Spring 2022

Zola's Vampires

Elizabeth Anastacia DeGeorge
Bard College

Zola's Vampires

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Languages and Literature
of Bard College

by

Elizabeth DeGeorge

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
May 2022

For my mother, Kathryn

Σ’αγαπώ παρά πολύ!

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Daniel Williams for shepherding me through this process and for your endless encouragement. I am very appreciative of the hours you spent listening to me ramble about vampires, writing down my incoherent thoughts, and then making sense of everything for me. I would like to thank Professor Daniel Williams for shepherding me through this process and for your endless encouragement. Also, thank you for helping me label Florent's "anti-vampirism" as my "reverse vampirism" theory was not the best. Without your guidance, this project would be as dismal as Le Vieil Elbeuf and as rank as Les Halles.

I would also like to thank Professor Marina Van Zuylen for believing in me again and again. During the most challenging points of my college career, I always looked forward to our Comparative Literature courses. I would also like to thank you for awakening me to the world of French literature and *Don Quixote*. Whenever anyone asks me about my favorite novels, I automatically say, "*Le Pere Goriot*, *Don Quixote*, and *Au Bonheur des Dames*" (sometimes I will say *Madame Bovary*, but not too often). I do not think these would be my answers if I had not read them with you as my guide. I will forever be grateful and indebted to you.

Thank you, Kevin Cohen, for being my best friend and sassy Scorpio. You are so intelligent, hilarious, and unique. If I did not have you in my life, I would not start spontaneously laughing in public because of something you had said the night before, nor would I have much of a project to speak of (only mountains of unwashed dishes). Thank you for putting up with me singing songs about my cat and for making our home full of fabulousness. But, more importantly, thank you for staying by my side and bringing me so much happiness. I love you, Chickenita Johnson!

Thank you, Sophie Rotenier, for also being my best friend. I did not want to say "one of my best friends" because, in my opinion, that implies that "best friend" is just a category of friendship and lessens the weight of the phrase. Let's not even label our friendship (the same goes for you, Kevin). We have grown so much this past year, and I cannot wait to see what the future holds! Our semi-nightly phone calls helped me more than you can imagine, and I am willing to express myself here. I will tell you the details the next time I see you, hopefully soon!

Last but *certainly* not least:
Thank you, Grandma Judy, for loving me as much as I do you. But, more importantly, thank you for understanding me.

Table of Contents

Introduction

When we think of vampires in today's culture, we might think of Stephanie Meyer's dream-infiltrating Edward Cullen, Anne Rice's dandy-esque Prince Lestat, or even Bram Stoker's pivotal rendition of the 19th-century vampire, *Dracula* (1897). The common features of such literary vampires are their cinematic adaptations that position the creature on a path of star-crossed romance, heartache, and bloodlust.[1] Stoker's variety of vampirism forms the basis of current vampire lore: the vampire sports fangs, is hundreds of years old, lives in a monstrous castle tinged with sour memories, and entertains polyamorous vampire brides. In short, the contemporary vampire seems to fit in a tradition far away from the conventions of 19th-century realism and naturalism.

But what if I were to tell you that Emile Zola could be considered amongst the greats of literary vampirism? To be frank, I doubt that during the writing of his series, *Rougon-Macquart Cycle*, Zola had the specific intention of contributing to the library of canonical vampires. What I will be arguing, however, is that his novels, specifically *Le Ventre de Paris* (1873) and *Au Bonheur des Dames* (1893), can be read as reactionary texts to the history of the vampire and its fictional emergence in 19th-century European literature and society. While the current vampire enthusiast may consider Stoker the father of the modern vampire myth, in actuality he joined the 19th-Century European vampire craze rather late in comparison to earlier vampire texts such as John William Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819), James Malcom Rymer and Thomas Peckett Prest's *Varney the Vampire* (1845-1847), and Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872), published just before

[1] For more on the contemporary vampire, paranormal romance, and the generalized appeal of the supernatural in American and European pop culture, see:
Mukherjea, Ananya. "My Vampire Boyfriend: Postfeminism, 'Perfect' Masculinity, and the Contemporary Appeal of Paranormal Romance." *Studies in Popular Culture*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2011, pp. 1–20

Zola's *Le Ventre de Paris*. The connection between Zola and the vampire is not entirely outlandish, considering the numerous instances of vampires appearing in common discourse, whether through prose, poems, plays, or peculiarities. *The Vampire Book: An Encyclopedia of the Undead* by J. Gordon Melton (a vampire scholar who I will return to repeatedly) features a well-developed timeline of vampire occurrences in Europe:[2]

> 1748 The first modern vampire poem, "Der Vampir," is published by Heeinrich August Ossenfelder.
> […]
> 1797 Goethe's "Bride of Corinth" (a poem concerning a vampire) is published.
> 1798-1800 Samuel Taylor Coleridge writes 'Cristabel,' now considered to be the first vampire poem in English.
> […]
> 1813 Lord Byron's poem "The Giaour" includes the hero's encounter with a vampire.
> 1819 John Polidori's "The Vampyre," the first vampire story in English, is published in the April issue of "New Monthly Magazine." John Keats composes "The Lamia," a poem built on ancient Greek legends.
> 1820 "Lord Ruthwen; ou, Les Vampires" by Cyprien Berard is published anonymously in Paris. June 13, 1820: "Le Vampire," the play by Charles Nodier, opens at the Theatre de la Porte Saint Martin in Paris. […]
> 1841 Alexey Tolstoy publishes his short story "Upyr," while living in Paris.
> 1847 […] "Varney the Vampire" begins major serialization.
> 1851 Alexandre Dumas's last dramatic work, "Le Vampire," opens in Paris.
> […]
> 1872 *Carmilla* is written by Sheridan Le Fanu. (Melton xxiii)

While there is no evidence (to my knowledge) of Zola interacting with the aforementioned fictional vampires, it is worth noting the prevalence of Paris, France in the history of the literary vampire. The authors featured in Melton's chronology were not of the obscure variety either, as per the fact of Polidori's "The Vampyre," that "was promptly issued in Paris in English, translated into French and Italian, soon became an acceptable play on the stages of both Paris and London, and formed the basis for an opera, produced in German, English, Russian, French,

[2] For the sake of length and relevance, I made the executive decision to forego the majority of Melton's historical timeline. For more on vampires spanning from 1047-2010, see: J. Gordon Melton, *The Vampire Book: The Encyclopedia of the Undead*, Visible Ink Press, 2011, pp. xxi-xxviii.

and Dutch" (Viets 84). Therefore, the high demand of the text and multiple adaptations increase the possibility that Zola was at least vaguely aware of the vampire tale and the associated vampire craze. Both theatrical adaptations of Polidori's text by Cyprien Beard and Charles Nodier must have at least grazed Zola's ears in passing conversation.

Le Ventre de Paris and *Au Bonheur des Dames* are not the only novels within the twenty-count series that exhibit representations of the 19th-century vampire. For instance, *Le Bête Humaine* (*The Beast Within)* follows Jacques Lantier, a man consumed with a hereditary predilection for murder. While the novel features no explicit reference to vampires, it does borrow from the lexicon of vampirism, as seen when "He heard the sniffing of animals, the grunting of wild boars, the roaring of lions; and he became calm, it was himself breathing. At last! at last! he had gratified his thirst—he had killed!" (Zola 366). The invigoration of Lantier's base animality, heightened sensory awareness, and soothing of his "thirst" calls to the vampire's physical sensations upon drinking the blood of a hapless victim.

Zola's *Therese Raquin* (1863) has been noted by few for the allusions to vampirism within the triangular relationship between Therese, her husband, and his childhood friend, Laurent. Buried within a tale of infidelity, premeditated murder, and suicide are elements of the bloodthirsty and hypersexual nature of the masculine and feminine vampire. The most vampiric detail of the novel is the scarred bite-mark on Laurent's neck: "Camille's deep bite was like the burn of a red-hot iron on his skin, and, whenever the pain of the injury intruded upon his thoughts, it hurt him most cruelly" (73). However, I am not the first to notice such references to the supernatural, as seen in Patricia Flanagan Behrendt's "Dangerous Wounds: Vampirism as a Social Metaphor in Zola's *Thérèse Raquin*." But, I am not interested in simple manifestations of

inherited bloodlust. The two novels I have selected feature less overt odes to vampirism, which is potentially why they have not already been analyzed with the supernatural creature in mind. Barbara Vinken's "Temples of Delight: Consuming and Consumption in *Au Bonheur des Dames*" is the only literary analysis of the novel that features the term "vampire." Nevertheless, in my first chapter,"The Vampire's Paradise," I will address Vinken's usage of the weighted term and how she fails to delve further into the overt expressions of vampirism in the novel.

However hypothetical the connection between Zola and vampire discourse might be, other factually proven aspects of his writing, such as his combined interests in heredity, naturalism, and mythos, seem to support the general point and are worth exploring. His essay, "The Experimental Novel," examines how literature studying the condition of man within society is a study of physiology that parallels the work of Charles Bernard's work pertaining to experiments of the human body. While Zola does not mention vampires, monsters, humanoid creatures, or other terms associated with the supernatural, he does argue that the experimental novel provides a space of hypotheticals and possibilities that both create and result from social phenomena:

> And this is what constitutes the experimental novel: to possess a knowledge of the mechanism of the phenomena inherent in man, to show the machinery of his intellect and sensory manifestations, under the influences of heredity and environment, such as physiology shall give them to us, and then finally to exhibit man living in social conditions produced by himself, which he modifies daily, and in the heart of which he himself experiences a continual transformation. (21)

Zola's approach to the novel as an art of experimentation where reality is represented as dynamic rather than static suggests the possibility that humanity both governs and is influenced by its environment. The specific phrasing pertaining to industrialization, such as "mechanism" and "machinery of his intellect," alludes to the built-environment's influence on humanity's psychological and moral development, while also stretching the limits by which a human can be considered mortal, or even human. The cyclical fluidity of the internal and external self found in the experimental novel ("produced by himself […] experiences a continual transformation"), while reliant on "phenomena inherent in man," registers as a supernatural ability on the part of the fictional characters. They are aware of the hold they have on their physical forms and surrounding environment, yet the transformation of the self is less autonomous. As I will discuss in the ensuing chapters, Zola's vampires are examples of his interest in the malleability of the human form and the extent to which it alters itself according to its governing environment.

The intention behind pairing Zola with vampires is not to claim that his novels are directly influenced by and can be definitively categorized as vampire fiction. Rather, in my reading of Zola's *Au Bonheur des Dames* and *Le Ventre de Paris* as reactions to vampiric discourse, I show how the consumerism, capitalism, and immoral characters pervading 19th-Century Parisian society are vampiric in nature. The first chapter, "The Vampires' Paradise" argues that the commercial institution, Au Bonheur des Dames, is an animated entity that appropriates aspects of the natural world for the purpose of enrapturing and consuming the female passersby. Vampirism connects the department store and its owner, Octave Mouret, through the mutual desire to seduce and conquer. He is not the sole vampire, however, as his employees occupy the position of "vampire-clerks." In their professional insubordination, the

vampire-clerks exhibit more animalistic attributes of the folkloric vampire than Octave Mouret, such as a predilection for violence, heightened passions, and gluttony. The exception to the vampire hierarchy is Denise Baudu who arrives in Paris with her two younger brothers as a seemingly innocent, restrained, and provincial girl. However, upon her introduction to Octave Mouret's department store, she begins her transformation into a vampire equal to Mouret. The second chapter, "Le Ventre de Paris," will take an alternative approach to vampirism as I will define the two categories of the "mistaken vampire" and the "anti-vampire."

The Vampires' Paradise

In Émile Zola's novel, *Au Bonheur des Dames* (1883), vampiric capitalism extends beyond mere metaphor. A literal reading of Octave Mouret's department store offers insight into the façade of 19th-century bourgeois Parisians who conceal their animalistic natures through gilded expressions of consumerism. Mouret, the literal and figurative head of the capitalist institution, perpetuates the shopgoers' false need to consume through forms of psychological manipulation pertaining to the superficial image of the ideal individual. Yet, upon closer inspection, the means by which Mouret exacts his agenda upon the upper-middle class is reminiscent of the literary figure of the vampire, whose emergence in European literature occurred within the same century. As an extension of its owner Mouret's will, the department store performs enchantments to attract each susceptible passerby. The desire to promote material gluttony and violence, all the while appealing to the aesthetic of nature through artifice, stems from Mouret's innate need to feed on the burgeoning capitalistic chaos of feminine desire. When viewed through the lens of 19th-century vampirism, Mouret's defining characteristics are suggestive of the archetypal vampire figure: a mischievous, soulless entity whose corporeality depends on the physical, emotional, and material drainage of his victims (Summers 34). On an outward level, Zola describes Mouret's physical appearance as tall, pale, and with eyes the color of "old gold." His vampirism resides not on the plane of literal blood-drinking, but rather in his socially-fluid mannerisms accompanied by an infallible façade that conceals his passion and short temper.

Rather than the department store concealing Mouret's malignant motives, the structure itself radiates Mouret's internal qualities as it lures customers to its threshold in order to

transform them into hive-minded vampires who feed on material goods. These individuals can be seen as vampires to a lesser degree than Mouret due to their consumerist bloodlust, animalistic qualities, and lack of humanity. Therefore, vampirism in *Au Bonheur des Dames* is threefold: the store feeds on societal consumption, Mouret feeds on individual female customers, and customers feed on material goods. The shopgoers' hypnotically influenced consumption feeds the life force of Mouret's structure and, in turn, the employees, who I refer to as the vampire-clerks. Together these phenomena constitute what I call the "industrial-vampire complex": an infinite cycle wherein the department store turns civilians into vampires of material goods who sustain their life-in-death through further interaction with the entity that drained them of their humanity in the first place.

