TAMED MONSTERS AND HUMAN PROBLEMS IN CINEMA'S
INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE (1994)

P. Stuart Robinson (UiT The Arctic University of Norway)

Abstract: *What can the taming of the monster reveal about its construction and the potential and limits of change? Modernist, individualist qualities of Western culture and society have shaped the construction and deconstruction of the monster in popular culture in general and film in particular. The idea of an historically emergent human nature and its associated norms is key to the construction of the monster as transgressive. Less obvious but nonetheless apparent is the constraining role this Western construction of human nature continues to play in recent cinematic attempts to approach the monster more closely. These are explored through a consideration of vampire movies within the horror genre, with a focus on* Interview with the Vampire *(dir. Neil Jordan, 1994), as arguably both influential within and emblematic of a more general trend. The film dismantles the conventional monster figure of the vampire, humanising her by detailing her transposition from a natural, human setting to something otherworldly. Human (read as Western) qualities are reinforced and salvaged from the disturbing ambivalence of conventional monstrosity, as we observe the logic of 'human' adaptation to alien conditions. In this way, both the paradoxical model of freedom as conformity to nature and the naturalising reification of contingent social groupings are re-affirmed.*

Introduction

Louis de Pointe du Lac looks out of the hotel window, suited and ponytailed, his back to the foregrounded young journalist who prepares to tape their conversation, arranging those cumbersome late-20th-century accoutrements of documentation. Imagine the impression of the scene, or perhaps remember it: the opening encounter of *Interview with the Vampire* (dir. Neil Jordan, 1994). "What do you do?" is the routine question. "I'm a vampire", is Louis's deadpan reply, simple but facetious. Realisation—conventions invoked and recalled—precedes the sight of his face, creating the requisite dramatic tension. Then he turns. Thus revealed is the rising star, Brad Pitt, already instantly recognisable, and thus a cipher for an ordinary acquaintance who now looks ominously different—pale, unwholesome, brittle. On one level, this is a rehearsal of an old convention, of the horror genre per se and the vampire narrative specifically: the shock of the familiar turned alien and threatening. On another, it is the dismantling of such conventions. The monster is a key feature of horror. It creates the desired affective response (fear, disgust or at least surprise and excitement) by balancing proximity and familiarity with just enough distance and under-specification to evoke mystery and menace. What could be more normalising and thus disruptive of this affective balance than something so mundane as an interview, for the vampire to put an end to all uncertainty and tension by explaining everything? It is this wilful wrongness that lends the film the quality of surprise, discernible from the first scene onwards. What makes it

noteworthy is the trail of similarly 'dysfunctional' approaches in its wake. A recent example, *What We Do in the Shadows* (dirs. Jemaine Clement and Taika Waititi, 2014), tells the tale, documentary style, of vampire housemates with the difficult task of keeping the place nice while slaking their thirst for human blood. Hence, Jordan's work forms the focus of the following analysis on the grounds of its disruption of conventional monstrousness. The goal is not to argue directly for its originality but that it in any case marks a kind of turning-point in the cultural 'stream'. It thus highlights popular culture's changing constitution of the monster.

The trend towards the dismantling or demystification of the monster is of particular analytical interest because of its political implications. It raises questions about the social and political context of the monster as a widely recognised figure of otherness. It can hardly be doubted that the constitution of the other is a matter of some importance and even urgency in light of contemporary political developments. A populist, xenophobic reaction to the perceived threat of outsiders, especially those on the move, appears to be spreading like a hysterical epidemic across a host of disparate countries. The following analysis presupposes a connection between the realm of culture, on one hand, and social and political relationships on the other. Insofar as Westerners make enemies of migrants, the resilient literary and cinematic trope of the monster plausibly provides relevant permissive conditions. Any consideration of such a connection can only, in this context, provide a measure of educated speculation. This is not unusual. Opinion will probably always be divided on the reactionary versus progressive impact of the 19th century rise of the Gothic novel, for example, as escapist and/or transgressive in relation to the emerging bourgeois values of early capitalism (Kilgour 1995: 10–11). Such questions are as important as they are immune to empirical proof. The specific connection following from a focus on the shift described above concerns the potential political effects of the new currency of positive, even amicable and conciliatory, depictions. Such a question focuses attention on a challenge to conventional monstrousness: an effort to reach out and *understand*, an apparently liberal gesture opposing the conventional practices of flight, destruction and demonization.

What follows are hermeneutical reflections on *fin-de-siècle* developments in the moving-image depiction of a particular recognised form of monster, as the basis for their political-philosophical interpretation. Formal analysis of the language of cinema will be considered only insofar as it contributes to the construction of meaning and stimulation of the spectator's affective response. The approach, in other words, is phenomenological, reflecting an epistemological concern with spectator effects rather than the craft of filmmaking per se (Sobchak 1992: 3–50). Such effects can then be placed in the broader frame of social and political relationships, in their reproduction and mutation over historical time. This implies an historicising investigative strategy, and, given the presupposition of a connection between culture and politics, that this is bound to work both ways. Popular genre tropes as purveyed by such industry giants as Hammer Film Productions, and paid ironical homage by more recent movies like *Mars Attacks* (dir. Tim Burton, 1996) and (arguably) *Starship Troopers* (dir. Paul Verhoeven, 1997), resonate, at any rate, with the political rhetoric of 'evil empire' or 'axis of evil'.[1]

---

[1] US President Ronald Reagan famously declared the Soviet Union a godless 'evil empire' before the National Association of Evangelicals, in Orlando, Florida, in 1983. George W. Bush echoed him in a State of the Union address on January 29, 2002, dubbing North Korea, Iraq and Iran the 'axis of evil'.

In other words, they have a loose affinity with broadly conservative-communitarian, lately 'neo-conservative' perspectives (Hoffman/Graham 2006: 186–207; Heywood 2012 [1992]: 55–96). More specifically, what can the monster *tamed* reveal about its construction and the potential and limits of change? A variety of movies from the late 20th century onwards, from *ET* (dir. Steven Spielberg, 1982), through *Monsters Inc.* (dir. Pete Docter, 2001) and its prequel, *Monsters University* (dir. Dan Scanlon, 2013), to some of the latest examples of the vampire genre, self-consciously depart from earlier generic conventions. The departure, however fresh and innovative, has a surprising tendency to offer little more than an alternative way of obliterating difference, sharing, as it does, a deep-seated cultural attachment to a simplifying and at times simplistic dichotomy. Hence, one might mystify the Other and thereby make more palatable the prospect of doing it literal or metaphorical violence. Alternatively, a curiously similar albeit less violent obliteration is achieved through its *de*-mystification, which 'humanises' it in keeping with the Western model, and 'ethnically' cleanses it of all meaningful complexities or other marks of distinction. The movement from demonisation to humanisation, most conspicuous in the recent TV series, *Lucifer* (created by Tom Kapinos, 2016–), thus illustrates a more general oscillation in Western culture between the binary (and hierarchical) oppositions of Subject and Other (Wood 1985; Walker 1993: 176–179; Leavenworth 2014: 692; Cohen 1996: 7–8).

