

Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* and Bram Stoker's vampire ladies as representations of Cesare Lombroso's *donna delinquente*?

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Abstract. In the middle of the 19th century, the Italian physician and psychiatrist Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909) founded what became later known as criminal anthropology, one of his two major works being *La donna delinquente* or *Criminal Woman, the Prostitute, and the Normal Woman* (1893). Lombroso is famous for his theory of the born criminal, who is characterized by “anomalies”, i.e. physical and psychological abnormalities, which made Lombroso regard criminal men and women as atavistic throwbacks on the evolutionary scale. These ideas were not new, but Lombroso was the one to formulate and systematize them in his criminal anthropology. To Lombroso, gender was one important aspect in the analysis of criminality. He thought that the main characteristic of criminal women was their strong sexual drive, which expressed itself in their development into criminals and prostitutes. Lombroso was very interested in female offenders and even sympathetic in some cases, but he propagated harsh punishments for murderers and incorrigible “monsters”. Although his main works from 1867 and 1893 were not translated into English until 1895 and 1911, he was an internationally renowned criminologist and it can be taken for granted that British 19th-century authors were acquainted with his theories. Based on the idea of an interdependence of literature and culture, this paper examines the question to what extent Lombroso's ideas concerning criminal women are implied in 19th-century representations of female vampires by taking Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872) and Stoker's vampire ladies in *Dracula* (1898) as examples. Thus, this paper aims at showing how, in the case of Le Fanu's child vampire Carmilla, biological markers mix with contemporary prejudices on women but are not yet explicitly explained in terms of criminal anthropology while Stoker's female vampires obviously correspond to Lombroso's version of the criminal woman.

Keywords. Cesare Lombroso – criminal anthropology – vampires – woman question – prostitution – British novels.

1. Introduction

The vampire is a phenomenon that has appeared in literature of different epochs. Being eternal does not prevent him from undergoing constant metamorphoses, which allow the assumption that this creature serves as a metaphor encoding the fears of a given period. During the 19th century, rapid mechanization, industrialization and urbanization caused massive changes in everyday life and added to a feeling of insecurity throughout Europe. On the national level, the British public perceived massive poverty, high crime rates and the female rights movement questioning traditional role models as a threat to the existing order. On the international level, these fears were partly but not solely caused by intercultural contacts with “the other” which were believed to threaten the already unstable British identity and sense of security.² Fighting crime on the national level became one means of managing this crisis. The late 19th-century vampire, in this context, appears as a symbol of such fears. That is why this analysis focuses on two of the most famous examples of such creatures of the



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² The assumedly negative influence of “foreign blood” on the British through immigration is a major question, but not one that will be discussed in this essay.

night in order to prove how they correspond to contemporary ideas not simply of the criminal, but the criminal woman.

One very influential theory for the analysis of crime and the criminal was developed by the 19th-century Italian physician and psychiatrist Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909), who founded the discipline of criminal anthropology. Regarding criminal men and women as atavistic throwbacks on the evolutionary scale, he thought that the main characteristic of criminal women was their strong sexual drive, which expressed itself in their development into criminals and prostitutes. Although his main works from 1867 and 1893 were not translated into English until 1895 and 1911, he was an internationally renowned criminologist and it can be taken for granted that 19th-century authors knew his theories. Based on the assumption of an interdependence of literature and culture, this paper examines to what extent Lombrosian theory can be applied in the analysis of British 19th-century representations of female vampires by taking Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872) and Stoker's vampire ladies in *Dracula* (1898) as two popular examples. Although Le Fanu's *Carmilla* predates the English translation of Lombroso's *Criminal Woman*, it will be demonstrated that the novelist anticipated Lombroso's ideas on an artistic level – though he did not formulate them in terms of criminal anthropology – in the homosexual child vampire Carmilla.

