

FOLKLORE AND IDENTITY IN *DRACULA*

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RESUMEN

Drácula, de Bram Stoker, emplea ciertos motivos folclóricos para expresar varios temas agrupados bajo el título de angustia hegemónica. En la historia de imperialismo invertido de Stoker, el vampiro intruso, en una especie de inversión carnavalesca, interpreta el rol del Cortés histórico o el cautivo del Quijote. Las principales víctimas de Drácula, Lucy y Mina, nos recuerdan a La Malinche, la Zoraida de Cervantes, y otros ejemplos antiguos y medievales de princesas nativas secuestradas.

Palabras clave: hegemonía, vampirismo, *Drácula*, Stoker- Bram, princesa nativa.

ABSTRACT

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* employs certain folkloric motifs to express a set of themes grouped under the heading of hegemonic angst. In Stoker's tale of reverse imperialism, the vampiric invader, in a kind of carnivalesque inversion, plays the role of the historical Cortés or the Quijote's captive. Dracula's chief victims, Lucy and Mina, remind us of La Malinche, Cervantes's Zoraida, and other ancient and medieval examples of the sequestered native princess.

Key words: hegemony, vampirism, *Dracula*, Stoker- Bram, native princess.

The present discussion does not attempt a comprehensive history of the vampire legend, nor an extensive study of variations on vampire themes within the horror genre. This essay aims, rather, to review certain folkloric affinities of Stoker's novel. These affinities play out in a characteristic vampiric storyline that repeats in the many remakes, versions, and variations that have appeared in the century intervening since the publication of Stoker's

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paradigmatic narrative¹. The storyline in question consists of the following elements: the prelude in Transylvania; the vampire's secret voyage by ship to England (or to another Western country, as in the Nosferatu versions); the stealthy, mysterious rampage, involving the death of some victims and the conversion of others into vampiric minions; the gradual discovery and escalating investigation –by a team of interested by-standers, led by an eclectically learned elder– of a pattern of unearthly degradations; the stalking of the fiend and the discovery of his lair or stronghold, culminating in a violent confrontation; the final pursuit and extermination of the monster (by beheading, staking, exposure to sunlight, etc.); the climactic rescue of a damsel about to undergo irrevocable metamorphosis².

This drama of incursion, predation, and reprisal establishes a ritualistic pattern adopted by many other narratives. Stoker's scenario, in a sense, makes folklore stand in for the social conflict and uncertainty of his time and place. The story is about spontaneous, organized response to alien aggression. The conflict that defines the plot is that between the singular adversary and the band of vampire hunters. Stoker's vampire hunters, like their many reincarnations in other media, engage in mob violence. Their improvisational understanding of due process coincides to a great degree with Victor Turner's model of "social drama" (1985), which may be defined as a "public action" originating in "aharmonic or disharmonic social process... [in] conflict situations". The first phase of the drama is a violation of "norm-governed social relations". The second is crisis, which establishes a threshold between "more or less stable phases of the social process". The crisis, with avoids sacral elements (those which are "hedged around by taboos and thrust away from the centers of public life"), assumes its "menacing stance in the forum itself", daring the "representatives of order to grapple with it". Redressive action, the third phase, alternates between "the rational idiom of the judicial process", and the "metaphorical and symbolic idiom of a ritual process". The final stage consists either of a reintegration of the "disturbed social group", or of the "social recognition and legitimation of irreparable schism between the contesting parties" (Turner 1985: 180; 1974: 37-41).

These phases constitute a "cultural-aesthetic" routine through which communities achieve "self-reflexivity". Nonindustrial societies tend to adopt "immediate context-sensitive ritual", while "industrial pre-electronic societies" prefer theatre. The latter designates "macroprocesses", such as "economic, political, or generalized family problems", as the causes of societal strife and calamity. Both ritual and theatre express "social metacommentary" by enactment or reenactment of "liminal events and processes" (Turner 1990: 8).

Presently we will examine Dracula's "metacommentary" on the "macroprocesses" and problems of the Victorian world. For the moment we note that Turner's four phases of ritual –breach, crisis, redressive action, and consummation– are triggered when "a person or subgroup breaks a rule deliberately or by inward compulsion, in a public setting". The resultant predicament, involving "conflicts between individuals, sections, and factions", threatens the group's unity, and "its very continuity", thus instigating a "redressive public action, consensually undertaken by the group's leaders, elders, or guardians". This consensual collective action, often ritualized, may conjure the authority of law or religion, with the former emphasizing "reason and evidence", the latter ethical infractions, covert malevolence, or "ancestral wrath against breaches of tabu" (Turner 1985: 8).

Consummation yields two possible outcomes: either a renewal, by using "redressive machinery", of "normality" in the community, or "social recognition of irremediable or irreversible [...] schism". If redressive action fails, a local community may "appeal to a higher

court". Whether this recourse to a higher authority is literal or metaphorical, the local community turns to that higher authority, that "more inclusive level of social organization", for its own internal purposes (Turner 1985: 9). Turner's phases of breach, crisis, redressive action, and consummation are readily mapped on to the basic *Dracula* plot. The breach of order begins in Transylvania, when Dracula violates the laws and customs of civilized society by his exploitation and abuse of Harker. The count's voyage to England escalates the transgression. The crisis is precipitated when Dracula, both deliberately and by "inward compulsion", breaks the law "in a public setting" (we recall that his first attacks are against the sailors on the ship, then out in the open, against Lucy).

As gradually becomes clear in the course of the epistolary narrative, the vampire's aggression and the strategy which it bespeaks threaten the unity and continuity of British society and, imminently, those of the entire Western world. This likely procreation of a vampiric horde prompts the formation of a counter-terrorist cadre whose members, led by an elder, consensually undertake a redressive action which is ritualized (as seen in the use of crosses, holy water, Latin incantations, etc.) and which, conjuring the authority of both religion and British cultural supremacy, stresses Dracula's ethical infractions, his clandestine malevolence, the provocation of "ancestral wrath against breaches of tabu". As Waller points out, the *Dracula* plot is characterized by an "insistence on the importance of traditional wisdom, symbolic and sacred objects, and ritualized action" (1986: 33). The wise and patriarchally learned leader, Van Helsing, is shown to be in the right; all who ignore him, scoff at him, or fail to understand him, risk death or worse. Polymathic sophistication constitutes a potent force for good. The final consummation is carried out by the righteous fellowship of vampire hunters in the name of Christian duty and natural law.

