



UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA

CENTRO DE COMUNICAÇÃO E EXPRESSÃO

PROGRAMA DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM INGLÊS: ESTUDOS LINGUÍSTICOS E
LITERÁRIOS

Vitor Henrique de Souza

**The Terrifying Lover: Hammer Films' *Dracula* and the Implications of Its Gender
Relations**

Florianópolis

2020

Vitor Henrique de Souza

The Terrifying Lover: Hammer Films' *Dracula* and the Implications of Its Gender Relations

Dissertação submetida ao Programa Pós-Graduação em Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina para a obtenção do título de Mestre em Inglês.

Orientador: Prof. Dr. Daniel Serravalle de Sá

Florianópolis

2020

Ficha de identificação da obra elaborada pelo autor,
através do Programa de Geração Automática da Biblioteca Universitária da UFSC.

de Souza, Vitor Henrique
The Terrifying Lover: Hammer Films' *Dracula* and the
Implications of Its Gender Relations / Vitor Henrique de
Souza; orientador, Daniel Serravalle de Sá, 2020.
74 p.

Dissertação (mestrado) - Universidade Federal de Santa
Catarina, Centro de Comunicação e Expressão, Programa de Pós
Graduação em Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários,
Florianópolis, 2020.

Inclui referências.

1. Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários. 2. Hammer
Films. 3. Cinema. 4. Sexualidade. I. de Sá, Daniel
Serravalle. II. Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina.
Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e
Literários. III. Título.

Vitor Henrique de Souza

The Terrifying Lover: Hammer Films' *Dracula* and the Implications of Its Gender Relations

O presente trabalho em nível de mestrado foi avaliado e aprovado por banca examinadora composta pelos seguintes membros:

Profa. Dr^a. Alessandra Soares Brandão

Instituição: PPGI/UFSC

Prof. Dr. Claudio Vescia Zanini

Instituição: UFRGS

Prof. Dr. Matias Corbett

Instituição: DLLE/UFSC – Suplente

Certificamos que esta é a **versão original e final** do trabalho de conclusão que foi julgado adequado para obtenção do título de mestre em Inglês.

Coordenação do Programa de Pós-Graduação

Prof. Dr. Daniel Serravalle de Sá

Orientador

Florianópolis, 2020

Para meus pais, Marli e Edson.

AGRADECIMENTOS

À minha mãe, por me apresentar aos filmes de terror quando eu era criança, e por manter meu interesse neles a cada vez que alugávamos dois ou três para assistir nos fins de semana.

Ao meu pai, por odiar filmes de terror e por odiar o fato de eu gostar tanto deles. Sua aversão por eles basicamente me trouxe até aqui.

À minha mãe, meu pai e meu irmão, pelo apoio, amor e paciência sem limites durante todos os anos da minha existência. Eu devo a vocês tudo o que tenho.

Aos meus avós, pelo incentivo de anos e pelo orgulho que vocês sentem de mim, onde quer que vocês estejam.

Ao Robson, por cinco anos de amor, compreensão e paciência, especialmente nos últimos dois.

Aos meus amigos, por manterem minha cabeça erguida e meu copo cheio.

Ao meu orientador, por me orientar com paciência e gentileza dentro e fora da Academia.

À Valdete, por sua gentileza e competência sempre que precisei de ajuda.

Ao Programa de Pós-Graduação e Inglês, à Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina e à CAPES, pela oportunidade, incentivo e possibilidade de ocupar esse lugar.

O presente trabalho foi realizado com apoio da Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - Brasil (CAPES) - Código de Financiamento 001.

“That what I am is what I am

‘Cause I does what I does

And maybe I’d relax

Let my breast just bust open

My heart’s made of parts

Of all that surrounds me

And that’s why the devil just can’t get around me”

Fiona Apple

Every Single Night

RESUMO

O presente trabalho tem como objetivo a análise de três dos nove filmes da franquia Drácula, dos estúdios britânicos Hammer Films, sendo eles *Horror of Dracula* (1958), *Taste the Blood of Dracula* (1970) e *Scars of Dracula* (1970), de modo a compreender as dinâmicas das relações de gênero entre o personagem Drácula e as suas vítimas femininas. As análises foram feitas com base em cenas selecionadas previamente, onde se percebe a importância da cor vermelha como objeto simbólico para o desenvolvimento e a manutenção de tais relações, e foram apoiadas por teorias relacionadas à expressão da sexualidade feminina e seu papel no cinema e no cinema de horror, junto com discussões acerca do papel do uso da cor no cinema. Identificou-se uma repetição e padronização que coloca a figura da vampira feminina como sexualmente ativa, dentro de um contexto histórico em que tal característica era atribuída somente aos homens, porém condicionada à figura masculina do vampiro, que detém o poder em relação à expressão dessa sexualidade.

Palavras-chave: Hammer Films, Cinema de Horror, Drácula, Sexualidade.

ABSTRACT

The present research has as its main purpose the analysis of three of the nine films of the Hammer Dracula franchise, *Horror of Dracula* (1958), *Taste the Blood of Dracula* (1970) e *Scars of Dracula* (1970), of British studios Hammer Films, in a way to understand the dynamics of the gender relations between the character of Dracula and his female victims. The analysis was made based on previously selected scenes, where it is possible to observe the importance of the color red as a symbolic object for the development and the maintenance of such relations, and they were supported by theories related to the expression of female sexuality and its role within cinema and horror cinema, alongside with discussions regarding the importance of color in cinema. The research identified a repetition and standardization that puts the figure of the female vampire as sexually active, within a context in which this trait was primarily attributed to men, although conditioned to the masculine vampire figure, which retains the power in relation of his victim's sexuality.

Keywords: Hammer Films, Horror Cinema, Dracula, Sexuality.

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Horror of Dracula, directed by Terence Fisher <02:19>	52
Figure 2: Horror of Dracula, directed by Terence Fisher <15:15>	53
Figure 3: Horror of Dracula, directed by Terence Fisher <16:27>	53
Figure 4: Horror of Dracula, directed by Terence Fisher <21:27>	54
Figure 5: Horror of Dracula, directed by Terence Fisher <34:15>	55
Figure 6: Horror of Dracula, directed by Terence Fisher <37:57>	55
Figure 7: Horror of Dracula, directed by Terence Fisher <01:01:00>	56
Figure 8: Horror of Dracula, directed by Terence Fisher <01:08:00>	57
Figure 9: Horror of Dracula, directed by Terence Fisher <01:09:00>	57
Figure 10: Horror of Dracula, directed by Terence Fisher <01:10:00>	57
Figure 11: Taste the Blood of Dracula, directed by Peter Sasdy <05:24>	58
Figure 12: Taste the Blood of Dracula, directed by Peter Sasdy <43:13>	59
Figure 13: Taste the Blood of Dracula, directed by Peter Sasdy <55:40>	59
Figure 14: Taste the Blood of Dracula, directed by Peter Sasdy <55:43>	59
Figure 15: Taste the Blood of Dracula, directed by Peter Sasdy <01:06:52>	60
Figure 16: Taste the Blood of Dracula, directed by Peter Sasdy <1:18:43>	60
Figure 17: Taste the Blood of Dracula, directed by Peter Sasdy <1:18:48>	61
Figure 18: Taste the Blood of Dracula, directed by Peter Sasdy <1:20:30>	61
Figure 19: Taste the Blood of Dracula, directed by Peter Sasdy <1:20:32>	61
Figure 20: Taste the Blood of Dracula, directed by Peter Sasdy <1:33:57>	62
Figure 21: Scars of Dracula, directed by Roy Ward Baker <00:53>	63
Figure 22: Scars of Dracula, directed by Roy Ward Baker <31:44>	63
Figure 23: Scars of Dracula, directed by Roy Ward Baker <31:56>	63
Figure 24: Scars of Dracula, directed by Roy Ward Baker <35:30>	64
Figure 25: Scars of Dracula, directed by Roy Ward Baker <35:45>	64
Figure 26: Scars of Dracula, directed by Roy Ward Baker <1:29:48>	65
Figure 27: Scars of Dracula, directed by Roy Ward Baker <01:31:12>	65
Figure 28: Scars of Dracula, directed by Roy Ward Baker <01:33:53>	66

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	10
1.1 The Vampire Myth: Dracula as the Definitive Vampire.....	12
1.2 Hammer Films' Dracula: A New Approach to the Vampire Myth.....	14
2. THE CULTURAL VAMPIRE: Sex and Sexuality from the Traditional Vampire Myth to Hammer Dracula Franchise.....	18
2.1 Sexuality and Eroticism: Basic Human Expressions.....	18
2.2 The Sexual Vampire: from Folklore to Cinema.....	22
2.3 Women in Cinema: Their Roles in Horror Films and in the Hammer Dracula Franchise.....	30
3. THE VAMPIRE IN COLORS: Technicolor in Horror Films and Its Use in the Hammer Dracula Franchise.....	41
3.1 The Red Blood: Sexual Power and Female Transformation.....	48
4. ANALYZING THE FILMS.....	52
4.1 Horror of Dracula.....	52
4.2 Taste the Blood of Dracula.....	58
4.3 Scars of Dracula.....	62
5. FINAL REMARKS: The Never-ending Cycle of Love that Terrifies.....	68
6. REFERENCES.....	70
Filmography.....	70
Works Cited.....	70

1 INTRODUCTION

This work will investigate three films by British company Hammer Films: *Horror of Dracula* (1958), *Taste the Blood of Dracula* (1970), and *Scars of Dracula* (1970), seeking to understand the representation of Dracula's sexuality and the role of erotic power in the narratives. The vampire invariably chooses as victims influential male figures and, most of the time, beautiful, young women. I am particularly concerned in understanding Dracula's interactions with the female characters and what they mean in the context of the late-1950s until 1970.

Historically, the vampire is an archetypical seducer, echoing other famous lover-types such as Don Juan DeMarco, Giacomo Casanova, and Dorian Gray. His sex-driven and seduction powers are unstoppable and irresistible. Dracula personifies the force that many people (man or women alike) would aspire to have: he is a charming, charismatic, lust-inspiring figure that can easily find the means to achieve his goals. In this sense, Dracula's seduction prowesses belong to the realm of the "mythical", since his feats as a subduer are unachievable by regular people. However, even though Dracula occupies this demi-god, mythical position in relation to love and desire (and myths are not to be questioned, just understood), I will argue here that it is possible to look at the underbelly of the seducer archetype, which is related to obsession, jealousy, the need to devour and destroy the object of love/desire. The paradox occurs when the more the seducer makes love to women, the less the seducer loves women.

I have also observed that the level of graphic violence escalates from the first film to the last, which is how I selected the films for the analysis. Since the character of Dracula appears on seven of the nine films of the franchise, I selected the first and the last ones, and one in the middle, in order to illustrate the increase of graphic scenes. With that in mind, I intend to analyze the impact of this increasing brutality on the gender-based behavior of the vampire, investigating in cultural fashion how these explicit scenes of violence relate to the social mores of the period. My hypothesis is that, although these images of women's submission may be seen as an expression of a male-oriented society, they can also be perceived as scenes that show women's engaging in sexual acts and, in this sense, they could be read as socially transgressive considering their time period. However, it proposes the question of how much of this transgression is in fact empowering or restraining for the women in these films.

Moreover, I will argue here that to a great extent, Hammer's achievements regarding the conflation between eroticism and horror are due to the Technicolor techniques, employed with unprecedented results in these filmic adaptations of *Dracula*. I will highlight in particular their symbolic use of red hues, which was used to intensify the abundant blood that flows in the scenes. In comparison with previous *Dracula* movies, especially 1930s Universal's productions, Hammer's representation of the vampire was ground-breaking and promoted significant changes in the collective imagination of the vampire, transforming the character into a more sexual figure.

When considering these differences between production cycles, it is possible to discuss not only how such changes are perceived, but also the implications of the depiction of a more sexually-driven *Dracula* in relation to the historical context in which this version was produced. The transgression of the female characters, although very much related to the real-life discussions of women's roles in the 1950s and 1970s, is often represented as a behavior susceptible to punishment by a male authority. The understanding of how this sex-gendered dynamic is established through an on-screen fictional work on screen can help viewers to understand the roots of the same dynamics in a real-life context.

In order to achieve the purposes of the study, I will introduce my working notion of sexuality and eroticism, with subsequent definitions, as one of the key characteristics of the vampire myth. Additionally, by presenting the vampire as a mutable figure throughout time, but with an intrinsically sexual behavior that lingers, remaining present to this day, I will attempt to debate the idea of how the figure of the sexual vampire was explored by Hammer Films in comparison to other filmic adaptations of *Dracula*. Moreover, I am going to describe how the Technicolor technology employed by Hammer Studios was a key element to make such representation possible. Although I am discussing different adaptations of the same literary work, I will not focus on the 1897 novel written by Bram Stoker. This choice was made in order to avoid cross-media analysis between the films and the novel (since the entire Hammer *Dracula* franchise took the liberty to change significantly elements from the source-text). However, as this is a thesis in the field of Film Studies, I will actively pursue comparisons between predecessor filmic representations of the characters. Also, most of the theorists I selected for the development of the foundational elements of this study are related to cinema only.

1.1 The Vampire Myth: Dracula as the definitive vampire

The difficulties of attributing one single definition to the term *myth* have been constantly addressed throughout time by a variety of contexts, beliefs and scholars. Its meaning varies from the traditional religious approach to its distinct significations in literary pieces, and when trying to encompass such range of definitions it is important to make some distinctions clear. In Greek mythology, for example, each of the mythological figures serves to represent one aspect of the human psyche. In the book *Dictionary of Symbols*, Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant address Greek myths as the dramatization of social life. They comment on the symbolic features of myths in the realm of philosophy, claiming that, although they do not account for any scientific truth, they “give expression to the truth of some perceptions.” (1969, p. 690)

Lauri Honko, in the article *The Problem of Defining Myth*, addresses the difficulties of defining the term, given its multidimensional possibility of fields, and establishes definitions by dividing the term in “ten different angles, some of which may have greater relevance than others depending on the nature of the material being studied and the questions posed”. (1972, p. 13) In this sense, perceptions and understandings of myths depend on factors such as what they are symbolizing, or who/what is making sense of them. This could be exemplified by how myths are treated differently according to their use and purpose, such as by religion, popular story-telling, natural history beliefs, etc.