2. Lombroso's criminal anthropology

2.1 Sources and main ideas on the born criminal

In contrast to Enlightenment criminology, which regarded crime as an evil product of man's free will,³ Cesare Lombroso developed his theory of the criminal as a biologically defective individual without free will. Convinced that the criminal was doomed by his biological predispositions, he adopted the term "born criminal" and described him as defined by physical and psychological abnormalities.⁴ Comparing these anomalies to the traits of assumedly primitive peoples, animals and plants, Lombroso concluded that dangerous criminals represented an earlier evolutionary stage.⁵ Lombroso equated criminality not only with atavism and evolutionary degeneration but also with racial categories when, already in his 1871 work *The White Man and the Man of Color*, he expressed his belief that "we must say there are two general races: the White and the Colored"⁶, with the latter representing early and assumedly primitive stages of evolution in contrast to civilized, white and law-abiding people.⁷

Although he was internationally criticized for his criminal anthropology, Lombroso created an elaborate classification of criminals, which became more and more differentiated in time, starting with a comparison of assumedly normal people and criminal males in the first two editions from 1867 and 1878, in which he already characterized criminals as marked by physically and psychologically atavistic features.⁸ In the third edition from 1884, Lombroso introduced the term "born criminal", which had originally been coined by Enrico Ferri. Each individual displaying a cluster of five or more anomalies was described as a "full type criminal".⁹ In the third edition, Lombroso dealt with the category of the morally insane, which he had adopted from Benjamin Rush, Philippe Pinel and James Cowles Prichard¹⁰, and claimed that morally insane patients were not only mentally ill but also criminal. Furthermore,

³ Cf. Gibson / Rafter (2004: 15) and Rafter (2008: 21 ff.).

⁴ Cf. Harrowitz (1994: 15).

⁵ For the connections between Lombroso's and Darwin's theories, see Norris (1985: 40 ff.).

⁶ Lombroso (1871: 222).

⁷ Cf. Lombroso (2006: 167).

⁸ Cf. Gibson / Rafter (2006: 9). The fact that Lombroso examined the skulls of criminals is a hint at the phrenological and physiognomical roots of his criminal anthropology. See also Lombroso (2006: 45 ff.) and Gall / Spurzheim (2001).

⁹ Gibson / Rafter (2006: 10).

¹⁰ Cf. Prichard (1835).

Lombroso turned to degeneration theory in Benedict Auguste Morel's tradition and concluded that both atavism and disease could cause arrested development or the degeneration of biological and mental functions. Lombroso tried to show "how social factors such as alcoholism, venereal disease, or malnutrition"¹¹ might cause biological and psychological regression in individuals and their children.¹² In the fourth edition from 1889, Lombroso identified three causes of born criminality: atavism, moral insanity, and epilepsy.¹³ He placed more emphasis on sociological factors as causes of crime – and thus his explanations oscillated between nature and nurture as causes of criminality.

Many of the ideas Lombroso presented in his criminological work were not new as both Henry Mayhew and John Binny, as well as J. Bruce Thomson and especially Henry Maudsley had come to similar conclusions and may even have served as sources for Lombroso's theories.¹⁴ Although his work was vehemently criticized throughout his lifetime and ever after, Lombroso succeeded not only in inspiring Nordau to dedicate his *Degeneration* to him,¹⁵ but also to set up criminology as a fully accepted science of its own¹⁶ and to develop, as Gibson and Rafter put it, "the first coherent criminological theory based on empirical data. Renouncing free will as an old-fashioned concept, [he] [...] redefined crime as a disease for which its perpetrators held no moral responsibility."¹⁷

2.2 Lombroso's theory of the *Criminal Woman*

Having applied his theory to male delinquents, Lombroso turned to an analysis of female crime and criminals, seeking to define the female counterpart to the male born criminal. *Criminal Woman* caused a reconsideration of ideas on the female criminal as Lombroso placed emphasis on psychological and sexual factors which he regarded as the main reasons for female delinquency.¹⁸ Lombroso begins by giving information on what he thought was the nature of woman in general on the basis of an analysis of the "normal woman" as a control group. After a brief outline of the historical genesis of female crime and prostitution, he turns to an analysis of the pathological anatomy and anthropometry of the criminal woman and the prostitute.

2.2.1 The normal woman

Lombroso's basic outline of the "normal woman" introduces the subject of his analysis as inferior to man in every respect. This also holds true for female criminal activity, which was lower than that of men as an analysis of crime rates demonstrated. As crime is linked to atavistic characteristics in Lombroso's criminal anthropology, he was confronted with the problem that women seemed to be less criminal and therefore less atavistic than men. This, of course, did not correspond to his idea of general female inferiority, which necessitated that

¹¹ Gibson / Rafter (2006: 11).

