



# THE TROPE OF THE VAMPIRE (AND *STRIGOI*) IN ROMANIAN CULTURE AND CULTURAL PRODUCTS IMPORTED TO ROMANIA (1839–1947)

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**Abstract:** This article explores the different iterations of the vampire trope, as they emerge from the cultural products which originated in Romania or were imported to this country between 1839, the year when the term “vampire” entered the Romanian language, and 1947, which marks the debut of the communist regime in the country. For reasons of space, the study briefly touches on the myth of the strigoi and only insofar as it deviates from or converges toward the various manifestations of the vampire trope in the interval submitted for analysis. By looking at a wide range of media – literature, theater, music, cinema – and cultural products – prose fiction, poetry, translations, drama, radio performances, and motion pictures –, I show that the early evolution of the vampire trope aligns closely with the German and French cultural models emulated by the fledgling Romanian society and that its development reflects those pop culture elements and real-life phenomena which left their mark on public consciousness until the late 1940s. However, the Romanian culture was late to embrace the supernatural dimension of the trope, so much so that G.M. Amza and Al. Bilciurescu’s *Vampirul* (1938), the first Romanian novel to feature an explicit vampire antagonist, was published a century after the introduction of the word in the Romanian language.

**Keywords:** Bram Stoker, Dracula, Romania, Transylvania, strigoi, vampire

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The emergence and evolution of the vampire myth in Romania is inextricably tied to the practice of translation and the profound influence exerted by the German and French cultural models which the nascent Romanian society sought to emulate. Although closely associated with this space in collective consciousness, it was only in 1839 that the word “vampire” itself appeared in the country’s lexicon. Its first mention can be traced back to Constantin Negruzzi’s translation of Victor Hugo’s “La Ronde du Sabbat” [The Sabbath Round-Dance] into Romanian, where the term appears among a host of other source-text supernatural beings such as “gnomes” and “dragons” and a local entity of Negruzzi’s addition, the “*strigoi*.”<sup>2</sup> While the translator does not juxtapose the

terms – they are separated by two other creatures –, his insertion of the latter where a similar entity is absent in the source ballad foreshadows the shared history of the myths of the vampire and *strigoi*, which contributed to each other’s semantic development.

Tell-tale examples in this regard include Ion Luca Caragiale’s 1885 comedy *O scrisoare pierdută* [The Lost Letter], widely recognized as the work that introduced the word “vampire” to a wider local audience and Joachim C. Drăgescu’s 1867 *Noaptele carpatine* [The Carpathian Nights], the first Romanian novel in Transylvania and the first one to feature it alongside “*strigoi*.” However, neither of these works employs the terms in relation to supernatural vampires; instead,

they propose a Marxist interpretation of the two words, using them to refer to “one who sucks the folk’s blood”<sup>3</sup> or to those “who drain the blood of a martyred people.”<sup>4</sup> In fact, this semantic dimension of the term “vampire” seems to have dominated the period’s press articles and prose fiction: newspapers make use of it in diatribes against various ethnic groups or high ranking members of these minorities accused of oppressing the Romanian majority,<sup>5</sup> and many novels released until 1947 similarly suggest that “most individuals occupying positions of power in the vampire-like state [...] are of foreign origin.”<sup>6</sup>

This is not to say that the vampire’s supernatural dimension was virtually unknown to the Romanian audience: an 1862 dictionary of the Romanian language enshrined its synonymy with the word “*strigoi*”<sup>7</sup> and by the time *Noaptea carpatine* and *O scrisoare pierdută* were published, the *strigoi* had already established the trope in poems such as Alexandru Sihleanu’s “Strigoiful” [The *Strigoi*], which opens with a quotation from Lord Byron’s *Mazeppa*, a narrative poem initially published alongside “Fragment of a Novel” (1819), one of the first English-language vampire stories. Other notable contributions in this respect include Vasile Alecsandri’s 1849 “Strigoiful” [“The Vampire”], the only Romanian work included in Otto Penzler’s *The Vampire Archives* (2009), and Mihai Eminescu’s 1876 “Strigoii” [“The Ghosts”], which is thought to have been partially inspired by Gottfried A. Bürger’s ballad “Lenore,” wherefrom one of Jonathan Harker’s coach companions quotes upon meeting Dracula’s “strange driver.”<sup>8</sup> However, that Drăgescu resorts to juxtaposing the words “vampire” and “*strigoi*” as Negruzzi did almost thirty years before him seems to suggest that the supernatural dimension of the vampire was still far from familiar to many Romanian speakers; an ethnographic study released around the publication of Drăgescu’s novel and Caragiale’s comedy appears to substantiate this theory, in that the author argues that “Lord Byron’s vampire [from ‘Fragment of a Novel’], August Darwell [*sic*], is foreign to Romanians in Transylvania.”<sup>9</sup>