One of the angles to which Honko refers is related to artistic expressions and productions. According to him, a myth can be a “[...] form of symbolic expression. Myth is placed on a par with other creative activities, such as poetry or music. Myth has its own laws, its own reality, its own forms of expression: it may be looked upon as a projection of the human mind, as a symbolic structuring of the world” (HONKO, 1972, p. 13). When linking Honko’s concept of myth as a projection of the human mind to the myth of the vampire, we can understand the vampire as a figure whose imagery and main characteristics predominantly relies on some sort of collective images, since most of its traits are shared collectively regardless of the source of the myth. Claudio Vescia Zanini develops this idea by stating that

Myths are constructed with materials (images) provided by our psyche – in more practical terms, if one takes Bram Stoker’s description of Count Dracula, one will realize that the most classic and recurrent representations of the

vampire nowadays, be it Dracula or not, be it in literature or on the movies, will not differ very much from the image Stoker proposed (ZANINI, 2007, p. 54)

In order to clarify the concept of myth I will refer to in the development of this work, I will borrow Don Cupitt's definition as presented in Zanini's work, since it explains the term in ways that suits my needs for this work. It considers, most importantly, the construction of an archetypal image throughout a variety of sources. This definition is very similar to the definition of vampire itself, when considering its vast folkloric origins:

So we may say that a myth is typically a traditional sacred story of anonymous authorship and archetypal or universal significance which is recounted in a certain community and is often linked with a ritual; that it tells of the deeds of the superhuman beings such as gods, demigods, heroes, spirits or ghosts; that it is set outside historical time (...) or in the supernatural world, or may deal with comings and goings between the supernatural world and the world of human history; that the superhuman beings are imagined in anthropomorphic ways, although their powers are more than human and often the story is not naturalistic but has the fractured, disorderly logic of dreams (CUPITT, 1982, p. 29, apud ZANINI, 2007, p. 54)

This definition resonates with the one proposed by Chevalier and, and precisely with another definition developed by J. Gordon Melton in *The Vampire Book: The Encyclopedia of the Undead*. When attempting to answer the question "what is a vampire?", Melton dives in the diverse range of origins of the vampire myth. Primarily a "reanimated corpse that rises from the grave to suck the blood of living people and thus retain a semblance of life" (MELTON, 1996, p. 31), the vampire myth has evolved and developed different needs and shapes according to the source that tells the story. The once completely demonic and evil being recently gained significant human characteristics, mostly because of its fictional reinterpretations. Such differences, however, are not completely detached from the archetype constructed by Bram Stoker in his 1897 novel, and its forerunners. While also borrowing from predecessor literary works, such as Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872) and John William Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819), Stoker put together what is popularly known today as the original or classical vampire. His appearance, with pale skin, cruel-looking eyes and sharp

white teeth, despite undergoing differences in popular culture productions, remains the strongest image of the vampire myth until today.

The adaptability of the vampire's characteristics, as discussed by Melton, has much to do with the time periods in which the vampire resurrects, often with enormous popularity. If in the Victorian society, for instance, the literary vampire was a "cosmopolitan citizen of the modern imagination" (MELTON, 1996, p. 33), in the 1960s the vampire would become more sexually aggressive, as a result of movies that "centered upon a sensual and seductive vampire" (MELTON, 1996, p. 34). Regardless, the underpinning myth of the vampire remains current, being reinterpreted according to whatever needs, desires or zeitgeist. The reinterpretation proposed by Hammer Films, the three films which the corpus of this work, also helped the cementation of Stoker's description, adding its own twist to a myth that has been around for ages.

1.2 Hammer Films' *Dracula*: A New Approach to the Vampire Myth

For a period of 16 years, the British company Hammer Film Productions launched nine films about Bram Stoker's universe of *Dracula*. The first one, *Horror of Dracula* (Terence Fisher, 1958), or simply *Dracula* in its British release, introduced a different perspective in relation to the characters in Stoker's novel. Starring Christopher Lee in the role of Count Dracula, the film approached new elements regarding its ancestors, such as the homonym *Dracula* (Tod Browning, 1931), starring Bela Lugosi. The British rendition depicted gorier, graphic scenes and more seductive characters. Besides the shift in the portrayal of the main characters and in the plotlines that derived from Stoker's novel, the first of Hammer's film was a commercial success, leading to other eight direct sequels of the vampire, which are still praised nowadays for their imagery and special effects.

A turning point for the productions' success and cult status is the portrayal of the main vampire of the narrative. Christopher Lee played Dracula not only as the aristocrat with a foreign accent, as seen on Browning's film, or the hideous creature described in Stoker's novel, but as a mysterious and more seductive character. Although still embodying the elements of the classical vampire figure, such as the black suit, the cape and the mannerisms, made iconic by Lugosi, Lee's performance had a strong focus on movement and sensuality.

His innovative approach to performance is crucial to the immediate identification of Lee's interpretation of Dracula, which is distinctive from all other previous adaptations. He appeared in seven of the nine films of the Hammer Dracula franchise, in which his character becomes more and more sexually pronounced. My argument here is that this unprecedented mixture between horror¹, gore, and eroticism helped to establish a new collective, cultural image of the vampire myth.

Moreover, Hammer's effort on improving the productions' filming technics and special effects contributed to the popularization of a brand-new imagery of the vampire. By making use of the Technicolor technology, and a well-developed work in the characters' make-up, Hammer Films was able to present gory scenes of violence in vivid colors for the first time, which contributed to the achievement of a different effect from the previous vampire cycle by Universal, which was filmed in black and white. The depiction of blood on screen for the first time, as a thick, red liquid, attributed a new perspective to one of the foundational characteristics of the vampire myth, bloodshed as an unexplored trait in past adaptations.

Despite being mainly inexpensive, low-budget productions, the Hammer Dracula franchise made a strong contribution to the mutability and expansion of the vampire's lore and until today is often cited as a cult reference and phenomenon, reclaiming British participation in horror film production². Lee's portrayal remains emblematic and an easily recognizable one among the many other interpretations of the character, which shows how the vampire figure and myth can be transformed from time to time, according to contemporary art forms, ways of production and different social contexts.

Besides being technically innovative, Hammer Films also established a new approach regarding the representation of the characters' relations. With the initial premise of returning

¹ The term *horror*, as used throughout this thesis, is in itself notably prolific in its academic researches regarding its definition. It has been constantly debated within a variety of realms such as literature and cinema, proving that one single definition of the term is impossible to encompass such a variety of possibilities. Pioneer of Gothic fiction, Ann Radcliffe, when debating the differences between terror and horror, has noted to how terror "expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes and nearly annihilates them", while stating that horror possess an "uncertainty and obscurity [...], respecting the dreading evil" (RADCLIFFE, 2002, p. 6.) In 1971, film historian Carlos Clarens has acknowledged how horror films, as a proper genre, may fail to tackle the variety and broadness of the term, since the term "unavoidably carries its connotation of repulsion and disgust-but it is the one sanctioned by usage and the best available in English." (CLARENS, 1971, p. 13) Therefore, it is possible to perceive the problems of understanding *horror* as a strict, precise term in whichever field since it has been under an ongoing discussion.

² Since Dracula is a character created by an Anglo-Irish writer, some film critics such as David Pirie (*A New Heritage of Horror*, 1973) and Peter Hutchings (*The Horror Film*, 2004) highlight the nationalistic dimension of taking Dracula back to England, since it had been in the hands of Americans.

in time or in different time periods in each of the movies of the franchise, Dracula looks for specific types of victims, which includes influent and powerful male figures, but mostly beautiful, young women. Attracted by his mysterious aura, charm, and promises of a tempting sexual awakening, his female victims frequently endure situations of submission, whose only purpose is the fulfilling of Dracula's wishes and desires. Except for the female lead character, the others are usually killed or discarded, most of the times by Dracula himself, once he achieves his objectives. This behavior is represented on several occasions, in the different films, until he encounters his death at the end of each film. The action of forcing women to give what he wants is achieved by his manipulative, seductive behavior, relying much less in his hypnotic abilities, which provokes a strong, passionate desire on victims. As Bruce G. Hallenbeck puts it, in the book *The Hammer Vampire* (2010), "This Dracula was a creature of flesh and blood – warm flesh and blood, at that. His potency lay in his charm – no need of hypnosis." (p. 40) In such films, Dracula makes use of his appearance and power as abilities to control women's mind. On the one hand, even though men can also be deceived by his presence and powers, they serve only as tools for him to maintain his influential status in society, since it is through them that Dracula can achieve a social position of power. On the other hand, it is only women who are romantically and sexually affected.

Another strong difference between Hammer's and Universal's production cycles is that the former one has a strong focus on eroticism, even though most of the scenes are edited to a subtler tone in the earlier films of the franchise. Frames, looks, and dialogues are elements that, combined, produce an erotic effect on spectators. Most of these features are present in the scenes where Dracula interacts with his female victims. Dracula establishes power relations with women making sexual advances in order to accomplish his goals and, as a consequence, putting them in a submissive position. Although men are also represented in a lower social position, their submission is not related to a romantic, eroticized manner. Once his goals are fulfilled, he does not show any sympathy for the victims, who are left either dead or alone. This pattern is well-explored throughout the franchise, particularly as Dracula's sexual advances became more aggressive, with the production of the different sequels. By deciding to portray such relations within the social contexts of the mid-1950s to early 1970s, Hammer Films enables a discussion whether these depictions can be understood as transgressive for women, or a mere reproduction of a male-dominated society on screen. The female sexuality, very much in discussion at the time through the Women's Movement, is put

as one of the central themes of a fictional narrative, which raises the question of what the implications of this depiction are and to who they refer to.

In this section I discussed the broad range of origins of the vampire myth and how it has been transformed throughout time. I have also discussed Dracula as the archetypical figure of the vampire, and how Hammer Films reimagined it by reclaiming the horror film productions of *Dracula* by adding layers to a character that had been previously explored by Universal Studios. The developments of the new cinematic techniques, particularly with the use of intense colors provided by Technicolor, and also the explicit sexuality of the vampire through Christopher Lee's performance, allowed the revival and the maintenance of the vampire myth

2 THE CULTURAL VAMPIRE: Sex and Sexuality from the Traditional Vampire Myth to the Hammer Dracula Franchise

In this chapter I intend to discuss the origins of sexuality as a fundamental characteristic of the vampire myth and how this particular trait has developed through different media in time. Also, I will comment on the possible implications of a more sexually-driven vampire in the productions of Hammer Films, while discussing texts on theory and criticism that tackle the discussions regarding the portrayal of women in cinema in general. The main goals of this chapter are to understand why a more sexual depiction of the vampire helped to shape the overall imagery of the myth after the Hammer production cycle, and what are the possible consequences of this depiction in relation to the gendered dynamics of such productions. To start the discussion, I present definitions and discussions regarding the meaning of the terms *sexuality* and *eroticism*, since both of these terms are going to be used throughout my analysis of the films in Chapter 4. Then, I move on to discuss how these characteristics were explored, in different contexts and in levels of intensity, from the traditional folkloric origins of the vampire until its reinterpretations in cinema. This discussion is helpful to understand how the idea of a sexual vampire has always been present as one of the foundations of the myth, but it reached its peak with the cinematic productions of Hammer Films. Afterwards, I present a discussion regarding the depiction of women in cinema and particularly in horror films. My intention in adding this section is to discuss the way in which women are represented and positioned in the Hammer Dracula franchise, since they are often depicted in direct connections with Dracula himself. I was able to identify two main arguments through the texts I selected for this section: the women of the films I am discussing tend to be masculinized in order to achieve some sort of sexual agency in the narratives, and this characteristic may put the Hammer Dracula franchise as predecessors of the slasher genre, that would find its production peak at the early 1970s to the late 1980s.

2.1 Sexuality and Eroticism: Basic Human Expressions

Even though commonly used and paired interchangeably, the terms sexuality and eroticism have been discussed through a variety of contexts and hypotheses, many of them

agreeing with the idea that, although similar, their origins and overall meaning are different. Because of this, the texts selected for this section present eroticism as something derived from sexuality and only existing within a human perspective, which means that eroticism, unlike sexuality, can only be experienced by humans. For the purposes of this study, it will be important to understand the similarities and distinctions between sexuality and eroticism, and their roles within the narratives of the analyzed films, since both are responsible for a drastic change when it comes to the representation of the vampire myth. Later, on subsection 2.2, I shall expand on this argument considering what sexuality means within the realm of the vampire myth, and how it relates to the texts present in this subsection.

The idea of presenting eroticism as related, but not identical, to sexuality has been posed by Octavio Paz in the book *The Double Flame: Essays on Love and Eroticism* (1993). To put it simply, sexuality would be the expression of the desire to reproduce, common to all animal species, including human beings, whereas eroticism would be the transfiguration, or the expansion, of sexuality by the human imagination. For this reason, eroticism would be strictly related to humans only, since humans can create, enjoy and attribute an erotic effect through imagination, by means of a variety of actions, feelings, emotions, or sensations that do not have the solemn purpose of reproduction. In his words: “[...] the sex act always says the same thing: reproduction. Eroticism is sex in action, but, because it either diverts it or denies it, it thwarts the goal of the sexual function. In sexuality, pleasure serves procreation; in erotic rituals, pleasure is an end in itself or has ends other than procreation.” (PAZ, 1993, p. 10)

Therefore, an important aspect to consider when discussing eroticism and sexuality is that eroticism occurs in a variety of possibilities and impulses. Because it is strictly related to the human mind and imagination, the ways it can be perceived or felt can substantially vary according to the person. Paz establishes that this variability to which eroticism is perceived is also extended by numerous factors, such as culture, history, the geographical location in which the person is positioned, the social surroundings, and the social, historical and sexual contexts to which one is exposed. Each of these elements has a significant role in the shaping of one’s erotic perception, which is why eroticism strikes differently for every person. The plurality of erotic desires, for instance, is the strongest difference between eroticism and sexuality, which has predominantly the same purpose: reproduction. Sexuality, in this sense, is a narrower term than eroticism, which is by definition plural, open, and imaginative.

Since sexuality supposedly finds its only purpose in reproduction, it becomes clear how eroticism is much more related to pleasure and its different manifestations. By “ending it itself” or having “other ends than procreation” (PAZ, 1993, p. 10), pleasure assumes a variety of manifestations:

Eroticism is, above all else, exclusively human: it is sexuality socialized and transfigured by the imagination and the will of human beings. The first thing that distinguishes eroticism from sexuality is the infinite variety of forms in which it manifests itself. Eroticism is invention, constant variation; sex is always the same. The protagonist of the erotic act is sex, or, to be more precise, the sexes. The plural is essential, because even in the so-called solitary pleasures sexual desire always invents an imaginary other... or many others. Also, in every erotic encounter there is an invisible and ever-active participant: imagination, desire. (PAZ, 1993, p. 12)

George Bataille, in his well-known book *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality* (1957), provides a deeper understanding of eroticism as inner to humans and related to imagination. His argument considers eroticism as the search of something outside of the human mind, something capable of sufficing one’s desires regardless of what they are. Desire, in this sense, and all the possible variants that form it, are, by itself, different for every person, since one’s object of desire depends on singular, unique traits to configure an erotic effect. As he puts it:

Eroticism is one aspect of the inner life of man. We fail to realise this because man is everlastingly in search of an object outside himself but this object answers the innerness of the desire. The choice of object always depends on the personal taste of the subject; even if it lights upon a woman whom most men would choose, the decisive factor is often an intangible aspect of this woman, not an objective quality; possibly nothing about her would force our choice if she did not somehow touch our inner being. (BATAILLE, 1986, p. 29)

Therefore, what can be considered to be erotic is an inner desire projected on another person or object, and eroticism can only be understood within personal experiences. This perception, varying according to cultural and social influences, has been shaping notions of

beauty, morality, and shame, for instance, ever since humankind has evolved from the Lower and the Middle Paleolithic periods (BATAILLE, 1986, p. 30). After reaching these aspects, humankind was able to distinguish themselves from animals in what concerns the aspects and the purposes of sexuality. As noted by Paz (1993), eroticism would configure itself as a characteristic exclusive to humans, which corroborates Bataille's argument:

Human eroticism differs from animal sexuality precisely in this, that it calls inner life into play. In human consciousness eroticism is that within man which calls his being in question. Animal sexuality does make for disequilibrium and this disequilibrium is a threat to life, but the animal does not know that. Nothing resembling a question takes shape within it. [...] Human sexual activity is not necessarily erotic but erotic it is whenever it is not rudimentary and purely animal. (BATAILLE, 1986, p. 29)

