Reconstructing the Myth of Lamia in Modern Fiction: Stories of Motherhood, Miscarriage, and Vengeance

Ana González-Rivas-Fernández,[1] Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain

Abstract: The myth of Lamia is a story of frustrated mother who never becomes one. This article will examine how modern fiction has recreated this tragedy. I will analyse the novels "By the Pricking of My Thumbs" and "The Woman in Black" and the films "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle," "À l'intérieur," and "Mama." All these works have an antecedent in Shelley's "Frankenstein," where miscarriage and revenge also play a central role. The myth of Lamia still fulfils a social function nowadays, explaining the disturbances that child loss and a frustrated motherhood may cause.

Keywords: Lamia, Motherhood, Miscarriage, Revenge, Abject

Motherhood Frustrated: Miscarriage and Other Losses

For a woman who wants to be a mother, the confirmation of her future motherhood is always a source of joy, and when an accident, a miscarriage, or issues involving infertility prevent that pregnancy from occurring, all of that hope vanishes, turning into sadness and frustration. There is a whole gamut of emotions behind such stories, and these are very personal. The stories do, though, all share the disappointment that comes with such adversity.

One of the classic myths representing the experience of motherhood interrupted is the myth of Lamia, who, filled with sadness and rage, ends up becoming what we would today call a serial killer of children. In this article, I shall examine how the figure of Lamia expresses the emotions that arise from the frustration of a mother who never becomes one, and how modern fiction has recreated the myth of this "female evil." I shall begin by summarizing the main narrative of the myth as recorded in the main Greek and Latin sources that mention it, as well as outlining associations and cases of syncretism with other narratives and mythologies. I shall move on to focus on the key emotions that accompany the experience of child loss; and, in order to achieve this, I shall look at a range of psychology works, with a view to understanding Lamia's motives for acting as she did. The following section goes on to show how the myth of Lamia has influenced Gothic fiction, looking first at Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or the Modern Prometheus* (1818). In this case, the myth not only updates the protagonist's misfortunes, but also helps to catalyse the writers' experiences. Mary Shelley's masterpiece, moreover, set a pattern for future narratives as far as the combined representation of miscarriage and monstrosity is concerned. Finally, I shall analyse five works that have reshaped the myth of Lamia in modern times: the novels *By the Pricking of My Thumbs* (1968) by Agatha Christie and *The Woman in Black* (1983) by Susan Hill, and the films *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle* (1992), *À l'intérieur* (2007), and *Mama* (2013). At the end of this article, and supported by the comparative analysis of these works, I contend that the myth of Lamia re-emerges in different cultural manifestations and still fulfils a social function in the present day, explaining the disturbances (and sometimes the tragic effects) that child loss can cause.

[1] Corresponding Author: Ana González-Rivas-Fernández, Campus de Cantoblanco, Calle Francisco Tomás y Valiente, 1, Department of English Studies, Autonomous University of Madrid, Madrid, 28049, Spain.
email: anagonfer27@telefonica.net

The International Journal of the Humanities: Annual Review
Volume 16, Issue 1, 2018, https://thehumanities.com
© Common Ground Research Networks, Ana González-Rivas-Fernández,
Some Rights Reserved (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).
Permissions: support@cgnetworks.org
ISSN: 1447-9508 (Print), ISSN: 1447-9559 (Online)
http://doi.org/10.18848/1447-9508/CGP/v16i01/25-38 (Article)

COMMON GROUND

Lamia: The Vengeance of a Mother Who Never Was

The story of Lamia, Zeus' young Libyan lover, is a story of frustrated motherhood. Lamia was the object of the wrath of Hera, who condemned her to lose all the children she gave birth to. The pain and the rage ate slowly away at her to the point where she became a monster[2]; this is how she lives, hidden in a cave and tormented by the sight of her dead children. Her rage, though, soon gives way to a fatal envy of all those fertile women who live happily with their children, and it is they who become the object of her hatred, as she steals and kills those children,[3] thus avenging herself for her deprived maternity.[4] To make her pain still more acute, Hera deprives her of sleep forever, though Zeus takes pity on her and allows her to remove her eyes when she wishes. The medieval re-creation of this character in the *Bestiario Moralizzato* of Gubbio adds a detail that further underlines her ill-fated motherhood: Lamia murdered her own children with the poisonous milk of her breasts.

According to Hurwitz (2009), the myth of Lamia derives from the Mesopotamian Lamashtu. As Lamia, Lamasthu also used her poisonous milk to kill her victims ("Bring me your children to suckle, I shall be their nurse" was her call—Leick [1998, 110]). In the Greek mythology Lamia is sometimes identified with Gelo, a girl from Lesbos "who came from the hereafter to steal children" (Grimal, *s.v.* "Gelo"), perhaps because she had died prematurely, unable to become a mother.[5] She is also compared to Mormo, a female monster who behaved in a similar way.[6] Mormo was the queen of the lestrigones who had, for reasons unspecified,[7] lost all her children (Izzi, *s. v.* "Mormo"). Devastated by her misfortune, she then began to kill other children. This category of legendary beings that hated children could also include Mormolykeia, with features similar to those of a wolf. All of these maleficent beings find equivalents in other monsters of popular folklore, such as "the Sandman" in English-speaking cultures, "el Coco," "el Sacamantecas," or "el hombre del saco" in Hispanic ones, or "Babau" in the Italian imaginary. And, just like today, it was also common in ancient times for mothers to threaten their children with the arrival of Lamia, if they did not behave properly.[8]

The figure of the Libyan queen Lamia (who has a specific narrative) should not be confused with the lamias, female beings with a woman's body and the tail of a snake, which attack the young and suck their blood. As far as these monsters are concerned, Philostratus' account in *The Life of Apollonius of Tiana* (IV.25) is especially pertinent, given its influence on later literature. In this work, Philostratus tells the story of Menippus, a young man who is blindly in love with a beautiful girl, until the philosopher Apollonius of Tiana shows him that she is actually a lamia who has bewitched him.[9] These seductive lamias are similar to sirens in presenting an irresistible temptation to their victims, but they have also been compared to other monsters with preference for children and babies, such as the Empusa (a monster with one foot of bronze and another of a donkey), the *striges* (spirits that dismember babies in their cribs; as Lamia and Lamashtu, the

---

[2] There is no specific description of her physical features. Lamia is sometimes represented androgynously, with the ability to transform herself. In the seventeenth century she acquired the form of a "quadrupedal animal completely covered with scales, with a woman's face, paws on the front legs and hooves on the hind legs, female breast and male sexual organs" (Izzi, *s. v.* "Lamia," my translation).

