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The evolution of the vampire novel in the 21st century

Vývoj upírského románu ve 21. století

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I state, that I have written this bachelor thesis on my own and that I used only, and all the sources of information listed in the bibliography.

Olomouc 22nd April 2022 Anna Barboříková

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is divided into 6 parts. The first part focuses on history of vampires and literature connected with them. The second part goes over popular works and compares some of their elements. The third part is focused on their differences. The fourth part talks about popularity and gives possible explanation as to why vampire literature is so popular. The fifth part gives attention to the theme of love and its effects on the readers. And finally the last part mentions other supernatural creatures and why are they important for vampire literature.

ABSTRAKT

Tato práce je rozdělena na 6 částí. První část se zaměřuje na upíry a literaturu s nimi spojenou. Druhá část je zaměřena na populární díla a srovnává některé jejich prvky. Třetí část je zaměřena na jejich rozdíly. Čtvrtá část pojednává o popularitě a dává možná vysvětlení, proč je upírácká literatura tak populární. Pátá část věnuje pozornost tématu lásky a jeho dopadem na čtenáře. A nakonec poslední část zmiňuje další nadpřirozená stvoření a proč jsou pro upíráckou literaturu důležitá.

1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis focuses on vampires in modern literature. The main focus will be on the series Twilight saga, Vampire Academy and Vampire Diaries. These series were chosen because they all fall into the 21st century and are very popular. There will also be mentions of the novel Dracula written by Bram Stoker, as it is one of the most important works in vampire literature.

Vampires are popular with young adult and teen audiences. Many books from this literature are enjoying great popularity, especially if there is movie or TV series made based on them. Not only published books, but even fan-created fanfictions on sites like Wattpad are still very popular.

Vampires are also trendy in different forms. For example in music, there are songs that have their music video shot incorporating vampire themes; there are also singers or groups, that include vampiric motifs in their sartorial and choreographic choices. Another popular usage of vampiric inspiration is on the social media platform TikTok. There are many creators that will shoot their videos in the vampire concept and then upload them onto the site.

In this thesis, I will cover the historical background of vampire novels and try to explain why they are so popular and why there are dangers that come with this popularity, particularly considering the affinity to the romance genre in many of these works. I will also focus on the little differences that can distinguish vampires between the literary universes they are in.

2 INDIVIDUAL CHAPTERS

2.1 Historical part

2.1.1 What is a vampire

When talking about what a vampire is, we first need to understand what this word means. A vampire (also could be spelt as Vampyre (Willis, 2018, p.2)) is a creature that sucks the life force (most often portrayed as blood) out of people it preys upon. If for some reason, a vampire refuses to drink human blood without a proper substitute, they get progressively weaker, often also more aggressive, impulsive (portrayed in TVD and TW) and in the end, they either die, enter a corpse-like state or lose all remains of their control (also could be referred to as humanity) and attack the closest human, often resulting in the death of said human. This is done by a set of fangs or some kind of very sharp teeth suitable for penetrating human skin.

They are portrayed as undead, meaning that they were once people, but they died and for some reason or another they came back to life. This can be done in many ways, for example in *The Vampire Diaries* a human has to die with vampire blood in their system, in *The Mortal Instruments* (series written by Cassandra Clare 2007-2014, about a girl that finds out about a war between angels and demons, where special people with angelic blood fight demons) human has to be bitten, die, be buried, claw out of their grave, and within the first twenty-four hours feed on human blood.

The most common way of becoming a vampire is to get bitten by some. There is of course a difference between a “turning” bite and a “drinking” bite. This depends solely on the literary universe within which the vampire exists. Even though this differs from book to book, it can be said, that writers generally follow two main systems. System number 1 is that a human gets bitten but the vampire doesn’t drink enough blood to kill them (this is used in *The Twilight saga*), resulting in a change from human to vampire or that to turn, one has to be bitten multiple times. System number 2 is based on some sort of blood exchange. Either both parties have to exchange blood or the human has to die with vampire blood in their system (as I stated above, this is used in *Vampire Diaries*).

There are of course other ways, like sorcery, curses, or cases where vampires are humans who were wronged in some way and therefore are unable to rest and rise from their graves.

It was also believed that people who commit suicide may return as vampires.

When it comes to their physical appearance, writers mostly tend to be consistent. Their most typical characteristic is pale skin and fangs. Depending on the writer, vampires can range anywhere from being unnaturally beautiful to grotesque and monstrous, this solely depends on the author and the literary universe in which the story takes place. Up to this point, writers tend to agree, but there are other characteristics, that are not used very often, like the inability to cast shadow or reflection, leading to them not being able to be photographed or captured on film.

2.1.2 Why were these stories created

Vampires have a great significance in history. Records of some sort of blood-drinking demons can be found as far as in ancient Babylonia and Assyria, where these demons had the name Lilitu (Willis, 2018, p.2). Then there are Striges from ancient Greek, and veletas from India, as a representative for China we have Jiangshi (Willis, 2018, p.17). Slavic cultures use words upyr or upier (Willis, 2018, p.2). There are many more examples, many nationalities have their names for vampires. One of the reason for them being so widespread would be insufficient medical knowledge of past societies. In her work Pospíšilová (2016) summarises how people could have mistaken illnesses or death for vampirism. When it comes to illnesses connected to vampirism, tuberculosis is a very important one. Tuberculosis is a bacterial infection spread through coughing or sneezing. Back in the 19th century, people with tuberculosis would get pale and loose weight, which would lead to unnatural appearance. Since Tuberculosis is easily transmitted so uninfected people could catch it while taking care of patients. This led to the illusion of these unnaturally looking people sucking energy and therefore weakening other people. Klozíková (2008) claims, that there are many other illnesses connected to vampirism for example Porphyria which can lead to sensitivity to light.

“There is a period of time in human history which many authors call The Vampire Plague” writes Němcová (2014) in her thesis. And she is absolutely right. Since many people believed that vampires were the ones who were at fault for this disease, this incident prompted hunt on vampires.

