

# Dracula on Film: A Psychohistoricist Study

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## *Acknowledgements*

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines selected iterations of Dracula in order to investigate the psychohistoricist cultural resonance of the character as established and continually reaffirmed by the film cycles that he inhabits. Dracula's continued pervasion of Western culture is argued to be due to the intersectionality of the intrinsic (psychological and emotive) responses of and extrinsic (historical resonances and sociocultural milieu) cues affecting viewers. The critical analysis of film in this thesis is based on psychohistoricism as a conflated analytical paradigm drawing upon the dynamic between historicism and psychoanalysis as applied to film. Historicism as posited in this context assumes that every expressive act is embedded in a network of material practices within which filmic texts circulate inseparably, and that no discourse within that network (imaginative or archival) gives access to unchanging truths nor expresses inalterable human nature. The intention is not to locate the film cycles of the Dracula canon as directly causal or symptomatic of contemporaneous sociocultural shifts, or the psychological tensions that underpin them, but to view them as reflective of the liminal spatial interplay between film-as-art, the psychosocial milieu, the concomitant evolution of psychoanalysis, and historiography via a process of inductive thematic content analysis. Dracula is a resilient and recurrent cultural property that has inhabited the roles of hero, anti-hero and villain, and is idolised, loved, vilified and hated, as a multifaceted perennial narrative focus. Dracula's cinematic cycles can be argued to be a cultural barometer, reflecting the culture we create and recreate.

## *Preface*

I have always had a fascination for the vampire, and Count Dracula in particular, since first reading Stoker's seminal book, and watching the Universal monsters and their Hammer successors, with the trepidation, excitement and suspension of disbelief that childhood in the seventies and eighties still seemed to allow. Childish risk/benefit analysis dictated the fearful bite of the vampire might be a worthwhile price to pay for the empowerment of being one. A sentiment I believe many a Dracula fan, in some shape or form, has sequestered in the recesses of their psyche. Dracula in his many cinematic guises is both attractive and terrifying, antihero and villain, lover and monster, even victim and stooge. He is one of the most widely recognised characters in Western culture. Fangs, evening wear and opera cloak, even when derided as faintly ridiculous by the supposedly sophisticated cynic, still equates the Dracula/vampire archetype for most of us, instantly drawing upon a century of Gothic imagery, psychosexual and sociocultural connotations, social transgressions, and still older mythological and theological afterlife constructs from throughout human history. Count Dracula remains a consummate performer on the stage of Western culture, a perennially marketable nightmare with multi-layered meanings as variable as his many viewers. He continually draws them back to his dark fictional world, as he has drawn his equally willing victims into the similarly forbidden, but ultimately attractive folds of his cloak, and the taboo pleasures within. It is what we as viewers seek from him, when and why seek it, and why we continue to do so, that interests me as a researcher. My studies in science and the arts, and a love of film that has seen me work on both sides of the camera as well as remaining a prolific viewer, have drawn me to seek understanding of these deeper meanings that this shadowy character has for me, and the culture that I have grown up within that he has pervaded.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction, Review of the Literature, and Formulation of Methodology

Whilst it must be recognised that Dracula's filmic character has for many years been regarded as a commercially viable cultural property in the public domain<sup>1</sup>, a tried and tested formula for profitable box office returns requiring little introduction to the viewing public from Browning's 1931 film onward, it seems reasonable to suggest that there are other reasons for the character's cinematic longevity. This thesis investigates what some of those reasons might be. Dracula first came to the cinema in the Weimar republic in the wake of World War I. He returned during the great depression and then during World War II at a time when medicolegal patriarchy denounced homosexual agency and identity, and then again during the transformations wrought by the counterculture from the late fifties through to the seventies. Dracula and his vampire ilk returned to the cinema in the wake of the AIDS crisis, as Western culture was pervaded by the fear of another pathological blood-oriented killer that mirrored its Victorian fin-de-siècle predecessor. Dracula arguably resonated with the millennial milieu, at a time when global terrorist incidents became more pervasive if still rare aves. Dracula has recently taken the superhero role as right-wing populism became culturally pervasive. The character's potential resonance with these historical contexts arguably informs his sociocultural currency in dynamic reciprocity with his commercial viability.

Some of these films could indeed be argued to be routine commercial procedurals, others, such as Coppola's 1992 film as iconoclastic even seminal reinventions of Stoker's original story. The underlying rationale is undeniably the same; to engage viewer interest in the character and thus the film he inhabits. This begs the overarching research questions, does Dracula's cinematic resurrections continually resonate with shifts in sociocultural dynamics and associated mores when viewed from the psychohistorical perspective, and if so, why? Analysing the historiography of sociocultural resonances with filmic texts from the perspective of (potential) underlying collective psychological tensions. In this thesis the psychohistorical approach refers to a conflated analytical paradigm predicated on social historicism and Freudian psychoanalysis. This will be discussed in greater depth later in this chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> Bram Stoker's novel remains copyrighted.

## **1.0 Why This Research?**

It is time for our culture to abandon Dracula and pass beyond him, relinquishing him to social history. The limits of profitable reinterpretation have been reached. The Count has served his purpose by insisting that the repressed be kept down, that it must always surface, and strive to be recognised. But we cannot purge him of his connotations of evil – the evil that Victorian society projected on to sexuality and by which our contemporary notions of sexuality are still contaminated. If the *return of the repressed* is to be welcomed, then we must learn to represent it in forms other than that of an undead vampire aristocrat (Wood, 1983, p187).

Robin Wood wrote this in 1983 with specific reference to a film made in 1979, yet Dracula continues to be resurrected and reinvented in films and other popular media. This might prompt us to question whether the limits of profitable reinterpretation have been reached (if said limits will ever be reached in the case of Dracula as a cinematic character), but also why the character has also returned in more faithful adaptations of Stoker's novel? This does not contradict Wood in of itself. However, the character can be purged of his associations with evil as his superhero incarnation in *Dracula Untold* evidences. Dracula as a cinematic character continues to be resurrected. Is this because there have been significantly new interpretations since Wood wrote this essay? The answer to this, considering Coppola's 1992 film and subsequent post-millennial cinematic interpretations of the character, would be a tacit yes, as, after all, he continues to surface in various cinematic incarnations and he is recognised for who and what he is. Noel Carroll states in his (1987) article 'The Nature of Horror' that:

The current ascendancy of the genre of horror may be the mass popular expression of the same anxiety concerning criteria that preoccupies the more esoteric forms of postmodernism (Carroll, 1987: 58).

This is rather simplistic. The masses do not make or directly influence the films. However, an astute producer and/or director may tap into that collective zeitgeist, to make their production appeal to their contemporaneous audience. Carroll cites the character of Dracula as an exemplar of this symbolism as Dracula as a recurrent cinematic character is certainly characterised by the self-conscious use of earlier styles and conventions. Thirteen years later, Ronald R. Thomas takes a similar standpoint. The following excerpt is taken from his (2000) article 'Spectres of the novel: Dracula and the cinematic afterlife of the Victorian novel'.

Modern mass culture and its media should not be seen as expressions of mere false consciousness, then, but as forms of transformational work that are performed upon our anxieties and fantasies and are managed by the production of compensatory narratives. This is the work done by every filmic resurrection, decapitation, and stake driven in the heart of Dracula. What the cinematic incarnation of Dracula makes quite clear is that in the conflict between past centuries and modernity Dracula is more an agent of the liberating, subversive powers of modernity than he is of the powers of the past; there are some powers of past centuries that the media of modernity cannot kill, and Dracula is foremost among them. Subsequent Dracula films reference their predecessors continuously, each one seeming to function as homage to those that came before (Thomas, 2000: 96-97).

It should be made clear at this juncture that Dracula is a well-known and iconic figure, and so it seems entirely unsurprising that he continues to be used from a commercial perspective. Why would the media of modernity want to do away with such a commercially viable cultural property? This seems rather a moot point, if we take modernity herein this context to span the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present that saw Dracula's inception and evolution as a fictional character in the spotlight of said media. Modernity as a historicist concept after all, defies any chronologically absolutist polemic definition, instead inviting such theorised contextualisation (Baudrillard, 1987). This does detract however from Thomas's standpoint that Dracula is not just a transplantable character but rather a reflective cinematic representation of modernity as a liberating agency, which may in part explain the character's continued resonance with historic sociocultural shifts. This perspective is again echoed in Stacey Abbott's 2007 book *Celluloid Vampires*:

The vampire is shaped by the changing world through which it emerges as well as by the medium through which it is represented. Its history demonstrates a self-conscious awareness of tradition by continually reinventing itself for new audiences. The vampire is timeless but, through a process of renewal, it is completely in tune with the present (Abbott, 2007: 10-11).

Whilst Abbott was referring to the cinematic vampire per se, the latter film portrayals of Dracula from 1992 to 2014 could be regarded as epitomic of such reinvention. Therefore, in contradiction to Wood's dismissal, Abbott, Carroll and certainly Thomas could be argued to

view the cinematic character of Dracula as continually being resurrected for commercial reasons yet perhaps reshaped by certain historic sociocultural shifts. So how does a nineteenth century literary vampire transition to a cinematic character and cultural property that often seems to be adapted in resonance with the prevailing zeitgeist thus retaining said cultural and commercial currency?

We can draw upon Thomas Leitch's (2009) work on adaptation pertaining to Dracula's literary and cinematic contemporary, Sherlock Holmes, to answer this question. According to Leitch, Holmes has been modernised in ways that allow him to maintain subtle tokens of both his nineteenth century roots and his universalism (Leitch, 2009: 218-223). Aspects of his sartorial iconography are one such example; a formal waistcoat and pocket-watch are an equally appropriate fashion statement for a distinguished or perhaps eccentric English gentleman in the modern era as they were in Victorian times. Holmes as a cinematic character was notably first modernised in such a manner in the Universal cycle of the 1940's starring Basil Rathbone as the titular detective in films with a specific anti-Nazi theme such as *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror* (John Rawlins, USA, 1942), *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon* (Roy Wm. Neill, USA, 1943), and *Sherlock Holmes in Washington* (Roy Wm. Neill, USA, 1943), as well as in more formulaic detective dramas such as *Sherlock Holmes Faces Death* (Roy Wm. Neill, USA, 1943), *The Spider Woman* (Roy Wm. Neill, USA, 1944), *The Scarlet Claw* (Roy Wm. Neill, USA, 1944), *The Pearl of Death* (Roy Wm. Neill, USA, 1944), *The House of Fear* (Roy Wm. Neill, USA, 1945), and *The Woman in Green* (Roy Wm. Neill, USA, 1944) (Leitch, 2009: 223-226). The character continues to be modernised in 21<sup>st</sup> century television adaptations including the BBC's *Sherlock* (UK, 2010) starring Benedict Cumberbatch, and in *Elementary* (CBS, USA, 2012).

Explorations of the depth of Holmes's character may also have contributed to that universalism in that a degree of mimesis has arguably been imparted to the character that readily facilitates such chronological transplantations. In Herbert Ross' 1976 UK film *The Seven Percent Solution*, Holmes (Nicol Williamson) is psychoanalysed by none other than Sigmund Freud (Alan Arkin). This exploration of Holmes' diegetic psyche is mirrored in an episode of *Sherlock*, *A Study in Pink* (BBC, UK, 2010) in which Cumberbatch's Holmes refers to himself as a high functioning sociopath. Similarly, the masculinity and potential closeted homosexuality of Holmes as a cinematic character was explored in Billy Wilder's *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* (UK, 1970); a theme that was again revisited in Holmes and Watson's

Soho restaurant scene in *A Study in Pink*. Dracula as a cinematic character by contrast traditionally has shown less evidence of such nuanced character traits. Whether portrayed as the iconic villain, or more latterly as the dark superhero, he is more defined by his powers and weaknesses. To compare Dracula's universalism with that of Holmes, Christopher Lee's formal Victorian garb in the Hammer films can be juxtaposed with Gerard Butler's long black coat in Lussier's *Dracula 2000* in this context. Both these dark flowing ensembles can be argued to evoke the same sense of brooding gothic menace. Another example is the erudite turn of phrase of both cinematic characters. Whilst this can also be deemed eccentric (and underused in some instances in the Hammer Dracula films in particular), it is not entirely the property of any one period of post-Victorian history (Leitch, 2009: 218-223). Leitch also posited that Holmes, Watson and their milieu can be selectively modernised despite the contemporary situations in which they are placed because they have the luxury of drawing on many different sources, including the original novels, graphic art, other novels of a similar genre, previous films featuring those characters, and other films of similar genres which do not (Ibid). It could certainly be argued that Dracula, Van Helsing, and their milieu can be selectively modernised by that same rationale.

Leitch defines Holmes as having become a paragon who can do all things well and a timeless hero whose resurrection is so certain that he can now ritualistically be captured by enemies determined to put him to death, and then emerge triumphant (Leitch, 2009: 223). This aspect of Holmes' character development almost certainly has its roots in Conan Doyle's resurrection of the character after his supposed demise along with his nemesis Professor Moriarty at the Reichenbach falls in Conan Doyle's *The Final Problem*. For Dracula however, his resurrections came first via film, and then permeated the literary medium. The character is currently featured in over a hundred novels other than Stoker's original<sup>2</sup>. Dracula is continually put to death by his enemies, but with the caveat of available resurrection plot devices appended to his mythos such as removing the offending stake or dousing his ashes in fresh blood. Van Helsing has his own resurrection plot devices, by resurfacing in the guise of his own son or grandson, or notably in Lussier's film, by transfusing himself with vampire blood filtered through leeches. Leitch initially concludes by alluding that the Holmes canon perhaps still proves viable because it continually proves to be hospitable to many new and varied

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<sup>2</sup> At least one hundred and fifty-six as reliably cross-referenced with author and publisher at: [https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/11284.Best\\_Books\\_Featuring\\_Dracula](https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/11284.Best_Books_Featuring_Dracula), accessed 04/2020

adaptations of its definitive exponents, Holmes and Watson (Leitch, 2009: 235). With reinvention after all, comes renewed audience interest. This can be regarded as being equally true of Dracula and Van Helsing (and his understudies) as the definitive exponents of their respective canon. Leitch ends by not discounting that corporations will always seek to profit from the sustainability of a protean fictional franchise, as evidenced by some of the formulaic Sherlock Holmes productions over the years (Ibid). This is another truism that appears to remain applicable to Stoker's arch vampire. His cinematic resurrections may likewise not always equate to artistic reinventions and may not always resonate with their contemporaneous cultural milieu. Returning to the research questions posited earlier, Angela Connolly's (2003) article 'Psychoanalytic theory in times of terror' states that:

Terror is defined as extreme fear; it refers to the mental state associated with fear. Horror refers more to its physical effects and has semantic overtones of disgust and repugnance. Terror may have a positive function for individuals and cultures. Terror produces a 'sickness of the soul'; nevertheless, individuals seem to take pleasure in terrifying themselves (Connolly, 2003: 408).

Connolly's examination of Burke, Freud, Kristeva and Jung lead her to implicate terror and horror in playing a role in structuring the individual's sense of identity and in strengthening community bonds. The research for this PhD seeks to explore this psychohistorical perspective further, to decide if the cinematic character of Dracula is resonating in this way and if so, is he still representative of terror or has he transitioned to a sympathetic figure in some respects, thus becoming its catharsis as Milly Williamson's *Lure of the Vampire* describes (Williamson, 2005: 29-50)? Is he now luring audiences "with the pathos of his predicament and painful awareness of outsiderdom" as a "source of empathy and identification", emulating Anne Rice's Louis in her book *Interview with the Vampire* (2005: 29)? This begs further research questions. Does Dracula resonate with both anxiety and its catharsis and if so, can Dracula still be made to be frightening? Moreover, do his viewers want or need him to be?

### **1.1 Aims and Objectives**

The intention of this research is to address these questions by investigating the degree to which the cinematic Count Dracula character can be seen to resonate with modern Western society at times of sociocultural change and upheaval, at other times, or both, from the psychoanalytical and psychohistorical perspectives and posit a rationale for this. It will not examine Bram



Stoker's seminal 1897 *Dracula* novel directly, nor will it refer to it in any depth because it is the evolving cinematic character of Count Dracula that is the focus of this research. Whilst comparisons to Stoker's envisioned character are valid in some instances, it is the intention of this research to analyse the films of the Dracula canon directly and not as meta-analyses of the novel.

It is worth acknowledging at the outset that the author is not what might be regarded as a conventional film theorist. My academic background is eclectic. I am a registered clinician and nursing lecturer, a geneticist, a doctoral qualified and certified forensic anthropologist with publications in that field, a trained professional actor who has performed in the West end, and a trained film and television producer. I have an abiding love of film, a fascination with the character of Count Dracula, and a desire to understand why the character pervades the history of cinema, hence my research for this thesis. My clinical scientific background sometimes leads me to think in a somewhat regimented manner, but it has also trained me to visualise patterns, themes, and trends that may appear disparate at first glance. I have attempted to capitalise on this interdisciplinary focus in producing this scholarly work. What I have sought to achieve is an interdisciplinary discourse between scientific analysis and the interpretative approach of film studies to provide new insights, despite the tensions between these two modes of thought, or perhaps because of them.

## **1.2 Psychohistoricism as a Tool for Textual Analysis**

With regards to utilising psychoanalysis as a textual analytical paradigm, whilst doing so is undoubtedly valid, in some respects it can be argued to be reductionist if considered in the absence of culturalism. David Bordwell devoted the final chapter of his seminal 1991 book on film theory criticism *Making Meaning, Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema* to why one should not read a film. His opening argument starts as follows.

From this standpoint, we can see that "theory" play many contingent roles in film interpretation. A theory can provide the critic with plausible semantic fields (for example, sexual relations as power relations), schemata, or heuristics (for example, looking as a privileged cue); and rhetorical resources (for example, the appeal to a community holding the same theoretical doctrines in common) (Bordwell, 1991: 250).

Bordwell however goes on to counter the need for such interpretation.

...But the critic does not need to call on theory in order to produce interpretations; if theory as a body of doctrine consists of propositional knowledge, critical interpretation is principally a matter of procedural knowledge, or know-how (Bordwell, 1991: 250).

Furthermore, he criticises the way that interpretive critics constantly ignore the theoretical precept that empirical claims should be open to counterexample, for instance does Dracula as a character resonate with sociocultural events outside of significant cultural transformations? However, Bordwell goes on to concede that by showing the applicability of existing conceptual schemes to a fresh case, the critic is often obliged to discriminate aspects of those schemes more exactly than heretofore, and in doing so the critic can bring out new affiliations among familiar semantic fields (Bordwell, 1991: 257). That is precisely the intention of the research conducted for this thesis. It does not seek to construct a new poetics of the Dracula film canon but rather to analyse its hermeneutics from just such a fresh perspective by conflating two of these existing conceptual schemes, interpretative historicism and psychoanalysis. I would not be the first to do this for a Dracula film, or even a cycle of them. I would be the first to do this for the most significant films of the canon in its entirety. This will be accomplished by exploring the epistemological reciprocity of historicism and psychoanalysis with one another to frame the potential resonances of the films themselves within contemporaneous sociocultural contexts and bring the new affiliations described by Bordwell to light. The intention is not just to posit another suite of potential meanings for the films, but to concomitantly analyse those potential resonances from a critical psychosocial perspective.

The research conducted for this thesis seeks to acknowledge Bordwell's stance on film theory by accepting that the act of film interpretation can and should be open to the possibility that plural, nuanced meanings can be ascribed to any one filmic text which may conceptually intersect or contradict one another, and that these are constructed by inductive as opposed to deductive reasoning. Bordwell intimates that the critic and the reader agree to entertain such notions as imaginative possibilities, as intriguing juxtapositions of semantic fields suggested by the film at hand and the critical practices in force (Bordwell, 1991: 257). This is demonstrated by avoiding such a priori codification throughout when exploring potential contemporaneous sociocultural resonances and the semantic implications and affinities of the psychoanalytical and psychohistorical analytical paradigms themselves. The application of these analytical paradigms in this thesis also seeks to form abstract interpretations that are novel

and persuasive, and that either eschew or revitalise the use of commonplace banal signification when rereading a filmic text in the pursuit of a renewal of knowledge.

Whilst Bordwell (1991: 262) is roundly critical of such an approach, Allen and Gomery's 1985 book, *Film History, Theory and Practice*, stated in this context that movies are social representations that might be used as a social-historical document.

They derive their images and sounds, themes and stories ultimately from their social environment. In fictional films, characters are given attitudes, gestures, sentiments, motivations, and appearances that are, in part at least, based on social roles and on general notions about how a policeman, factory worker, debutante, mother, or husband is "supposed" to act" (Allen and Gomery, 1985: 158).

They went on to point out that:

Relating the social structure of a given time and place to the representation of that structure in film is one of the most tantalizing yet vexing tasks faced by the entire field of film historical study (Allen and Gomery, 1985: 158).

Allen and Gomery define four main branches of film history, namely aesthetic, economic, technological, and social film history (Allen and Gomery, 1985: 43-62). Without denigrating its validity, it is worth noting at this juncture that historical empiricism i.e., verification of past facts by deductive process, is of less import to the aims and objectives of this thesis which is more concerned with theorist praxis. Social film history is the cornerstone of the historicist analytical paradigm that is integrated and juxtaposed with Freud's psychoanalytical paradigm in interpreting meaning in the film cycles of the Dracula canon for this thesis. Social film history refers to the various sociological factors affecting both the makers and viewers of film at a given time within a defined culture (Allen and Gomery, 1985: 153-186). As both the makers and spectators of films are members of said society and culture, their attitudes, perceptions, and mores are shaped by these factors (Ibid). It is the analysis of such potential sociocultural resonances in a historical context that define historicism in its wider sense as an analytical paradigm. Stephen Bann's essay 'The Sense of the Past: Image, Text, and Object in the Formation of Historical Consciousness in Nineteenth Century Britain' in H. Aram Veenser's edited collection of essays *The New Historicism* more elegantly frames historicism as an

analytical paradigm as a rhetoric of evocation, in which objects, texts and images all contribute to a materialisation of the past (Bann in Veaser, 1989: 102-115). It is this concept in Bann's essay that is salient to Allen and Gomery's view of social film history and thus the research for this thesis. Siegfried Kracauer conducts a similar cultural exploration of the collective psyche of Weimar Germany in his book *From Caligari to Hitler* which conflates the nihilist expressionism of filmic texts such as Murnau's 1922 *Nosferatu* with the anxiety of a nation of postwar survivors facing a bleak future as they are caught up in the political uncertainty of economic implosion (Kracauer, 2004 edition: 77-90). Kracauer's work essentially draws upon a cognitivist viewpoint centered on the collective consciousness of a society. This could be argued, and indeed has been by Elsaesser and others, as a sociologically and perhaps psychologically reductionist approach (Petro, 1991: 132; Elsaesser, 1987). Parallels are drawn between filmic metaphor and society, but there is less exploration as to why drawing those parallels might be justified. The intention is for the psychohistorical approach taken for the research at hand to explore the justification for drawing such parallels, by exploring in turn shifts in contemporaneous psychosocial tensions from the psychoanalytical perspective and considering not just the potential sociocultural resonances of individual Dracula films with key historical moments, but the potential resonances of cycles of those films with such moments. There are films within these cycles that can be argued to be resonant as innovative reinventions of the original text, whilst others could be equally as resonant (especially as part of a wider cyclic context) when argued to be representative of recycling of a profitable cultural property.

Bordwell, whilst opposed to direct historicist interpretations of films posited that the future of film interpretation lay in moving toward historicist poetics (Bordwell, 1991: 263-274). The film critic as poetician in this context according to Bordwell aims to analyse the conceptual and empirical factors, norms, traditions, and habits that govern the production, reception, and perception of film within the historicist context (Ibid). The research conducted for this thesis is not a poetical analysis in this context. Rather it seeks to explore the historical sociocultural influences that produce or contribute to the possible meanings that can be imputed to the film cycles of the Dracula canon by analysing those meanings and influences in parallel with concomitant shifts in psychoanalytical theory contextualised as a potential reflection of the psychosocial milieu. Reading film cycles as opposed to individual films, as posited by authors such as Tim Snelson (Snelson, 2015: 432-436), Peter Stanfield (Stanfield, 2012, 2013) and perhaps most notably Lawrence Alloway (1971), allows for the juxtaposition of sustained interpretations of these psychosocial dynamics over a given timeframe, and observation of how

their development and maturation influences films produced primarily in response to commercial drivers, but that can represent an expression of culture that informs those drivers, and how film in turn then informs those very psychosocial dynamics. Such an approach can be argued to facilitate a more robust analysis of trends within film cycles, and therefore of associated potential psychosocial resonances than reading individual films in isolation; akin to interpreting a life story from many albums of photographs, rather than any one single image. By analysing this reciprocity from a conflated psychoanalytical and historicist perspective as opposed to taking a conventional and more simplistic historicist approach, this research seeks to avoid the arbitrary ascription of historicist parallels that concerns Bordwell, Elsaesser et al. Some of Bordwell's challenges can thus be met by providing this conceptual framework within which questions about the thematic patterns and evolving style of this body of work can be posed.

Psychoanalysis and film have shared a parallel sociocultural evolution since their respective 19<sup>th</sup> century inceptions. As intimated by Poland, Rangell, and Gabriel amongst others, whilst psychoanalysis was incepted primarily as a therapy, a psychoanalytic orientation and psychoanalytic knowledge pervaded the fabric of Western culture, as a source of ideas concerning sexuality, inner conflicts, and possible solutions through such therapy (Poland, 2003; Rangell, 2002; Gabriel 1982). As outlined by Barbara Creed (1998), theorists commonly explore how psychoanalysis, with its emphasis on the importance of desire in the life of the individual, has influenced the cinema, but she also posits that the reverse is true and that the cinema may well have influenced psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysts, including Sigmund Freud, and their analysands are likely to have encountered film in Western culture. Freud even draws on cinematic terms to describe his theories, as in *Screen Memories* (Ibid). Therefore, if cinema has influenced psychoanalysis, and if psychoanalysis has indeed pervaded Western culture, then it is reasonable to assume that it has some influence on art forms created within that culture, including film. Kucich (2011: 88-90) alludes to the ability of new psychoanalytical theories, arguably those formulated parallel to historic sociocultural shifts (countering the accusation of psychoanalysis as ahistoric in this context), to rearticulate historicist discourses pertaining to those shifts by examining them in terms of cogent psychic formations. Kucich goes on to argue that displacing the Freudian tradition in favour of parallel relational theory can thus shift interpretive perspectives without reifying new ontological claims about the psyche and spotlight such discourses in cultural history (Ibid). By framing the Dracula film cycles as just such a discourse and examining them in this manner, the research conducted for

this thesis will seek explanations for some of the potential psychosocial resonances of these film cycles with the shifting sociocultural norms of their respective contexts, and how those resonances may have shaped the progression of those cycles at the nexus of commercialism and film-as-art.

In agreement with Bordwell however, it is important to acknowledge not every historical change can be regarded as a deviation from a norm that is necessarily reflected in film at the time it occurs, and not every posited historicist reflection constitutes the only possibility for historicist reflection. The monster films of Universal studios pervaded the cinema of the 1940's for instance, but so did the film noir genre as horror lost some of its initial shock value. There is the possibility for a multitude of potential historicist and therefore psychohistoricist parallels, divergences and contradictions that could no doubt be drawn from the symptomatic meanings that could be ascribed to these respective bodies of work by the analytical scholar. As outlined by Lawrence Alloway (1971: 15), it must also be considered that a successful film producer must extrapolate present successes into probable near future trends, anticipating the interests of a potential target audience in order to produce a marketable film, and so will account for the contemporaneous psychosocial milieu of said target audience in doing so at the juncture of similitude and novelty. One pertinent speculative example would be Hammer's decision to transplant Christopher Lee's Dracula from his generic European diegetic locus to contemporaneous London for the latter films of that cycle.

When referring to an established literary and cinematic character such as Dracula, this influence arguably becomes palpable. For the character to remain relevant and therefore marketable as a cultural property, that character must be aligned with perceived trends and in turn historic sociocultural shifts. It is therefore reasonable to question just what (if anything) is being reflected when interpreting a film and indeed a film cycle. When positing a psychoanalytical interpretation of implicit meaning, or a possible psychohistoricist interpretation of symptomatic meaning, is the film theorist questioning the film or film cycle's potential resonance with the culture from within which it has arisen, or the producer's commercial exploitation of their own perception of that resonance? There may well be an ontological homeostasis between the two. It is this acknowledgement of plurality not only of ascribed potential meanings, but also of the evidential psychosocial aetiologies that underpin

those ascriptions, that defuses the post hoc ergo propter hoc fallacy criticism<sup>3</sup> that can be applied to the historicist method, its derivations such as psychohistoricism, and its exponents such as Siegfried Kracauer amongst others. Ascribing a potential sociocultural historical resonance and its psychosocial connotations to the interpretation of a film, or a cycle of films, in this context implies that reading is within the realm of possibility; but more importantly can be robustly posited as reflective of that film or cycle's discourse with its contemporaneous milieu, but without arbitrarily stating that it definitively reflects historical causality. To refer to Allen and Gomery:

Thus, it is dangerous to presume that the values displayed within a film or novel corresponds in some direct way to the operation of those values within their real contexts. Films are certainly cultural documents, but what they document is the complex relationship among reader, fictional text, author, and culture (Allen and Gomery, 1985: 167).

Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*, for example, can be read as representing an introspective search for identity, an allegory for racist oppression, a cautionary tale on the perils of allowing scientific research to go unregulated, or as a parable on corporate greed. These are four possible readings of implicit and/or symptomatic meanings that could be formulated from the psychoanalytical or psychohistorical standpoints for the same film that could explore cultural resonances of the early 1980's. Is any single meaning more applicable than any other in this context? Does *Blade Runner* really reflect any of them more than it does Ridley Scott's auteurist intentions? Is this question just as applicable to Philip K Dick's original 1968 novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* on which the film was based? That is an irreconcilable interpretative paradox. Film interpretation in this context is not an empirical science but can reflect more tenuous yet intuitive connections between film and society as opposed to merely mirroring specific historical events. This is arguably the crux of Bordwell's rejection of such interpretations (Bordwell, 1991: 249-263). His stance however, can conversely be argued to encourage the theorist to more reflectively approach film interpretation, and it is this approach that will be taken with the research conducted here.

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<sup>3</sup> Post hoc, ergo propter hoc: "After this, therefore because of it" (Costello, 2017: 305-306).

Whilst acknowledging the potential plurality of meanings that can be ascribed to the reading of a film is preferable to falsely ascribing one meaning as the only objective possibility, some readings can be argued to be more compelling than others. It is imperative for the interpretative film theorist to remain grounded. Historicism as utilised during the research for this thesis owes much to Allen and Gomery's *Film History, Theory and Practice* (1985). It should always be remembered that, as posited by Allen and Gomery, that in a historicist analytical framework, a fictional text does not represent the transfer of intact values and beliefs from the experiential world of the reader (spectator) to that of the text (film). The fictional filmic text selects from among the variety of situations, values, beliefs, and norms to be found in any given culture and then combines these selected aspects of the social structure in such a way that they appear to be interrelated, and what they document is the complex relationship between spectator, fictional filmic text, author (or auteur), and culture (Allen and Gomery, 1985). Allen and Gomery's critique of Siegfried Kracauer's *From Caligari to Hitler* is of salience in this respect.

Kracauer's thesis is that "through an analysis of the German films deep psychological dispositions predominant in Germany from 1918 to 1933 can be exposed — dispositions which influenced the course of events during that time and which will have to be reckoned with in the post-Hitler era" (Kracauer 1947: 5) According to Kracauer, the films of a nation "reflect its mentality" more directly than any other artistic medium for two reasons. First, films are a collective rather than an individual enterprise. As such they tend to be immune from "arbitrary handling of screen material" and "individual peculiarities." Second, since films are made for mass audiences, motifs within popular movies can be seen as satisfying "mass desires." In other words, the biasing effects of film production are inhibited through the group nature of filmmaking, while audience feedback and the assumption that commercial producers always aim at attracting the largest possible audience assure the accurate reflection of a society's "mental climate." (Allen and Gomery, 1985: 160, Kracauer 1947: 5).

Allen and Gomery (1985: 163) go on to state that in *From Caligari to Hitler*, the notion that (in historicist terms) films reflect "collective predispositions," "inner urges," and "psychological tendencies" is an unexplored premise without grounding in any psychological theory. Although he sometimes uses a film-as-dream metaphor, Kracauer avoids specifically Freudian terminology. Whilst acknowledging that subjective interpretation cannot and should not be argued to equate to empiricism, it is precisely this point of criticism that this thesis in part seeks to address by conflating contemporaneous psychoanalytical theory and historicism



as a composite analytical paradigm, to explore this very premise as applied to the Dracula film canon. As alluded to earlier, the purpose of this conflation is to more critically examine the psychic formations underpinning these films as historicist discourse, to counter the charge of arbitrariness that can be levelled at a purely reflective historicist analysis. Film can in this context, according to Allen and Gomery (1985: 168), be plausibly read as one vehicle for the displaced expression of the language of the unconscious, or as arguably intimated by Ouweneel (2012: 227-239), as a reflective simulation to deal with emotions in a social reality. Ouweneel argues for the obsolescence of Freud, implying that we have learned all we can (Ibid). This author begs to differ. If science has taught us anything, it is that the reinterpretation of a time-served method can still yield novel findings, such as Gregor Mendel's seminal reinterpretation of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution that proposed a mechanism for the heritability of dominant and recessive characteristics in living things (Fairbanks and Abbott, 2016: 401-405).

Graf Von Orlok the first well-known cinematic vampire, arose from the expressionist stable of Weimar Germany. This came to be regarded as a canonical film. Whilst it is Tod Browning's 1931 *Dracula* that initiates the Count as a cyclical cinematic character, Orlok is nonetheless a suitable example to briefly illustrate this author's intent with regards to reading the films of the Dracula film canon. FW Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922) is more closely aligned with the vampire's folkloric roots than many other film incarnations of the undead. Julia Kristeva's essay 'Powers of Horror' defines the psychoanalytic concept of the abject as referring to the human reaction (fear/terror, fight-or-flight response, and extreme nausea) when a breakdown in meaning is threatened by a loss of distinction between subject and object, or more so, the self and other (Kristeva, 1982: 1-2). This is exemplified primarily in most of Judeo-Christian Western cultures by the corpse. Orlok at first glance is just such a plague ridden, animalistic walking corpse. He is abject horror, yet it is hinted that he may be capable of unrequited love. Revulsion for what he is arguably surpasses any sympathy for who he might be because he cannot pass as human, and the film provides no potential for his transformation into such. He remains the other that must be destroyed, even if he is not entirely evil.

From a purely historical standpoint, themes within Murnau's film have been compared to contemporaneous historical events, as opposed to being read as symbolic of them as per the historicist paradigm. This liminal distinction can arguably be regarded more as a blurring of the lines than a strict demarcation. The most overwhelming event of recent history at that time was of course, World War I. Reimer, Zachau and Sinka (2005: 15-25), and in more detail,

Anton Kaes (2009: 93-108), examine the parallel themes of Orlok's bite and the mass death, self-sacrifice, and the need to understand and overcome the horror of that death losing its clarity in the trenches. Following the war, the Weimar German economy was crippled by punitive reparations payments imposed by the allies on one hand and strikes on the domestic front on the other. Unemployment was high. There was little prospect of social mobility for the beleaguered and currently marginalised middle class (Ibid). Otherness (racial or otherwise) was not tolerated and came to be scapegoated by burgeoning egocentric Nazism seeking an object of blame in Weimar Germany at that time (Deren, 2012: 18-21). Returning to Orlok as symbolic of the ultimate otherness, abjection. Kracauer elucidates further on this symbology:

The horrors Nosferatu spreads are caused by a vampire identified with pestilence. Does he embody the pestilence, or is its image evoked to characterize him? If he were simply the embodiment of destructive nature, Nina's interference with his activities would be nothing more than magic, meaningless in this context. Like Attila, Nosferatu is a "scourge of God," and only as such identifiable with the pestilence. He is a blood-thirsty, blood-sucking tyrant figure looming in those regions where myths and fairy tales meet. It is highly significant that during this period German imagination, regardless of its starting-point, always gravitated towards such figures as if under the compulsion of hate-love (Kracauer, 1947: 79).

John Sandford also focuses upon Nosferatu's pestilence, but this time as being symbolic of invasion, eruption, and threat (Sandford, 1995: 318). Whilst Sandford is referring to invasion in an antisemitic context (the racist scapegoating of Jews), it could be argued that this symbol is equally applicable to the invading allies and the damage wrought to the German populace and national identity during and immediately after World War I (Ibid).

A more recent example of this approach is Joe Street's (2016, 33-90, 177-204) book *Dirty Harry's America*. Street frames the *Dirty Harry* film cycle against the reactionary conservative backlash against sixties liberalism in the United States, reflexively refracting the contemporaneous sociopolitical tensions leading up to the Reagan era through maverick detective Harry Callahan's narrative conflicts with demonised antiestablishment antagonists by conflating Harry's progressively dogmatic conservative policing with Clint Eastwood's star persona and the actor's concomitant and well-publicised conservative rhetoric. Is Harry as a cultural property and the diegetic scape that he inhabits reactive embodiments of late 20<sup>th</sup>

century American conservatism, or are they merely born of the same common sociocultural aetiology in a reflective discourse? Street argues that the latter as more plausible, and this author would concur, placing Kracauer's reflective interpretation of Nosferatu's symptomatic meaning within that same theoretical liminal space. Historicism as an analytical paradigm frames art, film in this case, within a cultural landscape as one reflection of that landscape. There is continued debate as to the degree of objectivity that is applied when the paradigm is implemented in scholastic terms. Whilst historicism in its unconfuted form identifies contemporaneous psychosocial tensions and key potential resonances with cultural shifts from a sociological standpoint as in these examples, what it arguably does not do is explore those tensions from the perspective of associated prospective psychological contexts.

Iggers (1995: 129-133) refers to historicism as recasting the epistemological questioning of the objectivity of historical knowledge as ontological questions about historical being. He likewise alludes that for historicism to be regarded as a rigorous analytical paradigm, it must both acknowledge sociocultural and historical cohesion and maintain a logic of enquiry when being utilised to interpret meaning (Ibid). The research conducted for this thesis aims to do precisely that by rearticulating historicist discourses pertaining to historic sociocultural shifts by examining them in terms of cogent psychic formations from a psychoanalytical perspective (Kucich, 2011: 88-90). It is this perspective that is argued to constitute the logic of rigorous historicist enquiry referred to by Iggers in the research at hand. The films of the Dracula canon, framed as a historicist discourse, will not be examined as reductionist arbitrary reflections of contemporaneous sociocultural shifts, but in terms of their more complex discourse with the psychological tensions underpinning them and the concomitant evolution of psychoanalysis as a means of exploring those tensions within that discourse, which can be argued to facilitate potentially deeper interpretations of contextual and intertextual meaning. This will be accomplished by chronologically mapping the cycles of the Dracula film canon against sociocultural and psychosocial shifts, and like contemporaneous transitions in psychoanalytical epistemology. Cycles in this context as defined by Peter Stanfield when referring to the work of critic Lawrence Alloway are groups of films that are recognised by filmmakers and audiences alike but are too often overlooked by critics searching for the next masterpiece (Stanfield, 2008: 179-189; Alloway, 1971: 41). In concurrence with Stanfield's viewpoint, the research conducted here thus seeks to place the emphasis in part on film cycles, rather than the discrete film or genre defined in terms of an ideal, in order to enable a content analysis that values the uniqueness of a truly socioculturally resonant film whilst acknowledging the

convention that marketable cultural properties will be modified and recycled to maintain currency with their audience and avoid the obsolescence referred to by Robin Wood (Ibid). Up until the early 1970s, Dracula's cinematic existence is usually as part of a conventional filmic cycle. This was less true from the 1980s onwards. There were either prestigious adaptations of Stoker (Badham, Coppola, Herzog) that are licensed under copyright and paying royalties to the Stoker estate and relied on a certain amount of iconoclasm to distinguish them from their forebear, or more minor standalone contributions to the canon (Curtis, Dekker etc.), that can be viewed from a more overarching thematic cyclic perspective. Both may reflect certain dynamics that resonate with their times but may encounter different sets of issues when reinventing a character that must remain recognisable yet have enough contemporary cultural currency to maintain commercial viability.

Is psychohistoricism then defensible as a conflated analytical paradigm applied to film? Historicism as a critical analytical paradigm according to Veenser (2013, p xi), assumes that every expressive act is embedded in a network of material practices within which literary and non-literary texts (including films) circulate inseparably, and that no discourse within that network (imaginative or archival) gives access to unchanging truths nor expresses inalterable human nature. Ergo, film as an expressive act can be argued to both express and influence its cultural historiography if this is read as a network of changeable material practices from within which film arises as an art form. The intention is not to locate the film cycles of the Dracula canon as directly causal or symptomatic of contemporaneous sociocultural shifts, or the psychological tensions that underpin them, as this would constitute an arbitrary, subjective, and tenuous ascription of meaning; but rather to view them as reflective of the liminal spatial dynamic between film-as-art, the psychosocial milieu, and historiography via a process of inductive thematic content analysis, much as key works from the nineteenth century gothic literature tradition, including *Dracula*, could be viewed (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Ilan and Kama, 2016). Shelley's *Frankenstein* tapped in to collective fears of scientific advancement whilst Stoker's *Dracula* touched upon the then taboo theme of sexual liberation. Both arguably explored resultant underlying ideological conflicts with theistic belief, but neither were causal or entirely symptomatic of these Victorian cultural anxieties; rather as exemplars of a literary art form, they could be argued to reflect those anxieties in reciprocity with them, by pervading that same psychosocial milieu (Van der Laan, 2010; Spencer, 1992).

Caroline Ruddell, in her (2014) book *The Besieged Ego* points out that psychoanalysis has been criticised as an ahistorical, abstract, and even unintelligible body of thought that is either incapable of analysing cultural products such as film or is only able to read them through the concepts of fantasy and desire (Ruddell, 2014: 29). However, psychoanalysis as a therapeutic and subsequently a critical analytical paradigm can be argued to arise and evolve within that same changeable historiographical network under those same malleable cultural influences as film does, if we apply Veesper's criteria to it. Veesper's criteria therefore can be seen to concur with Bordwell's view that human practices and institutions are in all significant respects socially constructed. Ruddell (2014: 30) goes on to point out that Bordwell draws an important parallel between culturalism (historicism) and psychoanalysis (subject-position theory) as applied to film. Both theories are preoccupied with understanding how viewers interact with film and this requires a degree of subjectivity. This brings us to a further criticism of psychoanalysis as an analytical paradigm, namely that it lacks objectivity. Psychoanalysis as an analytical paradigm after all is collectively intersubjective by its very nature (Ibid). It is not an empirical scientific discipline predicated upon the objective interpretation of quantifiable, fundamental data (Bornstein, 1989: 265). Indeed, any ascription of symbolic meaning, such as a character in a Freudian dream interpretation symbolising the dreamer's father, can be considered subjective and even arbitrary. This critique is equally applicable to any interpretative approach to textual analysis or criticism of any form of human artistic expression. The tension between subjectivity and objectivity in this context must be acknowledged, but it cannot readily be resolved. To deny subjectivity is arguably to deny human artistic expression. Therefore, psychoanalysis as an expressive act can arguably be read to be just as discursive with culture and historicism as film is, and thus psychoanalysis can also be discursive with film as a form of art. This immediately challenges the oft made fundamental criticisms of extemporaneity and ahistoricism that are applied to psychoanalysis. Sufficed to say at this juncture, the psychoanalysis of a subject whether it is a human psyche or a filmic narrative, can be read as just such an expressive act when viewed from this perspective.

Freud has filtered into and is widely regarded as having influenced popular culture, having been popularised by American culture from the forties to the seventies (Hale, 1995; Torrey, 1992). Whether this means, as Ruddell asserts, that film-makers and/or other auteurs consciously and deliberately or unconsciously and inadvertently borrow from Freud's et al's psychoanalytical discourses, thus pushing film in a certain direction, remains a matter for debate. Another facet of this debate is whether spectator engagement with popular

psychoanalysis has similar effects on their perception of films as entertainment, art, or cultural reflection within the historic context; neither denial nor affirmation could be easily proved from a philosophical standpoint, but that begs due consideration must be given to these arguments in theoretical discourse. There is less evidence that later developments in psychoanalysis were as influential, as explored by Philo and Parr's (2003) work on psychoanalytic geographies. However, it would be fair to say that these later developments were still influenced by Freud (Holt, 1989: 3-15). As with any subjective discourse, proof for or against such borrowing from Freud would be impossible to obtain (Ruddell, 2014: 29). The criticism that psychoanalysis could only be used to read film from the perspective of fantasy and desire is also arguably countered by its conflation with historicism. Whilst fantasy and desire certainly play a role in many psychoanalytical readings of film, changes in the (Freudian) psychoanalytical paradigm pertaining to the perception of homosexuality in the late forties, the reactions to feminism in the seventies, and the rise of therapy culture in the eighties have, amongst others in the course of this research, provided evidentiary examples that fantasy centred readings are not the only readings possible when applied within a psychohistorical framework.

This concurs with Kaja Silverman's position on utilising psychoanalysis to read dominant fiction. She posits that dominant fiction underscores the constructed rather than the illusory basis of reality, isolating from the whole repertoire of a culture's images, sounds, and narrative elaborations a consensus which is established, and which mediates between contradictory discourses to comprise a social formation, permitting a group identification and collective desires (Silverman, 1990: 115). If Silverman's dominant fiction is read in this context as filmic texts, then her perception of it as a libidinal apparatus for ideological investment that can be ruptured or as she puts it, traumatised, by sociocultural change, resonates with psychohistoricism as a means for reading film as potentially (not definitively) reflective of the psychological mechanisms underpinning such historic sociocultural shifts (Ibid). Ruddell (2014: 35) posited that psychoanalysis as an interpretative tool is a source for creative thought which is particularly useful when analysing cultural products that invite interpretation. It is a logical proposition then that as psychohistoricism draws upon psychoanalysis, when it is used to analyse cultural products within the context of historiography such as the Dracula film canon, it should prove equally as useful. Psychohistoricism is often conventionally regarded as the ahistorical application of psychoanalysis as an analytical paradigm to glean insight into the psychological tensions underlying historic sociocultural shifts (Milburn and Conrad, 1996). What the research for this thesis will attempt to do differently is to utilise contemporaneous

psychoanalytic theories for such an analysis, pertaining to the cycles of the Dracula film canon as reflective points of reference and their potential resonance with these shifts, to historiographically contextualise possible meanings for those resonances.

Another criticism pertaining to Freudian psychoanalysis and thus by a degree of abstraction to psychohistoricism should be addressed at this point, that of intertextuality. Freud has been accused of using characters from Greek tragedies and mythologies as nomenclature for psychoanalytic concepts in a bid to lionise them with cultural gravitas (Hills, 2004: 212-213). It can be argued that the film theorist faces the same accusation for applying Freudian concepts to the analysis of film. Further to this, antagonistic schisms pervade some of Freud's theories, which some theorists contend effectively negate those theories. For instance, Frank Cioffi posited Freud's theory that neurosis develops when perverse desires are not satiated, was compromised by his not recognising neurotic patients overtly fulfilling these desires (Cioffi, 1999: 119-121). It could still be argued that such a schism would not entirely negate ascription of meaning, but it is conceded that it could problematise it in the psychohistoricist reading of filmic texts. Boudry and Burkens (2011: 159-179) posited that when Freud was unable to discern evidence of a psychopathological construct, he determined this absence of evidence constituted unconscious resistance, in turn evidencing the underlying presence of said construct. Thus, it could be argued that in applying psychohistoricism as an analytical paradigm, the film theorist could similarly construct any psychoanalytic reading of a filmic text they chose to by means of this hermeneutic get-out clause. Using this particular nuance of Freud's psychoanalytical theory in a psychohistoricist reading of a filmic text, in agreement with Boudry and Burkens' view, would be untenable.

Cioffi (1999: 119-121) again criticises Freud on the dichotomous nature of some of his concepts, such as that pertaining to the conflict between libido and love. As Dracula epitomises sexualised dichotomy this arguably substantiates the application of psychohistoricism as an analytical paradigm to read the character's film canon as opposed to detracting from it. The pervasive implicit bisexuality of the cinematic Count is a particularly apt example. Dracula can be read to a greater or lesser degree as the bisexual other in several instances throughout the canon, exemplified by his sublimated homoerotic encounters with Alucard in the Hammer cycle and Harker in Coppola's film and his creation of vampire soldiers in the latest film *Dracula Untold* amongst others, alongside his sexualised discourses with his many female brides. Freud's initial underlying theories of perversion as applied to the tension between love

and libido are arguably applicable but to apply them to the films of the Dracula canon and ignore culturalism succinctly defines the fatal flaw of such an ahistoricist outlook. It denies paradigmatic evolution and is tantamount to applying Einstein's classical theory of relativity to particle physics whilst rejecting quantum mechanics. The concepts are not entirely invalid, but their isolationist application arguably subjugates any derivation of available meaning to a previous epoch. The subjective, expressive act of psychoanalysing the symptomatic meanings of these film cycles in the historicist context thus accounts for the evolution of psychoanalysis and its changing cultural attitudes to sexuality and sexual dichotomy as time progresses.

### **1.3 Formulating Psychohistoricism as a Theoretical Framework**

There has arguably been a prevalence of the use of psychoanalysis as an analytical paradigm applied to horror film. As with any analytical paradigm applied to film, there will be debates as to its legitimacy, utility and validity in this context. However, the *raison d'être* of psychoanalysis is to probe the depths of the human mind to examine psychopathology born out of the intersection of sexuality, violence, and persona amidst associated conflicts of sublimation, repression, and transference. This makes it eminently applicable to analysing the horror film genre which often seeks to express and thus mirror those same concepts. Its prevalence then could be argued as evidence that it is the right tool for the job and so is often selected. It also speaks to a deeper need within us all, the need to understand our nightmares. However, it is its conflation with social historicism that is of import here, and a particularly pertinent example of this can be found in Stephen Heath's essay 'Cinema and Psychoanalysis: Parallel Histories'. His essay examines the development of Freudian psychoanalysis in the first half of the twentieth century alongside the birth and development of cinema as an art form, referring to such diverse examples as *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* (Edwin S Porter, USA, 1902) and Slavoj Žižek's late 20<sup>th</sup> century psychoanalytic discourses on Hitchcock's *Frenzy* (UK, 1972) and *Rear Window* (Alfred Hitchcock, USA, 1954) (in Bergstrom, 1999: 25-56). Heath noted how a psychoanalytic analysand's interaction with his analyst may draw upon memories associated with and dependent upon sounds and images encountered at the cinema, with the film experienced providing a residue of signifying traces taken up as unconscious material (Ibid). Cinema in this context can thus be seen to influence the analysand's interaction with contemporaneous society and in turn its reciprocal interaction with the analyst. This essay can therefore be seen to echo in some respects the methodology used in this thesis to read some of the potential symptomatic meanings of the films of the Dracula canon, as illustrated by the following quote:



Cinema and psychoanalysis involve the specificity of psychoanalysis in a way that equally preconceives it, sets it in the distance from itself that its deployment in its relation to cinema produces; and the same holds in reverse for cinema, reconceived by the psychoanalytic theory and concepts with which it is newly posed (Heath, S., in Bergstrom, 1999, p.33).

Ergo as society evolves, film, psychoanalysis, and their interactions with that society evolve concurrently. This concept has been applied in this thesis to examine how the cycles within the Dracula film canon have evolved alongside them, concurring with Heath's point of view, and again countering the ahistoric criticism of psychoanalysis as an analytical paradigm in reading film. Measuring these intersecting paradigmatic shifts is not as simple as quantifying them via a privileged access to the truth facilitated by the logics of inferential statistics; rather it involves a considered qualitative interpretative inquiry into the hermeneutic realism of psycho-historiographic connections between these film cycles, revelatory events, insights, and the centrality of temporal-narrative themes (Yanchar, 2015: 107).

David Rodowick's 'The Difficulty of Difference. Psychoanalysis, Sexual Difference and Film Theory' focuses on interpreting sexuality in filmic narratives via Freudian psychoanalysis, but also consciously recognised and integrated historicist influences. He progresses from meta-analysis of Freud's work and reasoned critique of the work of Raymond Bellour, Thierry Kuntzel, and Christian Metz to define a view of Freudian psychoanalysis, when applied to cinema as an analytical paradigm from the perspective of sexual difference, as an institutional and cultural discursive that is a fluid dynamic, and therefore subject to transformation as time progresses (Rodowick, 1991: 67-140). To posit an example that might be drawn from this viewpoint, what would have been widely regarded as psychopathology at the time of Tod Browning's 1931 *Dracula*, such as homosexuality, is less likely to be regarded as such at the time of Francis Ford Coppola's 1992 opus. There are arguably instances of codified references to Dracula and his sexuality throughout the film canon. In Coppola's 1992 film, Dracula can be read as an older predator to Harker's impressionable youngster. The codified homosexual encounters occur when Dracula is depicted as a cadaverous old man. In his overt heterosexual encounters with Mina, he is an attractive young bohemian. In his covert heterosexual encounters with Lucy, he is a wild animal. As explored by Richard Dyer in his 1993 reading of Dracula filmic narratives, 'Dracula and Desire' in *Sight and Sound*, queer sexual codification in a Dracula film does not always refer to homosexuality, or even

bisexuality (Dyer, 1993: 8-12). Sexuality that transgresses the heteronormative can be codified as queer. In this example, Dracula's very body morphology provides the codification for what can be read as normative or transgressive.

Psychoanalysis as a scientific discipline can be seen from Rodowick's viewpoint to evolve over time, which foregrounds the centrality of temporal-narrative themes when framing psychoanalysis within historicism as a conflated analytical paradigm to explore film cycles within a historiographic sociocultural context. The psychosexual connotations of Dracula-as-vampire can also be argued to evolve as the film canon progresses from a sociocultural perspective. This evolution bears allusion to other historicist works outside of the psychoanalytic literature per se, such as Harry M Benshoff's examination of homosexuality in the horror film genre, which will be referred to later. Whilst the feminist psychoanalytic perspective is valid and certainly has saliency to the course of the research being undertaken here, in particular Juliet Mitchell's *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (1974: 218-227; 370-377; 401-417) which seeks an epistemological accord between these conflicting paradigms, there is arguably also merit in examining the Dracula film canon from the wider Freudian psychoanalytic frame of reference. As evidenced, there is a plethora of scholarly works applying the feminist psychoanalytical paradigm to vampires, although they do not always refer to Dracula in particular. In juxtaposition there are many more generic psychoanalytic works focused on film that little consider Dracula, vampires, or even the horror genre. Conversely there are many works centred on other perspectives, including those integrating historicism, that do not often focus on Dracula or vampirism. It can thus be argued that to take psychoanalytical and psychohistoricist vantages of the Dracula film canon informs originality and contributes in part to the literature rather than couching the research entirely within the realms of meta-analysis.

#### **1.4 Reading Filmic Textual Meaning from the Psychohistoricist Perspective**

The ascription of meaning to a filmic text is a work of interpretation by spectators that reflect shared cultural horizons, the need for which is challenged by Bordwell, as outlined earlier (Bordwell, 1991: 8-9). The meanings that can potentially be derived from a straightforward psychoanalytical reading of a particular film and the subtexts that may be ascribed may be consistent with its referential (narrative) and explicit (conceptual) meanings, or it may contradict them. The criticism that such readings can be regarded as entirely subjective, however still arguably applies; and in isolation, this criticism of these readings may prove

philosophically insurmountable. The potential plurality of ascribed meanings could after all be regarded as almost limitless, at least within the constraints of shared cultural frames of reference. However, it is when these readings are considered as foundational for potential psychohistorical readings of symptomatic meanings, as they are in the course of this thesis, that this limitless subjectivity is tempered. Whilst the potential number of direct psychoanalytical readings of a filmic text is arguably limited only by the theorist's knowledge of the subject matter, the potential number of psychohistorical readings is limited by the plausibility of the historical sociocultural resonances referred to. There can only be so many significant historical occurrences aligned with the release of any particular filmic text that can be feasibly be drawn upon when conceptualising a psychohistorical reading, so a certain degree of objectivity, albeit not absolute, is imposed. It cannot be absolute because that which is deemed historically significant is still a matter of interpretation. It is this imposition of objectivity that arguably validates the use of this conflated analytical paradigm in this context.

We now turn to the social film history that underpins the historicist analytical paradigm that will be used in conflation with psychoanalysis to interpret symptomatic meaning in the films of the Dracula canon. Social film history refers to the various sociological factors affecting both the makers and spectators of film at a given time within a defined culture (Allen and Gomery, 1985: 38). Historicist interpretation is again a point of criticism for Bordwell but is still one that this thesis seeks to address from the psychohistorical perspective. As both the makers and spectators of films are members of said society and culture, their attitudes, perceptions and mores can be argued to be shaped by these factors (Allen and Gomery, 1985: 38). As argued earlier, the evolution of psychoanalysis could be shaped by these same factors. In the context of defining the symptomatic meaning of a given film this research is primarily interested in how said film, namely those of the Dracula canon, is both potentially reflected and affected by the societies in which they were produced and viewed from the contemporaneous psychoanalytical perspective. However as saliently pointed out by Allen and Gomery:

There is no one correct approach to film history, no one "super-history" that could be written if only this or that "correct" perspective were taken, and all the "facts" of film history uncovered. All models and approaches have their advantages and disadvantages. All make certain assumptions and are based on certain notions as to what makes history "work" (Allen and Gomery, 1985: iv).

What happened at a given point in history may be a fact, but how that fact is interpreted depends on the theoretical perspective of the interpreter. Psychoanalysis as an analytical paradigm is perhaps further dependent on the subjectivity of the practitioner. It is not an analytical paradigm that is couched in empiricism. It can therefore be logically deduced that no one concept of film historicism and by a degree of abstraction, psychohistoricism, could likewise embody this unattainable correct perspective. Further to this, psychoanalysis is primarily a therapeutic discipline. The film theorist is not a clinician, and this is why they should seek to analyse filmic texts, and not diagnose the diegetic characters therein. History however can arguably manifest itself in film, and if so, is it plausible to examine resonances with historical sociocultural events and zeitgeists from a psychoanalytical perspective? In referring to Kracauer's *From Caligari to Hitler*, Allen and Gomery considered that:

The motifs in the films are reflective of the state of mind of not only individual film audiences but the entire society, as terms such as "inner life," "psychological disposition," and "collective mentality" would suggest (Allen and Gomery, 1985: 160).

As conceded by Allen and Gomery, this was rather a sweeping generalisation, but if we step back from this and take a slightly wider perspective, the potential for reading films from the psychohistorical perspective becomes more apparent. The contemporaneous psychohistorical perspective not only allows the theorist to frame the film as potentially resonant with aligned historical sociocultural events, but with the tensions pervading the psychosocial milieu that that filmic text was interacting with. If film is to be contextualised and analysed as art as reflective of culture, then it is necessary to construct a logical critical discourse that examines both sides of that discourse and avoids arbitrary subjective ascriptions of meaning to either. In the context of defining the symptomatic meaning of a given film this research is primarily interested in the possible resonances that the film cycles of the Dracula canon have with the societies in which they were produced and viewed, as refracted through the Freudian psychoanalytical lens. The concerns will be to firstly avoid the assumption of naïve realism that reality is wholly independent of and pre-existing its representation rather than as in any way constructed by it, and secondly that comparisons drawn with sociohistorical events and milieu are not perceived as entirely arbitrary constructs. Otherwise, there is the danger that such reflectionism could be dismissed as a fallacious assumption. Conversely, this should not invalidate examining relationships between the world, its filmic representations, and the spectator (Kuhn, 1990: 15-19).

One key scholarly text where psychohistoricism has been specifically applied to the Dracula film canon is Peter Hutchings' *Hammer and Beyond: the British Horror Film* (1993). Hutchings examines horror films (mainly those produced by Hammer Studios between 1945 and 1972). He successfully conflates analytical paradigms by historicising a psychoanalytical reading of Hammer's Dracula cycle, framing it against the burgeoning emancipation of women in 1950's Britain and the disruption of male professional authority, and thus patriarchy, during the 1960's. Referring specifically to Hutchings' reading of Fisher's seminal *Dracula* (1958) as an exemplar, he alludes to Dracula and Van Helsing as Oedipal fathers, the former penetrating his female victims with his phallic fangs thus sexualising and empowering them (although not entirely emancipating them as they are still answerable to his authority), whereas the latter penetrates them with his phallic stake, disempowering them and reclaiming them for Judeo-Christian, medico-legal patriarchy (Hutchings, 1993: 115-127). He posits these actions as taking place against a backdrop of unformed oedipal elements, the emasculated male secondary protagonists. As greater equality and empowerment for women was being obtained as symbolised by vampirism in Fisher's filmic text, there was a cogent patriarchal fear of emasculation by empowered women; a fear embodied by Fisher's subordinate males. The empowered (again read vampirised or sexualised) women however remained ultimately answerable to an overseeing patriarchy, represented by Dracula or Van Helsing (Ibid). By taking this approach, Hutchings has not only examined the psychoanalytic symbolism of the text but has also contextualised that symbolism as located within the theoretical liminal space between the text and contemporaneous sociocultural tensions.

By reading the text as symptomatic of a concomitant psychosocial dynamic in this manner, as opposed to an arbitrary ascription of symbolic meaning or alignment with a cogent historic narrative in isolation, historicist parallels have been critically analysed from an established psychological paradigmatic perspective, and it can be argued that the text can plausibly be read as resonant with that dynamic within this framework. As Fisher's narrative construct was then adapted to underpin the narrative framework of the Hammer narrative sequels, Hutchings argues that his reading is equally applicable to these subsequent films (Ibid). Whilst Hutchings' work is certainly paralleled by the research for this thesis, it also evidences that the psychoanalytic and historicist analytical paradigms can be integrated as a successful synthesis and applied to reading the film cycles of the wider Dracula canon by implementing like methodology to examine potentially reflective sociocultural resonances.

It can thus be argued that it is primarily the central characters reciprocity with their respective filmic narratives and their evolution within filmic cycles that resonate most readily with their viewers' experiences within mutual contemporaneous psychosocial and sociocultural contexts in this respect, which was why Dracula and the filmic characters in his immediate orbit are the focus of my research here. Textural analysis by contrast, that is analysing psychosensory contextual cues woven into the filmic text from a largely constructivist perspective (such as mise-en-scene, lighting, subliminal imagery, foley track audio), would have resonance for the film theorist but less so for the viewer in these particular contexts, and so have not been explored for that reason (Donaldson, 2014; Richard, 2021).

### **1.5 The Emergence of Vampire Theory**

Milly Williamson in her (2006) work *The Lure of the Vampire*, examines the literary and cinematic character of Count Dracula and his vampire cohorts and the audience perspective of them, exploring the spectator's concept of gender, sexuality and the self, and how the engaged spectator (read fan) chooses to self-identify with aspects of vampire mythos to attain empowerment, sexualisation, rebellion and catharsis, at least during transient engagement with such characters and with like-minded spectators. Williamson concludes that the vampire as a marginalised outcast offers individualism, defiance, and personal transformation for those spectators (Williamson, 2006: 183-191). Subculture as transformative outlet, however, is another avenue of research. Williamson's conclusion touches upon why Dracula as a cinematic character and as a trope has pervaded Western culture since his own transformation from his literary origin. Williamson implies that while Dracula is in some ways the most iconic of vampires, in others he is atypical, even iconoclastic. He can in some respects be seen to embody and epitomise a safe, cathartic expression of darker, partly suppressed thoughts and desires in this context that are pertinent to a greater or lesser extent to the engaged spectators of successive generations (Ibid). Further to this, Williamson's work is of particular import to the research for this thesis as it was one of the first to frame this examination of spectator engagement against the evolution of the sympathetic vampire, showing how self-identification within fandom becomes more acceptable to the mainstream as the evil antagonist Dracula was superseded and subsequently influenced by the anti-heroes that are Anne Rice's Lestat and Joss Whedon's Angel (Williams, 2006: 29-51). There are literary sympathetic vampires, however that predate him; JM Rymer's (1845) *Varney the Vampire*, and Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1876) being notable examples (Roberts, 1987: 1-5; Saler and Ziegler, 2005). It is with Williamson's work we arguably first see the mechanism underpinning the cultural loss of fear of the vampire and thus

Dracula. As a portent to Dracula's evolution into the superhero of Shore's *Dracula Untold*, we should not fear our heroes.

Progressing from Williamson's work, Tim Kane's (2006) *The Changing Vampire of Film and Television: A Critical Study of the Growth of a Genre* takes a conflated historicist approach similar to the research conducted for this thesis, and so is included here as both a point of comparison and in part a template. He examines the evolution of the sympathetic vampire by applying a syntactic semantic analysis which he uses to define three distinct cycles. Kane concentrates purely upon the film and television canons. The first spans 1931 to 1948, which he terms the malignant cycle (Kane, 2006: 21-43). This cycle is embodied mainly by Dracula or his analogues, and is characterised by evil, formally dressed infiltrators who are cogent with Clements later initial theistic view of Stoker's Count (Ibid). His second, the erotic cycle, spans 1957-1985 and concentrates on the increasingly sexualised and secular vampire who begins to exhibit sympathetic traits, such as *Blacula* (William Crain, USA, 1972), or *Fright Night*'s (Tom Holland, USA, 1985) Jerry Dandrige (Kane, 2006: 43-88). They remain the sun avoidant antagonist of the text, to be destroyed in the denouement to recuperate the surviving protagonists to normative (Ibid). His final sympathetic cycle charts the rise of the sympathetic vampire from the recuperated protagonists of *Near Dark* (Kathryn Bigelow, USA, 1987) and *The Lost Boys* (Joel Schumacher, USA, 1987), to the vampire as classical Hollywood hero via Joss Whedon's Angel, culminating with Kate Beckinsale's portrayal of the empowered vampire heroine Selene in *Underworld* (Len Wiseman, USA, 2003) (Kane, 2006: 88-128). Stacey Abbott's (2007) *Celluloid Vampires: Life after Death in the Modern World* took a more conventional historicist approach, aligning the evolution of the vampire from Lugosi's formally attired antagonist to Adrian Pasdar's problematised sympathetic protagonist in Bigelow's *Near Dark*, as symptomatic of the advance of modernity, globalisation and capitalism, and thus a necessary, progressive intradiegetic transcending of boundaries, in line with the extradiegetic.

James Craig Holte provides a scholarly analysis of the filmic texts of the Dracula canon, in his (1997) book *Dracula in the Dark: The Dracula Film Adaptations*. Holte examined Dracula's cinematic incarnations from the historicist perspective, focusing on the evolution of the Count's diegetic representation, from the abject, alien, plague bringing cadaver of Schreck's *Nosferatu*, to Universal's dichotomous sexualised gentleman predator, to Hammer's progressively more atavistic interpretations, and finally the romanticised nihilist Draculas portrayed in the latter third of the twentieth century (Holte, 1997: 111-121). Holte relates Dracula's cinematic,

diegetic, and fundamental character evolution to the concurrent evolution of Western culture, and the pervasion thereof by the vampire as a filmic and literary trope (Ibid). He also compares Stoker's novel's facilitation of an exploration of the repressed by its latter nineteenth century readership, covertly addressing cultural shifts such as the changing role of women, industrial and technological progress, imperialism, colonialism, and racism to later Western culture's eventual acceptance and assimilation, or rejection and annexing of such dynamics (Holte, 1997: 1-21). The despotic imperialist rapist Dracula is seen to segue into the gothic romantic nihilist of his most recent films. Holte effectively presents Dracula as a Western cultural mirror, from a historicist perspective (Holte, 1997: 27-93).

Holte draws on several other texts examining the wider vampire film genre from a similar historicist sociocultural perspective focusing on the pervasiveness of the cinematic vampire trope, and its multiple, layered, abstract meanings within Western culture. Two of these are *Reading the Vampire* by Ken Gelder (2002), and *Our Vampires, Ourselves* by Nina Auerbach (1995). Both come to the conclusion that vampire filmic texts including those of the Dracula canon have remained popular with the viewing public throughout the history of the cinematic medium because Dracula and his vampire cohorts potentially resonate with shifts in sociocultural dynamics, and with psychoemotive conflicts intrinsic to the astute individual spectator. Gelder asserts that the vampire may not only be central to (Western) culture but may even be reconstructing it in its own image (Gelder, 2002: 140-144). Auerbach posits that the vampire promises a (vicarious, cathartic) escape from our dull lives and the pressure of our times, showing us that our lives are implicated by theirs and our times are inescapable (Auerbach, 1995: 61-94; 99-147). Gelder and Auerbach thus exemplify a pervading theme within the literature, which is that we as spectators identify with the vampire and thus with Dracula.

