

A Critical Study of Gothic Fiction with Special Reference to Bram Stoker's Dracula

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Abstract:

Abraham stoker, better known as Bram Stoker is one of the leading names in the world of gothic literature and his contribution to the field with his ever so popular classic *Dracula* (1877) will remain irreplaceable. The book is one of the pioneers which take the readers into the world of imaginary beings of Vampires, the beings which have been a part of literature and popular culture for a very long time. This portrays Stoker's imaginative capabilities and his refined skill of creating a vivid picture, moving enough to arouse the feelings of fear and excitement within the readers. The Irish author was born in Dublin, Ireland in the year 1847 and had been a critic for the Dublin Evening Mail and also short story writer in his early days. However, his visits to the small Scottish village of Cruden Bay changed the fate of Gothic and Vampire fiction forever. He wrote multiple texts during his time in the gloomy village but most importantly, began with his crucial work *Dracula* in 1895 there during his stay. The visuals and landscapes of the place, especially the New Slains Castle, provided him with inspiration that he used to create his vivid, Vampire novel that is widely known and loved to date.

Keywords: Gothic Fiction, Vampire fiction, Imaginative Writing, Fiction, Fantasy fiction, Horror fiction, *Dracula*, Bram Stoker, Stoker's *Dracula*.

Introduction:

Gothic fiction refers to the literary genre which deals with negative elements like death, decay and other horrifying facets of life and death. It might also amalgamate romantic elements with the same. According to British library.uk, the concept of gothic fiction was introduced by the prominent English author Horace Walpole in his novel called *The Castle of Otranto* published in the year 1764.

“He was persuaded he could know no happiness but in the society of one with whom he could forever indulge the melancholy that had taken possession of his soul.” (Walpole, 78).

The main feature of gothic fiction is that it focuses upon the feelings of uneasiness and terror which might emerge in the readers in both pleasurable and horrifying manner. This is where the elements of romance are often incorporated. Gothic fiction and related literature induces a surrealistic feeling in the minds of the readers and turns them into a part of a greater narration, beyond the confinements of the physical world. The gothic literary genre might not necessarily

talk about ghosts in specific. It might talk about any otherworldly and supernatural entities and beings which might hold heinous intentions, at least in the beginning. While on the other hand, horror fiction emphasizes the feeling of terror, horror surprise or even contempt caused by grotesque elements.

It is considered to be a part of the broader literary category of speculative fiction. Speculative fiction encompasses all the fantastical and supernatural elements which do not necessarily exist in the real world but are only created through imagination. Horror as a genre might arouse the feeling of disgust, surprise, terror, shock and other similar frightening feelings within the reader. Horror as a fictional genre is usually based on the supernatural element however, this is not compulsory. The horrifying feeling might also be induced by non-supernatural elements propelled by abhorrence, violence, malice, death and decay.

While talking of gothic fiction as a part of literature as a whole, one cannot skip the era of graveyard poetry. The graveyard school of poetry, also often referred to as the churchyard poetry was a school comprising of a group of British poets which emerged in the 18th century and their works predominantly focused on sorrow, suffering and death. This is considered to be an important literary movement that preceded the great romantic age of literature. The focal characteristic of graveyard poetry is the expression of death and all the emotions of sorrow that follow.

The major themes corresponding to the given school of poetry were of solitude, bereavement, suffering, anguish and the many manifestations of death in life and nature. One of the important messages in the graveyard poetry is that death is inevitable and one day or the other everyone and everything must pulverize and become a part of the elemental earth. It does not only reflect the futility and short lived vanity but also the true intrinsic nature of life and death. All in all, indubitably it constitutes a great part of the foundational gothic literary works. John Keats, Thomas Gray, Oliver Goldsmith, Robert Blair, Edward Young, Thomas Percy, Christopher Smart, James McPherson and William Collins were well-known graveyard poets, to name a few. This literary genre is also considered to be the precursor of the gothic poetry which not only inspired but also influenced the coming era of gothic literature.