The Monster as Other

The Modern Western Other

Consideration of monstrousness and othering inevitably raises questions of subjectivity, modern or postmodern, human or post-human. The binary of self and other cannot be considered in isolation from its contemporary context of profound changes to understandings of subjectivity operative in the cultural field, and their broader embedding in a new kind of global—or at least globalising—social space (Jameson 1984). Such changes undermine the subject's sense of self, in terms of both internal coherence and orientation in her historical-social context. The oscillation between annihilation and colonisation can be read as a dialectic, in the manner of neo-Marxist or critical-theoretical thinkers such as Fredric Jameson (1981; 1984) and Robert Cox (1981), whereby scholarship can be understood not only as social interpretation but also *intervention*. Cox highlights the dialectical role of immanent critique as the motor— actual or potential—of change. The intrinsic tensions of social formations, and especially the 'intersubjective meanings', which support them discursively—more or less concealed as they may be—are nonetheless vulnerable to speech-acts of revelation, which can lead to both critical enlightenment and social resistance of the hegemonic order (1981: 136).[2] The humanisation of the outsider or sub- or quasi-human is best understood—and addressed—in its hegemonic context, how Western society in general and the Enlightenment in particular have constituted a sense of the modern human and political subject. Such humanity can only be intelligibly constituted in contrast and opposition to a notion of what is *less than* or *barely* human (and politically disenfranchised). Hence, as Judith Butler puts it, interpretative frames, especially in these times of war, continually shape our level of affective identification, rendering

---

[2] Here, Cox draws on the work of Theodor W. Adorno (1976 [1969]).

some lives more precarious and, moreover, less grievable (2009: 33–62). The recurring trope of the monster can be understood as symptomising and reinforcing such framing.

The idea, exercising enormous influence in Western culture from at least the time of the Enlightenment, of an historically emergent, benign universal nature opens up a cultural space for conceiving otherness in an extraordinarily imperious way.[3] While every bit as universalising as Judaeo-Christian divine purpose, a tension nonetheless arises within the diachronic view of a nature gradually developed and revealed. Some human subjects—or even whole societies—might fall outside the operative domain of humanity and nature, subject to the dictates of convenience and temporal perspective. They in any case become subordinate as less fully human and not entirely natural, their humanity not negated as such but suspended on the grounds of being historically incomplete or unfulfilled. Such a view shaped Victorian justifications of imperialism, like those of one of the East India Company's most illustrious employees, John Stuart Mill (Bell 2010; Campbell 2010). More recently, even a renowned moderate like Michael Walzer (2000 [1977]: 86–101) supported, in most instances, the self-determination of a 'developing' nation-state over intervening to protect human rights. His justification rests on the presupposition of liberal-humanist development-in-progress, which will need to run its course in its own, less than humane way. Such readily imperial habits of thought reflect the paradoxical normalising effect of an individualistic frame of mind, which represents the broadly liberal core of Western society and culture. It also constitutes the central ideological mechanism, which, first, casts the system of limited, representative government as enabling citizens' self-determination and, second, the concentration of capitalist economic power as enabling their self-determination as producer-consumers. To summarise briefly, adequate for the following analysis, such a core is constituted by widespread beliefs in the relative equality and similarity of humans as rational deliberators, whose reasoning powers, properly harnessed by their liberation—paradoxically—form the motor of progress, both material and ethical. The adoption of the abstract individual as reference-point[4] is a strangely mixed blessing. It is the source, on the one hand, of an egalitarian consciousness emerging from the strict hierarchy of the medieval political order, and, on the other, of a powerful normalising tendency, a problematic equation of freedom with submission to the law, which lays the very foundations of the totalitarian mindset. Hence, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for example, posits that the rational principles of collective political life—best for all—are discoverable by means of rational deliberation. Individual reflection is therefore ultimately the path to comprehending, actualising and applying the 'general will', understood, not as an aggregation of individual goals, but rather the enlightened recognition of the common good (1968 [1762]: Book Two).

---

[3] The idea is traceable to Aristotle's account of latent qualities constituting the immanent potential of human nature, which requires the polis for activation, just as the deceptively simple material of the seed requires the right environment to bring forth its nature as a fully developed plant (Sabine 1944: 119–120).

[4] Social contract theorists like Thomas Hobbes (2009 [1651]) and John Locke (2003 [1689]) made the good of the undifferentiated individual axiomatic to an implicit—rational—covenant to submit to sovereign power. For Immanuel Kant, the individual is the sacrosanct and irreducible end of ethical and political life (2002 [1785]).

The Monster in Art-Horror

Though the cultural roots of the monster figure clearly run much deeper, it has taken a certain form and role within Western society, which reflect the normalising tendencies described above. Simply put, the monster is a living being, which is in some way held to be wrong, to deviate from the norm. As such, monster figures are inherently diverse (Bordwell/Thompson 2008 [1979]: 330). They might express physical abnormalities, for example, awakening feelings of disgust, such as the corpse reanimated by unknown means and transformed into a zombie (Canavan 2011; Vint 2011: 165–166). Alternatively, they might express attributes considered *morally* objectionable. Deviant morality is the signature of an unpalatable alien nature—all the more appalling for being relatively hidden—exemplified by science fiction's 'fake human'.[5] Certain archetypal features can nonetheless be distinguished that make one monster more definitively *monstrous* than another, and thus exert its psychological-emotional leverage: the power of its transgressive qualities to affect the onlooker. Hence, though any poorly categorised creature might qualify as a monster, it is one with distorted *human* characteristics that is most likely to be perceived as *monstrous* and awaken the requisite repulsion or abhorrence. Its crucial reference-point then is a notion of normality. Its upsetting violation is thus the hallmark of the horror genre, as theorised by Noël Carroll (1990). 'Art-horror', emerging as a variation on the popular Gothic narratives of the 19th century, distinguishes itself, like *some* others—suspense and mystery for example—as a genre defined in terms of the desired affective response (13; Kilgour 1995: 3–10). As such, it raises two 'paradoxes of the heart': first, how the reader or spectator can be frightened by something known to be make-believe and, second, why the reader or spectator would seek out and set store by such an experience (Carroll 1990: 8). The first testifies to the power of human imagination (79–88), the second to the complex workings of human desire (158–195).

Social order, the more or less closely managed regularity—and predictability—of human conduct, depends on a core of shared beliefs, values and norms. The most important are likely to have been almost corporeally internalised and subsequently adhered to more or less automatically. They are the paradigmatic, unquestioned working assumptions of everyday life,[6] 'intersubjective meanings', which form the bedrock of any *hegemonic* order (Cox 1981: 136).[7] These taken-for-granted discursive premises are distinct from but also frame the more consciously and readily contestable 'collective images of social order' through which ideological tensions are actively expressed and political debate takes shape.[8] The work of Fredric Jameson is useful in this regard, in its similar focus on the workings, through history, of hegemonic power relationships, seen (in keeping with the views of Cox) as having critical roots in the social organisation of

---

[5] The ambiguous figure of Starbuck in *Battlestar Gallactica* (created by Glen A. Larson and Ronald D. Moore, 2005–2009) is a recent example (Leavenworth 2014).

