


**Please cite the Published Version**

Ní Fhlainn, Sorcha  (2017) A Very Special Vampire Episode: vampires, archetypes, and post-modern turns in late-1980s and '90s cult TV shows. *Horror Studies*, 8 (2). pp. 255-274. ISSN 2040-3275

**DOI:** [https://doi.org/10.1386/host.8.2.255\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/host.8.2.255_1)

**Publisher:** Intellect

**Version:** Accepted Version

**Downloaded from:** <https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/618890/>

**Usage rights:**  In Copyright

**Additional Information:** This is an Author Accepted Manuscript of a paper accepted for publication in *Horror Studies*, published by and copyright Intellect.

**Enquiries:**

If you have questions about this document, contact [openresearch@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:openresearch@mmu.ac.uk). Please include the URL of the record in e-space. If you believe that your, or a third party's rights have been compromised through this document please see our Take Down policy (available from <https://www.mmu.ac.uk/library/using-the-library/policies-and-guidelines>)

**Sorcha Ní Fhlainn**

Manchester Metropolitan University United Kingdom

### **A Very Special Vampire Episode:**

#### **Vampires, archetypes, and postmodern turns in late-1980s and '90s cult TV shows**

#### **ABSTRACT**

This article evaluates the importance of the TV vampire onscreen in science fiction, gothic, and horror-based cult TV series from the late 1980s to the late 1990s. The inclusion of the vampire as a peripheral character in series including *Quantum Leap*, *The X-Files*, *Tales from the Crypt* and *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>: The Series* indicates, in light of postmodern cultural turns, that there exists an imperative to re-evaluate, satirize and reflexively explore the vampire as a necessary and evolving stock gothic character within the narrative and generic frameworks of each show. In looking at these postmodern vampiric evaluations in their own right, where the vampire is featured as the 'monster of the week', this article argues that these understudied yet apposite representations of the television vampire, prior to and following on from the success of Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992), documents a distinct cultural shift and maturation in representing vampires in non-vampire based gothic television shows. Whether it is to reify, satirize and re-mould the vampire as a variant of 'the Dracula template' on the small screen, or to move beyond mere stock conventions, these specific vampire episodes document the continuing fluidity of screen vampires through TV's episodic 'creature feature' framework, and offer differing and dynamic alternative representations of undeath beyond vampire-centric TV shows.

#### **KEYWORDS**

Vampires; *The X-Files*; *Quantum Leap*; *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>: The Series*; *Tales from the Crypt*; *Dracula*; adaptation; subjectivity; bricolage; guest stars.

The late 1980s and early 1990s witnessed a renewed interest in horror and dark fantasy series on TV. Emerging in part due to horror cinema's most visible, grisly and commercially saturated decade, horror anthology shows such as *Tales from the Crypt* (1989-96), *Freddy's Nightmares* (1988-90) and the weird, gothic mystery *Twin Peaks* (1990-91), all reveal a distinct shift in television production. These shows demonstrate the specific targeting

of audiences by way of blending populist entertainment and niche genre-specific programming. As Jowett and Abbott note, ‘throughout the 1980s and 1990s horror often emerges as a form of ‘quality’ television drama appealing to an upscale audience’ (Jowett and Abbott, 2013: 6), literate in its generic style and aimed at a target, rather than general, audience. As Helen Wheatley suggests, there is an evident borrowing of styles at work on TV during this period, as ‘the generic hybridity of the gothic drama [such as *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991)] is understood as intertextual bricolage, one of the identifying traits of the postmodern’ (Wheatley 2006: 167). By the mid-1990s, this overt postmodern bricolage of ‘mix[ing of] horror, action, comedy, and melodrama’ (Jowett and Abbott 2013: 9) finds popular expression and cultural traction in shows such as *The X-Files* (1993-2002; 2016), *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) and *Angel* (1999-2004), privileging generic fluidity and playful intertextuality. Despite the proliferation of TV horror in this period,<sup>1</sup> the vampire television show had not yet achieved the level of prominent cultural visibility that it would later in the decade. Vampires, as we shall see, remained a consistent televisual presence but largely a subdued one; during this period, shows such as *Forever Knight* (1992-1996) achieved some commercial success, but did not yield the overt and sustained pop culture response which later series such as *Buffy* enjoyed.<sup>2</sup> Out of the plethora of television series that celebrated horror on the small screen between 1987 and 1998, this article focuses on two horror shows, *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>: The Series* (1987-1990) and *The X-Files* (1994-2003), alongside an evident transition of the TV vampire in episodes of *Tales from the Crypt* (1989-1996) and *Quantum Leap* (1989 – 1993), where each series represents the slow and steady evolution of the TV vampire in very divergent ways. Featuring as ‘Monster of the Week’ interlopers (alongside other recycled monsters of the gothic and horror canon), these vampires straddle two very significant decades in horror culture, and each show uses the vampire to broadly either reaffirm its literary origins, or to contest and satirise undead archetypes onscreen.

Why focus on these particular series and these particular television vampires? Vampires are an expected trope on television, and have varied from gentle representations such as *Sesame Street*’s Count Von Count to gothic soap operas with Barnabus Collins (Jonathan Frid) in *Dark Shadows* (1966-71), to monstrous invaders as found in the TV film/mini-series ‘*Salem’s Lot* (Hooper 1979). What is of original scholarly interest here is the inclusion and evaluation of specific instances of TV vampire guest-appearances outside of the vampire-centred series, exploring marginal vampire figures often overlooked in vampire studies. These specific series feature episodes that document the TV vampire’s screen evolution, and the swift shift from reverence to mockery, from appropriation to derision, of

Stoker's Count Dracula. As horror and science fiction shows flirting with gothic stock characters and human monsters, both *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>: The Series* and *The X-Files* hinge upon their own unique (yet broadly similar) frameworks – a young duo investigate cursed objects, discover conspiracies and unexplained phenomena - and only feature vampires as occasional marginal monsters amongst a diverse set of fantastic creatures. Despite such limited screen time, the TV vampire's fleeting presence nonetheless provides insight into the state of the contemporary undead outside of vampire-centric films, novels and television series. Spanning a very important period in the history of horror cinema and television more generally - from the decline of second-wave slasher films in the late 1980s,<sup>3</sup> to the evident popularity of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* on television in the late 1990s - during which time the recuperation and romantic transformation of the vampire in cinema and popular culture gains traction,<sup>4</sup> these series articulate the waxing and waning of the *Dracula* template for guest-spot TV vampires in their exploration of vampires onscreen.

