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## MASTER THESIS

Letters and English Languages  
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### Female Representation in Le Fanu's Gothic Novel

#### *Carmilla*

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## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this work to my beloved parents who are always there with continuing support, my sisters **Amina, Asma, Oumeima**, my brother **Mahmoud**, and my husband **Zakaria** for his love, support and kindness.

My special gratitude goes to my family in law members and my dear cousin **Hanine**; who always motivate me. All in all, it is addressed to everyone who supported me to accomplish this research.

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### **Abstract**

This study is an investigation into female representation in the gothic novel *Carmilla*. In other words, it sheds light on how *Carmilla* represents a new voice of female agency and sexuality by breaking the norms of the Victorian era, since she imposed the existence of female's sexual desire and opened the door to a forbidden concept of same sex relationships [lesbianism]. It also determines the nature of female vampire characters and their importance in depicting Sheridan Le Fanu's message which is liberating women from the patriarchal society. This study employs two approaches, the feminist approach that promotes and calls for gender equality and reflects on female's representation in gothic literature; the second which is the psychoanalytical approach, analyses the mental process of the psyche of the female vampire as an individual and how they reflect the author inner thoughts to represent this character. Furthermore, blood relations were an important theme in this novel, this was demonstrated through the analysis of the relations between *Carmilla* and *Laura*, *Laura* and her father and *The General Speilisdorf* and his niece *Bertha*. Finally, in contrast to male dominance, Le Fanu uses knowledge as a female reaction against them.

**Key words:** *Carmilla*, Gothic fiction, Vampire, Blood, Female Agency, Patriarchal society, Victorian norms.

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## General introduction

Darkness, suspense, fear, castles, and vampires are the concepts from which gothic fiction gains its popularity. It firstly appeared with Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* during the late of 18th century, without forgetting to mention one of the most practicing figures of the gothic novel Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian* 1797. Usually, some writers of this genre have a stereotypical gender representation, where the male is always portrayed with the Victorian norms. Among these norms, we find the traditional gender roles for Males as heroes or manipulator villains, while the females are presented as passive victims, sexless, and only an object of desire. This is not applicable for the Irish writer Sheridan Le Fanu because he had the ability to create suspense and obscurity within the plot by breaking free the stereotypical constraints of the female character.

In his novella entitled *Carmilla*, Le Fanu admits the existence of the female desire, which is an abnormal fact during that period because it was forbidden for women to express any kind of sexual desire. He seems to support a degree of gender equality suggesting that women have the capacity to be as evil and sexual as men. The aim of this study is to shed light on the representation of the female gender in the gothic novel. The outcome would include substantial details about how gothic fiction challenged the Victorian values by offering more freedom to the female character to prove her agency and free will.

As far as the Victorian values are concerned, discussing themes like female gender and sexuality especially delving into the forbidden world of lesbian lovers was considered as a sin. In this dissertation, we will analyze one of the English literature's vampire novels, *Carmilla* written by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, focuses on the female vampire's association with blood and its arguable significance. Thus, we tend to tackle the female blood relations with the other characters. We hypothesize that the vampire state is a reaction to the blood relations with the

others. They aim at rebelling against these males to prove their agency and autonomy and to rid themselves from their dominance, and her relationship with the same sex.

This study entitled Female Representation in Le Fanu's Gothic novel *Carmilla* is conducted to investigate and answer these crucial questions about the female role between the traditional view and the modern feminist perspective. In the process of answering the research questions, the theoretical approaches that were used are a mixture of feminism and psychoanalysis to analyze the character of a female vampire and demonstrate the stereotypical view of this character during that era and how it could be changed.

**Chapter One:**

**Theoretical Framework of Feminist and**

**Psychoanalytical Approaches**

## Introduction

To create a good literary work, authors use a collection of ideas, methods, and techniques. Those methods are called literary approaches. This chapter is dedicated to understand more two principal approaches that conduct this study.

The chapter's first part tends to introduce the feminist approach, definition of feminism, origin of the term, its three waves, major figures, and achievements of each wave from the date of its emergence until nowadays as well as its types. The second part presents a brief historical overview of the psychoanalytic approach, definition, the inventor of psychoanalysis and its concepts with a brief illustration, and the relation between this approach and Art.

### 1 Feminist approach

“If you believe in equality, you are a feminist.” -EMMA Watson

#### 1.1 Definition of feminism

Feminism and feminist are two words widely used to connote the ideas, movements, and supporters that advocate the liberation of women. It is agreed that the term feminism refers to gender equality in all aspects of life. According to the *Cambridge online dictionary* feminism is “the belief that women should be allowed the same rights, power, and opportunities as men and be treated in the same way” (Feminism). *Merriem-Webster dictionary* defines it as “the belief in and advocacy of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes expressed especially through organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests” (Feminism).

Another definition of feminism by the *Oxford Learner's Pocket dictionary* fourth edition is the “belief in the principle that women should have the same rights as men” (163). In literature: feminism is related to the ways in understanding literary works, in both production and reception. (O. OVI 1)

## 1.2 The Origin of the Term Feminism

Feminism is a term derived from the French word *féminisme*. It is composed from two parts the root *femin-* came from the Latin word *femina* which means woman, and the suffix *-ism* that serves to create new words out of the old words and make it implying a belief, practice, or worldview.

It is still unclear how the French word *feminisme* originated in the earliest days. They should be rooted in a political upheaval in the 1830s when the words *Socialisme* and *Individualism* appeared in the French-speaking political vocabulary. Scholars have illuminated the origins of these latter words for many years. ~ But for *feminisme* is not the case.

This term appeared first in the nineteenth-century French political discourse by the French philosopher and utopian socialist Charles Fourier (1772-1837) who advocated the emancipation of women from the subordination of men. In fact, the origins are still uncertain and the exact date of the attributed term is still obscure and vary from (1808-1842) dates of publication of the first and the second edition of the *Théorie de Quatre Mouvements et des destinées générales*, and (1837) the year of his death.

On another occasion, the term *féminist* reappears again in 1882 - as a label reported by the French champion of women's voting, Hubertine Auclert (1848-1914). In a letter to the Prefect of the Seine published in daily newspapers, Auclert opposed the recently imposed restrictions on speeches at the city hall during civil marriage ceremonies. She affirmed the fight by feminists during France's obligatory civil marriages to criticize marriage laws. In a later version of that letter, published in 1908 and cited by her sister after the death in 1922 of Auclert, the words partisans of the women's liberation were changed into partisans of Feminism. The words partisans of the women's liberation were also used in the letter. The commentators

subsequently alleged that the 1882 Letter was the first word use, *féministe* and *féminisme*, based exclusively on the 1908 version.

From 1892 it became common in French, not only in France but also in Belgium and Switzerland. While in England, the Oxford English Dictionary records the first use of the term *feminist* on October 12, 1894, in the Daily News, London; *feminism* was first used in a literary book review in April 1895. The term "*le mouvement féministe*" became popular in 1893. It was appropriated by the *Revue encyclopédique Larousse* in June. Clotilde Dissard published the first issue of *La Revue féministe* in 1895. A second "*Congrès féministe international*" was held in Paris in April 1896. It received extensive press coverage, which helped to popularize the words even more. (Offen 45-48)

### **1.3 Waves of Feminism**

The feminist movement began in Europe, Canada, China, and United States during the late of the nineteenth-century and continued until nowadays. This movement is divided into three main waves; each wave has its own principles and characteristics.

#### **1.3.1 First-Wave Feminism *Suffrage or Voting Right***

After gaining their rights to vote in Germany a question was raised in Banner carried during picketing of the White House in October 23, 1918 just after the first world war by members of the National Women's Party. They accused the government of undemocratic practices "Germany has established "Equal, universal, secret direct franchise." The senate has denied equal universal suffrage to America. Which is more of a Democracy, Germany or America? It was treachery to compare Germany with the United States. But picketers were sympathetic — after all, mid class women went to prison well-dressed, well educated, white. This was no way for women to be treated! Dressed in their best sleigh, they offered no resistance to the police and thus they both appealed and appealed to the public.

The protesters knew what they were doing. They personified White, the femininity of the middle class while practicing very unfeminine and less bourgeois practices. The action was motivated by Alice Paul (1885–1877), the radical agitator who brought activist tactics into the National Women’s Party. Parades, marches, picketing mainly White House and watching fires burn the speeches of President Wilson (Campbell 1989). The tactics of Alice Paul were confronting but also clever and were a thorn on President Wilson's side who preferred the less dramatic tactics of the National American Women's Suffrage Association. The fight dates back so far back to the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention in New York where the nation's first women's rights convention was convened by over 300 men and women. Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902) outlined the Seneca Falls Declaration, which claimed the natural equality of women and outlined the strategy of equal access and opportunity. This statement led to the movement for suffrage. (Krolokke & Sorenson 2-3)

In other words, during the late of nineteenth century and early twentieth century, women started fighting for their rights; Because at that period women were inferior comparing to men. The first wave feminists’ main concerns were education, employment, marriage laws, own properties, and the right to vote. Unfortunately, this wave was focusing only on the middle- and upper-class white women. By 1919, women have gained the right to vote which was signed in the nineteen amendment U.S constitution (S.A. Drucker, para. 3)

First-wave Feminism major pioneers are: **Mary Wollstonecraft’s** *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), **Virginia Woolf’s** *A Room of One’s Own* (1929), and **Elizabeth Cady Stanton** (1815-1902) who drafted and outlined the Seneca falls convention in 1848. Besides to Black women abolitionists, such as: **Sojourner Truth** (1797–1883) who maintains, “The woman who strengthens her body and exercises her mind will, by managing her family and practising various virtues, become the friend, and not the humble dependent of her husband.” (KROLOKKE & SORENSON 3-6).

