



**HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS**

**Hugvísindasvið**

# **Vampires in Literature**

*The attraction of horror and the vampire  
in early and modern fiction*

**Ritgerð til B.A.-prófs**

**Magdís Huld Sigmarsdóttir**

**Maí 2011**

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# Summary

Monsters are a big part of the horror genre whose main purpose is to invoke fear in its reader. Horror gives the reader the chance to escape from his everyday life, into the world of excitement and fantasy, and experience the relief which follows when the horror has ended.

Vampires belong to the literary tradition of horror and started out as monsters of pure evil that preyed on the innocent. Count Dracula, from Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* (1897), is an example of an evil being which belongs to the class of the "old" vampire. Religious fears and the control of the church were much of what contributed to the terrors which the old vampire conveyed. Count Dracula as an example of the old vampire was a demonic creature who has strayed away from God's grace and could not even bear to look at religious symbols such as the crucifix.

The image of the literary vampire has changed with time and in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it has lost most of its monstrosity and religious connotations. The vampire's popular image is now more of a misunderstood troubled soul who battles its inner urges to harm others, this type being the "new" vampire.

The vampire will be demonstrated as a representation of man's evil urges, which makes him identify with both the "old" and the "new" class of vampires. The vampire symbolizes freedom from society's control in regard to morality and sexuality, the evil of which man is capable of; and "the other", as being an outcast from humanity. Both the new and old kinds of vampires attract people that are marginalised so they recognize the vampire's otherness. The vampire stands also as an image of sexual deviancies which makes the vampire an outlet for sexual fantasy that does not fit in with the so called norm.

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# Introduction

The vampire is a known figure which originates from literary traditions, fables and world cultures. Predators much like the vampire have surfaced in different forms in nearly all cultures, “from the seemingly beautiful to the hideous and repellent. We’ve always believed in monsters and they appear in all myths, all religion, and all kinds of folklore. Our holy books are full of them as are epic poems and campfire tales.” (Maberry, xvi) It is clear that the idea of the vampire has existed for a very long time in folklore and much could be said on that subject, however the main subject of this essay will be the development of the vampire as a literary figure in western society.

The literary representation of the vampire has changed with time and different types have emerged. The vampire literary tradition is not an old one and is considered to have initiated around the 1800s. Bram Stoker’s novel *Dracula* (1897) is an important text in this argument and will be compared with other more recent vampire narratives in order to demonstrate the change which has occurred in the vampire’s outward image. These narratives will include for example Anne Rice’s *The Vampire Chronicles* (1976-2001) and Charlaine Harris’s *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* (2001- ). Various types of vampires have appeared in literature, but here they will be split into only two groups; the “old” vampire and the “new” vampire. The discussion of the two types will focus mainly on the change that has occurred within the vampire literary tradition. The two groups have numerous shared qualities such as; the craving for human blood, that they are dead but will have eternal existence, their beauty never fades, they have supernatural powers, and they need to feed on blood in some form in order to survive.

A more detailed description of these types will be given later, but as an example of the old vampire Count Dracula himself is the archetype as well as a figure of evil and monstrosity.

At the start of the vampire literary genre the vampire was commonly depicted as the villain, and the figure of the old vampire as a force of pure evil. As time passes readers start wanting thrilling new stories with more depth, so tales of pure evil tend to get dull. From that, among other reasons, the new vampire has emerged with human moral qualities intertwined with its evil urges. The new vampire is more of a recent figure which has gained popularity since the publication of Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles*. The new vampire has a more humane nature and a softer side than the old one.

Vampire fiction is part of the horror literary genre, therefore the subject of horror and monsters will be discussed and to what extent famous vampires in literature evoke fear in the reader. The concept of "the other", which is not belonging to the norm thus being "the other" in society, will be discussed in relation to the vampire and marginalization. This essay will explore the connection man has to the vampire and its representations, as well as the attraction the notion of the vampire holds for its reader. The perception linked with the vampire is one which also shows an association between man and horror, specifically with the vampire being a representation of man's hidden fears and desires. The vampire's attraction is based above all on its power to mirror man's darker side, which simultaneously evokes fear and thrill in the reader.

## **Representations of Horror**

Horror can be defined as a human sensation that leads to unpleasant feelings and the sense of fear. The concept of horror is often treated with specific aesthetics to depict what causes fear, and speculations are on what causes the sense of horror in an individual. It relates to the psychoanalytical approaches of how the audience will react, how the fear can be defined and in what way these aspects attribute to the genre. The psychology of the horror genre connects to what the reader considers to be scary, dark or evil. The concept of horror,

from both a psychoanalytical and socio-cultural perspective, changes through time and varies according to what is expected within a culture (Hills, 6).

The response which arises from fear always relates to the fears of the society in which it originates, but there is also a specific reaction which occurs emotionally which is natural to the fear. This is a reaction based on primal instincts of fear working in a psychological manner to warn the individual, and to create an emotional response that calculates the need to get away from danger. Within literary fields the threat is often represented by monsters, vampires and other evil beings, which follow this form of thought by identifying the subjects as a part of horror which should be responded to by primal instincts. This is followed, many times, with the victim not getting away from this fear, which continues to heighten the emotional responses (Gelder, 188).

Monsters are vital to the horror plot, but they need to have certain attributes that evoke a degree of fear in the reader. They cannot be human although they may have been human at some point, and they must share a mixture of qualities. According to Carroll monsters must be “threatening.

