

# “This movie **sucks!**”



Een onderzoek naar het gebruik van kunstkritische en populaire filmdiscoursen onder professionele filmcritici en amateurrecensenten op het gebied van **vampierfilms**

**Master Thesis Media Studies**

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Master Thesis Media Studies

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## Voorwoord

Deze master thesis vormt het eindresultaat van mijn studie media studies. Het onderwerp hiervoor komt voort uit een thesisproject rond de vraag waarom vampierfilms en -series tegenwoordig zo populair zijn bij het grote publiek. Dit project sprak me al meteen aan, aangezien ik zelf erg geïnteresseerd ben in horror en verschillende subgenres daarvan. De ervaring van het vampiergenre in populaire media was me dan ook al eerder opgevallen. Dit thema heb ik kunnen combineren met twee andere aan media en cultuur gerelateerde thema's die me ook erg interesseren: kritieken en evaluaties op het gebied van film en gebruikersparticipatie op internet. Ik heb hier uiteindelijk een thesis over kunnen schrijven waar ik voornamelijk met plezier aan heb gewerkt en hoop dat dit ook uit het eindproduct blijkt.

Mijn dank gaat uit naar Annemarie Kersten voor haar uitstekende begeleiding en feedback waar ik erg veel aan gehad heb. Ook wil ik Bernadette Kester bedanken voor haar werk als tweede lezer en verder iedereen die me op één of andere manier heeft geholpen bij het schrijven van deze thesis.

# 1. Inleiding

## 1.1 Aanleiding

Vanaf het begin van het nieuwe millennium heeft zich een ontwikkeling voorgedaan die ervoor zorgt dat internet meer dan ooit gekenmerkt wordt door participatie en interactie. De vrij statische versie van internet ontwikkelde zich langzaam naar het 'participatieve web' of Web 2.0. Dit heeft gezorgd voor een explosie van mogelijkheden tot creatieve uiting en participatie in de vorm van user created content, oftewel bijdragen die afkomstig zijn van de eindgebruikers zelf in plaats van de traditionele mediaproducten (OECD, 2007). Mede hierdoor is er ook een proces van democratisering in de media in gang gezet. Gewone mensen kunnen nu gemakkelijk zelf bijdragen aan de berichtgeving over nieuws, maar ook over hun eigen interesses, bijvoorbeeld op het gebied van kunst en cultuur, zonder dat ze daar een specifieke opleiding voor hebben gevolgd. Op het gebied van filmrecensies is dit erg goed te zien. Waar deze voorheen vooral werden gepubliceerd door professionele recensenten in kranten en tijdschriften, komen er nu steeds meer mogelijkheden bij voor amateurrecensenten om hun mening over films te delen met de hele wereld. Ze kunnen terecht op een groeiend aantal websites gericht op het verzamelen van meningen, waarderingen en gebruikerservaringen, of op eigen websites, weblogs en sociale media. Internet is ook een plaats geworden waar het publiek voor allerlei soorten en genres van mediaproducten zich verzamelt in fanculturen. Web 2.0 maakt het voor deze fans gemakkelijk om met elkaar in contact te komen en hun ideeën en creaties, waaronder meningen en recensies, met elkaar te delen (Monk, 2011). In ongeveer dezelfde periode als de opkomst van Web 2.0, begon er een opleving in de populariteit van vampierfictie. Dit is gepaard gegaan met het ontstaan van een grote online fancultuur op het gebied van vampierfictie in het algemeen en specifieke verhalenseries hierin (Gosa & Şerban, 2012). Vooral in de laatste jaren heeft dit genre erg aan populariteit gewonnen, onder andere door films en series als *Twilight*, *True Blood* en *The Vampire Diaries*, die een miljoenenpubliek trekken. Hierdoor zijn vampiers bijna niet meer weg te denken uit de hedendaagse populaire entertainmentmedia.

## 1.2 Probleemstelling

Of user created content een bedreiging vormt voor de autoriteit van professionele schrijvers en recensenten in het veld van de journalistiek, is het onderwerp van debat. Een optimistische visie hierop wordt onder andere vertegenwoordigd door Tim O'Reilly (2005), die de term 'Web 2.0' populariseerde en stelt dat collectieve intelligentie door middel van participatie op internet een verbetering van bestaande diensten kan bewerkstelligen. Ook Chris Anderson, die in zijn boek *The Long Tail* (2006) de democratisering van productie door Web 2.0 beschrijft, is erg optimistisch. Een

meer pessimistische visie wordt door Andrew Keen in *The Cult of the Amateur* (2007) uitgedragen. Keen stelt dat de verspreiding van door ongekwalficeerde personen geproduceerde user created content zal leiden tot een kwaliteitsdaling van de informatie die op internet beschikbaar is. In de praktijk hangt de mate waarin user created content een bedreiging voor of aanvulling op professionele mediabijdragen vormt, voor een groot deel af van de kwaliteit van de bijdragen die door amateurs op internet worden geplaatst. Wanneer de kwaliteit hiervan net zo hoog is als van professioneel geproduceerde bijdragen kunnen amateurbijdragen professionele journalistieke diensten op den duur overbodig maken. Wanneer de kwaliteit erg laag is, blijft professionele journalistiek relevant en zouden deze amateurbijdragen kunnen worden gezien als een aanvulling hierop.

Om aan te sluiten op deze discussie over de bruikbaarheid en betrouwbaarheid van informatie die door internetgebruikers op het web wordt geplaatst, is het nuttig om hier verder onderzoek naar te doen. Dit onderzoek kan bijvoorbeeld gedaan worden door middel van het vergelijken van journalistiek werk dat vanuit een professionele context is geproduceerd met het zelfde soort werk dat geproduceerd is door internetgebruikers die niet vanuit een professionele context handelen. In het onderzoek dat in het kader van deze thesis wordt gedaan, zal een dergelijke vergelijking ook plaatsvinden, gericht op filmrecensies van professionele recensenten en op internet geplaatste amateurrecensies. Dit onderzoek is vooral gericht op het vergelijken van het discours dat door beide soorten recensenten wordt gebruikt. Dit is de manier waarop er wordt geschreven over het onderwerp. Specifiek zal er worden onderzocht hoe beide soorten recensenten in hun werk gebruik maken van een kunstkritisch discours, waarin een film aan de hand van criteria voor hoge kunst wordt besproken, of een populair discours, waarin een film met gebruikmaking van een met het massapubliek geassocieerde populaire esthetiek wordt besproken. Dit onderwerp is nog erg breed om te onderzoeken, daarom is ervoor gekozen om het onderzoek af te bakenen op basis van één thema, namelijk vampierfilms. Voor dit thema is gekozen omdat vampiers momenteel een erg populair onderwerp zijn in entertainmentmedia en als onderwerp van fanculturen op internet, wat zich onder andere uit in een grote hoeveelheid door fans en andere belangstellenden geschreven recensies op internet (Gosa & Şerban, 2012). Binnen fanculturen wordt er veel aandacht besteed aan het opbouwen van expertise over een bepaald onderwerp, zoals in dit geval over vampierfictie (Bode, 2010). Onderzoek naar recensies die mogelijk vanuit deze vorm van expertise zijn geschreven, kan meer vertellen over de beoordelingcriteria die fans van het vampiergenre gebruiken en hoe deze zich verhouden ten opzichte van de door professionele filmrecensenten gebruikte criteria. Voor het onderzoek levert dit de volgende probleemstelling op: 'Hoe verhoudt het gebruik van kunstkritische en populaire filmdiscoursen zich in recensies van amateurrecensenten op internet ten opzichte van dat van professionele filmrecensenten in kranten bij het beoordelen van vampierfilms?'

### 1.3 Relevantie van het onderzoek

De maatschappelijke relevantie van het onderzoeken van het thema vampierfilms schuilt in de populariteit van dit genre. Zowel in de boekhandel als op televisie en in de bioscoop blijken vampiers ware publiekstrekkers te zijn. Zoals eerder genoemd zijn de allen op boekenseries gebaseerde films in de *Twilight Saga* en series *True Blood* en *The Vampire Diaries* wereldwijde successen, net zoals de al eerder verschenen filmseries *Blade* en *Underworld*. Naar aanleiding van deze successen worden er hiernaast ook vele minder bekende mediaproducten over of met vampiers uitgebracht, om in te spelen op de vampiertrend. Vampierthema's zijn vanuit culturele niches nu doorgedrongen tot mediaproducten voor het grote publiek. Of, zoals de Britse cultuurhistoricus Christopher Frayling deze verschuiving omschrijft: "*Twilight* [...] and everything else on television, all these vampire and werewolf things, it's become [...] a mainstream part of culture. It was a kind of guilty pleasure when I started; you went to the movies at eleven o' clock at night and hoped no one was watching." (Maby, 2012). Terry, King en Patterson (2011) berekenden dat films met een vampierthema gemiddeld vier tot elf miljoen dollar extra opbrengen in het openingsweekend ten opzichte van andere horrorfilms. De populariteit en daarmee de economische waarde van dit thema maakt het daarom interessant om de bespreking hiervan nader te bekijken.

Zoal uit de probleemstelling al gebleken is, ligt de maatschappelijke relevantie van dit onderzoek ook vooral in de discussie over de bruikbaarheid en betrouwbaarheid van bijdragen van gebruikers op internet, waar sinds de opkomst van Web 2.0 steeds meer nadruk op is komen te liggen. Dit wordt door sommigen opgevat als een aanwinst voor de maatschappelijke informatievoorziening in de vorm van verbeteringen door het gebruik van de collectieve intelligentie van gebruikers (O'Reilly, 2005) of als democratisering van de productie van content (Anderson, 2006). Anderen zien dit weer als een bedreiging van de algehele kwaliteit van de beschikbare content (Keen, 2007). Ook de wetenschappelijke relevantie van het onderzoek heeft hiermee te maken. User created content en de grootschalige productie en verspreiding hiervan is een relatief nieuw verschijnsel. Hierdoor is er nog relatief weinig onderzoek gedaan naar de verhoudingen tussen professionele producenten van bijdragen op het gebied van kunst en cultuur en amateurs op internet. Op het gebied van culturele gebruikersrecensies is er eerder onderzoek gedaan door David en Pinch (2006) naar het gebruik van online recensiesystemen, zoals dat van *amazon.com*, door amateurrecensenten van boeken en muziek en Steiner (2008) naar de eigenschappen van door amateurs geschreven online recensies van literatuur. Verboord (2009) onderzocht hiernaast het gebruik en de ervaren legitimiteit van door experts of internetgebruikers geschreven literatuurrecensies onder in literatuur geïnteresseerd publiek. Specifiek op het gebied van film en



internetgebruikers is er onderzoek gedaan door Duan, Gu en Whinston (2008) naar de invloed van gebruikersrecensies op bioscoopbezoek en door Plucker, Kaufman, Temple en Qian (2009) naar de expertise van internetgebruikers bij het waarderen van film. Het onderzoek dat in deze thesis zal worden uitgevoerd, kan dus een aanvulling opleveren op de informatie die is verkregen door eerder onderzoek naar gebruikersrecensies op internet. Meer specifiek gaat het hierbij om meer inzicht in het discoursgebruik van amateurrecensenten en de overeenkomsten of verschillen met dat van professionele recensenten.

#### **1.4 Opzet van de thesis**

Deze thesis bestaat uit een totaal van zes hoofdstukken. In dit eerste hoofdstuk is het onderwerp ingeleid en is de probleemstelling geïntroduceerd. Ook is de relevantie van het onderzoek uitgelegd. In hoofdstuk 2 zal er verder worden ingegaan op het onderwerp vampierfilms. De aantrekkingskracht van vampierfilms op het publiek en de mogelijke redenen hiervoor zullen worden besproken. Daarnaast is er aandacht voor de geschiedenis van de vampierfilm en ontwikkelingen binnen dit genre die hebben bijgedragen aan de hedendaagse populariteit. De literatuur die in het derde hoofdstuk wordt besproken, vormt een theoretisch kader van achtergrondkennis die nodig is voor het doen van onderzoek naar evaluatieve discourses op het gebied van kunst en het gebruik hiervan door professionele recensenten en amateurrecensenten op internet. Hierbij komt de werking van het culturele veld en de rol van kunstcritici aan bod, evenals het ontstaan van culturele classificaties, met in het bijzonder de classificatie van film. Hierna zullen de concepten kunstkritisch discours en populair discours worden besproken. Vervolgens is er aandacht voor de opkomst van Web 2.0, user created content en de gevolgen hiervan op het gebied van amateurrecensies. Ten slotte worden in dit hoofdstuk de deelvragen en hypothesen voor het onderzoek opgesteld. Het vierde hoofdstuk is gericht op het uitleggen van de methode die wordt gebruikt om het onderzoek uit te voeren. In dit hoofdstuk wordt ook de operationalisering van de te onderzoeken concepten besproken. In hoofdstuk 5 zullen de onderzoeksresultaten worden besproken aan de hand van de vier opgestelde deelvragen, die hierin ook zullen worden beantwoord. In het zesde hoofdstuk wordt er ten slotte een overzicht gegeven van de belangrijkste bevindingen van het onderzoek, die samen leiden tot de beantwoording van de probleemstelling. Hierna vindt er nog een korte reflectie op het onderzoek plaats met aanbevelingen voor vervolgonderzoek.

## 2. Vampierfilms

Het onderzoek naar filmkritiek en de criteria die verschillende soorten recensenten gebruiken, is afgebakend op het onderwerp 'vampierfilms'. In het Van Dale woordenboek (Den Boon & Geeraerts, 2005) wordt het woord vampier gedefinieerd als een 'dode die 's nachts zijn graf verlaat om mensen het bloed uit te zuigen'. Het lijkt hier op het eerste gezicht te gaan om een weinig aantrekkelijk wezen. Toch blijken vampiers een grote aantrekkingskracht uit te oefenen op het publiek. Al sinds de jaren '30 is de vampier niet meer weg te denken als icoon van de horrorfilm, maar vooral in de laatste jaren heeft hij een grote opleving in populariteit ondergaan. De vampier is nu niet alleen meer te zien in horrorfilms, die bedoeld zijn voor een nichepubliek van horrorfans, maar juist ook in erg toegankelijke mediaproducten als romantische films, kinderboeken en populaire jeugdseries (Gosa & Şerban, 2012). In dit hoofdstuk zal dit onderwerp nader worden bekeken. Eerst zal er worden ingegaan op de vraag wat de aantrekkingskracht van vampiers en horrorfilms is. Na een korte geschiedenis van de vampierfilm, zal worden besproken hoe de vampierfilm zich door de jaren heen heeft ontwikkeld en hoe dit bijdraagt aan de hedendaagse populariteit van vampiers in populaire mediaproducten.

### 2.1 De aantrekkingskracht van vampiers

Dat vampiers erg tot de verbeelding van het publiek spreken, blijkt wel uit de grote hoeveelheid films en andere mediaproducten die over ze gemaakt wordt. Ondanks de rol die vampiers vaak spelen als griezels en slechteriken, blijven ze populair en geliefd bij het publiek. Waarom zijn mensen zo geïnteresseerd in vampiers en andere manifestaties van horrorfictie?

Tudor (1997) geeft een overzicht van interpretaties van de populariteit van het horrorgenre, waar vampiers oorspronkelijk vandaan komen. Hierbij geeft hij aan dat het lastig is om het genre in het algemeen te interpreteren vanwege de grote verscheidenheid aan soorten films en publiek. Veel benaderingen gaan uit van het idee dat een voorkeur voor horror iets abnormaals is en speciaal uitgelegd moet worden vanuit de persoonlijkheid van de kijker. Vanuit de psychoanalytische hoek is er vooral veel aandacht voor repressie van seksualiteit en de monsterlijke Ander. Deze zijn verborgen in het innerlijke van de mens, maar kunnen in de horrorfilm volop tot uiting komen en aantrekkingskracht uitoefenen. Een andere rol die horror heeft is die van middel om angsten weer te geven. Horrorfilms laten vaak de grootste menselijke angsten zien, maar aangezien het publiek weet dat het slechts een film is, is dit een veilige manier om deze te overwinnen. Nog een interpretatie is dat veel horrorfilms taboeonderwerpen (bijvoorbeeld moord) behandelen en dit het onderbewuste

van de kijker prikkelt. Ook de tijdsgeest, beïnvloed door maatschappelijke ontwikkelingen en angsten, is vaak terug te vinden in horrorthema's. Voorbeelden hiervan zijn invasies van vreemde en vijandelijke wezens of de gevaren die kunnen voortkomen uit wetenschappelijke vooruitgang. De grote paradox van het horrorgenre is dat het afstotelijke en afgrijselijke dingen toont, maar toch door mensen wordt opgezocht, juist omdat deze dingen afwijken van de norm en daardoor interessant zijn. Daarbij is het ook de bedoeling om een fysieke respons op te wekken als schrikken of wegstaren, die als sociaal geconstrueerde en daardoor veilige horrorervaring juist als plezierig wordt ervaren. Ten slotte kan horror ook, net als andere genres, aantrekkelijk zijn vanwege de geboden entertainmentwaarde.

Soortgelijke redenen voor de waardering van horror komen ook naar voren in het onderzoek van Fischhoff, Dimopoulos, Nguyen en Gordon (2003), die de favoriete filmmonsters van het Amerikaanse filmpubliek en de redenen voor hun populariteit onderzochten. Hierbij werd een nationale enquête onder 1166 respondenten van verschillende leeftijden gehouden, die als grote winnaar de vampier (en meer specifiek, Dracula) opleverde. Belangrijke eigenschappen die monsters en andere horrorfilmfiguren aantrekkelijk maken voor het publiek zijn intelligentie en het hebben van bovenmenselijke krachten. Daarnaast worden filmmonsters gewaardeerd als ze 'het kwaad' vertegenwoordigen, niet gebonden zijn aan de maatschappelijke moraal en de kijker een veilige manier bieden om de duistere kanten van de menselijke aard te kunnen zien. Jongeren gaven vaker de voorkeur aan gewelddadige en moordende personages als Freddy Krueger (*A Nightmare on Elm Street*), Chucky (*Child's Play*) en Hannibal Lecter (*The Silence of the Lambs*). Als reden hiervoor werd vaak bewondering voor de bekwaamheid bij het moorden van deze personages genoemd. Oudere respondenten hadden daarentegen vaker een voorkeur voor klassieke filmmonsters als het Monster van Frankenstein en Godzilla, omdat deze monsters vaak een outsiderstatus hebben en dit sympathie opwekt. Vrouwen bleken een sterkere voorkeur voor vampiers te hebben dan mannen. Redenen die veel werden gegeven voor een voorkeur voor vampiers zijn de intelligentie van deze personages en hun tot de verbeelding sprekende onsterfelijkheid. Door veel respondenten werden ze bovendien aangemerkt als 'sexy', iets wat volgens de onderzoekers te maken heeft met de aantrekkelijkheid van veel van de acteurs die bekende filmvampiers spelen.

McMahon (2009) gaat specifiek in op de fascinatie van het publiek voor vampiers en geeft hier een aantal redenen voor. Ten eerste haalt ze de Duitse filosoof Martin Heidegger aan, die stelde dat angst voor de dood de grootste menselijke angst is en dat de meeste veelvoorkomende angsten hiernaar herleid kunnen worden. De mens weet dat zijn leven eindig is en probeert van de dood te vluchten. Uit deze angst komt een verlangen naar onsterfelijkheid voort. Hierin ligt de aantrekkingskracht van fictie over onsterfelijke wezens als vampiers, die een personificatie van de

vlucht voor de dood vormen. De tweede reden is dat vampiers eeuwig jong kunnen blijven. Ouder worden is iets waar ook veel mensen bang voor zijn, niet alleen omdat dit hen dichterbij de dood brengt, maar ook omdat ze door het bijbehorende uiterlijke verval verder verwijderd raken van het door de media en maatschappij verspreide ideaalbeeld van jeugdigheid. Vampiers kunnen altijd aan dit ideaalbeeld blijven voldoen en spreken daardoor tot de verbeelding. Een derde reden is de onkwetsbaarheid van vampiers. Waar mensen zich vaak zorgen maken over ziekten en andere zaken die het lichaam kwetsbaar maken, hebben vampiers vrijwel onkwetsbare lichamen, die niet vatbaar zijn voor ziekten, verwondingen of kou. Het vierde punt ligt in het verlengde hiervan. Vampiers bezitten over superkrachten als bovenmenselijke snelheid, kracht en schoonheid. Net als het geval is bij superhelden, maakt dit hen speciaal. Veel mensen willen zich graag speciaal en belangrijk voelen in plaats van slechts gewoon. Door vampiers en andere personages met buitengewone krachten kan het publiek ervaren hoe dat is. Als vijfde reden is er het elimineren van zwaktes en bedreigingen die ontstaan bij het aangaan van sociale relaties. Vampiers kunnen goed solitair leven en hebben geen anderen nodig, waardoor ze geen last hebben van deze problemen. Bovendien zijn ze in sommige verhalen in staat om gedachten van anderen te lezen, wat ze meer macht geeft in sociale relaties. Ten slotte is er nog de personificatie die vampiers vormen van ongecontroleerde menselijke instincten op het gebied van seks en geweld. Deze instincten worden niet tegengehouden door de maatschappelijke moraal en doorbreken sociale taboes op zaken als moord en kannibalisme. Zoals uit eerder onderzoek is gebleken, is dit een reden voor de aantrekkingskracht van filmmonsters en horror in het algemeen (Tudor, 1997; Fischhoff, Dimopoulos, Nguyen en Gordon, 2003). In veel moderne vampierfilms komt dit thema prominent naar voren, omdat de vampiers hierin vaak juist wel hun instincten proberen te beteugelen.

## **2.2 Geschiedenis van de vampierfilm**

Vampiers en andere ondode en bloeddrinkende wezens hebben al eeuwenlang deel uitgemaakt van mythologie en folklore. Vanaf de negentiende eeuw waren het vooral literaire verhalen in de 'gothic novel'-traditie als *The Vampyre* van John Polidori (1819), *Carmilla* van Sheridan Le Fanu (1872) en natuurlijk *Dracula* van Bram Stoker (1897), die de vampier introduceerden bij het grote publiek. Met de komst van de filmtechniek lag het dan ook voor de hand dat deze wezens vroeger of later in films zouden verschijnen. Het eerste vampierachtige wezen (een in een man veranderende vleermuis die met een crucifix wordt verdreven) verscheen zelfs al in 1896 in een film van Georges Méliès (Abbott, 2007). De eerste lange speelfilm waarin een bovennatuurlijke vampier voorkomt is F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens* uit 1922. Deze Duitse expressionistische film was tevens de eerste verfilming van *Dracula*. Dit werd gedaan zonder toestemming van de rechthebbenden en deze

auteursrechtenschending leidde tot de vernietiging van bijna alle kopieën. De film toont acteur Max Schreck als Graaf Orlok, die er een stuk grotesker en afschrikwekkender uitziet dan de meeste latere filmvampiers. Deze film heeft een grote invloed gehad op de conventies die gebruikt worden in vampierfilms, zoals de weergave van zonlicht als dodelijk zijnde voor vampiers (Le Blanc & Odell, 2008).

De volgende (geautoriseerde) versie van het verhaal bracht de vampier definitief naar Hollywood. Universal Studios bracht in 1931 het door Tod Browning geregisseerde *Dracula* uit. De Graaf werd hierin gespeeld door de uit Hongarije afkomstige Bela Lugosi, die met zijn accent en cape de toon zette voor vele latere interpretaties van Dracula. De film werd een groot succes en leidde voor Universal een hele serie monsterfilms in, waaronder Dracula-gerelateerde films als het vervolg *Dracula's Daughter* (1936) en horrorkomedie *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* (1948). Ook kwamen er in deze periode verscheidene ongerelateerde vampierfilms van andere studio's uit. De volgende serie belangrijke vampierfilms kwam van de Britse filmstudio Hammer, die in 1958 met regisseur Terence Fisher een nieuwe Draculafilm maakte: *Horror of Dracula*, waarin Christopher Lee als nieuwe Dracula werd geïntroduceerd en Peter Cushing als vampierjager Dr. Van Helsing. De film kreeg acht vervolgen en daarnaast maakte Hammer onder andere een filmtrilogie gebaseerd op het boek *Carmilla*. Een vernieuwend aspect van de Hammerfilms was het gebruik van kleur, dat sommige scènes een erg bloederige voorkomen gaf. Ook bevatten deze films meer seksueel expliciet materiaal dan eerdere films, een trend die werd voortgezet door Europese cultregisseurs als Jean Rollin en Jess Franco. Andere noemenswaardige films uit de jaren zestig en zeventig zijn de komedie *The Fearless Vampire Killers* van Roman Polanski (1968), George Romero's psychologische thriller *Martin* (1977), *Dracula* (1979) met Frank Langella en een nieuwe versie van *Nosferatu*, gemaakt door Werner Herzog (1979) (Le Blanc & Odell, 2008).

De jaren tachtig werden vooral gekenmerkt door op een tienerpubliek gerichte vampierfilms over jongeren die met vampiers te maken krijgen, als *Fright Night* (1985), *Near Dark* (1987) en *The Lost Boys* (1987). Dit was vooral een gevolg van het eerdere succes van op jongeren gerichte horrorfilms. Begin jaren negentig kwam de vampierfilm weer erg in de belangstelling te staan door kassuccessen als het tot liefdesverhaal bewerkte *Bram Stoker's Dracula* van Francis Ford Coppola (1992) en de verfilming van Anne Rice's boek *Interview with the Vampire* (1994). Ook was er *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1992), die matig succesvol was als film, maar later werd bewerkt tot een populaire televisieserie die van 1997 tot 2003 werd uitgezonden. Vanaf de tweede helft van de jaren negentig zijn vampiers vooral veel te vinden in meer actiegeoriënteerde films en filmseries als *Blade* (1998-2004), *Van Helsing* (2004) en *Underworld* (2003-2012), waarin vampiers en vampierjagers

elkaar met geavanceerde middelen op spectaculaire wijze te lijf gaan (Kane, 2006). Hiernaast waren vooral de verfilmingen van de romantische jeugdboekenserie *Twilight* vanaf 2008 een groot succes

### 2.3 Ontwikkeling van de vampierfilm

Zoals al te zien is in het bovenstaande overzicht van de geschiedenis van de vampierfilm, heeft dit genre zich in de loop der tijd verder ontwikkeld. Dit concludeert ook Tim Kane (2006), op basis van zijn onderzoek naar zeventien 'vampiernarratieven' in films en enkele televisieseries die uitkwamen tussen 1931 en 2003. Hierbij onderzocht hij inhoudelijke elementen die kenmerkend zijn voor het genre en de manier waarop deze elementen in de mediaproducten worden weergegeven.

Voorbeelden hiervan zijn de beet van de vampier, de vampier zelf, de vampierjager en de uiteindelijke vernietiging van de vampier. De conclusie die hij aan de hand hiervan presenteert is dat het genre van de vampierfilm door de jaren heen een ontwikkeling heeft doorgemaakt en vampiers in films en op televisie steeds meer menselijke en soms zelfs heroïsche eigenschappen hebben gekregen. Kane onderscheidt drie algemene trends die elkaar hebben opgevolgd in het beeld dat wordt geschetst van vampiers. Als eerste was er de boosaardige trend, waarin de vampier als eendimensionale slechterik wordt opgevoerd. Dit gebeurde bijvoorbeeld in de Draculafilms van Universal Studios. De tweede trend, die van de erotische vampier, begon met de serie films die Hammer vanaf eind jaren vijftig maakte over Dracula en andere vampiers. Hierin wordt de slechte vampier in een explicietere context geplaatst met veel bloed en geassocieerd met seks en extreem geweld. De nu geldende trend, volgens Kane, is die van de sympathieke vampier. Films over deze soort vampier raakten eind jaren tachtig in opkomst en tonen vampiers niet uitsluitend meer als monsters of moordenaars, maar ook als sympathieke figuren en driedimensionale personages. Ze zijn hierbij vaak emotionele helden, die zich uit gewetensnood proberen te verzetten tegen hun eigen behoefte aan bloed en de strijd aangaan met hun slechte soortgenoten die wel aan deze behoefte toegeven. Ook de slechte vampiers worden vaak sympathieker neergezet, als slachtoffers van de vloek van het vampier-zijn. Voorbeelden hiervan zijn de vampiers van Anne Rice in *Interview with the Vampire* en zelfs Dracula, die in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* als tragische antagonist optreedt. Vampiers worden binnen deze trend ook vaker in verband gebracht met romantische verhaallijnen, zoals de relaties tussen hoofdpersonage Buffy en de vampiers Angel en Spike in de serie *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Soms laat de sympathieke vampier ook zien dat het vampier-zijn positieve aspecten heeft, omdat vampiers in het bezit zijn van tot de verbeelding sprekende bovennatuurlijke krachten, als eeuwige jeugd of kunnen vliegen. Daarnaast hebben veel vampierpersonages nog andere eigenschappen gekregen, die ze voor het publiek herkenbaarder als personage maken. Vampiers zien er nu vaker dan voorheen uit als jonge mensen en leven in een alledaagse omgeving. Hierbij worden

vampiers ook vaker als sociale wezens neergezet, die contacten onderhouden met elkaar en met mensen. De trend van de sympathieke vampier zorgt er, volgens Kane, voor dat de vampier het publiek nu nog meer dan voorheen aanspreekt.

### **2.3 De populariteit van vampierfilms**

Vampiers en vampierfilms zijn vooral de laatste jaren zeer populair bij het grote publiek. Na de grote populariteit van de televisieserie *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, zijn het nu *True Blood* en filmseries als *Underworld* en *Twilight* die veel kijkers of bezoekers trekken. In het geval van de *Twilight*-serie is er zelfs sprake van een ware hype en deze films brachten per deel in de Verenigde Staten en wereldwijd honderden miljoenen dollars op. Terry, King en Patterson (2011) onderzochten verschillende soorten horrorfilms en de inkomsten die ze tussen 1978 en 2010 in de bioscoop genereerden. Hieruit blijkt dat een vampierthema het meeste oplevert in het openingsweekend, gemiddeld vier tot elf miljoen dollar extra ten opzichte van andere horrorthema's. Ook andere mediaproducten over vampiers doen het erg goed en vampiers duiken steeds vaker op in de populaire cultuur (Gosa & Şerban, 2012). Het is duidelijk dat vampiers hun weg naar mainstream cultuur hebben gevonden, maar hoe is deze grote mate van vertegenwoordiging van vampiers in allerhande recente mediaproducten te verklaren?

De grote hoeveelheid aan producten met vampierthema's die momenteel op de markt wordt gebracht is deels te verklaren vanuit de strategieën die binnen de media-industrie worden gebruikt. Veel grote mediabedrijven werken aan de hand van het 'hitmodel'. Dit houdt in dat deze bedrijven altijd op zoek zijn naar formules voor mediaproducten grote publiekstrekkers of hits opleveren. Deze strategie wordt gebruikt omdat de media-industrie in een onzekere en lastig voorspelbare markt opereert. Door middel van hitformules kan worden geprobeerd om de markt iets voorspelbaarder te maken aan de hand van eerdere successen. Hierbij wordt gezocht naar concepten die aanslaan bij een zo groot mogelijk publiek, simpel zijn en ook in verschillende mediavormen of als franchise kunnen worden verkocht (Küng, 2008). De reactie van het publiek in de vorm van verkoopcijfers of bezoekersaantallen kan producenten een indicatie geven welke concepten aanslaan en mogelijk succesvol in andere producten herhaald kunnen worden (Hirsch, 1972). Wanneer op jongeren gerichte vampierboeken als *Twilight* of actiefilms met vampiers als *Blade* aanslaan, zullen de mediabedrijven die deze uitbrengen zich dus richten op verfilmingen en vervolgdelen. Daarnaast zullen ook andere bedrijven de succesformule proberen over te nemen door zelf meer soortgelijke producten op de markt te brengen.

Ook op inhoudelijk gebied is er een verklaring te vinden voor het grote succes dat vampiers tegenwoordig hebben bij het grote publiek. Dit hangt samen met de door Kane (2006) beschreven

ontwikkeling van de vampier als sympathiek personage. Kane verklaart deze inhoudelijke veranderingen vanuit het begrip van 'genre' (in dit geval het horrorgenre), dat een zekere mate van voorspelbaarheid met zich meebrengt. Dit komt doordat het vereist dat er gebruik wordt gemaakt van bepaalde kenmerkende structurele bouwstenen en elementen die een mediaproduct als onderdeel van een genre herkenbaar maken. Volgens hem treedt er naar verloop van tijd een uitputting van het genre op, waardoor de formule saai wordt voor het publiek. Om dit te voorkomen kunnen er elementen uit andere genres aan een genre worden toegevoegd, zodat er voor het publiek enige vernieuwing optreedt. Deze factor haalt ook Wright (2010) aan om het succes van moderne vampierfilms te verklaren. Zij gaat voornamelijk in op de in 2008 uitgebrachte Zweedse vampierfilm *Låt den rätte komma in (Let the Right One In)* van Tomas Alfredson, die een wereldwijd succes werd en zowel onder horrorfans als filmcritici erg goed werd ontvangen. Deze film maakt gebruik van thema's die voortkomen uit zowel de Zweedse nationale filmcultuur als de traditionele vampierfilm, maar onttrekt zich hier tegelijkertijd ook aan. Hierbij wordt gebruik gemaakt van elementen uit horrorfilms, 'coming-of-age'-verhalen en realistisch socio-psychologisch drama. Wright stelt dat deze hybridisering van genres, het combineren van meerdere ongerelateerde genres in één film, een belangrijke factor voor het succes van deze film is. Genrehybridisering zorgt ervoor dat een film door het publiek wordt ervaren als bekend, maar tegelijkertijd ook als innovatief. Hierdoor worden genrespecifieke verwachtingen overstegen. Een vampierfilm die gebaseerd is op meerdere genres dan alleen horror kan zo een veel breder publiek aanspreken dan alleen het traditionele horrorpubliek.

Deze genrehybridisering is ook goed te zien in een andere populaire en veelbesproken vampierfilm: het door Catherine Hardwicke geregisseerde *Twilight*, de eerste verfilming van de *Twilight Saga*-jeugdboekenserie van Stephenie Meyer. Deze film is vooral gericht op een publiek van tienermeisjes en combineert een bovennatuurlijk vampierverhaal met de genres van romantische films en tiener- en 'high school'-films. Bode (2010) onderzocht de kritische receptie van *Twilight* en de rol van genre en publiek hierbij. Ze concludeert dat de film door de gerichtheid op een publiek van tienermeisjes, voor recensenten andere connotaties met zich meebrengt dan films die zich niet zo sterk op dit publiekssegment richten. Dit publiek wordt sterk geassocieerd met feminiene en sentimentele culturele vormen als soapseries, romantische fictie en melodrama, terwijl vampierfilms eerder vooral werden gezien als masculiene en authentieke nichemediaprodukten. In dit geval kan de hybridisering van genres, ondanks het grote succes, ook leiden tot negatieve reacties onder fans van het genre. Deze hebben uitgesproken ideeën over hoe een vampierfilm eruit hoort te zien en ervaren het overschrijden van te veel symbolische grenzen op het gebied van genre als een



bedreiging voor de authenticiteit van hun favoriete genre<sup>1</sup>. Het benaderen van *Twilight* als romantische film voor tieners leidt dan ook tot positievere boordeling dan beschouwingen als vampierfilm. Feit blijft echter wel dat vampiers nu ook worden geassocieerd met verschillende genres die ver van horror af staan. Murphy (2011) merkt op dat de ‘nieuwe vampier’, zoals die in *Twilight* en andere populaire boeken, films en televisieseries met een romantische of tienercontext te vinden is, tegenwoordig door veel tienermeisjes wordt gezien als de gevoelige ideale vriend. Onder invloed van romantische narratieven in onder andere *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* en *Twilight* is de vampier in de beleving van deze doelgroep meer de rol als van sprookjesprins gaan vervullen in plaats van een horrorfiguur.

De vampier heeft een lange geschiedenis op het witte doek en is sinds het begin hiervan nooit helemaal weg geweest uit populaire cultuuruitingen. Er zijn verschillende redenen te bedenken voor de fascinatie van het publiek met vampiers, van onderdrukte verlangens tot angst voor sterfelijkheid en van de vampier als superheld tot belichaming van het kwaad. Hiernaast is de vampier een veelzijdig personage, waar een grote variatie op mogelijk is op het gebied van rollen als filmmonster of sympathieke held. Ook op het gebied van genre is veel variatie mogelijk, onder andere door de hybridisering van genres. Het is daarom niet zo vreemd dat de vampier steeds weer terugkomt en vernieuwd wordt voor elke nieuwe generatie van filmpubliek en verschillende doelgroepen. Dit maakt de vampierfilm een erg financieel lucratief en artistiek interessant genre om te blijven maken.

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<sup>1</sup> Zie ook paragraaf 3.6 over het populaire discours.

### 3. Theoretisch kader

In dit hoofdstuk zal er een theoretisch kader worden gevormd van relevante achtergrondkennis uit de literatuur, die nodig is voor het uitvoeren van het onderzoek en uiteindelijk het beantwoorden van de probleemstelling. Als eerste zal er aandacht worden besteed aan de werking van het culturele veld en de rol die kunstcritici hierin spelen. Vervolgens zal er worden ingegaan op culturele classificaties en in het bijzonder de classificatie van film. Aansluitend worden twee belangrijke concepten besproken: kunstkritisch discours en populair discours. Hierna is er aandacht voor Web 2.0, user created content en gevolgen hiervan op het gebied van amateurrecensies. In het laatste deel van dit hoofdstuk volgt een bespreking van de probleemstelling, deelvragen en hypothesen die aan de hand van de literatuur zijn opgesteld.

#### 3.1 Het culturele veld

Om te kunnen begrijpen hoe waardeoordelen van recensenten tot stand komen en hoe deze helpen om culturele objecten een plaats toe te kennen in de kunstwereld, is het belangrijk om eerst te kijken naar de werking van het culturele veld en het gedrag van de actoren hierin. Twee elkaar complementerende benaderingen die hier op ingaan zijn die van Becker (1982) en Bourdieu (1993).

Een op samenwerking gerichte analyse van de kunstwereld wordt gemaakt door Howard Becker in zijn boek *Art Worlds* (1982). Waar het maken van kunst vaak als individuele activiteit, voortkomend uit de creativiteit en het talent van één persoon, wordt gezien, beschrijft Becker het produceren van kunst als coöperatieve activiteit. Deze vindt plaats binnen verschillende, naast elkaar bestaande kunstwerelden, die bestaan uit netwerken van samenwerking. In een dergelijke kunstwereld werken verschillende actoren zoals kunstenaars, producenten van de basismaterialen (in het geval van film bijvoorbeeld camera's of videobewerkingsprogramma's), uitgevers en critici samen in producerende en ondersteunende rollen om de productie van het kunstzinnige eindproduct mogelijk te maken. Hierbij maken ze gebruik van conventies en hulpbronnen. Deze conventies, eerder gemaakte afspraken die gewoonte zijn geworden, zijn voor een groot deel bepalend voor de manier waarop er gewerkt wordt en hoe het eindproduct eruitziet. De conventies vormen hierdoor ook de verwachtingen die er in de kunstwereld en onder het publiek bestaan over bepaalde soorten en genres van kunst.

Pierre Bourdieu (1993) beschrijft de productie van kunst in het kader van zijn veldtheorie. Bourdieu deelt de totale sociale ruimte waaruit de samenleving bestaat op in verschillende specialistische velden, bijvoorbeeld op het gebied van de politiek, wetenschap of kunst. De velden

vormen elk een eigen sociale ruimte, waarin alle in een sector actieve actoren zich bevinden. Elk veld heeft zijn eigen regels en orde. De velden kunnen van elkaar verschillen in de relatieve mate van autonomie die ze hebben ten opzichte van andere velden. Een grote mate van autonomie betekent meer vrijheid voor het stellen van eigen regels, maar er is altijd wel sprake van enige mate van wederzijdse beïnvloeding. De grootste bron van invloed is het veld van macht, dat gevormd wordt door de velden van economie en politiek samen.

Binnen velden is er een voortdurende strijd gaande over de posities hierin. Verschillende fracties in een veld proberen een grotere hoeveelheid kapitaal te bemachtigen en daarmee een overheersende positie te verkrijgen of behouden. Hiermee kunnen ze grote invloed uitoefenen op de binnen een veld gehanteerde regels en conventies. Deze interne strijd geeft van binnenuit vorm aan een veld. Het artistieke veld wordt door Bourdieu (1993) verder opgedeeld in subvelden, die in meer of mindere mate onder invloed staan van andere velden. Dit zijn een veld van grootschalige productie en hierbinnen een 'restricted' of kleinschalig veld. Het grootschalige productieveld is heteronoom en wordt sterk van buitenaf beïnvloed door het machtsveld en economische motieven. De culturele producten die hierin worden geproduceerd zijn voornamelijk bedoeld voor het massapubliek en kunnen over het algemeen tot de populaire cultuur worden gerekend. Het kleinschalige veld is meer autonoom en keert de economische waarden juist om. Het produceren van kunst is hierin een op zichzelf staand doel en dit resulteert in werk met een hoge mate van legitimiteit. In het meest autonome deel van dit veld bestaat het publiek voor de geproduceerde werken uit andere in het veld werkzame producenten. Op het gebied van film is het verschil tussen deze twee productievelden bijvoorbeeld te zien in het contrast tussen Hollywoodfilms en onafhankelijke arthouseproducties.

Het concept kapitaal speelt een grote rol in de theorie van Bourdieu. Kapitaal wordt gevormd door een ophoping van arbeid, die omgezet kan worden in hulpbronnen op bijvoorbeeld economisch of cultureel gebied. De hoeveelheid kapitaal die beschikbaar is kan verschillen per persoon of maatschappelijke klasse. De drie belangrijkste soorten kapitaal zijn economisch, cultureel en sociaal kapitaal. Economisch kapitaal is direct inwisselbaar voor geld, cultureel kapitaal bestaat uit hulpbronnen op het gebied van kennis en vaardigheden en sociaal kapitaal bestaat uit sociale connecties (Bourdieu, 1986). In het culturele veld speelt ook symbolisch kapitaal een grote rol. Deze soort kapitaal uit zich in prestige en eer (Bourdieu, 1993). In het kleinschalige culturele veld is veel cultureel en symbolisch kapitaal aanwezig en maar weinig economisch kapitaal. In het grootschalige culturele veld is dit juist andersom, door de gerichtheid op de vraag vanuit het publiek. Het grootschalige veld wordt uitgesloten van symbolisch kapitaal, omdat de producenten hierin zich niet houden aan het autonome principe van een 'ongeïnteresseerde' houding tegenover commercie en

economische belangen. Tussen de structurerende tegenstelling op het gebied van kapitaalverdeling in deze velden en die van het veld van macht en klassenrelaties bestaat een homologie. Dit wil zeggen dat de fracties van beide structuren voor een groot deel aan elkaar verbonden zijn. De culturele producenten met veel symbolisch en cultureel kapitaal trekken dus ook een publiek dat rijk is aan cultureel en economisch kapitaal. Op het gebied van esthetiek, de opvattingen over welke eigenschappen culturele objecten waardevol maken, wordt de dominante maatschappelijk klasse zo gerelateerd aan de pure esthetiek en de gedomineerde klasse aan de populaire esthetiek. De pure esthetiek vereist dat kunst wordt geïnterpreteerd en gewaardeerd vanuit een gedistantieerde positie, die mogelijk wordt gemaakt door cultureel kapitaal. Populaire esthetiek vereist juist weinig cultureel kapitaal, aangezien objecten hiervoor vanuit een continuering van het dagelijks leven worden bekeken (Bourdieu, 1984, 1993).

### **3.2 De rol van kunstcritici in het veld**

Een belangrijk kenmerk van de culturele producten (zoals kunstwerken, boeken en films) die in het culturele veld worden geproduceerd, is dat ze van zichzelf nog geen waarde hebben. Deze waarde wordt toegekend in het proces van interactie van verschillende actoren in de kunst- en cultuurwereld (Bourdieu, 1980). Kunstcritici, handelaren en anderen in het veld zorgen ervoor dat een werk directe commerciële marktwaarde krijgt, maar ook voor de 'productie van geloof'. Dit wil zeggen dat deze actoren symbolische waarde aan een werk toekennen en het geloof in deze symbolische waarde verder verspreiden binnen het culturele veld. Het symbolische kapitaal en de reputatie die ze zelf hebben opgebouwd in het veld geven legitimiteit aan deze waarderingen (Bourdieu, 1980). Ook Becker (1982) noemt esthetische oordelen als kenmerk van collectieve activiteit, waarbij de interactie van alle actoren samen zorgt voor een collectief waardegevoel. Dit komt doordat esthetische oordelen afhankelijk zijn van de conventies van de kunstwereld en zo van de samenwerking hierin. Belangrijke actoren voor het toekennen van waarde aan producten in de kunstwereld zijn de kunstcritici. Zij passen esthetische systemen toe op kunstwerken, om zo tot een waardeoordeel hierover te komen. Hun oordelen dragen bij aan het vormen van een reputatie van een kunstenaar of kunstwerk op het gebied van legitimiteit en deze reputaties worden vervolgens door distributeurs en publiek gebruikt bij het maken van keuzes op kunstgebied (Becker, 1982). Hirsch (1972) beschrijft de rol van kunstcritici in het culturele veld als die van poortwachters die helpen bij het bepalen welke culturele werken onder de aandacht worden gebracht bij het publiek. Hiernaast worden kunstcritici ook gezien als culturele bemiddelaars tussen producenten en publiek. Shrum (1991) noemt drie soorten hoofdelementenelementen die recensenten in hun recensies vaak gebruiken voor deze bemiddeling. Ten eerste zijn er beschrijvende en informatieve elementen, die

het publiek op een toegankelijke manier meer algemene informatie over het onderwerp geven. Analytische elementen vormen een interpretatieve context met extra achtergrondinformatie en ten slotte geven evaluatieve elementen het oordeel van de recensent over het onderwerp weer.

Het schrijven van recensies is ogenschijnlijk een individuele activiteit, maar toch heeft het sociale kader waar kunstcritici onderdeel van uitmaken een grote invloed op hun activiteiten in het culturele veld. In het culturele veld zijn er processen in werking die zorgen voor het voortbestaan van de bestaande structuren. Dit gebeurt door de reproductie van bepaalde waarden en manieren van handelen en denken met betrekking tot kunst, zoals conventies en esthetische systemen. Deze worden bijvoorbeeld doorgegeven door instituties die actoren opleiden om in het veld te werken of ze verder stimuleren bij hun socialisatie in het veld. Te denken valt hierbij aan opleidingen op het gebied van kunst of journalistiek en professionele beroepskringen (Bourdieu, 1993). Recensenten worden door zichzelf en door hun publiek vaak gezien als autonome actoren en in recensies worden ze geacht hun eigen mening over een werk te geven. Deze persoonlijke keuzes en oordelen van kunstcritici zijn impliciet beïnvloed door het veld, in de vorm van kunstopvattingen die ze tijdens hun opleiding en socialisatie in het veld hebben aangeleerd en ook door de oordelen van collega's. Deze invloeden zorgen ervoor dat de kans dat recensenten verkeerde keuzes maken, die hun status als expert zouden kunnen aantasten, wordt verkleind (Janssen, 1997). Een proces dat hier bijvoorbeeld aan bijdraagt is 'orchestration'. Door middel van dit proces wordt er in het veld een mate van consensus bereikt over de selectie van te recenseren kunst en de waarde die kunstwerken vertegenwoordigen. De consensus ontstaat doordat de recensenten in een veld letten op elkaars werk, waardoor hun eigen werk hierop aan begint te sluiten. Dit gebeurt onbewust en zonder dat iemand hierin de leiding neemt. Het resultaat hiervan is dat een nieuwe recensent die voor een groot deel dezelfde lijn volgt als de andere recensenten aan legitimiteit in het veld wint, aangezien de al gevestigde recensenten een grotere mate van culturele legitimiteit en autoriteit hebben (Van Rees, 1987).

Naast de invloed vanuit het eigen veld van cultuur, speelt ook de positie ten opzichte van andere velden een rol. De homologie die Bourdieu (1993) beschrijft tussen velden op het gebied van productie en consumptie is ook op het gebied van kunstcritiek relevant. Kunstcritici die schrijven voor bepaalde publicaties, zoals filmrecensenten in dienst van een krant, nemen als culturele producenten een plaats in het culturele productieveld in. Deze plaats is gerelateerd aan de vraag vanuit dezelfde positie in het veld van consumptie, maar er is hier geen sprake van een bewuste aanpassing aan elkaar. Bourdieu (1980) geeft het voorbeeld van verschillende klassenfracties in de samenleving en de kranten die ze lezen. De ideeën over kunst en kunstdisciplines van de lezers en de recensenten van de krant komen voor een groot deel overeen, doordat ze in hun eigen veld dezelfde

positie innemen. Hierdoor zal een groot deel van de lezers zich kunnen vinden in het oordeel in bijvoorbeeld een theaterrecensie die in de krant verschijnt, terwijl de recensent niet expliciet rekening houdt met de smaak van zijn publiek.

### **3.3 Culturele classificatie**

Het proces van waardetoekenning dat plaatsvindt in het culturele veld aan de hand van de waarderingen van critici, heeft ook invloed op de bredere classificatie van culturele producten. Dit wil zeggen: de plaats die culturele producten innemen ten opzichte van elkaar. Het kan bijvoorbeeld gaan om verschillende genres en de mate van prestige die aan elk hiervan wordt verbonden. DiMaggio (1987) beschrijft op dit gebied artistieke classificatiesystemen. Hierin worden zowel vanuit de culturele instituties als sociale groepen in een samenleving verdere classificaties aan een cultureel product gegeven op basis van de toegekende waarde. Voorbeelden hiervan zijn het onderscheid dat wordt gemaakt tussen legitieme kunst en populaire cultuur en verschillende genres. Classificaties van producten kunnen in de artistieke classificatiesystemen van verschillende samenlevingen van elkaar verschillen op vier dimensies: differentiatie, hiërarchie, universaliteit en sterkte van grenzen. Differentiatie geeft de mate aan waarin er een onderscheid wordt gemaakt tussen verschillende kunstgenres op basis van de eigenschappen van de werken en dit onderscheid is geïnstitutionaliseerd. De dimensie hiërarchie is een weergave van de mate waarin de genres hiërarchisch geordend zijn aan de hand van het prestige dat aan verschillende genres wordt toegekend. Of culturele classificaties door alle groepen in de samenleving erkend worden of juist erg verschillen per groep, valt onder de dimensie universaliteit. Ten slotte is er de sterkte van grenzen, waarbij het gaat om hoe streng de afbakeningen tussen genres worden bewaakt. Om het voortbestaan van de grenzen te garanderen is een strenge naleving hiervan nodig, wat het voor kunstenaars moeilijk maakt om van genre te veranderen. Deze vier dimensies worden onder andere beïnvloed door de sociale structuur van een samenleving, het onderwijssysteem en de onderlinge relaties tussen de dimensies. Ze kunnen dus per samenleving en tijdperiode verschillen.

Culturele classificatie kan ook op lange termijn invloed hebben op de status van een kunstwerk. Sommige werken ondergaan een proces van culturele consecratie, waarbij ze worden bestempeld als meesterwerk dat tot de top van een genre behoort en deel uitmaakt van een canon. Allen en Lincoln (2004) onderzochten retrospectieve consecratie van films in de Verenigde Staten. Doorgaans vindt dit proces plaats aan de hand van prijzen en onderscheidingen die worden uitgereikt door instituties in het veld. Dit zijn bijvoorbeeld culturele organisaties die de legitimiteit van een culturele discipline proberen te bevorderen. Allen en Lincoln concludeerden echter dat de hoeveelheid aandacht die aan een film wordt besteed in kritische publicaties en ook de gebruikte

discourzen, of de manier waarop er over film wordt geschreven, hierbij ook een rol spelen. De mate van erkenning die een film krijgt van critici en vanuit de industrie blijkt ook een goede indicator te zijn voor de kans op latere consecratie. Deze bevinding wordt ook ondersteund door later onderzoek van Hicks en Petrova (2006).

### **3.4 De classificatie van film**

Classificaties van en waardering voor bepaalde kunstvormen zijn niet statisch en kunnen door de tijd heen veranderen. Sommige populaire kunstvormen ondergaan een proces van culturele opwaardering en legitimering, dat ervoor zorgt dat deze genres (in bepaalde gevallen) ook als legitieme kunst kunnen worden gezien. Regev (1994) beschrijft dit proces voor rockmuziek en met name het werk van populaire en kritisch gewaardeerde artiesten zoals Bob Dylan en The Beatles binnen het genre. Hij stelt dat de legitimiteit van populaire kunstvormen ontleend wordt aan het toepassen van ideologische concepten die afkomstig zijn uit de wereld van autonome kunst. Voor het verkrijgen van artistieke erkenning is het volgens hem belangrijk dat er wordt aangetoond dat een werk een serieuze en authentieke betekenis heeft en geproduceerd is door een identificeerbare creatieve entiteit, die autonoom produceert, oftewel kunst maken als op zichzelf staand doel heeft.

Baumann (2001) onderzoekt de factoren die bij de culturele opwaardering van film tot kunstvorm een rol gespeeld hebben. Hij onderscheidt hierbij drie elementen die voor een dergelijk proces een belangrijke rol spelen. Ten eerste is er een veranderend aantal mogelijkheden. Deze mogelijkheden worden beïnvloed door sociale ontwikkelingen buiten de kunstwereld en worden gekenmerkt door het al dan niet aanwezig zijn van populaire substituten en concurrentie om een cultuurvorm tegenover te zetten, of steun van prestigieuze voorstanders, die een hoge mate van legitimiteit aan een cultuurvorm kunnen verbinden. Voorbeelden hiervan op het gebied van film zijn de opkomst van televisie als substitutiegoed en het stijgende opleidingsniveau van het publiek, waardoor het beter in staat werd om film als kunst te beschouwen en film ook geassocieerd raakte met een hogere maatschappelijke status. Het tweede element is de institutionalisering van bronnen en manieren van productie en consumptie binnen de kunstwereld. Voor film heeft bijvoorbeeld de oprichting van de Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences als instituut ter promotie van de filmkunst een grote rol gespeeld. Daarnaast hebben ook het ontstaan van filmfestivals en academische filmopleidingen bijgedragen aan de institutionalisering van film. Tot slot is er de legitimerende ideologie als factor waarmee artistieke waarde wordt onderbouwd. Dit houdt in dat er in de manier waarop er in de maatschappij over een vorm van cultuur gedacht wordt meer steun ontstaat voor het beschouwen van deze culturele discipline als legitieme kunst. Voor film is de auteurstheorie van invloed geweest als legitimerende ideologie. De auteurstheorie is in de jaren

veertig ontstaan en daarna vooral gepopulariseerd in het Franse filmkritische blad *Cahiers du cinéma* door filmcritici als François Truffaut en Jean-Luc Godard. Filmcriticus Andrew Sarris introduceerde de auteurtheorie daarna ook op het gebied van de Amerikaanse cinema. Deze manier van denken over film veronderstelt dat de regisseur van een film in het productieproces degene is die aan de hand van zijn persoonlijke levensvisie een eigen stempel op de film drukt. Dit kan bijvoorbeeld zijn door middel van terugkerende thema's of technieken, die een rode draad vormen door het oeuvre van de regisseur. De regisseur zorgt er ook voor dat de verschillende productionele aspecten samenkomen tot een artistieke eenheid, die aan hem toegeschreven kan worden. Het idee van de auteurtheorie werd in de eerste instantie vooral geassocieerd met kunstzinnige films, maar verspreidde zich later verder over de hele filmwereld, waaronder de meer populaire vormen van film als grote Hollywoodfilms. Tegenwoordig is de auteurtheorie gangbaar onder zowel filmcritici als publiek bij het beschouwen van film (Thompson & Bordwell, 2003).

De opkomst van deze legitimerende ideologie voor film wordt door Baumann (2001) aan nader onderzoek onderworpen aan de hand van uit Amerikaanse tijdschriften en kranten afkomstige filmrecensies van tussen 1925 en 1985, waarbij wordt gekeken naar manieren waarop de intellectualisering van film in het gebruikte discours tot uiting komt. Baumann concludeert dat er vooral sinds de jaren '60 meer over film wordt geschreven aan de hand van de criteria die eerder gereserveerd waren voor meer traditionele vormen van hoge kunst. Hierbij wordt er meer gebruik gemaakt van analytische concepten in plaats van concepten gerelateerd aan vermaak. Bovendien is het aantal woorden per recensie gestegen. Dit discours duidt op een verandering in de benadering van film door recensenten, die zo ook bij het publiek een nieuwe wijze van denken over film introduceren. Baumann (2002) heeft ook de rol van de filmcritici zelf onderzocht. Hierbij concludeert hij dat door de culturele opwaardering van film het vak van filmrecensent is geprofessionaliseerd. Bovendien wordt er een grotere nadruk gelegd op filmrecensenten als experts, die een bemiddelend discours aan het publiek bieden. Dit is bijvoorbeeld te zien in advertenties voor nieuwe films. Hierin is sinds de jaren '60 de marketingstrategie van het aanhalen van het oordeel van recensenten gebruikelijk geworden. Dit is een goede indicatie voor de culturele autoriteit die filmrecensenten vanaf die tijd hebben verkregen.

### **3.5 Het kunstkritische discours**

Uit het onderzoek van Baumann (2001) naar het proces van culturele opwaardering van film, komt duidelijk naar voren dat het gebruikte discours erg belangrijk is. De intellectualisering van de manier waarop film wordt besproken heeft bijgedragen aan de status van legitieme kunstvorm die film heeft



verkregen. Deze intellectualisering wordt gekenmerkt door het gebruik van een kunstkritisch discours, waar er voorheen vooral een populair discours werd gebruikt. Hierin wordt er gebruik gemaakt van andere esthetische criteria. Esthetiek is het systeem waarmee culturele objecten op waarde worden geschat (Bielby & Bielby, 2004). In een kunstkritisch en populair discours worden culturele objecten dus om verschillende eigenschappen gewaardeerd. Het werk van Pierre Bourdieu op het gebied van culturele distinctie en smaak is erg belangrijk op dit gebied.

Bourdieu (1984) beschrijft in zijn boek *Distinction* hoe verschillende klassen in de samenleving zich cultureel van elkaar onderscheiden. Van de hogere klassen in de samenleving wordt hierbij verondersteld dat ze in het bezit zijn van voldoende cultureel kapitaal en hierdoor ook over een 'esthetische dispositie' beschikken. Dit is een manier van denken en beschouwen die nodig is om hoge kunst te kunnen interpreteren en waarderen, maar die ook op andere culturele vormen en de wereld als geheel kan worden toegepast. Dit vereist een beoordeling die gebaseerd is op de vorm van een kunstwerk of ander object in plaats van de functie die het heeft of zou moeten hebben. Het kunstkritische discours is hierdoor het kijken naar kunst aan de hand van een pure en afstandelijke blik.

Baumann (2001) bespreekt in zijn onderzoek verschillende technieken en elementen uit recensies die volgens hem een indicatie zijn van het gebruik van een kunstkritisch discours. Een algemene trend die hij ziet in het legitimerende discours op het gebied van film is een toename in het gebruik van termen die eerder met kritiek van andere legitieme kunstvormen werden geassocieerd. Voorbeelden hiervan zijn expliciet aan kunst gerelateerde termen als 'kunstwerk' of 'kunstzinnig', wanneer deze gebruikt worden om een film mee te beschrijven. Ook andere termen die een door experts gemaakt onderscheid impliceren tussen het gewone en het kunstzinnige als 'briljant' en 'geïnspireerd' vallen hieronder. Een andere groep woorden die ook een weergave vormt van het oordeel van een expert is die van een eigenaam, gevolgd door de achtervoegsels '-iaans' of '-esk', zoals 'Hitchcockiaans'. Dit zet volgens Baumann een academische toon in een recensie. Baumann onderscheidt nog een tweede categorie van woorden die een 'high art'-discours aanduiden. Dit zijn kritische termen die gebruikt worden bij tekstanalyse en het beschrijven van de vorm en inhoudelijke aspecten van een werk, zoals 'genre' en 'metafoor'. Baumann gaat ook verder in op de veranderde technieken en concepten die in recensies worden gebruikt in een kunstkritisch discours. Hiervan definieert hij er acht die verder worden onderzocht: het geven van zowel positief als negatief commentaar in een recensie, het benoemen van de regisseur van de film, het vergelijken van de regisseur met andere regisseurs, het vergelijken van de film met andere films, het geven van een interpretatie van de film, het vinden van waarde in de gebreken van de film, het maken van onderscheid tussen kunst en entertainment en ten slotte het bestempelen van de film als te gemakkelijk om van te genieten.

### 3.6 Het populaire discours

Het tegenovergestelde van het kunstkritisch discours is het populaire discours. Populaire esthetiek wordt door Bourdieu vooral gelinkt aan de lagere klassen in de samenleving, die niet in het bezit zijn van veel cultureel kapitaal. Deze esthetiek wordt gekenmerkt door een continuering van het dagelijks leven en 'het gewone' in culturele producten, waarbij deze producten geen speciale plaats in de samenleving krijgen toegewezen, als bij hoge kunst het geval is. De functie, zoals het opwekken van emotie, wordt in de populaire esthetiek gezien als de belangrijkste eigenschap en de vorm is hier ondergeschikt aan. Ook is er sprake van emotionele betrokkenheid bij culturele objecten, die voortkomt uit de continuering van het dagelijks leven (Bourdieu, 1984).

Het populaire discours wordt geassocieerd met populaire mediaproducten en de beoordeling hiervan door het 'gewone' massapubliek. Bielby en Bielby (2004) gaan verder op het gebruik van deze soort esthetiek op het gebied van populaire cultuur in. Vanuit sommige cultuursociologische invalshoeken wordt verondersteld dat de toepassing van esthetische systemen op het gebied van populaire cultuur niet relevant is om te onderzoeken naast de productie en consumptie, omdat populaire cultuur geen esthetische waarde zou bevatten. Het blijkt echter dat het publiek juist wel gebruik maakt van esthetische beoordelingen bij het selecteren en consumeren van populaire culturele producten. Dit kan zijn op het gebied van schoonheid en smaak, maar ook met betrekking tot de emotionele en intellectuele waarden die een product bevat. Het gebruik van algemeen bekende formules en conventies in populaire cultuurproducten zorgt er in combinatie met de toegankelijkheid van deze producten voor dat het voor het publiek relatief gemakkelijk is om veel kennis op te doen over populaire genres en een expert op dit gebied te worden. Ze kunnen zo vanuit een autoriteitspositie culturele producten op waarde schatten en, bijvoorbeeld in de vorm van mond-tot-mondreclame naar andere liefhebbers van een genre, waardeoordelen verspreiden die net zo invloedrijk kunnen zijn als die van kunstcritici. Dit gebeurt bijvoorbeeld wanneer groepen fans een mediaproduct als hun morele eigendom opeisen op basis van hun opgebouwde kennis en expertise hierover. Bielby en Bielby laten dit zien door middel van een voorbeeld op het gebied van soapseries en de kritiek die fans uiten op de manier waarop schrijvers en andere producenten met de (emotionele) authenticiteit van het verhaal en de personages omgaan. Een goed voorbeeld uit het genre van de vampierfilm komt van Bode (2010). Zij beschrijft boze reacties in door horrorfans op internet geschreven recensies van de film *Twilight*. Deze fans definiëren de vampierfilm als een subgenre van horror, dat actie en angstaanjagende elementen hoort te bevatten. Het plaatsen van de vampier in een context van romantische tienerfilms, zoals in *Twilight* gebeurt, wordt door hun daarom gezien als een aantasting van de authenticiteit van het vampiergenre, waar ze zich vanuit

hun positie als horrorkenner tegen af moeten zetten. Bielby en Bielby (2004) benadrukken dat populaire esthetische beoordelingen niet per definitie voortkomen uit directe betrokkenheid bij het beoordeelde object, maar dat er ook kritische bemiddeling plaatsvindt onder het publiek. Het publiek is dus ook in staat om een afstandelijke positie in te nemen ten opzichte van het beoordeelde.

In het veld van populaire cultuur zijn het niet alleen fans die waardeoordelen verspreiden, maar ook professionele critici. Verschillende onderzoeken tonen aan dat ze zich hierbij, in tegenstelling tot wat verwacht wordt vanuit hun status als expert, niet altijd beperken tot het gebruik van een kunstkritische discours in hun recensies. Van Venrooij en Schmutz (2010) voerden een crossnationaal onderzoek uit naar de gebruikte discourses in professionele recensies van populaire muziek. Hiervoor definieerden ze een aantal recensietechnieken die onderdeel uit kunnen maken van een populair discours. Dit zijn het innemen van een negatieve houding tegenover hoge kunstcriteria, het focussen op ervaring in de vorm van participatie, amusement of energie, het geven van een gebruikersoriëntatie op het gebied van doelgroep of functie en het gebruik van voedselmetaforen. Uit dit onderzoek komt naar voren dat ongeveer de helft van het onderzochte aantal recensies van Amerikaanse muziekcritici een combinatie van kunstkritisch en populair discours wordt gebruikt. Bielby, Moloney en Ngo (2005) vergeleken de gebruikte esthetische criteria onder televisiecritici met die van critici op het gebied van meer legitieme vormen van cultuur. Ze concluderen dat televisiecritici gebruik maken van een herkenbare, vaste set van criteria, die voor een deel overeenkomt met de gebruikte criteria van critici op het gebied van hoge kunst. Dit zijn onder andere aandacht voor de makers, vergelijkingen met andere culturele producten en later ook de mate van innovatie. Daarnaast is het gebruik van populaire esthetische criteria, zoals entertainmentwaarde, emotionele authenticiteit en de reactie van het publiek, in de loop der tijd gestegen. Op het gebied van film laat onderzoek van Kersten en Bielby (2012) zien dat critici in dit veld in hun recensies zowel kunstkritische als populaire overwegingen mee laten wegen bij het komen tot een waardeoordeel. Dit is zowel het geval bij films die commercieel succesvol zijn als bij vanuit de filmindustrie of door filmcritici erkende films. De mate waarin de verschillende criteria worden gebruikt voor deze drie groepen films vertoont wel enige variatie, waarbij de kritisch erkende films het meest kunstzinnig worden benaderd. Deze differentiatie van de filmkritiek kan gezien worden als een afspiegeling van de mix van commerciële en artistieke belangen die meespelen in de filmwereld en toont aan dat film als opgevaardigde kunstvorm niet gebonden is aan een kunstkritisch discours en zowel tot het kleinschalige als grootschalige productieveld kan behoren.

### 3.7 Web 2.0

Het schrijven en publiceren van (film)recensies is lang niet meer voorbehouden aan professionele recensenten in dienst van kranten of tijdschriften. Iedereen met een internetverbinding kan nu op een snelle manier eigen recensies of andere vormen van commentaar delen met de rest van de wereld. De positie van amateurrecensenten is erg versterkt door de opkomst van internet en met name door een ontwikkeling op internet die het zelf publiceren van materiaal en het verspreiden hiervan onder een groot publiek heeft vergemakkelijkt: Web 2.0.

De term Web 2.0 is gepopulariseerd door Tim O'Reilly (2005) en verwijst naar de veranderingen die het internet aan het begin van de eenentwintigste eeuw heeft ondergaan. O'Reilly noemt hierbij het barsten van de internetzeepbel in 2001 een omslagpunt, waardoor nieuwe internettechnologieën de kans kregen om de oude op te volgen. O'Reilly stelde samen met Dale Dougherty een lijst op met concepten en webdiensten die volgens hen in Web 2.0 de opvolgers zijn van webdiensten die horen bij het eerdere internet (ook wel 'Web 1.0' genoemd). Voorbeelden hiervan zijn van mp3.com naar Napster, van Britannica Online naar Wikipedia en van persoonlijke websites naar blogs. Bij het vergelijken van de Web 1.0-diensten met hun Web 2.0-equivalenten, valt op dat de elementen van Web 2.0 verdienmodellen en werkwijzen hebben die meer gericht zijn op participatie, het delen van informatie en eindgebruikers die zelf produceren. In plaats van informatie die vanuit een bedrijf of instelling wordt uitgegeven op een website en die niet verder door gebruikers bewerkt kan worden, is er in Web 2.0 sprake van mogelijkheden voor gebruikers om informatie toe te voegen en in te delen door middel van wiki's en tags. Kenmerkend hiervoor is het verschil tussen de statische en van bovenaf samengestelde encyclopedie van Britannica en het door internetgebruikers geschreven en onderhouden Wikipedia. In Web 2.0 worden informatie en media gemakkelijker gedeeld tussen gebruikers. Op zichzelf staande websites met content worden voor een groot deel vervangen door op delen gerichte platformen als blogdiensten, BitTorrent en later ook sociale media. Ook verdienmodellen worden aangepast. Internetplatforms zijn meer gericht op het verzamelen van data en datamanagement en hierdoor kan er actiever en gericht op de gebruikers worden ingespeeld, bijvoorbeeld door middel van gerichte advertenties. Web 2.0 maakt verder ook gebruik van de collectieve intelligentie van de gebruikers. Hierbij groeit de structuur van websites organisch mee met de activiteit van de gebruikers en wordt deze hierdoor verbeterd. Al met al geeft Web 2.0 meer macht aan de gebruikers, doordat deze in staat worden gesteld om bij te dragen aan alle fasen van de productie van content. Deze zijn zo 'prosumers' geworden, producent en consument tegelijkertijd (Slot & Frissen, 2007).

### 3.8 Gevolgen van Web 2.0

Over wat de gevolgen van Web 2.0 op lange termijn zullen zijn voor internetgebruikers en de productie van cultuurproducten, zijn verschillende visies. Een zeer optimistische visie op Web 2.0 en de nieuwe mogelijkheden die er hierdoor ontstaan, komt van Chris Anderson. In zijn boek *The Long Tail* (2006) bespreekt hij hoe ruimtelijke beperkingen voor productie en consumptie worden opgeheven in een digitale omgeving. Door dalende distributiekosten en ongelimiteerde ruimte voor aanbod op internet, ontstaan er meer mogelijkheden voor culturele nicheproducten en -markten. Al deze nichemarkten kunnen samen net zo veel waarde genereren als alleen de bestsellers en hits van de massamarkt. Dit is bijvoorbeeld te zien in de verkoopcijfers van webwinkels, maar ook voor productie door internetgebruikers heeft deze diversificatie van de markt gevolgen. Naast de massamedia worden nicheweblogs en -websites een belangrijkere bron van informatie en hierop kunnen internetgebruikers zelf een rol als opinieleider binnen een niche verwerven, naast professionele redacteurs en recensenten. Volgens deze visie zouden amateurs op internet de traditionele media dus kunnen versterken of hier met hun gecreëerde content zelfs een alternatief voor kunnen bieden.

Volgens Tancer (2009) wordt de democratiserende kracht van door internetgebruikers gecreëerde media erg overschat, doordat er in de praktijk maar een beperkt aantal producenten actief is. Hij haalt hierbij Jacob Nielsen aan, die ontdekte dat er een grote ongelijkheid in participatie bestaat onder bezoekers van sociale websites en gemeenschappen. Negentig procent van de bezoekers hiervan leest alleen de bijdragen van anderen, negen procent draagt af en toe wat bij en slechts één procent houdt zich actief bezig met bijdragen. Het percentage actieve gebruikers van blogs ligt zelfs nog lager. Uit Tancers eigen onderzoek naar activiteit op YouTube, Flickr en Wikipedia concludeert hij dat deze verdeling ook ongeveer opgaat voor het uploaden van media, waarbij één procent complexe media als video's produceert, en negen procent zich bezighoudt met simpelere vormen als het schrijven van commentaar of het bewerken van teksten.

Andrew Keen is in *The Cult of the Amateur* (2007) ook erg sceptisch over de ontwikkelingen op het gebied van democratisering van de productie die Web 2.0 met zich meebrengt, vooral op inhoudelijk gebied. Hij vindt dat er hierbij teveel vertrouwen is in gewone internetgebruikers, van wie de achtergrond en motieven niet bekend zijn. De kwaliteit van informatie op internet zal volgens hem alleen maar afnemen, omdat ongekwalificeerde personen nu ook de mogelijkheid hebben om op vrijwel alle terreinen bijdragen te plaatsen en er hierover vaak geen kwaliteitscontrole plaatsvindt. Dit maakt het lastiger om bijdragen van experts op het eerste gezicht te onderscheiden van bijdragen van amateurs, die van mindere kwaliteit kunnen zijn. Deze democratisering gaat ook in tegen de grote mate van specialisatie en arbeidsdeling in de maatschappij, waarbij elk veld zijn eigen

experts heeft. De opgebouwde autoriteit van deze experts in de samenleving wordt zo ondermijnd. Andersons (2006) concept van de 'long tail' gaat volgens Keen ook niet op voor amateurbijdragen op internet. Er worden op internet dan wel meer bijdragen gepubliceerd dan in traditionele media mogelijk zou zijn, maar slechts een klein deel hiervan is geschreven door gebruikers met talent, die ook daadwerkelijk waarde aan het totale aanbod toevoegen. De reactie van schrijver J. R. Lennon op gebruikerscommentaar dat hij op *amazon.com* vond bij één van zijn boeken illustreert dit gebrek aan toegevoegde waarde: "I was shocked that people were not discussing the book in any analytical or rational way. They were just sort of blurting out their gut reaction to it under the cloak of anonymity." (David & Pinch, 2006).

### **3.9 User created content**

Een belangrijke factor in Web 2.0 is de productie van user created content (ook wel bekend als 'user generated content'). Dit houdt in dat internetgebruikers optreden als producenten van teksten, foto's, video's en andere media die op internet worden gedeeld. De Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2007) heeft een aantal criteria opgesteld, aan de hand waarvan user generated content kan worden geïdentificeerd. Het gaat om de drie kenmerken publicatie, creatieve inspanning en productie buiten de professionele sfeer. Publicatie houdt in dat het werk in een bepaalde context op internet toegankelijk wordt gemaakt voor alle internetgebruikers of een selecte groep. Creatieve inspanning wil zeggen dat er sprake moet zijn van door de gebruiker toegevoegde waarde aan het werk. Het uploaden van een door iemand anders gemaakte video valt dus niet onder user created content, maar een zelfgemaakte of creatief bewerkte video wel. De productie van user created content valt tot slot over het algemeen buiten de professionele sfeer. Hoewel de productie hiervan steeds er steeds vaker ook mogelijkheden biedt om geld mee te verdienen en wordt ingezet door commerciële mediaplatformen, wordt user created content vooral geassocieerd met productie door amateurs, die geen beloning voor hun werk verwachten. User created content kan ook een vorm van 'peer production' zijn. Dit houdt in dat internetgebruikers gemeenschappelijk bijdragen aan de productie van informatie en op informatie gebaseerde diensten van hoge kwaliteit, die een alternatief kunnen bieden voor de meer traditionele vormen hiervan (Benkler, 2006). Hierbij valt te denken aan websites waarop op basis van gebruikersrecensies een waardeoordeel wordt gevormd over producten en diensten en die een alternatief bieden voor recensies door professionele recensenten.

Internetgebruikers kunnen verschillende motivaties hebben voor het zelf creëren van creatieve content. Enkele belangrijke factoren hierbij zijn zelfexpressie, verbondenheid met andere internetgebruikers en het bereiken van beroemdheid, beruchtheid of prestige (OECD, 2007). David

en Pinch (2006) onderzochten gebruikersrecensies op *amazon.com* en zagen bij sommige gebruikers een duidelijke intentie om hun recensies te gebruiken als platform om een reputatie op te bouwen als recensent, om zo mogelijk een baan als betaalde recensent te bemachtigen. Anderen probeerden door middel van het recensieplatform een bepaalde agenda te promoten. Het schrijven van recensies is ook een sociale activiteit, waarbij de recensies kunnen worden gebruikt als gespreksonderwerp. Bovendien kunnen de amateurrecensenten een gevoel van trots ontleen aan hun publicatie en het grote publiek dat hiermee bereikt kan worden.

### **3.10 Amateurrecensie op internet**

Amateurrecensies zijn een vorm van user created content, die erg populair is op internet. Voor vrijwel elke soort producten en diensten is tegenwoordig wel een website te vinden waar recensies van gebruikers op staan. Zo is er *TripAdvisor* voor hotels en attracties, *GoodReads* voor boeken en *Amazon.com* voor allerlei producten die via deze site worden verkocht. Dit soort recensies kan gezien worden in het Web 2.0-kader van democratisering van productie. Doordat gebruikers zelf recensies kunnen schrijven en elkaars recensies kunnen lezen, zijn ze minder afhankelijk van de mening van experts en informatie uit institutionele bronnen (O'Reilly, 2005). Een goed voorbeeld hiervan is het steeds grotere belang dat reizigers bij hun hotelkeuze lijken te hechten aan positieve gebruikersrecensies op TripAdvisor in plaats van aan reputaties van hotelketens of door reisorganisaties gegeven beoordelingen (Tancer, 2009). Of deze amateurrecensies ook een volledige vervanging kunnen zijn voor professionele recensies is nog maar de vraag.

Een aspect van gebruikersrecensies op internet dat vaak als problematisch wordt beschouwd is de betrouwbaarheid hiervan. Zoals Keen (2007) opmerkt is er veel vertrouwen in anonieme recensenten van wie de motieven niet bekend zijn. Zowel David en Pinch (2006) als Steiner (2008) halen een incident aan waarbij gebruikersdata van *Amazon.com* uitlekte en aantoonde dat sommige recensies geplaatst waren door auteurs zelf en anderen die er belang bij hadden om boeken erg positief of juist negatief te recenseren. David en Pinch (2006) wijzen ook nog op andere problemen met betrekking tot gebruikersrecensies. Veel recensiewebsites werken met een systeem waarin een waarde of reputatie wordt toegekend aan recensenten. Deze reputatiescores kunnen andere gebruikers helpen bij het bepalen van de geloofwaardigheid van een recensie, maar zorgen soms juist voor een verminderde betrouwbaarheid en kwaliteit van de recensies op de website. Dit gebeurt wanneer schrijvers recensies kopiëren om snel veel recensies te kunnen plaatsen of met anderen positieve beoordelingen uitwisselen. Volgens David en Pinch bieden recensiewebsites veel nieuwe mogelijkheden tot participatie voor amateurrecensenten, maar werken nieuwe online

recensiesystemen nog lang niet altijd goed om op een democratische manier expertise van amateurs naar boven te komen laten drijven.

Ook de kwaliteit van gebruikersrecensie is vaak punt van discussie. Steiner (2008) beschrijft een aantal eigenschappen van amateurrecensies op internet op het gebied van literatuur. De inhoud van amateurrecensies komt vaak gedeeltelijk overeen met professionele recensies, door het gebruik van technieken en onderwerpen die aan deze recensies ontleend zijn. Nieuw aan de gebruikersrecensies is wel dat er ook andere, informelere schrijfstijlen en technieken in verwerkt worden, zoals die van brieven, dagboeken of boekverslagen. Vaak wordt er ook aandacht besteed aan de persoonlijke relatie of ervaringen met het onderwerp, bijvoorbeeld waar de recensent een bepaald boek heeft gelezen of hoe deze persoon zich herkent in het verhaal. Ook Chen en Xie (2008) vonden deze nadruk op ervaring in hun onderzoek naar gebruikersrecensies. Volgens hun worden gebruikersrecensies gekenmerkt door het evalueren van producten tegen de achtergrond van het doel waar de consument deze voor wil gebruiken, terwijl andere partijen als professionele recensenten zich meer op technische aspecten richten. De algemene toon en aanpak van de recensies kan wel variëren per genre. Zo trof Steiner persoonlijke ervaringen en het afzetten tegen professionele critici veel aan in recensies van commerciële fictie, terwijl in recensies van literaire romans meer wordt geschreven over de literaire kwaliteit van een boek. Dat amateurrecensenten op het gebied van kennis en smaak niet per definitie onder hoeven te doen voor professionele recensenten, blijkt ook uit onderzoek van Plucker, Kaufman, Temple en Qian (2009), die gebruikerswaarderingen op populaire filmwebsites als *IMDb* vergeleken met waarderingen van professionele filmrecensenten en leken. De conclusie die hieruit werd getrokken is dat er op internet een groot grijs gebied bestaat van expertise en ervaring. Websites over culturele genres als film trekken veel gebruikers aan die al erg geïnteresseerd zijn in film en hier al veel kennis over hebben opgedaan. Dit zorgt ervoor dat deze websitegebruikers niet meer als echte leken te bestempelen.

Ondanks hun grote populariteit lijken online recensies door amateurs op het gebied van kunst en cultuur toch slechts een beperkte invloed te hebben. Verboord (2009) onderzocht het gebruik van recensies van experts, internetrecensenten en uit de eigen kring door in literatuur geïnteresseerde consumenten. Centraal stond hierbij de vraag of systemen van waardetoekenning minder hiërarchisch worden en de ervaren legitimiteit van literaire critici wordt aangetast door de online recensies. Het bleek dat de gebruikersrecensies op internet slechts een beperkte negatieve invloed hebben op de positie van professionele critici onder het literaire publiek. Tegelijkertijd bleek dat mensen met een brede culturele smaak juist alle soorten bronnen voor recensies meer waarderen door hun grotere informatiebehoefte over verschillende cultuurvormen. Een onderzoek dat specifiek op film is gericht is dat van Duan, Gu en Whinston (2008) naar de invloed van



gebruikersrecensies op bioscoopbezoek. Hierbij werd geconcludeerd dat de door gebruikers in recensies gegeven waarderingen voor een film nauwelijks van invloed zijn op opbrengst in de bioscoop. Wat hier wel van invloed op is, is de hoeveelheid berichten en recensies over een film. Deze zorgen voor een groter bewustzijn van het bestaan van de film. Gebruikersrecensies hebben dus voornamelijk een rol als mond-tot-mondreclame, door Anderson (1998) gedefinieerd als informele communicatie tussen privépersonen, die een evaluatie van goederen of diensten bevat.

### **3.11 Probleemstelling en deelvragen**

Uit de literatuur die in dit hoofdstuk uiteen is gezet, blijkt dat kunstcritici, zoals professionele filmrecensenten, een belangrijke plaats innemen in het culturele veld als toekenners van waarde aan kunstwerken. Hoewel ze individueel te werk gaan, staan kunstcritici sterk onder invloed van hun sociale kader in de kunstwereld. Hun werk wordt beïnvloed door de socialisatieprocessen die ze hebben ondergaan in het culturele veld, zoals opleidingen en aangeleerde denkwijzen over kunst. Ook hun plaats in het culturele veld en de daarbij behorende manier van het beschouwen van culturele producten, zoals de 'afstandelijke blik', speelt hierbij een rol. Daarnaast vindt er een onbewust proces van synchronisatie tussen de kunstcritici plaats, dat helpt bij het legitimeren van hun positie in het veld. Film heeft als kunstdiscipline een proces van culturele opwaardering ondergaan, waardoor films nu als legitieme kunstvorm door experts kunnen worden besproken door middel van een kunstkritisch discours. Uit verschillende onderzoeken (Bielby, Moloney & Ngo 2005; Van Venrooij & Schmutz, 2010; Kersten en Bielby, te verschijnen) blijkt echter dat professionele recensenten niet uitsluitend gebruik maken van een kunstkritisch discours, maar ook elementen uit het populaire discours gebruiken bij het schrijven over onder invloed van commerciële belangen staande culturele vormen als film, televisie en popmuziek.

De opkomst van Web 2.0 heeft sterk bijgedragen aan de democratisering van het publiceren en onder een groot publiek verspreiden van journalistieke en creatieve uitingen in de vorm van user created content. Hier vallen ook de gebruikersrecensies onder, die op internet aan populariteit winnen. Deze amateurrecensies worden soms als een bedreiging gezien voor de positie van experts, aangezien ze het publiek minder afhankelijk maken van expertbronnen. De vraag die hierbij rijst is in hoeverre de recensies van amateurrecensenten als legitiem kunnen worden beschouwd, wanneer hun benadering van kunst en de kwaliteit mate van expertise wordt vergeleken met die van professionele recensenten. Tussen het werk van professionele filmrecensenten en amateurrecensenten op internet zijn sterke verschillen te verwachten. Amateurrecensenten hebben, in tegenstelling tot professionele filmrecensenten, vaak geen opleiding gehad in het beschouwen van film of andere vormen van kunst of in journalistiek schrijven en missen hierdoor het bijbehorende

culturele kapitaal. Daarnaast is er op recensiewebsites, vergeleken met in kranten, minder sprake van vaste recensenten die een reputatie als expert proberen op te bouwen. Amateurrecensenten hebben zo minder te maken met een sterk sociaal kader dat hen na een socialisatie hierin aan bepaalde vorm- of kwaliteitseisen of kunstkritische uitgangspunten doet voldoen om hun reputatie hoog te houden. Amateurrecensenten zijn hierdoor vrij om een populair discours te gebruiken en vooral uit hun eigen ervaring schrijven als vorm van zelfexpressie (David & Pinch, 2006; Steiner 2008). In mindere mate is ook te verwachten dat amateurrecensenten een voorbeeld nemen aan professionele recensenten en het kunstkritisch discours van deze recensenten deels overnemen om toch een expertreputatie te kunnen opbouwen.

