost as quickly as she appears, but as she turns from him, “Christian glaubte zwischen den Bäumen den goldenen Schleier, den hohen Gang, den mächtigen Bau der Glieder wiederzuerkennen”⁸⁹ (46); she seems as if she transforms into the woman on the Runenberg. The fluidity of gender and appearance in this scene leads to the interpretation that “the beautiful woman on the *Runenberg*, the stranger who brings the gold, and the ugly *Waldweib* are but three different manifestations of the same being” (Kimpel 180-181). However, given the outcome of the tale, it is likely that the two strangers are men equally infected with the vampire’s poison and that the figure of the

⁸⁶ “entered deep into its thickest shadows” (trans. Ryder and Browning 97).

⁸⁷ “An awesome silence surrounded him, not a breeze stirred in the leaves” (trans. Ryder and Browning 97). The translation of “schauerlich” as “awesome” is again misleading. “Schauerlich” is more accurately translated as “eerie,” which lends a completely different tone to the experience of the stillness beneath the trees.

⁸⁸ “When the figure came somewhat closer, he saw how mistaken he had been, for the outlines he had thought he perceived dissolved as though into themselves. An old woman of the utmost hideousness came towards him” (trans. Ryder and Browning 97).

⁸⁹ “Christian thought he recognized between the trees the golden veil, the majestic gait, the mighty limbs” (trans. Ryder and Browning 97).

Waldweib alone is a second manifestation of the spirit that dwells in the ruins. One key indication that the two men are not embodiments of the nature spectre is that they move more freely than the woman in Christian's vision or the *Waldweib*. The two women do not cross into the realm of the plains, but rather remain within the boundaries of the mountain's forests. The two strangers, however, are able to traverse both realms. The second man is even able to live in the village with Christian for a time. The *Waldweib* does not enter the village when she confronts Christian; instead, she waits for him to approach the forest. While he is initially repulsed by her appearance, the glimpses of the mysterious visionary woman completely erase any revulsion and he immediately wants to pursue her into the depths of the forest. This aligns Christian with other male victims of female vampires who cannot resist the lure of the creature "even when her mask of pretense has been dropped to reveal the grim, hungry visage of a praying mantis" (Frost 44). Indeed, Christian's longing for a return to the mountain realm grows after the revelation of this ugly aspect of the vampiric nature spirit.

Significantly, when the *Waldweib* disappears, Christian finds the mystical tablet in the grass and "die Gestalt und die bunten Lichter drückten mit der plötzlichsten Gewalt auf alle seine Sinne"⁹⁰ (Tieck 46). Nature's final agent not only reveals its multifarious guises, but also provides Christian with a physical reminder of his mystical infection. When he shows the tablet to his father, it elicits one final attempt to persuade Christian away from the mountain realm and the alluring spirit that inhabits it. When the father looks at the tablet in a futile effort to understand the runes and their impact on his son, he

⁹⁰ "The figure and the gay gleams pressed in upon his senses with instant power" (trans. Ryder and Browning 97).

exclaims: “mir schaudert recht im Herzen”⁹¹ (46). He attempts to show Christian ““wie kalt sie funkeln, welche grausame Blicke sie von sich geben, *blutdürstig*, wie das rote Auge des Tigers. Wirf diese Schrift weg, die dich kalt und grausam macht, die dein Herz versteinern muß”⁹² (Tieck 46-47, my emphasis). This speech is as unsuccessful as his earlier warnings. Once more, the language used to describe nature and its attempt to seduce Christian portrays the connection to a vampiric motif. The stones on the tablet are “blutdürstig” and the runes they form threaten to make Christian “kalt” and “grausam,” words that evoke corpses more so than stones. Clearly,

the gloomy horror and demonization of nature [...] assume real form in *Der Runenberg*, reflected in the alluring power of subterranean rocks and metals. All who succumb to their lure are enticed from the lightsome joys of the earth’s surface to their mysterious underground realm, and there they remain enthralled. Mere stones appear to them as costly treasures, and their souls fall prey to the ghastly “Waldweib,” who is both an illusion of the hero and a metaphorical incarnation and demonization of the mountain. The mountain symbolizes brute, unconscious force petrified and banished to dark depths. (Zeydel 162)

The father perceives the tablet and its source as evil, but Christian is now immune to his pleas. Overcome by the seductive power of nature, he declares: ““Das Waldweib hat mich gerufen, ich gehe sie zu suchen. Hier nebenan ist ein alter, verfallener Schacht, schon vor Jahrhunderten von einem Bergmanne aufgegraben; vielleicht, daß ich sie dort finde!”⁹³ (Tieck 48). This speech implies that the shaft was created by a man like Christian, a man whom nature had chosen and possessed. The cycle of infection is nearly

⁹¹ “I shudder in my very heart” (trans. Ryder and Browning 97).

⁹² “How coldly they sparkle, what dreadful glances they cast, bloodthirsty as the red eye of a tiger. Throw this writing away, it makes you cold and cruel, it is bound to petrify your heart” (trans. Ryder and Browning 98).

⁹³ “The Woman of the Woods has summoned me. I go to seek her. Nearby is an old mine shaft, dug centuries ago by some miner; perhaps I shall find her there!” (trans. Ryder and Browning 99).

complete, as he is now able to enter the subterranean realm which was closed to him at the outset of the tale: “The text indicates a fusion of Christian with the supernatural figures [...]. He finds the Stranger’s mineshaft, which was previously forbidden to him. Thus he assumes the Stranger’s role of *communicant* with the underground mineral world” (Ewton 33, my emphasis). Christian’s entry into the mine symbolizes a mystical transformation. The infection, which entered into him through the tablet on the Runenberg, has run its course and turned him into nature’s minion. In his final appearance, Elisabeth does not recognize him.⁹⁴

Nature, in Tieck’s vision, is not a benevolent, passive setting, but rather an organism fraught with danger and imbued with agency. Through the female spirit which inhabits the Runenberg, nature is able to exact revenge on those who trespass into her realm. Like the traditional female vampire her “kiss is [...] deeply ambivalent: It is a moment of union and sexual fulfillment, but, as a deadly embrace also an act of revenge, enacted on her promised husband *in lieu* of all men” (Barkhoff 133). Through the use of the stone tablet, the woman on the mountain penetrates Christian with a mystical disease which prevents him from rejoining human society. He is perpetually alienated and “nature [...] seems to have taken its revenge on Christian” (Tatar 300), perhaps *in lieu* of all men who seek to dominate the wilderness. As a vampire, nature does not simply kill her victims, but rather forces them into a cycle through her influence. Christian, and the two strangers who are also in her thrall, serve not only as examples of the mountain’s dangers, but they also lure other victims into the vampire’s embrace. Most importantly, Christian and his fellow miners demonstrate nature’s need: death is close at hand, but the

⁹⁴ And this return to his family is also a return from the dead, as his father assumes that Christian dies in the mine. Thus, Christian becomes vampiric in this final episode as well.

men provide a measure of vitality for the wilderness to sustain its freedom and its life.

The tale provides no true ending, because “in nineteenth-century iconography male vampires are allies of death who end their narratives by killing or dying, but females are so implicated in life’s sources that their stories overwhelm closure” (Auerbach 50).

Arguably, the conclusion implies that Christian is not the vampire’s final victim.

3. Death in Sunlight: Murnau's *Nosferatu: Eine Symphonie des Grauens*

3.1 The German Legacy of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*

As mentioned previously, Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*, the source material for Murnau's film *Nosferatu: Eine Symphonie des Grauens*, contains numerous Germanic elements and allusions. The most prominent elements are the use of German, speculation that characters, particularly Van Helsing and Dracula, are of German origin, and allusions to Bürger's "Lenore" and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust*. Stoker's use of these references is not surprising, as David B. Dickens points out, "German literature [...] contributed to the development of British vampire fiction in the nineteenth century: Polidori's tale of 1819 was inspired in part by a volume of German ghost stories; the anonymous German story 'The Mysterious Stranger' and Le Fanu's 'Carmilla' [...] would have been known by Stoker" (31). The intertextuality of *Dracula* and its relationship to German literature may have contributed to Murnau's interest in adapting it as a film. The two works thus contribute to a continuation of the "cross-fertilization" that Clemens Ruthner notes between German and English vampire fiction beginning in the 18th century ("Bloodsuckers" 55). A brief consideration of Stoker's allusions to German language, literature and culture is therefore relevant as a means to understand the vampire's heritage and it also provides a bridge between the literature of the 1800s and Murnau's 1922 film.

One of the first references to Germany in the novel is to the German language. Diane Milburn notes, "by the time Stoker came to write *Dracula* in the 1890s he was no stranger to German language and culture" and that "he had made at least two trips to

Germany” (41).⁹⁵ This familiarity is apparent on the first page of the novel, when Jonathan Harker writes, “I found my smattering of German very useful here; indeed I don’t know how I should be able to get on without it” (Stoker 9). In reference to Harker’s feelings here, David B. Dickens notes that the young traveller “discovers that German is the ‘lingua franca’; German names and labels, foods, place and hotel names and the like abound” (32). He cites Harker’s dinner of “paprika hendl,” the name of the hotel: “Golden(e) Krone” and the fact that Harker “converses in English and German with the innkeeper and his wife” (32). Milburn addresses the same list of incidents and adds that “in this alien, essentially German environment he meets Dracula, who speaks both fluent German and English” (47). This use of language, however, is only one of the ways in which Stoker draws on Germanic elements in his novel.

The origins of the characters, especially those of Dracula and Dr. Abraham van Helsing, have been the focus of scholarly speculation. Milburn uses the Count’s knowledge of German and his heritage to argue that the vampire is himself of German origin. She writes, “descended from Attila the Hun, [...] living in Transylvania, which was then part of the Habsburg Empire, Dracula is repeatedly portrayed by Stoker as being of Germanic origin. Even the title ‘Count’ did not exist in Romanian: but it was a German term (‘Graf’)” (47). Dickens, on the other hand, argues that Van Helsing is not Dutch, but rather German, citing primarily the syntax of Van Helsing’s speech (35). Significantly, he points out that “whenever Van Helsing lapses into a language other than [English], it is always into German” (35) with exclamations such as “Mein Gott” (Stoker

⁹⁵ One of these was a research trip to Nürnberg, a city which is mentioned in *Dracula* by Mina (Stoker 63), is connected to Henry Irving’s preparation to play Mephistopheles in a reworking of Goethe’s *Faust* (Dickens 33, Ludlam 71).

145) and “Gott in Himmel” (118).⁹⁶ Throughout the novel, Van Helsing’s “English word order betrays patterns that are distinctly German; for example, an infinitive or participle stands at the end of the clause or sentence instead of immediately after the finite auxiliary verb” (Dickens 35). This careful linguistic analysis and Van Helsing’s status as a polymath, lead Dickens to speculate on Stoker’s inspiration for the doctor. One possibility he cites is “Friedrich Max Müller (1823-1900) [who] was the son of the gifted late-Romantic Wilhelm Müller. He was a polymath (religion, philosophy, linguistics, mythology)” (36).⁹⁷ The connection Dickens draws between Van Helsing and Müller extends to the latter’s personal life: “less concrete but highly suggestive is the striking parallel between Müller’s profound experience with death and Van Helsing’s responses under similar circumstances” (37). In attempting to locate the origins of Stoker’s talented doctor, a German heritage appears more likely than the Dutch antecedent given in the novel.⁹⁸

Finally, Stoker uses several allusions to German literature in his novel. One of these notable references is to the vampire’s Germanic heritage and Gottfried August Bürger’s vampiric poem “Lenore,” which “enjoyed continued popularity throughout the century with a flood of new translations in the 1840s” (Milburn 46). Stoker uses the line “‘Denn die Todten reiten schnell’ – (‘for the dead travel fast’)” (Stoker 17)⁹⁹ in two

⁹⁶ Dickens notes that “Gott in Himmel” is incorrect “as a German would say ‘Gott *im* Himmel’” (35) and he “attribute[s] the error not to Van Helsing but to Stoker” (35).

⁹⁷ Clemens Ruthner also mentions Müller as a possible inspiration and source of vampire-related knowledge for Stoker (“Bloodsuckers” 61-62).

⁹⁸ A fact strengthened by the fact that in his notes, Stoker refers to “several characters [who] merge to form Van Helsing (‘Philosophic historian,’ German professor of history,’ and ‘Detective inspector’) [...] but nowhere in the Notes does Stoker indicate that any of these is Dutch, while ‘German’ is specified in some cases” (Dickens 37).

⁹⁹ The use of the line “for the dead travel fast” and the fact that Stoker ignored the popular translations and made his own prompts Millburn to assert that “the author deliberately avoided using ‘ride’ as it appeared in

vampire-related works, *Dracula* and in “Dracula’s Guest” a short story which was published after his death.¹⁰⁰ Further references to Germanic literature are found as well, according to Dickens, “Goethe’s *Faust* was, of course, a major influence on Stoker and his novel” (33). He lists the following similarities: “Faust’s defiance of the devil with his declaration ‘I am a Spirit!’ foreshadows the Count’s ‘I am Dracula!’” (33), both Mephistopheles and Dracula have “‘to be brought or helped over threshold[s]’” (Stoker’s “Notes” quoted in Dickens 34) in order to reach their victims, “the bluish flames that flicker over buried treasure – sites known to the devil and his minions – are echoes of scenes in both parts of *Faust*,” and “like Faust, Count Dracula is initially an old man who undergoes subsequent rejuvenation” (34). These allusions to “Lenore” and *Faust* place *Dracula* within a German literary context and demonstrate Stoker’s awareness of the German canon.

These references to German language, culture and literature demonstrate the movement of the vampire between different Western cultural spheres and highlight a

so many translations, and construed his translation to mean ‘travel’ in order to make Dracula a modern vampire” (46). This awareness of modernity in the novel again underlines the movement of the vampire into the popular imagination of a new age.

¹⁰⁰ This short story is the subject of some speculation. David B. Dickens points out that it “has been considered by many as the original opening chapter of *Dracula*” (31), but elaborates in an endnote that “while the general consensus seems to be that ‘Dracula’s Guest’ was originally intended to be the opening chapter of the novel, which was omitted for technical reasons, this is a matter of some dispute. [...] I am now more of the opinion that it is an independent short story, a kind of proto-*Dracula*, and not an omitted chapter” (40). Elizabeth Miller points out that “Stoker had originally intended to have his vampire come from Styria, a region of Austria and the setting used by Le Fanu in ‘Carmilla.’ An early chapter outline for *Dracula*, dated 14 March 1890, indicates that the clerk (Harker) was to travel to Styria. At some later point Stoker came back to this sheet, crossed out ‘Styria’ and replaced it with ‘Transylvania’” (13), which would give credence to the idea that “Dracula’s Guest” is an omitted first chapter. Finally, Harry Ludlum, in his Stoker biography, writes, in a follow-up discussion of the Stoker’s staging of the book as a play, that “one scene of ‘Dracula’ was not included in the play; in fact, it was never published. It consisted of a whole chapter, omitted because the book was thought to be too long [...]. The chapter lay forgotten among Bram’s papers until its discovery after his death” (114). Ultimately, Ludlum concludes that Stoker’s reference to Le Fanu’s *Carmilla* in this opening chapter would have been damaging to *Dracula*’s reception: “Far better that this episode was dropped from ‘Dracula’, for Bram’s affectionate remembrance of Le Fanu’s tale might easily have been misconstrued. It was the only piece in the story that was not wholly the product of his own vivid imagination and imaginative research” (115).

history of exchange that continues with Murnau's adaptation of Stoker's novel: "The reception of Stoker's work in the German-speaking countries began around 1900, paralleling a general boom of the fantastic in literature and art. The undead count, however, first became popular with F.W. Murnau's film *Nosferatu* (1922)" (Ruthner "Bloodsuckers" 56-57).¹⁰¹ The relationship between Stoker's novel and Murnau's adaptation, however, is complex. Significant alterations were made to the narrative in the film, prompting Ken Gelder to argue that "the only narrative events in common with *Dracula* involve Hutter's journey to Transylvania to negotiate a property deal with Orlok, and Orlok's attraction to Mina/Ellen – which similarly concludes with the vampire 'replacing' Hutter in their bedroom as her (sexual) partner" (95). The narrative of crossing thresholds and the intrusion of untamed nature into the human realm thus provide a bridge between the two works, as well as allowing for a connection to Tieck's tale of the dangers of trespassing into the wilderness. These changes, however, did not forestall the wrath of Florence Stoker, Bram's widow, at the unauthorized use of her late husband's work.

¹⁰¹ Ruthner goes on to write that "When a German translation of the *Dracula* novel was brought on the market by the publisher Altmann (Leipzig) for the first time in 1908 (with several subsequent editions until 1933), the critical response was not unreservedly positive" ("Bloodsuckers" 57).

