Vampire Characters in Anne Rice's "Interview with the Vampire"

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Undergraduate thesis / Završni rad

2017

Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj: **Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences / Sveučilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku, Filozofski fakultet**

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:142:806629

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Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2024-11-24**

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Sveučilište J.J. Strossmayera u Osijeku

Filozofski fakultet Osijek

Preddiplomski studij engleskog jezika i književnosti i filozofije

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doc. dr. sc. Ljubica Matek

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Abstract

This paper deals with the topic of vampire characters in Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*. The two characters on which the paper focuses are Louis and Lestat. Even though there are some others, the paper does not go into depth regarding them, only insofar as they relate to the previously mentioned two characters. The protagonist of the novel, Louis, is a man troubled by guilt due to the death of his brother who runs away from taking his own life by having it taken at the hands of Lestat, the antagonist. In his immortality, he undergoes a kind of identity crisis as he is faced with two conflicting natures within himself – the human one that seeks affection and connection and the vampire one that seeks only death. His creator and proverbial mentor, Lestat, is a character fully aware of his nature and everything he attaches with it. He stops at nothing to achieve his goals and fun. The reason why he only chases entertainment is because he actually knows nothing else of his nature, he is simply lashing out against the misery of his mortal life. By applying Freud's theory of personality, the paper will show that Rice presents vampires as the prototype of a postmodern being which has an endless supply of time and possibilities to become whatever he or she wants to be, but ends up being tied down by its basic instincts.

Keywords: vampire, Anne Rice, humanity, identity, Freud, postmodernism

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Introduction

This paper will deal with the topic of Anne Rice's vampire characters in her novel *Interview with the Vampire*. Anne Rice is the author of *The Vampire Chronicles*, a series of 11 novels (as of 2014) pertaining the lives of several key vampire characters. The two most important characters in the chronicles, particularly in the first novel which is the basis for this paper, are Louis and Lestat. The entire first novel is Louis' own account of his mortal and immortal existence. Lestat is presented as the seducer and the antagonist in the novel, a creature without remorse, one fully content with his abilities, but unable or unwilling to pass his knowledge to his creation. He is Louis' creator.

The thesis of this paper is that the two main vampire characters in the novel, Louis and Lestat, each present an answer to the postmodern state of fragmented identities. Time, as a concept measured by the length of human existence, does not apply to them. They are the perfect example of a postmodern creature that can truly be whatever he or she may choose. However, just like human beings, the two are bound by their most basic urge, the will to live. In order to do that, they must kill. This is where the two characters separate. Lestat is the representative of the 'id', as Freud describes it. He is a creature driven by pure and unbridled impulse. Louis is the super-ego, an equally imbalanced individual tormented by his morality.

The first chapter will deal with the setting of the novel and the depiction of the world in which we find our characters. It is a world of slavery. However, that world must be viewed through the lens of the time of writing the novel. That is why postmodernism is taken as the basis from which this paper will interpret the novel.

The second chapter will deal with the characterization of Louis as the super-ego and his motivations for becoming an immortal creature, as well as what that entails. The third chapter will deal with Lestat as the id, the vampire master who is no master at all.

This paper will not go in depth with regards to other vampire characters in the novel, particularly Armand and Claudia who are also major characters. This is due to the constraints of the paper and the exhaustive amount of work such an analysis would require.

1. A time and place for everything

The beginning of the novel is placed, by the protagonist, in a specific setting: "I was a twenty-five-year-old man when I became a vampire, and the year was seventeen ninety-one…we'd received a grant and settled two indigo plantations on the Mississippi very near New Orleans" (Rice 5). In order to fully grasp the setting, it is necessary to state that the economy of New Orleans, a port in the Southern state of Louisiana, was based on slavery. In order to better understand the position of slaves in the mind of the author, that is in the novel, we must see how the protagonist views them: "Slavery was the curse of their existence; but they had not been robbed yet of that which had been characteristically theirs" (Rice 50). It can be said that the protagonist is found in such a dire situation that he, paradoxically, envies the slaves. Louis actually envies the fact that even though they are servants, the fundamental basis of their identity has not been taken away from them. Also, it is worth mentioning that New Orleans, Louisiana is the hometown of the novel's author.