This again resonates with Kane's work. He views changing syntactic and semantic elements in vampire narratives over time as a process of evolution, akin to genetic mutations, which has also some cogency with Stacey Abbott's historicist perspective as discussed earlier. The vampire narrative can be seen to evolve to survive the changing tastes of its audience who are likewise evolving to survive within a shifting cultural dynamic. These shifts can thus be seen to also parallel those occurring over time within psychoanalysis as a therapeutic paradigm. This begs the question can those same shifts be explored within psychoanalysis as a theoretical, analytical paradigm? Yes, would be the tacit answer from the conflated psychohistorical



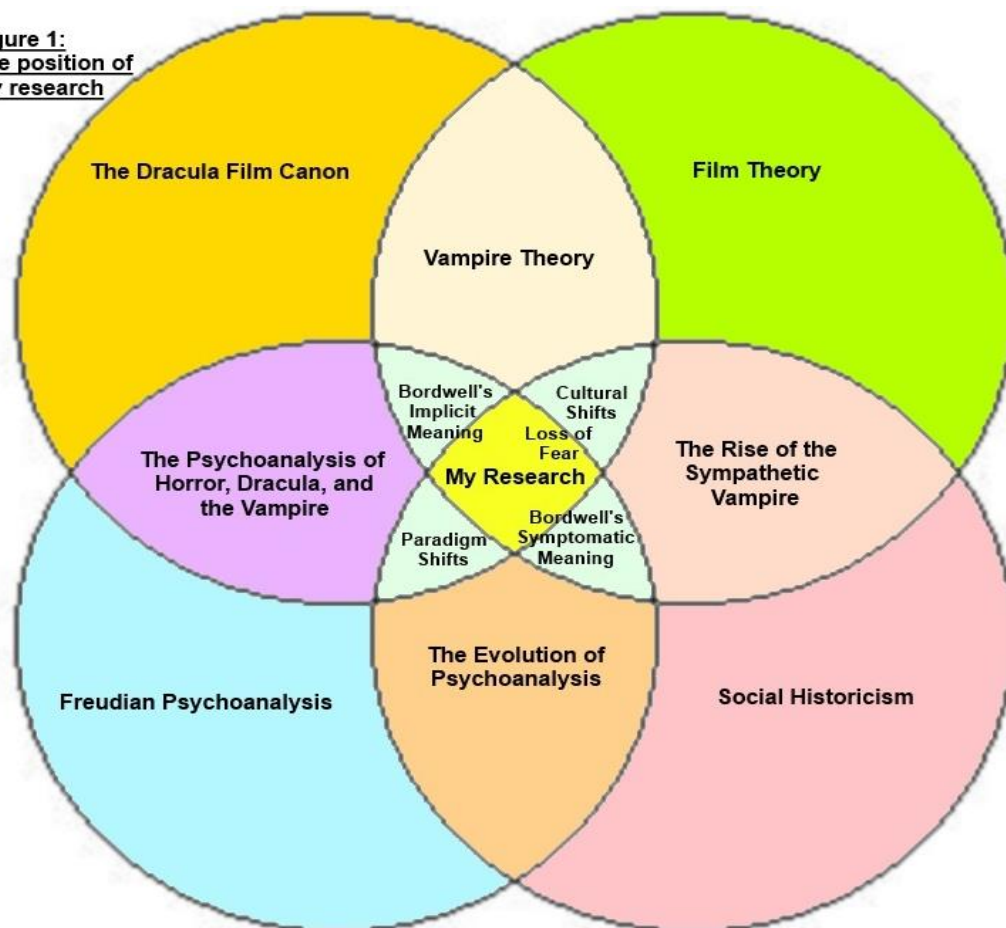
standpoint. These are arguably fundamentals of what can be termed vampire theory and is certainly a theme inviting a psychohistorical examination of the films of the Dracula canon to establish some of the reasons why. Erik Butler is one of the very few scholarly authors to succinctly make the case for the existence of vampire theory as a distinct subgenre of literary criticism, which he does in his (2010) book *Metamorphoses of the Vampire in Literature and Film: Cultural Transformations in Europe, 1732-1933*. He states that there is a need to account for the logic underlying the vampire's many and conflicting forms, alluding to its ever-expanding cultural pervasiveness from its eighteenth-century literary inception onward as evidenced by the body of scholarly works on the subject (Butler, 2010: vii-xi; 1-27). It can be argued that not only does Butler have a valid case, but that the body of scholarly works on the vampire in film as exemplified by the limited selection discussed thus far indeed evidences that vampire theory emerges over time as a body of scholarly work.

As in Hutchings' work, (historicised) Freudian psychoanalysis can be argued to evolve alongside Dracula's cinematic incarnations as the sympathetic vampire has emerged and responded to sociocultural shifts as outlined above. It is at this convergent epistemological and hermeneutic intersection of three bodies of literature that may appear disparate at first glance (film theory, Freudian psychoanalysis, and social historicism) that the research conducted for this thesis can be located within vampire theory as a novel contribution. By contextualising the deeper meanings of Dracula's filmic texts within these epistemological intersections, that in turn can be positioned within the liminal space between psychoanalysis and historicism, this research seeks to ascertain not only why Dracula is continually resurrected as a cinematic character, sometimes inhabiting the retelling of the same narrative and who continually adapts to the sociocultural moment, but what potential contributory contemporaneous psychosocial resonances may be at play, and why that reading may be applicable in that particular cultural climate. See figure 1 below.

Vampire theory thus contextualised can be argued to concur with Rick Altman's perspective whereby films, and indeed cycles of films, adhere to viewer ascribed systems of expectation of verisimilitude and hypothesis applied to those textual and intertextual constructs to locate genre (Altman, 1999: 84-85). The evolution of film genre by dint of logical abstraction can be read as an evolution of the film cycles which comprise it, and the films which comprise those cycles, which are products of their contemporaneous psychosocial milieu. Genre then, here the vampire subgenre of horror, can reasonably be argued to be in a similar reciprocity with

sociocultural shifts, but on a wider overarching scale that spans a greater timeframe, sitting taxonomically above filmic texts and film cycles respectively. Altman (1999: 204-205) further contextualises genre as regulatory schemes that facilitate the integration of diverse functions into a single unified social fabric, sharing functions with complex communities (including nations) advocating that by virtue of this parallel, genre theory is a useful tool for analysing populations and the texts that they use. This author concurs, but will take a microcosmic approach to a similar analysis as outlined earlier in this chapter, by focusing upon the film cycles that comprise a specific facet of an influential subgenre. In terms of the research conducted for this thesis, the cinematic evolution of Dracula, cycle by cycle, certainly constitutes only one facet of the evolution of vampire cinema, but it is perhaps the most seminal of those facets, as will be demonstrated.

**Figure 1:**  
**The position of my research**



### **1.6 The Cycles of Dracula’s Cinematic Evolution: An Overview of the Thesis**

Engagement with Dracula as a cinematic character taps into a historic pancultural engagement with vampire mythology that can be traced back into antiquity, be that the Roman succubus, or

Egyptian *ekimmu*.<sup>4</sup> What Dracula arguably has in common with this ancient lore, or even with his more recent vampiric literary predecessors, is that he allows the spectator a safe dalliance with fear, a vicarious, cathartic and socially acceptable engagement with visceral psychosexual urges, and with the desire for control (Righi, 2011). It must also be acknowledged that Dracula returns because the film industry relies on certain established, marketable properties to remake, but for them to be successful at the box office, innovation or even iconoclasm must inform change in those properties to maintain cultural currency. This is where there may be potential for Dracula to resonate with his contemporaneous psychosocial milieu. Fresh interest in the character can arguably be equated with reimagining of the original narrative on these occasions, but the prospect of a strong commercial viability pairing valorised directors with these adaptations cannot be discounted, as is the case with Coppola or Argento. Equally there are instances when it can be argued that the character has merely been recycled from the standpoint of base commercial reliability alone. What is perhaps more readily apparent, is that Dracula's evolution into a rebel anti-hero took place in the cinema.

Chapter two explores the Universal Dracula cycle and commences with Bela Lugosi's Depression era Dracula in Tod Browning's 1931 film for Universal studios humanises the monster's visage but not the monster. This chapter takes the first step towards foregrounding a robust psychohistorical analytical agenda for film studies, and rather than attempting to discredit established theory, it utilises it to construct the complexly layered analyses that can, as described by Medovoi (1998), successfully iterate the cogent psychosocial tensions and ideological stakes raised by the historicity of the Dracula films. According to Medovoi, reflection demands a relation of verisimilitude and realism between the text and history, whereas representation points more broadly to a referential function of the text, one that might operate according to other semiological principles such as the indexical or symbolic, the metonymic or synecdochic (Medovoi, 1998: 1-10). Where psychohistoricism diverges from this viewpoint, is that it can be argued to seek a reflection that establishes a common psychoemotive aetiology between synchronic signification and that which is signified.

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<sup>4</sup> The apotropaic customs of medieval through to Victorian era Eastern Europe are many, varied, and far too numerous to list in their entirety at this juncture. For the sake of brevity and salience we will mention here those which went on to evolve in the Count's filmic representations. In terms of prevention, vampires may only enter a dwelling at the invitation of an occupant, requiring said permission once to come and go at will. Garlic and wolfs bane are repellent to vampires. The vampire as an agent of the devil is repelled by Christian iconography. The vampire cannot cross flowing water unless in a vessel. The vampire's powers of hypnosis, preternatural strength, and transformation are limited in daylight. When FW Murnau represented sunlight as being fatal to the vampire resulting in its dissolution in his 1922 film *Nosferatu*, it was quickly incorporated into the popular representation of the vampire.

Within Browning's contemporary narrative framed within a Victorian gothic aesthetic, Dracula is portrayed as a calculating sociopathic predator, albeit a suave and elegantly attired one. The elements of sexual attractiveness were now in play, but the possibility of love between Dracula and any of his female protagonists was absent. There was no sympathy for the vampire here. Both Orlok and Lugosi's Dracula epitomised the trope of the evil other arguably resonates with some of the basest human fears. For Weimar Germans that other may possibly be read both as the extraneous punitive Western allies, and the growing perceived threat (by the burgeoning fascist right of that period) of the intrinsic Jewish community. The morphology and body language ascribed to Orlok, amongst other possible readings, may be read as an anti-Semitic caricature; perhaps Dracula's most blatant reflection of historical context (McCormick, 1993: 640-668). For depression era Americans that other could be read as representing the all-consuming financiers, but also as the other that rose from within that resisted such oppression. The later psychohistoricist reading given shows Browning's Dracula as symbolic of narcissistic characters that Fearnow argues as being able to rise above their initial circumstances and resist the threat of foreclosure and eviction, but that still encompasses the fear of change from life into a state that is less than living, that of basal animal survival, sans regard for your fellow human as anything more than prey (Fearnow, 1997: 31-41). The decadent Count and his opulent, philandering ways would provide many with a temporary mental escape from the realities of grinding poverty with a brief step into the world of a rich European aristocrat whose supernatural evil and understated misogyny titillated taboo and repressed urges of domination and yielding subservience. For the remainder of the 1930's Dracula per se was absent from the cinema although Lugosi did play a Dracula analogue who turned out not to be a vampire, in the convoluted murder plot of Tod Browning's 1935 *Mark of the Vampire*.

Chapter two continues as we enter World War II. Viewer sympathy for the vampire is arguably first felt when the first true humanising of the monster occurs in Robert Siodmak's 1943 *Son of Dracula* for Universal studios. Universal dominated the vampire film genre during the 1940's, although it could be argued that they were less invested in Dracula as a character than Frankenstein's monster, considering the repeated changes in casting. Lon Chaney Junior's vampire is as much in search of love as he is sustenance and is portrayed in some respects as a romantic old world aristocrat that falls in love with and is exploited by the younger gold-digging femme fatale, who in turn arguably demonises the empowered woman. It is difficult not to feel some empathy for Dracula as a victim in this film; he can be argued to be as much tragic as evil. Considering Chaney Junior's wider star persona, he also arguably draws upon the pathos

associated with the character for which he was best known at that time, Universal's tragic Wolfman Larry Talbot.

Dracula remains the victim in the next Universal studios film featuring the Count, Erle C Kenton's 1944 *House of Frankenstein*. Here John Carradine's debonair Count is again desirous of a bride above all else, after being rediscovered as a fairground attraction, and is then disposed of before the film is even close to half way through. His character can therefore be read as being manipulated and discarded by Frankenstein's protégé. In Kenton's following film *House of Dracula* (1945) which was more a re-working than a sequel, Carradine's somewhat more duplicitous and (for the first time) clinically pathologised Count is more central to the plot. He is no longer the victim but the manipulator. However, his goal is still a relationship with the woman to whom he shows loving attention. Themes of lack, loss and betrayal are foregrounded here, as they often are in time of war. It is from this perspective that Harry M Benshoff explores the cultural history and historicism of how homosexuality is codified in the horror film in his wryly titled 1997 book *Monsters in the Closet*. He aligns the evolution of the horror film genre with the cultural history of the gay community in the United States of America, drawing on a wide number of filmic texts (Benshoff, 1997: 31-77). It is Benshoff's examination of the cinematic character of Count Dracula in Kenton's films as the homosexual, monstrous, counter-hegemonic outsider and veiled threat to Judeo-Christian patriarchy in relation to contemporaneous medical, social, religious and psychological models of homosexuality that is salient to the research here (Benshoff, 1997: 77-122). Said models included the demonising psychopathological construct ascribed to homosexuality by Freudian psychoanalysis which bears comparison to the other sociocultural models discussed and was concomitantly evolving during this period as a therapeutic discipline (Ibid).

However, according to Worland it could also be argued that the cinema screen's monsters that metaphorically embodied the widespread fears and disillusionment that followed economic collapse such as Murnau's *Orlok* then Browning's *Dracula* lost that currency as the horrors of World War II so far exceeded mere anxiety and the capacity of distanced metaphor that they eclipsed fake movie scares so far as to render them irrelevant except as escapist entertainment (Worland, 1997: 47). At this juncture in the *Dracula* canon spectators may not only have found *Dracula* less frightening but wanted him to be less frightening to allow a brief cinematic respite from the very real fears without (Ibid). One vampire film worth mentioning outside the Universal canon was Lew Landers 1944 *Return of the Vampire* starring Bela Lugosi as *Dracula*

in all but name. The vampire Count Armand Tesla was released from his London tomb by a convenient German bomb during the blitz, only to be left open to his destruction when hit by another. Although Tesla was the primary antagonist of the text, he is not the greatest horror. He is a brief distraction from the blitz itself (Ibid). Apart from the name the characterisation and costume were identical to Lugosi's performance in Tod Browning's 1931 film.

Few notable vampire films were released during the 1950's until Hammer studios cycle revived the Count in 1958, notable examples of which will be examined in chapter three. The Hammer Films of the late 1950's to the early 1970's starring Christopher Lee in the role of Dracula commenced with Terence Fisher's 1958 *Dracula* and continued with six sequels<sup>5</sup>: *Dracula, Prince of Darkness* (1966) again directed by Terence Fisher, *Dracula Has Risen from the Grave* (1968) directed by Freddie Francis, *Taste the Blood of Dracula* (1970) directed by Peter Sasdy, *Scars of Dracula* (1970) directed by Roy Ward Baker, and finally *Dracula AD 1972* and *The Satanic Rites of Dracula* (1973), both of which were directed by Alan Gibson. Lee's Dracula, retaining the iconic opera cloak and dark suit from his Universal forebears, was no victim. He was a sexualised predator emphasised by being the first cinematic vampire to sport canine fangs and be explicitly seen to use them. Christopher Lee's Dracula may be considered in the light of both the fear of the Eastern European during the escalating Cold War and liberation from pre-war social norms and mores in the simultaneous sexual revolution of the sixties. Lee's Dracula (conditionally) sexually empowered the women he vampirised. He reproduced his kind asexually as is the wont of vampires. He indulged in metaphoric homosexual encounters as he would just as happily bite men, as implied with his encounter with sycophantic acolyte Johnny Alucard in Alan Gibson's *Dracula AD 1972*. Many spectators may have found his exploits a vicarious release of anti-establishment tendencies. Hammer's Count can therefore be framed as a Freudian libertine and postmodern countercultural revolutionary, arguably representative of the individual and collective anxieties of the long 1960's that were predicated on the fear of societal change. This Dracula facilitated such change in others, yet in contradiction he was its antithesis as he did not change. He did little to elicit the sympathy of the spectator. He showed little emotional attachment, only sexual arousal or violent aggression, but he was sexually attractive. While sympathy was absent, identification on the part of the spectator, if only at its most basal, arguably was not.

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<sup>5</sup> Excepting both *Brides of Dracula* (Terence Fisher, 1960) where Dracula is replaced by one of his disciples, Baron Meinster played by David Peel and the martial arts exploitation film *The Legend of the 7 Gold Vampires* directed by Roy Ward Baker, where Dracula's marginal role is portrayed by John Forbes-Robertson.

Lee's singular portrayal of the Count outside Hammer in Jesus Franco's 1970 *Count Dracula* may not belong with that cycle in a conventional sense, but it does share a thematic affiliation, and so is included as part of the wider chronological cycle that is being discussed. This Dracula like his Hammer alter ego was a remorseless manipulative predator, but unlike him appeared to be a more developed character and was the first to be conflated with the historical Vlad Tsepes. This was the first of the Count's cinematic incarnations to explicitly rejuvenate, and so resonate with the fear of aging and mortality that was becoming more pervasive in an increasingly secular, youth obsessed Western society. Franco's film arguably represents such charismatic narcissism. Dracula's vampirism can be read in this context as symbolic of what becomes a malign social influence that seeks to control a group mind set. Middle class youth seeking direction through this period of rapid social change were drawn into cults by such individuals, more so in the United States, and at times with similarly destructive consequences (Cushman, 1984). To quote Cushman:

Religious cult membership is a significant phenomenon that reveals a great deal about adult development, the formation and maintenance of the self, the tension between community and autonomy, the interactional dynamics between leader and follower, the importance of cultural forms and a cultural frame of reference, and the transitional shift from one era to another. Most importantly, it illuminates the confluence of the personal and the public, revealing how the history of the common person is made (Cushman, 1984: 5).

Dracula's cinematic resurrections arguably symbolise the spectator's desire for empowerment through modernity during such transitional shifts if we apply Thomas' standpoint. If we apply Cushman's, they also symbolise the consequences of naively seeking that empowerment from an exploitative predator.

Dan Curtis' 1973 *Bram Stoker's Dracula* was the first to present the character's contemporary love interest (Mina) as a reincarnation of Vlad Tsepes' bride, again conflating Dracula with Tsepes. It is Dracula's past that inevitably brings about his downfall, inviting a psychoanalytic reading couched in mourning and loss of the object, a theme that arguably draws at least some sympathy for Jack Palance's Dracula. Dracula in this film is a flawed warrior leader, again inviting parallels with the malign cult leaders of the long 1960's. The monster was now partly

humanised and even less an object of fear. It is at this juncture that Dracula appears to finally lose his dominance as the pre-eminent cinematic vampire as others emerged.

The first cinematic vampires to vie for Dracula's crown were analogous to the Count's morphology at that point, such as Bob Kelljan's *Count Yorga, Vampire* in 1970 and William Crain's Blaxploitation cult classic *Blacula* (a victim of Dracula) in 1972. These were sexualised, romantic, aristocratic cultural outsiders with a penchant for evening dress cloaks. Change was wrought by the rise of the female vampire as (bisexual) lead antagonist, in Hammer studios' *The Vampire Lovers* (Roy Ward Baker, 1970), *Lust for a Vampire* (Jimmy Sangster, 1971) and *Twins of Evil* (John Hough, 1971), and then more explicitly in Harry Kumel's 1971 *Daughters of Darkness* and Jesus Franco's 1971 *Vampyros Lesbos*. The literary source for Ward Baker's, Sangster's and Hough's films, Le Fanu's *Carmilla* was originally published in 1871, predating Dracula and notable in this context as one of the first sympathetic literary vampires desirous of love and companionship (Le Fanu, 1871; 2013). The generic cinematic vampire as modelled on Dracula would go on to be re-imagined in a variety of ways, from Brian Clemens' *Captain Kronos, Vampire Hunter* (Hammer, UK, 1974) in which the antagonist consumed vitality rather than blood from his victims, to the theme of the vampire apocalypse, which was explored in Hans W Geissendorfer's 1970 film *Jonathan*.

It would be six years from Curtis' film until Dracula would return as the arch antagonist of an English language cinematic film, to commence the next chronological cycle to be discussed in chapter four, the Dracula films of the long 1980's. In John Badham's 1979 *Dracula*, with which we will commence chapter three. Dracula's bride (here, Lucy) is empowered by his vampiric attentions as never before, and it is that theme that will be further explored by drawing parallels with Juliet Mitchell's contemporaneous feminist reappraisal of Freud's theory (Mitchell, 1974). It is with Badham's Byronic Count that Dracula arguably no longer objectified fear, as this was a more sympathetic vampire capable of true romantic love and passion. Whereas the latter Hammer Dracula films could be argued to constitute a reactionary recycling of the character for commercial gain, Curtis' and Badham's films (and perhaps Herzog's 1979 *Nosferatu*) constitute innovative reinventions of the character that return to Stoker's narrative during a phase of Western cultural anomie and as such are potentially more plausible foci of resonance with contemporaneous psychosocial tensions. Dracula again took a cinematic hiatus as lead vampire antagonist throughout much of the long 1980's. The notable exception was Fred Dekker's 1987 film *The Monster Squad*. This was a monster rally aimed at older children.



Dracula was very much the film's vampire antagonist as opposed to being a deliberately comedic or avuncular character as in other productions aimed at younger audiences. Dekker's Dracula was defeated by children and outright fear of the cinematic character, already ebbing with Badham's film, was now lost altogether, reflecting perhaps a wider loss of innocence.

A plethora of frothy vampire vs. teen horror comedies such as Tom Holland's 1985 film *Fright Night* were released during the decade, but several more notable vampire films also emerged. Tony Scott's 1983 *The Hunger* saw the return of the empowered bisexual female vampire, sans fangs but equipped with a small sharp knife. Susan Sarandon's somewhat sympathetic protagonist becomes the vampire and turns the tables on her mentor (Catherine Deneuve) by eventually keeping her locked in a coffin as she did to her own decomposing lovers. In Tobe Hooper's 1985 science fiction horror *Lifeforce*, the vampires were vitality sapping aliens, a break in generic convention from the blood sucking undead, but the principle of the prey being transformed into the predator through their infectious attentions remained intact. One of the most notable contemporary sympathetic vampire protagonists of the cinema, Jenny Wright's character Mae, was foregrounded in Kathryn Bigelow's seminal 1987 *Near Dark*. **Bitten by Mae, Caleb is a fledgling vampire who has not made his first kill.** Initially she seeks to draw her lover into her dysfunctional vampire gang, roaming the American heartland in search of blood, but love gets the better of instinct. She turns on them to protect him and is eventually recuperated to humanity by a blood transfusion, reintroducing the vampirism as pathology trope incepted in *House of Dracula* and perpetuated in *Dracula* (1958). A similar theme was explored in Joel Schumacher's 1987 *The Lost Boys* where small town newcomer Michael is drawn into the local vampire motorcycle gang, becoming another fledgling sympathetic vampire yet to make a kill. Meanwhile, the sire of this gang is seducing his mother. Michael is recuperated by the destruction of the sire. Now that the vampire had become fully sympathetic and Dracula had reached a point as a cinematic character where he represented more a pleasurable nostalgic figure than an object of fear, his next film incarnation as argued by Williamson (2005) was inevitably driven toward change if the character was to retain any relevance.

Dracula would make his iconoclastic cinematic return in 1992 in Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* that would conclude the long 1980's. Dracula was again conflated with Vlad Tsepes, and his potential bride Mina was his reincarnated lost love. In Coppola's film, Dracula's vampirism is born of grief-fuelled blasphemy when his wife was killed by the

invading Ottomans. When he finds Mina some four centuries later, he falls in love again. Crucially, that love is requited. Vampirism in Coppola's film is pathologised by images of coursing red blood cells, as the parasite did in Siodmak's *House of Dracula*. This trope and the synchronicity of its release frames the film against a potential psychohistorical reading of the cultural anxieties of the fin-de-siècle translated as disease. For Coppola's film that disease was AIDS, drawing parallels with syphilis during the previous fin-de-siècle as Stoker's novel reached the public consciousness. The free sexuality and mingling of body fluids represented by Dracula provided a vicarious release for psychosexual urges that had again become repressed and viewed as counter-hegemonic, this time not by cultural mores but by a deadly disease which unlike vampirism lead to a very permanent death. The AIDS allegory for vampirism loomed large in 1980's cinema and has been explored by previous authors, notably Nicola Nixon's readings of *The Hunger* and *The Lost Boys* in her 1997 book *Blood Read: The Vampire Metaphor in Contemporary Culture* and was applied to Coppola's film specifically in Jeffrey Weinstock's 1997 article 'Virus Culture' (Nixon, 1997; Weinstock, 1997). Coppola's Dracula like Badham's, remains a sympathetic romantic anti-hero albeit a re-pathologised one.

Dracula takes another cinematic hiatus for the remainder of that decade as the sympathetic vampire gained greater cultural momentum and currency. Neil Jordan's 1994 film of Anne Rice's book *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) is told from the perspective of Brad Pitt's Louis, a young man turned to vampirism by Tom Cruise's predatory hedonist Lestat. Louis truly lamented his condition and never really accepted the predatory aspect of his nature. He spent eternity embroiled in an existential crisis of sorts. It is this vampire being at odds with vampirism and living with the endless results of a single bad choice that marked a significant turning point for the cinematic vampire per se, truly humanising the monster and engendering spectator sympathy as never before. It is worth mentioning at this juncture that as spectators' fear of Dracula was dissipating during the 1970's, Louis came into being as Rice's novel was published in 1976. Sympathy for the vampire may not have been widely culturally penetrative -in cinema at least- until the 1990's but it had been incepted earlier. Williamson (2005) intimated that this signalled one of the most important transformations in spectator perception of the vampire. It was no longer a figure of fear in Western popular culture, but one of sympathy. Dracula's otherness may have provoked fear in earlier cinematic incarnations, but if the character was to avoid Wood's portent of complete obsolescence, then from Badham's film and certainly Coppola's film forward, that otherness would have to adapt to this new perception as a source of empathy and identification and resonate with spectator's desires rather

than their fears (Wood 1983; Williamson, 2005). The vampire subgenre mixed with action and teen drama during this period. In Stephen Norrington's 1998 *Blade*, Wesley Snipes portrays a half human vampire who prevents himself from turning completely by regularly injecting himself with a serum. He despises his vampirism so utterly he vaccinates himself against it, again foregrounding the vampirism as pathology model. He takes the sympathetic vampire role one step further in what could be read in psychoanalytic terms as projection. He destroys other vampires in acts arguably as inwardly nihilistic as they appear to be outwardly altruistic to his human cohorts and the spectator in that they preserve humanity. This trope is taken forward by the vampires who've regained their souls, Angel and Spike, who fight alongside the titular slayer killing other vampires as well as all manner of other hell spawned entities in Joss Whedon's television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) and its spin-off *Angel* (1999-2004). Both these heroic vampires can fall in love, as did Badham's and Coppola's Dracula, and both did with Buffy. The sympathetic vampire was now sleeping with the enemy (Nixon, 1997; Weinstock, 1997). Buffy even had a semi-romantic liaison with Dracula himself in the first episode of season five. This characterisation could be argued to be an homage to, or even derivative of Gary Oldman's portrayal of Dracula in Coppola's 1992 film, and as it is a relatively insignificant television appearance in the wider context of the research at hand, it won't be explored further at this juncture.

Chapter five commences with the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and a reactionary return to a more predatory cinematic Dracula as Patrick Lussier's film *Dracula 2000* commences the final cycle to be discussed. Portrayed by Gerard Butler, Dracula is again the Byronic anti-hero lover, reminiscent in part of Langella's performance but with a darker, visceral edge not dissimilar to and perhaps influenced by Tom Cruise's take on Anne Rice's vampire Lestat in Jordan's *Interview with the Vampire* (1994). Lussier's Dracula empowers his bride in an innovative character shift. She remained human but retains preternatural superhuman abilities drawn from her encounter with him. Parallels with Whedon's *Buffy* can be drawn and foreground some of the same themes, that of a young woman looking to find her place in the world via extraordinary circumstance. This invites a psychohistorical reading of the film as both resonant with and cathartic of contemporaneous millenarian anxieties that may have contributed to this disconnect (Nixon, 1997; Weinstock, 1997).

In 2004 Dracula was again transformed by Richard Roxburgh's portrayal of a piratical pantomime villain for Stephen Sommers' monster rally *Van Helsing*. As the hero of the film

suffers traumatic amnesia, the reading of this film explores the effects of repressed memory from the Freudian psychoanalytic perspective, expanding this to encompass the ongoing cultural impact of the Gulf conflict of the time. Dracula in this film is a megalomaniac dictator seeking domination. He is no anti-hero empowering his female victims. It could be argued that he does not go so far as to engender fear. He serves the purpose of any pantomime antagonist. He objectifies a faintly ridiculous set of immoral values to be overcome by the protagonist. By contrast Dario Argento's 2013 *Dracula* presented the Count as highly manipulative of others yet providing economic and political stability for the local community. This film invites psychoanalytical and thus psychohistoricist readings of a representative archetypal benevolent dictator trope. Dracula in this film could still be seen to represent anxiety in some respects but still does not engender fear despite here at least attempting to do so. By this point in the canon his fallibilities are staple tenets of vampire fiction, despite his brief intertextually incongruous metamorphosis into an aggressive giant (female) praying mantis.

Between 2008 and 2012 came perhaps the most sympathetic cinematic vampire hero thus far, Robert Pattinson's character Edward Cullen in the five films of the *Twilight Saga* franchise. Cullen falls in love, seeks marriage, and acts as a peace keeper in the war between vampires and werewolves. He is such a symbolic epitome of all that is good in the heroic protagonist of a classical Hollywood narrative that rather than be destroyed by sunlight or even be repelled by it, he sparkles when exposed to it as if canonised.

This may partly explain Dracula's most recent cinematic resurrection. Gary Shore's 2014 *Dracula Untold* presents a superhero Dracula who sacrifices his life, family, and earthly soul to save his country in an act of altruistic nihilism that arguably surpasses the anti-hero trope, invoking an exploration of the psychoanalysis and psychohistoricism of altruism in war. To acknowledge one possible criticism of this reading, it is that this film could hardly be considered a polemic in this context such as Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* (USA, 1998) or Coppola's earlier *Apocalypse Now* (USA, 1979). It could be more accurately considered from the commercial perspective as placing a tried and tested cultural property within an action fantasy setting to exploit the resurgent popularity of the cinematic superhero genre. This criticism notwithstanding however, it can still be argued that the psychohistoricist parallels drawn remain apparent and are not entirely invalid. Dracula has now come full circle as the hero rather than the villain of the piece. He is no longer even meant to be feared by the spectator.

Orrin E Klapp's *Collective Search for Identity* identifies the social function of a lead protagonist as being related to three prevalent norms, reinforcement, seduction, and transcendence (Klapp, 1969: 211-218). Reinforcement refers to the reinforcement of the hegemony, the dominant cultural ideology (Ibid). The lead protagonist does this by literally embodying this ideology and illustrating that conforming to it has its rewards. The rebel anti-hero likewise reinforces dominant ideology by providing safe, vicarious catharsis and a quiet rebellion against those aspects of the ideology that a spectator would secretly like to turn away from, a rebellion that does no harm in the real world. Diegetic characters all arguably seduce spectators to a certain extent. It is a part of engaging with the diegesis and being drawn into the narrative text and identifying with its characters. Dracula literally seduces his victims and may well metaphorically seduce his spectators with the lifestyle of a dominant, evil, sexualised, mysterious, supernatural, and immortal being. These aspects of Dracula's character are all part of the rebel vampire's attraction.

To draw upon Laura Mulvey's article 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (1975, reprinted 1989), transcendence in this context refers to a character allowing the spectator to transcend their real-life role for a time by identifying with him or her. For example, the spectator might identify with Dracula and place themselves in his place to indulge in a brief fantasy in which to be dominant and sexually attractive, or in one in which they may be dominated by him. This may spur his transcendence and he may be inspired to be assertive which may make him more attractive. Does Dracula as a cinematic character promote or discourage rebellion? He can be argued to do both in a tensile equilibrium. His sexual freedom, his dominance, sovereignty and power over his victims and slaves, and his wealth and status, despite (or perhaps because of) his actions and his lack of conformity to sociocultural norms all promote rebellion. Badham's and certainly Lussier's Draculas arguably epitomise this facet of the cinematic Count. Yet he always meets his end at the hands of the forces of good (read conformity) and thus the consequences of his rebellion are represented as negative, so conversely (and subversively) he also discourages rebellion. Lee's aloof aristocrat especially, personifies in some respects rather than entirely disrupts the authoritarian establishment archetype. Again, Dracula as a cinematic character remains dichotomous, defying simplistic labels, and inviting further analysis.

The progressive loss of fear and increasing sympathy for Dracula's complex and often contradictory cinematic character and his continual reconstruction is also signposted by parody which punctuates the diachronic periodicity of this film canon. In this context then, parody can

be argued to parallel reinvention. Parody achieves trans-textual actualisation via intertextual dialogism. It explores the open-ended discursive possibilities facilitating sufficient ironic distance between target proto-texts (films parodied) and the parodic text itself to constitute that text as parodic yet allow it to be recognised as such as opposed to being read as a comedic proto-text. Ironic distance is generated by transforming a conventionalised code into another code that engenders recognition of incongruity between those codes, such that the spectator perceives comedic transgression (Harries, 2000: 1-23). Harries defines parody as a textual composition imitating a pre-existing work or genre for ridicule, defining four successive stages within the developmental path of a genre, the primary logonomic system evoked in film parody (Ibid). These stages, experimental, classical, intellectualisation, and finally self-reflexive will be explored in context throughout the course of this thesis refracted through the lens of Susan Stewart's discourse on the epistemology of the horror film (Stewart, 1982: 33-50).

In chapter six, conclusions are drawn from these discussions of the Dracula film canon to answer the stated research questions.

The readings of the cycles within the Dracula film canon in this thesis examine why Dracula as a cinematic character continues to resonate with historic sociocultural moments, either in films adapted from Stoker's novel or transplanted into another narrative, whilst retaining relevance as a cultural property as opposed to merely retaining profitability as a commercial commodity. It is this question that the research conducted for this thesis primarily seeks to answer rather than attempting to define any particular reading of any singular Dracula film as a canonical, true reading of any supposed deeper meaning, whilst contextualising the cinematic evolution of the character and shifting attitudes toward him. There is an argument for applying the same depth of critical psychohistorical analytical discourse to female vampire characters in their respective filmic texts cogent to the Dracula film cycles that have been explored. The reasons for not doing so within the research conducted for this thesis are twofold. Firstly, it is a matter of structural brevity; there is insufficient scope within the writing constraints imposed to examine all of them in the same manner. Secondly, and perhaps more saliently, these characters cannot be argued to be a similarly iconic cultural property to Dracula, even if reimagining him as female gendered, and thus do not have the same degree of sociocultural resonance in their respective contemporaneous psychosocial contexts. That is not to imply that such a resonance is entirely absent however, and key texts pertaining to *Dracula's daughters* will be acknowledged where appropriate.

## Chapter 2

### Universal Dracula, The 1930's & 1940's

#### 2.0 The Universal Dracula Cycle

This chapter examines a cycle of films from one studio, albeit one that (unlike the Hammer Dracula cycle) does not constitute an overarching narrative. Conventional seriality was evidently not a consideration for the Universal cycle, but the intensification of conventions and iconographic tropes that would become synonymous with Dracula's cinematic character, and many a filmic and televisual vampire for that matter, until the early 1980's, were incepted within this cycle. It was within these films that Dracula's narcissistic dualist roles of the romantic predator and monstrous gentleman were first foregrounded in the cinema, and first resonated with facets of the contemporaneous psychosocial milieu. It is this formal elaboration of thematic complexity, to paraphrase Alloway, across this cycle that is of interest here; what were the potential overarching historiographic resonances of this cycle with the sociocultural shifts of the period? Concomitant shifts in psychoanalysis as an analytical paradigm, itself arguably influenced by that same psychosocial milieu, will be mapped against them to theorise this potential reciprocity between film and culture.

Universal's Dracula cycle commenced with Tod Browning's 1931 *Dracula*. As Browning's film was filmed by day, George Melford's Spanish language version was filmed concurrently by night utilising the same sets. The characters and script for Melford's Spanish version of Dracula were essentially the same as Browning's film (Brunas et al, 1990: 7-19). Some of the names of the protagonists were changed to render them more accessible to Spanish speaking audiences. Mina becomes Eva, Lucy Lucia, and John Harker, Juan. Seward, Van Helsing and most importantly Dracula, retained their names and thus their foreign identity relative to the other characters (Ibid). Key stylistic differences that can be highlighted in the Spanish film are the more developed dramatis personae of the characters and Melford's more cinematic style of shot composition. His use of close-ups and reverses etc., more familiar to the modern viewer, contrasted starkly with Browning's view through the proscenium arch (Ibid). Eva's character portrayal (Lupita Tovar) is again more naturalistic than her American counterpart. This is particularly evident when she nears transformation to vampirism. She is again more sexualised, wanton and vivacious, in appearance and manner. Renfield's characterisation by Pablo Alvarez Rubio is naturalistic compared to Dwight Frye's eerie stylised portrayal. Flashes of apparent lucidity were portrayed interspersed with increasing periods of florid psychosis epitomised by his truly manic sounding laughter, which construct a more convincing lunatic than Dwight

Frye's pantomimic madman. The Spanish speaking actors' performances were less theatrical, cogent with Melford's direction. There were more explicit visual cues for viewers, the most salient being Dracula's bite-marks upon both Lucia and Eva being shown in close shot, signifying vampiric taint (Ibid). Greater attention was paid to the characters' respective narrative resolutions in Melford's film, most notably Lucia's, who is staked by Van Helsing (her counterpart in Browning's text merely vanishes).

The overall effect is a more immersive mimesis, better facilitating spectator engagement with individual characters and their diegesis. Universal pictures released Tod Browning's *Dracula*, arguably the most seminal film in the Dracula canon, on Valentine's Day 1931, with Melford's film debuting in New York on April 24th of that year. Browning's film is one of the most well-known of its era, and despite criticism of its theatrical style, it has been denoted a classic of its genre and selected for preservation by the National Film Registry of the United States (Ibid). However, to the critical eye, it is Melford's film that would be argued by many to constitute the superior film. Although Melford's film essentially mirrors Browning's (utilising the same script), albeit improving upon it cinematically, it is Browning's (more widely seen) film that can be argued to be the more influential. There are three iconic tropes from these first Dracula films that have persisted throughout the Universal cycle and into the wider Dracula film canon, and indeed throughout the vampire film genre. The first is the sartorial iconography associated with the character. The formal dress and opera cape originated in the Balderston and Deane stage play as a theatrical device. Dracula would raise his cape to blend with the shadows and disappear through a trap door. Such a garment could only be worn convincingly with formal attire, which also serves to furnish the Count, at least in part, with his aristocratic demeanour (Browning, 2017: 195-211). The second is Dracula's hypnotic gaze, usually shown in close-up throughout the Universal (and Hammer) Dracula cycles (Barrett, 2010: 78). In terms of narrative expedition, this facilitates the Count's procurement of his (at this stage, mostly female) unwilling victims. It also sublimates the bite which if shown graphically, may well have courted censorship as alluded to by Schopp (1997: 236). The final trope is that of Dracula (in contrast to Murnau's animalistic Orlok) representing the dichotomous sexualised predator, embodying the alluring gentleman and the atavistic killer. It is this trope that invites psychohistoricist analysis of potential historiographic resonance. The reading will focus on representations of Freud's libidinal types, particularly as applied to Lugosi's Dracula, and ways they might have resonated with synchronous sociocultural milieus that valorised them.





**Figure 2:** Lugosi's and Villarias' Dracula lean over their victims; even in these publicity stills, note Villarias' more expressive interpretation of this act.

The Universal Dracula cycle technically continued with Lambert Hillyer's *Dracula's Daughter* (USA, 1936). However, as this film did not feature Dracula as a character (drawing parallels with Hammer's *Brides of Dracula*, directed by Terence Fisher and released in 1960) this

chapter will move directly to *Son of Dracula* which was released in the USA on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 1943, produced by Ford Beebe and directed by Robert Siodmak. *Son of Dracula* was intended by Universal Studios to be another pulp Horror film, which it was producing prolifically at the time, including such films as *Frankenstein meets the Wolf Man* (Neill, 1942). These were genre films with a monster and an attractive woman, to be produced on time, on budget, and released on a quick turnaround to net a quick profit (Brunas et al, 1990: 378-385). Curt Siodmak wrote an intelligent and well-paced story transplanting the legend of Dracula from his gothic homeland to the American deep South. Lon Chaney Junior was far from cadaverous in physicality and it could be argued that he was insufficiently expressive to be entirely convincing as Dracula. Bela Lugosi was not even considered. Universal Studios however, wanted a vehicle for their investment. The film arguably introduced a more sympathetic and fallible Dracula characterisation (Ibid). Chaney's Dracula can be viewed as much as a lonely older man as he can as a predatory vampire. He is portrayed as needing love as well as blood, adding a new schism to the dichotomous trope established by Lugosi's characterisation.

This Dracula was capable of human emotions, needs and desires, and was perhaps a more humanised monster. This is best illustrated by the scenes focused on Dracula's courtship and marriage. Hypothetically speaking, Dracula could merely take possession of Kay, as he does with any other object of his desire in any other Dracula film (excluding parodies), but in this narrative the character is depicted as having a romantic facet. Whilst the trope of Dracula as shape-shifter was present in Browning's film, it is more explicitly depicted in Siodmak's, when Dracula takes the form of a bat in animated form. This trope arguably meets the same narrative and culturally sensitive functions as Lugosi's gaze. It enables a human bite, and thus sexualised penetration, to be sublimated into a socially acceptable form for that time. In Siodmak's film Dracula is a pawn in Kay Caldwell's (Louis Albritton) machinations to possess wealth, status, immortality and her fiancé Frank Stanley (Robert Paige). In contrast to Gloria Holden's Contessa in *Dracula's Daughter*, who perceives being a vampire as a curse, Kay seeks and is subsequently empowered by vampirism. A salient psychohistorical reading focuses on her as the primary antagonist, alluding to Dracula for what he is in this film, the victim of a femme fatale in the popular film noir tradition of the time.



**Figure 3:** Lon Chaney's Dracula and the true antagonist of the text, Louise Albritton's Kay Caldwell in Siodmak's *Son of Dracula*: her agenda is perfectly illustrated in these publicity stills for the film.

The monster rallies followed Siodmak's film. *Frankenstein meets the Wolfman*, released in 1943 proved to be a box office success for Universal Studios. This incepted the idea that a monster rally movie featuring every permutation of classic gothic monster would prove even more profitable. Edward T Lowe was charged with developing the screenplay from Curtis Siodmak's original story. *House of Frankenstein*, directed by Erle C Kenton, would finally be released in 1944 after a year of being a somewhat labile project in the creative sense. The script, originally entitled *Destiny* was given the shooting title *The Devil's Brood*. The cast was assembled in February of 1944 with Boris Karloff as Dr Niemann, J Carrol Naish as Daniel the hunchback, Lon Chaney Jr reprising his Larry Talbot/Wolfman role, Glenn Strange stepping into Karloff's old boots as Frankenstein's monster, and the sepulchral John Carradine taking the role of Count Dracula for the first time (Brunas et al, 1990: 467-475). The sequel *House of Dracula* again directed by Kenton was also drawn from 'Destiny'. The resulting derivative narrative was more a re-write than a sequel with set-pieces and characterisations plagiarised from other films, notably the musical segues of Moonlight Sonata first depicted in Universal's own 1936 film *Dracula's Daughter*, and Edellmann's dream sequence and subsequent transformation into his evil alter which mirrored Spencer Tracy's performance in MGM's 1941

film *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Brunas et al, 1990: 519-428). *House of Dracula* has the same disjointed, episodic, incohesive narrative structure as its predecessor and is peppered with inconsistencies. The most notable are the unexplained resurrections of Dracula and the Wolfman, who each seek out Edellmann's medical counsel within a single day whilst a third (Frankenstein's) monster is discovered hibernating in his sub-basement.

*House of Dracula* was released in December 1945 and brought the 'Universal Monsters' films and its Dracula cycle to a close. The trope of Dracula's dichotomy developed further complexity during the monster rallies (Ibid). The gentleman predator became the outwardly repentant deceiver. This dichotomy will be explored from the psychoanalytical perspective vis-à-vis Freud's uncanny doubles, mirroring the shades of gray that typify human nature. The monster rallies add one last trope to the Universal Dracula cycle that would go on to be perpetuated throughout the vampire genre, from the Hammer films of the 1950's and 1960's to recent television series such as Hogan and Del Toro's *The Strain* (2014). Universal's monster rallies were the first to pathologise vampirism and therefore its otherness as a disease. The merely restorative blood transfusions of previous films were now superseded by blood transfusions as immune therapy to treat an invasive parasite. The psychohistorical reading of the film's symptomatic meaning offered here will examine resonances with another pathologised otherness that was in the public consciousness as well as the medical literature of the period. At this time homosexuality was inappropriately viewed and treated as a psychiatric illness (Benshoff, 1997: 77-81).

It was alluded to earlier that the monster rallies closed the Universal horror, and Dracula film cycle. Lugosi's Dracula however returned for one last Universal monster rally, the Charles Barton parody *Abbott and Costello meet Frankenstein* (1948). The character in such a parodic film is recognisable as Dracula but is intentionally altered as misdirection. Parody in this context trades on the iconography of the character, rather than directly contributing to it, or iconoclastically rupturing it (Harries, 2000: 38). Another example of when the original titular actor of a Dracula film reflexively reprises their role to comic effect in a parodic film, setting up and then rupturing spectator expectation, is John Carradine's in Harry Hurwitz' USA 1979 *Nocturna, Granddaughter of Dracula*. Lugosi plays the part in *Abbott and Costello meet Frankenstein* with conviction, whereas Carradine was unashamedly playing for laughs.



**Figure 4:** Carradine's Dracula with Karloff's Dr Niemann in *House of Frankenstein*.



**Figure 5:** Lugosi's Dracula attempts hypnosis of Lou Costello in Barton's *Abbott and Costello meet Frankenstein*; Carradine's Dracula (with Yvonne DeCarlo) is bemused by disco in Hurwitz' *Nocturna*, *Granddaughter of Dracula*.

### **2.1 Psychoanalytic Symbolism in Browning's and Melford's 1931 *Dracula* Films**

The films open by charting Renfield's journey to Castle Dracula to finalise property dealings, a transposition with Harker's journey in Stoker's novel. Lugosi's and Villarias' Draculas are first depicted alongside their respective brides in the trademark opera cloak over full evening dress. Dracula's polygamy exemplifies the overt sexuality of these adaptations compared to

Murnau's earlier more emotive narrative. Close-ups of Dracula's hypnotic stare signify its power, the scopophilic gaze. The first sublimation occurs as the dining scene concludes. Browning's Dracula enters and crouches over Renfield. The bite is not shown. Homoeroticism is repressed in Browning's film (Auerbach, 1995: 83-85). Conversely in Melford's film, it is intimated that the brides bite Renfield but not depicted, so female sexuality is repressed here. In both cases however, this conceivably depicts a metaphoric sexually transgressive violation of an unwilling male. In 1930's London, Browning's Dracula hypnotises and bites a passing flower girl, the bite shielded from view by his cloak. The scene acts as a sexual metaphor, equating the symbolic sex act of the penetrative vampire bite with the euphemism for losing one's virginity, being 'deflowered'. Humanity is objectified as a possession (his brides) or food (the flower girl) by Browning's Dracula, symbolising Freud's narcissistic libidinal type (Freud, 1931: 217-220). This scene is notably absent from Melford's adaptation and could arguably be considered superfluous to Villarias' more explicitly sexualised portrayal of Dracula.

At the opera (in both adaptations) Dracula exchanges introductions with Dr Seward, John Harker, his fiancée Mina, and her confidante, Lucy. Dracula informs Seward they are now neighbours as he has leased Carfax Abbey. Later in Lucy's hotel room, he raises his cloak and leans over her sleeping form. The bite is implied and again sublimated as it not explicitly depicted. The close-up is again, of his leering gaze. Dracula's vampirism is eventually revealed to the protagonists by his lack of reflection in the mirrored surface of Van Helsing's cigarette case. Carlos Villarias' Dracula, despite being modelled on Lugosi was a more animated, passionate and at times violent characterisation. This is emphasised in this pivotal scene when Villarias aggressively smashes it to the ground with his cane, his face contorted with anger, in sharp contrast to Lugosi's theatrical sweep of the hand, again foregrounding narcissistic symbolism, before the character exits. Both Mina and Eva confess Dracula compelled them to drink his blood, now defining both Draculas as possessive misogynists. The narrative reaches its resolution as Dracula is dispatched by his dualist double and opposite, Eastern European outsider and occultist scientist Van Helsing who drives a stake through his heart (off-camera). Harker/Juan finds Mina/Eva, freed of Dracula's thrall. The two lovers are illuminated by the sun, signifying Mina's recuperated purity and acceptance by God. The resolution is stereotypical of the classic Hollywood narrative. Wanton, sexualised evil (Dracula) is destroyed and good both triumphs (Van Helsing) and is recuperated (Harker/Juan, Mina/Eva) for the films to conform to the mores of the (contemporaneous) hegemony.

## **2.2 The Penetrating Gaze, Abusive Scopophilia, Sublimation, and Retribution.**

The vampire bite in fiction is widely considered to symbolise sexual penetration. The victim is penetrated by metaphorical twin phalli in the form of Dracula's fangs whilst held in his sensual embrace. The victim moans their audible pleasure as the orgasm represented by the drawing of blood symbolises ejaculation, be that male seminal fluid or female leucorrhoea. One of the earliest examples from the literature ascribing Freudian phallic symbolism in this context is Ernest Jones 1933 paper 'On the Nightmare'. A later salient example is Goldsmith's 'Beloved Monsters: A Psychodynamic Appraisal of Horror' (1975). In Freudian psychoanalytic terms, the vampire bite has not only sublimated the sexual act, it has sublimated the polymorphous perversity that can be ascribed to the sexual act. Oral sadistic connotations aside, vampirism is not limited to symbolising conventional heterosexual intercourse. Male vampire may penetrate female victim, but homosexual symbolism applies when male vampire penetrates male. Gender reversal is symbolised when female attempts to penetrate male (Mina attempts to bite John Harker in Browning's film, the brides are implied to bite Renfeld in Melford's as the scene fades). In the 1931 *Dracula* films, the physical act of a vampire biting, this metaphoric act of sexual penetration is never explicitly depicted. Such obviously sexualised violence may have been anticipated as being regarded as morally reprehensible or socially unacceptable by most of its contemporaneous viewers, therefore inviting censorship. Both films were US productions and the Hayes code in the United States arguably did not anticipate the birth of the horror film genre...

... (Joe) Breen's more enthusiastic enforcement of the industry's Production Code was combined with growing international disdain for horror. This trend was accompanied by an upsurge in domestic commitment to high-budget prestige pictures. The result was a decrease in horror's popularity, particularly in terms of studio rosters for big-money productions (Berenstein, 1996: 15)

Early horror films for this reason may be given to suggestion as opposed to explicit depiction (Skal, 2004: 233-235). Sobchack (1991: 33) posited that:

In this context, nearly all those visible markers that once separated the cultures of ethnic descent from the American culture of consent, that signalled the boundaries of otherness and gave it ethnic identity, integrity and authenticity, are detached from their original historical roots and have become floating signifiers available for purchased by anyone.

The performances in Melford's film are more explicitly sexualised than their counterparts in Browning's, but this could be argued to be a case of sexual stereotyping of degenerate males (Dracula) and wanton women (Dracula's brides, consummated and erstwhile) in Latin culture and therefore the film's intended audience in what was still a quintessentially North American Universal Studios production. According to Limon (1997: 603), this can be couched within 'repertoire of positions of power and resistance, domination and dependence that constructs colonial identification subject (both colonizer and colonized) in forms of difference that are racial and sexual'.

These are themes that are arguably still pervasive in US media representations of Latin culture. Prieler's 2016 paper 'Gender stereotypes in Spanish-and English-language television advertisements in the United States' echoes this perspective that was explored some three decades earlier in Padilla and O'Grady's 1987 paper '*Sexuality among Mexican Americans: a case of sexual stereotyping*'. It appears little has changed since Melford's 1931 film as far as this issue is concerned. Such linkages between sexual prejudice and religion, gender, sexuality, and related variables, and the cultural institutions encompassing these domains, the film industry in 1930's Hollywood in this case, are argued by Herek and McLemore (2013: 309) to create a social context within which individual expressions of prejudice can meet important psychological needs. Herek and McLemore identify these needs as securing social acceptance, affirming values that are central to one's self-concept, and avoiding anxiety and other negative emotions associated with threats to self-esteem. Film could certainly be argued as a potential expression of cultural prejudice in the historicist context, and one that is open to psychoanalytical interpretation.

Codified racial sexual prejudice in this context then, pertaining to the degree of sublimation between Browning and Melford's films, can be argued to be ahistoric, but its expression vis-a-vis the sublimation of the explicit penetrative act that is Dracula's bite, as aforementioned, is not. The first explicitly depicted vampire bite in a Dracula film of note, would come in Terence Fisher's 1958 adaptation. Dracula's bite and the subsequent ownership of his victim that he claims in its infliction are represented in the 1931 Universal films in metaphor, meta-symbolised by his penetrative gaze. The sublimation is itself sublimated. The stare in this context has assumed the mantle of metaphoric sex act. This sublimation, however, can be argued to be more sexually charged, and thus psychosexually explicit in Melford's film, and thus a lesser degree of sublimation is evident in this adaptation than Browning's.



Both Browning's and Melford's Dracula films symbolise abstract, perverse scopophilia. A scopophile, in Freudian psychoanalytic terms, is one who takes voyeuristic, perverse pleasures in the act of looking. In Freud's 1905 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality', an erotogenic zone from which a sexual component instinct arises, is defined essentially as a somatic organ subordinate to the genitals that contributes to sexual excitation. In obsessional neuroses, these impulses can create new sexual aims which may seem independent of that erotogenic zone. In scopophilia, Freud defines the eye as such an erotogenic zone (Freud, 1905: 26-39). The component sexual instinct in scopophilia is referred to by Freud as infantile, which involves other people primarily as sexual objects, a concept cogent with Dracula's apparent objectification of others in the 1931 Universal films (Ibid). Dracula in this context represents a perverse pleasure that is not located in the act of the penetrative gaze per se, but in the control and possession of the victim that it facilitates. Once violated unwillingly by Dracula's first penetrative gaze, the victims in these films become compliant and practice scotomisation on subsequent encounters thus codifying the traumatised submissive. Dracula codifies the abuser in the victim's environment and as such is subconsciously circumscribed as dangerous, fatal and even abject but is still consciously accepted because the abuse is inherently pleasurable, appealing to the primal instincts of life (sexual intimacy and immortality) and death (peace) simultaneously (Freud, 1920: 46-58); an appeal that is more explicitly evident when reading Melford's film. Representative examples in Browning's film include Renfield's willing subjugation and Mina willingly accepting Dracula's stare and embrace in the grounds of the Seward asylum despite being made aware of the threat posed to her.

Only those not penetrated by Dracula's gaze seek to avoid it. Whereas Renfield codifies acceptance of meta-sublimated homosexual penetration, Seward, Harker and Van Helsing codify its rejection. Dracula attempts to violate Van Helsing with said gaze on the one occasion they are alone with each other, only to be repelled by Van Helsing's crucifix. Christian iconography repelling the vampire can potentially be interpreted here as Christian dogma traditionally rejects homosexuality (Greenberg and Bystry, 1982: 542-544). The protagonists represent the view that the metaphoric sex act represented by Dracula's gaze is intrinsically perverse and abusive, and extrinsically replicates its perverse abuse in those who participate in it. In vampiric asexual reproduction, to be bitten is to be infected, so to be penetrated by the perverse gaze can conceivably be read here as becoming perverse. In the narrative resolution of the 1931 Universal Dracula films, Dracula is staked through the heart and destroyed by Van Helsing. His penetrative gaze can be implied to be halted as his eyes are closed in death (which

occurs offscreen) and thus the codified threat of dissemination of perverse abuse is ended. The irony is that the threat posed by one metaphoric sexual penetration (Dracula's gaze) is ended by another. Dracula's destruction is rent by his being penetrated by a symbolic erect phallus, a pointed wooden stake, in an act of symbolised rape; a symbolic retribution for that which was morally unacceptable to contemporaneous sociocultural mores.



**Figure 6:** Dracula's scopophilic gaze.

### **2.3 Dracula and other Gangsters from the Id**

Freud's 1931 essay 'Libidinal Types' invites certain synchronic psychohistorical parallels with Browning's and Melford's films, as Freud having categorised his key facets of the human psyche, now categorised human personality. Holt (1963: 363-372) posited two themes influenced Freud's thought, which developed across the arc of his life, and embedded in the man and his milieu; natural philosophy (particularly the work of Goethe) and physicalist physiology; a view echoed by Trosman (1973), and Ticho (1986). As discussed in the opening chapter, it is then reasonable to suggest that Freud's later psychoanalytic theory was similarly influenced by his contemporaneous psychosocial milieu (poverty in Weimar Germany birthing the growing threat of the far right in Germany) and was in a reciprocal interplay with it, much as the Universal Dracula films of 1931 were with like poverty in depression era America, and the transgressive criminal elements that rose from within. This was an era when charismatic

narcissism and violent extremism were not demonised but valorised as a means of transcending mass poverty and fiscal oppression, epitomised by the right-wing populism of Hitler in Germany, and the similar ascription of a *Robin Hood* archetype to Capone, and other 1930's gangsters from the Id by the oppressed in the US.

Selzer et al (1976) proposed that that post World War I events, combined with the chance emergence of a highly effective (albeit highly racially prejudiced) leadership, resulted in the politicization, to a most unusual degree, of those Germans who were psychologically deviant. Freud's 'Civilisation and its Discontents' (1929: 108)<sup>6</sup> outlines Freud's thoughts on German Nazism:

One can imagine that the German nation in its present condition has developed some sort of super-ego that, as I believe, has nothing to do with the cultural process. I am tempted to call this sort of super - a super-id. However, this collective super-ego cannot be fed aggressions for this reason: An unbelievably large amount of hatred and violence has become legitimized, highly esteemed, directed outwards, and realised.

Moellenhof (1942), observed during World War II, that Nazism equated to the collective narcissism of a nation; the hatred described by Freud is directed at perceived oppressors of German expansionism. The malignant narcissism of the organised crime syndicate draws immediate parallels in microcosm; the federal government oppress criminal expansionism in the USA of the 1930's. The narcissists in both sociocultural entities draw the sympathy of the masses who likewise perceive themselves as oppressed, who then valorise and facilitate their actions (Manco, 2019). The characterisation of Dracula and the other main protagonist roles in Browning and Melford's films can be seen to symbolise Freud's typography, and said gangsters; resonating with the rise of these narcissistic personalities from pervasive anomies and Freud's potentially concomitant attempts to understand them.

In his essay Freud seeks to categorise human libidinal typography as a spectrum of personality types ranging from normal to pathological. Freud initially posits three discrete libidinal types, erotic, narcissistic and obsessional (Freud, 1931: 217-220). According to Freud, the libido of the erotic is focused on loving and being loved. Erotics thus may become wholly dependent on

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<sup>6</sup> As cited by Moellenhof, 1942, from Freud, Sigmund. "Das Unbehagen in der Kultur." (Civilization and its discontents) Gesamm. Schriften Vol. 12

those in the position to give or withhold love from them (Ibid). Mina and Eva symbolise one of Freud's erotics who is dependent on significant males for loving attention, exemplified by Harker and Juan, or more subversively, Dracula. The erotic type as defined by Freud represents the instinctual demands of the Id, to which the ego and super-ego have become compliant. The obsessional type is distinguished by the pre-dominance of the super-ego, which in this case has become separated from the ego under tension. The obsessional type fears losing their conscience, they are self-reliant, conservative in nature, and act as a civilising force. Van Helsing can be read as symbolic of such a civilising force majeure, reinstating conservative Western Judeo-Christian patriarchy in place of the decadent, hedonistic anarchy of Dracula's world view. This brings us to Freud's final discrete libidinal type, the narcissistic. In this type there is negligible tension between the ego and super-ego, indeed as implied by Freud, the super-ego could be regarded as absent. This libidinal type is independent, not easily intimidated and driven by self-preservation. There is little preponderance toward erotic need, but rather a focus on erotic desire. The narcissistic type prefers being the lover sans a need to be loved. Dichotomously, they make ready leaders yet seek to destabilise the establishment. This libidinal type can thus be read as being codified by Dracula in Browning's and Melford's films.

Freud then goes on to define three conflated libidinal types, which equate to less pathological and more balanced personalities, with intrinsically moderated extremes (Ibid). In the erotic-obsessional type, instinctual activity is restricted by the preponderance of the super-ego and the individual is highly dependent on the approval on contemporary authority figures (Ibid). Dwight Frye's Renfield, forever seeking his master's favour, symbolises this libidinal type. The erotic-narcissistic type is more balanced with self-moderated extremes. They equate to the lover who still needs to be loved and can resort to aggression if the situation demands. The headstrong Harker and Juan thus codify this libidinal type. The final conflated libidinal type as posited by Freud is narcissistic-obsessional. The ego and super-ego can be regarded as in balanced tension in such an individual, who presents as a conscience driven independent thinker. The unconventional psychiatrist Dr Seward is a close symbolic fit. Freud also posited, partly in jest, that the conflation of all three discrete libidinal types would equate to the ideal psychic harmony of the ultimate normative. As would be expected in life, there is no individual in the 1931 *Dracula* films who could truly be symbolic of someone so completely balanced and sans all pathological traits (Ibid).

Dracula in these films codifies a self-serving, predatory, narcissist transgressor, and as such epitomises the stereotypical Hollywood textual antagonist of the time. Browning's Dracula was a murderer, an adulterer, and a manipulative, immoral influence on the society he infiltrated and in which he sought power. As such, he must be seen to be punished and neutralised by imprisonment or death in order to represent an upholding of Western Judeo-Christian patriarchal sociocultural mores. This dictate had to be seen to be upheld, even if the means to that end were unconventional, such as the folkloric juxtaposed with the scientific. Said mores were enshrined in Western law in 1931, as they are today. From the psychohistorical perspective, one obvious potential reading of Browning's and Melford's films would be to align their mirrored narrative with the events of the infamous 1929 stock market crash in the USA (and further afield) and the subsequent depression of the years to follow with Dracula's vampirism symbolising the draining psychosocial effects of unemployment as per the contagion model (Silverman, 1990: 116-118). Another, building upon the theme of Freud's narcissistic libidinal type, is that the characterisations of Browning's and Melford's Draculas has some resonance with the synchronous social valorisation of real-life criminal outsiders. David J Skal drew parallels between the 1930's Hollywood monster and gangster in the psychohistorical context when he opined that...

... 'the most lasting and influential invention of 1931 would be the modern horror film. Monster movies opened up the possibility of psychic lawlessness; a monster for Hollywood was a gangster of the id and unconscious. Cataclysmic junctures in history usually stir up strong imagery of the collective mind, and the years following the 1929 economic crash were no exception' (Skal, 2001: 114).

Whilst written with Browning's *Dracula* in mind, it is equally applicable to Melford's film, and this gangster from the Id epithet could be argued to be equally as applicable to the cinematic gangsters and their real-life counterparts of the time, so it is here we can locate a potential nexus of psychohistorical resonance for this reading of the film. Gangsters such as Alphonse Capone, Charles Dean O'Banion, and Johnny Torrio to name some of the more notable American examples, some of whom ran syndicates in Colombia and Cuba and thus influenced Hispanic and US organised crime such as Santo Trafficante Sr., can be regarded as having to be neutralised by the same Hollywood narrative dictate (death or imprisonment), that was epitomised in popular contemporaneous gangster films such as *Little Caesar* (Mervyn LeRoy, 1931), *Angels with Dirty Faces* (Michael Curtiz, 1938), and *Scarface* (Howard Hawks, 1932)

(Martin, 2014). The real-life gangster's social role could likewise not be seen to be valorised (Munby, 1999: 39-66; Kobler, 2003: 328; Mora, 2011: 126-134). They were however valorised in some circles at the time, and even glamorised in some echelons of the sympathetic press (McDonough, 1989). The depression era gangster archetype and his filmic counterparts in LeRoy's and Curtiz' films were viewed in some respects as an anti-hero, often an immigrant or of recent immigrant descent, who epitomised a working class, blue collar success story and defeated unemployment, government oppression, and even the depression itself (for a time) by unconventional means. He represented a perverse hope for the urban poor, migrant or otherwise, that an uneducated man with few social or career prospects could still rise to affluence, and break the patriarchal middle-class glass ceiling, when all around him were being crushed by economic hardship. This is a trope that arguably repeats throughout modern history (Ibid; Springhall, 1998: 152-154; Muzzio and Halper, 2013: 1008-1028). This valorised gangster archetype, however, could be argued to be equally applicable to the rise of Hitler's right-wing populism that concerned Freud, with the caveat, that within his own national boundaries, Hitler was a political gangster that could not only be seen to be valorised by the authorities as well as the oppressed masses, he was the authorities.

In terms of sociocultural resonances with the viewers of the period, this valorisation and cultural success of Freud's narcissistic libidinal type in certain circumstances may explain some of the appeal of Lugosi's and Villarias' portrayals of Dracula by codifying just such an anti-hero of the depression era, an aristocratic gangster, as opposed to a cursory simplistic reading of the character as a textual antagonist (Freud, 1931: 217-220). In this particular reading he too represented an immigrant arriving in the West with little hope, who quickly asserted power over his patriarchal middle-class oppressors<sup>7</sup>. However, like the infamous gangsters who became the oppressor, he had to be seen to be punished for this transgression. The charisma and innate risk taking of Freud's narcissistic libidinal type arguably contributes in no small way to the valorising of such personalities in the eyes of those disadvantaged and rendered socially immobile by the class systems of that time, whether in the US or South America, via an erroneous conflation with courage. The monstrous Dracula of Browning's and Melford's films resonates with valorised narcissistic gangster archetypes of that era, but concomitantly demonises them. The anti-hero of the oppressed is the threat by the other posed

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<sup>7</sup> A trope that would be more explicitly explored in Francis Lederer's portrayal of the vampire in Paul Landres' less well-known 1958 (USA) film, *The Return of Dracula*.

to patriarchy that rose from within, whether upon the national or international stage, that had to be neutralised.



**Figure 7:** 1930's Freudian narcissists: Lugosi as Dracula; Capone et al.

#### **2.4 The Psychological Drama of *Son of Dracula* (Siodmak 1943)**

Siodmak's opening scene immediately opposes convention. It is located at a railway station in America's deep South. The two lead protagonists meet. Dr Harry Brewster (Frank Craven) is an avuncular, Jungian 'wise old man'. Frank Stanley (Robert Paige) presents as a stereotypical Hollywood lead male protagonist (Brunas et al, 1990: 378-386). Brewster examines the Alucard crest on a coffin shaped trunk, informing astute viewers of the Count's travel arrangements. This is indicative of the omniscient perspective granted to viewers throughout this film. Kay Caldwell (Louise Allbritton), the elder daughter at the gothic Dark Oaks plantation by contrast is tall, pallid, and wearing a diaphanous dress, conforming to the stereotypical female vampire construct of the period, denoting her antagonist role. It is worth noting at this juncture that Universal Studios released *Dracula's Daughter* in 1936 directed by Lambert Hillyer, which put much greater emphasis on the character of the female vampire compared with their more marginalised roles in Browning and Melford's 1931 films (Brunas et al, 1990: 157-165). The character of Kay Caldwell arguably draws upon her precursor in this respect, but in contrast to Gloria Holden's Contessa, Kay develops autonomy and agency through vampirism instead of seeking to deny it. At the white tie ball at Dark Oaks, Lon Chaney Jr's Dracula's sartorial iconography conforms to that established by Lugosi's portrayal i.e.,

pallid make-up, slicked back hair, white tie and tails, and opera cloak. Dracula raises his cloak with a brief superimposed animation and transforms into a bat. A socially acceptable animal bite sublimates the homoerotic penetrative human bite, implying that Dracula has killed Colonel Caldwell (George Irving), father to Kay and Claire. The oedipal undertones of the death of the father can be read as incepting a Freudian psychological drama (Freud, 1942: 459-464; Freud and Bunker, 1960: 144-148).

The following scene is one of the most atmospheric of any horror film. Devoid of dialogue and poignantly underscored, this scene epitomises the rebellious gothic romanticist elements of vampire mythos. Frank follows and observes Kay driving down a lonely road into the swamp. She gets out at the water's edge and watches expectantly. A coffin rises to the surface, vapour seeps from it, coalescing into Dracula. Standing in a dignified pose upon the lid, he 'sails' the coffin toward Kay, his microcosmic 'ship of the damned'. He steps ashore, takes her hand and kisses it. They marry. The character dichotomy often associated with Dracula, the noble romantic predator, is evident in this subversive rendezvous. Kay is later revealed as one of Freud's 'psychopathic characters on stage' in this psychological drama (Ibid). Having manipulated Dracula to kill her father which can be read as resolving her feminine oedipal attitude, she discards him to possess her lover Frank. She can thus be argued to characterise a femme fatale in the film noir tradition. The film's narrative resolves with Frank setting Dracula's empty coffin afire, resulting in the Count's destruction in the dawn rays of the sun. In the final scene, Kay lies in a coffin. Frank takes a ring from his finger, placing it on hers in a symbolic act of marriage. The penultimate shot reveals the burning coffin. Frank has destroyed Kay. The final shot reveals Frank as a broken man, read as another of Freud's psychopathic characters, he is deranged by betrayal (Ibid).