Denise Baudu, the feminine eyes through which the reader perceives the department store, is the semi-exception of this symbiotic structure as she struggles against old versus new Paris or human versus vampire. Unlike her feminine counterparts who succumb to the feminine haze surrounding Mouret, Denise maintains her individuality through the avoidance of sensuality. However, her mere proximity to the institution and adaptation to the environment sparks her gradual transformation into a vampire. Her conclusive acceptance of Mouret's marriage proposal at the very end of the novel represents her final alignment with the vampiric empire, therefore displaying the magnitude of Mouret's power. In terms of the department store as a whole, the union between the human and vampire defines the former's dependency on the vampire as an indirect form of sustenance through wealth, lust, and power.

The vampire motif has not been fully recognized in previous criticism of the novel. Barbara Vinken does feature the term "vampirized vampires" (250) to describe the employees

and victims of the department store. She writes that each group consumes material goods while simultaneously being devoured by the capitalist institution, which will eventually drain itself as it evolves and expands. Vinken uses the loaded term "vampire" in relation to Zola's ideology surrounding the cannibalistic nature of the department store to create a clear mental image of the phenomenon. However, she does not explore the potential relationship between the 19th-century vampire and the individual figures within, nor does she consider Mouret as the catalyzing, head vampire. By using metaphoric terms like "sucking," "exorcize," and "half dead," Vinken links the capitalist vampire to the department store, focusing less on the actual nature of vampires and more on their parasitic nature. In fact, in her discussions of the gendered vampire, Vinken overlooks Mouret's gender fluidity and ability to recycle feminine energy as a means of seduction.

Vinken recognizes the power of the human female, which is true in the sense that their desire for material goods maintains the vampire's animacy. She fashions the human-vampire relationship into that of a parasitic mother-child dynamic, however, she analyzes Denise in superficial terms, treating her as the "antidote administered" and the "virgin child-mother who is not consumed by the demon of consumerism" (Vinken 251). While Vinken is correct in her assertion that Denise is immune to consumerism, she disregards the liminal phase in which Denise begins to physically emulate Mouret's many minions. Upon entering the department store, Denise begins to transform into a fledgling vampire, but her internal strength and lingering ties to humanity prevent her from fully transforming. Vinken acknowledges Denise's convictions, yet she views the figure's capitalist piety as an active agent in ushering in the new

era of consumerism. In actuality, Denise's passive acceptance enables the vampiric department store to expand infinitely due to the cyclical nature of the establishment.

Regarding the methods through which the human women interact with the merchandise, Vinken accurately interprets the transformation of inorganic or inanimate material into that of a false animacy; namely, that of mannequins, furs, and elements of the natural world. While Vinken views the inanimate as the media through which the women attain their ideal form, she overlooks the innate violence and gore associated with the textiles and mannequins. She writes of the artificial manipulations of the natural and the weighted actions granted to the inanimate, namely how textiles and garments transform the female customers into idealized representations of the hypernatural woman (Vinken 256). Again, Vinken limits her gaze to the feminine consumers' power over the masculine vampire and individual ability to transform their form by the way of material goods. As the department store is a mere projection of Mouret's vampiric nature that has developed an independent agency, it cannot manifest itself in a corporeal sense and must resort to the methods identified by Vinken.

Returning to the multi-tiered hierarchy of the vampires within the department store, the vampire aspect, I argue, exceeds a mere metaphorical status. The vampire exists beyond the symbolic drainage of 19th-century Parisian specialized, independent storefronts and the liberation of the female under capitalism. Through the lens of the 19th-century literary vampire, the department store, its employees, and its customers share qualities related to animality, metamorphosis, and lack of morality. Mouret's empire contains and encourages the co-dependent, human-vampire relationship founded on inorganic merchandise and, therefore, the actual department store is vampiric in nature as well.

The Undead Department Store

Since the department store is an appendage to Octave Mouret, and its growth has a symbiotic relationship to his supernatural abilities, for this reason, elements of blood and physical lust are apparent in the store's displays and overall philosophy of the projected ideal feminine form. Those prone to the hypnotic charm of Mouret and his seemingly animate enterprise are bourgeois women who, gazing on the overflowing displays, become entranced by a false need to consume. Zola presents the unnerving beauty of textiles, apparel, and accessories as cogs in the store-as-organismic factory that draws in willing victims. The unassuming victims believe that, through the purchasing of material goods masked as consumable extracts of the natural world, they may make themselves naturally desirable. The enticing wares and the customer's physical response rings true to the vampire who conceals their natural form prior to striking their victim. The department store, Au Bonheur des Dames, is thus vampiric in its ability to transmute natural elements, such as sunlight and fur, into masked forms of seduction.

Beginning with the department store's appropriation of natural elements, Mouret's structure sucks life and light from the organic world in order to mask its nefarious intentions. The novel's protagonist, Denise, does not begin her tale as a vampiric being who feeds on the influenced greed of bourgeois women, nor does she ever truly become one. Yet, her mortal desires cause her and her siblings to pause in front of the department store in the opening pages of the novel. Upon her first encounter with Au Bonheur des Dames, she and her siblings are struck by the "brightly colored displays gleaming in the soft, pale October light" (3). Such reflections of light, while also used to signal the opening and closing of the store, juxtapose the

natural with the artificial. In this instance, however, it is not the organic influencing the arrangement of the display, like a storefront with a theme, but the invisible forces of the store capitalizing on the infinite resource of the sun's illumination. The harnessing of natural light for material purposes, namely to attract prey, aligns with the vampire's ability to control all aspects of the night, along with and nocturnal animals such as "the rat, the owl, the bat, the moth, the fox, and the wolf" (Melton 17). Therefore, it is as though Mouret uses elements of shade and night to manipulate the sun through the structure of his store. While the connection of sunlight manipulation and vampirism may seem counterintuitive, considering that 20th- and 21st-century vampires are often depicted as fearful of the sun, as it represents the choking of their powers and death. Yet literary vampires of the 19th-century were actually able to pass freely in the sunlight undetected, their powers merely dampened (Melton 660). This distinction remains constant in pre-*Dracula* vampiric texts as the sun only became a weakness for the vampire following Stoker's publication. But, because of their ability to function openly beneath the sun's rays, the sun is a novelty of humanity for the vampires of *Au Bonheur des Dames*, principally Mouret and his clerks, can harness its powers for their own designs.

As the streets empty and the city of Paris retires to salons upon the final setting of the sun, Mouret and the department store must capitalize on the union between night and day: the rising and setting of the sun. The vampire figure's relationship with the sun depends more on their reliance on the moon as a magnification of their powers as "the rising and setting sun prescribed the period of the vampire's activity, and an approaching dawn created a moment of tension as the vampire rushed back to its resting place" (Melton 661). Since the department store transmutes the artificial into the hypernatural and is an extension of Mouret's own abilities,

logically, his transmutations remain constant during the daytime and merely increase in reach once the sun has set. With the rising of the sun, the department store begins the daily ensnaring of passersby with the appearance of overwhelming animacy. Almost like a flower attracting bees to propagate, the shop, Denise notices, "was still empty of customers, the staff had barely arrived, but it was buzzing inside like an awakening beehive" (Zola 3). The department store is both the hive, or nest, and the source of attraction. While the department store's absence of customers before opening is not a moment of vampirism, the "buzzing" activity within displays the unnatural, self-animated operations that distractions and attractions hypnotically conceal during the daytime.

Within the opening pages of the novel, Denise likens the capitalist colosseum to that of a "machine working at high pressure" emitting the "continuous purring of a machine at work." While this could solely be the union of streamlined industrialization and capitalism, considering "the customers [are] shovelled in, heaped in front of the displays and dazzled by the goods, before being hurled against the cash desks" (16), the "inner life" (4) of the traditionally inanimate structure depends on the energies and hungers of the shoppers. Zola's diction here ("shovelled," "heaped") recalls the act of supplying an engine with coal, and so produces a macabre effect when employed in relation to human bodies. Such phrasing implies that the humans are lifeless beings who are then "dazzled" by material goods and tempted by shop assistants who feed off the purchases through "percentage and commission" (98). Every aspect of Au Bonheur des Dames must catch the customer's attention and then retain it, therefore necessitating "dazzling" goods that stun them into submission. The assembly line begins with the viewing of the display and ends with the exchange of "raw takings just as they came from the

customers' hands, still warm and alive" (419). The supernatural commercial cycle depends entirely on the compromised autonomy of the female consumer in her search for the "divine afterlife of beauty" (415-416). As Mouret and his vampire-clerks rely on the customers for sustenance and are able to manipulate elements of the natural environment, the organic becomes an inorganic component of the department store.

Again, we are brought to the relationship of the natural and unnatural, or, simply put, the supernatural. The decadent violence associated with the discounted textiles and wares bludgeon the female shopperher (and the reader) into a state of frenzy by overwhelming the eye with altered and lifeless remnants of the natural world that masquerade as something else entirely. The "strips of fur, narrow bands to trim dresses, squirrel like fine ash, swans' down like driven snow, and imitation ermine and sable made of rabbit" (4-5) present a contradiction of life in death—the artificial masquerading as natural. We see this in the supernatural transformation of "squirrel" into "ash," "swan's down" into "snow," and "rabbit" into "imitation ermine and sable." Extending beyond the contents of the pile, the display masks itself as a naturally occurring "avalanche of cheap goods," which like loose organic material (or intestines), "spilled out." The overflowing nature of the display carelessly yet meticulously strewn "even on the pavement" displays a casual disregard for the material value of the textiles. As a manipulative manifestation of the department store's interior, the space in which women must enter voluntarily, the "bargains […] waving like flags" signal the purchasable natural beauty and "halt[ ] the customer" passing by. Despite the storefront's attempts to mask its motivations, "white price tags" interrupt the "neutral shades" of "slate grey, navy blue or olive green," thus reminding the reader of the bounty's true intentions—to snare the unwitting female shopper.

Amongst the organic hues, Zola features the color red to signal moments of extreme emotion or violent imagery, logically because of spilt blood's hue and association with lust and sin. While Mouret and his vampire-clerk counterparts never interact with blood directly, seeing as they feed primarily on feminine energy, signs of neck-biting and the spillage of the bodily fluid manifest themselves through the inanimate. Carpets of "blood-red" and mannequins "with a little wooden peg like the handle of a dagger sticking out of the red flannelette, which seemed to bleed from a freshly cut neck" (249, 362), beckon the customer to subconsciously desire such a sensual, deathly act. In terms of Mouret and his employees, the subtle nod to their true nature is a reminder of their weaknesses amongst a multitude of unnatural abilities. "Consecrated" daggers are the stereotypical weapon by which a vampire may be slain and "it is highly important that the body of the Vampire should be transfixed by a single blow, for two blows or three would restore it to life" (Summers 205). Therefore, as the department store's inorganic elements divulge the vampire's hidden form, the mannequins flag the vampire's primary weaknesses: daggers and blood. Including the spillage of blood, the color red has apotropaic associations as "red objects (e.g. red thread) [were] frequently associated with the cult of the dead in pagan antiquity. Red has its origin in the blood sacrifices with which the ancients were wont to appease the spirits of the dead and the gods of the dead" (MccLelland 65). Therefore, the combination of the "red flannelette" and "blood under the stones" is both defensive and offensive in nature. The repeated appearances of "red" in the displays subtly advertise Mouret's vampirism and attract the lustful gazes of customers, while simultaneously serving as a reminder of the department store's true intentions.

On a foundational level, blood and death are quite literally the basis of the department store, as Mouret's late-wife, Caroline Hedouin, died in the lowest level of the structure. As remarked upon by Madame Baudu, "He was the one who killed her, yes! With that building work of his! One morning, when she was looking round the site, she fell into a hole in the ground and three days later, she died. And she had never had a day's illness; she was so fit and so beautiful! Her blood is under the stones of that shop'" (Zola 22). The first fragment of Madame Baudu's accusation, while plausible seeing as Mouret married the wealthy Madam Hédoiuin following her first husband's death, crumbles upon her claiming the department store's construction to be the cause of death. Underpinning her argument is the bound relationship between Mouret and the department store, as seen in the combined exclamations of "He was the one who killed her, yes! With that building work of his!" As a building cannot actively decide to kill someone, Madame Baudu argues that Mouret is able to control the lifeless structure. The "blood under the stones" both grants life to the department store, like a sacrifice, and reveals the innate violence associated with the monstrous capitalist institution.

Therefore, the archetypal vampire's weakness, blood, is a reflection of the true nature of Mouret's institution. The wife's image is not forgotten, seeing as Mouret has a portrait of Madame Hédouin in his office that enraptures Denise each time she makes eye contact with the "handsome, regular face [ ] smiling gravely in gold […] the one that people in the neighbourhood accused him of killing so that he could establish his firm on the blood from her veins" (Zola 119). The unnatural circumstances of Madame Hedouin's death and unhallowed burial ground enables her image to haunt the structure and indirectly warn the surrounding neighborhood of the department store's malevolence. While connected to Zola's conceptions of

naturalism and heredity,[3] the specificity of "veins" emphasizes the physicality of blood as a source of life and lessens the metaphorical aspect of the deceased wife's blood fueling the department store. Therefore, Mouret and the department store collectively thrive as a byproduct of the death and consumption of the community's life force.