[3] She devours them (Horace 1942, 339–40).

[4] Diodorus Siculus, *Biblioteca* (XX, 41).

[5] Gelo "died unseasonably" and local people "imagined that her ghost went to children and to those [who had suffered] unseasonable deaths" (Suidas, *s. v.* "Gelo").

[6] Skolia to Theocritus' *Idylls* (XV, 40).

[7] Hurwitz (2009, 44), however, affirms that Mormo killed her own children—the same as Lilith, mentioned later in this article.

[8] Grimal (*s. v.* "Lamia 2"). On this social function of the myth of the lamia, Strabo's reflection is interesting (*Geography* I, 2, 8): "Since the portentous is not only pleasing, but fear-inspiring as well, we can employ the pleasing myths to spur them [the children] on, and the fear-inspiring myths to deter them; for instance, Lamia is a myth, and so are the Gorgon, and Ephialtes, and Mormolyce" (Translated by Jones).

[9] In his *Metamorphosis*, Antoninus Liberalis refers to another Lamia (or Sybaris) in relation to the myth of Alcione.

striges also use the poisonous milk of their breast to kill their victims),[10] and the harpies (the mothers of the *striges,* described as winged women or birds with the head of a woman). All of these beings tend to kill by sucking the blood of their victims, a trait that very early on linked all these monsters to the tradition of the vampire.[11]

Leaving behind the limits of classical mythology, there are also many parallels between the figure of Lamia and Lilith,[12] the first woman created by God, who was expelled from Paradise for refusing to submit to the sexual preferences of Adam (who wanted to prove his superiority by always lying on top of her), and then formed her own entourage of demons.[13] Etymologically speaking, the name of Lilith has been linked to terms such as "lasciviousness," "night," or "sensuality." Like the lamias, in the Judeo-Christian iconographic tradition Lilith is generally represented with a serpent's tail and the breasts and head of a woman[14] and also feeds on the blood of defenseless victims. In this way, the figure of Lilith, merged with that of the aforementioned female beings, ends up becoming the vampire woman *par excellence*, widely adopted in literature as a representation of the *femme fatale*. These features define what Hurwitz (2009) has labelled as Lilith's "Ishtar aspect."

The figure of Lilith as a *femme fatale* has so far been analysed from multiple points of view, including historical, mythological, psychoanalytical, Jungian, or reception studies perspectives.[15] As well as this more lascivious side, though, in some narratives Lilith also shares with Lamia the experience of frustrated motherhood—what Hurwitz (2009) calls Lilith's "Lasmashtu aspect"—because her insubordination and rebelliousness condemned her to lose one hundred of her children every day. In revenge for being condemned to these eternal miscarriages,[16] Lilith starts to steal and kill the babies of other mothers, especially the male ones, thus expressing her rejection of patriarchal society:[17]

> Said the Holy One to Adam, "If she agrees to come back, what is made is good. If not, she must permit one hundred of her children to die every day." The angels left God and pursued Lilith, whom they overtook in the midst of the sea (…). They told her God's word, but she did not wish to return. (…)
> "Leave me!" she said. "I was created only to cause sickness to infants. If the infant is male, I have dominion over him for eight days after his birth, and if female, for twenty days."
> When the angels heard Lilith's words, they insisted she go back. But she swore to them by the name of the living and eternal God: "Whenever I see you or your names or your forms in an amulet, I will have no power over that infant." She also agreed to have one

[10] King (1987).
[11] Calmet (2009 [1746]).
[12] Petoia (1995) refers to lamias as myths derived directly from Lilith. According to Izzi *(s. v.* "Lilith"), Lilith "owes its origins to a triad of Mesopotamian demons: Lilu, Lilitu and Ardat Lili." The only reference to Lilith in the Bible appears in Isaiah 34:14. In this text the word *lilit* or *liliz* is used, typically translated as "owl," but also as "ghost," "nocturnal monster," or "creature of the night." In the *Vulgate* it was translated as Lamia, which in itself shows the similarities between the two creatures. Cirlot (*s. v.* "Lilith") also states that "in the Israelite tradition [Lilith] corresponds to the Lamia of the Greeks and Romans."
[13] The legend of Lilith is rooted in an interpretation of Genesis 1:27: "God created man in his own image, in the image of God, he created him; male and female he created." The oldest known direct reference to Lilith is in the *Alphabet of Ben Sira*, though the story of this first woman did not become widely known until the eighteenth century, with the *Talmudic Lexicon* of Johan Buxtorf.
[14] This is at least how she is represented in the Kabbalah (Izzi, *s. v.* "Lilith"). However, in the form of Ardat-Lili she was also represented in a tablet from Arslan Tash "as a wolf with a scorpion's tail, trying to devour a child."
[15] See Bril (1981), Koltuv (1986), or Enid Dame (1998), Hurwitz (2009), or Bornay (1990).
[16] In the Talmudic imaginary there also seems to be a correlation between Lilith and the idea of miscarriage, to the extent that in the Tractate Niddah, which deals with different matters pertaining to the body and nature of woman and their effect on her purity, the possibility that an aborted fetus has the form of this fantastic being is considered: "If an abortion had the likeness of Lilith, its mother is unclean by reason of the birth, for it is a child, but it has wings" (*Talmud*, Tractate Niddah, Folio 24b).
[17] On this anti-patriarchal symbology, see Gilbert and Gubar (2000).