The greatest expansion for vampires came in the 18th and 19th centuries in Europe. It was then that poets started writing poems about vampires. This inspired larger literary works and led to one of the most famous piece of vampire literature: Dracula by Bram Stoker (Willis, 2018, p.10-14). Dracula is not only very famous but also incredibly important. Many of the characteristics, that are used in modern literature have their roots in this particular work, mainly ways to kill a vampire and often their inner political system (aristocracy). But vampires were

still portrayed more like animals than humans, this changed during the 20th century. The second half of the 20th century is when the Interview with the Vampire was written by the American author Anne Rice. Ms Rice portrayed vampires as more emotionally advanced than anyone before her. They are also described as more vulnerable than before, sunlight and fire are dangerous for them and they can be destroyed only when the first of their bloodline is killed. They are also described as creatures with heightened beauty, senses, speed and strength. These traits are mostly preserved in the 21st century. That is also a time, when vampire literature started seeping more into the romance, rather than staying only in fantasy or horror.

2.2 Comparison of 21st novels with older ones

2.2.1 Old vs. New Vampires

It can be said, that there are two kinds of vampires, the “old” one (Dracula) and the “new” one (Vučković, Pajović Dujović, 2016, p. 8) (Edward Cullen, Stefan and Damon Salvatore, most vampires in modern literary works). The difference between these vampires lies in how they are portrayed and what they represent.

Dracula is presented as living outside the society. This one simple detail gives the character more layers. It is a commonly accepted belief, that humans are social creatures. While there are people who enjoy more solidarity than others, being as alone as Dracula is highly uncommon. Dracula is not completely alone, he has his vampire brides and servants, but he is Direct contrast to this, are the new vampires as they are often portrayed living in groups or families and being near humans, living in cities or not so far from them. We can see this is TW where vampires create families and in VA where both the “evil” and the “good” vampires create groups. In TW vampires live in house on the outskirts of the city. In VA, the academy where the characters reside is located deep into the woods, but the series start with two main characters hiding along humans.

Another difference is the portrayal of evil. Dracula is the embodiment of evil, he is unredeemable and clearly the bad guy in all possible ways. The modern approach to vampires characterises vampires as more approachable, sympathetic and human. Molly Williamson (2005, p.173) writes about the fact, that “during 20th century appeared a new type of vampire. ” This new type is portrayed differently. More physically attractive and more “morally ambiguous and sympathetic”, making them more approachable. They are often shown as mysterious and rich. This is believable as they have centuries to make money. These vampires also tend to end up taking care of the girl of their choosing.

Claudia Bucciferro (2014) claims that “Anne Rice’s literary Vampire Chronicles and the television series Buffy the Vampire Slayer best portray this new vampire generation, whose melodramatic stories are reminiscent of the gothic novel.” The Louis character in Rice’s work is living as a “vegetarian bloodsucker”. Bucciferro (2014) then continues that “this restraint—the hesitation or refusal to feed—is a key characteristic of this new sympathetic portrayal of vampires.” Here, Louis is another portrayal of a “new” vampire, as he is always trying avoid killing humans.

2.2.2 Dracula

Dracula is a novel written by Bram Stoker in 1897. The novel itself is fiction, but it is based on real people, the character Dracula is based on Vlad Dracula, a real historical person who was known for his exceptional cruelty. Such as selling his son as part of a peace treaty to the Turks. (Willis, 2018, p.7)

Vlad III. Dracula was also known as Vlad the Impaler. He lived in the fifteenth century. He is called the Impaler for a simple reason that is his favourite way of executing people. His favourite thing were not only executions but also cruel and unusual punishments, Dracula also wouldn’t shy away from torturing people.

While writing Dracula, Stoker let this character keep this cruel nature. Dracula is shown as a monster, evil but very smart. He is portrayed as a predator. Not just any kind of predator but kind of like a cat, meaning he likes to toy with his prey, he likes to scare it before he kills it. We can see that while and after his move from Transylvania to England he came into contact with many people and it had an impact on them. After Lucy Westenra dies, under strange circumstances, the people in her inner circle end up finding out that Dracula is a vampire. This leads to them working together and trying to stop him.

This story can be described as slowburn, as it is presented to the reader through newspaper articles, diaries and letters. Throughout the story we can see everyone’s point of view except for Dracula, this is so that his character would be even scarier. We don’t know what his plans are, we don’t know what he is thinking, we see him as a figure that is waiting for any mistake made by the protagonists so he could turn it against them.

2.2.3 THE VAMPIRE ACADEMY

The Vampire Academy is a book series. It is written by Richelle Mead in the years 2007 to 2010. The story is about a girl named Rose Hathaway and her best friend Vasilisa (goes by

Lissa) Dragomir. These girls are brought to the St. Vladimir's Academy (from which they previously ran away) and the whole series, they are trying to survive any and all dangerous situations that they are being put through. What is interesting about this story is that Rose is a Dhampir and Lissa is a Moroi.

In this literal universe, vampires are divided into two groups and that is Moroi and Strigoi. Moroi are portrayed as "good" vampires as they never kill people they drink blood from. Moroi are also described as "alive", meaning that the sun doesn't kill them, it only bothers them. It also means that they are connected to nature, thanks to this connection, they are able to perform magic. Moroi are generally peaceful, they are also described as having faith in God. All of these qualities make them more human in the reader's eyes. Then there are Strigoi. While Moroi are born, Strigoi are created. There are two ways to do so. The first is when a Moroi kills a person while feeding. As this is seen as a sort of crime against nature, their connection to magic and life is severed and they become the "evil" undead kind of vampire we know. The other option of turning into a Strigoi is by being bitten by one, this works on everyone, Moroi, Dhampirs and humans. Strigoi can be killed in multiple ways, by sunlight, by deadly fire or by having their heart pierced by a silver stake. They can also be turned back. This can be done if they are stabbed by a silver stake which was charmed by all four elements.

Here we can see the connection between the "old" and "new" vampires. Strigoi have many folkloric elements and they generally share personality traits with Dracula. they can be described as soulless bodies inhabited by demons. Moroi are as the "new" kind of vampire more sympathetic and nice. They have a soul and a conscience.