[6] The seminal work on the epistemology of paradigms is Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970 [1962]). The social, self-reinforcing role of paradigmatic thinking among scholars has at least as much analytical purchase on the everyday workings of 'common sense'.

[7] Cox draws the idea of hegemony from Antonio Gramsci's classic exploration of the cultural conditions of institutional stability in capitalist society (Gramsci 1973 [1971; 1929–1935]).

[8] Consider the almost universal assumption of the state as the only possible institutional ground for any political order, which limits political adversaries to disputing its proper role in society: Should it be the economic liberals' limited night-watchman or the socialists' active interventionist?

production, but with a particular focus on how these play out in the cultural field (1981; 1984). The oppressive aspects of social existence are mediated or, more properly, repressed by the governing ethos of the age, for example, a broad movement in the cultural field in the late 20th century described by Jameson—as well as others—as postmodernism (1984). Such repression is never total, however. Social dynamics are experienced, at the very least, on an unconscious level, and leave their mark—quite literally—in the symbolic traces of desire. The proper role of cultural interpretation, according to Jameson, is to uncover aspects of the imprint of evolving social-psychological conditions upon the cultural fabric. The process is a kind of 'negative dialectic', identifying the limits associated with the necessary partiality of what is known and idealised (1981: 281–292). This is effected by reading literature or film, for example, in that crucial—historically grounded—context.

The more or less conscious project of normalisation, which generates faithful producer-consumers and loyal subjects, suffers from an innate discursive weakness. In order to prepare the conceptual ground for adherence to unquestioned beliefs and associated rules of conduct it is necessary to draw attention to their alternatives. Paradoxically, what is normal has to be questioned in order to become—ultimately, hopefully—unquestioned and even unquestionable because the norm has to be understood before it can be internalised and forgotten (at least on a conscious level). It is this intrinsic self-limiting potential of discursive power in operation, which leads Judith Butler, for example, to highlight the vulnerability of interpretative frames in their very circulation, as necessitating reproduction and hence potential disruption (2009: 12). The paradoxical cultural-political role of monsters can be seen more clearly in such terms. By setting the limit and the boundary, the realm of monsters must also run the danger of offering a kind of escape-route or site of resistance: "*Cave! Hic Dragones!*" The ideal of beauty is contrasted with the monster's ugliness, wholesome nature with its unnatural, hybrid deformity, and moral probity with its dangerously unfettered, evil and/or brutish caprice. In this way, the monster reminds us of who we are or at least who we *should* be. At the same time, in its abnormality and strangeness, the monster depends upon and inevitably animates the human imagination, with its associated feelings—from empathy to desire—the natural enemy of the conservative, individualist order. The threat is evidenced in the widespread fascination with monsters, the curiosity piqued by their strangeness and not least the desire awakened by such symbols and embodiments of transgression (Lestel 2012). The latter is apparent, not least, in the vampire genre, with its associations of eroticism, metamorphosis and death. So how is the threat to be contained? The unexpected, unusual and out of place tends to simultaneously attract and repel. The typical viewer's social-cultural background, with its binaries of natural and unnatural, good and evil, nevertheless tends to enhance the latter reaction.[9] The ancients, for example, considered a disfigurement to be a mark of divine displeasure and hence an evil portent (Beagon 2002: 114). In entertaining such an idea one's curiosity and desire will more likely give way to fear and disgust, and thoughts turn from the investigation of otherness to the practicalities of self-preservation or at least reassurance. This is key to understanding the portrayal of the monster in popular culture—especially its variations.

---

[9] See Mary Douglas's classic exploration of the logic of human disgust (2002 [1966]).

The Vampire as Other

Rather than track the monster across the gamut of popular culture, the following discussion will concentrate—largely but not exclusively—on what is arguably an especially illustrative genre, horror, emphasising the subgenre of the vampire, as purveyed in one especially illustrative medium, film. Arguably, this is the archetypal *popular* medium and hallmark of the industrial age, most immediately accessible, most seductive and least literary. Its central place in Western culture is a product of the importance attached to visualisation and the image, with deep roots in Europe's early Judeo-Christian history (Mitchell 1986: 7–46), as well as emerging mechanisms of commercialism between the world wars (Ewan 1977), and late-20th-century globalisation as a kind of cultural imperialism (Barber 1996; 2008: 3–37). *Vampire* film specifically grew out of Bram Stoker's seminal reworking of folkloric myths (2013 [1897]), which was itself a development within the already highly popular format of the Gothic novel (Carroll 1990: 13). The vampire movie-genre exemplifies the monster's depiction as simultaneously fascinating and repellent. Moreover, its narrative management exemplifies the identified normative and normalising practices, reflected in certain formal conventions, whereby the rank outsider, the dangerously different, becomes, above all, a problem to be solved. It will be useful to examine such conventions a little more closely before considering the reworking and disruption wrought by *Interview with the Vampire*.

From its early-20th-century infancy the movie industry generated vampire narratives, including the German silent-era classic, *Nosferatu* (dir. Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau, 1922) and the early 'talky', *Dracula* (dir. Tod Browning, 1931), reaching a peak in the heyday of Hammer Film Productions. In the late 1950s and through the 1960s, 'Hammer Horror' became a highly recognisable brand, in both cinema and television, with vampires a notable speciality. *Dracula* (dir. Terence Fisher, 1958), adapting Stoker's novel, was a particular box-office success and spawned a string of sequels. It was arguably pivotal in distilling and dispersing the cultural archetype of vampirism and the operative conventions of an increasingly consolidated horror subgenre (Bordwell/Thompson 2008 [1979]: 329–332). The figure of Dracula, as featured in this movie and its sequels, is thus a kind of archetype. What follows is not an exhaustive account or formal analysis of this particular example or the genre as a whole, but an attempt, more specifically, to distil from 'vampire practice' a kind of model of the monster, its treatment and intended effects, as a strategy of entertainment. The focus is on Terence Fisher's take on the infamous Count as exemplifying the visual-narrative mechanisms at work.