The novel came out in 1976, a decade marked by previous and undergoing cultural revolutions: "Postwar existence revealed different kinds of men and women, with new aspirations among both majority and minority populations. New possibilities for action empowered individuals and groups in the pursuit of personal freedom and individual self-expression" (Klinkowitz and Pritchard 2275). The same authors provide insight into the environment which Rice was born into and in which she started her literary career:

> With three million men in uniform, the vastly expanded workforce comprised increasing numbers of women. After hostilities were concluded many of these women were reluctant to return to homemaking; after a decade or so of domesticity, women emerged as a political force on behalf of rights and opportunities in the workplace. (Klinkowitz and Pritchard 2275)

The novel came out in a time which was a result of many cultural changes and, therefore: "Some characteristics of the previous decade's countercultural revolt had been accepted in the mainstream, including informalities of dress, relaxation of sexual codes of behavior, and an increased respect for human rights" (Klinkowitz and Pritchard 2278).

As far as literary developments in that decade are concerned, they have been marked by the appearance of many 'new' voices which have now found a medium:

> Feminist and nonfeminist women writers found that subgenres such as fantasy and science fiction could be useful in overthrowing long-held stereotypes of gender; present-day life could be described with a new frankness and expanded awareness appropriate to women's wider and more egalitarian role in society (Klinkowitz and Pritchard 2282).

1.1. Reworking the gothic genre

When talking about the themes explored in the novel, it is obvious that there are: "a number of characteristics usually associated with women's romance – notably, the tracing out of the vampire's search for fulfilment, for a 'complete' love relationship. But, under the umbrella of the vampire genre, romance themes may be dispersed or channeled through other topics or interests" (Gelder 109). One of such topics has always been the sexual orientation of Rice's vampires. Given the fact that her novels are: "essentially grounded in a coherent family structure" (Gelder 109), it is interesting to see how Rice: "flaunts the gayness of her male vampires" (Gelder 109). A possible research topic into this might prove viable because, according to Punter and Byron: "she has written erotica under the name of Anne Rampling and a sado-masochistic trilogy playing on the fairy tale of Sleeping Beauty as A.N. Roquelaure (Punter and Byron 162). However, the subject of sexual orientation will not be explored in depth because there is no space for that, although it does pertain to the era in which the novel was created. Sexual exploration of the 60s and the 70s is widely known and it is important as a part of the formation of identities of characters because they are portrayed as explorers in that regard.

Gelder also criticizes the novel because it allegedly seeks the truth about vampires, but ultimately: "comes back empty-handed" (Gelder 110). His point is that the novel deals very much with the play between reality and illusion. The point of it, according to him, is that: "acting and being collapse into each other. The reality of vampirism lies precisely in this point. And for Rice, a new kind of faith is subsequently produced, one that is aligned with popular fiction rather than with the Catholic religion" (Gelder 112). This results in a collapsing of: "the 'critical distance' – between audience and performance, reader and text, outside and inside" (Gelder 112). Of course, when investigating this particular relationship between the reader and the writer, one must take

this into consideration: “the postmodern vampires…seem to be an excellent means for enticing mass consumption” (Lukić and Matek 80).

Punter and Byron also offer their view on the quality of her work: “Rice’s prose has alternately been praised for its lush and ornate qualities and castigated as repetitive, stilted, formulaic and melodramatic” (Punter and Byron 162). The same authors highlight the value of her work as: “reworking Gothic conventions with a postmodern sensibility about identity” (Punter and Byron 162). According to Nussbaumer, another argument for the quality of this particular novel lies in its narrative structure: “This time the story is narrated from the perspective of a vampire and not the vampire hunters. The description of eternal life comes directly from the vampire itself in a first person narration, whereas the frame story is narrated in the third person” (22).