> hundred of her children die every day. Accordingly, every day one hundred demons perish, and for the same reason, we write the angels' names on the amulets of young children. When Lilith sees their names, she remembers her oath, and the child recovers. (*The Alphabet of Ben Sira*, in Stern and Mirsky 1998, 183–84)

Not for nothing does Cirlot (*s. v.* "Lilith") refer to Lilith as a monster who is the "enemy of childbirth and of the newborn" and as a "symbol of the terrible mother," also identifying her with the "stepmother," such a prominent figure in traditional folklore.[18] Some traditions, too, mention that Lilith has no milk in her breasts, which Izzi (*s.v.* "Ardat-Lili") interprets as a sign that she must have been a woman who died while pregnant or in childbirth—a mythological archetype in itself. Be that as it may, it is undeniable that the various mythographic interpretations all centre on the frustration of unfulfilled motherhood as the root cause of the evil that moves this woman.

In relation to these spirits of women who see how their own death is interposed in their experience of motherhood, one last figure is worthy of mention: the *langsuyar*, from Indonesian mythology. The *langsuyar* feeds on children or pregnant women, using a cleft in their necks to suck their blood (Izzi, *s. v.* "Langsuir"). It is possible that the *langsuyar* also feel frustrated by their lost motherhood and project their rage against all mothers and their children. Olivares (2001, 109), though, points out a different story that links them more closely with Lamia and the experience of miscarriage:

> It is said that, knowing the misfortune of her own son, who was born dead, she (…) incited by grief, decided to flee to the woods to deepen her tragedy, turning into a shy, unfriendly owl. In fact, she transformed herself into a green-clothed monstrosity with long nails and splendid hair down to her knees, a chimera intertwined with the "White Lady" or the "Banshee" who, from that day on, stalked children in order to drink their blood through a peculiar hole dug out in the back of their necks. (My translation)

There is undoubtedly much cross-contamination among all these monsters, which justifies many of the parallels. This phenomenon may be seen not only in some of the names—it is no coincidence that Lamia and the lamias share the same name—but also in the similarities in their monstrous attributes which often identifies these women with a snake, a lizard, or a dragon. This image reinforces her connection with the devil, as represented in Christian iconography,[19] and emphasizes the telluric character of these beings, highlighting an element (earth) which is also closely related to motherhood.

The figure of the woman who steals children to devour them is, however, not exclusive to mythology: popular folklore also provide some relevant examples, such as that of the witch in *Hansel and Gretel*—which Bettelheim (2012) identifies with the destructive aspects of orality created by two abandoned children who fear dying of hunger—or the Irish fairies who kidnap children to take them to their own world, leaving in their place a surrogate child or "changeling"—the reason why it is dangerous to look at a baby with envy, as this puts it at the mercy of these fairies.[20] In many cases, these stories are actually a way of sweetening the pill of child death in times when infant mortality was very high. It should also be noted that, as argued by Önal (2011), many tales and legends that involve "female evils" are at the service of a motherhood narrative articulated to perpetuate a patriarchal social order in which women plays a secondary and passive role. According to this patriarchal discourse, "motherhood is the proper role for women" (Önal 2011, 86), so any woman who, whatever the cause, does not become a mother takes on a monstrous shape, an external sign of their social inadaptation and eventual exclusion. Furthermore, in this discourse women's sexuality is understood only in terms of

[18] Cirlot specifies that "she should not be identified literally with the mother, but with the idea of her that is worshipped—loved and feared—during childhood" (My translation).
[19] As in Borges's account of the myth (1967).
[20] Yeats (2010 [1888]).

reproduction, so those who are especially promiscuous are likewise condemned and rejected. Within this motherhood narrative, therefore, mothers are regarded as superior beings to "adulteress (illegitimate mothers), murderous midwives, barren or childless women and bad mothers (…), who represent the dark side of the feminine and the fears of women related to motherhood" (Önal 2011, 87)—a dark side that Lamia embodies.

From Guilt to Envy: Emotional Reactions to the Loss of a Child

In just two hundred years the perception of motherhood has changed enormously. As we know, the traditional division into spheres of activity of the nineteenth century reserved the public domain for men, while limiting the space of women to the home. At home the woman took care of the housework and the welfare of the family, but her main function was to bear and raise children. From this perspective, it was clear that a woman without children had failed both socially and personally, and so was viewed with both disapproval and pity. Many such women, therefore, were frustrated and even humiliated by their problems with infertility, miscarriage, or the death of their children at an early age, which was very common at the time.

Much has, though, changed since then, and although in some cases there are still social, cultural and religious factors that can determine the decisions of many women, we can say that nowadays in the West being a mother or not being one is a choice, not only because there are ways both to promote pregnancy and to avoid it: women are also increasingly aware that having children is a life project, but not the only one. Motherhood has also been de-idealised, and some women have openly acknowledged that being a mother has led to conflictive feelings (Donath 2015). On the other hand, women who do decide to have children also have more information about it, which strengthens and supports their choice. In spite of scientific advances, though, some infertility issues remain insoluble today, still causing frustration and anguish in women who do want to be mothers.

The loss of a child or the inability to have one can take place in very different circumstances: infertility, repeated abortions, early miscarriage, late miscarriage, death of the baby during delivery, sudden death of the baby, or death of the baby due to accidents or illness.[21] In all of these cases, the parents go through a process of mourning, which will be very or quite long, and more or less painful, depending on the loss and the personality of each parent. The mother, moreover, usually experiences more intense emotions than the father, as has been shown by a number of studies.[22] There are many different emotional reactions during this mourning period. Maddens (1994) singles out sadness, frustration, disappointment, and self-anger as the main emotions a woman experiences after a miscarriage; Friedman and Cohen (1982) highlight the feeling of emptiness and inadequacy; and Barr and Cacciatore (2007–2008) speak of four basic emotions: envy, jealousy, shame, and guilt. To these Geller (2002) also adds loneliness and fear, warning too of symptoms of anxiety that may develop, sometimes leading to an episode of depression or obsessive-compulsive disorder. It may be that the woman directs her anger toward a third person, blaming her for her loss (Friedman and Cohen 1982). According to DeFrain et al. (1996), a miscarriage or the loss of a child can even lead to mental alienation and suicide.

