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**“UNDEAD MONSTERS OF ROMANTIC
LITERATURE”: THE ORIGINS AND GENESIS OF
SHELLEY’S *FRANKENSTEIN* AND POLIDORI’S
*THE VAMPYRE***

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ABSTRACT

It was one of those cold summer nights of 1816 in Lake Geneva that marked the birth of two of the great myths that nurture our popular culture: Frankenstein and the vampire. It was Byron's ghost story-telling challenge what awakened the imagination of two strangers: William Polidori and Mary Shelley. The first with *The Vampyre* and the second with *Frankenstein* achieved the milestone of having presence to this day, but how did these monsters take shape? Like any story, it all started before. Much had to do that both were born during the Romanticism, considered the time of explosion of the imagination, of the rise of sciences, and of recovery of mythology and folklore. The purpose of this paper is to show how the romantic ideas, as well as the authors' personal experiences, were the responsible of the genesis of these creatures, and to reflect through a comparison that these monsters are more similar than what people think.

Keywords: Frankenstein, vampire, science, folklore, John Polidori, Mary Shelley

Fue una de esas frías noches del verano de 1816 en Lake Geneva la que marco el nacimiento de dos de los grandes mitos que alimentan nuestra cultura popular: Frankenstein y el vampiro. Sería la proposición de Byron de escribir un cuento de terror lo que despertó la imaginación de dos desconocidos: William Polidori y Mary Shelley. El primero con "The Vampyre" y la segunda con "Frankenstein" consiguieron el hito de estar presentes hasta nuestros días, pero ¿cómo se gestaron estos monstruos? Como cualquier historia, todo empezó antes. Mucho tuvo que ver que las historias nacieran durante el Romanticismo, época de explosión de la imaginación, de auge de las ciencias, y de recuperación de la mitología y folklore. El propósito de este trabajo es plasmar como las ideas románticas, así como las propias experiencias de los autores, fueron las que realmente provocaron el génesis de estas criaturas, y reflejar a través de una comparación que estos monstruos se parecen más de lo que creemos.

Palabras clave: Frankenstein, vampiro, ciencia, folclore, John Polidori, Mary Shelley

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INTRODUCTION

Monsters have been with us always since ancient times. They have become an important part of the horror and science fiction literature, but their relevance did not arrive until the Romantic period, when the most important faculty of the human mind was the imagination. Two of the romantic figures who wrote about supernatural creatures were Mary Shelley and John Polidori, authors of *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus* and *The Vampyre* respectively. Their undead monsters created simultaneously during the summer of 1816 in Lake Geneva supposed the creation of two major mythic figures that would have not only a great impact during the 19th century, but until nowadays. Moreover, they were not created simply through an act of imagination, but they are based in some of the new ideas of the period, such as the sciences, and the ancient mythology and folklore previously repudiated in the Enlightenment.

Nowadays, the foundation that gave rise to both myths has been almost forgotten. Whereas Dr. Frankenstein and her unnamed creation “have been mythically woven into one by the modern popular mind” (Hindle 11), the figure of Lord Ruthven has been left behind with the pass of time, being substituted by figures like Dracula or the contemporary vampire Edward Cullen. In concordance with the changes in the society, these characters have been adapted to the necessities of the time, leaving behind the circumstances that gave birth to these undead monsters. In this way, the purpose of the paper is to present an analysis about the Romantic ideas and personal issues that prompted the genesis of both Dr. Frankenstein and his creature and Lord Ruthven individually as well as a comparison between both to conclude they are not so different as people generally think.

1. Contextualization

1.1. Cultural and Intellectual context: The Romanticism and the developments in the scientific field.

Although the beginning of Romanticism dates from the publication of William Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* in 1790, it will be in the late 1810s and the 1820s when the real development and birth of the Romantic fiction in literature will be seen. This fiction is considered as "most 'romantic' in the usual sense of that word in that time – 'fantastic, extravagant, irrational' – rejecting the domestic, the familiar, the rational, and the realistic that we have noted as a major strain of fiction in the 1790s and 1800s" (Kelly 184). In general terms, during the first half of the 19th century, Romanticism influenced almost every aspect of society to some degree. One of the main premises of Romanticism is that the artist is not characterized by the objectivity and rationality of the Enlightenment but, instead, the artist will be subjective, individualized through the use of his own imagination. The Romantic period saw "various attempts to revive the spiritual aspects of life" which took the form of calls for a return to nature where the irrational and strange takes places (Murray 692). These attempts set the path to the new interest in madness and the irrational or supernatural which is reflected in the presentation of some artistic forms, such as the architectural genre of the Gothic as well as the fascination with folk tales and Medieval fantasies" (Murray 692).

At the same time, "the period of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries has been named by some historians of science "the second Scientific Revolution" (Golinski 527). Science proper emerges as separate from nature. "In fact, the period sees the birth of practically all the academic and scientific disciplines [...]" (Murray 792). However, the new scientific ideas were not only a matter of the scientists properly, but these new ideas also had a great impact in the general literary culture, such as in periodicals and novels addressed to middle-class educated readers. One of those explorations will be related with the idea of vitality –the idea of life as *power* – which "was, to be sure, the distinguished feature, of Romantic aesthetics" (Gigante 3). The study of the properties and components of the living beings became a subject of debate from 1760 that derived in a 19th century fight between the Vitalists and the Materialists to impose their theory about life.

Since the development and study of science was not firmly established until the second half of the 18th century, there was not a clear frontier between the different branches of science. For this reason, most of the scientists were specialized in various areas of knowledge, so that “taking a wide range was an acceptable and expected thing to do” (Knight n.p.). Towards the end of the Romantic period, in the 1830s, and after several decades fighting against the intellectual legacy inherited from the Enlightenment, “the public dimensions of scientific activity had changed significantly from the situation prevailing in the eighteenth century” (Golinski 529). Furthermore, the understanding of the natural and human worlds would change for the European population and, consequently, transformed the European mode of acting in those fields (Fulford et al. 5).

2. Theoretical Frame: The boundaries between life and death.

Generally, “undead” refers to beings technically dead but still animated, who continue exhibiting some characteristics of the living beings.¹ The ideas of life and death and the limits between both were on the agenda during the Romantic period. In order to give explanation to these phenomena, there were two paths: the sciences of life, which would explain through experiments the limits between life and death, and the folklore and mythology, a source of information coming from stories full of superstition and supernatural elements from Medieval and ancient times recovered during the Romanticism.

2.1. Sciences of Life: The artificial life

The expansion and popularization of the term “biology” around the turn of the eighteenth century meant the support for a new branch of the life sciences, the artificial science of life, something “which would bring together investigations into the fundamental laws of organic phenomena and which would be characterized by a historical, causal, or genetic methodology” (Jarvis 113). Among the fields of study that this discipline embraced, physiology, medicine, anatomy, and the theory of evolution can be distinguished. However, the issue is not so easy since one of the key features of the Romantic-period science and culture was the competition between two biological theories to impose an explanation about life and nature of the living beings. These were the Materialists – “those who held that life was explicable in terms of physical and chemical processes unique to organised matter” – and the Vitalists – “those who believed in a separate life essence, principle, force, or ethereal substance” (Jarvis 113).

