

# Vampirism as a Metaphor for Addiction in the Cinema of the Eighties (1987-1995)

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## Summary

The use of several substances, commonly known as drugs, increased considerably from the fifties onwards. Use, habit and dependence were linked as cause and effect to economic, health-related and political implications, which contributed to the emergence of the “drug problem” and addiction. The media played an important part in the origin, in the decade of the seventies, of the stereotype of the drug addict as an individual who injected heroine. This stereotype was also assumed by cinema, especially by horror films in their postmodern tendencies in the eighties. Thus, the traditional vampire becomes a creature who is addicted to blood and whose dependence, and mainly withdrawal symptoms, are recreated with the same iconography and interpretations with which the most traditionalist society perceived drug addicts. The development of the vampire metaphor not only reflects social fears of the threatening temptation of addiction and the fear of transgressors who use forbidden substances, but it influences the viewers in a thought-provoking way that reinforces social stereotypes.

**Keywords:** Vampirism, Drug addiction, Metaphors, Horror films.

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## The temptation of metaphors in cinema

Susan Sontag’s attractive and influential essays about the metaphorical representation of several diseases (tuberculosis, cancer, AIDS<sup>1,2</sup>) have contributed to stimulating researchers’ desire to discover this dimension in certain ailments of our culture. Literature has been a great source of information for this type of analysis. However, cinema is a more significant source, not only because it is an industry that requires cinematographic productions to bear their audience in mind during the whole process – from the choice of a topic that might interest an audience to the kind of language that will be used to get the message across –, but also because of the wide range of population it will reach and which will receive in a more or less subtle way the deep message of the metaphors that have been created. In a scheme that can be superimposed to the representations offered by the media, metaphors are precisely what enrich their persuasive capacity<sup>3</sup>.

An example of this use of metaphors in films is vampirism. Considered a subgenre within the category of horror films (or within the wider frame of fantasy films), vampire films underwent considerable changes in the eighties of the 20th century, although the seed for certain of these changes had already been sown in the late years of the preceding decade<sup>4</sup>. For more than a decade, the myth and iconography of the vampire had been represented in Hammer Productions with different quality grades, although in a very skilful way (especially in Terence Fisher’s films). Hammer Productions’ vampire stories bring to mind Victorian puritanism and sexual repression in a way that proves extremely tempting for psychoanalytical interpretations<sup>5</sup>.

Hooper, Carpenter, Craven or Cunningham started profitable sources of wealth for horror films with the “realistic” horror sagas that would soon become spin-offs of film franchises with and for teenagers. Even though vampires might be as lethal as the latest psy-

chopaths, neither their motives nor the aesthetics of their attacks adapted to the literally visceral appetites of their main viewers: Peter Vincent – a character in *Fright Night* (1985) by Tom Holland (figure 1)- who played the role of a vampire hunter, was dismissed from a TV series because at the time the audience only wanted to see “furious lunatics with covered faces dismembering young virgins”. *Fright Night* is a particularly good example of the change in the viewers’ tastes and in the topics and language of the genre. Rather than intellectual, the aim of these post-modern currents is to be box-office hits, aware of the festive tastes of a new and younger audience; although they still contribute to the horror genre by providing new perspectives brought by the convergence of gang films (horror by subversion), psychopath films and films based on traditional myths such as monsters or vampires. Thus, among the various associations, deconstructions and reinventions that developed around the figure of the vampire, the emergence of a new metaphor, more in tune with the socio-cultural changes of the former decade and closer to viewers and their reality, was predictable; a metaphor in which the vampires’ thirst for human blood was based in its form and content on the stereotypes of addiction to illegal drugs.



Figure 1: *Fright Night* (1985) by Tom Holland (English poster).

### Sketching a context

The fifties – with the prominence of the beatnik movement – and the sixties involved the consolidation of the drug-use phenomenon, with an ever clearer evolution towards a consumer-based model. From the sixties onwards the use of drugs became linked to alternative contexts or those involving young people, contemporary to other profound social transformations that questioned traditional values and advocated freedom of behaviour and the search for new experiences and leisure activities involving new sceneries of interaction. Heroin itself emerges in the specific context of the Vietnam War and is then introduced in USA districts populated by African Americans and Hispanic Americans.

The WHO’s response led to policies focused on a socio-cultural model that shifted its attention from the individual to the context, from treatment to prevention<sup>6</sup>. The concepts and terminology used by the organization and in conferences about drugs clearly showed the difficulties to establish appropriate criteria about use, habit, dependence and addiction: whereas the Single Convention of Narcotic Drugs of 1961 used the concept “narcotic”, the same convention changed its name in 1971 to Convention on Psychotropic Substances – a term with no moral implications –, but it introduced in its definitions the ambiguous expression “misuse and harmful effects”. The war against opium and cannabis began in 1972 with the Protocol Amending the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, eradicating plantations and taking a decisive step in 1988 when the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances defined the war against trafficking and mafias<sup>7</sup>.

The media contributed to the institution of drugs as a social problem and, in the seventies and eighties, they set the stereotypes related to drugs, addiction and users. The paradigmatic representation of drugs was injected heroin, always in contexts linked to transgression, crime and violence. This drug was presented as powerfully addictive regardless of the users’ will<sup>3</sup>. Thus, society came to accept the idea of drugs as a problem and established the relationship between the aforementioned stereotypes. The screening of all this did not take long to arrive since, as Losilla explains, the guidelines of horror films as a genre are established by the moral standards of the predominant middle classes<sup>5</sup>.

