

“People do not, as a rule, believe in Vampires!”

Nineteenth-Century Sexology and “The True Story of a Vampire” by Count Eric Stenbock ZSOLT BOJTI

Abstract: The paper analyses the figure of the Hungarian vampire in the short story, “The True Story of a Vampire” (1894) by Count Eric Stenbock in its literary and ideological context. German-speaking Central Europe produced a number of new sexological categories and respective theories concerning same-sex desire in the nineteenth century. The English joined this discourse rather late in the 1890s. These new English texts on the science of same-sex desire, however, were virtually inaccessible or incomprehensible to laymen including homosexuals themselves. The English public’s understanding of same-sex desire came from the press coverage of scandalous trials and clandestine fiction. The paper, understanding Stenbock’s short story as his literary introspection regarding his sexuality, seeks to answer the question why Stenbock conceptualised his sexual desires as vampirism in light of his uncertainty of different controversial discourses on sexuality in the 1890s.

In 1894, David Nutt, publisher of Oscar Wilde, Aubrey Beardsley and Marc-André Raffalovich, released *Studies of Death*, a collection of short stories by Count Eric Stenbock (1860–1895), a remote member of Wilde’s decadent coterie. The penultimate story in this collection is “The True Story of a Vampire,” narrated by an old female character, Carmela Wronski, who is reminiscing about her childhood, when her father hosts a Hungarian vampire, Vardalek at their home in Styria. During his stay with the Wronski family, Vardalek forms a curious bond with Carmela’s little brother, Gabriel, who is mesmerised by the vampire playing the piano. Vardalek’s influence leads Gabriel to a bed-ridden vegetative state; he responds only to the vampire and dies shortly after falling ill. This story, especially the bond between

Vardalek and Gabriel, is often seen as the result of Stenbock's struggle to understand his unconventional sexuality. His confusion is not at all a surprise. From the second half of the nineteenth century, Europe witnessed the emergence of new theories and scientific terms in German-speaking Central Europe to describe male-love, but the English joined this discourse rather late in the century, and the German and English texts were not available nor were they comprehensible to the general public, including gay men themselves. The available discourse on male-love originated from newspaper articles on scandalous sexual affairs and often clandestine fiction. The aim of this paper is to reveal how Vardalek embodies a classificatory problem of nineteenth-century sexology in the short story, which can be considered as Stenbock's literary introspection.

Critics have already established that "The True Story of a Vampire" "is clearly rooted in reality, painful reality" (Adlard 11) and that the story has autobiographical references.¹ For instance, it is clear that Stenbock was familiar with Styria as his aunt had an estate there. His familiarity is pronounced in quite realistic description of the place if we compare it to contemporary travel guides such as Baedeker's *Austria* (Adlard 5). Not only is the setting rooted in reality, but the background of the characters has possible autobiographical sources. Both the vampire and the author were counts and the attributes of Vardalek match how Stenbock was described by his contemporaries. The vampire is effeminate and "rather fair, and though decidedly attractive in appearance, not what one would call singularly handsome... rather tall," according to Carmela, and he plays the piano very well. Stenbock was "girlish" and "tall... not exactly good looking" (qtd. in Adlard 9) and was an impressive piano player, according to his contemporaries (Adlard 9). There is also reason to believe that "[i]n one respect Gabriel is also Stenbock" (Adlard 10): they were both fond of animals. Gabriel had an "extraordinary power over animals," and Stenbock had an extraordinary collection of animals in Estonia (Adlard 10) and had dinners with "a pet toad on his shoulder" (Frošt 50). Another similarity between fiction and reality might be the co-dependency of the elder and the youth. Stenbock had "The Little Count," a life-sized doll, the well-being of which was a constant concern for Count Stenbock as if the doll had been his son (Adams, *Written in Blood*). This relationship parallels with that of Vardalek and Gabriel in the story: "When Vardalek was away, Gabriel was continually asking for him and talking about him... Gabriel

1 I am grateful to Tom Sargant of Brighton, UK, for this rare introduction.

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would rush to meet him, and kiss him on the mouth.” These parallels suggest that Stenbock projected his affection to a younger self, the Little Count in life, which he also articulates in the relationship of his fictional characters.