¹² In this respect, Lombroso is close to the environmentalist school of criminology in France, the greatest opponent of Lombroso's theory, as Harrowitz (1994: 16 f.) explains. In *Criminal Woman*, Lombroso does not always manage to separate the terms "degeneration" and "atavism" but rather mixes them up, as Gibson and Rafter (2004: 20) point out.

¹³ Cf. Lombroso (2006: 247 ff.).

¹⁴ Cf. Rafter (2008: 67) and Maudsley (1867).

¹⁵ Cf. Pick (1989: 110), cf. Pick (2003).

¹⁶ Cf. Harrowitz (1994: 16).

¹⁷ Gibson / Rafter (2004: 20).

¹⁸ Gibson / Rafter (2004: 3). In the first edition of *Criminal Man*, Lombroso included a section on criminal women which he based on Alexandre Parent-Duchatelet's 1836 study of Parisian prostitutes. Although Lombroso is famous for his work *Criminal Man*, his dealing with female delinquents was the one that was accessible to English-speaking readers much earlier and which made Lombroso's ideas popular among British and American readers. *La donna delinquente* was translated into English already in 1895 – only two years after the Italian original text had been published –, which, of course, added to its reception in various national contexts.

women had to be far more atavistic than men.¹⁹ It was for this reason that he linked his idea of female inferiority to the fact of her lower criminal potential.

Based on Darwin's findings, Lombroso begins his argument by explaining that, among plants and in very early evolutionary stages of human life, female beings are stronger than their male counterparts. In the course of human evolution, Lombroso argues, female organisms do not develop that much due to the fact that they are mostly preoccupied with reproductive processes and functions. That is why male organisms reach a higher level of strength and refinement in evolutionary terms while female organisms become weaker and less intelligent.²⁰ Lombroso then follows Ernst Haeckel in his statement that ontogenesis recapitulates phylogenesis – thus assuming that every human being has to live through the whole evolutionary development of the species again – and claims that women do not get beyond the stage of childhood which prevents them from developing into fully rational human beings. Instead, Lombroso suggests that they keep on thinking and behaving like children by lying (due to their “instinct of lying”²¹), deceiving and behaving in a deviant way²² that mirrors their “infantilism.”²³ Such seemingly biological explanations of female inferiority are combined with arguments that try to explain why women are likely to lie and betray by considering how they are brought up in a male-dominated environment in which they are educated to try to manipulate men for their own profit.²⁴ He also thinks that women are less likely to engage sexual intercourse because they really love a man than because they want to be protected and economically supported. Love, according to Lombroso, is among the most important aspects of female life, and is not caused by eroticism but by the needs described above.²⁵ In addition to that, for Lombroso, women are unstable personalities, very suggestible, vain and not very intelligent, and they can easily be turned into evil beings by their environment.²⁶

From Lombroso's point of view, women therefore seem to have a certain evil potential lurking behind their sometimes pleasant masks. Lombroso claims that the only feature that prevents them from turning evil – which they would if they followed their instincts – is maternity, which causes them to behave in an altruistic way.²⁷ He marvels about the coexistence of cruelty and compassion in women and credits maternity for women's compassionate side: “Maternity, together with women's lesser intelligence, strength, and variability, explains why women are not only less moral but also less criminal than men.”²⁸

2.2.2 The criminal woman and the prostitute

After presenting his basic assumptions concerning women in general, Lombroso focuses on forms of female crime and tries to find characteristics of the different groups of the criminal woman and the prostitute in comparison to the already inferior normal woman.²⁹ Female offenders are divided into criminals and prostitutes. Lombroso adds a number of minor categories, such as “suicides, insane criminals, epileptic and morally insane offenders, and hysterical offenders.”³⁰ All of his categories are subdivided into other categories, such as the born criminal, the occasional criminal, the criminal by passion, the born prostitute and the

¹⁹ Cf. Gibson / Rafter (2004: 9).

²⁰ Cf. Lombroso (2004: 45).

²¹ Lombroso (2004: 77).

²² Cf. Lombroso (2004: 46).

²³ Lombroso (2004: 64).