### **2.5 Bad Father, Worse Daughter**

Kay Caldwell when read as one of Freud's psychopathic characters symbolises an aberrant resolution to his concept of feminine oedipal attitude in girls at the oedipal stage of development (Freud, 1924: 419-424). According to this theory, the oedipal daughter's penis envy toward her father manifests as resentment of the mother, whom she blames for her symbolic castration. During the phallic developmental stage, the daughter becomes libidinally attached to the father, believing that being impregnated by him will resolve her lack, allowing her to attain equal status with her father. The superego, the judicial component of the human psyche that mediates the wanton impulsiveness of the id with the cold logic of the ego,



according to Freud, develops during the phallic stage and thus so does morality as value systems become internalised. This phallogocentric theory posits that the daughter resolves her oedipal attitude by reconciling with and emulating the mother's character to attract a male partner who emulates the father's character, having also reconciled she cannot have such a relationship in the literal sense (Ibid). The theory posited women as having a weaker superego due to the lack of need to resolve castration anxiety as metaphoric castration has already occurred, and as such must have their moral compasses checked by their male partner. It could certainly be argued that this aspect of feminine oedipal attitude had more to do with Freud's internalisation of Western patriarchal cultural value systems than the inadequate internalisation of these values by the developing female psyche (Moi, 1981: 73). When the oedipal attitude is inadequately resolved however, the woman in question, instead of seeking a like character to her father as a partner, supposedly seeks one that will sublimate him (Freud, 1924: 419-424).

Kay Caldwell can be read as symbolising this by eliminating her own father (it is implied that Colonel Caldwell is killed by Dracula at her behest) and thus her frustration at being unable to have a sexual relationship with him, then sublimating his presence with a more compliant paternal analogue, Dracula. Not only can Dracula have such a relationship with her, he can negate her thanatophobia by offering eternal life. More crucially in this reading, he codifies a unique resolution to penis envy. In transforming Kay into a vampire, he provides her with metaphoric phalli in the form of fangs, with which she is free to penetrate any victim she chooses, male or female. Kay can also be read as symbolic of a superego that has never developed during the original phallic stage. She codifies a psyche that is sans morality, whose ego is merely a logistics planner facilitating the impulses of an unrestrained id. She now therefore represents Freud's masculinised, hypersexual phallic woman, replete with partially resolved feminine oedipal attitude. She continues to codify this archetype by rejecting her sublimated father and seeking to revert to a more suitable partner, one who is a like character to her late father, as represented in this film by Frank Stanley (Freud et al. 1933: 24; Brooks, 2006: 114-138). Kay further represents the phallic woman archetype in the film via her remorseless pursuit of vampiric immortality and domineering ownership of Frank, and her preparedness to have anyone who proves an obstacle to these desires, friends or family, killed as necessary (Ibid). The phallic woman is not tolerated by Western medico-legal patriarchy (symbolised by Brewster, Laszlo, Simmons, and the Sheriff) to whose authority and cultural values she proves a palpable threat. Patriarchal recuperation is codified when Frank consciously rejects the phallic woman to safeguard his own nascent patriarchal status (as to accept her would constitute

accepting emasculation) and finally destroys the monstrous female that Kay represents; the independent woman whose threat to 1940's patriarchy is demonised as the cinematic femme fatale trope. Kay is located subjected to the central male character (Frank Stanley) as she would be in one of Siodmak's contributions to the film noir genre, which in many respects, *Son of Dracula* can be argued to inhabit. As well as the archetypal spider woman that is Kay, the dogged detective, high contrast gloom laden mise-en-scene and a central male character driven to the brink are all present (Lindop, 2016; Orr, 1997).

## **2.6 Freud's Psychopathic Femme Fatale on the Stage**

By applying Freud's 1942 posthumously published essay 'Psychopathic Characters on the Stage', Siodmak's contemporaneous film can potentially be read as a psychological drama in that the struggle to be resolved, which instigates suffering, is fought out in the hero's mind (Freud, 1942: 459-464; Freud and Bunker, 1960: 144-148). This struggle, according to Freud, is one which must have its end not in the extinction of the hero, with whom the engaged spectator identifies, but in the extinction of one of his impulses in a renunciation. The spectator after all often engages with a dramatic text and its hero to vicariously and cathartically triumph over adversity and resolve some suffering in this context. In witnessing events in public life, the spectator may arguably experience similar catharsis and identification in a satisfactory resolution for the protagonist in question (Ibid). The struggle may be epitomic of many internalised conflicts, but here it is what Freud terms the tragedies of love that is salient, such as the struggle between love and duty codified by Frank, or the struggle against loneliness as codified by Dracula (Ibid). Both Frank and Dracula love Kay, but she is a predatory killer who would consume them both for her own ends. Frank's duty to himself and society is to eliminate the threat that she constitutes, suffering bereavement and loss of love in doing so. Dracula seeks to resolve an existential lack. In the context of Freud's essay, Siodmak's horror noir can be seen to become a psychopathological drama (Freud, 1942: 459-464; Freud and Bunker, 1960: 144-148). The source of the suffering in which the spectator takes part, as with any cathartic engagement with a filmic character is supposed to eventually provide at least some pleasure as closure is achieved. This should occur when there is no longer a conflict between two equally conscious impulses, but between a conscious impulse (codified by Frank's duty and Dracula's loneliness) and a repressed impulse (codified by their love for Kay). This suffering according to Freud is often mental in filmic texts. Freud posited that few would identify with a protagonist's physical suffering, as the only urge would be for relief (Ibid).



**Figure 8:** Kay Caldwell completes her seduction of Dracula.

Freud stated that a precondition for the engaged spectator to actively enjoy such a conflict within a text, or a similar event affecting a person in real-life, is that this spectator must themselves be neurotic, as only such a person can derive pleasure as opposed to simple aversion from the revelation or conscious recognition of a repressed impulse (Ibid). It is Frank who symbolises the recognition and repression of one impulse (represented his love for Kay) and likewise symbolises acting upon a conscious impulse (doing his duty when he kills both Dracula and Kay) thus vicariously resolving the engaged spectator's conflict. In the hypothetically engaged spectator who is not neurotic such recognition, according to Freud, would meet only with aversion and would summon a readiness to repeat the act of repression which had been successfully brought to bear on the impulse (Freud, 1942: 459-464). In a non-neurotic a single expenditure of repression is enough to check that impulse. In sum, the engaged spectator is arguably meant to recognise Frank's sacrifice and share his grief, when Siodmak's film eschewed conventional Hollywood narrative resolution. It could be speculated that the intention perhaps was for them *not* to enjoy it.

Kay in this context has victimised both Frank and Dracula and can therefore be read as the epitomic femme fatale, the lethal seductress emerging from 1940's film noirs such as *I Wake up Screaming* (Humberstone, USA, 1941), who left her male victims dead or torn between love

for her and duty to the greater good. This is a connection that would arguably have been familiar to the audience of that time, and one that invites a hypothetical psychohistorical reading of the film (Boozer, 1999: 20-35). The Western woman of World War II was encouraged by government and society into the work force, essentially to replace the men serving in the armed forces.



**Figure 9:** Threesomes in Freudian dramas; Kay, Frank, and Dracula; Cora, Frank and Nick.

This independent woman, who did not need a man to support her, was then portrayed in the cinema of the period as the femme fatale narrative trope (read Kay), a dichotomous woman who would use her feminine wiles and sexual initiative to manipulate men for financial and/or social gain, which made her threatening to patriarchal phallogocentric authority (read Dracula and/or Brewster and Lazlo), its institution of marriage and the Judeo-Christian social construct (Jancovich, 2010: 164-178; Boozer 1999: 20-35). Both film noir as a genre, and *Son of Dracula* taken as an atypical exemplar, if read in the context of the Freudian psychopathic drama arguably demonised this sexualised, decadent, and therefore epistemologically traumatic threat (Doane, 2013: 1-2).<sup>8</sup> This arguably once more pathologises Kay Caldwell in Freudian psychoanalytic terms as the phallic woman. The femme fatale be that the supernatural Kay Caldwell, the more conventional but equally murderous Phyllis Dietrichson in Billy Wilder's 1944 film *Double Indemnity*, or Cora Smith placed in a similar fatal love triangle between older and younger partners in Tay Garnett's 1946 film *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, can also be read as representing the maladaptive resolution to Freud's feminine oedipal attitude discussed earlier (Hanson, 2007). When this maladaptive resolution is read as symbolising the

<sup>8</sup> Siodmak would go on to direct some of the most notable films of the genre including *The Killers* (USA, 1946) and *Criss Cross* (USA, 1949).

aetiology for *Son of Dracula* as a psychopathological drama, by abstraction it can also conceivably be seen to further pathologise the independent Western woman of the early 1940's as an object of patriarchal fear.

### **2.7 Locating Dualism in Kenton's Universal Monster Rallies**

*House of Frankenstein* opens with Dr Niemann (Boris Karloff) presented as Frankenstein's protégé, imprisoned for similarly grotesque experimentation alongside his hunchbacked cellmate, Daniel (J. Carrol Naish), as they affect their escape from a storm damaged prison. They kill horror showman Lampini (George Zucco) and steal his caravan along with his prize exhibit, Dracula's staked skeleton in its coffin. The narrative continues with their journey to the village of Visaria (Niemann's home prior to imprisonment) to exact vengeance upon those who bore witness against him, notably Burgomaster Hussman (Sig Rumann). Hussman's granddaughter Rita (Anne Gwynne) and boyfriend Tony (Peter Coe) provide the classical Hollywood heterosexual partnership who will be the final survivors at the end of the film. Rita persuades Hussman and Arnz to accompany her and Tony to the horror show at the crossroads. There, Niemann disguised as Lampini (presenting the first instance of dualism in the film) reveals Dracula's staked skeleton. As the protagonists exit, Niemann grabs the stake from the coffin, vengefully brandishing it unseen at the departing Hussmann. He turns to witness Dracula being slowly restored, depicted in a ground breaking special effect. Veins fade into view, then musculature, skin and finally the epitomic sartorial iconography of white tie, tails and opera cloak. John Carradine's dignified, sepulchral, and debonair Dracula opens his eyes. This is the first time Dracula has been explicitly resurrected on film. Whilst brandishing the stake above Dracula's heart Niemann offers to protect the vampire's resting place in exchange for his services.

When Dracula offers Hussmann, Rita and Tony the accommodation of his coach, dualism is signified by Dracula as he duplicitously introduces himself as Baron Latos of Transylvania, concealing his nature and identity. Once he has her alone Dracula's (scopophilic) gaze fixes Rita's, signifying his hypnotic control of her. Dracula betroths Rita with his signet ring, as opposed to merely biting her, so the erotic penetrative bite is again sublimated. Later the bite is sublimated via the transformative special effects used in *Son of Dracula*. Dracula metamorphoses into a bat. The silhouette of Hussmann's slumped form is shown as the bat moves to his throat, implying biting, yet denying homoeroticism. Niemann's duplicity is emphasised as Dracula's flight from his pursuers intersects with Niemann and Daniel fleeing

in Lampini's caravan. To deflect police attention, they dump Dracula's coffin from the back of caravan. Dracula rushes toward his coffin and collapses, dissolving to bone in a direct reversal of the resurrection scene, as he is caught in direct sunlight. Whilst some sympathy for the vampire may be elicited, considering his control of Rita, this can also be read as the manipulator manipulated. Rita is recuperated to Tony. Niemann and Daniel make their escape as planned. The scene concludes the "Dracula vignette" in a classical Hollywood narrative resolution when viewed in a microcosmic context. The narrative resolution of this film leaves few surviving salient characters. The Wolfman, an epitome of dualism in a horror film character, is killed by a silver bullet forged and fired by one who loves him, Ilona, whom he has fatally mauled. Niemann, finally reanimating Frankenstein's monster, is strangled by Daniel. The monster, both human and abject, in protecting the only character that has shown him kindness, kills Daniel. Villagers hunting the Wolfman drive the monster carrying Niemann into the swamp. Only those characters devoid of dualism, Rita and Tony the stereotypical normative heterosexual couple, survive the film's conclusion.

In Kenton's *House of Dracula*, Dr Edellmann (Onslow Stevens) and nurse Miliza (Martha O'Driscoll), mirror Niemann and Rita in the previous film. The film opens with Carradine's Dracula staring through a window at a sleeping Miliza, his intended bride. Dracula introduces himself to his host, Dr Edellmann, as Baron Latos of Transylvania, re-establishing his duality. Dracula initially seeks a cure for his vampirism, arguably engendering spectator sympathy. Edellmann examines Dracula's blood under the microscope to reveal a parasitic organism. This is the first example of pathologised vampirism depicted on film. In psychoanalytic terms this trope can again be read as pathologising otherness and complicates Dracula's duality as well as that of the other characters. Edellmann seeks to cure his nurse Nina's hunched back as well as Larry Talbot's (Lon Chaney Jr.) lycanthropy with a fungal distillate. Duality and otherness now stand judged as pathological and must be cured. Dracula seduces, hypnotises, and takes ownership of Miliza. Like many a dualist abusive male partner, he epitomises the romantic misogynist. Finally, Edellmann succumbs to pathological duality when Dracula reverses his curative blood transfusion to infect the Doctor with the vampirism parasite. Dracula is exposed to the light of the sun by Edellmann and his dissolution ensues. Edellmann then embodies a conflict between the shadow and the persona. The shadow seeks power and control by resurrecting Frankenstein's monster as an intended weapon whereas the empathetic persona still seeks to cure those in the Doctor's care. As the film concludes Miliza is recuperated as the normative female heterosexual love interest of Talbot. Talbot's atavistic alter is neutralised,

redefining him as the normative, heterosexual, masculine hero. Edellmann finally reanimates Frankenstein's monster and kills Nina as Dracula's evil consumes him. He is then shot dead by Talbot. The final scenes depict the monster being consumed by the flames of the collapsing laboratory. Talbot and Miliza, the recuperated and normalised heterosexual partnership now purged of dualist otherness are again the only salient characters to survive (Lothe, 2003: 72-91).

## **2.8 Personas, Shadows and Uncanny Doubles**

Protagonists are depicted as capable of evil and antagonists are depicted as compassionate, even loving. This variable, sliding spectrum of dualist, good and evil behaviour is arguably recognisable to spectators constructing the diegesis for these films. Diegetic characters and viewers alike are subject to mitigating circumstance. It is this overall balance of acts committed in the context of the prevailing moral construct that define whether diegetic characters symbolise good or evil. In examining the dualist symbolism of Dracula's character in each film in more detail, it is possible to posit one potential implicit meaning for the overarching diegesis. John Carradine's Dracula presents four distinct binaries. Firstly, he presents as an urbane, romantic, and occasionally avuncular older gentleman, who is also a predatory vampire. Secondly, he is guilty of duplicity in achieving his agendas. Thirdly he is both manipulator and manipulated. Finally, in *House of Dracula*, he is both pathologised and pathogenic. In the Dracula vignette of *House of Frankenstein*, Niemann manipulates Dracula, promising to protect his refuge by day in exchange for the vampire acting as his unpaid assassin. Dracula agrees, assuming his nom-de-guerre Baron Latos, to infiltrate the Hussmann household and kill the patriarch. Dracula's duplicity thus facilitates his twofold agenda. He has used a false identity to achieve Niemann's objective in killing Hussmann but also uses it to achieve his own i.e., to take Rita as his undead bride. Dracula's intrinsic dichotomy is fully apparent here. The remorseless predator that killed Hussmann shows genuine courtesy, affection and even love toward his potential bride, yet hypnotically manipulates her to accept him and her fate. Dracula is then betrayed by *his* manipulator.

In *House of Dracula* the same dualities are in evidence. Dracula infiltrates the Edellmann household and then reveals his true identity and nature to Dr Edellmann on the pretext of wishing to be cured of vampirism. His hidden and thus duplicitous agenda is to take Miliza as his vampire bride. He appears to display genuine love and affection toward Miliza, yet he also hypnotically manipulates her to accept him, again objectifying his potential bride as a

possession rather than gaining her acceptance of him as a consensual partner. As he manipulates Miliza and Dr Edellmann, Dracula is once more manipulated in turn. He must agree to Edellmann's treatment regime to remain in the house, ensconced by day in the safety of his coffin. Vampirism in this film is redefined as a contagious blood-borne disease. Dracula in this context is pathologised. On one hand, his actions are compelled by the symptoms of his illness. He can be read as much the victim in this sense as those he seeks to bite. Conversely, he is also pathogenic, he embodies the disease, and as with any disease, the only real cure is eradication. Once Dracula is aware of the pathogenicity of his blood, he uses it to his advantage to infect the Doctor, which manifests as Edellmann also developing a duality of character, a Hyde-like metamorphic evil alter ego. As in *House of Frankenstein*, Dracula's attempt to take a vampire bride in *House of Dracula* is thwarted. Such a bastardisation of conventional marriage constituting a positive narrative resolution for a clearly delineated antagonist could have been deemed socially unacceptable by some contemporaneous spectators. Dracula is eventually exposed to the light of the sun by Edellmann and his dissolution ensues. The disease is thus cured by the death of its first victim, Dracula as patient zero. Dracula has shown some love and affection for his potential brides in both monster rallies, but most of the character's actions have perceived negative connotations. On balance, he arguably codifies evil. However, the concept of what truly symbolises evil in any film is subjective to the respective morality constructs of its spectators (Elbarbary, 1993; Strengell, 2003).

If we apply Steven Schneider's interpretation of the Freudian psychoanalytical paradigm, the monster characters in Kenton's monster rallies could be read as symbolic of Freud's repression theory 'Das Unheimliche' or 'The Uncanny' (Freud, 1919; Schneider, 1996: 107-108). Freud's theory is encapsulated by the dual semantics of the terms heimliche and unheimliche. Heimliche may mean known or familiar, so unheimliche in this context refers to the dark side of the known and familiar, i.e., known and familiar fears. Heimliche may also be defined in terms of the secret or unknown. Unheimliche in this second context is the revealing, uncovering, or confirmation of an unknown or intellectual uncertainty that might best be left undisturbed. Freud then integrates the concept of Das Unheimliche with his theories of psychosexual development, positing that a situation or individual will engender feelings of the uncanny (fear and unease) by representing a revival of repressed individual infantile fears or desires, or confirmation of surmounted primitive collective human beliefs (Freud, 1919: 219-256). Freud also posited that the real-life experience of the uncanny differs from that engendered by fiction (Ibid). Freud was referring to literary fiction, but the theory is arguably



applicable to the diegetic construct derived by the spectator from the filmic text. The reason the experience differs is that in a diegetic construct the situation or individual engendering the feeling of the uncanny is not subject to reality testing. The uncanny effect is only truly engendered if the film so engages the spectator as to elicit near total suspension of disbelief so that the diegetic construct approaches the dream state in terms of a perceived (alternate) reality (Ibid).

Re-examining the character of Carradine's Dracula in Kenton's films invites reading the character as a symbolic reflection of Freud's theory of the uncanny and its Jungian shadow persona counterpart, the double. In the context of Freudian infantile psychic development, the double insures against mortality and the destruction of the ego construct. Children and primitive adult cultures believe the double, or soul according to religious didacticism, guarantees immortality. This belief is grounded in their common narcissism that will not admit to the nihilistic possibility of oblivion. When this belief is surmounted by the adult in a so-called advanced human culture, the role of the double reverses when its symbolic analogue is encountered in reality or in a diegetic construct; it then ceases to represent an insurance against the destruction of the ego or conscious mind and instead it represents a portent of this destruction (Freud, 1919: 219-256). It is by tapping into the basal human fear of death that the double engenders feelings of the uncanny in the spectator perceiving it. John Carradine's portrayal of Count Dracula in *House of Frankenstein* and *House of Dracula* embodies several reconfirmed, surmounted beliefs as a visual metaphor according to Schneider's model of Freud's theory thus theoretically engendering polysemic uncanny feelings in the spectator (Schneider, 1996: 107-108).

Dracula can be read as symbolising these surmounted beliefs as follows in most of his cinematic incarnations to a greater or lesser extent depending on the film (Ibid).

- **The dead can return to life** as per generic vampire lore. Dracula's resurrection is explicitly depicted in *House of Frankenstein* and implied in *House of Dracula*. Dracula, as a vampire, is **immortal**.
- **The omnipotence of thought**: Dracula is capable of telepathic domination of human consciousness.
- **The intellectual uncertainty pertaining to Dracula as a double**: the character appears human, but the spectator knows he is something more.

- **The existence of a physical double:** Dracula can metamorphose into a silent, shadowy death bringer, in the form of a giant vampire bat.
- **The existence of a mental double:** Dracula is dyadic in this context as the character presents as a debonair gentleman and dashing lover on one hand and a predatory vampire, controlling misogynist, and death bringer on the other.

The death bringer element codified by Dracula's character is cogent with Freud's theory regarding adult perception of the double and with Jungian shadows. The Jungian persona or socially acceptable façade has cogency with Freud's vision of the true self, consciously manifested by the ego as symbolised by Dracula's gentleman lover role (Jung, 1923: 50-70; Freud, 1919: 219-256). This potential reading of Dracula as an uncanny double is however subject to a problematic paradox with regards to his immortality. This Dracula as per vampire lore is sans reflection and therefore sans soul i.e., he lacks the conceptualised double that is supposed to guarantee that immortality. This contradiction however is arguably insufficient to negate the other dyadic, reconfirmed surmounted belief elements he codifies. The spectator may still perceive the character as uncanny predicated upon the stated multiple causalities because almost all of them invoke a return to the surmounted narcissistic infantile belief system. As metaphoric embodiments of Freudian doubles, it is worth noting here that the ability of horror film monsters to achieve their primary referential objective and horrify the spectator by elicitation of uncanny feelings is socioculturally dependent. Although Freud's theory of the uncanny can be argued to be immutable over time, that which is perceived as horrific evolves over time cogent with sociocultural mores (Schneider, 1996: 107-108). Kenton's Dracula may have achieved this objective with contemporaneous viewers but may have difficulty doing so with their contemporary counterparts.

Carl Jung argues that unlike in the Freudian paradigm, the personal unconscious of any individual derived from personal subjective experience is not the deepest layer of that unconscious and that there is a collective unconscious constituting a common psychic substrate or race memory that is inherited by all humans. Jung refers to its contents as archetypes, or archaic images that compose and influence both the intrinsic construct of human personality and the extrinsic constructs of culture and mythos that human personalities form in dynamic interaction (Jung, 1923: 50-70; Iaccino, 1994: 61-75). John Carradine's portrayal of Dracula, as with any filmic interpretation of the character or arguably any cinematic vampire, codifies a

trinity of Jungian archetypes: the persona/shadow, the cursed wanderer, and the black magician (Ibid). The persona archetype alludes to the mask or role an actor plays, a deception that humans use to conform to cultural mores enabling them to function within and be accepted by society. The persona archetype can be reflexively applied to a diegetic character. Kenton's Dracula's persona is codified by the cultured, urbane, elegantly attired nobleman, Baron Latos, who appeals to his cohorts for social acceptance. Yet it is Carradine who plays the role and comprises the extradiegetic 'star' element of the character's person schema (Dyer, 2019: 18-28). The shadow then is symbolised by Dracula the vampire, the atavistic predator beneath the acceptable façade. The persona and shadow, in Jungian terms, represent good and evil, the positive and negative aspects of self (Iaccino, 1994: 61-75). Dracula in Kenton's films codifies an emphasised mythological conceptualisation of the intrinsic duality of human nature in this respect. His duplicity and depredations symbolise the opportunist who takes advantage of another but may be regarded as ambitious as opposed to evil. All diegetic characters as with all spectators arguably have personas and shadows in this framework. It is when the shadow overwhelms the persona that the character is delineated as evil, as Dracula the vampire overwhelms Latos the gentleman.

The cursed wanderer archetype applies to an individual who has been compelled by negative circumstance to undertake a metaphoric journey, confront an adversary, obtain a treasure and return home. If these objectives are met, the cursed wanderer can cast off this archetype in favour of the patriarchal, and more positively perceived father-king archetype who has earned the respect of those he has authority over (Iaccino, 1994: 5-39). Kenton's Dracula symbolises this archetype by being compelled to undertake such journeys. He must seek out blood for sustenance and survival and has a baser more human need; he is lonely and desires an eternal partner. It is this potential partner that constitutes Dracula's treasure, namely Rita and Miliza. Kenton's Dracula is manipulated with cruel intention by Niemann, and initially out of compassion by Edellmann, as he quests for his treasures. Dracula then codifies the persona and the shadow. Having found his treasures and won their confidence by means of the superficial charms of his persona, his shadow surfaces to objectify and take ownership of them, manifesting as hypnotic controlling possession. It is here the character shows cogency with Jung's black magician archetype (Ibid). The antithesis of Jung's patriarchal wise old man uses his wisdom, experience and occult knowledge to further his own agenda as opposed to facilitating the quest of the hero at a textual crisis juncture. However, each time Dracula takes ownership of his treasure, he is thwarted in his quest by his respective manipulators, Niemann

and Edellmann, who expose him to the sun, resulting in his dissolution. In classical Hollywood narratives such as Kenton's monster rallies, convention dictates that the evil vampire antagonist must perish or be neutralised in that narrative's resolution, alongside any potential partner tainted with his vampirism. Dracula thus never gets to return home with his treasure and achieve the symbolic status of father-king (Ibid). Dracula here can be argued to not entirely codify evil, however. Jung's paradigm is predicated on the spectrum of human nature, not its extremes. Dracula when read as a cursed wanderer was first sent on his journey by another black magician. Dr Niemann awakened him from eternal rest to his accursed existence, in order to utilise him for his own ends. Dracula's motivations for attempting to attain a bride can be read as symbolic of loneliness and possibly having fallen in love, which are not exactly negative character traits. Carradine's Dracula can thus be viewed more as a continuation of Lon Chaney Jr's romantic anti-hero construct of the character than of Lugosi's remorseless, homicidal colonialist, one perhaps who bears a similar curse to Gloria Holden's Contessa in *Dracula's Daughter*.

It should also be noted in a discussion of uncanny diegetic doubling that from a reflexive perspective, all filmic characters are intrinsically doubles if we account for the actor/star and actor/character dichotomies (Dyer, 2019: 18-28). This begs the question, are actors intrinsically uncanny from a Freudian perspective? A point worth considering, but we will not digress here. In sum the spectator may find the intrinsic doubling of Kenton's Dracula uncanny from a Freudian perspective because within such uncanny doubles, spectators can potentially perceive their greatest collective fears, as they collapse the psychic boundaries of self and other, life and death, and even reality and unreality in dreams and madness (Freud, 1919: 219-256). Kenton's Dracula's symbolism of the Freudian double or Jungian shadow persona arguably resonates with the duality and duplicity that is intrinsic to the human nature of his viewers in an exaggerated form. By that rationale, those spectators may be uncomfortably reminded that they can perceive themselves as uncanny, or that they may perceive those different than themselves as a like reminder, which may inform deeper prejudices against those regarded as other, as will now be explored in the psychohistorical contextualisation of Kenton's films. (Chin, 2011: 67).

## **2.9 Monstrous Queer Pathology and Persecution during World War II**

*House of Frankenstein* and *House of Dracula* can be argued to resonate with the shift in pervading sociocultural mores and attitudes regarding homosexuality during World War II. This transition from the Edwardian perversion model to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century psychopathology

model eventually gave way to today's more enlightened egalitarian humanist perspectives. We will draw upon Harry M Benshoff's seminal 1997 book on queer film theory and horror, *Monsters in the Closet*. In applying Benshoff's queer historicism to Kenton's monster rallies, two salient concepts encoded within these films must first be defined. Firstly, queer as monstrous defines characters as deviant, other, and a threat to the monistic and collective concepts of self of the self-styled moral majority that perceives itself as so-called normative society. Queer as monstrous is essentially a prejudicial construct of that sociocultural milieu, mirroring its intrinsic prejudices. The epistemology underpinning this concept is arguably derived from archaic religious dogma resulting in a legacy reinforcement of the homosexual vs. heterosexual dichotomy in secular contemporary cultures that have developed from previously religion centric social hierarchies. This epistemology can be regarded as having perpetuated a state sanctioned learned prejudice. This religious dogma itself is likely to have been derived from a need to reinforce a more basal imperative. Homosexuality circumvented reproduction and thus continuity of culture in pre-industrial societies with high mortality rates (Benshoff, 1997: 1-24). Vampirism arguably parodies non-heteronormative reproduction in this context. Secondly, there is monstrous as queer. This is the allusion of queer signifiers to monstrous characters. These may be obvious, such as two males sharing an apparently close relationship, or the adoption of a stereotypical dandified mode of apparel, or they may be more abstract such as the sublimated penetration of a male, as when Dracula in morally palatable bat guise, bites male victims (Benshoff, 1997: 31-49). Decoding these concepts as they pertain to Kenton's monster rallies facilitates this potential resonance with the transition from the perversion model of otherness represented by *House of Frankenstein* to the psychopathology model represented by *House of Dracula*, with the concomitant transition occurring within the Western sociocultural dynamic of the time (Benshoff, 1997: 95-98).

Dracula embodies the queer-as-monstrous conceptualisation of fear of otherness perhaps more than any of the other monstrous characters in Kenton's monster rallies. His otherness as codified by his being an undead, metamorphic and predatory vampire is as extreme as his cohorts, but it is rendered more disturbing because he presents as human. As such he represents the other who can infiltrate society to prey upon others or assimilate them into monstrous otherness as codified by vampirism. In this respect Dracula can be read as symbolising the urbane, experienced older gay man who, whilst appearing like any other older gentleman, may assimilate an inexperienced, unsure younger man into homosexuality, thus applying the inappropriate universalising model that implies that anyone has the potential to become a queer

(vampire) if initiated. He may penetrate another to meet his sexual needs sans reciprocity, as codified by Dracula when he bites Hussmann, thus taking what he needs and leaving his prey drained. There are several other signifiers that codify the character in Benschhoff's terms as a monster queer (Ibid). He is charming, urbane and somewhat effete in manner. His immaculate evening attire, top hat and cloak constitute a dandified mode of apparel. He lives by a code predicated on hedonism and predation as opposed to conventional heterosexual morality. Most of all, as arguably any filmic monster does, he constitutes the queer force that disrupts the normative. In both films he attempts to induct normative heterosexual females (Rita and Miliza) into queer vampirism, therefore disrupting established or nascent heterosexual relationships (with Tony and Larry Talbot) in the process. The hypothetical extrapolation being that he would be left to have his way with their bereft male partners. Dracula's queerness thus codifies the depraved, irrevocably monstrous, and perverse from this perspective. In *House of Frankenstein*, he codifies a queer perversion that must be destroyed so normative heterosexuality might flourish in the form of Rita and Tony's marriage. The narrative resolution reinstates heterocentric norms by punishing Dracula the perverse transgressor with destruction as per the minoritisation model, allowing Rita and Tony to live the cliché. In the subsequent *House of Dracula* film, Dracula seeks a socially approved cure for his now pathologised as opposed to merely perverse queer monstrosity. He is allowed to live until it becomes apparent that he is implementing a ploy to possess Miliza. A contemporaneous homosexual man may similarly have accepted therapy for his homosexuality to gain acceptance but remained true to his sexuality in private. The transgressors are punished upon discovery. Dracula is destroyed, and his counterpart is marginalised. Benschhoff argued that due to being minoritised, gay spectators identify with queer monster transgressors predicated upon this shared perception of cultural marginalisation (Ibid). This same reading could feasibly be applied to Lambert Hillyer's earlier 1936 film *Dracula's Daughter* and for much the same reasons. The more overtly bisexual Countess Marya Zaleska (Gloria Holden) initially seeks the blood (and perhaps more) of model Lilli (Nan Grey), and the same from psychiatrist Dr Garth (Otto Kruger), whilst concurrently seeking a cure for her vampirism (read bisexuality) from the latter. When she does not renounce her vampiric/bisexual desires, i.e., is not cured, the sexually transgressive phallic woman (again read atypical film noir femme fatale) is destroyed by the sanctioned patriarchal penetration of an arrow (stake) through the heart as per many of Dracula's similarly liberated and empowered brides in later Dracula film cycles.

The transition from the perversion model to the pathology model of homosexuality in Western patriarchal culture occurred during World War II, and arguably resonated with American films produced during those years as exemplified here by Kenton's monster rallies. Another pertinent example would be the recuperation of Dr Radcliffe (Vincent Price) at the conclusion of *The Invisible Man Returns* (May, USA, 1940). The doctor's queer invisibility must first be cured before his life can be allowed to be saved on the operating table by his colleague Dr Griffin (John Sutton). It is worth noting at this juncture that Freud had conceivably referred to homosexuality in a pathological context (despite referring to it as a perversion) in his 'Three Essays on Sexuality' (1905) in which he categorises homosexuals as absolute inverts for whom the same sex equates their sexual object and who have no attraction or desire for the opposite sex, amphigenic inverts who are predisposed to attraction to the same or both sexes due their own biologically ambiguous genitalia and thus sexuality, and contingent inverts who seek sexual satisfaction with members of the same sex because that is all that is available. Freud cited camaraderie in war as one such aetiology for contingent inversion, and prison detention as another. As far as aetiology for absolute inversion is concerned, Freud linked this to childhood trauma. The psychopathological model of homosexuality as reconstructed by Freud's successors during World War II could be debated as having been incepted here (Freud, 1905: 26-39; Friedman, 1988; 49-57). The root of this transition may have lain in the perceived need for copious supplies of heterosexual young men to both staff the armed forces of the time and to reproduce on the home front, replacing those killed in action and thus perpetuating Western culture after the war. During the war years, homosexuality and transgender identity were mistakenly perceived by Western military medicolegal patriarchs as one and the same (Benshoff, 1997: 98-110). Predicated on this misperception, the concept of homosexuality as a psychopathology was reconstructed. In Kenton's monster rallies, this transition is potentially symbolised by a shift away from the talismanic remedies for queer monstrosity such as the rays of the morning sun for vampirism in *House of Frankenstein*, to orthodox medico-centric cures such as blood transfusions in *House of Dracula*. The pathology model supposedly codified sympathy for the tragic queer monster read as the victim of his own unnatural lusts.

This was far from the case in reality. The US military required new recruits to denounce their homosexuality in inquisitionist interviews. Homosexuality was regarded by military patriarchs as a contagion that could spread like vampirism from the fountainhead of Dracula to infect troops and neutralise the (heterosexual) male gender and its perceived fighting efficacy. Patulous tests for effeminacy, such as testing gag reflexes were used to root out supposed

homosexuals, just as Nina checked Dracula's reflection in Edellmann's mirror to delineate vampire from human (Ibid). Obscene 'cures' were implemented for homosexuality, including electroconvulsive therapy, castration, testicular irradiation, emetic aversion therapies, hormone injections and even lobotomies. These state-sanctioned medical patriarchs were madder scientists than their dyadic filmic counterparts. Those 'cured' were rewarded with social acceptance. Those who chose not to be were often publicly demonised. An article in a 1945 issue of *Esquire* magazine persecuted Noel Coward for his effeminacy as the British judiciary had done so a generation previously with another creative genius, Oscar Wilde (Ibid). Traditional gender roles became conflated with perceived good mental health in Western culture in the intra-war years, a perspective that can also be read as codified in Kenton's monster rallies as well as in war films of the period. The mad doctors Niemann and Edellmann and a plethora of diegetic Nazis, all came to codify as queer. To be 'other' was to be mentally unfit and regarded as the enemy within (Ibid).

This pervasive pathological view of (male) homosexuality at that time was underpinned by contemporaneous psychoanalytical theory. In Limentani's review 'The Psychoanalytic Movement during the Years of the War (1939-1945) according to the Archives of the I.P.A' (1989: 3-13) a particularly salient example is referred to, which alludes to Nazism itself as an analogy for homosexuality. This brings us to an intersection with another potential, perhaps more simplistic psychohistorical reading of the symptomatic meanings of Kenton's films. The monsters, Dracula in particular, could also be read as symbolising not just the enemy infiltrators but their alien culture. Jones' essay on Quislingism refers to a patient who was not in total opposition to the enemy and insisted that what had been taken from Germany (World War I reparations) be returned. This was interpreted by Jones as the father demanding back the penis that had been stolen from him. Jones intimated that this patient's lack of total opposition equated to submission to the dangerous father, and to an acceptance of and identification with him. This, Jones posited, resulted in the patient's repressive attempts to convert the evil father imago into a good one. Jones alluded that the quisling's self-deception and belief in the inevitable success of and sense of goodness ascribed to such internal evil objects was an exquisitely homosexual solution and referred to quislingism as Hitler's secret weapon (Jones, 1942: 1-12). Homosexuality read as pathology was also linked to other pathologies in the psychoanalytic literature of the time. Charles W Tidd (1943: 151-152) for instance, aligned the paranoiac fixated at the anal-sadistic level with homosexuality, stating that their strong drive to love and be loved existed due to a need to neutralise and eroticise unconscious hatred. Tidd



posited that this need was again rooted in an inadequate resolution of the Oedipus complex, due to a passive submission to and resultant hatred of the father.

In a further seminal example mirroring Dr Edellmann's treatment of monster queers as per Benschhoff's framework, Edmund Bergler MD alluded to homosexuality as a treatable mental illness in his paper 'Eight Prerequisites for the Psychoanalytic Treatment of Homosexuality'. Bergler (1944: 253-286) defined his pathological construct by quoting Freud's aetiologies for homosexuality. The first type is the male who flees from woman to man out of incest horror, the second type is one who loves another male as he himself would like to have been loved by his mother (thus identifying with the mother), and the third type having arisen from curbing aggression toward male siblings and/or the father (Freud, 1922: 221-232). Bergler drew his aetiology for female homosexuality from feminist psychoanalyst Melanie Klein, who ascribed this as the displacement of the feelings of hate and fear from the paternal penis to the sheltering body of the mother. Klein posited that as the penis epitomises anxiety, homosexuality for the woman overcomes this anxiety (Klein, 1932). Bergler goes on to conflate Freud's aetiologies, eventually defining homosexuality as a pre-oedipal oral fixation predicated on the woman who denies her breast to her male child being metamorphosed into the phallic mother with whom the male child then identifies.

According to Bergler this means that the male homosexual is rendered incapable of being reconciled with his disappointment with breast deprivation and accepts the male penis as a substitute, in what is effectively a narcissistic healing of a narcissistic psychic injury. Fear of castration then remains directed at the phallic mother, dissipating the Oedipus complex and resulting in a weakened identification with the father figure. Bergler stated that this results in the male homosexual (he makes scant reference to female homosexuality) developing an unconscious mechanism of orality that leads them to construct situations in which they are disappointed, as arguably symbolised by Kenton's Dracula's thwarted romantic assignations. They then aggressively throw themselves upon self-constructed or imaginary enemies and act defensively as potentially symbolised by Dracula choosing to engage with his nemeses, and then they finally revel in self-pity as is symbolised by Dracula arguably accepting betrayal and even death, with his ineffectual escape attempts (Bergler, 1944: 253-286). Bergler further pathologises male homosexuality in outlining his criteria for a successful 'therapy' for the 'condition'. He stated that the male homosexual has an inner guilt resultant of pre-oedipal conflict with the phallic mother that can be utilised analytically.

Treatment supposedly stood a greater likelihood of success if the subject voluntarily sought therapy. Kenton's Dracula arguably codifies this criterion, but does not codify the subsequent criterion, whereby the subject must not exhibit too extensive an amount of self-damaging tendencies, which includes hiding (aspects of their lives) and resorting to modes of self-protection that contain elements of self-punishment (Ibid). Bergler's next criterion was that the subject should have a therapeutic preference of homosexual reality to homosexual phantasy i.e., be a practising homosexual. He posited that psychoanalysis for the subject would otherwise become their alibi, constituting an insurmountable state of passivity (Ibid). The subject would have no real experience of complete psychic dependence on the mother, or an unresolved Oedipus complex and thus no established unconscious mechanism of orality to provide a therapeutic focus. Kenton's Dracula, as any vampire, arguably symbolises Bergler's mechanism of orality, having no real dependence on any psychosocial interaction. Dr Edellmann's efforts could be read as symbolising psychoanalysis with such a therapeutic focus. Bergler's ideal subject should have no persistent reason for maintaining homosexuality as an aggressive weapon against the hated family. Bergler is contradictive here, effectively stating that sexuality and/or neurosis can be chosen by the sufferer and utilised as a means of emotional blackmail, which would be regarded as a ludicrous concept by the modern reader. To refer to Dracula's vampirism read as homosexuality within Benschhoff's framework, Dracula has a hatred of a humanity that persecutes him yet must maintain contact to procure sustenance. This arguably codifies a homosexual in Bergler's view, who may hate their family's persecution of them, yet still seek familial approval, acceptance and love. Bergler's penultimate criterion is that there is no authoritative assertion of incurability. There could be no hopeless case, lest the analyst's pessimism predispose the subject to therapeutic failure (Ibid). This criterion can be read as being symbolised by Dr Edellmann's acceptance of his monstrously queer patients, a duplicitous vampire and a suicidal werewolf. Bergler's final criterion is that the analyst has sufficient knowledge of the pathological aetiology of homosexuality to successfully treat it (Ibid). Dr Edellmann again codifies the psychoanalyst in his treatment of Dracula's vampirism, due to his apparent expert knowledge.

State sanctioned prejudice epitomised by the continuing criminalisation of male homosexuality and its ascribed psychopathology perpetuated the need for secrecy and discretion within Western gay subculture in the 1940's. As symbolised by Kenton's Dracula and his cohorts, to reveal one's true nature was to risk persecution at the hands of the normative majority. The keeping of the secret ascribes monstrosity to the keeper. As World War II ended and the Cold

War began, the Western state apparatus continued to enforce prejudicial hetero-centrist binaries. In the United States witch-hunts hounded homosexuals in government service from their jobs, whilst in the more conservative United Kingdom, such indiscretions were covered up where possible, and where not, resignations for personal reasons were encouraged. Similar dishonourable discharges expelled ousted homosexuals from the armed forces, sans honours and benefits. As the cold war era progressed, the horror film narratives of the fifties continued to codify a monster queer dichotomy. The humanised monsters symbolised the intrinsic threat to Western culture perceived by the patriarchal state as posed by individual communists within (Benshoff, 1997: 121-132). To be a queer/gay other was now aligned with being unpatriotic as well as suffering from psychopathology. The giant radioactive all-consuming mutants, such as *The Blob* (Irvin S Yeaworth, Jr., USA, 1958) and the *Colossal Beast* (Bert I Gordon, USA, 1958) symbolised the extrinsic threat of nuclear war posed by the collective communists without, the Soviet Union and the Chinese.



**Figure 10:** Kenton's dyadic Dracula the gentleman predator and shadowy bat.

As alluded to earlier, these were the queer cultures beyond the West that rejected its values and belief systems. During the Cold war era, the gay subculture settled within tolerant enclaves of bohemian city quarters in the likes of New York, San Francisco, London and Paris. Its ranks were swelled by post-war socioeconomic and geographic mobility. As this subculture grew, it found its voice. The love that once dare not speak its name now dared. In 1958 in the UK, the British Homosexual Law Reform society was formed, which campaigned to introduce the recommendation of the 1957 Wolfenden report, the legalisation of homosexuality for consenting adults over the age of 21 years. In 1961, Illinois became the first state in the US to decriminalise homosexuality. The findings of the Wolfenden report were legislated in the UK in 1967 (McGhee, 2004: 357-375). Throughout the sixties and early seventies, underground gay subculture began to mobilise collectively against Western patriarchal discrimination. The pathologised queer monster of the late forties was resurrected in a more visceral, explicit form in 1958 as another cinematic Count Dracula. As gay subculture evolved and became ever more openly expressive from 1958 onward, Christopher Lee's interpretation of Dracula did likewise in the Hammer film cycle, from initially hiding his metaphoric penetrative act behind his cloak in *Dracula* (Terence Fisher, UK, 1958) to explicitly depicting it, with men and women, throughout the sequels of the 1960's and early 1970's (Benshoff, 1997: 121-132).



**Figure 11:** Dracula and homosexuality; otherness is pathologised (www.eurkastreet.com).

### **2.10 The Universal Dracula Films: The Psychohistoricism of the Cycle**

As outlined by Stanfield (2013), in his critical overview of Alloway (1971), film can be argued to utilise, intentionally or otherwise, current and timely issues while also itself being topical. As alluded to by Alloway, the film cycle communicates reciprocity with culture when these

elements are explored intertextually. Stanfield argues that film can be historicised whilst avoiding reflectionist or symptomatic analysis, by imagining direct, or even allegorical, correspondences between films and their contexts. Film can thus be regarded as an art form that is symptomatic of the psychosocial milieu that influences its creators, whether that influence is subconscious, or manifests as the conscious referencing of topicality in the pursuit of a marketable product. It is this historically contextualised psychosocial tension that is inherent to this reciprocity that invites psychohistorical analysis of film cycles as opposed to filmic texts in isolation. Whilst any one film can be regarded as evanescent, Alloway, as cited by Stanfield, contends that the proliferation of “continuing themes and motifs,” with “the prolongation of ideas in film after film” compensates for “the obsolescence of single films” (Stanfield, 2013: 217-218; Alloway, 1971: 19). This stance arguably accounts for both the inexorable propagation and continuation of themes and trends within contemporaneous sociocultural dynamics and the producer or director who anticipates and exploits them in the pursuit of a commercially successful product. Either way, filmic texts are indirectly influenced by the prevailing psychosocial milieu. This author argues for a further abstraction in that the proliferation of continuing associated themes and motifs in the Dracula film canon. Each Dracula film evolves in reciprocal tension with shifting historical psychosocial influences to allow those films to remain topical and hence marketable, but so must psychoanalysis in parallel as a therapeutic discipline and analytical paradigm to retain relevance. It is within this epistemological liminal space that this evolution not only counters (or seeks to counter) the obsolescence of any one Dracula film, but also Dracula as an evolving cinematic character within and across cycles.

In terms of applying vampire theory to the Universal Dracula films as a cycle, the interplay between films being resonant with their contemporaneous psychosocial milieu in the psychohistorical context and being exercises in commercialism remains labile, and even tensile, but arguably does not imply any mutual exclusivity in this respect. Interpreting in retrospect whether, as according to Ferreira (2004), that “the general social mood, historical context and cultural milieu within which particular events and pieces of information are interpreted are acted upon” (Ferreira, 2004: 203), is after all a subjective act on the part of the film theorist. The crux of interpreting whether a film or cycle of films is resonant or not in this context, is succinctly captured by Ferreira as follows, and is a standpoint with which this author concurs:

When the metaphor of resonance is expanded to encompass visual narratives, it not only acquires the multimedia dimension but also the added dimensions of real time immediacy and the possibility of shared vicarious experience (Ferreira, 2004: 203).

Any degree of sociocultural resonance with these films as a cycle as defined here, is still resonance, and is therefore arguably subject to reciprocity in with contemporaneous collective psychosocial tensions. Concomitant shifts in modes of interpreting those tensions (psychoanalysis), are arguably themselves subject to reciprocity with them within that same dynamic, justifying a psychohistorical analysis of potential resonances. The proliferating themes and motifs pervading the Dracula films of the Universal cycle can be seen to coalesce around a patriarchal narcissistic trajectory.

Browning's film, and by association, Melford's, are seminal adaptations of Stoker. Spectator interest in the character can arguably be equated with a fundamental reimagining of the original narrative with regards to these two films, so a certain degree of sociocultural resonance was guaranteed by the cultural impact of a sensationalised and original contribution to the burgeoning horror film genre. Lugosi's and Villarias' Draculas, in Browning's and Melford's respective 1931 films, can be read as symbolising scopophilic, narcissistic predators from the psychoanalytical perspective. As per Freud's libidinal typology, few redeeming traits were codified. Whilst not epitomising Freud's concept of the abject as Murnau's *Nosferatu* arguably did, they can still be viewed as symbolic of the evil other, infiltrating outsiders seeking power and bent on consuming their prey, redolent of Capone or Hitler. This other was still valorised by the oppressed as they opposed oppressive government authority. However, to oppose authority, or arguably morality, was to ultimately remain demonised and still had to be seen to be punished as such.

In terms of deeper resonance from the psychohistorical perspective, these interpretations of the character potentially resonated not only with Freud's narcissistic libidinal type, but with the wider social valorisation of that type at the time, and the impact that said valorisation could conceivably have had on Freud's thinking in this respect. The Dracula films of 1931, Freud's cogent essay on libidinal types, and a psychosocial milieu that foregrounded and popularised the narcissistic other from within can be located within a potent cultural nexus, one on which Freudian thought, especially in the USA, was already having a significant influence (Torrey, 1992). As with other Dracula films that adapt Stoker's novel (albeit with varying degrees of

poetic licence) they are, as outlined by Thomas (2000: 79), staged as the problematic symptoms of fundamental conflicts between the past and the present in which the traditional conception of character is threatened by primitive forces from within and by modern forces from without. Whilst historiographic resonances with elements of contemporaneous sociocultural shifts changes over time, the potentially deeper resonances with the psychosocial dynamics underpinning those shifts can be argued to be somewhat more consistent, and recurrent.

By this rationale, it can be seen why each new cycle of Dracula films, whether viewed from the conventional or from Alloway's perspective, commences with an adaptation of Stoker, as producers align the character as a marketable cultural property with associated recurrent perceived trends (Thomas, 2000: 79-88; Stanfield, 2008: 179-189, Alloway, 1971: 41). It is the progression of Dracula's trajectory of narcissistic otherness, starting with Browning's and Melford's films, but continuing with the Universal Dracula films viewed as a cycle, that arguably resonates with the collision and intersection of historical events and sociocultural dynamics in some respects but also with the progress of psychoanalysis itself as a response to them that is evidenced by the contemporaneous literature (Ibid). As the 1930's ended and the USA entered the 1940's, both the academic and medicolegal patriarchy, and the entertainment industry adhered in some form to the Freud's culture of psychoanalysis, and the influence of those then perceived as the upper socioeconomic echelons allowed that culture to permeate other sectors of American sociocultural life, in turn influencing wider norms and mores (Marcus, 2016: 256-265).

In *Son of Dracula* the Count is no longer the narcissistic evil outsider other but can be read as a dichotomous other with some redeeming traits, the weak and willing attention-starved victim of the potentially more narcissistic femme fatale. This could be argued as the first glimmerings of sympathy for the cinematic Dracula and even the vampire per se, if he is read as codifying a fallible, gullible old man. Both Dracula and Kay could be aligned with one of Freud's psychopathic stage characters in a recently posthumously published work, Kay as the psychopath, and Dracula the victimised sick neurotic (Freud, 1942). There could however be a perceived lack of sympathy for Dracula's character for that same reason. It was the horror noir femme fatale however, that was the demonised other here, codifying the threat of the independent woman in 1940's America to a patriarchy arguably fearful of relinquishing control; a reading applicable to many examples of the wider film noir genre for the same reasons (Snyder, 2001: 155-161). The threat to American patriarchy by the infiltrating

foreigner within, had been replaced with the threat from within posed by the unjustly pathologised independent (read phallic, post-oedipal) woman, but she and her victims could at the time be unassailably pathologised from a legitimised patriarchal psychoanalytical perspective, such was the continuing influence of Freudian thought on American culture; Bunker's translation of Freud's essay 'Psychopathic Characters on Stage', was published after the latter's death in 1939 (Freud, 1942; Torrey, 1992, Hales, 2007).

It was the traditional conception of the heteronormative male character that was threatened by the primitive female force from within and by allied feminist modern forces from without here (Ibid). This patriarchal fear can thus arguably be theorised as a projection of contemporaneous cultural male narcissism (read an apparently victimised Dracula) on to this stereotyped manipulative feminine archetype (Kay), symbolising patriarchy experiencing its own unjustly defensive position as the perceived aggression of the independent woman, allowing self-justification of that demonisation (Clarke, 1999: 23-30; Mancini, 2012: 423; Zwissler, 2018: 16-17). Siodmak's film is not usually seen as seminal; it could be argued to have a lesser cultural impact than Browning's and Melford's films, in that its production certainly constitutes capitalisation on the market appeal of its predecessor, but the wider psychosocial dynamics that it resonates with when reading the film within the wider film noir as well as the horror genre, specifically the burgeoning independence of the American woman during World War II, are arguably none the less palpable for that (Ibid).

Kenton's monster rallies again constitute capitalisation on the market appeal of their predecessors and lack the expected cultural impact of any reinvention of Stoker's narrative. Carradine's dichotomous Dracula, as a duplicitous Freudian uncanny double, has his otherness pathologised as an infection by a medicolegal patriarch. This in turn resonated with pathology providing a convenient explanation to justify hegemonic prejudice that was applied to the (male) homosexual population of the time. Kenton's films arguably symbolise the perceived threat to American patriarchy posed by the homosexual within, equated with Dracula as firstly the perverse, then the pathologised narcissistic other. To be other was to be unwell, as was demonstrated by Charles Tidd's and Edmund Bergler's psychoanalytic discourses on homosexuality. Rather than a projection of cultural heteronormative male narcissism, this homophobic patriarchal perspective as symbolised by Kenton's Dracula films was arguably symptomatic of it. As with the independent woman, the homosexual could be unassailably pathologised from a legitimised patriarchal psychoanalytical perspective; as the traditional



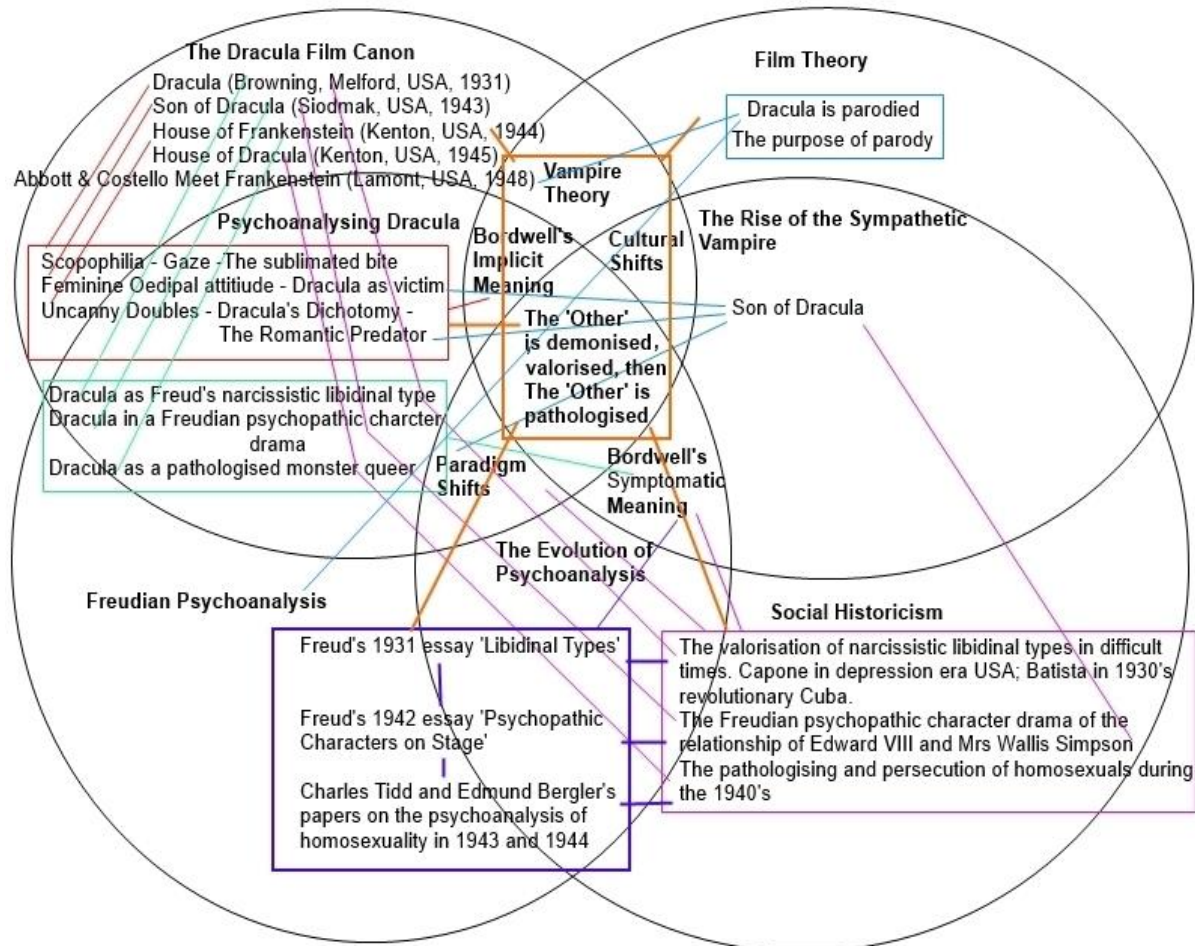
conception of the heteronormative male character was again threatened by the primitive transgressive sexualised force from within and by allied liberal modern forces from without.

This pathologising can be argued to constitute a narcissistic defence against long-held and entrenched value judgements in the psychoanalytic tradition being rightly challenged by those labelled as both other and a threat to the patriarchy suffering the infliction of sanitised institutional emotional and physical violence by psychoanalysts and other medicolegal patriarchs as a punitive response to what can ultimately be argued as a perceived transgression of the valorised stereotypical heteronormative archetype of masculinity (Ponder, 2007; Richards, 2017; Khayatt, 2006). In turn this punitive response can be argued to constitute a tacit rage-fuelled reaction when the very fundament of patriarchy itself is brought into question (Strozier, 2017). The potential psychohistorical resonances are not only as palpable as those posited for Siodmak's film, or Browning's and Melford's for that matter; to an extent they resonate with them as only the culturally marginalised scapegoats have changed.

It is at this nexus of interpretation that a psychohistorical reading of the Universal Dracula film cycle can finally be located, charting not only a trajectory of narcissistic otherness that is at times both valorised and demonised in tension, but the response of an equally narcissistic patriarchy to that which it deems a threat to its privileged position. Whilst these intersecting connections of meanings ascribing synchronicity to diegetic metaphor (as summarised in figure 21 below) can be debated as arbitrary, that renders them nonetheless apparent. Therefore, the possibility of the conscious or unconscious perceptions of these connections by their respective spectators cannot be easily discounted.

The Universal Dracula cycle ended conceptually in Kenton's monster rallies and finally in parody. Harries' first, experimental stage of parody, that of conventional formulation, encompasses the recreation of Count Dracula, as a cinematic character via the Universal films (Ibid). At the commencement of the Universal cycle Dracula still codifies the demonised other, although there are the first psychohistorical inklings of the valorised outsider evident (Harries, 2000: 1-23). At the end of the Universal cycle, Dracula read as the monstrous queer codifies the pathologising of the queer other as mad rather than bad. The endpoint of this experimental stage is marked by its cogent parody *Abbott and Costello meet Frankenstein* with Bela Lugosi reprising his Dracula role almost as he first played it. The laughs are left to Messrs. Abbott and Costello, so despite his exploitation, Dracula in this film is still the narcissistic other to be

feared (Stewart, 1982: 33-50). In psychoanalytical terms, this can be read as a defence against that which spectators recognise, and find uncomfortable, be that the sublimated vampire bite that sublimates sexual penetration or prejudice towards difference.



**Figure 12:** Mapping theorised liminal spaces of the Universal Dracula Cycle.

### **2.11 Afterword: Capes, Cloaks and Iconic Tropes**

On a final note, the visual tropes of Universal's Dracula did not disappear. Although the trope of Dracula as a seductive, formally attired, cloaked predatory European aristocrat came into being in the Balderstone and Deane stage production, it was both perpetuated by the Universal Dracula cycle and embedded by it within Western cinematic and televisual culture as the archetypal vampire for some years to come, and can be considered fundamental to the inception of the cinematic and televisual vampire subgenre of horror as a result. Viewer expectation of what constituted a cinematic vampire, from supernatural strengths and weaknesses to visual iconography, started with Universal's Dracula's cinematic lore, with a nod to F.W. Murnau's 1922 *Nosferatu* (discussed in the previous chapter). Parodies notwithstanding, prominent

examples include Christopher Lee's interpretation of the role for the Hammer Dracula films of the late 1950's to the early 1970's; Jack Palance's Count in Dan Curtis' 1973 USA TV movie *Bram Stoker's Dracula*; Bob Kelijan's 1973 film for MGM (USA), *Count Yorga Vampire*; the titular vampire of the Blaxploitation film *Blacula* (William Crain USA, 1972); Ferdy Mayne's sardonic Count Von Krolock in the 1967 Italian Roman Polanski farce *The Fearless Vampire Killers*; and even kindly old uncle Ludwig (Michael Gough) in the children's television series *The Little Vampire* (Christian Gorlitz, Rene Bonniere, UK/Canada/Germany 1986). It could be argued that the first truly influential iconoclasm of visual and other canonical tropes came with Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (USA, 1992), in terms of Dracula himself as a cinematic and televisual vampire character. However, the visual iconography of the wider archetypal vampire influenced by the Universal Dracula cycle began changing earlier, perhaps most notably with the vampire films of the 1980's. In *The Hunger* (Tony Scott, USA, 1983) the powerful female vampire is returned to the fore in the form of Catherine Deneuve's Miriam Blaylock, redolent of increasing numbers of successful women in leadership roles during this period (Elasmar et al, 1999: 20-34).



**Figure 13:** The Universal vampire archetype in formal wear; Christopher Lee and Jack Palance as Dracula; Ferdy Mayne as Count von Krolock; Robert Quarry as Count Yorga; Michael Gough as Uncle Ludwig; William G Marshall as Prince Mamuwalde, in *Blacula*.

Later that decade came the rise of a different breed of marginalised vampire outsiders, the young rebel drifters foregrounded by *The Lost Boys* (Joel Schumacher, 1987) and *Near Dark* (Kathryn Bigelow, USA, 1987). These vampires were presented as young Americans. They rode motorcycles, had long hair, dressed in leather and listened to rock music. As such, unlike Dracula, they were vampires that were identified with by the burgeoning generation X. The connotations of this for Dracula as a vampire character will be explored later (Bacon, 2011).



**Figure 14:** Gary Oldman in the titular role in Francis Ford Coppola's *Dracula*; Catherine Deneuve as Miriam Blaylock in *The Hunger*; Kiefer Sutherland as David in *The Lost Boys*; Bill Paxton as Severen in *Near Dark*.

### Chapter 3

#### Dracula Reinvented, the Long 1960's

##### 3.0 The Hammer Dracula Cycle: 1958-1972

Universal studios did not maintain the Count as one of their many series characters, and it would be more than ten years before he would make his cinematic return. In 1958 this would be in Paul Landres' low budget horror noir *The Return of Dracula* in the US. However, of arguably far greater sociocultural impact, was Terence Fisher's *Dracula* (UK, 1958) which was filmed at Hammer's original home, Bray Studios. It was released on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1958 (fig. 15). Peter Hutchings argues that Hammer's horror films "do draw upon, represent and are always locatable in relation to much broader shifts and tendencies in British social history" (Hutchings, 1993:1). In his later book, *Dracula, the British Film Guide 7*, he gives a substantiation of this argument, particularly relevant to historicist analysis of the Hammer Dracula cycle. In analysing some of the criticisms of Fisher's initial film and other early Hammer horror films, he refers to their repeatedly being described as degrading; highlighting "what this sort of 'exploitative' entertainment may be doing to an audience" and "how it might be 'blunting' sensibilities and in doing so, undermining class distinction" (Hutchings, 2003:85).

Pirie (2008: 42) similarly notes the reaction of the *Observer's* CA Lejeune, who asked "Can't anything be done about it?" Such sentiment succinctly outlines conservative establishment fears of the sexual revolution, breakdown in class division and the rise of alternative societal models and even meritocratic social mobility that defines the period sometimes referred to as 'the long 1960's' (Littler, 2013: 53). Similar criticisms of Hammer's Dracula came from more politically left-wing leaning commentators also, notably Nina Hibbin, whose review of Fisher's 1958 film commenced with jaded cynicism "I went to see Dracula, a Hammer film, prepared to enjoy a nervous giggle, I was ready to poke fun at it" but ended echoing her conservative counterparts, stating "I came away revolted and outraged" (Hibbin, 1959). The cultural shifts epitomising this period were perhaps best outlined by Arthur Marwick. He outlines the era as a transformative period of 'Cultural Revolution' running from 1958 to 1974, effectively framing the Hammer Dracula cycle per se as well as the Franco and Curtis films paralleling its denouement, that forever changed the lives of ordinary people in the Western world, and was characterised by seven distinct, constantly interacting phenomena. The first was a proliferation of social movements predicated on new social concerns, new forms of social participation, individualism, artistic expression, entrepreneurialism, spirituality and hedonism, in varying measures. Secondly came relational changes (familial and otherwise) rooted in sexual

liberation and associated moral shifts. Third, was the rise of youth culture, epitomised by the recognition of the teenager as a distinct social demographic. Fourthly there was a growth in the international exchange of cultural products and practices. Fifth was an improvement in the general standard of living, particularly of lower socioeconomic status groups, and sixth, the expansion and strengthening of a liberal, progressive zeitgeist. Finally, in contrast to these more positive cultural shifts of the long 1960's, was the resistance to such changes exhibited by some institutions of authority, typified by bigoted reactionary dogmatism. The backlash against the civil rights movement, particularly in some parts of the US, was a disturbingly potent example (Marwick, 2005: 780-806). Paradoxically, unlike its later horror films of the long 1960's, Hammer's crime thrillers of the 1940's and 1950's valorised patriarchal authority rather than challenge it. *Dr Morelle: The Case of the Missing Heiress* (Grayson, UK, 1949) is one notable example.

By applying Alloway's theory, the Hammer Dracula films (as part of the long 1960's Dracula cycle) can be read as resonant with these cultural shifts. David Pirie remarked in his book *Vampire Cinema* that Hammer's approach to horror was the intrusion of the abnormal into the normal rendering their supernatural material almost invariably thematically and psychologically subversive (Pirie, 1977: 74). This again parallels synchronous cultural shifts, which likewise were viewed by the establishment as subversive relative to (outgoing) mores. Brian Wilson would later agree with the somewhat extravagant claim that:

the films produced by Hammer studios during its heyday from the early 1950s to the mid-1970s worked to engender progressive forms of ideological awareness through the utilisation of traditional generic cinematic structures as a method through which to reflect and subvert a conservative value system (Wilson, 2007: 53).

He would go on to concur with Hutchings' points, that "Hammer's revitalisation of the British Gothic horror tradition marked a necessary shift in national cultural identity, effectively enabling ideological opposition" (Wilson, 2007: 53). It is worth emphasising at this juncture, that Wilson's and Hutchings' opinions on Hammer's contribution to cultural politics does not equate to this perceived contribution constituting conscious intent on the studio's part, but instead, their reading of incidental effect. This concept will underpin the psychohistoricist reading of Hammer's Dracula cycle. Lee returned to the role, again at Bray Studios, for *Dracula, Prince of Darkness* (UK, 1966; Terence Fisher). Five Dracula sequels with Lee in the

title role would follow: *Dracula has risen from the Grave* (UK 1968; Freddie Francis), *Taste the Blood of Dracula* (UK, 1970, Peter Sasdy), *Scars of Dracula* (UK, 1971, Roy Ward-Baker), *Dracula AD 1972* (UK, 1972, Alan Gibson), and finally *The Satanic Rites of Dracula* (UK, 1973, Alan Gibson). *The Brides of Dracula* (UK, 1960, Terence Fisher) was originally intended as a Dracula sequel, but Christopher Lee refused to reprise his role as the Count for fear of being typecast, despite his eventual return to the franchise. Jimmy Sangster's script was rewritten to replace the titular Count, with one of his supposed vampire disciples, Baron Meinster (David Peel). The film provided another vehicle for Peter Cushing's Van Helsing, as did the genre crossing martial arts horror *Legend of the 7 Golden Vampires* directed by Roy Ward Baker for Hammer studios and the Hong Kong studio Shaw Brothers in 1974. Apart from Dracula's brief cameos as portrayed by John Forbes Robertson in the latter film, neither was arguably part of the Hammer Dracula cycle in any overarching diegetic context (Johnson and Del Vecchio, 1996). Hammer also planned but never made a Dracula film set in India, *The Unquenchable Thirst of Dracula* (recently revisited by BBC Radio 4 under the direction of Mark Gatiss), as if the next step was to re-invent the character as a colonial villain.

Similarly, *Taste the Blood of Dracula*, was not planned to feature Dracula as the primary antagonist as Christopher Lee was disinclined to return to the role, and had been demanding greater remuneration for his contribution from Hammer. Ralph Bates, as Lord Courtenay, would have played a more youthful and romanticised lead. The script was rewritten to include Dracula after Hammer's producers persuaded Lee when Warner-Seven Arts refused to finance the production without Lee cast as the titular arch-vampire (Meikle and Koetting, 2009: 178-179; Kinsey, 2007: 137-139). As alluded to earlier, Hammer's ambitions were arguably more commercial than artistic, as is arguably the case for the sequelae in any film franchise, but this does not detract from potential resonances of such film cycles with their contemporaneous psychosocial milieu. Alloway indeed argues that such films would be of greater resonance in this context (Alloway, 1963: 16-18; Pirie, 2008: 109).

Fisher's 1958 *Dracula* was one of the first and arguably most influential of Hammer's horror films, although as Brian Wilson would later argue, Hammer sustains a reductive reputation often relegating it to cult status (Wilson, 2007: 57). Peter Hutchings remarked that Hammer's churning out films based on a particular formula as is the case with its Dracula cycle, resulted in over-exposure contributing to the transformation of Hammer horror from "something shocking into something safe", which compared to the more confrontational horror films that

came later in the 1970's such as Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (USA, 1974), they certainly were. Indeed, to the contemporary eye, used to the gore drenched visual effects and even more explicit violence of recent televisual vampire fiction such as Del Toro's and Hogan's series *The Strain* (2014) or AMC's popular zombie series *The Walking Dead*, Hammer's Dracula would seem tame. Hammer horror's transition to cult status, however, owes no small debt to film critic David Pirie himself, whose original 1973 book *A Heritage of Horror: The English Gothic Cinema* incepted a scholarly, intellectual interest in Hammer's works (earlier French critics aside) that has continued to gather momentum. From the first sequel onward, a common criticism levelled at the Hammer Dracula films was that the Dracula character was inserted ad hoc into a pre-constructed narrative rather than the narrative being centred upon its titular character (Hutchings, 2003: 93-95). The explicit sexualised, gore-soaked violence of the first film increased as the cycle progressed. *The Satanic Rites of Dracula* concluded the cycle unable to secure US distribution until six years after its UK release (Johnson and Del Vecchio, 1996). New, more visually explicit and disturbing tropes were pervading horror cinema during the 1970's that arguably contributed to the cultural obsolescence of the cinematic Dracula archetype of that time. Two of the most notable such tropes were the Judeo-Christian spirit possession horrors characterised by *The Exorcist* (Friedkin, USA 1973), *The Omen* (Donner, USA 1976), and *The Amityville Horror* (Rosenberg, USA 1979) (Bauman, 1994), and slasher films such as Tobe Hooper's *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (USA, 1974), John Carpenter's *Halloween* (USA, 1978) and Abel Ferrara's *The Driller Killer* (USA 1979) (Rockoff, 2002: 57-71).

