

The magical power of blood: the curse of the vampire from an anthropological point of view

El poder mágico de la sangre: la maldición del vampiro desde un punto de vista antropológico

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Abstract: We all have heard about vampires. Many cultures have developed myths and legends about vampires with different features. These tales have several common elements, as the dualism between life and death. Vampirism is one of the most enduring, universal, popular myths of all times, being one of the most archaic images that society has feared. Popular tales, folk legends and mythological stories about beings that prey upon others to drink their blood have been told for centuries across myriad peoples all over the world. Over the past few centuries, modern vampire myths emerging out of Europe have outlined the bloodsucking monsters as those who have risen from the dead to feed on human blood by night, sleeping in coffins by day to avoid the effects of the sun. Bram Stoker's 1897 novel *Dracula* provided us with the now iconic archetype. Vampires are deeply associated to blood, the vital fluid whose consumption has been a curse both for such a being and for the peoples. According to social, anthropological conceptions, these symbols do not come from nothing, but follow a process of transformation, emerging from real experience, intertwined with the cultural tradition. We intend to show and analyze the reason for such a linking.

Key words: Magic, Blood, Vampire, Symbology, Anthropology.

Resumen: Cualquier persona ha oído hablar de los vampiros. Muchas culturas han desarrollado mitos y leyendas sobre los vampiros con diferentes características. Estas narraciones tienen varios elementos comunes, como el dualismo entre la vida y la muerte. El vampirismo es uno de los mitos más duraderos, universales y populares de todos los tiempos, siendo una de las imágenes más arcaicas que la sociedad ha temido. Durante siglos miríadas de pueblos de todo el orbe han narrado cuentos populares, leyendas folklóricas e historias mitológicas sobre seres que se aprovechan de otros para beber su sangre. En los últimos siglos, los mitos modernos de vampiros que emergieron de Europa han descrito a los monstruos chupadores de sangre como aquellos que han resucitado de entre los muertos para alimentarse de sangre humana por la noche, durmiendo en ataúdes durante el día para evitar los efectos del sol. La novela de Bram Stoker de 1897, *Dracula*, nos proporcionó el arquetipo ahora icónico. Los vampiros están profundamente asociados a la sangre, el fluido vital cuyo consumo ha sido una maldición tanto para ese ser como para los pueblos. Según las concepciones antropológicas y sociales, estos símbolos no provienen de la

nada, sino que siguen un proceso de transformación, que emerge de la experiencia real, entrelazados con la tradición cultural. Pretendemos mostrar y analizar la razón de tal vinculación

Palabras clave: Magia, Sangre, Vampiro, Simbología, Antropología.

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“But flesh with the soul (or life) thereof, which is its blood, ye shall not eat.”
(Genesis, 9: 4)

Our everyday language is flooded with the red fluid. We say that a distinguished person is blue-blooded and, when someone is afraid he says that his blood froze. Blood, obviously, occupies a central place in the life of man, acquiring curiously ambivalent meanings. It is considered at the same time dangerous and benevolent, impure and pure, sinister and miraculous (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1969). On the one hand it is said, in the biblical way, that blood is life. On the other, it is associated with death and, in this sense, the taboo of blood appears: Jews and Muslims have no right to consume it, Buddhists are prohibited from spilling it and Christians transform wine into the blood of Christ (for a reading of the multiple meanings of blood, see Foucault, 1981, p. 147).

In all cultures we find the signifier of blood (Meyer, 2005), and almost everywhere the subconscious of the people refers to its power (Silver & Ursini, 1997). But it also dishonours, it represents guilt and curse. There are even bloodthirsty gods and bloody offerings. The primitives considered it God’s food, because it contained the soul and with it the essence of life (Lock 2002, p. 74), although, to obtain it, it was necessary to kill, either in a war or in

a ritual sacrifice. Drinking blood then becomes an act of priests and leaders: the beings closest to the Gods. Blood has been used throughout the centuries as a ceremonial element of sacrifices (“No sacrifice without blood” (Le Fanu, 1992, p. 303). This ancient reference is inscribed in the cave paintings and is contained in some rites that are still preserved by oral tradition, or that have been transformed into symbolic acts such as replacing it with wine in the Catholic ceremonial.

The word *blondo* (blood) comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *blōd*, which in turn comes from the word *blōwan*, which means to blossom. The Latin word was *sanguis* (meaning “of the blood”, Pokorny, 1959, p. 343; but also “vital force” and “origin, lineage”, Gaffiot, 1934), being the origin of many words, the more interesting *Sang-froid* (the way of saying frozen blood in French) y *Sangraal* –similar to *Holy Grail* (Bulgakov, 1997)–. In *Sang-froid*, the idea refers to a person lacking any life symptom. And then we have *Sangraal*, or Holy Grail, remembering in this sense the blood of Christ collected by Joseph of Arimathea (Garraud & Lefrère, 2014). Is blood sacred? Presumably yes (Walker Bynum, 2007, p. 16). In this sense, to say that “Blood is the Life” is true, but they are not the same thing because they are two separate concepts. Blood is something that is essential for life.

Blood has been a symbol of life: in our veins it has always been an iconic representation of the continuity of life as an opposition to death.

Blood can mean life or death. Also, blood usually is the equivalent of lust in vampire productions. It is viewed as a symbol of sexual urges, eroticism, and desire. Nowadays, it is regarded as one of the most popular Gothic motifs incorporated into the works (Harenda, 2016, p. 173-174; Smith, 2007, p. 116). Here one might wonder if the being associated traditionally associated with blood, namely, the vampire, is dead, is alive, or is perhaps in a state where there is no life –“neither whole dead nor whole alive” as Rosemary Jackson states (1981, p. 118), without it inevitably entailing the affirmation of death. Only living things have blood flowing (Lock, 2002, p. 41, 66).

Men have always made offerings of the blood of the designated victims in order to reconcile with the benefactor divinities; they have made terrifying idols endowed with fangs in order to calm the spirits. In pagan times, therefore, our ancestors honoured the Gods with blood sacrifices (Garraud & Lefrère, 2014). Today, in fact, things have not changed as much as we would apparently believe. In our churches, the liturgy of taking communion, the Eucharist, and wine symbolize Christ's blood (Mitchell, 1982; Walker Bynum, 2007). This union is openly expressed by Ethelind Fionguala [Let us observe in the light of this quotation that the name of the main character means, in the Irish language, "the one with white shoulders"], ("Ken's Mystery"): "Give me wine as red as your blood and as warm" (Dalby, 1988, p. 108).

