

Blood lines

## Description

default watermark

â??We Transylvanian nobles love not to think that our bones may lie amongst the common dead. I seek not gaiety nor mirth, not the bright voluptuousness of much sunshine and sparkling waters which please the young and gay. I am no longer young; and my heart, through weary years of mourning over the dead, is not attuned to mirth.â?•

â??Moreover, the walls of my castle are broken; the shadows are many, and the wind breathes cold through the broken battlements and casements. I love the shade and the shadow, and would be alone with my thoughts when I mayâ?• (15). Thatâ??s melancholy! Itâ??s from Bram Stokerâ??s *Dracula* of



## Amorous countenance

As the story involves blood, we should be able to say the account is also *sanguine* â?? according to the OED, â??Belonging to that one of the four â??complexionsâ?? which was supposed to be characterized by the predominance of the blood over the other three humours, and indicated by a ruddy countenance and a courageous, hopeful, and amorous disposition.â?•

Melancholy on the other hand is â??Originally: a pathological condition thought to result from an excess of black bile in the body, characterized in early references by sullenness, ill temper, brooding,

causeless anger, and unsociability, and later by despondency and sadnessâ?• (OED).

Blood or black bile? Courage or brooding? Passion or anger? They are not so far apart. In a detailed analysis of the novel Christopher Craft identifies how *Dracula* gives dramatic expression to the familiar tension between â??wicked desireâ?• and â??deadly fearâ?• (108).

## Entitlement

Of course, blood associates with transformation across many dimensions â?? sacrifice, menstruation, death, violence. But not least it symbolises family lineage, inheritance, continuity, entitlement and an inflated sense of responsibility. â??Itâ??s a wonderful house. How long have you lived here?â?• asked Charles Ryder of Lady Marchmain in *Brideshead Revisited*. â??About 400 years,â?• she replied.

I need to check my recollection of that quote, but thereâ??s a presumption that the blood line entitles you to be in that place, requiring no other justification â?? a sentiment that whole nations have adopted, as well as privileged families.

default watermark

Iâ??m bound to think of these matters as we are in Transylvania at the moment â?? that exotically other place onto which Bram Stoker (1847-1912), the British (Irish-English) author, projected his enduring melodrama about blood, bats, fangs, ancient families and travel.

## Reference


- Craft, Christopher. 1984. â??Kiss me with those red lipsâ?•: Gender and inversion in Bram Stokerâ??s Dracula. *Representations* 8, 107-133.
- Stoker, Bram. 1897. *Dracula*. New York: Black and White Classics


## Note

- The issue of blood circulated briefly in the run up to the Scottish referendum on independence earlier this year. In an article in the Statesman a journalist put to Alistair Darling (opposing independence) that the SNP (Scottish National Party) represent â??blood and soil nationalism.â?• Thereâ??s a reference there to German Romanticism, and the way it was invoked in Nazi Germany. So no one really wants to go there. But the idea of the â??blood lineâ?• and belonging to the soil of a place are strong metaphors still.
- Also see post Howling at the moon.
- Stereo pair pics taken in the Carpathian Mountains yesterday. Transylvania means beyond the forest.

### Category

1. Nature

### Tags

1. blood
2. Romanticism

### Date Created

July 11, 2015
**Author**
rcoyne99

default watermark