Het gebruik van kunstkritische en populaire discourses onder professionele filmrecensenten en amateurrecensenten zal verder worden onderzocht. Zoals in de vorige hoofdstukken al is besproken, wordt het onderzoek afgebakend op het thema 'vampierfilms', waarvoor onder andere is gekozen vanwege de grote populariteit van dit genre en fancultuur op internet. De probleemstelling voor dit onderzoek is: 'Hoe verhoudt het gebruik van kunstkritische en populaire filmdiscourses zich in recensies van amateurrecensenten op internet ten opzichte van dat van professionele filmrecensenten in kranten bij het beoordelen van vampierfilms?'. Om deze vraag gemakkelijker te kunnen beantwoorden is de probleemstelling opgedeeld in de volgende vier deelvragen:

Deelvraag 1: 'Op welke manier maken professionele filmrecensenten in kranten gebruik van kunstkritische en populaire filmdiscourses bij het beoordelen van vampierfilms?'

Deelvraag 2: 'Op welke manier maken amateurrecensenten op internet gebruik van kunstkritische en populaire filmdiscourses bij het beoordelen van vampierfilms?'

Deelvraag 3: 'Welke overeenkomsten zijn er te vinden tussen het gebruik van kunstkritische en populaire filmdiscourses van professionele filmrecensenten in kranten en amateurrecensenten op internet bij het beoordelen van vampierfilms?'

Deelvraag 4: 'Welke verschillen zijn er te vinden tussen het gebruik van kunstkritische en populaire filmdiscourses van professionele filmrecensenten in kranten en amateurrecensenten op internet bij het beoordelen van vampierfilms?'

Voor de eerste twee deelvragen zullen de door professionele recensenten en amateurrecensenten gebruikte discourses in kaart worden gebracht, waarna de twee groepen recensenten in de volgende twee deelvragen met elkaar vergeleken worden. Op basis van de besproken literatuur zijn de volgende hypothesen opgesteld:

Hypothese 1: professionele recensenten en amateurrecensenten verschillen sterk van elkaar wat betreft de gebruikte discoursen.

Hypothese 2: professionele recensenten gebruiken voornamelijk een kunstkritisch discours bij het beoordelen van vampierfilms.

Hypothese 3: amateurrecensenten gebruiken voornamelijk een populair discours bij het beoordelen van vampierfilms.

In het volgende hoofdstuk volgt een uitgebreide beschrijving van de precieze methode die gebruikt zal worden om tot een antwoord op de probleemstelling en deelvragen te komen.

## 4. Methode

In dit hoofdstuk volgt een beschrijving van het onderzoek dat wordt uitgevoerd om tot een antwoord te komen op de hoofdvraag en deelvragen. De gebruikte methode wordt verantwoord en er wordt ingegaan op de precieze manier van dataverzameling. Hierna worden de concepten 'kunstkritisch discours' en 'populair discours' geoperationaliseerd in de vorm van een aantal in de praktijk onderzoekbare thema's en elementen. Ten slotte wordt er in dit hoofdstuk aandacht besteed aan de validiteit van het onderzoek.

### 4.1 Methode

De onderzoeksvraag en deelvragen voor dit onderzoek zijn gericht op het analyseren van de filmdiscourseen die door professionele recensenten en amateurrecensenten worden gebruikt. Maken deze recensenten gebruik van kunstkritische en/of populaire criteria en welke verschillen en overeenkomsten zijn hierin te vinden? De methode die zich er het beste voor leent om dit te onderzoeken is een inhoudsanalyse van recensies die geschreven zijn door deze twee soorten recensenten. Wester (2006) karakteriseert inhoudsanalyse als een methode waarbij materiaal vanuit een bepaalde vraagstelling wordt gelezen. De gevonden kenmerken moeten daarbij worden verbonden aan een interpretatiekader om de waarnemingen betekenis te geven. Dit gebeurt aan de hand van een waarnemingsinstrument in de vorm van een codeboek of set met instructies, waarbij goed rekening wordt gehouden met de eigenschappen van de te onderzoeken materialen en mogelijke variaties daarin. Inhoudsanalyse is de beste methode voor dit specifieke onderzoek, omdat het de mogelijkheid biedt om het gebruik van criteria in de praktijk te onderzoeken. Een andere mogelijke onderzoeksmethode zou het interviewen van professionele filmrecensenten en amateurrecensenten zijn over hun gebruik van verschillende recensiecriteria en hun ideeën over wat een goede filmrecensie is. Het is echter niet te verwachten dat dit een goede representatie van het daadwerkelijke gebruik van verschillende criteria op zal leveren, omdat het toepassen hiervan voor een groot deel onbewust zal gebeuren vanuit de eigen houding ten opzichte van films en recensies. Recensenten zullen hierdoor waarschijnlijk niet over alle aspecten van de criteria die ze gebruiken evenveel informatie kunnen geven. Een inhoudsanalyse zal hiervoor waarschijnlijk meer gedetailleerde informatie opleveren. Wester (2006) beschrijft dit ook als een voordeel van inhoudsanalyse als methode: de te onderzoeken materialen zijn al in hun eigen productiecontext tot stand gekomen en de onderzoeker of onderzoeksmethode kunnen de inhoud hiervan niet meer beïnvloeden. De inhoudsanalyse zal op een kwantitatieve manier gebeuren, aangezien de precieze

betekenis van de tekst niet zal worden geanalyseerd, maar het gaat om de mate waarin bepaalde kenmerken in het onderzoeksmateriaal voorkomen. Delen van de tekst zullen hierbij worden gecodeerd en vervolgens op een kwantitatieve manier verwerkt.

## **4.2 Dataverzameling**

Zoals gezegd zijn de onderzoekseenheden voor dit onderzoek recensies van vampierfilms, geschreven door professionele recensenten en amateurrecensenten. Onder professionele filmrecensenten worden hier recensenten verstaan die verbonden zijn aan één of meerdere kwaliteitskranten waar ze recensies voor schrijven en onder amateurrecensenten worden internetgebruikers verstaan die uit zichzelf online een recensie plaatsen zonder hiervoor betaald te krijgen. Als onderzoeksgebied is de Verenigde Staten gekozen, omdat dit als één van de grootste filmproducenten en filmmarkten ter wereld, met Hollywood als centrum van de filmproductie, een erg belangrijk filmland is. Het is hierdoor te verwachten dat de Amerikaanse media veel aandacht aan film zullen besteden en er veel verschillende kwaliteitspublicaties te vinden zijn waarin filmrecensies verschijnen. Hiernaast zijn veel recentelijk populaire vampierfilms, die het grootste gedeelte van de filmselectie voor dit onderzoek zullen vormen, geproduceerd in de Verenigde Staten. Deze films worden over het algemeen als eerste uitgebracht op de eigen binnenlandse markt en dus als eerste gerecenseerd door Amerikaanse filmcritici. Van Rees (1987) beschrijft het proces van 'orchestration', dat ervoor zorgt dat critici in hun recensies naar verloop van tijd overeenstemming bereiken over de waarde van een cultureel product door wederzijdse beïnvloeding. Het voordeel van het kiezen van de Verenigde Staten als onderzoeksgebied, is dat de recensenten bij het schrijven van recensies over veel van de films voor dit onderzoek nog niet beïnvloed zullen zijn door buitenlandse recensies en receptie van de film. Hierdoor kan het discours in een zo puur mogelijke vorm worden onderzocht.

Het onderzoek is gericht op een vrij recente periode om de resultaten zo veel mogelijk aan te laten sluiten op de huidige situatie. Deze onderzoeksperiode omvat bijna elf jaar, van 2000 tot en met 2011. Preciezer nog: de periode die onderzocht wordt begint met het uitkomen van de film *Dracula 2000* op 22 december 2000 en eindigt op 19 augustus 2011, toen de film *Fright Night* uitkwam. Dit is een periode waarin het internet steeds interactiever werd en user created content opkwam en een steeds belangrijkere rol ging spelen online, maar ook in de kunst- en cultuursector. Ook verschenen er in deze periode relatief veel grote en populaire vampierfilms, vergeleken met eerdere historische perioden. De onderzoeksperiode is nog vrij ruim. Dit is om ervoor te zorgen dat er een voldoende aantal verschillende vampierfilms is uitgekomen waar de recensies van kunnen

worden onderzocht voor dit onderzoek. Hierbij is het belangrijk dat de films en recensies aan een aantal selectiecriteria voldoen, die hieronder zullen worden uitgelegd.

In totaal zullen er 200 filmrecensies worden onderzocht. Dit is een voldoende groot aantal voor het verkrijgen van representatieve resultaten. De helft van dit aantal bestaat uit recensies die zijn geschreven door professionele recensenten en de andere helft uit recensies afkomstig van amateurrecensenten. Deze recensies gaan over twintig films, waarbij elke film dus besproken wordt in vijf professionele recensies en vijf amateurrecensies. Dit aantal films is gekozen om ervoor te zorgen dat invloed van individuele films op de resultaten wordt beperkt, terwijl er toch genoeg recensies over één film kunnen worden vergeleken. De films zijn geselecteerd aan de hand van informatie van de *Internet Movie Database (imdb.com)*, waar films met vampiers gecategoriseerd zijn onder het zoekwoord 'vampire' en er verdere informatie beschikbaar is over of de film in de bioscoop is uitgekomen in de Verenigde Staten. Bovendien kan informatie over het plot gebruikt worden om te bepalen of vampiers ook daadwerkelijk onderdeel zijn van de belangrijkste verhaallijn van de film, wat ook een selectie criterium is. Bij het selecteren van de films is er ook gelet op het genre en soort film (bijvoorbeeld actie, horror, romantiek, art-house), zodat de resultaten de variatie in de verschillende soorten vampierfilms enigszins zullen reflecteren. Van filmseries als *Underworld* en *Twilight* wordt alleen de eerste film geselecteerd die in de onderzoeksperiode is uitgekomen, ook weer om grote invloed van bepaalde films of series te voorkomen.

Belangrijk is dat er van de films in de selectie genoeg recensies van de juiste soorten te vinden zijn. De professionele recensies zullen worden geselecteerd aan de hand van de website *rottentomatoes.com*. Deze website houdt per film het oordeel van (voornamelijk Amerikaanse) filmcritici van grote publicaties bij. Factoren die mee worden gewogen bij het opnemen van critici in de lijst met beoordelingen zijn onder andere het lidmaatschap van een beroepskring van filmcritici, het aantal gepubliceerde recensies en het bereik hiervan. De invloedrijkste filmcritici worden apart aangeduid als 'top critics'. Aangezien deze status een garantie is voor een goede reputatie van de recensent en goede kwaliteit van zijn geschreven recensies, zullen voor het onderzoek per film vijf recensies geselecteerd worden van 'top critics' die schrijven voor een Amerikaanse kwaliteitskrant, zoals de *New York Times*, *Washington Post* en *San Francisco Chronicle*. Bij het selecteren wordt er geprobeerd om oververtegenwoordiging van bepaalde recensenten of kranten zo veel mogelijk te voorkomen. De recensies zullen worden opgezocht op de website van de krant of door middel van de krantendatabase van *LexisNexis*. Als bron voor de amateurrecensies is *imdb.com* gekozen. Deze grote filmsite bevat naast algemene informatie over films ook mogelijkheden voor gebruikers van de website om hun eigen recensie aan de informatiepagina van een film toe te voegen. Dit is een optie waar ook veel gebruik van gemaakt wordt. Hiernaast is dit een erg geschikte bron voor

amateurrecensies, omdat de website veel film liefhebbers aantrekt die serieus met films bezig zijn en bereid zijn hier uitgebreid onderbouwd commentaar op te geven in plaats van een reactie van een paar woorden. Verder is de website niet, bijvoorbeeld zoals *amazon.com*, direct gericht op het verkopen van producten. Hierdoor is het minder aannemelijk dat het recensiesysteem door belanghebbenden wordt misbruikt om de verkoop te bevorderen, zoals David en Pinch (2006) vonden bij recensies van boeken op *amazon.com*. Per film worden de eerste vijf recensies die zijn geplaatst na het uitkomen van de film in Amerikaanse bioscopen geselecteerd voor het onderzoek. Dit is om te voorkomen dat de recensenten bij het schrijven van hun recensies al te veel zijn beïnvloed door het werk van andere recensenten of reacties van het publiek. Eerdere geplaatste recensies worden niet in het onderzoek meegenomen om de kans te vergroten dat de onderzochte recensies afkomstig zijn van ‘gewone’ fans van het genre of het bronmateriaal en niet van semi-professionele recensenten of anderen die de film eerder op uitnodiging van de filmmaatschappij zouden kunnen hebben gezien. Voor de recensies wordt een ondergrens van minstens 200 woorden aangehouden, omdat er in erg korte recensies waarschijnlijk minder diep op de materie zal worden ingegaan en hierin minder verschillende aspecten van de film en recensiecriteria zullen voorkomen. Om de vergelijkbaarheid met de Amerikaanse professionele recensenten te verhogen en culturele verschillen zo veel mogelijk uit te sluiten, worden ook alleen recensies geselecteerd van gebruikers die in hun profiel kenbaar maken ook uit de Verenigde Staten te komen.

Op basis van bovenstaande criteria zijn de volgende twintig films geselecteerd als onderwerp van de te onderzoeken recensies:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Dracula 2000 (2000)                         | 11. Låt den rätte komma in (Let the Right One In) (2008) |
| 2. Shadow of the Vampire (2000)                | 12. Twilight (2008)                                      |
| 3. Queen of the Damned (2002)                  | 13. Blood: The Last Vampire (2009)                       |
| 4. Blade II (2002)                             | 14. Bakjwi (Thirst) (2009)                               |
| 5. Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary (2003) | 15. Cirque du Freak: The Vampire's Assistant (2009)      |
| 6. Underworld (2003)                           | 16. Daybreakers (2010)                                   |
| 7. Van Helsing (2004)                          | 17. Let Me In (2010)                                     |
| 8. Bloodrayne (2006)                           | 18. Stake Land (2011)                                    |
| 9. Nochnoy dozor (Night Watch) (2006)          | 19. Priest (2011)  |
| 10. 30 Days of Night (2007)                    | 20. Fright Night (2011)                                  |

Het analyseren van de recensies zal gebeuren aan de hand van een codeerschema, waarin verschillende indicatoren voor kunstkritische en populaire discoursen zijn opgenomen. Deze

indicatoren zijn voor een groot deel ontleend aan eerder onderzoek van Baumann (2001) op het gebied van discours in filmrecensies, Bielby en Bielby (2004) naar het gebruik van esthetische systemen onder publieken van populaire cultuur en Van Venrooij en Schmutz (2010) naar discours in muziekcensies. Op het gebied van kunstkritisch discours zal er worden gezocht naar het benoemen van de regisseur, vergelijkingen met andere regisseurs, andere films en hoge kunst, het interpreteren van de film, filmprijzen, acteertalent en het gebruik van de criteria originaliteit, complexiteit, seriusheid en tijdloosheid. De criteria op het gebied van populair discours zijn het afzetten tegen kunstzinnigheid, het bespreken van de film in termen van vermaak en spanning, de betrokkenheid van de kijker, de mate van emotionele authenticiteit van de film, het geven van een gebruikersoriëntatie, aandacht voor de film als commercieel product, het gebruik van spektakelelementen, aandacht voor filmsterren en het aanhalen van populaire cultuur. Hieronder volgt een uitgebreidere beschrijving van de criteria.

### **4.3 Operationalisering kunstkritisch discours**

#### **1. Benoemen regisseur**

Volgens Baumann (2001) is het bij naam noemen van de regisseur van de film in de tekst van de recensie een indicatie dat film serieus wordt genomen als vorm van hoge kunst, aangezien het bij hoge kunst gebruikelijk is om de maker bij het werk te noemen. Ook de auteurtheorie is hier van grote invloed op. Hierin wordt de regisseur van de film gezien als de echte maker van de film en de persoon in het productieproces die zorgt voor de artistieke eenheid van het eindproduct en hier een eigen stempel op drukt, zoals een schrijver bij een boek of een schilder bij een schilderij. De auteurtheorie werd oorspronkelijk gebruikt voor het beschouwen van kunstzinnige films, maar is tegenwoordig een gangbare manier van denken over film in het algemeen, waaronder ook over populaire Hollywoodfilms, onder filmcritici en publiek (Thompson & Bordwell, 2003). Het benoemen van de regisseur van de film in de recensie is dus een teken dat de recensent de regisseur erkent als de creatieve bron van de film.

#### **2. Vergelijking met andere regisseurs**

Deze indicator houdt in dat de regisseur van de gerecenseerde film in de recensie wordt vergeleken met een andere regisseur of dat er vergelijkingen worden gemaakt tussen elementen uit de film en de stijl van een andere regisseur. Een voorbeeld hiervan is een vergelijking als *“the cinematography has a distinct Terrence Malick vibe”*, die wordt gemaakt in een recensie voor de film *Stake Land* in de



*San Francisco Chronicle* (Hartlaub, 2011). Baumann (2001) noemt dit als een kenmerk voor een kunstkritisch discours, omdat het plaatsen van een kunstwerk in de context van andere kunst voor een meer geïnformeerde manier van beoordelen zorgt, die vaak wordt toegepast op hoge kunst. Daarnaast wordt er in de auteurstheorie verondersteld dat een film wordt beïnvloed door de levensvisie van de regisseur en er hierdoor overeenkomsten te vinden zijn binnen het oeuvre van een regisseur op het gebied van bijvoorbeeld thema's of technieken (Thompson & Bordwell, 2003). Een regisseur heeft hierdoor een eigen stijl die kan worden vergeleken met het werk van andere regisseurs.

### 3. Vergelijking met andere films

Ook het vergelijken van de gerecenseerde film met andere films wordt door Baumann (2001) genoemd als indicatie voor een kunstkritisch discours. Net als de vergelijking met andere regisseurs, geeft ook de context van andere films een meer geïnformeerde beoordeling. Bovendien kan de recensent zo laten zien dat hij beschikt over voldoende achtergrondkennis om de film te plaatsen ten opzichte van andere films. Er wordt hierbij gezocht naar zowel impliciete als expliciete vergelijkingen met andere films in de recensie. Films die alleen in de recensie worden genoemd om aan te geven waar de acteurs, regisseur of andere betrokkenen nog meer bekend van zijn vallen hier niet onder.

### 4. Link met hoge kunst

Hierbij wordt de besproken film of elementen daaruit in de recensie vergeleken of in verband gebracht met meer traditionele vormen van hoge kunst, zoals toneel, schilderkunst of literatuur. Hieronder vallen vergelijkingen met genres van hoge kunst in het algemeen, specifieke kunstwerken en kunstenaars. Deze indicator is afkomstig van Van Venrooij en Schmutz (2010), die stellen dat het in verband brengen van populaire kunstvormen met hogere kunstvormen die traditioneel een hogere mate van legitimiteit genieten, kan helpen bij het proces van legitimering van deze populaire kunstvormen. Dit ligt in het verlengde van de bevindingen van Baumann (2001) op het gebied van het gebruik van kunstterminologie bij de opwaardering van film als kunstvorm. Wanneer een kunstvorm in een recensie wordt besproken als directe bron voor de film, bijvoorbeeld bij een boekverfilming of in het geval van de film *Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary*, een verfilming van een ballet, wordt dit niet meegeteld.

## 5. Interpretatie

Baumann (2001) noemt het aan het denken zetten van de beschouwer als belangrijke eigenschap van kunst. In tegenstelling tot vormen van expressie die meer op vermaak gericht zijn, is kunst vaak lastig om direct te begrijpen. Dit komt doordat kunstzinnige communicatie veelal gebeurt door middel van metaforen, die eerst moeten worden geïnterpreteerd om de betekenis duidelijk te maken. Het gebruik van een interpretatieve benadering is vanuit andere culturele disciplines gangbaar geworden bij de academische bestudering van film en kan daarom gezien worden als een intellectuele manier van schrijven over film. In de recensies voor het onderzoek zal er daarom worden gezocht naar door de recensent gegeven interpretaties van de betekenis of de achterliggende gedachte van de film. Ook uitleg van in de film voorkomende metaforen en symboliek wordt hiertoe gerekend.

## 6. Filmprijzen

Voor deze indicator wordt er bekeken of de recensent de film in de recensie in verband brengt met een filmprijs. Baumann (2001) beschrijft stappen die vanuit de filmindustrie zelf zijn gezet om van film een respectabele kunstvorm te maken. Zo werden er filminstituten als de Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences opgericht, die hun eigen prijzen begonnen uit te reiken ter promotie van kwaliteitsfilms. Ook kwamen er competitieve filmfestivals, waarbij jury's van experts uit het veld artistieke waarde aan een film toekennen. Omdat instituten die filmprijzen uitreiken over het algemeen worden gezien als autoriteit op het gebied van artistieke kwaliteit is het in verband brengen van de film met filmprijzen een indicatie van een kunstkritisch discours. Voorbeelden hiervan zijn een Oscar of Golden Globe, grote festivalprijzen als de Palme d'Or of een prijs namens een nationale of regionale organisatie van filmcritici. In het specifieke geval van vampierfilms zal het misschien eerder gaan om prijzen die zijn uitgereikt door festivals en publicaties die specifiek gericht zijn op films en andere media in de genres horror of fantasy. Bij films die als slecht beoordeeld worden kan het ook zijn dat er juist wordt geschreven dat de film nooit een prestigieuze prijs zal winnen. Dit wordt voor deze indicator ook meegeteld, omdat er in dat geval ook wordt verwezen naar de culturele autoriteit die uit gaat van een prijsuitreikende organisatie om de film langs een kunstzinnige lat te leggen.

## 7. Acteerwerk

Hoewel de regisseur van de film vaak als creatieve bron wordt aangewezen, zijn er natuurlijk nog veel meer mensen betrokken bij een filmproductie die invloed uitoefenen op het voorkomen en de kwaliteit van het eindproduct. De meest nadrukkelijk aanwezigen hiervan zijn de acteurs. Door de filmgeschiedenis heen heeft acteren in films zich ontwikkeld tot een professionele discipline, waarin verschillende soorten stijlen en technieken zijn ontstaan. Hoogstaand acteerwerk is een factor waarmee een film zich goed in kwaliteit kan onderscheiden van andere films (Thompson & Bordwell, 2003). In een recensie kan het dus nuttig zijn om het acteerwerk apart aan te halen en dit duidt ook op een genuanceerdere aanpak van de recensent dan het alleen beschouwen van de film als geheel. Voor deze variabele wordt er bekeken of er door de recensent aandacht wordt besteed aan de manier van acteren en de kwaliteit van het acteerwerk dat de acteurs in de film leveren. De aandacht is hier dus gericht op de bijdragen die de acteurs met hun talenten leveren aan het eindproduct en niet op alleen de aanwezigheid van een acteur. Wanneer een acteur wordt besproken als filmster valt dit onder het populaire discours (zie punt 9: 'filmsterren').

## 8. De aanwezigheid van zowel positief als negatief commentaar

Baumann (2001) noemt het geven van zowel positief als negatief commentaar in dezelfde recensie als een recenseertechniek die hoort bij de benadering van film als kunst. Hoge kunst wordt vaak als complexe materie gezien, die ingewikkeld is om te interpreteren en waarderen. De aanwezigheid van positief en negatief commentaar duidt op een diepgaande evaluatie van verschillende aspecten van de film op verschillende niveaus, waardoor er vaak een gemengd oordeel ontstaat. Baumann noemt hierbij als voorbeeld aparte oordelen over het acteerwerk tegenover de algehele aanpak van de regisseur. De combinatie van positief en negatief commentaar laat ook zien dat de recensent in staat is om een genuanceerd oordeel te vellen over de film en ook bij een goede film kritisch te blijven of bij een slechte film een goed aspect te vinden. In dit opzichte beschrijft Baumann ook de techniek van het vinden van 'merit in failure', waarbij een recensent juist waarde in de tekortkomingen van de film vindt, door deze op meerdere niveaus te bekijken.

Van Venrooij en Schmutz (2010) onderscheiden in hun onderzoek vier evaluatieve criteria die bij hoge kunst horen. De eerste drie hiervan zijn ontleend aan Bourdieu (1984) en zijn beschrijving van de esthetische dispositie die nodig is voor het beschouwen van kunst en de vierde aan Beckers (1982) stelling dat echte kunst voor langere tijd moet meegaan. Bij het coderen van deze variabelen

wordt er alleen gelet op de aanwezigheid van een evaluatie van de criteria en niet inhoudelijk naar de houding die de recensent ten opzichte hiervan inneemt.

#### 9. Originaliteit of innovatie

Wordt de film in de recensie beschreven in termen van originaliteit of het gebrek daaraan? Er kan bijvoorbeeld iets gezegd worden over de mate waarin elementen in de film innovatie vertonen ten opzichte van eerdere films of er juist sprake is van filmclichés en plotelementen die grote gelijkenis vertonen met andere films. Op basis van het soort films in dit onderzoek valt ook te verwachten dat er op het gebied van originaliteit en innovatie aandacht wordt besteed aan de manier waarop er in de film gebruik wordt gemaakt van genreconventies van de vampierfilm (voorbeelden hiervan zijn vernietiging door zonlicht, het kunnen veranderen in bepaalde dieren en de aanwezigheid van een vampierjager) en de mate waarin dit vernieuwend is binnen het genre.

#### 10. Complexiteit of ambiguïteit

Bij dit onderdeel van de hoge kunstcriteria wordt er gelet op de aanwezigheid van commentaar in een recensie over de mate van complexiteit van de film. Is het plot van de film gemakkelijk om te begrijpen, volgen of voorspellen of wordt er juist tegen het verwachtingspatroon van de kijker in gegaan en is er veel inspanning van de kijker nodig om de film te volgen en interpreteren? Naast het plot kan dit ook betrekking hebben op het vermengen van verschillende genres en thema's in de film of de voorspelbaarheid of diepgang van de personages. In het geval van vampierfilms zou dit bijvoorbeeld kunnen gaan over of er sprake is van een simpel verhaal over de strijd tussen goed en kwaad en of er ook personages zijn die zich in het morele midden bevinden.

#### 11. Seriusheid of intelligentie

Hoge kunst wordt over het algemeen gezien als een serieuze en intelligente aangelegenheid. Deze dimensie kan ook worden aangehaald bij het recenseren van film. Wordt de manier waarop de filmmakers een onderwerp, het plot of de film als geheel benaderen door de recensent beschreven als serieus of intelligent, of juist als bijvoorbeeld luchtig, flauw of dom? Bij vampierfilms kan er hierbij specifiek gelet worden op bijvoorbeeld commentaar over hoe bepaalde serieuze thema's in een fantasieplot verwerkt zijn.

## 12. Tijdloosheid

Hierbij gaat het om een bespreking van de mate van tijdloosheid van een film in de recensie, aangezien tijdloosheid volgens Becker (1982) een eigenschap is die bij hoge kunst hoort. Wordt de film bijvoorbeeld een tijdloze film of potentiële klassieker in het genre genoemd of juist een film die snel in de vergetelheid zal raken of gedateerd aan zal doen door de weergegeven tijdsgeest?

### **4.4 Operationalisering populair discours**

#### 1. Afzetten tegen kunstzinnigheid

Het innemen van een negatieve houding ten opzichte van kunst kan gezien worden als het vormen van een oordeel op basis van populaire criteria, waarmee de recensent zich juist afzet tegen wat wordt beschouwd als legitieme smaak (Van Venrooij & Schmutz, 2010). Deze houding kan naar voren komen in een recensie wanneer er negatief commentaar wordt gegeven over in de film aanwezige kunstzinnige aspecten. Dit kan bijvoorbeeld zijn wanneer de kunstzinnige aspecten door de recensent oninteressant, pretentius of ongeschikt voor de film worden genoemd. Ook kan het zo zijn dat er juist op een positieve manier wordt geschreven over de film als pulp- of B-film, filmsoorten die bekend staan om hun gebrek aan artistieke kwaliteit.

#### 2. Vermaak

Volgens Bourdieu (1984) wordt populaire esthetiek gekenmerkt door een continuering van het dagelijks leven en een focus op de functie van een object als belangrijkste eigenschap in plaats van de vorm. Het beoordelen van een film op basis van de functie als vermaak en als entertainmentproduct in plaats van kunstwerk valt hierdoor onder het populaire discours. Woorden als 'amusing', 'entertaining' of 'fun' kunnen wijzen op het bespreken van een film als vermaak in een recensie, net zoals woorden waarmee de afwezigheid van vermaak kan worden aangeduid, zoals 'boring'.

#### 3. Spanning of angst

Vampiers zijn oorspronkelijk afkomstig uit het horrorgenre en verschijnen nog steeds vooral in films die ook horror- of actie-elementen bevatten. Een belangrijke reden voor het publiek om dit soort films te bekijken is het opwekken van een fysieke reactie om zo op een ongevaarlijke manier angst of spanning te beleven (Tudor, 1997). Wanneer de film wordt besproken in termen van opgewekte spanning of mate van angstaanjagendheid kan dit gezien worden als een beoordeling van de film op de functie die hij voor het publiek zou moeten hebben. Net als het beoordelen op basis van vermakelijkheid, gaat ook het beoordelen op basis van opgewekte spanning of angst in tegen de functionele ongeschiktheid en de afstandelijke houding die Bourdieu (1984) in verband brengt met kunst en daarmee de hoge kunstcriteria. Voorbeelden van woorden die spanning of angst aanduiden zijn 'scary', 'terrifying', 'suspenseful' en 'thrilling'.

#### 4. Betrokkenheid kijkers

Ook dit punt komt voort uit de populaire esthetiek, zoals deze door Bourdieu (1984) wordt gekenmerkt. Het beoordelen van de film in termen van (emotionele) betrokkenheid van de kijker duidt op een continuering van het dagelijks leven bij het beschouwen van kunst en kan dus gezien worden als onderdeel van populair discours. Zaken die hierbij aan de orde kunnen komen zijn onder andere ontroering door gebeurtenissen in de film of de mate waarin de kijker zich in de film gezogen voelt. Zoals al op te maken is uit de aanwezigheid van een aparte variabele voor angst en spanning (3), vallen reacties die hiermee te maken hebben niet onder 'betrokkenheid'.

#### 5. Emotionele authenticiteit

Emotionele authenticiteit wordt door Bielby en Bielby (2004) beschreven als een belangrijk esthetisch criterium vanuit het publiek van populaire cultuuruitingen. Centraal staat hierbij de vraag of personages zich binnen hun fictionele wereld realistisch gedragen volgens de verwachtingen van het publiek. Deze verwachtingen kunnen onder andere zijn ontstaan door het imago en eerdere gedragingen van een personage. Dat het publiek hier veel waarde aan kan hechten blijkt wel uit de door Bielby en Bielby beschreven boze reacties van fans van soapseries wanneer deze fans van mening zijn dat de schrijvers van de serie de authenticiteit van de personages of verhaallijnen aantasten. Wanneer er in een recensie commentaar wordt geleverd over de authenticiteit en mate van realisme van een personage en diens handelingen valt dit onder deze variabele. Dit zal met name het geval kunnen zijn bij boekverfilmingen die in een recensie worden vergeleken met het bronmateriaal.

## 6. Gebruikersoriëntatie

Kunstkritici worden vaak gezien als culturele bemiddelaars en poortwachters in het culturele veld. Ze bevinden zich in een autoriteitspositie, van waaruit ze het publiek vertellen wat goede kunst is. Vanuit deze positie zou een kunstcriticus zich juist niet bezig moeten houden met de smaak of eisen van het publiek en het doen van voorspellingen over wie wat interessant zou kunnen vinden, maar deze smaak moeten voorschrijven (Shrum, 1991). Een publieksgerichte houding van een recensent is in recensies terug te vinden in beschrijvingen van publiekssegmenten voor wie de film wel of niet geschikt is of in welke situatie een film het beste bekeken kan worden (zoals een date of een gezellig avondje uit met vrienden). Ook wanneer er iets wordt geschreven over een eventuele vereiste mate van bekendheid met bronmaterialen of om een film goed te kunnen begrijpen valt dit onder gebruikersoriëntatie.

## 7. Film als commercieel product

Volgens Bourdieu (1980) vindt de waardering van kunst plaats binnen een wereld die zich afzet tegen commerciële belangen en in de eerste plaats geïnteresseerd is in de productie van symbolische waarde. Van kunstenaars wordt verwacht dat ze zich anti-economisch en ongeïnteresseerd opstellen tegenover de commercie. Wanneer ze hier wel rekening mee houden kan hun reputatie binnen de kunstwereld beschadigd raken. Het schrijven over een film als commercieel product in een recensie zorgt ervoor dat de film juist buiten de autonome kunstwereld wordt geplaatst, waarin geldzaken er niet toe doen, en in de dagelijkse economische werkelijkheid. Een film is als commercieel product in een recensie terug te vinden wanneer er informatie wordt gegeven over het productiebudget of de marketing van de film of er iets wordt gezegd over de mate van commercieel succes, bijvoorbeeld in de vorm van de opbrengst of voorspelde bezoekersaantallen. Ook andere commerciële belangen met betrekking tot de film worden hierbij meegerekend, bijvoorbeeld filmmerchandise of de aanwezigheid van product placements in de film. Zo wordt er in verschillende recensies van *Dracula 2000* gewezen op de reclame die in de film wordt gemaakt voor de winkels van Virgin. Ten slotte kan er in de recensie ook worden ingegaan op de vraag of het zien van de film de prijs van een bioscoopkaartje waard is, of dat er beter gewacht kan worden tot er een goedkopere mogelijkheid is om deze te bekijken.

## 8. Spektakel

Film begon als goedkope vorm van entertainment, waarin elementen van spektakel gebruikt konden worden om publiek te trekken. Dit gebeurde bijvoorbeeld in de films van Georges Méliès met verschillende soorten fototrucage en animatie-effecten en later met grootse historische spektakelstukken (Thompson & Bordwell, 2003). De special effects die tegenwoordig worden gebruikt zijn een stuk geavanceerder, maar nog steeds bedoeld om het publiek spektakel te kunnen bieden en een intense beleving van de film. Het beoordelen van de gebruikte effecten in een film kan dus gezien worden als een focus op een behoefte aan spektakel van het publiek. Deze variabele komt in een recensie voor wanneer de film wordt beschreven in termen als 'spektakel' of 'spectaculair', of wanneer er aandacht wordt besteed aan het gebruik of de kwaliteit van special effects en ander visueel spektakel in de film. Hieronder vallen bijvoorbeeld CGI- of 3D-effecten.

## 9. Filmsterren

Waar de indicator 'acteerwerk' (7) bij het kunstkritisch discours gaat om het talent van de acteurs in de film en hun kunstzinnige bijdrage, gaat het bij deze indicator om het bespreken van acteurs in de rol van filmster. Evens (2005) beschrijft de toegenomen media-aandacht die er in de loop der tijd is gekomen voor mensen die beroemd zijn om het beroemd zijn, terwijl beroemdheid eerder voornamelijk een gevolg was van vaardigheden en prestaties van een persoon. Vanuit sommige perspectieven wordt dit gezien als teken van cultureel verval. In de filmwereld is deze ontwikkeling ook terug te zien in de uitvinding van het concept van de filmster in het 'star system' van Hollywood. Hierbij ontstond er steeds meer aandacht voor het privéleven van acteurs en de acteurs als spraakmakende mediapersoonlijkheden om een film mee te promoten naast acteertalenten. Voor deze indicator wordt er bekeken of er in de recensie iets over de acteurs uit de film wordt geschreven dat niet direct te maken heeft met de kwaliteit van hun acteerwerk of hun verdere acteercarrière en opgevat kan worden als verwijzing naar de acteur als ster of beroemdheid. Hierbij valt te denken aan zaken die te maken hebben met hun privéleven of spraakmakende mediaoptredens.

## 10. Link met populaire cultuur



Deze indicator is het tegenovergestelde van de indicator 'link met hoge kunst' (4) bij het kunstkritisch discours. Hierbij helpen verwijzingen naar en vergelijkingen met hoge en meer legitieme vormen van kunst bij de legitimering van een gerecenseerd werk als kunst. Wanneer er in een recensie wordt verwezen naar populaire cultuur zorgt dit ervoor dat de film juist gezien wordt in een context van lagere culturele vormen in plaats van een kunstzinnige context. Er zal gezocht worden naar verwijzingen naar of vergelijkingen met populaire cultuur. Dit zijn bijvoorbeeld popmuziek, videoclip, televisieseries en beroemdheden die niet bij de productie van de film betrokken zijn geweest. Zo merkt de recensent die voor de *San Francisco Chronicle* schrijft over *Queen of the Damned* op dat een spectaculair effect dat in de film wordt gebruikt om een personage te laten verschijnen ook door zangeres Cher gebruikt werd op tournee. Het gaat hierbij om links die de recensent zelf legt en niet om verwijzingen naar populaire cultuur in de film zelf die worden beschreven.

#### **4.5 Codering**

Aan de hand van de bovenstaande aanwijzingen zullen bovenstaande indicatoren als dichotome variabelen gecodeerd worden. De afwezigheid van een indicator wordt hierbij als '0' gecodeerd en de aanwezigheid als '1'. De resultaten hiervan zullen met behulp van het programma *SPSS* statistisch worden geanalyseerd. Naast deze coderingen worden er per recensie een aantal kenmerken genoteerd: de bron en datum van de recensie, de naam of gebruikersnaam van de recensent, het aantal woorden dat in de recensie wordt gebruikt en de titel van de film waarop de recensie betrekking heeft. Het volledige codeerformulier is terug te vinden in bijlage 1.

#### **4.6 Validiteit en betrouwbaarheid**

De methode voor dit onderzoek en het codeerschema zijn opgesteld naar voorbeeld van eerder wetenschappelijk onderzoek van Baumann (2001) en Van Venrooij en Schmutz (2010) naar het gebruik van kunstkritisch en populair discours. Deze onderzoeken laten zien dat het soort methode dat ook voor dit onderzoek wordt gebruikt erg goed bruikbaar is voor het doen van onderzoek naar dit onderwerp en om naar aanleiding hiervan uitspraken te kunnen doen over discoursgebruik in recensies. Dit draagt bij aan de validiteit van het onderzoek. Daarnaast zijn er nog andere relevante theorieën en onderzoeken gebruikt om het onderzoek verder vorm te geven en wetenschappelijk te verantwoorden. Ook de criteria die onderzocht zullen worden in de recensies, zijn in de operationalisering van het onderzoek elk verantwoord op basis van (voornamelijk) wetenschappelijke bronnen. Hierdoor heeft het onderzoek een hoge mate van wetenschappelijke

inbedding. Om de betrouwbaarheid van het onderzoek te verhogen is er ook een betrouwbaarheidscontrole op het gebied van stabiliteit uitgevoerd. Bij deze methode worden een aantal van de te coderen teksten meerdere keren gecodeerd door dezelfde codeur om zo te kunnen controleren of de coderingen consistent zijn (Wester, 2006). Er heeft hierbij een proefcodering van tien recensies plaatsgevonden. Deze recensies zijn enige tijd later opnieuw gecodeerd en de beide coderingen zijn met elkaar vergeleken. Beide coderingen bleken redelijk goed overeen te komen. Op basis van tussen de coderingen gevonden verschillen en enkele andere punten die lastig bleken bij het coderen, is het codeerschema hierna verder aangepast om dit zo helder mogelijk te maken en eerdere fouten zo veel mogelijk te voorkomen.

## 5. Onderzoeksresultaten

In het vorige hoofdstuk is de methode uiteengezet die gebruikt wordt voor het onderzoek. In dit hoofdstuk zal worden ingegaan op de resultaten die zijn verkregen door middel van dit onderzoek. Uiteindelijk zal dit leiden tot een beantwoording van de deelvragen die samen antwoord moeten geven op de probleemstelling ‘Hoe verhoudt het gebruik van kunstkritische en populaire filmdiscoursen zich in recensies van amateurrecensenten op internet ten opzichte van dat van professionele filmrecensenten in kranten bij het beoordelen van vampierfilms?’. Als eerste zal er onder deelvraag 1 een beeld worden geschetst van het discoursgebruik van professionele filmrecensenten en daarna zal dit onder deelvraag 2 ook worden gedaan voor de amateurrecensenten. Voor het beantwoorden van deelvraag 3 en 4, zullen de gevonden verschillen statistisch worden getest om de mate van significantie hiervan te bepalen. In het kader van deelvraag 3 zullen hierna de gevonden overeenkomsten tussen professionele recensenten en amateurrecensenten worden besproken, terwijl de verschillen onder deelvraag 4 aan bod komen.

### 5.1 Deelvraag 1: professionele recensenten

Deelvraag 1 luidt: ‘Op welke manier maken professionele filmrecensenten in kranten gebruik van kunstkritische en populaire filmdiscoursen bij het beoordelen van vampierfilms?’. Om deze vraag te kunnen beantwoorden, zullen hieronder eerste de voor professionele filmrecensenten gevonden onderzoeksresultaten worden uiteengezet en besproken. De resultaten worden gegroepeerd besproken om de tekst overzichtelijker te maken, te beginnen met de variabelen die een kunstkritisch discours aanduiden.

Tabel 1 geeft het gemeten gebruik weer van de variabelen 1. ‘benoemen regisseur’, 2. ‘vergelijking met andere regisseurs’, 3. ‘vergelijking met andere films’ en 4. ‘link met hoge kunst’.

Tabel 1: Gebruik kunstkritische variabelen 1-4 in professionele recensies (N=100)

Variabele	Gebruikt in recensie	Niet gebruikt in recensie
1. Benoemen regisseur	88%	12%
2. Vergelijking regisseurs	9%	91%
3. Vergelijking films	53%	47%
4. Link met hoge kunst	6%	94%

Zoals in tabel 1 te zien is, is de variabele ‘benoemen regisseur’ in 88 van de honderd onderzochte recensies gevonden. Een zeer groot percentage van de door professionele recensenten geschreven recensies bevat dus aandacht voor de identiteit van de regisseur en soms ook een wat uitgebreidere bespreking, door de plaatsing van de besproken film in het oeuvre van de regisseur. Dit wijst erop dat het gebruik van de auteurtheorie, waarin de regisseur als de werkelijke maker van de film bestempeld wordt, onder professionele recensenten wijdverspreid is (Baumann, 2001). Het maken van vergelijkingen met andere regisseurs en de kenmerken van de films in hun oeuvre, kan bijdragen aan de creatie van een context waarin de film wordt geplaatst. Een goed voorbeeld hiervan is de manier waarop Michael Wilmington (2006) in zijn recensie voor de *Chicago Tribune* de regisseur van de film *Nochnoy Dozor* bespreekt: “Bekmambetov isn't a new radical virtuoso such as the Marxist Sergei Eisenstein in the '20s or the Christian mystic Andrei Tarkovsky in the '60s. Instead, he has the high-torque skills of such cinema-obsessed U.S. movie junkies as Quentin Tarantino and the Wachowski brothers”. Toch worden er in de onderzochte recensies maar in negen recensies vergelijkingen gemaakt met andere regisseurs en de kenmerken van de films in hun oeuvre. Ook de variabele ‘link met hoge kunst’ is maar weinig terug te vinden in de professionele recensies. De zes gevonden verwijzingen op dit gebied hebben voornamelijk betrekking op schrijvers en literatuur. Het maken van een vergelijking met andere films is voor professionele recensenten de belangrijkste manier om de film in een context te plaatsen. Deze variabele is in ongeveer de helft van de recensies gevonden.

Tabel 2 geeft het gebruik van de volgende vier variabelen van het kunstkritische discours weer: 5. ‘interpretatie’, 6. ‘filmprijzen’, 7. ‘acteerwerk’ en 8. ‘de aanwezigheid van zowel positief als negatief commentaar’.

Tabel 2: Gebruik kunstkritische variabelen 5-8 in professionele recensies (N=100)

Variabele	Gebruikt in recensie	Niet gebruikt in recensie
5. Interpretatie	35%	65%
6. Filmprijzen	5%	95%
7. Acteerwerk	32%	68%
8. Positief en negatief commentaar	51%	49%

Het gebruiken van een interpretatieve benadering bij het recenseren van films, wijst op een meer intellectuele manier van schrijven over film. Dit komt doordat er op deze manier dieper op een film wordt ingegaan dan alleen maar de functie of het effect op de kijker (Baumann, 2001). In ongeveer

een derde van de professionele recensies geeft de recensent een eigen interpretatie van de achterliggende boodschap die de filmmakers proberen over te brengen of symboliek die in de film voorkomt. Dit gebeurt bijvoorbeeld in vier van de recensies van de film *Twilight*, waar de recensenten boodschappen over tieners en seksualiteit in vinden. In enkele gevallen wordt juist de afwezigheid van een diepere betekenis besproken, bijvoorbeeld door een recensent van *The Boston Globe* in een bespreking van *Underworld*: “With two sides fighting for reasons only they understand, the film flirts with being an allegory, but of what? The conflict in the Middle East? The pennant race? The postponed California recall? Neither the Vampires nor the Lycans stand for anything greater than their own bellicosity.” (Morris, 2003).

Naar prijzen die een film zou kunnen winnen of heeft gewonnen wordt maar erg weinig verwezen, slechts vijf keer. Het gaat hier vooral om verwijzingen naar prijzen die de film al heeft gewonnen, zoals de juryprijs op het filmfestival van Cannes voor de film *Bakjwi*. De kwaliteit of stijl van het acteerwerk in de film komt in ongeveer een derde van de recensies aan bod. In ongeveer de helft van de recensies werden er daarnaast onderscheid gemaakt tussen positieve en negatieve aspecten van de film. Dit is een indicatie voor het gebruik van een genuanceerde manier van oordelen over de kwaliteit van de film.

De laatste vier variabelen van het kunstkritisch discours zijn te vinden in tabel 3: 9. ‘originaliteit of innovatie’, 10. ‘complexiteit of ambiguïteit’, 11. ‘seriusheid of intelligentie’ en 12. ‘tijdloosheid’.

Tabel 3: Gebruik kunstkritische variabelen 9-12 in professionele recensies (N=100)

Variabele	Gebruikt in recensie	Niet gebruikt in recensie
9. Originaliteit/innovatie	43%	57%
10. Complexiteit/ambiguïteit	51%	49%
11. Seriusheid/intelligentie	51%	49%
12. Tijdloosheid	15%	85%

Deze vier variabelen worden door Van Venrooij en Schmutz (2010) gegroepeerd op het gebied van hoge kunst en geven aan dat een besproken film wordt beoordeeld aan de hand van eisen die veelal aan hoge kunstvormen worden gesteld. Hiervan worden er drie redelijk vaak gebruikt in de onderzochte recensies. Originaliteit of innovatie wordt in 43 procent van de gevallen aangehaald. Er wordt hierbij veel verwezen naar gelijkenissen met andere films, maar zoals verwacht komt ook de mate van originaliteit of innovatie binnen het genre van de vampierfilm en de bijbehorende

conventies aan bod. Zo schrijft recensent Adam Graham (2011): “‘Fright Night’ honors vampire lore by sticking to some legends (vamps cannot come inside one's home unless invited) and updating others (did you know vamps don't show up on video camera?).”. De volgende twee variabelen, het bespreken van de mate van complexiteit of ambiguïteit en serieusheid of intelligentie komen even vaak voor, allebei in ongeveer de helft van de recensies. In vijftien procent van de gevallen werd er in de recensie iets geschreven over de mate van tijdloosheid van de film in de vorm van een potentiële status als klassieker of het weergeven van de tijdsgeest. Dit gebeurt bijvoorbeeld in de recensie van de film *Stake Land* in de *San Francisco Chronicle*, waarin recensent Peter Hartlaub (2011) de film “a bold and memorable step forward in the genre” noemt.

Na dit overzicht van de variabelen die een kunstkritisch discours aanduiden, zullen nu de variabelen besproken worden die het gebruik van een populair discours aanduiden. De mate van aanwezigheid van de eerste drie hiervan, 1. ‘afzetten tegen kunstzinnigheid’, 2. ‘vermaak’ en 3. ‘spanning of angst’, wordt uiteengezet in tabel 4.

Tabel 4: Gebruik populaire variabelen 1-3 in professionele recensies (N=100)

Variabele	Gebruikt in recensie	Niet gebruikt in recensie
1. Afzetten tegen kunstzinnigheid	3%	97%
2. Vermaak	19%	81%
3. Spanning/angst	33%	67%

Wat opvalt, is dat de variabele ‘afzetten tegen kunstzinnigheid’ slechts in drie recensies is gevonden. Hiermee is dit de variabele die in het onderzoek het minst vaak is gevonden in professionele recensies. In één recensie wordt er op een negatieve manier verwezen naar de kunstzinnige aanpak in een film en in twee gevallen wordt een film positief besproken in het kader van de afwezigheid van kunstzinnigheid. Recensent Stephen Hunter (2002) van de *Washington Post* vindt *Blade II* juist zo goed omdat er volgens hem geen enkele volwassen rechtvaardiging voor de film is en beschrijft hoe het idee van deze film de gerenommeerde Franse filmcriticus André Bazin zou hebben afgeschrikt. De volgende twee variabelen verwijzen naar het bespreken van de film in termen van functie. Het vermaak dat de kijker uit de film haalt wordt in ongeveer een vijfde van de recensies benoemd en de spanning of angst die de film opwekt in een derde. Op het gebied van deze laatste variabele gaat het in veel gevallen ook specifiek over het gebruik van horroreffecten in de film.

De volgende variabelen, 4. ‘betrokkenheid kijkers’, 5. ‘emotionele authenticiteit’ en 6. ‘gebruikersoriëntatie’, zijn te vinden in tabel 5.

Tabel 5: Gebruik populaire variabelen 4-6 in professionele recensies (N=100)

Variabele	Gebruikt in recensie	Niet gebruikt in recensie
4. Betrokkenheid kijkers	22%	78%
5. Emotionele authenticiteit	10%	90%
6. Gebruikersoriëntatie	12%	88%

De volgende twee variabelen hebben betrekking op betrokkenheid van het publiek bij de film. In ongeveer een vijfde van de recensies wordt er iets gezegd over het effect of directe gevoel van betrokkenheid bij de kijker. Zo worden films omschreven als ‘moving’ of ‘touching’, maar ook wordt er verwezen naar andere reacties als lachen of in slaap vallen. Veel minder aandacht is er voor de emotionele authenticiteit, het realisme van de personages binnen hun eigen fictionele wereld. Dit beoordelingscriterium wordt door Bielby en Bielby (2004) vooral gelinkt aan esthetische oordelen vanuit het publiek en wordt in het onderzoek ook maar in tien professionele recensies gebruikt. Professionele recensenten hebben vooral oog voor het uiterlijk van de personages, wanneer dit niet bij deze personages of de historische periode past. Ook de algehele geloofwaardigheid van personages komt hierbij aan bod. Ook het geven van een gebruikersoriëntatie voor de film komt niet erg vaak voor. Dit is overeenkomend met het idee dat recensenten vanuit hun positie smaak horen voor te schrijven in plaats van de smaak van het publiek te voorspellen (Shrum, 1991).

De overige vier variabelen met betrekking tot het populaire discours, 7. ‘film als commercieel product’, 8. ‘spektakel’, 9. ‘filmsterren’ en 10. ‘link met populaire cultuur’, zijn in tabel 6 terug te vinden.

Tabel 6: Gebruik populaire variabelen 7-10 in professionele recensies (N=100)

Variabele	Gebruikt in recensie	Niet gebruikt in recensie
7. Commercieel product	23%	77%
8. Spektakel	35%	65%
9. Filmsterren	5%	95%
10. Link populaire cultuur	30%	70%

In iets meer dan een vijfde van de onderzochte recensies wordt de film in verband gebracht met commercie of wordt de film besproken als commercieel product. Vaak zijn deze verwijzingen negatief van aard, bijvoorbeeld wanneer er iets wordt geschreven over de invloed van commerciële belangen

van de filmstudio op het eindproduct of de marketing van de film. Zo omschrijft een recensent van de *Boston Globe* de redenen voor het maken van de film *Van Helsing* als volgt: “‘Van Helsing’ is based on the Universal Pictures marketing department's tumescent desire to re-imprint its brands onto the minds of a new generation. [...]It's not good. But that's secondary. A movie like this is just a beachhead for the eventual theme-park ride.” (Burr, 2004). Het aanwezige spektakel en de elementen die hieraan bijdragen, zoals special effects, worden in een derde van de recensies benoemd. Dit is het element van het populaire discours dat het vaakste wordt beschreven door professionele recensenten. Het bespreken van acteurs als filmsterren of verwijzen naar het privéleven van deze acteurs gebeurt slechts in vijf recensies. In vier gevallen gaat het om recensies van *Queen of the Damned*, waarin de dood van zangeres en actrice Aaliyah wordt besproken, die een hoofdrol speelt in de film. Ten slotte wordt er in dertig recensies een link gelegd tussen de film en vormen van populaire cultuur. Vooral de televisieseries *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* en *True Blood* worden relatief veel gebruikt als referentiekader voor vampierfilms.

Samengevat ziet de top vijf van meest gebruikte criteria door professionele recensenten er als volgt uit:

88% Benoemen regisseur

51% Positief en negatief commentaar

51% Complexiteit/ambigüiteit

51% Serieusheid/intelligentie

43% Originaliteit/innovatie

De vijf variabelen die het meeste zijn gevonden in de onderzochte professionele recensies, behoren allemaal tot het kunstkritische discours. Vier hiervan zijn in minstens de helft van de gevallen voorgekomen. Het hoge percentage recensies waarin de regisseur wordt benoemd valt erg op, aangezien dit ruim boven de andere resultaten uitsteekt. Dit laat zien dat het noemen van de regisseur van de film in de recensie door professionele recensenten al bijna standaard gebeurt en misschien wel tot de basisinformatie over een film is gaan horen. Hieruit kan worden afgeleid dat het gebruik van de auteurtheorie, waarin de filmregisseur als belangrijkste maker van de film wordt aangeduid, onder hen een wijdverspreide manier van denken is. Het geven van zowel positief als negatief commentaar, wat wijst op een complexe en genuanceerde aanpak, komt in ongeveer de helft van de recensies voor. De volgende drie variabelen verwijzen naar criteria die specifiek in verband worden gebracht met het beoordelen van hoge kunst. Het hanteren hiervan duidt op het gebruik van een kunstzinnige benadering van film in een groot deel van de recensies.

Het totale gevonden gebruik van de beide discoursen is uiteengezet in tabel 7.



Tabel 7: Resultaten discoursgebruik professionele recensenten

	Aantal keer gevonden in recensies	Percentage
Kunstkritisch discours	439	69,6
Populair discours	192	30,4
Totaal	631	100

In totaal is het in de honderd recensies 631 keer voorgekomen dat minstens één van de in totaal 22 variabelen werd gevonden. De gemiddelde professionele recensie bevat dus 6 verschillende van de onderzochte categorieën, waarvan er (afgerond) 4 onder het kunstkritische discours vallen en 2 onder het populaire discours. Dit komt neer op 69,6 procent kunstkritisch discours 30,4 procent populair discours, oftewel een verhouding van 7/3. Er kan dus gesteld worden dat het gebruikte discours onder professionele recensenten overwegend kunstkritisch van aard is, maar dat deze groep toch ook gebruik maakt van een populair discours.

## 5.2 Deelvraag 2: amateurrecensenten

Nu de eerste deelvraag, op het gebied van het gebruikte discours van professionele filmrecensenten, is beantwoord, zullen ook de onderzoeksresultaten van de amateurrecensies nader worden bekeken. Deze zullen op dezelfde manier uiteen worden gezet als de professionele recensies en uiteindelijk zal uit deze resultaten een antwoord volgen op deelvraag 2: 'Op welke manier maken amateurrecensenten op internet gebruik van kunstkritische en populaire filmdiscoursen bij het beoordelen van vampierfilms?'. Als eerste zullen de variabelen behandeld worden die bij een kunstkritisch discours horen. In tabel 8 wordt het gevonden gebruik van de variabelen 1. 'benoemen regisseur', 2. 'vergelijking met andere regisseurs' en 3. 'vergelijking met andere films' in amateurrecensies weergegeven.

Tabel 8: Gebruik kunstkritische variabelen 1-4 in amateurrecensies (N=100)

Variabele	Gebruikt in recensie	Niet gebruikt in recensie
1. Benoemen regisseur	36%	64%
2. Vergelijking regisseurs	5%	95%
3. Vergelijking films	43%	57%
4. Link met hoge kunst	3%	97%

Uit deze resultaten blijkt dat de regisseur van de film in ongeveer een derde van de door amateurs geschreven recensies wordt genoemd of verder besproken. Dit is een stuk minder dan de 88 procent die voor deze variabele werd gevonden in de professionele recensies, maar toch geeft dit weer dat ook het publiek redelijk bekend is met het idee van de regisseur als auteur van de film en persoon die belangrijk kan zijn om te benoemen in een bespreking van de film. Van de volgende drie variabelen op het gebied van contextinformatie en achtergrondkennis, komt het maken van vergelijkingen tussen films het vaakst voor: 43 keer. Het vergelijken van elementen uit de film met het oeuvre van een andere regisseur of het maken van een vergelijking met legitieme kunst, komt nauwelijks voor. Respectievelijk zijn er vijf en drie recensies gevonden in het onderzoek waarin een dergelijke vergelijking te vinden is.

De resultaten van de volgende vier variabelen van het kunstkritische discours, 5. 'interpretatie', 6. 'filmprijzen', 7. 'acteerwerk' en 8. 'de aanwezigheid van zowel positief als negatief commentaar', worden in tabel 9 weergegeven.

Tabel 9: Gebruik kunstkritische variabelen 5-8 in amateurrecensies (N=100)

Variabele	Gebruikt in recensie	Niet gebruikt in recensie
5. Interpretatie	15%	85%
6. Filmprijzen	4%	96%
7. Acteerwerk	38%	62%
8. Positief en negatief commentaar	45%	55%

Het besteden van aandacht aan achterliggende gedachten of boodschappen in de film lijkt voor het grootste gedeelte van de amateurrecensenten niet echt van belang te zijn. Toch wil dit niet zeggen dat amateurrecensenten niet in staat zijn om een meer analytische manier van recenseren te gebruiken. Vier van de amateurrecensenten vinden in de film *Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary*, een balletbewerking van Bram Stokers boek *Dracula*, bijvoorbeeld thema's als immigratie en xenofobie, misogynie en (economische) macht terug. Eén van hen ziet in de aanwezigheid van een Aziatische acteur in de rol van Dracula zelfs een symbool voor het verlies van economische macht van de westerse wereld aan China. Net zoals in de professionele recensies, komt het verwijzen naar filmprijzen nauwelijks voor in de amateurrecensies, slechts vier keer. De mate waarin acteurs door middel van de kwaliteit of stijl van hun acteerwerk een bijdrage leveren aan de film wordt 38 keer aangehaald. In iets minder dan de helft van de recensies wordt daarnaast een enigszins genuanceerd

oordeel geveld in de vorm van een combinatie van positief en negatief commentaar. Zelfs in extreem positieve of negatieve recensies is in veel gevallen toch nog kritiek of lof te vinden. Zo schrijft IMDB-gebruiker vv-veryvery (2006): “I don't usually review movies but I like this one so much that I have to scream about it. Maybe one of the best movie's I've ever seen”, maar toch ook: “My only criticism is the video game scene, I felt that was out of place. Also, some of the fight scenes were a little confusing to follow. Other than these two things, I loved everything else.”.

In tabel 10 zijn de resultaten voor de laatste vier variabelen van het kunstkritisch discours opgenomen: 9. ‘originaliteit of innovatie’, 10. ‘complexiteit of ambiguïteit’, 11. ‘seriusheid of intelligentie’ en 12. ‘tijdloosheid’.

Tabel 10: Gebruik kunstkritische variabelen 9-12 in amateurrecensies (N=100)

Variabele	Gebruikt in recensie	Niet gebruikt in recensie
9. Originaliteit/innovatie	42%	58%
10. Complexiteit/ambiguïteit	49%	51%
11. Seriusheid/intelligentie	25%	75%
12. Tijdloosheid	6%	94%

De originaliteit of mate van innovatie van de film wordt in 42 onderzochte amateurrecensies gebruikt bij het vormen van een waardeoordeel over de film. Ook door amateurs wordt veel verwezen naar overeenkomsten met andere films en innovatie op het gebied van vampier- of horrorfilms, bijvoorbeeld “This movie, while a horror story, has a ‘human story’ behind it to give it a certain dimension that you do not normally see in a typical horror movie” (aeo, 2008) en “Beheading and the use of silver as means to dispatch a bloodsucker are two themes you rarely see in recent vampire films and are taken directly from the old myths” (evilfiendfromplanet9, 2000). ‘Complexiteit of ambiguïteit’ is met 49 procent de variabele die onder de amateurrecensenten in het onderzoek het meeste is gebruikt. Dit is opvallend, aangezien het de verwachting is dat amateurrecensenten vooral een populair discours gebruiken, terwijl dit criterium vooral met legitieme kunst wordt geassocieerd. In een kwart van de recensies wordt de film op het gebied van seriusheid of intelligentie besproken, bijvoorbeeld door middel van termen als ‘thoughtful’, ‘clever’, ‘stupid’ of ‘dumb’. Tijdloosheid wordt met zes keer nauwelijks gebruikt in het discours van de amateurrecensenten. De film wordt hierbij besproken in het kader van de weergegeven tijdsgeest of de mate waarin de film in de toekomst nog waardevol zal zijn, bijvoorbeeld: “one of those truly superb vampire-movie endings you'll be talking about for years, in a good way” (Gattanella, 2009).

Nu alle variabelen die horen bij het kunstkritisch discours zijn besproken, zal er aandacht worden besteed aan het voorkomen van de indicatoren voor een populair discours in de onderzochte filmrecensies van amateurs. De eerste drie variabelen voor het populaire discours, 1. 'afzetten tegen kunstzinnigheid', 2. 'vermaak' en 3. 'spanning of angst', zijn te vinden in tabel 11.

Tabel 11: Gebruik populaire variabelen 1-3 in amateurrecensies (N=100)

Variabele	Gebruikt in recensie	Niet gebruikt in recensie
1. Afzetten tegen kunstzinnigheid	5%	95%
2. Vermaak	28%	72%
3. Spanning/angst	27%	73%

Net zoals de professionele recensenten, zetten ook de amateurrecensenten zich nauwelijks af tegen kunstzinnigheid in de film of laten ze zich positief uit over de afwezigheid van kunstzinnigheid. In vier van de vijf gevallen gaat het hierbij om het prijzen van de film als 'hersenloos' vermaak, in een paar recensies gecombineerd met uitleg van de recensent over waarom bepaalde kwaliteitseisen voor dit soort films niet relevant zijn. De mate waarin de film vermaak biedt wordt in 28 van de recensies besproken en de spanning of angst die wordt opgewekt in 27. Deze variabelen verwijzen beiden naar een beoordeling van de film op geschiktheid voor zijn functie, iets wat volgens Bourdieu (1984) een belangrijk kenmerk is van de populaire esthetiek.

De volgende drie variabelen, 4. 'betrokkenheid kijkers', 5. 'emotionele authenticiteit' en 6. 'gebruikersoriëntatie', worden weergegeven in tabel 12 .

Tabel 12: Gebruik populaire variabelen 4-6 in amateurrecensies (N=100)

Variabele	Gebruikt in recensie	Niet gebruikt in recensie
4. Betrokkenheid kijkers	38%	62%
5. Emotionele authenticiteit	34%	66%
6. Gebruikersoriëntatie	32%	68%

De eerste twee variabelen hebben betrekking op een ander belangrijk element dat Bourdieu (1984) noemt als onderdeel van de populaire esthetiek: directe betrokkenheid bij culturele producten als continuering van het dagelijks leven. Dit blijkt redelijk vaak in amateurrecensies voor te komen, respectievelijk 38 en 34 keer. De betrokkenheid van de kijkers komt naar voren in onder andere de

beschreven emoties en reacties die de film opwekt. Tegelijkertijd wordt ook de functie van de film als ervaring voor de kijker hier aangehaald. Zo schrijft IMDB-gebruiker allykat\_\_d (2004): “This, to me, is the purpose of a movie: go get lost for two hours and forget about everything else, forget about the world and get lost in a fantasy.”. In het kader van emotionele authenticiteit wordt zoals verwacht veel aandacht besteed aan de vertaling van bronmaterialen als boeken naar de besproken film en de mate waarin dit volgens de recensent recht doet aan het verhaal of de personages.

Amateurrecensenten die fan zijn van het bronmateriaal kunnen hierbij zeer gedetailleerd en kritisch te werk gaan. Een voorbeeld hiervan is de manier waarop dcvanw (2009) de film *Blood: The Last Vampire* vergelijkt met de originele Japanse animatiefilm: “I do believe in creative license, and wouldn't have minded changes to the story if they didn't outright butcher it. [...] There were no twists and turns concerning Saya's origins. Never explained her blood was a poison, though they showed her giving some to a vamp after slicing it open. The chiropterans were just ordinary vampires, not genetic experiments. They took the science completely out.”. Ook de algemene geloofwaardigheid van personages en hun handelingen wordt in de recensies besproken, bijvoorbeeld in deze klacht van DrunkN\_M (2000) over *Dracula 2000*: “they make it look too easy to kill vampires - A problem arises, and they always manage to solve the problem all before breakfast time”.

Het geven van een gebruikersoriëntatie in de vorm van een voorspelling voor wie of in welke situatie een film geschikt zou kunnen zijn, komt in ongeveer een derde van de amateurrecensies voor. Kenmerkend hiervoor is een voorspelling als: “If you like vampire movies of the modern, campy, pop type ... think of Vampire Lestat, and Blade [...] then this move may appeal.” (Delacroix, 2006).

De laatste vier variabelen van het populaire discours, 7. ‘film als commercieel product’, 8. ‘spektakel’, 9. ‘filmsterren’ en 10. ‘link met populaire cultuur’ zijn uiteengezet in tabel 13.

Tabel 13: Gebruik populaire variabelen 7-10 in amateurrecensies (N=100)

Variabele	Gebruikt in recensie	Niet gebruikt in recensie
7. Commercieel product	17%	83%
8. Spektakel	41%	59%
9. Filmsterren	1%	99%
10. Link populaire cultuur	16%	84%

Het verwijzen naar de film als product met commerciële waarde komt zeventien keer voor in het onderzoek. Opvallend is dat amateurrecensenten, naast zaken als productiebudgetten of de film als opzet voor vervolgdelen, vooral ook de verhouding tussen de prijs en kwaliteit van de film bespreken. In een conclusie als “This movie was a complete waste of my time. I was thoroughly disappointed, and I regret the money and time spent at the theater.” (Alric\_, 2004), wordt een oordeel geveld over de mate waarin de film de investering in geld en tijd om hem te zien waard is geweest. Sommige recensenten geven op dit gebied ook het advies om te wachten tot de film voor minder geld beschikbaar is, bijvoorbeeld in de videotheek.

De spektakелеlementen in de film, zoals 3D- en CGI-effecten, worden redelijk vaak aangehaald in de amateurrecensies, namelijk 41 keer. Dit kan worden gezien als verwijzing naar de mate waarin een film zijn functie vervult op het gebied van bieden van spektakel. Het privéleven van acteurs wordt echter slechts één keer benoemd, in de vorm van een verwijzing naar het strafblad van actrice Michelle Rodriguez. Hiermee is ‘filmsterren’ de variabele waar door amateurrecensenten het minst naar verwezen wordt. Populaire cultuur wordt niet erg veel gebruikt als referentiekader bij het bespreken van de film. Dit gebeurt in zestien procent van de gevallen. Net als de professionele recensenten, verwijzen amateurrecensenten vooral naar televisieseries als *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

Uiteengezet in een top vijf zien de meest gebruikte criteria door amateurrecensenten er als volgt uit:

49% Complexiteit/ambiguïteit

45% Positief en negatief commentaar

43% Vergelijking films

42% Originaliteit/innovatie

41% Spektakel

Wat hierbij opvalt, is dat geen enkele van onderzoeksvariabelen in meer dan vijftig procent van de amateurrecensies is gevonden en er geen grote uitschieters onder de variabelen zijn te vinden. Vier van de vijf variabelen die het meeste zijn teruggevonden in de amateurrecensies zijn afkomstig uit het kunstkritisch discours en één uit het populaire discours. Twee van de met hoge kunst geassocieerde criteria, ‘complexiteit/ambiguïteit’ en ‘originaliteit/innovatie’ zijn in de top vijf terug te vinden. Ook de genuanceerde en complexe benadering van de film, die tot uiting komt in het aanwezig zijn van positief en negatief commentaar, is in veel recensies aanwezig.

Amateurrecensenten besteden daarnaast vrij veel aandacht aan het vergelijken van films met andere films en elementen van spektakel in de film.

In tabel 14 wordt het gevonden gebruik van beide discoursen uiteengezet.

Tabel 14: Resultaten discoursgebruik amateurrecensenten

	Aantal keer gevonden in recensies	Percentage
Kunstkritisch discours	312	56,7
Populair discours	238	43,3
Totaal	550	100

In totaal is het gebruik van de in totaal 22 variabelen 550 keer gevonden in de honderd recensies. Gemiddeld werden er per recensie dus 5,5 van de onderzochte categorieën gebruikt. Hiervan vielen er (afgerond) 3 onder het kunstkritische discours en 2 onder het populaire discours. In percentages is dit 56,7 procent kunstkritisch discours, tegenover 43,3 procent populair discours, wat ongeveer een 6/4 verhouding tussen het gebruik hiervan oplevert. Het kunstkritische discours wordt dus het meeste gebruikt, maar ook het gebruik van het populaire discours komt in aanzienlijke mate voor. Het discoursgebruik van amateurrecensenten is hierdoor redelijk gemengd te noemen.

### **5.3 Deelvraag 3: overeenkomsten tussen professionele recensenten en amateurrecensenten**

Nu de gevonden resultaten op het gebied van professionele recensies en amateurrecensies apart van elkaar zijn besproken, zullen deze hieronder met elkaar worden vergeleken om te overeenkomsten en verschillen in kaart te brengen. Als eerste komt deelvraag 3 aanbod. Deze luidt: ‘Welke overeenkomsten zijn er te vinden tussen het gebruik van kunstkritische en populaire filmdiscoursen van professionele filmrecensenten in kranten en amateurrecensenten op internet bij het beoordelen van vampierfilms?’. Om tot een antwoord op deze vraag te komen, zullen de resultaten statistisch getest worden. Aangezien de resultaten per categorie zijn verzameld (‘aanwezig’ of ‘niet aanwezig’) en nominaal van aard zijn, zal dit gebeuren door middel van een chi-kwadraattoets ( $X^2$ ). In enkele gevallen is er niet voldaan aan de voorwaarden voor het uitvoeren van een chi-kwadraattoets. Alle verwachte celfrequenties moeten gelijk zijn aan of groter zijn dan 1 en daarbij mag maximaal twintig procent van de verwachte celfrequenties kleiner zijn dan 5. In deze gevallen is Fisher’s exact test uitgevoerd. De uitkomst van deze testen leveren een p-waarde op, die de mate van significantie van de gevonden verschillen aangeeft. Wanneer blijkt dat deze p-waarde kleiner is dan 0.05 ( $p < .05$ ), kan er worden gesproken van een significant verschil. Bij de variabelen die in het kader van deze deelvraag worden besproken, is de p-waarde groter dan 0.05 gebleken ( $p > .05$ ). Deze resultaten worden daarom aangeduid als niet significant (ns).

Om de bespreking wat overzichtelijker te maken worden de resultaten gegroepeerd besproken. In tabel 15 zijn de eerste vier variabelen te vinden die bij het kunstkritisch discours horen.

Tabel 15: Verschillen en significantie kunstkritische variabelen (1) (N=200)

Variabele	Gebruik professionele recensies	Gebruik amateurrecensies	Vershil	Significantie
2. Vergelijking regisseurs	9	5	4	ns
3. Vergelijking films	53	43	10	ns
4. Link met hoge kunst	6	3	3	ns
6. Filmprijzen	5	4	1	ns

Significantieniveaus: \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*= $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*= $p < 0.001$ ; ns= $p > 0.05$

Van beide soorten recensenten zijn honderd recensies onderzocht. Uit deze eerste groep resultaten op het gebied van kunstkritisch discours blijkt dat drie van de criteria in minder dan tien of zelfs vijf procent van de gevallen worden aangehaald door recensenten. Dit betekent dat deze criteria kunnen worden gezien als niet erg belangrijk voor recensenten bij het komen tot een beoordeling. Het maken van een vergelijking tussen regisseurs is de eerste van deze minder belangrijke criteria. Wat inhoudelijk opvalt bij het gebruik hiervan, is dat vergelijkingen met andere regisseurs door beide soorten recensenten niet alleen worden gemaakt om iets te zeggen over de stijl of toon van de film, maar vaak ook een waardeoordeel over de film bevatten. Een positief oordeel gaat dan gepaard met een vergelijking met een regisseur die aanzien als kunstenaar heeft, bijvoorbeeld David Lynch, terwijl een negatief oordeel over de film kan worden versterkt door middel van een vergelijking met een regisseur die weinig kunstzinnig aanzien heeft, zoals Michael Bay. Ook bij de weinige vergelijkingen die er worden gemaakt met vormen van hoge kunst gaat het voornamelijk om het versterken van een positief oordeel. Dit is in overeenstemming met wat Baumann (2001) en Van Venrooij en Schmutz (2010) schrijven over de verandering in status die culturele producten kunnen ondergaan wanneer deze geassocieerd worden met kunstwerken en terminologie die bij legitieme kunst (of in dit geval ook minder legitieme werken) horen. Het vergelijken van films met andere films, zoals in variabele 3 naar voren komt, blijkt voor beide groepen recensenten de belangrijkste manier om films in een context te bespreken. Deze variabele is in bijna de helft van het totale aantal recensies voor. Filmprijzen worden door beide soorten recensenten nauwelijks besproken in recensies. Zelfs wanneer een film al een belangrijke prijs heeft gewonnen (bijvoorbeeld *Shadow of the Vampire* en *Bakjwi*, die respectievelijk werden onderscheiden door de Los Angeles Film Critics Association en het filmfestival van Cannes), wordt dit maar een enkele keer genoemd in recensies.

De tweede groep van variabelen op het gebied van het kunstkritisch discours en de gevonden overeenkomsten tussen de recensenten is te vinden in tabel 16.



Tabel 16: Verschillen en significantie kunstkritische variabelen (2) (N=200)

Variabele	Gebruik professionele recensies	Gebruik amateurrecensies	Vershil	Significantie
7. Acteerwerk	32	38	6	ns
8. Positief en negatief commentaar	51	45	6	ns
9. Originaliteit/innovatie	43	42	1	ns
10. Complexiteit/ambigüiteit	51	49	2	ns

Significantieniveaus: \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*= $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*= $p < 0.001$ ; ns= $p > 0.05$

Een bespreking van het acteerwerk dat in de film voorkomt, is gemiddeld in ongeveer een derde van de recensies te vinden. Wanneer het voorkomen hiervan wordt vergeleken met dat van de variabele ‘filmsterren’ van het populaire discours in de onderzochte recensies, blijkt dat het voor zowel professionele recensenten als amateurrecensenten belangrijker is om de bijdrage van de acteurs aan de film te bespreken dan de acteurs als privépersonen. In ongeveer de helft van de recensies is er sprake van een gemengd oordeel van de recensent over verschillende aspecten van de film. Dit laat zien dat amateurrecensenten in ongeveer dezelfde mate als professionele recensenten in staat zijn om de film op een diepgaande en genuanceerde manier te beschouwen.

Iets minder vaak worden de originaliteit en innovatie van de film benoemd in recensies, maar toch blijkt dit voor beide groepen recensenten een redelijk belangrijke factor bij het beoordelen van films. In beide soorten recensies worden de mate waarin een film op andere films lijkt of juist vernieuwing biedt in ongeveer veertig procent van de gevallen besproken. Hieronder vallen ook besprekingen die specifiek naar de context van het vampiergenre verwijzen en de manier waarop er gebruik wordt gemaakt van bestaande conventies of innovatie daarin plaatsvindt. Een voorbeeld van een dergelijke bespreking is te vinden in een recensie voor *Fright Night* door recensent Colin Covert (2011): “delightfully original despite its familiar context, it grabs vampire clichés by the neck and shakes them to life. [...] vampires are generally portrayed as upscale monsters. One of many ingenious twists here is that the thirsty guy is a pickup-driving, T-shirt-wearing construction worker named Jerry”. Ook de complexiteit en ambigüiteit van het plot, de personages en de film als geheel wordt in ongeveer de helft van de recensies aangehaald.

De eerste groep variabelen op het gebied van het populaire discours die een hoge mate van overeenkomst tussen de groepen recensenten laten zien, is te vinden in tabel 17.

Tabel 17: Verschillen en significantie populaire variabelen (1) (N=200)

Variabele	Gebruik professionele recensies	Gebruik amateurrecensies	Vershil	Significantie
1. Afzetten tegen kunstzinnigheid	3	5	2	ns
2. Vermaak	19	28	9	ns
3. Spanning/angst	33	27	6	ns

Significantieniveaus: \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*= $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*= $p < 0.001$ ; ns= $p > 0.05$

Het expliciet afstand nemen van kunstzinnigheid in de film of het juist prijzen van de afwezigheid van deze kunstzinnigheid, is iets wat zowel in professionele recensies als amateurrecensies slechts een paar keer voorkomt. Van het bewust afzetten tegen de legitieme smaak is dus nauwelijks sprake. Ook de volgende twee variabelen, die naar de functie van films verwijzen, komen in de onderzochte professionele recensies en amateurrecensies ongeveer even vaak voor. In rond de twintig procent van de recensies wordt naar de film verwezen als een vorm van vermaak of wordt de mate van vermaak beoordeeld die de film biedt. De functie die (horror)films kunnen hebben om het publiek spanning of angst te laten beleven wordt iets vaker besproken, in gemiddeld een derde van de recensies. Het grootste deel van de recensies van zowel professionele recensenten als amateurrecensenten zijn dus niet direct gericht op deze functies van de film.

De laatste groep populaire variabelen waarvan de verschillen tussen de recensenten niet significant zijn gebleken, is uiteengezet in tabel 18.

Tabel 18: Verschillen en significantie populaire variabelen (2) (N=200)

Variabele	Gebruik professionele recensies	Gebruik amateurrecensies	Vershil	Significantie
7. Commercieel product	23	17	6	ns
8. Spektakel	35	41	6	ns
9. Filmsterren	5	1	4	ns

Significantieniveaus: \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*= $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*= $p < 0.001$ ; ns=  $p > 0.05$

In gemiddeld twintig procent van de recensies wordt de film besproken als een commercieel product, dat onderhevig is aan economische belangen en marketingstrategieën. Hoewel er geen significant verschil is tussen het aantal verwijzingen hiernaar door professionele recensenten en

amateurrecensenten, is er wel enig inhoudelijk verschil te vinden tussen deze groepen. Zoals ook al naar voren is gekomen in de bespreking van deelvraag 1 en 2, halen professionele recensenten de commerciële aspecten van een film redelijk vaak aan om hun afkeur hierover te laten blijken, terwijl amateurrecensenten dit minder vaak doen. Amateurrecensenten onderscheiden zich op het gebied van deze variabele weer door het expliciet beoordelen van de film als product en de mate waarin ze menen waar voor hun geld te hebben gekregen. In bijna vier op de tien recensies wordt er geschreven over het spektakel in de film. Het bespreken van spektakel kan gezien worden als verwijzing naar de functie die film kan hebben als spectaculaire beleving voor de kijker, die versterkt kan worden door het gebruik van special effects. Dit criterium om de film op te beoordelen wordt vaker aangehaald dan de functies vermaak en spanning of angst. 'Filmsterren' is de variabele die in het hele onderzoek het minst is gevonden. Zoals al bleek bij het bespreken van de variabele 'acteerwerk', schrijven zowel professionele recensenten als amateurrecensenten voornamelijk over acteurs naar aanleiding van de rol die ze in de film zelf spelen en de kwaliteit van hun acteerwerk. Voor amateurrecensenten is hierbij ook de mate waarin de acteurs bijdragen aan de geloofwaardigheid en authenticiteit (onder de variabele 'emotionele authenticiteit') belangrijker dan wat de acteurs in hun privéleven doen.

Uit het bovenstaande blijkt dat er tussen professionele recensenten en amateurrecensenten een redelijk grote overlap is in de mate waarin de onderzoeksvariabelen in de recensies van elk voorkomen. Het onderzoek telt 22 variabelen, waarvan er bij veertien geen significante verschillen tussen beide groepen zijn gevonden. Dit is dus een overeenkomst van 63,6 procent van de onderzochte variabelen. Een opsplitsing per soort discours laat zien dat van de twaalf variabelen op het gebied van het kunstkritische discours er acht overeenkomen, oftewel twee derde. Bij het populaire discours zijn dit zes van de tien variabelen, of zestig procent. Naar aanleiding hiervan valt te concluderen dat er zowel over het geheel gezien als voor beide soorten discoursen meer overeenkomsten dan verschillen zijn tussen de twee groepen recensenten.

#### **5.4 Deelvraag 4: verschillen tussen professionele recensenten en amateurrecensenten**

Na de overeenkomsten in het discoursgebruik van professionele recensenten en amateurrecensenten, zullen in dit deel van het hoofdstuk de verschillen tussen beide worden besproken. Dit zal een antwoord opleveren op deelvraag 4: 'Welke verschillen zijn er te vinden tussen het gebruik van kunstkritische en populaire filmdiscoursen van professionele filmrecensenten in kranten en amateurrecensenten op internet bij het beoordelen van vampierfilms?'

Een eerste verschil dat opvalt bij het bekijken van de recensies, is het verschil in lengte van de professionele recensies en amateurrecensies. Deze bedraagt voor een professionele recensie

gemiddeld 529 woorden (SD=189,4) en voor een amateurrecensie 398 woorden (SD=170,8). Een independent-samples t-test toont aan dat dit een zeer sterk significant verschil is ( $t(198)=-5.13$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Het is echter niet de verwachting dat het verschil in lengte van de recensies van grote invloed is op het onderzoek. IMDB geeft gebruikers ruimte om een recensie van maximaal 1000 woorden te plaatsen, maar de meeste van hen blijven hier ruim onder. Er kan dus verondersteld worden dat deze recensenten hun tekst als 'af' beschouwden toen ze deze inzonden en het aantal besproken aspecten van de film niet hebben hoeven in te perken door ruimtegebrek.

Zoals in de vorige paragraaf al besproken is, zijn de gevonden verschillen in het gebruik van de onderzochte categorieën van recensiecriteria statistisch getest door middel van een chi-kwadraattoets ( $X^2$ ). Wanneer er niet aan de voorwaarden op het gebied van verwachte celfrequenties voor deze test is voldaan, is Fisher's exact test gebruikt. De p-waarde die uit deze testen naar voren komt, geeft de mate van significantie tussen de gevonden verschillen weer, oftewel de kans dat de gevonden verschillen niet op toeval berusten. In deze paragraaf worden de variabelen besproken waarvan de verschillen in gebruik tussen professionele recensenten en amateurrecensenten statistisch significant zijn gebleken. De sterkte van de gevonden significantie kan worden aangeduid met een aantal sterren. Eén ster (\*) geeft een p-waarde van kleiner dan 0.05 ( $p<.05$ ) aan. Dit geldt als een zwak significant resultaat. Twee sterren (\*\*) geeft een sterk significant resultaat aan en drie sterren (\*\*\*) een zeer sterk significant resultaat. Het testen van een grote onderzoekspopulatie, zoals in dit onderzoek gebeurt, kan sneller een significant resultaat opleveren dan het testen van een kleine onderzoekspopulatie. Enige voorzichtigheid is hierdoor geboden bij het aannemen van zwak significante resultaten.

De gevonden verschillen op het gebied van het kunstkritische discours zijn te vinden in tabel 19.