### **Vampire heritage in the 1980s:**

Vampire cinema in the 1980s was explicitly focussed on the MTV generation, giving rise to the teenage vampires and vampire hunters in *Once Bitten* (Storm 1985), *Fright Night* (Holland 1985), *Near Dark* (Bigelow 1987) and *The Lost Boys* (Schumacher 1987). Moving away from the increasingly sympathetic and middle-aged Draculas of the 1970s, and the as-then un-filmed introspective *Interview with the Vampire*, vampires became the cultural shorthand for a disaffected youth, attempting to find meaning and self-expression in a culture that had abandoned them to the Reaganite nightmare of corporate America. Following on from the 'leaderless 1970s' (Auerbach 1995: 165) with its plentiful array of Draculas and new articulate fledglings, 1980s vampires inherit a landscape that is devoid of a master vampire to call its own; crushed by neo-conservative forces that suffocate rather than celebrate vampire diversity, there exists no new *Dracula* to define or spearhead a counter-narrative in the decade, frequently leaving these fledgling vampires to burn up in the searing sunlight of Reagan's family-values styled 'morning in America'. Nina Auerbach notes that Anne Rice's vampires, who rose to particular literary prominence in the 1980s with her bestseller sequels to 1976's *Interview with the Vampire*, are consumed with their history and heritage, in a decade where vampires were 'defined by their origins rather than their plots' (Auerbach 1995: 172). For Rice, vampire legitimacy is a bifurcated worldview between the undead obsessed with their longevity and rich cultural ancestry (an exhaustive feature in her ongoing *Vampire Chronicles*), and the illegitimate young offspring in thrall of Stoker's

*Dracula* and his ilk in popular culture.<sup>5</sup> Neil Jordan's film adaptation of *Interview with the Vampire* (scripted by Rice and finessed by Jordan without a screen credit) also puts Stoker's *Dracula*, and his cultural ancestry, firmly in the literary past, casually dismissing *Dracula*'s cultural ubiquity and authority in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as merely 'the vulgar fictions of a demented Irishman' (Jordan 1994). Despite Rice's desire to suffuse the undead with an ancient heritage - a clumsy yet defiant attempt to paper over the cracks that her vampires are problematically 'new' fledglings themselves - while overtly appropriating contemporary modes of modern cultural authority via technology and MTV, Rice's material is deeply insular and exclusionary, vehemently denying other undead histories in favour of her own undead canon.

In order to identify and legitimate the inclusion of the TV vampire's occasional appearance on non-vampire television series, the cultural shorthand, generally speaking, is to engage and cite *some* connection to the master vampire template of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *Dracula*. These quotations can be explicit and immediate, via costuming or nominal citation, or they can be implicit, through rewarding fan-knowledge or parodic reference with hyperbolic visual cues. In this article, I will explore both sides of this desire to align with, or wholly debunk, the over-reliance on Stoker's Count as shorthand for television vampires in this specific period leading up to, and in the aftermath of, Francis Ford Coppola's epochal screen adaptation of Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* (Coppola 1992). The film reinvigorated gothic chic within Hollywood culture and revived a frantic (but short-lived) vogue to remake or reimagine classic gothic and horror tales, such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (Branagh 1994) and *Mary Reilly* (Frears 1996), now made hip with its cast of 1990s desirable film stars. The narrative figure of *Dracula*, transformed with significant revisions in novels, films and TV movies across the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is continuously remoulded and updated to represent contemporary concerns, but remains the master vampire by name alone. Television vampires are as revealing and culturally loaded as their (often more celebrated) cinematic counterparts, and demonstrate the evolution of the vampire in the cultural imagination during this transitional period both prior to and in the shadow of Coppola's highly influential film. It becomes apparent, in the anticipation and eventual arrival of Coppola's *Dracula* adaptation, that these nebulous and largely ignored instances of TV vampires in the late 1980s strive to conjure up Stoker's master vampire simply by virtue of his prolonged absence. Following the release of Coppola's film in 1992, a volte-face swiftly emerges whereby 1990s TV vampires overtly critique and mock *Dracula*'s gothic baggage and cultural obsolescence (as was in vogue in the wake of the film's excessive style), in an attempt to stand apart. Above all else, these seemingly incidental vampires demonstrate postmodernity's inter-textual

plurality, which enables screen-limited TV vampires to express their anxieties about who they are, and what they strive to be, as those at the '[m]argins and edges gain new value' (Hutcheon 1988: 130).

***Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>: The Series and the Dracula template:***

*Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>: The Series* has a slightly less polished and popular history than other horror television shows and therefore warrants a useful introduction. Originally pitched as *The 13<sup>th</sup> Hour* (and retitled in some regions as *Friday's Curse*), it was bought but promptly retitled by creator/executive producer Frank Mancuso Jr. to cash in on the then current popularity of the slasher film franchise *Friday the 13th* (which had garnered seven sequels by the late 1980s). The title is nothing short of a deceptive marketing ploy. Predating the (frequently nasty) gory offerings of the *Nightmare on Elm St* TV spin off show *Freddy's Nightmares* (1988-90), *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>: The Series* never engaged with its namesake slasher series or the slasher film's signature style of carnage and gore at the hands of masked and disfigured villains. Rather, attempting something more traditional than merely replicating the horrors of the multiplex on the small screen, the series used the established gothic horror convention of the Faustian pact to provide a clever (if overly repetitive) plot structure. Set in the antiques shop 'Curious Goods,' which was founded on a Faustian bargain, the treasures contained in the store are more sinister than they first seem. The show's protagonists, cousins Micki Foster (Louise Robey) and Ryan Dallon (John D. LeMay), alongside their wise patriarch Jack Marshak (Chris Wiggins) are charged with custody of the store and to successfully recover the cursed antiques sold by its deceased former owner Lewis Vendredi (R.G. Armstrong). Vendredi reneged on his Faustian pact (as almost all do when in league with infernal forces) and was claimed by the Devil for his defiance, but not before he sold magical antiques to the public who desired the rare objects and their magical powers. Our three protagonists must safely locate and return the sold objects to the shop's vault, which renders the indestructible cursed objects inert. The show's weekly gothic horrors manifest through objects and material culture, an especially telling reminder of the sins of late 1980s, and the acquisitive rot at the heart of the nation. As I have noted elsewhere, vampires and vampire hunters have a special relationship with magical objects, antiques, and props, which flourishes unabated throughout the 1980s, recalling Marxist warnings of empty and destructive consumption run amok during the vapid rise of the neoliberal agenda.<sup>6</sup> As John Kenneth Muir observes about the series' explicit consumerist critique,

‘It’s all about greed and materialism. [...] Here, people are willing to make a deal with the devil to achieve the things that life has not given them. That the tool of the devil is a thing itself, a belonging, an antique to be bought or sold, captures perfectly the rampant materialism of the era. The entire series is really about buying success and selling your soul in the process. Capitalism of the spirit is fatal, one could say of *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>*’s central tenet.’ (Muir 2008: 176).

In the first of *Friday*’s two vampire episodes, ‘The Baron’s Bride’ (1.13), an innocent man is conferred with a triad of separate yet interconnected curses which are closely aligned with traditional vampirism. The episode’s reluctant vampire, Frank Edwards (Tom McCamus), is bitten by a bourgeois vampire landlady while inspecting a new room to rent. Edwards, unaware of his immediate peril, is caught wearing a magical cape found in the landlady’s room, which confers mesmeric beauty unto its wearer. The cape is also fastened with a brooch that enables time travel with a drop of blood, turning the trinket into a veritable vampiric object. This triplication of gothic misfortune forms three of the most distinctive attributes associated with popular representations of vampirism: magnetic attraction, a form of immortality (for time travel confers abilities wholly beyond the human lifespan), and the material and visual association with vampirism through costume, most commonly associated through the use of a cape (in explicit reference to Bela Lugosi). Inadvertently intervening in this fracas between Edwards and the vampire landlady while attempting to retrieve the cursed cape and brooch, Micki and Ryan are accidentally transported with the now vampirised Edwards to Victorian London. Their arrival in Victorian London is quickly revealed to be in the stereotypical setting for, and at the narrative inception point of, popular culture’s soon-to-be most infamous vampire invader, *Dracula*.<sup>7</sup>

