The Immortality of Dracula's Fashion: the Man Behind the Cape

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Abstract

In the cinematic landscape, the depiction of characters arose from the personal envisioning of the movie creators. The processes of masculinization and de-masculinization partially are in the costume designer's hands, who build up the characters' fashion, identity and gender through dress. Their choice of design reflects upon their subjective and own perspectives of the world. However, the relationship between fashion and film is more layered and involves a great amount of creatives during the production, who equally contribute to the movie's outcome. It is crucial to stress the importance of the fashioned reality of cinema in which costume plays a fundamental role, in embodying one's identity. Creative works may be an expression of a vision but are not of a single interpretation and occupy a multidimensional space of negotiated meanings. Roland Barthes's theorization about the multidimensional space highlights the subjectivity and the creator's interpretations, which don't necessarily define the truth. Taking Barthes's rhetorical structure as a starting point for this paper, and the cultural reproduction of menswear in cinema will unpack the theoretical expression *Weltanschauung*, which describes a world's view by creatives in the literary and visual arts. This personification in cinema marks the importance of the industry's creatives and conveys their inputs on the visualization of race, gender and identity. Furthermore, it reflects on the relevance of fashion at large but also how masculinity shifts in culture and its social significance through the cinematographic landscape.

Keywords: Dracula; Visual Rhetorics; Fashioning Fiction; Costume Designer; Clothing Narratives.

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Introduction

The depiction of masculinity through "dressing" in the cinematographic landscape has been under continuous reproduction. In the early 20th century with the rise of Hollywood cinema, costume design established a more profound relationship between fashion and film.[1] Consequently, the art of costume design started to reserve a greater space in the film industry, however, its role remained marginalized and overlooked by many theorists and historians for a long while. In *Cultures of Masculinity*, Tim Edwards began his book by assigning the term as something nearly fictional, he notes "Masculinity is at once everywhere and yet nowhere, known and yet unknowable, had and yet un-*have*-able".[2] His reference stresses the complexity of masculinity and describes it as something one can own. Connecting Edwards' notion of masculinity to the audiovisual landscape may detect forms of hybridization concerning gender and "dressing" narratives. The representation of men and masculinity in cinema's history reflects upon the demarcation of a specific space and time. The processes of masculinization can be seen as an interpretation of that area in which "dressing" takes a crucial part, by linking reality with fiction. Hence, the scope for cinematic menswear connects the "now" and "then", present with the past. The so-called "present" in the cinema's landscape defines the film's current reality often stimulated by historical and cultural references and theoretical studies that concern various subject matters such as gender, identity, race and class. Hence, questions such as how can masculinity be fashioned in the realm of fiction, and when do visual arts interfere in the process of envisioning masculine ideals in cinema?

Since the mid-1920s there has been a long line of Hollywood stars who have become role models for the public, and whose looks and clothes have become iconic. Bram Stroker's Dracula is widely known in all world fiction, and it is the most filmed character in the history of cinema, followed by Sherlock Holmes.[3] Through an interdisciplinary lens, this study will investigate Dracula's masculinization, highlighting the shifts made in his depiction as an immortal and monstrous figure. Such mystification created a recurring icon throughout film history, from his ordinary attire to *Count Dracula*. The transformation into a vampire shows competency to change his appearance from an aristocrat to evil.

The research will trace back Dracula's evolving figure from an early monstrous character to a Victorian bourgeoisie, who has endured popularity and sex appeal by famous actors, such as Bela Lugosi and Christopher Lee. Dracula's canonization in literature and film has grown into a genre on its own and engraved a significant role in his character. The central aim of the essay is to unpack the canons of Dracula, by looking at three films from different historical contexts, along with his representation from the early 1920s, to the re-imagined version of him, in contemporary cinema.

