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Hysteria, Sexuality, and Their Influence on Male Authority in  
"Carmilla" and Good Lady Duayne"

(TITLE)

BY

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Hysteria, Sexuality, and Their Influence on Male Authority in  
“Carmilla” and “Good Lady Ducayne”

In her essay “On Hysterical Narrative” Elaine Showalter surveys recent studies of so-called hysterical narrative and finds critical work limiting in that hysterical narrative has become a “waste-basket term of literary criticism” (24). She seems unsatisfied by the current way the hysterical texts are being treated by some scholars and so concludes that “To label women’s writing as ‘hysterical’ is to denigrate it as art, no matter how strenuously it is simultaneously valorized as ‘literary,’ ‘uncanny,’ ‘modernist,’ or ‘Gothic’” (33). It is important to note, however, that it is not simply the loss of an art that Showalter objects to, it is the loss of distinction, as the term hysteria has become “a synonym for women’s writing and the woman’s novel” (24). Yet, even with these possible problems surrounding hysteria, Showalter sees potential in hysterical readings, particularly in discovering connections between the “scientific” studies of Freud and the fiction of the Victorian era. In order to properly read hysterical text, Showalter suggests a reading that embraces a “wider understanding of hysteria [that is] now becoming available through the work of medical historians and psychiatrists” in order to understand hysterical works beyond gender (33).

My study is in part a response to Showalter’s call for a more contextualized reading of hysterical narrative as I investigate two 19<sup>th</sup> century stories, “Carmilla” and “Good Lady Ducayne,” both of which invite consideration of female hysteria. Hysteria, in general, is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “a functional disturbance of the nervous system, characterized by such disorders as anæsthesia, hyperæsthesia, convulsions, etc., and usually attended with emotional disturbance and enfeeblement or perversion of the moral and intellectual faculties”. Hysteria, in the defined sense, often connects with the gothic, as the nature of gothic is

often uncanny and perverse, lending itself to the disorder of hysteria well. Gothic literature is full of examples of hysteria such as Lucy and her mysterious illness in the Bram Stoker's well-known novel *Dracula*. In fact, nearly any gothic text seems to have a hysterical element, and so quite easily, the gothic has become synonymous with hysterical texts. However, making this assumption invites oversimplifying the texts and minimizing the range and complexity of hysteria.

In addition to Showalter's concepts of how to approach hysterical texts, Tamar Heller has also inspired my work. In her essay entitled "The Vampire in the House: Hysteria, Female Sexuality, and Female Knowledge in Le Fanu's 'Carmilla,'" Heller finds that "male nervousness about voracious women suggests, both the female hysteric and the female vampire embody a relation to desire that nineteenth-century culture finds highly problematic" (78). In order to examine this connection, Heller examines the female appetite in relation to "the related female maladies of hysteria, anorexia, and chlorosis" through the view of the short story "Carmilla" (79). Heller's work seems to fulfill Showalter's desire for "wider understanding of hysteria," (Showalter 33) as she incorporates medical doctrine of the time period, as well as academic scholars, and therefore is a valuable text on which to rely for my analysis of hysteria.

"Carmilla" the one of the texts that will be focused on during the course of this essay, is also easily read as a hysterical text. "Carmilla" is a gothic tale that is part of a collection of short stories and is about a female vampire. It was written by Sheridan Le Fanu written in 1872, nearly two decades before *Dracula* one of the more well-known vampire novels. In opposition with the common readings in Showalter's essay, it becomes impossible to label "Camilla" as simply a result of female hysteria, as the author is male. Instead, one must look at the hysteria within the text itself, instead of seeing the text as a result of hysteria.

Within “Carmilla,” the main character, who is named Carmilla, is can easily be read as a hysterical woman, although she is technically a vampire, as she is described as “in delicate health, and nervous” (Le Fanu 6). However, in this well-studied short story, I do not believe that the story or the hysteria can be understood fully by simply labeling Carmilla as hysterical and treating her hysteria as though it is only contained to her character, as I believe influences can be seen in other elements of the story. In order to better understand the hysteria in the story, and following Showalter’s urging, I will examine the medical practices of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in relation to the medical discourse used with in the story. More importantly, I will look at the anxiety of the males in the story, which ultimately results in the males forcing their dominance over the women, and how this relates back to the idea of female hysteria.

