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**‘A Drop of Ink May Make a Million Think’; Two
Drops of Ink Made a Woman Sink: The Byronic Hero
and Vampirism in *Glenarvon*. An Insight into the
Byron-Lamb Affair**

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ABSTRACT

This paper employs a textual and comparative approach to Lady Caroline Lamb's novel *Glenarvon* (1816.) The main character, who shares the work's name, embodies several characteristics of the Byronic hero as we see it in Lord Byron's works, in this case *Manfred*, but also some specific to symbolic vampirism as observed in John Polidori's *The Vampyre* and Byron's *The Giaour*. Moreover, since this novel is essentially based on Lamb and Byron's non-fictional relationship, this paper establishes a parallelism between the novel's characters and their real counterparts, as well as the events, grounded on the respective biographies and further documentation endorsing said relationship. The final results of this research show first, a clear resemblance of the protagonists of these works personality-wise with Byron himself, and second, this research also evidences the social and professional repercussions that the publication of *Glenarvon* had for both public figures, Lady Caroline Lamb and Lord Byron.

Key Words: Caroline Lamb, Lord Byron, Byronic hero, *Glenarvon*, *The Vampyre*, *Manfred*.

RESUMEN

Este trabajo lleva a cabo un análisis textual y comparativo de la novela *Glenarvon* (1816) escrita por Lady Caroline Lamb. El protagonista, que da nombre a la obra, presenta características, que se analizan en el presente trabajo, del héroe byroniano presentes en obras de Lord Byron, en este caso *Manfred* y también algunas propias del vampirismo simbólico que se observan en la obra de John Polidori, *The Vampyre* (1819). Además, dado que la novela se basa esencialmente en la relación real que Lord Byron mantuvo con la autora de la novela, el presente trabajo propone un paralelismo entre los personajes ficticios y las personas reales, así como de los acontecimientos, todo ello basándose en sus respectivas biografías y documentos que avalan dicha relación. Esta investigación muestra, en primer lugar, una clara similitud entre los protagonistas de dichas obras con el propio Byron para ver cuánto se parecen sus personalidades y, en segundo lugar, se evidencian las repercusiones sociales y profesionales que la publicación de *Glenarvon* desencadenó para ambas figuras públicas, Lady Caroline Lamb y Lord Byron.

Palabras clave: Caroline Lamb, Lord Byron, héroe byroniano, *Glenarvon*, *The Vampyre*, *Manfred*.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 1812 British aristocrat Lady Caroline Lamb, who was already married, had an extramarital liaison with one of the most important public figures at that time in England, the well-known poet Lord Byron. This short involvement, which was, at best, dreadful, ended in 1813 and it is consistently recorded in every biographical work about Lamb or Byron. The reason behind the need to give an account of such a brief romantic link stands in the professional and social repercussions which the novel brought for the two of them.

Glenarvon was composed in 1814 shortly after Lamb and Byron's relationship ended, and it was finally published in 1816. The novel, written by Lady Lamb is set in Ireland, during the 18th-century rebellions against the British dominion. The protagonist, Calantha, is a young noble woman married to a respected aristocrat, Lord Avondale, and who ends up entering a relationship with Lord Glenarvon, an emotional and political danger. As the novel develops, it is evident that Glenarvon does not only represent a threat to Calantha's emotional stability, but also for the social and moral values of the aristocratic society which surrounds them. The story progressively presents the isolation that Calantha goes through, her loss of status and her personal deterioration as a consequence of her liaison with Glenarvon. The novel caught the public's attention by being based on autobiographical events, as it overtly hints at the author's relationship with Byron, in the representation of real people in *Glenarvon*'s characters, and the situations depicted in it.

When considering Caroline Lamb's *Glenarvon* within Literature, one may have the immediate assumption that the intention of the author was solely that of producing a sensationalist novel. *Glenarvon* is a classic example of what is known as *roman à clef*, a novel based on fictionalized accounts of real events and people (Douglass, 2004). Lamb was knowledgeable of the fact that publishing a work which involved the presence of a public figure such as Byron would surely guarantee her a large readership, which was the whole point. Readers found themselves interested in guessing which character was who in real life, but this also made the novel a double-edged sword. A key point to consider is that Caroline Lamb's aim when producing *Glenarvon* was to let people know the way Lord Byron played with women, and especially with her, showing how seriously he had hurt the writer as well as her reputation. However, in doing so, Lamb found herself even more socially judged than before by making their affair so public, exposing not only the man who made her so miserable, but herself too in a failed attempt to recover her dignity.

Lamb's work indeed successfully managed to create tension in the 19th-century English society because of the overexposing nature of her novel since "[...] the life of a woman in Regency England came with crushing pressures and harsh treatment if not done properly. It was spent under the eye of others – whether family or spouse – and subject to rigid social rules and protocols that carried immense cost should they be broken." (Curzon, 2023, para. 21). Although the Victorian era came a little later, the English society of the 19th century was already experiencing the strict gender roles which characterized it and suffering the expectations of them, as well as the consequences of not fulfilling the desired canon, especially women from the nobility as was Lady Lamb's case.