3.2 A Troubled Vampire Film: *Nosferatu's* Brush with Destruction

The vampire's transition from the page to the cinema¹⁰² was not made with ease. Indeed, the first surviving adaptation of Stoker's work into the medium of film was an unauthorized German version that sought to evade the problem of its source material with a script that was only a loose interpretation of the novel. Arguably, the novel *Dracula*, published in 1897, returned the vampire to a position of prominence in the popular imagination. Since "Stoker himself had a strong sense of the book's theatrical possibilities" (Skal 371), the movement into the medium of film appears as an inevitable progression. The transition to film, which placed the actors and the characters they portray into a liminal, undead space, again highlights the vampire's ambiguous malleability. While Bram Stoker died before an adaptation was possible, his widow, Florence, not only attempted to protect her late husband's intellectual property, she also worked with Hamilton Deane to stage *Dracula* as a play.¹⁰³ When the novel first appeared on film in Germany, directed by Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau based on a screenplay written by Henrik Galeen, the vampire found a new home on the silver screen. As an Expressionist and neo-Romantic interpretation of the vampire tale, it brought the bloodsucking fiend firmly into modernity. Through the alterations made to the story, Murnau, Galeen and producer Albin Grau¹⁰⁴ infused the film with a post-war sensibility

¹⁰² The first appearance of *Dracula* on the stage was not a theatrical production, but was of Stoker's devising. He prepared a "dramatic abridgement of his book entitled *Dracula: Or the Un-Dead*, which was given a staged reading at the Lyceum on May 18, 1897. Ostensibly for purposes of protecting the novel's dramatic copyright" (Skal, "Theatrical Adaptations" 373).

¹⁰³ This play, which was "first produced in 1924" (Skal "Theatrical" 376) is the source of the "now familiar appearance of *Dracula* as a kind of devilish vaudeville magician in evening dress and an opera cloak" (377) and is the basis of Tod Browning's 1931 *Dracula* starring Bela Lugosi (who also portrayed the Count in the stage version) (378-379).

¹⁰⁴ Thomas Elsaesser argues that "the project owed much to the enigmatic figure of Albin Grau, who signed for the decor and costumes but also seems to have been the driving force behind the production, both financially and artistically" ("Six Degrees" 12). Elsaesser goes on to relate that "the war had left less

rooted firmly in German literary tradition and their creation became a vehicle for the evolution of the vampire. At the same time, the film became a source of contention with Florence Stoker over copyright infringement¹⁰⁵ and this struggle only added to the film's intrigue.

In adapting the novel for the silver screen, Murnau and scriptwriter Henrik Galeen made some key changes to the way in which the story unfolds. Since the production company Prana "used Stoker's property without permission," the alterations were an "abortive attempt to evade copyright law" (Roth 309). While there are superficial changes to the names and locations so that Mina becomes Ellen, Jonathan Harker becomes Thomas Hutter and Count Dracula becomes Graf Orlok and the young married couple lives in the little town of Wisborg¹⁰⁶ rather than bustling London, the more important changes occur beneath the surface. Lloyd Michaels posits that

In loosely adapting Stoker's novel to the screen, Murnau simplified the social concerns while significantly expanding the role of the count [sic], making him the dominant character. [...] Probably influenced by Freud and certainly by German Expressionism, Murnau's concerns are more psychological than social. [...] Murnau's other principal transformation of the novel (aside from expanding the count's role) involves making Nina, not van Helsing, Nosferatu's main antagonist. Whereas in the novel, the woman must be saved from the monster, in the film she willingly sacrifices herself to become his destroyer. Van

visible scars and traumas, especially on the veterans. In the run-up to the opening of *Nosferatu*, Grau published a piece in *Bühne und Film* explaining how he'd come by the story and why he'd wanted to turn it into a film. It has to do with the war in Serbia and his experiences as a soldier of the infantry. Dispatched to a remote village [...] he's billeted with an old peasant who tells him the story of his father who, killed in a blood feud, was buried without sacraments and haunted the village as a vampire. The peasant even shows Grau an official paper about his father's disinternment in 1884, where the body is discovered perfectly preserved except for two front teeth protruding over the lower lip. The prefect ordered a stake to be driven through the heart of this 'nosferatu' [...], who expires with a sigh" (12).

¹⁰⁵ Skal notes that the "now-obscure 1920 film called *Drakula* [...] filmed in Berlin by Karóly Lajthay, apparently escaped her notice" ("Theatrical" 376).

¹⁰⁶ Which is "an allusion to the (still well-preserved) northern German port city of Wismar, in which Murnau did some of the location shooting" (Kaes 93).

Helsing, however, is reduced to offering ineffectual lectures on Venus flytraps. (241-242)

The film strips away Stoker's moralist undertones and replaces it with a nuanced tale focused on relationships between the three main characters: Ellen, Orlok and Hutter. The prominence of the love triangle overshadows the implications of Orlok's invasion of Wisborg and the infestation of the rats and the plague. In the end, the audience's focus is on the death of Ellen in Hutter's arms and its emotional impact, not on the destruction of the vampire or the end of the sickness. Where Stoker's novel ends with a return to normalcy, its first (remaining) film adaptation concludes with Hutter's sorrow at his wife's death. These alterations to the plot are in part responsible for the endurance of the vampire once it entered into the world of cinema.

However, considering the effort to alter the surface and content of Stoker's novel for this unauthorized adaptation to avoid issues of copyright infringement, openly claiming the novel as the source material appears counterproductive.¹⁰⁷ Judith Mayne suggests, "the acknowledgement of Stoker in Henrik Galeen's screenplay is more strategic than substantial. The acknowledgement might well be a gesture of legitimation, an identification with a literary source so as to validate Murnau's own contribution to the development of an art cinema" (26), regardless of the artistic merit of Stoker's work. If this need for legitimation was the reason, then it did not achieve its goal, as the copyright infringement led to a devastating lawsuit and curtailed any possibility of the film's success. Once released, the film's problems began almost immediately. In his book

¹⁰⁷ Although Murnau had done so before: in her biography of the director, Lotte Eisner mentions that one of the films Murnau directed, the lost *Der Januskopf*, "written for Murnau in 1920 by Hans Janowitz" (29) was "a sort of transposition of Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*" (31). Skal notes in *The Monster Show* that "although at least one account of *Der Januskopf* suggests that the film was suppressed by the Robert Louis Stevenson estate, an examination by [him] of the British Society of Authors archives dealing with dramatic rights for *Jekyll and Hyde* revealed no mention of a German controversy" (51).

Hollywood Gothic, David J. Skal gives a detailed account of the troubles that faced Prana Films and its first and only feature *Nosferatu*. While he points out that when the film first opened on March 4, 1922 “the initial reaction in Germany was generally favorable” (55), this did not lead to success. Regardless of the film’s merit, the financial problems of its production company overshadowed its artistic accomplishments and “by June, Prana’s precarious finances had driven it into receivership” (56). The company’s monetary issues were not the only crisis facing *Nosferatu*.

Soon after its release, Florence Stoker heard about the adaptation of her late husband’s work and began a lawsuit. The alteration to the names, time period – the film is set in 1837¹⁰⁸ – and location, along with the more psychological story did not prevent the widow from feeling that Prana owed royalties to Bram Stoker’s estate for the use of *Dracula*. The lawsuit was complicated, so that after years of legal battles and several contradictory rulings regarding monetary compensation, Florence, “realizing that there was no possibility of obtaining money, [...] began to press for the outright destruction of all extant copies of the film, in negative and positive” (Skal “*Hollywood*” 59). This effort succeeded in July 1925, but “the German Court had provided no tangible proof of the film’s destruction, although the original negative never resurfaced” (60). This effort

¹⁰⁸ This temporal shift leads Stacey Abbott to argue that *Nosferatu* “appears to mark a decided break from the novel with respect to its relationship to modernity. Murnau and the screenwriter Henrik Galeen moved away from Stoker’s fascination with the modern world by setting the story in the past and in the town of Wisborg, far away from the ‘whirl and rush’ of modern London, or even Berlin. The vampire, renamed Count Orlok for the film is explicitly associated with disease and pestilence, as opposed to the modern business practices, transport and technology described in the novel” (5). The variety in the interpretations of Murnau’s changes to the source material demonstrates the psychological and symbolic depth of his film. While Stoker’s novel has inspired many other cinematic interpretations, this first venture endures due to Murnau’s vision in bringing the undead from the mental image into the photographic image, moving the vampire from one liminal space to another with nuance and grace.

nearly doomed *Nosferatu*, but within months, a print emerged¹⁰⁹ and no matter what the widow did, the German film continued to exist hidden away in the darkness. Taking some creative license, Skal posits that like the vampire of literature *Nosferatu* operated through Renfield-like agents in order to remain in existence (61). Despite Florence Stoker's efforts to destroy the film, it survived through the decades, and while the original negative was lost, enough foreign editions remained so that Murnau's work was eventually restored.¹¹⁰

The process of reclaiming the nearly lost film, however, led to another problem for *Nosferatu*. None of the restorations were a "definitive" version, as Jörg Gerle states:

abgesehen von diversen Fassungen im World Wide Web, existieren gut ein Dutzend DVD-Fassungen in der westlichen Hemisphäre, die meisten davon in der USA. Und ganz wie in der guten, alten Zeit ist es heute noch so, dass kaum ein „Nosferatu“ dem anderen gleicht. Schon allein die technischen Formalia – wie Abspielgeschwindigkeit, Verstümmelungen durch Filmrisse und durch Projektionsformate (4:3 und 16:9), das Verändern der Zwischentitel je nach Landssprache usw. – ändern das Erscheinungsbild des Films signifikant. Hinzu kommen nun noch unterschiedliche Farb-Versionen, wie etwa die ergraute Schwarz-Weiß und die Sepia-Fassung einerseits und die ‚ursprünglichere‘, der besseren Emotionalisierung dienende viragierte Fassung andererseits. Und schließlich und wichtig: die Musik.¹¹¹ (47)

¹⁰⁹ The court proceedings concluded in July 1925 and already in October, "Florence Stoker received by mail the prospectus of a new organization [...]. The Film Society was dedicated to preserving the art of the cinema, and would arrange screenings in a manner patterned after private theatre clubs that had long been in vogue. It sounded like a worthy cause. Then she looked at the list of films that were to be shown. Prominent among them was 'Dracula by F. W. Murnau'" (Skal "Hollywood" 60).

¹¹⁰ The most interesting of these is a film entitled, *Die zwölfte Stunde*. Patalas explains that "a certain Dr. Waldemar Roger had assembled it in 1930 with the intention of releasing it with sound" (27), but Lotte Eisner describes how the film changed the ending so that "Ellen, instead of sacrificing herself and dying in order to save the city from the vampire, comes to life again. This surprising happy ending was achieved simply by transferring a sequence showing the couple living quietly and happily together from the beginning to the end of the film" ("Murnau" 114).

¹¹¹ "Aside from different versions on the World Wide Web, a good dozen DVD versions exist in the Western hemisphere, most of them in the US. And just like in the good old days, no two versions of *Nosferatu* are the same today. Just the technical aspects – such as playback speed, different cuts due to tears in the film and projection formats (4:3 and 16:9), the alterations of the intertitles to accommodate different languages

The German vampire did not perish in the sun as Florence Stoker hoped, but instead multiplied and adapted to the different visions of those who worked with the remaining prints. The film has served as an inspiration for different musical interpretations and continues to engage the imaginations of modern audiences, in part due to its near-destruction and the history of its recovery, as well as the continuing evolution and reinterpretation of Murnau's work.¹¹² The multiple versions, however, pose a slight problem for scholars attempting to analyze the work, in that, as Gerle points out, depending on the print the names of characters¹¹³ and intertitles, as well as the scenes are likely to vary.¹¹⁴

The process of restoration has been long and arduous, spanning through the decades after its release. Enno Patalas¹¹⁵ provides a detailed history of the film and the many attempts to restore it to its original form. One of the first problems facing the reconstruction was the disparity between the intertitles. Patalas notes that a copy of a 1926 or 1927 French print of *Nosferatu* reached America in 1947 where “the foreign-language intertitles were translated into English. In the process, the names of the characters (which in the French version had roughly approximated the German names)

etc – significantly alter the appearance of the film. Additionally, there are also different colour versions, such as the gray scaled black and white and the sepia version on the one hand and the more ‘original,’ the more emotionally engaging tinted version, on the other hand. And, last, but not least: the music.” (my translation)

¹¹² Not only in the different versions of *Nosferatu*, but also through Werner Herzog's re-working of the story in his 1979 film *Nosferatu: Phantom der Nacht*, E. Elias Merhige's 2000 film *Shadow of the Vampire*, and, most recently, a graphic novel adaptation published in 2010 written by Christopher Howard Wolf.

¹¹³ See below.

¹¹⁴ John D. Barlow also highlights the issues posed by the multiple copies and their inconsistencies. He notes that *Nosferatu* “presents a host of problems to anyone interested in studying it. The original negative of the film is lost; all existing versions are copies. None seems complete” (81). He goes on to discuss the problem of the different names used, as well (82).

¹¹⁵ Patalas was “director of the Münchner Stadtmuseum/Filmmuseum, where he was responsible for the restoration of many German cinema classics” (25) including *Nosferatu*.

were changed to the names of the characters in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*" (25), but the translations did not end there. When the film ventured back to Europe, the company responsible "translated the English titles back into German, retaining the altered names" and "when copies were needed for export into francophone countries they translated the German titles (which had been translated from the English titles, which themselves had been translated from the French) back into French" (25). This process of translation demonstrates the circuitous route by which *Nosferatu* traveled the world, as well as giving a source for the different names used in the various versions of the film. Further, Patalas describes the restoration of the film to its original length and tint. In 1994 a team began to splice together several of the incomplete, altered or damaged films, so that "in addition to the 522 shots of the well-known version, not including titles and inserts, a further thirty gradually found their way into the reconstruction" (29). The end result was a film that should be complete since "an extra 400 meters has been added to the 1,562 metres of the well-known version, so that no more shots should now be missing from the original 1,967 metres length" (29). At last, the first film adaptation of Bram Stoker's novel was once more complete. However, while this definitive Kino reconstruction is now available as a result of this diligent work, new printings of the film still draw from the various survivors. The story of *Nosferatu*'s precarious existence continues.

Florence Stoker's best effort could not destroy the German vampire that rose to plague her in 1922. Indeed, the infamy of the lawsuit may have aided the film's continued existence. Interest in the film continues and *Nosferatu*'s peculiar struggle for survival, as well as the loss of the original print, increased the liminality inherent in cinema,

Through the vagaries of film history, *Nosferatu, A Symphony of Horror* had already been reborn – or at least restored – before Herzog undertook the project. [...] the original negative of Murnau’s classic has been lost; thus, the existing prints [...] are *copies*, all of them incomplete, reproduced from Murnau’s shooting script and commentary. This circumstance compounds the usual ontological status of the film image as a ‘lost object’ and a figure of the ‘undead.’ Even the original characters have been displaced: Murnau’s shooting script changes the names from Stoker’s novel [...], and different names are used in different prints of the film (for example, Jonathan’s wife may be called either Ellen or Nina).¹¹⁶ (Michaels 241)

The image caught on film occupies a space between life and death, much like the vampire and this position creates an uncanny aura around all films. For Murnau’s *Nosferatu: Eine Symphonie des Grauens* this status as an undead creation is compounded. As Michaels points out above, the loss of the original and the process of restoration mean that *Nosferatu* today is not a relic from a time long past, but rather an amalgamation of effort to keep the film in existence and to restore it to its original configuration. Much like the mythical and fictional vampire, the cinematic vampire exists in a border space, one where its features become distorted and the details of its tale become malleable. The names, places and time periods might change, but one thing remains the same: the vampire is always liminal, the familiar made unfamiliar through death, which returns to haunt the living.

¹¹⁶ Alongside the negative, the original score – a key feature in establishing the mood of a silent film – was also lost. Enno Patalas discovered that “the credits of the *Ur-Nosferatu* give Hans Erdmann as the composer of the original music for the film” (30). He goes on to say that “Erdmann [... has] reported that, before completing his films, Murnau used to discuss the music with the composers. Erdmann arranged his *Nosferatu* score as a suite which he called *Fantastisch-Romantische Suite*” (30). He then reports that after hearing the music alongside the film, it became clear that “the musical and colouring effects reinforced each other. As the title of his suite indicates, Erdmann’s music for *Nosferatu* accentuated the fairy tale aspect of the film” (30).

3.3 A Post-War Aesthetic: The Neo-Romanticism of Expressionist Cinema and Murnau

Similar to Romanticism, Expressionism¹¹⁷ in Germany's cinema emerged out of a time of conflict, but this time the war was not a revolution based on a belief in equality in a neighbouring country. Instead, it was the first truly modern war and Germany was the aggressor. In part, the art of the time is a reaction to the fact that the war "brought death into the lives of almost everyone [...] the death of strong, fit young men challenged the living in a new way and brought them face to face with mortality" (Phillips 69). Another factor was the turmoil of the political situation, which left the country unstable:

With the collapse of Germany's authoritarian monarchy upon its defeat in history's first mechanized war on a mass scale, World War I, the first extended German experiment with democracy was initiated in November 1918. The resulting Republic would forever be associated with the city of Weimar because its constitution was ratified there in July 1919. But the Weimar Republic was threatened by revolution and counter-revolution from the beginning – indeed, it was fear of revolutionary masses in Berlin that caused the constitution to be ratified in provincial Weimar [...]. (McCormick 3)

The instability of the government and the scars of the war were expressed in the cinema and in the Expressionist style that allowed filmmakers to represent "a sense of threat, to individuals, couples and society at large, which either emanated from society itself [...] or

¹¹⁷ As with many other terms in this analysis, the term Expressionism as it is applied to Weimar cinema is also contentious. Thomas Elsaesser, for instance, argues that "The German cinema of the Weimar Republic is often but wrongly identified with Expressionism. If one locates Fritz Lang, Ernst Lubitsch and F. W. Murnau on the mental map of Berlin in the twenties, home of some of Modernism's most vital avant-garde directors, then Expressionist cinema connotes a rebellious artistic intervention. If one sees their films grow from the studio floors of the Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft (UFA), the only film company ever to think it could compete with Hollywood, this golden age of silent cinema takes its cue more from commerce and industry than art. Either way, coming so soon after a catastrophic military defeat and a failed socialist revolution, the emergence of a national cinema of international fame in Germany was as unexpected as it proved to be exceptional. No single stylistic label could hope to cover the many innovative ideas about film decor, the distinctive *mise-en-scene* of light and shadow, or the technical advances in cinematography usually attributed to Weimar film makers" (3).

from external monsters” (Roberts 8) and foregrounded “above all, a desire to show the world in a fantasy light, a liminal space where dreams, imagination and desire may briefly be reconciled with harsh realities” (8). It was another turn away from reality and an attempt to understand human experience through fantasy. Like the Romantics before them, the leading filmmakers of the Expressionist cinema connected the horrors of war and the anxiety about the post-war world with stories of the uncanny, the horrific and with an aesthetic grounded in contrasts of light and shadow.