By this time, however, two French-speaking authors had already promoted Romania as the vampiric capital of the world that it would become with Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*. In 1849, for instance, Alexandre Dumas père released the short story “Histoire de la dame pâle” [“The Pale Lady”], the tale of an undead woman haunting the Carpathians, which appears to have been rendered into Romanian as early as 1852.<sup>10</sup> A few decades later, in 1879, Marie Nizet, a lesser-known Belgian writer, followed in Dumas’ footsteps, publishing in Paris *Le Capitaine Vampire* [*Captain Vampire*], which was translated into Romanian only in 2003. In his monograph *Dracula*, originally published in French, Romanian historian Matei Cazacu dedicates an extensive study to the author – “the first to have placed her tale in an ‘oriental’ and

exotic geographic space, and in a specific historical context, namely Romania and the Russian–Turkish war of 1877”<sup>11</sup> –, whose novella he believes may have served as inspiration for Stoker’s *Dracula*: in both works the plot starts unfolding in May, both stories feature two couples facing a vampire antagonist, and in both writings the anti-hero is a nobleman.<sup>12</sup>

What distinguishes Nizet from Stoker, however – apart from the fact that some believe that the Belgian writer had visited Romania<sup>13</sup> and in 1878 she had published in Paris *Romania: Chants de la Roumanie* [Romania: Songs from Romania], a collection of philo-Romanian poems<sup>14</sup> –, is that the antagonist of her novella, Russian prince Boris Liatoukine, is a ‘living’ vampire who moves unhindered during the day. Another difference is that, in Nizet’s story, the vampires’ roles are reversed: if Stoker’s Count claims to be a descendant of Dracula, “who, when he was beaten back, came again, and again,” liberating his lands from “the shame of slavery” to the Turks and the “Hungarian yoke,”<sup>15</sup> Liatoukine, the Slavic vampire, personifies the author’s vision of the Romanian anxieties regarding the growing influence of the Russian allies in the region,<sup>16</sup> even after the proclamation of independence.<sup>17</sup>

The turn of the century marked a surge in imports featuring energetic vampires such as the painter in Jan Neruda’s “Vampýr” [“The Vampire”], translated into Romanian in 1894 and the hermit baron in Jules Verne’s 1892 *Le château des Carpathes* [*The Castle of the Carpathians*],<sup>18</sup> rendered twice in 1897, when Great Britain saw the release of Stoker’s novel. At the local level, this period saw the emergence of a new meaning associated with the word “vampire”; in Constantin I.A. Nottara’s 1898 novel *Suflete obosite* [Tired Souls], countess Eulalia Lutetia d’Avril is likened to a vampire not because of her foreign origin or social background but rather due to the power of seduction she holds over the protagonist and other characters. This is not the first iteration of the term with this sense – George Coșbuc’s poem “Fragment,” which features a similar metaphor,<sup>19</sup> had been published a few years earlier –, yet it coincided with a heavy influx of cultural products with vampires, human and supernatural alike.

The latter, however, were not without their detractors; in a 1901 review announcing the staging of Jules Dornay’s melodrama *Douglas le Vampire* [Douglas the Vampire], theater critic Emil D. Fagure notes ironically that “for four or five years now the disinterment of all sorts of *strigoi* has been tolerated (apart from [Henrik] Ibsen’s *Strigoii* [*Gengangere* or *Ghosts*], which, on the contrary, were buried). If we must break a few more lances to get rid of all these specters from the childhood days of dramatic literature, we will do it with great tenacity.”<sup>20</sup> If attempts were indeed made to eliminate vampires of all kinds from the Romanian entertainment, they failed miserably; in 1909, Romanian poet St.O. Iosif retranslated



Dumas père's "Histoire de la dame pâle" with Dimitrie Anghel, and with the spread of cinema theaters in the first two decades of the twentieth century, newspapers note a considerable import of movies with vampires, from big screen detective series such as *Les Vampires* [The Vampires], directed by *Fantômas* director Louis Feuillade to now obscure movies the likes of *Vampirul* starring Austrian-Jewish actress Ellen Richter.

Identifying many films from this period can be challenging today due to two main factors. First, the titles often underwent significant changes, making them difficult to match with their original counterparts. Secondly, the actors or directors were mentioned only if they had gained popularity among the Romanian audience. For *Vampirul*, one candidate is Georg Jacoby's 1919 *Aberglaube* [*Superstition*], the story of Roma dancer Militza, an unwitting *femme fatale* stoned to death by fellow peasants for her alleged involvement in the death of the village priest, an admirer of hers, whose demise is blamed by Militza's mother on her daughter, whom she accuses of witchcraft and vampirism.

"[A]t the time *Aberglaube* was produced, a number of Jewish filmmakers – among them Ellen Richter and Willi Wolff, who contributed to the script – used fiction films to raise awareness of the historical and contemporary plight of Eastern European Jews who had been persecuted and massacred in pogroms."<sup>21</sup>

The first indirect encounter of the Romanian public with *Dracula* took place in the early 1920s, when, on September 2, 1922, a cinema theater in Bucharest screened F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu*, which was explicitly promoted as having been inspired by Stoker's novel.<sup>22</sup> The period's newspapers do not note any notable critical reactions to the movie, although it ran throughout the entire month.<sup>23</sup> However, the second to last advertorial, printed on September 22, 1922, portrays it as a box-office success, which was brought back in another Bucharest cinema theater "by popular demand" and "for a few days only," without any mention of the source material.<sup>24</sup> Was this a desperate marketing ploy or the outcome of the copyright infringement lawsuit filed by Florence Stoker, the author's widow, against Prana Film, the movie's production company? According to American historian David J. Skal, in August 1922, Florence learned of illegal screenings in Budapest, even though Prana Film had declared bankruptcy two months prior due to the legal expenses, which were too high for a young production company. "The strategy, now, was to pursue the receiver of Prana's assets and liabilities rather than the offending officers of Prana itself."<sup>25</sup> Stoker's widow did not pursue it, yet the rumors may have discouraged further screenings in Romania.<sup>26</sup>