One of the primary examples of the research is F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu*, an early Dracula film in which the Count's attire and costume will be looked at, by deconstructing the nearly theatrical and archaic attributes of it. The second case study will be followed by Terence Fisher's film, where Dracula's fashion has gone through a prominent masculinization, portraying Christopher Lee as a desirable vampire in the *Horror of Dracula*. Finally, the analysis will consider different takes on the masculine depiction of him, using Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, in which Eiko Ishioka's extravagant costume design embodies the character as a rather androgynous figure.

The research aims to reflect on the complexity of his identity construction, by considering the key attributes and features of Dracula, the "ordinary" outfit to his costume for disguise, immortality and physical characteristics. Dracula's perpetuity made it through not only in the movie theatres, but also in costume history and created iconic pieces, such as the red-collared black cloak, or tuxedo suit through which masculinity is performed in the realm of the fictional world.

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1. Paul Jobling, "Border crossings: Fashion in film/fashion and film," in *The Handbook of Fashion Studies*, edited by Sandy Black et al. (London–New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 166–82.

2. Tim Edwards, *Cultures of Masculinity* (London–New York: Routledge, 2006), 99–115.

3. Christopher Frayling, "Dracula: the man behind the cape," *The Guardian* (4 May 2012), accessed February 21, 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/may/04/dracula-man-behind-cape-christopher-frayling.

It is crucial to stress the importance of the fashioned reality of cinema in which costume plays a fundamental role, in embodying one's identity. Creative works may be an expression of a vision but are not of a single interpretation and occupy a multidimensional space of negotiated meanings. Barthes's theorization about the multidimensional space highlights the subjectivity and the creators' subjective interpretations, which don't necessarily define the truth.[4] Taking Roland Barthes's rhetorical structure to give a theoretical framework for this paper, the cultural reproduction of menswear in cinema will unpack the expression *Weltanschauung*, which describes a world's view by creatives in the literary and visual arts. This personification in the audiovisual landscape marks the importance of the industry innovations and enables their fruitful inputs on the visualization of race, gender and identity. Furthermore, it reflects on the relevance of fashion at large but also how masculinity shifts in culture and its social significance through the cinematographic landscape.

The ability to construct one's identity based on wardrobe has tremendous advantages, including the profound freedom of inventing oneself.[5] According to Kambara and Deming, there are also risks and failures attendant to any attempt at assuming an identity that is desired. The costume designer's choice may be an expression of a vision but is not of a single interpretation. Cinema helps to validate this realisation and provides space for costumes to narrate and give meaning. In his essay, Paul Jobling addresses the correlation between fashion and film, for instance, the lack of studies of both for a long time. As highlighted by both Jobling and Genette, how dress plays a crucial part in *mise-en-scène* and narrative on the extra-diegetic level, extends to the understanding of costumes' function as storytellers in and of the film text. The analysis hopes to unpack the multidimensional space between moving images and cinematographic costumes, enhancing their own interpretations of gender narratives in menswear fashion.

Dracula's Fashion Now and Then

The Canonization of Dracula

In the field of Fashion Studies, there has been little said about Dracula's fashion and appearance which shows the academia's neglect regarding the subject. The boom of the Post-Millennial Gothic style was more broadly studied by theorists like Catherine Spooner, highlighting the rise of happy Gothic and its recognizability in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. The distinctive combination of black and jewel colours with motifs taken from Victorian mourning wear, Punk, fetish and other period or vintage sources repeatedly featured in subcultural blogs, broadsheet style pages and mainstream fashion magazines.[6] Spooner emphasises the performative elements of the Gothic subcultural style are unlikely to the often prejudiced accounts linked to the subcultural behaviours such as violence, blood-drinking, self-harm, or Satanism. She acknowledges the subculture's different direction that is about creative self-expression as well as Goths' interest in dressing up, listening to music and enjoying the social benefits of belonging to a subculture, rather than in fulfilling stereotypes of being miserable loners.[7]

The new intake of the Post-Millennial Gothic subcultural style might seem to resonate less with Dracula's appearance, the origins of vampires and their attire and their sociocultural backgrounds roots back to folkloristic studies. Even though vampires are commonly associated with early modern and modern Eastern Europe, the "classical" vampire is found in myths and narratives of many cultures and regions from antiquity onward.[8] In the saga literature of mediaeval Iceland, evidence the record of vampire

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4. Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, edited and translated by Stephen Heart (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977).