1.2. No future for the immortals

The more general concept of time is always a very interesting matter in a fantastic story regarding vampires, due to their immortality. The same concept which Sartre applies to Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* applies here, but in a more abstract sense:

> His present is irrational in its essence; it is an event, monstrous and incomprehensible, which comes upon us like a thief – comes upon us and disappears. Beyond this present, there is nothing, since the future does not exist. One present, emerging from the unknown, drives out another present (Sartre 226).

Understandably, all a vampire has is time and it is thought that he would have all the future with it. However, if we consider time like Sartre does when considering Benjy, in an irrational sense, it is applicable to Louis. A vampire, particularly one such as himself, is constantly in danger of simply realizing exactly what Sartre speaks of – the irrationality of his own existence. Armand, a vampire in which Louis seeks answers, gives us this piece of information:

> How many vampires do you think have the stamina for immortality? They have the most dismal notions of immortality to begin with. For in becoming immortal they want all the forms of their life to be fixed as they are and incorruptible…when, in fact, all things change except the vampire himself; everything except the vampire is subject to constant corruption and distortion. (Rice 283)

In this, Armand speaks of the final truth of vampire existence – if they do not find a way to fill the events of their present, they start to ponder the endless future ahead of them and realize they will have nothing to live for. Thus, the world is not filled with vampires because they simply lose the will to live which we find to be so strong in the characters of this novel. Therefore, as Gelder puts it, Rice makes her vampires characters to be: "traversing the earth 'invisible but gazing'" (Gelder 29).

2. Genesis

This chapter deals with the origin of the protagonist, Louis, as well as his transition from mortality to immortality. This is considered to be crucial for understanding his motivation and characterization in general. Louis is clearly introduced as a character aware of his outward appearance and of all the preconceptions one might have towards his kind, namely vampires. The reader is also immediately made aware of the fact that Louis has an irrepressible urge to share his story and he will not jeopardize his opportunity to do so in order to try to deal with the guilt that has been brewing inside him for centuries due to the nature of his existence and the fact he must kill to stay alive.

He begins by describing his mortal life. As the head of his family at the time, Louis has a very interesting notion of himself as a mortal: "It was ironic, really. He was so different from us, so different from everyone, and I was so regular! There was nothing extraordinary about me whatsoever" (Rice 6). The 'he' Louis refers to is his brother. The death of his brother influenced Louis' transition to immortality greatly. He describes his brother as an extremely zealous and physically beautiful person. However, Louis feels he wronged his brother upon hearing of his self-proclaimed visions of saints who ordered him to sell everything his family owned and go to France to become a great religious leader: "Holy he might be, peculiar most definitely; but Francis of Assisi, no. Not my brother. No brother of mine could be such. That is egotism" (Rice 9). At one point, he becomes aware of his own egotism: "It was then that I conceived of my own egotism. Perhaps I'd seen it reflected in the priest. His contemptuous attitude towards my brother reflected my own; his immediate and shallow carping about the devil; his refusal to even entertain the idea that sanctity had passed so close" (Rice 13).

Louis simply could not see mortal existence, especially his own or that of his brother, as being anything other than ordinary. His egotism is the source of his guilt and the feeling of responsibility for the death of his brother: "I could not forgive myself. I felt responsible for his death. The main thought was this: I had laughed at him; I had not believed him; I had not been kind to him. He had fallen because of me" (Rice 9-10). His guilt weighed him down to the point of wishing for death: "I lived like a man who wanted to die but who had no courage to do it himself" (Rice 11).