A distance and alienation from the monster is established long before its monstrosity reveals itself. Dracula is introduced as an aristocrat in a distant foreign country, occupying a remote labyrinthine mansion. The distancing effect is both spatial and temporal. We find ourselves in the 19th century with its more conspicuous trappings of what was—even then—an aristocratic time gone by. His nobility adds to the dissonance of the malignant atmosphere of scarcely concealed desire and aggression. The Count is a veritable paragon of civility. The idea of a beast lurking beneath the surface of the conventions of polite society is a powerful one. Monstrosity is nurtured not only by difference but also by the terms of its appearance, by being conspicuously out of place

at the moment of revelation.[10] Apprehension of Dracula's difference—his *deformity*—is meant to shock, from the instant of the first baring of his signature fangs. Small differences, which earlier aroused a vague unease, such as his unwholesome pallor, are revealed as the hallmarks of an inhuman reality. He is actually a kind of supernatural creature, once human but now caught in a horrifying immortal limbo, neither alive nor dead, invisible in reflection, vulnerable to sunlight, and wholly dependent upon a macabre parody of nourishment: to feed on human blood. The unexpected, erotic yet murderous bite of the Count, or the temptress masquerading as his prisoner, threatens death or, worse, inculcation into their own parasitic limbo, to share the fearful plight of the undead. The narrative's emergent problematic is how to ascertain who remains one of us and who has been transformed into one of *them*. Curiosity about the nature of the transformation and its creature is tantalisingly stimulated, only to be checked by the terror and intellectual challenge of deciphering the codes of ab/normality, in order to safely isolate and eliminate the threat. The character and narrative role of such ambiguity illustrates a key characteristic of monsterhood.

As noted above, the monster simultaneously, and paradoxically, tends to prompt both positive and negative reactions. The mechanisms of desire are not hard to decipher. They reflect the double quality of social norms and constraints as part safe haven, part prison. Hence, one may long for escape as much as one fears it. The sexual—and gender—overtones are complex none the less. The connotations of a vampiric desire, which by nature entails no distinctions, and certainly not with respect to gender, express a clear 'queer' undercurrent in a broadly heteronormative culture (Haggerty 1998; Lau 2018). The ambivalence gains its purchase on an even deeper level, beyond the constrictions of society to the very cage of mortality. As Jeffrey Jerome Cohen writes:

> The same creatures who terrify […] can evoke potent escape fantasies; the linking of monstrosity with the forbidden makes the monster all the more appealing as a temporary egress from constraint. This simultaneous repulsion and attraction […] accounts greatly for its continued cultural popularity […]. We distrust and loathe the monster at the same time we envy its freedom, and perhaps its sublime despair (1996: 16–17).

The roots of the contradictory reaction may run deeper still, in aspects of the human condition per se. Dominique Lestel maintains that the monster expresses innate and/or emergent human characteristics taken to their logical limit:

> Whereas living beings are all biological monsters, humans could be further qualified as *meta-monsters* […]. They are *meta-monsters* in their ability to beget monsters and also because they dwell in monstrosity by searching for human status *outside the realm of their species* [emphasis in the original] (2012: 262).

Lestel's observations echo Hannah Arendt's (1958) about the peculiarities of human self-consciousness, especially vis-à-vis mortality: to be a product of nature, with its

---

[10] As Van Leavenworth argues, drawing on Jacques Derrida, it is what is unrecognised (at least initially), which creates the suitably shocking effect (2014: 692).

cycles of life and death, but disposed to work against their grain, expressed in a complete inability to 'act naturally' (as idealised by Rousseau in his extraordinary imaginary of an idyllic, beast-like state of nature [1968 (1762)]). These aspects of the human condition tend to be a source of anxiety and object of repression, however, as the onerous trappings of displacement, alienation and unstable identity. Through repression, what really comes from within may appear to belong exclusively to the hostile external foe. The repressed subject displaces the monster within or, in Freudian terms, projects it onto the monster without (Murer 2009: 117). This may entail a kind of 'abjection', where a rigid boundary is drawn, placing the strangely familiar 'other' irrevocably beyond the pale as an object of unconditional contempt (115–117). Following Jameson (1981: 17–23), the reaction to the monster is the contradictory effect of internal conflict between habituated acceptance of social norms and sublimated alienation as potential grounds for their rejection.

The relationship between culture and politics is resistant but not immune to social scientists' favoured narratives of cause and effect. Hermeneutical connections are reflexive, subterranean relationships, the stuff of memory and conjecture. We can speculate but hardly verify, for example, that the atmosphere of Cold-War enmity generated cultural expressions of anxiety, heightened mortality, and fatalism, themes the novelist Martin Amis explored at the time in the essay, 'Thinkability' (1987). Such an atmosphere plausibly fuelled the resurgence of the vampire trope, which, in turn, could have helped heighten and consolidate the transnational attitudes of hostility, which formed its background. Commentators argue persuasively that the advent of atomic-cum-nuclear weapons directly influenced popular culture's post-war monster fixation, in science fiction (Hendershot 1999) and especially as expressed in a film like *Godzilla* (dir. Ishirō Honda, 1954) (Miyamoto 2016). Noël Carroll goes further, to speculate that the intimate experiences of many with outsider status through the hardships of the Great Depression correlated with relatively sympathetic portrayals of the monster, while relative prosperity combined with Cold-War enmity stoked its demonization in the 1950s (208–209). The relevance of such connections has hardly waned. Current public fascination with monsters is exemplified by the continued success of the 'Alien' franchise, in the form of Ridley Scott's prequels *Prometheus* (2012) and *Alien: Covenant* (2017), and the huge popularity of television's continuing zombie-apocalypse hybrid, *The Walking Dead* (created by Frank Darabont and Angela Kang, 2010–). Such pop-culture preoccupations dovetail with and connect to a global political turn to the nationalist, jingoist right in the wake of economic and military crisis. Other impulses are nevertheless observable, intriguing inflections to the traditional narratives. While not exactly unprecedented, they nonetheless show a marked shift of emphasis and, in some cases, a pronounced determination to disrupt or unravel the familiar monster figure, be it a visitor from another planet, a folkloric beast or our old friend—or enemy—the vampire. That they persist into a period of extraordinary and apparently ever-growing global political tension is a curiosity deserving further consideration.

Taming the Monster

The Switch of Perspective

Arguably, the coherence and functioning of the trope depends on maintaining the delicate tension between what is both strange and familiar in the figure of ostensible otherness. As such, the monster is an inherently vulnerable form, susceptible to the vicissitudes of generic over-familiarity, for example. Moreover, there is the risk (and opportunity) of curiosity or desire overcoming the limits imposed by fear. Curiosity and desire are in themselves potentially self-limiting, however, threatening to dissolve the monster and replace it with something else entirely. Determined correction may eliminate otherness as categorically as any stake through the heart. The following example of just such 'de-othering' is situated at the conventional limits (or beyond) of the horror genre and partly reflects earlier developments appearing in literary form. Indeed, the film, not unusually, is adapted from a novel.[11] As noted earlier, the domestication or even humanisation of monsters is not exactly new. Ancient folklore threw up the occasional gentle giant in contrast to the fearful ogre, and no consideration of modern horror can overlook the place of curiosity and empathy in Mary Shelley's iconic monster (2012 [1818]), something not entirely lost in the swathe of cinematic adaptations to follow. The inimitable pathos of the ultimate misfit is invariably preserved, not least in the classic Universal Pictures version.[12] What is interesting about recent changes wrought in the construction of monstrosity is not so much their novelty as their illustration of the *enduring* possibilities and limitations of the Western encounter with otherness.