Thus, Lotte Eisner’s assertion that Romanticism influenced the narrative concerns and aesthetic presentation of Expressionist cinema becomes grounded in the similar historical events that inspired the two movements. The inspiration drawn from German Romanticism allowed filmmakers in the Weimar Republic to see “the rational world of daylight and logic as one side of a natural relationship which placed insanity, horror and fear of the night on the other side” (*Haunted Screen* 13). The Romantics, Eisner explains, were interested in the interplay of shadows and light, in a twilight existence, which demonstrated that “night dissolved bodies, daylight dissolved souls [and that] in this sense darkness has an appeal for the German mind” (*Haunted Screen* 55-56).¹¹⁸ Similar to McCormick and Elsaesser, Eisner identifies World War I as the source of Expressionist aesthetic:

Mysticism and magic, the dark forces to which Germans
have always been more than willing to commit themselves,
had flourished in the face of death on the battlefields. The

¹¹⁸ She quotes Hölderlin: “‘Often [...] my heart feels at ease in this twilight. Contemplating unfathomable Nature I know not why this *veiled idol* draws sacred, blessed tears from my eyes.’ And he asks, ‘Could this twilight be our element? [...] Is shadow our soul’s Fatherland?’” (55); and draws on Novalis’ considerations of night as well: “‘To the glory of this eternal love for the uncertain, hence for the night, Novalis composed languorous hymns, finding in it a refuge far from the ‘poor and puerile’ light, far from the attacks of hostile life. Attracted by the dark maternal bosom of this dream- and death-dispensing night, all that Novalis ultimately sought there was the echo of his own disquiet. ‘I am light. Ah, if only I were the night! Why am I not shadows and darkness! How I would quench my thirst at the breast of light’” (55).

hetacombs of young men fallen in the flower of their youth seemed to nourish the grim nostalgia of the survivors. And the ghosts which had haunted the German Romantics revived, like the shades of Hades after draughts of blood. A new stimulus was thus given to the eternal attraction towards all that is obscure and undetermined, towards the kind of brooding speculative reflection called *Grübeleien* which culminated in the apocalyptic doctrine of Expressionism. (*Haunted Screen* 9)

This identification with the undercurrents of life, with the darkness hidden just beneath a thin veneer of society is apparent in films such as Robert Wiene's *Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari*¹¹⁹ and Murnau's *Nosferatu*, as well as his *Faust*. The villains represent elements of life that become unearthed to threaten a fragile civilization, while mob scenes in each of these films demonstrate that ferocity is not only the domain of monsters. In this way, cinema in the Weimar Republic "quickly built on the more firmly established arts, drawing on folktales, legends, romantic lore, and material that was extracted from literature, theater, and mass culture. The cinema assumed the role that fairy tales had traditionally performed, feeding into the curiosity and imagination of the viewing public" (Isenberg 5). Like the Romantic authors who served as inspiration for this new aesthetic movement, Expressionist filmmakers re-invented the fairy tale in a new medium, making not *Kunstmärchen* but rather *Filmmärchen* as an attempt to come to terms with the recent violent war.

Arguably, Murnau's *Nosferatu* is one of the eminent examples of this tendency to employ Romantic aesthetic ideals in Expressionist films. The choice to adapt Bram Stoker's novel may be due to the fact "that *Dracula* offered Murnau a complex reworking of major Gothic motifs extracted from Germanic literature and culture. [...] what seems

¹¹⁹ In this film, a hypnotist, the eponymous Dr. Caligari, terrorizes a town with his somnambulistic minion, Cesare, whom he sends to murder several citizens. *Caligari* is famous for its use of Expressionist sets, make-up and other visual effects, as well as the ominous story of the unconscious drives Cesare represents.

to have inspired Murnau to rework *Dracula* on film was an awareness that Stoker had appropriated much of Murnau's own aesthetic affinities with the German Romantic spirit in his novel" (Catania 229-230). As discussed earlier, the influence of German literary works and culture is present in *Dracula*, but Murnau, Galeen and Grau create a more solidly neo-Romantic story through the narrower focus of the film's narrative, the sets, and the use of special effects to bring the fairy tale aspect to life. This adaptation also marks a literal return to nature through Murnau's insistence to film not only *Nosferatu* but many of his other films on location rather than in the studio.¹²⁰ Unwilling to allow constructed sets to constrain him, "Murnau [...] saw all that nature had to offer in the way of fine images. [Thus] nature participates in the action: sensitive editing makes the bounding waves foretell the approach of the vampire, the imminence of the doom about to overtake the town" (Eisner *Haunted Screen* 99). *Nosferatu* is not only the evolution of the vampire myth into image; it is also an homage to the natural world. Each scene brims with an appreciation of the sea, the mountains, and the wilderness. This view of nature is complex and nuanced. Both beautiful and grotesque, tame and dangerous, the natural realm in Murnau's film is just as alluring and deadly as the one presented in Tieck's "Der Runenberg." In the post-war imagination, however, the once-beautiful female nature spirit has been transformed into a grotesque, undead and male monster.

¹²⁰ Filming in studios with elaborate sets was the preferred method of Expressionist filmmakers (Eisner 99).

3.4 Murdered Flowers and Sacrificial Wives: The Corruption of Nature in Murnau's *Nosferatu: Eine Symphonie des Grauens*

The fact that Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau's *Nosferatu* is more than an adaptation of Bram Stoker's 1897 novel *Dracula* is apparent from the beginning of the film where an introductory intertitle¹²¹ states it was "frei verfaßt von Henrik Galeen"¹²² and is not faithful to its source. Murnau's film is a contribution to the long intermingling between Romantic ideals and the vampire myth. Furthermore, the story Murnau presents is infused not only with a German, neo-Romantic sensibility, but also with an awareness of a postwar world coming to grips with a massive loss of life.¹²³ Anton Kaes writes that *Nosferatu*

works through the experience of the war at a time when German society had just begun to mourn its dead and commemorate their sacrifice. It is also the story of an undead vampire who sucks blood from the living. Even though the film's narrative draws heavily on Irish writer Bram Stoker's popular vampire novel *Dracula*, it is very much a German film of the postwar period. (99)

Kaes highlights the film's deeply Germanic roots and marks its departure from its source material. Murnau, and his scriptwriter, Henrik Galeen, draw not only on the Gothic elements of Stoker's book, but also on the literary heritage of Romanticism in their vision of the struggle against the vampire. The discussion of Tieck's "Der Runenberg" as a vampiric story where nature lures men into its realm in order to consume them can thus be applied to Murnau's film – only in this postwar vision nature has truly become

¹²¹ All intertitle translations are from the 2007 Kino version of *Nosferatu*, unless otherwise noted.

¹²² The translation of the intertitle provided in the subtitles is "adapted by Henrik Galeen," but that omits the word "frei" which would make it "freely adapted."

¹²³ The date – 1838 – and its connection to the many deaths in Wisborg also "vaguely [references] the cholera outbreak in Germany in the 1830s that killed hundreds of thousands in Europe" (Kaes 93).

monstrous and, while Tieck proposed no antidote, Murnau allows for a return to order through a woman's self-sacrifice. In both works, the vampire resides in a natural setting, at the summit of a mountain and is reached by a young man after encountering the creature's agents. A connection thus exists between the two works in their representation of nature as a vampiric entity that draws victims into the wilderness to feed upon them. Through the use of special effects and the portrayal of the interrupted relationship of a young couple the spirit of Romanticism, as portrayed in Tieck's *Kunstmärchen*, permeates the film's aesthetic and narrative arc.

While both "Der Runenberg" and *Nosferatu* portray nature as a vampire who first lures an unsuspecting young man to an isolated mountain that serves as the monster's domain, the two narratives differ in several significant ways. The most apparent divergence concerns gender dynamics within the Romantic triad. In Tieck's tale, Christian is at the apex, making him the focus of the two female opponents, whereas in Murnau's film the figure at the pinnacle changes as the narrative unfolds. At the outset, Hutter is the focus, but as the story progresses he is pushed to the margins and Ellen, his wife, moves to the top of the triangle as object of desire for both Hutter and the male vampire, Orlok. Where Tieck posits a conflict between a male protagonist and nature as a female seductress, Murnau locates the conflict between a female protagonist and the grotesque, plague-bearing Count. And while Christian's encounter directly threatens only himself,¹²⁴ Murnau's vampire menaces Hutter, Ellen and the entire town of Wisborg. Vampiric nature, when embodied as male, is able to penetrate into civilization,

¹²⁴ Arguably, Elisabeth, his children and his estate suffer as a result of his interaction with the vampiric nature spirit, but she never directly threatens anyone but Christian. The destruction of the fruitful estate that Christian builds occurs only after he invests the gold (which is an agent of infection) into his holdings, thus allowing his infection to spread.

unlike its female counterpart. When the danger enters the domestic (and feminine) realm, the power to destroy the threat rests in the wife. Through an intuitive connection with nature and a deep understanding of the domestic aspect of Wisborg, Ellen becomes the central character of the film, usurping her husband from his role as protagonist. The Romantic triad in *Nosferatu* hinges not on the men, but on Ellen alone. It removes the male authority figure found in both “Der Runenberg,” in the form of Christian’s father,¹²⁵ and *Dracula*, in the form of Van Helsing. As Lane Roth argues,

In Stoker’s novel, Van Helsing is Dracula’s nemesis. Both characters represent authority figures by being male, having venerable titles (Professor, Count), and possessing the wisdom of maturity. In the book they are antagonists, each vying to dominate the situation and the lives of the other characters. Van Helsing is conspicuously absent from *Nosferatu* so that Graf Orlok is unopposed by any male authority figure. The denouement is therefore different. The vampire is not ambushed outside and violently staked and beheaded, but with the dawn’s sunlight dissipates inside a bedroom. [...] Whereas in the novel the vampire’s ultimate demise is effected by male attack, it is accomplished by feminine surrender in the film. (309-310)

The focus of the film is, therefore, on the relationship between a female heroine and a male vampire, rather than on a struggle between men. In order to accomplish this narrative change, Orlok emerges as Hutter’s dark double and the young husband becomes little more than an observer, his inaction highlighted by his wife’s increasing association with the vampire. These changes are possible because Ellen has an intuitive connection with nature and is thus susceptible to the vampire’s advances. What careful analysis reveals is that as a male embodiment of the natural realm, he represents Ellen’s true

¹²⁵ Although, Christian’s father fails in his attempts to protect his son from the forces that lure him into nature’s dangerous embrace.

partner, allowing her to unite with the world she covets through the potting of flowers and raising of kittens.

In this way, Ellen surpasses the archetypal Elisabeth. Like this ancestor, she represents the concept of femininity associated with her time, but she is ultimately a more complex figure than her predecessor. Imbued with both a positive role through her active participation in the resolution of the conflict, as well as a sense of negative symbolism through this same activity and her connection to the vampire, Ellen represents the fears Weimar society felt toward women and a longing for a return to a simpler time. Where in Tieck the feminine is presented as dualistic through the vampiric, seductive nature spirit and the pious, beautiful Elisabeth, Murnau's film portrays the continuing friction of increasingly independent women in Weimar Germany:

It was feared that the New Woman, with her perceived self-interested orientation toward career advancement, had the potential to undermine the social fabric. [...] The Weimar woman navigated between the masculine world of career and her traditional role as mother and homemaker. Other discourses relating to this in-between state included the threatening *Mannsweib* figure, who was pitted against the traditional feminine woman in the Weimar press. The alleged trend of masculinized women, synonymous with the New Woman's androgyny, was decried by many critics who saw them as a threat to the stability of family and state. (Hales 318)

Clearly, Ellen is not a "*Mannsweib*," instead, she is associated with "possessing the power of the other, which is dangerous and must be held in check" (318). Women, in the postwar period, were seen as a threat to the social order and were pushed to liminal spaces to curtail their influence, and "these multiple in-between states ascribed to the Weimar woman created a situation in which spiritual powers deemed dangerous by society were attributed to women" (319). Finally, Ellen is the product of a time that

“portrayed women in both popular and scientific discourse in terms of their connection to the supernatural. Women were seen to possess mystical power that promised the ability to solve problems for which traditional modes of rationality were without answer” (319). While her active involvement in the struggle against the vampire and the transgression of her desire for the creature, as well as her continued portrayal as an opener (of windows, books, her eyes) are necessary for the resolution of the conflict, these actions also require her death. The powers that allow her to solve the problems beyond rational understanding also doom her. In order to examine Ellen’s progression from demure wife to daring martyr, and her evolving relationship to nature and thus to Orlok, a close reading of the film is necessary.

The opening of the film mimics the novel’s structure of amalgamated journals, letters and newspaper accounts in a condensed form through the introduction of a narrator who, in effect, tells the story of the great dying that happened in Wisborg. He is identified in the 2007 Kino restoration with three crosses,¹²⁶ but has no name and claims that “Lange habe ich über Beginn und Erlöschen des großen Sterbens in meiner Vaterstadt Wisborg nachgedacht.”¹²⁷ Judith Mayne argues that

this narrator is more or less equivalent of an omniscient point of view, since he is not a character in the film, and supposedly recounts the story of Nosferatu with all the salient details intact. This narration appears only in written titles, [...]. There is not really a visual point of view which can be called that of the narrator, unless it be the high-angle long shot of the city which opens the film. The role of the narrator is defined, then, primarily in terms of language.
(33)

¹²⁶ In other versions of the film, he is identified as Johann Cavallius.

¹²⁷ “I have reflected at length on the origin and passing of the Great Death in my hometown of Wisborg.”

Rather than presenting a story pieced together from various different sources, Murnau places the work into the writing of one man, giving an early indication of the more tightly focused narrative of the film with a significantly smaller cast of characters. Furthermore, the narrator is part of “the tradition of romantic storytelling” (Kaes 89) where he conventionally serves to mediate “between the fantastic world of fiction and the rational world of the audience,” thus providing “a measure of normalcy against which the bizarre fictional characters and events are thrown into relief” (89). He presents the story from a distance, and through his presence, the account of the “great dying” in Wisborg gains authority through the act of writing it down.¹²⁸ Through this lens, the unbelievable events begin to unfold.

The first character to appear on the screen is Thomas Hutter, the male protagonist. Several key visual elements are introduced in this scene, which, characteristically of film at the time, “call attention to phenomena like looking, voyeurism, the objectification of the female” (McCormick 18). The first depiction of Hutter shows him “as he preens in front of a mirror. He smiles with trouble-free satisfaction, pleased with what he sees, but the remainder of this opening sequence suggests how little Jonathan [sic] does or can see” (Waller 179).¹²⁹ Not only does this portrayal emphasize his self-absorption, but it also foreshadows the doubling that occurs throughout the film.¹³⁰ The other significant element of this shot is that beside him is a closed window. Windows and mirrors play a

¹²⁸ Tieck’s tale also uses a narrator, but “the narrator of the tale at no point accepts one of the characters’ views as unequivocally correct. He tells us simply what a character does, says, thinks, feels, hears, or sees without commenting on the opinion of events held by that character” (Lillyman 234).

¹²⁹ Unlike “Der Runenberg,” where Christian is already in the mountains at the beginning of the tale, and *Dracula*, which opens with Jonathan’s journal entry on the way to Transylvania (Stoker 9), the opening of *Nosferatu* presents a vision of the domestic sphere before sending the protagonist into the natural sphere.

¹³⁰ In his essay “The ‘Uncanny,’” Sigmund Freud notes that the double is linked to “reflections in mirrors, with shadows, with guardian spirits, with the belief in the soul and with the fear of death” (940).

key role in establishing the direction and location of the gaze within this film, and the mirror, specifically “is a dominant motif throughout *Nosferatu*, and is a form taken by the theme of the double [...] *Nosferatu* indeed functions as a mirror for all of the characters in the film” (Mayne 34-36). As Hutter turns from the mirror, he moves to the window and through it, the audience follows his gaze to see his wife, Ellen.