In addition to using “Carmilla,” I will also study “Good Lady Ducayne” which is also a short story written by the sensationalist writer, Mary Elizabeth Braddon in 1896. This text is relatively unknown and has little scholarship, although Braddon is a distinguished author best known for the novel *Lady Audley’s Secret*. “Good Lady Ducayne” provides an opportunity to engage Braddon’s work in a less ambitious, yet still meaningful setting. “Carmilla” is a useful text to use to examine hysteria in the gothic, as it is full of obvious references to hysteria which makes it fairly clear that it was meant to be read as a hysterical story, however, the hysteria that is present in “Good Lady Ducayne” is much harder to see. Yet, there is a definite, powerful, and controlling male presence that guides the story, at least in part, creating a clear connection between “Good Lady Ducayne,” “Carmilla,” and the gothic.

Heller medically contextualizes her study of hysteria by introducing Weir Mitchell, a doctor from the late 19th century, who wrote a book entitled *Fat and Blood: And How to Make Them* which looks at how “nervous women” are too thin and so must be made healthy by gaining weight (Heller 77). However, in Mitchell’s evaluation of hysterical women, he goes much farther than simply believing nervous woman are unhealthy and claims that they are also dangerous. As quoted by Heller, Mitchell says “A hysterical girl is . . . a vampire who sucks the blood of the healthy people about her” (77-78). Heller, quite naturally, picks up on this connection between vampires and hysteria and takes it even farther saying “not only, for doctors, is the hysterical woman like a vampire, but in tales like Le Fanu’s, the vampire can be read as a figure for the hysterical woman” (78).

Most of the problems in “Carmilla” stem from the character Carmilla, who first appears to be an innocent companion for Laura, but it is eventually discovered that she is actually a vampire. Using the information Heller has gleaned from Mitchell about the view of hysterical girls, it becomes possible to also see Carmilla as a hysterical girl, just as Heller does. When Carmilla is first introduced to the audience through Laura’s first impression, we are told by Laura’s father that she is “in delicate health, and nervous, but not subject to any kind of seizure,” making it incredibly obvious that the audience is meant to see the character as nervous, or at the very least, a girl who is in poor health (Le Fanu 6). Heller takes Carmilla’s health as reflective of women in the Victorian era saying “Carmilla epitomizes the nineteenth-century female invalid” (Heller 80). However, Heller connects the physical symptoms Carmilla displays, “she sleeps late, does not eat, and can scarcely walk several steps before coming completely exhausted,” not with simply hysteria, but also anorexia, another disease that was becoming known to medicine as its own separate disease during the late 1800s (80-81).

This connection to anorexia, instead of simply hysteria, is a reasonable connection to make, as it is true that Camilla does not eat. It becomes even more convincing since Heller has found evidence that during the Victorian time period anorexia was associated with extreme sexual desires and the “impulse toward frantic desires” (81), and Carmilla is clearly a very sexual being, as seen by her erotic behavior towards Laura. However, it is important to note that not all doctors of the time viewed and diagnosed anorexia the same way. According to an article by Erin O’Connor, the doctor who essentially came up with the term “anorexia nervosa” doctor Will Withey Gull, did not believe that anorexia was caused by any type of hysteria (O’Connor 535). More importantly, O’Connor has found that “Gull’s nomenclature produces the anorexic body as one that certainly looks ill enough, but is not really sick at all,” basically saying that although anorexics are very thin, they are not unhealthy in other ways (557). Whether this claim continues to hold true in the modern age is not significant. What is important is that in the Victorian era, according to Gull, an anorexic was not considered to actually be sick. Because of this, Heller’s information varies from that of the Gull, as she claims that Carmilla’s physical symptoms of fatigue suggest anorexia, yet, anorexia does not, according to O’Connor’s study of Gull, the leading doctor in anorexia, produce symptoms of exhaustion, much less result in extreme or deviant sexual desires.

