

## ***Le Vampire* (1831): a rediscovered journal of the July Monarchy**

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Not long after the establishment of the July Monarchy in 1830, which marked the zenith of the dynastic ambitions of the House of Orleans, a short-lived and somewhat irregular bi-weekly journal was published from 3 March until 10 April 1831, petering out after a mere eight issues, each one consisting of no more than five double-columned pages. This journal devoted itself to unmasking the vices and parasitism of Parisian gambling houses (where roulette and card-games such as *trente-et-un* were commonly played), the Royal Lottery, and the stock-market, all of which are portrayed as duping their victims, extorting from them either inherited or earned wealth. The actual reference to the ‘vampire’ as a motif likewise peters out in the main text after the first four issues, except in the title itself. However, where the expression is invoked, it is often by the editor who, in the throes of an imaginary conversation with his ghoulish counterpart, is entreated by him to protect the victims of the vampire’s own deceitful actions, which are usually characterised as protean (i.e., constantly changing its forms) and parasitic.

As will be shown in the following article, the characterisation of the vampire as a financial parasite, an allegory of alternatively bad government, financial scams and finally high capitalism, is as old as the earliest introduction of the phenomenon into West European newspapers in the 1730s, and had already become something of a dead metaphor by the first French Revolution of 1789, when, as Markman Ellis shows, the term ‘vampire’ was used to describe commercial aristocrats who levied taxes on food in Paris (Ellis 2000: 167).

However, as shall be further demonstrated, the use of the vampire to designate a financial parasite was not only newly invigorated due to recent literary developments in France in the 1831 journal which bore its name, but also helps us to make a differentiation between the

vampire as allegory of the speculator or gambling-house owner, and the later Marxian vampire who is parasitical upon labour rather than simply wealth. While Ellis, Nick Groom and Chris Baldick have all pointed to the use of the vampire as allegory of the capitalist, none have quite noted the fundamental differentiation between various types of this allegory over time, and *Le Vampire*, as an important text in the genesis of the concept, indicates how it evolved.

Therefore, in the following article there will first be a discussion of the likely founder and editor of the journal, the Abbé Grégoire. This will be followed by an account of the context in which gambling was represented in contemporaneous works such as Honoré de Balzac's *La Peau de chagrin* (1831). Next, there will be a brief description of the uses of the vampire in the first four issues of the journal together with a consideration of the portrayal of vampires, capitalists and other literary sources in previous decades. Finally, the article concludes with a number of remarks concerning the light this casts on the portrayal of the vampire in Grégoire's journal.

### **I. The Literary and Political Context of *Le Vampire*.**

Though it is not possible to identify the founder of *Le Vampire* with absolute certainty after this length of time, one likely candidate is Henri Jean-Baptiste Grégoire (4 December 1750-28 May 1831), commonly known as the Abbé Grégoire, a Roman Catholic priest, constitutional bishop (a term which will be explained shortly), and a major figure in the French Revolution. The clearest link to Grégoire and his supporters is the formal attribution of the editorship of the journal to a 'Société des Philanthropes et de Gens de Lettres' (Society of Philanthropists and Men of Letters) printed on the masthead of the prospectus issued on Thursday, 3 March 1831, and repeated on the mastheads of the next seven extant issues

lodged in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, the last of which is dated 10 April 1831.

Whether this is the final issue published is not known. However, it is well-documented that Grégoire became seriously ill around this time, his death from cancer occurring less than two months later, and without the aging prelate's energy and leadership such a periodical is likely to have collapsed rapidly.

By 1831, Grégoire's connection with various philanthropical associations dated back more than fifty years. At some point in the early 1770s, perhaps while studying for the priesthood at Metz, he joined the Société des Philanthropes de Strasbourg, a quasi-Masonic association dedicated to acts of charity, interdenominational tolerance, the spread of scientific knowledge, and educational projects, including the publication of school textbooks, classical texts in French translation, and even calendars for the use of peasant farmers.<sup>1</sup> Significantly, in an era dominated by the rigid teachings of the Catholic Church, the Société des Philanthropes de Strasbourg not only preached religious tolerance but also avowed itself open to members of all creeds.

In 1776, the year after his ordination, Grégoire was appointed priest at Marimont la Grande (now absorbed into the small commune of Bassing), some 54 kilometres from Metz, where he continued his work on behalf of the Société des Philanthropes de Strasbourg by acting as a founder member of a sister organisation, the Société Philanthropique de Nancy. Underlying all this activity is a commitment to human rights and, in particular, a commitment to the rights of those groups oppressed because of their religious or ethnic identity. Nor did Grégoire restrict himself to writing about human rights; he put his beliefs into practice. By September 1786, after a decade of work as a parish priest, most recently in his native village of Emberménil, he felt emboldened enough not only to attend the celebrations for Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year) at a newly built synagogue in nearby Lunéville, but later the same day preach a sermon on religious tolerance at a nearby Catholic church. Two years

later, in 1788, responding to a competition to write an essay concerning the means of integrating the Jewish community more actively into French life set by the Société royale des sciences et des arts de Metz (another philanthropic association), Grégoire took first prize with a work on the physical, moral and political regeneration of that same community.<sup>2</sup> Not only was this work considered significant enough to be published in French, but it was also translated, the following year, into English.

Despite his reformist zeal, Grégoire would be largely forgotten today were it not for the role he played in the French Revolution. In March 1789, he was elected as one of the delegates representing the lower orders of the Catholic clergy (the bishops and more senior clergy held separate elections) at the Estates General, a consultative but largely powerless assembly convened by Louis XVI at a time of mounting political and economic crisis. Collectively, the clerical delegates formed the First Estate; the other two groups of elected representatives consisted of the aristocracy (the Second Estate) and the commoners (the Third Estate). Little progress was made except with regard to a general agreement that France was in need of some form of written constitution. Before the king could dissolve the assembly, however, the Third Estate voted separately to reconstitute the Estates General as the National Constituent Assembly. A week later, on 19 June, the clergy voted to join them.