In the past agreements were signed with blood and alliances were strengthened by drinking the blood of the other. The dying also let their descendants drink their blood so that their strength would continue to influence their lineage. Blood therefore acts as a link. Remember that Dracula, in the homonymous work, makes Mina drink his blood while pronouncing words that evoke other evangelical counterpositions: "And you, their best beloved one, are now to me flesh of my flesh; blood of my blood; kin of my kin; my bountiful wine-press" (Stoker, 1989, p. 288). The blood donation that gentlemen make to Lucy is interpreted as a loving union, and the insane madman brings up the biblical words at times: "The blood is the life! the blood is the life!" (Stoker, 1989, p. 141). It is true that this character is branded insane when pronouncing such phrases, but we must reflect on whether the origin of his dementia can be traced in the very act of knowledge of vampirism; that is, having come into contact and knowing reality, he would have gone mad, as is the case with Count Ippolito in "Vampirismus", where he goes mad as a result of knowing everything that has happened around him.

For the archaic man, blood and soul are the dynamic forces that make life possible (Lock, 2002, p. 74). These two forces converge in such a way that they become confused and mean the same. In Babylon, man is already represented by a body and a soul, created from a clay mixed with the blood of a god. Roman treaties assure, very similarly, that blood is the cradle of the

soul. The Bible says that “blood is life” (Deuteronomy, 12: 23). Leviticus (17: 10) says that whoever eats the blood will be cursed. Likewise, the first death recorded in the Bible, the fratricide of Cain and Abel, denounces his infamy through spilled blood, whose voice rises to the heavens (Genesis, 4: 10).

One of the first discoveries that the human being made on his body was the red liquid; through hunting, wounds and menstruation, he realized that there was a red liquid that flowed inside and that it is closely related to life and death (Eliade, 1990; Teti, 1994, p. 58-60; Livingstone, 2008; Tiziani, 2009, p. 133; 7). The wounds bled to death and menstruation ceased when a new life was created (Durand, 1992; Meyer, 2005, p. 125-131). Fighter by instinct, he observed that when a piece or an enemy was bleeding, he lost his life. And if a deceased person or animal had cuts, then there was no blood flowing from the body, which showed that the red fluid of life had fled. And so, the relationship between blood and life gained strength. “A decomposed corpse is dry, indicating that the corpse is inert and death is complete” (Dundes, 1980, p. 102). Over the years there were endless and countless conjectures about the connection between the two. Blood was assigned a variety of sacred and magical qualities, so it has been used in many ceremonies. Leatherdale states: “It is the human fluid without which we die. Tears, saliva, urine, semen and other secretions all have their purposes, but blood is what keeps us alive. And if loss of blood causes death, surely imbibing it promotes life” (1987, p. 13).

At the same time, one of the first phenomena that always appear in any civilization is the funeral rites. Survival after death is something that obsesses man since the night of time. For this reason, it seems logical to think that whoever could keep his blood alive could remain immortal or at least return to life if he was already dead. This, together with the myth that those who have behaved badly in life or have left some pending account are the ones who most need this return (Barber, 1988, p. 197; Murgoci, 1926, p. 320–21; Tylor, 1929, p. 19), gives us a first idea of why the vampire figure is usually inspired by a damned being.

The significance and universal persistence of the myth suggests deep roots in the evolution of our psyche. It suggests the omnipresent quest to conquer the secret of life while containing the elements of its renewal. It represents the terrible desire for survival, destroying others to maintain his own existence... Vampirism, as a mortal sin, is contained in the image that most often comes to mind, the perverse nature of the vampiric act” (Rodriguez de la Sierra, 1998, p. 290).

The desire for eternal life or to remain forever young has tormented mankind from the moment he discovers that he is mortal: why does one have to die? Isn't there a way to live longer or forever? During history many men and women have tried to overcome death. Masters pointed out that the rebirth of life is intrinsically related to death: it is a natural thing that death occurs due to blood loss; therefore, it is logical to think that one can return to life by drinking it (1974, p. 14).

In primitive cultures the blood of animals has been the bearer of their qualities, so drinking it transferred them to man. Consequently, drinking a man's blood was equivalent to absorbing his vital energy, which was added to his own to prolong life (Hampl & Hampl, 1997, p. 637). Hence, the myth makes the bloodthirsty vampires allow them to live forever (Barrowclough, 2014). The attraction for human sacrifices, for the sadism of seeing enemies suffer, as well as the tradition of absorbing the blood of others to acquire their strength and vitality –Twitchell (1986) – goes back to the dawn of humanity: Aztecs, Phoenicians... In the ancient “Mahabharata”, an epic poem that serves as a basis for Hinduism, it is mentioned that warriors talked while drinking the blood of their dead enemies. The Sioux Indians in America poured the blood of their adversaries killed in combat. The Burgundians took the blood of the Huns after defeating them in 437, according to the legend of the Nibelungs. Similar behaviours have been verified in the Tolaalki, headhunters, who ingest the blood of their victims to achieve the desired value. Until the sixteenth century, in China, the blood of the executed was mixed with herbs and minerals, and sold as medicine in pharmacies, so that the sick and elderly had the strength of a dragon. During the Chinese

occupation of Tibet, in the absence of food, Tibetan mothers made a kind of soup with their own blood and gave it to their children as the only food. Arnau de Vilanova (1238–1311), a 13th-century Valencian astrologer, physician and alchemist, distilled human blood to elaborate what he believed was a remedy capable of curing all diseases... (Sugg, 2008).

In 1971, a member of the terrorist organization Black September, responsible for the murder of Walfi Tal, Prime Minister of Jordan, said he was satisfied that he had taken Walfi's blood. And indeed, several witnesses saw him drink his blood. Today we can attend in Cuba certain ceremonies brought from the African continent by former black slaves, where pacts with the dead come together, as observed in the Palo Monte or Palo Mayombe rule. Even today there is a tradition in Cuba that blacks steal babies to drink their blood in black magic ceremonies.