### **3.1 Reframing the Psychohistorical Approach**

When discussing psychoanalysis applied to culture as an analytical paradigm, Hutchings describes such approaches as having an ahistorical or universalising dimension, positing Stoker's novel *Dracula* as an erotically transgressive text that challenged notions of normative sexuality (Hutchings, 2003: 15-17). As discussed previously, it can also be argued from a meta-analytical standpoint that psychoanalysis as a therapeutic discipline and thus by logical abstraction as an analytical paradigm, is as subject to contemporaneous cultural shifts as film is. In the psychohistorical framework, both can be read as resonant with synchronous cultural shifts, and thus also with each other when reading films.

Hutchings (1993: 115-127) arguably concurs with Richard Astle's view that Dracula in the Hammer cycle can be seen as two faces of the symbolic father, the guarantor of patriarchy,



allowing hunters to both obey the father (Van Helsing or substitute) and kill the father (Dracula), in what can be read as an idealised resolution to Freud's oedipal complex (Astle 1979: 98-105). In Jungian terms as discussed previously, Dracula and Van Helsing similarly correspond to the dark and white mage archetypes respectively. These are even perceived by some as reciprocal roles, given Dracula's (conditional) transgressive sexual liberation of women and Van Helsing and cohorts' violent punishment of this throughout the cycle. This reading is alluded to in particular in Jonathan Rigby's 'English Gothic; A Century of Horror Cinema' (2004: 150-162).



**Figure 15:** The original release poster for Hammer's *Dracula* (Fisher, UK, 1958).

Secondly Hutchings refers to the conditionally empowered women of the cycle, noting that female desire is acknowledged only in that they wait longingly for Dracula. As the coital bite is delivered under hypnosis an ultimate circumvention of will is implied, and whilst they are transiently empowered as phallic women, they remain subservient to Dracula (Hutchings, 1993: 115-127). Finally, Hutchings refers to doubling, in particular the transgressive vampire couple of Dracula and Helen versus the normative heterosexual couple Charles and Diana in Terence Fisher's *Dracula Prince of Darkness*, outlining that this doubling both subverts the institutional norm and recuperates it in the film's narrative resolution which again draws parallels with Freud's uncanny doubles and Jung's shadow persona archetypes (Ibid). David

Pirie draws upon this same example of dualism in his book *A New Heritage of Horror; The English Gothic Cinema*, but also refers to two other important examples of this trope in the Hammer cycle, that of Van Helsing's inherent dichotomy as both occultist and scientist, and of demure women transformed by (Dracula's) sexuality (Pirie, 2008: 95-112). Although all of the above tropes are present in the Universal cycle (perhaps most evident in Melford's 1931 Spanish film) they are rendered far more explicit and visceral in the Hammer cycle. Whilst sublimation of the coital bite is still sometimes evident, notably when Dracula bites a male in Alan Gibson's *Dracula AD 1972*, it is for the most part to a lesser degree and in some cases absent, with the explicit bite sublimating only intercourse itself. This chapter will go on to draw together such discursive threads that can at first glance present as both arbitrary and disparate as a cohesive historiographic psychoanalysis of Hammer's, Curtis' and Franco's Counts, foregrounding the characters' nihilism and narcissism, which will in turn underpin an exploration of the psychohistoricist relationship between these films, counterculture, and cultism.

### **3.2 Dracula at the End of the Long 1960's**

The narcissistic trajectory codified by Dracula's character development was not restricted to the Hammer cycle at the end of the long 1960's. Franco's 1970 *Bram Stoker's Count Dracula* was a Spanish-German-Italian co-production that was originally conceptualised as a high budget film to be faithful to Stoker's novel, which is what initially attracted Christopher Lee to the titular role, but this was never to be. Between 1968 and 1970, British independent producer Harry Alan Towers and Spanish director Jesús Franco collaborated on a number of films that exploited literary sources associated with deviant pleasures and perversities including de Sade, von Sacher-Masoch, Sax Rohmer (Two Fu Manchu films were made), and Stoker. The resultant low budget film *Count Dracula* was shot on location in Valencia and the surrounding Catalan region in Spain during 1969. Towers and Franco's collaborations, such as *Marquis De Sade: Justine* (Italy, 1968), and its spiritual successor *Venus in Furs* (Italy, 1969) were, to quote Lázaro-Reboll:

characteristic of the industrial milieu in which European popular genre films were being made during the 1960s, but they also adapted to the shifts taking place in the international media market in the late 1960s, among them, more daring combinations of sex and horror, the expectation of sexual titillation, and more general changes in consumer taste (Lazaro-Reboll, 2013: 93).

As a result, Franco's Dracula portrayed by Lee again codifies a sexualised predatory narcissist in the Hammer mold circa 1972 in some respects, but arguably one underpinned by greater manipulative sentience. Dan Curtis' 1973 *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, with Jack Palance in the titular role, was made as a television film for ABC in the USA, with a subsequent limited cinematic release by EMI distribution in the UK. Curtis' Dracula film was one of the first to pursue the narrative trope of conflating the Count with Vlad the Impaler as he seeks to rekindle the love of his lost bride reincarnated as Mina. This narrative trope eventually proved canonical, resurfacing in Coppola's 1992 film and again in Gary Shore's 2014 *Dracula Untold*. Whilst Hammer's cycle dominates the long 1960's, it is in Curtis' film that the monster can be argued to be irrevocably humanised. He is given an explicitly depicted human past showing him to be capable of love and subject to the agonal pain of bereavement. An element of tragedy underpinned by guilt would haunt the majority of Dracula's cinematic characterisations from this point forward. The overall narcissistic representation of Franco's Dracula is retained in Palance's characterisation, but it is the desire to infiltrate and take control from within and the narcissistic rage when thwarted (similar in some respects to Browning's Count) that is foregrounded.

### **3.3 Coalescing Psychoanalytical Symbolism in Hammer's Dracula Cycle**

Terence Fisher's 1958 *Dracula* film defines Jonathan Harker (John Van Eyssen) as a vampire hunter seeking to destroy Count Dracula (Christopher Lee). The visual iconography pertaining to Dracula outlined in the Universal Dracula cycle is retained as a black frock suit, black cravat, and black lined cloak in this first film of the Hammer cycle (Fig. 16). Lee's imposing stature and mellifluous tone lend the Count an air of dominance and genteel sibilant menace. Later that evening, Harker is bitten by the female vampire who claimed to be Dracula's hostage and is thus penetrated by one of Freud's phallic women. Dracula bursts in and removes the woman. This act could be read as his claiming homosexual ownership of Harker. Dracula here embodies visceral animism and psychosexual aggression and it is quickly implied that Dracula bites (and therefore sexually penetrates) Harker. Dr Van Helsing (Peter Cushing) is introduced as the genius patriarch, occultist scientist Freudian double and Jungian wise old man. The normative heterosexual couple of the text, Arthur Holmwood (Michael Gough) and (blonde) wife Mina (Melissa Stribling) are also introduced along with Harker's fiancée and Holmwood's (brunette) sister Lucy, who is the first to welcome the Count's bite. Dracula's raised cloak sublimates the bite, which is arguably an incongruity considering Harker's bite was explicitly depicted. Lucy

is subsequently destroyed by Van Helsing in a scene which explicitly depicts the metaphoric rape codified by staking for the first time in film.



**Figure 16:** Christopher Lee's *Dracula* approaches Lucy, and Lucy's staking (*Dracula* 1958).

It is worth remembering here that in Browning's 1931 *Dracula* for Universal studios, Lucy merely disappeared from the narrative, whereas in Melford's Spanish language version, it was implied that the staking took place off-screen. The violating phallic stake in Fisher's film paradoxically restores purity lost in consensual metaphoric intercourse with Dracula's phallic fangs, inferring any sexual act deviating from that approved by patriarchal morality is punished in restoration to that morality (Fig. 16, above). Dracula meanwhile turns his attentions to Mina backing her onto her bed, kissing her neck. The bite is implied as a symbolic penetrative sexual act as close to literal as metaphor can be. Returning to the pathological model of vampirism, established in Kenton's *House of Dracula*, Van Helsing transfuses her with Holmwood's blood. This sanctioned exchange of body fluids indemnifies against the previous transgressive sexual act of vampiric penetration. Finally, Van Helsing chases Dracula into his castle. The final conflict takes place in the castle's dining hall. The black and white checkerboard patterned floor lends a chess game metaphor and thus can be read as the conflict of Jung's black and white mage archetypes. Van Helsing, holding a pair of candlesticks cruciform, drives Dracula into a sunbeam. Dracula decomposes to dust, perpetuating the destructive power of sunlight upon the undead as a narrative trope in the Hammer cycle. Holmwood kisses Mina's hand as the cruciform burn fades, signifying her vampiric taint has been lifted with Dracula's demise. Two narrative tropes that would pervade the Hammer cycle are incepted here. The brunette brides are either portrayed as morally weaker, more sexualised, and thus more available to Hammers' *Dracula* such as Lucy Holmwood; or are so utterly sexually repressed that vampirism can be read as their only hope of sexual liberation and even character development, such as Helen Kent in Fishers' subsequent *Dracula, Prince of Darkness*.

The blonde bride of the Hammer Dracula cycle as first exemplified by Mina is more redolent of a less proactive prototype of Carol J Clover's final girl trope in that "she alone looks death in the face, but she alone also finds the strength either to stay the killer long enough to be rescued...or to kill him herself" (Clover, 2015: 35). These 'blonde proto-final girl' versus 'sexualised brunette victim' tropes are not exclusive to the Hammer Dracula cycle. They are evident in earlier horror films. One notable example is Victor Fleming's 1941 (USA) film *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, with Spencer Tracy taking the titular roles. Secondly in the Hammer cycle, the blonde final girl bride is always freed of vampiric taint and recuperated to the moral hegemony and patriarchy in the person of her husband or appropriate male substitute in a classical Hollywood narrative resolution.

Fisher's *Dracula, Prince of Darkness* (1966) is set ten years after the Count's destruction. The narrative premise is a basic one often reused by Hammer, that of luring unsuspecting stranded travellers into vampiric depredation. Four English travellers, brothers Charles and Alan Kent and their respective wives Diana and Helen, travel to Castle Dracula. The first death is that of Alan, stabbed by Dracula's servant Klove to facilitate Dracula's resurrection. His corpse is winched above an empty stone sarcophagus in an inverted crucifixion. Blood spatters the ashes within and in a montage redolent of Dracula's resurrection in *House of Frankenstein* whereby a skeletal form re-adorns bones with flesh. In giving his blood in its entirety, Alan is both liberated and in psychoanalytic terms, introjected, almost becoming Dracula. Lee's Dracula, consistent with established possessive misogynistic character traits, takes ownership of repressed Helen via his consummative, penetrating bite. Charles and Diana confront Helen as a vampire and her new husband Dracula. The repressed Victorian couple thus stand metamorphosed as transgressive and sexualised. Helen and Dracula follow Charles and Helen to the monastery, where Helen is staked by Father Shandor (the film's analogous Van Helsing), which mirrors Lucy's metaphoric rape in the previous film. Having sacrificed brunette bride Helen, Dracula now attempts ownership of blonde (unobtainable) bride Diana. Dracula opens a vein in his chest, and compels Diana to drink, forcing his bride to imbibe his analogous semen in consummation (Fig. 17). The final confrontation is again predicated upon male protagonists pursuing Dracula and the tainted blonde final girl bride. Shandor, remembering the relevant tenet of vampire mythos (vampires drown in running water), shoots the ice of the frozen moat upon which Dracula stands, drowning him. With the normative heterosexual partnership recuperated the Jungian white mage Shandor stands triumphant in Van Helsing's stead over the black mage.

The core narrative of Freddie Francis' *Dracula Has Risen from the Grave* (1968) is similar to its predecessor with certain key differences. Firstly, the imagery is more visceral, and the plot more contrived than in Fisher's restrained dark fairy tales (Pirie, 2008: 101). Secondly, the hero must denounce atheism before overcoming the antagonist. Monsignor Muller persuades his priest (Ewan Hooper) to accompany him to Castle Dracula to cleanse it of evil. The Priest falls and injures his head and his blood trickles into Dracula's mouth as he lies in a nearby frozen stream (presumably connected the moat from the previous film). Dracula's reddened eyes hypnotically enslave the priest. The penetrating gaze sublimates the bite, but here is nonetheless symbolic of homosexual intercourse. Barred from his refuge by Muller's cross, Dracula asks angrily "who has done this thing?" Finally, the return of Dracula's voice re-establishes the monster's sentience. Most of Lee's dialogue after Fisher's first film merely gives exposition to his character's ensuing acts of vengeance. The priest denounces his Monsignor, and the remainder of the film is predicated on Dracula's exacting said vengeance. Viewers are introduced to remaining protagonists Paul (Barry Andrews) the atheist student hero, who is in love with the monsignor's niece Maria (Jenny Hanley), Max (Michael Ripper), owner of the bakery cum tavern, and wanton brunette barmaid Zena (Babara Ewing), who is quickly bitten and discarded.



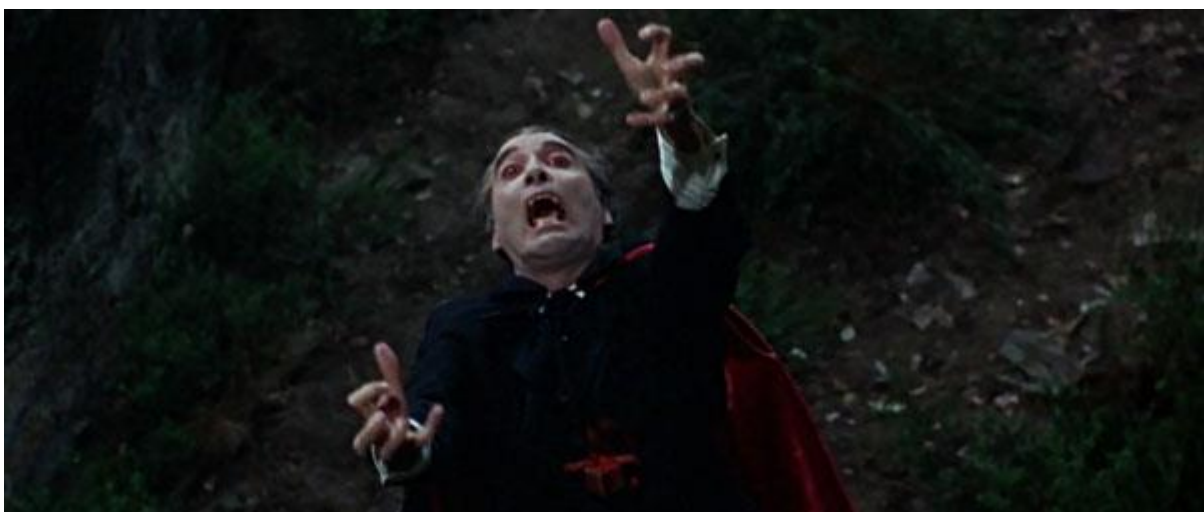
**Figure 17:** Dracula compels Diana to drink his blood (*Dracula Prince of Darkness*, 1966).

Having discovered blonde proto-final girl Maria's relationship to the Monsignor, Dracula targets her. Lee's Dracula now presents as the dichotomous fatal lover and usurping patriarch, similar in some respects to Chaney's portrayal in *Son of Dracula*. He provides what can be read as a deviant resolution to (Maria's) feminine oedipal attitude. His bite is not shown but signified by Maria's tensing, splayed hand, emerging from the folds of his cloak, pushing a childhood doll from the bed, symbolising orgasm in this subverted act of lovemaking, as she pushes away her innocence. The final part of the narrative commences with a dying Monsignor imparting knowledge with which to defeat Dracula to Paul. In Jungian terms, the wise white mage empowers the hero to undertake his destined quest but in the Hammer Dracula cycle, only Van Helsing truly actualises symbolism of this archetype. His substitutes, with the exception of Shandor, prove relatively ineffectual throughout in this context (Iaccino, 1994: 62). Paul stakes the vampire through the heart but cannot pray and remain true to his convictions. Hammer now adds a new tenet. The act of staking must be accompanied by a faithful prayer. Dracula extricates the stake and flees (Fig.18). A metaphoric Freudian quasi-religious paradox is arguably incepted here. A symbolic penetration of a male by another male has negative consequences unless sanctioned by God. Paul finally hurls Dracula over his castle balustrade. He lands impaled on Muller's discarded cross as the priest prays. Dracula's demise mirrors his resurrection in that it is another subverted crucifixion (Fig. 19). Michael Reeves *Witchfinder General*, made the same year as Francis' film, takes the contradictory position, whereby the young hero questor Marshall is punished (he loses his sanity) for transgressing patriarchal rule by mutilating the (albeit evil) patriarch in the form of Vincent Price's Matthew Hopkins (Harmes, 2013: 70-75).



**Figure 18:** Dracula extricates the stake (*Dracula has Risen from the Grave*, 1968).

The narrative again closes with the recuperated heterosexual partners. Paul crosses himself, redeemed to moral patriarchy by accepting God and denouncing secularity. The triumph of religion over evil pervades the Hammer Dracula cycle, even as the horror genre of the time appeared to be secularising. Hammer's own 1957 *The Curse of Frankenstein*, directed by Terence Fisher and starring Christopher Lee as the titular monster, is a case in point. Evil here is overcome by science as the monster is dissolved in an acid bath (Moreman, 2012: 130-147). What also became apparent, at this point, was that the character, at least in this cinematic incarnation was no longer being taken seriously in the United States, as evidenced by the accompanying promotional material (Fig. 20).



**Figure 19:** Dracula's symbolic crucifixion (*Dracula has Risen from the Grave*, 1968).



**Figure 20:** US promotional poster for *Dracula has risen from the Grave*, obviously.



Dracula is again resurrected from his own crucifixion in Peter Sasdy's *Taste the Blood of Dracula* (1970). The film opens synchronous to the previous film's resolution. Merchant Weller observes the Count's desiccated remains. The opening titles align viewers with the main characters leaving a Victorian English village church. The secondary antagonist William Hargood's (Geoffrey Keen) stern manner toward submissive wife Martha (Gwen Watford) and more assertive, attractive blonde final girl daughter Alice (Linda Hayden) quickly defines him as an outwardly respectable, misogynistic Victorian patriarch. Samuel Paxton (Peter Sallis) is accompanied by son Paul (Anthony Corlan) whose shared stolen glances with Alice define his dual role as Alice's lover and heroic male lead. Paxton's more sexualised, brunette daughter Lucy (Isla Blair) completes the established template as Dracula's soon to be slaughtered first bride. The final protagonists are middle-aged dandy Jonathon Secker (John Carson) and his son Jeremy (Martin Jarvis). At his defiled family chapel, Lord Courtenay reconstitutes Dracula's desiccated blood with his own. He drinks it and chokes, having imbibed the body fluid and thus analogous semen of the vampire in what can potentially be read as another sublimated homosexual act. Terrified, Hargood, Secker, and Paxton beat him to death with their canes and flee. A layer of dust blows over the corpse. A stylised extradiegetic heartbeat implies something grows within this metaphoric womb. With a thunderclap symbolising labour, the dust shell cracks. Dracula's rebirth is again facilitated by the introjection and thus total consumption of another. Dracula states his (again) vengeful objective "They have destroyed my servant; they will be destroyed". Dracula bites Alice as she flees her abusive father in the now familiar act of sublimated sexual penetration. Alice, in Dracula's thrall, kills her father, again having replaced him with a surrogate who offers resolution of feminine oedipal attitude by empowerment as a phallic woman. For the only instance in the cycle, Dracula has unintentionally committed a heroic act in freeing Alice of her abusive father.



**Figure 21:** Dracula reborn and Messrs. Hargood, Secker, Courtenay and Weller (*Taste the Blood of Dracula*, 1970).

As defined by Pirie, he is a schism in the façade of the upper middle-class Victorian family and thus its social stratum (Pirie, 2008: 106). Lucy's 'marriage' to Dracula is again consummated with the penetrative act of his bite, but this is more brutal and lascivious than the tender 'kiss' given to his preferred bride Alice. Lucy as the more sexualised of the two embraces vampirism. Paxton proves unable to stake his daughter, and is subsequently staked by her, subverting the symbolic incestuous penetration. The phallic woman here can thus be read as fulfilling the ultimate objective of Freud's feminine oedipal attitude.

The film's conclusion finds Jeremy becoming the final instrument of Dracula's vengeance. He fatally stabs his own father in a homosexual penetrative act which when read in psychoanalytic terms provides the deviant resolution to his own oedipal complex. As per Hammer convention, the sexualised first brunette bride is discarded. The dying Secker aspires to the Jungian white wizard mantle by imparting the knowledge to hero Paul to defeat black mage Dracula and complete his quest by rescuing Alice, mirroring the previous film's narrative. The ineffectual Secker senior again does not entirely actualise symbolism of Jung's archetype in this context as he is lacking in moral authority predicated on his previous diegetic actions. In terms of Jung's archetypes, he can be read as more a sage than a mage (Iaccino, 1994: 62). The final sequence finds Paul encountering transgressive couple Alice and Dracula at the Courtenay chapel. Dracula denies Alice's wish to leave with him. Enraged, the nascent final girl hurls a crucifix at him (Clover, 2015: 35). Dracula is felled by the symbolised hand of God as moonlight illuminates the Christian iconography of the chapel windows, bathing him in sanctified light. Allegorical to Satan's fall from heaven, Dracula falls from the chapel rafters. His corpse reverts to ashes. The heterosexual normative couple is again recuperated to one another, but that recuperation is ruptured. Dracula can be read as Alice's empowerment to overthrow oppressive patriarchy symbolised by her abusive father. She is perhaps the only truly sexually liberated bride of the Hammer Dracula cycle, and her attraction to the Count can as easily be read as entirely volitional. In these respects, she mirrors Lucy in Badham's 1979 Dracula film and her character therefore could be regarded as a portent of this future canonical iconoclasm.

Roy Ward Baker's 1970 *Scars of Dracula* is discontinuous in the context of narrative flow, and may constitute a poorly conceptualised attempt to reinvigorate the series. The narrative construct again conforms to the established, incidental and contrived plot template. Dracula is resurrected. He rejects his corrupted brunette bride in favour of pursuing an unobtainable

blonde bride-to-be and is finally thwarted by her heroic partner. The film opens with the recurrent obligatory resurrection scene as a large bat vomits blood on Dracula's ashen remains. The Hammer films more than any others in the Dracula canon, substantiate the titular character's powers of resurrection. Paul Carlson (Christopher Matthews) flees a dalliance with the burgomaster's daughter to the birthday party of blonde (proto-) final girl Sarah Framsen (Jenny Hanley), who is the fiancée of Paul's brother, hero Simon (Dennis Waterman). Paul is turned out by the Tavernier to seek the hospitality of Castle Dracula where he encounters Tania, Dracula's sexualised brunette bride. Whether Tania is intended to be Valerie Gaunt's character from Fisher's original film is unclear. Tania offers herself to Dracula, who explicitly bites her throat. She apparently dies as she reaches orgasm, inferring her reward with immortality vis-à-vis vampirism for services rendered. This can again be read as the recurrent resolution of the Freudian feminine oedipal attitude by rebirth as a phallic woman. Tania leans into bite the sleeping Paul to perform her first penetrative act in an extramarital bed as a phallic seductress.



**Figure 22:** Dracula's violence and misogyny increases along his narcissistic trajectory: he stabs his bride and tortures his servant with a red-hot sword (*Scars of Dracula*, 1971).

Dracula bursts in to find himself cuckolded. He dashes Paul to the floor and stabs Tania to death in an apparent jealous rage (Fig. 22). The brunette phallic woman is arguably disempowered for her transgression as she is discarded by the Count. The empowerment of the phallic women in the overarching Hammer diegesis is now fully codified as partial, conditional and disingenuous, and given or taken at the whim of a violent misogynist and sexual sadist. The film's conclusion is predicated upon Simon's search for his brother with Sarah at his side,

leading to confrontation with Dracula. Klove helps them escape and Dracula tortures him for his treachery, smiling as he sears his flesh with a red-hot sword, exponentially increasing potential spectator perception of Hammer's Dracula as a bisexual sadist (Fig. 22). Simon finds Paul dead. The Count is again challenged for his blonde bride by a love rival in the form of the hero. Simon spears Dracula with an iron railing which is struck by lightning as he extricates it, again inferring God's vengeance. As with the other films of the cycle *Scars of Dracula* closes with reconstitution of the normative heterosexual partnership, this time in a more simplistic, conventional form, in contrast to its immediate predecessor.

Alan Gibson's *Dracula AD 1972* opens with Dracula's demise at Van Helsing's hand in 19<sup>th</sup> Century England before segueing to Stephanie Beacham's Jessica Van Helsing, her boyfriend Bob Tarrant (Philip Miller), Johnny Alucard (Christopher Neame), and their group of young Chelsea hedonists at a deconsecrated church, St. Bartoph's for black mass (foregrounding allusion to the Highgate vampire case of 1968-1970). Alucard pulls a stake from Dracula's heaving grave as mist coalesces into Lee's Dracula, reiterating the motifs depicted by Carradine's and Chaney Jr's Counts. Dracula claims ownership of his first sexualised brunette bride Laura with his consummation bite (Fig. 23). The film continues with the group discussing the previous night's events juxtaposed with a disturbing scene of a group of young boys discovering Laura's corpse. The first brunette bride has been discarded. Inspector Murray (Michael Coles) recovers Laura's body and investigates the group. His first port of call is Jessica Van Helsing and her occult authority grandfather, Professor Lorimer Van Helsing (Peter Cushing). Alucard sacrifices Gaynor Keating (Marsha Hunt) to Dracula. He remarks "She is not the one" referring to his preferred (unattainable) blonde bride, Jessica. The final part of Gibson's narrative opens with Gaynor's exsanguinated corpse as the second brunette bride and Dracula's first black victim is discarded.

Dracula lays his hand upon Alucard's shoulder and conditionally empowers a male bride for the first time in the Hammer cycle to create a super-phallic male like himself. What can be read as the penetrative homosexual act of the bite is itself sublimated (Fig. 24). The handclasp harks back to the raised cloak of earlier films in the cycle as meta-symbolism again enshrouds taboo. Van Helsing eventually drowns Alucard. The transgressive homosexual male is destroyed by Dracula's equal and opposite, the appropriate father. The brides thus far have been utterly consumed and thus introjected by Dracula himself, the deviant surrogate father. No phallic woman has been empowered in this film. In the narrative resolution, Van Helsing finds his

torpid granddaughter lying upon St Bartoph's church altar awaiting Dracula's consummative bite. Van Helsing lures him into the churchyard and a fatal fall into a concealed stake pit, subverting the homosexual undertones of this film. Dracula's transgression is again punished by his own penetration. Rather than recuperating the heterosexual couple, the granddaughter is recuperated to her grandfather, recuperating both patriarchy and for the first time in the Hammer cycle, symbolising a more normative resolution to Freud's feminine oedipal attitude.



**Figure 23:** Dracula tasting jouissance as he consumes Laura's blood (*Dracula AD 1972*, 1972).



**Figure 24:** Publicity still depicting Dracula's homosexual subjugation of Alucard.

The final instalment in the Hammer Dracula cycle, Alan Gibson's *The Satanic Rites of Dracula* (1973), opens with a montage of 1970's London as Dracula's stylised shadow slowly encroaches across the screen until it is enveloped by his black cloak. This can be read as a symbolic portent of the character's diegetic objective, which is to doom mankind with a plague bacillus and rule the dystopian aftermath. The film opens with Peter Torrence (William Franklyn) and Colonel Mathews (Richard Vernon) identifying prominent figures partaking in black masses at Pelham House. Amongst them is Professor Julian Keeley (Freddie Jones), a germ warfare expert. Cushing's Van Helsing alludes to this corrupt patriarchy partaking in blood cultism and vampirism. Jessica Van Helsing (Joanna Lumley), the final girl from Gibson's previous film, is now her grandfather's apprentice. The colonel's kidnapped secretary Jane (Valerie Van Ost) awakens at Pelham House as Dracula penetrates her with his consummation bite to claim ownership of his first, dispensable, sexualised brunette bride of this film (Fig. 25). Jane is revealed as one of a shackled vampire harem. The concept of Dracula as a misogynist polygamist is engendered. Murray's explicit staking of Jane, disposing of Dracula's brunette bride, again punishes transgressive penetration with sanctified penetration.



**Figure 25:** Dracula about to bite Jane (*The Satanic Rites of Dracula*, 1973).

The protagonists escape leads up to Van Helsing's drawing together of this film's disparate narrative threads. He posits that Dracula (resurrected by a disciple) in the guise of industrialist D.D. Denham, commissioned the doomsday bacillus to unleash vengeance transcending his vendetta with the Van Helsing. Dracula wishes final peace brought about by annihilating his only sustenance. In Freudian terms, Dracula can be read as codifying a succumbing to the

nihilism of Thanatos the death instinct, as his intrinsic narcissism dictates that if he ends, all must end (Goodman, 1997: 162-192). The depths of Dracula's character are never really explored in the Hammer films, and the character is thus largely undeveloped. The function of the corrupt patriarchy is revealed by Dracula, they are the means of disseminating the plague. Murray sets Pelham House ablaze, consuming the corrupt patriarchy and corruptive plague. Murray and Jessica escape as the heterosexual normative couple, reiterating the recuperation trope. In the final scene Van Helsing entraps Dracula in the holy embrace of a hawthorn tree and stakes him. Dracula, wreathed with a crown of thorns, is pierced with his own Lancelot Longinus in a final subverted crucifixion, as he decomposes to ash (Fig. 26).



**Figure 26:** Dracula's final symbolic crucifixion (*The Satanic Rites of Dracula*, 1973).

The overarching Hammer Dracula diegesis is flawed by continuity inconsistencies and poorly explicated elision of time towards the end by the placement of *Scars of Dracula*, and the sudden transition from the 19<sup>th</sup> century setting to the 20<sup>th</sup> century of *Dracula AD 1972*. Whereas in the Universal cycle only the monster rallies are linked, the Hammer cycle constitutes an intersection of three diegetic constructs linked only by the titular character:

- {*Dracula-Dracula Prince of Darkness-Dracula has risen from the Grave-Taste the Blood of Dracula*}
- {*Scars of Dracula*}
- {*Dracula AD 1972-Satanic Rites of Dracula*}

In thematic terms the Hammer Dracula cycle (in microcosm) can be defined as a protracted cycle of mortal, supernatural, and even deific vengeance. In Fisher's 1958 *Dracula*, Harker

destroys Dracula's bride, attempts to destroy the titular antagonist, fails and is vampirised. Dracula compounds his vengeance by vampirising Harker's bride Lucy. Lucy is then destroyed by Van Helsing and Holmwood. Having been made bereft of a second bride, Dracula again seeks vengeance by attempting to vampirise Holmwood's bride Mina, only to be thwarted, and destroyed by Van Helsing. In Fisher's *Dracula, Prince of Darkness* (1966), Dracula's servant Klove kills Alan as a blood sacrifice to resurrect his master, who vampirises Alan's wife Helen. Charles seeks vengeance for his brother's murder, but in attempting to destroy Dracula, he almost loses wife Diana to the vampire's eternal embrace. Father Shandor exacts Charles' vengeance by proxy, drowning the Count in his own frozen moat. In Francis' *Dracula has risen from the Grave* (1968), the Count's castle is defiantly sealed against him with a crucifix by Monsignor Muller. Dracula, serendipitously resurrected, seeks vengeance by attempting to vampirise the Monsignor's daughter Maria. Dracula then falls foul of the combined vengeance of Maria's fiancé Paul, and arguably God himself, when he is symbolically crucified in the film's narrative resolution, a theme that is revisited with the Count's demise in *The Satanic Rites of Dracula*. The cycle of vengeance continues in Sasdy's *Taste the Blood of Dracula*, in which Hargood, Secker and Paxton, destroy the vessel of Dracula's resurrection, Courtenay. Dracula possesses Courtenay's remains, transforming them into his own physical countenance, before seeking revenge upon the troika responsible for Courtenay's death, having them killed by their own enthralled and/or vampirised offspring in various oedipal acts of violence. A narrative paradox is highlighted. Dracula seeks revenge for a death, that had it not occurred would not have led to his resurrection. Paul, as his previous namesake did, aligns his vengeance (for the deaths of his father and sister, and defilement of his fiancée) with that of God, and nascent final girl Alice (she viewed Dracula's rejection of her as betrayal). Dracula appears overwhelmed by Christian iconography, arguably representing the right hand of God, with mortal allies Paul and Alice at his left hand. Similarly, Roy Ward Baker's *Scars of Dracula* is predicated upon Dennis Waterman's lead protagonist Simon seeking vengeance upon Dracula for the death of his hapless brother. Simon, again, apparently allies his vengeance with God's. With Simon on the verge of defeat, the Count is immolated by lightning.

The protracted cycle of vengeance dominating the Hammer Dracula cycle is more clearly defined in final two films, Alan Gibson's *Dracula AD 1972* and *The Satanic Rites of Dracula*. In *Dracula AD 1972*, the Count seeks vengeance upon Van Helsing's familial line by attempting to take ownership of the contemporary Professor Van Helsing's granddaughter Jessica. The Professor seeks his own vengeance in turn, exacting it by luring the Count to his



doom in a pit of stakes, rescuing his granddaughter in the process. In the final film, *The Satanic Rites of Dracula*, Dracula again seeks vengeance upon his nemesis reincarnate, by again seeking to make Jessica his vampire bride. Dracula then seeks to eradicate mankind with a doomsday bacillus in an act of nihilistic vengeance against those who revile and hunt him, and arguably the God that created them and cursed him. Van Helsing finally triumphs, staking Dracula after trapping him in a hawthorn tree's Christian iconographic branches, again aligning his vengeance (for his granddaughter and humanity) with God's.

Such codified vengeful nihilism in conjunction with narcissism can be summarised by drawing upon Walter Menninger's (2007) paper 'A psychoanalytic perspective on violence'. When an individual perceives a narcissistic injury that is experienced as being profoundly unfair (Hammer's Jungian black mage Dracula is thwarted by the white magi or their questing agents in each film in the cycle) and that individual has no hope for achieving what he perceives to be a reasonable resolution of the injury (Dracula can never consummate his marriage to his preferred final girl blonde bride), then the individual reaches the decision that the injury cannot be tolerated further and must be responded to with action (Dracula's vengeance). Violence is propagated when the individual has access to weapons to enhance the capacity and potency to respond (Dracula is a vampire who eventually has access to a doomsday bacillus) and the individual feels a sufficient sense of potency and/or disregard of the consequences to initiate violence (Hammer's Dracula is a misogynistic narcissist with a desire for complete control). The Hammer Dracula cycle, Franco's film, and finally Curtis' film can thus be seen as codifying a common narcissistic thread when viewed in the wider context of the long 1960's.

### **3.4 Psychosexual Symbolism in Franco's *Bram Stoker's Count Dracula* (1970)**

The intertitle 'Transylvania 1897' opens the film as Harker (Frederick Williams) arrives at Castle Dracula. Lee's Dracula is an initially less sexualised, elderly, erudite aristocrat who represents rather than transgresses Victorian patriarchy in the first cinematic adaptation of Stoker's novel since Hammer's 1958 version. They discuss the lease of Carfax abbey and Dracula soliloquises his ancestor's (read his own) military triumphs, introducing the 'Dracula as Vlad Tsepes' narrative trope. He peruses a photograph of Harker's fiancée Mina and her friend Lucy, thus selecting his brides. Harker is then attacked by Dracula's three vampire brides. Dracula materialises to claim homoerotic ownership of Harker and directs his brides to a substitute meal, an infant (the first occasion that this scene from Stoker's novel is shown on film). Dracula codifies the Freudian narcissistic transgressor who has made a narcissistic object

choice. The brides' acquiescent acceptance of this sexless substitute by contrast renders them both sexless and non-maternal. The narrative continues as Harker recovers consciousness following his escape, as he meets fellow protagonists Dr Seward (Paul Muller), and Professor Van Helsing (Herbert Lom) at the latter's London clinic. Vampire expert Van Helsing is a Jungian wise old man and patriarchal leader in the truest sense of the archetype, but he is not Cushing's dynamic vampire hunter. He has the knowledge but lacks the physicality to complete the quest, which he must delegate to the younger hero (Iaccino, 1994: 62). Lom's Van Helsing is more antithesis than nemesis in this context, his aging frailty starkly juxtaposes his antagonist's ability to rejuvenate. The film's female protagonists arrive at the clinic and later that night Mina (Mary Rohm) encounters Dracula as his victim Lucy (Soledad Miranda) slides unconscious to the ground after the sublimated sex act of oral penetration. Dracula in a paradigm shift for the cinematic canon is visibly rejuvenated by consuming blood. The following night he sensuously bites Lucy's throat. This metaphoric lovemaking epitomises Dracula's overt bisexuality in Franco's film. The final sequence opens with Van Helsing's explicit staking of Lucy. This is no purifying metaphoric rape, with the writhing sexual transgressor rendered serenely inanimate. Lucy lays dead eyed as she is staked. This is dispassionate execution. Franco's Dracula symbolises a misogynist who debases and dehumanises women as narcissistic objects rather than sexually empowering them. Lucy was rendered a sexless abject predator. The narrative finally focuses upon releasing Mina from Dracula's objectifying thrall. The Jungian hero protagonists heed the white mage Van Helsing's instructions, setting Dracula alight in his box of earth (Ibid). The extinction of fire in Freudian psychoanalysis symbolises the extinction of aberrant sexual desire. As the fire burns and Dracula ages, aberrant bisexual desires can therefore be codified as renounced (Freud, 1930: 18). Whilst Dracula as a character rejuvenates in this film, the narrative does not. Fidelity with Stoker's novel is questionable, but that said, Franco's film cannot be argued to be an iconoclastic reimagining of it either.

### **3.5 Outlining Narcissistic Rage in Dan Curtis' *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1973)**

The opening of Curtis' film, as with other socioculturally resonant cinematic reinventions of Stoker's original novel, is predicated upon Jonathon Harker's (Murray Brown) journey to castle Dracula in order to finalise the Count's (Jack Palance) purchase of an English property suiting his needs.<sup>9</sup> Palance's Dracula symbolises the controlling narcissistic personality construct

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<sup>9</sup> In the 1931 Browning film, Renfield is placed in this role, whilst Harker remains in London.

(Bursten, 1973: 287). Harker can be read as being incorporated as an object, a possession, a means to an end. Dracula's gratification must be immediate and absolute, in simplistic Freudian terms, he symbolises unresolved infantile narcissism, with cogently underdeveloped ego and absent superego (Freud, 1914: 67-102). Dracula fixates upon a photograph of Lucy, selecting the nearby Carfax abbey as his chosen English property as a suitable substitution of his castle. When Dracula imprisons him within the castle, Harker finds a portrait depicting Vlad Tsepes, and his bride (identical to Lucy), hung above a coffin. Dracula is revealed as a vampire and the first cinematic instance narrative trope of 'Count Dracula as Vlad Tsepes searching for his lost reincarnated bride' that eventually becomes canonical is made explicit. The opening sequence of events concludes with Harker's consumption by Dracula's three vampire brides as his emasculation by a super-phallic male completed by phallic women (Corbin, 2006: 326). Dracula has discarded this narcissistic object possession, in favour of the next, Lucy. The narrative continues with Dracula standing upon the beach at Whitby, next to the wrecked ship Demeter. Lucy Westernra (Fiona Lewis), here Seward's fiancée, Dr Arthur Seward (Simon Ward), Jungian wise old man Dr Van Helsing (played in militaristic fashion by Nigel Davenport), and Lucy's confidante Mina Murray (Penelope Horner), are introduced. Dracula bites Lucy vis-a-vis the sublimated penetrative sex act, here again metaphoric lovemaking rather than rape (Baumeister et al, 1998: 1103). She dies as a result. As with Fisher's original Hammer film, Lucy is staked by Van Helsing. Seward cannot as yet stake a vampire, he can be read as representing fear of emasculation and thus castration via the penetrative bite of a phallic woman (Gabbard and Gabbard, 1993: 421-439). Sanctioned patriarchal rape again punishes transgressive phallic-oral lovemaking as this psychoanalytic trope is common to every film in the canon.

Dracula arrives at Lucy's tomb to claim his reincarnated eternal bride. Their metaphoric lovemaking can indeed be perceived as consummative on his part, drawing narrative parallels with Universal's *Son of Dracula*. Her staked corpse symbolises the loss of the (now internalised) love object, and subsequently of control as the sense of self is ruptured (Klein, 1958: 84-90). The narcissist is unable to accept or rationalise such challenges to their will, thus Dracula symbolises the resultant triggering of narcissistic rage by railing against this perceived persecution, and violently desecrating the tomb (Horowitz et al, 1988: 135-141). In the final part of this adaptation, Dracula (as per Stoker) replaces Lucy with Mina, again epitomising object possession (Ibid). He kills or intimidates anyone obstructing his objective. The film concludes by repeating the trope of the transgressive sexuality of vampirism being once more

punished by an orgy of patriarchal bisexual rape as Van Helsing and Seward stake Dracula's brides, then Harker and Dracula. In a departure from other Dracula films, Van Helsing drives a spear (evidencing greater phallic potential and thus potency in the Freudian sense than Seward's small stake) through the heart of the super-phallic dark mage (Corbin, 2006: 326). Seward, having replicated his father figure Van Helsing's potency on a smaller scale with Harker, both proves himself and identifies with him. The younger Seward's action can be read as a resolution of the oedipal complex as the super-ego is born, and fear of vampiric emasculation (castration) is assuaged (Freud, 1924: 173-179).

### **3.6 Threads of Commonality**

From the psychoanalytical perspective the Hammer Dracula films, Franco's film, and Curtis' film read as the long 1960's cycle can all be seen as representative of common narcissistic threads. In terms of deriving potential meanings of these films, three facets of narcissism will now be explored further. The hedonistic yet ultimately nihilistic pursuit of jouissance pervades the Hammer Dracula films. All that Hammer's Dracula does is for his own pleasure or satisfaction, something that his character can never truly have. Franco's Dracula represents the narcissistic response to one of humankind's basest cultural anxieties, the fear of aging and death. For Franco's Dracula this is the literal pursuit of immortality, as epitomised by physical rejuvenation at the fatal expense of others. Finally, the cycle of vengeance of Hammer's Dracula draws a parallel with the narcissistic rage of Curtis's Count. For these Draculas, any slight is met with violent repercussion representing the exchange between the inner and outer faces of power.

These narcissistic threads will be further drawn together by coalescing several of the potential psychohistoricist readings of these films. Hammer's Dracula cycle parallels the rise and fall of the counterculture pursuit of jouissance in the earlier part of the long 1960's. By contrast the latter films of the cycle, notably *Taste the Blood of Dracula*, *Dracula AD 1972*, and most explicitly of all *The Satanic Rites of Dracula* arguably resonates with a far more malign synchronous cultural shift. Dracula codifies a narcissistic leader in these three Hammer films that can be argued to embody the phenomenon of the narcissistic cult leader, a quasi-messianic, nihilist corruptor of vulnerable minds. Christopher Lee's interpretation of the Count in Jess Franco's 1972 *Count Dracula*, and Jack Palance's arch-vampire in Dan Curtis' *Bram Stoker's Dracula* that same year invite similar readings, resonating with contemporaneous real-life examples of this pervasive 1960's sociocultural trope such as Charles Manson, Jim Jones and

David Berg. Amongst others, David Gutman's work, and Horowitz and Arthur's later work on narcissistic rage in leaders, will be drawn upon to contextualise this resonance and reciprocity between culture and film-cycle-as-art from the psychohistorical perspective.

### **3.7 Hammer's Dracula: The Cult of the Vampire Libertine**

According to Krafft Ebing (1965: 70-95), sadism is that form of perversion by which a person derives sexual pleasure in causing other people pain and in using their powers upon them. Vampirism, especially the Hammer presentation thereof, can be read as sadism. The evolution of Christopher Lee's Count Dracula throughout the Hammer Dracula films arguably parallels that of a Sadeian libertine. The commonalities intrinsic to this parallel can be read within a psychoanalytic framework to read one potential implicit meaning of the overarching diegesis constructed from these films. De Sade's narcissistic, aristocratic libertines such as the blood fetishist Comte de Germande in his seminal work 'Justine' (1791), seek increasing cruelty and perversion in erotic power relations, eliding social status and sovereignty with sexual dominance as they exercise feudal droit de seigneur over the partners of others in the ultimately futile pursuit of jouissance (Powell, 2003: 11-75). The elegant sartorial iconography of Lee's egotistical Dracula first defines him as representing a Sadeian male dandy in this context. This Dracula however is inarticulate by comparison, so his Sadeian ideology is symbolised sans loquacious philosophy (Bloch, 1899: 124-138). As the narcissistic perceived self-import of Hammer's Dracula increases there is a commensurate evolution from the transgressive, adulterous seducer of Hammer's first *Dracula* film, to a vengeful serial killer in *Taste the Blood of Dracula*, to the sociopathic, possessive misogynist of *Scars of Dracula*, who finally becomes the monomaniac, thwarted godhead of *The Satanic Rites of Dracula*.

Most of the sexual partners of Sade's aristocratic libertines end up consumed, discarded and destroyed, as do the brunette brides of Lee's Dracula. Some Sadeian partners are chosen for ascension to the ranks of libertinism, for instance Sade's Madame Delbène chooses *Juliette* (Ibid; De Sade. 1797). This arguably resonates with the sociopathic cult leaders of the time, for instance Charles Manson's choice of Lynette Fromme or David Berg's marriage to Karen Zerby. Lee's Dracula also chooses successive, ultimately unattainable, blonde brides as prospective eternal vampiric partners. They are intended to be granted Klossowski's experimental right to prey upon lesser mortals and form perverse kindred with their mentors and be sheltered from the disapproving gaze of the moral majority amidst comparatively isolated, gothic mise-en-scene (Klossowski, 1965: 61-80). Hammer's Dracula like the libertine

reproduces by means of non-procreative perversity. Vampire and libertine spawn are thus criminal proselytes, recognising and embodying the lubricity of their respective pater or mater familias and denying previous mortal heritage, like Sade's nascent tribade character *Juliette* as analysed by Bloch, or the neonate vampire Zena in *Dracula has Risen from the Grave* (Bloch, 1899: 124-138). This is another nexus of psychohistoricist resonance with the followers of such narcissist cult leaders. Manson's followers in particular can be read as an exemplar, and similarly the inner circle of Jim Jones' Jonestown cult (Atchison and Heide, 2011: 771-798; Richardson, 1980: 239-255).

The favoured cultist, the Sadeian libertine adept and the vampirised bride are granted cogent sexual freedoms. They are reborn and empowered as phallic women and/or queer men, as in Sade's *Juliette* or *Dracula AD 1972*, through transgressive (counterhegemonic) sexualised acts. The ascribed numinosity of the cultist libertine's act of blasphemous sexual ecstasy and the vampire's act of blasphemous sexualised depredation thus subvert the natural order with the supernatural (Bloch, 1899: 124-138). Hammer's *Dracula* and his Sadeian libertine counterparts commit progressively more evil, blasphemous acts as their respective diegeses unfold, which again potentially resonates with the criminal cults mentioned. For a Sadeian libertine, such as the Duc de Blangis in De Sade's (1785) *120 Days of Sodom*, this may be a conjugal act with the abject dead. For *Dracula* read as the abject dead made animate, his final blasphemous act of nihilism in *The Satanic Rites of Dracula* is to attempt to destroy humanity, actualising a hell on earth over which he will rule briefly, deified, before his existence ends with that of his sustenance. For the cult leader as embodied by *Dracula*, such a criminal act would arguably satisfy the dual narcissistic drives for status and vengeance as they seek to surpass the acts of the cruel God that has cursed them with the intrinsic ennui of conscious existence. They ultimately reject and in turn are rejected by God, Christian culture and iconography. They are repelled by these things, the libertine figuratively and ideologically, the vampire physically and literally, and the cultist ideologically. The Sadeian libertine and Hammer's *Dracula* embody the corporeal secular sacred as their respective acts of intercourse and vampiric exsanguination replaces the conventional sacred of organised religion. Likewise, the hive mindset of the cult does this for the cultist. However, for *Dracula* and De Sade's libertine, despite the latter's protestation of atheism, God is not truly denied, but vilified (Bloch, 1899: 124-138).

The diegetic actions of the Sadeian libertine such as the anthropophagous Clairwil in *Juliette*, and Hammer's *Dracula* arguably symbolise the same Freudian drives. The erotic oral and

phallic drives govern both the sexual depravity and sexualised depredation surrounding their respective penetrative acts, leading both to breach taboos in consuming and internalising object fluids. Unlike the libertine, the vampire has the excuse that blood is its only means of nourishment. The sensuous mouth of Dracula with its penetrative phallic fangs had now sublimated the scopophilic penetrative gaze of his Universal studios' predecessors. To integrate the Lacanian perspective, the Sadeian Libertine and Dracula achieve the transient sensual pain of jouissance in orgasm as *vaenesectio*, which all too quickly evades them and is replaced by overwhelming lack (Horrocks, 1997: 68-85). For the cult leader the exertion of their influence over others evidenced by the obedience of a command meets this need. Lack then envelopes them. For the libertine, this is lack of stimulation. For Dracula it is this, and lack of sustenance. For the cult leader it is a lack of self-esteem. Lack leads to a compulsion to repeat the acts whilst offsetting ennui with change (de la Tour, 2005: 47-61; Hsiao, 2003: 47-66). For the libertine and Dracula this entails variance of partner and of locale. For the cult leader it entails increasingly demanding and deviant acts of obedience by their followers. Hammer's Dracula alone is privileged with sequential resurrection in filmic sequels and therefore variation of lives and epochs. As the acts are repeated, so respective egotisms are revalidated (Powell, 2003: 11-75). The intrinsic nihilism of Hammer's Dracula, sociopathic cult leaders and Sade's libertines can be argued to symbolise Thanatos, Freud's death instinct. In denying God, the libertine has denied immortality and willingly accepted death by consciously indulging in hedonistic proclivities that will hasten its arrival (Bloch, 1899: 124-138). Dracula can be read as having denied God, paradoxically accepted immortality, and been continually denied death (Powell, 2003: 11-75). Throughout the Hammer cycle he indulges in acts eliciting the fatal vengeance of others, implicitly seeking final demise until the final film, when his death seeking becomes explicit. For Sade's libertine and Dracula, endowed with preternatural recuperative powers and insatiable, inescapable, all-consuming appetites, death is the only real escape from the ennui and lack that is life, and thus for them only in death can jouissance be permanently attained (Hsiao, 2003: 47-66). This fatalist nihilism again arguably resonates with the narcissistic, sociopathic cult leader. Dracula's contradictory denial of death in the Hammer films epitomises the narcissistic psychohistoricism of the long 1960's, and its representative facets will now be examined further in terms of Curtis' and Franco's films.

### **3.8 Franco's Ageless Dracula: Preserving the Self by Controlling Others**

In Freud's 1914 essay 'On Narcissism: An Introduction', he defines the titular subject as:

an original libidinal cathexis of the ego, from which some is later given off to objects, but which fundamentally persists and is related to the object cathexes much as the body of an amoeba is related to the pseudopodia it puts out (Freud, 1914: 74).

In his 1915 work 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes', he posited that two groups of primal instincts should be distinguished, these being the ego or self-preservative instincts and the sexual instincts (Freud, 1915: 114-116). Further to this, in his 1916 'Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis Part III', he posited that nutritive suckling becomes conflated with sensual sucking in the infant, synchronously addressing self-preservative and sexual instinctual imperatives, auto-eroticising the aligned oral instinct (Freud, 1916). Primary narcissism in a Freudian framework is tantamount to self-love taking primacy over empathy (Teising, 2007: 1329-44). Freud never posited an exact timeframe for primary narcissism's domination of the developing human psyche. Post-Freudian readers of psychoanalysis are generally of the consensus that it occurs within early infancy, primarily the first year of life, certainly no later than the second year (Cohen, 2007: 883-893). Franco's *Dracula* can be read as codifying fixation within primary narcissism, in turn symbolising a narcissistic personality (Glickauf-Hughes, 1997: 141-148; Raskin and Terry, 1988: 890-902). His vampirism symbolises a libidinal cathexis of the ego in this context. He passes it to Lucy virally via the sublimated phallic penetration of his bite; an act that codifies a conflation of instinctual nutritive suckling and erotic sucking. Any pleasure on the part of his victims here can be read as incidental. Lucy falls under his influence, and codifying Freud's amoebic pseudopodia, his vampirism fundamentally persists within them as an extension of his self. He has taken ownership of her, so she becomes part of him. Renfield can also be read as an extension of Dracula's self in Franco's film, apparently merely by the force of Dracula's pervasive and invasive will, evidenced by his attempt to kill Mina whilst under the Count's influence. Renfield has been mentally as opposed to physically penetrated by Dracula. The narcissistic vampire takes ownership of him just the same (Wilson, 2000: 54-57). The key difference with this filmic text, is that whilst for previous *Draculas*, the concept of self was arguably subjugated to other narcissistic drives, satiation, desire, or even nihilism, Franco's *Dracula* primarily symbolises the narcissistic fixation with the deified self, and this symbology resonates with the narcissistic cult leaders of the long 1960's who took controlling ownership of their followers to that end.

Such ownership represents a protection against intimacy. To be intimate requires trust, volunteering some emotive and even physical vulnerability to one's partner. For the narcissist,



this translates as acknowledging one's inadequacies and giving up control. Narcissistic pride and more primal self-preservative instincts will reject this, to protect the structural integrity of the self-construct (Steiner, 2006: 939-951; Solan, 1998: 163-186). Dracula seeks physical penetration of Mina as he did Lucy. Mina codifies the object that satiates pride, greed, as well as self-preservative and sexual instinctual imperatives, as symbolised by Dracula's all-consuming hunger. Narcissists' concept of self is predicated primarily upon their egocentric sense of pride and self-import, as symbolised by Dracula's tacit self-aggrandising ode to past military triumphs. Similar rallying speeches were made by the narcissistic cult leaders of the long 1960's. From these stems what they believe is an inalienable right to take what they believe is theirs or merely what they desire, by any means (Waska, 2004: 253-266). Mina represents a replacement for the object (Lucy) taken from the narcissist (Dracula) and restitution for perceived humiliation when Lucy is executed. His audacious assaults against her in the opera then in Van Helsing's presence, further codifies arrogance fostered by narcissistic pride. The actions of Manson, Berg and Jones in this respect will be referred to shortly. In thwarting Dracula, Franco's protagonists can be read as symbolising an externalised societal superego, checking his actions as legal patriarchy checks those of narcissistic transgressors who are theorised to lack the internal superego (Kramer, 1958: 38-46).

Dracula's vampirism when read as phallic-narcissism is applicable to most of the character's cinematic incarnations, such as Hammer's cult leading vampire in the latter films of the cycle, and Dan Curtis' Dracula. In Franco's film, Dracula's consumption of others however arguably symbolises the satiation of another narcissistic urge, distinct from conflated self-preservative and sexual instinctual imperatives. Teising (2007: 1329-44) argues that males who experience a relinquishment of primary identification with the female object (the mother) as lack, or rejection (as codified when Dracula's empowered brides no longer need him) develop a libidinous cathexis of phallic-narcissistic characteristics. This specifically male narcissistic vulnerability emerges as phallic-narcissistic crises in ageing men (Kernberg, 2018: 155-173). The narcissistic male has an internalised construct of self, predicated upon his own perceived virility, youthfulness, potency, prowess, and base physical attractiveness. His self-esteem is rooted within that construct. When he ages, his internal self-construct is rendered dysmorphic and incongruent, toward polar opposition with his actualised self (Ibid). The resultant phallic-narcissistic crisis, sometimes referred to as Dorian Gray syndrome, engenders critical self-loathing, projected aggression, depression, promiscuity and/or obsessive seeking of a means of rejuvenation, in order to ratify the internal self-concept with the actualised self as outlined by

Harth et al (2006: 607-614). Dracula's vampirism in Franco's film can also be read as representing this particular libidinal cathexis of the ego. Dracula's ode to his military prowess evidencing his sense of self-import codifies a narcissistic self-construct. He overtly praises his own physical and intellectual prowess, and covertly his potency. He therefore arguably symbolises an ageing, decrepit actualised self that is at odds with an internalised self-construct. The multiple sexual relationships, trademark dark glasses, suits and slicked-back black hair of Reverend Jim Jones immediately come to mind, when exploring contemporaneous resonances with the narcissistic cult leader sociocultural trope. In Franco's film Dracula goes on to codify a circumvention of this phallic-narcissistic crisis. His sexualised, nutritive depredation of Lucy and Mina facilitates physical rejuvenation. This symbolises a ratifying of the reconstructed actualised self with the internalised self-construct. Dracula's satisfying any vengeful urge in this film also codifies a primary narcissistic urge for control over others and as well as the self-construct and is ultimately symbolic of the need to preserve the self at all costs. The potential resonance with controlling narcissistic cult leaders is obvious. Franco's *Count Dracula* can therefore be summarised as codifying the narcissistic avoidance of ageing, but with the caveat that this in turn is rooted in a need for control of the internal and external world in order to validate the narcissist's self-construct (Teising, 2007: 1329-44).



**Figure 27:** The rejuvenation of Franco's Dracula

### **3.9 Narcissistic Leader's Rage in Three Draculas of The Long 1960's**

Horowitz and Arthur's opening statement from their 1988 paper 'Narcissistic Rage in Leaders: The Intersection of Individual Dynamics and Group Process' is that "power corrupts in terms of both grandiose inflations and threatened narcissistic injuries" (Horowitz and Arthur, 1988: 135). It can be argued that this axiom is symbolised by Jack Palance's interpretation of Dracula in Dan Curtis' film in particular, but also by the latter Hammer Dracula films, as well as Franco's Count. According to Horowitz and Arthur, self-righteous rages are states of mind related to a continuum including fear of humiliation and chronic embitterment and occur when

a person who is usually composed becomes intensely, vengefully hostile as an exaggerated response to an insult (Horowitz and Arthur, 1988: 135-141). In conflating the character with Vlad Tsepes made bereft of his wife and his former leadership role and status, Curtis' Dracula can thus be read as codifying such humiliation and self-righteous indignation. This arguably resonates with the material and emotional paucity associated with the early lives of some of the narcissistic cult leaders of the long 1960's which will be examined in more detail later. The situations that trigger such rages are frequently noted to contain a threat to a prevailing omnipotent and grandiose concept of self which is appraised as a potential victim, with the other person perceived as a hostile aggressor who might insult, injure, subjugate, or engulf the self (Ibid).

This is symbolised in Curtis' film by any attempt to thwart Dracula's will or desire by Curtis' protagonists, which runs parallel with socio-legal challenges to the activities of narcissistic cult leaders. Instead of fear of deflation, injury, or subjection, the manifest feeling is anger. In a self-righteous rage the potential roles are unconsciously reversed from weak to strong. During this role shift, all evil attributes are externalised and others, not the self, are blamed. The self becomes the aggressor and an attack on the other becomes justified by the bad intentions attributed to them (Ibid). Curtis' Dracula codifies this by labelling the film's protagonists as aggressors who seek to thwart and control him. The cult leaders of the period similarly projected on to their perceived socio-legal (patriarchal) oppressors. The self-righteous rage state is described more succinctly as a full-bodied and sometimes exhilarating expression of towering indignation (Ibid).

The perpetrator expresses physical and verbal aggression and feels justified in that aggression. They describe this kind of rage as narcissistic because it is triggered by insults to self-esteem and because during the height of the rage others are assigned an inferior status. They also refer to it as blind hatred because of a destructive readiness to injure others on the grounds that they have no right to survive if the self is diminished (Ibid). Such a trigger situation is represented in Curtis' film where Dracula reacts to Harker's challenge to his orders to stay and dashes him violently to the ground. This scene is symbolic of a grandiose concept of self as it suffers ego deflation which manifests as self-righteous narcissistic rage (Jacobson, 1946: 129). It is during these episodes of self-righteous rage that Curtis' Dracula further codifies narcissism by being depicted as taking pleasure in hostility toward others. In this framework such pleasure can be read as an assumption of dominance over a dehumanised other (Horowitz and Arthur, 1988:

135-141). That may be follower or victim for the cult leader. In Curtis' film, Dracula as an enhanced meta-human can be regarded as viewing all humans as lacking, hence his desire to transform Lucy into a vampire such as himself in order to create a like partner with which to share such pleasure. Dracula's narcissistic rage in Curtis' film is again triggered when this partner (narcissistic object) is taken from him for the second time by the film's protagonists (Lucy is represented as Vlad Tsepes' reincarnated dead wife). This now codifies a compounding of indignation, sense of loss, and a perception of being wronged by external aggressors (Ibid).

When such rage continues to be triggered, it continues to build, and so it is progressively more easily triggered, with progressively more explosive outbursts resulting. This depiction in Curtis' film can be read as symbolic of such escalations for the cult leaders of the long 1960's, such as Manson's orchestration of the Tate-LaBianca murders or Jim Jones' eventual incitement to his followers' mass suicide (Atchison and Heide, 2011: 771-798; Richardson, 1980: 239-255). This escalated expression of narcissistic rage reaches a point where it blinds the subject to their own fallibilities and to the capabilities of an opponent (Horowitz and Arthur, 1988: 135-141). In a potential resonance with the downfalls of the cult leaders mentioned, this is arguably codified by Curtis' Dracula killing anyone attempting to block his path to Mina in the final part of the film, before his fatal downfall at the hands of Van Helsing and Seward, symbolising the socio-legal forces of patriarchal government.



**Figure 28:** Curtis' Dracula's narcissistic rage

In Horowitz and Arthur's framework then, Curtis' Dracula, Hammer's latter Dracula, and Franco's Dracula can arguably be read as symbolising narcissistic leaders who deny any disappointment by way of exaggerated use of power (Horowitz and Arthur, 1988: 135-141). They take whomever they want, either possessing them as narcissistic objects (Lucy, Mina, or substitute characters) or rejecting them as worthless (Harker in Curtis' film, Hammer's vampire brides). Narcissistic leaders as codified by these portrayals of Dracula tend to embark on grandiose projects and indulge in conspicuous consumption, as symbolised by Curtis' and Franco's Dracula's purchasing an English beachhead and ensconcing themselves there with a view to possessing a bride, or Hammer's Dracula's assembly of a cult of politicians in *The Satanic Rites of Dracula*. When the thrills flag, such leaders inject exhilaration by adding sadistic components as symbolised by Dracula's increasing violence and controlling behaviour as each narrative unfolds (Ibid). Dracula's destruction of others codifies self-perceived potency instead of vulnerability in self-perception as sadism is disguised by clever blame. In these narratives some trait of the victims provides Dracula's (distorted) reasoning a justification for his pleasurable humiliation of them, namely their comparative weakness as he defines it in the face of his meta-human vampirism. The extremes of Dracula's narcissism in these films can therefore be potentially read as codifying psychopathy, now referred to as antisocial personality disorder. These Draculas do not at any time show remorse for narcissistic rage and controlling behaviour. This again resonates with a number of the narcissistic cult leaders of that time. Increasing tension continually feeds back into the rage of narcissistic leaders as codified by these three portrayals of Dracula. Explosive rage finally leads to ruination of the leader, blood baths, and/or mutiny according to Horowitz and Arthur (1988: 135-141). In the denouement of Curtis' film, all three occur as Dracula's final killing spree leads to his execution by Van Helsing and Seward. Hammer's Dracula's attempt at world domination and destruction similarly leads to his destruction. Franco's Dracula's less grandiose attempts to possess a bride are likewise thwarted.

Curtis' Dracula, Franco's Dracula and Hammer's Dracula from the latter films of the cycle as viewed from the perspective of Gutmann's (1973) contemporaneous psychoanalytical perspective on the subjective politics of power also arguably codify the development of an autocratic mind. For such a mind, reality is an extension of the concept of self. This is a self that can be regarded as distributed in concrete experience and rooted in animistic conceptions of life-force (blood) and power (physical aggression, conscious manipulation of others) (Gutmann, 1973: 515-548). Power for narcissistic leaders is dichotomous and dependent on

that experiential reality. As symbolised in the finales of these films, it can vivify its possessor or backfire and destroy him when it consumes his judgment. The autocentric mind according to Gutman typically prevents the development of the allocentric self. This self-construction is an abstraction produced by the mind out of the various instances that it has of being a centre of others' regard, or of being the centre of sensation (Ibid). As such the allocentric concept of self develops the capacity to create and cathect abstractions and thus exist independently of experiential reality (Ibid). It is able to draw upon the internal world. The cinematic Draculas of the latter half of the long 1960's in this framework then also symbolise a failure to develop an allocentric self, again as codified by narcissistic aggression toward any perceived threat. This failure can be argued to be symptomatic of another developmental failure. Dracula in this context also represents the lack of development of a superego. According to Gutmann's interpretation of Freud, the installation of the superego in males marks the phasing out of oedipal conflict and rivalry with the father. When the son discovers that he cannot destroy the father, he realises that the father does not reciprocate the oedipal challenge (Ibid).

In conflating Curtis' Dracula with the historical Vlad Tsepes, the character can be argued to likewise symbolise an introjection that could not have occurred and thus an inability to conform to the father's legitimate authority in order to mirror it and thus acquire in the normative manner. This in turn codifies an infantile narcissism left unchecked (Freud, 1914: 67-102). Curtis' Dracula can therefore be read as equally symbolic of the oedipal conflict that has no satisfactory resolution, and in Gutmann's framework this is applicable to men whose father remains 'out there' as an 'enemy', never relinquishing his power. The consequence of such separation is that the superego never fully develops, remaining locked in the archaic, externalised modality of an autocentric mind (Gutmann, 1973: 515-548). The intersection, or collision, of this concept with psychohistoricist resonances with the narcissistic cult leaders of the period will be alluded to again later in this chapter. For Franco's and Hammer's Draculas, this narrative trope is arguably present if less explicit, as evidenced by their respective brief soliloquies on past battle triumphs. Their representing a lack of superego is therefore perhaps more tenuous but still applicable. Without the superego to channel aggression as a constructive force, only its destructive potential can be realised. The conflated Dracula/Vlad symbolises retention of the fantasy that all significant power is outside of the (underdeveloped) self and can only be garnered through acts of violence (read narcissistic rage), manipulation and propitiation. This is characterised by diegetic violations of social taboos and the use of infliction of pain upon others (and enjoyment of that sensation) to acquire power and control

at their expense, and to maintain that position of power at any cost. This is again symbolic of maintaining a limited sense of self (Ibid). Again, this arguably resonates with the narcissistic leader trope codified by Manson, Berg and Jones (Atchison and Heide, 2011: 771-798; Richardson, 1980: 239-255). Such leaders as symbolised by Dracula in these films snatch at anyone (Lucy, Mina) or anything (control over others i.e., Harker) that may temporarily fill their void of self (Horowitz and Arthur, 1988: 135-141). These cinematic Draculas are equally symbolic of the eventual downfall of narcissistic leaders as a cultural trope. Power is shown to corrupt judgement in terms of their grandiose inflations in response to threatened narcissistic injuries, leading to bloodbath, ruination, and death, again mirroring cults of the period, Manson's and Jones' serving as the most graphic examples (Ibid). Ian Cooper's essay 'Manson, Drugs and Black Power, The Countercultural Vampire' draws similar parallels with *Count Yorga* (Bob Kelljan, USA, 1970) and the cultist female vampire acolytes that kill at his behest, incidentally but nonetheless explicitly reflecting the actions of Manson and his notorious *family* (Cooper, 2014: 25-27).

To hypothesise possible reasons as to why the cinematic Draculas of the latter long 1960's may have presented as they did, potential resonances with the cultural dynamics from which they emerged must be explored. The synchronicity of these films marks a microcosmic fin-de-siècle, the end of the long 1960's characterised by a historiography of radical cultural shifts (Loqueur, 1996: 5-47). Charismatic narcissists have historically come to prominence as leaders during such phases of social vacillation. Such narcissists are insightful, manipulative, and crucially are able to exploit the less assured, vulnerable, and marginalised, by providing that which they seek: direction, validation, and a sense of belonging. The exploited are so desperate for this reassurance that they accept subjugation with very little question (Horowitz and Arthur, 1988: 135-141). Such leaders may arise as the microcosmic godheads of cults as they did at this time or as the macrocosmic godheads of nations as Hitler did as Weimar Germany eventually destabilised (Roper, 1998: 65-90). The underpinning historiography of sociocultural deconstruction coupled with the psychodynamics of charismatic narcissism can be argued to be similar (Craven, 2007: 29-46). To reapply psychohistoricism, historicism assumes that every expressive act is embedded in a network of material practices within which texts such as films circulate inseparably, and that any psychoanalytical interpretation also constitutes such an expressive act, then within this framework the latter cinematic Draculas of the long 1960's can indeed be argued to be in a cultural resonance with their real-world, malign and benign, narcissistic leader counterparts (Veese, 1989, xi).