Yet, Carmilla truly is a sexual being, or, at the very least continues to be read as one. Heather Meek, in her article about treatments of hysteria in the eighteenth century, about a century before “Carmilla” was published, claims that the females suffering from hysteria were “often deemed irrational, unruly, deceitful, and sexually depraved” (2). With the possible exemption of being irrational, all of these attributes seem to fit Carmilla rather well, as Carmilla is unruly, deceitful, and sexually depraved in the fact that she lives outside the normal social

rules. Assuming that simply being a vampire is enough to place Carmilla outside of normal society, she twists her role even further as she attempts to seduce Laura, saying things such as “You are mine, you *shall* be mine, you and I are one for ever” (Le Fanu 9). Although Laura does not understand what Carmilla means by this, she believes Carmilla is trying to say they are related, it becomes clear over the course of the story that the desires of Carmilla are not pure, not those of a normal young girl, but of something sinister and “sexually depraved,” (Meeks 2) that of homosexuality.

Homosexuality is clearly seen threatening and evil in “Carmilla”, as Carmilla’s homosexuality can be read predatory and therefore menacing. In her article, “Women Alone” Nancy Welter, who relies strongly on the teaching of Luce Irigaray to further her arguments, does read it this way, as seen in her claim that “in ‘Carmilla,’ such relations pave the way to eternal damnation” (143). In her reading, Welter finds incredibly strong homosexual and seduction elements, saying that the very first time the girls meet, “Carmilla is clearly engaging in a sexual act with the girl, one that combines vampirism and homosexuality” (145). She also sees Carmilla as a “predator” in the way that she “stalks Laura as prey, haunting her dreams, and even appearing to her in the form of a ‘sooty-black animal that resembled a monstrous cat”” (145). Heller too seems to agree with, at the very least, the idea that Carmilla’s sexuality is dangerous to Laura, as she brings up Sue-Ellen Case, who calls “Carmilla” the “‘first lesbian vampire story”” and also how many “critics have read Carmilla’s murderous designs on Laura as sexual advances” (Heller 79).

Therefore, it seems safe to say that Carmilla portrays a monster who is sexually immoral and untrustworthy, that resembles, in many ways, a hysterical girl. However, as Heller points out, Weir Mitchell also says “where there is one hysterical girl there will be soon or late two sick

women,” begging the question, how does Laura, the narrator of the story, figure into the ideas of sickness and hysteria? (78). In the story, Laura is first presented as a healthy woman, with no mention of illness or nervousness. Yet, when Carmilla arrives, Laura begins to fall ill. She has nightmares and trouble sleeping. She claims “A strange melancholy was stealing over me” and that physically she “had grown pale, my eyes were dilated and darkened underneath, and the languor which I had long felt began to display itself in my countenance” (Le Fanu 17). It is clear that Laura is growing ill. Her father takes notice, eventually calling in a doctor, who seems to convince Laura’s father that she is the victim of a vampire.

Heller also looks at the effects of Carmilla’s presence on Laura, not in a physical sense but in a sexual sense. Beginning with Laura’s first meeting of Carmilla in a childhood nightmare, Heller finds Carmilla’s presence to be almost an awaking of Laura’s sexuality, as she finds this first encounter to be not only “homoerotic,” but also “autoerotic” (82), suggesting a sort of masturbatory urge, which interestingly enough, was thought to be the origin “hysteria in girls” (83). However, it is important to point out that despite this sexual awaking, Laura seems fairly oblivious to what it is that Carmilla wants of her, that the narrative itself veils the truth of what is happening. Laura never actively responds sexually to Carmilla, at least not on purpose. In fact, though Laura likes Carmilla even from the first meeting “there was also something of repulsion,” and so Laura never responds in the way Carmilla seems to want (Le Fanu 8). After one of Carmilla’s barely veiled platitudes of love, Laura asks “What can you mean by all of this? I remind you perhaps of someone whom you love; but you must not, I hate it; I don’t know you” (9) which shows Laura’s inability to understand Carmilla’s pleas.

Heller examines Laura’s lack of understanding of Carmilla’s affections, but does not think that Laura is too simply innocent to understand. She finds Laura to be “more than

ordinarily obtuse” in the fact that Laura never picks up on Carmilla’s suggestive language or actions (Heller 85). Heller suggest that perhaps William Veeder, who “claimed that Laura is so repressed that she ‘cannot’ know fully what Carmilla means,” is correct, but Heller also argues that the repression goes deeper (85). She thinks that Laura is also intentionally suppressing herself and her own thinking, because of the burden society puts on her to be ignorant of sexuality of any type (85-86).