Before we delve deeper into the paper, it is essential to understand that there is a profound role of the two genders when it comes to gothic literature. Gothic literature not just portrays its women characters as libertine and free of the stereotypical norms but these female characters also help to establish a sense of suspense, mystery and plethora of emotions in the story. Female characters a vital role not just by being an important element of the plot but because they can be displayed in multiple ways. Well - known gothic works usually keep a female character in the very front. They can be represented as an innocent victim of the evil or the embodiment of evil itself. Not to mention, they can be the mighty fighters and destroyers of the evil as well. For instance, in Henry James' 1898 gothic novella, the Turn of the Screw the story revolves around a young governess who finds herself in an evil play surrounded by the spirits of the former governess and caretakers of the estate who died previously. While she goes through the story bravely enough and tries to decipher the events, as well as she could, the story ends at an ambiguous and open-ended situation with the death of a young boy. While in

the 1897 gothic horror novel by Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, the female characters play not just the role of the victims of the evil but also the evil wives of the blood-sucking monster. So, all in all we can understand that the two major types of female characters which are found in gothic literary works are the victims and the predators. As the name suggests, the victim is the innocent and vulnerable one who is not at fault and must be saved from the evil. While the predator is the evil itself and is often represented as an indomitable and seductive female character that holds the power to entice her victims, usually men, right into her web.

This research paper particularly aims at identifying the role of vampire literature and how it evolved to be a major part of gothic fiction that we know as of today. There is a very large range of gothic creatures which have been written about in books and featured in varied subsequent motion pictures as well. Some of such creatures include ghouls, banshees, sirens, goblins, gargoyles, spirits, demons, the lockness monster, man-eating, giant sea serpents and other sea monsters like hydras and leviathans, flying creatures, dragons and other reptilian monsters, monsters created scientifically in a lab such as Frankenstein's monster and so forth. However, one of the most well-liked and popular gothic creatures which has been a central figure in a number of books and films is a vampire.

One of the most classic examples of a vampire character is *Dracula* in Bram Stoker's book with the same name. They are essential elements of terror and seduction simultaneously running though and though which are always considered important in the story of *Dracula*. Their camouflage beauty which hides all the rotten evil inside is one of the classic ways to sprinkle the element of surprise in the readers. And this is where the women characters play a vital role when it comes to gothic literature as they can be molded ingeniously to incite a panorama of thoughts, emotions and feelings within the minds of the readers.

It is important to comprehend the character of a blood-sucking vampire from its very origin and how the idea of such a being even came into existence. The exact origin of the word vampire is not very clear however, it is concluded that the word is derived from various Slavic languages such as Hungarian, Croatian, Macedonian, Bulgarian and so forth i.e. a *vampir*. According to scientific America, the mentioned creature has traditionally been a part of the folklore of several countries and religions. A large number of European cultures have their own tales of a demonic spirit, which might appear as a human being that sucks out the very essence of life from the living, usually in the form of blood and transfer that life into itself. These creatures gained popularity especially after the mid-1700s when people in Europe believed to have witnessed corpses walking around trying to kill living humans and suck their life. In different places like Romania, Albania and other Balkan states, these creatures had different names according to their respective cultures and languages. Most cultures had spoken or written tales about vampires which were either created after being bitten by other vampires or were created through witchcraft or evil spells. It was also a common belief that some corpses were possessed by evil spirits which made them come alive and become the undead who fed on the blood of the living. However, the ideas of the vampire go back even further. According to jstor.org, in a hand written document on demonology by King James, from the mid-1500s it is found that the malevolent spirits cannot only possess the body of the living human being but

also the dead corpses and make them walk on earth again in a form of a vicious monster that preys on other living beings. Later in the 18th century, Europe experienced a great frenzy where people under the suspect of being a vampire or witches were killed off and the graves were dug back up as people claimed to have seen the blood-sucking monsters walking around among the living.

According to the university of Tilburg, English writer John William Polidori created his first vampire character which kind of resembles the current version of the same that we know of today, in his book called *The Vampyre* in the year 1818. His book gained popularity and became a mass favorite in the 19th century. However, unarguably, one of the most well-known and successful works ever done on the creature called vampire is without a doubt Bram Stoker's *Dracula* published in the year 1897. It is one of the foundational works of all the subsequent works done on the same creature and is widely popular even today, over more than a century later.

There are several contemporary descriptions of the vampire however the actual tradition vampire is described to be much more ghoulish and grotesque. Some of the most frequently mentioned and common attributes include pale, purplish or greyish skin which might appear to be withering away as the creature essentially is dead itself with a pair of deep sunken eyes and fresh scarlet blood dripping off of their lips, probably because they recently hunted their victim and drank the life out of them

“A man, tall and thin and ghastly pale.”(Stoker, 93).