### **3.10 Benign Narcissism and a Counter Culture Fear of Death**

The late 1950's through to the early 1970's colloquially termed the long 1960's was epitomised by the rise of counter culture rebellion against patriarchal establishment in the West. A pervasive theme in the psychoanalytical literature of the period, in particular the work of Mary Williams and Max M Stern, was focused on the fear of death (Williams, 1958: 157-165; 1962; Stern, 1968: 3-31). Ernest Becker's seminal 1973 work 'The Denial of Death' written during this period, examined this theme as an existential critique on Freudian psychoanalysis (Becker, 1973: 88-89). Hammer's Dracula cycle arguably resonates with contemporaneous counterculture philosophies, particularly with reference to the earlier part of the Hammer cycle prior to *Taste the Blood of Dracula* before hedonism and sublimated sexual liaison are overtaken by nihilism and the darker aspects of narcissism (Horn and Knott, 1971: 977-985).

Mary Williams' first psychoanalytic paper exploring this theme, 'The Fear of Death: Part 1: The Avoidance of the Fear of Death' was published in 1958, aligning it with Hammer's original Dracula film. The crux of Williams' theory is that the fear of death as a neurosis is couched in a confliction with the basic presumption of immortality when the denial of death as a psychic defence against the extinction of sentient consciousness intrinsic to human nature is fractured by an encounter with a situation that emphatically symbolises or literally epitomises the inevitability of death as a reality (Williams, 1958: 157-165). She posited two methods of avoiding the fear of death derived from her psychoanalytic casework. In the sadistic method the individual is described as forming a counter-phobic identification with death the destroyer. Their victim is the mortal who must die in pain so that the destroyer might experience the ecstasy of immortality (Ibid). The parallels with Hammer's Dracula's codification of Freud's twin drives for dominance and sustenance are obvious. Then there are the adherents to the sadistic method who aim to kill themselves. Williams (1958: 160-162) posits that such individuals are in fact attempting to kill the mortal within to attain immortality. For the suicidal individual, immortality attained in this manner can only be that ascribed to afterlife mythology. Hammer's Dracula arguably codifies this through sequential resurrection. Williams' masochistic method derives from the sadistic. Whereas the sadist identifies with the invulnerable destroyer and projects his mortality on to his victim, the masochist does vice versa and seeks the destroyer as saviour to rescue them from mortality (Williams, 1958: 162-164). This is symbolised by Hammer's Dracula's sexualised brunette brides. This dichotomy is also arguably applicable to the 1960's tropic counterculture revolutionary who seeks the end of the (patriarchal) establishment.



In her subsequent 1962 paper 'The Fear of Death Part II: The Fear of Death in Consciousness', Williams discusses therapeutic trajectory and reveals her posited aetiology for neurotic fear of death in consciousness, whereby individuals affected are possessed only of a rudimentary childlike ego that she terms a phobic ego, that is terrified of its own extinction and gives primacy to protecting itself (Williams, 1962: 29-40). The rudimentary ego takes primacy in consciousness when aroused by a traumatic encounter with that which symbolises or epitomises death to the subject. This rudimentary ego is masked by a pseudo-ego acting as a defensive outward veneer drawn from the immediate sociocultural constructs external to the psychic system (Ibid). Hammer's earlier Dracula is arguably symbolic of such a childlike ego. He is driven to source blood to maintain his immortality and ward off death symbolically negating implicit fear. In this symbology the predatory vampire read as a rudimentary ego is masked by an outwardly human pseudo-ego. For the counterculture revolutionary such a rudimentary ego can arguably be symbolised by the taking of childlike solace in the immediacy of hedonism and warding off the fear of death by living in denial. Both symbolise a cultural reformation juxtaposed with a baser avoidance of social responsibility (Horn and Knott, 1971: 977-985).

It is not only the titular character of the Hammer Dracula films that can be read as a filmic symbol of the sexualised hedonism and counterculture of the long 1960's. Dracula's disciples Lord Courtenay in *Taste the Blood of Dracula* and Johnny Alucard in *Dracula AD 1972* are equally representative. Both seek out the Count's vampirism, codifying countercultural adepts who seek out heightened sexual and other sensory experiences and status within a lifestyle that shuns the mainstream body politic. In short, they can be read as representing aspiring countercultural leaders. Alucard in particular can be read as representing the counterculturalist who seeks to popularise aspects of sexual hedonism closeted by older establishment figures as represented by Dracula. With vampirism read purely as sexual hedonism it can be argued to represent a currency between these demographics. Alucard and Dracula in this context may thus be read in psychohistoricist terms as symbolising the tension between the counterculture and the establishment that pervaded the era (Horn and Knott, 1971: 977-985).

Further to this, Hammer's Dracula (*Dracula*, *Dracula Prince of Darkness*, *Dracula has Risen from the Grave*) in embodying the tenets of vampirism similarly embodies the complex epistemologies of 1960's countercultural movements (Ibid). Hammer's Dracula is an immortal with the power to confer his immortality and eternal youth upon his chosen few. To posit a

pertinent example, counterculture leader Richard Neville conferred, as perceived by him, the metaphoric eternal youth of his anti-responsibility play power philosophy, thus denying death. Dracula's value system as an arch vampire parallels that of Richard Neville as an arch countercultural leader, thus rendering the earlier phase of Hammer's Dracula cycle analogous to these aspects of counterculture in a number of ways. Neville's philosophy espouses the use of recreational drugs to enter altered states. Vampirism codifies the ultimate altered state. Van Helsing in Fisher's 1958 film aligns Dracula's vampirism with drug use and addiction. The victim becomes psychosexually addicted and forever seeks Dracula's bite. As symbolism for recreational drug use this addiction is not attractively presented, but as a counter the consequences of recreational drug use are equally as roundly ignored by those seeking heightened sensory experiences (Neville, 1971<sup>10</sup>; Campbell, 2006: 97-112; Carrington, 2006: 145-155). Neville's counterculture play power philosophy valorises dropping out, eschewing the 1960's Western mainstream culture's materialist Christian work ethic. Instead, it favoured impoverished playful leisure sans work and financial obligation, seeking shelter wherever it was available, notably communal squats, in line with the Marxist dictate that all property in theft (Ibid). Hammer's Dracula arguably proselytises the same values. He squats in his victims' basements or derelict churches throughout his diegetic existence until his corporate sell-out in the final film, *The Satanic Rites of Dracula*. Dracula's credo, at least until the narrative resolution of *Dracula AD 1972*, appears to be 'have coffin, will travel'. He squatted in said coffins having unceremoniously evicted the inanimate incumbents, such as in *Dracula has risen from the Grave*. Hammer's Dracula likewise eschews work and materialism, seeking only free sustenance and sublimated sex, as did his extradiegetic counterculture kindred, the beats and hippies (Ibid).

The counterculture valorised polygamous free sexuality, opposing the Judaic and Christian more that is serial monogamy valorised by an increasingly secular mainstream Western culture at that time and now (Horn and Knott, 1971: 977-985). The sublimated sexuality of Hammer's Dracula's vampirism embodies the former to an extent, excepting its more sadistic excesses. Free sex is sublimated in *Dracula*, *Dracula Prince of Darkness*, and *Dracula has risen from the Grave*. The more vehement proponents of sixties counterculture such as Richard Neville were critical of what they perceived as an increasingly technocratic society where the

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<sup>10</sup> Richard Neville. *Play Power*. Paladin, Boulder, 1971, p.43, pp.57-75, p89, p99, pp.119-125, pp.135-145, pp.146-150, pp.204-229

continuing unrestrained application of technology, especially with regards to the patriarchal corporate military-industrial war machine, was perceived as a looming threat to humanity (Hendershot, 2001: 41-45; Neville, 1971<sup>11</sup>). Consequently, eastern mysticism and spiritual enlightenment were viewed, if not personally subscribed to, by many such as Neville as a cultural antidote. Hammer's *Dracula's* vampirism was criticised on more than one occasion by Cushing's mainstream *Van Helsing* as a cult, again drawing direct parallels with the cults of the time. Whilst such cults may have at first presented as a cultural antidote, like vampirism, many of them ultimately were a dark path to ruin.<sup>12</sup> Cushing's *Van Helsing* in this context embodies sixties patriarchal mainstream culture. He can be read as symbolic of the progressive institutional dynamic that emerged in the sixties, the patrician scientist who steps down from his ivory tower and shares his research with his public. He seeks to meet their need as well as his own agenda which he makes transparent. He respects and valorises Christian sociocultural mores, utilises Christian iconography for his purpose, but does not proselytise religion. As a university professor, he codifies mainstream, academic, corporate respectability.

So, what constitutes the traumatic encounter, so as to draw the rudimentary ego to consciousness leading to the adoption of a lifestyle predicated upon a neurotic avoidance of the fear of death? Max M Stern's 1968 papers (aligning them with Hammer's *Scars of Dracula*) 'Fear of Death and Neurosis' and 'Fear of Death and Trauma' defines this, building upon Williams' theories. Stern states the fear of death, based on his clinical observations of the period, emerges at an early age and is essentially fear of repetition of mortal terror experienced in the ubiquitous early, biologically focused traumatic states of object loss, namely castration anxiety during the oedipal phase of development, and parting with faeces during the anal phase. Stern posited that the integration and thus acceptance of this fear is a necessary part of development and that any deficiency in this adaptation is integral to fear-of-death neurosis, leading to avoidant, maladaptive behaviours and lifestyles. Adaptation, he continues, is only possible if the individual has developed stable differentiated object representatives and sufficient strength of ego identity to allow the recognition and acceptance of their ultimately transient nature (Stern, 1968: 3-31; 457-463). This begs the speculation as to what traumatic object loss is symbolised by Hammer's *Dracula* and potentially suffered by counterculture

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<sup>11</sup> Richard Neville. *Play Power*. Paladin, Boulder, 1971, p.43, pp.57-75, p89, p99, pp.119-125, pp.135-145, pp.146-150, pp.204-229

<sup>12</sup>This could read as a portent to Hammer's *Legend of the 7 Golden Vampires* (Roy Ward Baker, 1974) in which *Dracula*, in a minor role, joins just such a vampire cult in China.

leaders? Both arguably codify the development of a rudimentary ego that set them upon a neurotic path of avoiding death and fear of death. This fundamental object loss is arguably symbolised in the Hammer cycle by Dracula having lost his life to attain the undead material afterlife that is vampirism. The traumatic loss of a parent in World War II could be argued as having been an ever-present risk for leading counterculturalists during childhood. It is this facet of counterculture, resonant with Hammer's early Dracula cycle that can be argued as being a possible aetiology of the counterculture fear of death.

Stern's third paper exploring this theme (contemporaneous to *Dracula AD 1972*) 'Bio trauma, Fear of Death, and Aggression' defines aggressiveness as an instinctual response to any threat to survival which is transformed into a constant readiness for aggression by the anticipatory process. Through it, biological threats (codified by Van Helsing and his patriarchal analogues) as well as the threat from the ultimate trauma of death (Dracula is symbolic of a permanent state of warding off death) and the response to this threat, are perpetuated throughout life. Killing not to be killed thus assuages the death fear of the ego (Stern, 1972: 291-299). Hammer's Dracula evolved from a dichotomous romantic predator to an ever more sadistic, misogynistic killer, eventually bearing similitude to Franco's and Curtis' Draculas. From a psychohistorical perspective this can potentially be read as representative of the same escalations witnessed in the malign narcissistic cult leaders of that time. In Ernest Becker's 1973 existential psychoanalytical critique (contemporaneous to the conclusion of the Hammer Dracula canon and the long 1960's) again links such countercultural strivings to global repression of the fear of death, the ontogeny of which is located in the Freudian developmental phase where the object losses of the biological necessity of anal expulsion and the fear of castration come to fundamentally symbolise human mortality (Becker, 1973: 36-46). The child attempts to master his body as a *causa-sui* (from within) project. To master it is to master death and affirm his immortality. As the child becomes an adult he or she may successfully abandon this *causa-sui* project when he accepts its futility and thus reconciles his fear of death by recognising his biological finite body and choosing to embrace the immediacy of life. If he cannot do this, a new *causa-sui* project may be conceived to assure immortality and maintain global repression in the denial of death (Ibid).

The counterculture ended with an aggressive battle with patriarchy on its own terms and the threat of (symbolic) death, again mirroring Hammer's extended Dracula narrative. Such a new *causa-sui* project that promises distinction equates to becoming the transference object of

others and ratifies the underlying repression, thus maintaining immortality (Ibid). In Becker's (1973) framework, the strategies outlined by Williams (1968) and Stern (1972) and symbolised by Hammer's Dracula can be viewed as psychic constructs to facilitate this repression and transcend the mortality aware animal that is man. Hammer's earlier Dracula can be read as codifying counterculture leaders whose dedication to causa-sui projects, initially sans the conflict and guilt that their rebellious actions would engender in others, mark them out as leaders of groups that come together to share responsibility for those actions. Whilst the earlier Hammer Dracula mirrored the benign narcissistic counterculture leaders such as Neville, malign narcissistic cult leaders had darker causa-sui projects. To accept the fear of death according to Becker (1973: 15-24) is intrinsic to social responsibility and is thus ubiquitously valorised in human culture. It is when Hammer's Dracula abandons his causa-sui project of vampirism for the ideal of world domination and global annihilation as he adopts the persona of a Machiavellian tycoon in the final Hammer film, that he symbolises an embracing the mainstream culture of his nemesis Van Helsing. He is co-opted by it and accepts death by seeking to embrace it via the nihilistic elimination of his only means of sustenance. For Hammer's Dracula, the only way to accept death and the fear of death is to finally die in accordance with Western cultural mores that an unnatural extended life at the expense of others is unacceptable. Dracula once more resonates with the counterculturalist who is finally co-opted by the mainstream (Agar, 2008; 1-34). At the culmination of the long 1960's it is Van Helsing and his intertextual analogues that therefore can be read as embodying co-opting, neutralising, mainstream culture. Franco's and Curtis' Draculas are in tension with Hammer's Dracula on this particular psychohistorical alignment. For them there was no such acceptance, they fought to the end. Whilst Hammer's Dracula in the latter films of the cycle codifies the greater cult leader, they may codify the greater narcissists.

In sum, Levitt and Rubenstein's 1974 epigraphic psychoanalysis of counterculture itself, 'The Counter-Culture: Adaptive or maladaptive?' concluded that the counterculturalist possesses knowledge of reality but does not adapt his knowledge to that reality. Further to this they view him as having a superego slanted toward a narcissistic ego ideal and choosing to live within a peer group that conforms more closely to his average expectable environment because he cannot manage the diverse challenges of his wider culture (Levitt and Rubenstein, 1974: 325-336). He develops ego interests which are central to his existence which rationalise his adjustment and displays a strongly skewed moral stance which obfuscates his dedication to his self-interest. He views his feelings as central in primacy over his intellect. He emphasises oral

and anal rather than genital achievements and operates upon the pleasure principle, emphasising value rational rather than goal rational efforts (Ibid). All of Levitt and Rubenstein's conclusions are arguably codified by Hammer's oral sadistic Dracula as they are by any charismatic ideological virtuoso of the era that can potentially be read as being characteristic of their respective causa-sui projects and being in denial of death as per Becker's theoretical framework. Levitt and Rubenstein conclude that, on the basis of their defined criteria, counterculture is maladaptive (Ibid). By meeting these criteria, the counterculture of the first half of the long 1960's as symbolised by Hammer's early cycle Dracula, must also be considered maladaptive according to contemporaneous psychoanalysis. Finally, this potential psychohistoricist reading of the Hammer Dracula cycle can be couched in terms of mainstream culture ultimately overwhelming the countercultural elements that spring from within it, which can be considered adaptive by the majority consuming the maladaptive minority (Levitt and Rubenstein, 1974: 325-336; Horn and Knott, 1971: 977-985). Such elements emerge, migrate to cultural fringes, exert a certain amount of influence for a time and make changes for better and worse, but are finally co-opted and reabsorbed, or from the psychoanalytic perspective, cured. So far the more benign elements of counterculturalist hedonism during the long 1960's as represented by Hammer's Dracula in the former half of the cycle have been explored in the psychohistoricist framework. The more malign extremes of counter-culturalism, cults and the sociocultural trope of the narcissistic leader have been touched upon as a point of comparison. This trope as symbolised by Hammer's latter Dracula films and Franco's and Curtis' films as the latter part of the long 1960's cycle will now be examined in more detail.

### **3.11 Malign Narcissism and the Fear of the Cult Leader**

The leaders (as symbolised by the latter cinematic Draculas of this era) and followers (as symbolised by Dracula's victims) of the malign cults of the long 1960's when framed as sociocultural tropes can be read from contemporaneous psychohistoricist perspectives as the products of psychosocial schism, seen to be functioning at the respective extremities of sadomasochism. Pertinent examples include the Manson family, Jones' People's Temple, and Berg's Children of God. Herman and Nelson posited contemporaneous revolutions as a causal aetiology (Herman and Nelson, 1973: 333-372; Burke, 2006: 390-410). These included the scientific-technological leaps taking place at that time such as the 1969 moon landing and spatial-temporal contraction as mass transport became cheaper and faster, sociocultural changes such as rationalisation, the focus on amassing capital countered by egalitarianism, the social-morphological conflation of socio-economic, ethnic and religious groups, and finally

changes in the structures of global consciousness and conscience leading to conflict epitomised by the wars in Korea and Vietnam. At the time of the Manson family murders, the formation of the People's Temple and The Children of God, synchronous to the latter half of the Hammer Dracula cycle and the release of Franco's and Curtis' Dracula films, identification with the establishment for many in the West had fractured. It no longer provided a reliable indicator of psychological health and wellbeing. Compliance with Western sociocultural mores were often a pathway to frustration and disillusionment with incongruous prospects in a weakening economy or even violent death in an illegal war. The pervasive hopelessness for many arguably contributed to psychosocial pathology in some (Ibid). Manson's homicidal family committed the Tate-LaBianca murders at his behest. The homicidal-suicidal nihilism of Jones' followers leads to the murder of Congressman Leo Ryan prior to their alleged mass suicide in 1978 (coercion and therefore mass murder is alleged by some theorists). Berg's Children of God were accused of practising paedophilia (Ibid). Herman and Nelson (1973: 333-372) posited that from the late fifties in the USA, the ties between family and community, between child and parent, and child and the environment diminished in the birth of the throwaway society. Manson, Jones and Berg either had minimal or dysfunctional parental and societal contact (Burke, 2006: 390-410). Herman and Nelson (1973: 333-372) go on to posit that with the diminution of functional social interaction comes a reliance on inter-psychic events to fill the void leading to (pathological) individuals to manipulate others to assuage ennui. It is in such an environment that they deduced that pathological extremes of sadomasochism may develop. For the likes of Charles Manson, Jim Jones and David Berg, primary objects can be seen as having been experienced in an exploitative manipulative framework, as arguably symbolised by the interactions of the latter cinematic Draculas of the long 1960's and their respective filmic brides. These narcissistic cult leaders in resonance with these Draculas are arguably representative of an absence of Freud's splitting of the ego in psychoanalytical terms.

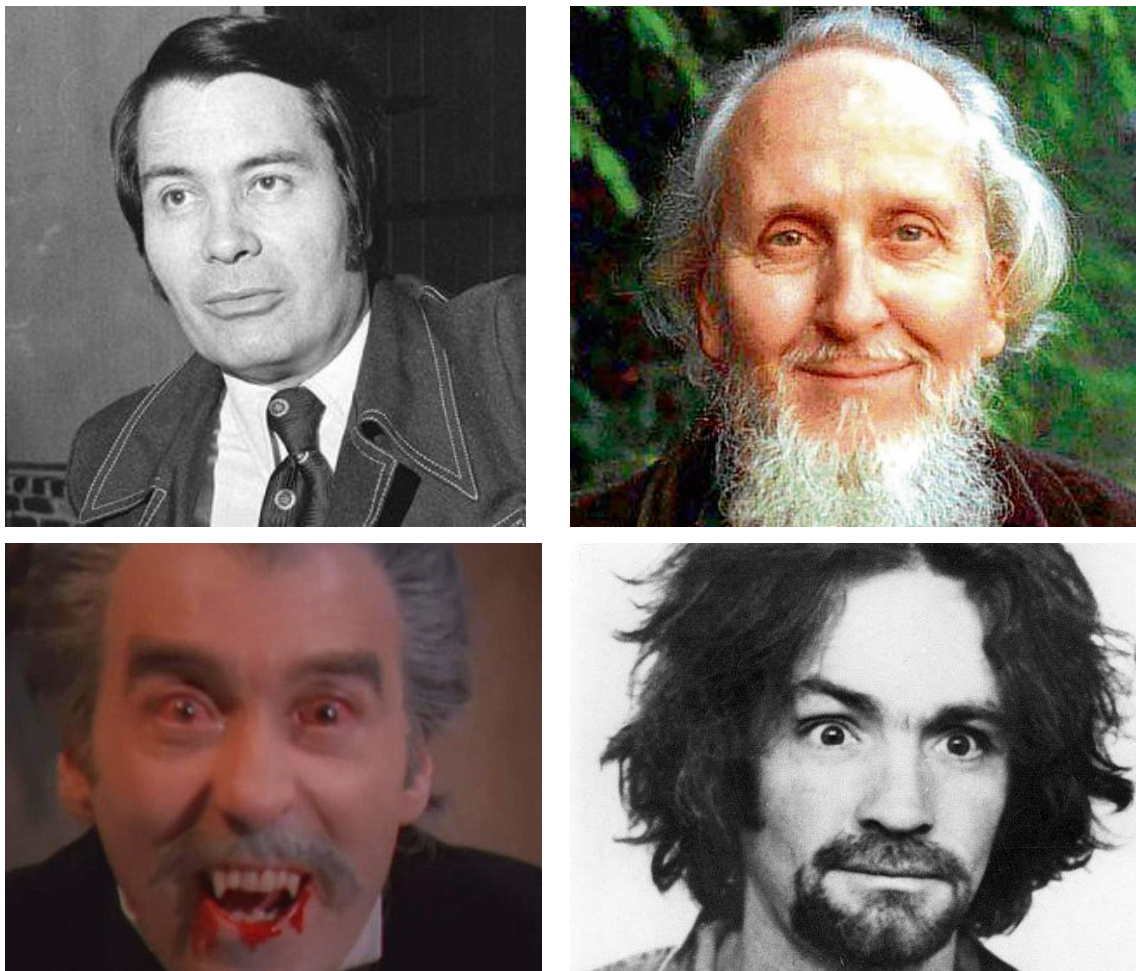
According to Freud's 1941 essay 'Splitting of the Ego in The Process of Defence' normal splitting of the ego occurs in early childhood at around three years of age and entails a compromise between disavowing instinctual demand in favour of assuaging real threat, or instinctual satisfaction at the cost of real consequences (Freud, 1941: 65-68). The child normally avoids either extreme and settles for a compromise i.e., enough instinctual satisfaction to avoid frustration and negate real consequences. The two contrary reactions to such conflict persist as the centre-point of the splitting of the ego, a rift normally retained throughout life to facilitate continued engagement with the reality principle (Ibid). A lack of splitting of the ego

sees the association of that part of the self with positive affect conceived as narcissism, and that associated with negative affect conceived as masochism. These rudimentary discriminations of objects as good and bad become universally applied. This results in a failure of projective defences and introjections and splitting of the object when threatened with loss which in turn invokes aggression toward the internalised objects and ego regression (Herman and Nelson, 1973: 333-372). The objects in this case are codified by the brides of our respective Draculas as symbolic of the victims of the narcissistic cult leaders of the long 1960's. As the individual's sense of security increases in narcissistic personalities, sadistic impulses take primacy in the sadomasochistic mindset (Ibid). Their narcissism is further fuelled by their charismatic personas attracting sadomasochists that they can objectify. For such sadomasochists, masochism has taken primacy which could be argued in this context to be exemplified by Manson's family members, Jones' inner circle, or Berg's wife, resonating with our cinematic Draculas' more willing sexualised brides (Burke, 2006: 390-410). For these disciples, narcissistic security lacks and is only available via group reinforcement which checks ego splitting and promotes identification with the charismatic leader (Herman and Nelson, 1973: 333-372). By abstraction, another potential (intersecting) psychohistorical reading of these films is that the latter Draculas of the long 1960's pathologised as sadomasochists can be read as representative of and legitimising Western patriarchal fear of otherness within. They physically embody the preternatural, satanic, anarchic, and occult, infiltrating the middle echelons of Western patriarchal society, locating and disseminating within it as murderous vampirism. Narcissistic cult leaders such as Manson, Jones and Berg represent the extremes of counterculture, disestablishmentarianism, anarchy, and the occult (Burke, 2006: 390-410). Likewise, they infiltrated the middle echelons of Western patriarchal society by rising from beneath it. They corrupted its scion, drawing them in and disseminating a deviant, abusive and even murderous ethos (Geis and Huston, 1971: 342-353).

Countercultural, disestablishmentarian otherness (albeit a labile sociocultural construct, as, arguably, is any concept of otherness in this context) was still not acceptable to the patriarchal establishment of the time. For Western patriarchy to remain intact it had to neutralise this threat of narcissistic otherness within, whether that was aligned to benign hedonism or malign, controlling cultism. It could be argued that by the time of the more sympathetic cinematic Draculas that were to follow, patriarchy incorporated otherness to capitalise upon it, rather than to accept it in the truest sense of the word. To conclude on a salient digression, Franco and contemporaries Jean Rollin, José Larraz, José Benazeraf, and Alain Robbe-Grillet explored the



ethic of pervasive explicit violence exemplified by Manson, Berg, and Jones in the European exploitation horror films of the mid-fifties to early eighties, where evil was often triumphant (Tohill, 1994). One such example is Rollin's 2002 revival of this sub-genre (exploiting exploitation) *The Fiancée of Dracula*, in which the protagonists, the Professor and his protégé (analogous to Van Helsing and Harker) are stabbed to death and trapped forever in Dracula's tomb respectively, whilst the titular antagonist succeeds in marrying the female lead and living happily ever after, leaving in his wake a trail of insanity and shattered lives. Play power, counter-culturalism, and the cultism at its more malign extremes as symptomatised by Dracula's vampirism fell from the collective viewer consciousness in the early 1970's (Marwick, 2005: 780-806). However, such cultism, like Dracula, would rise again.



**Figure 29:** Narcissistic Cult Leaders

### **3.12 Fear of Death and Fear of Dracula in the Long 1960's Cycle of Films**

One final possible psychohistorical resonance between the counterculture and Draculas of the long 1960's that should be mentioned is the underlying conflict between countercultural

secularity, new religious movements and established organised religion. As outlined by Darren Sherkat (1998: 1087-1114), the counterculture was in competition with a number of competing agents of socialisation. Parents, denominations, and schools all helped shape religious schemas and commitments, and produce a social context where particular religious choices are rewarded or punished, whereas the new consciousness of the counterculture espoused alternative spirituality and/or outright secularity. In *Dracula Has Risen from the Grave*, such intellectualised secularity embodied within the film's student hero protagonist is eventually rejected in order to triumph over Dracula and thus symbolically countercultural. As the Hammer cycle reaches its conclusion, Dracula rejects the occult in favour of science in *The Satanic Rites of Dracula*, in cogency with the counterculture he is read as symbolising, only to succumb to Christian religious iconography and thus conservatism as represented by Van Helsing. The same fate befalls Curtis' military strategist Count, and Franco's sexualised transgressor as it has every cinematic Dracula until this point. Counterculture philosophy (symbolised by Dracula) and religion (symbolised by Van Helsing and his cohorts) however did have a common ground. Both assuage that underlying fear of death, and therefore inviting the same psychoanalytical interpretations of intrinsic motives. Sherkat concludes that individuals' interactions with family and religious resources serve to sustain traditional religious schemata, while countercultural schemas find few complementary resources to nurture them (Ibid). This is perhaps illustrated in the denouement of counterculture and of the Hammer Dracula cycle, and with it the cinematic Dracula archetype it represented that was also exemplified by Curtis' and Franco's black cloaked dandy narcissists. They can be read as having been consumed by conservatism. This was where, to refer back to Robin Wood's essay, it can be argued that the obsolescence of the cinematic Dracula character as he was represented at that time arguably began to occur, as perhaps symbolised by the progressive physical deterioration of the Count, the moral deterioration of aristocracy (Dracula and the Di Fiore family), and thus class oligarchy in Paul Morrissey's 1974 parodic Marxist allegory *Blood for Dracula* with Udo Kier in the titular role. Dracula was defeated by Joe D'Alessandro's handyman as a new proletariat found its voice (Ahern, 2013). The Count and counterculture had served their purpose by insisting that the repressed be kept down, but that it must always surface, and strive to be recognised (Wood, 1983: 175-187). For society, and Dracula as a cinematic symbol of its machinations, reinvention would eventually be demanded.

According to Dennis White's (1971: 1-18) 'The poetics of horror: More than meets the eye' (synchronous to the conclusion of the Hammer Dracula cycle, Franco's and Curtis' films), we

all fear death and try to protect ourselves from it, but the arousing of our fear of death by itself is not enough to produce horror. Horror requires a certain kind of manipulation of that fear. If a film is to frighten us it must use elements that are genuinely frightening. The Dracula films of the long 1960's combine such elements by embodying within their titular character the kind of death from which there is no protection, no warning, and no escape. This is a disturbing parallel that can be drawn with Jones and Manson's victims in particular. The victims of the Count, outside of the surviving couples, are subject to a continual loss of means of escape until there is no safety and no hope of safety. Combinations of insight and accident emphasise their fatal errors and, in the process, produce horror for them and vicariously for us as viewers (Ibid). Ultimately the cinematic Draculas of the long 1960's not only brought us fear of loss of self in death but the threat of animalisation, analogous to losing one's mind and persona and the wholesale consumption of self by the Id. More subtly, these films also arguably subject us to the extension of everyday fears, such as the fear of rejection and being ostracised from our family and peers if we no longer conform to their value base. The transgressive, sexualised victims of these Draculas, unless recuperated by returning to conformity, are treated in just such a fashion. In this context, these interpretations of the eponymous vampire also embody the fear of impotence in the face of authority, perhaps best illustrated by Alucard's willing subjugation to Dracula in Gibson's *Dracula AD 1972*. Finally, in Gibson's *The Satanic Rites of Dracula*, our fears of social disintegration are foregrounded. It is the inclusion of such fundamental fear inducing narrative elements that render the cinematic Draculas of the long 1960's as the last that were truly feared in the conventional sense. As sympathy for the vampire becomes endemic to the horror film narrative from the late 1970's onward, these elements erode to the point that some vanish as Dracula transitions from the evil antagonist of Hammer, Curtis', and Franco's films to the Byronic anti-hero of Badham's and Coppola's films, to eventually become the hero of Gary Shore's 2014 *Dracula Untold*.

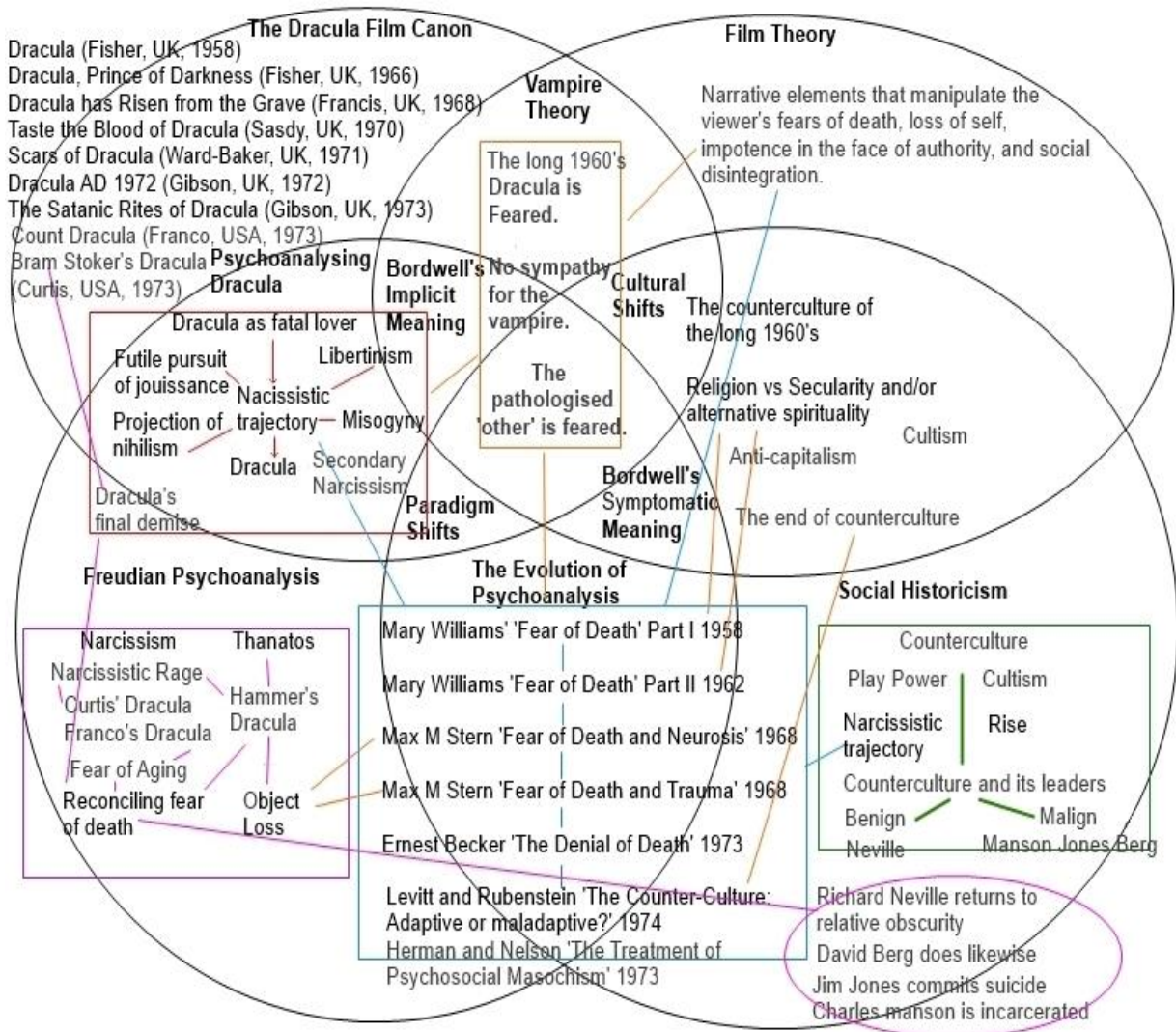
Dracula as a cinematic character became more sexualised, aggressive, atavistic and monomaniacal as the long nineteen sixties progressed, much as the influence of unrestrained sexuality affected Western culture during this period (Stewart, 1982: 33-50). As a point of corroboration, Hammer's analogous female vampires can certainly be argued to have followed a parallel if somewhat shorter psychohistoricist trajectory from the benignly hedonistic (Roy Ward Baker's 1970 film *The Vampire Lovers*, and John Hough's 1971 *Twins of Evil*) to the malignantly narcissistic in the form of Ingrid Pitt's titular sexual sadist in Peter Sasdy's 1971 *Countess Dracula*. Robin Wood's later assertion that the Count had served his purpose by

insisting that the repressed be kept down, but that it must always surface and strive to be recognised is perhaps evident at the end of the long sixties. As Wood suggested we had not purged him of his connotations of evil that Victorian society projected on to sexuality and by which contemporary notions of sexuality were still contaminated. Wood stated that if the return of the repressed was to be welcomed, then we must learn to represent it in forms other than that of an undead vampire aristocrat (Wood, 1983: 175-187). This was where the obsolescence of the Count as the cloaked, dandified yet sexualised and narcissistic predator began to take hold, and was finally consolidated as this classical stage concluded with Badham's film. In psychohistoricist terms Dracula now codified the narcissistic other that remained pathologised to an extent but was now tolerated and crucially was no longer feared (Stewart, 1982: 33-50). This loss of fear is arguably epitomised in the parody that marks the endpoint of this classical stage.

Harries second classical stage of parody, that of conventional stabilisation, encompasses the Hammer films and their immediate successors directed by Franco and Curtis, during which the character's iconography and character traits are consolidated (Harries, 2000: 1-23). George Hamilton's sexualised Count in *Love at First Bite* (Stan Dragoti, USA, 1979) mirrored Badham's Dracula at the transition in to the long 1980's. Unlike Lugosi's Dracula in *Abbott and Costello meet Frankenstein*, he represented just such a tolerated other, and like Badham's Count, was arguably never meant to be feared. Fear of Dracula was now exhausted. There are only so many aspects of fear any fictional horror character can engender in an audience until that fear becomes saturated to the point of ridicule or disdain (Stewart, 1982: 33-50). The character must then become obsolete or be reinvented to maintain any cultural currency. It is that point that parody and reinvention occurs. The prolongation of ideas in film after film compensated for the obsolescence of single Dracula films during the long 1960's and the psychosexual resonance of Dracula with the viewer arguably remained pervasive, inviting that very reinvention (Stanfield, 2013: 217-218; Alloway, 1971: 19).

Aligning with Stanfield's (2013) critical overview of Alloway (1971), Hammer's Dracula cycle, conjugated with Curtis' and Franco's films as the wider Dracula film cycle of the long 1960's, can arguably be regarded as an art form that is symptomatic of the psychosocial milieu that influenced its creators. Whether that influence was more of a creative statement (Curtis' and Franco's adaptations/reinventions of Stoker), or conscious referencing of topicality in the pursuit of a marketable product (Hammer's modern-day Dracula films at the denouement of

the cycle) is a matter for conjecture, but either implies potential resonance. The proliferation of continuing associated themes and motifs in the Dracula film cycle of the long 1960's has been shown to have evolved in reciprocal tension with shifting historical psychosocial influences to allow those films to remain topical and hence marketable, as did psychoanalysis in parallel as a therapeutic discipline and analytical paradigm to remain effective when analysing them. This historically contextualised psychosocial tension that is inherent to this reciprocity for the cycle has been critically evidenced from a multifaceted psychohistorical perspective (Ibid). Dracula as a cinematic character had indeed evolved within this epistemological liminal space countering not only the obsolescence of any one Dracula film, but also of the character himself.



**Figure 30:** Mapping the theorised liminal spaces of Dracula's Cinematic Evolution throughout the Long 1960's

Libertinism and progressively worsening narcissistic transgressions, coupled to a greater or lesser extent with underlying nihilism and its destructive projection, both codify and rail against one of humankind's most fundamental fears, that of death and the annihilation of self that it represents. There is no sympathy engendered for these vampires (see figure 30, above). In response to the fear of these Draculas' deathly otherness they are constantly thwarted and destroyed by their conservative adversaries. That very conservatism, with its fear of otherness eventually co-opted, consumed, and likewise brought about the demise of the otherness of Richard Neville's play-power philosophy, the cultism of Manson, Jones, and Berg, and ultimately the wider counterculture of the 'long 1960's'. The otherness that dissented and disrupted from within as with this particular cinematic Dracula archetype, as opposed to the evolving character, as predicted in part by Robin Wood (1983), finally became obsolete.

Christopher Lee's portrayal of Dracula for Franco, Jack Palance's for Curtis and Lee's portrayal of the Count for the latter Hammer cycle as violent narcissists can therefore be placed within vampire theory as still resolutely 'other'. The otherness of Dracula continues to be pathologised as late as Curtis' film, but more in terms of the controlling behaviour, violent misogyny, and deviant sexuality mirroring Manson and his ilk, than with vampirism read as Universal's blood borne disease, or Hammer's earlier fatal addiction. As fear for the character waned in some respects, fear for what he symbolised remained for obvious reasons. Dracula's invasive otherness in the early seventies was couched in progressively worsening, manipulative narcissistic transgressions, coupled with escalating, all-consuming rage, in turn codifying the megalomania of Freud's secondary narcissist (Freud, 1938: 65-68). Hammer's latter Dracula, Franco's Dracula, and perhaps more so, Curtis' Dracula, encompass the fear of the unpredictable other, the marginalised outsider who cannot be controlled and worse cannot control himself, forever engendering suspicion of a potential for sudden harm. When such an individual has the ability, drive and charisma to acquire a position of power such as that of a cult leader, that fear is compounded by a concurrent exponential increase in the risk of that harm. When that individual becomes a danger to society, that fear must then become collective, constituting a cultural anxiety (Bursten, 1972: 287-300; Black, 2004: 579-596).

## Chapter 4

### The Long 1980's

#### Obsolescence, Reconstruction, and Sympathy for the Vampire

##### 4.0 The Long 1980's Dracula Film Cycle

With the conclusion of the Hammer Dracula films at the end of the long 1960's cycle, Dracula as a cinematic character was again no longer associated with any one studio. Indeed, the character would not again be part of a conventional cyclic format in this sense, being played by one or two actors closely associated with the character, embedded within a loosely overarching diegesis. Dracula had perhaps been overtaken by other cycles in this respect, such as John Carpenter's *Halloween* films, or Miller and Cunningham's *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>* franchise. Formulaic sequels were now the province of the slasher sub-genre of horror. However, to again apply Alloway's perspective, the cinematic Dracula films of the 'long 1980's' arguably constitute a cycle of experimental metamorphic iconoclasm as the character evolves through a number of shifting archetypes, retaining some tropes from the preceding Universal and Hammer cycles whilst shedding others, and incorporating new ones.

Historically speaking, 'The long 1980's' in the Thatcher era UK can be viewed as a period of crystallisation and galvanisation of the divide between a proletarian middle-class who were experiencing an improvement in their material conditions of living and a newly forming underclass dependent on benefits. Some would argue there are parallels with the USA under Ronald Reagan's presidency (Jones, 2012: 185-221). This was a class divide predicated more on accrued wealth than inherited birth right, at a time when socialist altruism was demonised and personal gain was valorised as the baby boomers became the establishment and Generation X was reaching adulthood. Western cultural values of the long 1960's had effectively come full circle (Martin, 1988: 389-418). As previously, the Dracula films of these two decades will be framed against resonant contemporaneous events and sociocultural shifts, as well as against concomitant developments in psychoanalysis.

By the late 1970's the first of many shifts in Dracula's cinematic character development had occurred. John Badham's *Dracula* was released by Universal studios on July 13th, 1979, to a mixed critical response. Some found the film eviscerated with respect to its Hammer predecessors. Others praised Langella's eroticised, Byronic portrayal of Dracula, comparing him to his Universal forebear, Bela Lugosi. Langella's portrayal of the Count, like Lugosi's, was forged in the theatre. Frank Langella played Dracula for 925 performances on Broadway

in Dennis Rosa's 1977 revival of the Hamilton-Deane play, for which he garnered the 1978 Tony award for best actor, and Rosa the Tony award for most innovative production of a revival (Gunn, 2017: 73-88). Langella's Count had therefore already been recognised in the public consciousness when Badham's film was released. Badham's film marked the return of the sexualised romantic predator construct incepted by Chaney Jr and Carradine's portrayals but differed markedly in one key respect. Badham's Dracula was capable of and sought reciprocal romantic love. Unlike his predecessors, he was not depicted as debasing himself or surrendering his agency to acquire it. This brings us to two aspects of the screening of the alluring male that are particularly applicable to Badham's (and Coppola's) Count.

Firstly, Barbara Creed (1993: 118-133) intimates that whenever (desirable) male bodies are represented as monstrous in the horror film they assume characteristics normally associated with the female body. This desirable Dracula (as with his other filmic incarnations) embodies three of them as he is metamorphic, he is penetrated (by the winch hook) and he bleeds, and he experiences a blood (feeding) cycle. She cites other examples, notably those expressing more overt female characteristics such as the transvestite Norman Bates in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (USA, 1960) and the transgendered Dr Elliot in Brian De Palma's 1980 film *Dressed to Kill* (Ibid). Whilst previous cinematic Draculas can be argued to embody these same traits, they can equally be argued to be less conventionally alluring, although this is a subjective argument. Secondly, Badham's Dracula as objectified by the female gaze draws parallels with Peter Lehman's reading of Julian in Paul Schrader's *American Gigolo* (USA 1980), and arguably Tony in Badham's earlier *Saturday Night Fever* (1977). These characters can be read as seeking to bring empowering sexual satisfaction to women via a superphallic male sexuality (Lehman, 2007: 1-20). This second aspect is far less applicable to Dracula's previous misogynistic cinematic incarnations. From this perspective Badham's Count was perhaps the first cinematic Dracula to truly elicit romantic desire for the vampire, drawing parallels with another soulful, Byronic, romantic blood drinker of the time, Anne Rice's literary creation Louis, from her seminal 1976 novel *Interview with the Vampire*. More agency was given to the female protagonist (Lucy as opposed to Mina in this case) than in any previous Dracula film

It can be argued that the alleged obsolescence of Dracula as defined by Robin Wood begins with the latter Hammer cycle. Wood referred to Badham's film as seeming more romantic than Victorian in feeling, drawing parallels with the literary and artistic traditions of "l'amour fou" or mad love, and surrealism. He referred to two subtextual nuances that substantiate its



distinction from previous Dracula films (Wood, 1983: 185-187). The first is that heterosexual monogamy is reinstated under the cover of liberation. This viewpoint is not without its challenges. Lucy's character can indeed be read as being liberated by vampirism, but does she remain betrothed to Dracula? It can just as easily be argued that theirs represents a quintessential open relationship with neither partner subjugated to the other's agency. Secondly, Wood remarked that Lucy and Dracula in Badham's film represent latent fascism as the potential progenitors of a dominant super race. This point may well be regarded as a portent for the future superhero evolution of the Count's cinematic character. Finally, Wood purported that with Badham's film, the Count had thus finally served his purpose by insisting the repressed cannot be kept down and that it must always surface and strive to be recognised (Ibid). Perhaps it was only this cinematic archetype of the Count, the dandy, cloaked, romantic predator, that was rendered obsolete. Continued cinematic resurgences can be regarded as indicative evidence of this being the case.

The 1970's was arguably the decade where feminism began to inform psychoanalysis. Juliet Mitchell in 1974, seminaly argued that a rejection of (Freudian) psychoanalysis as patriarchal was fatal for feminism, seemingly concurring with several notable contemporaries. Concomitantly, both epistemologies began to be framed as analytical paradigms within film theory; Laura Mulvey's works of that period being notable examples. These perspectives will be discussed in context and in greater detail later in this chapter. Analysing Badham's 1979 film from the viewpoint of empowerment of women then has a particular psychohistoricist saliency. The resonance of said film with its sociocultural milieu is a matter for conjecture as with any other Dracula film or cycle of same, even for a seminal reimagining of Stoker's text, yet Badham's romanticised Dracula can be regarded as reflecting this zenith. Badham's Dracula character was the first to truly empower and sexually liberate his chosen bride as opposed to merely possessing and objectifying them. Lucy had her own agency and was not conditionally empowered as an extension of his. Badham's film has been read from the perspective of psychoanalysing Dracula's empowerment of Lucy and the emasculating threat that presents to her patriarchal male cohorts. In accepting this empowerment, Lucy has accepted the threat from within and embraced anti-establishment otherness. Whilst initially coerced by the male influence of the other, she can be regarded as developing her own agency through otherness; in concordance with contemporaneous psychoanalysis being informed by feminism. It is worth noting that it is the sexualised Lucy who replaces the morally forthright Mina as the female lead in this film in a reversal of the preceding Hammer narrative trope.

The 1980's then saw a relative dearth of Dracula films at the cinema. The exception was the release of *The Monster Squad* (USA) in 1987 directed by Fred Dekker. This formulaic monster rally whilst comparable in conceptual terms to its universal forebears, including from a fundamentally commercially motivated standpoint (as it is no auteurist reinvention of Stoker), differs in the characterisation of its monstrous antagonists. Dracula's characterisation by Duncan Regehr in this film has far more in common with Richard Roxburgh's dark comedic portrayal of the Count in the post-millennial monster rally *Van Helsing* (Stephen Sommers, USA, 2004) than it does with John Carradine's dignified performance. Compared to Carradine's duplicitous seducer in the pursuit of his brides, both Roxburgh and Regehr's characterisations place greater emphasis on the stereotypical villain's histrionic intolerance of opposition in the pursuit of power. The significance of this film is that it is arguably the first non-parodic film in the cinematic Dracula canon where the viewer's fear of the character is very severely dissipated if not lost altogether.

This loss of viewers' fear of Dracula (see the pastiche poster for Hammer's *Dracula Has Risen from the Grave*) had been taking hold in the televisual arena since the 1960's thanks to a succession of kindly old Counts ranging from the bumbling scientist that was Grandpa Munster (*The Munsters*, USA, 1964-1966), to the Count that helped you to count (*Sesame Street*, USA, 1969-present), to the similarly avuncular Big D in the children's cartoon *The Drak Pack* (USA, 1980-1982). Even Ferdy Mayne,<sup>13</sup> an actor well known for his horror roles (see footnote), took a turn as a parodic love-struck Count Dracula in the German co-produced children's television series *Frankenstein's Aunt* in 1986. Unlike these parodies, Duncan Regehr's Count in *The Monster Squad* was very much the evil lead antagonist, if somewhat less horrific than in previous cinematic incarnations, in a film aimed at older children. The Japanese anime television film *Dracula, Sovereign of the Damned* directed by Akinori Nagaoka and Minoru Okazaki in 1980, a take on Marvel Comics interpretation of the character, does bear some comparison to Dekker's film in that it is not a parody, but diverges in that the cartoon Count is instead an anti-hero for older children who is capable of love, altruism and even heroism. He very much engendered sympathy for the vampire, unlike Regehr's more conventional and nostalgic villain who was more redolent, as his co-stars were, of the by now heavily commodified Universal Monsters.

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<sup>13</sup> Ferdy Mayne played Count Von Krolock in Roman Polanski's *The Fearless Vampire Killers* (1967) and first played a parodic but less avuncular Dracula in Freddie Francis' *The Vampire Happening* (1977).

Dracula's conflict with the monster squad in Dekker's film is arguably symbolic of the tension between the older generation he represents, the hedonistic baby boomers, and the more driven generation X, represented by the monster squad, who were born in the 1970's and grew up in the 1980's. Rosine Jozef Perelberg's psychoanalytical theories on Freudian narcissism and the oedipal complex have been applied with regards to the murdered (narcissistic) father and the dead father in reading this film. Regehr's Dracula who at times inhabits both these descriptors can be read as having such a relationship with his oppositional sublimated sons, the titular monster squad. Further to this, the film is then framed as resonant with the development of therapeutic education that began with generation X, with reference to the work of Kathryn Ecclestone and Dennis Hayes. It examines underlying contemporaneous psychoanalytical theory as to why there should be a growing cultural need for shielding from fear, just as that interest in Dracula and the cinematic character becomes decentered in that respect.

The 1990's brought perhaps the most iconoclastic reinvention of Stoker's text to enter the canon. This was Francis Ford Coppola's 1992 film *Bram Stoker's Dracula* with Gary Oldman in the titular role and Anthony Hopkins taking the antithetic part of Van Helsing adapted from the screenplay by James V. Hart. Coppola, as auteur, stated that he would like to do Dracula like a dark, passionate, erotic dream, a love story between Dracula and Mina, souls reaching out through a universe of horror and pathos (Coppola and Hart, 1992: 1-12). Such a statement certainly points to a subconscious rather than a conscious exchange with contemporaneous psychosocial tensions when considering this film as the denouement of the long 1980's cycle. Arguably Coppola accomplished this by producing a composite Dracula origin story that incorporated aspects of the Byronic romantic of Badham's film, Franco's rejuvenating elderly Count, and Dan Curtis' '*vampire Vlad the Impaler seeks to rekindle his lost love with his reincarnated bride*' narrative trope. Conceptualising the narrative as an origin story, an established staple plot device of the comic-book and film superhero genre, was iconoclastic in of itself. This was the first time that the inception of Dracula's vampirism had been explicitly explored in any filmic text. This trope would go on to pervade the canon from this point forward, being referenced in Lussier's *Dracula 2000*, Sommers' *Van Helsing*, and latterly in what could be read as just such a conventional superhero origin story in Shore's *Dracula Untold*. Vlad here was not depicted as a sociopathic despot, but rather a heroic warrior leader cast into vampirism by his own grief as he railed at a God who had allowed the suicide of the love of his life. Coppola's was arguably not the first cinematic Dracula capable of love or even romantic desire. That accolade belongs to Siodmak's Count. Curtis' and Badham's Draculas

returned that character trait to the cinematic foreground. Coppola's cinematic Dracula was perhaps the first to display altruism borne out of love, thus truly humanising the monster in the film's denouement. Sympathy for the vampire, such as that arguably inspired by Anne Rice's literary Louis or Le Fanu's Carmilla, had now been earned by Dracula, marking a turning point in the canon that would eventually culminate in the valorised superhero vampire of Gary Shore's *Dracula Untold*. This invited a preliminary reading of Coppola's film from a sympathetic psychoanalytical perspective by framing the narrative as codifying Freud's melancholia that would inform the psychohistoricist reading (Freud, 1917: 237-258).

The recurrent scenes of red corpuscles coursing through veins in Coppola's film again pathologised vampirism as a blood borne disease. Coppola's film was released at the beginning of the post-AIDS era in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As such it marks a fin-de-siècle for the long 1980's cycle of Dracula films, and Dracula as a cinematic character which can in turn be read as symptomatic of the fin-de-siècle at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Whilst resisting direct comparisons to Stoker's novel, the parallels that can be drawn with the Victorian fin-de-siècle can be argued to be salient in the psychohistoricist context in examining Dracula's obsolescence and the loss of fear for the character. Robin Wood (1983: 175-187) stated that we cannot purge Dracula of his connotations of evil that Victorian society had projected on to the sexuality he represents, and by which our contemporary notions of sexuality are still contaminated. Wood concluded that if the "return of the repressed" is to be welcomed then we must learn to represent it in forms other than that of an undead vampire-aristocrat (Ibid). This obsolescence as Wood describes arguably did not incept and conclude with Badham's Count. Rather it can be read as a process, commencing with the dandy narcissist of Hammer's latter Dracula cycle before finally concluding with Coppola's dandy warrior.

Dracula as the dandy aristocratic vampire, the cloaked narcissist archetype or the gothic romantic, really was obsolete. Western cinema would welcome the "return of the repressed" in other forms. Some of them would still be vampires. There were rebellious outsider cinematic vampire cults coming to the fore in the long 1980's, most notably those portrayed in Joel Scumacher's film *The Lost Boys*, and Kathryn Bigelow's seminal *Near Dark*, both released in 1987. The arch female vampire would be foregrounded in Tony Scott's 1983 film *The Hunger*, and Tommy Lee Wallace's 1988 *Fight Night Part 2* and would even descend from space in Tobe Hooper's 1985 *Lifeforce*. As a precursor to Joss Whedon's *Angel*, the first vampire superhero in the form of Farhad Mann's detective Nick Knight would come to television

screens in the 1989 pilot of the same name that would go on to become the 1992 television series *Forever Knight*. After the millennium, some of them would still be Dracula. Dracula's otherness and that of his vampire ilk was finally being accepted.

#### **4.1 The Return of Repressive Symbolism in John Badham's *Dracula* (1979)**

It is law student Lucy (Kate Nelligan) in Badham's film who is the capable, emancipated modern woman whilst Mina the frail ingénue is depicted as the daughter of Professor Van Helsing (Laurence Olivier). Lucy here is less invested in monogamy and is more sexualised and thus less resistant to Dracula's attentions. Her promiscuity in previous Dracula films is translated in Badham's film to her role as the empowered heroine. Lucy's aspiration to a traditionally male role in the diegetic context can also be read as the film's first allusion to her in Freudian terms as a phallic woman (Freud, 1961). Harker (Trevor Eve) arrives by car (locating the diegesis in the late Edwardian era) to meet Seward (Donald Pleasance) aboard the wreck of the *Demeter*. Harker is concerned with the cargo (the eponymous crates of earth). Seward is concerned with the crew of corpses. It is only this image by way of sublimation that aligns the otherwise conventionally attractive Byronic Dracula in this film with the atramentous aspect of his nature, the abjection of death (Kristeva, 2018: 67-74). From the Freudian perspective the use of covert symbolism as opposed to overt depiction is cogent with displacement, repression and the obfuscation of the undesirable in Badham's film (Madison, 1956: 75). Renfield transports the crates of Earth to Carfax abbey. Dracula's penetrative homoerotic bite of Renfield is sublimated and repressed by his animal guise as a bat as he takes possession of his slave. Dracula consummates his betrothal to Mina with his penetrating gaze and not his bite, as he claims ownership of his first bride of this film. This again represses sexuality in a meta-symbolic act that draws a scopophilic parallel with Browning's 1931 film. Lucy's inviting Dracula to dance reverses traditional gender roles in this film as she seeks (phallic) empowerment that perhaps only Dracula can offer (Freud, 1961). In some respects, she is reminiscent of Siodmak's Kay Caldwell. Where Kay presents as a manipulative femme fatale in the noir tradition, seeking power through using men, Lucy seeks this empowerment on her own terms, to gain equality with men. She is arguably the phallic woman read as feminist. To refer to Juliet Mitchell's comments on Jones, Lucy's femininity develops progressively from the promptings of an instinctual constitution (Mitchell, 1974: 131).

The film continues as Dracula enters Mina's window in a swirl of vapour. An off-camera wolf howl represents both Mina's demise and Dracula's climax in his metaphoric intercourse, again

a meta-symbolic repression of the sexual act. Lucy returns to the bed she shares with Mina. The narrative allusion that Lucy is caring for her friend is underscored by subtextual homoeroticism that in Freudian terms defines Mina's frailty as a neurosis and Lucy's latent masculinity (Ibid). Harker finalises property dealings at Carfax, once more substituting for Castle Dracula. Renfield is dismissed as a lunatic. His homoerotic 'taint' is once more conflated with a Freudian neurosis (Freud, 1922: 221-232). At Dracula's dinner with Lucy, they kiss passionately. Canonically this is the first time Dracula's betrothal to his jeopardised, final girl bride has been achieved by conventional romantic means. Lucy accepts Dracula's bite and they make love in silhouette and intercourse is thus sublimated by visual perspective. Lucy drinks his blood, consciously choosing vampirism as the liberating empowerment she seeks (Freud, 1961). Their symbolic marriage is consummated by an exchange of all body fluids. Van Helsing's staking of Mina is rendered all the more poignant by her speaking to her father in their native Dutch. Her overt pathology equates this with euthanasia, yet her transgressive bisexuality nevertheless can be read as not going unpunished by her own patriarch. The conclusion of the narrative opens by perpetuating this pathology model of vampirism with the transfusion of Harker's blood into Lucy. He reaffirms his own betrothal with his blood. As Harker visits Lucy in the asylum, she sprouts fangs, and attempts to bite him. Her phallic woman ideal is now arguably realised, but as Van Helsing forces her to her mattress with the cross, it is dismissed by patriarchy (Beechey, 1979: 66-82). Dracula then rescues Lucy. Their engagement at once conforms to and subverts Western patriarchal values. Finally, in the departing ship's hold, Van Helsing attempts to stake Dracula but is staked by him. Reciprocal homosexual intercourse between opposing legitimate and transgressive patriarchs is repressively symbolised.



**Figure 31:** Badham's Byronic Count

Harker winches Dracula into the sun's immolating rays as Van Helsing expires. Their repressed homosexuality ends in death as transgression is again punished or in controversial and by now rightly discredited Freudian terms in this context, cured. Dracula's demise in Badham's film evokes the Hammer cycle. He ages rapidly and dematerialises. His cloak flutters aloft, symbolising his essence survives. Lucy who is supposedly freed of vampiric taint, smiles coquettishly at this prospect. The normative heterosexual partnership and patriarchy alike are not entirely recuperated. The phallic woman is not 'cured'.

#### **4.2 The Superphallic Patriarch versus the Polyphallic Feminist**

Urbano (1998: 889-908) defines four representational strategies of the modern horror film. Firstly, the representation of the uncanny whereby Freud's concept of this can be applied to the film's antagonist. Secondly, the representation of the monster whereby the monster/monstrous antagonist may be the true object of both the (diegetic) protagonist's and spectator's gaze without it being at that point an actual and immediate source of threat. Thirdly, the mise-en-scene of violent physical assault which seeks to produce tension by foregrounding and problematising the importance of vision; and finally, the mise-en-scene of all hell breaking loose, characterised by metaphoric and literal visual and aural symbols of mass death and destruction. Badham's Dracula (as does his predecessors) can be seen to embody Urbano's first three representational strategies. The fourth is perhaps more applicable to Dracula films that are (notably) not tied in any way to Stoker's original narrative, where such genocidal conflagration is either threatened as in *The Satanic Rites of Dracula* or *The Monster Squad*, prevented as in *Van Helsing*, or actualised as in *Dracula Untold*.

Badham's Dracula is just as symbolic of hetero- or homoerotic lust as he is a predator or evil other. One possible reading of the implicit meaning of Badham's film is as a symbolised interrelation between sexual empowerment (Dracula) and the empowered woman (Lucy). In Freudian terms Lucy embodies a dysfunctional resolved feminine oedipal attitude (Greenberg and Fisher, 1980: 409-414). Lucy's deceased mother symbolises the object of oedipal jealousy as in Freud's analytical framework the mother produces the daughter sans penis. Vengeance is thus served in this respect. The object of infantile libidinal desire as symbolised by Dr Jack Seward is thus possessed rather than relinquished by the subject. In phallogocentric psychoanalysis, a background lacking maternal contact prevents resolution of oedipal jealousy and predisposes such a subject to developing the masculine traits epitomising Freud's phallic woman (Ibid). This is symbolised in Badham's film by Lucy's assisting Dr Seward within the

threatening confines of his lunatic asylum and her pursuit of what in the film's historical setting was a traditionally male vocation.

From the feminist psychoanalytical perspective Lucy equally symbolises the empowered woman whose independence and strength are borne out of triumph over adversity. Attaining empowerment i.e., parity of status in this context can be read as symbolic of achieving womanhood. This should not be taken to mean that the empowered woman is incapable of triadic object relations (Dervin, 1998: 451-470). In Badham's film Lucy is in a relationship with Jonathan Harker who is analogous to her father in status and intellect. Harker cannot give her that which she desires most, empowerment and equality. Harker can therefore be read as representing oppressive patriarchy. Dracula however can provide this. He usurps the paternal role by virtue of being a better provider and thus he can be read as representing feminine empowerment triumphant over patriarchy. From the phallogocentric psychoanalytical perspective this translates as the phallic woman utilising whichever male is most able to provide for her needs as a paternal analogue. From the feminist psychoanalytical counterpoint, it equally translates to the empowered woman seeks an equal partner. Lucy's being sans penis in this context symbolises object loss which is negated by Dracula's oral sadistic provision of a phallic construct, or to be more accurate, two of them, in the form of the fangs of the vampire. From the phallogocentric standpoint this arguably symbolises aberrant female empowerment via the introjection of masculine traits (Ibid). Lucy codifies a (poly) phallic woman who is now capable of penetrating and thus emasculating a chosen male. His vital fluid would then be taken by force and not gifted, rendering him impotent. Freud's feminine oedipal attitude could be read at this juncture as fully (albeit dysfunctionally) resolved as the (poly) phallic empowered woman attains womanhood (Powell, 1993; Katz, 2000).



**Figure 32:** The polyphallic woman



From the feminist psychoanalytical perspective, Lucy symbolises the need for women not to be defined by their relationships with men, couching feminine empowerment in the liberation of sexuality (Gottlieb, 1994: 465-480; Tylim, 1998: 281-290). Vampirism in Badham's film can be seen to codify a dyadic relation between vampiric pater familias and his conflated prey/bride/offspring. The triadic object is rendered superfluous (Yassa, 2000: 174-192). Referring to the narrative, Lucy emasculates Harker. Again, this symbolises both the (poly)phallic woman choosing masculine power, and the empowered sexually liberated feminist choosing the more equal partner and the better lover. With Harker as the less effectual male partner symbolising patriarchy, Lucy's polyphallic vampiric bite from the phallogocentric psychoanalytical viewpoint symbolises oedipal regressive fear of castration by vagina dentata. From the patriarchal male perspective this speaks to the dread of being rendered impotent by the monstrous female, phallic mother, and empowered woman (Blanton, 1947: 214-224). Her penetration of him can be read as the emasculation of patriarchy as it fractures phallogocentric supremacism. Harker's diegetic situation in this context now reads as the patriarchal defensive position in the face of feminism.

Harker then seeks to prevent Lucy's transformation into the polyphallic woman by Dracula. To do this the less effectual male must break the polyphallic woman's vagina dentata, symbolising the hymen, to render intercourse safe for him. This can only be done with an unbreakable rigid superphallus. Harker must codify a superphallic man i.e., a more effectual partner, to emasculate the dominant polyphallic woman, as symbolised by Lucy, before she can emasculate him (Bonomi, 1998: 29-49; Otero, 1996: 269-288). Patriarchy as codified by Harker now attempts to reassert its masculine dominance and assuage its collective castration anxiety by suppressing the empowered woman as the focus of that anxiety. From the feminist psychoanalytical counterpoint, this constitutes the very definition of patriarchal oppression (Grindstaff and McCaughey, 1998: 173-192). The polyphallic vagina dentata must be transferred to Lucy by Dracula virally via metaphoric penetrative sex act. This transference signifies feminine empowerment in this reading. Introjection of masculine traits can be read as empowering the Freudian phallic woman just as achieving womanhood empowers the nascent feminist. Harker representing patriarchy must block this transference to avoid emasculation. The symbolic unbreakable superphallus destined to do this by breaking the symbolic vagina dentata is the all-penetrating stake or equivocal object. In the film's narrative resolution Harker seeks to penetrate Dracula and so simultaneously break Lucy's fangs, which can be read as

conflated emasculation. Patriarchy can thus be read in this film as seeking to disempower the independent woman read as phallic woman or proto-feminist.

Harker codifies an ineffectual patriarchy that proves unable to do this. The stronger superphallic male, the dying Van Helsing, penetrates Dracula with a cogently stronger superphallus in the form of an iron winch hook. Dracula is thus emasculated and Lucy's polyphallic vagina dentata are broken in this same act before she can fully claim ownership of them. Harker reclaims ownership of his fiancée, her polyphallic threat to his masculinity now neutralised, and she is safe to once more to accept his phallus (Bonomi, 1998: Otero, 1996). At first glance this narrative conclusion could be argued to symbolise patriarchal victory over the phallic woman as the independent feminist. This victory is problematised by Dracula's staking of Van Helsing. Harker and Van Helsing present as ineffectual males. There is no real victory for patriarchy here. Lucy is still an embodiment of strength, ambition, drive, and determination. These traits remain symbolic of the phallic woman in phallogocentric psychoanalytic terms, and of the independent woman from the feminist counterpoint (Gabbard and Gabbard, 1993: 421-439). In sum, Badham's 1979 *Dracula* can be read from a purely psychoanalytic standpoint as patriarchy intrinsically fearing emasculation by women read as Freudian phallic women or independent feminists and thus seeking to disempower and emasculate the independent woman to prevent this (Bak, 1968: 15-36).

#### **4.3 The Ego State of Vampirised Feminism at the Beginning of the Long 1980's**

Psychoanalysis and feminism, as a therapeutic discipline and a political movement respectively, had by this time long been in tension due to the core patriarchal Freudian stance toward female development and sexuality conflicting with the core ethos of feminist parity and empowerment. This tension during the latter 1970's was still very much in evidence but could be argued to have been dissipating as feminism began to inform psychoanalysis. Juliet Mitchell's (1974) rejection of (Freudian) psychoanalysis as being fundamentally fatal for feminism, resonated with Richard Wollheim's position on the tension between feminism and psychoanalysis. He remarked that the singular failure of development of 20<sup>th</sup> century feminism was that it lacked a psychological dimension and that necessary supplementation would come from psychoanalytic theory (Mitchell, 1974: 407-417; Wollheim, 1975: 61). At the conclusion of the decade, Nancy Chodorow argued that gender as opposed to sex is ultimately psychologically created in a relational context, and that psychoanalysis is most effective when it is read as stressing the relational ego, as it would be by necessity in psychohistoricist readings

(Chodorow, 1979: 51-69). Freudian psychoanalysis conflated within the psychohistoricist perspective and used as a paradigmatic tool for the analysis of film, can thus be argued as agreeing with Mitchell, Wollheim, and Chodorow in this context. Badham's *Dracula* read within this framework resonates with the rise of the sexually liberated feminist as psychoanalysis came to be viewed from such feminist quarters as an assayer of patriarchy rather than an agent of it. Badham's Lucy arguably embodies the construction of feminist sexual difference as she becomes more empowered throughout the text. Her character is a deconstructionist challenge to patriarchy that can be read from a psychoanalytical standpoint yet still remain in tension with its patriarchal etymology, as just such an essay.

Lucy's vampirism codifying the introjection of masculine ideals from a phallogocentric or patriarchal psychoanalytical perspective can also be read as equating to an ego state (Watkins, 1976: 471-489). Ego state theory was originated by Paul Federn, a US Freudian psychoanalyst (Federn, 1977: 25-60). He postulated two distinct forms of mental energy, object cathexis and ego cathexis. Object cathexis equated to Freud's libido, mental energy which when invested in the perception of others, which activated and emphasised the object in question. Ego cathexis by contrast was defined as a self-energy, the content of which is experienced when it is invested in the subject's own mind or body (Watkins, 1976: 471-489; Federn, 1976: 25-60). Federn posited that an ego state constituted a cluster of experiential and behavioural items bound by commonality and separated from other such ego states by a permeable boundary but remain able to communicate with one another (Ibid). Some constituent items can overlap ego states and belong to more than one like the overlapping sets in a Venn diagram. An ego state is activated with all constituent items under a common jurisdiction, and thus made present self when it is invested with ego cathexis (Ibid). Lucy's persona pre-*Dracula* symbolises nascent feminism in the context of such an ego state. This ego state finds its existence intolerable, so it creates introject within its psyche. This introject is an internalised image of that which the psyche is influenced by and what it represents. *Dracula* represents sexual liberation, empowerment, and the acceptance of pleasure for its own sake to nascent feminism symbolised by Lucy. When the suffering becomes intolerable and the threat of death absolute as a result, the self then abdicates in a desperate act of self-preservation to this introject as ego cathexis is withdrawn from the former and invested in the latter. A new self as ego state is formed from this introject, one which identifies with the external influence and is separated from the (buried, inert) old self by an impermeable barrier preventing communication between them (Ibid). *Dracula*'s destruction in the denouement of Badham's film, from the phallogocentric perspective

conceivably symbolises the nascent feminist's recuperation to the patriarchal sociocultural hegemony they had ultimately rejected. Lucy read as embodying feminism in the late 1970's remained empowered and therefore able to seek and take ownership of sexual pleasure.

