

# “Children of the Night” International Dracula Congress 2023

## Biographies and Abstracts

### Keynote Speakers

#### **Cristian Pralea (Transilvania University of Brasov, Romania)**

Cristian Pralea has a PhD in American Culture Studies from Bowling Green State University with a thesis building a philosophy of cyberspace. He now teaches in the American Studies program of the Literature and Cultural Studies Department at Transilvania University of Brasov. His interests lie in the fields of digital culture, popular culture at large, and the way they intersect with contemporary politics.

#### ***The Face of Dracula Today***

I will talk about the two 2023 Dracula movies, *Renfield* and *The Last Voyage of Demeter*, the way the image of Dracula is adapted in them, and how that speaks precisely to the times we live in.

#### **Enrique A. Palafox (Independent Researcher, The Dracula Fan Club, Mexico)**

Creative professional with a diverse journey spanning over two decades in design, media, and content creation. His path encompasses various areas, from graphic design to transmedia storytelling, along with academic achievements, including a PhD in Modern Literature and a Master's degree in Communications. Palafox seamlessly blends his academic background with a deep passion for pop culture, especially in the realm of Dracula and its transmedia adaptations.

Recognized as a speaker and consultant both nationally and internationally, Palafox's expertise extends across domains such as visual communication, transmedia storytelling, and the global influence of art and design. Throughout his journey, Palafox's unique combination of knowledge and creative enthusiasm has contributed to the dynamic creative landscape and academia.

In addition to his academic pursuits, Dr. Palafox recently achieved a significant milestone in the world of Dracula editions with the publication of "The Book of Dracula: The Mina Harker Transcriptions". This effort is the result of over 7 years of dedicated study of Bram Stoker's work. Dr. Palafox aimed to preserve the essence and style of the original text while staying true to the author's vision. Through his deep knowledge of the work and experience in transmedia storytelling, Dr. Palafox has offered readers an immersive way to experience this classic narrative by engaging them directly in the storytelling process.

His academic background and passion for Bram Stoker's work have provided a unique perspective that benefits both the academic and creative communities. As a speaker and consultant, Dr. Palafox continues to make valuable contributions to visual communication, transmedia storytelling, and art and design on a global scale.

#### ***"The Book of Dracula: The Mina Harker Transcriptions" by Dr Enrique A Palafox***

In this captivating lecture, I delve into the intricacies of Bram Stoker's iconic novel, "Dracula," through the unique lens of "The Mina Harker Transcriptions." In this lecture, I will explore how this edition, which I meticulously designed and translated, offers you an unprecedented opportunity to immerse yourself in the world of Dracula like never before.

Throughout my seven years of research to bring this edition to life, I will shed light on the transmedia of Dracula and how it has evolved over time. You will discover how my conceptual approach breaks the fourth wall, inviting you to become an active participant in the narrative.

A highlight of this lecture is my dedication to crafting the most precise and faithful Spanish translation of Stoker's original text from 1897. I will uncover how this translation maintains the essence and intentions of the author, making it a definitive and indispensable edition for both newcomers and seasoned Dracula enthusiasts.

This is an enlightening and immersive journey into the world of Dracula and the remarkable edition that aims to preserve its legacy while inviting you to experience the story in an entirely new way. And, as a special credit, I acknowledge the introduction of the book by Hans de Roos, an international expert on Dracula, whose insights provide valuable context to this literary masterpiece.

**Gareth Cox (Independent Researcher, UK)**

***The Hammer cycle of Dracula films in chronological order 1958 to 1974. The stories, the Directors, the stars and trivia***

"I'm now knocking on the door of 60 years of age and have a number of passions in my life, music, motorcycles and have never known a time when I've not been passionate about Gothic horror. As a child when my friends were interested in super-heroes there was only one Batman for me and that was Dracula.

From an early age when my mum and dad would let me stay up at night to watch horror films, I've had an obsession about British horror from the 1950s to the late 1970s.

The production houses of Amicus, Tygon but most of all Hammer with all of their gothic creations have fascinated me."

**Gilles Menegaldo (University of Poitiers, France)**

Gilles Menegaldo is an emeritus professor of American literature and film studies at the University of Poitiers. Founder and former head of the Film Studies Department. He has published about 150 articles on gothic literature and cinema, horror films, film noir, Science Fiction, comedies and other film genres. Book: *Dracula, la noirceur et la grâce* (with A-M Paquet-Deyris, 2006). As editor or co-editor, 35 collections of essays among which: *R. L. Stevenson et A. Conan Doyle* (with JP Naugrette, 2003), *Jacques Tourneur, une esthétique du trouble* (2006), *Film and History* (2008), *European and Hollywood Cinema: Cultural Exchanges* (2012). Latest books as editor: *King Vidor, odyssée des inconnus*, (with J-M Lecomte, *CinémAction*, 2014, *Le western et les mythes de l'ouest* (with L. Guillaud), *UP Rennes*, 2015, *Sherlock Holmes, un limier pour le XXIème siècle* (with H. Machinal et J-P Naugrette), *UP Rennes*, 2016, *Lovecraft au prisme de l'image* (with C. Gelly), *le Visage vert*, 2017, *Tim Burton, a Cinema of Transformations* (PULM Montpellier, 2018), *Spectres de Poe* (with J. Dupont), *le Visage vert*, 2020, *Le Goût du noir* (with M. Petit), *Rennes University Press*, 2021, *Dark Recesses in the House of Hammer* (with M. Boissonneau and A-M Paquet-Deyris), Peter Lang, January 2022, *Hammer, laboratoire de l'horreur moderne*, (with M. Boissonneau and A-M Paquet-Deyris), *Le Visage vert*, January 2023.

***Horror of Dracula (Terence Fisher, 1958) and the Rebirth of a Modern Myth***

*Horror of Dracula* which opens a cycle of seven films featuring the vampire count appears as an aesthetic manifesto as testifies the credit sequence, contrasting drops of red blood with a grey tombstone. Colour is meant to revitalize the vampire myth and blood signifies an increased realism but also a form of hyperrealism close to abstraction. Jimmy Sangster the script writer returns to Bram Stoker's narrative structure in three parts and to the Victorian context, but space and time are condensed. After having examined these aspects, this paper will focus on the way in which some characters undergo important changes, as a departure from the Universal studio tradition and how the vampire body is represented. Specific attention will be devoted to the two female characters, Lucy and Mina and their relation with Dracula, but also to the fight between Van Helsing and Dracula. Acting techniques will be analyzed as well as *mise en scene* (framing, camera movement, editing), the use of colour and James Bernard's musical score. In this first opus, Fisher highlights the repressive nature of Victorian society and the erotic dimension of Dracula. Vampiric activity takes the form of an attack on the patriarchal family, based on clearly defined sexual roles, and clearly subverts these codes, resulting in a radical but temporary

transformation, synonymous with liberation and sexual pleasure, prior to repression and the return to a normative order.

### **Hans Corneel de Roos (Independent Researcher, Philippines)**

Hans Corneel de Roos studied Political & Social Sciences at the University of Amsterdam and the Free University, Berlin; graduated cum laude in 1975. He made a career in Public Administration and in the financial field; his true passions, however, were (and are) Art, Art History and Photography. He got involved in Dracula Studies in 2010 while preparing a photo-illustrated Dracula edition. Since then, he has made a series of groundbreaking discoveries about the true locations of Castle Dracula, the Scholomance and Carfax, the lifetime identity of Count Dracula, the Icelandic and Swedish versions and the first US serialization of Dracula. De Roos is the translator/editor of *Powers of Darkness* (New York: Overlook, 2017), and contributed to *Dracula—An International Perspective* (ed. Marius Crişan, Palgrave, 2017). He was the Acting Editor of *Letter from Castle Dracula*, the bulletin of the Transylvanian Society of Dracula (2013-2016) and is the author of numerous articles about Stoker's novel. He received the Research Award from the Transylvanian Society of Dracula and the Lord Ruthven Special Award 2018. He is the initiator of the Fourth World Dracula Congress in Dublin (2016) and the "Children of the Night" International Dracula Conference series. In 2021, he won the Golden Bat Award for his video documentary about Philippine vampires.