Traditionally, they are also often described shabby, covered with a shroud, with long and soiled nails and hair as they have been dead for a while and also have long fangs on either side of their lips which they sink into the flesh of their victims to pierce through their veins and suck on their blood. Another attribute which is associated with vampires since the old times is their sensitivity to sunlight. It is believed that since they have been dead and buried under the earth for some time, they get accustomed to the dark and damp atmosphere that their body is unable to handle the heat of the sun causing their skin to burn off. They are also frequently portrayed to be desiccated in coffins in dark and damp conditions which is another reason behind their extreme and fatal sensitivity towards sunlight. However, these are some of the traditional physical characteristics if a vampire and it very well might vary according to the overall setting and the time period that the character of a vampire is set in literarily.

Abraham Stoker or popularly known as Bram Stoker was an Irish author and he is widely known for one of his most gothic horror famous works, *Dracula* (1897). His previous jobs include being a civil servant. Later on, being more drawn towards his literature, he became a theatre critic for the Dublin evening mail, which was already co-created by a gothic fiction writer. Although, it was a common notion that the theatre critic did not possess much skill and was not looked very highly upon, Stoker was able to prove his worth and skill by giving his intelligible reviews. One of his most notable reviews includes the one on Hamlet by Henry Irving, at the theatre royal, in Dublin. He and Irving eventually became friends, sharing a common interest in literature and also became the manager of Irving's theatre in London.

Stoker was also an art enthusiast and later became the founder of the Dublin sketching Club in the year 1897.

Cruden Bay is a small village in Scotland which Stoker pretty regularly visited between the years of 1883 and 1910. It is believed that it was the hotel Kilmarnock arms at this place where Stoker began with his writings for the early chapters of his now-iconic gothic work, Dracula. His long holidays to the nearby coastal villages provided him with plenty of time to be inspired by his surrounding and create his art in peace. Two of his works are set in Cruden bay itself. Also, the new Slains castle, which is distinguished from the old Slains castle, is believed to be the inspirations behind the castle Dracula, an important element of his gothic novel. Certain architectural details from the hotel where stoker stayed at can be identified with some details of the Castle Dracula. One of such distinguished detail includes the octagonal room from the same hotel whose description matches perfectly to the octagonal room of the residence of the infamous character of Dracula. It is believed that stoker, during his visits to the coastal countryside, witnessed and came across several scenes which might have been a prominent inspiration behind the eerie landscapes which are described in his above mentioned great gothic novel. Also, it is known fact that before he started writing Dracula, he met one of the most intelligible Hungarian- Jewish writers and travelled named Armin Vambery who was well known for his dark and eerie stories of the Carpathian Mountain. So, it is very likely that the inspiration of creating a grand all the while the dark character of Dracula came from Armin's stories and eerie tales.

Stoker gave a considerable amount of time researching and learning more about the mythological creatures, folklore, myths, legends and mythological stories about vampires and other blood craving creatures of the night while being in the central and east Europe, where they were prevalent. Based on the research by various literary critics and author it can be concluded that the character of count Dracula is based on or is inspired by the real-life Romanian emperor, Vlad the iii or more popularly known as VladTheImpaler. He was the national hero of Romania and ruled over Wallachia from 1448 until his death. He is considered to be one of the most important rulers of the nation and was the second son of VladDracul. He earned the title of Vlad the impaler because of the innumerable heinous and barbaric activities which he performed over the people he wanted to eliminate.

He has a stand-out manner of killing people and had a penchant for getting his enemies impaled on a stake inhumanly. Another important name used to address him was none other than, Dracula. The literal meaning of Dracula means the son of Dracul. Another detail which lied common for both the character of stoker's Dracula and the emperor of Wallachia is that they were both born in the region located in central Romania called Transylvania. All in all, Vlad the iii is considered to be one of the most important rulers of Wallachia in the historical significance of Romania. And indubitably, the emperor inspired the great gothic character of Dracula that you know of today.

As mentioned above, Dracula is a gothic novel, written by the great Irish author, Abraham Stoker in the year 1897. One cannot possibly talk about the gothic fictional literature without mentioning the given exquisite piece of literature. The mentioned gothic novel gave

the reader the introduction to the blood-chilling and magnificent character of Dracula the great and also set the tone for the entire subsequent fictional vampire storied which later annexed them to the course of fantastical gothic literature. It proved to be the base for all the upcoming literary pieces which revolved around the mythical creature of a bloodthirsty vampire. Dracula is an epistolary novel, which means that it is written in the form of exchange of letter among the major characters which are mentioned in the novel. Jonathan Harker is the protagonist of the novel, who is a young lawyer from England who decides to travel to Transylvania, located in the central region of the country of Romania, to meet one of the clients of his real estate company, count Dracula the great. Once he arrives in the small village near the woods when Dracula resides and tells people his business and real intentions of visiting the place, they are all horrified. He finds the reaction of the villagers a little queer as he himself has never met the infamous count and so although he feels a little shaken and nervous, he decides to continue with his journey to his final destination, castle Dracula, to quench his curiosity.

