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The Vampire's Evolution in Literature

*The Influence Bram Stoker's Dracula Has Had on the Works
of Writers of Modern Young Adult Vampire Fiction*

B.A. Essay

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Abstract

The vampire is an interesting creature. This essay explores the vampire and its evolution from the time it first appeared in literature and up to modern vampire literature.

Vampire fiction has gone through many drastic changes during this long period of time as is shown in this essay. A general discussion about the vampire in history and in literature is put forth to give the reader a better understanding of the vampire's evolution through the centuries. The focus will mostly be on the influence Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, a key work in vampire fiction, has had on the works of writers of young adult vampire fiction. In order to examine this, various elements in both *Dracula* and the other primary texts are looked at and similarities and differences between nineteenth-century vampire fiction and modern vampire fiction are analyzed. The vampire as it appears in *Dracula* is quite different from the modern vampire, which explains why vampires have in recent years been divided into two separate categories, that of the "old" and the "new" vampires.

The differences between these two categories are examined along with the folkloric influences that are found in vampire fiction. Modern vampire fiction, which has less to do with folklore than the nineteenth-century fiction, does no longer necessarily belong to the horror genre but has made the move into urban fantasy. This move between genres is interesting and ideas as to the cause of this will be looked at. Aside from *Dracula*, three book series are analyzed. These series are *The Vampire Diaries* by L. J. Smith, *The House of Night* by P. C. Cast and Kristin Cast and *The Vampire Academy* by Richelle Mead. The book series that are examined here are all marketed for young adults and each of them has enjoyed commercial success.

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Introduction

While tales of vampires originally had the purpose of warning people to use caution against possible dangers in the world they eventually came to be a source of entertainment. For a long time now the legends of vampires have kept people entertained, especially those who enjoy horror themed stories. As the vampire became more popular it created something of a vampire craze and nowadays one can find and join vampire fan-clubs, subscribe to vampire magazines and buy vampire related paraphernalia. This includes toys, clothing and even cereal like Count Chocula which is a clear reference to Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*. *Dracula* is a key work in vampire fiction as it brought forth Count Dracula who is the most famous literary vampire character to date. The success of *Dracula* was so immense that references are still being made to it in new vampire fiction. A lot of vampire fiction has been published throughout the years and as the vampire has evolved, so has its character. Anne Rice's bestselling novel *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) was immensely influential to the writers of modern vampire fiction for she brought forth vampire characters that caused people to view the vampire with more sympathy.

The vampires which were originally creatures to fear have become more sympathetic which helps people relate to their trials and suffering. Vampires have evolved and today they can be split into two categories, The "old" and the "new" vampires. The "old" vampires are similar to how vampires were portrayed in folklore that is as monsters that celebrate the evil inside of them. The "new" vampires on the other hand relate less to the folkloric legends for they are more like humans than monsters, as they still hold onto morality. During the 80's and 90's the popularity of vampire fiction soared with novels such as Anne Rice's *The Vampire Chronicles* (1976-2014) and Whitley Strieber's *The Hunger* (1981), both of which portrayed the "new" type of vampire. The popularity of the vampire only increased when stories of vampires were brought into another medium.

Feature films such as *Blade* (1998) and cinematic adaptations of known vampire literature like *Interview with the Vampire* (1994) remain popular. The same is true about television shows such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003), which was based on the feature film of the same title, which became immensely popular. Some vampire shows have been adapted from novels. These shows include *The Vampire Diaries* (2009-

ongoing), which were adapted from L.J. Smith's *The Vampire Diaries* (1991-1992), and *True Blood* (2008-2014), adapted from Charlaine Harris' *The Southern Vampires* series (2001-2013).

Authors of vampire fiction have started to write novels that appeal to the younger generation or young adults. This move to the younger market has been tremendously successful and has produced many bestselling series of novels such as the original *The Vampire Diaries* series (1991-1992) by L.J. Smith, *The Vampire Academy* series (2007-2010) by Richelle Mead and *The House of Night* series (2007-2014) by mother-daughter duo P. C. Cast and Kristin Cast. These series appear to hold an interest for the younger generation and what is more, gets them interested in reading.

What is it about Stoker's *Dracula* and the vampires in the bestselling young adult series mentioned above that has captured and excited people of all ages? Is it the mystery surrounding them and their origins? Or the powers they possess? Is it the romantic aspect that often penetrates these stories? Whatever the cause the vampire's popularity is still growing today and will in all likelihood continue to grow for years to come. While it is possible to see some influences from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* in the texts of modern writers of young adult vampire fiction, it is clear that they also tend to bring forth new ideas which creates a room for the vampire to continue its evolution.

Historical Background of the Vampire

The Vampire in Folklore

Vampires did not originate in literature despite having for a long time been prominent in that medium where they make up a whole genre today. In the preface to his book, *The Vampire: A Casebook* (1998), Alan Dundes emphasizes this by stating that "the fact is that the vampire did not originate in literature or popular culture" (location 13 of 2659). Figuring out for certain when the first tale of these undead creatures came to light is in all probability close to impossible and thus the exact date of origin will not be discussed here. Legends of vampires had however existed in folklore for centuries before they were captured and used as characters in literature. While vampire folklore exists in most continents, the focus here will be on the legends as they appeared in Eastern Europe.

Tracing the origin of the vampire is no easy task but regarding the Slavic vampire, Jan L. Perkowski has “concluded that it originated in the Balkans” when “speculation on vampires evolved as a result of the confrontation between pre-Christian paganism and Christianity” begun around the ninth century (Melton 561). From then on the “vampire found its place within the world view of the people of eastern and central Europe” (Melton 562). It was however “not the all-pervasive symbol of evil it would come to be in nineteenth-century western European literature” for the vampire’s role “was to explain various forms of unpredicted and undeserved evil that befell people” (Melton 562). In the folklore vampires were not made by other vampires nor born vampires, as is often the case in popular modern vampire fiction. In folklore “the vampire was the product of an irregularity in the community life, most commonly a problem with the process of either death and burial or of birth” (Melton 562). Reports of vampires and vampire epidemics have been put to paper since the late eighteenth century in Europe. In his essay “Forensic Pathology and the European Vampire” (1998) Paul Barber names the most common vampire traits as he quotes the *Mercure galant* on an account they gave of vampires which stated that “[t]hey appear from midday to midnight and come to suck the blood of the living people and animals in such great abundance that sometimes it comes out of their mouths, their noses, and especially their ears, and that sometimes the body swims in its blood which has spilled out into its coffin” (location 1620 of 2659). Since vampires were believed to be evil, the people believed to be vampires were often dug up in order to end their undead “lives” and the evil they brought with them.