### 1.3.2 Second-Wave Feminism *Radical Feminism*

The term second-wave feminism mainly refers to the radical feminism of the liberation movement of women. It appeared from 1960's until 1990's as a reaction of Miss America Pageants in Atlantic city 1968 to clarify the meaning of "women's oppression" and those women are not a mean of pleasure.

The Redstockings, the New York Radical Feminists and others from important feminism groups joined the protest in 1969 to demonstrate that women were paraded like bovines at competitions, highlighting the premise that the look of women is greater than what they do. Walking down the boardwalk of the Atlantic City and near the event itself, feminists have performed several types of theater activism. They have crowned a sheep like if it is Miss America, throwing in a trash in front of reporters, oppressive gender objects such as bras, girdles, false eyelashes, high heels and make-up. They [feminists] tried to show the relation between race issues, class, and gender oppression. Caring banners making their messages louder and clear by slogans like: "Cattle Parades Are Degrading to Human Beings," "Boring Job: Woman Wanted," and "Low Pay: Woman Wanted," It was a media event perfectly organized.

A small group of women bought tickets for the spectacle and smuggled in a banner reading "Freedom for Women" and "No More Miss America," which exposes the public to a feminist agenda in the early second wave. However, radical second-wave feminism cannot be discussed separately from other 1960s and 1970s movements. Indeed, it grew in the postwar Western societies from leftist movements, including student protests, the anti-Vietnam War movement, lesbian and homosexual movements, and civil and black movements in the United States. They criticized "capitalism" and "imperialism" and concentrated on the concept. (Krolokke & Sorenson 7-8). Their objective was guaranteeing social equality regardless of sex by passing the Equal Rights Amendment to the constitution. (Ovi 4)



This wave distinguished between sex as biologically born and gender as socially construct. Which made them shifted the debate from political to psychological. Gloria Steinem writes, “We’ve begun to raise our daughters more like our sons . . . but few have the courage to raise our sons more like our daughters” (KROLOKKE & SORENSON 12).

### 1.3.3 Third-Wave Feminism

It started from 1990’s and still exist till nowadays. It is a theory and politics that honor conflicting experiences and categorical thinking deconstruct. Editor Rebecca Walker explained the difficulty that younger feminists have to think in categories, which split people into *us* and *them* and when they are forced to live in specific identities like women and feminist. In *To be real: Tell the truth and changing the face of feminism (1995)*. Walker claimed that “this is not because feminist history is lacking in knowledge or because of the awful one-sided image of feminism of the media” (Krolokke & Sorenson 16). In addition, third-wave feminism is inspired and connected with a generation of the new global order of communism, new threats of religious and ethnic fundamentalism, and dual risks and promise from new information technologies and biotechnologies.

*Grrrl Feminism* is a common U.S. term for Third-Wave Feminism, and it's called *new feminism* in Europe. The new *new féminism* is characterized in areas such as violence against women, trafficking and body surgery, self-mutilation and overarching pornification of the media by local, national and transnational activism. In addition, it criticises earlier feminist waves in the context of new threats to women's rights, following the new global order, for having presented universal answers and definitions of feminity and developing their particular interest into somewhat static political identity.

This wave would like to prevent their entry into static categories, and would like to see a chaotic world accepted, while simultaneously embracing ambiguity and building new

alliances. Thus, the third-wave feminisms are defined not through common theory and political points of view, but by the application of rhetorical strategies such as performance, imitation and subversion. (Krolokke & Sorenson 17-18)

In this wave the beliefs of the second wave have changed, the marks of the “women’s oppression” such as lipstick, false lashes, high heels, and bras being marks of strength; Yet, every woman should define her femininity for herself. An aspect that confuses the feminists of the earliest waves. Pinkfloor states, “It’s possible to have a push-up bra and a brain at the same time”(20). In fact, race, ethnicity, class, religion, and gender are seeing by the third-wave activists as fundamental reasons to discuss feminism (Drucker, para. 5). Audre Lourde and Rebecca Walker [the first user of the third-wave phrase] are the standing pillars of this wave.

## **1.4 Types of Feminism**

### **1.4.1 Liberal feminism**

Liberal feminism, egalitarian or mainstream feminism are all names of the same type of feminism. Liberal feminism strives to achieve equal rights to women in law, politics and society. It also wants women's equality to be integrated into the public institution and knowledge creation to prevent women from being ignored. It supports the idea of gender equality, and that all human beings should have the same equal opportunities (Effiong & Inyang 12). It aims to level the playing field so that women have the same opportunities as men, particularly in terms of excelling in diverse sectors by denying the job classification (Pasque & Wimmer 16).

### **1.4.2 Radical Feminism**

Arose within the second-wave that calls for a radical abolishing and elimination of patriarchal society in all social and economic aspects by attacking structures and social norms rather than through political process (Ovi 2). Arguing that liberal feminism has not been

extremist enough to talk about institutional and individual oppression. This type concentrates more on the free expression of gender in all its forms, androgyny and masculinity, and femininity regardless of its biological sex. (Pasque & Wimmer 17).

### **1.4.3 Marxist / Socialist Feminism**

It concerns issues such as wage inequality, barriers to employment, work problems in certain sectors and the lack of equal policies in higher education organisations. Marxist feminists think that if women work to stop the economic and cultural oppression, women would have real liberty (Pasque & Wimmer 18). According to them, women are oppressed, and treated unequally. They blame the capitalist for this treatment. Thus, they believe that overthrowing capitalism is the only way to end women's oppression (Ovi 2).

### **1.4.4 Multi-Cultural or Global Feminism**

This feminist branch is concerned with the interaction of gender, race, and class, as well as issues of colonization and exploitation of women in developing countries. This implies that global feminism is a movement of people who are advocating for change across national borders. (Effiong & Inyang 14)

### **1.4.5 Black / Womanist Feminism**

The term womanist is often used to describe a woman of color in addition to her race and gender. It emerged as a result of the feminist and the civil rights movement of 1970. It discussed the double burden of African American women and their issues that were not addressed by previous feminist movements. Wheeler's definition of Black feminist is:

“a person, historically an African American woman academic, who believes that female descendants of American slavery share a unique set of life experiences distinct from those of Black men and White Women... the lives

of African American women are oppressed by combinations of racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism” (Pasque and Wimmer 19).

#### **1.4.6 Native American Feminism**

It focused on increasing the supremacy of Native peoples and combating gender discrimination and the role of women in safeguarding the indigenous cultural identity (Pasque and Wimmer 21)

#### **1.4.7 Existential Feminism**

This type, developed by Simon de Beauvoir, believes that prostitution financially empowers women and raises their status in a hierarchical society; supporters argue that one does not born a woman but becomes a woman. (Pasque and Wimmer 24)

#### **1.4.8 Multicultural Feminism**

Multicultural women say that every female has different intersecting identities and is not identical with any other female in nations, like United States. This feminist lens takes into account a number of different inter-related identities and influences; it is often used as a parachute that allows consideration of many different points of view. Some people note that this is not a useful umbrella to myriad historically and cultural feminist perspectives, as groups collapse and divorce from the focus on a particular race, region and language (Pasque and Wimmer 25)

#### **1.4.9 Postmodern feminism**

It emerged from third-wave feminism, with its activists criticizing society's dominant order and patriarchal system. They declined to classify themselves as feminists since "feminism" conveys a view of essentiality, which differentiates itself from others by accepting the diversity within it: a variety of roles, truths, or realities (Pasque and Wimmer 27)

## **2 Psychoanalytical Approach**

### **2.1 Definition of Psychoanalysis**

Psychoanalysis is a set of psychological theories and therapeutic approaches that have their roots in Sigmund Freud's work and theories. The primary assumption of psychoanalysis is the belief that all people possess unconscious thoughts, feelings, desires, and memories. The goal of this therapy is to release repressed emotions and experiences, by bringing what exists at the unconscious or subconscious level up to consciousness. To attempt a cathartic experience to help a person to be cured is through talking (McLeod, para. 1-3)

In other words, psychoanalytic approach concentrates on unconscious mind rather than the conscious one, because; the human behavior is built according to what the unconscious mind is storing (Ackerman, para. 1)

### **2.2 Sigmund Freud and Psychoanalytical Concepts**

Sigmund Freud was born on 6 May 1856 in Freiberg, Moravia, growing in Vienna where he entered medical school earning a medical degree and became a neurologist in 1881. He is the inventor of psychoanalysis, who pioneered a whole new way of viewing human personality. He is also considered one of the most influential - and divisive - thinkers of the twentieth century. (Biography, para. 1)

#### **2.2.1 Model of Mind**

Freud's investigations into internal conflicts such as, the case of his patient Anne O, led him to an eventual division of the mind into three layers: Conscious, Preconscious/subconscious, and Unconscious. Consciousness exists outside of your awareness. It is the place of the recent thoughts, feelings, and focus live. While preconscious, is the partition where everything we can recall or restore from our memory is situated. Finally, the unconscious is the layer where the processes that control our behavior, primitive and instinctual desires are situated. It is the profoundest partition of the mind. (Ackerman, para. 9)

Later on, Freud has developed and structured more his model of mind that could coexist with his initial concept, where he found that there are three structures of personality: the **id**, the **ego**, and the **super-ego**. These three elements work together to create a complex behavior and have a powerful influence on individuals. Each one of them symbolize something: the id as instinct, the ego as reality, the super ego as morality.