²⁴ Cf. Lombroso (2004: 63 ff.; 78).

²⁵ Cf. Lombroso (2004: 60).

²⁶ Cf. Lombroso (2004: 79; 85; 80).

²⁷ Cf. Lombroso (2004: 69).

²⁸ Lombroso (2004: 36).

²⁹ Cf. Gibson / Rafter (2004: 8).

³⁰ Gibson / Rafter (2004: 11).

occasional prostitute. Unfortunately, Lombroso does not always manage to explain the differences between criminal women and prostitutes. This may partly be due to the fact that, for him, prostitution did not only consist of selling one's body but also of extra-marital sexual intercourse.³¹

He again analyses criminal women's skulls and physiognomies, including jaws, ears, facial wrinkles – which are supposed to appear earlier in criminal women³² – and teeth. He also describes their hair – criminal women are supposed to display a “virile distribution of hair”³³ –, their bodies, menstrual abnormalities, genitals and breasts.³⁴ Finally, he concentrates on their characters, which he regards as lascivious and sexually abnormal.³⁵ Lombroso argues that the average criminal woman is closer to a man than to the normal woman.³⁶ The idea of female criminals' virility is somehow understandable in terms of Lombroso's theory because a normal woman would be far too weak to commit any violent crime. Only if women are really atavistic and close to assumedly primitive stages of human evolution, do they regain the virile strength Lombroso ascribes to female beings in very early evolutionary stages. Not only are criminal women and prostitutes more virile than normal women, but – being on a lower evolutionary level than normal, law-abiding women – they also display a stronger sexual drive, which manifests itself in lasciviousness, sexual precocity, nymphomania, and assumed sexual psychopathy such as “perversion” and “lesbianism”.³⁷ According to Lombroso, female homosexuality is caused by an “excessive lustfulness”³⁸, which, in situations when only women are together, such as in prisons, manifests itself in their sexual contacts with each other. While the first reason is biological, the second one emphasizes the importance of environmental factors. When lascivious women such as prostitutes spend a lot of time together, Lombroso believes, they will inevitably start immoral, homosexual activities.³⁹ Such behaviour becomes more intense as women grow older and, as Lombroso thinks, more degenerate (as happens to everybody, since Lombroso equates aging with degeneration). In this way, female homosexuality is described as cause and result of degeneration.⁴⁰ Finally, Lombroso feels sure that the homosexual criminal female “feels like a man”, that she shows “virile energy” and dresses in a “masculine style”.⁴¹

Since the atavistic anomalies are extremely high in prostitutes, Lombroso argues that the female equivalent of the male born criminal has to be the prostitute⁴² and that she shares the same atavistic origin.⁴³ Lombroso admits, though, that a prostitute is less dangerous for society than the male born criminal, and that women become criminal prostitutes mainly because of the pressure of their male environment that “victimize[s]”⁴⁴ them. Therefore, Lombroso concludes that the prostitute is “less perverse and less harmful to society”⁴⁵ than a male born criminal because she is only a woman and therefore of “arrested development”⁴⁶, but – being an unwomanly woman – nevertheless, a “true monster.”⁴⁶

³¹ Cf. Gibson / Rafter (2004: 11).

³² Cf. Lombroso (2004: 107 ff; 126).

³³ Cf. Lombroso (2004: 131).

³⁴ Cf. Lombroso (2004: 114; 134).

³⁵ Gibson / Rafter (2004: 4).

³⁶ Cf. Lombroso (2004: 130).

³⁷ Cf. Lombroso (2004: 171 ff.).

³⁸ Lombroso (2004: 177).

³⁹ Cf. Lombroso (2004: 177).

⁴⁰ At least, Lombroso (2004: 178) admits that some women become homosexuals due to evil treatment through male sexual abuse.

⁴¹ Lombroso (2004: 178).

⁴² Lombroso (2004: 37).

⁴³ Lombroso (2004: 37).

⁴⁴ Lombroso (2004: 37).

⁴⁵ Lombroso (2004: 37).

⁴⁶ Lombroso (2004: 183; 185).

3. Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* and Bram Stoker's vampire ladies as representations of Cesare Lombroso's *donna delinquente*

These major ideas of Lombroso's theory of the criminal woman will now be considered with regard to their applicability to 19th-century literary vampire women.

