

“Mute and beautiful”: The Representation of the Female in Anne Rice’s *Interview with the Vampire*

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This essay discusses the representation of the female in Anne Rice’s *Interview with the Vampire* with reference specifically to the character of Claudia. *Interview* was first published in 1976 and has had to date 8 sequels in the *Vampire Chronicles* and *New Tales of the Vampires* series since *The Vampire Lestat* in 1985.¹ The film adaptation directed by Neil Jordan in 1994 follows the novel fairly closely, but there are significant differences, some of which will be discussed below.

In the novel, Lestat, a decadent, established vampire, initiates Louis, a New Orleans plantation owner. Louis becomes a vampire with a conscience, troubled at taking life. In plague-ridden France, Louis finds a poor young girl, Claudia, whose mother has just died. To rescue her, he turns her into a vampire, thus starting a vampire family in which the young Claudia, fierce, relentless, never ages.

In my own experience, female readers are interested in Claudia, though her character is generally ignored by critics and reviewers, who tend to concentrate solely on Louis and Lestat. Nina Auerbach describes Claudia as “bristling with feminist significance” (154). It is notable, however, that having made this comment, she spends only one page discussing Claudia. This is indicative of the situation I will describe and analyze. Much is made of the freedom and independence of Rice’s vampires, as well as their sensitivity and their awareness of their own and the human condition. Previous vampire literature focused on the human characters as potential victims or vampire hunters, while the vampires themselves were alien, other, unknowable and voiceless. Many have claimed that Rice was the first to present vampires as subject, not object, to let them tell their own story.

According to biographer Katherine Ramsland, Rice has stated that she sees her vampires as existing in a state where gender is unimportant: “she views vampires as affording a gender-free perspective, or images of ‘lovers as equals’” and sees them as “equally franchised human beings” (148). Thus, Rice’s vampires are androgynous and sexually ambiguous. Yet, as at least one critic points out, this so-called androgyny or “gender-free” state is contrived by erasing women—the novel’s main characters are male.²

Rice has stated that “Claudia is the embodiment of my failure to deal with the feminine” (Ramsland 154). Yet through this “failure” and through Rice’s identification with the male rather than the female characters,³ Claudia is made a powerful symbol. I argue that Claudia, the only major female character, rather than being indicative of a “gender-free” state, represents the female in the patriarchal world. And because she does not conform, she suffers the fate of the transgressive woman and dies. Thus, Rice presents Claudia as an exaggerated symbol of the female, but at the same time she also re-inscribes the male narrative and heterosexual roles for women. It is here that Claudia’s importance for feminist readers lies.

There have been other female vampires, of course, starting with Sheridan LeFanu's "Carmilla" in 1872 in which a traveling, beautiful vampire woman, Carmilla, starts a dependent, potentially lesbian relationship with a young girl. Female vampires tend to connote dangerous female sexuality and the fear of penetration by a woman: they embody the monstrous feminine. Rice's Claudia is not just a female vampire; she is a female child vampire, and thus her position and its implications are somewhat different. As I will show, her childish physical form tempers the idea of a dangerous female sexuality, yet she still exhibits aspects of the monstrous feminine.

The character of Claudia is commonly held to derive from Rice's experience of the death of her own daughter, aged five, from leukemia.⁴ In an early version, the novel ended with Claudia and Louis living happily ever after, having found a group of vampires in Paris. Biographical readings abound: for instance: "When asked by the publisher for a stronger ending, however, Rice knew that she was cheating in letting Claudia live, that she had to let her die and let go her daughter" (Roberts 31). Rice herself has told her biographer: "The child vampire Claudia was physically inspired by Michele but she ultimately became something else—a woman trapped in a child's body, robbed of power, never knowing what it's like to really be a woman and make love. She became a metaphor for a raging mind trapped in a powerless body. That's really how I see her" (Ramsland 21). Thus, although Rice admits that Claudia is trapped and powerless, she highlights the sexual loss. I will later argue that this affects her characterization of Claudia. Ramsland also recounts that Rice "was particularly pleased with the performance of Kirsten Dunst, the actress who played Claudia. The [film] scene in which Claudia was destroyed moved Anne to tears" (21). It is notable that the film poster magnifies Lestat/Cruise while Kirsten Dunst's name does not appear with those of the actors who play Louis, Armand, the interviewer, and even Santiago. It appears in small print at the bottom. Thus, not only is Claudia the character ignored, so too is the actor who plays the part.