The parallels between Turner's deduced generalities and the details of Stoker's plot vindicate both the analytical genius of the great anthropologist, and the dramatic intuition of the great novelist. It could be said that they have comparable findings based on consultation of analogous bodies of evidence. Turner's insight is facilitated by his comprehensive array of ethnographic data and theatrical texts; Stoker's is grounded in literary perspicacity, polymathic reading habits, a background in law, a long career in the theatre (Belford 1997: 91-144, 193-210; Riquelme 2002: 8-12).

At the same time, *Dracula* is the stranger lured into playing the part of scapegoat. The late-nineteenth century's understanding of this ritualistic role is conveyed by James Frazer: the scapegoat is that creature, animal or human, through which "accumulated ills [...] are publicly expelled" (1922: 658). The scapegoat, "by its vicarious sufferings", is the object "upon whom the sins of the people are periodically laid" (1922: 659). At the same time, the outsider-victim is enticed and lulled by material temptations: "He is always well fed and nourished and supplied with whatever he should desire" (1922: 660). Ritual sacrifice occurs "for the well-being of [...] every family and individual", so that all may "transfer to [the victim] their sin, guilt, trouble, and death". The scapegoat, furthermore, is often a god (i.e., a man or animal acting out the part of a god; 1922: 660).

Stoker's *Dracula*, immortal, predatory, superhuman, is very reminiscent of Frazer's scapegoat-god, sacrificed "to save the divine life from the degeneracy of old age", and to assume the people's "sufferings and sins, in order that he might bear it away with him to the unknown world beyond the grave" (1922: 668). The Count's fate at the hands of a pursuing lynch mob functions as the cathartic analogue of ritual enactments such as the annual festival

of the lithobolia in ancient Troezen, which culminated in the stoning to death of foreigners made to play the role of Cretan goddesses. The typical pattern, notes René Girard, is that of the “foreigner, the passerby”, whose lapidation is a “sacrificial rite”. The vagrant or outsider designated as *pharmakos* is, in Girard’s terminology, a “surrogate victim” whose ‘lynching’ restores order by “reestablishing... the sentiment of social accord” (1977: 94-95).

At the same time, a generally folkloric perspective on the storytelling traditions invoked by the story complements the deliberations of folklorists and ethnographers concerning real-world conditions of collectivized violence. A folkloric approach to the problem of the scapegoat emphasizes the wish-fulfillment of folklore, literature, and drama. The ritual impact is most satisfyingly achieved when the villain-victim unknowingly orchestrates his own comeuppance. The story teller accommodating folkloric motifs plays the role of demiurge of a dramatic universe in which monstrous villainy arouses audience antipathy. Thus, *Dracula*, in effect, plays the folkloric role of the “bad guy”, who may variously be a tyrannical local governor (e.g., Herod or Pontius Pilate), or a tyrant, whose biblical prototype is Pharaoh. The villain’s overthrow or slaughter in such formulaic scenarios is always expedited by his own inexorably predatory and appetitive nature (Burke 1994: 153).

In her study of a “late-Victorian degeneracy crisis” as represented in *Dracula*, Kathleen Spencer (1992) explicitly links notions of a pervasive imperial angst with those of the outsider as scapegoat. Stoker’s novel, she argues, dramatizes the tendency, within a destabilized society, to organize xenophobia in terms of “purity competitions”, i.e., those defined in terms of “who is most vigilant at ferreting out enemies, especially those disguised enemies lurking within the society itself?” (1992: 208). This tendency toward storytelling organized around the imagery of ritualistic purgation is exemplified not only by Lucy, destroyed by the righteous vampire hunters with liturgical fervor, as well as for her own good and that of human society, but by the Count himself. The vampire’s climactic undoing suitably concludes a narrative characterized by an “insistent pattern of the many against the one, the community against the scapegoat”. The ritual bias and its focus on detection and elimination of outsiders passing as insiders helps us to understand “the novel’s popularity at a time of imperialist fervor concealing deep anxieties about the future of the empire” (Spencer 1992: 219).

The foregoing remarks on possible ritualistic aspects of the *Dracula* narratives do not hazard an intentionalist interpretation of Stoker’s work. Ritual aspects of narrative could be expressions of the writer’s political unconscious, or manifestations of sly artistry; either way, the pseudo-liturgical spin of the narrative has its effect and its appeal. The Bad Guy plays his role, which is to be bad and to get his comeuppance. But if the purpose of the scapegoat is atonement and purification, the circumventing of disaster, what is being cleansed and expiated, what calamity is being averted?

Before we attempt an answer to these questions, we must first contemplate three significant approaches to the *Dracula* conundrum. One of these is what John Allen Stevenson describes as the psychoanalytical or “primal horde” theory. Another is the feminist theory of vampiric aggression. The third, applied less overtly and less frequently than the other two, is the Bakhtinian model.

According to the first model, *Dracula* is a preternatural elder who seeks to monopolize all the females, compelling his youthful rivals to rise up and slay the evil father, “thus freeing” –Stevenson summarizes– “the women for themselves” (Stevenson 1988: 139; referring to Freud 1989, and citing Twitchell 1981: 135). Freud postulated a primal horde dominated by

a single, authoritarian, brutally powerful male who monopolized all females in the troop. Sons who provoked the anger or jealousy of the father were castrated, killed, or driven into exile. Eventually uniting in rebellion against the father-despot, this community of banished males killed him and devoured his body. The cannibalistic feast having afforded a mystic incorporation of the paternal essence, the mutinous sons, after a period of fruitless altercation as to who might replace the murdered patriarch, find themselves constrained by their new circumstances to contrive a kind of social contract that repressed instinctual gratifications, while imposing incest taboos and laws of exogamy. Upon this contract is based the earliest true society, a fraternal clan that, while replacing the original patriarchal horde with a fellowship of brothers, leaves its members haunted by their complicity in the original collective crime³.

Feminist interpretations of *Dracula* emphasize the sexual significance of the title character. The novel, to be sure, seems to underscore the rampant sexuality, the “deliberate voluptuousness” of the vampire’s women (Stoker 2002: 61); they are, notes Stevenson “sexualized beings” (1988: 145; see also Senf 1998: 8-9, 49-52). Lucy’s metamorphosis confirms this sexualizing effect of vampirization. When the newly-formed band of vampire hunters confronts the undead Lucy, her transmutation is described in terms of a “sweetness [...] turned to adamantine, heartless cruelty, and [...] [a] purity to voluptuous wantonness” (Stoker 2002: 218). The description of the undead Lucy summarizes the most conspicuous elements of vampirization: she is “like a nightmare of Lucy”, with “pointed teeth”, a “bloodstained, voluptuous mouth”—all in all, a “carnal and unspiritual appearance, seeming like a devilish mockery of Lucy’s sweet purity” (Stoker 2002: 221). Her staking at the hands of her fiancé and his comrades restores her original “unequaled sweetness and purity” (Stoker 2002: 224). Vampirism, in other words, makes women both libidinous and assertive, thus invalidating the cardinal Victorian female virtues of modesty and reserve. Such imagery has promoted a perception of the novel as chiefly reflecting a “hostility toward female sexuality” that presumably typified the Victorian age (Stevenson 1988: 145; referring to Roth 1999: 113, Weissman 1977: 392, Griffin 1980: 463, Dijkstra 1986: 341).