Enthroned intimately with these traditions is one of the great taboos of humanity, which is no other than anthropophagy, studied by many anthropologists among which James George Frazer (1854-1941) stands out. The sources on cannibalism are very numerous (Bormann, 1999), and range from the Old Testament to legends and tales (Summers, 1991). Charlemagne, who undertook in 722 the submission of the Saxons to his authority and his conversion to Catholicism, promulgated in 785 the *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae*, which forced the Saxons to be baptized and punished those who confused with death pagan beliefs with the mystery of transubstantiation, devoting themselves to feasts of human flesh. Despite these warnings and prohibitions, in the medieval Christian world blood acquires supernatural powers that demonology –where the belief in vampires is born– returns. The work of David Skal *V is for Vampire: The A – Z Guide to Everything Undead* (1996) presents us with an encyclopaedia, as its title indicates, but unlike most encyclopaedias, it contains a certainly psychological point of view. Many of the aspects discussed include entries such as Darwin, homosexuality, dependence, cannibalism, xenophobia, Freud, psychoanalysis, etc.

The human sacrifice that reminds us once again of cannibalism was very important for many archaic religious and pagan cultures. Mainly, sacrifice is a fundamental element of the religious act that is based on the feeling of a reciprocal dependence between God and man. Sacrifices are subdivided into bloody and bloodless offerings, and the first group distinguishes between animal or human victims. Of the great universal religions, Islam is the only one that has preserved the sacrifice of animals (Siddiqi, 2000). Judaism gave up on it, Christians have replaced it with the Eucharist while Buddhism and Hinduism refuse to sacrifice life in any of its forms (NIV, 2002). Anthony Masters (1974) points out some of the phenomena that originally have been related to vampirism since the beginning of time: ritual sacrifices, present in all ancient cultures. These ceremonies had as propitiatory victims both human beings and animals. For human sacrifices, people outside this community were well chosen, or those determined by destiny, that is, elected by powers. The sacrifice of a person always implied his ritual death.

Man soon related blood to life, as the generating principle of existence. This precious liquid had an incalculable value from the beginning, "For the life of all flesh is its blood. Therefore I have told the Israelites, 'You must not eat the blood of any living thing, because the life of all flesh is its blood'" (Leviticus, 17:14). Everything around him led him to think that without blood, life was not possible. He himself was born mixed with blood.

Red is the colour of blood. But the meaning of this colour does not confine to this, since red also symbolizes love and life. We know of many peoples, like Japanese, where pregnant women were wrapped in red ribbons to ward off evil spirits and thus favour life. Newborns were either painted red or put on clothes of that colour. Purple red is the colour of real sovereignty and universal power. In old German the word red (Skeat, 1993) comes from the term law (Bormann, 1999). The purple colour, typical of the Gods, was identified with the supreme magistracy and law. However, this is also the colour of revolution, tumult and drunkenness. In other places they wrapped the dead in red cloth to call them back to life.

It should not surprise us, then, that primitive man gave a magical value to blood and, by similarity, also to the red colour. Over the centuries, magical and religious rituals related to blood were spreading and expanding; these rituals were based on the dualistic conception that blood was life and that life was blood (Tresidder, 2004), until they reached the conviction that this liquid could cure the illnesses that afflicted them and soothe the wrath of the gods, as well as establish all kinds of pacts with celestial and infernal powers.

Over time, the belief that certain acts could be redeemed by the blood sacrifice, that the guilt of a person and even that of a group of people could be erased through the so-called atoning victim took shape. The result of these beliefs was that in ancient civilizations the most diverse rites related to the immolation of animals and human beings were developed all of them based on the magical power attributed to the red fluid. It was offered to deities, celestial beings and the rulers of the kingdom of shadows, whether to conjure up some calamity of Nature, erase sins, ask for the favour of the gods, etc.

Medieval necromancers used the blood of cats and bats to carry out their evocative practices. Red magic, that is, magic accompanied by bloodshed, was a common practice in past civilizations both in official practices and in the private rituals of magicians and sorcerers who attended to their clients' requests. Examples of the first are found in the civilizations of the Middle East, in Greco-Latin, in South American, in African, in Asian... while the private ones are found in the Europe of the Middle Ages, in the Renaissance and even at present. The power of blood in the covenants is most evident in *Faust*.

To God? He loves thee not;
The God thou servest is thine own appetite,
Wherein is fixed the love of Belzebub.
To him I'll build an altar and a church
And offer lukewarm blood and neworn babes
(Marlowe, 1988, p. 2.1.9-11)

The fact that Mephistopheles asks the covenant to be signed with blood and not with ink is based on the belief that he will have Faust more subjected to his power if he can obtain a single drop of his blood. This requirement is that, for him, blood carries within itself the soul and spirit of life [In a traditional ballad, after the young Sir Hugh is stabbed with a penknife:

Then out and cam the thick, thick, blood,
Then out and cam the thin,
Then out and cam the bonny heart's blood
Where a' the life lay in. (Hodgart, 1962, p. 125)]

Mephistopheles takes over Faust's blood because he wants to take over his soul. Not surprisingly in many legends it is claimed that whoever has a person's blood will have power over him.

On the slaughter of animals with such objectives, the *Traité sur les Sacrifices* by Count Joseph-Marie de Maistre (1753–1821) must be kept in mind. Maistre tells us that the replacement of animals as auspicious victims was degenerating –or perfected, if we consider the logical thinking of the civilization in question– and the perfect expiatory victim was reached, the immolation of human beings. Wasn't a person the closest thing to another? Gods, therefore, would see with greater pleasure the offering of human blood. The human sacrifices that have been made so frequently are largely due to the fact that different cultures have worshiped or have been subjected to bloodthirsty and cruel Gods (Girard, 2005, p. 2-4, 58).

This act has its roots in superstitions that are born in the Chaldean tradition of drinking blood before the carnal union, common among the Greek and Roman *lamias*, and especially in Romania where it is firmly believed that the vampire, after seducing his victims, makes them die of exhaustion. It seems logical, therefore, that the vampire, a creature like this that is the antithesis of life and death, obtains its strength from the blood of humans. For him, drinking blood means his life, his livelihood and is the only characteristic that makes him identifiable throughout the world.

The belief that blood is life and that the younger the victim is the greater its effect was also spread in ancient times. For students of demonology, Moloc or Moloch is a prince, a prominent member of the demon council, while for John Milton (1608–1674), the famous author of *Paradise Lost* (1667), he is an impious demon. Both ideas are inspired by an evil divinity of the same name, which was worshiped by various Semitic and Canaanite peoples. Human beings, mainly children, were sacrificed both to adjure their favours and to conjure an epidemic or celebrate a military victory. The Assyrians, Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Philistines, etc., paid homage and burned many victims to placate their fury.

