

= Vampire =

A vampire is a being from folklore who subsists by feeding on the life essence ( generally in the form of blood ) of the living . In European folklore , vampires were undead beings that often visited loved ones and caused mischief or deaths in the neighbourhoods they inhabited when they were alive . They wore shrouds and were often described as bloated and of ruddy or dark countenance , markedly different from today 's gaunt , pale vampire which dates from the early 19th century .

Although vampiric entities have been recorded in most cultures , the term vampire was not popularized in the west until the early 18th century , after an influx of vampire superstition into Western Europe from areas where vampire legends were frequent , such as the Balkans and Eastern Europe , although local variants were also known by different names , such as shtriga in Albania , vrykolakas in Greece and strigoi in Romania . This increased level of vampire superstition in Europe led to mass hysteria and in some cases resulted in corpses actually being staked and people being accused of vampirism .

In modern times , however , the vampire is generally held to be a fictitious entity , although belief in similar vampiric creatures such as the chupacabra still persists in some cultures . Early folk belief in vampires has sometimes been ascribed to the ignorance of the body 's process of decomposition after death and how people in pre @-@ industrial societies tried to rationalise this , creating the figure of the vampire to explain the mysteries of death . Porphyria was also linked with legends of vampirism in 1985 and received much media exposure , but has since been largely discredited .

The charismatic and sophisticated vampire of modern fiction was born in 1819 with the publication of *The Vampyre* by John Polidori ; the story was highly successful and arguably the most influential vampire work of the early 19th century . However , it is Bram Stoker 's 1897 novel *Dracula* which is remembered as the quintessential vampire novel and provided the basis of the modern vampire legend . The success of this book spawned a distinctive vampire genre , still popular in the 21st century , with books , films , and television shows . The vampire has since become a dominant figure in the horror genre .

= = Etymology = =

The Oxford English Dictionary dates the first appearance of the English word vampire ( as vampyre ) in English from 1734 , in a travelogue titled *Travels of Three English Gentlemen* published in *The Harleian Miscellany* in 1745 . Vampires had already been discussed in French and German literature . After Austria gained control of northern Serbia and Oltenia with the Treaty of Passarowitz in 1718 , officials noted the local practice of exhuming bodies and " killing vampires " . These reports , prepared between 1725 and 1732 , received widespread publicity . The English term was derived ( possibly via French vampyre ) from the German Vampir , in turn derived in the early 18th century from the Serbian vampir ( Cyrillic : ????? ) , when Arnold Paole , a purported vampire in Serbia was described during the time when Northern Serbia was part of the Austrian Empire .

The Serbian form has parallels in virtually all Slavic languages : Bulgarian and Macedonian ????? ( vampir ) , Bosnian : lampir , Croatian vampir , Czech and Slovak upír , Polish w?pierz , and ( perhaps East Slavic @-@ influenced ) upiór , Ukrainian ????? ( upyr ) , Russian ????? ( upyr ' ) , Belarusian ????? ( upyr ) , from Old East Slavic ????? ( upir ' ) ( note that many of these languages have also borrowed forms such as " vampir / wampir " subsequently from the West ; these are distinct from the original local words for the creature ) . The exact etymology is unclear . Among the proposed proto @-@ Slavic forms are \* ?pyr? and \* ?pir? .

Another , less widespread theory , is that the Slavic languages have borrowed the word from a Turkic term for " witch " ( e.g. , Tatar ubyr ) . Czech linguist Václav Machek proposes Slovak verb " vrepi? sa " ( stick to , thrust into ) , or its hypothetical anagram " vperi? sa " ( in Czech , archaic verb " vpe?it " means " to thrust violently " ) as an etymological background , and thus translates " upír " as " someone who thrusts , bites " . An early use of the Old Russian word is in the anti @-@ pagan treatise " Word of Saint Grigoriy " ( Russian ????? ????????? ) , dated variously to the 11th ? 13th centuries , where pagan worship of upyri is reported .

= = Folk beliefs = =

The notion of vampirism has existed for millennia . Cultures such as the Mesopotamians , Hebrews , Ancient Greeks , and Romans had tales of demons and spirits which are considered precursors to modern vampires . However , despite the occurrence of vampire @-@ like creatures in these ancient civilizations , the folklore for the entity we know today as the vampire originates almost exclusively from early @-@ 18th @-@ century southeastern Europe , when verbal traditions of many ethnic groups of the region were recorded and published . In most cases , vampires are revenants of evil beings , suicide victims , or witches , but they can also be created by a malevolent spirit possessing a corpse or by being bitten by a vampire . Belief in such legends became so pervasive that in some areas it caused mass hysteria and even public executions of people believed to be vampires .

= = Description and common attributes = =

It is difficult to make a single , definitive description of the folkloric vampire , though there are several elements common to many European legends . Vampires were usually reported as bloated in appearance , and ruddy , purplish , or dark in colour ; these characteristics were often attributed to the recent drinking of blood . Indeed , blood was often seen seeping from the mouth and nose when one was seen in its shroud or coffin and its left eye was often open . It would be clad in the linen shroud it was buried in , and its teeth , hair , and nails may have grown somewhat , though in general fangs were not a feature . Although vampires were generally described as undead , some folktales spoke of them as living beings .

= = = Creating vampires = = =

The causes of vampiric generation were many and varied in original folklore . In Slavic and Chinese traditions , any corpse that was jumped over by an animal , particularly a dog or a cat , was feared to become one of the undead . A body with a wound that had not been treated with boiling water was also at risk . In Russian folklore , vampires were said to have once been witches or people who had rebelled against the Russian Orthodox Church while they were alive .

Cultural practices often arose that were intended to prevent a recently deceased loved one from turning into an undead revenant . Burying a corpse upside @-@ down was widespread , as was placing earthly objects , such as scythes or sickles , near the grave to satisfy any demons entering the body or to appease the dead so that it would not wish to arise from its coffin . This method resembles the Ancient Greek practice of placing an obolus in the corpse 's mouth to pay the toll to cross the River Styx in the underworld . It has been argued that instead , the coin was intended to ward off any evil spirits from entering the body , and this may have influenced later vampire folklore . This tradition persisted in modern Greek folklore about the vrykolakas , in which a wax cross and piece of pottery with the inscription " Jesus Christ conquers " were placed on the corpse to prevent the body from becoming a vampire .