Dhampirs are offspring of Moroi and Dhampirs or humans. They are seen and used as protectors and bodyguards of Moroi. While in the academy, they are trained to fight so they could fulfil this duty after graduation. They are described as enhanced humans. Thanks to the human part of them, they look, act, sleep, and eat like humans. But the vampire part is making them heal faster and also grants them enhanced strength, speed, sight and hearing. Dhampirs can also see auras. The reason of why are Dhampirs protecting the Moroi, is that Dhampirs are not able to procreate. Therefore they need Moroi to keep their race alive.

A very important character in the first book is Victor Dashkov. Victor is Moroi, but he is evil, calculating, greedy and selfish. He has a rare disease and the only one able to cure him is Lissa (since she has special powers). Doing so would cost her her life, but he doesn't care and tortures her until she agrees to help him. By the end of the first book, Lissa is rescued and

Victor is captured. The importance of Victor springs from his similarity to Dracula as they share many characteristics.

2.2.4 THE VAMPIRE DIARIES

The Vampire Diaries is a name for book series written by L. J. Smith. This series later produced a TV show of the same name. The story is about Elena Gilbert a high school student who meets Salvatore brothers Stefan and Damon and falls in love.

Here, the difference between “new” and “old” vampires is in their approach to drinking blood. In this universe, vampires can drink both human and animal blood. But, vampires that drink animal blood are weaker than vampires drinking human blood. This not only affects them physically but it also affects their powers. Vampires in this universe have mind-controlling abilities. They can charm a person and control them, making them do whatever they are told or even erase memories. None of this is a problem for vampires, but if they drink animal blood, these powers get weaker and people may end up remembering things they were supposed to forget.

Another difference between the “new” and “old” vampires is their approach to people. The “old” type views people as food. This type uses any means available to achieve some set goal. It doesn’t care about people, in many cases, it doesn’t care about other vampires. It only cares about itself. All it wants is to have fun and to survive. The “old” type is represented by Damon, who serves as antagonist, but later switches to protagonist. Damon is amoral, dangerous and uncaring. When he doesn’t get his way, he resorts to anger and violence. Damon and his brother Stefan are both vampires, but Stefan is a representation of the “new” vampire. He cares about people in general, and he refuses to drink human blood, even though he knows it will make him weaker compared to other vampires. He cares about Elena as he tries to put some distance between them because he is scared of hurting her. In this work, Stefan is the embodiment of a sympathetic hero. Although Stefan tries to stay away from Elena, in the end, he becomes a protector of hers as he saves her from both vampires and humans.

2.2.5 THE TWILIGHT SAGA

The Twilight saga was written by Stephenie Meyer. The first book was published in 2005. The last book story-wise was published in 2008. The story revolves around Isabella (Bella) Swan, a girl that moves from Phoenix in Arizona to Forks in Washington to live with her father so her mother can go on travels with her new husband. While in Forks, Bella meets Edward Cullen and the rest of the Cullen family. Gradually, Bella gets closer with Edward, eventually

learning that he and his family are vampires. After Bella and Edward fall in love and start dating, they meet James, an evil vampire who decides to kill Bella. She tries to run away from him, but he attacks her and ends up seriously injuring her. She is then saved by Edward.

In the second book, Edward leaves Forks with the rest of his family. The reason for his departure is his belief that he is to blame for making James excited and causing Bella to get attacked. Bella then falls into a deep depression but develops a friendship with Jacob Black. Sometime later she learns that Jacob is a shapeshifter (when he changes, he turns into a wolf). She also finds out that Victoria, a female vampire companion of James, is trying to kill her to get revenge for James's death. While Jacob and his pack are trying to protect her, Edward comes to believe that Bella is dead and goes to Italy to meet the Volturi (a very powerful vampire coven led by three vampires – Aro, Marcus, Caius) hoping they would kill him. Bella finds out about this thanks to Edward's sister Alice and travels to Italy to rescue him, which she manages to do.

The Twilight saga is interesting because while it takes the concept of the “old” and “new” vampires and uses it, it also uses genuinely old vampires. The concept is used in a way, where Cullens are the “new” vampires. They are more or less kind to people, if nothing else, they do not wish to harm them, they drink animal blood and the “father” of the family even works as a doctor. They try and to a certain degree are successful with blending with the humans. They do have to move every couple of years, so people wouldn't take notice, that they don't age. Most vampires in the Cullen coven even have superpowers (this will be elaborated later on). This is unfortunately not exclusive only to them. It would seem, that any vampire can have superpowers. So, while the Cullens embody the “new” vampire. The usage of the “old” vampire is more interesting. The “old” vampire is represented by a character named James. At one point in the book, Edward says, that James is a hunter. Being a hunter is not as rare as having gifts like Edward or Alice, but it does mean, that James is especially good at hunting. Once he catches a scent he likes, he hunts that person until he kills them. James doesn't care about humans, he sees them only as food or a toy to be played with and then to be discarded. James is cruel and selfish. Again, there are many similarities between this character and the character of Dracula. The second kind is more literal. This would be represented by Volturi. Volturi are a coven of incredibly old vampires. They serve as sort of a government/judge of other Vampires. The reason for this is that in this universe, during the 17th century, humans found out about vampires. Their response to this new information was to try and find vampires so they could be killed. After this happened, Volturi rose to power and decided, that vampires had to be more careful

and if any vampire got out of the line, they would be executed. Thanks to their history, Volturi have a vast network of vampires. Aro, one of the leaders, has a hobby of collecting other vampires with superpowers. Of the main three, two (Aro and Marcus) have superpowers. While this in addition to their experiences gives a reason for their positions, the third leader has no powers. But that doesn't matter. The third leader had led fighting groups against werewolves (actual ones). His experience with fighting balances his lack of extraordinary abilities. Volturi as a whole are above normal vampires. They are a very well organised unit and thanks to some superpowers, they have very good methods of keeping everyone in line.

When it comes to the romance in this story, it is filled with toxic and dangerous moments. At first, Edward is controlling, but it is obvious that he cares about Bella and she loves him very much. But then he leaves and Bella starts to spend more time with Jacob, at first it seems okay, but then he becomes detached from her and while they resolve the problems in their friendship, Bella ultimately chooses Edward as the one she loves and after Bella and Edward get back together, Jacob sexually assaults Bella. But the toxicity of relationships will be touched upon later on in this thesis.