   A clear *fin-de-siècle* trend nevertheless emerges: to abandon the conventional dynamic tension requiring a certain distance, and rather get up close and personal, even to the point of a categorical shift of perspective—the story of the monster as told by the monster. The precursors came from Hammer itself as their usual offerings lost favour. *Dracula AD 1972* (dir. Alan Gibson, 1972) and *The Satanic Rites of Dracula* (dir. Alan Gibson, 1973) sought to reinvigorate the genre with a touch of self-parody and a more contemporary, everyday setting. However unsuccessful, they were an intriguing sign of things to come. A more significant turning-point was the release of Neil Jordan's *Interview with the Vampire* in 1994, with screenplay by Anne Rice, author of the novel by the same name (1976). A host of vampire stories transposed to contemporary settings ensued, most notably the irreverent hit TV series, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (created by Joss Whedon, 1997–2003). The temporal shift is important in narrowing the distance between spectator and monster, but the *perspectival* shift is more decisive in practically uniting them. In *Interview with the Vampire* it is the creature himself who tells the story, drawing the spectator deep into his own monstrous world. A number of succeeding works replicated such a perspectival change in some form and to some degree, including: *Modern Vampires* (or *Revenant*) (dir. Richard Elfman, 1998); *The Little Vampire* (dir. Uli Edel, 2000); the animated film, *Blood: The Last Vampire* (dir. Hiroyuki Kitakubo, 2000); the short film, *Coming Out* (dir. Kim Jee-woon, 2000); the hugely successful 'Twilight' series of romantic fantasies—*Twilight* (dir. Catherine Hardwicke, 2008), *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* (dir. Chris Weitz, 2009), *The Twilight*

---

[11] Inquiry into such literary-cinematic connections is beyond the scope of the present study.
[12] *Frankenstein* (dir. James Whale, 1931).

Saga: Eclipse (dir. David Slade, 2010), *The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn—Part One* (dir. Bill Condon, 2011) and *Part Two* (dir. Bill Condon, 2012); and, last but not least, the mockumentary *What We Do in the Shadows* (dirs. Jemaine Clement and Taika Waititi, 2014).[13]

In light of such developments, *Interview with the Vampire* would appear to be a pioneering example or, in its prominence, at least a pivotal one. It tells the story of the vampire 'in his own words'—for the benefit of an incredulous journalist. Louis recounts—and the films shows—how the vampire Lestat attacked and transformed him, and how he subsequently adapted to his new 'life' and its extraordinary demands. From the outset, Jordan employs expressive cinematography to evoke the sense of a very alien kind of perspective:

> […] [A] swooping camera surveys the nocturnal cityscape as it descends from on high. At ground level, the camera floats and glides on its quest through the crowd, a detached yet observant vampiric vision seeing wider and deeper than mortal eyes can (Powell 2008: 93).

Further devices consolidate the effect as the self-proclaimed vampire draws us into his world, evoking:

> the nostalgia of memory via period *mise-en-scène* in a pale, washed out palette of blues and greys. Both landscape and surrounds have been bled, their élan vital being absorbed by the vampires' own. The contrast of pallid background and opulent foreground figures limits actuality to a mere vampiric backdrop. The real is rendered virtual for the vampire, whose actuality is otherwise (ibid.).

Moreover, some judicious editing suggests a compression of time consistent with immortality (96), hence Louis's surprise—albeit conventional—reappearance to startle his interviewer, but this is only a prelude to their narrative transition to another world.

The 'Human' Narrative

What follows is the 'how to' of becoming a vampire, not as a conventional 'fate worse than death' but an unpacking of the logic and practical—albeit horrific—steps entailed, and the strange, inhuman existence, which awaits. So it is, from the moment the vampire Lestat de Lioncourt sucks Louis's blood and shares some of his own, thereby transforming him, that the genre slippage begins, as Jordan henceforth uses the conventions of fantasy or science fiction, where the key to an engaging verisimilitude is the internal consistency of a well-observed imagined universe. The film aims to stimulate a morbid fascination with the imaginary condition of the vampire in her (super)natural state. Its horror derives less from the shock encounter with the other, the genre's stock-in-trade, and more from how *being* other is—shockingly enough— experienced. Having deliberately breached the barriers of fear, customarily containing

---

[13] Moreover, Jordan's prototype spawned its own spinoffs: the sequel, *Queen of the Damned* (dir. Michael Rymer, 2002) and the *Vampire Chronicles* television series (created by Anne Rice and Christopher Rice, 2020–) now in the pipeline.

the viewer's imagination, Jordan takes us on an unpleasant journey to the Conradian "heart of an immense darkness" (Conrad 1998 [1899]: 43). What is entailed in this departure from the traditional standpoint of dehumanising what is too disgustingly or frighteningly ambiguous in its humanity? There is certainly something refreshing and promising about such a fearless engagement with the monster, to seek understanding and reconciliation over antagonism, redolent of that definitively liberal aspiration not to recoil from difference but to embrace it. There is nevertheless an ambivalence to this encounter, which illustrates the vices as well as the virtues of liberal praxis.

The embrace of the monster hides a multitude of, if not sins, then at least difficulties. The spectator is encouraged to get close to Louis but is liable to do so with gritted teeth, figuratively if not literally. Out of curiosity, he is *tolerated* and accompanied on his gruesome journey. Toleration has a long pedigree in liberal thought, connected to arguments for guaranteeing minority rights for example. Its practical applications nonetheless risk a paradoxical relinquishing of moral responsibility, on the one hand to allow any violation that is not one's own concern or, on the other, to dismissively repudiate what one patronisingly *allows*. Isaiah Berlin, among others, identifies the fundamental lack of respect for the (barely) tolerated other contained in the standpoint of toleration (1969: 184). There are obvious connections between a morally ambivalent British culture (and theory) of tolerance (Locke 2003 [1689]: 211–256) and the moral questionability of British imperialism, for example.[14] It should nevertheless be acknowledged that the film's overall effect is to encourage not just toleration but *identification* with the vampire's condition and perspective, to put herself, as it were, in her shoes. Perhaps nothing is more inclined to pique the spectator's morbid curiosity in this regard than the character of the child, Claudia, who Lestat transforms and thus freezes in her immaturity. The proverbial innocent, she is less troubled than Louis by what her new nature commands her to do, that is, to satisfy her thirst for human blood. Her childish yet precocious ferocity, brilliantly portrayed by Kirsten Dunst, provides some of the film's most powerful moments. The case of Claudia also illuminates a key aspect of the film's portrayal of the other. As the story unfolds and Louis's hold on human values weakens, his tolerance of the havoc wrought by, first Lestat, then himself (against his better judgement) and, finally, Claudia, turns to acceptance. He embraces what his nature dictates, however heavily it may weigh on his conscience, and it is through Claudia that we can read most clearly the impetus behind this change of heart. What Louis—and the spectator with him—are learning as witnesses to Claudia's plight are the dictates of nature or super-nature. They learn to live with what super-nature demands: to drink human blood and, in Claudia's case, to grow older in terms of experience while trapped in the body of a child. The figure of the child has an interesting function in this regard as embodying an innocence, which implies minimal agency or responsibility. Her conformity to nature paradoxically legitimises Louis's adult *choice* to follow its dictates, read essentially as self-interest. She holds up the example of necessity; he may thus embrace and justify a paradoxical freedom as

---

[14] This becomes especially clear in the light of specific examples of British imperial tolerance, and the persistent patterns thus generated. Hence, the toleration of slavery in the colonies in contrast to the metropole, as documented by Domenico Losurdo's groundbreaking 'counter-history' of liberalism (2011), can be traced to the post-colonial tributary order, the Commonwealth, which consolidated exclusive welfare provisions and other racially charged privileges for the metropole's workforce *only* (Bhambra/Holmwood 2018).

necessity. It is acceptable because it is necessary; it is good because it is the object of his free will.