3.1 *Carmilla*

Carmilla, Sheridan Le Fanu's child vampire, happens to become the guest of half-orphan Laura and her father in their castle in Styria. It soon becomes clear that, despite the young visitor's numerous amiable qualities, there must be something wrong with her. This suspicion is confirmed when she turns out to be the revenant *Carmilla* of Karnstein, trying to kill innocent Laura. *Carmilla* seems to be quite the opposite of Lombroso's female criminals at first sight, which is not surprising, as the text was written when Lombroso's *Criminal Woman* had not yet been published. Nevertheless, she corresponds to a number of criminological ideas also present in Lombroso's work.

Physically, *Carmilla* is introduced as an ambivalent creature. The narrator, Laura, and her companions perceive her as "absolutely beautiful", "gentle and nice", and feel fascinated by her "very sweet voice"⁴⁷, and her "slender and wonderfully graceful"⁴⁸ shape. They also admire her "rich and brilliant complexion", her "large, dark, and lustrous" eyes, her "small and beautiful features" and her beautiful masses of "very dark brown hair"⁴⁹, but, interestingly enough, also "the sharpest tooth, – long, thin, pointed, like an awl, like a needle."⁵⁰ Intellectually, *Carmilla* is perceived as intelligent and eloquent by her hosts.⁵¹ In spite of all these positive attributes, her friend Laura cannot but feel a hitherto unexplainable "faint antipathy"⁵² with regard to her guest. Apart from this spontaneous reaction concerning *Carmilla*, Laura's feeling is based on other reasons as well. First of all, *Carmilla* is said to have travelled in bad company with a number of sinister-looking men, her mother and a "hideous black woman"⁵³ – a fact that makes Laura and her governesses feel uneasy about their guest. This feeling is strengthened by *Carmilla*'s refusal to convey any information about her past and her family. Furthermore, they perceive her as a real "saunter",⁵⁴ as she sleeps long, does not eat regularly, likes luxuries and does not show proper behaviour in social matters.⁵⁵

Furthermore, Laura notices that her friend is emotionally unstable. Being full of languor and even of emotional "coldness" and "melancholy"⁵⁶ sometimes, she also displays sudden outbursts of emotion which, together with *Carmilla*'s statement that she was very ill when she was young,⁵⁷ make Laura assume that *Carmilla*'s mental health must be delicate. In these emotional moments, *Carmilla* tries to touch and kiss Laura in a way that is regarded as somewhat inappropriate by the latter, especially as *Carmilla* seems to be sexually aroused when touching Laura:

Sometimes after an hour of apathy, my strange and beautiful companion would take my hand and hold it with a fond pressure, renewed again and again; blushing softly, gazing in my face with languid and burning eyes, and breathing so fast that her dress rose and fell

⁴⁷ Le Fanu (2010: 14).

⁴⁸ Le Fanu (2010: 21).

⁴⁹ Le Fanu (2010: 21).

⁵⁰ Le Fanu (2010: 28).

⁵¹ Cf. Le Fanu (2010: 24).

⁵² Le Fanu (2010: 20).

⁵³ Le Fanu (2010: 15).

⁵⁴ Le Fanu (2010: 21).

⁵⁵ Cf. Le Fanu (2010: 24 f.).

⁵⁶ Le Fanu (2010: 21).

⁵⁷ Le Fanu (2010: 29).

with the tumultuous respiration. It was like the ardor of a lover; it embarrassed me; it was hateful and yet over-powering; and with gloating eyes she drew me to her, and her hot lips travelled along my cheek in kisses; and she would whisper, almost in sobs, 'You are mine, you *shall* be mine, you and I are one forever.'⁵⁸