### The strange family

The two films that we are going to focus on, *The Lost Boys* by Joel Schumacher (figure 2) and *Near Dark* by Kathryn Bigelow (figure 3) were produced in 1987. Both of them have many points in common and



Figure 2: *The Lost Boys* by Joel Schumacher (English poster).

have enjoyed short and long-term success, which contributes to their having become cinematographic references for the renewal of the genre at the time<sup>a</sup>. In both films vampires are presented in an original way, as gregarious beings who live in small communities structured more like an alternative family than like a gang. This is an unexpected turn, since, according to Robin Woods' essay, from the sixties onwards the apparently heterogeneous motifs in horror films become unified in a single concept: the family<sup>8</sup>.

In *The Lost Boys* the group is made up by four young men – one of whom plays the role of leader –, a young woman and a little girl. In *Near Dark* there is an adult couple, another man, a young man and a little boy. The atypical presence of vampire children stresses this representation of the group as a family, a family that shows a vivid contrast with that of the main characters and that provides viewers with ideas of unconventional relationships linked to alternative proposals: in the cave/home of

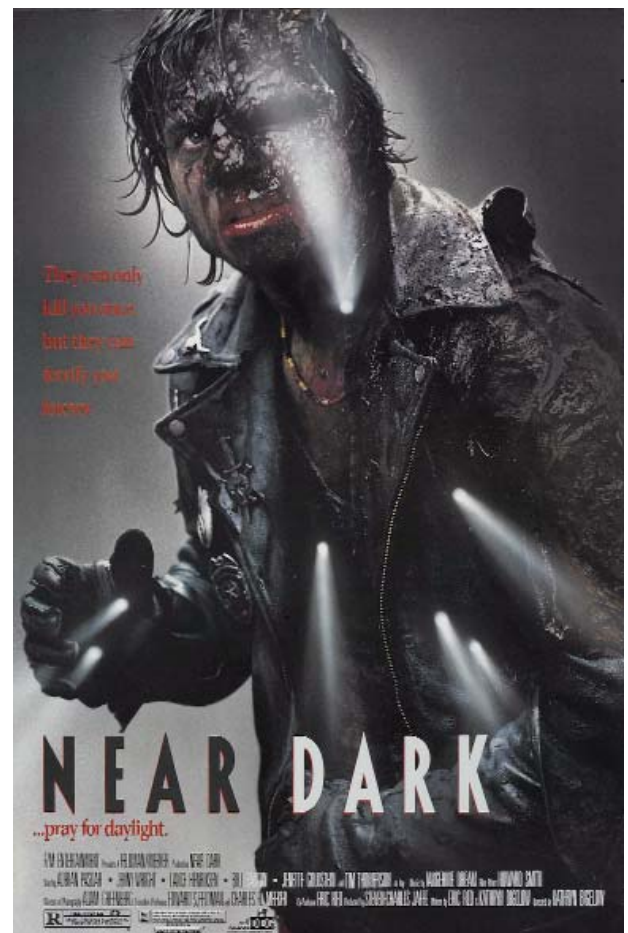


Figure 3: *Near Dark* by Kathryn Bigelow (American poster).

Schumacher's lost children the place of honour is occupied by a huge poster of Jim Morrison, leader of The Doors and a promoter of psychedelic experiences; whereas Bigelow's group travels around and lives in a camper van<sup>9</sup>.

These families, like many of the re-interpretations of the vampire myth, owe part of their success to the literary innovations provided by Anne Rice in her *Vampire Chronicles*. Seven years after the aforementioned films were premiered, Neil Jordan finally brought to the screen *Interview with the Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles* (1994) (figure 4), explicit in its presentation of the three protagonists [Lestat (Tom Cruise), Louis (Brad Pitt) and the eternal child Claudia (Kirsten Dunst)] as a family. Nevertheless, it is impossible not to recall a former but not less incisive reference such as the circus "family" in Browning's *Freaks* (1932).

a This article analyses four films that correspond to the period between 1987 and 1995. The four of them are American productions, although some of them are independent film productions and others are Hollywood majors. This conditions the form and content of their message, but also the amount of viewers it reaches and its influence. In order to take into account the potential impact of the suggested metaphors we have used the number of viewers as a criterion (income obtained) in the USA: *The Lost Boys* (1987) 32,222,567 \$ (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0093437>), *Near Dark* (1987) 3,369,307 \$, (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0093605>) *Interview with the Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles* (1994) 100,664,608 \$ (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0110148>), *The Addiction* (1995) 302,393 \$ (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0112288>).