5. Kenneth M.Kambara and John Deming, "Identity and the imaginary: Rhetorics of menswear in literature and film," *Critical Studies in Men's Fashion*, Vol. 4 (September 2017): 153–169.

6. Catherine Spooner, *Post-Millennial Gothic: Comedy, Romance and the Rise of Happy Gothic* (London–New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 67–82.

7. Spooner, 71.

8. Matthias Teichert, "'Draugula': *The Draugr* in Old Norse-Icelandic Saga Literature and His Relationship to the Post-Medieval Vampire Myth," in *The Universal Vampire: Origins and Evolution of a Legend*, edited by Barbara Brodman et al. (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2013), 3–14.

characters from the late 12th to 15th century in Northern Europe.[9] Sagas frequently refer to mysterious and supernatural phenomena such as werewolves or living dead. One of the dangerous types of living dead is the *draugr*, usually applied to walking undead who leave their grave and behave mischievously and physically and mentally threatening towards the living. Teichert notes that the Norse *draugr* myth shares similar characteristics to Dracula from the silent horror movie, *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* by Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau from 1922. *Nosferatu*, unlike Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and his seductive elegance,[10] draws on the pre-Victorian vampire lore and the folkloric one in connection to vampirism and plague. This is illustrious in the *draugr* myth in which he infects his victims with dragurism.

With the popularization of vampire legends, cultural fields, such as literature, film, and theatre nuanced in their interpretations to create supernatural beings. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* became an undead icon of vampirism, twisting the traditional folklore of Eastern Europe to create the misguided belief in Count Dracula as a typical Transylvanian or Romanian vampire.[11] Consequently, Stoker's figure became an ambiguous *nosferatu* and was taken as a stereotype of any of the undead, while he mixed some of the traditional folklore of Romania and Transylvania, other areas do not aline with the geographical and folkloric areas in which the Count originates from according to Stoker's book. The choice of *nosferatu*, a lesser-known term in Romanian folklore, marginalizes the importance of the native folklore and indicates that Count Dracula is not a typical Romanian *strigoi*.[12] However, some of Dracula's characteristics fall in line with folkloric renditions like "exceedingly gaunt and lean with a hideous countenance, the skin is deathly pale, but the lips are full and rich, blub and red".[13] Furthermore, Milmine corroborates that the Count's age is hardly determined and his appearance points to the werewolf instead of the vampire, especially with the description of the eyebrows and sharp teeth.[14] Stoker's redefinition of Dracula's identity undoubtedly contributed to the canonization of his figure and created a window for cinema production to represent and reimagine Count Dracula in the contemporary media landscape.

Meraj Ahmed Mubarki's article argues that Hollywood's Dracula is different enough from Bram Stoker's Dracula to merit an existence independent of the text. He writes:

> Dracula generates not in the alienating distance produced by history but rather in the more immediate present because, unlike the novel, the cinematic reincarnations of the Count, as fresh re-enactments of the Count's exploits, eliminate the temporal distance between the past and the present and are better reflective of the extant discourses and ideologies.[15]

Mubarki highlights some of the discourses and ideologies that evolved around Dracula's characterization, for example, the notions of abjection and its sociocultural understanding that lies in the physical Self and defies cultural categorization that excludes and is condemned as evil. Along with other discourses, Dracula's sexuality reserves great attention throughout Mubarki's paper and unpacks the vampire's monstrous sexuality from different movies, as well as his flourishment to sex appeal figure dealt with by both the Hammer Productions and Hollywood cinema. Due to mainstream cinema, Dracula's characterization is continuously being shaped making him commercial, vulnerable, "civilized", tamed and almost human in many ways.

In the *5 Technologies of Misogyny* Deborah Wilson's study interprets Bram Stoker's novel as a "multi-

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9.   Teichert, 3.

