Shakespeare en devenir
ISSN électronique : 1958-9476
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Shakespeare's Vampire: *Hubris* in *Coriolanus*, Meyer's *Twilight,* and Stoker's *Dracula*

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Publication en ligne le 22 décembre 2011

Résumé

Shakespeare's work long antedates the initial influx of Eastern European legends about vampires into Western Europe in the eighteenth century. In *Coriolanus*, however, Shakespeare does present violence, including the verbal or emotional violence of scorn and insult, as a kind of narcissistic feeding upon others. Using metaphors drawn from politics and economics, as well as hunting and the consumption of food, Shakespeare foregrounds the opposition between two very different forms of interpersonal relatedness: healthy narcissism, represented by the Roman marketplace, and unhealthy narcissism or "pride," symbolized by the "lonely dragon," Coriolanus. Pride aims at self-sufficient, one-sided control over one's own self-esteem, independent of the opinions of others. Healthy narcissism is in contrast a reciprocal, voluntary sharing of the burden of self-esteem regulation. The contempt that is so characteristic of Coriolanus, including outright violence, is in other words a maladaptive form of self-validation,

forcing others to metabolize his own disavowed shame, rather than suffer it himself, or else plead for consolation. Drawing upon Aristotle's definition of *hubris*, as well as Demosthenes' forensic oratory, I then explain that the ancient Greeks developed a very precise category for such behavior. The term *hubris*, often thought to mean simply presumption or arrogance, in fact does not refer to a state of mind at all, but instead to a type of action: "outrageous" conduct designed to humiliate someone else. Shakespeare represents this kind of *hubris* in *Coriolanus* as a cannibalistic preying upon others, like that of a monster or a predatory animal. Legends about vampires can be understood in like manner as a representation of narcissism. In our own time, narcissism is more likely to be expressed in snubs and slights than in the spectacular violence and scathing censure of Coriolanus' Rome. Nevertheless, the basic impulse is the same. In order to explain Shakespeare's representation of the connection between pride and *hubris*, I compare his paragon of unhealthy narcissism, Coriolanus, to the variation on the myth of the vampire currently popular in books, television, and movies such as the *Twilight* and *Vampire Diaries* series. I also distinguish this new, twenty-first-century vampire from Bram Stoker's nineteenth-century version. Present-day versions of the vampire legend no longer stress the sinfulness of sexual libertinism, but instead, like Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, the social disruptiveness of misguided narcissism.

Texte intégral

Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* presents two types of narcissism. Healthy narcissism such as that of the Roman marketplace aims at collaborative regulation of self-esteem, praising and being praised in return. Unhealthy narcissism or "pride" such as that of the "lonely dragon" (IV.1.30), Coriolanus, strives in contrast for self-sufficient self-validation, independent of others altogether. This attempt to break free from social relations proves impossible in practice. In its efforts to transcend

relatedness, unhealthy narcissism can in fact only distort it instead into destructive exploitation: *hubris.* As it was understood by the ancient Greeks, *hubris* does not in fact correspond to the sense that it currently holds in the vernacular. For authors such as Aristotle and Demosthenes, *hubris* does not mean arrogance, but instead, any deliberate attempt to humiliate someone else. In order to explain Shakespeare's representation of the connection between pride and *hubris*, I compare his paragon of unhealthy narcissism, Coriolanus, to the variation on the myth of the vampire currently popular in books, television, and movies such as the *Twilight* and *Vampire Diaries* series. I also distinguish this new, twenty-first century vampire from Bram Stoker's nineteenth-century version. Present-day versions of the vampire legend no longer stress the sinfulness of sexual libertinism, but instead, like Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, the social disruptiveness of misguided narcissism.

The title of this paper, "Shakespeare's Vampire," is a conscious anachronism. Although his work does feature several ghosts, Shakespeare does not ever mention the legend of the vampire. Slavic and Eastern European stories about these creatures did not begin to filter into Western Europe in earnest until the eighteenth century. At that time, moreover, they appeared in a slightly different guise than they do today. Initially, the concept of the vampire was pressed into service as a Gothic variation on the Byronic antihero. Dracula's precursor in the English imagination, "Lord Ruthven", was in fact quite literally a reimagining of Lord Byron himself, appearing first in print in a short story, "The Vampyre", by a friend of Byron's, and attributed for many years to Byron himself [1]. Bram Stoker, building upon this template, makes his Dracula a grand, unrepentant sinner, much in the model of Byron's own Manfred, or Shelley's Prometheus.

In the recent revival of this legend, such religious aspects have entirely disappeared. Sin in the Christian sense is no longer a concern. Sex outside of marriage is no longer taboo. Instead, the vampire for us represents the narcissist. In particular, the vampire is a symbol of the kind of seducer, like Don Juan, who takes advantage of emotional vulnerability in order to score

notches on the proverbial bedpost. This kind of untrustworthy, selfish lover, in or outside marriage, subordinates the moral demands of intimacy, a healthy reciprocity of affection, to the indulgence of an unhealthy, self-centered will to power. Natural human love manifests itself in normal sexual relations. Cold-hearted ambition is represented in contrast by a one-sided, literal feeding on the other. The vampire is a metaphor for the predator, the cheater, the manipulator, giving this type's less tangible misdeeds an analogous, concrete incarnation.