In Phoenicia and some towns in Canaan, Moloch meant king and was one of the names given to the Sun; another attribute that the king star received was that of Baal, sir. The Sun, both in its beneficial aspect of Baal, and in the evil one of Moloch –bull or ram-headed divinity– received all kinds of bloody sacrifices, all based on the magical power attributed to the blood. Moloch–Baal demanded ritual sacrifices of children (this aspect literally being followed in some of the colonies founded on the African coasts of the Mediterranean, like Carthage), being a character that reminds us of Asterion, the myth of the minotaur. “Can it be that there is a malign influence of the sun at periods which affects certain natures – as at times the moon does others?” (Stoker, 1989, p. 117).

Human sacrifices also took place in Greece. The ancient Greeks believed in the magical power of blood, shed as an atonement for faults or to ingratiate themselves with Gods (Garraud & Lefrère, 2014). The Greeks established a kind of mysterious union between blood and the world of the dead. In the eleventh song of *The Odyssey*, Odysseus –Ulysses in his Latin meaning–, led by Circe to the regions of Hades (in the so-called *catabasis*), sacrifices cattle from which he draws blood to invoke the spirits of the missing heroes and to give drinking blood to the shadows so that they could recover the soul, conscience and language ability (Summers, 1991). In the 11th book of the aforementioned work, Homer introduces Tiresias, his mother and many other

deceased talking to Ulysses after drinking the blood (for an extension of this, see Petoia, 1995, p. 39–40). Thanks to this, Ulysses can talk to the dead, giving them strength and vitality for a while; the force of the living was transmitted to the dead (Corradi Musi, 1995, p. 14). We must also remember that Achilles sacrificed twelve Trojans and Arsitomenes offered 300 to Zeus [‘Blood is too precious a thing these days of dishonourable peace; and the glories of the great races are as a tale that is told’] (Stoker, 1989, p. 30)]. And in Sparta, Lycurgus (about 850 years before Jesus Christ) decreed the prohibition of human immolations, which shows that in his time this barbaric custom was widespread.

Homer tells us in his *Iliad* (IX: 145, 287) about the sacrifice of Ifianasa. Let us remember that Ifigenia or Ifianasa was Agamemnon’s daughter, who, induced by the fortune teller Calcante, immolated her to the goddess Diana to grant favourable winds to the fleet assembled in Aulide. The famous poet Tito Lucrecio Caro (95–50 BC) also tells us in his great six-volume teaching poem *De Rerum Natura* (book I, 80–100) about this event. There are many legends and myths of Greek origin, which not only speak to us of human sacrifices, but even of man-eating. Indeed, the Greek had narrations recounting the resurrection of heroes after ingesting blood –and a creature similar to vampires, *Lamia*, appeared in mythological stories (Mutch, 2013, p. 3)–. As we have seen, then, the custom of the atoning victim, of the substituted soul, is not a legend.

The Romans, following in the footsteps of the Greeks, imitated them in the practice of magical and religious bloody rites (Auguet, 1972), which were banned by the Senate in 97 BC. Not surprisingly, within their mythology, they had *lamia*, “que iba rondando amenazadora, haciendo aquí y allí su comida de niños vivos, y que siempre llevaba uno en el estómago” (Paoli, 1973, p. 363).

In fact, *lamia* was originally a spectre dedicated to the abduction of infants. Belon and Libya’s daughter, she was said to act this way because of a grudge against the Gods: Hera had destroyed her children because of her love for Zeus. From that moment, *Lamia* wandered the world drinking young

children's blood. She was considered a demonic being by her actions, and shortly after, the *Lamiae* race arose from that name. These vampires are described as female creatures with snake-shaped bodies. The *lamiae* (in the plural) were also called *larvae* and *lemurs* (that is, the spirits of the deceased and the nocturnal ghosts of ancient Rome), sometimes confused with the *empusa* and used by nannies to intimidate unruly children. Horacio (65–8 BC) would write about a *lamia* in his *Ars Poetica*. *Lamia* has been the inspiration for female vampires throughout literary history, such as the work of Keats, Myriam Blaylock in *The Hunger* (1983) and the series of novels by J. N. Williamson where he characterizes Lamia Zacharius.

Blood folklore has a fascinating history in Europe, mainly due to the conflict between the Christian myth of blood and the more traditional blood legends that precede the introduction of Christianity into European popular culture (Bahn, 1988). Following anthropologist Reay Tannahill's words:

[Prehistoric man] knew that life was uncertain and sometimes short, that death was inevitable and sometimes abrupt. Every time he set out for the hunt he was aware that some day... the end would come with a slash and an outpouring of blood. It is not difficult to understand why... he should have come to the conclusion not merely that blood was essential to life, but that it was the essence of life itself (in Bernheisel, 1998).

The central theme of Christianity is the condemnation, crucifixion and resurrection of the Son of God. Jesus dies on the cross, sheds his blood for the sins of man, and after a short period of time in direct contact with death, rises from his grave and continues his existence, joining his Father in Heaven. Blood is associated, therefore, here, symbolically, with many different themes: death and resurrection, suffering and eternal life, pain and eternal peace. Blood has also always featured prominently throughout Jewish folklore (Baskin & Seeskin, 2010). The rite of circumcision, for example, focuses in part on the fact of the blood flowing from a young man's body.

Therefore, the fact that blood appears as a central theme within the true nature of the Christian religion should not be surprising, as it becomes consistent with the capital importance it had in all folklore and popular tradition (Huet, 1997; Goddu, 1999, McClelland, 2006, Beresford, 2008). What is more, blood folklore is a fundamental aspect in any society, whether primitive or completely industrialized. However, it is interesting to compare the Christian ideology of blood with that before the Christian one; specifically, with the body of oral tradition that survived Christian conversions and that continued to be transmitted through successive generations of peoples.

Consequently, this theological doctrine of the Church seems to reaffirm the classical view that blood is the essence of life; it is the substance in which life is contained and by which it can be transmitted (Cruz, 1984). By invoking the transmission of Jesus Christ's power through the transubstantiated Host, the Church is in fact providing a powerful impetus that can lead to perverted interpretations of that same conclusion, such as that a human being returned to life by some infernal means can continue his wandering the earth drawing the blood of those who are still alive (see Twitchell, 1985, p. 108–9 as a corroboration of this statement). This is the essence of the vampire myth, or at least the version of the vampiric myth that has become the modern and western perception of vampires. In the Bible (Deuteronomy, 12: 23) it is already accepted that the blood is the life: "Only be sure thou eat not eat the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh."