**The Id:** operates in the unconscious mind. It evolves into a psychological province that encompasses innate drive energies as well as everything else that comes with our phylogenetic inheritance. The Id works in the background, in accordance with the primary process, and drives the body to engage in pleasurable, tension-relieving activities. (Lapsley & Ste 5)

**The Super-ego:** The Super-Ego is linked to the social or moral ideals that a person develops as he grows older. It serves as an ethical constraint on action and aids in the development of a person's conscience. As an individual matures in society, he learns the cultural values and standards that enable him to distinguish between good and wrong. (Megha, para. 5)

**The Ego:** The logical and aware aspect of the mind that is linked to the reality principle is known as the ego. This means it creates a balance between the demands of the Id and the super-ego in real-life settings. Ego is conscious, and hence keeps Id in control through good reasoning of the external environment (Megha, para. 7).

### **2.3 Defense Mechanism**

Defense mechanism is the way that the ego resorts to when there is a conflict that a person cannot handle as a reaction to protect his psyche. It contains different sorts: repression, denial, projection, displacement, regression, sublimation, and rationalization (Ackerman, para. 11)

## 2.4 Psychoanalysis and Art

Psychoanalysis is a field that includes even art. Sigmund Freud is always the first who applied this theory in art, his notion is that artists including authors and painters are all neurotic. But he escapes his/her illness by creating a piece of art. For Freud, every work of art [painting or story] is influenced by artist's childhood inner desire, dream, or a forbidden wish that was buried in his unconscious.

To confirm his idea, he chooses Leonardo da Vinci's work and life for the first application of this theory in art. In his study, Freud averred: "Kindly nature has given the artist the ability to express his most secret mental impulses, which are hidden even from himself, by means of the works that he creates" (Blum 1409). With Freud's work *Leonardo*, he transformed the artist biography into psychobiography. He claimed that to have access to the unconscious in artistic work you must take into consideration his life, childhood, personality... (Blum 1411)

## 2.5 Psychoanalysis and the Uncanny

The concept of the uncanny as developed by Sigmund Freud is frequently misunderstood. Sigmund Freud's theory of the uncanny is commonly referred to *as the return of the repressed*. However, Freud also provided another, often overlooked, explanation for why we perceive certain phenomena as uncanny. This is due to the apparent confirmation of *overcome primitive beliefs*. Freud definition of uncanny is: "belonging to all that is terrible – to all that arouses dread and creeping horror..." (Jen, para. 1).

He uses two German words, *Heimlich* and *unheimlich*, to create a barrier between their meanings at first, but as he continues, the two merge to create a meaning behind what the *uncanny* truly is. He defines the barrier between the two as *Heimlich*, which means *familiar*, and *unheimlich*, which means *hidden or kept out of sight*. This barrier is what joins the two to form the uncanny – when something unfamiliar is added to something familiar. The uncanny is

defined by Freud another time as "that class of the terrifying which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar." It is distinct from realistic sources of fear, such as physical danger. The uncanny, according to Freud, stems from two major sources: animistic beliefs and infantile complexes. Animistic beliefs include belief in the resurrected dead, magic, and what Freud refers to as the omnipotence of thoughts, or the power of the mind over matter.

The literature of the uncanny provides an excellent context for examining the applicability of psychoanalytic theory to the study of literature. A seemingly supernatural event, whether in literature or in real life, may simply be the result of a psychological disorder in the perceiver. The uncanny has a special literary status as a result of research into the psychology of the writer and reader. Furthermore, because supernatural literature is not bound by naturalistic rules, it can present psychoanalytic concepts particularly well by employing devices such as the double. Such beliefs dominated humanity's infancy and now dominate the individual's infancy, but they are overcome during maturation. (Peel 410).

These themes of uncanniness then allowed Freud to propose the concept of the *double*. In Freud's terms, the *double* appears as a level of development. The level of development referred to by Freud in these terms is that of his theory of *narcissism of the child* or self-love. He defines this as when a child creates multiple projections of himself/herself, which are eventually overcome and the child develops his/her ego. The *double* comes into play when a person encounters *child narcissism* later in life, causing them to revert to that primitive state and thus causing *uncanny*. This could also be related to Freud's concept of the super-ego. The repressed projections of the multiple selves or *the double* comprise the super-ego. This is where a larger theoretical question enters the picture. whether the "double" is a common theme in film/cinema, or it is reflections in mirrors, shadows, spirits, or the infamous doppelganger. (Jin, para. 2)



According to Freud, gothic fiction has more resources to create uncanny results than life. People who fear a gothic fiction may enjoy literature positively, perhaps because they can master their threats through Aristotelian catharsis, or because in contrast, their sense of the safety of their own life is enhanced by the ghost. Although Freud does not mention the idea of death, perhaps he suggests why readers are searching for such ostensibly disagreeable experiences. Later his essay, the uncanny, gives a more literary explanation of this, but he says that fiction can be more uncanny events than in fact. (Peel 415)

### **Conclusion**

Feminist approach and psychoanalysis approach were produced for a better understanding of literature and facilitate analyzing both psyche's author and characters of the story and their representation. This chapter has included a theoretical background to fully comprehend *Cramilla*, Le Fanu's gothic novel. In the following chapter we will have a look at the historical overview of the Victorian era's norms and how gothic fiction broke those norms.

**Chapter Two:**  
**Gothic Fiction During**  
**the**  
**Victorian Norms**

## **Introduction**

The Gothic fiction originated to the Victorian era a period of rapid social, cultural, and technological growth. Works written in this genre are inherently linked to their social contexts and many critical comments focus on representing social and cultural fear in the face of the disintegration of tradition, gender roles, oppression and race in Gothic literature. This chapter will tackle a historical background about the Victorian Era, their social and cultural norms that govern people's life, gender role, and the flourished literature of that era. It focuses on the gothic fiction to explore how this genre breaks the Victorian norms through Lefanu's novel *Carmilla* with its summary plot discussing the gothic elements implemented in, themes, and blood relation between its characters.

### **1 The Victorian Era**

#### **1.1 Historical Background**

Named after the queen of that period, queen Victoria, who reigned from 1837 until 1901. During this long reign, more than sixty years, England was steadily progressing toward becoming Europe's most stable and prosperous country. The country acquired power and wealth without precedent. Britain's reach extended worldwide due to their empire, political stability and revolutionary transportation and communication developments. People are still today with many of the cultural and intellectual achievements of this period such as the increase in rail and steam systems – paired with electric telegraph development – from the 1840s forward which supported Britain's economic success. (Introduction to Victorian England, para. 1,4)

Steam engines were used in mines, factories, and ships during the industrial revolution and the railway age. Small towns were growing into smoky hubs of the manufacturing industry. All of this was happening under a government and legislature that were still narrowly restricted to the privileged few, who were wealthy by birth or became wealthy through commerce. Almost

all England was still an agricultural land despite the industrial revolution, factories, mills, mines and workshops. Everyone knew what it was like to live in the English countryside.

The Industrial Revolution, on the other hand, was just getting started in bringing dirt and squalor, ugliness and crime, into the lives of the poor, who were forced to live and work in the mills and factories of the new towns. Labourers were being treated unfairly with no recourse, women workers were also mistreated and underpaid, and children were frequently overworked in deplorable conditions. However, Society remained effectively feudal in the country. The landlord or lord in the estate to whom tenants of farms or cottages paid rents was still more or less governed by a small farming community. Nobody other than local parson or to a lesser extent an apothecary or surgeon had much authority in the rural community. (The Victorian age, para. 1)

## **1.2 Victorian Era Literature**

The Victorian era is taken into account to be the golden age of the Victorian novels. It absolutely was a time of contrast: prosperity and financial condition, morality and depravity, of peace and protest, paradoxically the simplest time and also the worst of times. Queen Victoria herself embodied variety of contradictions and influenced several writers, each directly and indirectly.

Over the six decades of queen Victoria's reign some sixty thousand works of prose fiction were revealed in the United Kingdom alone. This new growth was due partially to the expansion of education, the emergence of the middle classes, and also the proliferation of more cost-effective reading materials. As associate increasing proportion of the population became literate, thus too did the demand for brand new styles of literature increase a requirement that was met by over seven thousand of authors.

The Victorian market was dominated by novels that first appeared in three-volume standard format. However, for the middle and working classes these triple deckers were expensive. The dominant publishing format of the time made the growing numbers of new readers accessible to novels. In a series of installments novelists such as Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, and George Eliot published their works. Every installment on a cliffhanger was often ended by writers, which made them longing for the next episode. Although a lot of fiction is focused on specific markets, there are an increasing number of jobs throughout class, gender and age. Writers were encouraged to depict life, which they affected, through social problem novels, adventure stories, science fiction, detective fiction, and even fantasy represented social reality.

The development of science deeply influenced the literature of the Victorian era. beginning within the middle of nineteenth century, the invention of the press enabled industrial printing at a cheaper price than a single volume of Yellow backs. and paper-bound edition of existing works began to be oversubscribed. The sheer volume and variety of written material was revolutionary, reaching broader audiences than ever before. None fictional works has marked the literature of the time, from philosophical writings to political essays. Following romanticism, Victorian poets, were influenced by themes of the precedent era. Their own style has been developed and new poetry with a focus on realism, skepticism and a sense of accountability has been created.

The city of London became a hub of literature through its novels, newspaper and circulating libraries. Dickens' stories, which still bring Victorian London to life, were enormously popular during his lifetime, and Queen Victoria herself was a fan of his work.