Caroline Hedouin is not the sole physical victim of Mouret's department store and monetary motivations. It is in fact Denise Baudu's relatives who Zola writes of the most in terms of suffering at the hands of commercial and industrial modernization. The specialized shops with an "obstinate attachment to the old ways" (Zola 27) represent the mortal victims of the vampiric department store that financially chokes and prevents them from progressing. However, any attempt on the Baudu's part to combat the larger enterprise proves futile as they do not have the aforementioned powers of manipulation exhibited by Octave Mouret and his employees. When Denise and her brothers first enter their relatives' shop, they observe the stark contrast between the ethereal department store and old world shop. Once their eyes adjust to the dismal lighting, Zola writes: "Now they could see it, with its low, smoke-stained ceiling, its oak counters shiny with use, and its ancient display racks with their heavy ironwork. Bales of dark merchandise were piled up to the beams. The smell of cloth and dyes, an acrid chemical smell, seemed to be intensified by the damp of the floor" (Zola 10). Returning to Zola's interest in heredity, the Vieil Elbeuf embodies the tainted lineage of old world Paris with the store's years of wear manifested in the "smoke-stained stealing" and "ancient display racks with their heavy ironwork." In comparison to the animated and unearthly displays of Au Bonheur des Dames, the Vieil Elbeuf mirrors the mortality of humans and their weakness compared to the immortality of vampires.

---

[3] For more on Zola, heredity, and naturalism, see:
Nelson, "Zola and the Nineteenth-Century," pp. 2-3

For the community surrounding the department store, Genevieve occupies the role of martyrdom as those within her life blame Octave Mouret for her death. Zola centers the narrative of destruction on the Baudu family to demonstrate the progression of monetary loss and death as a side effect of Mouret's expanding empire. Genevieve Baudu embodies the collective loss of the community as her physical constitution diminishes throughout the course of the novel as a direct result of her betrothed, Columban, straying into the clutches of Au Bonheur des Dames. Upon Denise's first introduction to her aunt and cousin, Madame Baudu and Genevieve respectively, Zola describes the two female relatives in terms of their physical weakness and lethargy, as seen in the aunt's "completely white, with white hair, white eyes and white lip" and Genevieve's "debility and discolouration of a plant that has grown away from the light. And yet, the magnificent black hair, thick and heavy, that had somehow sprouted from this impoverished flesh, gave her a certain sad charm" (Zola 10). In comparison to Denise's prior observation of the department store's vibrancy and animacy, the two Baudu women embody the fading light of "old Paris" (Zola 28) and the collective experience of the older, specialized shops. The phrase, "discolouration of a plant that has grown away from the light," supports the connection between Genevieve's wellbeing and the collapsing store as it implies that her origins, or her roots, will forever be tied to the specialized shop's prosperity, or lack thereof. The diction is rather strange though, considering that "grown away" implies either the individual decision to subvert the solar rays, or the individual's lack of agency in the matter of their placement. Both interpretations, however, suggest a bodily decay reminiscent of vampire parasitism. Genevieve's "magnificent black hair […] that had somehow sprouted from this impoverished flesh" reflects actual "scientific" reports of vampirism in Europe, as corpses who "d[ied] from a lingering disease"

and were later exhumed, exhibited "a variety of unusual conditions, all signs of continuing life. The bodies had not decayed. The skin had a ruddy complexion and the hair and fingernails had continued to grow" (Melton 243). As Zola does not confine expressions of vampirism to the binary of monster and victim, the description of Genevieve's undead appearance has the sole purpose of alerting the reader to vampiric intervention. Nearing the final days of Genevieve's life, she reveals her bare form to her cousin Denise and declares: "I am not a woman any longer" (359). Returning to the analysis of the department store as an animate being that feeds on feminine energy, it can be inferred that the structure drains feminine energy located beyond the threshold of the window displays as it expands outwards and upwards: "This colossal emporium blocked out their view of the sky, as though contributing to the cold that made them shiver in the depths of their icy little shops" (Zola 230).

Therefore, as the department store causes the Vieil Elbeuf to falter financially, and Genevieve's bodily constitution is connected to the Vieil Elbeuf, it can be inferred that Genevieve is a victim of the department store. But, rather than the department store embodying death and decay, in actuality it is the human-owned shops that force their occupants to wither in financial ruin. Hence, there is not a direct relationship between the department store and the Rue de le Michodière victims, but a double-tiered connection beginning with the department store suffocating the life from the old shops, and in turn draining the life from the humans inhabiting said spaces. The department store is not the direct causation of Genevieve's death, but a mere catalyst for the Baudu's downfall. While the structure is at fault for the dismal quality of life experienced by the shopkeepers, Mouret feels "no remorse and [is] simply doing the work of his time" (367). In comparison to the department store that is large enough to "block[ ] out their

view of the sky," the Vieil Elbeuf and the Baudu family are simplified to the "dark old shop where no one ever goes" (322). "The monster's victims" (360), eventually become the residual entrails of "the corpse of old-fashioned trade, the mouldy, diseased remains of which were becoming a blot on the sunny streets of the new Paris" (367). The "blot," or the commercial blemish of old Paris, is an inconsequential hindrance to the light-bearing, artificially natural world of the department store that will eventually swallow the entirety of Rue de le Michodière, leaving nothing in its wake but mere memory.

The Master Vampire of Seduction, Octave Mouret

Octave Mouret, the mind behind the monstrosity of Bonheur des Dames, is a prime example of the 19th-century vampire. Unlike the more grotesque vampires of years past, such as those of Bulgarian folklore who were "characterized most frequently as a 'puffed-up bag of blood'" (MccLelland 66-67),[4] Mouret physically aligns more so with pre-Dracula vampires, such as Sir Francis Varney and Lord Ruthven. His suave mannerisms and gender fluidity allow him to navigate the realm of feminine desire as he shifts his nature into one that appeals to the bourgeois women, who appear repeatedly as the victims of the upper-class 19th-century vampire (Melton 111). Mouret is both a seen and unseen force within the bustling floors of the department store, much like 19th-century theatrical depictions of the vampire as a spectre-like entity, who sees all yet is unseen (Auerbach 27).

Prior to delving into Mouret's methods of seduction, it is worth defining the extent of his vampirism. Mouret does not necessarily bite the necks of his female victims, despite appearing to

[4] For more on folkloric vampires' appearance and identifiers, see: Barber, "The Appearance of the Vampire." *Vampires, Burial, and Death: Folklore and Reality.* pp. 39–45

do so otherwise considering the customers' desire to emulate the headless mannequins. Rather, Mouret physically drains the unwitting customer monetarily while simultaneously feasting on their feminine energy. The female customers are, in fact, his consumers in the sense that they purchase the department store's wares and influence Mouret's very nature. For the vampire, their very existence depends on human blood and which is, therefore, both an object of fear and desire. While the physical sensations of fear and desire are often intertwined, as witnessed in Denise's bodily response to Mouret's presence ("she knew now that it was not for fear, and the unease that she had once felt, her earlier anxiety, could only be the frightened ignorance of love" (267)), obsession and validation govern Mouret's sense of identity. His purpose in unlife is "the conquest of woman […], to trade on her needs and to exploit her feverish desires" (231). The term "conquest," while implying a goal of permanent domination, in actuality places emphasis on the continuous process of the hunt. Mouret's vampirism thrives on the "struggle for life that raise[s] creatures in the charnel-house of endless destruction" (367), meaning that he derives life from the lustful chaos innate to the commercial structuring of his enterprise.

As opposed to the vampire of Eastern European folklore who resembles a decaying corpse, Mouret's appearance reveals little of his vampiric nature and is similar to the unassuming vampires of Polidori and . The few instances of Mouret's physical description consist of unassuming features, such as his height, skin, and eyes: "tall with pale skin and a well-kept beard; and his eyes were the colour of old gold, as soft as velvet" (56). From the contemporary viewpoint, Mouret's pale skin and golden eyes resemble the vampires of Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* and Anne Rice's *The Vampire Chronicles* whose unearthly beauty both frightens and attracts their victims (Melton 163, 21). Zola, however, does not relay the extent to which

Mouret's physical appearance affects the female victims. In actuality, Mouret's pallor and golden eyes serve as an anchoring feature of his corporeal self which, as established in the previous chapter, extends into the visuals of the department store. Mirroring Mouret's eyes, the department store features multiple shades of "pale light," "gold," and the "red gold" of the setting sun (68, 72, 245). Only during moments of heightened emotional states such as passion, fear, and exhaustion do the other characters, vampire or human, become pale. For example, when confronted by the natural landscape emerging in the billowing silks and damasks, Zola draws attention to the female customers, who, "pale with longing, leaned over as though to see their own reflections in it [….] seized by a vague fear that they might be swept up in the torrent of such luxury and by an irresistible desire to leap and to lose themselves in it" (102-103). Therefore, it is nervous excitement that draws blood away from the surface of the skin and presumably in the direction of erogenous zones and limbs, again in reference to the doubled sensations of fear and desire. The women in this scene do not feel physical attraction towards Mouret, but to the byproducts of his commercial prowess that will enable them to resemble the observed beauty. The combined fear and sexual arousal caused by the wares of Mouret's department store align with his own abiltities of intrigue and influence.

The vampire-clerks of the department store do not partake in the endless hunt of lust-fueled, feminine energy. Speaking primarily of Hutin and Bourdoncle, the vampire-clerks desire the monetary gratification of commissions as "they were driven by a similar need for money, they thought only of money, they struggled for money from Monday to Saturday, then they spent it all on Sunday" (95). While Bourdoncle occupies a higher position within the vampire hierarchy due to his proximity to Mouret, who is "less serious-minded and got up to all

sorts of escapades, ma[kes] careless mistakes and [is] involved in worrying affairs with women," he does "not have the genius of the ardent Provençal, nor his daring, nor his all-conquering charm." Such can be seen in Bourdoncle's disdain for women, which starkly contrasts the satisfaction Mouret feels when causing the customers' abandonment of social decorum.

Bourdoncle, who Zola describes early in the novel as "the son of a poor farmer" and "one of the boss's [Mouret's] right-hand men" (32), relies on violence and hatred in order to bar himself against feminine wiles. "Now, he pretended to hate women, […] so small was the part they played in his life; while in the shop he was content to exploit the customers, greatly despising their frivolous need to spend a fortune on their silly rags" (33). Bourdoncle's "despising" of the feminine urges that sustain his vampirism removes him from the contention of a higher-ranking vampire as the obsessive appreciation does not come natural to him. When compared to Mouret's innate need for feminine energy, Bourdoncle simply wants to exploit "their frivolous need." He does not relish in the department store's collection of feminine energy, as "Instead of being intoxicated by the scent of seventy thousand customers, it gave him dreadful headaches and he would beat his mistresses as soon as he returned home" (324). Bourdoncle's physical discomfort and expressions of violence towards his sexual partners calls to the hatred he feels towards women. He loathes women for the power they hold over him, therefore implying that he is of a weak constitution in the sense that feminine power disgusts him. When compared to Mouret, a vampire of a higher-degree who craves the bursts of feminine energy and aroma, Bourdoncle's vampirism actualizes his remaining negative human qualities.

Zola's descriptions of the other male employees in the novel are crude and caricature-like in nature to display the unconcealed animalistic qualities of the lesser-vampires.

While Mouret physically embodies the lustful qualities of the department store, Zola identifies figures such as Jouve through exaggerated physical descriptors in order to limit them to a certain class of lesser-than vampires. Physical features, such as that of Inspector Jouve's nose which "only assumed a human appearance in departments staffed by women" and therefore "suggest[s] bullish appetites" (155, 169), expose the libidinous and ravenous aspects of the monster. Almost whimsical in its description, Inspector Jouve's nose alerts the reader of his true nature that he must conceal when in the presence of his potential victims so as to not alert them of his true nature. His nose forwarns Denise and Pauline of his incessant unwanted advances upon the female clerks, as seen when he assaults Denise only to find himself "choking with rage at such rough treatment" (170). On the other hand, Zola describes Hutin as "small and attractive, sturdily built and pink-skinned," therefore imbuing him with the permanent façade of fragility. In actuality, Hutin "had managed in only eighteen months to become one of the top salesmen, because of his flexible nature and the continual smoothing touch of flattery behind which he concealed his raging appetites." Hutin's "flexible nature" resembles that of Bourdoncle in the sense that his vampirism enables him to conceal his greedy intentions behind the "smoothing touch of flattery." However, Hutin differs from Bourdoncle in his "consuming everything and devouring the world, hungry or not, for the simple pleasure of doing it" (46-47). The powers of the male subordinates lie not in seduction, but in one-dimensional, physical intimidation. The vampire-clerks lack the sophisticated means of manipulation that Mouret exhibits during social interactions.

Another aspect of inhuman appearance occurs in the descriptions of teeth as a mode of displaying the vampire's waning control over their emotions. In a moment of concealed combat

amongst Hutin and Fauvier over the possibility of a female customer, Hutin "walked back and forth in front of the counters, teeth sharpened, wanting his share of the spoils" (95). While the insertion of the phrase "teeth sharpened" could be a mere display of Hutin's fiercely competitive nature, Zola features teeth more than once to expose the true nature of the employees; namely in reference to "clenched" teeth and jaws (195, 225). For the vampires of the department store, the jaw represents the hinge by which their true nature may be revealed. While the clenching and releasing of the jaw can be considered a sign of stress and frustration, within the context of the novel, the jaw alludes to the voraciousness and murderous abilities of the vampire's mouth with which they attack their victims. Upon Mouret revealing his sole weakness to be his love for Denise, Bourdoncle experiences "the reawakening of an ancient ambition, a timid and gradually expanding hope that he might in turn devour Mouret, before whom he had so long bowed down. […] Only a kind of religious fear – the religion of luck – had so far prevented him from closing his jaws" (393). The phrase "religious fear," harkens back to the folkloric vampires of Eastern Europe who were hunted down by members of the Orthodox church, decapitated, and burned (Beresford 33). However, the reference to religion can also be interpreted as the governing principle of the vampire's "ancient ambition": to consume and conquer. For the vampires of the department store, they do not necessarily long to sink their open "jaws" onto the necks of their victims, rather, as previously established, the act of consumption is a "devourin[g]" of feminine energy.