Grégoire was by no means a passive spectator at these events.<sup>3</sup> It is known that he lobbied his clerical brethren at Lunéville and Nancy in order to get himself elected to the Estates General; it is likewise known that he published a timely letter to his fellow delegates on 10 June 1789, exhorting them to side with the Third Estate. But it is for his participation in subsequent revolutionary activity that he is now generally remembered. One of a small number of clerical delegates that managed to make the transition to the Constituent Assembly (1789-91), Grégoire was present at the swearing of the Tennis Court Oath (20 June 1789) that effectively paved the way to the Legislative Assembly (1791-92), the first revolutionary

government, of which he was also a member, and the creation of the National Convention (1792-95), which was charged with providing a constitution for the country after the overthrow of the monarchy, and to which he also belonged.

During this period, Grégoire was the first priest to submit (27 December 1790) to the controversial new Civil Constitution of the Clergy, the terms of which forced the clergy to compromise their religious scruples by swearing their allegiance to the State. The same legislation also provided for bishops to be elected locally rather than appointed by the Pope. In this manner, in 1791, Grégoire himself was elected to the see of Blois, in the Cher-et-Loire, so becoming one of France's newly created 'constitutional bishops' (Carnot 1837: I, 28-35).

During the course of the French Revolution, Grégoire supported the motion for the abolition of the monarchy (21 September 1792), as well as delivering a speech in support of Louis XVI being brought to trial (15 November 1792). Whether he would have joined the ranks of the regicides by voting in favour of the execution of the king on 17 January 1793, it is impossible to say: he was absent from the chamber on official business on the day in question (Carnot 1837: I 53-56). But he is reputed to have said: "Louis est un grand coupable, mais la religion me défend de prendre le sang des hommes" (1837: I 56) ('Louis is very guilty, but religion forbids me from taking human life'.)

Despite his political radicalism, there can be no doubt that Grégoire was also a devout Catholic. In the face of intense hostility towards religion from some sections of the revolutionary left, Grégoire continued to wear episcopal dress throughout the Reign of Terror, conducted a daily Mass in his home, and sponsored legislation to protect churches, books and works of art from vandalism. During this period, he also acted as a leading advocate of the abolition of black slavery and the granting of citizenship to Jews. In the autumn of 1789, he joined Jacques Pierre Brissot's Société des amis des Noirs, yet another

philanthropic organisation, this one dedicated to the abolition of slavery, especially in the French Caribbean colonies of Saint-Domingue and Haiti.<sup>4</sup> With the support of such luminaries at Condorcet and La Fayette, Grégoire's proposition that the free black population of Saint-Domingue should be granted equal voting rights if born of free parents was adopted by the National Convention in May 1791, so allowing the first men of colour to serve as members of a European parliament (Brière 2004: 36). Saint-Domingue was France's most profitable overseas colony, however, and it was not long before the National Convention reversed its decision.

Grégoire retained his bishopric until 1801, when the legislation under which he held the position was repealed by Napoleon. Though his political influence was waning by this time, Grégoire smoothly transitioned to the new Napoleonic structures of government: the Corps Législatif (1799-1801) and the Senate (1801). While Napoleon dispatched an expeditionary force to quell the Haitian Revolution in 1802, Grégoire quietly championed the rebels, who came to see him as their 'spiritual godfather' (Brière 2004: 39).

With the restoration of the monarchy in 1814, Grégoire's political fortunes reached their lowest ebb. Though he may not have technically been a regicide, this is clearly how Grégoire was perceived by Louis XVIII and his successors. In 1818, Grégoire was deprived of his pension as a former senator, an act of political malice; the following year, having won a seat in the Chambre des Députés, his election was annulled by the house, likewise an act of malice (Jardin et al. 1988: 33, 279, 290). By the time Louis-Philippe was offered the French throne in 1830, Grégoire was a spent force. In the light of his former achievements, including his not inconsiderable bibliography of pamphlets and reports, *Le Vampire* is little more than a footnote to an illustrious career as a political activist.

In December 1830, Balzac published a short sketch entitled 'Le Dernier Napoléon' (The Last Napoleon) in *La Caricature*, a satirical weekly that flourished during the first

thirteen years (1830-1843) of the July Monarchy (1830-48) and quickly became notorious for its cartoons depicting Louis-Philippe as a bloated pear. Though Balzac's sketch is unlikely to have had any direct influence on *Le Vampire*, *La Caricature* is indicative of the general hostility that greeted Louis-Philippe's reign from the outset. The fact that Balzac's sketch describes a visit to a well-known Parisian casino may or may not have a direct political implication in the sense that gambling might be seen as a metaphor for the breakdown of civil society, a breakdown directly attributable to the failures of the new political regime to curb financial speculation of all descriptions. With a writer such as Balzac, whose work from 1830 onwards suddenly became saturated with arcane political meanings, it is difficult to be sure either way. One thing is certain, however: Balzac, in many respects a reactionary conservative, was no admirer of the regime of Louis-Philippe.

Like *Le Vampire*, Balzac's sketch in *La Caricature*, the novel to which it gave rise (*La Peau de chagrin*), and the entire multi-volume *Comédie humaine* can be seen as a reaction or a literary response to Louis-Philippe's regime. The sketch itself concerns an unnamed young man, a student or a writer of some kind, who, around three o'clock in the afternoon, is cooling his heels in the grounds of the Palais-Royal waiting for one of the gambling dens to open. Through the window, he can see the employees standing around idly like 'larves attendant leur proie' (larvae awaiting their prey) (*La Caricature* 1830: 54); this is the first in a number of startling metaphors employed by the author. Lost in his contemplation of suicide, Balzac's protagonist hears, by some sort of 'privilège infernal' (infernal dispensation) (1830: 54) the clock striking four. By the time he enters the gaming room, a small number of clients have already assembled 'comme le peuple va à le Grève' (just as the people go to [see an execution at] le Grève) (1830: 54), another striking metaphor. Unlike the seasoned gambler, Balzac's nameless protagonist does not think to divide his single gold Napoleon into smaller stakes, a matter quickly noted by the other habitués. His money lost,

Balzac's protagonist makes a pretence at insouciance by whistling a jaunty aria by Rossini as he leaves the gaming room and makes his way to the Seine, a short walk away, where he intends to drown himself.