Unlike other women, Lamia has never enjoyed the luxury of a narrative that gave her a voice, and so has never been able to tell in the first person the feelings that being repeatedly deprived of her children engender in her. Her actions, however, do point to three very specific emotions: envy, jealousy, and the desire for revenge. According to Cousineau and Domar (2007, 296), "one of the most difficult aspects that infertile women describe is the difficulty in social settings, such as dealing with feelings of jealousy and envy when learning of other women's

[21] Psychologically there are differences between a miscarriage and a death: although both are experienced as loss, miscarriage is an "ambiguous loss," as Geller (2002, 4) points out, that is, a loss of what could have been and was not. However, for the woman it remains an affective bond that has disappeared unexpectedly (Friedman and Cohen 1982).
[22] Dyregrov (1990) and Dyregrov and Mathiesen (1991, 1987).

pregnancies or being in the presence with others who have infants"; in the case of miscarriage, Geller (2002) also mentions jealousy toward other pregnant women or mothers with children. In this aspect, too, Friedman and Cohen (1982) concur: this envy may be directed at women both known and unknown, on whom guilt is projected. Barr and Cacciatore (2007/2008), who extend their study to other types of loss, differentiate clearly between jealousy and envy, pointing out that the latter emotion entails a certain desire to take justice into one's own hands (Barr and Cacciatore 2007/2008). In this sense, envy can be more powerful than jealousy (Barr and Cacciatore 2007/2008).

It should be noted that the case of Lamia is different from that of other women in mythology, who kill their own children to take revenge on their husbands (i.e., Medea or Procne). These are cases of filicide that have also been recorded by modern psychology and re-created on numerous occasions in literature.[23] Nor is Lamia the victim of any puerperal psychosis, a moment of temporary insanity that occurs during the postnatal period and leads to serious behavioural changes, to the point where the mother may try to kill or harm her baby in some way. Lamia is not even a mother who rejects her baby or regrets having given birth. A case like Lamia's is not a common one, and it has at least so far not been well documented in medical literature. Fiction, though, has found in the rage of this frustrated mother the perfect ingredient for other stories of motherhood and revenge.

Frankenstein's Monster: Motherhood, Miscarriage, and the Abject

As many authors have shown since the coining of the term "Female Gothic" by Moers (1977), many of the fears that accompany motherhood have provided interesting material for Gothic literature. One of the most significant examples of this may be found in Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein; Or the Modern Prometheus*, which uses the discourse of terror, the monstrous, and the abject to investigate both miscarriage and womb envy. Thereby *Frankenstein* becomes a new representation of Lamia and an intermediate stage for its reconstruction in modern fiction.

Mary Shelley herself suffered several instances of miscarriage and the loss of children at an early age, and so it is hardly surprising that her Victor Frankenstein became obsessed with the idea of creating life from inert matter, daring to defy nature and ignoring the role of woman as a maternal figure. The result of this act of hubris is a monstrous being, who comes to describe himself as "an abortion."[24] The fact that Frankenstein does not give him a name, and with him an identity, highlights still more his liminal nature, between person and non-person. This is, in Julia Kristeva's terminology, the abject. According to Kristeva, the abject is that which lies between the subject and the object; it is "what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules" (1982, 4); that is, "the ambiguous, the composite" (4) which represents elements like blood, vomit or saliva, all of them excretions on the borders of the "I." Motherhood is, then, also the origin of the abject, present in menstruation, the act of breastfeeding, or giving birth itself, as well as in the necessary separation between mother and baby. It is, though, above all the idea of the corpse that "upsets even more violently the one who confronts it" (3); the corpse, Kristeva goes on, "is a boarder that has encroached upon everything. It is no longer I who expel, 'I' is expelled. The border has become an object" (3–4). There is no doubt, therefore, that miscarriage, as a corpse and as a symbol of frustrated motherhood, is also a representation of the abject, defying the boundaries between life and death, as well as the boundaries of the mother's identity.

In an attempt to recover a stable and defined identity, the subject tries to expel the abject, which in fiction is projected as a monster or a ghost (Baldick, *s.v.* "abject"). In this sense, the monstrosity of the creature to which Frankenstein gives life can also be understood as a physical

[23] Some examples in Aguirre (2016).

[24] "I, the miserable and the abandoned, am an abortion, to be spurned at, and kicked, and trampled on" (Shelley 1999, 169).

representation of the abject, which also partly evokes the idea of miscarriage, or at least of a birth that has somehow produced a failed result. The presence of miscarriage in Mary Shelley's novel does not end here, though: there is also the unforgettable moment when Frankenstein, repenting and having agreed with the monster to create another similar being, a companion for him to share his solitude with, destroys that future woman before giving her life. The revenge of the monster is to be proportional to the doctor's act: he murders Elizabeth, Frankenstein's fiancée, on their wedding night. With this, the monster also eliminates all the offspring that Frankenstein and his wife might have had in the future—which is precisely what he himself did in destroying the monster woman, driven by guilt.[25] In both cases, therefore, the destruction of the mother implies an "anticipated abortion." Later on, the monster ends up showing itself to be a child killer, just like Lamia: his first victim is William, Frankenstein's younger brother, a murder that marks a turning point in the evolution of the monster. This facet of the monster was also represented by James Whale (1931) in his film version, which included a scene in which the character kills a child. It is not surprising, then, that Frankenstein's monster also comes to join the list of fiendish beings to threaten and terrorize children (Warner 1998). Notice, finally, that both Lamia and Frankenstein's creature become a modern representation of Rousseau's "noble savage," who, in these cases, get cruel and depraved due to the mistreatment received by the Victor Frankenstein and Hera, respectively.

Beyond the plot, the novel itself also becomes a living monster (and another representation of abortion) in the eyes of Shelley, who defined it as her "hideous progeny" (1999, 5), a metaphor that reflects the cathartic effect the process of writing had on the author.[26] Gilbert and Gubar extended this metaphor to the female artist in general, "with its plain implication that in her alienated attic workshop of filthy creation has given birth to a deformed book, a literary abortion or miscarriage" (2000, 233). Pregnancy, miscarriage, writing, and monstrosity are therefore elements that go hand in hand in Shelley's work.

