

Characterization of a multiple-identity Vampire. Matthew Clairmont in *A Discovery of Witches* by Deborah Harkness

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The combination of historical and fantastic literature featured with romance, conflict and supernatural characters seem to be the ingredients of the new bestseller sagas focused on creatures such as vampires. An example is the *All Souls Trilogy* by Deborah Harkness. This author uses different characteristics to report a current shift in traditional style, traits, and behaviour that the vampire figure seems to have experienced. This study has been set out with the objective of examining the character of the vampire Clairmont aimed at exploring the complexity of his multiple identities and demonstrating a shift in his role and traits regarding the traditional vampire. This has been done through a corpus study utilizing a thematic qualitative textual analysis. The study has revealed seven distinct themes related to new vampire characters and their potential to create a hook effect in the aforementioned readers.

Keywords: Corpus linguistics; New Vampire fiction; Literature; characterization; thematic qualitative textual analysis.

1. Introduction

Stories about vampires are coming out every year in literature, cinema, and TV series in the present century. As Martin (2021) argues, “contemporary authors keep finding new ways to reinvent vampire tropes to keep the concept fresh.” This unceasing reinvention of the traits of the character vampire either in literary works or on the screen is what seems to be keeping this genre alive. As Auerbach (1995, 145) puts it, “Every age creates the vampire it needs”. In other words, vampires have suffered a transformation and adaptation to more modern times, including changes in appearance and behaviour that have them got adapted to the times in which they were created. In turn, Miquel-Baldellou argues that vampires

have shifted significantly from focusing on parasitic personifications of wickedness and alterity that mostly threatened the establishment to the portrayal of heroic antagonists who no longer bear a hideous appearance but rather present a complex personality and a particularly acute sensibility that render them specially appealing to younger generations. (2014, 130)

The characterization of the figure of the vampire has been the subject of many studies throughout history. Authors such as Carter (2001, 5) have pointed out that “fictional reinterpretations of Dracula as a character have thus evolved over the past century from Stoker’s original characterization of the Count as satanic through various stages corresponding to the overall evolution of the literary vampire.”. In vampire fiction created by twenty-first-century writers, there seems to be a more humanized approach that has allowed the proliferation of good, attractive, and cultivated vampires. This is the case of Matthew de Clairmont, the main character of the *All Souls Trilogy* by Deborah Harkness.

This article is focused on the characterization of Matthew de Clairmont, an example of what I label “a new kind of vampire”. The research question underlying the present work is: what makes Matthew de Clairmont a non-traditional vampire? This study examines the character of the vampire Clairmont and explores the complexity of his multiple identities while proving that his personality differs from those of a traditional vampire. That is, it is aimed at studying how this character reverts typical traditional vampire features and how these build on multiple identities. The main reason for the choice of the *All Souls Trilogy* is gleaned from the fact that was a bestseller and a worldwide success upon release which made me read it and get interested in a more in-depth study. Moreover, Harkness received the Goodreads Choice Awards Favourite Books (for *A Discovery of Witches*, 2011), Goodreads Choice Awards Best Debut (2011) and Goodreads Best Fantasy, 2014 (Millán Scheiding, 2021).

First, a brief historical-literary study on some of the most famous traditional and new vampire novels was carried out to do so. The main motivation that underpinned this stage was to provide the characterization of vampire Matthew de Clairmont, one of the main characters of *All Souls Trilogy* by Harkness, with a historical context. Secondly, I analysed vampire Matthew Clairmont's traits in the first novel of the trilogy, *A Discovery of Witches* (2011) (DW from hereon in), which composes my corpus, to explore the complexity of the new vampire in his multiple identities. So, I analysed the book in-depth to construct meaning with thematic qualitative text analysis, prior knowledge, context, and semantic clues. Prior knowledge is particularly helpful in historical fiction since it provides us with the groundwork to build upon. This is so because it helps us to make connections with what we already know, such as other works of literature, clothing or food and drink brands, history and historical fiction, existing characters and events or geographical data, for instance.

2. A brief historical revision of the male vampire character

The mainstay of this brief historical overview involves the study of vampire literature, focusing mainly on the figure of the male vampire character. The myth of the vampire is as old as history, but it is said that since Vlad Tepes' death in 1476/1477 (the Romanian prince of Wallachia who provided a historical basis for Stoker's *Dracula*), the role of vampires in literary texts has been more present across cultures. However, even though there are many real terror stories about this character, "there is nothing in his historical character to connect him to vampire mythology" (Carlson 1977, 29)