This short sketch is significant for a number of reasons, not least the fact that it provides the basis of the magisterial opening chapter of Balzac's *La Peau de chagrin*, published some eight months later in August 1831 (Balzac 1831: I 35-57).<sup>5</sup> For present purposes, what is interesting is that it covers much the same ground as the various articles in *Le Vampire*; firstly, by identifying and describing a particularly notorious Parisian gambling hell and, secondly, by framing that narrative within a cautionary tale regarding the consequences of gambling, consequences almost invariably represented by suicide or violent crime. The third issue of *Le Vampire* (27 March 1831) specifically describes another establishment within the grounds of the Palais-Royal, the one located at No. 113 (with one or two exceptions, such establishments were generally known only by the number of their premises), while the *Variété* rubric of the first number (13 March 1831) gives details of two murders committed as a consequence of gambling and that of the fourth number (24 March 1831), a suicide by drowning in the Seine. Indeed, the only real difference between Balzac's 1830 sketch and the contents of *Le Vampire* is found in the vividness of the prose of the former and the relative flatness of the latter. Balzac's choice of the establishment at Number 36 in the Palais-Royal is not a matter of chance. Whatever the particularities of the other gambling dens scattered around Paris, the establishments in the arcades of the Palais-Royal represented the epicentre of the industry. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to describe the Palais-Royal as little more than a vast casino with occasional outposts located elsewhere in Paris.

The extent to which Balzac was personally acquainted with the Parisian gambling world is unclear, but one source of information is likely to have been Louis Véron, founder of

the *Revue de Paris* (1829-44), a French literary magazine to which Balzac was a frequent contributor. Indeed, in the issue of 29 May 1831, he published another short sketch, 'Le Suicide d'un poète' (The Suicide of a Poet), that was later incorporated into *La Peau de chagrin*. This episode describes the prolonged bout of drunkenness and despair, tantamount to moral suicide, that Balzac's protagonist, now identified as Raphaël de Valentine, indulges in after his friend Rastignac shares with him his winnings from the gambling-table (Balzac 1831: I 348-359; II 55-86). In his memoirs, Dr. Véron describes a similar experience that occurred to him in Paris around 1818, just after the second restoration of Louis XVIII following the Hundred Days. Having pooled his resources with two friends, Véron decided to visit a gambling den (No. 129) in the Palais-Royal where the money was quickly lost with the exception of some loose change. This change was given to one of the members of the group to chance his hand at roulette while the others went home to contemplate a month of severe deprivation. Seven hours later, the young medical student who had been playing roulette eventually returned with winnings of some sixty francs, enough for all three to dine sumptuously at the first grand restaurant in Paris, chez Véfou, located in the arcades of the Palais-Royal (Véron 1857: II 20-22).

Rather than learning his lesson, however, that same evening Véron and his friends returned to No. 129 where they quickly amassed winnings of between 1500 and 2000 francs each. Over the coming three months, Véron describes his growing gambling addiction, the days on which he visited all the different gambling halls of Paris in turn, detailing the slightly different rules and procedures that governed each establishment, the various systems which gamblers follow, and some of the celebrities among the usual habitués. As in *Le Vampire*, those who owned royal warrants under the restoration to operate gaming establishments (the *fermiers des jeux*), such as Perrin, Boursalt and Bénazet, are mentioned in passing by Véron, with a brief note of their previous careers (1857: II 37-39).

Surprisingly, *Le Vampire* provides little historical overview of French attitudes towards games of chance and the concomitant issue of lotteries. From the Middle Ages through the eighteenth century, the French monarchy unequivocally supported the Church's injunction against gambling as wasteful and destructive of family life (Harouel 2011: 5). Lotteries were another matter, however, and during the course of the eighteenth century the monarchy increasingly granted permission for lotteries to be held in support of charitable causes or for funding public work. Among early beneficiaries of this policy was the Hôpital des Enfants-Trouvés (foundling hospital) and the École Militaire, both of which were granted letters patent in the mid-eighteenth century to run private lotteries (2011: 7). In 1776, this system was reformed with the creation of a single state lottery, the Royal Lottery of France, the profits of which were directed towards both charitable causes and public works.

The Royal Lottery effectively legitimized gambling, or at least one form of gambling for the masses. Meanwhile, the widespread tolerance of card-play and other forms of gambling in Court society during the eighteenth century legitimized such activity among the elite. The notoriety of the Palais-Royal as a centre for gambling and prostitution was not a new phenomenon in 1830: it dated back to the lifetime of Louis-Philippe's father, Philippe d'Orléans, later known as Philippe-Egalité, who, in 1786, opened the Galeries du Palais Royal to the public. As an appanage of royalty, these grounds and galleries were effectively immune from official scrutiny, unlike the rest of Paris where gambling establishments were regularly raided by the police.

The revolutionary governments of the early 1790s proved even less tolerant of gambling than the monarchy. In 1794, Grégoire himself wrote in a report addressed to the National Convention that a mixture of revolutionary zeal and the popularity of the recently introduced national festivals had led to the closure of many gambling dens of the lower order,

where games of chances had brought ruin to so many families.<sup>6</sup> In fact, a more likely explanation for the decline of such businesses is the severity of the legislation passed by the National Convention in July 1791, legislation which was followed two years later by a decree abolishing the lottery (Harouel 2011: 11-12).