Frank Grady reads Rice's 'Vampire Chronicles' series (whose first episode led to this film adaptation) as a metaphor for and mediation of capitalism. Marx's notion of capital as accumulated 'dead labour' (Grady 1996: 225) suggests parallels between the parasitic existence of vampires and those who control the means of production. Though the film too can certainly be 'read' this way, there is more to be gained from focusing on how this particular vampire tale expresses still deeper aspects of modern, capitalist society, in terms of the very construction of the human subject. In this regard, the dictates of nature, with which Louis is doomed to wrestle, are especially revealing. Lestat implores him to 'do what it is in your nature to do', to throw off moral qualms that belong to the human world they have left behind: "Evil is a point of view. God kills, indiscriminately, and so shall we" (*IMSDb* 2010).[15] What is 'natural' is an imagined analogue of the 'real world', a novel framework with a number of effects worthy of attention. One is a perverse re-naturing of the monster, whose distinguishing characteristic has been a disturbing categorical ambiguity. The iteration of a new category cannot extinguish that ambiguity altogether. Its residue is preserved in the protagonist's continued inward moral dialogue, as he struggles to negotiate his sense of self between the mutually contradictory poles of human and vampire. In this way, ambiguity increasingly cedes place to dilemma and paradox, however. Thus, an important and dangerous message emerges implicitly from the vampire's condition as portrayed: the categorical difference of the other, and its inherent incompatibility with our utterly different world.

There is nonetheless a paradoxical familiarity to the vampire world. Though portrayed as incompatible with 'our own', implicitly Western, one, ironically enough it nonetheless mimics it in important respects. The vampires' struggle is less with horror's conventional metamorphosis, more with adaptation, as they respond to their radical change of circumstance as humans qua modern subjects. The narrator essentially humanises the monster, even as he regards himself as dehumanised by the monstrous process to which he has succumbed. Though the three central figures handle the situation in different ways, they are all learning how to deal rationally with their new conditions of existence, to identify their own intelligible individual goals, and pursue them systematically. The film readily presents choice as necessity, for example: to live rather than die, to consume human blood and thereby thrive rather than make do with animal substitutes, which promise to undermine the vampire's quality of 'life'. The narrative betrays a clear individualist centre of gravity. Others are of value, but wholly in reference to the subject, as ultimately exchangeable companions, or objects of desire—often murderous. The individual's modus operandi is the classic rational-actor model of neoclassical economics. Its narrow, instrumentalist frame of reference is the systematic pursuit of self-serving goals. As widely held norm and self-serving prophesy,

---

[15] The full quotation from Anne Rice's 1976 novel reads: "Evil is a point of view. We are immortal. And what we have before us are the rich feasts that conscience cannot appreciate and mortal men cannot know without regret. God kills, and so shall we; indiscriminately. He takes the richest and the poorest, and so shall we; for no creatures under God are as we are, none so like Him [*sic*] as ourselves, dark angels not confined to the stinking limits of hell but wandering His earth and all its kingdoms" (Rice 1991 [1976]: 88–89). The full quote from Neil Jordan's 1994 film adaptation reads: "Evil is a point of view. God kills, indiscriminately, and so shall we. For no creatures under God are as we are, none so like him [*sic*] as ourselves" (*IMSDb* 2010).

it is axiomatic to Western culture and its dominant, liberal ideology. The dubious assumption of *autonomous* goal-seeking ensures that the goals themselves, and their extraordinary conformity to the dictates of a thoroughgoing commodification of both work and pleasure, are never questioned. The hypocritical vision of benign cynicism does not express the horrors of the vampire world, but rather of capitalist society itself. The movie reflects and reinforces the paradoxical individualism at the heart of Western society and culture. It is paradoxical because it heralds freedom as choice and turns choice into natural necessity. The film thus reproduces the 'intersubjective meanings' of producer-consumer society, where all choices of any value—to find the work you can and consume the goods you must—are predetermined by the working assumptions of Protestant work ethic and materialist aspiration.[16] These may appear symbolically as natural necessities but they are the product of what Jameson terms "ideological closure" (1981: 49). An historically grounded account of symbolic expressions can be understood in terms of what is structurally active but textually absent: 'the political unconscious'. These are the fundamental social relations constituted by the mode of production as experienced, repressed, and/or resisted by the active subject (41–49). Kimberly J. Lau identifies the vampiric dimension of resistance lying in its inherent non-productivity, in its challenge to the reproductive heterosexual norm as well as life per se as a linear, *accumulative* process of moving "upward, onward, forward" (3) in favour of the reverberating repetition of an immortal limbo. The ideological *contradiction* this entails should be emphasised, however. Individualism forms the ideological core of capitalist society, in constant, uneasy tension with those norms of reciprocity needed to hold the fabric of social relationships together, not least the dictates of law, human and natural. *Interview with the Vampire* expresses that tension in a hedonistic fantasy of release, deeply rooted in the figure of the frightful, wilful villain, so lovingly nurtured by the Gothic novel (Kilgour 1995: 12).