The novel, written by Lady Lamb during English Romanticism, is a work which combines elements both from Romanticism and from Gothicism. From the point of view of Romanticism, the novel succeeds at showcasing intense emotions, revelry and individualism, all of this through a tormented and passionate protagonist who embodies the archetype of the dark and conflictive hero, typical from this literary movement. In addition, the novel criticizes the society of the 19th century, when it was composed, and explores essential Romantic topics such as individual freedom and moral conflict. From the point of view of Gothicism, *Glenarvon* portrays the dark and oppressive atmosphere typical of this literary trend, and even though there are no fantastic elements as such in this novel, it still manages to immerse the reader into a constant sense of mystery and imminent danger. The protagonist, Glenarvon, behaves like the prototypical Gothic villain, a charismatic but destructive figure, not only for him but for everyone surrounding him.

Numerous scholars agree and maintain that *Glenarvon*, though not a major narrative gem, had established the ground for the construction of other important literary figures. The novel helped shape the Byronic hero; by making Glenarvon the vivid image of Lord Byron himself, the author was describing a fictional character and at the same time portraying traits of the poet's nature. According to Poole (2010), Lord Byron was inevitably perceived through the lens of his characters, and so Glenarvon, although not created by him, was no exception. While Thorslev stated "Byron is not his heroes, in spite of a hundred years of confusion of the two" (1962, p. 9), it is only correct to affirm that he does share more than just a couple of personality traits with them.

Some of the most significant characteristics of the Byronic hero, which can also be recognized in Byron himself, include a great longing for isolation, indifference,

internal conflicts and most importantly a great capacity to achieve their ends by using the refined weapon of their charisma. *Glenarvon* did not only add to the figure of the already existing Byronic hero, as can be well recognized in Byron's works, but it also served as a source of inspiration for John Polidori's later work, *The Vampyre*. In Polidori's story, the darkest features of the Byronic character, Lord Ruthven, are more evident, being those a strong emotional detachment and a manipulative nature, often immoral and life-draining. The importance of analyzing Lamb's novel lies in the fact that the character of Glenarvon is a perfect combination of his alter ego Lord Byron, the Byronic hero, and the vampire.

This research, first, explores the distinctive characteristics of the Byronic hero that can be inferred from Byron's dramatic poem *Manfred*. Secondly, it intends to identify the traits of vampirism that are deduced from Polidori's *The Vampyre*. These two first objectives are indispensable for our third one, which consists in arguing whether or not Glenarvon portrays the characteristics of both Manfred –its model– and Lord Ruthven, its descendant. The next scope of this research is to examine the differences and similarities between Glenarvon as a character and Lord Byron as a real person. Additionally, an analysis of Lamb and Byron's relationship is necessary to convey the parallelisms between Glenarvon and biographical facts to be able to trace the line between reality and fiction and see how much of the true events have been intentionally dramatized for the sake of literary and public impact. The final aim of this study is to determine the social and the professional repercussions that the publication of Lamb's novel had for both the author herself and Lord Byron.

As to the methodology, the present paper mainly adopts a critical and comparative approach with the aim of analyzing three literary works, all of them belonging to English Romanticism. The selected works are *Manfred* (1817) by Lord Byron, *The Vampyre* (1819) by John Polidori, and *Glenarvon* (1816) by Lady Caroline Lamb. Even though they differ in purpose, style, and genre, they share one same core theme: the figure of Lord Byron, be it as author, literary inspiration or subject of critical representation, respectively.

The methodology of this paper is based on a thorough reading, both textual and contextual, of each work, framing the literary analysis within a solid biographical and historical contextualization. In the case of *Manfred*, the figure of the Byronic hero is approached, an archetype which combines traits of rebellion, introspection, suffering and isolation, as a reflection of personal and philosophical issues of Byron himself. The protagonist of this dramatic poem embodies the crisis of the Romantic subject, trapped

between the thirst for knowledge and the impossibility of redeeming. In the same way, in *The Vampyre*, Lord Ruthven is presented more as a fascinating but disturbing being, shaped by an immoral indifference, dangerous seductive skills and mysterious aura. Polidori was directly influenced by Byron's public figure when creating his vampire, and this can be seen in his sense of superiority, voluntary loneliness or the talent of bringing destruction everywhere he goes, traits which the author perceived from Byron. Therefore, Lord Ruthven can not only be interpreted from the point of view of a gothic figure, but also as a criticism of Lord Byron himself.

Afterwards, *Glenarvon* is studied from an autobiographical perspective. Written by Lady Caroline Lamb after her intense and scandalous affair with Byron, the novel offers a fictionalized representation of that experience through the figure of Lord Glenarvon, a character who shares numerous traits with Byron. Special attention is paid to the role of writing as a form of symbolic revenge and self-defense. Additionally, an analysis of Lamb and Byron's relationship is necessary to convey the parallelisms between *Glenarvon* and biographical facts to be able to trace the line between reality and fiction and see how much of the true events have been intentionally dramatized for the sake of literary and public impact.

The comparative study of these works allows for the exploration of the way in which different authors, all related to Byron, be it personally or artistically, re-elaborate and project his figure in fiction from different perspectives. This research is supported by academic references which specialize in Romanticism, studies about the Byronic figure, theory on vampirism in Literature, and confessional poetry. Hence, there are two clear objectives to this paper: first, being able to interpret how Byron's personal experiences and social context shaped his representation in Literature and second, analyze the consequences of the publication of Lady Lamb's *Glenarvon* to see how the relationship affected each of them.

