

of late capitalism, synthesizing Bourdieu, Baudrillard, Gramsci, Harvey, Lash and Urry, and others.

The remainder of the book, however, is curiously disappointing. Far from being a “near-encyclopedic work,” as the jacket promises, *Consuming Youth* offers readings of a fairly limited body of texts, while its theoretical exegesis never reaches the intensity of the introduction. Only seven vampire texts are looked at in any detail. Chapter 1 looks at S. P. Somtow’s novel *Vampire Junction* (Walsworth, 1984) and the film *The Lost Boys* (1987) for models of youth-consumer vampires; chapter 2 examines the division of vampire-consumers in post-Fordist society into yuppies and slackers, exemplified, respectively, by Anne Rice’s novel *Interview with the Vampire* (Ballantine, 1976) and George Romero’s film *Martin* (1978). Chapter 3 examines the ways these class issues are inflected by gender, focusing on homoerotic imagery in the film *The Hunger* (1983) and in novels by Rice and Poppy Z. Brite.

Latham’s accounts are interesting, highly readable, and even useful, but they hardly begin to cover the range of vampires in contemporary pop culture. Where are the vampire role-playing games, the urban legends, the software games, the television shows? Where the heck is  *Buffy*?

The next two chapters, focusing on cyborgs, are even more disappointing. Latham locates a post-Fordist youth-labor dystopia in the venture capitalism of Silicon Valley through a detailed reading of Douglas Coupland’s novel *Microserfs*. Chapter 5 weaves a half-dozen texts together into a complex intertextual narrative about Generation X and how it is defined in part by reference to the Internet.

Things pick up considerably in the final chapter, which attempts to bring all these various strands together through readings of six books and a movie. But one waits in vain for Latham to shift his argument from trendy science fiction novels and fifteen-year-old movies to the cultural icons youths consume en masse. Where is the *Terminator* (movies, comics, or novels)? Where is *Robocop*?

And, again, where is *Buffy*? Mall culture, generation X, homoeroticism, the Internet, slackers, and yuppies (living and undead), can

all be found in this extraordinarily popular television series. In an episode from the third season of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* entitled “The Wish,” a big-time vampire called The Master erects a blood-sucking factory in which a live human is zapped with a stun gun, then strapped to a conveyor belt which pulls her past a series of syringe/vacuums that drain her of blood. The Master proclaims: “Vampires! Undeniably, we are the world’s superior race. Yet we have always been too parochial. Too bound to the mindless routine of the predator. Hunt and kill . . . Hunt and kill . . . Titillating? Yes. Practical? Hardly. Meanwhile the humans, with their plebeian minds, have brought us a truly demonic concept: mass production!” (The Wish Script Part 2 <http://www.studiesinwords.de/shooting/wish2.html>). No one, having read Latham, can help but find layer upon layer of significance in such a scene. This is the redeeming power of the book. Although it fails to address itself to many of the key vampire and cyborg texts of contemporary youth culture, it serves as a superb prolegomena to any study of these texts by laying out the key metaphors and providing us with tools to explore their significance.

**Bloody Mary in the Mirror: Essays in Psychoanalytic Folkloristics.** By Alan Dundes. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002. Pp. xx + 141, bibliographical references, index.)

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Alan Dundes has been a leading scholar in the fields of anthropology and folklore for nearly forty years, during which he has untiringly made a case for interpretation. His professed academic credo, “To make sense of nonsense, find a rationale for the irrational, and seek to make the unconscious conscious” (p. 137), places Dundes on a path also trod by Freud and Lévi-Strauss (see *Tristes Tropiques* [Plon, 1955], pp. 61–63); however, Dundes’s constant effort to interweave structural description and Freudian interpretation has set him against the grain of mainstream folkloristics. He reckons “folklorists are too often regarded (rightly, I think

by their fellow academics as mere collectors and classifiers, but rarely if ever as bona fide scholars seeking to analyze their data meaningfully" (p. ix). Alternatively, Dundes hopes to pave the way for "psychoanalytic folkloristics" (p. x) in showing that psychoanalysis provides the necessary tools—namely, a "range of concepts such as 'projection' and 'family romance' (the Oedipus and Electra complexes)" (p. xvi)—to understand folklore.