Very important was the “Naturphilosophie”, a German philosophical perspective based on Kant’s ideas applied to the study of nature during the 19th century. What the Naturphilosophie tried to offer was a “window on the hidden interrelationship of all inanimate and animate existence, providing a unified account of all of nature as system where living systems emerged from but were not reducible to physico-chemical systems”

¹ Definition based on *Collins Dictionary* (2018): “of or having to do with supernatural beings, as vampires or zombies, who have died, but continue to exhibit some characteristics of living beings, as consciousness, movement, or speech”.; and *Oxford Dictionary* (2018): “(of a fictional being, especially a vampire) technically dead but still animate”

(Rosenstock xvii). Despite the fact that scientists and philosophers associated to the *Naturphilosophie* have been regarded as of minor importance, it is undeniable that this philosophy has had a great significance in the development of science (Gower 301). During Romanticism, there were some philosophers, such as Friedrich Schelling², who were involved in the study of the natural sciences. In the case of Schelling, he presented the world in terms of polar forces, a statement that extended to those scientists who dedicated themselves to the study of electricity, magnetism, and chemistry. *Naturphilosophie* and the work of Schelling would be the stimuli for some scientists, such as Hans Christian Oersted, discoverer of electromagnetism.

One of the elements of the *Naturphilosophie* is electricity, which was associated with the question of the vital powers that aroused in connection with pneumatic medicine at the end of the eighteenth century (Golinski 543)³. “Many of the doctors who explored the pneumatic medicine were also interested in therapeutic applications of electricity, which offered a candidate for the principle of life itself” (Golinski 543). This was the case of Luigi Galvani, “who seems to promise the discovery of the principle of life” (Jarvis 113). He discovered that by transmitting electrical impulses in a dissected frog movement was produced in the animal. The attention of the public increased even more when Galvani realized the same experiment with his nephew in London in 1803, resulting in the contraction of the muscles. After some attempts, he concluded that vitality might have been restored if the circumstances were different. In this way, he exposed the idea that the complete control of electricity might place in human hands the power to bring the dead back to life. However, the denominated Galvanism was no more than part of a great debate about the nature of properties of the living beings during the change of century “which had moral, religious, and political dimensions” (Jarvis 113). “The possibility of creating a human being seems to be just a small extension of the seemingly limitless possibilities of the new science” (Botting & Townshend 22).

In a time when some intellectuals still could not find escape from the idea of life as power – the unifying principle of the organic form – (Gigante 3), it came into the

² Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling (1775–1854) was one of the most influential thinkers of the “German Idealism”. His importance is associated with the *Naturphilosophie* that he promoted, which opened a new hermeneutic view of nature that does not restrict its significance to what can be established in scientific terms (Bowie 2016)

³ The *pneumatic medicine* is the theory or practice of using the inhalation of gases in the treatment of diseases (Oxford Dictionary, 2018).

picture “the competing claims of vitalist and materialist biological theories to provide and explanation of life” (Jarvis 99). The more extreme debate about the vitalist/ materialist visions that took place at England’ Royal College of Surgeons was between John Abernethy (1764-1831) and William Lawrence (1783-1865), mentor and student respectively. This debate was about “the possible existence of an electrical ‘life-force’ and the unique nature of the human consciousness” (Holmes 491). Abernethy defended the distinction between body, mind, and life, saying that “life was a separate principle based on some ‘subtle substance’ similar to electricity”; on the other hand, Lawrence turned against his mentor “rejecting any separate life-principle and identifying life instead with the functional interdependence of organised bodies⁴” (Jarvis 113). Therefore, as Gigante states, the life scientist of the period focused more on “the dynamics of organic form in an effort to explain how form emerged and maintained itself, despite the physical laws of an environment that worked, meanwhile, to reduce it to its constituent parts” (5).

Closely related with the idea of life as *power* was the issue of the limits between life and death studied by some chemists. Maybe, the man of science who can be described as the most Romantic was Humphry Davy, whose recurrent idea on his experiments were “the ideas of polarity, of the unity of nature, and of the importance of light” (Knight n.p). Considered one of the pillars of electrochemistry, for him, chemistry “was a sublime science because it revealed the fundamental unity of natural forces, all of them derived from electricity” (Golinski 534). Davy considers that the electrochemist has powers which may be considered even creative because he is able to modify and change the beings surrounding him (Fulford et al. 196).

2.2. Mythology and Folklore

After the Age of Enlightenment, when it was strongly defended the use of reason and superstition was pushed out, a new period of imagination came in which the romantics were captivated by the ancient elements, such as the medieval traditions, legends, and myths. The Industrial Revolution of the 18th century brought a degradation of the traditional values due to the substitution of the rural areas for the industrial city.

⁴ In the contemporary times of Romanticism, the term *organisation* “referred to the system characteristic of living things, in which a part existed by means of the others and for others as well as for the whole” (Jarvis 114)

Romantics saw this as an attack on their culture, which set the path for the construction of a national identity through the recovery of history, myths, legends, and folk customs. According to Gelder (36), although the term “folklore” may be coined in England, it was already under circulation in other European countries, particularly in Germany and Greece, centres for folklore studies but this issue spread throughout other European countries.

Folklore and mythological figures have always been used throughout history as a way of explaining strange phenomena, particularly related with the ideas of life and death. As Hallab states, “we are not, after all, so very far advanced from our own village origins of a few hundred years ago that we no longer need the comfort and solutions to life’s mysteries that folklore and mythology provide” (7). Maybe, the most important counter-movement against the Enlightenment came from the “positive valuation placed on the mythology that had been dismissed with mockery as mere superstition” (Shaffer 140). During Romanticism, it was taken for granted that the western culture of the present times was the result of the intellectual and artistic achievements in the ancient Greece and Rome (Hebron n.p.). Of special importance was the interest on ancient Greek civilization, which discharged on the recovery of male and female mythological figures. Some poets and novelist used them as metaphors to explain natural and socio-cultural facts common to our reality. One of the main figures was Prometheus, a Greek hero who gave fire to the humankind and, so, who creates and gives culture, but also the figure who created life through the use of clay. Many poets and some novelist used the myth of Prometheus to show an attitude about the reality of the romanticism.