The modern literary vampire was a product of Romanticism and its interest in folklore since "through German Romanticism, the vampire made his way from folklore into the realm of literature, where he soon became comfortable in certain character types already existing in the literature of the day" (Carlson 1977, 26). From Phillip Rohr's *Dissertatio historico-philosophica de masticatione mortuorum* (1679), one of the first texts on vampires written in German, or John William Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819), the first vampire story in English, to Harkness' *Time's Convert* (2019)—the last novel on vampires published before this study was finished in the series—many centuries have provided thousands of works focused on vampire characters. Throughout this time, the character of the vampire has been continuously evolving and developing in literature. Up to the end of the twentieth century, when listening to the word "vampire," the traditional literary vampire canon had made the general reader infer the image of a frightening and monstrous dominantly male being who represented the threat

of the unknown. This picture has been reinforced by the images projected in films such as *Interview with the Vampire* (1994) and *Dracula* (1992). The general traces of the myth in popular culture, as often depicted in the media and so, remote from the literary counterparts, make the general public think of vampires as demonic creatures, dark and weird. Also, as beings that were never able to control their bloodlust, they needed to feed either on human beings or animals (whom they often drained to death). Stories disclosed encounters with crucifixes, holy water, and garlic as their weak spots, apart from the fact that they showed fragile against sunlight and that they slept in a coffin.

In the history of vampire literature, Gothic and Romanticism, foreign and mysterious backgrounds and their local unusual traditions have been thought of as key factors for the birth of the figure of the “blood-sucker.” As Matthew Clairmont, the main vampire character in *DW* explains to the witch, Diana:

Most of what you know about me—about vampires—was dreamed up by humans. These legends made it possible for humans to live around us. Creatures frighten them. And I’m not talking solely about vampires.” “Black hats, bats, brooms.” It was the unholy trinity of witchcraft lore, which burst into spectacular, ridiculous life every year on Halloween. “Exactly.” Matthew nodded. “Somewhere in each of these stories, there’s a nugget of truth, something that frightened humans and helped them deny we were real. The strongest distinguishing characteristic of humans is their power of denial.” (Harkness 2011, 169)

All this mixed with the different interpretations and versions that oral tradition and folklore have provided, and the reaction of listeners and readers set the foundations for works such as Bürger’s *Lenore* (1774), Goethe’s *The Bride of Corinth* (1797) and Coleridge’s *Christabel* (1797, 1802) according to Olivares-Merino (2010a). The publication of the German ballad *Lenore* was a remarkable success being translated into numerous languages, such as English and French among others¹.

Early vampire fiction in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, particularly by British Gothic poets, was influenced by *Lenore* (Zarieva 2018, 2340). Some other examples were Robert Southey’s epic poem *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801), a work that might be said to feature the first vampire in English literature, and Lord Byron’s vampire poem *The Giaour* (1813). In turn, John Keats contributed “two poems to early British vampire poetry” (Crawford 2016,

1 A case in point was the translation into English by Sir Walter Scott, one of his major works, *Häntzschel and Häntzschel* in 1796, (Crawford 2016, 31).

30): *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* (Keats 1819) and *Lamia* (1820). All of them, as Crawford (2016, 31) explains, “contributed significantly to turning the vampire into a literary phenomenon that has persisted and even increased in popularity ever since”.

These works marked the end of the folkloric vampire. Polidori’s *The Vampyre* (1819) was the first aristocratic vampire in the history of literature: “the primitive and brutal medieval bloodsucker, the folk vampire, was deprived of its atavistic attires and dressed up as a gentleman to seduce the twentieth century” (Olivares-Merino 2010b: 23). Lord Ruthven, Polidori’s main vampire was the “first notable representation of an aristocratic, sensual, but ruthless vampire” (Hărășan 2018, 40), a character inspired by Lord Byron himself, with whom Polidori was acquainted since he was his personal physician. He is a high-society seducer, and “the women Ruthven kills do not become vampires, but [...] sexual monsters” (Macdonald 1991, 201). He is also a cold-blooded slaughterer who drinks his victims’ blood. For the first time, even though vampires were primarily creatures of the night, and by extension, feared and were destroyed by sunlight, the sun’s rays do not debilitate them, what is more, they could be regenerated by moonlight (Senf 1988, 9; Torres Medina and Olivares-Merino 2017, 20). In 1892, Jules Verne published his only Gothic novel *Le Château des Carpathes* belonging to his *Voyages Extraordinaires* series. As Hărășan explains, with “Verne’s baron Rodolphe de Gortz, the image of a dark (obscurantist/occult) Transylvania emerges and gets to be associated with the already shaped stereotype of the aristocratic vampire” (2018, 40).

When Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897) came onto the stage, it gave rise to more modern and cultivated vampires, integrated into society somehow. They can have human-like traits such as being able to have feelings, fall in love and control their bloodlust. *Dracula*, embedded in such a Gothic aesthetic as *The Vampyre*, is “selfish, instinct-driven and humanly immoral” (Grabias 2017, 115). He kills his victims mercilessly and cold-bloodedly. It is not solely taking their blood to get fed, but the fact of killing that motivates him. *Dracula* was a milestone in the history of the character archetype, as it has gone through a noteworthy evolution since then.