Shelley's instance is similar to that of other female writers who have also found in literature a way to catalyse their own traumatic experience with motherhood. Such is the case of Anne Rice, author of *The Vampire Chronicles*. Rice, who suffered the death of her mother at the age of fourteen, also had to face the death from leukemia of her five-year-old daughter Michele, an experience that led her to write *Interview with the Vampire* (1976), as she has herself recognised.[27] Like Shelley and Frankenstein, Rice also creates her own literary monster as a means of attaining the immortality denied to her daughter and finds in the image of the vampire—the heir of Lamia—the eternal life she longed for. The author resurrects Michele in the character of the little vampire Claudia, giving her the blood that she was lacking in that moment of life. Moreover, blood, another of the multiple representations of the abject according to Kristeva, is unquestionably another link with Lamia and associated myths, in which killing is so often accomplished through the sucking of this vital liquid. In Rice's work, as in all vampire stories, the blood that Lamia shed represents not only death and destruction, but also power and vitality. Like Lamia, the vampire also seeks to recover what was taken from her. Immortality, though, also brings Claudia its own tragedy, as it does to Frankenstein's monster: Claudia will remain forever a girl and will never become a fully developed woman, forcing her to renounce the full awakening of her sexuality and with it the chance to be a mother.[28]

---

[25] "Even if they were to leave Europe and inhabit the deserts of the new world, yet one of the first results of those sympathies for which the daemon thirsted would be children, and a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror. Had I right, for my own benefit, to inflict this curse upon everlasting generations?" (Shelley 1999, 127)

[26] Mellors also singles out "Shelley's anxiety about her capacity to give birth to a normal, healthy, loving child" as the starting point of her novel, highlighting the fact that "the metaphor of book as baby fused a double anxiety, an insecurity about both her authorship and her female identity" (Mellor 1989, 52). Moers (1980) also refers to *Frankenstein* as a "birth myth."

[27] Rice, interviewed in *The Independent*.

[28] "Rice did not read *Frankenstein* until the 1990s. She was struck by the similarity of themes between her and Shelley" (*Anne Rice. The Official Website*).

Modern Reformulation of the Myth of Lamia

The theme of miscarriage and child loss as the trigger for tragedy has also been present in contemporary fiction. The following examples will illustrate how these new lamias mourn the deaths of their children.

Christie's novel *By the Pricking of My Thumbs* presents one of the mysteries solved by the couple Tommy and Tuppence Beresford. The story begins with a routine visit to Ada, Tommy's aunt, who lives in a nursing home. There they meet Mrs. Lancaster, an old lady who, after contemplating a fireplace for a while, asks Tuppence a disturbing question: "Was it your poor child? (...) That's where it is, you know. Behind the fireplace" (1984, 22). A few weeks later, Aunt Ada dies, and when Tommy and Tuppence come to the home to pick up her things, they discover that Mrs. Lancaster has disappeared. Although the nurses assure her that Mrs. Lancaster was picked up by a relative, Tuppence suspects that there is something else to this sudden absence and sets out to make enquiries into the matter, taking as a starting point a mysterious picture of a house in the country which Mrs. Lancaster gave Ada. Looking for the house in the painting, Tuppence arrives in the village of Sutton Chancellor, where she meets Mr. Phillip Starke, a local entrepreneur. Pretending that she intends to buy the house, Tuppence asks for more information about her, and a village woman reveals that some children were killed there. Tuppence then decides to go to the house herself, where she meets Mrs. Lancaster, who goes on to tell her story: she is actually the wife of Phillip Starke, who had hidden her there. As a young woman she was forced to have an abortion, and after that she could no longer have children. The guilt she felt about the abortion began to obsess her, disturbing her to such an extent that she began to kill the children of other women, believing that by doing this she was fulfilling the wishes of her dead daughter and thereby expiating her sin:

> It was a girl, you know. Yes, I'm sure it was a girl. She came and she wanted other children. Then, I got the command. *I couldn't have any children. I'd married and I thought I'd have children, when my husband wanted children passionately but the children never came, because I was cursed, you see*. You understand that, don't you? But there was a way, a way to atone. To atone for what I'd done. What I'd done was murder, wasn't it, and you could only atone for murder with other murders, *because the other murders wouldn't be really murders, they would be sacrifices*. They would be offered up. You do see the differences, don't you? *The children went to keep my child company*. Children of different ages but Young. (…) It was such a happy thing to do. You understand that, don't you? It was so happy to release them so that they'd never know sin like I knew sin. (1984, 183, the italics are mine)

Mr. Starke knew all this, and in order to avoid his wife being accused of these deaths, he decided to simulate the death of Mrs. Starke and hide her in a nursing home under the name of Lancaster. Once she had confessed, Mrs. Lancaster/Starke attempted to assassinate Tuppence by forcing her to drink poisoned milk, as she had done with the mothers of the children who had discovered her. Fortunately, Tuppence was rescued by people from the village who came to the house at that moment.

The updating of the myth of Lamia in Christie's novel can be seen in the madness into which Mrs. Starke falls under the weight of the guilt she feels for an abortion she herself provoked. As regards the classical myth, the motif of poisoned milk is also particularly relevant: on the one hand, because milk evokes breastfeeding and the nutritional function of motherhood, and on the other because, as discussed earlier in this article, some traditions indicate that Lamia used the poisoned milk of her breasts to kill children. Through this reference to milk, Mrs. Starke, like Lamia, becomes a "mother monster," unable to develop another maternal role in her life. As another representation of the abject, then, milk serves to reinforce this contemporary revision of a classic myth.

Susan Hill's novel *The Woman in Black* describes to us the terrible curse that plagues the town of Crythin Gifford, where lawyer Arthur Kipps has to go to sort out the documents of Alice Drablow, a widow who has just passed away. During the funeral, Arthur sees in the distance a strange woman dressed in black, surrounded by a group of children. At this point he notices that something strange is going on, and this is confirmed when supernatural events begin to take place in the house. Little by little Arthur finds out the truth: Alice had a sister, Jennet Humfrye, who had a child as a single mother, and Alice decided to look after the child and educate him as his own son. Jennet was planning to run away with the boy, but misfortune was to intervene: the little one drowned in a bog after an accident with a horse-drawn carriage, at which Jennet goes mad with rage, dying shortly after and reappearing as the ghost known as "the woman in black." Since then, the appearance of the woman in black has presaged the death of a child.