The tone of this episode shifts upon arrival in Victorian London to become a revised retelling of *Dracula* (significantly evidencing the influence of 1970s adaptations of *Dracula* complete with a tragic lost bride), and features a young would-be-novelist Abraham (Kevin Bundy) as a helpful stranger aiding the American antique-dealers in their quest. The Victorian period is shot in monochrome to reinforce its ‘pastness’ in contrast with the colourful and garish 1980s American costumes and familiar sets of the show. Micki and Ryan soon assume default roles as distant echoes of Mina Murray and Jonathan Harker while pursuing the errant *Dracula*-esque vampire Edwards through London’s back alleys; Micki becomes mesmerised by his gaze and Ryan is largely ineffectual throughout their battles with

the vampire. But Edwards is no straightforward Dracula – unlike his vampire predecessors, he recoils in horror at his own monstrosity when he removes the cursed cape which, in Dorian Gray fashion, permanently ages and disfigures him. (Figure 1) Edwards enjoys no freedom with his newfound vampirism; rather, much like his 1980s filmic counterparts, it imprisons him. The emphasis on the cursed cape recalls Bela Lugosi's influential costume from the Deane/Balderston Broadway production of *Dracula* in 1927, which has remained a significant and staple feature in the vampire costume. Alongside this reference to costuming Lugosi's Dracula is a striking visual echo of Max Schreck in *Nosferatu* (1922), used to emphasise Edward's otherness and ugliness once he removes the cursed cape; the costume vampirically drains him of his youth and beauty, transforming him into an imitation of Schreck's preternatural form. Edwards is not a unique vampire, but rather a multi-sourced one. He embodies the imprisoning conditions of 1980s vampirism and the visual citations required to cue all-too-familiar and established depictions of vampirism. Edwards is a collage of 20<sup>th</sup> century cinematic vampire citations transported to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, sourced from literary and film adaptations and condensed down further for the medium of episodic television; his features are all reduced to mere cues and identifiers in an attempt to engage with the *Dracula* narrative in a decade noted for its absence.

The *Dracula* template comes full circle when Abraham's wife Caitlin becomes a condensed citation of both Lucy Westenra and Mina Harker as Edwards's on-screen victim, which in turn impels Abraham, as a farrago of Harker, Van Helsing and Quincy Morris, to avenge his wife's death by killing the vampire. Stoker's novel is appropriated and informs separate narrative strands in the episode; it becomes an intertextual novel and (future) quasi-biography by Abraham, directly inspired by the events of the episode; it remains an already-established literary resource for Micki and Ryan as time-travellers from the 1980s; and the novel is transformed into an inter-textual pastiche for the show's audience. The episode's denouement emphasises the (obvious) revelation of Abraham's identity as Bram Stoker, including nods towards time travel causality, but all of this falls remarkably flat. By inspiring that which will become the novel *Dracula*, Edwards becomes simulacra wherein the bricolage copy now loops back to become the inspirational source material of the original Stoker novel in the series. In the absence of other Draculas in the period, the only solution the show presents is to insert itself a source of inspiration for the original tale, rewriting and bending the narrative rules of time travel in order to force a connection to a fixed and influential moment (or text) directly associated with vampire origins in popular culture.



The second vampire episode in *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>: The Series*, 'Night Prey' (3.8) concerns an embittered vampire hunter seeking to avenge his bride who was kidnapped on their wedding night. Styled in the vein of a tragic Van Helsing narrative (though the vampire antagonist Evan Van Hellier (Eric Murphy) essentially steals the infamous vampire hunter's name), the episode remains recognisable in its use of grief and revenge, recalling the vampire romances of the 1970s when reimagined Draculas steadily grew to resemble tragic anti-heroes. Seeking out long-lost loves, blood-relations and antique objects, all of these tropes feature as shared motivations for both would-be Draculas and Van Helsing in their various screen incarnations and echoes across popular culture. In 'Night Prey', The Cross of Fire, described as 'a relic from the crusades... from the borders of Hungary and Transylvania' becomes the sought-after 'relic of the week' for its unique ability to destroy vampires. The cross emits an eerie glow and burns undead flesh with its powerful, quasi-holy light. After losing his wife in a random vampire attack twenty years earlier, vampire hunter Kurt Bachman (Michael Burgess) vows revenge upon the vampire Van Hellier who assaulted her, planning to obliterate him and his kind with the fiery relic. The episode reverts back to the traditional model of subjectivity in *Dracula* whereby we are aligned to empathise with Bachman (armed with his light-emitting relic) as an echo of Stoker's Crew of Light rather than with the contemporary and 80s chic undead vampires. This traditionalism is, however, relatively short-lived; Kurt is turned into a vampire by his undead wife only to be then dispatched by the series' resident Van Helsing patriarch, the sombre Jack Marshak, for his sin of becoming a monster in his quest. This puritanical end for Bachman at the hands of Marshak crystalizes the lack of joy or any reaped revenge to be found in destroying vampires in the 1980s; all that remains is grief and emptiness in these more complex, postmodern times. Van Helsing-styled vampire hunters have become remarkably more unhinged and zealous in their pursuit of monsters since the 1970s (with Laurence Olivier serving as a prime example in John Badham's *Dracula* (1979)), and, in turn, would-be Draculas morph into misunderstood reluctant anti-heroes, more dashing and erotic as 1970s icons of forbidden romance than any contending Jonathan Harker. As the many afterlives of Van Helsing attest, he who hunts vampires is often not to be trusted, and is frequently destined to become a vampire (or much worse) in the process.

The *Dracula* template of these two episodes anticipates, if not calls out for, Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992), in its mythological treatment of Stoker as an author/character/progenitor. The series, using pastiche to cue citations of Stoker's 1897 source novel, makes tenuous claims on *Dracula* to self-confer gothic legitimacy onto its

vampire episodes. This is, in part, the problem with the entire series, as its core narrative (to recover lost cursed relics) seemed initially quite clever, but quickly became extremely tedious. For all of its window-dressing, *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>: The Series* retold the same tale of the Faustian bargain time and again, with some attempt to disguise its familiarity. As Muir notes, ‘One trick was to vary its settings in an interesting manner, sending the trio after antiques in [various] arenas’ (Muir 2008: 177) but again, the familiar retelling of the vampire tale in these two episodes of this neglected series is evidence enough of a show wholly reliant on theme and variation, and particularly so in its versions of vampirism.