Tabel 19: Verschillen en significantie kunstkritische variabelen (3) (N=200)

Variabele	Gebruik professionele recensies	Gebruik amateurrecensies	Vershil	Significantie
1. Benoemen regisseur	88	36	52	*** $p=0,000$
5. Interpretatie	35	15	20	** $p=0,001$
11. Serieusheid/intelligentie	51	25	26	*** $p=0,000$
12. Tijdloosheid	15	6	9	* $p=0,038$

Significantieniveaus: \* $p<.05$ ; \*\*= $p<0.01$ ; \*\*\*= $p<0.001$ ; ns= $p>0.05$

Uit de resultaten blijkt een zeer sterk significant verschil tussen het benoemen van de regisseur van de besproken film in recensies van professionele recensenten en amateurs. Dit lijkt in overeenstemming te zijn met wat Thompson en Bordwell (2003) schrijven; de auteurtheorie heeft een belangrijke plaats ingenomen in het denken over film, maar professionele recensenten lopen nog steeds voorop in de toepassing hiervan. Volgens hen maakt het 'gewone' bioscooppubliek op een versimpelde manier gebruik van de auteurtheorie, waarbij regisseurs vooral worden aangehaald om de eigen smaak aan te duiden. Een sterk significant verschil is te vinden in het aantal recensies dat een interpretatie van de film bevat. Professionele recensenten gaan hier vaker op in dan amateurrecensenten, in ongeveer een derde van hun recensies. Hoge kunst laat zich volgen Baumann (2001) meestal niet direct begrijpen en moet eerst geïnterpreteerd worden. Het bespreken van een interpretatie van populaire films kan daarom worden gezien als het gebruik van een kunstgerichte benadering door de recensent. Het verschil op dit gebied tussen professionele recensenten en amateurrecensenten is duidelijk te zien in bijvoorbeeld de recensies van de populaire film *Twilight*. Vier van de vijf professionele recensenten bespreken hun interpretatie van deze film en zien hierin boodschappen over tieners en seksualiteit. Geen van de amateurrecensenten besteedt aandacht aan een (mogelijke) interpretatie van of boodschap in de film.

'Seriusheid of intelligentie' en 'tijdloosheid' zijn de enige twee van de door Van Venrooij en Schmutz (2010) gegroepede variabelen op het gebied van hoge kunst, waarbij een significant verschil te vinden is tussen het gebruik hiervan door de groepen recensenten. Het gebruik van seriusheid of intelligentie als beoordelingscriterium in de recensie vertoont een zeer sterk significant verschil tussen de professionele recensenten, die dit in ongeveer de helft van hun recensies gebruiken, en de amateurrecensenten die dit in een kwart van de gevallen doen. De professionele recensenten leggen films op dit gebied dus vaker langs de meetlat van hoge kunst, die verondersteld wordt serieus en intelligent te zijn. De mate van tijdloosheid van de film wordt door beide soorten recensenten niet erg vaak besproken, maar toch hebben de professionele recensenten in de onderzochte recensies het hier significant vaker over.

De laatste groep van variabelen en gevonden verschillen op het gebied van het populaire discours is te vinden in tabel 20.

Tabel 20: Verschillen en significantie populaire variabelen (3) (N=200)

Variabele	Gebruik professionele recensies	Gebruik amateurrecensies	Verskil	Significantie
4. Betrokkenheid kijker	22	38	16	*p=0,014
5. Emotionele authenticiteit	10	34	24	***p=0,000
6. Gebruikersoriëntatie	12	32	20	**p=0,001
10. Link populaire cultuur	30	16	14	*p=0,019

Significantieniveaus: \*p<.05; \*\*=p<0.01; \*\*\*=p<0.001; ns=p>0.05

Een zwak significant verschil is te vinden in de aanwezigheid van de variabele ‘betrokkenheid kijker’. In de amateurrecensies in het onderzoek kwam het vaker dan in professionele recensies voor dat een recensent eigen directe reacties op de film beschreef die niet onder vermaak of spanning en angst kunnen worden geschaard, zoals emoties. Dit kan worden beschouwd als een indicatie dat professionele recensenten een meer gedistantieerde positie innemen bij het beoordelen van de film, iets wat van professionele recensenten wordt verondersteld vanuit hun esthetische dispositie (Bourdieu, 1984). Deze gedistantieerde positie tegenover een meer betrokken positie bij amateurs, is ook terug te vinden bij het beoordelen van de emotionele authenticiteit van de film. Amateurrecensenten schrijven hier significant vaker over dan professionele recensenten. Het verschil is ook hierbij goed te zien in de al eerder aangehaalde recensies voor de film *Twilight*. De amateurrecensenten die over de film schrijven laten blijken fan te zijn van de boekenserie en geven voornamelijk hun oordeel over de vertaling van het boek naar de film en hun eigen emotionele betrokkenheid bij het verhaal. Amateurrecensenten schrijven bijvoorbeeld: “I have to say how pleased I am at the movie staying true to the Heart of the Book” (Miller, 2008) en “I don't know how anyone who claims to be a fan of the book can enjoy this movie without cringing at the fact that they ruined the most basic story.” (dolphindreams2003, 2008). Dit komt overeen met de bevindingen van Bielby en Bielby (2004), Zij laten zien dat het publiek, en met name fans, van populaire culturele producten, emotionele authenticiteit als belangrijke voorwaarde zien voor het toekennen van waarde hieraan.

Het geven van een gebruikersoriëntatie wordt door amateurrecensenten vaker gedaan dan door professionele recensenten. Het gevonden sterk significante verschil tussen deze groepen kan ook worden verklaard aan de hand van het verschil in hun positie als recensent. Professionele filmrecensenten hebben een positie als kunstcriticus, van waaruit ze op een gedistantieerde manier een film langst de meetlat ven legitieme smaak leggen en zo deze smaak voorschrijven aan hun publiek (Shrum, 1991). Zoals al bleek bij het onderzoeken van de mate waarin films in recensies als

commercieel product worden benoemd, schrijven amateurrecensenten vaker op een directe manier over de film als product en zichzelf als consument. Het geven van een gebruikersoriëntatie zou gezien kunnen worden als eens continuering hiervan, waarbij andere consumenten worden geholpen bij het maken van een geschikte filmkeuze. Dit is in overeenkomst met het door Chen en Xie (2008) gevonden verschil in productrecensies, die bij internetgebruikers meer gericht waren op het gebruiksdoel en bij professionele recensenten meer op technische aspecten.

Het laatste gevonden verschil in gebruik is een zwak significant verschil in de mate waarin films in verband worden gebracht met populaire cultuurproducten. Dit is een opvallend resultaat, aangezien dit de enige variabele van het populaire discours is waarbij de gebruiksfrequentie onder professionele recensenten significant hoger is. Een mogelijke verklaring hiervoor zou kunnen zijn dat professionele recensenten hun lezers vaker van een context op het gebied van vampierfictie voorzien en hierbij naar bekende televisieseries als *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* en *True Blood* verwijzen. Toch kan ook dit, samen met de verwijzingen naar zaken als videoclipps en computerspellen, worden gezien als uiting van een populair discours, omdat de film hierdoor buiten een kunstzinnige context wordt geplaatst.

Zoals al gebleken is uit de bespreking van deelvraag 3, blijven er van het totaal van 22 onderzoeksvariabelen acht over die een significant verschil laten zien in het gebruik door professionele recensenten en amateurrecensenten. Dit is 36,4 procent van het totaal. Vier van de twaalf variabelen hiervan, oftewel een derde, behoren tot het kunstkritische discours. Op het gebied van het populaire discours gaat het om vier van de tien variabelen, of veertig procent. Van de criteria die significante verschillen in gebruik opleveren, worden die in het kunstkritisch discours meer gebruikt door de professionele recensenten en die in het populaire discours voornamelijk door amateurrecensenten. De enige uitzondering hierop is de variabele 'link met populaire cultuur', die meer in professionele recensies terug te vinden is. Dit is echter een zwak significant verschil. Zoals eerder vermeld, moeten zwak significante resultaten met enige voorzichtigheid benaderd worden, aangezien deze in het geval van een grote onderzoekspopulatie eerder kunnen zijn ontstaan op basis van toeval. Het gaat hier om de variabele 'tijdloosheid' in het kunstkritische discours en de variabelen 'betrokkenheid kijker' en 'link met populaire cultuur' in het populaire discours. Wanneer deze resultaten niet worden meegeteld, blijven er nog vijf van de 22 variabelen over die een sterk significant verschil vertonen in het gebruik (22,7 procent). Binnen het kunstkritisch discours gaat het om drie van de twaalf variabelen (25 procent) en binnen het populaire discours om twee van de tien variabelen (twintig procent). De criteria waarvan met grote zekerheid kan worden vastgesteld dat deze kenmerkend zijn voor een bepaalde groep recensenten zijn dus het benoemen van de regisseur, het interpreteren van de film en het beoordelen van de serieusheid of intelligentie van de film voor

professionele recensenten en het bespreken van emotionele authenticiteit en geven van een gebruikersoriëntatie voor amateurrecensenten.



## 6. Conclusie

In dit laatste hoofdstuk zullen de belangrijkste bevindingen van het onderzoek nog eens naar voren worden gehaald om de deelvragen op een overzichtelijke manier te beantwoorden en deze resultaten te vergelijken met de opgestelde hypothesen. Op basis hiervan zal er antwoord worden gegeven op de onderzoeksvraag van deze thesis. Tot slot zal er een korte discussie van het onderzoek en de beperkingen hiervan plaatsvinden, waarbij enkele aanbevelingen worden gedaan voor vervolgonderzoek.

### 6.1 Deelvragen en hypothesen

De onderzoeksvraag die ten grondslag ligt aan het onderzoek dat is uitgevoerd, is verder opgedeeld om de beantwoording hiervan te vergemakkelijken. Dit heeft geresulteerd in vier deelvragen en drie hypothesen. Aan de hand van de onderzoeksresultaten die naar voren zijn gekomen in het vorige hoofdstuk, zullen deze hieronder nog eens worden besproken om de resultaten te kunnen vergelijken met de hypothesen.

Deelvraag 1 luidt: 'Op welke manier maken professionele filmrecensenten in kranten gebruik van kunstkritische en populaire filmdiscoursen bij het beoordelen van vampierfilms?'. Uit de resultaten komt naar voren dat de vijf onderzoekvariabelen die het meest worden gebruikt door professionele recensenten allemaal tot het kunstkritische discours behoren. Het besteden van aandacht aan de regisseur van de film valt hierbij als variabele erg op, aangezien dit in 88 procent van de recensies voorkomt. Van de overige variabelen komt het gebruik maar in enkele gevallen boven de vijftig procent. Het beschrijven van spektakel in de film is met 35 procent de variabele in het populaire discours die door professionele recensenten het meest wordt gebruikt. Over het geheel van de onderzochte recensies gezien vallen de variabelen die in een gemiddelde professionele recensie voorkomen voor 69,9 procent onder het kunstkritische discours en voor 30,4 procent onder het populaire discours. De verhouding tussen het gebruik van beide discoursen is dus 7/3. Op basis hiervan kan geconcludeerd worden dat het gebruikte discours van professionele recensenten overwegend kunstkritisch van aard is, maar toch ook deels populaire criteria omvat.

De tweede deelvraag is: 'Op welke manier maken amateurrecensenten op internet gebruik van kunstkritische en populaire filmdiscoursen bij het beoordelen van vampierfilms?'. De uitkomsten van het onderzoek laten zien dat het kunstkritische discours het meeste voorkomt onder de vijf variabelen die het vaakst worden gebruikt door amateurrecensenten. Vier van de vijf variabelen vallen onder dit discours en één, het besteden van aandacht aan spektakel, onder het populaire discours. Van geen enkele onderzochte variabele overschrijdt het gebruik vijftig procent. Het

bespreken van de complexiteit of ambiguïteit van een film komt met 49 procent het vaakst voor. Het discours dat gebruikt wordt in de gemiddelde door een amateurrecensent geschreven recensie, bestaat hier voor 56,7 procent uit kunstkritische variabelen, tegenover 43,3 procent aan populaire variabelen. Dit is een verhouding van ongeveer 6/4 tussen het gebruik van de beide discoursen. Het beeld dat naar aanleiding hiervan ontstaat, is dat het door amateurrecensenten gebruikte discours voornamelijk kunstkritische criteria omvat, maar ook een aanzienlijk deel aan populaire criteria. Het discours in amateurrecensies is hiermee vrij gemengd.

De derde deelvraag die is opgesteld is: 'Welke overeenkomsten zijn er te vinden tussen het gebruik van kunstkritische en populaire filmdiscoursen van professionele filmrecensenten in kranten en amateurrecensenten op internet bij het beoordelen van vampierfilms?'. Het onderzoek laat zien dat er een vrij grote overlap is tussen het gebruikte discours van professionele recensenten en dat van amateurrecensenten. Van de 22 variabelen die zijn onderzocht, zijn er in veertien gevallen geen significante verschillen gevonden. De overeenkomst in het discours bedraagt dus 63,6 procent. Op het gebied van het kunstkritische discours komt twee derde van de variabelen overeen en bij het populaire discours is dit het geval bij veertig procent van de variabelen. Beide soorten discours laten dus meer overeenkomst dan verschil tussen de groepen recensenten zien.

Ten slotte luidt deelvraag 4 als volgt: 'Welke verschillen zijn er te vinden tussen het gebruik van kunstkritische en populaire filmdiscoursen van professionele filmrecensenten in kranten en amateurrecensenten op internet bij het beoordelen van vampierfilms?'. Wanneer er wordt gekeken naar onderzoeksresultaten die duiden op een significant verschil tussen het gebruik van variabelen door beide groepen recensenten, blijkt dat 36,4 procent van de variabelen verschillend wordt gebruikt. Dit verschil kan verder worden teruggebracht tot 22,7 procent wanneer alleen de sterk significante resultaten, met een grote mate van zekerheid, worden meegeteld. 25 Procent van de variabelen die bij een kunstkritisch discours horen vertonen een sterk significant verschil in het gebruik en twintig procent van de populaire variabelen. Het benoemen van de regisseur, interpreteren van de film en beoordelen van serieusheid of intelligentie zijn daarmee criteria die kenmerkend zijn voor professionele filmrecensenten en het bespreken van emotionele authenticiteit en het geven van een gebruikersoriëntatie voor amateurrecensenten.

Op basis van de besproken literatuur zijn er drie hypothesen opgesteld met betrekking tot de uitkomsten van het onderzoek. De eerste hiervan is: 'professionele recensenten en amateurrecensenten verschillen sterk van elkaar wat betreft de gebruikte discoursen'. De antwoorden die zijn gevonden op de derde en vierde deelvraag laten zien dat er enkele kenmerkende verschillen te vinden zijn tussen het gebruikte discours van professionele recensenten en amateurrecensenten. Over het geheel van de verschillende onderzochte variabelen gezien, blijken de overeenkomsten tussen beide soorten recensenten echter groter te zijn dan de verschillen. De

overeenkomst bedraagt 63,6 procent of, wanneer er een strenger niveau van significantie wordt gehanteerd en alleen sterk significante verschillen worden meegerekend, zelfs 77,3 procent. Bovendien is ook gebleken dat beide groepen recensenten gebruik maken van beide soorten discours en er dus geen sprake is van een 'eigen' soort discours per groep. De verschillen in het gebruikte discours zijn dus niet dusdanig groot dat er gesproken kan worden van een sterk verschil.

De tweede hypothese is: 'professionele recensenten gebruiken voornamelijk een kunstkritisch discours bij het beoordelen van vampierfilms'. Deze hypothese kan worden aangenomen. Uit de beantwoording van deelvraag 1 blijkt dat het gebruikte discours in professionele recensies voor 69,9 procent uit kunstkritische variabelen bestaat en voor 30,4 uit populaire variabelen. Het werk van professionele recensenten wordt dus gekenmerkt door het gebruik van een kunstkritisch discours, maar bevat daarnaast ook elementen uit het populaire discours.

Ten slotte is er de hypothese 'amateurrecensenten gebruiken voornamelijk een populair discours bij het beoordelen van vampierfilms'. Deze hypothese blijkt niet in overeenstemming te zijn met de resultaten van het onderzoek. Uit de onderzoeksresultaten komt naar voren dat het gebruikte discours in de gemiddelde amateurrecensie voor 56,7 procent uit kunstkritische variabelen bestaat en 43,3 procent populaire variabelen. Ondanks het redelijk gemengde discoursgebruik maken amateurrecensenten dus meer gebruik van een kunstkritisch discours dan van een populair discours.

## **6.2 Hoofdvraag**

Nu de deelvragen zijn beantwoord en deze antwoorden zijn vergeleken met de hypothesen, kan er ook een antwoord worden gegeven op de hoofdvraag die voor dit onderzoek is opgesteld, namelijk: 'Hoe verhoudt het gebruik van kunstkritische en populaire filmdiscoursen zich in recensies van amateurrecensenten op internet ten opzichte van dat van professionele filmrecensenten in kranten bij het beoordelen van vampierfilms?'. Uit het onderzoek komt naar voren dat professionele recensenten en amateurrecensenten voor een groot deel hetzelfde discours gebruiken bij het beoordelen van vampierfilms. De verwachting dat er per groep overwegend een verschillend discours zou worden gehanteerd, blijkt niet te zijn uitgekomen. In plaats daarvan is gebleken dat beide groepen recensenten het meeste gebruik maken van een kunstkritisch discours en in mindere mate een populair discours. Bij de amateurrecensenten liggen de verhoudingen hiertussen wat dichter bij elkaar dan bij de professionele recensenten. Er zijn wel enkele criteria gevonden die kenmerkend zijn voor de recensies van professionele recensenten ofwel amateurrecensenten. De drie kenmerkende criteria voor professionele recensies bevinden zich in het kunstkritisch discours, terwijl de twee kenmerkende criteria voor amateurrecensenten bij het populaire discours horen.

Deze resultaten vormen een indicatie dat amateurrecensenten op internet voor een groot deel aandacht besteden aan dezelfde beoordelingscriteria die professionele recensenten in kranten gebruiken. Dit geeft aan dat ook het filmpubliek in staat is om een film ook op een kunstzinnige manier te benaderen, door middel van een afstandelijke houding en gebruik makend van een pure esthetiek, bij het vormen van een oordeel hierover. Op basis van het ontbreken van een socialisatie in het veld van kunstcritici en een veronderstelde afwezigheid van een esthetische dispositie, werd verwacht dat het door amateurrecensenten gebruikte discours voornamelijk populair van aard zou zijn. Dat dit niet het geval is, zou kunnen worden verklaard aan de hand van de stelling van Baumann (2001) dat professionele critici een voortrekkersrol hebben bij het verspreiden van het gebruik van nieuwe manieren van het beschouwen van film in het door hun gebruikte discours. Dit wil zeggen dat sommige amateurrecensenten bij het schrijven van recensies mogelijk een voorbeeld nemen aan wat ze door de opwaardering van film als kunstvorm zien in professionele recensies en zo als het ware toch 'gesocialiseerd' worden in het gebruik van het kunstkritisch discours. Deze voortrekkersrol van professionele recensenten lijkt nog relevant te zijn. De professionele recensenten in het onderzoek maken immers nog steeds meer gebruik van een kunstkritisch discours dan amateurrecensenten. Met name de auteurtheorie, met het idee van de regisseur als belangrijke maker van de film die in een recensie genoemd dient te worden, en in mindere mate de film als werk dat eerst geïnterpreteerd dient te worden, zijn zaken die in professionele recensies nog steeds zichtbaarder zijn dan in amateurrecensies. Bij dit laatste gaat het veelal om een interpretatie van het gebruik van de vampier of het vampierthema in de film als metafoor, iets wat onder amateurrecensenten veel minder vaak wordt aangehaald.

De amateurrecensies worden toch ook gekenmerkt door twee variabelen in het populaire discours die wijzen op de afwezigheid van een afstandelijke positie en het voorspellen van smaak in plaats van het voorschrijven hiervan. De nadruk op emotionele authenticiteit en het geven van een gebruikersoriëntatie doen vermoeden dat amateurrecensenten hun recensies vaak met een andere insteek schrijven dan professionele recensenten. Het bespreken van emotionele authenticiteit veronderstelt directe persoonlijke betrokkenheid. Dit komt ook overeen met de bevindingen van Steiner (2008) op het gebied van online amateurrecensies van literatuur. Hieruit bleek een gedeeltelijke overeenkomst met de recensies van professionele recensenten, maar ook meer variatie in de tekstvormen die worden gebruikt om een mening uit te dragen. Hieronder bevinden zich meer persoonlijke vormen als een blog, brief of dagboekantekening. Ook het schrijven vanuit een fancultuur op het gebied van vampiers, horror of specifieke mediaproducten in deze genres kan bijdragen aan de emotionele betrokkenheid van de recensent, aangezien fans als uitgangspunt voor hun evaluaties vaak hun opgebouwde expertise gebruiken op het gebied van eerdere mediaproducten die zich in dezelfde fictionele wereld afspelen (Bielby & Bielby, 2004). Het geven van

een gebruikersoriëntatie komt in amateurrecensies ook significant vaker voor dan onder professionele recensenten. Hierbij proberen amateurrecensenten op basis van hun eigen ervaringen bij de film andere consumenten te helpen bij het maken van een geschikte filmkeuze bij een bepaalde smaak (bijvoorbeeld op het gebied van verschillende soorten vampierfilms) of gelegenheid. Dit komt redelijk overeen met de uitkomsten van onderzoek naar gebruikersrecensies van Chen en Xie (2008). Zij concludeerden dat gebruikersrecensies vooral gericht zijn op het evalueren van producten tegen de achtergrond van eigen gebruiksdoelen, terwijl professionele recensenten meer oog hebben voor technische aspecten.

Amateurrecensies worden soms gezien als een bedreiging voor professionele recensenten, doordat het publiek over steeds meer online bronnen voor recensies kan beschikken en hierdoor minder afhankelijk wordt van door experts gegeven waardeoordelen (O'Reilly, 2005). De onderzoeksresultaten wijzen erop dat amateurrecensenten voor een groot deel hetzelfde discours gebruiken als professionele recensenten, maar er toch nog verschillen te vinden zijn. Bovendien is er ook nog het aspect van de kwaliteit en bruikbaarheid van de recensies, die in veel gevallen nog achterblijft bij die van professionele recensenten. Waarschijnlijk zal er hierdoor behoefte blijven aan professionele kunstcritici, die het discours kunnen aansturen door film als kunstvorm te bespreken. Amateurrecensies kunnen hiernaast een aanvullende rol kunnen spelen door ook informatie te bieden over persoonlijke ervaringen bij het bekijken van de film door gebruikers met een bepaalde smaak of te dienen als vorm van mond-tot-mondreclame. Dit zou vooral een grote rol kunnen spelen voor aan fanculturen verbonden genres als het vampierfictie, waarin fans gezamenlijk emotioneel investeren en onderling informatie en waarderingen uitwisselen.

### **6.3 Discussie en aanbevelingen**

Uit het onderzoek blijkt dat amateurrecensenten aandacht besteden aan veel van dezelfde criteria die professionele recensenten gebruiken. Wat echter niet in het onderzoek is opgenomen is wát er precies geschreven wordt en op welke manier. Dit kan van belang zijn voor de kwaliteit van de recensie. Het kan bijvoorbeeld zo zijn dat amateurrecensenten, van wie de onderzochte recensies gemiddeld een stuk korter zijn gebleken dan die van professionele recensenten, hun beoordeling minder uitgebreid beschrijven of minder onderbouwingen geven. Ook de vorm en (schrijf)stijl van de recensie kunnen bij amateurrecensenten sterk afwijken van de journalistieke standaarden die door professionele recensenten worden gehanteerd. Om meer te weten te komen over hoe amateurs filmrecensies schrijven en van welke kwaliteit deze recensies zijn, zou er onderzoek naar amateurrecensies uitgevoerd kunnen worden dat meer kwalitatief van aard is. Dit zou ook meer licht kunnen werpen op al onderzochte variabelen in de recensies en de manier waarop deze worden

aangehaald. Een voorbeeld hiervan is het benoemen van de film als commercieel product, wat onder professionele recensenten opvallend vaak in een negatieve context gebeurde en onder amateurrecensenten in het kader van tevredenheid over het verkregen vermaak voor het betaalde bedrag.

Een andere beperking van het onderzoek is dat de gebruikte gebruikersrecensies zijn geselecteerd op publicatie vanaf de eerste dag van uitkomst van de film. Dit is gedaan om de kans te verkleinen dat de recensenten al erg beïnvloed waren door de beoordelingen van anderen. De beperking schuilt er hierin dat dit waarschijnlijk niet in alle gevallen de toprecensenten of vaste gebruikers van de website zijn en dat ze wellicht niet bijzonder veel aandacht aan het schrijven van hun recensie hebben besteed. Een mogelijke oplossing hiervoor is het onderzoeken van recensies die door andere websitegebruikers een hoge waardering hebben gekregen of recensies van gebruikers die al veel recensies hebben geschreven. Ook het aantal onderzochte recensies kan als een beperking van het onderzoek worden gezien. In totaal zijn er honderd professionele recensies en honderd amateurrecensies onderzocht. Het onderzoeken van een groter aantal recensies, bijvoorbeeld vijfhonderd van elke soort, zou meer duidelijkheid zou kunnen geven over de sterkte van de overeenkomsten en verschillen in discoursgebruik.

Zoals al besproken is in hoofdstuk 2, zijn vampierfilms niet meer beperkt tot het horrorgenre en worden er steeds vaker genregrenzen overschreden in films en andere vormen van fictie die om vampiers draaien. De selectie van vampierfilms waarvan de recensies zijn onderzocht is dan ook redelijk gevarieerd te noemen. Hieronder bevinden zich horror-actiefilms, jeugdfilms en films met een kunstzinnige insteek en daarnaast ook zowel spektakelfilms uit Hollywood als onafhankelijk geproduceerde films. Deze diversiteit maakt het interessant om ook te onderzoeken in hoeverre deze resultaten generaliseerbaar zijn naar populaire film in het algemeen, of andere filmsoorten en -genres. Ook zou het interessant zijn om verder in te gaan op de reacties van fans op (vampier)films die gebaseerd zijn op populaire bronmaterialen. Zo viel bij het onderzoeken van de recensies op dat vooral fans van de populaire boeken van Anne Rice en Stephenie Meyer bij respectievelijk de verfilmingen *Queen of the Damned* en *Twilight* erg veel aandacht besteedden aan het beschrijven van hun eigen beleving hierbij en het vergelijken van boek en film. Dit onderzoek zou meer gericht kunnen zijn op fanculturen en receptie van mediaproducten hierbinnen.

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## Bijlage 1: Codeerformulier

Noteer voor alle onderzochte recensies het volgende:

<b>1. Titel van de recensie:</b>
<b>2. Naam/gebruikersnaam van de recensent:</b>
<b>3. Datum van publicatie:</b>
<b>4. Bron (IMDB of naam van krant):</b>
<b>5. Soort recensie (professioneel = 0, amateur = 1):</b>
<b>6. Aantal woorden:</b>
<b>7. Titel gerecenseerde film:</b>

Analyseer de recensie op de aanwezigheid van elk van de volgende variabelen en noteer '1' wanneer deze aanwezig is en '0' wanneer dit niet zo is.

<b>Kunstkritisch discours</b>	
K1. Benoemen regisseur	
K2. Vergelijking met andere regisseurs	
K3. Vergelijking met andere films	
K4. Link met hoge kunst	
K5. Interpretatie	
K6. Filmprijzen	
K7. Acteerwerk	
K8. Positief en negatief commentaar	
K9. Originaliteit/innovatie	
K10. Complexiteit/ambigüiteit	
K11. Seriusheid/intelligentie	

K12. Tijdloosheid	
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<b>Populair discours</b>	
P1. Afzetten tegen kunstzinnigheid	
P2. Vermaak	
P3. Spanning/angst	
P4. Betrokkenheid kijkers	
P5. Emotionele authenticiteit	
P6. Gebruikersoriëntatie	
P7. Film als commercieel product	
P8. Spektakel	
P9. Filmsterren	
P10. Link met populaire cultuur	

## Bijlage 2: Professionele recensies

### Film 1: Dracula 2000

#### Recensie 1

Wes Craven Presents: Dracula 2000 (2000)

FILM REVIEW; Those Wacky, Drooling, Foaming, Biting Undead

By STEPHEN HOLDEN [New York Times]

Published: December 23, 2000

Horror films with delusions of historical grandeur have to strain awfully hard these days to come up with fresh explanations for the origins of evil. Hasn't it all been done at least 10 times over? Well, as it turns out, no.

The doozy of an explanation offered by "Dracula 2000," a thudding, suspense-free montage of unshocking shock effects and more severed heads than toppled during the French Revolution, is that Dracula is actually the undead spirit of Judas Iscariot. Or something like that. Judas, you see, tried but failed to commit suicide (the rope broke), and thereafter became the father of the undead. The movie doesn't go into details of how these two villains are actually related.

The Judas connection is why the movie's rapidly expanding population of the undead drooling and foaming and biting their way through the movie are so terrified of silver (there are repeated shots of silver coins being scattered). It also gives the film, "presented" by Wes Craven and directed by Patrick Lussier, the excuse to throw in several warehouses full of tawdry Christian symbolism.

This version of the Dracula legend might be described as Dracula Meets Stigmata and They Fly to New Orleans via Hong Kong. That's because on top of all the Christian imagery (electrically illuminated crosses exploding into showers of sparks and such), the action sequences sometimes find the characters doing combat in the air. In barely two years, the airborne Hong Kong action-adventure antics that promised to refresh Western action-adventure movies have turned into a grating new cliché carelessly tossed into a picture (as it is here) to give it a hip kinetic gloss.

It's a little sad to see actors of the quality of Christopher Plummer and Jonny Lee Miller struggling straight-faced to dignify this sewage. Mr. Plummer plays Abraham Van Helsing, a 100-year-plus-old vampire slayer who keeps himself alive through leeches that have sucked on vampire blood (the leeches are the only scary element in the film). Mr. Miller is his assistant and surrogate son Simon, who has been kept in the dark as to his boss's true occupation.

Justine Waddell is Van Helsing's estranged daughter, whose small quotient of vampire blood (through her father via the leeches) makes her the ultimate apple of Dracula's eye and an object of jealousy among his many female victims who, once liberated from human life, turn into foul-mouthed, bloodthirsty sex fiends.

The clunking fill-in-the-blanks screenplay portrays Dracula as irresistible to women the moment he walks into a room. Gerard Butler, the pale, glowering actor clad in chi-chi black duds who plays him, radiates a certain suave self-assurance, but he is no head-turner.

A continuing annoyance is the movie's promotion of Virgin megastores. Two of the characters work in one such store, and even when they're off the job they wear shirts with the Virgin logo prominently displayed.

## **Recensie 2**

'Dracula 2000' -- Revenge of the Twits

Craven's remake is so laughable it's frightening

Peter Stack, Chronicle Movie Critic [San Francisco Chronicle]

Saturday, December 23, 2000

With the release yesterday of "Wes Craven Presents: Dracula 2000" at Bay Area movie theaters, fans of clunky and inane horror movies have something to be fangful for, so to speak, during this Christmas season.

For one thing, the bloated production -- with lots of fake-looking incisors and bloodshot eyeballs -- is more about the Easter story than the merry Christmas one. That makes it slightly twisted.

Unfortunately, the warp does not go far enough to make "Dracula 2000" more than a bloody mess as a movie, one with acting so lame it's likely to prompt shrieks, not of horror but of derisive laughter.

Bram Stoker would never have signed off on this dunce production because the guy who plays Dracula looks like a dork, a kind of over-the-hill '80s rock star who invested heavily in New Age fashion and might now be living in San Anselmo.

His name is Gerard Butler ("Mrs. Brown"), and he's not very convincing at necking, a time-honored Dracula gesture. Sure, he may be a little on the handsome side, but he's got varicose-looking veins in his face that appear to have been drawn on with a ballpoint pen in the low-budget makeup department.

WHAT WOMEN WANT?

Women are attracted to him (are panned veins what women want?), and if they're sufficiently slinky-looking they turn into seductive members of the undead who, as a group, look stupid because all they want to do is wear silky gowns and suck.

In fact, this film is rich in twits, except for Christopher Plummer playing the legendary vampire hunter, Abraham Van Helsing. Using his London antiques business as a front, he keeps Dracula's corpse in a basement vault and occasionally nibbles leeches. (Movie-critic



courtesy forbids the telling of too many plot details. It's worth noting that Plummer looks long in the tooth, and it seems strange that he's gone this far south at a time when "The Sound of Music" is being revisited so fervently.)

South, as in New Orleans, is where most of "Dracula 2000" is set. Much of the awkwardly stylized action occurs within a few yards of a Virgin Records store that gets unabashed exposure in the movie.

The main twit works there, and at first it seems slightly amusing that she looks innocent wearing a black T-shirt with "Virgin" written on it. Her name is Mary, played by Justine Waddell ("Mansfield Park"). To make matters worse, Mary is also pert. Twit and pert put a lot of strain on a movie.

#### LEECH-FILLED COFFIN

The action opens in London when a gang of burglars breaks into Van Helsing's heavily secured vault in which old Drac is encoffined with the squirmy leeches. The intruders get a rude welcome, and a couple of them are noticeably impaled. The ringleaders, played by Omar Epps and Jennifer Esposito (TV's "Spin City"), manage to escape with Dracula and coffin, but when one unleashes the leeches and frees Dracula, their plane crashes in a bayou not far from the Virgin Records store where Mary works.

The main star is another twit, Simon (Jonny Lee Miller, "Trainspotting"), Van Helsing's clueless assistant. When his boss flies to New Orleans to find Dracula, Simon shadows him. By doing so he meets Mary, though Mary, bless her, is often visiting a priest named Dave when she isn't working at Virgin. She wants to know why she has terrible nightmares about twits trying to smooch her neck.

One of the best scenes is when Simon tries to save Mary in a church library by unleashing the pages of the Bible on Dracula, whose teeth are atwitter with desire. Don't try this at home -- Bible pages don't work against twits.

#### Recensie 3

The New York Post

December 23, 2000, Saturday

#### BLOODY AWFUL DRACULA' FLICK WON'T QUENCH THIRST OF HORROR FANS

V. A. Musetto

DRACULA 2000 [Zero stars] A bloody awful updating of the vampire legend

WHERE is Mrs. Bram Stoker when we need her? Back in 1922, the widow of the novelist who wrote "Dracula" was so concerned with protecting her husband's creation that she wouldn't allow famed German director F.W. Murnau to use the name Dracula in his new vampire movie.

Instead, the bloodsucker was named Count Orlof and the movie, now a classic, was called "Nosferatu."

If Mrs. Stoker were around today, she could have stopped producer Wes Craven and the people at Miramax from making "Dracula 2000," the bloody awful movie that opened yesterday without advance screenings for critics.

Christopher Plummer plays a London antiques dealer, Abraham Van Helsing, who is keeping the undead Dracula hidden in a silver coffin behind heavy, high-tech security in a modern office building.

Van Helsing himself is centuries old, kept alive by Dracula's blood as he searches for a way to kill the neck biter.

"If Dracula can't die, neither will I," the crazed dealer explains.

Thieves - headed by the vicious Marcus (Omar Epps) and the sexy Solina (Jennifer Esposito) - break into Van Helsing's vault and set Dracula free.

Their necks bloodied by the undead count, the crooks, too, turn into vampires.

Now loose, Dracula finds his way to New Orleans, in search of Van Helsing's daughter, Mary (Justine Waddell).

Her father's arrival in New Orleans sets the stage for a predictable showdown with the count.

"Dracula 2000" has little going for it. The plot is full of holes, indicating that a lot of explanatory footage ended up on the cutting-room floor. (Miramax is infamous for chopping movies to shreds.)

The special effects, which owe a debt to the vastly superior "Nightmare on Elm Street" series, are bargain basement, at best.

Plummer, usually a first-rate actor, seems embarrassed to be in this piece of schlock.

The other stars, including Jonny Lee Miller as Plummer's assistant, don't show much enthusiasm either.

If you're in the mood for a worthwhile new vampire movie, catch "Shadow of the Vampire," with John Malkovich and Willem Dafoe, when it opens next week.

#### **Recensie 4**

The Houston Chronicle

December 23, 2000

Craven's 'Dracula' is sucked dry of inspiration

Bruce Westbrook

Its title alone will make "Wes Craven Presents Dracula 2000" out of date in nine days. But the film itself already reeks from the stench of rotting cliches.

Borrowing heavily from Blade, The Matrix and overly familiar vampire mythology, the film tries to update Bram Stoker's 1890s story in an Austin Powers sort of way, shifting its protagonists to the present.

Dracula (Gerard Butler) has been imprisoned in a London coffin since Victorian times, thanks to fearless vampire hunter Van Helsing (Christopher Plummer).

Now an antiques dealer, he's maintained this secret and his own life for more than a century. Van Helsing creepily leeches Drac's immortal blood via, well, leeches, from which he extracts the unholy fluid and injects himself. Ick!

Thieves led by Omar Epps presume the vault with the coffin will yield riches and stage a high-tech heist, unleashing the monster.

Van Helsing and his brave assistant (Jonny Lee Miller) pursue, and somehow they all wind up in New Orleans, where Van Helsing has a young daughter, Mary.

What follows is a mundane game of cat and mouse, slice and suck, duck and cover, nab and grab, or leech and lunge.

Call it gory counter-programming for yielding Yule yells at a time of traditional warmth. But for any season this Drac fails to emerge from the pack, except for one revelation with biblical origins.

As executive producer for director Patrick Lussier and screenwriter Joel Soisson, Craven reportedly was hands-on, not just lending his name.

If so, he should resurrect *Scream* or *Freddy Krueger*. Their horrors couldn't be more hoary than this.

By going to New Orleans, *Dracula 2000* invites comparisons with the far more worthy *Interview With the Vampire*, without a single in-joke nod to Anne Rice.

In fact, the film is almost humor-free, though Miller has a fun line about the fearsomeness of antiques dealers.

Gerard also shows snappy repartee by sneering "Propaganda" when Miller brandishes a Bible, and he declines a beverage by softly saying, "I don't drink . . . coffee" (alluding to Stoker's line about wine).

In other ways the film dutifully echoes Dracula's past. It forms a trio of vampire "brides" and adopts such names as Lucy and Seward.

But any new vampire film needs fresh blood, and this one is clotted with cliches, including its Matrix-style acrobatics.

Plummer seems tentative and embarrassed (and to think he complained about *The Sound of Music*), and Butler is all bluster, with scant bite to his bark.

This handsome guy is no monster. He looks like a long-locked romance novel hero, or perhaps a Vegas magician.

That was also a problem when Frank Langella romanticized Stoker's loathsome creature in 1979's *Dracula* - a problem corrected when Gary Oldman revealed the vile demon in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.

But give *Dracula 2000* credit for this: It's a surprising place to find a pro-Christian message.

Then again, 'tis the season.

## Recensie 5

Weak Plot Pierces Heart of Stylish 'Dracula'

Movie Review [Los Angeles Times]

December 25, 2000 | DAVID CHUTE |

"Wes Craven Presents *Dracula 2000*" is this film's official title, and it has a nice ring to it, seeming to promise a sly and subversive updating of one of the horror genre's pivotal myths. This is not exactly a minty fresh idea; bolder movies than this one, from David Cronenberg's *"Rabid"* (1977) to Abel Ferrera's *"The Addiction"* (1995), have deployed vampirism as a metaphor for, respectively, venereal disease and drug dependency.

And on prime-time TV now the reformed Nosferatu Angel is a good guy, a brooding Byronic dreamboat. But you never know: In the age of Goth cults and promiscuous body piercing, there might be a little bright red juice left in the old boy yet, especially for a genre-twister as crafty as Craven.

A couple of sharp satiric sequences offer fleeting glimpses of the true millennial vampire movie that got away. In one of them, the film's smugly seductive Euro-trash *Dracula* (Gerard Butler) savors a Goth rock music video and pronounces it "brilliant." In another, he passes unnoticed through the extravagantly draped and punctured throng celebrating Mardi Gras in New Orleans--the city that has replaced London as Vampire Central in the popular imagination, thanks to the *Lestat* novels of Anne Rice. A revived *Dracula* could indeed move like a born-again homeboy through the most ravenous parasitic subcultures of the modern world: Wall Street. A corporate law firm. Hollywood!

The big surprise, however, is that *"Dracula 2000"* is at heart a solidly old-fashioned cloak-and-fangs vampire flick. It honors the central traditions of the form a lot more often than it skewers them. Christopher Plummer plays Dr. Van Helsing, Vampire Hunter No. 1, in the oracular grand manner of Peter Cushing, embellishing the role with an untraceable Middle

European accent. A secret panel in Van Helsing's wainscoted London office glides open to reveal an arsenal of bulky silver-spewing weaponry, which manages to look both antique and futuristic, like the side arms of a 19th century Terminator.

On the purely visceral/visual level, this is a surprisingly impressive piece of work, especially for a Dimension genre item that was dumped into theaters without press screenings. The movie certainly doesn't look as if it was cranked out on a pinch-penny budget. First-time director Patrick Lussier has worked with Craven as the editor of all the "Scream" pictures, and the man behind the camera is Hong Kong action veteran Peter Pau ("Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"), a past master of the fine art of throwing things (often human bodies) right into the viewer's lap.

Lussier tries out some daringly fast, almost subliminal shock cuts in the action scenes, and he seems to know exactly how far to push this effect. Even when the pummeling vampire battles rush past in a blur of movement, they're never muddled or confusing. "Dracula 2000" has some of the best "boo" effects in the recent horror canon, and a couple of memorably icky gross-out moments involving leeches and deliquescent human tissue.

But the movie also hits some tin-eared wrong notes. Screenwriter-producer Joel Soisson squeezes together the tried and true formulas of old-school horror and the new postmodern formulas of the teen horror subgenre that Dimension has been strip-mining for years. The two styles clash repeatedly.

Jeri Ryan, who was the Borg bombshell Seven of Nine on "Star Trek: Voyager," takes a Courteney Cox Arquette retread role as a meddling journalist. Most of the heavy lifting in the anti-vampire camp is undertaken by Jonny Lee Miller, from "Hackers" and "Trainspotting," who accompanies every thrust of the stake with a would-be smart remark.

Dracula is liberated from his mossy vault by a band of bickering high-tech safecrackers, led by Omar Epps. Once bitten, these smooth dudes become wisecracking street-smart blood-suckers who instantly dissipate the ominous foggy mood whenever they appear.

The movie's central weakness, though, is the great big empty space at the heart of the story. There's a guy in the picture who calls himself Dracula, and he's well-played by Butler as a sort of lounge-lizard psycho-killer. But he's never a force of evil of mythic proportions; he seems small-minded and even whiny. The new "secret origin" story that's been cooked up for him doesn't add any depth to his legend; it's just a narrative stunt, a far-fetched twist ending that seems to explain less and less the more we think about it.

## **Film 2: Shadow of the Vampire**

### **Recensie 1**

Dafoe Lustily Sinks His Teeth Into 'Vampire'

Movie Review [Los Angeles Times]

The actor is mesmerizing as a vampire pretending to be an actor who is starring as a vampire in the 1922 film 'Nosferatu.'

December 29, 2000 | KENNETH TURAN |

Rare as a crucifixion in Dracula's lair is a film opening for Oscar consideration in the last days of the year that actually has something in it worth considering. Willem Dafoe's performance in "Shadow of the Vampire" is so irresistible it not only breaks that cycle but turns an otherwise just adequate film into something everyone will want to take a look at.

Though it was ineligible for a prize, Dafoe's work was generally considered the best male performance at Cannes earlier this year and has already won the Los Angeles Film Critics' best supporting actor award. His role may sound like a stunt, but Dafoe imbues it with enough of a variety of emotional colors to make it poignant as well as mesmerizing.

The idea behind "Shadow" is an intriguing one. Imagine that the 1922 silent classic "Nosferatu," the cinema's first great vampire film, was more of a documentary than anyone knew. Imagine that without alerting the rest of his cast F.W. Murnau, the film's obsessive director, found an actual vampire to take on the name of actor Max Schreck and play the king of the undead.

Directed by E. Elias Merhige and written by Steven Katz (who came up with the idea), "Shadow" has difficulty living up to its potential. The film has a mannered, pretentious air about it, a self-consciousness that's only encouraged by having a super-aware actor like John Malkovich playing Murnau and saying things like "our battle, our struggle is to create art, our weapon is the motion picture."

Even though we initially don't know what we're waiting for, "Shadow" marks time during its opening Berlin sequences. There we see Murnau shooting some of the early scenes of "Nosferatu" (a familiarity with the original adds amusement but isn't necessary) and doing his particular version of getting star Greta Schroeder ("Braveheart's" Catherine McCormack) into the mood for what's to come. "The ultimate expression of love," he tells her, "is the most exquisite pain."

Producer Albin Grau (veteran Udo Kier) has other things on his mind. "We have to talk about the vampire," he tells his director as they prepare for their location shoot in Eastern Europe. Who will play him, what clothes will he need, what makeup? Not to worry, Murnau says. The actor Max Schreck will appear in full makeup and costume, and, sounding like an early Stanislavski adept, will agree to be filmed only at night.

Once Dafoe's vampire, complete with the elongated fingernails he habitually clicks together, makes his appearance, it's impossible to do anything but watch him. Simultaneously silly and sinister, pleased with himself yet nervous about this unaccustomed movie work, Dafoe's Schreck combines crazy dignity, towering presence and an unstoppable blood lust to create the kind of presence you just don't see every day.

All talk of being deeply into character notwithstanding, Schreck's otherworldly aura unsettles the rest of the cast. Though the vampire makes no secret of viewing the beautiful Greta as more than just a feast for the eyes, he has no intention of being a fussy eater in the interim. "I don't think we need the writer anymore," he says at one point, literally licking his chops in a way even the most cutthroat producers can't match.

All this drives Murnau the director into a grumpy rage, and a series of uninspired plot devices follows, none of which would be worth experiencing if they didn't allow us to see more of Dafoe's completely realized performance as this petulant, thousand-year-old Peck's Bad Boy.

"Even in the most naturalistic parts, I'm always searching for a mask, because a mask is liberating," Dafoe, who required a minimum of three hours daily to have his makeup applied, said in Cannes of his performance. "For an actor, giving over to something that feels outside of yourself is the purest kind of performing." And for an audience, the purest kind of pleasure.

## Recensie 2

### Shadow of the Vampire

Hap Erstein, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

**Grade:** B+

**Verdict:** A stunningly original look inside the lens at silent movie-making, featuring a creepy, campy performance with bite by Dafoe.

**Details:** Starring Willem Dafoe and John Malkovich. Rated R for blood and gore, drug use and nudity. One hour, 29 minutes.

**Review:** The movies are an obsessive business, full of filmmakers willing to go to extremes for the sake of their art. One such driven visionary is post-World War I German director F.W. Murnau, who fanatically pursued the first silent version of what would become an industry staple -- the vampire movie.

Just how fanatical he was has never been chronicled until now, until *Shadow of the Vampire*, an ingenious, diabolical, probably libelous, funhouse of a movie, a fictional peek at the making of the 1922 film classic, *Nosferatu*. With an audacious screenplay by Steven Katz and a beautifully realized travel back in time by director E. Elias Merhige, this is a creepy and campy, newly minted film history artifact that is stunningly original, even if it is about the undead.

Wait, don't turn the page. In the same way that *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is the martial arts movie for those who don't like martial arts movies, *Shadow of the Vampire* will challenge all of your preconceived notions about vampire flicks. Visually striking, superbly acted and laced with a self-mocking humor as pungent as a Bloody Mary, it both fulfills and refutes the genre.

As film fans may already know, Murnau (played by John Malkovich with a tasty foppish menace) tried to bring the novel *Dracula* to the screen, but was denied the rights by Bram Stoker's widow.

Realizing they were unnecessary, he proceeded with his plans, but called his movie *Nosferatu* and dubbed his main character Count Orlock. The inspired leap that *Shadow of the Vampire* makes is to suppose that Murnau, having difficulty casting the role, finds an actual vampire and negotiates working conditions with him to bring unparalleled verisimilitude to the project.

Murnau merely explains to his company that chalky-faced, pointy-eared Max Schreck (a feral Willem Dafoe), whose bony fingers sport long tentacle-like nails, is a Method acting devotee of Stanislavsky's who never appears out of makeup. He will always remain in character and his scenes will all be filmed at night. To appease Schreck, Murnau includes vials of blood and small furry creatures on the catering cart, promising that he can do away with whiny female star Greta Schroeder (Catherine McCormick) however he likes, once her scenes are completed.

Malkovich defines the director-as-God syndrome, keeping everyone in the dark about the movie's schedule and locales, narrating the film and orchestrating his performers' emotions as the camera rolls. He builds suspense and apprehension -- among his actors and the audience -- leading up to Schreck's first emergence from his cave.

Murnau has it all figured out, assuming that Schreck abides by their bargain, but the Yoda-esque vampire proves unable, or unwilling, to curb his appetite.

Like all great celluloid monsters, there is a touching side to the misunderstood, justifiably feared Schreck, movingly portrayed by Dafoe in a wonderfully edgy performance.

Cinematographer Lou Bogue impresses with his shifts from color to black-and-white, as the movie shifts from the Nosferatu set to the world inside the film. He and Merhige duplicate the grainy, crude look of the silent era and match it to shots from the actual 1922 classic.

Ultimately, though, like any important history-based film, *Shadow of the Vampire* is about today. It ponders whether the crazed, often drugged Murnau is much different from contemporary filmmakers, whether our carnivorous need for entertainment has evolved over the years. It is one of the more telling movies about making movies, even if its facts are largely preposterous.

### Recensie 3

A Delectably Dark 'Shadow'

*By Desson Howe*  
Washington Post  
Friday, January 26, 2001

"*Shadow of the Vampire*" swoops batlike into the atmospheric darkness of the silent horror-movie era and comes up with a wonderful, wriggling little premise: What if the actor who played Dracula in the classic "*Nosferatu*" *really was* a vampire?

"*Nosferatu*," a real movie made in 1922 by directorial genius F.W. Murnau, is considered one of the greatest vampire films ever made. And it starred an actor known as Max Schreck, of whom little is known. But the performer, whose last name is the German for "shriek" or "yell," gave the movie an authentically chilly presence. This historical uncertainty about Schreck has excited the creative bloodlust of screenwriter Steven Katz and director E. Elias Merhige. The great result: "*Shadow of the Vampire*" is diabolically amusing without plunging into the Mel Brooks zone, and it's smart without being pedantic. And it's genuinely scary at times.

In "*Shadow*," we are in the early 1920s in Germany, which marks the boom of a film movement known as German Expressionism. The country is exploding with great movies, most of them thrillers with psychologically dark themes.



One of the leading filmmakers of that time is German director Murnau (played with wonderfully spirited mania by John Malkovich) who has just suffered the first of many setbacks for his new vampire movie.

The widow of Bram Stoker, author of "Dracula," has refused to give him the rights to the book. So Murnau and his scriptwriter, Henrick Galeen (John Aden Gillet), get to work on a story about a certain Count Orlock in a movie they decide to call "Nosferatu."

Murnau is considered a genius. But it's unclear whether people believe this or they just heard it from Murnau himself. He certainly acts like one, confounding money investors with his plans – which he reveals to no one until painfully necessary.

For "Nosferatu," he refuses to make his movie on soundstages, like most filmmakers around him. He demands that the film crew shoot at various locales including Czechoslovakia, to convey an external sense of doom and gloom. And to the chagrin of his producer, Albin Grau (Udo Kier), he's extremely secretive about the actor who'll play the part of Count Orlock.

Finally, Murnau informs his crew that a certain Max Schreck (Willem Dafoe), who worked with the famous theatrical director Max Reinhardt, will take the role. Schreck is so intense about his part, says Murnau, he's going to stay in character. This means Schreck will be "acting" like a vampire all the time. It also means Schreck is only available for nighttime shooting.

With a buildup like this, Murnau gets exactly what he wants: genuine terror from his stars, Greta Schroeder (Catherine McCormack) and Gustav von Wangerheim (Eddie Izzard), and one helluva realistic vampire. But is Schreck, who seems unusually excited about the prospect of biting into people's necks, "realistic" or just plain real? And if he is real, what kind of devil's agreement did Murnau forge with Schreck?

Malkovich is just right as a director who is so consumed with creating a masterpiece for posterity that he'll stop at nothing. Unfortunately, various members of the crew are starting to feel the bite of this artistic dedication.

"Why him, you monster?" sputters Murnau, when he realizes Schreck has helped himself to the first cameraman. "Why not the script girl?"

Dafoe, not surprisingly, is the scene stealer in this movie. A snorting, animalistic creature, who grunts with ecstasy at the thought of blood, he's no smooth, dapper Bela Lugosi. And there are amusingly restrained performances from Kier as the forever-exasperated producer and Cary Elwes as Murnau's replacement cameraman. Elwes' German accent (apart from German-born Kier's) is the best in the movie.

The ultimate credit, however, must go to filmmakers Merhige (whose debut was the 1991 "Begotten," which I haven't seen, but apparently it features God disemboweling himself with a razor) and Katz. They have created a perfect synthesis of classical tribute and contemporary entertainment. In his first scene with Schreck, which is also the first time he has set eyes on him, actor Gustav has to encounter the mysterious performer in a dark tunnel while Murnau and crew hand-crank their primitive cameras in the background. Gustav hesitates at the mouth of the dark tunnel, utterly terrified.

"Gustav, you must follow him into the tunnel," booms Murnau. At that point, producer Albin speaks quietly to the director. "Where did you find him, really?" asks Albin, referring to Schreck, as Gustav disappears into the darkness. "In that hole," Murnau says.

#### Recensie 4

Ebert: ★ ★ ★ ★

Shadow Of The Vampire

**BY ROGER EBERT** / January 26, 2001

[*Chicago Sun-Times*]

The best of all vampire movies is "Nosferatu," made by F.W. Murnau in Germany in 1922. Its eerie power only increases with age. Watching it, we don't think about screenplays or special effects. We think: This movie believes in vampires. Max Schreck, the mysterious actor who played Count Orlock the vampire, is so persuasive we never think of the actor, only of the creature.

"Shadow of the Vampire," a wicked new movie about the making of "Nosferatu," has an explanation for Schreck's performance: He really was a vampire. This is not a stretch. It is easier for me to believe Schreck was a vampire than he was an actor. Examine any photograph of him in the role and decide for yourself. Consider the rat-like face, the feral teeth, the bat ears, the sunken eyes, the fingernail claws that seem to have grown in the tomb. Makeup? He makes the word irrelevant.

In "Shadow of the Vampire," director E. Elias Merhige and his writer, Steven Katz, do two things at the same time. They make a vampire movie of their own, and they tell a backstage story about the measures that a director will take to realize his vision. Murnau is a man obsessed with his legacy; he lectures his crew on the struggle to create art, promising them, "our poetry, our music, will have a context as certain as the grave." What they have no way of knowing is that some of them will go to the grave themselves in the service of his poetry. He's made a deal with Schreck: Perform in my movie, and you can dine on the blood of the leading lady.

John Malkovich plays Murnau as a theoretician who is utterly uninterested in human lives other than his own. His work justifies everything. Like other silent directors he has a flamboyant presence, stalking his sets with glasses pushed up on his forehead, making pronouncements, issuing orders, self-pitying about the fools he has to work with and the price he has to pay for his art. After we meet key members of the cast and crew in Berlin, the production moves to Czechoslovakia, where Schreck awaits. Murnau explains that the great actor is so dedicated to his craft that he lives in character around the clock and must never be spoken to, except as Count Orlock.

"Willem Dafoe is Max Schreck." I put quotes around that because it's not just a line for a movie ad but the truth: He embodies the Schreck of "Nosferatu" so uncannily that when real scenes from the silent classic are slipped into the frame, we don't notice a difference. But he is not simply Schreck--or not simply Schreck as the vampire. He is also a venomous and long-suffering creature with unruly appetites, and angers Murnau by prematurely dining on the cinematographer. Murnau shouts in rage that he needs the cinematographer, and now will have to go to Berlin and hire another one. He begs

Schreck to keep his appetites in check until the final scene. Schreck muses aloud, "I do not think we need . . . the writer . . ." Scenes like this work as inside comedy, but they also have a practical side: The star is hungry, and because he is the star, he can make demands. This would not be the first time a star has eaten a writer alive.

The fragrant Catherine McCormack plays Greta, the actress whose throat Schreck's fangs will plunge into, for real, in the final scene. She of course does not understand this, and is a trooper, putting up with Schreck for the sake of art, even though he reeks of decay. Concerned about her closeups, intoxicated by the joy of stardom, she has no suspicions until, during her crucial scene, her eyes stray to the mirror--and Schreck, of course, is not reflected.

The movie does an uncanny job of re-creating the visual feel of Murnau's film. There are shots that look the way moldy basements smell. This material doesn't lend itself to subtlety, and Malkovich and Dafoe chew their lines like characters who know they are always being observed (some directors do more acting on their sets than the actors do). The supporting cast is a curiously, intriguingly mixed bag: Cary Elwes as Murnau's cinematographer Fritz Wagner (not the one who is eaten), Eddie Izzard as one of the actors, the legendary Udo Kier as the producer.

Vampires for some reason are funny as well as frightening. Maybe that's because the conditions of their lives are so absurd. Some of novelist Anne Rice's vampires have a fairly entertaining time of it, but someone like Schreck seems doomed to spend eternity in psychic and physical horror. There is a nice passage where he submits to a sort of interview from his colleagues, remaining "in character" while answering questions about vampirism. He doesn't make it sound like fun.

"Every horror film seems to become absurd after the passage of years," Pauline Kael wrote in her review of "Nosferatu," "yet the horror remains." Here Merhige gives us scenes absurd and frightening at the same time, as when Schreck catches a bat that flies into a room and eats it. Or when Murnau, knowing all that he knows about Schreck, reassures his leading lady: "All you have to do is relax and, as they say, the vampire will do all the work."

## **Recensie 5**

The Philadelphia Inquirer

JANUARY 26, 2001 Friday

**DAFOE REALLY SINKS HIS TEETH INTO THIS ROLE IN "SHADOW OF THE VAMPIRE," THE ACTOR HAS A HIGH OLD TIME IN THE TITLE ROLE.**

Steven Rea

It's a night shoot, on location, a crumbling Czechoslovakian castle in the background, and cast and crew are hunkered together between takes, shooting the breeze. In a small circle, two men are curious about the third: He is the film's star, but is virtually unknown in the acting circles of Berlin.

He is also seriously into character - so much so that at one point he stabs his hand into the air and pulls it back, his fist wrapped around a quivering little bat. Pop! It's in his mouth, a trickle of blood running down his chin.

In *Shadow of the Vampire*, Willem Dafoe - decked out with pointy ears, daggerlike nails, cadaverous prosthetics and a perpetual gleam in his eye that says this is rich, this is fun, isn't it? - stars as Max Schreck, the real-life German actor whose claim to fame was landing the title role in F. W. Murnau's 1922 vampire classic, *Nosferatu*.

The conceit of *Shadow of the Vampire*, directed by E. Elias Merhige from a screenplay by Steven Katz, is that Murnau was so intent on creating "the most realistic vampire film ever made" that he cast the genuine article - a card-carrying, blood-sucking Undead One - as his leading man. No one else on the set (at least at first) is in on the director's icky secret, but they do know that this Schreck fellow, who will work only at night and is never seen sharing vittles from the caterer's truck, is an odd duck.

Like 1998's *Gods and Monsters*, which built an entertaining, and moving, fictional construct around the life (and death) of Frankenstein director James Whale, *Shadow of the Vampire* has great fun replicating scenes and situations from Murnau's movie. John Malkovich, wearing goggles and a lab coat (apparently this is how they dressed back then, treating the production of a motion picture like a science experiment), portrays Murnau as an obsessive despot - albeit one whose accent and gestures border on camp.

Unlike *Gods and Monsters*, however, *Shadow of the Vampire* is a bit of a one-joke wonder: Dafoe and Malkovich get into the high melodrama syncopations of early cinema, and Catherine McCormack is beguilingly theatrical as *Nosferatu*'s leading lady - unaware that she's also quite literally the carrot-and-stick used to lure Max Schreck into the picture. (Murnau promises Schreck that he can "have" the actress when the final scene wraps.) But the film plods, and never succeeds in becoming truly scary, which is clearly what the filmmakers wanted it to be - in addition to the gags.

Still, Dafoe is having a high old time, and the picture is studiously dank and dark-feeling - trying to evoke the nightmare stuff that "lies at the bottom of the flower box," as Murnau/Malkovich puts it. If things aren't quite as wormy and horrible down there as they should be, at least they are never less than amusing.

### **Film 3: Queen of the Damned**

#### **Recensie 1**

Queen of the Damned

Larry Aydlette, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

**Grade:** D -

**Verdict:** Avoid this heavy metal hell at all costs.

**Details:** Starring Aaliyah and Stuart Townsend. Rated R for vampire violence. 1 hour 41 minutes.

**Review:** At the end of *Queen of the Damned*, a title card comes on screen: "In Memory of Aaliyah, 1979-2001." What a way to be remembered.

If the filmmakers really wanted to honor the late pop star, they should have never released this piece of slick trash.

Here's one memory of Aaliyah: Dressed in a skimpy metal breastplate, she lasciviously feasts on gory vampire guts while blood gushes from her mouth and a heavy metal dude wails on the soundtrack, "Why don't you die? Why don't you die?"

Or how about this: Knowing they've got a load of Z-movie claptrap, the filmmakers exploit Aaliyah's death by advertising her as a major character, when she doesn't show up for nearly an hour and has only a handful of scenes.

*Queen of the Damned* is a total waste. Obviously, Aaliyah's blood-spattered performance is difficult to watch after her death in a plane crash last year. But there's also a neat conceit -- completely unexamined -- lurking underneath this sensory overload of MTV video, rancid creature feature and atrocious acting.

Think of a vampire who lives in shadow but craves the spotlight of 21st century fame. A bored bloodsucker without an adoring audience. What's a shallow night ranger to do? Become a pasty-faced headbanger, of course!

Dracula as Marilyn Manson -- not a bad concept.

Our neck-muncher is the vampire Lestat (Stuart Townsend), familiar from Anne Rice's pulp novels and the vastly superior Tom Cruise movie. Snoozing in a New Orleans crypt for a century, Lestat's in a funk and looking for a reason to rise when he hears the martial, bone-crunching beat of metal music.

Didn't your parents always say that devil noise was going to wake the dead? Soon enough, it's all "sex, blood and rock 'n' roll." Lestat is the new Ozzy, biting groupies instead of birds, commanding the cover of *Rolling Stone* and planning the Altamont of vampire concerts out in -- where else? -- Death Valley.

Cool idea, but director Michael Rymer (*In Too Deep*) and screenwriters Scott Abbott and Michael Petroni don't have a clue. Here's Lestat living luxe and on the loose in vacuous L.A., hovering over the Sunset Strip, being a bad boy and ticking off his fellow travelers who prefer their draining in silence.

A perfect *Buffy*-esque set-up ripe for parody, and they blow it. Instead, we switch to a long, leaden subplot about a dull, obsessed vamp-buster (Margeuerite Moreau) and her mysterious attraction to Lestat -- that old stake-him-or-make-him quandary.

We also endure the how-I-lost-my-mortality-in-the-18th-century flashback with poor, innocent Lestat falling under the spell of an evil dandy (Vincent Perez). Lestat's insatiable blood-hunger and screechy violin playing somehow unleash the entombed Queen Akasha (Aaliyah), a slinky Ms. Bad who dispenses fiery death and urges Lestat to be her playmate in crime. Needless to say, serious blood-loss ensues, accompanied by an ear-splitting soundtrack.

Rymer has some decent sets and stylish camera moves, and the vamps swoop and slide with a swift Superman-like grace. But the actors, from newcomers Townsend and Aaliyah to the talented Perez and Lena Olin, can't invigorate this lifeless script and genre. (Part of the problem is Rice's hack prose, although her first Lestat novel, *Interview With The Vampire*, was a pop classic.)

So, how should you remember Aaliyah? Listen to her CDs, rent that first movie with Jet Li, but take a blood oath not to let her young fans anywhere near this dumb, depressing Hollywood junk.

## Recensie 2

Movie Review

Queen of the Damned (2002)

FILM REVIEW; A Vampire Searches for Meaning to a Rock Beat

By ELVIS MITCHELL [New York Times]

Published: February 22, 2002

If Anne Rice was upset over the film adaptation of her "Interview With the Vampire" a few years back, then she probably already has Johnnie Cochran preparing legal briefs over "Queen of the Damned," the latest movie version of one of her books. The message of this florid and dull "Queen," about the lonely ways of the undead, boils down to this: Just Say No to Blood.

It turns out that this time around, Lestat, the thinking man's vampire, is depressed because he misses being a mortal, that same adolescent existential crisis that Louis (Brad Pitt), a secondary bloodsucker, suffered through in the earlier "Interview With a Vampire." Lestat -- who in this incarnation has morphed from Tom Cruise ("Interview") to Stuart Townsend -- is now a pop star. He saunters about the stage in skin-tight outfits that are probably supposed to send a menacing shiver but look more like ensembles from a road production of "Chicago."

Lestat has also emerged as a vampire who's come out of the closet, as it were. Imagine the number of vampire support groups that would appear in real life in worldwide response. When asked at a news conference if he has anything to say to the formerly hidden community of vampires worldwide, his answer is simply, "Come out, come out, wherever you are." Or rather, "Come out, come out, wherever you are." It seems vampire fashions may come and go, but the Bela Lugosi accent never, well, dies.

The real victim of this dreary mess is the late Aaliyah. She plays Akasha, the Queen of all Vampires, who is so powerful that she can even venture out in daylight. Poor Aaliyah, who showed such unaffected naturalness in "Romeo Must Die" that she exacted immediate audience rapport, is also saddled with a ludicrous Transylvanian accent. If they all sounded so operatically goofy, who exactly is it that Lestat and his similarly afflicted souls thought they were hiding their identities from?

Aaliyah's commanding physical presence is not enough for her to triumph over lines like "You're bold, like your music!," which she has to deliver to Lestat with a straight face. The Times Square preview crowd raised the roof for her in tribute when she made her first appearance more than 30 minutes into the film. That same audience lapsed into bored silence

when it realized how sparingly she would be used. (Moviegoers may rush out of the theater before seeing the title card dedicating the film to her, which is a good thing. She deserved better.)

"Queen," of course, is really Lestat's story. He commits the sin of pride when he announces his presence, and that of other vampires, to the world. He's tired of hiding from mortals. Lestat's story is revealed when Jesse (Marguerite Moreau), a paranormal investigator, discovers his diaries and peruses them. Apparently vampires, unlike Enron and the Nixon White House, are unfamiliar with paper shredders.

Lestat's chronicles go all the way back to the beginning, showing him being turned into a vampire by "the man who made me," Marius (Vincent Perez). Marius, an old-world European who bit Lestat centuries earlier, tells his protégé that vampires all over the world will be angered by the breaking of their unspoken vow of silence. "Better dead than alone," Lestat muses. But when Lestat begins to fall for Akasha's power, Marius warns him about the Queen Mother Vampire's appetite, "She has no respect for anything, human or immortal."

The "All My Coffins" tangle of story lines results in a surfeit of exposition because so much history has to be uncorked. At one point, when Jesse is poring over Lestat's journals, we get narration within narration as the movie shifts from Jesse's voice-over of Lestat's story, to Lestat's own voice-over of his life -- one shallow mirror effect. The wheels-within-wheels narration unfolds at a grindingly slow pace, and over-explicit dialogue accompanies it.

This patter, which rings hollow throughout the picture, sounds like the badly translated dubbing from some weird Eastern European soft-core version of "Emmanuelle." The undead tend to unleash twitchy maxims like "Vampires don't settle old scores; we harbor them." But at least those pictures have corny, humid embraces and athletic couplings to keep you awake and embarrassed. Vampires don't have sex -- not in this picture, anyway.

The movie reaches a climax of sorts when Lestat's Death Valley concert -- the kind of thing that passes for intentional humor in "Queen" -- turns into a Vampire Throwdown, with bloodsuckers from everywhere attacking the vampire star onstage. And a later pitched battle breaks out when Akasha wants to rule the world. "Humans are animals," she sneers, which seems a strange way to dismiss her food supply.

Directed with meaningless fashion-victim chill by Michael Rymer, "Queen of the Damned" is itself a casualty of an awful trend, the corporatization of horror movies. Vampire pictures and the like used to have a specific signature, either from thoughtful hacks or B-picture geniuses - filmmakers who respected the conventions of the genre. Now, these genre pictures are big-budget spectacles with so much at stake, like Anne Rice's good will, that the studios can't afford any eccentricity, the kinds of idiosyncratic gestures that used to make horror movies memorable.

It should be said that "Queen" offers a minimal amount of special touches: when Lestat becomes one of the undead, the director and his cinematographer render him slightly out of focus -- visually not of this world. There's another cool touch: when Lestat is turned into a vampire, his skin goes the color of condensed milk and his hair becomes wavy with henna highlights. As necromancer and hairdresser, Marius is the José Eber of the netherworld, though he doesn't take the same care with his own locks.

But a filmmaker not cowed by Ms. Rice's middlebrow formality would have had fun with the rock-vampire axis. Pop music has a chilblain tradition that ranges from Screaming Jay Hawkins to Gravediggaz to Marilyn Manson, with many stops in between -- and quite a few capable of wit. You'd think "Queen" could cough up a few jokes out of its vampire as pop star plot. If you want goosebumps and gallows humor from pop, it looks as if you'll have to turn to Ozzy Osbourne's coming MTV series. "Queen" is a movie that stoops to jokes like calling Lestat's CD "a monster hit"; the movie is just a plain old monster.

### Recensie 3

San Jose Mercury News

February 22, 2002 Friday

#### A 'DAMNED' SHAME; RIGOR MORTIS TAKES OVER ANNE RICE VAMPIRE STORY

BRUCE NEWMAN

How would you feel? You are Lestat, dark lord of the underworld, and Tom Cruise plays you in a big movie. You are one of People magazine's 50 Most Beautiful Vampires, you're biting the heads off rats with Brad Pitt, and you're married to Nicole Kidman.

You go to sleep. A couple of hundred years later, you wake up as a karaoke-crazed vampire, warbling headbanger tunes for kids who shop at the Goth Gap. Stuart Townsend is now you, because Tom Cruise doesn't want to be you and Nicole Kidman doesn't want to know you. And Townsend is playing you in "Queen of the Damned" as if you had died and gone to video. Well, you snooze, you lose.

If legendary shlockmeister Ed Wood had ever made a movie about a vampire, it probably would look a lot like this alarming production, adapted from Anne Rice's novel "The Vampire Chronicles." Among the few things to recommend "Queen of the Damned" is the previously unimaginable luster it adds to the 1994 adaptation by Neil Jordan of Rice's "Interview With the Vampire." In that movie, the undead were carriers of metaphor, infected with a blood lust. In "Queen of the Damned," they just suck.

Townsend is the young Irish actor who was supposed to play the dashing Aragorn in "The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring" but got dumped at the last minute in favor of Viggo Mortensen. He actually seems to have something as Lestat, in addition to his gaunt good looks, but all he is given to do is sashay around in black ready-to-wear, hemorrhaging from the mouth. "Eternity seems like a long time," Lestat says while still lying in his New Orleans crypt, "when you realize you're going to spend it alone." Totally!

Townsend's voice sounds as if it had been bounced onto the screen from an echo chamber and his lines were being beamed down from Telstar. But never mind him! Think of Aaliyah, the pop singer who perished in a plane crash last August and who plays the vampire queen Akasha. She sounds like she's hiding a Moog synthesizer in her clamshell bra, and during her



more preposterous moments she actually reminds you of Bela Lugosi in Wood's "Plan Nine From Outer Space."

You can't teach that kind of acting, and "Queen of the Damned" has plenty of it. The characters in this movie never spring to life; they just become a little more undead with each passing scene. Lestat has decided this whole scared-of-the-daylight thing is so Peter Cushing that he reinvents himself as a rock god. He just happens to be walking around practicing the violin when he discovers the ancient tomb in which Akasha has been cooling her heels, or hanging by them. His violin playing awakens her from a stone statue, not that you'd know it from Aaliyah's performance.

Even the movie won't stay dead, ending at least three times, none of them soon enough. Lestat becomes obsessed with a young mortal named Jesse (played by Marguerite Moreau), whom we are told is "a Talamascan," as if this were the equivalent of identifying her as an Anabaptist or a Shriner. As some sort of Talamascan intern, Jesse has discovered a "vampire coven" disguised as a nightclub in the heart of London. The elder Talamascans don't seem at all happy about this, and Jesse is forced to concede that she crossed the line.

"I know," she says dejectedly: "Observe the dark realm, but be not of it."

It's good advice. Observe "Queen of the Damned" at your own peril. But be not of it.

#### **Recensie 4**

The Philadelphia Inquirer

February 22, 2002 Friday

Campy vampire doings

Carrie Rickey

It's creepy to see the late recording artist Aaliyah, who tragically lost her life in a plane crash last summer, resurrected as the vampire Akasha in the posthumously released Queen of the Damned. So dead and yet so undead.

Perhaps even creepier is that only when Aaliyah is not on screen parading in little more than a breastplate and fangs does this campy piece of bloodlust come alive.

No one's saying it's good, but any movie that boasts dialogue like, "I'm too old to live forever!" (uttered by a middle-aged vampire tracker) has undeniable entertainment value.

If there were a vampire yearbook, then Stuart Townsend and Marguerite Moreau would tie with The Hunger's Catherine Deneuve and Susan Sarandon for cutest couple.

Based on Anne Rice's *The Vampire Chronicles*, *Queen of the Damned* stars Townsend (the seducer in *About Adam*) as the Vampire Lestat, for whom eternity is not a fragrance but a life sentence.

Seems the 18th-century French nobleman "made" by an ageless European aesthete, Marius (Vincent Perez), now thinks "Immortality is a great idea until you realize that you'll spend it alone."

You may think Lestat last surfaced in *Interview With a Vampire* (played by Tom Cruise, flirting with Christian Slater in San Francisco), but in this movie he confides that he has spent the last century alone and depressed in a New Orleans crypt.

The drone of Goth rock rouses this sleeping beauty, and Lestat swiftly becomes a star whose motto is "sex, blood, and rock and roll."

Soon, the world is at Lestat's feet and Akasha is at his throat. The screenplay, choppiest than it otherwise might be due to Aaliyah's demise, does not explain why Akasha has been hibernating for centuries. Nor does it explain why all vampires have Transylvanian accents.

As made by Australian director Michael Rymer, the film takes a tongue-in-cheek look at the recording industry (a bloodsucking enterprise), and also at vampire style through the ages. The look of *Queen of the Damned* is very *Dracula* meets *Stargate*.

In the film's cleverest conceit, Rymer reveals the vampire Generation Gap. Lestat, shirtless and leather-trousered à la Jim Morrison, berates Marius, frock-coated à la Oscar Wilde. "Still wearing the old fashions, I see," Lestat snorts. "How did you manage to slip through the 1950s in red velvet?"

At its best, *Queen* is campy fun like the Vincent Price horror classics of the '60s. At its worst, it implodes in a series of very bad special effects.

## **Recensie 5**

### **BAD BLOOD**

'Queen' is a silly, overwrought vampire tale, and a creepy screen farewell for Aaliyah

Edward Guthmann, San Francisco Chronicle

Friday, February 22, 2002

Oh, the torture of eternity. That deep, lonely void. It's tough being a vampire, as the charismatic Lestat moans in "*Queen of the Damned*," a toothless, overwrought adaptation of Anne Rice's 1988 novel -- the third in her "*Vampire Chronicles*" series.

In "*Queen*," Lestat (Stuart Townsend) has just emerged from a century's sleep and reinvented himself as a Goth-rock superstar. Ghostly white and androgynous, he devours unsuspecting

groupies, angers his mentor Marius (Vincent Perez), seduces a librarian (Marguerite Moreau) and awakens Akasha (Aaliyah), the ancient vampire queen.

In flashbacks, we see how Lestat, an 18th century French nobleman, was trained and groomed by Marius ("the man who made me"). A fiend for blood since his conversion, Lestat is transformed by the taste of it but learns never to drink that last drop, to hold back from killing.

Directed by Australian filmmaker Michael Rymer, who showed promise in the low-key "Angel Baby," "Queen of the Damned" is self-serious, pointless and silly. It's getting more attention than it merits only because it marks the final screen appearance of Aaliyah, the singer-actress who died, at 22, in a plane crash in August.

Aaliyah doesn't show up in "Queen" until the last 40 minutes and hasn't much to do but undulate, show off her flat tummy and reveal a dental appliance that gives her saberlike eyeteeth. Her costume, with its metal breastplate, shell skirt and elaborate headdress, does most of the work for her.

It's more a modeling job than an acting assignment. Aaliyah's voice sounds mechanical and dubbed, and when she appears at Lestat's outdoor rock concert in Death Valley -- where else? -- she makes a spectacular entrance on a fog-enshrouded hydraulic lift. Just like Cher in her "Believe" tour.

Had Aaliyah lived longer and become a good actress, it wouldn't be the result of anything she learned in "Queen of the Damned." Although her presence has a built-in curiosity factor, it takes on a morbid edge as the violence escalates and her character leaves a trail of corpses in her wake and is ravaged by rival bloodsuckers.

An extra dimension, never intended by the filmmakers but unavoidable given the actress' death, is embedded in those scenes. What might have been a campy little romp becomes something else: a premature farewell, sobering and sad and, given the material, a tad creepy.

It isn't just Aaliyah and her legacy that are ill served by "Queen of the Damned." Anne Rice doesn't fare any better, and neither do the rest of the actors: not Townsend, whose part is equally ornamental and superficial; not Perez, who looks bored and confused; not Lena Olin, who has a few take-the-money-and-run moments as Moreau's tragic vampire aunt.

The music hits a sour note as well. Jonathan Davis, lead singer for the neo-metal band Korn, collaborated with Richard Gibbs on the score -- he also sings Lestat's role -- and the result is a collection of dark, overproduced songs that sound like discards from old Billy Idol records. .  
Advisory: This movie contains violence, partial nudity and sexual situations.

## Recensie 1

**Ebert:** ★ ★ ★ ★

### Blade II

**BY ROGER EBERT** / March 22, 2002

[*Chicago Sun-Times*]

"Blade II" is a really rather brilliant vomitorium of viscera, a comic book with dreams of becoming a textbook for mad surgeons. There are shots here of the insides of vampires that make your average autopsy look like a slow afternoon at Supercuts. The movie has been directed by Guillermo del Toro, whose work is dominated by two obsessions: War between implacable ancient enemies, and sickening things that bite you and aren't even designed to let go.

The movie is an improvement on "Blade" (1998), which was pretty good. Once again it stars Wesley Snipes as the Marvel Comics hero who is half-man, half-vampire. He was raised from childhood by Whistler (Kris Kristofferson), a vampire hunter who kept Blade's vampirism in check, and trained him to fight the Nosferatus. Time has passed, Whistler has been captured by vampires and floats unconscious in a storage tank while his blood is harvested, and Blade prowls the streets in his lonely war.

One night acrobatic creatures with glowing red eyes invade Blade's space and engage in a violent battle that turns out to be entirely gratuitous, because after they remove their masks to reveal themselves as vampires--a ferocious warrior and a foxy babe--they only want to deliver a message: "You have been our worst enemy. But now there is something else on the streets worse than you!" This reminded me of the night in O'Rourke's when McHugh asked this guy why he carried a gun and the guy said he lived in a dangerous neighborhood and McHugh said it would be safer if he moved.

The Vampire Nation is under attack by a new breed of vampires named Reapers, who drink the blood of both humans and vampires, and are insatiable. Blade, who is both human and vampire, is like a balanced meal. If the Reapers are not destroyed, both races will die. This news is conveyed by a vampire leader whose brain can be dimly seen through a light blue translucent plastic shell, more evidence of the design influence of the original iMac.

Blade and Whistler (now rescued from the tank and revived with a "retro-virus injection") join the vampires in this war, which is not without risk, because of course if the Reapers are destroyed, the vampires will turn on them. There is a story line, however quickly sketched, to support the passages of pure action, including computer-aided fight scenes of astonishing pacing and agility. Snipes once again plays Blade not as a confident superhero, but as a once-confused kid who has been raised to be good at his work and uncertain about his identity. He is attracted to the vampire Nyssa (Leonor Varela), but we sense a relationship between a creature of the night and Blade, known as the Daywalker, is sooner or later going to result in arguments over their work schedules.

The Reapers are the masterpieces of this movie. They all have what looks like a scar down the center of their chins. The first time we see one, it belongs to a donor who has turned up at a blood bank in Prague. This is not the kind of blood bank you want to get your next transfusion from. It has a bug zapper hanging from the wall, and an old drunk who says you can even

bring in cups of blood from outside and they'll buy them.

The chin scar, it turns out, is not a scar but a cleft. These Reapers are nasty. They have mouths that unfold into tripartite jaws. Remember the claws on the steam shovels in those prize games at the carnival, where you manipulated the wheels and tried to pick up valuable prizes? Now put them on a vampire and make them big and bloody, with fangs and mucus and viscous black saliva. And then imagine a tongue coiled inside with an eating and sucking mechanism on the end of it that looks like the organ evolution forgot--the sort of thing diseased livers have nightmares about. Later they slice open a Reaper's chest cavity and Blade and Whistler look inside.

Blade: The heart is surrounded in bone! Whistler: Good luck getting a stake through it! Del Toro's early film "Cronos" (1993) was about an ancient golden beetle that sank its claws into the flesh of its victims and injected an immortality serum. His "Mimic" (1997) was about a designer insect, half-mantis, half-termite, that escapes into the subway system and mutates into a very big bug. Characters would stick their hands into dark places and I would slide down in my seat. His "Devil's Backbone" (2001), set in an orphanage at the time of the Spanish Civil War, is a ghost story, not a horror picture, but does have a body floating in a tank.

Still in his 30s, the Mexican-born director doesn't depend on computers to get him through a movie and impress the kids with fancy fight scenes. He brings his creepy phobias along with him. You can sense the difference between a movie that's a technical exercise ("Resident Evil") and one steamed in the dread cauldrons of the filmmaker's imagination.

## Recensie 2

The Denver Post

March 22, 2002 Friday

'Blade II' cuts to the quick If you can stomach the gore, you'll find stylish vampire tale

By Steven Rosen, Denver Post Movie Critic,

If you have the stomach for the blood, 'Blade II' is a pretty effective vampire movie.

It has some of the loud, silly, pop-culture feel you expect from a movie based on a comic book. And also of one that uses its star, Wesley Snipes, more like the world's supercoolest male model than as an actor.

It lets him (or his stunt double) leap, kick, sword-fight and shoot oversized guns in endlessly iconic poses, his hair angularly sculpted, his sunglasses dark and his layers of armor-reinforced clothing black. (He plays a half-human, half-vampire vampire-hunter.)

But while 'Blade II,' the followup to the 1998 hit 'Blade,' is pop, it never becomes kitsch or camp like the current video-game-derived 'Resident Evil.'

That's because the director, Guillermo Del Toro, takes horror very seriously, especially the frightening and disturbing aspects of the blood- and violence-related imagery. His previous films are 'Cronos,' 'Mimic' and 'The Devil's Backbone.'

Del Toro doesn't just lay on the blood, but also the sinewy tissue, membranes and just plain icky, sticky stuff underneath the skin. Ordinarily, I have little stomach for this. I hated 'Devil's Backbone' for this reason. But the vampire legend is all about our fears, fascination with and dependence upon blood, so I went with it, often with clenched facial muscles.

'Blade II' also has some outstandingly creepy effects - particularly the way vampires disintegrate or self-immolate - and set design.

The story by David S. Goyer is just fleshed out - or fleshed off, if you prefer - enough to keep you interested. It puts Snipes' Blade in Prague, where he rescues old mentor Whistler, who appeared to have died in the first 'Blade.'

As Whistler, Kris Kristofferson looks as raggedy as Richard Harris in 'The Count of Monte Cristo' and offers more homespun good-old-boy truisms than Dan Rather. But he does little besides take a punch, over and over. He could have sat this one out.

Blade is persuaded to work with addled old vampire overlord Damaskinos (Thomas Kretschmann), who has the skin color and texture of a white candle, in fighting the grim Reapers.

They are vampire mutants, feasting on the blood of 'normal' vampires and led by the sickly looking Nomak (Luke Goss), whose mouth is perennially bloodstained and whose chin rips apart to reveal a bulldozer-shovel-like throat with fangs and multiple tongues. Visual-effects supervisor Nicholas Brooks and his staff deserve kudos for this weird, shocking creation.

Convinced that once these Reapers destroy vampires they'll turn on humans, Blade, Whistler and computer-geek partner Scud (Norman Reetus) agree to work with a kind of vampire anti-'X-Men' known as the Bloodpack to destroy them. The Bloodpack, many of whom hate Blade, consist of an imposingly brutal, sociopathic Ron Perlman, a surprisingly sincere Leonor Varela and others.

With their shaved skulls, grotesque posture, pale faces, tormented eyes and wild, desperate hunger for victims, the Reapers are like a wolf pack of Nosferati. They crawl and scamper along the walls and streets, and inside the sewers, of a dark Prague like rabid spiders.

Production designer Carol Spier has made the nighttime city (light kills vampires) look as sinister as anything Kafka could imagine. There is a blood bank that is like a decrepit train station. And at a secret Studio 54-like dance club, young and ecstatic vampires engage in sexy blood rites.

Cinematographer Gabriel Beristain keeps everything spooky and melodramatically gothic, often filming in moodily melancholic monochromatic colors.