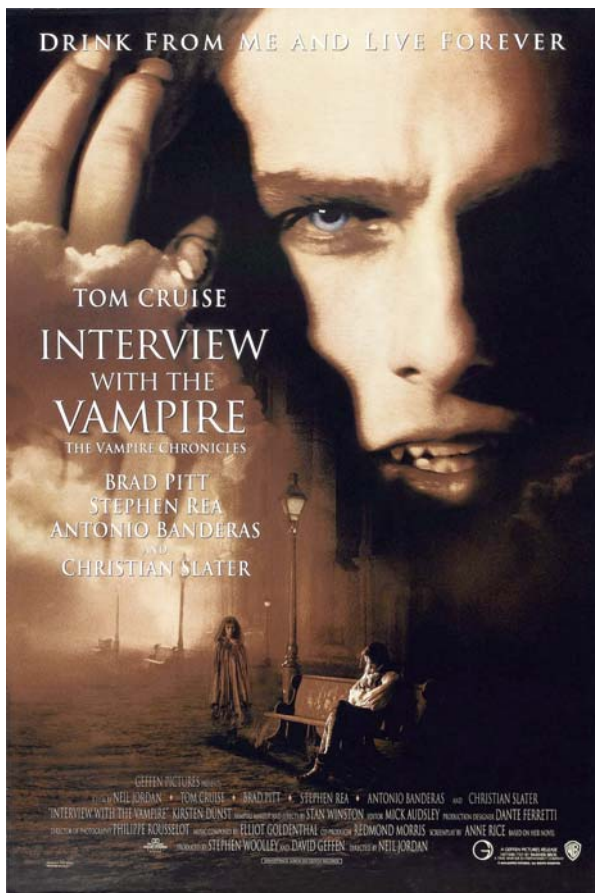


Figure 4: *Interview with the Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles* (1994) by Neil Jordan (English poster).

The main characters of both analysed films will become members of groups of this kind. Both of them are young men, the firstborn in their families. Michael (Jason Patric) (the protagonist of *The Lost Boys*) has a younger brother, Sam (Corey Haim), while Caleb Colton (Adrian Pasdar) (the protagonist in *Near Dark*) has a sister. In both cases, only one of the parents is present in the family.

Caleb's mother died and both sons live on a ranch with their father, a veterinary whose job will be interestingly used throughout the plot. On the other hand, Michael and Sam move from Arizona to their maternal grandfather's house in the world's crime capital (Santa Carla) with their newly divorced mother.

The portrait of these one-parent families provides a subtle explanation for the vulnerability of the eldest children to the temptations of other forms of life and other conceptions of the family unit. An explanation that is in line with certain interpretations of the family-related factors involved in antisocial behaviours and drug-abuse, but above all with the stereotype that emerged at the time<sup>10</sup>: the addict's family as a background lacking emotional bonds, a family where "something" is missing<sup>11</sup>.

However, despite appearances, the one-parent structure of the families described in the films is not only criticized, but also defended as a lifeline in both of them. Lucy (Diane Wiest), Michael's mother, is presented as the main source of her children's problems, not only for uprooting them, but also for attracting the true vampire chief as an admirer whose purpose is to form a happy family with them, even if that entails their being made vampires.

This misogynous overtone becomes clear, in both *The Lost Boys* and *Near Dark*, in the figures of Star (*The Lost Boys*) and Mae (Jenny Wright) (*Near Dark*), who represent the woman as a symbol of perdition, a femme fatal following the model of Lilith, according to the traditional conceptions of the horror genre and vampirism in particular. These women attract the protagonists and become their first link to the group. They are characterized by an inviting body language that contradicts their warnings and, as in Mae's case, they become directly responsible for the protagonists' initial conversion to vampires. Likewise, either as a sugary concession or as a clear cliché of their inferiority, they will be redeemed/healed by the male protagonists.

However, Bigelow's film provides several levels of interpretation and offers a glimpse of a different view of the relationship between men and women: while Mae turns Caleb into a vampire following the traditional femme fatale role, she also plays a nursing and maternal part, feeding him with her own blood in view of his scruples against converting others; if Mae, as a creature of the night, embodies freedom, her relationship with Caleb, as son and lover, is a bond that restricts such freedom by reintroducing traditional human codes into her life and burdening her with new responsibilities. This possible hint of criticism becomes lost in the plot's happy ending.

### A portrait of addiction

A well-behaved boy from a family with middle-class American values<sup>b</sup> (though far from the corresponding traditional principles), feels attracted to a young girl who introduces him to a group (to which the epithets alternative, transgressor and marginal could be applied) with set rules and initiation rites that must be complied with to become a member: living at night, motorbike races, hanging from a bridge while a train goes by, jumping into the void, looking for fights, but, above all, taking illegal substances (vampire blood provided in bottles – in *The Lost Boys* – or drunk directly from the blood vessels). In these initiation rites, spilling a victim's blood becomes more important than its ingestion, since blood symbolizes the bond, which is more necessary and addictive than sex was for the former generation: even though

*Near Dark* shows each member of the group's individual hunting techniques, cohesion is only achieved through the rituals of violence<sup>c</sup>. For this reason, the most dangerous thing about these vampires is that they spread their subversive lifestyle.

This outline of the creation of social identity in teenagers, of belonging to a group that might be considered a "we"<sup>11</sup>, is also consistent with the way the media portrayed young people who got involved in the world of drugs, in this case a more conservative version where the loss of traditional values, negative influences and the power of drugs themselves are considered determining enough to explain addiction. To try blood/drugs is to become hooked because it causes a change in the individual's nature. From this point of view, the exoneration of the protagonists, rather than eliciting sympathy, seems to answer the need for a character that might allow the viewer to feel a certain degree of identification.

The vampires of the eighties are presented in two stages: first the human's initial transformation, characterized by the effects they suffer when they consume blood for the first time; and then a second and dramatically attractive phase that shows itself in the colourful symptoms that appear when the body demands blood. *The Lost Boys*, *Near Dark* and *Interview with the Vampire* recreate both stages using current stereotypes for the effects of drugs and their withdrawal symptoms. Vampire blood, despite having distressing effects because of the transformation it brings about in the protagonists, also causes changes in perception: the eyes of statues seem to come alive (*Interview with the Vampire*), the night becomes deafening and painfully bright (*Near Dark*)... This reveals another aspect of the stereotype in which the idea of drugs (any drug) is ever present as a trigger for hallucinations.