From *Dracula* to the *Twilight* series or the *All Souls Trilogy*, the literary trend of a more and more integrated-into-society vampire evolving from monster to hero seems to be here to stay, featuring the Gothic literature of the twenty-first century (Smith and Moruzi 2018). In this context, Anne Rice started her saga *The Vampire Chronicles* and in 1976 published her first novel *Interview with the Vampire*. This would later become the well-known film of the same name starring Tom Cruise, Brad Pitt and Antonio Banderas (Neil Jordan 1994).

Vampire fiction seemed to have brought these fanged beings back onto the teens’ public stage after the supposed death of interest in the mid-1980s as Melton

states (2011, 749). This absence seemed uncanny to everyone since 1997, the year of the first centennial of Stoker's 1897 *Dracula* was at hand. Nevertheless, 1985 seemed to be the starting point of a new wave of interest in vampire literature. This was the year of the second novel by Rice, *The Vampire Lestat*. For the first time in vampire literature history, the vampire had become the main character in novels of this genre. From that moment on, in the eyes of the reader, vampires started to be sympathetic and romantic characters. Thus, Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* set the standard at this point as it was shortly followed by more humanistic takes, e.g., Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's Count St. Germain Cycle. As a result of this "re-birth," by the end of that decade, "everywhere one looked books, comics, movies, trading cards and games, vampires had come to life" (Melton 2011, xv). At that time, vampire fiction had become more centred on young adults identities with the novel saga and their corresponding TV series, *True Blood* based on the Southern Vampire Mysteries series by Charlaine Harris (Forde, 2018), as well as *The Vampire Diaries* (2009–2017), a TV series based on L.J. Smith's *Vampire Diaries* (1991–1992) and *Night World* (1996–1998) novels. *The Vampire Diaries* paved the way for the worldwide successful young adult vampire horror TV series led by two vampire brothers, Stefan and Damon Salvatore, in the author's opinion, the incarnation of good and evil, the old and the new vampire and thus, the representation of the transition towards the modern male vampire character. They opened the way for the *Twilight* saga and their film adaptation. All these vampires have some common traits: their community-integrated living rather than solitary existences and they have romantic inter-species bonds, mainly vampire-human, as argued by Leavenworth and Isaksson (2013, 11). Romance was one of the keys to the success of what I propose to call the "new vampire canon." Time passed by and Rice extended her works to a series of about twelve novels. Then, she was joined by Yarbro (*Hotel Transylvania* 1978) and her *Le Comte de Saint-Germain*, a cultivated, well-travelled, sensual, and mysterious vampire. In her own words, Yarbro "was the first writer to revise the stereotype so completely and mesh it so fully with romance"² (2017). Additionally, her works gave rise to historical fiction vampire novels, the precursors of such works as those by Harkness. In addition, Saberhagen published his eleven-volume *Dracula* series starting in 1975 with *The Dracula Tape*. It is the story of Stoker's *Dracula* told from the vampire's point of view. Saberhagen's work alters the horizon of expectation in such a way that "Stoker's *Dracula* now serves as a synthesis of romantic, Victorian, and Christian values, ideals and fears, allowing us to take it apart and create informing structures for our vampire stories" (Day 2002, 17).

2 <https://www.chelseaquinnyarbro.net/saint-germain.html#:~:text=Yarbro%20was%20the%20first%20writer,were%20of%20equal%20erotic%20potency>

From the twenty-first century, the combination of historical and fantastic literature featured with romance, conflict, and supernatural characters – mainly vampires, wizards, and witches – has made a fan phenomenon arise with the most outstanding examples of the previous, that is, Stephanie Meyers' *Twilight Saga*, and Harkness' *All Souls Trilogy*, the main object of the present article. The four volumes of the *Twilight* series: *Twilight*, *New Moon*, *Eclipse* and *Breaking Dawn* released between 2005 and 2008, gave rise to the conception of a young vampire fan phenomenon. This saga broke “records not just in the vampire world but the whole realm of popular literature” (Melton 2011, xvi). From their birth, vampires could be seen in every shape and place; in every literary format: cartoons, comics, films, TV series, and so on. For the researchers, this is the milestone in what I have termed “the new literary vampire canon.”