As with the abolition of slavery, such advances proved short lived. The lottery was re-established as early as 30 September 1797; likewise, in exchange for hefty premiums, nine gambling establishments, a number of which were located in the Palais-Royal, were also granted licenses. These establishments became veritable gold mines after the Battle of Waterloo, when Paris was once again occupied by the Allies. Further legislation on the organisation of the Paris gambling industry was passed in 1818 and 1820, including the creation of the system of *fermiers des jeux* (2011: 12), mentioned by both Véron and *Le Vampire*.

Given that opposition to the reign of Louis-Philippe would focus to a considerable degree on the perception that France had fallen victim to speculators of one kind or another (bankers, investors, property developers or simply those involved in the gambling industry), it is easy to overlook one key fact: that most of these issues dated back to previous political regimes, whether the *ancien régime*, the revolutionary era, the Napoleonic period, or the restoration of the monarchy in 1815. As we have seen, Grégoire himself contributed to the debate about gambling in 1794; no doubt he would have had much to say about the liberalization of gambling in 1818 had he been given the opportunity. Balzac, in particular, had much to say on the same subject. In both *Le Père Goriot* (1834) and *La Rabouilleuse* (1842), he provides lively portraits of the gambling frenzy that had gripped Paris at the time of Louis XVIII's second restoration. In *Goriot*, this takes the form of a bravura account of how Rastignac wins a fortune for his mistress, Delphine de Nucingen, whose fortune has been misappropriated by her husband, by winning seven thousand francs for her at roulette.

*La Rabouilleuse* is a cautionary tale of how a civil servant's widow impoverishes herself by purchasing lottery tickets.

Despite the evidence provided by writers such as Balzac about gambling frenzy in 1830s Paris, the writing was on the wall for the industry even before the last issue of *Le Vampire* was published. The Royal Lottery, reinstated as the National Lottery in 1797 before being renamed the Imperial Lottery, and then once again becoming the Royal Lottery, was abolished in April 1832, a decision that took effect in 1836. The following year (1837) the seven remaining gambling houses were closed down. With regard to the issue of speculation, it is ironic to note that *La Revue de Paris*, in which so much of Balzac's work was published in the early 1830s, was not only a speculative venture in itself but one founded by a man whose wealth derived from yet another speculative venture: patent medicines. In 1824, having by now qualified as a doctor, Véron purchased a brand of 'pâte pectoral' (cough drop) from the widow of a deceased pharmacist whose shop was situated near his medical practice on the rue Caumartin. By means of an adroit publicity campaign, Véron made a fortune for himself that quickly paved the way for a successful career in opera management and, later, the ownership of a newspaper.

## **II The Political Context of *Le Vampire*.**

*Le Vampire* (1831) begins its first issue with an imaginary conversation between the editor and the vampire he is about to satirise. In it, the vampire actually asks the editor to help those people that the creature itself seeks to destroy:

VAMPIRE. Monstreux assemblage de l'homme et du tigre, proscrit des tombeaux,  
génie malfaisant altéré de sang, avide de victims, vampire, enfin, que me veux-tu? -

Te server et sauver les hommes. — Singulière idée pour le vampire. —

Que t'importe, suis moi, pour un j'en sauve dix, et je t'associe à cette bonne oeuvre. -

Bien, bien: mais ne pourriez-vous les sauver tout seul? — J'ai besoin de ton ministère.  
 — Bien, très bien, M. le Vampire; mais c'est que voyez-vous je n'aime pas le déplacement, cependant s'il est vrai, s'il est vrai. (*Le Vampire*, 3 March 1831: 1)  
 [VAMPIRE. Monstrous combination of man and tiger, proscribed from tombs, evil genius spoiled in blood, greedy for victims, vampire, well, what do you want with me? — To serve you and save men. — Singular idea for the vampire. — What does it matter, follow me, for one I save ten, and I associate you with this good work. — Good, good: but couldn't you save them on your own? — I need your ministry. — Good, very good, Mr. Vampire; but, look here, I'd rather you spared me the inconvenience, still, if it's true, let's get on with it (. . .)]

The paragraph continues with the vampire coaxing the editor to join him on his perambulations round the 'maisons des jeux'. The prospectus continues with an address to the reader discussing the ills of gambling, the lottery and financial speculation on the stock market ('agiotage'), and how the new journal will expose the villains, promising that 'les aventures scandaleuses, la vie de ces modernes Protées, leur inextricable existence seront mis en lumière' (the scandalous adventures, the lives of these modern Proteuses, their inscrutable existence will be illuminated). The prospectus continues with a discussion of the vices of the 'maisons des jeux', the lottery and 'agiotage', and then, in a separate article entitled 'Statistique', talks of the history of the 'maisons des jeux' in the 1770s, and provides the names of the directors and the amounts of money they have made in *livres*. Finally, there are two reviews (one literary and the other theatrical), neither of which, at first sight, have any connection to the main subject of *Le Vampire*.

In fact, both reviews affirm the revolutionary political allegiances of the periodical. With regard to the literary review, praise is given to the recent work of the poet Auguste Barbier (1805-1882). These poems, collected under the title *Iambes* (1831), were written in

the immediate aftermath of the July Revolution and, not unlike *Le Vampire*, denounce the evils and abuses of the time (3 March 1831: 5). Similarly, the stage review relates to a play which bears the name of the notorious Mme du Barry, a celebrated courtesan who was Louis XV's last mistress. More controversially, this play involves the infamous Parc-aux-Cerfs, a private brothel deliberately created in Versailles to cater to the king's illicit sexual appetites, and the subject of an inflammatory 1790 pamphlet entitled *Le Parc-aux-Cerfs, ou l'origine de l'affreux déficit* (The Deer Park, or the Origin of the Atrocious Deficit). Not surprisingly, Jacques-François Ancelot (1794-1854), the author of *Madame Dubarry*, not only lost his job but his government pension (he was formerly an admiralty clerk) as a result of Louis Philippe's coronation (3 March 1831: 5).