Here the practice that certain peoples had of drinking the blood of the victims, generally of their enemies, was banned, perhaps in an attempt to stop the habit of immolating human victims, so common in the civilizations that surrounded the Jews. Already in *Genesis* we are told in detail the attempt to sacrifice Isaac by his father Abraham and how the Creator makes him replace Isaac with a ram. Later, when Moses went up to Mount Sinai to receive the Tablets of the Law, one of the precepts, "you will not kill," could explicitly refer to human sacrifices, a meaning that was later altered, giving us the one

we have today; the religions themselves have had their own armies to kill, and always in the name of God –“We are truly in the hands of God” (Stoker, 1989, p. 360). The command not to kill could be interpreted to mean you will not sacrifice human beings (Garraud & Lefrère, 2014).

Also in the New Testament we find the Father’s exhortation to his followers that they abstain from the blood, which has been erroneously and savagely interpreted by some Christian sects, such as Jehovah’s Witnesses, as a reproof of blood transfusions. (Garraud & Lefrère, 2014).

It is known that among the Jews the Passover sacrifice, the immolation of victims to God, was a sacred custom that in Jesus’ time was in full splendour. Although neither in the Old Testament nor in other works of Jewish religious literature is reference made to the use of human blood for any rite (NIV, 2002). For centuries the Jews were accused (Shylock, *The Merchant of Venice*) of using the blood of Christians for certain offerings. This recrimination, accompanied by an anti-Semitic hostility, named them as murderers of Christ (recrimination resurfaced after the controversy raised by Mel Gibson’s film, *The Passion of the Christ*, 2004). Yet, while the Jews were reproached for stealing the blood of Christ for their rituals, one of Jesus’ best-known phrases says: “This is my blood and I have shed it for you.” Millions of believers also eat and drink bread and wine today, which during the celebration of the Eucharist are transformed into the blood and flesh of Christ (Mitchell, 1982; Biale, 2007). Through this communion, the Christian becomes part of his Saviour, just like that of the Saviour: “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them” (Saint John, 6, 56).

A key fact, therefore, is the importance that the Church provides to blood, since it constitutes the very centre of the Mass, when wine is turned into Jesus Christ’s blood in the Consecration (dogma that was introduced by Pope Innocent III). “Blood is a sign of desecration that makes holy; hence it sets apart, it consecrates” (Walker Bynum, 2007, p. 16). The Christian idea evolved the atoning sacrifice to identify it with the blood shed by Jesus. Among Catholics, during the Mass, in the Consecration, this sacrifice is

renewed (Cruz, 1984). Thanks to this transubstantiation, the bloody sacrifices have been eradicated from the Christian religions.

We know that the Gods of ancient American civilizations asked for men's flesh and blood of men. When the Spaniards discovered the American continent it became clear that most of the peoples and civilizations of those lands also practiced sacrifices and magical and religious rituals, in the course of which they immolated human beings.

As numerous sources attest, from all the peoples of America, perhaps the Mexican Aztec was the one who cultivated the most refined bloody rites, having a true cult of the human sacrifice practiced during its time of splendour, between 1100 and Age of the Spanish conquest in the first half of the 16th century, although the Olmecs and other peoples also sacrificed human lives. What is more, the Aztecs were ruthless murderers and certainly cruel warriors during their reign. Among the Aztecs, the blood shed of a young victim, offering to the gods, had the power to fertilize the earth.

The Aztecs believed that, during the creation of the world, their Gods gave their heart and blood to the sun, and that, in fair compensation, men should offer them sacrifice to keep the world in balance. The sun and god of war, *Huitzilopochtli*, was the one who demanded the greatest tribute of blood. They had to strengthen it daily with human hearts and blood so that God could resist the struggle with the powers of the night, and the next day he could appear in heaven with his outward appearance. In Tenochtitlan (capital of the Aztecs) the blood was drunk by the Gods and, to feed them, the Aztec priests needed about 20,000 annual victims; the Aztecs sacrificed to their gods the most precious thing they had, human life itself, thus human sacrifice reached an unsuspected limit (Conrad & Desmarests, 1984).

It may be interesting to mention that the Aztec culture calls *tlahuelpuchi* a witch that sucks blood. Usually, it was a woman with the ability to transform herself into several animals, attacking people. The *tlahuelpuchi* had the ability to hypnotize their victims (one of the qualities most recently attributed to the

vampire and that the cinema has managed to capture and express very accurately). Garlic was used as a protective element, as well as any cross-shaped object, or mirrors. Anthony Masters states in *The Natural History of the Vampire* (1974) that salt, urine and garlic were the elements of an ancient ritual to protect against vampires. Some have confirmed that the belief in these beings –*tlahuelpuchi*– has remained alive until well into the twentieth century in some villages in Mexico.

Another American civilization that reached great splendour was that of the Maya. They built great temples and pyramids similar to those of the Aztecs and, like these, offered bloody sacrifices to the Gods. In fact, this culture is considered one of the bloodiest in terms of their religious practices, and yet they worshipped a bat god whom they greatly feared, *Zotzilaha*. Human sacrifice was the most important ritual of the Maya. For them, too, blood was the safest vehicle to establish positive contact with the gods. However, unlike the Aztecs, the Maya performed much of the sacrifices by offering the gods their own blood drawn by small cuts made in their bodies.

The Incas, meanwhile, immolated beautiful maidens when they enthroned a new sovereign. It was a means of strengthening his health and assuring his reign (Conrad & Desmarests, 1984).

No one ignores that blood is an element of particular attraction for certain psychopathic and criminal minds. The terrible rituals practiced by Gilles de Rais are famous –also known as Gilles de Laval and / or Guy de Laval “and the basis of the story of 'Blue Beard'” (Bunson, 1993, p. 107) and the noble Catherine de Médicis (1519-1589). But if there is a character who was obsessed with blood, that is Countess Bathory, *Die Blutgräfin*, the bloody countess, as she was nicknamed in Vienna; as Summers puts it: “In the 16th century there dwelt in Hungary a terrible ogress, the Countess Elisabeth Bathory, who for her necrosadistic abominations was known as 'la comtesse hongroise sanguinaire’” (1991, p. 63).

Erzsabeth Bathory (1560-1614) –one of whose nicknames was *the tigress of Csejthe*, which was the name of the fortress that stands in the town of the same name and where she usually lived– was surprisingly born very close to the homeland from Dracula, specifically in Bratislava, where Austria, Hungary and Slovakia meet, “in the midst of the Carpathian mountains; one of the wildest and least known portions of Europe” (Stoker, 1989, p. 1).