This point in Badham's narrative then can be read as symbolic of the nexus whereby feminism informed psychoanalysis. Albeit in tension, it can be read as being in juxtaposition to feminism rather than in total opposition to it, as in Juliet Mitchell's orthodox defence of this viewpoint (Mitchell, 1974; 285-297). The crux of Mitchell's argument is outlined as she quotes Freud's 'A Case of Paranoia Running Counter to the Psychoanalytic Theory of the Disease'. The quote begins:

When a mother hinders or arrests a daughter's sexual activity, she is fulfilling normal functions whose lines are laid down by events in childhood, which has powerful unconscious motives, and has received the sanction of society (Freud, 1939: 130 – See Ferenczi, 1939).

Referring here to the resolution of the feminine oedipal attitude, Freud can be argued to acknowledge that psychoanalysis is in some respects an analysis of the patriarchal society (couched in biological determinism) within which it was incepted as a therapeutic discipline. The quote continues:

It is the daughter's business to emancipate herself from this influence, and to decide for herself on broad and rational grounds what her share of enjoyment or denial of sexual pleasure shall be (Freud, 1939: 130 - Ibid).

Mitchell rightly argues that Freud accepts that when a girl attains womanhood, she also attains empowerment, identity and agency if she chooses to do so. This assertion also applies to readings of other more overtly female vampire centred filmic texts of the long 1980's, perhaps most notably Michael Almareyda's 1994 *Nadja*. The titular character portrayed by Elina Lowensohn, is an empowered female vampire, who is resurrected from her own execution as a living introjection overtaking the mind of another woman, transplanted there via a blood transfusion. She therefore at once (most saliently here) also embodies vampirism as (blood borne) liberation and empowerment, then mirrors the continuity of Dracula's essence intimated by Badham, and even portends Dracula's consumption of consciousness in Gatiss and Moffat's 2020 *Dracula* television miniseries. Mitchell's assertion thus resonates with the core ethos of

the feminist movement as it developed during the seventies into the long eighties (Mitchell, 1974: 285-297). From this feminist psychoanalytical perspective, nascent feminism as symbolised by Lucy in Badham's film does not introject masculinity, but rather agency, sexual liberation and the freedom to seek pleasure unconditionally. This begs the question is there a psychoanalytical case for introjection and ego state formation at a cultural level? This depends on an acceptance of the idea of a collective in the same circumstances assimilating the same introject for the same reasons. In any case the new ego state theorised in this framework arguably cannot be regarded as a pathological one. Badham's *Dracula* when read from a feminist psychoanalytical perspective then, does not represent masculinity but rather can be read as representing feminine empowerment and an awakening of womanhood. Harker's attempts to suppress Lucy's sexual empowerment in taking her back from Dracula, can now be read as emblematic of the tension between feminised psychoanalysis and patriarchy as the seventies ebbed into the eighties. Harker doesn't get back his patriarchal fantasy of Lucy.

According to Sharon Mayes' 1979 study on women in authority, such (potential) women leaders as symbolised by Lucy, are interpreted through the universal experience of the family and placed in some aspect of the mother role (Mayes, 1979: 556-568). In 1979, the status of women in the family and the status of the family in society indicated that this was still the home base for images of female power and authority. If the family was not the actual context for interaction it was seen as becoming a patriarchal fantasised context, with female authority being viewed in this light (Ibid). Lucy's empowerment by Dracula at Badham's narrative conclusion then also symbolises the rupture of the illusory patriarchal fantasised imago of woman from the phallogocentric psychoanalytic perspective as the seventies drew to a close.

This changing role of the woman from a contemporaneous feminist psychoanalytical perspective was explored further by Mimi Grand-Jean Crowell who stated that for a woman to break the emotional link to the depressed, passive, feminine image of her mother (and her mother's mother, etc.) it would entail the rejection of the good aspects of the mother along with the bad (Crowell, 1981: 221-235). She reported that much of the feminist literature of that time implied that past relationships to the traditional, role determined mother object would have to be obliterated if women are to be liberated. Crowell saw a role for psychotherapy as helping women learn to hate their mothers (with the benefit of hindsight her meaning here appears to be what their mothers stood for in terms of the passive role in a patriarchal society), enabling them to grow as individuals (Ibid). She went on to imply that the key is resolving the underlying

resistances that continually suppress the release of aggressive feelings thus enabling women to experience all feelings more freely and to offer love without the obstructions of a narcissistic defence. Crowell viewed the underlying problem, as being that libido was bound up in holding aggression in check. These defences that supposedly protect the objects of love from the impulse to hate, from Crowell's viewpoint, thus also limited the ability to love. She summarised that crucial outcome of psychoanalysis for women who are bound to passivity, self-attack and poor self-image that they may be able to learn how to love (Ibid). By a point of abstraction this conclusion is again applicable to nascent feminism being empowered to take unconditional sexual pleasure, again resonating with Badham's narrative conclusion.

The need for this empowerment at that time was explored by Prado and Galen. Prado stated that different status was still assigned according to sexually defined roles, with women's role in the family still undervalued, leading in the long run to internal confusion and conflict (Prado, 1976: 79-84). She pointed out that women (of the mid to late seventies) were not allowed the same possibilities of choice as men, and consequently they regarded many acts as obligations. She outlined that biological determinism did not provide a sufficient basis for assigning such divergent status and possibilities to men and women, pointing out that the sexual role is defined at the time that the girl has to change her love object. This according to Prado added further feelings of insecurity to the already inferior evaluation of the girl's social role. She posited that the change in the love object was often further complicated in modern life by the estrangement of the father who was immersed in the business world and subjected to his own range of needs (Ibid). She theorised that during this period the father often could not assist his daughter in achieving a normal separation from the mother by providing her with the necessary bonds of affection; therefore, she reasoned both sexes enter the phallic phase without the requisite object security and lacking instinctive pleasures. Prado concluded that women could attempt to compensate for this lack in their relationship with the father but would often have a poor identification with the mother as well, and that this was due to the fact that during this period they had seen the advantages of being male, namely his greater acceptance by both the mother and society (Ibid).

Galen's psychoanalytic viewpoint (1979) effectively concurred, suggesting that superego formation for a woman is a complex process which encompassed two conflicting trends, one being the internalisation of cultural values from the father and the other being the internalisation of values from the mother (Galen, 1979: 173-186). Galen reasoned that in a

patriarchal culture, whilst it could be assumed that there would be concordance between these sets of values with the father and mother representing the male viewpoint, in actuality the mother represents her version of prevailing patriarchal attitudes and in doing so may create in her daughter a superego so harsh and relentless that the male superego appears mild and undemanding by comparison. Galen concluded that what the mother communicated were the realities of a culture of oppression blended with her own sense of disappointment and frustration. The reactive need to rise above oppression at the core of the feminist movement was thus psychoanalysed from the feminist perspective (Ibid). In this reading of Badham's *Dracula*, the titular vampire then ultimately symbolises transformative feminine empowerment. Lucy has been discussed as symbolising the empowered nascent feminism of the late seventies. In Badham's narrative Harker's position can now be read as codifying psychoanalysis from a meta-analytic standpoint, representing transformed patriarchal culture. In the film's conclusion he must adapt to his empowered fiancée, as (patriarchal) society had to adapt to the empowered woman in order to move forward.

A similar reading is arguably germane to another seminal vampire film of the long 1980's, Tony Scott's *The Hunger* (USA, 1983). Here Susan Sarandon's character is similarly empowered by the attentions of Catherine Deneuve's bisexual arch-vampire. Sarandon's Sarah, a medical doctor, ultimately consolidates her authority by taking over her mentor's role, epitomising the successful progressive feminist victorious in the face of patriarchal oppression. What was required (and arguably still is), was perhaps best summarised by Stern's paper of the time (aptly) on feminism and cinema exchanges. She opined that an imperative should be instituted that advocated heterogeneity in terms of men and women working together whilst it simultaneously secures sexual difference. This heterogeneity would be threatened by a subversion of that difference that challenged social categories (Stern, 1979: 89-106). Badham's sexually liberated lawyer when read as embodying nascent feminism arguably epitomises Lesley Stern's outlook in this context.

Badham's *Dracula* marked the point in the *Dracula* film canon where Dracula as *other* was not just accepted as a means to an end (as per *Son of Dracula*) but accepted in his entirety. His very otherness was romanticised as an exotic, empowering alternative to the patriarchal mainstream that unlike Hammer's *Dracula* was not co-opted or oppressed by that mainstream. In his final confrontation with patriarchy, Badham's *Dracula* still flew above them. In this sense Badham's Byronic *Dracula* had more in common with his literary contemporary, Anne Rice's vampire

Lestat, than with his cinematic forebears. Perhaps spectators were finally choosing to identify with the vampire that was once feared, replacing that fear with the allure of the taboo. From a synchronistic psychohistorical perspective this again arguably resonates with some of the subcultural shifts of the time (feminism aside) not least that associated with the birth of gothic music epitomised by Bauhaus aptly vampiric 1979 song *Bela Lugosi's Dead* (Gunn, 1999: 31-50). As the 1980's progressed it could be argued that the fear of Dracula as a cinematic character would be lost entirely.

#### **4.4 Symbolising the Monstrous Feminine in *The Monster Squad's* Narrative**

Fred Dekker's 1987 film opens by establishing the premise that once a century an incantation read by a virgin will trigger a magic amulet to open a portal to limbo that will consume all things monstrous. In psychoanalytical terms this symbolises defloration and the loss of virginity, negating the twin taboos of menstrual blood and virginity and defeating Freud's monstrous repressed female by a forced acceptance of the sexual act (Freud, 1955: 145-172). This theme pervades the first part of the film from Mrs. Carlson the science teacher who punishes the titular monster squad's freedom of expression to Sean's mother Emily (Mary Ellen Trainor) challenging the (patriarchal) will of her police officer husband, Sean's father Del (Stephen Macht), by demanding he prioritise time with her over his job. She demands compliance or threatens divorce thus threatening denial of intercourse. Dracula (Duncan Regehr) in Universal inspired evening dress travels from his homeland in a cargo plane, a contemporary Demeter, to assemble the monsters of this resurgent monster rally, (Universal's) Wolfman, Frankenstein's monster, the creature from the black lagoon, and the mummy, in order to take possession of the amulet before the critical centennial. The aggregate monsters can be read in this context as symbolic of the monstrous feminine (also codified by Emily) in seeking to perpetuate that monstrosity by rejecting patriarchy (also codified by Del) by denial of coitus in preventing the opening of the (vaginal) portal (Creed, 1993: 139-167). Sean (Andre Gower), the leader of the monster squad of adolescent boys, Patrick (Robby Kiger), Horace (Brent Chalem), Eugene (Michael Faustion) and the slightly older Rudy (Ryan Lambert) realises the threat. He leads them to identify with Del, thus codifying a resolution of the Freudian oedipal conflict (Freud, 1924: 419). The monster squad then galvanises to counter the threat.

The monster squad forms an allegiance with their elderly German neighbour to translate the incantation to open the portal. Frankenstein's monster aids them thus representing repressed



female sexuality as it corrupts and weakens the monstrous feminine. The adolescent male monster squad now symbolises nascent patriarchy (Beechey, 1979: 66-82). If they do not defeat the monstrous feminine by taking possession of the amulet and having a virgin read the incantation and open her portal (to all-consuming intercourse), they will be emasculated and metaphorically castrated by it, mirroring the threat of marital dissolution and the same castrating emasculation of Sean's father imposed by his mother (Freud, 1955: 145-172). The patriarchal monster squad confronts the aggregate monstrous feminine of Dracula and his cohorts. Frankenstein's monster impales Dracula on a phallic railing, codifying female sexuality being lifted from repression to conscious awareness by a penetrative act (Freud, 1940: 152-156). Sean's younger sister is the virgin who opens the portal with the help of the film's wise old German neighbour. The castrating, emasculating threat of the monstrous feminine is consumed as the portal accepts intercourse with patriarchy. The dissolution of this threat is mirrored by the acceptance of Del by Emily, lifting that same threat for him and thus recuperating the patriarchal nuclear family unit as the film concludes (Creed, 1993: 139-167).

#### **4.5 An Oedipal Voyage around Three Fathers**

The oedipal complex according to Freud typically occurs in the phallic phase (from three years of age) and is usually resolved in early childhood (at around the age of five years) as the child realises that it results in the threat of castration no matter which course of action he chooses to pursue. If he threatens his (actual/real) father, he will be defeated as his father is stronger and can satisfy the mother's sexual needs whilst if he wants to be near his mother, he must repress his incestuous desire for her and accept metaphoric emasculation. The child thus rejects oedipal attachments and enters the latency period which lasts until puberty (Freud, 1924: 419-424). In Freud's tripartite construct of the human psyche, the oedipal complex is replaced during this period by the superego, incorporating the ego ideal which is effectively the morality construct of the child. The superego counters the impulsivity and proclivity to unbridled hedonism of the id and acts as an introjected parental (paternal) authority which continues to forbid incest. The ego mediates between these opposing constructs according to Freud's reality principle, delaying the narcissistic demands for instant gratification by the id, and moderating the punitive authoritarianism and denial proscribed by the superego, to allow satisfaction to be achieved in a socioculturally acceptable manner (Ibid). Sean's narrative trajectory potentially symbolises a resolution to the oedipal complex that is complicated, problematised, and fractured by interaction with three aspects of the father within Freud's framework as meta-analysed by Rosine Jozef Perelberg in her book 'Murdered Father, Dead Father, Revisiting the Oedipus

complex' (2015: 11-36). Police detective Del for obvious reasons can be seen to codify the real or biological father. The son must resolve his oedipal struggle in order to identify with the father according to Freud. In Dekker's film, Sean faces the prospect of literally having his mother to himself in light of his parents' troubled marriage. This particular narrative element thus represents an oedipal resolution fractured by the absent father. Secondly there is the narcissistic, tyrannical father, the possessor of all women, as outlined in Freud's 'Totem and Taboo' (Freud, 1913: 1-91). In Freud's text, the primitive sons of this father join forces to murder him in order for them to possess all women including their mothers and sisters and take his place. The sons in their remorse at their combined act of patricide, renounce their wish to possess all women, most notably their mothers and sisters, thus renouncing incest. For Freud, this is the origin of society and culture, underlying the need for successful oedipal resolution (Ibid). In Dekker's film (as in some others, notably those closely adapting Stoker, and *The Satanic Rites of Dracula*), Dracula is arguably symbolic of this narcissistic, tyrannical father who seeks to possess all women. Firstly, he holds three women captives in his closet. He literally takes possession of them in the consummative, penetrative act of biting them. Secondly, he desires to rule the world in darkness by taking possession of the talismanic amulet, allowing him to possess all women. Sean's struggle to defeat Dracula and prevent him from ruling the world in eternal darkness can therefore also be read as a metaphor for the son's oedipal struggle to murder the narcissistic father, and so renounce incestuous desire for the mother to preserve society and culture. To heal the resultant oedipal schism requires the son to accept the normative real father and reject the otherness of his narcissistic father. This is potentially codified by Sean's accepting Del and rejecting Dracula (Ibid).

In Freud's 'Totem and Taboo' as read by Perelberg, there is a third and final aspect to the father, the dead father. When the narcissistic father is murdered, he becomes the dead father, constituting the symbolic order derived from the resultant renouncement of incestuous desire (Perelberg, 2015: 11-36). In *The Monster Squad*, the dead father who constitutes this symbolic order, codifying goodness and morality, can be symbolised by Dr Abraham Van Helsing. Van Helsing is represented in the film by Sean's German neighbour's interpretation of his journal instructing Sean on how to defeat Dracula. To obey the law of the symbolic order the narcissistic father cannot be allowed to usurp the dead father. In the conclusion of Dekker's film Sean fights alongside his real father to defeat Dracula. This narrative resolution finally codifies defeat of the narcissistic father and identification with the real father upon the instructions of the dead father (Ibid). Dracula is imprisoned in the void beyond the portal,

trapping him in limbo. This represents the repression of the narcissistic father thereby saving culture and society from eternal horror. Oedipal resolution for the son in this context can only be consolidated by the renouncing of incestuous desire toward the mother. This is arguably codified by the reconstitution of Sean's family. However, this resolution remains problematised if there is a resurrection clause for the narcissistic father. Although staked by Frankenstein's monster, there is no dissolution of Dracula in this film. This nuance can be read as a repression to the subconscious with the potential to be resurrected to the conscious mind. Looking more deeply, the oedipal resolution symbolised by *The Monster Squad* may yet be read as pathological.

To draw upon Zelda G Knight's work on the subject, the fractured resolution of an oedipal complex constitutes an idealisation experience. The ideal parental imago of the real father is internalised, becoming part of the self-structure (Knight, 2006: 1189-1206). In this way the role of the other is to assist in the development of the infant's sense of self-esteem and self-worth. Moreover, self-objects in terms of narcissism imply the fusion of the self and the ideal object (the idealised parental imago) to form an internalised ideal self. The superego may therefore be flawed if it is a product of a flawed oedipal resolution. The parents would thus be regarded as self-objects, meaning that their function is to support the child's development until said child is capable of providing their own sense of self-esteem (Ibid). This can be codified by Sean wanting his family back together only because he needed his support network. Further to this the desire to uphold the symbolic law of the dead father whilst identifying with the real father and acting in a socioculturally acceptable, moral, and even heroic manner in Knight's framework can be argued to meet a repressed need for narcissistic glorification (Ibid). This narcissistic aspect of oedipal resolution can be symbolised in Dekker's film by taking just such an alternate view of Sean's defeat of the symbolic narcissistic father, Dracula. To underscore this view, narcissists are often the product of a domineering, controlling, punitive and rejecting mother and an absent father. The parental figures of this film and Sean are again, arguably symbolic. The impact of such dysfunctional object relation perpetuates a need for grandiosity. Sean as leader of the monster squad symbolises this by taking all the credit for said defeat with the army general. Finally, repressed narcissism can manifest as (unconsciously surfacing) behaviour mirroring the authority figure (Ibid). This is symbolised in Dekker's' film by Sean mirroring Del via his autocratic approach to the leadership of *The Monster Squad* typified by his passive aggressive exchanges with both them, and his younger sister.

The defeat of Dracula ostensibly by a child arguably marks the point when the fear of Dracula as a cinematic character was finally lost. The psychohistoricist connotations of this loss of fear will be examined next, but a point worth noting at this juncture is that Duncan Regehr's characterisation of the Count harks back to the Universal and Hammer film cycles. The loss of fear occurs after the divergence from this characterisation exhibited by Badham's romanticised and accepted other.



**Figure 33:** Narcissistic 'father and son'

#### **4.6 Therapy Culture for Dracula's Diminished Self? No Fear for Generation X**

To elaborate further on the loss of fear for the cinematic character of Dracula represented by Fred Dekker's *The Monster Squad*, an exploration of the film's resonance with the rise of therapy culture and the diminished self is offered here. Drawing upon the research of Ecclestone and Hayes, the inception of therapy culture began in the mid-sixties. The nascent Western therapy culture of the time represented a transition from religion as the underlying existential ethos to a need for an understanding for the inner life (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2019: 122-145). According to Ecclestone and Hayes (2019: 124), Rieff pointed to Freud's influence on (Western) culture and the nature of humanity as key to this transition. Philip Rieff argued that Freud used analysis to free people from their enslavement to the demands of an external, self-denying morality and to reconcile themselves to a tension between that and their self-interest. The self-renunciatory character of a cultural personality from earlier (religious) epochs was replaced by one whose self-interest dominated and who sought self-realisation rather than external goals (Rieff, 1987: 244). The result, according to Ecclestone and Hayes' reading of Rieff was that a sense of well-being became the endpoint rather than the by-product of striving

for a greater communal end. In the psychoanalytic framework of the time (building upon and diverging from Freud's theories), part of that sense of well-being was couched in a perceived need for a freedom from fear (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009: 122-145). One pertinent psychoanalytical exemplar epitomising this perceived need is Sappenfeld's critique of Freud's signal theory. Sappenfeld objected to Freud's conception of anxiety as free-floating fear, which is a motivational state involving limited expectations concerning the quality of behaviour (some form of escape or avoidance) that is likely to bring relief (Sappenfeld, 1965: 266-270). He argued that in other contexts, anxiety is frequently said to be an undifferentiated tension state involving no such limited behavioural expectations so that, under the influence of anxiety, an individual will perceive any and all behavioural possibilities as equally probable or improbable methods for tension reduction. Sappenfeld posited an alternative adaptive conception of anxiety and its relation to repression whereby anxiety was viewed as a consequence rather than as a cause of repression, and therefore can be considered to serve an adaptive function for solving conflicts (he conceded that anxiety was created as a by-product of this conflict resolution) (Ibid).

The loss of fear for Dracula as a cinematic character can be argued to have begun to really take hold as the beginnings of therapy culture coincided with the birth of generation X. The name Generation X was borrowed from the 1991 Douglas Coupland novel entitled 'Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture' and refers to the generation born after the baby boomers from 1963 to 1981. This generation has been characterised as cynical, pessimistic, less idealistic, and less inclined to value tradition than the previous baby boomers and represented a demographic with greater access to education moving into a weakened economy with fewer prospects (Kupperschmidt, 1998: 36-43; Reisenwitz and Iyer, 2009: 91-103). In purely historicist terms, the cogent shifts in the horror film genre, particularly in US films, can be read as resonant. The seventies saw the dawn of edgier, confrontational narratives intent on shocking their audiences, epitomised by slasher films such as Tobe Hooper's *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974), and a move away from the neo-Victorian gothic diegesis inhabited by the now romanticised but still archetypal cinematic Count Dracula such as in Badham's film. As the seventies ebbed into the eighties, it was Generation X that can be regarded as the first to truly embrace therapy culture as defined by Ecclestone and Hayes. To move forward to psychohistoricist parallels with Dekker's narrative, Ecclestone and Hayes (2009: 124) refer to Christopher Lasch's 1979 'The Culture of Narcissism' which affirmed that:

The contemporary climate is therapeutic, not religious; people today hunger not for personal salvation, let alone for the restoration of an earlier golden age, but for the feeling, the momentary illusion, of personal well-being, health and psychic security (Lasch, 1991: 7).

Therapeutic culture at the dawn of the eighties can be viewed as an introspective, narcissistic mindset, where the individual's need to protect him or herself from negativity including experiencing fear as anything other than catharsis, was becoming pervasive. Dekker's film can conceivably be read as representative of this growing avoidance of fear within Western therapy culture during the mid-eighties by framing its symptomatic meaning in De Vries and Miller's contemporaneous psychoanalytical theories on group fantasies and organisational functioning, which drew upon the work of Freud, Bion, and Bales. Freud postulated that a group is extraordinarily credulous and open to influence, has no critical faculty, and the improbable does not exist for it. He theorised that the group thinks in images which call another up by association and whose agreement with reality is never checked by any reasonable agency. Further to this, Freud remarked that the feelings of a group are simple and exaggerated and that it knows neither doubt nor uncertainty (Freud, 1922: 90-100). Wilfred Bion in turn postulates the group as the pool to which the anonymous contributions (of wishes, thoughts, opinions and emotions) are made, and through which the impulses and desires implicit in these contributions are gratified. Bion stated that any contribution to this group mentality must enlist the support of or be in conformity with the other anonymous contributions of the group (Bion, 2003 ed.: 29-41). Finally Bales charts the development of a group fantasy as follows. Elements are selected for more extended discussion. Accidents are then taken advantage for the creation of symbolic meaning. Lastly the selected elements and chance combinations are elaborated cooperatively as an interpersonal process with the qualities of a chain reaction (Bales, 1970: 140-150). De Vries et al (1986: 266-279) posited a group typology synthesised from these frameworks, *fight-flight*, *dependency*, and *pairing*.

The monster squad and the monsters can in this context be read as fight-flight groups. For the fight-flight group, the overarching group fantasy is that there is an enemy against one whom has to defend or from whom one has to escape. The parallel between the monster squad's need to defeat Dracula and his cohort of monsters is an obvious one. Fight-flight cultures according to De Vries et al can be recognised by their resort to primitive defences to manage anxiety (i.e., avoid fear), such as splitting and projection (Ibid). The monster squad arguably codify this by

thinking of themselves as an extreme of good with Dracula and his monsters symbolising their perceived antithesis.

Splitting however can be ruptured and this is represented by the expression of good in Frankenstein's monster. Sean and Dracula potentially symbolise the opposing leaders of similar fight-flight groups, challenging one another in a narcissistic dynamic. Such group leaders must exemplify valour, recognise the enemy and mobilise for flight or attack, whilst engendering a group culture of anger, hate, and suspicion. In seeking to avoid fear, paradoxically, it predominates within such a mindset (Ibid). Opposing introjections (we protect our own from oppression) and projections (the human world denies us darkness, power and agency, so is bad) can thus be recognised in Dekker's film. The fight-flight group view of the environment as dangerous is reflected by the monster squad's seeking out dangerous environments in a self-fulfilling prophecy. The monster squad and the monsters further conform to De Vries et al's typology by symbolising the projection of splitting on to their world. They separate it and the people (or monsters) they encounter into good and bad in simplistic binary opposition (Ibid).

Such binary opposition and associated splitting are symbolised in Dekker's film in several instances. The picture of marital discord for Sean's parents for example paints Del as good and Emily as bad until Emily renounces her viewpoint, complying with Sean's need for provision by his parents. Nuanced shades of grey are not overtly acknowledged in this outcome. Frankenstein's monster, likewise, becomes good and rejects bad, his behaviour does not conform to a more humanistic, or mimetic, spectrum. He acts in accordance with the groups' needs delineating good, whilst the monsters oppose those needs i.e., bad. In such a split good is introjected and bad is projected, maintaining primitive defence against anxiety and thus fear. This is also codified by the monster squad's interaction with their German neighbour. He is initially projected upon as bad for not being perceived to conform outwardly to the groups' value base but becomes introjected, i.e., part of the monster squad, when this misperception is discovered, and he is seen as useful to them. Finally, fight-flight groups were regarded in this framework as being in a state of denial, lacking self-reflectivity and insight, projecting and externalising hostile impulses on to the other instead of acknowledging their own faults (Ibid). This is symbolised by the monster squad attacking the monsters and Dracula and his cohorts' reaction to the threat in an escalating exchange of strike and counter-strike in a battle for supremacy.

For Dracula and the monster squad, their fear of each other and their respective desires not to have to fear are neutralised by conflict resolution at the denouement of the film. They symbolise groups that have sought to remove their fear and attained this. This draws further parallels with Ecclestone and Hayes' exploration of the rise of therapy culture (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009: 122-145). They draw upon the work of Furedi (2004: 106-162) and Lasch (1991: 7) to conceive that individuals make sense of their experiences through reflection on their individual circumstances and in line with expectation through prevailing cultural norms. They argue that the prevailing cultural norms have progressed from the eighties to a point where now therapy has ceased to be a clinical intervention, and become an instrument for the management of subjectivity, in effect, a cultural norm.

The end result within this conflated analytical framework can be posited as a widening culture of self-imposed litigious victimhood, where De Vries et al's fight-flight group is a fight-flight culture populated by the human of the diminished self, who insulate themselves from fear by shunning agency, resilience and ownership in favour of projection on to the other (De Vries et al, 1986: 266-279). For Ecclestone and Hayes, Freud's adaptive repressed notion of the self, shifts to the self-actualising narcissistic self of the eighties and it is this shift that is arguably codified throughout Dekker's film (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009: 122-145). It is however, the climax of the film that arguably parallels their posited shift from the narcissistic self to the concept of the diminished self (Ibid). In this shift, Dracula and his monstrous cohort are not read as the object of fear but the object of blame for what was going awry. These children were never really depicted as afraid. For the human of the diminished self, the other is no longer an object of fear, but it is an object of blame. To be seen to defeat this blame object invites valorisation, rather than derogation of exploitative behaviour. This is symbolised by Dracula's defeat by the monster squad who are then valorised by authority, represented by Sean's parents and the US military. Dracula in Dekker's film arguably codifies an equally diminished self. He does not look for fault in his own decisions but projects the fault for his thwarted plans onto a group of children. The rise of the diminished self, incepted in the sixties and developing through the eighties was the time that an avoidance of fear, with its simultaneous rejection of agency, in tension with feminist ideology, may well have contributed to the loss of fear of Dracula as a cinematic character (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009: 122-145). This insulation from and eventual loss of fear of the cinematic monster at a wider Western cultural level was exemplified by the concurrent 'video nasty' phenomenon in the UK. Whilst arguably less of a moral panic in the USA, the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) raised similar



concerns regarding the rise of the home video market. Sean S Cunningham's *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>* (USA, 1980) and David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* (USA, 1983) were two notable targets (Benson, 2013). Such films were reflective of the horror film genre seeking a different source of terror in new cinematic conventions couched in the gore and dismemberment of body horror (Brophy, 1986). The cloaked cinematic archetype of the vampire epitomised by Regehr's Count Dracula as well as being no longer fearful was now completely obsolete as a result.



**Figure 34:** Opposing fight-flight groups

The introduction of the UK Video Recordings Act 1984 imposed a stricter code of censorship on videos (VHS tapes for rental or purchase) than was required for cinema release. At least 72 such 'nasty' films ended up being banned on VHS, falling within the scope of this legislation (imdb.com, 2016). Due to a legislative error discovered in August 2009, the Video Recordings Act 1984 was repealed and re-enacted without change by the Video Recordings Act 2010. The majority of these films (e.g., Peter Newman's *Absurd*, 1981; Jess Franco's *Bloody Moon*, again 1981) either are or have been readily available on the home media market or more recently via streaming sites for some time (Ibid). Although films released for the home video market in the USA were subject to the MPAA ratings system of the time, the banning of 'video nasties' was not implemented as it was in the UK. What was once termed a cultural panic now can be seen to represent loss of fear, in that these titles became more sought after by viewers (Kendrick,

2004: 153-172). This is further evidenced by the fact that any given episode of AMC's recent television series *The Walking Dead* (2010-) is more violent and horrific in terms of depicted human body horror than many of the banned 'video nasties' but has never been the subject of such restriction. It is conceded however, that in terms of purely existential horror, the real animal deaths depicted in films such as Ruggero Deodato's *Cannibal Holocaust* (Italy, 1980), can be argued to be more fundamentally abject (Petley, 2005: 173). Returning to the Count, Dracula would not remain blamed for long. He was about to be romanticised once more and this time there truly would be sympathy for the vampire.

#### **4.7 Blood Sacrifice in Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992)**

Coppola's film opens in Romania, 1462, with Gary Oldman's Dracula depicted as a long-haired warrior Prince Vlad Tsepes, reprising Curtis' narrative trope consolidated by images of the forest of the impaled. Dracula returns to his castle to find his bride Elizabeta has committed suicide, believing him dead. Distraught, he lays waste to his castle chapel, shattering a stone cross, drinking the symbolic blood of Christ that spews forth, in a subversive blasphemy of the Eucharist. From the psychoanalytic perspective, this blood sacrifice symbolises defence against the fear of an overwhelming unconscious, such as the all-consuming grief portrayed in this scene. In such an act, power over life and death is imparted to the conscious mind. As posited in Mats Winther's (2008) paper 'The Blood Sacrifice':

Identification with a collective, deific consciousness is promoted, which serves to strengthen less effectual individual consciousness. The regressive bond to the unconscious such as the threat of all-consuming grief is temporarily disrupted, but the sacrifice must be renewed by repetition to maintain the disruption and its comforting transfer of sin and guilt to an external agency and prevent the undesirable feeling resurfacing. The portion of sin that is not transferred to the environment will work destructively on ego wholeness and vitality (Winther, 2008; Freud, 1919: 219-256; Freud, 1913: 1-91).

Ego wholeness (narcissistic wholeness) can only be maintained by this severing of the bond to the unconscious, allowing the narcissistic ego to abandon the law of original man and replace it with egocentric fanatical doctrine. There is now a new ego position with its own rules, effectively constituting an oppositional anti-law (Winther, 2008; Freud, 1919: 219-256; Freud, 1913: 1-91). This is potentially symbolised by Coppola's Dracula becoming free of guilt and

acquiring deific stature via the immortality of vampirism, as the antithesis of the God that he holds responsible for his pain. The law of vampirism supersedes God's law allowing Dracula to take lives without feeling remorse. This opening sequence marks an iconoclastic change in Dracula as a cinematic character. Coppola's Dracula is a warrior, not a seductive opera cloaked dandy. His vampirism is born of blasphemy (per folkloric dictate) committed in grief which arguably humanises the monster. The opening sequence concludes with Keanu Reeves' Harker's coach journey into the supernatural realm, Castle Dracula, dogged by howling wolves, passing unharmed through rings of blue flame, redolent of Murnau's *Nosferatu*.



**Figure 35:** Dracula's blood sacrifice



**Figure 36:** Dracula's homoeroticism

The film continues with what could be construed as a further homage to Murnau. Dracula is presented as a preternaturally animated shadow, before appearing as a cadaverous monster with

translucent venous skin. His bouffant of white hair and long trailing robe are redolent of a stylised Mandarin. The warrior is dehumanised and rendered a sexually ambiguous predator. This Dracula continues to veer from monstrous to effete to snarling sociopath as he alights on a photograph of Mina. He makes a subtextual reference to his inner world and his belief that Mina is Elizabetha reincarnated, revisiting another of Curtis' narrative confluences. The redemption of his love for Elizabetha symbolises a possible end to the enslaving repetition of bloody primal transgression as the transgressive act could be read as being lifted from repression to heal the psychic schism (Freud, 1922: 291-294). Dracula coerces Harker to stay. He licks Harker's bloodied shaving razor, then embraces him from behind and shaves him in an expression of homoeroticism implying (sublimated) bisexuality. The bloody transgression of the sexually ambiguous predator is again repeated. Harker is lured to Dracula's brides. The overt sexuality of Coppola's film is epitomised as the brides' lick and bite Harker, kissing him and each other, sucking his blood explicitly from his nipple implying fellatio. This is a reading often made of the same passage in Stoker's novel (Stevenson, 1988: 139-149). They are symbolic of (Dracula's) anti-law as they also repeat the primary blood sacrifice. Their oral sadistic repast ends with Dracula's claiming ownership of Harker, again conflating vampirism with bisexuality (Abraham, 1928: 247-258). During Dracula's journey to England aboard the *Demeter*, he writhes within a placental membrane, symbolic of imminent rebirth. The ship runs aground at Whitby. Lucy Westenra (Sadie Frost) in a red diaphanous gown symbolic of blood and burgeoning sexuality engages in a predatory sex act with Dracula in the form of a vulpine man-beast, transformed in a monstrous uncanny dualism. The primal transgression of blood sacrifice is repeated. Dracula keeps his grief at bay, again symbolising the repression of psychic pain in a denial of the unconscious and appeasement of the death drive (Winther, 2008; Freud, 1919: 217-256; Freud, 1913: 1-91). Mina arrives to aid Lucy back to the house as Dracula vanishes.

Van Helsing's (Sir Anthony Hopkins) arrival is juxtaposed with Lucy's descent into vampirism. Dracula's disembodied shadow spreads and kills flowers in its wake, conflating vampirism with contagion and again with defloration. Van Helsing advocates Lucy's transfusion with the blood of Seward and Holmwood. Lucy has shared the bodily fluids of two of her men whilst giving hers to Dracula. The film continues with Mina's rejection of Dracula's romantic intentions in favour of Harker and Lucy's death, vampiric resurrection and subsequent staking and decapitation by Van Helsing. Van Helsing therefore makes his own blood sacrifice which he too as a vampire hunter is doomed to repeat. Mina (Winona Ryder) accepts the

sublimated sexual penetration of Dracula's bite. Mina then imbibes his blood, allowing his analogous semen to enter her in this consummative act. Mina's symbolic blood sacrifice would free her from the banality of patriarchal servitude as an empowered equal of her partner and Freudian phallic woman. Patriarchy will not be denied and as with all of Mina's cinematic incarnations she is interrupted by her supposed rescue. Van Helsing accuses Dracula of Vlad Tsepes' war crimes, reiterating this narrative conflation. Dracula departs transformed into a horde of rats, leaving his jeopardised bride (Ibid).



**Figure 37:** Dracula's bestial transgression



**Figure 38:** Final altruism

Mina again reveals her telepathic link to Dracula. Van Helsing informs her Dracula's destruction would halt her vampiric transformation. Equating the salvation of the corrupted with the demise of the corruptor is a motif pervades the film canon. Mina's burgeoning sexuality as a phallic woman finds expression as she attempts biting Van Helsing. He burns her forehead with a consecrated wafer. Her symbolic blood sacrifice is again thwarted by patriarchy. Van Helsing's decapitation of Dracula's brides can be read as his primal transgression being repeated. As the film concludes, Harker shears Dracula's throat with Morris' knife. Harker now symbolises a repetition of a primal blood transgression to repress unconscious pain and attain freedom from guilt, codified by his faithless encounters with Dracula and his brides. Mina follows Dracula into the castle chapel and kisses his bloodied cadaverous lips. A sunbeam heals the fractured stone cross and recuperates Dracula to youthful form and to God by this act of true love. He asks for peace; she runs him through the heart. As he expires, the cruciform burn on her forehead fades. He gives his life to free her of taint. She is therefore also recuperated to God (her husband, and patriarchy) by an act of love and altruism. This can therefore be read as the final blood sacrifice of Coppola's film. Dracula at last symbolises freedom from repressed unconscious pain by acknowledging its true aetiology and being redeemed to Elizabeta. Mina however can now be read as repressing the pain of loss and so still repeats a primal blood transgression (Ibid). She therefore does not encode a true recuperation as she remains doomed to patriarchal servitude. Dracula in Coppola's film (dysfunctionally) loves Mina as Elizabeta as opposed to seeking to repossess her as in Curtis' film. Whilst Siodmak's Count was capable of love, he was victimised by it, whereas Coppola's Count personifies altruistic valour for misplaced love even in the face of his own demise. It is this narrative thread that valorises Coppola's Dracula and substantiates the argument that Coppola's was the first truly sympathetic cinematic Dracula.

#### **4.8 Dracula's Freudian Melancholy Resolved**

Coppola's film arguably symbolises the journey through pathological protracted grief which Freud terms melancholia until a resolution is achieved (Freud, 1917: 237-258). Normative mourning within Freud's psychoanalytic framework is predicated on the libido gradually withdrawing its invested energies, cathexis, from the lost love object. When this decathetic process is completed, the ego is freed and is able to allow the libido to invest its cathectic energies in a new love object (Dozois, 2000; Baker, 2001). Coppola's Dracula's relationship to Elizabeta in this context symbolises a libidinal attachment predicated on narcissism where outwardly apparent intense love codifies possessiveness. The possessor cannot bear to be

separated from the love object because apparently reciprocal intense love fuels and validates their narcissistic self-construct. Elizabeta's suicide codifies the loss of the love object. With such a loss the libidinal cathexis is suddenly and violently freed rather than gradually withdrawn. Decathexis does not occur. Instead cathectic energy invested in the lost love object is introjected into the possessor's ego to avoid hostility toward the love object (Shapiro, 1996; Friedlander 1996; Thomas and Siller, 1999). This is symbolised in Coppola's film by an abandoned Dracula projecting his anger and blaming God as he enacts his blasphemous Eucharist. This act can be read as the freed libido regressing fully into the ego, symbolised by Dracula imbibing Christ's free flowing blood into his body. As a result of this introjection, the loss of the love object equates to a loss of ego and the pathological expression of internal anger. This is codified by Coppola's Dracula wallowing in self-reproach for being unable to prevent his wife's suicide. He sleeps by day, wakens at night, ceases to eat, and takes only the fluids he needs to survive. Finally, he yearns for an end to his suffering and has delusional expectations of deific punishment as his sense of morality declines. This scenario is just as applicable to other Dracula films, particularly Gibson's *Satanic Rites of Dracula* as it concludes the Hammer cycle and Curtis' *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. However, for Coppola's Dracula the symbolic narcissistic trajectory is overshadowed. For the last cinematic Dracula of the long 1980's, vampirism can be read as representative of melancholia (Bonanno et al, 1995).

When Coppola's Dracula re-encounters Elizabeta reincarnated as Mina, a regressive narcissistic identification with the love object is codified as re-established. The lost object is re-corporealised and libidinal cathexis is then reinvested (Dozois, 2000; Baker, 2001). This is in turn codified by Dracula seeking to seduce and possess Mina despite her betrothal to another. He takes ownership of her via the sublimated consummative act of his bite. Her willing consumption of his blood signifies her reciprocal sublimated acceptance of his vital fluid (Bonanno et al, 1998; Stroebe and Stroebe, 1991). It is only when he is mortally wounded at the conclusion of Coppola's adaptation that the symbolised object relationship is transformed. Imminent demise forces a reassessment of reality. Libidinal attachment is withdrawn when the possessor finally perceives the new love object as a substitute. This is symbolised by Dracula's realisation that Mina is not Elizabeta. Decathexis is thus in turn signified by Mina's striking the mortal blow. The libido is displaced to the original love object symbolised by Elizabeta as implied by the final shot of their chapel ceiling portrait referencing their afterlife reunification. This resolution of a Freudian melancholy can be argued to be problematised. Such a resolution implies the displacement of libidinal cathexis on to a novel love object. Here it was displaced

back to the original love object. This can be interpreted as constituting regression rather than resolution (Baker, 1998; Field et al, 1999; Bonanno and Kaltman, 1999). Coppola's Dracula appears to be capable of love, but this love can still be read as dysfunctional in the Freudian sense as being representative of being rooted in an egotistical narcissistic self-construct. It still allows for altruism so likewise can be read as not being entirely possessive. Coppola's Dracula therefore can be argued to be far more a humanised monster than a monstrous human. Whilst he is still the vampire other, his otherness is lessened to the point that he can be accepted and even loved in return. It is here that Coppola's iconoclasm marks a nexus in the canon and truly engenders sympathy for the vampire. Drawing upon Freud, David Black defines sympathy in the psychoanalytic context as the capacity that facilitates the more sophisticated operation of empathy which in turn makes compassion possible. With the help of imagination and reflection, sound judgements of value may then be made, and where a basis may be discerned for calling judgements of value sound (Black, 2004: 579-596). To value Coppola's Dracula as more human than monstrous and thus truly sympathise with the character as such, his non-verbal emotional messages must convey that this is indeed the case and that he does still possess the humanity and the ability to truly love. This is arguably demonstrated at the beginning of the film and at the end. This then allows the viewer to make a superego judgment and identify with him on that basis. Coppola's Dracula's final act of ultimate altruism toward Mina in the film is therefore a strong case for spectator sympathy on Freudian terms.

#### **4.9 Dracula, Degenerative Disease and the Fin-de-Siècle**

As with Stoker's novel in the preceding century, Coppola's film adaptation of it is couched in a fin-de-siècle. Coppola's adaptation arguably draws a number of psychohistoricist parallels with this pre-millennial epoch just as Stoker's novel did with its post-industrial counterpart. Three themes, according to authors such as Pykett, Ledger and McCracken, pervade both post-industrial and pre-millennial fin-de-siècle sociocultural discourses. These themes, gender and sexuality, decadence and degeneration, and imperialism, and their associated cultural anxieties and prejudices could be seen to conflate around two diseases as nexus constructs (Thomas, 2000: 445-463; Pykett, 2014: 1-22; Ledger and McCracken, 1995: 1-11). For Stoker's post-industrial Count this was syphilis, whilst for Coppola's pre-millennial arch-vampire it was AIDS. These same themes, even down to respective degenerative disease processes, can be read as signified in Stoker's novel and Coppola's adaptation of it. Thus, it can be argued that they invoke the same psychohistoricist reading, transcending time and media. Some would argue that this is evidence that psychoanalysis as a therapeutic discipline and analytical



paradigm, itself a fin-de-siècle construct, is indeed ahistorical. Psychoanalysis has already been demonstrated as mutable under the influence of historiography. From a philosophical standpoint, if the human response to transition as epitomised by fin-de-siècle cultural dynamics is relatively static by comparison then similar psychoanalytic readings of how they are signified are inevitable. It suffices here to acknowledge the intrinsic heuristic tension of this discourse. Coppola's melancholic, capriciously wealthy, flamboyant, at times effeminate, and arguably bisexual Dracula can be framed against similarly dramatic characters more overtly epitomising the burgeoning expressionism of early 1990's gay culture. Examples include Tony Kushner's former drag queen Belize in his 1993 play *Angels in America* or the drag queens of Stephan Elliot's 1994 Australian road movie *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*. The same comparisons have been drawn between Stoker's literary Count and Oscar Wilde, who had been convicted of sodomy just prior to Stoker writing *Dracula*, and, reflexively, even with Stoker himself, who is believed by some scholars to have been a closeted homosexual. Schaffer in particular argues the case for Stoker's novel codifying this dynamic (Schaffer, 1994: 381-425). *Dracula* can therefore be read as a unifying signifier of heteronormative boundary transgression by decadent aesthetes, interfacing both fin-de-siècles as these boundaries schism in the respective collective anxieties of those cultural transitions. When cultural change is feared, its agents are often demonised. In both epochs, sexual expression beyond the heterosexual norm was couched in decadence and such cultural shifts were equated with degeneracy by the patriarchal establishment. Degeneracy in turn was signified by disease, at least by establishment critique of that which was deemed other.

Coppola's film as Kenton's did before pathologises vampirism and aligns it with a blood borne infection via dialogic cues and visceral imagery of coursing erythrocytes. To draw parallels with Syphilis and subsequently AIDS within a psychohistorical framework is therefore a logical association (Showalter, 1997: 68-74). Meira Weiss' 1997 research on signification of late 20<sup>th</sup> century pandemics including the metaphorisation of AIDS, explores this potential resonance. Weiss' subjects metaphorise HIV as an external penetrative agent, fluidic like the blood it invades and consumes, separate from the body and self, yet polluting it systemically and utterly and ultimately transforming it (Weiss, 1997: 456-476). Its Victorian counterpart syphilis can be similarly metaphorised and both diseases transform the sufferer from a vital human being into a cadaverous revenant surviving on fluids, as codified by the infection and degeneration of Lucy in Stoker's novel and in Coppola's subsequent film adaptation. HIV and Syphilis can be read as representing both Dracula and his vampirism as dyadic in this context

(Whittaker, 1992: 385-390; Showalter, 1997: 68-74). Stoker's and Coppola's respective Draculas being read as embodying these disease processes, whilst valid, however does risk being criticised as reductionist if considered in isolation in the psychohistoricist context. From the imperialist aspect of the fin-de-siècles, be that post-industrial colonialism or the shrinking world of pre-millennial corporate globalisation, AIDS or syphilis can be further metaphorised as the contagious cultural other, redolent of Murnau's *Nosferatu*. Stokers' and Coppola's Draculas as the spectres of orientalism, redolent of Browning's Count, were personified by the others of each of these fin-de-siècles such as the promiscuous, the profligate, fallen women, homosexual men, ethnic minorities, and intravenous drug abusers (Whitehead, 1997; Carlson, 1996). In the AIDS pandemic of the late eighties and early nineties and the more pervasive syphilis pandemic of a century previously, these diseases were delegated to these socially constructed 'dangerous' cultural others who were arguably perceived both as an infection and the source of infection by the right-wing occidental mindset (Schiller, 1992; Shannon, 1989; Altman, 1999). Like Dracula, they were viewed as different, deviant and immoral. These diseases were highly contagious so the other had to be separated from the patriarchal hegemonic body politic to maintain and reconstruct cultural integrity and social order. The socially constructed dangerous other was stigmatised as the polluted carrier of an evil disease to be avoided and/or punished for their deviance and misconduct. This stigma as a cultural construct, grounded in the very collapse of the human form, in turn collapses the psychic boundaries between normal and abnormal, acceptable and deviant, body and contagion, and ultimately body and cohesive self in death. It incepts anxiety informed by unconscious fears of loss of control and of self in the viewer (Epstein, 1992, 293-310; Burgner, 1994: 201-213). The infected person was at once a sexual being and a depersonalised fatal disease, a body incorporating contagion, mirroring Dracula the vampire and those he has infected with his evil disease, his vampirism. As Dracula and his vampires were hunted and staked, the fin-de-siècle infected were forcibly transfused or injected with medicines, constituting punitive symbolic patriarchal rape for their deviance and misconduct (Weiss, 1997; Epstein, 1992; Whittaker, 1992). The sexual body of the Western fin-de-siècles was blamed for the spread of these plagues and labelled as dangerous and insurrectional, again epitomising Dracula. The body infected by these diseases had been penetrated by a set of politically and socially hostile notions of contagion, pollution and threatening communicability. These cultural anxieties can be codified by spreading vampirism in Stoker's novel and Coppola's film. When disease causation can be located, control is ceded to the medical profession to reinforce the socially accepted normative (Ibid). Collective patriarchal reactions against the infected other are enforced and

re-informed by continued structuring of society. The agencies of patriarchy direct via the consensual common sense of culture. This is signified in the novel and Coppola's film by Mina's actions that are influenced by her struggle to comply with her indoctrinated Christian monogamy ethic. Medico-legal patriarchy dominates with force when this fails as when Van Helsing morally challenges Mina, emancipating her of her burgeoning, unacceptable, vampirised sexuality by physically burning that ethic back into her with a consecration wafer prior to the final confrontation with Dracula (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001: 533-552).

Mina's actions epitomise Nichols' transitional state in his psychoanalytical model alluded to in Blechner's contemporaneous paper 'Psychoanalysis and HIV disease' (Nicholls, 1987: 137-140; Blechner, 1993: 61-80). This state follows initial denial and is characterised by this ego defence and that of isolation of psychic elements, thus disavowing conflict and associated negative affect (Burgner, 1994: 201-213). The AIDS patient experiences anger, fear, terror, and depression (melancholia) and acts upon these extremes of emotion, as symbolised by Coppola's Mina in her asylum confrontation with her fiancé when confronted with her own blood borne deadly infection. This analysis can be argued to be equally as applicable to the Victorian syphilitic, who at the time was likewise sans hope of an entirely effective treatment or cure. There is a struggle for a sense of control, to take back the self, amidst underlying dread and self-loathing. Following Nichols' transitional state comes that of acceptance, garnering changes in persona and the seeking of resolution as reaction formation, as the ego defences of denial and isolation of the initial denial state are overwhelmed (Nicholls, 1987: 137-140; Blechner, 1993: 61-80). In Stoker's novel and Coppola's film these changes are arguably symbolised by Mina's recuperation, but in the narrative resolution of Coppola's film digressing from the novel, they can also be argued to be signified by Dracula's acceptance of death in an act of redemption to save Mina from his vampiric infection. This is the same resolution that symbolises an end to Freudian melancholy for much the same reasons. In finding acceptance, if the disease is not cured, fear is at least lost. Coppola's Mina, being the only cinematic protagonist who treats Dracula with any sympathy, can be read as regarding him in this context as patient zero as opposed to the contagion personified. To an extent sympathy for Dracula in the pre-millennial fin-de-siècle is at least somewhat maintained on these grounds and where there is some sympathy, the monsters remain humanised. It is perhaps in acceptance of this, that fear of Dracula can be regarded as irrevocably lost. Psychohistoricist readings of Coppola's film and Stoker's novel at their most simplistic could therefore be seen as a system of binary oppositions whereby Dracula's vampirism representing disease constitutes a nexus of fin-de-

siècle cultural anxieties embodied within physical and psychopathological contagion, versus the vampire hunter read as patriarchy and sociocultural regulator who seeks to contain that contagion and maintain hegemony. Coppola's *Dracula* can still be read as the contagious sexual predator, the seducer rather than the rapist, who nonetheless depersonalises and objectifies his victims, destroying their identity and with it their innocence. The *other* was now worthy of sympathy but not yet worthy of outright valorisation. This would come later.

Innocence for the adult sexual subject represents the time before carnal knowledge, the safety of childhood viewed retrospectively through the proverbial rose-tinted glasses. Innocence as posited by Patton from the psychoanalytic perspective derives from two forms of memory (Patton, 1992: 323-341). The first as originally posited by Freud is the cultural memory and resultant social construct of virginity and monogamy whereby entering the marital bed with any sexual memory is taboo. The second is the adult's nostalgia for a time for when the mother was not consciously recognised as a sexual being. This is a moment the adult seeks to reinvent to maintain the memory of childhood innocence as a safe anchor, maintaining the cohesion of self (Freud, 1905; Freud, 1957: 67-102). The loss of innocence in socioculturally unacceptable relationships compounds transgression as it threatens self. The punishment for loss of innocence in this framework is codified by suffering the seducer's contagion. This reading of Coppola's film from the psychohistorical perspective embodies a renewed postmodern fin-de-siècle loss of sexual innocence for Western society represented by infection with AIDS. The infection mirrors syphilis and the patriarchal establishment's response to it at the previous post-industrial fin-de-siècle as Coppola's film mirrors much of Stoker's original novel. AIDS at the end of the long 1980's as syphilis could before it, can be represented by *Dracula*'s vampirism with its promise of subsequent physical and psychological un-death. The fear of the associated loss and the threat posed to self, underpinned the response of medico-legal patriarchy to these diseases as symbolised by Van Helsing's isolation of Mina in both Stoker's novel and Coppola's film adaptation. When syphilis was rendered curable by the advent of penicillin, fear of transgressive sexuality and sexual intercourse was for a time relieved and Western sexual innocence was temporarily recuperated. Fear of consequence was assuaged. With the advent of AIDS this innocence was again lost as that fear returned. In the post-AIDS era of the millennium, the cycle now repeats as it is AIDS that can be successfully treated for a lifetime if not cured. The cloaked Universal studios archetype perpetuated by Hammer and ruptured by Badham was now rendered utterly obsolete by this iconoclastic, sympathetic vampire.

#### **4.10 Loss of Fear, Iconoclasm and Embracing the Other**

##### **The Long 1980's Dracula Films as a Cycle of Change**

By the late seventies the other began to be romanticised and was becoming acceptable to younger elements of Western society. This was subculture rather than counterculture. These new others such as the goths and later the new romantics (derivative of the earlier punk subculture), subverted establishment values and coda regarding dress and musical affiliation, but still operated within defined establishment boundaries such as the rule of law. They disagreed with their parents' taste but not to the point of refusing their support (Gunn, 1999: 31-50). This tolerated otherness carried within it a disestablishmentarian insurgency that would not be so easily held. Badham's gothic romantic Dracula as portrayed by Frank Langella can be placed within vampire theory as just such an initially tolerated other; an attractive non-conformist whose influence wrought an insurgent change, symbolising the sexual empowerment of the feminist as she ruptures patriarchy and embraces her otherness as a refuge from establishment banality. There was arguably some sympathy for the vampire here, but it could still be perceived as being tempered with underlying fear. Badham's Count continued to subject the spectator to the extension of everyday fears, perhaps most notably the fear of rejection and of being ostracised from family. The acceptance of empowering otherness at that time might come at the expense of rejecting the patriarchal value base of family (White, 1971: 1-18). Was this a feminist Dracula? In terms of conceptualising Badham's Dracula as incepting the long 1980's Dracula film cycle, the answer might be a tacit yes, but with a caveat. This film can certainly be regarded as a seminal reimagining of Stoker's narrative that resonates with the rise of the empowered feminist ideologue's position within an egalitarian relationship. As with other conventional or conceptualised cycles within the canon, such a reimagining being positioned as the opening text is a recognisable pattern by this juncture. However, Badham would have been well aware of Langella's appeal in the role to his (empowered) female audience evidenced by the commercial success of the Broadway play; it could just as easily be argued that resonance with the contemporaneous psychosocial milieu may have been consciously exploited for commercial gain, as is that milieu having a palpable influence on the construction of the narrative or production of the film from a potential auteurist perspective.

As aforementioned, if a film is to frighten us it must use elements that engender some semblance of actual fear, albeit the safe cathartic form afforded to the film spectator. Fear is therefore lost when the film does not combine such elements (Ibid). Dekker's Dracula in *The Monster Squad* was challenged, thwarted, and eventually defeated by a group of children

despite having a monstrous cohort at his behest in this resurgent monster rally. The children were not afraid of this self-aggrandising narcissist. They blamed him for what was going awry in their world (De Vries et al, 1986: 266-279). Dracula here was symptomatic of a burgeoning therapy culture in the eighties that sought to avoid fear and paradoxically must then be consumed by fear of fear (Kendrick, 2004: 153-172). In terms of vampire theory fear for Dracula was now lost in this avoidant ethos as agency began to be dispelled in favour of the other as an object of blame, a pervasive cultural scapegoat absolving individual responsibility (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009: 122-145). The other was no longer feared but there was no room for sympathy either for the arch-vampire here. Such sympathy could be argued to have been consumed by introspective self-pity (Black, 2004: 579-596). This cultural shift was at odds with that paralleling Badham's film. As outlined earlier, there is some argument for this film symbolising a transition from confrontation of patriarchal anxieties to aversion of wider anxieties. In terms of locating this film within the posited long 1980's cycle, this text could be argued to be as derivative and fundamentally commercially motivated as the previous monster rallies. Older children defeating monsters or the monstrous was already a commercially successful box office formula as demonstrated by films such as *The Goonies*,<sup>14</sup> *Ghoulies*, and *Gremlins* in the years immediately prior to the release of *The Monster Squad*, and the iconoclastic *The Lost Boys* that same year. As with Dekker's film however, each of these films has one character whose corrupt pursuit of power, incompetence or intransigence incites jeopardy to be resolved by the child protagonists, thus symbolising a blame object. Similarly, the aversion of fear of the monstrous could be debated to be just as evident in all of these non-parodic quasi-horror texts, just as it was in Ivan Reitman's 1984 blockbuster success *Ghostbusters*. This theoretical position lends greater credence to contextualising Dekker's film as resonant with its contemporaneous psychosocial milieu when refracted through this analogous wider filmic cultural lens as the long 1980's Dracula cycle progressed.

It was Coppola's iconoclastic Dracula that truly changed the cinematic Count's cinematic character trajectory. He veered from monstrous to attractive, from vengeful to loving, even if in the Freudian sense he symbolised an egotistical narcissistic-melancholic self-construct. This was a reimagining of Stoker's narrative, here incorporating an origin story, that could feasibly be construed as intentionally culturally resonant, as Coppola (as quoted earlier) could be argued

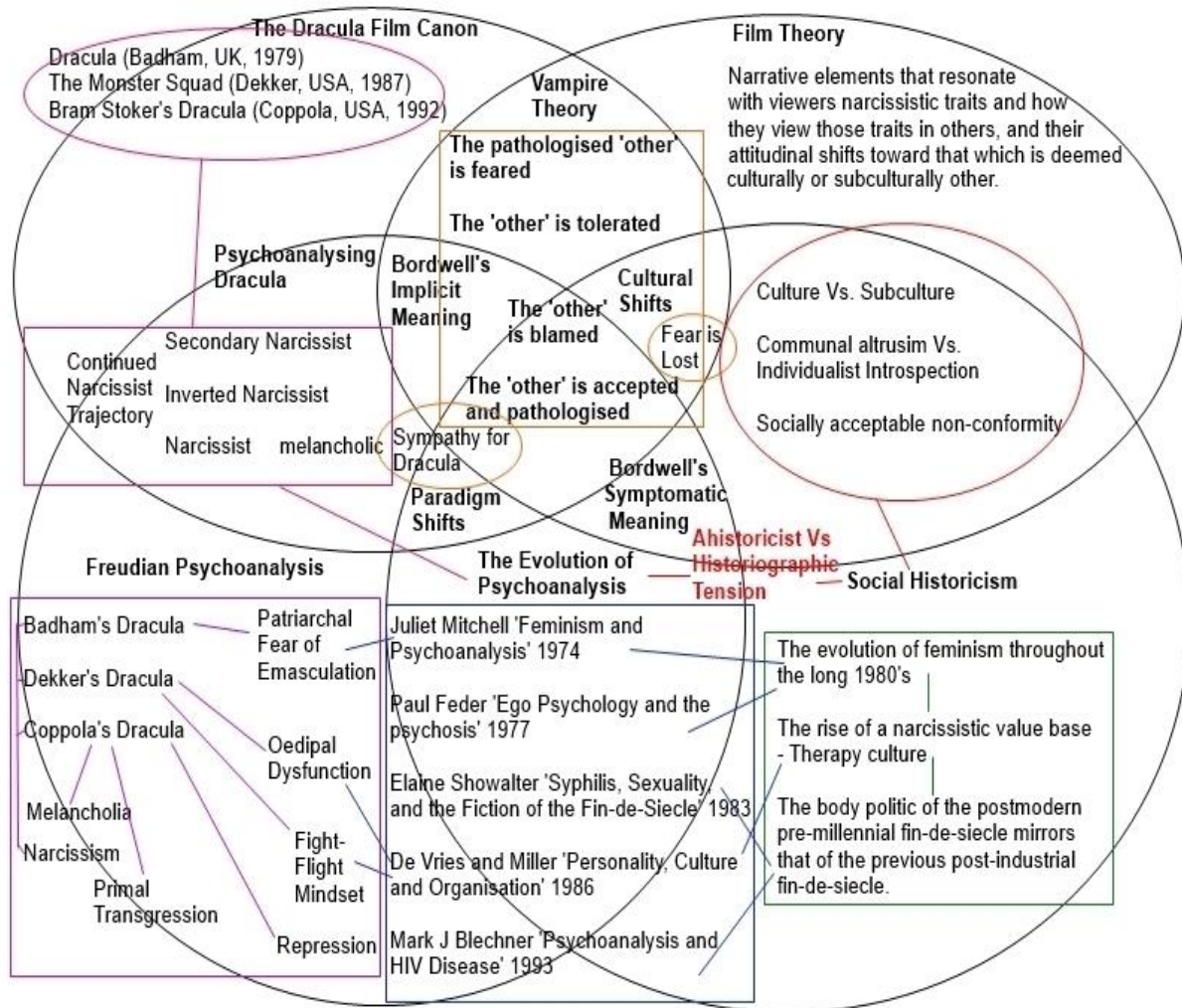
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<sup>14</sup> Mama Fratelli is the human monster of this particular text. This author would argue Sloth to be an abused victim who transcends his disability resulting from that abuse to embody the role of hero protagonist.

to be making an auteurist statement. In concluding the long 1980's cycle in this context, this was very much a fin-de-siècle Dracula. Crucially this character construct still allowed for altruism. This was the first cinematic Dracula that was more a humanised monster than a monstrous human. He signified the pathologised, imperfect other, the demonised outsider of the fin-de-siècle. He also signified the victim and his otherness lessened to the point that he could be forgiven, accepted, and even loved in return. Coppola's iconoclasm engendered sympathy in its literal sense for the Count for the first time (Ibid). Dracula's cinematic psychohistorical path to this point is summarised in figure 48. The evolving cinematic character's resonance with the acceptance of feminine, subcultural, or marginalised outsider otherness superseding the patriarchal fear of that otherness that he once represented can perhaps best be defined by Judith Butler's psychoanalytic reading on the subject drawn from Karen O'Connell's work on disability discrimination, and it is perhaps indeed this that can be argued to likewise frame the overarching resonance of the Dracula films of the 'long 1980's' when read as a cycle against pervading contemporaneous psychosocial tensions (O'Connell, 2011: 883-904).

Our unknowability is a foundation for an ethical relation to others, since affirming what is opaque and unknown in one's self 'may allow one to affirm others who may or may not "mirror" one's own constitution'. In other words, by being forced to acknowledge that we are strangers to ourselves, we are (*or at least should be*) ethically primed for accepting otherness; the stranger within orients us to the stranger without. The failure to give a full account of ourselves marks us in a relation of humility to others, since we cannot present ourselves to them in full self-knowledge, and we must therefore forgive those 'who are also constituted in partial opacity to themselves (Butler, 2005: 42)

The Catch twenty-two tensile dynamic that inhabits the theorised liminal spaces illustrated between historicist synchronicity, corresponding psychoanalytic theory, and readings of potential symptomatic meanings of the Dracula film canon remains. This synchronicity as shown in the figure above is still demonstrable but what is not and perhaps cannot be from a philosophical standpoint is determining whether this contextualises objective reality in this framework, or is it as much a sociocultural construct as the films themselves (Polan, 1988: 15-30)? Similarly, the tension between psychoanalysis as mutable in terms of being influenced by historiography yet remaining applicable to ahistoricist aspects of the human condition also remains.



**Figure 39:** Mapping the theorised liminal spaces of Dracula's Evolving Cinematic Character from the 1970's to the 1990's

This argument is further substantiated by placing the rise of therapy culture during the long 1980's within the psychohistorical framework framed against continuing changes in psychoanalytic perceptions. Conversely the literary and cinematic Count's signification of otherness at their respective fin-de-siècles draws stark parallels despite being chronologically separated by over a century. The crux of this argument is that perhaps certain aspects of the human condition are effectively ahistoricist, even as our means of analysing them progresses. This seats psychohistorical film theory and thus vampire theory squarely within this tensile dynamic whether one is reading individual filmic text or the cycles that they inhabit. Resolving this tension may not be philosophically possible, but it must be acknowledged to avoid cognitive bias. Robin Wood's undead vampire aristocrat was now certainly obsolete as a gothic vampire archetype, but the character's cinematic journey would continue into the next millennium (Wood, 1983: 175-187).



## Chapter 5

### The Post-Millennial Cycle: Dracula Becomes the Hero

#### 5.0 The Traitor, the Dictators and the Superheroes

In many respects Dracula's screen incarnations have epitomised the epithet applied to Byron by Lady Caroline Lamb. The Count is mad, bad and dangerous to know, but is nonetheless alluring, both sexually and psychosocially. The character has always possessed anti-hero traits. In the psychohistorical framework this may well be due to, as Christopher Sharrett puts it, the tendency of the consciousness industry (the expressive arts) to absorb cultures adversarial impulses (Sharrett, 1993: 100-110). Dracula's transformation into a true cinematic anti-hero, countering Wood's charge of obsolescence, began with Badham's *Dracula*'s empowerment of his female partner and in some respects continued with Coppola's romantic love for his (Wood, 1983: 175-187). They promised an easeful death and eternal life, but in their respective sacrifices at the ends of these films, gifted nothing more than a positive mindset and a memory of romance to their bereft partners. It was with the new millennium that this would change. Dracula embodies and co-opts sociocultural radicalism, the anti-hero mantle, and eventually heroism in this progressively iconoclastic postmodern 21<sup>st</sup> century cycle of films (Ibid). According to Sharrett, the postmodern horror film of the latter twentieth century offered a climate of sacrificial excess characterised by a dominant order that is simultaneously accredited and affirmed, an atmosphere of unfettered sexuality that offers women status insofar that they are incorporated into the dominant order, a recognition of a chaotic universe that is celebrated at the same time it is subdued, and a lionisation of the other only as a preface to its destruction or incorporation into dominant ideology (Sharrett, 1993: 100-110). Whilst Sharrett refers to latter 20<sup>th</sup> century horror films, this framework remains eminently applicable to the Dracula films the 21<sup>st</sup> century thus far.

In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, Dracula was reinvented again as Gerard Butler's eternally punished traitor Judas in Patrick Lussier's 2000 film, *Dracula 2000*, marking significant milestones for the cinematic character. This film marks his resurrection from a second fin-de-siècle and the commencement of this post-millennial cycle. The initial traditional Victorian gothic Count of the prologue quickly segues into a youthful, conventionally attractive, black-clad bad boy persona more akin to Kiefer Sutherland's David in Joel Schumacher's seminal 1987 film *The Lost Boys*, James Marsden's character Spike in Joss Whedon's 1990's television series *Buffy*

*the Vampire Slayer* or even the rock star vampire Lestat of Michael Rymer's 2002 screen adaptation of Anne Rice's novel *Queen of the Damned*, than any previous filmic Dracula. Lestat could certainly be argued to be the prototype for this new breed of cinematic vampire. This iconography conflated with the character's Judas backstory quickly defines Lussier's Dracula as an anti-hero whilst touching upon *Nosferatu's* codified anti-Semitic undertones predicated upon the cliched negative stereotypes of traitor and wanderer. His allure to potential female partners is greater than his predecessors but comes at the same price for most of them. The exception is the incestuous bond with his partner and spiritual daughter Mary, who is the biological daughter of the vampire hunter Van Helsing in this film. Both Dracula and Van Helsing can again be read as symbolising aspects of Freud's dead father imago. Drawing upon the works of psychoanalytical theorists including Christine Kieffer, Joanne Courteau, Montana Katz, George Awad, and Lucy Holmes, it is Mary who can be read as the super-powered oedipal victor. This oedipal reading of Lussier's film naturally invites comparison with Dekker's *The Monster Squad*. Mary comes to possess the vampire's powers sans limitations due to Dracula's redemptive act of sacrificing himself to save her. It is this redemptive act, paralleling the final altruism of Coppola's Count that cements Dracula's anti-hero status in Lussier's film. Mary is now valorised as the part vampire superhero and is comparable to the characters of Stephen Norrington's films, notably the titular character in his adaptation of Marvel Comics' *Blade* (1998) and Mina Harker in *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (2003). Returning to Sharrett, she epitomises the sexually expressive woman incorporated into the dominant order when she subsumes her father's patriarchal role (Sharrett, 1993: 100-110). The conceptual door to screen Dracula as the hero was now opened.