That Stenbock was attracted to vampire stories and that he was well-acquainted with them is obvious: “[Stenbock] is in the mainstream of vampire art, yet... of all the vampires who preceded Dracula, Stenbock’s is the most remote from orthodox legend” (Adlard 6). Although one may certainly find resemblances between “The True Story of a Vampire,” *The Vampyre* (1819) by John William Polidori, *Varny the Vampire; or The Feast of Blood* (1847) by James Malcolm Rymer and Thomas Peckett Prest, and *Carmilla* (1872) by Sheridan Le Fanu, Stenbock clearly breaks with the received conventions of bloodsucking in some romanticised foggy moonlight. In fact, the exposition of the short story appears to parody the gothic vampires of its mainstream predecessors:

Vampire stories are generally located in Styria; mine is also. Styria is by no means the romantic kind of place described by those who have certainly never been there. It is a flat, uninteresting country, only celebrated for its turkeys, its capons, and the stupidity of its inhabitants. Vampires generally arrive at night, in carriages drawn by two black horses.

Our Vampire arrived by the commonplace means of the railway train, and in the afternoon.

You must think I am joking, or perhaps that by the word “Vampire” I mean a financial vampire.

No, I am quite serious. The Vampire of whom I am speaking, who laid waste our hearth and home, was a real vampire. (Stenbock)

Stenbock comments on the similarity of the location, but surprises the reader with an eerie twist. The setting makes us expect a typical gothic vampire story. However, the gothic elements (the night, the carriage, the black horses) are taken away, and we get a realistic contemporary context. But what does a “real vampire” mean in this realistic context? It has been established, given the author’s inclination towards literary introspection, that in this story “Stenbock made a genuine attempt to understand his own homosexuality in terms of traditional occultism, eventually

coming to view his condition as an aspect of vampirism and lycanthropy” (King 13–14). In what follows, I intend to substantiate what discursive possibilities and restrictions led to Stenbock’s understanding of his sexuality as vampirism; more specifically, how literary predecessors and his lack of access to sexology influenced the creation of Vardalek.

It was German-speaking Central Europe in the nineteenth century that gave new labels and theories for male same-sex desire. For instance, it was Johann Ludwig Casper in the middle of the century, who was the first to conclude from a medical standpoint that the sexual drive of the pederast was inborn and, as a result, should not be subject to legal punishment (Herzer 11). Following along the lines of Casper, the German activist, Karl Heinrich Ulrichs was the first theorist of male same-sex desire by coining the term, *urning* explaining the sexual drive with a female soul in a male body.

As early as 1869, the public and theorists faced a classificatory issue, which was apparent in the reactions to the trial of Lieutenant Karl Ernst von Zastrow. Though there was no direct evidence against him, Zastrow was sentenced to fifteen years in prison for the “sex-murder of a 16-year-old boy and the attempted sex-murder of a 6-year old boy” (Herzer 12). The public and press were outraged by Zastrow’s deeds and demanded his conviction. Zastrow’s principal defence was that he claimed himself to be an *urning*, a term Ulrichs invented a few years before the case. The idea behind his claim was that he might be effeminate and attracted to his own sex, but, as an *urning*, he was not a pederast whose sexual desires were kindled by children; he was attracted to adult men. Similarly, Ulrichs, the inventor of the term tried to emphasise the distinction between the pederast and the *urning* in 1869 with regards to the Zastrow trial. However, the public was willing neither to accept nor to understand the *urning*. Instead, “[t]he crime was so notorious that the verb *zastrieren* briefly came to mean ‘to rape homosexually’ (rhyming with the German word for ‘castrate,’ it could be rendered as something like ‘to castrate’). An outraged public demanded vengeance against this Zastrow, as well as all other ‘Zastrows’” (Tobin 11). Since the meaning of ‘*urning*’ was beyond their grasp as its script was not readily available to them, they invented their own terminology, thus adding to the conceptual muddle addressing the classification of same-sex desires.