The legacy of Victorian writers reflects the enormous changes of the time, much of the writing during this period was in response to rapidly changing ideas about science, morality, and

society. Victorian writers reacted to the works of earliest generations as well. According to George Landow, the Victorians sought to avoid what they saw as the Romantics' excessive subjectivity while retaining their individuality, originality, intensity, and, above all, sincerity. Thus, Victorian literature attempts to combine Romantic subjectivity (1798-1830) with Augustan objectivity (1660-1798).

According to Landow, the dramatic monologue and autobiographical fiction were used to bring personal experiences to literature without making the author appear self-obsessed (Myers, Allie, et al, para. 2). In absorbing both neoclassical and romantic literary tradition, the Victorian era was acutely aware of its ties to the past, but also of its role in shaping the future, paving the way for the development of literary modernism (Literature in the Victorian Era, 2020).

### **1.3 Characteristics of Victorian Literature**

The literature of the era expressed the merger between pure romanticism and gross realism. Although it brought forth great poets during the Victorian Age, which is a remarkable age for its excellent prose. Furthermore, Science discoveries have a distinct impact on the literature of that time. Which distinguished it by specific characteristics:

First, literature of this era tends to be more grounded in reality, reflecting its practical problems and interests. It evolves into a potent tool for human progress. Industrialism was on the rise socially and economically, as were reform movements such as emancipation, child labor, women's rights, and evolution. Also, by asserting Moral Purpose, Victorian literature appears to deviate from *art for the sake of art*. Tennyson, Browning, Carlyle, and Ruskin were all English teachers who believed in the power of their moral message to instruct the world. Second, Idealism is frequently regarded as a period of skepticism and pessimism. The impact of science can be felt here. The entire age appears to be caught up in the concept of man's

relationship to the universe through the concept of evolution. Despite the fact that the age is characterized as practical and materialistic, most writers extol a purely ideal life. It is an idealistic age in which poets, essayists, and novelists emphasize great ideals such as truth, justice, love, and brotherhood (Sajin 2).

Utilitarianism is also a new concept that characterized the literature of this era. Its impact touched both state and industry sectors, even if that era was governed by the biblical instructions but, by the coming of Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, and J.S. Mill these instructions changed and the greatest good of the greatest number become the principle that rule the utilitarian ideology on morals, law, politics and administration. (Athar, para. 4)

After utilitarianism, people in the Victorian Era were left in doubt because they sought to explore and understand questions about the metaphysical world, but ultimately found no answers. The term Agnosticism came to describe skepticism caused by an inability to logically support the existence of spiritual beings. (Athar, para. 5)

## **1.4 Victorian Social Norms**

### **1.4.1 Social classes' Manners & Etiquettes**

#### **1.4.1.1 The Upper and Upper Middle Class**

The reign of Queen Victoria dominated the Victorian Era in the United Kingdom (1837-1901). Despite the fact that it was a peaceful and prosperous time, there were still problems within the social structure. This era's social classes included the upper, middle, and lower classes. Those who were fortunate enough to be of the upper class did not usually work in the fields. Instead, they were landowners who hired lower-class workers to work for them or made profitable investments. This class was divided into three subcategories: Royal, who were born into a royal family, Middle Upper, who were important officers and lords, and Lower Upper, who were wealthy men and business owners. (Social Life in Victorian England, para. 1)

Rules such as proper forms of address and even what to wear were all very important to those in the upper echelons of society. Victorian society was preoccupied with every aspect of daily life, from the smallest burp to how a gentleman addressed a young lady. The upper class's days were governed by dos and don'ts from the moment they awoke. Social ostrich horrors were overwhelming. It was to be feared as greatly to be caught in the wrong way at the wrong time of day than to address a company member by the wrong title. It was critical to know who you could talk to.

For a woman, a complete stranger's request to dance could pose an etiquette issue that could affect for days. Young ladies were constantly accompanied by chaperones. It was equivalent to social death to be found alone with a gentleman other than family. Her reputation was going to be ruined and her gentleman's companion would become the target of gossip and, more often than not, derision. Victorian society members kept themselves busy with parties, dances, visits, dressmakers, and tailors. For them, keeping track of what people from other social classes doing was also a full-time occupation. (Etiquette, para. 1)

#### **1.4.1.2 The Middle Classes**

The rapid growth of cities and the economy contributed to the expansion of the Middle Class during this period. It was also known as the Bourgeoisie, and it was made up of people who worked hard to support themselves and their families. The trade, both inland and abroad, grew to be popular as merchants and shopkeepers. Because of the large scale of new industries such as railroads, banks, and government, more labor was required to ensure that cities could function. White-collar workers could advance in the corporate hierarchy and earn a higher salary. It was advantageous to have connections to those in positions of power because they were able to obtain jobs more easily. Furthermore, the Middle Class was divided into two levels: higher and lower. People from the lower middle class usually worked for those from the upper class.



The working class was made up of unskilled laborers who were forced to work in harsh and unsanitary conditions. They lacked access to clean water and food, as well as education and proper clothing for their children. They frequently lived on the streets and were far from available employment, so they had to walk to get where they needed to go. Unfortunately, many workers turned to drugs such as opium and alcohol to cope with their hardships. (Social Life in Victorian England, para. 2-3)

Working as a servant in one of the grand Victorian mansions provided shelter and food. There was, however, etiquette to be learned. The first rule is the upper class was to be avoided and never be addressed unless absolutely necessary. If that were the case, as few words as possible would be uttered. Also, the importance of using the proper title could not be overstated. However, it was always proper to address someone as madam or sir. Otherwise, the second rule is If madam was seen, you had to disappear, turning to face the wall and avoiding eye contact. The upper class of the servant world, the butler and housekeeper, would frequently abandon their lofty roles in the household to join their fellow servant [below stairs] in gaiety. However, they would reclaim their places by morning.

Another opportunity to be a part of Victorian society's middle class was having a career. Shopkeepers, doctors, nurses, schoolteachers, and parish priests were all well-known occupations. The uppers and middles would occasionally mix, because; it was possible for a tradesman to gain the support of a prominent upper member if the proper introductions were made. A successful business transaction could increase both parties' wealth and, for the middle classes, their social standing. (Etiquette, para. 2)

#### **1.4.1.3 The Lower Class**

The Underclass consisted of those who were helpless and relied on the assistance of others. The poor and orphaned children relied on donations to survive. To make a living, some

unqualified women who could get no jobs were turned into prostitutes to live. Because they were highly contentious, Parliament voted to pass the *Contagious Diseases Act (1864, 1866, 1869)*, which allowed prostitution in military towns but required women to be forcibly checked for diseases. The act was intended to protect men from disease transmission, not women from harm. This mistreatment sparked a strong feminist movement among Victorian women seeking equal treatment. In 1885 the Parliament finally adopted the *Criminal Law Amendment Act* that raised the consent age and forbade using brothels. (Social Life in Victorian England, para. 4)

No etiquette time was available for the lower class. Victorian society did not acknowledge that a lower class was present. Poor people were unnoticed. Those Englishmen who worked as chimney sweeps, ratcatchers, or stayed in factories had no place in a high-class echelon, even though their services were occasionally required. The prevalent belief was that the poor deserved to live as they did. The poor would not be living the way they do if moral decisions had been made. Ignoring the poor was the best way for society to deal with them. They were a burden on the general public.

Etiquette played little role in the poor's daily existence because they were too busy trying to survive. But that doesn't mean pride wasn't available. There was a social stigma associated with seeking assistance, and certain families preferred to keep to themselves and figure out their own means of survival. Although poor laws were enacted, it was not until after the Victorian era ended that the lower class was able to raise itself, in some cases literally out of the gutter, through education, technology, and reform. (Etiquette, para. 3)

## **1.5 Gender role**

During this time, men's and women's roles became more clearly defined than at any other time in history. Instead of women working alongside men in family businesses, the nineteenth century saw an increase in men commuting away to their places of work, leaving the

women at home all day to manage the household. This ideology of men and women occupying *Separate Spheres* was supported by the notion that men and women had *natural* characteristics that suited each to different roles. Men are physically strong, they possessed the capacity for reason, action, aggression, independence, and self-interest. Unlike women who are considered physically weaker but morally superior, making them best suited for the domestic sphere. It was not only their responsibility to counterbalance the moral taint of the public sphere in which their husbands worked all day, but also to prepare the next generation to carry on this way of life. (Social Life in Victorian England, para. 15)

Men in the Victorian era were thought to be mentally and physically superior to women, which were intended to protect their families. They were also influenced by various factors such as domesticity, economy, gender roles, imperialism, manners, religion, and athletic competition. Victorian men had to compete for respect not only within their own sex, but also with the women. Men were accused by lack of masculinity if they were unmarried; for them supporting a family was considered a sign of true male success (Appell, para. 4). According to Ingrid Ranum quoting John Tosh: “only marriage could yield the full privileges of masculinity” also, “To form a household, to exercise authority over dependents, and to shoulder the responsibility of maintaining and protecting them—these things set the seal on a man’s gender identity” (Ranum 242-243)

Men were known to have a high level of sexual desire. They considered sex to be extremely beneficial. It relieves stress and maintains a healthy mind and body. Men of this era, including married men, frequently visited the local house of prostitution. Women would put chastity belts on their husbands to prevent them from cheating. If a man joined a Greek fraternity, he was almost always involved in homosexual behavior. (Jesus, para. 6)

Women did not have the same rights as men in patriarchal society, their pivotal role in life in the Victorian society was to marry and preserve the interests and business of their husbands. As a result, women were assigned more feminine tasks such as caring for the home and pursuing outlets for feminine creativity. They would learn to weave, cooking, washing and cleaning before matrimony, except the one who belonged to a wealthy family. They didn't always learn these tasks because their servants were primarily responsible for the household tasks (Appell, para. 2).