I don't want to oversell this film, as it has plenty of faults. Del Toro sometimes confuses his characters' bloodlust with our own. And the martial-arts scenes are so speeded up as to seem artificial. They're often empty exercises in post-'Matrix' hyperkinetic action.

But 'Blade II's' worst fault is that Del Toro underestimates our interest in and patience for character development. Nomak has unexpected resonance, like Tim Roth in 'Planet of the Apes,' yet for much of the film it's hard to distinguish him from other Reapers.

And the romantic feelings that develop between Blade and the Bloodpack member Nyssa (Varela), who also is Damaskinos' daughter, go relatively unexplored.

True, we expect such subplots in movies like this, but this one could actually work. The tension and conflict feel real, and Varela is quite good even if Snipes is too lost in caricature to fully respond.

Their final scene together is touching and visually striking - a great place for the movie to end. Unfortunately, crassness gets the better of artistic judgment.

Remembering that 'Blade II' first and foremost is product - a franchise - Del Toro, probably under orders from the producers, throws on a coda that undercuts and almost ruins the scene.

Still, if you can keep your eyes open amid all the blood and gore, you'll see Del Toro has brought unexpected gravity to 'Blade II.'Blade II

### Recensie 3

The Houston Chronicle

March 22, 2002, Friday

'Blade II': Losing the edge;  
Modern-day vampire tale could benefit from a sharper, emotion-driven plot

ERIC HARRISON

Remember when vampires had class?

They used to wear tuxedos and capes, and they spoke with such sexy Old World accents. When Dracula looked a woman in the eyes, you knew he had something on his mind besides a hasty evening repast, something the weak-kneed lass couldn't resist.

And the vampires of old could turn into bats. How cool was that?

Nowadays, they're just leather-clad bruisers who know kung fu. "Blade II," the sequel to the 1998 Wesley Snipes movie about a fanged, half-human vampire hunter, has so much martial arts you'd almost think it came from Hong Kong.

This time out, Blade (Snipes) is living in Prague, working out of a warehouse fortress with a young assistant, Scud (Norman Reedus).

At the end of the first "Blade" movie, you will recall, Whistler (Kris Kristofferson), Blade's father-figure sidekick, apparently commits suicide to keep from turning into a vampire. Now it turns out Whistler didn't die. He has been kept alive for two years by vampires and moved all over the world to keep Blade from finding him.

This scenario, and the inevitable rescue, could've made a movie all by itself. And since that film would have had an emotion-driven plot, we might have cared about the proceedings. The filmmakers decided instead to get all this out of the way early.

First, Blade recaps his history in cheesy off-screen narration, explaining how he is half-vampire and half-human and telling us how he met Whistler (though he doesn't explain how he can afford to travel all over the world and to have such high-tech gadgets). Then, before you can say "I want to drink your blood" three times, Blade kicks vampire butt, and he and Whistler are reunited. Presto!

Blade is adapted from a Marvel comic book, so the pulpy bluntness of the filmmakers' approach is appropriate, but Snipes has talked of how he worked with screenwriter David Goyer to invest the first film with an element of "King Lear-like" tragedy.

Goyer returns for Blade II, which is directed by talented Mexican director Guillermo del Toro, but this time the story forgoes feeling, choosing instead to dwell on gore and present a compendium of late-20th-century horror and science-fantasy movie cliches.

The vampires appeal to Blade for help. A new race of supervampires called reapers is threatening the vampire nation and soon will turn its attention to humans. Blade unites with the Blood Pack, a nasty team of vampire assassins (initially formed to kill him) to hunt down the lead reaper.

Every 20 minutes or so, the story pauses so Blade and some foe or foes can swing swords and high-kick each other, Matrix-style. When the reapers tire of kung fu, they get down to bloodsucking business. But they don't just bite people in the neck. The lower portion of reapers' faces open up and a tentacled, leechlike appendage that looks like the creatures from *Aliens* comes out.

It all is quite gruesome. But other than that, the only thing to say is that these vampires sure are different from any we've seen before, which surely is the point.

There's nothing wrong with reinventing vampires. The original *Dracula* movie deviated from Bram Stoker's book, making the vampire more debonair and less beastly. And Stoker's vampire bore little resemblance to the Balkan vampire legends from which it grew.

Vampires have been among the most enduring of monsters precisely because the myth is so adaptable to their times. Stoker's 1897 novel was about transgressive sexuality and Victorian England's fear of outsiders.

Since the 1970s, Anne Rice, among others, has portrayed vampires ambivalently, showing them as brooding, conflicted figures. Some people see the more recent portrayals of vampires as purely evil creatures as a reflection of more conservative times.



What, then, do the vampires of Blade and Blade II tell us about our time? The original Blade portrayed young vampires as spoiled party animals rebelling against elders who made weighty decisions in corporate boardrooms. The medical metaphors, treating vampirism as a virulent AIDS-like disease, also were apparent.

This time out, the story seems oddly divorced from the recognizable world. There are references to drugs, but mostly this film seems interested only in wowing us with stunts, makeup, special effects and plot twists that we see coming for miles.

The leader of the Blood Pack is an attractive woman (Leonor Varela), the daughter of the head of the vampire nation. Oddly, though, while she's a babe, he is as hideous as Nosferatu, pale with a bald, misshapen head and pointy ears. The reapers all look like this, too.

It isn't clear at first if Blade and Varela's character, Nyssa, really like each other or if they're only pretending for tactical advantage. It's obvious from the beginning, though, that the other members of the Blood Pack want Blade and Whistler dead.

Speaking of death, one of the perplexing things about Blade II is how hard it is to kill anyone. Vampires, of course, are notoriously hard to kill. But vampire enemies who could give the superhuman Blade a run for his money beat the dickens out of Whistler and only scratch him up a bit.

Apparently the filmmakers didn't want to have to go to the trouble of resurrecting the old coot for Blade III.

#### **Recensie 4**

'Blade II': A-Positive

By Stephen Hunter  
Washington Post Staff Writer  
Friday, March 22, 2002

I like to think of the great humanist French film critic Andre Bazin. I like to think of his belief in the truth of cinema, his conviction that through cinema could the world be healed.

Then I like to think of him seeing "Blade II."

I think it would go something like this:

"AIEEEEEEEEEEEEE-AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

There is no possible adult justification for the picture. It is pure pagan glee, a raptor's flesh fest, a zesty paprika of cannibal stew, stylized toward almost total abstraction, beyond describing, beyond imagining except by its makers.

And that is why it's so good.

Enter here, ye who dare. All others turn back.

What "Blade II" has that so few others of its ilk, or any ilk, do is an actual director. He has a worldview. You may not agree with that worldview, but it's there all the same, and it commands respect for the consistency with which he adheres to it and how its organizing principle permits his oeuvre to cohere.

Here's his worldview: "Let's eat the weak."

No, not exactly Christian or progressive, but you can't have everything. He's Guillermo del Toro, who achieved his breakthrough in 1993 with "Chronos," and then went American less successfully with 1997's "Mimic." His last film was "The Devil's Backbone," a brooding ghost story set during the Spanish Civil War.

This time, freed by a large budget, a major star who gets it, and uncountable gallons of fake blood, he's created something ghastly yet wonderful at the same time.

Derived from Marvel comic books, the movie continues the tale of the half-man, half-vampire Blade (Wesley Snipes), who has become the human champion in the war between the races. But in vampire movies as everywhere, politics intrude; a third subspecies has mutated, and it feasts on vampires themselves, quite effectively. Thus a truce is established: Blade, helped by a vampire special-operations team that looks like a punk garage band that has just looted a National Guard armory, heads out to take down this bad form of vampire.

The setting is Eastern Europe, the production standards high, the violence kinetic and stylized, the acting surprisingly good (with one drab exception); and the plot, while nonsensical if you don't believe in vampires, has a truly intriguing force and subtext. If you're going to make a movie about vampires fighting with automatic weapons in crowded Eastern European go-go joints, this is the way to do it.

It's also amazing how much an actor can contribute, even to an overabundantly effects-driven piece like this. I speak, yes, of Snipes, who is already so stylized he seems to have stepped from an Egyptian sarcophagus and then gotten a makeover from Aubrey Beardsley, but also of Ron Perlman. He's Blade's primary antagonist on the ops team, and what a great performance!

Really, everyone in the movie looks like a Droog or a Druid, yet Perlman manages to give his fellow an extreme individuality. That you even *notice* him among the sets and the slaughter and the too many guys in leather jackets with bald, veiny heads and automatic shotguns is a miracle; that you like him (even though he's the bad guy) goes beyond the miraculous.

The bald guys are fun, too, one being the master vampire Damaskinos (Thomas Kretschmann) and the other his mutant enemy Nomak (rocker Luke Goss). Alas, the weak link is Leonor Varela, who plays a vampire with complex family ties; while beautiful, she never seems animated. Okay, so, she's dead. Still . . .

Well, anyway: This movie is for a variety of segmented audiences: children whose souls have been leeches by MTV, folks with IQs under 100 and geniuses with IQs over 150. You normal people stay away: You won't get it, you won't like it, and you'll feel violated by it.

## Recensie 5

The New York Post

March 22, 2002, Friday

A DULL 'BLADE'

LOU LUMENICK

BLADE II

Not so sharp.

'BLADE II' transfuses some new blood into this sequel to the 1998 hit starring Wesley Snipes as a half-vampire hero - namely, Mexico's Guillermo del Toro, who directed last year's supremely creepy art-house hit "The Devil's Backbone."

While the new film is much more eye-catching than its blood-drenched Stephen Norrington-directed predecessor, the new script by the returning David S. Goyer is much sillier - and the movie's nearly two-hour running time seems to last nearly as long as a vampire's afterlife.

And it's less scary than last year's movie release schedule.

Snipes is back as the leather-clad Blade, sworn to kill the vampires who killed his mother and turned him into a half-vampire.

Also returning is Kris Kristofferson as his human mentor, Whistler, who killed himself at the end of the last movie. Blade conveniently recovers him from a vat of blood where Whistler has been kept in "stasis" by the vampires.

The nonsensical plot - set mostly in Prague - has Blade agreeing to a truce with Damaskinos (Thomas Kretschmann), the overlord of the undead, to battle a mutant strain of super-vampires called Reapers who are immune to Blade's silver bullets and sword.

Blade, Whistler and their shady new slacker helper, Scud (Norman Reedus), join up with a SWAT team of vampires known as the Bloodpack, led by the untrustworthy Reinhardt (Ron Perlman).

More friendly toward Blade is another member of the Wolfpack, the beautiful Nyssa (the bland Leonor Varela), who is also Damaskinos' daughter.

"Blade II" is influenced, as are so many other action films these days, by "The Matrix," and there's some impressive - if too heavily edited - martial arts sequences staged by Donnie Yen, who also plays a member of the Wolfpack.

While it's not quite the bloodbath of the first "Blade," this sequel still has more than enough entrails on view to satisfy gorehounds.

"Blade II" seems mainly aimed at hard-core comic book and action fans who check their brains at the popcorn stand.

## **Film 5: Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary**

### **Recensie 1**

Dracula: Pages From a Virgin's Diary (2002)

NYT Critics' Pick

FILM REVIEW; Eerie, Flickering Images Of a Vulnerable Dracula

By STEPHEN HOLDEN [New York Times]

Published: May 14, 2003

By turns voluptuous, whimsical and exceedingly strange, Guy Maddin's film "Dracula: Pages From a Virgin's Diary" suggests that silent movies and ballet may have always been natural dancing partners. At least they seem that way when folded into each other by a quirky visionary like Mr. Maddin, the Canadian experimental filmmaker whose work has acquired a fervent cult following.

His silent, black-and-white "Dracula," which opens today at Film Forum, was made for CBC television and is a collaboration between Mr. Maddin and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, which unveiled its evening-length adaptation of Bram Stoker's 1897 novel on the stage five years ago. For all its oddities, the movie is surprisingly faithful to the 1897 novel, which infused a modern ashen-faced archetype of night-crawling depravity into popular culture around the same time Freud published his groundbreaking studies of hysteria.

Mr. Maddin, whose mostly silent films recreate the flickering, melodramatic ambience of early movies, is a cinematic aesthete whose montages evoke a primitive moviegoing experience with a winking postmodern knowingness. In "Dracula" he and his longtime associate director and editor, deco dawson, have re-invented the dance film in a homemade style that alludes to F. W. Murnau's "Nosferatu" while looking back but nodding to the present.

"Dracula" isn't altogether silent or entirely black and white. Sound effects and painted-on dashes of color have been applied. Blood (which is plentiful) is red and money green, and the story's jagged mood swings are accented by the film's tint, which changes from sepia to blue to orange to lavender.

Subtitles and intertitles are sparingly but tellingly used to keep the story on track and to announce its themes. The use of dreamy close-ups, slow motion, pantomime and silhouette, and copious amounts of fog that makes the dancers appear to be rising up from a roiling gorge enhance the movie's sometimes campy Gothic ambience.

For all its eccentricities and technical quirks, "Dracula" is a compelling expressionistic work. Its dancer-actors, especially Zhang Wei-Qiang's Dracula, Tara Birtwhistle's Lucy, CindyMarie Small's Nina, and the Dr. Van Helsing of David Moroni, C. M., emote in the grand nostril-flaring tradition of silent melodrama. Their leering grimaces of the unhinged, fantasy-besotted characters are as memorable as Mark Godden's elegantly sexy choreography.

The director has accentuated the ballet's racial and erotic subtexts with a fun house audacity. At the beginning of the film, the image of blood seeping from East to West across a crudely drawn map of Europe sets up the portrayal of Count Dracula as a mysterious Eastern Other spreading contamination into the West. As Mr. Zhang's suave, swashbuckling count seduces and poisons his victims, you think of Attila the Hun as a Valentino-like voluptuary luring them to surrender to the intoxicating rhythm of the tango in his hard, unsmiling eyes. Radiating an avid sexual intensity that carries a whiff of sadism, Mr. Zhang is as charismatic a Dracula as has ever been shown on the screen.

Once the count infects Lucy (the movie's titles make such a fetish of the transfusion of fluids from men into women that the contamination is portrayed as racial, sexual and medical all at once), she succumbs to a lingering malaise that suggests a fatal case of tuberculosis. As in other recent interpretations of "Dracula," the image of contaminated blood also has overtones of AIDS. But more than a plague metaphor, this "Dracula" implies a demonic sexual hysteria imported into repressed Victorian England from outside.

Although a transfusion of clean blood briefly restores Lucy's vigor, the count immediately returns and re-infects her. Once she has died and been resurrected as one of the undead, she is a grinning maniac writhing in spasms of blood lust: liberated but cursed. Van Helsing, the pious vampire hunter who leads the charge against Dracula, is a fiery-eyed Puritan whose excessive zeal reeks of prurience. Lucy's suitors who join his posse, are pious, cross-bearing goody-goods, wielding flashlights, bent on a holy crusade resembling a late-19th-century lynch mob.

The story is divided into two parts. In the first, Dracula seduces Lucy, in the second he pursues her best friend, Nina, and is ultimately tracked down and ends up impaled on a stake. His final pose is sensual and heroic. This Dracula may be dangerous, he is also a martyr in an antisexual, xenophobic witch hunt.

## **Recensie 2**

San Jose Mercury News

June 6, 2003 Friday

EERIE DANCE MOVIE UPDATES 'DRACULA'

ANITA AMIRREZVANI

"Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary" is one of the most bizarre and extraordinary dance movies you'll ever see. Its characters seethe with frustrated desires and angry passions, exuding a creepy unease about women, sexuality and Asian immigrants.

The film is based on a version of "Dracula" presented by the Royal Winnipeg Ballet in 1998. Director Guy Maddin, who is known for experimental films such as "Archangel," was commissioned by the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. to film the dance for television.

Instead of making a typical dance movie, Maddin sliced and diced the ballet using jump cuts and extreme close-ups. His 75-minute film zooms by at MTV speed. No dance sequence lasts more than a few minutes, and many are just seconds long. Some of the dance choreography (by Mark Godden) looks campy, but most of it contributes to the film's otherworldly mood.

Shot in grainy black and white (with touches of red blood), "Dracula" is mostly silent except for music by Gustav Mahler. But no spoken words are needed to tell this story. The dance pantomime, along with the use of title cards, succeeds in creating a crisp narrative.

A title card at the beginning announces "Immigrants from the East!" as if a plague is on its way to the "civilized" West. It's no accident that the story opens at the home of Lucy Westenra, a lovely upper-crust blond who is the epitome of cosseted 19th-century womanhood. The role is performed by the very expressive Tara Birtwhistle, a principal dancer at the Winnipeg ballet.

Lucy is pursued by three suitors. Too bad none of them can match Dracula's appeal. The suave Zhang Wei-Qiang, a dancer who plays the Count, has a magnificent face for the role. This Dracula is sexy and sadistic, and Lucy can't resist him. Their pas de deux in a graveyard explodes with passion fulfilled after a long wait.

But Lucy's bloodless suitors aren't pleased by her choice. They track her down and destroy her, pounding in her head with a shovel (one of the few sounds in the film that is grotesquely clear over the Mahler music).

Back for more blood

Lucy's friend Mina Murray (Cindy-Marie Small) is the Count's next victim. She's stuck in a convent waiting for her suitor, Jonathan Harker (Johnny Wright). Mina tries her best to seduce Harker, but he's too Victorian to enjoy it. Enter Dracula, who doesn't have any such qualms about indulgence. He sinks his teeth into Mina and both of them look gratified, at least for a while.

The story repeats itself as the frustrated band of suitors and the crusading Dr. Van Helsing (David Moroni) hunt down the Asian vampire, determined to annihilate him. Things turn out differently for Mina than for Lucy, but the reasons aren't as clear as they could have been.

Modern and timeless

Still, "Dracula" makes an unforgettable contribution to the world of dance films. Its eerie magic seems inspired by such 19th-century ballet classics as "Swan Lake," yet its outlook on race and sex is utterly modern.

### **Recensie 3**

Undead can dance in 'Dracula'

Ballet adapted to screen as silent melodrama

Edward Guthmann, San Francisco Chronicle

Friday, June 6, 2003

Canadian maverick Guy Maddin isn't the first name one would think of to bring ballet to the screen. His films are too stylized, too crowded with visual tricks and jokey flourishes to accommodate the pure lines and smooth, classical rhythms of ballet.

In fact, Maddin ("Careful," "Tales From the Gimli Hospital") has said that he initially balked at making "Dracula: Pages From a Virgin's Diary," an adaptation of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's take on Bram Stoker's musty, overinterpreted classic. Maddin has sharp instincts: He really is the wrong director, and yet his film -- a whimsical Gothic dreamscape, shot in the style of a silent melodrama -- succeeds despite that mismatch of artist and material.

#### SIMULATING SILENT FILM

Maddin is an image-maker first and a storyteller second, and most of the fun in watching "Dracula" is sharing the high he feels in building such giddy, gauzy atmosphere. He shoots "Dracula" in black and white, on 16mm and Super 8, then reworks and "ages" the images to simulate the grainy, shadowy world of a silent film.

He tosses in irises, superimpositions, places a character's head in a bouquet of flowers, and floods a map of Europe with surging blood that signals the approach of Dracula.

Images are tinted yellow, brown, green or purple, and occasional hand-painted flashes of red highlight the dripping of blood or the lining of Count Dracula's cape. Some shots look like they were filmed in fun-house mirrors, others through a child's wintry snow-globe, still others through an optometrist's lens-switching thorofter.

No dialogue here. Just the dancer's faces, the eloquence of Mark Godden's choreography, the occasional mocking intertitle ("Death! It is only the beginning!") and the squishy sound-effect crunch of a stake through the heart or a head severed by a shovel. All that, plus Gustav Mahler's First and Second Symphonies.

Maddin sees parables for sexual repression and fear of the unknown in "Dracula" -- "Immigrants! Others! From the East!" screams a title card -- and he has a grand time eroticizing Count Dracula (Asian dancer Zhang Wei-Qiang) as a dashing, curly-haired dream lover.

Nobody disrobes or has overt sex in this movie, but when victim Lucy (Tara Birtwhistle) arches her alabaster-pale neck and Dracula dips down for a delicious, lingering bite, there's bound to be a moistening of flesh in the audience.

#### CLOSE-UPS AND CHOREOGRAPHY

Consummation -- such twisted, entwined ecstasy -- is celebrated in a gorgeous pas de deux in a snowy graveyard. Godden's choreography makes "undead" romance look appealing, but the

dancing -- predictably enough, given Maddin's reservations -- is the weakest aspect of "Dracula."

Dance, Maddin told NPR interviewer Terry Gross, "wasn't my favorite species of performing arts." He tends to favor close-ups of the dancer's painted faces,

but when he pulls back to allow Godden's choreography to flow unfettered, we feel his indifference. He admires the beauty and poise of the dance, perhaps, but his creativity isn't charged by it.

#### **Recensie 4**

Vampire's prey: Once bitten, not so shy

Movies | MOVIE REVIEW

A brainy, balletic retelling of the Dracula legend fastens on the element of women's sexual awakening.

June 27, 2003 | Manohla Dargis | Los Angeles Times

Straight out of Canada by way of Transylvania, "Dracula -- Pages From a Virgin's Diary" ranks among the more eccentric wonders of the new-movie world. A wittily revisionist adaptation of the Bram Stoker classic and a passionate kiss to a lost cinematic past, the film was directed by Guy Maddin, performed by members of the Winnipeg Royal Ballet and looks like a lost silent-movie masterpiece -- albeit one that would never have been shot. It's sexy, brainy and slightly nuts, and if it weren't playing at the Nuart Theatre it would be right at home at the Museum of Jurassic Technology.

Set in 1897 on the "East Coast of England," the film opens with the sounds of gulls and lighthouse bells capped with a flourish of Mahler. A maverick with a passion and talent for archaic cinematic vernacular, Maddin introduces his principal players in the manner of early movies. Among the characters are Lucy Westernra (Tara Birtwhistle), a coquette who relishes the attentions of her three suitors and lives alone with her ailing mother, a prisoner of an iron lung. As in the novel, Lucy falls under the vampire's spell, succumbing to Dracula (Zhang Wei-Qiang) under the cloak of night when women of a certain age and class are meant to be as cut off from the world as her mother. But while Stoker's Lucy grows progressively weaker after she's bitten, Maddin's all but glows.

Stoker's original "Dracula" creakily unfolds as a series of diary entries and letters. Although the vampire enters the story as a bald old man with a long white mustache, that vision has long been subsumed by the flamboyant figure cut by Bela Lugosi in the 1930s. In the years since Lugosi twirled his cape, filmmakers have rarely deviated from Tod Browning's vision of the count as a matinee idol, a kind of weird uncle to Valentino. A sexed-up Dracula was likely a function of box-office pragmatism, but it's also what makes his story a movie perennial. Whether the count assumes the vigorous shape of Christopher Lee or a feral Gary Oldman in Francis Ford Coppola's film, the bloodsucker makes for a choice screen villain -- a continental smoothie putting moves on virgins and looking for trouble.



You don't need to throw Stoker's imagination on the couch to get the symbolism of the novel's blood-engorged beasts and heaving female bosoms, but post-Lugosi most Dracula movies have tended to bypass the women altogether in favor of testosterone-and-gore fueled action. Coppola managed to insert some kink into his version, yet for all his film's erotic suggestiveness he never fully laid bare the novel's undertone of sexual panic. By contrast, Maddin embraces Stoker's panic and returns Lucy and her friend Mina to center stage, making them -- rather than the vampire and his hunters -- the focus. With the guys now off to the side, Maddin is freed up to seize on the novel's most embarrassingly dated aspects -- the ravaged virgins, their ravenous hunger and the male anxiety about their hunger -- and turn Stoker's subtext into text with a vengeance.

Beautifully shot to look like a silent movie with touches of Surrealist filigree -- and gracefully danced from start to finish without a spoken word of dialogue -- Maddin's film distills the essence of Stoker's narrative into a compact story of two young women struggling to come of sexual age. The first half of the film traces Lucy's descent into illness and the steps taken by Dr. Van Helsing (David Moroni) to cure her by any means necessary; the second follows the travails of Mina (CindyMarie Small). Like Lucy, Mina is a prisoner of her time and circumstance. Stashed away in a convent, she is engaged to a young man whose dealings with the count have left him haunted by sexual demons. Bedeviled by what these demons have stirred up inside him, he becomes even more horrified when he learns what they've roused in Mina.

In most Dracula movies the count and his handmaidens get their comeuppance, but only after they've vamped through the story, biting necks and turning heads. Anne Rice may have figured out vampires are hot, but few demon-lovers have gone as far as Maddin in admitting that an undead life of nocturnal gnawing isn't just sexy but far more enticing than a Victorian marriage. When Maddin's young women flutter across the stage, their long limbs and diaphanous gowns flowing, their every gesture -- at once delicate, steely, mysterious -- communicates the desire that Stoker dare not name. And when this Dracula materializes in Lucy's bedroom in the night, wafting through a pipe organ like smoke, there's no denying that this time the prey is every bit as hungry as the predator.

## Recensie 5

'Dracula' gets its bite from ballet, cool count

July 04, 2003 | By Michael Wilmington, Chicago Tribune

"Dracula: Pages From a Virgin's Diary" is yet another vampire film, and one more revival of Bram Stoker's evil and insatiable Count. But this time, it's one that may surprise you. Stoker's oft-filmed legend of the bloodthirsty undead is filtered through a different but congenial sensibility: Canadian independent virtuoso Guy Maddin, giving the vampire mythos a lusciously sinister new spin.

No director today makes movies quite like Maddin ("Tales of the Gimli Hospital"), master of a retro style which eerily duplicates the feel of the great (and not-so-great) black-and-white silents and early talkies of the '20s and '30s. In summoning up the silent and early talkie era, Maddin celebrates as well as lightly satirizes. "Dracula: Pages From a Virgin's Diary,"

opening at the Music Box Theatre, is the latest example of Maddin's alchemy, not his best, but still a picture that aficionados of classic film--and classic Dracula--should eagerly seek out.

Maddin's new film was made in collaboration with Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet, and it's essentially a record of their Dracula ballet, adapted and choreographed by Mark Godden. The story comes from Bram Stoker's novel and, a bit, from the dozens of screen and stage adaptations since.

Magnificently sensuous and macabre, the music is from Gustav Mahler's first two symphonies, and the action follows Count Dracula's (Zhang Wei-Qiang) seduction of Lucy Westenra (Tara Birtwhistle) and Mina Murray (CindyMarie Small), while the determined vampire-hunters, led by stern Professor Van Helsing (David Moroni)--abetted by Lucy's fiance Jonathon Harker (Johnny Wright) and others--hunt him down. Railing away back in the asylum is Dracula's depraved assistant-adorer and fly-eater Renfield (Brent Neale).

Through voluptuous British mansion sets, shimmering with silks and shadows and drenched in eerie nocturnes of monochrome, the sexy, sinister Dracula pursues, woos and bites his ladyloves--and is pursued himself. While Mahler's music thrums and soars, at one point turning the child's song "Frere Jacques" into a danse macabre, Dracula casts his spell. Under his hands and teeth, women blossom into evil, while Van Helsing's band, puritans in evening clothes, are like vengeful exterminators, bent on destroying glamor and wickedness.

These are characters we've seen many times, from F.W. Murnau's classic 1922 German "unofficial" adaptation "Nosferatu" to Francis Coppola's lush 1992 "Dracula" with Gary Oldman as the Count and Wynona Ryder as Lucy. But Maddin, as you'd expect, creates a new world: black and white, with flashes of color (blood-red intrusions). His "Dracula" is closer in spirit to Murnau's silent--and to Tod Browning's famous 1931 talkie, with Bela Lugosi--than it is to Coppola's fiery spectacular. Confined by Goddard's ballet, he keeps the arena minimal, the stage dreamily compact. But, like Coppola, he's made this a "Dracula" that's aware of all the others, as well as modern psychosexual commentary, post-Freud psychology and AIDS.

This Chinese Dracula is seducer, outlaw and menace. But he's also a powerfully romantic figure (as he often has been in recent decades), and the vampire hunters after him seem something of a lynch mob. Yet Maddin, as usual, steeps us in the mood of the past. This "Dracula," like all his work, might be palmed off to the unwary as an archival treasure from the late '20s. As we watch, Maddin and his crew (including editor deco dawson and art director Deanne Rohde) transport us back to a time when black and white cinematography was natural and silence (at least from the actors) was golden. And they show us how monochrome images, far from destroying illusion, can vitalize our imagination.

The dancers and their choreography are secondary to the images here. But they perform well, especially Zhang and Birtwhistle, and, more importantly, the constant music and the exaggerated flow of gesture and movement help steep us in the film's spooky lyricism.

If there's a problem with Maddin's "Dracula"--winner of several Canadian and world television and fantasy film awards--it's that Maddin isn't purely offering his own vision here, but instead uses his style to convey Stoker's novel-legend and Goddard's ballet. Maddin's great films bewitch us as much for their wit and eccentricity of his scripts as for the weird

felicities of his visual style: Here, his inspiration is limited by the bonds of the dance. But, in a way, that leaves him freer to indulge his visual knack, to drown us in jewel-like murk, dread and sexual hysteria. So he does. This is a "Dracula" to dream on.

## **Film 6: Underworld**

### **Recensie 1**

'Underworld' vamps 'Matrix' look, formula

By Wesley Morris, The Boston Globe, 9/19/2003

"Underworld" is a sepulchral vampires-vs.-werewolves soap opera. All the white dudes have damp, longish coifs, and look as if they could front the German metal outfit of their choice. The baldish black dudes seem like bouncers. And Kate Beckinsale trudges through each damp, crypto-European set in swirling dusters and tight, rubberized pants as though she really wanted to play Carrie-Anne Moss's part in "The Matrix."

But as murky and derivative-looking as the film is, it moves with an authority that pummels you into submission. Whether you'll enjoy having this picture bully you is a different matter. "Underworld" is also a romantic drama with the visual heft of a graphic novel. But its sights are so transparently set on franchisehood that cynical is the only way to feel about it. The movie makers are thinking "Matrix," but somewhere before the big climax I started thinking "Highlander."

The action picks up in the middle of an interspecies war that's been raging for a millennium. The lupine Lycans are looking for the ultimate weapon to obliterate the Vampires once and for all. (I was certain that the Lycans' new artillery would do the trick: Their guns can fire daylight-loaded bullets that glow like little tanning-salon bulbs. It's the best sight gag in the whole sunless movie.)

They think they've found their solution in a miraculous young doctor. He's called Michael, presumably because The One was taken. He's played by Scott Speedman, a swimmer type who's even more passive than Keanu Reeves. Michael belongs to a aberrant species: pure human. The Lycans want to turn him into the ultimate Vampire slayer. Looking out for him however is Selene (Beckinsale). She's a Death Dealer -- that high caste of Vampires that kills Lycans dead.

Her relationship with Michael has her fellow Dealers peeved, in particular the aptly named Kraven (Shane Brolly, who appears to be acting from the scalp up). Somehow Kraven has gotten the idea that he's Selene's man, though there's nothing in Beckinsale's performance or in Danny McBride's otherwise overcooked script to corroborate his possessiveness. He forbids her to spend another minute with Michael, whom she's falling for. And who can blame her? Michael's the only person in this movie you wouldn't expect to run into after a Marilyn Manson show.

Selene has also angered Viktor (Bill Nighy), the Vampires' prissy, desiccated, 1,400-year-old immortal ruler. Sure, he's been asleep for two centuries thanks to a medically induced hibernation, but he's awake now, and, boy, is he upset.

He, too, would like his loyal Selene to stay away from Michael. This turns urgent after the ugly truth about Michael is revealed. But Viktor has his own checkered past, which Selene finds shocking. If you're familiar with Euripides, the plot of "Jungle Fever," or any of Archie Bunker's choicer racial zingers, you'll find all this old hat -- or, for that matter, old hate. What would "Underworld" like to tell us about war? The film is written by a former stunt coordinator (McBride) and directed by a former props guy (Len Wiseman, who is Beckinsale's fiance), so the gist of the film is probably just that the bodies should fly (they do) and that the swords should be sharp (they are). With two sides fighting for reasons only they understand, the film flirts with being an allegory, but of what? The conflict in the Middle East? The pennant race? The postponed California recall?

Neither the Vampires nor the Lycans stand for anything greater than their own bellicosity. A crazy back story, lots of rules and a bevy of characters are meant to pass for ideology. That's not how you build a blockbusting movie franchise, but it certainly makes for a decent role-playing game.

## Recensie 2

The Denver Post

September 19, 2003 Friday

Despite over-the-top antics, vampire thriller bloody good

Michael Booth

The first two acts of 'Underworld' may seem like a violent, moody video game with a crepe-thin script attached.

Be patient. The rain-soaked urban saga of why werewolves and vampires hate each other gets richer by the minute. In a two-hour slow reveal, director Len Wiseman and writer Danny McBride take us deeper and deeper into the storied fury of beast versus bat, compensating with intelligent mythology for the lack of character development early in the dark show.

Suddenly we care beyond all reason whether the made-up world of moonlit man-wolves can live in peace with the make-believe covens of sun-avoidant bloodsuckers. And whether any will wear a color other than black.

Wiseman and friends sat around imagining a werewolf movie for the 21st century, and decided the doomed creatures must have been the mortal enemies of another anthropomorphic classic, the vampires. To explain the feud, they built in a Romeo and Juliet legend that would tie the clans in a centuries-long struggle: This time, it's personal, not to mention furry.

But they won't tell you this up front. 'Underworld' starts in the middle, with Kate Beckinsale poured into a leather bodysuit as Selene. She is one of the elite vampire warriors who executes the lower-class, feral werewolves lurking in their unnamed, timeless city. The long-suffering werewolves seem to be reorganizing, and she wants to know why they are pursuing neutral human Michael Corvin (Scott Speedman).

Like all good cops, fanged or no, Selene's noble quest for the truth is undercut by a corrupt supervisor, the vampire elder Kraven (Shane Brolly). Kraven, one of the few weak links in 'Underworld' thanks to constant overacting by Brolly, doesn't want the undead wising up to his traitorous dealings with werewolf prince Lucian (Michael Sheen), whom everyone thought was dead.

Sprinkled throughout the fierce fighting and acrobatic effects is an interesting take on race relations, with the aristocratic vampires persecuting the allegedly dumber and more venal werewolves to the point of extinction. The greatest fear of the 'respected' vampire elders is that werewolves and bat creatures will drink at the same genetic watering hole, spawning a mixed race that would mean the end of undead civilization as we know it.

The characters all know exactly why they are fighting and what's at stake, but it is only divulged to the audience in layers. It's a frustration at first, but eventually the technique is a tribute to the makers' talents, creating an internally logical world that has existed for centuries and demanding that we drop into it cold.

I should say, mostly logical. Apparently it's been raining for 800 years but nobody has yet invented umbrellas or raincoats. The vampires have roomfuls of hot concubines lounging in lingerie from the Victoria's Secret fall Gothic collection, while the werewolves are all male. Maybe that's why they're so angry.

But these are minor punctures in this smooth skin of a movie. Beckinsale chooses to say it with spandex rather than Shakespearean monologues, but it's a role with bite. She handles the intense physical demands with grace, and her effective brooding grows with her phlebotomistic lust for the human.

Bill Nighy grows brilliantly and forcefully from dusty bones to vampire king Viktor, in one of the many virtuoso, drawn-out special effects sequences featured in 'Underworld.' He brings his own Shakespearean authority to the sometimes benevolent, sometimes rampaging leader.

"Underworld" may very well end up as a video game, and a good one, too. But future gamers should know it began as a well-conceived, powerful movie, over the top for all the right reasons.

### **Recensie 3**

The Houston Chronicle

September 19, 2003, Friday

'Underworld' takes vampires to a new level

BRUCE WESTBROOK

Just as 1931's now-stuffy *Dracula* was a potent product of its time, "Underworld" is a vampire film for the new millennium - bold, galvanizing and darkly stylish.

Like *28 Days Later*, this new stab at old horrors takes its genre seriously. Screenwriter Danny McBride and director Len Wiseman, both first-timers, put fresh spins on dusty myths by melding Matrix-style flamboyance to a star-crossed romance bridging the bitter divide between savage racial purists.

Set in a timeless city - and shot in Budapest, Hungary - the film slams into bravura action scenes with wrenching regularity while still weaving an elaborate back-story into its intriguing plot.

Humans are hardly seen and barely bitten. Instead, aristocratic vampires and lowly, feral werewolves assail each other in a centuries-old blood feud. Each race has adapted modern weapons to its supernatural needs, lacing bullets with silver nitrate to waste werewolves or ultraviolet liquid to vanquish vampires.

Selene (Kate Beckinsale) is a vampire warrior with double-fisted handguns and revenge-driven fierceness. As treachery erupts in her coven, she unearths odious genetic experiments by the Lycan (werewolves), requiring the blood of a human (Scott Speedman) to whom she's strangely drawn.

Near *Dark* was similarly adventurous in 1987 when it showed armed vampire gangs by way of *The Wild Bunch*. *Underworld* goes further, turning them into a heavily armed, Godfather-style family ensconced in a massive mansion until venturing out to put hits on its enemies.

Forget crosses, stakes, garlic, sunlight or other hoary horror trappings. Looking like a party of aging British rock stars (and played by a largely British cast), these vampires prowl the rainy streets and soggy sewers of their aging city like a John Woo-led army of decadent, slick mercenaries.

Atmospheric to the max, *Underworld* evokes the elegant noir look and gothic grandeur of *Dark City*, *The Crow* and even the *Batman* movies. It also glamorizes vampires (but not heathen werewolves) by dressing them in chic cloaks and gowns, not to mention the tight black-leather duds Beckinsale wears to war. Don't hate them because they're beautiful.

Unlike most of today's action filmmakers, Wiseman wisely eschews computer-generated excess. Werewolf transformations are CG-driven, but then elaborate prosthetics take over. The vampires rely on toothy subtlety.

Though its gunplay and stunts spark the exhilaration of a thrill ride, the film's acting is uneven. A baleful Beckinsale is quietly tortured and convincingly resolute, while credible as a kick-butt assassin. But Shane Brolly as coven leader Kraven is a clumsy study in spite, and Speedman isn't proactive enough to flesh out his part.

Easily stealing their thunder is Bill Nighy, a treasure of the British theater who's creepily regal as a resurrected vampire. Michael Sheen also earns ambivalence as tragic Lycan leader Lucian.

Beyond its supernatural side, Underworld's chief fantasy is that vampires and werewolves have remained unknown to humans despite escalating their warfare to spectacular public battles. The only thing "underworld" about their hellish hail of bullets is the subway where one such fracas erupts.

Picky, picky. Underworld also has the guts to update a genre - and the wisdom to preserve its eerie seductiveness. Purists may howl, but it makes perfect sense for modern vampires to use guns, cars and cell phones. A bloodsucker's gotta do what a bloodsucker's gotta do.

#### **Recensie 4**

A Stake In The Heart Of Quality Cinema

Movies - REVIEW - 'Underworld'

September 19, 2003 | By Jay Boyar, Orlando Sentinel

Underworld isn't your typical sucky vampire movie. It's much, much worse. This is a vampire movie that thinks it's The Matrix. Pointless, explosive action. Occasional slo-mo violence. Flashy special effects. Even those long coats.

Kate Beckinsale (Pearl Harbor) wears one of those coats. She's Selene, a vampire warrior who is more likely to gun down an enemy than to use her fangs on him. Selene also wears a body-hugging shiny black jumpsuit. If there's any reason to see this picture, that's it. As Underworld begins, Selene and her vampire buddies are caught up in a centuries-old war with the lycans. And in case you've misplaced your horror-flick lexicon, lycan is another word for werewolf. Somewhere in there is a human doctor (Scott Speedman of TV's Felicity) whom the lycans want to kidnap. Selene tries to stop them. There's your plot.

Director Len Wiseman is a newcomer to features whose resume includes music videos and video-game commercials. His background shows in the new film's visual razzle-dazzle and general lack of coherence. Wiseman gives Underworld, which opens today, a cold, cobalt look, which we probably have to call "stylish." At a length of two hours, it's also pretty monotonous. Only a nitwit would insist on discussing a film like this in terms of its performances. The actors are like puppets in elaborate costumes. In fact, the film might have been more fun with actual puppets.

Somewhere out there, Dracula is turning over in his grave. He does that all the time, of course. But this time he really has to be ticked.

## Recensie 5

The Washington Post

September 19, 2003 Friday

'Underworld': Nothing New Under The Moon

Ann Hornaday

Vampires have gone high-tech in "Underworld," first-time director Len Wiseman's contemporary take on legend's most terrifying fiends and their ancient blood feuds. Instead of fangs, these bloodsuckers wield floppy disks; their enemies kill them not by opening velvet curtains with a flourish or by brandishing mirrors, but with guns that fire weaponized UV rays.

For all its slick, neo-noir style, "Underworld" brings very little that's new to a hoary genre, except for the clichés and conventions of other hoary genres. With its derivative nods to "The Matrix," "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" and heaven knows how many John Woo movies and Michelob commercials, "Underworld" plays less like a novel re-imagining of a classic if campy narrative than a drearily self-conscious exercise in Know Your Film References.

Kate Beckinsale, who used to be an actress and presumably will be again someday, scowls attractively as Selene, a vampire whose voiceover narration provides the back story: For centuries her kind has been at war with werewolves, which in the movie are called "lycan," bringing to mind little pink mosslike flowers, surely not the filmmakers' intended effect. Although the vampires succeeded in killing the werewolves' leader, the latter seem to be making a comeback. The first scene of "Underworld" is a protracted shootout between the wolves and the bats in a subway station, the point of which is obscure and will only become marginally less obscure as the movie wears on (and on).

In Wiseman's blue-tinted, vaguely Mitteleuropean setting, the vampires are the café society of the bloodletting ghoulish set, a bunch of Goth fashionistas whose well-upholstered hangout resembles a New York nightclub during the 1980s (but that's not red wine they're sipping). The werewolves are clearly the uncool kids, a gang of unsexy beasts who, as soon as the full moon hits, turn into creatures less lupine than simian. When they're not fighting vampires, they're fighting each other, as demonstrated in a scene that could have been lifted wholesale from "Fight Club" (that movie easily being worth 20 points in Know Your Film References).

It turns out that the werewolves are after an innocent human (played by Scott Speedman), and Selene takes him under her black-latex-encased wing to find out why. But the convoluted plot of "Underworld" has less to do with a comprehensible or compelling story than with finding excuses to revel in blood, viscera, desiccated flesh and lots of dramatically fluttering leather trench coats ("Matrix" for 10!). By the time Selene joins the final battle with her mortal enemies -- not the ones you might expect -- "Underworld" clearly means to convey apocalyptic doom. Instead, the effect is as underwhelming as the rest of the world it has so strenuously confected.



## Film 7: Van Helsing

### Recensie 1

#### Van Helsing

**Grade:** C-

**Verdict:** Overblown and underwhelming. It's slightly better than the odious "The Cat in the Hat."

By BOB LONGINO

In the incessant, irritating noise that is "Van Helsing," the werewolves overhowl at the moon, the vampy vampires make annoying cat screeches, and zealous plucks from guitar strings blast their way through the soundtrack's bloated orchestrations.

The movie's also stuffed with enough over-the-top computer effects -- a few of them simply lame -- to choke George Lucas.

And "Van Helsing" lead actors Hugh Jackman and Kate Beckinsale? They never had a chance.

Jackman plays a wide-hatted 19th century hunter of scary creatures like Dracula, Dr. Jekyll's Mr. Hyde and Frankenstein's Monster. He's got PR problems because once he kills a killer, his prey turns back into human form and, thus, the public thinks Van Helsing is the bad guy.

The movie's got even bigger problems. It's the kind of film that sucks the life out of all its encounters.

It is an overly expensive (the budget has been estimated as high as \$150 million), overblown mess of upside-down vampires and wailing monstrosities, boo scares and incomprehensible weather patterns. First it rains, then it snows, then lightning strikes. Meanwhile, clouds come and go on cue to mask the moon, thereby changing werewolves into humans and back again, depending on needs of the plot.

Make no mistake, "Van Helsing" will top the weekend's box-office tally. In a way, the film marks the beginning of summer moviegoing.

Writer-director Stephen Sommers made his mark in Hollywood with the questionable "Mummy" movies, which piled on special effects to mask limp stories.

"Van Helsing" is more of the same. Lots more.

Some of the Transylvania sets, in fact, are breathtaking. The opening sequence, involving the creation of Frankenstein's Monster (played by Tony winner and Marietta native Shuler Hensley) is a near visual masterpiece of old-style matte paintings, intriguing castle sets and electrical gizmos.

The computer effects alternate between the good (the electrified head of Frankenstein's Monster), the bad (Mr. Hyde is far less convincing than last summer's critically annihilated "Hulk") and the truly ugly (a ship on the high seas looks as ridiculous as anything in "The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen").

What is lacking throughout the film is the script, brimming with inane and pompous prattle. The plot never gets any deeper than Jackman's Van Helsing pontificating, "You think I enjoy being the most hated man in Europe?"

Beckinsale and others are saddled with ridiculously affected accents. David Wenham (Faramir in the "The Lord of the Rings" movies) is seriously miscast as Carl, the weird-haired comic relief friar and Van Helsing's gadget-making sidekick. Richard Roxburgh's evil Dracula is more laughable than sinister.

Many of the side characters appear costumed for a revival of "The Rocky Horror Picture Show." Makeup-wise, they are pancaked within an inch of their lives.

The emotional vacuum between characters and moviegoing audience is almost palpable. There is but a single scene where but a single character -- Hensley as Frankenstein's Monster - - conveys any sort of honest emotion.

But, hey, it looks really cool when the guy playing the first werewolf rips off his own skin to reveal the beast within.

## **Recensie 2**

San Jose Mercury News  
May 7, 2004 Friday

**MAN VS. MONSTERS;  
WITH ALL ITS CREATURES AND ACTION, 'VAN HELSING' FAILS TO SINK TEETH**

**GLENN LOVELL**

Hugh Jackman shows his box-office bite again as the titular monster hunter in "Van Helsing." Flashing his pearly whites, the Aussie heartthrob metamorphoses from Wolverine to all-out wolf, both figuratively and literally.

But by film's end Jackman is more dazed than dazzling. And who can blame the poor guy? Stephen Sommers' follow-up to his popular "Mummy" remakes is all climax and no foreplay, all computer effects but zero sense of dread.

It raids so many graves and catacombs that it should come with a blanket apology to everyone who ever toiled in the horror genre, from Mary Shelley, Robert Louis Stevenson and Bram Stoker to directors James Whale and Tod Browning and Britain's Hammer Films (for Sommers' use of abundant heaving breasts, a Hammer studio trademark).

And after Sommers has had his way with the dark-and-stormy-night brigade, he moves on to Sergio Leone's spaghetti Westerns (this Van Helsing sports a leather duster and a Stetson!) and the 007 franchise (there's even an abbey armorer modeled after "Q"). And lest you miss the fact that this is all meant tongue-in-cheek, Sommers moves on to spoof the classic spoofs, including Roman Polanski's "Fearless Vampire Killers" and Mel Brooks' "Young Frankenstein."

In short, this next-generation horror epic proves a monster of a mess, a herky-jerky, stitched-together amalgam of plot twists, monster lore and classic lines ("It's alive! It's aliiiiive!"). At least Sommers doesn't have to worry about a sequel this time: His latest is so jam-packed that it comes with its own evil, increasingly screechy spawn.

### Promising at first

Sommers opens promisingly with a fun homage to "Bride of Frankenstein," complete with torch-bearing mob, electrical storm and frazzled Victor Frankenstein (Samuel West). In the shadows, but really calling the shots, are Dracula (Richard Roxburgh) and Igor (Kevin J. O'Connor) who, like Marty Feldman in "Young Frankenstein," is the hunchback with the comebacks.

After this fiery Transylvanian prologue, we flit forward a year to the streets of Paris, where Van Helsing is busy pursuing an ape-like bruiser named Mr. Hyde (a digitized brute with Robbie Coltrane's voice).

Van Helsing -- played in the '30s by a professorial Edward Van Sloan and in the '50s by a more intense Peter Cushing -- has undergone his own Jekyll/Hyde transformation: As played by Jackman, he's now a studly adventurer with a mysterious past. He works for the Vatican, which dispatches him to remote corners of the globe to battle the forces of evil.

Van Helsing's next assignment takes him to Transylvania, where the very capable Anna (Kate Beckinsale) and her doomed brother (Will Kemp) are battling a family curse, and Dracula and his brides are attempting to unleash a new generation of vampire hatchlings. In this retelling, Drac's incubating progeny have something to do with the Frankenstein monster (Shuler Hensley), who's really a lovable dough boy with flip-top cranium and green-neon brain.

What transpires over the next hour or so is a veritable monster mash, what with Frankie, Drac and Igor soon being joined by the Wolf Man, some dwarfish lab assistants and Drac's three lascivious wives. Some of this is quite spectacular, even inspired (such as the masque ball and a vampira's X-rayvision), but overall the thing feels manic and repetitious, particularly all the dive-bombing by fanged harpies and the endless coach chase, which might as well flash "Warning! Cliffhanger Moment Ahead!"

### Lack of tension

Sommers obviously knows his horror movies, but in his race to cram in thousands of references to the Universal classics of the '30s and '40s, he has forgotten a simple lesson: When you don't slow down long enough to build relationships or character empathy, you forfeit a little something called tension. Much befalls Van Helsing and his loyal band, but not for a second do we feel they're in real jeopardy. It's like Halloween without the howl.

Postscript: Universal has asked critics to "refrain from revealing plot developments . . . in the final 30 minutes." You can file that request under so much wishful thinking. Like much else in this operatic video game of a movie, the ending is so nonsensical and over-the-top, it defies description.

### Recensie 3

Movie review: 'Van Helsing' sucks the life out of horror classics

Colin Covert

Minneapolis Star Tribune

May 6, 2004

To determine whether you'll enjoy "Van Helsing," the heavily advertised would-be action-horror franchise launcher, simply take the following quiz. Begin with 100 points and follow the instructions below. If your final score is 75 or above, run to the theater like a Transylvanian villager fleeing sundown.

- If you fidgeted through 2001's "The Mummy Returns," the previous film from writer/director Steven Sommers, subtract 10 points.
- If you think horror movies ought to be scary, subtract 25 points.
- If you think action movies should occasionally interrupt the stunts for a smidge of storytelling and character development, subtract 35 points.
- If you have fond memories of the great old 1930s Universal monster movies, subtract 60 points.
- If you own more than two video-game systems, add 50,000 points.

"Van Helsing" might make viewers jump out of their seats and run screaming from the theater, but not in the way its producers hoped. More and more summer movies depend on relentless action sequences at the expense of coherent narrative, but "Van Helsing" might be the first whose overkill reaches nuclear capacity.

Pounding audiences while trashing the heritage of Universal Studios' founding monsters, it rages like a tornado, flinging special effects mindlessly in all directions. But there is no eye of calm in this thunderingly stupid storm, no moment to catch your breath and anticipate the next barrage. The film is designed for continuous bombardment.

Van Helsing, a 19th-century monster hunter for a secret Vatican order that operates in the manner of a steam-era James Bond, takes a tour of a Q-like underground armory where he gazes admiringly at a rapid-fire Gatling gun. "Why can't I have one of those?" he says wistfully, and you can tell he's on the same blast-'em-to-smithereens wavelength as the filmmakers.

St. Cloud native Sommers, who gave us the delightful "The Mummy" and then stumbled with "The Mummy Returns," falls all the way down the cellar stairs with his latest effort. After a glorious black-and-white opening in which the film salutes "Frankenstein," with the monster jolting to life in the good doctor's laboratory and being trapped a few fast-paced minutes later in a flaming windmill, "Van Helsing" begins to grope for a workable plot.

It settles for 367 strenuous confrontations between the title character and werewolves, Count Dracula and the singed monster. Action outweighs every other value in this breathlessly rushed film, which manages to work in a rapid-fire crossbow, more cable swinging than a Tarzan marathon and a pair of runaway disintegrating stagecoaches. The film seems to fear that our attention will wander unless two or three cataclysmic battles are raging at the same time.

Outfitted in an absurd leather overcoat and broad-brimmed hat, Hugh Jackman's Van Helsing suggests Indiana Jones without Harrison Ford's redeeming sense of humor. He scowls and snarls and growls his way through the film like Wolverine with a migraine. Jackman isn't having any fun with the role, and neither do we as he spouts memorably bad dialogue with the utmost passion and conviction. Sommers has directed his actors TO SHOUT ALL THEIR SPEECHES LIKE THIS AS IF NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

The story proceeds the same way, with no rhyme, reason or sense of rhythm. The notion of combining three classic monsters in a single plot (four, if you count an early cameo by a CGI Mr. Hyde, who shares Shrek's plasticky skin and Scottish accent) results in a monster mush where narrative sense is jettisoned and pretty much anything goes.

Sommers concocts an irredeemably dumb new mythology in which Dr. Frankenstein created the monster as part of Dracula's plot to unleash flying squadrons of gargoyle-like vampire babies on Transylvania. Werewolves fit into the scheme in a way that is equally foolish and obviously contrived to provide some boffo wolf-monster-vs.-bat-monster mayhem at the finale.

I don't know enough about monster lore to know if this is heresy, but I know enough about movies to know it is stupid.

Outfitted in a wasp-waisted corset that recalls her leather battle gear in last year's vastly more entertaining vampires-vs.-werewolves yarn "Underworld," Kate Beckinsale is an indistinct smear of a heroine. She plays a tough noblewoman with a personal grudge against the vampire hordes, the good-girl counterpoint to Dracula's three sadistically lip-licking brides. While she lacks the leathery wings that enable the brides to swoop through the air like MiG fighters, she has mastered the "Crouching Tiger" art of ignoring the laws of gravity during fight sequences.

Beckinsale's performance is functional, and it must be conceded that she is given little in the way of character to work with. Her only defining desire is a wish to see the sea, and when she finally does, a tear trickling down her cheek, only stone-hearted viewers will be able to choke back howls of laughter.

Less likely is the possibility that they will be amused by the script's intentional stabs at humor, such as her observation that "we Transylvanians try to look on the brighter side of death."

Exeunt audience, screaming.

#### Recensie 4

Special effects turn 'Van Helsing' into a monster mush

May 07, 2004 | Ty Burr, The Boston Globe

"Van Helsing" isn't based on a comic book or a video game or a line of action figures, although it bears a resemblance to all three. No, "Van Helsing" is based on the Universal Pictures marketing department's tumescent desire to re-imprint its brands onto the minds of a new generation. Translated into English, that means we haven't had a good Frankenstein, Dracula, or Wolf Man movie in a long time, so here's one where the whole gang shows up.

One catch: It's not good. But that's secondary. A movie like this is just a beachhead for the eventual theme-park ride.

The early bird of the 2004 summer "tent pole" movies, "Van Helsing" promises a long, noisy, enervating season ahead. Writer-director Stephen Sommers proved with the two recent "Mummy" movies that he could bring a Universal horror franchise back from the dead, but here he piles too much on his plastic buffet plate: We get Victor Frankenstein (Samuel West) and his monster (Shuler Hensley), Count Vladislaus Dracula (Richard Roxburgh) and his three brides (Elena Anaya, Silvia Colloca, and Josie Maran as a slightly more dessicated version of the Gabor sisters), more than one Wolf Man (Will Kemp is the first), Igor (Kevin J. O'Connor), Edward Hyde of Jekyll and Hyde fame (played by Robbie Coltrane under several digital tons of CGI "make-up"), not to mention throwaway nods to "The Wizard of Oz," "Aliens," "Gremlins," and Lon Chaney in 1927's "London After Midnight."

At the center is the monster-killer Gabriel Van Helsing, who was a doddering professor in the 1931 Bela Lugosi "Dracula" but who's here played by Hugh Jackman clad in vintage Indiana Jones. Employed by the secret Vatican intelligence agency the Order, Van Helsing is posted to Transylvania to help the surviving members of the Valerious family quell Dracula's plans for world domination (or something). Jackman has cut a natty figure in the "X-Men" movies and on Broadway, but here he's defeated by mall-goth dialogue like "To have memories of those you've loved and lost is perhaps worse than having no memories at all." By the end you can barely see the actor between the explosions and morphing flesh.

The sad thing is that "Van Helsing" starts off with a stylish black-and-white bang that bows low to the Universal horror films of the '30s and '40s. Those movies were often scary and funny at the same time - intentionally so - and Sommers's opening scenes likewise let Roxburgh's Dracula and O'Connor's Igor rip with fruity line readings that have you looking forward to a smart, witty revamp.

Then the film switches to color, the special-effects bloat kicks in, and the fun drains away. For most of its running time, ``Van Helsing" is one excruciatingly loud set piece of CGI hooey after another, and when a character or a plot twist does manage to make you laugh, you're not sure whether it's camp or ineptitude.

Except for Kate Beckinsale's performance as Princess Anna Valerious: That's all unintentional comedy. Wearing a leather bustier and thigh-high boots that don't exactly scream late-19th-century Eastern Europe, pitching her accented voice somewhere to the left of Natasha in ``Rocky and Bullwinkle," Beckinsale cuts a ridiculous figure - Alanis Morissette as a strapping action babe.

The movie may be a hit, regardless. Hollow big-budget sensationalism is a proven staple, and younger audiences may confuse the sound and fury of ``Van Helsing" for actual content. (On the other hand, it didn't convince them to go see "The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen," which was worse only by a matter of degrees.)

Parents of younger teens should know that this is a horror-action flick in which the emphasis comes down - hard - on horror, and in which the filmmakers have worked overtime to provide one assault on the senses after another. Are the results icky-cool or icky-traumatizing? Depends on your kid. Still, read the reasons for the rating if you want a horselaugh: That ``Van Helsing" got a PG-13 only testifies to the MPAA's cravenness when it comes to studio blockbusters that need the teen audience like a junkie needs heroin.

A final note: Universal Home Video has just released the original "Dracula," "Frankenstein," and "Wolf Man" in deluxe "Legacy Collection" DVD sets that group each film with its sequels. The target audience for ``Van Helsing" will doubtless find them fatally dull (and in the case of the original ``Dracula," they'd be right).

The rest of us will curl up with James Whale's 1935 "Bride of Frankenstein" and a mug of spiked mead and be perfectly content.

## **Recensie 5**

Movie - REVIEW - `Van Helsing'

Out For Blood -- But With No Bite

Despite Its Buzz, The High-powered Van Helsing Drives A Stake Into The Heart Of Creature Features.

May 07, 2004 | By Jay Boyar, Orlando Sentinel

Dracula sucks, and he's not the only one in the new, way-over-the-top Van Helsing.

A turbo-charged retelling of the Dracula, Frankenstein and Wolf Man sagas, this extravagant creature-feature crams everything in but Abbott and Costello.

The monstrous overkill leaves you feeling not just dead but undead -- as if all the blood has been drained from your system.

Van Helsing was written and directed by Stephen Sommers, whose blockbuster Mummy remake opened exactly five years ago. It was similarly overblown, although his sequel to it, *The Mummy Returns*, took itself more lightly and worked as a kind of parody of the first film.

There's batty humor in *Van Helsing*, but it's incidental.

Sommers can't bring himself to kid around much this time -- not with the revival of at least three big Universal Pictures horror franchises at stake. This is serious business, as the studio's marketing department was presumably eager to remind him.

Drac-a-holics know that *Van Helsing* is the vampire expert who, in many adaptations of the classic Bram Stoker novel, becomes the courtly bloodsucker's chief nemesis.

Sommers gives us a younger, more virile *Van Helsing* than usual. Played by Hugh Jackman (*Wolverine* in the *X-Men* films), this vampire hunter sports a souped-up crossbow and a hat from the *Indy Jones* designer collection.

But Sommers' main innovation is the way he combines the stories of the three major monsters (plus one or two others) into a single narrative. Part of how he does this is to stress that *Van Helsing* is an all-purpose monster-buster for whom any unruly creature is fair game.

In fact, this *Van Helsing* works for a secret society that sends him on improbable missions and provides him with a sidekick. That would be Carl, a wry friar who, like James Bond's Q, dreams up useful inventions.

*Van Helsing*, admittedly, begins well.

Sommers sets up a series of action sequences that are coherently staged and, sometimes, even exciting. He has a knack for working within large environments, such as a village square or a drafty building.

An early, visually sensational sequence, set at a windmill in an open field, features *Frankenstein's* monster and an army of angry villagers with torches and pitchforks. The scale of the action amps up the excitement: As the windmill collapses in flames, you feel as if you're on some huge thrill ride.

But as the film dashes by, scenes such as these inexplicably become less coherent. And, finally, there are simply too many of them in this two-hour, 12-minute extravaganza.

What gets lost along the way is the story's human -- and inhuman -- dimension. Those old Universal creature features -- *Dracula* (1931), *Frankenstein* (1931) and *The Wolf Man* (1941) -- sometimes plod along, but they never forget to stress the emotional values.



To blend these stories, Sommers slices and dices their dramatic elements. And the new connecting story that he has cooked up, involving a Gypsy princess and Van Helsing's blocked memory, seems thin and flavorless.

Jackman looks great in his hat and long coat, and he certainly has the stature for the title role. But it's conceived in such blandly heroic terms that he doesn't have much to work with: Compared to this flashy adventurer, Indiana Jones seems to have the depth of King Lear.

As Anna Valerious, that Gypsy princess, Kate Beckinsale (*Underworld*) also looks dashing, and her character is as much of a fighter as Van Helsing. It's a shallow role too, but at least she moves well.

David Wenham, as the ingenious Carl, is responsible for most of the movie's humor. (Some might say he's Abbott and Costello combined.) And Richard Roxburgh (*Moulin Rouge*) finds a surprising freshness and sadness in the dark count of Transylvania.

Rounding out the cast are Shuler Hensley as the Frankenstein monster, Will Kemp as the Wolf Man, Kevin J. O'Connor as the lurching Igor and, as Dracula's fang-and-cleavage-baring brides, Elena Anaya, Silvia Colloca and Josie Maran.

Opening today, on the threshold of Hollywood's summer, *Van Helsing* is an in-your-neck reminder of the season's traditional strengths and failings. It tells you to keep your eyes peeled even as you check your brain at the door.

## **Film 8: Bloodrayne**

### **Recensie 1**

Published: Jan. 9, 2006 3:00 a.m.

'BloodRayne' is anemic and weak

The horror-movie version of the video game is more cartoonish than frightening.

By TOM MAURSTAD / The Dallas Morning News

There's nothing certain in life except death, taxes and ... that movies based on video games are going to stink. Cue "BloodRayne."

It offers enough twists on the vampire tale to support a game in which you roam around killing the evil undead. But as a movie, "BloodRayne's" mishmash of comic books and movies, all set in an Earth-like world in a vaguely medieval time, is just too thin and flimsy to support mere viewing interest. There's not a character that's more than a cartoon cutout.

"Rayne" is the half-human/half-vampire heroine of this movie, and as with the game, much of the entertainment value of this experience is in watching her run around, looking sexy and dangerous. Who knew there were leather pants and halter tops in the Middle Ages? Looking

sexy and dangerous is a familiar challenge to Kristanna Loken, who played the killing machine in "Terminator 3."

The story concerns the evil Kogan's plan to rule the world. That involves a "Lord of the Rings"-like quest to gather three talismans, but first he must also destroy Rayne, who just happens to be his daughter who's been estranged ever since he killed her mother. There's some secret human society dedicated to wiping out the vampire menace, led by Michael Madsen's Vladimir and his young ward, Sebastian (Matt Davis).

But wait, there's more - King Elrich, an ambitious vampire, plans a hostile takeover of Kogan's empire. Billy Zane's few scenes offer some needed comic relief.

There are geysers of blood. And a sex scene that is gratuitous even by horror-movie standards. But the most depressing sight is watching Oscar winner Ben Kingsley sleepwalk his way through it. The good-actors-gone-bad gallery may have to make room for a new member.

## Recensie 2

The New York Post

January 7, 2006 Saturday

NOT SUCK-CESSFUL

KYLE SMITH

BLOODRAYNE

\* (one star)

Heads will roll.

Running time: 94 minutes. Rated R (gory violence, nudity, sex scene). At the Empire, 42nd Street and Eighth Avenue.

THE semicoherent vampire flick "BloodRayne" has one Oscar winner - Ben Kingsley - and zero wardrobe changes for the lead character, suggesting the former star of "Gandhi" is now cheaper than a new outfit.

Rayne (Kristanna Loken) is an 18th-century circus freak in a leatherette bustier who gets scorched by water but is OK with crosses. She's a dhampir, meaning Mom was human but Dad, the evil Kagan (Kingsley), is a vampire.

Kagan is guilty of rape, murder (he killed Mom) and wearing what appears to be a satin Sgt. Pepper tunic in a dark castle where he gives orders like, "Bring me my thralls!" These are henchmen who aid him in his quest to reassemble a super-vampire, now deceased, whose body parts are scattered throughout the kingdom.

Ungodly powers will fall to whoever puts all the pieces together.

The lord of another castle, Billy Zane (remember him?), also lusts for power, though he is reduced to whining "Stop throwing things at me" when someone tosses a severed head on his desk.

Rayne escapes from the circus with much sword fighting and neck biting, and starts picking up the super-vampire parts in an effort to work her way back to Kagan - and seek her revenge. She's aided by vampire hunters Vladimir (Michael Madsen, who says things like, "So. We meet again!") and Sebastian (Matt Davis), who mainly seems to be waiting for his big sex scene with Rayne.

"BloodRayne" has a strange rhythm: Halfway through, the guys put Rayne through a training sequence, even though we've just seen her kick butt for 45 minutes, then there's a long, talky stretch that is woefully short of impaling - perhaps suggesting that the movie's financing was dwindling.

But there are a few cool scenes of vampires shriveling up into corpses and lots of "Conan the Barbarian"-style broadsword action - and these '70s-style fight scenes look more convincing than CGI-based ones made on 50 times the budget.

### **Recensie 3**

'BloodRayne' fun comes in spurts

January 07, 2006 | Wesley Morris, The Boston Globe

A few days ago I made a list of stuff I was looking forward to doing in 2006. "BloodRayne," I'm embarrassed to say, didn't make the cut, but it has managed to give me a few things I didn't know I wanted. One was a trip to Revere, which is the only place in town this intermittently interesting vampire-slayer adventure is playing. The other is a celebrity death match between Kristanna Loken and the increasingly shameless Ben Kingsley.

Yes, stop the presses! "Lad-mag princess squares off against Sir Ben." Seeing a fit former model and an Oscar-winning thespian stab the dickens out of each other won't change your life, but one does appreciate the convergence of two disparate universes for a cause I think we can all relate to: Getting paid is fun!

The willowy Loken has been hired to play Rayne. She's half-human, half-vampire, and totally miffed that Kagan, Kingsley's ultravampire, has killed her mom. Revenge is in order, and Rayne spends the movie fighting her way from one crypto-medieval set to the next to get to Kagan's castle, where Kingsley sits on a throne and mechanically performs dark-lordliness like a coin-operated Dracula.

If her journey's success seems contingent on tracking down certain power-boosting talismans (she drinks blood like Gatorade), it's because "BloodRayne" is based on a video game. This means the director, Uwe Boll, is obligated to shower us with action sequences that hold up the narrative action. But Boll is more convincing here than he was with his previous outing in

dank adventure-horror, "Alone in the Dark," a sinful Christian Slater-Tara Reid-Stephen Dorff flick that, funnily enough, was quickly banished from theaters.

"BloodRayne" has what passes for humor and a cast that passes for interesting. The opening credits, in fact, are the film's funniest sequence: Michael Madsen! Meat Loaf! Udo Kier! *Geraldine Chaplin*? The rear, meanwhile, is brought up by Kingsley in the pivotal "and" position; Billy Zane in the "special appearance by" slot; and Michelle Rodriguez, who plays her crucial "with" designation something fierce. (She's clearly using the part to get in some much-needed fake-British-accent practice.)

Guinevere Turner, an independent-film actress and smart screenwriter (she co-adapted "American Psycho" for the movies), gives "BloodRayne" the woman's backbone usually missing from these wet T-shirt contests. She even contributes sincerely coy, vaguely lesbian banter for Loken and Rodriguez to spout while sparring. "Your form is lacking passion," says Rodriguez. "It's part of my plan to weaken you," says Loken. "Your plan lacks passion as well!" And in this sense the film might be the first of its kind: something to bring Maxim subscribers, video gamers, and loyal Logo viewers together.

#### Recensie 4

BloodRayne

This is what you get for enjoying the holidays

1star

STEPHEN WHITTY

January 9, 2006, Newark Star-Ledger

Now is the winter of our discontent.

The gift-giving is over, and the first presents are already returned. The snow has melted and our backyards are a muddy wasteland. And with the last of the big Oscar hopefuls finally in suburban theaters, it's time for the studios to throw out whatever else they still have lying around.

The holidays are done. Here comes the hangover.

As usual, the new fare in theaters are shock comedies and gore movies, neither screened for critics and both aimed at slacking fratboys who haven't yet returned to classes. This week's shock comedy was *Grandma's Boy*; the gore-movie slot has been filled with *BloodRayne*.

Based on a videogame, and directed by videogame-turned-into-bad-movie specialist Uwe Boll, *BloodRayne* has a few unusual credits, beginning with a cast that ranges from exploitation actors (Udo Kier, Michael Madsen) to actors exploiting themselves (Geraldine Chaplin, Ben Kingsley). The script, such as it is, is by Guinevere Turner, who once wrote sensitive lesbian stories like *Go Fish* and TV's *The L Word*.

Oh well. Everyone has to eat — or, in the world of *BloodRayne*, suck blood and pay homage to the gods of eternal darkness. Both happen a lot over a very loud hour-and-a-half, as vampire fighter Kristanna Loken wanders olde Romania in some of Jennifer Garner's *Elektra* castoffs, and vampire king Ben Kingsley sits on a throne and calculates how many Euros he's earning for each sibilant "Exxxx-cellent."

Given such a huge and hugely untalented cast — Michelle Rodriguez is in here too, as well as Billy Zane, Meat Loaf and Michael Pare, of fleeting *Eddie and the Cruisers* fame — the performers take different approaches.

Zane treats it all as a joke, smirking his way through the movie like good old AIP-period Vincent Price. Rodriguez, fatally, takes it seriously, affecting a vaguely Continental accent and frowning a lot. Michael Madsen, meanwhile — and was there ever a less likely action hero? — charges through scenes like a rhino in a bad wig, grumbling mock-macho lines like "I was killing vampires before you were born."

The movie is as confused as its actors' styles. Is it supposed to be an old-fashioned adventure like *Captain Kronos*, *Vampire Hunter*? Is it supposed to be a classic blood-and-thunder gothic, like *Brides of Dracula*, or any of the grand Christopher Lee shockers? Boll, not talented enough to manage either genre, opts instead for the story's simplest, click-and-kill cliches.

So, long useless sequences are built around typical videogame stunts like navigating a dangerous passage, or obtaining a series of treasures. Busty vampire fighters model the latest in low-rise breeches and belly-baring bodices. Gaps of plot are bridged by another aerial shot of our heroes riding somewhere, or quickly spoken lines of dialogue looped in over someone's back.

"You don't know the meaning of pain!" our heroine hisses at one point. Oh, honey, believe us we do. And it's best defined by a January in which *Hostel*, *Grandma's Boy* and *BloodRayne* are the big movies of the week — and the weeks to come promise only *Hoodwinked*, *Underworld: Evolution* and *Big Momma's House 2*.

## Recensie 5

### REVIEWS

Hold nose, buy tickets -- three sneakers slink, understandably, onto your Cineplex screens

Peter Hartlaub, San Francisco Chronicle

Monday, January 9, 2006

The first sign of the apocalypse is upon us.

But first a little background: The majority of mainstream movies -- easily 95 percent -- get screened for critics several days before they open. About once a month, a movie comes along that's so bad, there's no advance screening before its Friday release. The studios may disagree, but most critics will tell you that Hollywood executives are well aware that films such as "Alien vs. Predator" are inferior, and they're trying to milk a few dollars from the unsuspecting public -- knowing the Mick LaSalle of the world won't get a warning in the paper earlier than Monday.

And then, once every 10,000 years or so, there is an event so unholy and unspeakable that I shudder to think that children may be reading this. For one week, all of the bad movies arrive in perfect alignment.

Which is how I ended up driving to San Leandro on Friday to spend the afternoon seeing what appeared to be the Triple Feature From Hell -- "BloodRayne," "Grandma's Boy" and "Hostel." None was screened for Bay Area critics.

As I walk toward the Century 16 Bayfair Center, ethical questions swirl. Do I buy one ticket and try to hop theaters? Or do I buy each ticket individually and burden The Chronicle with a larger expense bill?

A compromise is reached: I buy three tickets, and sneak in my food. (Mr. Pibb + Red Vines = CRAZY DELICIOUS!) Provisions will be needed, considering the chances are good I'm about to watch 285 minutes' worth of atrocious cinema.

12:50 p.m., Theater 11: "BloodRayne." Uwe Boll is such a bad director that it must be intentional. "BloodRayne" may be the best of the three movies by Boll that I've seen, and it still gets an empty chair review.

The plot of "BloodRayne" is basically "Blade" with a white chick -- set just after the invention of gunpowder but long before the invention of humor. Kristanna Loken, who played the female cyborg in the last "Terminator" film, stars as a half-human, half-vampire who must avenge the death of her mother while stopping the evil vampire Lord Kagen (Ben Kingsley, slumming like few Oscar winners before him) from ruling the Earth.

Boll also directed the video game movies "House of the Dead" and "Alone in the Dark." His problem is in translating the source material literally, without adding irony or any of the obvious adjustments that should be made when bringing a game to the big screen.

Example: When a character in a video game wears the same two super-skimpy outfits throughout a game that takes place over months, it's barely noticeable. But in a movie, she just looks like a lazy hooker. Loken perpetuates this image further by exposing her breasts in an explicit sex scene that's nearly identical to Linda Fiorentino's famous hookup in "The Last Seduction."

The production values in "BloodRayne" are horrible, from the repetitious interiors to the ridiculous wigs. The hair of each secondary character seems modeled after a different member of Motley Crue -- good guy Michael Madsen wears a Nikki Sixx wig from the "Dr. Feelgood" sessions, bad guy Meat Loaf wears a Vince Neil wig from the "Theater of Pain" years, etc. The only notable exception is Kingsley, who wears a piece inspired by the plastic braided wigs worn by those square-headed action figures in your Lego Spirit of 1776 playset.

The over-the-top violence in "BloodRayne" falls somewhere between "Kill Bill Vol. 1" and "Kill Bill Vol. 2," but even that simple pleasure is ruined by the camerawork, which gets shaky every time something potentially cool is going on.

"BloodRayne" is the kind of movie where "Lost" actress Michelle Rodriguez shows up speaking with the most unbelievable English accent in recent movie history, and she's maybe the 17th-worst thing about the film.

## **Film 9: Nochnoy dozor (Night Watch)**

### **Recensie 1**

#### MOVIES | MOVIE REVIEWS

The most successful film in its homeland gives the dark fantasy genre new life.

February 17, 2006 | Kenneth Turan | Los Angeles Times

"As long as humanity has existed," the somber voice intones, "there have been Others among us: witches, sorcerers, shape-shifters." And for as long as the movies have existed, they have cashed in on human curiosity about just what those Others might be up to.

"Night Watch," however, does the familiar a little differently. Think of it as a popcorn movie with a vodka chaser. A really strong vodka chaser.

In its Russian homeland, "Night Watch" has been nothing less than a phenomenon. It is the highest-grossing film ever in that country, taking in more money in three weeks than the "Lord of the Rings" finale earned in two months, and its just-released sequel, "Day Watch," the second film of a projected trilogy, is poised to earn even more.

The secret behind this success is the way "Night Watch" director Timur Bekmambetov has combined two things that never connected before. He's taken a glossy Hollywood-type fantasy thriller about the battle between supernatural forces of good and evil right here on planet Earth and infused it with a homegrown, distinctively Russian soul.

That means a movie full of characters, including protagonist Anton Gorodetsky (Russian heartthrob Konstantin Khabensky), who specializes in morose, dejected looks. It means individuals who think nothing of suddenly breaking into mournful dirges such as "love still lives in my wounded heart." It means a despondent world view that believes "it is easier for men to destroy the light within them than to resist the darkness."

But if this sounds like the recipe for a dispiriting movie, "Night Watch" is anything but. The act of Russianizing traditionally Hollywood material has brought a nice freshness to a tired genre, making the film feel less formulaic than usual.

Also helping is filmmaker Bekmambetov's commercial and video background. Working from a popular novel by Sergei Lukyanenko, the director has used quick-cutting, propulsive music

and colorful locales to invigorate "Night Watch" with an unmistakable and quite welcome visceral energy.

What Bekmambetov doesn't do, and this is something of a relief, is whiplash you with fear. The film's fright moments are mild by Hollywood's dubious standards, and the blood and guts, though present, are similarly not as voluminous as they might be. There's something pleasantly old-fashioned and almost corny about some of "Night Watch's" situations, and its sense of atmospheric strangeness, the ability to create an unseen world that is parallel to our own, adds to this.

Much of "Night Watch's" violence comes in a prologue, set, at least in the Russian version, specifically in 1342, when a bloody battle between the supernatural forces of good and evil takes place on one very narrow bridge.

The battle is so horrific that both sides agree on a truce. No Other can be forced to turn to either good or evil, with the Night Watch keeping an eye on the dark side and the Day Watch eyeballing the light. For hundreds of years now, everyone has been maintaining the equilibrium and marking time, waiting for the arrival of the prophesized Great Other, whose choice for good or evil "will change the balance forever."

Enter Anton, at first in yet another prologue, this one set in 1992, when he visits a witch to see if she can force his girlfriend to return to him. This action has all kinds of consequences, one of which is Anton's realization that he too is an Other.

Cut to present-day Moscow, where Anton works for the Night Watch and, armed largely with a flashlight with a special bulb, protects civilians from marauding vampires. Aided by his partner, Olga, a woman who has spent 60 years as a stuffed owl (don't ask, because the film won't tell you), he is tasked with guarding a 12-year-old boy named Yegor, who appears to be in special danger.

Also in danger is the entire city of Moscow. A mythological woman called the Cursed Virgin has reappeared, creating a terrifying vortex of abysmal luck that just might herald a massive bloodbath unless the Night Watch can correct the situation. As if they didn't already have enough to do.

If this doesn't seem to make sense, rest assured that seeing the film does not make anything any clearer. To appreciate "Night Watch," you have to accept it as one of those chaotic cartoon movies that refuse to completely add up. Its clearly derivative plot may seem silly to us, but its characters take it completely seriously. Their belief, it turns out, makes all the difference in the world.



Keeping Moscow safe from evil at 'Night'

Ruthe Stein, San Francisco Chronicle

Friday, February 17, 2006

In the labyrinthine mythology of "Night Watch" -- a wildly entertaining fantasy thriller that propels Russian cinema into the 21st century -- a chosen few are lobbied by the forces of good and evil to pick a side. A 12-year-old boy is among these so called Others. Before becoming the center of a tug of war, the lad is shown in his comfy living room with "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" blaring away. Sarah Michelle Gellar sounds especially threatening spouting Russian.

It's a good bet that "Night's" director, Timur Bekmambetov, is a devotee not just of "Buffy," but also of "Star Wars," "Star Trek," "The Omen," "The Matrix" and "The Terminator." He borrows liberally from these franchises. His warriors do battle using neon tubes that look suspiciously like light sabers. The leader of the Dark Ones -- a menacing collection of vampires and other black arts practitioners -- contorts his spine in a motion reminiscent of "Star Trek's" Borg Queen.

But "Night Watch," an enormous hit in Russia, brings a brooding sensibility to such hocus-pocus that obviates the feeling you've seen it all before. A very human story of parental love left unexpressed for complex and surprising reasons never gets lost amid the fantastical elements.

Based on a best-selling novel by Sergei Lukyanenko, the Stephen King of fantasy, "Night Watch's" central conceit is some silliness about a truce declared 1,000 years earlier between the armies of good and evil. The film opens with them galloping up on horses, covered in armor that makes the soldiers look like Monty Python in search of the Holy Grail. They agree that a night watch composed of the good guys and a day watch of the bad ones will patrol one another with the goal of maintaining a balance between the two forces at all times.

Konstantin Khabensky, one of Russia's top actors, stars as Anton, who is unwittingly recruited as an undercover agent on the night watch. He first appears in a Beatles haircut calling on a fortuneteller for advice on enticing his girlfriend back. This is a pivotal scene to understanding the unnecessarily convoluted plot, so pay close attention.

In the blink of an eye, the action moves 12 years ahead, and Anton, looking leaner and with shorter hair, is prowling Moscow on the lookout for evil. Khabensky brings a likability and humanity to Anton that makes you suppress the urge to laugh when, in the line of duty, he's called upon to slurp pig's blood. Unbeknownst to him, he's on a trajectory to prevent the balance from tilting.

"Night Watch" has a sleek futuristic look enhanced by animation and special effects. Some of it is appealingly simple, such as zooming in on video game figures or using a whip pan to blur traffic moving through a tunnel at breakneck speed. But there's also state-of-the-art CGI done on a \$3.5 million budget, proving that imagination trumps moola.

Like "Moulin Rouge," "Night Watch" employs hyperkinetic editing to make less look like more. You could get whiplash hurtling between scenes. The fast cuts don't give you time to realize that the same settings -- mostly Moscow's streets and barren underground system --

appear again and again. Unforgettable, however, are the bats that flap about repeatedly, harbingers of evil doings.

The sound effects have been intensified. Sirens seem to be inside the theater. A bolt from an endangered airplane comes undone and, after flying through space, lands in a coffee cup with a loud plop.

In a prologue, a narrator speaking English with a heavy Russian accent portentously explains the terms of the centuries-old truce. Fortunately, the American distributor had the good sense to switch to subtitles rather than dubbing the rest of the film into English, trusting that audiences, even those who go to multiplexes, know how to read. Cleverly, the titles become part of the special effects, changing shape and color -- red letters are favored, in keeping with the blood undercover agents have to drink. In one scene set near water, the words dissolve into liquid.

It's not giving anything away to say that by the end, it's still not clear whether good or evil has triumphed. There's a reason for this. A sequel, "Day Watch," has already been released in Russia and will be coming to these shores in the near future. Anyone who sees "Night Watch" is sure to eagerly await the next installment.

### Recensie 3

Movie review: 'Night Watch'

By Michael Wilmington, Chicago Tribune

**3½ stars (out of four)**

February 25, 2006

"Night Watch" is a contemporary Russian movie that you could honestly call revolutionary, more for its style than its politics. In this full-throttle science fiction tale of vampires, shape-shifters and warring supernatural armies, breakthrough writer-director Timur Bekmambetov opens a shocking new contemporary world--a Moscow of poverty, crime and moral breakdown--but he does it in Western-influenced techniques a world away from what we usually imagine as standard Russian cinema.

Bekmambetov isn't a new radical virtuoso such as the Marxist [Sergei Eisenstein](#) in the '20s or the Christian mystic [Andrei Tarkovsky](#) in the '60s. Instead, he has the high-torque skills of such cinema-obsessed U.S. movie junkies as [Quentin Tarantino](#) and the Wachowski brothers (both admitted Bekmambetov influences), mingled with classic Russian grimness and darkness. He uses them to blast us right out of our seats.

Schooled in TV commercials, Bekmambetov creates one of those horrific pop [fantasy](#) worlds American movies are so adept at, to our occasional glory and sometime shame. The movie, [Russia's](#) all-time top domestic grosser on its first 2004 release, is based on a popular Russian fantasy-science fiction novel by Bekmambetov's co-scenarist, Sergei Lukyanenko --the first of a literary trilogy that will eventually become a trilogy of movies. Here, the two collaborators take the macabre, zingy elements of 20th Century movie [horror](#)--a bloody, creepy gallery of vampires and other night

creatures--and give them ancient context and modern edge.

In the haunted world of "Night Watch," battles rage under the noses of the general populace between the armies of Good and Evil, each of which has special squadrons of police to scout the other's terrain. The good cops, the forces of light, which include the movie's scruffy hero Anton Gorodetsky (Konstantin Khabensky), are the titular Night Watch, protecting humankind in the dark hours. Their counterparts, the Day Watch, strike blows for the bad during daylight.

The movie starts with a medieval battle prologue, where good leader Boris Geser (or Gesser in the subtitles, played by Vladimir Menshov) and bad leader Zavulon (Victor Verzhbitsky, who looks like a blond [Harry Dean Stanton](#)) declare truce, setting up the Night-and-Day rulebook. Then it flashes forward to 1992, where we meet young Anton, and learn of a boy soon to be born, Yegor, who may be the fabled, long-awaited Great One.

The non-stop contemporary adventures that follow 12 years later keep mixing up old and new imagery: a punk blood-junkie vampire (Anna Dubrovskaya), a virginal beauty/jinx (Maria Poroshina) on the subway, blood-and-booze cocktails, 12-year-old Yegor (Dima Martynov) watching "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" on TV, a vortex filled with dark, whirling birds over a blacked-out Moscow and a series of supernatural fights waged all over the city, in streets and dirty, packed apartment buildings. Through it all, the moviemakers keep catching a grimy sense of everyday (or every-night) reality that makes the jolts hit harder.