On the basis of this information, Carmilla could be analyzed in Lombrosian terms. Her beautiful looks would be explained by her young age, which, as she is a vampire, lasts eternally. Nevertheless, her canine teeth would be regarded as an anomaly typical of the criminal woman. In addition to that, her emotional instability would probably have been ascribed to her moral insanity – which Lombroso also regarded as a source of female crime – with her being unable to control herself in certain moments while behaving normally in the next. Her languor can be regarded as a sign of mental illness or degeneration, and would perfectly match the slow reflexes Lombroso ascribed to poisoners⁵⁹ – and in a way, Carmilla attempts to poison Laura with a vampiric infection that would lead to her degeneration as well. Furthermore, her languor can also be interpreted as the “dullness of the senses”⁶⁰ which Lombroso claimed to have found among prostitutes, with the sense of touch being the only exception. This again holds true for Carmilla, who is always trying to touch Laura. Carmilla’s homosexual behaviour towards Laura, then, would perhaps serve as the strongest marker of her proximity to the stereotype of the criminal woman as she is trying to seduce innocent Laura and lure her into homosexual behaviour. The fact that Carmilla is still a child makes her even more likely to be dominated by atavistic and primitive drives, and, being already very sexual, she shows the “sexual precocity”⁶¹ Lombroso saw as an explicit feature of the criminal woman and the prostitute. As to the reasons for Carmilla’s criminal behaviour and her development into a serial killer, Lombroso would probably have considered the hint that is given with regard to her family roots: she is said to be a descendent of the noble, but “bad family”⁶² of Karnstein, which has gone extinct. As an incorrigible, degenerated, and criminal individual, Carmilla is then, in accordance with Lombroso’s ideas, declared “a monster”⁶³ and is finally decapitated.

In spite of the obvious applicability of Lombroso’s criminal anthropology in the analysis of Carmilla of Karnstein, one cannot neglect the fact that she is still too early a literary creation to have been obviously inspired by Lombroso’s theory of the criminal woman which had not yet been formulated in English in 1872. Nevertheless, her case is a good example of how elements of the early British criminological discourse, namely phrenology, the theory of moral insanity and the idea of degeneration as the opposite of evolution, worked together to create what Lombroso later claimed to have discovered and proved with the help of empirical research. It is remarkable that especially the ideas uttered by Henry Maudsley in *The Physiology and Pathology of the Mind* in 1867⁶⁴ are strikingly similar to Lombroso’s theory – which might be understood as an evidence of a certain zeitgeist that allowed and demanded the biological explanation of evil. As a former student of law, Le Fanu might have been aware of such theories and could have been influenced by them when writing *Carmilla*.

⁵⁸ Le Fanu (2010: 23).

⁵⁹ Cf. Lombroso (2004: 164).

⁶⁰ Lombroso (2004: 170).

⁶¹ Lombroso (2004: 160).

⁶² Le Fanu (2010: 69).

⁶³ Le Fanu (2010: 7).

⁶⁴ Cf., for example, Maudsley (1867: 203).

3.2 Dracula's vampire women

What has already been alluded to in Carmilla's case, becomes explicit in Bram Stoker's vampire creatures. Not only do Count Dracula's physical attributes suggest his atavistic nature threatening the civilized British people who are trying to fight him, but he also lives in a polygamous relationship with his harem of three vampire women.⁶⁵ According to Lombroso, organisms in early evolutionary stages showed polygamy and violence – a behaviour that had made way for monogamy and justice in a civilized world with fully developed human beings⁶⁶ – which obviously places the Count and his harem among assumedly primitive peoples. What holds true for the Count is more than obvious in his female companions, whose very first introduction to both the British estate agent and the reader is situated in a seduction scene: Jonathan roams the castle at night and happens to enter a room in which he meets three women, two of whom look similar to the Count, with virile physiognomies and “aquiline noses”⁶⁷, and one very attractive woman described as “fair, as fair as can be, with great wavy masses of golden hair and eyes like pale sapphires”⁶⁸ and “voluptuous lips.”⁶⁹ This information already matches Lombroso's descriptions of the female born criminal and the prostitute who – according to Lombroso – often had a strong jaw,⁷⁰ “gigantic canine teeth and dwarf incisors”⁷¹ as well as “big sensual” lips.⁷² The fact that one of the women is described as “fair” does not reduce her correspondence to Lombroso's stereotypes as he, too, admitted that prostitutes sometimes display “a ray of beauty”⁷³ in the early stages of their degenerate lives: “Very often in women the criminal type is disguised by youth; the lack of wrinkles and plumpness of youth mask the size of the jaw and cheekbones, softening the virile and savage aspects of the features.”⁷⁴