From the psychohistorical perspective, we return to cultism. The novel conflation of Dracula with the treacherous Judas Iscariot and the synchronicity of the film's release with the millennium invited a reading of Lussier's Count as resonant with the leaders of the apocalyptic millenarianism movements that came to prominence at that time. Klaus Theweleit's psychoanalysis of fascism is arguably applicable to such totalitarian leaders. The crux of Theweleit's argument was that the fear of dissolution and the failure to adhere to boundaries are rooted in the infant's inability to distinguish itself from the extrinsic reality that threatens to consume it. Those deemed as other by dint of difference to the perceived hegemony are demonised as the consuming agents of that reality, incepting the mindset of fascism. (Theweleit, 1989: 200-208). Sharrett's affirmed and discredited dominant order and subdued chaotic universe also represent the transient rise and fall of millenarianism whilst Lussier's

Dracula's redemptive act lionises the other prior to his destruction (Sharrett, 1993: 100-110). By applying a Freudian psychoanalytical perspective to the contemporaneous millenarian sociocultural theories of Hicks, Barkun, Marchetti, and Lebreda, this psychohistorical reading foregrounds the underlying nihilistic cultural anxieties that were juxtaposed with celebratory optimism.

Although Universal studios' 21<sup>st</sup> century return to the monster rally is entitled *Van Helsing* it can essentially be read as an iconoclastic but nonetheless equally commercially motivated (as opposed to auteurist) reimagining of the studio's 1940's monster rallies *House of Frankenstein* and *House of Dracula*. Stephen Sommers' 2004 film portrays Van Helsing as a traumatised soldier forced to participate in a morally questionable war overseen by a gubernatorial agency, the knights of the holy order. Richard Roxburgh's Count is defined as a former brother-in-arms of Hugh Jackman's Van Helsing, foregrounding a reading of Dracula as representing the ally turned enemy as well as his more obvious symbolism of the corrupt dictator, again touching upon the psychology of fascism. This narrative theme draws stark psychohistorical parallels with the war in Iraq that was taking place at the time of the film's production and can be seen as resonating with the psychic anguish of combatants in such an ethically ambiguous conflict. Once more Sharrett's affirmed and discredited dominant order is foregrounded as is his chaotic universe that is eventually subdued (Ibid). The psychoanalytical theories of Freud, Trosman, Schlesinger, Carveth, and Engel are juxtaposed with sociohistorical commentaries on that war by Bellamy, Press-Barnathan and others in these readings. Both Van Helsing and Dracula in Sommers' film can be perceived as the anti-hero. Van Helsing is a flawed protagonist who lacks certain conventional heroic attributes and questions his own morality. His dark past (murdering Dracula) is alluded to in the narrative as the cause of his amnesia. This dark past is an attribute often capitalised upon in postmodern cinematic depictions of older and contemporary literary heroes such as the most recent film adaptations of Sherlock Holmes and even Batman. Perhaps mimesis now demands a flaw in the postmodern hero. Sommers' Dracula on the other hand is an antagonist who demonstrates similar attributes to Van Helsing such as his insight in consciously recognising and lamenting his lack of emotion as pathological and being driven by the very paternal objective of restoring his children to life. Both Dracula and Van Helsing constitute Sharrett's lionised others whereby Dracula is destroyed, and Van Helsing embodies the dominant ideology (Sharrett, 1993: 100-110). Whilst not exactly epitomising the benevolent dictator archetype, this cinematic incarnation of Dracula cannot be perceived as a conventionally evil dictator either. Every facet of Dracula as the evil vampire

had been fully explored by this juncture in the canon, so only one developmental trajectory was left open. Dracula's obsolescence would continue to be challenged by his progression from anti-hero to conventional hero.

This transformation continued with Dario Argento's Italian 2012 film *Dracula 3D* featuring Thomas Kretschmann as Dracula and Rutger Hauer portraying a journeyman interpretation of the Count's nemesis Van Helsing that again differs from the conventional wise patriarch. Argento's Dracula first presents as a conventionally attractive seducer similar to Hammer's early Count. The plot, as with many others in the canon loosely follows Stoker's novel but is arguably more commercial venture than auteurist reinvention and could be seen as a vindication of Wood's prediction. Argento when interviewed for his biography (Jones, 2016: 382-392), confirms that the Hammer Draculas were a particular point of reference (his and Fisher's are the only Dracula films where Harker is essentially Van Helsing's agent). Secondly, he clearly thinks that the reincarnation-of-wife-as-Lucy/Mina theme is in the original novel. It is not, but this suggests that it has somehow become canonical in modern adaptations of Stoker. In Argento's film, Lucy is seduced, becomes a vampire, and is eventually staked. Mina is seduced, jeopardised then redeemed when Dracula is disposed of by Van Helsing and Mina's fiancé Jonathan Harker. The crucial difference is that Argento's Dracula symbolises the benevolent dictator to the point that it is epitomic of this oxymoron. The character's authority is portrayed as wisely exercised. The local villagers know what he is, and they tolerate his predation in exchange for the resources and protection he affords them. They are presented as his loyal foot soldiers. One possible psychoanalytical reading of the film centres on this symbolism and is drawn from diverse works on such leadership by Bar-Hillel and Margalit, 1988, and Fabiani, 2013. From this basis a psychohistoricist reading of the film is then framed as resonant with the rise of contemporaneous benevolent dictators that have become prevalent in Western society including Italy's Silvio Berlusconi, and latterly President Donald Trump in the USA. Such leaders' indiscretions are overlooked by their followers in return for the personal benefits that they bestow. Klaus Theweleit's psychoanalysis of fascism underpins this reading juxtaposed with Barry Richards' contemporaneous discourse on the subject (Theweleit, 1989: 200-208; Richards, 2013: 124-142).

The *Dracula* television series (USA, 2013) screened as Argento's film was released, featuring Jonathan Rhys-Meyers in the titular role for NBC. This series portrayed the Count as a benevolent dictator who seeks socioeconomic domination of Victorian London via cutthroat

entrepreneurship whilst rekindling his lost love by returning to the Mina-as-reincarnated-bride narrative trope. Rhys-Meyer's characterisation veers even more toward the anti-hero and even the superhero archetype as this Dracula does not hesitate to use his preternatural powers to protect those he loves and cares for. Whilst this series will not be explicitly analysed in the course of this research as it is not a theatrical film, its possible influence in the onward developmental trend of Dracula's cinematic character is duly noted. The next logical step would have to be a film narrative that portrayed the evolution of Count Dracula from anti-hero to superhero as all previous archetypes had now been exhausted and rendered obsolete as Wood predicted, leaving his ubermensch the only avenue open, other than nostalgic regression (Wood, 1983: 175-187).

The final cinematic production to be examined in the course of this research is Gary Shore's 2014 (USA) film *Dracula Untold*. Luke Evans plays the titular role in a return to the narrative conflation of Vlad Tsepes with the Count. Shore's film is a conventional Hollywood superhero origins mythology. Facing the overwhelming forces of the invading Turkish army, the young Wallachian Prince seeks out preternatural (vampiric) powers with which to defeat them, which are duly bestowed upon him by an exiled ancient vampire who fulfils the role of the patriarchal wise old mystic. Parallels with similar superhero mentorship relationships such as those between Marvel Comics' Ancient One and Dr Strange or DC comics' Queen Hippolyta and her daughter Wonder Woman immediately spring to mind. As with a number of other superheroes, this power comes at the cost of a bereavement that serves as a source of motivating vengeance. Dracula loses his bride as DC's *Batman* lost his parents and Marvel's *Spiderman* lost his beloved uncle. He eventually attains his diegetic objective, defeats the invaders and saves his homeland, but his newfound powers and vampiric immortality leave the superhero stood apart from mere mortals as is the case with his aforementioned compatriots. The film's epilogue finds Dracula in modern times, finding his reincarnated bride at a café, marking the resurgence of this narrative trope as he is secretly watched over by his ancient mentor (Charles Dance). In this iconoclasm for the character, sympathy for the vampire is fully elicited as the superhero premise is cemented and the diegesis is left open to further developments.

One possible reading of Shore's film is to return to the psychoanalysis of duality but instead of Freudian doubles, Dracula's symbolism of human versus superhuman will be explored via the work of Mark Ligorski, Brownie and Graydon, and Richard Kaplan on the subject. This Dracula arguably follows a tradition of monstrous superheroes including Marvel's *Hulk*, *Thing*,

and *Beast*, and Mike Mignola's *Hellboy*. Shore's *Dracula Untold* will then be framed against the current resurgence of the superhero film and the cultural anxieties that these cathartic mythic narratives address in the psychohistoricist context as potentially resonant with an era characterised by political and sociocultural instability. A number of recent psychoanalytical works will be drawn upon including Doniger's examination of myth, Weisner's analysis of the fear of abandonment, Twemlow's work on bullying, Piterman's commentary on the fears of taking leadership, and Glassman and Widzer's respective accounts of the family romance fantasy. Returning again to Sharrett, *Dracula-as-superhero* epitomises the lionised other becoming incorporated into dominant hegemonic ideology whilst affirming and discrediting his (vampiric) dominant order (Sharrett, 1993: 100-110). *Dracula Untold* epitomises Sharrett's postmodern sacrificially excessive horror film as Shore's *Dracula* literally sacrifices everything (Ibid). The forced expulsion of the other in Shore's film however returns us to a nexus with Theweleit, Richards, and the psychology of fascism (Theweleit, 1989: 200-208; Richards, 2013: 124-142). In terms of vampire theory this chapter seeks to answer the question: is this *Dracula* the version of the character his viewers always wanted but were afraid to ask for?

### **5.1 The Dead Father's Return and the Birth of a Superhero in *Dracula 2000***

Lussier's film opens in a 21<sup>st</sup> century London antiques firm as protagonists Simon (Jonny Lee Miller) and his employer Matthew Van Helsing (Christopher Plummer) are introduced along with Van Helsing's secretary Selena (Jennifer Esposito). Thieves penetrate Van Helsing's vault and depart with a silver coffin. Interspersed are scenes of Van Helsing injecting blood drawn from a leech. His eyes turn vivid blue implying that the blood's preternatural powers are at work. By this juncture the identity of the coffin's occupant merely needs to be inferred. Mary Heller (Justine Waddell) is introduced in the grip of a nightmare, experiencing the viewpoint of a man trapped in a coffin. She is awakened by her roommate Lucy (Colleen Ann Fitzpatrick). Stoker's characters are thus mirrored. Van Helsing and *Dracula* are givens, Simon equates Harker, Mary equates Mina (evidenced by her telepathic link with *Dracula*), and Lucy is again Mina's closest friend. Aboard a plane the thieves break into the coffin to reveal a corpse crawling with leeches, revealing the source of Van Helsing's transfusions. *Dracula* wakes then bites one of the thieves and is immediately rejuvenated, repeating Franco's depiction of this motif.

Gerard Butler now personifies the 'bad boy' archetype described earlier. He hypnotises Selena and takes ownership of his first bride with his consummative bite. *Dracula* summons a storm,

defining the plane as another contemporaneous Demeter. The viewer is reflexively aligned with Van Helsing's viewpoint as he watches Valerie Sharpe's (Jeri Ryan) newscast. The plane has crashed into the Bayou. Sharpe is quickly taken by Dracula as his second vampire bride. Van Helsing exposit his capture of Dracula the first vampire and reveals that he defied death by transfusing himself with Dracula's blood filtered through leeches. He reveals that Mary is his daughter and Dracula's scion as Dracula's blood flowing in his veins had been passed on to her. Dracula is thus defined as the first Freudian dead father imago of Lussier's film. Dracula takes Lucy as his third vampire bride and she leads him to Mary. Van Helsing is staked and killed by Dracula as in Badham's film. Mary discovers her father's death, introducing the film's Freudian murdered father imago. Mary reads of her tainted blood heritage from her father's journal. Subsequent events define this moment as the birth of a superhero. Dracula bites an initially acquiescent Mary. In their shared vision he is revealed as Judas Iscariot, condemned by God to walk the earth for eternity as a vampire. His hatred of Christian iconography and silver are now given symbolic meaning. Dracula is still not yet secularised. In a final redemptive act Dracula releases Mary from vampirism as he does in Coppola's film. Her recuperation to superhero is symbolised by her eyes changing from vampiric red to her father's immortal blue. The sequence concludes with Dracula's immolation by the sun's rays, again mirroring Badham's film. Mary takes on her father's mantle as the immortal guardian of Dracula's cursed remains. In this classical Hollywood horror narrative, the antagonist has been vanquished and the normative heterosexual partners have been recuperated as the virtuous survivors. As in Norrington's films, 'Mina' retains her super-powers.

We now return to Freud's 'Totem and Taboo' as meta-analysed by Rosine Jozef Perelberg in her book 'Murdered Father, Dead Father, Revisiting the Oedipus complex'. In Lussier's film, the dead father representing symbolic order and morality is symbolised by Mary's actual father Van Helsing. To obey the law of the symbolic order the narcissistic father cannot be allowed to usurp the dead father. When the narcissistic father Dracula is murdered by Mary, he now also symbolises the dead father, constituting the symbolic order derived from the resultant renouncement of her feminine oedipal incestuous desire for him. This narrative resolution therefore codifies the defeat of the narcissistic father but with a subsequent problematic identification with both dead fathers (Perelberg, 2015: 11-36). Mary's narrative thus arguably codifies a fractured oedipal resolution predicated on lack as she comes to embody the bereaved superhero archetype. To draw upon the Mark Ligorski's work on the subject Mary's story reflects the oedipal conflict as the struggle for the ability to express power and individuality

against a force that would reject it, represented by her fathers (Ligorski, 1994: 449-464). The schism in the Oedipality of Lussier's film is that there is no original father figure with whom to fight as codified by Van Helsing's death. The father figure and the mother figure are symbolised as irretrievably lost. In Lussier's epilogue Mary eventually symbolises a hero no longer struggling with the ability to exercise power but with what the consequences of that personal exercise of power will be. This is arguably represented by her distancing herself from Simon. The exercise of power in this narrative as in Ligorski's reading of Superman's origin story can be read as potentially disruptive to being in a relationship with people who one loves (Ibid). It is this fractured Oedipality that invites elaboration in the following reading of the film.

## **5.2 A Hollow Oedipal Victory over Millenarianism**

Lussier's film places Mary as symbolising the oedipal victor who has survived dysfunctional relationships with both an absentee father codified by Van Helsing, and an incestuous father codified by Dracula. According to Freud's concept of the feminine oedipal attitude at its most simplistic, when a girl discovers she lacks a penis, penis envy leads her to take her father as a libidinal object and to express antagonism toward her mother whom she blames for her lack. Resolution occurs when she replaces her wish for a penis with a wish for a child of her own, identifying with her mother and subsequently her gender role (Kieffer, 2004; Powell, 1993: Courteau, 1989; Katz, 2000). Mary's narrative thread symbolises a resolution that is problematised by confounding factors. In Lussier's film a dead mother figure has protected the daughter from the truth with lies thus breaking her trust leaving the daughter with only idealised memories. This codifies the role of the consuming pre-genital mother being supplanted by a constricting hegemony that has trapped the daughter in a banal, meaningless existence sans career or relationship fulfilment. From the historiographic perspective, it is this scenario that may trigger a disaffected individual to experiment with cultism such as millenarianism. Both fathers in Lussier's film textually represent exciting mysterious others (Palacios, 2004: 284-297). The biological father Van Helsing dies before Mary can meet him thus symbolising another empathic rupture. Mary is left with only an exposition of his character, motives and actions, codifying another idealised image. The need for the love of the biological father is frustrated by his irredeemable absence (Kieffer, 2004: 69-80).

In Freud's feminine Oedipal framework, when the daughter contacts a spiritual, seductive substitute father (Dracula when read as a millenarian cult leader), he can then take her as a libidinal object, meeting his need for identificatory love and quashing her burgeoning



autonomy (Wilner, 1982: 58-78). Van Helsing and Dracula epitomise Freud's respective murdered and dead father imagos. Dracula symbolises a reciprocated unconscious desire for incest. Mary codifies a daughter who is initially submissive to this, by accepting his transformative bite and transiently becoming a phallic woman. In doing so, she can be read as the millenarian cult member who attacks the maternal introject by denying the mother (Courteau, 1989: 1-10; Katz, 2000: 49-73; Awad, 1995: 145-155). This interaction with Dracula more so than Mary's posthumous identification with Van Helsing represents a metaphorical transgression of Western sociocultural incest taboos as it symbolises the intersection of defined father-daughter kinship categories and sexual behaviours codified by the sublimated sexual, penetrative act of Dracula's bite (Palacios, 2004: 284-297; Wilner, 1983: 134-159). From the psychohistorical perspective it symbolises the interaction of the vulnerable young female cultist with the neo-fascist father figure at the head of the millenarian cult, a symbology that we will soon explore further. According to Kieffer's reading of Freud's oedipal framework the need for incestuous, identificatory love stems from separation-individuation conflicts (Kieffer, 2004: 69-80). In Lussier's film such conflicts can be represented by Van Helsing's loss of his wife when she left with his daughter upon discovering his preternatural immortality, and by Judas' rejection by God, the ultimate pater familias in Christian Western culture. The interaction between the cultist and their leader can be read as a deviant resolution to these conflicts as well as agreeing with Sharrett's postmodern female horror protagonist attaining sexual expression only by being assimilated into the dominant order (Sharrett, 1993: 100-110).

As Lussier's film concludes Mary can arguably be read as embodying the daughter who has won the oedipal struggle. She does not need to identify with her biological mother or the constricting hegemony that supplanted her. Simon's exposition on Van Helsing reveals to Mary that although he desired to recapture Dracula, it was because his primary concern was for her and only her. This is symbolic of a healing of the empathic rupture with the murdered father. Dracula's desire to take Mary as his bride codifies the incestuous attentions of the (narcissistic, substitute) dead father and cult leader are only for the (symbolic) daughter. Mary now symbolises the daughter who has won the love of both fathers in the face of an unavailable idealised mother's sublime dispassionate hegemony (Kieffer, 2004: 69-80). Mary breaks her relationship with Dracula and rejects vampirism in the film's denouement initially to his outrage but then arguably with his blessing in that he accepts his immolation. As well as symbolising the millenarian cult escapee survivor, this codifies a rejection of the substitute

(dead) father which represents a second empathic rupture. Out of this rupture according to Awad's discussion of Freud, arises the potential of replacing this dysfunctional relationship with one of a normative nature (Awad, 1993: 145-155). This is potentially symbolised in Lussier's film by Mary's acceptance of Simon.

Mary's acceptance of her biological father Van Helsing's immortal superhero mantle as guardian of Dracula's remains and protector of humanity against vampiric evil in Freudian terms also codifies her as a phallic woman. Returning to Mitchell's (1974) psychoanalytical perspective however Mary as superhero can also be read as symbolic of the empowered woman, again forming a cultural nexus with the millenarian cult escapee survivor trope. In possessing her spiritual father and having total control of his fate, the healing of another empathic rupture is symbolised as is the survival of the cult escapee. This empowerment remains in tension with her introjection of Van Helsing meanwhile which still arguably codifies an idealised posthumous expression of identificatory love. Mary still symbolises the daughter dominated by internalised paternal imagoes who in transcending the hyper-feminine child-woman to become the superhero cult escapee survivor has defined her concept of self out of defensive narcissism and given up part of her sexuality (Holmes, 2000: 207-226; Kieffer, 2004: 69-80; Mitchell, 1974: 131). Like all superheroes, vulnerability, humanity and sexuality can be read as having been sacrificed to vocational nobility but also to surviving in this new role. This oedipal victory, superficially at least appears consolidated, but at what cost? Mary codifies an oedipal victor daughter and cult survivor left with internalised guilt due to traumatic loss. She can be read as the empowered survivor isolated from humanity as her preternatural heritage and superhero role has been foisted upon her at the expense of a sense of agency, entitlement and autonomy (Ibid).

In Lussier's film, Mary is distanced from both her fathers by her mother. As a result, she codifies the survivor daughter whose sexuality has been repressed by the aberrant maternal imago and left unable to direct sexual impulses toward the introjected paternal imago out into the object world in order to fully invest in a fulfilling, procreative relationship (Holmes, 2000: 207-226). In Lussier's narrative conclusion this is symbolised by Mary's apparent emotive distance from Simon. Mary's nascent relationship with Simon in Lussier's film can be read as symbolising an attempt by the daughter to re-enact and master the oedipal trauma and empathic rupture left unresolved by the death of the father. This codifies a relationship problematised by legacy filial devotion (Kieffer, 2004: 69-80; Powell, 1993: 155-174). In this context, Mary's

narrative trajectory draws parallels with Sophocles' *Antigone*. Both characters share their father's heroic essence and in dedicating themselves to taking up his mantle, both can be read as compromising their chances of a fulfilling relationship with a potential partner. The sociocultural contradictions symbolised by Mary's cult survivorship and relationships are partially resolved in that the conflated cult leader father/lover is replaced with a loving partner. However, Mary's relationships also symbolise a conflict between maternal and paternal introjects that conspire to distance that partner and limit the potential of such a relationship. The narrative of Lussier's *Dracula 2000* therefore represents a problematised oedipal resolution and ultimately a hollow oedipal victory (Freud, 1924: 419-424). Whilst this narrative arguably centres on Mary, it is Dracula who is central to the film's psychohistoricist context.

### **5.3 Dracula's Neo-Fascist Millenarianism**

According to Nayar, it is a consequence of cultural anxiety that superheroes serve the human race and not set about creating one of their own (Nayar, 2011: 171-183). By making the enhanced human a servitor, a trustee of the human race we not only ensure that the other is incorporated into the larger project of humanity but also that the threat of the super-powerful other is alleviated. This is precisely what Lussier's film does with Mary's character. She represents Nayar's other that is not in an oppositional relationship with humans but in a supportive role to the human projects of preserving life, wealth, property and the law (Ibid). In this reading of *Dracula 2000*, Mary represents an establishmentarian catharsis of millenarian cultural anxiety, the stabilising altruistic force that would protect the people from millennial chaos. In essence she represents idealised government in the psychohistoricist context.

Lussier's *Dracula* by contrast is not subject to these moral constraints and therefore can be read as an opposing disestablishmentarian catharsis of that same anxiety (Hicks, 2000: 471-485). The millennium as co-opted by Western secular culture as a delineation of a thousand-year period has become a socio-temporal construct with subjectively ascribed meaning. The concept of the millennium originates in the Christian Bible in the Book of Revelation, portrayed therein as a great battle at the end of time between Jesus Christ and Satan, good and evil, followed by a thousand-year peace prior to judgement day (Barkun, 1974: 117-146). Apocalyptic millenarianism feeds on the uncertain, insecure and disoriented, as Lussier's *Dracula* feeds upon characters with these traits, the thieves, his brides, notably Lucy, and ultimately Mary. Millenarianism is defined by living in anticipation of the world's end and the dawning of a new epoch (Marchetti, 1997: 281-299). Vampiric transformation ends one's inner world, bringing

a new era of cursed immortality. Both centre on a collective fantasy of salvation, earthly immortality, an existential desire to halt chronicity, and a total transformation of life by supernatural agencies (Ibid). The gothic fin-de-siècle atmosphere of millennial New Orleans where antiquity collides and harmonises with modernity is a fitting locus for this microcosmic, transformative Armageddon of dystopian visions, human and vampire, and for this dyadic modern Dracula and ancient traitor. The urban environment as a homogeneous polyglot collective consciousness is an interaction of heterogeneous sociocultural enclaves, some characterised by disillusion, disaffection, disempowerment and disenfranchisement. Such an environment is the perfect breeding ground for cultist millenarianism as codified in Lussier's film by vampirism (Hicks, 2000: 471-485).

Lussier's Dracula in this context can therefore be read as the head of the ultimate transformative millenarian cult. From Klaus Theweleit's psychoanalytical perspective Dracula's cult can in turn be read as symbolic of millennial cults and their leaders, neo-fascist microcosmic cultures ranging from the more benign such as Chen Tao's Hon-Ming Chen to the extremely malign such as Heaven's Gate's notorious Marshal Applewaite (Theweleit, 1989: 200-208; Dein and Littlewood, 2000: 109-114; Howard, 2005: 99-130). The totalitarian ethos of unquestioning submissive obedience to the pseudo-messianic cult leader equates to Theweleit's fascist molar mass, whose destructive potential can be transmuted as fear of the other (Theweleit, 1989: 200-208). Millenarian movements espouse annihilation of the patriarchal old-world order, legitimising their own oxymoronic utopian and dystopian vision in its stead seeking past perceived perfection in modernity. This is arguably symbolised in Lussier's film as Dracula/Judas legitimises his hedonist views as he rants against Christianity (Ibid).

Such circumscribed neo-fascist movements receive and indoctrinate their adepts, providing no exit, and measure their success in terms of recruitment and retention (Lebra, 1972: 195-215; Barkun, 1974: 117-146). Once Dracula transforms his fin-de-siècle brides in Lussier's film, their indoctrination into vampirism is absolute. Millenarian cults generally do not favour ecological separation from wider society, they tend to leave their members entrenched within both social spheres. This strategy provides ready access to new, voluntary recruits, ripe for transformative resocialisation, the process of which is in turn shaped by that cult's degree of maturation and level of organisation (Ibid). This is again codified by Lussier's Dracula's cult of vampirism. He seeks adepts for transformative vampirisation. However, for Dracula and his

recruits, wider human society also constitutes their food supply. Dracula/Judas when read as a millenarian cult leader, exploits patriarchal psychosocial control in wider human society. This affords such neo-fascist leaders, arguably perceived as heroic or at least anti-heroic by their followers, a degree of social flexibility to accommodate their dualist stance. They are other, but they are among us. The vampire coterie in *Dracula 2000* mirrors smaller cult movements which maintain exclusive limited membership and are often longer lived (another vampiric parallel) than their larger counterparts that risk institutionalisation, mainstream integration and eventual dissolution from the collective consciousness as newer adaptive sociocultural norms pervade them (Ibid). For Dracula's vampires in Lussier's film this would equate to discovery and extermination by organised society rather than the small numbers of scattered radicalised hunters with expert knowledge that confront them.

The millenarian resocialisation process and Dracula's transformative vampirisation of others in this film share common promises of enlightenment, integration and commitment that compel their respective adepts to internalise a rejuvenated, transformed concept of self. Enlightenment in the millenarian framework refers to transformative cognitive reorientation experienced as revelation. The susceptible receiver awakens to a perceived universal truth according to a supernatural coda that the future is polarised, and the past is meaningless and confused. This pervasive fantasy of transformation from a primitive to a higher form in which the sexual body and godhead leader become symbolic of one another within a unitary and unifying experience is effectively the ultimate escapism, as explored by Freud in his 1910 essay 'Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood'. Enlightenment in this context can be represented in Lussier's film by the awakening of the nascent vampire from death. From this point the millenarian adept anticipates a reversal of patriarchal hierarchy where his kind attains supremacy and God's favour. In Lussier's film this is arguably symbolised by the spawn of Dracula seeking supremacy over humanity and Dracula's favour. To further this goal such cults often seek conversion of the prominent citizen as codified by the vampirisation of Valerie Sharpe. For Dracula's vampires read as millenarians, this sense of predetermined destiny couched in seduction by a supernatural, deific entity, elicits consent in the victimised believer (Lebra, 1972: 195-215).

Millenarian integration refers to the social engagement and intimate solidarity of the adept who is accepted as an individual within the community of believers that is governed by one charismatic, messianic leader. This leader is self-defined as an omnipotent agency of the

supernatural, as opposed to being recognised by separate roles and facets of being by many leaders within the intersecting hierarchies of wider patriarchal structure (Marchetti, 1997: 281-299). Such a leader justifies this position with a compelling confession of that which lead to his transformation. Lussier's *Dracula/Judas* can be read as embodying just such a messianic leader in that he embodies the supernatural and amasses a coterie of vampire adepts in opposition to Jesus Christ, whose role has been similarly eroded by secularity. Christ's role has arguably been replaced by leaders delineated within socio-political constructs. *Dracula* confesses such a transformation, the damnation of Judas, in an effort to convert Mary to his cause, vampirism. The millenarian leader's supernatural performances such as extemporaneous speech and telepathy are overtly symbolised by Lussier's Count, lending further credence to this messianic reading of the character. Millenarian resocialisation as symbolised by vampiric transformation in this context is finalised by commitment. The passive millenarian receiver becomes an active proselytiser which can be read as the nascent vampire making their first kill and incepting vampiric transformation in turn. Millenarian commitment is also epitomised by abandonment of material possessions, the old social system, and past relationships in favour of material and emotive involvement with the movement. This can be codified in Lussier's film by Valerie, Selena, and to a lesser extent Lucy, abandoning their old lives for material and emotive involvement with *Dracula*. The trade-off for the nascent vampire read as nascent millenarian is the promise of miraculous healing, belonging, and ultimately immortality (Lebra, 1972: 195-215).

The millenarian mindset is defined in psychoanalytic terms in Beverley Schneider's millennial review of Mortimer Ostow's 1995 work 'The Psychodynamics of Jewish Mysticism' which draws further parallels with Lussier's *Judaeo-Christian* narrative subtext (Schneider, 2001: 113-121). Schneider posits Ostow's work as pointing to the millenarian mindset being constructed as "the apocalyptic complex" epitomised by two psychodynamic features, fantasies of death/rebirth and merger/oneness (Ibid). Ostow opines that the apocalyptic complex is hardwired during the infantile experience and regulates both depressive and manic affect (Ostow, 1995: 45-83). This is a hypothesis cogent with Freud's theory that psychic trauma sustained during a crucial phase of infantile development manifests as a persistent obsessional neurosis that may be triggered again in later life as examined in his (1918) essay 'From the History of an infantile neurosis'. For Ostow that trigger is depressive affect which Schneider roots in millenarian alienation from the all-encompassing hegemony (Ostow, 1995: 45-83).

The millenarian thus seeks fixed imminent goals, earthly flesh-and-blood salvation, the mythology of the dead returning to life, and the comfort of belonging to a group dynamic that absolves them of individual responsibility. The vampire mirrors this as they seek their own imminent earthly salvation via the consumption of human blood. The millenarian binary dichotomy that all schemata are either millenarian/creative or apocalyptic/destructive can be translated as Dracula's vampiric dichotomy of consumptive/sustaining versus execution/destruction. Millenarian chosen believers vs. doomed non-believers can be emblematised by Dracula's chosen adepts (thieves, brides) vs. doomed prey (cameraman, doctors). This dichotomy illustrates the contrapuntal dissonance of dual consciousness that is the non-millenarian/millenarian dyad codified by its human/vampire diegetic counterpart. In Lussier's film, what is now vampire was once human, thinks and feels as a human transformed, and by necessity must live amongst humans. With many millenarian cults, death is the only means of cancelling membership, or of obtaining the cult objective of a utopian afterlife. Heaven's gate is one of the most pertinent examples (Dein and Littlewood, 2000: 109-114; Howard, 2005: 99-130).



**Figure 40:** Rock star, cult leader, traitor, and father.

Dracula and his vampire spawn meet their demises in the denouement of Lussier's film as per classical Hollywood narrative resolution. This is their only means of exit from the cult of vampirism. Mary in this conflated psychohistoricist context represents the millenarian cult escapee, one who has tasted millenarian enlightenment, contemplated integration, but ultimately rejected commitment. She arguably represents one who has unshackled herself of the millenarian comfort and sense of cultist belonging that vampirism symbolised and chose to find her own concept of self. Mary thus found true enlightenment as a higher being in her father's image, symbolising a healing of depressive affect in a Freudian sublimation by

accomplishing that which the millenarian seeks but is doomed never to acquire (Schneider, 2001: 113-121; Ostow, 1995: 45-83). Lussier's *Dracula 2000* can therefore be read as a socioculturally resonant search for personal truth during a period of high cultural anxiety, and one in which the seeker should not look without to external influences but within themselves if they hope to find it. Lussier's film then, perhaps more than any other in the Dracula canon, can be argued to embody the very crux of Freudian psychoanalysis (Freud, 1918: 1-118).

#### **5.4 The Return to Dyadic Repression in Sommers' *Van Helsing* (2004)**

Sommers' monster rally opens with the awakening of Frankenstein's monster as Richard Roxburgh's Dracula materialises in the laboratory. Dracula in this film has a long black ponytail, sports an earring, and emulates Lugosi's accent with an exaggerated camp inflection. Frankenstein is summarily dispatched by the vampire's bite. The iconoclastically moral monster is pursued by torch bearing villagers. Dracula takes flight as a bat-winged demon, arriving to see the monster plunge to its apparent doom. Hugh Jackman's antihero Van Helsing is introduced as the preternaturally strong, immortal, amnesiac left hand of God. His loss of memory is explicated as a penance for past sins. The duality of three of the central characters is now established. Dracula is presented as a human/demonic monster, Frankenstein's monster as monstrous/moral, and Van Helsing as moral/immoral. The film is predicated on Van Helsing's next assignment from the Knights of the Holy Order. He must protect the last living descendants of Valerious the elder, Anna and Velkan. Valerious cannot enter heaven until Dracula is vanquished. The next sequence aligns viewers with Anna (Kate Beckinsale) and her brother Velkan as the trapping of a werewolf goes awry leading to Velkan being mauled. Anna's duality of feminine/aggressor is established. The sequence concludes with Dracula raging against Van Helsing's destruction of his bride.

That night Anna awakens to a visit from Velkan now a werewolf in Dracula's thrall. Velkan now represents the human/monster dyad. Dracula seeks to utilise Frankenstein's machinery to infuse thousands of undead foetal vampires, his offspring, with life-force. His motive is arguably twofold, a desire for domination of the human populace and base paternal instinct. Another of Dracula's brides and wolfman Velkan are destroyed by Van Helsing, who is wounded and thus cursed by the wolfman. Anna is captured by the remaining bride who offers Van Helsing a trade, Anna for the monster. Dracula is finally revealed as Anna's ancestor, murdered by Van Helsing, who has made a pact with Satan for immortality via vampirism. This point foregrounds the theme of the repressed traumatic memory for the inflictor and the



inflicted. The dualist human/monster dyad is now ascribed to Dracula. Van Helsing and Anna enter Castle Dracula as his lycanthropy becomes apparent. In a canonical departure it is Van Helsing who is tainted and jeopardised by dualism. The wolfman's bite is revealed as being fatal to Dracula, but he possesses a cure as an insurance against this. Van Helsing takes wolfman form to kill the monstrous Dracula. Anna injects Van Helsing with the curative syringe but is killed by his bite. The epilogue finds the re-humanised Van Helsing lighting Anna's funeral pyre. Anna is depicted in ethereal form symbolising her admission to Heaven as Frankenstein's monster sails away. Van Helsing is the only character whose dualism is not resolved by death in a downbeat dénouement mirroring Siodmak's *Son of Dracula*.

As with Universal's previous monster rallies we can apply Steven Schneider's interpretation of the Freudian psychoanalytical paradigm (Schneider, 1999: 167-191). The monster characters in *Van Helsing* can also be read in terms of Freud's repression theory 'Das Unheimlich' or 'The Uncanny' (Freud, 1919: 219-256). To reiterate, Freud's theory is encapsulated by the dual semantics of the terms Heimlich and Unheimlich. Heimlich may mean known or familiar, so Unheimlich in this context refers to the dark side of the known and familiar i.e., known and familiar fears (Ibid). The binary dualism of Sommers' characters illustrated in this synopsis can certainly be read as once more embodying this concept of good/evil, and moral/immoral. However, Heimlich may also be defined in terms of the secret or unknown. Unheimlich in this second context is the revealing, uncovering, or confirmation of an unknown or intellectual uncertainty of that might best be left undisturbed (Ibid). It is this second context that is foregrounded in Sommers' monster rally as represented by Van Helsing and indeed Dracula, more so than in Kenton's films, and one that arguably warrants further investigation with regards to conceptualising psychoanalytical and thus psychohistoricist readings of the film's psychosocial resonances.

### **5.5 A Problematic Recovery from Repression**

Sommers' film can be read as symbolising the return of a repressed traumatic memory with subsequent psychopathological consequences. Freud defines primal or first phase repression as occurring when ideation representative of instinct is prevented from becoming conscious (Freud, 1915: 141-158; Brenner, 1958: 152-154). When fixation upon this ideation is established, the second phase which Freud termed repression proper occurs which then affects mental derivatives of the repressed representative. This repressed representative equates to a traumatic memory sequestered by the human mind as a defensive act against reliving that

trauma (Ibid). This memory is formed concurrently with the fight or flight mechanism as it is initiated by the amygdala. This memory effectively acts as a noxious foreign body lodged in the psychic construct, resulting in pathogenesis analogous to its physical, somatic counterpart (Blum, 2005: 295-311; Arlow, 1981: 488-514). This is distinct from forgetting, which is a function of condensation as memories are organised and constructed. Humans retain significant points as opposed to every singular event of nil import. In psychoanalytic terms such memories do not retain a preconscious cathexis although they may maintain an unconscious cathexis if linked to a significant event. Such memories are not consciously accessible but may be accessed in the unconscious by means of hypnotic regression (Schlesinger, 1970: 358-371).

Freud hypothesised two possible means for a repressed memory to bleed into the conscious from its secretion within the unconscious and trigger psychological pathogenesis. The first is the dual registration hypothesis whereby an auditory cue triggers this process. The second is the form hypothesis whereby it is triggered by internalised experiential cues. Attentional narrowing whereby only highly specified experiential cues are internalised is regarded to be a coping mechanism intrinsic to the repression process (Cohen and Kinston, 1984: 411-422). It is the form hypothesis that can be read as being symbolised by Van Helsing's interaction with Dracula in Sommers' film. The experience of Van Helsing's confrontation with Dracula codifies a cathexis to secondary repression resulting in a return of the repressed that triggers symptoms (Christianson et al, 1989: 289-310). These symptoms can be codified by Van Helsing's progressive lycanthropy and Dracula's impotence indicated by his failure to produce viable offspring in Sommers' film. The affected individual is compelled to repeat the experience, the traumatic memory of which has been repressed (Schlesinger, 1970: 358-371). There is no defensive counter-cathexis to which the individual can resort. This is textually codified by Dracula and Van Helsing's predestined return to their age-old conflict. The primal repressed experiential memory is symbolised in Sommer's film by Van Helsing's murder of Dracula in centuries past. The traumatic memory in Freud's framework represents the instinctual aggression of the id and its unrestrained drives. Van Helsing is potentially symbolic of the psychic response whereby an individual attaches guilt, fear of what he or she is capable of and thus fears of their own self-construct to the traumatising event. Dracula by contrast arguably represents dissociation from the traumatic memory by withdrawing into a relatively safe psychic space. The repressive sequestration of the traumatic memory is a function of the ego defending itself by withdrawing the preconscious cathexis of that memory and replacing it with an unconscious one that is retained within the psyche, resulting in what can be interpreted

in Freudian terms as a neurosis (Arlow, 1981: 488-514). In Sommers' film this neurosis is conceivably symbolised by representations of retrograde hysterical amnesia (Van Helsing) and emotional dysthymia (Dracula) (Christianson et al, 1989: 289-310).

Self-preservation in its most literal sense requires coherence in the ego's reactions to the external world as the ego ideal and superego claim moral unity and harmony from it. The ego defends itself via repression and other means to maintain freedom from conflict (Weiss, 1942: 477-492). In this respect however, repression is never absolute. It is a faulty psychic construct and a flawed defence. A self-destructive repetitive compulsion according to Freud's theories as interpreted by Sillman is intrinsic to the death instinct (Sillman, 1949: 124-132). When Van Helsing kills Dracula again in the denouement of Sommers' film, this symbolises an expression of the original repressed episodic memory as the later memory screens for the earlier event by compulsively repeating that event under changed circumstances (Szajnberg, 1993: 711-727; Christianson et al, 1989: 289-310). Episodic memories carry information about personally related episodes as opposed to semantic memory, which is conceived as general knowledge. Furthermore, in Sommers' film, Van Helsing's and Dracula's opposing alignments with radicalised monotheist Catholicism would according to Sillman's interpretation of Freud's framework, symbolise the repressed fantasy memory of the father's murder by the primal horde, on which Freud's repression theory is predicated (Sillman, 1949: 124-132).

Van Helsing killing Dracula in Sommer's narrative resolution can also be read as symbolic of a current circumstance acting as a retroactive causation of the present on the past. The repetition of the act causal of the repressed memory in this case would be perceived by the unconscious as traumatic in of itself (Baranger et al, 2018: 107-136; Arlow, 1985: 521-535). Van Helsing's vulpine form and Dracula's bestial demon guises are arguably symbolic of a conversion reaction in this context, which is a somatic manifestation of psychopathology. Such all-consuming symptoms represent a neurosis that has escalated to psychosis and are drawn from the id, whose cathexes have temporarily overwhelmed the ego. This altered state continues until tolerable levels of emotion are reinstated, as part of the repressed traumatic experiential memory is retrieved to consciousness providing a partial reintegration of the ego schism resulting from repression (Weiss, 1942: 477-492; Christianson et al, 1989: 289-310). In Sommer's film this is finally symbolised by Van Helsing's lycanthropy being cured by Anna and Dracula's vampirism being ended by Van Helsing. At this point a negation of the concreteness of the traumatic memory occurs in the psyche. It is replaced with an integrative

symbolic image predicated on a now accessible subjective experience requiring the surrender of protective false selves. This is again potentially symbolised by Van Helsing and Dracula's surrender of their bestial forms (Yahalom, 1967: 373-383; Brenner, 1957: 19-46). Recovery from repression is near complete upon exposure of the true self and the need for love. This is arguably codified by Van Helsing's expression of grief at having lost Anna, a primal howl/scream (Aron, 1991: 81-108).

All four of Sharrett's postmodern horror film criteria can be seen to converge in Sommers' narrative resolution. The dominant order that is simultaneously accredited and affirmed as Van Helsing obeys yet apparently leaves the Knights of the Holy Order. The atmosphere of unfettered sexuality that offers women status insofar that they are incorporated into the dominant order is codified by Anna's entering heaven. The recognition of a chaotic universe that is celebrated at the same time it is subdued is codified by the loss of Van Helsing's love in a hollow victory. Finally, the lionisation of the other only as a preface to its destruction or incorporation into dominant ideology is codified by Dracula's demise and the cure of Van Helsing's lycanthropy. Considering the synchronicity of the Iraq war and the film's potential psychohistoricist resonance with that conflict, Sommers' *Van Helsing* when read as codifying a problematic recovery from repression, warrants further exploration (Sharrett, 1993: 100-110).

### **5.6 Somatising Guilt in Unjust Wars**

Sommers' *Van Helsing* can be read as an allegory of war not always being just and its protagonists therefore not always being recognised as heroes in this context. Their associated guilt may be so damaging as to inflict metamorphic pathology. The dates of filming for *Van Helsing* invite a historicist resonance to be explored with regards to the 2002-2003 Iraq conflict within the wider war on terror. In ascribing resonant intertextual symbolism, we can again draw upon Sharrett's climate of sacrificial excess in the postmodern horror film and Theweleit's psychoanalysis of fascism (Theweleit, 1989: 200-208). The Knights of the Holy Order in symbolising Western governments, and Van Helsing the Western armed forces, both can be read as Sharrett's dominant orders that were simultaneously discredited and affirmed (Sharrett, 1993: 100-110). Sommers' *Dracula* in this context is symbolic of opposing Middle Eastern dictators, epitomising Theweleit's fascist who gains knowledge of the world without shifting from his own position and organises his world to be uniform by killing it if needs be (Theweleit, 1989: 200-208). Both symbolise Sharrett's other who is recognised and lionised prior to their destruction by a dominant order. The war on terror is thus arguably symbolised by the war on

supernatural beings in Sommers' film (Dunne, 2003: 257-277). According to natural law within Western tradition, sovereign states have a right to use force to uphold the good of the human community especially when unjust injuries are inflicted upon others. This is the humanitarian exception to current international law as mediated by the United Nations which favours legal and/or diplomatic sanctions (Ibid).

A sovereign or sovereign state may however use said humanitarian exception to mask its true *raison d'état* for declaring war. The Western allies' declaration of war upon Iraq for example, was to negate the threat of a supposed arsenal of weapons of destruction and to deliver the people from tyranny and the tortures inflicted upon them i.e., the humanitarian exception (Bellamy, 2004:131-147; Bluth, 2004: 871-892). The *raisons d'état* underlying the Western invasion of Iraq are however argued by many as economic (control of oil), strategic (maintaining an armed Western presence in the Middle East), and lastly to prevent a shift in world power from Christian to demonised Islamic patriarchy (which could be argued to represent the last vestiges of fascist colonialism) (Ibid). Iraq had challenged the centrality and unipolar hegemony of the West as perceived by those governments. An assault on Iraq would thus be viewed as a deterrent by other states considering a like challenge (Press-Barnathan, 2004: 195-212; Dunne, 2003: 257-277). In Sommers' film potential resonances can arguably be codified thus. The Knights of the Holy Order seek to negate the threat of Dracula's weapon of mass destruction, his army of foetal vampires, and the humanitarian exception is to deliver Anna Valerious' family unto heaven and the villagers from Dracula's predation. The Holy Order's *raison d'état* is to prevent a shift in the balance of world power from Christian Patriarchy to evil supernatural monarchy. Dracula challenged the centrality of the Knights of the Holy Order and unipolar global Christian hegemony as perceived by them. An assault on Dracula thus constitutes a deterrent to other supernatural beings considering a like challenge.

There is no single lawmaker sitting as an authoritative judge over international law. It sits within a variety of differing oppositional moral frameworks. Sovereign states within this incohesive network exploit weakness to promulgate and act upon their own viewpoints to their advantage as per Western administrations as symbolised by Sommers' Knights of the Holy Order. Opposition by any dissatisfied, subordinate agents is tolerated by such mono-hegemonic imposition such as the French opposition to the war in Iraq because outright conflict with them would have dire consequences (Bellamy, 2004: 131-147). The European tradition of holy war is defined by a propagation of endemic religion and establishing of social order aligned with

divine authority thereby enforcing religious compliance by punishment of deviation. The diametrically opposed combatants view one another as holy or unjust. Western administrations as codified by Sommers' holy order were aligned with Christianity and sought its propagation as a base ethos by covert means. Compliance with this ethos was enforced by punishing those perceived to deviate from it i.e., Middle Eastern dictators as symbolised by Dracula. In Sommers' war on the supernatural read as the Iraq war, to return to the earlier example, the combatants are similarly diametrically opposed in view. Whilst the Iraq conflict could conceivably be read as a holy war, it would be simplistic to ascribe holy war as the primary motivation for the actions taken. A holy war overtly instigated by a Western power would not be tolerated by its peers. For the Iraq war, it could be argued to have been an underlying motivation adjunctive to others. This is also arguably symbolised by Sommers' Knights of the Holy Order.

To return to the natural law argument, a just war must be justified upon evidence that the elements of natural law violated are transparent to onlookers. Said violations must be demonstrated to be widespread and systematic. Using force to preserve those affected by said violations should save more than it injures. For the Iraq war, violated elements of natural law were vociferously espoused but lacked transparency to onlookers. Sommers' Knights of the Holy Order again codify such opacity. Violations of natural law were argued to be widespread and systematic in Middle Eastern dictatorships for instance (Antoon, 2003: 34-37). Sommers' Dracula's parallel intentions could be argued to codify these. Ultimately more people were injured or killed than saved in the Iraq war. Western involvement in Middle Eastern wars in this context war as symbolised by Sommers' war on the supernatural can be argued to be unjust, covertly holy wars. Both sets of protagonists will be valorised by some and vilified by others as per Sharrett's lionised other (Sharrett, 1993: 100-110).

Sommers' film and the Western involvement in Middle Eastern war typify the ethics of many high concept action films of the superhero genre in this respect. The use of extreme force by a superpower/hero to subdue or destroy the villain(s) is deemed acceptable as long as lip service is paid to supposedly minimising innocent casualties despite untold damage to infrastructure leaving survivors destitute. The survivors are depicted by Hollywood as being grateful in line with Western government expectation with regards to survivors of Middle Eastern war. War is not always just so its protagonists may not be recognised as heroes or they may be cast as murderous villains. Van Helsing even denounces this during the conclusion of the film. Factors

such as perceived costs, both economic and human, the prospects for long term progress, and consensus support all have influence. In times past history may have been written by the victors. From the 20<sup>th</sup> century onward, it is recorded on multiple formats. Future historians will make their own judgements (Voeten and Brewer, 2006: 809-830; Boettcher and Cobb, 2006: 831-854).

Van Helsing's and Dracula's somatically manifest psychopathologies, lycanthropy and metamorphic vampirism can be read as potentially resonant with the emergence of Gulf war syndrome in this context. Within psychoanalysis, psychological disorders manifesting with physiological symptoms are classified (albeit with incomplete discretion) as either conversion disorders or somatisation disorders, as outlined in Carveth and Carveth's paper (2003: 487-508) 'Fugitives from Guilt: Postmodern Demoralization and the New Hysterias'. In conversion disorders, hysterical symptoms mimic organic disease and dysfunction whilst evidence of organic pathology remains absent. By contrast in somatisation disorders, organic pathology becomes evident that is believed to stem from somatisation of psycho-emotive constructs that affect persons with a certain physiological predisposition (Taylor, 2003: 487-508). The aetiology of both is rooted in a conscious quasi-physiological or physiological expression of unresolved unconscious psychological distress and/or conflict or in Freudian terms, a neurosis (Freud, 1893: 1893-1895).

It is at this psychohistorical nexus that Sommers' Van Helsing and Dracula characters can be argued to be potentially symbolic of Gulf War syndrome in which the unresolved, repressed, unconscious conflict results in a neurosis. Conscious actions can be argued to be in opposition to the internalised morality construct. A strong sense of duty and responsibility prevents acknowledgment of this conflict. Unable to accept conscious guilt, the psyche implements self-punishment (Carveth and Carveth, 2003: 487-508). That self-punishment is a somatisation disorder, the outward organic pathology that is unconsciously drawn from the surrounding sociocultural dynamic and existential knowledge of the afflicted (Engel, 2004: 321-334). Van Helsing's lycanthropy and Dracula's demonic transformation arguably codify somatisation disorders drawn from their supernatural diegesis. They are symbolic of paranoid associations with pervasive conspiracy theories on exposure to toxic agents that inform the symptoms of Gulf War syndrome. Engel's paper on 'Post-War Syndromes: Impacting the Impact of the Social Psyche on Notions of Risk, Responsibility, Reason and Remedy' (2004: 321-334) demonstrated that such contemporary sociocultural influence effectively distinguishes post-

war syndromes from one another, maintaining valorisation of the sufferer and divorcing them from the unjust nature of the war. He suffers because he has fought in *this war* and is not merely afflicted with a known condition. He can be argued to be Sharrett's lionised other subsumed into the dominant order (Sharrett, 1993: 100-110).

For Sommers' Van Helsing, his initial murder of Dracula can be read as symbolic of an inception of an unconscious guilty conflict that is perpetuated and exacerbated by subsequent acts perceived as immoral, for instance that codified by his killing of Velkan. Dracula's failure to defeat Van Helsing, resulting in this murder codifies likewise. In Gulf war syndrome, this unconscious guilty conflict comes with witnessing or committing acts violating natural law in an (arguably) unjust war and is also perpetuated and exacerbated by subsequent such acts (Carveth and Carveth, 2003: 487-508). As Sommers' narrative progresses Van Helsing's and Dracula's conditions deteriorate. This again symbolises the somatisation disorder in which organic pathologies worsen until the unconscious guilt underpinning them finds conscious acceptance and expression. The somatisation disorder as posited by Taylor in his paper 'Somatization and Conversion: Distinct or Overlapping Constructs?' is a passive phenomenon, embodying a failure to symbolise states of instinctual or emotional arousal, which escape psychic elaboration and affect the soma (Taylor, 2003: 457-508).



**Figure 41:** Flawed Dictators

To negate this requires a restoration of the associated object lost to repression in defence against unconscious guilt as the symbol guiding that emotional schema. Van Helsing's recognising his initial killing of Dracula as just symbolises the restoration of the associated object and resolution of a guilty conflict. The cure for lycanthropy in Sommers' film can thus be read as



symbolising the psychoanalytic resolution for a somatisation disorder, as does the ending of Dracula's vampirism. The psychanalysis of Gulf War syndrome such as that conducted by Carveth and Carveth or Taylor facilitates restoration of objects associated with violation of natural law and involvement in an unjust war. This in turn transforms emotion schema to conscious acceptance of guilt, alleviating the physiological symptoms of Gulf war syndrome as a somatisation disorder (Carveth and Carveth, 2003: 487-508; Taylor, 2003: 457-508).

### **5.7 Freudian Totemic Oedipality in Dario Argento's *Dracula* (2012)**

Argento's film opens with Dracula's (Thomas Kretschmann) depredation of village girl Tanja. Dracula does not metamorphose from a bat during this assault, but from a barn owl. The totemism of this metamorphic motif pervades the film and sublimates transgressive vampire sexuality albeit to a lesser extent than in previous Dracula films (Rao, 2005: 97-124). Argento's Dracula presents as a juxtaposition of the youth of Lussier's Count and the sibilant aristocratic menace of Franco's vampire. Harker rides to the village of Passburg where he visits his wife Mina's best friend Lucy Kisslinger (Asia Argento). He is then hired as the Count's librarian, referencing the first film in the Hammer cycle. Argento's narrative again conflates Dracula with Vlad Tsepes, prior to his eventual destruction. Tanja who is now Dracula's vampire bride, attempts to bite Harker, but she is cast aside by Dracula who claims ownership of him with the line "he is mine" before biting him, as in Fisher's 1958 film. Harker attempts to escape but is bitten again by Dracula, this time metamorphosing from a wolf. Mina arrives in the village in search of her missing husband where she visits her confidante Lucy. It quickly transpires that the local villagers have a pact with the Count. His vampiric predation of the local populace is tolerated in return for his financial largesse. This defines the character as a benevolent dictator which is a construct cogent with that of the totemic leader in Freudian psychoanalytical theory (Rao, 2005: 97-124). Dracula takes Lucy as his next vampire bride. Mina (Marta Gastini) approaches the local priest for help who summons Van Helsing (Rutger Hauer). He is portrayed as a grizzled mercenary as opposed to the conventional wise patriarch.

The village elders hold a meeting and decide upon opposition to the Count. A swarm of flies coalesces and metamorphoses into Dracula who violently dispatches them for this disloyal dissolution of their pact. Sharrett's affirmed dominant order is again discredited in this postmodern horror film as the benevolent dictator renounces his benevolence in the face of proletarian opposition (Sharrett, 1993: 100-110). The vampire Lucy arrives at her tomb with a child victim and is dispatched by Van Helsing. Patriarchy once more punishes feminine sexual

transgression. In a disquieting scene redolent of Claudia's death scene in Neil Jordan's 1994 *Interview with the Vampire* Van Helsing stakes the child before giving the standard exposition on vampire lore. Tanja is quickly staked. Both Lucy and Tanja thus equate to Sharrett's conditionally empowered female archetype (Ibid). Dracula meanwhile in the incongruous form of a giant praying mantis arrives at Lucy's house where he kills her father before reverting to humanised form and kidnapping Mina. Dracula's interaction with her reintroduces the narrative trope of Mina as Dracula's reincarnated lost love. As in Coppola's film, she is initially reluctant but then accepting of the Count's affections including his consummative bite. Van Helsing stakes the vampire Harker once more symbolising patriarchal punishment of homoerotic sexual transgression as in Fisher's film. Mina breaks from Dracula's thrall and shoots the vampire through the heart with a garlic bullet but must forego her empowerment and submit to patriarchy. He turns to dust. The film ends with said dust swirling from the ground as a dust-devil that embodies a growling wolf in one final metamorphosis, implying the survival of Dracula's spirit to the spectator.

The villagers in this film, if we apply Freud's theory as outlined in his 1913 essay 'Totem and Taboo' can be read as a totemic culture, between the state of primitive man and the age of gods and heroes (Freud, 1913: 1-91). Argento's metamorphic Dracula is sublimated as feared and dangerous animal totems as a wolf, owl, plague of flies (disease) and a giant mantis. Such totemic animals within this framework will spare the tribe providing they do not deviate from their prescribed patterns of worship as symbolised by the villagers' servile pact with Dracula. This likewise represents the sternly observed commandment and restriction that Freud ascribes to totemic social control and that Theweleit equates with the fascist leader (Theweleit, 1989: 200-208). In this context Dracula as an immortal vampire can arguably be read as symbolising what Freud termed a tribal totem, shared by the whole tribe and inherited by subsequent generations. The totem is expected to warn of death by appearing within the vicinity of the individual about to die. This aspect of totemic culture is certainly applicable in a totemic reading of Argento's film but so is the corresponding schism in this construct in that the totem may well be responsible for that death (Freud, 1913: 1-91).

Violation of the taboos which protect the totem in such a culture according to Freud's theory as drawn from his reading of Frazer, is punished by serious disease or death which again converges with the psychology of fascism when Theweleit's theories are applied (Ibid; Frazer 1910). This is symbolised by Dracula's violent reaction to the villagers' rejection of his pact

with them. Finally, the ritualised manner of Dracula's death in Argento's film constitutes the ceremony whereby totemism is rejected by the tribe mediated by an immigrant sociocultural influence as embodied by Mina and Van Helsing. In terms of Freud's essay this returns us to the killing of the primal father to liberate the woman symbolised by Mina in Argento's film, and the guilty son being finally denied the liberated woman as symbolised by Harker's death. Argento's Dracula can therefore be read as symbolic of these two fundamental taboos of totemism by embodying the two repressed wishes of the Oedipus complex, the killing of the father to possess the mother (Freud, 1913: 1-91).

### **5.8 The Omnipotence of Argento's Narcissistic Benevolent Dictator**

Argento's Dracula can be read as representing the narcissistic zenith of benevolent dictatorship. The narcissistic benevolent dictator as a cultural archetype is exclusively focused on the possession of the object as opposed to the altruistic benevolent dictator who is concerned with the benefits of those they lead (Bar-Hillel and Margalit, 1988: 119-145; Fabiani, 2013: 113-136). This can be codified in Argento's film by Dracula's seeking to rectify the object loss of his wife by possessing Mina as his wife's reincarnated form. The narcissistic benevolent dictator seeks to accomplish their personal objectives at all costs but also partially engages with Freud's reality principle in that they recognise that a creative division of labour is required to bring their goals to fruition (Freud, 1920: 1-64). They come to believe that the most important work can only be done collaboratively, which requires a partial relinquishing of the object (Whitehouse-Hart and Taylor, 2012: 75-95). However, their inherent narcissism dictates that control of goal attainment must be maintained. To maintain that control, benevolence is employed as a stratagem to manipulate and coerce others (Freud, 1914: 67-102). Rewards are proffered from a position of power and authority that are accepted by others in return for the rendering of the exact services required to attain this type of benevolent dictator's desired goals. This epitomises a leadership style that is overtly transactional but covertly autocratic and from the psychoanalytic standpoint, indicates a desire for omnipotence (Ibid).

As discussed by Whitehouse-Hart and Taylor, Donald Winnicott defines omnipotence in this context as a benign form of illusion that is necessary for the infant to orientate to reality (Winnicott, 1971: 90-92). In infancy, this concerns the move from subjective-object relationships, of which omnipotence is a feature, to relationships with objects as objectively perceived i.e., not under the infant's magical control. This move occurs only when a facilitating environmental provision is provided and occurs in a 'third' or 'intermittent' space, which is

between inner and outer worlds. He states, adaptation to the reality principle arises naturally out of the experience of omnipotence and the relationship to 'subjective objects' within this third area (Ibid). The narcissistic benevolent dictator however can be read as not having relinquished this omnipotence, and so remains couched in unresolved infantile narcissism with a cogently underdeveloped ego and absent superego (Freud, 1914: 67-102). Hence their engagement with Freud's reality principle is only partial (Freud, 1920: 1-64). This partial engagement suffices for the benevolent dictator to realise the key to maintaining their omnipotence is the manipulation of subordinates, by effectively containing them within a social microcosm akin to Winnicott's third area. Such manipulation connotes an underlying, omnipotent state and is a means to implement it with regard to effects desired in the self or others in the outside world. For the narcissistic benevolent dictator experiencing object loss, the self is not whole and is unstable, and must likewise be controlled.

This position is conceivably symbolised in Argento's film by Dracula's coercive pact with the local villagers, and his plot to obtain Mina. Dracula and his vampirism in this film can thus be read as representing the benevolent dictator who has sought a pathological, dissociative, extreme state of omnipotence to compensate for the pain and trauma of object loss. This is the intersection of benevolent dictatorship and narcissism in an over-compensation for what is perceived by the benevolent dictator as the loss of the object equating to a loss of self. Such a need for power and control can be ascribed to populist leaders such as Italy's own Silvio Berlusconi amongst others, whose subtextual fascist ideologies are cloaked by that very populism. The psychohistoricism of narcissistic populist Italian benevolent dictatorship as codified by Argento's film will be explored further. Returning to Horowitz and Arthur's framework, Argento's Dracula symbolises yet another narcissistic leader. Any disappointment is denied by way of exaggerated use of (vampiric) power. Argento's Dracula again takes whomever he wants, either possessing them as narcissistic objects (Lucy, Mina) or rejecting them as worthless (Harker) (Horowitz and Arthur, 1988: 135-141). He likewise embodies the controlling, manipulative patterns of such a leader. The key difference is that Curtis', Hammer's, and Franco's Draculas can be read as narcissistic leaders who control others by threat. Argento's Dracula by contrast codifies the benevolent dictator by manipulating others with the promise of conditional benefits.

The benevolent dictator draws further parallels with other narcissistic leaders in that their self-perceived omnipotence can also be regarded as an extension of the concept of self, a self that

can be regarded as distributed in concrete experience and rooted in animistic conceptions of life-force (blood) and power (physical aggression, conscious manipulation of others) (Gutmann, 1973: 570-616). For the narcissist, vulnerability to the effects of powerlessness is reinforced by perceived omnipotence. Any thwarting of the narcissist results in schisms of the perceived omnipotent state and of the self (Klein, 1958: 84). This can trigger narcissistic rage and the benevolent dictator will then cease to be benevolent and will resort to aggressive, violent, overt autocracy. Referring again to Horowitz and Arthur, self-righteous narcissistic rages are states of mind related to a continuum including fear of humiliation and chronic embitterment and occur when a person who is usually composed becomes intensely, vengefully hostile as an exaggerated response to an insult. The self-righteous rage state is described more succinctly as a full-bodied and sometimes exhilarating expression of towering indignation (Horowitz and Arthur, 1988: 135-141). This threat to the narcissistic benevolent dictator's self-perceived omnipotence is taken as an insult to self-esteem. During the height of the rage others are assigned an inferior status (Jacobson, 1946: 129). This is symbolised by Dracula's killing of the village elders and Lucy's father when the villagers dissolve their pact with him. Argento's *Dracula* again symbolises the narcissistic leader whose rage leads to his destruction when it consumes his judgement. His loss of control over Mina during his rage fuelled assault on Van Helsing allows her to take her fatal shot. Crucially this narrative point can also be read as symbolic of the benevolent dictator who has lost control of his subjects (codified by the villagers) when this loss of judgement equates to the loss of benevolence that maintains that control. The underlying trigger is when the object (codified by Mina) is again lost. This concept will now be extrapolated in reading some of the sociocultural resonances of Argento's *Dracula* in the psychohistorical context, but with the caveat that said resonances are qualified by the marginality of the films. Argento's *Dracula* is not a seminal interpretation of the novel such as Browning's film, an iconic reimagining of that text like Fisher's, or an innovative and iconoclastic reinvention such as Coppola's. Rather, Argento's film again illustrates the exhaustion of the monstrous version of Dracula as per Wood's prediction, recycling many tropes from previous Dracula films. That said, some shards of resonances, undeveloped though they are, seem to speak to their time and place.

### **5.9 Dracula and the Neo-Fascist Legacy of Italian Populism**

Barry Richards' 2013 critique of Adorno et al's psychoanalysis of fascism suggests that the origins of the authoritarian personality of a fascist populist leader can be seen in a certain pattern of childhood experience that led to an intense and conflicted relationship with authority

(Richards, 2013: 124-142). Such individuals were often raised by overbearing and emotionally distant parents resulting in them developing a powerful rage against their parents for this emotionally depriving and punitive regime. These nascent fascists however do not express their rage against their parents. Instead, both in fear and in the helpless love of a child for its parents, such individuals identify with the repressiveness they've suffered, and go on to manage their rage by becoming an intensified version of the father. In adulthood this leads them to project their rage on to an outsider group perceived as an externalised threat. When such individuals identify with one another the authoritarian or fascist state merges in the unconscious mind with a paternal imago that embodies the father's cruel authority and repressive aims (Ibid). It is within this shared ethos that fascism as populism arguably has its roots. To be read by his cohorts as a populist benevolent dictator the nascent neo-fascist leader must partially engage with Freud's reality principle by recognising that a creative division of labour is required to actualise their objectives (Freud, 1920: 1-64). These objectives align succinctly with Klaus Theweleit's psychoanalysis of fascism whereby savage and predatory expropriation has transformed socialist pleasure in common property into repeated demands for the right-wing populist neo-fascist protection of private property, making ownership the touchstone of survival (Theweleit, 1989, 200-208). It is this psychoanalytical synthesis that can be applied to the populist neo-fascist leadership hierarchy of the Italian mafia outlined by Barzini.

Barzini refers to a lowercase mafia that is a state of mind, a philosophy of life, a conception of society, and a moral code (Barzini, 1964: 278-303). He paints the Sicilian mafia as an ant-colony or beehive, a loose and haphazard collection and heterogeneous groups with each obeying entomological rules, submitting to the will of its own feudal leader (read narcissistic benevolent dictator) and with each group imposing its own form of primitive justice. This benevolent dictatorship is known in such circles as *l'amico degli amici*, the friends of friends. When friends do favours for friends, those favours are returned, and protection is given by the benevolent dictator leaders. If the code of conduct or pact is disregarded or disrespected or favours are not given unquestioningly when the benevolent dictatorship asks for them, then sanctions will be levied, and those sanctions can take the severest form. It is at this cornerstone that the lines between law breaker and law enforcer blur. Rank within these disparate groups is determined by how a combination of fearlessness and obedience is perceived and valorised by the wider group, in short, it is determined by populism (Ibid). It is at this nexus that the psychoanalysis of neo-fascist benevolent dictator leaders within the mafia socio-political microcosm can be applied to the macrocosm of contemporary Italian populist politics, and it is

this same nexus that can potentially be read as being codified by Argento's *Dracula* from the psychohistorical perspective.

Fella and Ruzza examined the rise and fall of Silvio Berlusconi's Italian centre-right coalition, from its successful emergence in the mid-1990s in the wake of the collapse of the previous party-system to its demise with the resignation of Berlusconi in 2011. They framed the downfall of the coalition in terms of internal contradictions exacerbated by the adoption of a populist strategy which masked differences between the coalition partners and led to political and economic realities being ignored. Evocative populist incantations aroused expectations among voters (the benevolent dictator's pact) which could never be met, not least because of the contradiction between Berlusconi's anti-elitist discourse and the pursuit of his own private interests (Fella and Ruzza, 2013: 38-52). Berlusconi can therefore be read not just as a narcissistic benevolent dictator, but as one who emulates one of Barzini's archetypal Sicilian Mafiosi leaders, even sharing similarities with Barzini's description of Benito Mussolini (Barzini, 1964: 278-303). Mirroring a mafia leadership challenge, a financial crisis (in 2008) and its aftermath, coupled with allegations about Berlusconi's private life alienated previously supportive social actors such as the northern entrepreneurial bourgeoisie and the Catholic Church. At the same time, the creation of the People of Freedom (PDL) out of previously separate political parties made it more difficult for Berlusconi to manage tensions within the coalition and led to greater questioning of his leadership. The friends of friends had become fractious. The legacy of this anti-political approach enabled new populist movements to emerge and re-direct anti-political rhetoric against parties of the centre right. In particular a new potential benevolent dictator offering another populist pact to the people, has like Berlusconi, emerged from the media sphere. Beppe Grillo followed the populist tradition in Italian political culture with his continuing appeal of charismatic leadership.

According to Bordignon and Ceccarilli (2013: 427-449), comedian Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement (M5S) lay at the junction between different organisational models and conceptions of democracy. It has horizontal structural elements but a top-down decision-making process and is positioned beyond ideologies, whilst its electorate comes from various political families. The parallels with the populist and arguably fascist leadership hierarchy of the mafia leadership as analysed by Barzini are therefore both stark and immediate (Barzini, 1964: 278-303). Grillo's concept of political representation building upon that first initiated by Berlusconi proposed by the M5S should be understood as representativeness, read as an alternative to the

distance between citizens and politics. Grillo and Berlusconi want to be seen as of the people and for the people by promoting the anti-elitist approach of populist rhetoric, which harks back to the virtues of the people as the source of political legitimacy. It is a rhetoric that is used to legitimise the sanitised fascism of the centre-right that obfuscates the demonisation of the other as invasive and the vulnerable as parasitic in the more socially acceptable if undoubtedly immoral cloak of patriotic nationalism (Bordignon and Ceccarilli, 2013: 427-449). As with their mafia counterparts, Berlusconi, Grillo and their international cohorts such as Donald Trump are charismatic showmen. They know all the rhetorical techniques to enthuse their chosen audience. Bordignon and Ceccarini outline that the aim is to underline their extraneousness to the establishment. Exclusion and underestimation are by extension, the lot of their people as well (Bordignon and Ceccarilli, 2013: 427-449). Although Bordigno and Ceccarini apply this analysis specifically to Grillo, it is equally as applicable to Berlusconi and Trump. All are part of their public, the guru and preacher of a new religion. All are great divulgers who can be seen to ascribe to populist liberation through destruction of the other, as outlined by Theweleit (Theweleit, 1989: 200-208).