Other methods commonly practised in Europe included severing the tendons at the knees or placing poppy seeds , millet , or sand on the ground at the grave site of a presumed vampire ; this was intended to keep the vampire occupied all night by counting the fallen grains , indicating an association of vampires with arithmomania . Similar Chinese narratives state that if a vampire @-@ like being came across a sack of rice , it would have to count every grain ; this is a theme encountered in myths from the Indian subcontinent , as well as in South American tales of witches and other sorts of evil or mischievous spirits or beings .

In Albanian folklore , the dhampir is the hybrid child of the karkanxholl ( a werewolf @-@ like creature with an iron mail shirt ) or the lugat ( a water @-@ dwelling ghost or monster ) . The dhampir sprung of a karkanxholl has the unique ability to discern the karkanxholl ; from this derives the expression the dhampir knows the lugat . The lugat cannot be seen , he can only be killed by the

dhampir , who himself is usually the son of a lugal . In different regions , animals can be revenants as lugsats ; also , living people during their sleep . Dhampiraj is also an Albanian surname .

= = = = Identifying vampires = = = =

Many elaborate rituals were used to identify a vampire . One method of finding a vampire 's grave involved leading a virgin boy through a graveyard or church grounds on a virgin stallion ? the horse would supposedly balk at the grave in question . Generally a black horse was required , though in Albania it should be white . Holes appearing in the earth over a grave were taken as a sign of vampirism .

Corpses thought to be vampires were generally described as having a healthier appearance than expected , plump and showing little or no signs of decomposition . In some cases , when suspected graves were opened , villagers even described the corpse as having fresh blood from a victim all over its face . Evidence that a vampire was active in a given locality included death of cattle , sheep , relatives or neighbours . Folkloric vampires could also make their presence felt by engaging in minor poltergeist @-@ like activity , such as hurling stones on roofs or moving household objects , and pressing on people in their sleep .

= = = = Protection = = = =

= = = = = Apotropaics = = = = =

Apotropaics , items able to ward off revenants , are common in vampire folklore . Garlic is a common example , a branch of wild rose and hawthorn plant are said to harm vampires , and in Europe , sprinkling mustard seeds on the roof of a house was said to keep them away . Other apotropaics include sacred items , for example a crucifix , rosary , or holy water . Vampires are said to be unable to walk on consecrated ground , such as that of churches or temples , or cross running water .

Although not traditionally regarded as an apotropaic , mirrors have been used to ward off vampires when placed , facing outwards , on a door ( in some cultures , vampires do not have a reflection and sometimes do not cast a shadow , perhaps as a manifestation of the vampire 's lack of a soul ) . This attribute , although not universal ( the Greek vrykolakas / tympanios was capable of both reflection and shadow ) , was used by Bram Stoker in Dracula and has remained popular with subsequent authors and filmmakers .

Some traditions also hold that a vampire cannot enter a house unless invited by the owner , although after the first invitation they can come and go as they please . Though folkloric vampires were believed to be more active at night , they were not generally considered vulnerable to sunlight .

= = = = = Methods of destruction = = = = =

Methods of destroying suspected vampires varied , with staking the most commonly cited method , particularly in southern Slavic cultures . Ash was the preferred wood in Russia and the Baltic states , or hawthorn in Serbia , with a record of oak in Silesia . Potential vampires were most often staked through the heart , though the mouth was targeted in Russia and northern Germany and the stomach in north @-@ eastern Serbia .

Piercing the skin of the chest was a way of " deflating " the bloated vampire . This is similar to the act of burying sharp objects , such as sickles , in with the corpse , so that they may penetrate the skin if the body bloats sufficiently while transforming into a revenant . In one striking example of the latter , the corpses of five people in a graveyard near the Polish village of Dravsko , dating from the 17th and 18th centuries , were buried with sickles placed around their necks or across their abdomens .

Decapitation was the preferred method in German and western Slavic areas , with the head buried between the feet , behind the buttocks or away from the body . This act was seen as a way of hastening the departure of the soul , which in some cultures , was said to linger in the corpse . The vampire 's head , body , or clothes could also be spiked and pinned to the earth to prevent rising .

Romani people drove steel or iron needles into a corpse 's heart and placed bits of steel in the mouth , over the eyes , ears and between the fingers at the time of burial . They also placed hawthorn in the corpse 's sock or drove a hawthorn stake through the legs . In a 16th @-@ century burial near Venice , a brick forced into the mouth of a female corpse has been interpreted as a vampire @-@ slaying ritual by the archaeologists who discovered it in 2006 .

Further measures included pouring boiling water over the grave or complete incineration of the body . In the Balkans , a vampire could also be killed by being shot or drowned , by repeating the funeral service , by sprinkling holy water on the body , or by exorcism . In Romania , garlic could be placed in the mouth , and as recently as the 19th century , the precaution of shooting a bullet through the coffin was taken . For resistant cases , the body was dismembered and the pieces burned , mixed with water , and administered to family members as a cure . In Saxon regions of Germany , a lemon was placed in the mouth of suspected vampires .

In Bulgaria , over 100 skeletons with metal objects , such as plough bits , embedded in the torso have been discovered .

= = = Ancient beliefs = = =

Tales of supernatural beings consuming the blood or flesh of the living have been found in nearly every culture around the world for many centuries . The term vampire did not exist in ancient times . Blood drinking and similar activities were attributed to demons or spirits who would eat flesh and drink blood ; even the Devil was considered synonymous with the vampire .