Furthermore, for all its liberal associations, the film expresses the *political* dimension of Western subjectivity in a way that further reinforces the divide between subject and other. We learn, as the vampiric 'social order' takes centre stage, that killing humans is a natural necessity while killing a *vampire* is tantamount to an 'immortal' sin. Santiago warns, "[t]here is but one crime… among us vampires here. It is the crime that means death to any vampire—to kill your own kind" (*IMSDb* 2010). Such ethical partiality, depressingly familiar in the history of ethnic groupings, provides the finishing touch to an unearthly analogue of the Western episteme. Freedom as conformity with the necessities of species nature is complemented by a further natural law, that is, loyalty to the natural collective to which each individual necessarily belongs. Logically, the analogue is not a perfect one, in creating an imaginary divide between qualitatively different beings, but as such it takes Western values to a further, and not unheard of, extreme, to equate national-juridical difference with a kind of racial one. A genuine universalism disappears from this picture in favour of separate racial-species universes unto themselves. R. B. J. Walker (1993) identifies how the discourse of national citizenship regularly betrays a kind of doublethink in invoking universal values as the uncompromising grounds of national ones, selectively ignoring their territorial-bio-political partiality. Though few would be likely to suggest explicitly that one's specific

---

[16] Max Weber famously analysed the role of the former in capitalist society (2001 [1930]), while Stuart Ewan explored the roots of contemporary consumerist materialism in interwar America (1977).

national values monopolise and exhaust the possibilities of a universal humanity, one might nevertheless become habituated to behaving as though it were the case. This helps explain liberal political theory's traditional concentration on the territorial entity as its utopian project (15–21), as well as the invocation of necessity to protect the territorial ground of such projects, as *realpolitik*'s "reason of state" (104–124). Hence, it might also help explain the resort to the logic of the natural divide between vampire and human. The contradictions entailed are the natural focus of Gramscian 'immanent critique' or Jamesonesque 'negative dialectic'. The critique highlights contradictions, which cannot be entirely eliminated. They persist in the disquiet of the 'political unconscious', a latent resource for the purposes of insurrection and self-enlightenment (Jameson 1981: 17–22). This casts light on the rich heterogeneity of expressive responses to social conditions, that the continuing 'Vampire Chronicles' coexist with a burgeoning war on terror, just as a film like *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (dir. Robert Wise, 1951) did with an escalating Cold War.

The focus has been on one, seminal case, which heralds a trend in the constitution of otherness reaching well beyond the realm of the vampire—within limits: the conventions of the zombie as a body stripped of consciousness, for example, resist such a move.[17] There is nevertheless plenty of evidence of such a trend in a variety of contexts. The inversion of perspective in the treatment of vampires is alive and kicking (however unfortunate the expression) in the mockumentary *What We Do in the Shadows* for example. Otherwise, the TV series *Lucifer* provides fresh perspective on what is arguably the ultimate monster figure of the Judeo-Christian tradition—provoking hostile reactions from religious groups (Richter 2015). Science-fiction antecedents in films like *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *Solaris* (dir. Andrei Tarkovsky, 1971) and *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (dir. Nicolas Roeg, 1976), paved the way for a more categorical change in later works like *Blade Runner* (dir. Ridley Scott, 1982), its sequel, *Blade Runner 2049* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, 2017), *ET* (dir. Steven Spielberg, 1982), *Total Recall* (dir. Paul Verhoeven, 1990), and the TV series *Battlestar Galactica* (created by Glen A. Larson and Ronald D. Moore, 2004– 2009). It remains a question for further inquiry whether such work equally falls prey to the tendency to humanise, individualise and westernise the monster, and thus foreclose the expression of genuine difference or *mutability*. The preceding argument, that the tendency is deeply embedded in long-standing Western cultural practices, at least suggests that the question is worthy of further consideration, without attributing a misleading determinacy to such practices. Initial consideration of *Lucifer*, for example, suggests that the imagined encounter between fallen angel and human, however flippant, is surprisingly nuanced compared to *Interview with the Vampire*. This raises the question of the continued, constraining influence of the conventions of the vampire subgenre, a line of inquiry also meriting further attention.

Conclusion

Modernist individualist qualities of Western society have shaped the construction and deconstruction of the monster in popular culture in general and film in particular. The idea of an historically emergent human nature and its associated norms is key, not

---

[17] Nevertheless, the scope for interpreting—and reinventing—zombies as a mute symbol of the desperate revolt of oppressed hordes (Canavan 2011) or, for that matter, of unreflective, commodity-fetishistic consumers, raises more possibilities than we might initially suppose.

surprisingly, to the construction of the monster as transgressive. What is less obvious is the constraining role this Western construction of human nature continues to play in recent cinematic attempts to approach the monster more closely. The example of *Interview with the Vampire* is arguably both influential within—and emblematic of—a more general trend, especially in the way it dismantles established monster conventions. By detailing its conditions as a transposition from a natural, human setting to something otherworldly, it is effectively humanised. In this way, human—read as Western—qualities are reinforced and salvaged from the disturbing ambivalence of conventional monstrosity. The spectator observes—and is encouraged to identify with—the logic of human adaptation to alien conditions. Thus reaffirmed is the paradoxical Western model of freedom as conformity to nature (Hobbes 2009 [1651]; Locke 2003 [1689]; Rousseau 1968 [1762]). Beyond the individual subject, collective or political subjectivity is likewise reaffirmed through the idea of a natural order proper to vampires, which mirrors that of humans. The vampires' *supernatural* moral universe prohibits taking another vampire's life. The ambiguity of this injunction is a curious echo of that at the level of world politics. Universalism makes all human life sacrosanct but insofar as such universalism falls short, through practical organisation into nation-states for example, it can be inverted. The failure of some actors (at least provisionally) to meet the criteria of full humanity means the sanctity of human life can become to all intents and purposes the sanctity of the life of the citizenry (ours) to be protected by all means possible, whatever the cost to others. The most conspicuously modernist feature of the humanised vampire—and most important failing—is that its nature, though emergent, is essentially fixed. The power of the monster trope to symbolise and illustrate the transformative potential of pliable *humanity* is ironically lost in the very act of a normalising humanisation. For all its vices, the monster is a powerful symbol of transformative change but it will take sensitivity and imagination to make it a *progressive* cultural force. The key may lie in contemporary cultural impulses challenging the anthropocentrism of the humanist tradition of thought. The imaginative potential of the monster to represent humans as embedded in—but not unrealistically determined by—nature resonates with 'posthumanist' ideas challenging deeply ingrained liberal assumptions of autonomy and exceptionalism (Hayles 1999). What the preceding analysis illustrates, however, is the robust constraining effect of powerful humanist ideas whose ideological role we are obliged to continue to take seriously (Badmington 2003).

Cave! Hic dragones.

Bibliography

Adorno, Theodor W. 1976 [1969]. "On the Logic of the Social Sciences", in *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, edited by Theodor W. Adorno et al. Translated by Glyn Adey and David Frisby. London: Heinemann, 105–122.

Amis, Martin. 1987. "Introduction: Thinkability", in *Einstein's Monsters*, authored by Martin Amis. New York: Harmony, 1–32.

Arendt, Hannah. 1958. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Badmington, Neil. 2003. "Theorizing Posthumanism", *Cultural Critique* 53, 10–27. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.1353/cul.2003.0017.

Beagon, Mary. 2002. "Beyond Comparison: M. Sergius, *Fortunae* Victor", in *Philosophy and Power in the Graeco-Roman World: Essays in Honour of Miriam Griffin*, edited by Gillian Clark and Tessa Rajaz. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 111–132. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198299905.003.0007.

Bell, Duncan. 2010. "John Stuart Mill on Colonies", *Political Theory* 38, 34–64. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591709348186.

Barber, Benjamin. 1996. *Jihad vs. McWorld*. New York: Ballantine Books.