For being a product of human imagination, eroticism relies on the fact that it often projects hidden fantasies and wills in relation to the object in the exterior world. For this reason, Bataille defends that eroticism is beyond any human understanding, since what is considered to be erotic in one's mind might be considered a taboo, or immoral, by others when externalized. This would exemplify the particularity of eroticism as something shaped accordingly to one's perceptions. As a pure state of the mind, eroticism knows no boundaries to its expressions of what can be considered erotic. In his words:

My starting point is that eroticism is a solitary activity. At the least it is a matter difficult to discuss. For not only conventional reasons, eroticism is defined by secrecy. It cannot be public. I might instant some exceptions but somehow eroticism is outside ordinary life. In our experience taken as a whole it is cut off from the normal communication of emotions. There is a taboo in force. Nothing is absolutely forbidden, for there are always transgressions. (BATAILLE, 1986, p. 252)

Eroticism, as an imaginative, particular and private aspect of sexuality, distances itself from the literal act of sex, since the latter one assumes physicality in order to exist. Sigmund Freud, for instance, in his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), elaborates on the

idea of sexuality being a biological need for all animals, including humans. This impulse, the “libido”, is as natural as the instincts to feed, for instance:

The fact of sexual need in man and animal is expressed in biology by the assumption of a "sexual impulse." This impulse is made analogous to the impulse of taking nourishment, and to hunger. The sexual expression corresponding to hunger not being found colloquially, science uses the expression “libido.” (FREUD, 2018, p. 8)

Freud also develops the argument that sexuality is in constant development, from childhood to adulthood, with many of its major traits being formed still during childhood. It is in this phase, for instance, that children become aware of the erogenous zones of the body when they perform thumbsucking. This action, constituting the “oral phase” (FREUD, 2018, p. 56), is in contrast with the nourishment activity, which changes the mouth into one of the erogenous zones. Likewise, the anal zone becomes another important erogenous zone for the children once they undergo a sense of power in relation to it. It is also during childhood that children’s curiosity makes boys realize that they are different from girls for having a penis, which develops what Freud calls a “fear of castration” (FREUD, 2018, p. 53) In opposition, when girls realize their real lack of a penis, they develop penis envy: “The little girl does not react with similar refusals when she sees the differently formed genital of the boy. She is immediately prepared to recognize it, and soon becomes envious of the penis; this envy reaches its highest point in the consequentially important wish that she also should be a boy.” (FREUD, 2018, p. 54)

Freud’s arguments in relation to penis envy and masculine castration are brought here since they are crucial for the understanding of the discussion proposed on section 2.3, in which I shall revisit such terms, juxtaposing them with other theorists, in order to understand their workings within the horror film genre. Sexuality and eroticism, as natural as it is to humans, becomes one of the lenses through which horror films can be analyzed, especially the ones I selected for this work.

2.2 The Sexual Vampire: from Folklore to Cinema

Despite having distinct origins and being present in many different cultures, the myth of the vampire has not only maintained the thirst for blood as one of its main characteristics,

but it has also been popularly associated with sex and sexuality throughout different time periods, turning the blood/sexuality connection into a constant element whether in vampire popular folklore or fiction. From the traditional Eastern European legends to modern literature, it seems that a strong sexual impulse is a prominent feature when describing the axial features of the vampire.

Before tracing a historical contextualization about the presence of sexuality in vampire myths, I must first develop on the notion of how vampirism accounts for sexuality in a different manner from human sexuality. As a reanimated corpse, however, vampires are not able to perform sexuality in the ways that humans do as described by Freud on the previous section. In his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Freud explains the importance of semen to the fulfillment of the sexual act: “Where there is no stock of semen it is not only impossible to accomplish the sexual act, but there is also a lack of excitability in the erogenous zones, the suitable excitation of which can evoke no pleasure.” (FREUD, 2018, p. 68) He states, therefore, that pleasurable sex is not possible in occasions where semen is not present. The sexual act of the vampire, in this case, would be replaced by the act of biting and drinking blood. It accounts for three phases that strongly resemble the human sexual act: penetration, the exchange of fluids, and the pleasure of at least one of the parts involved. By understanding that penetration through biting, generally a private area such as the neck or the breast, there is a solid resemblance to intercourse without any genital contact. Also, the exchange of fluids carries a similar meaning when equalizing semen and blood as vital to the creation (or maintenance) of life. Emily Shuck, in her article *Re-masculating the Vampire: Concepts of Sexuality and the Undead from Rossetti’s Proserpine to Meyer’s Cullen*, delves in the representations of the sexuality of vampires, exploring the notion of fluid exchanges between vampires and victims. She states that, although impossible of engaging in proper sexual acts, “Victorian vampires ostensibly fall into this category—beyond the fact that they are dead and appropriately can no longer create (natural) life—the prime fluid of interest to the vampire is blood, not semen.” (SHUCK, 2013, p. 2-3)

Shuck expands her argument describing the process of vampirism as condensed in strictly gendered relationships, but reversed roles. Although Dracula’s fangs are representatives of the phallic object for penetration, it is the vampire that receives the fluid, in a reversion that, momentarily, emasculates the vampire while at the same time provides it the means for his existence:

While the penetrations in *Dracula* are not genital, they are frequent in the narrative and their implications are explicit. However, a literal look at the way

that the Victorian vampire penetrated its victims, a gender reversal becomes apparent. The vampiric dental penetration of sucking blood from the neck or breast of their victims is more like the traditional female role in sex. While the tooth of the vampire serves as a phallic representation of penetration, the blood is received by the penetrator, not the penetrated. As the vampire sucks the blood of their (usually female) victim, a role reversal occurs, in which the blood-giver (penetrated) is the source of the fluid which creates and sustains life for the male vampire, effectively—in Freudian terms anyway—emasculating the vampire. (SHUCK, 2013, p. 3)

Although the physicality of the sexual act is very different between humans and vampires, the similarities they share are crucial for the understanding of how this characteristic is apparent in the vampire myth. The three previously mentioned appear in different levels of intensity and of bodily responses, but the strongest one remains the sexual impulse. As Freud has put it, the sexual impulse is a biological, natural feature of the human body. However, it also appears recurrently in any of the retellings of the vampire myth. This impulse, often described as the main reason for the vampire to prey upon victims, would later be appropriated by modern literature and cinema, always considering their times of production, perpetuating the vampire myth as a narrative closely linked with genital sexuality.

In the chapter *Sexuality and the Vampire*, a section from the book *The Vampire Book: The Encyclopedia of the Undead* (1996), J. Gordon Melton describes how European Gypsies visualized the vampire as such a strong sexual entity that its intense sexual drive would be enough to make it come back from the grave. Other folklore legends also depict the vampire as a creature that returns from the dead with the unique purpose of consummating its lust with a beloved woman (MELTON, 1996, p. 628). It is also a common trait in Russian folklore, where the vampire is traditionally described as a handsome stranger with an eager sexual appetite who seeks for young, beautiful women (a cautionary tale).

The relation between the vampire myth and sexuality would later appear in modern literary vampires, such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem *Christabel* (1797) and in John William Polidori's prose fiction *The Vampyre* (1819), to keep the examples within British literary tradition. Later in the nineteenth century, Sheridan Le Fanu's novella *Carmilla* (1872) alluded to a prolific sexual nature by telling the story of a predatory female vampire, Carmilla, who slowly develops a relationship with Laura. The protagonists' sexuality is developed throughout the story with a strong notion of desire also present in the text. The most iconic

literary fiction about the vampire is Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* (1897), which could be responsible for enhancing the popular imagery of the vampire as a sexual being. A substantial example of this is the scene where Jonathan Harker encounters the three vampire brides in Dracula's castle. His reaction expresses not only fear, but also desire for being devoured by such predators, a representation that is not only subtle, but perhaps unconscious for the character and the readers of the time:

There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips. It is not good to note this down, lest some day it should meet Mina's eyes and cause her pain; but it is the truth. They whispered together, and then they all three laughed—such a silvery, musical laugh, but as hard as though the sound never could have come through the softness of human lips. It was like the intolerable, tingling sweetness of water-glasses when played on by a cunning hand. (STOKER, 2017, p. 47)

As Melton points out, “The sexual nature of vampirism formed an underlying theme in *Dracula*, but it was disguised in such a way that it was hidden from the literary censors of the day, the consciousness of the public, and probably from the awareness (as many critics argued) of author Bram Stoker himself.” (MELTON, 1996, p. 626)

Bram Stoker's epistolary novel *Dracula* has been constantly adapted several times through different media, including stage and cinema. German expressionist film *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* (directed by F. W. Murnau) was released in 1922 as the first unofficial filmic adaptation of Stoker's novel, as referred to today. At the time, the names of characters, the location, and even some parts of the original plot were transformed. The looks of the original Count Dracula were changed into the rat's teeth and bat's ears of Count Orlok, a more suitable look to German Expressionism's standards. Although the sexual nature of the vampire myth was not explored, his long fingers and his hunchback posture, combined with the inventive filmic techniques from the time period, gave the character a new visual representation.

In 1924, when Bela Lugosi played Count Dracula in the Broadway stage play adaptation of Stoker's novel, the audience could identify the subtle traces of the character's seduction that went unnoticed to the novel's general public. The sexual vampire entered the realm of cinema when the same play was transformed into a film by Universal Studios in 1931. With Lugosi reprising his character in the leading role, its filmic adaptation also

presented a more sensual relation between Dracula and his victims through Lugosi's acting. This duality between horror and sensuality was transported to the advertisements of the film at the time, which read as "the story of the strangest passion the world has ever known!" The film was a major success, and it was the first of many others to incorporate Lugosi playing the Count.

In the following years, and also by means of direct sequences and parodies, the Universal Cycle turned the character of Dracula into a worldwide brand, although, as David Pirie states, his performance was easily recognizable by its frozen depiction: "The Dracula they evoked was simply a cardboard villain who, by virtue of the new technological resources of the cinema, and Lugosi's unusual qualities as a personality, was able to make an impact on the picture-going public." (2008, p. 98)

It was only in 1958, nearly 30 years later, with Hammer Films and Christopher Lee that the character would resurrect, bringing strong changes in the popular image of the vampire. Lee's Dracula, although still sharing minor similarities with the original character from the book, was more physically appealing to general audiences. This, according to Pirie, helped the development of Dracula's sensuality since, through Lee's appearance and performance, the audience could finally visualize the strong erotic undertone in his relation to women, which was only germinal in the previous adaptations. Additionally, Terence Fisher's direction, the inventive editing technics and the use of color (unseen in past versions of *Dracula*) were key elements to the representation of this effect. Commenting on Hammer's cinematic techniques, its consequences in the portrayal of Dracula and his relation to women, Pirie describes one of the most emblematic scenes from the first film, one that suggests sexual anticipation from the character Lucy:

Lucy's two visits from Dracula are both conveyed without our even seeing the Count, by an allusive juxtaposition of shots which weave a dream-like, magical aura around the large French windows in her bedroom. On the first occasion, Fisher cuts from a long shot of Lucy lying on the bed expectantly fingering the two marks on her neck. (PIRIE, 2008, p. 100)

Considering the representation of the female characters and their relation to sexuality, Anna Krugovoy Silver, in *Victorian Literature and the Anorexic Body*, writes about the body of the female characters in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and the depiction of desire through the act

of drinking blood. Affirming that thinness and fatness are related to the act of fulfillment through blood, Silver addresses the relation between vampirism and eroticism by establishing that there is a “grotesque and strong resemblance to sexual impulse in the will that female characters have to feed” (SILVER, 2003, p. 102). Characters like Lucy, for instance, express their sexuality through their appetite once she becomes a vampire. In the Hammer Dracula franchise, there are scenes that combine imageries of blood and female body parts, with large close-ups and slow pauses, such scenes establish connections between the vampire’s bite and sexuality. One example of this is the scene after the character of Mina is bitten in the first film, *Horror of Dracula* (1958), where she lies in her bed while blood slowly runs down her breasts. This exemplifies how Hammer Films depicted the act of vampirism and sexuality on screen as intrinsically entwined, with a focus on the characters’ erotic desires.

Hammer Films retold Stoker’s story from a much more graphic point of view, exploring elements that were previously only inferred in the story’s narrative. With Lee’s *Dracula*, the audience witnessed an actual on-screen bite for the first time, adding a new layer to a well-known character and myth. From the nuances of sexuality to the actual depiction of vampirism, much of the differences from previous productions are due to the technical improvements of the time, especially color. It allowed creative direction to explore blood and its relation to the vampire’s sexuality in its more vivid form. By exploring and developing an unexplored characteristic of the vampire, Hammer Films contributed to the establishment of the mutability associated with the vampire myth.

Commenting on this idea of mutability, José Duarte, in his essay *Bite me! But please be sexy about it – o mito do vampiro no cinema* (2005), presents an analysis of the vampire in cinema, more specifically of the productions from the early 1970s (the end of Hammer productions of *Dracula*) until contemporary films, and the changes it has suffered throughout the years. According to him, the reinterpretations of the vampire are often products of different aesthetic expressions, and most of them come from literature and cinema. Since the vampire figure is constantly changing, popular imagery of the myth often includes cinematic references, which is something that has contributed to the current representations of vampires in different media.

Regarding the adaptations of *Dracula*, Duarte traces a panorama that starts with 1922’s *Nosferatu*, and how director F. W. Murnau presented the vampire with a more traditionalist approach, focusing on its relations with nature, such as animals and the sun as a

destructive force. He mentions Tod Browning's adaptation of *Dracula* in 1931 and how Bela Lugosi's portrayal of the vampire helped to shape the popular, contemporary image of the vampire.

An important argument in Duarte's analysis is how the myth of the vampire has constantly suffered changes in its features as a result of the freedom directors have to play with these changes in order to keep the myth alive. In the case of Hammer Films, the sexual aggressiveness and behavior of the vampire figure is what differs from the previous productions cycles. Christopher Lee's version of *Dracula* helped to perpetuate the myth of the vampire at the same time it re-shaped the vampire figure in a reimagined and previously unexplored take. In conclusion, the sexually aggressive vampire is a product of Hammer Films.

Anna Powell, in her article *Adapting Gothic from Print to Screen* (2006), also comments on the processes of adapting Gothic literature into cinema using Bram Stoker's *Dracula* as an example. Powell addresses different aspects while commenting on filmic adaptations of *Dracula*, such as the narrative structures, characterization, and socio-historical contexts. Commenting on different theorists and their ideas of adaptation from literature to film, the author also points out how different directors may choose to focus on a specific trait of the characters, and how these choices can create a whole new dimension of monsters and, in this case, vampires. Relating this notion with Hammer Films, it is possible to see how the Hammer *Dracula* franchise strengthened the vampire's sexuality as a fundamental characteristic. While enhancing this particular trait, Hammer also enlarges the notion and the definition of the vampire, corroborating Duarte's argument that the vampire is a myth whose figure changes and adapts throughout different times. Commenting on Lisa Hopkin's claim that cinematic versions of *Dracula* are "analogous to the ways in which perceptions of the novel have changed over time" (POWELL, p. 128), she summarizes the different approaches of different directors and what were the choices made by them, and with this conceptual background she discusses the idea of "originality". If considering Stoker's novel as the 'original source', a question of what the 'original adaptation' is emerges. However, each one of them deals with different traits that are common to the main character, with the difference on the focus chosen by the respective directors.