Almost every nation has associated blood drinking with some kind of revenant or demon , or in some cases a deity . In India , for example , tales of vet?las , ghouls @-@ like beings that inhabit corpses , have been compiled in the Bait?l Pac?s? ; a prominent story in the Kath?sarits?gara tells of King Vikram?ditya and his nightly quests to capture an elusive one . Pi??ca , the returned spirits of evil @-@ doers or those who died insane , also bear vampiric attributes .

The Persians were one of the first civilizations to have tales of blood @-@ drinking demons : creatures attempting to drink blood from men were depicted on excavated pottery shards . Ancient Babylonia and Assyria had tales of the mythical Lilitu , synonymous with and giving rise to Lilith ( Hebrew ????? ) and her daughters the Lilu from Hebrew demonology . Lilitu was considered a demon and was often depicted as subsisting on the blood of babies . And Estries , female shape changing , blood drinking demons , were said to roam the night among the population , seeking victims . According to Sefer Hasidim , Estries were creatures created in the twilight hours before God rested . An injured Estrie could be healed by eating bread and salt given her by her attacker .

Greco @-@ Roman mythology described the Empusae , the Lamia , and the striges . Over time the first two terms became general words to describe witches and demons respectively . Empusa was the daughter of the goddess Hecate and was described as a demonic , bronze @-@ footed creature . She feasted on blood by transforming into a young woman and seduced men as they slept before drinking their blood . The Lamia preyed on young children in their beds at night , sucking their blood , as did the gelloude or Gello . Like the Lamia , the striges feasted on children , but also preyed on adults . They were described as having the bodies of crows or birds in general , and were later incorporated into Roman mythology as strix , a kind of nocturnal bird that fed on human flesh and blood .

In Azerbaijani mythology Xortdan is the troubled soul of the dead rising from the grave . Some Hordtan can be living people with certain magical properties . Some of the properties of the Hordtan include : the ability to transform into an animal , invisibility , and the propensity to drain the vitality of victims via blood loss .

= = = Medieval and later European folklore = = =

Many myths surrounding vampires originated during the medieval period . The 12th @-@ century English historians and chroniclers Walter Map and William of Newburgh recorded accounts of revenants , though records in English legends of vampiric beings after this date are scant . The Old Norse draugr is another medieval example of an undead creature with similarities to vampires .

Vampires proper originate in folklore widely reported from Eastern Europe in the late 17th and 18th centuries . These tales formed the basis of the vampire legend that later entered Germany and England , where they were subsequently embellished and popularized . One of the earliest recordings of vampire activity came from the region of Istria in modern Croatia , in 1672 . Local reports cited the local vampire Jure Grando of the village Khring near Tinjan as the cause of panic among the villagers .

A former peasant , Jure died in 1656 . However , local villagers claimed he returned from the dead and began drinking blood from the people and sexually harassing his widow . The village leader ordered a stake to be driven through his heart , but when the method failed to kill him , he was subsequently beheaded with better results . That was the first case in history that a real person had been described as a vampire .

During the 18th century , there was a frenzy of vampire sightings in Eastern Europe , with frequent stakings and grave diggings to identify and kill the potential revenants . Even government officials engaged in the hunting and staking of vampires . Despite being called the Age of Enlightenment , during which most folkloric legends were quelled , the belief in vampires increased dramatically , resulting in a mass hysteria throughout most of Europe .

The panic began with an outbreak of alleged vampire attacks in East Prussia in 1721 and in the Habsburg Monarchy from 1725 to 1734 , which spread to other localities . Two famous vampire cases , the first to be officially recorded , involved the corpses of Petar Blagojevich and Arnold Paole from Serbia . Blagojevich was reported to have died at the age of 62 , but allegedly returned after his death asking his son for food . When the son refused , he was found dead the following day . Blagojevich supposedly returned and attacked some neighbours who died from loss of blood .

In the second case , Paole , an ex @-@ soldier turned farmer who allegedly was attacked by a vampire years before , died while haying . After his death , people began to die in the surrounding area and it was widely believed that Paole had returned to prey on the neighbours . Another famous Serbian legend involving vampires concentrates around a certain Sava Savanovi? living in a watermill and killing and drinking blood from millers . The character was later used in a story written by Serbian writer Milovan Gli?i? and in the Yugoslav 1973 horror film Leptirica inspired by the story .

The two incidents were well @-@ documented . Government officials examined the bodies , wrote case reports , and published books throughout Europe . The hysteria , commonly referred to as the " 18th @-@ Century Vampire Controversy " , raged for a generation . The problem was exacerbated by rural epidemics of so @-@ claimed vampire attacks , undoubtedly caused by the higher amount of superstition that was present in village communities , with locals digging up bodies and in some cases , staking them .

= = = Dissertations on Vampirology = = =

From 1679 , Philippe Rohr devotes an essay to the dead who chew their shrouds in their graves , subject resumed later by Otto in 1732 , and then by Michael Ranft in 1734 . The subject was based on the peculiar phenomenon that when digging up graves , it was discovered that some corpses had at some point either devoured the interior fabric of their coffin or their own limbs . This distinguishes the relationship between vampirism and nightmares which were believed that many cases of vampirism were simply illusions brought by the imagination . While in 1732 an anonymous writer calling itself " the doctor Weimar " discusses the non @-@ putrefaction of these creatures , from a theological point of view. in 1733 , Johann Christoph Harenberg wrote a general treatise on vampirism and the Marquis d 'Argens Boyer cites local cases . Theologians and clergymen are also addressing the topic .

Dom Augustine Calmet , a French theologian and scholar , put together a comprehensive treatise in 1751 titled Treatise on the Apparitions of Spirits and on Vampires or Revenants which investigated the existence of vampires , demons , spectres and many other matters relating to the occult of his time . Calmet conducted extensive research and amassed reports of vampire incidents and extensively researched theological and mythological accounts as well . He had numerous readers , including both a critical Voltaire and supportive demonologists who interpreted the treatise as claiming that vampires existed . In his Philosophical Dictionary , Voltaire wrote :

These vampires were corpses , who went out of their graves at night to suck the blood of the living , either at their throats or stomachs , after which they returned to their cemeteries . The persons so sucked waned , grew pale , and fell into consumption ; while the sucking corpses grew fat , got rosy , and enjoyed an excellent appetite . It was in Poland , Hungary , Silesia , Moravia , Austria , and Lorraine , that the dead made this good cheer .