On the other hand, when dealing with ancient figures from folklore associated to the feature of “undead”, one of the main ones that usually comes to people’s mind is the vampire, whose origin is unknown. Although the vampire is usually associated to “Transylvania”, it was also associated with other places different to this. “Most histories of the vampire similarly gesture towards a multiplicity of origins, whereby the vampire’s identity is thoroughly dispersed across history and across place” (Gelder 24). The reason is that in different moments of history different countries have been considered as “the source of vampires”. This suggests that neither the term “vampire” nor the creature are easy to typecast, as well as the mysterious origin of the legend of the living dead. Even so, “the Vampire tradition seems even at this stage to have had a strong hold upon ‘the people’ there” (Gelder 25).

According to Barber “the supposed blood-sucking predilection, for example, may be just ‘a folkloric means of accounting for two unrelated phenomena: unexplained deaths and the appearance of blood at the mouth of a corpse’” (qtd. in Bell 233). The vampire could be defined as a reanimated body of a dead person whose blood keeps flowing through the body, but whose the skin tone – pale skin – and dimensions change. However, another echo that set the path for the description of vampires and increased its importance among the population was that there is a register of several news items from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries that refer to a strange epidemic in several localities in Serbia, Hungary, Russia, Silesia, and Poland. All the news coincide in the fact that strange corpses had been found in their burials without decomposition and overflowing with liquid blood (Genís i Mas 39). From this, the superstition played an important role, letting people to believe that these corpses came out of their graves in the middle of the night and fed on the blood of the living humans.

The name that the popular culture gave to those “beings” was vampires or undead. However, it was through literature that the figure of the vampire gained relevance, becoming a recognizable symbol still today. With its entrance in the literary world in the 19th century, the folkloric vampire will suffer a transformation in every respect, but still maintaining his main trait: the vampire as a blood-sucker with supernatural powers.

3. Origins of SHELLEY'S *FRANKENSTEIN* AND POLIDORI'S *THE VAMPYRE*

3.1. Summer of 1816: Together at Lake Geneva, Switzerland

Considered a legendary stay that has been documented by different biographers and that has even been taken to the cinema, the summer of 1816 supposed the birth of two of the most important cultural icons until now. It was in May 1816 when the group composed by Mary Shelley, her lover and future husband Percy Bysshe Shelley, and their friend Claire Clairmont decided to travel to Lake Geneva to spend the summer at the Villa Diodati with the poet Lord Byron. Important to remember is also the presence of John Polidori, who went to Geneva accompanying Lord Byron as his physician during a Grand Tour across the continent in 1816.

Forced by the stormy weather of that summer, the group spent several evenings reading ghost stories and listened to doctor Polidori telling the latest reports in terms of medical sciences. It was during one night in mid-June that, after reading among other things J.B.B. Eyries's collection of horror stories translated from German into French called *Fastamagoriana*⁵, Byron proposed each person present to write a ghost tale, thus the story-telling challenge that led to the composition of *Frankenstein* (1818) and *The Vampyre* (1819). Shortly after, during a waking dream, Mary Shelley conceived the idea for *Frankenstein* as the story of a scientist who brings to life a something akin to a man with disastrous consequences, as she explained in the preface of her novel⁶. In this way, it can be said that "Mary's inventive mind was peculiarly grapple with both literary and scientific controversy" of the time (Holmes 490). Completed when Shelley was still 19 years old and first published in 1818, *Frankenstein* is a novel that is still reprinted today.

On the other hand, Doctor John Polidori's story was named *Ernestus Berchtold or the Modern Edipo*, a story overshadowed by Shelley's novel. Even so, he is recognized today by the tale of "The Vampyre", which was inspired in a fragment about a vampire story that Byron himself produced as a result of the competition and that had been left unfinished. Based on this outline, Polidori ended the story, but he did not publish it. Instead, he decided to leave the manuscript to the Countess of Breuss, who "gave it to another person, presumably the mysterious Mme. Gatelier, who forwarded it to Henry

⁵ *Fastamagoriana* was a popular collection of stories about apparitions and spectres published in Paris in 1812 and translated into German by Jean Baptiste Eyriès (encyclopaedia.com). Later, it would be published with the name of *Tales of the Dead* (1813) in England in 1820.

Colburn”, who published it under Byron’s name in *The New Monthly Magazine* in 1819 (Rieger 462). Consequently, Polidori protested because of the wrong attribution of the work, but the editors of the magazine defended Byron. Despite this, Nowadays Polidori is considered the first writer to represent the vampire in the way we would recognize today.

4. Genesis of the character of Frankenstein and his monster

Considered a modern myth and trope of everyday life in the Western culture, *Frankenstein* is based on the cutting-edge science of its day and the recovered culture of the ancient times. Apart from the depiction of the classical myth of Prometheus through the figure of Dr. Frankenstein, *Frankenstein* is an experimental novel based on the work of some scientists: Humphry Davy, first president of the Royal Society of Science; William Lawrence, centre of the dispute between Materialists and Vitalists and important anatomist; Luigi Galvani, who posed the idea of application of electricity to dead bodies to bring them to life; and Erasmus Darwin, “who first theorized the process of botanical and biological evolution through sexual selection” (Mellor 18).

As the full title of the novel indicates – *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* –, the novel uses the classical mythology, in this case to depict the main theme: “the aspiration of modern masculinist scientist to be technically creative divinities” (Hindle 28). Golinski states that “Shelley, who was acquainted with Davy’s reputation and writings, portrayed the hazards of a Promethean attempt to control the forces of nature” (536). Although Prometheus is a mythologic character with a special standing in the society, his character and aspirations determine his fate (Goetsch 36). Prometheus is a titanic figure coming from the Greek mythology who brings culture and knowledge to the humankind. Considered as the greatest of the mythical heroes, Prometheus was interested in the secret of fire from Gods, fire which supposed the complete knowledge of the world. However, this would be only one of the two versions of the Promethean myth. The other version, the Roman one, is an “elaboration of the Promethean legend rendered by Ovid (whose *Metamorphoses* Shelley had been reading in 1815)” that puts Prometheus as figure who “creates” and “manipulates” men into life, rather than a saviour of the humankind (Hindle 28).

In this second version, with the help of Athene, Prometheus stole the secret of fire from the gods, so he could infuse the statue of life to the figure of a man made from clay (Fara 27). What Shelley does is to combine both into one. Back to the novel, this interest for the Fire of the Gods is revealed since the beginning of the novel, when Dr. Frankenstein states that he has been “deeply smitten with the thirst of knowledge” (27). His words already betray him in the fact that he wants to be the new Prometheus:

I was capable of a more intense application and was more deeply smitten with the thirst for knowledge. [...] While my companion contemplated with a serious and satisfied spirit the magnificent appearances of things, I delighted in investigating their causes. The world was to me a secret which I desired to divine. Curiosity, earnest research to learn the hidden laws of nature, gladness akin to rapture, as they were unfolded to me, are among the earliest sensations I can remember. (Shelley 27)

The role of Dr. Frankenstein is that of an ordinary human being who pretends to “pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation” (49), acting like a kind of deity. The difference with this mythological figure is that, instead of clay and the fire of the Gods (knowledge), Dr. Frankenstein uses limbs from human corpses and electricity to create a new and perfect human.