Claudia is made a vampire as a child ("She was only five at most," says Louis (Rice 82)), and then lives with Lestat and Louis for 65 years. "Yet it wasn't until some time had passed," remarks Louis, "that an obvious fact occurred to me about Claudia. I suppose from the expression on your face you've already guessed, and you wonder why I didn't guess" (112). During this time, of course, Claudia ages and develops mature characteristics while retaining the physical form of a child. Thus, she embodies the role of the woman-child, the woman treated as a child by the world around her. Auerbach remarks that Claudia "is a visual icon of arrested development" (154).

The novel traces her growth and maturation, reflected in her clothes and actions. Outwardly she remains a child, but inwardly she becomes a woman. Louis says, "I could see she became impatient ordering everything through me; it was wearing for her" (Rice 221). Louis and Lestat find it difficult to understand what is happening to her: of course, they were already mature when transformed and have not had to cope with the same dilemma of growing up while not growing at all. "She's not a child any longer," Louis says to Lestat, "I don't know what it is. She's a woman" (117). This is complicated further by their lack of understanding about woman/other: "She was simply unlike Lestat and me to such an extent I couldn't comprehend her" (108).

Claudia becomes interested, then hurt and frustrated by the sight of mortal women growing up. This is highlighted in the novel and film, and it has been suggested that in the case of the film "Claudia's older age, necessitated by the need to find an actress who could play the role, intensifies her dilemma for the

audience. She is physically just on the threshold of puberty but is unable to move into adulthood" (Reep et al. 129). Her transformation from human to vampire robs her of the chance to be transformed from child to woman. Claudia questions Louis about this situation, though he does not seem to understand: "But tell me one thing from that lofty height. What was it like [. . .] making love?" (Rice 225, again Rice insists on the sexual loss). Finally she tells him: "Six more mortal years, seven, eight, [. . .] I might have had that shape! I might have known what it was to walk at your side" (283).

Louis describes Claudia as "mute and beautiful": "Mute and beautiful she played with dolls. [. . .] Mute and beautiful she killed" (Rice 108). These seem to be her defining characteristics. As child and woman in one, she is seen (worth looking at) but not heard. Thus, a number of Claudia's characteristics relate to my argument.

First let us examine her beauty. Even as a human child, Louis remarks on this, describing it as: "sensual" (Rice 103), possibly connoting sexuality. Claudia's beauty is part of her appearance. A major feature of this is her hair, which can be read as both childish curls and as a sexual symbol. We are told that Claudia develops a taste for jewelry not suitable for children. "She had a new passion for rings and bracelets children did not wear" (223). Claudia appears to be a child but is something else/other; thus her appearance masks her "true," unnatural nature.

Claudia embodies at least two paradoxes: the child's innocence and the vampire's evil; the child's weak body and the woman's strong spirit. Louis and Lestat both admit that she is stronger than they: "She's too strong for me" (Rice 101), "She was stronger than I" (227). Although Claudia is 70 years old, she is dependent on Louis and Lestat for protection, the appearance of adult guardians; she can never do without them for long, just as a woman under patriarchy is reliant on her father/husband. She also embodies the unlawful/unnatural: an attribute of the monstrous feminine. Her relationship with Louis is incest, a transgression of natural law; her attempt to kill Lestat is a transgression of vampire law. Louis consistently describes Claudia as inhuman "the white and fierce and unnatural childing" (Rice 284), and indeed she herself says, "I have no human nature" (130). Janice Doane and Devon Hodges have pointed out that *Interview* differs from the "classic monster narrative" in that here the female is not "the woman who must be protected from the monster; she is the monster" (424).

Finally, Claudia is mute; she rarely speaks. Like many women through history, she has no voice. Her story is told by her father or her husband (Louis is both). But note also that for the vampires, sexual gratification is through feeding, and reproduction is carried out orally. We are told that Claudia, as a child, is not strong enough to make another vampire; thus she is impotent. Reproductive/creative power is oral here, thus making Claudia's silence indicative of her powerlessness. Rice crystallizes the features of the woman-child in Claudia and presents them to the reader in a new, disturbing context.

As a child, Claudia needs parents. Having lost her mortal mother to the plague (her mortal father does not appear), she ends up with two vampire fathers. In typical short-sighted, self-centered fashion, Louis imagines that having two vampire parents is good for her (in contrast to his own situation): "only you were complete . . . because there were two of us, one on either side of you from the beginning" (Rice 216). In fact, Claudia is doubly fathered and so doubly bound. And like most vampires, both her fathers are quite literally dead, while European males from a privileged class.