From the beginning, Murnau establishes the connection between Ellen and nature. In the introductory scene, he shows her using a ball on a bit of string to play with a cat on a windowsill. Planted flowers frame them both. Significantly, Ellen sits on the threshold and leans out of the window toward cultivated nature, rather than venturing beyond the safety of the home to find an undomesticated environment. Unlike Hutter, however, she occupies an open window, and while her husband is associated primarily with the mirror, Ellen is associated with the window, which “has special import in terms of the social and symbolic positioning of the woman – [it] is the interface between inside and outside, the feminine space of the family and reproduction and the masculine space of production. It facilitates a communication by means of a look between the two sexually differentiated spaces” (Doane 72). Thus, she bridges the gap between the feminine and masculine spaces,¹³¹ as well as occupying a liminal position vis-à-vis nature. Her portrayal throughout the film places her in an in-between space. When she stops playing with the

¹³¹ As Sara Libby Robinson writes, “Gender norms in nineteenth-century Western Europe and America were founded on the middle class ideal of separate spheres. Many opinion-makers of the period believed that men and women possessed different physical and moral attributes, and these attributes fitted them for two distinctly different spheres of life. Men were the stronger sex, endowed with reason, intelligence, courage and strength – both physical and moral. They inhabited the public sphere, in which they received their education, pursued careers, and engaged in politics. [...] Women belonged to the domestic sphere – the home. Weaker than men physically, intellectually, and morally, women were vulnerable to the dangers and temptations of the public sphere. Women’s strengths were their capacity for devotion, their innocence, and their delicate sensibilities, but this purity was only influential within their homes, and might be vitiated by contact with the world outside” (156-157). Arguably, Murnau’s film draws on the gender tensions of Weimar Germany, but also enacts these nineteenth-century spheres when he chooses to set the story in 1838 rather than the present.

kitten, she sits down, near the open window, and begins to mend a shirt. This occupation demonstrates her domestic side and presents an image

of the bourgeois home as a comfortable, private domain contiguous with domesticated, ornamental nature – a modern Garden of Eden, in which the man goes and does, while the woman entertains herself with idle, childish diversions or passes the time with needlepoint before her husband reappears from his sojourn in the public world of commerce (Waller 179).

However, the open window remains in the frame, reminding the audience of Ellen's perch on the threshold between the inside and outside space and her connection to the domesticated nature her potted flowers represent. While it is true that Hutter ventures into the world, and later into the wilderness, his association with the mirror and to a lesser extent closed windows, symbolizes that he is unable to perceive the threat nature poses, because he is caught in his own self-referential sphere. Ellen, on the other hand, through her openness, and her position on the margins of society, is able to identify the danger that the wilderness, and the vampire that dwells at its center, pose to the ordered world of Wisborg.

In opposition to this representation of Ellen's connection with nature, Murnau presents the first instance of Hutter's interaction with the natural world in which he displays his lack of awareness. As a counterpoint to the peaceful scene of Ellen's game with the kitten set amongst the potted plants, Hutter's association with nature is almost frenzied. After observing his wife through the window, he rushes outside to enthusiastically pick a bouquet of flowers. He is shown happily tearing the flowers from their stems and adding them to a growing bushel in his hands. This sequence recalls Christian's thoughtless uprooting of the mandrake and his subsequent encounter with

vampiric nature, but, as Hutter is still within the safety of Wisborg, he is presented with the chance to gain knowledge as a result of his transgression, a knowledge he does not recognize. As the scene continues, Murnau elaborates on the two differing levels of connection to nature Hutter and Ellen represent through an exchange between the young married couple. He brings the violently gathered flowers to his wife. Rather than being pleased with the gift, Ellen exclaims unhappily “Warum hast Du sie getötet.....die schönen Blumen...?!”¹³² Notably, the list of intertitles in Murnau’s script, translated and included in Lotte Eisner’s biography of the director, shows that Ellen should say, “Why have you destroyed them...the beautiful flowers?” (Eisner 228). The discrepancy is subtle, but relevant as “killing” the plants has a connotation of more direct action than destroying them, which implies a slight degree of distance from the act.¹³³ Nevertheless, Ellen’s reaction is one of remorse and tenderness. She gently shelters the bouquet; her hunched shoulders and reproachful expression demonstrate how deeply the “death” of the flowers affects her emotions. The enhanced attachment to the life of plants she displays continues to mold her as the epitome of the Romantic feminine, a creature of such sensitive intuition that she crosses the boundaries between the social and the natural.

This scene becomes pivotal in understanding the young married couple and provides the first glimpse of why the vampire is able to tempt Ellen. The relationship between husband and wife is depicted as puerile, innocent and chaste; this interpretation of the marriage stems from Hutter’s behaviour, as Anton Kaes notes, “he acts like a child as they embrace and kiss on the cheeks. His innocence is betrayed by her reaction” and

¹³² “Why did you kill them...such beautiful flowers...?!”

¹³³ Some versions of the film, for instance, the 2003 Arrow Entertainment release featuring a soundtrack by goth-metal band Type-O Negative, omit this intertitle completely, which changes the tone of the scene considerably. Instead of filling Ellen’s actions with remorse, she appears to be deeply touched by her husband’s thoughtfulness in giving her a gift.

he goes on to write: “the word 'kill' introduces the theme of violence against nature, against living things, a premonition of events to come. Hutter soothes her, but it is clear that he has no clue of what she means” (89). Two issues emerge from this reading of the scene. The first is that the marriage is one of innocence, and thus not consummated. Kaes supports this interpretation by drawing attention to how, in a subsequent scene, “the untouched bed - a reminder of their marital status - remains clearly in view” (91) while Hutter prepares to embark on his journey and Ellen frets at his imminent departure. Her ability to lure and destroy the vampire, a task which only a “pure woman” can accomplish, also corroborates this reading. The second, more sinister aspect of the “murdered” flowers is the violence inherent in the act and is hinted at in Hutter’s behaviour when he first enters the room: “Jonathan’s [sic] initial behavior toward his wife is also somewhat menacing as he stoops and peers at her from the doorway and laughs rather maniacally” (Unrau 235).

While Kaes correctly points to the willful destruction of nature and living things, this line of thought can be extended to women. Hutter reverses Simone de Beauvoir’s assertion that “man expects something other than the assuagement of instinctive cravings from the possession of a woman: she is the privileged object through which he subdues Nature” (156): he seeks to subdue Ellen through his subjugation of nature. Implicit in this exchange is a threat of violent defloration.¹³⁴ Pushing the symbolic value of the flowers even further, Colin Davis argues, “death has entered this world and tainted love

¹³⁴ De Beauvoir on the origins of the term: “one of the ends sought by all desire is the using up of the desired object, which implies its destruction. In breaking the hymen man takes possession of the feminine body more intimately than by a penetration that leaves it intact; in the irreversible act of defloration he makes of that body unequivocally a passive object, he affirms his capture of it. This idea is expressed precisely in the legend of the knight who pushed his way with difficulty through thorny bushes to pick a rose of hitherto unbreathed fragrance; he not only found it, but broke the stem, and it was then that he made it his own. The image is so clear that in popular language to 'take her flower' from a woman means to destroy her virginity; and this expression, of course, has given origin to the word 'defloration'" (155).

before Hutter even sets foot in the country of ghosts; and from this early point Ellen's love will always be touched by death" (38). Hutter's inability to understand both nature and his wife overshadows the picture of happy domesticity.¹³⁵ In a sense, the act of "killing" the flowers foreshadows his involvement in bringing Nosferatu and the plague to Wisborg, both through his inability to realize the implications of his actions and their violent undercurrent. His naivety is contrasted against Ellen's intrinsic ability to comprehend not only the vulnerability of nature, but also the power inherent within it, a power she circumscribes when she chooses to interact only with cultivated plants.

The narrative moves forward as Hutter leaves his wife and walks to his place of employment. As he is hurrying along, an old man¹³⁶ stops him and warns "Nicht so hastig junger Freund! Niemand enteilt seinem Schicksal,"¹³⁷ which prompts Kaes to assert that "the professor's odd warning and bemused expression betray knowledge unavailable to our young hero. The old man seems to know what awaits Hutter" (90-91). Hutter dismisses this with another one of his characteristic laughs and continues on his way.¹³⁸ Murnau's protagonist displays a similar disregard for the elder's wisdom as Tieck's Christian and this wilful ignorance also leads him into a realm he does not comprehend, a realm which endangers his life and the lives of those he loves.

Throughout these opening scenes, Murnau emphasizes Hutter's blithe naivety and every interaction serves this purpose. Thus, his response to his employer's instructions about a

¹³⁵ It also serves as a further connection to Christian's experience with nature. Like his Romantic counterpart, Hutter cannot comprehend the mysteries of the natural realm, or the feminine. Unlike Christian, however, Hutter never attempts or desires to gain this understanding.

¹³⁶ Kaes identifies him correctly as Professor Bulwer (90), but the film does not introduce him by name until much later.

¹³⁷ "Not so fast, my young friend! No one can outrun their fate."

¹³⁸ Arguably, this veiled warning corresponds to the warning about the Runenberg given to Christian by the forester who trains him, but which Christian only vaguely remembers (Tieck 31).

journey to a foreign land in order to conclude a real estate transaction is one of unperturbed enthusiasm. He arrives at work and when Knock gives him his new assignment he “immediately agrees to travel to Transylvania [...], for the trip offers ‘a good opportunity,’ presumably to earn money and gain advancement” (Waller 179). Hutter appears unaware of the peculiar nature of his own employer and the strange letter of arcane symbols. Clemens Ruthner asserts,

So hat das Böse offenkundig seine eigenen Hieroglyphen, wie der Zuseher erkennen kann, als Knock am Anfang des Films einen Brief aus Transylvanien bekommt, der wohl nicht zufällig an einen Teufelspakt gemahnt. Schon die Tatsache, daß er den Text lesen kann, markiert Knock als Handlanger des Bösen (ebenso wie physiognomische Ähnlichkeiten).¹³⁹ (45)

The film builds on the sense of foreboding heralded in the opening scenes, but Hutter remains unaware of the danger that surrounds him. His acceptance of the proposed business journey is a result of greed, because Knock explains, “Sie könnten einen schönen Batzen Geld verdienen.”¹⁴⁰ This financial gain, however, comes with a price: “es kostet zwar ein wenig Mühe...ein bißchen Schweiß und vielleicht.....ein wenig Blut.”¹⁴¹

Rather than being disturbed at this declaration, Hutter and Knock share a maniacal laugh. Knock sends Hutter to the “Land der Gespenster”¹⁴² without any objection from the young man. His avarice endangers the entire city and as Rona Unrau

¹³⁹ “So, evidently evil has its own hieroglyphs, as the viewer can see, as Knock receives a letter from Transylvania at the beginning of the film, and its resemblance to a pact with the devil is probably not a coincidence. Just the fact that he can read the text, marks Knock as evil’s henchman (just like his physical resemblance).” (my translation).

¹⁴⁰ “You could earn a tidy sum.”

¹⁴¹ “You might have to go to a bit of trouble...a little sweat and maybe...a little blood.”

¹⁴² “the land of phantoms.”

argues, “Bremen [sic] disintegrates into blood-lust and deaths, connected causally to Jonathan’s [sic] desire for money, since this near-vampiric desire of his drives him to leave his wife eagerly and enter the demonic world, even after Renfield’s [sic] warning that it may cost him ‘a little blood’” (237). Wisborg’s ultimate misfortune and the many deaths that occur as a result of the vampire’s plague are linked to Hutter’s thoughtless trespass into the depths of nature. The scene is the catalyst of the events that follow and demonstrates the dependence of the vampire on human agents. Like the nature spirit in Tieck’s “Der Runenberg,” Orlok uses Knock to lure a new victim to his lair and then uses this new victim as an agent that allows him access to a city teeming with even more victims. The difference between Tieck’s female vampire and the male vampire of the later narrative is the goal of infection. The feminine spectre lures young men from their lives and dooms them to a subterranean existence in the depths of her realm; the masculine phantom not only lures victims to his lair, but does so with the intent to invade civilization. Preying not on a restless desire for a connection to nature, but instead avarice, Orlok gains power over Knock and the careless Hutter.

While the business trip to Transylvania excites Hutter with the prospect not only of a journey, but also of monetary gain, Ellen’s reaction to the news that he travels “weit, weit fort in das Land der Diebe und Gespenster”¹⁴³ is one of immediate trepidation and melancholy. The contrast between the two is highlighted again when she despondently follows her smiling husband through the house as he packs. Colin Davis notes that “in the opening sequence [Ellen] seems to be dressed in black, as if she were already mourning a death” (46) and this somber attire continues in Hutter’s leave-taking

¹⁴³ He “must travel far, far away to the land of thieves and phantoms.”

sequence,¹⁴⁴ where her dark clothing appears in stark contrast to her friend's white dress. Her exaggerated response to what appears to be a simple business venture shows an intuitive understanding that Hutter's journey is more dangerous than he realizes. Rather than pointing to a weakness in her character, her unvoiced, indefinite misgivings foreshadow the peril that lies dormant in the Carpathians, which, upon awakening, threatens not only her husband, but also Ellen herself, as well as the town of Wisborg.

Throughout this opening sequence, Ellen's ability to comprehend the implications of Hutter's careless actions demonstrates her connection to nature, while also portraying an "affinity with death" (Davis 46) – she understands that the flowers have been "killed." Superficially, this association appears contradictory, but the two spheres often collide in the female body:

Because nature, conceived as an all-powerful force of destruction, was exteriorised into an object of control and domination, it also became dangerously foreign, untamed and savage. By the nineteenth century, 'love' and 'death' were culturally constructed as the two realms where savage nature could break into "man's" city, at the same historical moment that society believed that its achievements in technology and rationalism had served to colonise nature completely. (Bronfen 86)

Ellen's attraction to the vampire stems from this cultural construction of these two intertwining symbolic realms. She is susceptible to the creature's advances, not only as a result of her unfulfilling marriage to Hutter, but also because she perceives the forces of nature and death that surround her even in the peaceful city of Wisborg. Her overwrought behavior at Hutter's departure is a further signal of Ellen's alienation from the town's society. While she attempts to act as the devoted wife, her portrayal on the

¹⁴⁴ And indeed, throughout the entire film.

threshold of the window and her reproach of her husband's ill-conceived gift are early hints that she strives for more than the domestic life Hutter offers. Indeed, her gentle reproach over the "murdered" flowers is the first indication of how she undermines Hutter's male authority, a course of action that places her in perpetual conflict with society and its norms. As a result of this self-marginalization, Ellen cannot persuade Hutter to forsake the mountain journey. While her Romantic counterpart, Elisabeth, is able to connect Christian to the village community for a number of years through her *own* connection, Ellen cannot anchor Hutter in the same way. Ultimately, Elisabeth's piety fails to hold Christian, not as a result of her status, but due to him already being infected when he enters this realm. Ellen's failure, on the other hand, stems from a dual cause – her own lack of connection and Hutter's determined ignorance.

Unperturbed at his wife's fear, Hutter leaves her in the care of his friends and sets off on his Carpathian adventure, certain of his future economic happiness and heedless of the dangers such an excursion represents. As he embarks on this venture, he is "a smiling innocent journeying in mortal territory [and he] represents the type of person who would put death out of mind [because it is] something that happens to others, something too far off to worry about" (Perez 3). This attitude leaves him vulnerable and unprepared for his encounter in the castle. Just as he ignores the warnings given to him earlier from both Ellen and Knock, he now ignores the qualms of the villagers. They greet him politely, but when he announces, "Rasch...das Essen – Ich muss zum Schloss des Grafen Orlok!"¹⁴⁵ he is met with consternation and unease. The innkeeper informs him that

¹⁴⁵ "Quickly...bring my dinner – I'm on my way to Count Orlok's castle!"

“Ihr dürft jetzt nicht weiter, der Wehrwolf [sic] streift durch die Wälder.”¹⁴⁶ In response, Hutter laughingly agrees to stay the night. A shot of a hyena represents the dreaded werewolf¹⁴⁷ and a herd of nervous horses¹⁴⁸ runs across the screen. The villagers huddle together in terror, while Hutter prepares to sleep. The ominous atmosphere does not affect him and not even the *Book of Vampyres*, which he finds in his room, rouses more than his laughter, a reaction that also recalls his treatment of Ellen in the beginning of the film. Gregory Waller argues that

Jonathan’s [sic] laughter seems to be a matter of smug condescension and stupidity rather than an outright attempt at ridicule [...]. Whether or not Murnau desired Gustav von Wagenheim [sic] to portray Jonathan [sic] in the manner he does, the effect of von Wagenheim’s [sic] performance is to render the young traveler a shortsighted, foolish egotist (recall that he is preening himself in front of a mirror the first time we see him), much different from Stoker’s young solicitor, who is to some degree the best that Victorian England has to offer. (180-181)

Hutter is clearly not interested in learning about his destination or his host, so that none of the information provided to him increases his understanding of his precarious situation. He remains ignorant throughout, unable or unwilling to accept the dark undercurrent of his environment. When he ventures into the wild, natural landscape of

¹⁴⁶ “You can’t go any further tonight. The werewolf is roaming the forests.”

¹⁴⁷ Bruce McClelland suggests that the wolf was an enemy of the vampire, stating, “the dog, however, is a domesticated descendant of another animal also often thought to be an enemy of the vampire, the wolf. [...] The wolf as the vampire’s enemy does not have to have any special markings [...]. We must thus conjecture that the wolf is totemic” (105). He also notes that the wolf “plays a dual role as both a morph of the vampire and the vampire’s mortal enemy” (107), demonstrating the liminal symbolic function of the wolf.