What is exceptional about Shelley is that, contrary to most of the Romantic writers, she also knew the second part of the story (that belongs to the Ovidian version). As a way of punishment for Prometheus felony, Fara recounts that Zeus decided to give life to a clay statue, Pandora, who was presented as a gift to Prometheus brother, lifting the lid from her giant vase and unleashed the evil in the world (27). In *Frankenstein*, the responsible for the consequences of the human arrogance is a man, Dr. Frankenstein, “usurping the female gift of procreation” and, so, opening the Pandora’s box that spread the terror on the face of the earth (Fara 28). All this results in the terrifying aspect of the creature and the lack of guidance from a paternal figure, which makes the monster’s mind change into evil.

At the time that this novel was written, the dispute about the principles of life was in the agenda of the scientific community. Especially influential was William Lawrence (1783-1867), a young surgeon and physiologist who “was part of William Godwin’s circle and had become a personal friend of Percy Shelley’s” (Cooper 87). From this, it has been argued that Mary Shelley must have participated in some of the conversations between her husband and the surgeon. As mentioned, Lawrence was in the centre of the dispute between the materialists and the vitalists, exposing an antitheological materialism in the life sciences against the vitalist position (Cooper 88). It is in the context of these debates that Shelley focusses on. “Although at the beginning of the novel Victor Frankenstein seems to be a devoted of the vitalist point of view – due to the readings

during his childhood, such as Cornelius Agrippa, Albertus Magnus, and Paracelsus⁷ – the “stroke that completed the overthrow” of these names was the catastrophe of the oak tree during the thunderstorm and the consequent experiments of his father to show him “the nature and origin of thunderstone and lightning”, which are based on electricity (Shelley 42). But this was not what converted Dr. Frankenstein into Materialism at all.

The materialist view was little by little imposed in his mind during his stay as student at the University of Ingolstadt⁸. In this environment, it can be seen that the content and tone of Davy’s lectures at London’s Royal Institution are embodied in the fictional figure of Dr. Waldman (Hindle 29; Holmes 492). Especially important is when Professor Waldman claims that the modern scientist “have acquired almost unlimited powers” (49). As Victor describes, these words “destroy me”, and so, promoted the sudden conversion:

[...] soon my mind was filled with one thought, one conception, one purpose. So much has been done, exclaiming the soul of Frankenstein – more, far more, will I achieve; treading in the steps already marked, I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation. (49)

In this way, it would be confirmed the statement of Cunningham, which says that “Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, with its portrait of the man of science as a sorcerer’s apprentice, starts from the assumptions of a materialistic physiology” (20).

As well as Lawrence was implicated in the debate between the materialist and the vitalist, he also was influenced by the work of the French school of anatomy, especially by the philosophical anatomy of Geoffrey Saint-Hilaire (1772-1844), who created the brand of science named teratology (Cooper 88). Since most of the English anatomists were influenced by the French scientist, they were interested in the monstrosity and, so, the abnormalities of the embryos. What it was studied was not the monstrous as such, but they put it into relation with the nature, finding “proof of nature’s most extreme possibilities of generation, and it was the monster that convinced them that nature could be modified in new and as yet untested ways” (Cooper 89). In Mary Shelley’s novel, it is

⁷ Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535), Albertus Magnus (1200-1280), and Paracelsus (1493-1541) are alchemist from the medieval and renaissance times.

⁸ The *University of Ingolstadt*, as well as the city, were considered important for the study and development of the humanism, science, theology, law, and medicine in the time the novel takes places. Ingolstadt became famous throughout Europe in the 1780s, for the creation of the order of the Illuminati, which aimed for the practice of scientific research (Knellwolf & Goodall 4-5). Maybe, Shelley took this setting for the formation of *Frankenstein* for its aura of mystery that permitted the development of the creation of the creature in secret.

the question of the monstrosity what concerns her, expressing a criticism against the scientific approach to monstrosity, which presents anomalous living beings as experiments and not as creations. Therefore, Dr. Frankenstein's creature is presented as a sort of new man from a different species which is not only a specimen, but a living being who expresses the sensations and feelings he had upon being born and after this as any living being.

A strange multiplicity of sensations seized me, and I saw, felt, heard, and smelt at the same time; and it was, indeed, a long time before I learned to distinguish between the operations of my various senses. [...] I walked, and, I believe, descended; but I presently found a great alteration in my sensations . . .

It was dark when I awoke; I felt cold also, and half-frightened, as it were instinctively, finding myself so desolate. (Shelley 105)

Since the beginning, Frankenstein considers the birth of the monster an experiment to create new life from dead bodies and not like a son to whom educate. This can be seen when the monster comes to life, when the relationship between Frankenstein and the creature suddenly changes shape. As Victor exposes, "the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled *his* heart" (58). Hence, what Shelley pretended was to make the reader consider the consequence of those unsuccessful experiments of engendering live monsters done by scientist such as William Lawrence. In this case, the result is a monster who is like a child who wants to communicate with the rest of the world as any other human, but that due to the abandonment of his creator and the way society marginalizes him because of his appearance makes him develop the evil nature.

A clear idea in the novel is that the author was interested in the principle of galvanism, based on the application of electrical currents to the organic tissue of a corpse to bring it to life. As she mentions in the introduction of her novel, among other conversations during the summer in Geneva, there was one between Byron and Percy Shelley that touched upon the experiment of Erasmus Darwin's (grandfather of Charles), in which a piece of vermicelli was galvanized into voluntary motion (Cardin 129). As a result, Mary wondered: "perhaps a corpse would be reanimated; galvanism had given token of such things; perhaps the component parts of a Creature might be manufactured, brought together, and endured with vital warmth" (Shelley 8).

In the same manner, the “universal fluid became the researches into galvanism and electricity of Sir Humphry Davy”, whose *Elements of Chemical Philosophy* (1812), and the earlier publication *A Discourse, Introductory to a Course of Lecture on Chemistry* (1802) is what Mary Shelley got around to reading in October and November 1816 (Rieger 469; Hindle 29). The idea of infusion of electricity to a dead body through a machine is presented in the novel when Frankenstein says, “I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lays at my feet” (58). However, the electricity has not only presence from the scientific point of view, but also is used as symbol of several events throughout the story.

The aspect of light as *power* is what seduced Victor Frankenstein at the age of fifteen into the study of the philosophy and sciences of nature, witnessing what he describes as “most violent and terrible thunderstorm” that resulted in oak tree blasted by lightning. Moreover, it was this and the explanations of his father what ended with his vitalist point of view about the nature of life through an experiment. However, this light, “which was an exalting term denoting divinity” (Hindle 28), is what also gave Frankenstein knowledge about the generation of life, an idea associated to the myth of Prometheus and his stealing of the Fire of Gods:

a light so brilliant and wondrous, yet so simple, that while I became dizzy with the immensity of prospect which it illustrated, I was surprised that among so many men of genius [...] that I alone should be reserved to discover so astonishing secret
...