The second issue, some ten days later on 13 March, simply repeats the 'Prospectus' and 'Statistique' of the first issue. There then follows a letter from a 'Docteur Roudrac' effectively threatening the journal (doubtless inserted by the editor as a means of showing that he and his colleagues cannot be intimidated), and then two more short sections, including an account of gamblers who have committed suicide (13 March 1831: 3-4). The third issue begins with a 'Notice Bibliographique' recounting how M. de Chuyes brought the lottery into France (20 March: 1); this is followed by an article entitled 'Des Jeux' that excoriates gambling for its economic uselessness (20 March: 2). The second article in the 'Statistique' series then recounts the numbers of 'maisons des jeux' in Paris, the numbers of tables they have, and how much money they raise. After another short article attacking the Stock Exchange and 'agiotage' (speculation), the vampire is invoked again in an article entitled 'Coup-d'oeil dans les salons de Paris' (a glance into the salons of Paris) which describes 'M. Le Baron', a wealthy man who has gained his wealth purely through speculation and exploiting gamblers. Before telling his disgraceful story, the writer declares:

O ciel! puis-je en croire mes yeux! [. . .] Il serait possible [. . .] Vampire, mon guide, mon protecteur, à l'oeuvre! Auprès des témoignages vivants que je vais invoquer appelle ceux des morts. Je vais parler d'un homme dont la tombe a déjà recouvert plus d'une victime. (20 March: 3)

[O heaven! Can I believe my eyes! (. . .) It would be possible (. . .) Vampire, my guide, my protector, to work! Alongside the testimonies of the living that I shall invoke call upon those of the dead. I shall talk of a man whose tomb conceals more than one victim.]

Again, the vampire is addressed as though the narrator is beginning a conversation, and unlike the earlier invocation this includes a physical detail related to vampires, this being the tomb.

This rhetorical strategy of invoking the Vampire requires some comment. From the early 1820s through the late 1830s, one of the principal emergent genres was a popular form of French romanticism sometimes called the *roman frénétique*, which issued in part from the vogue among readers for English and German Gothic novels in French translation. Two such works that caught the public eye in 1821 were Christian Spiess's *Le Petit Pierre* (*Das Petermännchen*) and the Rev. Charles Maturin's *Melmoth ou l'Homme errant* (*Melmoth the Wanderer*), both of which employ a similar rhetorical strategy: a dialogue between a man and his two tutelary demons in the case of the former, and a dialogue between the devil and the man who has sold his soul to him in the latter (Hale 2002: 78-79).

In the late 1830s, this formula gave rise to one of the most popular sensation novels written in the nineteenth century, Frédéric Soulié's *Les Mémoires du diable* (1837-38), often considered the first novel of any significance to be published in daily instalments in a French newspaper. In this work, the devil has the power to allow his victims to see inside the minds of those with whom they come into contact in everyday life, to read their thoughts, and so

learn the secrets of their criminal conduct. *Le Vampire* only modifies the formula of works of this kind to the extent that the editor's sinister invocation involves not the devil but the figure of the vampire, rendered popular by Byron and Polidori in 1819, and quickly brought to France, as we shall see later, by Charles Nodier and Cyprien Bérard.

In the fourth issue, after an article on the history of gambling houses in France, there is another article entitled 'Une Leçon de Trente et un', meaning the card-game, in which we find the following introduction:

*Je veux vous apprendre un moyen sûr de toujours gagner au noble jeu de trente-et-un [ . . . ] Voilà une singulière prétention pour un Vampire qui s'est fait philosophe, et qui a entrepris de régénérer la société. Qu'importe? Je veux vous faire connaître une martingale des plus avantageuse que j'ai vu jouer dernièrement avec un bonheur sans égal. (Le Vampire 24 March: 6)*

[I want to teach you a sure method of always winning at the noble game of thirty-one ( . . . ) There's a singular pretention for a Vampire turned *philosophe*, and one who has embarked on the regeneration of society. What does it matter? I want to let you know about a *martingale*, one of the most successful gambling systems I have ever seen, with unparalleled happy results.]

The vampire goes on to say that his fine clothes inspire confidence, before the author instructs the reader to look at a man in the *maison des jeux* who has been ruined by gambling, and who now simply offers his advice at the table to others. In a later article in the same issue the author references the vampire again when he tells the story of the sorry M. B\*\*\*, 'un capitaliste millionnaire', who managed to lose 500,000 francs in one month in 1826 through unwise speculation on stocks and shares, despite being a relative of the Rothschilds: 'Une Dupe!' (The word 'dupe' enjoyed an extraordinary popularity in the France of the 1830s). The writer concludes, 'Voilà à quoi exciter les railleries et

les ricanements d'un Vampire' (That's how to provoke the scorn and guffaws of a Vampire)  
(*Le Vampire* 24 March: 7).

That the 'capitaliste' is a victim of the vampire is cause for reflection, as in modern interpretations of the allegorical vampire it is the capitalist himself who is usually equated with the vampire, particularly in Marxist terminology. This, however, is a result of changing understandings of financial parasitism from the earlier era of free trade until the rise of high capitalism and industrialisation — *Le Vampire* (1831) helps us understand the development of this concept.

As Markman Ellis has shown, the idea of seeing a vampire as a parasite on wealth or on society stems from the very first stories of Hungarian and Serbian vampires reaching the London and Paris presses in the 1720s and 1730s. Ellis details how the anti-establishment and anti-Walpole journal, *The Craftsman*, immediately related the allegory of parasitic vampirism to the "hard rule" in Hungary imposed by the Hapsburgs, and further related this allegory to the "blood-sucking" of Walpole's Whig government, whose financial administration the journal frequently referred to as a bloodsucking caterpillar (Ellis 2000: 165-66). The leechlike nature of the vampire also, as Ellis further outlines, led later commentators like John Trenchard to see the South Sea Company as a 'blood-sucker' because of its parasitism (2000: 167).<sup>7</sup> Noting further how Charles Forman declared that exporters of coin were "Vampires of the publick, and Riflers of the Kingdom" in *Some Queries and Observations Upon the Revolution in 1688, and its Consequences* ([1741] Qtd. in Ellis 2000: 167), and how Goldsmith, in 1760, used the metaphor of the vampire to satirise the corrupt magistrate in *The Citizen of the World* (1760), Ellis adds that during the French Revolution the term 'blood-sucking vampires' was used as 'shorthand' for those who levied food taxes on the products of agriculture (2000: 168).