In this twenty-first-century form, stripped of any reference to Christianity, the vampire is more clearly analogous to the character that I refer to metaphorically here as "Shakespeare's vampire", Coriolanus. To look for such a character in Shakespeare may seem to suggest an indifference to history. And, I grant, the comparison that I hope to draw does imply some degree of belief in continuities in human nature. In the spirit of psychoanalysis, I will present narcissism here as a perennial characteristic of the human psyche [2]. In the spirit of historicism, however, I would also propose that there are historically-contingent reasons why this drive sometimes comes to the fore [3]. In this case, the prime historical variable is the waxing and waning of Christianity. Shakespeare's Coriolanus reflects a pre-Christian sensibility, just as *Twilight*'s Edward Cullen reflects a post-Christian. Each in that sense illuminates the other. Specifically, moral failure in each case is not presented in terms of sin and damnation, as it is, e.g., in *Macbeth* or *Richard III*, or especially, in the literary template of the Byronic antihero, Milton's description of Satan. Ethics does not revolve around the problem of sex outside marriage, as it does in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* or, in Shakespeare's case, Christian-context plays such as *Measure for Measure.* Instead, the chief problem is the behavior which the ancient Greeks called *hubris,* and it is described through images of disordered eating: cannibalism, hoarding, drinking blood.

It is a common misconception that the word *hubris* in ancient Greek means "pride" or "arrogance". The mistake is so widespread, in fact, that it is in this sense that the word has entered the English language. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "hubris", as it is used in English, as "presumption, orig.

toward the gods; pride, excessive self-confidence". In a review of extant critical literature, classicist N. R. E. Fisher summarizes what he calls the "traditional" view of *hubris.* "It is the act, word, or even thought whereby the mortal forgets the limitations of mortality, seeks to acquire the attributes of the gods, or competes with the gods, or boasts overconfidently; or it is any act or word by which a man incurs the hostility of the gods, or even arouses their jealousy". *Hubris* at its simplest "may even be no more than the possession of great good fortune, which in itself offends the gods [4]". Within this paradigm, Greek tragedy is understood as structured around the relationship of *hubris* and *nemesis*. At its core is a religious lesson: the gods punish human insolence or overreaching with retribution, *nemesis,* such as the thunderbolt which hurls Prometheus down to Tartarus in *Prometheus Bound,* or the Furies who haunt Orestes in the *Oresteia.*

This interpretation of *hubris* is familiar and pervasive. Over the course of the latter half of the twentieth century, however, it has been shown to be for the most part incorrect. Chiefly, it fails to take into account more normative uses of the term apparent in contemporary legal records, as well as political oratory. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle offers a definition.

> *Hubris* is doing and saying things at which the victim incurs shame, not in order that one may achieve anything other than what is done but simply to get pleasure from it. For those who act in return for something do not commit *hubris*; they avenge themselves. The cause of the pleasure for those committing *hubris* is that by harming people they think themselves to be superior. That is why the young and the rich are *hubristai*; they think they are superior when committing *hubris.* Dishonor is characteristic of *hubris*, and he who dishonors someone slights him, since what has no worth has no honor, either for good or bad (1378b23-4) [5].

This interpretation of *hubris* is not idiosyncratic. In contemporary Athenian law, for example, *hubris* refers to a specific kind of criminal offense: violence, including verbal expressions of contempt, undertaken for the purpose of deliberately humiliating someone else. As a paradigmatic

instance of such intentional shaming, Aristotle cites Agamemnon's depriving Achilles of his concubine, Briseis, in the *Iliad,* after Achilles speaks out against him in counsel. "That is why Achilles says when he is angry: "he dishonored me; for he has himself taken my prize, and keeps it" (1.356) and "he treated me as if I were a wanderer without honor" (9.648), since he is angry for those reasons [6]".

For the Athenians, violence designed to violate an individual's sense of dignity was as a much more serious crime than simple assault and battery. As a specific legal charge, *hubris* could carry any penalty that a jury decided to impose, not excluding that of summary execution [7]. Thus, for example, in his speech *Against Conon*, Demosthenes as prosecutor is much exercised to accuse the defendant of *hubris,* as well as merely brawling in the streets. He not only beat up the plaintiff, but he also mocked him and exulted over him. Demosthenes recounts, "He began to crow, mimicking fighting cocks that have won a battle, and his fellows bade him flap his arms against his sides like wings [8]". *Hubris* could extend, moreover, to sexual misconduct, as well physical violence and verbal mockery. Like Machiavelli, who warns his prince to stay away from his subjects' women, Aristotle in his *Politics* presents sexual humiliation of other men as a dangerous mistake. He presents several hair-raising stories of despots sexually taunting their inferiors, cuckolding them, or appropriating their lovers, offenses that he defines as *hubris*, and goes on to show that such behavior is particularly likely to provoke reprisals, including outright assassination [9].

In his speech *Against Meidias,* Demosthenes denounces *hubris* in the strongest possible terms. "Nothing, men of Athens, nothing in the world is more intolerable than a personal outrage [i.e. *hubris*], nor is there anything that more deserves your resentment [10]". Encountering such language, it is easy, perhaps, to understand how critics strongly affected by Christianity might conflate *hubris* with pride. In the Christian paradigm, pride is the ultimate sin; nothing is "more intolerable", to borrow Demosthenes' diction, than presumption before God. One might see here, as well, a typical modern tendency to give priority to the interior, the subjective. *Hubris* for the ancient Greeks, however, was an external action.

Demosthenes, for example, inveighs against Meidias in this case, a wealthy political opponent, for slapping him in public, not for his frame of mind when he did so. *Hubris* is not pride; more precisely, *hubris* is behavior that infringes upon someone else's pride, shaming that person. It is an act, an abuse of power, violating its victim's sense of his or her own dignity and social value.