The vampire, however, persevered across all media and in short order several successful productions gave

an impetus to the translation of Stoker's *Dracula*: the highly acclaimed staging of Hans Müller-Einigen's *Der Vampir oder die Gejagten* [The Vampire or the Haunted] in 1925, directed by a student of Max Reinhardt's. Even more popular, however, was Fred Niblo's *The Temptress* (1926), which ran in the Romanian theaters from April 1927 until at least April 1929 under the title *Femeia vampir* [The Vampire Woman]. In her second role in an American movie, actress Greta Garbo plays here the role of Elena, Marquise of Torre Blanca and *femme fatale*.<sup>27</sup> "Vampyr" by Jan Neruda, who had visited Romania, was retranslated that same year, and three years earlier St.O. Iosif, translator of "Histoire de la dame pâle", had finally rendered Bürger's "Lenore". In 1927, Romanian music lovers could listen on their radios to Heinrich A. Marschner's *Der Vampyr* [The Vampire], an opera indirectly inspired by John Polidori's short story "The Vampyre", which is regarded as one of the first works to have informed the modern perspective on the vampire myth.

In the meantime, the connection between antisemitism and the vampire trope had been established more evidently than ever before. In 1925, seven years before he joined the Nazi Party, Hanns Heinz Ewers – writer, Doctor of Law, cabaret owner, spy in Mexico and the United States during World War I – had some of his works translated into Romanian by Alexandru Terziman, a Romanian author of Jewish origin. They were not the first – *Alraune* (1911), a revisit of the Frankenstein trope, had been rendered two years earlier –, as the writer had already garnered considerable popularity among Romanians; in 1901 he visited Braşov with his cabaret troupe, in 1921 the Hungarian rendition of *Alraune* (1918) was screened in Sibiu, and in 1924 Romanian moviegoers could watch *Der Student von Prag* [*The Student of Prague*] (1913), whose screenplay Ewers signed. The press article announcing Terziman's translations is also relevant in that it mentions *Vampir* [*Vampire*] (1921), the last volume of the Frank Braun trilogy, whose title character the author modelled after himself – *Alraune* is the second one.<sup>28</sup>

"Ewers's views about the link between German and Jewish destiny, as they are expressed in *Vampyr*, are macabre. There, the character Braun must drink the blood of his Jewish mistress – voluntarily offered by her – if he is to be an eloquent fund-raiser for the cause of Germany in World War I."<sup>29</sup>

In 1929, when Ewers was scheduled to return to Romania for a lecture on his writing career, the period's newspapers found, however, something else to be outraged at in his works. Two articles published in October in the daily *Universul* [The Universe] deplore two publications, *Adevărul* [The Truth] and *Dimineața* [The Morning], for welcoming Ewers' talk, even though,

"in his odious pamphlet-novel, [*Vampir*] [...] he speaks of



King Ferdinand I, the founder of Great Romania, in such trivial and disgusting terms. [...] Does the committee of the Romanian Athenaeum think that the rostrum, which has been graced by so many illustrious lecturers, [...] is worthy of the shame which would be brought to it by the Teutonic pamphleteer, who insulted in the most trivial manner the founder of Greater Romania on the day after the conclusion of the peace?”<sup>30</sup>

Ewers' belief in a “master race composed of Aryans and Jews” were to catch Nazi attention a few years later, although he published a eulogy to the far-right “martyr” Horst Wessel, which was adapted for the screen in 1933. A year later, all his books were banned, and after the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, he would leave the party, helping his Jewish friends leave Germany and penning several unpublished satires against the Nazis.<sup>31</sup>

On November 13, 1928, the daily *Universul* published an advertisement with an enigmatic text: “The ghost with the vampire mask?”<sup>32</sup> From subsequent issues, readers could learn that it promoted *London After Midnight* (1927) by Tod Browning, who three years later would release *Dracula* with Bela Lugosi in the legendary role of the Count. One of the “Holy Grails” of horror cinema, *London After Midnight* was lost in the 1965 or 1967 fire at the MGM studios, yet in 1935 the same Tod Browning would direct its “talkie” twin, *Mark of the Vampire*, starring Bela Lugosi in the role of another Count who, on this occasion, poses as a vampire. Of note about the movie's Romanian premiere, which takes place two days after the mysterious announcement, is that it is described in the period's press as a film “in the style of the fantastic *Mosferatu* [sic].”<sup>33</sup> On 21 December, a little over a month after the release of Browning's lost film, *Cuvântul* [The Word] announced the following:

“Dracula, the novel of a vampire, set in Romania, by the English writer Bram Stoker, [translated] in[to] Romanian by Ion Gorun, will be serialized in *Gazeta noastră ilustrată* [Our Illustrated Gazette], starting with [...] the Special Christmas Issue, available today for purchase.”<sup>34</sup>

The publication of Gorun's rendition of *Dracula*, which extended well into the following year, coincided with yet another momentous event in the history of the vampire trope in Romania. On November 28, 1929, the newspaper *Dreptatea* [The Justice] reported, citing the French *Le Journal*, that the infamous serial killer dubbed the “Vampire of Düsseldorf” “had made a sudden appearance in Bucharest.”<sup>35</sup> Peter Kürten's case – his young and unsuspecting victims, extensive hunt, and anticlimactic apprehension – headlined many Romanian newspapers in the late 1920s, with his proclivity for blood serving as inspiration for local writers such as Marius V., who published a serial novel entitled *Vampirul din Düsseldorf*:

*Mare roman de actualitate* [The Vampire of Düsseldorf: A Great Topical Novel] in 1930, or directors the likes of Fritz Lang, whose *M* (1931) was given the subtitle *Vampirul din Düsseldorf* [The Vampire of Düsseldorf] upon its release in Romanian theaters. This new vampire, who “commits crime[s] in a state of abnormal arousal, somewhat resembling sleepwalking, or rather, by switching personalities,” is a “[person] like any other, a peaceful bourgeois, devoid of any extravagance,” unlike the vampire-capitalist or *femme fatale* who flaunt their financial or seductive power.<sup>36</sup>

This new paradigm of the vampire trope, which *Mark of the Vampire* (1935) fleshed out by recasting Lugosi, famed for his portrayal of Stoker's Count in *Dracula* (1931),<sup>37</sup> in the role of an actor playing a vampire, was a likely point of reference for G.M. Amza and Al. Bilciurescu's *Vampirul* [The Vampire], written in 1936 and published in 1938. In their work, former theologian-turned-village priest goes on a killing spree under the guise of a vampire to coerce the increasingly industrialized local community to revert to Christianity and, by extension, to his control. Tributary in many respects to Stoker's novel – *Vampirul* features scenes which resemble key moments in *Dracula* such as Jonathan Harker's journey to Transylvania or Lucy Westenra's encounters with the Count –, Amza and Bilciurescu's novel proposes nonetheless a new perspective on the myth, which is indebted only to a limited extent to Stoker's vision of a supernatural bloodsucking vampire.

When the two authors finalized their *Vampirul*, Romanian historian of religion Mircea Eliade released the first short prose piece featuring a *strigoi* antagonist.<sup>38</sup> The *strigoi* in this work is, however, unlike any other in the Romanian prose fiction published until 1947; until then, the two myths have evolved to refer to different incarnations of the undead: the vampire is, as shown previously, a member of the bourgeoisie, a *femme fatale* or, closer to when Eliade published his work, a serial killer. Conversely, the *strigoi* is oftentimes a creature thought to be dwelling in rural cemeteries – Duiliu Zamfirescu's 1898 *Viața la țară* [Life in the Countryside], Ionel Teodoreanu's *La Medeleni* [In Medeleni];<sup>39</sup> a mysterious old man – C. Sandu-Aldea's 1912 *Pe Mărgineanca* [On Mărgineanca], N. Prosența's *Visătorii* [The Dreamers]; or an elderly woman, usually of Roma origin, who dabbles in the occult – Zamfir Arbore's 1893 *Psylla*, Mihail Gaspar's 1929 *Fata vornicului Oană* [Village Chief Oană's Daughter].<sup>40</sup> In “Domnișoara Christina” [“Miss Christina”], Eliade reestablishes the connection between the two iterations of the trope and proposes a *strigoi* villain who emulates the seductiveness and upper class background of the vampire, while retaining its ties with the countryside, in the sense that Christina mainly targets the peasants who live in the area surrounding her manor.

What is particularly interesting about “Domnișoara



Christina” and *Vampirul* is that they also reflect the political landscape of the period in which they were written or when the story is set. The mine accident in Amza and Biliurescu’s novel and the ensuing strike of the workers introduce a novel perspective on the attacks, which the miners interpret to be the work of a vampire-capitalist who seeks to imperil their livelihood. Similarly, in “Domnișoara Christina”, class struggle is closely linked with the undead’s activity: during the Romanian Peasant Revolt of 1907, “peasants on the other lands had come and she summoned them into the bedroom [...] to divide her goods. She said that she wanted to give away all her goods [...] if only they did not kill her. In fact, she would let them all take turns in abusing her. [...] [Her lover] [...] shot her; [...] some of the peasants were shot, others [...] were sentenced to the salt mines.”<sup>41</sup> In neither of the works the undead is the catalyst of these movements; rather, they are used by the undead either to exploit the workers’ fear of the new economic system to the benefit of the feudal order they represent or to satisfy their own desires.