"Night Watch" imbues those old pop terrors with the trashy, crime-ridden, drug-drenched and street-dangerous world of Moscow today. The actors, meanwhile, play their roles with from-the-guts realism we associate with Stanislavsky.

Khabensky has a "Serpico" shaggy-cop quality and the charismatic Night Watch papa/boss Geser is played by Vladimir Menshov, director of the warm-hearted, slightly sappy Russian romance, "Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears," which was a surprise 1980 Oscar winner--and an undeserving one. It beat out Kurosawa's "Kagemusha" and Truffaut's "The Last Metro," which might qualify Menshov for the forces of evil.

Still and all, "Night Watch" gripped and excited me and made me laugh. Even though you couldn't call it a great science fiction movie, on the level of Tarkovsky's "Solaris" and "Stalker" it's often a great, heart-pumping, blow-you-to-the walls movie experience. "Night Watch" may not affect us as it did the Russians, but the best of it fires up the devils and angels of the imagination.

#### **Recensie 4**

Night Watch

Tries for stone-faced seriousness, but it's covered in cheese

AMY BIANCOLLI, Houston Chronicle

Friday, March 3, 2006

What a rabid beast is *Night Watch*. What a pungent Russian fantasy-horror cheeseathon.

If you pay to see it, which you might decide you shouldn't, expect to be shocked — not by the gore (lurid) or the profuse Slavic philosophizing (gloomy) but by the unironic, stone-faced seriousness of the thing.

This, you see, is the End of the World. Here lurk forces of Good and Evil, Light and Dark, Human and Vampire. The apocalypse is at hand. Muscovites in skuzzy flats prepare to do battle for the fate of mankind. A freaky woman's hair twirls skyward on the subway, portending a giant tornado. On the soundtrack: metal-shredding guitars and bald Mussorgsky ripoffs, serious music for serious business.

*Night Watch* (*Nochnoi Dozor*) offers nothing but gloom — the Gloom, a soul-sucking vampiric limbo known only to "Others," immortals with supernatural talents who align with good or evil in an ongoing, eternal struggle unseen by average clods.

Many ages past, the armies of light and darkness were clanging swords on a stone bridge when their respective leaders decided the bloodshed was getting, you know, a little out of hand and came to a truce. They agreed to split the world diurnally: Evil got nighttime, good got day. To monitor the truce, a "night watch" of daytime warriors would police the darkness, and a "day watch" of nighttime warriors would police the day.

Then, one fateful night in modern-day Moscow, a Night Watchman named Anton ([Konstantin Khabensky](#)) kills an enemy combatant (technically, he fragments the guy's head against a sink) who had been hoping to snack on an innocent boy ([Dmitry Martynov](#)). Anton's attack might strike casual observers as a defensible action, but for evil-warlord Zavulon ([Viktor Verzhbitsky](#)), it's a truce-breaking crime, even worse than Zavulon's striped Adidas track suit or the fact that everyone in the film drinks instant Nescafé.

So Anton's in a fat load of trouble. Plus, there's that swirling-haired chick on the Metro — who just might be the "cursed virgin" of Byzantine prophecy. She brings dead puppies and nasty gothic weather in her wake, along with something called the "vortex of damnation" that the forces of light conveniently track on their computers. ("The vortex is expanding!" "Do something now!") If the cursed virgin isn't decursed before the vortex arrives, humanity is dead meat. Very serious business.

Directed by [Roger Corman](#) disciple Timur Bekmambetov (previously known for his Corman-produced girly-gladiator flick *The Arena*) from [Sergei Lukyanenko](#)'s cultish novels, *Night Watch* was the top-grossing film in its native land until the second film (*Day Watch*) arrived, soon to be followed by a third (*Dusk Watch*).

How this reflects the postmillennial Russian psyche I can't say — perhaps, with the collapse of communism, film goes yearn for a forceful moral reckoning — but I can vouch for the movie's way-beyond-tacky computer effects and dogged phantasmal mood. Is it visionary, or is it hogwash?

Survey says: hogwash. But it's entertaining, elemental and highly self-confident hogwash — hogwash that explores free will and exploits our irrational, Matrixy suspicion that the universe is sham, that there must be some alternate explanation for the greaseball who lives next door.

After sitting through *Night Watch*, we now know he's a bloodsucking minion of darkness poised on the lip of Inferno. Damn straight it's serious. Abandon all campiness, ye who enter here.

## Recensie 5

Night Watch (3 stars out of 5)

It's a long slog but 'Watch' has moral heft

Roger Moore, Orlando Sentinel

March 3, 2006

Here's a little experiment. Stick your head in your favorite comic-book or video-game store and shout, "Horror trilogy!"

See how fast the place empties.

Here's another. Stick your head into crowded screenings of *Night Watch*, pre-previews, and shout, "In Russian, with subtitles!"

Again -- stopwatch -- emptying out.

This much-anticipated Russian vampire epic -- it opened almost two years ago in Russia -- brings something much more interesting to chew on than Wesley Snipes' various *Blades*, or Kate Beckinsale's leather-and-cleavage romps through the Underworld. It has a refreshing Old World take on a never-ending fantasy war between vampires and the forces of "light," a frazzled ultra-modern style of cutting and a depressing lack of storytelling drive.

Hollywood vampire movies are exercises in moral absolutism, "good versus evil." *Night Watch*, which tells the tale of a vampire on "our team" haunted by guilt over the deaths he once wished for and the death he brings about, is world-weary and wizened. Grown-ups, and ancient cultures, don't see things as simply "us versus them."

This is a Moscow patrolled by legions of "The Others," walking, shape-shifting vampires of the Dark and the Light. The Dark dudes drive Audis. The Soldiers of Light race around in a rocket-fueled utility truck that looks like something that would service Harry Potter's house.

Well, there's one concession to Hollywood. Actually, there are several. The story, a complex hodgepodge of "chosen ones" and "the damned" and a vortex straight out of *Wizard of Oz* Kansas, feels like a post-Sovietsmorgasbord of every fantasy and horror film.

Anton, played by Konstantin Khabensky in a vodka fog coated with gore and sweat, tracks a kid who has been "called" by the night vampires, who are allowed to feed-recruit only by "license." In a furious fight, he kills a vampire who has crossed the line.

But he himself has crossed one. And this isn't the first time. The rest of the film follows his efforts to save a boy, plug up a vortex that's evolving from a particularly cursed woman (puppies die in her presence) and fend off the denizens of the dark.

Anton's boss, Boris, is played by filmmaker Vladimir Menshov (*Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears*). He's the guy who assigns a shape-shifting owl to help Anton.

Meanwhile, the guys on the other side scheme to have what is either their revenge or righteous recompense.

It's based on a Russian fantasy novel trilogy. There are already two other pieces to this Watch puzzle -- Day Watch and Dusk Watch. No doubt they'll have some of the same layered, organic (nondigital) effects, the same silly-portentous narrated prologue and epilogue, the same flashbacks to medieval battles in this long struggle.

At its heart, it's about guilt. But there's a pretty decent Cold War metaphor, too -- the moral relativism the way these two supposedly diametrically opposed ideologies have of compromising, keeping the peace. It's enough to make you nostalgic, in today's post-Cold War clash of fundamentalists.

It's flashy, and it opens at a sprint. But as it slows down, the movie is needlessly and almost intentionally confusing.

All is unclear in a haze of buzzing flies, cawing crows and tornadic clouds of bats. The talismans of such tales -- vials of blood, ultraviolet flashlights that make the invisible visible, "the rules" of vampire combat, are recognizable to anyone who has ever seen Buffy (glimpsed, in Russian, on TV, in one scene).

The finale, however, has emotional and moral heft to it, enough that you're reminded that this did come from the country that produced Dostoyevsky.

Still, wading through two muddled, murky acts to get to a third with a bit of relevance takes one back to the whole hubbub at the beginning of *The Matrix*. Those so inclined will find more meaning than this actually has. And those not so inclined probably won't sit through a movie with subtitles anyway.

## **Film 10: 30 Days of Night**

### **Recensie 1**

Movie review: '30 Days of Night'

'30 Days' sucks the fun out of graphic novel

By Michael Phillips [Chicago Tribune]

*October 17, 2007*

## **2 stars (out of four)**

In between meals the vampires in “30 Days of Night” converse in a language scrambling together a little Dutch, a little Hebrew and a little Arabic, so that a subtitle reading “We should’ve come here ages ago” accompanies dialogue that sounds like “Ak-mak poop-dek humuna-humuna-humuna-ptooooey.” The film is based on a 2002 graphic novel by Steve Niles and Ben Templesmith, set in Barrow, Alaska, the northernmost burg in the U.S., where a diminishing handful of survivors must fend off the bloodthirsty so-and-sos long enough to see the end of the annual month without sun.

Fast and gory and pretty spectacular in its amalgam of Bram Stoker and “Northern Exposure,” the graphic novel is very entertaining. Slower and gory, director David Slade’s dutiful film version has its moments—including an eerily beautiful gliding overhead perspective of the vampires and their victims and the blood-stained snow—but it feels sluggish and attenuated. It’s too bad, because the world could’ve used a new collection of vampires, a breed operating at the speed of light with the ferocity of a sales force working entirely on commission, the way “28 Days Later” and especially “28 Weeks Later” reimagined flesh-eating zombies for today’s active lifestyle.

The script is simple stuff, simpler than the graphic novel, which at least managed to devote a page or two to the vampires’ back story. Not here. They just show up, as if their charter bus hit a bad patch of weather and pulled over for repairs somewhere. Josh Hartnett, looking worried every second, plays the sheriff in charge of keeping a generic group of townsfolk alive. (Danny Huston fares best as primo vampiro.) We follow the survivors as they inch their way across town, day by computer-generated-scary-skies day, from an attic to the general store to the police station. When the words “DAY 7” appear on the screen, you can’t help but think: Only seven? Twenty-three days to go? Damn.

Director Slade, who did the nicely acted piece of dung “Hard Candy,” has some talent, but he’s too in love with his individual pictures of slaughter to concern himself with the proper rhythm and velocity of a scene. Nearly two hours long, “30 Days of Night” makes you feel the cold (though it was shot in New Zealand) and feel the fangs, but it also makes you feel like 30 days is a pretty long time.

## **Recensie 2**

Movie review: 'Fright' night

Colin Covert , Minneapolis Star Tribune

Updated: October 22, 2007

An Alaska town is besieged by vampires and its snowbound streets run blood red.

The Arctic Circle horror movie "30 Days of Night" is a subzero chiller. The second feature from director David Slade (who gave us 2005's brilliant rape-revenge shocker "Hard Candy") clamps its fangs on your jugular and doesn't stop until the final arterial spray. There's not a moment of camp humor in this striking, excruciatingly scary film; Slade refuses to cut the audience any slack. His vision of a town under siege conjures a mood of apocalyptic anxiety.

The movie begins as the sun goes down and the desolate village of Barrow, Alaska, enters a monthlong nightmare. Sheriff Eben Oleson (Josh Hartnett) looks after the residents out of a sense of duty: law enforcement in the town is his family business, and he more or less inherited the post. As the town battens down for a month without contact with the outside world, some unexpected visitors have arrived. An ugly cargo ship is anchored offshore and a tense, wild-eyed emissary (Ben Foster, the psycho gunslinger in "3:10 to Yuma") alarms the regulars at the town's diner by demanding a plate of raw hamburger. The sheriff locks him up, but the prisoner acts as if he has the upper hand, taunting, "That cold ain't the weather. It's death approachin'."

The test of a vampire movie is finding the right balance between innovation and the standard ingredient of the tale. Slade modernizes the story smartly, ditching the supernatural and romantic elements of old-school vampirism. His ghouls make their arrival in an evil-looking cargo ship, an effective update of Dracula's plague-infested schooner, and they themselves are junkie-pale marauders with dark, bottomless eyes and crocodile teeth. Dressed in worn, bloodstained street clothes and communicating in a hoarse, Slavic-sounding language, they could be mutant survivors of some Chernobyl-level disaster. They strike fast and butcher their prey in Grand Guignol style.

Their devastating surprise attack leaves the town a flaming ruin. Slade films the massacre from above, a chilling God's-eye-view of carnage showing us street after street of blood-soaked snow, the kind of bravura visual effect that young directors reach for when they're adapting graphic novels like this one.

The young, unprepared sheriff gathers a cluster of survivors to wait out the invasion hidden in an attic. It's great casting. Hartnett would be out of place playing a hard-edged cop, but as a worrier who wound up on the force almost accidentally, who would agonize over decisions that might kill somebody, he's ideal. When the handful of people he's protecting begin to dwindle, he starts to crack up, and Hartnett doesn't hold anything back. He makes the character's pain so raw and direct that it's painful to behold.

There's a lot of fine acting in this movie, from Mark Boone Junior's turn as a gruff plow driver to the loathsome lead vampire. The role is played by a fairly well-known actor so transfigured by his physical performance and makeup that his name will surprise many viewers when it's revealed in the end credits.

Despite some rough edges -- the chronology could have been used to better effect, and the hero's climactic gambit is a bit of a puzzler -- "30 Days of Night" sparks with crackling energy. It's a symphony of shocks.



### Recensie 3

30 Days of Night

Lovely gothic carnage

3stars

AMY BIANCOLLI, Houston Chronicle

Friday, October 19, 2007

Every other scene or so, some unbelievable icky-sticky gross-out occurs in *30 Days of Night*.

Perhaps it is a decapitation by ax. Perchance it is the sight and sound of a precious girl munching on a corpse. It might feasibly be a little bit of both.

But even as stage blood flows like water, this wicked-mean vampire thriller pushes ahead with effective characters, a fantastic visual schema and a terrifying plot. The whole thing scared the bejesus out of me, whatever a bejesus is; all I know is I haven't got one any longer.

For that I blame the evil noggin of David Slade, the director behind 2005's psycho-twisted stalker flick *Hard Candy*. It's much less graphically violent, but both films leave a filmy residue of horror that's hard to wash off. It might never, and frankly, it shouldn't; a truly scary movie should do some permanent damage to the psyche.

Nothing in *30 Days of Night* looks all that groundbreaking. It calls on the usual blood-sucking stand-bys (neck bites, gnashing teeth) and the usual narrative progression of a contemporary slasher film: We enter a contained space with assorted characters who die hideously, one by one, until they dwindle to a handful. In this case the contained space is Barrow, Alaska, where the sun sets and stays there for 30 days of night.

In this fictional town (which bears little resemblance to the real-life Barrow), roads are cut off for the duration. What an irresistible opportunity for a shipload of itinerant vampires, who sneak in after sundown and prepare to snack for a month undisturbed by daylight. They send a runner ahead of them, a half-bit weirdo (*3:10 to Yuma*'s Ben Foster, current and undisputed king of the strange) who cuts the town's power and torches everyone's cell phones in a pyre.

There to investigate is Sheriff Eben Oleson (Josh Hartnett), standing on a ridge of snow as he bids farewell to one last dusk. He gets word of more odd doings — vandalism, slain dogs in a kennel. That weirdo from out of town shows up at a diner, demanding a bowl of raw meat: a hamburger of doom. Then an old man's head pops up on a stake, and from that moment on, we're in for a feast of nauseous gothic carnage.

Ah, but it's such *lovely* nauseous gothic carnage. Two things make it so: Its genesis in Steve Niles' and Ben Templesmith's ashen horror comics; and its cosmetic kinship with F.W. Murnau's expressionistic *Nosferatu*. Slade's vampires all have the pale aspect and curling fingernails of Max Schreck in his signature role — giving a classic look to the washed-out, computerized palette of this contemporary nocturne. Like *300* and other graphic-novel adaptations, *30 Days of Night* boasts a stylized claustrophobia that yields some arresting visuals: The best, in my book, is an aerial portrait of townsfolk fleeing the undead through snowbound streets stained with blood.

All of this is competently acted — by Hartnett as Eben, Melissa George as his estranged wife and Mark Rendall as his younger brother, Jake. The film gets small details just so, from the squeak of boots in the bitter cold to the grungy facial hair that sprouts over 30 days of hiding. These aren't complicated people, this isn't a complicated film, but it messed with my head in a major way. As George's character says of Foster's, "He's just trying to freak us out." Jake replies: "It's working." And how.

#### Recensie 4

30 Days of Night \*\*\*

October 19, 2007 | By Tirdad Derakhshani, Philadelphia Inquirer

Barrow, Alaska, the setting for David Slade's mesmerizing vampire thriller, *30 Days of Night*, is so far north, it's plunged into darkness for one month each year.

In other words, it's a bloodsucker's paradise.

Adapted from Steve Niles' critically acclaimed three-part comic book, *30 Days* is about a cabal of vampires who descend upon the town to kill and feed - and feed and kill some more.

A truly terrifying hell-ride through darkness for grownups, the film stars Josh Hartnett as Sheriff Eben Oleson, who joins forces with his estranged wife Stella (Melissa George) to help a handful of townsfolk survive the attack.

Slade, whose shocking and disturbingly playful debut, *Hard Candy*, was an intricately plotted piece about a power-play between a predatory adult male and a disturbed teenage girl, treats this tale with as much care for detail and characterization.

Although the film contains its share of ripped-out throats and arterial sprays, Slade knows how to tighten the screws by cutting away from the gore to show the faces of dying humans, the faces of the feasting undead, or the beautifully stylized comic-book scenery.

Like John Carpenter's *The Thing*, which it evokes, *30 Days* boasts an atmospheric and chilling sound design. Close your eyes and you'll be scared out of your wits just by the ambient noise.

Slade's most intelligent move was to cast character actor virtuoso Danny Huston as the vampire leader, Marlow, who speechifies about his hatred of God and his utter contempt for humanity.

In one particularly harrowing scene, Marlow and his followers toy with a little girl, pushing her back and forth between each other the way a cat bats around a half-dead mouse. They laugh with as much pure *glee* as sadistic menace.

As if by reflex, the girl invokes God, the way we all do. ("Please, God! No!")

With an almost gentle, but ironic, half-smile, Marlow tells the girl: "No God." Not missing a beat, he tears out her throat.

Like *The Exorcist* and *Alien*, *30 Days* evokes a direct, visceral experience of evil in its purest form as the all-devouring, empty movement of life without purpose or order.

## Recensie 5

A Long 'Night' Full of Fright

Friday, October 19, 2007

**Desson Thomson, Washington Post**

"*30 Days of Night*" is the kind of gruesome but entertaining survival guide you pray you never have to follow: how to stop vampires killing you during the darkest days of Alaskan winter.

Hey, it *could* happen. It certainly does in Barrow, Alaska, where vampires come to terrorize the isolated town, as seasonal darkness descends for a *loooong* month. From a safe distance -- in our own pocket of darkness, as it were -- it's a visceral kick to watch as a group of ever-dwindling survivors, led by young, resolute Sheriff Eben (Josh Hartnett), figures out how to outlast these powerful predators. Until sunlight returns and reduces the nasty suckers to black confetti, it's time to lie low and plan occasional guerrilla attacks.

To survive, these guys -- are you taking notes? -- are going to need a good, sharp ax to sever the invaders' heads. (Forget about guns and bullets; they'll only annoy the vamps.) And as Eben discovers, it's vital to get a good clean cut or you'll be Alaskan sushi in seconds.

Directed by David Slade ("Hard Candy"), the action scenes are artful and terrifying; these killers move so quickly and decisively, there seems to be no hope for humanity. And while Hartnett and Melissa George (as his estranged wife) make functionally appealing characters, the real star of "30 Days" is Danny Huston. As the animalistic leader of the pack, he's as disturbing as he is compelling, a feral creature with all senses at full capacity. If there's an action figure, I'm ordering one.

## Film 11: Låt den rätte komma in (Let the Right One In)

### Recensie 1

The New York Times

October 24, 2008 Friday

## Pale Boy and Pale Vampire In a Still, Wintry Landscape

By MANOHLA DARGIS

### MOVIE REVIEW 'LET THE RIGHT ONE IN'

The title of the spectrally beautiful Swedish vampire movie "Let the Right One In" comes from a song by Morrissey, a romantic fatalist who would surely appreciate this darkly perverse love story. "Let the right one in," he sings in "Let the Right One Slip In." I'd say you were within your rights to bite/The right one and say, "What kept you so long?" " These may sound like words to live by, though in the case of a film about a boy and the girl next door who may just be a vampire, they could easily turn out to be words to die for.

I'm not sure if the director Tomas Alfredson is a Morrissey fan, even if, like the singer, his movie smoothly and seemingly without effort works through a canny amalgamation of cool and hot, diffidence and passion. (John Ajvide Lindqvist, who adapted the screenplay from his horror novel, openly borrowed the title from Morrissey, a favorite.) The film's cool is largely expressed in visual terms, in the enveloping snow, the wintry light and the cinematographer Hoyte van Hoytema's meticulously and steadily framed compositions. There is a remarkable stillness to many of the film's most indelible images, particularly the exteriors, which are so carefully photographed, and without the usual tiresome camera jiggling, as to look almost frozen. It's no wonder that pale, pale little Oskar (Kare Hedebrant) looks so cold.

Pale and strange: with his light blond hair and alabaster skin, the 12-year-old Oskar appears not quite of this world, an alienation of body and spirit that causes him enormous pain but proves his salvation. The seemingly friendless only son of divorced, emotionally remote parents, he is also an outcast at school. The other children taunt him, particularly a pint-size sadist who grows crueler the more Oskar retreats into himself. But there are few other places he can go, which is how he ends up alone at night outside his apartment building thrusting a knife into a tree as if stabbing his tormentor. It's an uneasy revenge fantasy that attracts the notice of a girl even paler than he is, Eli (Lina Leandersson), an outcast of a deadlier kind.

The bedraggled Eli drops into Oskar's life like a blessing, though initially she seems more like a curse. Mr. Alfredson has an elevated sense of visual beauty, but he knows how to deliver the splattery goods. One of the earliest scenes features Eli's guardian or slave (it's never clear which), a defeated-looking middle-aged man named Hakan (Per Ragnar), headed into the night with a little black kit, the contents of which -- a knife, a plastic container, a funnel (ick) -- are soon put to deadly use on a strung-up victim. The ensuing stream of red is all the more gruesome for being so matter-of-fact, though the sudden and comical appearance of an inquisitive poodle quickly eased at least one violently churning stomach.

There are other interested animals in this story, and many more unsettling excuses to laugh. Yet while Mr. Alfredson takes a darkly amused attitude toward the little world he has fashioned with such care, he also takes the morbid unhappiness of his young characters seriously. Both are achingly alone, and it is the ordinary fact of their loneliness rather than their extraordinary circumstances that makes the film more than the sum of its chills and estimable technique. Eli seizes on Oskar immediately, slipping her hand under his, writing him notes, becoming his protector, baring her fangs. "Are you a vampire?" he asks

tremulously at one point. Her answer may surprise you, but it's another of his questions -- "Will you be my girlfriend?" -- that will floor you.

## Recensie 2

Swedish horrors

October 24, 2008

Stephen Whitty, Newark Star-Ledger

By now, even a casual horror-movie watcher knows the laws of vampirism. The fiends can't cast reflections or go out in daylight. They can only be warded off with crosses and garlic, or killed by a stake through the heart. They cannot cross a threshold unless they're invited in.

Forgotten that last one?

It's part of the mythos, though, and it's a small but significant plot point in "Let the Right One In," a new Swedish movie about tween vampires. That it's not one of the most obvious traits (not being able to cross running water is another one, by the way) is only apropos. Because this isn't an obvious vampire movie.

Based on a bestselling Swedish novel, it's the story of 12-year-old Oskar, pale as a daydream and eternally targeted by bullies. He's the dis-honorary misfit of his drably utilitarian apartment complex -- that is, until another misfit moves in. A strange, dark girl named Eli, with sallow skin and deep circles under her hungry eyes.

And what she's hungry for isn't Ikea meatballs.

As a straightforward horror movie, "Let the Right One In" reliably delivers. Eli has an acolyte who procures blood for her; his efforts require several violent murders, and lead to several more. The requisite vampiric shocks -- sunshine immolation, addictive bloodthirst -- are provided, along with a few fresh ones.

But what's really fresh here is the attention to middle-school, pre-"Twilight" angst.

Torn by his parents' divorce, tormented at school, Oskar is slowly shutting down, walling himself up in fantasies of revenge. But then, as the title suggests, he lets the right person in; as the folklore suggests, he crucially takes the active role in inviting a strange spirit into his life. And that makes all the difference.

This is a first film for its young leads, but director Tomas Alfredson gets accomplished performances from both. It helps that they're so physically well-cast. Kare Hedebrant, who plays Oskar, has a blandly unfathomable gaze which might conceal all sorts of hurts; Lina Leandersson, who plays Eli, has elfin, Gypsy looks.

But Alfredson directs the atmosphere just as well. Eli may be one of the undead but you don't get the feeling that Oskar's neighborhood is particularly alive to begin with; by February, the

snowfall is merely an annoyance, and all people have to stave off the cold loneliness are drunken arguments.

It's a midnight-black twist on the legend. The allure -- the only appeal -- of vampirism has always been eternal, youthful life. But suppose you were stuck as a 12-year-old girl in suburban Sweden? Suppose you were fated to spend an endless childhood patronized by bored adults smelling of aquavit and gravlax?

Suddenly a stake through the heart doesn't seem so scary.

"Let the Right One In" doesn't have a single close-up of bloody fangs, or ever show Eli transforming into a bat; it arrives in theaters sans opera capes or Van Helsing. Yet it is still a smart and welcome vampire film. And although it provides the usual horrors, its most frightening one may be the stark loneliness of a child.

### Recensie 3

#### A Boy and His Ghoulfriend: Beyond the Genre

By John Anderson

The Washington Post

Friday, November 7, 2008

*"I never had any friends later on like the ones I had when I was 12. Jesus, does anyone ?"*

-- "Stand by Me," 1986

Movies about kids have usually concerned either the littlest among us or those working out their differences with adulthood. But the new Swedish drama "Let the Right One In" -- which shares with "Stand by Me" an appreciation of the 12-year-old state of mind -- lurks in a cold, dark, brooding territory, inhabited by people both haunting and terrified: tweens.

The primary one here is Oskar (Kare Hedebrant), the pink-skinned, white-blond child of a single mother, a loner and a target, whose days include having his pants stuffed into a gym urinal or having a cane lashed across his milky cheek -- all by his personal, and very devoted, trio of schoolyard bullies.

The other is Eli (Lina Leandersson), the dark-eyed waif who moves into Oskar's apartment block, goes barefoot in the snow and gives Oskar something to live for -- even though she is technically dead. Or, rather, undead.

Yep: Eli is a vampire, and "Let the Right One In" (probably the most uninviting title of a film this year) is, in the basest of terms, a horror flick. But it's also a spectacularly moving and elegant movie, and to dismiss it into genre-hood -- to mentally stuff it into the horror pigeonhole -- is to overlook what is at this point the best film of the year. Two of the sadder things about "Let the Right One In" are that it's being distributed as part of a genre series and that it's going to be remade for the U.S. market.

No offense, but it seems unlikely that the American adaptation won't be something like an all-harmonica version of Beethoven's Ninth.

From the cool blue cinematography of Hoyte van Hoytema to the intelligence and subtlety of the script by John Ajvide Lindqvist (adapted from his novel), "Let the Right One In" executes all the right moves technically, and another director might be able to emulate that. Capturing its considerable soul is another thing.

Start with Oskar: Almost an angelic cliché, he is smarter, prettier and lonelier than anyone in his school, so he naturally attracts abuse from the bullies; his mother has no clue about his plight. We see him, knife in hand, fantasizing about revenge on his tormenters, repeating the same baiting words they use on him and stabbing his blade into a tree. Behind him, he discovers, Eli is watching, a dark-eyed, black-haired, sallow-looking girl, who immediately informs Oskar that they can't be friends; rigorous honesty, it seems, is the hallmark of the preadolescent ghoul (she must be invited into Oskar's room, for instance, hence the title). Oskar is desperate enough to settle for close acquaintance. And Eli, as it develops, needs an ally.

The horror aspects of "Let the Right One In" toy with the audience's existing vampire knowledge -- specifically, the survivor guilt inherent in the immortal bloodsuckers of modern ghoul lit. Eli doesn't want to put the bite on anyone. For that, she has Hakan (Per Ragnar), who is old enough to be her grandfather and who seems to be at the end of his usefulness: When he sets out to collect blood for Eli -- his MO is to anesthetize a victim, string him upside down, slash his throat and drain him into a plastic gasoline jug -- he picks a too-conspicuous spot and is interrupted by dog walkers. Eli has to kill a local, though it grieves her to do it, and the murder becomes front-page news. At that point, it seems only a matter of time before she's driven from yet another town.

Where Eli is a walking (and flying) mystery, Oskar is an open book: He's tortured at school; home isn't a lot better. When he's sent off to visit his estranged father on some remote Swedish farm, his joy is palpable. A shot of the boy on a snowmobile, his ecstatic face pushed into an icy wind, is bliss. But his duet with his father becomes full of flattened grace notes. When their backgammon game is interrupted by a neighbor with a vodka bottle, it's clear Oskar knows the truth about Dad, and we know the truth about Dad and Mom. And Oskar's options become all too clear. Life with Eli starts to look better and better.

Unkindness is evil, and overstatement a sin, in "Let the Right One In." Vampirism, which has provided a metaphor for sex, AIDS and outsider status over the last several decades, is in this film more about survival and symbiosis: Even at her most blood-desperate, Eli resists making Oskar one of her meals (the sound you hear, which at first suggests the purring of cats, is the rumbling of Eli's insatiable appetite). So she dines instead on the unhealthy herd of local barflies who wander into her web at closing time: One woman, whom Eli bites but doesn't kill, provides the film's most conventionally creepy moments, becoming a scratching post for fear-maddened cats and eventually bursting into flames.

But most of "Let the Right One In" provides more of a generalized and constant sense of unease. What is Eli after? "I'm not a girl," she tells Oskar. "Okay," he answers, "but do you want to go steady or not?" Oskar possesses the androgynous heart of the preadolescent. And he's emboldened by love: In one of director Tomas Alfredson's most startling moments, the

camera pulls back as Oskar delivers retribution on his nemesis, avoiding the easy melodrama inherent in the moment, and making it indelible.

Eli is a slippery matter. She is 12, "more or less," she tells Oskar, but we know -- Alfredson shows us, in several fleeting, disturbing snapshots, just how old she might be. Her late, unlamented assistant, Hakan, may have been her husband; he may have been her father; he may have been only the latest in a long line of companions devoted to Eli's survival. He may, in fact, have signed on to the Eli campaign when he was just the age of Oskar, whose need for love has him looking for a friend -- not on the Internet, but in the realms of the undead.

#### **Recensie 4**

Let the Right One In

Reyhan Harmanci

Friday, November 7, 2008

Vampires never really go out of style, but they are especially popular right now. Between the young adult novel series juggernaut "Twilight" (with a movie coming out soon) and a new Alan Ball HBO television show on the bloodsuckers, the undead seem to have reached a critical cultural mass.

Although this Swedish film is based on a best-selling novel of the same name, "Let the Right One In" is cut from a different cloth than most vampire tales. It is a humanist vampire story, less concerned with the symbolic value of vampires (frequently seen as religious or sexual outsiders) than the actual experience of feeding on human blood. Killing people to eat is a messy and sad way to live, and it does terrible things to one's social life. Remaining young for all time is pointless if there's no one to share youth with.

The film centers on two young people, 12-year-old Oskar (played luminously by Kare Hedebrant) and the eternally 12-year-old Eli (Lina Leandersson). Oskar is a sweet blond kid and a punching bag for his classmates, a cruel gang of exceptionally well-cast young actors. Like many children, he survives by engaging in fantasy, standing in the courtyard of his drab apartment complex and taking his anger out on a tree.

It is there that he meets his new neighbor, the pale Eli. From the beginning, there are a few things wrong with her: She doesn't seem to get cold, and she looks extremely ill. She cautions Oskar that they can't be friends, but their kinship is obvious. At the same time, Oskar's town is dealing with two brutal murders. As the parallel plots converge, it becomes clear that Eli and Oskar face significant challenges to becoming boyfriend-girlfriend.

"Let the Right One In" strikes a surprising array of notes: scary, sad and hopeful. The director, Tomas Alfredson, does a great job of presenting peril in the film. Oskar being lashed by the evil schoolmates feels just as vicious as Eli tearing open the throat of a cheerful drunkard on his way home, and both manage to become somehow realistic. The film celebrates empathy, as both characters find ways to put themselves in the other's shoes with happy consequences.



In less careful hands, the vampire plot could have fallen into farce, but Alfredson has a fantastic eye for detail and has found some incredible young actors to bring depth and feeling to their roles. The press notes say that the film is already set for a 2009 American remake. It's hard to see how a different production team could improve upon these results.

## Recensie 5

Swedes' take on sweet, tender vampire love

\*\*\* RATING | Vampire Crush

11/14/2008

**By Lisa Kennedy**

*Denver Post Film Critic*

Has there ever been as pale a child as the lonesome tween of "Let the Right One In," a beautifully brooding vampire tale from Sweden?

Oskar's father lives in the country. His mother works in the city. At school, he is increasingly tormented by a trio of bullies. Staring out the window of his and his mother's modest apartment, hair the color of butter, Oskar looks like he's already been bled.

One night, while pantomiming payback with a knife he stashes away (along with an album tracking violent crimes), he meets his new neighbor. She seems immune to the February cold. She also has, notes her new acquaintance, an odor. Eli lives with her father in the next apartment.

What might have been the sort of meeting that leads to more familiar mayhem — two outcasts angry at the world and their uncomfortable place in it — becomes a surprisingly tender crush story, mixing the romance of friendship with the tentativeness of deep love.

Tomas Alfredson's moody beauty, based on screenwriter John Ajvide Lindqvist's bestselling novel, is visually lyrical. In the wintry starkness, cinematographer Hoyte van Hoytema reveals the eerie: A chainsaw plunges into a frozen lake to free a corpse; a white standard poodle stands near a body hanging upside down, its throat slit.

Eli's mortal father does the burly bloodletting. It makes him a serial killer and keeps the city dwellers jumpy. It also allows Eli moments of innocence.

Like the best vampire sagas, the film is rife with aching melancholy and existential crises. Its haunting beauty isn't marred, but complemented by strong, disquieting images. Cats hiss, go mad, attack. An infected woman fights her fate with rending determination.

Eli fights too. And as Oskar begins to understand who, or what, Eli is, he wrestles with his feelings. Kåre Hedebrant and Lina Leandersson, the youngsters who play Oskar and Eli, bring a believable shyness to their roles.

Opening today at the Mayan, "Let the Right One In" can be seen as a grimly poetic primer to "Twilight," the vampire-loves-mortal phenom opening next week.

## **Film 12: Twilight**

### **Recensie 1**

Twilight (PG-13)

**Ebert:** ★ ★ ★

Twilight

/// November 19, 2008

**By Roger Ebert, Chicago Sun-Times**

If you're a vampire, it's all about you. Why is Edward Cullen obsessed to the point of erotomania by Bella Swan? Because she smells so yummy, but he doesn't want to kill her. Here's what he tells her: He must not be around her. He might sink his fangs in just a little, and not be able to stop. She finds this overwhelmingly attractive. She tells him he is the most beautiful thing she has ever seen. I don't remember Edward ever saying that to her. Maybe once. He keeps on saying they should stay far, far apart, because he craves her so much.

Should a woman fall in love with a man because he desires her so much? Men seem to think so. It's not about the woman, it's about the man's desire. We all know there is no such thing as a vampire. Come on now, what is "Twilight" really about? It's about a teenage boy trying to practice abstinence, and how, in the heat of the moment, it's really, really hard. And about a girl who wants to go all the way with him, and doesn't care what might happen. He's so beautiful she would do anything for him. She is the embodiment of the sentiment, "I'd die for you." She is, like many adolescents, a thanatophile.

If there were no vampires in "Twilight," it would be a thin-blooded teenage romance, about two good-looking kids who want each other so much because they want each other so much. Sometimes that's all it's about, isn't it? They're in love with being in love. In "Twilight," however, they have a seductive disagreement about whether he should kill her. She's like, I don't especially want to die, but if that's what it takes, count me in. She is touched by his devotion. Think what a sacrifice he is making on her behalf. On Prom Night, on the stage of the not especially private gazebo in the public gardens, he teeters right on the brink of a fang job, and then brings all of her trembling to a dead stand-still.

The movie is lush and beautiful, and the actors are well-chosen. You may recall Robert Pattinson (Edward) as Cedric Diggory, who on Voldemort's orders was murdered in a graveyard in "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire." Maybe he was already a vampire. Pattinson is not unaware of how handsome he is. When Bella and Edward, still strangers, exchange stern and burning looks in the school cafeteria, he transfixes her with a dark and glowering - nay, penetrating - stare. I checked Pattinson out on Google Images and found he almost always glowers at the camera 'neath shadowed brow. Kristen Stewart's Bella, on the other hand, is a fresh-faced innocent who is totally undefended against his voltage.

Bella has left her mom and stepdad in hot Arizona, clutching a potted cactus, to come live in the clammy, rainy Pacific Northwest, home of Seasonal Affective Disorder. Her dad (Billy Burke) is the chief of police of the very small town of Forks, Washington (pop. 3,120). His greatest asset: "He doesn't hover." At high school, she quickly notices the preternaturally pale Cullen clan, who in some shots seem to be wearing as much Max Factor Pancake White as Harry Langdon. Edward is 114 years old. He must be really tired of taking biology class. Darwin came in during his watch, and proved vampires can't exist.

There are other strange youths around, including American Indians who appear not too distantly descended from their tribe's ancestors, wolves. Great tension between the wolves and vampires. Also some rival vampires around. How small is this town? The Forks high school is so big, it must serve a consolidated district serving the whole table setting. The main local Normal Kid is a nice sandy-haired boy who asks Bella to the prom. He's out of his depth here, unless he can transmogrify into a grizzly. Also there are four grey-bearded coots at the next table in the local diner, who eavesdrop and exchange significant glances and get big, significant close-ups but are still just sitting significantly nodding, for all I know.

Edward has the ability to move as swiftly as Superman. Like him he can stop a runaway pickup with one arm. He rescues Bella twice that I remember, maybe because he truly loves her, maybe because he's saving her for later. She has questions. "How did you appear out of nowhere and stop that truck?" Well might she ask. When he finally explains that he is a vampire, he goes up from 8 to 10 on her Erotometer. Why do girls always prefer the distant, aloof, handsome, dangerous dudes instead of cheerful chaps like me?

"Twilight" will mesmerize its target audience, 16-year-old girls and their grandmothers. Their mothers know all too much about boys like this. I saw it at a sneak preview. Last time I saw a movie in that same theater, the audience welcomed it as an opportunity to catch up on gossip, texting, and laughing at private jokes. This time the audience was rapt with attention. Sometimes a soft chuckle, as when the principal Indian boy has well-developed incisors. Sometimes a soft sigh. Afterwards, I eavesdropped on some conversations. A few were saying, "*He's so hot!*" More floated in a sweet dreaminess. Edward seemed to stir their surrender instincts.

The movie, based on the Stephenie Meyer novel, was directed by Catherine Hardwicke. She uses her great discovery, Nikki Reed, in the role of the beautiful Rosalie Hale. Reed wrote Hardwicke's "Thirteen" (2003) when she was only 14. That was a movie that knew a lot more about teenage girls. The girl played by Reed in that movie would make mincemeat of Edward. But I understand who "Twilight" appeals to, and it sure will.

**Note:** *Now playing around the country is the much better and more realistic teenage vampire movie "Let the Right One In," a Swedish import scheduled to be Twilighted by Hollywood. In this one, the vampire girl protects the boy and would never dream of killing him. That's your difference right there between girls and boys. Warning: This is very R-rated.*

## Recensie 2

Movie review: Twilight -- 3 out of 5 stars

By Roger Moore, Orlando Sentinel

November 19, 2008

There's a playfulness that seems just so right in Catherine Hardwicke's *Twilight*. The director of thirteen gives the hit Stephenie Meyer teen vampire novel a little edge, a little sexual heat. But she makes it fun, too.

The irresistible force that draws Bella, the new girl in Forks High, to Edward, the dreamy classmate with pale skin and red, red lips, is lust. And lust can be funny.

But after a brooding, arms-length courtship of overcast days, near-accidents and almost kisses, Edward's clan heads out in a thunderstorm to play baseball. And *Twilight* tumbles from romantic into risible. *Buffy the Vampire Dater* becomes *Transylvania High School Musical*.

The fetching but somewhat humorless Kristen Stewart is Bella, a girl so swoony over her new bio class lab partner that she cannot close her lips. Who can blame her? Edward Cullen (Robert Pattinson), his hair piled high with eyes that seem to match that hair color, is dreamy but rude. He's instantly put off by Bella, and that puts her off

Then a car almost crushes Bella in the school parking lot. In a flash Edward is by her side, stopping the careening student driver, denting the dude's car with just his touch. He instantly regrets it.

"Can't you just thank me and get over it??"

They fight the feeling, and Bella does her homework. A Native American friend of the family, Jacob (Taylor Lautner), gives her hints of "the legend." Google gives her more. Seeing the rest of the Cullen clan -- pale, incestuously close, ageless and sophisticated -- gives them away.

But can these kids find love? Will Bella touch Edward's icy skin and melt his cold, cold heart?

Meanwhile, Bella's dad, the police chief (Billy Burke), is tracking local "animal attacks" that might not be the work of your run-of-the-mill wolf or grizzly. A trio of nomadic vampires dressed like Mötley Crue groupies (Cam Gigandet, Edi Gathegi and Rachelle Lefevre) have moved into this hunting ground. They get a whiff of Bella and it's game on.

Hardwicke boils down Meyer's novel into a sort of *Romeo & Juliet*, star-crossed lovers the fates keep apart. This is more *Superman: The Movie*, with Bella's incessant Q&A sessions with Edward, getting the parameters of Meyer's vampire universe. The relationship at the heart of the film has heat, but Stewart isn't up to delivering the "I'll just die" longing that we all feel at that age. And the effects that show Edward's speed are cut-rate comical.

The situations, in high school and among the vampires, are over-familiar. But the dialogue is mostly flip and hip. Some of the laughs are intentional, some not. A vampire using the word "vegetarian?" Funny.

There are four books in this series, so if *Twilight* hits, they'll make more. Two more movies of

restraint, controlling your teenage urges? Like Edward, we've all had practice at that. "I'll just have to endure it."

### Recensie 3

'Twilight'

by **Bill Goodykoontz** - Nov. 20, 2008  
The Arizona Republic

Long on looks but short on story and, especially, meaningful dialogue, *Twilight*, the much-anticipated film based on Stephenie Meyer's novel, still resonates - but mostly if you're a 12-year-old girl.

Fans of the books will swoon at the sight of Robert Pattinson, who plays Edward Cullen, the soulful vampire with whom Bella (Kristen Stewart) falls in love. (They did just that, in fact, at a screening of the film, cheering when Pattinson made his first appearance on-screen.) Director Catherine Hardwicke uses locations in the Pacific Northwest to great effect; some of the panoramic shots are stunning.

But once the characters start talking. . . . The dialogue is so wooden you could use it to stake a vampire's heart. There is an intriguing story here, about outsiders finding acceptance, as well as nods toward adolescent sexual frustration, but those elements are largely glossed over.

Too bad - high school can be as scary a place as any vampire's lair, a fact that the television version (not the film) of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* proved time and again, using monsters as metaphors to portray the very real horrors of growing up.

*Twilight* is not as sophisticated, seemingly deliberately so. Melissa Rosenberg's script instead takes aim at the teenage-romance crowd, playing to its heart, if not always its head.

After her mother remarries, Bella moves from Phoenix to the small town of Forks, Wash., a rainy, gloomy town of a little more than 3,000 people. Fitting in might be tough, you'd think, but several students immediately befriend her. She could be quite popular, in fact, but she resists it.

Instead, she's intrigued by the Cullen family, particularly Edward. Disagreeable lab partners at first, they obviously have feelings for each other and soon fall in love. This is complicated, of course, by the fact that Edward and his family are vampires.

But they're *good* vampires, drinking only the blood of animals. Not all vampires are so noble; a marauding band of bloodsuckers - you can tell they're bad because, unlike the Cullens, they're unkempt - is on the loose, killing humans.

Nothing much comes of that thread, because soon they have their sights, and their fangs, set on Bella. It's up to Edward and his family, providing a form of stability that Bella's real family cannot, to protect her.

Stewart is a fine actress, but too often here when she is supposed to appear brooding and aloof she just seems bored. Pattinson, meanwhile, isn't particularly convincing, and his chemistry with Stewart doesn't quite make for the timeless romantic bond that it might have.

Both risk much for love - he risks discovery by revealing the family secret to her, and she risks, well, becoming dinner. There are glimpses of how that might have worked better - in the scene where Edward first admits what he is to Bella, for instance. But that's undercut by an awkward sequence in which he shows her what he looks like in the light. He's supposed to sparkle; instead, he looks as if he's covered in blond fur.

Other scenes fall short, as well. The less said about the Cullen family baseball game, for example, the better.

Still, *Twilight* will doubtless thrill fans of the books, who have long waited for its release. And while it's not a failure, everyone else will wish that the film had, if you'll excuse the expression, a little more bite.

#### **Recensie 4**

A touching teen-vampire tale

November 20, 2008 | By Steven Rea, Philadelphia Inquirer

"You're not in Phoenix anymore," Charlie Swann tells his teenage girl, Bella, welcoming her to the rain-drenched, vampire-pocked Pacific Northwest town of Forks, Wash. And if that line echoes a famous one from *The Wizard of Oz*, well, so be it, because in *Twilight* - the surefire hit adaptation of the first book from Stephenie Meyer's mega-selling saga - Bella Swann, like Dorothy Gale, is in for the ride of her life.

A pheromone-drenched high school romance rife with heavy-duty Dracula stuff, *Twilight* - directed with savvy humor by Catherine Hardwicke - turns vampirism into a metaphor for teen lust.

When Bella (a soulful, scrutinizing Kristen Stewart) takes one look across the school cafeteria at the lush-lipped Edward Cullen (Robert Pattinson), sirens go off in her head. And the feeling is mutual: Lab partners in biology class, Edward can't control his attraction to Bella. It's biology, but it's chemistry, too: She emits a scent that vampire dudes inhale with urgency. Sitting next to her is driving him wild. Literally.

Bella is in Forks (just down the road from Twin Peaks, I'll wager) because her parents are divorced. Her mother, with whom she lived in Arizona, is traveling with her new husband. And Dad (Billy Burke), the town police chief, is glad, in his taciturn way, to have his daughter home. There's a period of adjustment - entering high school midway through the semester, she has no clique to call her own. But that's OK; Bella, with her iPod and her books, likes to keep to herself.

Until she meets Edward, that is, and suddenly her dreams are full of his lurking likeness. When a kid's car almost crushes Bella in the school parking lot, Edward, on the far side of the lot, is there in a flash - stopping the oncoming vehicle with a superheroic outstretched arm.

There are jokes about radioactive spiders and kryptonite, but then Bella is on the laptop, Googling vampires. She has sussed him out, his cold skin, his speed, his strength. But Edward and his family, a clan of pale-skinned stunners who live in a dazzling glass house in the mist-shrouded woods, aren't your typical bloodsuckers. They stick to animals, and leave the humans alone. Edward's father, Carlisle Cullen (Peter Facinelli), is, in fact, the town doctor.

*Twilight* manages the neat feat of radiating sexual heat at the same time that its pair of young lovers (well, *she's* young - he's been 17 for centuries) must remain ridiculously chaste. Even an innocent kiss could be lethal - or lead to a painful immortality.

Hardwicke, who showed a keen affinity for the female adolescent mind-set in *Thirteen* (and directed the teen skateboarding pic *Lords of Dogtown*), goes close-up on Stewart and Pattinson countless times. Chins aquiver, eyes shooting rockets at each other, it's about as intense a series of onscreen clinches as the movies have seen in ages. And amazingly, it feels real - the actors pull it off.

*Twilight* is a bit like the *Harry Potters*, sexed-up and set in the (kind of) real world. Misfit kids mess around with the supernatural (*Twilight* even substitutes a Quidditch match with a thunderstorm baseball session), and, certainly, there's the promise of a Potter-scale screen franchise.

Stewart, Pattinson and company should get cracking on *Twilight*s 2 and 3 while they're young enough to plausibly play high school (Stewart's 18; Pattinson, who was the doomed Cedric Diggory in two *Harry Potters*, is 22).

There is, of course, a prom moment in *Twilight* - just after the flying battle between Edward and a rogue vampire who has the hots for Bella. And then Hardwicke sets up the sequel with an ominous appearance from a wicked vampiress, descending the stairs at the prom, looking hot - and venomous.

## Recensie 5

NOVEMBER 21, 2008

'Twilight' Barely Sips at Juicy Vampire Genre

For Scary Bloodsuckers, Right One is 'Right One'; 'Bolt' Is Low on Electricity

By JOE MORGENSTERN, Wall Street Journal

Attention, all 13-year-old female readers of this newspaper: Run, do not walk, to the nearest multiplex playing "**Twilight**," the screen version of Stephenie Meyer's best-selling potboiler about a principled vampire and the teenage girl who loves him. Others needn't run. Or walk.

The bleached-faced bloodsucker, Edward Cullen, attends high school in Forks, a singularly gloomy little town in Washington state; he's played by the young English heartthrob-in-the-making Robert Pattinson. Edward first meets his inamorata, Bella (Kristen Stewart), when she moves to Forks, where her father is police chief, from her mother's house in Phoenix, where she had managed, fatefully, to avoid getting a tan. In a film that has the courage of its absurdity but not much else, Mr. Pattinson gets the best of what passes for style. He's been fitted out with an upswept rat's-nest hairdo, along with a thin coat of clown-white makeup, and photographed with special attention to his cantilevered brows and his gift for growing a gaze into a glare or, when the occasion demands it, a leer. Ms. Stewart, on the other hand, hasn't been directed so much as permitted, or maybe incited, to indicate anxiety by spitting out her lines in a rat-tat-tat that can be borderline unintelligible.

Not that "Twilight's" fate hangs on intelligibility. It hangs on fangs that aren't bared, and on a bloodlust that isn't indulged. Edward is, as he explains to Bella patiently, the vampire equivalent of a vegetarian. Like ordinary people living on tofu, he and his family restrict their diet to animal blood, though they still consider the human variety a treat to die for. Indeed, the movie pushes undead abstinence while its director, Catherine Hardwicke, indulges in klutzy extravagance that misfires as often as it fires -- a Cullen family baseball game is to howl at -- and gets little blood pounding until the climax, when Edward clashes with the slaving scion of a carnivorous vampire family in some no-tofu kung fu for the custody of Bella's soul. "Twilight" has targeted the collective soul of teenage America, and will surely have its way.

### **Film 13: Blood: The Last Vampire**

#### **Recensie 1**

Blood: The Last Vampire

Vampire action-schlock aside, this 'Blood' lacks bite

July 10, 2009 | Wesley Morris, The Boston Globe

Anyone waiting for another installment of Stephenie Meyer's "Twilight" or sitting on the edge of his sofa for a new episode of HBO's "True Blood" might want to hold on. Don't let the subtitle of "Blood: The Last Vampire" alarm you. The finale of this tedious piece of Asian-ish action-schlock based on a popular anime series implies an intention to make more. One was plenty for me.

It's no fun not enjoying a story about a half-human, half-vampire samurai, especially one that appears to be aiming for vigorous nonsense. ("Blood" names a character Alice simply so someone can say to her, "Welcome to the other side of the looking glass.") The actors are uniformly terrible. Most of them appear to have been dubbed into English, including the English speakers. But the movie looks too slick for the school-play performances. A more homemade production would immediately lower expectations of competence. Nothing particularly original, exciting, or even noteworthy happens in "Blood," even though it always looks as if something might. The movie and its literary symbols just hang over us like a piñata waiting to be whacked.



Saya (Gianna Jun), our samurai, has been sent to a US military base in Japan during the 1970s. Her mission is to protect humans from vampires and to find the vampire who killed both her father and her first love. For no particular reason, she explains all this in a long, narrated flashback: "Happiness and love was within reach," she says. "But then the dark dream came."

Chris Chow's screenplay seems to be out of fresh ideas before it's really begun. Saya winds up in one of those new-girl-at-school plots. The base is full of American kids who think their new classmate is a freak - not because she's a vampire but because she's Japanese.

During kendo class, she winds up rescuing Alice (Allison Miller), one of her classmates, from a vampire attack. It's the start of a dutiful friendship that, after what feels like hours, leads to the movie's big showdown between Saya and the Japanese celebrity Koyuki, playing a serene vampire who wears giant sunhats and carries a paper parasol. These two hop from screensaver to screensaver trying to destroy each other. Backgrounds typically reserved for sleeping computers are now being tested on sleeping movie audiences.

Just about everything here feels like it's been done better somewhere else, namely for material better suited for a Wii. For instance, the special effects of a sword slashing open a chest is like a sack of coffee beans being ripped open. (Evidently, they're decaf.) "Blood" was directed by Chris Nahon but wants us to know that it's come from "a producer" of "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" and "Hero." So if you're thinking, "Man, that's familiar" as you watch actors do impossible backbends to avoid the swing of an oncoming sword or leap around fake-looking landscapes in defiance of gravity, you'll know why.

## Recensie 2

Review: 'Last Vampire' a bloody mess

Peter Hartlaub, San Francisco Chronicle

Friday, July 10, 2009

"Blood: The Last Vampire" begins with great promise.

First of all, it's a film called "Blood: The Last Vampire." Assuming you're not one of those wine-sipping Sundance Cinema discriminating movie buffs, how bad can it be? Director Chris Nahon fulfills the titular promise almost immediately, treating audiences to a dude getting cut in half lengthwise with a samurai sword and stuffed in the back of a subway car *all before the opening credits*.

If only the projectionist could be persuaded to play the first 10 minutes over and over for two hours, this might be a satisfying movie. Unfortunately, the middle and the end feature a weak lead character, choppy fight choreography, humorless dialogue and computer-generated effects that look as if they came from the "Ghostbusters II" era.

"Blood: The Last Vampire" is a remake of an animated 2000 movie by the same name. They both feature a young-looking vampire named Saya (Gianna Jun), who hunts demons at an Air

Force Base in Tokyo during the Vietnam War, getting sent undercover at a high school. Before you can sing the theme to "21 Jump Street," violence breaks out, and Saya must protect Allison, a general's daughter.

If that sounds kind of hot, don't get your hopes up. Allison Miller plays her character as if she's a guest on "Charmed." The dialogue sounds as if it is being spoken in Middle-earth, not the 1970s. ("Now that Onigen is here, blood will be shed!") When the demon Onigen does arrive, and blood is indeed shed, the editing is too fast, while the artsy cinematography with slow-motion falling leaves seems derivative and second-rate.

The best part of the film involves the CIA cleaning up Saya's messes while keeping the military out of the way. You can always count on the spooks from Langley for a few minutes of entertainment.

### **Recensie 3**

Teenage Terminatrix

By JEANNETTE CATSOULIS, New York Times

Published: July 9, 2009

Upholding the Japanese media mandate that every teenage terminatrix resemble a murderous Catholic schoolgirl, "Blood: The Last Vampire" introduces Saya (Gianna, otherwise known as the South Korean actress Jeon Ji-hyun), an ancient vampire-human hybrid posing as a 16-year-old student. Ever since her father was killed by the über-demon Onigen (an excruciating performance by the Japanese model and actress Koyuki), Saya, assisted by a shadowy organization known as the Council, has pledged to rid the world of demonkind. In her down time she sips blood from bottles tucked inside brown paper bags, like a strangely sexy wino.

Set primarily on an American military base near Tokyo (the action takes place in 1970, but Vietnam references are conspicuously absent), "Blood" suffers from abusive close-ups, repetitive fight sequences and uninspired demon design. The French director Chris Nahon (adapting Hiroyuki Kitakubo's animated short film of the same name) strains to connect low budget and high ambition, but his talent for atmosphere is repeatedly undermined by Chris Chow's incoherent script.

Were it not for a last-minute appearance by the action legend Yasuaki Kurata — who, one feels, must have wheel-kicked his way out of the womb — "Blood" would be as pallid as Saya's alabaster skin.

### **Recensie 4**

The Washington Post

July 10, 2009 Friday

## Not-So-Fresh 'Blood'

Dan Zak

Finally, a zombie-vampire martial arts movie set in Tokyo during the Vietnam War. And they said it couldn't be done.

"Blood: The Last Vampire" is based on anime that predates the two "Kill Bill" movies and "Sin City," but this live-action version sucks elements from all those films: deadly Japanese schoolgirl types, salivating red-eyed demons, film-noirish CIA spooks.

There's a legend, or something, behind the story of "Blood," but who cares? We get the scoop before the credits: Something happened in the 16th century with a bunch of demons, and there was some kind of war in Japan, and maybe the humans won, and now it's 1970 and the demons are preparing for a comeback. The demons are vampires. Or zombies. They kill people! And maybe drink their blood. There's a shadowy government operation called the Council, and they clean up the gore whenever a demon is dispatched by Saya, a half-human, half-demon assassin with pigtails who looks like jailbait but is 500 years old.

Saya gets involved with the daughter of a general on a U.S. military base outside Tokyo. The daughter, Alice, is almost killed by two demons after gym class. Saya steps in, slaughters the demons and the two stick together for the sake of the narrative. The powerful demon leader is getting ready to rumble, so Saya and her sword must be prepared for all-out war.

The first third of "Blood" shows promise because of its hodgepodge of clashing tones. There's something delightfully kitschy about placing a Japanese sword fighting story on and around an American military base in Tokyo in 1970, with Edwin Starr's "War (What Is It Good For)" on the soundtrack and demons assailing humanity for its "pretentious moral high ground."

But when Alice and Saya start to bond, director Chris Nahon loses control of his tones. A flashback goes on too long in a feeble attempt to give the movie an emotional backbone. The peculiar, comic-book-like computer graphics -- artful at first -- finally overtake "Blood" and make it look like a video game instead of a graceful, graphic martial arts movie.

### Recensie 5

Movie review: 'Blood: The Last Vampire'

South Korean star only undead part of 'Vampire'

By Michael Ordon, Chicago Tribune

July 9, 2009

**1 1/2 stars (out of four)**

What we have here is a failure to communicate.

Even when one adjusts expectations for an English-language adaptation of an animé adaptation of a manga, shot as a Michael Bay knockoff by a French video director, the often unwatchably dim “Blood: The Last Vampire” doesn’t convey much of anything. That’s “dim” in many senses. The supposed plot involves a beautiful half-human, half-vampire government agent hunting demons in Japan with her American schoolgirl sidekick during the Vietnam War. If you’re going “huh?” already, just wait.

Vampires and demons hang out in sunlight and have no specified powers or limitations. There are long, imponderably shot, sped-up and edited martial-arts fights, some with a gorgeous gal in a sailor dress swinging a samurai sword at hordes of stunt performers.

The dialogue is of the “Everything according to plan?” and “The Council must remain anonymous” ilk. The sidekick is superfluous and largely reduced to screaming and whimpering throughout.

Director Chris Nahon (“Kiss of the Dragon”) jumbles the usual batch of silly macho stereotypes (sunglasses at night, you know the type) and stock sequences with a visual palette ranging from barely visible black to impenetrable black. The exercise filches shamelessly from “300,” “Star Wars,” “The Matrix” and countless kung-fu movies.

“Blood’s” only surprise is that the filmmakers landed Gianna (also known as Jeon Ji-hyun) for the lead.

The South Korean megastar, a compelling screen presence, proves a more-than-capable action heroine, despite the creative detritus around which she has to navigate.

#### **Film 14: Bakjwi (Thirst)**

##### **Recensie 1**

Review: Farce, gruesomeness dominate 'Thirst'

Walter Addiego, San Francisci Chronicle

Friday, July 31, 2009

I'll stick out my neck and say that Park Chan Wook's wildly gruesome "Thirst" is the most whacked-out version of an Emile Zola novel ever to reach the screen.

The movie's source, "Thérèse Raquin" (1867), is about an unhappily married young woman who plans a murder with her illicit lover; the movie focuses on a Korean priest who becomes a vampire, then takes up with a married woman who also becomes a vampire, and the two have a falling-out after many bloody killings.

The South Korean director is best known here for his "Vengeance" trilogy, cult films marked by ultra-violence and gross-out scenes. Quentin Tarantino is a Park enthusiast. (Of the three films, I particularly like "Oldboy," which won the Palme d'Or at Cannes in 2004. The others movies are "Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance" and "Lady Vengeance.")

A saintly young priest (Song Kang Ho) who works at a hospital dies in a medical experiment. A blood transfusion brings him back to life, but changed: He needs blood to prevent outbreaks of boils from the virus he received in the experiment, and he now has an extremely healthy sexual appetite.

One of the priest's childhood friends is a sickly fellow (Shin Ha Kyun) with a domineering mother (Kim Hae Sook), both of whom roundly abuse the young man's wife (Kim Ok Vin). Visiting the family for mah-jongg sessions, the priest falls for the wife; he infects her via vigorous couplings, and they become partners in pursuit of blood, of which we see plenty.

The priest, at least early on, is a man with a genuine gift for helping others, so much so that he gains followers who see him as a miraculous healer.

The changes he undergoes disturb him deeply, but eventually he abandons his calling and gives himself over to "sinful pleasures." Meanwhile, his companion exults in sex and in her newfound powers, and her indulgences will come to shock her lover.

Park dwells on disgusting images, from the priest's throbbing boils to his sucking of victims' blood through medical tubes, to gory vomiting and various scenes of bone-smashing violence. There's a sense of glee in all the mayhem that helps mitigate the shock effects - at least a bit.

Still, there are moments when you can actually hear hints of Zola, and the film strikes a more realistic mood in the priest's agonizing over the changes in his life and the wife's repulsion at her husband and mother-in-law. (The latter's eventual paralysis, which leaves her capable of moving only her eyes, is taken directly from the novel.) But this material is overwhelmed by the film's mixture of farce and horror.

"Thirst's" excesses will entertain some viewers, but if you want coherence, look elsewhere.

## Recensie 2

The New York Times

July 31, 2009 Friday

Man of the Cloth, With a Sudden Craving for Blood and Sex

By A. O. SCOTT

Sang-hyun, the hero of Park Chan-wook's "Thirst," is many different things: a Roman Catholic priest; a selfless volunteer in a dangerous medical experiment; a reluctant faith healer with a cult following; a vampire. And "Thirst" itself, which won the Jury Prize this year at the Cannes Film Festival, where Mr. Park has long been a favorite, is equally protean. It is a bloodstained horror movie, a dark comedy, a noirish psychodrama of crime and punishment, a melodrama of mad love, a freehanded literary adaptation (of Emile Zola's "Therese Raquin") and, of course, a vampire movie.

Unfortunately, it is also less than the sum of its parts -- overly long, lacking in narrative momentum and too often choosing sensation over coherence. Mr. Park has an undeniable knack for choreographing bloody, sensual set pieces. While nothing in "Thirst" is quite as shocking or perverse as some of the best-known moments in his "Old Boy" or "Lady Vengeance" -- by which I mean that no children are murdered and no live cephalopods swallowed whole -- there are elegantly presented servings of sex and gore. Mr. Park and his cast offer moments of creepy, winking humor and also of intense emotion, a combination that is a hallmark of this director's oeuvre.

The most vividly rendered feeling, suggested by the film's title, is desire: for human blood, for sexual release and also for something purer and more soothing. Sang-hyun, despite his vampirism (which follows his voluntary infection with a disfiguring tropical virus), clings to a sense of righteousness and decency. Instead of maiming or killing innocent people, he discreetly slurps from the intravenous tube of an overweight patient in a hospital coma ward. Later on, when his appetite (and that of his lover) grows, Sang-hyun proposes turning to assisted suicide rather than outright murder. Even his sexual hunger is shadowed by guilt and colored by tenderness as much as lust.

It helps that Sang-hyun is played by Song Kang-ho, one of South Korea's most inventive and reliably sympathetic actors. More somber and stiffer than he was in Bong Joon-ho's "Host," one of the best monster-horror movies of recent years, Mr. Song broods and suffers persuasively. He also slyly signals some of the more preposterous aspects of his character. This poor priest, longing to help humanity, finds himself covered in blisters and under quarantine and then subject to sensory freakouts that are scant compensation for his superhuman powers.

Sensory freakouts are one of Mr. Park's specialties. His colors -- red in particular -- are always bright and menacing, and his sound design foregrounds wet, intimate, icky noises. He is a virtuoso not so much of sex and violence as of the feverish states that incite such frenzies of carnality. In Sang-hyun's case, involuntary bloodlust is redoubled by a more familiar kind when he finds himself infatuated with a young woman, Tae-ju (Kim Ok-vin). The adoptive stepsister, and now the wife, of a sickly childhood friend of Sang-hyun's, Tae-ju lives with her husband (Shin Ha-kyun) and mother-in-law (Kim Hae-sook) in a state of Cinderella-like servitude. She is bored, bossed around and, she leads Sang-hyun to believe, grievously abused.

What develops between Sang-hyun and Tae-ju should be, and sometimes is, a nasty little drama of mayhem, revenge and remorse. Ms. Kim, at first the very image of girlish frailty, evolves from ingenue to femme fatale to demon, and exerts herself bravely in an effort to embody the film's anxious and confused ideas about female sexuality.

These will be familiar to connoisseurs of recent vampire-obsessed popular culture, from "Twilight" to "True Blood." Tae-ju, who is initiated by Sang-hyun into his sanguinary tribe, is at once a helpless victim and a wanton vixen. The difference between the lovers is indicative of the film's queasy, quasi-misogynist ideas about eros and ethics. Sang-hyun is morally stricken by his cravings, and when he can't fight them he at least tries to bargain with their implacable demands. Tae-ju, once she overcomes her initial shyness, recognizes no such scruples or boundaries. She is a fantasy figure designed to scare and titillate boys who imagine that a sexually awakened woman is an uncontrollably destructive force.

Like other conceits in the film, this fantasy has the potential to be more interesting than it is. Mr. Park seems almost to be making up the story as he goes along, gesturing toward themes that are never, so to speak, fleshed out. Soaked in blood though it is, "Thirst" leaves some essential cravings unsatisfied.

### Recensie 3

'Thirst' is a vampire movie with intellectual heft

#### MOVIE REVIEW

July 31, 2009 | BETSY SHARKEY | Los Angeles Times

Are you hungering for that rare vampire movie with serious intellectual heft, ravishing undead, biting passion and a healthy splash of irony as well as iron in all that spilled red blood?

Wait no longer, Korean auteur Park Chan-wook's "Thirst" should satisfy.

Though the subject is vampires, this is not a horror film, at least not in any of the traditional ways we think of horror with its thrills and chills, shrieks and shocks. Instead, Park has created a rumination on morality and mortality that is not at all deadly, but funny and profound and at times intensely erotic.

"Thirst," the Jury Prize winner at the Cannes International Film Festival this year stars Song Kang-ho as a brooding young priest whose efforts at self-sacrifice lead him into a high-risk experimental medical program. Things do not go well, and a tainted blood transfusion turns out to be lifesaving in ways he never imagined.

The priest becomes the predator, but in what has become a modern-day trend (see "Twilight" and "True Blood"), the undead cleric has adopted medicine's governing principle -- first do no harm. Which is all well and good except there is the matter of that unquenchable thirst that makes even the best intentions a struggle.

Park, who co-wrote the screenplay with frequent collaborator Chung Seo-kyung, has surrounded Song with trials and temptations. The most deadly turns out to be carnal desire in the winsome shape of Tae-ju (Kim Ok-vin), a devil in a blue kimono if there ever was one.

Soon there is an intriguing web of deception being spun around and by our tortured priest as he moves between siphoning blood from patients at a nearby hospital, assisting suicides and a weekly mah-jongg game.

Mah-jongg, and soon other far more deadly games, is played at the house where Tae-ju lives. Her situation there is complicated -- an abandoned child the family took in, raised like a daughter by the domineering matriarch, but now married to the idiot son, who was a childhood friend of the priest.

Incest? Technically no. Regardless, this is not the question that interests Park as it did in his seminal 2003 treatise on the subject, "Old Boy."

Nevertheless, sexual relations and relationships are usually somewhere at the dark heart of Park's work. Mix that predilection with vampire mythology, long cloaked in sexual complexity (see Anne Rice's "Interview With a Vampire" et al.), and it was clear that he would have much to play with.

And Park has taken full advantage of the possibilities. Though the filmmaker has made a career of examining human frailty within brutal landscapes where violence and revenge battle it out with god and philosophy for the soul, "Thirst" may be his most fully realized film yet. Certainly its visual style is stunning, the color pallet shifting from muted browns to stark whites, the set design from cluttered to spare, as the vampire instincts take hold.

Nothing about "Thirst" is tentative. Where many filmmakers opt for their undead to swoop in for a quick bite and drain, Park has chosen to linger on the process, a decision that is more unsettling than frightening as you watch life slipping away in the face of uncontrollable need.

He has also given us a love triangle between the priest, the pretty one and the son that is both ordinary and exceptional in the ways it tempts and tests our players. For starters, "Thirst" has some of the most exhaustive vampire sex to be found, at least in the art house versus the back rooms of video stores or the inky corridors of the Internet.

Where forbidden desire grows, deceit is sure to follow, and it quickly does. This is where Park slips into the surreal in ways that don't quite work for the story, which otherwise grounds its vampires in the rhythms of a relatively ordinary existence, the feasting rituals notwithstanding.

Song, one of Korea's top actors, is mesmerizing as the meditative priest, and Kim proves a tantalizingly fiery and unexpected counterbalance. In one particularly trenchant moment, the two lovers sit on a beach, watching the waves roll in. It's just before sunrise. Breakfast anyone?

#### **Recensie 4**

Thirst

Priest-turned-vampire has a hearty 'Thirst'

August 21, 2009 | Ty Burr, The Boston Globe

After seeing "Thirst," I can't shake the image of Park Chan-wook, the ferociously talented director of Korean action-horror movies like "Oldboy," cruising the aisles in the supermarket of movie genres. He's piling his shopping cart with this and that: a vampire fantasy, a disease-epidemic drama, a "Postman Always Rings Twice" slice of murderous adultery. A little *l'amour fou*, some Emile Zola, a lot of gore. At times, "Thirst" seems hellbent on proving Park can do it all, and without a sign of strain.



On that last count, the film's a slight disappointment. "Thirst" keeps coming up against the limitations of its various inspirations like a bumper car on a crowded court. On almost every other level, the film's audaciously entertaining, at times even quite moving. You just have to have the stomach for it. Until Park's 2006 insane-asylum romance "I'm a Cyborg, But That's OK" gets a proper release in this country, "Thirst" will do nicely.

Song Kang-ho, the brooding Korean superstar and featured player of Park classics like "Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance," is cast, against all common sense, as a Catholic priest named Sang-hyun. The father has a martyr complex: He volunteers as a test subject for a virulent Ebola-like disease and, after a sudden relapse and blood transfusion, emerges from high-tech quarantine completely cured. A miracle? Legions of the devout think so. In fact, Sang-hyun has accidentally been transfused with vampire's blood. (We never find out which vampire. He probably lied on the forms.)

The specifics of Sang-hyun's new condition are bizarre and gross and matter-of-factly presented, and Park has great fun with them until he gets sidetracked by the appearance of Tae-ju (Kim Ok-vin), a bored housewife married to a sickly mama's boy (Shin Ha-kyun). The lust between the priest and Tae-ju is incendiary - the director has acknowledged Zola's "Therese Raquin" as an influence - even as Sang-hyun tries to hold on to what tatters of Christian morality he has left. Not so with the wife, who blossoms from an abused mouse to a goddess of desire in carnal increments. And that's before she discovers what her lover has for dinner.

"Thirst" is deliriously bonkers and keeps getting more so; you watch it holding your breath, waiting to see where Park will zigzag next. What holds it all together - what makes it work as a movie - is Kim's astonishing performance and the boundless thirst she implies, for sexual release, for blood, for power. In addition to everything else, the movie has more than a little classic women's melodrama in it, with its put-upon heroine bursting through years of repression and righteously vowing to even the score with an uncaring world. By the final scenes, "Thirst" has gone even further, becoming the tenderest of monster movies. Call it "Sympathy for Lady Vampire."

## Recensie 5

'Thirst' starts with much promise, then devolves into repetitious violence

August 28, 2009 | By Tirdad Derakhshani, Philadelphia Inquirer

Do you dig the current vampire craze? Do you love *Twilight* so much you'd die for it?

Then skip South Korean writer-director Park Chan-wook's violent, bloody *Thirst*, a genre-bending - if not genre-destroying - foray into the vampire myth. *Thirst* has more in common with Claire Denis' deeply disturbing sex, blood and angst orgy *Trouble Every Day* (2001) and Abel Ferrara's overblown Søren Kierkegaard-meets-Prince Vlad college seminar *The Addiction* (1995), than with Catherine Hardwicke's misty-eyed teen vamp romp.

Sadly, like both, *Thirst* begins with great intellectual and artistic promise, then devolves into a repetitious mess of teeth, blades, necks, bites, arterial sprays, sex, sex, sex and death.

The film's failure is sad, because no one seems better suited to make a grown-up vampire film than Park, whose fierce and fiercely intelligent Revenge Trilogy - *Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance* (2002), *Oldboy* (2003), and *Lady Vengeance* (2005) - is a grisly, gruesome yet oddly transcendent meditation on sin, vengeance, grace, and redemption.

Based in part on Emile Zola's *Thérèse Raquin*, a disturbing yarn about adultery and murder, *Thirst* features Song Kang-ho (*Memories of Murder*) as Sang-hyeon, a Catholic priest who ministers to hospital patients.

In its briskly paced, rewarding first 45 minutes, the film follows Sang-hyeon as he selflessly volunteers for a dangerous medical experiment, only to become infected with vampire blood.

Park fills Sang-hyeon's transformation with wicked jokes and visual puns. Things start to get tricky, and bloody, when the erstwhile celibate, fastidious clergyman falls in love with his old school friend's sad, ill-treated, frumpy wife, Tae-ju, played by 22-year-old actress-model Kim Ok-vin in a breathtaking turn.

The new couple's love blossoms in a segment saturated with magical realism. But soon enough, their relationship devolves into selfish desires, angry jealousy, and murder.

Park's Revenge Trilogy explored what happens to us when we are stripped of our humanity by forces we can't control. *Thirst*, which Park insists is a film about morality, treads similar ground. At its best, it underscores the wide chasm between Sang-hyeon the priest, whose life is committed to helping others, and Sang-hyeon the vampire, who can survive only if he robs people of their dignity, if not their life.

Far too long at 133 minutes, *Thirst* becomes slow, repetitious, and self-indulgent in its far more bloody second half. It seems to descend into the same vicious, selfish world of addiction that traps Sang-hyeon and Tae-ju.

## **Film 15: Cirque du Freak: The Vampire's Assistant**

### **Recensie 1**

Movie review: Cirque du Freak: The Vampire's Assistant -- 3 out of 5 stars

John C. Reilly is well cast as a playful, seen-it-all blood-sucker in Cirque du Freak: The Vampire's Assistant

By Roger Moore, Orlando Sentinel

October 23, 2009

Cirque du Freak: The Vampire's Assistant is sort of a Twilight-lite. It's about vampires and it's about teenagers. But where Twilight vamps down Romance Novel Road, Freak, based on Darren Shan's novels, is a lark and in this case, the laughs are intentional.

The movie's big drawback is that it isn't silly enough.

Chris Massoglia is Darren, a good kid with good parents but a boy under the influence of the classmate his parents call "that damned Steve" (Josh Hutcherson). Steve's a class-cutting, vandalizing punk who leads Darren away from "the path to a happy, productive life," or so the parents warn.

Darren should have listened, because when a strange Euro-limo passes through town dropping flyers for "The world's greatest freak show," Steve insists they go. And mixed up with the bearded lady (Salma Hayek) and Alexander Ribs (Orlando Jones), there's a real live vampire. Steve recognizes Larten Crepsley (John C. Reilly) from his vampire books and is anxious to escape his miserable life by joining the undead. But the guy whose "destiny" it is to join the vampires in their war with the murderous Vampanese is Darren.

Director Paul Weitz (*In Good Company*) and writer Brian Koppelman (*Mystic River*) go for something like a *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* goof on teens dealing with issues of eternal life/eternal damnation. The dialogue lacks the wit of the visuals -- chasing a vampire's trained spider through school is a highlight.

Reilly is well cast as a playful, seen-it-all blood-sucker who explains what awaits Darren if the kid chooses to earn his fangs -- "It's a lonely life, but there's lots of it."

A plumped-up Michael Cerveris from TV's *Fringe* makes a dandy, fey villain, the one playing vampires against one another. The kids aren't bad, with freak show member Rebecca (Jessica Carlson) providing the coy teen love interest.

But despite some amusing scenes and "rules" for this vampire world, the script never sinks its teeth into the *Cirque du Freak* and never once works up a decent fright. This Assistant could use more on-the-job training.

## **Recensie 2**

'Cirque du Freak: The Vampire's Assistant' movie review: Reilly and company undead on arrival in lightweight vampire tale

Thursday, October 22, 2009

### **Stephen Whitty, Newark Star-Ledger**

Ever since the first Harry Potter film opened, studio executives have been busy alchemists, trying to turn lead into gold. Or, at least, trying to adapt young-adult novel series into blockbuster-movie franchises.

It hasn't been successful, or pretty. "The Golden Compass." "A Series of Unfortunate Events." "Inkheart." "Eragon." The release schedule of the last few years is cluttered with kickoffs to series that never got past that first, disappointing episode.

"Cirque du Freak: The Vampire's Assistant" is the latest flawed attempt. Based on the first three installments in a sprawling 12-book series, "The Vampire's Assistant" follows the life (and unlife) of Darren (Chris Massoglia), a typically lonely and maladjusted teen hero. When

a peculiar circus comes to town, he and best friend Steven (Josh Hutcherson) go to take in the freak show. But they become fascinated with the vampire magician, Larten Crepsley (John C. Reilly), and before long, both boys will become bloodsuckers themselves.

Bloodsuckers on opposite sides of an ancient vampire war.

The series of books, by Darren Shan, is quite popular, but exactly why it's popular is absolutely lost on director and co-writer Paul Weitz. The movie has no sense of magic or fun; the characters never seem to have anything at stake. It's just a lot of computer graphics and gleefully hamming-it-up actors.

Some interesting actors, at least. If the "Potter" films have become a kind of steady check for Britain's best stage stars, at least "The Vampire's Assistant" provides some nice bonuses for America's theatrical veterans and indie regulars. Reilly, Willem Dafoe and Michael Cerveris all pass through here, to snarl and strut.

But it's all pitched a little bit too high, and a little off-center. Reilly, who always exudes lumpish, regular-guy decency, never remotely convinces as a wise and ancient vampire. (It's as if Karl Malden played Count Dracula.) Cerveris hams it up. Other performers (including Selma Hayek, as a busty, bearded lady) have little to do.

The film's two teen stars, Massoglia and Hutcherson, get more screen time. But who wants to watch them? Massoglia is dully if pleasantly forgettable, and Hutcherson telegraphs every emotion. What's supposed to come off as a desperate blood feud looks like a Nickelodeon sitcom: "Drake & Josh, the Undead Years."

Sure, Hayek is pretty to look at, even with the Smith Bros. treatment. Dafoe pumps a lot of quirky energy into what amounts to two very brief scenes. And some of the monsters are fun — including a scaly snakeboy who really wants to be a rock star.

But what could have been a truly magical, Ray Bradbury kind of world, full of midnight circuses, runaway boys and soul-stealing business deals, instead plays like tame, jokey horror. And what might have been the beginning of a new tween fantasy series only feels like one more first — and final — chapter.

### **Recensie 3**

Movie review: Another 'Freak' of the week

Colin Covert , Minneapolis Star Tribune

October 22, 2009

The teen neck-biter sweepstakes gains a new entrant with "The Vampire's Assistant," a distillation of several titles from the popular British "Cirque du Freak" series. It isn't really much, beyond a wry tone and a few earned laughs.

As usual, the fantasy form is used for a sneak psychology lesson. Darren Shan (Minneapolis actor Chris Massoglia) lives a tidy little life in a tidy little town. In other words, he's half dead already. His parents have his "happy, productive" future all planned out.

Delinquent pal Steve (Josh Hutcherson, "Bridge to Terabithia") points out adventures off the straight and narrow path. When they attend a shady freak show, Darren is awestruck: These are his people. In short order he's traveling with the show. He apprentices with slick, hammy bloodsucker Larten Crepsley (John C. Reilly), falls for a cutie with a prehensile tail, and becomes a player in a war between rival factions of undead.

The film shuffles together episodes from the first three volumes of the 12-book "Cirque" saga, which may explain its rushed, patchy feel. It unfurls like a series of skits. Director Paul Weitz ("In Good Company") films the carnival kitsch in poshly lurid color and gives his performers permission to camp it up.

Reilly is droll in a red velvet suit, top hat and a crown of carrot-colored hair. He's a small-time ham with a classic con man's grand manner. Crepsley is a good vampire who refuses to chomp jugular veins. "That would kill you," he archly explains to Darren. Instead he anesthetizes his human prey, makes a neat incision in the shoulder and sips delicately. This keeps the host alive and avoids the whole torch-and-pitchfork brouhaha sparked by his throat-ripping cousins, the murderous Vampanese.

The bad vamps, led by obese Mr. Tiny (Michael Cerveris) want ... well, I'm not sure what they want other than to fight Crepsley and Darren. There are dark hints about the conflict between the mystical clans, but the film is more interested in fisticuffs and splintering furniture. It's loud and emphatic, but not terribly frightening.

"The Vampire's Assistant" brims with youth-specific motifs: fractured friendships, disenchantment, agonizing over choices, first love, travel. They don't fit smoothly into a vampire story but you can see what was intended.

Massoglia gives a warm, likable performance as Darren; just 17, he suggests a young John Krasinski. Salma Hayek, inhumanly voluptuous and whiskered like a desert prophet, plays the Cirque's bearded lady; Ken Watanabe is somehow 9 feet tall as the colossal owner, and gaunt Willem Dafoe sports a gigolo's mustache as an elder vampire. Weitz can't get the jumble into coherent form. He's a good comedy director, but this spook show suffers from the kind of pacing that demands a laugh track.

#### **Recensie 4**

Amid Vampires, Boy Meets Girl, Complete With Monkey's Tail

By A. O. SCOTT, New York Times

October 22, 2009

Darren (Chris Massoglia) has a life that's hectic in the usual teenage ways. He's a good student with a bad-boy best friend named Steve (Josh Hutcherson) and loving if somewhat intrusive parents. Darren's afterlife, however, is a whole different story.

After a mysterious circus comes to town, Darren and Steve find themselves pulled into a long-running conflict between rival factions of the undead: the eccentric but basically decent Vampires and the diabolical Vampaneze. They enter a world whose inhabitants range from odd to sinister and beyond, a realm fraught with complications that will take many more movies to resolve.

This is the premise, and the hope, of “Cirque du Freak: The Vampire’s Assistant,” adapted by Paul Weitz (who directed the film and wrote the script with Brian Helgeland) from the first volumes in a popular series of young-adult, comic-gothic novels by Darren Shan. This frenetic, bumpy movie enters a crowded marketplace of book-based, youth-oriented fantasy entertainment and perhaps inevitably calls to mind some of its competitors, from the unstoppable (and soon to be concluded) Harry Potter series to, most obviously, the “Twilight” franchise.

Coincidentally enough, Mr. Weitz’s brother and frequent collaborator, Chris, has taken over that juggernaut of swooning adolescent vampire love, the second installment of which, “New Moon,” opens next month. Both “Twilight” and “Cirque du Freak” plunge a normal American high school student into a maelstrom of supernatural warfare, but “The Vampire’s Assistant” favors campy, semi-comic grotesquerie over hothouse romanticism. Its wandering narrative and quizzical blend of the outré and the everyday sometimes feel like David Lynch for young adults.

There are bright colors, garish costumes and stagy special effects, in keeping with both the circus setting and with Mr. Weitz’s not quite successful attempt to meld disparate moods and tones. (Speaking of tones, I should disclose here that the composer of the film’s score, Stephen Trask, is a friend of mine.) The movie starts out as a voice-over-driven satire of youth in the suburbs, with shades of John Hughes and “Heathers,” and then jumps from horror to melodrama to a kind of carnival backstage comedy.

At the circus, whose connection to the whole Vampire-versus-Vampaneze imbroglio is never entirely clear, Darren finds a squad of human oddities, including a bearded lady (Salma Hayek), a fellow with two stomachs (Frankie Faison), an indie-rock snake boy (Patrick Fugit) and a potential sweetheart with the tail of a monkey (Jessica Carlson). The show is presided over by an enigmatic fellow named Larten Crepsley, played by John C. Reilly with an exotic accent and a florid manner that express, above all, his joy at being liberated from regular-guy typecasting.