Lestat has been described as "aggressive and impetuous (i.e. masculinized)," while Louis can be seen as "delicate and sensitive (i.e. feminized)" (Gelder 112).⁵ They can certainly be read as a "queer" couple. When they eventually find a daughter, they continue these contrasting roles. Lestat plays the strict, sometimes distant father; Louis the caring, constant mother.

This aspect of Rice's vampire world has been described as "homocroticism [. . .] imagined by a woman writer who finds male . . . homosexuality [. . .] glamorous" (Auerbach 153-4). She valorizes homocroticism while erasing female sexuality. The equality Rice sought is demonstrated between androgynous vampire partners, who just happen to be male. This issue gives rise to several of the divergences between novel and film. The film version of the story makes certain changes in Louis' mortal situation to establish his *heterosexuality* (it gives him a wife, a child, and a mistress). It changes his relationship with Armand and has him reject Armand immediately,⁶ Lestat retains some homocroticism in the scenes where he kills young men, but other elements such as his obsession with Frieniere and other young men and the sharing of a coffin with Louis are omitted. Removal of these aspects allows audiences to feel comfortable with the film and its characters and protects the leading man status of Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt (Reep et al. 126-8). There has been much discussion of this subject, but, as I have indicated, very little on representation of the female gender.

Yet with the introduction of Claudia, the narrative becomes even more complex. What Ken Gelder calls "the folding together of gay love with heterosexual incest/paedophilia" (112), complicates the family situation. Claudia herself complicates things by insisting on questioning how she could be "created" by two men (this is another aspect of her un-naturalness). The changing point in Claudia's relationship with her two fathers is the realization that one of them is her creator, one of them made her a vampire, just at the time when she begins to realize how trapped she is *as a vampire*. "*Which of you made me what I am?*" (Rice 120, Rice's emphasis) is the crucial question. Lestat actually performed the act, though of course we see that both Louis and Lestat have made Claudia what she is. "I took your life," says Louis in explanation. "He gave it back to you" (128).

Lestat is the father/monster whom Claudia eventually decides to kill in order to free herself and Louis. He is also her actual creator/father as a vampire (he is Louis' father too in this respect, and in *Lestat* we discover that he creates his own mother as a vampire). Lestat creates Claudia the vampire in an attempt to keep Louis with him, in an attempt to re/create them as a happy family. In doing so he desecrates Claudia's mortal family, dancing with the corpse of her mother before removing the child from her home (thus the power of the mother, the female is destroyed). He also reserves the power of creation for himself as the patriarch of the "queer" family (Rice 121). Lestat creates Claudia as a daughter with two fathers. Lestat throws Louis and Claudia together and all but forces them to become lovers (105).

Therefore, Claudia hates Lestat as the creator of all her burdens: her arrested physical development, her dependence on her two fathers who play adult to her child, and her binding love for Louis. Of course, Louis authors her problems as much as Lestat (in fact, he narrates them, as I will discuss), but when she finds Lestat committed the act, he becomes the focus of her hate.

Claudia discovers the strength of patriarchal law when she attempts to transgress it by killing Lestat. To kill the father is not only unthinkable to humans but also to vampires. Furthermore, it is impossible.⁸ Lestat taunts Claudia with the situation he has helped create at the very moment of her revenge upon him.

When Claudia states that she has a reconciliation gift for him, he replies, "I hope it's a beautiful woman with endowments you'll never possess" (Rice 146). Significantly, this is one of the few parts of Louis' narrative where he recognizes that Claudia is on the verge of losing control. But she retains her grip on the situation and appears to succeed in killing Lestat. He does not die, however. Lestat's revenge for this act finally leads to Claudia's destruction. He who was responsible for her immortal life is also responsible for her second death.

Louis is the father/lover whom Claudia attempts to free by killing Lestat; in fact, she rescues him from Lestat not once, but twice. He is the caring father. He remains with her constantly and he teaches her about art and literature (while she learns hunting from Lestat). He is the lover who protects her without understanding her or understanding that in many ways she does not require his protection.