Such bold and blunt depiction of sexuality, however, was not free from critical backlash. Its gruesome scenes, combining feminine submission with male dominance and a strong focus on blood, often caused critics and spectators to fervently protest against the first

exhibitions of 1958's *Horror of Dracula*. Bruce G. Hallenbeck, in *The Hammer Vampire*, recounts the public's first impressions by quoting Audrey Field, a reader of Jimmy Sangster's original script, who was part of the British Board of Film Censors: "The curse of the things is Technicolor blood: why need vampires be messier feeders than anyone else? Certainly strong cautions will be necessary on shots of blood. And, of course, some of the stake-work is prohibitive." (HALLENBECK, 2010, p. 40) Nonetheless, such shock value is, undoubtedly, one of the reasons why Hammer Films managed to transform the vampire into the ultimate sexual vampire, something quite different from the previously presented. In Hallenbeck's words,

Sangster, along with Fisher and Hinds, was intend to remaking the image of the predatory vampire into much more of a 'demon lover' than Lugosi had ever been: 'The terrifying lover who died – yet lived!' as the ads were to proclaim. Helped enormously by Lee's characterization of the count, Dracula was no longer to be feared simply because he was a monster; now he was to be feared twice over because he was also devilishly attractive – he still brought terror and death to his victims, but he was to promise them a sexual thrill-ride along the way." (HALLENBECK, 2010, p. 38-39)

Hammer Films and Lee's performance contributed to the image of Dracula as a "darkly virile and sexually-charged" (HUNTER, 2008, p. 69) character that perpetuates popular culture in relation to the vampire myth. This myth, as previously stated, can change throughout history according to different factors, but many of them are common to the general idea of a vampire. It is the emphasis or focus on one of these traits that can establish the changes of the myth throughout time. By being a myth possible of interpretations and re-imaginative depictions, the overall meaning of what is a vampire becomes ambiguous in the sense that it depends according to which source (director, book, TV show) is answering this question. The ambiguity constantly associated with the vampire figure is often seen as sexual-oriented, and this leads to many kinds of interpretation and adaptation in cinema, sometimes focusing on one particular trait, sometimes focusing on another one. Therefore, Hammer's adaptations aimed for this ambiguity and succeeded in establishing a distinguished imagery that involves the sexuality of the vampire as a basis to the story of the myth.

2.3 Women in Cinema: Their Roles in Horror Films and in the Hammer *Dracula* Franchise

In this section I present a selection of theorists that dealt with the issue of the representation of women in cinema. Since Hammer Films' productions of *Dracula* are notorious for their depiction of the female vampires' sexuality and their relation with the main vampire, it is important to understand what this approach means to previous adaptations of *Dracula* and also to horror cinema in general. The depiction of women, in these films, provides a variety of interpretations whether it perpetuates pre-established gender conventions, or offers an empowering role to the female characters by attributing sexual agency to them. Therefore, the theorists here argue that the standard approach to women's representation in cinema as submissive, passive, and subjugated behavior, in comparison to the male characters in the narratives. My goal here is to develop a summary of these theorists' main arguments alongside a parallel with what is reproduced in the films of my analysis. These authors are going to serve as a framework here, combined with the discussions of color and film technology on Chapter 3, all the way into the development of the analysis of the film scenes on Chapter 4.

When acknowledging the position of women as central in Hammer Films, given the centrality of them and their bodies in several scenes, and, thus, by discussing the probable consequences of this, it is important to understand firstly what is the role of a patriarchal perspective in structuring film form in general. In this regard, Laura Mulvey, in her article *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, proposes a debate about the depiction of women in cinema. Writing within the context of the Women's Liberation Movement³, she argues that the function of women in cinema is often primarily to fulfill the scopophilic pleasure of masculine viewers. Mulvey describes the cinema as possible of offering a variety of pleasures, being scopophilia (the pleasure in looking) one of them. The term, as she explains, was isolated by Freud as one of the main "component instincts of sexuality which exist as drives quite independently of the erotogenic zones. At this point he associated scopophilia with taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze." (MULVEY, 1989, p. 16). The main consequence of it, as she puts it, is that women become restricted to objects of the gaze, not-bearers, meaning that the point of view always departs

³ Also referred to as feminist movement, a series of historical-political events aiming for reforms on issues related to gender inequality.

from a masculine perspective. Mulvey defends that, when we analyze such subjective constructions, materialized in the film framing, we can achieve a better understanding of female oppression in society. Paying particular attention to Hollywood cinema produced in the 1950s, she states that only by analyzing such structures and conventions of the centrality of the female image can we try to break them.

One of the arguments made by Mulvey is that the cinematic representation of attributing women the inactive role of just being looked at perpetuates pre-established sexual roles, reaffirming the active/passive dichotomy that is very much present in the real-life issue of sexual inequality. Women, in this case, do not have an actual importance to the story's narrative; they are styled, objectified and used, with the purpose of attributing visual pleasure and narrative development to the male characters. As Laura Mulvey puts it:

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. Woman displayed as sexual object is the *leitmotif* of erotic spectacle: from pin-ups to strip-tease, from Ziegfeld to Busby Berkeley, she holds the look, and plays to and signifies male desire. Mainstream film neatly combines spectacle and narrative. [...] The presence of woman is an indispensable element of spectacle in normal narrative film, yet her visual presence tends to work against the development of a story-line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation. This alien presence then has to be integrated into cohesion with the narrative. (MULVEY, 1989, p. 19)

Mulvey's argument is extended when she points the problematic of the combination between the male spectator's gaze and the male character's gaze. These two levels in which women are depicted function together when she, the object, is looked both by the male characters in the film and the male spectator in a film auditorium. The fragmentation of women (with close-ups on specific body parts) destroys, according to Mulvey, the important aspects of a narrative through a mere fulfillment of visual pleasure. This happens because of the identification of the spectator with the male protagonist, as he "projects his look onto that of his like, his screen surrogate, so that the power of the male protagonist as he controls

events coincides with the active power of erotic look, both giving a satisfying sense of omnipotence” (MULVEY, 1989, p. 20).

Considering the female vampires of Hammer Films, one can find similarities with the example of *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939) and *To Have and Have Not* (1944) brought by Mulvey when she discusses the power of the male protagonist/spectator over the female characters. In both films, the female characters are

“[...] isolated, glamorous, on display, sexualised. But as the narrative progresses she falls in love with the main protagonist and becomes his property, losing her outward glamorous characteristics, her generalized sexuality, her slow-girl connotations, her eroticism is subjected to the male star alone. By means of identification with him, through participation in his power, the spectator can indirectly possess her too.” (MULVEY, 1989, p. 21)

This description could easily fit the representation of women in the Hammer Films of *Dracula*. Initially, the female characters are often portrayed as having an innocent, exemplary, almost virginal behavior, which is completely erased after the process of becoming a vampire through their encounters with Dracula. This action, conducted by the main male character of the films (the active force, the maker of meaning, as put by Mulvey), is the catalyst to the beginning of the representative female characters’ sexuality, which becomes a strong characteristic to differentiate them from their previous human form. However, this sexual “awakening” is completely molded by Dracula alone, who restricts their acts in order to fulfill his own pleasures: he often imprisons his female victims, and punishes them whenever they attempt to bite another male character. In this sense, the women in these films are the “passive” agents, since they cannot succeed in fulfilling their own wishes in relation to who they are going to feed on.

This possessive behavior is duplicated when we consider the camera angles of the productions, which often assumes Dracula’s point of view when he prowls on women. This perspective, when considering Mulvey’s argument of identification with the male characters, is reflected upon a male spectator, who tends to identify with Dracula’s unstoppable, active personality⁴. This will be further exemplified on Chapter 4, with screenshots of the previously mentioned scenes.

⁴ Since Mulvey does not account for a gay or lesbian spectator, only the “ideal” male spectator, I am considering her argument here within a classical theoretical perspective. Therefore, I am aware that her text should be historically considered, as it was written in 1975. Mulvey understands sexuality as binary, rather than a spectrum, as it is considered in contemporary Queer theory.

One of the problems with Laura Mulvey's argument is, however, her use of only the male, third person gaze when referring to a spectator, which excludes the possibility of a female spectator's identification. It proposes, therefore, the question "what about the women in the audience?" She addresses this issue in her *Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' inspired by *Duel in the Sun**, in which she elaborates on a possible 'masculinization' of the spectator regardless of her/his gender. Mulvey starts off her response to previous criticism of disregarding the female spectator by stating that it is very much possible that a female spectator could reach the opposite effects of going through the 'masculinization' of identifying with the "freedom of action" (p. 29) of the male protagonist, or she could find herself completely disconnected and unidentified with the 'active' part of the story. Because of these conflicting possibilities, she addresses the problem considering films in which women are crucial to a narrative shift in the story. When this happens, "[...] the female presence as centre allows the story to be actually, overtly, about sexuality: it becomes a melodrama." (MULVEY, 1989, p. 35) The example of melodrama brought by Mulvey, the film *Duel in the Sun* (1981), represents the masculinization to which the female character goes through when she has to undergo her phallic phase of being 'active' in the narrative. Therefore, the female spectator inevitably still identifies with the masculine, active force. This identification is, as Mulvey puts it, "restless in its transvestite clothes" (MULVEY, 1989, p. 37)

If we attempt to perceive any indication of female agency in the Hammer Films of *Dracula*, we can observe similarities with the masculinization that is described by Mulvey in her *Afterthoughts*. When characters such as the vampire prisoners in *Horror of Dracula* (1958) and in *Taste the Blood of Dracula* (1970) show any trace of activeness, for once abandoning the submissive position, that is, when they decide to bite a male character, it is always depicted through a phallic perspective. Their phallic objects (their fangs) are central to the action; it is through their fangs that they can reach an active position in the narrative, fulfilling, for once, their desires and instincts as vampires. The problem here is that this sense of agency does not last, and they are often punished (killed, locked in a cell, abandoned) by Dracula himself. For a female spectator to identify with these characters, in this sense, is to wear the 'transvestite clothes' to which Mulvey refers to, to be masculinized, but also to be repressed for it afterwards.

Another significant problem with Mulvey's gaze theory is that it relies on a binary view of sexuality and an assumption of an ideal male spectator, which has been debunked by subsequent scholars. In the films of my analysis, however, when women attempt to engage in

sexual activities, they are punished by a masculine authority, which is something that Mulvey's theory predicted. Also, it is important to note that, even with the aforementioned problems, Mulvey's argument remains important in the field of film studies for being a seminal text when considering the role of women in cinema. Her context of investigation and starting point should not be disregarded.

When considering the social situation of women and their accomplishments within the 1950s and 1970s, there is a strong advance in comparison to the same aspects in the 1930s. However, the oppressive systems remain the same: female desire is an object of punishment. The representation has changed, but from a political perspective it maintains the conditioned norm, which justifies my choice of using Mulvey's gaze theory in my analysis.

Still on the issue of how masculinity and femininity on film are much more related to the state of mind than to the body or the spectators' gender, Carol J. Clover analyses gendered stereotypes in slasher films in *Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film*. My intention with bringing her argument to the discussion is, besides acknowledging the discussions about gender that she develops in the context of horror films, is to highlight the idea of the Hammer Dracula franchise as a possible predecessor of the slasher genre, since these films share substantial similarities. Its constitutive elements appear on the films analyzed in this work and in the slasher genre. The summary of the slasher genre given by Clover already mirrors an important aspect of the Hammer Dracula, the sequential death of women through the hands of a male killer. Since this relation is primarily the basis of the slasher genre, Clover states that this particular genre "present[s] us in startlingly direct terms with a world in which male and female are at desperate odds but in which, at the same time, masculinity and femininity are more states of mind than body." (CLOVER, 1987, p. 188)

By attributing the term "body genre" to horror films and pornography, Clover establishes how both of these genres have their 'success' measured in bodily sensations, which means that good horror films are supposed to physically scare its audience (with chills, shivers, etc.), while pornography is supposed to arouse its target audience with sexual stimulation. There is, therefore, a relation between the bodies in the audience and the bodies depicted on screen, since the latter is on display whether under threat or in sexual action, and the former responds to this display (CLOVER, 1987, p. 189) The cinematic formula of the slasher genre, according to Clover, started in 1960 with *Psycho*, directed by Alfred Hitchcock. This film portrayed an array of elements which would later be reproduced in films such as *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974) and *Halloween* (1978). These elements are the presence of the killer, a locale (a "terrible place"), the use of weapons, the numerous victims

(mostly female), and shock effects. I will now present such elements through the definitions of Carol J. Clover while describing how they appear in the Hammer Films of *Dracula*, alongside with what makes them gender-related in the horror genre.

Clover uses the example of the killer in *Psycho* and in Brian De Palma's *Dressed to Kill* (1980) to illustrate how the killer in the slasher film is often a male propelling psychosexual fury, whether it is through gender distress (like in both previous mentioned films, or through a childhood trauma related to the female sex (like Leatherface in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* or Michael Myers in *Halloween*, who violently stabs his older sister for having sexual intercourse). The links between these characters remain clear in Clover's analysis as primarily gendered-based, since, even though they also kill men, they pay extra attention to the killing of women, in ways that are more developed and graphic. Clover also points out to the "virtual indestructibility" (CLOVER, 1987, p. 196) of these killers, who often resist attacks in order to come back for the next sequence. This is another significant trait of slasher films: the killers are fixed. What changes in the sequences are the victims, often replaced by other female characters who inevitably also find a violent death. This pattern is very much present in the Hammer *Dracula* franchise. *Dracula* himself is the figure whose indestructibility, due to the mythical aspects of the vampire, manages to find a way to come back in the next sequence, with the difference that he usually dies at the end of each film. His killings, however, are much more similar to the ones present in slasher films. In *Scars of Dracula* (1970), for instance, he violently stabs one of his female prisoners after she has sex with another man. Sex, and more importantly the sexual drive of the female vampire, is the ultimate reason for her to die by the hands of the male killer.

The second element that configures the slasher genre is the locale, the "terrible place" (CLOVER, 1987, p. 197) in which most of the action develops. A basis for Victorian horror, the terrible place in the slasher narrative combines the visual decrepitude of the place (an abandoned mansion, an old shelter, a forest hut) with the terrible aspects of its residents. If in classical slasher films there is the presence of a murderous family, for instance, in *Horror of Dracula* (1958) we discover, little by little, the dreadful secret aspects of *Dracula's* castle, such as the imprisonment of women, the open coffins and chains, and the overall violence through which he treats his employees.

The weapons in a slasher film are always seen as extensions of the killer's body, the most common being knives, axes, or even chainsaws. Clover brings to attention what she calls 'marginal examples' in horror cinema, such as *Jaws* (1975) and *The Birds* (1963), and werewolf and vampire films, to demonstrate this characteristic of the weapon. She declares:

“Knives and needles, like teeth, beaks, fangs, and claws, are personal, extensions of the body that bring attacker and attacked into primitive, animalistic embrace” (CLOVER, 1987, p. 198). It is this phallic object through which the gendered dichotomy of the characters emerge; when a female victim, by emulating the active, masculine power through the use of a weapon such as a knife, or, in Hammer Films, when a female vampire attempts to attack, we can perceive the masculinization of the character when she makes use of a phallic symbol to gain her agency.