2. THE BYRONIC HERO: LORD BYRON'S *MANFRED* (1817)

Lord Byron's dramatic poem *Manfred* is still perceived from an autobiographical point of view nowadays in popular culture, more than for its actual literary value. This is so because a majority of readers identify Manfred with Byron himself. Due to the alleged incest that Byron was said to have committed with his half-sister Augusta Leigh, it is

strongly argued among scholars that Manfred's forbidden love, Astarte, could be the expression of that same familial figure, even though her identity remains enigmatic in the work (Thorslev, 1962).

Along with this sin that the hero carries with him, it comes the guilt, and existential despair which characterizes Manfred's character. According to Thorslev (1962), the Byronic hero is sympathetic to the reader despite the "crimes" he has committed, because normally these crimes do not necessarily come from the hero's cruelty, but from his exalted sensibility and heightened perception of emotions.

Aligned with the concept of cruelty, it is worth mentioning that Thorslev establishes clear boundaries between the Byronic hero being cruel and him being fatal to women: "he is not even in any very significant sense 'fatal to his women', except in that he is often a 'star-crossed lover'; but then so were Romeo and a hundred other heroes of Romantic story" (p. 8). The concept of "star-crossed lovers" alludes to Shakespeare's idea of a couple being doomed by fate since the very beginning, and this could arguably be the case for many of the different heroical figures in Byron's works.

In the following excerpt from *Manfred*, the reader can perceive the strong feeling of guilt that characterizes the Byronic hero, which subsequently leads to a mind plagued with remorseful thoughts and belief that he must suffer or even die in order to uphold his principles.

Astarte! my belovèd! speak to me:
I have so much endured, so much endure—
Look on me! the grave hath not changed thee more
Than I am changed for thee. Thou lovedst me
Too much, as I loved thee: we were not made
To torture thus each other, though it were
The deadliest sin to love as we have loved.
Say that thou loath'st me not, that I do bear
This punishment for both, that thou wilt be
One of the blessèd, and that I shall die
(*Manfred*, Act II, Scene IV, Byron, 1817)

Loneliness is another one of the features that best describe the Byronic hero. In this case it is a self-imposed isolation, a sentiment of sorrow that derives in the wish to

be on his own, which is born from the hero's strong misanthropy. This is firmly connected to the pursuit of solitude and avoidance of human contact. Thorslev (1962) perfectly summarizes this idea that the Byronic hero "for Byron [...] is the outcast who learns through years of suffering that he loves not the world nor the world him." (p. 18) In fact, The Byronic hero often finds himself relieved by this loneliness and experiences some sort of comfort when being unaccompanied. As Poole (2010) argues, the misanthropist nature of the Byronic hero emerges from a solid belief that society is unfair, and thus, Manfred's disillusionment regarding humanity. This alienation of oneself from humanity usually relates to a deep connection with nature, and an amazement for its beauty "No eyes/ But mine now drink this sight of loveliness;/ I should be sole in this sweet solitude" (*Manfred*, Act II, Scene II, Byron, 1817).

Marin (2008) properly states that "the Byronic personality compels attention [...] showing us the alienation and the perpetual inability to be satisfied [...] resulting in his rebellion against life itself" (p. 82). The following extract represents in the character of Manfred precisely the revolt against life previously mentioned; the Byronic hero finds relief in death. For him, dying signifies the end of a life of anguish and lamentation, and that is what he so much longs for.

My long pursued and superhuman art,
Is mortal here; I dwell in my despair—
And live—and live for ever.
Witch. It may be 160
That I can aid thee.
Man. To do this thy power
Must wake the dead, or lay me low with them.
Do so—in any shape—in any hour—
With any torture—so it be the last.

(*Manfred*, Act II, Scene II, Byron, 1817)

Finally, another one of the Byronic hero's typical traits is the intellectual or moral superiority that he believes to have when compared to the rest of men. This can easily be interpreted as arrogance, or as seen at times, a complete indifference to others' opinions. Manfred's moral and intellectual superiority, as can be seen in the excerpt below, contributes to the hero's quest for loneliness and disillusionment with society in its whole.

From my youth upwards
My spirit walk'd not with the souls of men,
Nor look'd upon the earth with human eyes ;
The thirst of their ambition was not mine,
The aim of their existence was not mine ;
My joys, my griefs, my passions, and my powers,
Made me a stranger ; though I wore the form,
I had no sympathy with breathing flesh,
(*Manfred*, Act II, Scene II, Byron, 1817)

Therefore, this analysis of *Manfred* suggests that several characteristics of the Byronic hero, such as guilt, loneliness, rejection of society or belief in his own superiority, can also be found in Byron's figure (Poole, 2010). Hence, it is not surprising that some readers perceive Manfred as a representation of the author himself (Thorslev, 1962). Poole (2010) in his work about Lord Byron and his characters expresses how Byron's wife, Annabella Milbanke, when they first met found it peculiar the way in which he presented himself as lonely to find acceptance from others (pp. 8-9). Also, the critic notices "A number of the traits that Milbanke noticed in Byron's behaviour during their first meeting have equivalents in his poetry. Consider Byron's [...] Hubris, pride, contempt for the 'common crowd', indifference to the opinion of others" (Poole, 2010, p. 11). These are all features that Byron and the Byronic hero share.