Louis' motivation is marked by guilt caused by his flawed behavior. From the very beginning of the novel, his guilt finds a way to manifest itself and his narrative can then be viewed as a fulfillment of that guilt in various way throughout his immortal life, as a kind of self-punishment for his own inadequacy. The basis of this can be found in Sigmund Freud's theory of personality which consists of the id, ego, and super-ego: "From the point of view of instinctual control, of morality, it may be said of the id that it is totally non-moral, of the ego that it strives to be moral, and of the super-ego that it can be super-moral and then become as cruel as only the id can be" (*The Ego and the Id* 30). Louis is clearly the representation of super-ego, an incomplete being created and maintained by his dissatisfaction with mortal and immortal existence alike, but also by his fear of death: "The fear of death in melancholia only admits of one explanation: that the ego gives itself up because it feels itself hated and persecuted by the super-ego, instead of loved" (*The Ego and the Id* 33).

2.1. The uncanny that devours

The recount of the first time Louis saw Lestat shows that it was a crucial moment Louis' transition from mortality: "I think I knew everything in that instant, and all that he told me was only aftermath. What I mean is, the moment I saw him, saw his extraordinary aura and knew him to be no creature I'd ever known, I was reduced to nothing. That ego which could not accept the presence of an extraordinary human being in its midst was crushed" (Rice 14). Louis was in an extremely impressionable state at the time. Faced with his own failings in the actions leading up to the death of his brother, his entire identity was devoured by something that seemed so majestic to himself. Also, that kind of existence promised him reprieve from the sins of his mortal life. The play on words which becomes apparent when taking Freud into consideration is simply too obvious – Louis' ego could not accept the presence of Lestat, the id, and he was crushed.

When faced with the concept of immortality, Louis believed that he would no longer feel the burden of his mortal sins when transformed and saw no other option for himself but to go ahead with the transformation: "Decided. It doesn't seem the right word. Yet I cannot say it was inevitable from the moment that he stepped into that room. No, indeed, it was not inevitable. Yet I can't say I decided. Let me say that when he'd finished speaking, no other decision was possible for me, and I pursued my course without a backward glance" (Rice 14-15).

Indeed, he mentions that there were two sides i.e. lights to his desire for vampirism: "The first light was simply enchantment; Lestat had overwhelmed me on my deathbed. But the other light was my wish for self-destruction. My desire to be thoroughly damned" (Rice 17). His motivation for immortality had as much to do with wanting to escape his own guilt as it did with the enchantment of the vampire and the desire to see the world through different eyes. This part of his characterization grounds him in a very real world in which people battle with an assortment of addictions and provides a step away from the supernatural.

However, it is also important to take Freud's thoughts on the uncanny into consideration here: "It is undoubtedly related to what is frightening – to what arouses dread and horror; equally certainly, too, the word is not always used in a clearly definable sense, so that it tends to coincide with what excites fear in general" (*Theory and Criticism* 930). The uncanny is at the same time familiar and psychological in nature, as it refers to something known but forgotten, or, rather, repressed: "if psycho-analytic theory is correct in maintaining that every affect belonging to an emotional impulse, whatever its kind, is transformed, if it is repressed, into anxiety, then among instances of frightening things there must be one class in which the frightening element can be shown to be something repressed which recurs. This class of frightening things would then constitute the uncanny" (*Theory and Criticism* 944). An interesting parallel can be drawn between Freud's analysis of the meaning of the word "uncanny" and how Gelder views the very theme of the novel: "The German word '*unheimlich*' is obviously the opposite of '*heimlich*' [homely], '*heimisch*' ['native']…" (*Theory and Criticism* 931). As Gelder puts is: "Thus the novel moves back and forth between the recuperation of a mother-and-child relationship (the familial relationship: home) and the unfamiliarity of one's separation from the mother (away from home)" (Gelder 114).