¹⁴⁸ In a footnote, Nina Auerbach and David J. Skal, the editors of the Norton Critical edition of *Dracula*, point out that, “throughout the novel, horses are aligned with humans rather than with the wolves, bats, and rats who fall under Dracula’s spell. In F. W. Murnau’s haunting silent film *Nosferatu* (1922), [...] horses similarly flee Max Schreck’s ratlike Dracula” (18). And Paul Barber points out that horses were used to find vampires: “One may also detect vampires and revenants by leading a horse through the graveyard, over the graves, because it will balk at stepping over the grave of a vampire” (68). However, in a later scene, Orlok arrives as the driver of a coach and the team of horses swathed in black cloth is at ease in his presence.

the Carpathians, his intention is not communion with nature and a return to spiritual unity. Rather, his focus remains on his business obligations, with no regard for the beauty or danger that surrounds him. In a sense, his refusal of knowledge is similar to Christian's early hunting song and serves as an attempt to assert his mastery over a foreign situation. Where Christian seeks to subjugate nature after she taunts him with the unintelligible (to him) voices in the stream, Hutter laughs at the purveyors of knowledge regarding the unknown or supernatural.

Significantly, he does not cross into the realm of the vampire through the power of either the villagers or Orlok, but under his own volition. Indeed, the villagers attempt to prevent him from continuing into the vampire's territory. When he reaches the pass that leads to the Count's castle the coachmen refuse to continue, stating that "Drüben überm Pass ist's nicht geheuer!"¹⁴⁹ Thus, "unlike Stoker's traveler, who waits with impatient helplessness for various and increasingly sinister vehicles, Murnau's *walks* across the border. His coachman refuses to pass over the bridge into the land of phantoms, and so Jonathan [sic] crosses it on foot" (Auerbach 73). No warning, no cautionary tale deters Hutter from his goal. He willingly crosses the border into the phantom realm, which again presents a dualistic symbolic meaning of being both the realm of nature and the realm of death. As Evans Lansing Smith argues,

Mountains are associated not only with the demonic realm of witches and the supernatural in German literary tradition [...], but also with the underworld of the mythological tradition [...]. These conventional affiliations between mountains and the underworld are reinforced in Murnau's film by the related conventions that link river crossings to the heroic descent: in *Nosferatu*, Harker [sic] is driven by horse drawn coach at sunset to the edge of the 'Land of

¹⁴⁹ "We've got a bad feeling about heading over the pass!"

Phantoms,' where he must disembark and cross a bridge over a river before being met by the relay coach sent by Count Dracula [sic]. This is the threshold crossing over the river Styx into Hades. (242)

Hutter passes from the land of the living into the supernatural realm associated with the vampire and with death. The influence of this unknown region asserts itself immediately, as an intertitle states: "Kaum hatte Hutter die Brücke überschritten, da ergriffen ihn die unheimlichen Gesichte, von denen er mir oft erzählt hat."¹⁵⁰ This statement is one of few indications that Hutter has an unsettling experience in the Carpathian Mountains and is willing to discuss his trial with another person – the film's narrator. His apparent willingness to share his experience on the mountain contradicts his behaviour throughout the film, where he refuses to acknowledge the dark power of the vampire and his role in unleashing the creature on Wisborg.

Once Hutter willingly enters Orlok's realm in the depths of the mountains and, like Christian, leaves the comfort of society, he confronts nature in its full power, unrestrained and wild. A coach appears to assist him in reaching the castle and upon accepting this final invitation from a disguised Orlok, Hutter comes completely under the influence of the vampire. The first representation of the vampire shows him as a ferryman, collecting the unaware Hutter and carrying him from the boundary of his territory into its depths. Murnau renders this journey as a strange coach ride in negative. The reversal of colours – the coach is black and travels through a forest of white trees – and the sped-up film¹⁵¹ visually demonstrates the departure from normality: "it unsettles

¹⁵⁰ "As soon as Hutter crossed the bridge he was seized by the eerie visions he so often told me of."

¹⁵¹ Ian Roberts notes that "this was achieved by cranking the camera at half the standard speed, then using a negative image of the scene in order to unsettle the viewer. The carriage itself was painted white for the shoot, so that in negative print it would appear black, as the audience might expect, against the eerie white backdrop of the forest" (44).

the setting of nature, the seeming solidity of trees and hills, by making manifest the flickering incorporeity of their representation on screen: trees and hills and the ground underfoot are suddenly seen to crumble into the thin imagery that constitutes them” (Perez 3-4). The audience understands that Hutter has left reason behind and has crossed over into the vampire’s territory. Reality has been disrupted. Like Christian he “crosses the threshold into the magic zone, [and] his reason and consciousness are dissolved in intoxication” (Vredevelt 201). This spectral journey and its use of special effects “can be understood as [...] demonstrations of the affinity between the cinema’s process of signification involving the play of presence / absence and the ambiguous character of the film’s protagonist” (Michaels 242). Hutter from this moment forward is associated with the phantom existence of the vampire. He is as much a spectre in this setting as the Count. When he boards the coach, Hutter gives himself up to the power of Nosferatu. Murnau clearly references Romantic motifs in the construction of Hutter’s interaction with Count Orlok, but this vision is altered through the lens of a more cynical post-war sensibility. Thus, the traveler who once sought spiritual communion with nature, now seeks only to fulfill a mercenary task.

After depositing Hutter at the entrance to the castle, Orlok drives away with the coach, again like the stranger who accompanies Christian to the base of the Runenberg and then leaves him to complete the final stage of the journey alone. Hutter voluntarily crosses another threshold when he enters into the castle. He becomes lost in a realm of the subconscious, where his trespass arguably creates a fissure that allows Orlok to emerge as Hutter’s dark double. Significant also, is that he “arrives at the Count’s castle just before midnight, thus linking the German Romantic affiliation between night, death,

sex, and dream to the symbolism of the underworld” (Smith 242). The nighttime arrival is a further indication of the subconscious element of Hutter’s interaction with the vampire after the fantastical coach ride into the realm of the unknown. As soon as Hutter enters the door, which opens by itself, Murnau shows Orlok materializing from within a dark archway, his pale face and hands slowly surface from the blackness until he stands in the blue light.¹⁵² Two arches frame him, the one behind him and one through which the audience sees him. The scene cuts back to show Hutter approaching, framed by the door through which the outside world is momentarily still visible, but again, it moves under its own power and closes. He must continue through a shadowy passageway to the waiting Orlok, “as if he were walking out to meet his reflection” (Wood “Midnight” 7). They mirror each other as they approach. In a study of the *Doppelgänger* figure in German literature, Andrew J. Webber lists these characteristics of doubles:

The *Doppelgänger* recurrently introduces voyeurism and innuendo into the subject’s pursuit of a visual and discursive sense of self. Knowledge and sexuality are the two predominant forms of the fifth characteristic principle of the *Doppelgänger*, that of power-play between ego and *alter ego*. Power in the *Doppelgänger* scenario, is always caught up in exchange, never to be simply possessed as mastery of the self, of the other, or of the other self. [...] The sixth premise is that the *Doppelgänger* operates as a figure of displacement. It characteristically appears out of place, in order to displace its host. [...] The *Doppelgänger* is also temporally out of place. (3-4)

These aspects of the *Doppelgänger* are at play in the relationship between Hutter and Orlok, and constitute another factor in the vampire’s eventual seduction of the young Ellen. Since Hutter’s approach to Ellen is childish, her desires remain unfulfilled until

¹⁵² Blue tint signifies that the scene occurs at night. Yellow signifies daytime or candlelight in interior nighttime shots, while pink denotes dawn.

Orlok enters and disrupts the chaste relationship. The Count embodies the sexuality her husband lacks. He even appears more masculine than Hutter, who has full, pouting lips and a head of unruly hair. There is a power-play between Hutter and Orlok, but Hutter is clearly on the losing side of the battle between his ego and alter ego.¹⁵³ He cannot reassimilate his Other. Only his wife can destroy the dark double his venturing into the unconscious space has spawned.

Finally, the vampire is displaced both physically and temporally: he lives alone in the wilderness, removed from modern concerns and life until Hutter finds him there and brings him into the city and society. After Hutter has entered the courtyard, the two men regard each other, but now Hutter is framed in a bright arch, a counterpoint to Orlok's earlier appearance. The vampire then invites his guest into the castle and they walk together into the darkness. This scene in the passageways is pivotal in establishing the act of doubling that occurs in the narrative. Orlok's liminal position and this first depiction suggest the return of something repressed. Not only is he *unheimlich* as a result of his actual appearance, but also because he is familiar to the audience who has seen him as the disguised coach driver. Through the construction of these scenes, Murnau shows that Orlok "is in reality nothing new or alien, but some thing which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression" (Freud 944). In this case, he represents Hutter's sexuality, as well as his impulse to violence, alluded to in the scene with the "murdered" flowers. Furthermore, the mirroring in their approaches and the passage through the archways, the crossing of

¹⁵³ Arguably, Hutter's encounter with this sexually powerful subconscious self recalls Christian's sexual awakening at the summit of the Runenberg.

thresholds at first separate and then joined shows that Orlok needs Hutter, needs his double, in order to escape his displacement.

Inside the castle, the vampire and his guest sit down at a table where dinner is laid out for the traveler. Hutter eats, seated next to Orlok who reads a letter, again written in strange glyphs and symbols which recall not only the letter Knock peruses, but also the tablet of bejeweled runes in Tieck's tale. A skeleton-topped clock chimes midnight and, startled, Hutter cuts his finger with a knife. The blood that wells from the injury prompts the vampire to act; he puts aside his cryptic letter and advances on his guest, stating, "Ihr habt Euch weh getan...Das kostbare Blut!"¹⁵⁴ He clutches Hutter's hand and brings it to his mouth, but the shocked guest pulls his injured finger from his grip and, clearly horrified, begins to back away. This retreat is the first, but not the last time that Hutter recoils from the Count. The scene is another indication of his unwillingness to confront the reality of his situation. Orlok pursues his victim and suggests they sit together for a time. Significantly, he uses the terms "Liebwertester" and "mein Bester"¹⁵⁵ to address Hutter, endearments which suggest attraction and posit that at this stage, the vampire wishes to seduce and consume Hutter, rather than his wife. The threat implied in Orlok's interest is realized in the film, but not portrayed on the screen. While Hutter recoils from the vampire, escape is not possible and he collapses into a chair. The scene ends.

The next intertitle announces the sunrise, "So bald die Sonne stieg, wichen auch von Hutter die Schatten der Nacht,"¹⁵⁶ and an assumed return of normalcy. Hutter's

¹⁵⁴ "You've hurt yourself...the precious blood!"

¹⁵⁵ Translated respectively as "my lovely man" and "dear fellow." The translation does not capture the essence of the first term. "Liebwertester" more literally translated, means "most worthy of love," which lends a stronger tone of attraction than "my lovely man" to the vampire's request.

¹⁵⁶ "As soon as the sun rose, the shadows of the night retreated from Hutter."

awakening after his first encounter with the vampire is associated with two images. The first is the shadow he casts on the wall when he stands up to stretch. Although Hutter has until now existed in a world of light, his shadow has not been a prominent element of his portrayal. In this scene, however, his shadow is starkly noticeable. The significance of this slight shift is that shadows are exclusively associated with the Count. The second important aspect in this sequence is the discovery of the two puncture marks on Hutter's neck. He finds them while looking in a mirror, a visual cue that recalls his introduction earlier in the film. Notably, the shot first focuses on Hutter's full lips, pans to show the two marks, then again moves back to the mouth, which, in terms of the literary vampire, articulates the threatening liminality of the vampire:

As the primary site of erotic experience [...], this mouth equivocates, giving the lie to the easy separation of the masculine and the feminine. Luring at first with an inviting orifice, a promise of red softness, but delivering instead a piercing bone, the vampire mouth fuses and confuses [...] the gender-based categories of the penetrating and the receptive. (Craft 445)

Hutter's arguably feminine lips align him with the gender ambiguity of the vampiric mouth and, in a sense, the vampire's attack feminizes him through the implied act of penetration. Rather than being disturbed at the discovery of the wounds, Hutter smiles. Murnau chooses to capture the entire sequence through the reflection in a handheld mirror, a choice that again highlights the importance of the mirror as a motif in the film. Both the shadow and the reflection, are visual representations of the doubling that occurs between Hutter and the vampire, as Lotte Eisner writes, "the traces of the 'Doppelgänger' are numerous. [...] Nosferatu the vampire, also the master of a feudal castle, wishes to buy a house from an estate agent who is himself imbued with diabolism" (*Haunted*

Screen 109-110). Hutter, thus, becomes associated with a type of financial vampirism and the focus on the mouth in the two mirror scenes is a further link to his ambiguous portrayal.

Once more unperturbed, Hutter enjoys a breakfast left presumably by the Count and then goes for a walk around the castle grounds. At this point, the focus of the film is on Hutter, while Ellen becomes a phantom haunting the edges of the narrative – she is an absent referent, a topic of discussion, a silent recipient of a letter - but she does not appear. The first reference to this spectral Ellen, who exists only on the margins of the story, is in the letter Hutter writes to her after his first night in the castle. Her next appearance is in the form of the portrait Hutter carelessly drops onto the Count's table when they are finalizing the real estate transaction. The vampire seizes the little picture, clearly enamoured. In both instances, Ellen is not physically present, but only represented through symbols. Her absence from the encounter with Orlok deprives her of agency and leaves her unable to resist the insidious influence of the vampire. In the realm of the vampire, Ellen, as an embodiment of the Romantic feminine, is a powerless item of exchange. A portrayal that points to the idea that “the transaction among men in vampire fiction is, on an economic level, a direct metaphor of the control and exchange of women as property in the surrounding culture, and of men's battles with other men over who controls the women” (Johnson 76). At no point in this bargain is Ellen able to assert her own desire. She is merely a pawn between the two men, distant and precious, a silent participant in the patriarchal struggle for control.

Significantly, Hutter does not understand the implication of the interaction with the Count. None of the warnings he has received, nor the symptoms of the supernatural

that surround him, can dissuade him from fulfilling his duties. He does not doubt that “he’s selling the mysterious Count a piece of real estate” (Elsaesser “Six Degrees” 12), a belief that shows that he is fully immersed in his version of the world, firmly grounded in a reality that does not include vampires or non-monetary exchanges, such as that of blood or, in this case, that of Ellen’s life. He does not realize that “what the two also trade when they exchange contracts is the portrait of Harker’s [sic] fiancée Mina [sic], giving Nosferatu access to and possession of her person” (12). Hutter does not perceive the Count’s interest in Ellen’s portrait as dangerous. His ignorance leads him into a precarious situation, trapped in an obscure castle at the mercy of a creature he does not (want to) believe exists. Not only, then, is Ellen’s life passed between the two men, but the transaction also gives Orlok access to the entire town of Wisborg. With his new house purchased, the vampire is able to invade society. Unaware, as always, Hutter returns to his room, kisses the portrait of his wife and prepares to sleep, ignorant of the depth of his bargain.

The use of the picture in this scene not only recalls Hutter’s voyeurism at the beginning of the film, but also provides a venue that foreshadows Ellen’s death. In discussing the process of portrait photography, Roland Barthes writes, “the Photograph [...] represents that very subtle moment when, to tell the truth, I am neither subject nor object but a subject who feels he is becoming an object: I then experience a micro-version of death [...]: I am truly becoming a specter” (14). Arguably, Ellen shares this experience and the very existence of the picture and the rigidity of the pose she strikes within it rob it of the vitality which imbues her movements in the introductory scenes of the film. While the window frames her in the opening sequence in a happy interaction

with her cat and allows her to withdraw into the apartment, the frame of the portrait constrains her in her inaction.¹⁵⁷ Carol Christ uses Barthes' assertions to analyze Victorian art and poetry, arguing that "the photograph always carries the sense of death by implying an anterior future. [...] The photograph is thus a kind of *tableau vivant*, a still life." She continues: "Victorian poets characteristically use the portrait in exactly this way; indeed, they often amplify the effect Barthes describes by constructing a narrative that represents and represses the anterior future, [...] or by connecting the portrait itself to its subject's death" (138). Murnau, a trained art historian, manipulates the audience through this subtle use of Ellen's photograph and allows this representation to become the site of her future death, foreshadowing her lifeless face after the vampire has fed upon her blood. She is entrapped within the confines of the frame and waits only for the vampire to fulfill the threat inherent in his declaration to Hutter that "einen schönen Hals hat Eure Frau..."¹⁵⁸ while the two male viewers consider her picture. The sense of menace only increases when Orlok signs the deed with the assurance to Hutter that "ich kaufe das Haus...Das schöne, öde Haus, dem Euren gegenüber."¹⁵⁹ Hutter's work, and his usefulness, is now at an end. Ellen, helplessly held within the frame of the photograph, is not yet aware that her husband has granted the monstrous Count access, not only to the town of Wisborg, but also to her body and life.

¹⁵⁷ Rona Unrau connects the two scenes as well, writing that "Nina [sic] on the other hand is presented as the feminine ordering principle, knitting their household together in a classic Victorian pose, encircled by an oval iris. Yet the similarly oval frame in which Jonathan [sic] carries her image to Nosferatu's chateau finally exposes her as a commodity and attracts the vampire's desire" (235).

¹⁵⁸ "Your wife has a lovely neck."

¹⁵⁹ "I'm buying the house...that nice, deserted house across from yours..."