#### ***Early Vampire Illustrations***

Since April of this year I have been working on a new book project: collecting and describing pre-*Dracula* vampire illustrations. The two main sources are A) illustrations of published poems, stories and stage productions dealing with vampires, and B) independent art works, such as drawings, etchings, lithographs and paintings, dealing with the same issue, and with related subjects, such as the *femme fatale* or "vamp." A third source is made up of C) cartoons and sketches, appearing in newspapers and magazines, dealing with "political vampires": bat-like creatures personifying public figures, political movements, countries, unpopular measures such as property taxes, or capitalism and greed in general. I also pay attention to D) the earliest vampire movies, either in the form of film stills or movie posters. Last but not least, I take a look at E) the imagery of South-American vampire bats, often depicted while attacking unsuspecting travelers in their sleep. By now, I have collected over 200 relevant illustrations, and with a team of studio assistants, I am preparing them for publication, with a book text. This presentation will have the character of an interim work report, not a completed academic analysis.

It seems that such a collection has not been presented in book form before, and I beg the audience and the conference team *not* to record this illustrated talk, as I would not like this selection to be publicly disseminated before I am ready to publish my book – which will certainly take another year. Anyone who is able to contribute a rare illustration is very welcome and will receive full credits in the book.

### **Magdalena Grabias (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland)**

Magdalena Grabias is an Assistant Professor and a Deputy Head of the Institute of Cultural Studies at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland. She received her PhD in Cultural Studies in 2012. She specialises in Film Studies, Gothic Studies, Dracula Studies, literary translation and music journalism. She was a co-organiser of the Fourth World Dracula Congress in Dublin (2016) as well as numerous conferences in Poland and abroad. She is a co-founder of the international organisation "Children of the Night" and a co-organiser of International Dracula Congress series. Her academic publications include books: *Songs of Innocence and Experience: Romance in the Cinema of Frank Capra* (UK, 2013), *Visual Culture:*

Art, Popular Culture and Digital Media (ed.) (Poland, 2020), as well as numerous articles in English, Polish and Romanian propagating film, music and theatre viewed from the perspective of philosophy, semiotics, anthropology and popular culture. Over the last decade, her academic interest has been focused on Dracula and Vampire Studies, which resulted in a series of articles discussing the subject of literary and cinematic vampires and their meaning in contemporary culture. In 2019 she received the prestigious “International Helion Award” from the science fiction cultural association “Helion” in Timișoara, Romania. In 2022, “Children of the Night” International Dracula Congress, co-organised by dr Magdalena Grabias, was nominated for a prestigious American “Rondo Hatton Award” in the category of “Best Event 2022”.

### ***I Like Bats: The Nature of Polish Vampire Cinema***

The article delves into the intriguing phenomenon of the scarcity of Polish vampire cinema in light of the immense popularity of Western vampire narratives within Poland. While vampire folklore has held a prominent place in Polish culture and literature, it has not found equivalent representation in Polish cinema. The research seeks to uncover the underlying factors contributing to this anomaly, examining the historical, cultural, and cinematic context of Poland, and how these elements interact to shape the nature of Polish horror cinema. The article places a particular focus on the exceptional case of Grzegorz Warchoła's *I Like Bats* (1986), a rare Polish vampire film that stands as exceptions to the norm. Through an analysis of the film and its reception, it aims to shed light on the unique nature of Polish vampire cinema, its historical roots, and its divergence from Western conventions. Ultimately, this study offers an insight into the broader dynamics of genre cinema in the context of national identity and popular culture.

### **Marius Mircea Crisan (West University of Timișoara, Romania)**

Marius-Mircea Crișan, Dr Habil (PhD 2008 University of Turin, Italy) is Associate Professor at the Teacher Training Dept., West University of Timișoara. He is the editor of *Dracula: An International Perspective* (Palgrave Macmillan, Springer Nature 2017), coordinator of the special issue of *Biblioteca Nova Bulletin* "Speculative Fiction and the Frontiers of the Possible" (2019), author of *The Birth of the Dracula Myth: Bram Stoker's Transylvania* (2013) and *The Impact of a Myth: Dracula and the Fictional Representation of the Romanian Space* (2013), and co-editor of the volume *Beliefs and Behaviours in Education and Culture: Cultural Determinants and Education* (2017). He was the manager of the research project *The impact of a Myth: Dracula and the Image of Romania in British and American Literatures* (2011-2013).

### ***Searching for Bloodsuckers Within the University of Brașov: Alexandru Mușina and the Academic Vampire in Romanian Literature***

More than 11 years ago, in the building and the aulă where this edition of the *Dracula Congress* is held, the teachers and students were speaking about the physical presence of a vampire. Not a violent or terrifying bloodsucker, but a tedious junior lecturer of the Faculty of Letters, in charge with the course of French literature, whose wellbeing and prosperity were based on blood feeding, and who discovered that he actually was a descendent of Voivode Dracula. This is the plot of the parodic novel *Nepotul lui Dracula [Dracula's Nephew]* published by the late Romanian writer and professor of the Transilvania University of Brașov, Alexandru Mușina, in the summer of 2012. My paper discusses the topic of the academic vampire in this comical work, and also refers to some other Romanian writers who approached the topic of the academic vampire.

### **Mark Olly (Writer, Presenter, Archaeologist, Visiting Lecturer at Wilmslow Guild/University Of Chester, UK)**

Mark Olly was born in 1962 in Warrington, England, and educated at Appleton Hall County Grammar School, Warrington College Of Art & Design, the University Of Liverpool Institute Of Extension Studies field archaeology unit, various business schools, and El-Shaddai College Of

Advanced Ministry U.K. Manchester where he obtained a Certificate Of Ministry (Ct.Min.AP) and Diploma Of Biblical Studies (Dip.BS.AP).

For over 22 years he worked as a professional musician, live DJ, compare, and in music management, founding Angelharp Music, Unicorn Entertainments Agency Ltd. and Legendthink Ltd. (one of the first 'multi-media' companies in the world) before moving on to pursue a solo career as a writer, archaeologist and television presenter. This career has so far taken him to all parts of the UK, France, Egypt, Norway, Italy, Bulgaria, Cyprus, South America, Turkey, Malta, and North Africa in search of the ancient and the mysterious.

He has nine major books in print, appeared on Carlton Television's 'The History Detectives', wrote and presented all three seasons (22 episodes) of ITV Granada's award nominated 'Lost Treasures' adventure archaeology series, has presented for Sky History Channel, and featured on popular US series 'Ancient Aliens', writes, presents, directs, and has produced several Music Videos, occasionally appears in movies, and recently played sessions as drummer with bands Soul Path, Sacred Wind, Wolf and Copperworm.

He is visiting lecturer at Wilsmlow Guild and the University Of Chester, occasionally heads up his own archaeological unit, and runs his own DVD production and props company MythCo

### ***Vampires – Their History and Development***

In ancient times everyone believed in some kind of walking dead that could take life from the living. In this comprehensive examination we take a journey through the primitive fears of the past, through horrors & realities of the medieval world, the science of the enlightened age, & into the terrifying modern day mixture of film, television, & reality!

### **Philippe Met (University of Pennsylvania, USA)**

Professor of French and Cinema Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, former Chair of French, and Editor-in-Chief of *French Forum*. He has published widely on poetry, fantastic literature, genre/auteur film and graphic novels. In addition to over 100 articles, single-authored and edited books include: *Formules de la poésie. Études sur Ponge, Leiris, Char et Du Bouchet* (1999); (co-ed.) *Les Aventures de Harry Dickson: scénario pour un film non réalisé par Alain Resnais* (2007); *La Lettre tue. Spectre(s) de l'écrit fantastique* (2009); (co-ed.) *Screening the Paris Suburbs 1895-1995* (2017); (ed.) *The Cinema of Louis Malle, Transatlantic Auteur* (2018); *Ponge et le cinéma* (2019); (ed.) *Louis Malle dans tout ses états* (2022). He is currently completing a book-length manuscript on the Italian *giallo*, and developing another on phantom cinema.

### ***Childhood and Vampirism***

As the title metaphorically suggests with its nod to Count Dracula's enraptured description of howling wolves and the "music they make," my talk will focus on the figure of the child and representations of childhood in relation to or within the context of vampirism. In vampire films children are readily shown to be in turns innocent preys and evil predators, acting as vehicles for enhanced transgression, especially in terms of violence and sexuality. Is there however a (narrative, psychological, thematic or visual) specificity to vampiric kids within the horror genre where pre-teen characters are regularly featured in various capacities (ghosts, demons, aliens, zombies, psychopaths, victims, etc.) across the moral and behavioural range? How do these vampire children partake of, or engage in, the at once privileged and burdensome cycle of eternal youth that is constitutive of the status and nature of vampirism?