Abel Ferrara is much more explicit, offering scenes of raw realism enhanced by nerve-racking black and white. In this sense, *The Addiction* (1995) (figure 5) becomes the best cinematographic gallery showing the images that make up the stereotype for heroin addicts<sup>14</sup>. Kathleen Conklin (Lili Taylor) experiences a gradual physical decline as she becomes a consumer of human blood, which at first she draws from her victims with a syringe, subsequently shooting it up amidst a display of all the paraphernalia typical of heroin addicts, and experiencing similar effects (figure 6). Her body wastes and she loses teeth ("*I'm rotting*"), her habits becoming a catalogue of the downward spiral towards debasement: she

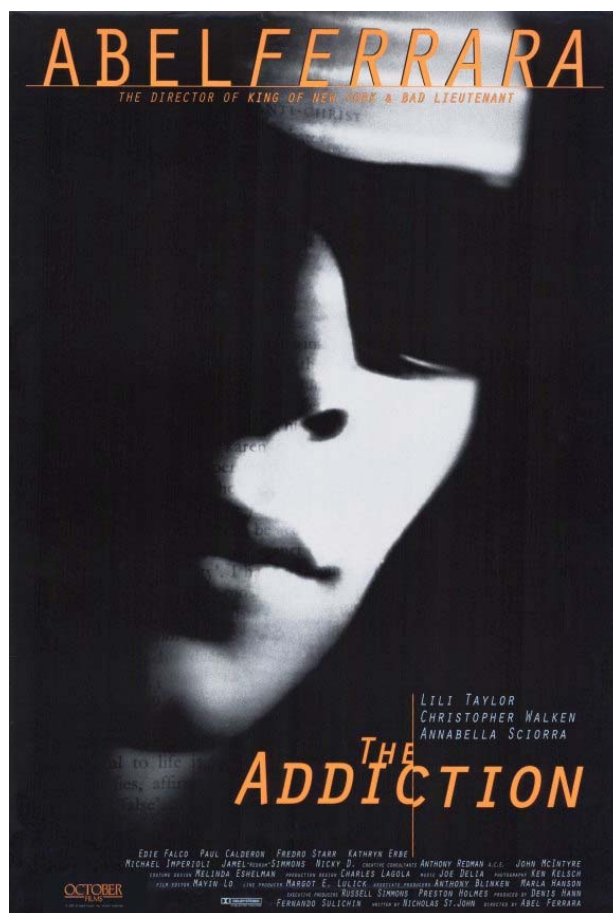


Figure 5: *The Addiction* (1995) by Abel Ferrara (American poster).

steals, chain-smokes, uses drugs, hangs out in sordid environments, and shows indifference towards others. Her contempt for her victims grows, reaching its climax in the image of a small-sized shoe that suggests infanticide.

The withdrawal symptoms are dealt with in a detailed and dramatic manner: there are sweats, twisting of the body and screams in all the films under analysis, but in *The Addiction* this is recreated with more precision, showing self-mutilations and suicide attempts. An experienced vampire [Peina (Christopher Walken)] contributes to all this by feeding from Kathleen and providing her with a significant cultural reference: "*Have you read Naked Lunch?*", Burroughs clearly describes what going without a fix is like. And the film also shows us a scene that could be interpreted as a recreation of an overdose: Kathleen's PhD defence party becomes a vampire orgy [an aesthetic homage to *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) by George A. Romero (figure 7)] that leads to her hospitalization and subsequent death.

b. Jürgen Müller believes that the Colton family in *Near Dark* is the equivalent to the Waltons in the homonymous TV series<sup>12</sup>.

c. Francisco Benavent sees the travelling vampires in *Near Dark* as "modern vampires that travel along American roads reveling in violence and blood, a kind of natural born killers (Natural Born Killers, Oliver Stone, 1994) that are allergic to sunlight"<sup>13</sup>.



Figure 6: Kathleen Conklin (Lili Taylor) in *The Addiction* (1995).

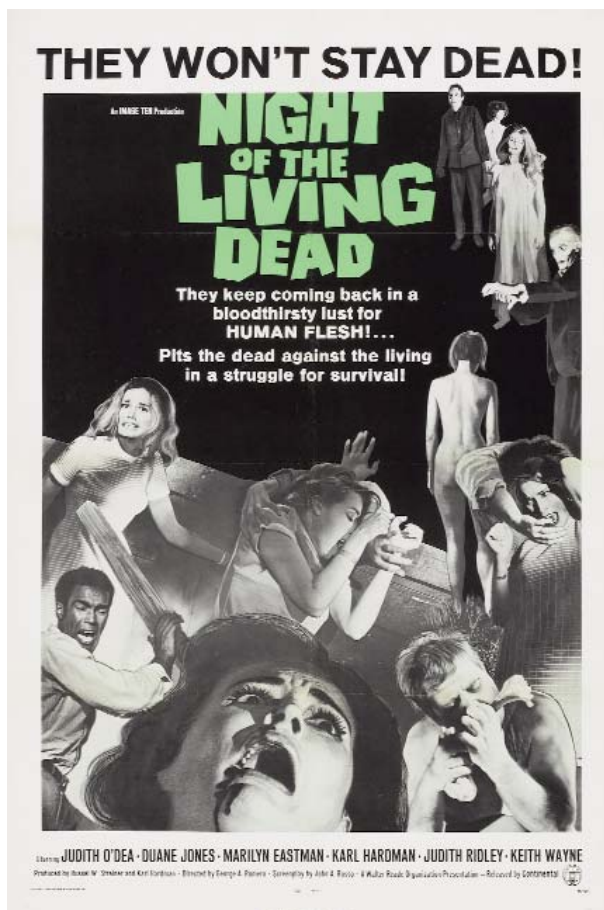


Figure 7: *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) by George A. Romero (English poster).