In this original sense of the term, as a kind of emotional assault, the behavior of the serial seducer is also a form of *hubris,* albeit less obviously so than a slap in the face.Initially, the "Don Juan" type flatters his victims, enabling him to exercise various kinds of power over them. The end result, however, once he moves on, is that his ex-lovers feel shamed and valueless. In the mythology of the vampire, this sense of abandonment is represented by physical debilitation and death. Nowadays, as a result of what Norbert Elias calls "the civilizing process", *hubris* tends to be more subtle than it would have been in ancient Greece or Rome: wordless snubs or slights, or passive-aggressive verbal jabs, rather than explicit insults, scathing curses, or spectacular violence [11]. The vampire legend is useful, therefore, because it gives concrete representation to much more insidious, immaterial forms of social selfishness. Blood-sucking is a figure for less-tangible, emotional exploitation.

If *hubris* is an action, however, rather than a mindset, then a question naturally arises. What is the cause of such behavior? What impulse prompts it, within the psyche? To answer this question, I will draw upon Heinz Kohut's post-Freudian psychoanalytic concept of narcissism as an innate drive independent of the libido, capable of positive as well as negative expression in everyday life [12]. The concept of "healthy narcissism" originates with Kohut, and, given the connotations of "narcissism", the phrase can come across as paradoxical. Alternative formulations such as "the pursuit of approval" or "the desire for praise" would be equally true to its sense. Kohut, however, meant to be counter-intuitive. As a psychoanalyst in the 1960s and 70s, Kohut observed that narcissism was treated in theory with scrupulous neutrality, but in clinical practice with "sarcasm, ridicule, even mockery [13]". This discrepancy he found troubling,

as well as key elements of Freud's theory of narcissism. According to Freud, narcissistic behavior reflects an investment of the libido in the self, as opposed to the more mature choice of an external love-object. Kohut, however, came to see narcissism as a distinct drive, independent of the libido. Narcissism, according to this understanding, is not necessarily regressive, but instead, rightly harnessed, can be an engine of healthy activity.

In *Coriolanus*, Shakespeare uses metaphors drawn from politics and economics, as well as the consumption of food, to illustrate two opposing forms of interpersonal interrelatedness: healthy narcissism and unhealthy narcissism. Maurice Charney sees "the most extensive and important motif in the play" as that of "food and eating [14]". Stanley Cavell sees Shakespeare in *Coriolanus* as fascinated more specifically with cannibalism, as for example when Menenius worries that Rome might become an "unnatural dam," eating her own children, or when Coriolanus accuses the plebians of wanting to "feed on one another" (III.1.288-292, I.1.189) [15]. The evidence for Cavell's interpretation greatly multiplies if one also includes myriad conceits in which human beings are described as animals: some predators, and others, prey [16]. Coriolanus himself is described three times as a "dragon" or "dragon-like" (IV.1.30, IV.7.23, V.4.13). Like vampirism in *Dracula* or *Twilight,* cannibalism in *Coriolanus* represents *hubris*. The subject "feeds" on the object like a vampire on its victim, sapping the object's strength through scorn, banishment, or even violence in order to affirm and validate its own.

Like Shakespeare's tragedy, the modern vampire legend aims to illustrate a single, central contrast: the distinction between two rival forms of intersubjective interaction. Unhealthy or "pathological" narcissism, like vampirism, aims at self-sufficient, one-sided control over one's own self-esteem, independent of the opinions of others. It separates the individual from the community and tends to express itself in *hubris.* Healthy or "normal" narcissism consists in contrast in a reciprocal, voluntary sharing of the burden of self-esteem regulation, through various forms of mutual affirmation. The self-destructive contempt for others that is such a marked

characteristic of Coriolanus' personality, often flaring up into outright violence, can be understood, in other words, as a maladaptive striving for self-validation. Through the behavior that the ancient Greeks defined as *hubris*, Coriolanus tries to force other people to serve as involuntary scapegoats, metabolizing his disavowed and projected shame, rather than internalize it, suffer it himself, and more plaintively ask them for reassurance and acceptance. He tries to exploit them, like livestock, rather than participate in a common sense of shared vulnerability.

In his essay on *Coriolanus,* "Who does the wolf love?", Stanley Cavell observes that the play draws attention to the social circulation of "money", "food", and "words", and that in context, as explanations of Coriolanus' fundamental "narcissism", these currencies are symbolically interchangeable [17]. In each case, the tension is one between hoarding and sharing, or more abstractly, between isolation and participation. For example, one of the most oft-observed features of *Coriolanus* is its protagonist's discomfort with language [18]. Coriolanus is prone to long, socially-awkward silences, most notably in response to the seriatim pleading of Cominius, Menenius, and Volumnia, as well as other forms of reticence, as for example when he balks at seeking the political support of the plebs. "To what extent can Coriolanus … be understood as seeing his salvation in silence?" Cavell asks [19]. Taciturnity is attractive to Coriolanus because, in its opacity, he feels safely separate from any kind of intersubjectivity. As Cavell points out, however, even silence is a signifier. "Silence is not the absence of language; there is no such absence for human beings; in this respect, there is no world elsewhere [20]". "There is a world elsewhere!" (III.3.135) [21] Like Cavell, Stanley Fish seizes upon this phrase as expressing a fantasy of an impossible escape. "The truth is that there is no world elsewhere, at least not in the sense that Coriolanus intends … there are only other … communities, and every one of them exacts as the price of membership acceptance of its values and meanings [22]".

When Coriolanus does speak, his language is harsh, laconic, and disjointed. Michael West and Myron Silberstein see this style as a rhetorical strategy: Coriolanus is an "anti-Ciceronian orator [23]". Coriolanus' Attic style, like his

silences, says much about his attitude towards language itself. Language by its very nature is a communal phenomenon: a medium of communication and, at the same time, a tissue of convention. Most critics of *Coriolanus* take this as a self-evident premise. Cavell describes language as "metaphysically something shared [24]". James Calderwood argues that "language, to be language, must be public [25]". Stanley Fish writes, "language is wholly and intractably conventional [26]". To use language at all is to participate willy-nilly in what Fish calls, "an interpretive community". For Coriolanus, however, this loss of autonomy is all but intolerable. "He wants to be independent of society and of the language with which it constitutes itself and its values [27]". When Coriolanus does speak, his paratactic syntax and asyndetic style, leaving clauses unconnected, moving abruptly from one subject to the next, breaking off unexpectedly mid-sentence, manifests and represents an internal, psychological rebellion against interpersonal relatedness per se [28].