Mouret never shows his teeth, but he is aware of the other vampires' tendency to reveal their true nature and intentions through this expression. However, as a result of his obsessive love for Denise, his control over his employees deteriorates. His vampire-clerks begin to believe

his desire to marry Denise is a sign of weakness, and, as the vampires of the department store feed on power, they view this emotional urge as an opportunity to overthrow their leader. Following Mouret's final decision pertaining to his proposal of marriage to Denise, Zola writes that "Bourdoncle felt he was doomed, swept away by this victory of womankind." Despite Mouret's waning composure, his power to "read one's thoughts" remains and he lashes out verbally to strike Bourdoncle: "'You think I'm finished, don't you, and your teeth are bared. But just you watch it: no one eats me!'" Mouret, "that devil of a man," maintains his hold over the weaker vampire in this assertion, ignoring Bourdoncle's further attempts to assuage his fiery temper and defending his position "more savagely" (419). Therefore, beyond daggers and the spilling of blood, Mouret is at the mercy of his heightened passions. His strength, however, lies in his knowledge of the fledgling vampires' lack of emotional intelligence.

Unfortunately, a contradiction lies in the dagger-mannequin theory when applied to strictly Mouret. Seeing as his corporeal self is somewhat nonexistent, the majority of his identity resides in the psychological, much like the psychic vampires that appeared in folklore of ancient Greece "identified the vampiric entity as a ghostly figure rather than a resuscitated body" and are connected to the "medieval incubus/succubus" (Melton 546). As discussed by Nina Auerbach, vampires, specifically Stoker's variety, draw their power from "awe-inspiring animals." In her analysis of Dracula's ability to morph at will into creatures of the night, and to control them into transforming at his mercy, she states that the prime vampire figure both isolates himself through his hybridity while simultaneously forming a union with creatures of shared identities (93), which does not apply to Mouret until the arrival of Denise. What strengthens Mouret's vampirism lies in "his creaturely alienation" that "makes him the center of a cult," or, the

department store. The contradiction of being vampire and not vampire, solitary and surrounded, rings true to Octave Mouret's experience at Au Bonheurs des Dames. In the case of both prime vampire figures, Dracula and Mouret, they both share a superficial similarity to their minions and victims, that allows them to go unseen in their machinations aimed at "not blood, but an assertion of ownership" (Aurbach 71). Mouret differs from Dracula through his ability to psychologically connect with his victims, rather than tearing into their flesh directly. Such fluidity of identity steps beyond transforming into animals, as Mouret's form of vampirism extends into concepts of gender. As previously discussed, his mere presence incites both fear and sexual rage in those he exacts his will upon. Despite Zola focusing primarily on their animalistic rage, the employees of Les Halles are equally as enraptured by Mouret's abilities and manipulations.

While Mouret's malleable nature is a strength in terms of maintaining a hold on his employees, regarding the attraction of prey, Mouret must devise ways to extend his fluid corporeality into tangible mediums. Such can be seen in his multiple forms of spectacle and attraction that coax the women into the department store, as "it was his contention that a woman was powerless against advertising, that in the end she must inevitably be drawn towards the source of the noise" (Zola 232). Therefore, Mouret views the façade of the department store as an inescapable magnetic force of guaranteed sway. Like a source of terror or sensory overload, "the source of the noise" eases the process of hypnosis and limits Mouret's amount of direct interaction. Returning to the concept of the vampire factory, Mouret seeks out efficiency to increase the turnover of female clientele. He views the incoming female shoppers as animals to be played with and consumed as he sets "clever traps for her" and "show[s] the skill of an analyst of human nature in his dissection of her" (232). His invigorated department store is a devised

mechanism through which he garners feminine notice, yet, once he draws the bourgeois women into the vampire nest, he and his weaker vampire cohorts must apply means of physicality to fully entrap the victims.

The process of draining feminine energy can be seen in Mouret's experience with the group of five bourgeoisie women with varying sensibilities. Rather than Mouret beckoning the women, they must first summon him into their space, almost like a cultish gathering, as every aspect must fit the criteria perfectly in order for his full powers to emerge: "The sun had just set behind the trees in the garden, night was falling and a gentle darkness was spreading [….] It was the tender hour of dusk, that minute of discreet sensual pleasure in Parisian apartments, between the dying of the light from outside and the coming of the lamps" (77). Through the descending sunlight, emerging darkness, and flaring of the artificial lamps, Mouret's power of seduction blooms despite him needing to "maintain[ ] the calm of a conqueror, amid the unsettling scents that rose from their hair. He continued to take a little sip of tea between each sentence, and its perfume cooled that of those other, more pungent scents in which there was a hint of animal musk." Mouret's heightened sense of smell that requires him to "take a little sip of tea" in order to assuage the "animal musk," situates him amongst canonical vampires who are able to smell their prey from a great distance due to their heightened senses.

Beyond the sensual teasing of lace, it is as though he places the one-dimensional victims into a mesmeric trance through the textural and visual elements. As "they no longer interrupted, but pressed still closer in around him, mouth half open in a faint smile" , the women abandon all sense of decorum and fall prey to Mouret's manipulation of the mind and body through his targeting of feminine sensitivities. While the physical seduction could simply be an example of

Mouret's awareness of the average consumer's seuxal and mimetic desires, the act of mesmerism proceeds into vampiric territory as "their eyes paled and a light shudder ran across their necks. And he maintained the calm of a conqueror, amid the unsettling scents that rose from their hair" (79). Focusing on "paled" and "shudder," both physical acts occur in response to Mouret's influential presence; not from the beauty of the "taffeta of incomparable sheen," but from the sheer proximity to him and his "actor's voice that he put on when speaking to women" (77). The aforementioned physical response to Mouret implies a loss of bodily strength, whether that be pertaining to consciousness, blood, or self-control. In terms of the bourgeois woman whose internality depends on her meticulous façade, Mouret weakens her physically and mentally in order to place her into a state of submission.

As the vampire drains the women of their composure, he gains power through the setting of the sun and mingling of warm bodies. On a macroscale, the department store directs the rays of sunlight in to draw attention to objects of desire and away from the underlying nefariousness. Mouret, however, employs the liminality between night and day as a means of blurring the boundaries between the natural and supernatural. The sun does not confine the "inventor of this system for consuming women" (76) to the shadows, as seen in his manipulation of light and shade to direct the sensual urges of the consumers. Returning to the aspect of light and its direct relation to the power of the vampire, "As the light was still fading, there were times when he had to bend forward, let his beard lightly touch their hair, so that he could examine a piece of needlework or point out a design" (82). Mouret's adopted human mannerisms, feigning attention to detail and awe, calls to his complete understanding of human weakness and desire. Of his own weaknesses, however, Zola maintains Mouret's hold over the women, reminding us that "in this

soft sensuous dusk surrounded by the warm scent rising off their shoulders, he still remained their master, for all the rapture he feigned." The intimacy granted by the waning light amplifies Mouret's powers in a way as to blur his ungendered vampiric mannerisms and melt into the swarm of human bodies.

Octave Mouret's supernatural abilities lie in his feminine mimesis, as in order for his vampiric empire to flourish and drain the life force from the surrounding old-world storefronts, he must alter himself at will through mannerisms to control the minds of feminine consumers. Regarding the term "feminine mimesis," Mouret's vampirism allows him to assume multiple expressions of the self depending on his surroundings. Therefore, when the setting requires him to surpass the mental barriers of the female customers, he adapts to his environment through mimicry. The liminal space of the "red gold" sunlight (72), the heat of live bodies, and the primal lust exuded by the women, both psychologically and physically, allows Mouret to ignite his highest power: the ability to surpass boundaries of physical definition. While it could be insinuated that such fluidity of the vampiric self equates to a lack of true identity, Mouret's internal self remains intact whilst reconfiguring his gendered mask. The truest expression of Mouret's corporeal fluidity lies in the evocative phrase, "He was Woman" (82). Rather than *a* woman, the double-natured, adjective-like employment of "Woman" removes Mouret from the gender binary. In terms of the vampire and their gendered prey, "Sometimes his subordinates are all women, and his attacks usually have a pronounced sexual component: he is magnetic, irresistible, and deliberate in his movements, as though he knows that the lady really wants it this way." (Barber 83). Rather than dominating the women through brusque masculinity, Mouret coaxes the women into allowing him to partake in the feminine experience. Therefore, the

previously stated definition of vampire sexuality, while presumably speaking of the physical act of sex, only applies to Mouret's penetration of the women's emotional boundaries.

Despite the beauty of the scene, there is an underlying monstrosity to the fact as he manipulates the women into granting him mental passage, as seen in them feeling "penetrated and possessed by that delicate sense he had of their innermost beings, and they abandoned themselves, seduced by him" (Zola 82). Mouret's mastery of generalized femininity manifests itself in a "delicate sense" that coaxes the female customers to permit him into their psyche. Once the women allow themselves to be at his mercy, he "penetrate[s] and possesse[s]" them, which places the scene within the context of sexual intercourse, leaving "the customers, despoiled, violated, […] with the satisfied lust and vague shame of a desire slaked in the depths of some shady hotel" (415). Because Mouret's advanced vampirism is of the more intangible variety, he does not require the physical act of penetration to "possess" the women, similar to "the ghostliness of earlier vampires [that] had deflected improper intercourse with mortals [….] He was another order of being, one whose body (as opposed to his teeth) could not quite penetrate a human's" (Auerbach 84). Mouret's vampirism does not restrict his sexual capabilities or desires, as he involves himself in an affair with Madame Desforges (98), although their relationship is simply a way for him to access her husband's fortune. Rather, he believes himself to be a master of all female desires and finds little to no pleasure in the actual act of seduction save for the validation of his abilities.

The sole exception to Mouret's thrall is Denise Baudu, as she proves herself immune to his vampiric prowess. She is the only woman he is unable to conquer, which indulges his fantasy of the endless hunt. Prior to her advancement in the department store, Mouret witnesses Denise's

abnormal nature that allows her to ogle the displays while simultaneously maintaining her agency as he "was actually flattered by the poor girl's obvious fascination, just as a countess may be stirred by the animal desire of a passing coachman" (49). The comparison of Denise's "fascination" to a countess's "stirred" interest demonstrates the naivety of the provincial girl as the awe-inducing displays enrapture her. The selection of "fascination," however, emphasizes Denise's immunity to Mouret's abilities as the term implies indirect observation in lieu of direct interaction. The hypothetical "countess," evokes the more base qualities of the Parisian woman who is naturally attuned to "animal desire[s]," such the sensations felt when consuming the wares of the department store. As per the fact that Mouret interacts with sexualized women on a daily basis, Denise's unattainability sparks his internal need to consume the feminine form and enrages the more stereotypical qualities of his vampiric self.

When Mouret is in the presence of Denise, Zola repeatedly draws attention to the weakening of his more refined vampiric abilities pertaining to his emotional composure and powers of influence. As his feelings for Denise intensify, he loses control over the passionate aspects of his vampirism, illustrated when "He who usually breathed fire into his customers with the quiet skill and ease of a man operating a machine, seemed to be caught up himself in the gust of passion raging through the shops." In the same way that the female customers lose their resolve when enraptured by the material wares of the department store, so too does Mouret find himself unable to execute his will "with the quiet skill" he is accustomed to. It is not that Denise involuntarily drains him of his energy as he does with the female customers, rather she forces the uncontrollable urges of the vampire to breach the surface of his calloused façade. Then again, he does not lower himself to the animality of his insubordinates who bare their teeth. Rather, in his

frenzy “he showed signs of nervous excitement the closer they came: his face blushed and his eyes had something of enraptured bewilderment that would start to flicker in the eyes of the lady purchasers” (250-251). The “nervous excitement” and “blushed” complexion differs from the experience of the female customers, despite Zola likening Mouret’s heightened emotions to the “enraptured bewilderment” of the vampirized women. With emphasis on “had something of,” Mouret does not identically resemble the enthralled female customers in their state of hypnosis. Rather, it is simply Denise’s presence that sparks a battle of wills between Mouret’s internalized vampirism and his front-facing humanity.

Apart from Mouret’s aforementioned abilities related to manipulating elements of the natural world, placing hapless women under his thrall, and dominating the lower-ranking vampires of the department store, he relies on more traditional expressions of the literary vampire during his interactions with Denise. Following Denise’s false dismissal from the department store, Mouret comes across her and her brother during a nightly stroll: “he looked up at her. Night was falling, yet he recognized her. ‘It’s you, Mademoiselle.’” While the conjunction “yet” displays Mouret’s memorization of Denise’s mannerisms well enough to recognize her in the light of night, it also delineates his multiple manifestations of vampirism that even he is not privy to. She awakens within him the physical abilities of nocturnal animals known to follow the 19th-century vampire, therefore advancing his abilities to newfound proportions while simultaneously deepening his connection to his vampiric identity.

During scenes of romance or lust, the 19th-century vampire and their victim are often cloaked in the darkness of night, as seen in the primary interaction between the female vampire and male victim of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s *“Bride of Corinth”* (1732): “Damp strikes the

hour that spirits know — Her eyes with eager pleasure shine. / Her cheek assumes a sparkling glow. Her pale lips quaff the blood-red wine" (329). Midnight, or, "the hour that spirits know," presents a cloak of intimacy and isolation for the vampire and their victim. Denise and Mouret do not take advantage of the darkness to copulate or embrace. Rather, the natural privacy allows them to expose the more vulnerable aspects of their identities. Denise is less forthcoming than Mouret as she is in the company of her youngest brother, Pépé, whose perspective reveals "her hot hand, which trembled slightly in his" (201). Mouret, on the other hand, "beneath the black shadows of the mighty trees," subtly reveals a concealed side of his identity as "He went on, politely and with respect, an attitude to which the sales staff of Au Bonheur des Dames were not accustomed from him [….] The distant noises of Paris were fading away" (200). As Denise does not desire to overtake his vampiric enterprise and has no ulterior motives, Mouret feels more safe and content with her than he does with "Madame Desforges, who was waiting for him" (201).