### **Vampire Pastiche and Parody in *Tales from the Crypt* and *Quantum Leap***

By the early 1990s, HBO’s *Tales from the Crypt* (1989-1996) firmly established itself as a popular horror television anthology, attracting both famous guest stars and directors to contribute in its pun-filled celebration of bad taste, Grand Guignol gusto and macabre fun. Based on the 1950s EC comics of the same name, each weekly episode was introduced by the wise-cracking mordent host the Crypt Keeper (voiced by John Kassir), a specially designed operated puppet, whose mischievous personality revelled in the show’s tongue-in-cheek style (and later established the character as a pop celebrity in his own right). In ‘The Reluctant Vampire’ (3.7), the episode explicitly parodies both Anne Rice’s morose and dieting vampires and recent re-imaginings of *Dracula*, via its sympathetic vampire loner, Donald Longtooth (played by guest star Malcolm McDowell). Longtooth, working as a night watchman for a blood bank, has largely reformed his ways and adapted to masquerading among the living, including inserting human dentures to mask his own teeth and becoming a blue collar worker. Feasting off the blood bank’s supply rather than ‘sucking on the streets,’ Longtooth’s gorging arouses the suspicion of his unscrupulous employer Crosswhite (George Wendt), while both the inept police department and touring vampire hunter Rupert Van Helsing (Michael Berryman) investigate recent unexplained exsanguinations. Longtooth becomes a perverse type of vigilante, targeting and draining street criminals in order to replenish the stolen blood stock, and to conceal his true nature from both his employer and his sweetheart co-worker, Sally (Sandra Dickenson). Vampire hunters in particular are dismissed in this episode as retrograde relics; the police chief (Paul Gleason, true to his established sarcastic screen persona) offers a parodic summary of Van Helsing’s ‘expert’ analysis of the vigilante killer: ‘So, we’re looking for a 300 pound refugee from Castle Dracula, with bad teeth and a taste for muggers... you let me know when you find it, Sherlock, and meantime I’m due back in the 20<sup>th</sup> century’. The connection to Stoker’s

*Dracula* in this episode, namely via Van Helsing, is wholly dismissed and revealed as inept from the offset. Typically portrayed as outmoded and deeply flawed, vampire hunters are rarely able to keep pace with modernity in comparison with their adaptive vampire nemeses.

The true monster of the episode is, of course, the capitalistic leech Crosswhite, unsubtly reinforcing the Marxist metaphor of draining the workforce and metaphorically feeding off the profits of both his employees and society at large who merely ‘keep the blood [product] warm’. In keeping with the series’ parodic tone – from the offset, the Crypt Keeper introduces each episode with some form of parodic bite - diabolical retribution is both swift and fitting for Crosswhite, who is mistakenly identified as undead and staked by the inept Van Helsing, concluding the episode on the series’ familiar note of just desserts. For *Tales from the Crypt*, the political subtext proved rather fitting in this episode wherein modern vampirism and genuine monstrosity are unbound, enabling undead assimilation into the postmodern world with ease, while inefficacious vampire hunters remain firmly trapped in their stale Manichean worldview.

The other television show in this period to pastiche vampirism with Draculean reference is cult sci-fi television series *Quantum Leap* (1989-1993). Airing in March 1993, this overlooked vampire episode ‘Blood Moon’ (5.15) sees scientist and time traveller Dr Sam Beckett (Scott Bakula) leap into the body of Lord Nigel Corrington, in an atmospheric English castle in 1975. Awakening in England in a closed coffin and costumed in a full tuxedo and cape, Corrington is described by Beckett’s holographic companion Al (Dean Stockwell) as looking like ‘a cross between Bela Lugosi and a sick corpse’. The episode amplifies overtly established motifs associated with Draculean vampires onscreen, revelling in stock clichés including the use of J.S Bach’s ‘Toccata and Fugue in D minor’ on the soundtrack (cueing a gothic expectation from the offset); howling wolves; plush, candlelit décor; an accessible and used coffin, and a violent lightning storm. When visually combined in such an excessive fashion, these ‘stylistic twitches’ (Jameson 1985: 113) signal parodic overtones and postmodern pastiche, which Jameson defines as ‘the wearing of a linguistic mask, speech in a dead language’ (Jameson 1991: 17). Further references go so far as to include a Doberman named Vlad and a frightening and grimacing portrait of an eerie and uncanny Corrington ‘ancestor’, through to the undoing of the episode’s true villain, Victor Drake (Ian Buchanan) who is struck and killed by lightning, in a direct citation of *Dracula*’s (Christopher Lee) own demise in Hammer’s *Scars of Dracula* (1970). *Quantum Leap* immediately exonerates this TV vampire as Sam always leaps into the body of those wronged by historical injustice; Sam as Corrington makes every effort to save his bride from a fatal

vampiric ritual sacrifice, recuperating Corrington as a revised hero rising up against murderous wannabe vampires. Amid this gothic masquerade, including revelations of fake fangs and costumed pretence, Sam unexpectedly discovers at its conclusion that Corrington casts no reflection at all; this is a shared comical conclusion with other heroic characters such as Nancy Drew and The Hardy Boys who have similar or accidental encounters with vampires or Dracula (as discussed by Abbott in this issue). The narrative punchline of this supernatural revelation is punctuated by Sam's inevitable leap, but not without playfully planting a seed of doubt in the scientist's mind about the possible existence of vampires. The importance of this instance of vampirism is precisely because *Quantum Leap* is not a horror TV show – it is generically grounded in science fiction – and thus the whole episode is imbued with playful incredulity throughout.

The postmodern 'masquerade is contingent on its own performance,' (Hiebert 2012: 121) which informs the narrative crux of *Quantum Leap*. Throughout the series, Sam is continuously caught up in a prolonged type of masquerade whereby he assumes a new external identity, visually confirmed by his changing reflection in the mirror, every time he leaps; Sam's reliance on the mirror image spurs on an expected 'engagement which is externally constituted' (Hiebert 2012: 121), a temporary 'masked' performance read at surface level until he leaps on to his next subject/mission. By concluding this vampire episode in revealing Sam's inability to cast a reflection while in Corrington's body – a reminder that ultimately there is '*nothing* behind the mask... of postmodern masquerade... but this formulation implies the necessity of the mask itself' (Hiebert 2012: 121) - *Quantum Leap* enjoys its affectionate Hammer-horror homage as part of its central preoccupation with the assemblage of non-linear time travel, pop culture history channelled through explicit styles, fashions and periodisation, including this flirtation with gothic citation and aesthetics. Sam's lack of a reflection also works twofold: not only is its absence a tease (or an affectionate confirmation?) about his temporary vampiric state but this also instantaneously nullifies Sam's own ability to understand and psychologically separate himself from the person into whom he has leapt (Figure 2). As biological time travel is affirmed by the presence of Sam's new reflection in each episode, alongside his ability to affect historical change (which triggers the next leap on to the next episode), Corrington's lack of a reflection confirms vampirism is configured here as the antithesis of Sam's form of time travel. The undead Corrington is defined by his vampiric stasis and reflective absence, while Sam, reflectively unfixed conversely transcends time in random order in his quest to alter the

wrongs of history. In the universe of *Quantum Leap*, vampirism temporarily disturbs this symbolic Lacanian ‘mirror (image) stage’ by denying Sam (and the viewer) his necessary reflection to anchor his temporary subjective identity. In denying Sam a reflection as Corrington, this version of vampirism is both literally and figuratively confined to the past and blank for remoulding.