Those are some of the questions I will ponder through key examples pertaining in varying degrees to the modern history of international vampire cinema, from the 1960s (Mario Bava's "The Wurdalak," in *Black Sabbath*; Freddie Francis's *Dracula Has Risen from the Grave*) to the 1990s (Neil Jordan's *Interview with the Vampire*) and the 2000s (Tomas Alfredson's *Let the Right One In*; F. F. Coppola's *Twixt*), with particular emphasis on the 1970s (Peter Sasdy's *Taste the Blood of Dracula* or Robert Young's *Vampire Circus* on the Hammer front; Jaromil Jireš's

*Valerie and her Week of Wonders*, Vicente Aranda's *The Blood Spattered Bride* or Giorgio Ferroni's *The Night of the Devils* in continental Europe; Tobe Hooper's *Salem's Lot* on American television). Not to mention in the 1980s, even if the word "vampire" is not once uttered and almost none of the habitual vampiric attributes are in evidence in the film, Kathryn Bigelow's *Near Dark* with the character of Homer, forever caught in a child's body (his own when he was first vampirized)...

### **Sean Rourke (Independent Resercher, USA)**

By day, I work in the Hollywood Movie Industry as an editor. I have credits on such films as Avengers Infinity War, Guardians of the Galaxy 3, Godzilla vs Kong, and Twilight Breaking Dawn part 1 for some vampire cred. (Kind of). By night, I run a YouTube Channel called "The Vampire's Castle" which is entirely about vampires, and in specific, it's about writing and storytelling in the vampire genre.

#### ***The Perilous Road From Idea to Finished Movie***

A look at how hard it is to make a good movie in Hollywood.

In light of the shockingly low box office for *The Last Voyage of the Demeter*, I thought it might be of interest to give a perspective from inside the movie industry on how treacherous the road can be for a movie to go from an idea on paper to a finished film in the theatre. (Or streaming service of your choice.)

As someone who's been in the entertainment industry for 30 years now, I've seen first-hand what a miracle it is when a movie turns out to not only be good, but turn an actual profit.

In this talk, I'll be going over the ways in which studios pick the movies they make, which of those movies actually proceed to production, and the impossible gauntlet of traps, pitfalls, hubris, incompetence and dumb luck that winds up determining actual success on opening weekend. All from the perspective of a working dude in the thick of it.

### **William Hughes (University of Macau, China)**

William Hughes is Professor of Medical Humanities and Gothic Literature at Bath Spa University, an immediate Past President of the International Gothic Association, founder editor of the internationally refereed journal 'Gothic Studies', a prominent member of the editorial board of Manchester University Press's International Gothic Series and one of the two editors of the Edinburgh University Press Companions series. He is also a Visiting Scholar at the University of Macau, where he is one of the recipients of a research grant supporting enhanced public access to manuscript resources connected with Bram Stoker and his theatrical and literary associates. He is the author, editor, or co-editor of more than 20 books in the fields of Gothic and medical history, including *Beyond Dracula: Bram Stoker's Fiction and its Cultural Context* (2000), *The Historical Dictionary of the Gothic* (2013), *That Devil's Trick: Hypnotism and the Victorian Popular Imagination* (2015), *Key Concepts in the Gothic* (2018), and *The Dome of Thought: Phrenology and the Victorian Popular Imagination* (2022). He is currently writing a monograph on Victorian spiritualism and preparing a second edition of *The Historical Dictionary of Gothic*.

#### ***A Pathology of the Un-Dead: Maladies of the Modern Vampire***

This paper explores how contemporary authors have explored the theme of bodily dysfunction through the distinctive physiology of the literary un-dead. Opening with a brief introduction to the conventions which have been historically associated with the vampiric body, the paper contemplates the pathological relationship between victim and vampire and raises the possibility that human blood may be as much a poison as a pabulum to those whose extended lives seemingly depend upon its regular consumption. To become a vampire, it would seem, is also to become the embodiment of a progressively debilitating weakness.

**Yuri Garcia (Post-graduation program of the Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro – PPGCom-UERJ; Post-graduation program of Universidade Anhembi Morumbi – PPGCom- UAM, Brazil)**

Yuri Garcia is a Professor of the Postgraduate Program in Communication at the University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (PPGCom-UERJ). Doctor and Master in Social Communication in the Communication Post-Graduate Program at the University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ). Post-Doctoral Researcher at Universidade Anhembi Morumbi. Held a Post-Doctoral internship at the University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ) with research on Transpositions of Comics in Cinema (2019-2020). Coordinator of the research group "POPMID: Reflections on Gender<sup>2</sup> and Trends in Media Productions". Author of the book "Drácula: o vampiro camaleônico" (2014), conducts research on Cinematographic Genres (especially Horror) and cinematographic transpositions of literary works and comics.

***The Biopolitical Vampire: What hides behind the reflection of our monsters?***

The figure of the monster is a part of our cultural imagination, emerging as an essential construct in the understanding of humans throughout history. If, in the explorations of Western epistemology, in a process of knowledge of the universe and possible experiences, the idea of the unknown awakens primal sensations of the species, the fear of monstrous creatures (fictitious or not) easily bursts into our imagination and inhabits our nightmares and fears. In a dialogue that can be traced from the oldest mythical traditions, through an infinite number of oral and/or written stories, contemporary audiovisual products seem, finally, to place such beings in representations that manage to reconfigure the threatening (or villainous) character into a new form of perspective that understands the idea of difference from a more plural, multicultural, and diverse conception of identity. This new narrative (seen in examples such as the new crop of humanization of Disney villains or in cartoons like Hotel Transylvania) raises an interesting observation in popular culture: monsters have sensibilities and subjectivities that are closer than they first appear. Could these monsters have always been beings so close and worthy of our empathy? Could these narratives be presenting not a new narrative possibility, but a kind of belated justice about understanding the importance of difference? The aim of this paper is to investigate its use as a metaphor for otherness in its sociopolitical, economic, and cultural implications, through the conception of monstrosity. I will present an attempt for a biopolitical teratology that has as its central focus unveiling some layers of what certain characteristics of the monsters of a Western culture really mean, whose epistemic regime permeates a worldview created within a patriarchal, Eurocentric, and Judeo-Christian register. In this sense, the figure of the vampire can be used as an impressive example. Dracula would be a manifestation of the fear of the unknown or some of our prejudices in a monstrous skin.

## **Speakers**

**Adam Owsinski (Charles Darwin University, Australia)**

Adam Owsinski is an early-stage researcher from Charles Darwin University in Darwin, Australia in Philosophy, Sociology, and literature studies who specializes in cultural evolution, cultural transmissions, the philosophy of language and philosophy of the mind. Being fascinated with the works of Michelle Foucault in how power is established within culture and Jacques Derrida Deconstruction/Hauntology. Adam stated challenging binary concepts such as 'personhood' or 'humanity'. As a result, Adam became obsessed with Identity theory especially within the Otherkin subculture (non-human identities) and how they formed. As a gothic literature enthusiast Adam investigates in his PhD the nexus between Otherkin identity formation and gothic fiction and fantasy narratives and proposes a new theory called Refractive Identities.

Refractive identities work similarly to light entering a piece of glass. Adam in his PhD is exploring if narratives function as a force within the brain, that then cause physical manifestations.

### ***From the Page to the Mind: How the Sublime in Gothic Literature Influence Otherkin Identities***

The concept of Otherkin, individuals who identify as non-human entities like vampires, elves or animals, has grown in prominence among internet subcultures and identity studies. Yet, the mechanisms through which Otherkin construct and solidify their unique identities remain largely uncharted territory. This thesis delves into the nexus between Otherkin identity formation and gothic fiction narratives, drawing on McAdams's Narrative Identity Theory (2006) and Daniel Dennett's The Self as Narrative Centre of Gravity (2014) framework to unravel the intricate threads of this phenomenon.

The Otherkin subculture emerged in the late 20th century, primarily within online communities in early internet forums, inspired by folklore, fantasy and gothic literature, and spiritual beliefs and has since diversified into public spaces. This thesis seeks to illustrate how narrative elements shape identities and propose a new theory, coined “refractive identities”, which likens narrative to refractive light or force inside the brain. The following research questions relate to refractive identities and the Otherkin subculture: (1) How can Narrative Identity Theory (McAdams et al., 2006) and Narrative Centre of Gravity (Dennett, 2014) explain how Otherkin individuals form their identities? (2) In what ways are the Otherkin influenced by the sublime within Gothic Literature narratives? (3) In what way does the sublime influence identity construction? (4) How does academia define a ‘person’ in the 21st century?