At any given time of the day after the marriage, Angels of the house [women] were expected to obey their husbands and their needs. They had to ensure that their children were well cared for and made sure that their household was in good shape (Jesus, para. 4). the critic, Richard D. Altick states, “a woman was inferior to a man in all ways except the unique one that counted most [to a man]: her femininity. Her place was in the home, on a veritable pedestal if one could be afforded, and emphatically not in the world of affairs” (Altick 54). While Charlotte Brontë stressed the strong emotions introducing her heroine character Jane Eyre’s mouth about the bounded role of women:

Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags (02).

Victorian men expected women to be feminine as well as innocent; otherwise, they would not be suitable for marriage. In his article “Victorian Women Expected to be Idle and Ignorant,” Charles Petrie explains what the Victorian man was looking for:

Innocence was what he demanded from the girls of his class, and they must not only be innocent but also give the outward impression of being innocent. White muslin, typical of virginal purity, clothes many a heroine, with delicate shades of blue and pink next in popularity. The stamp of masculine approval was placed upon ignorance of the world, meekness, lack of opinions, general helplessness and weakness; in short, recognition of female inferiority to the male (Petrie 184).

Simultaneously, a young girl was not expected to be overly concerned with finding a husband. Being 'near term' in men's company suggested an appetite for sexual desire. It was not appropriate for women to enjoy sex; they were supposed to want marriage because it allowed them to become mothers instead of pursuing emotional or sexual satisfaction (Hughes, para. 4).

## **1.6 Gothic Fiction**

For more than two centuries, Gothic fiction has intrigued and unsettled readers with its wild and remote landscapes, vulnerable heroines, violent and erotic fantasies, supernatural and uncanny happenings. What role do these works play in reflecting the political, social, and cultural contexts in which they were written?

Gothic literature could be defined as writing using dark and picturesque scenery, stunning and melodramatic stories and the overall exotic, mysterious, fearful and terrible atmosphere. A Gothic novel or a Gothic story often revolves around a large old house that hides an appalling secret or is the refuge for a particularly fearful and dangerous person. The origins

of this genre are extremely difficult to pinpoint (Kennedy, para. 1). It is widely assumed that the Gothic period began with the publication of Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* in 1764.

Early gothic horror novels heavily feature discussions of morality, philosophy, and religion, with the evil villains frequently serving as metaphors for some sort of human temptation that the hero must overcome. The novels' endings are almost always unhappy, and romance is never the main focus. A gothic horror novel's true trademark is the battle between humanity and unnatural forces of evil [sometimes man-made, sometimes supernatural] within an oppressive, inescapable, and bleak landscape. (Pagan, para. 1-2)

Actually, the term Gothic derives from the barbarians Visigoths and Ostrogoths, who conquered Rome during the fifth century. The world fell into a dark age after Rome's fall, and the Goths were eventually forgotten until artists and architects rediscovered Greco-Roman culture during the Renaissance. They began to refer to certain barbaric architecture built by Goths during the Middle Ages as gothic, these were castles, mansions, and abbeys, many of which had been disrepair (Al-Mehairi, para. 1). The Victorian era (1837–1901) saw the publication of some of the most well-known examples of gothic horror, including novels like Willkie Collins' *The Woman in White* (1859) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), as well as novellas like Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1871) and Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886).

### 1.6.1 Elements of the Gothic Fiction

Gothic fiction is distinguished from other literary genres by specific prominent elements. The first element is the **setting**, writers of this kind of novel are often use old, rundown structures such as ruined and hunted castles, country manors, churches, with dark corridors and winding stairs, or even graveyards that often contains hidden passages, trap doors,

dungeons or secret rooms surrounded by a bleak foreboding atmosphere full of fear, mystery, and suspense to make readers sense of a strong feeling of tension.

The second element is the **protagonist**, there is typical style of protagonist gothic stories called the pursued protagonist. Usually the plot involves hidden secrets, or sort of curse which threatens the protagonist. He tends to be isolated or alone, feels like he is physically trapped in a house far from civilization; Experiencing emotional needs because he was separated from people around him or imposed to circumstances beyond his control. If there is a protagonist the **antagonist** must be mentioned. He is the villain of the story who either poses as a hero in the beginning of the story or has sufficient heroic features charism, sympathetic past, etc. so that either the reader or the other characters view the hero as more than simply charlatan or a bad man. There are three types of antagonists: Satanic Hero, Promethean, and Byronic Hero (Gothic literature 4) .

**Women or the female characters** are also an essential element of the story. There are two types of females in gothic novels: the helpless victim, who is frail, vulnerable, and always terrified; she gives the protagonist something to rescue, and they are frequently the prize for the protagonist's bravery. The second type is the predator, who is both dangerous and recklessly attractive; she contributes to the portrayal of pain and pleasure, a paradox that is synonymous with gothic literature.

In the Gothic genre, supernatural is an essential defining element that writers can directly invoke or use the reader's imagery to provide; it creates suspense when readers witness to ghosts, dead spirits and uncanny characters. Sometimes history includes omens and ancient curses, magic, supernatural expressions and uncanny suggestions. Emotions are intense. There are a lot of high-emotion triggered murders, kidnappings, people going insane, and tragic illnesses in this kind of literature. In addition, emotions can run high, and characters are often

quite passionate and strong-willed, defying others and even their own common sense in pursuit of their goals. Women are inquisitive and prone to swooning, whereas men storm and rage in response to unseen inner torments.

Science is involved in some gothic literature especially gothic literature of the Victorian Era, because, scientists like Charles Darwin with their advances in science made people fearful of whether man would try to use science to replace God and do unnatural action. This fear is exploited by this genre (Gothic lit. and genre, 2020). Sheridan LeFanu combined four elements of the gothic literature in his work *Carmilla* to explore the relation between them. As knowing, the Victorian era was a time of rapid progress in science and technology.

At that time Darwinism theory has started to destabilize the ideas of Christians regarding God's position in the universe. [Darwin's book *On the Origin of Species* was published thirteen years before the publication of *Carmilla*]. This created a widespread fear of the relationship between science, nature, religion, and the supernatural, which was palpable in other works of the time period, such as *Frankenstein* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. While other works responded to the changes of the Victorian era by rejecting God's supremacy, the characters in *Carmilla* insist on maintaining their faith in God as they react to the vampire Carmilla and the illness that her bite causes in Laura. Carmilla appears to take a conservative stance from this vantage point, insisting that God remains at the center of everything and must be invoked in order for good to triumph over evil. (Farinet-Brenner, para. 1)

### **1.7 Gothic Novella *Carmilla* by LeFanu breaks the Victorian Norms**

*Carmilla*, a vampire novella, written by the Irish literate Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu during the Victorian era, in 1872. The novella dealt with a relationship between a young women named Laura and a vampire in a form of human named Carmilla. The story starts with a flashback of the six-year-old Laura, the helpless victim of the story, trying to sleep, visited by a mysterious



young lady who bites her on her breast. The narration moved then thirteen years, when General Speilisdorf sends a letter to Laura's father informing him about the death of his niece Bertha; accusing a monster of killing her.

After that day, a carriage carrying Carmilla, the predator, and her mother crashes near Laura's castle, and the mother persuades Laura's father to look after Carmilla for a few months while she attends to pressing matters. Laura is delighted to have Carmilla as a visitor, and the two of them been enchanted. One day Carmilla asks Laura for walk under the moonlight where she expresses her feelings for Laura, which embarrasses and frightens her even more. From that point, the events of the story rise to its climax, discovering that Carmilla is the countess Mircalla Karnstein, the vampire who has control over her victims attacked a village caused the death of its young ladies (Farinet-Brenner, para. 1)

The novella adopts implicitly the theme of lesbianism [same sex desire] when Carmilla expressed her attraction to Laura. Homosexuality/Lesbianism was considered as a sin during the Victorian Era. It was strictly forbidden to have a kind of this relation during that time which led to the introduction of the Labouchere amendment, in 1885, that criminalized and severely imposed homosexual acts even in private. Those convicted of sodomy, or the so-called buggery, faced years in prison with hard labor and abuse designed to break the spirit, or were sentenced to death. This amendment was the most prominent cause for the detention of Oscar Wilde, the famous playwright, author, and aesthetics professor. Because of his affair with Lord Alfred Douglas, son of the Marquess of Queensberry. (Dawn Powell, para. 7)

Le Fanu does not directly mention the sexual orientation of the female protagonist, Laura, and the vampire, Carmilla, since Leal suggested that "to support homosexuality openly in Victorian England was to risk imprisonment and moral outrage" (Künnecke 48-9). Thus, female vampires were used as an example of the two extreme positions through which women

were represented in the Victorian culture: “the virgin and the whore” or “the saint and the vampire” (Dijkstra 334). Carmilla seeks to refute the entire world’s idea of sexuality. For Brown, according to the entirety of the Gothic canon, it is highly conducive to breaking barriers in sexualities, typically keeping either a proto-feminist twist on gender and/or sexuality or a blatant homosexual spin to the canon (Sladana 12-13).

In addition, Nina Auerbach argues that “the construction of the vampire changes in accordance with the political and social issues of that period, and that vampires are reflections of the social atmosphere they are produced from. The Victorian vampire challenged patriarchal systems of class relationships and civility with their efforts to find prey—regardless of social class—as well as their disobedience to social codes” (Vesperry 2-3). Le Fanu admits the existence of the female desire, which is an abnormal fact during that period. This admission made him break the norms of that era.