### Dr Jekyll and Mr Dracula

To analyse the construction of the metaphor in greater depth it is necessary to review the change brought about by the vampire stereotype of the films of the seventies and the newer one of those of the eighties,

which will provide other features for the social construction of the image of the drug addict. The vampire of the seventies, as recalled, lives in isolation or within a limited social unit, being a loner when it comes to hunting and feeding on blood. This creature exerts an addictive influence over his/her victims. Hammer productions provided the following reflections through Van Helsing: "Up to now it had been proved that victims detested to be dominated by vampires, however, they cannot abandon this practice in the same way that a drug addict cannot quit drugs" [*Horror of Dracula* (1958) by Terence Fisher (figure 8)]; "it is easier to become addicted to this particular ailment than to heroin and the result is equally fatal" [*The Satanic Rites of Dracula* (1973) by Alan Gibson (figure 9)]. This is a very simple view of the problem, a view in which the vampire (and sexual freedom) is the drug.

Nevertheless, the vampires of the eighties that are analysed live in groups/communities and their look is dangerous. They do not usually take animal forms nor die when staked, which suggests that the symbolic aspect that relates them to sex and its repression is not as relevant as in the case of their predecessors. The transgression that lies beneath the origin of horror is no longer

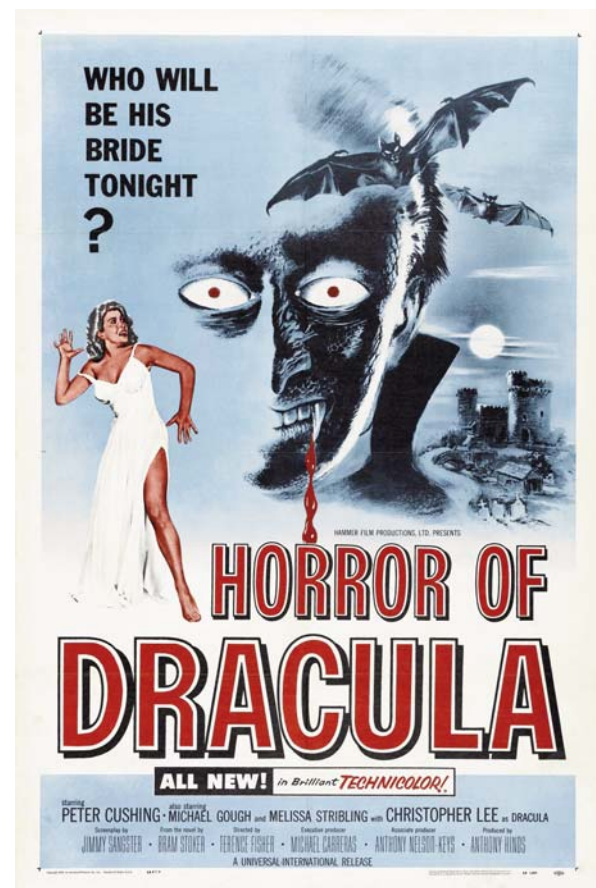


Figure 8: *Horror of Dracula* (1958) by Terence Fisher (English poster).

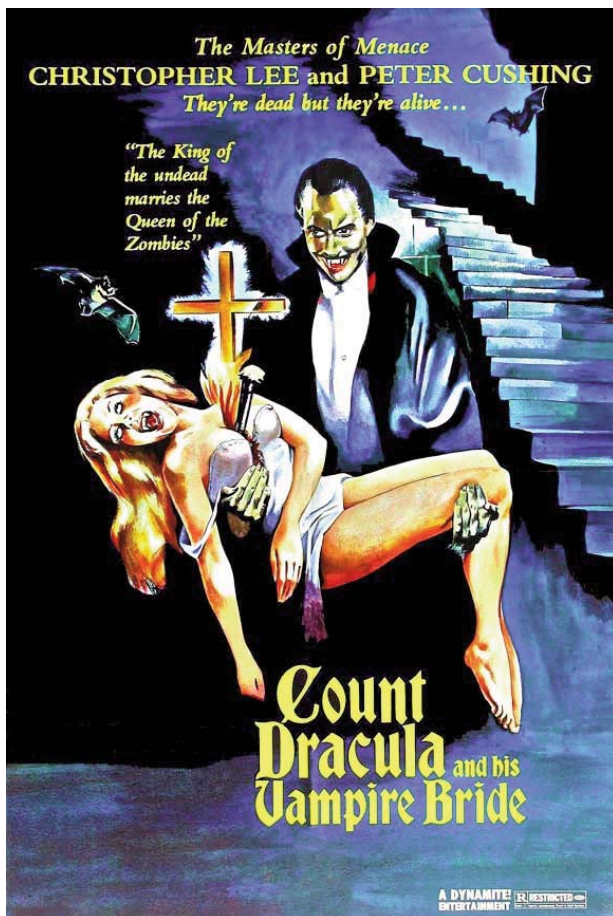


Figure 9: *The Satanic Rites of Dracula* (1973) by Alan Gibson (English poster).