Another thing that makes TW different from the others is imprinting. What is imprinting is in a more detailed manner explained later. But simply put, it is when two soulmates meet each other and instantly fall in love. In the series Jacob is in love with Bella, but after she marries Edward and has his baby, Jacob imprints on the newborn. This makes Bella understandably angry but in the end, there is nothing to be done about it.

Another point of interest is the existence of Bella's daughter. As it is half human and half vampire, Twilight doesn't use the word Dhampir, all these creatures are called vampire hybrids, half-human, half-immortal or half-vampire. In Twilight is a part, where Rosalie (one of the Cullens) has a talk with Bella to discourage her from becoming a vampire. One of the reasons she uses is their inability to have kids. But after Bella turns pregnant it is found out, that vampires can have kids but only with humans, where the male has to be vampire and the female has to be human. While the same is possible in Vampire Academy, there is a great difference between them. In VA they have a role of protecting vampires, but in TW these hybrids don't have any special purpose.

After are these babies born, they have an enhanced growth as Renesmee (the name for the baby) grows what normal human children grow in a few years in a few weeks. This is worrisome as it means, that within a few years Renesmee will be dead. But later it turns out,

that these hybrids just grow to a certain point and then they stop. While not immortal like vampires, their life span is greatly prolonged. After Volturi find out about Renesmee's existence, they mistake her for an immortal child. And they decide that the best course of action is killing her. This is understandable. Immortal children are an incredibly dangerous and powerful force.

“However, they could not be taught. They were frozen at whatever level of development they'd achieved before being bitten. Adorable two-year-olds with dimples and lisps that could destroy half a village in one of their tantrums. If they hungered, they fed, and no words of warning could restrain them. Humans saw them, stories circulated, fear spread like fire in dry brush. . . .” (Meyer, 2010, p.38)

As they are unable to control themselves. They were brought vampires to the brink of being exposed and in the end, there was a hunt for them so that vampires would be protected. One of the rules set by Volturi is that it is forbidden to create immortal children. If someone breaks this rule, both that vampire and the child are killed without any mercy and option for a trial. There is another reason for such aftermath.

“I told you they were loveable. Well, covens fought to the last man—were utterly decimated—to protect them. The carnage was not as widespread as the southern wars on this continent, but more devastating in its own way. Longestablished covens, old traditions, friends... Much was lost. In the end, the practice was completely eliminated. The immortal children became unmentionable, a taboo.” (Meyer, 2010, p.38-39)

As explained by Carlisle, these children were so incredibly charming, that they were able to get other vampires to fight and die for them. Such ability could lead to a great reduction of vampires. It is not that Volturi and vampires, in general, didn't try to “raise” these children and teach them how to act. There were many attempts for this, but in the end, the immortal children were unable to develop themselves, this then led to the ban on their existence.

In both TW and VA, these hybrids are important for the story. In VA, the main female protagonist is one of these hybrids and in TW Renesmee is the reason for most of the fourth books conflict. On the other hand, Dracula doesn't have his own children and in TVD it is impossible for vampires to be or to get someone pregnant as they are sterile.

2.2.6 GENRE DIFFERENCE – HORROR/FANTASY/ROMANCE

Kristin Ramsdell (2004) lists different subgenres for romantic fiction, containing werewolf, vampire, and shape-shifting tales, for example Twilight or TVD as they fall into the romance or paranormal romance genres. Dracula on the other hand, is more in the horror genre.

The main difference between let's say a Dracula and Vampire academy is clear. Dracula is a horror story while VA is fantasy/romance novel. This can be seen in both the overall tone of the novel and more minor elements, that make these novels what they are.

One of these minor examples is the living situation of the vampires and other characters. It is clear, that certain places and situations allow more freedom than others. Both Dracula and VA wouldn't be what it is, if the vampire characters lived in some suburban area. Dracula's living situation is depicted as a decaying castle in the Carpathian Mountains. This gives the reader sense of isolation and further amplifies the horror of an unknown creature roaming both outside and inside the castle.

VA, on the other hand, is set in a boarding school. This means, that the characters are not limited by their parents, there are still teachers, but the characters still have a certain amount of freedom.

2.2.7 ELEMENTS OF TRADITIONAL VAMPIRE RULES IN MODERN LITERATURE

The thought of vampires themselves originated in folklore. Therefore it is only natural, that vampire novels tend to bear some folkloric elements. Some of the most notable ones are ways to repel vampires.

It is said, that there are ways to repel vampires. Modern vampire novels don't use this option very much. When used, it is either some Christian implement like holy water (which has an acidic effect on vampire skin), crucifixes, or crosses. This can be explained easily. Vampires are basically in defiance of God, they are something that should be dead but aren't. Therefore, when confronted by something with a connection to God, they are repelled by it. With crucifixes, they start backing off from them as soon, as they see them, and upon direct contact vampires get burnt by them. John Edgcomb (2020) in his book claims that vampires represent dead, evil and darkness while God represents light, life and overall goodness. According to the book this is the reason why vampires cannot go outside or step on holy ground.

While vampires are said to be unable to step on holy ground, not many authors use this characteristic, it is used in *Vampire Academy*, but only for Strigoi (this will be elaborated later on), Moroi can and often go to church, in most of the modern popular literature is this overlooked. This is directly contradicted in Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1997) where Louis is inside a church and comments that he is the only supernatural being in there. Both *Vampire Diaries* and *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*, on the other hand, use another characteristic, and that is the incapacity to enter a home of someone, without being invited by the owner of the home. After the invite, vampires are able to enter and leave as they please.

The least used option is to distract them by making them count something. This is done by scattering objects (most often grains, seeds, even pennies – something small in large amounts), when these objects are dropped on the floor, vampires are compelled to count them all up, thanks to this, the victim can escape. This is used in *Sesame Street* – a show for children. In this show is a character named Count von Count. Count is a vampire that teaches children how to count, for this he uses anything from bats and cars to snores.

2.2.8 Ways to kill a vampire

When speaking about vampires, an important thing to mention is how to kill them. There are multiple ways. Every literary universe has its own rules when it comes to this.