The political appropriation of the trope continued in the 1940s, with the undead being instrumentalized by the fascist<sup>42</sup> and more so by the communist regime to vilify the other. The latter, however, appears to have preferred the more recognizable *strigoi*, especially after the removal of Ion Antonescu’s Nazi-aligned government in August 1944, possibly in an attempt to connect more effectively with the working class, whose level of literacy was very low.<sup>43</sup> In a (seemingly) programmatic fashion, many of the newspapers of the second half of the 1940s, spearheaded by the communist party’s mouthpiece, *Scântea* [The Spark], speak in elusive terms of “the *strigoi* of the past”<sup>44</sup> or more bluntly about “the *strigoi* of fascism,”<sup>45</sup> which one contributor explains as referring to

“the leaders of the [former historical] parties, who thrived on the country’s budget [...] [and] the political power they held for decades through terror, dread, torture, and the exploitation to the point of blood of the Romanian people over whom they ruled as they pleased.”<sup>46</sup>

This decade also brought the “disinterment” of Ibsen’s *Gengangere* – to use Fagure’s metaphor from 1901 –, which was regularly performed in the early 1940s. A year after its release, Cezar Petrescu’s three-volume novel, *Ochii strigoiului* [The Eyes of the *Strigoi*] (1943), the story of a World War I veteran who regains his memory in the eve of a new international conflict, was adapted for the stage, encouraging the audience to reflect, like the protagonist, on the interwar period, which “had not yet been assimilated” and paving the way for “social theater [...] after [World War II].”<sup>47</sup> In the spring of 1945, *România Liberă* [Free Romania] announces the publication of Ghérasim Luca’s *Le vampire passif* [The Passive Vampire], where the undead is imagined, like in Amza and

Biliurescu’s *Vampirul*, as a (quasi)-supernatural serial killer.<sup>48</sup> On a lighter note and in contrast to historical reality, the Romanian cinemas of the late 1930s and early 1940s screened comedies such as Norman Z. McLeod’s 1937 *Topper* [Strigoi], starring Cary Grant and Constance Bennett in the role of unwilling ghosts and Wilhelm Tiele’s 1940 *The Ghost Comes Home* [Strigoiul vine acasă], in which Frank Morgan, known for impersonating the title character in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), plays the role of a missing man who returns home only to learn that his wife has collected on his life insurance.

What this article hopes to have achieved is to show that Romania, widely considered to be the cradle of the vampire myth, was, in fact, neither its originator nor its innovator. In fact, the evolution of the trope aligns closely with the developments seen in the German and French cultures, to which the Romanian society looked for inspiration in its early days. With the spread of cinema theaters across the country, the myth further expanded to reflect real-life phenomena which had left their mark on public consciousness and popular culture, both at home and abroad. However, between the introduction of the word “vampire” in the Romanian language and the first vampire novel produced locally, there was a span of almost a century during which the local counterpart, *strigoi*, dominated the literary market. The vampire, especially in its supernatural apprehension, was, by and large, imported through foreign plays, motion pictures or translations, or exploited figuratively to represent class struggle.

In fact, the most well-known occurrence of the term “vampire” in a Romanian literary text expounds on this very semantic dimension of the word, which, alongside that of the *femme fatale*, would become the preferred meaning among the Romanian novelists from its emergence until the late 1940s. Unlike the vampire, which is an urban invention mediated by a French source, developed through Western cultural imports, and used to hint at members of the elite, the *strigoi* remained, for much of the period submitted for analysis, the object of superstition and a substitute for the nearly missing supernatural dimension of the vampire trope. However, the mid-to-late 1940s saw, as previously shown, a *danse macabre* between the two myths in the period’s discourse, in which both sides of the new worldwide conflict exploited the undead’s potential for conveying political meaning.