This aspect of the design of horrific monsters is, I think, incontestable. They must be dangerous. This can be satisfied simply by making the monster lethal. That it kills and maims is enough. The monster may also be threatening psychologically, morally, or socially. It may destroy one’s identity, seek to destroy moral order.” (Carroll, 43)

The power of the vampire as a monster to invoke fear is manifold. It is threatening in almost every aspect; it threatens society and its decency with disregarding the moral social order. Foremost the vampire is represented as a demonic creature that is lacking in religious qualities which creates the reaction of fear.

The concept of horror is not only based on the representations and the responses which occur. The making of the horror genre uses specific techniques that allow individuals to respond to both the evil and the good that is in the story. The horror is one



which becomes specific to creating moments of fear. However, these are followed by normal circumstances which lower the fear and create a normal response. When the threat occurs, it is unexpected and therefore the feeling of fear is heightened.

This threat creates a specific response where the reader is uncertain of what will occur next in the plot, but is still able to respond with the fantasy created during the story. Relief eventually follows when the illusion ends and the reader returns to his everyday life. The excitement which the reader experiences through the horror fiction is a break from the boredom and routine of normalcy. This particular response is what has allowed the idea of horror and the genre to culturally continue to remain popular, specifically because of the addiction to the heightened emotional response which occurs (Gelder, 126).

## **Background of the Horror Novel**

Key elements to the horror genre are; to create social definitions of horror, produce a reaction from primal fear and evoke psychological response. The literary horror genre started with gothic literature in England in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The first gothic literary work is considered by many scholars to be *The Castle of Otronto* written in 1764 by Horace Walpole. It has the elements of mystery, magic, supernatural and gothic gloom. The gothic genre does well in creating a presence and sense of evil and plots that are able to show the mysterious elements of danger and the supernatural.

There were several subgenres which emerged from the gothic literature, including plots based on history, the natural, the equivocal and the supernatural. The horror genre is considered to have evolved from the supernatural gothic, which has the existence and malicious actions of unnatural forces that are graphically stated. Unexplainable events take place that involve supernatural beings which cannot be explained by modern science, ghosts, zombies and vampires are examples of these beings (Carroll, 4).

The genre of horror has evolved alongside historical approaches to fear. Changes in culture and society have affected and altered the horror story plot according to what is considered to be most terrifying at each point in time. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the church was a very significant factor in people's lives, therefore when the gothic literary tradition appeared it had strong associations to the church. Since the church and religion has built up so much fear and had people under the constant threat of evil, the gothic horror genre took advantage of what was already deeply rooted in society and played on that fear.

For instance, Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* from 1797 was based on a demon that stalked a priest, making the priest his victim in the end. The social implications of this show that the idea of horror moved beyond primal instinct and into the social definitions of what evil and terror meant. Similar components exist in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* of 1818 where a man gets punished severely for playing God, with his creation being a monster, and experiences the horrors of going against religion for science (Punter, 15). These different associations show how horror was based on the idea of fear and evil not only passed down from basic instincts, but also from social associations of what was considered horrific.

The mythology and symbolism of the church were the key elements to the horror tradition, as well as the use of monsters and religious fears. The vampire horror story *Dracula*, written in 1897, is mostly built on paranormal occurrences, although the novel starts with seemingly normal circumstances. The novel demonstrates that there can always be something hidden beneath the surface, like a monster disguised as a gentleman. The monster, which is Dracula, is under the surface a dark demonic creature which religious symbols offer protection against.

The definition of horror evolved as the world evolved and when man started to discover more about the natural world with the help of science, the church lost much of its power to evoke fear which it had used to control the public.

The horror genre that had mostly made use of mythology in its plots also changed and started to adapt new connotations to fear.

The evolution of the horror genre led to the ideal of artistic horror in literature, sometimes called art-horror. This notion became realised in the 1900s, and was specific to the concepts of having real horror. The idea of art – horror combined the realistic effects with the production of the gothic into an avant-garde notion of horror. Experimentation with horror began to emerge and during this time, there was an exploration into what could cause fear and horror in individuals, divided specifically with the historical, natural and supernatural elements of horror. Special components and artistic elements were used to charge the primal instincts and fear responses from the spectator, the result being the ability to show the terrifying aspect of human consequences in tales of terror, with actions that can lead to supernatural occurrences. The monsters, vampires and other demons create a presence as a result of realistic ideologies which one falls into (Hawkins, 54). The horror story's main agenda is to bring about terror in a convincing way. Credibility might not be conveyed through the use of supernatural creatures in horror, but as a fear factor supernatural beings still invoke fear. The dread of the unknown and the possibility of them existing, works as an advantage for the horror novel which still manages to affect its reader.

## **Definition of the Vampire**

The genre of horror and the rise of different supernatural elements combined with the natural are in part responsible for the creation of the vampire as a monster. Vampires are figures that habitually start out as humans.

However, they usually fall victim to one who is already a vampire, causing them to transform into vampires themselves. This is a myth which has been passed down and is known to create a metaphor within society about the endurance of evil.

The metaphor is based on how the idea of evil can start with one who intends to be good but slips into the reigns of the vampire. Early vampire fiction often depicted the vampire as an evil figure which was repulsive, indifferent and unwanted. Common connotations for the vampire include traits such as: sleeping in coffins, the need for blood to exist, fangs, pale skin, not withstanding sunlight, eternal “life” thus never aging. Vampires are often intelligent and have supernatural powers, but have limitations such as; the inability to cast a reflection and they cannot enter a house without permission. Religious symbols, garlic and silver give protection against vampires. These attributes are common with literary vampires, with slight variations among literary works.