sexual, although certain of the traditional elements belonging to the archetypal structure of fantasy films are still present: the tensions between science and belief, civilization and nature, modernity and tradition, but, above all, between awareness and irresponsibility. *Near Dark* perfectly illustrates these aspects. Blood/drugs and addiction are part of the irresponsible and out-of-control world that threatens the order represented by the patriarchal family. Fear of what is “real”, of what is social, of those who are outsiders or violent... but, above all, fear of the possibility of becoming attracted to that proposal, of being seduced by complete freedom. Fear that we might come to like drugs and their effects.

The post-modern context of many of their theories does not prevent part of the traditional role played by the monster in films to persist in the productions under analysis. Interpreted from a psychoanalytical point of view, horror films have served to liberate the impulses of the “id” for its subsequent repression. The monster is the “id” that blooms unrestricted, free, with no rules: Mr Hyde. Stevenson’s classic, so often adapted to the screen with obvious success, provided this newly made key: drugs are the way<sup>15-17</sup>.

This ambiguity in both the victims’ and the viewers’ attitude towards the vampire is present in this sense both in *Near Dark* and in *The Lost Boys*, where there is indulgence towards the counter-culture of the portrayed group. In fact, the following words are used as an appeal in the trailer of *The Lost Boys*: “they sleep all day. They have fun all night long. They don’t grow old. They never die. It’s fun to be that way...” (figure 2); and its soundtrack recreates the musical style that is associated to vampires, a style that the viewers for whom the film is intended find attractive. The same might be said of *Near Dark* whose aesthetics, wrapped in the sound of Tangerine Dream, are rather intended for a narrower range of viewers that would be, nevertheless, interested in transgressor proposals.

Because, as Tudor summarizes, this is the trend followed by horror films made after the sixties: the threat, rather than coming from outside, is rooted within the individual, “an expression of deep uncertainty concerning ourselves [...] our characteristic point of view has become secularized, a new conception of fear has returned to our very hearts [...]: fear of ourselves and of the unfathomable and dangerous forces that stir within us”<sup>18</sup>.

For this reason sunlight rather than stakes is what kills these vampires. Light is deadly because it symbolizes the triumph of the conscious over the unconscious. Bigelow and Ferrara constantly play to offer different images of the moon, the sun and aesthetic scenes where light works as a deadly weapon: the first of these scenes shows the group surrounded by the police in a motel room, and it is not the bullets that harm them but the sun beams that penetrate through the holes made by the shooting; likewise, Ferrara presents us with an image of Kathleen agonizing on her hospital bed while exposed to the sunshine that filters through the cracks in the blind, and which trail down a wall where a crucifix hangs (figure 10).

This much feared world of the unconscious is no longer that of repressed sexuality: although the vampires of the eighties need blood to feed on, this blood is a result of their addiction to violence, emphasized by the use of weapons in attacks that are no longer linked to their feeding habits, but that are rather encouraged by the growing blood thirst of the viewers<sup>d</sup>. Ferrara stresses this in his establishment of a double metaphor: he uses the iconic stereotype of drug addiction to build, based on this aesthetics that is familiar to the viewer, a metaphor in which vampires represent addiction to evil.

While the films under analysis capture the individual’s fear and weakness when it comes to rejecting the appealing rupture with external rules and internal



**Figure 10:** Ferrara shows Kathleen agonizing on her hospital bed, exposed to the sunlight that filters through the cracks in the blind.

repression that is achieved through the use of drugs, Nicholas St John's script goes even further: *"We are addicted to evil. Our tendency to this lies within our inner weakness"; "addiction has a dual nature: it satisfies the appetite engendered by evil, but it also blurs our perception so that we might forget how sick we are. We drink to escape the fact that we are alcoholics. Existence is a search for relief from our compulsion. And our compulsion is the only relief we can find"*<sup>e</sup>.

Ferrara brilliantly contributes to defend St. John's theory with scenes where, by the use of subjective shots, the viewer sees through Kathleen's eyes, in the cinema, on TV, or in showrooms, images of wars, killings and genocides. However, to confirm that "we do acts of evil because we are bad", Penia, after biting Kathleen again, turns to the camera and stares into it in silence in a scene that seems to last forever, looking straight into the viewer's eyes and thus stressing our role as passive *voyeurs* looking on suffering of others. We are all addicts.

### Redemption and rehabilitation

The vampires of the eighties are closer to the dilemma presented by Stevenson's character than to the ones presented by Dracula and his family. Michael, Caleb and Louis are vampires who present ethical conflicts: they are incapable of a complete conversion because they still respect human life. In the case of the first two characters, their link to their original families is what leads them to assume a protective role equal to the social role played by adults, which places them outside the tempting world of addiction: Caleb reacts to defend his sister and father and Michael does the same when

they attack Sam. Addiction is immature, which is made clear in the meaning of the original title *The Lost Boys*, which is an allusion to the lost children in *Peter Pan* (1953) by J.M. Barrie, who did not want to grow up. This interpretation has been officially supported: *"fortunately, nearly sixty million Americans that used illegal drugs when they were young reject such substances when they become adults"*<sup>20</sup>.