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## Notes

1. Ivan Evseev, author of *Dicționar de magie, demonologie și mitologie românească* [Dictionary of Romanian Magic, Demonology and Mythology] (1997), identifies 1872 as the year in which Negruzzi published his version of Hugo's ballad. *Dicționar de magie, demonologie și mitologie românească*, s.v. "Vampir." However, Romanian critic Eugen Lovinescu points out that Negruzzi's translation was originally released on September 17, 1839. Eugen Lovinescu, *Costache Negruzzi: Viața și opera lui* (Bucharest: Editura Institutului de arte grafice "Minerva", 1913), 96.
2. Like other Romanian researchers, Ivan Evseev distinguishes between "living" and "dead *strigoi*": "[t]he first category includes the 'undead in the flesh and bones', i.e., living human beings with infernal [and] demonic [personalities] and [who practice sorcery], while the second category includes ghosts and *moroi*, i.e., the 'dead risen from the grave.'" *Dicționar de magie, demonologie și mitologie românească*, s.v. "Strigoi." All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.
3. Ion Luca Caragiale, *The Lost Letter and Other Plays*, trans. Frida Knight (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1956), 17.
4. Joachim C. Drăgescu, *Noaptea carpatine sau Istoria martirilor libertății* (Pesth: Tipariulu lui A. Bucsanszky, 1867), 131. In his *Capital*, Karl Marx notes "Capital is dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks." Karl Marx, "Capital, Volume One. Chapter Ten: The Working-Day. Section One: The Limits of the Working-Day," *Marxists*, 1999, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch10.htm>. This is not the only occurrence of the metaphor in the German philosopher's *magnum opus* – Terrell Carver notes three explicit uses – yet it is probably the most frequently iteration of the simile. Terrell Carver, *The Postmodern Marx* (Manchester: Penn State University Press, 1998), 14. Some authors such as Jason J. Morissette even propose using it in the process of teaching the Marxist critique of capitalism. Jason J. Morissette, "Marxferatu: The Vampire Metaphor as a Tool for Teaching Marx's Critique of Capitalism," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 46, no. 3 (2013): 637–42. As for the inspiration behind it, Christopher Frayling makes a very interesting discovery: "Karl Marx enjoyed reading the horror tales of Hoffmann and Dumas père for relaxation at bedtime. [...] When (in the same chapter) he sought a comparison between the historical evolution of the English factory system and another set of economic relationships (through history), he turned to the lord-peasant relationship in the Danubian principalities, and epitomized this by the image of 'the Wallachian Boyard'. Who was this 'Wallachian Boyard' who demanded that a large proportion of the peasants' time be devoted to his seignorial estate? The source Marx quotes (Elias Regnault's *Histoire des Principautés Danubiennes* [History of the Danubian Principalities], 1855) provides the answer, and perhaps explains why the image stuck in his mind. The 'Wallachian Boyard' was none other than Vlad the Impaler, Vlad Dracula." Christopher Frayling, *Vampires: Genesis and Resurrection from Count Dracula to Vampirella* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2016), 208–9. For an analysis of the vampire metaphor in Marx's critique, see Mark Neoclesus, "The Political Economy of the Dead: Marx's Vampires," *History of Political Thought* 24, no. 4 (2003): 668–84. For a Marxist reading of Stoker's *Dracula*, see Franco Moretti, "The Dialectic of Fear," *New Left Review* 136 (1982): 67–85.
5. In the late nineteenth century, journalists use the metaphor of the "exploitative vampire" to target Jews, accusing them of engaging in "twisted business practices" which "drain the wealth of thousands and thousands of families" but also King Carol I, labeled the "German vampire," as well as foreigners in general. G.J.M., "Inarticularea națiunii române. Tienorea deputatiloru in această cestiuine. Opiniunea publică si inca ce-va," *Concordia: Diurnalu politicu si literariu* (Pesth), August 29 / September 10, 1863, Digitheca Arcanum. For an account of the ethnicities targeted with this metaphor, see Anca Simina Martin, preface to *Dracula*, by Bram Stoker, trans. Ion Gorun (Bucharest: Dezarticulat, 2023), 6.
6. F.R. Atila, *Ion Negru: Roman social* (Bucharest: Editura Librăriei "Frățilă", 1912), 181.
7. Iorgu Iordan, "Un dicționar de neologisme românești din anul 1862," *Studii și cercetări lingvistice* 1 (1950): 57.
8. Eminescu's manuscripts include a translation of the first stanza of "Lenore", which seems to have served as inspiration for "Strigoi", Part III. Ilarie Chendi, preface to *Opere complete: Literatură populară*, vol. 1, by Mihai Eminescu (Bucharest: Editura Institutului de arte grafice "Minerva", 1902), xvii. It should also be noted that, in the poem "Epigonii" ["The Epigones"], Eminescu speaks admiringly of Sihleanu and Alecsandri who also wrote poems featuring "*strigoi*".
9. The Romanian ethnographer refers in this context to "Fragment of a Novel" (1819), an unfinished horror tale which inspired John Polidori's short story "The Vampyre" (1819), originally attributed to Lord Byron. "Fragment of a Novel" emerged from the same "competition" held at Villa Diodati in the "lost" summer of 1816 when Mary Shelly wrote her *magnum opus*, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818). Nicolae Densușianu, "Scrutări mitologice la români," *Familia* (Pesth), October 29 / November 10, 1868, Digitheca Arcanum.
10. George A. Barozzi's translation of "Histoire de la dame pâle", "Castelul brâncovenesc" [The Brankovan Castle] (1852), does not credit Dumas with the source text, yet in 1960 Romanian critic George Călinescu finally restores the paternity of the text. Al. Piru, "Dumas și românii," *Luceafărul* (Bucharest), July 30, 1977, Digitheca Arcanum.
11. Matei Cazacu, *Dracula*, trans. Nicole Mordarski et al. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 261.
12. Cazacu, *Dracula*, 260–62.
13. Cazacu, *Dracula*, 265.
14. Cazacu, *Dracula*, 262.





15. Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 35.
16. Cazacu hypothesizes that her perspective on the events was informed by the daughters of Ion Heliade Rădulescu, one of the leaders of the 1848 Wallachian Revolution, who was known for his anti-Russian views. Cazacu, *Dracula*, 263–4.
17. The final confrontation between the Russian vampire–colonel Liatoukine and Ioan Isacesco, a Romanian fighter under his command, takes place during the Battle of Grivița, a few months after the proclamation of independence. Not only does Ioan fail to capture the vampire, but the latter, decorated general for his military achievements, eventually marries an aristocrat from Bucharest, Epistimia Comanescu, whose brother had fallen in battle and who also dies on their wedding night, possibly at Liatoukine’s hands.
18. None of the characters in either work is a blood-drinking vampire. It should be noted, however, that Verne, like Stoker in *Dracula*, chooses Transylvania as the setting of his novel, which he also describes as an isolated and backward region populated by superstitious people. However, there is no evidence as of yet that Stoker read Verne’s *Le château des Carpathes*, despite the similarities between them, primary of which is the role technology – phonographs in particular – play in the unfolding of the plot. If in *Dracula* the device is used by Dr. Seward to keep a diary, in Verne’s work, the hermit baron Rodolphe de Gortz employs it to record the voice of the late La Stilla – the *prima donna* with whom both her admirer, the energy vampire de Gortz, and the protagonist, Count Franz de Télék, her grieving fiancé had fallen in love –, who even after her death continues to be a source of contention between the two.
19. In the poem, the woman is said to be “a vampire when she loves / and a hyena when she hates.” Elena Voronca’s critique of this work, although very much consistent with the gender discourse of her period, nonetheless attributes this vampire-like behavior of the women “dwelling in large cities” to the fact that “men socialized them so.” Elena Voronca, “Respuns la cele ce spun dușmanii femeilor,” *Familia* (Oradea-Mare), May 7 / 9, 1895, Digitheca Arcanum.
20. Emil D. Fagure, “Cronica teatrală și muzicală,” *Adevărul* (Bucharest), 7 March 1901, Digitheca Arcanum.
21. “Aberglaube (DE 1919),” *Le Giornate del Cinema Muto*, 2020, <http://www.giornatedelcinemamuto.it/en/aberglaube/>. In so doing, Ellen Richter, Willi Wolff and others repurposed the vampire trope from a myth instrumentalized by some authors to promote antisemitism into a weapon against it. For an analysis of *fin-de-siècle* antisemitism in *Le Château des Carpathes* and *Dracula*, see Daniel Renshaw, “‘A Fine Fellow... Although Rather Semitic’: Jews and Antisemitism in Jules Verne’s *Le château des Carpathes* and Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*,” *Jewish Culture and History* 23 (2022): 289–306.
22. “Teatru Cinema Bulevard Palace,” *Adevărul* (Bucharest), 2 September 1922, Digitheca Arcanum.
23. In any case, it did not go unnoticed and seems to have left its mark on the Romanian popular culture; in an article from 1935, the author says of the conductor of the “Modern orchestra” in Roman, a city in north-eastern Romania, that he “looks a bit like Nosferatu.” Ion Dragomir, “Roman, orașul liniștei,” *Universul* (Bucharest), December 1, 1935, Digitheca Arcanum.
24. “Teatru Cinema Bulevard Palace,” *Adevărul* (Bucharest), September 22, 1922, Digitheca Arcanum.
25. David J. Skal, *Hollywood Gothic: The Tangled Web of Dracula from Novel to Stage to Screen* (New York: Faber & Faber, Inc., 2004), 207.
26. Such legal action threatened, however, to be “a very expensive and dangerous experiment.” Skal, *Hollywood Gothic*, 206. One thing is certain: Stoker’s widow did not lay down her arms, winning her copyright infringement suit against Prana Film on 20 July 1925, several years after *Nosferatu*’s premiere in Germany. Unable to pay the damages, the production company was forced to destroy all copies of the film. But in October of the same year, Florence received by mail the prospectus of a new Film Society, with actress and friend Ellen Terry, mentioned by Bram Stoker in *Dracula*, among its founders. One of the first movies to be screened there was “*Dracula* by F.W. Murnau.” Skal, *Hollywood Gothic*, 217–8.
27. The association between Greta Garbo and seductive vampirism was immortalized in prose as well, with Cezar Petrescu publishing *Greta Garbo*, a novel about an aspiring *femme fatale*, in 1932. He is not the only one to have been inspired by the actress – in 1939, B. Jordan released *Greta Garbo: Viața romanțată a celei mai mari vedete a ecranului* [Greta Garbo: The Fictionalized Life of the Greatest Screen Star] –, however, he is the only one to employ the word “vampire” to describe the female protagonist and her “predatorial” behavior.
28. F. Lohr, “Păiajenul,” *Dimineața* (Bucharest), June 15, 1925, Digitheca Arcanum.
29. Leonard Wolf, *Blood Thirst: 100 Years of Vampire Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 256.
30. Romulus Șeișanu, “Se poate? Îndrăzneala unui pamfletar german,” *Universul* (Bucharest), October 18, 1929, Digitheca Arcanum.
31. Hans Michael Bock and Tim Bergfelder. *The Concise Cinegraph: Encyclopaedia of German Cinema* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 114.
32. “*Fantoma cu masca de vampir?*,” *Universul* (Bucharest), November 13, 1928, Digitheca Arcanum.
33. Rep., “Film și cinema,” *Rampla* (Bucharest), September 14, 1928, Digitheca Arcanum.
34. “*Dracula*,” *Cuvântul* (Bucharest), December 21, 1928, Digitheca Arcanum.
35. “Ecourile zilei,” *Dreptatea* (Bucharest), November 28, 1829, Digitheca Arcanum.
36. “*M*, capodopera lui Fritz Lang,” *Rampla-film* (Bucharest), October 24, 1931, Digitheca Arcanum.
37. In *Vampirul din Praga* [The Vampire of Prague], the title with which *Mark of the Vampire* was marketed in Romania, Bela Lugosi plays the role of a “hired [actor] entrusted with terrorizing one baron suspected of being the author of a murder.” In