## The History of the Vampire in Literature

The notion of the vampire was only first referenced in English in *State of the Greek and Armenian Churches*, a book written about churches in 1679. Later, in 1810, a definition was published by an anonymous writer in *Travels of three English Gentlemen from Venice to Hamburg*.

It is likely to have been the first specific definition in English on the phenomenon, the book tells us that; “The vampyres, which come out of the graves in night-time, rush upon people sleeping in their beds, suck out all their blood, and destroy them. [...] Those who are destroyed by them, after their death, become Vampyres; so that, to prevent so spreading an evil, it is found requisite to drive a stake through the dead body” (Wilson, 7). However, vampires in western literature probably first appeared with characters from the admired short story *Wake Not the Dead* written around the 1800s by Johann Ludwig Tieck. The book portrays a man who resurrects his dead wife with the help of a sorcerer, but she returns with a craving for blood.

Almost 20 years later a short story named *The Vampyre* (1819) appeared. The story is written by John William Polidori and is about the mysterious Lord Ruthven who with his charm claims unwary victims, emerging the idea of the vampire as a gentleman. *Varney the Vampire; or, the Feast of Blood* was the next published vampire fiction. First written by James Malcolm Rymer in weekly instalments, it was later gathered into a complete volume in 1847. Varney, the vampire in the story, is a nobleman with pale skin, long fingernails and shimmering eyes. He attacks women in their bed by biting their neck with his sharp teeth (Ramsland, xvi). In 1872 another vampire story surfaced, *Carmilla* by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu. Carmilla is an extraordinarily beautiful vampire. She has a youthful appearance even though she is 300 years old and she bears no external signs of her vampirism. Perhaps most influential vampire novel of all time, *Dracula* by Bram Stoker was published in 1897.

## The novel *Dracula*

*Dracula* mainly consists of journal entries, stories, telegraphs and letters, through which the tale of Count Dracula is told. The first part of *Dracula* is told by Jonathan Harker on his travels to Transylvania to visit a client, an older gentleman, to discuss business. On the way to Dracula's castle Jonathan meets people who show strange reactions when Count Dracula is mentioned and refuse to speak of him. His client Count Dracula seems pleasant at first but gradually Jonathan finds that there is something unsettling about him. One day Jonathan is in his room shaving when the Count suddenly appears behind him, but there is no reflection of Dracula in the mirror.

Jonathan accidentally cuts himself and experiences; “that vague feeling of uneasiness which I always have when the Count is near; but at that instant I saw that the cut had bled a little, and the blood was trickling over my chin. [...] When the Count saw my face, his eyes blazed with a sort of demonic fury, and he suddenly made a grab at my throat. I drew away, and his hand touched the string of beads which held the crucifix. It made an instant change in him, for the fury passed so quickly that I could hardly believe that it ever was there” (Stoker, 37-8). Jonathan had received a crucifix for protection on his way to the castle, which works here as a protection from the vampire. This aspect reflects the contemporary readers religious anxieties related to the fear of the devil and being out of God’s grace. In the novel Dracula is a representation of the devil, the monster and the evil vampire.

Jonathan is imprisoned in Dracula’s castle and slowly realizes the nature of his circumstances. He experiences some very peculiar things such as Dracula crawling like a lizard down the wall of the castle. One night Jonathan gets a visit from three beautiful vampires, he tells us that “there was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips. [...] The girl went on her knees, and bent over me, simply gloating. There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive, and as she arched her neck she actually licked her lips like an animal.”(Stoker, 51-2) There was an animalistic sexuality about them and Jonathan feels a strong attraction towards them which he feels ashamed of because of his fiancée. There is a suggestion of the possibility of group sex with the three vampires and of oral sex when one of the vampires bends over Jonathan on her knees. One of them was about to bite him when Dracula furiously bursts into the room and commands them to let go of Jonathan because he being his property.

He is held captive for some time before escaping from the castle after which he falls ill and needs to be hospitalized. While all this is happening Jonathan's fiancée Mina is staying with her friend Lucy in England. Lucy is popular among men and has many suitors such as; Dr. John Seward, Quincey Morris, as well as Arthur Holmwood whose proposal she accepts. Dracula travels to England by ship and enters land close to Mina and Lucy's home in Whitby.

Lucy becomes Dracula's first victim and falls ill with what seems at first to be a strange illness. Mina leaves England to be with her fiancée who is sick in Budapest, raving of strange things, without knowing about Lucy's true situation. Lucy becomes very pale and on her neck there are two small puncture marks which puzzles them all. She gradually gets weaker and Dr. Seward who is baffled by her condition asks his old master Dr. Van Helsing, who is an expert on diagnostics, for help.

Helsing discovers that Lucy is a victim of a vampire who visits her at night, draining her blood. Dr. Helsing and the others do everything they can think of to help her, including giving her several blood transfusions and protection with garlic. But Lucy only gets weaker until she eventually dies. Mina and Jonathan return married to England, Jonathan sees the Count in London who has migrated to England. Strange deaths and vanishings start taking place in the area of Whitby. Children are abducted and some return with strange marks on their necks similar to the ones Lucy had. Van Helsing believes that Lucy might be involved and gets Dr. Seward, Quincey Morris and Arthur Holmwood to accompany him to Lucy's tomb which they find empty.

