

Editors' note.
**“Children of the Night” – Vampires in Literature,
Film, and Folklore**

Magdalena GRABIAS¹, Hans C. DE ROOS², Cristian PRALEA³, Florin NECHITA⁴

The present issue of Transilvania University's Bulletin (Series IV) has two major sections accompanied by a review one. While the Literature section is shorter and uses German for the articles' language, with Robert G. Elekes discussing German Romanian literature as a minor literature, and Alexandru Popa theorizing the terminology related to the concept of fiction, the Cultural Studies section is devoted to what we may call “Dracula studies” – rather an umbrella term that signifies research related to the theme of vampires and vampirism in fiction and folklore. The articles brought together in this section are the result of the last “Children of the Night” International Dracula Congress series hosted by Transilvania University of Brasov's Faculty of Letters and Faculty of Sociology, together with the Institute of Cultural Studies at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland. It combines the work of scholars holding academic positions with insights provided by independent researchers – a concept that has always been central to this particular conference.

The Cultural Studies section begins with Niels K. Petersen from Denmark presenting his inquiries into one of the earliest descriptions of vampire beliefs, *Magia Posthuma* by Karl Ferdinand von Schertz (1706). Petersen demonstrates to what (limited) extent *Magia Posthuma* has influenced the West-European understanding of this phenomenon, especially via the writings of Augustin Calmet, who selectively quoted Schertz. The rare book specialist Simone Berni from Italy gives us an overview of the translated *Dracula* editions that appeared in Russia as early as 1902, and later in the Soviet Union and the countries formerly belonging to its sphere of influence. His article points to a rather bizarre confusion: While

¹ Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland, magdalena.grabias@mail.umcs.pl

² Independent researcher, Germany/Philippines, hanscorneelderoos@gmail.com

³ Transilvania University of Braşov, cpralea@gmail.com

⁴ Transilvania University of Braşov, florin.nechita@unitbv.ro

Dracula was time and again falsely attributed to the English novelist Marie Corelli, works by Corelli appeared under Stoker's name. The many illustrations gathered by Berni add an important visual dimension to his timeline and analysis. Hans Corneel de Roos, the initiator of the "Children of the Night" conference series, a Dutchman now based in the Philippines, drafted a fresh research paper on "*Mörkrets Makter's* Mini-Mysteries," addressing a series of intriguing and hitherto unanswered questions related to the Swedish modifications of *Dracula* that were serialized in the newspaper *Dagen*, and the magazine *Aftonbladet's* *Halfvecko-upplaga*, during the years 1899-1900. His essay can be seen as a part of a trilogy that also includes a book with restored illustrations from these serializations, and a longer e-book discussing further trends and topics in *Mörkrets Makter*. Prodosh Bhattacharya and Abhirup Mascharak of Jadavpur University, Kolkata, contribute a chapter about still another foreign adaptation of *Dracula*: the Bengali versions that were published in 1949 and 1967 respectively. They demonstrate how Stoker's story was "Bengalized" by Hemendra Kumar Roy to address the topic of England's colonization of India; more clearly than *Dracula*, his version also reveals the homoerotic tension between the vampire and his (male) victim, and the apparent queerness of all his male protagonists. In Sunil Kumar Gangopadhyay's version, by contrast, homosexuality is portrayed as undesirable and even dangerous.