Jonathan's very first impression makes him perceive these strangers and their attempt at seducing him – which, in this case, means biting him – as sexually attractive and voluptuous on the one hand, but also as virile and repulsive on the other hand:

There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive, and as she arched her neck she actually licked her lips like an animal, till I could see in the moonlight the moisture shining on the scarlet lips and on the red tongue as it lapped the white sharp teeth. Lower and lower went her head as the lips went below the range of my mouth and chin and seemed to fasten on my throat. Then she paused, and I could hear the churning sound of her tongue as it licked her teeth and lips, and I could feel the hot breath on my neck.⁷⁵

From a psychological point of view, his perception of the scene is typical for a man of his time: the act of biting doubtlessly bears sexual connotations, which, of course, implies an

⁶⁵ Cf. Stoker (1978: 47).

⁶⁶ Cf. Gibson / Rafter (2004: 18), cf. Harrowitz (1994: 17). In his sexological statements, Lombroso is close to Richard Krafft-Ebing's work *Psychopathia Sexualis* from 1886. Both agreed that monogamy was a civilized norm and thought that deviations from this norm were expressions of degeneration. Cf. Gibson / Rafter (2004: 21).

⁶⁷ Stoker (1978: 46).

⁶⁸ Stoker (1978: 46).

⁶⁹ Stoker (1978: 46).

⁷⁰ Cf. Lombroso (2004: 135).

⁷¹ Lombroso (2004: 139).

⁷² Lombroso (2004: 139).

⁷³ Lombroso (2004: 139).

⁷⁴ Lombroso (2004: 140).

⁷⁵ Stoker (1978: 46 f.).

inversion of the sexual act of penetration⁷⁶ – usually carried out by the male part, but in this situation realized by the three “devils of the pit”⁷⁷, frightening and fascinating poor Jonathan. Stoker’s depiction of the vampire women is close to Lombroso’s ideas as they behave like prostitutes – in the sense of not being married but living in a relationship with the Count, who can be regarded either as their father, their lover or their pimp – and by trying to sexually seduce helpless Jonathan without being married to him either. Their arguing about who will be allowed to drink first reminds the reader of Lombroso’s – admittedly strange – description of the immorality of women confined together in, for example, brothels or boarding schools and entering into competition on the beauty of their genitals and their sexual experiences. Their murder of the baby that the Count has brought them for dinner shows that there is no feeling of maternity left in them, so that – this limiting factor eliminated – they can develop into the true monsters which un-motherly women were from Lombroso’s point of view.⁷⁸ Their un-motherly perversion is emphasized by two further factors: first, instead of nurturing the child, they drink its blood; second, they seem to be unable to have children, which reminds the reader of Lombroso’s assumption that degenerate criminal women were often sterile.⁷⁹

When the innocent but already – in Victorian terms – “sexualized”⁸⁰ British girl Lucy is bitten by the Count, the reader is able to witness her degeneration, which results from the infection with vampirism. She realizes how she becomes more and more sexual, enjoys being courted by three men and pities herself for not being able to „have all three of the men vying for her hand”⁸¹ – a trait that makes her seem like the nymphomaniac prostitute Lombroso had in mind.⁸² Her eyes are suddenly „unclean and full of hell-fire”⁸³ so that the reader is reminded of the „hardened stare”⁸⁴ Lombroso claimed to have detected in criminal women. In the case of Mina, Jonathan’s beautiful and virtuous wife, Dracula succeeds as well and manages to activate Mina’s degenerative potential, but has to give her up, as her resistance is too strong. In terms of Lombroso’s theory, one can argue that the vampire women, Lucy and Mina, represent different stages of female degeneration.⁸⁵ While this process has been completed in the vampire women with their repulsive un-womanly and un-motherly sexual and murderous behaviour, Lucy’s case allows the reader to observe the degenerative process in fast motion. As Lucy’s mental and physical condition seems already unstable⁸⁶ before she is bitten by the vampire, she is not able to fight against the degenerative process and ends up as a criminal woman who kills children and is finally executed by her husband.