The characters in *The Lost Boys* and in *Near Dark* free themselves from vampirism/addiction because, according to Tajfel and Turner, *"individuals tend to seek affiliation to other groups when membership of those to which they belong contributes negatively to their identity"*<sup>11</sup>. The ethical conflict leads them to no longer be able to see the vampire group as a "we" to which they belong and they return to seek their own social identity in the family environment.

The different ways of interpreting the underlying conditions for drug addictions did not only historically favour scientific answers, but it also brought about educational, psychological and many belief-related ones. In the analysed films faith, order and the return to traditional values are the guidelines that define the therapeutic principles. Bigelow provides the clearest example: Caleb's father draws a vessel of his own blood which he subsequently transfuses to his son achieving his complete recovery (figure 11). The father's blood is healthy blood as opposed to Mae's blood, vampire blood, bad blood which kept the main character trapped. Caleb refuses to visit the hospital because he believes that his illness cannot be treated there and that he could even get killed; however, technique and science are more powerful than oral instinct: ingested human blood feeds the vampire, but when it is injected directly into the veins it has healing powers. When Caleb is rehabilitated he transfuses his blood to Mae and welcomes her with the words *"you're home"*.

The characters that change the course of the situation, not only by releasing the women, but also by eradicating the vampires that threaten the family, are always male (protagonists, father, grandfather). Even the young and inexperienced vampire hunters in *The Lost Boys* are crusaders fighting for "the truth, justice and the American lifestyle". Solid patriarchal values become established as opposed to addiction as a symptom of effeminate weakness. The blood of the male in charge (Caleb's father or Caleb himself as a protector of his family) symbolizes the triumph of order over transgression,

<sup>d</sup> Interestingly, the Spanish title that has been given to Barry Gray's documentary *Bloodsucking Cinema* (2007), a review of the "origins and evolution of vampire films", is *Adictos a la sangre* (Addicted to Blood).

<sup>e</sup> Julian Petley thoroughly examines the way Ferrara and St. John analyse this topic<sup>19</sup>.





**Figure 11:** Caleb's father draws his own blood, which he will transfuse to his son, thus achieving his recovery (*Near Dark*).

of tradition over change, of reason over instinct, of male over female. A conservative response to drug addictions that is far from the social models used in addiction therapies.

From that point of view there is no possible cure without redemption: women, Star or Mae, become dignified and redeemed inasmuch as they defend the protagonist and/or his family, even saving their lives. *The Addiction* pays special attention to this aspect, since only faith (light) can heal: Kathleen places flowers on her own grave while her voice-over says "to face what we are in the end, we stand in the light and our true nature is revealed. This self-revelation is the annihilation of the very being". This is an acknowledgement of human nature as addicted to sin and an example of devotion and commitment to faith as a way of liberation, which does not seem far from the principles proposed by government-sponsored therapeutic, religious and pseudoscientific communities<sup>f</sup>. Healing faith, belief and recovery are presented by Ferrara in the final scenes: in the corridor of the hospital where Kathleen's room is, the priest who is to receive her confession, after passing the vampire that has visited her, meets a doctor and greets him with the following words "How's it going doctor? It's been a long time since we last met".

Reference to this symbolic death of human nature itself, prone to weakness and addiction, can take on much more literal aspects. As opposed to the protagonists that have been redeemed, the vampires/drug addicts of the alternative gangs are not only annihilated (Bigelow begins his film with the sound of a mosquito's buzz and, following the title, a scene where the mosquito has alighted on Caleb, who crushes it with a slap while saying: "filthy little insect"), but they are also shown as aware of the fact

that death is the only chance of freedom that is left for them: while the sun burns Diamondback to death, she smiles and exclaims "it is all over".

Rehabilitation and the assumption of traditional values is the only way out suggested by cinema for problems related to certain drug addictions. For those who do not choose this path there is the option of merciful death, the same kind of death presented in traditional horror films, where the monster was allowed to recover its human shape for the relief of its murderers and viewers.

### Technical details

**Original Title:** *The Lost Boys*.

**Country:** USA.

**Year:** 1987.

**Director:** Joel Schumacher.

**Music:** Thomas Newman.

**Cinematography:** Michael Chapman.

**Film editor:** Robert Brown.

**Screenwriter:** Janice Fisher, James Jeremias and Jeffrey Boam.

**Cast:** Jason Patric (Michael), Corey Haim (Sam), Dianne Wiest (Lucy), Barnard Hughes (Grandpa), Edward Herrmann (as Ed Herrmann, Max), Kiefer Sutherland (David), Jami Gertz (Star), Corey Feldman (Edgar Frog), Jamison Newlander (Alan Frog), Brooke McCarter (Paul), Billy Wirth (Dwayne), Alex Winter, (as Alexander Winter, Marko), Chance Michael Corbitt (Laddie), Alexander Bacon Chapman (Greg), Nori Morgan (Shelly), ...