### ***The X-Files*, Biology and disavowing *Dracula*.**

At the conclusion of his seminal study *Gothic*, Fred Botting declares the gothic dead with the release of Francis Ford Coppola’s *Bram Stoker’s Dracula*. Botting states that the film, desperate in its claim for textual authenticity in its doubled uses of directorial and authorial vision nonetheless ‘mourns an object that is too diffuse and uncertain to be recuperated’ (Botting 1996: 180). The preceding vampire appearances on television directly cite *Dracula*’s author, its ‘rules’ and expected film and pop culture costuming, but *Dracula*’s own absence during the 1980s and into the 1990s leads to a series of vampires masquerading as, or paying lip service to, popular culture’s hegemonic vampire archetype. The re-emergence of *Dracula* in 1992 as a tragic and sentimental hero refashions him as a product of George Bush’s ‘kinder and gentler America’ – *Dracula* (Gary Oldman), more sympathetic than monstrous, becomes truly humanised and emotional. Coppola’s determination to claim his film as one of the most faithful and authentic retellings of Stoker’s novel also provoked cultural derision and mockery for such brash proclamations. It is only by trying to achieve the authentic and definitive *Dracula* do we understand the character’s enduring mutability, his malleability in popular culture. Coppola’s claims of authenticity are clearly founded on his inclusion of Stoker’s name in his title, and a near-full complement of characters typically lost or erased in other popular film adaptations, in his attempt at an imaginative approximation of Stoker’s novel in his respectful, glossy adaptation. The success of the film quickly led to a spate of costumed retellings of these classic gothic tales but none matched *Dracula*’s box-office appeal.<sup>8</sup> 1990s horror cinema’s rising tide of home-grown and human monsters looked inward at the heartland rather than national borders and outposts, fostering a growing sense of paranoia and deep suspicion of those in authority, namely representatives of government, law enforcement agencies, and the scientific community. Alongside the advancement of new biotechnologies (including animal cloning and mapping the human genome), and increased awareness of scientific discourse and paranoia in the zeitgeist, gothic biology in Chris Carter’s science fiction horror hybrid television series *The X-Files* (1994-2002; 2016) facilitated both a cultural prescience and temporary catharsis to explore the national mood.

The primary source of both fear and fascination in *The X-Files* is firmly rooted in the horrific possibilities of biology, rather than magical materiality in *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>: The Series*, or the familiar and performed parodic cues in *Tales from the Crypt* or *Quantum Leap*. As Linda Badley attests, ‘the other’, be it the vampire, mutant or alien, is examined through the body as text and ‘becomes the “fantastic space” in which *The X-Files* often takes place’ (Badley 1996: 149). These fantastic bodies are conduits for contagion, disease, mutation and biological adaptation, strange fetishes and cravings, or abnormal cellular, psychological or telekinetic abilities, as the series ‘mines the hoary figures of the werewolf, vampire, and alien for contemporary relevance and significance, re-appropriating those figures to comment on contemporary problems and issues [while]... problematiz[ing] dominant ideologies and classic generic codes’ (Kellner 1999: 165). Drawing on this rich televisual hybridity of familiar conventions, the show ‘takes the postmodern strategies of genre pastiche, quotation, appropriation, and hybridity to new levels... redoing old stories and formulas... playing on the audience’s knowledge of traditional folklore, the occult, and media culture..., but often reworking traditional material to question it critically’ (Kellner 1999: 167). Mulder’s (David Duchovny) vast knowledge of folklore, cult activity, and supernatural phenomena is framed alongside (and often countered by) Scully’s (Gillian Anderson) extensive medical expertise, which, when channelled through their status as FBI agents, enables them to both solve the core mystery of the case and serve justice. The body as text serves both the medical and supernatural frameworks to stake an equal claim to account for glimpses of the fantastic, which the series privileges above all else. Vampirism also features within these biological parameters, undercutting expected cultural and cinematic representations of the undead while also playfully hybridising and debunking weary tropes through humour, postmodern scepticism and contested subjectivities.

The first vampire episode to provide this form of metacommentary is ‘3’ (2.7), featured early in its second season following the abduction of Scully, and Mulder’s resultant trauma. In the pre-credit sequence, the vampire cult ‘Trinity’ murder and exsanguinate a victim with hypodermic needles in a mansion in the Hollywood Hills. This opening sequence immediately sets up a rejection of Hollywood-styled vampires, and instead recalls the horrific violence of the 1969 Manson murders with its similarly blood-smeared crime scene. Mulder’s obsession with this vampire case permits him to continue with his work in the absence of his abducted partner, keeping Scully’s gold cross both as an emblem of hope for her return, and (unknowingly) as a talisman. The episode broadly aligns realism, vampire folklore, and cult activities by choosing to discard (by now) tired vampire costumes and

accessories and instead favouring scenes more closely aligned with sexual fetish. It openly acknowledges contemporary AIDS-awareness and the dangers of drinking blood by having Mulder resolutely refuse an invitation to taste ex-cult member Kristen Kilar's (Perrey Reeves) blood during their first, sexually-charged, encounter at Club Tepes. Kilar is no killer (despite nominal suggestion) but rather a misguided survivor of domestic abuse, fleeing a cult from whom she now fears retribution because she no longer shares their abject philosophy. As the episode implies, accounts of 'real-life' vampires increased during the 1990s at the dawn of cyber-culture, including websites and chatrooms dedicated to alternative vampire lifestyles. For example, Anne Rice biographer Katherine Ramsland's vampire exposé *Piercing the Darkness: Undercover with Vampires in America Today* attests to the existence of numerous paraphilic blood-drinkers, and 'people who claim to live by a vampire code' (Ramsland 1998: X) in 1990s America.<sup>9</sup> Such disclosures fed into the prevalent panic of widespread cult-activity as found in coverage of the lengthy and controversial McMartin preschool trial;<sup>10</sup> the international media coverage of the fifty-one day siege by the ATF and FBI at the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas in 1993; and the first West Memphis Three trial in 1994 during which the prosecution theorised numerous motives for the murders including cult membership, the practice of witchcraft, blood drinking, and Satanism. This same period also produced a wealth of talk-shows specials such as Geraldo Rivera's 1988 Satanic Cult investigation (and other 'occult' topics) and info-tainment shows such as *Unsolved Mysteries* (1987-2002).<sup>11</sup> These media spectacles and sensationalist programmes seized upon increased anxieties that the American homeland as a riven, unheimlich space, from which *The X-Files* thoroughly benefitted in the post-Cold War 1990s. The show made numerous references to tabloid anxieties, particularly in its second season which featured four separate episodes all highlighting or blaming cult activity for its various criminal and/or supernatural disruptions. Ascribing cult membership is convenient as a 'rational' panacea, as it also functions as an effective diversion or derisory response to belief in either supernatural or religious phenomena on the show.<sup>12</sup>

Where cult practises largely represent the dark heart of 1990s America in the series, vampirism is an isolating expression of disconnection from expected community norms. Most evident of all in '3', Mulder and Kristin are separately imprisoned by grief and emotional suffering. Wallowing in self-doubt, Mulder questions his own ability to endure and protect those to whom he feels closest; he drives on ceaselessly to uncover the truth about Scully's abduction, spiralling towards self-destruction. Kristen abandons her vampire cult as she believes it to be an empty promise of immortality, repeatedly attempting to extricate herself

from her abusive pursuant former partner who continues to practice violent ‘blood-sports’ (a play on drawing and drinking blood as a sexual fetish). Mulder, yet again unable to protect someone with whom he shares a (brief sexual) connection, loses Kristen as she sacrifices herself to immolate the cult. The episode cites vampire lore and culture, but is more invested in unmasking vampirism, stripping it back from its costumed heritage and romance, to reveal a gloomy depressive emptiness.