After days and nights of incredible labour and fatigue, I succeeded in discovering the cause of generation of life. (Shelley 53)

In addition, Golinski argues that in Shelley’s novel “thunderstone and lightning appear as forces of destiny, partially identified with the monster created by Frankenstein “(Golinski 536). Thunderstorm takes action each time the monster appears in the scene, but it also foreshadows the deaths of people. So, the storms have an undeniable connection to the terrible events in Dr. Frankenstein’s life.

All in all, it can be seen that as part of the Romantic movement, Mary Shelley was influenced both intellectually and socially by her contemporaries in sciences, but also by the ancient mythology and folklore to expose the consequences of the new scientific ideas. For this purpose, Shelley built the figure of Victor Frankenstein as a modern

Prometheus who has an unending thirst for knowledge and who, influenced by the ideas of the time – galvanism, lightning as power, anatomy, teratology, the fight between Materialism and Vitalism – during his stay in the university, finally creates a new being with a monstrous aspect who brings evil to the world.

5. Genesis of Lord Ruthven in *The Vampyre*

Considered the main poet of the period in Great Britain and one of the precursors of vampire stories in the modern European culture, Lord Byron built the foundation for the creation of the vampiric character of Polidori: Lord Ruthven. Although inspired in Lord Byron's fragment - often referred as "Augustus Darvell" - for the story-telling challenge he proposed in Geneva, Polidori summarized the story and "created a demonic image of Byron" (Coghen 29). Hence, the genesis of the image of Lord Ruthven is based on Byron's works about vampires, but "Ruthven distinctive character comes from at least three sources: folklore, scientific discussions of primitive belief, and popular literature" (Senf 25).

Although based on the story of Augustus Darvell - Byron's character in "A Fragment of a Novel" -, maybe this character was not really a vampire and that, so, Byron may not have had the intention of creating a vampire story, but it served as inspiration for Polidori. Even so, both Byron's and Polidori's stories are similar when it comes to the core of the plot in the sense that both share the idea of travel but, more important, the relationship of submission between the two main characters, the narrator and Augustus Darvell (Torres 10). Therefore, the character of Augustus Darvell served as inspiration to Polidori for the creation of Lord Ruthven.

Lord Ruthven, a pale-faced elegant aristocratic figure who results irresistible for the ladies, without forgetting that his nature is really evil, was inspired in the person of Lord Byron, something that even the name of Polidori's vampire confirms - "Polidori had taken the name of his Byronic vampire from Clarence de Ruthven, Lord Glenarvon, the rakish villain modelled on Byron in Caroline Lamb's notorious novel, *Glenarvon* (1816)⁹" (Gelder 31).

Several analogies can be established between Byron and Lord Ruthven: "both are misanthropic, both are attracted to young females, both are accompanied by male companions, etc. "(Coghen 36). As well as Byron, Lord Ruthven represents the qualities of the ascendant middle class in the early 19th century, now named bourgeoisie. These similarities with the poet are confirmed even more when dealing with the personal relations in the story: Lord Ruthven goes hand in hand with Aubrey as well as Polidori

⁹ *Glenarvon* (1816) is a novel written by one of the lots of lovers that Byron abandoned, Caroline Lamb. She decided to write a roman a clef, to satirize the poet as a way of revenge (Senf 36).

accompanies Lord Byron as his personal physician. Furthermore, Polidori “was in the shadow of his famous benefactor just as young Aubrey feels inferior to the more experienced Ruthven” (Senf 24). This relationship of master-servant was the result of the deterioration of his relationship with Byron.

Since Ruthven seems to be based on Lord Byron himself, the depiction of the mysterious Lord Ruthven also would follow the pattern of the Byronic hero, very popular during the 19th century. The Byronic hero is an archetype of character in literature based on Byron’s famous qualities named after the English poet. Schoebelen defined this character in the following way:

Characteristics of the Byronic hero include arrogance, intelligence, cunningness, and adaptability [...]. A Byronic hero is mysterious, magnetic, charismatic, and seductive, yet often a social outcast. He is sexually and socially powerful. He is moody and conflicted emotionally and has dark “anti-hero” qualities. (n.p.)

Following this pattern, Lord Ruthven is generally described as a mysterious man that belongs to the upper class. Even so, what correlates the Byronic hero with this vampire is the power of attraction over the opposite sex, which is the result of his exceptional traits. Polidori was the first one to introduce the aspect of sexuality associated to the vampire, something which did not exist in folklore and mythology but that, later on, would be one of the main traits of the modern vampire (Torres 20).

In social terms, Lord Ruthven is powerful in the society – he “appeared at the various parties of the leaders of the *Ton*” (Polidori 246) –, but, at the same time, he is described as someone strange and scary. Also, Aubrey describes him as a “man entirely absorbed in himself, who gave other few signs of his observation of external objects, than the tacit assent to their existence implied by the avoidance of their contact” (247-8), which seem to indicate that he is someone who has no interest in the rest of the world so that he is a social outcast. Even so, “Polidori’s consistent characterization of Lord Ruthven rest on his careful attention to the vampire’s perception of the world and people around him” (Telotte 11).

What makes Lord Ruthven a different character is his mercilessness. He is “a destroyer of others, one whose touch leads to the ‘death’ of the victim’s reputation and will, so that he makes the society worse for his benefit (Senf 36). This is proved when Aubrey says that Ruthven’s actions cause the misery of the people: “all those upon whom

it was bestowed, inevitably found that there was a curse upon it, for they were all either led to the scaffold, or sunk to the lowest and the most abject misery” (Polidori 249). As has been previously said, this is something that applies to Lord Byron, who is best known for his female conquests and the way he made them suffer, demonstrating that he did not care what happened to them.

As well as Byron, Ruthven’s “victims” of his good-looks are women, something different to the folkloric vampire, who was like a demon who attacked even friends and relatives. As Hallab states, Polidori’s vampire is a creature who chooses, selects, and follows his victims carefully, taking personal interest in each of them (76). This means that he does not attack someone without thinking about it, but he decides to use his attractiveness in a smart way to attract the opposite sex not only to suck their blood but also when he needs money, leaving the youthful novice “without a single farthing of his late immense wealth” (Polidori 249). Through this, it can be demonstrated even more that he follows the pattern of the Byronic hero as someone who is intelligent and adapts to every situation for his own benefit.

All these new traits and values attributed to Lord Ruthven illustrate an important evolution in the vampire: the new characteristics incorporated by Polidori to the vampire supposed the civilization of this legendary creature as someone who lives and coexists with the rest of the society. Lord Ruthven is not described as a beast, but as an aristocrat who goes to the most important social events in London. Though his actions reveal his true evil and wild nature, Lord Ruthven symbolizes the exodus of this myth from the rural setting to the urban one, a first step in the humanization and socialization of the beast (Olivares 261).