Some theological disputes arose . The non @-@ decay of vampires ' bodies could recall the incorruption of the bodies of the saints of the Catholic Church . A paragraph on vampires was included in the second edition ( 1749 ) of De servorum Dei beatificatione et sanctorum canonizatione , On the beatification of the servants of God and on canonization of the blessed , written by Prospero Lambertini ( Pope Benedict XIV ) . In his opinion , while the incorruption of the bodies of saints was the effect of a divine intervention , all the phenomena attributed to vampires were purely natural or the fruit of " imagination , terror and fear " . In other words , vampires did not exist

The controversy only ceased when Empress Maria Theresa of Austria sent her personal physician , Gerard van Swieten , to investigate the claims of vampiric entities . He concluded that vampires did not exist and the Empress passed laws prohibiting the opening of graves and desecration of bodies , sounding the end of the vampire epidemics . Despite this condemnation , the vampire lived on in artistic works and in local superstition .

= = = Non @-@ European beliefs = = =

Beings having many of the attributes of European vampires appear in the folklore of Africa , Asia , North and South America , and India . Classified as vampires , all share the thirst for blood .

= = = = Africa = = = =

Various regions of Africa have folktales featuring beings with vampiric abilities : in West Africa the Ashanti people tell of the iron @-@ toothed and tree @-@ dwelling asanbosam , and the Ewe people of the adze , which can take the form of a firefly and hunts children . The eastern Cape region has the impundulu , which can take the form of a large taloned bird and can summon thunder and lightning , and the Betsileo people of Madagascar tell of the ramanga , an outlaw or living vampire who drinks the blood and eats the nail clippings of nobles .

= = = = The Americas = = = =

The Loogaroo is an example of how a vampire belief can result from a combination of beliefs , here a mixture of French and African Vodou or voodoo . The term Loogaroo possibly comes from the French loup @-@ garou ( meaning " werewolf " ) and is common in the culture of Mauritius . However , the stories of the Loogaroo are widespread through the Caribbean Islands and Louisiana in the United States . Similar female monsters are the Soucouyant of Trinidad , and the Tunda and Patasola of Colombian folklore , while the Mapuche of southern Chile have the bloodsucking snake known as the Peuchen . Aloe vera hung backwards behind or near a door was thought to ward off vampiric beings in South American superstition . Aztec mythology described tales of the Cihuateteo , skeletal @-@ faced spirits of those who died in childbirth who stole children and entered into sexual liaisons with the living , driving them mad .

During the late 18th and 19th centuries the belief in vampires was widespread in parts of New

England , particularly in Rhode Island and Eastern Connecticut . There are many documented cases of families disinterring loved ones and removing their hearts in the belief that the deceased was a vampire who was responsible for sickness and death in the family , although the term " vampire " was never actually used to describe the deceased . The deadly disease tuberculosis , or " consumption " as it was known at the time , was believed to be caused by nightly visitations on the part of a dead family member who had died of consumption themselves . The most famous , and most recently recorded , case of suspected vampirism is that of nineteen @-@ year @-@ old Mercy Brown , who died in Exeter , Rhode Island in 1892 . Her father , assisted by the family physician , removed her from her tomb two months after her death , cut out her heart and burned it to ashes .

= = = = Asia = = = =

Rooted in older folklore , the modern belief in vampires spread throughout Asia with tales of ghoulish entities from the mainland , to vampiric beings from the islands of Southeast Asia .

South Asia also developed other vampiric legends . The Bh?ta or Prét is the soul of a man who died an untimely death . It wanders around animating dead bodies at night , attacking the living much like a ghoul . In northern India , there is the Brahmar?k?hasa , a vampire @-@ like creature with a head encircled by intestines and a skull from which it drank blood . The figure of the Vetala who appears in South Asian legend and story may sometimes be rendered as " Vampire " ( see the section on " Ancient Beliefs " above ) .

Although vampires have appeared in Japanese cinema since the late 1950s , the folklore behind it is western in origin . However , the Nukekubi is a being whose head and neck detach from its body to fly about seeking human prey at night .

Legends of female vampire @-@ like beings who can detach parts of their upper body also occur in the Philippines , Malaysia and Indonesia . There are two main vampire @-@ like creatures in the Philippines : the Tagalog Mandurugo ( " blood @-@ sucker " ) and the Visayan Manananggal ( " self @-@ segmenter " ) . The mandurugo is a variety of the aswang that takes the form of an attractive girl by day , and develops wings and a long , hollow , thread @-@ like tongue by night . The tongue is used to suck up blood from a sleeping victim .

The manananggal is described as being an older , beautiful woman capable of severing its upper torso in order to fly into the night with huge bat @-@ like wings and prey on unsuspecting , sleeping pregnant women in their homes . They use an elongated proboscis @-@ like tongue to suck fetuses from these pregnant women . They also prefer to eat entrails ( specifically the heart and the liver ) and the phlegm of sick people .

The Malaysian Penanggalan may be either a beautiful old or young woman who obtained her beauty through the active use of black magic or other unnatural means , and is most commonly described in local folklore to be dark or demonic in nature . She is able to detach her fanged head which flies around in the night looking for blood , typically from pregnant women . Malaysians would hang jeruju ( thistles ) around the doors and windows of houses , hoping the Penanggalan would not enter for fear of catching its intestines on the thorns .

The Leyak is a similar being from Balinese folklore of Indonesia . A Kuntilanak or Matianak in Indonesia , or Pontianak or Langsuir in Malaysia , is a woman who died during childbirth and became undead , seeking revenge and terrorizing villages . She appeared as an attractive woman with long black hair that covered a hole in the back of her neck , with which she sucked the blood of children . Filling the hole with her hair would drive her off . Corpses had their mouths filled with glass beads , eggs under each armpit , and needles in their palms to prevent them from becoming langsuir . This description would also fit the Sundel Bolongs .