Finally, Freud's notes on the uncanny as depicted in literature must be taken into consideration: "The contrast between what has been repressed and what has been surmounted cannot be transposed on to the uncanny in fiction without profound modification; for the realm of phantasy depends for its effect on the fact that its content is not submitted to reality-testing. The somewhat paradoxical result is that in the first place a great deal that is not uncanny in fiction would be so if it happened in real life; and in the second place that there are many more means of creating uncanny effects in fiction than there are in real life" (*Theory and Criticism* 950). The

usage of the uncanny, that is the very introduction of vampirism, serves a purpose in the characterization of Louis. When faced with the uncanny notion of the existence of something superhuman, his ego is annihilated and he submits to it. Ken Gelder offers some criticism of Freud's concept by stating that: "Freud's resolution prevents him from analyzing just how unstable the 'in between' state can be: the boundaries dividing imagination and reality, the animate and inanimate, the living and the dead, can never be properly distinguished. The uncanny is precisely this 'dubious' in between condition" (Gelder, 44).

2.2. Overcoming

Having gone through with his transformation, which is effectively his death as a human being, Louis is left with the aftermath. He is thrust into a very different form of existence and he is having a hard time dealing with his heightened senses and strong urges. However, immediately after reconciling with the tidal wave of stimuli, he informs us that "The first thing that became apparent to me…was that I did not like Lestat at all. I was far from being his equal yet, but I was infinitely closer to him than I had been before the death of my body" (Rice 25). Louis realizes now that the radiating presence of Lestat he felt prior to becoming a vampire himself was the result of his mortal self being presented with something immortal and supernatural. The fascination was not founded in Lestat's personality or his knowledge of the vampire world and it could not last beyond the physical transformation itself. Here, a notable shift in the characterization of Lestat can be seen. Having been the supernatural and evil seduction artist in the very beginning, he is now seen as a very shallow character. This spurs on a parallel development of the two characters in a reverse manner – as Louis grows in power and knowledge, Lestat's influence becomes weaker and his many flaws come into focus. We can also see this through the lens of Freud – Louis' ego was being seduced by the primal urges of Lestat's id. However, when transformed, Louis' finds himself to be something of a super-ego i.e. on a moral high-ground when compared to Lestat. He then acknowledges the fact that Lestat is simple and primal and that no longer appeals to him. He only wants to control that side of himself and Lestat.

Furthermore, Louis quickly becomes aware of just how superficial Lestat's knowledge of vampirism is and how bad of a teacher he really is: "He might have calmed me and told me I might watch my death with the same fascination with which I had watched and felt the night. But he didn't Lestat was never the vampire I was. Not at all. The vampire did not say this boastfully. He

said it as if he would truly have had it otherwise" (Rice 22). The very act of taking a life, held sacred by Louis, is taken as something collateral by Lestat: "Killing is no ordinary act…it is the experience of another's life for certain, and often the experience of the loss of that life through the blood, slowly…because for vampires that is the ultimate experience" (Rice 29). The distinct difference between these two characters is further highlighted after that first kill: "I understood now the difference between us. For me the experience of killing had been cataclysmic…I was altered, permanently; I knew it" (Rice 31). As previously mentioned, Louis believed that absolution would could come along with immortality. After taking a life, he realized that there would be no absolution. This causes the primary struggle within him – the battle of his two natures.

Louis describes the onset of his disappointment with Lestat in the following manner: "Lestat felt the opposite. Or he felt nothing….By morning, I realized that I was his complete superior and I had been sadly cheated in having him for a teacher" (Rice 31). Lestat is now completely removed as the representative of vampirism in Louis' mindset. He is now just a supporting character in Louis' attempt to learn as much as he can of his new condition: "I felt cold towards him. I had no contempt in superiority. Only a hunger for new experience, for that which was beautiful and as devastating as my kill" (Rice 31). As described, Louis feels that the experience of taking a life is the ultimate experience he can now have and is eager to learn more. This is a characteristic from his mortal personality that endured the transformation: "And I saw that if I were to maximize every experience available to me, I must exert my own powers over my learning. Lestat was of no use" (Rice 31-32). What he means by this is that his super-ego must completely exert its influence and he is, therefore, only driven by the desire to obtain knowledge of his condition and to form some sort of identity which would appeal to him more.