Although these characteristics made that the image of the later vampire would be determined by the literary and not the folkloric vampire, Polidori also used the folklore as base. He added to his character several traits common to the vampire from the western culture to maintain the original demonic and wild image of the vampire from the folklore and, so, maintain the essence of this creature.

Among the common traits of the folkloric vampire is the pattern of person who drinks blood and has a canine tooth before taking it. This can be supposed from the passage of the story which says, “upon her neck and breast was blood, and upon her throat were marks of teeth having opened the vein” (Polidori 255). The colour of the skin also

seems to indicate that Polidori identified the vampire as a dead body when he describes Lord Ruthven's skin of a dead grey colour, which shows that he is really a dead body. Also, the superhuman strength is a common trait of the folkloric. This trait is revealed when Aubrey says that "he felt grappled by one whose strength seemed superhuman" (Polidori 254). It is important to comment that vampires used to be creatures of the night, but Polidori invented a character that does not care about it, being during the night when the vampire is reinforced with the moonlight rays and not debilitated with the sun's rays (Torres 20).

As many romantic writers, Polidori seems to be interested in the exoticism of the Mediterranean culture, and the ancient history. Although neither the term "vampire" nor the creature are easy to typecast, as well as the mysterious origin of the legend of the living dead, Polidori uses Greece, "which is where the origins of the vampire superstition are located" (Gelder 34). After having left Ruthven, Aubrey decides to go to Greece, home of the mythology, legends, and superstition. Here, he is introduced to the vampiric world by Ianthe, the daughter of an innkeeper. Although Lord Ruthven moves freely in London society without being noticed, in Greece he is recognised and feared. It is important to remember that although Polidori never travelled to Greece, Byron did. During an earlier Grand Tour in 1809-10 throughout Europe, Byron visited Greece and Turkey. As Gelder states, the vampire poem "*The Giaour* (1813) and his 'vampire' fragment were no doubt shaped by his experiences there, and these and other 'Byronic' representations of Greece may certainly in turn have influenced Polidori" (26).

Following this analysis, it is clear that Lord Ruthven supposed brought the transition from the vampire of the folklore to the modern one, a vampire born from the existent vampiric figure from the folklore "deprived of its atavistic attires and dressed up as a gentleman" that seduces women (Merino 23). Mixing the folklore of the Western European coming from the news about supernatural events, the Byronic image of the poet later called "the Byronic hero", and the popular literature that deals with vampirism, the figure of the mysterious, aristocratic, attractive, but evil vampire was born.

6. *Frankenstein versus The Vampyre*

6.1 Examination of the Scientific Innovation

Considered one of the most radical attacks on modern science ever written (Holmes 420), *Frankenstein* makes an important study and reconsideration of the new sciences and technologies and how destructive they can be even when they seem to be harmless. This message is transmitted through the figure of the creature, who finally becomes monstrous and evil due to the education and socialization he receives, but also through the figure of Dr. Frankenstein, who considers himself a kind of deity who can bring to life new living beings from dead bodies following the new ideas exposed by the life sciences.

Since the beginning, Mary Shelley sets out in her story “to speak to the mysterious fears of our nature and awaking thrilling horror” as direct consequence (8). What she wanted to show was a violation of the natural order of life which, consequently, results in the alienation of the creature not only from society but also from nature (Goetsch 81). The natural force that Frankenstein applies to the dead body is electricity, demonstrating that “the hazardous power of atmospheric electricity – partially and insecurely controllable by man – stands for the capacity of nature to avenge trespasses upon its domain” (Golinski 536). In this way, *Frankenstein* “captures how the natural sublime nature had come, in certain respects, to stand in for deity”, making those scientists who control the natural forces, such as the light and electricity, superior individuals with powers (Golinski 537).

In Shelley’s novel, Dr. Frankenstein is presented as a person with an inexhaustible thirst for knowledge since his youth. With a background of vitalism during his youth, Frankenstein changes his mind not only with the catastrophe of the oak tree but during his time at the University. In the preface of her novel, Shelley states that she “has endeavoured to preserve the truth of the elementary principles of the human nature, while I have not scrupled to innovate upon their combinations” (5). In this way, she presents a character -Dr. Frankenstein – that, although he respects the laws of nature, he considers that a new human being can be “manufactured” from other human bodies, producing a new human being with human attributes. However, the result is a monster with human attributes, but that is not of the same nature as man.

This is further demonstrated with Erasmus Darwin's ideas about the evolution, from whom Shelley derived the belief that a good scientist would not alter the current working of nature, but rather to observe her processes closely in order to understand her (Mellor 18). Bearing in mind the statement of the mentioned scientist that dual-sex reproduction is better and more evolved than asexual reproduction, Shelley demonstrates through the figure of Dr. Frankenstein the fatal consequences of the scientific methods for creation of life that is destined to disappear.

Following the previous statement, *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* also could be analysed from a feminist perspective. Since the 1980s-90s, Shelley's novel has had several feminist interpretations, such as the ambition to create life without the other, the real nonbirth of the creature, and the lack of a feminine and maternal figure. In this way, the novel has been presented as the story of a man who tries to procreate without a woman, using the natural sciences to substitute the natural reproduction. So, this is also a way of opposing to the new ways of sciences since "the novel is profoundly concerned with the natural as opposed to the unnatural modes of production and reproduction" (Mellor 10).

So, "Mary Shelley's fantasy can be read as a warning of the moral dangers of enlightened intellectual hubris" present in the attitude of some scientist of the period, such as Davy (Golinski 537). Through this experiment only suitable for deities and the social dissection of the monster – his education and his source of evil –, Shelley tries to show the consequences of some the scientific experiments carried out in this period, of the change of the natural order of things, and of the thirst for knowledge of some scientist. Furthermore, as Goodall states, "one of the morals of the story is that until human nature can recover from the condition of hysterical extremism to which the modern Prometheus succumbs, human science will have little chance of creating anything with a hopeful future in the world" (130, 131).

6.2. The Sexualization and gender roles of the vampire tradition

The terms "vampire" and sexuality have been associated with each other since the first vampire narratives began to dominate the literature of the 18th century (Ames 1). During the 19th century, *The Vampyre* was the story that definitely gave way to the creation of the myth of the modern vampire defined as a sexual predator. Polidori

transformed the image of the “legendary bloodsucking predator” with a monstrous aspect coming from the folklore to the “glamorous, aristocratic, and mysterious figure” that we use to associate to the literary (Bainbridge 21). Following the pattern of Lord Ruthven, the vampire is characterized by the sexualization of the creature as someone who does not fit the exterior with the interior.