——————————. 2008. *Consumed: How Markets Corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults, and Swallow Citizens Whole*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Berlin, Isaiah. 1969. *Four Essays on Liberty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bhambra, Gurminder K., and John Holmwood. 2018. "Colonialism, Postcolonialism and the Liberal Welfare State", *New Political Economy* 23, 574–587. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.1080/13563467.2017.1417369.

Bordwell, David, and Kristin Thompson. 2008 [1979]. *Film Art: An Introduction*. Eighth edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Butler, Judith. 2009. *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* London: Verso.

Campbell, Craig Grant. 2010. "Mill's Liberal Project and Defence of Colonialism from a Post-Colonial Perspective", *South African Journal of Philosophy* 29, 63–73. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.4314/sajpem.v29i2.57049.

Canavan, Gerry. 2011. "Fighting a War You've Already Lost: Zombies and Zombis in *Firefly/Serenity* and *Dollhouse*", *Science Fiction Film and Television* 4, 173–203. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.3828/sfftv.2011.12.

Carroll, Noël. 1990. *The Philosophy of Horror; or, Paradoxes of the Heart*. New York/London: Routledge.

Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome. 1996. "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)", in *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 3–25. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.5749/j.ctttsq4d.4.

Conrad, Joseph. 1998 [1889]. *Heart of Darkness*. Reprint edition. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cox, Robert. 1981. "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory", *Millennium* 10, 126–155. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298810100020501.

Douglas, Mary. 2002 [1966]. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. Reprint edition with a new preface. Abingdon/New York: Routledge. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203361832.

Ewan, Stuart. 1977. *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Grady, Frank. 1996. "Vampire Culture", in *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 225–241. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.5749/j.ctttsq4d.14.

Gramsci, Antonio. 1973 [1971; 1929–1935]. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Translated and edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Noell-Smith. Reprint edition. New York: International Publishers.

Haggerty, George E. 1998. "Anne Rice and the Queering of Culture", *NOVEL—A Forum on Fiction* 32, 5–18. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.2307/1346054.

Hayles, N. Katherine. 1999. *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226321394.001.0001.

Hendershot, Cyndy. 1999. "From Trauma to Paranoia: Nuclear Weapons, Science Fiction, and History", *Mosaic—An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 32:4, 73–90. Digital object identifier not available: https://www.jstor.org/stable/44029850 [October 31, 2019].

Heywood, Andrew. 2012 [1992]. *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*. Fifth Edition. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hobbes, Thomas. 2009 [1651]. *Leviathan or The Matter, Forme, and Power of a Common Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil* [*sic*]. E-book edition [via ProQuest]. Auckland: Free Floating Press.

Hoffman, John, and Paul Graham. 2006. *Introduction to Political Theory*. Harlow: Pearson Longman.

IMSDb (author unknown). 2010. "[Script:] *Interview with the Vampire*: Screenplay by Anne Rice, Produced by Stephen Woolley and David Geffen, Directed by Neil Jordan", *The Internet Movie Script Database*, May 19, without page numbers. Available online: http://nldslab.soe.ucsc.edu/charactercreator/film_corpus/film_20100519/all_imsdb_05_19_10/Interview-with-the-Vampire.html [June 5, 2019].

Jameson, Fredric. 1981. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

—————————. 1984. "Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism", *New Left Review* 146, 53–92. Digital object identifier not available: https://newleftreview.org/issues/I146/articles/fredric-jameson-postmodernism-or-the-cultural-logic-of-late-capitalism [October 31, 2019].

Kant, Immanuel. 2002 [1785]. *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. E-book edition [via ProQuest]. Yale: Yale University Press.

Kilgour, Maggie. 1995. *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*. London: Routledge.

Kuhn, Thomas. 1970 [1962]. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Second, enlarged edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lau, Kimberly J. 2018. "The Vampire, the Queer, and the Girl: Reflections on the Politics and Ethics of Immortality's Gendering", *Signs—Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 44, 3–24. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.1086/698274.

Leavenworth, Van. 2014. "Making Starbuck Monstrous: The Poetics of Othering in *Battlestar Galactica*", *The Journal of Popular Culture* 47, 688–708. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.1111/jpcu.12156.

Lestel, Dominique. 2012. "Why Are We so Fond of Monsters?", *Comparative Critical Studies* 9, 259–269. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.3366/ccs.2012.0062.

Locke, John. 2003 [1689]. *Two Treatises of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*. E-book edition [via ProQuest]. Birmingham/New York: Yale University Press.

Losurdo, Domenico. 2011. *Liberalism: A Counter-History*. London: Verso.

Mitchell, William John Thomas. 1986. *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226148052.001.0001.

Miyamoto, Yuki. 2016. "Gendered Bodies in *Tokusatsu*: Monsters and Aliens as the Atomic Bomb Victims", *Journal of Popular Culture* 49, 1086–1106. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.1111/jpcu.12467.

Murer, Jeffrey Stevenson. 2009. "Constructing the Enemy-Other: Anxiety, Trauma and Mourning in the Narratives of Political Conflict", *Psychoanalysis, Culture and Society* 14, 109–130. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.1057/pcs.2008.33.

Powell, Anna. 2008. "Duration and the Vampire: A Deleuzian Gothic", *Gothic Studies* 11, 86–98. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.7227/GS.11.1.9.

Rice, Anne. 1991 [1976]. *Interview with the Vampire*. Reprint edition. New York: Ballantine Books.

Richter, Greg. 2015. "Fox's *Lucifer* Series Draws Protests", *Newsmax*, June 7. Available online: https://www.newsmax.com/Newsfront/lucifer-tox-tv-series-one-million-moms/2015/06/07/id/649257/ [December 22, 2018].

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. 1968 [1762]. *The Social Contract*. Reprint edition. London: Penguin.

Sabine, George. 1944. *A History of Political Theory*. New York: Henry Holt.

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. 2012 [1818]. *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. E-book edition [via Project Gutenberg]. London: Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor, and Jones. Available online: http://www.gutenberg.org/files/41445/41445-h/41445-h.htm [December 22, 2018].

Sobchack, Vivian. 1992. *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Stoker, Bram. 2013 [1897]. *Dracula*. Reprint edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vint, Sherryl. 2011. "Science Fiction and Biopolitics", *Science Fiction Film and Television* 4, 161–172. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.3828/sfftv.2011.11.

Walker, R. [Rob] B. J. 1993. *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Walzer, Michael. 2000 [1977]. *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*. Reprint edition. New York: Basic Books.

Weber, Max. 2001 [1930]. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Reprint edition. London: Routledge.

Wood, David C. 1985. "An Introduction to Derrida", in *Radical Philosophy Reader*, edited by Richard Osborne and Roy Edgley. Thetford: Thetford Press, 18–42.

Biographical Note

P. Stuart Robinson is Associate Professor of Political Science at UiT The Arctic University of Norway. His research concerns the cultural and social dynamics of continuity and change in world politics. He writes about film for a wider audience for *Montages.no*.

Acknowledgements