While Ellen to this point is depicted as mostly passive,¹⁶⁰ this portrayal changes when Orlok again threatens her husband, who retains the focus of the vampire's menace, due not to desire now, but proximity. The sequence that follows the completion of the real estate transaction solidifies the representation of Orlok as the "Other," and once more draws attention to Hutter's unwillingness and inability to confront reality. In a frightening set of scenes, Hutter finds the *Book of Vampyres* in his travel bag and reads a passage that warns, "In der Nacht bekrallet selbiger Nosferatu sein Opfer und sauget sich in höllichem Lebenstranke das Blut"¹⁶¹ and to "habet acht auf daß euch nicht sein Schatten als wie ein Alp mit graußigen Träumen beschwere."¹⁶² These warnings prompt him to fearfully open the door to his room, at which point he finally *sees* the vampire and this vision causes him to retreat. The creature's appearance is now altered, all pretense of gentility stripped away and as Matthew Beresford argues, "the first time he appears in vampire form he is extremely sinister, has a huge form that fills the doorway and his features are quite rat-like, with protruding teeth, pointed ears and long, pointed fingers; here the vampire is more akin to the undead of folklore than the vampire of literature" (142). And Wayne E. Hensley points out that "the sheer impact of being able to see events unfold on the screen must have produced a considerable impact on audiences of the early 1920s. In a story such as the Dracula tale, it is important that the makeup, lighting and set be sufficiently macabre that the audience is subjected to the horror of the vampire" (62). Murnau's portrayal of Orlok in his castle finally revealing his true,

¹⁶⁰ Reproaching Hutter over the "murdered" flowers is an early indication of her ultimate willingness to transgress social norms. Although, paradoxically, it could also be interpreted as aligning her with the "gentleness" of her sex. This positioning of Ellen as both transgressive and normative persists throughout the film. Through it, her liminality is highlighted and this ambiguity infuses even her sacrifice and death.

¹⁶¹ "At night that same Nosferatu digs his claws into his victims and suckles himself on the hellish elixir of their blood."

¹⁶² "Beware that his shadow does not engulf you like a daemoniac nightmare."

demonic self to Hutter brings this sense of fear to the audience, both through the Count's appearance and through Hutter's helplessness throughout the confrontation. In this sequence, the young man is momentarily unable to deny the supernatural danger of his situation.

His brief insight, however, comes too late and the wisdom of the book is not able to protect Hutter, because he is under the Count's power, trapped in the creature's lair. The naïve traveler is at the vampire's mercy and Nosferatu, with the deeds to a new home in hand, no longer disguises his nature and openly attacks his guest:

When Jonathan [sic] retires the following night, Orlock [sic] intrudes more boldly to resume his meal. By the use of the jump cut, the vampire moves forward with unnatural speed through framing arches and doorways that recall open coffins. He appears to lean out of the frame toward us, rising up whilst already vertical. He does not progress in a human manner by walking, but by a melting motion, which passes through layered planes of space as though space and time are no longer a barrier to him. As he moves forward towards the camera, he grows in size and power. The door bursts open like a coffin lid lifting of its own accord. The on-screen horror of the approaching vampire lies in his gliding motion, his spiky, claw-like hands and his shadow. The shadow absorbs his victim's light in a virtual prelude to the actual absorption of the life-force. As his body is drained, Jonathan's [sic] own shadow grows and follows him like a dark *doppelgänger* [sic]. (Powell 124-125)

Several issues arise from Powell's observations. First, the framing of Orlok recalls Christian observing the mountain spirit on the Runenberg, as does the vampire's towering stature. Hutter here confronts the unknown force that dwells in the depths of nature and becomes paralyzed with fear, while Christian was paralyzed with desire. The second element that Powell highlights is the use of the shadow as a site of doubling. Throughout this encounter, Hutter is shown as helpless. His feeble attempt to escape through the

window, which is prevented due to its location over a cliff, leads to yet another retreat. He covers in bed as the vampire's shadow engulfs him. The undercurrent of this bedroom assault indicates again that Hutter is a victim not only physically, but also sexually. As Robin Wood argues: "the bedchamber scene is played, unmistakably, for its potential perverse sensuality, with Jonathan [sic] prostrate on the bed (his attitude suggests a kind of desperate surrender) and the monster advancing and enfolding him with a lascivious longing" ("Burying the Undead" 181). Sexuality is a key element of Christian's experience on the mountain as well, but for the young man encountering a female vampire, the initiation is seductive rather than violent. This moment of attack and submission is the final exchange between the two men, where Orlok's darkness passes over and into Hutter, an act that precipitates Ellen's intervention.

While Hutter trembles under the covers at the vampire's approach, Ellen awakens in Wisborg and leaves her bed, apparently in a somnambulistic trance, and walks along the balustrade of a terrace outside of her room.¹⁶³ Her host sees her and catches her as she swoons. Murnau then cuts back to Hutter, pressed tightly against the headboard with his eyes shut as the shadow of the vampire looms over him. In Wisborg, Ellen rouses once more, with her eyes wide open. She stretches out her arms and calls for her husband. The interweaving of the scenes suggests that she senses the threat to his safety as the fiendish Count approaches. The link portrayed in this sequence, however, is ultimately not between husband and wife, but between the vampire and Ellen. Judith

¹⁶³ Evans Lansing Smith points out that Murnau connects these scenes "by focusing on imagery of doorways and windows in both: Dracula [sic] walks through a narrow, pointed Gothic archway to get at Harker [sic] in his room in the Medieval castle, while Nina [sic] sleepwalks through a lovely, rectangular, patrician portal onto the balcony off her bedroom in the Westenra home in Bremen [sic]. The contrast reinforces the opposition between the two realms and establishes a visual symbol of the transit between them" (242). Ellen here is connected not to an open window, but to an open door, as is the vampire.

Mayne points out that “in this alternation between the vampire’s castle and the Harker [sic] home, an eyeline match between the vampire and Nina [sic] suggests not only Nosferatu’s attraction to Nina [sic], but her own arousal as well” (29). She is the object of the male gaze again,¹⁶⁴ drawing the attention of the vampire to herself, but in this instance, she forces the shift in focus, rather than being a passive recipient. Furthermore, not only does the vampire *see* her, but she also *sees* him and “in the classical narrative cinema, to see is to desire” (Williams, L. 83). Her reaching hands thus portray an initial hint of ambiguity in her relationship with Orlok, because she is simultaneously reaching for her husband *and* the vampire. The crosscutting is significant as it is the first overt sign of the disruption in the marriage; it marks the original intrusion of Orlok’s inherent untamed force into the domestic sphere.

The technique effectively excludes Hutter from the central position in both the interaction with the natural realm and with his wife. He shrinks away, hiding from the vampire, while Ellen confronts the dark power encountered in the depths of the mountains. She, like Christian has a vision and she does not avert her gaze. As Kenneth Scott Calhoon posits,

This literal turning point represents a lateral realignment of reciprocal address whose circuit now excludes Hutter, shown variously with his head covered or his eyes simply averted and shut tight. [...] Hutter is privy to a spectacle that is suddenly indifferent to him, and while Ellen's wide-eyed gesture is as intensely theatrical a moment as one finds in this film, it effects a compositional integrity consistent with traditions - in both painting and theater - meant to feign an obliviousness toward the spectator. (645)

¹⁶⁴ As she was in the opening scenes when Hutter observes her at the window and in the admiration of her picture by both Hutter and the Count.

Hutter ceases to be the focus of the vampire's malice; indeed, he ceases to be of any interest to Orlok, who withdraws from the chamber after this confrontation with Ellen. Calhoun points to the juxtaposition between husband and wife in this scene – he closes his eyes, while hers remain open, unwilling to turn her gaze from the powerful creature that sees her across such a vast distance and responds to her cry by abandoning his pursuit of her husband. In essence, she does not only “feign an obliviousness toward the spectator” (645) in the form of the film's audience, but also the observer in the guise of the male authority of Hutter and the men of Wisborg “as her action negates the traditional sexual code of female passivity and posits her as an active participant in the trio's sexual drama” (Williams, A. 97). The visual dialogue between Ellen and Nosferatu in this scene is the primal instance of her transgression against the norms of society in relation to her status as a dutiful wife.

For Ellen, the vision of the vampire becomes the key moment in her transition from placid wife to active heroine. Her psychic ability places her directly in Nosferatu's path and allows her to feel the first alluring hints of nature's power without any societal restraint forced upon it. The trance sequence places her into the wilderness, not physically, but psychically and thus, she usurps her husband's place within the Romantic triad. She struggles with the same force that undoes Tieck's Christian, faces the same difficulty in overcoming the knowledge she gleans from her hypnotic encounter.¹⁶⁵ Ellen begins to learn that “the gift of deepest awareness such as Christian receives on the ‘Runenberg’ can easily become a curse. It is only one small step from ecstasy to

¹⁶⁵ The trance also places Ellen in yet another liminal state, highlighting once more her affinity with the position of the Romantic protagonist. The Romantics showed a keen interest in “hypnotism, cataleptic states, the visions of stigmatized nuns, somnambulism and similar manifestations of the unconscious” (Praver 5). Thus, Ellen's psychic ability with regard to the vampire marks her as intrinsically Romantic.

insanity, from intoxication to death. And the deeper one descends into the inner world, the more difficult it becomes to return” (Vredeveld 209). At this point, the narrator interrupts the story to provide the audience with additional information. He explains that “Der Arzt berichtete mir von Ellens Angst wie von einer unbekanntem Krankheit. Ich weiß aber, daß ihre Seele in dieser Nacht den Ruf des Totenvogels vernommen hat – Schon hob Nosferatu seine Schwingen.”¹⁶⁶ This passage indicates the connection between the vampire and Ellen that was forged in their brief psychic interaction. Ellen has become infected, just like Tieck’s Christian, and she cannot escape the “harmlose Blutkongestionen”¹⁶⁷ that enter into her on this night. In protecting her husband, she puts herself into harm’s way, but she also finds that she desires the interaction with Orlok and the dark aspect of nature he embodies. The same connection with nature, which provides her with understanding, also makes her vulnerable to the temptation of the unbridled power he represents.

After the narrator’s interpretation of Ellen’s trance, he turns the audience’s attention back to the Carpathians: “Mit dem Morgenlicht aber machte sich Hutter auf, das Entsetzen seiner Nächte zu ergründen.”¹⁶⁸ In perhaps the only example of Hutter’s courage, he explores the depths of the castle in an attempt to find answers. In the relative safety of daylight, Hutter visibly steels himself to the task and seeks out the daytime resting place of his menacing host. What he finds is a coffin with a damaged lid through

¹⁶⁶ “The doctor described Ellen’s anxiety to me as some sort of unknown illness. But I know that on that night her soul heard the call of the death bird – Nosferatu was already spreading his wings.”

¹⁶⁷ “Just a mild case of blood congestion.”

¹⁶⁸ “At dawn Hutter set out to investigate the horrors of the previous nights.”

which he glimpses the horrific, fanged face of his client and captor.¹⁶⁹ This moment of seeking contradicts his earlier refusals of information. In untangling his motivations, it is important to consider that

What is central in both Murnau and Stoker is not fear of the Undead, of being in an absent present state, but the ambivalent attraction / repulsion that such a state elicits in mortals. Significantly, though Harker shares none of his filmic counterpart's interest in the vampire's confined body, but simply his revulsion, Hutter's advancing / retreating movements in the "crypt coffin" sequence are as explicitly at cross purposes as Lucy's repeatedly clutching and dropping the antivampiric garlic in Stoker's novel. [...] The vampire attracts and repulses simultaneously by offering immortality to nonliving entities. (Catania 233)

Therefore, while Hutter succumbs to terror when he faces the vampire at night, during the day he is drawn to find his resting place, to investigate the phantom he encountered in the dark. His curiosity is momentarily awakened in the aftermath of his encounter with the dark sublime. Through the broken lid, Hutter confronts the monster. In fact, a glimpse is not enough and in a moment of grim fascination, he knocks the lid off the coffin to confirm that he sees Orlok prostrate, his eyes locked open and staring. The confrontation strips him of his shield of ignorance, but this effect is again only momentary. Almost instantly the sight repulses him and he draws back until he stumbles on the stairs and “becomes diagonal as he slides up the steps, but his face, frozen in horror, is compelled to focus on the vampire to the last” (Powell 122). Retreat is a motif for Hutter and he retreats again here, seeking safety in the sunlight. Returning to his chamber he “flings himself to the floor in despair, but then rises up from his abject posture, crawling towards the window in an upward diagonal line that seeks escape” (122), but the window does not

¹⁶⁹ Notably, Hutter does not meet with any resistance in his exploration of the castle. No locked doors prevent his descent into the vampire's lair.

offer him the opportunity to flee. As with the *Book of Vampires* on the night of Orlok's attack, Hutter moves toward knowledge and immediately turns from it again. While his moment of curiosity and courage has the potential to avert danger to Wisborg and Ellen, he does not capitalize on the information he gains. Instead, he wishes to return to ignorance.

From his window, Hutter watches Orlok as he loads boxes onto a horse-drawn cart. The vampire is again portrayed as otherworldly through camera effects, making him move at a super-human speed, before finally crawling into the topmost box and moving the lid into place psychically. The box-laden cart departs and Hutter momentarily collapses again. Orlok's motivation for pursuing Ellen is unclear, since

if the 'Book of Vampires' is able to chronicle the fact that Dracula [sic] can be destroyed by 'a woman pure in heart' offering herself to Nosferatu, then it is almost certain that the Count must also possess this information. When knowledge is so widespread that it can be codified in a book left on the nightstand of an inn, a man who has lived for over four hundred years would surely be aware of it. It would therefore be imperative that Dracula avoid such a woman at all costs. [...] Why would he even bother with female victims? He would not be expected to fall into such an obvious trap unless there were some extremely unusual circumstances involved. (Hensley 62)

Nevertheless, Orlok departs from the safety of his Carpathian stronghold, clearly determined to find his real estate agent's young wife and her lovely throat. Robin Wood asserts that "it seems to be Jonathan's [sic] impotence that gives Nosferatu the power and freedom to leave his environment, shut away from civilization in inaccessible forests" ("Murnau's Midnight" 8) As the vampire departs, Hutter appears to revive: "his body and soul freed from immediate hypnotism" (Powell 125). He seems to realize the true danger and with a cry of "Ellen! Ellen!" begins an effort to escape the castle. Fashioning

a rope by tearing his bed sheets into strips, he climbs out of the window, falling some distance when his make-shift rope ends short of the ground. The fall causes an injury and Hutter remains prone at the foot of the castle's walls. At the same time, Orlok moves steadily away from his isolated lair and toward civilization on a raft. The men steering it "wussten nicht welch eine unheimliche Last sie zu Tal führten."¹⁷⁰ With Hutter unconscious and Orlok in transit, Ellen is momentarily returned to the realm of the absent referent, more directly threatened, but not yet an active participant in the story. The vision of the vampire and her interference are only the first indication of the role she must ultimately play in the restoration of order.

In the aftermath of his fall, Hutter is hospitalized. His illness aligns him, for the last time, with Tieck's Christian and his feverish feeling after leaving the Runenberg. When he wakes up, his face is contorted in fear and his first word is "Särge,"¹⁷¹ indicating that the encounter with the vampire has left him in mental distress. He clings momentarily to the nun who is his nurse, then collapses back into the bed. This scene, for Kaes, again connects Murnau's work to the post-war period with its portrayal of "shell-shock." But this reading becomes complicated when "what might first seem to be a hallucination of a shell-shocked patient is actually 'true' because we see through crosscuts that coffins are indeed on their way to Wisborg. The film validates what appears to be a subjective vision of horror" (108). The nurse and doctor do not know that Hutter is not hallucinating and so assume that his reaction is a result of his fever, nothing more than a delusion. Although attended by the physician and nuns, Hutter in effect remains alone, unable to share the dreadful knowledge of the vampire. Ellen, similarly

¹⁷⁰ "Were oblivious of the strange cargo they piloted downstream."

¹⁷¹ "Coffins."

isolated due to her affinity with nature, awaits his return in Wisborg. The film, thus, leaves its characters isolated in their struggle against the vampire.

This isolation highlights not only the strained relationship between the young couple, but also the fact that they lack a unifying leader in their confrontation with the monster. Professor Bulwer is introduced in this crucial, threatening moment in the film when “Nosferatu war auf dem Wege. Die Gefahr für Wisborg zog heran.”¹⁷² He provides mundane information to the narrator for his account of this troubled time in Wisborg: “Der Paracelsianer Professor Bulwer, der um diese Zeit die Geheimnisse der Natur und ihre Zusammenhänge ergründete, erzählte [ihm (the narrator)] darüber: Auf dem Zweimastschoner *Empusa*¹⁷³ seien Säрге mit Erde geladen worden.”¹⁷⁴ While he is unable to combat the vampire, he does provide the key piece of knowledge to establish the connection between Orlok and the natural realm: “Aus diesen Tagen zeichne ich aus, daß Professor Bulwer seinen Schülern die grausame Art der fleischfressenden Pflanzen

¹⁷² “Nosferatu was coming. Danger was on its way to Wisborg.”