Octave Mouret's mastery of seduction does not falter upon his union with Denise. Rather, as she is "on the side of the big stores in the battle between them and the small businesses" (200), she does not necessarily alter the ongoings of his animated enterprise. The sole inkling of Mouret's distraction can be seen prior to their final confessions of love, as Zola writes that, "Mouret, staring into space, had just felt something great pass through him; and while his flesh quivered in this shudder of triumph – Paris devoured and Woman conquered – he felt a sudden moment of weakness, a failure of his will which pushed him back in his turn before a superior force" (417). While this could be interpreted as a satiation of his endless hunger at the hands of Denise, in actuality, it is in fact the supernatural force of the animated department store and city

of Paris that overwhelms his very being. The "moment of weakness" does not come as a result of his emerging humanity, but rather from the conclusion of his final hunt for women and power. The phrase, "Paris devoured and Woman conquered," harkens back to the scene with the five bourgeoisie women wherein Zola writes that Mouret "was Woman." Therefore, the vague "something" that passes through him is merely an insurmountable gushing of feminine energy as he is now both conqueror and devourer.

Here Comes the Vampire Bride, Denise Baudu

Denise Baudu, the provincial girl of "twenty years and four months" (Zola 54), is a complex example of vampirism due to her conflicting stance as both victim and vampire. Unlike the vampire-clerks of the novel whose sole purpose is to dominate and exploit feminine desire, Denise's ambition is fuelled by the altruistic need to care for her brothers, or, as she calls them, "her two children" (117). While it could be argued that only later in the text does she fully succumb to the very nature of the department store through her marriage to Octave Mouret, in actuality her incessant determination to succeed proves her to be a prime candidate for vampirism. There is a slight point of contention in this argument, however, seeing as she internally maintains her sense of righteousness while externally adopting the ways of the vampire-clerks. As Denise is neither a fully-transformed vampire or a human, she differs from the literary vampires of her time, such as Polidori's Lord Ruthven, who do not have transformation narratives. She does not align with the folkloric feminine vampire either, such as the Greek Lamia, as she does not experience a violent death or lose a child (Melton 120). Contemporary 19th-Century understanding of the feminine vampire limits the creature to a status

of subordination in relation to the male vampire (786). She exerts her power through psychosexual means, succubus-like mannerisms, and a sexual self-awareness; much like Mouret's own vampiric abilities. Denise Baudu, however, refuses to succumb to the sexual pleasure of the department store, which prevents her from fully transforming into one of the many vampires of the novel.Therefore, she is neither a full human nor a full vampire, rather she exists within the liminal space between the definitive states of existence.

Upon her first encounter with the department store, Denise is immediately enthralled by the conflation of organic and inorganic materials, as noted by Mouret when he first lays eyes upon her (49). Yet, unlike the female customers who abandon their sense of identity when in the midst of immortal beauty, Denise acknowledges the unnatural, divine-like displays while simultaneously expressing awareness of the institution's fear-inducing elements of violence. Returning to her first encounter with the department store, Zola writes that "Denise had been feeling its pull since the morning. She was amazed and attracted by this store" (16). While showing a semblance of attraction to Au Bonheur des Dames, the specificity of "amazed" alludes to her initial immunity to the powers of the department store when compared to the female passersby. The term actualizes Denise's heightened emotions when in the presence of the unearthly displays but does so in a fashion that places her as a mere observer. She is not one of the "herd" (159), but an interloper to the phenomenon that is the department store's manipulation of feminine bodies and the natural world. Denise is able to withstand the incessant hounding of the department store's projected beauty and attainable immortality because "She had never followed conventional ideas; her common sense and her wholesome nature were enough to ensure that she lived a decent life" (129).

Zola presents Denise as a naive girl from the countryside who fulfills the maternal role of her two younger brothers, therefore imbuing her with a responsibility beyond herself from the onset (3). Her lack of material pride and excess of morals sparks a subconscious cautiousness early into her relationship with the department store. When she learns of Mouret's deceased wife whose blood remains "in the red cement of the basement," she absorbs the narrative as though listening to "fairy tales" and "shudder[s]" from "fear that had been lurking since that morning behind the temptation that she felt" (22). While others digest the gruesome foundations of the department store through hatred directed towards Mouret, such as Aunt Baudu who remarks that the terrific death "seems to be bringing him luck," Denise enters her early professional relationship with the vampire and his counterparts with trepidation. Despite her pure intentions, Denise ultimately succumbs to vampirism's thrall in order to ascend the ranks of the department store. Unbeknownst to her, the erasure of her former self is irreversible and biological in nature.

When Denise first arrives at Au Bonheur des Dames as an employee in the when the department and Mouret's mistress ridicule Denise for her appearance that does not align with the sins of gluttony and lust projected onto the customers: "The beautiful wild hair and fine virginal shoulders of the new assistant had dishonoured her in the proper management of her department" (Zola 113). With emphasis placed on the untouched "wild[ness]" of her hair, and more specifically, her "virginal shoulders," Denise's purity violates the sanctity of the vampiric institution that feeds itself through the orgasmic experience of infidelity through the consumption of material goods. The irony of Denise's virginity offending the "proper management" further proves the sacrilegious nature of the department store and its employees who prey on the weak. Despite projecting an image of natural light and beauty as a status to strive for, the internal

nature of the department store thrives on the opposite. For Denise to become a true member of her department, she must transform into a monster.

The primary commodity of the department store is sex, which Mouret and his vampire-clerks sell through the guise of material wares. Unlike her female counterparts in the department store (clerks and customers), Denise refuses to romantically or sexually submit herself to the temptations that govern the commercial institution. While the many clerks of the department store shun Denise for her abnormally restrained virtue, Pauline, a female clerk from the lingerie department, offers her hand in friendship to the "innocent girl" (Zola 324). She warns Denise of the weaknesses her virtue presents, recollecting through personal experience, ""Hide it, or else they won't let up on you [….] Well, they would have eaten me alive in the early days if I hadn't faced up to them" (114). When Pauline gains intimacy with Denise through the sharing of eachother's hardships and origins, she encourages Denise to find a man to financially support her, as seen when she says, "If I were you, I'd get someone" (127). Within the social constructs of the department store, the idea of a casual romantic partner is a "necessary" and "so natural" method of survival (128). The women of the department store use men to fulfill their sexual and financial needs, while using each other for companionship tinged with a violent streak of competitiveness. Pauline is the exception to the latter aspect of female friendship in the novel, but her behavior with Denise calls to the eponymous vampire of Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* ( ) who is one of the first examples of homosexuality in the vampire literary canon. To my knowledge, Pauline does not have romantic feelings for Denise, but she does offer a sisterly love that no one else in the novel can or will provide. Similarly, Carmilla "presents herself as Laura's only available source of intimacy. Everything male vampires seemed to promise, Carmilla

performs: she arouses, she pervades, she offers a sharing self" (Auerbach 38). Unlike Mouret and his firm of vampire-clerks, Pauline is the sole individual who encourages Denise in her professional endeavors and while simultaneously urging her to assimilate into the immoral culture of the department store.

Compared to the vampires of Au Bonheur des Dames who indulge their "greedy hunger" (140), Denise does not give in to the "fevers of advertising" until she accepts her emerging vampire identity (258). She suffocates her emerging passions as she believes that they interfere with her morally pure ambitions. She cannot fathom the possibility of taking up with a man beyond the boundaries of friendship, as prior to Pauline suggesting the possibility of involving herself sexually with a man, she does not consider the allure of romance. Only when "the conversation had stirred all the blood in her heart" (129), does Denise begin to notice the overt expressions of desire and sex within the department store. Her sexual awakening through observation does not necessarily catlyze her vampire transformation. Rather, it is the combined sensations of embarrassment, violation, and rejection that perforate the depths of her very being. The combination of her "her head full of dreams, curiosity about all the life in Paris she did not know," and "tiredness of the mind" leave her with "a mixture of desire and lassitude." Her mental wanderings beyond her "animal's den" of solitude (131), weaken her mind and expose her to the subconscious allure of vampirism. It is her internal resolve, however, that proves her eventual vampirism to be of a higher variety, similar to that of Octave Mouret's.

Despite external forces influencing Denise's transformation, she drives the process to completion through will alone. Unlike the shoppers who unknowingly become the prey of the department store and its employees, Denise is conscious of the precise moment her physical

transformation takes place. After Madame Desforges and members of the department ridicule her appearance, Denise's resolve to maintain her values cracks as a result of the verbal intimidation, causing her to become "paler" and feeling "as though she had been raped, stripped bare, left defenceless" (113). The insertion of the sexually and physically violent into her emotional understanding of the scene marks the moment wherein her transformation into vampire begins as she is reborn through suffering. Zola returns to the phrase later in the text when Bourdoncle wrongly fires her when he sees her with a man, who in actuality is her brother. When Marguerite and Clara, two of the vampire-clerks, laugh at her, Zola writes that "She shouted, with the pained anger of a raped virgin" (174). The two scenes that feature this term do not consist of sexual assault. Rather, Zola uses the charged term to display the extreme violation Denise feels upon the stripping of her innocent morals. The emotional pain penetrates her very being as it catalyzes her vampiric transformation. Denise is "instinctively aware of the understanding between them," the vampires, that she does belong in their inner circle. Rather than fleeing like a victim, she maintains her stance only to feel "her heart stabbed by some unknown pain" (113). Therefore, in both a literal and figurative sense, her heart and soul die which results in the beginning of her transformation.

According to Romanian, Hungarian, and Scandinavian folklore, the complete transformation into a vampire takes forty days (Krauss 68). In the case of Denise, her semi-vampirism is fully manifest after a period of two months (Zola 180), therefore calling to her soul's combattance of the transformation. She succumbs as a result of her determination to be accepted by the vampire-clerks. Within Zola's text, one does not become a vampire through death or the transmission of blood via biting. Instead, vampirism manifests itself through the

curated aura of the department store, like an airborne illness of the spirit. The physical transformation of one into a vampire consists of a mental and physical deterioration that results in a rebirth of the body and soul. The symptoms of her transformation may be read as mere exhaustion, however, each suffering is linked to the quality of her blood:

> She felt a deterioration of her whole body, her limbs and organs strained by the exhaustion of her legs, together with sudden disturbances of a womanly nature, indicated by the pallor of her skin. Yet she, so thin, seemingly so delicate, carried on, while many of the girls had to leave ladies' wear, suffering from illnesses brought on by the work. Her willingness to endure pain and her dogged determination kept her upright and smiling even when she was on the point of collapse, entirely exhausted by work that would have finished many men. (Zola 120)

Denise's symptoms of exhaustion, lack of menstruation, and pallor align with those of anemia, which are archetypical of a vampire attack and transformation: "The symptoms include a pale complexion, fatigue, and in its more extreme instances, fainting spells" (Melton 49). As her physical deterioration stems from her legs and "womanly nature," the attack on her system targets the blood-flow of her body's lower regions. While other "girls had to leave ladie's wear" as they cannot endure the physical transformation process, Denise has a "willingness to endure pain." In her suffering, now both emotional and physical, she outranks "many men," presumably the male vampire-clerks of the department store and those who were consequently fired, such as Deloche. As she surpasses the feminine and masculine vampires in her abilities, she proves her potential to align herself amongst Mouret's variation of vampirism.

Following the climactic scene of Denise's early vampire transformation, she begins to show signs of aligning more closely with the department store's projected image of beauty and vitality.Through indirect discourse, Zola writes that "She had become more refined, her skin whiter, her manner more considerate and serious. The puny insignificance of earlier times was giving way to a subtly penetrating charm" (263). When compared to her earlier beliefs surrounding physical and emotional contentment for the sake of her brothers, her burgeoning vampirism swallows up her former "puny insignificance." However, the transformation is not complete, as her former self is only "giving way" to her vampiric identity. In terms of her actual vampiric abilities, like Mouret she is able to absorb the detailed sensory properties radiating off of the women's bodies as "when she closed her eyes she could sense the crowd more, with its dull sound like a rising tide and the body heat it gave off. A fine dust rose from the floors, heavy with the smell of woman" (250). Relying on sound rather than sight, Denise can hear the vibrating energies of the women that cause a "fine dust" to carry the "smell of woman" to her nose. Again, the appearance of "woman" rather than the plural "women" erases the individual identities of the female customers, thus transforming them into mere sources of sustenance for the vampires of the department store.

In the final pages of Denise's narrative, she submits herself to the vampire, Octave Mouret. The act does warrant mourning, however, as in her vampirism she is now liberated beyond the constraints of her former predilections of piety. Concluding the novel, Zola writes that "A last rumble rose from Au Bonheur des Dames, the distant acclamation of the crowd. Madame Hédouin's portrait was still smiling with its painted lips. Mouret had slumped onto the desk and was sitting amid the million which he no longer saw. He would not let Denise go, but

clasped her desperately to him" (422). Therefore, in a cyclical fashion, Zola maintains the endless performance of consumption, desire, and conquering.