One of the characteristics of the victims in the slasher genre is their sexual transgression. Clover explains how, regardless of the victim’s gender, the killer often attacks who engages in “unauthorized sex” (1987, p. 200), with the single difference that a male characters’ death is a lot simpler and less detailed than a female character’s. Women tend to die slowly, or graphically, and with a lot more suffering than men, who usually die quickly, sometimes even off-screen. This is also present in the Hammer Films of *Dracula*; his male servants are always found dead by another character, with the audience being led to deduce they were killed by Dracula. In *Horror of Dracula*, for instance, Dracula attempts to kill Van Helsing not because he wants to, but because he needs to defend himself from his nemesis. It becomes a matter of survival.

The issue of the final girl, although with a completely different purpose, can also be found in the Hammer *Dracula* franchise if we consider the female survival of these films. Having a central role in slasher films, since, as described by Clover, the final girl is the one who “finds the strength either to stay the killer long enough to be rescued (ending A) or to kill him herself (ending B)” (1987, p. 201), the main female characters in *Horror of Dracula*, *Taste the Blood of Dracula* and *Scars of Dracula* also manage to survive Dracula’s attempts of attack. The aggravating difference here is that their survival depends on their male lover’s ability to find Dracula and kill him, therefore stopping the process of vampirism that may or may not be happening to the female character. This puts their survivalist characteristics entirely on masculine hands, which differs significantly from the final girls in the slasher films, who by themselves manage to escape the killer, whether by finding rescue (like in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*), or by confronting him (like in *Halloween*). Another substantial difference between the female survivals is their masculinization. Clover puts that the final girl in slasher films is always “boysh” (1987, p. 204), with her masculine characteristics serving as tools for her survival. In the Hammer Films of *Dracula*, women who survive do it while still performing femininity, since the “active” aspect of killing Dracula is effectively performed by her male lover. This visual dichotomy is another strong argument to exemplify

the masculinization of both the women on screen and in the audience, who, in slasher films, could only survive alone by undertaking a phallic, masculine stance.

The last characteristic of the slasher genre defended by Clover is the shock value of this genre's productions, and it can be seen as similar to the productions of Hammer Films in its visual depictions of excess, whether of violence, of graphic deaths, or, as I shall develop on Chapter 3, blood. Differently from predecessors such as *Psycho*, or even 1931's *Dracula*, both the slasher genre and the *Dracula* Films by Hammer have a tendency of showing, and not only suggesting. The images, vividly strong, perpetuate the shock effect in audiences, for the positive or negative. Clover states that these creative choices may draw the line between the audience's repulsion, or may be seen as responsible for putting such films within the realm of cult films. This repulsion, often measured by bodily responses, reinforces the concept of horror as one of the body genres, a term extended by Linda Williams in her essay *Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess*, where she adds the melodrama, together with pornography and horror, as the three genres whose purposes often rely on the depiction of an excess of emotions, sex, and violence, respectively, to provoke a physical sensation in viewers. The goal of the essay, pointed by Williams, is for us to reconsider the apparent "gratuitous" (1991, p. 3) excesses presented in these genres, in order to understand the structural and systemic aspects of such excesses.

Williams expands Carol Clover's argument of the body genres when she considers the melodrama as a genre which also puts the female body as spectacle. Whether they are orgasming (pornography), suffering physical violence (horror), or weeping (melodrama), women in such genres perform a specific form of ecstasy, which is often related to a sexual excitement or rapture (WILLIAMS, 1991, p. 4). There is, however, a mixture between the excess of horror and pornography in the Hammer Films of *Dracula* when we consider, for instance, that the monstrous aspect of Dracula (there is, the threat that lies within his acts of vampirism) is also his sexual trait, since biting, in vampirism, is commonly known as a sexual act. The victims' responses, in this case, are perceived as rather ambiguous, and not so defined as in the established genres of pornography and horror, particularly the slasher genre, which do not depict fear and sexual tension towards the killer as interconnected. The ecstasy of the victims in *Horror of Dracula* (1958), for instance, despite being a horror film, is much more sexual than fearful due to the vampire's nature as a seducer, who often hypnotizes his victims. Traditional screams of fear are substituted for contemplative gazes and moans of pleasure, with rare occasions where there is a chase between monster and victim. When this happens, usually by the end of the film, it is often because Dracula's seduction power over

women is interrupted by a male character, which causes the female victim to regain her awareness of danger.

Williams also points out that women in horror films are often portrayed sharing the spectacle along with the monster of the film. By describing how the female actresses in films such as *King Kong* (1933), *Psycho* (1960), and *Halloween* (1978), (in which the depiction of bodily excesses, there is, the screams of fear and shudders, appear in its full intensity), she addresses that women are positioned as the channels through each of such 'excesses' are achieved, assuming a role as central as the monster of the film. When considering the Hammer Dracula franchise, the female characters are crucial to the depiction of the previous mentioned bodily excesses. They are depicted as terrified victims, but they also become the embodiments of pleasure when they become more sexually pronounced. Eroticism is present alongside with the fearful aspects in the relations between the monster (Dracula) and his female victims. In both assumptions, the female body indeed becomes the central element on screen, embodying the fear caused by Dracula, but also the sexual undertone with which it is associated. When such defined lines are blurred by Hammer's version of Dracula, the role of eroticism in such productions becomes more apparent. Sexual transgression, pointed by Carol J. Clover as one of the key elements of the slasher genre, has a different purpose in the Hammer Films of Dracula, which makes their distinctions clear within a possible horror genre timeline. Instead of serving as the ultimate motif and justification for the killer, it first gives women the agency necessary for them to act independently from Dracula for the first time. It adds to the narrative, arranging the events in a way that may be perceived, at a first glance, as a tool that liberates the women of the story from their social and political restraints, while at the same time corroborating the hypothesis of sexuality as a trademark of the vampire myth.

The idea of a female, transgressive vampire is developed by Barbara Creed in *Woman as Vampire: The Hunger*, a section from her book *The Monstrous Feminine*. By describing how the female vampire can also be interpreted as monstrous, Creed points out how the figure of the female vampire became an important and prominent figure during the 1970s, a period in which "the vampire film began to explore openly the explicit relationship between sex, violence and death." (CREED, 2007, p. 224) In this sense, it is possible to consider the Hammer Dracula franchise, and its derivative franchises, such as *The Karnstein Trilogy* (1970-1971), as important mediums through which the figure of the female vampire as a monster became evident. Creed, referring mainly, but not exclusively, to films in which there are lesbian vampires, states that this proliferation of films with strong, sexual female vampires may have a connection with the rise of the feminist movement. The connection, according to

her and Andrew Tudor (1989, p. 64-5), is that the feminist movement would also lead to “public fears about a more aggressive expression of female sexuality.” (CREED, 2007, p. 224) This fear is often represented in the characters which the female vampires interact with in the Hammer Dracula franchise. Once they access their ability to express their sexuality through vampirism, for instance, they become prisoners of Dracula, staying susceptible to his power and manipulation. If they escape, they are hunted and killed. They are not allowed to sexually perform in the same way that Dracula does, remaining conditioned to his wills.

Creed compares the masculine and the female act of vampirism as equally erotic, by stating that “Sucking blood from a victim’s neck places the vampire and victim in an intimate relationship. Unlike other horror-film monsters, the vampire enfolds the victim in an apparent or real erotic embrace. This is as true for the female vampire as the male.” (2007, p. 225) This is particularly relevant when considering the outcomes of a female vampire’s “erotic embrace” in a Hammer Film of *Dracula*. The constant punishment of this act throughout the whole franchise may suggest a conditioning upon the female vampire, who, after being masculinized by becoming a sexual predator, is forced to regain a submissive position. Creed brings into discussion Penelope Shuttle and Peter Redgrove’s book *The Wise Wound: Menstruation and Everywoman* (1978), in which the authors present the concept of the masculinization of the female vampire, while Dracula himself is feminized. They

point out that in filmic versions of the vampire narrative the Dracula figure is a sexually ambiguous character (1978, 267). The male Dracula is feminized: he is a sensual, elegant, aristocratic figure who wears a black satin cloak, speaks with a seductive accent, is clearly evil and yet immensely attractive to women. In his death he is ‘feminized’ in that his body is usually penetrated by a phallic stake. The female Dracula is masculinized; she is an active, predatory seducer. (CREED, 2007, p. 237)

In this sense, the female vampire is monstrous, according to Creed, because it threatens “to undermine the formal and highly symbolic relations of men and women essential to the continuation of patriarchal society” (2007, p. 229-230) by acquiring the masculinized characteristics of being active and sexually unrestrained. The threat relies on the idea that female sexuality is deemed transgressive both within the films’ narratives and the social context in which they are produced. It is through their sexuality that the female vampires of Hammer acquire a sense of power that implies liberation within a system that demands them to be passive as the objects of the look and meaning.

However, the role of sexuality in the Hammer Dracula franchise can also be analyzed in a way that presents itself as not so empowering for women. On the contrary, it may open discussions wheatear it is shown as a mere artifice to enhance the notions of a masculine power. Although the women in these films are more sexually active just as the main character, it can be noted that this trait is particularly helpful for the main masculine figure in the narrative, whose plot and intentions revolve around the use of women as fundamental for his achievements.

Therefore, the notion of power here considered is relevant to discuss its connection to the relation between men and women. Further on, I will analyze scenes in which this relation of power is represented in the three films of my corpus, considering the theories gathered here as a way through which power is constructed on screen. When such power relations are seen as gender-based, a definition of power in this relational context comes in hand. Pilcher and Whelehan, for instance, argue that, in general terms, “to possess power is to have the ability to achieve whatever is desired regardless of any opposition” (2004, p. 111) This definition suits the universe of *Dracula* depicted by Hammer Films, since it is possible to see how Dracula consciously manipulates the female characters to achieve his goals, while at the same time fulfilling sexual needs. Thus, power and sex share similar values throughout the films’ narratives, since both are intrinsically connected on screen. Sex and sexuality can be perceived as key features through which Dracula exerts his power upon his female victims, while at the same time stiffening an element of the vampire myth.

I have gathered in this chapter texts that deal with the issue of sexuality and eroticism in contexts that vary from the traditional vampire myth to its depiction in cinema. It is possible to observe how extra attention is paid to female sexuality since it invariably becomes the focal point due to its symbolic charges of meaning in cinematic works, particularly in the horror genre. When Hammer Films also explores the sexual trait of the vampire within the female sexuality in the Dracula franchise, the immediate assumption may be related to how it breaks with gender conventions by portraying sexually active women in the same way of its masculine characters. However, a deeper look shows how their sexual agency remains restrained to a masculine figure, which ultimately retains the power throughout the narrative. Female sexuality, in this sense, ends up serving a masculine scopophilic pleasure that occurs inside and outside the screen.

3 THE VAMPIRE IN COLORS: Technicolor in Horror Films and Its Use in the Hammer Dracula Franchise

In this chapter I will present an overview of the conflicting opinions regarding the use of color in cinema, more specifically in horror films. The discussion presented here revolves around the contribution (or lack thereof) of color to horror films, more to the point, if the use of color can enhance the narrative or if such trait can indeed be considered as a mere distraction. I will argue that, for the aims of Hammer Films' productions, color has a key role in the development of the story, and it also enhances the notion of "excess", a trait that is defended by Fred Botting (1996) as one of the characteristics of the Gothic. Moreover, I will discuss the distinctive assumptions regarding the meaning of the color red, and how its use in the Hammer Dracula franchise is fundamental to the gender differences within the films.

Despite common beliefs among film critics that color could only be perceived as a mere distraction from the actual narrative, Hammer Films, by making use of the Technicolor Technology, was able to attribute purpose and significance to its uses of it. For instance, when considering the fake-looking, red blood presented in several scenes running down a female victim's body, in shots that suggest an erotic effect through Dracula's expressions. This effect, now explicitly present on screen, represents a new approach to the popular image of the vampire, one that is much related to the mutable aspect of its myth throughout time.

Hammer's *Dracula* is remarkably the first film production to present Bram Stoker's universe in color. Although Bela Lugosi's portrayal of the Count is considered to have cemented the popular imagery of the vampire, Christopher Lee's rendition remains emblematic when taking into account the association between sexuality and gruesome aspects. The association between a more sexual-oriented vampire and vivid (but unrealistic-looking) blood is a very suitable creative choice, with visual implications that impacted narrative form and content, and changed the perception of the vampire in popular culture.

Although these two aspects added much to the character's lore, Hammer's version of *Dracula* was also considerably criticized for relying too much on technical features, and critics, such as Carlos Clarens, argued that the use of color was a mere distraction from the poor direction and narrative quality of the films. Additionally, journalists commented on how such depiction was offensive for the moral standards of the time of release. In the book

Horror Movies: An Illustrated Survey, Carlos Clarens affirms that Hammer's *Dracula* franchise failed to achieve a satisfactory horror effect in comparison to its predecessors. Although Clarens acknowledges the box-office success of the productions as a major achievement to the vampire myth, he criticizes what he considers to be an excess of technical resources in the narrative. Clarens goes further, claiming that Hammer's take on the vampire had a strong focus on bloody, gory imagery to the detriment of traditional features, and the result is a character's deviation from the established features of Dracula's mythology. In his words:

Stoker's novel, scriptwriter Jimmy Sangster concluded, was old-fashioned, overlarded with proper mood of terror and anguish. 'It is a common fallacy that vampires can change into bats and wolves', announced a conceited Van Helsing (Peter Cushing) and to bury all the covert symbolism of the vampire the new *Dracula* substituted a blatant, almost athletic display of sadism and necrophilia – a young (physiognomically) uncadaverous vampire (Christopher Lee) slobbering blood over the naked throats of his victims ('The Terrifying Lover – who died yet loved', said the ads); the driving of a stake through the body of a beautiful vampire (Valerie Gaunt); all scenes swimming in a wealth of gory detail. As a result of this new approach, the movie failed where the others had at best made something of themselves, in the evocation of a timeless, intangible evil." (CLARENS, 1971, p. 205)

In Clarens' evaluation, the Hammer *Dracula* franchise excluded a few characteristics of the traditional vampire myth, such as the vampire's ability to transform itself into animals. However, as argued in the previous chapter, the vampire has been timelessly described as a mutable figure, which is capable of incorporating or excluding features according to the social context and the historical period that it emerges. When considering this argument in contrast with the one made by Clarens, Hammer's renditions of *Dracula* did not 'bury' the symbolism of the vampire to the benefit of the story's sexual explicitness. On the contrary, it foregrounded a layer of meaning that was previously an undertone in the vampire lore, more to the point, the connections between blood and sex, and the bite as a metaphor of penetration. These features are not new, they exist in the traditional vampire lore, but they were made unambiguous as a result of the studio and director's creative choices.

Clarens extends his criticism to the technical qualities of Hammer. According to him, neither the ‘lack of style’ (1971, p. 209) of Terence Fisher’s direction nor the colored sets add much to build a strong narrative. Still according to the critic, Hammer’s productions could only be perceived as substantial in terms of the technologies employed: “It was most impressive in its physical aspects, in lushly coloured sets and costumes and a distinct flair for period touches. [...] And sometimes even a whiff of Gothic survives Terence Fisher’s pedestrian direction.” (CLARENS, 1971, p. 205-207) While he concedes Hammer Films credit for its high grossing productions and praises its costumes and settings, his criticism is ultimately conservative, as he seems to consider Universal’s silent, black and white films the Golden Age of horror due to their more introspective atmosphere and proximity with the literary source.

