

**Transylvanian Society of Dracula – INTERNATIONAL OPEN CONFERENCE DUBLIN – 25 years TSD
20 & 21 October 2016, Trinity College, Dublin, Long Room Hub**

www.tsdcon25.com
tsdcon25@gmail.com



Overview of Keynote Speakers Abstracts

Clive BLOOM, Emeritus Professor, Middlesex University; Adjunct Professor, University of Notre Dame; editor of the *Palgrave Gothic* academic book series.

Dracula as Terrorist: The Implications of Recent Discoveries in Dracula Studies.

Following the recent discoveries of Hans de Roos and the translation of a 'second' version of *Dracula*, the novel opens itself to a wider and more nuanced discussion of the nature of Stoker's vampire in relationship to occult and anarchist activities in the East End of London and their relationship to public perceptions of terrorism and foreigners (including Jack the Ripper) at the turn of the twentieth century. This has particular resonance with the idea of the outsider and the appearance of a psychic shift in popular culture towards the potential fragility of the Empire and its centre: London. At the time the novel was being written there also appeared a subtle shift in the nature of the self. Ontological uncertainty coupled with social anxiety gave rise to a new person (see Clive Bloom, *Victoria's Madmen*) who was both present and somehow 'absent': murderers; anarchists; detectives; occultists; all connected by a hidden world of conspiracy. The connection between *Dracula* and terrorism leads to both a political appraisal of the novel as well as to an understanding of Stoker's own sense of his milieu.

Damian BYRNE, a well-known Dublin artist and director of Oracle Pictures. He has been creating props and set elements for modern horror movie productions such as *Penny Dreadful* and *The Raven* (after Edgar Allan Poe).

Damian will report on his practice as an artist who works for the screen, specialising on horror and fantasy productions. Supported by images from his own productions, he will explain about various strategies to visualise the evasive Hidden Forces of Darkness.

Dara DOWNEY, Lecturer in English at The National University of Ireland, Maynooth, and author of *American Women's Ghost Stories in the Gilded Age* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

The Evolving Material Culture of the Vampire Narrative

In the very first episode of Joss Whedon's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, we are introduced to the eponymous heroine via her dreams – or rather, her nightmares. These are made up of oblique, strobing images of demonic creatures, but also of mysterious quasi-religious ceremonies, crosses, and eerie cemeteries filled with statues. Her subsequent encounters with the ancient vampire known as the Master are often accompanied by reiterations of this imagery, all of which combines to convey a vaguely realised but inescapable sense of the kind of rituals stereotypically classed as satanic. What this suggests, somewhat unsurprisingly considering the far-reaching cultural influence of Stoker's *Dracula* and the specific traits attributed to vampirism therein, is that *Buffy* is self-consciously perpetuating here the all-but-ubiquitous situating of the vampire within a Christian (and, arguably, a specifically Catholic) framework in contemporary Western culture, resulting in vampirism's implicit association with the satanic.

That said, later episodes and seasons move almost entirely away from iconography of this kind, retaining some of the ritual elements while largely jettisoning the reliance on communion wafers and holy water that dominate early episodes – though the cross remains an important visual and material cipher throughout the series. In this, *Buffy* is not unlike, say, Richard Matheson's *I Am Legend* and Anne Rice's *Interview with a Vampire*, which seek explicitly to undermine the conventional associative link between the vampire and the Christian cross, which they effect, not through omitting this now central signifier of the vampire, but by actively acknowledging and then refuting its importance. What is more, the former continues to emphasise the vampire's dislike of garlic, and the latter the use of coffins. In other words, even when it denied, the vampire continues to be defined as much by things as by his or her violence and monstrosity. I therefore begin this paper by discussing some of the ways in which traditional vampire narratives such as *Dracula* engage with material culture, and particularly with things that carry religious or ritual significance. From here, I move on to discuss the recent "racial turn" in popular vampire narratives, specifically *The Vampire Diaries* and especially its spin-off *The Originals*, and *True Blood*. Such Southern Gothic depictions of vampires, I argue, constitute a wholehearted return to the kind of visually rich, religiously inflected *mise-en-scène* familiar from Stoker and indeed from the Count's Hammer Horror avatar. However, this is done, not simply to evoke pre-Christian or pre-Enlightenment forms of supernaturalism, but in an effort to recuperate the vampire narrative as a vehicle for exploring, perpetuating, but also critiquing contemporary issues surrounding race, difference, and belief.