## **1.8 Blood Relation in the Novel**

### **1.8.1 Laura & Carmilla**

Carmilla as a character evokes female sexuality, but its vampire bite has a wider meaning, as it leads to a loss of innocence and a change from girl to woman. Laura was a naïve character protected by her father from the crucial realities of life; that is what make Carmilla attracted by Laura, and her lack of world-wide knowledge makes her an easy exploit target. Laura's encounters with Carmilla permanently transforms her from a young girl to an adult woman in both physical and emotional ways, and in both positive and negative ways. Her complicated relationship with Carmilla reaches a climax when she is bitten and becomes ill— at this point, Laura refers to herself as a *changed girl* who begins to consider death in a way she doesn't entirely dislike.

These previously unknown darker thoughts indicate a more mature way of thinking, a change she doesn't quite understand but also doesn't reject. Furthermore, blood symbolizes the female desire, specifically female homosexual desire. Also, the vampire bite and subsequent blood flow is suggestive of menstruation, the traditional sign of becoming a woman. Menstruation, like the vampire bite, has both beneficial and dangerous effects, especially for the time period: it enables a woman to give birth to children but it also awakens her sexuality that was considered dangerous during the Victorian era. (Farinet-Brenner, para. 1-2)

### **1.8.2 Laura & her Father**

The relationship of father and daughter is presented in the novel as completely pure and loving within the socially acceptable sphere. In contrast to Carmilla, Laura's father is driven by a genuine, selfless love for his daughter. He seeks a way to heal her from her disease and tries to protect her against the truth to avoid worrying her. This platonic love between father and daughter is the love that overpowers and defeats Carmilla. (Farinet-Brenner, para. 3)

### **1.8.3 General Speilsdorf & Bertha**

Similar to the relation of Laura and her father, the General is motivated by his own feelings of love and sorrow over the death of his niece Bertha. Although he is driven by a "passion" to exact revenge on the vampire who murdered his family, it is his love for his niece that drives these strong emotions. As a result, the novel depicts his passion as a "righteous passion," as opposed to the physical lust that drives Carmilla (Farinet-Brenner, para. 3).

## **Conclusion**

To sum up, Gothic literature breaks the Victorian norms by exploring themes such as religion and lesbianism. This chapter has included a better understanding about the Victorian era, gothic fiction and its elements during this period stressing how Sheridan Le Fanu breaks

these norms in his novel *Carmilla*. In the following chapter the feminist and psychoanalysis approaches will be useful to explore Monstrosity, agency, and sexuality as a female reaction.

**Chapter Three:**  
**Carmilla a New Voice of**  
**Sexuality and Uncanny**

## **Introduction**

For centuries, Vampires fascinated their human victim, reviled and seduced. Like its subject, these imaginary creatures are mysterious and disjointed in their literature. However, the great works of vampire literature offer a fascinating playground for studies of sex and gender. Vampires, as a social, cultural, and physical other, allow authors to explore sexual and gender issues; additionally, they provide a canvas on which potentially deviant characteristics or activities can be enacted. This chapter will discuss the meaning of gender, sexuality and vampirism. Analyzing *Carmilla*, the female vampire, in Le Fanu's work, who symbolizes la femme fatale with her new voice of female sexuality. Taking into consideration her knowledge as a reaction towards male dominance.

## **1 Gender, Sexuality, and Vampirism**

### **1.1 Gender**

The terms *sex* and *gender* are frequently used interchangeably, but this is incorrect. Sex and gender are distinct. Sex describes the universal and determined biological differences between men and women when they are born. While gender is more complicated to define; it is a state of being, a mode of life. It refers to the roles and responsibilities that men and women establish in their families, societies, and cultures. The gender concept also includes expectations about women and men's features, skills and likely behaviors [femininity and masculinity]. Gender stereotypes and expectations are instilled in children. They can change over time and differ between cultures. Gender roles are modified by social differentiation systems such as political status, class, ethnicity, physical and mental disability, age, and more. Gender is important because it reveals how women's subordination or men's dominance is socially constructed when applied to social analysis. As a result, subordination can be modified or terminated. It is not predetermined by biology, nor is it fixed in stone. (UNESCO, para. 1)

In contrast to biological contexts, the term gender has traditionally been used in social or cultural contexts. This was especially related to language. The term gender was first used in 1387 by T. Usk, who wrote, “No mo genders been there but masculine and femynyne, all the remnaunte been no genders but of grace, in faculte of grammar” (Diamond 321). By the end of the 1950s, the concept of gender emerged. Its use in the psychomedical field became more common in the 1960s. Feminism in the 1970s made it more applicable to other disciplines, and by the 1980s, the term had gained academic popularity in the social sciences. Gender first obtained public attention in the 1990s and has since become firmly established as [the] explanation for gender inequality in the twenty-first century.

## 1.2 Sexuality

The term sexuality refers to people's sexual interest and attraction to others, as well as their ability to have erotic experiences and responses. People's sexual orientation refers to their emotional and sexual attraction to specific sexes or genders, which frequently shapes their sexuality [heterosexual or homosexual]. Thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, practices, roles, and relationships are all ways to express and experience sexuality. These can take the form of biological, physical, emotional, social, or spiritual manifestations.

The biological and physical aspects of sexuality are primarily concerned with human reproductive functions, such as the human sexual-response cycle and the basic biological drive found in all species. Bonds between individuals that are expressed through profound feelings or physical manifestations of love, trust, and care are examples of emotional aspects of sexuality.

The social aspects of sexuality are concerned with the effects of human society on one's sexuality, whereas spirituality is concerned with an individual's spiritual connection with others through sexuality. Cultural, political, legal, philosophical, moral, ethical, and religious aspects

of life all have an impact on and are influenced by sexuality. In his discussion of human sexuality, Stanley.J Grenz states the following:

Further, sexuality is a dimension of our existence as embodied persons. As we will see later, at its core this embodied existence includes a fundamental incompleteness, one which is symbolized by biological sex and is based in our sexuality. Through sexuality we give expression both to our existence as embodied creatures and to our basic incompleteness as embodied persons in our relationships to each other and to the world. Our sexuality, then, calls us to move toward completeness. It forms the foundation for the drive which moves male and female to come together to form a unity of persons in marriage. But this yearning toward completeness also lies at the basis of the interpersonal and religious dimensions of human existence as a whole (Grenz 20).

Sexuality differs from biological sex by referring to the capacity for sexual sentiments and attraction, whereas biological sex refers to the classification of anatomy, physiology, hormones and genetics typically as male, female, or intersex.

Gender identity is a person's sense of their own gender, or sociocultural classification *i.e.*, man, woman, or another gender based on biological sex *i.e.*, male or female. It is also distinct from, but shapes, sexual orientation, or a person's emotional and sexual attraction to a specific sex or gender (Introduction to Gender and Sexuality, par. 1). Through modern psychology; George Tavard summarized the analysis of human sexuality: “Whether it remains latent or becomes active, sexuality pertains to the deepest levels of personality . . . from earliest infancy humans are sexually oriented . . . their sexual inclinations are predetermined by their earliest experiences” (Grenz 16)



### 1.3 Vampirism

There are legends about creatures that can be considered the vampires' forefathers in ancient Mesopotamia and, indeed, all over the world, such as the *Jiang Shi* or zombie vampires in China or the *Sejmet* in Egypt. However, the term *vampire* and the figure that most closely resembles contemporary depictions of it first appeared in the eighteenth century, and are associated with three main meanings: it is a flying creature, it sucks or drinks, and it is associated with wolves.

Vampirism and vampire dynamics were frequently used as metaphor by English Romantic poets to express social, emotional, and erotic processes and goals. The gothic depiction of vampires reflects the Victorian era's debates on gender and sexuality. Around the fifteenth century, the Church saw the vampire as a figure that could be used to represent taboos such as suicide or incest, as well as forbidden – primarily sexual – behavior and tendencies such as promiscuity, homosexuality, and so forth. In this historical context, the vampire becomes a tool for representing the Other, an important metaphor for people who do not fit into the traditional standards that society imposes, the desires and fears concerning sexual liberation, which are related to feminist and homosexual claims for sexual freedom. They have also frequently been interpreted as a representation of Freud's concept of the unconscious.

According to Freud, the unconscious mind consists of mental processes that are inaccessible to consciousness but influence judgments, feelings, or behavior, and it is the primary source of human behavior for him. In general, psychoanalytic concepts, particularly those relating to sexual instincts and impulses, have proven useful in explaining the significance of vampires. Twitchell, for example, claims that “the vampire personifies a set of meanings directly related to Freud's work – maternal attraction, repulsion, incest, oppressive paternalism, sexual repression, homosexual attraction– mainly pointing towards repressed sexuality” (Torres 9).

Perhaps the most obvious reason for vampires to permit such freedom is that their bodies do not act as human organisms, although they appear physically human. For sustenance, vampires demand blood, not food. Actually, their way of life seems to be based on a sexual meeting [not the first-time sex has been figured as hunger]. But the significance of this sexual encounter is more important. Judith Butler argues that “various requirements have instated sexual reproduction within the confines of a heterosexually-based system of marriage which requires the reproduction of human beings in certain gendered modes which, in effect, guarantee the eventual reproduction of that kinship system” (Mai 1).