Jiangshi , sometimes called " Chinese vampires " by Westerners , are reanimated corpses that hop around , killing living creatures to absorb life essence ( qì ) from their victims . They are said to be created when a person 's soul ( ? pò ) fails to leave the deceased 's body . However , some have disputed the comparison of jiang shi with vampires , as jiang shi are usually represented as mindless creatures with no independent thought . One unusual feature of this monster is its greenish @-@ white furry skin , perhaps derived from fungus or mould growing on corpses . Jiangshi legends

have inspired a genre of jiangshi films and literature in Hong Kong and East Asia . Films like Encounters of the Spooky Kind and Mr. Vampire were released during the jiangshi cinematic boom of the 1980s and 1990s .

= = = Modern beliefs = = =

In modern fiction , the vampire tends to be depicted as a suave , charismatic villain . Despite the general disbelief in vampiric entities , occasional sightings of vampires are reported . Indeed , vampire hunting societies still exist , although they are largely formed for social reasons . Allegations of vampire attacks swept through the African country of Malawi during late 2002 and early 2003 , with mobs stoning one individual to death and attacking at least four others , including Governor Eric Chiwaya , based on the belief that the government was colluding with vampires .

In early 1970 local press spread rumours that a vampire haunted Highgate Cemetery in London . Amateur vampire hunters flocked in large numbers to the cemetery . Several books have been written about the case , notably by Sean Manchester , a local man who was among the first to suggest the existence of the " Highgate Vampire " and who later claimed to have exorcised and destroyed a whole nest of vampires in the area . In January 2005 , rumours circulated that an attacker had bitten a number of people in Birmingham , England , fuelling concerns about a vampire roaming the streets . However , local police stated that no such crime had been reported and that the case appears to be an urban legend .

In 2006 , a physics professor at the University of Central Florida wrote a paper arguing that it is mathematically impossible for vampires to exist , based on geometric progression . According to the paper , if the first vampire had appeared on 1 January 1600 , and it fed once a month ( which is less often than what is depicted in films and folklore ) , and every victim turned into a vampire , then within two and a half years the entire human population of the time would have become vampires . The paper made no attempt to address the credibility of the assumption that every vampire victim would turn into a vampire .

In one of the more notable cases of vampiric entities in the modern age , the chupacabra ( " goat @-@ sucker " ) of Puerto Rico and Mexico is said to be a creature that feeds upon the flesh or drinks the blood of domesticated animals , leading some to consider it a kind of vampire . The " chupacabra hysteria " was frequently associated with deep economic and political crises , particularly during the mid @-@ 1990s .

In Europe , where much of the vampire folklore originates , the vampire is usually considered a fictitious being , although many communities may have embraced the revenant for economic purposes . In some cases , especially in small localities , vampire superstition is still rampant and sightings or claims of vampire attacks occur frequently . In Romania during February 2004 , several relatives of Toma Petre feared that he had become a vampire . They dug up his corpse , tore out his heart , burned it , and mixed the ashes with water in order to drink it .

Vampirism and the Vampire lifestyle also represent a relevant part of modern day 's occultist movements . The mythos of the vampire , his magickal qualities , allure , and predatory archetype express a strong symbolism that can be used in ritual , energy work , and magick , and can even be adopted as a spiritual system . The vampire has been part of the occult society in Europe for centuries and has spread into the American sub @-@ culture as well for more than a decade , being strongly influenced by and mixed with the neo gothic aesthetics .

= = = Collective noun = = =

'Coven ' has been used as a collective noun for vampires , possibly based on the Wiccan usage . An alternative collective noun is a ' house ' of vampires . David Malki , author of Wondermark , suggests in Wondermark No. 566 the use of the collective noun ' basement ' , as in " A basement of vampires . "

= = Origins of vampire beliefs = =



Commentators have offered many theories for the origins of vampire beliefs , trying to explain the superstition ? and sometimes mass hysteria ? caused by vampires . Everything ranging from premature burial to the early ignorance of the body 's decomposition cycle after death has been cited as the cause for the belief in vampires .

= = = Pathology = = =

= = = Decomposition = = =

Paul Barber in his book Vampires , Burial and Death has described that belief in vampires resulted from people of pre @-@ industrial societies attempting to explain the natural , but to them inexplicable , process of death and decomposition .

People sometimes suspected vampirism when a cadaver did not look as they thought a normal corpse should when disinterred . Rates of decomposition vary depending on temperature and soil composition , and many of the signs are little known . This has led vampire hunters to mistakenly conclude that a dead body had not decomposed at all , or , ironically , to interpret signs of decomposition as signs of continued life .

Corpses swell as gases from decomposition accumulate in the torso and the increased pressure forces blood to ooze from the nose and mouth . This causes the body to look " plump , " " well @-@ fed , " and " ruddy " ? changes that are all the more striking if the person was pale or thin in life . In the Arnold Paole case , an old woman 's exhumed corpse was judged by her neighbours to look more plump and healthy than she had ever looked in life . The exuding blood gave the impression that the corpse had recently been engaging in vampiric activity .

Darkening of the skin is also caused by decomposition . The staking of a swollen , decomposing body could cause the body to bleed and force the accumulated gases to escape the body . This could produce a groan @-@ like sound when the gases moved past the vocal cords , or a sound reminiscent of flatulence when they passed through the anus . The official reporting on the Petar Blagojevich case speaks of " other wild signs which I pass by out of high respect " .

After death , the skin and gums lose fluids and contract , exposing the roots of the hair , nails , and teeth , even teeth that were concealed in the jaw . This can produce the illusion that the hair , nails , and teeth have grown . At a certain stage , the nails fall off and the skin peels away , as reported in the Blagojevich case ? the dermis and nail beds emerging underneath were interpreted as " new skin " and " new nails " .