William HUGHES, Professor of Medical Humanities and Gothic Literature at Bath Spa University, England. He is the author of *Beyond Dracula: Bram Stoker's Fiction and its Cultural Context* (2000); scholarly editions of *Dracula* and *The Lady of the Shroud*; two student guides to *Dracula* (2009); *The Historical Dictionary of Gothic Literature* (2013); and *That Devil's Trick: Hypnotism and the Victorian Popular Imagination* (2015). He is the Editor of *Gothic Studies*, the refereed journal of the International Gothic Association and has contributed to television and radio broadcasts on Gothic and medical topics in the UK, Europe and the US.

Scripta Manent: Bram Stoker and his Publishers

Much has been written on the fiction of Bram Stoker, with scholarly interest in the author's novels in recent years having finally come to acknowledge the breadth of his writings beyond *Dracula*. Relatively little has been said, however, regarding Stoker's often protracted relationships with the many publishers with whom he contracted his work over a writing career that spanned some thirty years. This is a curious omission in the broader study of the author's life, and one made the more obvious by the recent scholarship, in particular, of Catherine Wynne, whose work has greatly clarified Stoker's professional relationship within the theatre.

Stoker's correspondence with his publishers embodies a unique insight into the personal, artistic and financial circumstances of a writer whose output embraced the genres of romance, adventure fiction, the Gothic and biography. Stoker's association with the Bristol publisher J. W. Arrowsmith, for example, was sufficiently personal for the latter to tender quite trenchant advice regarding the novella *Miss Betty* (1898), in advance of its publication. The novella itself is extant in its unrevised form at the Brotherton Library in Leeds, where Arrowsmith's letter is likewise archived: it is noteworthy that Arrowsmith finally declined to publish his friend's work. Less personal, but considerably more detailed are the letters from Stoker to the editors of the London publishers Sidgwick and Jackson, relating to the 1910 biographical volume *Famous Impostors*. These detail the author's experience across the volume, from its commissioning to the final negotiations between author, publisher and printer over the proofs. These letters are archived at the Bodleian Library, Oxford: the unabridged draft of *Famous Impostors* itself, heavily edited and annotated, is held at Trinity College Dublin. Neither has been discussed by critics in any detail.

After discussing some of the salient points of Stoker's relationships with his publishers, as evidenced by the surviving correspondence between them, this plenary address will consider the process by which *Famous Impostors* developed from a contract negotiated at length, through drafts interrupted by the author's infirmity and convalescence, to a published volume. Utilising material drawn primarily from the publisher's correspondence files, the address throws light upon the Anglo-American context of the project, the difficulties of proof-reading and printing, issues with taxes and customs and, finally, the publisher's own verdict on their investment in the author.

Paul MURRAY, a writer and former Irish Ambassador; author of *From the Shadow of Dracula* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2008).

The Historical Dracula: Young Bram Stoker's Visits to the Marsh's Library

Between 4 July 1866 and 30 March 1867, a teenage Bram Stoker visited the venerable Marsh's Library in Dublin seven times. On his visits, Stoker read pamphlet collections and a variety of seventeenth-century books. In reading the pamphlets, Stoker was immersing himself in the conflicted world of the seventeenth century, when the Anglican establishment in Britain and Ireland was under threat both internally and externally, the world which forms the backdrop to *The Mystery of the Sea*. Even more importantly, the books he consulted feature the historical Dracula as well as Transylvania – then a well-known, significant area of Europe – and Wallachia. This material radically transforms our understanding of the formation of Stoker's masterpiece, *Dracula*.