Overall, there are multiple ways to kill a vampire. Which one will be used depends solely on the author. This often results with writers choosing more than one or two methods and then exchanging them depending on the situation. Out of all existing means, there are three ways of killing a vampire, which are adapted most often. The first way, and what everyone says when asked how to kill a vampire, is piercing a vampire's heart with a stake. Now, depending on the author, this can be done by a regular wooden stake, a wooden stake made from some special kind of wood or a more special kind of stake, meaning stakes made or covered in silver or charmed in some way. This particular method is used in *VA*.

Made with elemental magic, silver stakes were a guardian's deadliest weapon. Stabbing a Strigoi through the heart with one meant instant death. (Mead, 2009, p.94)

This method can be only used in literature where vampires have more human-like aspects. The main opponent to this would be *TW*, where vampires are described as more rock-like. *His skin was cold and hard, like a stone. (Meyer, 2006, p.185)* Even though they look human, their skin is too hard and tough to be penetrated by any kind of stake.

This leads us to the second option, which is burning.

“How can you kill a vampire?” He glanced at me with unreadable eyes and his voice was suddenly harsh. “The only way to be sure is to tear him to shreds, and then burn the pieces.” (Meyer, 2006, p.431)

It generally seems, that this option has only one rule and that would be that while fire is more than capable of killing a vampire, it has to be a deadly fire. In TW is a first vampire killed, when the Cullen family rip his body to pieces and then burn them. This can be seen again in later books.

And lastly, it would seem, that vampires have one natural enemy and that is the sun. This is the most often adapted thing there is. In VA sun is deadly for Strigoi and bearable but unpleasant for Moroi, in TW the sun is not deadly but can be used to detect vampires as their skin has quite a particular answer to sunlight.

Edward in the sunlight was shocking. I couldn't get used to it, though I'd been staring at him all afternoon. His skin, white despite the faint flush from yesterday's hunting trip, literally sparkled, like thousands of tiny diamonds were embedded in the surface. (Meyer, 2006, p.281)

In both TVD and TSVM sunlight is deadly. On the other hand, in AL sunlight does nothing to vampires. They are not injured or bothered by it. Overall, how vampires respond to contact with sunlight may vary anywhere on a scale from didn't even notice to killed on the spot.

2.3 How they affect each other

2.3.1 Spike in popularity

As to why is vampire literature so popular can be explained by the fact, that people often want what they cannot have, both immortality and powers are both a wanted commodity. Madison (2016, ch. 1) states that “The popularity of vampire literature is partly the interest of the unknown, the intriguing nature of immortality, and the romanticizing of death.”

Another reason could be with Anne Rice and her characters, Lestrade and Louis are opposites, but both are very interesting characters. Thanks to the difference in their characters, they have some interesting interactions.

Every new piece of work brings something new to the vampire literature (Madison, 2016), *I Am Legend* by Richard Matheson presents vampires as killing machines, *TSVM* comes with the idea of synthetic blood and *TW* brings the tell-tale signs of sparkling in the sunlight.

Molly Williamson (2005) talks about how “the vampire is one of the most enduring of popular fictions in modern Anglo American culture”. Williamson then continues to find that female readers identify more with the male vampire than his female victims. The sympathetic and “new” kind of vampire has a lot to do with this. Readers of Stoker’s *Dracula* (not only readers, but people in general) view *Dracula* as predator, but readers of Rice’s work see Louis and Lestat in more caring light, because they had no choice in becoming a vampire but were forced into it.

2.3.2 Fanfiction

Fanfiction is part of literature. With any novel or series, there is a high possibility that it has fanfiction or even more than one. It is actually directly proportional, the more popular a novel is, the more people will write fanfiction about it.

Fanfiction is when a person writes a story about characters, that don’t belong to them. The internet is filled with them, not only that but there are actually published books that at least start as fanfiction. One of these would be *Fifty Shades of Grey*. This work was originally named *Masters of the Universe* and was written as fanfiction about Edward and Bella, where their relationship was portrayed as more sexual. But it got popular, so the author changed the names of the characters and anything from the *Twilight* universe (because of legal reasons) and published it.

New fanfiction is being published every day. There are numerous websites that allow this or were created for this specific reason. The most well-known sites for this are Wattpad, FanFiction and Archive of Our Own. If we search for the word vampire, we will find a great amount of results. Basically anyone can write on these sites. While this means, that many people can freely enjoy their hobby of writing, it also means that there is a great span of quality.

2.4 Romanticism of toxic behaviour

The Romance Writers of America (2010) claim, that “if story wants to be considered a romance, there must be a love story and an emotionally satisfying ending.” But story doesn’t have to be in the romance genre to have some relationship in it.

When it comes to romance in literature or even movies and TV shows, there is an important problem, that needs to be talked about. And that is how toxic and abusive behaviour tends to be romanticised. The issue with this is that when this behaviour gets normalised, it's harder to recognise it and therefore people may end up in an abusive relationship and not even realise it until it's too late.

This behaviour is very prominent in vampire literature. It is generally used in any supernatural literature, be it vampires or werewolves (especially in Omegaverse). This can be explained easily. Supernatural beings often possess some kind of supernatural or simply just enhanced powers. Writers can also claim, that since these creatures are not humans (no matter how close to humans they are), they have different rules. With werewolves, it is explained by their brain being too much animal-like to care about human social conventions. With angels and demons, it can be explained either by them doing what they want, when they want it or by them living in a completely different type of society and therefore viewing this behaviour as normal. And with vampires, it can be explained by them losing part of their humanity when turning and therefore changing their worldview.

Vampires are designated to hunt; in modern literature, their appearance is more on the mysterious and incredibly handsome/pretty side. This combined with their abilities makes them apex predators. The problem is that authors tend to transfer this to the romantic part of the plot.

Whether consciously or not, authors end up encouraging unhealthy and toxic ideas in their books. This more often than not leads to being harmful. The majority of the audience for this type of literature are teen girls. Teens, in general, are quite impressionable and influenced when they are presented with toxic behaviour; they start thinking that it is normal or even idolise it and may end up in dangerous relationships themselves.

Many romantic teen and young adult novels have couples in harmful relationships. More often it is one partner (usually male) controlling the other (female or, in the case of a gay relationship, the "weaker" male). Emotional and physical abuse is presented to the audience and viewed as true and deep love.