Yuri Garcia from Universidade Anhembi Morumbi in São Paulo, Brazil, discusses the construction of the vampire myth in cinema based on three timeless classics: Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922), Tod Browning's *Dracula* (1931) and the post-war *Dracula* (1958) directed by Terence Fisher. Garcia's insightful analysis of the three movies and their evolving protagonist concludes with the claim that it is thanks to these numerous cinematic transpositions of the literary *Dracula* that we can talk about a "vampire pattern" and "vampire mythology" at all. Peter Gözl from the University of Victoria, Canada, draws attention to an often ignored aspect of Murnau's *Nosferatu* movie: the role of rats and cats. While the former embodied the plague and doom that soon would destroy civil life in Germany in the form of Hitlerism, the scene in which Ellen plays with her cat serves to introduce her interaction with the animalistic world. Gözl traces the depictions of pestilence and bestiality through the later movies by Werner Herzog (1978) and E. Elias Merhige (2000), analysing the different ways in which they refer to and deviate from Murnau's original. A further movie analysis is provided by Roberto C. Rodrigues of Federal University of São Paulo, who looks into the inspiration and historical research that went into the making of costumes for Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) - an aspect of horror productions that is rarely discussed. Rodrigues examines the cross-links between

“haute couture” and film costumes, and illuminates Ishioka’s aspiration to tell a story through her creations alone. Like in Berni’s article, the well-chosen illustrations play a major role in building Rodrigues’ argument.

Yağmur Tatar of Yeditepe University in Istanbul, dives still deeper into the characterization of evil by discussing Elizabeth Kostova’s novel *The Historian* (2005) that lends a voice to “one of the greatest torturers in history stating his belief that humanity carries an evil core inside.” Tatar’s study of evil is enhanced by the theoretical background found in Jacques Derrida’s concept of hauntology. In the next article, Marius Crişan, from West University of Timișoara, has his own say, together with his colleague Aba-Carina Pârlog. Working from an interdisciplinary perspective that incorporates both literary studies, literary perception, language and literature teaching, as well as translation and interpreting studies, they set out to circumscribe the many parallels between Stoker’s *Dracula* and Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*: the dichotomy of civilisation and barbarism, the gradual transformation of seemingly innocent subjects into hunters and hunted, the erosion of Christian values and reason when tested under extreme circumstances. Their contribution concludes with an evaluation of the digital feedback tool EVOLI – a means to measure how much of the novel has been understood by students. Georgeta Moarcăs, from Transilvania University of Braşov, brings in an interesting twist by looking at three vampire novels written by women authors (Elizabeth Kostova’s *The Historian*, Ruxandra Ivănescu’s *Eye of the Dragon*, and Doina Ruşti’s *Zogru*) focusing on their treatment of the “metaphysical” vampire. Perhaps a key for such hermeneutics lies not in their monstrous otherness but rather in their timeless existence. If humans define themselves in relation to their own mortality, maybe we should look at how vampires define themselves in relation to their own immortality.

Discussing Bram Stoker’s supposed and possible connections to folklore, Ruxandra Ivănescu’s article (also from Transilvania University of Braşov and herself an author of vampire novels) looks at *Dracula* as a shaman (“solomonar” in ancient Romanian folklore) and reads the novel as a two-fold initiation story. On the one hand, it is a story of a failed initiation (that of Jonathan Harker), yet on the other hand it seems to be indeed a successful initiation of its readers – albeit one that, being tightly connected to generational readings, looks different in different ages. Tanja Jurković, a Croatian scholar affiliated with the University of East Anglia, Norwich, explores how the traditional Balkan myths around vampires (especially Jure Grando, Sava Savanović and Petar Blagojević) not only informed one of the first Serbian horror movies, but today also plays a key role in promoting a so-called Dark Tourism. Aggeliki Velissariou, finally, presents a number of traditional Greek

vampire stories, that are either related to to death and burial customs, to sin and the Orthodox religion, or, alternatively, to magic folktales: she builds a case study on *Gelloudi* and *The Lamia Bride*.

The issue concludes with a review section, although the books reviewed by Magdalena Grabias and Cristian Pralea are also connected to the themes approached in the Cultural Studies section. *Dracula: An International Perspective*, a book edited by Marius-Mircea Crişan, explores the field of Gothic studies with a focus on the development of the myth of Dracula, while *Postmodern Vampires. Film, Fiction, and Popular Culture* by Sorcha Ní Fhlainn tells a particular history of vampires as symbols and characters throughout the recent American history.