Human thought is inevitably embedded in interpersonal commitments, influences, and dependency. Kicking against the pricks, Coriolanus, however, tries to set up what Calderwood calls a "private language" or "private verbal standard [29]". He insists on the validity of his own grandiose self-image, independent of broader consensus or more modest conventions of self-expression. "Would you have me / False to my nature?" (III.2.14-15) "Must I / With my base tongue give to my noble heart / A lie?" (III.2.99-101) "I will not do't; / Lest I surcease to honor mine own truth" (III.2.120-121). What these naked rejections of public opinion reveal is that Coriolanus is not so much concerned with language in and of itself as he is with what it both symbolizes and communicates: the reflected appraisals of what Fish calls an "interpretive community". Language is represented in the play by synecdoche as "words", "tongues", or "voices", but language itself is a symbol of something more intangible: "good report" (I.1.32, I.3.20, I.9.53) [30]. To be thought well of by others: this is the butterfly that Coriolanus is doomed to chase, and Volumnia is right to see that labor as, for him, a kind of infernal torture, like that of Sisyphus. "Prithee now", she

says, “Go, and be rul’d; although I know thou hadst rather / Follow thine enemy in a fiery gulf / Than flatter him in a bower” (III.2.89-92).

Like symbols of language, economic images in *Coriolanus* chiefly represent internal, psychological concerns about self-evaluation. The play presents two basic models of economic activity. One is that of aristocratic hoarding: “storehouses cramm’d with grain” (I.1.79-80). The other is that of free trade in an open market. For example, much of the stage business of the play consists in Coriolanus going to and from “the marketplace [31]”. Menenius and Volumnia convince him to go there only much against his wishes, and, when what he calls the “price o’ th’ consulship” proves too high, he leaves it in a huff (II.3.74). He does not want to submit his goods to independent evaluation; he has a certain “price” in mind *a priori*, and he wants the market to bend to it. It is no accident therefore that the plebeians are referred to in contrast as “trades” (III.2.134, IV.1.13). Theirs is a tacit bargain, like that of a “marketplace”: I will honor you, if you will honor me. I will allow you to connect to me, if you will allow me to connect to you. Through healthy narcissistic transference, the burden of attaining the ideal is distributed and eased. Shakespeare shows this as an idyllic state of affairs. People acknowledge each other; each participant, “citizen”, or “neighbor” knows and is known; praises and is praised. After Coriolanus is banished, the tribune Sicinius rejoices to see “tradesmen singing in their shops and going / About their functions friendly” (IV.6.8-9). Coriolanus in contrast balks at the idea of participating in a “commonwealth” of mutually-reinforced self-esteem (IV.6.14).

What Shakespeare expresses politically, as well as economically, in the idea of a “commonwealth”, the mythology of the vampire expresses in images of marriage, romantic fidelity, and genuine friendship. The narcissism of the vampire imperils domesticity, just as, in *Coriolanus,* the narcissism of the aristocrat imperils the ship of state. As a point of comparison, I will begin with *Dracula*, first published in 1897. As in earlier stories about “Lord Ruthven”, Stoker uses Eastern European legends about vampires to reflect on nineteenth-century Byronism [32]. The willful grand sinner flouts moral convention, much as a vampire violates the laws of nature. *Dracula* made

vampires famous; however, the novel is not altogether a romanticization. Twentieth-first-century vampires are glamorous, beautiful; Stoker, however, takes pains to portray Dracula as at times repugnant. For example, trapped in Dracula's castle in Romania, the solicitor, Jonathan Harker, whom the vampire has hired to help him learn English finds himself increasingly horrified by his host. "As the Count leaned over me and his hands touched me, I could not repress a shudder. It may have been that his breath was rank, but a horrible feeling of nausea came over me [33]". Even later, after the Count has fed on "fresh blood", and his youth has been "half renewed", he remains for Jonathan an object of disgust and horror: "a filthy leech" with a "bloated face [34]".

That said, the impression that Dracula makes on women is more ambivalent. Meeting Dracula on the streets of London, Jonathan's wife, Mina, does not find him particularly handsome, but instead, "fierce and nasty", "a tall, thin man, with a beaky nose". "His face was not a good face", she concludes; "it was hard, and cruel, and sensual [35]". When the vampire visits her at night, however, and drinks her blood, she finds herself "bewildered". "Strangely enough", she recalls, "I did not want to hinder him [36]". Her friend, Lucy Westenra, cannot remember her encounter with the Count clearly, but does suggest that she felt some degree of attraction. "I didn't quite dream", she explains. "It all seemed to be real … I was afraid of something – I don't know what … Then I had a vague memory of something long and dark with red eyes … and something very sweet and very bitter all around me at once [37]". The same language of "sweet" and "bitter" appears earlier, as well, in Jonathan Harker's encounter with Dracula's harem of female vampires in his castle in Transylvania, where it is treated to a much more clear-cut elaboration. "The fair girl advanced and bent over me till I could feel the movement of her breath upon me. Sweet it was in one sense, honey-sweet, and sent the same tingling through the nerves as her voice, but with a bitter underlying the sweet, a bitter offensiveness, as one smells in blood". Jonathan finds the undead women "both thrilling and repulsive". Like Lucy, he feels fear, but at the same time, attraction. "There was something about them that made me uneasy, some

longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked desire that they would kiss me with those red lips [38]".