¹⁷³ David Keyworth writes that the word “*empousa*” [sic] is “synonymous with the word *lamia*, a shape-shifting, succubus that supposedly fed upon the flesh and blood of the living” (18). While the OED defines it as “a hobgoblin or spectre supposed to be sent by Hecate” (“*empusa*”). In tracing the literary sources of Murnau’s film, Stefan Keppler notes that the name *Empusa* is “wohlkalkuliert” (“well calculated”) and cites “die gespenstische Frauengestalt aus Flavius Philostratos’ *Das Leben des Apollonius von Tyana*” (21) (“the spectral figure of the woman in Flavius Philostratos’ *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*”, my translation). The connotation of the name in Murnau’s film, then, is that the ship is bringing a “hobgoblin” to the city of Wisborg. Some versions of the film, the Arrow Entertainment one for example, use the name *Demeter* for the ship thus going back to Stoker’s name for it in the novel (79). The name *Demeter* connects the ship to the Greek Underworld. Demeter was a Greek goddess associated with agriculture, vegetation and fruitfulness. Her daughter, Persephone was abducted by Hades, the god of the Greek underworld. In her grief over losing her daughter, Demeter neglected the plants and animals that were her domain and thus imperiled the future of humanity. Zeus intervenes and Persephone is returned to her mother, but since the girl ate a pomegranate seed while in Hades’ domain she can only spend half of the year above ground. The other half, she must spend with Hades. In this way, the seasons were created (“Demeter” 38). The name *Demeter*, thus, links the vampire’s journey with the crossing of the threshold between the realm of the dead and the realm of the living, while also drawing a connection between Orlok and Demeter, so that as “pagan nature gods, [they] share the gift of eternal return” (Halab 84).

¹⁷⁴ “Professor Bulwer, a Paracelsian, who at this time was investigating the secrets of nature and its unifying principles, told me about it: Caskets filled with dirt were loaded onto the double-masted schooner, *Empusa*.”

erklärte. Mit Grauen sah man in das geheimnisvolle Wesen der Natur.”¹⁷⁵ After a shot of a Venus Flytrap closing around its prey, Bulwer postulates to his students: “Nicht wahr – wie ein Vampyr! [sic]”¹⁷⁶ This analysis of nature as vampire concretely explains the growing relationship between the sensitive Ellen and the destructive Count. The professor, however, is a man of theory, not practicality and thus he is unable to use his insight to lead Hutter and the township in a battle against the foreign invader. This shift in power, from the male scientist to the female mystic, is a crucial thematic alteration in the film and points to the idea that science, in the post-war world, “with its researches into the merely palliative or dilatory, its remedies ultimately powerless before the death that awaits us all, has but a minor role in a film concerned with the irremediable” (Perez 2). The professor’s lack of authority also recalls Christian’s father in “Der Runenberg,” attempting to anchor his son through his lectures on the benevolence of the plant world without success. Bulwer might be able to perceive that nature is vampiric, but he cannot locate the source of the danger to Wisborg and its citizens. He, like Hutter, is powerless.

The ability to perceive and destroy the vampire comes to rest in the woman who has haunted the periphery of the film’s narrative: Ellen Hutter. When she reappears on the screen, the effect of her psychic encounter with the vampire begins to emerge. While on the surface she longs for her husband, this yearning becomes ambiguous through her seaside vigil. Hutter, at this point, is still in the Carpathian hospital and it is in fact Orlok who travels toward Wisborg by ship. As the vampire approaches the city, his influence begins to spread in the town, affecting Knock, who was his initial point of contact, and

¹⁷⁵ “I should note that in those days Professor Bulwer was teaching his students about the dreadful methods of carnivorous plants. One viewed with horror the mysterious workings of nature.”

¹⁷⁶ “Like a vampire, no?”

Ellen who spends her days on the beach. She is surrounded by desolate dunes and a cemetery to honor the dead lost at sea. This setting is ominous, macabre and wild, evoking images of the unfathomable expanse of the ocean and its countless victims. It also places her once more in a natural scene, but one significantly altered from the domestic plants of her earlier appearance. An intertitle explains that “Ellen wurde oft am Strande in der Einsamkeit der Dünen gesehen. Ihre Sehnsucht flog dem Geliebten entgegen, ihre Augen suchten über Wellen and Ferne.”¹⁷⁷ A telling statement, considering that the ocean brings Orlok closer to her, rather than her husband. The imagery suggests that she has come under the vampire’s sway, unable to resist the dark undercurrent of his power, so that even as she waits for word from her husband, she is looking towards the vampire. Effectively, this seaside vigil not only solidifies Ellen’s link to nature, but to the unbridled force of the Count. As Saviour Catania states, “while edging into Ellen’s sight, Nosferatu manifests invisibly in terms of a symbology of infinity, which finds embodiment in the illimitable seascape Ellen scans from the beach cemetery” (232). Where Ellen was the phantom earlier, present only through reference, the vampire here occupies a similar space. While she waits by the sea, he is creeping into her domestic life and is beginning to make her see his untamed world.

Furthermore, Ellen’s choice of setting points to her isolation from the society of Wisborg. Her “dreamlife, her psychic/spiritual/paranormal power of perception, her awareness of the vampire, and even her love for Jonathan [sic] make this young woman almost as alien in Bremen [sic] as Renfield [sic], though both of these patients are native inhabitants of the bourgeois city – citizens who are labeled ‘mad’ or ‘ill’” (Waller 184);

¹⁷⁷ “Ellen was often spotted on the beach in the solitude of the dunes. Her eyes scanned the waves and the horizon as she pined for her beloved.”

her intuitive understanding of nature and sensitivity to the juxtaposition of civilization and wilderness can be added to this list of marginalizing attributes. She is the “Other” and different from the populace of Wisborg even before she encounters the alluring dark power of the vampire. Through this liminal position and her intuitive understanding of nature and death, Ellen becomes associated with folkloric elements of the vampire seer or slayer, although this figure traditionally tended to be male. The strength of the seer

Is predicated on his ability to identify the force that saps the energy from the life of the community. Something unnatural, unholy, invades and disturbs the natural order of things, and through this puncture in the tissue of everyday existence, something – is it a certain trust in the impermeability of that which separates us from the dead? – drains out. Yet because this intruder is invisible or, at the very least, unnoticeable [...] only those with a special understanding of his nature are able to intervene and stop the hemorrhage. Like the vampire, the slayer must be marked – externally, by some sign of birth or accident; internally, by his symbolic connection to the world of the dead. (McClelland 7)

From the moment that Ellen reproaches Hutter for his “murder” of the flowers, she is positioned as this internally marked “Other,” able to perceive more than regular people. As such, she becomes the Romantic outcast in place of her husband, who begins to fade to the margins of the story she once occupied as the relationship between Ellen and Orlok intensifies. The arrival of Hutter’s letter from Transylvania interrupts her seaside vigil, but it does not sever her ties to the vampire, nor does it bring her back to the fold of society. When her friends bring the missive to where she sits on the bench at the beach, she is windswept and her eyes rest on the succession of waves washing over the sand; she waits in a sublime space, both dangerous and serene. The letter and its strange content upset her. She crumples the paper and, rather than seeking comfort in the companionship

of her friends, she runs from the sandy dunes alone. Her expression provides the only hint that she understands the last lines, which describe the nature of dreams at the castle,¹⁷⁸ more keenly than she articulates, relating them to her own recent nocturnal experience with the vampire. Effectively, these seaside scenes not only solidify Ellen's link to nature, but to the *wild* nature the Count embodies, while simultaneously furthering her isolation from Wisborg's society.

Orlok's journey highlights his supernatural power, as well as his ability to assert his will over nature. Murnau continuously presents images of the vampire's association with the natural realm and his control over its elements, thus

Gradually, on the ship, the vampire rises up and takes over, undermining and destroying the whole crew, until the ship has become an extension of his power, supernaturally propelled by his mysterious energies. [...] In the scenes of his progress his identity as a force of nature, or the underworld of nature, is again implied and strengthened. There are the rats with which he is repeatedly associated, [...]; there is also the plague with which the rats are connected. The exact nature of the plague is left ambiguous [...]. The ambiguity is essential to the film's symbolism, allowing us to view the plague as the eruption both of universal natural forces and of repressed energies in the individual. (Wood "Murnau's Midnight" 8)

This depiction links the vampire and Ellen through their understanding of the natural realm, while Hutter remains ignorant of this knowledge. When the cut returns to Hutter, he is finally awake, although not well, and able to leave the Carpathian hospital. Barely able to stand, he still insists on leaving, exclaiming, "Nein ich muss fort... auf dem kürzesten Wege nach Hause!!!"¹⁷⁹ In a reversal of the trip to the Carpathians, where the

¹⁷⁸ "Man träumt hier schwer in dem öden Schloß, aber ängstige Dich nicht." ("One dreams deeply in this desolate castle, but don't let that frighten you.")

¹⁷⁹ "No, I must go... I must get home as quickly as possible!!"

majority of his journey is omitted and we see him only once he has reached the village below the Count's castle, his travel here is portrayed in full, showing him struggling through the wilderness in a race with the sea-bound vampire. In this passage no hint of the earlier surreality of the carriage-ride to the castle remains. Hutter's return is firmly grounded in an established reality, even though the disruption has not been repaired, as the vampire is alive and moving steadily closer to his new home in Wisborg.

At this point, the film cuts between Orlok on the ship, Hutter traveling on land and Ellen waiting in Wisborg, culminating in Ellen once more sleepwalking along the balcony,¹⁸⁰ her arms outstretched, reaching for something, or someone, who is not yet present. Her words, "Ich muß zu ihm. Er kommt"¹⁸¹ appear directed, not at Hutter, but at Orlok, as "Murnau has cut to this, [...] not from Jonathan's [sic] ride, but from Nosferatu's inexorable progress by ship" (Wood "Murnau's Midnight" 8). When Hutter returns to the city, Ellen swoons in his arms, relieved that he is home at last. However, the Count's arrival coincides with Hutter's and overshadows their tender reunion. Indeed, their kiss is cross-cut with Nosferatu standing outside their home, turning his head as if searching for a trace of Ellen's scent, as though "he is aware of Hutter's success in reaching Ellen first" (Abbott 18). He takes up residence in the empty building across from the Hutter house, while the married couple believes that "Alles ist nun gut."¹⁸² Murnau, however, shows the audience that husband and wife are not yet safe from the threat of the vampire. Through his careful use of continued crosscutting,

Murnau

¹⁸⁰ Again, she is portrayed on multiple thresholds – not only the edge of the balcony, but also in a state between waking and sleeping.

¹⁸¹ "I must go to him. He's coming!"

¹⁸² "All is now well."

breaks the unity of this reunion by shifting back and forth between the couple and the vampire, between their embrace and his approach, their kiss of undying love and his lingering outside their house before proceeding to his dilapidated mansion across the way, coffin in hand. This crosscutting leads to a deepening rather than a resolving of the peril: its outcome is no happy confluence but the plague that spreads in the Baltic town, the death that strikes the site of everyday. (Perez 5)

Furthermore, the Ellen shown in these scenes looks wan and weak, not like the joyful young woman in the opening of the film, nor even the woman in a trance fearing for her husband's life. Throughout, Ellen's vitality has been decreasing, fading away like the brilliancy of Hutter's plucked flowers. Clearly, the influence of the vampire is manifesting itself in her demeanor, much like Christian's encounter on the top of the mountain begins to unravel the happiness he finds in the village. Ellen's haggard appearance and her illness, her sleepwalking and her dreams echo Christian's struggles as he attempts to reconcile his life in the plains with his experience in the mountains. Both suffer sleeplessness in their confrontation with the overwhelming power of nature; both cannot rely on assistance from their friends and family, because no one understands the strength of the mystical realm's call.

With the vampire's arrival and the unleashing of his plague-ridden rats, Wisborg descends into sickness and fear. As a force of nature, his entry into civilization exacts a toll, which continues to hold him in his liminal position:

Nosferatu is poised between the uncanny and the monstrous; he cannot quite pass for a normal human. The rats may be seen as his emissaries, but they are also the aspect of monstrous (unnatural) nature he seeks to shed so as to enter Western civilization. His entry into the townhouse involves a passage out of the nature from which his Transylvanian castle has seemed to be an outcrop; the incompleteness of the passage is patent, however, for the

point of entry is the virtually ruined house in which culture threatens to crumble into nature. (Coates 94)

Separated from the wilderness, the vampire remains wild. His presence fills Wisborg with the miasma of illness and death, allowing him the freedom to feed and to covet his neighbour's wife. As the plague spreads through the town, Hutter focuses solely on quarantining himself and Ellen. In a repetition of his earlier refusal to confront the reality of the vampire, he now turns his back on the knowledge he gained in the Carpathians and does not question the disease Count Orlok has brought with him to ravage the city in conjunction with his own need for the blood of its inhabitants. Perez offers this insight into Hutter's behaviour: "No longer an innocent but even now not prepared to face the horror at large in the town, the husband suppresses his knowledge of the vampire's agency for the sake of maintaining composure. The husband's smiling innocence has turned into dim conventionality" (7). He goes so far in his unwillingness to confront the situation that he forbids Ellen to read the book of vampire lore. Thus one of his few assertive moments serves only to force ignorance on his more astute wife.

This attempt to control her actions hints that Ellen showed an interest in the tome and the wisdom it contains. An intertitle informs us that "Sie aber konnte dem seltsam fremden Zwange nicht wehren."¹⁸³ The fact that she disobeys her husband becomes an outward indication of her inner transformation in the aftermath of her psychic encounter with the vampire and the longing it instills within her: "she hesitates and wavers, but as she furtively glances at the book, she commits an act of transgression: by opening it she literally opens herself to be possessed by the vampire" (Kaes 123). Ellen's willingness to open the book and to defy Hutter's will "allies her with a grand tradition of female

¹⁸³ "She found its strange force irresistible."

characters whose desire simply for knowledge has led them to transgress [...while] the physical contortions she exhibits before giving in to temptation is [sic] evidence [...] of an erotic passion inspiring the curiosity” (Unrau 238). Like Hutter in the crypt, Ellen here portrays the same attraction and repulsion. Her response to the knowledge she gains from the book is at once fearful and langourous: clutching the book, she leans back in her chair, her eyes closed, her neck bared to the camera. This posture is an invitation to the vampire who is present only on the pages she holds. When desire overcomes her dread, the extent of Orlok’s power over her becomes clear: she cannot even resist a written description of him. Hutter finds her in this position and his response is indicative of his continued struggle to remain oblivious to the threat to his wife and to Wisborg. Significantly, this sequence contains the only true argument between the couple as Ellen confronts him with the reality of their new neighbour, exclaiming that “So sehe ich es – jeden Abend...!!!”¹⁸⁴ Hutter looks out of their window at the decrepit building across from his home, but immediately retreats, as he has done throughout the film. He remains determined to avoid knowledge. The rift between the couple grows as Ellen forms a deeper understanding of the situation and “assumes the role of active protector while Hutter remains passively inactive” (Williams, A. 98).

Having learned how to destroy the vampire, Ellen hesitates to act on the instructions that: “Sindemalen keine andere Rettung fürfanden, es sey denn, daß ein gar sundlos Weyb dem Vampyre den ersten Schrey des Hahnen vergessen mache. Sie gäbe ihm sonder Zwange ihr Blut.”¹⁸⁵ The moment of decision arrives when she watches a

¹⁸⁴ “That is what I look at - every night!”

¹⁸⁵ “Deliverance is possible by no other means but that an innocent maiden maketh the vampire heed not the first crowing of the cock – this done by the sacrifice of her own bloode.”

line of coffins carried past her house – a grim reminder of the many deaths occurring in the city. Significantly, the audience sees this procession from Ellen’s point of view so that “through her eyes we see, coming toward us, what we the living are to become, an inexorable procession of corpses slowly but surely encroaching upon the window bar marking the place of the beholding self” (Perez 8). The sequence also highlights Ellen’s isolation: “the cross-pattern of the frame hinders her [...] view of the townspeople, suggesting that she is already isolated from the rest of society by her decision to sacrifice herself to counter the vampire’s malevolence” (Roberts 46). Like her lonely vigil on the windswept beach, Ellen faces not only Orlok, the plague and the deaths it causes, but also her own impending doom alone. The procession of coffins strengthens Ellen’s resolve and she commits to destroying the vampire, even though his destruction requires her own death. Through the use of this point of view, Ellen’s motivations are relayed to the audience without the need for verbal explication. She cannot abide the death that holds the city in its phantom grip. Finally turning from the window, she once more reads the passage about killing the vampire and resolves to end his influence in her home and in Wisborg.