3. New literature on vampires?

The traditional literary canon can be defined as “a recognized body of literature which constitutes the classics or ‘must-read’ major works” (Battenburg 2018, 16). In turn, from Fowler's (1979, 98) point of view, the official canon is a synthesised list of authors and texts in anthologies and syllabi. The definitions of the canon are “inextricably bound to our understanding of literacy” (Fowler, 1979, 17), mainly socio-cultural multiliteracy. This kind of literacy is explained as the fact that some texts could be “read and understood by all members of a group to produce shared experiences and points of reference. This allows students/readers to develop a common body of knowledge and traditions” (Battenburg 2018, 17). Taking this into account, the authors are known as “new” to the canon or group of readings composed of those works on vampires from *The Vampire Diaries* onwards. The reason for this is that these works by Rice, Meyer or Harkness might be constructing knowledge in readers who are sharing not only their books but their TV series, films, merchandising, and video games.

This vampire literature should also become, evolve, and suit current issues such as equality, or peace. This new vampire literature seems to be enriched with inclusivity also, counting not only on vampires, but also on witches, werewolves, and demons. As Michelle Smith puts it, this kind of reading has “proved to be the ideal genre for exploring the grotesque and frightening aspects of coming of age, and metaphorically representing pressing social issues such as racism and gender inequality” (2014). Elements such as romance, sex, creature-girls living in equality with creature-boys in a non-patriarchal society, super-powers such as huge strength and immortality, and lives in-between (human-vampire,

for example) matching the transitory period that adolescence means seem to be appealing enough to get readers hooked on vampires.

Hence, the author hypothesises that the heir to the new vampire literary canon success of *The Vampire Diaries* or the *Twilight Saga* is the *All Souls Trilogy* by University of Southern California professor, Deborah Harkness, a historian of science. *A Discovery of Witches* (2011) (New York Times Best Seller upon its release), *The Shadow of Night* (2012) and *The Book of Life* (2014), the three novels that make up this work, together with a book in another series set in the same universe featuring secondary characters: *Time's Convert* (2018), tell the story of an American witch, Diana Bishop, that rejects her uncanny lineage and becomes a historian at an American university, and Matthew Clairmont, a British-French Oxford University geneticist who is a 1,500-year-old vampire. Both are linked somehow to a magical alchemical book, *Ashmole 782*. Harkness' saga goes one step forward in the "modernization" of this new vampire canon. The reason for this is that it combines supernatural facts with contemporary discussions on genetics, university research and history. What led Harkness to lay the foundations of her works of vampires was the fact that:

People believed that the supernatural and the natural existed, intermingled. We think of ourselves as having very little in common with people in 1558. And yet there were walls of this stuff. What if the 16th-century people were right, and the supernatural and natural coexisted? How would that play out? It started out almost like a kind of logic problem. (Timberg 2011)

The first book of this work, *DW*, was released in a TV series adaptation of the same name on Sky One on September 14, 2018. Regarding literacy or literary education, the author of the novel has created some educational pages containing reading guides.

4. Analysing the vampire Matthew Clairmont

To analyse the character Matthew Clairmont, this study has been done through thematic qualitative text analysis following the analysis model outlined in Kuckartz (2014, 69) since it is used to set the principal meanings of content included in a text. Kuckartz's qualitative method is focused on both, a profile matrix, referred also as a thematic matrix, and categories. Concerning the matrix, it "includes topics (themes) as structuring elements in the columns" (Kuckartz 2014, 3), but can include characteristics, places, dates and so

on. This is the reason for the choice of this method of analysis, namely, that it is a powerful tool for learning more about Clairmont's characteristics and the context in which he is embedded. Qualitative analysis through this profile matrix is aimed at creating a clear and understandable interpretation of the data and information included in it. Each cell of the matrix contains a piece of text which is accessible throughout the analysis process. Hence, "it is possible to select, separate, and abstract without losing sight of the context" (Kuckartz 2014, 3). Regarding categories, the second element of this qualitative method of text analysis, they are the most important tools of the analysis and are derived in this investigation from the research question underlying this article, that is: What characteristics make Matthew Clairmont a non-traditional vampire? Categories in this analysis will help in the coding of the entire data material.

Thus, the present analysis involved a profile matrix to build a clear and coherent interpretation of the information provided by the study of *DW* regarding the research question at stake. Hence, the aim of the present investigation was to construct the categories related to the character inductively using the data provided by the novel. The steps followed in the analysis involved first, a careful reading of the book and a selection of particularly important text passages that were relevant in terms of vampire traits to identify and highlight. I selected 173 excerpts from the novel (from 13 to 269 words long) and included written notes regarding the potential categories in the margins of the text to help in the following stage. The excerpts were quoted by a number after the *DW* abbreviation. In the second stage, the thematic categories were determined with the aim of starting the coding process. Seven thematic categories were established, they were derived directly from the research question which explains their choice. As seen in Table 1, these categories, inferred from the corpus after analysing it and extracting all the excerpts containing some kind of vampire (traditional or modern) trait, were coded as: V1) Featuring 21st-century vampires overall, V2) Matthew and his becoming a vampire, V3) Matthew's physical and personal traits, V4) Matthew's emotional and personality traits, V5) Matthew his multiple roles and his academic profile, V6) Matthew's description according to the five senses, and V7) Matthew and his families. In the third stage, the relevant passages were thematically compiled and coded according to a thematic matrix (see Table 1 below), which served as the starting point for the analytical work carried out in the last stage of this procedure. The third stage involved the coding process by assigning text passages to categories followed by the compilation of all the text excerpts that belonged to the same category. In the last stage, a category-based analysis was carried out.