### **Bernardo Demaria Ignácio Brum (State University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)**

PhD student in Social Communication in Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro – UERJ (State University of Rio de Janeiro). Master's Degree in Communication in Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro – UERJ (State University of Rio de Janeiro). Journalist, worked as a movie critic from 2009 to 2021, stopped for Master's Degree and now a doctorate student. I have three articles published on Brazilian magazines and presented researches on Brazilian (Intercom and Socine) and international academic events (FLUC). I also studied screenwriting as a technical course.

### ***Whom do we serve? Renfield (2023) as the modern day worker***

This work intends to think about the movie Renfield (2023), directed by Chris McKay as a post-modern depiction of the materialist concept of servant and master, according to Hegel (2014). Through the words of Bram Stoker, the maniac servant of Count Dracula became the archetypical figure of the dedicated human that serves a monster, like the cartoonish Doctor Frankenstein's Igor. Played by Nicholas Hoult, the new Renfield is presented as a victim of a toxic workplace, forced to do the most heinous act due to the emotional dependency provoked by the unnatural charisma of Dracula (Nicolas Cage). We will investigate how this Renfield compares to other movie's iterations of the character, with the hypothesis that McKay's approach is less psychological or even gothic and, in fact, is more connected to the workers' nowadays situation. The mindless slave of Dracula will be read within the mind destroying labor of the late capitalism stage, according to Mandel (1982), and the effects on the psychological state of the modern-day ordinary person, according to Harvey (2008). While Renfield struggles to get rid of Dracula's influence throughout the narrative, we will struggle with difficult questions: if our bosses suck our energy dry, if the food deserts are the new zoophagia, if we aspire to become a fraction of our worshipped charismatic leader, are we all Renfield? Last, we will discuss if there are any way to break the chains of our Dracula as the movie portrays it.



**Bogdan - Alin Imbri and Professor Marius-Mircea Crisan (West University of Timișoara, Romania)**

Bogdan Imbri, PhD (born 1987), I am a teacher of English at the General Dragalina” High School, in Oravița, and editor-in-chief of the "Jurnal de Liceu" magazine, edited monthly by the same high-school. I completed over 13 professional courses and obtained multiple awards with my students at various competitions. I authored courses on British and American Culture and Civilization and Anglo-American Cultural History Through Films for junior and senior secondary school students, I published didactic materials on educational websites and articles in each issue of the Jurnal de Liceu magazine. I am a member of the Sasca Română Parish Choir, of the teachers’ choir (MAGISTRI) of the “General Dragalina” Theoretical High School. I am an organizer or co-organizer of the following events: The Romanian Halloween; Dăruind vei Dobânda / Giving You Will Gain Festival; the English Reading Club; the International Poetry Festival (3 editions); Cultural Passport; Theater Gala. I also published the volume *British and American Culture and Civilization. A Didactic Approach*, in 2020.

Marius-Mircea Crișan, Dr Habil (PhD 2008 University of Turin, Italy) is Associate Professor at the Teacher Training Dept., West University of Timișoara. He is the editor of *Dracula: An International Perspective* (Palgrave Macmillan, Springer Nature 2017), coordinator of the special issue of *Biblioteca Nova Bulletin* "Speculative Fiction and the Frontiers of the Possible" (2019), author of *The Birth of the Dracula Myth: Bram Stoker’s Transylvania* (2013) and *The Impact of a Myth: Dracula and the Fictional Representation of the Romanian Space* (2013), and co-editor of the volume *Beliefs and Behaviours in Education and Culture: Cultural Determinants and Education* (2017). He was the manager of the research project *The impact of a Myth: Dracula and the Image of Romania in British and American Literatures* (2011-2013)

***Doug Moench’s Batman & Dracula Trilogy. Succumbence and Redemption***

Dracula had always been a source of inspiration for Batman, something confessed by his very creator Bob Kane in his autobiography. And there have been many similarities between the two dark knights the most important of all being that they share the night as their favourite dimension of existence. This made possible for writer Doeg Moench to imagine his trilogy in which the two characters reunite in one person(age). Written and published in what is called the Modern/Dark Age of Comics the *Batman & Dracula Trilogy* raises the question of the anti-hero.

A hero is exemplary, yet human nevertheless. Being human, he is imperfect and, therefore, subject to mistake. But how grave can a hero’s mistake can be? To what extent is a mistake a fall? And does a hero have the right to redemption no matter the gravity of his fall? These are all questions posed by Doeg Moench in his *Batman & Dracula* graphic novel trilogy: *Red Rain* (1991), *Bloodstorm* (1994) and *Crimson Mist* (1998).

Bitten by Tanya, a rogue of Dracula’s vampires, with the purpose of helping her to defeat the count of the undead, Batman accomplishes this mission but eventually succumbs to the lust of blood and breaks his one rule: never to kill. From then on the fall is rapid but the act is majestic at the same time as Batman, now actually a vampiric man-bat, feeds on the blood of Gotham’s criminals cleansing the city altogether.

But, with all its nobility, principles enforced by years and years of self-control and discipline have been broken and lives (although not innocent) have been taken. The rationale and the morale behind the very idea of Batman have been lost once the hero succumbed to anger and lust and could not stop his fall anymore. Does the sacrifice he eventually undergoes entitle him to redemption? This is what we will try to explore in our presentation.

**Brian Forrest (Toothpickings, USA)**

Brian Forrest blogs and vlogs as Toothpickings, and has been writing about the intersection of vampires in fiction, folklore, and history for several years. He is currently working on a s (orty documentary about director William Crain.

### ***Ermagerd! Der Vampir!***

Before movies or books, vampires existed in poetry. This year marks the 275th anniversary of the first such poem—and the first appearance of vampires in fiction. The poem's meaning and intent have been debated as hotly as its quality; while its history and authorship remain largely mysterious. This presentation won't conquer all the questions, but will hammer a crack into the bunker where the answers hide.

### **Carlos Guilherme Vogel (State University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)**

PhD student in Communication in Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro – UERJ (State University of Rio de Janeiro). I am a Screenwriter, Director and Film Producer. Graduated in Screenwriting at Escola de Cinema Darcy Ribeiro (RJ), I also studied at EICTV/Cuba and Prague Film School/Czech Republic. Master and PhD student in Communication, I conduct researches on Brazilian cinema and audiovisual productions. Among the films I directed, are Soccer Boys (2018), Copinha, um Sentimento (2015), The Player (2014) and Danças do Coração (2011). In 2021, I made my debut in literature, with the novel Milonga de um pampa esquecido (Song of a forgotten pampa). In 2022 I have published the essay Complexidade narrativa e ficção seriada no audiovisual brasileiro (Narrative complexity and serial dramas in Brazilian audiovisual landscape).

### ***A Vampire Under the Sun: Vampirism in Brazilian Erotic Comedies of the 1970s***

In the 1970s, Brazilian cinema was characterized by a cycle of productions that focused on erotic comedies, pejoratively referred as pornochanchada. Such comedies preserved certain characteristics of the chanchada – low-budget Brazilian productions ranging from the 1930s to the 1950s – adding eroticism as a strong element in their narrative construction. In the productions of pornochanchada centered in Rio de Janeiro, there are the predominant presence of the sun, beaches, the city's natural beauty and the tanned bodies of its inhabitants. An inhospitable place for vampires. In *The Vampire of Copacabana*, a 1976 film directed by Xavier de Oliveira, the main character Carlos is a sociologist, a middle class, married man, who enjoys Rio's Carnival dressed up as Dracula. Carlos' journey crosses all his dramas. A feeling of displacement takes place when he goes to the beach. He is a thin man, without the desired physical attributes associated to young surfers, living in a society that rejects his ideals. The relationship with his wife is not going well, largely due to his own inability to adapt to what family life requires, which puts him in a difficult financial situation. At the same time, he is despised by his young lover. He feels dead and needs urgently to satisfy himself with what life can offer him. In this context, Carnival comes in, which works almost like an interruption in time, an eternity that lasts four days, where everything becomes possible, especially for a vampire challenging one of the sunniest cities in the world.