This is how the novel describes Jennet's transformation in the novel, showing how sadness and illness consumed her life, thus, as in the case of Lamia, reinforcing the link between the frustrated motherhood and the abject. Special attention should be paid to the adjectives and verbs that outline the process of change through which Jane takes on her monstrous form, a metamorphosis that recall the classical myth in a very straightforward manner:

> And Jennet watched. She was at the house, watching from an upper window, waiting for them to return. (…) The bodies were recovered but they left the pony trap, it was held too fast by the mud. From that day Jennet Humfrye began to go mad. (…) *Mad with grief and mad with anger and a desire for revenge*. (…) *Whether because of her loss and her madness or what, she also contracted a disease which caused her to begin to waste away*. *The flesh shrank from her bones, the colour was drained from her, she looked like a walking skeleton—a living spectre*. When she went about the streets, people drew back. Children were terrified of her. She died eventually (…) And whenever she has been seen (…) in the graveyard, on the marsh, in the streets of the town, however briefly, and whoever by, there has been one sure and certain result. (…) In some violent or dreadful circumstance, a child has died. (1993, 148–49, the italics are mine)

The shadow of Lamia has also touched cinematographic narrative, which has given the myth a new twist as far as the protagonist's intentions are concerned. One of the most iconic films on the subject is *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle*, which takes its title (and its subtitle, "is the hand that rules the world") from the William Ross Wallace poem "What Rules the World" (1865), and which constitutes in itself a paean to motherhood. The film recounts the traumatic experience that Claire, a pregnant woman, is obliged to undergo when she realizes that her gynecologists is taking liberties in the way he explores her, leading to her denouncing him for harassment. As a result of this complaint, other women find the courage to confess that they too were molested by the same doctor, who, now feeling cornered, commits suicide. The news reaches the doctor's wife, Peyton Flanders, who is at the time at an advanced stage of pregnancy. She faints at the shock and loses her baby. During the operation, moreover, doctors are forced to carry out a hysterectomy, which leaves her sterile. It is then that she begins to plot her revenge, presenting herself to Claire as the model nanny she is looking for. Once Peyton is in the house, she works to gradually supplant the young mother, from whom she intends to steal her children and her family.

A much more brutal and terrifying vision may be found in the French film *À l'intérieur*. The film introduces us to Sarah, a woman in an advanced state of pregnancy, still in shock from the death of her husband in a car accident which she and the baby survived. The night before the birth, which coincides with Christmas Eve,[29] Sarah is visited by a woman stranger who tries to open her belly with scissors to get the baby inside. The protagonist struggles desperately to save

[29] Possibly a macabre subversion of Jesus Christ' birth.

her life and that of her baby in a life-or-death fight. Finally, the stranger confesses the motive for her macabre plan: she was the driver of the other car involved in the accident in which Sarah's husband died. Like Sarah, she too was pregnant, but her baby did not survive, and now she wants what she thinks belongs to her.

As disturbing as this may seem, there are a number of documented real-life cases that resemble the plot of *À l'intérieur*: the crimes of murderesses who kill pregnant mothers to take over their babies by abducting the foetuses. The motives may vary, although in many cases fertility problems and a sickly obsession with motherhood lurk behind such madness. No doubt that the Lamia that resurfaces in all these cases shows her most brutal side.

Finally, the film *Mama* offers us a very different vision of Lamia, with some important reformulations of the myth. The film tells the story of two girls, Victoria and Lilly Desange, who are kidnapped by their father after he has killed his wife and coworkers in a fit of madness. He finds shelter in a hut in a forest, where he is about to kill the girls as well, when he is suddenly attacked by a monstrous being, who protects the girls from that point on, and whom they call "Mama." In the course of the film we find out who Mama is: a young woman from the nineteenth century who had been locked up in a psychiatric ward and had had her baby taken from her. One day, though, she manages to recover her baby and escape with her, but she falls into a ravine and both of them die. Since then, the young woman, now a monstrous spectre, has been wandering the forest looking for her daughter, until the day she meets Victoria and Lilly, who were at the time about three and one respectively. Five years later, the girls are found and taken to their uncle Luke, who lives with his partner Annabel. Mama, too, finds a way to follow them there, opening up a communication portal between Luke's house and the cabin in the forest. It happens that Annabel has no maternal feelings, so at first she poses no threat to Mama, but as time goes by the bond between Annabel and the girls becomes stronger, especially with Victoria. At this point Annabel becomes a rival who is trying to steal the girls from Mama, who spares no effort, attempting to kill Annabel and get her daughters back. The murderous nature of Lamia comes to the fore at the end of the film, when Mama takes the girls to the same ravine into which she threw herself years before. Annabel tries in vain to stop her, but the decision is left to the girls, who have to choose between staying with their new family or with the mother who saved them and cared for them when they needed it most.

Creating a Modern-Day Lamia

The stories analysed above reveal at least three different representations of Lamia:

1. In *By the Pricking of My Thumbs* we have a Lamia caught in the madness generated by the traumatic experience of abortion. Mrs. Lancaster/Starke does not kill out of rage or revenge, but out of mercy, like the old ladies in Capra's film *Arsenic and Old Lace*. She does, in fact, define herself as a murderer at the service of the Lord.
2. *The Woman in Black*, however, is Lamia in a pure state: the woman who blames others for her own tragedy, and takes her revenge by killing their children. In this case, the monstrous nature of her actions and her physical transformation become especially important as visual representations of the abject.
3. Finally, in *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle*, *À l'intérieur*, and *Mama* the figure of Lamia lays claim to her motherhood and clings to it, which explains why she does not initially try to kill the children, but to steal them so that she can keep them and supplant the true mother. The modern world, and in particular the cinematographic narrative, thus provides a twist to the Lamia myth, shifting from killing children to killing mothers.

It is a fact that, when transferring them to new contexts, the modern discourse re-elaborates myths and gives them a new dimension. According to Losada, "the myth is composed of certain

constant themes that are subjected to a state of crisis, presents a conflictive, emotional, functional and ritual nature, and always refers back to an absolute cosmogony or eschatology, particular or universal" (Losada 2015, 9). Myths, therefore, are in a state of constant change, engaged in a permanent quest for the new form that will adapt them to the new age, so they may remain meaningful to the society that inherits them. In this process of transfer they always retain their symbolic power, evincing the universal nature of mythology. In the particular case of the reception of the Lamia myth in the twentieth century, the Lybian queen re-emerges to fulfil a function often taken on by Gothic literature: to become a vehicle for the expression and release of women's fears, in this case related to motherhood and child loss. Now denuded of its religious significance, the myth of Lamia is no longer used to threaten children, but to confront human beings with their darkest side. In Campbell's terminology, we can affirm that the myth's chief social function, aimed at supporting "the current social order" (Campbell 1991, 520), evolves into a primary pedagogical function (that is, "to initiate the individual into the order of realities of his own psyche, guiding him toward his own spiritual enrichment and realization" [Campbell 1991, 521]). The visual component of the cinema, moreover, has greatly contributed to highlight the most gruesome details of the narrative, making it more effective and enthralling.