TABLE 1. Thematic matrix: main thematic categories related to Matthew Clairmont and their definition.

Code	Main Thematic categories	Definition
V1	Featuring 21 st -century vampires overall	Characteristics of vampires broadly speaking usual works for vampires, stereotypes on vampires and vocabulary on vampires
V2	Matthew and his becoming a vampire	Matthew as a child & Matthew becoming a vampire
V3	Matthew's physical and personal traits	Face: eyes, mouth, lips, hair & skin General: age Body: physical appearance accent/origin Feeding, abilities, clothes wealth
V4	Matthew's emotional and personality traits.	Emotions, changing personalities
V5	Matthew his multiple roles and his academic profile	Degrees, memberships & Reputation
V6	Relationship with history	Historical acquaintances and friends, historical facts and events lived
V7	Matthew and his families	Before being a vampire After being a vampire

5. Results and Analysis

V1) Vampires in general (21st century)

This category aims at featuring 21st-century vampires overall, that is, the works vampires used to carry out, the stereotypes humans constructed about them and some vocabulary including the semantic field “vampires.” This category was introduced since the characters of the book mentioned them and serves as a contrast between what the main characters in *DW* mention about traditional vampires and the characterization of a more modern one such as Matthew Clairmont. Broadly speaking, vampires are breathtaking (*DW*, 20–21); “ancient and beautiful, who feed on blood and will charm you utterly if they don’t kill you first” (*DW*, 19). Another example follows (*DW*, 20–21):

Their bone structures are so well-honed that they seem chiselled by an expert sculptor. Then they move or speak, and your mind can’t begin to absorb what you’re seeing. Every movement is graceful; every word is musical. And their

eyes are arresting, which is precisely how they catch their prey. One long look, a few quiet words, a touch: once you're caught in a vampire's snare you don't stand a chance.

So, they are predators. Vampire bodies do not age as humans do since they are supposed to live forever. In the twentieth century, this fact was seen as some sort of a curse for them, as in Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*. In turn, in Stoker's *Dracula*, the vampire lord is immortal but can also inverse this ageing process. Another interesting trait is that vampires work in different fields of science since it "rewards long study and patience" (DW, 20).

In contrast to stereotypes of vampires, their reflection can be seen in the mirror, they do not sleep too much, certainly not in a coffin, but when they do, they look like the dead. Crucifixes and holy things have no power over the vampire, and a stake through their heart is also useless. Concerning their reaction to the sunlight, Diana, the main witch character says: "Vampires didn't burn at the touch of sunlight, nor did they have fangs. These were human myths" (DW, 39). They cannot fly "but we're strong and fast. Vampires can run and jump, which makes humans think we can fly" (DW, 172). Vampires are also efficient since their bodies do not waste much energy: they do not breathe much; their hearts do not beat very often and they barely eat. They "run cold, which slows down most bodily processes and helps explain why we live so long" (DW, 172). There is some vocabulary on vampires that the novel teaches us such as pack behaviour, possessive rituals, preternatural senses, dining habits and the way to slay a vampire: "No, not even slicing our necks open is fool proof, [...] You want to cause as much blood loss as possible. Go for the groin as well" (DW, 578). Overall, the fact of being strong, fast, beautiful, charming, immortal, well-built, not having the need to sleep too much, and even working in science fields, to mention a few, can be pointed out in this category as traits that might compel young adults (YA). And it is that in my opinion, this is a trilogy that could engage YA in the same way that the saga *Twilight* has done, even though it is not concretely addressed to them. The reason for this is that there are sexual excerpts, yes, but it is not a trait that takes over the book and the descriptions are not graphic. Young adults are currently hooked on books and TV series with more explicit scenes related to sex, violence, addictions, and others this makes *All Souls Trilogy* appropriate for them.

V2) Matthew and his becoming a vampire.