3. Lestat as the failed teacher

It is worth devoting a portion of the paper to highlight the stark change in how Lestat is first seen to how he is seen afterwards. In the beginning, when he first came to Louis, he is fascinating "I remember that the movement of his lips raised the hair all over my body, sent a shock of sensation through my body that was not unlike the pleasure of passion" (Rice 19). This description is very vivid and full of charge. It is borderline erotic, suggesting thus Lestat's connection with the impulses and the id.

Contrary to this, Lestat is further on described as a regular son worried about his father and his own reputation: "He had human problems, a blind father who did not know his son was a vampire and must not find out. Living in New Orleans had become too difficult for him, considering his needs and the necessity to care for his father, and he wanted Pointe du Lac" (Rice 16). Moreover, he is shown as trying to get by using any means necessary: "He spoke my name to me softly, laughing. As I said, he was determined to have the plantation" (Rice 17). His blatant disregard for anything but his own selfish motivation makes his antagonistic characterization evolve. Instead of teaching Louis everything he knows, he merely taunts him and makes sure Louis is dependent on him for survival: "You don't know, for example, all the ways you can die. And dying now would be such a calamity, wouldn't it?" (Rice 33-34).

Here we can delve deeper into Lestat being the id. His father is a poor, blind man. He has received no help and no instruction from him as far as it is known. In fact, given the situation his mortal self would be in, it can be estimated that his mortal existence would be a miserable one. Therefore, it is possible to argue that the reason why Lestat gave in to his base instincts during his immortality was because he was repressing the misery of his existence. That is why he forgoes all inhibitions and becomes the embodiment of id: "The id, to which we finally come back, has no means of showing the ego either love or hate. It cannot say what it wants; it has achieved no unified will. Eros and the death instinct struggle within it" (*The Ego and the Id* 34).

The contrast in motivation between the two characters perhaps shines the brightest when Louis analyzes Lestat's reason for killing: "A young man around your age would have appealed to him in particular…they represented the greatest loss to Lestat, because they stood on the threshold of the maximum possibility of life" (Rice 41-42). He later goes on to claim "Being a vampire for him meant revenge. Revenge against life itself. Every time he took a life it was revenge…Vengeance,

blind and sterile and contemptible" (Rice 46). This revenge Lestat carries as his basic motivation is, as was suggested, based in the misery of his mortal life.

However, there was once instance in which Lestat showed weakness. When faced with the imminent death of his father and the man's single dying wish to part with him on good terms, Lestat caved and said "It's all right, Father. You must rest easy. I hold nothing against you" (Rice 56). It could be stated that this had not actually been weakness and that Lestat was simply saying what he had to say and be on his way. However, there were far less emotionally revealing ways to go about it. He also might have been startled by the fact that almost immediately prior to that Louis claimed he wanted them to separate "Now, go look at your father and tell me how long he has to live, for that's how long you stay, and only if the slaves don't rise up against us" (Rice 51). A noteworthy comparison can be drawn here – as Louis is master to the slaves, so is Lestat still a master to Louis. Both are reliant on a completely fictional foundation. The slaves are led to believe that their place is to serve, and Louis is led to believe that Lestat holds some sort of knowledge which gives him power and superiority and so both the slaves and Louis refuse to rebel.

