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# ANG1755: Vampires in Films and Literature

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Winter 2020  
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## Week 6

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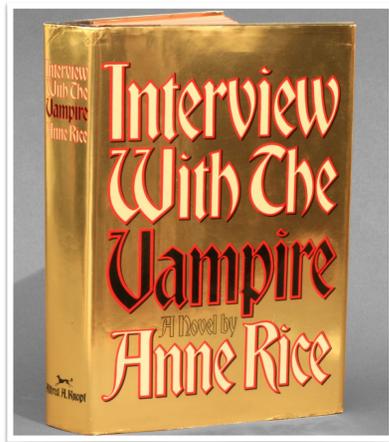
- ❖ Anne Rice, Interview with the Vampire (1976)
- ❖ Buffy the Vampire Slayer: 'Lie to Me'

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## Interview with the Vampire

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- ❖ 'Salem's Lot vs Interview with the Vampire
- ❖ Structure
- ❖ Rice's Vampires
- ❖ Sexuality
- ❖ Class



## 'Salem's Lot vs Interview with the Vampire

❖ Characters

❖ Good vs Evil

❖ Representation of vampires

❖ Louis: “We had met with the European vampire, the creature of the Old World. He was dead” (207).

**Louis:** “‘Oh, the rumor about crosses!’ the vampire laughed” (27).

**Louis:** “[Lestat] laughed uproariously when I discovered that I could see myself in a mirror and that crosses had no effect upon me, and would taunt me with sealed lips when I asked about God or the devil” (42).

**Armand:** “‘The destruction of your remains,’ he said. ‘Don’t you know this? Fire, dismemberment . . . the heat of the sun. Nothing else. You can be scarred, yes; but you are resilient. You are immortal’” (313).

Structure

- ❖ Opening and ending of the novel
- ❖ “I see ...” said the vampire thoughtfully, and slowly he walked across the room towards the window. For a long time he stood there against the dim light from Divisadero Street and the passing beams of traffic. The boy could see the furnishings of the room more clearly now, the round oak table, the chairs. A wash basin hung on one wall with a mirror. He set his briefcase on the table and waited.” (3)

- ❖ Opening and ending of the novel
- ❖ “The boy sat mute, staring at the vampire. And the vampire sat collected, his hands folded on the table, his narrow, red-rimmed eyes fixed on the turning tapes.” (338)

**Louis:** “But I know you are eager to hear what became of Armand. And the night is almost ended. I want to tell you this because it is very important. The story is incomplete without it” (346).

## Rice’s Vampires

“The vampire was utterly white and smooth, as if he were sculpted from bleached bone, and his face was as seemingly inanimate as a statue, except for two brilliant green eyes that looked down at the boy intently like flames in a skull. But then the vampire smiled almost wistfully, and the smooth white substance of his face moved with the infinitely flexible but minimal lines of a cartoon. ‘Do you see?’ he asked softly” (6).

“The boy shuddered, lifting his hand as if to shield himself from a powerful light. His eyes moved slowly over the finely tailored black coat he’d only glimpsed in the bar, the long folds of the cape, the black silk tie knotted at the throat, and the gleam of the white collar that was as white as the vampire’s flesh. He stared at the vampire’s full black hair, the waves that were combed back over the tips of the ears, the curls that barely touched the edge of the white collar” (6).

**Louis on Lestat:** “a tall fair-skinned man with mass of blonde hair and a graceful, almost feline quality to his movements” (16). (cf. “Dress well, to begin with. And have a luxurious head of pampered yellow hair” [299]).

“His gray eyes burned with an incandescence, and the long white hands which hung by his sides were not those of a human being” (17).

“‘Vampires are killers,’ [Lestat] said now. ‘Predators. Whose all-seeing eyes were meant to give them detachment’” (92).

“‘That is the way it is,’ [Lestat] answered. ‘You talk of finding other vampires! Vampires are killers! They don’t want you or your sensibility! They’ll see you coming long before you see them and they’ll see your flaw’” (92).