In the same year, the aim of Károly Kertbeny (born Karl-Maria Benkert) with the coinage ‘homosexual’ in his two pamphlets sent to the Prussian authorities was

to address the “confusion of ideas” prevailing in the era (Herzer 14–15). In short, his theory was intended to prove that legal penalties were inconsistent: “normal sexualism” (heterosexuality) is unpunished while homosexuality has serious legal consequences. In his view, heterosexuals were more inclined to self-abuse and same-sex excess either in the active or passive role, bestiality, pederasty, necrophilia, and sadistic sexual gratifications. Homosexuals, on the other hand, who unlike the urning have a different male drive (and not a female one), pose no harm to society in general (Feraÿ and Herzer 34–36). His new terms, however, did not have much recognition at the time. Instead, the theory of the “contrary sexual feeling” by somatist, Carl Friedrich Otto Westphal dominated the medico-legal discourse on same-sex desire as his explanation of bodily symptoms (and not an alleged sexual drive) was what the so-called experts accepted as hard-science. Kertbeny’s term was popularised by Guſtav Jäger in his second edition of *Die Entdeckung der Seele* (*The Discovery of the Soul*, 1880) and Magnus Hirschfeld in *Jahrbuch für Sexuelle Zwischenstufen* (*Yearbook for Intermediate Sexual Types*, 1899–1923). It must be noted, however, that several terms (such as the urning, homosexual, similisexual, unisexual, intersexual, third sex, intermediate) had become more or less synonymous; furthermore, these texts were available for a specifically professional readership only.

The English joined the discourse of sexology rather late compared to German-speaking Central Europe. The term ‘homosexual’ entered the English language in 1892 with Charles Gilbert’s translation of *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) by Richard von Krafft-Ebing (Halperin 15). The first comprehensive book-length study of same-sex desire in English was *Sexual Inversion* by Havelock Ellis, published three years after Stenbock’s short story. Despite the fact that it was a scientific study of the subject matter, it was neither easy to publish nor obtain such texts. *Sexual Inversion*, for instance, was banned in 1898 as a result of the Bedborough trial. The court took issue with the fact that in accordance with prevailing laws, the publisher could not have sold copies to readers other than private subscribers and medical professionals (Crozier 60). George Bedborough was fined a hundred pounds in the end (Cook 73). With regards to *Sexual Inversion*, G. B. Shaw wrote in *The Adult* that “[i]ts publication... was more urgently needed in England than any other recent treatise... Until it appeared there was no authoritative scientific book on its subject within the reach of Englishmen and Englishwomen who cannot read French or German” (qtd. in Cook 73).

More than a decade later, the American émigré, Edward Prime-Stevenson was contributing to both literary and sexological discourses for the same reasons. He lamented in *The Intersexes* (1909) that “[t]he authour [sic] or publisher of a homosexual book, even if scientific, not to speak of a belles-lettres work, will not readily escape troublesome consequences. Even psychiatric works from medical publishers are hedged about with conditions as to their publication and sale” (376). In the preface, he explicitly stated his agenda that his sexological magnum opus was “addressed particularly to the individual layman” to help one understand “the problem of homosexuality, similitsexualism, urningism, inverted sexuality, uranianism, as it [had been] variously termed” (ix). At the beginning of the twentieth century, it was still evident that the classificatory and accessibility issues needed addressing as lay-men, including homosexuals themselves could not read nor understand contemporary scripts of same-sex desire.

There were two sources for English readership on male-love in the second half of the nineteenth century. One was the press coverage on scandalous cases such as the trials of cross-dressers and alleged sodomites, Boulton and Park in the early 1870s; the Cleveland Street Scandal of telegraph boys doubling as prostitutes in the early 1890s; and the Wilde trials in 1895. H. G. Cocks in *Nameless Offences: Homosexual Desire in the 19th Century* (2003) claims, as the title itself also suggests, that the public could learn almost nothing about these acts as they remained unnamed in court proceedings and in the press.