10. Meraj Ahmed Mubarki. "Reorienting Dracula: From Nosferatu to Dracula Untold," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, Vol. 38 (May 2020): 91–115.

11. Alexis Milmine, "Retracing the Shambling Steps of the Undead: The Blended Folkloric Elements of Vampirism in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," in *The Universal Vampire: Origins and Evolution of a Legend*, edited by Barbara Brodman et al. (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2013), 33–44.

12. Milmine, 35.

13. Milmine, 36.

14. Milmine, 37.

15. Mubarki, 91.

layered sexual drama" one that enacts the primary contradiction of Victorian sexual hegemony.[16] Wilson refers to the Victorian social imbalance of its time, where women's role was defined as domestic and considered them without any sexual desire. She refers to the novel's ideology of gender as ambiguous by underpinning a scene from the book which conflicts with the hegemonic depiction of gender roles. In this scene clothing rhetorics depict a relevant subject position and decodes Dracula's black attire that overshadows Mina's innocent helplessness in bed, wearing her white nightgown.

What | Who Are We Looking at?

Most of the film adaptations based on the novel fabricate new identities for Dracula while simplifying his origins and fixating them into one. Through the media of cinema Dracula's character is perpetually becoming with the renewal of his fashion. The liberties of cinematic representations as well as their production conditions draw importance on the effective narratives of light, set design, acting, hair, make-up and costume design. Yet, it is important to note that further roles equally take place in the fabrication of movies and contribute to their outcome. As Kambara and Deming stressed in their essay, the creator's role not only captures elements of social realities but also serves to influence them.[17] Following up on their enquiry about how taste can be defined through social processes involving cultural capital through creative production will be linked to the rise of mainstream film production houses, like Hammer Film Production best known for its Gothic horror and fantasy films.[18] The rise of big movie theatre production companies and their shaping force on the cinematic *gaze* will be supported by Tim Edwards's theoretical study about masculinity and menswear. His implication on the paradox of looking will be redirected in this essay to returning legends, such as Dracula who became a recurring character in cinema's history. Edwards highlights the conspicuousness of cinematic menswear and notes as a most conscious form of looking at men that we engage in.[19] Nevertheless the discourse of looking, the rhetorics of fashion and its place in the audiovisual landscape is one of the primary subjects that enables the costume designer's subjectivity to the forefront. Such allowance of the cinematic space will be linked to the concept of *Weltanschauung* to clothing narratives.

The Birth of the "Dracula Industry"

One of the earliest pre-Dracula movies was filmed in 1922 by Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau, introducing *Nosferatu/Count Orlok* who was played by Max Schreck. Unlike later vampire films, In *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror*, Dracula was framed as a hideous and monstrous figure. His visual depiction is exaggerated by costume and set designer, Albin Grau. The German art director and costume designer was a driving force behind the visual reproduction of Count Orlok. The tall, gaunt and gangly creature he created, became iconic for its terrific look. Yet, Dracula's grotesque representation overpowered any racial and gender-related backgrounds of his, and seemingly determined him as the infectious "other" who endangers the "good" and "civilized". This distinction can be depicted in the details of his physical features. Max Schreck's face was masked to ghastly, with a bald cap, huge, messy eyebrows, large prosthetic ears, fingers and false teeth. His unnatural and disproportionately large body was further emphasised by his black overcoat that enlarged his shoulders and chest, combined with dark trousers and a cravat. This instance corroborates Grau's intentions to envision something "unnatural" stimulated by the surrealist look of German expressionism.[20] His design rather prioritized conceiving an ideal visual

16. Deborah S. Wilson and Christine Moneera Laennec, *Bodily Discursions: Genders, Representations, Technologies* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), 103–148.

17. Kambara and Deming, 153.

18. "Hammer Film Productions," *Wikipedia*, accessed February 21, 2024, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hammer_Film_Productions.