Nonetheless, though it is true that Byron is similar in some traits with his characters, the Byronic hero is not just a portrait of the author's life, but a construction with a clear literary purpose. Byron undoubtedly used elements of his personal experience, but he took them further in order to create a hero who embodied the typical Romantic characteristics. To conclude, it can be argued that Byron and the Byronic hero have indeed much in common, but they are not exactly the same.

3. VAMPIRISM: JOHN POLIDORI'S *THE VAMPIRE* (1819)

John Polidori was for a time Lord Byron's physician, and their relationship is believed to have turned somehow tense toward the end. Polidori was thus well-acquainted with Byron and therefore understood many of his actions as well as the motivation behind each of them. The author was also familiar with Lamb's novel *Glenarvon* by the time he produced *The Vampire*, and it served as a great inspiration for the character of Lord Ruthven, who is strongly based on both *Glenarvon*, and Lord Byron by default.

Moreover, another helpful source which Polidori used for the creation of his vampiric figure was indeed Byron's *The Giaour* (1813). *The Giaour* is one of the first texts in English where the concept of the vampire as a romantic and cursed figure is introduced. In contrast with the traditional folklore, Byron adds a melancholic and tortured dimension to the vampire, a being who is not only cursed to live on their loved ones', but also to suffer for it. This Byronic archetype directly influences Polidori's *The Vampire* and also Lady Lamb's *Glenarvon* (Hoppenstand & Browne, 1996). This dramatic poem's influence on *The Vampire* comes mostly from the following famous verses where the *Giaour* is cursed to become a vampire:

But first, on earth as Vampire sent,
Thy corse shall from its tomb be rent –
Then ghastly haunt thy native place,
And suck the blood of all thy race;
There from thy daughter, sister, wife,
At midnight drain the stream of life;
Yet loathe the banquet which perforce
Must feed thy livid living corse –

(*The Giaour*, Byron, 1813, lines 755- 762)

Therefore, Lord Ruthven is a character who embodies both parts: on the one hand, he is seductive, elegant and mysterious, and on the other, he is cursed and isolated. This form of presenting the vampire as someone with feelings and internal conflicts changes the traditional perception of the monstrous unhuman vampiric figure. This new image

was key for the Gothic development of a literary character creation (Hoppenstand & Browne, 1996).

However, in contrast with the character from the previous section, Manfred, Lord Ruthven would be best described as a Byronic anti-hero rather than a Byronic hero. The passage below perfectly exemplifies this idea:

In every town, he left the formerly affluent youth, torn from the circle he adorned, cursing, in the solitude of a dungeon, the fate that had drawn him within the reach of this fiend ; whilst many a father sat frantic, amidst the speaking looks of mute hungry children, without a single farthing of his late immense wealth, wherewith to buy even sufficient to satisfy their present craving. Yet he took no money from the gambling table ; but immediately lost, to the ruin of many, the last gilder he had just snatched from the convulsive grasp of the innocent : this might but be the result of a certain degree of knowledge, which was not, however, capable of combating the cunning of the more experienced (Polidori, 1819, p. 35).

His ill nature can be easily understood by observing his actions which are clearly driven by self-centered reasons only, such as maintaining his power, wielding his influence over people, or spreading destruction everywhere he goes simply because he finds pleasure in doing so (Brainbridge, 2004).

One of the main features of Lord Ruthven is his ability to use his mesmerizing charm as a sort of superpower in order to achieve his ends. The excerpt below also alludes at how menacing his behavior is for people, but especially women, who are his principal target. However, these women are not simply chosen by chance, each choice is studied with detail by Lord Ruthven before “hunting” on them. They are usually, as Brainbridge (2004) suggests, “desirable but socially prohibited females” (p. 30), as can be seen in this passage: “His guardians insisted upon his immediately leaving his friend, and urged, that his character was dreadfully vicious, for that the possession of irresistible powers of seduction, rendered his licentious habits more dangerous to society” (Polidori, 1819, p. 37).

Another defining trait of Lord Ruthven is his emotional and physical detachment from his surroundings. In the passage below, Polidori highlights the vampire’s inhuman nature: his conduct remains unaltered by others’ suffering, reinforcing the idea of a cold being with an empty morality. This indifference at human pain is not just physical

numbness, but also a complete lack of empathy. Ruthven could be hence categorized as someone who is unable to feel remorse or real connections, simply a predator, as seen in the following example: “His conduct and appearance had not changed ; he seemed as unconscious of pain as he had been of the objects about him [...]” (Polidori, 1819, p. 54).

Finally, a key element that must be acknowledged is that Lord Ruthven functions not just as a physical vampire, but also an energetic one. This means that he does not only feed on his victims’ blood but also on their lives, revealing that he gains vitality by draining those women’s vitality through suffering and dependence. By doing this, the Byronic figure does not only ruin the women themselves, but also their reputation, and this is an opinion which Polidori overtly acknowledges about Byron (Brainbridge, 2004). This can be seen in the passage below:

[...] by feeding upon the life of a lovely female to prolong his existence for the ensuing months, his blood would run cold, whilst he attempted to laugh her out of such idle and horrible fantasies [...]. (Polidori, 1819, p. 42)

To conclude, Polidori made his vampire looking at the figure of Byron, especially inspiring himself by the poet’s relationship with women. Although Byron was not a literal vampire, he was seen by Polidori as an energetic one, sharing that trait with Lord Ruthven, since both “drained” women and eventually abandoned them (Pop & Iliev, 2022).