Le Ventre de Vampire

Emile Zola's *Le Ventre de Paris* (*The Belly of Paris*) follows Florent, a man wrongfully accused of murder during his involvement in the French Coup of 1851[5], after his return to a post-Haussmann[6] Paris. Upon escaping from the penal colony of Devil's Island and returning to Paris ten years after the events that led to his incarceration, hunger, deprivation, and sacrifice propel Florent into Les Halles, the 19th-century food-centered capitalist institution governed by individual merchants and fueled by the bourgeois class. Published in 1873, ten years prior to *Au Bonheur des Dames, Le Ventre de Paris* revolves around the older commercial institution of Les Halles established centuries prior to the celebrated department store. Within this economic sphere, Zola creates two caricatured competing factions of the Fat and the Thin: "two hostile groups, one of which devours the other and grows fat and sleek and endlessly enjoys itself" (191). Both groupings, the Fat upper-middle class that financially dominates the commercial sphere and the Thin lower class that starves to overthrow the Fat, hunger for the semi-erotic act of eating as an expression of one's position in society. Despite physically aligning with the Thin, Florent exists beyond the adipose binary because he derives gratification from self-deprivation and, in doing so, violates the social code upholding the community of Les Halles.

A literal reading of the novel's gastronomic infatuation and treatment of gluttony offers insight into Zola's disdain for the animality of modern Paris and the monstrous side effects of capitalism. When read as "vampire literature," however, the text shifts into a loose depiction of weak mortals, the Thin, warring against the vampires, the Fat, who have seized control over the transforming Paris. In comparison to *Au Bonheur des Dames*, the presence of vampires is less

5

6

apparent as the Fat do not exhibit overt vampiric attributes in terms of the 19th-century literary vampire. Rather, the Fat merely alludes to the vampiric nature of Napoleon III's regime of the Second Republic. Again, while Zola never mentions vampires in literal terms, the vampiric qualities of the novel are nevertheless more than a mere metaphor for capitalism. *Le Ventre de Paris* centers itself around the ancient institution of the food market, in comparison to the newly devised department store in *Au Bonheur des Dames*. Therefore, the vampires of *Le Ventre de Paris* do not resemble the 19th-century modern vampires, as seen in the likes of Octave Mouret and Denise Baudu, but rather those of older Eastern European and Greek folklore concerning the glutted vampire. Florent falls into neither category of vampire.

Certain qualities of his character suggest to others in the novel that Florent can be taken as a stereotypical vampire. His false conviction of murder and ensuing six years of imprisonment on Devil's Island (Zola 52) produces a symbolic death of the spirit that catalyzes this superficial transformation into a vampire. Multiple descriptions spanning the entirety of the novel characterize Florent as vampiric: beginning with his exile to Devil's Island; his "far too thin appearance" (4) and "deadly pale" (254) complexion; and his scene with the woman murdered by "two bullet holes" (9) to the neck. Even in his mistaken case of vampirism, Florent is still an outcast of society within Les Halles. His physical alignment with the wane and strange vampire, differs from that of the true vampires within the novel, the Fat, who glut themselves on the edible wares of Les Halles.

As a mistaken vampire, Florent occupies the role of outcast, somewhere beyond its main categories of Fat and Thin. He does not exist between the two as this would imply that he is a combination of the two factions. Physically, he has the potential to align with the Thin, but he

lacks their eternal starvation. Likewise, he possesses no qualities of the Fat, save for an abnormal relationship with food. Because of his overt disdain for the Fat, also figuratively seen as vampires, and his masochistic relationship with self-inflicted starvation, which aligns him with the Thin at least in appearance, Florent occupies the role of the "anti-vampire." This term is typically equated with the vampire slayer and their paraphernalia (garlic, crucifix, wooden stake, and holy water) (Mccleland 85), but it applies neatly to Florent's desired self. He is a creature of reversed vampiric tendencies, as seen in his avoidance of normative sexual tendencies and disgust for the consumable wares offered by Les Halles. His paradoxical anti-vampire status emerges, however, paradoxically because of those around him mistaking him for a vampire. Although Florent is taken to be a vampire and therefore, potentially, an effective revolutionary figure against the Fat, his true identity as anti-vampire visible in his physical weakness, aversion to gluttony, and permanent outsider status thwarts those ambitions.

A Case of Mistaken Vampirism

From the outset of the novel, we see Florent characterized as a true vampire. His thin, pale, and weak appearance becomes more apparent the longer he goes without sustenance. While this would be true for any starving individual, the context of his endless hunger aligns with the vampire's undead nature and insatiable need for blood. The use of the vampire in accusatory terms is not unheard of in 19th-century French novels, which often include at least one character with a pension for tales of the gothic. For example, in Alexandre Dumas's *The Count of Monte Cristo*, published in 1844, Lucien Debray wonders if the Count is a vampire simply because of his mysterious origins and vampiric appearance: "'He eats then?' - 'Yes, but so little that it can

hardly be called eating.'[…]' He must be a vampire.'" Debray then proceeds to say that "Countess G–, who knew Lord Ruthven, declared that the count was a vampire."[7] While there is no direct accusation of vampirism in Zola's novel, the knowledge that mistaken vampirism exists in 19th-century French literature nevertheless aids in our reading of Florent.[8] Beyond appearance alone, Florent exhibits other canonical elements of the literary vampire, namely features of the crime that results in his false imprisonment, his return to Paris from a foreign land, and his relationships with the women of Les Halles.

The text opens with the most incriminating scene of vampirism: the death of a woman by two bullet wounds to the throat. While Florent is guilty by association of revolutionary activity, he is innocent of the murder as he is unconscious when the nameless woman falls into his lap. He is sent to the penal colony of Devil's island solely on the count of murder in the vampiric fashion of two identical wounds to the neck (The woman's true murderer is actually one of the several nameless militants aiding in Napoleon III's self-coup: "when the military suddenly opened fire, shooting people at close range" (Zola 9-10)). With no specific individual to identify as the guilty participant, the murder signals to an overarching malevolence that looms in the background of Florent's revolutionary journey. The pivotal moment of Florent's narrative, when the woman's corpse falls into his lap, features an overt reference to the canonical fangs of 19th-century vampirism: "Above her breast, at the top of her bodice, were two bullet holes" (Zola 10). While this gun-related death is important for the narrative as it marks the young woman as a casualty of revolution, Zola forces the reader's eye to travel "above her breast, at the top of her bodice,"

---

[7]I will not analyze *The Count of Monte Cristo* alongside *The Belly of Paris*, but the similarities in plot are worth noting.

[8] Dumas expressed interest in the vampire in his adaptation of John William Polidori's "Le Vampyr." For more see: Switzer, "Lord Ruthwen and the Vampires"

deliberately pinpointing the exact location of the wounds on the woman's neck. Rather than featuring a singular wound, or simply placing the wounds elsewhere, Zola specifies the strange circumstances of the woman's death as a nod to vampires. The double puncture wound is a typical motif of vampirism dating back to at least *Varney the Vampire* (1845–1847), and had recently been featured in Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, published one year before Zola's novel in 1872 (Melton 140). Hence, the correlation between the literary vampire and Zola's novel are plausible, despite there being no direct mentioning of the term "vampire" within the opening pages.

Continuing with Zola's portrait of the deceased woman, a recurring aspect is the complex expression on her face that is both wrought with terror and excitement. With the literal and figurative "blood trickl[ing] from her wounds onto his hands" marking him as her killer, Florent experiences an emotional death of the soul as "he wandered about the streets until evening, haunted by the image of the young woman lying across his legs with her face so pale, her blue eyes wide open, her lips twisted in pain, and her look of surprise at meeting death so suddenly." The image of the woman draped across his lap with a look of surprise could be interpreted as an orgamsic experience related to dying (heavy handedly, "le petit mort"). A woman indeed died in Florent's lap, but he is more disturbed by the image of the woman's eyes looking into his own and her frozen "lips twisted in pain." With her mouth parted, eyes aghast, and "look of surprise at meeting death so suddenly," she appears frozen in a state of action, therefore visually imbuing her with an animacy in death. This does not necessarily mean that the bite transformed her into a vampire, despite writers of the time believing that "vampires attacked humans, and, through that attack, drew victims into their world" (Melton 510). At the same time, 19th-century culture did

associate drinking blood with the occult, namely vampires. Digging deeper into the 19th-century vampire craze beyond literary fiction, "the great majority of people labeled as 'real' vampires during the last two centuries manifested symptoms of what psychologists call hematomania, a blood fetish" (Melton 155). It is unclear, and potentially unlikely, that the deceased woman had such a fetish in life, but the association of blood drinking and intercourse in circulation among 19th-century discourse solidifies the plausibility of mistaken vampirism in Zola's text.

In reference to other examples of the vampire in 19th-century European literature, John William Polidori's 1819 novella, *The Vampyr*, while not featuring a distinct reference to fangs, includes a pivotal scene that mirrors Florent's fateful night. While there is no evidence (to my knowledge) of Zola interacting with this text, Polidori's tale experienced widespread popularity in Europe following the confusion of the text's authorship (first attributed to Lord Byron, then amended to Polidori). Polidori's narrative follows a young man, Aubrey, and his ill-fated relationship with the vampire Lord Ruthven who sustains himself on the blood of women who are in love with him. The parallels between Polidori's and Zola's works are uncanny, though I am not insinuating that Zola drew direct inspiration from *The Vampyre*. Rather, the aim of comparing these two texts is to display how Florent's narrative aligns with both the murderous acts of Lord Ruthven and Aubrey's failed attempts to thwart the vampire's ill-intentions. The protagonist, Aubrey, falls in love with Ianthe, a Greek woman who shares local beliefs in vampire existence with him. Lord Ruthven, the vampire of the text, has a relationship with her prior to Aubrey's arrival and returns to drain her of her blood. Aubrey hears her cries and searches for her in the dark, guided by lightning strikes and her screams. When he finally discovers Ianthe, "he felt himself grappled by one whose strength seemed superhuman […] he was lifted from his feet

and hurled with enormous force against the ground […] The storm was now still; and Aubrey, incapable of moving, was soon heard by those without" (Polidori 47-48). Similar to the physical blow Aubrey experiences, the "crowd, panic stricken by the shooting, trampled over" Florent and "knock[ed him] to the ground at the corner of the Rue Vivienne" (Zola 10). The force of the crowd causes him to "los[e] consciousness," like Aubrey. The likening of these two blows to the unfortunate characters' heads does not mean that the crowd consists of vampires,[9] but it can be inferred that the vague circumstances of Florent's injury come as a result of vampiric intervention. Additionally, both texts feature an external element that renders the primary witness unable to exact their agency upon the vampire's actions. Florent's circumstances differ from those of Aubrey, however, as the reader is the sole witness of his innocence and the true events. With no onlooker to verify that Florent did not kill the woman, and that he is not a vampire, he automatically appears to be guilty.

In terms of the deceased woman's body, both texts feature a figure with fatal wounds to the neck and a facial expression frozen in a state of excited terror. Following Ianthe's vampire attack and death, Polidori writes: "There was no colour upon her cheek, not even upon her lip; yet there was a stillness about her face that seemed almost as attaching as the life that once dwelt there — upon her neck and breast was blood, and upon her throat were the marks of teeth having opened the vein" (Polidori 48). The woman's palor, her enlivened facial expression, and the attention paid to her neck and breast by the author, call to Zola's scene wherein the deceased woman falls into Florent's lap with a pained expression of bliss. The sole difference between these events is the group of men who are aware of the vampire's existence and bear witness to

[9] For more on the vampiric qualities of crowds and the flaneur, see, Fiona. "'L'Homme Des Foules': The Vampiric 'Flâneur.'" pp. 139–42.

Aubrey's prone form in relation to the deceased woman's corpse. Florent is not as fortunate as Aubrey, however, as the placement of the woman's body on his lap and her exposed chest frames him as the culprit by proximity alone. When viewed as a scene of vampire activity, the "fang" marks, spillage of blood, and mirrored facial expressions of both murderer and victim call to the semi-eroticism of Unfortunately, Zola presents the scene as a memory from Florent's perspective with no external witness to prove otherwise, save for the reader.

Both Florent and Lord Ruthven attract female attention as a result of their outcast status and peculiar natures. However, Polidori's vampire desires the female gaze whereas Florent avoids direct contact with women, save for that of maternal affection from his sister-in-law and La Belle Normande. Zola characterizes the women of Les Halles as members of the Fat, with repeated emphasis placed on their corpulent forms, animalistic characteristics, and fragrance. Most notable is the feud that ensues between La Belle Lisa and La Belle Normande, who Florent's artistic companion, Claude, describes as being "all belly" and "all breasts," respectively (Zola 192). La Belle Lisa and La Belle Normande, including the other women of Les Halles, compete for Florent's attention merely for self-validation. As discussed in the previous chapter regarding Octave Mouret's sexual allure, Lord Ruthven attracts women through his waxing and waning gazes ("though his eyes were apparently fixed upon her's, still it seemed as if they were unperceived" (Polidori 28)). He has the women at his mercy as he dangles his attention by a thread simply to play with the women. Florent is merely a passive object of the women's desires. His disinterest prompts La Belle Lisa and La Belle Normande to combat one another for any semblance of affection, as the women of Les Halles take great interest in Florent and view interactions with him as a marker of their desirability. In the case of Florent's relationship with

La Belle Lisa and La Belle Normande, he does not aim to play with their feelings or form any binding relationships. But, because "he had compromised, angered, and upset a world that had previously lived in perfect peace and harmony" (Zola 134), Florent resembles a vampire set on social destruction founded on manipulating feminine desire.

As seen in Goethe's "The Bride of Corinth," Polidori's "The Vampyr," and Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, the vampire often enters the narrative from a distant foreign land. In the introduction of Polidori's novella, he writes: "In many parts of Greece it is considered as a sort of punishment after death, for some heinous crime committed whilst in existence, that the deceased is not only doomed to vampyrise, but compelled to confine his infernal visitations solely to those beings he loved most while upon earth" (Polidori xxii). Aligning with Florent's death of the spirit and eventual return to Paris, Polidori's defined revenant-vampire encompasses the stereotypical qualities of the mistaken vampire whose transformation came as a result of a "heinous crime."

