



Abstract: Using ideas originated in queer theory by authors such as Jack Halberstam and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, the paper analyzes the underlying and even explicit queerness in vampire literature. As Halberstam argues in *Skin Shows*, in Gothic horror, “the monster always represents the disruption of categories, the destruction of boundaries, and the presence of impurities,” (27). Because of such disruption, the vampire tradition as a genre has functioned in various ways as a metaphor for social and political afflictions. Specifically, vampires are homologues with homosexuality because they are feared by the public and involve resisting anything outside of the binary “regimes of the normal.” This paper looks at the ways in which the vampire character is “queer,” considering all the evolutions and interpretations of “queer” within cultural context and rhetoric.

The vampire used as metaphor, as an embodiment...

Vampires are an “Other,” allowing writers to mask and project other forms of Otherness onto them:

- Racial and ethnic stereotypes – ex: *Dracula*.
- Hysteria -- women who do not fall under gendered norms.
- Capitalism -- “abstract parasite” draining the value of their workers' labor to enrich themselves—just as supernatural vampires drain their victims' life force to grow stronger.”



Carmilla (1872), Sheridan Le Fanu

Novella with a girl-vampire who preys on other girls.

- Carmilla shows overt romantic affection, admiration, and loyalty towards Laura
- Carmilla described as “engaging,” and others being “taken” by her beauty and attraction.
- Laura’s attempts to rationalize her feelings & view Carmilla as a boy in drag. Carmilla’s explicit femininity.



Dracula (1897), Bram Stoker

Context: Oscar Wilde trial, public condemning the ‘threat’ of homosexuality.

- Dracula’s words: “This man belongs to me!”
- Dracula “saving” Jonathan like a damsel in distress.
- Dracula as mother figure.
- Jonathan’s “wicked, burning desire.”



Erotic Triangles & Women as Buffers

“the only way to eliminate the homosexual threat between men is to include a woman in the relationship, forming a (safe) triangular configuration rather than a (threatening) linear, male-to-male union”

Dracula : Arthur + Van Helsing killing (“raping”) Lucy as a vampire.
Twilight: Edward + Jacob. The plot is driven through the “relationship between men who both vie for the affection of a woman” in any erotic rivalry, the bond that links the two rivals is as intense and potent as the bond that links either of the rivals to the beloved. ex: Bella sleeping scene.

Interview with the Vampire (1976), Anne Rice

- Lestat is described as beautiful. He has a “graceful, almost feline quality to his movements.”
- Interviewer: “it sounds as if it was like being in love;” Louis: “That’s correct. It is like love.”
- Sexual innuendos: “He was pressing the length of his body against me now, and I felt the hard strength of his sex beneath his clothes pressing against my leg...I rocked with him, devouring him, his ecstasy, his conscious pleasure.”
- Louis & Lestat and Louis & Armand are “partners”

The Twilight Saga (2005-), Stephenie Meyer

- Both queerness and vampires have “tells” or “give away aspects” that are specific signs of stark difference/strangeness.
 - Bella to Edward: “I know what you are.” Othering language is in reference to Edward’s vampirism but is similar to the ways queerness is unspoken, implicit, and noticeable.
- The Cullens do not revel in their vampirism (they are “vegetarians”). “Glorify heteronormative structures and institutions by upholding the importance of compulsory heteronormative coupling, monogamy, the practice of abstinence before marriage, matrimony, the nuclear family.”
 - Edward rejecting his “nature” to kill (men).
 - Sparkling skin & its queer connotations!