4. GLENARVON (1816)

4.1. The Byronic hero in *Glenarvon*

In this section, the figure of the Byronic hero is analyzed as it appears in *Glenarvon* (1816), Lady Caroline Lamb's novel. Through the character of Lord Glenarvon, the work offers a representation which encompasses the typical traits of this romantic archetype. With this, we are able to see how Lamb takes advantage from the Byronic hero to criticize Lord Byron from a personal and also literary perspective.

To begin with, one of the most characterizing features of the Byronic hero, as already noticed, is the quest for isolation or dislike to be around other humans, an overt misanthropy. In *Glenarvon*, there is a key difference because he does in fact not look at any point of the story for this loneliness which the Byronic hero craves, but the contrary. Glenarvon has a great need of people's admiration, he is pleased by being the center of attention and, most importantly, he enjoys the power which he has over people, being it in politics or in sentimental life. The author may have done this purposefully in order to remark on the vain and narcissistic personality of Byron through the character in her novel.

However, what we do see is the way in which Glenarvon is idolized by people. This is a very significant part of the charismatic personality which the Byronic hero has, which is what usually helps this character to eventually achieve all his ends. There are examples of this in the novel such as the following:

“[...] was it in woman's nature to hear him, and not to cherish every word he uttered? And, having heard him, was it in the human heart ever again to forget those accents, which awakened every interest, and quieted every apprehension?” (Lamb, 1816, p.104)

As seen in the analysis of Manfred, another characteristic of the Byronic hero would be a clear intellectual and moral superiority when compared to other people. As can be observed in the example below, Glenarvon does in fact consider himself better than others by implying that the usual interests or problems of these other people are of no importance to him, placing himself on the verge of arrogance.

“[...] splendid genius and uncommon faculties were first developed. [...]his soul turned with antipathy from the ordinary cares of life.” (Lamb, 1816, p. 79)

The same can be perceived in the following instance: “That which was disgusting or terrific to man’s nature, had no power over Glenarvon” (Lamb, 1816, p. 86).

However, the part of the moral superiority is not present in Glenarvon. We see in some occasions that his actions are not aligned with his principles, and that his moral code is normally not shared by the rest of society. We can see this in the following example: “Glenarvon seemed, however, to differ in practice from his principles.” (Lamb, 1816, p. 78)

Another notably trait of the Byronic hero would be the sense of guilt for his past actions which he believes incorrect. Nevertheless, again, there is an absence of this in Glenarvon, because guilt is not perceived in either of the three volumes of the novel. An exception is one particular case where, for a very brief moment, Glenarvon is falling asleep, and he sees some images reminding him of what he has brought to the life of others. This appears in the following passage:

Every event of his short life crowded fast upon his memory : — scenes long forgotten recurred :— he thought of broken vows, of hearts betrayed, and of all the perjuries and treacheries of a life given up to love. But reproaches and bitterness saddened over every dear remembrance, and he participated, when too late, in the sufferings he had inflicted. (Lamb, 1816, p. 309)

Having said that, Glenarvon may not exactly fit in the category of the Byronic hero. It is undeniable that he shares some of the typical traits of this archetype, but ultimately, he fails in gaining the reader’s sympathy because, except in that short moment quoted above, he was unable to feel remorse. That is why Glenarvon rather evokes a disturbed fascination to the readership, because of his “fiery soul” (Marin, 2008, p. 82). If compared to Lord Byron, Poole (2010) mentions that Milbanke actually believed that her husband had a heart which could feel pain or remorse when having done evil deeds to someone, and this was something that Glenarvon could not do, so they differ in that.

However, it could be argued that even though Glenarvon is not a Byronic hero in the most exact sense of it, he is certainly a Byronic figure, since he encompasses some of the traits in Byron himself and his characters although he has some other traits particular of himself. This in fact may be a result of Lady Lamb’s attempt at demonizing Byron after the tumultuous relationship they had, by exaggerating or adding some of Glenarvon’s dehumanizing features, especially his manipulative nature.

4.2. Vampirism in *Glenarvon*.

In this section, the representation of vampirism is analyzed in *Glenarvon* (1816). Through the figure embodied by the character of Glenarvon, the author presents symbolic but also physical elements which refer to the vampire, such as the power of seduction, emotional destruction of the ones who surround him and an obscure presence. Hence, the novel does not only make use of the vampiric imagery as a literary resource from Romanticism, but also as a form of condemning Byron, by associating him with a character who consumes and corrupts people. As stated in section 3 of this paper, though Glenarvon is not a vampire, Polidori got inspiration for his work from the features of this character (Pop Zarieva & Iliev, 2022).