Louis describes them as "Father and Daughter. Lover and Lover" (Rice 112). Physical though the vampire form may be, Louis and Claudia's love is not a sexual love, however erotic it may seem. It may be for Louis almost intellectual, a love of the mind, which may be why he transfers it whenever he meets someone whose mind seems more like his. What it is for Claudia we never know. As Gelder suggests, the confusion between familial, and sexual complicates the relationship. Louis's homoerotic relationships with Lestat, and later Armand, complicates this further.

Although Lestat is actually her creator as a vampire, both Lestat and Louis accept Louis' role as her closest parent. "'What's the matter with her!' he flared at me, as though I'd given birth to her and must know" (Rice 117). Yet Louis' role as parent/lover implies protection and possession, which he almost unconsciously allows the listener and the reader to hear in his story: "I loved her, *must keep her*" (Rice 127, my emphasis).

Claudia, on the other hand, becomes in the later stages of their relationship much more aware of his importance as lover and companion than as father and begins to resent his fatherhood and all that it implies. "Did you think I'd be your daughter for ever?" (Rice 225). Claudia is all too aware of Louis' shortcomings as a lover, even in his self-awarded role as her protector: he describes her "whispering softly that I should never be as grown up as she" (113); and during their search for other vampires in Eastern Europe she tells him "Would that I had your size... And would that you had my heart" (201).

With all its faults, the relationship is close. The reader can understand Claudia's shock when she discovers Louis' role in what she is: "You... fed on me?" she asks, "I was your victim?" (Rice 127). Claudia is Louis' victim in many ways, from the very beginning when he tells her, "It's only for a moment and then there'll be no more pain" (83). Claudia's pain lasts for more than 65 years, during which time she tries to kill one father and loses the other; finds a possible mother, only to lose her; and loses her own life. In all the obscurity that surrounds Claudia in Louis' narrative, only one thing about her is clear: her love for him. Thus, Claudia not only plays the role of dependent, mute, and beautiful female, she also plays the role of faithful heterosexual lover. She is trapped in her physical body and trapped emotionally; she is caught by the patriarchal myth of heterosexual romance, which Rice re-writes again and again in her fiction.

As I have mentioned, critical credit goes to Rice for creating vampires who are not alien/other/object, not perceived through the eyes of human subjects, but who tell their own stories as subjects themselves. Louis tells his story in *Interview*; Lestat tells his in *Lestat*, yet Claudia remains a third person in both narratives. Only in later novels do we get female voices, and these are rarely

vampires.⁹ As Auerbach notes, "Rice's vampires are compulsive storytellers, but Claudia, the ultimate spectacle, is unable to break free of paternal narrative" (154-5). Throughout *Interview* we see Claudia through Louis' eyes, as object, not subject, and in later writing as an absent presence.

"Vampires are killers. [. . .] Predators. Whose all-seeing eyes were meant to give them detachment" says Lestat to Louis early in the novel (Rice 92), yet where Claudia is concerned Louis' eyes are far from all seeing, and his narrative reveals that he is less than detached. If Lestat seems to stand for the old patriarchy, we might view Louis as the "new man," sensitive and cultured. Louis is the narrator, the "I" who erases Claudia from his narrative as a subject, emphasizing her as object.

From the very beginning, Rice presents Claudia as an object, a doll, the perfect mute and beautiful female. Louis describes her as such at their first meeting: "I threw the child down. She lay like a jointless doll" (Rice 83). Later he remarks, "Lestat played with her as if she were a magnificent doll, and I played with her as if she were a magnificent doll" (110). Lestat specifically states one of his purposes in creating her a vampire: "We could use her, Louis, and think of all the pretty dresses we could buy for her" (84, my emphasis). His other purpose, of course, is to keep Louis with him. In neither case is Claudia of importance for herself; rather she is simply an object to be used in the struggle/relationship between two male vampires. In fact, Doane and Hodges describe *Interview* as demonstrating "homosocial bonds that make women into objects of exchange" (425).