This category shows the human traits Matthew had, portrayed by Ysabeau, his vampire mother, when describing him as a child, before becoming a vampire. He was bright, curious, and gifted, "by the time he could hold a hatchet without injuring himself, he was put to work" (DW, 352). He became a skilled builder, got

married and had, after many miscarriages, a son. Unfortunately, he lost his family after a pandemic. This made him try to take his life. It was then that Ysabeau made him a vampire. Then, after his turning into a vampire, there was no hint of humanity in him. “He was always full of hunger and almost out of control” (DW, 352). This double profile is shown throughout the novel. Matthew, as will be seen in the further text, is some kind of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. He passes from being a renowned scientist or a charming and attentive suitor to the most feared murderer in the whole book. YA might as well be described as curious and always full of hunger and nearly out of control if we extrapolate these concepts to their social contexts. Thus, they could see themselves reflected in this depiction.

V3) Matthew’s physical and personal traits

He has the appearance of a thirty-seven-year-old man, but he is a more than fifteen-hundred-year-old “with a face that would make an angel envious” (DW, 341). Clairmont, as shown in the following example (DW, 21):

was tall-well over six feet [...]. And he definitely was not slight. Broad shoulders narrowed into slender hips, which flowed into lean, muscular legs. His hands were strikingly long and agile, a mark of physiological delicacy that made your eyes drift back to them to figure out how they could belong to such a large man.

In the case of Clairmont, as it is with the Cullen family (*Twilight Saga*), being vampires is as if they had reached a stage of perfection in terms of both their bodies and their characters, not like Dracula seems to have. They have some physical particularities such as the fact that their eyes change like mood or bloodlust indicator rings. Matthew’s unnatural, odd, and strange eyes portray an ancient look. Additionally, they range from dark or “black as night” (DW, 21) to the fact that Matthew’s pupils and irises “were dots in a sea of grey-green” (DW, 23). His eyes are either described as having a “moonlike pull,” as “grey-rimmed black eyes” or “cool grey eyes.” (DW, 8) depending on his mood. Concerning his skin, unlike the Cullens in the *Twilight Saga*, which glitters under the sunlight like diamonds, Matthew’s body is a palimpsest, like the book he and Diana are looking for in the novel. His smooth, perfect skin was all covered up with odd marks located deep within him, dozens of scars that talked about hundreds of battles, some of them having left deep scars in his soul too making him carry a heavy burden full of guilt for all the years of his existence. As Matthew puts it: “I said vampires were difficult to kill. Creatures try their best to do so anyway” (DW, 428). Additionally, vampires move at a prodigious speed and have superhuman strength since their abilities are preternatural—but not supernatural, like mind

reading or precognition would be. He has a “feral combination of strength, agility, and keen intelligence” (DW, 20– 21). Extrapolating these traits to YA, we can pay attention to the time adolescents devote to their fitness to become aware of how Matthew’s physical traits might call their attention. This could have a deeper reading, that might be a topic for further research, and is the influence of these characters: astonishing vampires like Cullen, Clairmont or Damon and Stefan (*The Vampire Diaries* by L. J. Smith), other characters like Hardin (the saga *After* by Anna Todd), but also YouTubers, Instagrammers and others that dazzle YA who try to emulate them in every possible way, being it mentally and physically healthy or not. I am aware that some of these works are not addressed particularly to YA, but the truth is that they are available to them either in book or TV series format, include all kinds of scenes including sex, violence, addictions, and toxic relationships and they are accessing them, as a popular idiom says, one cannot stem the tide.

Regarding Clairmont’s personal traits, he is a blood drinker but does not necessarily take blood directly from his victims against their will. He might have willing donors, get it bottled, acquire it from a blood bank or drink it in a cup. Apart from blood, Matthew needs water to survive, and he very often drinks wine. He has his own cellar in the All Souls College basement, where he resides, and he uses some wines such as Château d’Yquem and Dom Perignon to try to seduce Diana. He is omnivorous, so, he “can eat food—preferably uncooked food, or food that’s cold, so that it doesn’t smell” (DW, 168). He likes nuts, seeds, berries (like grey wolves), plain broth and no vegetables.

Regarding his clothes, he is upper-class. He wears jerseys made of cashmere, and his shoes are exclusive (DW, 38):

Clairmont looked immaculate and rested, his pale skin startling against his dark hair. This time his open-necked grey sweater had flecks of green, and his collar stood up slightly in the back. A peek under the table revealed charcoal grey trousers, matching socks, and black shoes that surely cost more than the average academic’s entire wardrobe.

This exclusive purchasing power is shown with an in-depth description of his personal belongings such as his Montblanc Meisterstück mechanical pencil (DW, 41), his low-slung black Jaguar (DW, 78); his Range Rover the size of Connecticut (DW, 485); his jet that “was outfitted like a luxury yacht, with chairs that folded down flat to make beds, areas of upholstered seating and tables, and a small galley where a uniformed attendant waited with a bottle of red wine and some chilled mineral water” (DW, 482). He also has a helicopter (DW, 664), a two-story Tudor manor house, the Old Lodge and (DW, 92-93) “He’s funded up to

his eyeballs” (DW, 58) in terms of his research. In this case, vampires Clairmont and Cullen are along the same wealth and academic lines and thus, in this sense, we could extrapolate YA’s interest in the *Twilight Saga* to *A Discovery of Witches*.