The short story “entertains the themes of the sex, sin and vice represented by Ruthven’s libertine character” (Hezinová 25). For this purpose, Polidori portrays the vampire Lord Ruthven according to what he sees as bad habits and vices in Lord Byron, in this case, the attractive aristocrat who has at his feet young girls to whom, later on, he makes suffer and abandon. From the personal perspective of the author, Polidori could have tried to show through his depiction of the vampire what women have suffered because of the poet, showing his true nature to the world.

Viewed from a general perspective, *The Vampyre* can be read as a warning of how destructive are for the society males like Lord Ruthven, who “represents a corrupt aristocracy who uses his money and influence for evil rather than good” and the danger of wild and perverse sexuality (Orlomoski 6; Hezinová 63). Also, Punter states that Ruthven could be understood as “a catalyst for repressed tendencies to emerge into the light of day”, representing the sexual liberty and the freedom from the restrictions of the social convention (qtd. in Bainbridge 118). Whatever Polidori wanted to show, Lord Ruthven became the first “gentlemanly” vampire who instead of being horrifying was considered something desirable as well as dangerous.

Another important point which Polidori’s story introduces as novelty is the significance of the gender roles. As the rest of the vampiric stories would later do, Polidori’s narrative outlines “contemporary debates about sexual objectification and gender roles, using the lens of the vampire in order to examine the ways those norms are undone and reinforced through popular culture” (Hobson 4). The short story perpetuates society’s expectations about gender roles, depicting men as the ones in power – more specifically the middle and high classes – and women as subordinate to them. In the story, the public that falls in the feet of the vampire are women, who play the role of objects for Lord Ruthven, who takes and do what he wants with them only for his own benefit. Hence, the vampire is portrayed as someone with a power, which is highlighted even more by the fact that he belongs to the aristocracy.

In the same manner, the female characters are the primary victims of the vampire, which shows that women are the vulnerable and marginalized sex. Even in the short story, this role is not only reserved for women, but also for men with feminine traits, which is the case of Aubrey. At the beginning, Aubrey, as well as the women who hang around Lord Ruthven, is fascinated with the figure of Lord Ruthven and decides to be his friend: “desirous of gaining some information respecting this singular character, who, till now, had only whetted his curiosity” (Polidori 248). However, Aubrey realizes of the true evil nature of the Byronic hero, which may be an indication of the rational mind of the male, contrary to the female victims, who only realizes how this monster is when they have lost everything. Even so, Aubrey is not able to escape from the superior force that Lord Ruthven has over him.

Taking all this into account, Lord Ruthven will mark the origins of the image of the literary vampire as a person who “chooses victims outside his own ethnic group and of the opposite sex”, contrary to the vampire in folklore, “who does not distinguish his victims by sex” (Senf 25). What made possible this change was the fact that through the figure of Lord Ruthven the vampire suffered a social advancement because of his power, wealth, and rank, as well as his good-looks, which he uses as weapon to attack his victims generally from the opposite sex. At the same time, fiction is used as a weapon that reinforces the roles and gender features of women which are still rooted in the inequality – vulnerable women subordinate to powerful men (Spears 10).

6.3. Comparison between both monsters

It is not only the competition in Geneva in 1816 and the title of myth what *Frankenstein* and *The Vampyre* have in common, but also the fact they are undead monsters. “In myths or other kinds of stories monsters may represent strange phenomena in the natural environment. [...] Monsters not only represent strange phenomena in the environment but also the strangeness of other human beings and groups “(Goetsch 4). Hence, what they have in common is that both are individuals that represent a different group to that of the humans, even so they try to imitate some human behaviours.

The Vampyre and *Frankenstein* share several motifs: the destructive relation between the two main characters of each story that leads to the death of the loved ones of the human part; the importance of the morality over the supernatural; and the supernatural

and superhuman nature of the monsters. However, although they are “brothers” conceived at the same time, they differ in terms of their conception as undead creatures, their physical and psychological fields, and the settings where the plot develops.

First, both stories present the relationship between two persons as the centre of the plot, but in different terms: in *Frankenstein*, Dr. Victor Frankenstein and his monster have a relation of creator- experiment in scientific terms, and a relation of father-son in terms of procreation; Polidori’s story, on the other hand, presents the friendship and relation of master-slave between Lord Ruthven and Aubrey. What these relations have in common is that, at the beginning, both are relations in good terms but that, at the end, they turn into “a path of destructiveness leading to the death of those who surround Ruthven and the monster” (British Library n.p.)

Dr. Frankenstein is excited with the creature during its conception as well as Aubrey begins his friendship with Lord Ruthven to be able to fulfil his dreams. Both relations get worse when one of the characters (Aubrey and Victor Frankenstein) realises of the real nature of the other side: after the infusion of life to the creature Dr. Frankenstein realises that he has created a monster and not a new human being, which aggravates his relationship with the creature he decides to abandon; the same happens with Aubrey, who realises that Lord Ruthven is really a monster who does not mind making people suffer. Both relations imply the death of the loved ones of Dr. Frankenstein (William, Henry Clerval, Elizabeth) and the ones of Aubrey (Ianthé, Aubrey’s sister). In the end, the relationship ends up with the death of Aubrey and Dr. Frankenstein in both stories for the same reason: anxiety.

The moral issue and not the supernatural are in the centre of both stories. Maybe, this is clearly seen in *The Vampyre*, where Polidori makes more emphasis in the way Lord Ruthven acts as someone who hurts and corrupts the society than to the revelation that he is, in fact, a vampire – revealed at the end of the tale. The same happens with Mary Shelley’s novel, which “can be read as a warning of the moral dangers of enlightened intellectual hubris” present in the attitude of some scientist of the period (Golinski 537). In the same way, Shelley tries to show how experiments that change the natural order of things can hurt the society even when they seem to be harmless. Hence, in both stories, one of the main characters act unethically, but they differ in the sense that Dr. Frankenstein does not act right in scientific terms, while Lord Ruthven does not act right in social terms.

What marks the difference between both stories is the conception of the undead figure. Although both are based on the folklore, they are different because the Frankenstein's' creature is the result of the new scientific ideas and the vampire is not more than part of the superstition mixed with the traits of the Byronic hero. According to Rieger, "*Frankenstein* (1818) contains no supernature" in the sense that everything has a scientific background – although some steps of his creation are lost along the way for the creation of suspense (461). On the contrary, the vampiric figure of Lord Ruthven is based only on the superstition grounded on supernatural events which have not explanation.