One of Crepsley’s fellow Vampires, Gavner Purl, is played by Willem Dafoe, whose hollow cheeks and funereal voice (to say nothing of his portrayal of the old-school freak Max Schreck in E. Elias Merhige’s “Shadow of the Vampire”) give him instant credibility. Also on hand is Michael Cerveris, the brilliant stage actor (“Tommy,” the recent Broadway revival of “Sweeney Todd”), who plays Mr. Tiny, a porcine provocateur who entices Steve over to the Vampaneze in his quest to stir up trouble in the underworld.

The trouble with “The Vampire’s Assistant” is that it is almost all prologue and exposition. It lays out, at some length and yet only in part, an intricately crosshatched set of dramatic problems. Will Steve and Darren become mortal — or undead — enemies? Why do the Vampires and the Vampaneze hate each other so much? Ideally, the opener of a many-sequeled series should create an almost unbearable need to know the answers to such questions, so that fans count the months to the next installment.

Instead, this movie incites curiosity tinged with confusion and irritation. It bristles with interesting ideas — about friendship and freakishness, honesty and anger — and intriguing characters, all of which may blossom in later episodes. But the pop-culture landscape is littered with scuttled or suspended fantasy series, including “The Chronicles of Narnia,” “The Golden Compass” and those Lemony Snicket novels. “Cirque du Freak” seems to be at some risk of joining them, since “The Vampire’s Assistant” tests its viewers’ patience even as it strives to build their loyalty.

## Recensie 5

'Cirque du Freak: The Vampire's Assistant'

### MOVIE REVIEW

October 23, 2009 | BETSY SHARKEY | Los Angeles Times

In the bizarre world of "Cirque du Freak: The Vampire's Assistant," there's a war brewing over, how to put this simply, "portion" control. It seems the truce between those who sip, leaving humans a little weaker but none the wiser, and those who guzzle, gluttons who leave death, destruction and no tip behind, has been on hold for a couple hundred years.

But those peaceful days are about to end in Paul Weitz's stab at vampire camp in "Cirque du Freak," a not quite deadly adaptation of the frothy fanged kids book series by Darren Shan. Interestingly, the lead character is a 16-year-old named Darren Shan (Chris Massoglia). Coincidence? I think not.

Darren's a good kid, makes good grades and seems to be taking a pass on the whole teen rebellion thing except for his delinquent best friend Steve (Josh Hutcherson). That is, until the Cirque comes to town (cue ominous music).

Despite being told not to go, come evening Darren and Steve are there, claiming to be 21. How 16 is that?

There's a good mix of appropriately gross freaks from minor aberrations like Snake Boy (Patrick Fugit), who seems to have nothing more than a bad case of green psoriasis, to major freakishness like Corma Limbs (Jane Krakowski), who can regenerate body parts, which comes in handy when there's an angry werewolf around. But the real discovery of the night is Crepsley (John C. Reilly) and his performing pet spider, a big bright red and blue poisonous plush one named Octa, who blinks, bites and bounces around trying her best to look lethal.

Now here's the weird thing, Darren really likes spiders and Steve is obsessed with vampires and he's sure that Crepsley is one. Have they come to the right place or what? Soon there's an Octa heist, a bad spider bite, some DNA testing by a nasty fat man named Mr. Tiny (Michael Cerveris) and Darren's having to make a really major life decision -- like should he become a half-vampire to get the spider-dote for Steve and fool his family into thinking he's dead? The answer, my friends, is yes, a quick death and a very long life are definitely in the cards for Darren.

The themes in "Cirque" are typical teenage ones -- feeling like a freak, unsure of who you are or what you want to be in life, ready to fall in love, kinda, especially when the monkey girl (Jessica Carlson) is so cute, and falling out with your best friend.

This is usually Weitz's sweet spot, having written "About a Boy" with such a lovely blend of sentiment and humor, and "In Good Company," an underrated relationship comedy starring Topher Grace, which he both wrote and directed. So it's a disappointment that "Cirque" isn't better.

The look of the film has a great, eerie Victorian storybook quality to it. The story and characters are mostly sized for the 8- to 10-year-old crowd. The action -- a lot of rough vampire-versus-vampire (the killer vamps) fighting, which entails limb tearing, head butting and spilled blood -- aims a little older. Meanwhile the dialogue is shooting for something akin to the campy cleverness of "Scream."

Unfortunately Weitz can't quite get a handle on what the film should be, despite teaming up with the talented Brian Koppelman ("L.A. Confidential") on the script. "Cirque" is a harmless bit of fluff with a very cool look, but there's just never enough bite.

## **Film 16: Daybreakers**

### **Recensie 1**

'Daybreakers'

Fresh blood in saturated vampire market

**Bill Goodykoontz** - Jan. 6, 2010

The Arizona Republic

"Daybreakers" puts a nice spin on the usual horror movie, offering a world where the bad guys don't win, exactly, but who we think of as the good guys have definitely lost.

Of course, this calls into question your perception of good guys and bad guys. Typically, since Bram Stoker wrote "Dracula," vampires have occupied a curious middle ground in storytelling. Yes, they kill people, suck their blood, rob them of their very humanity. When you put it like that . . .

On the other hand, they're just so . . . cool.

Michael and Peter Spierig, who wrote and directed "Daybreakers," place their story in a world in the near future, when whatever plague caused people to turn into vampires won out; there are few humans remaining, and they hide, so that they won't be used as the bottom rung on the food chain.

But, unlike "I Am Legend," which is the story of one man's quest for survival in a similar world, "Daybreakers" is the story of the vampires trying to stay alive. With so few humans left, the blood supply is dwindling.



The trouble with the dwindling blood supply is, besides starvation, the transformation the vampires undergo when they try to feed on each other (or, in extreme cases, themselves). Then they become true monsters, the stuff of nightmares. Just ask Edward (Ethan Hawke), who finds a neighbor in his house, or at least what used to be a neighbor. Now he's a savage, winged creature desperate for blood. You might feel sorry for the guy if he wasn't so intent on ripping Edward's head off.

Edward is a researcher trying to come up with a suitable substitute for blood. He works for Charles Bromley (Sam Neill), who would of course love to corner the market on a working blood-type product.

Oh, and they're both vampires. So is Edward's brother, Frankie (Michael Dorman), a vampire soldier who hunts humans, so that they can be captured and farmed for their blood (the contraption the vampires have rigged for storing and "milking" humans is haunting).

Yet, thanks to an encounter with a human (Claudia Karvan), who is part of an underground network of survivors trying to stay alive while working up a possible cure, Edward now sides with the humans. It's an interesting film, despite the wild overacting by Willem Dafoe as Elvis, a human with a personal line on a cure who wields a crossbow (as well as a ridiculous Southern accent that's as scary as anything in the movie).

Hawke is suitably moody and brooding as a man - a former man - tormented. Neill is goofily effective as the oily Bromley, whose attention to the bottom line trumps . . . what? His humanity? He doesn't have any left to begin with. Dorman's also good as a heartless sort who comes to realize the error of his ways.

The Spierigs create a nicely eerie atmosphere, one fueled on either side of the vampire equation by a desperate need for survival. "Daybreakers" isn't a great film, but it's a good one, and in a market oddly lousy with vampire tales, it's an original.

## **Recensie 2**

January 07, 2010

'Daybreakers' -- 3 stars

Michael Phillips, Chicago Tribune

Everything that's good about "Daybreakers" bursts forth in the scene where in a hematologist played by Ethan Hawke undertakes an experiment and injects a not-quite-FDA-approved synthetic liquid into the veins of a fellow vampire, under the watchful eye of a pharmaceutical magnate played by Sam Neill.

From the scene's relative placement early in the story, and the familiarity of its premise, it's clear the operation will fail in the most spectacular way possible. The setup goes back a lot further than "Independence Day" or "The Thing" (either version), but the writers-directors of

this picture, the German-born Australian-raised duo known as the Spierig Brothers, toy with our expectations just so, delaying the payoff like expert sadists who know how to hit and run.

Like "District 9," another recent, inventive what-if? splatterfest, "Daybreakers" imagines a near future turned upside down by a single event. In 2019, a bat-borne vampire plague has reduced the human population by 95 percent and left the golden-eyed, fedora-sporting vampires in charge. But the global blood supply (nice metaphor for our oil dependency) is running low. When the vampires go hungry, they become ravenous, batlike "Class 4 blood-deprived" citizens, stalking the shadows and wreaking undead havoc.

In this world, commuters pay for shots of diluted human blood on the way to work, knocking 'em back like espressos. Humans are hunted, harvested and bled dry by the sinister drug company run by Neill, whose smile suggests a vampire at a blood bank. (Wait: He is a vampire at a blood bank!)

Hawke's character isn't sure where he belongs in this new ruling order; he has sworn off human blood, to the disgust of soldier brother Frankie (Michael Dorman) and feels not quite vampire, not quite his old self. A chance encounter with a group of renegade humans, led by Audrey (Claudia Karvan) — the best of many Australian performers on view here — leads Hawke's Edward Dalton to a breakthrough and a chance to become human again, with the aid of a hot-rodding, vampire-blasting survivalist played by Willem Dafoe.

Peter and Michael Spierig's earlier, campier horror outing, the zombie picture known as "Undead," was even bloodier than this one. The movie-makers are after bigger game here, and a subtler mixture of speculative nightmare and action film. It's too bad things sputter in the more conventional second half.

While the Spierigs are clever genre practitioners, their camera sense mainly sticks to the basics: huge close-ups suddenly interrupted by another "boo!" moment. With luck they'll discover more and better ways to energize their stories visually. And with luck, Ethan Hawke will deliver a lead performance that makes fools of people like me who too often wonder: Couldn't they get anyone besides Ethan Hawke?

### **Recensie 3**

JANUARY 8, 2010

Cera Makes It a Well-Spent 'Youth'

Germany's 'White Ribbon' is a blue-ribbon exercise in evil's essence

By JOE MORGENSTERN, Wall Street Journal

'Daybreakers'

The vampire franchise didn't lack for attention or support last year, but the German filmmaker brothers Michael and Peter Spierig have come up with a new twist in "Daybreakers." (The film, produced in Australia, is in English.) The year is 2019, and vampires have taken over the world—they offered us a chance to assimilate, but we refused. As the newly dominant

species, vamps hunt down humans and farm them, like dairy cows, for their blood. But there's a catch—a blood supply that has dwindled to the vanishing point. (A panhandler's sign says, "Need blood.") If vampirism is to survive, a blood substitute must be found.

That's a clever idea, as far as it goes, and a pretext for some stylish action (George Liddle did the elegantly noirish production design), accompanied by several solid performances: Sam Neill as the CEO of a pharmaceutical giant, Ethan Hawke as a vampire hematologist with a conflicted soul, Willem Dafoe as an ex-vamp who has managed to be born again human. Still, other performances are pretty dreary (I won't name names, since you wouldn't recognize them anyway) and the idea goes only so far—roughly halfway through the 98-minute running time—in sustaining narrative clarity. "Daybreakers" finally comes up with some comments on the predatory practices of Big Pharma, but that's an awful comedown from the blood-rushing brilliance of the early scenes.

#### Recensie 4

Movie review: Ethan Hawke feeds the vampire craze in forgettable 'Daybreakers'

By Michael O'Sullivan

Washington Post  
Friday, January 8, 2010

In keeping with the people's mandate that no month shall go by without another vampire movie, book or TV show, the film "Daybreakers" has arrived in theaters. Its subject: a vampire named Edward who refuses to drink human blood, falls in love with a human and does battle with his own kind. Sound familiar?

Two-hards, be warned. There is no teenage love triangle here. The only heartbreak comes when someone of the vampire persuasion gets stabbed in the chest with a wooden stake and explodes in a burst of flames. Which is often enough, in this passingly funny, moderately stylish and almost mind-numbingly gory horror film set in a world in which bloodsuckers are the majority, and the few humans left are hunted and harvested for their blood.

Edward Dalton (Ethan Hawke) is the abstemious hero, a renegade vampire scientist whose lab is working furiously to formulate a synthetic substitute for human blood that will prevent his race from turning into "subsiders." They're the starving, batlike zombies that have resulted from the worldwide blood shortage brought on by the fact that draining people of their life fluid tends not to be the most sustainable method of farming. Subsiders are very bad news. And they're very, very scary, even to other vampires, but especially to people watching this movie.

One day Edward meets Audrey (Claudia Karvan), a pretty human fugitive he hides from the vampire police. Sensing his trustworthiness, she introduces him to a *recovered* vampire called Elvis (Willem Dafoe, looking particularly undead). You read that right: Elvis is a recovered vampire. Apparently (though Elvis doesn't know exactly how), he has managed to cure himself of his vampirism. Something involving exposure to sunlight, which normally causes vampires to incinerate, but in his case has made him human again (hence the title).

Making life difficult for Elvis and Audrey (and now Edward, who has agreed to lend them his scientific know-how and act as vampire guinea pig in their research) is Charles Bromley (Sam Neill). He's the coolly creepy vampire CEO whose company has a monopoly on human blood and who would rather see repeat customers than a cure. In one of the film's wickedly funny touches, vampire commuters are shown lining up for shots of the red stuff at a Starbucks-like blood bar. Vampire purists will also note that, unlike "Twilight," the movie's mythology respects most of the conventions of vampirology (wooden stakes, sunlight).

With its social allegory about oppression of the other, "Daybreakers" may remind some of a poor man's "Avatar" or "District 9" (another splatter film with a message). But that reading goes only so far. In the end, "Daybreakers" doesn't really want to make anyone think too hard. If that were to happen, they might stop to wonder why all the human survivors out there hiding in fear of their lives don't just become garlic farmers and call it a day.

## Recensie 5

Movie Review

Daybreakers (2009)

NYT Critics' Pick

Futuristic World Where Vampires Rule

By JEANNETTE CATSOULIS, New York Times

January 7, 2010

Among the many pleasures of "Daybreakers" is its reminder that vampire movies can function as more than just metaphors for teenage celibacy. Written and directed by Peter and Michael Spierig (the Australian twins who brought us the ebullient 2003 zombie caper "Undeaf"), this impressively styled thriller envisions a world where vampires rule, and humans run. Those who don't are likely to find themselves transformed into Ready Meals and stored in a giant corporate larder: a futuristic Costco with only one product.

But with the undead outnumbering the living, starving immortals must find a blood substitute or mutate into crouching, bat-winged marauders. Enter Edward (Ethan Hawke), a vampire hematologist with human-friendly goals and a weary-undertaker wardrobe.

Convincingly cadaverous, Edward is thrilled to encounter a small band of humans whose leader (a rangy Willem Dafoe) professes to have found a cure for vampirism. Now all they have to do is convince the bloodsuckers that immortality is a long time to be counting calories.

Imagined in loving detail — reflected in a car mirror, Edward is no more than an empty, bobbing suit — "Daybreakers" throngs with yellow-eyed commuters and homeless vamps panhandling for O negative. The narrative may flag, but the doomsday atmosphere and George Liddle's production design remain vivid until the final, blood-splattered reel.

## **Film 17: Let Me In**

### **Recensie 1**

'Let Me In,' 4 stars

**Bill Goodykoontz** - Sept. 29, 2010

The Arizona Republic

How often do American remakes of foreign films come up short, both in courage and execution?

Short answer: often. We are, so studio executives would have you believe, suckers for a happy ending, which is why so many foreign films wind up neutered. The 1993 American remake of "The Vanishing" is a perfect example.

Thus, news that "Cloverfield" director Matt Reeves was remaking "Let the Right One In," a terrific Swedish film about a bullied little boy and the vampire girl who befriends him, was met with trepidation. The original is a masterful study of loneliness, set in the sterile, frigid snow of a suburb of Stockholm, that spares nothing in its depiction of the need for blood and belonging.

As it turns out, the same is true of "Let Me In," Reeves' remake.

With the story now set in the winter of 1983 in Los Alamos, N.M., Reeves does not shy from the grittier aspects of the story. This is a really good movie, good enough that whether it needed to be made is beside the point. If you've seen the original, you'll be happy with the results. If you haven't, then just sit back and enjoy.

Owen (Kodi Smit-McPhee) lives with his mom (Cara Buono), a religious woman who has a drinking problem and whose face we never see in focus, emphasizing Owen's sense of being on his own. He is small for his age, bullied at school, sometimes violently. For solace he heads out into the freezing night and hangs around the sad little playground of his depressing apartment complex - again, alone.

Alone, at least, until the night a girl and an older man move into the apartment next door. Soon the girl, Abby (Chloe Moretz), joins him in the cold dark, barefoot, impervious to the elements.

"We can't be friends," she warns, but to a boy as alone as Owen, such caution is useless. He craves companionship of any kind, and in Abby, as unusual as she might be - she doesn't know what a Rubik's Cube is! - he thinks he might have found some.

I'm not a girl, she tells Owen, but that's OK, too. What is he? Ignored, except when he's mistreated. His needs outweigh his misgivings.

Abby has needs, as well, needs for which her "father" (a quiet, self-loathing Richard Jenkins) provides. Abby is a vampire. She needs blood, and it's this man's sorry lot in life to provide it for her.

Abby, meanwhile, encourages Owen to stand up for himself at school, with the implication that, should he need it, she can help him on that front, as well. This is a relationship of horribly wounded people willing to look past each other's imperfections - that's putting it mildly in Abby's case - for companionship. Smit-McPhee and Moretz do an outstanding job of getting that across in their performances.

The title refers to the need of a vampire for someone to invite them in; they can't enter of their own volition. Thus, it puts the responsibility on the human, in this case Owen. "Let Me In" succeeds in portraying a life so solitary that, even when he knows what's going on, that's a deal Owen is willing to make.

## Recensie 2

Let Me In

By GARY DOWELL / The Dallas Morning News

Published: 30 September 2010

Vampires in film and television have been largely defanged thanks to the teen angst-ridden antics of the Twilight franchise, the Southern Gothic soap operatics of True Blood, and the melodrama of The Vampire Diaries. With Let Me In, writer and director Matt Reeves takes a step toward making everyone's favorite bloodsuckers scary again. [Movie Information Let Me In](#)

This remake of the 2008 Swedish horror thriller *Let the Right One In*, itself adapted from John Ajvide Lindqvist's novel, stars Kodi Smit-McPhee as Owen, an awkward, miserable lad on the cusp of adolescence. He has no friends and his parents are separated. His father is a nonentity in his life, and his mother is preoccupied with her disintegrating marriage and equally distant toward her son (something Reeves deftly illustrates by never letting us get a clear look at her). On top of that, Owen is constantly tormented by the school bully, Kenny (Dylan Minnette), and his gang.

Enter Abby (Chloë Grace Moretz), a girl who moves into the apartment next door to Owen's. She is accompanied by someone we at first assume is her father (Richard Jenkins), but the audience quickly discovers he is something both more and less than paternal. Though it's never really stated, Abby is a vampire, at least a century old, and the man has been taking care of her for who knows how long, slaying hapless victims and bringing their blood back to Abby, to quench her thirst.

Drawn to a fellow outsider, Abby befriends Owen (initially keeping her true nature secret), and the two become something of an item. In an interesting twist, it's Abby's state of affairs that begins to suffer while a newly emboldened Owen begins to take at least a small degree of control over his own, gradually letting out his pent-up rage.

Reeves, who reinvented the giant-monster-stomps-on- downtown movie two years ago with *Cloverfield*, has streamlined the story, cutting a subplot involving Owen's hard-drinking neighbors down to the bone and introducing a police detective played by Elias Koteas. Reeves directs with a cold detachment appropriate for the material and the movie's wintry setting, moved from Sweden to Los Alamos, N.M., during the winter of 1983.

The movie's young leads carry the story. McPhee (last seen opposite Viggo Mortensen in *The Road*) and Moretz (who shocked audiences earlier this year as the pint-size potty-mouth Hit Girl in *Kick-Ass*) ably carry off chilling performances as a pair of near-innocents with matching dark sides - two sides of the same coin.

### **Recensie 3**

Movie review: "Let Me In"

\*\* 1/2 | Vampire Drama

10/01/2010

**By Lisa Kennedy**

*Denver Post*

Before there was the pouty pining of "Twilight" pair Bella and Edward on thousands of multiplex screens, there was the art-house ache of a forever- young vampire and a bullied tween boy in the Swedish wonder of a vampire flick, "Let the Right One In."

Now comes the American version, directed and adapted by Matt Reeves (of the visceral if gimmicky "Cloverfield") and co-produced by resurrected Hammer Films, Britain's legendary purveyor of horror.

It's called "Let Me In." That demanding title says something about how the gentle poetry of the original gets lost a bit in Reeves' translation, based on John Ajvide Lindqvist's best seller.

Granted, it's easier to gripe about what's lost than celebrate the vital thing that remains: The two protagonists remain oh-so sympathetic.

As Abby and Owen, Chloë Grace Moretz and Kodi Smit-McPhee dig down into their characters' existential discomfort.

All the other bloodsuckers in pop culture these days have friends, family, similarly damned rivals. But Abby is an incredibly lonesome soul, whose mortal caretaker is on the edge of oblivion when "Let Me In" opens.

Just as solitary, Owen spends his life in bully- avoidance mode, dashing home, cowering in the locker room.

The action has moved from 1980s Sweden to the same period in Los Alamos, N.M.

On television sets, President Ronald Reagan delivers his famous speech about the evils of the Soviet regime and the moral goodness of the U.S. to the National Association of Evangelicals. At 12-year-old Owen's modest apartment, his divorced mother riffs on sin and prayer. But Reeves doesn't do much with these gestures, except to make clear that once Owen learns his new friend and neighbor is a vampire he has to grapple with the grays of reality.

We're already ahead of him. Owen himself is a complicated figure. Watch him exact fantasy revenge on his bullies with a knife. Watch him spy a bit too creepily on his apartment-house adults.

Richard Jenkins is in fine form as the man who kills for Abby. Although he appears in the credits as "The Father," their exact relationship is a mystery, initially. It's clear his commitment to kill is an act of love and sacrifice.

Reeves has more of a feel for the scary than the tender. A man writhing in an ambulance is an eerie start.

Even so, some of the special effects are distractingly cheesy. Abby's savage forays, her face transformed by thirst and hunger, look plain silly.

#### **Recensie 4**

October 1, 2010

Tom Long Film Review: 'Let Me In' -- GRADE: B+

Review: Coming-of-age vampire movie has real bite

By Tom Long, Detroit News

Just when you thought bloodsuckers had been sucked dry of any potential, along comes "Let Me In."

True, the film is a meticulous and tone-perfect remake of the Danish vampire hit "Let the Right One In," so it's not exactly new. But it should open the story up to a much wider audience.

What works so well here is the juxtaposition of youthful innocence and downright puppy love with monstrosity and murder. Mean kids are scary. Kids who drink blood are scarier.

The film takes place in wintry New Mexico, where bullied 12-year-old Owen (Kodi Smit-McPhee from "The Road") is trying to weather his parents' divorce. Into his apartment complex moves an odd young girl named Abby (Chloe Grace Moretz) and her apparent father (Richard Jenkins).

Abby and Owen meet at night at the apartment's playground and begin a wary friendship. Meanwhile Abby's roommate is going out killing people and draining them of blood. Hint-hint.



Yes, it turns out Abby, who walks around barefoot in the snow, is sun-challenged. This throws Owen a bit, but then friends are friends, right?

Director Matt Reeves ("Cloverfield") adapted the original film with a careful eye to retaining its quiet strength and odd tension (OK, he changes one thing).

Even though the visuals have been strengthened, this still feels very much like a European horror film.

Instead of immortality, this movie is about power -- the power that Owen doesn't know he has, the limits of Abby's power, the power of their bond, the power of a child's perspective.

"Let Me In" shows the words "smart" and "vampire movie" can still co-exist; and that bloodsuckers can still have bite.

## Recensie 5

Let Me In

A bullied boy protected by his BFF the vampire

3stars

AMY BIANCOLLI, Houston Chronicle

Thursday, September 30, 2010

Fans of chilly Scandinavian thrillers might argue on principle against *Let Me In*, an American reworking of the extraordinary Swedish vampire film *Let the Right One In* (and John Ajvide Lindqvist's selfsame novel). In a way, they're right: The original is perfect on its own. There's no real excuse for a remake, except perhaps to ditch the subtitles and sell more tickets in the process.

But *Let Me In* is a done deal, and I'll let you in on a secret: It's verifiably good. No, not as good as the Swedish version, which had a low-key, stripped-bare authenticity that never faltered, even in moments of blood-sucking savagery. This one indulges in unnecessary CGI enhancements; it didn't need the fake-o four-legged attack scenes. But it's still a striking piece of character-driven horror, and it still ranks (despite the effects) among the more understated fright fests to hit the mainstream in recent memory.

Written and directed by *Cloverfield* monster-man Matt Reeves, *Let Me In* moves the action from Sweden to early 1980s New Mexico, but it keeps the focus on its lonely pubescent leads: Chloë Grace Moretz as Abby, a child vampire, and Kodi Smit-McPhee as Owen, the little bullied neighbor she befriends. Theirs is the story of any young outcasts who bond over shared pain, social ostracism and maybe a round of *Ms. Pac-Man* — a vampire herself, when you think about it. The true horror in Owen's life isn't the ghoul next door but the kids in gym who torture him with wedgies. (To emphasize this horror, Michael Giacchino's orchestral score portends doom at school with the same thudding drum figure that signals bloodshed elsewhere.)

When Owen meets Abby, she's standing barefoot in the snow outside their apartment complex. That's strange. Also strange: her age, which she describes as "12, more or less." With half-baked conviction, she informs him she can't be his friend. Why? It has to do with that flash-forward at the start of the movie, an eerie sequence shot in part through the blurred eyes of a man who doused himself with acid. One minute he's in a hospital room with a drab cop (Elias Koteas). The next, he's sprawled out dead beneath his window.

This foreshadowing marks the biggest of several changes that distinguish *Let Me In* from its Swedish counterpart. Reeves, always one to toy with perspective, cagily hides the man's misshapen face until the scene is revisited later on. By then, we've come to know him as the bedraggled human assistant (played by an exquisitely sad Richard Jenkins) who kills and drains victims for Abby's benefit. There are nuances here that were missing from the original, and there were nuances in the original that are missing here.

Yet Reeves' movie is rich with emotion, evoking terror and tenderness with equal skill in equal measure. *The Road's* Smit-McPhee seems to grow wiser and more delicate with age - while Moretz, the zingy girl assassin from *Kick-Ass*, has an ethereal quality as Abby that only makes her deadlier. Let her in, but watch your back.

## **Film 18: Stake Land**

### **Recensie 1**

Bringing On the Vampires in 'Stake Land'

By JEANNETTE CATSOULIS, New York Times

Published: April 21, 2011

"It ain't a normal world," says Martin (Connor Paolo) at the beginning of "Stake Land," and, really, what postapocalyptic-vampire-western world ever is? That said, this unusually taut sophomore feature from Jim Mickle is more abnormal than most in that its creatures are capable not only of evolving but also of embracing religious fanaticism.

Essentially "The Road" on supernatural steroids, this unrelentingly grim tale takes to the tarmac with Martin — orphaned by a worldwide plague of vamp-zombie hybrids — and a taciturn companion known only as Mister (Nick Damici). As they head for rumored haven in the biblically named New Eden, skulls are hammered, nuns rescued (hello, Kelly McGillis!) and cannibals squished in Mister's continuing attempts to train his young protégé in the fine art of stakecraft. Given the ferocity and endurance of the special-effects team's creations, Martin has his work cut out.

Yet the film's bloodsucking undead are pussycats compared with the Brotherhood, a coven of fundamentalist terrorists led by a sadistic, ovoid-headed loon (Michael Cerveris). Their presence lampoons extremists who view every disaster as a signal for end-of-days rejoicing and holds our attention through occasional narrative doldrums. Even when the story flags, however, Ryan Samul's cinematography and Jeff Grace's score pick up the slack, smoothly maintaining an unstable atmosphere of lurking horror.

Partially dispelling the stench of misanthropy that clings to most zombie movies, "Stake Land" offers moments of ethical pause that suggest some empathy for the infected — before turning them into drooling weapons and tossing them from a plane. Oh well.

## Recensie 2

Stake Land (R)

Ebert: ★ ★ ★

Stake Land

**BY ROGER EBERT** / April 27, 2011 / Chicago Sun-Times

Zombies are a great convenience. They provide villains who are colorful and frightening, require no dialogue, motivation or explanation, and yet function efficiently as a negation of all that is good. Just the very word "zombie" can persuade people to buy tickets for a movie, and "sex" hasn't done that in years. At the risk of using the word MacGuffin twice in the same week — well, that's what zombies are, aren't they?

Humans are survivors in an undead world that has gone horribly wrong, where all the good times are past and gone. That's what our modern world feels like to me sometimes; the morning news is filled with more ominous portents than the opening montage of a disaster movie. When Japan is torn by earthquakes and airports are attacked by tornadoes and the economy is melting and radiation is leaking and honey bees are dying, obviously the zombies are only waiting for the globe to warm a little more.

One advantage of zombie movies and indeed, all monster and horror movies, is that they provide a port of entry for new filmmakers. The genre itself is the star. I don't like to say this about David Arquette, who is a jolly nice guy, but I doubt many people went to "Scre4m" to see him; they wanted to see the slasher in the mask.

That said, there are substantial qualities in "Stake Land," a movie that probably uses zombies as little as it can get away with. Considering that the dialogue calls them "vamps" for short, they're apparently some kind of zombie/vampire hybrid, previously unidentified by Horror Science. The Dead have merged with the Undead. You see what spraying with insecticides can lead to.

The movie mercifully focuses on a handful of characters as they journey toward a perhaps mythical New Eden. We begin with the voice of a young narrator, Martin (Connor Paolo), who explains how after his family was massacred, he came under the protection of Mister (Nick Damici). How they are driving in a big boat of a classic car through a wasteland of threat and paranoia. How Mister instructs him in the skills of survival. There are echoes here, less eloquent, of "The Road."

Mister has hard-earned expertise about vamps. A bullet will slow them down but all that will kill them is the proverbial stake, driven into the base of the skull, where allegedly resides the Reptile Brain. He schools Martin in eternal vigilance, and they survive surprise attacks by zombies who sometimes seem suspiciously well-coordinated with one another (given their presumed inability to communicate).

Mister is like a Western hero committed to doing the right thing. When he sees Sister Anna (Kelly McGillis), a nun, being attacked by zombies, he rescues her. Their little band grows to include Belle (Danielle Harris), a pregnant young girl, and Willie (Sean Nelson), who was a Marine.

On the road they encounter rare safety zones, carefully guarded communities barricaded against strangers. Some of these are run, however, by religious cultists looking forward to the end of days. The scariest is a venomous loony named Jebedia (Michael Cerveris). This is not so unlikely. I just saw a report on CNN about Branch Davidian members looking for the resurrection of David Koresh.

Director Jim Mickle, who co-wrote the film with his star Nick Damici, has crafted a good-looking, well-played and atmospheric apocalyptic vision. There are pauses for thoughtful character moments and some nicely written dialogue evoking the looming despair. The cinematography makes this new world look as bleak as ... well ... as a lot of empty strip malls and seldom-travelled badlands. What with one thing and another, "Stake Land" is, if not precisely entertaining to my taste, certainly attention-getting.

### Recensie 3

'Stake Land' review: Great details overcome flaws

Peter Hartlaub, San Francisco Chronicle

Friday, April 29, 2011

Jim Mickle and Nick Damici's latest collaboration is filled with fanged bloodsuckers, but the vampire movie label doesn't fit. The filmmakers seemed to choose their antagonist just to spend the rest of the film being contrary to expectations.

"Stake Land" bursts with action, ideas and interesting characters. If you have to pick a category, the movie should be filed with zombie movies or post-apocalyptic Westerns. But there's a spare intimacy and slow-building tension that makes the movie a closer cousin to "Winter's Bone" than "Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome."

Damici is Mister, a vampire killer who rescues teen Martin (Connor Paolo) in Pennsylvania, and they travel north toward Canada visiting the remaining pockets of humanity. The first scene features Martin's baby brother getting eaten and discarded like a chicken wing, and that's nowhere near the peak of grim imagery. There are bad people out there, including the Brotherhood, a pseudo-Christian group that seems to be siding with the vampires.

There's also a strong foundation of humanity, as the jaded warriors meet a very functional new family played almost exclusively by actors you used to love and haven't seen in a while - including "Witness" star Kelly McGillis as a nun, and "Fresh" protagonist Sean Nelson all grown up as a military vet.

Director/writer Mickle and co-writer Damici are guilty of too-convenient plot turns. And the last 20 minutes jarringly turns into a Joss Whedon TV pilot. But there are so many wonderful details packed in between that any flaws are easily forgiven. The Brotherhood's method of using aircraft filled with vampires to attack cities is a particularly genius Sept. 11 allusion.

The cinematography has a distinct Terrence Malick vibe, and the production design and location scouting are outstanding - taking advantage of several real-life post-industrial wastelands in rural America. Fans of low budget survival horror will be thrilled. This is a bold and memorable step forward in the genre.

#### **Recensie 4**

Movie reviews: 'Stake Land'

April 29, 2011 | By Robert Abele, Los Angeles Times

For a horror filmmaker to traffic in vampires or post-apocalypse survival scenarios these days is to risk a collective "Really, again?" But resourceful writer-director Jim Mickle covers both in his realism-tinged indie "Stake Land" and shows that a savvy mixture of characterization, atmosphere and gore-eographed suspense can make even the most familiar fright tropes feel vaguely organic again.

The template is a coming-of-age story in which our narrator — orphaned teen Martin (Connor Paolo) — is schooled by a mean yet moral, Bronson-esque vamp hunter (co-writer Nick Damici) in the art of what may best be described as stake fu.

As they trek through an undead-stricken America — which, apart from the human carnage, looks suspiciously like regular ol' poverty-stricken America — the pair pick up travelers (Kelly McGillis as a nun, Danielle Harris as a pregnant singer) and fend off attacks. More menacing than the bloodsuckers, however, may be a fundamentalist sect led by the creepy Jebedia (Michael Cerveris), who sees the vampire swarm as a holy reckoning.

Though it never really scares or surprises, "Stake Land" does exhibit a painterly eye and feel for performance, as Mickle artfully toggles between the moody human drama of living in open-space captivity and the expected crunchy, squishy showdowns.

#### **Recensie 5**

Stake Land

Movie Review

A vampire film with smarts: There's beauty in the bleakness of 'Stake Land'

June 17, 2011 | By Ethan Gilsdorf, Boston Globe

Post-apocalyptic scenarios never used to be inundated with the undead. Take the classics: "Soylent Green," "Planet of the Apes," "The Terminator." Plenty of unsavory characters who've fashioned impressive wardrobes out of leather, your pick of unspeakable acts. But no zombies.

Of late, our dystopian worlds tend to be overrun with the plague-ridden. Whatever killed off the humans and caused the US government to collapse was not nuclear, not alien, but viral, spread one sweet bite at a time.

In the case of “Stake Land,” blame a vampire epidemic. Unlike standard animated corpses, who stumble about while comically shedding limbs, these “vamps” are more orc-like: buff, agile, growling, with a bad case of ’roid rage.

Still, the standard wooden stake to the heart does the trick.

When “Stake Land” begins, a vampire hunter known only as “Mister” (Nick Damici, of “World Trade Center”) saves young Martin (Connor Paolo) and takes him under his wing, training the boy in anti-vamp hand-to-hand combat. Together, they cruise northward in a clunky gas guzzler, hoping to reach Canada, a.k.a. “New Eden,” a promised land where life is supposedly better. They pick up a nun, played by a haggard-looking Kelly McGillis (a long way from her “Witness” and “Top Gun” days), a pregnant girl (Danielle Harris), and an Army deserter (Sean Nelson). In the weakest plotline, they must fight off a creepy cult leader (Michael Cerveris) and his burlap-wearing minions.

As in “The Road Warrior,” a young narrator’s experience is the prism through which we see rape, death, devastation. We watch Martin morph from wide-eyed boy to jaded man. Damici plays Mister as all brood and no bluster. He keeps watch while the others sleep, and utters advice like “One day you’ll learn not to dream at all.”

Other undead movies needlessly foreground the action. “Stake Land” has its fight scenes, but here they’re secondary. While paying debts to John Carpenter and Sam Raimi, director Jim Mickle (“Mulberry Street”), who wrote the script with Damici, has his own aesthetic, which smartly lingers on poignant details — a ruined factory, an abandoned home the travelers scavenge, a Virgin Mary figurine left on a makeshift grave. The beautifully bleak vision is enhanced by Ryan Samul’s exquisite cinematography and composer Jeff Grace’s plaintive piano and violin arrangements.

This doomed world may feel familiar, but “Stake Land” remains one of the genre’s smartest entries in years. As in “The Road,” our hope hinges on the survival of this makeshift family. Which suggests the hidden purpose of zombie movies: Given these folks’ post-apocalyptic woes, can the recession be all that bad?

## **FILM 19: Priest**

### **Recensie 1**

Movie review: 'Priest'

Vampires, cowboys and priests make for a hodgepodge of a horror movie.

May 14, 2011 | By Mark Olsen, Los Angeles Times

Vampires — so hot right now! Also religion. And the apocalypse. And maybe cowboys? Pull together a hodgepodge of all these elements and one ends up with something like "Priest," the big-screen adaptation of a series of graphic novels, directed by Scott Stewart.

A long war between humans and oozy, unsexy, eyeless vampires ended with the humans victorious, thanks to a league of battle-trained priests. The remaining vampires have been herded into remote prisons, while humans live in walled-off cities, rendering the warrior-priests unnecessary.

When a city-dwelling former priest (Paul Bettany) learns that his country-dwelling brother (an underused Stephen Moyer from "True Blood") and his family have been attacked, it's time to dust off the jet-cycle and head into the desert to investigate. The priest discovers that peacetime has not been as peaceful as it might have seemed and has to head off an oncoming vampire invasion.

The film is somehow a disappointing combo of too-full and oddly empty. Even with all the various parts and pieces going into its structure, it feels bare-bones — the differentiation between the dystopian future-cities and the dust-bowl hinterlands never creates the tension it should, and a fistful of crucifixes that become throwing stars is as deep as the theology gets.

Stewart, with a background in visual effects, likes to place his characters as tiny specks in vast, open vistas, which may partly explain why the film remains disconcertingly remote. An animated prologue (designed by Genndy Tartakovsky in the style of Min-Woo Hyung's original art) gives a primer on the mythology and contains the film's most engaging visuals.

"Priest" is being projected (and priced) in 3-D venues; it was converted in post production. While watching in 3-D it is easy to forget that there are supposed to be some additional dimensional effects, were it not for the glasses on your face and their dimming of on-screen color. The film also ends with a blatant set-up for a sequel that feels not only crass but also premature — one can only wish the filmmakers would have concentrated more on the film they were making rather than eyeing the one they might make next.

## **Recensie 2**

'Priest' review: Forgive it, Father, for it's a sin

Stephen Whitty, The Newark Star-Ledger

Friday, May 13, 2011

“Priest” is a theological horror movie that leaves all sorts of questions in the audience’s mind.

For example: Was poor Paul Bettany frightened by a monsignor at an early age? Is he trying to shave years off a stint in purgatory by all the willful suffering he’s going through now? Is there any other way to explain his taste in roles?

Because Bettany — who was a murderous albino monk in “The Da Vinci Code,” a sinful medieval priest in “The Reckoning” and no less than the Archangel Michael in “Legion” — is now a futuristic, vampire-hunting cleric in “Priest”

And it’s an unholy mess.

The film — which did not screen for critics — starts off well, with a bit of old-school animation explaining how after centuries of human-vs.-bloodsucker war, a new class of priests arose to exterminate the brutes.

Once they succeeded, the surviving vampires were packed off to camps. The priests were stripped of their power. And a fascist theocracy took control of what was left of the Earth.

And so it's been — until, one day, a human/vampire leader leads the parasites in a new attack on humanity.

Filmed in ugly, grimy neutrals — it's as if the life's been sucked out of the photography, too — it's intricately confusing and casually offensive at once, taking place in a world that can't decide what century it's in.

The cities are full of cheap, “Blade Runner”-style visuals, where Christopher Plummer shouts from a video screen; the countryside is a dusty old Western, full of patent medicine and pioneers.

Not that any of it matters. It's all in one era and out the other, once Bettany climbs aboard a high-tech motorcycle and goes out into the desert where a young relative has been kidnapped by a gang of savages who decided to leave the “reservation.”

The parallels to cowboy movies are both obvious — Bettany's search is meant, embarrassingly, to evoke “The Searchers” — and vaguely racist. Honestly, if you do want to do a modern horror Western, seeing saintly warriors as the cowboys, and soulless monsters as the Indians, is probably not the way you want to go.

But that would assume that the filmmakers put some thought into this script (itself adopted from a Korean comic). And any script that has head-scratching lines such as “With or without the clergy, we're still priests!” hasn't had any thought put into it at all.

The creatures themselves — which breed like insects, and grow up to be eyeless, slimy gargoyles — are certainly a change from the usual fiends. Bettany, meanwhile, looks intense — perhaps he's intently trying to remember when he was in movies such as “A Beautiful Mind” — and Plummer looks like he's very pleased to have tricked you out of your money.

The whole thing — which in less than an hour-and-a-half manages to insult Catholics, Native Americans, John Wayne fans and anybody with two I.Q. points to spare — all climaxes in a lot of fire and smoke and CGI explosions. Or does it?

“The war is over, priest!” Plummer shouts.

“No, it's just beginning,” Bettany snaps back.

Pray he's wrong.

### Recensie 3



A Christian Avenger

By MIKE HALE, New York Times

May 13, 2011

Not far into “Priest,” Scott Stewart’s second consecutive film starring Paul Bettany as a John Wayne-like Christian avenger, you’ll say to yourself: “Oh! It’s ‘The Searchers and Vampires’!” That realization will keep you amused for a few minutes, but it becomes clear pretty quickly that the only real thought in the movie has gone into the cowboy-gothic costumes and the computer-generated effects.

“Priest” is what you get when you open a male geek’s toy box and dump everything on the floor: John Ford, Sergio Leone, comic books, throwing stars, computer-enhanced martial arts, a runaway train, schoolboy Roman Catholic rebellion and Maggie Q in skin-tight vestments.

Mr. Bettany is the Ethan Edwards of the piece, a clerical ninja living in a post-vampocalyptic world in which the humans cluster in dingy cities, and the vampires are imprisoned in underground “reservations.” When a band of renegade vamps kidnaps the priest’s niece, he sets out with a young sidekick to find her, vowing that he will kill her if she’s been infected. (Yes, the “Searchers” parallels are that literal.)

The film, based in name only on a series of South Korean graphic novels, has nice, washed-out desert exteriors and some cool jet-powered motorcycles, but there’s nothing in the hackneyed story or the derivative action scenes to make you take notice. (And the American Indian-vampire metaphor is too bizarre to bear much thought.) There are two things worth watching: Mr. Bettany, who makes an excellent latter-day Wayne and can put across nearly all of the aspiring-to-second-rate dialogue, and Maggie Q, who has a Jolie-like ability to project intelligence and emotion while looking scorching hot.

#### Recensie 4

'Priest' is an unholy mess

Sci-fi meets western in a graphic-novel adaptation gone wrong.

May 14, 2011 | By Tirdad Derakhshani, Philadelphia Inquirer

There's nothing quite like a hard-core horror pic about a vampire-hunting priest to get the blood pumping on date night.

*Priest* is not that movie.

A derivative mutt that haphazardly mixes half a dozen incompatible genres, this 3D picture reteams director Scott Charles Stewart and star Paul Bettany, who churned out the equally addled *Legion* in 2009.

The two pictures are twins.

*Legion* featured Bettany as a rebellious warrior-angel who descends to Earth on the eve of Armageddon to save a woman from drooling, icky-looking demons.

In *Priest*, the otherwise fine British actor plays a rebellious warrior-priest who descends into a dark underground hive to save a teenage girl from drooling, icky-looking bloodsuckers.

*Priest*, which was adapted from the graphic novel by South Korean artist Min-Woo Hyung, tries to evoke its comic roots with a lame and animated prologue. A voice-over chronicles the eons-long war between humans and vamps. See, the humans were losing until the Church (Catholicism is not mentioned, but implied) trained a cadre of knife-wielding, taekwondo-using supermen from childhood.

These priests, whose foreheads sport a tattooed crucifix (*why?!*), killed off all the marauding monsters.

Peace is restored and a brave new - totalitarian - world is created by the Church. We see this bleak world in retro-futuristic cityscapes ripped off from Michael Anderson's *1984* and Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*.

Billboards spell out the new creed, "Faith. Work. Security." People are forced to pour out their hearts to the clergy in roadside video-phone confessional boxes that look alarmingly like port-o-potties.

The film shifts from sci-fi-land to a western motif when, a la John Ford's *The Searchers*, Bettany's niece Lucy (Lily Collins) is kidnapped by the head-honcho vampire, an awfully witty cowboy (Stetson and all) played by Karl Urban.

Bettany goes after Lucy with the help of a Priestess (an awfully sexy Maggie Q) and Lucy's beau, a sheriff played by Cam Gigandet who is duded out head to toe in cowboy gear. (No joke: He wears chaps and a tin star.)

Battles ensue.

High production values and slick editing can't save this picture. Nor does its overbearing soundtrack music, which tries to strong-arm viewers into believing they're watching a pulse-pounding thriller.

In reality, *Priest* has no pulse at all.

## Recensie 5

Priest

In drawing on other films, nothing's sacred in 'Priest'

By Mark Feeney

The Boston Globe / May 16, 2011

Priest” is based on a series of Korean graphic novels. What it’s really based on, though, is other movies — a whole lot of other movies.

An animated prologue summarizes a history in which Earth has been dominated by two groups, humans and vampires. The vampires always held the upper hand, or at least they did at night, until a group of warrior priests came along to vanquish them. A large cross tattooed on the forehead serves the dual purpose of identifying the priests and making them look like skinheads.

With the vampires now put in their place, most humans live in dark, teeming, neon-lit cities (hey, it’s “Blade Runner”!). A few outcasts live in a post-apocalyptic landscape (hey, it’s the Mad Max movies!). A married couple and their daughter work a hardscrabble farm. The father’s named Owen and he has an absent brother who’s . . . let’s just say interesting (hey, it’s the first “Star Wars” movie!).

The priests, who have imprisoned the vampires on reservations (they’re like “Shutter Island,” only without the ocean views), are now decommissioned. When vampires kidnap Owen’s daughter, the local sheriff (don’t even try to count how many westerns “Priest” is) comes into the city to get one of the priests to help him rescue her (all right, one of the westerns is “The Searchers”).

That priest, played by Paul Bettany, is Owen’s brother. Never cracking a smile, Bettany looks like Ed Harris with finer facial features. Maybe he’s making up for playing that evil monk in “The Da Vinci Code”. He climbs aboard his nitrogen-powered motorcycle to give chase (it’s all those American International biker pictures from the ’60s!). The sight of Bettany slicing across the desert has a kind of bozo grandeur, as does “Priest,” generally.

As a lady priest, Maggie Q shares a chaste, unspoken love with a fellow priest (hey, it’s “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon”!). She’s one of a quartet of clerical vampire hunters sent out to stop Bettany, who has disobeyed church orders to go on his mission. Those orders come from Christopher Plummer, who has a high old time doing everything but waggle his eyebrows as a sinister monsignor (hey, it’s that TV movie where Plummer played Cardinal Law!).

The vampire-hunting priests wear black garments that look a lot more like dusters than cassocks (it’s “The Matrix”?) and they move in slow motion when they go into martial-arts mode, which they frequently do (definitely “The Matrix”).

The vampires, it turns out, travel on a special windowless train (hey, it’s “To the Finland Station” — oh, wait, that’s not a movie). The train looks really cool. Three-D doesn’t add much to the “Priest” viewing experience, frankly, but that’s OK since even in 2-D it’s pretty interesting to look at. Having so many influences can do that for a movie.

The train hurtles along at break-fang speed (hey, it’s a Coors Light ad!). Bettany and Cam Gigandet, as the sheriff, need to commandeer it (hey, it’s “The General”!). Do they succeed? Let’s just say the movie ends with the figurative words “To be continued” all but filling the screen (hey, it’s a series!).

## Film 20: Fright Night

### Recensie 1

A blue-collar bloodsucker in 'Fright Night'

COLIN COVERT , Minneapolis Star Tribune

August 19, 2011

With Colin Farrell as a lusty villain, the new "Fright Night" puts a delicious vamp stamp on a familiar formula.

"Fright Night" is the best thing to happen to horror movies since red food coloring and Karo syrup. It delivers the weird toxic jolt of adolescent joy that only a first-class creature feature can provide. Energetic, suspenseful and delightfully original despite its familiar context, it grabs vampire clichés by the neck and shakes them to life.

From those Eurotrash nobles Nosferatu and Dracula to "Twilight's" affluent Cullens, vampires are generally portrayed as upscale monsters. One of many ingenious twists here is that the thirsty guy is a pickup-driving, T-shirt-wearing construction worker named Jerry, whose castle is a suburban Las Vegas tract house. Bram Stoker, meet Sam's Club.

Fingering Colin Farrell's character as a bloodsucker isn't a spoiler. This is a monster movie, not a mystery. From the moment Farrell flashes his incisors we know this Sun Belt Stanley Kowalski is one dangerous rogue male. His tool-belt machismo mesmerizes his next-door neighbor, single mom Jane (Toni Collette), and puts her protective high school son Charley (Anton Yelchin, Chekov in J.J. Abram's "Star Trek") on alert. But he sees Jerry as a wolf, one who gallingly turns Charley's hot girlfriend Amy (Imogen Poots) to a puddle of goo, too.

Charley's former pal, fantasy geek Ed (Christopher Mintz-Plasse), warns that Jerry is a for-real bloodsucker who's behind a rash of student disappearances. Charley retorts that students cut class all the time, and besides, "That's a terrible vampire name, Jerry."

When Ed drops off the attendance list, Charley seeks help from Peter Vincent, a long-haired, leather-clad stage magician and self-styled vampire hunter in the mold of Criss Angel. David Tennant (the BBC's 10th Dr. Who) approaches the role with playful zest.

The conjurer is an egocentric boozier and a fraud to boot, his occult artifacts acquired on eBay. The role seems to have been custom-tailored for Russell Brand, but the hyper-energetic Tennant makes it his own. When Sandra Vergara sashays onscreen as his hot-tempered assistant, it's an uproarious tug of war between two heavyweight scene stealers.

Screenwriter Marti Noxon (of TV's "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and "Mad Men") retooled 1985's hokey "Fright Night" for the 21st century, adding twists and character notes that keep the jumps and jokes coming. Setting the film in sunbaked Vegas is an inspired touch. It's a place where night-shift workers black out their windows and sleep all day, where the transient population provides plenty of midnight snacks, and where cellphone coverage drops out on dark, lonely stretches of desert highway. Miraculously, even the 3-D effects are clever in an

enjoyably cheesy sort of way. When Farrell catches an arrow flying toward the viewer, it's both gimmicky and cleverly self-aware.

Yelchin has a rich character to play and works it to the hilt. He's solid as a likable, status-obsessed teen, as a frightened underdog and as a fledgling Terminator in Army surplus armor. He's fine at comedy or drama, as required.

Farrell, one of the most watchable and dynamic actors in the business, seemingly recognizes the camp potential of the charming, sinister Jerry and has fun bringing him to life. He's smooth and cool and scary and ferocious, and clearly relishes playing a master vampire. His gusto makes the audience love the character even while he scares the Cracker Jack out of them. Farrell is a villainous powerhouse not to be missed. If you're looking for a fun comedy-horror night on the town, this movie is right up your dark alley.

## Recensie 2

Thu, Aug. 18, 2011

When a vampire moves in next door

Steven Rea, Philadelphia Inquirer

In *Fright Night*, an unnecessary remake of the beloved 1985 vampire romp, Anton Yelchin plays a formerly geeky high school senior who has grown taller and stouter, lost his zits, and is now going out with the prettiest girl in class.

But to accomplish this teenage metamorphosis, Yelchin's Charley Brewster has had to leave his past - and his nerdy former best friend - behind. Christopher Mintz-Plasse (*Superbad's* McLovin) has the honors, and has the old videos of the two fanboys parading around in dweeby, superhero-costumed bliss.

So Charley's a little cold toward his ex-pal. But then again, he has Amy (the sunny English actress Imogen Poots) to warm him up.

All of which, unfortunately, is beside the point because there aren't any moral repercussions for Charley's snobbery and rejection. Well, there is *a* repercussion, but it's not a moral one so much as it is supernatural: Ed (Mintz-Plasse) gets gnawed on by a vampire and, consequently, goes over to the dark (and bloodthirsty) side.

This isn't really giving anything away, because even if you haven't seen Tom Holland's original *Fright Night*, Craig Gillespie's (he did *Lars and the Real Girl*) new take comes off as mostly unsurprising.

Perhaps the biggest surprise is that Colin Farrell, who has been on a roll lately, goes genre-slumming as Jerry, the vampire who moves in next door. Charley is convinced early on of Jerry's sinister proclivities, but it takes Charley's mother (Toni Collette) a little longer to realize her handsome new neighbor is a fanged fiend.

To help him put Jerry down once and for all, Charley seeks the counsel of a Vegas showman, Peter Vincent (David Tennant), who has incorporated vampiric lore and lusty vampirettes into his act. Tennant plays Vincent like a spoiled rock star, holed up in goth digs with his rare Transylvanian artifacts. The deadpan *Doctor Who* star doesn't really make his presence known until the film's third act, and things liven accordingly. (I use the word *liven* loosely, though - closing in on a two-hour running time, *Fright Night* can feel eternal.)

The film's producers are bragging about their 3-D effects - it was shot with stereoscopic technology, not digitally retrofitted after the fact. But with the exception of a few stakes and crosses jumping from the screen, some bloody sprays here and there, and one creepy, claustrophobic car ride, the 3-D glasses are a hindrance, not an enhancement.

### Recensie 3

Those Good, Old Vampires, and Now They're in 3-D

By A. O. SCOTT, New York Times

August 18, 2011

It is inevitable that "Fright Night," a 3-D remake of a tongue-in-cheek, tooth-in-neck frightener from 1985, includes a mocking reference to "Twilight," the vampire juggernaut that serves as both its target and its reason for being. Two estranged friends, Charley (Anton Yelchin) and Ed (Christopher Mintz-Plasse), are snooping around in an empty house, and Charley is teasing Ed, his geeky boyhood pal, for believing in undead, fanged predators, implying that he is a closet fan of Stephenie Meyer's swoony books and the movies they have spawned. "How dare you?" Ed sputters, in the midst of trying to explain that *real* vampires are nothing like the effete and sensitive immortals played by Robert Pattinson and his colleagues.

Of course not. Real vampires, for this movie's purposes, are hunky guys with tight T-shirts and laid-back, seductive rock-'n'-roll manners. Like Jerry, for instance, a neighbor of Charley's who is played, with a wink and snarl and a feline purr, by Colin Farrell. Mr. Farrell, who has lately been exploring his comic side (for instance with kimono and comb-over in "Horrible Bosses") exaggerates Jerry's menace just enough to underline the film's satiric intentions, but not enough to subvert its earnest creepiness.

Directed by Craig Gillespie ("Lars and the Real Girl") from a script by the television powerhouse Marti Noxon ("Mad Men," "Buffy the Vampire Slayer"), "Fright Night" honors the original — written and directed by Tom Holland, with Chris Sarandon as the blood sucker next door — without falling into the traps of slavish fandom or smarty-pants spoofery. The old "Fright Night" was both self-aware and effectively scary, and if this one seems to prefer gruesome digital effects to old-fashioned bump-in-the-night spookiness, it still succeeds in keeping the audience both tickled and anxious.

Though there is a big, bloody and somewhat tedious finish, complete with fireballs and last-minute solutions to vexing supernatural problems, the filmmakers are in no hurry to arrive there, allowing a vague sense of weirdness to percolate through the early scenes. In the best '80s horror-movie tradition, sociological and psychosexual implications hover around the

edges of the frame and between the lines of the dialogue without becoming annoyingly explicit. The spoiled friendship of Charley and Ed has a quiet adolescent poignancy, as it becomes clear that Charley has abandoned the pal he used to dress up with in order to hang out with the cool kids.

Charley also has a sweet, cute girlfriend named Amy (Imogen Poots), but vampire business has a way of distracting him every time she is feeling amorous. Charley seems, even before Jerry's true nature is revealed, to have some issues when it comes to love and friendship, hovering between sullenness and panic, and behaving like a jerk without quite meaning to or realizing what he is doing. He acts, in other words, remarkably like a real male teenager, a creature almost as likely to be misunderstood in a summertime movie as a vampire.

Charley and his mother, Jane (Toni Collette, whose professionalism is as seductive as Mr. Farrell's impishness), live on the outskirts of Las Vegas. The desolation of their subdivision — real estate signs everywhere, on stakes that double as potential weapons — is especially haunting in these busted times, and there is something pointedly desperate about the way the residents cling to routines of normalcy.

Jerry may seem too sly and eccentric to be a metaphor, but since there is no such thing as a literal vampire, we have to assume that his presence in this landscape means something. And if "Twilight" and "True Blood," in their different ways, register deep cultural worries and fantasies about sexuality, "Fright Night's" fears seem to orbit around real estate, money and security. The hastily built, characterless, isolated houses that sprawl beyond recently booming cities may be haunted too.

But it is the prerogative of the genre to dispel allegory in a puff of smoke and a wash of blood, to which raucous laughter is added once David Tennant shows up as a Vegas stage magician — addicted to Midori liqueur and chafing in his tight leather pants — to whom Charley turns for help. With a nod to Russell Brand, but with his own special brand of louche ickiness, Mr. Tennant helps make a too-long and somewhat by-the-numbers last act easier to bear.

The 3-D throws some icky stuff in your face but is mostly not distracting and occasionally witty, which seems to be about what you can expect at this stage in the development of the format. Three-D is a neutral presence in a movie that has great fun with the possibility of evil.

#### **Recensie 4**

#### **Not so campy 2nd time around**

*By Sean O'Connell, The Washington Post*

Friday, Aug 19, 2011

"Remake" has become a curse word in Hollywood, largely because of a flood of unnecessary updates meant to "fix" films that weren't broken in the first place. As such, audiences are being trained to react to remakes the way vampires react to crosses or garlic cloves: Hiss, scream, then turn and run in horror.

"Fright Night" is different. It stands apart from the rehash pack by accomplishing something rival remakes rarely do: It improves on the premise it has been handed, producing a

modernized version of a decades-old story that's superior to its predecessor in virtually every aspect.

In this case, "Fright Night" director Craig Gillespie remakes Todd Holland's 1985 horror-comedy of the same name, a dated slice of teenage paranoia that was neither scary nor funny the first time around (unless you count a few unintentional guffaws at the cheesiness of the film's effects or the overall campy vibe).

The story still steals from Alfred Hitchcock's masterpiece "Rear Window" with awkward teenager Charlie Brewster (Anton Yelchin) casting suspicions that his mysterious new neighbor, Jerry (Colin Farrell), is a vampire. As Charlie's accusations fall on deaf ears, the arrogant Jerry engages in a deadly cat-and-mouse game that draws in Charlie's childhood friend (Christopher Mintz-Plasse), his girlfriend (Imogene Poots) and a carnival-barking entertainer named Peter Vincent (David Tennant) who trades in the occult but lacks the faith needed to stand up to a vampire.

Gillespie's "Fright Night" doesn't drift too far from the original's structure, though little tweaks made by screenwriter Marti Noxon - best known for her contributions to Joss Whedon's genre-defining vampire soap opera "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" - lead to major improvements in Holland's initial plot.

For starters, the action moves from a nondescript suburb to a pop-up neighborhood outside of Las Vegas, a self-described "transient community" where residents are casino employees who work all night and sleep all day. The simple location shift goes a long way toward explaining how Jerry is able to sink his teeth into a tight-knit community without alerting the authorities.

The Vegas setting also allows Noxon and Gillespie to cleverly change their Peter Vincent character from the fey host of the late-night film series to a Las Vegas illusionist sleepwalking through his sold-out show at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino. Fans of the original "Fright Night" may miss Roddy McDowall's stagey, Shakespearean turn as Charlie's reluctant mentor, but I quite enjoyed the sleazy approach Tennant takes in the role. A cross between Criss Angel and the boozy Russell Brand, he puffs his chest with a phony bravado that's punctured by Jerry's undead presence.

At its best, "Fright Night" mixes sly pop-culture references, "Twilight" jabs and Scooby gang jokes with legitimately suspenseful horror sequences sure to unnerve even the most-seasoned genre fans. Though Gillespie staked his claim with the offbeat indie comedy "Lars and the Real Girl," he deftly maneuvers this film's lengthy action sequences, the most memorable involving a minivan, a motorbike, a demonic hand and one of those real estate signs with sharp points on the end.

All of this takes a back seat to Farrell, who appears to be having a ball as Jerry, the bored bloodsucker. Like a fat cat batting around an injured mouse, Farrell plays off his innate sexuality and unforced charm to intimidate co-stars who appear less confident. Which, in a word, is everyone.

Too bad Farrell can't do anything about the film's ineffective 3-D. The glasses needed to see Gillespie's "Fright Night" in another dimension do more harm than good and should be avoided at all costs. Outside of a few spurts of blood shooting off the screen, the 3-D in "Fright Night" is forgettable, and the tint from the glasses makes it seem like every scene in



the film takes place at dusk. You'll enjoy "Fright Night" more if you see it in 2-D, because the edgy thriller shows that, when used right, Hollywood's creatures of the night still have plenty of bite.

## Recensie 5

The Detroit News

August 19, 2011 Friday

Bite done right

Adam Graham

GRADE: B

If you're gathering anecdotal evidence to support your theory that this time, Hollywood has finally run out of ideas, a 3-D remake of 1985's horror-comedy "Fright Night" would likely be high on your list.

But don't unfairly dismiss this bloody good time, which features a killer performance by a beefed up Colin Farrell as a bloodsucking vampire. The talented Farrell is undoubtedly above such fare; but he takes a big bite out of the role of Jerry, the Dracula next door, and elevates the film to the level of pleasant late summer surprise.

Charley Brewster (Anton Yelchin, "Star Trek," "Alpha Dog") is a high school student who dropped his nerdy past to hang with the cool clique, including his new girlfriend Amy (Imogen Poots). But when one of his classmates turns up missing, his geeky, occult-obsessed former friend "Evil" Ed (Christopher Mintz-Plasse, doomed to be forever known as McLovin) suspects vampires are to blame, specifically Charley's mysterious new neighbor, Jerry.

The charismatic, brooding Jerry is indeed a creature of the night, keeping his victims captive inside his home and in the massive caverns beneath his house. In an effort to take him out, Charley recruits Peter Vincent (David Tennant), a supposed vampire hunter who stars in a cheesy vampire-themed show on the Vegas strip and carries on like Buffy the Vampire Slayer by way of Russell Brand.

To its credit, "Fright Night" has the good sense to reference "Buffy," and also includes a nod to the original "Fright Night," which has earned a cult following over the years. But this is a fully modernized take on the story, and director Craig Gillespie ("Lars and the Real Girl") keeps the action moving and makes impressive use of that most annoying of current cinema trends, 3-D technology. When the blood splatters on screen, it almost lands in your lap.

"Fright Night" honors vampire lore by sticking to some legends (vamps cannot come inside one's home unless invited) and updating others (did you know vamps don't show up on video camera?). The Big Showdown at the close of the film is a bit of a letdown, but the performances - especially by Farrell and Yelchin - make the film worthwhile.

Midway through the movie there's a quiet showdown between Charley and Jerry, as Jerry is subtly trying to get inside his neighbor's house. The baby-faced Yelchin is dialed down; but Farrell is all darting eyes, facial ticks and macho confidence. He never goes over the top, he's not a showy actor, but he's clearly relishing his role and eating it up with abandon. He makes this a "Night" to remember.

## Bijlage 3: Amateurrecensies

### Film 1: Dracula 2000

#### Recensie 1

**Choppy but adequate for what one expects**, 22 December 2000



Author: [Jeroboam](#) from Seattle

Well, I went to this with a few thoughts in my head...

1. Horror is dead. 2. The concept of Dracula really hasn't been mastered since Stoker first penned the novel. Well ok, Nosferatu, (not the horrible 1979 remake) was great but Bram Stoker's widow had something to say about that whole deal. But in all it was fun to watch. Vampires are neat, they bite, they float, they turn into things. It simply was a pleasant movie watch. Editing was a bit scattered, and some of the slower points were just that.. slow. And some of the lesser characters were so insignificant one forgot they were there until they popped up all of the sudden. "Oh THAT guy? He's still in the movie?"

Some nice twists, especially Drac's origins and motives, and some good homages to the previous films' imageries and tell tale signatures. So if I had to see it again I'd make sure it was some bored evening and someone happen to bring it by. Which won't be too long from now, they plan to release it on video/DVD in a mere month from now. Go see it if you like Vampire movies, just give it some grace and you'll come out saying "that was ok" and go have coffee afterwards with friends and discuss whether it was as good as you wanted it to be.

#### Recensie 2

**Worth seeing but not great...**, 23 December 2000

Author: [DrunkN\\_M](#) from SoCal

I love vampire movies - whenever one comes out I have to see it, no matter how bad I know it's going to be. In this case, I was very curious - it looked like it had potential from the previews, but I knew better than to keep my hopes up.

This movie DID have potential. The cast of characters was good, especially considering it had no big hollywood names, and they all performed wonderfully. Some of the special effects were nice, but some were downright inappropriate (meaning this isn't the matrix). The movie had a nice flow moving along during the beginning and throughout the middle, especially with the gorgeous women portraying the seductive evil vamps (Jennifer Esposito was my favorite, what am I saying? She's STILL my favorite! >=), but I guess the problem I had was with the ending, and the manner in which (at least in my opinion) they rushed through the movie... They should have taken their time telling the story and getting to explore this world more, but instead it felt too familiar like all the other recent vampire movies - they make it look too easy to kill vampires - A problem arises, and they always

manage to solve the problem all before breakfast time lol. Well don't wanna spoil anything, but let's just say I can't imagine anyone who would actually like the ending - felt too... typical? I dunno... Worth seeing for anyone as big a vampire fan as I am though might wanna catch the matinee

### Recensie 3

**Not the worst movie ever, but it's close enough to wave**, 24 December 2000

Author: [gcr](#) from Illinois

I was forced into seeing a movie, and I figured Dracula 2000 might be watchable. After all, if Wes Craven attached his name to it, you'd think there might be some redeeming quality to it, but there really wasn't. This movie really comes down to what kind of standards you have for movies. I'd like to think that I have pretty high standards and therefore this movie was really insulting to myself. If are one with lower standards, who enjoys some of the crap that Hollywood is producing these days, you might give this movie a "pretty good" or "very watchable." In reality, it wasn't. I've seen enough horrible movies to last me a lifetime, and this isn't on par with the worst that I've seen, but it's still pretty bad.

I just kept watching it and waited for it to be good, but it never was. Some movies have a great flow to them and you become easily engrossed in the picture. It's impossible to become engrossed with trash like this, though. The dialogue is contrived and too many scenes are just cliched and predictable, and not the predictable where you're thinking "I can't wait for this to happen!" It was more like the predictable where you're thinking "Wow, this is horrible." If you have money, don't spend it on this movie. Go buy a book instead.

### Recensie 4

**This was a better movie than people are giving it credit for**, 25 December 2000



Author: [slealos](#) from Norman, OK

First of all, I go to a movie to be entertained. By that measure, Dracula 2000 was a success.

I think Gerard Butler was a good fit in the role of Dracula. Who said Dracula was not supposed to be good looking. He is a classic vampire who not only can strike fear in victims but also seduce the women as well. Dracula had his "harem" and they were also played well in the movie, as jealous and cruel vixens.

Justine Waddell was a good fit for the protagonist, as she fit the typical "woman in distress." My only qualms about the film was the typical horror plot devise that the people went to the one place they never should think of going. Justine went straight to the bedroom when she knew there was something wrong up there. One of the early victims went into the casket after the leach attacked his eye. How can you sympathize with a victim that stupid.

Jonny Lee Miller (aka. Sickboy) was a pretty good fit as the co-protagonist. I was disappointed that Christopher Plummer did not have more of a role.

And the ending. No one liked it. I loved it. The plot twist was genius. I predicted a similar twist half way through but it was still carried out well and was good symbolically. If you want a exciting movie with a good story, check this out.

## Recensie 5

**old story gets a new twist from an even older source**, 26 December 2000

Author: [evilfiendfromplanet9](#) from St Louis, MO

If you like films that are completely re-spun new takes of old, over-done franchises, then you will like this film. I have always enjoyed vampire films and the mythos of the undead, in general, but I never particularly cared for the concept of Dracula, the "super-vampire". Yet, I thoroughly enjoyed this film. Now, let me tell you why. This was a complete over-haul of the Dracula story. It had all of the bloodsucking gore and ultra violence typical of modern horror movies, but, without delving into the plot too much for fear of spoiling the great concept which is revealed, I will say it is the most clever concept I have seen or read dealing with the origins of the nosferatu, putting Dracula at the start of it all, explaining where HE came from, as well. The writer of this script has completely thrown out the ramblings of that "drunken irish madman" (Bram Stoker) in favor of a story which utilizes even older vampire mythology. Specifically, I speak of "The Vampire and His Kith and Kin" which is a much older work and actually considered to be non-fiction in that it doesn't tell a fluid story but instead collects old folk tales about the nature of vampires dating back to their origins in the middle ages. Ideas from this are clearly used, and used well, I might add. Beheading and the use of silver as means to dispatch a bloodsucker are two themes you rarely see in recent vampire films and are taken directly from the old myths. And what is clever about the film is how they don't stop with the inclusion of these concepts but take it even a step further by explaining, not only why these things work, but in the process, where Dracula comes from, and more specifically, WHO he actually is. Yes, folks, that's right, there's a mystery afoot! The casting and acting of the film was well done also, although from the appearance of the actor playing the title character, one almost expects that this was originally meant to be an Antonio Banderas vehicle. And I, for one, would like to have seen that since he did such an excellent job the last time he played a vampire (Interview's Armand). Anyway, I would definitely recommend this movie to any fan of redefined horror, or vampire enthusiasts in general.

## Film 2: Shadow of the Vampire

### Recensie 1

**Superb, but not in the ways you might expect**, 1 January 2001

Author: [catrandom](#) from Los Angeles

First, the quibbles: Since this is about a German movie and everyone in the movie is understood to be speaking German, the erratic accents would have been well dispensed with. John Malkovich's wig has

his hairline receding more in some scenes than others. The title sequence -- easily 10 full minutes of zooming in and out on vaguely creepy artwork while all the people who ever adjusted a light or passed the director a pencil are credited, two at a time -- is a serious test of patience. And there's perhaps a bit too much silliness here and there -- there is the odd cheap laugh.

Now the praise: Though it would still work if one had not seen "Nosferatu," that definitely adds to the experience. "Shadow of the Vampire" easily matches "Nosferatu" in giving a sense of Count Orlock (or Orlok; it appears both ways in the title cards) as something completely other. This count is not a courtly, distorted human. He's utterly, unpredictably alien, and his priorities and needs are entirely his own. It makes him fascinating, and raises all kinds of questions about his real moral culpability. Dafoe is superb.

There's no question about the culpability of Murnau in the story; he's rather more dangerous than the vampire. Malkovich, who, with his bored bureaucrat's voice, has a particular genius for making lunacy sound perfectly reasonable, is terrific. And when he and Dafoe are together -- well, there hasn't been so much ham on a single screen since the scene between Charles Laughton and Peter Ustinov in "Spartacus." They're a joy to watch.

I should also mention to those who haven't seen "Nosferatu" that, not only is Eddie Izzard a ringer for the pudgy young hero in the original, his portrayal of that actor's approach is not the least bit exaggerated.

## **Recensie 2**

**A Creepy Opus that Doesn't Quite Work**, 3 January 2001

Author: [Richard French \(rlejoef@aol.com\)](mailto:rlejoef@aol.com) from Studio City, CA

There have been a few raves about Willem Dafoe's performance as a vampire playing an actor named Max Schreck who portrays a vampire (a Victor/Victoria type of concept) in a depiction of the real-life 1920s classic, Nosferatu. Consequently, I was expecting a lot from director E. Elias Merhige's Shadow of the Vampire. What I got was a moody travesty that was preposterous and unexciting. I've always found the topic of German decadence in the 20s an alluring subject, and we do get a feeling of the period from that standpoint. John Malkovich plays the role of F.W.Murnau, the legendary German director of Nosferatu. As always, he is smugly effective. The rest of the cast, though unremarkable, works adequately with the limitations of the material and their roles. For the most part, the film mopes along to its rather predictable conclusion, with the ghoulish-looking Schreck popping in and out of scenes, doing a few gruesome vampire tricks, speaking in menacing tones and clicking his nails. All the while, Murnau pontificates and bosses everyone around like your average crazy director, while a few nefarious things happen. Murnau furiously admonishes Schreck from harming the cast and crew, but his warnings are unheeded. As a viewer, I was confused about the genuineness of his safety concerns for his coworkers, since at least one person disappears and elicits no reaction from Murnau or the other characters.

Admittedly, production values are quite good. Dafoe's makeup is flawlessly fiendish and the opening

credits, though long, were eerie and fascinating to watch. Nevertheless, the film just wasn't good enough on most counts to compel me to suspend my belief system, which brings up an inherent problem with subject matter that fictionalizes events based on factual occurrences. It's one thing to build a story with such events, however unlikely, that are at least within the realm of possibility. But when these events are virtually impossible, as is frequently the case in this film, one's credibility can be strained to the breaking point. If that happens, as it did for me, there's a substantial risk the material will be greatly undermined or dismissed entirely. I suspect for the die-hard vampire fans, the film will be generally well received and there are worse horror films around. So with that in mind, *Shadow of the Vampire* is there if you're interested.

### Recensie 3

**Best film of the Year!!!**, 6 January 2001



Author: [moo1031](#) from New York, USA

This is the best film I have seen in a long time. The performances were excellent and everyone was perfectly cast. The writing was tight and the story was actually suspenseful without us even noticing it! It is more than the sum of its parts, those being a making of a movie movie, a vampire story, and a costume drama. It subverts reality in such a way that we, as the audience, are drawn in until the climax makes us question the lack of veracity in good film making. It is one of the few movies released in recent memory that I look forward to seeing again and owning on DVD when it comes out! Beyond all this though, the cinematography of this film is magnificent. The move between color to the silent film of the movie to the brief glimpses of the original silent film are smooth and very effective. It serves to pull us further in. Plus it is a delight to see a wonderful reenactment of the making of a silent film with a begoggled director explaining a scene while the actors instantly translate it into action. It has given me another level on which to enjoy these silent classics. It has also made me think again of an idea I had recently about resurrecting the silent film as a viable art form again. An actor such as Eddie Izzard, who is spectacular in this film, is the type of talent that would shine in this sort of medium. Beyond all this Dan Jones does an excellent job with the score. His music supports the tension without becoming a caricature. This film may not be for the mass audience but for those who enjoy stories that blur reality, peopled with truly great actors that are able to pull off tragedy and comedy at the same time, while being filmed in an engaging and classically inventive way, this is the film for you!

### Recensie 4

**One of the best of the year....works at multiple levels**, 24 January 2001

Author: [Glida](#) from Newport News, VA (US)

*Shadow of the Vampire*, the brilliant new horror/comedy/suspense offering from E. Elias Merhige asks the compelling question of how far any of us are willing to push the limits of a personal Mephistophelean bargain in order to achieve some ill-begotten immortality.

In 1922, the great German expressionist film-maker, F.W. Murnau (played by John Malkovich), directed a film derived from Bram Stoker's Dracula called "Nosferatu," possibly the greatest vampire movie in the history of the medium. Unfortunately, Stoker's widow would not give him the rights, so Murnau went ahead with the project anyway, "camouflaging" his work by changing the names of the characters (e.g. Dracula became "Count Orlock"). This feat of imagination was not unlike Clark Kent wearing glasses so no one could divine his real identity. Needless to say, Stoker's widow followed Murnau through the courts into the next several incarnations.

To play the part of the vampire, he hired an unknown actor named "Max Shreck" (shreck is German for "fright"). Shreck (portrayed by Willem Dafoe) was unarguably the ugliest and creepiest Dracula ever portrayed on the silver screen. His presence was so forbidding, that a rumour actually circulated at the time that Shreck, was in fact, a vampire.

Picking up on this conceit, Merhige put forth the following conundrum: was the unknown that Murnau had hired a Stanislavsky trained actor (who always stayed in character throughout the shoot) portraying a vampire, or was he a vampire portraying an actor portraying a vampire? While the audience begins to work out this dilemma, Shreck/Orlock starts to leave a trail of blood.

In the meantime, the plot reveals that Murnau has worked out his own deal with Shreck, which involves some unthinkable reward for his quite unique take on the role. And as the characters assume their characters, Murnau begins to assuage the fears of the cast in their work with this unsavoury character actor. Particularly, he promises Greta, the female lead (Catherine McCormack, who starred in the under-appreciated "Dangerous Beauty"), that her work in this role will guarantee her immortality.

Unlike most horror offerings, this thoughtful work challenges us with considering to what degree a film maker's (and by extension, our own) obsessions become vampiric relative to the sacrifices that they demand of others. The legends are rampant: Hitchcock commenting that actors should be treated like cattle; Carl Theodore Dreyer (Rene Falconetti in "The Passion of Joan of Arc") and Lars Van Triers (Bjork in "Dancer in the Dark") pushing their female leads to the point where they decided never again to endure the torture of making another picture.

The camera promises a level of immortality unique in our time: the enshrinement of voice and image on film. But to what degree might anyone be tempted to sacrifice everything for eternal life in any walk of life? What price Hollywood? What human cost might a general assume for the taking of the next blood soaked piece of real estate? How many business bodies to trample in the quest for the first billion? Or even, what price family in quest of financial security?

From that perspective, one could argue that "Shadow.." is a rather graphic and colorful depiction of idol worship, and how within the context of some higher aim we can commit incalculable harm. In addition to the brilliant performances (I would consider it a grave injustice if Dafoe does not receive the Best Supporting Actor Award from the Academy), this film dares us to form a relationship both with Murnau and his horror. And as a dazzling display of horror, suspense, and dark comedy, this film works extraordinarily well.

\*\*\*\*, and clearly one of the best films of the year.



## Recensie 5

**Why, oh why did it have to end that way?**, 26 January 2001

Author: [jungledweller98@yahoo.com](mailto:jungledweller98@yahoo.com) from Houston, TX

After counting the days until it was released here, I played hookey from work to go to the first showing. I am sorry to say I left sorely disappointed.

The acting is excellent for the most part. I thought Dafoe and Malkovich both nailed their characters sublimely, and the rest of the cast, though not given much to do, were just fine. It's creepy how much Eddie Izzard looks like his character Gustav von Wangenheim. The exception to the great acting was Cary Elwes, who was very nearly painful. Pick an accent and stick with it, dude, or just stand there and look pretty.

I did enjoy \*most\* of the film. As others have said, the opening credits were too long (as were the closing credits, which I stay for at every film), but whatever. For the first hour or so it was a nice, creepy little pseudo-homage to Nosferatu (one of my favorite films). And the point, that Murnau was obsessed with making the film and Schreck was weird, was quite clear. Fine. Cool. Enjoyable.

But then it had to end in a flaming ball of unbelievable schlock, and I mean unbelievable in its literal sense. Sure, any vampire movie has to have some suspension of disbelief, but this was just too much. Maybe it was the fact that they used the real names, that these were supposed to be real people, but I really couldn't suspend my disbelief that much.

Still, even with the over-the-top ending, everything would have been okay, I could have let it go and still enjoyed the film if it hadn't resorted to the oldest, tiredest vampire cliché in film history. Unnecessary, trite and totally inappropriately historically inaccurate (even in the context of this film), that scene just killed it.

I'm sad, because I really wanted to love this movie. But all things considered, I shouldn't have even bothered to see it.

## Film 3: Queen of the Damned

### Recensie 1

**Lestat come out come out where ever you are...**, 22 February 2002



Author: [banjogal](#) from Philly

Hahaha! If you watch this film and pay close attention, Lestat's humor is right on target. It's a good thing Louis didn't show up, he would have been a downer for the movie. Sure there are things I missed that were in the books but I think Stuart Townsend's take on Lestat made up for it. Whew, he can suck on my neck any night. Remember this film is Lestat's story and don't expect Akasha (the late Aaliyah) to be in the majority of scenes and you'll come out feeling better about it.

On Aaliyah's performance let me just say she did very well with what she had to work with. She looked luscious and acted with regal abandon.

I also enjoyed Vincent Perez as the ancient, Marius. He seemed to be a combo of Marius and Armand as I envisioned them. He certainly had Armand's playfulness and persistence.

The script was weak in parts and some of the special effects were a bit cheesy (think of that scene in Interview with the Vampire where Louis is pissed off and chops Santiago in half and burns the Theatre des Vampires down) nothing monumental and a bit low end. Oh well...

My advice is, if you like vampires go see it, give it a chance. Remember it is not Louis romantising via Anne Rice's pen and you'll enjoy it much more. Focus on Lestat and you'll be ready to surrender your mortality for a few sensuous minutes of life as an immortal rock star.

## Recensie 2

**Absolutely Awesome... Anne Rice would be proud.**, 22 February 2002



Author: [SandyFury](#) from Santa Monica, CA

I just came from seeing Queen of the Damned and cast my 10 vote.

I was very much looking forward to seeing this particular book of the Vampire Chronicles as it was my favorite of the original three that I'd read many years ago. I thought it was divine fate it coming out on my birthday so my friend and I went to the first show.

I was definitely NOT disappointed and I don't think anyone else into vampire movies will be either. I absolutely think this movie did complete justice to the sentiment of the author and her characters.

First of all: The sets of the movie were beautifully done. The backdrops, the props, all of it. Special effects were awesome!!!!

Another great thing about the movie were the original songs that Lestat sings. This was something that could've potentially been a disaster for the films makers had they not been both believable and very very good. They were more than believable and more than good.. I foresee the soundtrack being a big seller with me at the front of the line.

The vampires were beautiful and terrifying as was my impression when I read the book. I thought the depth and scope of the "companion"s relationships were underplayed but was very happy it was not entirely overlooked ie, Marius and Lestat, Marius and Dave

Upon leaving the theater the only semi fault I could find when speculating on how this fabulous film could have possibly been any better was the relationship between Lestat and Jessie was not explored enough to jive with the ending. I felt like there was a little skip in the record there. Why would Lestat care so much? etc...

The movie surely could've done with another hour to develop the intensity and length of all of the relationships: between Lestat and Marius, Jessie and Lestat, Marius and Dave, Marius and Akasha, and Lestat and Akasha, and so on.

As a Lestat fan I certainly would sit through any length film with Lestat... But for the time given to the films makers it was really well done.

I loved this film and would see it again and recommend it to everyone who likes vampire movies. My friend who went with me who has never read an Anne Rice book, but who is very into vampire movies like Blade, loved it.

### Recensie 3

**Thank God for Stuart!!!**, 22 February 2002

Author: [Claudia24601 \(Katieminna@aol.com\)](mailto:Claudia24601@katieminna@aol.com) from Low-Buttocks (Lubbock), Texas

I ran to see Queen of the Damned today, the first show of the day, like a child insane. I've awaited a sequel to Interview since it came out, and perhaps I had high expectations for this film. Honestly, the filmmakers had a difficult challenge ahead of them, they had two books to cover in an hour and a half film (too short if you ask me), and they didn't have Anne Rice writing the script. Still, whoever decided to replace Tom Cruise with Stuart Townsend as the one and only Lestat made a great decision. He captured the tremendous sexuality needed for this character after the terrible picture painted in Interview's storyline. Sadly, that was all that saved this movie from being a terrible endeavor not worth the price of the "Early Bird" ticket special I got for the first show.

At any rate, if you've read the book, you will notice the obvious screw-ups in the plot line and you will catch the obvious characters that weren't introduced as they should have been (aka Maharet, Mekare, and Khayman). Still, the movie could have been a LOT worse and the soundtrack with Stuart's look and Margurite Moreau (in a role that's a far cry from her Mighty Ducks appearances) as Jesse make the movie enjoyable to an extent. Still, I wish Anne had been a part of this film because it could have been a comparable sequel with her influence. All in all, I say go see this movie, but I wouldn't recommend paying full night time prices for it.

### Recensie 4

**Entertaining and wild**, 22 February 2002



Author: [Olga Bas \(LestatLouis\)](mailto:OlgaBas@LestatLouis) from Brooklyn, NY US

Woohoo, what a wild ride. I'm not even sure what I really expected but it sure paid off. A friend who I dragged along said that it all looked "like a big video game" referring to the vast number of scenes that span across a large terrain making it look and feel like you're inside.