At the same time, the contrast between the sweet innocence of the real Lucy and the venomous cruelty of her vampiric self participates in a general Victorian mythology regarding dreaded female potentialities. These are embodied, suggests Nina Auerbach (1982), in the Victorian proclivity for imagining variations on the image of “female life-in death”, represented by female “vampirism, somnambulism, mesmerism, or hysterical paralysis” (1982: 15-16). Behind these images of paralysis and powerless subjugation is a paradoxical notion of powers implicitly attributed to woman: the victim of paralysis, argues Auerbach, “possesses seemingly infinite capacities of regenerative being that turn on her triumphant mesmerizer and paralyze him in turn” (1982: 17).

Bakhtin’s theory of the carnivalesque, in broad terms and with modifications, could be applied to the several aspects of *Dracula* pondered by feminist criticism of the work. By “Bakhtinian” I mean a general approach that emphasizes transgression and topsy-turvy as cultural systems within a cultural community. The dichotomies and inversions in question can articulate in terms of high/low, purity/impurity, dominant/subaltern, elite/commonality, serious/clownish, etc. Bakhtin’s carnival, an immensely volatile and diverse, yet organically coherent system, posits a world of the common folk apart from and opposed to the officialdom of church and state. Embodying “the extrapolitical aspect of the world, of man, and of human relations”, it is “the expression of folk consciousness, of folk culture” (Bakhtin 1984: 6). Popular festive forms are thus “outside of and contrary to all existing forms of coercive socioeconomic and political organization” (Bakhtin 1984: 255).

We may apply the term carnivalesque to forms and usages that draw upon the vast and heterogeneous array of recombinant elements, the remnant of carnival's disintegration under the oppressive influence of the modern, centralized state and of capitalist, stratified, bourgeois society. Seen from the perspective of a fragmented or diluted carnival, the charm of vampiric narrative resides in the representation of a subverted social order. On the one hand, Dracula, even as he can be seen as the scapegoat, also plays the role of carnival's king for a day. He holds sway, inverting the imperial order of things, imposing on the world's greatest empire the role of colonized victim. On the other hand, the tale of his rampage seduces because vampirism is fun; is, in fact, both orgasmic and orgiastic. Dracula, observes Noel Carroll, is therefore tempting because he is transgressive as well as powerful. Demonic possession empowers the possessed by allowing imitation of a tempter whose "Miltonic proclivities" fuse "defiance and rebellion" (1981: 18). Women in particular are allowed to let themselves go, to be taken away from all social constraints by a kind of a literally bloodthirsty Don Juan, and to become sexual and predatory beasts like menfolk. This corresponds to what Stallybrass and White call "transgressive literature", a by-product of the bourgeois disengagement from carnival. Middle-class hysteria tended, in late-Victorian times, toward a "compensatory plundering of ethnographic material [...] from colonized cultures". The case histories of fin-de-siècle mental patients frequently exhibit "pastiche appropriations of festive, carnival, religious and pantomimic gestures" (1986: 172). Patients seem "to be reaching out, in their highly stylized gestures and discourses, towards a repertoire of carnival material", and "to mediate their terrors by enacting private, made-up carnivals". The literature on hysteria, influentially typified by Freud, testifies to a "complex interconnection between hints and scraps of parodic festive form and the body of the hysteric" (1986: 174).

Due to the disdain of Victorian science for ritual, Freud interpreted individual behaviors, within the framework of bourgeois neurosis, as pantomimic metaphor. Stallybrass and White contend, to the contrary, that the centuries-long "demonization" of carnival provoked an individualist reenactment of "ritual fragments salvaged from a festive tradition" (1986: 176). The repression of carnival and the consequent alienation of bourgeois culture from "the power of the 'low'" induce subliminal panic. The low, at the same time, is usually identified with the Other, the Outsider, the Alien (1986: 178). The idiom of neurosis becomes, under a repressive regime of capitalist work schedules and bourgeois proprieties, a raving, impulsive, irrepressible prurience that disdains convention, good breeding, gentility, refinement. Unconventional or disorderly deportment, often enacted as a "fantasy bricolage" of "carnavalesque fragments" and "unstable discursive compounds", tended to be categorized as "hysteria" (1986: 180-182).

In his *précis* of the Freudian and feminist approaches to Dracula, Stevenson criticizes, first of all, the notion that the strife of the plot is somehow "intrafamilial" (Twitchell 1985: 139, and citing Richardson 428). Noting the several obvious discrepancies between Dracula's plot and Freud's ancestral totemic scenario (e.g., the vampire hunters are not the vampire's sons; they do not eat his corpse), Stevenson replaces the Freudian theory of surrogate family, internecine rivalry, and incestuous competition, with the ethnographic model of incest as exogamic regime. Recent anthropological studies of incest tend, notes Stevenson, to question the universality of incestuous desire, while tacitly or overtly criticizing psychologist models that emphasize temptation and repression (Fox 1980: 7). Stevenson proposes an "anti-incestuous model", in which Dracula is not a "monstrous father", but rather, above all, "a foreigner". The conflict in Dracula centers on "interracial sexual competition" rather than on pseudo-familial confrontation. Dracula's villainy is grounded, in Stevenson's hypothesis, not in "incestuous greed" but "an omnivorous appetite

for difference, for novelty". The vampire's crime, in other words, is "excessive exogamy". His own women are not enough for him: "he is exclusively interested in the women who belong to someone else" (1988: 139).

Dracula's women are desexualized in Stoker's novel. It is as if he practices exogamy to avoid endogamy; in other words, as if he adheres to a marriage rule that emphasizes avoidance of forbidden endogamy –i.e. incest–. Vampirization, in effect, recruits women into Dracula's clan; these new clan members are no longer suitable consorts. Dracula, however, does not obey a rational, normal rule of marrying-out within a defined connubial range. His exogamy knows no bounds. He is, argues Stevenson (borrowing from Westermarck 1922: 51), a "social adulterer" who must ever seek elsewhere for sustenance/satisfaction. Each new victim/recruit expands the population of Dracula's clan. Vampirism is thus inherently colonial, in the strict sociobiological sense: it is covetous, acquisitive, territorial, possessive. Dracula converts "good Englishwomen [...] away from their own kind and customs" (1988: 140)⁴.