Even at the climax of his relationship with her, Louis emphasizes his own suffering and sensitivity, saying just after he has made Madeleine a vampire at Claudia's request, "what died in that room was not a woman. It will take her many nights to die, perhaps years. What has died in this room tonight is the last vestige in me of what was human" (Rice 295). Thus, Louis presents himself as human and, by implication, Claudia as inhuman, and further it is she who steals his humanity by forcing him to this act (which by his rejection he has forced her to). Louis states that he has seen her agony at what she has become (been made by her two fathers)—"For all these years I had depended utterly upon her cruelty, her absolute lack of pain! And pain was what she showed to me, undeniable pain" (288).¹⁰ But he almost immediately reverts to his habit of erasing Claudia the subject from his narrative. Claudia dies as a direct result of Louis' rejection of her for Armand, and in some respects he chooses not between her and Armand, but between Lestat and Armand. Louis as narrator insists on the importance of Lestat, Armand, and himself—Claudia's only significance in the story Louis tells is her destruction, her physical erasure. Louis' analysis of her is as blind to her love for him as it is to her complexity, and once more it valorizes his own sensitivity and suffering, while presenting her as inhuman and insensitive: "*she feels almost nothing*" (300, my emphasis).

As early as our first sight of her Claudia is both lacking female companionship (her mother is already dead) and betraying a need for such female connections. "Where is Mamma?" are her first reported words (Rice 103). "I'm not your daughter," she throws back at Lestat as he claims her for theirs, "I'm my mamma's daughter" (105). Louis often describes her, and indeed she describes herself as an orphan despite her two fathers. In fact, Rice has said of the novel: "It's about being orphaned" (Reep et al. 146).

Later, when she becomes acutely aware of her lack of physical maturity, we are told "she seemed obsessed with women and children" (Rice 115). At this point, Claudia not only kills but also keeps the bodies of a mother and daughter who work for the vampire family. Louis describes them thus: "mother

and daughter together, the arm of the mother fastened around the waist of the daughter, the daughter's head against the mother's breast" (117), an image which returns to him when he sees Madeleine and Claudia together in death. Claudia's "obsession" with mothers resurfaces later when Claudia refuses to kill a woman Lestat has chosen for her, and Louis is convinced that "the woman resembled her mother" (216)."

Claudia has lost her own mortal mother and her own chance at motherhood. Set free from her father/maker Lestat, she embarks on an ambiguous quest into *creation* and *origins*, seemingly of vampires, but as Louis states: "she seemed anxious for more than answers: for communion with *her own kind*. [. . .] She made me feel the gulf that separated us. [. . .] *I was not her own kind*" (Rice 164, my emphasis). Louis can never be Claudia's own kind, not because they have different sensibilities, but because he is male. This search leads in the end to Paris, described as "the mother of New Orleans" (219). Yet only when finally abandoned and betrayed by her father/lover Louis does Claudia eventually (re)turn to other women.

Louis' new infatuation with Armand prompts Claudia's search for female companionship. If Louis loves another male, why should Claudia not love another female? True to her child's form, however, Claudia does not seek a female lover (as other female vampires had done before her). Instead of replacing Louis the lover with a female lover, she seeks to replace Louis the father with a female parent. Sandra Tomc has observed that "Louis is variously Claudia's lover, father, and mother; he is Lestat's wife and son, Armand's gay paramour, Madeleine's father and husband" (99). But Claudia, as we have seen, is trapped in her physical form and trapped emotionally as daughter and lover.

Claudia had no choice in selection of mortal or vampire parents. Now she chooses her new vampire companion. Thus, we might say that the child creates her own mother. But the limitations imposed on her by her fathers deny her even the ability to do this. She is not strong enough to create a new vampire, and must ask, plead, beg Louis to do it for her: "I haven't the strength! You saw to that when you made me!" (Rice 282). This is for Claudia a pivotal scene. For Louis, it is a long-overdue recognition of Claudia's true situation. For both, it cuts the threads that tie them together.

Louis, although he comes to see some of Claudia's motivation and pain, is blind to the implications of his own and her actions. He asks Madeleine if she perceives Claudia as a doll, oblivious to the fact that he and Lestat have "used" Claudia as a doll ever since they found her (Rice 289). Madeleine's reply reveals her own motivation in this mothering of the vampire: "A child who can't die! That's what she is" (289). This scene in the film emphasizes many of the points mentioned, particularly Louis' selfishness and erasure of Claudia as subject. He talks primarily to Madeleine, not to her; the camera focuses on him and his reactions when she speaks to him. Our final sight of Claudia through Louis' eyes returns us to our first sight of her with her dead mother and to the mother and daughter she killed when struggling with her own (un) developing womanhood: "But these two lying under the gentle rain were Madeleine and Claudia" (328).