19. Edwards, 102.

20. "Designing Fear: Nosferatu — A Symphony of Horror," The Art of Costume, accessed February 21, 2024, https://theartofcostume.com/2020/10/05/designing-fear-nosferatu-a-symphony-of-horror.

atmosphere in which Dracula's body goes under disguise and becomes nearly inhuman. His costume helped Orlok's character to come "alive" and turned the actor's body to unrecognisable. The unpleasant aesthetics of his body, merging with his costume, centralized the cinematic gaze on the unknown. In regards to Grau's subject position as *Nostrau*'s visual concept maker and responsible for the film's memorable poster, reinforces the early role of crafts makers working in film sets. The role of costume designers more specifically in early cinematography, where the production of silent cinema had impacted the visual outcome of movie props. Even though costume designers had to compromise with their design and align with the production processes, costumes could be mobilized and replace speech.[21] Clothing can fortify a film's plot, theme, or mood and act as a metaphor for certain character types. The constraints of silent cinema might have altered the qualities of visuals but foregrounded the rhetoric of Count Orlok's attire. Grau's professional background and personal world perspectives, namely his devotion to occultist beliefs are embedded in his design decisions. *Nosferatu*'s creation conveys ideas from the cognitive philosophical perspectives of *Weltanschauung* and gives authorization to Albert Grau's creative input as well as his ideologies about depicting Dracula. Nonetheless, the film's smaller production scale and crew should not be disregarded, granting space for Grau's work.

The Rhetorics of Count Dracula

Roland Barthes theorized the capability of clothes in creating sentences whether the person who is wearing the outfit intends the meaning or not.[22] To situate clothing narratives and the unintentionality of wearers in cinematic contexts, it is vital to note the rise of costume designers in the 1920s. Consequently, this resulted in the expansion of scale and scope with the advent of sound and the institutionalization of costume design in Hollywood in the 1930s. After the Second World War, the film director as auteur overpowered the production of film and costumes ultimately needed to serve the script, scene, narrative and the director.[23] The growth of cinematic production resulted not only in the United States but also in Britain. Hammer Film Production was founded in 1934 and became well known for its series of Gothic horror and fantasy films made in the mid-1950s.[24] Soon after the succession of Hammer Production, their industry dominated the horror film market and "dealt" with Dracula's serious masculinization in cinema history. Dracula's sexual awakening was depicted in many movies. Between 1959 and 1978, Hammer produced a total of eight sequels to its first version of Dracula.[25] This depiction firmly moved Dracula away from *Nosferatu*'s unpleasant figure and replaced the undesirable vampire figure with celebrity actors. Next to the famous Hollywood star, Bela Lugosi, Christopher Lee became one of the role models in Dracula movies. The Count's fetishization of desirable characters can be seen as a form of neutralization of his evilness. Lee made his dramatic debut in *Horror of Dracula* in 1958. His particular portrayal is anchored by a black floor-length opera cape over a simple black suit. The cape has a shirt-style collar and a black silky rope tie that knots around his neck. The iconic cape was approved by Christopher Lee himself and later auctioned for nearly twenty-six thousand pounds.[26] The actor's say in the choice of his costume design validates the embodiment of Count Dracula. His dramatic, nearly theatrical attire relays a slick elegance that speaks to the target audience about power, and sexual desirability. Small fragments of his shirt can be seen due to the full coverage of his long black cape that hides a three-piece suit. Similarly to *Nosferatu*'s Orlok, Lee wears a black silk cravat around his cutaway spread white collar shirt. Lee's Dracula wears a black subtly self-striped suit, resembling fashions of the 1880s with its long four-button single-breasted jacket. Lee wears only the top button, referencing the common practice of the era like his ankle-high style, black leather Chelsea boots. The use of Lee's dimensions of

21. Jobling, 180.

22. Barthes.

23. Kambara and Deming, 160.

24. "Hammer Film Productions," *Wikipedia*, accessed February 21, 2024, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hammer_Film_Productions.