In order to destroy them, the “vampires” were exhumed and staked, usually by wood, through the heart in one motion. This was often followed by decapitating or burning the corpse. Barber tells the story of Paja Tomic who after death had started returning at night and scaring the inhabitants of his family’s house and so “[t]he corpse was dug up, it was pierced by hawthorn pole and thrown onto the stakes. After the body was burned, they dispersed its ashes, and those few charred bones which remained were thrown back into the grave” (Barber 1077 of 2659). If the corpse was decapitated after being staked the head was sometimes tucked between the corpse’s legs and/or garlic stuffed in its mouth to prevent the corpse from being able to return to its vampire form.

The portrayal of the vampire has changed over the centuries. The vampire originated in folklore and many of its characteristics are derived from folkloric legends where it is often portrayed as grotesque. The vampire in literature however is more often portrayed as charming and beautiful. After its first appearance in literature, however, the vampire has changed drastically. The vampire has, through the years, evolved from the monstrous creature the legends tell of and people were frightened by, to a being that may be considered civil and does not necessarily frighten people anymore but rather brings them wonderment.

The Vampire in Literature

While Count Dracula from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is the most famous vampire in literature it is not the first vampire to appear in literature. Melton writes that a gothic short story "The Vampyre" by John Polidori "was the first full work of fiction about a vampire written in English" (xv). It was to some extent influenced by legends of Lord Byron and a fragment of a short story he had written. After its publication other vampire short stories started to appear in publication and among the most popular of these stories was "Carmilla" by Sheridan La Fanu, published in 1872. It was not, however, until 1897 when *Dracula* by Stoker was published that the vampire fiction reached a turning point. The novel changed the relatively unknown Abraham "Bram" Stoker "into the most successful horror novelist of all time" (Frayling 4). Today, the popularity of vampire literature has reached an all-time high, "[n]o vampire novel, however, has ever surpassed the general popularity of *Dracula*, which has been in print continuously since it was first published" (Melton xvi). It is worth noting that Melton's book was published in 1994 and novels such as *Interview with the Vampire* by Anne Rice, which was popularized again after the success of its cinematic adaptation, and *Twilight* by Stephanie Meyer may, since Melton's book was published, have become more popular than *Dracula*. Stoker's novel will however undoubtedly continue to be read by new generations. It is interesting that both "Carmilla" and *Dracula* were written by Irish authors since "the vampire rarely appeared in Irish literature" but today the "tradition of Irish vampire lore is celebrated" (Melton 326). Vampire literature has been so popular that a number of bibliographical works have been published in order to keep track of all the vampire fiction. As "literary vampires have received the most attention" (Melton 46)

new bibliographies are being published regularly detailing these literary works in order to “deal with the vast outpouring of new vampire fiction” (Melton 46). These bibliographies have been compiled by numerous people but Melton says in his book that the “comprehensive efforts of Riccardo, Carter, Cox, Frost, Finné and Melton have been most useful to scholars, but they have been supplemented by a variety of selective bibliographies which have circulated widely among enthusiasts” (46). Since Melton’s book was published twenty years ago, it is safe to assume that new, more comprehensive material may have been published during that time. The vampire has evolved throughout the ages as they have become popular subjects to authors of horror and fantasy fiction.

Writings of vampires have increased and with them the popularity of the vampire. There have been made numerous shows and feature films portraying vampires. Due to this the modern “vampire has become an easily recognizable character in Western popular culture” (Melton 95). The modern vampires are “different, however, in that they possess a pair of fangs [...], have a pale complexion, sleep in coffins, are associated with bats, and only come out at night” (Melton 95). Despite these changes in the vampire characteristics the popularity of the literary vampire continues to soar which points to the fact that people enjoy associating new ideas with the old ones. The vampire was, at the beginning of the nineteenth-century, transformed, by writers, from the folkloric vampire “into a gothic villain” and while “retaining many of the characteristics from the reports of vampires [...], writers were quite selective in their choice of acceptable attributes” (Melton 96). This is quite similar to what modern writers of vampire fiction are doing. The only difference is that they are selecting acceptable attributes from other vampire fiction, or even creating new ones, instead of portraying their vampires only in accordance with folklore as the writers of the nineteenth-century did. The subject of vampires has had immense success not only in short stories and novels but also in comic books. The constant evolution of the vampire has prevented vampire literature from becoming stagnant and today vampire literature is not only marketed toward adult readers but also toward the younger readers. The vampire has changed from the “old” monstrous vampire in *Dracula* to the more sympathetic vampire that can be found in twenty-first century vampire literature.

The Differences between the “Old” and the “New” Vampire

The character of Dracula is different from the contemporary vampire or the “new” vampire as Jules Zanger frequently calls them in his article “Metaphor into Metonymy: The Vampire Next Door” (1997). He says in his article “To speak of the “new” vampire however, demands that we first distinguish this creature from the “old” one, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*” (17). He characterizes Dracula as the “old” vampire which is distinguishable as solitary while “the new one tends to be communal” and “is often presented to us as multiple, communal and familial, living with and relating to other vampires” (18). Zanger also characterizes Dracula as wholly evil and morally unredeemable by saying that “[i]n Stoker's novel, Dracula is presented to the reader as the earthly embodiment of supernal Evil” (18), and that “Dracula, for Stoker and for Stoker's readers, is the Anti-Christ” (18). While Dracula is portrayed as the embodiment of evil, the vampires in the other primary texts used for this essay mostly follow the characterization of the “new” vampire showing that the “new” and sympathetic vampire is on the rise. This is probably due to the fact that it is easier for people to relate to the sympathetic vampire than to the “old” vampire. Victoria Nelson, who is less negative towards “new” vampires than Zanger, says that the supernatural cannot be restricted “exclusively to that which provokes terror and fear” because the vampire subgenre “has followed the new twenty-first-century arc of evil villains morphing into sympathetic heroes and ultimately, guardian angels and beneficent gods” (location 1348). Nelson’s words emphasize the vampire’s evolution in recent years where the vampire has become more than human without becoming a monster. This change is shown in a more tangible way in the analysis of the primary texts here below.