To begin with, the first element which may catch the reader's attention is the names of both characters. Lord Glenarvon's real name is Clarence de Ruthven — this is stated in the novel for the first time in the example below. The vampire-protagonist in Polidori's work is named Lord Ruthven, and this is more than just a mere coincidence. In fact, this is the result of Polidori being influenced by Lamb's *Glenarvon* as this character is, according to Thorslev (1962), “a peculiar hybrid ‘hero-villain’ or villainous hero” (p. 17):

Glenarvon, the hero, the lord of the demesne is dead: — he fell on the bloody field of Culloden : — his son perished in exile : — and Clarence de Ruthven, his grandson, an orphan, in a foreign land, has never yet appeared to petition for his attainted titles and forfeited estates. (Lamb, 1816, Vol. I, p. 10)

Another important aspect that is perceptible as vampiric in *Glenarvon* is the ill nature of his actions. The reason behind his proceedings is simply that of destroying everything which surrounds him for the sake of pleasure, as a sort of sadism (Thorslev, 1962). This is stated very early in the novel when the character is presented, such as in the example below: “[...] but nothing can palliate repeated acts of licentious wickedness and unprovoked cruelty” (Lamb, 1816, Vol. II, p.8)

Aligned with this, in the following example the reader is presented with Glenarvon himself admitting to Calantha that he is indeed ruining or damaging the ones who surround him or try to have him in their lives: “I am not what you think, my Calantha. Unblessed myself, I can but give misery to all who approach me. All that follow after me

come to this pass; for my love is death, and this is the reward of constancy” (Lamb, 1816, Vol. II, p. 328).

In line with people who follow him, that is precisely what Glenarvon most longs for, fame and power, at any price. The character is described as someone who has a very powerful influence over people, as can be seen in the example below: “None — none believed or trusted in Glenarvon. — Yet thousands flocked around and flattered him [...]” (Lamb, 1816, Vol. II, p. 88)

In the beginning, Glenarvon is followed by the Irishmen when they fight for Ireland’s independence because they see in him a fierce leader with a fair cause, but they get deceived in the end. As stated before, Glenarvon does not act as a hero, he has hidden intentions, and at the end of the novel, he surprisingly joins the British troops, deceiving everyone who believed in him. This is clearly stated in the following example:

“They sailed: they reached the English shore; and before the rumor of these events could have had time to spread, Glenarvon had taken the command of his ship, following with intent to join the British fleet, far away from his enemies and his friends.” (Lamb, 1816, Vol. III, p. 276)

Even after this, Glenarvon is not presented as someone capable of feeling remorse or being affected by people’s pain caused by his mistakes. In the following example the reader can perceive this villainous emotional detachment, which is characteristic of the vampiric figure and consequently, of Glenarvon: “[...] he knew not how to pardon [...] and he existed henceforward, but to mislead others.” (Lamb, 1816, Vol. II, p. 81)

Furthermore, Glenarvon is the perfect illustration of the use of seduction which is so typical from the vampiric figure to achieve his ends. In the novel, Glenarvon uses Calantha, as well as other women, since he is enticed by their nobility and social status (Marin, 2008), but he enjoys making them suffer (Pop & Iliev, 2022). There are numerous instances in the two last volumes of the novel where Glenarvon’s appearances are more prominent, but the following is an accurate example of this feature in the character:

I have seen, I have heard of cruelty, and falsehood; but you, Glenarvon — oh you who are so young, so beautiful, can you be inhuman ? It breaks my heart to think so. Why have you not the looks, as well as the heart of a villain ? (Lamb, 1816, Vol. III, p. 79)

As a direct consequence of this, there comes the power of the vampire to drain energy from its victims. In this case, Glenarvon is an expert in doing so, because he first makes his women so attached to him that then, when they are most dependent on him, he abandons them. There are several examples of this in the novel because it is perhaps what the author was most disturbed by her relationship with Byron, making it very present in *Glenarvon*. However, the following instance is an accurate one to show the essence of this trait:

When near him, she felt ecstasy ; but if separated, though but for one moment, she was sullen and desponding. [...] He felt, he saw, that the peace of her mind, her life itself were gone for ever, and he rejoiced in the thought. (Lamb, 1816, Vol. II, pp. 255-256)

Even though it has been said that Glenarvon's is not a physical vampirism but an energetic one, there are some elements which the author adds in order to enhance that quality and probably magnify the villainous nature in this character based on Lord Byron. Those elements are, on the one hand, the strange relation that the vampire figure has with the moon as we can see in these lines:

[...] upon his retiring, to the pinnacle of a neighboring mount, according to a promise they had given his lordship, that it should be exposed to the first cold ray of the moon that rose after his death. (Polidori, 1819, p. 55)

This element is also seen in *Glenarvon* at times such as the following:

Glenarvon wandered forth every evening by the pale moon, and no one knew whither he went, and no one marked but Calantha how late was his return. And when the rain fell heavy and chill, he would bare his forehead to the storm [...] (Lamb, Vol. II, p. 189)

And the other element which is present in Polidori's work is the constant feeling of fear that Lord Ruthven provokes in other characters. In some instances too this is perceivable about Glenarvon in Lamb's novel, for example:

Calantha started back, as she again observed that almost demoniac smile. His eyes glared upon her with fierce malignity; his livid cheeks became pale ; and over his forehead, an air of deep distress struggled with the violence of passion, till all

again was calm, cold, and solemn, as before. She was surprised at his manner.
(Lamb, 1816, Vol. II, p. 261)

This being said, the figure of Glenarvon can be interpreted as a manifestation of this symbolic vampire, not because of the presence of supernatural elements or blood-sucking, but because of his ability to absorb and destroy the essence of the ones who surround him, in this case, Calantha. His seduction does not seek love, it seeks power over the others. He is seen as an emotional parasite, leaving ruin where there was life before. In this sense, it is correct to say that Glenarvon has much more in common with Lord Ruthven than he has with Manfred, because of the characteristics they share among them.