Thus, if Claudia represents the female in a patriarchal rather than a "gender-free" vampire society, we can also see her as the transgressing woman who must be punished. She transgresses as child, woman, and vampire and dies for her transgression. Claudia is seen to transgress as a child, with her tantrums and indiscretions, but more significantly through her relationships with her two fathers: she attempts to kill one, while taking the other as her lover. She is seen to transgress as a woman by disturbing the homosocial bonds among Lestat,

Louis, and Armand. She is female and a heterosexual disruption in the homoerotic world of the male vampire. "She should never have been one of us," says Lestat (Rice 353).

She transgresses as a vampire when she deliberately attempts to kill her maker, Lestat. We are told that vampires are forbidden to kill their own kind, and especially to kill their maker. However, we are also told that it is forbidden to make a vampire as young as Claudia precisely because she can never be independent. Thus, Lestat succeeds in transgressing the vampire code and goes unpunished (and so does Louis, when he kills the Paris vampires), while Claudia fails and dies. As Jennifer Smith points out, "That Claudia is the one who fails is not so much a failure of her spirit, which remains unquenched throughout, but a failure of circumstance and knowledge. . . . Like so many women in literature, Claudia dies because she lacks knowledge she has sought but been denied" (Smith 29).

Thus, Claudia enacts the typical end of the transgressing woman. The male world of the patriarchy, erases her from the male narrative and destroys her. It is clear that Claudia very powerfully demonstrates the limitations of fixed gender roles and representations. This may be why Rice said that Claudia embodied her "failure to deal with the feminine" (Ramsland 154). But Rice's failure is not only her inability to deal with the feminine, that is those aspects of being female which she might wish to reject. More significantly, she fails to push forward the representation of the female in Claudia; she fails to offer a (feminist) alternative to the female roles society and literature impose. Claudia remains "mute and beautiful" despite her anger and despite her recognition of the limitations imposed on her. These limitations are imposed not only by the two male vampires, but also by the female author who claimed that her vampires exist as androgynous, "equally franchised human beings" (Ramsland 148).

NOTES

1. *The Queen of the Damned*, 1988; *The Tale of the Body Thief*, 1992; *Memnoch the Devil*, 1993; *The Vampire Armand*, 1998; *Pandora*, 1998; *Vittorio the Vampire*, 1999.
2. Tomc describes Rice as "fantasizing a community of beings from which all signs of female sexuality and its traditional limitations have been erased" (97) and goes so far as to argue that the erasure of the female body "is the gap around which her [Rice's] utopian project undoes itself" (98). I argue that Claudia represents the female, including female sexuality and its limitations.
The issue of androgyny figured as male has arisen before in art and literature. Two examples which spring to mind are the depiction of angels and Ursula K. Le Guin's novel *The Left Hand of Darkness*.
3. Rice admits that she identified first with Louis, and in later novels with Lestat, see Ramsland, 152.
4. See Ramsland's biography. Ramsland also describes the alternate ending cited by Roberts. Rice lost her mother when she was 15. This too relates to my discussion of Claudia. See note 10.
5. Louis describes himself explicitly as such: "the great feminine longing of my mind" (Rice 225). It has also been suggested that Louis' story can be read as a particularly female narrative (Ingebreitسن 100). However, I would argue that Louis' narrative also contains many paternalistic and patriarchal features which erase the female subject.
6. It has been suggested that Antonio Banderas, who plays Armand, is a gay icon and therefore the film allows the homoerotic implications of his attraction to Louis, but not vice versa (Reep et al. 126-8).

7. See Gelder and Haggerty on homoeroticism, and see Doane and Hodges for a psychoanalytic view of the female in *Interview*, *Lestat* and *Queen of the Damned*.
8. Doane and Hodges offer a Lacanian reading of this (426).
9. Lestat's mother, Gabrielle, is a potentially interesting character but after her treatment in *Lestat*—and this of course, is Lestat's story, not hers—she is rarely seen in the *Vampire Chronicles*. *Queen* is discussed by Doane and Hodges as both pre-oedipal and post-feminist. *Pandora* might have offered the opportunity for a female, or feminist perspective, but does not really deliver. *Pandora* is a heterosexual romance which is as much about her male lover Marius as it is about Pandora, the female vampire. It is difficult not to conclude that Rice is uninterested in developing a feminist voice and a feminist representation of the female.
10. It has been noted that here Louis "discovers that her diminutive shape has filled her to the brim with 'rage' and 'pain' and 'suffering,' the very elements that constitute Louis's own claims to humanity" (Tome 108).
11. Ramsland maintains that Rice consciously imagined Claudia as "seeking mother figures" (154).

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