*Bloody Mary in the Mirror* comprises a preface, in which the author defines his subject matter and sketches the formation of his life interest in folklore and in psychoanalytic theory, seven recently published essays (including two coauthored by Lauren Dundes) that illustrate the application of Freudian tenets to folklore, and a short epilogue that sets the whole book in the light of the author's lifelong objective of making sense of nonsense while seeking to make the unconscious conscious. Various subjects—religious behavior, vampire beliefs, wondertales ancient and modern, contemporary American rituals, and Mediterranean mores—come under examination to tackle the big question: can psychoanalytic theory materially help us understand folkloristic data? Overall, Dundes challenges readers to judge "whether or not one or more of these essays succeeds in yielding genuine insight into the folklore data in question" (pp. xvi–xvii).

Even though few readers are likely to agree with all the interpretations presented, and critics may feel that some readings oversimplify matters, the overall answer must be "yes." Take for example the book's core chapter, "Bloody Mary in the Mirror." This piece seeks to explain the American contemporary teenage practice of summoning Bloody Mary to appear in a bathroom mirror. Dundes interprets this "rite" as an adolescent celebration of the onset of the first menses, the mirror bleeding image being hypothetically a self-image of sorts. In this strain, Dundes explains an oozing cut in the mirror woman's forehead as an upward displacement of the bleeding vagina, taking account of a demonstrable equivalence of the head and genital area on one hand, and of evidence that "Bloody Mary" connotes menstruation on the other. Independent confirmation for this interpretation comes from Iberia, where the bloody

woman in the mirror is called Veronica. For centuries in Western Christendom this name has unified under the heading of a "true image," *vera icon*, the hemorrhagic woman healed by Jesus (Matt. 9.20–22) and the woman who collects the bloody sweat of Christ on a cloth (Gervase *Otia imperialia* 3.25, cf. *Evangelium Nichodemi* chap. 7, *Vindicta Salvatoris* chap. 18). Note the mirror imagery: Jesus quenches the woman's genital flux; Veronica dries up Christ's facial blood and so becomes his simile (for "veronica" designates both the woman and the bloody imprint on her cloth). Thus, the modern equivalence of Bloody Mary and Veronica—the namesake crystallizing the ancient mirroring of hemorrhagic genitals and a bleeding face—confirms that, in the American ritual, a bleeding face is the mirror image of a menstruating girl. Dundes, working on contemporary American data, reveals equivalencies enduring throughout centuries and across continents. By any standard, such ability to grasp fundamental layers of symbolism must qualify as "genuine insight" into folklore data.

To what extent Dundes owes this interpretive capacity to psychoanalytic theory is less clear. The "Bloody Mary in the Mirror" piece, stripped of its Freudian garb, would still stand. More generally, even though psychoanalytical notions are a constant muse to Dundes, the appeal of his work stems largely from an impressive command of anthropological and folkloristic literature as well as from an uncanny ability to bring coherence to apparently unrelated data. Whether the insights in this book argue for a pointedly psychoanalytic folkloristics or actually plead for a wider-ranging symbolic approach remains, I think, an open question.

One thing does seem clear. *Bloody Mary in the Mirror* keeps alive the ideal of folklore as an intellectually relevant academic pursuit, which alone would be an excellent reason for reading and pondering this stimulating book.

**Popular Stories of Ancient Egypt.** By Gaston Maspero. Ed. and intro. by Hasan El-Shamy. ABC-CLIO Classic Folk and Fairy Tales Series. (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2002. Pp. cliv + 275, tale type and motif index, bibliography