**Armand to Louis:** “How many vampires do you think have the stamina for immortality?” (306).

“all things change except the vampire himself; everything except the vampire is subject to constant corruption and distortion . . . this immortality becomes a penitential sentence in a madhouse of figures and forms that are hopelessly unintelligible and without value” (306)

## Sexuality

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### Vampire as androgynous / sexually “polymorphous”

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“I’ve always loved the images of androgyny ... whether it’s a beautiful woman in the opera dressed as a man or rock stars changing and shifting ... I see the androgynous figure as the ideal figure”.

(Anne Rice quoted in Katherine Ramsland, *Prism of the Night* 148)

**Lestat to Louis:** “You’ll have to bed down with me this morning” (26).

**Louis on Lestat:** “. . . filled with a distaste for being so close to him, handsome and intriguing though he was” (29).

“Lestat was absolutely the most overwhelming experience I’d ever had” (29).

**Louis:** “But I can’t tell you exactly, any more than I could tell you exactly what is the experience of sex if you never had it” (18)

**Louis:** “Not physical love, you must understand. I don’t speak of that at all, though Armand was beautiful and simple, and no intimacy with him would ever have been repellent. For vampires, physical love culminates and is satisfied only in one thing, the kill” (275).

**Louis:** “It is again and again the experience of that loss of my own life, which I experience when I sucked the blood from Lestat’s wrist and felt his heart pound with my heart. It is again and again a celebration of that experience; because for vampires that is the ultimate experience” (34).

**Louis:** “Lestat whispered to me, his lips moving against my neck. I remember that the movement of his lips raised the hair all over my body, sent a shock of sensation through my body that was not unlike the pleasure of passion. . . .” (23).

**Louis:** “As we beat the body, bruising the face and the shoulders, I became more and more aroused” (20).

**Louis:** “And then I saw Lestat--the blow that was more crippling than any blow. Lestat, standing there in the center of the ballroom, erect, his gray eyes sharp and focused, his mouth lengthening in a cunning smile” (319)

“No matter what his or her residual sexual organs denote, both the vampire’s experience of erotic pleasure and its ability to reproduce are located orally, not genitally; sucking blood is the vampire’s way of feeding, of gratifying itself, and of making other vampires”.

(Sandra Tomc, “Dieting and Damnation: Anne Rice’s *Interview with the Vampire*” 443-4)

**Louis:** “I drank, sucking the blood out of the holes, experiencing for the first time since infancy the special pleasure of sucking nourishment, the body focused with the mind upon one vital source” (23).

“The *sine qua non* with which this author mesmerizes her readers, however, is homoerotic desire. *Interview with the Vampire* begins in the gay district of San Francisco, and the scene between the vampire Louis and the gay “boy” who interviews him, after they have met in a “bar,” is a straightforward parody of a queer seduction. This cannot be accidental: Rice is interested in male-male desire and uses the imagery of gay life to give her characters substance and texture. She makes Lestat our culture’s prototypical gay predator, roving in the darkness with an insatiable appetite that is usually satisfied by the blood of a troubled but beautiful man.”

(George E. Haggerty, “Anne Rice and the Queering of Culture” 5)

**Louis:** “[Armand’s boy] was pressing the length of his body against me now, and I felt the hard strength of his sex beneath his clothes pressing against my leg” (248).

“and I sank my teeth into his skin, my body rigid, that hard sex driving against me. . . . I rocked with him, devouring him, his ecstasy, his conscious pleasure” (248).

“While Claudia’s little-girlishness signals the exclusion of adult female sexuality from the vampire’s body, the scene of her creation emphasizes the extent to which that exclusion predicates vampire existence generally. When Louis and Lestat make a vampire out of Claudia they do so quite literally over her mother’s dead body”.