Dracula is, above all, alien. His racial strangeness is highlighted in Van Helsing's exhortation to Mina to "struggle and strive to live, though death would seem a boon unspeakable". In that speech, Van Helsing refers to Dracula as "the other, who has fouled [Mina's] sweet life", and "this great evil" (2002: 290-291). The novel, argues Stevenson, dramatizes conflict "between groups that define themselves as foreign to each other", as "at odds" with regard to their "fundamental identity" (Stevenson 1988: 140).

Racial confrontation in *Dracula* must be seen in the context of the book's publication in a year, 1897, that occurs toward the end of "an unprecedented program of colonial expansion", that coincided with "that great vulgarization of evolution (and powerful racist rationalization), social Darwinism". Hence the novel's fixation on the "terror and necessity of racial struggle in an imperialist context". The count, in short, may be seen as invading England and planning "to take it over" (Stevenson 1988: 140). Elaine Showalter characterizes the spirit of that late-Victorian age as one haunted by "fears not only of colonial rebellion but also of racial mingling, crossbreeding, and intermarriage". Such events as Gordon's defeat by the Mahdi at Khartoum in 1885 prompted a general apprehension that "the Empire was being undermined by racial degeneration and the rebellion of the 'lower' races" (1990: 5).

We will have much more to say on this topic presently. For the moment we note that the notion of a racial confrontation best explains the scar left on Mina's forehead by Van Helsing when he presses the host against her skin in an unavailing effort to inoculate her against the vampire's attack. The mark, similar to that on the vampire's own forehead, constitutes "a kind of caste mark, a sign of membership in a homogeneous group [...] foreign to the men to whom Mina supposedly belongs". This scar is thus also a "sign of defilement [...] [and] of sexual possession by the outsider" that causes Mina more than once to cry out "Unclean! Unclean!" (Stoker 2002: 285, 296), that stigmatizes her would-be master (and potentially Mina herself) as "simultaneously untouchable, defiled, and damned –above all, different" (Stevenson 1988: 141).

Stevenson notes that the deducible "physiology of vampire sexuality" literalizes the metaphorical correlation of eating and sex. Vampire reproduction necessitates "marriage laws" that weirdly caricature rules of incest avoidance and exogamy. Vampirization, in effect, converts pseudo-sexual consorts into kin. Stevenson cites the telling passage in which Dracula declares to Mina: "And you, their best beloved one, are now to me, flesh of my flesh, blood of my blood, kin of my kin, my bountiful wine-press for a while, and shall be later on my companion and my helper" (Stoker 2002: 288).

The count's words, on the one hand, parody those of Genesis and of the christian marriage ceremony. On the other, his declaration discloses the impending application of an incest taboo: when Mina's transformation from Englishwoman to vampire is complete, she will become Dracula's "daughterly" confederate. Vampires thus collapse the distinction between sexual partners and offspring [...] [so that] Dracula re-creates in his own image the being that he is simultaneously ravishing". Where, in the Freudian model of the primal horde, "daughters become wives", the opposite pattern is observed in Dracula: brides are transformed into daughters. This generates an "iron rule of exogamy" that compels the vampire to seek new consorts who will in turn be –as newly inducted family members– disqualified as consorts (Stevenson 1988: 143).

The vampire is, then, compelled to social adultery: because his consort is his food, and because he cannot consume those who have already been converted, he must "marry out or die". He is thus, of dire necessity, "an imperialist whose invasion seeks a specifically sexual conquest; he is a man who will take other men's women away and make them his own". His possession of foreign women "physically deracinates them and re-creates them as members of his own kind". This explains the novel's equation of blood as sustenance and blood as the medium of racial identity and racial continuity through time: "Dracula's threat is not miscegenation, the mixing of blood; instead, he gives his partners a new racial identity". With this new identity come not "confused loyalties" but "new ones" (Stevenson 1988: 146).

Thus do the blood transfusions received by Lucy from her brave defenders amount to "a kind of promiscuity" (Stevenson 1988: 144), prompting Van Helsing to call her a "polyandrist" and himself a "bigamist" (Stoker 2002: 186). The disputed possession of women that constitutes the narrative crux of Dracula is, therefore, not incestuous but interracial. The primal fear enacted by the novel is that "they" will take away "our" women". Dracula's potency, therefore, is not that of the incestuous patriarch but that of the "extravagant stranger" (Stevenson 1988: 145).

Dracula's intolerance of female sexuality and aggression, its evident loathing of female concupiscence and self-assertion, goes beyond mere misogyny. Vampirized women, argues Stevenson, are terrifying in the novel because they are alien: "the primary fear is a fear of the foreign" (1988: 145). They are the recruits of a potential invading legion, that "new order of beings, whose road must lead through Death, not Life", of which Dracula intends, as Van Helsing reminds his troop of vampire slayers, to be "the father or furtherer" (Stoker 2002: 300). "The indispensable catalyst" of his female victims' sexual transformation, Dracula promotes sexual roles that are "terribly confused" (Stevenson 1988: 145). What could be called the female vampires' machismo contrasts with what could be termed the master vampire's maternity, as in the scene in which Dracula's forced feeding of his blood to Mina recalls a mother's breast-feeding of a child (Stoker 2002: 283).

The transformation that brings about this confusion of traditional sex roles is yet another aspect of the "deracinative reproduction" which is the vampire's compulsion and his strategy. It is not exactly fear of female sexuality and aggression that animates Van Helsing and his collaborators, but rather "a fear of superior sexual potency in the competition". It is Dracula the "sexual imperialist" that they fear, his obvious objective of "imperiling the racial integrity of the West". The vampire's system is that of "an imperialism of seduction": he will overthrow the rival empire by destroying "the 'good' men's race and their masculinity"–he intends to annihilate them as a group while emasculating them as individuals (Stevenson 1988: 146-147).

In support of Stevenson's ethnographic reading, we may point out Mina's entreaty that she be killed for her own good and the good of her people, as she declares: "Think, dear,

that there have been times when brave men have killed their wives and their womenkind, to keep them from falling into the hands of the enemy” (Stoker 2002: 326). In addition, we note Dr. Seward’s summary of the essential principle motivating Van Helsing’s vigilant surveillance of Mina: “‘Euthanasia’ is an excellent and a comforting word! I am grateful to whoever invented it” (Stoker 2002: 331).