Dracula

The idea for *Dracula* came to Stoker in an unconventional manner. Christopher Frayling writes, that Stoker “had a terrifying nightmare in 1890: the nightmare found its way into some notes he was scribbling for a possible story” (4). While *Dracula* is a novel of fiction it is to some extent based on real figures and on reports related to

vampires. The character of Dracula was loosely based on the historical figure Vlad Dracula.

Vlad Dracula, who is today better known as Vlad the Impaler, was in the fifteenth century a “prince of Wallachia. Vlad earned the nickname of Tepes or “the Impaler” due to his “brutal manner of terrorizing his enemies and the seemingly arbitrary manner in which he had people punished” (Melton 668). Vlad has been revered as a folk hero in Romania for his part in deterring Ottoman forces from invasion (“Vlad III”). While being loosely based on Vlad Tepes, Dracula is his own character.

Stoker portrays Dracula as an evil but cunning monster, as a predator toying with its prey by scaring it before going in for the kill. The story of Count Dracula tells of his relocation from Transylvania to England and the impact it has on the people he comes in contact with. When strange happenings start to occur leading to the death of Lucy Westenra, the people closest to her, Jonathan Harker, Mina Murrey (later Mina Harker), John Seward, Abraham Van Helsing, Quincey Morris and Arthur Holmwood come to realize that Dracula is a vampire. They then find themselves in a dangerous game of cat and mouse and start working together in the hopes of stopping Dracula.

The story is presented to the reader through journals, newspaper articles and letters and is organized in accordance to dates in a way that the reader reads the story straight on instead of going back and forth in time. The story is in fact all data that Mina and to some extent her husband, Jonathan Harker, have gathered in an organized bundle in the story. This bundle contains the diaries and other pertinent papers from the Harkers, Lucy Westenra, John Seward and Abraham Van Helsing which have been gathered in order to study the case of Count Dracula. What is intriguing is that Dracula’s point of view is absent from the story despite the fact that the story revolves around him and his actions. By omitting Dracula’s point of view Stoker makes his character all the more frightening for the reader cannot know what to expect of Dracula and sees him merely as a terrifying figure lurking in the dark.

While “*Dracula* enjoyed considerable success as a novel [...] the story did not become a broad popular culture phenomenon until it made the journey into film” (Nelson location 2558). The novel however, has a loyal fan base and is still popular among both older and newer generations. *Dracula* is “the key work in the development of the modern literary myth of the vampire” (Melton 583). What makes the story so

popular is Stoker's use of folkloric elements. He crafted a real character out of old legends which helped people recognize the characteristics of Dracula. He made sure that the vampire he created had its roots in folklore by researching the folkloric elements. While Stoker also used some original ideas he made sure that people received the image of the vampire as it was portrayed in the legends. Since his character was so similar to how it was portrayed in folklore it was easier for people to believe that these monsters might actually exist, which added a new dimension of horror to his story. What could be more terrifying than monsters that might, according to the legends, be real?

While folkloric elements may not be used much by writers of modern vampire fiction it is at least mentioned in some way. As in L. J. Smith's *The Struggle*, the second novel in *The Vampire Diaries* series, the main character, Elena asks a vampire whether a number of folkloric elements work against vampires (347).

The Vampire Diaries

The Vampire Diaries series are written by L. J. Smith who is an American bestselling author of over three dozen children and young adult novels. The original series, which were published in 1991-1992, follows the life and adventures of Elena Gilbert, a young high school student who comes to know two vampire brothers, Stefan and Damon Salvatore, and ultimately finds her heart torn between the two. Two types of vampires are portrayed in the series.

In the series the reader is introduced to, as Zanger calls them, the "new" vampire as well as the "old" vampire. What marks the difference between these two in the series is whether or not a vampire drinks human blood and thus makes full use of their powers. Stefan Salvatore is a vampire who has just moved to the fictional town of Fell's Church where he meets Elena Gilbert. Stefan has more in common with the "new" vampire than the "old", despite the fact that for centuries he has lived a rather solitary life. Now, he is ready to try to live a normal life again which includes living in a community and attending school. In order to do this he feeds mostly off of animals and seldom kills his prey. Despite the powerful attraction between him and Elena, he tries to stay away from her because he is scared he might not be able to control his lust for human blood around her.

After Stefan moves to Fell's church strange things start occurring and he is manipulated, by the "old" vampire, into believing that he is responsible for everything that starts going awry, such as attacks on people where blood is drawn or where people are killed. Since Stefan cannot sense any malicious creature nearby he starts believing that he is responsible for everything which causes him emotional distress.

What strengthens his believe about him being responsible is that each time there is an attack, it is in close vicinity to him and after each attack he wakes up in a sort of a stupor. His believe is also strengthened by the fact that to him it is obvious that these are vampire attacks due to the injuries sustained by the victims who look like they have been attacked or mauled by a predatory animal.

It does occur to him at first that he is being played but since he does not, in the beginning, drink human blood his powers are weak and limited which leaves him unable to sense or use his powers against the more powerful "old" vampire. The "old" vampire, as defined by Zanger, enjoys toying with Stefan out of malicious intent, by making him fear for his sanity. The "old" vampire is stronger than Stefan since it revels in darkness; it consumes human blood and has spent centuries working on training its powers. There is a clear distinction between the "new" and the "old" vampires in the series.

While the "old" vampire in *The Vampire Diaries* provokes terror and fear, the "new" vampire, as shown in the character of Stefan, brings the feeling of safety. Stefan has indeed morphed into a sympathetic hero as he wishes to protect human lives, thereby showing his willingness to risk his life by going up against his own race. He does not merely wish to protect them against other vampires but also from himself, which he shows the reader by trying to keep away from Elena. The reader also notices that Stefan has become a guardian angel to Elena, who feels safe and at home with him, saving her not only from the danger created by vampires but also from humans that pose a threat. This emphasizes what Nelson said about the "new" vampires, that they are more heroes and guardian angels than monsters.

The folkloric aspect in the story is minimal but will be examined further in the chapter: Folkloric Elements in the Primary Texts.