The time gap of two years wherein Florenthe wanders Guiana and followed by his compelled to return to Paris resembles that of the aforementioned vampire who must remain in proximity to the site of their death. Even so, in this span of time heFlorent spills no blood nor does he perform actions resembling the vampire:

> After that he could not remember anything clearly. He thought he could remember having slept for several hours in a ditch and having shown a gendarme the papers he had managed to acquire. But he had only a vague idea of what had happened. He had come all the way from Vernon without a bite to eat, overcome every now and then by despair and by such terrible pangs of hunger that he had munched leaves from the hedges as he tramped along. In pain, suffering from cramp and sickness, his stomach knotted, his

> eyesight blurred, his feet moving forward as if drawn, without his being aware of it, by his vision of Paris far away, so far away, summoning him from over the horizon, waiting for him to come. (Zola 6)

Following this vague interval, Florent's returns to Paris., But despite displaying "terrible pangs of hunger" that are canonically associated with the freshly arisen vampire, he never succumbs to these sensations. He emerges from his exile as though awaking from a dream state, or, as if arising from the grave. But, in his resurrection he does not glut himself on the blood of others. In fact, he only sustains himself on "leaves from the hedges," and never resorts to thievery or violence. His suffering is not a marker of his unsatiated bloodlust, but rather a symptom of his victimhood and physical weakness. In fact, it is the "vision of Paris" that "summon[s] him from over the horizon, waiting for him to come." Such can be seen in the weakness of his physical state of weak vision and "his feet moving forward as if being drawn, without being aware of it." Rather than actively returning to Paris, his weak physical and mental state proves him to be an ideal blank slate for manipulation by the vampiric energy swarming within the city's foundations of Paris.

Moreover, Florent's imprisonment and consequential isolation from society only furthers his false vampire presentation, as he becomes a creature of social otherness. Zola does not write of Florent's incarceration in a linear fashion. Rather, he reveals the traumatic scenes in the form of memories. The ten years between his capture and return to Paris, while ever present in his mind, appear in bouts of dream-like narratives. Such can be seen when he recalls his journey to and from the penal colony to his brother's family: "'Once upon a time there was a poor man who was sent far away, right across the sea. On the ship that carried him away, there were four

hundred convicts, and he was thrown among them.' [...] 'As soon as they arrived,' continued Florent, 'they took the man to an island called Devil's Island. There he found himself with other men who had been deported from their own country. They were all very unhappy.'" (Zola 80). In Florent's attempt to distance himself from the memory through his use of a third-person narrative, the tale takes on a semblance of a former life revisited. The temporal distance between the Florent of Les Halles and the Florent of Devil's Island is reminiscent of the immortal vampire and their resurrection. Florent's use of temporality to emotionally distance himself from the trauma of his incarcerated years recalls the existence of the vampire as a revenant, a being returned from the dead or brink of death (Barber 86).

While in the penal colony of Devil's Island, Florent and the other incarcerated men experience inhumane treatment and unsuitable living conditions. The name of the island penal colony alone, Île du Diable (Devil's Island), is vaguely vampiric in its reference to isolated torment. However, Zola's selection of this specific location is not based on name alone, as this colony "was utilized exclusively for political prisoners, such as Alfred Dreyfus" (Toth 12).[10] Florent briefly, yet painfully continues his recollection by detailing the horrors of his time in the penal colony of French Guiana:

> They had managed to build some huts out of tree trunks to shelter them from the sun, which is so fierce in that country that it burns everything up. But the huts did not protect them from the mosquitoes, which covered them at night with sores and swellings. Several

[10] The similarities between Alfred Dreyfus and Florent are alarming considering that Zola conceived of Florent's false imprisonment twenty-years prior to the Dreyfus Affair (1894-1906). Both figures were falsely accused of crimes against the French Republic; sentenced to hard labor in the penal colony of Devil's Island; and textually defended by Emile Zola. Florent, however, is a fictional character who lives under the regime of the Second Republic of France, while Dreyfus was very much a real man falsely accused of political espionage.
For more on Zola and Alfred Dreyfus see: Morgan, "'J'Accuse...!': Zola and the Dreyfus Affair."

> of them died, and the others turned quite yellow, so shrivelled and bedraggled, with their long beards, that they looked the most pitiful sight. (81)

Focusing on the burning of the sun, the "sores and swellings" from mosquitos, and "shrivelled" appearance of the men, the physical suffering alone is enough to warrant his escape. Although mosquitos do not appear in vampire literature as vectors, their parasitic nature and reliance on blood clearly resembles the vampire. Florent does not become a vampire merely from the sharing of blood by mosquitos, of course, but the connection between vampirism and infectious disease is long standing in the vampire discourse, dating back at least concept of vampires and contagion began in as early as the middle-ages and the Black Plague (Melton 56). While "several of them died," Florent and the other men resemble decomposed corpses of "the most pitiful sight." The described men who "turned quite yellow" here presumably suffered from yellow fever[11], which was a common cause of death in the French colonies of South America (McNeill 181). In other words, although we should not equate a disease like yellow fever with the creation of vampires, Zola seems to use the association to give some background to Florent's vampirism.[12]

---

[11] In his discussion of South American vampires, Joseph Gordon Melton writes of the lobishomen: "It had a yellow face, bloodless lips, black teeth, a bushy beard, and plush-covered feet. […] The lobishomen was not a vampire, however, but the Portuguese form of a werewolf" (Melton 651)

[12] In fact, this particular colonial setting has several links to vampire discourse. There is a body of water in Guiana called *Crique des Vampires* (Creek of Vampires) located approximately 161 kilometers (100 miles) north-west of Devil's island. Beyond mosquitos, vampire bats are native to the majority of South America, including Guiana, and were studied by the famous French naturalist Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire in 1810, who Honoré de Balzac acknowledges in his 1835 novel, *Le Pere Goriot*.

For more on Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire and vampire bats, see: Bill Schutt, *Dark Banquet : Blood and the Curious Lives of Blood-Feeding Creatures*.

Honoré de Balzac dedicated his 1835 novel, *Le Père Goriot*, to Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire. For more on the relationship between naturalism, Balzac, and Saint-Hilaire, see: Somerset, "The Naturalist in Balzac: The Relative Influence of Cuvier and Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire" pp. 81–111

The case of mistaken vampirism is fraught with undeniable evidence supporting the presence of vampires. In comparison to the highly visible, true vampires of *Au Bonheur des Dames*, Florent's mistaken vampirism overshadows his true nature as an anti-vampire. In Zola's representation of the vampire's stereotypical fangs, traumatic past, and outcast status, he draws attention to the multiple variations of the vampire. Rather than limiting the supernatural creature to one romantic form, as those by his contemporaries, Zola actualizes an exaggeration of the

The Sacrificial Anti-Vampire

Florent is often figuratively mistaken for a vampire in the novel, even if he is more coherently seen as an "anti-vampire." But, there is a layered complexity to Florent's identity that extends even beyond mere anti-vampirism. Based on his own self-perception, Florent is a revolutionary, anti-vampire. Externally, the Fat, and at times the Thin, believe him to be an actual vampire, while internally understanding his role as the "lamb," or pawn. For the majority of the novel, Florent believes himself to be a force acting against the vampires, those who drain the life force of the natural world while glutting themselves on meat and produce. Florent's experience as a mistaken vampire resembles more of a witch hunt as the community blames him for their misfortunes and turns him into a scapegoat. In terms of vampires in history, based in Slavic and Greek folklore, "unlike sacrificial victims, scapegoats are not ritually purified or consecrated before they are expelled. On the contrary it is their status as unclean, dirty, polluted, or transgressive that marks them as suitable candidates to bear collective sin. They are considered dangerous in any case so expelling them does not constitute any great loss" (Mcclelland 53).

Therefore, the sacrificial lamb does not envelope Florent's anti-vampire identity, rather the duality of his nature as an escaped convict and scorned innocent makes him the ideal scapegoat for the inhuman inhabitants of Les Halles.

In terms of the sacrificial victim, or scapegoat, Naomi Schor's *Zola's Crowds* incorporates Renee Girard's theory of the "pharmakos," or sacrificial victim, as an overarching theme of the *Le Rougon-Macquart*. Unlike the previous chapter's reading of Barbara Vinken's "Temples of Delight: Consuming Consumption in Emile Zola's Au Bonheur Des Dames," I am not interested in lamenting Schor's lack of engagement with the term "vampire." Rather, my aim is to display how current discourse surrounding Florent's predetermined sacrificial status aids in the analysis of the novel's vampiric qualities. While Schor does not mention the term vampire, she does employ language that mirrors that of the discourse surrounding the folkloric vampire as a scapegoat for the trials and tribulations of pre 19th-century Eastern Europe. Schor addresses the overt themes of ritual and sacrifice present in Florent's narrative specifically connected to the concept of blood, citing Girard when she writes: "only a new sacrifice […] can rid the community of the contagion he carries. Sacrifice is founded on the ambivalent nature of blood: 'Blood serves to illustrate the point that the same substance can stain or cleanse, contaminate or purify, drive men to fury and murder or appease their anger and restore them to life'" (Schor 23). For Girard, and consequently Schor, blood is a universal bodily fluid divided solely between the categories of "good" or "bad" blood depending on the intention of the individual causing the spillage. The duality and significance of blood in terms of heredity, disease, and the soul align with Zola's beliefs surrounding the human body as a mere receptor of the environment's influence. As discussed in the previous chapter regarding the significance of blood in *Au*

Bonheur des Dames, for the vampire, blood is both a feared and desired form of satiation. The blood that spills onto Florent's hands following the death of the woman in the pink bonnett connects him to the deceased through the eternal "stain" on his soul and the catalyzation of his transformation into an anti-vampire.

Within Schor's analysis of Girard's theory of the "pharmakos" (sacrificial victim), she defines the social qualities of the individual through which the tainted community may project their misdeeds onto. To chronologize the ritual of sacrifice, she digests Girard's theory into three stages: the arrival and discovery of the sacrificial victim, the "breakdown" of the sacrifice, and lastly, the community's return to peace and harmony (5-7). Prior to analyzing the sacrificial victims in *Les Fortunes de Rougon*, Schor states that the general "sacrifice, whether human or animal […] must be drawn from among the marginal members of society – slave, stranger, unitiated adolescent – or from the category of the nonhuman" (6). Florent's anti-vampire status, which violates the very nature of the vampire, immediately marks him as the ideal sacrificial victim, especially considering the "category of the nonhuman." While she states the term, "nonhuman," in reference to dehumanized individuals, it can also be applied to the vampire who is not an animal, but also not a human per say. Schor contends that "Florent seems like a walking sacrificial encyclopedia: his hands are tainted with 'bad blood'; in prison he has consumed 'impure' foods; he stands in the perfect ambiguous position vis-à-vis the community of Les Halles; he is a stranger to his own family – in short, he is a black sheep ready for the kill" (25). Accordingly, these aspects of Florent's character align with his mistaken vampirism: the framed murder, the incarceration in Cayenne, the strange relations with the women of Les Halles, and the disruption he causes within the home of his brother, Quenu. What Schor does not

acknowledge, understandably, is how these aspects of Florent's identity are skin-deep in comparison to the wide-breadth of his anti-vampirism.

The very nature of Florent's anti-vampirism originates in his rejection of the standards supporting the social hierarchy of Les Halles. Despite the contrasting physical appearances of the Fat and the Thin, both factions view the offerings of Les Halles as markers of prosperity and vibrancy. While divided into two distinct social groups, Zola connects them through the shared pleasure of consumption. The community of Les Halles subsists on the semi-erotic obsession with the consumption and making of food, such as the sexually grotesque scene wherein La Belle Lisa and Quenu stuff sausage and taste raw meat together: "Sometimes she helped him, holding the sausage skins with her plump fingers while he filled them with meat and lardons. Sometimes, too, they tasted the raw meat with the tips of their tongues" (46). While Lisa and Quenu relish in the titillating act of touching their tongues to raw meat, this does not mean that they are vampires. In fact, the mortality of the Fat manifests itself in "a kind of plump suppleness" (68) that displays a "bursting [of] health" (36). Speaking in general terms of the Fat, one could potentially argue that they are the vampires of Les Halles, seeing as the Fat resemble the aforementioned bloated vampire of Bulgarian folklore, the *ohur*, who "was noted as a gluttonous blood drinker. As part of the efforts to get rid of it, it would be enticed by the offerings of rich food or excrement" (Melton 90). In actuality, the Fat are mere pawns within the limited sphere of Les Halles as they have no host for their parasitic nature other than the natural world.

Traditionally, the vampire figure has an identifiable target, whether it be former loved ones, wrongdoers, or specific genders (Beresford 33). In terms of the repeated comparison of La Belle Lisa and La Belle Normande, who both exhibit a sensual corpulence, Florent initially finds

the latter to be far more desirable as her figure exudes a vitality only visible in those who consume great amounts of meat, produce, and cheese from Les Halles. However, the Later in the novel, when La Belle Normande attempts to seduce him into marriage, Zola writes through indirect discourse that "Florent, however, lived on a loftier plane" (220). As previously discussed, beyond the nourishment, the act of vampiric feeding is inherently sexual (specifically when the bite occurs on the neck). Even when speaking of "psychic vampires"[13] who do not experience physical euphoria after their feedings, Florent does not fit this type of vampire as he shies away from any form of consumption-based gratification. Concerning Florent's relationships with the women of Les Halles, he does not have a sexual or romantic infatuation with any of them. Rather, he develops an infatuation with the life radiating from the women's ample flesh and the fantasy of "the woman in the pink bonnet whose blood had run onto his hands" (Zola 219). Despite his arrival causing disarray in the community, Zola labels him as "the real victim of the two women" (134).