Contributing to the plurality of vampiric variation and mutation in the series, ‘2Shy’ (3.6) offers a new type of vampire who sucks on human fat for sustenance rather than blood. Moreover, this ‘fat-sucking vampire’ as Scully sardonically terms him, is rather familiar to viewers as a condensed pastiche of both Buffalo Bill (Ted Levine) and Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins) from *The Silence of the Lambs* (Demme 1991). It has been noted by many critics including Kellner (2002: 214) that Scully, particularly in earlier seasons, has been explicitly framed and costumed to recall her FBI antecedent Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster), especially in this episode which liberally quotes Thomas Harris’s fiction and Jonathan Demme’s film. This episode’s villain, Virgil Incanto (Timothy Carhart), possesses a ‘fat melting kiss’ which, extending Buffalo Bill’s modus operandi of harvesting skins, strips these larger victims of their adipose tissue. As Badley cogently notes, ‘[Incanto’s] kiss melts the normally too solid flesh of his victims and, in a perverse fulfilment of their heart’s desire, pares them down to the bone. His specialty comments on a culture in which fat, like blood, is simultaneously fetishized and considered poison’ (Badley 1996: 153). Vampiric diversity here is expressed through ingestion and digestion rather than the vampire bite, explicitly emphasised in the abject visibility of typically hidden bodily substances such bile, fat, blood, and viscous spittle left on the bodies of Incanto’s victims.

Postmodern quotation is playful and reversed in ‘2Shy’, as the episode explicitly cites many of Harris’s themes and conventions. Harris’s villains are all textually marked through the horrors of their scarred or imperfect skins – *The Silence of the Lambs*’s Buffalo Bill requires female skin to perform his metamorphosis into a ‘woman’; *Red Dragon*’s Francis Dolarhyde possesses both a traumatic cleft palate scar and a remarkable tattoo; *Hannibal*’s Mason Verger peeled off his own face and fed it to his dogs in a drug-addled state – whereas Incanto’s ingestion of human fat keeps his excessively shedding skin in check. For Harris, villainy is typically symbolically routed through the abject nature of the mouth – the horrors of eating, biting and mastication, digestion, and cannibalism are a trademark in his Lecter quadrilogy, with Lecter’s own mouth as a focal point for both dangerous words and vampiric violence. This is explicitly reinforced in Demme’s film when a police officer guarding Lecter



asks Clarice about Lecter's quasi-supernatural status - 'Is it true what they're saying... He's some kind of vampire?' to which she thoughtfully replies, 'They don't have a name for what he is.' Incanto, like Lecter, is a composite of numerous horror tropes – he is a bricolage of age old fears (cannibalism), folklore (vampirism) and contemporaneous anxieties (the perceived prevalence of serial killing) - updated for a 90s audience by using internet chat rooms to ensnare new victims.

The difference between cannibalism and vampirism is blurred in *The X-Files* in the episode 'Our Town' (2.24), during which cannibalism results in preservation of youth, a trait more commonly associated with vampirism. Commenting on contemporary concerns about the contamination of the human food chain through abhorrent farming practices abolished in the 1990s, the episode emphasises the abject nature of food processing and animal feed sourced from and fed to the same species, resulting in devastating diseases such as variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) in humans. Inter-mixed with references to cult activity derived from a lost tribe in Papua New Guinea, which is subsequently brought to and practiced by the townsfolk in the American heartland, the episode is imbued with credible contemporary anxieties about food production and contamination rather than the cannibals and cult rituals featured. For the inhabitants of Dudley, Arkansas in 'Our Town', cannibalism and vampirism become cross-contaminated practices, wayward abject means of prolonging life.

Arguably the best known (and firm fan favourite) example of vampirism in *The X-Files* is 'Bad Blood' (5.12), known for its distinctly humorous reimagining of the vampire condition as a melting-pot of vampiric folklore, film citation, and parody, set in the Lone Star state of Texas. Mulder describes the X File case as 'a series of mysterious nocturnal exsanguinations' of six dead cows and a tourist from New Jersey, with evidence of two prominent puncture marks on the throats of both the bovine and human victims. By using the 'Rashomon Effect' to comically illustrate the postmodern inability to find 'truth' in subjective experiences, Mulder and Scully each recall their recent encounter with a group of small town vampires in Chaney, Texas, in preparation for their official report. Texas is a striking place to set this episode as it permits the series to wryly nod to *Dracula's* infamous Texan Quincey Morris, and humorously comments on 'cowboy masculinity that was new-world in Quincey Morris [which has now] become old hat, appropriate for camp reappropriation' (Wakefield 2016: no pagination). With the 1993 Waco siege (and a wrongful death at the hands of the federal authorities) lurking in the background, the episode mocks small town vampirism and the outsider status of Texan culture right down to Mulder's

jealousy-tinged description of Sheriff Hartwell's (Luke Wilson) speech impediment, buck teeth, and thick regional accent (Figure 3). In Mulder's version of events, indirectly referencing federal interference at Waco, Hartwell twice affirms his commitment to their investigation and to federal law enforcement to gain Mulder's trust: 'y'all work for the federal gov'mint and that's all I need to know. I mean, CIA, Secret Service – y'all run the show'. Keen to demonstrate his academic expertise on folkloric vampires, Mulder twice bewilders Sheriff Hartwell with a brief but exhaustive account of vampire history and practices, which, naturally, neatly sidesteps naming *Dracula* or any other fictional source (and later only briefly mentions Stoker in passing to Scully). Scully twice rejects Mulder's case of 'classic vampirism' (and Mulder's unflattering description of the handsome sheriff), favouring a profile of the perpetrator as 'someone who has watched too many Bela Lugosi movies' – a wannabe vampire obsessed with fiction and film. The Rashomon tale enables both Mulder and Scully's version of events to be simultaneously correct and inaccurate concerning vampirism, as murder suspect Ronnie Strickland (Patrick Renna) *is* a type of vampire, and a killer who happens to be heavily influenced by popular culture. Recalling *Dracula*'s own epistolary structure of fragmented narratives from multiple perspectives, the Rashomon structure celebrates postmodern metacommentary by simultaneously referencing vampire stereotypes and liberating the vampire from the constraints of Stoker's narrative template. Furthermore, by refusing to cite *Dracula* directly, episode writer Vince Gilligan diversifies contemporary vampires by debunking this classic template of vampirism. This is the core of Mulder's (ignored) argument – vampires have always been with us and continue (especially on this show) to evolve beyond familiar stereotypes.