Assuming Laura is in some way repressing herself or being repressed, it is clearly not being done by Carmilla, as she is the one who is encouraging sexual growth. Instead, the other dominant presence in the story, Laura’s father, is the one who appears to be the one controlling Laura, both mentally and physically. In the story, Laura’s father controls much of the flow of information to his daughter, and often withholds information from his daughter when he apparently feels it proper. When Carmilla’s buggy crashes, it is Laura’s father who arranges for Carmilla to stay at their home, it is he who gives Laura the basic information about Carmilla, and in doing so, becomes the source for any outside information given to Laura. When Laura believes Carmilla will tell her more about herself the next day he replies negatively and “with a mysterious smile, and a little nod of his head, as if he knew more about it than he cared to tell us” (Le Fanu 6). This phrase suggests that even early in the story, the male in the story professes to have more information than the woman, and chooses not to share it. The refusal to give out critical information continues, as even when Laura falls ill, her father refuses to give her information about her illness, simply saying “you must not plague me with questions” (21).

Laura’s father shows his dominance over her in a physical sense, as well, especially when Laura is sick. He sends for the doctor, without consulting her. This action in itself only shows that he is a caring parent, although throughout the interview with the doctor, the doctor confers

with Laura's father, instead of the actual patient. It even reaches the point that the doctor asks Laura's father to lower her dress so that he may see the marks on her neck, rather than ask Laura herself, as though Laura's body is her father's to dominate (Le Fanu 20). With all of these instances as evidence, it is clear that Laura's father is more than simply a biologic father; he has authority both her knowledge and her body.

Heller also looks at the male power in the story, finding that "Laura's relation to knowledge becomes increasingly mediated by male authority" as the story ends (89). As already implied, Heller sees Carmilla and Laura's relationship as a way for Carmilla to teach Laura about sexuality. Heller then sees the males coming back actively into the story at the point of the doctor's examination as ending this "transmission of sexual knowingness" (89). She points at the fact that Laura is excluded from Carmilla's actual death, her "rape-like surgery," as proof that Laura is coming back under male control (89). In addition, by performing this ceremony on Carmilla, the males essentially stop Carmilla's teachings and that it is "telling that Carmilla is decapitate, and that her head, the site of knowledge and of voice, is struck off" (90). Still, Heller is unsure if Laura is also silenced, as Laura writes the story, not to the doctor who publishes it in his collection but to a "'town lady'", suggesting that Carmilla's influence is far from gone (90).

Welter's findings are much more concrete than Heller's, as she finds that Laura ultimately does end up free from male authority. She finds, in her article, that according to Irigaray, a woman who speaks up is "a man" and implies that Carmilla is outside of male control because "she is homosexual, and therefore masculine" (143). Welter points out the violence and the sexuality in the death of Carmilla, which Laura is not present for. She suggests that at this moment of Carmilla's death, the men are "forcefully reestablishing patriarchal authority over her transgressive body" (145). However, though Carmilla may come back under male control in her

death, “Laura stays outside of the patriarchal power structure” as she writes her own story after Carmilla is gone (146), similar to what Heller has suggested.

If one takes Laura as hysterical girl, one who was basically infected by Carmilla’s, things become even more interesting as Laura earns her freedom in at least one way from male authority by writing her story down. In her article, Diane Price Herndl finds that “Hysteria can be understood as a woman’s response to a system in which she is expected to remain silent” (53). To help illustrate this point, Herndl uses the example of Charlotte Perkins Gilman who suffered from hysteria and was told not to write or exert herself and had a mental breakdown. It was not until she began writing again “was Gilman able to cure herself of her hysteria” (52). Naturally, this is just one example but it is a power statement to the use of the written word. In the 1700s, Meeks claims that a similar idea of women writing as a way to help treat hysteria was being used as it allowed some women “to defy oppressive cultural forces that incited hysteria (Meeks 14). It is fascinating that the very action that Heller and Welter find frees Laura from male authority also, according to Herndl and Meeks, helped free women from hysteria. It seems that although Laura is released from the influence of the males because of the sexual knowledge given to her by Carmilla, she is also released, at least in part, from the impact of Carmilla, by writing down her story, and so becomes closer to being her own person.