Another argument made by Clarens is how Hammer’s effort in producing consistent horror films struggles in comparison to other studios. Many of the company’s accomplishments in establishing itself as an important brand in horror cinema relies on the fact that it employed a more aggressive tone in its movies. However, Clarens seems to consider this new approach farfetched, an over exaggerated gimmick to supply the absence of interesting plotlines. These accomplishments, as he states, is related to an investment in the visual effects as a mean to shock the audiences and the outcome are productions that deviate from essential horror to primarily sadistic films:

These horror embroideries aside, a study of Hammer’s adventure melodramas, [...] as well as their ‘straight’ thrillers [...], reveals that the common denominator of their product is not really horror but sadism. The more jaded the public’s palate becomes, the ranker the banquet of effects. [...] Mutilations, beheadings, gougings, burning flesh, and decaying corpses – all of these are arbitrary spliced into the scenarios at the expense of characterization and plot. The story told in a Hammer film has become an utterly predictable and mechanical narration; [...] The studio contends in the face of critical dismay that practically every one of their films has done extremely well at the box office – so Hammer does not intend to change the formula, or experiment with a new one, unless public taste changes first.” (CLARENS, 1971, p. 208-210)

Clarens argues that Hammer’s achievements are related to the audiences’ preferences and (poor) taste in relation to what he considers an excess of special effects. The problem here

is that Clarens' criticism seems to be more based on opinion and a personal fondness for a bygone era in horror film production; he explicitly rejects the use of color and sexuality. Nonetheless, his assessment, first written in 1971, is extremely valuable to understand how horror film criticism evolved in the light of historical developments, and the arguments he elaborates in the section "*The Horror Revival*", a chapter in his book, show that Clarens considers Hammer productions a revival of classical horror cinema, a new cycle of production which interrupted the late 1940s and early 1950s postwar, science-fiction productions and also the wave of parodies that the Universal monsters had produced. In other words, although Clarens dismisses many of Hammer's features and achievements, he understands that the British production company reclaimed the horror genre as worthy of commercial production and of academic investigation.

When Hammer decides to adapt *The Curse of Frankenstein*, in 1957, initiating a series of six films that would last until 1974, it brings back to cinema the classical horror, which is precisely what Clarens calls a 'mythical appeal' (1971, p. 204). The critic's problems with the British studio's 'excesses' and 'lack of style' seem to endorse too much of a purist perspective, which segregates the genre into a standardized and fixed idea of horror that does not correspond to social, historical and cultural changes in society. In the case of *Dracula*, in particular, his view is problematic if taken into account how the vampire has adapted its characteristics to new contexts and changed its features throughout time. Therefore, the arguments developed by Clarens should be understood as a particular moment in horror film criticism because it is assumed that the vampire could only be transported from literature into the screen if it followed a traditional approach, something that has proven to be the exact opposite when it comes to in what concerns the plural possibilities of representing the vampire myth in different media.

Carlos Clarens is not the only critic who has condemned the use of Technicolor. In the essay *Technology and Aesthetics: Technicolor Cinematography and Design in the Late 1930s*, Scott Higgins provides useful information concerning the use of color in the early stages of cinema, historicizing how the 1930s were a turning point in relation to how production studios and critics perceived the use of color in cinema. If in the early 1930s the cinema industry was focused on the production of three-strip films as ways of demonstrating the potential of color, the late 1930s strongly aimed at establishing color as a commercial opportunity for major studios. However, although color in motion pictures was starting to be understood as a potential benefit for cinema, it was not free from criticism. Higgins shows

that the *American Cinematographer*, a magazine published by the American Society of Cinematographers, judged it to be a failed endeavor:

Emphasizing the failings of colour processes, unsigned articles entitled 'Why all this hub-bub regarding color', 'Is all this color ballyhoo justifying itself', and 'Just what is so mysterious about color', all appear to be authored by the same critic who claimed to write on behalf of the publication. The articles set out a fairly unified argument which questioned the value of colour for feature films, and defended black and white's dominance. The author proclaimed: 'the multiple-hued films appear mainly to have enhanced appreciation for the superlative artistic and dramatic creations that have been evolved in monochrome.' (1999, p. 56-57)

In this regard, the critic exemplifies how the reluctance to adopt color in motion pictures has been present and very much on debate at least twenty years before Hammer Films' *Horror of Dracula*. While not strictly related to horror films, the invention and emergence of Technicolor faced the problem of "proving that its system could complement rather than dominate standard productions practices" (HIGGINS, 1999, p. 58) in Hollywood productions. The "case against color", as Higgins calls this debate, is related to a potential setback in narrative meaning due to the use of Technicolor. At the end of the 1930s decade, however, Technicolor's cinematographers enhanced their efforts in producing films that "offered greater expressive opportunities than black and white" (HIGGINS, 1999, p. 59), such as *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) and *A Star is Born* (1937). The latter, directed by David O. Selznick, is exemplary of how color could add to the emotional content rather than disrupt the narrative and overall effect of the film.

The critic mentions how cinematographer W. Howard Greene aptly balanced the use of Technicolor with the dramatic tone in *A Star is Born*, demonstrating with the courtroom scene how Greene considered that the same scene would not achieve the same effect in a monochrome film. In Higgins' words: "Without resorting to additional ornamentation, colour helped to convey the scene's emotional atmosphere on a pictorial level. From this perspective, colour gave the cinematographer greater flexibility to render mood than black and white, regardless of any imposition on standard practice." (1999, p. 67) Gradually, the employment of Technicolor begun to be seen as a 'useful contributor', instead of a mere gimmick, and started to be used in future productions as part of new stylistic options, as it is the cases with

Adventures of Robin Hood (1938) and *Wizard of Oz* (1939). These films are regarded crucial advocates to the use of color in films, establishing new approaches to film production in the 1940s and after, clearly departing from the previous three-strip productions that dominated the early 1930s. Therefore, my analysis of the three films I selected from the Hammer Dracula franchise will focus on how the narrative meaning highly benefited from the use of the Technicolor technology.

Higgins' essay does not account for the "color debate" in relation to horror films. However, he brings to the discussion historical arguments that were put forth by film critics in the 1930s and which bear similarities with the problems pointed by Carlos Clarens in relation to color and the use of new technological features. Clarens does not claim that color is completely unnecessary for horror films, but he argues that it is the excessive use of Technicolor that causes Hammer productions to be inferior to its black and white predecessors. The critic makes no attempt to assess the effectiveness of Hammer's productions in presenting a Dracula in full colors and the different effects it might achieve.

The 'excess' to which Clarens refers to can be, in fact, perceived as favorable to Hammer's adaptation of Stoker's universe, especially when it is considered a key characteristic of the Gothic. In the book *Gothic*, Fred Botting discusses the literary meaning of Gothic, arguing for the disruptive and transgressive nature of the genre, whose aesthetic materialization defies normativity. The excessive characteristics of Gothic literature – with its abundance in emotional displays, overwhelming fantasies narrated in grandiloquent writing style – challenged eighteenth century mores and would later become nineteenth century Gothic monsters. Botting argues that the nineteenth-century Gothic is more psychological and inward-based than the eighteenth-century one, historically based on fears of the Revolutions. Therefore, the latter monsters would be transformed into emotions and circumstances for readers:

Through its presentations of supernatural, sensational and terrifying incidents, imagined or not, Gothic produced emotional effects on its readers rather than developing a rational or properly cultivated response. Exciting rather than informing, it chilled their blood, delighted their superstitious fancies and fed uncultivated appetites for marvellous and strange events, instead of instructing readers with moral lessons that inculcated decent and tasteful attitudes to literature and life. Gothic excesses transgressed the proper limits of aesthetic as well as social order in the overflow of emotions

that undermined boundaries of life and fiction, fantasy and reality. Attacked throughout the second half of the eighteenth century for encouraging excessive emotions and invigorating unlicensed passions, Gothic texts were also seen to be subverting the mores and manners on which good social behaviour rested. (BOTTING, 1996, p. 3)

Botting's arguments of esthetic rupture and excess are not restricted to literature and, as a characteristic of the Gothic genre, may appear in different narrative form and media. In this sense, it can be argued that Hammer created a cinematography of excess by making use of Technicolor's bold colors, such as the red blood, which worked as a tool for the disruption of a normative cinema aesthetic, as defended by Clarens. Furthermore, the rupture with the horror film aesthetic norms enabled audiences to confront different cinema experiences and effects by means of comparing previous productions of *Dracula* and Hammer Films' productions. Considering Botting's argument about the Gothic as being a type of narrative through which aesthetics and social 'mores and manners' are subverted in favor of an emotional response and effect, Hammer's production cycle was able to achieve a different effect from Universal's.

Botting extends his argument by adding that transgressive behavior, as a characteristic of the Gothic, helps to present alternatives to moralistic perspectives, particularly in what concerns female characters (and novelists) to escape restrictive social norms. The result is a world in which these characters challenge pre-established gender roles. In his words:

The centrality of usurpation, intrigue, betrayal and murder to Gothic plots appeared to celebrate criminal behaviour, violent executions of selfish ambition and voracious passion and licentious enactments of carnal desire. Such terrors, emerging from the gloom of a castle or lurking in the dark features of the villain, were also the source of pleasure, stimulating excitements which blurred definitions of reason and morality and, critics feared, encouraging readers' decline into depravity and corruption. As well as recasting the nature of social and domestic fears, Gothic fictions presented different, more exciting, worlds in which heroines in particular could encounter not only frightening violence but also adventurous freedom. The artificiality of narratives imagined other worlds and also challenged the

forms of nature and reality advocated by eighteenth-century social and domestic ideology. (BOTTING, 1996, p. 4-5)

In similar ways that the eighteenth-century Gothic novel defied the *status quo*, Hammer's use of Technicolor and erotic effects that resulted from it, particularly in relation to female sexuality, can also be deemed transgressive to the late 1950s. I argue here that not only Hammer's 'excessive' use of vivid color, but also other types of excess, such as Christopher Lee's overtly sexual performance, establishes Hammer's *Dracula* as a distinguished Gothic film. As Carlos Clarens affirms, Hammer's productions can be understood as a continuation of Universal's horror films, a fresh look on a previous production cycle that updates the vampire imagination to a new sociocultural context. The films produced by these two studios are, in certain ways, very different from one another, but, they are also unified by their insertion in the longstanding and diverse history of Gothic genre.

3.1 The Red Blood: Sexual Power and Female Transformation

The understanding of the relation between blood and vampirism appears to be the basic and most common association regarding the vampire myth. However, this association may produce quite different meanings when the different symbolisms of blood are taken into account. I have previously mentioned how blood is the substitutive element for semen in the vampiric sexual activity, but the variety of interpretations of the blood symbolism to vampires is fairly broad. The basic principle, which is food for the vampire, has lost space for interpretations that encompass themes such as sexuality, psychic transmutation, creation of life, and many more. Since sexuality is one of the main bases for this work, as well as to the vampire myth, I will be sticking to looking at the meaning of blood as the product of the vampire's sexuality in order to analyze an aspect that has gained prominence through the Hammer *Dracula* franchise: color.

The realization that blood is red, although obvious, is significantly important when Hammer Studios decided to depict it as a red, thick liquid in its productions of *Dracula*. Not only did it add a visual perspective that was unavailable for audiences of previous black and white productions, but it also encompassed a range of meanings as large as blood does. For this account, I will be using Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant's *Dictionary of Symbols* to make connections with the symbolic meanings of red and its predominance in the analyzed films.

At the beginning of the entry, the authors already establish the relationship with the color red and blood by stating that, just like blood, it is “regarded universally as the basic symbol of the life-principle, with its dazzling strength and power” (CHEVALIER, GHEERBRANT, 1996, p. 792) They make a distinction, however, between bright and dark red, and this distinction is particularly important when considering the Hammer Dracula franchise. According to two of the many interpretations they bring to the color red, bright red resembles a diurnal, masculine, stimulating activity, whereas dark red is more nocturne and mysterious. Dark red also represents a more feminine aspect than bright red. Coincidentally, the blood that appears on the films here analyzed, besides the obvious fake-looking characteristic of resembling a thick paint, varies according to its source. The blood that flows from Dracula’s body when he is hurt, for instance, is slightly brighter than the blood that runs from the female victims’ bodies when they are bitten. The opening sequence of the first film even depicts a stain of bright red blood upon Dracula’s tombstone. I will bring a more in-depth analysis of these scenes in Chapter 4, where I discuss the varieties of the color red in selected scenes.

Chevalier and Gheerbrant relate the darker red to a more female quality because it was the color that appeared on the lamps that “marked the entry to French licensed brothels” (1996, p. 792), therefore, the connection here is that a darker red is more sexually inviting. It is, according to the authors, an invitation to sexual drive, libido and sexual instincts. Intentionally or not, the dark red blood we see across the women’s bodies in the films are representative of their own sexuality. It combines the idea of blood as a sexual fluid with the idea of their own sexual transgression, their own sexual instincts, which consequently become the cause of their deaths. This correlation is particularly intriguing to me since it mimics, symbolically, the active/passive dichotomy of gendered relations. It becomes a subtle visual representation of the gender roles in the films’ narratives.

Another strong feminine analogy made by Chevalier and Gheerbrant is that dark red is representative of the womb. The relations between these elements provide rich insights when placing it within the vampire myth and it is a fruitful territory when exploring it in relation to the female vampire. As a taboo, female menstruation is another aspect of female sexuality that is represented through the color red. In the authors’ words:

For such, in fact, is the deep ambivalence of blood-red – when hidden, it is what conditions life: when exposed, it means death. This is the basis of the taboos relating to menstruating women. Menstrual blood is impure because it inverts its polarity when it passes from the darkness of the womb to the light

of day and passes from the sacred right-hand to the sacred left-hand.”
(CHEVALIER, GHEERBRANT, 1996, p. 793)

Barbara Creed, in the previously mentioned book *The Monstrous Feminine*, also acknowledges the association between blood, red, and the womb. According to her, “Woman’s womb is a site of terror because it bleeds; it is the blood which flows from the inside to the outside of woman’s body that is viewed as abject.” (CREED, 1993, p. 250) This resonates with Chevalier and Gheerbrant’s argument of the externalization of the blood. Creed extends her analysis when she brings to discussion two aspects of the female sexuality that involve blood: the woman’s first menstruation, the menarche, and defloration, there is, the loss of virginity. For the first interpretation, she once again brings *The Wise Wound: Menstruation and Everywoman* to support her argument:

Shuttle and Redgrove interpret the vampire myth as a rite of passage which is used to explain the phenomenon of menarche, or the first menstruation, in young girls. They argue that the neck, which is almost always the place that is bitten, represents the neck of the uterus. They place great emphasis on the altered state of the vampire’s victims – after being bitten, that is, after menstruation begins, the women are filled with new energy. While the vampire narrative appears to be closely tied to myths associated with menarche, it can also be related to another important threshold event in a woman’s life, an event which also involves a sudden blood flow – defloration. (CREED, 1993, p. 238)

In these terms, the dark red blood flowing from female bodies always represents transformation. This transformation is mostly sexually charged, especially when considering the naturally sexual behavior of the vampire. Creed reinforces the vampire/sex association when she describes the vampiric sexual act from its transformative trait for women, which is always seen as a sexual awakening:

The vampire bites the woman, the teeth penetrate her neck, blood flows. She is transformed from an innocent into a creature of the night who, because she has been sexually awakened, is now a threatening female figure. She is the deadly vampire who desires to suck men’s blood, which in this context could be seen as a metaphor for semen. (CREED, 1993, p. 249)

The definitions I brought in this section recollected for the multiple interpretations of the color red and the symbolic meanings of blood to the vampire myth. It shows the implications of having a vampire narrative in colors for the first time, which was Hammer Film's primary achievement. Its excessive use of reds as a main stylistic characteristic allows the analysis I will present on the next chapter as an attempt to develop on the discussions I presented on chapters one and two.