= = = Premature burial = = =

It has also been hypothesized that vampire legends were influenced by individuals being buried alive because of shortcomings in the medical knowledge of the time . In some cases in which people reported sounds emanating from a specific coffin , it was later dug up and fingernail marks were discovered on the inside from the victim trying to escape . In other cases the person would hit their heads , noses or faces and it would appear that they had been " feeding . " A problem with this theory is the question of how people presumably buried alive managed to stay alive for any extended period without food , water or fresh air . An alternate explanation for noise is the bubbling of escaping gases from natural decomposition of bodies . Another likely cause of disordered tombs is grave robbing .

= = = Contagion = = =

Folkloric vampirism has been associated with clusters of deaths from unidentifiable or mysterious illnesses , usually within the same family or the same small community . The epidemic allusion is obvious in the classical cases of Petar Blagojevich and Arnold Paole , and even more so in the case

of Mercy Brown and in the vampire beliefs of New England generally , where a specific disease , tuberculosis , was associated with outbreaks of vampirism . As with the pneumonic form of bubonic plague , it was associated with breakdown of lung tissue which would cause blood to appear at the lips .

= = = = Porphyria = = = =

In 1985 biochemist David Dolphin proposed a link between the rare blood disorder porphyria and vampire folklore . Noting that the condition is treated by intravenous haem , he suggested that the consumption of large amounts of blood may result in haem being transported somehow across the stomach wall and into the bloodstream . Thus vampires were merely sufferers of porphyria seeking to replace haem and alleviate their symptoms .

The theory has been rebuffed medically as suggestions that porphyria sufferers crave the haem in human blood , or that the consumption of blood might ease the symptoms of porphyria , are based on a misunderstanding of the disease . Furthermore , Dolphin was noted to have confused fictional ( bloodsucking ) vampires with those of folklore , many of whom were not noted to drink blood . Similarly , a parallel is made between sensitivity to sunlight by sufferers , yet this was associated with fictional and not folkloric vampires . In any case , Dolphin did not go on to publish his work more widely . Despite being dismissed by experts , the link gained media attention and entered popular modern folklore .

= = = = Rabies = = = =

Rabies has been linked with vampire folklore . Dr Juan Gómez @-@ Alonso , a neurologist at Xeral Hospital in Vigo , Spain , examined this possibility in a report in Neurology . The susceptibility to garlic and light could be due to hypersensitivity , which is a symptom of rabies . The disease can also affect portions of the brain that could lead to disturbance of normal sleep patterns ( thus becoming nocturnal ) and hypersexuality . Legend once said a man was not rabid if he could look at his own reflection ( an allusion to the legend that vampires have no reflection ) . Wolves and bats , which are often associated with vampires , can be carriers of rabies . The disease can also lead to a drive to bite others and to a bloody frothing at the mouth .

= = = Psychodynamic theories = = =

In his 1931 treatise *On the Nightmare* , Welsh psychoanalyst Ernest Jones asserted that vampires are symbolic of several unconscious drives and defence mechanisms . Emotions such as love , guilt , and hate fuel the idea of the return of the dead to the grave . Desiring a reunion with loved ones , mourners may project the idea that the recently dead must in return yearn the same . From this arises the belief that folkloric vampires and revenants visit relatives , particularly their spouses , first .

In cases where there was unconscious guilt associated with the relationship , however , the wish for reunion may be subverted by anxiety . This may lead to repression , which Sigmund Freud had linked with the development of morbid dread . Jones surmised in this case the original wish of a ( sexual ) reunion may be drastically changed : desire is replaced by fear ; love is replaced by sadism , and the object or loved one is replaced by an unknown entity . The sexual aspect may or may not be present . Some modern critics have proposed a simpler theory : People identify with immortal vampires because , by so doing , they overcome , or at least temporarily escape from , their fear of dying .

The innate sexuality of bloodsucking can be seen in its intrinsic connection with cannibalism and folkloric one with incubus @-@ like behaviour . Many legends report various beings draining other fluids from victims , an unconscious association with semen being obvious . Finally Jones notes that when more normal aspects of sexuality are repressed , regressed forms may be expressed , in particular sadism ; he felt that oral sadism is integral in vampiric behaviour .

### == Political interpretations ==

The reinvention of the vampire myth in the modern era is not without political overtones . The aristocratic Count Dracula , alone in his castle apart from a few demented retainers , appearing only at night to feed on his peasantry , is symbolic of the parasitic Ancien regime . In his entry for " Vampires " in the Dictionnaire philosophique ( 1764 ) , Voltaire notices how the end of the 18th century coincided with the decline of the folkloric belief in the existence of vampires but that now " there were stock @-@ jobbers , brokers , and men of business , who sucked the blood of the people in broad daylight ; but they were not dead , though corrupted . These true suckers lived not in cemeteries , but in very agreeable palaces " .

Marx defined capital as " dead labour which , vampire @-@ like , lives only by sucking living labour , and lives the more , the more labour it sucks " . Werner Herzog , in his *Nosferatu the Vampyre* , gives this political interpretation an extra ironic twist when protagonist Jonathon Harker , a middle @-@ class solicitor , becomes the next vampire ; in this way the capitalist bourgeois becomes the next parasitic class .

### == Psychopathology ==

A number of murderers have performed seemingly vampiric rituals upon their victims . Serial killers Peter Kürten and Richard Trenton Chase were both called " vampires " in the tabloids after they were discovered drinking the blood of the people they murdered . Similarly , in 1932 , an unsolved murder case in Stockholm , Sweden was nicknamed the " Vampire murder " , because of the circumstances of the victim 's death . The late @-@ 16th @-@ century Hungarian countess and mass murderer Elizabeth Báthory became particularly infamous in later centuries ' works , which depicted her bathing in her victims ' blood in order to retain beauty or youth .

### == Modern vampire subcultures ==

Vampire lifestyle is a term for a contemporary subculture of people , largely within the Goth subculture , who consume the blood of others as a pastime ; drawing from the rich recent history of popular culture related to cult symbolism , horror films , the fiction of Anne Rice , and the styles of Victorian England . Active vampirism within the vampire subculture includes both blood @-@ related vampirism , commonly referred to as sanguine vampirism , and psychic vampirism , or supposed feeding from pranic energy .