Heller, on the other hand, suggests that Laura is still nervous and points to a phrase Laura writes toward the end of the story that says: “I write all this you suppose with composure. But far from it; I cannot think of it without agitation” (90). This may mean she has nervousness from either her mixed emotions of Carmilla or simply because Laura almost died during the experience, but she is clearly upset. In relation to this phrase, Heller mentions that Breuer, a scholar who worked with Freud, said that “Hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences” which

suggest that the entire story is part of Laura's hysterical experience (Heller 90). It is important to note, however, that Laura still continues to explain the nature of vampires in detail, even after admitting nervousness, showing that, although nervous about her experience, she is still functioning and willing to talk about her encounter with a vampire. Laura's mental health has clearly been affected by this experience, she admits that although she sometimes thinks of Carmilla as "the writhing fiend" she is also able to remember her as "the playful, languid, beautiful girl" (Le Fanu 33). All of this suggests that while Carmilla does still have an influence over Laura, Laura has, as mentioned, moved past the hysteria she felt when she was with Carmilla and has slowly become independent, both from Carmilla and her father's influence.

In Mary Elizabeth Braddon's story "Good Lady Ducayne," written in 1896, Bella Rolleston is a young lady of working class status who is hired to be a companion to the old Lady Ducayne. Although kind and generous with her money, Lady Ducayne has had her last few companions fall ill in her service and die shortly afterward, and so, Bella is determined to stay healthy, not because she is worried about death, but because she and her mother need the income provided by Lady Ducayne. However, as she stays and continues to work doing tedious tasks for Lady Ducayne, Bella also finds her own health declining, despite having been treated by Lady Ducayne's personal doctor Parravivini. Ultimately, Bella is "saved" by Herbert Stafford, a friend she had meet traveling with Lady Ducayne, who discovers that Bella's symptoms are from being drugged and bled. Stafford confronts Lady Ducayne with the knowledge that she is taking blood from Bella, in order that Lady Ducayne may live longer. Once confronted, Lady Ducayne, after

trying to persuade Stafford to work for her, lets Bella go and promises to stop with her experiments. The story ends with Herbert and Bella's engagement, as they sail back to England.

On the surface, the story is innocent enough. It appears to be the story of an innocent girl who is lured into the service of a monster, but is saved by an upper-class, educated man, whom she is lucky enough to marry, gaining the ultimate "happy ending." It is also narrative that reveals a tension between the classes, as Lady Ducayne can afford to hire and use up young girls until they die, as though the working class is dispensable. In this way, there is something unsettling about way the story is presented, that recalls "Carmilla," in that Lady Ducayne represents a threat to those around her, acting as the vampire does in "Carmilla." Just as Carmilla gives Laura a feeling of "repulsion" (Le Fanu 8), Lady Ducayne also has an effect on Bella as she thinks about "those gleaming eyes, with an invincible horror" (Braddon 82). Still, Lady Ducayne is not the same type of monster, the same type of vampire that appears in "Carmilla," as there is no hint of the homosexual or forbidden lust. Yet, Lady Ducayne indulges in the forbidden, by not only taking blood, but also by doing so without Bella's knowledge or permission and so essentially assaults Bella in a private way, (this assumption is based of Shannon R. Wooden's note number 6 in which she presents evidence that allows that transfusions of blood "may invade the private self") (n.p.).

This transmission of blood is incredibly interesting in this context. It is unlike the transmission of blood in "Carmilla," which Heller calls "the transmission of sexual knowingness from one woman to another" (89). In "Carmilla", it is implied that as Carmilla took blood from Laura, Laura gained sexual knowledge, in one way or another. On the other hand, in "Good Lady Ducayne" there is no knowledge transmitted and there is not sexuality. Lady Ducayne is clearly not a sexual being, nor is Bella. There is only a slight sense of romanticism, as Bella exclaims, in

a letter to her mother, that “this is what makes some girls so eager to marry--the want of someone strong and brave and honest and true to take care for them and order them about” (Braddon 80) but Bella does not seem inclined to join these girls, as she does not spend any time thinking or writing about marriage. If neither woman is sexual, it seems unlikely that a transmission of blood could result in any communication of that knowledge. Instead, the transferring of blood becomes an unsettling, unacceptable invasion of Bella’s body, an unwarranted assault.