### **Chloe Hammond (Writer, UK)**

#### ***“Darkly Dazzling” - vampire prose***

Chloe Hammond is an Aquarius, and she's very Aquarius. Born in Liverpool in 1975, she grew up in rural West Wales. She now lives in Barry, South Wales, with her husband and rescue cat and dogs. She studied Creative Writing as part of her degree always planned to write, but life got in the way. Chloe worked in homeless hostels, particularly with vulnerable teenagers for twenty years, and saw too many of the world's uninvited monsters. She developed extreme anxiety and depression, which caused terrifying nightmares and sleepless nights. In her typically contrary way, she used this to her advantage and the nightmares became this novel, and the sleepless nights were when she found time to write it. She created her own monsters to deal with the memories. Her best friend, and number one cheer leader, was her inspiration and the person she could spin other worlds with. When her friend died suddenly of a brain haemorrhage, Chloe struggled to overcome her grief to start writing again. She had just found her rhythm again, when

the worldwide pandemic hit, and she was gripped in the terror of losing more loved ones. She dug deep, and is currently working on the third book of the “Darkly Vampire Trilogy”, as Rae and Layla are booting her brain, demanding their story is written, they have adventures to live. Chloe has had several poems and short stories published in various charity anthologies. She was nominated for both Best Paranormal Author and Best Horror Author in Reality Bites 2018 Book Awards. Chloe won a Gold Stake award at the International Vampire Film and Arts Festival 2022, for her short story, “The Caretakers”.

**David MacDowell Blue (Fierce Backbone Theatre Company, USA)**

I am a playwright/director/theatre critic, graduate of the National Shakespeare Conservatory (1988), adaptor of Dracula (once) and Carmilla (twice) for stage, all three of which have received productions. I gave what seemed a popular talk for the 2022 WDC. Former regular contributor to the vampires.com online magazine, for which I wrote literally dozens of articles about vampires, their history, various adaptations, the meaning of vampires in terms of myth, etc.

***Carmilla Through a Modern Lens***

Le Fanu could not have imagined the world today, and how his last great work might be received. There are perceived problems and issues with the text in modern eyes, which modern adaptors need to address, some of them subtle. An overview of these 'traps' and how various versions address them.

**Dax Stokes (North Central Texas College, USA)**

Dax Stokes is an academic librarian and instructor at North Central Texas College. He also hosts the Lord Ruthven Award winning podcast “The Vampire Historian.” He was the organizer of “There Are Such Things! Vampire Studies Symposium 2015” and the “World Dracula Day Symposium 2017,” both held in Texas. His published works can be found in IndieJudge magazine, at vamped.org, and in the Fantastika Journal. He has spoken on various Vampire topics frequently since 2011, including both the 2018 and 2022 Children of the Night Dracula Congresses. He is also an ordained Deacon in the Eastern Orthodox Church.

***Wait! Dracula is really Judas?: A Survey of Christian Themes in Vampire Cinema and Television***

In my previous presentations at the Congress, I have presented on how the Church is related to Vampire Folklore. In this talk, I will move to how vampire films have depicted the Church. Together, we will take a look at two aspects of the depiction of Christian themes in Vampire Cinema. First, we will look at some of the interesting plotlines that deal with Christianity, from films such as Dracula 2000, John Carpenters Vampires, and Van Helsing. At the same time, we will discuss the portrayal of the Church and its clergy in films such as Bram Stoker's Dracula, Dracula: Prince of Darkness, The Thirst, and more. Newer television series such as Midnight Mass, the BBC's Dracula, AMC's Interview with a Vampire, and others offer various takes on the Church in the lives of the vampires in the stories. All of these themes will be explored in this presentation.

**Fernando Soto (Independent researcher, Canada)**

Fernando J. Soto, PhD, and I am a long-time independent researcher devoted to the works of Lewis Carroll and George MacDonald

***Excavating the Vampire's Roots: Stoker's Use of the Mythology and Folklore of the Mandrake in 'Dracula'***

My name is Fernando J. Soto, PhD, and I am a long-time independent researcher devoted to the works of Lewis Carroll and George MacDonald. Lately I have spent much of my time and energy uncovering the covert use both these famous Victorian authors made of the folklore of the Mandrake and, while doing so, I came across what I consider important connections of this same

magical plant to Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, both novel and monster. First there is a linguistic connection: in some European languages the name of the Mandrake has been and continues to be "Mandracula." It must be kept in mind that previous to Stoker's *Dracula* there had been at least two stories that cut across the categories of fauna and flora in the Vampire Genre - Phil Robinson's *The Man Eating Tree* and H. G Wells's *The Flowering of the Strange Orchid*. As I began to dig more into the possible botanical connections between the magical plant and Stoker's monster, a great many of the puzzling features of *Dracula* began to resolve themselves for me. For instance, I can now much better explain why *Dracula* has such a deep connection to his Eastern blood-rich native soil, from which he, mandrake-like, receives restorative energy when in direct contact with it. *Dracula*, like the Mandrake/Homunculus, is shaped like a human being, yet he like them lacks a soul. The Mandrake's connections to blood also is reflected in *Dracula*'s need for it, while both the plant and monster can provide eternal youth. It may also be the "fertile" mandrake from which *Dracula* draws his sexual and aphrodisiac aspects. Further aspects of Greek mythology and medieval folklore surrounding the Mandrake and Anti-Christ also allow me to explain why the heads of vanquished vampires must be severed and separated from their bodies till Judgment Day, when Jesus, the True/Logos Head, may redeem them. Using this same mythology I can also explain why garlic is a type of protection against vampires. There are a great many other of Stoker's mysterious insertions in his book that I can trace back to the Mandrake. For instance, it is Mandrakes in particular that are Known for lighting up on the special day of November 4-5 and, like the folklore of the plant, these "lights," as in *Dracula*, also help a would-be observer find hidden treasure.

Given my research and novel discoveries, I would like to be able to present my findings at your conference this Fall. What worries me is whether you would be able to allow me a large segment of time to fully explain my discoveries (in one of the keynote speeches or in two or three shorter presentations?). I have presented up to three different papers at one conference and I find that giving two or three papers is not difficult for me. As well, are you able to help with any of my expenses? Being an independent scholar has allowed me to pursue avenues somehow closed off to regular researchers, however, it has also limited my financial resources. I live in a small town in British Columbia, Canada, and I am willing to forego paid work in order to make my way to Brasov, as well as to pay for most of my expenses, however, I would appreciate it if you could tell me if you have any funds to help me defray what would surely be a large outlay on my part. I am also prepared to present my findings from my home over Zoom.

**Gabriela Hlușcu and Marius-Mircea Crișan (University of the West Timisoara, Romania)**

PhD Student in Doctoral School of Humanities, Faculty of Letters, History and Theology of the University of the West Timisoara. I am a 2<sup>nd</sup> year PhD student Graduate of the Faculty of Letters at Spiru Haret University Bucharest, English Language and Literature – Italian Language and Literature, in 2011. MA Studies of Translation at the University of the West Timisoara, Faculty of Letters, History and Theology, 2013. Teacher of English and Italian and freelance translator, with several books already translated. Passionate music lover, having a long-time choir-singing activity. An appearance on stage, in Moliere's *Doctor Without a Cause*, as the minstrel who provides the soundtrack on the harpsichord. I am also passionate about arts, Maths, and nature.

***In the Shadow of Sound: The Role of Auditory Imagery in Bram Stoker's novel Dracula***

This paper investigates how auditory imagery impacts the building of atmosphere in Bram Stoker's novel, *Dracula*. It also explores other possible functions of the auditory imagery that can be found in the novel, and whether this specific type of imagery is a key element in the overall construction of the story. By examining the way in which the writer employed acoustic elements such as music, voice, and sounds in his novel, this paper shall study the contribution of these elements in the creation of the Gothic and supernatural atmosphere and mood. It shall further investigate whether auditory imagery influences the building of characters and their

psychological experiences, the engagement and the perception of the readers and their interpretation of the text. Given all this, a possible question that this paper aims to answer would be: What is the role of auditory imagery in Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*?

**Gustavo Alberto Garcia Vaca (California State University, USA)**

Gustavo Alberto Garcia Vaca is an interdisciplinary visual artist/writer and arts educator. His artwork is in the Collections of MoMA New York, LACMA and the Bibliotheque Nationale de France. His writing appears in the online speculative fiction journal *Strange Horizons*, literary journal *Bilingual Review* and comic/manga magazine *Shonen Jump/Aoharu*. Gustavo collaborates visually with Detroit Techno producers Underground Resistance and Jeff Mills, and others. Gustavo holds a BA from Hampshire College, Certificate from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Certificates from the Architectural Association London and is currently a MA candidate at California State University Northridge. Gustavo's website is: <http://www.chamanvision.com>

***'Vampirus', a Short Film***

*Vampirus* is a short film that takes the form of a visual and poetic journey through an imagined Paris in an alternate near future. The protagonist who narrates the film has strange sensations of being controlled by some external force: it is as if their life essence is being slowly taken from them. The film is inspired by the 1922 F. W. Murnau film *Nosferatu*, the 1962 Chris Marker film *La Jetee*, the 1965 Jean-Luc Godard film *Alphaville*, and the 2001 David Lynch film *Mulholland Drive*. The film utilizes automatic writing techniques, experimental narrative methodologies, visual AI renderings and Photoshop image manipulation.