The Vampire Academy

The *Vampire Academy* series by Richelle Mead, an American bestselling author of urban fantasy novels for both teen and adult readers, were written in the years 2007-2010. The series follows the adventures of a teenage Dhampir, Rose Hathaway, who in the first novel is brought back to St. Vladimir's Academy along with her best friend Vasilisa, also known as Lissa, Dragomir who is a Moroi. At the academy Rose is put in training to become a bodyguard for Lissa as the Dhampirs purpose is to guard the Moroi against the Strigoi, which are the evil undead vampires. Together they get into a lot of dangerous situations that they have to get through in order to survive.

The Vampire Academy series like *The Vampire Diaries* series contains more than one type of vampire though one could argue that the Moroi and the Strigoi in *Vampire Academy* are more like two separate species. While Mead uses the words Moroi and Strigoi, taken from Eastern European folklore where they were used to describe witches that turned into vampires after their deaths, she has created a new definition for them. In the novel the Moroi are "alive and wield elemental magical" while the Strigoi are "undead and evil-feeding on the innocent to survive" ("*Vampire Academy Series*"). It could be argued that the series has in fact four types of vampires. In addition to the Moroi and Strigoi are the Dhampirs, which are half vampires and half humans and then there is the character of Victor Dashkov, who is quite similar in character to Dracula, that is greedy and selfish with extremely low morals, while he still belongs to the good vampire race. Dashkov is to the Moroi society what dangerous criminals are to the rest of our society.

If one were to name the two types of vampires based on Zanger's definition of the "new" and the "old" vampire, the Strigoi would be the "old" vampire as they have given into their evil nature and the Moroi would be the "new" vampire as they still hold onto morality. The Moroi numbers are rapidly dwindling as the number of Moroi turning Strigoi, whether by choice or not, are increasing. There are two ways for the Moroi to turn Strigoi, they need to be bitten by the Strigoi or they can turn voluntarily by killing the victim they feed on, usually another Moroi.

While the Moroi are not all saints they are different from the Strigoi in the sense that they live by a certain code and only feed on "feeders". "Feeders were essential to

Moroi life. They are humans who willingly volunteered to be a regular blood source, humans from the fringes of society who gave their lives over to the secret world of the Moroi” (Mead 44-45). The Strigoi have no such rules. They feed on humans, Dhampirs and Moroi and are not concerned with whether they kill their victims. They are similar to the character of Dracula in nature, that is purely evil besides being intelligent and cunning and like to play games and manipulate people. Like in *Dracula* their bodies have been taken over by a demon and the only way to save their mortal souls is by killing them. There is one character, Dimitri, who has unwillingly been turned into Strigoi and one could argue that he is a mixture of Lucy and Mina from *Dracula*. This is due to the fact that he goes through the change like Lucy, changing from the sympathetic mortal to the demonic immortal. He is at one time almost killed and the only thing that saves him then is the fact that the stake missed his heart. However, similar to Mina his soul is saved without him being killed. This is done by the use of magic. Dimitri was a Dampir and a guardian before he got turned and again after his soul was saved. Dhampirs are essential to the vulnerable Moroi who need them for protection.

The Dhampirs are the Moroi’s guardians and the reason for why they gladly took on said role is that they need the Moroi to keep their race from going extinct as the Dhampirs cannot procreate with one another. In order for a Dampir to be born the Dhampirs have to procreate with the Moroi, which is why it is in the Dhampirs best interest to keep the Moroi alive.

While Dhampirs are only half vampires they possess some of the vampire qualities such as heightened senses and reflexes and great strength. They are also free from the need to drink blood. These attributes are what make the Dhampirs such excellent guardians.

Usually half vampires are portrayed as slayers due to their supernatural abilities such as strength and reflexes. This can be seen in the case of *Blade*, who has enjoyed success in comic books and in feature films. Melton says that “it was believed that the dhampir had unusual powers for detecting and destroying the vampire - a most important quality” (168). This change in Dhampirs from being slayers to becoming guardians in the *Vampire Academy* is interesting because usually Dhampirs are portrayed as slayers who hate vampires, often due to self-loathing, and are the

vampire's greatest enemy. In the *Vampire Academy* however, they are portrayed as risking their lives in order to protect the vampires. While most Dhampirs do not like how the Moroi sometimes use Dhampirs as "blood-whores" (when Dhampirs volunteer to give their blood to feed the Moroi due to the drug like state it brings them), they feel more shame for their race rather than anger toward the Moroi.

The House of Night

The House of Night series are written by American bestselling mother-daughter team P. C. Cast and Kristin Cast. While *The House of Night* series are the only novels Kristin Cast has published the same cannot be said about her mother P. C. Cast. She is a member of the Oklahoma Writers Hall of Fame and three series by her had already been published when she started working on *The House of Night* series. The first instalment of the series, *Marked*, was published in 2007 and in the next seven years to come the authors wrote multiple instalments to the series which ended with the twelfth novel, *Redeemed*, in late 2014.

The series follow Zoey Redbird who is marked by a vampire tracker as a fledgling vampire and goes to a boarding school in Tulsa, Oklahoma. At the boarding school she receives magical powers (which is similar to the *Vampire Academy* and will be analyzed further in the chapter: The Move from Horror to Fantasy) and finds others like her that she forms friendships with which help her through the dangerous adventures she has to go through. The friendships she forms are especially important in her dealings with the High priestess Neferet who has everybody believing that she is good when in fact that is just a facade. The portrayal of the vampires in *The House of Night* series differs from the other two series in regards to the fact that they are neither born vampires like in *The Vampire Academy* series nor turned into vampires by the swapping of bodily fluids or bite as in *The Vampire Diaries* series.

The vampires in *The House of Night* series are chosen by Nyx who is sometimes "known as Night personified" (Mahoney location 117 of 3624) and is the daughter of Chaos and mother of Hemera (Day) (Mahoney location 117 of 3624). In her essay "Night in the House of Good and Evil: Nyx's Portrayal in the House of Night Series" Karen Mahoney says: "Nyx, Greek goddess of night, is traditionally known as a

primordial god, one of the creators of the world” (location 117 of 3624). As with all the other vampire fledglings in the series, the main character, Zoey Redbird is chosen by Nyx. There are several references to this in the book, one such reference is when Zoey first encounters Nyx who says to her: “I have Marked you as my own” (Cast, *The House of Night: Marked* 40). Another reference is made by the vampire tracker as he marks her: ”Night has chosen thee; thy death will be thy birth” (Cast, *The House of Night: Marked* 3). Being chosen is not all fun and games.