Throughout this sequence, Ellen has moved from marginal phantom to active participant in the story. Indeed, once in Wisborg, Orlok becomes the spectre haunting the narrative through his plague, and he only reappears on the screen on the night of Ellen’s sacrifice. Hutter’s enthusiastic exuberance fades as Ellen’s solemn determination grows. In the pivotal scene, Hutter is asleep in a chair, while his wife sleeps fitfully on the bed. This separation again highlights the innocent nature of their relationship. When Ellen awakens she is drawn to the window. The scenes that follow are reminiscent of the

vampiric encounters James B. Twitchell describes in *The Living Dead: A Study of the Vampire in Romantic Literature*:

The actual ‘attack’ is almost always the same: it is nighttime, probably midnight, [...]. The moon should be full, for the vampire is not only revived by moonlight, he is energized by it. Assuming that the vampire is male, the female victim is preparing to sleep, [...]. She sees her recently deceased lover (often her late husband) standing before her, perhaps outside the window. Now the victim must make some inviting move; she must unclasp the window, open the door, do anything that shows she is acceding, even slightly. This crucial point is repeated in almost all the literary adaptations, for the vampire cannot cross a threshold without this invitation; he is bound to wait pathetically like a schoolboy until invited in. (10)

Several parallels exist between Twitchell’s analysis and Murnau’s film. The first, is the use of the moon as the scene begins with a view of the full moon over the ocean. While generally both are symbols of the feminine, in the film, they are connected to the vampire and his power over nature. Secondly, Ellen is again portrayed in relation to the window, from which she sees Orlok at his own window, his claw-like hands grasping the cross bars, watching and waiting. Basil Copper describes the sequence eloquently when he writes that Ellen “looks from her window and Murnau harrows us with a series of static shots in which the Count is standing balefully at his window looking across at the heroine” (125). The vampire’s pale face in this scene is reminiscent of the moon so recently on screen. Again, Orlok interrupts the matrimonial relationship, because it is the vampire, her husband’s dark double and not Hutter, who waits for Ellen’s invitation. The final parallel is the invitation, which occurs when Ellen opens the window, her back to the camera and her arms stretched wide to beckon the vampire to her bedroom. In a sense, she releases Orlok from captivity, as Ian Roberts asserts: “he is filmed behind the

window, hands wrapped around the strong horizontal and vertical bars which demonstrate that the vampire is as much a prisoner, as much a victim, as Ellen and the others” (Roberts 46). The boxes of earth allow the male vampire to cross the boundary between the natural realm and the cultivated city, but he becomes a captive once ensconced within civilization.

Unleashed once more, Orlok leaves his perch and enters the Hutter home, finally arriving in the couple’s bedroom. Again, his motivation for pursuing Ellen is unclear. In his role as an embodiment of corrupted, undead nature, a nature that cannot sustain its own existence, the vampire is a lonely and destitute creature. In responding to her invitation, he appears give in to a desire for his own destruction. The true death Ellen offers is his only means of escaping from his grotesque and barren “non-life.” As Wayne E. Hensley argues, “even if he has been able to avoid all the previous attempts by women seeking to kill him, Dracula [sic] ‘cannot resist’ Mina [sic]. Why else would he choose her as his victim of the evening with the knowledge that his choice carried with it the possibility of his destruction?” (63). Through her understanding of nature, Ellen is able to accomplish what the urban men cannot, so that “good ultimately prevails and evil is destroyed not by aggressive human action, but by a combination of ritual sacrifice and mystical event” (Roth 311). The price of her success is her blood and, ultimately, her life. The connection to tamed nature that allows Ellen to lure the vampire, ultimately, is the source of her own death. In a sense, her ability to comprehend the vampire and the natural realm he represents infects her with his desire for destruction, thus, “her gesticulations as she faces Nosferatu articulate the silent struggle between her conscious wish for self-preservation and an unconscious, erotically tinged death drive” (Kaes 117).

Like Christian, who hears the suffering of nature whenever he plucks a flower, Ellen comes to understand the precarious, untenable position of the vampire. She comprehends the *wrongness* of his continued existence and resolves to end it. The knowledge, however, separates her fully from society. Ellen's liminality compromises her position in the world of tamed nature and her death is the only possible atonement for the desire for more that the vampire awakens within her.

The prolonged psychic contact between Ellen and Orlok and the conflict this connection fosters within her create an atmosphere of somber tension. Her invitation to the vampire is her penultimate transgression as she "exhibits' herself, throwing open the bedroom window and exposing herself to the vampire. Overtly theatrical, Ellen's gesture toward a visible observer runs contrary to the essentially bourgeois prohibition against 'making a scene'" (Calhoun 635-636). When she puts herself on display in the window, with her arms wide, Ellen not only turns her back on the camera, but also on the rules of propriety. On the threshold between the domestic and public again, her defiance of the quarantine rules "signals her willingness to allow the outside world into her private domain, rather than merely to watch the street from a safe enclosure or to turn - like Jonathan [sic] - completely away from what is outside" (Waller 192). In the closed-in society of Wisborg, her willingness to put herself on display and her curiosity mark her as an abnormality, a disruption as detrimental as the plague and the vampire. In order for the town to return to its peaceful existence, both the vampire and the transgressing Ellen must be removed. With the vampire approaching, Ellen sends Hutter away, urging him to bring Dr. Bulwer to their home. Thus, she commits her ultimate transgression as she

faces the vampire alone in her bedroom, giving him access to her blood and her marriage bed.

In this scene of mutual destruction, Ellen demonstrates the attraction/repulsion Judith Mayne describes in Hutter's earlier exploration of the Count's crypt. She appears fearful, and when Orlok's shadow hand reaches along her body and grasps her heart, she writhes, but it is not clearly apparent whether the movement is one of pain or pleasure. Significantly, in this moment, Ellen averts her usually open eyes, submitting to the vampire. She shrinks into her bed and passively allows Orlok to feed on her blood. As he consumes her life force, the open window stands in the background. When dawn arrives the vampire is still at her side and "has a final moment to realize his plight before he disintegrates in the sunlight that streams in through the open window – recalling, by way of contrast the sunlight shining through a different window in the first image of Nina [sic] in the film" (Waller 193). Thus, the nature associated with cultivated civilization destroys the embodiment of untamed wilderness. Orlok places a hand to his chest as he realizes his impending doom, recalling the way in which his shadow grasped at Ellen's breast earlier in the night. Like the phantom he becomes once within the city, he dissolves in the light. Ellen, through her position on the threshold between these two realms is able to restore order to Wisborg, allowing for a return to normalcy:

Her desire for death is not [...] erotic but a sacrifice of the self to confirm the symbolic law and stability of the collective. At her corpse, which splits her body from her soul, an end is put both to her own liminality and that of the vampire's 'uncanny' presence, the body artificially preserved after its natural end. As the vampire disappears into smoke, all aspect of the difference and disturbance he traced in the community, all aspects of the 'uncanny' division caused by disease and otherness, is eliminated. (Bronfen "The Vampire" 85)

While Ellen's sacrifice returns the city to equilibrium, her death also sets her free from its restrictions. In allowing the vampire to kill her, Ellen accepts the power of the untamed nature he represents, in effect, giving herself permission to experience the fullness of the wilderness which has lured her throughout the film. Orlok, as well, gains his freedom in death. Only through dying can they escape the infection of the vampire's uncanny, liminal existence. They move beyond the confines of civilization. Once Ellen has destroyed the vampire, Hutter returns with the doctor to find her dying and "only in this final image of the Harkers [sic], after Nina [sic] has sacrificed her 'pure' heart to the vampire, do Jonathan [sic] and his wife share the same bed – their marriage ends before it can truly begin" (Waller 194). The inability of Hutter and Dr. Bulwer to understand the threat of the vampire forces Ellen to act alone. While Tieck's Christian joins vampiric nature when he forsakes his family and ventures into the mines, suffering a social death, Ellen chooses true death to reach the wilderness.

The final shot of Murnau's film shows the vampire's castle in ruins, demonstrating the dissipation of his power. In using this image of the crumbling walls of the previously strong structure, the tale again connects with Christian's experience on the Runenberg, and, as with Sophie Thomas' discussion of ruins cited earlier, Anton Kaes connects the destroyed castle with its relationship to time and remembrance:

Occupying a state between past and future, the ruin is an overdetermined and paradoxical site. Its state of decay and decomposition bears traces of what once was, while showing temporality at work. Suspended in time, ruins have long been objects of fascination and curiosity, contemplation and reverence. Nosferatu's castle [...] was an imposing, phallic-looking emblem of power, but when the vampire expires it is reduced to an overgrown pile of stone. (Kaes 127-129)

The vampire's stronghold turning to rubble allows for the possibility that it, like the visionary hall Christian sees during his night on the Runenberg, was only an illusion made possible through Orlok's supernatural power. When he dies, the mirage fades and only the destitute remnants of the castle recall the creature that once dwelt there. Nature in this vampiric form thus manipulates its victims through the appearance of intact, man-made structures, cloaking its decay with visions of splendor and strength, when, in fact, all its power lies in tatters, undermined and tamed. While Orlok represents nature as corrupted and grotesque, there is an affinity with the more alluring, feminine nature of Tieck's tale. Both come to embody an anxiety about the natural realm, the power it possesses and its precarious position in a world increasingly turned to cultivation and civilization, rather than appreciation and awe.

Superficially, Murnau's vampire film provides a sense of closure through Ellen's self-sacrifice and the destruction of malevolent, diseased nature as embodied in Count Orlok that Tieck denies the reader in his tale. The final intertitles proclaim the success of Ellen's sacrifice, announcing that "und das Wunder sei der Wahrheit nach bezeugt: zur selben Stunde hörte das große Sterben auf und wie vor den siegreichen Strahlen der lebendigen Sonne war der Schatten des Totenvogels verweht."¹⁸⁶ Hutter, however, complicates the clean ending. When he encounters the vampire, he becomes infected, but he does not die, nor does he retreat from society. Instead, he "returns from his mission effeminate, weak, and impotent, spending his time languishing in an easy chair" (Kaes 120) and he lingers in Wisborg. His condition might improve with the vampire's death,

¹⁸⁶ "...and the truth bore witness to the miracle: at that very moment the Great Death came to an end, and the shadow of the death bird was gone as if obliterated by the triumphant rays of the living sun."

but the narrator's description of the young widower hints that he never truly recovers from his encounter with Count Orlok. Grotesque, vampiric nature thus continues to exert its influence even after its apparent destruction. Hutter's affliction highlights the perpetual anxiety about the power of the natural realm, despite the fact that the threat of its corrupted aspect has been removed.

4. Conclusion

The vampire is indeed a “foul German spectre,” often hiding behind a veneer of mysticism and illusion. While often associated with a subterranean existence within crypts and dank castle cellars, not all vampires keep such lairs. The nature spirit in Ludwig Tieck’s “Der Runenberg” dwells at the summit of a mountain, hidden within ancient ruins. Its vampirism is not immediately apparent, but after close analysis the mysterious woman on the summit of the mountain is, without a doubt, a vampiric creature. From her perch, she lures unsuspecting men into her domain and ultimately uses them to sustain her own fading life. This behavior aligns her with other vampiric entities found within the Romantic tradition, such as John Keats’ “La Belle Dame,” who also accumulates young men, drawing them into a spiritual embrace and leaving them “alone and palely loitering” (2) on a hillside. The elements that comprise the vampiric encounter are a journey into an unknown realm, the crossing of thresholds, a moment of mystical infection and thereafter, an inability to return to society without great cost. The moment of contact between the human and the sublime, as embodied by the vampire, removes the victim from the social realm and into a spiritual plane from which there is no escape. In this Romantic fairy tale, there is no cure for vampiric infection – Christian and others like him are lost to the mines, where they toil to sustain the life of nature.

In the neo-Romantic vision of an encounter with the dark aspect of nature, however, the solution to infection is the martyrdom of the representative of the feminine. The focus in *Nosferatu: Eine Symphonie des Grauens* undergoes a gender shift, but the underlying premise remains the same: a young man ventures into the wilderness and encounters a creature that does not fit into the human realm. Whereas Tieck’s tale is

partially a warning about a blind enthusiasm toward a reunion with nature seen in some early Romantics, Murnau's film sees a different threat. There is, throughout, a sense of invasion in the actions of the Count toward the city of Wisborg. The male aspect of vampiric nature is not bound to the mountaintop like his female counterpart, or, as Siegfried Kracauer points out, *Nosferatu* is "a blood-thirsty, blood-sucking tyrant figure looming in those regions where myths and fairy tales meet" (79). He traverses the boundaries between wilderness and civilization, reversing Hutter's trespass from city into nature. The threat is no longer *out there*, but in the midst of the town. The other significant change in the narrative is the focus on Ellen and her self-sacrifice. Tieck's protagonist was doomed, but Hutter survives through the intervention of his wife. She demonstrates a closer connection to nature and is thus the character who faces the greatest danger when she comes into contact with the vampire. In the end, Ellen and Orlok both die, allowing for a return to order that Tieck withheld. Nature's dangerous aspect is banished in Murnau's film through Ellen's martyrdom. This conclusion points to a need for resolution within the neo-Romantic construction of "nature as vampire" that can be seen as a response to the post-war devastation felt within Germany.

The two concepts – vampire and wilderness – thus become linked within the Romantic fairy tale and the neo-Romantic Expressionist film. This connection emerges in other works as well. The most apparent continuation of this theme exists in the films that draw directly on Murnau's *Nosferatu*: Werner Herzog's re-imagining in *Nosferatu: Phantom der Nacht* and E. Elias Merhige's *Shadow of the Vampire*. Martina G. Lüke gives a detailed outline of the ways in which Herzog's film uses and expands on Romantic themes "such as the conflicts of the individual and the society, love and death,

sanity and insanity, dream and reality, as well as the setting or the use of music” (153). She characterizes the depiction of nature as harkening back to Romantic and Expressionist painters, whose work focused on open landscapes: “While the Enlightenment attempts to analyze and separate, the method of Romanticism is to synthesize and lend to mysterious facets. In an infinite landscape, the free poetic imagination is without boundaries. Herzog uses the 360-degree camera shot for similar visions” (159). This analysis¹⁸⁷ ties Herzog’s film to the concerns of both the Romantics, as well as the arguably neo-Romantic work of Murnau. Nature is again portrayed as active and menacing, with the Count standing as a representation of the dark aspect of the wilderness. This new interpretation, however, adds a further layer of complexity to the narrative and to the character of the vampire. Klaus Kinski’s Dracula¹⁸⁸ evokes pity in the audience as he bemoans his long, lonely life. The sense of *lingering* beyond his time, of the losses that accumulate with the slow passage of time is stronger in this film than in any of the previous works discussed. The mountain spirit’s song of remembrance in “Der Runenberg” hints at nature’s loneliness, and there is an indication that part of Orlok’s desire for Ellen stems from the fact that she offers him true death and thus release from his long life, but these elements are not the focus of the two stories. In Herzog’s *Nosferatu*, however, Dracula, the embodiment of the wilderness, portrays a sense of despair and overwhelming loneliness in the face of his longevity. The conclusion of the film also harkens back to Tieck’s lack of closure. Dracula dies, but Jonathan, the protagonist, becomes a vampire in his stead. The theme of vampiric infection within a natural setting thus remains intact.

¹⁸⁷ As well as the work by Kent Casper and Susan Linville mentioned in the Introduction.

¹⁸⁸ Herzog reverts back to the name Dracula for his vampire.

The relationship between Herzog, Murnau and by extension Tieck is fairly straightforward. Pushing the idea of nature as vampire to include E. Elias Merhige's *Shadow of the Vampire* is more complicated. This film is not a re-telling of Murnau's *Nosferatu*, but rather a fictional version of the making of the film. The primary focus shifts away from the young idealist venturing into the wilderness and toward a preoccupation with the nature of cinema and the role of the director as artist. However, some of the narrative elements remain. The crew travels into unknown territories to shoot on location, a journey which removes them from the urban center of Berlin and places them into the wilderness and it is in this setting that they first encounter the actor Max Schreck, who is actually a vampire. He begins to prey on the crew, drinking their blood. The fictional Murnau eventually confesses to finding the vampire hiding in a dark hole within a partially ruined castle. Again, the theme of infection within a natural, mystical setting emerges. Schreck comes to embody the duress of immortality in a way that surmounts the previous depictions of the grotesque, suffering vampire. This portrayal can be read as nature's continuing struggle against civilization. The wilderness becomes progressively marginalized in these tales, while still representing the same dangers found in Tieck's story: the threat of infection and madness persists, but the results are different. Schreck meets his end, but Murnau, though never bitten, emerges as the true carrier of disease through his obsession with creating the perfect picture.¹⁸⁹

The idea that the vampire in these films is an embodiment of the dark aspect of nature represents an important thematic link between these diverse narratives and requires further study. The narratives that portray the undead as an embodiment of

¹⁸⁹ The final line of the movie is "I think we have it," spoken by Murnau standing next to the camera surrounded by the bodies of his crew who were killed when they attempted to destroy the vampire.

wilderness point to more than just a fear of the unknown, they express humanity's ambiguous relationship with nature. Contemporary horror writers

narrate their horror stories from the inside, [...], filtering them through the consciousness of the horrors that inhabit them. Not surprisingly, the impact of this shift from human to "other" perspective works to invite sympathy for the monstrous outsider at the same time as it serves to diminish the terror generated by what remains outside our frame of the familiar and knowable. (Gordon and Hollinger 2)

This apparent "domestication" of the vampire (Gordon and Hollinger 2) and the movement away from the forays into unknown regions to encounter terror, point not only to a changing attitude toward the monstrous, but also toward nature. Arguably, the vampiric entities in "Der Runenberg" and *Nosferatu* gain the sympathy of the reader/audience despite their malevolent actions, because both contain an element of suffering. The "Other" in these two narratives is unknown and terrifying, but also painfully human in that both vampires *need* contact with the living. Contemporary vampire stories still represent anguish and need, but they often remove the connection with nature in their portrayals of vampires. For the modern audience, the vampire is no longer a threat that lurks in the depths of the mountains, but a sleek urban hunter, prowling through metropolitan streets. These predators are perceived as alluring and sexy; the danger they embody serving as an attractive feature rather than a warning or source of repulsion. However, these new vampires continue to represent a link to the natural realm, not in a geographic setting, but rather in that they constitute the embodiment of wilderness in an urban setting.

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