Fairly obviously, the subtext in these episodes is the simultaneous temptation and perceived sinfulness of extramarital sex. Lucy and Mina are either engaged or, as the story progresses, married, to key male protagonists, and these bonds are made much of as a healthy, Christian alternative to the night visits of the vampire, Dracula. Jonathan's first thought, after confessing in his journal his "wicked desire" for the female vampires in Dracula's castle, is that that confession might trouble his fiancée, Mina Murray. "It is not good to note this down, lest some day it should meet Mina's eyes and cause her pain; but it is the truth [39]". The threat to fidelity in marriage is coupled with a threat to child-rearing. Just as Dracula preys upon women, so also the women in his thrall, the "nosferatu" whom Jonathan calls "semi-demons", including in time the unfortunate Lucy, prey upon children [40]. With this pattern in mind, Mina's reflections on the contemporary idea of the "New Woman" take on a graver import [41]. Mina associates the group she calls "the 'New Women' writers" with sexual independence and "appetites", and, by juxtaposing this allusion with her husband's, Jonathan's, account of female vampires, as well as the conversion of her sweet-tempered friend, Lucy Westernra, into a ravening, seductive predator, Stoker suggests that these writers' avant-garde line of thought, a kind of proto-feminism, presents a danger akin to vampirism [42].

Taken as a whole, Bram Stoker's novel, *Dracula*, written at the turn of the century, gives voice in symbolic guise to a fear that a new laxity in sexual mores, one associated with aristocracy, modernity, and irreligion, as well as feminism, will bring about a disintegration of domesticity, as well as quite literally the damnation of souls. Dracula's nobility, in the genealogical sense, is emphasized throughout; upon receiving Jonathan Harker at his castle, he gives a long speech about his own status as a *boyar,* a high title in the Eastern European aristocracy, and "the pride of his house and name [43]". He recoils at the thought of being buried among "the common dead" and is repelled by "common garlic": a symbol of the peasantry [44].

The association with modernity is more subtle. Trapped in Dracula's castle, Jonathan Harker muses on his own surprising powerlessness. "The old centuries had, and have, powers of their own which mere 'modernity' cannot kill [45]". Van Helsing's mastery of science, like that of Lucy's suitor, Dr. John Seward, proves useless; instead, the protagonists find that they must turn to Christian tradition. Over time, Jonathan discovers that the Transylvanian Catholicism which he initially dismisses as "superstition" is in fact a marvelously effective defense against supernatural evil [46]. Crucifixes and Communion wafers prove to be indispensable. Small wonder, perhaps; Dracula and his various undead mistresses are associated throughout with the devil and hellfire. They are evil, in other words, in an explicitly Christian sense of that term. Jonathan describes them repeatedly as "diabolical": "the devil and his children", "the devils of the Pit! [47]".

In present-day vampire mythology, this Christian subtext vanishes almost entirely. Much in contrast to Bram Stoker's *Dracula,* Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight*, for example, makes almost no reference to Christianity at all. One "large, wooden cross", not even a crucifix, does make an appearance, but in a manner that amounts to an ostentatious dismissal of its relevance. It is an "ornament" in the vampires' home, and an object of their laughter. The human protagonist, Bella, stares at it "incredulously", but her host, the vampire and love-interest, Edward Cullen, is merely amused. "Edward chuckled at my bewildered expression. 'You can laugh,' he said. 'It *is* sort of ironic [48]". Likewise, marriage is neither here nor there. Bella's parents are divorced; Edward is a foundling; when the two lovers consider whether or not to have sexual relations, the sanctity of marriage, in the Christian sense, is simply not a concern. Lust in the human, sexual sense is not seen as sinful, but instead as a relatively positive force, in comparison to the vampires' deadly and unnatural hunger for blood.

In Meyer's *Twilight* mythology, the chief element of suspense is whether or not Edward Cullen, the vampire, will be able to control his "thirst" for Bella's blood, an impulse that he compares to addiction, and instead be able to maintain a more normal, "human" romantic relationship, one in which he sees her, not as prey, but as an object of "love" [49]. "It's not only

your company I crave!" he says. "Never forget *that.* Never forget that I am more dangerous to you than I am to anyone else [50]". Edward freely confesses that he is new to the experience of love, and that most vampires never entertain the emotion. "I'm not used to feeling so human", he says [51]. "You're resurrecting the human in me [52]". Much unlike Bram Stoker's Count Dracula, Meyer's Edward Cullen is never described as either disgusting or diabolical. Instead, Bella insists that he is extraordinarily handsome, often comparing his appearance to that of an "angel". He does not sleep in a coffin during the day, like Dracula; he avoids the sun, but only because it makes him glow and sparkle beautifully, in a way that would draw unwanted attention, if he allowed it to happen in public. This effect of the sunlight on his skin closely resembles and symbolizes his ability to "dazzle" normal humans and convince them effortlessly, by the sheer power of his glamorous presence, to do what he asks [53]. The only physical sign that something is awry is the coldness of his skin, which Bella describes variously as "frigid" or "icy" [54]. Later she learns that werewolves, vampires' age-old enemies, call them simply, "the cold ones", in reference to this tell-tale physical sign [55].