From the offset, Chaney's vampire community outsmart audience expectations and invert TV vampire conventions. Led by Sheriff Hartwell as their exemplary figurehead, the vampire community collectively reject the performativity associated with screen vampires, with the exception of pizza-delivery boy and killer Ronnie Strickland. Ronnie inadvertently reveals the community's secret by wearing plastic fangs and drugging his human and bovine victims with knock-out drops. Enthralled by the vampires of the cinema screen rather than the actual vampire community in which he resides, Ronnie's behaviour is rejected by the vampire community because these are clichéd and performative aspirations, corresponding more with popular culture's isolated vampire than with shared community values. As Hartwell explains to Scully, '[Ronnie]'s just not who we are anymore. We pay taxes. We're good neighbours. Ronnie just can't seem to grasp the concept of 'low profile'... but though he may be a moron, he's one of our own'. This is what makes 'Bad Blood' such a witty and knowing special

vampire episode; keenly aware of the evolving nature of vampires within the zeitgeist of the late 1990s, Gilligan playfully reverses the trajectory of contemporary vampires through Ronnie Strickland's awe of classic vampirism and its ideals in popular culture. The episode contains recurring visual and prop references to teeth and fangs, the importance of which Mulder explicitly attributes to Stoker's lasting influence (Figure 4). According to Mulder, fangs and puncture marks not only suggest 'classic vampirism' but also, judging from his personal fixation with the Sheriff's dentition, endorse the class-based assumption that unusual teeth are indicative of low social status. In horror cinema, having bad teeth, or being 'orally deficient' (Clover 1993: 125) strongly implies belonging to an impoverished (or 'white trash') rural community. By wearing fake vampire fangs while attacking his victims, Ronnie immediately casts doubt on his own 'authenticity', his postmodern pretence masks his actual biological vampirism, which he feels is inadequate in comparison with his screen counterparts. Furthermore, when Ronnie's fake incisors are confiscated after he is staked by Mulder, he is reduced to 'gnaw[ing] on' the coroner in a pathetic attempt to feed. This is a playful contradiction in the episode as fangs are presented both to affirm 'classic vampirism' but also debunk it as a construct of Stoker's novel and popular film. Without pop culture's undead accoutrements, Ronnie Strickland is reduced to being merely a mediocre vampire.

According to Mulder's version of events, Cheney's two prominent vampires, Sherriff Hartwell and Ronnie Strickland, both possess the wrong type of teeth for their conquests; bearing buck teeth and fake fangs respectively, their dental features are at once too much and not enough of the right type of teeth to conform to traditional attractive, let alone 'classic vampire', expectations (Figure 5). Mulder's definition of classic vampirism is equally problematic as his exhaustive examples are too diffuse for purpose, while Scully's repeated invocation of 'Bela Lugosi movies' is equally problematic because it derives from fiction. 'Classic vampirism' is as contentious and unstable a label as any other bricolage presented in this episode. While Mulder may not be limited in his supernatural scope to one rigid set of undead stereotypes, his initially comical prejudice about the Sheriff's overbite and Chaney's RV park residents nonetheless hint at other popular horror prejudices concerning insular families and communities in classic rural horror films such as *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (Hooper, 1974), *The Hills Have Eyes* (Craven, 1977), and the nomadic vampires in *Near Dark* (Bigelow, 1987). In sum, it is in keeping with the encounter with the fantastic privileged in the show that both Scully and Mulder are proven correct in their contradictory analyses of vampirism; this shift in the 1990s, oscillating between folkloric 'legitimacy' and expected popular culture cliché, captures the necessity for vampires to morph beyond the

Draculean template while acknowledging the weight of its cultural saturation. Simultaneously addressing TV clichés about vampires and backwater American spaces, ‘Bad Blood’ plays upon these expectations by confounding such city-dweller, FBI smugness; dismissed by the agents as almost beneath their remit in their contradictory assessments of the case, they are ultimately bested by the misunderstood vampiric townspeople, who vanish at its conclusion.

To conclude, *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>: The Series*, *Tales from the Crypt*, *Quantum Leap*, and *The X-Files* offer differing representations of what vampirism in popular culture and popular television is expected to be, largely predetermined by the types of generic conventions of their respective shows. During the 1980s and early 1990s, many TV vampires are in thrall of, or indebted to, Stoker’s Count; following the release of Coppola’s epic version of *Dracula*, rather than replicate what Coppola declared as the ‘authentic’ screen version of the tale, TV vampires began to radically diversify away from the Count’s century of influence, parodying the old master and paving the way for new metamorphoses. *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>: The Series* is particularly rooted in the traditional gothics of lost treasures, magical antiques, Faustian pacts and mythical lore, and typically concludes each episode on a conservative bent of retrieval and containment, perfectly in tune with the conservative 1980s. By the 1990s, *The X-Files*’s overt postmodern style of resisting closure, of bending and playing with generic rules and formulas, permits an understanding that vampires (and other monsters) live and thrive amongst us; though many eventually escape the clutches of the FBI, the series fosters a worldview where vampires cease to be considered a serious threat, once they remain in check. In spite of occasional wish fulfilment or parody, 1990s TV vampires do not always have to conform to literary tropes or stereotypes - indeed, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*’s (1997-2003) heroine Buffy (Sarah Michelle Geller) begins the new millennium by (temporarily) killing off Dracula in ‘Buffy vs. Dracula’ (5. 1), proving that laying Dracula to rest (however temporary the outcome) has become a shared, if not necessary, deed to move beyond his shadow over the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The very notion of a visible vampire community has evolved in shows such as *True Blood* (2008-2014) – one cannot accuse Bon Temps’ vampires of being low profile (nor do they need to be) after achieving legal status; this undead plurality onscreen is achieved by greater screen diversity, moving away from Draculean stereotypes while owing a great debt to Stoker’s popular and literary heritage. As Alexandra Warwick notes, the ‘rules’ of vampirism and the overflow of gothic signifiers into other genres in recent years actively provides a plurality which facilitates vampire diversity: ‘The rules are the game, how else does *Dracula* proceed, if not by the rules of how vampires are to be dealt

with? What are later texts like *Interview with the Vampire* or *Blade* or *Buffy* concerned with if not the rules of vampirism and the negotiation of those rules, the exploration of the boundaries, not necessarily of subjectivity or gender or society, but of the rules themselves?’ (Warwick 2007: 12) By their sheer diversity alone, from imitating to (re)burying *Dracula*, in this transformational period in vampire studies from the late 1980s to late 1990s, it is evident that vampires, whether featured as central or peripheral characters on TV, through to large blockbuster films, continue to play with, challenge, and occasionally discard the rulebook. These peripheral postmodern TV vampires are the overlooked yet quintessential gothic rule-breakers; at once indebted to and rebelling against Stoker’s master vampire.

## REFERENCES

- Auerbach, Nina. (1995), *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Badley Linda. (1996), ‘The Rebirth of the Clinic: The Body as Alien in The X-Files’, in David Lavery, Angela Hague and Marla Cartright, (eds.), *Deny All Knowledge: Reading The X-Files*. London: Faber & Faber, pp. 148-67
- Bigelow, Kathryn. (1987), *Near Dark*, USA: F/M productions.
- Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. WB, USA, 1997-2003.
- Clover, Carol J., (1993), *Men, Women and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Craven, Wes. (1977), *The Hills Have Eyes*, USA: Blood Relations Co.
- Demme, Jonathan. (1991), *The Silence of the Lambs*, USA: Orion Pictures.
- Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>: The Series*. Syndication/CBS, USA, 1987-1990.
- Hiebert, Ted. (2012), *In Praise of Nonsense: Aesthetics, Uncertainty and Postmodern Identity*. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press.
- Hooper, Tobe. (1974), *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*, USA: Vortex.
- Hutcheon, Linda. (1988), *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. New York: Routledge.
- Jameson, Fredric. (1985), ‘Postmodernism and consumer society’, in Hal Foster, (ed.), *Postmodern Culture*, London: Pluto Press, pp.111-25.
- Jameson, Fredric. (1991), *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. London: Verso.

Jowett, Lorna. and Abbott, Stacey. (2013), *TV Horror: Investigating the dark side of the small screen*, London: I.B. Tauris.

Kellner, Douglas. (1999), 'The X-Files and the aesthetics and politics of postmodern pop', *The Journal of aesthetics and art criticism*, 57:2, pp.161-175.