- the opinion of one critic, this motion picture helped to further “[modernize] the theory of the [v]ampire.” I. Suchianu, “Cronica filmelor: *Vampirul din Praga*,” *Cinema* (Bucharest), October 25, 1935, Digitheca Arcanum.
38. Subtitled “a novel,” Eliade’s “Domnișoara Christina” [“Miss Christina”] is still a matter of contention among critics as to whether it should indeed be classified as a novel. Angelo Mitchievici notes how the work was subsequently included in Eliade’s 1969 *La țigănci și alte povestiri* [The Gypsies and Other Stories], which indicates that it more closely fits the formula of an “extended novella.” Angelo Mitchievici, “Domnișoara Christina în fața oglinzii,” *Transilvania* 5–6 (2009): 22. For an analysis of Cezar Petrescu’s *Aranca, știma lacurilor* [Aranca, the Fairy of the Lakes], a similar story published a little over a decade earlier which features a female vampire-like antagonist, see Mihaela Grancea, “Mortem terribilem. Moartea gotică,” *Transilvania* 7 (2020): 54–64.
  39. Zamfirescu’s and Teodoreanu’s novels are not the only ones where the characters fear *strigoi*. Their works, like the other writings mentioned in this context, exemplify best the typology of characters associated with those iterations of the trope.
  40. There are, however, instances in which the *strigoi* is separated from the rural world and grafted onto visions of a dystopian world. Cezar Petrescu, who also authored the post-World War I novel *Ochii strigoiului* [The Eyes of the *Strigoi*] (1943), appears to have coined this association in the second volume of *Baletul mecanic* [The Mechanical Ballet] (1931) where some automata, “the cripple with an iron arm [and] the female dead-washer,” are called “*strigoi*.” Cezar Petrescu, *Baletul mecanic*, vol. 2 (Bucharest: Editura “Cartea Românească”, 1931), 89.
  41. Mircea Eliade, *Mystic Stories, the Sacred and the Profane*, “Miss Christina,” trans. Ana Cartianu (Boulder and Bucharest: East European Monographs and Editura Minerva, 1992), 37–8.
  42. In addition to denouncing “the Bolshevik vampires” or “*strigoi*,” some newspapers of the early 1940s perpetuate the myth of the vampire–Jew, extending the xenophobic dimension of the trope to include other nations by reproducing Nazi German propaganda. A 1943 issue of the daily *Gazeta Transilvaniei* [Transylvania’s Gazette] published the “Franklin prophecy”, an antisemitic canard attributed to Benjamin Franklin, which warned the fledgling American society about the alleged dangers of allowing Jews residency. A few months later, another newspaper, *Curentul* [The Current], quotes *Völkischer Beobachter* [People’s Observer], the Nazi Party’s official daily, with an article entitled “Vampir Der Welt”, translated into Romanian as “Vampirii lumii” [The Vampires of the World], where Dr. Wilhelm Koppen condemns the expansionist ambitions of the United States. “Benjamin Franklin a prevenit poporul american de primejdia jidovească în anul 1787,” *Gazeta Transilvaniei* (Brașov), June 2, 1943, Digitheca Arcanum. “Luptă pe viață și pe moarte: Cum vede *Voelkischer Beobachter* proiectele imperialiste ale Statelor Unite,” *Curentul* (Bucharest), October 26, 1943, Digitheca Arcanum. Wilhelm Koppen, “Vampir der Welt,” *Völkischer Beobachter* (Vienna), October 25, 1943, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.
  43. According to Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery, “[i]n 1944 Romania’s rural illiteracy rate was estimated to be 49 percent.” Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery, *Peasants Under Siege: The Collectivization of Romanian Agriculture, 1949–1962* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), 163.
  44. Take, for instance, George Macovescu, “Reacțiunea și poziția periculoasă a României,” *Scânteia* (Bucharest), March 1, 1945, Digitheca Arcanum and “D. Dr Petru Groza președintele Consiliului de Miniștri, a primit delegația tineretului balcanic: D-sa a rostit o importantă cuvântare,” *România viitoare* (Sibiu), March 31, 1946, Digitheca Arcanum.
  45. Some examples include Silviu Brucan, “Războinicii fără de patrie,” *Scânteia* (Bucharest), June 28, 1946, Digitheca Arcanum and “Provincia Roman: Înființarea organizației locale a Apărării Patriotice,” *România liberă* (Bucharest), October 5, 1944, Digitheca Arcanum.
  46. Ion Niculi, “Muncitorii și studenții,” *Lupta Moldovei* (Iași), March 19, 1946, Digitheca Arcanum.
  47. Mircea Ștefănescu, “Din vreme în vreme,” *Vremea* (Bucharest), August 15, 1943, Digitheca Arcanum.
  48. Will Atkin, “Demonic Surrealism in Bucharest: Black Magic, Gothicism, and Nihilism in Gherasim Luca’s *The Passive Vampire* (1941–45),” *Dada/Surrealism* 24 (2023): 16.

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