V4) Matthew’s emotional and personality traits.

A noteworthy evolution of the vampire figure “includes the acquisition of strictly human emotions as well as the recognition of moral rules and values, thus altering the hitherto nature of the vampire character” (Grabias 2017, 110). All these vampires have some sort of love interest, or there is some sort of love story that is embedded in the main storyline. So, it seems that these more contemporary vampires can have feelings and be able to love another or be loved. An example is “Matthew feels deeply” (DW, 357). In Matthew’s words, “I’m experiencing emotions I’ve never” (DW, 211). Apart from love, he appears to feel sorrow, rage, pleasure, or pain. Besides, there is a heavy burden he carries, the guilt that he feels throughout his entire existence which is one of the seminal emotions for the character and has been previously mentioned. The guilt for his lost family, for the people he has murdered (including his father and former lovers, friends and even enemies). In turn, his eyes were also able to show emotions since they could either be weary, guileless, or cold; they glinted, were full of barely controlled rage or concern and even showed grudging admiration.

In terms of Clairmont’s personality, there are twenty-first-century vampires with perfect self-control. Just like Carlisle and Edward from the *Twilight Saga*, Matthew controls his vampire instincts either to cure or to “work as a doctor, saving human lives rather than taking them” (Guanio-Uluru 2016, 211). Matthew is a peculiar case of a dual-personality vampire, just like Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, or as shown in DW: “some diabolical combination of Lancelot and Superman” (374), able to have the finest qualities: compassion, conscience, and patience with those he loved. But he can also be flooded by such destructive anger and rage that (DW, 237) “once the poison was out of his system, he disappeared for months or even years to come to terms with what he’d done” (DW, 237). His duality takes him to either have a wicked sense of humour or “enjoy romping in the woods like an oversize puppy” (DW, 585); to do yoga (DW, 88) and play chess (DW, 125) or billiards while talking all night long (DW, 115) and to fight like a warrior in the Crusades (DW, 429). He can either sing in his rich baritone voice (DW, 314) and dance like Astaire and Rogers (DW, 307-308) or hunt the fastest member of the animal kingdom as if it were easy prey, as in “the rabbits and owls knew they couldn’t escape him. ‘King of the beasts,’ I whispered” (DW, 512). He is also respectful, secretive, and wolfishly protective, a killer and a lover, possessive, and old-fashioned at

times, particularly when it comes to courtship and sex. This duality shared also with YA readers, is shown in the next category which gathers many metaphors regarding Clairmont's multiple personalities.

V5) Matthew his multiple roles and his academic profile

Matthew shows many different sides: the warrior, the scientist, the father, the bodyguard, the assassin, the lover etc. He has lived so many lives, for such a long time that the multiple personalities he had are all within himself: "I'm a warrior.' 'No you're not,' I said fiercely. 'You're a scientist.' 'I've been a warrior longer'" (DW, 429). From the warrior to the knight, Matthew "looked like a medieval knight lying atop a tomb in Westminster Abbey: long legs, long torso, long arms, and a remarkably strong face" (DW, 97). But Clairmont is a loving father, too, as he shows when dealing with children visiting their house on Halloween night, or when saying his farewell to his son Marcus as in "'No speeding,' Matthew said firmly, sounding like a father. 'Call us when you get home'" (DW, 660). He has been a father all his life since the son he had as a human is always present in his thoughts. Also, in this excerpt (DW, 666): "Between father and son there was a long look, the clasp of hand to elbow, the press of a hand on the back—a pattern of leave-taking based on hundreds of similar farewells. For me there was a gentle kiss, a murmured 'Be well,' and then Marcus, too, was gone."

The seductive and charming creature that had entered Diana's life, the Matthew who had swung Diana into his arms and kissed her passionately, the scientist "absorbed in his work and preoccupied with the question of why he was here" (DW, 330), were kept at bay by a cold and impassive vampire depending on the moment and circumstances. This multiple-personalities being, ranging from seductive to monstrous, as mentioned in previous categories, might well be easier to identify with by YA readers than the previous vampires, whose personalities range was more limited.

In turn, vampires in these texts are emotionally and intellectually mature. Most of them have more than one university degree. Matthew Clairmont, "the elusive, reclusive Professor Clairmont" (DW, 57), whom people are calling "the next Attenborough" (DW, 57), is a professor of biochemistry affiliated with Oxford Neuroscience at the John Radcliffe Hospital. He is also a physician interested in the brain and has a medical degree. His visiting card shows an Oxford University logo. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Society, a member of Merton, Magdalen, and University colleges, a member of New College and Oriel twice each and a Fellow member of All Souls (DW, 22, 203). He might be any YA's teacher, someone easily recognizable, someone to emulate, a referent.