When she returns she is not the same Lucy as before.

When Lucy- I [Arthur] call the thing that was before us Lucy because it bore her shape- saw us she drew back with an angry snarl, such as a cat gives when taken unawares [...] Lucy's eyes [were] unclean and full of hell-fire, instead of the pure, gentle orbs we knew. At that moment the remnant of my love passed into hate and loathing; had she then to be killed, I could have done it with savage delight.

(Stoker, 253)

She has turned into a vampire, a killer, with nothing left of her sweet former self. She is now portrayed as a satanic figure who murders young children and the men feel compelled to stop her. They stake the vampire she has become while she sleeps in her coffin, and by that they destroy her.

Dr. Van Helsing tells them what he knows of vampires and their powers. They get news of a possible location of Dracula's habitats and set out to find and destroy him but fail.

Dracula starts visiting Mina to drink her blood; he slices open his own chest and forces her to drink his blood. She becomes sick and slowly starts to transform into a vampire. Mina has a bonding to Dracula and is able to help the men track him down. They follow Dracula on a ship and Mina tells them where to go until they eventually catch up with him. After a struggle Jonathan is able to slit Dracula's throat and Quincey stabs him in the heart and by that Dracula is vanquished and turns into dust. Quincey dies from his wounds but Mina is saved by Dracula's death. Many have died along the way but the story ends with peace happiness and closure.

*Dracula* was a controversial book at the time and a shocker for the late Victorian society. Sexual intercourse outside of marriage as well as same sex intercourse is hinted at. The novel seems to use the vampire as a symbol for promiscuous sexuality and a freedom from moral restraints.



Since its publication the novel *Dracula* has influenced every book, film and television show about vampires. Jules Zanger a scholar of vampire lore and literariness examines, in his article “Metaphor into Metonymy: The vampire next door”, the difference between the phenomenon often known as the old and new form of the vampire. Stoker’s *Dracula* is a good example of the old vampire: an evil being who has forsaken everything kind and decent, a monster of sorts.

The key purpose of the creature is to demolish and corrupt the human race. Zanger argues that the vampire has lost its mystery with contemporary retellings of vampire stories. The vampire has been tamed by recent films and fiction: the new vampire is prone to be more social than solitary and the religious symbolism is lost as well as many of their old myths. The new vampire has evolved from the old; it has lost most of its old monstrous elements and is fighting against its own inner monstrosity and vampirism (Rutkowski, 12).

The old vampire is represented by *Dracula* as appearing human but having animalistic qualities lurking underneath. Even though creatures as Count *Dracula* are not depicted as very repugnant at first, they are still despicable and impure. The ‘monster’ needs not to be externally hideous in order to evoke repellent feelings. Even when Jonathan Harker was unaware of *Dracula*’s nature he is repulsed by *Dracula*, although the vampire’s superficial looks are not essentially monstrous (Carroll, 52).

Dracula's features are very animalistic, which puts him in a group of a combination of man and animal.

I [Harker] could not but notice that they [Dracula's hands] were rather coarse-broad, with squat fingers. Strange to say, there were hairs in the centre of the palm. The nails were long and fine, and cut to a sharp point. As the Count learned over me and his hands touched me, I could not repress a shudder. It may have been that his breath was rank, but a horrible feeling of nausea came over me, which, do what I would, I could not conceal. The Count, evidently noticing it, drew back; and with a grim sort of smile, which showed more than he had yet done his protuberant teeth.

(Stoker, 28-9)

Part of the element of fear associated with Dracula is the fact that he is a monster who can disguise itself among us. He is displayed as an embodiment of evil which is disguised as a gentleman.

The vampire figure of Dracula was the embodiment of the vampire for a while, but with changes in society in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century America, the representation of the vampire was altered as well.

The vampire is still exciting but the public had developed other voids for the vampire to fill up. The main idea is that the vampire which used to be human has still some human awareness and attributes, and with the vampire being partly human it corresponds to our own humanity. In some ways they are like our dark side, "allowing us the vicarious experience of an asocial- even antisocial- inner life. They are associated with darkness, the moon and the abyss, and they shun whatever symbolizes spiritual redemption from a culturally approved deity" (Ramsland, xviii). Vampires represent the darkness; the evil urges within that would appear if the bondage of societies were nonexistent. Free from religion as well as the notion of sin, vampire fiction allows the world of evil fantasy to subsist and gives dark thoughts a safe haven, if only for a while.

# The New Vampire

The new vampire is usually a very handsome sophisticated male. He is well spoken and much softer version of the previous more monstrous vampires. The new type of vampire's perspective is often expressed in fiction, which causes the reader to sympathise with the vampire, contrary to the vampire Dracula whose thoughts and feelings were never revealed.

The new vampire has a capacity for emotions such as; love, sympathy, regrets and internal conflicts. It has a desire to stop harming others and is in battle with its own inner primal instincts. This compassionate nature is one which continues to allow the persona of the vampire to show thin how the line between the good and evil where the vampire is only a representation of the evil which can be created by humans. An example of this in contemporary literature is Anne Rice's novel, *Interview with a Vampire* (1976) which is the first novel in the series *The vampire chronicles*. The story is told by the vampire Louis, in a form of an interview to a reporter about his 200 years of existence. Louis begins the story with how he was made by another vampire, Lestat, who then taught him the vampire's way of life. Lestat chose Louis as his eternal companion but Louis resisted the vampire lifestyle, lived on animal blood and refused to harm humans. As time went by Louis commences to live the lifestyle and feed on human blood but is still disgusted by the act of killing and Lestat's nonexistent conscience. Lestat seems to take pleasure in inflicting pain and to live a life of total freedom from any moral self- control. He laughs at the misery of others and never does anything unless it is beneficial to his own needs and longings. Louis on the contrary never stops struggling with his own conscience regarding his actions both as a human and a vampire, as well as blaming Lestat for turning him into a vampire.