Here at last, we begin to see some degree of more detailed overlap with Stoker's Dracula. Like Edward Cullen's, Dracula's hand is "cold as ice – more like the hand of a dead than a living man [56]". Stoker's preferred adjective, however, fulfilling a similar symbolic function as Meyer's "cold", is "hard". In *Twilight*, Edward's foster-sister, Anna, herself also a vampire, is described as having "obsidian eyes [57]". Edward's skin is described as "cold and hard, like a stone [58]". So also, in *Dracula,* Jonathan Harker describes the laughter of female vampires as "mirthless, hard, soulless", "as hard as though the sound never could have come through the softness of human lips [59]". When Lucy becomes a vampire, Jonathan is astonished to see her "sweetness … turned to adamantine, heartless cruelty [60]". These physical attributes – "cold", "hard" – reflect and symbolize the most essential feature of a vampire's characteristic personality: contempt for the weak. Meyer repeatedly describes Edward Cullen as "arrogant", "patronizing", "smug", "condescending", "cutting", "mocking", "sarcastic", and especially,

"smirking" [61]. In this insistence on the vampire's arrogance, Meyer seizes upon a facet of the vampire legend that also appears in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. However, her relatively simple prose style, as well as her pruning-away of other legendary elements, makes it more salient. Stoker, too, ascribes to Dracula a "lion-like disdain" for his human prey, and refers repeatedly to his "mocking smile": an "evil smile", "a grin of malice", a "contemptuous sneer" [62].

Like the *hubristai* in Aristotle's description of *hubris*, or the mythical Don Juan, the vampire feels himself to be "superior" to his victims, the living – or in Edward's case, his potential victims. This impulse towards scorn, symbolized by the vampire's hunger for blood, is at war within the vampire with a contrary impulse towards love, symbolized by some degree of preserved humanity. In the case of Edward Cullen, this psychomachia is relatively obvious. "On the one hand", Edward says, "I've told you … the hunger – the thirst – that, deplorable creature that I am, I feel for you. … But… there are other hungers … I have human instincts – they may be buried deep, but they're there [63]". In the case of Dracula, it may seem incongruous to think of such a "monster" in love; however, Stoker does suggest it, at one point. While Jonathan watches, lost in reverie, one of the female vampires accuses Dracula, coquettishly, of indifference to her. "You yourself never loved; you never love!" His reply, "in a soft whisper", is surprising: "Yes, I too can love", he tells her, as well as the other two undead women with her. "You yourselves can tell it from the past". Then, as a token, so to speak, of his affection, he gives them a gift: a "dreadful bag" containing "a half smothered child" [64].

In Shakespeare's tragedy, the basic lesson that Coriolanus repeatedly fails to learn is that interpersonal relatedness cannot be escaped. Frustration with this fundamental human given, our dependence on other people, is what gives rise to *hubris*, including the more subtle forms of *hubris* that vampirism represents, as well as Coriolanus' more straightforward violence and insults.Recognizing weakness in his own person, specifically, his dependence on the approval of others, the narcissist disavows it and projects it instead onto some weaker object, as for example Coriolanus

does with the Roman plebs. Dracula seducing young women, and these women then in turn feeding on children, is a figurative representation of the same kind of narcissistic transference. The other in this process is a scapegoat, called upon to serve as a proxy for the self's own less-than-ideal qualities. It is then altered in lieu of the self, or, if intractable, destroyed. In his monograph *Shame: the Underside of Narcissism*, Andrew P. Morrison describes the effort to "expunge shame" as the fundamental motor of all expressions of contempt, i.e., all *hubris.*

> The subject projects his shame 'into' the object (the container), treats the object with contempt and haughty disdain, and thus distances himself from his own shame, while continuing to interact with it through the interpersonal relationship with the object. This stage represents the identification element of the equation. Finally, the object accepts the projection, contains it to a greater or lesser degree, and must deal with, and alter, the shame (that is, 'metabolize' the projection) [65].

If the object in this case refuses to accept its negative redefinition, this resistance can spark anger or even physical violence.

> One commonly used means of expunging shame is through a massive expression of rage aimed at the 'offending' object (either the unresponsive … object who refuses to mirror or to accept idealization, the rejecting object of attachment, or the 'uncooperating' environment). In addition to expunging shame (reflecting a feeling of helplessness), the rage response also fosters an illusion of power and activity, thus seeming to reverse into activity the sense of passivity and helplessness that itself generates shame [66].

The deliberate violation of another's dignity that the ancient Greeks called *hubris*, whether it be through violence, insults, or more covert means such as confidence games and deceitful seduction, can be understood in this light as essentially a manifestation of an effort, through the psychological phenomenon known as "projection", to escape an incipient awareness of the self's own intractable weakness.

Stanley Cavell observes that “both mother and son,” Volumnia and Coriolanus, describe themselves as “starving,” like Narcissus, and that they both in fact “*are* starving,” in an emotional sense [67]. They crave, paradoxically, the very same relatedness from which they strive to be exempt. *Non illum Cereris, non illum cura quietis / abstrahere inde potest*. (“Concern for neither food nor rest can draw him from thence.”) Narcissus starving beside his own reflection is a symbol of the inability of the proud to sustain their pride independent of the other [68]. Cavell sees Coriolanus as responding “not primarily to his situation with the plebeians, as if trapped by an uncontrollable disdain”, but rather “to his situation with himself, as befits a Narcissus, trapped first by an uncontrollable logic”. “What he incessantly hungers for is … not to hunger, not to desire”: “he hungers to lack nothing, to be complete, like a sword” [69]. However, Coriolanus does not just want to be “desireless”. He wants to be seen as such. “I go alone”, he tells his mother, “like to a lonely dragon” (IV.1.29-30). Nevertheless, he adds, with apparent satisfaction, “his fen” is “fear’d and talk’d of” (IV.1.30-31). On the cusp of his exile, he assures her, “You shall hear from me still” (IV.1.52).