The writer gives a very vivid description of the narrator's journey through the dark and eerie woods which lead to the residence of the Count Dracula. It is the quality of a skilful author to create an entire environment so vivid in the minds of the readers that they feel that they are actually present in the same situation. The woods are described to be extremely dark and ringing with a mysterious vibe of the upcoming danger. The howling of the wolves makes the atmosphere furthermore eerie and sets the tone for what is to come. Also, it can be considered to be an omen or a sign that the future is not very bright, literally. The thick sheet of mist covering the woods foreshadows the mysteries which are hidden under the shroud of the dark woods. The strange pointy trees in strange shapes give a ghoulish envisage too. Finally, after the dreadful journey through the woods, Jonathan finally reaches the castle Dracula and meets the owner. The character of Dracula is described to be a very superior character but at the same time is shown to be very proud and adamant.

He is sophisticated, educated and gentlemen, although he is also a prisoner to his own castle as is learned by Jonathan Harker later in the novel. When it comes to the physical traits, he is a tall man, though quite gaunt with pale skin, hollow eyes and two sharp fangs growing out on either side of his lips which he uses to pierce through the flesh of his unfortunate victims. The reason behind his physical anomalies is clear. Vampires are believed to be burnt by the sunlight and hence prefer to live in dark, damp and cold places. Another important feature of their physical bodies is that it is believed that the temperature of their skin quite low and hence they might feel really cold at the touch. Not to mention that if they are around a victim, that person or even that area might feel eerie and cold. All of this is clearly because vampires are essentially non-living as their heart does not beat like a normal person and it also does not pump the blood. And therefore they are as cold as a dead body and do not bear the warmth human skin. Also, in accordance with the myth, their body lacks the ability to naturally produce haemoglobin in itself and hence they survive on the blood that they suck from their human victims. He is assertive and forces his dominion over the people who come across him. His sense of powers births from the fact that he is one of a kind and the belief that he is invincible in comparison to the weakling humans. Although the age of the great blood-sucking

count is not clearly and accurately specified, however, it is mentioned that he is hundreds of years old and hence also very wise and gallant. He was a nobleman in the old Romania before he turned into a vampire and froze in time. Some of the most important characteristic features of the count include his dressing sense.

He dresses extravagantly and is seen wearing a long cape with his collars standing out over the neck area to showcase his power, wealth and aristocracy. Apart from the aesthetic features, he also possesses some strengths and weaknesses which are described in the gothic novel. It is important to note that these powers and weaknesses set a base for all the upcoming vampire fiction literary works which came later in time. The effect of time does not give the same results on vampires as it does on ordinary human beings and hence the Dracula does not age with the same speed as others. He is also described to possess the ability of *therianthrope*. In other words, he can metamorphose into an animal, more specifically into a black coloured bat. Bats are nocturnal creatures which are more active at night and slumber through the day in a similar manner as a vampire.

They are also known to suck the blood out of their victims. He can also control the nocturnal creatures and make them his slave. Another major ability possessed by Dracula is that he has enormous strength and could tackle twenty human beings singlehandedly. He also has the ability to control the weather and can produce fog or mist whenever and wherever he likes. Also, disappearing into a cloud of mist is one of Dracula's favourite ways to exit. But of course, it is not only the strengths that he possesses. He is also a victim of some weaknesses which include that he cannot enter the residence owned by another human being unless and until he is invited in by the owner himself. Also, he cannot cross a body of water all by himself and is to be carried over it by somebody else. He is also repelled by the cross of the Christ as well as blessed holy water. The reason behind this is clear that Dracula is an evil spirit dwelling on earth to harm the innocent human beings while the cross and the holy water are the agents of the almighty and are pure and hence irritate the spirit of the Dracula. And last but not the least, one of his greatest enemies is none other than sunlight. He cannot physically go out in the sun and is rendered powerless; else he will get burnt off. Regardless of how strange the introductory greetings and conversation go by between the undead and the human, the situation gets further gets problematic when Harker goes off to the room given to him to freshen up from his travels. He decides to shave and accidentally cuts himself revealing a drop of blood which oozes out of his skin and proves to be enough to gain all the attention of count Dracula.