There is a huge difference how these novels show women and men. Women are often shown as objects. As something that males lust over and want to claim for themselves. They tend to be average and without any special traits personality-wise or physically-wise. Men are often shown as rich (*Fifty Shades of Grey*) or as the leader or just in any position that is higher than what the woman has.

After two characters establish contact, they usually have very little to no communication and instead, the focus is put on the physical part of their relationship. It is often shown that the couple spends no time doing any other activities. This in particular can be very dangerous for young people. “YA lit often functions, implicitly or explicitly, as a model for what constitutes romance and what doesn’t” (Seifert, 2015, p. 10) this can be dangerous for the young and impressionable audience this literature often has. There is also a feminist literature which can “warn young women of potential physical and emotional abuse from male partners” (Younger, 2009, p.75)

2.4.1 Portrayal of toxic/abusive relationships

In this part, I will provide a list of the most used types of abuse that we as an audience can see in literature.

1) Forcing a kiss on someone

This is often used in contexts, where the female is saying something or the couple is arguing and the male decides to forcibly kiss the female to make her quiet. It is usually portrayed like the female is either too surprised to fight back or fighting back, but in the end, she usually returns the kiss.

This can be seen in TW many many times. For example:

His mouth was on mine then, and I couldn't fight him. Not because he was so many thousand times stronger than me, but because my will crumbled into dust the second our lips met. (Meyer, 2022, p.532)

This is in the first book, in this part Bella and Edward are having a minor fight and instead of calmly explaining everything and talking things out, Edward decides to kiss her. Even though a few lines before this she is trying to get some distance between them. In that part, he grabs her and refuses to allow her to move.

His lips crushed mine, stopping my protest. He kissed me angrily, roughly, his other hand gripping tight around the back of my neck, making escape impossible. I shoved against his chest with all my strength, but he didn't even seem to notice. His mouth was soft, despite the anger, his lips molding to mine in a warm, unfamiliar way. (Meyer, 2010, p.351)

This happens between Jacob and Bella in the third book. This scene is after they argue, and Jacob tries to convince Bella to be with him instead of Edward, when she refuses, he kisses her. This kiss leads to her punching him and breaking her arm in the process.

2) Grabbing by the wrists or an arm or otherwise limiting movement

This happens when the female wants to leave, but the male stops her. It is prominent in movies and TV shows as its form is physical and therefore has a stronger impact when the audience can actually see what is happening. It is actually greatly used in Korean TV shows and movies. Now, it was slightly withdrawn, but about seven years earlier, it was very popular.

Edward grabbed my face in his hand, forcing me to look at him. His other hand was out, palm toward Carlisle. (Meyer, 2002, p.558)

In this instance, Edward grabs Bella, after he finds out that she is going against what he wants. Ever since finding out that Edward is a vampire, Bella also wants to become one to be able to be with him. Prior to this scene, Bella makes a deal with Carlisle and Alice, that if Edward won't change her, then they will. Edward gets very angry when Bella goes against his wishes so brazenly and grabs her and forces her to look at him, presumably so he could have her full attention so he could talk her out of it.

3) Refusing to take No for an answer

One of the most well-known tropes is when someone is "playing hard to get" and the other person has to make them give it up. Unfortunately, this managed to cross over to the real world and is used more often than it should. In this instance, person A starts pursuing the affection of person B. even if person B says NO, person A doesn't let it slow them down and in the end, they end up together. Them dating and maybe even marrying could be reasoned by saying that person A was persistent in their goal until they wore down person B, so B would give up and give in, but not because person B really loves person A.

"I suspect their willingness to see male force interpreted as passion is also the product of a wish to be seen as to desirable to the right man that he will not take no for an answer." (Radway, 1984). Radway offers an interesting perspective, that this trope may be so often used because it is supposed to make women feel more desirable. After all, the man has to see something spectacular in her, if he completely disregards her choices and keeps on pursuing her.

This particular trope is a big problem, because it has spread to a real life. Every woman has had something like this happen to her or has a friend with such an experience. In her article, Rebecca Haddad talks about her friends who recently experienced this. Haddad claims that both of her friends turned those men down, and after that didn't work, they stopped responding, but it still took some time before the men stopped trying. "She became less responsive to his texts and started hanging out with him less often, but he still continued pining after her." (Haddad, 2021)

4) Extreme (unhealthy) possessiveness

"Being possessive is problematic because it's a sign that the possessive partner is insecure, controlling, and untrusting," (Steber, 2021). Not only does this create problems at the start of the relationship, it can lead to emotional abuse.

Being possessive is sometimes hard to distinguish "especially since a desire for control is often disguised as care for your wellbeing" (Steber, 2021).

"When I see how you look at Damon." There, it was said. He continued, painfully. "Before he came home, you and I were together every day. My father and yours were pleased, and spoke of marriage plans. But now the days grow shorter, summer is almost gone—and you spend as much time with Damon as you do with me. The only reason Father allows him to stay here is that you asked it. But why did you ask it, Katherine? I thought you cared for me." (Smith, 2009, p.134)

It is predominant in the werewolf literature. The male usually starts verbally attacking other males, sometimes for flirting with his girlfriend or in more psychotic cases for just looking at his girl. It doesn't take a lot for these males to start physically attacking the other males.

It is alarming how easy it is to find a story with this happening. For example the application GALATEA (application containing stories, e-books, audiobooks and more) is containing great amount of stories with very possessive partners (doesn't have to be a werewolf, there are stories with dragons, mafia bosses, work bosses, basically anyone).

5) Bullying/from enemies to lovers

What is interesting about this, is that it doesn't matter whether is the bully a boy or a girl, it can be executed both ways. This trope can be done in two ways. The first one is where two people begin as a sort of enemies, where one bullies the other. In this case, usually something

happens, they start spending more time together and fall in love. In this case, the bully changes the way they acted toward the bullied and often regrets it. The other option is that bully is mean because he already loves the bullied, but is either afraid to show it (mostly is afraid of possible rejection) or doesn't know how.

The problem with this is that bullying is a serious issue. It leaves psychological, sometimes even physical, scars on a person. This all is supposed to be forgotten when the two get together.