It is true that Lady Caroline Lamb uses Byron as her main source of inspiration for this character, but she goes beyond personal satire and transforms him into a monstrous being. Hence, while Glenarvon reflects several aspects of Byron, he also embodies a wider literary archetype, bearing traits of the vampire but also, although to a lesser extent, of the Byronic hero.

5. LORD BYRON AND LADY LAMB: FICTION VS. REAL LIFE

From the very beginning, Lady Caroline Lamb's first intentions for writing this novel were to regain her dignity by sharing her side of the events, and exposing Byron for the way he treated her, which led her to ruin. However, as Douglass (2004) mentions in his work, "Those who have judged her novels and poetry have treated them as an extension of her personality: at best the production of a neurotic mind, and at worst a devious attempt to hurt Byron. This does no justice to her as a writer or human being" (p. 16).

In order to see whether this is an accurate statement or not, *Glenarvon* is analyzed in this section of the paper comparing the events in the novel with the ones in Byron and Lamb's real relationship. Moreover, in this way, the points of the story where the author has magnified the experience for the sake of drama, criticizing her lover and the high society, or literary grandeur are marked.

In the first place, Douglass (2004) goes in his work through several episodes from Lamb's life where Byron is involved, and he states that the author was annoyed and probably regretted the fact that "Byron had seduced her away from her marriage and further undermined her faith in God and the immortality of the soul" (p. 229). This is also perceptible in the novel, especially in the following passage: "She reassured him : " I have given my very soul to you, O ! Glenarvon. I believe in you, as I once did in Heaven. I had rather doubt myself and every thing than you" (Lamb, 1816, Vol. III, p. 9).

In the novel, Calantha mentions that Glenarvon gave her a necklace: "As he spoke, he placed around her neck a chain of gold, with a locket of diamonds, containing his hair [...]." (Lamb, 1816, Vol. III, p. 37)

However, Douglass (2004) mentions that even though it was common for lovers to give each other locks of hair as an expression of their love, Byron did not give Lamb one. Nevertheless, the token of the locket is something he actually gave to Lady Caroline and it was inscribed with the words "*crede Byron*" (p. 120). Months later, after Byron's behavior toward the author, she decided to change the inscription to "*ne crede Byron*" (Douglass, 2004, p. 162). Even though this is not exactly the same in the novel, there is a scene which is very similar to this episode of their relationship. In the following example, the one given a token with an inscription by Glenarvon is Alice, his former mistress. Lamb may have done this in her book as a way of manifesting how Byron's moves were calculated and he acted in the same way to all of his lovers:

Eterna fede" had been inscribed. He had placed it upon his little favourite's hand, in token of his fidelity, when first he had told her of his love ; time had worn off and defaced the first impression ; and "Eterno dolor" had been engraved by her in its place — thus telling in few words the whole history of love — "the immensity of its promises — the cruelty of its disappointment. (Lamb, 1816, Vol. II, p. 367)

Lady Lamb continued writing and looking for Byron after he ended their affair. Some biographers refer to Lamb's conduct as obsessive, but it can be seen how the author asserts this in her novel, not exactly referring to herself as someone who was obsessed, but rather infatuated as seen in her own representation, Calantha. (Douglass, 2004) She first acknowledges this in the following excerpt:

[...] and advise her not to write so often. It is most absurd, believe me. Nothing, I think, can be more wanting in dignity, than a woman's continuing to persecute a man who is evidently tired of her. (Lamb, 1816, Vol. III, p. 54)

For this reason, Lady Caroline was catalogued by the psychiatry of the time as an "erotomaniac", who suffered from "dementia caused by obsession for a man" (Douglass, 2004, p. 15). What the author tries to acknowledge repeatedly in *Glenarvon* is that yes, she may have had a breakdown indeed, but it was not because Byron ended their relationship, but because of the situation in which he left her. Her family turned their back on her after this affair became publicly known, publishers saw her as a writer who only looked for fame by criticizing Byron, and people only believed her to be a mad fallen woman. That is why the novel has several passages resembling the following one:

I have fallen to the lowest depth. You, you are the first to teach me how low, how miserably I am fallen. I forsook every thing for you. [...] If you should likewise turn against me — if you for whom so much is lost, should be the first to despise me, how can I bear up under it. Dread the violence of my feelings — the agonizing pang, the despair of a heart so lost, and so betrayed. (Lamb, 1816, Vol. III, p. 78)

Another very remarkable aspect of the author and Byron's relationship, which is also clearly presented in the novel, is the fact that Byron exposed Lady Caroline by publicly showing the letters she sent to him. He did this for the mere entertainment of a group of elite whigs from the period, but it is undoubtedly a disloyal and humiliating behavior toward Lady Lamb to show such personal conversations between two supposed

lovers. In the following example, this is evident, but instead of only politicians, Glenarvon shows Calantha's letters to everyone who surrounded her, damaging her to the core:

Her letters he had shewn ; her secrets he had betrayed [...] And to whom did he thus expose her errors? — To the near relations of her husband, to the friends, and companions of her youth [...] They were human: they saw but what he would have them see : they knew but what he wished them to know: they censured her already, and rather believed his plausible and gentle words, than the frantic rhapsodies of guilt and passion. (Lamb, 1816, Vol. III, pp. 91-92)

To conclude this section, it is worth mentioning that Lady Lamb's husband, William Lamb, impersonated by Lord Avondale in *Glenarvon*, never formally divorced her. Even after the scandal, as happens in the novel, he preferred to simply live separately from his wife. Lamb was in fact ashamed of her acts and she even said she was again in her senses some months after the affair in a letter to Lord Clare, an acquaintance of her (Dickinson, 2007).