To start I must say that Stuart really captured the "Lestat" look, he very sexy as my friend remarked, and I must agree, wow!!! I did not see anything wrong with his accent I actually enjoyed his part the most in the whole movie. He captures Lestat and his wayward ways perfectly, and his skin looks beautiful in the movie. The concert scene was very well done and the song "System" playing along, while Akasha killed the vampires, was a nice touch. The little Jesse was adorable and the grownup was also compelling. Marguerite Moreau pulls off her part with a lot of flair and innocence, she's probably the only innocent in the whole movie. Akasha was physically enchanting though it was hard to make out the dialogue especially when she and Lestat were on the beach. Even though her role is not overly large she holds your attention when she is on screen. I enjoyed the scene when Lestat crawl away from the groupies and then crawls up the wall, very nice. Also when Lestat is listening to music lying in his coffin and then he realizes another vampire is in his mansion that is also very for lack of a better word, yummy :). The ancients who were barely featured seemed very reserved and not enough lines for them all, if they had any. I counted only about three lines from Armand, and Matthew Newton did resemble a "pretty girl" as my friend interjected. I think he was a pretty good Armand in appearance, he did not speak enough to find out if his character was very complex and dark, like it is. I like that Lestat calls his band "my children", very paternal and sweet of him, if Lestat can ever be sweet :) Also his biting sarcasm and humor worked well for the movie especially the line: "Sorry I'm late, I was trying to catch my breakfast." And when Maudy (a band member) first saw Lestat and was surprised about his statement that he was a vampire: Maudy-"Vampire, that's funny." and Lestat's reply: "Yes, it's hilarious." Some of the special effects were a little shoddy and I'm not sure why but the way that the preternatural speed was conveyed was a little funny looking. Overall the movie deserves recognition for all the hard work put into it by everyone. I don't think it's fair to judge it so poorly especially because of the fact that it wasn't what you expected.

## Recensie 5

**What was everybody expecting**, 22 February 2002



Author: [Clown005@msn.com](mailto:Clown005@msn.com) from USA Texas

First of all people, a book is not a movie. In a book Anne Rice's creativity is limitless and not limited to what you can do in "real life". Also Anne Rice did not really have direct interaction in the movies production so do not base you opinion on that! For people who say they are "real fans" and hate the movie, readers be warned they are not true fans. First of all this is not a "sequel" to "Interview with a Vampire" this is the third book in the series. Therefore the director had to give some kind of background (mostly made up but loosely based on the book "The Vampire Lestat") on Lestat and the other vampires present.

The movie in directing and screen play was Excellent. The voices were great and for people who said there wasn't enough of the vampire queen in the movie... well Aaliyah died before the editing was done so forgive them for that!

To end the movie in my opinion was an A+. Mainly because it wasn't based on the book. When I read the vampire Lestat and queen of the damned the way I pictured things in my head the way Anne Rice

intertwined the language she used is in no way re creatable on screen. The movie was a great "original" idea

Please go see it and do not be discouraged by these reviews.

#### **Film 4: Blade II**

##### **Recensie 1**

**OK movie, enough action for those with short attention spans...**, 22 March 2002



Author: [ixijimixi](#) from Warwick, RI

I was hoping this movie would have the same depth of plot as the original, but I was mistaken. The entire movie was almost one giant action sequence. Any fleshing out of the plot was rushed. It was an OK movie if you're just in the mood to watch stuff explode and watch neat vampire death effects.

If you were hoping to see Wesley Snipes act in this movie, you're going to be disappointed. It's an awful lot like he'd repeated all his character's mannerisms so much, he's become bored with them.

The special effects rate very high on the "ooh, ahh" scale. However, any scene where the vampire ninjas are crawling across the ceiling or walls looks very fake. We're all used to wirework and slow-mo angles of scenes nowadays, but at least in them, gravity and momentum looks somewhat logical. In the ninja scenes, though, they jump and fall with a rushed, unreal look. I kept thinking of Cats & Dogs when I was watching these scenes. It's sad that in this day and age, they're still making mistakes like they did back in the Mortal Kombat II movie.

If you're looking for a good action flick with a unique plot, then pass. This movie was worth matinee price, but I wouldn't waste nine bucks on it.

##### **Recensie 2**

**It's a white knuckle cracking, head slicing, runaway locomotive. Review by Tim Bradstreet**, 22 March 2002



Author: [m99gallows](#) from San Diego, California

Hat's off to Del Toro. Blade 2 left me gasping for breath and wanting more. Don't delude yourself. Del Toro did not set out to make Citizen Kane. Blade 2 may be a bit short on story but the plot is diabolical and the action almost never stops. It's full of horrific images that are like a grizzly kind of fine art. The Reapers are both nasty as hell and yet horribly tragic. When you are not looking at lush images of Vampire warriors you are watching them and Blade performing a balletic and crisply choreographed tour de force of violence. Ash flying, bones splintering, bodies twisting. It is like a hyper live action comic book that hit's you like a punch in the throat. From the ghastly sewers

beneath Prague to the underground lair of the ancient Vampire lord, the sets blend high tech Vampire technology and centuries old gothic architecture which makes for some stunning eye candy. The colors are lush in their limited pallet, sodium yellows, ambers, greys, greens and subdued blues. There is more to this film than meets the eye on a first viewing. It's horror/action yes, no doubt about it. But it's anything but a one dimensional vision. In my opinion it ranks as one of the best comic book movies ever. Is it for everybody? Certainly not. but if the above overview appeals to you, this is your movie. These are my feelings and impressions of the film, to tell more would be to spoil this wonderful danse macabre

### Recensie 3

**Picture Aliens II but without the fear and terror...**, 22 March 2002



Author: [smakawhat](#) from Washington, DC

Enter once again that realm of Hollywood action marketing...

The sequel....

In this case what is new?!?!? Well they stuck pretty much with the same winning formula. Blade is his old comic book self as well as his sidekick and nemesis parts, little on dialogue, big on action and looks. Here director Guillermo De Toro (Mimic, Devil's Backbone) tries to see if he can put his crowning touch on this very likable character.

In short this film was kind of odd, It started off kind of dissapointing, and then got better, and actually kind of did real good towards the end. It also had some GREAT scenes. The basic plot involves a new breed of vampires (Reapers) that are stalking all of the planet including the ordinary vampires. The high council asks Blade for his assistance in stopping the threat which is more powerful and more thirst ridden and could wipe away all life.. Henceforth Blade allies himself (cautiously with his small team of humans) AND with the 'Bloodpack' an elite vampire fighting force that was originaly set up to kill none other than the daywalker himself.

My biggest problem with this film was that there wasn't alot that was new. That being said the first Blade was just a great neat thing, but watching this I couldn't help but have the feeling, yeah I've seen this already... been there done that. However, with the addition of these new Reapers there was something more to get excited about.. only problem is they are introduced very slowly into the picture... just enough to tease the audience..

Also the director has some great looking shots that are very eerie.. there is alot of suspense.. but not much dialogue but after all it is a comic book like script. The action is first rate involving some great fight scenes that are 1 half Matrix like, 1 half standard bone crunching, and 1 half WWF!! (I think the director has this thing about wrestling moves)... In the end it comes out very unique as the Reapers are no EASY kill..

My biggest beef though was that the film wasn't scary.. unlike the first one. Maybe they needed more women stalking guys and then ready to do the ole praying mantis thing (in the first film that just gave me the chills), here however, the film comes across as re-make of Aliens II with the Reapers (LOTS OF THEM) and the rag tag 'Bloodpack' is a knock off of the alien marine fighters but without any of the charisma, depth or likeableness. Picture Aliens II with the spaceship co-ridors and aliens replaced with improved vampires and sewer tunnels but without the chilling edge of your seat terror.

That being said the film is what it is, a simple action film, with some good fight scenes, neat villain(s), and some good shots. I just wish they could have made some of the supporting cast have more lines, and more insight into their characters.... some of them were kind of bland and they could have done WAY more with the script. But overall it was a good film.

Rating 7 out of 10

#### Recensie 4

50% more action...almost perfect!, 23 March 2002



Author: [jeffery q \(jeff@whocaresproductions.org\)](mailto:jeffery.q@whocaresproductions.org) from USA (in front of my computer)

A step or two up from the first outing.

First up, the story is better - some folks are saying there was no story but this one has 200% more story than the cliché that is the first movie's 'plot', that one and this one are really about Snipes fighting vampires, not an in-depth character study. Great plot twists included - there are some moments early on where I was thinking how stupid for Blade to be told and shown so much but later you find out why...now, I wouldn't have told him so much if I was one of those vamps but hey, they wanted his trust right? So, it may have been a bit stupid but it IS possible. Also, not having to set the character up, we get right to business and that equals 40% less exposition.

Action is far better. It wasn't bad in the first one but his foes were not too skilled and the fights were not long enough...as a result, the original Blade film couldn't top the opening fight (one of it's few flaws). but here the fights start high, dip to a steady level and escalate to a smashing finale! Lots of things I am hearing about the fights are that they are too similar to Matrix scenes...this makes complete sense seeing as Donnie Yen, who plays Snowman in Blade 2, was the fight choreographer on this movie (the film's credits say he was assisted by Michael Woods, who was in a bunch of Donnie Yen's Hong Kong films). He learned all about fight choreography from Yuen Wo-ping who did the Matrix fights and he (Yen) also did the fights in some of those Yuen Wo-ping Hong Kong films. So now you know WHY they look so similar...they are not copies of the Matrix, more like brothers to that film's fights.

My ONLY complaint about Blade 2 is that Donnie should have been used in the movie more than he was...yeah, they also could have dumped some of those special effects fight bits but they really didn't do it too much for the hand to hand stuff, more for the leaps...so, it doesn't get in the way all that

much (even if it does look weird).

I'm looking forward to seeing this one again (and still again!) and would tell anyone/everyone to run out and see it. For what it tries to be and how well it succeeds: 10 out of 10!

## Recensie 5

**By the numbers sequel with few surprises and big plot holes**, 23 March 2002



Author: [Kurt Winter](#) from Freaking Jersey!

Where "Blade" successfully pulled the viewer into a very sensual vampire underworld, and maintained that suspension when the film took a super-supernatural turn, "Blade II" alienates & insults the viewer with too many Hollywood clichés. The film's "surprise" is too much like the original, combined with the hokey antics of the "Towelly" episode of South Park.

Tim Burton turned a few city blocks into Gotham City for "Batman", Del Toro struggles with constructing an ethos for the film with the entire city of Prague at his disposal. Del Toro attempted to "scare" the audience, but the attempts are laughable, at best. The elements, apparently designed to scare, are cliché Hollywood slasher.

Worse yet, is the hokey "team" that partners with Blade. For the purposes of this review, let's call them "Fox Force Five". The team members looked more like potential action figures than believable flesh & blood characters. For that matter, all the characters in this film remain static. The first film introduced the viewer to the seedy underworld of vampires, this film is like a documentary of it. All the scenes of vampire culture are shot from a distinct, third person pov. This further disconnects the viewer.

The "love story" angle is poorly underdeveloped here, especially viewed in comparison with the first film's Oedipal overtures. Blade's love interest is underdeveloped, and while the actress is stunning, the character falls flat.

The highlight of the film, of course, is the creation of the "Vampire Nation". In the first film, vampires existed, and helped operate things from behind the scenes. In this film, the over the top portrayal of them is just too much - vampires have corporate offices now.

Of course, action is the name of the game - but with all the nonsense heaped onto this weak story, there's not much room for it. The first film's groundbreaking martial arts - backed up by excellent physical acting by Snipes, are sadly mediocre in this film. The set design for these fights are standard fare - the catwalk, the church, the underground tunnel, etc.

In all, a disappointing sequel that has little of the energy, style, or sensibilities of the first film.



## Film 5: Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary

### Recensie 1

"Only from the mind of Maddin", 4 July 2003



Author: [cranesareflying](#) from usa

What an absolute thrill, from start to finish, just experiencing the `artistic conception' of this reverent homage to silent film, featuring Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet, a stunning performance by Zhang Wei-Qiang as Dracula, and the brilliant production design of Deanne Rohde. Once again, Guy Maddin has created a unique, conceptualized universe all his own; there's nothing else in cinema quite like his eerie, dreamlike imagery. This film is immersed in the thundering power of Mahler's `Resurrection' 2nd Symphony, a work which itself features an ascension from all things human and earthly, and rises into the glorious heavens, a transcendent experience which, musically, grounds this film. From this theme, we add vampires, whose lust for blood promises life everlasting. The performance of Zhang Wei-Qiang dominates throughout, as he is easily the most fascinating stage personality, filled with a mesmerizing ability to seduce and ultimately possess his willing screen sirens, and while I can't speak for anyone else, I always root for him against his puritanesque nemesis, Dr Van Helsing, the leader of the repressed gang of vampire slayers. Ballet director Mark Godden choreographed the ballet adapted by Maddin for this film, so there is constant motion on screen. All this is done in image and in dance, with exaggerated gestures and with an extreme grace in movements, magnificently sensuous and macabre, shrouded in fog and black and white shadows, with only the tiniest color tints. Each frame, by itself, is a still masterpiece; the imagery is that overpowering. But when put in motion by such gifted hands as Maddin's, the film experience is indescribable, but unforgettable.

### Recensie 2

**Maddin's Dracula taps the vein with its modern yet bygone vision**, 21 May 2004



Author: [scarletminded](#) from San Diego, CA

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

May be spoilers. Watch out where you tread.

This came to my local theater and I didn't see it. I could kick myself in the head for not seeing it on the big screen now.

I have never seen the Dracula ballet, but this makes me want to run out and get tickets for it, if it is as great as it is made out to be in this movie.

The film captures all the plot points of the novel and serves it up in only 75 minutes. I have read the book and seen countless movie versions, but I have never seen the reference to Dracula's coat being cut and money falling out of it. Amazing. I was so happy that was put in. Money had to be a silent

way of conveying the menace of Dracula, who in a genius move by Maddin, is Chinese. Wow. A modern update on a classic, but it is, unlike other lesser movie updates, with a purpose. No longer are the "reds" the threat, it is the Asians who might take over the money systems of Europe and America. This metaphor also calls to mind the outsider baseness of Dracula, the evil animal who must be stopped before he consumes the land and white women!

The subtitles were a riot. The one with Van Helsing that ends with Etc, was inspired. For those who didn't know the story from the novel of Stoker's novel (which was given good yet shoddy historical treatment by Coppola some years back, so more people should know most of its scenes, minus the Vlad Tepes bits not in the book) these words explained the characters, their intentions, places in the book, etc, so even the layman can't get lost, giving humor in the process.

The techniques in the ballet and the film are brilliant. For example, when Dracula is staked at the end (did I give it away for some of you?) he ends up lying on top of it, much like in woodcuts of Vlad Tepes when he would put people on stakes to torture them. I can't see wires, so how this was done brings out the kid in me. The adding of color here and there (such in the green of money and the red of blood) added much to the movie and it looked hand done, even if it was done by computer. I am unsure if it was or not. The ballet itself was a good forum for Maddin, a man who loves dealing with imagery from the Victorian age to the Depression Era, using grainy film and making the films look bygone, but adding modern ideas and translations. He is one of my favorite directors. He is like a Victorian Lynch...in fact many of his films have an Eraserhead like feel. Empty, tense, with a lot of feeling.

Tara Birtwhistle is wonderful as Lucy. There is a scene where her suitors and Van Helsing come to her grave and she rises up and towards the camera. It is lovely and disenheartening at the same time and is, again in my kid self, quite unnerving! It is beauty in horror, which Birtwhistle claims with honor and grace.

Wei-Qiang Zhang is also full of poise as Dracula. I love watching him dance. His Dracula is seductive, taking along much of Stoker's characterizations, such as hairy palms. He even dances with a knife. Gorgeous!

I rented this film and will watch it as many times as possible. I love that the DVD has many extras, including commentary. If you liked this film, I highly recommend Careful, Twilight of the Ice Nymphs and Archangel. I also recommend you go see The Saddest Music in the World when it is in theatres! Maddin's world is definitely unique, bringing the past into the present with a much inspired bloodtap!

### Recensie 3

**One of the best "Dracula" movies ever**, 22 November 2004



Author: [kintopf432 \(kintopf432@hotmail.com\)](mailto:kintopf432@hotmail.com) from St. Paul, MN

Despite the extreme, extreme familiarity of the source material and the stuffy associations of the ballet form, Guy Maddin's 'Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary' emerges not only as one of the best 'Dracula' movies ever, but also as one of the best films about the Victorian Era (ranking with 'The Elephant Man' and 'Topsy-Turvy'). Maddin achieves the first feat with his insight into Stoker's novel (it's exciting to see somebody touch on the misogyny and xenophobia for once), and the second through a fascinating and completely appropriate aesthetic synthesis. Combining a 19th-century novel with a 19th-century pop art form, and setting it to 19th-century music (Mahler's from the wrong country, but so what), is a good beginning, but what makes it work, of course, is shooting it all in a mock-19th-century style. OK, so the silent horror films we think of date from a little later; still, Maddin does what he can to give the film a primitive, experimental, moving-daguerreotype effect, and the result feels like an actual window to the past, even if it's all just an artificial aesthetic construct. If this all sounds a bit self-conscious and over-the-top, it sort of is, but viewers will almost certainly be surprised at how unpretentious the effect actually is. The more explicitly balletic moments occasionally slow things down a bit for non-fans, but Maddin wisely keeps the running time at 75 minutes, and this helps the film retain a surprising accessibility. Not for all tastes, of course, but worth the effort for just about anyone. 8.5 out of 10.

#### Recensie 4

**Surprisingly traditional, but worth a watch for horror and silent film fans**, 7 February 2005



Author: [Brandt Sponseller](#) from New York City

Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary is a silent version of author Bram Stoker's Dracula that also incorporates many ballet-oriented scenes.

My two principle reactions to the film were surprise and delight. I was surprised that the film is so traditional--the silent footage often looks like one is simply watching a film from the 1910s or 1920s. This is heightened by the score, which is extremely conservative, traditional classical music. This surprised me because the Sundance Channel promos for the film kept repeating, ". . . from avant-garde director Guy Maddin". There is not much avant-garde about this film, either in the literal translation of that phrase, as "new wave", or in the more popular sense of "experimental/uncompromisingly different and unusual". Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary is decidedly old wave, and never more experimental, different or unusual than a couple small production design touches that might have been gleaned by anyone who is a big fan of Terry Gilliam's Brazil (1985) and Francis Ford Coppola's Rumble Fish (1983).

Even citing those two influences might be misleading. The Brazil influence is primarily present in a single device--Mrs. Westerna's (Stephanie Ballard) ventilator, and the Rumble Fish influence primarily in the recurrence of red (and occasionally green and gold) within the context of mostly black and white photography (with occasional, very traditional silent film tinting for various scenes). But Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary is so traditional that Maddin frequently even went for German expressionist influenced set design. The sets are wonderful at that, however, and occasional they're more surreal.

It's not that the film is bad for being so traditional, but it took me awhile to adjust my preconceptions, which were misled from the Sundance promo. However, the silent film aspect didn't exactly work well for me, either, and the ballet was a bit blasé when it was present, which was less often than I expected. Most of the time I was wondering what the motivation was for the silent film aspect, aside from an exercise in nostalgia and/or cribbing a style of a bygone era, like trying to create a painting that looks almost exactly like Titian, say. On the other hand, it was effective in a couple instances, such as one decapitation-by-shovel (shot from an angle that allowed for minimal gore, to my dismay), where Maddin introduced foley "sound effects" that amped up the impact of the scene. The instances of bright red in the cinematography were also very effective, and not dissimilar to M. Night Shyamalan's *The Village* (2004), which postdates this film by 2 years.

My delight reaction arose when I realized that much of *Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary* can be read as an anti-immigration parable. This help explains why *Dracula* is Chinese here, rather than East European. Under this interpretation, the immigrant Others are invading white Anglo-Saxon shores, usurping authority, "stealing" women and economic power, and so on. It's also notable that Maddin's means of dispatching *Dracula* in the film is very similar to punishments meted out by *Dracula*'s real-life basis, Vlad Tepes, aka "Vlad the Impaler" (and aka "*Dracula*" by the way). One popular theory has it that Vlad the Impaler's motivation for his atrocities was primarily to protect the integrity of his Wallachian burg, against what he saw as foreign political and cultural invaders. This makes *Dracula*'s finale in the film fittingly ironic in light of the anti-immigration subtext.

Maddin's film is also interesting for presenting the story in two halves, the first solely centered on Lucy Westenra (Tara Birtwhistle), and the second on Jonathan Harker (Johnny Wright) and Mina (Cindy Marie Small). A pervert rendition of *Dr. Van Helsing* (Dave Moroni) was also unusual and amusing, but *Renfield* (Brent Neale) was mostly wasted.

Of course a potential audience for *Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary* has to be amenable to silent films, and not averse to ballet or traditional classical music. If you fit that bill and you have a taste for horror or an interest in *Dracula*, this film may be just up your alley.

## Recensie 5

**Cinematically Erotic**, 7 December 2005

Author: [tedg \(tedg@FilmsFolded.com\)](mailto:tedg@FilmsFolded.com) from Virginia Beach

I am completely revising my must see list after watching this. I know only one other of Maddin's projects, his "*Saddest Music in the World*" of the next year. I rated that in my category of films you must see.

The rules of that list are that no more than two films per year, nor no more than two per filmmaker can be on it. This almost bumped "*Talk to Her*" off that list. It may yet. Let me advise you now that this is powerful and important stuff, the only successful marriage I know of literature, dance and film. In fact I know few that successfully integrate any two, much less masterpieces in each medium.

The story itself is greatly enriched: all the most terrifying horror is beautiful, and this is: an arc of desire across your life for that hour and a half. Where the original was only about sex, this is written larger to race, money, power and all in an erotic context that transcends sex. You'll notice when seeing this that it is more true to the book than any other filmed version.

Now just think for a moment about this: Dracula has been filmed by Murnau, Browning, Warhol, Herzog, Franco, Coppola and herds of lesser lights. No where has the scope been this broad and sharp.

(The device of the diary has been changed from the detective's to the virgin's, a master concept that indicates the deep thought that went into this. Exposure to that diary makes the girlfriend sex-crazed, for instance, as if the art itself were the infected blood.)

The dance. The choreographer has put together something that is remarkable, even seen merely as a ballet. It uses Mahler's music, by the way. That music is usually so overtly ripe it smells of selfish world conquest. It says something that here it seems merely supportive, that what you see on the screen is bigger.

So the choreography affects powerfully but what matters is the cinematic rendition. This is far more evocative as filmed ballet than a live performance can ever be, because we are allowed to have our eyes dance as participants. When a character's eyes flutter and question, ours do too. When the dance suggests a motion, it is us that completes it or gives it a resting place. The integration of choreography and cinematography is the best I have ever had in my life: beyond the sheer energy of "Red Shoes" to intimacy.

But it is the other cinematic qualities that make this unique. Dracula is a powerful story only because it evokes notions of the past that have power to awaken and live in our souls. Those notions are like the vampire and carried by him in the story. Once we touch them -- have sex with them, we are infected, transformed.

How to convey that cinematically? Why by evoking old film techniques as the story did literary ones. (Today that evocation by hacks is inaptly called "gothic.") So we have a silent film. Actually a postmodern comment on a silent black and white film. Lots of reminders of the camera in cropping and Vaseline lenses. Occasional tinting (blood and lucre), overtly theatrical sound effects, wobbling when we have to move quickly (or die).

The gauzy camera lens is made three dimensional with fog that extends the blur as the camera motion is also made three dimensional by the moving crowd. The whole thing has a phrasing and rhythm that is so well integrated among the dance, light, camera, story and music it is as if the things coevolved from the big bang.

Whoever did the art design deserves a reward. The sets are organic and in the last half in the lair, overtly vaginal -- so overtly it shocks. It must have been drawn at the same time as the choreography.

There's sex and beauty and seduction here. Be seduced my friends. Succumb. Art requires seduction and in the process some infection of urges. It is all about the dance -- Succumb, dance, die.

Ted's Evaluation -- 3 of 3: Worth watching.

## Film 6: Underworld

### Recensie 1

**Entertaining, but tries too hard to capitalize on trends**, 19 September 2003



Author: [Paul Kershaw](#) from Ferndale, MI

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

The typical comments from people who have only seen the trailers bear true here, to a degree. This premise had a lot of potential, and when it focused on that potential, it was a good film.

Unfortunately, the filmmakers too often tried to exploit obvious cultural trends in movies like "The Matrix" and "Blade," and that's where they tripped up. This was especially true in the action scenes, where an obscene number of bullets were fired for no other plausible reason than because that's what they did in "The Matrix." There was also far too much black with blue filter, again seemingly because of "The Matrix" and "Blade."

Unfortunately, discussing the "good parts" means discussing the original parts, which means discussing spoilers. To tread these waters without diving in: The movie relies on its own mythology for both werewolves and vampires. This might annoy some vampire purists, but I found it a fairly interesting and convincing mythology. Logic holes? Sure. What the heck, it's a movie, people. Nothin' but a show.

There's social commentary in the movie, too. Vampires seem to be a recurrent metaphor for some social ill or other (usually bloodborne illnesses, as in *Stoker*). In "Underworld," the social commentary makes for a more complicated plot than in "Blade," one I wished they'd explored more, instead of spending so much film time on cliches.

### Recensie 2

**All Style, No Substance!**, 19 September 2003



Author: [tyrellcorp27](#) from Bronx, NY

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

First time director Len Wiseman definitely knows how to make a good looking movie, but not much else. Mr. Wiseman has nailed down the look that is evident in most of today's vampire movies: dark, grainy, gothic, leathery, bluish hued skin and RAIN! Lots and lots of RAIN. Most annoyingly, outside of the terrible overacting of Shane Brolly as Craven (he espouses anger in EVERY look and in EVERY word he utters) and the stoic, zombie-like acting of Kate Beckinsale is the director's use of DOORS! Every damn scene of this movie either starts or ends (and sometimes both) with someone slamming open/closing a door, or gate. My guess is that doors must swing to and fro over 100 times in this movie. This must have been the editor's first movie and asked the director to use the doors as cues for his cuts. Once I pointed this out to my friend, he couldn't stop laughing every time a door swung.

The plot is pretty thin and close to being stupid. Plot spoiler follows: Why would the leader of the vampires and the werewolves want to create a mixed, super breed of half vampire, half wolf? The new super wolfpire would surely doom the vampires and werewolves to extinction. Secondly, we are continuously told that the vampires defeated the werewolves and pushed THEM to the edge of extinction. Yet, except for the finale, every fight between vampires and werewolves is dominated by the werewolves.

So if you just want to have a good laugh and watch a stylish vampire flick, "Underworld" is for you. But if your looking for a crafty, fast beat, well directed movie (e.i. "Blade II"), it ain't this one. You'll be bored to death and you'll learn to HATE DOORS!

### Recensie 3

**horrible acting, overdone matrix style fights**, 19 September 2003



Author: [BaalDemon](#) from Reston, Virginia

I cant decide whether this or The Matrix Reloaded was the worst movie ive seen this year. They both had so much potential but ended up falling extremely short of being anything better than "Well at least we got a good soundtrack from it."

First of all the acting was extremely bad, most of the theater burst out in laughter at how crappy it was. Secondly the story wasn't written all that great. If you try to have a real story line and try to develop characters thats great, but doing this while trying to fit in all the action that you think you possibly can just ruins everything. I wanted to know more about the story, I honestly didnt think this movie would be more in the action genre than anything else. Even the action wasnt even that great, infact it was extremely repetitive and made me think about how Matrix Reloaded sucked because it was nothing but overdone action. And the guy getting sliced through the head was possibly one of the dumbest scenes I have seen in a movie ever.

For this movie here is what you do, go get the soundtrack, and listen to it while you wait for the movie to come out as a rental.

#### Recensie 4

**A heckuva good flick**, 19 September 2003



Author: [davidemartin \(davidemartin@cs.com\)](mailto:davidemartin@davidemartin@cs.com) from Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Maybe I'm getting jaded in my middle age but I don't quite get as wrapped up in flicks as I used to.

Not so with UNDERWORLD. This is a very engaging flick. Sure, it's evocative of Matrix and its clones but you know what? Here's a case where a second-generation flick is BETTER than the ones that inspired it!

Maybe the secret of UNDERWORLD's success is that it is NOT a Hollywood flick? The team of Brit, German, and Hungarian filmmakers have succeeded in making a big budget, FX-heavy flick that does not have the oppressive obnoxiousness of flicks like The Matrix or the incredibly awful Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle (the REAL Worst IMDB flick of all time!).

Hidden away in Hungary, the filmmakers were free to make an interesting flick and not have to deal with studio execs and focus groups.

I agree there is not a lot of overt character development. But what there is is subtle and nicely done. Michael, for example, is shown as a caring person even during the subway shootout. This IS the guy who will bring an end to the persecution of the downtrodden werewolves, despite being drawn unwilling into their conflict. Selene is withdrawn, literally dead inside because of her centuries-old grief for her family. Had she been wisecracking or even smiling, THAT would have been out of character. Victor is a truly scary depiction of a noble yet ruthless superbeing. Hopefully directors, writers, and stars of more tradition comic book flicks to come will take note, learn, and finally give a real performance rather than just do a Nicholson ham job.

One note about Selene's bodysuit-- it's 35 years since Diana Rigg set the model. Nice to see it carried on.

#### Recensie 5

**Was a new twist on the paranormal...**, 20 September 2003



Author: [dreamangel99 \(dreamangel@girllofyourdreams.com\)](mailto:dreamangel99@dreamangel@girllofyourdreams.com) from Chicago, IL, USA

First the down side to the movie....the overused Matrix special effects, but that always happens when new effects are introduced. All action movies lately seem to be taking a spin from it.

The movie itself was excellently made. The story line was tight and the characters believable in a paranormal world. Too many people have compared this to the Blade series. This is unlike the Blade series in many ways. Can Blade take Selene? Well can Sylvester Stallone 'take' Bruce Willis? Who knows and who cares. These are characters in movies who have their own place, strengths,



weaknesses, etc. in their own worlds. This movie was not about the violence and action itself but about the struggle for survival between two rival paranormal species. The Blade series was about an evolved vampire eradicating the world of vampires and the like.

The existence and battle of the vampires and the lycanthropes is quite similar to the Laurel Hamilton "Anita Blake" series of books or even the survival aspect of the Christine Feehan "Dark" series about the Carpathians. I saw this movie about the survival of two species who became caught in a blood feud which neither side seems to have the full history on.

I thought the plot twists at the end were very well done. This was not only an action movie but a story. It held up both the action and the fantasy aspect of its classification very well.

I would like to have seen more character development on the lycanthrope side. I think the vampire side was heavily presented but the werewolves only seemed to focus on Lucian and Michael, who for all intents and purposes was not really a full lycan.

All in all I thought this movie was very well done and lived up to its previews. I'd like to see more movies along this line by these same creators. Not necessarily saying a sequel would be in order but the story can be even more fleshed out as time progresses.

## **Film 7: Van Helsing**

### **Recensie 1**

**2 Hours of my life gone forever**, 7 May 2004

Author: [Alic](#) from Alabama

This movie was a complete waste of my time. I was thoroughly disappointed, and I regret the money and time spent at the theater. For this review, I'll outline my expectations and desires and then contrast those to my experience.

After a long, stressful week at work and with my girlfriend out of town for the weekend, I decided that I was going to see movie tonight. I wanted something fairly mindless, with enough action and pretty visuals to consume my mind for a while. I was considering Hellboy, Kill Bill v2, and Van Helsing, but I knew my girlfriend would want to see KB2 and maybe Hellboy, if not in the theater then at least when they are released on DVD.

Alright, so I decided on Van Helsing. I was looking forward to two fun-filled hours packed with CG monsters and buxom she-vampires. I wanted to turn off my brain be entertained with raw action goodness. Instead, I was presented with two hours of boredom, intolerable acting performances, and computer graphics that drew me out of the movie.

First, the plot was some bizarre combination of epic-hero-vengeance and kitschy B-Movie monster flick. At times, I could feel that the director really wanted to have a plot with depth and meaning, but then he would just abandon it for unbelievably formulaic and trite patterns.

The computer graphics were good at times but awful at other times. Some of the human morphing into vampire/lycanthrope scenes were highly enjoyable, but the movie also had some of the worst landscape graphics I've seen. I truly felt like I was watching a video game sometimes and not some new fancy video game; I felt like I was watching clips from PS1 games. However, the Frankenstein character was fairly well-done. Besides Gollum, he was one of the best CG characters I've seen.

The acting was atrocious overall. Jackman was okay, but I've seen him do much better. However, David Wenham (Faramir in LOR) gave a great performance. In fact, his performance/character was the reason I gave this film a D+ instead of an F. The rest of the acting was pretty awful. Of special note, are the female vampires, Dracula's brides. They are constantly screeching in this awful, feigned moan, and their attempts at a Transylvania accent made me cringe with shame. I literally felt embarrassed for them. Richard Roxburg (the duke in Moulin Rouge) gave an okay performance, but even his accent was pretty atrocious, with this hideous lisp that randomly disappeared in some scenes.

The direction was also not good. The film used way too many hero close-ups with this over the top dramatic music. I can't think of the correct term right now, but I know that I don't want to see any more tight shots of a character with intense religious strings and vocals in the background.

I could go on, but I doubt anybody is still reading at this point. I hoping for something closer to X-Men or GoldenEye or even Kill Bill v1. I wanted a movie that would engage me in an indulgent, stupid, input-stimulating fashion. Instead I got a movie with a plot too boring to keep my interest, acting so bad that I found myself feeling sorry for the actors, cheap video game computer graphics, and directing so formulaic that it made me think I could have directed this film.

I WANTED to like this movie. I just wanted a fun little experience. I wasn't expecting a great movie, but I was hoping for an entertaining movie. However, I was so disappointed that I felt compelled to post this review as soon as I got home.

## **Recensie 2**

**Delivered pretty much what I expected**, 7 May 2004

Author: ([naramsina@hotmail.com](mailto:naramsina@hotmail.com)) from California

Okee, just as a matter of curiosity: when did Jack the Ripper make an appearance in LXG? I've seen that movie 4x and haven't been able to identify him.

As for Van Helsing, I thought it was great! I was a little disappointed that Kate Beckinsale wasn't as "kick-ass" as I had expected (cognate to Selene in Underworld), but every other facet of the movie delivered as much, if not more, than what I had hoped for. I didn't exactly expect the script for VH to rival the profundity of, say, the script for Gladiator. The quality of the script didn't damage the movie for me. It was fairly decent - certainly admissible. If you want Grecian catharsis, you shouldn't be looking to VH.

Script aside, the special effects in this movie are fantastic! Mr. Hyde was my favorite. The CG was great. Yeah it reminded me a bit of the Hulk, (referencing jsjn1s comment) but the only resemblance being that he's big and muscular. Despite that, Hyde CG creation was pretty dead on it's character. Technically, it's the one of the best 3D animated characters out there. It felt alive, had skin sliding over fat and muscle which deformed quite realistically with his movements. If you knew how 3D animation is created, you'd certainly appreciate ILM's achievement.

### Recensie 3

**Not bad, despite what's being said**, 7 May 2004



Author: [Bob Stout](#) from Houston, Texas, USA

The early reviews for this are all over the map, with lots of pans. I frankly don't get it. Let's face it, folks, the progenitors of this film were B movies long before they became "classics" of the horror genre. As such, they endured decades of critical scorn before being appreciated. Will this achieve the same fate? Probably not, but it's not the turkey everyone is saying!

Disclaimer: I'm a boomer. I grew up with high-concept silly movies and learned how to adopt a mindset to appreciate them. Shoot, I was even able to find fun with "The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen" (LXG) which was, by any measure, a much worse movie than this.

The tactic here is relentless action which sweeps you along without giving you too much time to think of what's illogical (other than the mere existence of vampires, werewolves, et al). Is some of the action silly? Sure. But is it entertaining? It can be if you let it. Aside from the obvious derivations, there are, as others have noted, quotes and homages from a variety of other films. Those are fun. There is comic relief, mostly from David Wenham but also from Hugh Jackman himself. Is the heroine totally implausible? Duh, of course! But that's part of her job. Classic horror films have two types of women - crones and bimbos. Since there's no one comparable to Maria Ouspenskaya these days, we have to just settle for the babe.

I rated this 8 out of 10. It's good mindless entertainment that pays due respect to its origins. Where it falls down is both at the very beginning and near the end. In the beginning, there's a sequence with Van Helsing and Mr Hyde/Dr. Jekyll where Mr. Hyde is every bit as overdone as in LXG. At the end, the temptation once again becomes too great and the climactic battle is between CGI creatures. Well done, but a bit disappointing. The very end of the movie is its Achilles heel - it's a real downer and probably hurts the word of mouth for the show.

Should you see it? If you liked "The Mummy", you may well like this. Just don't be too swayed by the critics. Many of them were wrong about the original Universal horror films, as they have been later over other FX-laden films. Especially if you're of boomer age like me, you may find yourself having a pretty good time with it.

## Recensie 4

**More to it than you think.... SPOILERS ...**, 7 May 2004



Author: [allykat\\_d](#) from California

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

Let me say up front that I loved this movie. I haven't had as much fun at a movie theatre in years. This movie is pure story telling spectacle at its finest. Total entertainment. This, to me, is the purpose of a movie: go get lost for two hours and forget about everything else, forget about the world and get lost in a fantasy. Van Helsing did that for me. There were tons of CG but it fit the story and never detracted from it. However, I believe there's more to this movie, an added layer, that will pass over most viewers' heads.

SPOILERS AHEAD.... although they'll make you want to go back and watch the movie again...

There has been complaints/criticisms/mutterings about Van Helsing's identity. Given the clues in the movie it's very clever what Stephen Sommers has done.

The reason Van Helsing cannot remember his family and the reason he was found on the steps of the Vatican is because Van Helsing is an angel cast down from Heaven.

I kid you not.

Gabriel is one of the highest-ranking angels in Christian, Judaism and Mohammedan religious lore. He is the angel of vengeance, death, and resurrection. Gabriel is said to sit on the left-hand side of God (remember in the movie the Left Hand of God killed Dracula during the first go-round). Now here is the important part: Gabriel is also identified as a man-God-angel and in Babylonian legend he fell into disgrace for not obeying a command exactly as given, and for that was cast down from heaven.

I think what Sommers was getting at is that the last command Gabriel disobeyed was one relating to his battle with Dracula. For that he was cast out of heaven with no memories of who (or what) he is.

Dracula recognized him as the man whom almost killed him, yet, if Gabriel was that man, he would be dead from old age. So my theories make sense. Gabriel can't age; he's not human-at least not entirely. I have to wonder if that explains his werewolf at the climatic scene, how he was bigger, more powerful than the others and able to resist Dracula's commands. A battle of Titans! The devil vs. heaven. Although Van Helsing may be mostly mortal at this point, he still retains a spark of what he once was: The Angel of Death and Vengeance. He is doing what he was created to do and is perhaps more effective on Earth than in Heaven.

If you see the movie with this knowledge, it gives the movie an added layer above the spectacle and FX. Watch for the clues, such as Dracula mentioning how human heartbeats increase when he is close and how Van Helsing's does not. Listen carefully to the message of the picture behind the wood panel. Note that Van Helsing can see Anna Valerious ascend to heaven, and that Carl (the monk

played by David Wenham) can not. Very cool. Maybe there are more clues that I missed.

I'm going to see it again and get as many people rounded up as possible to see it with me.

## Recensie 5

**Oh where oh where could that little plot be...**, 7 May 2004

Author: [darkageofwythia](#) from Greenville, NC

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

Van Helsing was so bad that I'd rather do anything than watch the 45 minutes of it I watched before I got up and left the theater. This includes such painful endeavors as getting a root canal, driving a car into a tree at 60 MPH, and jumping off of Niagara Falls.

Yes, it was that bad. You see, there seems to be this new generation of movies that are based solely on CGI effects and seem to lack that important literary device they teach you in middle school called a PLOT. Van Helsing was a particularly fitting and awful example of this, reminding me of a flop called Battlefield Earth that came out several years ago.

\* Warning: Potential Spoilers (although I try to avoid them) \*

The movie took me completely by surprise, as I thought the first three scenes of it were a preview. This was because there was no introductory text on the screen to indicate that this was the start of the movie. The movie opens with some townspeople trying to break into Dracula's Castle. We see Victor and Dracula and then somehow Frankenstein got involved in all of this (don't ask me how). The action and awful noise begins there. We are soon introduced to Dracula's three "brides" - although certainly good looking, whoever was playing them had worse acting skills than me, and I have terrible acting skills to say the least. At the end of the first scene as they are swirling around the burning tower in what is conveyed as a malicious manner they have big bright smiles on their faces, certainly out of context with the scene.

After that we are introduced to our (weak) hero Van Helsing, who destroys Jekyll??? Don't ask me how he got into this, but he was there. After that Van Helsing makes a very quick trip to the Vatican where is told he must kill Dracula, stocks up on supplies very quickly, and leaves. There are many strands left open here... including his partner. We are not even told the name of his partner! Not only that but something was alluded to with a snake and a ring, and we don't learn anything about that but are left hanging. After that is a confusing action scene with the female character in the story which is probably a future scene of some sort... and that is followed by two more action sequences complete with loud noise and CGI effects to boot, but no plot...

Where oh where could that little plot be? Where is the character development? Where is the emotion to rope the audience in? Where are the basic literary devices that have been used for centuries to make reading and filmgoing a pleasure? Where is the story?

This is not a story or a movie folks, this is candy for those of little mind and short attention span. If you have any sort of brain, or are under the impression that you have any sort of brain, then this movie is not for you. And if you saw this movie and actually liked it then go and see it again, and try to actually think about what you're seeing... I think you will understand everything that I have said.

## Film 8: Bloodrayne

### Recensie 1

**God in heaven go see Serenity or even Chronicals of Narnia!!!**, 6 January 2006



Author: [Dream seeker](#) from United States

At least those movies has a better plot, good story line, and a insightful biblical message somewhere if you look deep.

I feel beyond a shadow of a doubt that the rumors are true, uwe boll is really the Ed wood of the 21st century; let's take a half vampire-half-human plot from the blade trilogies, mix a bit of the special effects from the alone in the dark, the cave, and many other b-rated creature feature movie...and take some good actors like academy award winner sir Ben Kingsley abuse them and throw them into the cauldron of pure crappiness and ONCE AGAIN a movie that some will love and Lots will hate. I actually got a chance to see this movie much like the same way i got to see alone in the dark...Free and by ways of private screening...believe me i wasn't impressed...don't get me wrong Christiana lo ken is one hot dish...but her acting is pretty much the same as in T-3 stiff and very do mo arigoto Mrs. roboto! LOL you get to see new Lost star and now another to the chain of police records Michelle Rodriguez (who don't get me wrong she's hot too!!) playing the SAME roles she plays in many of her movies...ex. Resident evil, Girlfight, fast and furious, and even Lost!!!

come on Meatloaf!!!? enough said. and sir Ben Kingsley...GANDHI for crying out loud!!! the person that could of been professor Xavior for the Xmen movies but turned it down for some God awful reason...wait a minute was it for SOUND OF THUNDER!?!? i mean come on what did uwe boll do call him up when he wasn't in the middle of making possibly GREAT movies and said, "hey Ben...this is DR. uwe boll! listen i got this great idea for a movie that your kids will love if they seen my movies..if not that's GREAT...i hope you like to be part of it...i'll pay you BIG MONEY!!!"

and for the nerve of him to call himself the next Quentin tarantino...more like Napoleon...short and very outdated for his time! someone hire a hit-man to get this SOB before he makes the next movie called "HITMAN"!! or worse...HALO!!

### Recensie 2

**Definitely not worth seeing...**, 6 January 2006



Author: [dust86](#) from United States

I was able to see an advanced screening of this movie. My friend and I are movie buffs and are rarely disappointed by movies like this. He, having been a huge fan of the video game was greatly disappointed by it. He said the movie was somewhat close to the story in the game, except for being set in a different time period and location, however the story line in the movie was completely lacking. It seemed that they tried to accommodate for this by putting a lot of unnecessary gore and nudity in it. Things seemed to be completely random. At one point it turned into a porno with a completely random sex scene which never had anything to do with the story. The fight scenes were terrible. The choreography wasn't impressive at all and because the camera flashed around so much it was extremely hard to see what was going on. Honestly, after this movie I think the director(Uwe Boll) shouldn't be doing anymore movies based on video games because so far he's done a horrible job. These movies have the potential to be awesome and he's turned them into complete crap. In my opinion, if you want to see a good vampire movie, wait for Underworld 2!

### Recensie 3

**Very Bloody Indeed!**, 6 January 2006



Author: [Brian T. Whitlock \(GOWBTW\)](#) from WILMINGTON, NC

Another vampire movie has just come out. "Bloodrayne" is as bloody as its namesake. Here you have a woman named Rayne(Kristanna Loken) as a sultry but lethal dhampir who kills anyone who crosses her. Even a vampire is the victim of her wrath. She is trusting among some people, but many dread the undead. Don't we all? Unless they fight back, the humans have Rayne on her side. Vladamir(Michael Madsen,"Species1&2"), Sebastian(Matt Davis), and Katarin(Michelle Rodriguez) lead the way to find Kagan(Ben Kingsley). To me part of this game based movie is quite similar to "Castlevania", however, Dracula is never mention, so that's good. It's amazing that Rayne was sympathetic to the sister whose brother was slain by the vampires. And I liked the part where Rayne seduced the woman vampire and killed her afterward, and the thieves rob her later. Just like the game, Rayne has a hot body, and Sebastian took advantage of "being inside her". Reminds me of "Innocent Blood". It's a shame that Katarin turned out to be a turncoat, and everything is way out of whack. How would the fighters know? The effects and the fight scenes were indeed awesome, and the blood was just too much. It's great that Loken got to do more and show very much in this movie. I know Rayne was heartbroken when Sebastian decided to die than to live forever, for him why live when your family is avenged. It's a pity that he would be dead than live with the soul mate who is indeed "shared her heart". I'd been a fool to sacrifice when there's more terror out there. A very interesting movie, lots of action, lots of fun, and it's great for all the fans of the game. I enjoyed it a lot! It was interesting and intriguing. Rating 2.5 out of 5 stars.

### Recensie 4

**Halfway OK Vampire Movie**, 6 January 2006



Author: [Charles Delacroix](#) from United States

I just saw this movie today, the day it opened in my locality. And although I liked it alright, it really is one of those movies chock full of "well that's good but" features.

If you like vampire movies of the modern, campy, pop type ... think of Vampire Lestat, and Blade, and even Buffy the Vampire Killer ... then this movie may appeal. I've liked Vampire movies and stories since childhood and although I prefer "old school" vampires (like Dracula) I do think the modern ones of this kind have a kind of cool appeal as well.

The cast includes some enormously capable actors: Ben Kingsley, Michael Madden, Michelle Rodriguez. They, and the entire cast, produced solid performances fitting their parts and the overall script ... but certainly nothing here really stretched their talents. The female lead, Kristianna Loken, is new to me, but she's an attractive actress and turned in a solid performance.

The sound and cinematography seemed to have some problems of a technical nature. Some of the speech was obscured or sounded hollow; some of the camera slides were uneven.

Some of the scenes in the countryside were simply breathtaking. In fact, the whole flavor of horseback riding across these panoramic, wild, lush countrysides ... during daylight, during nighttime, during twilight ... all of this I liked very much indeed. Likewise I liked the castle(s), the monastery, the (fighting) monks, the boat that bore our heroes and heroines across the water ... these were all just delightfully lush, evocative ... the kind of scenes that just delight the heart of an old Medievalist like me. And the kinds of scenes that will thrill you as well if you like me are a Lord of the Rings fan.

The general plot ... well ... is "OK" ... but this is the kind of movie that for myself I have a hard time caring about the Plot. The value of a Plot in some stories and movies to me is really just to provide a framework on which to depict wonderful moods and atmospherics and scenery and the delightful playing out of Myth of the Vampire. For this purpose the plot sufficed well.

There were several places during the action, though, in which the events were simply unconvincing. I won't give them away. And in a sort of high mythos or high legend movie like this, I'm certainly not in the least concerned with "realism." But everything that happens should surely be convincingly in accord with the movie's internal logic. Several parts failed this test though.

All in all, a good rich campy vampire flick. Not bad for an evening's entertainment. But you know ... I can't help but wonder if something with the scale and quality of the Lord of the Rings or the Chronicles of Narnia or even Harry Potter could be developed out of the rich, decaying, earthy mythos of the Vampire? If so that's a movie I'd love to see! Till then, though, hey: BloodRayne is a decent, fun vampire flick.

## Recensie 5

**raw but moving**, 6 January 2006

Author: [Laughingly](#) from United States



I enjoyed this movie. It's not perfect, but I've not seen its like before, either. It's not a happy movie, but I think it has some parts to it stand out. The Rayne and Kagan characters are both memorable and make the movie worth watching. Scenically, the movie is lush. The movie itself is brutal, but the settings are often beautiful.

Plot-wise, it is a game movie -- heroic action/fantasy with a few somewhat "indiana-jones-ish" elements. For those that care about the bloodrayne games: the movie does include some elements from both bloodrayne games, and given that it's been declared a prequel to those games I'm not sure that was the best idea. In the long run using those elements here would make it difficult to use them in the sense they were used in the games. On the other hand some of the more obvious "game elements" are from other games. Some seemed like Nocturne (a sort of "godfather" game to the bloodrayne games).

In any event, the plot was an important part of the movie, but it's emotionally where this movie is strongest, and weakest.

The middle... was the weakest, emotionally speaking. If I had to rate the movie on the middle alone, I'd probably give it half the rating I'm giving it. It felt like exposition, and while it's possible in retrospect for me to step back from the movie and see how most of those parts fit, I found it bit hard to be engaged by the movie during the middle. Some of the characters were portrayed wonderfully, and some parts of the middle of the movie were just great, but some of the characters were portrayed in a fashion I found distracting. Maybe some people will have liked them, but not me -- at least not on my first viewing of the movie.

I think the emotional impact of the first part of the movie was the strongest. The ending was good, but it was action-movie good, the beginning was far more emotionally engaging, in my opinion.

And, ultimately, this is a movie about Rayne. She's ... some people won't like her. But I did. I'm not going to be able to describe this in detail without turning this into a spoiler, but the aspects of her character that some people are going to resent are what really make this movie.

## **Film 9: Nochnoy dozor (Night Watch)**

### **Recensie 1**

**Worth watching**, 7 February 2006



Author: [gwaito247](#) from Los Angeles, CA

If you liked Blade, Buffy/Angel, Dark City and similar movies and TV shows, then you'll most likely enjoy watching this film.

The film does not really break any new ground in the genre, but it's definitely a solid piece of film making, with visual quality on par with what you would expect to come out of Hollywood. The movie introduces you to the setting slowly, and takes its time explaining the "rules" of the world in which it

is set in.

The premise is familiar enough to follow, and yet offers a few interesting twists along the way. The special effects are well done, and the plot offers some depth beyond the standard good vs evil fare. The film does have some weakness in terms of character development and depth, but hopefully the remainder of the trilogy will flesh this out.

If this was a stand alone film I might rate it lower, but as the beginning of a trilogy, I'll give it a few extra points in terms of promise. The subtitles do a good of job of translating the Russian dialogue, and fans of the genre will have no trouble following the plot.

If you're curious about seeing it, I'd check it out, and if you like similar types of movies, its definitely worth watching.

## Recensie 2

**40 Million Russians Can't Be Wrong? Think Again.**, 13 February 2006



Author: [janos451](#) from San Francisco

40 Million Russians Can't Be Wrong? Think Again.

"Night Watch" ("Nochnoy Dozor") is said to be the top-grossing film in Russian history. One could make catty judgmental remarks about that, were it not for the current huge box-office success of "Final Destination 3" in the US (\$20 million on opening weekend).

The two have much in common: stupid stories, lots of blood and gore, and computer-game slickness. Incidentally, the number 3 comes up for "Night Watch" also in that it's the first opus in a trilogy - explaining, in part, its sudden, inconclusive end; come back for part 2 and 3, both likely to match the first installment's two-hour length. Arrrrggghhh! Timur Bekmambetov's 2004 bloody horror-fantasy, now coming to US distribution, is "about" the struggle between Good and Evil, but it's really hard to tell 'em apart. There is something about an agreement between Good and Evil, and the "night watch" is enforcing the rules in the dark - or maybe I got that in reverse. Who can tell? Regardless of the purported context, this is the real content: wild rides, vampires biting, heads exploding, Konstantin Khabensky, Vladimir Menshov, and Valery Zolotukhin fightin', fightin' and fightin'... just add a roller coaster and you could have had "Final Destination 4," although with different product placement.

Yes, Nescafe, Nokia, and other products are displayed frequently and prominently (and profitably, no doubt), although often near pools of blood, and doesn't that make you want to have a 'cuppa? Much will be made of how slick "Night Watch" is; I wonder. Some of the unexpected humor is OK, but the strangely-behaving subtitles (wiggle, jump, in color here and there, etc.) simply call attention to themselves, and special effects are anything but seamless.

In short: Nyet.

### Recensie 3

**Muddled, confusing, derivative**, 22 February 2006



Author: [peterfehrrs](#) from p-town, oregon

I attended a free screening of this movie on Feb. 21 in Washington, DC. The theater was packed with people who were already fans of the movie, perhaps they had seen it before or were just amped up on the hype surrounding the picture.

Despite this eager and interested crowd, the enthusiasm seemed to die down as the movie progressed. The film, simply put, is disappointing. Yes, it is amazing that Night Watch was made for \$4 mil. (supposedly). Yes, it has an epic scope. But I can't help but wonder if a much, much better film could have emerged from a somewhat interesting idea.

I've seen a couple Russian films in my day, and these films are often long and ponderous, with multiple layers to the characters. There is often limited dialogue and what dialogue remains informs us of the characters and their history. However, much like modern European cinema, it appears as though Russia is now trying to emulate American films, in this case, the American action/"horror" film. Expect a nauseating amount of quick cuts, slow motion, nearly pitch black imagery, close-ups, out of focus shots and stuttering camera work - all set to rock music.

If anything, the film heavily rips of X-men, The Matrix, Constantine and Star Wars. The plot is about a group of "Light" Others (humans who have quasi-supernatural abilities) who seek to keep a balance against the "Dark" Others. As explained in a battle sequence that is the prologue to the film, the "Light" side are those that fight for good and the "Dark" side is made up of evil (and vampires) but they have made a pact to stop killing each other in order to remain alive. Light versus Dark? Use the force, Anton!

The movie started out promisingly enough but then became quite ponderous and melodramatic. Often in my showing there was a lot of laughing at things that were not meant to be funny, purely because of the overacting/melodrama of it all. The movie is confusing and apparently the filmmakers realized this because there is quite a bit of exposition and flashbacks.

Anyway, its an interesting film but not scary at all (why they are marketing this as "horror" is beyond me). All the cool visual effects are seen in the trailer, though the movie does have its own look and feel, which I appreciate (even if it is derivative). There is a really neat animation about halfway through the film and the use of dynamic subtitles was really cool, but other than that I doubt I'll be in line to see the sequels.

Recommended if you can see it for cheap or free, otherwise not really worth it.

## Recensie 4

### **Legendary Forces Entertainingly Battle Another Apocalypse With Wit and Ethics**, 27 February 2006



Author: [noralee](#) from Queens, NY

"Night Watch (Nochnoi Dozor)" brings the world as we know it, and the world we don't see, once again to the verge of the apocalypse in an enormously entertaining manner. In this Part 1 of a trilogy, the fate of the world hangs in an intriguing tension.

Amidst the satire and humor (and a lot of red blood) as the iconography and legendary participants are very quickly explained, the story has a fine-tuned sense of ethics about sin and redemption that gives the plot more substance than such nonsense as "Van Helsing". I particularly liked the resonance of the resentment of the Forces of Darkness' against the centuries old treaty of balance that leaves them simmering at the mercy of licensure by the Forces of Light. The rules against them do seem a bit arbitrary as evidently dispensed in kind of an equivalent to the Ministry of Magic in the "Harry Potter" stories.

While director/co-adapter Timur Bekmambetov creates his own visual universe (or at least maybe fulfilling that of novelist Sergei Lukyanenko which I look forward to reading in English translation when it's available later this year), imagery is cheerfully borrowed from big and small movies in the sci fi/time travel/vampire genres, with winks at "12 Monkeys", "Brazil", "The Navigator: A Mediaeval Odyssey", etc., as well as amusing references to other legends and sources, including a dubbed clip from the Dracula episode of the TV series "Buffy the Vampire Slayer". The subway chase scenes (filmed in St. Petersburg) recall the small Hungarian film "Kontroll", particularly in the cinematography. "Anton" at one point sure looks like Bono of U2 in his The Fly stage, while his apartment seems to have the same sunglasses decor as the TV version of "La Femme Nikita".

While I loved the non-Hollywood faces of the actors that visually express the cynicism and world-weariness of an eternal fight, I did get the two blondes mixed up as I wasn't even sure for awhile that there were two different women in the story. (A friend confirmed that at first he was also confused.)

In a terrific contrast to the noisy opening clash of mythic knights (which I just caught in time though I missed a minute or two as evidently this film is amazingly showing sans any other previews), the outdoor urban locations are used in marvelous tandem with grungy interiors and just spooky enough special effects of mirrors, integration of computer and television screens, whooshing (and a bit repetitive) flashbacks and disappearances amidst flying camera work. Animation is used effectively to tell the back story.

There should be an award for best English subtitles ever! Not only are they always black-lined for ease of reading, they also do not give away punch lines of jokes or dialog too soon as instead they frequently roll out Mitch Miller style while the words are spoken, including attention to puns, such as for "underground" to probably make up for localized jokes.

For additional entertaining visual commentary, vampires speak in red and the red fades away into bloody-looking smoke that surrounds characters. Sometimes letters are italicized, capitalized,

enlarged or move around for emphasis, especially when characters are shouting or fade into another dimension. I guess "Yegor" and "Andrey" are new standard transliteration for the the more familiar "Igor" and "Andrei".

I hope this attention to detail will be replicated by other distributors. Though not all the street signage is translated, the credits are so a monolingual viewer can confirm that's a Bravery song over the closing credits and what are the other musical operatic and balletic references. (The original score and songs are also very effective.) You can also read the acknowledgment to all the second hand clothing shops in Moscow for the costumes, though maybe that's where they got the wigs too.

I live in a neighborhood with a lot of Russian immigrants and I was surprised how few people were at the opening matinée. Maybe they already saw it on DVD, but then they missed the visceral advantages of seeing it on a big screen.

I very much look forward to seeing the rest of the trilogy!

## Recensie 5

**Creative and Compelling Revision of Vampire Mythos**, 27 February 2006



Author: [yv-veryvery](#) from United States

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

Just got back from a sneak preview in Cleveland. I don't usually review movies but I like this one so much that I have to scream about it. Maybe one of the best movie's I've ever seen. Excellent cinematography and special effects. I'm a huge jerk about special effects, it takes a lot to impress me, I can barely watch Harry Potter movies because the special effects look so fake. But this movie totally immerses you in the experience, I completely forgot I wasn't really looking through Anton's eyes. The subtitling work is another example of this immersion effect, they to a lot of careful fade outs and timing work to make every subtitle fit. For example, during one scene the words turn into watery blood (it's hard to describe, but trust me, it's awesome). I'm SO glad they subtitled this.

Vampires have been done to death, so I was really dubious about whether I would like this movie or not. Also, I'm a big scaredy cat but the plot and imagery kept my eyes glued to the screen the whole time.

My only criticism is the video game scene, I felt that was out of place. Also, some of the fight scenes were a little confusing to follow. Other than these two things, I loved everything else.

## Film 10: 30 Days of Night

### Recensie 1

**Descent Vampire Movie**, 19 October 2007



Author: [pcone2](#) from Boston, MA

The film is set in Barrow, Alaska where for 30 days during winter the town is in perpetual night. The movie begins with everyone who doesn't have to be there leaving because 30 days without sunlight is somehow impossible to endure. Having grown up in Buffalo, I can assure you this is not true. So the movie sets up the town, depleted and cut off, vs. a troop of vampires, somewhat artificially but there you go. Initially the vampires run through the town killing everything in their path. There's an overhead shot of this that is completely original and spectacular. I suspect that the director took it from a panel in the graphic novel but to film this shot is way more difficult than to create a static drawing.

Anyway, from there on in it's the vampires vs. the plucky survivors and plucky they are. There's a bit of "I wouldn't do that if I were you" going on but that's just unavoidable in a horror film and it's kept to a minimum. In general the survivors act intelligently and most importantly believably as they try and last the 30 days until sunup. That goes a long way to keeping the movie afloat.

The end offers a bit of twist although the final scene it is similar to Blade II.

I would say that if you like this sort of movie you will not leave the theater feeling disappointed or cheated.

### Recensie 2

**Not great, does nothing really new, but really, not actually bad either**, 19 October 2007



Author: [jeffrey-46](#) from Baltimore, MD, USA

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

So, I got a free preview pass for this thing. So even if it was horrible, at least I wasn't out 50 bucks, which is how much I think movie tickets are these days. But I digress.

One note on my theater: the sound system was WAAAAY too loud, like, hurt-your-ears, rock concert loud, and actually distracted from the movie. I was not the only one there who felt this way. But once again I digress; I just mention this because this fact, which was not the movie's fault, might have affected my enjoyment a tad.

Anyway, here's the good:

\* Josh Hartnet as Eben

\* Supporting cast, mostly. Eben's brother, decent actor; Eben's wife is hot; the Grizzly Bear Smith character (not sure the character's name but you'll know who I mean) was pretty good. Overall, acting was acceptably good.

\* Special effects, especially the gore, were all pretty good. The gore was very realistic. Too realistic? Maybe. But it *is* a horror flick

\* Concept, vampires in an endless night, was new. I think? I haven't seen quite exactly that setup in a vampire flick before. Kudos.

\* Production, delivery, filming, all decent to good

And the bad

\* It really didn't do anything new as far as horror movies go. As in, there were plenty of horror movie clichés.

\* It didn't do anything new as far as vampire movies go. Standard vampire clichés as well.

\* Quite a few typical Hollywood holes. Such as, why can't planes come in when it is dark? I mean, 30 days of dark does not have to mean 30 days of no plane flights, does it? I've flown at night, people! And, dark all the time in winter in Alaska means IT'S FORTY BELOW ZERO ALL THE FRICKIN' TIME! Put a hat on! But no, we are actors, we can be in the cold with minimal cold weather gear. And, so, they are hiding in an attic, WITH WINDOWS, and although, yes, there is a covering over the window, please, people, turn out your light!

I dunno, it's little things like closing up these holes that make an unbelievable scenario -- and vampires is pretty much always always an unbelievable scenario -- believable. Make the tiny things realistic and believable and it is easier to believe the outlandish stuff.

But overall, an alright movie. Probably scarier in the theater, but probably more worth the expense of renting on DVD.

### Recensie 3

**A Breath of Fresh Bloody Air for the Vampire Legend!!**, 19 October 2007



Author: [czarnobog](#) from United States

"30 Days of Night" is a very welcome addition to the ranks of vampire movies. This one is strictly for horror fans, not for doily-draped gender-confused romantics dreaming of third degree hickies from pretty fanged lovers in New Orleans.

The fun begins in the first frame, courtesy of the evocative setting, a snowbound town at the Northern edge of America. The only iffy moment comes with the introduction of Josh Hartnett as the town sheriff. Young and movie star handsome, he threatens to come off as unbelievable, like the Ben Affleck sheriff in "Phantoms." Hartnett, however, despite his young years, has the gravitas to pull off this role, and director David Slade gets masterful performances from all the fine actors in this film.

Melissa George is scrumptiously beautiful. (Her mouth is so cute it should be patented.) She's also an excellent actress, who horror fans should remember from the recent (and highly recommended) remake of The Amityville Horror. With her endearing little girl face and keen talent for playing it straight under the most fantastic of circumstances, she's likable, sympathetic and totally believable in this role.

What really sets this film apart though is its portrayal of the vampires. Someone obviously boned up on ancient vampire legends, because these are the most authentic movie vampires since Boris Karloff's "wurdalak" in Mario Bava's "Black Sabbath" 40 years ago.

Speaking in a strange Eastern European tongue (Romanian? or Hungarian?) these creatures bear the remains of human personalities, but are purely evil; cunning and vicious and blood-stained, like vampires were before Bram Stoker introduced the "new improved" (i.e. sanitized) Victorian model and Anne Rice gussied it up even more.

Fans of Kathryn Bigelow's "Near Dark" and John Carpenter's "Vampires" will appreciate the high action and body count. The story is a bit slimmer than either of those two films (it is based on a comic book, after all) but it's very atmospheric and suspenseful, with superb production values all around.

The visual efx are topnotch, especially when they're subtle, such as snowflakes adding their magical luster to a scene. The special make-up efx (blood and guts et al) are completely believable, but aside from a few very graphic images and much spilled blood in the snow, are not as overwhelming as some overly squeamish reviewers have claimed.

The cinematography is gorgeous, and is enhanced by the seamlessly integrated visual effects noted above.

If you're in the mood for a nicely paced, well-produced, superbly directed movie that'll satisfy your craving for a dose of traditional horror, you can't go wrong with this one.

#### **Recensie 4**

**Overall excellent movie**, 19 October 2007



Author: [Timmy Babaganush](#) from United States



I have only reviewed one other movie and that was the Emily Rose disaster. This film couldn't be more different or much better than the old re-hashed vampire cliché. I see a lot of people on here claiming the "plot" isn't fulfilling. ITS A HORROR MOVIE NOT RAINMAN. The last good horror I saw with a comprehensive plot was..... wait there has never been one. If you want a logical explanation of why there are vampires in the world, or a resolution to their eons of persecution, go rent Stoker's Dracula. This ain't the love story that put you to sleep - I promise. I see others claiming it wasn't scary. My friends it was as scary as any movie I have ever seen. After being disappointed so many times at the box office, I am finally satisfied. In short this movie will satisfy you if you want to watch a horror. Especially a vampire horror. This is extremely well produced with a REAL budget and expertise. Raimi's best work, better than Signs and The Village put together. A 9 instead of a 10 due to the over use of the shaky camera or what I call nausea-vision. Anyway I can't recommend it highly enough, what are you waiting for - go see it - YOU WILL JUMP!

## Recensie 5

**Good god...please say no**, 19 October 2007



Author: [chastitychild-1](#) from United States

I felt the need to enable an account in order to respond to my now realized utter indifference to the money I earn. Now...I was a little biased in that I am a fan of the comic. Keeping that in mind I had no anticipation of this "motion picture" bearing any resemblance to said book as the direction was not helm-ed by chris nolan or frank miller...the only directors/producers seemingly capable of translating a comic with dignity to the big screen. However...what is beginning to puzzle me is the following: to the best of my knowledge for something to be mediocre it has to be average. A "C" were we in high school. Now answer me this...HOW CAN SOMETHING SO F'ING MEDIOCRE BE SOO F'ING BAD? The plot, which I won't "spoil", seemed to be comprised of every generic device which are generally reserved as filler until a piece of effects-laden brutality wow the audience and make us giggle with sick delight and munch popcorn. I spent more time picking corn out of my teeth than taking mere moments of enjoyment from this trite excuse for an adaptation. It breaks down into several key components of suck. 1. Josh Hartnett is utterly incapable of emoting on screen. He plays callous characters quite well as in Sin City or even Lucky Number Slevin where the character has a heavy-hearted back story but doesn't really need to show that outside of intensity. 2. The aforementioned Hartnett is surrounded by a barrage of generally small-rolled actors desperately attempting to hold their heads above the proverbial blood-soaked water and fail to show anything that can generate more than a few sporadic laughs throughout the theater aimed at their inability to carry the scene. 3. This really should be the chief point. Who was it that felt the need to elaborate on anything outside of carnage engorging vampires in a month of darkness and snow? That's all I asked for. Ripping corpses, adrenaline fueled failed attempts at escape, and a hatred of garlic/silver/Jesus or whatever is fashionable to thwart vampires this year. No...just sequences of re-hashed "We can't stay here!" moments followed by jump-cuts anytime there should be on screen grisly. I would rather watch Underworld. Think about that.

## Film 11: Låt den rätte komma in (Let the Right One In)

### Recensie 1

**The most fantastic and original dark fantasy starring a child since "Pan's Labyrinth"**, 26 October 2008

Author: [Aluisio Is All Right](#) from Winooski, Vermont, USA

Tomas Alfredson's "Let The Right One In" is an original, dark, twisted and gory horror fantasy, one of those special films that are hard to classify. Not merely an exercise in style, his film is a brilliant piece of amoral storytelling, and even if some characters' actions defy any logic or common sense (I don't wanna spoil any moment here, but you'll know what I mean when the first revenge moment of the story happens), they seem to be there just to remind you that this is just a fantasy tale (but not for the little ones!). Oskar (Kåre Hedebrant) is a 12 year-old bullied boy that befriends and develops an innocent crush on his new neighbor, Eli (Lina Leandersson), who happens to be a vampire. What comes next is a twisted tale of revenge and pubescent love, made with visual flair (the swimming pool scene is already classic), creative directing and impressive performances by the young pair of protagonists.

Hollywood, of course, didn't waste time and already announced an upcoming remake for those who are too lazy to read subtitles. Most likely, the remake will turn out to be PG-13 in order to make more money, and be filled with moral values so the prudish parents will let their kids watch the movie (don't they know "The Little Vampire" was made years ago?). Ignore the future bomb and enjoy the original - you're in for a treat! 10/10.

### Recensie 2

**The one "vampire" movie you don't want to miss**, 3 November 2008



Author: [demidov](#) from United States

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

In a nutshell, the movie is not about vampires at all. Yes there is violence but it is the kind of violence which is comes across as an absolute necessity. It often feels that the violent scenes are almost apologetic in nature. This is a movie about life, love and everything in between. The movie is very "crisp" and focused with every emotion being "sharpened" by the age of its characters, the cinematography and pureness of the actors portrayal of their characters.

All of the other reviews already mention the plot so by now you probably have a good idea of what the movie has in store for you.

I just wanted to draw your attention to one detail that i have not seen mentioned in any of the reviews. I think this one detail gives the movie its greatest depth: Eli's (Eli is the old vampire trapped in the never-aging body of a 12 year old girl) caretaker is seen by many as a serial killer or maniac which brutally slays young boys. He drains the blood of his victims and delivers it to Eli.

I think everyone is dead wrong here. Eli's caretaker is the "key" to the whole story. He is clearly in love with her. He clearly hates murdering people but at the same time clearly hates to see Eli suffer without blood or doing the killing herself. He sacrifices himself for her.

Who is he? He is a man who once fell in love as a young boy. Just like Oskar (the young boy who finds friendship, support and live in Eli). Perhaps he too at his young age found Eli a friend, a savior and his first and only true love. Perhaps he couldn't see her murder people for blood and he decided to take care of her just like she took care of him when he couldn't stand up for himself.

When he is caught, he can not bare the shame. First he disfigures his own face not to allow authorities to link him to Eli and then he ends his own life, knowing well that his time has ended and that Eli has found a new life and a new friend. Before his death he gives Eli his last gift - his own blood.

Understanding this detail we understand the movie's ending. Oskar takes the place as the right one who now will take care of Eli until the day he dies as she continues to live on.

### Recensie 3

**A movie worthy of 9 out of 10 stars**, 4 November 2008



Author: [aéo](#) from Beverly Hills, California

It has been awhile since I have seen a movie that moved me. This movie, while a horror story, has a "human story" behind it to give it a certain dimension that you do not normally see in a typical horror movie. But, this is not a typical horror movie given that the principal characters are young children. One of the main character is a "human" boy named Oscar who is 12 year old. The other main character is a girl named Eli who looks 12 years old physically, but in reality, she is much older. The movie, however, never states her real age.

By the way, this is a Swedish movie with English subtitles. I know many people do not like seeing foreign films because they have to read subtitles but please give it a chance. You will not be disappointed.

The setting of the story seems to begin sometime in late 1970's or the early 1980's in Stockholm, Sweden. Oscar is an introvert. His parents seemed to have divorced and he is living with his mother in an apartment. At school, Oscar is constantly bullied. His life changes when a man and his daughter moves in next door to him.

## Recensie 4

**Pure Love**, 16 November 2008



Author: [Martin](#) from United States

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

Wasn't sure what to expect at the beginning of the film. But after watching it, it left me with two words "Pure Love". Not sure where John Aivide Lindquist (author) got his inspiration, but's clear that love was at the heart of the story. I don't doubt this film might win an award, for him and the director. The story begins with a girl, named Eli (Lina Leandersson) moving into the same apartment building as Oskar (Kare Hedebrant). Oskar is a boy that's continually being bully at school and it's obviously having a psychological effect on him. After seeing this, Eli, begins to talk to Oskar, but warns him that they cannot be friends. We find out later, she needs real blood to live. But what begins as curiosity, ends with both of them being so attached to one another that,they begin to depend on one another. But it isn't until Eli's guardian futile and idiotic attempts to feed her, that forces Eli to take a course of action, which will change the lives of both (Eli & Oskar). This movie truly answers the question on how far are you willing to protect the one you love. The answer is "ANYTHING".

## Recensie 5

**his film manages to explore a very unique distant world of the supernatural without having to directly explain it**, 16 November 2008



Author: [richrodi](#) from United States

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

Let the Right One In is a film that represents the interesting perspective on what it might be like to be a lonely child vampire who happens to be a Swedish murder machine. Let the Right One In explores the virtuous nature of isolation in the face of an ever-growing fever of paranoia. The film's setting is that of a bleak Swedish landscape in the late eighties. The not so distant Soviet Union is often talked about through the conduit of radios and serves as an encroaching force that is ignored by the local residents of this small town.

The town seems to exist in a perpetual state of darkness. This eternal night scenario is perfect for the pedophilia like nature displayed by the vampire's manservant. This manservant acts as an interesting catalyst for much of the films events due to the fact his primary function of nurturing the vampire is completely interrupted by his idiocy and incompetence. Wondering why he can't seem to "get it up" he goes through his last licks of life unable to fully achieve his goal of self-fulfillment in the eyes of his innocently seductive young master. The prize for his loyalty is his death in the form of a consumable meal for the vampire child. Once his life is extinguished the young vampire advances on the young boy whose name is pronounced Oskar.

Oskar is completely vulnerable to his external elements. His peers delight in his swine like completion. Interestingly Oskar has a violent side to his distorted angelic face. He delights in the destruction and is equally attracted to the possibility of dismemberment and human casualties. In one particular scene Oskar responds to a question relating to the circumstantial evidence of this person's demise. He is qualified to answer this proposition because of his obsessive collection of newspaper clippings. Due to his isolation with his uncanny abilities he is quickly alienating by his classmates and is tortured throughout the course of the film. This torture comes in the forms of verbal abuse, whippings and beatings. Of course this conflict is resolved by the friendship gained by a new girl who is equally complex and isolated. Oskar's parents are divorced. Living away from his father gives Oskar feminine qualities, which are juxtaposed against the dominant tomboy attitude of this young girl.

This young girl exclaims without hesitation that she is not a girl. She is quite literal in her own assessment because she is really a boy with his penis removed who also has inherit ability to suck blood and destroy the lives of anyone she seems to come in contact with. She dislikes her own condition and finds a small amount of solace in this young fragile boy. She seems to stalk him. We see her cat like eyes prey on this young man's emotions. She is quick to offer him assistance. She is also quickly taken by his charismatic charm so they decide to go steady with each other. Obviously this steadiness is quite complicated; with her lack of genitalia and the ability to age. Despite these bizarre circumstances their relationship is extremely innocent. Oskar first hand views the young girl's ability to annihilate life. He remains very calm despite these drastic scenarios. He adopts an attitude of a much more conservative nature towards her advancements of extreme violence.

In one scene we see the playground bully's return to exact their revenge on poor Oskar. Oskar taking the initiative to further his own self-images decides to tone his body with weights and swimming exercises. The bullies arrive in the form of archetype interlopers who demand revenge for Oskar's previous transgressions. His late night swim is interrupted by the threat of his eye being cut out. Before these heinous acts could be executed his fellow vampire bodyguard quickly dispatches Oskar's transgressors. The perspective throughout this aquatic scene expands on the vision that this elderly child has the inane ability to end human life. Oskar relieved of his problems in the form of decapitations decides that this new friend is worth keeping. In this instant these two isolated worlds of questionable homosexuality and blood sucking delight are merged and these two distant individuals understand the hardships of such a lifestyle.

Vampires in appearance usually carry an aesthetic of opulence and charisma like the character of Dracula. The vampire in this film displays opposite tendencies in the form of visible imperfections and destitute attire. Her appearance relays the information of her obvious internal conflict of loneliness. She is unable to find a person who understands or accepts her flaws as both a human and a vampire. Oskar tries and ultimately succeeds in showing her his acceptance in terms of their isolated microcosms. This film manages to explore a very unique distant world of the supernatural without having to directly explain it. *Let the Right One In* tells a Romeo and Juliet story of the supernatural where the different parties deal with the harshness of the environments they are thrust into with the mutual acceptance of their obvious flaws.

## Film 12: Twilight

### Recensie 1

**Always love Twilight even if it wasn't a 10**, 21 November 2008



Author: [shellykpavon](#) from United States

... I really tried not to compare the book to movie because duh the book is always better besides that, like many other fans something was missing certain parts could have been cut out and added to the build up of the romanc. Yes i Know it was geared toward that tween age group but foolish for them to think only tweens were in love with Twilight.. I am in my twenty's and i expected more as a twilight obsesser i want to love it but it just wasn't there... If you didn't read the book i cant see someone appreciating it simply because its a twilight thing :) Well i think part problem is the director..bad translation...and Some bad acting! Still loved Edward n Bella's interaction if New Moon turns out like this ill be sleeping when Edwards away... Edward made the movie.. Was hoping for more Still left with a smile and thought it was cute but it should have dazzled me to the point of no compare... Im scared that New Moon Might not do as good because it wont draw out the non-readers, ratings might be a slump because there probably not twilighters! But as a loyal twilight fan i am still going to see it mulitple times!! I will review after i see it again i think it will be better. And Randomn Stephanie Meyer Moment eating pie

### Recensie 2

**Totally worth the cost of the ticket.**, 21 November 2008



Author: [mareserenitatis](#) from Wisconsin

As an avid fan of the Twilight saga, I was very nervous about the film adaptation of my favorite story about a girl and her vampire love, but the cast and crew of this movie did an absolutely amazing job. I don't think I ever could have anticipated a better, more loyal portrayal. I'm not going to say that the movie is a perfect adaptation of the book, because it's not. There are differences between the two, but I think that those differences are what makes the movie so amazing. The movie would have been incredibly boring if every aspect of the book had been translated to the screen. On the other hand, if some of the material that was added to the movie to enhance the story had also been in the book, I think it actually would have been more of a distraction. The side story of the evil vampires is crucial to the flow of the movie, but had no place in the book. I commend Melissa Rosenberg and Catherine Hardwicke for bringing the book to the screen in such a loyal fashion, and I have great admiration for the actors for portraying these much beloved characters in such a way that I can't wait for my next chance to see the movie. Above all, I think that Stephenie Meyers' amazing story has now been proved to be able to translate to a variety of mediums.

### Recensie 3

**Simply Amazing.....leave all pre-conceived notions at the door**, 21 November 2008



Author: [kismet does happen](#) from United States

Tonight I finally saw it, the movie we all have been waiting for finally came out, and to be honest at first when it finished I felt a little bit let down. Many of you have complained about the film, but I challenge you to try something. Many of us went to the midnight premiere or even opening weekend, the first time you see a movie you have been waiting for what seems like forever the only thing that you can think is "oh my god! I am finally seeing it!" Once that feeling goes away, devoted fans will be making comparisons of what they think the book goes like in their heads, each and every one with a different version. My challenge to you is, once you have seen it once, take the time to see it again before you make your "final judgment". The jitters of a first time see ruins hyped-up movies because you just can't wait to see it. Go to a showing next weekend or even during the week when there are not as many people there, take the time to sit back and appreciate what gift has been given to you, the fans. To create a movie that will fit everyone's vision of the book is absolutely impossible and it is selfish to think that your particular version of what you think is right will be on the screen. Loved the movie, perfectly cast, set it up perfectly for New Moon, especially for those who have not read the books...fans you will understand at the end of the movie.... Lastly, my advice is to love the books (of course!) but look at the movie separately, and love the movie. It's never going to be exactly what you want, but hey that's what your imagination is for! So go out, see this amazing film and enjoy, really enjoy!

### Recensie 4

**Movie does indeed have the heart of the book!**, 21 November 2008



Author: [Janice Miller](#) from United States

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

I just came home from a midnight showing where I have to say how pleased I am at the movie staying true to the Heart of the Book. It is not as good as the book, but what movie can be? You have 2 hours to tell several hundred pages. The phrases we know and love so well are all in the movie, there are jokes, plenty of action, and yes the love story between Edward & Bella. You see 1st hand the frustration that Edward experiences while trying to fight with himself on Bella smelling so good. You see Rosalie's expression of "I'm not sure I like you Bella" rings loud and clear. And Yes you see the love blossom between Edward and Bella. I think even those who have not read the book will enjoy this movie. Everyone thought this would be 13 year old girls, but at the movies tonight I saw teenage girls & boys, along with women who are in the 20'-60's. It is a show for everyone to see and enjoy. I have to say that all of the actors did a great job and I even caught Stephenie Meyer in the movie--yes it really was her. The director did a superb job and I hope she will do the same for the rest of the movies. If you can't imagine that there can be "good" vampires in this world, then you won't like any of the Twilight Saga. That is the great part, that they CAN overcome the monster and be

good, have a reason for being on this earth forever. I hope that those who see it and haven't read the books will want to read them. It is an exceptional fantasy and a delight to escape the world we live in. Isn't that the reason we go to a movie anyway? Thank you Stephenie for sharing this story with us. I love it and give books to everyone because I love to read and this movie is an excellent display of Hollywood bringing the books alive!

## Recensie 5

**The movie KILLED the story!**, 21 November 2008



Author: [dolphindreams2003](#) from United States

I absolutely hated this movie. I went in prepared and fully aware that it wasn't going to be like the book and that they were going to change it so it was more adaptable to the film. I didn't really have any high expectations, I just wanted to see some parts of it come to life or at least attempt to come to life. I was utterly "mouth dropping" disappointed. I don't know how Stephenie Meyer could have let this even happen to her precious story. There was no character construction, you didn't connect with the characters and this has nothing to do with casting for the actors. I don't even blame it on the director. THERE WAS NOOOOOOOOOO SUBSTANCE AT ALL!!! You didn't feel any connection with the love story. Events meshed in and clashed due to wrong timing and placement of scenes. Crucial scenes were left out for useless scenes ( field trip?!?!?!?) Even though the scenery was breathtaking they could have cut out at least 40 minutes of it to develop the storyline better. They killed the story. It was horrible just plain horrible. This was worse than adaptation of Harry Potter. I was disappointed when I first saw Harry Potter, even though I accepted that it would not be the same and still enjoyed the movie. This is on a whole new story. At least Harry Potter made you feel like it was the essence of the story still there just cut short. Twilight was just like seeing two strangers that have no real established connection no relationship (They don't even have a friendship) and then suddenly they are together and now they are trying to save this girl who doesn't even seem like is in that much danger to the very end. I laughed in some parts but then there were parts where it was not meant to be funny and they tried too hard to turn the situation into a comical moment.

Also the fact that inconsiderate fangirls were cheering for every useless pathetic scene in that movie didn't help to get into it. How can you call yourself a fan of the series if the essence of it was never even portrayed. Even if it wasn't close to the movie at least show some bonding of characters. I don't know how anyone who claims to be a fan of the book can enjoy this movie without cringing at the fact that they ruined the most basic story. Again, I am not talking about the actors' performance nor the directing. I'm talking about the beautiful aching and pain of the story. The soul of the story was never there.

Will not go to another premier of any further movies. Will consider going to other movies but only to go see some of the "story parts" being visualized. If you disagree, that is completely fine! To each their own! All I know is I love the book and will always love it but this movie killed me tonight!



## Film 13: Blood: The Last Vampire

### Recensie 1

**Definitely less than expected**, 10 July 2009



Author: [BigGuy](#) from United States

I just got back from seeing this movie and was disappointed. I actually knew relatively little about the movie aside from the plot synopsis going in, and still I was disappointed.

The more I think about the movie, the lower I have been setting the ranking. The acting was for the most part okay or sub-par: the main character, Saya, had one look, the sulking schoolgirl. Alice, the white girl side-kick seemed to do well, but have terrible direction, as if her character was never quite in the right mood for the scene.

The action scenes were pretty weak. School girl swings her sword and a demon gets cut in half and super CGI ichor comes out. Whole bunch of demons attack, girl swings her sword and a couple demons fall spurting CGI ichor. I don't need an action scene to be believable, but I do expect it to have life. There was one action scene that reminded me of old school ninja movies (which is actually a good thing) but for the most part the action was dull and little more than a series of decent stills strung together.