Although Lady Ducayne is not sexual, as the vampire in “Carmilla” is, she can still be read as a vampire and a murderess, one who takes blood and therefore, life, which was a stereotype that was established during the Victorian era. Lady Ducayne is incredibly old, she is described as being “born the day Louis XVI was guillotined,” and is post-menopausal, as it can be assumed that she is at least a hundred years old (Braddon 95). The public opinion of an “old maid” is explored in Andrew Mangham’s book entitled *Violent Women and Sensational Fiction: Crime, Medicine and Victorian Popular Culture*. By analyzing articles from the 1800s, Mangham has found that older women are described as exhibiting “unusual peevishness and ill-temper, sometimes assuming the importance of moral insanity” (44). In his research, Mangham discovers that post-menopausal women were considered to be dangerous, even to the point of murdering, due to their morals becoming corrupt during menopause. This seems to be what is presented in Lady Ducayne as she seems, in her old age, is just as dangerous as the homosexual, young Carmilla.

Upon closer examination of the story, however, it slowly becomes clear that it is more than simply the presence of Lady Ducayne that makes the story uncanny. It is also interactions between Bella and Herbert. Unlike the relationship between Laura and her father in “Carmilla,”

the relationship between Bella and the main male figure, Herbert Stafford, it is fluid and changes throughout the story. Bella has no father, no male authority in her life until she falls ill and is in need of a doctor. Although she goes to Lady Ducayne's Italian doctor about her mysterious bites, he does not take control of her health, like Laura's father does, though it is clear she is falling ill. Stafford is the one who is concerned about her unhealthy physical appearance and so takes control of her ill body.

Bella is clearly ill. Her friend Lotta tells her brother that she "looks a wreck" and informs Bella that she must have been "awfully ill" (Braddon 88). She also complains of "an occasional recurrence of that one bad dream with all its strange sensations...the whirring of wheels; the sinking into an abyss; the struggling back to consciousness" (89-90). Despite these symptoms, it is unclear if she is truly hysterical, at least, in the same sense as Laura and Carmilla are as her sickness makes her feeble but not sexually deviant. In addition, Bella fights against admitting her illness, while Laura had accepted her illness saying that it took a "not unwelcome, possession of me" (Le Fanu 17).

This difference in the girl's attitudes seems to come down to class more than anything. In the book *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-century Literary Imagination*, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar explain that "'female diseases'" of the time period were actually encouraged, that "'Society agreed that she [a lady] was frail and sickly'" (54). Laura, by breeding, is a lady, while Bella is, as already mentioned, an "absolute pauper" who must work for her living (Braddon 87). She cannot afford the luxury of illness or hysteria, and thus, must become a very different type of hysterical character, one that must hide her illness.

As mentioned, Bella does not have a male authority figure until the appearance of Stafford. He and his sister are orphans, and he clearly embraces the role of the male authority figure as he shelters his sister, refusing to “allow her to read a novel . . . that he has not read and approved” (Braddon 80). Bella describes his relationship with her, the first time they meet as though he were handling her “like a child” (80). Yet, despite Bella’s opinion, Stafford “thought of her with a compassionate tenderness” (87), and clearly thinks of her with enough fondness that his sister feels the need to remind him about Bella’s poverty to lessen his opinion of Bella.

Stafford clearly cares for her in a medical sense as well. Both he and his sister notice Bella’s poor physical appearance, and he essentially becomes her doctor. He asks questions about her symptoms, and even examines the “bites” upon her arm. He eventually diagnoses her condition; she has been bled. Stafford confronts Lady Ducayne, accusing her and her doctor of taking blood from Bella without her knowledge, calling it “A practice so nefarious, so murderous, [that it] must, if exposed, result in a sentence only less severe than the punishment of murder” (Braddon 96). With this threat to expose the pair, he frees Bella from Lady Ducayne’s service and takes Bella back to England.