This feeling of remorse and shame is captured in *Glenarvon* in one moment in particular, Calantha's death. In this scene, Lord Avondale complains and indirectly reproaches dead Calantha about her affair with Glenarvon by asking where is he at that moment, while his husband is by her side after all:

Where are the friends and flatterers, Calantha, who surrounded thee in an happier hour? I was abandoned for them : where are they now ? Is there not one to turn and plead for thee— not one ! They are gone in quest of new amusement. Some other is the favourite of the day. .The fallen are remembered only by their faults. (Lamb, 1816, Vol. III, p. 172)

As a result of this relationship, Lord Byron's literary career as contrary to Lamb's, did not get immediately damaged by this affair, but it did when the novel got published. In 1813, he resolved to marry another woman after Lady Caroline Lamb, Annabella Milbanke, "a marriage that would protect his public character, allow him to escape Caroline and solve his financial problems" (Douglass, 2004, p. 127). However, Byron was forced to leave England because of Milbanke's accusations of him committing incest with his half-sister Augusta Leigh, and also because of his multiple affairs with both women and men, the second one being illegal at the time. The English establishment could not allow such accusations being made of an English Lord. Byron's reputation was

already downgraded enough when *Glenarvon* was published in 1816, adding a destructive and morally corrupted view of the poet which only helped to aggravate the conflict. Since then, Byron was never able to return to his own country, and his name is directly related with drama and polemic up to our days (Galt, 1831).

On the other side, for Lady Lamb, even though she had a previous extramarital affair with Sir Godfrey Vassal Webster, her reputation was not as harmed as with Byron. This is so because Lord Byron was a more public figure, but Lady Lamb's publication of *Glenarvon* also contributed to the expansion of the rumors which were already circulating at the time. Therefore, her artistic production is "disregarded in favour of a wilful misreading of an obsession with Byron" (Dickinson, 2007, p. 13). This is far from the intention she had when creating the novel, which was simply that of narrating her dreadful experience with a man who did not care about his women nor the consequences of his actions toward them. In *Warm Days Will Never Cease* (2023), the writer states: "Perhaps it would have been more beneficial for her if she had not published the novel", which could have totally been a wiser decision for Lamb, but the circumstances pushed her to the limit in an attempt to clear her image and restore her stained reputation.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The main focus of this dissertation has been Glenarvon, the protagonist of Lady Caroline's novel, and the literary as well as biographical sources which constitute him. Both a textual and a contextual study have been combined in order to better understand the novel.

In the first place. The concept of the Byronic hero has been studied, especially in Lord Byron's *Manfred*. This archetype shows characteristics such as rebellion, psychological complexity, inherent suffering and challenging society. These qualities are key to understanding Manfred as well as Glenarvon. The novel reflects these characteristics and adapts them to create a unique figure within Romanticism.

Moreover, the symbolism of the vampire features has also been analyzed in early literature, with special attention to John Polidori's *The Vampyre* and also Byron's *The Giaour*, the first instance of the modern vampire as we know it in Literature. This analysis allowed for the identification of symbolical elements in Lord Ruthven and the Giaour which are also present in Glenarvon. The figure of the vampire adds an extra dimension to the protagonist, showing him as a destructive presence for his social circle. This enriches the interpretation of the novel within the Gothic and Romantic frames.

Furthermore, this paper has also established a parallelism between the fictional characters and real people. In particular, the relationship of Lord Byron and Lady Caroline Lamb with the novel's main relationship, that of Calantha and Glenarvon. Through biographical documentation and literary analysis, it has been confirmed that *Glenarvon* is a fictionalized representation of their controversial relationship and of the personal and social tensions which arose from it.

Therefore, *Glenarvon* is not only a literary product, but also an act which impacted on the public life of both parts, Byron's and Lamb's. The publication of the novel had significant social as well as professional repercussions.

Lamb verexposing herself and her intimate affairs affected the author's public image in a very negative way. The figure of Glenarvon was a projection of Byron, so this fact also damaged the poet's reputation. The conclusion which is drawn from this is that Glenarvon's value stands both from the point of view of Literature as much as from the historical one. For the literary side, *Glenarvon* shows the Byronic hero and the symbolic vampirism in Romanticism. From the historical side, *Glenarvon* represents the way in

which Literature can reflect on the personal and social conflicts of the people who are involved in the novel.

Altogether, this research contributes to better understand and reevaluate *Glenarvon*. Although this work is usually on a secondary place compared to the works of Byron and Polidori, this novel is crucial to an understanding of the development of the vampiric character in nineteenth-century literature and the idea of power to which it is related.

Finally, this study opens new possibilities for future research. Especially in relation to private life and literary creation, and the analysis of literary characters who become social and cultural symbols. The Byronic hero is still a rich theme to explore, and *Glenarvon* an essential work to comprehend it.

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