He jumps out abruptly and lunges to attack Harker by grabbing his throat with an intention to drink his blood. Later in the night, Harker encounters the female vampires which reside in the castle of Dracula and try to seduce him to trap him in their web of lies but he somehow manages to escape from their fangs. Consequently, he understands the danger he has put himself in and learns the sinister secret of the count that he is a vampire who gains life by sucking the blood out of his victims. Understandably, he thinks that he might be the next victim whose life the count might be after. He tries to get rid of Dracula and run away, he also attacks him but is rendered unsuccessful each time. Finally, Dracula traps Harker in a castle dungeon

and sets off on a journey to England in search for new victims, along with fifty boxes full of soil.

The next series of events take place in the country of London and revolves around Jonathan Harker's fiancée, Mina. Mina gets in touch with her old friend, Lucy and who is recently got engaged to a man, after a long time of being alone. One strange night, Lucy starts to sleepwalk. Somnambulism is one of her old habits and so Mina decides to go out and look for her outside the graveyard. She finds it strange for her to be out there in the dark in the middle of the night. Just then she feels that she saw a strange dark misty figure with two glowing charcoal red eyes, hovering next to her friend Lucy. When she finally approaches her, to get her back, she notices that Lucy has two strange red dots on the side of her neck. She doesn't want to think too much of it and naturally assumes that Lucy might have accidentally pricked herself while sleepwalking. Regardless, Lucy gains an unnatural pallor all over her body and starts to look sick and exhausted and so Mina decides to take her to Dr Seward. Neither of the two is able to draw any logical conclusion or reason behind Lucy's miserable state. Finally, Dr Seward summons his old and highly cognitive mentor professor Van Helsing. Later, Van Helsing arrives in the town of Whitby and examines Lucy's condition. He suggests that a wreath of cloves of garlic is to be hung around Lucy's room as it is a powerful weapon against vampires. Not soon after, Lucy starts to recover and looks better than before however, Lucy's mother who did not know about the importance of the odiferous spice in this situation, inadvertently removes it and leaves Lucy vulnerable and tactless for an attack in the future. Furthermore, Mina, the doctor and the professor try every method in their book to help Lucy get better. After several failed efforts and blood transfusions, they start to lose hope. Then one night, when everyone goes out for a break and leave Lucy unguarded for a short span of time, a pack of wolves break into Lucy's house. Witnessing then, Lucy's mother goes into terror and is struck by a heart attack. Further, the wolves attack Lucy and she dies. Soon after, they notice many reports which are being made regarding the missing children. Professor Van Helsing comes to this conclusion that Lucy has been changed and turned into the undead, or in other words a blood-sucking vampire and that she is responsible for the mysterious disappearances of the children in the town of Whitby. Jonathan Harker somehow manages to climb down the tower of castle Dracula and returns to the town of Whitby and marries Mina.

All in all, they finally decide to perform the vampire killing ceremony which includes some ominous steps to get rid of Lucy as a vampire and stop her from killing people in the future. Harker also tells them about his experiences of his journey to the country of Romania and all he went through in Transylvania in count Dracula's castle. In the dead of the night, they return to the cemetery when Lucy's undead body is buried and unearth her corps, to finally put her to peace. According to the myths and legends regarding vampires, it is believed that an undead monster or a vampire can be killed off once and for all by only a few ways. One such effective way is stabbing the vampire with a wooden stake in the heart.

And so, the group unearths Lucy's corpse and plunges a wooden stake in her heart, cut off her head and stuff up her mouth with garlic. Once they are finished with the ritual, they adamantly pledge to give count Dracula the very same fate as Lucy and finish the game once

and for all. They meticulously craft a knavish plan to track down Dracula and the fifty boxes of soil that he bought with him from Transylvania. According to the vampire legend, it is important for the vampire to have the soil or dirt from his homeland in order to survive and stay in good shape and health in a faraway land, away from home. Mina and Professor Van Helsing collect all the journal entries and written materials made by others and plan to destroy the boxes of the earth so as to leave Dracula vulnerable as he would have no means to survive in a foreign land. Finally, they find his boxes of dirt which he uses to stay alive however, things go awry when one of the mentally ill patients of Dr Seward's mistakenly give Dracula the permission to set foot inside that mental asylum where the entire group was taking refuge all his time to be safe from Dracula. As a result, this gives Dracula a chance to attack Mina. When Van Helsing and Dr Seward come back in the room they see Mina drinking blood from the chest of Dracula as Jonathan lies unconscious. Not soon after, Mina starts to turn into a vampire and the others destroy the boxes of dirt to make the count flee away.