The setting also has to do with the foundations on which both stories are built: there is an opposition of the rural setting versus the urban one. The action of *Frankenstein* takes place all over Europe in places that are characterized by the rural setting, except Ingolstadt, Bavaria, where Victor goes to the university. Places like Geneva, the French Alps, or the Arctic are places full of wilderness which express the manifestation of the sublime, peace, and supernatural, but also gives rise to the use of imagination whose result broke with the tranquillity. On the other side, *The Vampyre* takes place in the urban setting of London, where people of high social rank – this is the case of Lord Ruthven – attend to parties. The other setting of this short story is Greece, the Mediterranean country considered the home of superstition and mythology where people believes in supernatural stories

As undead, Lord Ruthven and the creature are immune to any damage, which is the result of their superhuman physical strength. The source of this strength is not the same in both cases: the creature acquires this strength as a result of the scientific method to bring him to life, while Lord Ruthven has that trait for the simple fact that he is a vampire. It is this feature what gives them the ability to destroy everything with the slightest touch, even if they do not do it on purpose. This the case of Frankenstein's' creation, who at the beginning kills William (Frankenstein's' cousin) by accident but, after this, the rest of the people he kills will be the victims of his hatred to his Victor Frankenstein. It differs from *The Vampyre* since Lord Ruthven kills people for his own benefit – to take their blood or their money.

Although neither of them enters completely in the category of "humans", the physical appearance marks the difference, making them more or less human. While the creature has a monstrous aspect, Lord Ruthven has a somewhat atypical human appearance with morbid features that do not make him look monstrous. The supposed

human appearance in both makes them different in the sense that one goes unnoticed by the society – Lord Ruthven – and the other one does not – the creature. The creature does not go unnoticed for his monstrous aspect and, therefore, produces a sense of fear in people, while Lord Ruthven has a human appearance with exceptional traits that make people, especially the opposite sex, to fall at his feet. With this, the creature would represent the grotesque and Lord Ruthven the category of the beautiful. Even so, both have exceptional traits in a different degree that marks the difference with the rest of the people of the society.

Closely related with this is the opposition between the internal qualities and the external traits of the monsters. While Lord Ruthven is a good-looking man attractive outside but an evil creature inside, the contrary happens with the monster, who is a sympathetic child who has not still the trait of good or evil in himself but that is avoided by people due to his external appearance. Maybe, what marks the difference in terms of evil and good nature in them is the fact that while the monster is “filled with empathy, compassion, and caring for others” (Spears 7) but who later becomes bad due to his destine of isolation, Lord Ruthven is “selfish, cruel, and enjoys the suffering of others”, something inherent and proper of vampires (7). Hence, both text makes a divergent depiction of the monstrousness: the creature is repulsive and sympathetic while Lord Ruthven is seductive and dangerous.

Also, both display their intelligence, but while Lord Ruthven is presented as such from the beginning, the creature modelled himself following a process of learning through books and by observing De Lacey family. In this sense, the creature is more human than the vampire because he tries to understand what surrounds him, the humanity, while the vampire is someone who already knows the human world so that he does not appreciate what surrounds him. In fact, Lord Ruthven uses this knowledge against humanity in contrast with the creature, who uses that knowledge to understand humans and communicate with them as any other human.

Maybe, the main difference is between the authors because while Polidori is a male, Shelley is a female, something that mixed with their personal experiences could make us understand the approach they have to the figure of the monster in each novel: the vampire is sexualized akin to Lord Byron, the person whom Polidori hates, whereas Frankenstein’s creature is like a child conceived from the scientific ideas developed at the beginning of the 19th century. What Shelley seems to show is a maternal feeling for

the monster, as well as has a deeper sense and knowledge about the emotions and feelings of any living being, even if it is a monster. On the contrary, Polidori focuses on the aspects of sex, vice, and sin that are not only rooted in the poet Lord Byron, but also in the society.

Considering all this, the two main myths from the modern times have more in common than what we use to think. They are not only monsters that were conceived at the same time, but the fact that both are undead creatures makes them be classified in the same group: supernatural abilities, unusual physical traits, evil nature, and destroyers of the natural order of things. Although both were based on the folklore, what will mark the difference between them will be the personal experiences and knowledge of the authors: the exposition to the sciences of Mary Shelley during her youth, and the toxic relationship that John Polidori had with Lord Byron.

7. Conclusions

The image of the modern vampire and the myth of the crazy scientist and his monster have suffered changes since their creation in the early 19th century, leaving behind the original conception of both undead monsters. The Romantic period witnessed the birth of these monsters in a time when the study of the boundaries between life and death was in the agenda. Taking this into account, the purpose of the paper was to demonstrate that the Romantic ideas, as well as the personal experiences of the writers, were essential for the conception of both undead monsters, making at the same time a comparison to see how similar the monsters are, with an emphasis on the main ideas that both study.

First of all, the study of the genesis of Dr. Victor Frankenstein and his monster showed how this myth was the product of two main sources: the mythology and the life sciences. Through the analysis, it was seen that the author of the novel, Mary Shelley, was very influenced by the contemporary ideas in scientific terms. In the novel, the character of Dr. Frankenstein acquires ideas during his stay at the university, ideas which made him finally to create the monster who destroys the world. Also, it has been shown that Shelley was someone who tries to expose the consequences of the new scientific ideas through the use of the mythological figure of Prometheus, the titan who stole the knowledge from the Gods with which he creates a human being from clay. In the same manner, Dr. Frankenstein is described as someone with an unending thirst for knowledge who discovers the secret of life with which he brings to life a monster. The result of this experiment is a creature who develops the evil trait due to the abandonment of his father and the way the society marginalize him.

In the case of Polidori's vampire, it was Lord Byron who set the foundation for the creation of Lord Ruthven with his fragment of the vampire Augustus Darvell. Taking the undead monster called "vampire" from the folklore, Polidori created the vampire that supposed the transition from the folkloric vampire to the modern myth as we know it now. As the analysis reflected, Lord Ruthven mixes the image of the poet Lord Byron – the so-called "Byronic hero" – with the popular literature coming from the folklore. In this way, Lord Ruthven takes the Byronic traits of the mysterious, attractive, intelligent, wealthy, and evil figure, as well as the main traits that characterized the folkloric vampire – blood-sucker, dead grey skin colour, demonic, with superhuman powers.

Regarding the comparative analysis, it revealed that both creations had a lot of things in common not only because they were conceived at the same time in the same place, but also because of the fact that both are classified as undead monsters. As undead monsters, both have supernatural powers for their immortal trait, but they also have uncommon physical traits that make them different. In addition, both are based on the mythology and folklore, and both have an evil nature that makes them the destroyers of the natural order through the murdering of their victims. On the contrary, what differentiates them are the personal experiences of the authors: Shelley's exposition to the scientific ideas of her times, and the relationship between Polidori with the poet Lord Ruthven. Consequently, *Frankenstein* makes an examination and reconsideration of the new sciences, whereas *The Vampyre* is an examination of the sex and vice of the high social class as well a study of the gender roles.

All in all, the paper shows that these myths that we commonly see in popular culture were created according to the Romantic thought and the personal view of the authors in a time when there was a rebirth of the supernatural elements. The consequence would be the birth of the two main myths of our times, one changing the story of vampirism and the other creating the idea of the crazy scientist who creates evil monsters.

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