Another source could be the texts of literary predecessors working with homosexual themes. Christopher Looby suggests that literature as a public discourse is an obvious source on sexological knowledge, since “sexuality is itself a fiction, an imaginary composite of many different experiences, identifications, and performances (bodily sensations, gender determinations, forms of sexual conduct, erotic scripts, and so on)” (843). These “[s]exual identities (or labels or categories or scripts) need to be articulated, promulgated, circulated, and encountered in order to be received and adopted and performed, and this requires a literary public sphere” (Looby 843). Therefore, what Davide Sparti calls the “attribution model,” the recognition/application of “the power of naming”/categories/descriptions (332) was not available to Stenbock. His sexual representation works as the “internalization model,” the internalisation of symbolic codes (332). The author’s literary introspection must be studied not in terms of sexological advances, but literary codes.

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Instead of using sexological categories, “The True Story of a Vampire” (1894) accumulates symbolic codes for illicit sexual desires to describe homosexuality, which also shows how Stenbock understood his sexuality. According to Trevor Holmes, though he is uncertain if “there can be much agreement... about which nineteenth-century vampire narrative signals the beginning of representational depth in gay male vampire fiction” (176), by the time the short story appeared, “certain of the generic codes [of gay male vampire fiction] bec[a]me settled, codes through which we might say with certainty in our glance back that a text embodies gay male vampire subjectivity” (176).² Although Holmes admits that it is not possible to make an absolute list of such codes, he still tries to identify a few: “the displacement of male-male desire through an aged and desexualized ‘female’ narrative gaze; reiterations of a Classics-inflected cult of male youth; perhaps the absent mother and ineffectual father; references to unfettered sexuality” (176). The most important code in my following analysis is Gabriel’s gypsy origins on his mother’s side, “which is the first suggestion of a sexuality coded as unconventional, unstable, and non-normative” (177). I agree that the family background might signal non-normative sexuality in the era as medical psychiatrists, such as Richard von Krafft-Ebing in *Psychopathia Sexualis*, worked within an atavistic framework or degeneration theory. However, as I have outlined above, it is unclear whether these theories could influence Stenbock in 1894. For instance, Oscar Wilde’s defence during his trials did not include sexology at all. Only in 1896 did he “appeal for early release ... which cited degeneration theorists Max Nordau and Cesare Lombroso” (Cook 59–60).

Moreover, a boy’s gypsy origins *per se* could hardly prove that he felt sexual love for men at such a young age. Another problem Holmes’ argument poses is that the reader cannot know for sure what Vardalek knows about the boy’s background, which is revealed through the narration of Carmela. While it would also be difficult to prove that a character’s gypsy origins would, in themselves, suggest inclination to same-sex desires, I intend to complete Holmes’ claim to prove that, Gabriel’s “blood” has indeed a code for the initiated readers. Vardalek identifies Gabriel’s unconventional nature when he plays music:

2 Having considered *Dracula* (1897) by Bram Stoker, he also argues that “there [is not] much agreement at present about which nineteenth-century vampire narrative signals the beginning of representational depth in gay male vampire fiction” (176).

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After dinner my father asked him if he played the piano. He said, “Yes, I can a little,” and he sat down at the piano. Then he played a Hungarian csardas—wild, rhapsodic, wonderful.

That is the music which makes men mad. He went on in the same strain.

Gabriel stood stock-still by the piano, his eyes dilated and fixed, his form quivering. At last he said very slowly, at one particular motive—for want of a better word you may call it the *relâche* of a csardas, by which I mean that point where the original quasi-slow movement begins again—“Yes, I think I could play that.”

Then he quickly fetched his fiddle and self-made xylophone, and did, actually alternating the instruments, render the same very well indeed.

Vardalek looked at him, and said in a very sad voice, “Poor child! you have the soul of music within you.” (Stenbock)

It is Gabriel’s response to Vardalek’s music test that proves to the vampire and the initiated reader that the young boy is capable of deciphering and coding a man’s desire for a man. Music connects Gabriel’s gypsy origins to secreted desires that need another ‘language’ in order to be expressed. It is not by chance that Vardalek plays a Hungarian csardas. A two-volume travel book, *Magyarland* (1881) attributed to Nina E. Mazuchelli, which devotes a separate chapter to gypsy music, shows the English view on Hungarian music:

The Magyars have a perfect passion for this gipsy music, and there is nothing that appeals so powerfully to their emotions, whether of joy or sorrows... It is the language of their lives and strange surroundings; a wild, weird, banshee music; now all joy and sparkle, like sunshine on the plains; now sullen, sad and pathetic by turns, like the wail of a crushed and oppressed people... (52–53)

The key here is that music is a language for an oppressed race. Mazuchelli’s assertion seems highly probable; gypsy music appealed to most Hungarians because at the time they might have felt like second-rate citizens in the Austro-Hungarian

Empire. However, writers such as Stenbock or Wilde did not, in fact, care about Hungarian national identity. “Musical orientalism,” as Derek B. Scott claims, has never been overly concerned with establishing distinctions between Eastern cultures” (158). The *style hongrois* was known in Western musical cultures from the middle of the eighteenth century, and derived, according to Bellman, “from the exotic-sounding music played by Gypsy bands (not actual Magyars) in Hungary and westward Vienna” (qtd. in Scott 158). In the nineteenth century, the *style hongrois* became more distinct and popular, partly because of Liszt’s influential theory of the “Gypsy Scale” (Scott 159).³ At the same time, and perhaps for the same reason, gypsy music might have seemed the perfect rhetorical device for “the love that dare not speak its name” signalling illicit desires for the initiated. Gypsy music as an allusion to male-love is present in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Teleny* as well. In the former, events that are out-of-the-ordinary are marked by *ekphrasis*: whenever the plot arrives at a crucial turn, the reader is offered a glimpse at the picture, which shows what could not otherwise be shown. The letters allude to illicit meaning through the description of another mode of art. Gypsy music plays a similar role in Wilde’s work: “At another time [Dorian Gray] devoted himself entirely to music... he used to give curious concerts, in which mad gypsies tore wild music from lither zithers... when Schubert’s grace, and Chopin’s beautiful sorrows, and the mighty harmonies of Beethoven himself, fell unheeded on his ear” (Wilde 94). This might seem an innocent comment on Dorian’s musical taste; however, we encounter a similar episode in *Teleny* too. At the very beginning of the novel, the narrator Camille meets Teleny, a Hungarian pianist playing at a concert: “That is just the difficult point, for you cannot disconnect him from the music of his country; nay, to understand him you must begin by feeling the latent spell which pervades every song of Tsigane” (Wilde et al. 4). The detailed description of the rhapsodic music Camille has been listening to correlates with the bodily desires that the music has evoked in him. Camille abuses himself to the rhythm of the rhapsodic music, which leads him to orgasm in the end (Wilde et al. 4–5). It seems these narratives share Hungarian

3 “The *style hongrois* is marked by syncopation, dactylic and dotted rhythms, virtuoso violin or quasi-violin passages (the Gypsies were Hungary’s professional musicians), a more prominent raised fourth than in the Turkish Style, and the melodic interval of the augmented second. It becomes a more distinct style in the nineteenth century and the augmented second is increasingly used to connote ‘Gypsy.’ The ‘Gypsy Scale’ is then theorized by Liszt, who emphasizes difference by choosing the raised fourth degree and omitting the equally common diatonic fourth degree” (Scott 158–159).

music as a code for unnameable desires. Like *ekphrasis*, the verbal representation of a work of art, literature is able to talk about male-love through the verbal representation of music. This code became so popular and Hungarian music gained such reputation as the vehicle for same-sex desires that in *The Intersexes*, Edward Prime-Stevenson classifies it as the epitome of musical uranianism:

Music, as a mystery in aesthetics, unites logically with uranianism as a deep problem in psychology... If we turn from the formalized neurotism of such great composers [like Wagner and Richard Strauss] we may say that no music seems as directly *sexual* as the Magyar; wonderfully beautiful in its rhythms, melodies and harmonies. And the Magyar is a distinctively 'sexual' racial type. (395–96)