**Hande Tekdemir (Independent researcher, Turkey)**

Hande Tekdemir is an Associate Professor of English at the Western Languages and Literatures Department of Bogazici University, Turkey. Her research interests include Victorian literature, urban theory and trauma studies. She has published on Walter Benjamin, Edgar Allan Poe, Karen Tei Yamashita and Latife Tekin, along with a number of articles on nineteenth-century travelogues on Constantinople. She is currently working on a book project about the representation of the Irish Famine in the Victorian novel.

***Modernist Aesthetics of Bram Stoker's Dracula***

As an aesthetic movement that generated a radical break from previous artistic practices, modernism became dominant during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Written at the end of the century, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* does take part in this radical change although scholarship in the field has mostly studied Stoker's novel as a quintessentially Gothic text -not necessarily a modernist text. In this paper I would like to examine the novel's modernist elements particularly in comparison with cubist practices in visual arts such as Pablo Picasso's 1907 painting titled the *Young Ladies of Avignon*, among others.

Broadly defined, modernist artists disputed that external reality is stable and neutrally perceptible. Modernist texts and art works display a constant struggle and self-reflection about the possibilities and limits of art, which is frequently referenced as "crisis of representation." In *Dracula*, the crisis of representation is manifest in a number of stylistic choices: the focus on the functioning of the human psyche through recollection and reflection, the use of metafictional devices, the overemphasis on multiplicity, relativity, and subjectivity of perception, existence of multiplicity of texts as diverse as diaries, letters, newspapers, business transactions, medical reports, telegrams, ship-logs, among others. After an examination of the novel's modernist aesthetics, I would like to conclude with a brief discussion of how the modernist experimentation informs its Gothic style as well.

**Ildikó Limpár (Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Hungary)**

Ildikó Limpár is an associate professor at Pázmány Péter Catholic University (Budapest, Hungary). Her research interest lies in the fantastic and the monstrous. Her *The Truths of Monsters: Coming of Age with Fantastic Media* (McFarland, 2021) examines the use of monsters in coming-of-age fantasy and science fiction. She is associate editor of *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies* and has edited books on the fantastic in both English and Hungarian (*Displacing the Anxieties of Our World: Spaces of the Imagination*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017; a Hungarian anthology of essays on monsters in 2021 and on monstrous space forthcoming in 2023).

***“The Blood is the Life”?: Vampirism and Religious Fanaticism in Midnight Mass***

Ever since the vampire figure appeared on the literary scene, it has been examined in the context of Christianity, as this form of the revenant monster calls for interpretations that address questions of the soul as well as the phenomenon of resurrection and eternal (after)life. Parallely with this approach, the vampire body has also become a focused topic in Vampire Studies in the past few decades, especially in relation of the vampire lover in supernatural romances. Netflix’s *Midnight Mass* (2021) presents a new take on the vampire lore when it combines a special interest in the body in an extremely religious context. The proposed paper argues that the newly interpreted revenant embodies the menace fundamentalism threatens people with, and it presents evil as a nearly unstoppable, spreading infection that roots in the inability of interpreting signs and phenomena correctly as a result of indoctrination. The show’s treatment of the blasphemous vampire reveals a criticism of an engagement with the Scripture and the sacred that focuses on the literal meaning (the body of the text, that is) as opposed to the spirit of the Bible, which is also reflected in the focus on the physical metamorphoses as a prerequisite of blind faith and as a motive that will bring complete moral and physical annihilation to the community.

**Julia Silveira and Ellen Lima (Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)**

Julia is Master’s student in Communication in Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro – UERJ (State University of Rio de Janeiro), researching racial issues and data journalism. Member of the research group "POPMID: Reflections on Genres<sup>2</sup> and Trends in Media Productions" coordinated by prof. Dr. Yuri Garcia.

Ellen is Master's students in the UERJ postgraduate communication program. Member of the research group "POPMID: Reflections on Genres<sup>2</sup> and Trends in Media Productions" coordinated by prof. Dr. Yuri Garcia. Graduated from the Cinema course at Estácio de Sá University (UNESA) Tom Jobim-Barra Campus, has experience in administration and management for audiovisual production. She conducts research on representation and diversity in cinematographic transpositions of comic books.

***At the bottom of both worlds: Hierarchy of speeches in Blade (1998)***

The present work seeks to observe the hierarchy of speeches in the first *Blade* (1998) movie. Since the black vampire hunter is half human and half vampire, we must analyse its complex existence in both groups. Due to the fact he is a black man, it is possible to see parallels between the existing racial prejudice in the off-screen world and the separation shown in the film. Besides, as a half vampire, he is also considered at the bottom of the vampire world hierarchy. Although he is portrayed as an outcast, living outside the margins of society, Blade is placed at the centre of a myth as the one who has the power to awaken an ancient vampire god. Meanwhile he sees himself as the one who can solve the secret ongoing war between vampires and humankind. To understand the paradoxes of Blade’s identity, we intend to focus on the power dynamics presented in the movie through the lens of the decolonial studies framework, considering authors such as Bell Hooks, Lélia Gonzalez and Homi Bhabha.

**Michael A. Torregrossa (Bristol Community College, USA)**

Michael A. Torregrossa is a graduate of the Medieval Studies program at the University of Connecticut (Storrs) and works as an adjunct instructor of writing and literature courses in both Rhode Island and Massachusetts. His research focuses on popular culture's adaptation, appropriation, and transformation of literary classics, including the Arthurian legends, Beowulf, Dracula, Frankenstein, Robin Hood stories, and the works of writers H. P. Lovecraft, William Shakespeare, and H. G. Wells. In addition to these pursuits, Michael is the founder of The Alliance for the Promotion of Research on the Matter of Britain (2000-) and The Association for the Advancement of Scholarship and Teaching of the Medieval in Popular Culture (2004-). He also serves as editor for these organizations' various blogs and moderator of their discussion lists and leads the development of their conference activities. Besides this work, Michael is active in the Northeast Popular Culture/American Culture Association (a.k.a. NEPCA) and organizes sessions for their annual conference in the fall. Since 2019, Michael has been NEPCA's Monsters and the Monstrous Area Chair, but he previously served as its Fantastic (Fantasy, Science Fiction, and Horror) Area Chair, a position he held from 2009-2018. Most recently, Michael has become a member of the Council of the New England American Studies Association and contributes to the group's planning of events.

***The Count and Camelot? Representations of Dracula in the Monstrous Matter of Britain***

Literary traditions survive and expand through the exchange of material, and the Arthurian tradition has been incredibly syncretic over the millennia and a half of its existence readily absorbing elements from many independent traditions into itself, including aspects that now seem so familiar, such as the Grail legend and the characters of Merlin, Lancelot, and Tristan. Through its assimilation of new themes and characters, the Matter of Britain has grown immensely, but its expansion is seemingly never ending. Recently, creative artists working mostly in the United States and Great Britain have combined elements of the Arthurian tradition with features of vampire fiction and brought artifacts and characters of the legend into contact with the undead. These works testify to the incredible adaptability of the Arthurian story, but, more importantly, they signify the emergence of a new and distinct transmedia subtradition of modern Arthurian fantasy—a “Monstrous Matter of Britain”— that deserves further study. One way into this corpus is to focus on how the figure of Dracula, one of the world's most famous vampires, has been translated into Arthurian contexts. This has occurred in a variety of means, including guest appearances, team-ups, and (even) a full-scale invasion of Arthur's realm as revealed in comics, fiction, film, and television programming.