Bathory was a Protestant Hungarian aristocrat belonging to one of the most illustrious families in Europe, strong and powerful. In one of the ironies of fate, the existing documents seem to demonstrate the union between the Bathory family and Vlad Tepes' family by distant ties of blood. In fact, a member of the Bathory family and Bathory's grandfather, the Moldovan prince Stephen I, led the mission that brought Vlad back to the throne in 1476 –so said by Penrose (1987, p. 10-23). Stephen and Sigmund Bathory occupied the thrones of Transylvania and Poland, respectively (Stephen held the position of Voivode – or prince–, as did Vlad Tepes), as well as several dignitaries of the Church and ministers of Hungary. A fief of Dracula, Fagaras Castle, became a possession of the Bathory family during Erzsabeth's time. Both families had the badge of a dragon curled up in their family coat of arms [These two characters are presented jointly and interestingly in Elaine Bergstrom's vampire historical novel *Daughter of the Night* (1992), which is based on the information McNally provides from Bathory in *Dracula Was a Woman* (1984)]. And the coat of arms of the Bathory displayed the teeth of a wolf; the Bathory were cruel, reckless... Bathory is supposed to have in his family a list of women close to witchcraft as well as certain sexual practices not very orthodox at that time (Clark, 2009).

This terrible lady is known for her habit of bathing in the blood of animals and especially of young, virgin women. She had the idea that this blood would keep her young and beautiful. She sacrificed more than 600 maidens in a devilish feast (Pirie, 1977, p. 18). The Countess believed, instructed by the witch Darvulia, in the ancient creed that taking someone else's blood would assimilate the physical and spiritual qualities of that person (Corradi Musi, 1995, p. 194-195).

Paraphrasing the famous verses by Ruben Darío (1867–1916), “Juventud, divino tesoro, te vas para no volver”, we see how they express precisely what Erzsabeth Bathory did not tolerate: the passing of the years and their unavoidable companion, old age. The blood of the sacrificed girls would serve to keep their beauty eternal (Dracula also repudiated old age as it is associated with death and the loss of an omnipotent position). Erzsabeth, a woman’s paradigm, refused to grow old, since that meant, according to the ideals that she herself had formed deep down, stopped being beautiful, thus losing the only form of power to which she had access. Like the Snow White Queen, Erzsabeth needed a permanent confirmation of her beauty as a way of maintaining self-esteem (this flirtatious woman changed her clothes and hairstyle quite a few times a day and spent long hours in front of her mirror). And in truth it is that although she, when contemplating herself in the real mirror, always looked young and beautiful, she cannot escape from that other reality, so opposite, that the portrait shows her (as it happened to Dorian Gray). Another one is the case of the queen who appears in Snow White. There the mirror is not only a witness, but also an accomplice. When the queen asks: “Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?” it answers: “Thou, O Queen, art the fairest of all.” But that mirror can also become an enemy when, before the same question, it answers that the most beautiful is Snow White: to be young is to be beautiful. Aged, a woman becomes ugly. The mirror, conditioned by the same scale of values, gives an answer that causes suffering and poisons the soul.

Even Stoker himself suggests the influence of the myth of Erzsabeth Bathory, in the fact that Dracula rejuvenates as soon as he has drunk blood. However, there is in fact no express mention of Bathory in *Dracula*, and Vlad Tepes is mentioned only incidentally. From Stoker's notes it follows that he had read the book *The Book of Were-wolves: Being an Account of a Terrible Superstition* by Sabine Baring-Gould, who also dedicates a chapter to the bloody countess. Contrary to the general belief, she never drank blood and never confessed to being a vampire. The term serial killer would be more appropriate to describe this person. When this living vampire passed away, her memory continued to be alive thanks to legends and stories. Several films

have been made about her, such as *Daughters of Darkness* (1970) directed by Harry Kumel, *Countess Dracula* (1971), by Peter Sasdy, *Walpurgis Night* (1970) directed by Russian-Argentinian Leon Klimowsky, the Hispanic-Italian *Bloody Ceremony* (1972) by Jorge Grau (a film in which the bloodbath was credible), or the Hispanic-Mexican *The Return of Walpurgis* (1973), directed by Carlos Aured.

The masterful description of the vampire made by Sheridan Le Fanu in “Carmilla”, may help us to better understand the relationships established by Countess Bathory:

The vampire is prone to be fascinated with an engrossing vehemence, resembling the passion of love, by particular persons. In pursuit of these it will exercise inexhaustible patience and stratagem... It will never desist until it has satiated its passion, and drained the very life of its coveted victim. In ordinary ones it goes direct to its object, overpowers with violence, and strangles and exhausts often at a single feast (337).

Since what we are dealing with happened in the early seventeenth century in Transylvania, it is possible that this story influenced the legends about vampires collected by the French Abbot Dom Augustine Calmet (1672–1757). Sooner or later, the fascination for the occult should also take Stoker to Transylvania, “región que, como ninguna otra, ha recogido material sobre vampiros” (Märtin, 2000, p. 188), as the English James Frazer (1854–1941) pointed out in his book *The Golden Bough*, a work that is supposed to have been one of the sources for Stoker's imagination.

Certain human behaviours tend to irrationality, even criminality. And the story certainly contains examples of homicidal vampires, of those who were excited to see the blood, those who needed to see it spilled or shed, even taste it. It has been shown that there is a definite and explicit connection between blood fascination and sexual arousal (Vanden Bergh & Kelly, 1964, p. 543-547). Due

to tradition, imposed and learnt inhibitions and education, this emotion usually remains latent. Havelock Ellis established the possibility that the reason for the sexual murders was to shed blood, and not cause the death itself. Thus we find characters such as the already referred widow Erzsabeth Bathory (1560–1614), The Bloody Countess –we call attention to the double meaning of this adjective in the English language–, or as Peter Kürten (1883–1931), the Düsseldorf vampire, executed in Cologne on July 2, 1931, in the courtyard of the Klingelpütz prison.

Kürten was accused of nine murders, although there was a suspicion that he committed many more (about thirty). Kürten acted like a real vampire. A manic-sexual killer, he looked for his victims among the boys and girls, whom he led to a forest near Düsseldorf. There he opened a wound in their throat with scissors and, after sucking the blood, he finished them off.