When a human has been marked as chosen in the fictional world in *The House of Night* series they receive the mark of a crescent moon on their forehead and begin their transformation. The transformation usually takes a few years to finalize, except in Zoey’s case as the reader finds out as the story continues. After being chosen Zoey gives her thoughts on the situation: “The problem, of course, was that turning into a monster was the brighter of my two choices. Choice Number 1: I turn into a vampire, which equals a monster in just about any human’s mind. Choice Number 2: My body rejects the Change and I die” (Cast, *The House of Night: Marked* 6).

Unlike in *The Vampire Academy* series and *The Vampire Diaries* series, the vampires in *The House of Night* series do not live in secrecy. People know about their existence since human beings often receive their mark in a public place like Zoey, who received her mark at school. Zoey is upset about her situation at first, though not because she is becoming a part of another race but rather because of how prejudicial humans in this fictional world are towards vampires.

While people know about their existence they are however not always well received by the humans who often treat them as monsters, despite the fact that most vampires live peacefully among them. Parents of kids who are chosen sometimes cannot wait to drop them off at the vampire fledgling boarding school and leave them behind. Despite being feared by some, many vampires are very public figures as vampires are gifted with good looks and are often talented in liberal arts as Zoey’s thoughts confirm: “Yes, I knew vampires were attractive. Everyone knew that. The most successful actors and actresses in the world were vampyres. They were also dancers and musicians, authors and singers. Vampyres dominated the arts” (Cast, *The House of Night: Marked* 62). Like with the other series there are both “old” vampires and the more sympathetic “new” vampires in this series.

The heroine, Zoey, represents the sympathetic vampire. She embraces not only the vampire part of herself but also the human aspect. She cares for everyone, whether they are human or vampires and becomes a guardian angel to both races as she tries to stop Neferet, the “old” vampire, from starting a war that could end with the extinction of either race. What differs between the other series and *The House of Night* series is that similarly to *Dracula* there are very few “old” vampires with Neferet being the main one though she has followers that follow her lead. Most vampires in *The House of Night* are “new” vampires that are fooled by Neferet’s facade and her powers as she possesses an ability, a hypnotic power, that makes it easy for her to charm people and to hide her true nature from them. She is similar to *Dracula* in many ways, including her ability to keep the evil inside of her hidden, thereby fooling people. She is also an expert at manipulating people and keeps those who know about the darkness inside of her quiet, either by threatening them, using memory magic on them or by killing them. The vampires in the *House of Night* are portrayed as being chosen to become demi-gods. This limits the use for folkloric elements in the series, which is kept minimal.

The Move from Horror to Fantasy

Many writers of vampire fiction have been influenced by *Dracula*. Instead of following directly in Stoker’s footsteps, the authors of *The Vampire Academy* series and *The House of Night* series have created whole different worlds for their series. They have therefore changed the vampire fiction format by turning it from the usual horror fiction to something new that rather fits the definition of urban fantasy, due to the first person narrative of a modern supernatural story.

Both novels feature boarding schools located outside of a city where vampire students live and study. The only adults in the student’s lives are their teachers and guardians. This means that they have some freedom from parental supervision and are in turn rather independent as they have to rely on themselves to solve their problems which have more often than not to do with the supernatural.

This difference in format suggests that the authors of the series wanted to bring forth their own ideas rather than be limited to what people have already read in other vampire fiction. This includes the use of magic in their fiction, especially elemental

magic which has not been used much in regards to vampires. While magic is interwoven into the storyline throughout *The Vampire Academy* series it serves a backstage role for the most part. However Lissa is worried because she has not found her affinity for magic which is unusual for a Moroi of her age. It turns out that her affinity is for spirit and the reason for why no one knows about her affinity is that it is so extremely rare that almost no one has heard of it or if they have heard of similar experiences to hers they are unable to connect it to magical affinity. The Moroi believe only in the affinity for air, fire, water and earth. However, throughout the story Lissa and Rose learn about spirit on their own before teaching others about it. Lissa's affinity for spirit makes her charismatic.

She is more talented in glamour and compulsion than other vampires and is able to restore spirit, heal and give life back to the dead whether it is a plant, an animal, a human or a vampire. In order to heal and restore she has to connect to the other's spirit and gives some of her spirit to them in order for her magic to work. This is similar to imprinting in the *House of Night* series except imprinting is what happens when a vampire drinks human blood or gives a human some of its blood. The bond however is similar. The use of elemental magic can also be seen in the *House of Night* series.

The magic in the *House of Night* series is the driving force behind the story. In the series the vampires believe in all five elements unlike in the beginning of *The Vampire Academy* series. Another difference between the series is that not every vampire in the *House of Night* series has affinity for magic. The vampires believe that their powers come from Nyx and while she grants all vampires some power or talents, only a few of them have the ability to wield magic. This makes Zoey special as she possesses affinity for all five elements, which in her world is unheard of. The reason for Zoey's special ability is due to the fact that Nyx has chosen Zoey as her helper or to represent Nyx on earth for she knows that someone has to stop the High Priestess Neferet. This is due to the fact that Neferet has made evil plans which center on destroying the balance between good and evil on earth which she hopes will lead to a war between vampires and humans. Zoey has therefore been chosen by Nyx as Neferet's adversary. The reason Nyx chose Zoe for this role is due to Zoey's empathy. Zoey cares about both humans and vampires and will do everything in her power in order to stop Neferet, who believes the vampires to be the superior race and views

humans merely as a nuisance. This can be seen when Neferet says with a “cold flatness to her voice” to Zoey that “humans in your past, and even in your present and future will become less and less important to you until, eventually, you will feel little for them” (211). This for Zoey is unimaginable because she cannot imagine that she could stop caring for humans. While horror can be found in these series, they belong rather to the fantasy genre, more specifically to the urban fantasy. Despite this move from horror to fantasy, Stoker’s novel is clearly influential to the writers of the *House of Night* series as they refer to his novel on several occasions.