V6) Matthew's relationship with history

This multi-personality creature, reborn as a vampire in 537 (CE), was a puzzle composed of all the pieces that his fifteen hundred years of existence have given to him. Pieces that his historical acquaintances and friends such as Catherine of Aragon, Giordano Bruno, Darwin, Cornelius Drebbel, William Harvey, Thomas Jefferson, Edward Jenner, Marquis de Lafayette, Andreas Libavius, Marlowe, Jacques de Molay, Newton, Machiavelli or Shakespeare have imbued him. Matthew has lived through many of the most important events in history and has not remained just shut away in a castle, like Dracula. Thus, "he had drunk chocolate in Paris in 1615 and received a building permit from Henry VIII in 1536 – of course, he was buying wine in 1811" (DW, 175). This lifetime experience could raise the natural curiosity YA have and enhance their experiential cross-curricular knowledge and development. In my opinion, the inclusion of real, well-known historical events makes Clairmont a closer character and his, a more real, closer story.

V7) Matthew and his families

The last category is related to Clairmont's families. Prior to his becoming, Matthew was born within a modest family. His father was a carpenter, as he would become later on. Then he met Blanca, his former wife, who gave him his beloved son, Lucas. Both would die some years later. Once Ysabeau, his vampire mother, made him a vampire, Matthew lived in a perfect and diverse family (he had a homosexual brother). The vampire is no longer a lonely being from the 1980s, but "lives within a social structure of vampires (which can be family or gang-like) who are not just his concubines as in Dracula with no further plot relevance is another important feature of the 'new' vampire of the second half of the 20th century." (Zanger 1997, 18).

This trait was seen first in Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976). In this novel, three vampires live together as some kind of family. Matthew had three older brothers: Hugh, the negotiator, Godfrey, the conscience, teasing out the ethical effects of every decision, and Baldwin, the strategist in battle. Matthew also had a sister, with the role of bait and a spy. Philippe, his vampire father "had always been the leader of men, a charismatic figure who could convince vampires and humans and sometimes even daemons to fight for a common cause" (DW, 456). In contrast, Ysabeau "missed nothing and had a longer memory than Mnemosyne" (DW, 457). This category has identified the sense of being part of a "pack" as the trait YA could be keen on. They belong to their groups, gangs, teams, and friends.

6. Conclusion

This study has been set out with the aim of examining the character of the vampire Clairmont aimed at exploring the complexity of his multiple identities and demonstrating a shift in his role and traits regarding the traditional vampire. The research question intended to answer through the investigation was: what is it about the characterization of Matthew de Clairmont from the *All Souls Trilogy* that has made him a multiple-personalities character that has shifted towards a non-traditional vampire?

In light of Harkness' use of Clairmont's personal traits, it can be concluded that these semantic units fulfil a function in terms of characterisation. The traditional vampire showcasing scary and wickedly monstrous vampires seems to have given rise to a more modern, gentle, and human-like vampire, integrated into society, able to have feelings and fall in love. Matthew Clairmont still has some of those traditional vampire traits and is portrayed sometimes as the assassin, the predator on top of the food chain and the warrior, but at the same time, he is a considerate lover, a cultured scholar, a scientist, and a protective couple. This new multi-identities vampire seems to have a wide-ranging combination of fiction and realism, that is, of the fictional figure of the vampire and the real character of the scholar and husband. After the gathering and discussion of the results, I agree with Melton on some of the reasons why this kind of new vampire literature is engaging to the point of becoming a bestseller:

overwhelmingly, people who are vampire fans in later life began their attachment to vampires as teenagers. They go through a period of enthusiasm as only teens can have and then settle down to a lifetime of being entertained by the vampire and using their favourite fanged monster as an entity to assist them in thinking about real-life issues such as the nature of sexuality, exerting personal power in social situations and the possibilities of life after death. (Melton 2011, xvii)

Nevertheless, due to this first stage in our research study, it has only been possible to retrieve 273 excerpts related to Clairmont's traits. For this reason, further research involving a study of the other works included in *All Souls Trilogy* would be necessary to open new avenues to this study. Additionally, a complementary study concerning a computational corpus stylistic analysis following Ruano San Segundo (2016, 117-119) and its related issues in corpus design based on the novel *A Discovery of Witches* would be needed to complement this characterization. The reason for this is that it would be interesting to notice patterns in form and function that have been impossible to identify in the present study. This is so because this kind of study could provide more information regarding how this

novel reflects culture and ideas and shows topics and characters' patterns in the work that has taken it to be a bestseller.

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