Consequently, the count is left is no other choice but to run away to Transylvania as he is left with no more boxes of dirt from his home and would lose health if he stays in England any longer. Although he leaves, the group is determined to eliminate him once and for all. They follow him back to Castle Dracula and find him in a slumber in one of his coffins. They finally plunge a wooden stake right in his chest and rip off his head. Also, Professor Van Helsing along with Mina cleanses the castle by killing off the three evil wives of the count. Finally, Dracula pulverizes and fades away into nothingness. However, the group of brave vampire hunters also sacrifices a lot and loses their friends and family in this journey to eradicate evil from this world.

Now, if you think about the idea that why is Bram Stoker's Dracula, such an important piece of fiction in the world of gothic literature from the eyes of today's world, you might not be able to come to a clear conclusion. But if you retrospect, you might understand why. During and around the time when this legendary and one of a kind novel was produced, there already were a few vampire based works which were done before. However, none of them delves so deep into the world of the vampire as much as a Stoker's Dracula all the while staying in touch with the human world at the same time and piecing the elements together. So, if you really look at it you would realize that stoker's Dracula lay down the very foundation for all the other future vampire based works which were yet to come. It didn't only talk about the characteristic features of a gothic monster dwelling in the dark shadows of his castle or caves but very craftily brought it into the urban word of the living human beings and showed a clear interaction between the two. No wonder it marked the very beginning of the vampire based gothic fiction that we know of today. The idea of a creature that does not appear drastically different than a normal human being has been terrifying to the readers and this is why Dracula made an imperishable mark on the threshold of gothic literature. Most of the gothic monsters, ghouls, ghosts and spirits that you know of bear extreme differences than the living humans and could be extremely grotesque, repulsive or downright terrifying at first glance. However, at first sight, a vampire looks like a normal humanoid figure and could easily be mistaken to be a very normal, living human being if not scrutinized meticulously. This gives him the ability to

freely come about and roam around among other humans and mark its victim who would later meet an unfortunate end.

Another important approach that matters towards this exquisite literary piece is feminist criticism and point of view. As it is already discussed above that the role of the two genders holds an important in the gothic literary works. Stoker's Dracula has both ups and downs when it comes to feminist approach. The character of the Count Dracula is usually considered to be a misogynist. He might not despise women but he certainly does not think of them any better than the male characters. He keeps his demon wives almost as prisoners in his castle and they are supposed to obediently follow every rule and order that is imposed by the Count. In simpler words, even the evil female sisterly characters lack free will. Their sole purpose in the story is to seduce the victims and keep them engaged as long as possible. In return, the count gives them food and shelter. The human female characters are brave but are usually portrayed to be the damsel in distress and are always saved by the will of the men in the story. Women are treated in a petty manner are merely considered as a thing to be rescued, commanded, subordinated or seduced.

Another question that arises is that how has the character of a vampire evolved, transitioned or changed in any way over the years that followed by and what are the basic distinctions between a traditional and a modern vampire character in literary works? Throughout the years, there has been a plethora of vampire based fictional books and movies created with different interesting background stories and characteristic details. As time passes, more features can be seen added or removed from the characteristic detail of a bloodsucking monster or a vampire. An important detail which can be seen in most of vampire based literature and a movie is the presence of a romantic or seductive element which makes the story all the more interesting. In order to understand the difference between the connective vampire the modern-day vampire, you need to understand the modifications which have been made in the vampire based stories and literature as a whole. As it is already well known and described above, stoker's vampire and other classical vampire characters wore a very ornamental and extravagant dress to show off their power, majesty, influence and grandeur. This helped them assert their power and frighten their victims. However, the downside is that it makes them very apparent and visible to the eye of the stranger and vulnerable to being recognized. But the modern-day vampire is mostly portrayed quite casual and looks just like any other human being, however, not in all case and it hugely depends upon the story and the genre. There are several modern-day vampires based literary works which earned the spotlight and gained quite a lot of popularity. Some of which include *The Vampire Diaries* (1991), by American author L.J. Smith, which was later turned into a very popular television show which aired for almost a decade and gathered a huge fan following. It gave its vampire characters some fascinating powers and characteristics such as mind compulsion and super hearing ability and also replaced the age-old enemy of the vampires which a fictional herb called vervain.