References to Stoker’s novel are common in vampire fiction as *Dracula* has influenced many writers of vampire fiction. There are several references to *Dracula* in *The House of Night* series. Zoey mentions in the first book, *Marked*, that *Dracula* is among her favorite novels (Cast, *Marked* 72). Later on in the novel Zoey is worrying about whether she imprinted Heath, her ex-boyfriend. One can see the different points of view of Zoey, the sympathetic vampire, and Neferet, the “old” vampire, in relation to *Dracula* by the short dialogue that follows. Neferet is explaining the imprinting situation to Zoey and says:

“Let me know if he tries to see you again. If he calls you, don’t answer. If he began Imprinting even the sound of your voice will effect him and work as a lure to draw him to you.”

“It sounds like something out of *Dracula*,” I muttered.

“It’s nothing like that wretched book!” she snapped. “Stoker vilified vampyres, which has caused our kind endless petty troubles with humans.” (Cast, *Marked* 215)

While Zoey views *Dracula* as innocent fiction Neferet gets angry about how Stoker wrote about vampires which might be explained by what Zoey learns later on in the series when she is reading a textbook and finds reference to *Dracula* when studying imprinting. “There the text went off on a tangent about how Bram Stoker had actually been Imprinted by a vamp High Priestess, but that he had not understood her commitment to Nyx had to come before their tie, and in a fit of jealous anger had betrayed her by exaggerating the negative aspects of an Imprint in his infamous book, *Dracula*” (Cast, *Betrayed* 170).

Neferet's anger at Stoker and his novel can be explained by her understanding that Stoker had betrayed her race by creating a vicious vampire character for the entire world to see. It is however questionable whether this account of Stoker is accurate or not (in this fictional world) since the textbook was written by vampires who may have an agenda by teaching students that Stoker was a villain and that his account of vampires is therefore tainted by negativity instead of teaching them that there are villainous members in their own race.

Other references to *Dracula* in the texts are often more obscure. Instead of naming Stoker or his novel in the texts the authors sometimes instead choose to create characters similar to the ones found in Stoker's novel. The Casts used this type of reference, in their *House of Night* series, with the character of Neferet who is, as previously mentioned, manipulative and cunning like Count Dracula. Another type of obscure reference is when the author gives their vampire characters similar qualities as Stoker did with *Dracula*. Like Dracula the Strigoi in Mead's series *The Vampire Academy* are incredibly strong. In *Dracula* Jonathan sees the Count climbing out of his window and watched in horror as Dracula started to crawl down the fall, face down. He wrote in his journal "I saw the fingers and toes grasp the corners of the stones" and that the Count started to "move downwards with considerable speed" (location 620). This shows the incredible strength Dracula possesses. The Strigoi in Mead's novel are also strong as Dimitri warns Rose when he says to her "[y]ou have no idea what Strigoi are like [...] until you've seen how strong they are [...] you can't even imagine" (125). It is not only the characters and characteristics in Stoker's novel that make it special but also his use of folkloric elements. He painted for his readers a credible vampire character that could fit into any Eastern European folkloric legend.

The Usage of Folkloric Elements

The idea of the vampire originated in folklore which is why much of the vampire literature contains some folkloric elements. The influence the folkloric legends have had on vampire literature is important for it brings the old legends to life, often in new and unexpected ways. Some texts tell a fictional story of how and when the vampires

originated, while other texts never mention it. Stoker's *Dracula* is among the most heavy handed when it comes to basing vampire fiction on reported folkloric elements.

Based on Stoker's writing, it is clear that he was familiar with the vampire as it appeared in folklore and that his view of the vampire was influenced not only by the vampire tales he had read such as "Carmilla" (Melton 584) but also by the folkloric legends. His utilization of folkloric elements permeates the story from start, when it is made clear that Dracula is a creature to be feared, to the finish when he is destroyed when his heart is pierced. Not all vampire literature is based on folklore.

In some vampire literature the use of folklore is minimal, non-existent or even ridiculed, as is the case in Smith's *The Struggle* when Stefan laughs when Elena asks if garlic is effective against vampires (347). This is, in itself, an important statement. The fact that some writers choose to ignore how the vampire was portrayed in folklore could mean that the authors have gotten tired of the same old stuff and want to create something new, that the authors want to distance their vampire fiction from previously known vampire fiction or it could be that they simply want to put together a story without putting in any research into the folkloric legends. Listed below are some of the elements that can be found in Stoker's *Dracula* and connections will be made, where it is possible, to the other primary texts.

Crosses, Crucifixes and Holy Wafers

Crosses are a great protection for warding off evil. Veselin Čajkanović states in his article "The Killing of a Vampire" that a "cross is a sure and universal protection against every demon and against every evil in general" (location 1172 of 2659). Since a vampire is essentially an evil being, it is no wonder that the symbols relating to God, which stands for all things good, should work well against vampires. At the beginning of *Dracula* crosses and crucifixes appear frequently as Harker is travelling to Count Dracula's remote castle. Most people he encounters, who know of Dracula and where Harker is heading, cross themselves and point with two fingers at him as "a charm or a guard against the evil eye" (Stoker location 161 of 6442), and try to sway him not to go to the castle. Harker writes in his journal of the landlord he stayed with on his journey to Dracula's castle:

He and his wife, the old lady who had received me, looked at each other in a frightened sort of way [...] When I asked him if he knew Count Dracula, and could tell me anything of his castle, both he and his wife crossed themselves, and, saying that they knew nothing at all, simply refused to speak further.

(Stoker location 129 of 6442)

As they could not convince Harker to stay, the old lady insists on giving him a crucifix, which he then carries around his neck. The crucifix saves him later on when Dracula startles him as he is shaving which caused him to cut himself. When the Count sees the blood he tries to grab at Harker's throat in fury but as Dracula's hand touches the beads of the crucifix however, there is "an instant change in him, for the fury passed so quickly that I could hardly believe that it was ever there" (Stoker location 484 of 6442). However, in Smith's novel *The Struggle* (book two of *The Vampire Diaries*) crucifixes are said to have no effect except "if the person holding one *believes* it's a protection" (346).

Stoker also uses Holy wafers, or sacramental bread, as a repellent against vampires. After Lucy becomes a vampire, Van Helsing uses this type of repellent as a way to keep her from entering her tomb by placing it "into the crevices between the door and its setting in the tomb" (Stoker location 3480 of 6442). In order to drive Dracula away from London he and the other male members of the group place the wafers in the boxes Dracula brought to England, which contain his native soil, as a way of keeping him from resting there. When Van Helsing places a wafer against Mina's forehead, when they worry that she might be changing, "[t]here was a fearful scream which almost froze our hearts to hear. As he had placed the Wafer on Mina's forehead, it had seared it [...] had burned into the flesh as though it had been a piece of white-hot metal" (Stoker location 4921 of 6442). While the uses of Christian symbols have diminished in modern vampire fiction it is still believed that these symbols will ward against evil. Another thing that is said to ward against evil is garlic.