(Sandra Tomc, “Dieting and Damnation: Anne Rice’s *Interview with the Vampire*” 444)

“Like Louis’s pursuit of self-determination, Claudia’s is articulated as hunger, her desire for the plenitude that both sustains and relentlessly undermines her identity: “I kill humans every night. I seduce them, draw them close to me, with an insatiable hunger, a constant never-ending search for something ... something, I don’t know what it is’ (125). .../...”

.../... That this desire for satisfaction is paradoxically both the fulfilment and the end of her freedom is underlined by the fact that, as soon as Claudia gets the mother she wants in the form of Madeleine, she dies”.

(Sandra Tomc, “Dieting and Damnation: Anne Rice’s *Interview with the Vampire*” 449)

“Rice’s novel begins as a vampire named Louis tells his story to a young male interviewer, and it is the vampire’s story that admits the monster—a girl vampire named Claudia—whose death leads to the reestablishment of homosocial bonds between men. No longer is it the woman who must be protected from the monster; she is the monster. In place of the monstrous sexual appetites of Stoker’s somewhat marginalized vampire women is the rage of a monstrous girl vampire against her infantilization and dependency in a world defined by the fathers.”

(Janice Doane and Devon Hodges, “Undoing Feminism: From the Preoedipal to Postfeminism in Anne Rice’s *Vampire Chronicles*” 424)

“Rice's child vampire, Claudia, in *Interview*, is simultaneously the victim of her homosexual parents' incestuous love for her, and a perpetual child bride doomed, in an exaggeration of the conventional marital infantilization of women, never to grow up enough to live an independent and sexually autonomous life. Her resulting rage at her powerlessness causes her to attempt to murder Lestat, one of her two male parents, and this attempt ultimately leads to her own death.”

(Judith E. Johnson, 'Women and Vampires: Nightmare or Utopia?' 78)

## Class

**Louis:** “[Lestat] didn’t consider the world’s small population of vampires as being a select club, I should say” (19).

**Louis:** “The better the human, as [Lestat] would say in his vulgar way, the more he liked it” (47). (Cf. “he was for all appearances of the same class now as myself, which meant little to me” [41]).

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## Vampire society

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**Armand:** “That you are flawed is obvious to them: you feel too much, you think too much” (273)

“‘Evil is a point of view,’ [Lestat] whispered now. ‘We are immortal. And what we have before us are the rich feasts that conscience cannot appreciate and mortal men cannot know without regret. God kills, and so shall we; indiscriminately.

.../...

.../...

He takes the richest and the poorest, and so shall we; for no creatures under God are as we are, none so like him as ourselves, dark angels not confined to the stinking limits of hell but wandering His earth and all its kingdoms. I want a child tonight. I am like a mother . . . I want a child!” (98).

**Louis to Armand:** “I don’t see our life as powers and gifts. I see it as a curse. I haven’t the courage to die. But to make another vampire! To bring this suffering on another, and to condemn to death all those men and women whom that vampire would subsequently kill! I broke a grave promise” (311).

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## Buffy the Vampire Slayer

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‘Lie to Me’  
(Season 2, episode 7)



## Humor

- Humor via sexual innuendos in Buffy (cf. Australian rock band Divinyl's 1991 song 'I Touch Myself', and Willow finally realizing "that's what that song is about")
- Spike's comment on a restaurant that delivers
- Fashion (cf. scene with Angel at the club; Buffy's comment on Diego: "Could you have a dorkier outfit?")

## Popular Culture

Popular references ("Die young and stay pretty" [cf. James Dean]; "No one gets out of here alive" [cf. The Doors])

Cult movies (cf. Jack Palance's performance as Dracula in 1973 eponymous film) and "it's tradition"

## Religious Dimension

- Cult dimension (cf. Goth subculture in general, and X-Files as another example)
- (Dis)illusion ('The lonely ones' [cf Rice's Louis: "You see these powers as a gift" (308)])

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### Sample Midterm Exam Questions

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- How is humour used in The Fearless Vampire Killers
- Contrast the medical imagery of vampirism in Dracula and I am Legend.