

Mortido & Libido

ANOUSHKA BEAZLEY considers blood, lust and the second coming

DRACULA – BBC1 AND NETFLIX
Who knew the BBC was that bleedin' good? Not me. But in this three-part adaptation of one of the most infamous charming manipulators Transylvania has to offer, they bloody excel in script, production, acting and make-up. Sister Agatha Van Helsing (genius play by Dolly Wells) tells Harker, 'clearly you have been contaminated by Count Dracula. Any sexual intercourse you have had. . . is therefore relevant.' Some of you darker types will deduce she was clearly talking about Berne's contaminations (1966). A student of Paul Federn and heavily influenced by Freud, Berne saw sexual acts as gratifying mortido (1992) at the same time as libido (1992). In 1972 Berne differentiated between four powerful forces working within each human life; one of which he described as 'demonic parental programming, abetted by the inner voice the ancients called the Daemon.' Bram Stoker's 1897 novel has created in Dracula the immortal custodian of mortido and libido and in 2020 the blood is just as fresh. Sister Agatha baits the Count: cutting her finger, she watches him watch her drip. She asks, 'What's stopping you, a feeling, a force? Is it physical or mental? Why do you need an invitation?' It is at this point we know that Sister Agatha has her CTA tucked firmly under her rope belt and may even make TA a habit. She knows the Count is playing a psychological game. He cannot come in unless invited and therefore does whatever he can to hook the other. 'You expect me to tell you,' he says. 'Oh, I don't even expect you to know,' she replies. Sister Agatha assumes Dracula's games are so strong they are unconscious.

Agnes: *I'm sorry, I don't understand*

Dracula: *What's unclear to you?*

Agatha: *You went to the dining room? You don't eat food*

Dracula: *I enjoy company, and I like people*

Agatha: *Then why do you kill them?*

Dracula: *Why do you pick flowers?*

Food for thought.

THE AFFAIR –
I know, it's old, but I only just got round to watching it and what a ride! Noah (Dominic West) and Alison (Ruth Wilson) are electric as a fated, lust-driven couple (rampantly realistic sex scenes – do not look away), both married to other people. In all honesty

Season One is the best and after that the honeymoon is over, literally – but more interesting is what drives them. Berne (1961) wrote: 'The everyday problem of the human being is the structure of their waking hours.' He cited stimulus hunger as the basic human drive. Berne (1966) wrote: 'Structure hunger represents the antipathy to monotony. . . and boredom.' Marital domesticity was not satisfying Noah's creative writer urges and having been a carer to his mother, he has repeated the pattern but is in need of something different – stimulus hunger raging against boredom. Alison is grief stricken and the existential futility of life has her stimulus hunger raging against numbness. These two are morally annihilated by the community for their marital transgressions but could they in fact be responding to their survival needs? Is that why the shock vibrations which saturated the affair, both within the fictional world and the viewers real world, contained the fervent ferocity they did, epitomised in Berne's (1964) assertion that intimacy is the 'only completely satisfying answer to stimulus-hunger, recognition-hunger, and structure-hunger.'

MESSIAH – NETFLIX
A politically-charged fusion between *Homeland* and *The Passion*. It's clever really. Could Netflix have known Trump would assassinate an Iranian general and take us so perilously close to World War 3 in December 2019, so that when Netflix dropped its biblical offering in January 2020 we were already gagging for the Messiah and would have followed him through the desert to discover the secrets of his no frizz, curl-tamed luscious locks no matter what he said? Preferring to separate religion from TA, Tudor (2019) illuminates Berne's only two references to religion and how one contradicts his earlier writings on cure. But Berne was Jewish and therefore did believe the Messiah is coming. He just didn't know which channel.

References

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