**Genre:** Comedy, Fantasy, Horror, Vampires.

**Runtime:** 97 minutes.

**Colour:** Color.

**Production Company:** Warner Bros. Pictures (as Warner Bros.).

**Synopsis:** Michael and his brother Sam move together with their mother to their maternal grandfather's house in Santa Carla, where the former meets a group of young people who give him vampire blood to drink, beginning his transformation. Sam and two local vampire hunters try to free Michael by destroying the vampires and their leader, who attack the family home.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0093437>

[Trailer](#)

<sup>f</sup>"Experience and research suggest that individuals with values that are linked to a belief system can benefit faster from treatment. A factor that reduces the risks of becoming addicted to drugs among teenagers is their participation in religious programmes. The government encourages religious organizations to become involved in the national efforts towards drug prevention"<sup>20</sup>.

### Technical details

**Original title:** Near Dark.  
**Country:** USA.  
**Year:** 1987.  
**Director:** Kathryn Bigelow.  
**Music:** Christopher Franke, Edgar Froese and Paul Haslinger (the three of them as Tangerine Dream).  
**Cinematography:** Adam Greenberg.  
**Film editor:** Howard E. Smith.  
**Screenwriter:** Kathryn Bigelow and Eric Red.  
**Cast:** Adrian Pasdar (Caleb Colton), Jenny Wright (Mae), Lance Henriksen (Jesse Hooker), Bill Paxton (Severen), Jenette Goldstein (Diamondback), Tim Thomerson (Loy Colton), Joshua John Miller (as Joshua Miller, Homer), Marcie Leeds (Sarah Colton), Kenny Call (deputy Sheriff), Ed Corbett (Ticket Seller), Troy Evans (plainclothes policeman), Bill Cross (Sheriff Eakers), Roger Aaron Brown (truck driver), Thomas Wagner (barman), Robert Winley (bar owner),...  
**Color:** Color.  
**Runtime:** 94 minutes.  
**Genre:** Drama, Horror, Vampires, Thriller.  
**Production Companies:** F/M and Near Dark Joint Venture.  
**Synopsis:** Caleb meets Mae and becomes a vampire after being bitten by her. Forced to live with Mae's gang, his scruples when it comes to feeding on human blood prevent him from being accepted by the group. After exposing himself to the sun's rays to save them from an ambush he is accepted as a member, but when they attack his father and sister Caleb defends them and flees with them. After his recovery thanks to a blood transfusion from his father he must confront the vampire group when they kidnap his sister Sara, whom he rescues together with Mae.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt009360>

[Trailer](#)

### Technical details

**Original Title:** *Interview with the Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles*.  
**Country:** USA.  
**Year:** 1994.  
**Director:** Neil Jordan.  
**Music:** Elliot Goldenthal.  
**Cinematography:** Philippe Rousselot.  
**Film editor:** Mick Audsley and Joke van Wijk (as Joke Van Wijk).

**Screenwriter:** Anne Rice (based on her homonymous novel).

**Cast:** Brad Pitt (Louis de Pointe du Lac), Christian Slater (Daniel Malloy), Virginia McCollam (the Waterfront prostitute), John McConnell (player), Tom Cruise (Lestat de Lioncourt), Thandie Newton (Yvette), Kirsten Dunst (Claudia), Antonio Banderas (Armand), Stephen Rea (Santiago),...

**Color:** Color.

**Runtime:** 123 minutes.

**Genre:** Drama, Horror, Vampires, Fantasy.

**Production Company:** Geffen Pictures.

**Synopsis:** Journalist David Malloy interviews Louis de Pointe du Lac, who, claiming to be a vampire, tells him the story of his life starting with the loss of his family and his being made a vampire by Lestat de Lioncourt. He talks about his life with the latter and the child-vampire Claudia, drained by Louis and converted by Lestat, their confrontations and their separation from Lestat thinking they had murdered him between the two of them. Louis recalls how he and Claudia went on a pilgrimage in search of other beings like themselves, and how Claudia is killed by the Parisian vampires and he returns to the USA.

**Awards:** Nominated for an Academy Award in the category of Best Art Direction and Best Original Score (1995).

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0110148>

[Trailer](#)

### Technical details

**Original title:** *The Addiction*.

**Country:** USA.

**Year:** 1995.

**Director:** Abel Ferrara.

**Music:** Joe Delia.

**Cinematography:** Ken Kelsch.

**Film editor:** Mayin Lo.

**Screenwriter:** Nicholas St John.

**Cast:** Lili Taylor (Kathleen Conklin), Christopher Walken (Peina), Annabella Sciorra (Casanova), Edie Falco (Jean), Paul Calderon (professor), Fredro Starr (black man), Kathryn Erbe (anthropology student), Michael Imperioli (missionary), Jamal Simmons (as Jamel 'RedRum' Simmons, black man's friend), Robert W. Castle (as black man's friend, narrator/ priest), Michael A. Fella (as Michael Fella, policeman), Louis Katz (as Dr Louis A. Katz, doctor), Leroy Johnson (homeless victim), Fred Williams (homeless victim), Avron

Coleman (cellist),...

**Colour:** Black and white.

**Runtime:** 82 minutes.

**Genre:** Drama, Horror, Vampires.

**Production Companies:** Fast Films, Guild and October Films.

**Synopsis:** Kathleen Conklin is a philosophy student who, after being bitten by a woman, begins to experience changes in her behaviour that lead her to feed on human blood. At the same time, she reflects on her nature and on that of human beings, on evil, sin and redemption, which are the objects of her life and also of the research she is carrying out for her PhD. When she meets Peina, an experienced vampire, her life takes a new turn, reaching its climax in a vampire orgy that takes place when she is celebrating the defence of her thesis.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0112288>

[Trailer](#)

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