4. Liberation

This paper attempts to analyze the two main characters, namely Louis and Lestat. However, the character of Claudia holds great significance for the development of both and will be approached in that regard only. In this chapter, the effects of creating a vampire child on the two characters will be explored. Her appearance, at first, only serves to postpone the inevitable break between Louis and Lestat. However, throughout their life together, Louis finds himself to be greatly influenced by her. As he teaches her, he himself is taught a great deal. Therefore, his identity is thoroughly shaped by taking care of the child in a sense that can be construed as fatherhood in a human sense. She can be viewed as an extension of Louis' human identity: "Yes, and that's your flaw, and why your face was miserable when I said as humans say 'I hate you'…I have no human nature…Yet I have your tongue. Your passion for the truth. Your need to drive the needle of the mind right to the heart of it all…I am your vampire self more than you are. And now the sleep of sixty-five years has ended" (Rice 117 – 118). After "the sleep of sixty-five years", Claudia decides to free herself and her mentor from Lestat and the slavery she claims they are in. At this point, Louis is a changed person. Although he is still clinging to some fragment of humanity, he claims that he has grown far less attached: "I had grown far from the attachment I'd felt for her or my sister or any mortal. And I watched the tragedy finally as one might from a theater balcony, moved from time to time, but never sufficiently to jump the railing and join the players on stage" (Rice 130 – 131).

This section finds Louis to be in some sort of passive state of observing, bur more in line with his changed living situation. Not only that, but his dreams and visions started bothering him more. The one in the cathedral is quite indicative of what troubled him most: "I was the supernatural in this cathedral. I was the only supermortal thing that stood conscious under this roof! Loneliness. Loneliness to the point of madness" (Rice 144). Being alone and having no one to share your existence with is what troubled Louis the most. This is an apparent similarity with Lestat. He does not want to be left alone because he realizes that he is unbearably incomplete alone. It can be argued that this drive is also a remnant of his human nature. Even if it is, it would only become supersized for a character such as Louis who is not fulfilled by simply satisfying his physical needs and his desire for wreaking havoc. More to the point, he even tried to confess, even though he knew the act to be in vain. The deed, however, went awry when he presented himself as he truly

is to the priest: “Do you see what I am? Why, if God exists, does He suffer me to exist” (Rice 147). This is, of course, indicative of just how much Louis is still in conflict with himself. That conflict separated him from both Lestat and Claudia “…despite everything I had done or failed to do – she clung to me. I was not her own kind. Merely the closest thing to it” (Rice 149).

After luring Lestat using two young boys poisoned with absinthe and laudanum, Claire and Louis believed to be rid of him and started to make plans to travel and find out more about their kind in Europe. At this point, the other side of Louis’ conflicted nature comes into play. In every previous conflicted situation, it was always his human nature that rebelled against what was expected of him by Lestat. Now, when he is rid of Lestat, he can not stop seeing him everywhere around: “I was thinking of him as I’d thought of my brother’s body. I was seeing him sunk deep among the roots of cypress and oak, that hideous withered form folded in the white sheet” (Rice 152). In fact, the only time when he actually was not just a passive observant in the act of liberating the pair from Lestat and his way of existing was when Lestat surprisingly came back and Louis protected himself and, more importantly, Claudia.

4.1. Investigation of self

Even though they were now free to do as they pleased and discover all that they wanted to discover, Louis was still not rid of his conflict. On their journey by ship, he states: “It struck me suddenly what consolation it would be to know Satan, to look upon his face, no matter how terrible that countenance was, to know that I belonged to him totally, and thus put to rest forever the torment of this ignorance. To step through some veil that would forever separate me from all that I called human nature” (Rice 163). This is yet another confirmation of what exactly it is that is causing the conflict within Louis – his humanity. It is also worth mentioning that Claudia, once the instrument of calming Louis’ mortal needs, was now fast becoming the one who tried to guide him on his way of getting rid of those “Louis, your quest is for darkness only. This sea is not your sea. The myths of men are not your myths. Men’s treasures are not yours” (Rice 167). This means that Louis basically stayed in the same spot as a vampire character because he never tried to develop that side of him. By taking care of Claudia, he was only developing one side of him, the human side. It showed a great deal when they came upon some people scared of a potential vampire in Europe: “I could see what I must do, but it wasn’t only that I wanted so much to learn from him, my heart pounding with excitement. It was heartrending to see him that way” (Rice 175). Not only

that, but he also stood up for a man whose dead wife some villagers wanted to mutilate "You've searched your cemetery! If it's vampires, where do they hide from you? This woman can't do you harm" (Rice 182). At the same time, Claudia developed only her vampire side, due to her only having that. Her reaction to all those people was in tune with that, meaning that her only motivation was to find out the potential location of alleged vampires.