4 ANALYZING THE FILMS

The analysis of the three selected films adopts the following structure: (i) a brief summary of the films' plot in order to introduce the main characters and events of the story, (ii) a presentation of shots that illustrate the arguments made, and (iii) interwoven remarks regarding the theoretical points raised in the previous parts of the thesis. Each film is going to be individually analyzed, since I believe this method best represents the formulaic repetition which the Hammer Dracula franchise developed through the course of the nine productions. My analysis is primarily focused on Dracula's relation with the female characters of the film, paying particular attention to the differences between them and to what they represent within the narrative. At the end of the chapter, I present an overview of the productions' achievements in relation to the aspects of sexuality, eroticism, the development of the vampire myth, and the use of color.

4.1 *Horror of Dracula*, 1958

Rebooting Bram Stoker's universe in film, *Horror of Dracula* (1958), directed by Terence Fisher, is the first film of the Hammer Films of *Dracula*. Its plot revolves around the character of Jonathan Harker (John Van Eyssen), who accepts the job of being Count Dracula's new librarian. However, his true intention is to infiltrate Dracula's castle in order to kill him, since he is already aware that Dracula (Christopher Lee) is a vampire.

The opening credits' sequence follows Dracula's castle from the outside in, ending in a frame that depicts his gravestone with blood dripping upon it:



Figure 1: *Horror of Dracula*, directed by Terence Fisher <02:19>

In many ways, this opening scene already establishes the tone for the entire franchise, especially when considering the symbolisms attributed to blood and the color red. The blood stain seen in Figure 1 <02:19>, which is an obvious relation to the vampire myth, appears in a bright red color, according to Chevalier and Gheerbrant, the more masculine and active hue of the color. When it drips on top of Dracula's tomb, this activeness is centralized on his character. Red, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is representative of dominance and power. The image above encompasses this enormous charge of meaning even though it remains independent from the actual filmic narrative; we never come to know whose blood it is, or why it is depicted at the beginning at the film.

I chose this frame to start my analysis mainly because, for us viewers, it works as a visual warning of what to expect from this new, reformulated version of Dracula, and it immediately recalls the lack of the color resource in previous adaptations, all at once. It works both symbolically and temporally, helping to set *Horror of Dracula* as a fresh start within the adaptations of Stoker's universe.

The film then proceeds to introduce us to Jonathan Harker, who arrives at Dracula's castle to settle as his new librarian. He enters an empty dining room and reads Dracula's welcoming note saying he will not be able to join him. While dining, he is surprised by a woman who claims to be Dracula's prisoner, begging Harker for help. Harker accepts her requests and offers assistance, but he is soon staggered with the fact that the woman is, in fact, a vampire. She bites Harker on the neck (Figure 2), but her action is interrupted when Dracula enters the room. Aggressively, Dracula throws the woman vampire to the ground (Figure 3).



Figure 2: Horror of Dracula, directed by Terence Fisher <15:15>



Figure 3: Horror of Dracula, directed by Terence Fisher <16:27>

This scene is important for the future development of many of the franchise's motifs. It shows the first female vampire of the narrative being held prisoner to Dracula's wills. She tricks Harker in order to get a chance of biting him, but she is soon punished by Dracula, who, in the wide shot above, exerts his dominance upon her both physically and symbolically, since he looks at her from above. Since the female vampire succeeds in biting Harker, and biting here means the consummation of the vampiric sexual activity, her punishment, in this perspective, becomes strictly sexually-related. She is punished for disobeying Dracula's commands, but most importantly, she is punished for having sex. An important characteristic of this version of *Dracula*, his sense of possessiveness and jealous behavior is presented to us in an action-charged scene, with his movements serving as another strong difference from Bela Lugosi's rendition of the same character.

An important twist in the film's narrative happens when Harker reveals, through a narration of one of his diary's entry, that his intention is to kill Dracula. He is aware of the existence of vampires, and therefore decides to eliminate Dracula's reign of terror. He acknowledges: "I have become a victim of Dracula and the woman in his power" (19:07)

While wandering around the castle during the next morning, he finds the Count in his resting place, a stone coffin. In the same crypt lies the female vampire who attacked him during his first night at the castle. Seeking to accomplish his mission, he grabs a stake and a hammer, weapons traditionally used to kill vampires. For reasons unknown to spectators, as he could easily kill Dracula, he first aims at the female vampire's heart, striking through it with the stake. Her scream of pain awakens Dracula, who disappears. Blood flows out of her wound (Figure 4) and she is revealed as an elder lady, indicating that she has been Dracula's prisoner for many years.



Figure 4: Horror of Dracula, directed by Terence Fisher <21:27>

There is a significant difference between the color of the blood in this scene and the color it has during the opening credits. Here, it is shown as a darker red, the feminine hue, which implies desire and sexuality, nonetheless a reference to her previous scene, in which she was sexually active. Also, her death through a phallic object is what liberates her from her unnatural, predatory behavior, or, more to the point, it becomes her final punishment.

The next act of the film, primarily focused on the introduction of characters such as Doctor Van Helsing, Lucy Holmwood and Mina Holmwood, also develops two very distinctive portrayals of Victorian women and how they deal with their sexuality and eroticism. On the one hand, Lucy, Harker's fiancée, is a strong representative of the virginal, pure and subservient woman, attributes that are often linked with the female role in the Victorian society. On the other hand, Mina, Arthur Holmwood's wife, seems uninterested in taking part in her husband's business, and often seems bothered with her married life. Both women become Dracula's objects of desire once his prisoner is killed by Harker, and he starts paying visits to them. There are, however, singular differences in the way the women react in relation to their visitor.



Figure 5: Horror of Dracula, directed by Terence Fisher <34:15>



Figure 6: Horror of Dracula, directed by Terence Fisher <37:57>

The shots above were taken from the scene in which Lucy, in a dream-like state, prepares herself for Dracula's visit as she is waiting for her lover. She removes her crucifix, opens her windows, and lays in bed, waiting for him. When he arrives, the spectator can witness his desire through the way he looks at her, until the moment in which he involves her in a suggestive embrace, a subtle representation of his biting, which marks the end of the scene. As she gets weaker every day, it becomes obvious that she prepares herself every night to be bitten by Dracula, or, in this case, to engage in a sexual encounter. Later, she gets frustrated with Van Helsing who, aware of what is making her ill, decides to surround her bed with garlic, an effective vampire-repellent according to the traditional vampire myth. She demands her maid to take them away, just to receive Dracula's visit again, which eventually causes her death through the loss of blood. She is buried, but soon resuscitates as a vampire.

Mina, in contrast, seems to acquire a more obstinate and proactive personality as a consequence of her encounters with Dracula. Her voice changes into a deeper tone, and she looks mischievously excited about things, as if she is keeping an exciting secret. This is represented by the way she holds her coat around her neck, happily hiding her neck's bite marks, as depicted in the shot below. Her wedding ring is also purposefully apparent in the scene, which indicates her adultery as another of her transgressions.



Figure 7: Horror of Dracula, directed by Terence Fisher <01:01:00>

The scene takes place after her first encounter with Dracula in a funeral home. Later, she would, like Lucy, prepare herself for Dracula's visit. The stylistic choices of the scene,

however, attribute a more sexual undertone to her actions. Her clothes leave her shoulders exposed, establishing a distinction from Lucy's nightdress, which covered her from neck to toe. The close-up below shows her expectation, with her mouth slightly open, as she waits for Dracula's kiss. The viewer is positioned in Dracula's p.o.v. perspective, looking directly at her. The scene cuts to their kiss, as Mina corresponds to it passionately. She enjoys her newly-acquired and recently awakened sexuality, and allows Dracula to consummate their sexual relation through his biting. The scene resumes in the third shot below, with the dark red blood imagery once again being reproduced. It has flowed down her breasts, increasing the whole erotic motif of the scene. Blood, here, becomes the strongest imagery of the vampiric sexual act: it is the resultant fluid of it, a powerful analogy to semen in the natural intercourse.



Figure 8: Horror of Dracula, directed by Terence Fisher <01:08:00>



Figure 9: Horror of Dracula, directed by Terence Fisher <01:09:00>



Figure 10: Horror of Dracula, directed by Terence Fisher <01:10:00>

The choices of director Terence Fisher and screenwriter Jimmy Sangster of depicting Dracula's victims as already repressed women from the Victorian era's morality, being Lucy an unmarried virginal young woman and Mina as a sexually unsatisfied wife, combined with the nuances of eroticism that result in their moral and sexual transgression through Dracula's visits, sets the tone of the rest of the franchise. The clear message spectators get through this first film is that women are not being saved from death when they are released from vampirism, but instead deprived from their natural, human impulse of sexuality. Vampirism becomes the means through which they are allowed to fully express it in a repressive environment such as the Victorian period. This becomes evident when vampire Lucy is staked through her heart and her physiognomy instantly goes back to her virginal appearance, and when Dracula is finally killed by Van Helsing, releasing Mina from his enchantment through a scene that focuses once again on her wedding ring as she regains her previous physiognomy. Normality is re-established, there is, they become submissive again.

4.2 *Taste the Blood of Dracula*, 1970

The fifth installment in the Hammer Dracula franchise and the fourth with Christopher Lee starring as Count Dracula, *Taste the Blood of Dracula* is in its essence a tale of Dracula's revenge against a group of men who have killed one of his servants in the ritual made to bring Dracula back to life. Peter Sasdy's direction marks a significant change from the previous productions by already establishing the relation between vampirism and sexuality at the initial sequence of the film, which depicts the men that accomplish the ritual entering a brothel. The frames below are representatives of the beginning and of the end of the ritual, and it highlights the bright red that was also in the opening sequence of the first film. The scene reprises the introductory warning that Dracula's actions are about to begin, but this time, Dracula's eyes acquire the same hue, indicating his determination to get his revenge.



Figure 11: *Taste the Blood of Dracula*, directed by Peter Sasdy <05:24>



Figure 12: Taste the Blood of Dracula, directed by Peter Sasdy <43:13>

The first man Dracula decides to punish, William Hargood, is the father of Alice Hargood, the woman in the scene below. Via hypnosis, she is manipulated by Dracula and kills her own father after she seems to enjoy being bitten by the vampire. The scene is important to illustrate how Alice is fulfilling both Dracula's sexual needs – through the act of vampirism – and desire for revenge, since she is used as the instrument to kill the man who had previously betrayed him. Dracula does not take direct part in Hargood's killing; he simply watches as Alice beats her father's head with a shovel, with pride, as if she has accomplished an enormous feat for her master. Alice is, then, subjugated to the position of Dracula's servant, who is there to attend his desires, sexual or not.



Figure 13: Taste the Blood of Dracula, directed by Peter Sasdy <55:40>



Figure 14: Taste the Blood of Dracula, directed by Peter Sasdy <55:43>

Alice also is responsible for introducing Dracula to Lucy Paxton, the daughter in law of Samuel Paxton, one of the three men who betrayed Dracula. After Alice's father funeral, she takes Lucy into Dracula's crypt, who turns her into a vampire. Engaged to Jeremy, Samuel Paxton's son, Lucy moans in pleasure when she is bitten by Dracula; the scene resonates with Mina's adultery in the first film of the franchise. Lucy, in the shot below, enjoys her sexual awakening in the same way Mina had enjoyed hers. She, too, undergoes a change of personality, becoming more curious and sexually inclined. One example of this is the scene where she appears in her fiancé's window, practically begging him for a kiss as a trick to bite him. By biting his neck, she consolidates her sexual act, performing an action that she has decided to do on her own, but unaware that she is being watched by a jealous Dracula.



Figure 15: *Taste the Blood of Dracula*, directed by Peter Sasdy <01:06:52>



Figure 16: *Taste the Blood of Dracula*, directed by Peter Sasdy <1:18:43>



Figure 17: Taste the Blood of Dracula, directed by Peter Sasdy <1:18:48>

Dracula's reaction towards Lucy's sexual agency is another representative of how he values the female vampires in his surroundings as his own personal possessions. They are not allowed to perform their sexuality with anyone except him, and when they do so, they are killed by Dracula himself. It also happens to Lucy, who is furiously killed in the next scene, in which she has her blood completely drained.



Figure 18: Taste the Blood of Dracula, directed by Peter Sasdy <1:20:30>



Figure 19: Taste the Blood of Dracula, directed by Peter Sasdy <1:20:32>

One crucial aspect in the relationship between Dracula and Lucy in this particular film is that, although she had helped in Dracula's revenge, she is killed once she has sex. A few moments before meeting her fiancé, Lucy and Alice kill Samuel Paxton, one of Dracula's betrayers, by driving a wooden stake through his chest. The action takes place under

Dracula's vigilance, who nods in approval, but this is completely disregarded once she seeks her sexual independence. Besides obeying Dracula and fulfilling his demands, she is also supposed to remain as his sexual property. Her body is found by her brother Paul in the next morning, fully drained and ditched on the margin of a river. The way she is killed and simply thrown into a river is symptomatic of how little regard Dracula has to her once she decides to have sex with another man.

Paul moves on to save Alice, who is still enchanted by Dracula's hypnosis. He manages to undo the ritual that had brought Dracula back at the beginning of the film, and traps him in the crypt by surrounding it with crosses. Once Dracula dissolves in a bloody dust, Alice is back to her virginal, passive state again, although it does not change or undo her previous sexual acts. Like many of the final girls, she is saved by a masculine figure.



Figure 20: Taste the Blood of Dracula, directed by Peter Sasdy <1:33:57>

4.3 Scars of Dracula, 1970

Released only a few months after *Taste the Blood*, *Scars of Dracula*, directed by Roy Ward Baker, also begins with Dracula's resurrection with a shot that focuses primarily on his blood. As spectators are not aware of how his remains had been moved to a different location from the ending of the previous film, this time his own castle, a bat drips blood upon his bloody dust, bringing him back to life in the same manner from the previous productions. This is yet another opening sequence focused on blood, another warning for Dracula's future actions.



Figure 21: Scars of Dracula, directed by Roy Ward Baker <00:53>

The film's narrative follows the villagers around Dracula's castle as they decide to set it on fire, seeking revenge for young women who have been murdered by the count. As he is asleep in his stone coffin, he manages to escape. The plot moves on to follow Paul Carlson, who is running away from authorities under false accusations of rape. He ends up at Dracula's castle and is welcomed by a beautiful woman named Tania. The scene is particularly similar to the welcoming of Jonathan Harker in the first film; she introduces herself as Dracula's prisoner and asks for help. As Paul agrees, he leaves her and enters his bedroom. The scene cuts to Tania's encounter with Dracula, as she exposes her neck in preparation for the vampire's biting. She smiles and moans as Dracula consummes their sexual act.