Some of the vampires in the novel are shown as compassionate and predictable outsiders, instead of threatening enemies. We learn from Louis' story that he is an adverse vampire, it was not his choice to become one, but instead it was forced upon him against his will. Louis suffers from being caught in circumstances beyond his power and comprehension and is filled with guilt.

In Rice's novel it is not Louis, but the reader, who is aware of his innocence (Williamson 20) as Louis is always full of self hate and never justifies himself. The two personas of Louis and Lestat show the archetypes of the rebellious vampire and the society which only accepts them as outsiders. In different ways they are both at odds with society and their rejection of being part of society is a way for them to protect their individualism. They are in fact an example of "the other" as they do not belong anywhere. As vampires they are outsiders in the human community, and do not even fit entirely in with their own vampire world. Louis' denial of his own nature as a vampire and his depression is a form of revolt, as he refuses to follow rules set by other vampires (Williamson 20).

In the novels *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* or sometimes called *The Sookie Stackhouse Chronicle* written by Charlaine Harris, the old type of vampire can be found, though the focus is more on the new vampire. The story takes place in a small fictional Louisiana town. In this fictional world the vampires are no longer villains lurking in shadows but have stepped out and made themselves known to man. They are no longer mythical figures but real creatures of nature who wish to join human society. The novel draws on popularity of the fictional vampire and adds a little spin to it. *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* represents a world quite like the real world, with the exception of vampires being existent. The vampires can now refrain from violence such as attacking humans to drink their blood, but can instead buy bottled blood which is available in stores.

The majority of vampires prefer peace between themselves and humans, as well as wishing to co-exist in human society.

Most humans on the other side still fear vampires and care nothing for their kind, but vampires fight for equal rights and have a spokesperson in the media to defend their cause. They are portrayed as a minority group excluded by the majority in a kind of “racist” human behaviour. The vampires are no longer the hunter as before but hunted as their blood is considered valuable because its narcotic effects. “Since vampire blood was supposed to temporarily relieve symptoms of illness and increase sexual potency, kind of like prednisone and Viagra rolled into one, there was a huge black market for genuine, undiluted vampire blood”. (Harris, 6-7) The story’s narrator Sookie Stackhouse is curious, like many others, on the subject of vampire. They are considered risky and exciting and are not yet a common sight in human communities.

Ever since vampires came out of the coffin (as they laughingly put it) four years ago, I'd [Sookie] hoped one would come to Bon Temps. We had all the other minorities in our little town—why not the newest, the legally recognized undead? But rural northern Louisiana wasn't too tempting to vampires, apparently; on the other hand, New Orleans was a real centre for them—the whole Anne Rice thing, right? (Harris, 1)

Here the writer is referring to Anne Rice’s novels *The Vampire Chronicles*, as the vampire Louis was from New Orleans. The writer furthermore uses word play to compare the vampire to the minority groups of homosexual, but the phrase used here of the vampire “coming out of the coffin”, links to the common phrase used by homosexual “coming out of the closet” which describes the act when they announce their true sexuality.

This further connects the idea of the vampire as an outsider, who as a minority group feels the need to hide his true nature from society on the grounds of not belonging to the norm and being “the other”.

The novel tells us that Sookie feels like an outsider in her community because of her special mind reading powers, and that she longs to meet another outsider as herself. She wants to meet a vampire, possibly to be able to relate, and Sookie's wish gets fulfilled when she meets the vampire Bill early in the novel. Bill is a representation of the new vampire who wants to remain as human as possible and avoid harming others. He shows that he is capable of human emotions when developing a relationship with Sookie. The story soon starts revolving around their relationship which runs into many obstacles. As them being an interracial relationship between a human and a vampire, they deal with prejudice and the dangers of other supernatural creatures.

## **The Vampire as “The Other”**

The ability to create a sense of horror through the vampire figure relates to the growth of the supernatural and the unknown which the vampires belong to. The myths which continue from folklore about the vampire and which are passed down into the contemporary ideologies of the vampire also show a direct relationship to the idea of marginalization of the vampire.

From one point of view, there is a sense of sympathy that is portrayed by the monster, specifically because he needs to eat and has no choice but to fall prey to victims. He is seen as similar to humans with the same emotions and attitude which many can relate to. However, the otherness comes from the evil which persists in needing to take victims. This idea of evil is one which is based on creating a monster that is human and which can fall prey to the evils that are in society. The concept of combining “the other” with the sympathy of the vampire then shows how the idea of horror is one which also combines the ability for the realistic aspects of a human to sway into the evil side of nature and turn into the vampire or monster like form. This dichotomy was able to create a fear of the everyday happenings which one could then fall prey to.

The vampire has always been “the other” as being different and the enemy. The new vampire, despite its transformation towards human qualities, is still an outsider.