2.5 The relationship between the female MCs and their partners

2.5.1 Personalities of main characters

When it comes to any romantic literature that is aimed at teens and young adult audiences, we often come across one particular problem. Our problem and the thing that readers are often complaining about is that the female MC is very plain.

Romantic vampire novels or rather the female MC in them can be broken down into two main categories. The first one would be FMC which are actual characters, with goals (other than getting together with male MC), dreams and personalities. In this category is, for example, VA. The second category is where the FMC doesn't have much of their own personality and is rather plain. This whole category is led by TW and TVD.

These categories exist for a simple reason. When it comes to romantic teen and young adult literature we also have two kinds. The first kind is where we have characters that undergo some kind of development. In this case, characters need to have a personality so it could change as the story progresses. Whether are the changes small or more noticeable is not important. Important is that we as an audience can see that a certain character or characters had some starting point personality-wise and that they either changed, or are on their way to change.

The other kind is where the characters are purposely plain so that readers would be able to insert themselves into the story better. Aimed predominantly at a female audience, in this type of stories, FMC don't even have any persisting personality traits. They can be short-tempered, calm, compassionate, uncaring, deceitful or genuine, all at the same time. When we have a character without any set traits then it's easier for us as readers to imagine ourselves as the character. There is only one problem that arises from this. And that is that readers tend to complain that the FMC doesn't deserve to be with any of her possible romantic partners. Sometimes, writers unfortunately write the FMC so plain, that she ends up not liked by the audience.

The first kind could be represented by Claudia from Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*. Claudia is more of a child than a woman, this is caused by the fact, that she was turned when she was only 5 years old. Despite the fact that she is a child, her bloodlust is very strong. At first she considers being vampire and killing fun, but later she realises that she will remain a child forever and she directs her anger into the one who turned her. Despite all these negative feelings, she still manages to find a place for her love for her friend Loui.

Somewhere in between is Sookie Stackhouse, who is one of the main characters from *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*. Sookie is a waitress of a fairy heritage, she is a kind girl but thanks to her fairy ancestors, she has the power to hear peoples thoughts. This power is making her appear to be awkward around others and it also makes harder for her to fit in with others. She is unable to hear thoughts of vampires and therefore is drawn to them. Sookie is a very loyal and caring girl, who is always trying to help, but at the same time she tends to be naive and sometimes a bit simple-minded.

The second kind are characters like Bella from *TW*. One of the first things readers know about Bella personality-wise is that she is clumsy, insecure and quiet. She is often infantilised by Edward. Her most prominent trait is sarcasm, but other than that she is very plain.

2.5.2 Choice of romantic partner

More than often, the FMC is given more than one possibility for a romantic plot. In vampire literature is the most famous case in *TW*, where fans split into two different groups one of them named Team Edward and the second Team Jacob.

These two teams had different opinions on who should Bella (the FMC) end up with. Tracy L. Bealer (2011) claims that "the novel establishes Edward and Jacob as diametrically opposed romantic possibilities for Bella by and through their different preternatural characteristics." This is beautifully shown in the third book when Jacob comes to Bella to warm her up as Edward is unable. Through the course of four books, Bella started with Edward, then shifted towards Jacob and then returned and finally stayed with Edward. This gave the readers a chance to understand both of these male characters more. While both Jacob and Edward shared factors such as handsomeness or protectiveness over Bella, they were quite different. This proved to be a very positive addition as readers that didn't like Edward could envision Bella with someone different.

The same rule applies to *TVD*. There the FMC had a choice between Stefan and Damon. While these two are brothers, they have very different personalities. Stefan is labelled as a

“good boy”, he is supposed to be a good guy who is constantly trying to protect generally everyone and anyone. This can be seen when we as readers learn, that he refuses to drink human blood and only drinks blood from animals. Damon on the other hand is a “bad boy”. He is that type of literary character, that is mean to everyone, except for the one he likes as “her love makes him better”. He drinks blood from both living humans and blood banks, he is sarcastic and has a snarky answer every time he gets a chance.

Here, people in the audience get to choose what personality they like better. But in the end, most of the main or otherwise important characters end up with some romantic partner.

2.6 Love triangle and superpowers

2.6.1 Love triangle

When it comes to literature, love triangles are an incredibly common thing. We can find examples of them in works by authors like Jane Austen or Emily Brontë. In earlier times, this plot was understandable. It used to be a fight between heart and brain. It was whether should FMC marry a man with money but no emotional connection or a man she loved, but who wouldn't be able to provide for her.

Nowadays love triangle is an important part of romantic stories. There are exemptions like Hunger games, where the romantic plot is secondary to the actual plot about Katniss and her resolution to protect her family, friends and district. In TW, TSVM and TVD romance is very important. But giving a FMC only one possible romantic interest is predictable and would get boring very soon. So love triangles are used. *The Guardian* (2015) says that “a love triangle is, typically, composed of a female and two male companions.” Usually one of the male characters is a childhood friend and the other some new and mysterious character. It also usually goes that the female chooses the new character over the friend. None of this a rule, it is even possible to completely change it and have one male with two female companions.

The two male or female companions usually don't have a very good relationship. They can be complete strangers, or know each other, sometimes even be friends but they often end up fighting over their love, therefore it's hard to stay friendly with each other. Sometimes, the companions keep their friendship status, or become friends (usually when they need to join forces to help their love interest) this can be also done if one of them falls in love with someone else.

2.6.2 Different vampiric powers

Aside from their superhuman strength, speed and hearing, vampires often have some kind of superpowers. This is most notable in TW, VA and TSVM.

In TW some special vampires have almost magical powers. Edward, the main male character, can read minds. His adoptive sister Alice can see the future. And his adoptive brother Jasper can feel emotions of other people. In the whole saga, there are many vampires that have some special abilities. We can divide them into psychological – mind reading, mind shield, emotion manipulation, future sight or pain creation (not physical, greatly affects the brain), and physical like electric power (the power to create an electric current and conduct it across the skin) or the power to control elements.

TW does explain the possibility of this existing. In the TW universe, when a human has some sort of a gift and then becomes a vampire, this gift gets amplified and becomes a power.