Figure 22: Scars of Dracula, directed by Roy Ward Baker <31:44>

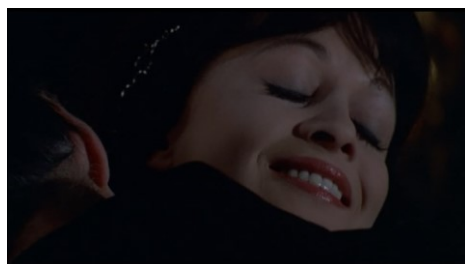


Figura 23: Scars of Dracula, directed by Roy Ward Baker <31:56>

The film continues as she enters Paul's bedroom, kisses him and begs for him to love her. Laying in bed, she invites him to do the same, which he does. When he is asleep, as Tania sees Paul's bare neck, she attempts to bite it. The first screen shot below expresses how she is charged with desire: her eyes are wide open, her fangs are explicitly apparent. Before she manages to bite him, a furious Dracula emerges from the bed's drapery, surprising both Tania and Paul. Her punishment for attempting to perform sexually is, of course, death, but this time there is a strong difference from the previous victims of Dracula. Her blood is not drained; instead, she is brutally stabbed multiple times by Dracula.

There is an evident shift in the function of penetration in the scene. On the one hand, it would be the consummation of her sexual act, had she succeeded in biting Paul. On the other hand, she is stabbed to death. Penetration, once the fulfillment of her pleasure, becomes her final punishment in a scene that resembles the killing of women in the slasher genre. The interruption of the sexual act reinforces how this is the main reason for her punishment.



Figure 24: *Scars of Dracula*, directed by Roy Ward Baker <35:30>



Figure 25: *Scars of Dracula*, directed by Roy Ward Baker <35:45>

The film's plot proceeds to present Paul's brother, Simon, and his fiancée Sarah, in their attempt of rescuing Paul from Dracula's castle. When they arrive at the castle, Sarah immediately becomes Dracula's object of desire. As he follows her, the spectator sees through his perspective (p.o.v. shot); her body parts are fragmented, with close-ups of her neck,

shoulders, and her breasts. Dracula is repelled by the cross she carries around her neck, but he continues to gaze upon Sarah's body, who is centralized on screen. Consequently, the spectator's gaze is also directed towards Sarah's body.

These scenes possess a clear erotic undertone in its imagnetic choices. The camera could easily focus on the cross only, to illustrate what is maintaining Dracula away from Sarah, but instead, it shows her exposed breasts as a clear erotic symbol of Dracula's desire for Sarah. His desire, as shown in previous scenes, is not only sexual, but also possessive. He wants Sarah to replace Tania's role of a submissive prisoner with whom he could engage in a sexual relation at any time.

As Dracula, Sarah and Simon run to the castle's rooftop, the same bat from the opening sequence removes Sarah's crucifix, offering the audience another shot of her breasts, but this time, with dark red blood as a result of the bat's scratches. Dracula is gored by an iron spike thrown by Simon, which gets struck by lightening, setting him on fire and eventually causing his death, but not before we can see another glimpse of Dracula's desire for Sarah. As in the right shot below, her breasts are not only exposed, but they are also now covered in Sarah's blood. An invitation for sex, as pointed by Chevalier and Gheerbrant, its dark red color puts and almost extasiastic expression on Dracula's face, right before he is killed with the help of Simon, who ultimately becomes Sarah's savior.



Figure 26: Scars of Dracula, directed by Roy Ward Baker <1:29:48>



Figure 27: Scars of Dracula, directed by Roy Ward Baker <01:31:12>



Figure 28: Scars of Dracula, directed by Roy Ward Baker <01:33:53>

There is a clear standard and repetition in the way these films portray Dracula and his relationship with women. When analyzing the films, it is possible to identify the similarities among them despite the differences in the films' basic narratives, and they all lead to the construction of two feminine specific archetypes: the sexual transgressor and the saved, helpless one. Regardless, their sexuality is always at the edge of their survival; when fully expressed, it causes their deaths or submission.

Dracula's own archetype is also very much repeated throughout the films. Ever since the beginning of each of the franchise's installments, his resurrections are always symbolically connected with the sexual activeness to which his character is associated. We know, from the beginning, that his sexual actions through the film sets motion to the story. The masculinized symbols, however, are not strictly related to the blood imagery. They emerge in the way Dracula looks at women and in the way he penetrates them, whether for sexual or killing purposes. His death, conveniently, is never phallic; he dies because of the sun, or because of a cross, or because of a lightning. His masculinity remains preserved, alongside his desire, throughout the entire film.

The recurrent formulas of the franchise are also present in the development of the female protagonists. At the beginning, they are depicted as unaware of their own sexuality, and they need to become vampires in order to acknowledge and fully express it. It seems logical, at this point, that the relation between vampirism and sexuality was explored by Hammer Films. However, the sexual agency acquired by the women in the Hammer Films of Dracula must only exist if it is subordinated to Dracula's wishes and desires. There is no true

agency in this aspect when the films establish that they can return to a place of oppression at the end, as in Mina's case in the first film, or face a brutal death through Dracula's hands, as in the case of Tania in *Taste the Blood of Dracula*.

The standardized manner through which the films' action develops also corroborates to the hypothesis them being predecessors of the slasher genre. When Dracula comes back to life at the beginning of each film, leaving behind a trace of dead corpses (with practically every death being gender-oriented), not only it develops a formulaic filmic narrative within the horror genre, but it also foreshadows a behavior that would be reproduced in subsequent horror franchises of the late 1970s and early 1980s. There is even a timid, but sustained glimpse of the final girl, when at least the female protagonist survives. Even though Hammer Films' effort in depicting women's sexuality in an innovative, empowering way appears to have failed from a more attentive point of view, its apparent landmark as a predecessor slasher genre consolidates its value within the horror films genre.

5 FINAL REMARKS: The Never-ending Cycle of Love that Terrifies

The vampire myth has unquestionably survived the test of time, and as it is reimagined through a variety of media, its foundational archetypes change accordingly. Nonetheless, the depictions of Dracula in cinema much have to do with the specificities of their periods of production, and it was not so different when Hammer Films decided to adapt Bram Stoker's character within an age in which the discussion regarding gender imbalance was happening. When the British studio explicitly depicts the sexual nature of the vampire, it is not surprising that it implies a drastic change in the character's popular imagery, but it also provides plenty of interpretations to role of the female characters that are as crucial as Dracula himself for this change.

Ultimately, the first difference between Christopher Lee's Dracula and his predecessors is the presence of color. Finding its peak in popularity as well as in criticism, the use of color in cinema has proved its film critics wrong when we consider its importance in the Hammer Dracula franchise. Blood is now red on the screen, as it is naturally in real life, and with this new technical development there is an enormous quantity of meaningful insights to interpret the purposes of a narrative that, at a first glimpse, seems to emphasize female sexuality as naturally as the male. Making it clear that the vampire is, undoubtedly, a sexual being, and making use of blood symbolism to reinforce the idea, it would only be logical to assume that it resonates with the female vampires as well. They are now sexually active, too, and they are eager to express it.

The female vampire in the Hammer Dracula franchise's universe is, except for the seventh film, temporally positioned in the Victorian era, where a woman's purpose was getting married and mastering domestic abilities. The same franchise, as a product of time, is temporally positioned within the late 1950s and the early 1970s, a period in which a woman's function, and the way she could politically and socially express her sexuality, was also on debate. Intentionally or not, when Hammer Films depicts female characters that are so linked with their sexuality, and chooses to express it within two time spans that are so connected in its similarities when dealing with the female sexuality, it invariably breaks a taboo that is often concealed: women, as human beings, are also interested in sex.

The problematic developments of this depiction, however, appear stronger to me than its positive, superficial realization. Just like Carmilla, the female character of a Hammer Dracula film only becomes aware of her sexual nature through vampirism, but, unlike Carmilla, her sexuality is controlled by a masculine dominant figure. Carmilla, who is also

killed by men in Sheridan Le Fanu's novella, could at least act as the agent of her sexuality, and agency, in a Hammer Dracula film, is one particular reason of why its female characters' depiction of sexuality is not positive.

From the first film, *Horror of Dracula*, in which the first female vampire of the entire franchise is introduced to the spectators as "the woman in his power", it implies that all of her actions throughout the film are going to be related to and in favor of Dracula. Her imprisonment is extended to her actions: she is limited to have sex with Dracula only. As far as the films progress, the same formula is applied to the creation of Dracula's relationships with women. At the same time as it enhances his seductive qualities, it reinforces that his seduction is charged with jealousy and possessiveness, which leads to the destruction of the female characters. They return to their previous state of submission, conditioned to the social mores of their surroundings, or killed and destroyed. The scenes in which they perform sexuality give a false notion that they are overcoming their oppressions, when considering what it results to them at the end of the films.

Moreover, their bodies on the screen, too, are on display for the purposes of feeding Dracula's desires and, by doing so, it shows spectators no real purpose for this display despite fulfilling a masculine pleasure. It is masculine, too, actions they need to perform in order to exist in the narrative in a relatively substantial way. If not undergoing the processes of masculinization, they remain conditioned to the submissive position attributed to them. Their existence, and most importantly, their survival (or not) at the end of the films rely entirely on the masculine portions of the narrative.

The cyclic and formulaic repetition to which the films were produced reinforces the paradox to which I refer to at the introduction of this work. Dracula's love for women, or, in this case, his desire for women, which superficially appears to be the means through which they can act from themselves, is in fact a possessive, controlling behavior that very much resembles the oppressions he appears to liberate women in the first place. Vampirism, for the women in the Hammer Dracula franchise, becomes a system within a system in which they are supposed to obey and respond to a powerful, masculine figure, which delimitates at to which extend their "transgressive" actions can take place. Not surprisingly, "the terrifying lover" is indeed a figure which inspires a constant terror upon his loved ones, or, more precisely, his imprisoned victims.

6 REFERENCES

Filmography

DRACULA. Directed by Tod Browning, performance by Bela Lugosi. Universal Pictures, 1931. 1 DVD (74 min), son., black and white.

HORROR OF DRACULA. Directed by Terence Fisher, performances by Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing. Hammer Film Productions, 1958. 1 DVD (81 min), son., color.

NOSFERATU: A Symphony of Horror. Directed by F. W. Murnau, performance by Max Schreck, 1922. 1 DVD (96 min), son., black and white.

SCARS of Dracula. Directed by Roy Ward Baker, performances by Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing. Hammer Film Productions 1970. 1 DVD (96 min), son., color.

TASTE the Blood of Dracula. Directed by Peter Sasdy, performances by Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing. Hammer Film Productions, 1970. 1 DVD (95 min), son., color.

Works Cited

APPLE, Fiona. *Every Single Night*. Epic Records, 2012. Available in: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzoQoIIDITw>> Access in: January, 2020.

BATAILLE, Georges. *Eroticism, Death and Sensuality*. Translated by Mary Dalwood. City Lights Books, 1986.

BOTTING, Fred. *Gothic*. Routledge, 1996.

BRONFEN, Elisabeth. *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*. Manchester University Press, 1996.

CLARENS, Carlos. *Horror Movies: An Illustrated Survey*. Panther, 1971.

CHEVALIER, Jean; GHEERBRANT, Alain. *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols*. Translated by John Buchanan-Brown. Second Edition. Penguin Books, 1996.

- CLOVER, Carol J. *Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film*. Representations, No. 20, Special Issue: Misogyny, Misandry, and Misanthropy, pp. 187-228. University of California Press, 1987.
- CREED, Barbara. *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*. Routledge, 1993.
- CUPPIT, Don. *The World to Come*. London: SCM Press, 1982.
- DOMÍNGUEZ-RUÉ, Emma. *Sins of the Flesh: Anorexia, Eroticism and the Female Vampire in Bram Stoker's Dracula*. Journal of Gender Studies, Vol. 19, No. 3, 2010, p. 297-308.
- DUARTE, José. *Bite Me! But Please Be Sexy About It – O Mito do Vampiro no Cinema*. In: <<http://repositorio.ul.pt/handle/10451/27799>>. Access in: January, 2019.
- FREUD, Sigmund. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. Translated by A. A. Brill. Second Edition. Global Grey Ebooks, 2018.
- GELDER, Ken. *Reading the Vampire*. Routledge, 1994.
- HALLENBECK, Bruce G. *The Hammer Vampire*. Hemlock Books Limited, 2010.
- HIGGINS, Scott. *Technology and Aesthetics: Technicolor Cinematography and Design in the Late 1930s*. Film History, Vol. 11, No. 1, Film Technology, p. 55-76, Indiana University Press, 1999.
- HONKO, Lauri. *The Problem of Defining Myth*. Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis, 6. 1972. In: <<https://doi.org/10.30674/scripta.67066>> Access in: July, 2019.
- HUNTER, Jack. *House of Horror: The Complete Hammer Films Story*. Creation Books, 2008.
- HUTCHINGS, Peter. *The Horror Film*. Pearson Longman, 2004.
- MARCUS, Sharon. *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England*. Princeton University Press, 2007.
- MELTON, J. Gordon. *The Vampire Book: The Encyclopedia of the Undead*. Visible Ink Press, 2011.

- MENDES, Joseph A. *Droch Fhola: Sexuality, Blood, Imperialism and the Mytho-Celtic Origins of Dracula*. 2005. 64 p. BA, Boston College, 2005. In: <<http://hdl.handle.net/2345/399>> Access in January, 2019.
- MULVEY, Laura. *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Palgrave, 1989.
- PILCHER, Jane; WHELEHAN, Imelda. *50 Key Concepts in Gender Studies*. Sage Publications, 2004.
- PIRIE, David. *A New Heritage of Horror: The English Gothic Cinema*. I. B. Tauris, 2008.
- PAZ, Octavio. *The Double Flame*. Essays on Love and Eroticism. Translated by Helen Lane. The Harvill Press, London, 1993.
- POWELL, Anna. *Adapting Gothic from Print to Screen*. In: Teaching the Gothic, Palgrave, 2006.
- RADCLIFFE, Anne. *On the Supernatural in Poetry*. In: <<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/12677575/on-the-supernatural-in-poetry-by-ann-radcliffe-the-literary-gothic>> Access in: March, 2020.
- SHUCK, Emily. *Re-masculating the Vampire: Conceptions of Sexuality and the Undead from Rossetti's Proserpine and Meyer's Cullen*. 2013. LUX: A Journal of Transdisciplinary Writing and Research from Claremont Graduate University: Vol. 2: Iss. 1, Article 26. In: <<https://scholarship.claremont.edu/lux/vol2/iss1/26/>> Access in: September, 2019.
- SILVER, Anna Krugovoy. *Victorian Literature and the Anorexic Body*. Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- STOKER, Bram. *Dracula*. Penguin Books, 2003.
- WILLIAMS, Linda. *Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess*. Film Quarterly Vol. 44, No. 4 (Summer, 1991), pp. 2-13.
- ZANINI, Claudio Vescia. *The Myth of the Vampire and Blood Imagery in Bram Stoker's Dracula*. 2007. 154 p. MA, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, (UFRGS), Porto Alegre, 2007. In: <<http://hdl.handle.net/10183/12102>>. Access in: July, 2019.