Another code of Wildean origins which Stenbock uses is the colour green. Carmela often gives Vardalek's eyes an inquiring look. First, she is unsuccessful at looking the vampire in the eye: "When he arrived his eyes were half closed—indeed they were habitually so—so that I could not decide their colour." This suspense leads to a minor climax in the narrative, when Vardalek looks at Gabriel and the colour of his eyes is revealed: "The stranger looked up at his approach; then I noticed his eyes. They were green: they seemed to dilate and grow larger. Gabriel stood stock-still, with a startled look, like that of a bird fascinated by a serpent." Wilde's symbolism of green, particularly his green carnation, was famous at the time and was well-known by late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century readers as well. So much so that, according to Margot Norris, the children's curiosity for green-eyed sailors in "The Encounter" by James Joyce is a Wildean expression of their immature homoerotic interest, which was appealing to Joyce (38–39). Although Prime-Stevenson views Wilde's role as potentially harmful for the gay community in the aftermath of the Wilde trials (*The Intersexes* 362), for Stenbock, Wilde's texts constituted the evident first base to understand his own sexuality at the time of his short story.

So far, I have studied the literary representation of same-sex desire in the short story in terms of the internalisation model. It has been established that several codes refer to Gabriel's unconventional sexuality and the codes of Vardalek's desire, such as Hungarian music and the colour green, are rooted in Wildean 'traditions.' However, the codes having been inspected do not explain why Stenbock understood

his sexuality in terms of vampirism. Hereafter, I intend to substantiate that Vardalek is described as a vampire to represent the author’s inability to cope with his own sexual identity since the scientific discourse on homosexualities was not readily available to Stenbock and the literary codes do not ease the tension between the controversial Victorian ideas on same-sex desire.

Analysing *Dracula*, Robert Mighall claims that “a vampire was sometimes only a vampire and not a sexual menace” (247) and that “[a] tautology operates which insists that the vampire is erotic, and because it is monstrous this testifies to sexual anxieties which the critic identifies. Vampirism is used [in critical literature] to demonstrate what the critic already knows about Victorian ‘sexuality’” (211). Mighall refers to Sergeant François Bertrand’s case in *Psychopathia Sexualis* to establish that the word ‘vampire’ was used as a cover for a more general “classificatory problem” (214). Bertrand was a grave-violator with a drive, which was not explainable at the time: “Neither necrophile, sadist, nor even sexual ‘pervert’ were available” (219). Outrage followed Bertrand’s acts: he escaped the authorities for two years despite their best efforts and journalists eventually named him ‘Le Vampire’ (213). The term ‘vampire,’ Mighall asserts, was not meant to capture a certain sexual being, but designated, for the lack of a better word, a classificatory problem with regards to such a strange behaviour (214).

Bertrand’s case exemplifies the extreme situation, when the categories were simply non-existent. But the issue is similar to the classification of same-sex desire as the labels and their respective descriptions were inaccessible or incomprehensible. To be clear, I do not intend to assert that it is absolutely inconceivable that Stenbock heard of the terms *urning*, *homosexual*, *similisexual* and so on; however, these new terms appeared in English around the 1890s for the first time. What I intend to state here is that the acts of and the theorised medical attitudes towards male-love could not find their clearly distinguished ways into the various competing categories I outlined above, which resulted in a conceptual muddle. Drawing on Mighall’s theory, I think that the “psychic vampire”⁴ Vardalek also embodies this conceptual muddle, a classificatory problem, the identity crisis Stenbock himself was going through concerning his sexuality.

4 Critics tend to sort literary vampires into two categories: the blood-sucking and the psychic vampire (Adlard 8, Penzoldt 37). The first is craving for bodily interaction, potentially with an erotic interest in the victim; the latter has a psychological, rather than a physical influence on the victim. Since Vardalek is not a bloodsucker, he can be classified in this latter category.