“We don’t really know. Carlisle has a theory . . . he believes that we all bring something of our strongest human traits with us into the next life, where they are intensified — like our minds, and our senses. He thinks that I must have already been very sensitive to the thoughts of those around me. And that Alice had some precognition, wherever she was.” (Meyer, 2010, p.332)

This is best shown on the FMC Bella. Through the course of the first three books, she is a human. Even then, she has the ability of a mental shield. Edward is unable to read her mind and after she turns into a vampire, she learns how to project her shield and how to use it to protect other people.

When it comes to vampires possessing superpowers, the best contrast to this is undoubtedly VA. in that literary universe, vampires are able to control elemental magic. It is important to note, that this particular universe has two kinds of vampires. The first kind is named Moroi, these vampires are basically viewed as the good ones. They possess magic – usually only one element, they can sometimes control more but that is extremely rare. They also drink blood from humans that gave their consent to be subjected to it. They also never kill, for when they kill a human, they become a Strigoi and lose their powers. The main difference here is that Moroi are connected to the world and nature and therefore believe that their powers should be used for good and peace (it is forbidden to use it for any kind of conflict – but this rule is constantly overlooked as some Moroi use their magic offensively even in the first book)

and they also believe that killing a human is unnatural and that for this act they lose their soul which connects them to their magic.

All Moroi wielded elemental magic. It was one of the things that differentiated living vampires from Strigoi, the dead vampires. Moroi viewed magic as a gift. It was part of their souls and connected them to the world. (Mead, 2009, p.47)

Taking into a consideration Stoker's Dracula and modern vampire literature, we can clearly see that the power these supernatural being posses changed. Bram Stoker shows Dracula as someone with the abilities to control natural elements, the same power is used in TW when a vampire named Benjamin uses water and air elements while practising to prepare for battle with Volturi. However the main difference is that Dracula had the power to raise the dead and control smaller creatures, this is not very used in modern literature. Another power is Dracula's power to go through a key hole or a gap under a door, modern vampires do not have this power. Sometimes vampires are able to do some kind of transformation, usually it's either transformation to bat or sort of a facial transformation when their faces become more distorted, Dracula counters this with his power to turn into a wolf, which is something that modern vampires are incapable of doing.

2.7 Werewolves and Witches

2.7.1 Werewolves

A werewolf is a human, that can change into a wolf-human hybrid. This change occurs during the full moon and is prompted by a curse. In earlier times, the power to change was called lycanthropy, this world is still used today, but it's not so popular as the world werewolf.

In Dracula, for example, vampires and werewolves weren't enemies. Dracula himself could shapeshift into a wolf and had the ability to control other wolves. In modern vampire literature, werewolves stand as natural enemies to vampires. There is an untrust between these two groups and if they meet, they often either fight or insult each other. Reasons for them to be enemies change, with each literary universe, but the reasons are generally within these. The first reason is that both of them are apex predators, they hunt for the same food and don't like when the other is in their territory. Another reason could be that vampires view werewolves as overgrown dogs and werewolves see vampires as dead monsters. Jacinda Perez (2019) says that "vampires and werewolves have always been portrayed to have equal abilities to kill each other." This is shown in TW, multiple times when werewolves are able to puncture a vampire's

skin and vampires are able to hug the werewolves so strongly that their bones break, or when they rip werewolf's jaw into two pieces.

Aaron Sagers (2010) said that "at the moment the stand-off is famously characterized by Team Edward and Team Jacob in The Twilight Saga film franchise." This claim is still true. Nicole Waxman (2021) argues that Jacob Black seems like a more reasonable choice for Bella, partly because of his personality, partly because although he is a werewolf, he is still partly human and therefore Bella wouldn't have to change herself to be with him.

2.7.2 Witches

Witches are people, who can do magic. They can be either bad and harm humans, or good (can be also called a White witch) and protect and help people. there can be multiple reasons why witches can control magic. It can be because they were born with this ability, or because they gained it as a reward or it was gifted to them by someone or something (some deity or enchanted item), and finally, some witches can do magic, because they make sacrificial rituals and gain powers from them.

Witches are very important for story in TVD as they give vampires the ability to walk in sun. this is done by charming a piece of jewellery, that the vampire later wears at all times. Aside from TVD witches are generally used as a tool to progress in a story. Sometimes they help create or find something for the main hero and sometimes they stand in the position of power when they act as either ally or enemy. The usage of witches isn't as widespread as that of werewolves.

3 CONCLUSION

In my work, I have looked at vampires, their depiction in history and literature. Vampires and vampirism have followed humankind for almost as long as humans existed. This gives vampires a great advantage when it comes to their popularity, as they have roots within almost all the cultures there are. Just that fact alone gives writers many opportunities for depicting vampire characters. There is also the well-known hatred between vampires and werewolves, which can add an interesting element to the story.

When it comes to vampires and literature, it is safe to say that they have gone through a lot of changes. Every one of these changes gave vampires something new. Vampires just by themselves are interesting creatures but depending on the settings they inhabit they can be either extremely dangerous creatures capable of killing a person on the spot, or, more recently, they can be lovable neighbours with weird habits. This range of possibilities guarantees large audience, as it doesn't matter if person likes romance or horror; with vampire literature, everyone can find something to suit their taste.

4 LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TW – Twilight saga

TVD – The Vampire Diaries

VA – Vampire Academy

TSVM – The Southern Vampire Mysteries

AL – Abraham Lincoln

MC – main character

FMC – female main character

5 RESUMÉ

Hlavním tématem mojí práce bylo analyzovat a popsat, jak se vyvíjela upírácká literatura, od jejích začátků až po dnešní dobu.

Při porovnání děl jsem dospěla k závěru, že s postupem doby se literatura odklonila od hororu a přiklonila se více k romantice. Toto se odráží jak na stylu, jakým jsou tyto díla napsaná (již neobsahují tolik prvků, které mají ve čtenáři vzbudit strach), tak na způsobu, jakým jsou vyobrazováni upíři samotní. Spíše než monstrem sídlící buď v osamění či za doprovodu pouze jiných upírů či nějakých sloužících, dnes máme upíry, kteří se zapojují do běžného života lidí, kdy například chodí do školy či se účastní různých společenských akcí.

Ze dříve velice nebezpečného zabijáka máme nyní mysteriózního cizince, který pouze chce najít lásku a pochopení.

6 ANNOTATIONS

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