The allegory of the vampire as financial predator continues long after this period and the issues of *Le Vampire* (1831), and was most popularly seen in the work of Karl Marx, as demonstrated by Nick Groom in his work *The Vampire: A New History* (2018). Groom observes the development of the vampire as a symbol of capitalist parasitism in the nineteenth century, from writers like Moses Hess, who in his 1845 essay ‘Das Goldwesen’ described money as “‘the coagulated blood of those who suffer’”, and that by going to market to gain capital, it “‘cannibalistically suck[s] nourishment from its own fat’” (Qtd. in Groom 2018: 3139; Biale 2007: 177), to Michael Davitt, who in 1880 saw the land-owners in Ireland as “‘the brood of cormorant vampires that have sucked the life-blood out of the country’” (Qtd. in Groom 2018: 3152-58). As Groom notes, the most eloquent and sustained articulation of the vampire as capitalist comes from Marx himself, who wrote in his notes towards *Grundrisse* (1857-58) that:

Capital posits the permanence of value (to a certain degree) by incarnating itself in fleeting commodities and taking on their form, but at the same time changing them just as constantly. [. . .] But capital obtains this ability only by constantly sucking in living labour as its soul, vampire-like [. . .] sucking its living soul out of labour.

(Marx 1973: 646; Groom 2018: 3173)

As Groom remarks, Marx most famously repeats this in *Das Kapital* (1867), where he writes that “‘capital is dead labour which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks’” (Marx 1990: 342; Groom: 3173-83). Following the observations of Terrell Carver, Groom asserts that ‘Marx’s vampirology derives from Enlightenment philosophy rather than the escalating popular appetite for supernatural fiction’ (ibid: 3206).<sup>8</sup> While this is possibly the case (although, as Groom also notes, Marx gives a much more graphic description of the vampire capitalist later in *Das Kapital*, adapting a quotation from Engel’s essay on the ‘The English Ten Hour Bill’ (1850) [Groom: 3183-94]),<sup>9</sup>

it must be said that Marx's definition of the allegorical vampire and what it sucks has fundamentally changed from the definitions of coin exchangers and speculators being vampires in the eighteenth century, since the vampire now specifically sucks labour. This is in keeping with Marx's view that it is the exploitation of labour which gives surplus value to a product for the capitalist when the labourer creates it (Marx 1990: 69), further augmented by the subsequent creation of machinery, which absorbs the worker's traditionally 'fixed capital' of skill into the 'circulating capital' of raw material and the end product; this effectively objectifies the worker as part of the process of creating capital (Marx 1973: 699-700). Indeed, the vampire metaphor in such a sucking and deadening of labour is naturally allied to Marx's further description of machine-based capitalism being 'monstrous' in the 'disproportionate' ferocity of its exploitation of labour time (Marx 1973: 705), and thus radically transforms the earlier, much less elaborate and almost dead vampire metaphors used to describe how currency-trading 'sucks' the blood of a people's or a nation's finances, employed by the likes of Charles Forman in 1641. *Le Vampire* (1831) can help us gain partial insight into the development of the vampire as capitalist during the nineteenth century, particularly in France, as it allegorizes the process from the revolution's overthrow of feudalism to the incipient bourgeois monarchy of Orleans. Marx himself did much to condense and describe this process in the first three chapters of *Le Dix-Huitième Brumaire de Louis Napoleon Bonaparte* (1852).

In France, as opposed to England, it is Voltaire who created the precedent for seeing financial parasites as being vampires in his entry 'Vampires' from the *Dictionnaire Philosophique* in 1764. Having speculated why only countries like Hungary and Serbia had vampires, and that there were none in London and Paris, he reminds the reader that these towns in fact do have such creatures, but that they are simply called bankers and businessmen instead 'qui sucèrent en plein jour le sang du peuple' ('who sucked in broad daylight the

blood of the people’) (Voltaire 1878: 548). In 1788, Etienne Clavière became one of the first French writers to use the term ‘capitaliste’ in writing (Adam Smith had used the term in the English-speaking world some decades before, while Trenchard had used the word ‘Capital’ to refer to wealth before his death in 1723 [Trenchard 1724: 48]), and did so as part of a series of pejorative terms, including ‘vampire’, which were employed by various Jacobins (among them followers of Rousseau) to condemn the treasury’s creditors. A banker himself, he wrote a series of letters to Simon-Nicolas-Henri Linguet, which were then openly published as *De la foi publique envers les Créanciers de l’État*, condemning the state’s declaration of bankruptcy on 16 August 1788. According to Clavière, this was grossly unfair to the country’s creditors, whom he defends by mocking their detractors’ own mockery:

A la réserve de *quelques vieux Domestiques, quelques artisans économes*, vous transformez les créanciers de l’état en autant de Banquiers, d’agiateurs, de gens d’affaires, que vous dénoncez comme des *capitalistes ardents, d’insatiables vautours des usuriers voraces, des vampires criminels*. C’est dans leurs mains que les Etats-Généraux doivent se hâter d’anéantir la Dette Publique; quitte à dire ceux qui ne méritent pas ces odieuses qualifications: Si ce n’est toi, c’est donc ton frère. (Clavière 1788: 6)

[With the exception of a few old servants, a few thrifty artisans, you transform the creditors of the state into as many bankers, brokers, business people, whom you denounce as ardent capitalists, insatiable vultures, voracious usurers, criminal vampires. It is in their hands that the Estates General must hasten to cancel the Public Debt; at the risk of those who do not deserve such odious qualifications/insults: If it is not you, then it must be your brother.]

