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Title

From Count Dracula to *El conde*: A Brief History of the Vampire Cinema of Latin America

Abstract

In 1931, the feature film *Dracula* (dir. Tod Browning) released to mass critical and box office success, forever cementing the eponymous vampire as a fixture of horror cinema and pop culture. However, often overlooked in discussions of *Dracula*'s impact is a lesser-known film sharing the same name and year of release—*Dracula* (dir. George Melford), is the Spanish-language counterpart to the English-language feature, produced by Universal Pictures using the same sets and equipment and a largely-identical script, but featuring a cast of Spanish-speaking actors in an effort to connect with a Spanish-speaking audience. The Spanish *Dracula* would go on to become just as iconic and influential within its linguistic territory as the English version, laying the foundation for a rich Latin American vampire horror cinema that often escapes the attention of Anglophone cinephiles.

In this presentation I will examine this film tradition, from *Dracula* to films that it inspired including *El vampiro* (1952, dir. Fernando Méndez), *Cronos* (1992, dir. Guillermo del Toro), and *El conde* (2022, dir. Pablo Larraín), in order to show how Latin American filmmakers adopted and adapted conventions of the English-language vampire horror film genre to create a uniquely Latin American cinema shaped by the the particular cultural forces at play in this region, particularly by transforming the vampire into a symbol for the very real monsters of politics and the colonial past. I will turn to close-reading of filmic elements and a review of the relevant literature to support these points and further illustrate how these films (re)make genre and identity.