Noting the many figurative terms applied by various theoretical interpretations of *Dracula* –“seduction”, “emasculatation”, “parricide”, “carnavalesque hysteria”, etc.– it might be useful to recall what the novel is actually about. It is not that the novel and the personage of *Dracula* do not have a metaphorical subtext susceptible to Freudian, feminist, Bakhtinian, or other interpretations. But we must exercise caution. Carroll, while characterizing *Dracula* as both a “harem master” and “a bad father figure”, points out, for example, the need to avoid a too-doctrinaire Freudian approach to horror fiction (as in Ernest Jones 1971), while seeking to define a “broader reference” of fears (Carroll 1981: 18) as the basis of horror fiction.

Over-zealous application of Freudian, Bakhtinian, feminist, or other models tempts us to disregard the most literal dimension of transgressive kinship in *Dracula*’s plot. This literal aspect is the realm of pseudo-kinship. *Dracula* enlarges his kin group by a kind of ritualized kinship; he creates blood-brothers and blood-sisters. *Dracula*’s program of pseudo-kinship, effected through asexual blood-sucking and reinforced by demonic possession, is the literal vector of his conspicuously announced counter-imperialism. The sanguineous transaction required by Stoker’s concept of vampirization (perpetuated, with variations, in such recent vampire narratives as *Salem’s Lot*, *Fright Night*, and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *True Blood*, and the *Twilight* series) corresponds to very ancient and wide-spread practices of artificial kinship, which frequently involve an exchange of bodily fluids (e. g. blood, saliva, semen; see, for discussion of various kinds of artificial kinship, Pitt-Rivers 1968 408-409; Eisenstadt 1956: 90-93; Lynch 1986: 23-47)⁵.

While dramatizing this ethnographic commonplace, *Dracula* inverts the ethnic axis of folkloric motifs of seduction and abduction, such as those abstracted by F. M. Warren in his study of “The Enamoured Moslem Princess”. The typical Muslim princess of medieval epic and romance befriends a captive Christian knight, falls in love with him, and converts to Christianity (1914: 345). The core of this miscegenational theme is not merely love between Christian captive and Muslim woman, but the additional elements of active collaboration and willing conversion by the female character (1914: 347). The princess shows resolute guidance, treasonous collaboration, and above all, unfeigned conversion to the faith of an outlander lover; she is, Warren observes, a “willing apostate” (1914: 358)⁶.

We may situate this conventional motif of epic and romance in a broader tradition of stories and folklore about women –be they princesses or queens, sisters or spouses– who betray their own clan or people while collaborating with an intruder. Ancient examples are Ariadne in the story of Theseus and the Cretan labyrinth and Medea in the tale of Jason and the Golden Fleece of Colchis. An early modern example is that of Zoraida in Cervantes’s tale of the captive in *Don Quijote* (2002: Part I, chaps. 39-41). All these relationships fall under the heading of exogamic betrayal and conversion (from the viewpoint of the woman’s people). The motif is not without its echoes in real history, as we see in the case of Doña Marina in the true-life epic of Hernán Cortés’s conquest of Mexico. Doña Marina, la Malinche, famously interpreted by Octavio Paz as the personification of indigenous women “fascinated, violated or seduced” by the Invader (1985: 86), prefigures Bram Stoker’s Lucy and Mina, who play the role of native princess to the Vampire’s imperialist seducer.

The notion of Dracula as a counter-imperialist is supported by a comparison of Dracula's appearance to that of Charlemagne in *laisse 40* of the *Song of Roland*, where Charlemagne is described –by the Saracen Marsile– as “very old”, as having lived a preternatural “two hundred years”, and as having led his armies “through many lands”, and reduced “many powerful kings” to beggary (*Song of Roland* 1990: vv 524-527). Charlemagne's utmost puissance, however, is revealed in his presiding over the capture and conversion of the the Saracen queen Bramimonde, the wife of his one-time adversary. By dint of “sermons and parables” this captured queen comes to fear the Christian God and demand christening. At her baptism, the noble captive, sponsored by her godmothers, “very loyal and noble ladies”, is given the Christian name of Juliana, and declared to be a true Christian, “convinced of the truth” (*Song of Roland* 1990: vv 3982-87).

While the ethnographic interpretation of Dracula, more than Freudian, feminist, or Bakhtinian theories, perhaps accounts for many elements in the story, folkloric parallels nonetheless do not “explain” the popularity of Dracula in film history. We may say, on the other hand, that understanding the character's popularity obliges us to analyze Dracula films from the same perspective as that of folklorists and ethnographers. In other words, the mystery of the character's literary and filmic reception is a phenomenon analogous to that of the reception and transmission of folkloric motifs and narratives centering on them. By adducing folkloric parallels to Dracula, by placing Dracula in folkloric context, we do not decipher him; we simply say that the enigma of the vampire and that of comparable folkloric personages constitute analogous puzzles.

S. S. Praver (1980) points out, in elucidating the structuralist classification of horror and science fiction genres, and “the teratology of cinema”, a tendency toward such “binary oppositions” as

“normal”-“abnormal”, “psychological monster”-“physiological monster”, “acting monster”-“suffering monster”, “monsters like ourselves”-“monsters as unlike us as possible”, “monsters born”-“monsters made” [...] “good”-“evil”, “beauty”-“ugliness”, “instinct”-“reason”, “anthropomorphism”-“bestialization”, “nature”-“science”, “human”-“mechanical” [...] (1980: 49-50).

Without endorsing the structuralist approach to the taxonomy and dissection of works that fall under such dichotomous oppositions (Praver cites Lenne 1985: 65-71), we note that such dichotomies may certainly invasion stories that pray on fears of onslaught from above, around, or below. They express the dread symbolized in the biblical tales of the flood, or of the plagues of Egypt: that natural forces and agencies, unsuspected denizens of earth, sea, or sky, may make us the object of their incomprehensible appetites or their unfathomable aggression (Praver 1980: 51; citing Derry 1977: 50).

Speculation as to why there was an original audience for the pistolary novel *Dracula* requires that we focus on the writer's stand-in function for his society. Again, we need not hazard an intentionalist explication of Stoker's use of ethnographic themes; he incarnates and expresses collective anxiety, as he elaborates a late-Victorian tale that must have seemed relevant to his contemporaries. Again: role-reversal is at work here. Dracula incarnates the invader; the novel named for him enacts a drama of resistance. This makes of his late-Victorian, imperial England a Massada, a Numancia.