Vampires make the human sexual encounter more difficult, while vampires use their quasi-sexual act to reproduce, another person's sex is irrelevant; a male vampire does not need a female victim, and vice versa. In addition, vampires do not have to reproduce gender as humans must, and a female vampire does not need to be feminine, to attract the victims, etc., which make heterosexual marriage systems unnecessary. This leads to the conclusion that there is no physical vampire dichotomy - there is no physiologic difference. While their bodies are certainly having the form of human beings and thus their human physical binaries, they are not dependent on their body's.

Furthermore, as many critics have pointed out, the nature of their shared sex - through which the means of reproduction, the vampiric mouth, which is both orifice and penetrator - implies possession of both male and female sexual organs, implying that vampires exist in a liminal space where they are both male and female sex to perpetuate their species any more. The fact that there are no dichotomous sexual organs in vampires that can act as gender determinants leads back to the Butler essay. gender is culturally defined rather than innate. As a result, while the feminine gender is assigned to the female body, it is not inherently a part of it, though some of its characteristics may be (Mai 2).

In vampire literature, this gender assignment manifests itself in intriguing ways. The fact that vampires are frequently depicted as sexualized creatures is significant for this discussion, because desire and sexuality are the primary loci of gender difference in vampire literature, alongside periphery differences such as knowledge and confinement. This highlights the plasticity of gender for female vampires in particular, because appearing sexually aware and aggressive is to appear masculine, whereas the body, it is less obvious for male vampires, but homosexual undertones that tend to support any male vampire's progress on a male victim strengthen this sexual fluidity. Male victims are implicitly feminized, because they are the recipients of the advances of a male or female vampire. Finally, since vampires do not have a firm sex or gender, aspects of each gender can be included, and the culture that produces such the inscription can be reflected (Mai 3).

## **2 Carmilla a New Voice of Female Sexuality**

### **2.1 Analysis of the Female Vampire**

Gender of the vampire is important in the characterization of the creature. For instance, Dyer states “vampires are less wild and more sexual, unlike other monsters” (Tores 10). Female vampires have always been associated with liberation and sin. In the nineteenth century, the Victorian women and other western classic societies dominated by patriarchy had used these creatures to illustrate the example that would not be followed by any decent woman.

Female vampires were used to portray one of two extreme positions in the culture of women: “the virgin and the whore or the saint and the vampire” (Dijkstra 334). In most cases, a woman's attitude towards sexuality was the factor that determined on which side of her polarity. At the end of the 19th century, the social situation of women was changed, and these changes also affected men, who, being frightened or uncertain of their previously privileged male position, had created these two extremes that transformed the woman into symbolic representations and thus broken the present reality. As Dijkstra shows, “women's as vampires

were a recurring fantasy that embodied male anxieties” (Tores 10). Carmilla is likely to be the first popular example of literary representation with female vampires exclusively.

Carmilla does not impose her will on Laura, nor is she compelled to do so; she merely suggests and asserts ideas to her mind. This female vampire seduces her victim and, without using violence, binds Laura to her will, transforming her into puppets. When the vampire's prey are men, the creature tends to make them her slaves, forcing them psychologically and sometimes physically. Carmilla sees Laura as her eternal lover, an everlasting passion, but her relationships with other women are depicted in a very different light. Carmilla’s love is an equal love, in contrast to the patriarchal ideas of love prevalent in the nineteenth century.

The female vampire has gained popularity, and this character has transcended the realms of literature and mythology to become a social and political symbol of freedom, female empowerment, and feminist values for many women.

## **2.2 New Convention of Sexuality [Lesbianism] and the Uncanny**

Carmilla is an avant-garde novel that has included two topics mostly perceived as taboo subjects, vampirism and lesbianism, it is a mixed story about the female vampire who preys on young women, which focuses on women's sexual anxieties. Le Fanu was one of the first writers to portray a woman vampire.

Vampirism is consistently combined with eroticism. Carmilla, the disguised vampire, has a sexual desire for Laura, and her desire for the blood of young women suggests that female sexual desire, particularly homosexual desire, is inherently dangerous. Despite the fact that Carmilla portrays female sexuality negatively, the fact that Le Fanu acknowledges the existence of female sexuality is a departure from the time period's traditional gender roles, which frequently prevented women from expressing any sort of sexual desire.

For Victorian texts, the woman sexuality exposed in this line poses a serious problem, as women were believed to be innocent of this knowledge during the period of time. Sexuality is therefore a distinctly masculine feature of much of the Victorian discourse. The covert sexuality of Carmilla [and her suggestion of her latent existence in Laura], therefore, appears to represent how it defies sexuality standards, while her sexuality itself is portrayed as a male feature as Laura suggests, with suspicion that Carmilla may be a disguised boy, the way it plays out is rather feminine. the following scene is an example of what Laura wrote:

Sometimes...my strange and beautiful companion would take my hand and hold it with a fond pressure, renewed again and again; blushing softly, gazing in my face with languid and burning eyes, and breathing so fast that her dress rose and fell with the tumultuous respiration. It was like the ardour of a lover; it embarrassed me; it was hateful and yet overpowering; and with gloating eyes she drew me to her, and her hot lips travelled along my cheek in kisses; and she would whisper, almost in sobs, 'You are mine, you shall be mine, and you and I are one for ever (Le Fanu 109).

Based on the assumption that vampiric consumption is a highly sexual process, most vampire's works, including the later *Dracula*, depict the vampire/victim relationship primarily in heterosexual or occasionally bisexual configurations. Carmilla, on the other hand, constructs its vampire as exclusively homosexual and in thirst for young female blood only. Carmilla's desire for blood is not her only motivator, as she exhibits strong emotionality and sexual attraction to some of her potential victims, such as Laura. These human characteristics correspond to the Victorian era's general perception of women as highly emotional. Despite Carmilla's focus on Laura throughout the story, the reader discovers that Carmilla feasts on other young girls in the area, undermining strictly monogamous principles of relationships:

“She is the poor girl who fancied she saw a ghost a fortnight ago, and has been dying ever since, till yesterday, when she expired” (Le Fanu 115).

Le Fanu highlights even more the sexuality of Carmilla's attraction for Laura than the violent nature of the vampire, since Laura has been won by her looks. The reader is asked to see an intimate link between vampirism and sexuality. This relationship is established by Laura's first meeting with Carmilla, twelve years before the main plot. Laura dreams of an act which softens and not frightens her, a young lady who crawls with her in bed and caresses her. Years later, Carmilla engages in similar conduct, crawls into Laura's bed and treats her as her own. The behavior of Carmilla is like that of an enthusiastic lover, although she never quite says that she sees Laura more than a friend. Whereas Laura's emotions for Carmilla are conflicting, she cannot refuse to be fascinated by and close to Carmilla, feeling an intense physical response to Carmilla that is sure to be an attraction. Carmilla simultaneously attracts Laura and fears her because Carmilla is free of men's control. While she is with Carmilla, Laura is allowed to exist within a world not fully controlled by men, which causes her to respond to Carmilla's tentation both physically and emotionally.

When Carmilla arrives for the first time, Laura, who is confused by the affection of her guest, wonders whether Carmilla is a disguised male admirer. Carmilla's desire can only be understood if Laura believes that Carmilla is a man, that demonstrating the extent to which female sexuality was suppressed. Le Fanu is explicitly that the escalation of Laura's disease is sexual in nature, and that Laura can only be "cured" when the cause of her disease, Carmilla, has been eliminated and especially their attraction to each other. Laura's disease comes in a female form and is overcome with strange, fascinating sensations.

At the end of the book, Laura's father is traveling around Italy with her in an effort to heal her, bringing her back into the norms she escaped through her relationship with Carmilla.

on the other hand, Laura is not completely cured; it appears that she no longer wishes to be placed within a masculine narrative now that she has experienced the freedom that Carmilla provided for her.

The complex ending reflects the ambiguity of Carmilla's gender standards. On the one hand, Le Fanu seems to advocate a degree of gender equality, meaning that women can be as evil and as sexual as men. In addition, despite the prejudices of the time Le Fanu does not entirely condemn lesbianism. Since Laura does not want to escape her relationship with Carmilla, the relationship seems to have freed and liberated her in some ways. Overall, the book does not, then, take a simple moral approach to gender and sexuality, questioning some norms and beliefs while upholding others. However, from a patriarchal point of view, females and lesbianism are extremely threatening as the final result would be the futility of the men existence. Paulina Palmer claimed that “the lesbian is regarded as an eccentric disruptive subject who transgresses sexual and social convention [...]” (Tores 11), and thus the embodiment of lesbianism in monstrous figures has been customary.

Despite the wildness of Carmilla, she is eternally willing to remain faithful to Laura by presenting a love story intended to overcome death. This goes against a general belief of promiscuity between vampires, (homosexuals in general). The uncanny represents According to Freud is the return of the repressed; he stated that:

[A]mong instances of frightening things there must be one class in which the frightening element can be shown to be something repressed which recurs. This class of frightening things would then constitute the uncanny [...] [T]his uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become

alienated from it only through the process of repression (Tores 20).