The otherness returns in the vampire of the twentieth century as a source of empathy and identification. This signals one of the most important transformations in our perception of the vampire – it is no longer predominantly a figure of fear in Western popular culture, but a figure of sympathy. (Williamson, 15)

From vampire in literature it can be deduced that vampires are not like humans and belong to a marginalized group. When they come into a society, they may not be distinguishable, except for the attributes of horror which they carry, such as fangs, sucking blood and only being able to come out at night. By creating a mystery around the man like figures, there is the ability to expose the vampire as a marginalized group and therefore “the other”. The mystery that is related to this begins to interchange fantasy with reality. The result is a heightened sense of horror because there is the realm of what is known to man and on the other hand that which is unknown, which belongs to the category of the vampire (Heldreth, 19).

Then the concept of the vampire is not based on creating the ideology of the monster or demon which was used specifically for horror. Instead, the unknown could take form with the setting, place, fantasy or the ideologies of not understanding how the vampire thought, lived or what the character would do as a result. The creation of fear and primal instincts was subsequently based on the close relationship that the vampire had to men, and the distinctions and the unknown is what allowed for the literature to create the sense of horror and fear. The direct relationship to society was able to impose the realistic nature while keeping the vampire as a marginalized group outside of the mainstream of society. The old and the new vampire share this otherness. They are associated with sin and abnormality.

People who experience that they themselves belong to the outside can easily identify with the vampire figure. People who feel like outcasts from social order can as a consequence relate to the otherness of the vampire.

## The Sexual Vampire

The creation of the vampire and the association with the human nature is not only based on the general morality between good and evil. The perception of the vampire as partly human and part monster also relates to the sexuality which is based on the creation of the monster. It is not the vampire alone which creates this, but also the unknown desires that the observer would believe they could not fall to but remains as “the other”. The defined line between evil and good then rests on the ideal between the vampire and human and the accepted and unaccepted notions of sexuality (Gelder, 59).

Sexuality of the vampire has changed through time, both with the concept of it being a seductive monster which is the old vampire and its capacity for emotion such as love and lust that belong to the new type of vampire’s. The features of biting and the seduction which often take place between victims are some of the expressions of sexuality which remain as the main component of the vampire. “Even when the writing does not seem to emphasize the sexual, the act of biting itself is so like a sexual act that it seems almost perverse not to see it as one” (Gelder, 63).

The concept of sexuality is used in particular to create a link to the human consciousness and to show the good and evil side of the vampire’s seduction. At times, this occurs specifically with the romantic ideologies in mind while other forms show the seduction as one which is obtrusive towards human nature. According to Maberry; “sexuality, in fact, is a more common theme in the modern vampire tale than horror. The whole paranormal romance subgenre is built on the exploration of the vampire as a romantic, tragic and often misunderstood creature” (Maberry, 27).



In modern vampire fiction the spotlight belongs to the new vampire. The old vampire was a seductive figure with an air of sexual deviancy. It is a creature of lust, and its powers work as a sexual hypnosis. The sexual factor that arouses dread is, among others, the fear of exposing the true sexual self. Which is followed by anxiety of being recognized as an outsider, and receiving punishment for ones alleged sins, for experiencing lust with a demonic being. The horror and danger of the old has diminished with the new vampire, but it still plays with the cultural taboos. When *Dracula* was published it pushed the boundaries of the society, with ideas of sexuality that were outside the norm and thus shocking to most.

The insinuation of ideas such as; homosexuality, promiscuity, sexual fantasies, oral sex and multiple sexual partners were considered terrifying unchristian notions. The vampires exemplify various inconsistencies in their bodies and beings: “dead yet somehow alive; murderous, impulse-driven animals and yet suave, nattily- dressed seducers” (Rutkowski, 12). There is certainly something unconventional about the vampire’s sexuality which holds an attraction for the sexually marginalised.

Vampires connect to their victims through life energy, which usually means they approach humans for their blood, a symbol for life, birth and connection. When someone is aroused, the blood pumps hotter, which adds an erotic allure. [...] They take us against our wills. Thus, no matter what their ultimate intent for us, vampires are undoubtedly exciting. (Ramsland, xviii)

Vampires are exciting as they can be ascribed to any sexual deviancy. Examples of the old and the new both embody sex outside the norm and fantasies of the vampire often includes being taken against ones will. The power of the vampire is appealing to the powerless, for the wish to possess the power themselves or sexual fantasies of being dominated by a powerful being and succumbing to its control.

The main concept of sexuality in vampire fiction can be seen through several different types of stories through time. *Dracula* is an example of how the idea of sexuality becomes the mirror between the good and bad which man can be a part of. The women in the story are conveyed as victims to Count Dracula, not only because they are injured by his bite, but because of their powerlessness against his seductive powers.

There is an attraction to Dracula and a sexual appeal which is noted throughout the book through Mina and the others who are victims of the vampire. The threat and terror which occurs in *Dracula* seems to begin with the seduction and appeal of the Count which then turns into malevolence.

From this perspective, the idea of morality and the difference between good and evil moves to man's desires and suggests that giving into the desires is dire and leads victims to falling into evil. The concept of sexual evil and good in literature such as *Dracula* then lend into the horrors that originate from disobeying moral orders and the two sides which man can exhibit in terms of human desire (Stevenson, 139).

The new vampire continues to create the ideology of the sexual vampire and the appeal which draws the line between "the other" and its desires, as well as the lack of desires which allegedly leads to good. Unlike the old it is conflicted with its inner urges and fights its craving for blood. The abandonment of morality connected to the old vampire is being reclaimed by the new.