Dracula is by his very nature an imperialist, constrained, as Franco Moretti phrases it, “to subjugate the whole of society”. Dracula, being “a saver, an ascetic”, might even be viewed as “an upholder of the Protestant ethic”. Like capitalism, he is “impelled towards a continuous growth,

an unlimited expansion of his domain". He thus embodies the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie of ever-expanding monopoly. Those who stand up to him are thus "a bunch of fanatics who want to arrest the course of history" (Moretti 1983: 93-94; cited by Waller 1986: 40, 69). This view of *Dracula* is reminiscent of the description of the alien invaders in *Independence Day*: a locust-like plague who, insatiable, invade a solar system, utterly deplete its resources, then move on to yet another system to repeat the cycle. Not that any real-life Transylvanian count, or any other feudal (thus pre-capitalist) congener of his would really be anything like that; rather, that Victorian imperialist (and, as we will see presently, neo-Victorian) anxiety would project such motives and methods on to such personages and their analogues.

The horror genre in general, including *Dracula* movies, adheres to what Robin Wood calls a "simple and obvious basic formula", namely, that "normality is threatened by the Monster" (1979: 15). The confrontation of the normal by the monstrous ensures that horror movies conform to what Andrew Tudor calls the "seek-it-out-and-destroy-it-pattern". Horror genres are defined as those which revolve "around the creation or the discovery of an it, its recognition, seeking, and destruction" (1974: 209). It is necessary, Waller reminds us, to combine the approaches of Wood and Tudor. *Dracula* is about the threat and the response to the threat. Such tales "reveal the possibilities [...] for individual heroism and collective effort and the efficacy of socially sanctioned, predetermined means of handling threatening disturbances" (1986: 18). What is heroic about the brave band who take on the vampire is precisely the fact that they carry out their protective, purgative mission with unsung dedication, on behalf of the unsuspecting or unappreciative "normal" inhabitants of "a supposedly safe, unruffled world" (1986: 22).

The invader theme in modern science fiction and horror generally manifests in two variations: that of the invader as devourer of bodies, or that of the invader as body thief. The founding texts of this dichotomy are Stoker's novel and H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds*, first published in 1898, one year after *Dracula*. What could be called the ingestive narrative fixes on the fear of being physically consumed; the focus of what could be called –if I may be forgiven the neologism– corporeoraptorious narratives in general, and of *Dracula* and other vampiric narratives in particular, is the crisis of human identity. What is expressed in the latter type is anxiety "about the 'wholeness' of the human personality". Films about shape-shifting invaders perpetuate that beloved motif of the German Romantics, so obsessed with "identity-fears and ego-dissociation". This is the motif of the "double" or *Doppelgänger*, which, notes Praver, is "as central to the terror-film as the theme of sexual alienation" (1980: 55-56). The fear of the "wicked double", as Mary Hallab observes (2009: 55), is a crucial element in the horrific titillation afforded by Vampiric narratives. The horror which informs such tales is "the devastating loss of personal identity as a zombie-like, predatory undead" (2009: 56). In *Dracula*, observes William Hughes, vampirization embodies the dread notion of "the body mobilized by life after conventional death". This reanimation, in its very "sentience and mobility", calls into question conventional notions of immortality of the soul and "the integrity of personality and identity to flesh" (Hughes 2007: 7). At the same time, argues Hughes, Stoker's narrative reminds us in various places that, for the Alpha vampire at least, the consumption of living blood is part of "the revenant lifestyle" (Hughes 2007: 9). *Dracula's* attitude with regard to his prey reflects "consumption as much as ownership". He derides the vampire hunters by telling them they are "like sheep in a butcher's", and by reminding them of their women who already belong to him: "through them you and others shall yet be mine –my creatures, to do my bidding and to be my jackals" (Hughes 2007: 9; citing Stoker 2002: 304).

The narratives of both Wells and Stoker articulate the hegemonic angst –that is, the trepidation of the perpetrator, not the victim– that hovers over the world of brooding intellectuals ever since the very beginning of the West’s imperialist enterprise. The latter development and the untenable prosperity it engendered arouse two basic responses: the fear of lost dominion and prosperity, and the compulsive need for atonement and sacrifice. Both reactions, while mutually contradictory, may merge in a single mind to constitute a single conflictive obsession that portends the search for a scapegoat. Depictions of the response to invasion vary according to the political and cultural orientation of the storyteller. Wells, we may say, personifies the liberal, penitent, pessimistic orientation; Stoker the conservative, self-respecting, optimist alignment. Whatever its political orientation, the horror genre, in all media platforms, lends itself to expressive exploitation of “the fear that strangers may invade our secure world and destroy us”, and “the related fear that the social underdog may rise against the establishment” (Praver 1980: 58).

Hegemonic foreboding is the genuinely carnivalesque aspect of *Dracula*, in that it enables an ethnic role-reversal whereby culturally imperialist readers and viewers may savor the perspective of the invaded. It is a virtual hegemonic cross-dressing, experienced vicariously and voyeuristically, in which the personages of the tale, not the audience, dress up. Like the cultural in-drag, utopia/dystopia, and topsy-turvy of carnival, it is both titillating and cautionary. The remorse that vexes the counter-cultural intellectual has inspired novelists, missionaries, even diplomats. We could say that when Wells expresses sympathy for the invader’s perspective, he paraphrases and expands on de Las Casas and many another missionary of earlier imperial centuries. He empathizes with the Martians:

And before we judge of them too harshly we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought, not only upon animals, such as the vanished bison and the dodo, but upon its inferior races. The Tasmanians, in spite of their human likeness, were entirely swept out of existence in a war of extermination waged by European immigrants, in the space of fifty years. Are we such apostles of mercy as to complain if the Martians warred in the same spirit? (Wells 2001: 55)

Stoker’s angst, on the other hand, is not that of the cognizant, guilt-ridden intellectual, but rather of the proudly modern Victorian. Stoker tells a tale haunted by the possibility of cultural counterattack. In him, alien encroachment is more eerie, more menacing than the physical extinction postulated by Wells. For Stoker, the ultimate horror is living on as a mere possessed simulacrum of ourselves. In other words, that we suffer conversion. His insecurity is presumably unconscious as he selects a villain-victim from faraway Romania, conceived in his fin-de-siècle orientalism as an Eastern land. “The impression I had”, declares Jonathan Harker in his journal, “was that we were leaving the West and entering the East” (Stoker 2002: 27). The Carpathian Mountains which are Harker’s destination and which contain Castle Dracula are “one of the wildest and least known portions of Europe”. Harker notes that while there he is going among the Szekelys, who are “descended from Attila and the Huns”. Dracula’s country, moreover, gathers to itself “every known superstition in the world”, so that the area is “the center of some sort of imaginative whirlpool” (Stoker 2002: 28).