Besides the obvious connections between Lombroso’s ideas on criminals and Stoker’s depiction of the Count and his vampire ladies, Stoker himself includes a hint at Lombroso’s criminal anthropology when he has Van Helsing say: “The Count is a criminal and of criminal type. Nordau and Lombroso would so classify him, and *qua* criminal he is of imperfectly formed mind.”⁸⁷ Both the obvious stigmata of criminality and the fear of an invisible

⁷⁶ Cf. Roth (2003: 4 ff.) und Craft (2003: 41): “[...] virile Jonathan Harker enjoys a ‘feminine’ passivity and awaits a delicious penetration from a woman whose demonism is figured as the power to penetrate.” McGarth (1997: 43) regards the vampire women as Carmilla’s heirs.

⁷⁷ Stoker (1978: 61). Cf. Pütz (1992: 39).

⁷⁸ Cf. Lombroso (2004: 69).

⁷⁹ Cf. Kline (1992: 80).

⁸⁰ Roth (2003: 9), Brennan (1997: 114 f.), Pütz (1992: 70) and Leatherdale (1985: 135-137).

⁸¹ McGarth (1997: 45).

⁸² Cf. Kline (1992: 92), Lombroso (1959: 159) and Lombroso (2004: 171 f.).

⁸³ Lombroso (2004: 143).

⁸⁴ Lombroso (2004: 143).

⁸⁵ Cf. Kline (1992: 50).

⁸⁶ Cf. Brennan (1997: 114) and Pütz (1992: 67 ff.).

⁸⁷ Stoker (1978: 346) and Fleming (2000: 204).

degeneration and an infectious potential of criminal individuals are thus combined in the Count and his vampire women.

4. Conclusion

This analysis of two literary examples of female vampires has shown that both the child vampire Carmilla of Karnstein and Count Dracula's vampire ladies correspond to Lombroso's ideas about criminal women and prostitutes. In *Carmilla*, contemporary phrenological, psychiatric and evolutionary ideas about criminal women can be detected and can be said to be very close to what Lombroso was going to formulate a few years later. What is artistically anticipated in *Carmilla* becomes explicitly linked to Lombroso's theory of the born criminal in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* with the Count representing the prototype of the Lombrosian born criminal, and with his female companions as criminal women and prostitutes. Interestingly enough, in his 1911 edition of *Criminal Man*, Lombroso suggested the image of the vampire on a metaphorical level⁸⁸ by describing the criminal as a parasite who was able to adapt to a new environment if necessary and to feed on society's healthy and law-abiding individuals by living next to them and profiting from their world while endangering it at the same time. Thus, the criminal was a "kind of social vampire who preyed on the nation and desired, in Lombroso's words, 'not only to extinguish life in the victim, but to mutilate the corpse, tear its flesh and drink its blood'."⁸⁹

While the female vampires' horrible nature is describable in biological terms, it is nevertheless connected with other discourses as well: homosexual Carmilla, the voluptuous harem, sexualized Lucy and Mina do not correspond to Victorian norms concerning women. They are rather close to the so-called "New Woman"⁹⁰ as they are definitely unable to fulfill the role model of the "angel in the house"⁹¹ and so become seductive, rebellious, and thus dangerous.⁹² Furthermore, they all stand as symbols not only of gender-specific alterity⁹³, but also as representatives of "the other" or "racial others"⁹⁴ in an intercultural sense and thereby incorporate the 19th-century fear of "the other" finally fighting back and starting a process of reversed colonization.⁹⁵

The vampire in the two works consequently fulfills the function that was mentioned at the beginning: she represents 19th-century fears of national insecurity caused by crime and changing social structures and gender role models, and, at the same time, the Empire's anxiety of losing its predominant position and being interculturally "infected" with foreign ideas, identities, and blood.

⁸⁸ Cf. Pick (1989: 172).

⁸⁹ Lombroso (1911), quoted in Pick (1989: 172).

⁹⁰ Cf. Rowbotham (1999).

⁹¹ Cf. Patmore (2007).

⁹² Cf. Leatherdale (1985: 140-141), Foucault (1994: 146), Brock (2009: 122), Richardson (2003) and Welter (2006: 138 ff.).

⁹³ Cf. Kline (1992: 79 ff.).

⁹⁴ Ferguson (2007: 66).

⁹⁵ Cf. Pick (1989: 167) and Klüsener (forthcoming).

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