The horror cycle that is a part of the vampire excels by allowing the vampires to express these human attributes and to change the horror cycle out of the supernatural and into the natural desires of men.

The appeal and seduction of the vampire is the part of the vampire's image and sexual identity, crossing from desire to evil, love to violence, and from men to vampires.

The speculations and uncertainty toward both homosexuality and the vampire are a part of the vampire's otherness and sexual freedom.

Homosexuality is implied in many stories of vampires for example in *Interview with a vampire*; Louis is fascinated at first with Lestat, describes him as radiant and feels a connection between them which baffles him. Lestat informs Louis, on his first night as a vampire, that as a vampire he will need to sleep in a coffin. However since Lestat does not have a spare one, Louis will need to sleep on top of him.

Now, I'm [Lestat] getting into the coffin, he finally said to me [Louis] in his most disdainful tone, and you will get in on top of me if you know what's good for you. And I did. I lay face-down on him, utterly confused by my absence of dread and filled with distaste for being so close to him, handsome and intriguing though he was. And he shut the lid. (Rice, 25)

This text has a certain homosexual undercurrent like in various other vampire fictions, such as *Dracula*. The vampire is connoted with sexual deviancy or marginalization, both in which homosexuality connects to. When Jonathan had succumbed to the three vampire women that came to him, Dracula burst into the room and said; "How dare you touch him, any of you? How dare you cast eyes on him when I had forbidden it? Back, I tell you all! This man belongs to me!" (Stoker, 39) The women had seduced Jonathan at that point in the story and are about to suck his blood in his bedroom when the count arrives.

Dracula's anger and claiming that Jonathan is his property sounds more as a jealous spouse than a callous monster. This has a homosexual undertone where much is implied but without anything being graphically stated.

## **The Vampire and the Primal Self**

The persona which is created by the vampire and transformed as a representation of man's evil actions is further engaged in the primal self and how the vampire can generate a sense of horror.

The sympathy felt through the vampire is still based on creating a sense of horror, specifically because of the primal instincts which begin to play with the emotions and fears associated with the vampire.

It is although, not the primal instincts of being in danger. The reaction to fear is one which is based on the social and cultural teaching that a vampire should be feared and is evil in nature (Twitchell, 83). This is further represented with symbols such as coming out at night, living in a coffin and only being able to die with a cross to the heart or through a stake. These different symbols came from religious convictions in society.

However, they were passed down through several myths and fables to create a reaction of fear. When the vampire began to be associated with “the other”, there was a cultural acceptance of the vampire belonging to this sect of evil. The primal instinct and reactions which occur both in older ideals and with the new vampire continue to push into the primal instincts which come from the original myth of the vampire while showing how the dichotomy of morality of the vampires always leads back to the evil in the end. From this perspective, it is the idea of “the other” and the primal instincts that are taught from the cultural myths of the vampire which create the monster as one which is representative of the evil of man, despite the persona which is created (Stone, 2).

The persona which is created from the idea of primal instincts from cultural associations with the vampire is furthered by definitions of what it means to be primal. The human association is based on the ideal of good and evil. However, the animal like attributes of the vampire show the main contrast between the modern man and the vampire. The physical attributes of the teeth and eyes and how the vampire takes the prey and kills to suck blood are the main ideologies which relate to the primal side. While the being looks human, it is governed by its primal instincts and its unpredictability can cause it to perform evil actions at any time.

The cycle of life then leads back to the animalistic nature of humans and shows how one can never truly overcome these attributes, as symbolically shown through the vampire. The vampire goes beyond culture, religion and other attributes and back into the animalistic myths that are associated with men (Gelder, 141). The old vampire is an animalistic predator which symbolises this primal aspect of man.

The importance of the vampire being a representation of man turning toward evil through primal instincts is one which creates fear not only because of the capacity of each individual to do this. The vampire has been displayed as one who was governed by primal instincts because of the lack of understanding with religious and cultural belief. Showing that when one goes outside of this framework will lead to primal instincts also creates a message to individuals to not create the own horror which may be a part of the vampire and which anyone can easily turn victim to.

The myth is furthered into psychological components that identify “the other” and the relationship to belonging on the outside. The fear of the vampire relates to primitive fears and fixations, specifically because of the representation which the vampire creates. Whether it is a monster that is displayed as completely evil and with no regard to humans like the old type of vampire, or as a monster that is an outsider that is trying to be moral like the new vampire, the same fixation arises to create the same fear. This is based on the subconscious association with evil and the definitions of what evil means. The fear which is created is based on the desire to stay distant from “the other” and the unknown which relates the most to the old vampire. The unknown of the vampire is one which can easily lead to the evil which all men are capable of. No matter how much the myth is transformed, the same primal instinct arises based on the psychological processes which one goes through. These are based on reconstructive memories which are formed based on recollections of the myths which one has learned and how they are associated with one being told not to be evil. The social association with the vampire then relates to the

unconscious beliefs in evil and good as well as the human capacity for both (Kimberley, 38).

## Identifying with the Vampire

The characteristic of the vampire literature is for one the capacity of men to identify with the vampire and the man made desires which are attributed to them. The dividing line between good and evil is then based on the actions of the vampire and the evil which is created and the actions of the victims.

However, one can change places by giving into “the other”, marginalization, sexual deviancy or the ideas of evil. It is this main sense of symbolism that creates the horror and which allows the individual to relate to the attributes of the vampire.