Lamia does, of course, retain many of the features and mythemes that characterized her in ancient mythology: her heart-breaking experience of loss, her monstrous appearance, her thirst for revenge motivated by a feeling of envy toward other fertile women, and her murderous impulses that finally make her a serial killer of innocent victims. But at the same time the essence of the myth has undergone a metamorphosis that has revealed other facets of the monster, which are a direct consequence of her emotional distress—and the feelings of envy, jealousy, and the desire for revenge that can overwhelm a frustrated mother. The figure of Lamia turns thus a paradigmatic example of myth-appropriation in modern fiction.

Conclusions

There are many emotions that come over a woman who is frustrated in her desire to be a mother. The character of Lamia expresses in a monstrous and grotesque way all of these feelings of sadness, anger, guilt, or even jealousy and envy of the fertility of other women. In the face of her frustrated motherhood, Lamia becomes a bloodthirsty murderer who pursues both children and their mothers. She becomes a villain of the domestic sphere, and a dark and terrible representation of motherhood, subverting the values of protection, love, and goodness that are associated with it.

As shown in the course of this article, contemporary fiction too has created its own Lamia myth. As in the classical myth, this new Lamia also goes mad and does not hesitate to take revenge for what she feels as an injustice. Fiction thus enacts the grieving process which some women live through and helps to provide a deeper insight into the experience of frustrated motherhood. But in modern times the myth of Lamia also outgrows fiction itself, taking centre stage in the very process of literary creation. Writers like Mary Shelley and Anne Rice have found in writing a way to express their own feelings of loss, which in their novels take on terrible forms, such as Frankenstein's monster or the vampire Claudia. In one way or another, both characters reveal the abject component and the monstrosity that motherhood can come along with, resurrecting thus the most destructive features of Lamia. This component is equally present in the later reinterpretations of the myth and has been sometimes enhanced by the new audiovisual formats. The literary and filmic works analysed in this article have given a new focus to the figure of the monster by pointing her emotional state as the main cause of her cruel behaviour, which in some cases has even contributed to increase the empathy of the reader or the spectators toward its protagonist.

There is no doubt that Lamia is a perverse being, physically and morally a monster, and that it is with good reason that she has over the centuries become the nightmare of so many children. Like Frankenstein's monster, she feels she has been mistreated and so seeks revenge. But she is

also a woman motivated by pain, who is trying to assimilate a heart-breaking event: the loss of a child. And that is why her story continues to be hauntingly familiar.

Acknowledgement

This article is framed within the projects "Acis & Galatea" (S2015/HUM-3362)," "Marginalia Classica Hodierna" (FFI2015-66942-P), and "Diccionario Hispánico de la Tradición Clásica" (FFI2017-83894-P). I would like to give special thanks to Mercedes Aguirre and Luis Unceta.

REFERENCES

Aguirre Castro, Mercedes. 2016. "Madres culpables: El mito de Medea y la ficción contemporánea" [Guilty Mothers: The Myth of Medea and the Contemporary Fiction]. Paper presented at the International Conference on Myth Criticism: "Myths and Emotions," Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid, Spain, October 27.

Antoninus, Liberalis. 1968. *Les metamorphoses* [The Metamorphoses]. Edited and translated by M. Papathomopoulos. Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres."

Auerbach, Nina. 1995. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Baldick, Chris. 2008. *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Barr, Peter, and Joanne Cacciatore. 2007/2008. "Problematic Emotions and Maternal Grief." *Omega: Journal of Death and Dying* 56 (4): 331–48.

Bettelheim, Bruno. 2012. *Psicoanálisis de los cuentos de hadas* [The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales]. Barcelona: Editorial Planeta.

Bible Study Tools. 2018. "Bible Study Tools." Accessed May 23, 2018. http://www.biblestudytools.com.

Borges, Jorge Luis. 1967. *El libro de los seres imaginarios* [The Book of the Imaginary Beings]. Buenos Aires: Editorial Kier.

Bornay, Erika. 1990. *Las hijas de Lilith* [Lilith's Daughter]. Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra.

Bril, Jacques. 1981. *Lilith o la mere oscure* [Lilith or the Dark Mother]. Paris: Payot.

Bustillo, Alexander, and Julien Maury, dir. 2007. *À l'intérieur* [Inside]. Paris: La Fabrique de Films. BR Films.

Calmet, Augustine. 2009. *Dissertation on Ghosts, Demons and Vampires*. Edited by Henry Christmas. Project Gutenberg Ebook.

Campbell, Joseph. 1991. *The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology*. New York: Arkana.

Christie, Agatha. 1984. *By the Pricking of My Thumbs*. London: Fontana / Collins.

Cirlot, Juan Eduardo. 1982. *Diccionario de símbolos* [Dictionary of Symbols]. Barcelona: Editorial Labor.

Corominas, Jordi. 2014. *Barcelona 1912: El caso de Enriqueta Martí* [Barcelona 1912: The Case of Enriqueta Martí]. Madrid: Sílex Ediciones.

Cousineau, Tara M., and Alice D. Domar. 2007. "Psychological Impact of Infertility." *Best Practice & Research Clinical Obstetrics and Gynaecology* 21 (2): 293–308. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bpobgyn.2006.12.003.

DeFrain, John, Elaine Millspaugh, and Xiaolin Xie. 1996. "The Psychosocial Effects of Miscarriage: Implications for Health Professionals." *Families, Systems, & Health* 14 (3): 331–47. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0089794.