Bogdan Popa, PhD, a historian and researcher at the Nicolae Iorga Institute of History at the Academiei Române, Bucharest, Romania. Bogdan is a long-year member of the Romanian TSD and will represent the Bucharest mother organisation instead of Daniela Diaconescu, who cannot be personally present in Dublin due to health issues in her family.

The Prince, the Vampire, and the Tour Guide: Dracula Comes to Romania -- Revisited

While starting from history of the “Transylvanian Society of Dracula,” this paper will explore the difficult relation between Vlad Țepeș and Count Dracula. I aim to analyse the long, difficult, and never innocent growth of the first as a national hero, as opposed to the un-human characteristics of the latter. Nevertheless, even though the mediaeval prince is still a positive reference for the Romanian public (and a constant reference during electoral campaigns), this was not always the case. Before being considered a national hero, Vlad Țepeș was more like a villain. His cruel behaviour was the reason behind this approach. As the historians and writers of the 19th and 20th Centuries continued to reconstruct the past, Țepeș emerged as the figure we all know today: cruel, yet fair; impulsive, yet legitimated by national aspirations. My thesis is that “Dracula tourism” - less than, at least for the Romanians, unfamiliar novel and movie character(s) - strengthened this heroic status in the past five decades. While Romania went from communism to democracy, both the historical and the fictional Dracula became topics for open academic and non-academic debates, whilst conserving a certain lack of trust in the economic potential of the myth.

Hans de ROOS, acting Editor of *Letter from Castle Dracula*, the official news bulletin of the TSD, and author of *The Ultimate Dracula* (Munich: Moonlake Editions, 2012).

Powers of Darkness: The – Better – Sister Version of *Dracula* rediscovered

Makt Myrkranna, the Icelandic version of *Dracula*, was published in Reykjavík in 1900 as a serialisation in the newspaper *Fjallkonan*. Until shortly, the subsequent 1901 book edition has always been considered an abridged translation of Stoker's 1897 original; only the preface, with its obscure hints at the infamous Ripper Murders, was published in English translation by Richard Dalby in 1986. In 2014, I got hold of the complete Icelandic text as published in *Fjallkonan* and of the 1901 book edition. I discovered that the plot had been radically modified and that new characters had been added. This raises questions about the precise nature of the cooperation between Bram Stoker and the Icelandic translator/co-author/publisher, Valdimar Ásmundsson. Was this a case of literary piracy, or was *Makt Myrkranna* an authorised adaptation, or did Stoker even create this new version himself, based on previous drafts? How is it possible that the text contains elements borrowed from old Norse mythology, but also plot ideas described in Stoker's early preparatory notes – but not in *Dracula*? And how could *Makt Myrkranna* anticipate changes to the plot that only two decades later turned up (again) in the stage and screen adaptations of the *Dracula* novel, now authorised by Bram Stoker's widow, Florence Balcombe?

By way of preview of my upcoming annotated translation of *Makt Myrkranna/Powers of Darkness*, (Overlook Press, New York, December 2016), this presentation will discuss some of the highlights of this rediscovered sister version of *Dracula*, as well as the new mysteries we are faced with, and the clues contained in its preface that Stoker – almost certainly – exclusively authored for the Icelandic publication.

Clemens RUTHNER, Assistant Professor for German at Trinity College, Dublin, and initiator of the Doctor van Helsing Society.

BATSHIT! Common Misperceptions and Other Drivel Re: Vampires

This paper has the ambition to finish off common popular misperceptions of vampirism:

- That vampires 'have existed for thousand years' (at least),
- that the word 'vampire' existed before 1725/32,
- and "vampire graves" in Bohemia, Venice and Bulgaria, and finally,
- that those Balkan village vampires necessarily sucked blood.

A critical analysis of the first known-of vampire cases of world history in Serbia 1725/32 (not Transylvania!) and others will provide historical proof and a theory how vampires came into existence: They are nothing else than a misinterpreted / local version of the good old European REVENANT.

The intellectual property rights of these abstracts remain with their authors.

Status: 16 October 2016