Kürten was a real vampire and curiously, contemporary of Fritz Haarman (1879–1925). Kürten was not an undead as Dracula, but a normal citizen –thus breaking the stereotype of the vampire we are accustomed to– who left his home in Düsseldorf to suck the blood of the living, presenting the appearance of a normal worker becoming a monster at the time he was with his young victims. So, this being is someone of flesh and blood, which makes him more fearsome. The crimes of this German inspired several film versions, the first of them a masterpiece of Austrian film director Fritz Lang, *M. Eine Stadt sucht einen Mörder* (*M, The Vampire of Düsseldorf*, 1931), who was a spectator at the trial. The interpretation of the protagonist by Peter Lorre is magnificent, while the feature film, shot in black and white, shows realistic scenarios, especially in relation to the German working class and the world of thieves. The German city of Düsseldorf is ravaged by a killer of little girls impossible to catch. Faced with the proliferation of raids and arrests, the crime union in the area makes a drastic decision: to collaborate with the police in the search for a criminal who likes to whistle a certain melody when he is about to commit one of his heinous actions. The Germany of the early thirties succumbed to Nazism when Fritz Lang and his wife, the novelist Thea Von Harbou, elaborated this allegory and the possibility that the murderer is already

among us. Joseph Losey made an unusual remake with the same title in 1951, whose action was in California and which featured David Wayne and Raymond Burr in the lead roles. His story was also told in the Franco-Italian film *Le Vampire de Düsseldorf* (1964), directed by and starring Robert Hossein.

On the other hand, the Reverend Doctor Alphonsus Joseph–Mary Augustus Montague Summers (1880–1947), the highest English authority on the subject, tells the story of Fritz Haarman born in 1879 in Hannover, The Butcher of Hamburg, with extremely meticulous details, he was beheaded –note the irony of this execution, as it was one of the most common and effective ways of destroying a vampire– on April 15, 1925, after being accused (along with two other accomplices) of having bitten the throat of several young boys (between 24 and 50) to kill them and later sell “mysterious carcasses” (Stoker, 1989, p. viii) to a pork butcher’s next to the Hanover railway station. Haarman was gay, and his victims were exclusively young teenagers. He was considered a vampire because of his cannibalism and his habit of biting his victims in the neck and drinking their blood. But this character was deeply rooted in popular culture, because not all murderers are granted the deference of being remembered with a popular song, such as the one made about this murderer during his heyday. The case of this German was made into a film directed by Ulli Lommel in 1973 in *Die Zärtlichkeit der Woelfe (The Tenderness of Wolves)*, with the disturbing Kurt Raab as the protagonist, apart from having written it himself. It should be said that inspired by the minutes of Haarman’s psychiatric statements, Romuald Karmakar made another film, *The Deathmaker* (1995).

There are many legends about vampires. The myth of the vampire has, as we are seeing, roots that feed directly on History. The terrible and real cases of nobles who liked to feed on blood undoubtedly marked the imagination of the writers. In the fifteenth century the Breton Gilles de Rais (1404–1440) stood out. He was a fellow armsman of Joan of Arc in Orleans. The infanticide Gilles de Laval, baron of Rais, also known as *blue beard* (nicknamed by the strange colour of his little beard), was an immensely rich man, cultured and sportsman. After his confrontations against the English, he was appointed

Marshal of France by the recently crowned King Charles VII when he was only 24 years old (unprecedented for a man his age), and was considered a national hero in the Hundred Years War (According to C. G. Jung, the distance that separates a war hero from a common murderer is really short). Rumours about the activities that Gilles carried out in his castle near the village of Machecoul induced the Church –through the Inquisition– to begin to investigate him. He was convicted of having tortured and murdered more than a hundred children (after having sexually abused them) in order to obtain with their blood the philosopher’s stone that would make him immortal. He was obsessed with esotericism, and his enormous fortune allowed him to acquire, from his childhood, a large number of valuable books related to it. Gilles de Rais –a male version of Bathory– lived in a society where the nobility granted an almost divine superiority, an almost unlimited right for the materialization of all desires, of any desire.

Much less frequent than witchcraft in the annals of mankind, vampirism has had a clamorous judicial case, which in 1732 led to burying corpses and piercing them with stakes in the town of Meduegna, near Belgrade (Yugoslavia). The chronicles of the time state that the dead were full of fresh blood when they were taken from their graves.

And advancing in time, the same *Dracula* novel would take its name from a historical character, “that Voivode Dracula who won his name against the Turk” (Stoker, 1989, p. 240), the Romanian prince Vlad Draculea (the son of the dragon or the devil, in Romanian language), better known as Vlad Tepes (the impaler, for his custom of impaling the Turkish prisoners), [The word or Vlad *Drakul*, since the word *drakul* (devil, in Romanian) also named the traditional Moldovan vampire. On the other hand, Stoker’s intention is also noticed in the fact of choosing this name for a character with such an erotic burden, since, in Romanian, the word *dracula*, phonetically, is confused with lover. Demon and lover are two figures that are contained in Dracula (and by extension in the vampire as being prototypical) and both give him horror and fascination.

The first biography as such about Vlad Tepes was written by historian Bogdan in 1896, just one year before the appearance of Stoker's book.

The writings on Vlad Tepes were very successful, to the point that they rivalled the reports of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. His fame was on the rise thanks to the printing techniques developed then, through Russian and, above all, German gazettes. From the 16th century, some anonymous propagandist sources, of German origin, were true best sellers at the beginning of the modern world. Such loose sheets are found from the Papal archives to the English, they appear in different places, different languages, different dates. These texts were accompanied by engravings where the figure of Dracula was seen in the act of eating and surrounded by impaled enemies or dismembered prisoners. Michel Benheim (*Deutscher Meistersinger*, chorus master) composed in 1463 a song titled *Von ainem wutrich der hies Trakle waida von der Walachei* in which he tells the story of Vlad IV Draculea. Benheim was closely related to the Hungarian king Matthias Corvinus, in whose court Draculea was a refugee when he had to flee from Wallachia. Several authors such as Fernando Martínez (2001, p. 203–4) make reference to a possible conspiracy –which would start from the circle of this king– to discredit Vlad, this being the origin of the later history having identified him with a vampire.