Even in instances of *hubris*, the participation of a responsive object is necessary, if that activity is to be, from the subject’s point of view, successful. To relieve his internal sense of shame, the narcissist must feel a palpable hit. The object of contempt must endure it, must “metabolize” it; the enemy must be wounded, banished, maimed, imprisoned, or put to death, not simply forgotten or ignored. A negative bond, in other words, is still a bond. This is the reason why Coriolanus cannot simply walk away from Rome and become, as he styles himself, “author of himself” (V.3.36). If Rome will not bow to him, then he must destroy it; he cannot simply rest indifferent to its abiding effect on his self-esteem. In Bram Stoker’s *Dracula,* the vampire’s fatal weakness is that he must rest, during the day, in the soil of his own native land. So also, Coriolanus finds, he cannot in the end abandon Rome for what he calls “a world elsewhere” (III.3.135).

Dependence on other people, on the external world, cannot be eradicated; it can only change form. *Hubris* is a product of a desire to escape

relatedness itself; to be wholly independent, not just of other people, but even of the given limits of human existence, including, most notably, death. However, this desire to escape the human condition, to become something other than, superior to, and independent of one's fellow man, is impossible to satisfy completely. Rather than escaping relatedness, the *hubristai* simply end up in twisted, unhealthy variations of the same basic, indissoluble social entanglement. For example, the vampire cheats death; he has the strength of twenty men, etc. Yet, at the same time, he is intensely dependent on the blood of the living. He is, as Meyer puts it, a kind of addict, chained to other people like an alcoholic to his bottle. So also, Coriolanus, for all his posturing, finds himself dependent for his own sense of self-worth on the opinions of the very Romans whom he holds in such contempt.

Notes

[1] The character Lord Ruthven was first created on June 16, 1816, the same night as Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. Due to a storm, Percy and Mary Shelley were forced to spend the night at a villa in Geneva, along with their fellow traveler, Byron, as well as his personal physician, John William Polidori, and they passed the time by inventing tales of the supernatural. Polidori's novella, "The Vampyre", first published in 1819, was based on the story that Byron himself told that night. For the story and its publishing history, see John William Polidori, "'The vampyre' and other writings", ed. Franklin Charles Bishop, Manchester, Carcanet, 2005. The name itself, "Lord Ruthven", is also that of a character who represents Lord Byron in an earlier novel, *Glenarvon,* first published in 1816, by Byron's embittered ex-lover, Lady Caroline Lamb. See Caroline Lamb, *Glenarvon,* ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, Oxford and New York, Woodstock, 1993.

[2] See esp. Heinz Kohut, "Forms and Transformations of Narcissism", *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 14 (1996), p. 243-72.

[3] See esp. Heinz Kohut, *The Restoration of the Self*, New York, International Universities Press, 1971. Cp. Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, New York, Norton, 1978, and R. M. Restak, *The Self-Seekers,* New York: Doubleday, 1982. Kohut's seminal idea of a new age of narcissism, replacing Freud's earlier, more religious age of neurosis, has attracted substantial attention from journalists and cultural critics. For example, from *The New York Times,* 1980-2010: David Brooks, "The Gospel of Mel Gibson" (July 15, 2010); Roger Cohen, "The Narcissus Society" (February 22, 2010); Daniel Goleman, "Narcissism Looming Larger As Root of Personality Woes" (November 1, 1988); Maya Pines, "New Focus on Narcissism Offers Analysts Insight Into Grandiosity and Emptiness" (March 16, 1982); Susan Quinn, "Oedipus vs. Narcissus" (June 30, 1981). For more recent studies, see Jean M. Twenge and W. Keith Campbell, *The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of Entitlement*, New York, Free Press, 2009, and Jean M. Twenge, *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled – and More Miserable Than Ever Before,* New York. Free Press, 2006. For a wide-ranging discussion of the new narcissism in a Francophone context, see especially Alain Ehrenberg, *La Société du Malaise*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 2010.

[4] N. R. E. Fisher, *Hybris: A Study in the Values of Honor and Shame in Ancient Greece*, Warminster, Aris and Phillips, 1992, p. 2-3.

[5] Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, in N. R. E. Fisher, *op. cit.*, 8.

[6] Homer, *Iliad,* in Aristotle, op. cit., 1378b25.

[7] The law is cited in full in Demosthenes 21, *Against Meidias,* 24. Cp. N. R. E. Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 36 ff.

[8] Demosthenes 54, *Against Conon,* 9, in *Demosthenes,* trans. Norman W. DeWitt and Norman J. DeWitt, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, and London, William Heinemann, 1949.

[9] See Aristotle, *Politics,* especially 1314b23-7 and 1315a14-31. Cp. N. R. E. Fisher, *op. cit.*, 21-35.

[10] Demosthenes 21, *Against Meidias,* 46, in Demosthenes, op. cit., trans. DeWitt and DeWitt.

[11] For a variety of humorous examples, see e.g., Nancy McWilliams and Stanley Lependorf, "Narcissistic Pathology of Everyday Life – The Denial of Remorse and Gratitude", *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 26 (1990), p. 430-451.

[12] For more on Heinz Kohut's revisions to Freud's account of narcissism and their influence, see e.g., Allen M. Siegel, *Heinz Kohut and the Psychology of the Self*, New York, Routledge, 1996.

[13] Charles Kligerman, "Memorial for Heinz Kohut, M. D., October 31, 1981," 12, *Annual of Psychoanalysis*, 12 (1984), p. 9-15. Cp. Heinz Kohut, "Forms and Transformations," p. 243.

[14] Maurice Charney, "The Imagery of Food and Eating in *Coriolanus*", in Rudolf Kirk and C. F. Main, eds., *Essays in Literary History*, New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers University Press, 1960, p. 37-54.

[15] Stanley Cavell, "Who does the Wolf Love? Reading *Coriolanus*", *Representations,* 3 (1983), p. 1-20.

[16] For other examples, see J. C. Maxwell, "Animal Imagery in *Coriolanus*", *Modern Language Review* 42 (1947), p. 417-421.

