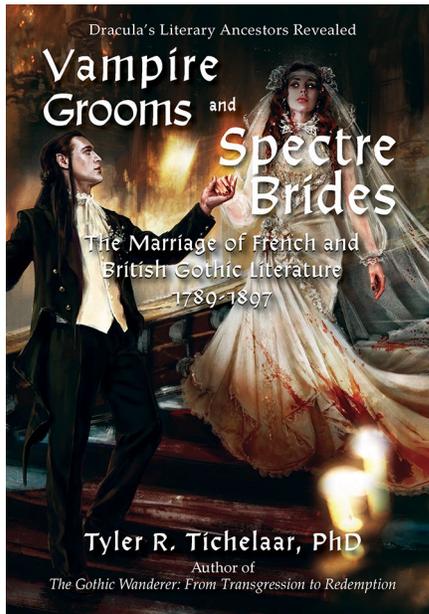


New Book Reveals Dracula's French and British Gothic Ancestors

Dr. Tyler R. Tichelaar's new literary history, *Vampire Grooms and Spectre Brides*, reveals how nineteenth-century French and British Gothic novelists were continually inspired by each other to create some of the most memorable characters in literature, from *Quasimodo* to *Dracula*.



Marquette, MI, February 1, 2023—Gothic literature studies usually focus on one nation's tradition. Dr. Tyler R. Tichelaar, however, argues that the Gothic crossed the English Channel regularly, providing blood transfusions of new life into the Gothic corpus as revealed in detail in his new book *Vampire Grooms and Spectre Brides: The Marriage of French and British Gothic Literature, 1789-1897*.

When Gothic novels are mentioned, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) quickly comes to mind, but *Dracula* was only one in a long tradition of vampire stories that stretches back to John Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819). *Dracula* scholars today focus on the handful of British vampire stories by John Polidori, James Malcolm Rymer, and J. S. Le Fanu, as sources for *Dracula*, but in *Vampire Grooms and Spectre Brides*,

Tichelaar looks to the plethora of vampire texts from France by Charles Nodier, Étienne-Léon de Lamoignon, Alexandre Dumas, Paul Féval, and several other authors as influential in the creation of Stoker's masterpiece. In fact, the female vampires in *Dracula* make far more sense within the context of the French vampire tradition.

Beyond *Dracula*, French literature inspired numerous British Gothic works and was inspired by them. Tichelaar explores how early British Gothic novelists like Radcliffe, Lewis, and Scott influenced French Gothic works by Hugo, Dumas, and Sue, and those works inspired British works by William Harrison Ainsworth, George W. M. Reynolds, Charles Dickens, and many others. Besides vampires, Tichelaar examines such literary archetypes as immortals, werewolves, cursed transgressors, and redeemed Gothic wanderers. Separate chapters include thorough discussions of the city mysteries genre and depictions of secret societies and the French Revolution in Gothic novels.

Tichelaar argues that by exploring how the French and British Gothic traditions influenced each other, a new understanding arises of many literary classics from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *The Count of Monte Cristo* to *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Dracula*. "To explore the French and British Gothic traditions together," says Tichelaar, "is like performing an archeological dig that exposes the missing links in Gothic development. Reading *Dracula* and *Carmilla* in the context of early French Gothic literature allows us to understand better the continuity of the Gothic tradition. Today, Paul Féval is almost unknown and largely overlooked by scholars of British literature, yet

his vampire and Irish novels probably influenced Bram Stoker. Even British novelists like Ainsworth and Reynolds, who have been ignored by literary critics, provide fascinating understandings of the Gothic's cross-cultural influence. Dickens and Stoker regularly visited France, and French authors regularly read British works, so the two literatures deserve to be read together as one Gothic literary tradition."

Vampire Grooms and Spectre Brides: The Marriage of French and British Gothic Literature includes in-depth discussions of a wide range of British and French Gothic novelists from 1789-1897, including Mrs. Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis, Sir Walter Scott, John Polidori, Charles Nodier, Victor Hugo, William Harrison Ainsworth, George Croly, Edgar Quinet, Eugène Sue, Paul Féval, George W. M. Reynolds, Alexandre Dumas, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Charles Dickens, Marie Nizet, J. S. Le Fanu, Jules Verne, and Bram Stoker. The book's cover art by Ukrainian artist Inna Vjuzhanina perfectly complements the title, suggesting not only the marriage of these two literary traditions but how the first literary vampires, including Polidori's Lord Ruthven, continually tried to dupe unsuspecting women into marrying them so they could avoid eternal damnation. A comprehensive index, endnotes, and an extensive bibliography complete the study.

About the Author



Tyler Tichelaar with
statue of Bram Stoker at
Hotel Castel Dracula,
Transylvania

Tyler R. Tichelaar has a PhD in Literature from Western Michigan University and Bachelor and Master's Degrees in English from Northern Michigan University. He owns his own publishing company, Marquette Fiction, and Superior Book Productions, a professional editing, proofreading, and book layout company. The former president of the Upper Peninsula Publishers and Authors Association, Tichelaar has been a book reviewer for Reader Views, *Marquette Monthly*, and the UP Book Review, and regularly blogs about Gothic, Arthurian, and Michigan literature and history. Tichelaar is the award-winning author of thirteen novels and nine nonfiction books, including *The Gothic Wanderer: From Transgression to Redemption*, *When Teddy Came to Town: A Novel*, and *Kawbawgam: The Chief, The Legend, The Man*.

Vampire Grooms and Spectre Brides: The Marriage of French and British Gothic Literature, 1789-1897 (ISBN: 978-0-9962400-9-3 hardcover; 978-0-9962400-8-6 paperback; 979-8-9872692-0-6) is available through local and online bookstores.

For more information, visit www.GothicWanderer.com. Publicity contact: tyler@marquettefiction.com. Review copies available upon request.

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