Unfortunately, Prince Vlad has been accused of having the habit of drinking a glass of blood from his victims while watching them agonize at the stakes [We consider, however, a mistake the interpretation that some scholars have tried to make of Vlad Draculea as a merely pathological figure, morbidly cruel and bloody. Regardless of the facts provided We by McNally & Florescu, 1994, p. 85, we refer to the vast and detailed study of the German historian Ralf – Peter Märtin (2000) for a more accurate view and on the other hand according to the time of the prince.], although it is true that no known tradition attributes to Vlad Tepes any vampire properties (Pirie, 1977, p. 17). One has to contemplate his cruelty in the framework of his time. Torture, the Inquisition and the killings of war were nothing out of the ordinary at the end of the Middle Ages. Other nobles of the time, such as Louis XI of France, used to

have little regard for the lives of men. And many authors openly expressed their ideas, such as Nicolás Maquiavelo (1449–1527) in *The Prince* (1513).

But let's look more closely at the etymology of Vlad's nickname, Draculea, son of Dracula. His father, a Romanian nobleman, was named Knight of the Dragon Order (*Societas draconistarum*; this Order was founded by the Emperor of Germany and King of Hungary and Bohemia, Sigismund I of Luxembourg, in 1408 to protect Christianity and Eastern Europe from the Ottomans –the old name for Turks (Muslims). On February 8, 1491 the emperor granted Vlad Tepes' father entry into the Order (to which the kings of Castile and Poland and the Grand Duke of Lithuania, among others, also belonged). The truth is that Vlad II and Vlad III owed their nickname to the draconian order of Sigismund, an attribute derived from the Latin *draco*; this noun must have been misinterpreted in Wallachia, because, in Romanian, dragon is *baluar* or, sometimes, *zmeu* (monster), whereas *drac* means *evil* (the suffix *-ul* is the determinate article, while *-a* means son of), [Soler (2004, p. 33) suggests the origin of the word *Dracula* refers to the union of two Gaelic terms: *droch* and *fhola*, that is to say, bad blood. Additionally, what probably attracted Stoker to this figure was his name, as in Wilkinson's book there is a footnote stating that "Dracula in the Wallachian language means Devil" (Wilkinson, 1971, p. 19)]. The insignia of the Order of the Dragon was a winged snake, which is also a symbol widely used to represent the devil in both folklore and Romanian art.

The connection between the name of Dracula and the dragon is interesting. In his day Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) pointed out that the dragon represents both the negative image of the woman and the devouring mother. In this sense, there are several symbolic relationships between Dracula and the feminine realm. Thus, the liquid coveted by vampires is present both in menstruation and at birth (Creed, 1993; McCracken, 2003). The night is governed by the lunar cycle, which in turn corresponds to the menstrual cycle of women (Herbert *et al.*, 2003). Even more, vampires are intimately connected with the earth, returning to their grave at dawn. The common image of the earth as a female being is well known, the earth as the mother.

In any case, of course, vampire folklore and associated legends not only precede Vlad Dracul, but even the New and Old Testament (Varma, 1989, p. 14–29). It would not hurt to remember that long ago baths in human blood were prescribed as a possible remedy against leprosy. In the same way, “puede afirmarse que desde siempre la sangre ha sido unida a la juventud, lo mismo que las enfermedades” (Scott, 1997, p. 7). Babylonian doctors resorted to bloodletting to cure their patients, believing that they caused a regeneration of the body by expelling evil. This was a mistake, because they only achieved the weakening of the patient. This resource continued to be used, almost worldwide, until the 18th century. In the eighteenth century, bloodletting was very common as a healing remedy to eliminate harmful substances from the body. Part of the medical community called this method used by doctors to draw blood from their patients as vampirism. In the eleventh century, the idea of the redeeming value of blood and an abusive interpretation of the cult of the Virgin Mary leads doctors to prescribe the ingestion of immaculate blood of young virgins to combat all kinds of diseases and delay the effects of aging. In 1830 a book called (*Der Vampirismus im neunzehnten, The vampirism in medicine*) came to light in Hamburg, by the German Doctor Friedrich Alexander Simon (1793-1869).

Blood has always been associated with the possession of supernatural powers and mystical qualities, since it is what gives us and what takes our lives (Lock, 2002, p. 74). Losing it, feeling that it escapes us, means the irremediable loss of vitality, of strength, of essence (Cosmacini, 2007, p. 85-86). We should remember that there are current cases, although much less dramatic, of mentally ill people who believe they need the basic food of the blood, although in most cases they conform to that of animals.

Having established a possible reason for the evolution of vampire mythology from a monstrous and cannibal legend –that is, the vampire legend as an undead person, a parasite, a bloodsucker– it is necessary to recall why such myths spread so much and so quickly throughout the eastern part of Europe (Pile, 2003; Miller, 2012), and throughout the continent later. The myth could

not have developed to the extreme that it did without the help of Christian theology and liturgy. Of course, it had not been intentionally manufactured by the Church itself; in fact, the medieval church often fought hard to eliminate the belief in the legend of blood (Hampl & Hampl, 1997, p. 638).

The central theme in the two traditions is undoubtedly that of the parasite, of course, of different types. There is hardly a more parasitic being than the vampire, a leech, literally. Vampires were traditionally described as those who stalked members of the opposite sex or children, extracting a certain amount of precious fluid from an opposing victim. If the symbolic extraction of the fluid were reversed (thus transforming it into a fluid injection) we would have the image of a violation. The vampire bite, the so-called vampire kiss, is itself sexually suggestive, since it takes place in a region that is especially sensitive and tactile, as well as an erogenous zone. Richard Dyer comments that:

a number of... writers on the horror film have suggested, adapting Freudian ideas, that all 'monsters' in some measure represent the hideous and terrifying form that sexual energies take when they 'return' from being socially and culturally repressed. Yet the vampire seems especially to represent sexuality... s/he bites them, with a bite that is just as often described as kiss (1988, p. 54).

Could there be a parallelism between the intake of blood allowed to medieval clergy as a form of compensation for their absence of sexual stimulation?

Vampire folklore only serves to enlarge the transubstantiation so proclaimed by the Church; the power of the blood that allows the vampire to remain eternally young seems to have a parallel in the power of faith by transforming wine and bread into flesh and blood. Is it related to the fact that the bodies of the saints were not subject to decay even though they were underground?

We can conclude, therefore, that Western civilization has maintained a rather ambiguous position on blood. While the medieval church claimed that drinking

the blood of Christ was not only beneficial, but even necessary for salvation, the other two minority groups that openly consumed blood (Jews and vampires) were openly accused of being in contact and conspired with evil (Davison, 1997, p. 152, 155; Hughes, 1997, p. 132; Bildhauer, 2003).

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