Their political followers likewise parallel the servitude to the mafia of the average person as demonstrated by Barzini (Barzini, 1964: 278-303). Such leaders have a political pact to provide economic benefits only for their people, as long as those people do not seek to challenge any other aspect of their leadership, or there will be sanctions often in the form of increasing austerity. This returns us to Richards' and Theweleit's psychoanalysis of fascism (Richards, 2013: 124-142; Theweleit, 1989, 200-208). The narcissist benevolent dictator's egotistic maintenance of power and need for authority is a battle for order waged within their own unconscious that resonates with that same battle as experienced by their less capable followers. Therefore, both Richards' and Theweleit's psychoanalysis of fascism can be seen to be not just applicable to narcissistic benevolent dictators but also to the right-wing populist ethos that propels them to positions of political authority (Ibid). The need for order in an economically and politically uncertain climate thus leads the populace in to the pact with the populist. The populace accepts a certain degree of financial predation by the populist benevolent dictator's capitalist backers in exchange for their own perceived economic benefit.

It is this psychoanalysis of the Mafioso politics of populist benevolent dictatorship that can be codified by Argento's *Dracula*. The villagers form the same pact with Dracula for the same reasons at the risk of sanction (in their case bloody massacre) for non-compliance. Dracula thus



represents the narcissistic Mafioso benevolent dictator whose benevolence has clearly defined limits. In a final parallel Argento's *Dracula* and Silvio Berlusconi eventually became undone by their own arrogance. Is this a parallel that is applicable to all right-wing populist leaders? If we draw a lesson from modern and more recent history, the answer may be a tacit yes, taking Mussolini, Grillo, and Trump as examples.



**Figure 42:** The Narcissistic Benevolent Dictator

### **5.10 Superhero Identity in Gary Shore's *Dracula Untold* (2014)**

Shore's film essentially presents Dracula as a superhero origin story commencing with the now standard narrative conflation of Vlad Tsepes and the Count. The film opens with the still human warrior prince Dracula (Luke Evans) and his military reconnaissance party finding evidence of Turkish encroachment on to Transylvanian soil. This leads Dracula to track the Turks to the mountain cave where the cursed master vampire (Charles Dance) is imprisoned. The vampire is trapped in the cave by a demonic pact until it can find its replacement. The film continues with the Turkish military leader Hamza Bey arriving at Dracula's Easter feast to take the Sultan's tribute and demand one thousand Transylvanian boys for his Janissary corps. Dracula realises domestic politics and the need to maintain peace demands that as part of this he must give up his own son to the Sultan as once happened to him. He is unable to give up his child and brings Transylvania to war with the Turks. Realising Transylvania's meagre military forces are outclassed, Dracula returns to the cave of the master vampire to drink its blood and gain its superpowers. These are described by the master vampire in true superhero style as the strength of a hundred men, the speed of a falling star, and the ability to see and hear through the senses

of the creatures of the night. This casts him in the same light as other Jungian comic book wise mages, the ancient one of Marvel's *Dr Strange* for instance, but he also echoes earlier filmic Draculas. This empowerment comes at the cost of an insatiable thirst for human blood thus jeopardising Dracula's family and friends as per superhero comic book coda, an example of which is the anger of Marvel's *Incredible Hulk* (Leterrier, 2008). In this film this instance marks the birth of a dark superhero borne of personal vengeance against injustice akin to DC comics Batman, or Marvel's *Wolverine* and *Blade* (Crutcher, 2011: 53-72). This concept is embodied in Dracula's line "sometimes what the world needs is not a hero, sometimes what it needs is a monster" (Bukatman, 2011: 118-122). Dracula is now cast as the hero or at the very least the antihero. As such sympathy for the vampire can be argued to be truly engendered. Wood's charge of obsolescence is also countered. The obsolete cloaked sexualised predator archetype is now not just transformed by romanticisation as in Coppola's film or even modernisation as in Lussier's. It is completely discarded in effecting total iconoclasm in the production of a new heroic archetype. Wood's charge that a sympathetic Dracula would become a superman however is substantiated (Wood, 1983: 175-187).

The film continues as per superhero origin narrative convention with a montage demonstrating the hero's new superpowers which are used to devastate the invading Turkish forces. The next sequence is predicated upon Dracula's resistance to his thirst and his revelation of his new superhero identity to his wife. This immediately dooms her to death as convention dictates that the secret of the identity of a superhero may only be safely kept by another superhero or their mentor (Ndalianis, 2009: 3-86). Dracula's opponent Mehmet is now cast as the archetypal supervillain, who sends a Turkish skirmish party to slaughter Dracula's people (Gresh and Weinberg, 2004: 7-17). Dracula uses his vampire powers to once more defeat his enemy and eventually them to his people, again marking them for death. Dracula defeats his Turkish enemies in the film's penultimate battle but at the cost of his wife's life and son's kidnap at Mehmet's hand. Dracula drinks his dying wife's blood to render his powers permanent in order to save their son thus releasing his mentor from imprisonment. He converts his surviving forces to vampirism and dons his dragon armour. This motif immediately equates to his superhero costume in this film. Drawing parallels with Marvel's *Avengers* and DC's *Justice League*, he leads this superhero team against Mehmet's army. He defeats the supervillain and his henchmen and rescues his son, overcoming Mehmet's silver coin trap which in this context can be read as Dracula's kryptonite. All superheroes have ascribed vulnerabilities as a truly invincible superhero would defy all narrative tension (Ndalianis, 2009: 3-86). When his

erstwhile superhero team come for his son's blood, he realises that he cannot unleash the evil of vampirism upon the world, so he sacrifices them and himself to the sun's rays, charging his priest with his son's safety. However just as all superheroes must have vulnerabilities, many of them according to narrative convention have a recuperation clause (Ibid). For Superman it is solar energy, for the Green Lantern it is his green lantern. For Shore's Dracula as with other cinematic Draculas (particularly Hammer's), he is restored by blood brought to him by a faithful servant. Shore's film ends with an epilogue set in modern times. This reintroduces another narrative trope that has become standard by this juncture. Dracula encounters a woman who appears to be the reincarnation of his lost wife. She introduces herself as Mina. He is clandestinely watched by his Jungian wise old mentor.

Crucially, Prince Vlad chooses to become a vampire in order to take on the vampire's powers in Shore's film. In doing so he chooses to construct the superhero identity of Dracula. This sets him apart from superheroes whose powers happen upon them by circumstances of birth (Superman, Wonder Woman, and Thor), or chance accident (Spiderman, the Hulk) and aligns him with others who have similarly chosen to construct themselves as superheroes such as Batman, Iron Man, and perhaps most notably considering the character's supernatural attributes, the sorcerer Dr Strange (Crutcher, 2011: 53-72). As already demonstrated Shore's Dracula complies with many of the tenets of superhero narrative convention but he crucially symbolises one in particular from the psychoanalytical perspective. Dracula in this film as with these other superheroes codifies a split identity. Shore's Dracula will firstly be placed in Brownie and Graydon's framework to examine the construction of the character's superhero identity before moving to Robert M Peaslee's psychoanalytical perspective on the split identity symbolism that it codifies (Brownie and Graydon, 2016: 151-161; Peaslee, 2005).

When Dracula initially adopts vampirism, he is emblematic of the superhero that conceals otherness, to snatch moments of being liberated from the responsibilities of the superhero lifestyle and the extreme attention it garners. The character already garners enough attention as the ruler of his people, drawing a retrospective parallel with *He-Man* in this respect. He can also be read as a monster like the *Hulk*, as demonic like Mike Mignola's *Hellboy*, or as an evolved human like Marvel's *X-men*. Whereas other superheroes such as *Spiderman* are able to maintain this civilian disguise as a similarly retrospective participant observer, due to his own diegetic circumstance, Shore's Dracula cannot. He must give up any semblance of covert ordinariness bar recollection (Brownie and Graydon, 2016: 151-161; Peaslee, 2005). His

constructed vampire superhero persona by necessity quickly supersedes his central human alter-ego, leaving neither identity entirely complete. Travis Langley's psychoanalytical work on DC's Batman proposes that superheroes are tripartite characters, the civilian, the superhuman, and the real man (Langley, 2012: 352). Shore's *Dracula* draws an immediate parallel in that he is the warrior leader, the vampire superhero and the real man. Of course, there are further facets to the latter, such as husband, father and friend that are encountered in the diegesis, and it is these that are eventually overwhelmed by the vampire in the film, leaving the character seeking to return to them in its epilogue.

To return to Sharrett's sacrificial excess in the postmodern horror film this superhero *Dracula* affirms his own dominance as a vampire but discredits the dominant order of vampires in the film's final battle. The unfettered sexual expression of the female vampires he creates that are subsumed into this dominant order is a given. The carnivalesque chaotic universe of battle is both celebrated and subdued in *Dracula*'s victories. *Dracula*'s recreation as a superhero is recognised and lionised as such but like the Hulk, Batman and Wolverine he is both destroyed and resurrected into dominant ideology (Sharrett, 1993: 100-110). Peaslee outlines areas of emphasis within the literature addressing superheroes as divided into four psychoanalytical sub-categories (Peaslee, 2005). Firstly, the superhero acts as a locus of wish fulfilment and thus a return to primary narcissism. *Dracula* in this film symbolises a cathartic attainment of the sheer omnipotence required to accomplish this return. Secondly the superhero has a mythic function, both in an American and supra-national context. Shore's *Dracula* as with many other superheroes, epitomises a myth of deliverance and redemption, textually symbolised by the deliverance of his people and his child, and his own blood salvation. Thirdly, the superhero emblematises the material pressures of social institutions or what might be more succinctly termed the morality construct. The masochistic asceticism of this particular *Dracula*'s character construct can certainly be read in those terms. Finally, there is the ongoing discussion of the superhero's oedipal function. Peaslee points out that the superhero persona almost always acts as an impediment to the alter ego's possession of the female. The superhero is the figure of power and authority, whereas the female is the object of oedipal desire (Ibid). This is arguably symbolised by the narrative trope of *Dracula* losing his wife and seeking out her reincarnation that again recurs in this film, albeit at the very end.

This leads us to a hermeneutic nexus in psychoanalytically interpreting Shore's *Dracula Untold*. The unconscious in the form of the perceived moral responsibility of the hero to the

society he has come to protect, represses oedipal desire and causes the resurfacing of the mythic superhero identity, which is essentially an unconscious/conscious split that returns us to another facet of the narcissistic benevolent dictator. It is this split that will now be examined further.

### **5.11 The Repressed Superhero Unmasked**

Drawing upon the work of Mark Ligorski and returning to Sillman, Baranger et al, Weiss and others, Shore's *Dracula* as Vlad the man and *Dracula* the superhero vampire can arguably be read as symbolic of the masked superhero. This is an archetype which is itself a metaphor for the split between conscious impulses and unconscious repressed impulses presenting as a dualist persona in the psychoanalytical context. In such a dyadic schism, Vlad symbolises the sensitive facet of the persona, the loving husband and father who can provide intimacy but is weak and ineffectual in providing for his family and protecting them. *Dracula* by contrast codifies the opposing facet, the emotionally distant tactician, the strong provider and protector, the virtuous rescuer. Shore's *Dracula* now symbolises the inner conflict of Ligorski's masked superhero (Ligorski, 1994: 449-64). The emotional interpersonal persona desperately craves closeness, intimacy, and physical affection from the partner but is too pathetic to be protective. The superhero persona rises to any challenge, but the expression of a personal desire cannot be allowed as it would interfere with the job at hand. Shore's *Dracula* draws a parallel to Ligorski's allusion to Superman in that both symbolise this catch twenty-two interplay between an alter-ego existence that alternates between the heroic self and the weak, ineffectual self. When both facets of the persona become necessitated by circumstance there is no tension to resolve the split of the ongoing ego/alter-ego duality (Ibid). If anything, Shore's film can be read as codifying what happens when there is a tension to maintain the split. Narcissism may further contribute to this tension as the heroic leader persona will garner craved attention and valorisation. Shore's *Dracula* therefore can also be regarded as symbolising another benevolent dictator in this respect. The resolution of the split can be regarded as a double-edged sword of Damocles in this context and can be read as the negative outcome of a Freudian psychopathological drama (Sillman, 1949: 124-132). Ligorski inferred that Freud suggested the development of the masked superhero archetype in his description of the progression from conscious to unconscious conflict, essentially an unconscious/conscious split, and quoted the psychoanalyst as follows (Ligorski, 1994: 449-64).

Thus, religious drama, social drama and drama of character differ essentially in the terrain on which the action that leads to the suffering is fought out. And we can now

follow the course of drama on to yet another terrain, where it becomes psychological drama. Here the struggle that causes the suffering is fought out in the hero's mind itself — a struggle between different impulses, and one which must have its end in the extinction, not of the hero, but of one of his impulses; it must end, that is to say, in a renunciation. But the series of possibilities grows wider; and psychological drama turns into psychopathological drama when the source of the suffering in which we take part and from which we are meant to derive pleasure is no longer a conflict between two almost equally conscious impulses but between a conscious impulse and a repressed one (Freud, 1942: 461).

In Shore's *Dracula Untold*, the repressed unconscious as potentially codified by the vampire superhero Dracula is temporarily overwhelmed by the conscious as codified by Vlad the man. Whereas Sommers' *Van Helsing* symbolises the return of the repressed, Shore's film symbolises its inception. The moment that the repressive sequestration of the traumatic memory occurs can be symbolised by the death of Dracula's wife, the one person the vampire wished to save but could not, as he was elsewhere killing his enemies and was temporarily returned to his more vulnerable human state by a sunbeam before he could reach her (Weiss, 1942: 477-492; Christianson and Nilsson, 1989: 289-310).

Returning to the earlier discussion on repression with regards to Sommers' *Van Helsing*, the repressive sequestration of the traumatic memory is a function of the ego defending itself by withdrawing the preconscious cathexis of that memory and replacing it with an unconscious one that is retained within the psyche, resulting in what can be interpreted in Freudian terms as a neurosis (Freud, 1893: 1893-1895). The repetition of the act causal of the repressed memory in this case would again be perceived by the unconscious as traumatic in of itself. This repetition of the traumatic act in Shore's film is codified by Dracula's continued killing. Dracula's vampiric form can thus again be read as symbolising another conversion reaction in this context. As discussed earlier this symptomatology represents a neurosis that has escalated to psychosis, which is drawn from the energies of the id, whose cathexes have temporarily overwhelmed the ego. This altered state or alter-ego continues to dominate the conscious until tolerable levels of emotion are reinstated, as part of the repressed traumatic experiential memory is retrieved to consciousness providing a partial reintegration of the ego schism resulting from repression (Taylor, 2003: 487-508; Baranger and Baranger, 2018: 107-136). As aforementioned, Shore's film symbolises the inception of repression not its resolution. The

attention this alter-ego receives is also the foodstuff of narcissism. The maintenance of this conscious/unconscious split is arguably symbolised by Shore's epilogue to this film.

The masked superhero vampire continues to drink blood, but it is inferred in that epilogue that Vlad the man has taken back some control from Dracula the vampire, thus codifying a return to the conscious repression of the unconscious. Yet narcissism also dictates that the valorised heroic alter-ego may never be entirely suppressed, so the superhero identity construct here draws more parallels with the narcissistic benevolent dictator. What would be the point of a superhero if they were not lionised as such? In any superhero narrative the heroic alter-ego can be read as feeding on the attention of mere mortals. There is arguably no incentive for the superhero to protect them if all these mortals do is demonise that superhero, but if the superhero protects them only to maintain a position of power through that very valorisation, then that is a fundament of benevolent dictatorship. To return to the repression also codified in Shore's narrative, the beginning of the retrieval of the traumatic experiential memory is perhaps symbolised by Vlad encountering the inferred reincarnation of his bride in a 21<sup>st</sup> century city at the very end of the film, but there is no symbolic resolution yet, no return from repression. Shore's superhero vampire's bereavement draws parallels with Batman's loss of his parents, Spiderman's loss of his uncle, and Superman's loss of his entire planet. In order for the superhero to continue to exist as a dual persona the repression and its splitting of the conscious and unconscious must be maintained, ergo there can be no resolution of repression for the superhero as this would codify either utter (superhero) invincibility or a return to (human) vulnerability to the spectator. If our superheroes were entirely invulnerable then we as viewers could not identify with them. They must share some inherent weakness with us and have that weaker human facet in common with us in order to elicit our sympathy. However, if they are totally human there is no fantasy catharsis for the viewer in watching them. Shore's superhero vampire is the first cinematic Dracula to elicit such sympathy without caveat as his vampirism (here constituting superpowers) unlike others in the canon can be read as being borne of altruism. Wood's charge of obsolescence, if not his charge of Dracula becoming superman, is now fully countered (Wood, 1983: 175-187). Dracula is now a superhero and superheroes as a sociocultural archetype are far from obsolete as evidenced by the ever-expanding Marvel and DC cinematic universes of recent years. In sum, Shore's Dracula as with other superheroes symbolises those instances where circumstance renders the return from repression impossible because survival and/or narcissism dictates the maintenance of duality is the more advantageous state where the alter-ego is the best ego defence (Taylor, 2003: 487-508).

### **5.12 Dracula Retold as a Mythic Tragedy of Leadership**

It can be argued that Dracula as a cinematic character has often been emblematic of leadership since at least the mid-twentieth century. From the latter half of the Hammer cycle through to Lussier's messianic traitor, the cinematic Count can be read as a narcissistic cult leader (from *Taste the Blood of Dracula* onwards). The twenty-first century has presented us with Sommers' and Argento's vampire dictators. The cinematic Draculas thus far however have a single character trait in common; even the more sympathetic renderings of the character such as Curtis' and Coppola's love-struck Counts are all antagonists. Shore's superhero vampire breaks the mould. The character not only represents the lead protagonist, but a leader protagonist. One potential reading of the film's symptomatic meaning then, is that Shore's *Dracula Untold* is allegorical for the need to lead and the need for leadership in twenty-first century Western culture. Hannah Piterman's paper on the challenges of leadership posited that the idealisation of the market economy has perverted the spirit of competition, rendering it uncontained, without boundary, and devoid of superego (Piterman, 2010: 180-206). She argued that this idealised state is underpinned by a culture of rationalism untempered by reflexivity that has enveloped capitalist society in a belief system and behaviours which are regressive, and which have seen an increasing failure to separate reality from fantasy. In this context we can read fantasy as super-heroism. Piterman goes on to point out that narrow success indicators have rewarded an adolescent notion of masculinity manifested in excessive heroics, toughness, and risk taking, leading to aggressive and exclusionary dynamics that have seen the repudiation of the feminine with the resulting loss of capacity for reason, moderation, and boundary (Ibid). Whilst Piterman was theorising about the corporate financial leaders whose adherence to this value base was arguably instrumental in orchestrating the global financial crisis of 2008-2009, it can certainly be argued that this same value base and resultant behaviour pattern was equally applicable to the right-wing political leaders of 2014-2015 inclusive of David Cameron in the UK, Tony Abbott in Australia, Vladimir Putin in Russia, and the Republican opposition to Barack Obama in the USA. The resultant and ongoing global political unrest overseen by these leaders was ultimately centred on their opposition to their countries accepting migrants fleeing poverty, political turmoil and conflict (Demos, 2013: 1-20). As symbolised by Dracula's negotiations with his Turkish overlords in Shore's film, many of these conflicts are emblematic of deeper political tensions and machinations between regions. Shore's *Dracula Untold* has thus brought us full circle in some respects, drawing parallels with earlier psychohistoricist readings of Murnau's and Browning's films. Shore's film allegorises the tough, risk-taking aggressive and excessively (super) heroic occidental leader. He can be read as another



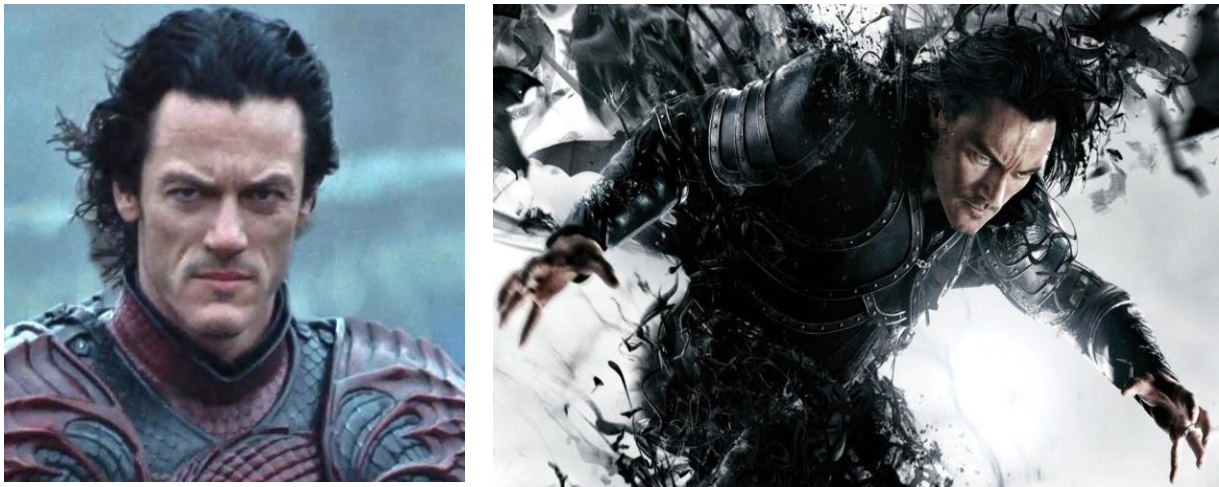
benevolent dictator who seeks to unify his people in rejection of the perceived invasive oriental other as codified by Dracula's opposition to the invading Turkish army. The crucial difference of course is this valorised Dracula arguably no longer embodies the stigmatised other. Resolution to such crises comes at a price and is confounded and problematised by confrontation and loss. It cannot be absolute, as represented by Dracula's final battle of the film. This symbolism is common to many contemporary superhero films. Both Superman in Zack Snyder's 2013 *Man of Steel*, and Marvel's eponymous superhero team in Joss Whedon's 2015 *Avengers: Age of Ultron* codify super-heroic leaders, even benevolent dictators, who similarly take aggressive risks and emerge victorious against the invasive other represented by Kryptonian fascists and a rogue artificial intelligence respectively. As with Shore's Dracula they do so at the cost of devastated landscapes and untold numbers of casualties in their respective conflicts. Does Shore's film also codify that which draws us to such superhero leaders?

Individuals are often driven to self-impersonation through the pressure of public expectations but also from their own intrinsic narcissism (Doniger, 2004: 101-125). For most of us this is the mask of professionalism we don to meet the expectations of work colleagues and superiors, or the insincere affection affected for the benefit of a barely tolerated relative and the subsequent prevention of familial discord. Political leaders however don the mask of leadership, authority and gravitas to be considered a worthy actor on the world stage. This is the symbolic mask of the superhero. The spectator arguably derives a dual fantasy catharsis by transiently identifying with the powerful mythic persona of the superhero (Abel, 2014: 187-208). Myth in this context requires emotional participation and ritualised recollection. To the ancient Greeks a myth was a sacred narrative presented as entertainment explaining how the world and man came to be in their present form. The superhero film can be read as a similar contemporary narrative that likewise addresses the viewers' needs to ameliorate their own cultural anxieties. Shore's Dracula encodes the tragic Greek mythical hero such as Oedipus Rex or Hercules more so than a conventional hero archetype. Where the conventional mythical hero fights his way through to victory or at least to some degree of resolution, there are no such solutions for the tragic hero. The tragic hero is enmeshed in pain and perplexity and must make conscious choices and accept their consequences (Orfanos, 2006: 481-499). Again, parallels with the self-enforced distanced emotional isolation of DC's *Batman* or *Superman*, or Marvel's *Spiderman* or *Hulk*, can be drawn. Power for such heroes comes at the cost of conventional human companionship. Shore's Dracula (as does Coppola's and Curtis' Counts) loses his wife.

Whilst the modern political leader usually comes with a de rigueur socially acceptable partner, it is leadership that must take precedence in order to be perceived as a leader or benevolent dictator. It is here that myth, ancient or modern, intersects with Freudian psychoanalysis (Ibid). Freud framed myth as mirroring the inner perception of one's own psychic apparatus which stimulates thought illusions that are projected onto the outside and, characteristically, into the future. He regarded them as a means to understand our anxieties, both personal and cultural, in terms of being reflections of our psychic internal world. Freud further elucidated that myths could be interpreted like dreams, and given that associations were absent, psychoanalytic knowledge of symbolism could be used to elucidate the meaning of myth (Freud, 1900: 33-50). This offers a means to interpret cultural anxiety as symbolised by postmodern myth.

Returning to the postmodern superhero myth then, the viewer's identification with the superhero provides this dual catharsis in the guises of a satisfying taste of (unattainable) power and consumerist status by imagining oneself as the superhero, and the comforting safety of being protected from the perceived external threats posed by the invasive other by imagining oneself as the follower of such a powerful and inspirational leader. It is this cultural trope which meshes with the admiring followers of the benevolent dictator (Snyder-Young, 2013: 81-94). *Dracula Untold* even provides the mechanism for this act of secondary imagination on the viewer's part by encoding the archetypal family romance narrative fantasy, whereby the spectator imagines himself ordinary only by virtue of being adopted by an ordinary human family but is able to attain extraordinariness by being returned to his natural extraordinary family and extricating his associated birth right (Glassman, 2013: 116-119). Shore's *Dracula* is adopted by the human Turks but is returned to his royal bloodline where he attains his vampire superpowers. He emblematises a superhero leader of nations as do other heroic symbolic godheads such as Marvel's *Thor* or DC's *Wonder Woman*, and thus meets the viewers' need for this dual fantasy catharsis. The parallel with benevolent dictatorship can again be drawn here. Whilst *Thor*, *Wonder Woman* and the *Black Panther* can be read as just leaders, as with Shore's *Dracula* they are absolute monarchs not elected leaders (Young, 2013: 48-56). In times of intermittent conflict, population upheaval and thus cultural anxiety, it can be argued that the populace seeks that same dual fantasy catharsis from its political leaders, albeit whilst adhering to the necessary caveat of Freud's reality principle. Instead of being godlike heroes they are ordinary people whose success inspires emulation to meet those same underlying needs (Orfanos, 2006: 481-499). As with the ancient Greek myths of Oedipus Rex etc. upon which Freud drew when developing his theory of psychoanalysis, the postmodern

superhero myth as epitomised by Shore's film addresses the questions of inaction and agency and fate versus free will (Ibid). The human desire for agency and the fear of its loss to perceived alien cultural influences in addition to these underlying desires for status and protection can therefore be seen as going some way toward explaining the attraction to and tolerance of right-wing territorial aggressive risk takers who are indeed perceived in some quarters as (super) heroic in these positions of political power. Returning to the psychoanalysis of fascism, they can be argued as being perceived by some as being able to meet those basal desires (Jahoda, 2009: 243-249; Richards, 2013: 124-142; Theweleit, 1989, 200-208).



**Figure 43:** Man, and superman, the dyadic superhero leader unmasked.

Shore's *Dracula* offers a postmodern secularised re-interpretation of the tragic mythic hero. Reframed as a superhero, he can be argued to codify the empowered right-wing political leader who even as a neo-fascist benevolent dictator still offers a consumerist path to status and protection from the barbarians at the gate when science and consumerism has left postmodern Western culture with no gods to pray to. The trouble is that if such a leader incites conflict and rejects the perceived other as catharsis for an irrational fear of them at a cultural level, then that leader and his followers become the barbarians and must accept the consequences of those actions. This is the genesis of sanitised postmodern fascism in the post-truth era (Hassler-Forest, 2012: 21-69). Shore's *Dracula* ultimately sacrifices his followers for the new world he seeks to create. In accomplishing this goal in the film's epilogue, he finally represents the leadership of a culture that becomes isolated and is left longing to return to the world left behind. Considering the rising tide of global nationalism from 2014 onward, *Dracula* has therefore remained topical from the psychohistorical standpoint in terms of synchronicity.

Wood may have argued that the cinematic character became obsolete, and the archetypal cloaked romantic predator did, even if Wood's superman did not (Wood, 1983: 175-187). For Dracula, obsolescence was the mother of reinvention.

### **5.13 The Post-Millennial Dracula Film Cycle**

#### **Lost Fear and Valorising the Leadership of the Other**

The tolerated subcultural otherness that carried within it a disestablishmentarian insurgency in the latter half of the twentieth century had begun to seek out its own leadership. This can be read as having escalated into a cultural need for populist leadership that has become more pronounced as the twenty first century has progressed. Dracula as portrayed by Gerard Butler can be placed at the commencement of his 21<sup>st</sup> century film cycle within vampire theory as a subculturally valorised other. He was an attractive non-conformist, whose influence over his inner circle and need to indoctrinate his spiritual daughter paralleled the messianic leaders of early twenty-first century millenarian cults which met the same needs of the disenfranchised and disillusioned for leadership and direction as did the cultist movements of the long sixties (De Vries, 1999: 109-133). There was some sympathy for the vampire here, more so than for previous cinematic incarnations of Dracula. This was an anti-hero Dracula with the conventionally attractive good looks and bad boy rock star swagger of his *Lost Boys* contemporaries and was arguably informed by the success of that film from a commercial perspective, although conversely this film could certainly be considered a seminal reimagining of Stoker's text resonant with its sociocultural and psychosocial milieu in many respects. The spectator was arguably meant to be attracted to him and indulge in a cathartic imaginary emulation of him as per the millenarian cult leaders he symbolised (Lebra, 1972: 195-217; Barkun, 1974: 117-146). He was not there to be feared. Wood's argument for Dracula's obsolescence can be regarded as having been fractured by Lussier's *Count*. It was not Dracula that became obsolete but our need as viewers to fear him as a cinematic character represented by the cloaked romantic predator (Wood, 1983: 175-187). Lussier's *Count* was still the villainous antagonist, so sympathy for Dracula was not yet absolute. In this film, Dracula still encoded Freud's vision of the dominant oppressive patriarch (Freud, 1924: 419-424).

The transformation continued in Sommers' commercially focused reimagined Universal monster rally *Van Helsing*. Sommers' Dracula was a camp pantomime villain designed to act as a foil for the Hollywood anti-hero and can be regarded as disdainful rather than fearful (Douglass, 1981: 30-39), although this interpretation could be argued to apply to Carradine's

and Chaney Jr's respective characters in *House of Dracula* for much the same reasons. The need to fear Dracula had certainly been discarded by this juncture. He no longer embodied death from which there is no protection, no warning, and no escape. Unlike Universal's previous monster rallies, his primary adversary sans cure was as superhuman as he was. The victims of the Count outside of the surviving protagonists were no longer subject to a continual loss of means of escape until there is no safety and no hope of safety. The only protagonist to die was Anna and this death was not even at Dracula's hand. The combinations of insight and accident that emphasise the protagonists' fatal errors and produce horror for them and vicariously for us as spectators were absent (White, 1971: 1-18). The character of Dracula in Sommers' film symbolised the repressed opposing combatant and flawed dictator who makes immoral choices out of the fear of his own mortality. He even symbolised the dysfunctional parent who wants the best for his offspring and to please his partner but chooses the wrong path to meet these needs (Hadley et al, 1993: 348-356). Whilst far from symbolising the hero to be valorised, Sommers' Count can therefore equally be argued to be not as entirely representative of polarised evil as previous cinematic Draculas. There are shades of grey apparent that invite the spectator to identify with the character. Whilst viewer sympathy for this antagonist is equally likely to be far from polarised, it is reasonable to suggest that it may not be entirely absent either (Williamson, 2006: 29-51). In drawing a symbolic parallel with Middle Eastern dictators, it must be remembered that even they can have the sympathy of and be valorised by some loyal followers even as they are despised by their opponents. These opponents may be read in some instances, as arguably symbolised by Sommers' Van Helsing, as just as flawed and thus not entirely entitled to the moral high ground in an unjust conflict (Graham-Brown, 2003: 12-23). Dracula still symbolises a dysfunctional leader at this point but the shift towards his symbolising a populist cultural leader and acting as the wider focus of deeper human needs to lead and for leadership now began to pervade the film canon as it did Western society (De Vries, 1999: 109-133). This concept in terms of vampire theory can be regarded as the post-millennial Dracula film cycle, as conceptualised here, driving the progressive metamorphosis of Dracula as a post-millennial cinematic character towards his eventual reconstruction as a valorised hero. Dekker's Dracula had represented agency being dispelled in favour of the other as an object of blame, becoming a pervasive cultural scapegoat absolving individual responsibility. Sommers' Dracula symbolises not only the acceptance of otherness but that otherness now being regarded as a leadership attribute. Dracula's otherness could now be read as representing agency rather than as a threat to it (Ecclestone and Hayes,

2009: 122-145). The fear of the otherness that the cinematic character represented was now utterly superseded.

This brings us to Argento's *Dracula's* symbolism of the totemic leader and narcissistic benevolent dictator. A flawed dictator is not entirely feared but can be argued to be more feared than revered. The benevolent dictator's relationship with his followers such as the twenty-first century populist right-wing leaders and their followers as potentially embodied by Argento's *Dracula* and his mutually beneficial socioeconomic pact with his own followers is built upon such a leader being equally feared and revered. The benevolent dictator can still be read as a narcissist in psychoanalytical terms as being in a dysfunctional ego driven love affair with their own omnipotence. In a psychohistorical framework they further represent the cultural rather than the cult leader. It is arguably the nature of fear rather than its loss that is critical to a reading of Argento's *Dracula* as a benevolent dictator compared to his filmic forebears (Gleicher and Petty, 1982: 86-100). The followers' fear of a benevolent dictator is conditional. Their followers need only fear them if they cross, reject, or disobey them. If they tow the collective line then the socioeconomic benefits of doing so such as a sense of belonging, protection from external threats, and access to financial and material gain remain on offer. In terms of vampire theory, Argento's *Dracula's* representation of leadership can be read as the first that straddles the nexus of fear and respect as opposed to being predicated on control and a fear of reprisal. *Dracula's* otherness read as agency was conceivably cemented and the character had shifted further still from his oppugnant origin. This left *Dracula's* progression as a cinematic character within this twenty-first century film cycle with only one option that could not be considered regressive or obsolete. *Dracula* as a cinematic character would have to symbolise a leader that could not only be identified with, but truly admired by the conventional viewer. To do that would require his transition from diegetic antagonist to hero protagonist. He would have to become Robin Wood's superman (Wood, 1983: 175-187).

This transition came with Shore's *Dracula Untold*. As a postmodern superhero myth, it can be read as allegorical of the viewer's dualist cathartic identification that provides a taste of power and consumerist status by imagining oneself as the superhero and the comforting safety of being protected from the perceived external threats posed by the invasive other by imagining oneself as the follower of such a powerful and inspirational leader (Snyder-Young, 2013: 81-94; De Vries, 1999: 109-133). *Dracula* in this film emblematises the valorised heroic leader who sacrifices all for the sake of his people, but also the valorised right-wing leader whose

choices isolate those same people. With regards to vampire theory, the character's now super-heroic otherness epitomises the zenith of human agency that is the cultural leadership of a nation state. Otherness is no longer feared by this juncture, it is valorised. It is also still problematised in some respects. To allow the superhero leader to textually symbolise perfection is to deify him. The viewer is then distanced and alienated from them by a lack of recognisable human commonality. This schism is addressed in the superhero narrative by the introduction of human flaws. The superhero is valorised for their otherness provided they are not deemed too other. Shore's *Dracula Untold* introduces flaws by symbolising the repression of intimacy and trauma that the valorised cultural leader endures to present a strong façade to the world. This facade must inspire their followers whilst intimidating their enemies to elicit respect and maintain that leadership (Ibid). Dracula's journey to superheroism was however preceded and then paralleled by another female counterpart, vampire superheroine Selene (Kate Beckinsale) in the *Underworld* film franchise (USA, Len Wiseman 2003, 2006; Patrick Tatapoulos, 2009, Mans Marling, 2012; Anna Foerster 2017), which when also considering Joss Whedon's *Angel* and *Spike* a decade previously, and *The Twilight Saga* film adaptations of Melissa Rosenberg's books, alludes to that it was not just Dracula who inevitably had to take up the superhero mantle but the cinematic vampire per se, and arguably for the same reasons underpinned by the same psychohistoricist resonances explored in this chapter.

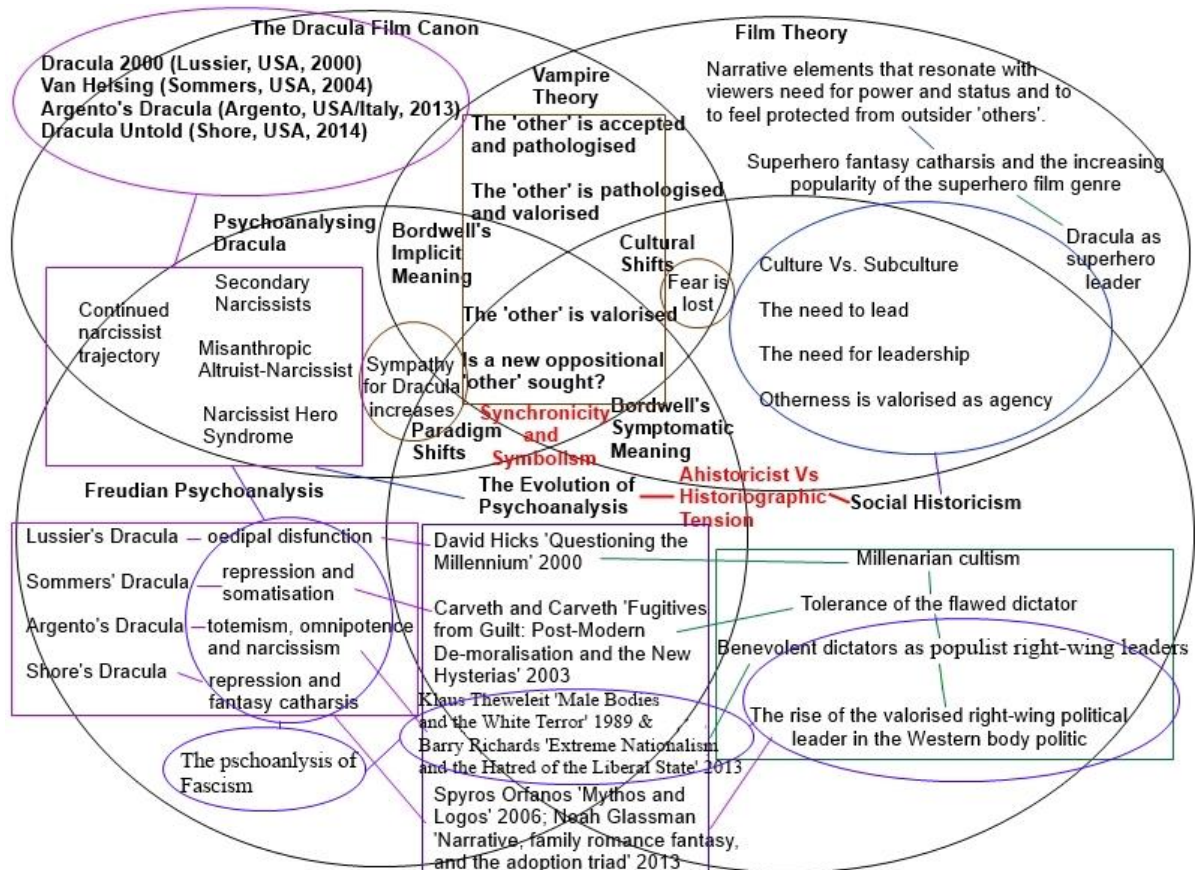
Kletner and Haidt's referral to Max Weber's analysis of charismatic leadership is particularly salient in this context (Keltner and Haidt, 2003: 297-314). Weber noted that social groups settle into patriarchal or bureaucratic modes of organisation which are fairly stable. These bureaucratic movements transform society from the outside. As material and social orders change, the people change with them. In times of crisis such as the political upheaval in Western culture symptomatised by the rise of right-wing nationalism in the second decade of the twenty-first century, the people may overthrow these stable power constructs in favour of transferring their allegiance to a charismatic leader who awes the masses by performing miracles or acts of heroism. This can be argued to be the heroic defence of territoriality in the face of the invasive, competitive other as perceived by some (Weber, 1978: 1111-1158; Keltner and Haidt, 2003: 297-314). Charisma is currency in the cult of celebrity, and what are twenty-first century populist cultural leaders if not the ultimate celebrities? (Rieber and Kelly, 2014: 103-115). Such leaders bring about revolution from the inside according to Weber by changing people who go on to change society. This pattern of leadership is certainly symbolised by Shore's vampire superhero and the followers he infects with his vampirism in order to purge

his country of the invasive other, but it also intersects with the psychoanalysis of fascism as posited by Richards and Theweleit, drawing parallels with Kracauer's reading of Murnau's *Nosferatu* exploring the rise of Nazism as elements of history once more repeat (Richards, 2013: 124-142; Theweleit, 1989, 200-208). There was little left to explore in filmic narrative terms should the Count remain firmly in the role of the antagonist. This brings us to the fourth self-reflexive stage of parody that typically arises to parallel genres (Harries, 2000: 1-23). This is where recycling will arguably continue to occur within the Dracula film canon as each will likely eventually be parodied in turn as the canon expands and progresses toward its next conceptual shift in the face of cultural change (Harries, 2000: 1-23). Conceptualisation of Dracula now undergoes necessary radical shifts for the cinematic character to avoid cultural obsolescence. The loss of fear of Dracula in cultural terms was arguably almost absolute as Argento's 2013 film was released. Argento's Dracula was less parodic than Sommers' Count but in representing the archetypal benevolent dictator as typified by contemporary right-wing populist leaders, codified the other that was to be feared and revered. Dracula here begins to be valorised, which returns us to the only narrative trajectory open, so Dracula finally became the flawed superhero (Stewart, 1982: 33-50). When otherness as symbolised by Dracula's vampire powers is finally co-opted as agency and is thus valorised as representative of heroic leadership, the character cannot reasonably ever be feared again. If the fear of the character is now truly obsolete, have we as viewers now found a new otherness to fear or are we just choosing someone else to symbolise the same otherness that Dracula as a cinematic character once represented? That is a paradoxical conjecture that cannot easily be solved here, if at all. What is certain is that we as viewers have now chosen to accept Dracula as a hero and potentially the psychohistorical symptomatology of what that symbolises. If we accept Weber's viewpoint then Shore's Dracula arguably emblematises the leaders that Western culture currently seeks and perhaps that is one possible reason why viewers might identify with the film's narrative (Weber, 1978: 1111-1158).

Harries third stage of parody, intellectualisation and expansion of increased variation within the canon, is epitomised by the reinvention of Dracula as a more sympathetic character in Coppola's film (Harries, 2000: 1-23). Dracula went on to embody the bad boy rock star persona incepted by Anne Rice's Lestat character in Lussier's Dracula 2000. Again, this is a more sympathetic vampire, but epitomises the anti-hero more than the hero. This is an epithet that would define the cinematic Count for the first decade of the twenty-first century and can also be seen to be applicable in Jonathan Rhys-Meyers' televisual incarnation for NBC in 2013. This



stage was first effectively parodied by *Dracula Dead and Loving It* (Mel Brooks, USA, 1995) targeting Coppola's film and its many predecessors. However, it is arguably Roxburgh's pantomimic portrayal of Dracula in Sommers' *Van Helsing* that parodies Lussier's millennial bad boy. These parodies signified that the narcissistic other as codified by Dracula was now less pathologised and more accepted as a sympathetic character but had reached another conceptual saturation point (Stewart, 1982: 33-50).



**Figure 44:** Mapping the theorised liminal spaces of the evolution of Dracula's progressively iconoclastic cinematic character during the first two decades of the twenty-first century.

From one point of philosophical tension, we must now return to another. In hermeneutic terms the tension between the arbitrary ascription and conscious recognition of symbolic meaning when reading films and the cycles that they inhabit from the standpoint of synchronicity in a psychohistorical framework again remains (Baydala and Smythe, 2012: 842-859). However even as the cinematic character's narrative shift is now complete within this latter cycle of films, Dracula still palpably remains a culturally pervasive agent and thus can be argued to continue to resonate with cultural shifts and associated psychosocial tensions (figure 44). An attempt will be made to address why this should be will be made in the concluding chapter.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusions

#### Loss of Fear and Gaining Sympathy as Cycles Intersect

Film cycles featuring the character of Count Dracula and indeed vampirism have inherent psychosexual connotations that have always lent themselves to Freudian psychoanalysis. Further to this, this paradigm seeks to uncover the anxieties and desires that may have underpinned the popularity of these films. When the film cycles of the Dracula canon are refracted through the Freudian psychoanalytical lens, they can arguably be read as a cathartic, vicarious sojourn to the apotheosis of the darker side of human nature, the repressed, the sequestered, and the taboo; at least until identification with the anti-hero replaces fear of the antagonist. From escaping the abjection of death, to deviant sexual desires and the need for empowerment met by manipulating others, to narcissism, chauvinism, misogyny, grief, emotional trauma and its repression. The cinematic character of Dracula both embodies these when the viewer seeks to engage with them or conversely offers escape from them via easeful death or immortality as dark fantasy cure-alls for the human condition. In the psychoanalytic context, it could be argued that Dracula and the film cycles he inhabits provide a transient therapeutic acknowledgement and release. Such a release can be argued to be more attractive when the spectator's psychic reserves are taxed by highs of cultural anxiety; when the threat of disempowerment, loss of control, isolation, loss of intimacy, and death may not only be more keenly felt, but can be all too real (Lidz, 1985: 209-217). This may be in part why Dracula's cinematic resurgences seem to parallel such events and may offer an explanation why there were more high-profile cinematic releases featuring the Count during the 1940's and the long 1960's in particular. The film-maker may in turn seek to facilitate that release by confronting sociocultural trauma with gothic horror film tropes, as addressed by Leigh M. McLennon's 2015 essay examining Boll's *Blood Rayne*, Wirkola's *Dead Snow*, and Raaphorst's *Frankenstein's Army* read as commentaries on the legacy of Nazism (McLennon, 2015: 29-47). This again highlights the tripartite reciprocity between viewer, filmmaker and the psychosocial tensions of the contemporaneous sociocultural milieu that invites a psychohistorical analysis of filmic texts and film cycles in order to conceptualise, and contextualise this bricolage.

To return to Bordwell's methodological critique, as the critical film theorist constructs symptomatic meaning from what the filmic text, or by logical abstraction, the film cycle, can

be construed as representing, with the caveat that Bordwell criticises the rationale for doing so. In the research conducted during the course of this thesis, that representation has been traced to the bricolage of sociocultural dynamism that encompasses political, ideological and economic processes by employing social historicism conflated with psychoanalysis. The resultant psychohistorical framework has referred to the various sociological factors potentially affecting the (Western) spectators of Dracula's film cycles. Their attitudes, perceptions and mores are arguably shaped by the interplay of these factors. Within this framework film cycles can be read as the collective images, fantasies and values of the culture in which those films were created, dramatising symptoms of societal needs of an era, symbolising and reinforcing societal trends, and revealing potential glimpses of a contemporaneous cultural consciousness. In this context these films, as with others, can in some ways be seen to act as visual markers of social change (Corbin and Campbell, 1999: 40-48). However, cycles of films, or perhaps more precisely, potential theorised readings of their meanings, can conversely be argued to fail in that respect as the notion of collective fantasies and anxieties can be regarded as problematic when founded on a hypothetical viewer inferred from their respective component texts.

The conventionally regarded film cycles of the Dracula canon (Universal, Hammer), and the high-profile reimaginings (Badham, Coppola), opportunistic exploitations of Dracula as a public domain character (Argento, Dekker), and revisionist iconoclastic reconstructions (Evans), linked by chronicity and synchronicity, as with the wider horror genre, can be argued to represent the modern equivalent of cultural myths. They embody Western society's shared stories of gods, heroes and monsters, with repetitions and variations of a core of basic plots. Dracula as a character has transcended Stoker's narrative through commercial cinema to become an iconic cultural property. He is recognised for who he is, what he is, and by a myriad of potential ascriptions of symbolic meaning, but he is arguably no longer owned. Taking Dracula as an endlessly recycled cultural property representative of the horror film genre, increasing viewer tolerance and desensitisation to explicit screen depiction of violence and sexuality are reflected, as is tolerance to the depiction of ambiguity, at the boundaries of good and evil. This arguably in turn reflects Dracula no longer representing collective fears and anxieties (Krahe et al, 2011: 630-646, Fanti et al, 2009: 179-187). Some would argue this is evidence of increasing sophistication and engagement with the core Dracula narrative spanning film cycles and the wider canon on the part of the viewer, others may conclude it equates the opposite. However, the intertextual themes explored in Dracula's films and the multifaceted

Count as spectators have now constructed him, can also be argued to touch upon the deeper sociocultural resonances mentioned above.

The Dracula canon can be conceived as indicative of societal repression of aspects of the symbolically supernatural (afterlife mythos, religious constructs, sexuality) as it passes through transformative fin-de-siècle phases, wherein the transformation between life and death symbolises cultural change and exchange. Dracula's vampirism can be abstractly depicted as a viral threat, as a displacement of the subject (societal transforming events and movements), and as a manipulator of individuality. Dracula may conversely symbolise the (conditional) empowerment of the individual via sexual enlightenment and immortality, and the constraints imposed via the enforced adherence to lore as law. He transforms his victims between being alive and being undead, reproducing bodies as well as symbols, mediating and enforcing cultural change and exchange within each iteration, arguably resonating with the experiences of contemporaneous viewers as they respond to changing fears and taboos within the wider framework of historic sociocultural shifts (Grant, 2010: 1-17). As Foucault intimated, the play of signs and the cultural markers of normalisation reinforce the power of norms over subjectivity and define the changing anchorages of that power within the shifting of norms (Foucault, 1977: 217; Foucault and Nazzaro, 1972: 225-248). Dracula's films when viewed in this psychohistoricist context can therefore be regarded as a potential metaphor for the effect of external societal change upon contemporaneous spectators via diegetically mediated change in internal affect (Deaton, 2008: 95-108).

As has been demonstrated, when Western sociocultural dynamics are in flux Dracula's cinematic resurrections can be seen to adapt to and resonate with these shifts, and even to embody them within his predominately (codified) narcissistic developmental trajectory as a cinematic character. The question was asked why viewers return to Dracula as a cinematic character at such times. Our basest fears of change that may worsen our predicament, death and its incumbent loss of self, are foregrounded by the negative normative influences of our fellow humans and the inherent influence of normative human values within our own belief systems (Forsel and Anstrom, 2012: 2-9; Robbins and Moore, 2013: 3-19; Carpentier and Van Brussel, 2012: 99-115). To return to the Freudian psychoanalytical framework, Dracula's dichotomous cinematic character aligns with the most primitive aspects of our psyche. He appeases our instinctual drive for life and nihilistic drive for escape from anxiety into easeful death (Freud, 1920: 1-64). He empowers us as our unrestrained impulsive Id and he counters

anxiety induced by the fear of loss of the object, and self in death. The cinematic character of Count Dracula arguably resonates with these sociocultural shifts because we as spectators find that engagement with him continues to offer a transient and cathartic, if problematised and contradictory, fantasy means of escaping some of the anxieties associated with them.

To return to the original research question; can we still make Dracula frightening? This in turn begs another question; do we need to? As Wood asserted, Dracula as a cinematic character in one way did become obsolete. Perhaps he is no longer the cloaked romantic predator representing the return of the repressed. He countered that obsolescence by becoming a superman as Wood also predicted (Wood, 1983: 175-187). When otherness as symbolised by Dracula's vampire powers is finally co-opted as agency and is thus valorised as representative of heroic leadership, the character cannot reasonably ever be feared again.

Yet the cloaked, dichotomous romantic and narcissistic predator has returned in the three part 2020 BBC/Netflix televisual adaptation of Stoker's novel directed by Jonny Campbell, Paul McGuigan, and Damon Thomas, as scripted by Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat. Claes Bang's sartorial iconography owes more to Lugosi than to Stoker, and his sardonic characterisation of this overtly bisexual Count (he openly refers to the vampirised Harker as his bride) could be argued to resonate more with Roxburgh's and Oldman's interpretations of the role than with those of his other cinematic and televisual predecessors (Fig. 45). Further reimaged juxtapositions of Stoker's crew of light are also in evidence; most notably in the form of Dracula's usual nemesis, here one Sister Agatha Van Helsing. In an innovative addendum to Dracula lore, this Count assimilates the language, culture, mannerisms and even memories of those whose blood he drinks, as do those who consume his. The psychohistoricism of Dracula's cinema analysed throughout this work has focused upon the tensile exchange between sociocultural shifts, psychodynamics, and filmic texts. This latest televisual incarnation of Stoker's arch vampire literally consumes the discursive elements of this exchange. He consumes information as he does blood, and it is implied in Gatiss and Moffat's script that information is just as much sustenance to him as that blood. He is a metaphor for his own continuous cinematic (and televisual) resurrections in this respect, a modern cultural myth that retains currency by consuming, resonating with and adapting to its contemporaneous psychosocial milieu. It is perhaps apt that the current psychosocial milieu that this incarnation of the Count finds himself resurrected within, namely the internet age, is one in which humans consume information as a multicommodity as never before. Our social media digital selves are

now the focus of our collective anxieties (Brake, 2014, pp 33-55, 73-80; Gutierrez, 2016: 111-134). The parallels with the Wachowski sisters' *Matrix* trilogy are stark. In that series of films this very information of our own creation consumes us, as Dracula (a metaphor for such expansionist consumption himself) always has, as the human denizens of the first world spend ever more time in cyberspace as opposed to with one another (Barnett, 2000: 359-374; Proffitt et al, 2007, 65-84). Has Dracula stepped into *The Matrix* with us, does he now embody the matrix-as-internet, or does he represent a nostalgic escape from it and those intrinsic burgeoning collective anxieties? Either of these notions again, arguably maintains his sociocultural and therefore his commercial currency as an iconic cultural property.



**Figure 45:** Claes Bang as Dracula (BBC/Netflix, 2019)

Proctor (2018, 160-179; Proctor and Kies, 2018: 127-142) argues the case for totemic nostalgia whereby fans' nostalgic narratives, formed by an intense and affective relationship with the totemic object (read Dracula's iconic as opposed to iconoclastic film incarnations) are valuable "texts" in their own right pertaining to the formation of nostalgic (and by abstraction, psychohistorical) narratives centred on that totemic object. In this context Proctor (drawing upon Routledge et al, 2012) theorises that such nostalgic narratives are augmentations and aggregations of the individual self, "the potent connection between reflecting nostalgically on the past and maintaining a meaningful conception of one's current life", representing a

confluence of temporal identities associated with previous meaningful episodes of one's life. Drawing upon Hook's (2012: 225-239) psychoanalysis of nostalgia as a potential defence formation, such nostalgic narratives may act as a means of reifying past or present rather than attending to relations of causation obtaining between past, present and future, facilitating a restorative transhistorical (true) reconstruction of that which has been lost, or a reflective and ironic derivation of pleasure from longing for it in an idealised form. Dracula's cinematic incarnations here would not necessarily be objects of fear, but totemic objects of association with historic personal and wider sociocultural narratives both for viewers and film-makers (not discounting opportunist commercialisation of said totemic objects by the latter in that context) as evidenced by the slew toward cinematic reboots and reimaginings in the late teens of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.



**Figure 46:** Finding new 'others': Frank Darabont's *The Walking Dead*

As the chronicity of these narratives overlap, so do their respective totemic cinematic Draculas, which perhaps furnishes us with another explanation for his continued filmic resurrections. They may be driven in part by the perpetuity of nostalgia itself as an ongoing retrospective psychohistorical resonance with sociocultural events, driven in turn by a deeper psychic need. Does this mean that we as viewers finally have sympathy for Dracula the vampire? Perhaps that answer is now a tacit yes, but if the fear of the character is now truly obsolete, we as viewers may find comfort in nostalgic regression, or we may find a new otherness to fear or choose someone else to symbolise the same otherness that Dracula as a cinematic character represented in the past. The denizens of the ever-expanding film and television representations

of the dystopian plague borne zombie apocalypse such as Danny Boyle's *28 Days Later* (UK, 2002), Marc Forster's *World War Z* (USA, 2013) and Frank Darabont's TV series *The Walking Dead* (USA 2010-present; see Figure 55) all come to mind, as do their like predecessors such as the zombies of George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (USA, 1968).

To return to Harries framework, why parody Dracula? There are two likely reasons. Firstly, humour is utilised here not as a defense against fear of the abject, undead, sexualised predator, but rather a defense against that which we fear within ourselves, that which attracts us as viewers to him i.e., our latent desires for unrestrained sexuality, nihilism, the immortality of an earthly afterlife, the eroticism of death sans its finality, power, domination, predation, murder, and the transgression of Western sociocultural mores and the natural order. It could be argued that if we don't fear Dracula, there is part of us as viewers that may still fear aspects of what he represents. In this context we perhaps parody Dracula in order to parody our repressed darker natures as a means of denial, to cage the monster from the Id lest it unleash anarchy. The threat of that which we ridicule may not be negated by that ridicule, but it may be sequestered far enough from conscious intrusion to be comfortably overlooked (Berzonsky 2008: 645-655). Secondly, returning to Wood's comments, and revisiting the theories of Proctor and Hook, perhaps Dracula is parodied as another nostalgic way of perpetuating the obsolescent, because we no longer fear him as a character. The alternative is to shift the focus of our fears elsewhere, such as toward those infected zombies of dystopia. When our monsters from the Id become obsolete, or transcend that obsolescence to become our heroes, Wood's very *ubermensch* in Dracula's case, then we need new monsters to reflect current social anxieties, or perhaps conversely or even perversely, yet another new Dracula who does. As we his viewers have come to believe in our own digital selves, this latest televisual Dracula also believes his own mythos; he is phobic of, not threatened by sunlight and Christian iconography.

Humour and horror however, as per many a slasher film from the mid-eighties onward, are not always so mutually exclusive. In his latest televisual incarnation, it is Gatiss and Moffat's Dracula who occupies that liminal space between humour and fear. His sardonic asides are intentionally darkly humorous but never stray so far as to be perceived as overtly comedic. As explored by Gutleben (2012: 302-326), Dracula's loquacious humour in this latest televisual text, as opposed to his taciturn cinematic predecessors, creates hermeneutic ambiguity and engenders conceptual uncertainty for the viewer. This intertextually indeterminate humour elicits the same stilted and uncomfortable laughter that is so often the defensive response to a



depiction of grossly exaggerated and thus grotesquely absurd body horror for the same reasons (Karschay, 2016: 341-358). Is this a Dracula to fear, to laugh at, or even laugh with? Whilst such a conceptual narrative conflation is not without its critics<sup>15</sup>, and this production could not conceivably be considered as conventionally parodic, he is arguably intended to be both, and as such he potentially leaves that viewer unsettled in their nostalgia (Figure 47, below).



**Figure 47:** Gatiss and Moffat's darkly humorous Dracula.

In either case, as Western culture shifted toward right-wing populism at the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century, this may partly explain why that culture now accepts as a superhero or even a sardonic information age antihero, that which was once unequivocally feared as unacceptably abject. As Western societies faced a potential xenophobic zombie plague from within, perhaps Dracula as a cinematic character has come full circle. Instead of representing the demonised other, he has indeed come to represent that other that is acceptable to some but demonised by others, the flawed heroic leader who draws upon his differences in service of a perceived greater good, that in of itself may be diligently argued to be not just a misperception, but an antithesis of that notion. His valorisation is therefore not absolute. As with many superheroes and certainly those considered antiheroes, it remains problematised, and perhaps has to do so, lest flawlessness negate both diegetic allegiance to the character and

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<sup>15</sup> Ralph Jones' 2020 article on the subject pertaining to this production for the New Musical Express was entitled '*An open letter to the 'Dracula' writers: "Not everything has to be funny"*'

narrative tension, thus alienating the viewer. Conversely, he may still represent a nostalgic diegetic safe haven, a darker totemic pater familias who offers a brief refuge not just away from contemporary reality (or even cyberspace) as does many a film, but also the transient prospect of reconnecting, perhaps not entirely consciously, with a less anxious if somewhat idealised reflection of a previous reality by association for his viewers. It is the latter, this author suspects, in conjunction with the proven commercial success of *Dracula* and the character's continuing iconicity as a pervasive and resonant cultural property that reciprocally maintains his currency in both these contexts. This will likely continue to pave the way for further cinematic and televisual resurrections for the Count to continue codifying the trajectory of narcissistic sociocultural elements in reciprocity with Western sociocultural shifts and their underlying psychosocial tensions, as has been and as continues to be evidenced.

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## **X**

## **Y**

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## ***Filmography***

*28 Days Later* (Danny Boyle, UK, 2002)

### **A**

*Abbott and Costello meet Frankenstein* (Charles Barton, USA, 1948)

*Absurd* (Peter Newman, Italy, 1981)

*American Gigolo* (Paul Schrader, USA, 1980)

*Angel* (20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox Television, USA, 1999)

*Angels with Dirty Faces* (Michael Curtiz, USA, 1938)

*Apocalypse Now* (Francis Ford Coppola, USA, 1979)

*Avengers: Age of Ultron* (Joss Whedon, USA, 2015)

### **B**

*Blacula* (William Crain, USA, 1972)

*Blood for Dracula* (Paul Morrissey, France/Italy, 1974)

*Blade* (Stephen Norrington, USA, 1998)

*Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, UK, 1982)

*Blood Rayne* (Uwe Boll, USA, 2005)

*Bloody Moon* (Jesus Franco, Spain, 1981)

*Bram Stoker's Dracula* (Dan Curtis, USA, 1973)

*Bram Stoker's Dracula* (Francis Ford Coppola, USA, 1992)

*Brides of Dracula* (Terence Fisher, UK, 1960)

*Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox Television, 1997, USA)

## **C**

*Captain Kronos, Vampire Hunter* (Brian Clemens, UK, 1974)

*Count Dracula* (Jesus Franco, Spain/Germany, 1970)

*Countess Dracula* (Peter Sasdy, UK, 197)

*Count Yorga, Vampire* (Bob Kelljan, USA, 1970)

## **D**

*Daughters of Darkness* (Harry Kumel, UK, 1971)

*Dead Snow* (Tommy Wirkola, Norway, 2009)

*Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Victor Fleming, USA, 1941)

*Dr Morelle: The Case of the Missing Heiress* (Grayson, UK, 1949)

*Double Indemnity* (Billy Wilder, USA, 1941)

*Dracula* (Tod Browning, 1931, USA)

*Dracula* (George Melford, 1931, USA)

*Dracula* (Terence Fisher, 1958, UK)

*Dracula AD 1972* (Alan Gibson, UK, 1972)

*Dracula* (John Badham, USA, 1979)

*Dracula* (Mark Gatiss, Steven Moffat, BBC/Netflix, UK, 2020)

*Dracula 2000* (Patrick Lussier, USA, 2000)

*Dracula* (Dario Argento, France/Spain/Italy, 2013)

*Dracula's Daughter* (Lambert Hillyer, USA, 1936)

*Dracula Dead and Loving It* (Mel Brooks, USA, 1995)

*Dracula Has Risen from the Grave* (Freddie Francis, UK, 1968)

*Dracula, Prince of Darkness* (Terence Fisher, UK 1966)

*Dracula Untold* (Gary Shore, USA, 2014)

## **E**

*Elementary* (CBS, USA, 2012)

## **F**

*Frankenstein' Army* (Richard Raaphorst, Brazil, 2013)

*Frankenstein's Aunt* (Taurus Film, Germany, 1986)

*Frankenstein meets the Wolf Man* (Roy Wm. Neill, USA, 1942)

*Frenzy* (Alfred Hitchcock, UK, 1972)

*Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>* (Sean S Cunningham, UK/USA, 1980)

*Fright Night* (Tom Holland, USA, 1985)

*Fright Night* (Tommy Lee Wallace, USA, 1988)



## **G**

*Ghostbusters* (Ivan Reitman, USA, 1984)

*Ghoulies* (Luca Bercovici, USA, 1984)

*Gremlins* (Joe Dante, USA, 1985)

## **H**

*Halloween* (John Carpenter, USA, 1978)

*House of Frankenstein* (Erle C Kenton, 1944, USA)

*House of Dracula* (Erle C Kenton, 1945, USA)

## **I**

*I Wake up Screaming* (H. Bruce Humberstone, USA, 1941)

*Interview with the Vampire* (Neil Jordan, USA, 1994)

## **J**

*Jonathan* (Hans W Geissendorfer, Germany, 1970)

## **K**

## **L**

*Legend of the 7 Golden Vampires* (Roy ward Baker, UK/Hong Kong, 1974)

*Lifeforce* (Tobe Hooper, USA, 1985)

*Little Caesar* (Mervyn LeRoy, USA, 1931)

*Love at First Bite* (Stan Dragoti, USA, 1979)

*Lust for a Vampire* (Jimmy Sangster, UK, 1971)

## **M**

*Man of Steel* (Zack Snyder, USA, 2013)

*Mark of the Vampire* (Tod Browning, USA, 1935)

*Marquis De Sade: Justine* (Jesus Franco, Italy, 1968)

## **N**

*Nadja* (Michael Almareyda, USA, 1994)

*Near Dark* (Kathryn Bigelow, USA, 1987)

*Night of the Living Dead* (George Romero, USA, 1968)

*Nocturna, Granddaughter of Dracula* (Harry Hurwitz, USA, 1979)

*Nosferatu* (FW Murnau, 1922, Germany)

*Nosferatu* (Werner Herzog, 1979, Germany)

## **O**

## **P**

*Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (Stephan Elliot, Australia, 1994)

*Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock, USA, 1960)

## **Q**

*Queen of the Damned* (Michael Rymer, USA, 2002)

## **R**

*Rear Window* (Alfred Hitchcock, USA, 1954)

*Return of the Vampire* (Lew Landers, USA, 1944)

## **S**

*Saving Private Ryan* (Steven Spielberg, USA, 1998)

*Saturday Night Fever* (John Badham, USA, 1977)

*Scars of Dracula* (Roy Ward baker, UK, 1970)

*Scarface* (Howard Hawks, USA, 1932)

*Sesame Street* (Sesame Workshop, USA, 1969)

*Sherlock* (BBC, UK, 2010)

*Sherlock, A Study in Pink* (BBC, UK, 2010)

*Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror* (John Rawlins, USA, 1942)

*Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon* (Roy Wm. Neill, USA, 1943)

*Sherlock Holmes in Washington* (Roy Wm. Neill, USA, 1943)

*Sherlock Holmes Faces Death* (Roy Wm. Neill, USA, 1943)

*Son of Dracula* (Robert Siodmak, USA, 1943)

## **T**

*Taste the Blood of Dracula* (Peter Sasdy, UK, 1970)

*The Curse of Frankenstein* (Terence Fisher, UK 1957)

*The Drak Pack* (Hanna-Barbera, USA, 1980)

*The Driller Killer* (Abel Ferrara, USA 1979)

*The Exorcist* (William Friedkin, USA, 1973)

*The Fearless Vampire Killers* (Roman Polanski, UK/Italy, 1967)

*The Goonies* (Richard Donner, USA, 1985)

*The House of Fear* (Roy Wm. Neill, USA, 1945)

*The Hunger* (Tony Scott, USA, 1983)

*The Invisible Man Returns* (Joe May, USA, 1940)

*The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (Stephen Norrington, USA, 2003)

*The Little Vampire* (Christian Gørlitz, Rene Bonniere, UK/Canada/Germany 1986)

*The Lost Boys* (Joel Schumacher, USA, 1987)

*The Matrix* (Lana Wachowski, Lilly Wachowski, USA, 1999)

*The Monster Squad* (Fred Dekker, USA, 1987)

*The Munsters* (CBS, USA, 1964)

*The Omen* (Richard Donner, USA 1976)

*The Postman Always Rings Twice* (Tay Garnett, USA, 1946)

*The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* (Billy Wilder, UK, 1970)

*The Return of Dracula* (Paul Landres, USA, 1958)

*The Satanic Rites of Dracula* (Alan Gibson, UK, 1973)

*The Scarlet Claw* (Roy Wm. Neill, USA, 1944)

*The Spider Woman* (Roy Wm. Neill, USA, 1944)

*The Strain* (Guillermo Del Toro, FX Productions, Canada, 2014)

*The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Tobe Hooper, USA, 1974)

*The Vampire Happening* (Freddie Francis, Germany, 1977)

*The Vampire Lovers* (Roy ward Baker, UK, 1970)

*Twins of Evil* (John Hough, UK, 1971)

*The Walking Dead* (Frank Darabont, AMC, USA, 2010)

*The Woman in Green* (Roy Wm. Neill, USA, 1944)

*Twilight* (Catherine Hardwicke, USA, 2008)

*Twins of Evil* (John Hough, UK, 1971)

## **U**

*Underworld* (Len Wiseman, USA, 2003)

*Underworld Evolution* (Len Wiseman, USA, 2006)

*Underworld: Rise of the Lycans* (Patrick Tatapoulos, USA, 2009)

*Underworld: Awakening* (Mans Marlind, USA, 2012)

*Underworld: Blood Wars* (Anna Foerster, USA, 2017).

## **V**

*Vampyros Lesbos* (Jesus Franco, Spain/Germany, 1971)

*Van Helsing* (Stephn Sommers, USA, 2004)

*Venus in Furs* (Jesus Franco, Italy, 1969)

*Videodrome* (David Cronenberg, USA, 1983)

**W**

*Witchfinder General* (Michael Reeves, UK/USA, 1968)

*World War Z* (Marc Forster, USA, 2013)

**X**

**Y**

**Z**