The writing was campy and sub-par. A number of scenes caused the audience to laugh because the dialog and scene as a whole just came across as ridiculous.

I think the best way to describe the movie is a Frenchman making an American movie from a Japanese script.

### Recensie 2

**Better than I expected.**, 11 July 2009



Author: [Katrina Rae](#) from United States

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

I finally got to see the one movie I have been waiting and counting the days for: BLOOD: The Last Vampire.

(SPOILERS WITHIN) Jeon Ji-Hyun, going by Gianna, was definitely the best thing about this movie. I couldn't believe that this was her first English movie and action movie. What amazes me even more is that she is Korean, but she spoke both English and Japanese so well, and was able to portray the correct emotions when speaking in languages foreign to her. This girl poured her blood, sweat, and tears into this role and it shows. Anyone who says her acting was bad needs to watch one of Paris Hilton's movies.

The action scenes were brilliantly choreographed. I loved Saya's fight in the alley, and I loved Kato's fighting in the forest; one of my favorite things about that fight, was when Saya just plowed through those demons with nothing really driving her but her grief and her desire to save the man who raised her.

People have complained about the script. I think they seemed to forget that this was a popcorn action flick. They almost seemed like they were expecting something so thought provoking. I don't really understand when they say "cheesy lines". The script was normal for this kind of movie. Watch the original anime movie and there isn't a lot of spoken dialogue. Both movies were meant to show off the action scenes, and they did their jobs very well.

I really don't understand why this movie has received so much negative criticism. Yes, the CGI demon was bad, but that was about it. It wasn't even that bad when it was moving/fighting. And the CGI blood? Even my 54-year-old mother understood the point of that was to show the difference between human blood and demon blood (which is black) In the scenes where some of the human characters were shot, they had normal blood splats.

Comparing the online bootleg I watched and what I saw here in an American cinema, things were very different. In the online bootleg, almost all of the really gory scenes were cut; from memory, Linda's head being sliced off, Saya splitting a guy in two, Saya cutting a guys neck and then kicking it off, Kato's fingers being sliced off. They also left out a scene where Onigen and her retainer were all dressed up and leaving the onsen. Koyuki's voice was also left intact.

In the version I saw here in the states, a huge goof happened right in the In the beginning; after Saya leaves the Council behind to clean up Saya's kill, we are shown her already at her hotel room, frantically downing a bottle of blood and she's already wearing her school uniform, which she hadn't received yet. We then see her walking to the hotel back in her normal clothes.

A scene during Saya's alley fight was completely cut out. It's the scene where she is fighting to big black demons with afro's. I'm assuming it was cut out for PC reasons, but I am kind of happy they did that just because there is a point in the scene where Saya jump kicks one of the demons in the neck, and it is so badly edited. I mean, think back to 50 and 60's fantasy/action movies and how fake the monsters looked when edited into the movie.

Another thing I am happy about is that either they dubbed Koyuki or she was brought back in to redo her lines. Her English was pretty bad, at some points not even being able to understand her.

One thing I am disappointed about is how small of a role they gave to Sharon, who was the main villain in the original anime. We don't even get to see how Saya took her out.

Ending this review, I have to say that I liked this movie even more than I thought I would. I would say I loved it, even. This is a movie that you have to see and judge for yourself, and take other opinions on the movie with a grain of salt; really, don't miss this movie just because of a few bad reviews (and hey! Ebert gave it a 3 out of 4 stars!)

### Recensie 3

**A major disappointment**, 11 July 2009



Author: [dbborroughs](#) from Glen Cove, New York

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

As a sort of chaser to the NYAFF I decided to wander into Manhattan and see the American release of the live action version of the original animated film of the same name. This is a Hong Kong, Japanese, French, Argentine co-production with a Korean lead, a French director and apparently shot in English. For my money it's as scatter-shot as its world wide origins.

The plot is reasonably close to the source, expanding it here and there in order to fill out the 95 minute running time. For those who haven't seen it, it concern Saya the last of the vampires, who works for a shadowy American agency hunting demons that stalk mankind. Saya is looking to find the big demon Oregon who killed her father centuries ago and take revenge. The film is set primarily in Japan in 1970 on a military base where the demon is thought to be hiding. Saya is put into a high school class in order to track down the monster and his minions. Some blood is spilled.

As exciting as the 45 minute short film is this adaptation is dull and boring. I was looking at my watch almost from the start as the legendary subway attack from the animation is redone pretty much as dully as you can imagine. The performances from much of the cast is stilted, even the usually good Gianna Jun (My Sassy Girl, Il Mare) seems at sea with a part that essentially has her brooding. I'm curious if some of the cast was dubbed since their delivery of the English lines seems off. The action sequences are dull and badly filmed and I was incredulous when I saw that they were staged by Corey Yuen, one of the best action directors and fight choreographers working today (He did Lethal Weapon 4, X-Men and The Transporter films). Did he phone it in or did they disregard what he did? The effects are part of the annoying trend to use CGI for the gore which gives the decapitations and slicing and dicing an unreal effect that breaks any spell the story creates.

This is a huge disappointment for me, since I really had high hopes for the film based on the trailer. I'd wait for home video or do what I did, catch a really early bargain matinée which was about the price of a rental.

### Recensie 4

**Better then I though!!!**, 11 July 2009



Author: [julian\\_tash](#) from San Francisco

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

When I first heard that Jeon Ji Hyun was going to make a Hollywood movie i was a bit nervous. I thought it was a bad idea but then i decided to give her a chance. I saw Blood: The Last Vampire this evening and I was pleasantly surprised. I mean the only real complaint was the CGI monsters and the

CGI blood. I mean i know that the demons and humans were supposed to be different but why not just use the Tarantino method, i know it was supposed to be hyper real, but it would have looked so much better if they used "old school" tricks. Also the CGI demons...no excuse, i would have rather scene someone in a rubber suit.

Other then that it was well worth the wait and my cash. I thought it had good atmosphere and i thought that Jeon Ji Hyun acted well and she was looking sexy as ever. I mean she didn't have much to work with and I think she did a really awesome job. I think that if you're fans of comics or anime you may enjoy this. Also if you're a fan of Jeon Ji Hyun(Like me) then you will like this. It is not Oscar winning stuff, but its fun. I cannot wait for the DVD.

## Recensie 5

**I hope Saya wakes from her 30 year sleep to bitch slap the writers**, 19 July 2009



Author: [dcvanw](#) from Wisconsin, U.S.

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

Oi! Where do I start? I was tricked into thinking they were going to follow the storyline from the opening scene-same as the 45 minute short anime film. Looked good. Then I saw they took some liberties with the story line by introducing the general's daughter, and lacking greatly with the special effects during the scene at the school. Definitely not as creepy as the anime. There were scenes that were definitely familiar, but the Red Shield guy(Saya's government appointed protector) was replaced by the general's daughter, and the story went south big time.

The special effects of the vamps(called chiropterans in the movie and series) was God-awful. Very low budget and fake looking. And the action sequences with Saya and the monster-looking vamps was fake,even where Saya was concerned. It looked like someone got busy with the photo shop or something. Not kidding! From the people who did Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon-I expected a lot more. At least a tangible storyline.

Saya isn't even a full vampire in this story-she's like a Japanese Blade equivalent. Only half. And the story reminded me a lot of Blade in many respects-half vampire trying to stay as human as possible so they can slay the evil vampires and redeem one's self.

I do believe in creative license, and wouldn't have minded changes to the story if they didn't outright butcher it. The rewrite wasn't even that good, and didn't hold my interest at all. There were no twists and turns concerning Saya's origins. Never explained her blood was a poison, though they showed her giving some to a vamp after slicing it open. The chiropterans were just ordinary vampires, not genetic experiments. They took the science completely out.

If you've never seen Blood: The Last Vampire anime, I guess you might not be as disappointed as someone who has, but it's not worth the \$20 you plop down with your friends to go see it. Rent it, maybe, when it hits the old release section and you can rent it for \$1. What a waste of time! But

better, get a hold of the original and download the series Blood+, which is the rest of Saya's story. So much more engrossing, original, and entertaining.

## Film 14: Bakjwi (Thirst)

### Recensie 1

one of a handful of vampire films to treat it as a disease, 1 August 2009



Author: [Jack Gattanella \(whiplashfilm@gmail.com\)](mailto:whiplashfilm@gmail.com) from United States

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

The great thing about Thirst, Chanwook Park's latest film, is that it's the anti-Twilight. Some of you may take that as a minus, but in reality it's a big plus. Park takes the method of vampirism seriously, and as well the torrid love story between Sang-hyeon and Tae-Joo. We see the conflicts of both of the characters- Sang-hyeon being a priest who undergoes a medical experiment that, unbeknownst to him, turns him into a sickly but true-blue vampire, and Tae-Joo with her mother and "idiot" brother, the latter is killed by Sang- as in a very strong melodrama. There's nothing terribly weepy or insipid with the story and characters at any point, and the implications put forth from religion early on (Sang, for example, is seen as a healer of sorts since he rose from the dead thanks to his vampirism, even as he just can't be that and knows it) on top of those about good vs evil, push it up into another plane cinematically.

That Thirst also rises up to the awesome standard of artistry that Park has displayed with Oldboy, Lady Vengeance and the underrated I'm a Cyborg but That's OK, should be taken as a given. Thirst is a film with a juicy narrative and bizarre suburban characters, and is shot and edited with an eye for a mood that is part satiric, part romantic/erotic, part dramatic and lastly fantastical. And it doesn't always treat vampirism as something of a simple horror movie set-up (though as a horror movie Park has more than his share of scary scenes). It's more akin to the movie Near Dark which never mentioned the word vampire but let you know it was, and treated it with sincerity and a kind of lucid track of attention, and that the disease itself and its effect on a person's existence is perhaps scarier than the killings or bloodshed. Once you see one vampire jump up really high or heal its wounds, you've seen em' all.

Thirst also has a wicked sense of humor, much like Oldboy, only here with a bite (pun intended) meant to emphasize bizarre physical states of being. An example of this can be found with the Priest's predilection of sucking off of blood from people in comas by taking their blood tube and suckling on it on the floor. Or the manner in which Tae-Joo holds on to one scrap of humanity by keeping her mother alive, even as she's had something like a stroke and can only blink her eyes and tap one finger as a means of reacting to the blood-suckers who've brought pain and horror to her home. But these moments are like icing on the cake to make it a complete experience. What makes Thirst last in the mind is how elements come together, of drama and existential pains, of a Bunuelian-surreal sense of Catholicism (I especially loved the dynamic between Sang-hyeon and the other priest who gives his arm up for blood-sucking but really wants to be a vampire too), and of the

erotic: the scenes where the priest finally gives in to Tae-Joo are incredible in their pace and length of shots and how real it gets. Not in a pornographic manner, but in the sense of these characters' release and escape, which doesn't last long over the scope of the story.

If it's not as great as Oldboy, it's not something to carp about. Not all films Chanwook Park directs will reach the stature of his masterpiece (and, at the least, he'll always be known as the man who directed that movie). But Thirst is an excellent addition to his oeuvre, and to the serious streak of vampire movies in general. The film-making is crisp and exciting and even dangerous (and what a white room of 'daylight' the characters live in!), the humor is dark and hilarious, the acting is intense and moody- especially from subtle strokes from Song Kang-ho and the quirky evil and surprising vulnerability from Kim OK-vin, and the ending, when it does finally get there, is one of those truly superb vampire-movie endings you'll be talking about for years, in a good way. In a battle between Thirst and Twilight, Thirst takes the knock-out in the first round. Between Let the Right One In or Near Dark, it's tougher to call. 9.5/10

## Recensie 2

**Romance, Religion, Madness, and lots of slurping**, 21 August 2009



Author: [tjackson](#) from Boston. MA

Not for the squeamish, but the number of twists, inventive uses of situations using vampire mythology, gorgeous visual extremes, together with interesting and quirky characters make this one of the most stunning horror films I've ever seen. It descends into utter madness along with characters, but never seems exploitative or horrific without purpose. There are copious amounts of bloodletting accompanied by some nasty sucking and squishing sounds, but also subtle moments where you laugh out loud. As he tends to do, Chan-wook Park keeps you off center with leaps in time and plot and situation that you have to fill in for yourself forcing your involvement in the story and characters.

And there's a lot of literal leaping. Keeping in the vein of vampire myth (pun intended), they have superhuman strength and can nearly leap tall buildings in a single bound (to coin a phrase). The first time our heroine is carried by the across the tops of buildings by the troubled vampire priest, it has all the magical romance of Lois Lane and Superman - but this romance becomes increasingly disturbing - but driven by a strange and conflicted 'love affair' not by mere horror.

The acting is superb, particularly OK-vin Kim, the gorgeous actress in the female lead role who, at 22, shows a range that is remarkable. The character borders on a kind of black widow film noir type. She careens from innocent to impish to vixen to demon with utter conviction. This is a really smooth and nervy performance.

If you love real art in horror, or are a fan of Oldboy - don't wait for the video, see it immediately.

### Recensie 3

**A New Masterpiece**, 25 August 2009



Author: [esung-1](#) from United States

After watching Oldboy I went on to watch Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance and Sympathy for Lady Vengeance, needless to say I found much enjoyment in all three of these movies.

Thirst is very different from its former films because it is not quite about revenge...it takes the genre of Vampire/Thriller and pushes it to new levels, both in its artistic nature and its refreshing storyline.

Every scene throughout this film was obviously meticulously and painstakingly shot, giving the movie an overall beautiful texture with lustrous backdrops and great shots.

The length of the movie, around 2:30, might seem a bit long but there is not a single boring moment during the entirety of the film. The reason for this is because the movie itself is basically divided into three different sub-plots, the theme for the first is about faith, the 2nd is about guilt, and the third is about the paradox of the correlation of love, betrayal, and inevitability.

There are several gritty scenes of sex and gore, but this is most definitely NOT an action or thriller flick, this movie is very human, focusing on the irony of happiness.

Unfortunately the only lacking part of this film is its music, not that it has bad music, but after the masterful thematic music in Oldboy and Sympathy for Lady Vengeance it was hard not to notice that the music was not quite up to par (simply because it was almost unnoticeable, in Oldboy it is impossible not to get emotionally involved through the musical scores).

But what it lacked in music, it compensated more than enough with the thoroughness and beauty of the movie itself. A true masterpiece of cinematography, it will be very hard to top this film. The unrelenting depth and mind-numbing emotions of "Thirst" trashes Hollywood.

Subtitles are slightly lacking (since I can understand Korean), but were done as best as possible.

### Recensie 4

**Park delivers another incredible film**, 15 November 2009



Author: [chrimsawin](#) from United States

The cinematography is the film's shining feature. Park really knows his stuff when it comes to shooting memorable scenes from behind a camera. Every shot is filled with vibrant colors that leap off of the screen. Every frame of the film seems to tell a story all on its own. I hope there's a Blu-ray release of this film because it will look fantastic. It's rather intriguing to see which elements of the vampire mythology Park used for his vision. Sang-hyeon has to drink blood to survive and to stay

looking flawless, has incredible strength, and is vulnerable to sunlight. He doesn't, however, have fangs and also has a reflection in the mirror.

Although I've never seen the film, I couldn't help but feel like this was Chan-wook Park's version of Twilight. The entire middle portion of the film is devoted to Sang-hyeon's and Tae-Joo's love for one another. It felt like the adult version of Twilight, really. There's a lot of blood, nudity, sex, and even a few obscenities thrown in for good measure. Maybe it's the Chan-Wook Park fanboy in me, but I honestly feel like I can guarantee that this is the better film of the two. The psychological aspect that I love about Park's previous films is in Thirst, as well. That's a major factor for me as any film that causes me to think or is unusual in any way winds up becoming a fan favorite. The soundtracks to Park's films always seem to fit its respective film like a glove. Thirst is no exception. While the soundtrack is a bit more subtle this time around, it fit the overall atmosphere of the film rather effortlessly.

The middle portion of the film did seem to drag on longer than everything else in the film. It's weird though as the scenes during that time are crucial to the storyline of the film and it's hard to imagine Thirst being the same film if any of those scenes were cut. Nevertheless, it is my one nitpick of the film.

Chan-wook Park bites into the vampire mythology with Thirst and puts his own dark, psychological twist on it. Park's films always seem to have a specific formula or include most of the following: great writing, beautiful cinematography, a solid cast, some sort of psychological twist that'll mess with your head, and a memorable ending. Thirst delivers on all fronts and will hopefully get more of the attention it deserved during its theatrical run on DVD (and eventually Blu-ray, hopefully).

## Recensie 5

**Every bit as good as the Vengeance trilogy**, 22 November 2009



Author: [zetes](#) from Saint Paul, MN

From the director of Oldboy comes this slick vampire flick. Kang-ho Song stars as a priest who is accidentally changed into a vampire while being cured of a deadly, mysterious virus. His vampirism and priesthood are quite at conflict, but he is able to survive by robbing the hospital's blood bank and unconscious patients who might not mind some siphoned blood. Because of his supposedly miraculous survival, he comes into the lives of Ha-kyun Shin's family. Shin has cancer, and his mother believes that Song can cure it. Unfortunately, Song's vampirism raises his levels of lust to a height where he can't help but fall for Shin's young wife, OK-vin Kim. Kim is intensely interested in the world of vampirism, and the two become lovers. The film from there goes in weird directions that I think one should experience for themselves. What really should be mentioned is Chan-wook Park's mastery of the medium of cinema. My God, I've rarely seen such a masterful visual artist at the peak of his powers. The major flaw of the film is that it's a little incoherent, especially near the beginning. Park is interested in telling his stories mostly in the visuals, which can be difficult to follow at times. But when it works, man, does it fly. The film is also perversely hilarious. The final sequence, easily



one of the best of the decade, is simultaneously heartbreaking and delightfully ridiculous. OK-vin Kim should become a worldwide star after this film. She gives one of the best performances of the year.

## Film 15: Cirque du Freak: The Vampire's Assistant

### Recensie 1

**The Vampire's Assistant**, 23 October 2009



Author: [myboo1210](#) from United States

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

Well, when i was going to see this movie, i had really high hopes that it would match up with the books at least MOST of the time... which it did, for at least the first half of the movie. they pretty much crammed the first book into the first half of the movie. up until the digging-up of Darren's "grave", the movie matched the book very well. Then, it seemed that the people who wrote the script for the movie and the director wanted to rush the movie (a bit TOO much) to cram in the first three books worth of info. not to mention, they introduced a new character (the monkey girl) into the story, and she wasn't even IN the book series, and also replaces one of the principal characters in the books. also, in the book series, the first meeting between Darren and Steve after Darren is blooded shouldn't have been that dramatic and should NOT have led to a fight. ALSO, the fight with Murlaugh was supposed to take place in the sewers of the city where Larten grew up. the fight should NOT have been in the theater. and Darren's family was NOT supposed to become involved, because they HAD to think he was dead! in my opinion, the directors should have just used the first TWO books, so they would have had more time to buff up some of the more important details and plug up some of the plot holes.

other than that... awesome movie, i really loved it

### Recensie 2

**Not a bad movie at all, and quite entertaining, even if flawed....**, 24 October 2009



Author: [donjokat-kat](#) from United States

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

Now I am a fan of the book series, and for book fans out there I can tell you that they changed a lot, took out a lot of the subtleties (it's patently obvious that Mr. Tiny is controlling Darren and Steve's lives the whole time, rather than a hidden thing revealed at the end like in the books), moved the plot forward, eliminated Debbie and replaced her with a monkey-girl, made his parents awful, etc....and for non-book fans, the plot can seem a little muddled at times, and the main actor who plays Darren is frankly a terrible actor, even if he looks the part....

And yet, it's still quite an enjoyable film, full of lots of laughs (especially from John C. Reilly, who is brilliant and a riot as Mr. Crepsley, it is worth watching this movie just for him alone!) and fun and colorful characters and an interesting story--enough of the books is retained for book fans like me to feel warm and fuzzy recalling them (this is no "Ella Enchanted" or "The Dark is Rising" abomination), and overall I think it's worth seeing. Everyone in the theater with me was laughing many times throughout the film, and besides the main kid everyone gave a great performance--Salma Hayek, the kid who plays Steve, William Dafoe, Patrick Fugit, the list goes on....

So in all, a decent film worth watching, and which I hope does well enough for a sequel...

### Recensie 3

**Vampires Assistant: Help needed Apply now**, 25 October 2009



Author: [MovieZoo](#) from United States

Here we go again...

A luscious looking trailer with promises of cinematic pleasure. Silky and sinister, the lighting and color make you believe there is some serious attention to the cinematography. Mixed with some great, clever lines delivered by preposterously quirky looking characters that no one in a non-freaky state of mind would want to meet in an alley, dark or otherwise, high expectations were created for dark spoof. And so, we get high levels of disappointment. The trailer shows only good parts, so that means someone knows what's good and bad. So if that someone is smart enough to recognize the bad parts and leave them out of the trailer, why weren't they smart enough to fix the bad parts in the movie? I give high marks for the acting from the seasoned performers, the special effects, and the darker backgrounds. The story, while I thought it had a great chance in the beginning, became far too convoluted. The one-liners, while often hitting the funny bone at the right time, were sometimes too clumsy and just plain wrong! Not even garlic and silver bullets would help.

The surreal naivety of the everyday non-freaks was bizarre to say the least but often fed the need for darker material. However, Steve and Darren were hard to stay with as their acting was school play quality. While I am sure they were following direction, their performances really killed the allure of this movie.

Again, I feel potential greatness in this movie is diminished by the lack of attention to the same kind of care that the trailer got. I am puzzled on one more thing. How can the greater actors be used to show their skills so beautifully, and yet the rest of the package around these wonderful actors be treated with so little respect? Sooooo disappointing...

4 of 10

## Recensie 4

**A Fun and Hilarious Vampire Movie, but Somewhat Disappointing.**, 25 October 2009



Author: [Gamesmacker](#) from United States

A very vampire and monster inspired movie aimed for teens, Vampire's Assistant doesn't try to be anything it's not. It's a fun movie that keeps it's audience entertained with a good storyline and somewhat elusive plot. The more you discover in plot, the more you want to know, which is the movie best quality.

The supporting cast sports a number of well known actors, all of whom make this movie something special. John C Reilly gives possibly his best performance in a movie ever, and it was nice to see him doing something else other than be Will Ferrel's silly side kick. He plays the funny, yet mostly mysterious vampire. Ken Watanabe and Selma Hayac also give inspired performances that aren't necessarily important, but add charm none the less. Every different character offers something unique in the movie, from attributes too personality.

This is where my real gripe with this movie comes into play. The actor Chris Massoglia, who plays the main character Darren Shan, offers up nothing to this movie. He presents some of the most emotionless and bland acting in a movie, and shows no emotion for anything. He doesn't get sad, angry, happy, surprised, etc. He delivers every line with a flat monotone voice. He looks even worse next to his veteran co-stars who play much more imaginative characters. Watching him in this movie is like watching paint dry while at a concert. Everyone around you has fun and excitement while you are forced to watch the paint in the middle of it.

Overall, the atmosphere and sound was excellent. The camera angles were for the most part good, and set the tone. The special effects were done impressively and fit well into the movie. Some of the cuts were a little off, and the fire fades were a little tacky but stylish. I would recommend seeing it around Halloween time with friends and family. It doesn't disappoint in comedy, mystery, or entertainment.

## Recensie 5

**Targeted for teens but still entertaining for adults**, 27 October 2009



Author: [EricShirey](#) from United States

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

It's very easy these days to dismiss any film based on a successful young adult book series as just a studio's attempt to throw something up against the wall that could effectively begin a franchise and seeing if it sticks. You have every right to be suspicious of that, based upon the number of fantasy books that have tried it and been mostly unsuccessful - The Seeker, The Golden Compass, Narnia, The Spiderwick Chronicles, The Bridge to Terabithia, Eragon, and the list could go on and on and on. I

mean, let's be honest. When you see the trailer for Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief and realize that the same guy that kick-started the Harry Potter franchise is directing it, you kind of feel like the studios are really getting desperate to try to launch something new in the genre to continue to milk it. Almost like their trying to get lightning (pun intended) to strike twice or more times in the same place. I'm sure that's what everyone is thinking about this adaptation of Darren Shan's Cirque du Freak series of books.

It probably doesn't help that the movie features vampires that don't have fangs and seem to have an Interview with a Vampire theme of the main bloodsucker not wanting to kill humans and be a good guy. Believe me, I'm getting tired of that just as much as you are. But that's pretty much where the comparisons end here. All the other vampire's featured in the film definitely have a lust for human blood and the main bad guy, Murlough, actually files his teeth into fangs. This is also not just a story about fighting vampires. Yes, the main conflict in the film is between two groups of the bloodthirsty undead, but there are many different types of characters that we run into on our way through the film. You've got Patrick Fugit as a snake-boy, Salma Hayek as a bearded lady with psychic powers, Tom Woodruff, Jr. as the Wolfman, Orlando Jones as a guy with his skin missing and his ribs exposed, and an extremely evil fellow that seems to play everyone against each other to get what he wants named Mr. Tiny. He seems to have some kind of bizarre magical powers that weren't completely explained.

Just with the names above, you can see that there was no expense spared in pulling together a pretty impressive ensemble cast. Then add to that Willem Dafoe as a rather eccentric acting vampire and a very unexpected John C. Reilly as the freak show vampire Larten Crepsley. Reilly really delivers in the role, being witty and slightly scary in the as Crepsley. He almost veers completely off his normal path of the idiot friend or relative that he has paved for himself by being in Stepbrothers, Talladega Nights, and Walk Hard. The reason I say almost is he still retains a sense of humor, but just not THAT kind of humor.

The film does a really good job of staying dark and not compromising what I feel the director was trying to accomplish with the atmosphere and adaptation by watering it down and making it overly "safe" for tweens and a younger audience. The villains, Mr. Tiny and Murlough, have a lot to do with the dark tone of the film. They are both quite frightening and detestable to look at. There's also some more adult-oriented language that you don't usually get in these types of movies.

Sometimes, it sort of feels like the director and writers had to "paraphrase" or shove in some little parts to fit them in to the film. Sort of like something was going to be important to mention in this one if there ever is a sequel. You could really feel it at the end, as it seemed like they were giving you visual footnotes for something that could be coming in the future.

I found Cirque du Freak: The Vampire's Assistant to be a pretty enjoyable film. It had a darkly comic and sarcastic vibe that many of the films based on these types of books seem to miss. I haven't read every book of every film that has been made from a young-adult series, but this movie definitely seemed to be rooted a little bit more in the reality and attitude of teenagers and the way they act and live together. Will this be one of those times where the movie will make enough money for the studio to kick off a new franchise? Who knows. Odds are against it, but you can never stop hoping.

## Film 16: Daybreakers

### Recensie 1

**Surprisingly good movie**, 8 January 2010



Author: [xStewieGriffin](#) from United States

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

As the title suggests, I had seen previews on TV for the movie and thought it looked OK. Nothing too bad but nothing I'd bust out to go see either. I was very pleasantly surprised by this film. I will not be writing a summary of the movie, as I feel you should see the movie first, then read what people are analyzing out of it. Instead, I'll lightly touch on some of the abstract points of the movie.

The cinematography in the movie is very good. There are a lot of scenes where the director could have gone to cheesy quick-cuts of action so you don't know what is happening. Instead the film actually slows down on some parts, extending the action and giving the audience time to thoroughly see what is happening. The acting in the film is good, not great, but you can't expect "Shawshank Redemption" from a vampire movie. Strictly rating it from within the genre, the acting is very good. The characters are believable with a minimal appearance of overused, cliché' lines. The graphics in the movie are above average. The fire when the vampires are exposed to daylight is the one thing that keeps it from being great. It is hard to demonstrate real burning on a computer model, and this film doesn't completely fail, but it's not so radically realistic that you believe the actors are on fire. Personally I'd have rather seen stunt people actually being set on fire as opposed to the CG, but either way this isn't a point that will ruin your movie going experience. The gore in the movie is quite good, showing much more than I would have expected. There is one scene at the end that is remarkably good and somewhat reminds me of a dark comedy because of the amount of detail in the shot and the irony of what is happening.

8/10 acting 9/10 cinematography 8/10 plot

I'd recommend seeing this movie in theaters so that more films with this quality can be funded.

### Recensie 2

**New Moon take a break, it's all about Daybreakers right now.**, 8 January 2010



Author: [nflores342](#) from United States

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

Vampires seem to have been put on steroids in the last decade, both in literature and movies. Take the whole twilight series, I'm a fan, but i'm an underworld girl through and through. Now you can consider me a Daybreaker chick too. In the beginning it was all about Anne Rice and Steven King type Vampires. You know the great sex appeal mixed with the danger. Well not in Kings case, that was just

straight up horror. But vampires in twilight, and the likes are all about one thing. Romance. Don't get me wrong romance here and there blends well with vampire flicks, most vamps are sex on a stick. But Now it seems to be all about the "Bella and Edward" type romance. But when one thinks of vampires the first thing that comes to mind is not romance or even sex. Its blood. Then vampire powers, then the looks, finally some sex, and hell maybe a decent relationship. But vampire flicks have lost there vampire touch. We the viewers don't want a crap load of romance. We want action, blood, and more blood. The exploding vamp is a good thing to throw in there too. Daybreakers is a really great fresh new take on vampires. A future where everyone is a vampire would not have occurred to most. There really was no bad parts(well for me there is, i'm a chick and there is one mighty cute vamp in there, doesn't end well.lol) if I had to pick one bad thing, it would be that the movie was to short. The graphics were fantastic, if it had been 3-d the audience would have been covered in blood. there is enough action to call it a vamp flick, but mainly a vamp sci-fi flick. Blood lots of blood, fantastic. The vampires, looked like vampires. Finally none of that twilight crap. They have fangs!!!! Thank the lord. and hey guess what there is a little romance, not much but enough to sate the vamp girls love lust. so all in all a fun, bloody vamp flick, that exceeds my expectations. and hey all you twilighters, Edwards in the movie. who would have thought.

### Recensie 3

**An eerily presented dystopian future in a fun, gory movie that will succeed at creeping you out and making you laugh**, 8 January 2010



Author: [Ginger Earle](#) from United States

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

The primary goal of a film is to elicit emotion. Daybreakers did an amazing job at this. I was so disturbed by the film that I had to take a walk outside in the sunshine after seeing it to calm my nerves. I'm no lightweight when it comes to dark movies or horror films, I frequently watch them alone, I had no problem swimming after seeing Jaws, or going home and turning out the lights after Paranormal Activity, but this movie got under my skin in a way most other horror movies have failed to do. For that alone, I give the filmmakers a huge amount of credit and classify it as a great movie.

The other awesome thing about it was Willem Dafoe.

The previews, while quite intriguing, didn't even hint at how funny he would be. He lent an amazing amount of charm, comic relief and wit to what would have otherwise been a too depressingly dark movie. Ethan Hawke was fine, but he was, as his character demanded, so whiny and self-loathingly tortured and brooding that if it weren't for Willem Dafoe the movie would have been a complete downer.

I'm a sucker for vampire movies (pun intended), and I also find post-apocalyptic movies fascinating. The premise alone of this film was enough to make me want to see it, and I was pleasantly surprised at how well the Spierig brothers brought this imagined future to life. The special effects weren't perfect, but they weren't bad enough to be distracting. The makeup was great, and all of the actors

did a good job. The filmmakers didn't spare any detail and took their time painting the picture of the brave new world that might exist if we had all become vampires-the school zone time was changed from 2:00 AM-3:00 AM, everyone chain smoked, since lung cancer was no longer a concern, and cars were equipped with special shields to allow the vampires to go cruising during the day. The dark utopia presented at the beginning of the film was fascinating enough, and the way the story unfolded kept me on the edge of my seat, with what were sometimes predictable turns that nonetheless worked and served to continually challenge the hero. There were no dull moments and nothing came easy. It also offered some interesting, though not wholly original, social commentary on class warfare, the use of limited resources, and how quickly a society can turn on its own once it allows itself to classify certain people as outsiders.

#### Recensie 4

**Better than expected, really!**, 9 January 2010



Author: [crimson.crescent@ymail.com](mailto:crimson.crescent@ymail.com) from MA, United States

For some reason I went in there expecting a B+ movie at best, but what I got was much more pleasant. First of all, let me say I am happy to see a vampire movie in theaters that I was both enticed to go see and happy there were no tween girls losing their minds over it. Now that that's out of the way, Daybreakers takes place in the year 2019, where 95% of the human population of the planet are now vampires. They are civilized (sort of, anyway) and do many of the same things humans do now. Society is now 95% nocturnal, and everything from food to toothpaste is geared toward a vampiric society. There are ads on train station walls with vampires with pearly white teeth, and the average vampire drinks his coffee with some blood in it. The movie's main character is named Edward Dalton, a hematologist tasked with finding a suitable blood substitute for the Bromley Marks Pharmaceutical Company. The movie shows a dwindling supply of pure, human blood, since only 5% of the population are still human. The movie from there spirals out of control to one wild ride that you'll enjoy from beginning to end. The Spierig brothers should prove to be a great directing duo to watch for in the near future. They're both talented storytellers, and this movie is definitely worth your money. The movie's all-star cast of Ethan Hawke, Sam Neill and Willem Dafoe make this an awesome movie that you will enjoy through and through.

#### Recensie 5

**Daybreakers**, 9 January 2010



Author: [Scarecrow-88](#) from United States

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

You know as a horror fan, I really don't demand too much. I was hungry for a horror film with some originality, an inspired story, some chills, and effective grisly gore. Daybreakers delivered to me all I wanted in a vampire movie. While it does carry certain traditional vampire traits(..no reflection in the

mirror, stake through the heart, sunlight, and beheadings kill them, and the incredible need to satiate their blood-thirst), thankfully, some interesting and refreshing ideas have been included in this film. In 2019, humans are the desired source of nourishment for an overpopulation of vampires. The only humans left in existence are either on the run and hiding out the best they can, or placed in "farms", their blood slowly depleted as they remain alive, bound in containment chambers to be bleed from. A corporation led by Sam Neill(..and devious, cold-blooded, and cruel as one could possibly ask for in a villainous corporate fiend)is supposedly working on a substitute for blood before the supply runs out and the vampire race become grotesque, winged, uncivilized carnivorous creatures. Scientist Ethan Hawke, sympathetic to the humans and turned by his own brother against his will, works diligently to find the cure for vampirism which causes his species' voracious appetite. We see that the city for which Neill's organization works is rather like a hi-tech, corporate, commercially-driven metropolis, but the civility is starting to deteriorate and crumble as blood becomes far more scarce, and in stronger demand. Also the monsters that vampires, without the blood they need to survive, are evolving into, continue to grow in number, even finding their way into the security-heavy, privileged suburban areas(..a frightening sequence in Hawke's own home is an example of this)and in subways underneath the city. Hawke, who loathes his kind's willingness to hunt and kill humans for their blood, so desperately desires to end this once and for all..that is when he uncovers Willem Dafoe, a former vampire who has somehow transformed back into human form. Claudia Carvan has a great feature role as a heroine human leader for the humans whose cause is to return the human race to a role of prominence without fear and to find a legitimate cure for vampirism;she also becomes a love interest for Hawke who confides in her.

The Brothers Spierig assemble a top notch cast, anchored by the always dependable Hawkes, and don't forget to bring us gorehounds the carnage we crave, an all-out assault when vampires feast on humans, and some truly horrifying sequences where vampires are burned alive entering the sunlight. There's some potent drama, particularly a tragic situation that develops when Neill is able to recover his human daughter, and his decision to turn her despite her pleas to remain as she is. Also, we see the relationship between Hawke and his soldier brother(..who hunts humans for his species)as their loyalties divide them, with devastating results. Perhaps the conclusion is predictable, but there's enough bloodshed and violence to perhaps please vampire fans. The way to a cure(..actually using sunlight, what typically kills vampires)is a most interesting concept the Spierigs establish in their script. Thankfully, unlike recent horror flicks, the camera work is stable, not all jumpy and jerky, and while there is some CGI work(..yes, some blood is obviously created by the computer), we get plenty of practical grue(..some awesome head gags and flesh wounds). One of my favorite sequences has a patient, who agrees to be a guinea pig for Hawke and his fellow scientist's experiments, reacts negatively, with the result being a body explosion. As has happened in more modern vampire horror, when they are staked, they go explode into ash. Some good vampire neck-biting as well. Oh, and there's an imaginative reaction that occurs when vampires bite humans who were once turned, that is put to impressive use(..and contributes to the power of the finale as a brave choice is made to save lives).



## Film 17: Let Me In

### Recensie 1

**One of the most accurate and well-written horror remakes in recent years.**, 1 October 2010



Author: [chrimsawin](#) from United States

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

Let the Right One In was one of the most talked about films of 2008. Even outside the horror community, critics and moviegoers alike were raving how the film breathed new life into the tired vampire genre. While the Swedish film certainly had its moments and told a pretty amazing story, it wasn't quite as exceptional as everyone made it out to be. When word came that Cloverfield director Matt Reeves would be remaking the film for American audiences, there was a massive amount of skepticism. You've probably heard the complaints about remakes before. How they're never as good as the original and are only done to make a quick buck. Well Hollywood may have pulled a fast one on you and is set to release a remake that's actually worth seeing for once.

The trickiest part when handling a remake like this is what the writers, directors, and anyone else behind the scenes decide to change in comparison to the original film. If they change too much then people complain that it strayed too far from the original, but if they change too little then people claim it's too similar to the original and that it was pointless to remake in the first place. They've got to find a balance; add just the right amount of different and new material while maintaining a film that follows in the same footsteps of whatever it was based on. Let Me In just does that.

Let Me In is actually at its strongest during the scenes where it ventures away from the 2008 film. Just about any scene that takes place in a car is spectacular, especially during one particular scene where things don't go exactly as planned. There's also a scene where Abby attacks a jogger in a tunnel that's pretty brutal. These added scenes didn't take anything away from the already well-established story, but actually managed to add depth to these characters a good portion of the people seeing this are already familiar with. Considering most Hollywood remakes, this is well worth mentioning. Let Me In at least deserves credit for pulling off something like that.

There are several alterations to the story that may put off some who were Let the Right One In enthusiasts. Oskar and Eli are now Owen and Abby and the film now takes place in New Mexico rather than Stockholm. Some of the more memorable scenes in the film didn't make quite as much of an impact as they did in Let the Right One In. Virginia being exposed to sunlight and the pool scene at the end of the film being the two biggest examples. It's not that those particular scenes weren't done well, but they just felt too similar or maybe weren't quite different enough to distinguish them in comparison to the original. That's probably my biggest complaint with the film overall. If you've seen Let the Right One In, then you know how everything turns out. That's a pretty obvious statement dealing with a remake, but knowing that going in really seemed to hurt the experience overall.

Let Me In definitely deserves to be held in high regard as one of the best horror remakes in recent years and perhaps ever. Its newly added material blends in nicely into an already well-written

vampire story. It just felt like the film could have been even stronger if it was a bit more unpredictable. Nevertheless, its wonderful cast, enticing storyline, and eye-catching camera work will satisfy just about any moviegoer and is a surprisingly strong horror film to be released this late in the year.

## Recensie 2

**Innocence Dies. Abby Doesn't**, 1 October 2010



Author: [moviewizguy](#) from United States

An alienated 12-year-old boy befriends a mysterious young newcomer to his small New Mexico town, and discovers an unconventional path to adulthood. (Overture Films)

Ignore the marketing for the film. LET ME IN is not an action-oriented horror film. Those who have seen the original Swedish film, LET THE RIGHT ONE IN, would already know this. What LET ME IN is, is a thoughtful, harrowing, and heartfelt journey of a boy who befriends a girl who just happens to be a vampire. It's like a romance with horror elements. LET ME IN takes what made the original film so special, that is, the relationship between the two kids, Owen and Abby, and puts a lens focus on it. This, I say cautiously, is why I believe LET ME IN is the better of the two. In fact, the film puts less emphasis on the adult supporting characters and more focus on the young in the film. You don't even get to see Owen's mother's face!

Ironically, the film is also more violent than the original film, but I guess that's due to the fact that most American horror films usually have gallons of blood. To those who are cautious about seeing the film, yes, LET ME IN plays out in a similar way like the original film (with some events switched together), but the atmosphere between the two couldn't be any more different! It's like you're watching a similar but different film. Get what I'm saying? Also, there are some different scenes to this remake, some for the better, including a brilliantly-shot car accident sequence. The bullying aspect of the film is also amped up considerably, which adds more emphasis of a threat for Owen.

The two child leads, Kodi Smit-McPhee and Chloe Moretz, do a terrific job in their roles. Smit-McPhee does great playing the confused, hurt, lonely boy while Moretz does well as the sweet but monstrous vampire lurking within. Richard Jenkins also plays a sympathetic but very conflicted character. Dylan Minnette pulls off a convincing role as the lead villain, especially the fact that I last seen him playing a sweet and an emotionally wounded son in the TV show, LOST.

Director and screenwriter Matt Reeves also does a fantastic job. The film clearly shows that he has high respect for the original source, whether it's the book or the Swedish film. The cinematography is very beautiful as well. I loved the use of blurry images in particular. The score by Michael Giacchino is extremely heart-tugging yet conveys a sense of the 1980s time era, in which the film is taken place. However, there's one bad thing that stuck out to me: The use of CGI. Even though the overall use of it was kept at a minimum, some of the CGI effects were really dodgy, although not as bad as the infamous cat sequence in the original film, which was smartly removed for the remake. LET ME IN

also didn't match up to the original's elegantly-orchestrated ending, which was disappointing.

Overall, those who haven't seen the original film will definitely get more of a kick out of this than those of us who have already seen the original film (or read the book, for that matter). However, to those who have truly embraced the Swedish film, I can tell you that LET ME IN didn't "ruin" it at all. If anything, it embraced it. As for me, in particular, I actually thought the remake was the better version because it focused more on the relationship between the two kids, which is what these films are really about. LET ME IN is easily one of the best films of the year and one of the more commendable remakes ever made.

### Recensie 3

**Better Title: My Girlfriend Is A Vampire**, 2 October 2010



Author: [Fields201](#) from United States

I knew nothing about this film going in. I just knew that it was either a horror film or a thriller. The biggest draw was that Hitgirl from Kick-Ass was on here and I was really curious about her performance in other movies. I loved her performance in Kick-Ass and looked forward to seeing how she does with future projects.

The film starts out interesting enough. We see an overhead shot of some police cars and ambulance going down a snowy road surrounded by trees. It is here where we get a brief glimpse to someone's deformed hand as this person is taken to a nearby hospital. The person is still alive, and a cop who looks strangely like my sixth grade Math Teacher, Mr. Bortles, questions him. Mr. Bortles gets a call, asks about some little girl, and a nurse screams.

Then a title card says TWO WEEKS EARLIER and we see some little boy eating candy outside in the snow. This is where the film takes an odd turn for me. That whole setup in the beginning really sets the mood for a creepy film but instead, as my friend and I agreed, it was one depressing film.

It really was. That outside where that kid hangs out with is lit with red. It has this depressing mood to it that reminds me of days when I had no friends and wanted to get away from my parents. Hitgirl doesn't make it much better. She has this monotone personality that just makes it more depressing. And the boy, well, not only does he act depressing, he is depressing.

The boy gets picked on by these kids at the school. These kids harass this boy to no end and are probably the most vile group of kids ever put on film. They are the type of kids who deserve what they get back. Unfortunately, in real life, there are kids like them and the scared little boy would be the one in trouble if he deservingly sent them to the hospital. Dang adults!

But the core of the movie is that Hitgirl is a vampire. Her and the boy has this bond together and they even become boyfriend and girlfriend. There's a scene where Hitgirl is lying next to him, telling him not to look, because her face is covered in blood. Very attractive. Then the next morning he wakes up

and she's gone. It happens, kid.

There were a few scenes in the film that bother me. Besides the depressing atmosphere, there were some special effects shots that were noticeably fake like how the vampire kills this guy in a drainage pipe and some fire effects. There's also a scene that makes no sense other than establish Hitgirl is a vampire where the boy cuts his finger to become blood brothers with her. Who does that? I mean, your boyfriend and girlfriend! Isn't that enough?

But the film does have some great moments in it. One scene involves a guy in the back of the car waiting to kill somebody only to find out he gets another passenger. Another scene involves a cop lurking in Hitgirl's home. There's also a scene that strangely reminded me of the movie *Omen 2*.

Let Me In isn't the greatest film I've seen but it's a better vampire film than say, *TWILIGHT*! I still think *The Lost Boys* is the greatest vampire film ever made and I'm not much of a vampire freak anyway. Would I recommend Let Me In? Only if you like vampires or Hitgirl. Otherwise, wait a couple months for DVD.

#### Recensie 4

**Love at First Bite**, 2 October 2010



Author: [alexart-1](#) from United States

Five years ago, nobody would have thought that vampire love may be romantic. Now, it seems as though that is the only way people can picture vampire love. Sookie frequently gets ravaged by Bill on *True Blood*. Bella is evermore loyal to Edward in *Twilight*. Along came a spider called *Let the Right One In*, a charming and disturbing Swedish film that was about adolescence and love infused with a little vampire horror. It was a film that was said to be perfect in many ways. And then it was remade as *Let Me In* and in a surprising turn of events, it worked very well. *Let Me In* is almost as good as *Let the Right One In*. Matt Reeves has masterfully matched the tone and cinematography of the Swedish film and tweaked it a little bit to make it his own. Some of the best performances of the year so far are in this film and Michael Giacchino's score shines in a subtle and beautiful way. The few plot changes are inoffensive and the writing is well done.

*Let Me In* is not what it seems to be. It is a case of poor advertising in which it so frequently portrays the film as an in-your-face horror movie. *Let Me In* is actually a rather tender tale of boy meets vampire. Owen (Kodi Smit-McPhee) is a twelve year-old who is constantly bullied at school. One night, Owen meets a strange, but friendly girl who moves in next door. She is twelve (more or less) and appears perfectly normal. Her name is Abby (Chloe Grace Moretz). One problem: she is a vampire. The film beautifully examines pre-pubescent love. It is only a horror movie sometimes, but most of the time, *Let Me In* is a drama and romance.

Matt Reeves, who previously directed the cinema verite horror film *Cloverfield*, slows it down a lot with this film. He has reproduced the tone of the Swedish film quite nicely through color palettes and

cinematography. The film is often subtle and solemn, except for in the gory scenes, which nicely contrast with the rest of the film. The score from Michael Giacchino, who has also composed the scores for *Lost* and *Up*, matches the tone of the film. At one moment, the score can be sad and sweet, while in the next moment, it can be loud and booming. What is most interesting is the switch between the two moods, which is equally as subtle as some of the action and chemistry that goes on between Abby and Owen.

Reeves has also done a very nice job with the actors involved in this film. Chloe Grace Moretz, who plays her role with equal maturity as she did for *Hit Girl* in *Kick-Ass*, is worthy of an Oscar again for playing Abby. She makes the viewer, as well as Owen, feel so emotionally distant simply through facial expressions and simple mannerisms. Kodi Smit-McPhee does a fantastic job as Owen. Never once was there a time when the audience did not feel sorry for his character.

It is very possible that *Let Me In* is the best remake to date. Nobody would have ever predicted that someone could reproduce *Let the Right One In* in a way that was original and faithful at the same time. It may not be the horror movie that the studio was advertising, but it certainly is a movie that is worth watching. Matt Reeves, Chloe Grace Moretz, and Kodi Smit-McPhee are names that people should keep an eye on. We'll see a lot more of them in the future. As for Michael Giacchino, he has got some tough competition from Hans Zimmer for the Best Original Score Oscar, but he definitely deserves it.

People may criticize *Let Me In* for being too much of a direct copy of *Let the Right One In*, but honestly, a good movie came out of it, so who cares? Besides, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

## Recensie 5

**Brilliant Vampire Film**, 2 October 2010



Author: [quirkbuster](#) from United States

From the very beginning we are treated to spectacular creepiness. Who is the man who covered himself in acid? What kind of a strange young man wears a mask and pretends to stab girls? Who are the new neighbors that move in under cover of dark? This film is much more violent and has more suspense than the original, a Swedish film hailed as a landmark in vampire cinema, which might turn off some people but it really made it great for me. The film was a roller coaster of emotion and rhythm, each tender scene followed by a horrific moment. Some people may feel that it moves too slowly, but each quiet moment is meant to be enjoyed because deafening horror is soon to follow.

Overall it is not just a vampire story. It is the story of a lonely boy who finds companionship in the most unusual place. It is a wonderful study of human nature and asks important questions. Are there truly evil people in the world? And are they always evil, or can they actually be wonderful in the eyes of some? One of the great strengths of this film is that it constantly moves between two worlds--the sweetness of youth, and the horror of what a vampire really is. We get a front row seat to both and

must decide if the evil outweighs the good.

I can't think of the last time I saw a vampire movie that impressed me as much. This has all the blood and action that was missing from the original, but maintains its commitment to carefully revealing the characters to us. There are wonderfully creepy additions and a truly artistic filming of a car crash that elevate this film onto a different level than the original. If you are a fan of horror films this one is not to be missed!

## Film 18: Stake Land

### Recensie 1

**Best vampire film I've seen in the last couple of years.**, 1 May 2011



Author: [mdnobles19](#) from United States

By far the best horror film I've seen this year and probably going to be the contender for best horror film of 2011 just about beating Black Death. The film is full of dread, macabre, terror, pain and sadness but also filled with hope. The acting is surprisingly good for a independent, low-budget vampire/apocalypse flick with Nick Damici and Connor Paolo being the standout and to me breakthrough performances as vampire hunters on a journey to salvation. The atmosphere, vampires and unbalanced human beings doing evil deeds against one another sends chills down my spine and is terrifying and raw that makes this movie stand above the rest of its kind and raises the bar for vampire/apocalypse movies, it packs a bleak punch. The movie kind of though goes through similar territory from movies like The Road, Carriers, Daybreakers, Zombieland without the comedy aspect and a dose of Black Death but it still manages to stand on its own and it's very novel in its own right. The movie is pretty brutal throughout and doesn't hold back and is definitely not for the faint of heart or the easily offended and that's what I like about this movie because it's very bold and brave and is balls to the wall type of attitude that's rare and usually can't be found in most wide released, mainstream horror flicks and it's like a present to fans who like their vampire movies hard and mean and are sick of movies like Twilight who are giving them a bad name, so thanks for this movie it's a gem! Overall I was impressed and a movie like this deserves all the fans it can get and deserves a wide release and not shocking it doesn't because Hollywood is too dense to see a great movie even if it slaps it in the face! The ending left it open for a sequel so I really hope we get to see the light of day of Stake Land 2, bring it on geniuses. Highly recommended! 3.5 stars out of 5 stars.

### Recensie 2

**Cool idea but a failed delivery**, 13 June 2011



Author: [bennystar](#) from United States

When I saw the ratings here I figured I was going to be in for an exciting post-apocalyptic adventure with the undead. Unfortunately what's actually there is a movie that fails to deliver any sort of

punch. The beginning starts action packed, which got my hopes up, however that was quickly diminished. Instead I was left with a few, quick scenes of montages to try to make the adventure seem plausible and honestly when I saw them I couldn't help but think of, the montage and the song that went along with it in, the movie Team America, it made me chuckle, because it jokingly sums up the events.

That brings me to problem two, I just didn't care about any of the characters, they all seemed like "meh" to me, no emotional feeling whatsoever, which is highly unusual to me for these types of post apocalyptic adventure movies. I didn't care if they lived or died, if they were good or evil, or if god had screwed them over or helped them, I just didn't care at all. It could have been the lack of character development and cheesy montage I don't know, but either way the characters failed. Now that's not saying that the acting was bad, the acting was quite good I just did not care about any of the characters or their story (or lack of in the case of this movie).

i did like the the fact that the vampires resemble zombies with fangs more than vampires, i like zombies better, but that's not enough to make this a movie worth watching again. I have just seen black death and must say that that is an EPIC movie compare to this drizzle.

I read a review of this movie that talks about the movie "the shrine" and how awful it was. I will disagree with that and say that I found the shrine quite interesting and easy to watch when I compare it to the pain that I had when I had to sit through this movie.

This movie fails on all accounts (even on the monsters, choose one is it a zombie or is it a vampire, don't make it a hybrid, they are not alive they can't breed!). Three words "IT'S BORING AS". I'm giving it three stars cause the acting was good, even tho the story was boring, I liked the scenery and I like zombies better than vampires.

### Recensie 3

Refreshing and amazing, 8 August 2011



Author: [darklydreamingrahu](#) from United States

Stake Land gripped me from the opening scene. This film is shot beautifully and is one of the best vampire movies ever made. The plot is fast paced and the characters are complex and realistic. The settings are breathtaking and the cinematography is awe-inspiring. This one has cult-classic written all over it. If this is a low budget film, it's one of the most technically sound low budget movies I've ever seen. There's heart in this one that so many movies lack.

First off, the actors were all brilliant. Every single actor and actress felt natural and realistic. Even characters that died 15 minutes after meeting them felt developed and complex. The writing was profound and hurled characters through the story with a definitive vision. Particularly Connor Paolo and Nick Damici who share a true chemistry on screen. Some of the scenes between their father/son like relationship were brutally honest and gut-wrenching. Others were eye opening and jaw

dropping. These two were perfectly casted.

The settings are fantastic. Atmospheric is an understatement for the level of care of precision that went into the locations and cinematography. Stake Land weaves us through backwoods southern America, forests, mountains, villages, highways, and northern wilderness at almost a breakneck pace. The lighting, the angles, the saturation, the positioning is so perfect at times that it feels like a National Geographic magazine. Meanwhile when the action heats up, the camera is fixated on what is happening and doesn't shy away from the violence. Also, the music is OUTSTANDING and mostly ethereal or somber. It sets the mood and helps bring the beauty on screen to life.

The themes are nihilistic and dark which is right up my alley. The lore is deep for the short runtime and introduces multiple enemy types. Sometimes when the action starts rolling, it feels like a video game. You got Vamps, Scamps, Berzerkers, Thinkers, The Brotherhood, Military, and Christians all fighting for domination of the lawless post apocalyptic America. It's impressive how much content this movie has and still manages to keep the plot simple and coherent. By the way, these vampires are more like a vampire/zombie mixture for the most part. The creature types are similar to I Am Legend, except infinitely better in appearance and execution. Also, a large part of the story revolves around Americans grasping for faith anywhere they can in the face of destruction and the dangerous implications that brings. Hardcore Christians will be offended for sure. Sometimes truth hurts.

I do have a couple minor complaints. First off, The Brotherhood was a bit overdone. Initially, they were terrifying and seemed plausible. As the movie progresses however, they become over the top and almost ridiculous. One segment in particular involving a Brotherhood member turned Vamp seemed unnecessary and almost laughable. This scene is saved by solid acting and the gritty style in which it is portrayed. Also instead of easing you through the plot, sometimes it just hurls you through situations like a spear through an open field.

All in all, Stake Land is an underground gem that will gain steam as it goes along. It's surreal atmosphere and blistering universe is sure to leave a mark on moviegoers. It is a beautiful film with awesome acting, great special effects, and a story that keeps your gripped. The soundtrack is top notch. At times, it feels like you are watching a classic unfold. The epic journey and gut-wrenching drama punctuated by scenes of unflinching violence is enough to grab you and never let go. The only thing stopping this one from being higher than an 8 and ranking among my favorites is the sloppy way The Brotherhood was handled in the middle of the film and the blistering pace it sets. Otherwise I would recommend this one to fans of the following: Horror, Survival Horror, Post-Apocalyptic, Zombie, Vampire, Road Trip, Action, Suspense, Drama with a strong stomach. Be aware this one earns the R rating for brutal violence. 8/10

#### **Recensie 4**

**Vampires That Behave Like Zombies!!!**, 14 August 2011

Author: [Van Roberts \(zardoz@bellsouth.net\)](mailto:zardoz@bellsouth.net) from United States

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***



Writer & director Jim Mickle has done a splendid job fusing vampire movies with zombie movies in his creepy road trip saga "Stake Land." Yes, the title refers to the stakes used to put vampires to death. However, "Stake Land" is not your typical vampire adventure. The vampires are not elegant, late-night denizens who speak in flowery language and dress up in the height of fashion. This is where Mickle and co-scenarist Nick Damici alter and then reinvent the genre. The vampires in "Stake Land" are as predatory as zombies. Sometimes they hunt alone, while at other times they hunt in groups. They are bestial to say the least and have congealed blood stuck to their faces. They are like zombies because they don't think. They are attracted to the scent of blood and live to kill. Yes, they have fangs and they can roar like lions. Furthermore, Mickle and Damici treat nothing about the plight of the humans who have survived this vampire apocalypse with levity. You won't hear any jokes and there aren't any movie references. The closest comparison to "Stake Land" is "I Am Legend" as our heroes--Mister (Nick Damici)and Martin (Connor Paolo)--embark on a road trip to the promised land in Canada of 'New Eden' after Mister saves Martin from death at the fangs of the vampires in a rural setting. Essentially, everything that occurs in "Stake Land" takes place out in the sticks. Our heroes don't travel to metropolitan cities are wander through empty concrete canyons of skyscrapers. They save a nun named Sister(a virtually unrecognizable Kelly McGillis of "Top Gun") from rapists who belong to a Christian cult of barbarians. The barbarians are a skin-headed denomination who believe that God has created the vampire scourge to wipe the land clean of godless heathens. There is nothing tolerant or merciful about this savages. Jebedia Loven (Michael Cerveris of TV's "Fringe")leads this dastardly cult, and he has a score to settle with Mister because Mister killed his son. Loven's evil son was trying to rape Sister when he got a stake hurled into his back. In another sense, the narrative structure of "Stake Land" is reminiscent of "Zombieland" with the humor. We accompany Mister and Martin on a cruise through the ruins of America, somewhat like the CBS-TV show "Jericho" where communities have sprung up in isolation and imposed strict regimens to keep themselves safe. Squeamish viewers should not watch this gory, profane white-knuckled horror saga.

## Recensie 5

**Kick-ass Apocalyptic Vampire film? Hell yeah....**, 14 August 2011



Author: [The gore hound](#) from United States

"Stake Land" is a film about Martin (played by Connor Paolo) and Mister (Nick Damici), who travel across the nation that has become over run by blood-thirsty vampires, in search of New Eden, a settlement in Canada that promises to be a safe-haven in an apocalyptic country. Along the way, they meet up with other, equally-like-able characters such as Sister (Kelly McGillis), Belle (Danielle Harris), and Willie (Sean Nelson), as they struggle along as desperation and death surrounds them with false promises of hope and safety.

This film was amazing on every level for a horror film, and I would say that the greatest thing going for the movie are the characters. You have Martin, who is learning the ropes of killing vampires after he is saved from a vampire ,who killed his whole family, by Mister, and you have to give Connor Paolo credit for making the character very human and like-able, even though his emotions when his

family is killed isn't really "all there". But my favorite character has to be Mister. I just love the way he grasps this apocalyptic vampire world by it's bloody throat and commands it to listen. Every time he's on screen, he steals the show.

But I would also say that another big character in this film is the apocalyptic setting. The whole landscape is strewn with carcasses of the long-forgotten, and the hanging bodies and lying skeletons (some of them not exactly adults, either) just sets one of the creepiest atmospheres that I have ever seen in my life as a horror film buff.

And while what some people say about the ending might be true (I'll admit, it underwhelmed me a bit) the film is one of the tightest apocalyptic/horror films that I've seen in a while. The director, Jim Mickle, is on a two-for-two winning streak for me (his previous film, *Mulberry St*, was, to me, the best "Horrorfest" entry of that year) and he really sets this great gritty and grim mood for the film. He has written some great characters that I would LOVE to see again (after all, the ending kinda does leave opening for a sequel). Overall, it's a great film that any fan of the apocalypse or vampire genre should see.

## Film 19: Priest

### Recensie 1

**So much more than expected**, 13 May 2011



Author: [PennyDread](#) from United States

First off, the 3D did not add anything to this film. Much like other low action films like *Thor*, the 3D was distracting and made it appear as if most of the dialogue was shot in front of a green screen when in fact it most likely wasn't.

*Priest* is a fantastic tale about a world where vampires are an acknowledged threat and are hunted by a unified faction until they are kept under control...or so we thought. This film had it all - action, intensity, drama, layers, humor - and is right up there with some of my favorites among originality (i.e. "Daybreakers"). Visually, there is not much to talk about aside from the introduction (Awesome and original!), but that's kind of the stunning part. It is a dystopian society, and it is one like I really haven't seen before. The acting was, as expected with this cast, on point, but I especially enjoyed Lily Collins! I am so excited to see her work again with Scott Stewart ("Legion") in "The Mortal Instruments", a favorite book series. Stewart and Collins are definitely names to watch for in the future! *Priest* is one for the home collection and a must for vampire enthusiasts.

### Recensie 2

**Insipid Search: A Flawed Cry For Help**, 13 May 2011



Author: [JonnyHavey](#) from United States

"Inspid Search: A Flawed Cry For Help" Director John Ford must be rolling over in his grave this week with the release of Priest taking Ford's masterpiece The Searchers replacing cowboys with priests and Native Americans with vampires. Even if this is just a coincidence as Director Scott Stewart adapts the film from the Korean comic written by Min-Woo Hyung teaming up with Paul Bettany for the second year in a row following last year's Legion. Again he tries to hide strong Christian undertones within a horror flick delving into godly protection. Bettany stars as the main character referred to as Priest, who is specially trained to kill vampires in the name of the church and God. His reputation precedes him after fighting in a war against the vampires resulting in their imprisonment in vampire reservations. However, years later a wasteland sheriff named Hicks (Cam Gigandet, The Roommate) reveals news to Priest that one of Priest's kin has been killed and his niece Lucy (Lily Collins, The Blind Side) kidnapped by vampires and an evil man named Black Hat (Karl Urban, RED). After being told to stand down by his order because Monsignor Orelas (Christopher Plummer, The Last Station) doesn't believe that the vampires are a threat, Priest disobeys and flees to find his niece. Consequently, Monsignor Orelas sends a group of Priest's peer warriors after him to stop him. Priestess (Maggie Q, Live Free or Die Hard) tracks down Priest and Hicks, however, instead of dissuading their journey she helps them as they trail the vampires lead by Black Hat in Searchers fashion. Paul Bettany has chosen some very interesting supernatural roles recently within very horrid films. His role in Priest is no exception, however, he is still able to have a very average performance portraying his one-dimensional role. Cam Gigandet has had a similar problem with pathetic roles and has a subpar performance at all. Also, with the territory of their characters comes a film that is at its best during its visual driven special effects. They aren't great at any means, but they aren't as trashy as the rest of the film. The film bypasses its development stage after showing a brief exposition of the film's similarity with The Searchers and a poorly animated storybook narration scene. Following is a story stripped down far too lean stretched thin over a short runtime. The script is cliché and messy making the film neither a strong horror film, nor an action adventure flick. It fails to produce any memorable material and has terrible acting overall. Karl Urban is especially despicable in the film with very cheesy dialogue made up of second-rate one-liners. Lastly, while the darkness of the film attempts to act as clever cinematography instead it adds to the dull tone of the film. Priest is underwhelming and insipidly commonplace to be anything more than just a flawed cry for help. Gigandet has achieved a great yet disgraceful feat in 2011, managing to be cast in the two worst films of the year.

### Recensie 3

**In 4-D: Dull, Drab, Dismal Downer**, 13 May 2011



Author: [RichardSRussell-1](#) from United States

Priest (1:27, PG-13, 3-D) — borderline, 2nd string, crossover, OSIT cynics

So here's a bunch of actors who've hovered on the outskirts of the big time for awhile. Paul Bettany is best known as the ship's doctor in Master and Commander, but that was a decade ago. He's since shown up in supporting roles in The Da Vinci Code and Inkheart. He headlined as the archangel Gabriel in Legion, which I hope nobody saw. Cam Gigandet is perhaps best known to SF fans for the car-crash-fascinating Pandorum. Karl Urban is much younger, handsomer, and more virile than his

best known role as the aged, weary King Eomer in Lord of the Rings, and he didn't really get a chance to show this off as Bones in Star Trek. Finally, Maggie Q, once eye-catching as part of the Impossible Mission Force, has since been reduced to such stereotypical roles as the Asian fighting machine in the regrettable Balls of Fury.

Now, probably hoping for a breakthrough in a healthy-budgeted actioner, they get stuck with this dull, drab, dismal downer. At least they got to rub elbows with Christopher Plummer, who was playing the middle-aged Baron Von Trapp in (ta da) 1965!

DULL: Almost all the story is crammed into an expository lump at the beginning, animated comic-book style. Here we learn that men (for so they are known) and vampires have been at war since forever. The latter are strong and swift, which is sufficient to overcome the human advantage with mechanics and sunlight. Still, it's a fearsome toll all around, a la WW1 trench warfare, until the rise of a class of warrior priests, superbly conditioned and trained, who succeed in beating the vampires back into reservations. By then, the exhausted humans have hunkered down fearfully in their enclosed cities, ruled over with an iron fist by a church which constantly reminds everyone "To go against the church is to go against God." The hierarchy is embarrassed by the post-war veteran priests, who are aimless now that they no longer have a purpose.

There are half a dozen good story possibilities here. We get none of them. Instead it's a trip out into the desert (about the distance of a long suburban commute, it looks like) on turbine-powered motorcycles to fight some vampires, then a trip back, doing the same. That's it. That's the whole of the live action, and even that has to be padded out by going to slo-mo for the fight sequences to yield even the pathetically brief running time. (Yes, I know: terrible food, and the portions were so small.)

DRAB: I have no idea why they bothered wasting color stock filming this. It's 98% shades of gray, mainly dark. It was down-converted to (not shot in) 3-D, for no obvious reason and to no apparent effect. A dead giveaway that this was an afterthought is the use of dissolves instead of cuts. Anyone with experience in 3-D knows that such a method of scene transition is at least disorienting and perhaps nausea-inducing for the audience.

DISMAL: Man, there is just no life anywhere in this movie. Like The Book of Eli there's a small town out in the desert, and there's no hint whatsoever of how they survive without water or crops. Even the mainly light-hearted, kid-friendly Rango treated the issue more seriously. And the dank, depressing (2 more "D"s) city with its dour, domineering (2 more) episcopate are even more (can I say it?) discouraging. The performances are similarly dismal. The entire cast shares a total of maybe 4 expressions among them during the course of the film, nobody ever hogging more than 2.

DOWNER: Not only is there no happy ending (unless you get your jollies from death and destruction, the big explosion being the sole source of color in the movie), there is no happy beginning, nothing happy in the middle, and the prospect of no happiness in the foreseeable future. This is a film for cynics.

I categorize it under "borderline", because it's not apparent whether this is supposed to be a far-

future or an alternate Earth (or even Earth at all), and because it's not clear whether the vampires can be explained biologically (SF) or supernaturally (fantasy). This is the only border that Priest rises UP to.

Why did I give it such a high rating (3 = bad)? Because it wasn't actively, aggressively annoying. (For THAT, we'll have to wait for the Smurfs movie advertised in the trailers.) It just wasn't any good.

#### Recensie 4

**A study in clichés**, 13 May 2011



Author: [eidlehands](#) from United States

**\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\***

The movie Priest is based upon the graphic novels of Hyung Min-woo. As I have not read them, I can only hope that the source material was nowhere near as clichéd as the movie. I am pretty sure that the write, Cory Goodman, pulled out his Giant Book of Movie Clichés and check- marked each and every chapter as he added them to the movie.

In the movie, you will find:

The tortured protagonist: Tortured by his past. Pulled out of retirement to save his family and willing to break the rules to do so.

The love-struck side-kick: In love with the kidnapped girl and will do anything to save her. Including threaten the priest who kills vampires with his hands.

The ex-best friend turned villain: Not even close to a spoiler as it pretty obvious 30 seconds into the movie. The overly melodramatic villain: Is it in the rule manual that when you get turned into a supernatural villain, your acting abilities are thrown out the window?

The love-struck partner: Really? Really? We already have one love story in the movie and have been hit over the head repeatedly on how dedicated these guys are to their duty. Unrequited love just makes it sad.

The victim: Left alive and untouched by the villain. Why? So she can be saved. Not even a good throw-away line that she is alive only to be killed dramatically.

The sleaze turned informant: He doesn't even give any information that the villain doesn't already know or at least expect. He's there simply to prove how evil the villain is.

The government blind to the situation: This could have worked just as well by having the Priest sent on the mission with full approval. But no. It had to be shown that he was willing to break the rules.

Arnold Chon: The new Al Leong. A great martial artist who's there for one reason and one reason only. To do a cool 30 second routine and then get his ass killed.

For all of that, I enjoyed it for the cost of an early bird matinée ticket. This could have easily been better written with very little extra effort and become a truly great movie.

## Recensie 5

**Not bad, not good**, 13 May 2011



Author: [Chaz 233](#) from US

In Priest, we find ourselves in the days after a war between vampires and humans. Vampires were supposedly eliminated and humans live poor and secluded in high tech mega cities. Holding society together is an all-present religion that is more like a cult with the voice of the leader beaming through speakers everywhere. The warriors who got rid of the vampires are priests, a select group of individuals. After the war they were integrated into society of sorts.

When vampires attack a family, one priest demands to be allowed to leave the city to go after the vampires. His request is denied so of course he becomes the rogue loner cowboy priest on a mission. But he's joined by a town's sheriff whose girlfriend was kidnapped. They follow the trail of the vampires and run into their human side-kicks called Familiars. The vampires are led by some dude who looks like Jonah Hex.

This all sounds fairly entertaining but it doesn't amount to much. The vampires are four-legged monsters with no eyes that only shriek and jump around. Paul Bettany does his best with a role that doesn't ask much of him. This movie, like most vampire movies, has mostly tones of gray and looks as lifeless as it actually is. Later some female priest joins our main priest for the battle. There are plenty of clichés, like the final fight scene on top of a moving train- haven't we seen that a million times before.

You won't have a bad time watching this movie, nor will you miss much if you don't see it. I saw the 2D version. This movie should probably have been made as an R rated movie to add some type of excitement. The fight scenes are nothing spectacular and the villains are dull for the exception of the cowboy bad guy who doesn't get enough screen time.

## Film 20: Fright Night

### Recensie 1

**One good performance can't make this a good movie**, 19 August 2011



Author: [Tim McNeil](#) from Forest Park, Illinois

It took me a while to see the original *Fright Night* (1985). I had one of those mothers who tried to impose her own uneasiness with the horror genre on her children. Actually, she held crazy beliefs like that KISS stood for Knights in Satan's Service and Rush (the Canadian prog-rock band) meant Ruling Under Satan's House and is still afraid to watch the movie *Jaws* (1975). I'm pretty sure the first time I saw *Fright Night '85* it was on cable television. I soon went out and rented it – and its inferior sequel – and found a movie I really liked. It had the right amount of camp and humor, but it was the slow build to the horror element that made it, to me, a classic.

Don't expect that from the new version. *Fright Night '11* takes the same basic premise, but has none of the fun with it. Marti Noxon – the Queen of Mean – transplants the Angelus character from the *Buffy/Angel* Whedonverse and hands the role to a more talented actor in Colin Farrell. Let me make this perfectly clear: if you are going to see this movie, Colin Farrell is the reason to go. He does truly embody the inhuman menace of the shark from *Jaws*, but is somewhat hampered by the direction and editing that occasionally sets him up as a vampiric Pepé Le Pew. Though largely robbed of any kind of a backstory or motivation beyond being a vampire – and what little we do get to learn about his kind mostly goes to waste – Farrell does his best to make this movie work.

The problem is that he isn't enough.

Anton Yelchin, an actor who has yet to impress me in any role I've seen him in, is the lackluster lead. We learn that he is the kind of man who would betray his friends and hang out with assholes in order to score a tasty girlfriend, but still nerdy enough to not be able to close the deal. Seemingly, a mere ten minutes – it may have been a little more or less – Yelchin's Charley Brewster is already aware (in a way) that vampires are real. That sucks all of the tension out of the ensuing scenes and helps get the leaden feeling of the movie going. Yelchin does have a couple of good scenes, but he – or director Craig Gillespie – doesn't know what to do with them.

Instead of giving an actor as good a role as they did with Roddy McDowell in the original, David Tennant (as Peter Vincent) is required to start off with what looks like a Ben Stiller impersonation of Johnny Depp in any of the *Pirates* movies. There is too much unpleasant self-loathing in this new Vincent to make him accessible. He is a pompous coward – which could have worked – that never really is given a chance for redemption; it is up Charley to do that, too.

Imogen Poots (as Amy) and Emily Montague (as Ginger) make for attractive and mildly compelling potential victims of the vampire. Both seem to have unreasonable faith in the Charley character, though this is a problem with the screenplay and not the acting. Much less effective are the other potential victims that wander about the film. Most are disagreeable and unlikeable, and in the case of Dave Franco seem to be too old to fit into the film's high school age group characters. Toni Collette (as Charley's mother, Jane) is largely wasted. She looks good and should be a calm, capable, strong woman that has given Charley his moral compass and conviction. Instead, she is quickly turned into just another potential victim and is removed from the third act in an unsatisfying way (though, to be fair, it does work in the overall story). Chris Sarandon makes an appearance – my one lone laugh of the night – as does Lisa Loeb (???)

The film looks bland and uninspired, and that isn't due to the special effects. The FX work, almost

without exception. It is the sets and landscape that robs the movie of any sense of life. Watching a cookie-cutter, Las Vegas McMansion in an oddly isolated subdivision burn provokes no reaction from me, except that many built unwisely during the housing boom. There is no vibrancy to the movie, and that is a problem.

I cannot comment about the 3D. There was a problem with the projection during the previews, and while it was resolved to the point of where it wasn't just blurry, most of the effects that were in 3D never really popped. Some are obviously meant to, and if they do it will add more to the experience. Other than those flashy (and repetitive) sequences, there are only three or four shots that effectively make use of the technology (no, I am not counting the crossbow bolt shot seen in the previews). Gillespie does a great job with one particular shot in a swimming pool early on, then seems to degenerate into some level of amateurism with his shot selection. This is his first feature, and in retrospect, it looked as though he wasn't ready.

My suggestion is to watch the original *Fright Night* (1985) instead of the cynical, cold-hearted '11 *Fright Night*. The new one isn't horrible, but like a vampire, it has no life of its own. Colin Farrell is great in what he is allowed to do (I never thought I'd ever write a sentence like that), but the rest of the cast is subdued and improperly handled. This is a solid C effort, but I would have like to have seen a more accomplished director – and definitely no Noxon influence – for this movie.

## Recensie 2

**Bests the original by dialing back the cheese**, 19 August 2011



Author: [Dan Franzen \(dfranzen70\)](#) from United States

I saw the original *Fright Night*, and I think this one's much better. Scarier, right amount of cheese and camp, terrific, dead-on acting. Excellent thriller, especially (as much as I hate to admit it) in 3D.

Anton Yelchin (*Star Trek*) is Charlie Brewster, a high schooler who lives in a town outside of Las Vegas with his single mom, played by Toni Collette. Charlie has a gorgeous girlfriend (Imogen Poots) and cool-kid friends. One of his older friends, Ed (Christopher Mintz-Plasse of *Superbad* and *Kick-Ass*) comes to him and asks for Charlie's help; it seems that a third friend has gone missing, and Ed believes vampires are to blame. Specifically, he feels that Charlie's new next-door neighbor Jerry (Colin Farrell) is the chief vampire and is literally sucking the town dry.

I was fortunate enough to watch this as a sneak preview, because I don't think I would have splurged for the 3D version. But it's totally worth it. The film will be subtly 3D for most of the time, and then all of a sudden something will unexpectedly - but plausibly - come flying at you. Love it. Well done, well executed, very detailed use of the technology, for a change.

Charlie necessarily turns to a TV vampire (think of a *Criss Angel* knockoff) who's rehearsing for his Vegas show. In the original, the role was that of a late-night horror-movie TV host, played by Roddy McDowell, but here he's played with almost demented glee by David Tennant (*Dr. Who*). What good



is a fake vampire hunter against a real vampire? A little good, as it turns out.

The movie's exciting. It's funny without straining for laughs; it's scary without forcing fear. It doesn't get mired in overexposition: Farrell's vampire is just there, no explanation needed; tropes of vampire lore are mentioned, but no background material is needed. Its simplicity is its greatest asset.

The cast as a whole is strong, particularly Farrell, who plays creepy and diabolical better than I thought possible. He's always been able to be violent, but this role brought a different level of acting out of him. Well played.

Suffice to say that if you don't like vampire movies, there's no reason in the world for you to watch this. So don't. You'll just get mad, and there's no need for that. If you do have a yen for the macabre, though, you would do well to give this a look.

### Recensie 3

**"Fright Night" just might be perfect for those looking for a dose of nostalgia and some highly suspenseful, fun entertainment.**, 19 August 2011

Author: [garethvk](#) from Seattle, WA

Twenty-six years ago, "Fright Night" premiered in theaters and went on to become a fondly remembered title amongst horror fans. The movie cleverly combined horror and humor to create a fresh take on the vampire and teen horror genres which had started to grow stale. While the movie spawned a largely forgettable direct to video sequel, the original film has remained popular over the years. So, when I first heard that they were planning on remaking the film I was skeptical as I felt it would be very difficult to match the original film.

Boasting an impressive cast which includes Anton Yelchin, Colin Farrell, David Tennant, Christopher Mintz-Plasse, and Toni Collette, the remake does not try to reinvent the wheel, but instead takes the formula of the original and creates an entirely new entry into the saga.

For those unfamiliar with the series, Yelchin stars as Charlie Brewster, a young man who is trying to balance watching over his single mother, and his growing relationship with a girl way out of his league named Amy (Imogen Poots). He is also wrestling with becoming part of a cooler crowd at the cost of alienating his geeky former best friend, Ed, played by Christopher Mintz-Plasse.

Colin Farrell plays the handsome and suave new next door neighbor who easily charms Charlie's mom, played by Toni Colette. Unbeknownst to his neighbors, the charming and charismatic Jerry, played by Colin Ferrell, is actually a vampire who's come to their Las Vegas suburb to continue his nighttime hunts. Ed has become suspicious of the recent disappearances in their community and confides to Charlie that he's had Jerry under surveillance and knows that he is a vampire.

Needless to say this does not sit well with Charlie, who distances himself further from Ed. But when Ed goes missing, Charlie decides to do some investigating of his own. Charlie turns to a local Vegas

performance artist named Peter Vincent (David Tennant), whose vampire-themed show portrays him as an expert in fighting the undead. While at first skeptical over Charlie's claims, a few devastating confrontations with Jerry and his minions forces Vincent to rethink his role. The two unlikely allies soon find themselves in a deadly race against time to defeat Jerry and save their loved ones before it's too late.

The film cleverly combines horror and comedy and does a good job of providing some suspenseful moments in between the blood and gore, managing to squeeze in more than a few laughs along the way. While not overly scary, the visual effects work is solid and aside from the converted 3-D is a really enjoyable to watch. The film would've been much better had it been shot in 3-D or simply left as a 2-D film as the conversion really didn't offer anything of value as is often the case in these lab converted efforts.

The cast works very well with one another and Farrell cheekily introduces a few new wrinkles to the vampire lore. I really enjoyed David Tennant's performance and should they do a sequel I certainly hope that they bring him back. Anton Yelchin gives a reliable performance but I was surprised that Christopher Mintz-Plasse did not have a bigger role but he does have some memorable moments in the film. What really impressed me was that the film did not attempt to do a shot-by-shot remake of the original but instead took the premise of the original and offered a fresh take that easily could have been issued as the third chapter in the series rather than a reboot. While there were nods to the original, outside of the premise it was very much its own film.

The film is not going to set any high marks for new standards in horror nor is the plot fresh and original. It simply knows what its target audience and source material are and sets a course right down the middle without attempting to deviate too much one way or another. "Fright Night" just might be perfect for those looking for a dose of nostalgia and some highly suspenseful, fun entertainment.

Three stars out of five

#### Recensie 4

**lifeless disposable remake of a beloved cult classic**, 19 August 2011



Author: [nevthur](#) from United States

\*\*\* This review may contain spoilers \*\*\*

Somewhat mildly entertaining, but compared to other recent horror films like *Incidious*, this movie is about as scary as an episode of *Wizards Of Waverly Place*.

Most remakes suck, that's just reality, and this fails to disprove it.

The original, which was by no means a *Lost Boys*, was, for the time, a seamless blend of horror, comedy, superb (but now outdated) special effects, and a new wave soundtrack to fit the time and

place the film was made. It was as creepy and campy as the 60's and 70's Hammer Horror films which it pays homage as well as making fun of.

But, beyond that, the original had a solid story line, with multiple characters with multiple motives.

Gone is the creepy "Evil" Ed who, despite being a horror fan, refuses to believe Charlie that his next door neighbor is a vampire. In his place is another one-note performance by a character who serves more as wallpaper and who is a sad joke when he turns vampire

Gone is the charming and subtle Jerry Dantridge and instead we have a single-note boring one dimensional Collin Ferral who spends the entire film walking with heavy footsteps and hissing like a cat.

Gone is Danridge's zombie day-time protector who added an even greater dimension of story layers replaced by, well, nothing.

Gone is the charming Peter Vincent a cowardly tired old B-movie star who faces his fears to become a hero, replaced by yet another one-dimensional ex-Dr. Who.

And perhaps most important of the omissions of this boring life-less remake is that of the big creepy decrepit American-Gothic old mansion in the heart of suburbia (like a tiny virus, and a metaphor for the vampire, which goes on to be so many other metaphors I can't list them all here).

The original is dated, no freaking duh! Because it captured the essence of the time (date) and place it was created. The remake fails to even be dated because the sets and atmosphere are so lifeless this film could have been made anywhere between 1990 and now.

The original is a "cult film" and so, by definition, it only has a small cult of fanatics, so, if you don't get why the original is so beloved then you're in majority of people who just don't get it.

20 years from now this sad remake will be sitting in the Walmart \$5.00 bin, cast aside by all those but Collin Farrel fans.

P.S. the computer animated blood splashes are horrible, they look like mid 90's effects. Also, where's the remake of Brad Fiedel's "Come To Me" which was in the original as well as it's sequel? They must have been crazy not to put an update of that in the film. It's up there with Bela Lugosi's Dead and Cry Little Sister. Oh, and one finally little update: Imagine Poots IS actually very hot and a wonderful actress as was Amanda Bearse at the time.

## Recensie 5

**"Vampire's Zombieland: Congenial Farrell Suave"**, 19 August 2011

Author: [JonnyHavey](#) from United States

In the midst of the time of the vampire in American pop culture, Director Craig Gillespie's ("Lars and the Real Girl") remake of the 1985 horror film "Fright Night" has defiled the "Twilight" film series in "Kick Ass" fashion. With more blood, more fun and better acting than the original, "Fright Night" does not concern itself with exposition; instead it recognizes that Colin Farrell ("The Way Back") is a vampire and focuses on the thrill of mixing badassery and clever, creepy, comedy. For those of you who haven't seen the original and do not know the basic plot, or wonder how things may differ from the original this is for you. Charley Brewster (Anton Yelchin, "Star Trek") lives in a small box shaped town just outside the Las Vegas strip with his mother Jane (Toni Collette, "Little Miss Sunshine"). Life is normal for high school senior Charley as he strays away from his dorky friend Ed Lee (Christopher Mintz-Plasse, "Kick Ass") by befriending popular boys Mark (Dave Franco, ABC's "Scrubs") and Ben (Reid Ewing, ABC's "Modern Family") and dating the sexy Amy Peterson (Imogen Poots, "Jane Eyre"). Charley's mother also seems to be doing well befriending their lewd new neighbor Jerry Dandrige (Farrell). The question is why does it appear as if students are disappearing? Ed has begun an investigation by following the teachings of a Vegas performer obsessed with vampires named Peter Vincent (David Tennant, BBC's "Doctor Who"), but will he get through to Charley about his mysterious new neighbor before its too late? When I first heard that "Fright Night" was going to be in 3D I was very skeptical, but for a horror film its use of 3D is above par in aiding in pursuit of humorous gore. The film exceeds horror remake expectations taking the film in a modern day applicable direction. The casting of Yelchin, Tennant and Mintz-Plasse and the uniqueness each actor brings to their respective characters produces each of them a distinct likability. However, the fact the performances of the rest of the cast are above average for a horror film, along with a new vampire swagger Colin Farrell brings to his character, are the reasons why the remake is a success.

The main issue people may have with the film is that it bases its horror around knowing that Jerry is a vampire instead of making his existence a mystery. So if you are looking for a "Scooby-Doo" mystery search elsewhere. Also, the dialogue is shoddy in places, the vampires look a little off when they aren't in human form, the overall scheme is predictable, and in the end it may be too gory for non-slasher fans. However, if you do not find yourself laughing at the prosaic scenes in the film, you may have missed the point.

"Fright Night" has the most memorable characters and best acting performances that a horror film has had in years. So prepare yourself for a whole lot of congenial Farrell suave in the "Zombieland" of vampire movies.