

## Editor's Note: Dracula and Vampires in Literature, Film, and Popular Culture

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The articles included in this issue are the result of the 2023 edition of the Children of the Night International Dracula Congress, an annual event organised by Transilvania University of Braşov, Romania (Faculty of Sociology and Communication and Faculty of Letters), Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland (Institute of Cultural Studies), and the State University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in collaboration with the Dracula Fun Club in Mexico. The contributions to this volume align with the thematic scope of Dracula Studies, the primary focus of the congress. However, the topics also extend into the broader realm of Gothic Studies, encompassing various aspects of research in this field, as well as Popular Culture Studies, with the umbrella topic of vampires in contemporary literature, film, and video games being ever relevant. The issue reflects the interdisciplinary richness and scholarly diversity of the Congress, offering fresh perspectives on Dracula and vampires at large, Gothic literature, audio-visual media and culture.

We open up the issue with **Hans de Roos** and his passionate rebuttal of Bram Stoker's biographer Paul Murray's interpretation of the actual intended location of Dracula's fictitious castle. Hans de Roos' literary hermeneutics and detailed archival work is showing us that although Stoker wanted to wrap these locations in mystery, he actually did study the geographical details of the area quite extensively – as his notes and maps show. It is a subtle point, but, as De Roos argues, it touches upon the core of Stoker's functioning as a fiction author.

We continue with **Brian Forrest**'s deep dive into the origins of vampire fiction. Besides folklore and then scholarly debates on the respective folklore, presumably the first mention of a vampire in literature is in Ossenfelder's 1748 poem "The Vampire." Forrest argues that it was in fact more likely that Ossenfelder took inspiration from a contemporary work of fiction, Jean-Baptiste de Boyer's *Jewish Letters*, where vampires show up as actual folkloric belief rather than characters.

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Remaining in the realm of literary hermeneutics we return to Bram Stoker's original text with **Gabriela Hluşcu** and **Marius Mircea-Crişan's** essay on auditory imagery in *Dracula*. From the manipulative voice of the evil, yet charismatic vampire, to the eerie soundscape surrounding his castle, the authors argue that Stoker's theatrical experience (and success) really influenced the novel's style.

**James McCrea** provides us with an interesting cultural history of the bat, shedding some light on the ways in which our Western culture increasingly relegated this small mammal to a realm of pestilence, parasitism, and evil. The resurgence of this kind of imagery within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic is particularly unsettling and revelatory.

We move to the sphere of popular culture, with **Bogdan-Alin Imbri** and **Marius-Mircea Crişan's** article on David Moench's trilogy of graphic novels *Batman and Dracula*. This is an experiment trying to intersect two different fictional worlds (although the original character of Batman clearly draws some inspiration from Dracula), and we find that by allowing Batman to become more like Dracula, Moench explores some moral issues that prove to be fundamental in the construction of this beloved graphic novel character.

We end the issue with three articles approaching film in relation to Dracula or the vampire theme at large. We have first **Ellen Lima** and **Julia Barroso's** article on the first Blade movie, an anti-hero character that, as part vampire, fights against evil vampires. Considering that the titular character is also black, the two authors are focusing on the power dynamics at play in the film, using a decolonial studies framework.

**Laura Loguercio Cánepa** introduces us to the *Nosferato in Brazil*, a Super 8 film by Ivan Cardozo created in 1971 (when he was 19 years old). Shown at private parties, with an improvised soundtrack, Cardozo's film managed to spark an entire phenomenon of cultural resistance to the censorship of the military dictatorship.

Finally, **Yuri Garcia** provides us with a sweeping overview of the "vampiric episteme" in the contemporary cinema. He looks at how the Gothic villain was transformed by the medium of film to answer to our new desires and needs, as a dialogue with our contemporary sociopolitical and cultural metaphors. Thus, it is exactly the otherness of the vampire that which changes its contemporary stories by leaving its villainous image behind, a move that is reflecting the larger societal changes of the past couple of decades.