Garlic

Garlic is featured prominently in folklore and "while the crucifix slowly disappeared from the list of anti-vampire weapons" (Melton 249), garlic remained steadfast against

vampire attacks or as a way to keep vampires at bay. “In the southern Slavic countries and neighboring Romania, garlic was integrated into the vampire myth. It was used in both the detection of and prevention of attacks by vampires” (Melton 249). In Murgoci’s article she says: “It is known that a man is a vampire if he does not eat garlic; this idea is also found among the South Slavs” (location 287 of 2659). If a person, in these regions, was suspected of vampirism garlic would sometimes be placed in their mouth or inside their coffin (Melton 249) since they “have an intense aversion to garlic” (Melton 248). Stoker used garlic on more than a few occasions in *Dracula*, especially in regards to Lucy Westenra.

As Lucy starts getting sick, Van Helsing is quick to figure out what is causing her sickness and starts placing garlic around Lucy’s room. He places a wreath of garlic around Lucy’s neck and smears it on the sashes in her bedroom, so that whenever air “would get in it would be laden with the garlic smell” (Stoker location 2200 of 6442), he also rubbed it on each side of the door and fireplace so that no evil creature might enter (Stoker location 2200 of 6442). Lucy wrote in her diary that same evening saying: “I never liked garlic before, but tonight it is delightful! There is peace in its smell” (Stoker location 2214 of 6442). Her words indicate that the garlic had a calming effect on her which might mean that the garlic lessened Dracula’s power over her. Lucy’s mother, Mrs. Westenra, however, due to ignorance and in all innocence, removes the garlic from the room which leads to Lucy’s deterioration (Stoker location 2229 of 6442).

After Lucy dies Van Helsing believes that Lucy has returned from the dead and convinces Arthur, her fiancé, Jack and Quincey to go with him to her tomb in order to save her soul by using a stake to pierce her heart before decapitating her corpse and last but not least, by placing garlic in its mouth (Stoker location 3608 of 6442). While Stoker follows traditional folklore when it comes to garlic Smith, however, in her series *The Vampire Diaries* does not.

Smith’s vampires do not have the same aversion to garlic as Stoker’s vampires do. In *The Struggle*, Elena asks Stefan whether she should be “stocking up on garlic” (346), he laughs and answers with “[o]nly if you want to be unpopular” (346). By that he means that garlic’s only effect for keeping people or vampires at bay is the bad

breath it induces and at the same time confirming that in this series, garlic has no effect on vampires. This is similar to the vampires in the *House of Night* series.

In *Marked*, the first book in the *House of Night* series, the vampire fledglings do not appear to have any aversion towards garlic as they are served garlic bread at the boarding school. Stevie Rae, one of the vampire fledglings, explains to Zoey when she is new on campus, that: “[t]hat whole vampyres can’t stand garlic thing is total bullshit” (Cast, *Marked* 80)

While garlic was an effective ward against evil in the nineteenth-century it seems that its powers are limited to that century because in most modern vampire fiction, garlic is ineffective, limited only to causing bad breath.

Stakes and Other Weapons and Ways to Kill a Vampire

The uses of weapons against vampires have been known since legends of vampires started circulating. The best known and most common weapon against vampirism is the stake. Melton writes that the “most well-known way to kill a vampire was by staking it in the heart” (579). While stakes are used as weapons against vampires nowadays they were to begin with used to make sure the vampire could not escape the grave. Melton explains that early on in Europe, before people started using coffins, the “corpses of persons suspected of returning from their graves would be staked as a means of keeping them attached to the ground below their body” (580). There were different opinions on how a staking should be performed between regions.

In Russia it was believed that one had to be able to stake a person believed of vampirism in one stroke and that if more than one stroke was used the suspected vampire would return to life (Melton 580). In some regions stakes had to be made out of a specific type of wood, for instance hawthorne, and in others wood was not used at all but rather iron: “in Bulgaria it is a red-hot iron which is driven through the heart” (Murgoci location 268 of 2659). In Vâlcea it was believed to be “sufficient to put a needle into the heart” (Murgoci location 268 of 2659). Despite different opinions on what to use to stake a vampire it is clear that the idea that the vampire might be kept in place or killed by being struck through the heart by something sharp was widespread and not contained to any one region. Due to the reports that stakes can be used to kill

vampires, the stake has become a prominent weapon for killing vampires in vampire fiction.

In *Dracula* stakes are used on Lucy after she has turned to vampire while a Bowie knife is used to pierce Dracula's heart in the end, resulting in him turning to dust. When Lucy is staked her body "writhed, and a hideous, blood-curdling screech came from the opened red lips" and "blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted up around it" (Stoker location 3581 of 6442) which is in accordance to what Frayling tells of in his article "Lord Byron to Count Dracula" (1991). He quotes a report written about the case of Arnold Paole who claimed to have been bitten by a vampire before his accidental death. Shortly after his death several people claimed that he had returned from so "according to the customs of those regions, a stake was driven through his heart. But, as this was being performed [...] [h]e gave a great shriek, and an enormous quantity of blood spurted from his body" (Frayling 21). *Dracula* is not the only one of the primary texts where stakes or other instruments are used in order to kill a vampire by piercing its heart.

In Smith's series *The Vampire Diaries* the vampires can be fatally wounded by being staked. The vampire Stefan says to Elena: "A wooden stake through the heart is still the approved method for my kind" (347). This is also the case in the *Vampire Academy*.

In Mead's *Vampire Academy* series the Dhampirs are taught to fight, using stakes as weapons as they advance in their training. This gives them a better chance of killing the Strigoi.

Since the inception of vampire literature the stake has been a predominant weapon against vampires. This has continued in modern vampire literature where stakes are still and probably will continue to be the weapon of choice in the fight against vampires. While the use of stakes is important in vampire fiction it is not the only thing that is sure to kill vampires.