On their travels at the outskirts of Vienna, Claudia proposed to Louis that it seemed ludicrous that Louis would be unable to make vampires if Lestat was able to. However, in revealing his thoughts on the matter, Louis actually gave everything one needs to know of his vampire nature: "I don't know why at first I didn't even understand her, except that in loathing what I was with every impulse in me I had a particular fear of that question, which was almost worse than any other" (Rice 197). Louis hated every part of his vampire nature and what it made him do. The only part of that existence which made it worthwhile for him was taking care of Claudia. Even in that instance he was constantly aware of just how perverted their group was: "Can you picture it, this splendid domesticity, dim lamps, the vampire father singing to the vampire daughter? Only the doll had a human face, only the doll" (Rice 199). We may, again, find the answer to why Louis hates his own nature so much in Freud, if we take him to be a patient of Freud: "We are accustomed to say that the need for illness has got the upper hand in them over the desire for recovery" (Freud 27). If Louis is taken to be a patient suffering from an illness (vampirism), it can be concluded that the benefits of his illness (his immortality) simply outweigh the fact that it is indeed an illness and that he sees it as such. This generates further conflict within him.

4.2. The death of humanity

The final piece of the puzzles that are Louis' and Lestat's identity is the death of Claudia. After they allegedly surpass the id of Lestat, Louis and Claudia are once again visited by his unyielding will to live. He survived their assassination attempt and came back. In that form, he was rid of all his glamour and all the enchantment. All that was left was the simple drive for existence: "But those scars still scored every inch of his face, the fine, hard threads cutting the delicate skin above his lip, the lids of his eyes, the smooth rise of his forehead. And the eyes, they burned with a silent rage that seemed infused with vanity, an awful relentless vanity that said, 'See what I am'" (Rice 295). This is also what is left of him at the very end of the novel.

Louis, however, goes through a much more significant change. Lestat's revenge against Claudia ended in her demise. Upon realizing this, Louis is fundamentally changed: "…and I felt that cry that pushed everything else out of its way, my teeth clenched to keep it in, because it was so loud and so full it would destroy me if I let it go" (Rice 305). Louis, as was mentioned, hated the vampire part of his nature and identity. Claudia was the only thing in his existence which made him feel like he still belonged in the world. His place was to watch over her. When that is taken from him, his humanity is finally and completely destroyed. He goes on existing with Armand, the unwilling head of the coven which executed Claudia, hoping for answers which actually never come. The final expression of his guilt because of the fact that he exists is the interview itself.

Conclusion

The novel *Interview with the Vampire* has been one of the most widely popular vampire stories in contemporary time, spawning numerous sequels (albeit, some of questionable quality, as has been mentioned). The purpose of this paper was to analyze the vampire characters, Louis and Lestat, as postmodern characters. The thesis of the paper was that they are each an answer to our postmodern state of existence. They exist out of the framework of time and are not limited by it. Therefore, they are the prototypical self-made characters. However, they are each bound by the same thing (in different ways). Neither of them wants to feel alone and out of place. Lestat does so by demonstrating his power over humans in vengeance for his miserable life as one. Louis does so by creating surrogates for relationships which he can never have. The novel also presents an interesting twist on the Freudian concept of the 'uncanny' through the concept of family and familiarity presented by Lestat, Louis, and Claudia. On top of that, it provides us with the possibility of also analyzing the gender roles and representations, which have not been dealt with in this paper. The thesis of this paper is thought to be proven – both the titular characters are extremely fragmented personalities (they must constantly find new things to occupy them) at grips with their basic nature which they cannot ultimately run away from.

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