The Twilight Saga (2005), by Stephanie Meyer, a very popular young adult romantic fiction series in 5 parts which revolutionized the modern outlook of vampire literature and was also later turned into a blockbuster movie that gained huge popularity among masses,

especially the teenage audience. However, it received some mixed reviews though heavy on the positive side, to name a few. These books, while being a part of gothic literature, gave their vampires, humanistic features and hence made them more relatable instead of fantastical, to the general audience. *Interview with the Vampire* (1976), by American novelist Anne Rice, is another well celebrated and popular contemporary vampire fiction novel liked by masses. To name a few, there have been many differences which were made and also gradually evolved among the traditional vampire that was initially created and the ones which we know of today. Clothing and attire is just one facet of the great kaleidoscope which creates the entire personality of the bloodsucking monster. However, there are many other facets defining its personalities such as the thought processes, the hunting techniques, the strength and vulnerabilities and the emotional and psychological involvement with the other characters of the literary piece, especially other human beings. The modern vampire is more libertine and casual in its ways of living. It does not just dress up in a casual and self-desired manner but also thinks and acts in a much more callous way. Due to a number of literary works which have been done one and around the blood sucking vampire, people have been more fascinated and delighted by the myth of a vampire than being afraid or terrified by it. The modern literary works and the motion pictures which usually follow, portray the vampire character to be extremely sophisticated yet very modern. And above all, the characters are mostly very pleasing to the eyes and other sense of the audience instead of being extremely horrifying and grotesque. They are highly evolved and are no longer those awful, terrorizing and filthy looking dilapidated monsters. Instead, they are portrayed to be good-looking and intelligent beasts that excel at compelling and manipulating their victims whenever needed. A very important characteristic which is given to the modern-day vampires in the literary works and movies, which cannot be overlooked as it usually creates the main conflict in the stories, is the presence of very human emotions and feelings. The modern vampire is given human-like empathy and emotions. It feels emotions like happiness, grief, anger, love, lust, anguish and envy in a very similar manner to a normal human being. It is no longer that ruthless and emotionless conventional animalistic creature that only knows how to dig its fangs in people's throats or rip out their heads.

It is their ability and choice to either stay in touch or not with their humane side that gives a definition to the storyline and keeps the reads engaged. However, it is understandable that if one pokes the beast, the beast might poke back and hence the reactions of a vampire cannot be predicted with absolute certainty. After all, it really is an undead being walking the earth in search of victims in order to survive. Multiple vampire based fictions and stories have made a difference when it comes to the food or the prey of vampires. Now, the fictional vampires can easily survive on the blood of animals and exempt humans from becoming their victims. This portrays their human side and forgiving emotions. In a humorous manner, the vampires who prey only on animals consider themselves 'vegetarians' which is considered to be a little inside joke in several vampires based fictional franchises. However, it is usually mentioned that the vampires who prey on animals are usually weaker than those who feed on human blood. This can be taken as an inside joke in the fictional world of vampires. While the

ones which prey on human are obviously the non-vegetarians. Also, a common happenstance that the vampires which are 'good at heart' might not completely kill off their victims or might only prey the more deserving an evil or criminal-minded human beings. The modern vampire is also portrayed with strengths and vulnerabilities which are slightly different than the one which we saw in the conventional vampires. For example, the only protection that the classical vampire had from the sunlight was to stay in the shadows and not come only until its dark outside. However, in the modern-day fictional vampire tales, the vampires come up with or extrapolate alternative solutions to save themselves from burning away in the sunlight. One such solution which has been portrayed in several vampire fictions is to wear an enchanted piece of jewellery or another accessory which would save them from sun damage.

An important change that can be seen in the modern-day Vampire stories by which it differs from the conventional vampire tales is the presence of romantic elements. Initially, the vampire character was the main antagonist in the literature piece who must be eliminated at all costs by the good and the brave. This was the only way of getting rid of evil from the world as there was no possibility of redemption what so ever. However, in the modern vampire tales, the vampire character is not as evil and monstrous as is expected from a blood-sucking creature. This humanistic behaviour has led to the creation of a common conflict which can be seen in most of the vampire based literary pieces, which is the romantic involvement of an eternal vampire with an earthy mortal. This indubitably gives way to several obstructions in the story and the main purpose of the story becomes to come to a solution for this problem and not the elimination of the vampire character itself. As a result, it leads to only two compromises. Either the human must turn into an immortal or the vampire must find a way to turn back to a human which is very unlikely. Another apparent difference is that the classical vampire was often portrayed sleeping in a coffin, or living in a dingy and dark cave or dungeon in order to stay as far away from the human civilization as possible.