**Nina Anna Trzaska (University of Adam Mickiewicz, Poland)**

I work as an academic teacher at University of Adam Mickiewicz in Poznań and at University of Warsaw. I am waiting for the second review of my PhD thesis on Greek vampire folklore; the defense should take place just before the Congress. I spoke about Greek vampires on many different conferences such as ‘A Cross-Platform Dracula Conference’ (Braşov 2018 & virtual event 2021 and 2022), ‘Α Διεθνές Συμπόσιο Νέων Ερευνητών Νεοελληνικών Σπουδών’ (Granada, 2022) and ‘Ųpiory, duchy, zjawy. Widmowe reprezentacje w popkulturze’ (Katowice 2015). I have also published two scientific articles about vampires – ‘Protowampiry antycznej Grecji’ (‘Protovampires of Ancient Greece’) in journal ‘Nowy Filomata’ (XIX, pp.80-93) and ‘Elementy greckiego folkloru w europejskiej literaturze wampirycznej’ (‘Elements of Greek folklore in European vampire literature’) in monography ‘NaoKoło Migracji’ (Poznań 2018, pp.79-91). I have translated a few Greek pieces such as: novel ‘Murdress’ by Alexandros Papadiamantis, short story ‘Frappe’ by Petros Markaris and poems by Kyriakos Charalambidis.

***‘Diachronic approach to Greek vampirism based on literary and non-literary sources’. An overview of the PhD dissertation***

The proposed paper concludes my PhD dissertation titled ‘Diachronic approach to Greek vampirism based on literary and non-literary sources’ as it presents an overview of the whole

thesis along with the proper results. The research was conducted on the basis of ten text sources containing over one hundred narratives showing Modern Greek folk beliefs and vampire lore. The proper analysis of the text corpus providing an inclusive description of the vrykolakas (Modern Greek vampire) is divided into six categories (aspects) that could be called respectively: (1) terminology, (2) ontology, (3) becoming a vampire, (4) appearance, (5) behavior and activity, (6) prevention, apotropaics & destruction. Each of the mentioned aspects is going to be briefly summarized and provided with conclusions, corresponding diagrams and schemes that highlight the most important issues.

### **Patricia Hradec (Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie Brazil)**

Patricia Hradec holds a PhD in Letters from Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie (UPM). She conducts researches in the field of Gothic literature and fantastic universes, more specifically with literary vampires. She has been a member of ABRALIC - Brazilian Association of Comparative Literature since 2019 and she is a member of the Gothic Studies Group at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ). She worked as a teacher in Letters and Pedagogy courses at several renowned colleges, but currently works with basic education in the areas of Portuguese and English in private schools.

#### ***Anne Rice's Prince Lestat and his Blood Communion***

Vampires have been changing all over the years and with the contemporary vampires by Anne Rice's Vampire Chronicles, especially the vampire Lestat de Lioncourt, is not different. He was a villain in the 1st volume, in 1976, *Interview with the Vampire*. After he showed the world his story, he became a hero, in the 2nd volume, in 1985, *The Vampire Lestat*. Finally in the 11th volume, published in 2014, he was sworn as the prince of the vampires, organizing the tribe around the world. But his saga continues until the 13th volume, published in 2018, *Blood Communion*. This volume was the last one published by Anne Rice, before her death on December 11th, 2021. The purpose of this communication is to analyze the character highlighted by the book *Blood Communion* (2018) and make some reflections: why is he a prince but not a king? What character traits does he have? Why is he important for the hall of the contemporary vampires? What makes him special? To help our reflections we will make connections with several theorists to strengthen our studies, such as Nina Auerbach (1995), Zygmunt Bauman (2022), among others. This way, we can reflect on Prince Lestat's personality and way of being over the centuries, updating the vampire's tribe.

### **Peadar O'Dea (Maynooth University, Ireland)**

Peadar O'Dea, 31 is a disabled activist and lecturer from Maynooth University, in the Republic Of Ireland, with an MA in Disability Studies, and experience working for the UNCRPD committee and at a European level on disability rights. He is the policy officer, and a founding member of Disability Power Ireland (DPI) and has an interest in Dracula and Bram Stoker more widely since a young age. He won a golden bat for best original research at last year's Children Of The Night Congress where he presented a disability analysis of Dracula And Carmilla. He has also co-published a paper for Palgrave's Handbook Of The Vampire, called "Carmilla In Context" which explores the historical context of J. Sheridan Le Fanu's vampire novella.

#### ***The Vampire, The Voivode and The Epistolary Novel: Locating Dracula in Bram Stoker's The Lady of The Shroud (1909)***

Discussions of Bram Stoker's masterwork *Dracula* (1897) have been rich and diverse, with serious scholarly attention being paid to Stoker's vampire novel and its various stage, film, radio, and TV adaptations over the years. However, despite this attempt to study Stoker's novel through the prism of his other writings is still sadly lacking in the mainstream apart from some attempts by for instance Stoker's biographer Paul Murray (2004) to offer literary criticisms of the wider Stokerian canon outside of *Dracula*. This presentation will focus on Bram's (1909) novel *The*



*Lady of The Shroud*. An action-adventure, anti-gothic, anti-vampire, epistolary novel. I shall argue that this little-known work of Stoker's was heavily influenced by *Dracula* and that Stoker used the work to subvert themes and plot points from his most famous novel, such as the un-dead Lucy, the epistolary structure of *Dracula* and the colonial questions that can be in *Dracula*.

I argue that this subversion of *Dracula* within *The Lady of The Shroud* provides new contexts for which we can understand the vampire novel, particularly surrounding questions as to whether Bram was influenced by legends relating to the Wallachian leader Vlad III or not as a model for Count Dracula.

**Peadar O'Dea (Maynooth University, Ireland) and Adam Owsinski (Charles Darwin University, Australia)**

**Peadar O'Dea**, 31 is a disabled activist and lecturer from Maynooth University, in the Republic Of Ireland, with an MA in Disability Studies, and experience working for the UNCRPD committee and at a European level on disability rights. He is the policy officer, and a founding member of Disability Power Ireland (DPI) and has an interest in *Dracula* and Bram Stoker more widely since a young age. He won a golden bat for best original research at last year's Children Of The Night Congress where he presented a disability analysis of *Dracula* And *Carmilla*. He has also co-published a paper for Palgrave's Handbook Of The Vampire, called "Carmilla In Context" which explores the historical context of J. Sheridan Le Fanu's vampire novella.

**Adam Owsinski** 41 is an early-stage career researcher at Charles Darwin University, in Darwin, Australia. Adam is currently completing a PhD in Philosophy and Sociology. Adam's interests are in Philosophy of Language & Mind, focusing on cultural evolution and cultural transmissions in Pop-culture. He is also a Neurodiversity advocate, and National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) manager in Australia. Adam has co-managed Autistic day care programs in Australia and sat on Charles Darwin Universities Neurodiversity forum; The Academic Planning Committee at Western Sydney University, where he oversaw alterations to modules and assessment criteria as the Postgraduate nominee. Additionally, Adam was the Postgraduate member of the Western Sydney University Student Representative Council in 2019. Adam is in the middle of publishing his Master Thesis, *Blood Is Life: A Bio-Cultural Ontology In vampiric Identities*, in the Journal of Scientific Exploration. Which is currently in a second-round review. Adam has also had an article accepted In Palgrave's Handbook of the Vampire, called *Identifying Otherkin Identities*. Adam & Peadar met course at last year's Children of the Night conference where they decided to compile this book on Vampires and Disabilities.

***Disabilities and the Vampire***

We are discussing the upcoming publication of our book "Disabilities and the Vampire". Also discussion issues of how disabilities are covered in vampire/gothic literature/pop culture. We are also submitting a call for papers on the panel for people to contribute chapters.

**Phil Fitzsimmons (Avondale University, Australia)**

Dr. Fitzsimmons is attached to Avondale University as a research professor and supervisor of PhD students. He works in the 4L area of education (Learning, Language, Literacy and Literature). His research interests lie in the area of critical literacy in general and in 'monster theory' in particular. In his thirty year career in tertiary education has worked in Australia, England and the United States, and has developed a publication list of over 90 peer review articles, book chapters and co-authored books.

***'There's More to Dracula than the Blood and the Bite': Towards a Grounded Theory of Vampiric 'Materiality'***

This paper unpacks a layer of findings that arose from a qualitative investigation that sought to understand how thirty young adults under thirty years of age understood the representations and

meaning of the elements of ‘materiality’ in vampire cinema. In what began as a focus on the engagement forces and factors in current vampire cinematic narratives, through a series of in-depth hermeneutic-dialectic interviews these young people shifted the focus, unpacking the layers of meaning and representations they phenomenologically saw in this cinematic genre. One of the layers they clearly referenced as a part of their overall meaning making visuality, was similar to the recently developed academic notion of thinginess. While not dominating the cinematic flow of meaning, the everyday elements of inorganic materiality were metaphoric touchpoints of the Dracula narratives. Different in several ways to the findings that currently exists in this largely unexplored slice of vampiric research, this cohort saw these ‘things’ as not only metonymic reflections of the vampire itself, but also as polyvalent narrative stratum related to the psychosocial axiology of the vampiric mythology, and possible links to the sociohistorical sources of Bram Stoker’s ‘lived experience’. The thrust of this presentation is summarized in the following extract from one interview: “In Dracula related film of all kinds, you need to see everything as a driving force, or at least sense of direction, towards darkness and dissolution” (Respondent 3, aged 19 years).