Instead of creating an ideology in literature that is a part of the unknown, there is a direct link to the evil of the vampire as being a part of the realistic nature of man in which one can easily fall prey to. The primal instincts which are created then come from an internal fear in which an individual can become a part of.

There are several different types of vampire stories which display some, if not all, of the human like characteristics of the vampire and the way in which this creates the horror of the story. The old and new vampire both shows this same relationship. When looking at the story of *Dracula*, this specific component can easily be seen. *Dracula* is a good example of a novel which reflects the good and evil of society, specifically in relation to the Victorian age. During this time, there were several diverse types of fear that were based on the loss of the church and morality; there were also questions of identity and nationality with political uprisings taking place. *Dracula* was in a way a symbolic image of many negative parts of Victorian culture, specifically because of the way the novel dissects society, acts on the bourgeois nature of those in society and shows how men can easily fall into a type of seduction politically and socially that turns them to evil.

Dracula becomes an example of what was feared and debated in society and moves into the primal instincts based on the disputes within society (Sellers, 85).

The blurring of lines between good and evil is created specifically to show that the difference between men and vampires only comes from the choices, desires and urges to be a part of “the other” and to walk into the evil. Any individual that is in the story line can easily go to this other side.

The horror which is created is based on the primal instinct which shows the fear of how an individual, even when trying to do good, can easily turn into evil. There is not a visible line between the good and the evil which further complicates the relationship to the vampires and humans and shows that the ideologies of both cannot be defined, specifically heightening the horror with an unawareness of where the evil or good will come from (Burr, 343).

The same division and blurring between good and evil of men is displayed with the invention of the new vampire, mostly which is attributed to Anne Rice’s *The Vampire Chronicles*. The new ideal of the vampire is to show that it has human qualities and can’t help the attributes which it carries, such as sucking blood and giving into carnal desires. The success of the chronicles led to Vampire Fan clubs by 1988 and produced the notion that vampires were not intrinsically evil or good. However, the vampires were still kept in a marginalized group because they could give away to the primal desires at any time. This allowed the vampire to become good and to struggle with morality. However, the horror and the fear of the vampire remains through *The Vampire Chronicles* because the characters always had to give into their desires, either through sexuality or through the habits and behaviours of the vampire. In this manner, there was the ability to create a connection to the horror of the vampire as well as the relationships which were considered normal.

This heightened the fear and horror of individuals reading the books while creating a close relationship between the idea of vampires not only as monsters, but also as reflections of humans (Gelder, 108).

Vampires hold “a mirror up to our darker side and assist us in understanding evil. Perhaps it is the evil that, in reality, dares not show its face or speak its name” (Fischhoff, 424).

The old vampire possessed supernatural powers that attract those who feel powerless and makes them wish to possess those powers. They indentify with the vampire who is on the edge of society, and are therefore marginalised because of their own feelings of being “the other” and not belonging (Fischhoff, 402).

The vampire also holds an attraction for those experiencing an inner struggle with unwanted feelings. The old vampire’s strength and freedom from morality makes it able to inflict pain on others without consequence. People that feel like outcasts and rejected by society often harbour hostile feelings towards its community and wish to cause the pain that they themselves are experiencing in the form of violence. The vampire therefore represents an outlet for an inner rage which might relate to the primal self that wants to break free from society’s restraints. The new vampire also stands as a representation of an inner struggle in various forms, although it is a struggle for the good not the fantasy of succumbing to ones inner evil. It also has an appeal for those who feel like outcasts and not belonging to the norm, but they identify with the vampire struggle with its inner demons to stay inside rules of society. Both the old and the new vampire often stand as an image of all sexual deviancies and are also outlets for sexual fantasy that do not fit in with the so called norm.



# Conclusion

The concept of the vampire is one which has grown and changed throughout time, specifically the associations with the idea of fear and horror. The concept of horror from the beginning of the folklore of the vampire was based on creating an unknown monster which had mysterious ways and which could make an individual its victim at any time. This was furthered by associations with demonic like beings that were a part of religious mythology of that time. The vampire; however, was able to take a persona that was closely represented to the human but was able to pull on the horror of evil. The vampire consisted of one who was able to hold the same nature as men with the difference of sucking blood and living a life of evil. It was this main difference that created the reaction to horror as well as the fear based components that were a part of the vampire.

Not only were the reactions to the vampire based on creating the associations with fear and horror but also of expressing the different ideals of evil of men. The vampire works as a representation of man's darker evil nature, or even as a fantasy of a life without the restraints of society. The vampire's literary image has changed from the vampire being a creature of complete malice, into a figure that has a conscience and struggles with its evil actions. The new vampire has in fact become more human, who the reader identify with because of its inner struggle between morality and desires. Both the new and the older vampires hold to the same consistency, specifically which is based on creating the idea of "the other", while holding the same values as men. "The other" is based on creating marginalized scenery, attributes and associations with the vampire. This is furthered with the creation of marginalized concepts related to what the vampire might do and the characteristics which could express the vampire. The main association with this is to allow the vampire to take on some human attributes while creating distinguishing lines that are

based on evil. The concept of sexuality, desire and morality are some of the basic characteristics that identified “the other” and which allows the vampire to create a different approach to the creation of horror. With these attributes, the vampire is able to draw on the evil which man can associate with while becoming a representation of fear and horror that is not outside of man’s capability.

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