### == Vampire bats ==

Although many cultures have stories about them , vampire bats have only recently become an integral part of the traditional vampire lore . Indeed , vampire bats were only integrated into vampire folklore when they were discovered on the South American mainland in the 16th century . Although there are no vampire bats in Europe , bats and owls have long been associated with the supernatural and omens , although mainly because of their nocturnal habits , and in modern English heraldic tradition , a bat means " Awareness of the powers of darkness and chaos " .

The three species of actual vampire bats are all endemic to Latin America , and there is no evidence to suggest that they had any Old World relatives within human memory . It is therefore impossible that the folkloric vampire represents a distorted presentation or memory of the vampire bat . The bats were named after the folkloric vampire rather than vice versa ; the Oxford English Dictionary records their folkloric use in English from 1734 and the zoological not until 1774 . Although the vampire bat 's bite is usually not harmful to a person , the bat has been known to actively feed on humans and large prey such as cattle and often leave the trademark , two @-@ prong bite mark on its victim 's skin .

The literary Dracula transforms into a bat several times in the novel , and vampire bats themselves

are mentioned twice in it . The 1927 stage production of Dracula followed the novel in having Dracula turn into a bat , as did the film , where Béla Lugosi would transform into a bat . The bat transformation scene would again be used by Lon Chaney Jr. in 1943 's Son of Dracula .

= = In modern fiction = =

The vampire is now a fixture in popular fiction . Such fiction began with 18th @-@ century poetry and continued with 19th @-@ century short stories , the first and most influential of which was John Polidori 's The Vampyre ( 1819 ) , featuring the vampire Lord Ruthven . Lord Ruthven 's exploits were further explored in a series of vampire plays in which he was the anti @-@ hero . The vampire theme continued in penny dreadful serial publications such as Varney the Vampire ( 1847 ) and culminated in the pre @-@ eminent vampire novel of all time : Dracula by Bram Stoker , published in 1897 .

Over time , some attributes now regarded as integral became incorporated into the vampire 's profile : fangs and vulnerability to sunlight appeared over the course of the 19th century , with Varney the Vampire and Count Dracula both bearing protruding teeth , and Murnau 's Nosferatu ( 1922 ) fearing daylight . The cloak appeared in stage productions of the 1920s , with a high collar introduced by playwright Hamilton Deane to help Dracula ' vanish ' on stage . Lord Ruthven and Varney were able to be healed by moonlight , although no account of this is known in traditional folklore . Implied though not often explicitly documented in folklore , immortality is one attribute which features heavily in vampire film and literature . Much is made of the price of eternal life , namely the incessant need for blood of former equals .

= = = Literature = = =

The vampire or revenant first appeared in poems such as The Vampire ( 1748 ) by Heinrich August Ossenfelder , Lenore ( 1773 ) by Gottfried August Bürger , Die Braut von Corinth ( The Bride of Corinth ) ( 1797 ) by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe , Robert Southey 's Thalaba the Destroyer ( 1801 ) , John Stagg 's " The Vampyre " ( 1810 ) , Percy Bysshe Shelley 's " The Spectral Horseman " ( 1810 ) ( " Nor a yelling vampire reeking with gore " ) and " Ballad " in St. Irvyne ( 1811 ) about a reanimated corpse , Sister Rosa , Samuel Taylor Coleridge 's unfinished Christabel and Lord Byron 's The Giaour .

Byron was also credited with the first prose fiction piece concerned with vampires : The Vampyre ( 1819 ) . This was in reality authored by Byron 's personal physician , John Polidori , who adapted an enigmatic fragmentary tale of his illustrious patient , " Fragment of a Novel " ( 1819 ) , also known as " The Burial : A Fragment " . Byron 's own dominating personality , mediated by his lover Lady Caroline Lamb in her unflattering roman @-@ a @-@ clef , Glenarvon ( a Gothic fantasia based on Byron 's wild life ) , was used as a model for Polidori 's undead protagonist Lord Ruthven . The Vampyre was highly successful and the most influential vampire work of the early 19th century .

Varney the Vampire was a landmark popular mid @-@ Victorian era gothic horror story by James Malcolm Rymer and Thomas Peckett Prest , which first appeared from 1845 to 1847 in a series of pamphlets generally referred to as penny dreadfuls because of their inexpensive price and typically gruesome contents . The story was published in book form in 1847 and runs to 868 double @-@ columned pages . It has a distinctly suspenseful style , using vivid imagery to describe the horrifying exploits of Varney . Another important addition to the genre was Sheridan Le Fanu 's lesbian vampire story Carmilla ( 1871 ) . Like Varney before her , the vampire Carmilla is portrayed in a somewhat sympathetic light as the compulsion of her condition is highlighted .

No effort to depict vampires in popular fiction was as influential or as definitive as Bram Stoker 's Dracula ( 1897 ) . Its portrayal of vampirism as a disease of contagious demonic possession , with its undertones of sex , blood and death , struck a chord in Victorian Europe where tuberculosis and syphilis were common . The vampiric traits described in Stoker 's work merged with and dominated folkloric tradition , eventually evolving into the modern fictional vampire .

Drawing on past works such as The Vampyre and " Carmilla " , Stoker began to research his new

book in the late 19th century , reading works such as *The Land Beyond the Forest* ( 1888 ) by Emily Gerard and other books about Transylvania and vampires . In London , a colleague mentioned to him the story of Vlad ?epe? , the " real @-@ life Dracula , " and Stoker immediately incorporated this story into his book . The first chapter of the book was omitted when it was published in 1897 , but it was released in 1914 as *Dracula 's Guest* .

The latter part of the 20th century saw the rise of multi @-@ volume vampire epics . The first of these was Gothic romance writer Marilyn Ross ' *Barnabas Collins* series ( 1966 ? 71 ) , loosely based on the contemporary American TV series *Dark Shadows* . It also set the trend for seeing vampires as poetic tragic heroes rather than as the more traditional embodiment of evil . This formula was followed in novelist Anne Rice 's highly popular and influential *Vampire Chronicles* ( 1976 ? 2003 ) .