Kellner, Douglas. (2004), 'The X-Files and Conspiracy - A Diagnostic Critique', in Peter Knight, (ed.), *Conspiracy Nation: The Politics of Paranoia in Postwar America*, New York: NYU Press. pp. 205-32.

Muir, John Kenneth. (2008), *Terror Television: American Series 1970-1999*, Jefferson, NC: McFarland.

*Quantum Leap*. NBC, USA, 1989-1993.

Ramsland, Katherine. (1998), *Piercing the Darkness: Undercover with Vampires in America Today*, New York: HarperCollins.

Rice, Anne. (1992), *The Tale of the Body Thief*, New York: Knopf.

\_\_\_\_\_. (1988), *The Queen of the Damned*, New York: Knopf.

\_\_\_\_\_. (1985), *The Vampire Lestat*, New York: Knopf.

*Tales from the Crypt*. HBO, USA, 1989-1996.

*True Blood*. HBO, USA, 2008-2014

Wakefield, Sarah. R., (2016), 'Vamps and Camp: Sci-Fi Television Mocks the Monstrous Texan', *Slayage: The Journal of Whedon Studies*, [Online] 14:1, winter 2016. [no pagination], [www.whedonstudies.tv/uploads/2/6/2/8/26288593/wakefield\\_slayage\\_14.1.pdf](http://www.whedonstudies.tv/uploads/2/6/2/8/26288593/wakefield_slayage_14.1.pdf) Accessed: 31 July 2016.

Warwick, Alexandra. (2007), 'Feeling Gothicky?' *Gothic Studies*, 9:1, May 2007, pp. 5-15

Wheatley, Helen. (2006), *Gothic Television*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

*X-Files, The*. Fox, USA, 1993-2002; 2016 -.

## CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS

**Sorcha Ní Fhlainn** is Senior Lecturer in Film Studies and American Studies and a founding member of the Manchester Centre for Gothic Studies at Manchester Metropolitan University. She is Reviews Editor for *Gothic Studies*, the journal of the International Gothic Association. She has published widely in gothic and horror studies, popular culture and film studies.

Recent and upcoming titles include *Clive Barker: Dark Imaginer* (Manchester University Press, 2017) and *Postmodern Vampires: Film, Fiction, and Popular Culture* (Palgrave, 2018).

Contact: Manchester Metropolitan University, Department of English, 70 Oxford Street, Room 2.04, Manchester, M1 5NH, UK.

Email: s.ni-fhlainn@mmu.ac.uk

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> For more on this, see Lorna Jowett and Stacey Abbott. (2013). *TV Horror: Investigating the dark side of the small screen*. London: I.B. Tauris.

<sup>2</sup> Both the brief revival of *Dark Shadows* in 1991 and *Forever Knight* (1992-1996) failed to gain any sustained cultural traction. *Kindred: The Embraced* (loosely based on a vampire role-playing game *Vampire: The Masquerade*) also aired for one eight-episode season in 1996 before being cancelled by the Fox network.

<sup>3</sup> For more on this see, 'A Nightmare on Elm Street, Sequels Galore and the Decline of the Slasher Film' in Adam Rockoff. (2002), *Going to Pieces: The Rise and Fall of the Slasher Film*. Jefferson: McFarland. pp. 151-78

<sup>4</sup> For much more on this see, Joseph Crawford. (2014), *Twilight of the Gothic?: Vampire fiction and the Rise of Paranormal Romance, 1991-2012*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

<sup>5</sup> This exclusionary tone is still evident in Rice's later instalments of the Vampire Chronicles as late as *Prince Lestat* (2014), in which she dismisses young and beautiful vampire fledglings that have sprung up in a vampire population boom across the globe as irritants who neither understand nor appreciate undeath.

<sup>6</sup> For more on this see, Siorcha Ní Fhlainn. (2014), 'Old Things, Fine Things: Of Vampires, Antiques and Timelessness.' *Vampires: Myths of the Past and Future*. Simon Bacon, Katarzyna Malgorzata (eds). London: Peter Lang. pp. 183-210

---

<sup>7</sup> The episode is filled with numerous and inconsistent citations, including using familiar gothic spaces such as Jack the Ripper's foggy and cobblestoned London streets, and featuring *Dracula*'s own author Bram Stoker as a tragic character, all to conceal cracks in the narrative. In the episode, the cape is supposed to make its wearer irresistible rather than vampirise them, it renders the transformation visually awkward and confusing. As the symbolism of the cape is more indebted to Bela Lugosi's own costuming as Dracula, it can be read as a substitute for entering into layers of vampiric myth in the episode.

<sup>8</sup> For more on this, see Stacey Abbott. 'High Concept Thrills and Chills: The Horror Blockbuster.' Ian Conrich (ed.). *Horror Zone: The Cultural Experience of Contemporary Horror Cinema*. London: I.B. Tauris. pp. 27-44; Sorchá Ní Fhlainn. (2010) "'His Eyes Blazed Redly": Skinning, Satanism and Mephistophelian Romance – Hannibal Lecter and Bram Stoker's Dracula (1992)' *Our Monstrous (S)kin: Blurring the Boundaries Between Monsters and Humanity*. Sorchá Ní Fhlainn (ed.) Oxford: The Inter-Disciplinary Press. pp. 89-111

<sup>9</sup> Ramsland traces the disappearance of journalist Susan Walsh who was investigating vampire activity in Manhattan in 1996. It is highly unlikely that Walsh disappeared due to her investigative work on vampire lifestylers as her article was not published in *The Village Voice* because it was deemed overly sympathetic and lacking in objectivity. Walsh had previously worked as a stripper and revealed in documentary interviews that she had first-hand experience of stalking. The police have not solved her disappearance and the case remains open.

<sup>10</sup> The McMartin preschool case dates from 1983 – 1990. The accusations of satanic child abuse were made in 1983; the pre-trial investigation lasted from 1984-1987, and the trial was conducted from 1987-1990. No convictions were made and the trial was dropped in 1990. However, this case, coupled with the cultural emphasis on real serial killer cases (Bundy, Gacy, Ramirez et al) during the 1980s, heightened paranoia and moral panic in the maelstrom of aggressive and sensationalist media coverage.

<sup>11</sup> Geraldo Rivera famously made a prime time TV special in 1988 on the rise of Satanic Cults in America, which, while clearly ridiculous and overblown for its target audience, paralleled the McMartin preschool trial. However, such repeated invocations of devil worship as the root and cause of evil in 1980s America ties quite neatly into the reaffirmation of 'Family Values' as promoted by Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority group and their support of President Reagan. Reagan's political relationship with the evangelical right provided a



---

platform for some religious figures to claim they were defending the nation from extremist (and largely unproven) cults and groups.

<sup>12</sup> The episodes which feature some form of cult activity in the second season of *The X-Files* include: '3' (2.7); 'Red Museum' (2.10); 'Die Hand Die Verletzt' (2.14); and 'Our Town' (2.24). In 'Die Hand Die Verletzt' for example, the cult is a failure due to the lapsed faith of its members, and their activities amount to nothing magical. However, the Devil is accidentally summoned by an innocent student and, in the guise of a supply teacher, takes revenge on the cult's errant members and their children to cleanse the community of its own unworthy worshippers. The cult in itself is a meaningless red herring but the supernatural intrusion in the community is nonetheless real.