Diodorus, Siculus. 1956. *The Bibliotheca Historica*. Translated by John Skelton and edited by F. M. Salter and H. L. R. Edwards. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Donath, Orna. 2015. "Regretting Motherhood: A Sociopolitical Analysis." *Signs. Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 40 (2): 343–67.

Dyregrov, Atle. 1990. "Parental Reactions to the Loss of an Infant Child: A Review." *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology* 31 (4): 266–80. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9450.1990.tb00839.x.

Dyregrov, Atle, and Stig Berge Mathiesen. 1991. "Parental Grief Following the Death of an Infant—A Follow-Up over One Year." *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology* 32 (3): 193–207. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9450.1991.tb00869.x.

———. 1987. "Similarities and Differences in Mothers' and Fathers' Grief Following the Death of an Infant." *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology* 28 (1): 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9450.1987.tb00900.x.

Wikipedia. 2018. "Fetal Abduction." Last Modified April 9, 2018. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fetal_abduction.

Friedman, R., and K. A. Cohen. 1982. "Emotional Reactions to the Miscarriage of a Consciously Desired Pregnancy." *The Women Patient, Vol. 3: Aggression, Adaptation and Psychotherapy*, edited by M. T. Notman and C. Nadelson, 173–88. New York: Plenum Press.

Geller, Pamela A. 2002. "Understanding Distress in the Aftermath of Miscarriage." *Network News* 27 (2): 4–5.

Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. 2000. *The Madwoman in the Attic. The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. New Heaven, CT: Yale University Press.

Graves, Robert, and Raphael Patai. 1983. *The Hebrew Myths: The Book of Genesis*. New York: Greenwich House.

Grimal, Pierre. 1981. *Diccionario de mitología griega y romana* [Dictionary of Classical Mythology]. Barcelona: Ediciones Paidós Ibérica.

Hanson, Curtis, dir. 1992. *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle*. Interscope Communications; Buena Vista Pictures.

Horace. 1942. *Ars Poetica*. Edited and translated by H. Rushton Fairclough. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Hurwitz, Siegmund. 2009. *Lilith—The First Eve: Historical and Psychological Aspects of the Dark Feminine*. Zurich: Daimon.

Izzi, Massimo. 2000. *Diccionario Ilustrado de los Monstruos. Ángeles, diablos, ogros, dragones, sirenas y otras criaturas del imaginario* [The Illustrated Dictionary of Monsters]. Palma de Mallorca: Alejandría-José J. de Olañeta, Editor.

King, Francis X. 1987. *Witchcraft and Demonology*. London: Exeter Books.

Kristeva, Julia. 1982. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Leik, Gwendolyn. 1998. *A Dictionary of Ancient Near Eastern Mythology*. London: Routledge.

Losada, José Manuel. 2015. "Mitocrítica y metodología" [Myth Criticism and Methodology] *Nuevas formas del mito* [New Forms of the Myth]. Berlin: Logos Verlag.

Maddens, Margaret E. 1994. "The Variety of Emotional Reactions to Miscarriage." *Women & Health* 21 (2/3): 85–104.

Mellor, Anne K. 1989. *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters*. New York: Routledge.

Moers, Ellen. 1980. *Literary Women*. London: The Women's Press.

Muschietti, Andrés, dir. 2013. *Mama*. Toma 38. The Milo Productions; Universal Pictures.

Olivares Merino, Julio Ángel. 2001. *Cenizas del Plenilunio Alado: Pálpitos y vestigios del vampiro en la literatura inglesa anterior a "Drácula"* [Ashes of the Winged Full

Moon: Beats and Remains of the Vampire in the English Literature before Dracula]. Jaén: Universidad de Jaén.

Önal, Leyla. 2011. "The Discursive Suppression of Women: Female Evils as the Villains of the Motherhood Narrative." *Electronic Journal of Folklore* 48: 85–116. https://doi.org/10.7592/FEJF2011.48.onal.

Ovid. 1959. *Fasti*. Edited and translated by James George Frazer. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Petoia, Erberto. 1995. *Vampiros y hombres lobo: orígenes y leyendas desde la Antigüedad hasta nuestros días* [Vampires and Werewolves: Origins and Legends, since Antiquity till our Days]. Barcelona: Círculo de Lectores, Galaxia Gutenberg.

Perkins Gilman, Charlotte. 2012. "The Yellow Wallpaper." In *The Norton Anthology. American Literature. 1865–1914. Volume C*, edited by Nina Baym and Robert S. Levine, 792–804. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Philostratus. 1960. *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana: The Epistles of Apollonius and the Treatise of Eusebius*. Translated by F. C. Conybeare. London: William Heinemann.

Jacques, Adam. 2014. "Anne Rice: The *Interview with the Vampire* Novelist on Her Daughter's Death, Living through Her Own Funeral and the Dangers of Oxford." *Independent*, November 2, 2014. http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/profiles/anne-rice-the-interview-with-the-vampire-novelist-on-her-daughters-death-living-through-her-own-9829902.html.

Rice, Anne. 2006. *Interview with the Vampire*. London: Time Warner Books.

———. 2017. *Anne Rice. The Official Website*. Accessed May 23, 2018. http://annerice.com/Bookshelf-Interview.html.

Shelley, Mary. 1999. *Frankenstein; or the Modern Prometheus*. Ware: Wordsworth Classics.

Stern, David, and Mark J. Mirsky, eds. 1998. *Rabbinic Fantasies: Imaginative Narratives from Classical Hebrew Literature*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Strabo. 1969. *The Geography of Strabo in Eight Volumes*. Translated by Horace Leonard Jones. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Suidae Lexicon. Graece et Latine. 1705. Edited by Ludolf Kuster and translated by Aemilius Portus. Cambridge, UK: Typis Academicis.

Babilonian Talmud, Tractate Niddah, Folio 24b. Accessed May 23, 2018. http://www.come-and-hear.com/niddah/niddah_24.html.

Theocritus. 1950. *Idylls*. Edited and translated by A. S. F. Gow. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Warner, Marina. 1998. *No Go the Bogeyman. Scaring, Lulling, and Making Mock*. London: Vintage.

Yeats, William Butler. 2010. *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*. Project Gutenberg Ebook.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ana González-Rivas-Fernández: Lecturer, Department of English Studies, Autonomous University of Madrid, Madrid, Spain