However, the modern vampire lives among and around the normal human population and usually in a very normal looking house which might have its own secrets. The modern vampire does not need to sleep in a coffin and does not sleep at all for that matter as it does not get tired like a human being. Also, the traditional anti-vampire weapons such as odiferous garlic, holy water or the cross of Christ might not work for the modern vampire. However, the quintessential difference that has evolved between the traditional vampire and the modern vampire that we know of today is that the vampire of the past was a monstrous creature to be feared and be submitted to. The modern vampire on the contrary, has become a character of fascination and admiration instead of being terrified or being repugnant of, thanks to most of the recent vampire based literary works and motion pictures. It is no longer that old, wrinkled and grotesque monster that every character in the book runs away from. Instead, it is that bedazzling, intelligent, indubitably manipulating but in a charming manner, emotionally available and attractive blood sucking creature that people in the book want to befriend, except that one antagonist of course who could smell the problem and hence becomes the black sheep. Also, it is important to be noted that in the previous vampire based victory works, not much was mentioned when it comes to the background. However, a good amount of background

information about the human life of the vampire was kept from the reader to emphasize the later life of the vampire and to engage the reader's mind on the vampire's terrorizing traits and not his innocent human days. This was to restrict the readers to develop any emotions or feeling for the antagonist character, apart from terror and repulsion. However, the modern vampire based literary world opts for the opposite philosophy and strikes a balance between the past and present lives of the vampire character. This helps the readers to form an emotional connection to not just the human but also the non-human characters in the literary piece of work.

There is mostly an entire descriptive chapter or two and even more, that is dedicated to the backstory of the new vampire character to explain the circumstances and living conditions which propelled him or her in the direction which stimulated their course of life in a way that landed them in the present situation of being an undead creature. Again, this is done to make the readers or the audiences keep an empathetic perspective towards the vampire character instead of being absolutely repugnant and horrified by them. These also later help the mind of the readers to fantasize or hold them in a more positive light unlike in previous times. One must keep in mind that one of the reasons why modern vampires are so relatable to the reader's minds is because of the ability of acceptance that is exhibited by the vampire characters. The modern vampire is displayed to be ready to live in the humanistic ways and adopt the lifestyle and conventional norms of a normal living human being. This not just allows him to hide in plain sight but also keep an amicable rapport with human society. This creates a fine line between the interests and intentions of the modern and the traditional vampire of literary works. The conventional vampire wanted to exhibit its magnificence and power to evoke terror and submissive obedience in human beings. It wanted to stand out of the crowd as the most powerful and indomitable being that has the strength to rule over the entire world. But the modern vampire is different and its main objective is not to be seen by the rest of the world and hence it hides in plain sight making it look ordinary as one of the many. As the characters and fictional stories about mythical bloodsucking creatures evolved, they also gave scope for the presence of other relevant characters. For instance, some folklore suggests that the very first or the original vampire was created through witchcraft or black magic. This makes the story all the more interesting. Also if there is an evil vampire running loose in town then it requires a special person with extraordinary skills and weapons to catch and save the world. This is where the character of a vampire hunter comes into existence. Several literary works have been dedicated solely to a vampire hunter.

Now the conflict arises that the vampire from which time period falls superior over the other. So, the answer is actually not that complicated and lies in the question itself. The literary writers constantly evolve with their writings with respect to the passing time and create characters and settings accordingly. With the changing perspective and taste of the readers, it is likely for the authors to bring changes in their literary works as well. And hence it is understandable why the differences which exist between the conventional vampire and the modern vampire were brought into existence. Neither of two vampires from different time periods is better over the other because they are equally capable of spellbinding the readers

with their respective traits, characteristics and superpowers, which in return distinguish them from each other. And not just that but also their vulnerabilities help in defining their nature respectively.

Concluding, we can collectively agree over the fact that if the modern vampire excels in creating the camouflage of mundanity by appearing very human-like and average the traditional vampire is good at asserting its power and terror with its magnificence and sense of dressing up which instead of helping them hide, makes them stand out in the crowd. If the modern vampire sits well in the romantic and emotion-packed settings which allure the audiences from various age groups then the conventional vampire creates a terrifying sequence which stays put in the memory of the readers for the years to come. If the modern vampire is more relatable and desirable then the conventional vampire is indubitably the foundation of where it all began and would remain the classic character for the generations to come. And therefore, vampire fiction will remain essential to the gothic genre in literature that we know of today.

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