He argues that the creditors of the state are ‘transformed’ by their detractors into bankers, stockbrokers and businessmen—meaning effectively interpreted as being solely these

professions, who are then denounced as ‘ardent capitalists’, ‘insatiable vultures’, ‘voracious usurers’ and ‘criminal vampires’. He quickly denounces these very denunciations, and while he admits that ‘agiotage’, or stock-market speculation, can be a burden, and suspend industry (1788: 11), he warns that bankruptcy will not stop this, with the event punishing the innocent many for the acts of the few. He does not equate the terms ‘capitalist’ and ‘vampire’, but makes it clear that these are both habitual terms of abuse for the treasury creditors: labels with which he totally disagrees. These terms, linking a noun to an epithet in each case, clearly repeat standard forms of abuse current at the time. There is no sense, however, that the ‘capitaliste’, even as a term of abuse, is associated with the exploitation of labour.

In the years before *Le Vampire* (1831) was published, interest in the vampire in France as a literary phenomenon rather than merely a metaphor for capitalism or financial speculation was spurred by the work of Charles Nodier. Nodier encountered the vampire myth when working as Librarian in the short-lived republic of Illyria for Napoleon’s political ally Maréchal Fouché, where he learned of both the vampire and *stryge* [‘strix’] myths while reading *Viaggio in Dalmazia* (1771) by the Abbé Fortis — an eighteenth-century travel book about the area wherein he found himself at that time. Polidori’s *The Vampyre* (1817) was translated by a certain ‘Faber’ into French in 1819 under Byron’s name, and Nodier quickly published and wrote the introduction for Cyprien Bérard’s novel *Lord Ruthwen, ou Les Vampires* (February 1820), an extensive sequel to Polidori’s tale, with the vampire portrayed as a similarly predatory aristocrat. A few months later, together with Adolphe Carmouche and Achille de Jouffroy, Nodier adapted the original short story into a successful drama, *Le Vampire*, which relocated the plot of the original story to the Scottish Highlands. In *Infernaliana* (1824), a work which mixes short stories with excerpts from writers such as Don Calmet and from *The Arabian Nights*, Nodier reproduces the vampire

stories of Arnold Paul and Milo and Stanoska, headed by an introduction which cites Voltaire's pithy joke of 1764 about the vampire's meaning (Nodier 1824: 177; Gibson 2006: 134-36).

In 1827, Prosper Mérimée wrote *La Guzla*, a 'supercherie' (literary hoax), in which he exploited various sources, including Don Calmet and Byron, to write vampire poems such as 'Cara-Ali' and 'La Belle Sophie', both of which are thinly disguised allegories of Turkish oppression (Gibson 2006: 142). As Matthew Gibson notes, whereas Nodier used the vampire in keeping with his theory of the 'merveilleux' and emerging theory of the 'fantastique' to explore anomalies and the possibility of ideas that disproved Enlightenment philosophy and science, the fake folkloric poems which Mérimée pretended to have collected during a supposed tour to Dalmatia, to which he also provides qualifying scholars' notes, are really mockeries of the Dalmatians' primitive attitudes towards politics (2006: 146). The reinvigoration of the vampire story and fictional aspects of the vampire in the decade before the publication of the journal *Le Vampire* (1831) thus helped the editors to flesh out the figure into a character beyond the somewhat dead metaphor of the vampire as financial parasite which it inherits from Clavière and others, especially the reference to the vampire bringing victims beneath his tomb and his being a *philosophe* in fine clothes.

Thus, the history of the vampire as a metaphor of financial parasitism, the recent depiction of vampires on the French stage and in popular romanticism, are introduced to the journal's sardonic portrayal of gambling houses, the lottery, and the stock market. However, the implicit blood-sucking is particularly related to financial ills of a certain kind that demand attention. At one point in the third issue, the editor explains why gambling specifically is useless; delineating the normal process of 'augmentation de valeur' (increase of value) in economic transactions, the editor describes how the merchant takes commodities to a workman, who then transforms them into something more saleable, thus increasing their

value, while simultaneously allowing the workman to increase his earnings. This the editor condones, and whether he was aware of David Ricardo's theory of how it is the relative quantity of labour that gives value to products (i.e., the amount of labour that has to be paid in creating a product being what fixes the product's eventual exchange value [Ricardo 1911: 8-9]), is debateable. Nevertheless, here this economic process is presented as being in no way a bad thing. With gambling, however, it is different:

Mais, au jeu, quelle est l'augmentation de la valeur mise en action? Aucune assurément. Pierre perd 100 fr., Jean gagne 100 fr., et la valeur est toujours le même; donc la société ne gagne rien, et les dupes qui passent ainsi leur temps à l'occupation de jouer sont décidément les plus inutiles à la société, puisqu'ils ne lui fait gagner.  
(Issue 3, 20 March 1831: 2)

[But, in gambling, what is the increase in value put into action? None, of course. Pierre loses 100 francs, Jean gains 100 francs, and the value is always the same; therefore society earns nothing, and the dupes who thus spend their time in the business of gambling are decidedly the most useless to society, since nothing is gained.]

The editor condemns gambling specifically because it gives no added value to any artifact and creates no wealth, thus making the gambler useless to society. As such, the vampire is identified with the passing of existing wealth from many hands into those of a parasitic few, and is identified neither with the capitalist nor with the exploitation of labour. This is exactly how Marx later used the term 'vampire', his crucial analysis being that it is not an object's use value that gives it exchange value, but the labour time of the labourer which is transferred onto the exchange value of a product once it is completed (Marx 1990: 69), with this process entailing the worker's inevitable exploitation to assure surplus value and profit (1990: 326).