25. Wilson and Laennec, 128.

26. "Christopher Lee as Dracula," BAMF Style, accessed February 21, 2024, https://bamfstyle.com/2022/10/25/dracula-christopher-lee/#more-66954.

cultural capital in gestures, manner, dress and physical appearance shows how visual rhetorics are created through meaning. Molly Arbuthnot's costume design might need to follow up on Bela Lugosi's virility. While cinematic costume can craft the character's identity in film, actors playing a character can create an imagined persona, however, Roland Barthes notes that these fashion choices are still bounded by cultural/microcultural logic.[27] Menswear can deviate from historical authenticity to create eroticised fetishism for the audiences to decode, like Christopher Lee's black cape or even Chelsea boots. Yet, Lee's popularity undoubtedly engraved him as a sex appeal of his time. His fame raises questions about how the process of Dracula's masculinization made him so favourable amongst female audiences and what made him stand out from other Dracula characters. Conceivably, Kambara and Deming's idea would give direction in deconstructing the cinematic gaze upon the re-imagined Count Dracula.

> A person putting on a leather jacket for the first time is employing a fiction that becomes more and more real the more frequently the person wears the jacket — as the leather softens and begins to conform to the wearer's body, it simultaneously becomes a more central, if still manufactured, component of the person's identity.[28]

The embodiment of one's fictional character might gradually overcome the idea of the costume designer's world views and become real. Throughout many Dracula movie sequences, Lee's repetition of acts in recrafting Count Dracula legitimized the imagined masculine ideal of heteronormative cinematic gaze.

Re-Fashioning Bram Stoker's Dracula

Francis Ford Coppola's film transcended most Dracula horror movies and brought new perspectives to the vampire movie canon. *Bram Stoker's Dracula* was first shown in the movie theatres in 1992, starring Gary Oldman as *Lord Vlad*. Coppola's movie has been analysed for its expanded mythical content that opened up immediate historical interests and dilemmas among many scholars. Meraj Ahmed Mubarki highlights the interconnection between historical periods and the auteurs and how they reflect on each other as products.[29] *Bram Stoker's Dracula* took shape around the demise of the Soviet Union. There are clear indications in the movie why Coppola's Dracula is so different from earlier characterizations, depicting him as a war hero by rehabilitating the historical Vlad as a defender of Christianity. The unusual adaptation from Coppola demystifies earlier depictions of Dracula characters. The film's plot enhances romance and love throughout the movie, erasing the monstrousness and horror of the vampire legend. The film alters its form through the director's intervention, and the vampire genre gets reworked. In the readaptation of Stoker's novel, the movie's conspicuous production design invites further investigations into Dracula's fashion. Eiko Ishioka, former art director and graphic designer (with minimal experience in costume design at the time) took the lead in designing the movie's costumes. Her designs created a strong and surreal *mise-en-scène* for the film, mixing Eastern and Western cultural influences. She drew upon from insects and lizards to armadillos and red-blood corpuscles for inspiration and created costumes that evoked haute couture, superhero attire, and traditional Japanese formalwear.[30] Ishioka's extensive visual rhetorics accentuate Dracula's attire and represent him with more than one outfit. During the movie, Dracula appears as Lord Vlad transformed into a creature with bat ears and supple, leathery armour that forms an exoskeletal musculature like a flayed human. The exceptional costume designs show a total form of *Weltanschauung* that regenerates Dracula's identity and creates tropes in fictional narratives. Gary Oldman's spectacular attires present a rather eclectic fashion, showing diversity in cultural attributes that moves away from the mainstream portrayal of Dracula by disregarding his iconic black cape. Ishioka costumes Oldman in a crimson-red kimono that billows behind him as

27. Barthes.

28. Kambara and Deming, 157.

29. Mubarki, 92.

30. "Celebrating Eiko Ishioka's extraordinary costumes for Bram Stoker's Dracula," *Medium*, accessed February 21, 2024, https://medium.com/@JoeSommerlad/celebrating-eiko-ishiokas-extraordinary-costumes-for-bram-stoker-s-dracula-e9c0e74159da.