It is on this trip that their relationship begins to change drastically. As they begin the trip back to England, Stafford began “treating Bella as coolly as if he had been the family physician” (Braddon 97). However, it is not long before he “dropped into the use of her Christian name” because and took “the privileges of an elder brother” (98). Before the trip is over, they are engaged. Basically, over the course of a few short pages, Stafford changes from her doctor, to a brother, to a future husband. Yet, there is no wooing, no dramatic moment that changes the relationship between the two. Instead, the engagement simply appears in a list of facts included in a letter sent home to Bella’s mother. This seems to suggest that, for Stafford, there is little

difference between a patient, a sister, and a wife, which means that essentially, for him, women are interchangeable in their roles. In rather abrupt engagement, “Good Lady Ducayne’s” ending becomes like a “classic case history” (32) that Showalter mentions in relation to Freud, as he took the Victorian novel’s “dependence upon marriage for closure” and impressed it upon his hysterical female patients (27). The only possible ending for such a case were “marriage, madness, or death” (32). For Bella, the ending had to be marriage, as she refused to be hysterical much less mad, and Stafford saved her from death.

The most disturbing issue between Bella and Stafford, however, is not a lack of courtship or the sudden change from brother to husband, but is the way in which Stafford controls Bella’s flow of information. Although he has discovered the blood transfusions taking place between Lady Ducayne and Bella, Stafford does not reveal this to Bella. He continues to treat her like a child, much as Laura’s father treats her, both refusing to give the girls the nature of their illnesses. In keeping this from her, Stafford makes Bella double the victim; once because blood is taken from her without her knowledge by Lady Ducayne, then again as the man who supposedly cares for her chooses not to tell her about the invasion of her body. Ironically, though Lady Ducayne becomes a monster for her actions, Stafford is presented as the hero for his. In this, the male presence in the story becomes even stronger, as the story sees what Stafford does as acceptable, a necessary thing, in order for the proper happy ending to occur.

It is important to note that in this happy ending, Stafford will be marrying down when he marries Bella, as she is of a lower class. She and her mother work by sewing mantels, and as Lotta reminds her brother, are “absolute pauper[s]” (Braddon 87) Although her mother “was a lady by birth” after an unfortunate marriage, Bella and her mother have “Cheap lodgings in a shabby street off the Walworth Road, scanty dinners, homely food, well-worn raiment” (74). The

fact the Bella becomes Lady Ducayne's companion is sheer luck, she just happened to be at Superior Person, the agency she applied too, at the same time as Lady Ducayne. In other words, Lady Ducayne did not choose Bella based off anything except the fact that she is healthy. For Lady Ducayne, Bella is, as mentioned, dispensable, just as the other two girls she has had were, because they all are of the working class. This is very different from "Carmilla" where Carmilla seems to treat her victims differently based on class, seducing Laura, who is upper class, while simply killing the peasant girls. So, although Stafford may see women's roles as interchangeable, he does so without looking at class in the same way Lady Ducayne or even his sister do.

It is clear that there is a hysteria element present in both "Carmilla" and "Good Lady Ducayne." In "Carmilla," hysteria is connected with Carmilla who is a vampire that can be read as homosexual. Therefore, in the story, hysteria becomes associated with vampirism and sexuality, both of which infect Laura, almost as a disease. Similarly, in "Good Lady Ducayne" there is a hysteric element which affects Bella as she begins to lose blood, though, perhaps not as noticeably as Laura, as Bella hides her illness, due to her need to continue working while ill. The major difference between the two stories is the vampires, as Lady Ducayne, is not sexual like Carmilla is. Although Lady Ducayne is feeding off Bella, she is not transferring her hysteria and sexuality to the girl. However, despite these differences, the general effect of hysteria is the same; it forces the men in the story to claim or reclaim control of the women. In "Carmilla", when Laura's illness becomes obvious, her father comes and takes control of his daughter's body. When Bella's illness becomes obvious, Stafford too, comes and takes control of her body, physically removing her from Lady Ducayne's presence. The malady of hysteria is contained or repressed by the male authority, and in doing so, the female figure is also controlled

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