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Blood Read: The Vampire as Metaphor in Contemporary Culture

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The vampire is one of the nineteenth century's most powerful surviving archetypes, owing largely to Bela Lugosi's portrayal of Dracula, the Bram Stoker creation. Yet the figure of the vampire has undergone many transformations in recent years, thanks to Anne Rice's Vampire Chronicles and other works, and many young people now identify with vampires in complex ways.

Blood Read explores these transformations and shows how they reflect and illuminate ongoing changes in postmodern culture. It focuses on the metaphorical roles played by vampires in contemporary fiction and film, revealing what they can tell us about sexuality and power, power and alienation, attitudes toward illness, and the definition of evil in a secular age.

Scholars and writers from the United States, Canada, England, and Japan examine how today's vampire has evolved from that of the last century, consider the vampire as a metaphor for consumption within the context of social concerns, and discuss the vampire figure in terms of contemporary literary theory. In addition, three writers of vampire fiction—Suzy McKee Charnas (author of the now-classic Vampire Tapestry), Brian Stableford (writer of the lively and erudite novels Empire of Fear and Young Blood), and Jewelle Gomez (creator of the dazzling Gilda stories)—discuss their own uses of the vampire, focusing on race and gender politics, eroticism, and the nature of evil.

The first book to examine a wide range of vampire narratives from the perspective of both writers and scholars, *Blood Read* offers a variety of styles that will keep readers thoroughly engaged, inviting them to participate in a dialogue between fiction and analysis that shows the vampire to be a cultural necessity of our age. For, contrary to legends in which Dracula has no reflection, we can see reflections of ourselves in the vampire as it stands before us cloaked not in black but in metaphor.

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