**Robert Gabriel Elekes (Transilvania University of Braşov, Romania)**

Lect. dr. Robert Gabriel Elekes teaches critical thinking and German literature and philosophy at the Faculty of Letters of the Transilvania University in Braşov. In 2012 he earned his PhD from the Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu for a thesis on German-language literature in Romania during communism. In 2016 he published *Kleinschreibungen: Literatur, Gesellschaft, Emanzipation* (*Kleinschreibungen: Literature, Society, Emancipation*) at Transylvania University Press. He is also a poet, translator and performance artist.

***The Heritage of the Unreal***

In this paper I will analyse through the filter of phenomenology how we can rethink and re-evaluate cultural heritage in the digital age. Heritage is a concept usually associated with concrete objects, artifacts, buildings or with certain social practices that defined individuals, communities or nations. In our contemporary world most of the structures, practices and even artifacts that define us as individuals and groups are virtual, unreal. How can we then establish the value of the virtual in our digital age and protect it from being erased from our cultural memory?

**Roberto Cavalcante Rodrigues (Federal University of Sao Paulo, Brazil)**

Roberto (Beto) is a Brazilian historian, graphic designer and digital artist. Master's student in Art History at the Federal University of Sao Paulo, graduated in Art History and Design. His research addresses visual and social representations of the human body in the afterlife in mass culture portrayed in contemporary vampire horror movies. As a South American researcher, he intends to highlight the colonial references that construct (or deconstruct) the current cosmology of the supernatural in the Americas. He works as a Graphic Designer at the Museum of the Portuguese Language, and is a Human Rights activist in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

***Eat me! Accounts of the Tupinambá anthropophagic ritual and the vampiric Wendigo in Ravenous (Antonia Bird, 1999)***

In 1557 Hans Staden wrote the first account of cannibalism among the indigenous people of the American colonies. The book was widely distributed throughout Europe in 76 editions, becoming a bestseller (sorry for the anachronism) of its time. This story filled the imagination of European colonizers with fanciful descriptions, frightening illustrations and images of sadistic, almost satanic anthropophagy rituals, practiced by the Tupinambá people, who lived on the current Brazilian coast. Thus arises the myth of the indigenous cannibals of America: soulless creatures, devouring bodies and blood, with an infinite hunger and thirst for the flesh of their

fellow creatures, a vampire-like depiction used in contemporary horror. In this research, we intend to investigate how the different reports of the Tupinambá anthropophagic ritual influenced the dissemination of myths among the colonizers, and how to this day this idea of indigenous cannibals is perpetuated through films in mass media, leading to the stigmatization of this population. We will discuss *Ravenous* (Antonia Bird, 1999) and how the idea of relating American indigenous anthropophagy with European Christian morality produced a horror film about vampires, even using the same homoerotic subtext present in "Interview with the Vampire" (Neil Jordan, 1994), *Ravenous* shows us how the impact of reports of Tupinambá anthropophagy continue to influence and be updated to this day, transforming indigenous people into carnivorous vampires in the cinema.

**Tom Marcoux (Academy of Art University, Stanford University, Sofia University, California State University, Hacker Dojo in Silicon Valley, California, USA)**

(United States of America, San Jose, California, Guest Lecturer (Stanford University), Guest Lecturer (California State University—Chico; California State University—Los Angeles), Adjunct Instructor (Sofia University, Academy of Art University, University of Silicon Valley when it was known as Cogswell Polytechnical College)

Tom Marcoux, International Speaker-Author (53 books), novelist of 4 urban fantasy books (pen name Raven Aren James). Guest lecturer (Stanford University to MBA students). Feature film director/producer/screenwriter of feature film taken by distributor to the Cannes Film Market. Winner of special award at the Emmy Awards. Author of 3 books on writing including *How to Believe In Yourself, Write and Complete Your Novel*. Author of the urban fantasy novel, *Jenalee Storm: Against the House of Dracula*. Earned degree in psychology from Santa Clara University. Marcoux has created 21 online courses. Marcoux coaches new novelists and writers to complete their work.

***Writing Dracula: From Intimidated to Inspired***

Marcoux provides practical guidance on writing a new work of the classic character Dracula. Marcoux's novel includes these elements:

- An unexpected friendship arises between Dracula and Benjamin Van Helsing (a descendent of Abraham Van Helsing).
- From this friendship, Dracula is invigorated and moved to sacrifice something valuable to him.
- Dracula drops the boredom of immortality.
- Dracula changes his code of conduct.

Marcoux's concern was to stay true to Dracula's power, ruthlessness, and charisma as a creature of darkness. He wrote 3 urban fantasy novels before writing about Dracula. Marcoux was intimidated by the tremendous devotion to Dracula. Marcoux consulted with true devotees of Dracula and powerful stories. In Marcoux's novel, Benjamin Van Helsing is 111 years old, suffering, and sustained by tubes and machines. Benjamin lost his wife years ago and believes if he is buried in holy ground, he will be reunited with her. Saying nothing out loud, Benjamin hopes to "commit suicide via Dracula."

Near the end of Marcoux's novel:

Dracula moved as a blur. His powerful hand was on Benjamin's throat.

"You will be buried in holy ground," Dracula said. "Of all of my opponents, you are my favorite," Dracula said, his voice catching.

Benjamin smiled.

A pause.

Benjamin kidded, "You know I hate you."

"I'm smug," Dracula said.

"You kill people."

“And I—” Snap. Dracula broke Benjamin’s neck. Dead.

“—I care.” Dracula paused for a moment. He couldn’t stop the mournful sigh that escaped his mouth.

With honor and care, Dracula lifted Benjamin’s body.

**Yong Liu (Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei) and Florin Nechita (Transilvania University of Braşov, Romania)**

**Florin Nechita** (Romania) received his PhD in Marketing in 2012. Florin’s research and teaching interests are oriented towards Marketing, Advertising and Brand Management. He is an experienced marketing and trade marketing executive with a broad expertise in FMCG industry, marketing, trade marketing, strategy planning and event management. Other activities: coordinator and initiator of three editions of International Summer Schools on Creative Destinations and Heritage Interpretation (2014, 2016, 2018); co-organizer of the International Dracula Congress (2018, 2021); project member in European funded projects: I was Citizen of Stalin Town (Europe for Citizens - 2017), Active Telling, Active Learning (Europe for Citizens - 2019), E-Entrepreneur (Erasmus+ - 2019-2020), UniCulture (Erasmus+ - 2019-2021), E-PSY (Erasmus+ - 2020-2022); member of European Association for Heritage Interpretation; Erasmus Mobility Teaching Exchange at University of Macerata, Marche Polytechnic University, and Salerno University (Italy), University of Zadar (Croatia), University of Extremadura (Spain), Laurea University (Finland), Aegean University (Greece), Christian University Ede (the Netherlands), Université Lumière Lyon 2 (France), University of Madeira (Portugal), Federal University of Minas Gerais and Grupo UNIS (Brazil) and one month teaching mobility; 10 books (author or coordinator) and more than 70 journal articles, book chapters and conference papers on marketing, consumer behaviour and brand management, tourism and destination marketing topic.

***Project-based learning at Dracula Digital: a Romanian and Bruneian Perspective***

Project-based learning (PBL) is an educational approach that underscores the importance of hands-on projects and real-world problem solving. In this context, the Dracula Digital short movie competition provided an exceptional platform for engaging students from Transilvania University of Brasov and Universiti Darussalam in Brunei in this immersive learning method. This presentation will be focusing into the role of film festivals as catalysts for motivating students specializing in digital media and screen production to enhance the quality of their work for both regular course assignments and specific competition projects and will cover key aspects regarding production process and the challenges encountered by students working in culturally diverse production teams. The presentation will be centered on the experiences of Romanian and Bruneian students participating in the Dracula Digital competition—a mobile phone filmmaking event organized by the FANZIN Association and Zile și Nopti (Days and Nights) magazine, with support from the Faculty of Sociology and Communication at Transilvania University of Brasov, Romania. It will be employed the significant learning experience paradigm to elucidate the educational journey of students who engage in the film festival, creating short films for both module assignments and the Dracula Digital competition.