The description of the abuse of M. B\*\*\*, ‘capitaliste millionnaire’, at the hands of speculators, and then as a dupe to the Vampire in Issue 4 (24 March 1831: 7), gives further sustenance to the view that the term vampire is not being used here to attack private property or capitalism. The poor M. B\*\*\*, to whom ‘Israël a donné la naissance’ — a people to whom, the editor reminds his readers, fortune is usually favourable — loses 500,000 francs in one month at the hands of deceitful stockbrokers (and thus unbuckles any racist links the reader might have made between the vampire as predator and Jewish people). The capitalist, therefore, is here the victim of unscrupulous speculators, and not the victimiser.

### **Conclusion**

*Le Vampire* (1831), a short-lived journal probably published by the Abbé Grégoire, reflects the cultural view of gambling and the lottery found in the work of contemporary writers like Balzac, and defines financial speculators, the lottery and gambling houses as being vampiric entirely because their business adds no surplus value to goods, is of no use to society, and preys upon capital. It draws upon recent fictional portrayals of the vampire and other supernatural figures in French literature, as well as definitions of financial vampires such as those by Voltaire, Clavière and perhaps even Forman. However, the allegory of the vampire is in no way used to criticise exploitation of labour in the way that Marx later employs it, since vampirism is interpreted in terms of different gambling and speculative institutions’ inability to add value through labour in their transactions, rather than attacking capitalism *per se*. It tells us much about the later development of the allegorical use of the vampire and of the trends in economic thought at the time, and reminds us that critics like Groom should be more precise in their definitions of this allegory, since while Marx may have been inspired, as Groom asserts, to use this figure by the earlier traditions established by critics like Forman, Voltaire and Hess, Marx’s own use of the allegory is far removed from a work published

even as late as 1831. This would appear to be because in using the vampire figure Marx was reacting to mass industrialisation in a way as yet unconsidered in this journal, and from his later vantage point understood machinery as having alienated the labourer from the process of providing surplus value to raw materials, thus turning ‘living labour’ into ‘dead labour’ (Marx 1973: 646; 1990: 1 342). Nevertheless, the gradual development of the vampire allegory of finance can be taken as a barometer of changing attitudes to capital and economic trends throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and constitutes a worthy subject of study in economic history as much as in literature.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Sepinwall (2005) argues that, by providing a forum in which Roman Catholic priests and Protestant ministers could interact, the *Société des Philanthropes de Strasbourg* played a crucial role in Grégoire’s intellectual development, not least by providing him with a universalist model.

<sup>2</sup> The most convenient biographical source concerning the life and work of the Abbé Grégoire is the latter’s *Mémoires de Grégoire, Ancien Évêque de Blois*, edited by Hippolyte M. Carnot (2 Vol. Paris: Ambroise Dupont, 1837). In addition to containing Grégoire’s own reminiscences of his life, written in 1808, this work also contains a useful autobiographical introduction (‘Notice historique sur l’auteur’) by Carnot himself (Carnot 1837: 1-312). As the son of Grégoire’s friend and fellow-revolutionary Lazare Carnot (1753-1823), Hippolyte M. Carnot was ideally suited to both tasks. Carnot later deposited Grégoire’s extensive collection of correspondence, memoranda, and other writing in the Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal in Paris. On Grégoire’s membership of philanthropic societies in Metz and elsewhere, and his essay on Jewish integration, see Grégoire, 1837: I, 331-337; Carnot 1837: I, 12-13.

<sup>3</sup> On Grégoire’s political activity during the Estates General and its aftermath, see Grégoire (1837: II 1-57) and Carnot (1837: I 16-27).

<sup>4</sup> For an overview of the activities of this association, see Jean-Pierre Barlier (2010).

<sup>5</sup> With regard to the complex process of composition of *La Peau de chagrin*, see the detailed critical apparatus contained in Vol. X of the Pléiade edition of Balzac’s *La Comédie humaine* (Paris: Gallimard, 1979) under the general editorship of Pierre-Georges Castex.

<sup>6</sup> ‘[L]es fêtes nationales, en contribuant à détruire les tripots, les jeux de hasard qui sont l’école des fripons et qui ont désolé tante de familles, donneront au peuple des plaisirs dignes de lui’. Abbé Grégoire, ‘Rapport sur la nécessité et les moyens d’anéantir les patois et d’universaliser l’usage de la langue française’ [Report delivered to the National Convention, 16 prairial an II (4 June 1794)]. In Frank Paul Bowman (1988: 140).

<sup>7</sup> Ellis refers to the third edition of Trenchard’s *Cato’s Letters*, of 1733. The first edition of 1724 (published a year after Trenchard’s death) does not appear to have the particular reference he provides, in which Trenchard brands the company ‘Blood-suckers of the People’ who should “‘make the People some Amends, by restoring the Blood that they have sucked””

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(Qtd. in Ellis 2000: 167), but nevertheless uses the blood-sucking metaphor frequently in other places when discussing the South Sea Company. E.g., ‘Poor England! What a name art thou become! a Name of Infatuation and Misery! How art thou fallen! how plundered! And those that have done it, would, to keep their Spoil, agree to assist others to squeeze out thy last Dregs, and to suck out thy remaining Blood’ (Trenchard 1724: I 65). Trenchard specifically relates this blood-sucking to ‘Harpies and Horse-leeches’ (1724: I 40, 41, 42), as the vampire craze had not yet broken out by this time.

<sup>8</sup> Chris Baldick notes that Friedrich Engels used the vampire allegory before Marx in *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, and assumes that Marx adapted it from him (Baldick 1987: 128). However, Engels simply makes a very tepid reference to the ‘vampire property-holding class’ (Engels 1943: 238), and does not develop either the meaning or the imagery of the vampire at all.

<sup>9</sup> Writing of the worker, Marx asserts that ‘the vampire will not let go [of the worker] “while there remains a muscle, sinew a drop of blood to be exploited”’ (Marx 1990: 416). The adaptation of the vampire figure to Engels’s existing rhetoric is Marx’s own invention, showing that the graphic elements of the vampire in *Varney the Vampire* and other sensational novels had probably inspired the imagination of the putative (and failed) novelist as much as had the more subdued and allegorical uses of the figure by eighteenth-century writers.

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