In *Dracula*, as in *War of the Worlds*, the blood is the life. “What devil or what witch”, demands Dracula, “was ever so great as Attila, whose blood is in these veins?” (Stoker 2002: 53). But blood and life serve a different purpose than in Wells’s fantasy of invasion. The otherness of Dracula is not merely predatory; it is, as we have noted, body-snatching. The seizure is performed by the acquisitive Outsider, the rapacious Other. Unlike Welles’ voracious Martians,

Count Dracula seeks not mere sustenance, but colonization and conversion. He will found covens of the blood-sucking possessed to form a proselytizing, counter-hegemonic, ethno-terrorist network, mocking and reverse-impersonating the ethic of “teach all nations” that informs the White Man’s Burden:

What good are peasants without a leader? Where ends the war without a brain and heart to conduct it? [...] Ah, young sir, the Szekelys, and the Dracula as their heart’s blood, their brains [...] can boast a record that mushroom growths like the Hapsburgs and the Romanoffs can never reach. (Stoker 2002: 54)

Hegemonic anxiety is subliminal –one might even say, superstitious– in Stoker. As Stevenson points out, such fears “must have been acute in late nineteenth-century Britain, plump with imperial gain, but given perhaps to the bad dream that *Dracula* embodies: what if ‘they’ should try to colonize us?” (1988: 147). Jerome Buckley refers to the apocalyptic spirit that haunted England in the 1890’s (1964: 226-227), the pervasive sense, “behind the cult of empire”, of “a half-hushed uneasiness, a sense of social decline, a foreboding of death” (1964: 228). Such factors inevitably conduce to an erosion of “Victorian confidence in the inevitability of British progress and hegemony” (Senf 1998: 35; see also Wasson 1966: 23). The notion of a hegemonic apprehension of reverse colonization is defined with specific reference to *Dracula* by Stephen D. Arata, who points to an “increasing unrest in British colonies and possessions” and a “growing domestic uneasiness over the morality of imperialism” (Arata 1990: 622). Seen as a confluence of Gothic and travel narrative, *Dracula* problematizes “separately and together, the very boundaries on which British imperial hegemony depended: between civilized and primitive, colonizer and colonized, victimizer (either imperialist or vampire) and victim” (Arata 1990: 626).

Christopher Sharrett detects in recent horror films a resurgence of “fanciful normality”, assuring “the continued battle of good versus evil” and even a “recuperation” of the dominant order. Thus, Coppola’s version of *Dracula* “replicates rather than criticizes Victorian morality”, reflecting a “contemporary conservatism that pretends a critical distance from ideology” (1996: 265). Observing that the film’s depiction of *Dracula*’s origin as a heroic defender of Christendom invokes the present day’s representation of the Muslim as an alien Other who replaces the communism of Cold War days, Sharrett characterizes Coppola’s version as “a tawdry *Paradise Lost*”. *Dracula*, an “angel turned devil” by his grief-induced renunciation of God, is saved by the love of Mina, the reincarnation of his lost love (1996: 266). Noting the “jettisoning of psychoanalysis as a framework for characterization” (1996: 267), Sharrett observes that Coppola’s film portrays Lucy and Mina as victims of “the poisonous influence of the East”, that provokes, in the form of sexual curiosity and awakening, “a potentiality threatening to the patriarchal order” (1996: 268)⁷.

Walter M. Clements (1981) distinguishes what he calls a “Polyphemous type” of horror story, which dramatize confrontation with the alien and the monstrous, and which often involve exotic locales and flight from the alien domain (1981: 120; cited by Waller 1986: 30, and n 1 66). Waller points out (n 1 66) that Clements overlooks *Dracula* as an example of the so-called Polyphemous type, mentioning him instead under the heading of a type of his own, the “*Dracula* type” which comprises “the discovery of the source of unexplained phenomena and the destruction of that source” (Clements 1981: 120).

Dracula adheres to both of Clement’s patterns –his Polyphemic and his *Draculan*–. But *Dracula* films –incipiently in the earlier works, more fully in the later ones, including those of Warhol and Brooks– convert the Homeric, savage, alien Polyphemous into a Theocritean, Ovidian, pastoral Polyphemous. In other words, they sentimentalize him, they humanize him. Stoker’s monster, by contrast, is distinctly Homeric –thus, cunning, ravenous,

belligerent—. Like Homer's cyclops, he abuses the rules of hospitality (as when, with fiendish bad faith, he demeans Harker for profaning "friendship and hospitality", while using the Englishman to establish his bridgehead in England; Stoker 2002: 65), while his sanguinary insatiability reminds us of Homer's Polyphemous, who "even as a mountain-bred lion", devours men, "entrails and flesh and bones with their marrow" (Homer 1967: Book IX).

Waller calls attention to the theme of resistance in his analysis of the plot of *Dracula* as centering on the formation of a cooperative community, brought into being precisely because of the initiative taken by the monster (Waller 1981: 32). *Dracula* is, argues Waller, "the story of the formation and growth of a community", a story that dramatizes, in Van Helsing's words, the "power of combination" (Waller 1981: 35; citing Stoker 2002: 243). This combinatory power is, observes Van Helsing, "denied to the vampire kind". The book's vampire killers, by contrast, "have sources of science" and are "free to act and think". Their powers, in fact, are, so far as they extend, "unfettered". They have, in addition, "self-devotion in a cause, and an end to achieve which is not a selfish one" (Stoker 2002: 243).

Stoker's concept of solidarity reflects the social concepts of Emile Durkheim, whose contrast of mechanical and organic solidarity very precisely abstracts nineteenth-century positivism's optimistic yet invidious comparison of self-made modernity and inherited tradition. Durkheim maintained that interactions among individuals generate phenomena different in kind from those that exist within individuals. These phenomena, or "social facts", are the assemblage of collective attitudes, practices, institutions, and other communal aspects of human existence that constitute the object of sociological study. Furthermore, interrelations among the elements of society cohere into an integrated system that manifests its own organic identity, exterior to individual personality, and superintending individual conduct. Social systems are based on the cooperative solidarity of individuals and groups, each with complex sets of statuses and roles. All aspects of a society, according to the more strict expressions of this concept, have a purpose and are essential to the society's survival. While assuming that cultural or social phenomena are positively vital to the workings of society, this rigorously organic functionalism axiomatically presupposes that utility defines the elements deemed "essential" to the society. Within this context, function denotes the purpose of behaviors understood as dynamic elements of a structure, rather than as disconnected, independent actions. Based on such organicist postulates, Durkheim contrasted merely "mechanical" solidarity—typified by bequeathed, ascribed categories and statuses such as those of kinship—and "organic" solidarity, typically manifested in the improvised collaboration and division of labor of team work at all levels (1933: 70-99; 111-130).