Attempting to answer the question of what exactly is the repressed substance which causes male anxiety in Carmilla, the answer might be multiple: the true existence of women who are powerful and sexualized, lesbianism, or the vulnerability of men's role and position in society. From the quote above, the text of *Le Fanu* also shows the recognition of something familiar which is unfamiliar or unknown. Perhaps the greatest example of this is the childlike dream/fantasy/visitation of Laura. She describes a strange experience she had when she was only six years old and awoke in the nursery to find herself alone. Laura says:

“I saw a solemn, but very pretty face looking at me from the side of the bed. It was that of a young lady who was kneeling, with her hands under the coverlet. I looked at her with a kind of pleased wonder, and ceased whimpering. She caressed me with her hands, and lay down beside me on the bed, and drew me towards her, smiling; I felt immediately delightfully soothed, and fell asleep again. I was wakened by a sensation as if two needles ran into my breast very deep at the same moment, and I cried loudly. The lady started back, with her eyes fixed on me, and then slipped down upon the floor, and, as I thought, hid herself under the bed. (*Le Fanu* 58-59)

Both girls feel a sense of mutual recognition when they first meet in Carmilla's bedroom, despite the fact that they have never met before. This is because Carmilla apparently had the same vision as Laura as a child, and the young lady's face she saw was Laura's, whereas in Laura's vision, the face belonged to Carmilla. This combination of the familiar and the unfamiliar in the girls' encounters hints at their nature as uncanny gothic doubles.

Under certain conditions and circumstances, Freud admits that the repetition of the same thing can also be a source of uncanny feelings. He claims that: “If we take another class of



things, it is easy to see that there, too, it is only this factor of involuntary repetition which surrounds what would otherwise be innocent enough with an uncanny atmosphere, and forces upon us the idea of something fateful and inescapable when otherwise we should have spoken only of “chance” (Tores 20).

The important thing is that in this story Lesbianism is partly visible because Carmilla's seduction cannot be counter-sexualized. In Carmilla, human and/or vampire there is no attractive male figure since the men in the story are all old as devotees of love and do not even consider themselves as possible wedding candidates.

### **3 Knowledge as Female Reaction to Male dominance**

The supernatural is mainly gendered as female in this story. All of the major supernatural representations are female, and they are constantly opposed by men who are consistently unwilling to accept the reality of supernatural influences. While men are often portrayed as the guardians of knowledge, they are largely incapable of comprehending the supernatural. One of the novel's central themes is the conflict between men, who seek to impose patriarchal authority through knowledge control, and supernatural women, who challenge that authority.

The father's insistence on keeping Laura from learning about the supernatural is repeatedly questioned in the narrative, especially since they are motivated by a chivalric impulse that Le Fanu repeatedly portrays as outdated and unrealistic. Laura's mother has been dead since her childhood, so the studious, deliberate restriction of Laura's knowledge is at the command of her father. Laura's father completes his role as the family patriarch by controlling Laura's access to information. His conduct of this information, on the other hand, is insufficient and irresponsible.

The prevention of women gaining knowledge is in fact vulnerable, even when it is supposed to protect them. Laura is completely unaware of the supernatural threat that is plaguing the area, and she is completely unaware of the need to exercise caution in her relationships because her father confuses ignorance for safety. As a result, Laura lacks both the means and the knowledge required to resist Carmilla's influence, whether as a child or as an adult. Le Fanu criticizes 19th century masculinity ideals by depicting men's devotion to patriarchal standards as patronizing and dangerous. Carmilla and her mother both use the men's adherence to patriarchal standards, such as chivalry and the need to protect women, to gain access to their homes and daughters, and it is the men's desperation to support their patriarchal authority by limiting women's access to knowledge that nearly destroys them all.

Carmilla's mother, in particular, exploits men's adherence to tradition by appealing to men's instinct to protect upper-class women. The General notices Carmilla's mother is "richly and gravely dressed, and with a stately air, like a person of rank"(Le Fanu 201) as soon as he sees her. Later, he mentions Carmilla's beauty as another reason he agrees to take her in, citing "the elegance and fire of high birth."(Le Fanu 215). The General's reliance on old honor and chivalry systems renders him ineffective, and his inability to see past gender and class to the predator beneath makes him absurd.

In contrast to men who are consistently ineffective and secretive, Carmilla seduces Laura with the promise of knowledge. The mystery surrounding Carmilla's past is part of what both attracts and frustrates Laura. and Carmilla is able to entice her with the promise of answers and knowledge. Laura's desire for knowledge grows as the story progresses, as Tamar Heller argues, as "Laura's relation to knowledge becomes increasingly mediated by male authority" (Bell 63). Her frustrated thirst for knowledge grows as she gets closer to Carmilla. While male authorities continue to restrict Laura's access to knowledge, Carmilla promises that "the time is very near when [Laura] shall know everything." (Le Fanu 143).

Carmilla exemplifies the dangers of limiting women's education—when left isolated, women, according to Le Fanu, are easy prey for other, more predatory women who share their own versions of truth. He contends that women will inevitably seek knowledge from their companions whether they are men or women. They will find relationships with other women more appealing than relationships with men as long as only other women provide knowledge.

Le Fanu also presents women's communities as potential sites for sharing dangerous knowledge through Carmilla's mother; their similar methodology implies that Carmilla's mother is teaching her daughter how to seduce both men and women, implying that Le Fanu primarily understands mother-daughter relationships to be the means of passing knowledge between women. Though this is a dangerous relationship, Le Fanu does not portray all mother-daughter relationships as inherently evil. In fact, such relationships are also a means of passing on supernatural knowledge between women, and Laura's early loss of her mother is a key component of her dangerous ignorance. This link between women and vampires further associates women with the supernatural, as well as vampires and motherhood. According to the story, the most important power that either vampires or women have is the ability to recreate themselves through their daughters. The tragedy is that neither vampires nor mothers survive the act of creation, leaving women isolated and unable to fully exchange feminine knowledge.

The author focuses on Carmilla's head removal because it symbolizes the core of knowledge. "In light of the tale's thematic of female knowledge, it is also telling that Carmilla is decapitated, and that her head, site of knowledge and voice, is struck off," Heller states (Bell 69). Her death also marks the end of the intellectual and emotional development of Laura, because she loses her agency after this, and she showed a lot of emotion in the novel earlier. Carmilla's decapitation is thus an act which once again prohibits women's knowledge. Le Fanu once more questions the stereotypic patriarchal tendency to control women by making the scene troubling rather than heroic.

## **Conclusion**

Le Fanu was most likely able to enjoy more artistic freedom with his story; thus, it would be harder to make possible accusations. In terms of tabooed female sexuality, portraying the sexually active character Carmilla as a vampire allowed Le Fanu to include undertones of female homosexuality and lesbianism that would have been difficult to include otherwise.

## General Conclusion

This dissertation is an investigation into Female Representation in Gothic Novel during the Victorian era, the publication of the Carmilla novel by Le Fanu led to tremendous changes in society and culture. Some are related to gender roles and female sexuality. The female vampire Carmilla, who seduced her victims to gain trust and to feast on their blood, can be seen as a figure of women's freedom and independence, since the mighty creature did not bind any male master to the same thing that women did in the 19th century, creating anxiety among men who saw the progressive attainment of women's rights and goals. The female vampire, Carmilla, was created to represent the villain part of the polarity. In her case, she joined the vampirism, lesbianism and the effect of the uncanny in the passionate sexuality of women.

Ultimately, Le Fanu's novel criticizes many 19th-century social institutions, in particular with regard to gender. Mainly, he suggests that chivalry systems infantilize women and make men ineffectual, to the detriment of everyone. By depicting Laura and Carmilla, he puts forward the argument that women should not, especially when that knowledge affects them, be excluded from the processes of knowledge. Le Fanu appears to conclude that communities are most effective when both men and women are present, and that relationships between women are both necessary and unavoidable. Thus, his novel emphasizes the sharing of knowledge between women, particularly in relationships.

furthermore, Carmilla can be regarded as an early example of lesbian literature and one of the key texts in the discussion on lesbianism and the uncanny. In the story, the two leading girls, the vampires Carmilla and Laura, are a few who live their passion in a world of patriarchy in which such connections are not even contemplated as they can. Carmilla, the vampire is still ambivalent. She can be regarded as a female freeing Laura from the Victorian society's cultural

oppression, or as a monster threatening patriarchal gender roles, sexual norms and life-long creature.

All in all, views and opinions on gender, gender behaviour, gender relations and sexuality have arguably changed drastically since the Victorian era, one thing remains true throughout the centuries: the blood is – and shall remain – the life.

### المخلص:

يركز هذا البحث على مسألة تمثيل الأنثى في الرواية القوطية كارميلا. حيث، يسلط الضوء على كيفية تمثيل كارميلا لنهج جديد للقوة والجنس الأنثوي من خلال كسر أعراف العصر الفيكتوري، حيث فرضت هذه الشخصية حقيقة وجود الرغبة الجنسية للأنثى وفتحت الباب أمام مفهوم محظور للعلاقات الجنسية المثلية [ السحاق]. كما تحدد هاته الرواية طبيعة شخصيات مصاصات الدماء وأهميتها في تصوير رسالة شيريدان لو فانو التي تحرر المرأة من المجتمع الأبوي. تستخدم هذه الدراسة نهجين، النهج النسوي الذي يعزز ويدعو إلى المساواة بين الجنسين وينعكس على تمثيل المرأة في الأدب القوطي. أما المنهج الثاني فهو نهج التحليل النفس، وذلك لتحليل الحالة العقلية والنفسية لأنثى مصاصي الدماء كفرد و كيفية انعكاس أفكار المؤلف الداخلية لتمثيل هذه الشخصية. علاوة على ذلك، كانت روابط الدم موضوعاً مهماً في هذه الرواية، وقد تجلت من خلال تحليل العلاقات بين كارميلا ولورا ولورا والدها والجنرال سبيلسدورف وابنة أخته بيرثا. وفي الأخير، كيفية استخدام الكاتب للمعرفة كرد فعل أنثوي ضد هيمنة الذكور.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** كارميلا ، رواية قوطية ، مصاص دماء ، دم ، قوة نسائية ، مجتمع أبوي ، أعراف فيكتورية.

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