The 21st century brought more examples of vampire fiction , such as J.R. Ward 's *Black Dagger Brotherhood* series , and other highly popular vampire books which appeal to teenagers and young adults . Such vampiric paranormal romance novels and allied vampiric chick @-@ lit and vampiric occult detective stories are a remarkably popular and ever @-@ expanding contemporary publishing phenomenon . L.A. Banks ' *The Vampire Huntress Legend Series* , Laurell K. Hamilton 's erotic *Anita Blake : Vampire Hunter* series , and Kim Harrison 's *The Hollows* series , portray the vampire in a variety of new perspectives , some of them unrelated to the original legends . Vampires in the *Twilight* series ( 2005 ? 2008 ) by Stephenie Meyer ignore the effects of garlic and crosses , and are not harmed by sunlight ( although it does reveal their supernatural nature ) . Richelle Mead further deviates from traditional vampires in her *Vampire Academy* series ( 2007 ? present ) , basing the novels on Romanian lore with two races of vampires , one good and one evil , as well as half @-@ vampires .

= = = Film and television = = =

Considered one of the preeminent figures of the classic horror film , the vampire has proven to be a rich subject for the film and gaming industries . *Dracula* is a major character in more films than any other but Sherlock Holmes , and many early films were either based on the novel of *Dracula* or closely derived from it . These included the landmark 1922 German silent film *Nosferatu* , directed by F. W. Murnau and featuring the first film portrayal of *Dracula* ? although names and characters were intended to mimic *Dracula* 's , Murnau could not obtain permission to do so from Stoker 's widow , and had to alter many aspects of the film . In addition to this film was Universal 's *Dracula* ( 1931 ) , starring Béla Lugosi as the Count in what was the first talking film to portray *Dracula* . The decade saw several more vampire films , most notably *Dracula 's Daughter* in 1936 .

The legend of the vampire was cemented in the film industry when *Dracula* was reincarnated for a new generation with the celebrated Hammer Horror series of films , starring Christopher Lee as the Count . The successful 1958 *Dracula* starring Lee was followed by seven sequels . Lee returned as *Dracula* in all but two of these and became well known in the role . By the 1970s , vampires in films had diversified with works such as *Count Yorga , Vampire* ( 1970 ) , an African Count in 1972 's *Blacula* , the BBC 's *Count Dracula* featuring French actor Louis Jourdan as *Dracula* and Frank Finlay as Abraham Van Helsing , and a *Nosferatu* @-@ like vampire in 1979 's *Salem 's Lot* , and a remake of *Nosferatu* itself , titled *Nosferatu the Vampyre* with Klaus Kinski the same year . Several films featured female , often lesbian , vampire antagonists such as Hammer Horror 's *The Vampire Lovers* ( 1970 ) based on *Carmilla* , though the plotlines still revolved around a central evil vampire character .

The pilot for the Dan Curtis 1972 television series *Kolchak : The Night Stalker* revolved around reporter Carl Kolchak hunting a vampire on the Las Vegas strip . Later films showed more diversity in plotline , with some focusing on the vampire @-@ hunter , such as *Blade* in the Marvel Comics ' *Blade* films and the film *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* . *Buffy* , released in 1992 , foreshadowed a vampiric presence on television , with adaptation to a long @-@ running hit TV series of the same name and its spin @-@ off *Angel* . Still others showed the vampire as protagonist , such as 1983 's *The Hunger* , 1994 's *Interview with the Vampire : The Vampire Chronicles* and its indirect sequel of

sorts Queen of the Damned , and the 2007 series Moonlight . Bram Stoker 's Dracula was a noteworthy 1992 film which became the then @-@ highest grossing vampire film ever .

This increase of interest in vampiric plotlines led to the vampire being depicted in films such as Underworld and Van Helsing , and the Russian Night Watch and a TV miniseries remake of ' Salem 's Lot , both from 2004 . The series Blood Ties premiered on Lifetime Television in 2007 , featuring a character portrayed as Henry Fitzroy , illegitimate son of Henry VIII of England turned vampire , in modern @-@ day Toronto , with a female former Toronto detective in the starring role . A 2008 series from HBO , entitled True Blood , gives a Southern take to the vampire theme .

In 2008 the BBC Three series Being Human became popular in Britain . It featured an unconventional trio of a vampire , a werewolf and a ghost who are sharing a flat in Bristol . Another popular vampire @-@ related show is CW 's The Vampire Diaries . The continuing popularity of the vampire theme has been ascribed to a combination of two factors : the representation of sexuality and the perennial dread of mortality . Another " vampiric " series that has come out between 2008 and 2012 is the Twilight Saga , a series of films based on the book series of the same name .

In quite another type of depiction , Count von Count , a harmless and friendly vampire parodying Bela Lugosi 's depictions , is a major character on the children 's television series Sesame Street . He teaches counting and simple arithmetic through his compulsion to count everything , a trait he shares with certain other vampires of folklore .

The 2005 CW series Supernatural has also depicted vampires . The main characters , Sam and Dean Winchester , along with other hunters , believe that the true way to kill a vampire is to decapitate the being. The show 's vampires are shown in a rather negative light , though some are shown mercy after being found to not harm humans .

= = = Games = = =

The role @-@ playing game Vampire : the Masquerade has been influential upon modern vampire fiction and elements of its terminology , such as embrace and sire , appear in contemporary fiction . Popular video games about vampires include Castlevania , which is an extension of the original Bram Stoker Dracula novel , and Legacy of Kain . Vampires are also sporadically portrayed in other games , including The Elder Scrolls IV : Oblivion , when a character can become afflicted with porphyric haemophilia . A different take on vampires is presented in Bethesda 's other game Fallout 3 with " The Family " . Members of the Family are afflicted with a manic desire to consume human flesh , but restrict themselves to drinking blood to avoid becoming complete monsters .