

Tabish Khair and Johan Höglund, eds., *Transnational and Postcolonial Vampires: Dark Blood*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Pp. xiv + 227. £50.00. ISBN 9781137272614.

‘How hungrily empire feeds upon the substance of those whose life it requires to live and to thrive’ (vii). Thus begins Elleke Boehmer’s foreword to *Transnational and Postcolonial Vampires* – a collection of essays exploring the wandering, parasitic, and transmutable figure of the vampire in literature, film and popular culture. From classic vampire fiction to post-9/11 manifestations, this collection succeeds in refashioning the vampire as a global nomadic phantasm, whose presence demands the renegotiation and transgression of borders.

Boehmer’s suggestive opening sentence succinctly foregrounds the concerns at the heart of this volume: race, nation, identity, power and imperial history. The book consists of 11 essays and a poem (by David Punter) that interrogate the vampire motif as a vehicle through which issues of race and empire are confronted and critiqued. *Transnational and Postcolonial Vampires* succeeds in opening up a global dialogue about Gothic, vampiric, narratives and posits the vampire as an emblem of age-old anxieties about Otherness, which continue to haunt the postcolonial present. Höglund and Khair introduce the collection by drawing our attention to the importance of the vampire today ‘in the wake not only of globalization and the worldwide dispersion of culture [...] but also in relation to the aftermath of 9/11 and the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq’ (3). For this reason, *Transnational and Postcolonial Vampires* emphasizes the ubiquity and universality of the vampire trope across disparate cultures and forms, offering the reader a compendium befitting the twenty-first century.

The essays are broadly arranged ‘according to overlapping thematic concerns’ (4) and they cover diverse ground: chapters 2 and 9 examine, in different ways, the fraught relationship between Catholic Ireland and imperial Britain: Robert A. Smart reads *Dracula* and *Carmilla* in light of Anglo-Irish anxieties about identity, while Maria Beville analyses Brendan Kennelly’s use of the vampire myth in *Cromwell: A Poem* (1983) to deconstruct colonial and nationalist discourses. In chapter 3, Gina Wisker explores the postcolonial vampire in texts by African-American and Caribbean women writers such as Octavia Butler and Tananarive Due. These writers, Wisker argues, reconfigure the vampire/ Lamia/ souyoucant in liberating new forms that celebrate community and hybridity. Chapters 4, 5 and 10 focus on cinematic manifestations of the vampire as harbingers of conflict; Justin D. Edwards discusses David Cronenberg’s ‘Terrorist-Vampires’ in relation to the 1970 October Crisis in Canada, Ken Gelder persuasively argues that films such as *Thirst* and *Blood: The Last Vampire* interrogate modern anxieties even as they perform self-conscious citations of earlier vampire texts, and Johan Höglund reflects on the militarization of the vampire in *Underworld*. Given such broad themes (albeit themes centred exclusively on the vampire) there is scarcely enough space within this review to do justice to every chapter. The essays I have summarised here are but a glimpse into the rich scholarship offered in this well-curated volume, which offers original critical approaches to texts indebted in various ways to the vampires of Romantic Literature. This volume illustrates how the vampire figure has evolved and departed from its Gothic and Romantic origins, even as it remains entangled within the discourses of otherness present in texts such as Byron’s *The Giaour* and Keats’s *Lamia*.

It is worth mentioning that there have been some considerable political changes since this book was published in 2013: most recently, the United Kingdom elected to leave the EU and debates surrounding the ‘issue’ of immigration continue to divide the nation. As the editors stress in their introduction, there has never been a better time to discuss the vampire – a figure who is nearly always characterised as a foreigner, in the broadest sense of the word. In the wake of film releases such as Jim Jarmusch’s *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2013) and Ana

Lily Amirpour's Persian vampire thriller *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* (2014), it is clear that Khair and Höglund anticipated that the vampire was, once again, gaining currency in response to a globally unstable political landscape.

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