[17] See Stanley Cavell, op. cit., p. 15, for "the words/food equation" and *idem,* 19 n. 9 for the idea of an analogy between "the circulation of words" and "the circulation of money" in *Coriolanus.*

[18] Stanley Cavell: "The theme of silence haunts the play". Cavell, *op. cit.*, p. 17. Cp. Carol M. Sicherman, "*Coriolanus*: The Failure of Words", *English Literary History,* 39 (1972), p. 189-207.

[19] Stanley Cavell, *op. cit.,* p. 17. See also Christina Luckyj, *'A Moving Rhetoricke': Gender and Silence in Early Modern England*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002, p. 109-16; Robert C. Johnson, "Silence and Speech in *Coriolanus*", *Aligarh Journal of English Studies* 5 (1980), p. 190-210; Alwin Thaler, *Shakespeare's Silence,* London, Ayer, 1970, p. 10-13; Maurice Charney, *Shakespeare's Roman Plays,* Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1961, p. 176-196.

[20] Stanley Cavell*, op. cit.,* p. 18.

[21] William Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, ed. Philip Brockbank, London, Thomson, coll. "Arden Shakespeare", 1976.

[22] Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?*,Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1980, p. 218.

[23] Michael West and Myron Silberstein, "The Controversial Eloquence of Shakespeare's Coriolanus – An Anti-Ciceronian Orator?" *Modern Philology* 102 (2005), p. 307-331.

[24] Stanley Cavell, *op. cit.,* p. 16.

[25] James Calderwood, "Coriolanus: Wordless Meanings and Meaningless Words", 217, *Studies in English Literature*, *1500-1900,* 6 (1966), p. 211-224.

[26] Stanley Fish*, op. cit.,* p. 207.

[27] Ibid., p. 206.

[28] See John Porter Houston, *Shakespearean Sentence: A Study in Style and Syntax*, Baton Rouge, Lousiana State University Press, 1988, especially chapter 7, "Syndeton and Asyndeton in *Coriolanus*", p. 159-178.

[29] "In an unstable society whose verbal currency is fluctuating back and forth between inflationary and deflationary levels, one can never know at any time what words are worth. Coriolanus' response is to revert to a private verbal standard in which he gives his own value to words and,

refusing to accept outside currency, “pays himself with being proud” (I.1.33-34)”. James Calderwood, op. cit., p. 218.

[30] On synecdoche in *Coriolanus*, see especially Lawrence Danson, *Tragic Alphabet: Shakespeare’s Drama of Language*, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1974, p. 142-162.

[31] The words “market-place” and “common” occur much more frequently in *Coriolanus* than in any other play by Shakespeare. For “marketplace”, cf. I.5.26; 2.1.231; II.2.159; III.1.29, 111; III.2.93, 104, 131.

[32] For more on this phenomenon in general, as well as its relation to Bram Stoker’s *Dracula,* see esp. Christopher Frayling, *Vampyres: Lord Byron to Count Dracula*, London, Faber and Faber, 1991, Nina Auerbach, *Our Vampires, Ourselves,* Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1995, p. 11-98, and Deborah Lutz, *The Dangerous Lover: Gothic Villains, Byronism, and the Nineteenth-Century Seduction Narrative*, Columbus, OH, Ohio State University Press, 2006.

[33] Bram Stoker, *Dracula,* ed. Andrew Elfenbein, New York, Longman, coll. “Longman Cultural Editions”, 2011, p. 22.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 177.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 289.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 106.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

[39] *Id.*

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

[41] “Across the decade when Stoker was researching and writing *Dracula,* debate raged over the ‘New Woman’, a term used most often by those who

liked the old ways. The New Woman was a single, urban young woman, often working in a new clerical job; she smoked cigars and rode a bicycle and ventured, scandalously, into the world on her own". Andrew Elfenbein, "Gender", 412-413, in Bram Stoker, *Dracula,* ed. Andrew Elfenbein, *op. cit.,* p. 412-416.

[42] Bram Stoker, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 28, 137.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

[46] It is interesting perhaps to note here that Bram Stoker himself was brought up as a Protestant in predominantly Catholic Ireland.

[47] Bram Stoker, *op. cit.*, p. 54-55, 58.

[48] Stephanie Meyer, *Twilight*, New York, Little, Brown, 2005, p. 330.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 267, 278.

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 266.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 278.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 304.

[53] *Ibid.*, p. 168, 209.

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 137, 220.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 124.

[56] Bram Stoker, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

[57] Stephanie Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 174.

[59] Bram Stoker, *op. cit.*, p. 43-44.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 215.

[61] Stephanie Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 271, 62, 224, 64, 263, 255, and for "smirking", p. 61, 172, 214, 243, 483.

[62] Bram Stoker, *op. cit.,* p. 307, 56, 228, 307, 57, 308.

[63] Stephanie Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 277-278.

[64] Bram Stoker, op. cit., p. 44.

[65] Andrew P. Morrison, *Shame: The Underside of Narcissism*, Hillsdale, NJ, Analytic Press, 1989, p. 106.

[66] *Ibid.*, p. 102

[67] Stanley Cavell, "Wolf," 4; cp. *Coriolanus,* IV.2.50-51, II.3.118-119.

[68] Ovid, *Metamophoses,* 3.435-436. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Frank Justus Miller, rev. G. P. Goold, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1984.

[69] Stanley Cavell, *op. cit.,* p. 5.

Pour citer ce document

Par Patrick Gray, «Shakespeare's Vampire: *Hubris* in *Coriolanus*, Meyer's *Twilight,* and Stoker's *Dracula*», *Shakespeare en devenir* [En ligne], N°5 - 2011, Shakespeare en devenir, III. Violence and popular culture: from tale to stage, mis à jour le : 03/12/2019, URL : https://shakespeare.edel.univ-poitiers.fr:443/shakespeare/index.php?id=557.

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