Stoker believes in the rightness of Western modernity, if not of Pax Britannica. His Durkheimian social assumptions locate real social solidarity not in kinship and its mechanical, traditionalist analogues, conveyed by tradition and bloodlines (as in those that *Dracula* seeks to augment through ethno-terrorism), but rather in the collectively improvised, organic solidarity arising from the spontaneous yet reasoning collaboration of individuals. This fellowship, further organized and reinforced by a rational division of labor and organic social categories that derive from it, originates as a response to shared conditions, including those of crisis and hardship. In the context of *Dracula* and its closest adaptations, the liminality of the story involves both the individual initiation of the members of the brave band of vampire slayers, but also the formation, through heroic response to crisis, of a new, elite fellowship, the guardian of the greater community.

Thus, Sharrett is persuasive when he argues that Coppola's version, in many ways the closest of all film versions to Stoker's original, "replicates rather than criticizes Victorian

morality” (1996: 265). He is accurate in his observation that the Coppola version’s revisionism chiefly resides in its depiction of Dracula as an erstwhile defender of Christendom against “barbaric Islam” (1996: 266). In addition, Sharrett may well be correct in his judgment that this enhanced Christianization of the vampire legend represents what could be construed as a “reactionary” and “neoconservative” resuscitation and embellishment of Stoker’s original program (1996: 268-69)⁸.

In Stoker, as in Wells, intellectual apprehension and guilty misgivings fuse Cassandra and Jeremiah, whose premonitions are unheard prophecies, unheeded self-criticisms whose substance adumbrates real-world reprisal. Intellectuals since the dawn of modernity have fretted over the forced conversions of all the Numantias, all Massadas. It is not for nothing, therefore, that the events of the 11th of September have been repeatedly compared to such images of destruction in disaster or alien invasion films. Such mythic parallels, predictably, now generate both frantic chauvinistic resuscitation and despondent liberal repudiation. Where this ongoing new-Victorian revival will lead, in art, and the world, no one can say.

Notes

1. Stoker’s literary and folkloric antecedents and sources have been succinctly reviewed by, among others, Halliwell (1986: 15-29) and Silver and Ursinia (1997: 17-51). The genre question, with regard to vampire films and *Dracula* versions in particular, has been elucidated by Gregory Waller (1986: 5-22).
2. Among film versions of *Dracula*, the *Nosferatu* films depart significantly in their handling of this final component of the plot. It is not vigilante teamwork that undoes the vampire; rather, the damsel in their rendering of the story sacrifices herself to save the community. Luring the vampire to feed on her, she seals his doom by distracting him so that he is caught still feeding when the cock crows. Her self-sacrifice, stealing the macho thunder from Stoker’s notion of the band of stouthearted males, faintly adumbrates the proactive, altruistic superheroism of Buffy the Vampire Slayer.
3. Waller summarizes the Freudian representation of *Dracula* (1986: 61-65). Freud’s notion of a primal horde, derived from such authors as William Robertson Smith (the concept of the sacrificial meal [1927: ch. 2]) and J. J. Atkinson (the premise of tyrannical paternity and reactive patricide in the primal horde [1903: 222-225]) underpins his theory of the origins of society.
4. Stevenson cites Fox (1967: 78) for definitions of exogamy as a pragmatic, customary observance of boundaries based on linguistic, territorial, racial, or cultural criteria. Waller describes the frequent representation of the vampire as a being with “work” to perform (cf., in Stoker’s novel, the Count’s declaration: “there is work to be done” [Stoker 2002: 63]). “Work for the undead,” summarizes Waller, “can often be a purposeful mission and an act of creation or colonization” (1986: 20).
5. See, on the idea of *cognatio spiritualis* and its congeners, Westermarck (Vol 2, 1922: 154); also his discussion of exogamic rules based on notions of “nearness of blood,” (Vol 2, 1922: 179-180). Of particular importance, for understanding late-nineteenth-century concepts of blood kinship, is Westermarck’s critique of Durkheim’s theories of exogamy rules’ origin in cultural notions of “magical virtues of blood,” of the totemistic derivation of exogamy rules, and the idea of “totemic being [...] incarnate in [the blood of] every individual” (Westermarck Vol 2, 1922: 184; referring to Durkheim, 1981: 47ff.). For an illuminating discussion of traditional European Christian notions of blood and its genealogical significance, see Stevens (2002), who cites Leviticus 18: 1-16 (and esp. 10-11), as well as Deuteronomy 12: 23-24, as prominent sources of Judaeo-Christian notions of blood and its associated properties.
6. Stith Thompson’s index yields numerous narrative affines under such headings as ‘conversions by love’, tests of suitors, captives and fugitives, elopements and ‘unusual marriages’ (T110). The latter sort of union includes miscegenetic or socially unequal marriages, and variations on endogamy and exogamy, including abductions and exchanges of bride and grooms. One rubric is specifically ‘Sultan’s

- daughter falls in love with Christian captive' (T91.6.4.1). See also Bennet (1984: 3-5) for an alternate articulation of the motif.
7. Sharrett's contention of a growing demonization of the Muslim (beginning, we note, long before the events of 11th September 2011) is substantiated by such films as *True Lies* (1994) and *Executive Decision* (1996), which portray Islamic terrorists commandeering equipment and hijacking planes in furtherance of anti-capitalist, anti-globalist terrorism.
 8. His condemnation, however, is based on his judgment of ideological incorrectness rather than on an analysis of aesthetic transgressions: he seems to chiefly deplore the film's "jettisoning of psychoanalysis as a framework", its "inattention" to "feminist psychoanalytical critical theory" (Sharrett 1996: 267) and its generally reactionary politics (1996: 268-269). His condemnation of the patriarchal extends, as he makes clear, to Coppola's Godfather films, which present, by their very nature, an almost conventional patrilocality and machismo. The present essay is not an opportune venue for deliberating these points in any detail. Two observations, however, might be made. On the one hand, the damsel-in-distress feminism Sharrett so sweepingly invokes often smacks of fin-de-siècle misandry (that is, fin de siècle with regard to both the 19th and 20th centuries) in its shriller and more undiluted forms. In a sense, we are, therefore, talking of competing neo-Victorianisms. I will only say that the politico-aesthetic preconceptions invoked by Sharrett's remarks would oblige us to jettison –to use his term– the majority of works from most centuries and most cultures, including the majority of works discussed in this essay.

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