Compared to Florent's initial infatuation with the consumable and social offerings of Les Halles he eventually becomes disgusted and monomaniacal with his disdain for the gluttony and death. While the natural world manifests itself in the meat and produce sold in the Les Halles, in actuality they are representations of the looming vampire figure. Such bounties of the natural world are what initially draw Florent to Les Halles, but he soon discovers the death and decay permeating the foundations of the community are mere side-effects of gluttony and greed as "Les Halles now seemed to him like a huge ossuary, a place of death, littered with the remains of things that had once been alive, a charnel house reeking with foul smells and putrefaction" (189).

---

[13] For more on psychic vampirism, emotional vampires, and psychic parasitism, see:
Fortune, "Vampirism."*Psychic Self-Defense: The Classic Instruction Manual for Protecting Yourself Against Paranormal Attack*. pp. 42-50

Not entirely dissimilar from the vampire-industrial complex of *Au Bonheur des Dames*, the Fat and the Thin perpetuate the cyclical nature of Les Halles in their consumption and creation of food. As Florent is a permanent outcast whose status is only solidified the further he falls into the clutches of Les Halles, he never experiences the euphoria of satiating bloodlust experienced by the other members of Les Halles. His reversed vampirism, or, his anti-vampirism, causes him to be the antithesis of the true vampires. For Flaurent, despite his attempts to satiate himself with vegetables, the denial of food proves to be both a repulsive and sexual act. Rather than the overwhelming displays hypnotizing Florent, they disgust him into a state of obsession. Unlike the unearthly displays of violent beauty projected onto the street in *Au Bonheur des Dames*, Florent perceives the offerings of Les Halles as markers of death and decay. Upon his first encounter with the offerings of Les Halles, the carcasses of calfs, brains, and fatty tissue repulse him rather than ignite his endless hunger.

In a macabre tableau, Zola expands upon Florent's opposition by emphasizing the cruelty, rather than the animalistic allure, of slaughter. Florent's eyes trace the "freshly killed calves, wrapped in canvas, lying on their sides" and, without falter, compares them to "children in big rectangular baskets, from which only the four bleeding stumps of their legs protruded." His relation of the consumable body parts to children calls to Florent's heightened sense of empathy, a characteristic uncommon in vampires save for those of the psychic and emotional variety. As seen in the vampires of *Au Bonheur des Dames*, vampires showcase their powers of empathy through the act of hypnosis and manipulation, not in identifying with the victims. Florent's anti-vampirism and defined victimhood prevent him from using his powers of empathy to his benefit, but rather, the opposite. His comparison of "the long two-wheeled carts, covered with

tarpaulins, which brought sides of pork hung on racks on each side over a bed of straw" to a "candlelit mortuary chapel, suggesting the deep recesses of a tabernacle, such was the glow of all the raw meat," causes him a physically harmful reaction, as "he was in agony" and "the grip of a dull fever" (Zola 29). For a vampire to survive, it must partake in some form of consumption, whether it be psychological, material, or physical. Therefore, Florent's identity exists in a cycle of negative space and drainage. He is a husk who maintains a state of homeostasis of suffering as a victim subconsciously aware of his impending sacrifice.

Through his double status as outcast and interloper, vampire and anti-vampire, Florent views himself externally as the ideal figurehead for a revolution against Napoleon III's Second that results in moral destruction and the erasure of the lower class's life force (Schnerb 338). Emperor Louis Napoleon III staged a self-coup in order to retain his political seat and progress his vision of a redefined Paris founded on commercialism. In tandem with Georges-Eugène Haussmann (Baron von Haussman), Napoleon III, as discussed by Walter Benjamin, flattened the independent storefronts, winding streets, and one to two-family homes in order to optimize the "technological necessities" of the desired commercial centers, such as Les Halles (Benjamin 12). Florent, who revolts against Napoleon III's 1851 seizing, views Haussman's "long straight streets opening onto broad perspectives" (Benjamin 12) as "some foreign town" (Zola 12) and is "disturbed by this huge but seemingly fragile sight" (8). Walter Benjamin writes of Haussman as a "demolition artist" who "estranges the Parisians from their city. They no longer feel at home there, and start to become conscious of the inhuman character of the metropolis […] The true goal of Haussman's projects was to secure the city against civil war" (Benjamin 12).

The political and architectural structuring of Paris guarantees Florent's conclusive failure at revolution despite his "believing that he was destined to avenge his thinness upon a city that had grown fat while the defenders of justice starved to death in exile, he had taken upon himself the role of arbiter, and dreamt of rising up in Les Halles and sweeping away the reign of gluttony and drunkenness" (Zola 198). The act alone of "believing" the general states of "gluttony and drunkenness" to be connected to one commercial institution with no definitive enemy signals to the weakness of the proto-Proletarian character[14]. Florent's desired insurrection against the greed and visual gore of post-Haussmannian Paris fails due to his lack of identity within the community of Les Halles and the infallibility found in the "inhuman character of the metropolis," similar to the department store in *Au Bonheur des Dames*.

Unfortunately, Florent is not the ideal candidate for the uprising of Les Halles due to his predisposition as a vampiric scapegoat. Florent's shortcomings as a revolutionary and anti-vampire solidify his fated inability to assimilate and destroy from within Les Halles. Originating with his false conviction, Florent occupies the status of "anti-vampire" by failing to prove his status as human or vampire, pawn or revolutionary. Neither Florent nor the Fat are aware of his true identity. Therefore, due to his malleable and undefined nature, Florent can easily be shaped into the confines of the false vampire through mere appearance alone. Florent's foggy identity guarantees a lack of agency, as seen when "he let himself be taken like a lamb and treated as a wolf" (42). With emphasis on the "let himself," it is clear that Florent is aware of his inability to fight against the malevolent forces that govern the social structures of Paris. Rather,

[14] Monty Johnstone article ?

Florent's passivity allows the community of Les Hall to swallow him in their sacrificial performance, such as the "the mud in the streets [that[had risen up and submerged him" (269).

Conclusion

Zola's vampires are not creatures with hulking predicalections for capes, blood, and chaos – nor are they mere metaphors of capitalism. As seen in my analysis of *Au Bonheur des Dames* and *Le Ventre de Paris*, the vampire takes on many forms ranging from the literary vampires of Zola's contemporaries, the folkloric vampires of centuries past, and the parasitic vampires of nightmares. But, they are also complex beings with an ephemeral existence that depends entirely upon the reader's will and imagination. The same could be said for most supernatural creatures, however, the vampire is the most perplexing because of its physical similarities to humans. Returning to Polidori's Lord Ruthven, Goethe's vampire maiden, and Le Fanu's Carmilla, each vampire maintains a passing resemblance to their hapless human victims despite their monstrous acts. The literary vampire's ability to conceal and reveal their true identity at will is the very reason why Zola's *Au Bonheur des Dames* and *Le Ventre de Paris* can be read as both naturalist and supernaturalist texts. The vampire is both seen and unseen, therefore allowing them to evade the reader's gaze while the creature wreaks havoc on the figures within the novel. The nature of the vampire allows literary fiction to twist and transmute the definitions of vampirism at will, as seen in the multiple variations of Zola's vampires ranging from the built-environment, the commercial institution, the true vampire, and the mistaken vampire.

I am not the first to read non-vampire 19th-Century literary fiction as odes to the supernatural. Novels of the "Horror Mashup" genre, such as Seth Grahame-Smith's *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2009); Lynn Messina's *Little Vampire Women* (2010); and Sherri Browning Erwin's *Jane Slayre* (2010), take canonical works of 19th-Century literature and

combine them with contemporary 21st-Century understandings of the supernatural and paranormal (hence "mashup"). The horror-mashup novels are an honorable and rather creative feat, seeing as the authors maintain the overall narrative while incorporating the unexpected. Prior to beginning this project, I noticed Zola's overt nods to the literary vampire solely from my previous exposures to novels such as those within Anne Rice's series *The Vampire Chronicles* and Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight.* If I had not become a fan of vampires as a child, I would not have noticed the vampiric aspects in Zola's representation of 19th-Century Paris.

As mentioned in the introduction to this project, Zola's standalone novel, *Therese Raquin* features the most overt and well-documented elements of vampirism. Rather than analyzing the metaphorical vampire in the 1863 novel, the award-winning director, Park Chan Wook, reimagines Zola's novel in terms of Roman Catholicism, infidelity, and the vampire figure. Unlike the novels of the horror-mashup genre, Park alters the identifying plot points of the narrative in order to emphasize the vampiric qualities of Laurent and Camille. As remarked by Roger Ebert in his four-star review of the film, "I'll bet if Park hadn't mentioned the Zola novel, no one would have guessed, particularly since it contains no priests and no vampires." Similar to my reading *Le Ventre de Paris*, Park draws upon the explicit and implicit references to vampirism, namely the bite mark on Laurent's neck. However, as remarked upon by Ebert, Park does not draw attention to the non-vampire novel that founded his cinematic adaptation. In doing so, he contributes to the concept of the seen and unseen vampire that stalks in the shadows of contemporary media or works of centuries past. As the future of the vampire, I hope that it continues to exist within both the recesses and forefront of popular culture and potentially reveal

itself as in more expressions of literature, cinema, and conceptions of the contemporary individual.

Bibliography

Arata, Stephen D. “The Occidental Tourist: ‘Dracula’ and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization.” *Victorian Studies*, vol. 33, no. 4, 1990, pp. 621–45.

Auerbach, Nina. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Barber, Paul. “Forensic Pathology and the European Vampire.” *Journal of Folklore Research*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1987, pp. 1–32.

Barber, Paul. *Vampires, Burial, and Death: Folklore and Reality*. Yale University Press, 2010.

Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*. 1st Harvard University Press pbk. ed, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002

Beresford, Matthew. *From Demons to Dracula: The Creation of the Modern Vampire Myth*. Reaktion Books Ltd. 2008.

Bräunlein, Peter J. “The Frightening Borderlands of Enlightenment: The Vampire Problem.” *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, vol. 43, no. 3, 2012, pp. 710–719.

Cooke, Roderick. “Theorizing the Scapegoat in Maupassant and Zola.” *French Forum*, vol. 41, no. 3, 2016, pp. 177–91.

Ebert, Roger. “Heroic priest volunteers himself for science, becomes vampire.” Review of *Thirst* directed by Park Chan Wook. rogerebert.com. August 12, 2009. https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/thirst-2009

Groom, Nick. “The Covenant Of The Undead:” *The Vampire*, Yale University Press, 2018, Pp. 73–94.

Fortune, Dion. *Psychic Self-Defense: The Classic Instruction Manual for Protecting Yourself Against Paranormal Attack*. Weiser Books, 2011.

Le Fanu, Joseph Sheridan. *Carmilla.* Scholastic Book Services. 1971.

Morgan, Owen. “‘J’Accuse...!’: Zola and the Dreyfus Affair.” *The Cambridge Companion to Zola*, edited by Brian Nelson, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, pp. 188–205. Cambridge Companions to Literature.

Melton, J. Gordon. *The Vampire Book : The Encyclopedia of the Undead*, 2nd ed, Visible Ink Press, 1999.

McNeill, J. R. “Ecology, Epidemics and Empires: Environmental Change and the Geopolitics of Tropical America, 1600-1825.” *Environment and History*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1999, pp. 175–84.

Polidori, John William. *The Vampyre: A Tale*. London: Printed for Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, Paternoster-Row. 1819.

Ponikwer, Fiona. “‘L’Homme Des Foules’: The Vampiric ‘Flâneur.’” *Essays in Memory of Michael Parkinson and Janine Dakyns*, edited by Christopher Smith and Mike Carr, School of Mod. Lang. & European Studies, Univ. of East Anglia, 1996, pp. 139–42.

Schnerb, Robert. “Napoleon III and the Second French Empire.” *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 8, no. 3, 1936, pp. 338–55.

Schor, Naomi. *Zola's Crowds*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.

Somerset, Richard. "The Naturalist in Balzac: The Relative Influence of Cuvier and Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire." *French Forum*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2002, pp. 81–111.

Schutt, Bill. *Dark Banquet : Blood and the Curious Lives of Blood-Feeding Creatures*. Crown, 2008.

Switzer, Richard. "Lord Ruthwen and the Vampires." *The French Review*, vol. 29, no. 2, 1955, pp. 107–12, http://www.jstor.org/stable/382161.

Summers, Montague. *The Vampire, His Kith and Kin*. K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & Company, 1928.

Toth, Stephen A. *Beyond Papillon: The French Overseas Penal Colonies, 1854-1952*. University of Nebraska Press, 2006.

Viets, Henry R. "The London Editions of Polidori's 'The Vampyre.'" *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, vol. 63, no. 2, 1969, pp. 83–103.

Vinken, Barbara. "Temples of Delight: Consuming Consumption in Emile Zola's Au Bonheur Des Dames." *Spectacles of Realism: Gender, Body, Genre*, edited by Margaret Cohen and Christopher Prendergast, NED-New edition, vol. 10, University of Minnesota Press, 1995, pp. 247–67.

Zola, Emile. *Au Bonheur Des Dames (The Ladies Delight)*. Translated by Robin Buss. Penguin Books Ltd, 2001.

Zola, Émile. *The Belly of Paris (Le Ventre De Paris)*. Translated by Brian Nelson, Oxford University Press, 2009.

Zola, Émile. "*The Experimental Novel" and Other Essays*. Translated by

Zola, Émile. *Monomaniac* (La Bête Humaine). Translated by Edward Vizetelly. Hutchinson & Co.. 1901.

Zola, Emile. *Therese Raquin*. Translated by Rothwell, Andrew. Oxford University Press. 1992.