It is this classificatory problem, coming from German-speaking Central Europe that, in my reading, is Stenbock's concern. His realistic Styria is the place of origin of new sexological terms, which are incomprehensible to the general public and where both the Wronski family of Polish origins and the Hungarian vampire are 'others.' Moreover, these terms, upon entering the English language, even became synonyms by the end of the century, as Prime-Stevenson's *The Intersexes* attests. Stenbock's choice of the vampire's name, Vardalek, a highly unlikely name for a Hungarian, points to the same issue. Adlard suggests that Stenbock borrowed the name from Polidori's introduction to *The Vampyre* in which Polidori asserts, "[t]hough the term Vampyre is the one in most general acceptance, there are several others synonymous [sic] with it, made use of various parts of the world: as ... Vardonlacha" (qtd. in Adlard 7). On this note, it becomes evident that classifying Vardalek as a vampire (or calling a vampire Vardalek) is redundant. This redundancy hints at the lack of established terminology for vampirism in the short story, which, I suggest, draws a parallel with the lack of established terminology for same-sex desire. The word 'homosexual,' as a result, is somewhat analogous with the word 'vampire' in terms of their established role as the most commonly used term for their respective subject matter, though the prevailing status of the former was crystallised decades later.

The vampire's role in the representation of an identity crisis amidst the above conceptual muddle is also present in Vardalek's polyglossia: "Indeed he seemed to know all languages" (Stenbock, "The True Story of a Vampire"). In her analysis of *Dracula*, Katy Brundan notes that the vampire's polyglossia in Stoker's novel solves the issue articulated by Benedict Anderson: "[W]hat limits one's access to other languages is not their imperiousness, but one's own mortality" (qtd. in Brundan 2). She concludes that "[t]he premise of [*Dracula*] ... presents us with a polyglot vampire who exerts control over his victims through his unique abilities of bodily and linguistic translation, resisting the forces of monolingualism as he resists mortality" (2). The parallel I would like to draw here is that the 'homosexual' as a new category also tried to resist mortality and monolingualism. Emancipators such as Ulrichs and Kertbeny tried to legitimise same-sex desire by enumerating international and trans-historical examples to demonstrate that this sexual drive always existed, exists, and will exist, regardless of the dicta of the medico-legal discourse. The 'homosexual' also resisted monolingualism. While Ulrichs' term 'urning' existed in English translation (uranian) by the end of the century, Kertbeny's 'homosexual'

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gained popularity by this time for its “unruly” but “readily translatable” Greek and Latin compound to any other language (Breen 6). The gay vampire, Vardalek’s polyglossia suggests that there is no single ‘language’ of male-love but the several ‘languages’ (or scripts) of the invert, the urning, the homosexual and so on. However, none of these seem to speak for Vardalek’s desire, or Stenbock’s for that matter. He even tried to articulate his desire in Gabriel’s native language, Polish: “Nie umiem wyrazic jak ciechi Kocham” (I cannot express my love for you); therefore, he needs to rely on the international language of music as I have discussed above.

Stenbock’s story, in the end, does not reach a conclusion regarding the identity of the lover and the nature of the male-love Carmela witnessed. She laments that she and her story are laughed at as “people do not, as a rule, believe in Vampires!” (Stenbock). The aged, desexualised female narrator proves to be a layperson with regards to sexology, as her conceptualisation of the attraction between Vardalek and Gabriel is best described as vampirism. Although from her point of view, the psychic gay man was a real vampire; her narrative only reflects her inability to find a better word. Her conceptualisation of male-love, however, hinders the credibility of her story and the acceptance that same-sex desire exists. According to Tobin, emancipators such as Ulrichs argued that the suppression of witch-hunts at the end of the eighteenth century opened the possibility of eliminating Judeo-Christian superstitions concerning male-love as well. This argument, however, had a significant flaw. The Enlightenment broke with the idea that supernatural creatures exist; they denied the existence of witches, werewolves or vampires. At the same time, the point of the emancipators’ argument was that male-love and sexual categories such as the urning did, in fact, exist (Tobin 49–51).

The concluding remark (“People do not, as a rule, believe in Vampires!”) indicates, as a result, that Stenbock came to understand his sexuality in terms of the conceptual muddle prevailing in England at the end of the century. Literary predecessors offered a way to code and, hence, represent same-sex desires; however, they did not aid Stenbock to understand his desire as one of a distinct sexual identity. Another key issue in this crisis was that the results of the study of sex were difficult to access and even if one could obtain a book on sexology, it was virtually incomprehensible to Victorian readers. As a result, Stenbock cast his autobiographical character Vardalek as a vampire representing the classificatory issue of the 1890s.

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