he moves around his castle. On both sides of his chest, golden phoenix embroideries decorate Count Dracula's robe, which is associated with immortality, and life after death.[31] Ishioka's strong illustrative elements for the young Vlad Tepes' red suit of armour resemble his aura of power and symbolically associate him with his craving for blood. Upon his arrival to London, Lord Vlad appears in a fine charcoal top coat, waistcoat and matching hat, he is wearing sunglasses that protect him from fatal sunlight nonetheless, Vlad's style depicts similarities of Steampunk fashion that comprehends a mixture of the Victorian era's romantic view of science in literature and the industrialisation in most parts of Europe.[32] Lastly, Ishioka's "Satanist" costume design for the Count enhances the character's ancient lineage. The metallic gown, rich in jewels and patchwork curlicues, resembles a bishop's vestment keeping with the Satanic perversion of Christianity. Ishioka's work received the Oscar Award for Best Costume Design of the Year in 1992. Her production design for Coppola's movie ensured her name in cinema history for the costume's spectacular visual rhetorics. Ultimately, Ishioka's creations gained attention after the production of *Bram Stoker's Dracula* furthermore she also disrupted the solid foundation of Dracula's identity and additionally challenged the preconceptions of clothing narratives.

Coppola's intention of "demystifying" Dracula's figure and appearance varied from earlier vampire films. However, it is worth mentioning an earlier attempt at rethinking the genre of vampire horror films. Roman Polanski's parody from 1967, was a new take on the subgenre and a remake of the vampire which aimed to bring it back to its Central European folkloristic origins and had since become an archetype of Western horror.[33] In The Fearless Vampire Killers, Polanki's strong commentaries on Cold War politics and communist regimes of the Eastern bloc gives strong historical context to its time. His interpretation of the Count challenged the canonization of Dracula and varied from the archetypical Western idealization.

Polanski's Count von Krolock unlike the other characters of the parody along the movie remains serious and dedicated to his role. His extended monologues and spectacular costumes portray him sober. Contrary to Hammer and Hollywood horror films where Dracula is often depicted as the "exotic Other" or the fearful concourer who will overpower the weak, Polanski's Count aims to move away from such narratives.

The film raises significant questions about Count von Krolock's virility and his signature night cape. His black cape with a vibrant red lining, shows his sexual aggression, but also the problematic paternity of the "super-male" who is the father of a homosexual boy.

The film had gone through several changes during production. American producer Martin Ransohoff disliked Polanslki's version due to the protagonists, who neither seemed to give the impression of fearless nor bloodshed killers during the film. Later the film appeared in two distinct versions: Polanki's in Europe and Ransohoff's in America. The original film's parts had been radically changed by recutting, redubbing, revoicing, and altered dialogue that no longer represented Polanski's envisionings.

Conclusion

The performativity of masculinity through cinematographic costume becomes unnoticeably inseparable. Fashion allows its wearer to construct identities and create meaning through it, and the use of menswear in film is part of a complex visual rhetoric which enhances the compound structure of cinema production. However, the processes of masculinization and de-masculinization blur the line between fiction and reality in which clothing narratives take crucial space. Dracula's continuous reproduction

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31. "Phoenix," *Wikipedia*, accessed February 21, 2024, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phoenix_(mythology).

32. "Celebrating Eiko Ishioka's extraordinary costumes for Bram Stoker's Dracula," *Medium*, accessed February 21, 2024, https://medium.com/@JoeSommerlad/celebrating-eiko-ishiokas-extraordinary-costumes-for-bram-stoker-s-dracula-e9c0e74159da.

33. Thomas Prasch, " 'Oy, Have You Got the Wrong Vampire': Dislocation, Comic Distancing, and Political Critique in Roman Polanski's The Fearless Vampire Killers (1967)," in *The Laughing Dead: The Horror-Comedy Film from Bride of Frankenstein to Zombieland*, edited by Cynthia J. Miller et al. (London–New York, Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 3–24.

led to the birth of the masculinization of his character, enhanced by the visual rhetorics of the creative makers.

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