Sunlight

One of the main characteristics of today's vampire is its aversion to sunlight. It has been shown to slowly burn vampires or even kill them as they burst into flame or disintegrate into ashes by being exposed to sunlight "[b]ut such was not always the case. In the

folklore of many cultures, the vampire was able to infiltrate society and return to some semblance of a normal life” (Melton 592). Dracula in Stoker’s novel was able to roam about in sunlight and Abraham Van Helsing noted that his “power ceases, as does that of all things, at the coming of day. Only at certain times can he have limited freedom. If he be not at the place whither he is bound, he can only change himself at noon or at exact sunrise and sunset” (location 3979). When Van Helsing and his friends are preparing to destroy Dracula’s boxes so that he can find no place to rest they are aware that they may come across him at his Piccadilly residence which is what happens one afternoon when he strolls into the house while they lie in wait. While his powers are diminished due to the daylight, he is still able to escape them with life and limbs intact. While the “old” vampire who has strong resemblance to the folkloric vampire can withstand the sun without any injuries the “new” vampire seems to be more sensitive to sunlight. The sunlight can cause the “new” vampire harm, such as minor discomfort or burns, or even kill it, such as causing it to burst into flames or turning its body to dust.

In *The House of Night* series the vampires are able to withstand sunlight like Dracula. However, sunlight does not draw away from their powers as is the case with Dracula but it does sting their eyes as their eyes have started to adjust better to darkness. While Zoey usually sleeps during the daytime, there is a scene where she goes to town during daytime and says: “even the weak, foggy daylight bothered my eyes and made my skin feel twitchy” (Cast, Betrayed 112). It is not only in the *House of Night* series that the vampires can go out during daytime.

In *The Vampire Diaries* the vampires can go out during daytime as long as they wear a special jewelry. Without said jewelry the vampires burst into flame, leaving nothing but ashes behind. When Stefan is talking to Katherine, the vampire who will later on turn him, he asks her about the effects of sunlight:

“But can you never go out in sunlight?”

“I can yes, as long as I wear this.” She held up a small white hand and the moonlight shone on the lapis ring there. “But the sun tires me so much.” (Smith, Awakening 68)

Smith has made it possible for her vampires to go out in daylight as Dracula can but she has however added her own idea that in order for the vampires to be able to do so, they have to have jewelry set with lapis.

Regarding daylight in the Vampire Academy series, it is never spelled out that the Moroi can go out during daytime but it is implied on several occasions. Rose and Lissa went to college in Chicago and Portland before they were captured by guardians and brought back to St. Vladimir's Academy. It could of course have been evening classes but when a teacher is inquiring of Rose what guardian techniques she had used to keep Lissa safe he asks: "Did you avoid going out at night?" (Mead 32). Later as Rose has to go out during an afternoon the reader gets a look into her mind. "Mid-afternoon sun shone with a cold, golden light on us. The human genes in me welcomed it and always sort of regretted how Moroi light sensitivity forced us to live in darkness most of the time" (Mead 157). This tells the reader that while the Moroi avoid being exposed to sunlight they can be exposed to it without getting killed.

The sun's effect on vampires has changed as the vampire literature has evolved. In the nineteenth century sunlight caused the "old" folkloric vampire no discomfort other than diminished powers. In later times the sun came to be a great weapon against "new" vampires as the vampire appears to have become almost allergic to it. Most modern vampire literature still treats the sun as a weapon against vampires while some modern fiction appears to be putting less emphasis on the sun's destructive powers against the vampires. This means that modern vampire fiction has reverted somewhat back to folklore where vampires were often able to go out during daylight, though it may cause the modern vampire some discomfort or even death.

Conclusion

The image of the vampire has changed drastically since its inception in folklore. When it was first brought forth in literature, where it belonged to the genre of horror, the image of the vampire was transformed into an image of a villain which to some extent was similar to how it was portrayed in folklore. The vampire has evolved from the “old” vampire, which is similarly to the folkloric vampires reclusive, morally corrupt and more a representation of a monster or a demon, to the “new” vampire which is sympathetic, which in turn makes it easier for readers to relate to it, and often chooses to attempt to live a more normal life among humans as if it can still relate to them. This difference between the “old” and the “new” vampire has a direct connection to how much folkloric elements are used in texts. There are most often more folkloric elements found in texts where the “old” vampire is portrayed than there are in texts that focus on the “new” vampire.

This means that the “old” vampire has stronger roots to folklore than the “new” vampire does for the influence folklore has is better visible in regards to the “old” vampire. While folkloric elements are fewer in texts that pertain to the “new” vampire it is still influenced by the folkloric vampire. The vampire originated in folklore and without those sources vampires would not have evolved as they have through the years.

As the vampire has evolved from being evil to being good it does now not necessarily fit into the genre of horror. While modern vampire literature sometimes fits into the horror genre it can in some instances fit better in the fantasy genre and more specifically the subgenre of urban fantasy. This movement between genres is due to the fact that modern vampire texts include other supernatural elements like for instance elemental magic. Despite these changes in the vampire literature, much of the vampire literature shows influences from Bram Stoker’s novel *Dracula*.

Dracula, which is a key work in vampire literature, is, has been and probably always will be an influence for writers of modern vampire fiction. The main elements that are used from Stoker’s novel are the characters and the folkloric elements he used to create his story. Often when reading vampire fiction one will come upon a character that is a reminder of some character in *Dracula*. One could come across a character that is similar to Van Helsing or a character that has the kindness and intelligence of Mina.

More often than not a character will appear that has gone through the change like Lucy, who was the first in the history of vampire literature that was described going through the change from human to vampire. While folkloric aspects seem to be diminishing in the modern vampire literature it is often mentioned and is by some still vigorously used.

What this research into the vampire literature has shown me is that that while the writers of modern vampire fiction still show influences relating to *Dracula* in their writings, they have started taking their stories in new directions, by presenting their own ideas rather than going strictly by the old ideas presented in the nineteenth-century. The differences between the “old” vampire which is closely related to the folkloric vampire and the “new” vampire show the vampire’s evolution through the years. The vampire that started out as a grotesque fearsome creature has become something charming. While the vampires in nineteenth-century literature caused the other characters in the texts fear, the vampires as they are presented in modern young adult vampire fiction are treated as superheroes rather than monsters. It will be interesting to see in the future how the vampire literature will continue to evolve and expand, creating new and interesting ways to portray the legendary creature that is the vampire.

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